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Roles of Education in Cambodian Development: Facilitating Positive Outcomes

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Social Science at Lincoln University

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ABSTRACT

Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master in Social Science.

Roles of Education in Cambodian Development: Facilitating Positive Outcomes

By Sokly Keat

Development has been a topic of discussion over the past century. The concept of development is believed to have its origin in the colonial era and then has changed over time, especially after the end of the World War II. Development was traditionally discussed in an economic context, but it has increasingly drawn attention from social scientists. Today, development is discussed in the context of human development. In this context, an improvement of quality of life is the ultimate goal of development. At the same time, there is widespread recognition that education has produced positive outcomes on development in many countries. Therefore, this study examines positive outcomes of education in the context of development. To do so, Cambodia has been chosen as a specific focus of the study because it has a unique historical context [where the literacy rate was almost zero after the defeat of the Khmer Rouge in 1979] and has experienced particularly rapid post-war development. An exploratory approach and qualitative methodology were applied to collect first-hand information from eighteen participants consisting of eight development and education experts, five university graduates who are appointed as leaders at their organisations or companies, and five university students who are studying at different universities. The research has produced five major findings. First, education has empowered individuals in the areas of health, internal capacity and skills, and resilience. These attributes serve as a foundation which enables individuals to develop themselves so that they can become professionals or skilled workers. Second, education improves chances of or pathways to a career, especially in the context of globalization and regionalization of economies. Third, education has produced positive social changes in many areas such as [better] working conditions, [higher] incomes, [more] employment, and [reduced levels of] social inequality. Fourth, education is a powerful tool to fight poverty. Fifth, the cycle of poverty can be broken when barriers to education are broken down, and there are three mechanisms for removing these barriers: support from the government, support from family and community, and student commitment.

Key words: Development, education, employment, income, poverty, and social changes.
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<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTM</td>
<td>Cambodian Tribunal Monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFI</td>
<td>Economic and Finance Institutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>KI</td>
<td>Key Informant</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEYS</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport [of Cambodia]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoP</td>
<td>Ministry of Planning [of Cambodia]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIE</td>
<td>National Institution of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIM</td>
<td>National Institute of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSDP</td>
<td>National Strategic Development Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZME</td>
<td>New Zealand Media and Entertainment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODI</td>
<td>Overseas Development Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGC</td>
<td>Royal Government of Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RULE</td>
<td>Royal University of Law and Economics</td>
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</table>
RUPP : Royal University of Phnom Penh
UG : University Graduate
UK : United Kingdom
UN : United Nations
UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organiszation
UNTAC : United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
US1 : University Student 1
WTO : World Trade Organisation
CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Development is regarded as an important tool for creating international equity by positively changing the social and economic positions of the world’s less fortunate nations. For many decades, ‘development’ has been an ongoing topic of discussion in the international community, among governments of developed and developing countries, academics, the public and non-governmental organisations [NGOs]. Much of the discussion and associated work on the ground has centred on the development of effective ways to alleviate individual and household poverty in poorer nations and, more generally, how to appropriately support the overall development process.

Within development discourses, education is often viewed as an important instrument for achieving positive economic and social outcomes for citizens of developing countries (Ojiambo, 2009; Uriah & Wosu, 2012). Education is regarded as the key to peace, stability and sustainable development, and also as a path for effective participation by every human being in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2000). It has been strongly asserted that a better-educated population contributes to faster development (Soubbotina & Sheram, 2000). Such arguments suggest that national development is underpinned and supported by individual development, specifically through education.

In academic circles, research and theorizing concerning the association between education and development have also occurred. Moore (2004), to take one example from the field of education sociology, discussed theoretical differences in the role of education in development in Education and Society. This included the ‘liberal logic of industrialism’ of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, which sees education as a key mechanism of progressive social change. In citing Bowles and Gintis, Moore postulates that education responds to the needs and developmental logic of an industrial society in four ways: (1) integrating youth into the economic system through the development of the productivity of human labour; (2) promoting civic values and behaviours, which are necessary for an advanced liberal democracy; (3) developing a meritocratic selection
system in society; and (4) promoting an ‘open’ society in which all members are able to mobilize more freely and to enjoy equal opportunity.

Given the above, it can be argued that an important criterion for successful national and individual development is a strong and successful education system. This link between education and development is the basis of this study and Cambodia is chosen as the study site. The research focuses on how education contributes to people’s personal development and to ultimately decrease poverty, while enhancing other positive social changes.

1.2. Study Site

Cambodia, the location of this research, is located in South East Asia, bordering Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. In 2013, it had a population of 14.68 million people, with 79% of the total number of households located in rural areas (Ministry of Planning [MoP], 2013). Over 11.5% of the total population resides within the capital city of Phnom Penh (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2014).

![Figure 1.1: Location of Cambodia](source: United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia [UNTAC] (2003))
Over the past century, Cambodia has experienced political unrest and civil war, both of which eroded the education system. A key time was the genocidal period, between 1975 and 1979, when the country was under the dictatorial rule of the Khmer Rouge. During that period, Cambodia was transformed into a classless society with: no schooling, no religion, no health care, no private property, no money and no market (Cambodian Tribunal Monitor [CTM], Ayres, 2000; 2014; Kamboly, 2007). There was also a concerted effort to remove all aspects of a formal education system, including those who worked in it. Intellectuals and former officials of the republican government, especially educators, were regarded as the prime enemy of the Khmer Rouge, and a significant number were executed (Ayres, 2000; CTM, 2014; De Walque, 2006; Duggan, 1997; Kamboly, 2007; Rany, Zain, & Jamil, 2012). It is believed that about 80 to 90% of Cambodia’s educators were either killed or died of hunger whilst working in labour camps (CTM, 2014; De Walque, 2006; Kamboly, 2007; Rany et al., 2012). The Khmer Rouge’s attack on education saw the destruction of public documents, and the conversion of school buildings into prisons.

It has been estimated that more than half of the written material which existed in Cambodia was destroyed by the Khmer Rouge. Also, 2.2 to 2.8 million Cambodians are estimated to have died during the 1970s, with 1.5 to 2 million losing their lives to execution, malnutrition or overwork – again during the rule of the Khmer Rouge (Delux, 2013; Heuveline, 1998). Although the Khmer Rouge were removed from power in early 1979, a full programme of redevelopment could not immediately begin due to on-going fighting between government forces and residual Khmer Rouge fighters. This fighting continued until the Paris Peace Agreement of 1991. When the redevelopment of Cambodia did start, it had to begin from scratch, due to degraded and limited infrastructure and battered social, political and economic systems. With respect to education, it is believed that when some level of redevelopment did commence – during the 1980s and 1990s – almost the entire population was unable to read and write.

Since the defeat of the Khmer Rouge, and the beginning of the process of redevelopment, a range of positive social changes have been reported. One example is the education system which has been reinstated for children and adults and which is producing positive outcomes. Another example is adult literacy rates, which were recorded at 67% in 1998 and increased to 79.3% in 2011 (World Bank, 2014a, 2014b; 2014c). Numerous school buildings and health centres have been built throughout the country to provide education.
and health care to the people of Cambodia, and national infrastructure programmes have led to the building of roads and bridges. However, high school dropout rate especially at the lower secondary level is still a challenge and is evidence that education is not always believed (by some Cambodians) to be an important part of the country’s development.

The current Cambodian education system is structured into three levels: pre-school education; general education[^1] which is comprised of primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary education; and higher education (MoEYS, 2007a). Pre-school education is designed to prepare children below the age of 6 for primary school. Primary education in Cambodia spans six years while lower and upper-secondary levels each spans three years. Higher education can refer to both vocational and university education. However, for the sake of this research, unless otherwise specified, higher education refers to university-level education. At most universities, students studied for two years for associate degree and four years for a bachelor’s degree while some degrees such as medical doctor take longer. Students must at least graduate from upper-secondary school in order to be eligible for this level.

National poverty rates are also declining as the total number in poverty has dropped to one third of what it was in only eight years [Figure 2.1], decreasing from 53.2% of the population in 2004 to 17.7% in 2012 (ADB, 2014; World Bank, 2014b; 2014c). Cambodian people today have full freedom to travel, access to public and private education, laws promoting freedom of expression, the right to vote, and access to modern technology such as smart phones, computers and the internet. Economic analysts (e.g. Lin, Hseih, Yuok, Savary, & Sum, 2004) suggest that Cambodia is now one of the fastest developing countries in Southeast Asia, boasting a growth rate of almost 10 per cent per annum over the period 1998-2008. It has been argued also that Cambodia has grown faster than any other post-conflict country in recent times, with a growth rate regarded as one of the fastest in the developing world (Guimbert, 2010; Hill & Menon, 2013).

[^1]: General education in Cambodia is comprised of primary and [lower and upper] secondary education. Primary education consists of six grades [grade 1 to 6] while secondary education also consists of three grades at the lower secondary level [grade 7 to 9] and three grades at the upper secondary level [10 to 12] (MoEYS, 2007a).
1.3. Research Objectives and Questions

Cambodia rehabilitated its education immediately after the Khmer Rouge was largely evicted in 1979 and it has also experienced notable development progress since then. However, the nexus between development and education has only been taken for granted but not yet been studied. Such an absence of research may have led to skepticism about the roles of education in the development of Cambodia amongst many Cambodian especially policy makers.

The overarching objective of this research was to explore the education-development nexus in the context of Cambodia’s (re)development. A more specific aim was to identify ‘success factors’ in Cambodia’s education system which are, by extension, contributing to Cambodia’s development. Two specific objectives are: 1) to discover the degree to which education facilitates positive social, political and economic outcomes; and, 2) to identify the gaps between education policies and practice that might be preventing Cambodia from achieving its development goals.

Given this was an exploratory study, qualitative research methods were deployed, with findings derived from in-depth interviews with; 1) Cambodian residents who were currently studying at University or who had progressed through the education system; and 2) those who were directly involved in the governance, planning and provision of education.

The research was guided by four research questions:

**Question 1:** Has education been a major engine of Cambodia’s progressive social changes?

**Question 2:** How has successful completion of secondary education helped facilitate positive outcomes for individuals?

**Question 3:** From a stakeholder perspective, how have these positive outcomes effected social, political and economic development in Cambodia?

**Question 4:** What are the gaps between education policy and practice that may impede the effective operationalization of education as a tool for development in Cambodia?
1.4. Significance of the research

This research sought to explore the linkages between education and development. In doing so, it was anticipated that the research would make a positive contribution to the social science academic literature on education and development, and positively inform the development of education policies and practices in Cambodia. In terms of academic contribution, the research enriches a limited body of knowledge concerning education and development in Cambodia. It provides evidence that education is a powerful tool for the development of Cambodia and provides a model for future research in the same field. Methodologically, this research and the model have replication capability. Moreover, the research identifies some other significant areas for further exploration through future research.

In terms of the development of Cambodia, this research provides insights into the contribution of education. Such evidence can be used by development agencies such as NGOs and donor agencies particularly in advocacy, and by policy makers in future decision making processes.

Finally, from a social point of view, the research illustrates that education benefits an individual’s ability to further their own economic and work opportunities, and how education produces more effective/resilient human capital. Ultimately, it is hoped that the result of this research will influence younger Cambodians to advance their education to higher levels.

1.5. Thesis Outline

This thesis has eight chapters. The first chapter [this chapter] is the ‘Introduction’ which includes: a general overview of the research; a brief introduction to the research problem; a brief history of Cambodia; the focus of the research and research objectives; and some commentary on the significance of the research.

The second chapter is the ‘Literature Review’. Relevant literature is introduced and discussed in order to conceptualize development, to understand the positive outcomes of education in the context of development, and to provide the rationale for this research.
The third chapter presents the ‘Research Methodology’. Presented here is a detailed explanation of the research methods used; an explanation about how participants were selected; the process by which information for analysis was collected; an overview of how the information was analyzed; and some commentary about research ethics.

The fourth chapter is ‘Education Outcomes for Individuals’. In that chapter findings are presented in the context of personal development. Those outcomes cover such areas as development of skilled workforce, development of people’s resilience, improvement of career opportunities and choices, and improvement of individuals’ health.

The fifth chapter is ‘Education Outcomes for Society’. In that chapter findings are presented in the context of social and economic development of society as a whole. It focuses on how education responds to the economic demand for skilled workforce; how education fosters higher individuals’ incomes and creates more jobs; the connection between education and improvement of working conditions; and how education leads to a decrease in social inequality.

The sixth chapter is ‘Mechanisms for Succeeding in Education’. Based on primary data, that chapter has special focus on barriers to education for poor students noting the gaps between educational policies and practices, poverty and a lack of schooling infrastructure, and on mechanisms for breaking down those barriers to education.

In the seventh chapter, ‘Discussions’, a synthesis of the research outcomes is presented, along with a discussion about how they contribute to the body of knowledge in relation to the link between education and development. The discussion addresses the research questions and is structured around the following themes; the role of education as a mechanism for development and or positive social change, and in particular, the role of education as the foundation of a skilled workforce; the educational logic of development; and keys to breaking the cycle of poverty.

The last chapter is the ‘Conclusion’. That Chapter highlights the major findings of this study, the opportunities for future research, and the research limitations. The Chapter also presents personal reflections on the research methods used and the lessons learnt through the research process.
CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a critical analysis of the literature which informed the development of this study i.e. that which relates directly to the field of education and development. The chapter includes literature which discusses how [in various ways] education is linked to the achievement of development outcomes, be they economic, social and/or at the level of the individual. To remain within the scope of the study, the review is limited to the literature located at the nexus of education and development. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the evolution of the concept of development. This is followed by a discussion of differing theoretical approaches to education and commentary on the positive outcomes of education [including indicators for measuring success in a development context and the role of education in poverty reduction].

2.2. Understanding Development

The concept of development has various meanings and is dependent on contextual application. Development is commonly defined as a system or process by which growth, progress or improvement is achieved, and doing so makes things better than the current position, be it for an individual, a specified community or a nation. From a theoretical perspective there has never been a single universally accepted definition of development because of conceptual and contextual differences over time (Desai & Potter, 2014; Moghaddam, Bianchi, Daniels, Apter, & Harré, 1999; Potter, 2014; Soubbotina & Sheram, 2000).

From an historical perspective, it has been argued that the notion of development has its origin in the rebuilding of nation states following World War II. There is also evidence that the contemporary conceptualization of development is found in the process of fighting poverty during colonization periods (Desai & Potter, 2014, p. 1). However, over time, development at national levels has been defined by national needs and is identified in relation to goals and policies (Royal Government of Cambodia [RGC], 2009). The
next sections of this chapter examine development through two definitive events or periods, namely the colonial period, and the post-World War II evolutionary period.

2.2.1. Development in the Colonial Period

As identified above, the concept of development as a “campaign against poverty” is first found in many colonial projects (Desai & Potter, 2014, p. 1). Historically, colonialism was a strategy of many western countries for increasing the wealth and power of both individuals and nations. Whilst development is believed to have its origin in this period and in the process of colonialism, it has also been blamed as the root of present-day poverty, inequality and violence, in many nations (Craggs, 2014; Desai & Potter, 2014; Potter, 2014). These criticisms revolve around the recipients of the proposed development. Colonial powers sought to improve general physical infrastructure, economic output, and the quality of health care systems. The purpose though of any development was targeted and concentrated on the colonizers themselves and little change was experienced by the native people (Craggs, 2014).

The coming of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also brought changes to the implementation of policy and a new model of colonization. British, French, and Dutch colonies began to focus more on “humanitarian development” for native colonial communities (Craggs, 2014, p. 6). One of the examples of humanitarian development practice over the colonial period was the introduction of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 by the British government. It was written in Colonial Development published by the Overseas Development Institute [ODI] that (1964, p. 95):

“The 1940 Act corrected deficiencies of the system that had been tried over the previous ten years. It voted more funds. It widened the purposes of ‘schemes’ to cover ‘any purpose likely to promote the resources of any colony or the welfare of its people’, and explicitly included the expenditure on education”.

A similar change took place in French colonized Cambodia including the introduction of modern education by the French colonizer. The French colonization commenced in 1863. During the period of colonization, the French transformed Cambodia’s traditional education through the introduction of secular schools for both boys and girls and the application of western curricula (Ayres, 2000). Prior to these changes, education was
provided by Buddhist clergymen and monks in Buddhist monasteries to the male population; females were excluded. The traditional education involved students receiving only basic literature, the foundation of religion, and life skills such as artistry, carpentry, construction, craftwork and traditional music (Ayres, 2000; Rany et al., 2012; Sideth, 2004).

The humanitarian development of colonies was enhanced through the transformation and modernization of social and economic structures to mirror those of Western cultures (Craggs, 2014). Development projects began to focus more on improving physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges and telecommunications, applying technological innovation to combat disease and to increase agricultural and industrial productivity (Craggs, 2014). Moreover, houses and buildings in many colonies followed the colonial designs using new materials such as concrete; they also imported scientific construction techniques, and modernism in architectural design (Craggs, 2014).

Following these philosophical changes the concept of development was associated with wealth and prosperity within a colonization setting. Being wealthier was equated with being more modernized or modern. Thus, poverty alleviation was the ultimate goal of development, and modernization was the core development strategy to achieve such an ultimate goal (Desai & Potter, 2014). Colonization itself was however being questioned and many colonial nations began to withdraw from the nations they had colonized either voluntary or because they were forced to, but the measure of development continued to underpin economic growth as discussed in the next section.

2.2.2. Development as Growth

After the collapse of colonialism, development practice and policy during the 1950s and 1960s more specifically focused on economic progress and development was measured with economic indicators particularly gross national income and growth rates (Torado & Smith, 2011). Development was thus defined in strictly economic terms as achieving sustained growth rates of gross national income per capita to enable a nation to generate its economic outputs, particularly gross domestic product [GDP], at rates that were faster than its population growth rate (Torado & Smith, 2011). Focusing on growth, many nations, particularly the poor ones, strived to copy the Western style of accelerating
economic growth and deprioritized problems such as poverty, unemployment, discrimination and social inequality. But how would poorer nations achieve the required economic growth within a developmental framework. The answer to that question was forthcoming with the end of World War II.

After the end of the World War II, there was a need to rebuild the countries destroyed by the ravages of war. The dominant line of thought was that the development of these nations would be achieved thorough industrialization which was based on the historical experience of richer Western nations who had achieved stronger economic growth through industrialization (Potter, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012). Such an approach required a shift from long standing economic structures based on agriculture to industrialization. The industrialization approach to development, as with economic growth strategies for development, brought with it many criticisms particularly from social scientists who argued that while industrialization had allowed many poor nations to achieve the required economic growth over the following two decades, little had been done to deal with poverty, unemployment, discrimination and inequality. The main argument was that the bottom 40% of the populations of many poor nations were not sharing in the economic growth and the gap between the rich and the poor was continuing to grow. Whilst certain countries were becoming richer poverty remained high and as such demonstrated a weakness in the industrialization development philosophy (Torado & Smith, 2011). This lack of advancement in lowering or removing poverty is directly related to how national wealth is distributed to the entire nation and not the economic elite. This aspect of development is discussed in the next section.

2.2.3. Redistibution with Growth

The above content presented the shift in developmental thinking during the 1950s and 1960s to focus on improved economic outcomes that would in turn support other social issues within a developing nation. Whilst some nations were able to achieve required economic growth and others were not, it became apparent that other national problems, specifically poverty, unemployment, discrimination and inequality were not being reprioritized. As a result, development was redefined during the 1970s with its focus shifting to a reduction of poverty, social inequality and unemployment in the context of economic growth (Ingham, 1993; Sen, 1999; Streeten, 1994; Thornton et al., 2012;
‘Redistribution with growth’ was the slogan used by economists, social scientists and policy makers to redefine the approach to development (Soubbotina & Sheram, 2000; Streeten, 1994; Thirlwall, 2014; Torado & Smith, 2011). Under this philosophy, development had two major objectives being both economic and social development. This change also identified the differing aspects of economic development and economic growth. In identifying the differences Thirlwall (2014, p. 26) asserted that:

“Economic growth, ..., is not the same as economic development. The process of economic (and social) development must imply a growth in living standards, but it is a much wider concept than the growth of per capita income alone. Growth, it might be said, is a necessary condition for the economic and social development of nations, but it is not a sufficient condition because an aggregate measure of growth or per capita income pays no attention to how that output is distributed amongst the population: it says nothing about the composition of output (whether the goods are consumption goods, investment goods or public goods such as education and health provision), and it gives no indication of the physical, social and economic environment in which the output is produced. In short, the growth rates of nations cannot be taken as measures of the increase in the welfare of societies because the well-being of people is a much more inclusive concept than the level of income alone.”

In this sense, achieving economic objectives is an essential component of development, but not the only one. The core concept of redistribution of income is that development includes not only economic objectives but also social values and objectives that societies strive for (Goulet, 1971). In other words, development strategies must entail the capacity of the poor to share in the benefits more equitably from the national income and as such see an improvement in quality of life. Goulet (1971), who is regarded as one of the leading thinkers in the field of development, suggested that development must contain three main components: life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom. These three components were identified as the three “core values of development” by Torado and Smith (2011, p. 21) and should be central to the redistribution of national wealth. In redefining and identifying the differences between growth and development, Goulet (1971) stresses that a country only achieves real development if the rich and the poor participate and benefit from economic growth together.
Sen (1999) defined development as an expansion of human freedom. With his capability approach to development, Sen, the 1998 Nobel Prize Laureate for Economic, proposed that the ultimate goal of development is to improve the quality of life and development is thus defined as “a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy” (Sen, 1999, p. 3). Sen (1999) has strongly advocated that it was very wrong for development to be identified with only economic growth because past experience shows that many poor nations achieved economic growth at the cost to the poorer members of the population. However, he has also recognized that development cannot be achieved with an absence of such economic growth. In his well-known Development as Freedoms, Sen (1999, p. 3) wrote that:

“Focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization, or with technological advance, or with social modernization. Growth of GNP or of individual incomes can, of course, be very important as means to expanding the freedoms enjoyed by the members of the society. But freedoms depend also on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements (for example, facilities for education and health care) as well as political and civil rights (for example, the liberty to participate in public discussion and scrutiny).”

For Sen (1999), the quality of life is improved when people’s freedom [of choice] is expanded; citing two different types of freedom: substantive and instrumental freedoms. Substantive freedom is the capacity of people to fulfill their basic needs and to avoid such deficiencies as starvation, undernourishment, and illiteracy. Instrumental Freedoms are social freedoms which are the external conditions of life and are identified as political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and prospective security (Sen, 1999). In other words, instrumental freedoms are personal choice driven, substantive freedoms are driven by a person’s capacity to share and function within or benefit from what is [made] available. In summary, a person’s quality of life is improved when their capacity to make choices increases, and the choices available are expanded. In this regard, freedom can be a process or an outcome but it is the role of development to provide the path to achieving those freedoms (Sen, 1999).
In 1990 the United Nations [UN] also addressed the need to revisit development and promoted the concept of “human development” (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1990). In the first report into human development, the UN noted the purpose of development is to provide people with more options necessary to acquiring human well-being, the options that include opportunities to get higher income, better conditions for longer life, equal and equitable access to education, freedom to political and social participation, and, guaranteed human rights (UNDP, 1990). Further in the 1996 Human Development Report (UNDP, 1996, p. 1), the UN noted that “Human development is the end – economic growth is the means”. As with Goulet (1971) and Sen (1999), the UN was effectively acknowledging the need for economic growth to support human development strategies such as: prolonging life expectancy; educational attainment; and standards of living measured by income per capita. These three measures of human development are referred to as the Human Development Index (Soubbotina & Sheram, 2000; UNDP, 1996).

In summary, the ‘redistribution with growth’ perspective of development recognizes both the interrelatedness of economic and human development and also the dependence perspective in that human development is dependent on economic development to meet the costs of implementing human development strategies and ultimately to improve an individual’s quality of life. The manner in which national wealth is distributed is just as important as how that wealth is created.

2.2.4. The Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]

Development has undoubtedly become a universal problem with many Western nations being involved in developmental programme through either direct or indirect funding. The process is however focusing on human development outcomes. One hundred and eighty nine members of the United Nations have committed to MDGs incorporating the eradication of poverty and attainment of other human development goals (Torado & Smith, 2011). The eight goals are:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. To achieve universal primary education;
3. To promote gender equality;
To reduce child mortality;

To improve maternal health;

To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;

To ensure environmental sustainability; and,

To develop a global partnership for development.

The MDGs expand the development spotlight to incorporate two new focal points. First, it includes the environment and, second, it introduces sustainability to imply the need for a long term focus when designing developmental strategies. The sustainable development perspective also calls for a balanced approach in achieving economic, environmental and social objectives (Soubbotina & Sheram, 2000).

2.2.5. Concluding Remark on Development

The preceding content presented a brief overview of the evolution of the concept of development. The colonization period witnessed the first incidences of development but the recipients of benefit from development were the colonial masters to the detriment of native nationals and social and human development were never addressed. After the collapse of colonialism development was defined by the capacity of a nation to generate economic growth and the development strategy of many poor countries was to push for faster growth. The next phase of development was ‘industrialization’ which was deemed to be the most appropriate means to achieve a fast economic growth outcome. Whilst industrialization was successful in increasing economic growth with poorer nations, there was little evidence of socially targeted development being implemented. In fact with some countries the gap between the rich and the poor only widened. The next shift in developmental thinking proposed a rethink of how national wealth could be distributed more effectively to all levels of society. So followed the introduction of human development. This thinking promoted the dependency of human development on economic development but did not suggest one was more important than the other. Economic growth was seen as the means to achieve the ultimate goal of development and improving people’s quality of life not just for the sake of high economic growth rates. This was followed at the turn of 20th century with introduction of the Millennium
Development Goals. The eight goals included the environment in development outcomes and promoted the need for a long term focus in introducing sustainable development.

The latest or current conception of development focuses on the improvement of quality of life and proposes this is achievable when people are more capable of enjoying what they want to do when certain freedoms are available. Sen (1999) refers to these as ‘substantive freedom’, and ‘instrumental freedom’. This research does not deal with Sen’s freedoms directly. Discussion of them is included however as Sen’s conceptualization of development as more than economic outcomes is central to this research. Although there have been several changes in theoretical approaches to development over the past two centuries, there is one thing that remains constant, ‘combating poverty’. This means that the successful eradication or alleviation of poverty should be the ultimate outcome for development practices.

There is a long held belief that education is a significant tool for development and eradicating poverty and as such is also the focus of this research. This research focuses more specifically on how education contributes to people’s personal development and to ultimately decrease poverty, while enhancing other positive social changes. The next sections discuss education, and education within a development setting.

2.3. Positive Outcomes of Education in Development

The previous section provided a brief overview of the concept of development, with the prominent outcome of application being the achievement of economic growth, in line with wealthier Western nations, and thus leading to positive social change. Education is also seen as a positive developmental tool and is regarded as a prerequisite for the achievement of development goals (UNESCO, 2015). The next section holds discussions of the function of education and then introduces certain positive outcomes from education as part of developmental progress.

2.3.1. Functions of Education

There are two major issues in relation to education. First, education is seen as a fundamental right of all human beings, and second, education is seen as the instrument
by which people can secure a better life and societal outcomes (Freire, 2005; Macedo, 2005; Moore, 2004; Cambodian Education Law, 2007). The concept of ‘education’ is derived from the Latin ‘educere’ which means ‘to lead out’. Hirschhorn (2003, p. 243) describes education as means of “leading one's students out from ignorance”. Education is commonly considered as comprising a combination of learning, from the student perspective, and teaching, as the process for delivering the content that the student learns. The content has been contentious for some time and is guided by the expected outcomes. These will be discussed in the following content.

Sociologists view education as means of maintaining social and cultural norms. Emile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of educational sociology, described education as being a functional process by which expectations and outcomes are achieved in the “methodical socialization of the young generation” (Moore, 2004, p. 125). Durkheim’s view was that education develops or constructs in the young generation – specifically children or those who are not yet ready for social life – a particular number of physical, moral and intellectual states which help them fit into society (Moore, 2004). In other words, the process of becoming a social being is achieved through the process of education.

Likewise, other educational sociologists view education as: the process by which knowledge, values, skills and norms of a society are formally or informally transferred from one generation to the next. Ololube and Egbezor (2012) for example view it as a process through which individual learners develop and construct their inborn potential and capabilities to become functional adults as they are systematically influenced by knowledge, cultures, values, skills and attitudes of the community. Uriah and Wosu (2012) to take another example frame education as a transmitting and renewing process of culture, one in which infants and young children develop themselves under careful guidance of the adult members of a society (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003).

However, others view education as being something more than a system of maintaining or handing on cultural and social norms, which are seen to maintain equilibrium within a society. Freire (2005, p. 72) uses a banking analogy in his criticisms of education in saying that education becomes an “act of depositing”. The teacher is the depositor who makes the deposits of information and the students are depositories whose passive roles are to patiently receive, memorize, and repeat the deposits. In *Pedagogy of the*
Freire (2005, p. 79) criticized this banking concept of education because of the dominating role of the teacher, and for lacking active participation by the students which in effect prevents students from critically considering reality, and proposes a “problem posing” concept of education as an alternative. In the problem-posing approach, education is regarded as the process through which “people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in the process of transformation” (Freire, 2005, p. 83).

Hirschhorn (2003, p. 243) also supported Freire’s philosophy of active student participation by defining education as “leading out one’s students’ thought processes to allow for a broad approach to the topic at hand”; the definition within which Hirschhorn argued that education needs joint participation of all parties particularly teacher and students. Finally, Shaull (2005) views education as a means to facilitate the integration of a younger generation into the logic of the present system or a means of freedom practice by which people deal creatively and critically with reality and learn how to take part in the transformation of the world.

Business however views education, and learning for that matter, from a different perspective in believing the prime aim of education is to prepare young people for the world of work, providing them with basic literacy, numeracy and vocational skills to be useful as an employee (Maina, 2014). Such a view in some ways supports the thinking of Freire and Shaull, the policies of many governments, and the business community in general. The underlying message suggests formal education needs to develop more innovative thinking within its education programmes along with ongoing skills development to be more internationally competitive. In the context of development, these theories would suggest that such an approach would bring positive outcomes for economic and human development.

In the Cambodian education model the Government appears to take a dual approach in explaining the foundations of the system. Cambodian Educational Law (2007, p. 3) states that:

“...Education refers to the process of educational development or training for physical, mental and spiritual development through all activities that allow the learners to obtain a set of knowledge, skills, capacities and values to become
individuals who are useful for themselves, their families, their communities, the nation and the world.”

In relation to development, the statement talks about learners in two contexts: human development – physical, mental and spiritual – and, economic development – the useful application of knowledge and skills for number of groups including the nation. This would suggest a financial or economic outcome.

The above content presented differing theoretical approaches to education and suggested outcomes. Education in practice has two mutually important processes. The first is an operational or input function, which includes curriculum development, teaching techniques in delivering content and administration systems. The second is a functional process which involves measuring the outcomes of the implementation of the operational inputs. One objective of this research is to examine the impact of formal education in achieving specific developmental outcomes as identified in the research questions – social change; positive individual outcomes for the learner; and social, political and economic development. As such the main focus of the research will be functional aspects of education, that being the outcomes or the impact of education on development. In the following I will discuss specific outcomes of education in relation to development.

2.3.2. **Positive Social Changes**

Successful developmental processes have proven to have a positive impact on certain indicators of human and economic development, such as improved labour market conditions resulting in increased employment opportunities (Streeten, 1993; UNESCO, 2000; World Bank, 2014c; Wolf, 2002). The next section will show specific outcomes of education on certain indicators for measuring successful development practices.

2.3.2.1. **More Jobs**

The prospect of achieving higher levels of income and career advancement are positively correlated with educational achievement (Wolf, 2002). The flow-on effect of this is generally identified in more positive outcomes through increased employment opportunities for others. This occurs through two main streams. First, higher levels of
education bring with them higher levels of individual and business capabilities resulting in higher levels of company growth and then additional employment. The second stream is self-employment. There is an increase in the number of younger and well educated people choosing the entrepreneurial path as opposed to working for another person or business (Maina, 2014). This shift has resulted in many universities including courses and indeed degrees for entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2014c, p. xviii). The flow-on effect of this stream is again found to be in increased employment opportunities for others. Increased employment opportunities bring higher levels of company profits, higher wages for individuals and more money flowing through the national economy supporting economic development. Research addressing the positive impact of education on employment opportunities is limited, which prompted the inclusion of this aspect of development in this study.

2.3.2.2. Less Social Inequality

Social inequality is an issue for both the developed and undeveloped regions of the world. The United Nations advocates that education is a strong mechanism for achieving greater social and economic equality (UNESCO, 2015). According to the ‘liberal logic of industrialism’, people who live in an advanced liberal democratic society respect each other and value each other as human-beings regardless of gender, race, or disability and education has played an important role in promoting such civic values and behaviours (Moore, 2004). In other words, theoretically education promotes equality in every aspect of society. This is also true in developing countries such as those of sub-Saharan Africa where, historically, women were not part of the education system. However, research has revealed that educational achievements of more modern day parents have played a notable contribution to the promotion of equal access or rights to education for female adolescents in countries such as Eritrea (Janigan, 2008). This suggests that education has encouraged equal opportunity and participation of women in society.

It has been found that higher education has been synonymous with reducing levels of discrimination. For example, many developed countries have laws which forbid all form of discrimination at work and within social interactions. It has been further implied that education has promoted a meritocratic selection system within society (Moore, 2004). Such a system means that individuals will be rewarded, recognized or selected based on
their competency rather than their inborn attributes such as race, colour, gender or family status.

Education has been credited with reducing certain inequalities in areas relating to discrimination and changing social values as addressed above. But poverty still remains a major source and indicator of inequality in developed and undeveloped societies. Whilst the developed world has mechanisms such as social welfare systems for addressing this issue, many parts of the undeveloped world still struggle with poverty. In the next section, I explore the role of education in poverty reduction.

2.3.3. Education, Higher Income and Poverty Alleviation

A decrease in poverty is also a positive social change and is arguably the biggest or the ultimate goal of development. There is a strong belief that education is an essential weapon to fight poverty. At the global level, the role of education’s role as a tool for poverty alleviation was promoted when the EU Commissioner for Development raised it in the EU High Level Conference on Education and Development conducted in Brussels by stating that education has a central place in poverty reduction. The UN Special Envoy for Global Education also echoed at the same event that education is the only way to break the poverty cycle especially in this 21st century (European Commission, 2013b).

There is empirical evidence that reinforces the positive relationship between educational attainment and a decrease in poverty. For example, it was found that lower-income countries would have their poverty level drop by 12% if all of their children could read (European Commission, 2013a; UNESCO, 2010).

In Cambodia, the poverty rate has decreased dramatically and uninterruptedly over the past ten years. As the data from the World Bank shows, Cambodia has done a commendable job in terms of poverty reduction, as the total number in poverty has dropped to one third of what it was in only eight years [Figure 2.1], decreasing from 53.2% of the population in 2004 to 17.7% in 2012 (ADB, 2014; World Bank, 2014b; 2014c). This means that with a poverty line of KHR 8,000 [approximately US$ 2.00] per day, only two out of ten Cambodian are poor in 2011 while it was five out of ten in 2004 (World Bank, 2014b). It was also found that an increase in price of rice, an increase in rice production, an increase in agricultural wages and an increase in incomes from
self-employment in non-agricultural businesses were the four most important drivers of such a dramatic decrease in poverty (World Bank, ADB, 2014; 2014c). In addition to this, The World Bank (2014c) suggests that the government of Cambodia has made the right policies to enhance opportunities for households, especially for rural ones who represented 90% the whole poor population, to pull themselves out of poverty.

It is true that there are many factors, as previously outlined, that have enabled Cambodia to do well in reducing poverty. However, education must also have played an important role in helping Cambodians to get out of poverty as it has been a top development agenda of the government. In this regard, education has been the core of the national strategic development plan and as it is written in the National Strategic Development Plan [NSDP] 2009-2013 that: “strengthening the quality of education has been and remains a high priority of the Cambodian government. It is recognized as a necessary and critical element for human development and poverty reduction” (RCG, 2009, p. 54).

Figure 2.1: National Poverty Rate of Cambodia 2004-2011

But how is the problem of poverty addressed through education? The simple answer is that there is a strong positive relation between level of education attained and level of income earned. Economists and social scientists acknowledge that individuals who spend more time in education may have characteristics that help them to earn higher incomes or salaries (Krueger & Lindahl, 2000). The first thing is that employment [self-
employment or working for another] is a source of income and education gives individuals a pathway to a career or a chance to be employed. In other words, education is a pre-requisite for skilled jobs. In this regard, Wolf (2002) clarified that employers undoubtedly use education as a requirement in their job advertisements when they hire staff.

The second thing is that microeconomic evidence suggests that education is a fundamental determining factor of individuals’ income (Krueger & Lindahl, 2000). In other words, higher level education leads to higher income generated. For example, it was empirically found that every extra year of education adds on average 10% to a person’s income in low-income countries and even more for women (European Commission, 2013a; UNESCO, 2008). The same thing was found to have happened in the United States (Krueger & Lindahl, 2000). It was also found that the impact of education on income is even stronger in developed countries where education attainment is high. For example, the data provided by the New Zealand Media and Entertainment [NZME], (2013) showed that New Zealanders with a tertiary education earned on average 24% more than those who only have upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. It was also found that the gap between the two groups was 35% in Australia in 2009 while the average gap for the OECD countries was 55% in 2010 (NZME, 2013). Moreover, the same source revealed that such a difference in average earnings between the two groups was even higher in the United Kingdom [UK] which had 65% and in the United States which had a gap of up to 77% in 2010.

It has been suggested that poverty or low income [they are not quite the same] is an important barrier to education attainment. It was argued that poverty and low income are two different problems but low income is one of the causes of poverty (Sen, 1999). Sen (1999, p. 19) suggested that there are two ways that income connects with education and health, and as he put it:

“... deprivation of individual capabilities can have close links with the lowness of income, which connects in both direction: (1) low income can be a major reason for illiteracy and ill health as well as hunger and undernourishment, and (2) conversely, better education and health help in the earning higher incomes”.

Sen believes that higher incomes will address the problem of poverty and higher level education will help individuals to lift their incomes. Moreover, education has an
important role in increasing individuals’ incomes. The higher the level of education one has, the higher income they are more likely to obtain. There is research which demonstrates the role of education, specifically higher education, in helping individuals to gain salary further above the national poverty line. For example, Phalthy (2014) found that almost 90% of students who obtained a bachelor degree earned more than US$150 per month after four years after graduation while almost 85% did so after three years of graduation. The World Bank (2014c, p. xviii) also suggested that “higher education opens opportunities to engage in salaried jobs that pay an important premium for education; it also increases the ability of self-employed workers to manage their own businesses and to increase the returns to their investment and labour”.

Thus, the literature suggests that a decrease in individual poverty is a positive outcome of education. Education builds the capacity of individuals so that they are capable of generating high incomes. Income and poverty are two different things however. Having low income does not mean one is poor but an increase in incomes is a crucial for getting out of poverty.

2.4. Research Rationale

The review of the literature suggested that ideas about development have changed over the past century. It is now generally accepted that development is defined as a process to achieve positive social changes. The positive role of education in development is accepted regardless of how development is perceived. There is a need to understand how education contributes to a decrease in poverty, which is the ultimate goal of development. Such a need serves as the rationale for this research and also a basis of the four research questions proposed in the previous chapter.
CHAPTER 3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the research methods used in this study of education and development. It begins with a discussion explaining why a qualitative social research methodology was deemed appropriate for this research. Next, the chapter gives an outline of the data collection techniques and specific methods used, including factors associated with research participant selection. Also covered in this chapter is information about the fieldwork process, data analysis procedures, and ethical issues and responsibilities.

3.3. Qualitative Methods

Given the open-ended nature of the research questions at the centre of this study – an exploratory research approach was developed and used, incorporating qualitative social science research methods. The decision to use qualitative methods was based on the general principle that they are appropriate when there is very little or no prior research available on the social phenomenon being studied and, therefore, some initial exploratory work is required (Emerson, 2005; Leko, 2014; Patton, 2002; Ritchie, 2003). They are also appropriate when the researcher is trying to develop an understanding of some aspect of human experience, such as one’s first-hand experience of education and everyday life and achievements after education. The use of qualitative methods – such as in depth interviews – generates a very rich account of the social phenomenon or issue in question through open-ended investigations that can help researchers uncover unanticipated findings and present avenues for further exploration (Emerson, 2005; Leko, 2014; Patton, 2002).

3.4. Research Techniques

Key qualitative social research techniques include in-depth interviews, focus groups and observation. The technique employed in this research was the semi-structured in-depth interview. This technique brings the researcher into face-to-face dialogue with the
research participant who has first-hand knowledge and experience of the subject matter. The in-depth interview is a flexible process – one which permits the researcher to explore new lines of inquiry as they arise in the conversation. The choice to use this interview technique is well supported by Ritchie (2003, p. 36) who claims that:

*Individual interviews are probably the most widely used method in qualitative research. They take different forms but key feature is their ability to provide an undiluted focus on the individual. They provide an opportunity for detailed investigation of people’s perspectives, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located, and for very detailed subject coverage. They are also particularly well suited to research that requires an understanding of deeply rooted or delicate phenomena or responses to complex systems, processes, or experiences because of the depth of focus and the opportunity they offer for clarification and detail understanding.*

In this sense the method is on-going, flexible and with the possibility of key themes emerging over the full course of the study.

### 3.5. Research participant selection

This project involved semi-structured interviews with three groups of people: (1) key informants [to gain contextual data]; (2) five university graduates, who, post-education, were appointed as leaders of NGOs and private companies; and (3) university students who were currently doing their undergraduate programme. The total pool of interviewees was eighteen and comprised: eight key informants [Table 3.1]. Most of the participants were identified on a purposive basis, with a snowball sampling technique used to identify some of the participants [i.e., one participant offering the name of another potential interviewee].

#### 3.5.1 Key Informants

In order to develop an understanding of the connection between education and development in Cambodia, a series of interviews was carried out with key informants: education experts, development experts, and human resources recruitment agents. The
The purpose of these interviews was to gain in-depth insights into the social, historical, political and cultural context of Cambodian education and development. These interviews also sought to identify the problems that Cambodia has been facing regarding education and development. Key informants were asked to share their thoughts about how education and development policies/strategies had been integrated in Cambodia, and how they were succeeding in producing a society of equal opportunity. Table 3.1 shows the list of development and education experts who participated in this research as key informants.

### Table 3.1: List of Key Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>OrganisationType</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 1</td>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>International NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 2</td>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>Education Specialist</td>
<td>UN Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 3</td>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>School Principle</td>
<td>Public High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 4</td>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>Mathematics Teacher</td>
<td>Public High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 5</td>
<td>KI5</td>
<td>Education Specialist</td>
<td>International NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 6</td>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>Government Official</td>
<td>MoEYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 7</td>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>Senior Recruitment Officer</td>
<td>Recruitment Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant 8</td>
<td>KI8</td>
<td>University Teacher</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the key informants—a development expert—was a senior member of an international NGO which specializes in education and disabilities. The main criterion for a person to be considered as a development expert was that that person must have been working actively in the development sector of Cambodia for at least ten years. Based on this criterion, the first participating development expert introduced me to a representative of the Ministry of Education, two other senior members of international NGOs working on education and development in Cambodia, a university teacher who had been teaching at various universities in Phnom Penh for more than ten years, and a director of a local NGO working with people with disabilities in Cambodia [this local NGO director participated in this research as a university graduate who is holding a leader position]. The selection of high school teachers, a high school principal and a university teacher were included based on a purposive basis. The teachers and the school principal selected both had more than ten years of experience of teaching and operating schools. The high
school principal who was chosen as a participant was the principal of a well-known high school in Svay Rieng province. This high school principal had been involved in the teaching profession since the collapse of the Khmer Rouge in 1979 and had been working as a principal over the last ten years. Through the interview with that school principal, a teacher was introduced and included as another participant.

The identification of an employment expert was done in a different way. A list of recruitment agencies in Cambodia was made and the biggest and most well-known agency was chosen for contact. The agency was contacted directly and referral was made to a senior recruitment expert who had been working for that agency for almost ten years.

3.5.2 University Graduates

The research explored the power of education through the narratives of university graduates who are successful in their careers. This research involved face-to-face interviews with a sample of leaders of public and private companies and organisations in order to gain in-depth insights into how education contributed to their success and how they have subsequently contributed to the country’s development. Table 3.2 shows the list of senior employees and entrepreneurs who participated in this research as successful university graduates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Organisation Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Graduate 1</td>
<td>UG1</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Local NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Graduate 2</td>
<td>UG2</td>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>Private Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Graduate 3</td>
<td>UG3</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>International Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Graduate 4</td>
<td>UG4</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Graduate 5</td>
<td>UG5</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five university graduates participated in this research. They were recruited to participate using a snowball sampling method. The first one who is a leader of a local NGO working in the areas of disability and development was introduced by a development expert who also participated in this research. The second and third who are senior employees of two different private companies were introduced by the recruitment officer who also
participated in this research. The fourth and fifth university graduates are both entrepreneurs and they were introduced by the third university graduate.

3.5.3. University Students

One of the ways to understand the role and importance of education as a tool for development is to listen to students as key stakeholders in the process about their schooling experience and expectations from education. This research involved face-to-face interviews with university students in order to gain in-depth insights into their schooling experience [primary, secondary and higher education], their expectations from education, and how they think their education will contribute to the country’s development. Table 3.3 shows the list of university students participating in this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Organisation Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Student 1</td>
<td>US1</td>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>RULE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Student 2</td>
<td>US2</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>RULE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Student 3</td>
<td>US3</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>RUPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Student 4</td>
<td>US4</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>EFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Student 5</td>
<td>US5</td>
<td>Pedagogy Student</td>
<td>NIE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three reasons for involving university students. First, university students can be considered to be stakeholders who have been successful in education. They can therefore reflect on their schooling experience at all levels and are in a position to discuss what contributed to and/or facilitated their successful involvement. Second, they can also reflect on their reasons for remaining in education and their expectations from doing so. Third, they are adults and capable of giving consent to participation in this research. Five students who were currently studying at different universities were selected for interviews in order to investigate their schooling experience from primary school through to university level and their expectations from education. The selection of students was done using a convenience sampling method where a single student was approached at each of five different universities and invited to participate in the research.
3.6. Fieldwork

Field work was conducted in Cambodia over a three month period starting from the beginning of October 2014 to the end of December 2014, mainly in the capital city of Phnom Penh. The interview process was comprised of two steps: (1) preparation and (2) interview.

3.6.1. Preparation

All participants except the university students were contacted in advance by telephone to ask for an interview date, time and venue. On the phone, they were informed about the project and asked if they wanted a research information sheet [Appendix 2] before the interview, but all of them preferred to have the sheet at the actual the interview. A voice recorder, an information sheet to be given to participants and a consent form for the participants to sign on [Appendix 3], and a gift to give to participants after the interview were prepared one day before the interview date. A review of interview questions was also conducted to ensure the smooth flow of the interview.

3.6.2. Interview

Most interviews with key informants and university graduates took between 60 to 120 minutes while all interviews with university students took between 30 to 90 minutes. The face-to-face dialogue started with an explanation of the goals and objectives of the research, how the information was to be used and the ethical responsibilities of the researcher, asking for permission to record the conversation, and signing of the consent form.

During the interview, the voice recorder was on and the themes stated in the semi-structured interview schedule were discussed one by one. The order in which the questions were presented varied between interviews [Appendix 5, 6 and 7]. Subsequent questions based on participants’ responses were asked in the interview and some participants also shared additional information which was not covered by the planned themes. The conversations were conducted in the Khmer language [the language of Cambodia]. At the end of the interview, a small gift was given to each participant.
3.7. Data Analysis

Data analysis took place concurrently with data collection. The first step of the analysis involved the transcription of the interviews. All interviews were conducted in Khmer and the records were transcribed by the researcher in this original language.

The second step is coding. A thematic analysis was used to identify emergent themes in the data. This involved manual coding techniques, particularly focused coding and filing, which were employed to identify the themes. The interview schedule informed the coding process. According to Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) ‘focused coding’ is a technique in which themes are more selective while ‘filing’ is a technique in which similar data are grouped in the same place. Focused coding technique was applied when the interview schedule was employed to identify three main themes: outcomes for individuals, outcomes for society, and gaps between education policies and practices. Under these three selective themes, filing coding techniques are applied in order to help other sub themes to emerge.

The last step was to structure and present the results. In presenting qualitative data, direct quotations from participants were included and code names were assigned to each participant in order to ensure confidentiality of their information. KI is the code used to identify key information, UG is the code used to identify university graduates, and US is the code used to identify university students. The number is assigned in order to distinguish between members of each group. For example, KI1 refers to Key Informant 1; UG2 to University Graduate 2; and US3 to University Student 3 when direct quotations are made.

I decided to develop a case study which was based on real life of a university graduate and I presented it in section 6.2 [page 60-62]. The exposition of the case study made it easier for the presentation of the results in Chapter 6 because that case study provided a better understanding of the context of Cambodian education.
3.8. Ethical Responsibility

The project was conducted in compliance with the requirements of the Human Ethics Committee of Lincoln University [Appendix 1]. All materials used for fieldwork, the way of collecting data, the way of storing the interview record and script, and the process of using and presenting the information are all carefully, and professionally, reviewed and approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Lincoln University.

3.9. Summary

This research used qualitative methods to explore the role of education in development in Cambodia. The techniques employed to collect information were semi-structured in-depth interviews with three groups of participants: (1) key informants; (2) university graduates who were appointed as leaders of NGOs/private companies; and (3) university students who were currently doing their undergraduate programme at different universities. Some participants were identified and selected based on a purposive basis with a snowball sampling technique being used for the rest of the sample. The face-to-face dialogue was conducted with eighteen participants in total over the full fourth quarter of 2014. Data analysis, particularly coding and theming the data, was done manually and took place concurrently with data collection. In presenting qualitative data, direct quotations from participants are included with code names assigned for each participant in order to ensure confidentiality of their information.
CHAPTER 4- EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS

4.1. Introduction

As presented in Chapter 1, the overarching objective of this research was to explore the education-development nexus in the context of Cambodia’s (re)development. In doing so, primary data was collected to: 1) to discover the degree to which education facilitates positive social, political and economic outcomes; and 2) to identify the gaps between education policies and practice that might be preventing Cambodia from achieving its development goals. These two specific objectives are guided by four research questions which were all described in section 1.3. The findings are presented in three chapters, commencing with this chapter.

This chapter presents the results which relate to the first objective. It aims to answer research questions 1) “Has education been a major engine of Cambodia’s progressive social changes?”; and 2) “How has successful completion of secondary education helped facilitate positive outcomes for individuals?”. The findings presented in this chapter focus on the outcomes of education for individuals in order to understand the main role of education in the context of development, which is to build human capital. The reported outcomes are presented under five main themes which emerged from the data analysis: skilled workforce, resilient workforce, pathways into career, increasing career choices, and healthy population.

4.2. Skilled Workforce

In the context of development, the main role of education is to build human capital and this is often taken for granted. However, the destruction of intellectuals by the Khmer Rouge during the period of their power has highlighted a different ideology of development. What they had done to their own nation was that they killed all identified intellectuals and eliminated education. Only the Khmer Rouge leaders can explain all the reasons why they perceived that intellectuals and education were not important to
Cambodia, but what they had done illustrated that educated workforce was not seen as a priority in the way they developed the country. As noted earlier, it is believed that almost the whole population of Cambodia was illiterate after the Khmer Rouge was largely defeated in 1979. Redevelopment of Cambodia at that time started from scratch as the country was destroyed and the people were living with trauma, extreme poverty, illiteracy, and ongoing [residual] bouts of fighting.\footnote{The aftermath fighting took place from 1979 until 1991 in some parts of the country.}

While some Cambodians may still question the contribution of education into development through building a skilled workforce, the findings in this section will highlight just such a role of education. The restoration of the education system started immediately after the defeat of the Khmer Rouge. This reflected the government’s strong belief that development could not progress without education (RCG, 2009). Cambodian education has improved since then. In Cambodia, general education equips students with basic knowledge which is essential to or a prerequisite for higher education. According to the Cambodian Education Law and the Policy for Curriculum Development, general education helps individuals to develop themselves into literate adults who have enough critical thinking ability, knowledge, skills, capacities and values necessary for further personal development (MoEYS, 2004; Cambodian Education Law, 2007). All the development and education experts interviewed acknowledged as such the significance of general education and regarded it as the basic foundation that every individual must possess if they are seeking advancement of their education and profession. For example, KI5 defended this argument by saying that “general education is very important because it is the foundation for higher education or vocational training”.

In terms of educational requirements, having completed a general education means that individuals are formally eligible for admission to any university in Cambodia. It is higher education or vocational training that helps people to develop specific skills such as engineering, technology, agriculture, business management, accounting etc. In relation to the role of higher education as a means to produce a skilled workforce, KI6 emphasized that “higher education is more specific compared to secondary education and it definitely produces workers who have advanced technical skills such as accounting, management, information technology, engineering, agriculture, and so on”. In addition to what KI6 has highlighted about higher education, KI7 promoted the role of vocational training by
emphasizing that “most students over look vocational training which is more practical and this is why we still lack skilled workers in the areas like mechanical engineering”. This suggests that one needs education at all levels in order to become a skilled worker.

Beyond education, work experience is another component of skill development. The idea of starting small or low and then growing bigger or higher can best describe the impacts of education on individuals’ career development. In fact, education has become a primary requirement for [high profile] jobs but it is not the only requirement. This means that recent graduates are only eligible for certain jobs that do not require work experience and they need to upgrade themselves in order to be qualified for higher profile jobs which pay higher remuneration. This point is strongly supported by KI7 was quoted as saying that:

“It is important for people to have university degrees or vocational training diplomas because these are the minimum requirement. However, work experience become a more important requirement if they want to compete for higher positions”.

Higher education empowers people with theory and skills. Such skills are very important but might not be sufficient for one to address most problems at work; and this means that such skills need be advanced. Normally, people must improve or advance their capacity through work experience in order to become skillful enough to deal with all kinds of situation at work or to become a successful professional. In this regard, UG2 explained that:

“I did very well at the university but I felt I had so much to learn when I started my first job. At work, I learnt new things every day and it took me four years to learn everything practically before I was promoted as a manager”.

At this point, it can be construed that individuals develop their foundation through general education and their technical skills through higher education or vocational training, and then advance those skills through practical work experience. This means that one needs general and higher education to become a skilled worker and then one needs additional practical work experience to become an advanced skilled worker. So, advanced skilled workers need general education [foundation], higher education or
vocational training [theories and skills], and work experience [practical skill] all together; and this can be written in a basic social equation below:

| General Education (foundation) + higher Education/Vocational Training (theory and skill) + Experience (practical knowledge) = Advanced Skilled Workforce |

Thus, education as a mechanism to build a skilled workforce has been recognised as being obvious. The finding in this section helps to clarify such an obvious fact in the context of Cambodian development.

### 4.3. Resilient Workforce

The finding in section 4.2 illustrated that people develop their foundation through general education and skill through higher education. It is these outcomes of education that initiate and strengthen people’s resilience. In general, this is also a clear fact about education that the world has acknowledged. This research has identified examples which validate this inference about formal education in the context of Cambodia’s development. It was found that many university students in Cambodia get jobs which are not specifically related to their academic background. However, they can still adapt to these jobs and thrive. In this regard, KI8 who is a university teacher commented that “many Cambodian students get a job which is totally different from the degree they received from the university but they can still do it”.

In addition to this observation of KI8, the *Case Study* of UG3 [page 60-62] also provides an example of the relationship between education and resilience. UG3 initially planned to be a mathematics teacher and therefore completed his bachelor’s degree in mathematics. However, financial constraints forced him to cancel his plan after he graduated from university. Instead, he looked for a job for which his educational background was not directly relevant. Without any academic background or degree in tourism, he was offered a job as a tour operator with a tour company. However, he adapted to the job quickly and established himself as a valuable employee at that company. Moreover, he has since changed his job to work for a bank with yet a new position which is totally different from his academic background and tour operating work experience. However, he again adapted to that latest job quickly and is thriving in his new role.
There are other cases in this research which illustrate that individuals who have more education are more likely to be more resilient compared to those who have less education. People, as a result of having more education, are capable of dealing with new situations more effectively contrasted with those who have less. This argument is supported by the case of UG4 who is a young, successful business person. In the interview, UG4 who has an advanced university degree compared the way he operates his business to the way his sister who did not finished high school operates hers in order to highlight how they each respond to their business situations. A key difference he highlighted is that he is more capable of identifying and benefiting from market opportunities. He stated that “I have the ability to see more opportunities and to catch and transform them into growth while my sister has very limited ability of this kind”.

There was also evidence that people who have more education are more resilient than those who have less education when they encounter the same problem. UG5 is a young business person who became an entrepreneur when she took over her parents’ business about two years ago. She has a lot more education than her parents do as she has a Master’s Degree while her parents do not. She has turned the business from non-systematic to systematic in order to increase the productivity and operational effectiveness. She described that:

“My parents opened a glass cutting and frame making shop a few years before I came back from Australia. [...] Late 2013, I came back from Australia to take over this business from my parents. [...] After a few months, I realized that the productivity of our business was very low. At that time, there were only three male staff and two female ones. So, the five staff worked from 7am to 6pm. However, they paid overtime wage to keep the staff at work until 9pm or 10pm in order to have the work done. [...] Yet, they still could not supply the products with enough quantity that our clients wanted. [...] So, I suggested that we must add more staff and set up a working system in order to improve our productivity. [...] Now, we have twenty staff and we can deal with large orders. We open our shop from 7am and close at 6pm and our staff are less tired. We can supply the frames to our main customers which are private companies, universities and NGOs in numbers that none of our competitors can do”.
This quote suggests that people who have a higher education are more likely to have a broader range of concepts than those who do not. The understanding of the concept of the productivity enables UG5 to innovatively introduce an operational and management system which can help the business to deal more effectively with much bigger market demands. It can also be interpreted that she is more resilient because she is more capable and skilful.

Thus, education is found to have helped individuals to develop their ability to adapt quickly to new situations, creatively respond to problems, and thrive under pressure. In other words, individuals who have more education are more resilient in their careers and lives. On this basis, it can be concluded that resilience and capability have a very close link with each other. This finding reinforces the importance of education in psychological development of individuals in a Cambodian context.

4.4. Pathway into a Career

While it is generally believed that education is important for individuals’ career success, education is still seen by many Cambodians as unimportant for career success. This is one of the reasons why some parents, especially those who live in rural areas, decided not to send their children to school or hold back their children from education so that they can look for a labouring job. The failure of some university graduates in obtaining skilled employment after graduation has reinforced this thinking within Cambodian society. This was raised by a development and education expert, KI1, who mentioned during the interview that:

“Many parents in the rural areas usually degrade the value of education because there are some university graduates that return home without a job. In that context, they usually complained that there is no point in investing money on their children’s education because many people cannot get jobs after their graduation and only come back to work in the rice field like those who have a university degree”.

Despite this there are some inspiring and successful role models. It is also evidence that emerged from fieldwork which leads to the inference that education and career success have very close connections with each other especially in the current development
context of economic globalization. In other words, formal education can develop a career pathway for individuals and this is what people have taken for granted. While there were some negative cases found, there is still much evidence which supports the important role of formal education in the career success of individuals. The employment market in Cambodia is becoming highly competitive as it is moving to a knowledge-based economy and certain levels of education are required even for some unskilled or low-skilled jobs. In this regard, KI5 stated that “we are now living the world of a knowledge-based economy and education becomes a very important even for low-skilled employment” while KI3 supported this in stating that “even low profile jobs such as garment factory workers and waiters at the restaurant would now require at least the ability to read and write Khmer”. The experience of development experts interviewed suggests that educational attainment is important in the context of Cambodia where people have to compete hard for jobs.

For skilled employment, a higher education or an advanced vocational training has become a primary requirement. The discussion in this section has a close link with that in section 4.2.2 about development of a skilled workforce. Level of education is demonstrated by a certificate, a diploma or a degree. Such official documents are needed by individuals in order to compete for high profile employment. This was strongly supported by KI7 who explained that “I have recruited very many employees for my clients and I have never looked for someone who does not have a degree of higher education”. This suggests that formal education has now become the key to unlock the door for many careers in Cambodia.

The competition in the current labour market is very strong and people who have more education usually have more advantages. It can be said in another way that having a higher degree and better knowledge of foreign languages would help increase the chances of being offered a job. In this regard, UG1 described his experience of competing for his first job that “Thirty candidates applied for a clerk position at that coffee shop; and I was successful because I had a high school diploma and good command of English while most candidates were poor in English and did not have a high school diploma”.

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3 She told that most of her clients are big private corporations while some other are UN agencies, big NGOs, and smaller private companies.
4 UG1 describe that he applied for his first job at a coffee shop operated by a local NGO.
Changes in the Cambodian development context have made the role of education even more important in connecting people to employment. Several of the development and education experts suggested that members of older generations and who have less educational qualifications are disadvantaged in the workforce. KI 1, said that “older people are now less preferred in the labour market because they have less education compared to younger ones; and employers have more choices because many younger people are now ready to work”.

Thus, the finding of this research suggests that education is the basis to building a career path for Cambodian individuals and the levels of education is associated with higher levels of remunerations. In today’s globalization and regionalization development context, higher education has become a primary requirement for almost all skilled jobs while some unskilled or low-skilled jobs also require certain levels of education. This means that the opportunity to get a job has continually become more difficult for individuals who have limited or no education. In the case of Cambodia, older people who received their education during the 1980s and the 1990s [when the education system was still recovering from the Khmer Rouge period] find it harder to compete for jobs now because the pool of younger people who have better and higher levels of education is becoming bigger. These changes within a development context suggest that people who have attained a higher level of education increase their likelihood of career success.

### 4.5. Increasing Career Choices

As already discussed in sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, education gives people a chance to start their career by developing them into resilient skilled workers. With such an initial chance, they are able to advance their profession. Normally, career choice is quite limited for university graduates although they are regarded as skilled workers. However, the participants interviewed suggested that they will have more career choices when they have gained more work experience and become advanced skilled workforce [further discussion about skilled workforce and advanced skilled workforce can be found in section 4.2.2]. All of the university graduates who participated in this research started their careers with modest positions and it took them a while to move to the points that they are at now. In this regard, UG2 shared his opinion by saying that:
“I think everyone including myself feels that job opportunities are very limited for fresh graduates because most jobs require work experience. However, it is less hard to look for a job when we have more experience because we are qualified for more jobs”.

This suggests that one’s career choices will increase when they develop themselves into advanced skilled workers. An increase in career choices at this stage usually rewards individuals with higher incomes. The data suggested that career choices for advanced skilled workers are increased in three ways: (1) being promoted within the same organisation, (2) changing career across organisations, and (3) owning a business.

4.5.1. Promotion Within

A capable employee is an asset to a place of employment. Despite having a university degree, many people start their careers in low positions and earn low salaries. With more work experience and satisfaction with their work performance, people gain more opportunities to advance and be rewarded with better salaries. One of those opportunities is internal promotion. This point was concluded from the case of UG4 who said that “I started my career with a telecommunication company\(^5\) as a management trainee and I was promoted as a manager six month later and had my salary doubled”.

However, promotion within the same company or organisation is found to be a choice that is not much preferred by many individuals. The reason for this is that it usually takes a shorter time for a capable person to get a better and more highly paid job by moving to another place. In this regard, UG2 offered his opinion and experience that “many companies prefer to promote their employees but many employees prefer to move to other companies because it is a faster way to get a better position and higher salary”.

4.5.2. Changing Workplace

As discussed in section 4.2., formal education serves as the foundation for professional development and work experience helps individuals to transform themselves into

\(^5\) He mentioned the name of his former employer but I decided not to disclose it.
advanced skilled workers. Skilled individuals usually have more career choices because they are qualified for more high profile employment. As just presented earlier, changing employment across organisations is a faster way to move to a higher position and receive a higher salary. Moreover, changing the employer is arguably a better option for some individuals because this helps them to enrich their experience or expand their professional qualifications as they are going to learn different things. In this regard, UG3 explained that “I changed my job from a tour company to a bank because I want to gain experience in the banking industry which is booming and offering better remuneration”.

Another reason why some participants preferred to change their employment was that they were looking for new opportunities to grow which were not available at their current position. This related to some individuals who had reached the highest position or a salary cap with their current employer and moving to another place is the only way to grow professionally and have a better salary. UG2 is an example of this, “I had reached the highest point of career with my previous employer and I would not get any more salary increases if I stayed longer; so, I decided to change to my current employer for the same level of position but a higher salary”.

4.5.3. Owning a Business

Besides being promoted by their employers or moving to other companies for a better job, some people chose to set up their own businesses. This kind of career choice is risky but also high in return. Normally, people who choose to own a business have their career path long planned and their study choice has usually been made to follow that career plan. For example, UG4 explained his study choice that “I chose to study international business because I always wanted to run my own business”.

Although the career goal may be to own a business, people usually do not open a business right away after they graduate from university because they believe that the risk of failure is high. The risk of failure is high because there are a lot of challenges and risks within the business environment and people can learn and get used to how to deal with those challenges by working for others. In this regard, UG4 added that “working for the others before you start your own business is very useful because you can learn to deal with all risks and challenges in business environment”.

There are also other reasons why people choose to work for others before they decided to become entrepreneurs and one of those reason is to save up money. This is usually the choice of people who do not have enough financial resources to open a business. For example, UG1 explained that “I also want to have my own business later but I have to work for others for many years to save up money”. The other reason is that working for others is a chance to build a business network which is a very effective mechanism for business success. In relation to this, UG2 explained that “I have got to know a lot of people and I am sure that this will be very useful when I start my business”. In some cases, people choose to quit their job to open a business because they have identified the business opportunity through their employment. For example, UG2 added that “some of my friends have left their companies to open a business and then operate it as a partner with their former employers”.

Thus, it is that career choices usually increase when people have more education and practical work experience. This is generally true in every country and the findings that emerged from this research reveal that Cambodia is no exception. Moreover, in the Cambodian context, the research indicates that individuals are most likely to make or increase their career choices through promotion within, changing work places, and owning a business.

4.6. Healthy Population

The correlation between educational attainment and improvement of individuals’ health can be difficult to understand because there seems to be no direct connection between these two factors. However, this research suggests that educational attainment does have both direct and indirect positive impacts on health improvement of the Cambodian population. Health was not planned as a topic of discussion in this research. However, it was a theme that emerged in many interviews during the fieldwork. In the opinions of some participants about positive outcomes of education, improvement of the population’s health is an important feature of development and it is a positive outcome that education has produced. Moreover, health issues were discussed by some key informants as being a major cause of poverty in Cambodia. They believed that education’s contribution to the improvement of Cambodians’ health is a crucial outcome related to improved education.
As discussed in Chapter 2, development aims to achieve an improvement in quality of life. With the assumption that ‘better health’ is a crucial component of such an improvement, being unhealthy would have negative effect on quality of life. Moreover, a healthy population is more likely to make bigger contributions to the development of the country compared to an unhealthy group. As stated above, participants in the research suggested that in Cambodia, being sick can contribute to poverty. It makes poor people poorer as some need to take out loans to cover medical treatment. Their [poor people’s] situation is even worse because being sick means that they cannot go to work. Moreover, because people in Cambodia make their living on a daily basis, being sick means that their incomes must decrease and the whole family has to struggle. All of these are supported by KI1, a development expert, who describes the situation:

“Generally, being sick matters to people especially the poor. In Cambodia, many poor families have fallen into serious debt when any family members get sick because of two reasons. The first one is that poor people usually look for a loan to deal with the emergent situation. The second one is that poor people make their income on a daily basis and that income will decrease when they are sick and cannot go to work”.

Emergency loans that poor people may need to take are often given out by the lenders with a high interest rate. High interest increases household debt and this means that families have to look for ways to increase their income to service such a loan. For some families, child labour may be a solution as some poor parents stop their children’s education so that they can send those young people to work to support the family. KI5 explained that “high interest rates usually force many parents to keep their children from school in order for them to work to support the family and to pay back the debt”. In contrast, people do not need to spend money on medical care if they and their family members are healthy. In the opinion of some development experts, this is an important positive impact that education has on development. For example, KI1 argued that “when people are healthy, they can save money from treating illnesses and spend it on other necessary things such as eating sufficiently, sending their children to school, eating well, and even investing in businesses”.
Helping the poor to achieve good health is essential to development. The data in this research suggest that formal education may contribute to short term and long term positive outcomes for some Cambodian people’s health.

4.6.1. Direct/Immediate Impacts

Information about living a healthy life has been transferred to Cambodian people through education. As part of the curriculum, students are made aware of the importance of getting vaccinated and taught about how to protect themselves from some common diseases such as diarrhea, dengue, malaria and HIV/AIDS. Many development and education experts have recognized the importance of education in promoting public health one of them, KI5, is quoted as saying that “our people are more educated now and their health has also improved because they understand better about hygiene and how to protect themselves and their family from preventable diseases”. Most schools in Cambodia provide a clean environment and facilities that enable students to practice a healthy way of living. Many schools in Cambodia have been equipped with toilets and clean water in order to keep children healthy at school. As a result, people who are educated possess the information necessary to make their home a healthy place to live. In this regard, KI5 explained that “we have built a lot of school buildings and toilets and have provided potable water in a lot of schools across the country and the idea was that we not only teach children in class about how to take care of their health but also to let them practice”.

Cleaning activities are part of the curriculum and all students from the primary to upper-secondary levels are obliged to practice them at school. Such activities are designed to train students to make and keep their school and classroom clean so that they apply those activities at home to keep their house clean too. In other words, this is how education helps children to develop their habit of keeping their home and workplaces clean. Such cleanliness should be the foundation of a hygienic living environment. In this regard, KI3, who is a school principle, explained that:

“Students at both the primary and secondary levels are scheduled to clean their classrooms and the ground in front of and outside their classrooms every day. Moreover, all schools have a ‘labour session’ on every Thursday in which
students must work together to clean their schools, grow flowers and trees, and cut grass”.

Beside these direct or immediate impacts, the data also suggested that education has produced indirect and long-term positive impacts on the health of for many Cambodians.

4.6.2. Indirect/Long term Impacts

One of the long term impacts is that educated people are more aware of health issues and more capable of lowering their families’ vulnerability to sickness. Educated parents are generally more capable of keeping their children healthy and respond more appropriate to the situation when their children are sick. In this regard, KI1 explained that “compared to the city, children in rural areas are more likely to be infected by diseases which could lead to disabilities because their parents lack understanding about health care and are quite careless with vaccination”. Moreover, educated parents usually teach their children about how to live healthily and how to protect themselves from diseases. This is beneficial for students because they can learn how to take care of themselves particularly their health in and outside schools. In relation to this, US1 mentioned that “at home, my parents always teach me and my siblings about how to keep ourselves safe from diseases like dengue, malaria and diarrhoea”.

Another important point is that education was found to have helped people to succeed in their career and with sufficient income, people can then afford to pay for good food, which is essential to keeping their families healthy, and to pay for good health care services should they or their family members get sick. This was concluded based on the experience of KI4 who pointed out that “people are qualified for high-paid jobs when they have education and they therefore have money to buy good food or go to see a good doctors when they are sick”. This means that educated people can more likely afford to keep themselves and their family well-nourished and access better health care services.

Also, being healthy means that people are fit to work and do not need to spend money on medical treatment. There is evidence that education helps individuals to pursue good health. Learning is a long process and children are taught theoretically and practically to live in a clean and healthy environment. Compared to non-educated parents, educated
ones are more likely to be able to keep their families or children from being vulnerable to illnesses. This finding warrants further exploration in future research.

4.7. Summary

Formal education has its presence because people are convinced that it is a tool for development of individuals and society as whole, so much so that this relationship is often taken for granted. However, the historical context of Cambodia may have left some Cambodians with skepticism about such a role of education in development. Despite such skepticism, the findings in this chapter suggest that education has also played a very important role in Cambodia. In general, all the discussions in this chapter lead to the conclusion that education has contributed to an improvement in the well-being of Cambodian people and the development of the country.

There is evidence that education has produced at least five positive outcomes for Cambodian individuals. First, education has contributed to the transformation of individuals into a skilled workforce by building their internal capacity and skill. Second, education has built resilience in individuals and helped them become a resilient workforce, who are able to quickly adapt to changes, innovatively respond to problems and thrive under pressure. Third, education contributes to individuals’ career opportunities. With internal capacity and resilience, individuals are more eligible for skilled jobs which usually compensate them with higher wages. Fourth, education appears to help increase career choices for individuals by providing individuals with the foundation which is necessary for their professional development. The combination between this educational foundation and work experience helps to transform individuals into a skilled workforce who have more choices across career pathways. Fifth, education was found to be related to better health. Although health was discussed more in the primary and secondary level of education, it was argued by development experts that the general improvement of health of Cambodian population was a positive outcome of education in the context of development.

So in the world-at-large it is obvious that increasing education will help with these outcomes. This research has led to the conclusion that it is also true in Cambodia.
CHAPTER 5- EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR SOCIETY

5.1. Introduction

The discussion in the previous chapter suggested that education contributes to human capital, which is crucial for development. In the context of development, education has direct impacts on individuals and indirect impacts on society. As part of the first objective of this research, this chapter aims to present education’s outcomes for society in order to answer the third research question: “From a stakeholder perspective, how have these positive outcomes affected social, political and economic development in Cambodia?”.

The research suggests that education has produced many development outcomes for society including supplying a skilled workforce, creating more jobs for people, promoting better working conditions, enhancing higher incomes, and decreasing social inequality.

5.2. Matching Demands for Skilled Workforce

It was presented previously that education was found to be the builder of a skilled workforce. However, the question that can be asked is ‘what is a skilled workforce is built for?’ The simple answer to this question is ‘because there are demands’. As the country’s economy has achieved fast growth, there have always been demands for a skilled workforce. Cambodia’s education strategies reflect several major changes since 1979 which correspond to the changes in developmental needs of Cambodian society. In other words, education strategies of Cambodia have changed over time within this country’s unique development and historical context.

After the Khmer Rouge was largely defeated in 1979, the country was devastated and the redevelopment of the country started from nothing. The country at that time needed people to work in every sector but with no choice except to use human resources that were very poor in quality since almost all of the surviving population were illiterate. In this regard, KI3 said that “only a few people could read and write; and they were recruited as teachers anyway because we did not have any other options”. With an urgent need for a workforce, formal education was immediately restored with the goal at that time to
produce an educated workforce quickly. One of the education experts, KI6, suggested that “education was regarded a top priority of the redevelopment agenda of the new government⁶ and was immediately restored after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge because the country urgently needed a capable workforce”. Therefore, Cambodian education was initially designed to help students to study for ten years to finish upper-secondary school and to study four years for a bachelor degree.

The education system was designed as a ten year programme because many students started school late as they had turned six or older during the four year period under the dictatorship of the Khmer Rouge. Ten years was considered already too long for those older students, as KI5 explained “a majority of the students were older than school age and many of them would have dropped out before finishing high school if they had to spend a long time in education”. The other reason why education was designed as a ten year programme was that the country lacked educators. This conclusion was based on the experience of KI3 who said that “very few teachers were capable enough to teach at a high school level at that time while the majority of teachers were assigned to teach beyond their qualification because of the needs”.

The post-war⁷ education strategy that set out to quickly produce an educated workforce fulfilled the urgent need for human resources. Because of this and also because there was an increase in the need for better quality human resources to enhance greater and faster development, education strategies shifted from more quantitatively focused to more qualitatively focused. The 1986 educational reform which changed the education system from ten to eleven years has shown that Cambodia was changing its education focus from quantity to quality. That reform mainly focused on strengthening children’s educational foundation at primary level as it extended primary education from four to five years. This means that Cambodia tried to strengthen the foundation for students at the primary level so that they could do better at high school. This discussion was based on the observation of KI3 who explained that:

“In general, a reform is made to achieve better results. The first reform was made in 1986 because Cambodia had more resources compared to a few years before

⁶ The People’s Republic of Kampuchea
⁷ Post war or post-Khmer Rouge in this context refers to 1979 and the early 1980s.
that and because we needed to upgrade the quality of our education especially at the primary level”.

The educational reform in 1986 looked like preparation for the country’s transformation of the economic system from a command economy to an open market one at the very end of the 1980s. This was clearly mentioned by KI6 that “the first reform was made in 1986 and this might be because the government had already planned to change its economic system from a planned economy to a free-market one a few years later”.

However, Cambodia’s development context changed more significantly after the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement. Through this agreement, Cambodia became a democratic Kingdom in 1993, and could fully focus on development. The political situation of Cambodia became more stable while inflows of humanitarian aid and foreign investment increased. Skilled workers, especially those who had knowledge of foreign languages, became more appreciated and needed. In relation to this, the same expert [KI5] told that “the need for people who have good command of foreign languages exploded in 1991 when UNTAC came to Cambodia and foreign language studies have been more and more popular amongst Cambodian people since then…inflows of international NGOs and foreign investors after the Paris Peace Agreement have encouraged Cambodian people to study foreign languages and to upgrade their education”.

Changes in the development context during the early 1990s led to the second education reform in 1996. This reform changed the formal education system from eleven to twelve years and allowed higher education to be privatized. It [this second reform] has shown that Cambodia’s educational strategies placed more emphasis on the quality of general education and more on quantity [and also on quality arguably] at the higher level. Moreover, the 1996 education reform has a close connection with the government’s strategy to integrate Cambodia into ASEAN in 1999 and into the World Trade Organisation [WTO] in 2004. The integrations into ASEAN and WTO were regarded as enlarging the market for Cambodian products and as attracting foreign investment into Cambodia. In relation to the discussion above, KI1 mentioned that:

“I think education reform and economic reform are in line with each other. For example, the government reformed its education in 1996 and at the same time started to work on its application to become a member of ASEAN and WTO. This
means that they knew already that there would be a huge increase in needs for skilled labour when the integration was successful”.

Another education reform that Cambodia has made in order to respond to its integration into ASEAN and WTO was to mainstream information and communication technology into the official educational curriculum in 2004. In this regard, KI6 made it clear that “the government has considered knowledge of information technology as the core of the competition between Cambodian workforce and that of other ASEAN nations”. Such mainstreaming was to help Cambodian people to catch up with world technology and to become as competitive as the workforces of other nations in the region. This means that education is a channel through which knowledge and new technologies are transferred to people. One of the development experts, KI8, raised that “teaching computer skills to students since high school is a step forward because everything is now done with computers and the internet”.

Thus, the findings presented in this section leads to a general conclusion that education has to change in order to follow or respond to the changes in development context, and Cambodia is a clear example. Moreover, politic has had strong impact on development context of Cambodia. The Cambodian development context has changed several times from a closed economy to the current regionalized and globalized one. To respond to those changes in its economic system, Cambodia has conducted several education reforms such as increasing the general education from 10 to 11 years in 1986 and then to 12 years ten years later, and privatization of higher education in order to increase the number of university graduates. Such reforms have lifted the level of skill of Cambodian workforce to meet the need created by the change to the open economy. All of these discussions about the case of Cambodia help empirically strengthen evidence of the role of education in pushing the economic progress which is an aspect of positive social change.

5.3 Achieving Higher Incomes and Creating More Jobs

Having more education is likely to help individuals to earn a higher salary because higher levels of education help an individual’s likelihood of having a better job as discussed in the previous chapter. However, the importance of formal education in business success
is not well much appreciated by many Cambodian business people. In other words, many of them believe that a business person does not really need an education in order to make their business successful because many people who have no or limited education have already been successful in their businesses. In this regard, UG4 mentioned that “many people believe that a successful business man does not need education and they normally regard going to school as a waste of your time”.

There are cases where entrepreneurs with no or limited education are successful in their business, but those who have more education or a university degree still believe that education can help entrepreneurs to do better in their businesses. So, it is not possible to say in general that a higher level of education guarantee higher incomes and more jobs created within the wider society; this apparent relationship warrants further research. As this research reveals, the level of education of business owners may have a positive influence on the performance of their business. In other words, business owners who have more education may be more likely to produce more profits, create more jobs, and have more effective ways of doing business compared to those who have less. This was supported by both UG4 and UG5 who have been successful in their businesses. UG5 defended the important role of education in the success of her business by describing that:

“When I took over the business from my parents which is just a family business, people criticized me that family business does not suit my education and it was a waste of time that I went to school. However, I think differently. I think people who have and do not have education surely have different ways of doing business. Their visions are also different. I told myself that I have a good education and I am confident that I will run the business better than those who have limited education”.

UG4 strongly agreed with the above claim as he echoed that “a clever educated business person can always expand and diversify their businesses with no limits as long as the opportunities are available, while those who have limited education usually have limited capacity to expand”. The achievements of both UG4 and UG5 suggest that education plays an important role in helping them to do better than their sister and parents who have limited education. The difference is expressed through the results that they have achieved in their business. For example, UG5 has transformed her parents’ business from a purely
family business that has no management system into a more systematically managed one and that transformation has resulted in a significant increase in profit. She explained that “if I look back to when our business was operated by my parents, their highest profit was only US$3,000 per month but I can now make at least US$2,500 per month and the profit in some months may jump to US$10,000”.

Moreover, entrepreneurs who have higher levels of education are usually able to achieve faster business growth compared to those who have lower levels of education. The case of UG4 is typical of this and he described that:

“My sister didn’t finish high school but she has been involved in business since a long time ago [about twenty years]. This means that her competency is very strong in terms of doing business. My business is new as I just started my business in 2012. So far, she has made more money from her business more than I did from mine. But our incomes this year [2014] have become almost equal”.

In the case of the participants in this research, there are at least two factors that contribute to entrepreneurs with more education achieving better growth or enjoying greater business success. The first is that the entrepreneurs who have a university degree understand productivity while those who have not gone to university seem not to do so. For the respondents in this research, the ability to understand and apply theories of productivity in the workplace contributed to the entrepreneurs with university education achieving faster business growth and the ability to expand their businesses. Such an expansion consequently creates more jobs for people and this is one of the positive outcomes of education on society as suggested by UG5 who mentioned that:

“When I was in Australia, my parents opened a glass cutting and frame making shop. They were very busy as their shop was operated from 06:30am or 07:00am to 09:00pm or 10:00pm every day. They only hired five staff to work in the shop and there was no system to manage the business. […] Late 2013, I came back from Australia to take over this business from my parents. After a few months, I realized that the productivity of the business if very low and we therefore could

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8 He did not specify the exact profits but he used US$10,000 per month as the example figure as he said: “being equal means we make the same profit of US$10,000 per month, for example”. 
not match the quantity demanded by the customers. So, I decided to add more staff and set up a working system to improve the business productivity”.

This quote serves as evidence that education has a positive relationship with the number of jobs created in society. It suggests that entrepreneurs who have more education may create more jobs compared to those who have less because the latter group are less able to upgrade their businesses while the former group are able to improve the effectiveness of their business. This can also be interpreted that less educated entrepreneurs may lack some of the advanced concepts that are taught at university while those who have gone to university have a better understanding of them.

Increasing staff numbers was seen by entrepreneurs who have limited education as an increase in cost while it was seen by those who had higher education as a facilitator of business productivity. Because of these different thoughts, entrepreneurs with more education were more likely to have hired more employees compared to their peers with less education. All of these themes emerged from the case of UG5 who raised that:

“I decided to add more staff and set up a working system to improve the business productivity. However, my parents was not happy with me when I told them that we need to increase the number of staff because they only see such an increase as an increase in costs [...] Now, the shop has twenty staff and is able to deal with large orders”.

The second factor which contributes to the more educated entrepreneurs achieving better growth or enjoying greater business success is that they are more likely to understand the importance of middle management and delegation while their peers who have limited education do not. Because of this, entrepreneurs who do not have higher education possess less capacity to expand their business. In contrast, those who have higher education were able to identify the opportunities and turn them into growth. In this regard, UG4 described the difference between himself and his sister in that:

“The problem is that my sister is not good at management and this is because she has little education. If we look at her working hours, she starts at 8am and closes at 9pm from Monday to Sunday while I start at 8am and close at 5pm from Monday to Friday and we work only half a day on Saturday. She does not have middle management and this means that all decisions must be made by her. I have
tried to set up middle management and recruit middle management staff for her, but she is not capable to manage and delegate such staff. After a while, they resigned. Staff turnover rate of her business is very high because of her family-business management style. I asked her if she wants to expand more; she said she is very tired as her maximum capacity to work is already reached and she therefore does not want any more. However, this is just the start for me. I have doubled my business in 2014 and will double it [the 2014 business] again [which mean 4 times bigger than the business in 2013] and will keep on expanding every year. I am able to expand because I have a general manager and section team leaders such as sale manager, finance manager and production manager to delegate the responsibilities. I have a clear plan and target for them. In contrast to my sister, I always see the opportunity to double my business every year. So what does this means? This means that I have the ability to see more opportunities and to catch and transform them into growth. This also means that I can increase my staff, production and productivity. This is the difference between highly educated business people and lowly or non-educated ones”.

This quote suggests that entrepreneurs who have higher levels of education may be more likely to employ middle management employees to help them improve their business in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. With the assistance of middle management, they are able to expand and diversify their businesses. The expansion or diversification of their businesses means that they need more people and this is how entrepreneurs with higher levels of education create more jobs.

Thus, the findings in this section suggest that over time, education has become more important in the Cambodian context especially in the area of employment and business operation. During the time when the economy was a closed one and everyone had limited education, education was not so much important. However, its importance has increased in the current context where the economy is becoming very competitive and globalized. As already presented, education has produced positive changes in Cambodian society through its crucial contributions into an increase in incomes of Cambodians and in the numbers of job created.
5.4. Improving Working Conditions

The findings of this research suggest that education has helped improve working conditions in Cambodia, though this may not yet be appreciated by most Cambodians. For example, the data from this research suggest that a positive outcome of education on Cambodian society is the improvement to working hours made by younger generation entrepreneurs who have university degrees. In Cambodia, many family businesses are operated in a way which requires their staff to work more than 10 hours per day. Many family businesses in Cambodia still belong to older generation entrepreneurs who lack the ability to operate their business within a system. Just such a problem was raised by UG5 who described the situation of her shop when it was under her parents’ control. She said “when I was in Australia, my parents opened a glass cutting and frame making shop; they were very busy as their shop was operated from 6:30am or 7:00am to 9:00pm or 10:00pm every day”. The way her parents operated their business is similar to the way UG4’s sister has been operating hers. He described that “if we look at her working hours, she starts at 8am and closes at 9pm from Monday to Sunday while I start at 8am and close at 5pm from Monday to Friday and we work only half a day on Saturday”. Similar to UG4, UG5 has improved the working hours of her shop after she took over the business from her parents and she described that “now it [the shop] is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and the staff are less tired”. This suggests that entrepreneurs who have higher levels of education may offer better working conditions in terms of number of working hours.

The factor that appears to enable entrepreneurs to require their staff to work fewer hours a day is that their understanding around concepts of productivity and their ability to delegate; UG4 and UG5 provide evidence of this. Their understanding of productivity enables UG4 and UG5 to optimize the number of employees for their business [not over- or under-staffed], to use them effectively and to build their loyalty to the company. For example, UG5 explained that:

“I decided to add more staff and set up a working system to improve the business productivity. [...] Now, the shop has twenty staff and is able to deal with large orders. [...] It is open from 07am to 6pm and the staff are less tired because we are not over- or understaffed”.

By contrast a lack of understanding about concepts of productivity and incapacity to systematically manage staff may lead entrepreneurs with limited education to provide tough working conditions. In relation to this, UG4 explained that:

“My sister does not have middle management, this means that all decisions must be made by her. I have tried to set up middle management and recruit middle management staff for her, but she is not capable to manage and delegate to such staff. After a while, they resigned. The staff turnover rate of her business is very high because of her family-business management style”.

Working conditions may also be improved in terms of wages. Employees who work for entrepreneurs with higher levels of education or a university degree may receive higher incomes, compared to those who work for entrepreneurs with limited education as some of these entrepreneurs with higher levels of education used incentive strategies to motivate their staff. For example, UG4 shared his experience that:

“My sister pays her staff with a fixed salary. I do it differently. I pay them a fixed salary which is usually higher than what other people dare to pay. I do this because I want to attract good people and I want my staff to love their work place. In addition to their fixed salary, I also give them commissions which vary based on the amount they have sold. When they sell more, they get more money. By doing so, both my company and my staff grow together”.

So, the findings in this section suggest that attainment of education has led to the improvement of working condition in Cambodia. There are many family businesses in Cambodia which do not have standards for working conditions for their staff. However, new generation entrepreneurs who have a more education or who have gone through higher education may replace the family business style with a more systematic or formal style of doing business. It is this new style that usually guarantees better working conditions to their employees. These working conditions include more standardised working times, delegation of authority, a systematic management, and higher wages.
5.5 Decreasing Social Inequality

As presented earlier, the data suggest that education has produced positive impacts on health, internal capacity or skill and careers of individuals. Moreover, it has produced positive impacts on society such as answering industry demands for a more highly skilled labour market, delivering higher incomes, creating more jobs, and changing work conditions. However, a decrease in social inequality is another important outcome of education on development. There are many aspects of social inequality but the data from this research suggest that education may help decrease discrimination, and reduce the gaps between social classes and between rich and poor.

People with no, or limited, education are disadvantaged and have fewer opportunities in almost every aspect of society. In other words, people will find it more difficult to live in the current society, which is called by a development expert, KI2, a “knowledge-based society”, if they do not have education. In a sense, by default, education has produced social class and this can be a negative, but inevitable, outcome. This means that levels of education have become a characteristic by which people can be classified and people who have lower level of education are often considered as a lower social status group. However, for some, this may provide motivation to advance their education. In this regard, US3 explained his motivation to come to the university for education that:

“Before I took the high school national examination, I thought that I would not come to the university. However, I changed my mind after I passed the examination. All of my friends came to Phnom Penh to study at the university and I feel that I would not be in the same class as my friends in the future if I decided not to come to the university”.

In terms of gender discrimination, women who used to be a disadvantaged group in Cambodia, have experienced decreasing levels of discrimination. It is the internal capability of women that can address gender discrimination. In other words, the promotion of women’s equal participation in all aspects of society would not be as effective as it is now if women were not empowered. In this regard, KI1 shared his opinion that:

“In the present time, women have good jobs and are regarded as equals in society. Many women have important roles at government units or hold
management positions at private companies and NGOs. Education has empowered women and such an empowerment has led to the automatic disappearance of discrimination against women”.

The success in reducing gender discrimination is also a potential model for addressing discrimination against people with disabilities. Cambodian people with disabilities are protected and their rights are promoted by the Law of the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was adopted in 2009. With this law in place, discrimination against Cambodian people with disabilities is expected to decrease. However, people with disabilities must develop themselves more in order gain the same social opportunities as people without disabilities. As a person with disabilities who has been highly regarded as an influential and successful professional, UG1 emphasized that “the disability law is one thing but the capacity of people with disabilities is another; we have the law to protect and promote people with disabilities but there are still a lot of people with disabilities who could not find a job”. The case of UG1 serves as an example of a person with a disability gaining equal social status. He used to be discriminated against by his community before his higher education. Higher education has had a positive effect on his life and professional career. He described his situation that “now, all discriminations that I used to face is gone; people never look at our disabilities when we are strong”.

These examples and other research data suggest that education has played an important role in providing improved career opportunities for women and people with disabilities, who were formerly regarded as disadvantaged in Cambodia. Thus showing that education has contributed to a reduction in social inequality in Cambodia especially in terms of reducing discrimination against disadvantaged groups such as women and people with disabilities. Moreover, education can be regarded as a mechanism for promoting equal participation amongst individuals into all aspects of society.

5.6. Summary

Beyond having contributed to positive outcomes for individuals, education has indirectly contributed to positive outcomes for society as a whole. The data suggested that education has contributed to at least four positive outcomes for the social and economic
First, education has contributed to creating a skilled workforce in response to the country’s development needs and to industries’ labour demands in particular. This can also interpreted that education may help promote the competitiveness of Cambodian citizens in the contexts of globalisation and regionalisation. Second, education has contributed to more effective ways of doing business which consequently enhances incomes and creates more jobs. The research has provided examples which illustrate the different contributions to social and economic development made by people who have higher level of education and by those who have no or limited education. More specifically, the data suggested that people who have more education were more likely to operate businesses more effectively compared to those who have less education. This may in turn contribute to higher incomes and creation of additional job.

Third, education has helped promote better working conditions in Cambodian society. It was illustrated earlier that entrepreneurs who have higher levels of and/or university education may attend more to employees’ wellbeing. This may be reflected in improved working conditions such as shorter but more effective working hours, more authority delegations, higher salaries and better incentive schemes. Fourth, there is evidence to suggest that education is related to a reduction in inequality within society. As presented, education has contributed to more equal participation of women and people with disabilities, who were formerly amongst disadvantaged groups in the employment sector.

Thus, education has not only empowered individuals to become skilled workers, but also has facilitated social conditions that enable people to increase their career success as well as their incomes. This provides the foundation for the next chapter which considers the role of education in reducing poverty and the gaps between the rich and the poor.
CHAPTER 6- MECHANISMS FOR SUCCEEDING IN EDUCATION

6.1. Introduction

As discussed previously, the second objective of this research is to identify the gaps between education policies and practice that might be preventing Cambodia from achieving its development goals. This objective is guided by the fourth research question, “What are the gaps between education policy and practice that may impede the effective operationalization of education as a tool for development in Cambodia?” which focused on the identification of such gaps.

The discussions with all participants during fieldwork around the gaps between education policies and practice have led to not only identification of such gaps, but also the emergence of other barriers to education encountered by poor children. Moreover, the exploratory approach also led to the identification of mechanisms for breaking down those barriers.

In this chapter, those barriers to education and mechanisms for breaking them down are presented. The three main barriers to education suggested by participants are ‘poverty’, ‘inequitable education administration’ and ‘a lack of schooling infrastructure’. The three mechanism for breaking down these barriers are ‘government support’, ‘family and community support’ and ‘students’ commitment’. These barriers and facilitators to educational achievement are discussed below. In the first instance, a case study of one of the university graduates interviewed for the research is presented. This is followed by a discussion of the experiences of other participants.

6.2. Case Study

The findings discussed in Chapter 4 and 5 suggest how important and powerful education has been in the context of Cambodian development. However, there are still many barriers to education especially for poor Cambodian children. Those barriers make education inaccessible for many Cambodian children or they are unable to complete
formal education. In this section, a case study of a university graduate who participated in this research is presented. This is then integrated with data from interviews with the participating development and education experts to identify the factors that are necessary for the educational success of poor children.

**Case Study**

UG 3 was born in a very poor family in a rural village of Kampong Cham province\(^9\). Because of the financial constraints of the family, he was obliged to help his peasant parents with house and farm works and this limited his concentration on study when he was at primary school. However, he managed to complete his primary education.

Because studying at secondary school required more money\(^{10}\) and his parents could not earn sufficient money to keep all the children well fed, he was thinking about quitting education in 1996 just after one year at lower secondary school. The other reason that led UG3’s decision to quitting school early was that everyone in his family including himself knew that it was a very long way to go and did not know what he could achieve with education in the future. However, his education was saved by a friend and his parents [parents of UG3’s friend] who had a much better financial situation. After the parents of his friend explained about the importance of education and expressed their desire to help him to continue education, UG3 moved to live with and work for his friend’s family so that he could still go to school. Although he had to help his friend’s parents with their business, his schooling time was never affected and he was supported in the same way that his friend was.

In 2001, UG3 successfully completed his upper secondary education but decided not to go to the university because he knew that it was unaffordable for his parents. Instead, he decided to return home to help his parents with farm work. It was the same friend who persuaded him to come to the capital city of Phnom Penh to compete for scholarships through university-entry examinations\(^{11}\). His friend encouraged him that he could make

\(^9\) Kampong Cham is a province of Cambodia.
\(^{10}\) Education in Cambodia is free but there are often informal expenses such as attending private tutorials, buying lesson papers from teachers, and buying examination paper.
\(^{11}\) A university-entry examination was a very competitive examination that allowed high school graduates to compete for a limited number of scholarships [to study at the university free of charge]. Before university education was allowed to be privatized in 1996, only a few hundred out of thousands of high
up his mind after results of all the examinations he had taken were announced and it would be fair enough to stop education if he failed these examinations. With very minimal financial support from his parents, UG3 decided to come to Phnom Penh to sit in four university-entry examinations and this poor student from a rural school finally passed two out of four.

However, poverty was again a major obstacle for UG3’s higher education. Each university required every student who passes the entry examination to pay an admission fee of as little as 20,000 riels [as little as about five US dollars] and UG3 had to pay 40,000 riels for two. Unfortunately, he could afford to pay only one because he had less than 40,000 riels by the time he was supposed to pay. Moreover, he thought that it was better for him to drop one because studying at two universities at the same time would be far beyond affordable for his family.

He chose to drop management study at the National Institute of Management [NIM] for a degree in mathematics science at the Royal University of Phnom Penh [RUPP] in a hope that he could move back to his home town and work as a high school teacher. After graduating from RUPP, he was required to attend the pedagogy programme for another year in order to become a high school teacher. However, he decided not to attend the pedagogy programme because he could not afford to study for another year. Then he decided to forget about working as a mathematics teacher and look for a fulltime job in another areas instead.

Right after his graduation in 2005, he was employed as a tour operator by a private tour company earning less than one hundred US dollar per month. However, his wage increased every year to almost treble that amount in three years. In 2008, he moved to an international bank for a much better position, salary and working conditions and he is still enjoying working for that same bank now.

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12 It is now changed to National University of Management

13 Most bachelor degree programmes in Cambodia are four years and mathematic science is one of them.
At the present time, UG3 has very good living conditions. He is married with two children and has a house, a car and a motorbike. As he looked back to the past when poverty had dominated his family, he said that his life has completely changed. He also said that could not imagine what his life would now be like if he had decided not to come to the university or if had dropped out when he was at high school. Also, he has been very grateful for his friend’s family.

End of the Case Study

This case study illustrates the psychological changes one university graduate had to undergo in order to persevere and complete his education. This is indicative of the educational context in Cambodia; that it takes a lot to succeed in Cambodia. This can serves as an inspirational case about education for other Cambodians who are in the similar position. Such a case illustrates that the achievement of personal dreams and ambitions of people may be facilitated through education, especially in the Cambodia.

It takes a lot to succeed in Cambodia and this case study illustrates three key points, as presented in the previous discussions. The first one is that it emphasizes the significance of education in the context of long term improvement of individuals’ lives or well-being. In other words, it demonstrates how education positively changes lives of the poor. The second point is that it highlighted poverty and some gaps between educational policies and practices as barriers to education for UG3 as well as other poor children. The third is that it suggests that there are three major mechanisms that help students especially the poor ones to overcome those barriers to be successful in their education. In the following section, barriers to education and the three major mechanisms for breaking down those barriers will be discussed.

### 6.3. Barriers to Education

There are many barriers to education for poor students in Cambodia. The case study above and information provided by development and education experts reveal that there are at least three major barriers to education: poverty, inequitable educational administration, and lack of schooling infrastructure.
6.3.1. Poverty

The fact that poverty is a barrier to education is true all over the world especially in developing countries. However, Cambodia has a unique context which makes the case of poverty as a topic for discussion. Public education has been made free of charge because the world and Cambodia itself aims to make it available for poor children. However, there are many other related issues that make poverty a barrier to education in Cambodia.

Many Cambodian children quit education because their family cannot afford to let them continue (Kim, 2011). As can be seen in the case study, UG3 almost gave up his education after one year at lower secondary school and again after he passed the national upper-secondary school examination because of his family’s financial constraints. Education in Cambodia is free by law but it is not really free in all aspects and many poor parents cannot afford to send their children to school or keep their children in education. Students may need to spend money on buying lesson papers as well as monthly test papers and in paying for private tutorials. As a result, some poor students like UG3 may choose to quit education. This problem [the informal related fees that student need to pay in class or at school] will be discussed further in the next sub-section. Along with these costs, some students are kept out of school in order to work to help support the family. The two major reasons why UG3 initially decided not to go to the university were: (1) his family could not afford it, and (2) he was thinking about returning home to work with his parents to support the whole family. In this regard, he explained in his own words that:

> “After I passed the high school examination, I left my friend’s family and returned home to live with my parents. I didn’t think about coming to Phnom Penh for university study because my parents could not afford it. Moreover, I thought that I should find a job to support my family”.

In spite of this, UG3 managed to finish study at the university and the mechanisms that helped him to succeed will be discussed in section 6.4. In fact, UG3 was planning to work as a teacher after he finished his bachelor’s degree in mathematics but financial difficulty forced him to change his career plan. As discussed in the case study, UG3 was required to attend the pedagogy school for another year after he completed his bachelor’s degree but he decided not to do so because he believed that his bachelor’s degree should be
enough to help him get a job and also because he could not allow his parents to borrow more money from others to support his study. He told that:

“After I graduated, I was required to get a pedagogy certificate in order to be qualified as a teacher. This means that I must go to the pedagogy school for another year. Then, I decided to change my career plan because I could not afford to study for another year. Moreover, I thought that I am already qualified for many jobs with my bachelor’s degree”.

Some participants suggested that poverty has been a major obstacle for education in Cambodia. Poverty is a contributing factor in parents stopping their children from continuing with education so that they can work to support the family. The development experts interviewed observed that parents have traded off their children’s education for their [the children’s] labour jobs. For example, KI1 reported that “a lot parents in rural areas allow their children to quit education in order to come to Phnom Penh to work as garment factory workers”. Moreover, some parents see their children’s migration to other countries as a better choice compared to education. In this regard, US5 described that “many parents let their children quit school and go to labouring jobs on the border or in Thailand” while KI6 echoed that “working opportunities in Malaysia and Korea have attracted the attention of many poor Cambodian teenagers”.

Thus, poverty can be a barrier to education for many Cambodian children. Many poor students may decide to quit education because they need a job that can help them support their families while others may quit education because they could not afford to cover all related fees. Education related fees in Cambodia are associated with gaps between educational policy and practice and are discussed in the sub-section bellow.

6.3.2. Inequitable Educational Administration

While education is free by law, the case study of UG3 suggested that inconsistent academic administration was factor in some poor children not completing their education. In addition to this, KI1 observed that “many teachers are very unethical because they force their students to buy lesson papers and examination papers and to attend their private tutorials”. According to the same expert “selling snacks and forcing their students to buy their products is a popular way that primary school teacher make money from their
students”. It was also raised by KI2 that “some teachers in Phnom Penh force their students to pay a regular fee or they will face penalties such as standing in front of the blackboard or may not pass their monthly test”.

Although not reported by all participants, the practice of charging extra fees by some teachers is problematic for students from impoverished backgrounds. Educational policy needs to be implemented consistently in order to help Cambodian children especially the poor ones to receive equitable education.

In regards to educators setting up private tutorials, there are mixed understandings amongst development and education experts. On the one hand, private tutorials have been regarded by some people as a way that educators make money from their students. This places pressure on poor students who cannot afford to pay the fee. On the other hand, private tutorials have been regarded as an important support that teachers can give to their students as they it allows students to have a chance to learn more sophisticated problems which could not be covered in the official class. In this regard, KI3 said that:

“Well, we have only a few hours per week at school. This is not much and what we can thus teach in class is very basic. Attending private tutorials for an additional one or two hours per day would allow the teachers to teach students what they don’t have time to teach in normal class. In fact, providing private tutorials is very tiring as it require the teachers to devote a lot of energy.”

The other reason why private tutorials are considered as an extra support that educators have for their students is that some educators allow their students to attend it without any charge. This shows that private tutorials are not set up just to make money as many people have thought, but also to help students develop more sophisticated knowledge. For example, KI4 who is a mathematics teacher told that:

“I ask every student to attend my private tutorial because I want all of them to attain good grade and pass the examination. I tell my students that they don’t need to pay if they cannot afford to do it but the most important thing is that they should come”.

In this case, as discussed above, poor students have benefitted from private tutorials as a form of support. It is also the case for US2 who described that “I was able to attend some
private tutorials for free and some for half price because my mother is also a teacher and my teachers know that my family is poor”.

These inconsistencies in how education is delivered suggest that there are gaps between educational policy and practices. These gaps are particularly salient for students from poor backgrounds, some of whom do not have equitable access to education. This has implications for the country’s achievement of development goals.

6.3.3. Lack of Schooling Infrastructure

Lack of schooling infrastructure has been a problem that Cambodian education has faced since the early 1980s. This problem largely resulted from the governance of the Khmer Rouge during the second half of the 1970s. The Khmer Rouge had eliminated the education system, destroyed written documents, killed educators, and converted schools into prisons or something else. This was informed by KI3 who told that “school buildings converted into prisons and rice storage while written documents and educators were destroyed and killed during the dictatorial governance of the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979”. Apart from being used as prisons and rice storage, school buildings were destroyed in the aftermath fighting between the armed-forces of the Cambodian government and the Khmer Rouge militants during the 1980s. In this regard, KI5 explained that “the fighting during the 1980s left many parts of Cambodia without education and school buildings in other parts unrepaired”.

The Khmer Rouge was largely defeated in early 1979 but the aftermath fighting restricted Cambodia from fully focusing on its redevelopment work including the restoration of formal education. Cambodia’s inability to concentrate on rebuilding the country has been a major cause of the current lack of schooling infrastructure especially in rural and remote areas. This point is reinforced by KI3 who commented that “we [Cambodia] had one hand fighting to prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge and the other one redeveloping the country”.

The lack of schooling infrastructure is related to non-attendance at school and students withdrawing from education prematurely. Students have dropped out of lower secondary school at a rate between 18% and 22% per year and out of upper secondary school at a rate between 10% and 17% a year since 2005 (MoEYS, 2006, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011).
2011, 2012, 2013, 2014). KI1 provided the rationale behind these numbers by explaining that:

“The number of primary school, lower secondary school and upper secondary school are not balanced. Many students have dropped out at lower secondary level because their lower secondary schools are not as close to their house as their primary one. The same thing happen to students at upper secondary level”.

So although the government has been trying hard to solve the problem of lack of school buildings, which has been addressed at the primary level, the problem still has not yet been addressed at the lower and upper secondary level. This means that lack of schooling infrastructure is still a major obstacle for many Cambodian students, particularly for those poor ones who live in the rural and remote areas.

6.4. Breaking Down Barriers to Education

The data have revealed a range of barriers to education. They have also suggested three mechanisms that can facilitate access to education are government support, family and community support, and student commitment. These are discussed further, below.

6.4.1. Government support

It is government’s responsibility to make sure that every child has access to education and the government of Cambodia has already done a lot to fulfill that responsibility. A lack of schooling infrastructure has been revealed as a barrier to education for children. However, the government of Cambodia is aware of this problem and has been working hard to increase access to education for Cambodian children. Since 1979, the government has achieved a lot in terms of increasing schooling infrastructure particularly schools. Research subjects have shared the same understanding about this and KI3, for example, explained that “I know that we have so much to do and have worked very hard throughout a very difficult situation; and we can see that the government has built more schools every year and we have schools almost everywhere now”. Statistics provide evidence that the Cambodian government has been working hard on building schools and increasing educational staff in order to make sure that every Cambodian child has access
to education. Table 4.1 shows that the number of schools has increased from less than 3,000 primary schools, 14 lower secondary schools and just one upper secondary school in 1979 to almost 7,000, 1,244 and 444 respectively in 2013 while the numbers of staff increased from 13,619, 205 and just 20 to 55,958, 32,616 and 13,330 over the same period of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
<th>Lower Secondary School</th>
<th>Upper Secondary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1980</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13,619</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>35,470</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>4,693</td>
<td>44,454</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>6,063</td>
<td>59,271</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>6,993</td>
<td>55,958</td>
<td>1244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Number of Schools and Education Staff from 1979-2014

Data retrieved from the Education Management Information System [EMIS]\(^{14}\) shows that the increases in number of schools and education staff helped push the net enrollment rates at primary level from 91.3% in 2005\(^{15}\) to 97% in 2013. The dropout rate at this educational level decreased from 11.7% to 7.76% over the same period of time (MoEYS, 2006, 2014). However, the drop-out rate at the lower secondary and upper secondary level are still high suggesting that the government has to provide more support in terms of increasing the number of schools especially in the rural and remote areas.

Besides increasing the number of schools, the government has developed a scholarship scheme in order to keep poor students in education. This scholarship programme was developed because the government believes that poverty has forced poor students to drop out. In this regard, KI6 raised that “the government has provided scholarship to poor students in order to help them stay in education”. However, the scholarship programme is believed to be ineffective. In other words, it has very little effect on students’ decision to drop out (Kim, 2011; No & Hirakawa, 2012). The reason for such ineffectiveness is that the amount of the scholarship is not enough for poor families to cover their children’s education related expenses. In relation to this, KI2 criticized that “the scholarship is too little and cannot prevent poor students to trading-off their education for labouring jobs”. However, KI3 defended the government’s scholarship policy saying that “the scholarship is very small but it shows that the government has been trying to do everything they can

\(^{14}\) EMIS is the national data base administered by MoEYS

\(^{15}\) EMIS does not show any official Net Enrollment Rate before 2005.
with very limited resources”. The scholarship has also been offered to university students so that poor students are able to advance their education. There is evidence that this kind of support from the government has presented opportunities for poor students. For example, the case study of UG3 illustrated that a poor student like him could have a chance to attend university through a scholarship. Without such a scholarship, he and many more poor students would finish their education without a university degree. However, a scholarship to study at university is only offered to a very limited number of students. The government is aware of its responsibility and how to deal with the problem. However, limited resources mean that the scholarship programme is not as effective as it could be. This can also be interpreted that the government should invest more in this programme.

Education reform can also be regarded as an important support that the government has made. At the higher level of education in particular, the government has increased opportunities for Cambodian students to study at university by allowing privatization of higher education. The educational policy reform in 1996 which allows higher education to be privatized resulted in an increase in numbers of private universities in Cambodia as well as the number of university students. In this regard, KI8 approved the privatisation of higher education by telling that “the increase in numbers of private universities played an important role in advancing human resource in Cambodia in terms of both quantity and level of education”. However, the lack of quality focus was criticized by some experts such as KI7 who raised his concern that “many university graduate are not capable enough to match the expectation of investors”. Despite this, there is evidence that people have enjoyed and benefited from the government policy reforms to allow privatisation of higher education. For example, UG1 has benefited from such reform as the government has made and he explained that:

“After finishing upper-secondary school in 1990, I started to look for a job and it took me four years to get a job\textsuperscript{16}. After three years, I thought that I could not live with this little income for my whole life. At the same time, the second reform of education system in 1996 was made and the higher education was privatized. Then I had a chance to continue my study for a Bachelor of English literature at a university”.

\textsuperscript{16}He was paid US$100 per month from that job.
Thus, there is evidence that the government of Cambodia has provided support to help Cambodian children to receive education. The government has been working on improving schooling infrastructure, providing scholarships to poor students at every level [from primary to university level], and making several reforms; and those supports are seen to have produced positive impact on children’s attainment of education. However, the government support has still been limited. As mentioned in section 6.3.2, the government needs to address the apparent gaps between education policy and practice which lead to inequitable educational administration.

6.4.2. Family and Community Support

Family and community support is crucial to students’ success in education especially in Cambodia where the gaps between policy and practice exist. As discussed in section 6.4.1, education in Cambodia is free by law but students still need to spend money on some education related things. While students are not able to make money to support their study, it is the responsibility of the parents to make sure that their children have money to spend on their education. This point was raised by a KI2 that “some poor parents dare not spend money on themselves because they save those money to send their children to school until they finish their university studies”. This point is also illustrated by the case study of UG3 which shows that UG3’s parents are very poor and they tried to borrow money from others in order to support his study until he successfully graduate his bachelor degree.

Sometime, parents cannot afford to cover all expenses relating to their children’s education. Such an inability of the parents to cover all education related expense may contribute to the problem of child labour. In other words, some children may have to drop out and go to work instead in order to make money to support the family. In this case, support from the community can be another way that helps poor children to continue their education. For example, KI5 explained that

“Many poor parents stopped their children from education and asked them to work to support the family. Seeing this problem, many NGOs provided financial support to the parents as a replacement for the income that their children could makes so that those children can go back to school”.

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The case study of UG3 has also highlighted the importance of community support in poor children’s education success. As mentioned in the case study, UG3 decided to drop out when he was at grade six because his parents could not afford to let him continue. However, his education was saved by his friend and his friend’s parents who decided to let him move to live with them so that they could support him to continue is education until he finished high school.

Besides financial support, parents and community have also provided emotional support to children to help them strive for education. Such support is very important because it helps children to commit to their education and have hope that education will bring them a bright future. This was suggested by UG1’s experience as a student with a disability who had faced social discrimination through his student life. Thanks to his father’s encouragement, he has had stronger commitment to education and finally became who he is today. He described that:

“I was discriminated at school since the primary level and I had been the subject of mocking through my student life. I was very embarrassed but my father always encouraged me to do well at school and ignore all discriminations. I can still remember all his words as he told me that “only education can help you and being physically disabled does not mean that you cannot have a bright future”.

The case study of UG3 also illustrates the importance of community support. UG3 had already decided not to go to the university after he graduated from high school because he thought that his parents could not afford to send him to the university and that he might not have enough background to do well at the university. However, advice from his friend and his friend’s parent helped him to change his mind and to strive for higher education. As a result, he became a successful professional and freed himself from poverty. He described that “I never thought that I would ever have today if I look back to about twenty years ago; I really don’t know what my situation would now be like if I had quit school when I was at grade 7 or did not come to the university”.

NGOs have also provided non-financial and non-material support to students and their parents in order to help them commit to education. Many NGOs have been working on promoting the importance of education in order to raise the awareness amongst students and their families. All education and development experts who participate in this research
believe that such an effort from the international and local community has played an important role in students’ attainment of education. For example, KI2 raised that:

“We -NGOs- have been working a lot at the grass-roots level, provincial level and national level in order to promote the importance of education to all children and the country as a whole. We believe that this has helped because we have observed that people especially those poor ones who live in rural areas have changed their attitudes toward education and the enrollment rate increase every year”.

The community has also provided material and technical support to help students to receive and stay in education. Cambodian education started from nothing after the government declared their victory over the Khmer Rouge in 1979. From that point Cambodia lacked all kinds of resources. Since then, the country has received technical assistance from the international community in terms of policy and curriculum development. In relation to this, KI1 also explained that “we have been working for years to help the government develop education policy and curricula for inclusive education in order to help poor children to have equal access to education”. Moreover, NGOs have also shared some remit with the government or have worked with the government on constructing and improving school buildings, libraries and latrines in Cambodia. In this regard, KI5 clarified that:

“We have been working in Cambodia since 1980. Our main focus in that time is to build the capacity of educators and help the ministry of education to develop the curriculum. We have also built school buildings and toilets for many schools in rural areas”.

So, it can be summarised that family and community have provided financial, emotional, technical and material support in order to increase children’s success in education. This support has played a crucial role in increasing access to education for Cambodian children, quality of education, and children’s commitment to education.

6.4.3. Students’ Commitment

It is true that support from government, the community and the family are all crucial to help children’s education. However, the commitment of children to their education is
also crucial for their own success. While gaps between policy and practice were found to have discouraged some children, especially the poor ones, their own commitment would lessen the impact of those gaps. The commitment of students to education can be built through emotional support from their parents and the case of UG1 serves as an example of this argument. He described that “my father’s encouragement made my very determined to do well at school because I believe that having education will make others overlook my disability and stop discriminating against me”. Thanks to that commitment, UG1 has a master’s degree, a very good command of English, and a very good job.

The community has also helped strengthen students’ commitment to education. They have done so by telling and showing them the positive results that education has produced for individuals as well as the society as a whole. In relation to this, KI5 mentioned that “we cannot keep children in education if they don’t want to study; that is why we – NGOs– have been trying to raise awareness about the importance of education in a hope that they have stronger commitment and study hard”. Letting children see what may actually happen to them and their society is believed to have helped them strive for education. For example, US4 provided the rationale for her decision to come to the university that:

“There are many poor peasants in my province who are illiterate. Many of them stop their children from school and send them to the border or Thailand to work as labourers. I do not want that kind of life and that’s why I must come to the university. I believe that I will live a better life in the future compared to those children”.

Commitment and determination are important factors that can help keep some students in education. However, there are many factors that strengthen students’ commitment and determination to education. Based on what has been discussed, commitment is related to support from the families and the community, and from students themselves who strive for their future.

6.5. Summary

Cambodia has a very unique context of development in which its present education system has evolved. The findings in this chapter identified the three barriers that have
prevented some poor children from receiving or succeeding in education: poverty, lack of schooling infrastructure, and inequitable educational administration. In general, poverty can be a barrier to education, but the case of Cambodia some circumstances make it an even greater barrier. While education is made free in order to give the chance to poor children, lack of school building and inequitable administration make poverty a more complicated problem to deal with. However, three mechanisms that help poor students to succeed in education were also identified. The first one is the government’s support. The Cambodian government has provided support already such as increasing the numbers of schools and education staff, reducing the gaps between education policies and practices, making educational reforms, and providing scholarships. Such support was found to be effective. However, these supports are not yet sufficient to cover the needs of all children and the government has to provide more. The second mechanism is family and community support that includes financial, emotional and material support. The third mechanism is students’ commitment. With strong commitment, students may be more likely to be successful in their education. These three mechanisms must all exist simultaneously if that poor children are to be able to achieve success in education.

So, the results presented so far in Chapter 4, 5 and 6 have suggested that education has produced positive outcomes for both Cambodian individuals and society and that barriers to education can be regarded as a development obstacle. In the next chapter, these findings will be discussed to conclude the four research questions.
7.1. Introduction

The overarching objective of this research was to explore the education-development nexus in the context of Cambodia’s (re)development. Such a nexus has been explored through firsthand information collected through fieldwork in Cambodia. More importantly, the discussion which combines both the results from fieldwork and the existing literature will provide a better understanding about the education-development nexus in the context of Cambodia’s (re)development. The discussion in this chapter will reflect on the four research questions that have guided this research. Additional literature will be integrated to support the discussion of the findings.

7.2. Education as a Mechanism for Social Changes

Research question 1: Has education been a major engine of Cambodia’s progressive social change?

As discussed by Moore (2004), and noted earlier in this thesis, education is highly regarded in the ‘liberal logic of industrialism’ of Bowles and Gintis as an on-going mechanism for developing a modern society. It addresses the developmental needs of industrial society by integrating youth into the economic system through the development of the productivity of human labour, by promoting civic values and behaviours which are necessary for an advanced liberal democracy, by developing a meritocratic selection system in society, and by promoting an ‘open’ society in which all members are able to mobilize more freely and to enjoy equal opportunity.

The most notable social change that education has stimulated is a dramatic decrease in poverty in Cambodia. Statistically, Cambodia’s poverty rate has dramatically dropped from 53.2% in 2004 to 17.7% in 2012, while the adult literacy rate has notably increased from 67% in 1998 to 79.3% in 2011 [Figure 7.1]. The literature has also provided many general arguments about the role of education as a powerful tool for poverty reduction. For example, at a recent EU conference on education and development, the EU
Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, asserted that education is the key to poverty reduction, and UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, asserted that educating the poor is the most effective way to help them break the poverty cycle (European Commission, 2013b). It was also suggested by UNESCO that the poverty in lower-income countries would drop by 12% if all of the children could read (European Commission, 2013a; UNESCO, 2008, 2010).

**Figure 7.1- Cambodia: Poverty vs Adult Literacy**

Some scholars have suggested that low income is not poverty in and of itself, but rather, low income is a cause of poverty. According to Sen (1999), low income and poverty are two different things; he regards low income as a major cause of poverty. In terms of income improvement, this research found that people who have more education are likely to earn more compared to those who have less education. As presented in section 4.2, education helps individuals to be prepared for employment by building their internal capacity. Moreover, it was also shown in section 4.4 and 4.5 that education connects...
individuals to higher paid employment and helps them to increase their career options. With more career choices, people can receive higher incomes by either being promoted within their organisations, changing jobs across organisations [moving to a better job with other employers], or owning a business of their own. This finding about the role of education in increasing individuals’ incomes is also in line with the point of view of Sen (1999, p. 19) who asserted that “(1) low income can be a major reason for illiteracy and ill health as well as hunger and undernourishment, and (2) conversely, better education and health help in the earning of higher incomes.” Several studies in the past have also provided empirical evidence that there is a close association between individuals’ educational attainment and their incomes. For example, Phalthy (2014) found that most university graduates in Cambodia, particularly those who participated in his research, got jobs after their graduation and earned salaries well above the national poverty line. More than this, it was found by UNESCO that every extra year of education adds around 10% to a person’s income in low-income countries and even more for women (European Commission, 2013a; UNESCO, 2008, 2010).

This research also found that education may contribute to improved health outcomes by equipping them with knowledge of disease prevention and of methods for living a healthy life. This suggests that educated people may be more knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe from preventable diseases and how to respond when they or their family members become sick. It was also found that education has helped improve incomes of Cambodian people. Educated people usually have higher incomes compared to those without education, and as a result they can afford to spend more on food and they have access to better health care.

Research in other countries also suggested that education has brought the improvement of overall health to people and led to lower maternal and child mortality as it encourages good health practices and improved nutrition (Bulled & Sosis, 2010; Cochrane, OHara, & Leslie, 1980; Crimmins & Saito, 2001; European Commission, 2013a; Meara, Richards, & Cutler, 2008; Roberts, 2003; Valkonen, Sihvonen, & Lahelma, 1997). In their study, Cochrane et al. (1980, p. 35) found that education helps people change their attitudes to focus more on health, and he explained in his own words that “increased education might increase the value people place on health and hence lead them to devote more of their time and resources to health”. Cochrane et al. (1980, p. 35) also reported similar findings in his research as he wrote that “education increases productivity and the
higher income resulting from increased market productivity should lead to increased expenditures on food, housing, medical care, with improved health as a consequence”.

Beyond helping individuals to free themselves from poverty, education has contributed to poverty reduction on a larger collective scale. Many educated people are able to help other members of their society improve their incomes. Well-educated entrepreneurs are able to create more jobs, and pay their employees better salaries, and provide better working conditions compared to their peers with limited education. This suggests that education has both positive impacts on poverty at the individual and at societal levels.

So, education is found to have contributed to Cambodia’s progressive social change. It helps Cambodia to combat poverty which is the number one social issue. Moreover, it helps Cambodia to improve in other areas such as working conditions, employment opportunities, and social inequalities. All of these things have been noticed as obvious by the world but this research helps adduce evidence to those assumptions with an example from Cambodia, providing new knowledge of education-development nexus in the context of this country.

7.3. **Education as the Foundation of a Skilled Workforce**

**Question 2:** How has successful completion of secondary education helped facilitate positive outcomes for individuals?

Again, it is obvious that education is a mechanism for development of a skilled workforce, which is an important factor of economic progress. However, the findings of this research have led to an apparent relationship between skilled workforce and the development of a more advanced one. In Cambodia, formal education is important for individuals’ career success. It equips students with basic knowledge of all subjects which serves as the foundation for further development of critical thinking and job skills. As a support to this finding, educational law in Cambodia holds that high school graduates are considered full adults who have the capability to advance their professional skills through vocational training (MoEYS, 2004).

As presented in section 4.2 and 4.3, general education is important because individuals need it to develop into complete professionals or skilled workers. In the context of
Cambodia today, university degrees have become a minimum requirement for many skilled jobs. According to the World Bank (2014c) and Maina (2014), university education in particular equips students with knowledge, ability and skill which are essential to or required by their jobs and which help them to become self-employed workers. This means that secondary and higher education is a channel through which people develop themselves into skilled workers who can respond to the needs of industries.

Therefore, general education is the foundation and higher education is a means to develop specific job skills, while practical work experience fosters the advancement of skills. The combination of these three components helps transform individuals so that they can become part of a skilled workforce, and the social equation [shown in section 4.2] describing the result of this discussion is worth redisplaying again here:

\[
\text{General Education (foundation) + Higher education/Vocational Training (theory and skill) + Experience (practical knowledge) = Advanced Skilled Workforce}
\]

7.4. Educational Logic of Development

Research question 3: From a stakeholder perspective, how have these positive outcomes affected social, political and economic development in Cambodia?

As already discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, the findings of this research and the literature provide evidence that education is a powerful tool for positive social change. The discussion in this section describes the flow of positive outcomes of education in the context of development.

This research suggests that one of the functions of education in development is to empower individuals in at least three main areas: health, skills and resilience. Through education, people acquire knowledge about health and this can have both immediate and long term impacts on their health and the health of their families. In terms of personal development, education equips people with knowledge, critical thinking skills, and specific job skills; and this finding aligns with the literature. It is strongly supported by Ololube and Egbezor (2012) who saw education as a process by which the knowledge, values, skills and norms of a society are formally or informally transferred from one
generation to the next. According to Uriah and Wosu (2012), education is a process through which individual learners develop and construct their inborn potential and capabilities to become functional adults as they are systematically influenced by the knowledge, cultures, values, skills and attitudes of the community. These arguments strengthen the findings of this research which is that high school and higher education is the foundation for individual resilience and professional advancement. Thanks to such a foundation and resilience, educated individuals become qualified for skilled jobs. In other words, education provides individuals with a chance to start their professions as members of a skilled and resilient workforce. People’s skill and resilience develop over time through practical work experience; and the combination between education, which is considered the foundation for fundamental job skills, and practical work experience transforms people so that they are able to integrate into a skilled workforce and advance with the benefit of more career choices [this point has already been discussed in detail in section 7.3]. Specifically, skilled workers usually have three main career choices which are promotion within the organisation of the same employer, mobility across jobs/employers, and entrepreneurship.

In a broader discussion, the development of individuals is very essential to the country’s economy. As presented in section 4.2 and discussed in section 7.3, education transforms individuals into a skilled workforce which is an important factor for growth. In other words, education is a bridge that connects individuals with employment. It can also be said that education produces skilled labour to respond to the development needs of the society and the needs of industries on a large scale. This is strongly supported by Bowles and Gintis’s approach of ‘liberal logic of industrialism’. This approach, according to Moore (2004), regards education as an on-going mechanism for developing a modern society as it responds to the developmental needs of industrial society by developing a skilled workforce/youth and integrating them into the economic system.

There is also evidence that education leads to higher incomes and creates more jobs for society. As presented in section 5.3, entrepreneurs who have a university degree may be in a better position to apply their skills and knowledge to generate higher incomes/profit compared to their peers who have limited education. The case of UG5 is an example of the usefulness of university education in business operations. Given the same business, UG5, who has a master’s degree, was able to produce a more effective working system resulting in higher productivity, more jobs for others, shorter working hours, better
working conditions including higher wages for her staff, and overall much higher profits compared to her parents who had a much lower level of education. In this regard, Maina (2014) highlighted that [entrepreneurship] education promotes self-employment which leads to the growth of businesses, and those businesses consequently provide employment to other members of society. This means that education produces higher income at both individual and societal [collective] levels, and this consequently leads to a decrease in the country’s poverty.

Another important point is the improvements in social equality as an outcome of education. As presented in section 5.5, social inequalities in Cambodia such as the gap between social classes, the gap between the rich and the poor, and inequality related to discrimination, were observed to have decreased. Cambodia has done well with promoting the participation of women and people with disabilities into social, economic and political activities. This decrease in discrimination against women and people with disabilities may be associated with an increase in capacity and literacy levels of the two groups. This finding is supported by the ‘liberal logic of industrialism’ of Bowles and Gintis. As discussed by Moore (2004), education in modern society has played an important role in promoting civic values and behaviours which are necessary for an advanced liberal democracy, in promoting the development of a meritocratic selection system, and in promoting an ‘open’ society in which all members are able to mobilize more freely and to enjoy equal opportunity. In other words, the ‘liberal logic of industrialism’ provides lessons learnt that education has been an effective tool to combat social inequality in industrial countries. In support of the ‘liberal logic of industrialism approach’, UNESCO also suggested that the world believes and has evidence that education is a strong mechanism for achieving greater social and economic equality (UNESCO, 2015). It appears that education has contributed to a reduction in social inequality in Cambodia, especially in terms of discrimination against women and disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities. This research found that education has contributed to the enhancement of career opportunities for people with disabilities and women. Decreases in social inequality and in poverty have close connections with each other. Participation of women, disabled people and other disadvantaged groups in society, especially participation in economic activity, also makes a contribution to poverty reduction.
So, this research provides evidence that education is a powerful tool for development. Education produces positive outcomes in a logic flow which may be referred to as an ‘educational logic of development’. With such empowerment, individuals are qualified or enabled to compete for skilled jobs and then develop themselves into skilled workers. Being part of a skilled workforce means that they have more career choices and higher incomes. Because people are the cells of society, educated people are able to make beneficial changes in society. Education helps keep the economy moving and improving because it produces human capital which can respond to the development of society and its economic needs. Beyond supplying industries with a skilled workforce, education encourages better working conditions, enhances higher incomes, creates more jobs, and promotes social equality including participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in all aspects of society. All of these produce an ultimate result which is a decrease in poverty in Cambodia. Because poverty is a major barrier to education, a decrease in poverty means that education is more and more accessible to more people. The flow that has been described is illustrated in Figure 7.2 on the next page.
Figure 7.2: Educational Logic of Development

**Impact on Individuals**
- Healthier
- More skilled
- More resilient

More choices to start career

More choices to advance career

**Promotion within organisation**

**Mobility across jobs**

**Owning business**

**Impacts on society**
- Matching demand for skilled workforce
- Higher Incomes and more jobs
- Better working conditions
- Lesser degree of social inequality

**Decrease in Poverty**
- Wealthier individuals
- Wealthier society
7.5. Breaking the Poverty Cycle

Question 4: What are the gaps between education policy and practice that may impede the effective operationalization of education as a tool for development in Cambodia?

This particular research question led to the identification of barriers to education and how to address them. Helping poor children to break barriers to education will ultimately help them to break the cycle of poverty. The question about the gaps between education policy and practice helped identify gaps which may be referred to as ‘inequitable educational administration’. Gaps between education policy and its consistent application may negatively affect students’ ability to remain in formal education. The application of discretionary fees can potentially disadvantage poor students. Some participants in the research suggested that some students, especially those from impoverished backgrounds, may have dropped out of school as a result of their families’ inability to pay these informal fees.

Another barrier to education identified was a lack of educational infrastructure. As presented in section 6.4.1, since the defeat of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, the Cambodian government has made remarkable progress in terms of building schools. However, many students, especially those who live in rural and remote areas, still drop out because they live far away from school. The high drop-out rate at the secondary level was found to have been caused largely by the long distances between homes and schools.

As previously discussed, there are many barriers to education, but poverty is arguably one of the most significant. Poverty as a barrier to education can be discussed from two aspects. The first is that poor people cannot afford to send their children to school. Many Cambodian children have quit education because their families could not afford the unofficial costs. Many poor families cannot afford the informal fees and other related expenses. The second aspect is that poverty is related to child labour. Poverty has led some parents to stop their children from pursuing an education in order to work to help support their families. Some parents were observed by development experts to have traded off their children’s education for the small incomes that their children could produce from their labour.
Taken in their totality, the data from this research suggest that education helps the poor to escape from poverty. It follows that helping the poor to break down barriers to education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty. There are three main mechanisms that are essential to helping poor children break the cycle of poverty. As discussed in section 6.4.1 government support plays an important role. The Cambodian education system is much improved compared to its state when it was reinstalled after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, and the Cambodian government deserves the credit for that improvement. However, for the future, it is very important for the government to offer more support in terms of reinforcement of educational policy implementation in order to help Cambodian children, especially poor children, to receive equitable education. In regards to the role the government, development expert, Streeten (1993, p. 1283) in particular, argued that “government has special role in promoting development of human resources”.

In section 6.4.2, the important roles of family and community support in helping poor children to succeed in education were presented. Support from the government could contribute to education being available and accessible to every child, but children also need financial, emotional and material support from their families and their communities in order to be able to go through the long and arduous academic journey.

Each student’s individual commitment is also a determinant of educational success, as presented in section 6.4.3. With strong commitment, students may be more likely to be successful in their education, even when support from the government and the family are limited. There is also literature which support the findings about the importance of family support and students’ commitment to their educational attainment and success. For example, Janigan (2008) who conducted a study in Eritrea where girls’ education is unpopular found that many Eritrean adolescents, especially girls, have managed to overcome obstacles and complete high school because of three main factors: their parents’ educational achievement, their family resources, and their own personalities and personal attributes. With all these three mechanisms, poor children are more likely to attain educational success. It can also be concluded that these three mechanisms help education to fulfill its role as a breaker of the cycle of poverty. Figure 7.3 on page 89 provides a summary of this discussion.
7.6. Summary

This research supports the findings of others who have undertaken similar research on the role of education in development supporting the conclusion that education has and continues to make a significant contribution to Cambodia’s progressive social changes and is a mechanism for breaking the cycle of poverty. As suggested by this research, formal education has contributed to a skilled and resilient workforce which is necessary for development. Educational policy has been used to respond to the economic need for a skilled workforce and, moreover, education has fostered positive social changes such as better work conditions, social equality, more employment opportunities, and ultimately a decrease in poverty. All of these social changes lead to a better quality of life for the people of Cambodia.

The fact that education has produced positive outcomes in the context of development is no longer in question. However, the question that remains is how to help children, especially poor children, to succeed in education. The discussion in earlier sections shows that poor children are able to receive and succeed in education when three mechanisms are in place concurrently. With an absence of any one of these mechanisms, poor children are at risk of continuing to be left out of school or to drop out early.
Figure 7.3: The Two Direction Connection between Education and Poverty [Ways out of The Poverty Cycle]

Strong competency

- High income
- Lower risk to basic health problems

Education attainment

Poverty

- Government support
- Family and community support
- Students’ determination and commitment

Out of school/ Dropping out

- Low income
- Higher risk of basic health problems

Weak competency

Escape from poverty

- High income
- Lower risk to basic health problems

Student's determination and commitment

Low income

Strong

Government support

Higher risk of basic health problems
CHAPTER 8- CONCLUSION

“Telling young people about the benefits of school can affect the outcome” –The World Bank (2006, p. 17)

8.1. Introduction

This chapter begins by evaluating the role of education in development, highlighting the key findings regarding the three mechanisms for transforming education into a tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. Following which, the limitations of this research are discussed and opportunities for further research are suggested. The chapter closes with a personal reflection on the methods used.

8.2. Concluding Remarks

Development has long been a topic of public discussion and the understanding of development has changed overtime. However, ‘positive social changes’ may be the best synonym for ‘development’. Development or positive social changes can be measured through various qualitative and quantitative indicators. Many positive outcomes of education in the context of development have been found in this research. The first one is that education empowers individuals in the areas of health, internal capacity and skills, and resilience. All of these attributes serve as a foundation which enables individuals to develop themselves further and transform themselves into professionals or skilled workers. In this context, this finding has led to the conclusion that a combination of education and practical work experience contributes to the development of skilled workers.

The second finding of this research is that education enables opportunities or pathways to a career. The affects of globalization, regionalization, especially the integration of Cambodia into the ASEAN Economic Community at the end of 2015, and an increase in the number of educated workers make it very difficult for individuals who have no education or very limited education to compete for skilled jobs. With education as the foundation, people have a chance to mainstream themselves into the market of skilled workers.
labour. As they develop themselves through their work experience, they transform themselves into professionals or skilled workers who, as a consequence, have more career choices. Beyond the individual context, education is argued to have produced human resources to respond to the demands of industries or to the development needs of society in general. This has made the position of education, especially that of higher education, even more important in the context of development.

If positive social changes are synonymous with development, then the role of education as a mechanism for development is well established. The third finding is that education contributes to positive social changes in many areas such as [better] working conditions, [higher] incomes, [more] employment, and [reduced levels of] social inequality. The improvement in these areas can be regarded as an improvement in living environments and conditions, and such improvements are essential to the attainment of well-being and a better quality of life.

The fourth finding is that education is a powerful tool to fight poverty. For example, one aspect of this is that in Cambodia, some poor people are not able to improve their incomes while medical expenses act as a major factor keeping them in poverty. It appears that education is one factor that can help mitigate this particular problem faced by many poor Cambodians. First, it helps people to reduce their spending on medical treatment of preventable diseases, as educated people are generally more aware of how to live a healthy life. Additionally, healthy people can maintain their income generating activities. This means that education has a role to play in preventing poor people from becoming poorer. Second, education enables people to improve their incomes. When poor people or children of the poor have more education, they become qualified for skilled employment which often rewards them with higher salaries. At a broader level, education helps create more jobs, encourages better working conditions, and promotes the participation of vulnerable groups in society. All of these factors have contributed to the reduction of poverty in Cambodia.

The fifth finding is that failing to help the poor to break barriers to education means failing to help them to break the cycle of poverty. There are barriers to education such as gaps between education policy and practice, a lack of educational infrastructure, and especially poverty itself. This research has suggested that the cycle of poverty can be broken when those barriers are removed, and three of the mechanisms for removing them
are government support, family and community support, and student commitment. There are many supports that the Cambodian government has provided. Those supports include efforts to guarantee that public education is practically free, availability of scholarship programmes, education reforms have been initiated, and construction of more school buildings is undertaken every year. Family and community support is very important for encouraging students to pursue their education, and these supports are commonly emotional, financial and material. Student commitment is also a factor in educational success. With strong commitment, students are more likely to be successful in their education, even when support from the government and from the family are limited.

Thus, it can be concluded that education has contributed to positive outcomes regarding development. Education gives everyone a chance and is a key to development. Without it, people are not able to benefit from the economic growth and are unlikely to be able to break the cycle of poverty. Education builds human capital based on the needs of development. It produces positive outcomes for individuals and society as a whole.

8.3. Opportunities for Future Research

This research has produced findings which open up many opportunities for future research. The first opportunity is the possibility of investigating the positive results of education on expanding people’s freedoms. Through the literature review process, it was identified that Sen (1999) has defined development as an expansion of human freedoms which he classified into two types: substantial and instrumental. Sen’s approach to development has been notable for putting human well-being at the core of development goals. Because this research was designed to only discuss development in the context of poverty reduction, future research could focus on the positive impacts of education on the expansion of each aspect of substantial and instrumental freedoms.

The second opportunity is that future research could look more deeply at the positive outcome of education on public health. In this research, a relationship between expenditure on health care may be a contributing factor to deepening poverty for poor Cambodians. However, this research only provides the basic assertion that education has contributed to positive outcomes in the health of Cambodians. Therefore, this is an
opportunity for other social researchers to make contributions into this area of knowledge through their future studies.

The third opportunity relates to the social equation which sees a skilled workforce as a result of the combination of general education, higher education and work experience. Such a social equation emerged from this research, presenting the positive outcome that education produces in serving developmental needs. With the small number of university graduates participating in this study as a research limitation, there opens the opportunity for other social researchers to look for data to add to or critique this equation. The findings of those future studies will contribute further to the body of knowledge in the field of development. Finally and importantly, the research results indicating how to break down barriers to education also opens an opportunity for future studies. As already discussed, poverty is a core problem of development and a decrease in poverty would be regarded as the attainment of a development goal. It was found that government support, support from families and communities, and student commitment are three mechanisms that help poor children to receive enough education so that they can later develop into skilled workers. This means that those three mechanisms are essential to breaking the cycle of poverty. However, there may be more than three mechanisms. As discussed in the latter section, the small sample of university graduates is a limitation of this research. An increase in the size of this sample could help identify more mechanisms. Thus, the fourth opportunity is to look at this problem more deeply and specifically.

8.4. Research Limitations

There are four main limitations of this research. The first one relates to the methodology used. This research used only one technique which is semi-structured in-depth interviews to collect data. However, a focus group discussion technique could have also be used in order to increase the pool of participants and to let all participants have a chance to discuss the problems that this research was looking at. The application of a focused group discussion technique would allow participants to use their experience to argue their ideas. As a result, some consensus about themes could have been identified and more deeply explored. This means that a use of more than one technique would have enhanced both the validity and reliability of the data. In addition, the small, non-probability sample means that the results of the research, although likely to be indicative, are not
representative of the Cambodian population as a whole and as such, cannot be
generalized beyond the sample.

The second limitation is the time and budget constraints. Because of these constraints,
focus groups were not undertaken. Moreover, most key informants were professionals
whose jobs are their top priority. The interview schedule was thus adjusted to conform
to their availability. Some key informants were not available during the three months
when field work was conducted. Because of the time constraints, they were finally
excluded. This exclusion may have affected the result of this research to some degree.

The third limitation is that there is an imbalance between participants. Prior to field work,
it was thought that key informants and university students would provide rich information
that would help this research to understand the contributions of education to
development. However, it was found after the completion of field work that it was the
information from university graduates that was most useful. Had the time and resources
been available, a pilot study could have been undertaken to identify [and address] such
issues.

The last limitation is that reliable literature about positive outcomes that education has
produced for Cambodian society is limited. This limitation made it difficult for the
researcher to demonstrate what he had previously observed first hand in Cambodia.
However, this limitation should be regarded positively. In other words, such a limitation
represents the importance of this particular research, and raises opportunities for further
research, because its findings contribute to the very limited stock of knowledge about the
roles of education in the development of Cambodia.

8.5. Closing Remark

Social science is a very broad discipline which covers many different areas and
development is one of them. The discussion about development has been a major concern
for social scientists including myself. This research is a very useful academic exercise
which allowed me to advance not only my social research skills, but also my knowledge
of development. I regard the combination of advancement of social research skills and
knowledge of Cambodian development as an essential preparation for my future career.
Throughout the course of this research, I also learnt that qualitative methodology is time consuming and requires a lot of patience as well as analytical skills. It takes much time in the field, much time to analyze the data, and much time to write the report. However, it has been a very beneficial exercise because it compelled me to get involved directly in the human aspect of this issue, rather than exploring it from a distance through the computer and using only numbers to draw conclusions about what is happening to the human beings represented by those numbers. This research also taught me that qualitative research needs a lot of flexibility, especially during fieldwork. There are three approaches to in-depth interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. I learnt that semi-structured interviews, which is the type that I used to collect the data, best suits this type of exploratory research. It is directive, but it gives enough flexibility to participants to share their knowledge of the issues under examination. This means that while the direction of this technique helps ensure that the participants talk about the specific topics that the research has proposed, its flexibility gives freedom to participants to share the knowledge which they believe to be relevant to the specific topic and which the researcher may not have anticipated.

Thus, this research has been a very valuable experience which has connected my academic skills to my future career. Although not all research techniques were applied this research has helped me to develop my social research skills so that I can establish myself as a social researcher.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Human Ethics Committee’s Approval

Application No: 2014-28

18 September 2014

Title: A case study on the role of education in development in Cambodia: Facilitating positive outcomes.

Applicant: Sokly Keat

The Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee has reviewed the above noted application.

Thank you for your response to the questions which were forwarded to you on the Committee’s behalf.

I am satisfied on the Committee’s behalf that the issues of concern have been satisfactorily addressed.

I am pleased to give final approval to your project. Please note that this approval is valid until three years from today’s date at which time you will need to reapply for renewal.

May I, on behalf of the Committee, wish you success in your course.

Yours sincerely

[signature redacted]

Caitriona Cameron
Acting Chair, Human Ethics Committee

PLEASE NOTE: The Human Ethics Committee has an audit process in place for applications. Please see 7.3 of the Human Ethics Committee Operating Procedures (ACHE) in the Lincoln University Policies and Procedures Manual for more information.
Appendix 2: Research Information Sheet

You are invited to participate as a subject in a project entitled “A case study on the role of education in development in Cambodia: Facilitating positive outcomes”.

The aims of this project are: (1) to apply a case study approach using qualitative methods to investigate the relationship between education and development in Cambodia, focusing on what facilitates positive social, political and economic outcomes; and (2) to identify some of the gaps between education policy and practice that prevent Cambodia from achieving its development goals.

Your participation in this project will involve a face-to-face interview. The interview will take between 60 to 90 minutes. With your consent, the interview will be tape recorded.

As a follow-up to this activity, you will be asked to provide consent for a further telephone interview in case further information is needed through the data analysis process.

In the performance of the tasks and application of the procedures, there are no risks of discomfort. However, you may choose not to answer questions and you may terminate the interview at any time.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation. The identity of participants will not be made public. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality the following steps will be taken: (1) the consent forms will be stored separately from the interview records and scripts at a locked and safe place (computer); (2) pseudonyms will be used to replace the real names; and, (3) all consent forms, interview records, interview scripts and tape recordings will be destroyed and deleted after six years.

The project is being carried out by: Keat Sokly

Contact: Lincoln University, Ellesmere Junction Rd. ⬦ Spring Rd. Lincoln, Canterbury, New Zealand; Email: sokly.keat@lincolnuni.ac.nz; Phone: (+64)21 084 56903, (+855)12 763 776

He/She will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project.

- Dr. Tracy Berno, Associate Professor at Lincoln University
  
  Contact Details: Tracy.Berno@lincoln.ac.nz

- Dr. Michael Mackay, Lecturer at Lincoln University
  
  Contact Details Michael.Mackay@lincoln.ac.nz

The project has been reviewed and approved by Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.
Appendix 3: Consent Form

Consent Form

_Name of Project:_ “Roles of Education in Cambodian Development: Facilitating Positive Outcomes”.

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate as a subject in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved. I also understand that I may withdraw from the interview at any time, and from participation in the project up until the data is analysed (January 15, 2015), including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

Name: _______________________________________________________________

Signed: ________________________________ Date: _________________________
Appendix 4: Descriptions of Participants

- Key Informant 1 (KI1)

The first key informant who was invited for the interview was a senior member of an international development partner [non-profit organization providing funds to local NGOs] working in the area of development in Cambodia since 2003. His development knowledge and experience is excellent particularly in education, disability, livelihood and human right. I had been working with this development expert since 2007 via the partnership between my previous employers and his institution and his name has been known by most people who worked in education and disability sector in Cambodia. This is how this first key informant was identified. He was also asked to recommend other people whom he thought to have right knowledge and experience in the field of this research and he recommended key informant 2, 5 and 6 and University Graduate 1.

- Key Informant 2 (KI2)

The second key informant that was invited for the interview was a senior local (Cambodian) member of a UN body who is in charge of education affair. She started her career as a teacher and then moved to different NGOs working on education networking, development and support. Her seniority in and contribution to Cambodian education sector has also been outstanding. Identifying her as a key informant was not difficult either because she has been known as an education expert by many people who involve in education work in Cambodia. Moreover, she was recommended as a key participant to this research by KI1.

- Key Informant 3 (KI3)

I went to Svay Rieng and asked my friend who is working as a teacher to recommend two teachers who have experienced the Khmer Rouge and at least one of whom must have involved in teaching since 1979 and I was recommended to interview key informant 3 and 4. The third key informant that was invited for the interview was a former teacher and school principal of a high school in Svay Rieng province. He has been involving in teaching affair since the beginning of the education rebuilding process. This means that
he had involving in Cambodia’s education for over 30 years before his retirement. His experience and knowledge are of rich account in historical context of Cambodia education.

- **Key Informant 4 (KI4)**

The fourth key informant that was invited for the interview is a teacher of a high school in Svay Rieng province. He experienced the Khmer Rouge regime as a very little child and education after the Khmer Rouge as a student [he was six when he first started grade 1 in 1979], and has been working as a teacher since 1998. This means that he had involving in Cambodia’s education for about 35 years as a student and as an educator. Thus, his mixed experience and knowledge are also of rich account in historical context of Cambodia education.

- **Key Informant 5 (KI5)**

The fifth key informant who was invited for the interview was a senior member of an international non-profit organization working in Cambodia since 1979 on different areas of development but mainly education. Moreover, he experienced life under the Khmer Rouge and is one of the individuals who involved in rebuilding education from the beginning of the process. He becomes an education expert after joint this organization since the start of its operation in Cambodia and has been a key local person development and education. As already stated, this expert was referred by KI1.

- **Key Informant 6 (KI6)**

As a senior official of the MoEYS, KI6 was recommended as a participant of this research by another key informant, KI1. He was recommended because KI has been working a lot with him and KI1’s experience of working with him shows that he know more than enough to be an education expert in Cambodia. His involvement is very valuable to this research because he provided the information about the challenges that MoEYS has faced in implementing education policies and about the future direction of Cambodia education.
- **Key Informant 7 (KI7)**

The seven key informant is a senior recruitment consultant of a local international standard recruitment agency which might be the biggest enterprise of this kind in Cambodia. She started working as a recruitment consultant since 2007. As an expert, she provided rich information about the gap between employers’ expectation and job hunter’s capability. She also provided the information regarding the position of Cambodia’s education in investors’ decision to invest in Cambodia. She was identified when I called to her agency and her named was given to me.

- **Key Informant 8 (KI8)**

The seven key informant was a lecturer at a university in Cambodia who has been serving his position for about fifteen years already. The interview with KI8 mainly focused on the challenges of higher education and how well such education links with the need to the industries. He was also asked to evaluate the quality of higher education in general and general quality of university educators. He was invited to participate in this research because I used to be his student and I acknowledge his professionalism as an educator.

- **University Graduate 1 (UG1)**

As already mentioned, the first university graduate was recommended by KI1 in the first interview. UG1 is a disabled person who has been leading a local NGO working to promote people with disabilities and their rights for almost ten years already by the time of the interview. He is one of the most active actor in the disability sector in Cambodia and have had good education. His contribution in this research is to serve as an example of how education help disadvantage people to live with dignity and equally within Cambodian society. In other words, information given by UG1 shows how education contributes to social development or how his education has contributed to the development of the country.
- University Graduate 2 (UG2)

The second university graduate is currently holding a senior position at a big private company and being paid very highly. He had been going through public primary and secondary schools and a public university in Cambodia before he got a scholarship to continue is study abroad. The information given by UG2 showed how education helps him to succeed in his professional goal and how his education has contributed to the development of Cambodia.

- University Graduate 3 (UG3)

The third university graduate is currently a staff of an international bank in Cambodia. He had been going through rural public primary and secondary schools before continue his study at a public university in the capital city of Phnom Penh. He was about to quit education for a few time but he never quitted and education finally pay him off. The information given by UG3 showed how education has changed his life and lift him from poverty.

- University Graduate 4 (UG4)

The fourth university graduate is currently a shelf employed whose business is very successful. He has gone through primary and secondary schools in a province of Cambodia before moving to the capital city of Phnom Penh for higher education. The information given by UG4 showed how education make the difference between him and his sister who dropped out early. In other words, the story of UG4 showed how higher education generate higher incomes.

- University Graduate 5 (UG5)

Like UG4, the fifth university graduate is a successful business women who just took over her parent business for less than two years. This case showed that highly educated people contribute much more to the development of the country compared to lowly or non-educated ones. In other words, the story of UG5 told not only that higher education
generate higher incomes but also that higher education contribute more to economic and social development of Cambodia.

- University Students

Five students who are studying at different universities were selected for the interview in order to investigate their schooling experience from the primary school until the university level and their expectation from education. The selection of students was done based on a random basis. By ‘random basis’ I do not mean random sampling but mean approaching participants randomly. I went to five different university and approach one student at each university for the interview.
Appendix 5: Basic Interview Structure for Key Informants

(Education Sector e.g., policy makers, government officials, teachers)

1. **Personal profile**
   - Name
   - Age
   - Qualification (Secondary or higher education)
   - Current (main) occupation
   - Nature of past and present involvement in the education and/or the development sector(s) in Cambodia (if any)

2. **Key terms**
   - Defining “education”
   - Defining “development”

3. **Establishing a contextual background**
   - History/knowledge of:
     - the (re)development of Cambodia’s education system, including the socio-cultural and economic context in which this has occurred
     - the connections, if any, of education (policy/practice) with national/regional development goals/objectives and priorities
   - The meaning of the Cambodian principle of “Education for All”
   - The meaning of the “Millennium Development Goals” and how they are linked, if at all, to education policy and practice
   - Understanding how Cambodia’s education/development policies have developed in the context of 1) international cooperation and 2) globalisation
4. **Education and its relationship to development**
   - Views on education in Cambodia and its links, if any, to:
     - the goal of building a skilled and (regionally) competitive labour force
     - individual development and enhanced civic participation
     - the creation of an open society (freedom to move, work and do business across borders)
     - the amelioration of social inequality (i.e., the gaps between the rich and the poor) in Cambodian society
     - Regional/small town development (urban vs rural)

5. **Role of education in career development in the private/public sectors**
   - Importance of educational qualification (does level of education matter?)
   - Gaps, if any, between job seekers’ qualifications and industry/public sector needs
   - The relationship between level of education and level of remuneration
   - Comparison between domestically/locally educated employees and employees with educational qualifications attained from abroad

6. **General questions**
   - Strengths and weaknesses of Cambodia’s education system (in the context of Cambodia’s national development objectives)
   - Gaps, if any, between education policy and practice

Challenges facing the Cambodian education sector (in a development context)
Appendix 6: Basic Interview Structure for University Graduates

(Graduates with Professional Appointments or Leadership Roles)

1. Personal profile

- Name
- Age
- Qualification (Secondary or higher education)
- Current (main) occupation
- Nature of past and present involvement in the education and/or the development sector(s) in Cambodia (if any)

2. Key terms

- Defining “education”
- Defining “development”

3. Establishing a contextual background

- History/knowledge of:
  - the (re)development of Cambodia’s education system, including the socio-cultural and economic context in which this has occurred
  - the connections, if any, of education (policy/practice) with national/regional development goals/objectives and priorities
- The meaning of the Cambodian principle of “Education for All”
- The meaning of the “Millennium Development Goals” and how they are linked, if at all, to education policy and practice
- Understanding how Cambodia’s education/development policies have developed in the context of 1) international cooperation and 2) globalisation
4. **Education and its relationship to development**

- Views on education in Cambodia and its links, if any, to:
  - the goal of building a skilled and (regionally) competitive labour force
  - individual development and enhanced civic participation
  - the creation of an open society (freedom to move, work and do business across borders)
  - the amelioration of social inequality (i.e., the gaps between the rich and the poor) in Cambodian society
  - Regional/small town development (urban vs rural)

5. **Role of education in career development in the private/public sectors**

- Importance of educational qualification (does level of education matter?): *general discussion plus an example of the participants themselves*

- Gaps, if any, between job seekers’ qualifications and industry/public sector needs

- The relationship between level of education and level of remuneration: *general discussion plus an example of the participants themselves*

- Comparison between domestically/locally educated employees and employees with educational qualifications attained from abroad: *general discussion plus an example of the participants themselves*

6. **General questions**

- Strengths and weaknesses of Cambodia’s education system (in the context of Cambodia’s national development objectives)

- Gaps, if any, between education policy and practice

Challenges facing the Cambodian education sector (in a development context)
Appendix 7: Basic Interview Structure for University Students

(Students currently enrolled in higher education)

1. Personal profile
   - Name
   - Age
   - Year of graduating from high school
   - Year commenced university
   - Degree and major

2. Key terms
   - Defining “education”
   - Defining “development”

3. Schooling experience (secondary)
   - Secondary school experience (personal history)
   - General views on secondary school environment in Cambodia (perceived level of resourcing, relevance of material covered, quality of learning experience…)
   - Views on links, if any, between secondary education and national development priorities/goals
   - Views on level of importance of secondary education to Cambodia’s development
   - University/Polytechnic experience (personal history)
• General views on higher education in Cambodia (perceived level of resourcing, relevance of material covered, qualifications offered, quality of learning experience…)

• Future academic aspiration(s) after graduating, if any

4. Career aspirations

• Short term, medium term and long term career plan

• Prospective contribution of higher education degree to future success

5. Education and its relationship to development

• Views on education in Cambodia and its links, if any, to:
  ➢ the goal of building a skilled and (regionally) competitive labour force
  ➢ individual development and enhanced civic participation
  ➢ the creation of an open society (freedom to move, work and do business across borders)
  ➢ the amelioration of social inequality (i.e., the gaps between the rich and the poor) in Cambodian society
  ➢ Regional/small town development (urban vs rural)

Prospective contribution (of the interviewee) to Cambodia’s development