Examining System Level Policy for School as Learning Organization: A Case Study in Cambodia

Khay Sambonin, American Pacific International School, Cambodia

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Abstract
In the midst of uncertain and constantly changing environment, schools today are argued to transform themselves to learning organizations. Kools & Stoll (2016) conceptualized the Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization to offer a framework for schools to prepare the transformation process. Cambodian schools have been through several phases of rigorous reforms. The MoEYS, through Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and Cambodia Education 2030 Roadmap, aimed to transform schools into learning organizations. Following these initiatives of MoEYS for SLO, researcher conducted a content analysis of ten extant Cambodian national policies and strategies for education to examine whether the MoEYS’ policies and strategies support school as learning organization. We developed a conceptual framework outlining four dimensions and fourteen subsets as the criteria for data collection. Researcher collected the secondary data through the ten policy and strategy documents of the RGC and the MOEYS. We organized the data under the four dimensions and fourteen subsets on the spreadsheet for analysis. As a result, we found that the MoEYS’ policies and strategies, which are aligned with the Royal Government of Cambodia national strategies, support school as learning organization. However, researcher recommends a coherent leadership policy for school directors, DOE and POE officials. Since leadership has proven to impact on school transformation, we argue for the coherent leadership policy to integrate transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributed and learning leadership. Another important recommendation is further reform in decentralization and de-concentration to reduce the school governance layers to narrow the gaps between MoEYS and school levels.

Keywords: School as Learning Organization, Education Policies, System Level
Introduction

The school of tomorrow may be a need of many scholars, educators and policy makers who long for the preparedness and responsiveness of an uncertain, complex and constantly changing environment. School was conceptualized as a Professional Learning Community (Moore, 2009; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006) and as a Professional Development School (Harris, & van Tassell, 2005). Bowen, Ware, Rose & Powers (2007) proposed a School Success Profile-Learning Organization to measure learning school. Another popular LO model of Dimension of Learning Organization Questionnaire (Watkins & Marsick, 1997) has been tested in multiple contexts including schools. Having tested the DLOQ model in education context, Kools & Stoll (2016) reconceptualized the Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization grounded on the theoretical DLOQ model (Watkins & Marsick, 1997).

Cambodia has long sustained from the tragic genocide event since 1975. After regaining the second kingdom in 1993, Cambodia has emerged as one of the fastest growing economic countries in the world (World Bank, 2024). In addition, Cambodia has achieved lower-middle income country status since 2015 and the annual economic growth rate is 7% or around 5% due to Covid. According to the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase 1 of the Royal Government of Cambodia, which integrated the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals(CSDG) 2016-2030, Cambodia aims to reach the status of upper-middle income country in 2030 and high-income country in 2050 (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2023). To achieve the CSDG on education roadmap 2030, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has developed an Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for 5 years from 2019-2023 (MoEYS, 2019) that outlines concrete strategic policy reforms and actions to achieve the goals in ESP per se and also in National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023(Royal Government of Cambodia, 2019). According to the ESP (MoEYS, 2019) and Cambodia’s Education 2030 Roadmap (MoEYS, 2019), Cambodian schools are envisioned to transform to learning organizations.

Having conducted a descriptive review of the Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization (Kools & Stoll, 2016), we found that the SLO model is more applicable in European contexts than in East Asian nations like China. Cambodia is one among the South East Asian countries, where social norms, high cultural settings, power distance affect the management and leadership (Jones & Nagel, 2022; Kovačević, & Hallinger, 2019; Hallinger & Bryant, 2013; Walker, Hallinger & Qian, 2007; Hallinger, 1998). Since Cambodian education is on another strategic education reform phase where the current ESP 2019-2023 is due to end soon, it is more compelling for the research to examine the system level supports and initiatives for schools to transform to learning organization in Cambodia. The findings would contribute to the MoEYS’ education strategic planning 2024-2028 for realizing the Cambodian school as learning organization.

Conceptual Framework

The Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization (Kools & Stoll, 2016) was proposed by OECD and UNICEF through a joint working paper to offer an SLO framework for policy makers, scholars, practitioners to apply respectively in their country contexts. Kools & Stoll (2016) conceptualized 7 action-oriented dimensions for school as a learning organization. Each seven dimension is followed by 49 key subsets that elaborate further on how to effectively implement each dimension as below.
• Developing a shared vision centered on the learning of all students
• Promoting and supporting continuous professional learning for all staff
• Promoting team learning and collaboration among all staff
• Establishing a culture of inquiry, exploration and innovation
• Embedding a system for collecting and exchanging knowledge and learning
• Learning with and from the external environment and larger system
• Modelling and growing learning leadership

Figure 1: The Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization
Adapted from Kools & Stoll (2016)

The model was tested in mostly European countries, namely Wales (Harris, Elder, Jones & Cooze, 2022; Kools, Stoll, George, Steijn, Bekkers & Gouëdard, 2020; Kools, Gouëdard, George, Steijn, Bekkers & Stoll, 2019), Greece (Papazoglou & Koutouzis, 2022; Papazoglou & Koutouzis, 2020), Romania (Paraschiva, Draghici & Mihaila, 2019), Latvia (Lavrinoviča, Linde, Šiliņa-Jasjukeviča & Lūšēna-Ezera, 2023) and in Asia like China (Tan, 2020).

In Wales, Kools, Pont, Gouëdard, Rodriguez, Stoll & George (2018) conducted a thorough research to help Welsh schools transform to learning organizations adopting the Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization. In their published book, there was a review of system level policies to enable or to hinder the transformation process of school as learning organization. Kools et al. (2018) conceptualized three dimensions for reviewing the system level policies of Welsh education to support the transformation of schools to learning organization as below:
• A shared and future-focused vision centered on learning of all students
The dimension argues for developing a national policy that converges a vision from national level to provincial/ middle tier / district level and to school level. The linkage of one vision centered on student’s learning outcomes to be shared between the national level and school level will motivate schools to align with the national goals and strategies. Kools et al. (2018) also recommended the vision to be inclusive of the disadvantaged / minority students and elevate equity in education.

• The development of a professional capital and a thriving learning culture
The dimension pinpointed a significant process of maintaining professional capitals following the seminal work of Hargreaves & Fullan (2015) and Fullan & Hargreaves (2012) that system level policies in Wales should consider. The professional capital was proposed to compose of human capital, where individual motivation and engagement is argued to happen, social capital which values networking, teamwork, collegiality and relationship between leader and teacher and teacher with teachers, and decisional capital that focuses on interwoven leadership where leaders can interact together to improve decision making in uncertain and complex working environment. Campbell, Lieberman & Yashkina (2016) and Tong & Razniak (2017) recommended the national level policy to amend their approach to teacher’s professional development, motivation, teacher’s benefits, working conditions and collaborative working environment to foster professional capital that is drawn from their research evidence of the Ontario’s teacher learning and leadership program. Likewise, Kools et al. (2018) proposed five subsets for policy makers in Wales to foster professional capitals and learning cultures.
• Assessment, evaluation and accountability promoting SLO

In the dimension, it is argued for national policies to include school evaluation criteria and procedures where inspection criteria such as the Estyn system must be rigorously done at school level. Kools et al. (2018) argued for an articulated monitoring and evaluation system to be drafted in the policies. The policies for monitoring and evaluation must hold the school level to be accountable for developing the school as learning organization.

In Greece, Papazoglou & Koutouzis (2020) conducted a research with 418 primary schools in Greece and found that only six dimensions of the integrated model of SLO were fit with the Greek school contexts. Schools’ size affected the transformation while geographical difference did not challenge the process. According to Papazoglou & Koutouzis (2022), there should be a reform of policy to decentralize school principal’s more autonomy and authority to improve teacher’s continuous professional learning. Teachers should be granted moreautonomies and professional learning opportunities.

In Latvia, Lavrinoviča, Linde, Siliņa-Jasjukeviča & Lūsēna-Ezera (2023) reviewed the extant literatures of SLO models by Kools & Stoll (2016) and other international published papers to conceptualize the theory and practice of SLO. The research has found key barriers, lack of knowledge and skill in learning leadership, a centralized system, lack of time, lack of support from upper management, lack of financial support and sustainability. School autonomy and leadership are key enablers to make positive transformation toward learning organization.

Having reviewed the recommendation of policies to support transformation of SLO in Wales by Kools et al. (2018) and some effects and impediments of Greece's and Latvia’s case studies, researcher will conceptualize the framework based on these findings to review the system level policy to support SLO in Cambodia. We will adopt the three main dimensions of policy review in Wales and add another dimension, namely decentralization of authority and funds following the strong argument from the SLO research findings in Greece and Latvia. Decentralization can come in many forms, namely de-concentration, delegation of semi-autonomous corporations, devolution to local government and transfer of functions to nongovernmental organizations (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983). Decentralization is still a debatable issue of implementation between the central government and local authority (Caldwell, 2005; Parry, 1997; Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson, 1989). In education, decentralization is a school management strategy called School-Based Management (SBM) where devolution of authority to school level is argued to raise effective school management, teacher motivation and learning outcomes (Faguet & Sanchez, 2008; Sawada & Ragatz, 2005). As argued in Caldwell (2005), SBM must build the professional capacity of teachers and school leaders through the transferred autonomy and authority from central authority to impact directly on student’s learning outcomes. There are varied forms of SBM (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). However, Leithwood & Menzies (1998) argued for four forms of SBM, namely administrative control, professional control, community control and balanced control (professional and community control). Decentralization, through SBM, will promote school autonomy and accountability for learning. Therefore, researcher will integrate the decentralization dimension as other criteria to review the system level policy of Cambodian SLO.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Key Subsets</th>
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</table>
| **Shared and future focused vision centered on learning of all students** | - consolidating inclusive visions across the national, middle tier and school level   
- Central focus on equity and well-being                                  |
| **The development of professional capital and a thriving learning culture** | - Basing selection into initial teacher education on a mix of criteria and methods  
- Prioritizing professional learning in certain areas  
- A coherent leadership strategy (learning leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership and distributed leadership)  
- Greater support for secondary school leaders  
- Promoting collaborations between schools and teacher education institutions |
| **Assessment, evaluation and accountability promoting SLOs**            | - School inspection  
- A participatory self-evaluation process  
- National criteria for school evaluation  
- Monitoring system through student’s assessment results, school inspection report and school evaluation report  
- Aligning performance measure to the new curriculum                     |
| **Decentralization of authority**                                       | - School level decision-making autonomy  
- Transfer of funds and resources to school levels                               |

Table 1: Criteria for examining system level policy in Cambodia

Figure 3: Conceptual framework of system level support for SLO
Research Questions

In order to examine the system level policies that support the schools as learning organization in Cambodia, researcher will raise one key question as below to frame the research design and analysis.

1. Do Cambodian national and educational policies support schools as learning organizations?

Research Method

Researcher applies a qualitative case study research to examine the system level policies to support the SLO development in Cambodia. Researcher will apply a purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012) to collect the secondary data from key relevant educational policies and strategies published and adopted by MoEYS for content analysis. First, we locate official documents from the MoEYS website, the Open Development Cambodia, Ministry of Economics and Finance and other RGC websites. Researchers will only collect the published RGC’s national policy that is relevant to education, namely National Policy for Lifelong Learning(NPLL) and National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023(NSDP), and MoEYS’s strategies and policies for analysis and discussion, namely Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, Continuous Professional Development Framework for Teachers and School Directors(CPDFTSD), Cambodia Education 2030 Roadmap (CER), Capacity Development Master Plan in Education Sector(CDMPES), Teacher Policy Action Plan(TPAP), Cambodia Secondary Education Blueprint 2030(CSEB) and School Inspection Handbook(SIH).

To conduct data analysis, researcher will group the collected secondary data from above official documents based on the four dimensions which are the main themes for our research. We create a spreadsheet with each theme and organize the collected data from RGC’s and MoEYS policies and strategies under each theme. The analysis will follow each key subset of the main themes or dimensions to deliver answers as the findings from our research questions.

Findings

Having conducted a cross sectional data analysis through each dimension and its subsets of the ten published policies and strategies of Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), researcher has found the results of Cambodian national and educational policies and strategies to support school as learning organization as below.

Dimension: Shared and future focused vision centered on learning of all students

Subset: Consolidating inclusive visions across the national, middle tier and school level

In this dimension, the key policies and strategies focus on inclusive vision cascading from national level, namely RGC to MoEYS, to provincial/district and to school levels. Equity and well-being are also integrated into the criteria for the interconnected vision from national level. RGC, through the National Strategic Development Plan (RGC, 2019) has laid out a national vision to become an upper middle-income country in 2030 and a high-income country in 2050. This vision was echoed and supported by the Educational Strategic Plan (MoEYS, 2019) that envisions for the development of high-quality human resources in the knowledge society of Cambodia.
Another vision alignment is laid in the Cambodia’s Education 2030 Roadmap (MoEYS, 2019) which aims to transform Cambodian schools to learning organizations to provide high quality education for all students. According to the MoEYS’s Capacity Development Master Plan in Education Sector 2020-2024 (MoEYS, 2021), we spotted a legal framework for all policies to be implemented from central to Provincial Office of Education (POE), to District Office of Education (DOE) and to school level.

**Subset: Central focus on equity and well-being**
The national vision is argued to support the equitable access to quality education and student’s well-being (Kools et al, 2018). In this subset, we found the overarching goal of Cambodia’s Education 2030 Roadmap (MoEYS, 2019) was to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning for all. Equity is also addressed in the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (MoEYS, 2019) to provide equitable access to quality education of all children and youth for socio-economic development. In addition, the MoEYS also set the key strategic goals for their ESP 2019-2023 to promote student’s enrollment in basic education (from grade 1 to 9). Secondary enrollment and retention are also stated in the strategic reform. However, student’s well-being is slightly stated in the ESP 2019-2023 and it is merely for physical health like water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) at schools.

**Dimension: Development of professional capital and a thriving learning culture**
**Subset: Basing selection into initial teacher education on a mix of criteria and methods**
We found four policies to lay out criteria for reforms of the recruitment of pre-service teachers, namely Continuous Professional Development Framework for Teachers and School Directors (MoEYS, 2019), Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (MoEYS, 2019), Capacity Development Master Plan in Education Sector 2020-2024 (MoEYS, 2021) and Teacher Policy Action Plan (MoEYS, 2015). According to the Teacher Policy Action Plan (TPAP), the graduated high school students with grade A, B and C in the Bac II, school leaving examination, will be eligible to apply for a pedagogical education at any teacher education institutions, namely Provincial Teacher Training Center (PTTC), National Institute of Education (NIE) and Phnom Penh Teacher Education College (PPTEC). The pathway will reform the PRESET qualification from 12 + 2 pedagogical education to 12 + 4, which the student-teachers are qualified for a bachelor degree from the teacher education college (TEC, a new upgrade from PTTC and PPTEC). The TPAP also offered a new pathway for any bachelor holder from private and public universities to acquire a teaching license which will reduce shortage of licensed teachers to provide education services at public schools.

**Subset: Prioritizing professional learning in certain areas**
In this subset, we found the MoEYS aimed to develop professional capacities of education personnel, school directors and specialist teachers in different functions and roles. There were four policies and strategies, namely ESP 2019-2023, CPDFTSD, CDMPES 2020-2024 and Cambodia’s Education 2030 Roadmap (CER) to guide the implementation of capacity development. School-based management and instructional leadership were the most cited in the ESP in the CER. Specialist teachers were also planned for improvement in their professional knowledge, skills and competences to improve student’s learning outcomes and changes in classrooms.

**Subset: A coherent leadership strategy (learning leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership and distributed leadership)**
In this subset, leadership development strategies were found mostly to improve instructional leadership of school directors. Those leadership development programs were stated in three
policy documents, namely ESP 2019-2023, CER and CDMPES 2020-2024. According to the ESP 2.3, the MoEYS aimed to transform Cambodian schools to learning organizations through autonomous management and visionary and instructional leadership.

“CER 4.5.5.A: develop management and instructional leadership ability of school directors or heads.”

Subset: Greater support for secondary school leaders
The MoEYS, through the Cambodia Secondary Education Blueprint 2030 (MoEYS, 2021), laid out the support for secondary school leaders from building instructional leadership and management to devolving authority to school level in teacher recruitment, development, retention and dismissal. The strategy was also to equip POE and DOE officials, as the supervisors of school directors, with necessary supervisory skills, namely performance appraisal, monitoring and evaluation, and coaching skills to support the secondary school leaders to achieve the MoEYS’s strategic goals.

Subset: Promoting collaborations between schools and teacher education institutions
The collaboration between schools and teacher education institutions is seen in the policy document of MoEYS’ ESP 4.4, CPDFTSD 1.2 & 3.2-3.6 and TPAP 6.2. The policies outline key cooperation between Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) and schools where PRESETs and INSETs receive pedagogical training to be qualified for teaching and to improve their teaching. The policies also initiated a professional learning community (PLC) in school and in TEIs to foster the didactic learning between school directors, homeroom teachers and specialist teachers together with teacher education trainers. The TPAP 6.2. also proposed on-site teacher support by the TEIs, where teacher trainers will conduct pedagogical training at school and provide feedback to improve teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-School Teacher Training College</th>
<th>Provincial Teacher Training Colleges</th>
<th>Regional Teacher Training Colleges</th>
<th>E-TEC (Phnom Penh &amp; Battambang)</th>
<th>National Institute of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood education</td>
<td>Grades 1-6</td>
<td>Grades 7-9</td>
<td>Grades 1-9</td>
<td>• Grades 10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ELM PRESET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Inspector INSET (EQAD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Teacher Education Institutions
Adapted from Continuous Professional Development Framework for Teachers and School Directors (MoEYS, 2019)

Dimension: Assessment, evaluation and accountability promoting SLOs
Subset: School inspection
School inspection is argued to be one of the quality control or assurance tools for ensuring the accountability of schools in teaching and learning (Gustafsson, Ehren, Conyngham, McNamara, Altrichter & O’Hara, 2015). Hofer, Holzberger & Reiss (2020) defined school inspection as a systemic, goal-oriented and criteria-based process conducted by external / national authorities. In this subset, researcher found a school inspection handbook (MoEYS, EQAD) as a practical guide for school directors, DOE and POE officials to implement systemic inspection. The systemic inspection involves two types of internal inspection (school self-evaluation) and external inspection (thematic and regular inspection). In the school inspection process, we spotted ESP 4.2. and CER 6.1 to improve the school self-evaluation process and the external inspection by DOE and POE officials.
Subset: A participatory self-evaluation process
In this subset, there is no proper policy statement of MoEYS to support the participatory self-evaluation process. We could find only ESP 3.3 that the MoEYS aimed to train the school directors in school self-assessment.

Subset: National criteria for school evaluation
In this subset, researcher could not find the MoEYS’ policies or strategies to outline national criteria for school evaluation. We could see the statement for school self-evaluation in the school inspection handbook where most of the key evaluation laid foundation in leadership and management, teaching and learning and student achievements.

Subset: Monitoring system through student’s assessment results, school inspection report and school evaluation report
In this subset, through the ESP 4.2 and CPDFTSD 6-b and CER 4.5.5 & 6.1, MoEYS aims to build a robust Educational Management Information System (EMIS) where all data of the school inspections both internal school self-evaluation and external DOE & POE ‘s evaluation is securely and timely retained. The MoEYS also initiated the capacity development of POE and DOE officials in monitoring and evaluation of schools. ESP of MoEYS also intended to use the inspection results to inform the performance of schools and PRESET & INSET education programs.

Subset: Aligning performance measure to the new curriculum
Performance measurement will ensure the school’s accountability and productivity (Courty, Heinrich & Marschke, 2005). Performance measurement can come in different types, namely outputs, learning outcomes, teaching quality, management and leadership and so forth (Nicholson Crotty, Theobald & Nicholson Crotty, 2006). In this subset, researcher found only one ESP 3.3.5 of MoEYS to develop a professional development policy to align with the new curriculum framework. As an implication, we assume the MoEYS to have no explicit curriculum reform for the schools.

Dimension: Decentralization of Authority
Subset: School level decision making autonomy
It has been a decade that the MoEYS has stepped up their ESP to promote school decentralization and de-concentration of functions and resources to school levels. Researchers have found a solid objective of ESP 2019-2023 in 4.10 that aimed to reform the decentralization and de-concentration of functions and resources from national level, the MoEYS to POEs, DOEs and to school levels. A recent progress of decentralization reform from the RGC and the MoEYS was seen through a sub-degree No.213 to transfer education, youth and sport functions of MoEYS to municipal/district/Khan administration through a unified administration. In the CER 4.5.5.A, there was a statement that aim to establish the financially and administratively independent SBM schools as below:

“CER 2030-4.5.5 A: In the above context, MoEYS is moving towards school-based management which entails developing schools as autonomous institutions administratively and financially. This would also mean local actors (teachers, parents, community members) are involved in decision-making on issues that are important for school development, and decision-making is located closer to school.”

In the CER 5.1.1a, the MoEYS also strategically intended to develop a national strategy for education decentralization to devolve more authority and autonomy to school levels.
Subset: Transfer of funds and resources

The transfer of funds and resources is necessary to be transparent, relevant and accessible. School resources are also important for effective learning and insufficient resource allocation to schools will impact on learning outcomes (Levačić, 2007). Mingat (2007) mentioned three types of resources for education which the central government uses to sponsor schools. The transfer of funds and resources in Cambodia may be less intriguing as the MoEYS could not secure sufficient funding for the education expenditures as stated in the ESP annex 4.C and in the CER 5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2028</th>
<th>2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total resource available for education (US$ million)</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>1,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP financial requirement</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>1,564</td>
<td>1,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education PIP</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortfall</td>
<td>-112</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>-25</td>
<td>-35</td>
<td>-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding gap as % of total financial requirement</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
<td>2.23%</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Funding gaps of MoEYS
Adapted from the Cambodia Education Roadmap 2030 (MoEYS, 2019)

The monetary resources for schools keep increasing from every strategic plan cycle and the projection draws on funding gaps resulting from the smaller size of GDP allocation for the education sector. From the ESP, the expenditure of education consumes only 3.10% of the country's GDP or equal to 4,925,415 billion Riels in 2023.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available resource estimate (in million Riels)</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>108,590,444</td>
<td>119,033,548</td>
<td>130,915,622</td>
<td>144,168,348</td>
<td>158,884,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP growth rate</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government expenditure on education</td>
<td>3,229,604</td>
<td>3,577,655</td>
<td>3,975,988</td>
<td>4,423,847</td>
<td>4,925,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent</td>
<td>3,219,604</td>
<td>3,567,655</td>
<td>3,965,988</td>
<td>4,413,847</td>
<td>4,915,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As % of GDP</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>3.01%</td>
<td>3.04%</td>
<td>3.07%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education budget as % of government expenditure</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Royal Government of Cambodia expenditure on education
Adapted from the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023(MoEYS, 2019)

For the mechanism to transfer funds and resources to school level, researcher found the ESP of MoEYS to improve the process of delivering direct funding from the national treasury to schools. The MoEYS also operates the school bank accounts process to minimize risks of leakages and corruption spilled from the in-person cash delivery. Besides, the MoEYS also set monitoring and evaluation of budget planning and expenditures at school levels to ensure the transparency and accountability of using funds. In this subset, the MoEYS seems to prove the reform of funds and resource allocation process through its ESP.
Discussion

To answer our question if Cambodian national and educational policies support the school as learning organization, we found that MoEYS, in alignment with RGC vision and strategies for socio-economic growth, has sufficient policies and strategies to transform schools to learning organizations. For the first dimension of shared and inclusive vision centered on the learning, the MoEYS, through its ESP, has developed sufficient inclusive vision for equitable access to education and quality human resources. However, the process of sharing visions between national and sub-national authorities should be articulated and structured as the top-down approach, which requires a mechanism for POE and DOE officials to bring aspiring MoEYS’ vision to school levels. According to Senge (1990), team’s mental model needs to align with the organization vision to realize a shared vision. If the POE and DOE officials, who are the supervisors of the schools, hardly align their mental models with the MoEYS’ vision, it will result in failure to share the vision with school directors. School directors must align their mental model to adopt the shared vision from MoEYS and inspire teachers and school personnel to align their performance with the MoEYS’ vision.

In the dimension of development of professional capital and a thriving learning culture, the MoEYS seems to focus on providing instructional leadership and relevant managerial skills to school directors as well as DOE officials. Learning leadership as argued in the Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization (Kools & Stoll, 2016) should leverage the capacity of school leaders to uphold learning culture and inspire learning at all levels in schools. Transformational leadership and distributed leaders were also argued to combine together for effective school leadership (Papazoglou & Koutouzis, 2022). Hargreaves, Halasz & Pont (2007), through their study of school leadership for systemic improvement in Finland, argued the systemic leadership for a coherent leadership development from national level to school level for the real impact on teaching and learning. To institutionalize these leadership capacities at all levels, the MoEYS should develop a coherent leadership development policy that integrates all four leadership in the capacity development of POE & DOE officials and school directors.

The final suggestion for national policy to support school as learning organization is reducing hierarchical systemwide structure and securing sufficient funds and resources for school levels. From the findings, MoEYS raised concern about the funding gaps to implement their strategic plan effectively and also their education roadmap 2030. According to Mok (2006), the impact of globalization will shift the strategies and policies of government from a single source of education provider and funders to involvement with non-state actors like family, private and non-government entities. Public-Private Partnership model (Mok, 2006) would be ideal for meeting the educational funding gap where the involvement of families in financing education is argued to enhance the quality provision of education and school accountability for student’s learning.

Cambodian education, through MoEYS, has leapfrogged major reforms in public school system. The development of education strategic plan every 5 years and the mechanism to monitor and evaluate the strategic plan was also firmly implemented from national level to sub-national and to school level, as reported in the Mid-Term Review of Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (MoEYS, 2021). In the critical reform era, Cambodia would need a direction and a clear paradigm of school effectiveness to uphold in the next cycle of its strategic plan 2024-2028. Through its CER 2030 and ESP 2019-2023, MoEYS intended to transform schools into learning organizations. It was quite obvious that the MoEYS aimed to re-
conceptualize school effectiveness through the lens of school as learning organization model. Therefore, the MoEYS should articulate their next cycle of strategic plan to conduct several studies of the Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization, theorized by Kools & Stoll (2016).

**Conclusion**

Quality education is becoming a global agenda for every country to strive for in their local contexts. Schools in the 21st century are argued to transform into learning organizations to prepare students for the uncertain, complex, and constantly changing environment. The Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization (Kools & Stoll, 2016) was conceptualized to offer a framework for transforming schools to learning organization through seven dimensions. Many schools in Europe have tested the model and Wales was the piloting country to apply the model in their school reform system.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has adopted national rectangular strategies in four phases and the newly adopted Pentagonal Strategy-phase 1, which aims to achieve the United Nation Sustainable Development Goal 2030 through growing human capitals for social-economic development. Having conducted a thorough content analysis of the national level policies and strategies, researcher found that the MoEYS’ policies and strategies for educational reform support the school transformation to learning organizations, despite an ambiguity in defining school as learning organization in the policy and strategy documents. The MoEYS has indicated its motivation and deliberation in improving school governance through its clear supporting ESP 2019-2023, Cambodia Education 2030 Roadmap, CDMPES, CSEB 2030 and CPDFTSD. The integrated leadership, namely transformational leadership, instructional leadership and distributed leadership (Papazoglou & Koutouzis, 2022) and learning leadership (Kools & Stoll, 2016) was argued to equip school leaders to effectively lead school transformation to learning organization. Therefore, the MoEYS should have a coherent leadership development policy to equip all educational leaders- POE, DOE officials and school directors with the integrated leadership skills. Moreover, we also recommend further decentralization and de-concentration reforms to reduce multi-layers of education administration from the national level- MoEYS to POE, to DOE and to school levels. Finally, the MoEYS should conduct feasibility study of the Integrated Model of School as Learning Organization in their next education strategic plan 2024-2028 to pave a way for developing Cambodian schools as learning organizations.

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### Appendix

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POE</td>
<td>Provincial Office of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSDP</td>
<td>National Strategic Development Plan</td>
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<td>ESP</td>
<td>Education Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>MoEYS</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports</td>
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<td>CSDG</td>
<td>Cambodian Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<td>RGC</td>
<td>Royal Government of Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>RS-PIV</td>
<td>Rectangular Strategy-Phase IV</td>
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<td>PS-PI</td>
<td>Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I</td>
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<tr>
<td>CER</td>
<td>Cambodia’s Education 2030 Roadmap</td>
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<td>SLO</td>
<td>School as Learning Organization</td>
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<td>NPLL</td>
<td>National Policy for Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>CPDFTSD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development Framework for Teachers and School Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDMPES</td>
<td>Capacity Development Masterplan in Education Sector</td>
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<td>TPAP</td>
<td>Teacher Policy Action Plan</td>
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<td>CSEB</td>
<td>Cambodia Secondary Education Blueprint 2030</td>
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<td>SIH</td>
<td>School Inspection Handbook</td>
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<td>DOE</td>
<td>District Office of Education</td>
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<td>PRESET</td>
<td>Pre-Service Teacher</td>
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<td>PTTC</td>
<td>Provincial Teacher Training Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIE</td>
<td>National Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPTEC</td>
<td>Phnom Penh Teacher Education College</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRESET</td>
<td>Pre-Service Teacher Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>INSET</td>
<td>In-Service Teacher Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEI</td>
<td>Teacher Education Institutions</td>
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<td>CQA</td>
<td>Concept of Quality Assurance</td>
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**Contact email:** bonin.hku@gmail.com