



**OUTCOME EVALUATION OF THE
EDUCATION CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND
(CDPF)
PHASE I AND II
Final Report – Volume I
July 2017 – February 2018
Cambodia**



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EVALUATION REPORT

MARCH 2018

**OUTCOME EVALUATION OF
THE EDUCATION CAPACITY
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Authors:

Frans Van Gerwen (Team Leader),
Anne Bernard, Marta Balestrini, Ok Amry, Heng Thou on
behalf of *Lattanzio Advisory SpA* - Via Aurelia 547, Rome,
Italy

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Directorate General of Policy and Planning, and
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OUTCOME EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND (CDPF) – PHASE I AND II: Final Report (Volume I)

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United Nations Children’s Fund
P.O. Box 176
Phnom Penh, Cambodia 12201
phnompenh@unicef.org

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The Outcome Evaluation of the Education Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) – Phase I and II was prepared by Frans Van Gerwen, Anne Bernard, Marta Balestrini, Amry Ok and Heng Thou, on behalf of Lattanzio Advisory SpA. The evaluation was jointly commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and UNICEF Cambodia, and managed by a team lead by Sar Sopheap (MoEYS) and Erica Mattellone (UNICEF), with support provided by Rasika Sridhar Sethi, Kimlong Sain, Phaloeuk Kong, Monique Rao, Cody Minnich and Elizabeth Fisher (UNICEF).

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Outcome Evaluation of the Education Capacity Development Partnership Fund

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Geographic Region of the Programme:	Nationwide
Timeline of the Evaluation:	July 2017 – February 2018
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Evaluators:	Frans Van Gerwen (Team Leader), Anne Bernard, Marta Balestrini, Ok Amry, Heng Thou on behalf of Lattanzio Advisory SpA - Via Aurelia 547, Rome, Italy
Name of the Organization Commissioning the Evaluation:	The Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) Steering Committee Secretariat, comprised of the Directorate General of Planning and Policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Cambodia

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Frans van Gerwen
Anne Bernard
Marta Balestrini
Amry Ok
Heng Thou

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the European Union (EU) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) established the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) in 2011 to support the implementation of the Ministry's Master Plan for Capacity Development 2011-2015 and the realization of the Education Strategic Plan for that same period. The CDPF is administered by UNICEF and managed as per UNICEF rules and regulations. UNICEF's role as Administrator of the Fund includes planning, administration, contracting, procurement of services and supplies, management of the funds, monitoring and reporting to the CDPF Steering Committee. The CDPF Steering Committee is co-chaired by MoEYS and the EU, and is composed of members from MoEYS, the EU, Sida and UNICEF. The CDPF Steering Committee is supported by a Secretariat, which is responsible for the management of CDPF, and it is composed of representatives of the Departments of Planning, Personnel and Finance of MoEYS along with UNICEF. Capacity support actions are implemented by MoEYS and UNICEF in partnership with Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) and Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) who implemented actions on the ground

The CDPF was implemented in two phases: Phase I from November 2011 to December 2014 and Phase II from January 2015 to December 2017. Phase III of CDPF will start in 2018.

The total budget for the entire CDPF period (2011-2017) was US\$ 30,384,405 and these funds were provided by the EU, Sida and UNICEF.

CDPF provides capacity development support to the education sector in Cambodia by supporting national MoEYS institutions and departments, provincial and district education offices, and schools. The focus of CDPF has been on achieving nationwide coverage of preschool, primary and secondary education, with special attention on provinces that are rural, remote and/or home to minority communities.

The reach of CDPF is system-wide, encompassing the institutional, organizational and individual layers of capacity development, and reaching out to individuals, organizations and organizational units in the education service delivery chain.

CDPF is a funding mechanism to complement capacity development interventions. It focuses on investments in structures, mechanisms and materials for education delivery. It also aims to improve capacity and skills development support for capacities and competencies which strengthen education delivery staff, so that they effectively use these structures and systems.

The overall objective of CDPF is "to enable effective leadership and management of the education sector at all levels through systematic capacity development thereby enabling implementation of the Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018".

The outcome areas of the current CDPF (Phase II) are: i) to develop evidence-based policies based on research and comprehensive dialogue; ii) to strengthen results-oriented planning, policy and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at all levels; iii) to ensure that Government financing is based on equity and quality and is ensuring financial accountability; iv) to efficiently deploy and manage personnel (MoEYS and teachers) through systematic capacity development mechanisms; and v) to ensure equity in and quality of education service delivery.

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Intended Users: In July 2017, UNICEF contracted Lattanzio Advisory SpA to provide evidence-based findings and conclusions on CDPF implementation and to present recommendations to inform the formulation of CDPF Phase III (2018-2021). The evaluation, which covers both Phase I and II, responds to accountability requirements for CDPF implementation towards donors, MoEYS, teachers and children, but also provides more general lessons for capacity development interventions in the education sector. The objectives of the evaluation were to analyse and assess the CDPF approach to capacity development; outcomes achieved in capacity development at national and sub-

national levels; collaboration and coordination within MoEYS and with external partners; financing, management and governance arrangements around CDPF; and use of existing knowledge and practices in capacity development by CDPF.

The primary audience of this evaluation includes different national and sub-national entities of MoEYS; the Education Section of UNICEF Cambodia; as well as VSO and CARE, the implementing partners of CDPF; and the EU and Sida, the supporting development partners.

Evaluation Methodology: The evaluation is primarily an outcome evaluation at all implementation levels, with a focus on outcomes obtained at the provincial and district level. Mixed methods were used, including a desk review, case studies, semi-structured key informant interviews, group interviews, focus group discussions and document review of planning and reporting documents at district and provincial level (over 500 documents). In total 711 (210 women) respondents participated in the field research; additionally, 742 survey forms were completed by provincial and district level MoEYS staff and by School Directors. In addition, two national briefing and debriefing workshops were organized with all direct stakeholders in CDPF for planning research activities and making sense of research findings.

The evaluation combined research at the national and sub-national level. Field research was conducted in 12 districts in 6 provinces and the survey was conducted in 42 districts in 18 provinces. These districts and provinces were selected through a stratified random selection process, ensuring that those sampled were representative of the whole country. Ethical guidelines were followed at all stages of data collection and analysis.

Main Findings and Conclusions:

On outcome realization

CDPF has achieved verifiable, significant outcomes at the individual and institutional levels of capacity development, but less at the organizational level. Many individual staff members of MoEYS at all levels have benefited from capacity development activities. These individuals show increased awareness of policies and systems and can apply formats and instruments for educational planning and management and for data collection for different management and information systems.

At the institutional level, policies and systems (particularly planning and management information systems) were developed, disseminated and implemented at national and sub-national level.

Capacity development outcomes at the organizational level were less pronounced, and this was mainly because capacity development, particularly in the first years, focused on training and workshops. Capacity effects over time often decrease considerably because individuals are mobile. More attention was gradually given to longer-term and organization-focused capacity development, particularly in the CDPF funded projects of VSO and CARE.

Most capacity development changes occurred at the national level, but much less change could be observed at the sub-national level, particularly at the provincial level.

At the district and school level, however, capacity development effects were less visible, while capacity constraints at this level were much more pronounced.

Most outcomes were obtained under outcome area 2 of CDPF: education planning and management and Education Management Information System (EMIS) which received most of the CDPF budget. Significant improvements in planning were realized: central and provincial level MoEYS entities structurally developed Annual Operational Plans and Education Strategic Plans. While improved planning capacities of provincial offices of education could be widely verified, planning capacities at the district and school level have remained limited, as can be observed in the quality of Annual Operational Plans and School Development Plans.

Data collection and processing capacity for EMIS has improved significantly. Data in EMIS are now more timely and reliable and annual statistical reports on education are comprehensive,

although they contain limited analysis to enable that data can be used and translated into new policies and action plans.

Under both outcome area 3 (financial management) and 4 (human resource management), outcomes were less pronounced than under education planning and management. While financial (FMIS) and human resource (HRMIS) management information systems and formats were rolled out and instructions were provided for data collection, the systems were not always operational at the provincial level due to technical difficulties.

Despite growing gender and equity awareness, quality and equity of education service delivery (CDPF outcome area 5) have not shown significant changes. Quality and equity were mainly operationalized through focused support to the north-eastern provinces, the ethnic minority region of Cambodia, by VSO and CARE.

Research for policy development (outcome area 1) has received limited attention and therefore results are still emerging towards the end of CDPF implementation.

On relevance

CDPF was well aligned with Royal Government of Cambodia and MoEYS policies as well as international development partners' strategies. MoEYS has shown strong commitment to and ownership of CDPF.

The CDPF approach on capacity development was not sufficiently programmatic and long-term; it has focused strongly on the individual and institutional level (policies and systems), but was less developed at the organizational level.

CDPF, as a flexible fund, was not based on a long-term and programmatic approach to capacity development and served to provide seed-money to match many priority needs.

On effectiveness

Effectiveness of CDPF at the district level is challenged due to significant and persisting capacity constraints at this level. Available staffing and budgets of district level education management and delivery entities are seriously constrained to perform their multiple tasks. This has also limited their capacity to absorb more capacity development support provided by CDPF.

Capacity development support provided by CDPF has focused on producing and extracting information from the local and school level for management information systems and clear results have been obtained in this area. Less support was given to MoEYS staff, particularly at provincial, district and school level, to analyse and interpret data and to translate these into strategies and action plans and thus produce outcomes at the sub-national level.

Long-term, on-the-job support provided by VSO and CARE focusing on disadvantaged provinces and districts has increased the reach of CDPF to rural and remote areas and was much appreciated by provincial and district offices of education, and schools. This support was mostly provided in disadvantaged locations, as a strategic priority of these non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Coordination in the education sector has improved, contributing to improved effectiveness of education capacity development interventions. In particular, MoEYS's leadership in the national Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) is strong, contributing to effective development and implementation of policies and programmes. At the provincial level, experience was built in coordination in the Provincial JTWGs (P-JTWGs), although these working groups were not always fully functional. At district level, coordination is still less common.

Coordination challenges exist between different technical departments of MoEYS and with other ministries, for example in the framework of the national reform process of Decentralization and De-concentration.

Some P-JTWGs are not yet fully functional and provincial offices of education need more capacities to deal with multi-stakeholder cooperation at the provincial level.

On efficiency

A considerable extent of fragmentation and short-term planning have challenged efficiency of CDPF implementation. The implementation of CDPF under separate outcome areas, in combination with the compartmentalized structure of MoEYS to implement education policies and strategies, has challenged a strategic approach to capacity development.

The short timeframes of the two CDPF phases have made it difficult to report on CDPF at the outcome level (most reporting was output- and sometimes even input-based) and have also caused some inefficiency because of the need for new planning documents and concept notes for extension and follow-up phases of CDPF.

Monitoring and reporting of CDPF was good, though more focused at the level of output and financial reporting. It has been less adequate in providing good outcome-level reporting.

On equity and gender equality

Equity and gender equality were not strongly developed as crosscutting dimensions. Women's involvement in the education delivery system has remained largely at the lower levels of the bureaucracy, mostly in teaching in preschools and primary schools. Women tend to disappear higher up in the system, particularly at management level.

Although more gender-disaggregated information has become available, capacity for gender analysis and for translating gender analysis into action has remained limited at all levels of MoEYS, and this challenge has received limited attention in CDPF.

The rural-urban education gap in education delivery remains significant, and there are many challenges in remote districts that require special attention. In CDPF, attention was given to remote districts mainly by VSO and CARE.

On sustainability

Sustainability of capacity development interventions is limited, particularly at the organisational level. Capacities over time tend to decrease a considerable extent when looking at organizational and team-level capacity. This is particularly the case when capacity development is done merely at the individual level and when it is not well embedded in human resource management policies and staff planning.

MoEYS shows commitment to provide future follow-up on capacity development. During CDPF Phase I and II, MoEYS has regularly matched CDPF funds with its own funds, and this provides a good start for strengthening sustainability during the next CDPF phase.

Lessons Learned: The following lessons were learned in this evaluation of CDPF that are more widely applicable for capacity enhancement processes in the education sector: i) capacity development requires a **long-term and well-focused step-by-step approach**; ii) **consultation and participation** of multiple stakeholders in interventions are crucial for inclusiveness of planning and implementation; iii) adult learning methods such as **coaching and mentoring** enhance the possibility of capacity development, producing more relevant and sustainable outcomes; iv) working on **capacity development at the organizational level and measuring** it is needed for effective capacity development at all levels; v) a **cascading approach** to capacity development is needed to cover the whole country and; vi) dealing with **willingness for risk-taking and innovation in organisations** is important for successful and effective change.

Main Recommendations: The following recommendations were prioritised and clustered by the key stakeholders in the evaluation and are presented herein in order of priority.

- **Focused programmatic approach to CDPF Phase III:** MoEYS and UNICEF should develop a focused and programmatic approach in CDPF Phase III, while maintaining

the flexible nature of CDPF as much as possible. MoEYS should ensure that CDPF Phase III remains well aligned with its Master Plan for Capacity Development and corresponding theory of change. MoEYS and UNICEF, the EU and Sida in the JTWG should increase their efforts to coordinate and harmonize actions with other actors in wider education delivery and in strengthening decentralization processes.

- **Comprehensive approach to capacity development:** MoEYS and UNICEF should develop a comprehensive approach to capacity development, with increased attention to developing capacities for data analysis and translation into policies and action plans, realization of consultative and inclusive planning processes, meaningful gender mainstreaming and team, and organization level capacity development. In CDPF Phase III, MoEYS could furthermore consider piloting and introducing performance-based management mechanisms to support capacity development of provincial and district offices of education, and schools.
- **Functional review of education delivery at district level:** MoEYS should undertake a comprehensive functional review of education delivery structures and entities at the district level to identify the capacity constraints faced by these different entities at the local level.
- **More capacity development at local level:** In CDPF Phase III, MoEYS and UNICEF should continue to strengthen the process of sub-national capacity development assistance, particularly in rural and remote areas, reaching out more effectively to the district and school level, including continuing to work with NGOs like VSO and CARE to provide tailor-made and long-term on-the-job capacity development assistance, and ensuring that VSO and CARE work in a coordinated and complementary way. It is recommended that MoEYS looks at experiences and results obtained by CARE and integrates these in an approach to strengthen accountability functions of school support committees.
- **Appropriate M&E and baseline for capacity development:** At the start of CDPF Phase III, MoEYS and UNICEF need to introduce a comprehensive M&E system and indicators that include not only output, but also outcome indicators at the individual, organizational and institutional level, starting with a CDPF Phase III baseline.
- **Timely exit strategy:** It is recommended that UNICEF and other development partners develop a clear and timely transfer and exit strategy right from the start of CDPF Phase III.
- **Gender responsive planning:** MoEYS should develop and integrate gender-responsive planning and targets in its human resource management policies and capacity development provisions.
- **Multi-stakeholder coordination at the provincial and district level:** UNICEF should provide specific support to capacity development of MoEYS, provincial and district offices of education in leading multi-stakeholder coordination in JTWGs in the education sector.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AOP	Annual Operational Plan
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ATP	Advanced Training Programme
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBO	community-based organization
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CDPF	Capacity Development Partnership Fund
CFS	Child Friendly School
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan (UNICEF)
CSO	civil society organization
D&D	Decentralization and De-concentration
DEMIS	Department of Education Management Information System
DGPP	Directorate General of Policy and Planning (MoEYS)
DME	Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (MoEYS)
DOE	district office of education
DoF	Department of Finance (MoEYS)
DoP	Department of Planning (MoEYS)
DP	development partner
DPer	Department of Personnel (MoEYS)
DPP	Department of Policy and Planning (MoEYS)
DTMT	District Training and Monitoring Team
EAPRO	Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EM	Evaluation Matrix
EMA	Education Management Advisor
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPA	Education Project Assistant
EPM	Education Planning and Management
EQ	evaluation question
EQAD	Education Quality Assurance Department
ERC	Education Research Council
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
EU	European Union
FGD	focus group discussion
FMIS	Financial Management Information System
FTI-EFA	Education Fast Track Initiative for Education for All (now GPE)
GMSP	Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management

HRMIS	Human Resource Management Information System
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IP	implementing partner
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JTWG	Joint Technical Working Group
KII	key informant interview
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCFA	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
MIS	Management Information System
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoInf	Ministry of Information
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoCS	Ministry of Civil Service
MPCD	Master Plan for Capacity Development
MTR	Mid-term Review
NatComs	National Committees
NCDD	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIE	National Institute of Education
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
PB	programme-based budget
PBM	performance-based management
PCA	Programme Cooperation Agreement
P-ESP	provincial Education Strategic Plan
P-ESWG	provincial Education Sector Working Group
P-JWTG	provincial Joint Technical Working Group
POE	provincial office of education
QEMIS	Quality Education Management Information System
RBM	results-based management
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
RTTC	Regional Teacher Training Centre
RUPP	Royal University of Phnom Penh
SBM	school-based management
SC	School Cluster
SD	School Director
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	School Development Plan

SEM	Strengthening Education Management
Sida	Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency
SIF	School Improvement Fund
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SOB	School Operating Budget
SSC	School Support Committee
TA	Technical Assistance
TCP	Teacher Career Pathway
TD	Teacher Deployment
ToC	theory of change
ToR	terms of reference
TPAP	Teacher Policy Action Plan
TTC	Teacher Training College
TTD	Teacher Training Department
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSO	Volunteer Services Overseas
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

COUNTRY MAP WITH RESEARCH SITES

Figure 1: Map with field visit (case study) and survey locations



Legend: Survey and Case Study visits locations: ○ Additional Survey locations: ★

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1. Context and Background of the Evaluation

1.1. Introduction to the report

This report presents the outcome evaluation of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), Phase I and II, implemented from 2011 to 2017. The evaluation research was conducted in the period July 2017 – February 2018 by an independent international team¹ of Lattanzio Advisory SpA contracted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Cambodia.

This evaluation was managed by an evaluation management team of UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) with technical support provided by a reference group of UNICEF, MoEYS and supporting development partners.

The evaluation focuses on outcomes obtained by CDPF-funded interventions after seven years of implementation. The evaluation fed into the development and implementation of a new phase of CDPF that is expected to start in 2018, while also providing more general lessons for capacity development interventions in the education sector.

This report consists of seven sections. This first section provides the context and background to the evaluation and is followed by section two that presents the evaluation purpose, objectives and scope. Section three introduces the evaluation approach and methodology. Section four presents an analysis of the main outcomes that were obtained under the different outcome areas and levels of CDPF and presents the main findings on the evaluation criteria specified in the terms of reference (ToR) (included in Annex 1). Section five presents the main evaluation conclusions and section six includes main lessons learned. The final section, seven, presents the evaluation recommendations. All annexes are included in Volume II.

1.2. Context of CDPF: Socio-economic, political and educational sector context

1.2.1. Socio-economic context

Cambodia has seen significant social and economic transformation in the last decade. As a result, the country moved toward lower middle-income status in 2015 and stronger economic integration within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The country is also adopting policies to support increased decentralization and equity distribution of resources, while shifting from establishing systems and developing capacity to more efficient performance of systems and use of capacity.²

The current National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2014-2018 presents a forward-looking and proactive planning model that has changed the perspective from negative to positive, from poverty reduction to economic development.

These developments are gradual and significant variance persists. While poverty rates in monetary terms have declined since 2007 from 47.2 per cent to 18.6 per cent in 2012, significant geographic disparities exist, with poverty rates ranging from around 15 per cent in Phnom Penh, up to 37 per cent in the mostly rural north east.³ According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), “vulnerability to poverty has increased” as more families live just at the poverty line, and while urban poverty appears to be rising, some 90 per cent of those

¹ Bios of the evaluation team are included in Annex 19 of Volume II. The evaluation team consisted of national and international consultants and was gender-balanced with three women and two men. The team combined education sector and capacity development expertise with evaluation research expertise.

² The Royal Government of Cambodia-UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan 2016 – 2018: 4.

³ The Royal Government of Cambodia-UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan 2016 – 2018: 4.

classed as poor are still in rural areas, have larger families and lower levels of education.⁴ While income poverty has decreased over the past decade, challenges remain, particularly in Cambodia's weaker performance in improving people's access to basic services.⁵

Since 2005, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) started giving more attention to decentralized governance. A Strategic Framework for Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) Reforms was adopted in June 2005, in which key characteristics of sub-national administration principles and structural arrangements were laid out. The main objective of the reform was "to create a sub-national governance system that will operate with transparency and accountability to promote local development and delivery of public services to meet the needs of citizens and contribute to poverty reduction within the respective territories"⁶. Despite considerable progress made in the formulation of laws and policies to transfer functions and resources to the sub-national government, the D&D process is suffering delays and is still far from complete.

1.2.2. The education sector in Cambodia

The education system in Cambodia has been under reconstruction since the devastation experienced during 20 years of civil war and Khmer Rouge rule. Thanks to strong national commitment, much progress has been made since the end of the civil war, but a great deal remains to be done. Beginning in the 1980s, the RGC started almost from bare ground in (re)building schools, recruiting new students and teachers, seeking financial and technical support, and developing policies and guidelines for development. The new education system was established despite a very scant human resources base, with much of the expertise coming from former Cambodian refugees returning from North America and Europe. The limited economic resources available for building the physical infrastructure of the education sector and the considerable pressure made by donors to achieve the international Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets within 5-year plan periods, have further increased the demand on national actors in the education sector to concretely build capacity, develop it for effective application and, at the same time, deliver quality services to achieve these international goals.⁷

In March 2015, the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) recognized important achievements⁸ obtained in education service delivery by MoEYS in the past years,⁹ but at the same time the ESWG also noted that, despite significant efforts, some of the indicators (such as completion rates in primary and secondary; drop-outs, particularly at the secondary level)

⁴ ADB. "Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis". 2014: x.

⁵ ADB. "Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis". 2014: xii.

⁶ RGC. Strategic Framework for Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) Reforms, 17 June 2015.

⁷ The Royal Government of Cambodia – UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan 2016 – 2018: 8; Annex 1: Description of the Action - EU-Sweden-UNICEF Contribution Agreement, CDPF II (2014).

⁸ These achievements included:

- Launching of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP, 2014 – 18) in March 2014;
- Continued increase of the National Budget for Education in 2014 and 2015;
- Realization of education reforms, such as the successful implementation of the Grade 12 Examination Administration Reform in 2014;
- Adoption of the Higher Education Vision 2030;
- Approval of Teacher Policy Action Plan (TPAP);
- Establishment of the Education Research Council (ERC);
- Realization of the national literacy campaign in 2015;
- Establishing internal and external quality assurance (EQA) in Higher Education; and
- Focus of MoEYS on curriculum review as one of the top priorities in the ESP, as the curriculum is at the centre of the education system.

⁹ In Annex 4, an overview of development of core education statistics during the CDPF implementation period is provided, as a background and cross-reference to the findings presented in this section.

are not progressing as much as they should. Also, the number of primary school teachers in the country is decreasing rather than increasing.¹⁰

In addition to these concerns, some other significant and persistent challenges were identified in the document review and interviews for this evaluation. These include: i) delays in the ongoing D&D reform process; ii) limited demand for better access and quality in education; iii) persisting challenges in the enrolment of children in lower and higher secondary education; iv) continuing inadequate and insecure environment at school; and v) restricted gender equality. More details on these challenges are provided in Annex 5.

1.3. Development of education budget and expenditures in the past decade

With the growth of Cambodia's economy and achieving lower middle-income country status in 2015, the education sector has continued to be one of the most important focuses of state expenditures, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Recurrent budget allocation to education sector 2007-2017 (in millions of US\$)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
MoEYS Budget	121.37	149.88	170.74	175.38	196.22	224.75	262.50	321.03	367.58	456.35	590.46
Total National Budget	632.13	828.08	1,004.36	1,069.39	1,182.05	1,413.55	1,693.54	1,981.64	2,149.58	2,493.74	3,226.56
% Education in National Budget	19.2%	18.1%	17.0%	16.4%	16.6%	15.9%	15.5%	16.2%	17.1%	18.3%	18.3%

Sources: Budget Law 2007-2017 and Budget Settlement Law 2007-2015; Ministry of Planning (MoP), National Account 1993-2016, 2016.; RGC Circular on 2018 Budget Preparation. Note: These budget allocations include Official Development Assistance (ODA).

In the past ten years, annual budget allocations to the education sector have oscillated around 17 per cent of the national budget. However, it is clearly notable that since 2007, when the allocation to education was the highest percentage of the decade, following the global economic crisis of 2008, percent of budget allocations to education decreased for the next five years, from 19.2 per cent in 2007 to 15.5 per cent in 2013 – the lowest level of the entire period. From 2014 onwards, however, the direction reversed, reaching 18.3 per cent in 2016, almost as high as in the pre-crisis year of 2007. In 2017, exactly a decade later, allocation of national budget to education was the same as in 2016 at 18.3 per cent. Having said that, the MoEYS nominal budget increased over the same period.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) for the education sector in 2016 was considerable,¹¹ totalling more than US\$ 90 million, almost 20 per cent of the entire education budget, a major increase over the 2015 allocation of US\$ 61 million. Among the ten development partners, the European Union (EU) provided the largest amount of financial support, followed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF.¹² The most important donors in the education sector are shown in the table below.

¹⁰ Education Sector Working Group, meeting minutes, March 2015.

¹¹ On the OECD/DAC Aid at a Glance Website, the average percentage of ODA in Cambodia allocated to the education sector in 2015-2016 was 9 per cent. Refer to: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/aid-at-a-glance.htm>

¹² Education Congress Report 2017: 8.

Table 2: Aid financing of Top 10 development partners in education sector (in thousands of US\$)

No.	Donor	Expenditure 2014	Expenditure 2015	Expenditure 2016	Planned 2017	Planned 2018
1	European Union	1,021	8,498	24,149	28,615	—
2	World Food Programme	9,958	8,910	14,90	—	—
3	UNICEF	7,227	6,997	9,065	6,560	3,375
4	ADB	509	5,500	4,600	5,200	3,200
5	Sweden	11,948	7,914	3,975	139	—
6	World Bank	7,489	1,736	3,888	9,171	10,801
7	Japan	6,503	8,987	3,714	2,834	2,719
8	Republic of Korea	1,432	3,723	2,649	2,800	—
9	New Zealand	3,082	1,128	2,635	550	852
10	USA	6,334	7,206	2,233	—	—
Total amount from top 10 donors		55,503	60,599	71,820	55,871	21,310
Total amount from all donors		55,837	61,358	90,484	58,258	21,624

Source: Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC), ODA Database accessed on January 30, 2017. Amounts in US\$ and Education Congress Report 2016-2017.

Now that Cambodia has graduated to lower middle-income status, several development partners (DPs) are beginning to decrease their commitments and the amount of support to be maintained in the future is not certain.

1.4. Object of the evaluation: The Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF)

By the beginning of this decade, research and evaluations in the education sector increasingly recognized that capacity development interventions in the Cambodian education sector “were not sufficient to bring about comprehensive and sustainable improvement because they focused mainly on individual department functions without sufficient attention to the interfaces between them.”¹³ Within the MoEYS, capacity development thus far was largely taking place on a department-by-department basis in a strongly divided ministerial structure, with no strong mechanisms for coordination of activities and cooperation between different units or levels within the ministry.

To address this challenge, MoEYS, UNICEF, the EU and Sida took the initiative to promote and develop a more coherent approach to capacity building, resulting in the publication of the Ministry’s Capacity Development Master Plan (MPCD) in 2011. Considered a significant step forward, this plan recognized that capacity development needed to happen “at the individual, organizational and institutional levels and also that it needs to embrace the different administrative levels, namely the sector overall, central capacity of MoEYS, provincial and district level capacity for improved service delivery (in line with D&D reform¹⁴) and at school/community levels.”¹⁵

¹³ Seel, Amanda. 2012. A Brief Situational Analysis of Capacity Development in the Cambodian Education Sector, 2011-2012.

¹⁴ In 2005 the Strategic Framework for D&D Reforms was adopted by the Councils of Ministers to endorse the development of the management systems at provincial, district and commune levels in order to promote local development and delivery of public services to meet the needs of citizens.

¹⁵ In International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), (2012, pp. 20-21) these levels are described as follows:
 - Institutional capacities refer to rules, procedures, and processes that countries have in place to regulate, plan, and manage execution of development, rule of law, and other functions of state. It is important not to confuse

The CDPF was set up as an immediate response of MoEYS, UNICEF, the EU and Sida to the establishment and start-up of the MPCD 2011-2015 (and later MPCD 2014-2018). After the design and planning of the Fund was designed in November 2011, the first phase of CDPF was started. CDPF was further guided by the frameworks of national Education for All/Millennium Development Goals (EFA/MDG), the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) (2009-2013 and 2014-2018), and the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2009-2013 and 2014-2018). The “modality of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund”, provided “un-earmarked funding for implementation of its key activities” as identified in Annual Operational Plans (AOPs).¹⁶ CDPF was implemented over two phases: 2011-2014 and 2015-2017.¹⁷

CDPF provides support to the education sector in Cambodia at the national level, extending from support to national MoEYS institutions and departments to provincial and district education offices and to schools. The focus of CDPF has been on nation-wide pre-school, primary and secondary education, with special attention to disadvantaged provinces in rural and remote areas and in minority regions. Over time, the framing of CDPF objectives and strategic outcomes has evolved in accordance with changes in national policy and sector dynamics, including refinements in and subsequent phases of the MPCD and ESP. In general, however, the Fund has retained its initial mandate of providing flexible, responsive budget and technical support. This is to ensure that individuals and organizational structures of the education system, and the system as a whole, *as duty bearers*, have and can effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, intellectual competencies and technical skills. Those are necessary to improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of the education provided to children and their families, especially the most vulnerable, *as rights holders*. The total reach of CDPF is illustrated in the table below; however, there is no overall estimate of the total number of staff that have participated in, and benefited from, CDPF-funded activities throughout its two implementation phases. A detailed stakeholder analysis is included in Annex 7 of this report.

Table 3: Reach of CDPF to duty bearers and rights holders in education delivery in Cambodia

Duty bearers	Focus and target-groups of CDPF interventions	Specific target groups and participants during whole CDPF implementation
MoEYS central level (19 technical departments, National Institute for Education (NIE) and Education Resource Council (ERC))	MoEYS departments: Department of Education Management Information System (DEMIS), Department of Finance (DoF), Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DME), Department of Planning (DoP), Department of Personnel (DPer), Department of Policy and Planning (DPP), NIE, ERC	Management and staff of technical departments
25 POEs	Nation-wide, special attention for disadvantaged regions	Management and staff of Provincial Offices of Education (POEs)

this description of institutional capacities with specific institutions, such as, for example, an educational establishment or a ministry.

- Organizational capacities describe ministry and stakeholder arrangements and structures that operate within the institutional rules and contexts noted above, and shape behaviour and functioning of various actors in performing tasks.
- Individual level capacities can take a variety of forms of skills, such as technical, functional, and leadership skills. The technical and functional skills of the planning staff can in themselves provide a wealth of capacities that are essential for the effective operation of the planning system. In addition, leadership skills are important, especially at the sector-wide level, in setting strategic directions for the sector, in supporting the planning function, and in obtaining political support.

¹⁶ Seel, Amanda. 2012. “A Brief Situational Analysis”: 6.

¹⁷ Each CDPF period was originally a two-year plan, with a final third year extension. The first phase of CDPF started in November, bringing the total CDPF implementation period to six years and two months.

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	and ethnic minority regions (also by VSO and CARE)	
165 DOEs	Nation-wide, special attention for disadvantaged regions and ethnic minority regions (also by VSO and CARE)	Management and staff of District offices of Education (DOEs) and related district level organizations/structures (District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMTs) and School Clusters (SCs))
12,899 schools (preschool, primary, secondary). 92,444 teaching staff (51% women) 18,704 non-teaching staff (27% women)	Nationwide, special attention for disadvantaged regions and ethnic minority regions (also by VSO and CARE)	School Directors (SDs) and Deputy Directors (teaching and non-teaching staff) and members of School Support Committees (SSCs) As focus of CDPF was on SDs, where representation of women is lower than average, women's participation in CDPF-funded activities was lower than average at an estimated 27% ¹⁸
Rights holders		
3 million students (49.3% girls) and their families and care-takers	Nationwide, special attention for disadvantaged regions and ethnic minority regions (also by VSO and CARE)	No direct participation in CDPF-funded activities, but indirectly benefiting by improved conditions and quality of education delivery in the classroom and by capacity development support to school management and School Support Committees

Source: Public Education Statistics and Indicators 2016-2017, DEMIS, MoEYS, 2017, CDPF reports.

CDPF is focusing on capacity development in education service delivery in a wide range of areas: evidence-based policy formulation, comprehensive planning, competent leadership, coherent management, and frequent and consistent monitoring. The reach of CDPF is system-wide: on individuals, organizational units and organizations in the education service delivery chain, delivery mechanisms and policy and programme structures at national, provincial, district and school levels.

CDPF is a flexible capacity-oriented fund rather than a rigorously capacity-focused project. It is “an ambitious and multi-faceted programme supporting many different organizations and institutions through multiple interventions and approaches,”¹⁹ and as such its activities are broad, covering different areas and activities under five categories or outcome areas: Evidence-Based Research, Education Management Information System (EMIS), Financial Management Information System (FMIS), Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) and Quality and Equity of Education. CDPF is often described as a funding mechanism, with the intention to complement development interventions that focus on investments and infrastructure for education delivery. These are supported by the ADB, among others, to develop capacities and competencies of education delivery staff to ensure structures and mechanisms actually function and materials are effectively and responsively applied.

CDPF was divided in two phases and the basic characteristics of the two CDPF phases are presented below.

¹⁸ The figure of 27 per cent for women's participation in CDPF is based on the composition of the survey respondent group (753 respondents in total), which is believed to be representative for the average staff composition at POE, DOE and School Director's level.

¹⁹ Refer to: EU, UNICEF (2014c) Description of Action: EU-Sweden-UNICEF Contribution Agreement, CDPF II 2014: 18.

1.4.1. CDPF Phase I and II

CDPF Phase I was originally designed for implementation in the period from November 2011 to the end of 2013 (two years and two months). In 2013, an extra year was added to the original programme. The overall budget for the entire programme implementation period of November 2011 to December 2014 was US\$ 14.1 million, and the final Phase I report showed total spending of US\$ 13,734,759, corresponding with 97 per cent budget depletion rate in that period.

CDPF Phase II originally had a two-year horizon. To align CDPF with the planning horizons of the RGC, the EU and Sida, it was decided to add an extension (or bridging) year in 2017 to allow the start of CDPF Phase III in January 2018. CDPF's original budget for the period 2015-2016 was US\$ 10,992,185.²⁰ With the one year-extension, the budget was increased by US\$ 5,292,220 for 2017, for a total budget of US\$ 16,284,405 for the entire phase. The total spent in 2015-2016 was US\$ 9,555,125, corresponding to an 87 per cent implementation rate in the first two years of CDPF II.

The objectives of CDPF Phase I are slightly different from the sub-objectives of Phase II (whose overall objective was "to enable effective leadership and management of the education sector at all levels through systematic capacity development thereby enabling implementation of the ESP 2014-2018"), as shown in the table below.

Table 4: CDPF Phase I and II objectives

CDPF Phase I objectives	CDPF Phase II sub-objectives
1. To strengthen MoEYS capacity in education planning, management and monitoring for improved education service delivery, sector performance and outcomes	1. To strengthen [national] MoEYS capacity in planning, monitoring, public financial management, policy implementation and management of education reforms for improved sector performance
2. To strengthen capacities at national and sub-national levels to sustain coherence and synergy between macro- and sector-level reform processes for improved education service delivery and governance, especially public financial management, D&D and civil service/administrative reforms	2. To strengthen capacities at [sub-national] provincial and district levels to plan, manage, monitor and ensure effective implementation of policies for improved education service delivery
3. To strengthen MoEYS capacities for improved absorptive capacity, improved system efficiency, education service delivery and accountability systems	3. To strengthen school-level capacity and accountability in relation to planning, financing and management to increase participation and learning

During the implementation of CDPF Phase I, annual planning documents were produced to ensure close alignment with the development and implementation of the MPCD 2011-2015. Six outcome areas were identified that were condensed into five outcome areas in Phase II, which were largely the same, with one exception: in Phase I, more attention was given to capacity of the National Institute for Education (NIE), while in Phase II this support was included under the outcome area on education planning and management.

Phase I of CDPF aimed to realize system strengthening at the national level – to plan, manage and monitor for improved education service delivery, sector performance and outcomes. At the sub-national level, it aimed to establish synergies and sustain coherence within the overall sector reform process, especially with respect to financial management, D&D and administration.

In Phase II, the sub-national level support became gradually more important to strengthen capacities for local management and education service delivery. The establishment of the Education Research Council (ERC) has been one effect of increasing interest in building a stronger research base for more strategic education thinking. This went together with CDPF

²⁰ See Annex 8: Analysis of budget implementation and expenditures during CDPF Phase I and II.

funding of master's degrees in education of MoEYS staff at national and subnational level at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP).

In both phases, a multi-level capacity development approach was also applied; however, in CDPF Phase I the focus was on the individual and institutional levels, and in Phase II gradually more attention was given to organizational capacity development.

The most important outputs and intermediate outcomes that were reported during both phases of CDPF are listed in the table below.

Table 5: Summary of intermediate outcomes and main outputs supported by CDPF Phase I and II

<p>Outcome area 1: Evidence-based policies are developed based on research and dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERC established • 5 ERC research papers with relevant policy recommendations published • Other research ongoing • Start-up of action research projects by VSO
<p>Outcome area 2: Results-oriented planning, policy, M&E / EMIS practice / exercise at all levels (including outcome area 6 of CDPF Phase I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESP 2014-2018 approved and mid-term review (MTR) conducted • International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) advanced and specialized training for MoEYS staff and POE staff on education planning & management by NIE/IIEP* • Provision of transportation means to DOEs* • Policy and master plan for research in education section developed • NIE staff trained in IIEP Specialised Courses, Advanced Training Programme (ATP) and the IIEP Blended Course on basic concepts and techniques of education planning (2012 and 2013) • Research and case studies on education management and planning and education reform published • Three training programmes developed by NIE and delivered to POE, DOE and School Directors (SDs) • Teacher Policy Action Plan (TPAP) 2014-2018 published • NIE's new Virtual Documentation Resource Library operational** • Provincial Joint Technical Working Group (P-JTWG) meetings supported in most provinces • Technical departments of MoEYS produce AOPs* • MoEYS has produced Functional Mapping Report and a Draft Policy on D&D* • Training courses provided on RBM in ECE sector and on Community Learning Centres* • All POEs produce quality AOPs and reports. More than 50% of DOEs produce AOPs. Some POEs produce provincial Education Strategic Plans (P-ESPs) (Phase I & II) • All POEs operate EMIS without support and QEMIS with support of DEMIS • Coaching of POEs and DOEs on education management (VSO-Strengthening Education Management (SEM) project) (Phase I & II)
<p>Outcome area 3: Government financing based on equity and quality and with financial accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prakas 508 (on principles of expenditure for carrying out programme-based budget (PB) of MoEYS) approved* • Internal Audit Department introduced standard internal audit tool at school level and gradual increase in schools audited (both Phase I and II) • All budget entities are using FMIS system • All schools receive school grants/PB through bank transfer • 20 per cent (out of 12 per cent target) of schools with low budget execution receive refresher training on School Improvement Grant/School Operating Budget (SIG/SOB) • Publication of D&D Policy, but implementation constrained: piloting new organizational structure or transfer of functions at sub-national level developed in line with D&D reform has not started. Training was provided to SDs and Deputy Directors
<p>Outcome area 4: Efficient deployment and management of personnel (MoEYS and teachers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource (HR) Policy approved in November 2012* • Actualization of Human Resource Management (HRM) Policy and monitoring implementation of the HRM Policy • English and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) upgrading of staff at national and sub-national level (Phase I & II) • Implementation of the TPAP • NIE, Teacher Training Department (TTD) and Regional Teacher Training Centre (RTTC) staff members and MoEYS planning and management staff (national and POE- level) followed master's degree courses • Human Resource Policy Action Plan was approved and is implemented by MoEYS • Gender education review in education 2012-2013 and gender-based leadership published* • Training POEs and DOEs in HRMIS (Phase I & II) • HRMIS implementation rolled out at sub-national level and HRMIS data reviewed (Phase I & II)

Outcome area 5: Equity and quality of education service delivery

- Training SDs in management and administration*
- Training on Gender Mainstreaming in Education*
- Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan published
- National EFA workshop on EFA review report*
- Primary School Support Committee (SSC) Guideline approved in September 2012 and distributed to all provinces
- Development of trainers' manuals on the roles of (primary) SSCs in ethnically diverse areas
- Analysis of multi-lingual education published*
- SIG Management Manual, Early Childhood Education (ECE), Primary Education and Secondary Education Manual published*
- Support to schools in developing quality School Development Plans (SDPs) and SIG proposals
- CARE Strengthening School Management project in Monduliri and Ratanakiri (Phase I & II)
- Girls counselling programme piloted
- Training of staff in application of improved inspection services and formats
- Technical support to grade 12 assessment reform and data analysis (Phase I & II)

Source: UNICEF, narrative reports CDPF 2011-2014 and 2015-2016.

* Activities during Phase I reorganized under the outcome areas of CDPF Phase II.

** Activity during Phase II reorganized under outcome area 6 of CDPF Phase I.

In CDPF Phase I the focus was nationwide, targeting technical departments in MoEYS, particularly the Department of Planning (DoP),²¹ and gradually reaching out to other technical departments and subnational entities such as Provincial Offices of Education (POEs), District Offices of Education (DOEs) and schools under MoEYS control in the entire country. The focus shifted gradually to the sub-national level, particularly in Phase II.

Through a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) Cambodia in 2013, additional support was provided at the POE, DOE and school level in 10 provinces. In each province, VSO worked with the POE and in two districts with special needs selected together with the POEs. A second PCA was signed with Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) to work in all districts of the remote provinces of Monduliri and Ratanakiri to strengthen school support committees and community involvement in school management.

The national reach of CDPF II was almost equal to that in Phase I. CDPF supported MoEYS at the national and sub-national level in all provinces and districts of the nation. The PCA with VSO, in its Strengthening Education Management (SEM) project, allowed UNICEF and MoEYS to continue to cooperate in 10 provinces (on average working at POE level and in two districts per province), as was done in Phase I. However, in 2016 some changes were introduced. The work in Kampong Thom and Pailin provinces was phased out and new activities were started up in five provinces in 2016 and 2017: Tbung Khmun, Kampong Speu, Pursat, Koh Kong and Siem Reap. The total number of VSO provinces in 2017, where the SEM project is implemented, was 14. CARE, in its Strengthening School Governance project, continued its work in the provinces of Monduliri and Ratanakiri, working at the provincial level and in all districts of these two provinces.

Management capacity for systems reform has been generated through linking senior officers from the NIE and Directorate General of Policy and Planning (DGPP) with the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP). This linkage aims to improve capacity in education planning and management (EPM) through on-the-job training and specialized on-site courses conducted in Cambodia and France. Materials were developed specifically for the sub-national level, enabling a 10-day training programme for POE directors and their deputy directors/planners.

Considerable expectations have been placed on the improvement of several mechanisms for planning, monitoring and service delivery. Key among these are the District Training & Monitoring Team (DTMT), School Support Committees (SSCs), the Joint Technical Working

²¹ DoP was transformed in 2015 into Directorate General for Policy and Planning (DGPP).

Group (JTWG) and Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) at national and provincial levels. While these mechanisms might be somewhat tangential to the MoEYS system, they are crucial facilitative tools, which the system (as a focal capacity development area) depends on to interpret and foster implementation of its policy and programme priorities at sub-national levels. They are also important in allowing contextualization and flexibility, in tailoring education provision to local needs and circumstances, and in linking community ‘demand’ to system ‘supply’. Through VSO (with the Education Management Advisor (EMA)), CARE and MoEYS allocations, considerable resources have been applied to strengthening the planning, monitoring and outreach capacities and competencies of these mechanisms, which, in turn, enable and sustain the results of capacity interventions made elsewhere in the system.

Implementation of CDPF II has highlighted commitment to collaborative and partnership-based action. The most evidently strategic of these being the core funding of development partners (EU, Sida); the government-led JTWGs and the provincial JTWGs (P-JTWGs); the development partner (DP) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) led ESWGs; and the support to NGOs and community based organizations (CBOs) in disadvantaged and minority areas and the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) in its promotion of the provincial ESWG (P-ESWG).

1.4.2. Budget and expenditures in CDPF Phase I and II

The total budget of CDPF Phases I and II, to the end of 2017, was US\$ 30,384,405.²²

The total expenditures in the period November 2011 to December 2016 were US\$ 23,303,099*. Of this amount, US\$ 13,747,974* was spent in Phase I (November 2011-2014) and US \$9,555,125* in Phase II in the period 2015-2016. The remaining budget for the final year (2017) of CDPF, as per final budget revision of July 2017, is US\$ 5,410,666.

*Including UNICEF management and administration fee and 7 per cent cost recovery.

Support of development partners to CDPF

CDPF Phases I and II have been supported by the EU, Sida and UNICEF. These development partners provided a total budget of US\$ 30,384,405 for the entire period 2011-2017. The table below shows their contributions.

Table 6: CDPF expenses per development partner (US\$) 2011-2016²³

DP	Contribution (US\$)	Percentage (%)
EU	14,861,609	64
Sida	6,702,467	29
UNICEF	1,639,023	7

Source: CDPF Phase I and II planning and reporting documents.

The EU contribution to CDPF is an earmarked supplement to its long-term sector-wide support to the education sector overall, seen as a strategic priority over several decades and confirmed at least until the end of current strategic programming in 2020. Its support to CDPF is considered strategic in that it increases capacities in the education delivery structure and, as such, is assumed to contribute to greater efficiency and effectiveness of the application of its sector-wide education budget support to the RGC.

The Swedish Government, through Sida, has also been a long-term strategic development partner of the RGC since 1979 and has been active in the education sector through specific programme and support modalities through much of this period. In the current strategy of the

²² The budget until the end of 2016 was US\$ 25,092,285.

²³ Financial reports with 2011-2014 and 2015-2016 CDPF-reports. Note: Amounts include recovery costs percentage (7 per cent) for UNICEF.

Swedish Government (2014-2018), Education and Employment is one of three outcome areas. In addition to CDPF, its support in the education sector is to Inclusive Education, channelled through UNICEF, the education quality assurance programme, education programme support (better known as the School Improvement Grant (SIG)), skills development and youth employment, and support to the Academy of Culinary Arts of Cambodia (vocational training). The SIG has absorbed by far the largest budget, followed by CDPF.

UNICEF²⁴ is providing its own resources to CDPF, through both its regular budget and support from several national UNICEF committees (NatComs), particularly that of Australia. CDPF is strategic to UNICEF as it is aligned to the education strategy of its overall Country Programme Action Plan²⁵ and rolling annual plans, as well as with other of its core interventions. For example, the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative with its significant focus on capacity development interventions linked with strengthening DTMTs and DOEs.

Budget implementation and expenditures during CDPF Phase I and II

Budget implementation of CDPF (as shown in Annex 8) has been largely according to plan. CDPF Phase I effectively started only in the final quarter of 2011 with limited expenses incurred in that first year. In 2012, expenditures were still modest and only in 2013 and 2014 did CDPF implementation gather full steam.

During Phase II, expenditures in CDPF remained roughly at the level of the final years of Phase I (2013 and 2014), suggesting that the Fund has operated with a consistent speed throughout, even though its objectives and outcome areas were changed in the second phase.

CDPF has approached the end of Phase II of its implementation at the end of 2017, and in 2018 a third and final phase of CDPF will be started. Implementation of activities within CDPF and budget depletion is also largely as planned, at the end of 2017.

1.5. Evaluations of CDPF and other capacity development projects in Cambodia

CDPF Phase I was subjected to an external process review in 2015.²⁶ That review was mostly output-focused as it was conducted relatively early in CDPF implementation.²⁷

The CDPF's development partners also conducted reviews of CDPF. The EU's Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) mission in 2016²⁸ concluded that CDPF was progressing to plan and that performance of the implementing partners (IPs) was satisfactory. On relevance and efficiency, CDPF received a green score in the ROM traffic light system, while effectiveness

²⁴ More information about CDPF in the context of UNICEF's activities in the education sector are included in Annex 6 in Volume II.

²⁵ For an analysis of the alignment of the CDPF with the UNICEF CPAP education planning, see Annex 6.

²⁶ Refer to: Swift, Digby (2015). Evaluation of Phase I of the Cambodia Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), UNICEF July 2015.

²⁷ Its main findings and conclusions are summarized below:

- CDPF Phase I was relevant to the capacity development needs of the Cambodia education system and particularly to the ESP; MoEYS shows strong commitment to CDPF;
- CDPF was largely effective in contributing to its intended outcomes, although it was recognized that funding windows were too short to enable outcomes, hence the focus on outputs;
- The Fund was generally efficient in its implementation, although value-for-money was not well specified;
- Although the evaluation was conducted at an early stage of the CDPF, the evaluators found evidence of likely contributions to education outcomes in terms of school participation, reducing dropout-rates and improved quality of education, and in better education planning and management; and
- CDPF is not yet sufficiently sustainable as there is limited government funding for capacity development. However, MoEYS has set aside budget for capacity development of its staff in its MPCD.

²⁸ DEVCO H (2016), ROM Report CDPF Phase II, 22 August 2016.

and sustainability received an orange score. Main concerns expressed in the ROM report were that effects of the CDPF were not reaching all levels and that outcomes and impact were not well monitored. There was some concern about the future continuation of support to CDPF by MoEYS and DPs beyond Phase I.

In 2015, Sida conducted a multi-country and project evaluation on good practices in capacity development that included a country study on Cambodia. This country study also reviewed Sida's support to CDPF and found that the capacity development results were satisfactory, though below the average score of eight specific capacity development projects supported by Sida. The review was particularly critical of CDPF effects at the sub-national level. As no recommendations were formulated for specific projects, no follow-up was provided.

1.6. Intervention logic of CDPF and its theory of change

CDPF was established to address challenges in the education delivery structure²⁹, as noted in the previous section. The design and intervention logic of CDPF was based on the following main elements and assumptions:

- The ESP and MPCD are to provide guidance to CDPF;
- Different development partners provide support to infrastructure and materials and to teacher development and classroom education delivery, to which CDPF is complementary;
- The CFS Policy needs to be supported by strengthening education delivery policies and practices; and
- Capacity development in planning and management of education delivery needs to happen at three levels: individual, organizational and institutional.

MoEYS, UNICEF and the supporting development partners of CDPF decided not to develop a specific logic model and a fixed intervention strategy (logical framework) for CDPF, recognizing that the partnership fund needed flexibility to allow alignment with the ESP and MPCD and to allow ownership of CDPF by MoEYS. CDPF was directly linked to the MPCD 2014-2018, which presented an overall goal and purpose as well as five outcome areas to guide CDPF Phase II (2015-2017), following the structure of MPCD one-to-one.

The overall goal of the Master Plan 2014-2018 is: effective leadership and management of education staff at all levels through a Ministry-led, needs-based, comprehensive, systematic and sustainable capacity development approach.³⁰ Effective leadership and management can be realized if the Master Plan at the longer-term outcome level can provide a clear strategic direction³¹, focused areas of capacity development, and harmonised support (PB and provided by DP) and approaches.³²

To produce knowledge and capacity for education policy development and implementation, CDPF should support interventions at the individual, organizational and institutional levels,

²⁹Sida, (2015), Joint Scandinavian evaluation of Support to Capacity Development – Cambodia', country working paper, May 2015.

³⁰ MoEYS (2015d), Master Plan for Capacity Development in Education 2014-2018, January 2015.

³¹ Strategic direction and well-targeted actions must be based on improved availability and quality of data in several priority areas. These are the five outcome areas of the Master Plan and are closely aligned with the ESP as well as the priority reform agenda:

1. Evidence-based policies are developed based on research and comprehensive dialogue;
2. There is results-oriented planning, policy and M&E / EMIS practice / exercise at all levels;
3. Government financing is based on equity and quality and ensures greater financial accountability;
4. There is more efficient deployment and management of personnel (MoEYS and teachers) through systematic capacity development mechanisms; and
5. There is improved equity in and quality of education service delivery, sport and youth development.

³² MoEYS (2015d), Master Plan for Capacity Development in Education 2014-2018, January 2015.

and these include training, coaching, research, systems development and a great range of other more specific capacity development actions.

At the intervention level, it was required to support and strengthen capacities of national level organizations and MoEYS departments, and at the same time to ensure that individual, organizational and institutional capacity development also included the sub-national level and ultimately the school level where education is provided to the target groups.

No further elaboration of a theory of change (ToC) was pursued for the CDPF. The evaluators, based on the goal, purpose and outcome areas of both the MPCD and CDPF Phase II planning documents, have reconstructed a ToC that can serve both as a bridge between CDPF and MPCD and as a way to substantiate the choice of interventions supported by CDPF, to ensure an optimal contribution to the implementation of the MPCD by MoEYS.³³ This reconstructed ToC is included in Annex 9 of this report. It was used in the field research by the evaluators to analyse causal relations between actors and factors and (preliminary) outcomes obtained in the CDPF as well as to look at contributions of CDPF actions and implementing partners to these outcomes.

In analysing outcomes of the CDPF along the ToC, it was recognized that outcome areas 1-4 have a shorter-term perspective and are more directly related to CDPF-supported interventions, while the quality of education service delivery takes a longer timeframe for outcomes to materialize and depend on multiple other partners and interventions in the education sector. Therefore, in the reconstructed ToC, outcome area 5 was elevated to the impact level. Furthermore, quality and equity of education also require close interaction between rights holders and duty bearers. This has not been the focus of the CDPF, because it has concentrated more on planning and management capacities of duty bearers in the education delivery system. Under outcome area 5, the attention also was primarily on duty bearers, with the exception of the Strengthening School Management project of CARE, where rights holders (in SSCs) were also involved. These elements and aspects of the reconstructed ToC have been considered in the development of lessons learned and recommendations in this evaluation report. This could be relevant if the CDPF Steering Committee and MoEYS decide to develop a ToC or intervention logic for CDPF Phase III that is to start in 2018.

³³ The evaluators made a first reconstruction of a ToC for CDPF in the inception phase, linking the CDPF to the ESP 2014-2018. After more thorough analysis it became clear that CDPF is linked to the MPCD and that this document provides a better reference for the elaboration of a ToC.

2. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

2.1. Evaluation purpose, objectives and intended users

The primary purpose of this evaluation (as specified in the terms of reference (ToR)) was to provide evidence-based findings, conclusions on Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) Phase I and II implementation and to present recommendations to inform the formulation of CDPF Phase III (2018-2021), as well as to ensure that lessons learned from CDPF Phase II are documented.

The evaluation also responded to the accountability requirements of CDPF's supporting development partners: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the European Union (EU) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). It provided elements to MoEYS and ultimately to teachers in the classroom to strengthen their accountability as duty bearers to the rights holders: children, their caregivers and communities. The evaluation was therefore summative, but above all formative in nature, given the focus on learning. The evaluation covered both CDPF Phase I (2011-2014) and CDPF Phase II (2015-2017) to provide a comprehensive in-depth analysis of the entire lifecycle of CDPF to date and to fill the analysis gaps left from previous reviews of CDPF conducted in 2015 (Evaluation of Phase I of CDPF) and 2016 (EU, CDPF Results Oriented Monitoring review). These previous reviews mainly looked at the implementation of activities and realization of outputs of CDPF Phase I. The current evaluation research was the first evaluation exercise that looks, in a comprehensive way, at outcomes that were produced in both CDPF implementation periods in capacity development in the education sector in Cambodia at national and sub-national levels.

The objectives of the evaluation, as specified in the ToR (see Annex 1), were to:

- Assess CDPF approaches to capacity development, whether outcomes and pathways to achieve results are articulated clearly and if the programming choices, relative to CDPF's position and comparative advantage, are aligned well with regional benchmarks and international good practices;
- Evaluate the extent to which CDPF has achieved intended outcomes of building capacities at national and sub-national levels and promoting evidence-based policies to reform the education sector. Key stipulated outcomes included: building capacities of decision makers at multiple levels, promoting evidence-based policies to reform the education sector, results-oriented planning, policy, monitoring and evaluation, equity, gender equality, and quality in school financing to ensure greater financial accountability, efficient deployment and management of personnel, equity and quality of education service delivery;
- Determine the extent to which CDPF has adequately and efficiently collaborated and coordinated internally and externally through partnerships with respective partners to advance goals and objectives in capacity development;
- Determine the extent to which UNICEF financing, management and governance arrangements coalesced around CDPF programmatic goals and accountabilities to maximize the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes and the implementation of previous recommendations; and
- Determine the extent to which CDPF built on existing knowledge and evidence, and identify lessons learned that could inform CDPF Phase III or similar programmes.

Key users of findings of this outcome evaluation are the Directorate General of Policy and Planning (DGPP) of MoEYS at the national level, the EU, Sida and UNICEF's education section.

Additional users include MoEYS sub-national offices (provincial offices of education/district offices of education (POEs/DOEs)), NGO and civil society organisation (CSO) partners (i.e., VSO and CARE) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE, previously the Education Fast Track Initiative for Education for All (FTI-EFA)), including members of the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), as well as the UNICEF Cambodia Country office and the Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO).

This evaluation is particularly relevant and timely in light of the preparation of CDPF Phase III that will start in 2018. The debriefing and validation meeting in October 2017 and sharing and presentation of the evaluation results with the evaluation management team and the reference group ensured that preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations could be used in the CDPF Phase III planning cycle. This evaluation has also fed into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluation and the evaluation of the EU budget support, both conducted in 2017 and 2018.

MoEYS is currently working on developing the new Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for the period 2019-2023 and the new Master Plan for Capacity Development (MPCD) for the same period, while UNICEF, the EU and Sida are all starting to design their new strategies from 2018 onwards.

In the final quarter of 2017, VSO had also already started to prepare a new follow-up programme to its current Strengthen Education Management (SEM) programme. The SEM programme will be more strongly aligned to CDPF Phase III, and VSO used the preliminary findings of this evaluation for the further development and implementation of this programme. Plans for continuation of the cooperation with CARE are not yet certain, although it is certain that CARE will phase out its CDPF-funded operations in Monduliri and Ratanakiri after CDPF Phase II. However, it will remain with other interventions in this region. CARE and VSO were also able to use preliminary results of this evaluation for future planning through their participation in the debriefing and validation workshop and in the evaluation reference group.

2.2. Evaluation scope

The evaluation scope included five evaluation themes that were outlined in the ToR³⁴, namely: 1) CDPF's approach to capacity development and strengthening education systems relative to its positioning; 2) intended and unintended achievement of programme outcomes in education; 3) CDPF-wide collaboration, learning and external partnerships; 4) CDPF's management and governance; and 5) knowledge management.

The evaluation team has further elaborated and extended these themes (with relevant initial evaluation questions) in the inception phase and has systematized the evaluation questions and reorganized them per the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria into a comprehensive Evaluation Matrix (EM) (see Annex 2 and next section for more details).

This evaluation covered the entire life cycle of CDPF from November 2011 until the end of 2017, encompassing its two strategic Phases, CDPF Phase I (2011-2014) and Phase II (2015-2017). The evaluation built on a process-focused review of Phase I and looked at emerging outcomes in capacity development towards the end of Phase II, recognizing that capacity development processes are long-term and require a long-term perspective to be analysed and assessed.

³⁴ This evaluation focused on CDPF Phase I and II only. It is recognised that there are many other development partner (DP) and NGO interventions in the education sector that are usually complementary. However, the ToR of this evaluation exercise did not include a comparison between different interventions and an analysis of overall coherence of these different programmes. Such analysis would require substantial additional research.

The evaluation coverage was nation-wide. A comprehensive desk review of existing documents was conducted and key informant interviews were held at the national and sub-national levels, covering 12 districts within 6 provinces. Furthermore, a survey was delivered, covering a total of 42 districts in 18 provinces. This enabled verification and analysis of outcomes in the entire education delivery structure at the national level.

CDPF generally does not support interventions in strengthening teachers' qualifications and quality of teaching in the classroom.³⁵ CDPF indirectly supports the delivery of teaching in the classroom by supporting the strengthening of school management, teachers' deployment, career development and other Human Resource Management (HRM)-related interventions. CDPF also supports budget management and implementation at different levels and the use of EMIS data for educational planning, among others. This is an important focus of CDPF and, therefore, the research in this evaluation did not include teachers as education providers in the classroom, but teachers were included in this evaluation with respect to managerial tasks in School Support Committees (SSCs), School Clusters (SCs) and school management, with a clear focus on School Directors (SDs) and Deputy Directors.

The ToR for this evaluation requested an assessment of outcomes of CDPF at the national level, considering all provinces and districts. This required significant investments in field research at the provincial and district level throughout the country, through a representative sampling methodology that allowed drawing more generally applicable conclusions on the outcomes of CDPF at the national (central) level, provincial (POE), district (DOE and related district level structures) and school level (SDs and related school level structures).

³⁵ There are many other projects and programmes funded by other donors, such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), focusing on curriculum development and pedagogical training of teachers. An exception to this is the SEM programme of VSO. In one specific instance, two volunteers have been placed at a Teacher's Training College (TTC).

3. Evaluation Methodology

3.1 Evaluation approach

The evaluation followed a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to address the evaluation questions. While the evaluation questions were mainly of a qualitative nature, at the same time results and outcomes had to be verified at the national level because Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) had an outreach to the whole country.

The evaluation involved multi-level research addressing the national (central) level and analysing processes and outcomes at the subnational level at selected locations. This multi-level approach allowed the team to assess CDPF-funded interventions in the country and at different levels in the education delivery system. About half of the data collection and research time was invested in fieldwork activities at the sub-national level, mostly in case studies. The case studies were conducted using the outcome harvesting approach³⁶ focusing on outcomes obtained according to CDPF reporting and verifying the existence of these outcomes and subsequently tracing contributions of CDPF actors and actions, while also considering other influences and other actors.

To facilitate the analysis of causal and results chains to produce outcomes in CDPF, the team reconstructed a theory of change (ToC) for CDPF (see section 1.6 and Annex 9). The reconstructed ToC with specific pathways of change enabled the evaluators to analyse and 'backtrack' outcomes to specific CDPF-supported actors and actions.

The evaluators followed as much as possible a participatory approach in preparing and implementing evaluation activities, field visits, focus group meetings and individual and group interviews. A national level briefing and outcome harvesting workshop was organized in the inception phase in which Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) staff at national, provincial and district levels and School Directors (SDs) from three selected provinces could provide inputs for case studies.

Field visits to districts were preceded with briefing notes to the provincial office of education (POE) and district office of education (DOE) staff and short briefing and debriefing meetings were organized at the start and end of the district visits. At the end of the data collection process, research results were submitted again to a wide audience of national and sub-national stakeholders during a second national level sense-making workshop.

For the selection of qualitative case studies and selection of districts, an at-random sampling technique was used, and selected samples were checked with MoEYS for relevance and feasibility allowing for well-motivated changes in sampling (see section 3.4).

The use of multiple research instruments allowed for different crosschecking possibilities in the datasets (e.g., document analysis and surveys, desk review and interviews, etc.). The research findings of field visits and interviews were compared and discussed during field visits and in broader team meetings at set intervals in the evaluation process. Regular meetings were organized with the evaluation management team and the reference groups to discuss progress and results of data collection.

The evaluation applied both a gender focus in analysing specific gender-targeted actions supported by CDPF and also mainstreamed gender in the analysis of outcomes and processes under other outcome areas of CDPF. The same was done in equity and human rights related aspects and interventions.

³⁶ Refer to: Wilson-Grau, Ricardo, Heather Briit, 2012 (revised). Outcome Harvesting. Ford Foundation. Mena Office. 2013.

Finally, the evaluation reporting process was iterative during both the inception phase and reporting phase. Two draft reports were submitted before the final inception and evaluation reports to allow proper feedback from all evaluation stakeholders.

3.2 Evaluation criteria and questions

The selection of evaluation criteria was based on the ToR. The interventions funded by CDPF focus on capacity development processes at the individual, organizational and institutional level. Significant time is required before the effects of increased capacity at these levels can be observed in terms of improved situation of the ultimate beneficiaries and rights holders: children advancing in education and starting their careers as well as their families and communities. CDPF does not support capacity development of teachers in the class rooms or education delivery in the classroom, but focuses on organizational and managerial aspects of teachers' deployment, at national and sub-national levels and therefore impact at the level of ultimate beneficiaries is one step further up the results chain. This evaluation focuses on the outcome level, to be observed primarily in terms of changes in capacity for service delivery for the actors in the education delivery chain. The evaluation has also looked at equity and gender equality in addition to the other OECD/DAC criteria mentioned in the ToR, to align with UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards (2016). Equity and gender equality were added to address the focus of CDPF on rural and remote areas and minority target groups and on addressing gender equity in access to and delivery of education.

The Evaluation Matrix (EM) developed during the inception phase was used as a framework to collect, analyse and assess data and information to answer the evaluation questions. The matrix was subsequently used by the evaluation team as a tool for systematizing the data collection process, identifying gaps in evidence and developing clear evaluative assessments.

The main evaluation questions under the evaluation criteria are summarized in the table below and the complete EM (sub-questions, information sources, etc.) is included in Annex 2.

Table 7: Evaluation criteria and main questions

Criteria	Evaluation Questions	# of sub-questions
Effectiveness	EQ.1.1. To what extent has the CDPF achieved the expected outcomes in contributing to building capacities in the education sector in Cambodia as identified in the core documents?	7
	EQ.1.2. To what extent has the CDPF collaborated and coordinated internally and externally with strategic partners?	3
Relevance	EQ 2.1. To what extent are CDPF approaches to capacity development clearly spelled out and reflect the needs and the priorities of the main parties involved?	6
	EQ.2.2. To what extent is the CDPF strategy aligned with national priorities and international good practices?	3
Efficiency	EQ 3. To what extent have resources been used as planned, was implementation on-time and has monitoring and reporting been up to standards?	7
Equity and Gender Equality	EQ 4. To what extent have CDPF actions mainstreamed gender and equity in all its actions, and have there been sufficient gender and equity target actions to ensure progress and results in achieving equity and gender equality?	4
Sustainability of Outcomes	EQ 5. To what extent has CDPF enabled and prepared MoEYS, DPs and other stakeholders to continue capacity development actions in the approaches and activities beyond CDPF duration?	5

The evaluation criteria and questions are conceptually linked with the original research questions included in the ToR, which were originally organized by five evaluation themes (see section 2.2.). This was done to align more explicitly this evaluation with the OECD/DAC

evaluation criteria. The relation between the original research themes and the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria is explained in the EM in Annex 2.³⁷

3.3 Data collection methods and sampling strategy

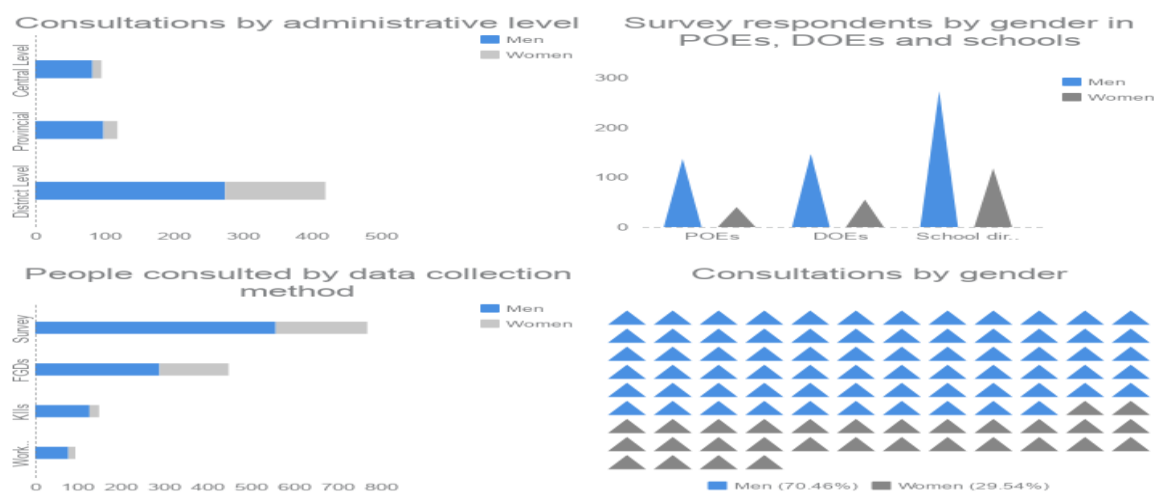
The evaluation used different qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and tools.³⁸

Document review: Over 500 documents were reviewed by the evaluation team, including: CDPF programmatic documents, reports, knowledge products; MoEYS documents including the MPCDs; CDPF relevant evaluations; relevant financial information; other United Nations agencies' documents on the education sector in Cambodia; relevant partners' and donors' reports; and relevant literature and websites. A full list of documents consulted is provided in Annex 10. Document review was also done during field visits to look at existence, contents and quality of provincial and district level planning and reporting documents.

Semi structured interviews at individual, group and focus group levels: The evaluation team consulted 711 stakeholders (210 women and 501 men) at the national, provincial and district levels through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and group interviews and workshops. The following key informant groups were consulted in the process: key staff of CDPF managing and implementing partners (MoEYS, UNICEF, VSO and CARE); direct (POEs, DOEs, SDs) and indirect beneficiaries (School Support Committees (SSCs) and community members), donor agencies (EU and Sida) and external stakeholders (NGOs, development partners (DPs), universities, etc.).

The figure below provides a snapshot of the stakeholders consulted in this evaluation. A full list of key informants consulted is provided in Annex 11. The figure presents an analysis of these key informants at different levels and among different stakeholder groups. An analysis of gender of key informants and stakeholders shows that 30 per cent of the persons met and consulted by the evaluation were women (see Figure 2). This is in line (slightly high) with the overall representation of women in MoEYS staffing at all levels and women among survey respondents – in both cases women represented 27 per cent.

Figure 2: People consulted, locations and data collection methods



³⁷ To facilitate the link between the evaluation criteria used for analysis and assessment of findings and the evaluation themes, the section of findings starts with a summary of main findings organized under the different evaluation themes, also explaining under which evaluation criteria the evaluation research themes will be addressed.

³⁸ All tools, formats, checklists that were used in the data collection phase are included in Annex 3 in Volume II.

District and site visits: District and site (e.g., POE, DOE offices and schools) visits were an important element of the field research. During district and site visits, key informant interviews and document analysis were conducted as inputs for responding to the general evaluation questions and sub-questions. Much of the research in the districts focused on the outcome case studies.

Outcome case studies: 16 outcome case studies (see Annex 12) covered the full variety of CDPF-supported interventions under all five outcome areas and were done at the national, provincial and district level. The subjects and locations of the case studies are presented in the table below.

Table 8: Outcome case study subjects and locations of research

Province/District/Entity	Case Study Subject (between parentheses outcome area of CDPF II)
1. Education Research Council	Support Policy-Based Research Activities: Evidence-Based Research to support Implementation of Teacher Policy Action Plan (TPAP) (1.1)
2. NIE/DGPP/MoEYS	Institutional Twinning Programme between International Institute of Education Planning and Directorate General of Policy and Planning: Strengthening training capacity of National Institute of Education (NIE) on educational planning and on teacher deployment and distribution for POE staff (2.3)
3. DGPP/MoEYS	Capacity Development of Planning Staff at National and Sub-National Levels: Capacity development by the Department of Planning on sub-national planning (2.2)
4. EMIS Dept./MoEYS	Strengthening Education Information Management: Technical assistance to continue the development of the capacity of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) Department at national and sub-national levels for management (2.5)
5. Banteay Meanchey Serei Saophoan	Development of Educational Planning System at all Levels: VSO Education Management Adviser Support to POEs to support planning and management in 20 districts (2.1)
6. Banteay Meanchey Mongkol Borei	
7. Kampong Thom Stueng Saen	Strengthening Education Information Management: Development capacity of EMIS Department at sub-national levels for management, use and development of EMIS (2.5)
8. Kampong Thom Stoung	
9. Oddar Meanchey Samraong	Support to pilot the Financial Information Management System: Capacity development on roll-out of Financial Management Information System (FMIS) to all budget entities (3.2)
10. Oddar Meanchey Trapeang Prasat	
11. Mondulkiri Saen Monourom	Strengthening school management and local accountability: Primary SSCs in 14 districts Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri trained and supported (5.3)
12. Mondulkiri Pechr Chenda	
13. Koh Kong Khemara Phoumin	Strengthening school planning and financing: Mid-term and annual review workshop on results implementation of programme-based budget (PB) financial management and SIG management (3.3)
14. Koh Kong Kiri Sakor	Strengthening personnel management and performance: Capacity Building Workshops to support implementation and monitoring of Human Resource (HR) Policy related activities (4.1)
15. Phnom Penh Chroy Changva	Strengthening accuracy of the Human Resource Information Management System (HRMIS): Capacity Development initiatives related to HRMIS (4.2)
16. Phnom Penh Sen Sok	Strengthening systems for equitable service delivery: Development and dissemination of Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan and implementation and monitoring of girl counselling programme (5.1)

Multi-stakeholder workshops: A national outcome harvesting workshop was organized in the inception phase (27 July 2017, half-day) and a national debriefing and validation³⁹ workshop was organized at the end of the data collection phase (18 October 2017, full-day). These workshops were organized in Phnom Penh and approximately 40 persons participated

³⁹ Sense-making as prescribed in the outcome harvesting methodology was applied to a limited extent.

in each event, including: CDPF-supporting development partners; managing and implementing partners; MoEYS departments and representatives from POEs, DOEs; and SDs from selected provinces. During the first workshop, methodological and planning aspects of the evaluation were discussed and a first inventory was made of outcomes obtained by CDPF. During the second workshop, the findings of the evaluation were presented and preliminary conclusions and possible recommendations were discussed.

Survey among POEs, DOEs and SDs: A survey was conducted at the sub-national level of 810 staff of POEs, DOEs and SDs in 40 districts in 18 provinces. This survey was used to obtain additional data on appreciation and assessments of the CDPF support provided by MoEYS and UNICEF in a broader group of representative provinces in Cambodia. The sampling strategy for the selection of the districts is explained further below and the survey results are presented in Annex 13.

Sampling strategy

In this evaluation, three levels of sampling were applied to select: 1) provinces and districts to be visited during the field work and to investigate the selected case studies, 2) outcome-oriented case studies, and 3) provinces and districts to be covered by the survey among MoEYS staff at POE and DOE level and SDs. The sampling of districts and provinces for case studies and surveys was done through a stratified at-random sampling method, to ensure a relevant sample of locations and respondent groups for the overall CDPF supported interventions. Details of this sampling strategy are further described in Annex 14.

3.4 Data analysis and quality assurance

The evaluation team followed a three-step approach to data analysis, as follows:

- Step 1: Organizing quantitative and qualitative data for analysis;
- Step 2: Describing data, generating findings; and
- Step 3: Interpreting data, assessing findings against criteria and qualitative ratings (from poor to good, with narrative) following a checklist and a checklist rating format.

Content analysis constituted the core of the qualitative analysis undertaken by the team: documents, focus group/interview notes and qualitative data emerging from the fieldwork and the case studies exercise, and from the reconstruction of the theory of change and stakeholder analysis were analysed.

Analysis of causal chains was done using the outcome harvesting approach and considering pathways of change in the reconstructed ToC to facilitate mapping of outcome pathways.

Comparative analysis was used to the extent possible, to examine findings across different categories of stakeholders (comparing understandings and perceptions of different categories of stakeholders on the relevance, utility and need of CDPF approaches to capacity development in education) and to identify best practices and lessons learned.

Quantitative analysis was used to analyse quantitative data available in CDPF's databases and emerging from the survey. Questionnaires were processed and data analysed using STATA software. The survey results were further analysed by interpreting and crosschecking statistically relevant differences with interviews and written sources. The survey analysis is presented in Annex 13.

Triangulation of information: Secondary data collected in the desk review were validated and corroborated through interviews, focus group discussions and survey data; unclear data were clarified through field visits; data from interviews and direct observation were analysed in a comparative way, using only the most frequent or common findings as solid evidence, while also recording divergent views when and if appropriate. Team discussions were held regularly to jointly discuss and further triangulate information and validate findings. Case study peer

review was done on all case studies by the international team members and the case studies were formatted using a similar structure and basic contents for ease of comparison. After finalizing all case studies, a meta-analysis of results of the case studies was conducted. The case studies are presented in Annex 12.

Data management throughout the evaluation: The evaluators ensured strict confidentiality of interview notes and survey data throughout the evaluation. The report does not contain statements that can be attributed to specific individuals. Confidentiality of the survey was secured by gathering responses in sealed envelopes. As there were over 750 respondents, after the statistical analysis it is not possible to relate responses to specific individuals.

Quality assurance and proof reading: Draft and final evaluation reports were submitted for quality assurance by a backstopping senior consultant of Lattanzio and proofreading and editing of Volume I of the evaluation report was done by a native English speaker.

3.5 Limitations encountered in the evaluation process and ways to overcome these

Limitations that the evaluators encountered during the evaluation process and the measures that were taken to overcome them are summarized below. See Annex 15 for a detailed explanation of the limitations and mitigating measures.

Challenges in attribution and contribution analysis: This limitation was overcome by reconstructing the ToC of the CDPF/Master Plan for Capacity Development (MPCD) and using the outcome harvesting approach to allow backtracking of outcomes to specific contributions and actions of partners.

CDPF did not have a balanced and national level outreach that allowed observing outcomes at the level of randomly selected locations: Case study findings provide a reliable overview of the outcomes of CDPF at different levels, but some of the piloted and regionally focused actions of CDPF could not be captured. Therefore, the case studies should be seen as average outcomes and not as best practices of CDPF.

CDPF plans and reports were largely limited to outputs and no proper baseline was conducted by UNICEF at the start of CDPF: This posed limitations for this outcome-focused evaluation. Through semi-structured questions and issue-based research seeking qualitative data, the evaluation addressed this issue, particularly through key informant interviews (KIIs) and FGDs.

Underrepresentation of women in education delivery is mirrored in data sources: The evaluators documented the gender balance in participation in this evaluation and, where possible, provided gender-disaggregated data. The evaluators applied a gender lens under all other outcome areas.

Limited time for local level data collection and not full availability of key informants: Visits to districts were meticulously prepared and briefing notes (in Khmer) were provided for local stakeholders to be able to prepare for interviews and FGDs. Despite these preparations, not all key informants were available for interviews. However, the number of people met at district level was large enough to compensate for this.

Fieldwork was done in 12 districts (out of 165) and 6 provinces (out of 25) in Cambodia: Selection of provinces and districts was done through a stratified at-random sampling, which is explained in detail in Annex 14. This ensured that the sample was representative of the whole country.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis⁴⁰ and with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards⁴¹ and implemented the following practices:

Integrity, independence and impartiality: The absence of conflict of interest was duly checked prior to the start of the evaluation. Reasons for evaluative judgments and acceptance or rejection of comments on evaluation products were provided in written 'comment trails' for each version of evaluation deliverables. All findings were triangulated.

Privacy and respect of rights: Stakeholders consulted were duly informed about the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. The evaluation was conducted in full respect of the stakeholders' right to provide information in confidence. All information was used and represented only to the extent agreed to by its contributor.

Fair representation and avoidance of harm: The evaluation team ensured that participatory processes and evaluation questions were responsive to the needs and sensitivities of participants. Facilitators set a tone of informality and openness while building rapport in all meetings, interviews, and focus groups as appropriate to the individuals participating.

Accuracy, completeness and reliability: The evaluation ensured that all evidence was tracked from its source to its use and interpretation. All evaluation questions were answered through triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources and processed using multiple analytical tools. All findings and conclusions are explicitly justified and substantiated, and the recommendations are based on findings and not bias.

Meetings with children: No individual interviews were conducted with children; FGDs were conducted with children on two occasions. During these meetings, the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis (2015) involving children was followed. The children were asked to participate on a voluntary basis and their participation was strictly confidential. The meetings with children were conducted by the female national consultant and a student/girls' counsellor was present during the meetings.

⁴⁰ UNICEF (2015K), UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, CF/PD/DRP/2015-001 Effective Date: 01 April 2015.

⁴¹ UNEG, UNEG Norms and Standards, June 2016.

4. Main Evaluation Findings

This section is structured along the main evaluation questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex 2)⁴² and is based on detailed findings from case studies (please refer to Annex 12 for the full description of case studies), the survey (Annex 13), document analysis, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in the research phase of this evaluation. In the table included in Annex 18, findings are summarized along with conclusions and recommendations.

4.1. Outcomes realization

Achievement of main outcomes
<p>Summary of main findings:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Main crosscutting outcomes of Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved quality of planning (Annual Operating Plans (AOPs) and Education Strategic Plans (ESPs)) at national and sub-national level; - Increased data collection and management capacity at all levels, but limited capacity to use data for planning and implementation; - A large number of staff members of MoEYS at all levels have benefited from capacity development support, though these capacities do not always translate to increased organisational capacities; and - District level capacity constraints are challenging the effective absorption of capacity development support to local level education management and delivery entities. <p style="text-align: center;">Main outcomes under outcome area 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of research has become more systematic particularly after the Education Research Council (ERC) in 2015; - An unplanned outcome was that many MoEYS staff members have conducted relevant research in the framework of their participation in (inter)national (master's degree) courses; and - As research activities are relatively recent, follow up on research has not yet been substantial. <p style="text-align: center;">Main outcomes under outcome area 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoEYS and National Institute of Education (NIE) have developed training capacity in Education Planning and Management and training is rolled out to the sub-national level, more recently also to the district level; - Quality of AOPs has improved over the past years and there is a growing interest among MoEYS staff to introduce results-based management (RBM) principles in educational planning, now that experience has been built with the AOP assessment tool; - Data collection and processing in Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) have improved and are more timely now that systems and capacity are rolled out up to the school level; - Coordination mechanisms were established at national and provincial level, but are not yet always functional at the provincial level; - VSO longer-term coaching and on-the-job support has strengthened capacities of provincial offices of education (POEs) and district offices of education (DOEs), although there is considerable variety in effects of this support, which is also due to the often-challenging conditions in the disadvantaged districts that by default are selected for VSO support; and - An unplanned development is the slow progress of the overall Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) process that has limited the decentralisation of planning and finance, despite MoEYS D&D policies.

⁴² Please note that during the research phase two questions had to be deleted from the original EM that were developed during the inception phase. These questions were impossible to respond to due to lack of available information. All remaining sub-questions are addressed in the section, but only the main questions are presented to improve the flow of the text.

Main outcomes under outcome area 3

- The Financial Management Information System (FMIS) was effectively rolled out at sub-national level, but is less advanced compared to EMIS, and also more technological and connectivity constraints are felt at the sub-national level;
- An external unplanned influence was the fact that DOEs and particularly schools have very limited budget to plan for and are, therefore, not empowered to implement financial planning and implementation. This is further affected by the slow progress of the D&D process; and
- Several AOPs and ESPs that were developed didn't have a financial paragraph on budget.

Main outcomes under outcome area 4

- Staff training supported by CDPF has been massive and skills were built in the area of all different Management Information Systems and in English and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). At the sub-national level, however, these capacities are less visible than at the national level;
- Also the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) has been effectively rolled out up to the district and school level and provided data are timely and of good quality;
- An unplanned outcome was that Human Resource Management (HRM) Policy implementation at sub-national level has not advanced much because there are significant budgetary and capacity constraints to apply HRM policies at this level; and
- Gender and equity are not yet sufficiently integrated in HRM and personnel planning within MoEYS. Women and ethnic groups remain a minority in the education delivery structure, particularly at management level.

Main outcomes under outcome area 5

- Community involvement and participation were mainly applied in ethnic minority regions and implemented by CARE. School Support Committees (SSCs) were strengthened particularly in their fundraising and school enrolment campaign functions, but a challenge remains to improve accountability relations between schools and local communities; and
- Limited attention was given to Gender in CDPF. In spite of supporting the dissemination of the Gender Mainstreaming Plan, limited structural changes have occurred in gender specific and gender-mainstreamed planning. Although awareness of importance of women's participation has increased there is generally limited capacity for gender analysis and gender responsive planning.

This section starts with an overview of the main outcomes of CDPF before addressing the specific evaluation questions related to effectiveness.

At the start of Phase I of CDPF, assistance was provided for the finalization of the MPCD 2014-2018, to which CDPF was fully aligned. Ongoing assistance was also provided for development and review of the ESP 2014-2018. Throughout the full implementation period of CDPF, these strategic action plans provided guidance to implementation of the education policy and capacity development from the national level to the school level education delivery structure. The fact that these policies are widely adhered to, and translated into, provincial ESPs, provincial and district level AOPs and school level School Development Plans (SDPs), is an important outcome of CDPF at the institutional capacity development level. In addition to these overarching and crosscutting policies and strategic plans, under the specific outcome areas of CDPF, many other important policies and strategic action plans have been developed and currently implemented. Staff at the national level in MoEYS departments, POE and DOE staff members and School Directors (SDs) interviewed during the field visits have generally shown good awareness of these plans and show the capacity to work with and translate these policies and strategies at their own level, though not always with in-depth analytical insight to tailor and build specific plans based on specific local realities. This can be observed particularly in the ESPs and AOPs at the POE and DOE level that were analysed during the field work (see Annex 16).

In systems development and implementation under several CDPF outcome areas, capacities have been built to populate Management Information Systems (MIS) with data, and MIS reports, particularly the yearly EMIS statistical reports, show clear evidence that quality and timeliness of information provision have greatly improved. However, key informant interviews

(KIIIs), particularly at the district level, show that capacity development focused on extraction of information from the lower levels. Local stakeholders indicate that empowering local level actors, through provision of information feedback and capacity development for analysing data and translating them into needs-based and relevant actions, has been limited. The analysis of availability and quality of core planning and reporting documents for the 12 districts visited in this evaluation confirms that the capacity to follow formats is built, but at the same time content is often standardized and not always developed based on a proper context and needs analysis.

A second important outcome at the overall CDPF level is that key informants at all levels confirm to have had at least some, and regularly significant, exposure to capacity development activities funded by CDPF. While many of the capacity development actions throughout CDPF implementation have applied traditional training and workshop methods, new methods of capacity development (coaching, on-the-job assistance, action research) have been introduced gradually. VSO and CARE in particular have been working with these approaches. Outcomes of capacity development interventions are significant at the level of individual staff members, in terms of having acquired basic technical skills or English and ICT skills. These skills were encountered at the national level and to a lesser extent at provincial level, but were much less common at the district level. In some cases, impact for individuals has been life-changing, when after obtaining a Masters, new steps in career development were taken, as confirmed by several participants in the Master's course at Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). Key informants, after six years of experience with CDPF and MPCD, show a clearly higher appreciation of the value of capacity development support as the necessary software to complement infrastructural and material support.

The effects of CDPF-funded interventions at the organizational level are less obvious, and this relates to the fact that most of the capacity development actions have targeted individuals. Transfer and replication of capacities and team- and organizational-level capacity development interventions were limited, although VSO and CARE have applied such approaches more often at the provincial and district level.

A constraint in organizational capacity development, observed clearly during the district level visits, is that the organizational capacities of local organizations and teams (such as DOE offices, District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMTs), School Clusters (SCs), school management, and School Support Committees (SSCs)) are limited because of limited staffing and budget compared to the tasks assigned to these organizations and teams. These limitations are sometimes severe in more rural and remote districts, as in Mondulhiri, Koh Kong and Beantey Meancheay visited in this evaluation. These constraints have limited the possibilities for CDPF beneficiaries at the local level to absorb further capacity development investments.

This evaluation looked at outcomes obtained under the different outcome areas at the main levels in the education delivery structure: national level (MoEYS and its technical departments, including NIE and ERC), provincial level (POEs) and district level (DOEs, DTMTs, SCs) and ultimately schools (school management and SSCs). Outcomes of CDPF-funded interventions under all outcome areas were more pronounced at the national level. POEs have also benefited to a considerable extent from capacity development support enabled by CDPF, but this is much less at the level of DOEs. The level of awareness and knowledge of CDPF clearly decreased with descending levels and is generally low at the district level, often to the extent that even the name of the fund is not recognized. The survey showed, on a five-point scale, that awareness of CDPF is roughly equal among DOEs (2.85) and SDs (2.89), and is a half point lower than that of POEs (3.38). The overall average knowledge is below the average (3) of the five-point scale.⁴³ DOE level respondents indicated that they have not been regularly

⁴³ In the five-point scale for "How well do you know about the CDPF," the responses from 1 to 5 are: not at all, a little bit, somewhat, much, and very much, respectively.

exposed to CDPF-funded activities (2.86), if at all. SDs (3.18) responded more positively and here again the POEs show a clearly higher score (3.36).⁴⁴ Appreciation of the usefulness of CDPF support is quite high with scores over 4 on a five-point scale⁴⁵; the scores of SDs (4.33) and DOEs (4.36) are lower than the scores of POEs (4.47).

Outcome Area 1: Research for evidence-based policies

CDPF has supported research and preparation of development of evidence-based policies. To some extent these activities were funded under this research outcome area, but this research and preparation of policies and actions have also been developed under the other specific thematic outcome areas (e.g., EMIS master plan, Teachers' Policy Action Plan (TPAP), Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSP)). These examples will be discussed under the respective outcome areas.

After the approval of the Master Plan for Research Development in the Education Sector 2011-2015 on 14 March 2011, prior to the launch of CDPF, MoEYS developed a more systematic approach to apply research as a tool for policy development in the education sector. One of the most important actions supported by CDPF was the launching of the Education Research Council (ERC) on 12 March 2015. In the past two years, the ERC has published research on school management, teacher career pathways and award systems. More research is being conducted now that the ERC is becoming more strongly established. Additionally, technical departments of MoEYS confirm that ERC is providing research support for the development of policies and strategies. The activities of the ERC are still quite recent and a new VSO action research component started in the final year of CDPF Phase II.

Expenditures of CDPF under this outcome area have been modest and in terms of outcomes under this outcome area there is not yet much to report. The case study (1 – Annex 12) on ERC also concludes that many of the tasks of ERC are long-term and require more time to produce firm outcomes in terms of changes in policy implementation. During the current CDPF implementation period, there is evidence of the integration of ERC research in HR Policy development and particularly on the TPAP and Teacher Career Pathway (TCP) development. However, it still requires more time before outcomes at the implementation level can be assessed.

The case study on ERC illustrates that the process of securing a proper institutional home for the council, ensuring its independent operations and at the same time enabling close cooperation with technical departments in MoEYS, has not yet been fully completed.

An unplanned effect under this outcome area was observed in the form of research that is produced by students participating in master's degree courses at RUPP and in master's degree and short courses of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Students conduct research for producing theses and the research subjects are linked to practical tasks and challenges faced by students in their working environment. The full potential of this applied research in longer-term training trajectories has not yet been explored, but examples of application of such research by the students themselves exist, for example in comparing multi-grade with single-grade teaching methods.

⁴⁴ In the five-point scale for "...has your DOE/POE/etc., received support from i," the responses from 1 to 5 are: not at all, a little bit, somewhat, much, and very much, respectively.

⁴⁵ In the five-point scale for "How useful was this support," the responses from 1 to 5 are: not at all useful, slightly useful, moderately useful, quite useful, and very useful, respectively.

Outcome Area 2: Results-oriented planning, policy and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at all levels

This outcome area received roughly one third of the total budget. It is therefore not surprising that most of the outcomes that could be verified in this evaluation were found under this outcome area.

The twinning partnership between NIE and IIEP and MoEYS (Department of Planning (DoP)) was already established in Phase I of CDPF and continued in the second phase. Long-term support was given to improve planning capacities of DoP and NIE and to apply new methods and formats for educational planning, most importantly ESPs and AOPs at national and sub-national levels.

The IIEP-NIE partnership case study (2 – Annex 12) shows that this partnership has resulted in improved capacities of NIE staff members and in improving facilities at the NIE, such as the establishment of a documentation centre (library), supported with CDPF funding. However, at the time of this evaluation digital access to the documentation centres was not possible.

While training capacity has been developed in Educational Planning and Management and in developing training modules and training of trainers, the provision of training still depends on a central group of core trainers at NIE. No cascading approach was developed for reaching out more quickly at the sub-national level, particularly at the district level.

The case study on the IIEP-NIE partnership further observes that much effort was given to developing training capacity at NIE, but there has been less attention for sustainable institutional development of the NIE as a national centre of excellence in Education Planning and Management as well as in research and development for policy and programming and continuing professional development for the sector. This capacity at present is still somewhat fragmented between NIE and Directorate General of Policy and Planning (DGPP)/DoP in that both conduct training, too often on an ad-hoc basis without proper longer-term follow-up.

Capacity development tools for preparing AOPs were the subject of a case study (3 – Annex 12) that focused on the development of the AOP training modules and delivery of this training at the provincial level in 2016. In 2017, the NIE is starting to provide this training gradually to DOEs, as illustrated in the case study. Reaching out to all districts will still take considerable time.

The case study also shows that technical assistance and training provided by IIEP, and scholarships provided for academic training at RUPP were successful to upgrade individual MoEYS staff members at the national and provincial level. Interviews and analysis of participant lists of academic training show that only 20 per cent of the participants were female.

At the outcome level, improved capacities of MoEYS staff at national and sub-national levels in educational planning could be verified in analysing planning documents and in KIIs. Training provided at the provincial level has contributed to improved quality of AOPs at the provincial level, although this capacity is only emerging at the district level. This was evident in the document review conducted during the district visits in this evaluation, where the quality of documents produced by POEs was clearly higher than those of DOEs (see Annex 16). The annual AOP assessments conducted by MoEYS also show clear improvement in the quality of AOPs in 2016 and 2017 compared to 2015.

On the other hand, the document review and interviews with POE and DOE staff also showed that there are still significant challenges to producing good quality AOPs. Although AOPs generally comply with formats and requirements, this is not a guarantee that their contents are relevant and of good quality. The capacity of POEs and DOEs to ensure that AOPs are needs-based and developed through a consultative process is not yet systematically developed. This evaluation regularly found that elements of AOPs are standardized and copied from other sources. Furthermore, the existence of an AOP does not automatically mean that it is implemented. DoP recognizes these challenges: now that the AOP assessment of 2016-2017

has shown that compliance with requirements has improved significantly, DoP is considering enriching the AOP assessment with a component on AOP implementation.

The AOP assessment process has opened the way towards an interesting, maybe unplanned, outcome in terms of behavioural change of MoEYS, POE and DOE staff. The assessment of plans has created more interest in performance-based management (PBM) approaches. Many stakeholders have indicated that they are interested in performance and results management principles that stimulate and reward good performance and that sanction poor performance. In KIIs, RBM principles were considered an interesting future option for capacity improvement at national and sub-national level, though no concrete steps to introduce such an approach have been announced.

The AOP development case study (3) and case studies conducted in Beantey Meancheay (5, 6) and Mondulkiri (11, 12) illustrate (in Annex 12) that capacity development and on-the-job coaching are important for capacity development of POEs and DOEs, but do not automatically lead to improved performance of these POEs and DOEs compared with others where no such support is provided. The reality is quite diverse. For example, Beantey Meancheay is struggling with developing AOPs, despite extra coaching provided by VSO and MoEYS itself, while Mondulkiri leaped from the bottom to the top of the list of best performing POEs in AOP development. According to key staff of POEs and DOEs and providers of on-the-job support, effects depend on good planning and alignment with POE and DOE planning, and this is not yet happening systematically. Performance also depends on personal characteristics of recipients and providers of capacity development and support from the leadership in POEs and DOEs. It is important to acknowledge that VSO and CARE strategically provide capacity development and coaching support (Strengthening Education Management (SEM) and school governments) to disadvantaged provinces and districts and in ethnic minority regions. CARE has conducted pre- and post-tests of its training activities for POEs, DOEs and SSCs at the individual participant level and these tests show a clear increase of capacities. However, at organizational level and after a longer period of time, these capacity effects could not be observed strongly in interviews and focus group meetings conducted during the field research at the district level.

Provinces have also taken up the task to develop provincial ESPs, but this is not yet done in all provinces, and in some provinces the document analysis found that the quality of these plans still leave room for improvement. Also, reporting on ESPs and AOPs can still be improved.

A third focus area in CDPF has been capacity development around EMIS, and more recently Quality Education Management Information System (QEMIS). The rolling out of the EMIS system and capacity development is one of the most significant outputs of CDPF under this outcome area. This is also thanks to the Asian Development Bank's significant support for the infrastructure and systems-development and rolling out of the system. Although the EMIS system, as other management systems, is still facing technical challenges in terms of online connectivity and processing of data, particularly from the provincial level downwards, the system and the formats are now rolled out and used nationally. Timeliness, quality and reliability of data have greatly improved, as observed in case study 4 on EMIS (Annex 12). At the time of this evaluation, statistical reports on 2016-2017 were readily available at the national and provincial level and were rich in data, although the analysis and explanation of these data are not yet provided, which limits their usability for future planning and management. In particular, the capacity to analyse and translate statistical data at the sub-national level is not yet sufficiently developed, as is also illustrated in the case study (7, 8 – Annex 12) on Kampong Thom. A common bottleneck is related to ICT skills at sub-national level, despite significant ICT training inputs in the past years. The EMIS department is often called as a help-desk to support POEs to solve ICT issues, causing a considerable strain on this department.

The case study on Kampong Thom confirms that the POEs and DOEs in this province generate timely and good quality EMIS data to higher MoEYS levels. At the DOE level, data provision and management capacities have also improved, though technical constraints are more strongly felt at this level. When server connections are not secure and stable, data are still computer- and not network-based. A new generation of Excel has been supplied for this purpose. At school level, data collection and processing are still often paper-based.

CDPF has supported capacity development on managing school operational budgets and preparing school development plans. Training and instructions for SDP development are provided by POEs. DOEs provide assistance and DTMTs and School Clusters are additional supporting instruments for school management to improve their SDPs and ensure proper budget implementation, though these entities often face staff capacity constraints.

A final outcome under this outcome area cuts across several other CDPF outcome areas; coordination and cooperation has increased not only within MoEYS technical departments, but also between the Ministry and other actors in national and provincial level Joint Technical Working Groups (JTWGs) and Education Sector Working Groups (ESWGs). Particularly at the national level, the working groups meet regularly and participants confirm that there is a good and constructive dialogue in these forums. At the provincial level, P-JTWGs and P-ESWGs have been established, but these are not always functional. In some provinces, the POE is not yet involved actively in coordinating the P-JTWG and this means that in some provinces only P-ESWGs of NGOs and other partners are active, without being effectively coordinated by the POE. This is observed in the case study on Mondulkiri, though in this province there are plans to revive the P-JTWG.

An external influence on the realization of outcomes under this CDPF outcome area is the D&D reform process in Cambodia. This process is currently not advancing as planned and is slowing down MoEYS D&D Policy implementation. CDPF has provided support to equip MoEYS to participate as one of the line ministries in the D&D pilot. A functional review was done, and an Education D&D Policy was developed as well as an appropriate M&E framework. The effective introduction and implementation of these policies is currently on hold, pending political decisions to revive it.

Outcome area 3: Government financing based on equity and quality

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), since 2014, has significantly increased its budget allocation to education. The increase of MoEYS programme-based budget (PB) is an important condition for further improvements in education delivery. Although the increase in the RGC budget allocation cannot be attributed to CDPF, to some extent CDPF has been relevant for the credibility and capacity of MoEYS to effectively manage an increased budget. This is also important from the perspective of international development partners that support the education sector. CDPF is a strategic intervention to complement financial support provided by the RGC and development partners because it increases the capacity of MoEYS at the national and sub-national levels to implement its increased education budget effectively.

The development of FMIS, however, has advanced less than EMIS (outcome area 2) related interventions. The case studies 9 and 10 on FMIS-related capacity development in Oddar Meanchey province (Annex 12) show that there are considerable challenges in FMIS implementation at the sub-national level. Oddar Meanchey is representative of remote and disadvantaged provinces, where more challenges are encountered than in other provinces closer to Phnom Penh. The district visits in this province illustrated that FMIS as an effectively operated system at sub-national level is less advanced than EMIS.

Provided that systems work and staff is available and able to operate the systems, FMIS is a crucial tool to ensure the effectiveness of MoEYS staff's time for generating financial reports, updating and analysing financial data as well as their ease of access to budget information. In practice, however, FMIS is not only dependent on availability and quality of soft- and hardware,

but also on user's capacities, and challenges in both of these areas were encountered in Oddar Meanchey. The MySQL FMIS did not become operational in this province and other Excel-based solutions had to be developed. And staff interviewed at POE and DOE-level showed limited background and qualifications in finance and ICT and this made it difficult for them to absorb capacity development support. More specific finance and ICT capacities need to be recruited and further trained at provincial and district level. DOEs and schools in particular need more support in this area; many DOEs and schools have no means to securely place in-house ICT equipment and connectivity problems are common.

The school management and financing case study (13 – Annex 12) conducted in the remote Koh Kong province shows that support provided by CDPF in providing training and assistance in developing School Development Plans (SDPs) resulted in an improvement of these plans, although there is considerable room for further improvement, particularly in financial planning and management capacities.

Capacity development has focused on implementation of budgets at the school and district level, but it has not addressed the mechanisms of provision and allocation of PB and School Improvement Grant (SIG) budgets. An often-heard complaint, not only in Koh Kong, but in all provinces visited, was that the PB and SIG allocation are very low and insufficient to address all needs. Furthermore, budget lines and formats are restrictive and do not allow much room for matching budgets with SDP needs. Thus, the anticipated outcome under this result area – to achieve equitable school financing based on quality SDPs – has not materialized as planned. There is simply not enough of a budget to plan for.

The budgetary constraints are alleviated to some extent by SSCs that do fundraising for school improvements, but this mechanism of local fundraising might hide to some extent the urgency to increase budgetary flows to the school level.

Considering the ongoing D&D reform process, the PB and SIG provision to schools is now subject to change and both funds will be merged in the School Improvement Fund (SIF). However, as the D&D process has slowed down, these changes have not yet been implemented. A concern is that, even when these decentralized transfer mechanisms are solved, the amounts of transfers to schools will remain limited and thus capacity for financial management and budget implementation at the school level also remains limited. Further development and rolling out of financial planning and management capacities depend on reactivating the D&D reform process and establishing a clear roadway ahead. If this does not materialize, it is understandable that CDPF in this area will be put on hold to some extent.

At the provincial level, there are also challenges to aligning budgets and plans. ESPs and AOPs analysed during field visits did not always have a budget or the budget was not in line with planning. This problem might have been caused (and by any means is aggravated) by the fact that planning capacity development has been operationalized under outcome 2 and financial aspects have been dealt with separately under outcome area 3 without proper coordination.

Outcome area 4: Efficient deployment and management of personnel

Under the outcome area of HRM, some important system level changes have been achieved. MoEYS approved a new HR Policy in 2012 and subsequently has revised and actualized it. New mechanisms for performance-based appraisal were developed and piloted, but are not yet rolled out. The TPAP 2014-2018 was approved and the TCP plan and Teacher Deployment (TD) plans were developed.

Despite these important outputs at the systems level, under this outcome area, outcomes on the ground have been more limited than under the other outcome areas of CDPF.

Particularly at provincial and district level, although there is awareness of the existence of HRM policies and plans, implementation is not common. An important reason for this,

indicated in KIIs during the district visits, is that organizational structures are small and staffing insufficient for the many tasks at hand. HRM policies do not match well with this reality on the ground and actual implementation of HRM policies might even aggravate the existing overload on staff. The field visits found that in many districts there is a significant discrepancy between HRM policies and practice.

As with EMIS and FMIS, the HRMIS was introduced and rolled out. Basic information is provided on staffing at all levels, including the school level and is aggregated at the national level; this is a big improvement compared with the past.

Now that staffing information is more readily available, at least the potential for staffing plans and for teacher deployment has improved, but there is still a long way to go before staffing constraints will be solved. Until such constraints are resolved, it is not likely that the newly introduced systems can be effectively used on the ground, such as the Performance-based Appraisal System. Absence of planning, appraisal and development systems at sub-national level also make it difficult to work on strategic capacity development of staff.

Interviews at the central MoEYS level show that the reality at this level is quite different. More capacity exists, HRMIS is functioning and HRM policies are implemented. Also, staff development is more systematically and strategically applied.

The case study (14 – Annex 12) on rolling out the HR Policy and related capacity development in Koh Kong province confirms that HR related capacity development action, beyond collection of data for the HRMIS, have not yet been rolled out to this remote and disadvantaged province. The case study (15 – Annex 12) focusing on HRMIS application at the POE level in Phnom Penh shows that regional variety is considerable. The POE in Phnom Penh shows capacity in HRM and HR Policy implementation and the operation of HRMIS. The staffing levels in the POE are much higher than in most other provinces and this increased the relevance of the HR Policy and the use of HR Policy related instruments.

The example of Phnom Penh shows again (as with EMIS and FMIS) the importance of good ICT systems and reliable internet connectivity and availability of trained staff. While these conditions were clearly present at the POE level, allowing good and efficient use of the HMIS, visits to other districts in Phnom Penh showed that connectivity is often still a challenge, particularly at the school level. Individuals fall back to paper-based information provision due to lack of access to equipment.

Particularly in the first phase of CDPF, many people were trained in ICT and English language skills. Both skills are crucial for the management and operation of all MIS systems and for acquiring access to further (international) training and career development. The case study on Phnom Penh (POE level) and KIIs showed that these capacities were developed. However, in other districts of Phnom Penh this was not the case and outside Phnom Penh, English and ICT capacities were observed only occasionally and to a limited extent.

Although it was not included in this CDPF outcome area, gender mainstreaming is an important aspect of HR policies. However, development and design of the HR Policy and instruments has included limited attention to gender. While it is widely known that women make up only 27 per cent of the staff of MoEYS (from the national to the school level), KIIs and analysis of documents show that there is no explicit concern that this percentage is low. The percentage of women in management positions in the MoEYS structure is even lower and has not changed as a result of CDPF actions or the approval of the new gender mainstreaming strategic plan of 2015-2018. The HR Policy and the TPAP do not contain specific measures to stimulate entry and career development possibilities for women in the education system. The HR Policy and instruments that were developed and introduced are gender blind.

Outcome area 5: Improved equity in and quality of education service delivery

Outcome area 5 of CDPF is somewhat different from the other CDPF outcome areas. The interventions under this outcome area are more closely related to delivery of education on the ground, while the other outcome areas focus on planning and management. In terms of budget and activities it has the second largest budget. An important part of the budget is dedicated to the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with CARE in Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri. CARE's School Governance project was strongly related to outcome areas 2 and 3, but the fact that this project was implemented in the region of ethnic minorities during CDPF Phase I and that bilingual education activities of CARE were supported, have most likely been reasons to place it under outcome area 5. The work of CARE and of VSO in Mondulkiri are the subjects of case study 11 and 12 at the POE and DOE level.

Capacity development support to local structures (DTMTs, SCs and SSCs) was provided, but did not always lead to stronger capacities of these actors for a variety of reasons:

- SSCs have been strengthened (CDPF provided funding for training and capacity development and supported the development of SSC guidelines in 2012), and they have become active and effective in fundraising for school improvements and school enrolment campaigns. However, as structures to establish stronger accountability lines between schools and communities, the SSCs are still facing challenges. Sustainability of capacity in SSCs is a challenge as continuity of member participation is low.
- DTMTs and SCs have been particularly struggling with capacity constraints as DOEs in Mondulkiri have limited staff and budget. SDs and teachers participating in DTMTs and SCs have difficulties in freeing time for these structures and are not compensated for their participation. Different stakeholders point to the overload of these structures and this seems particularly a reality in rural and remote districts such as Mondulkiri.
- Under this outcome area, specific, and sometimes small, projects were supported in CDPF I and II in the areas of: non-formal education; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects and integrating WASH data in EMIS (which in the latest 2016-2017 EMIS data could not be confirmed); girls' counselling project that was piloted in some provinces (and confirmed in the visit to Oddar Meanchey); and support to the Grade 12 Examination Administration Reform of 2014. However, in general at the time of this evaluation, these small and specific interventions have not led to significant outcomes in terms of changed practices and continuation of interventions.

In Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri, CARE has provided specific support to school management, and this also included strengthening school accountability mechanisms in relation to their communities through the School Support Committees (SSCs). Case studies 11 and 12 (Annex 12) on Mondulkiri analysed the effects of support to strengthening local support structures and school management at the district level. One of the main constraints observed at school level is the limited availability of PB and SIG budget for schools, and therefore, there is limited budget to plan for. A second bottleneck is identified in the performance of SSCs and the effects of capacity development on these committees. While SSCs have been consolidated as structures at the school level, their roles and actions often remain limited to only 2 out of 8 functions assigned to them: school enrolment campaigns and fundraising for school improvements. By design, SSCs are to strengthen school and community relations and mutual accountability. Research in this area shows room for significant improvement, and this will require significant and well-focused capacity development support. The case study and other district visits found that local level structures, such as DTMTs and SCCs as well as the short-staffed DOE offices, face considerable staffing and budget constraints vis-à-vis the functions assigned to them. These challenges were also observed in the Child Friendly School (CFS) evaluation of 2016. Under outcome area 5, CDPF has also supported the development and dissemination of the GMSP. The dissemination of the GMSP is the subject of a final case study (16 – Annex 12) conducted in Sen Sok. While this evaluation can confirm the existence

of the GMSP 2015-2018 as a follow-up of the GMSP 2011-2014, the visit to Sen Sok in Phnom Penh showed that this plan was not yet disseminated and known and used in this district. Checking in other districts during the field visits showed that this was also the case in several other districts. This means that the GMSP 2015-2018 has not yet been effectively rolled out and therefore no outcome level changes can be expected. Also, the previous GMSP 2011-2014 was not widely referred to, and its application in practice is not observable. CDPF has funded only a few gender related actions under outcome area 5 and has not mainstreamed gender under other CDPF outcome areas, and there are limited changes to report on gender-aspects that can be attributed to CDPF. There is one exception: under EMIS and HRM, provision of gender-disaggregated data on all activities and participants has become systematic. However, there are no examples of systematic use of gender-disaggregated data for analysis and policy development as well as gender audits/analyses to guide and orient projects and actions.

4.2. Effectiveness

EQ.1.1. To what extent has the CDPF achieved the expected outcomes in contributing to building capacities in the education sector in Cambodia as identified in the core documents?

Summary of main findings:

- Beneficiaries and stakeholders are generally satisfied with the outputs and outcomes of CDPF, although somewhat less so at the district level;
- Constraints at the district level (DOE, DTMTs, SCs, SDs and SSCs) are caused by the limited budgets and multiple tasks of these entities. These constraints limit the capacity of local actors to absorb further capacity development support;
- Knowledge management and exchange of lessons learned on CDPF remained limited;
- CDPF, as a flexible fund with rather short programming periods, is somewhat fragmented and focused on short-term capacity development interventions; and
- Key indicators for capacity development were not systematically developed in CDPF and this has limited a comprehensive review of capacity development outcomes against baseline data and targets.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders are generally satisfied with the outputs and outcomes of CDPF, although somewhat less so at the district level.

The survey conducted among POEs, DOEs and SDs (see Annex 13) points to the high degree of satisfaction of these beneficiaries and stakeholders with the actions and results of CDPF. The overall average appreciation rate of the usefulness of CDPF actions among 742 survey respondents on a 5-point scale⁴⁶ was 4.39. This appreciation was also confirmed in interviews and focus group meetings with these stakeholder groups during the fieldwork of this evaluation. At the same time, however, key informants indicated that local level stakeholder awareness of CDPF is quite limited. Many stakeholders at the district level, despite their appreciation of the capacity support received, indicate they still face serious capacity constraints. Many of these constraints are related to the structural and functional set-up of the education delivery system at the sub-national level and specific constraints suffered in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, some constraints are not specific to the education system but to local contexts and political developments, such as the current delays in the D&D process. These constraints limit the extent and intensity of capacity change in education delivery at the sub-national level.

During the fieldwork, key informants regularly expressed frustration that while capacity development was often provided as instructional workshops to make local actors more

⁴⁶ In the five-point scale for "How useful was this support," the responses from 1 to 5 are: not at all useful, slightly useful, moderately useful, quite useful, very useful.

effective in collecting data, the same participants were not sufficiently empowered to analyse and make use of the data collected.

During district and school level interviews and meetings, particularly in the case studies on planning and management and financial management, local level beneficiaries regularly expressed dissatisfaction and concern on two specific aspects:

- PB and SIG budgets are limited and budget lines are restrictive and this does not allow planning and budgeting for all existing needs on the ground. Budget is limited for local level institutions (DTMT, SCs and SSCs) to properly perform their functions. “Why train people to plan, when there is no budget to plan for?” was a regularly heard complaint.
- SDs and DOE staff regularly indicate that they are overburdened with multiple tasks and that they have limited time to participate in different structures at the local level and in meetings with DOEs, POEs and JTWGs.

Although these expressions of dissatisfaction do not relate directly to support provided by CDPF, they are relevant to the effectiveness of capacity support provided by CDPF to manage and implement the tasks mentioned above. These expressions clearly refer to constraints to effectively absorb capacity development support provided by CDPF from local stakeholders, particularly among DOEs, DTMTs, SDs and SSCs.

CARE and VSO, in consultation with the DGPP, selected challenged districts in more remote provinces to provide long-term capacity development support. Local stakeholders express a high level of satisfaction with this support from VSO and CARE and indicate that they have limited alternative sources for capacity development support on the ground. The case studies show, however, that satisfaction is not uniform. While in some cases pro-active on-the-ground support by advisers of these NGOs or national MoEYS departments is appreciated, in other cases, recipients want to be more in the driver’s seat of the capacity development process. A challenge in providing technical assistance is to continue to transfer knowledge and skills and not replace district-level MoEYS staff capacity. In the provision of on-the-ground capacity development support, the balance between pro-active and supply-driven support and responsive and demand-driven support is not always optimal, pointing to the need for good preparation and negotiation of long-term capacity development services.

This evaluation did not find an evident difference between capacity outcomes obtained in provinces and districts with the more direct and long-term support of VSO and/or CARE and provinces and districts that did not have such support. For example, the quality of AOPs (see Annex 16) in the provinces supported by VSO is marginally better than in other provinces and the increase in quality of the AOP 2016-2017 compared to 2015-2016 has not been significantly higher in VSO supported provinces than in other provinces. This finding was also confirmed in the document assessment done by the evaluation team during the district visits (see Annex 16) and also in interviews with VSO Education Management Advisors (EMAs) and Education Project Assistants (EPAs) and their counterparts in the POEs. There is one notable exception to this and that is the province of Mondulkiri. While the Mondulkiri AOP in the AOP assessment tool of 2015-2016 ranked among the lowest scoring provinces, its 2016-2017 AOP ranked as the second best. This leap can be explained by two factors: the long-term EMA support to the planning department in Mondulkiri and the arrival of a new POE director who brought significant planning experience from his previous position in NIE.

CARE, in its Strengthening School Governance project in Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri, has not only provided capacity development services to local level entities delivering education services as duty bearers (DOEs, DTMTs, SDs, SCs), but also to community level actors, most notably in the SSCs, as rights holders. In the CARE approach, it has been important to target both duty bearers and right holders to ensure that accountability relations can be strengthened. Joint attention to rights holders and duty bearers in capacity development support was not common in CDPF and is a specific value of CARE’s work in CDPF.

Constraints at the district level (DOE, DTMTs, SCs, SDs and SSCs) are caused by the limited budgets and multiple tasks of these entities. These constraints limit the capacity of local actors to absorb further capacity development support.

The number of specific functional entities that exist at the district level to support the delivery of education and its management, monitoring and quality control is large, particularly when considering the locally available staff in quantitative and qualitative terms. These constraints are particularly felt in rural and remote districts where DOEs (as seen for example in Monduliri) consist of only four staff members. In these remote districts, time and costs to participate in these functional entities are often higher than in urban areas. DOE staff members often participate in several functional entities at the same time, particularly in the DTMTs. For SDs, this burden of participation is even higher because they participate in meetings with the DOE, in DTMTs, SCs and SSCs at the same time.

The District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMTs) in particular face difficulties to effectively monitor (internal inspection), train and guide SDs in improving their performance, especially with respect to implementation of the CFS Policy. These constraints were also identified in the CFS evaluation of 2016. There are three DTMTs at the district level and staffing them is a challenge, particularly in rural and remote districts where DOEs are small and SDs must spend significant (travel) time to make themselves available for these teams. Thus, DTMTs do not systematically perform all tasks assigned to them. Furthermore, limited time and low qualifications of DTMT members cause difficulties to absorb and make effective use of capacity development services provided to the DTMTs within the framework of CDPF. In less than half of the districts visited in the six provinces selected for fieldwork in this evaluation (Phnom Penh, Oddar Meanchey and Sem Monourom in Monduliri), the DTMT-1 regularly implemented monitoring activities. In other districts these monitoring activities were infrequent. The DTMT-2 formally exists in most districts visited, but often were not fully functional. DTMT-3 teams were not functional in any of the districts visited.

Some monitoring functions of the DTMT show a certain degree of overlap with inspection and M&E functions assigned to POEs and DOEs, and some of the training and mentoring functions overlap with peer review and mentoring functions assigned to School Clusters. While this overlap is, to some extent, functional, in a situation of serious staffing constraints and lack of budget for DTMTs to perform their monitoring activities, there might be a need to review monitoring, training and mentoring functions in the districts. This is currently done in the follow-up to the CFS Policy evaluation recommendations and possibly recommendations of this CDPF evaluation could also feed into that process.

The building of the education delivery and management system is particularly complex when seen against available staffing and budget constraints. Similar conclusions with respect to performance of DTMTs were also made in the CFS evaluation in 2016.⁴⁷

Knowledge management and exchange of lessons learned on CDPF remained limited.

Structural and systematic exchange of experiences and lessons learned at different levels has not occurred regularly in CDPF implementation. There have been no learning events on specific outcome areas or at the overall level of CDPF to bring together the experiences of all actors at all levels in the education delivery chain.

A review of CDPF documentation and publications shows that the following tools were used for communication and dissemination of information around CDPF, mostly to the public:

- Three short videos were produced on CDPF and these are available on YouTube;
- Two TV and two radio round table discussions were produced and broadcast. These round tables were on education challenges in general and specific CDPF contributions to the education sector; and

⁴⁷ UNICEF. 2016. Joint Formative Evaluation of CFS Policy Implementation in Cambodia: vii.

- UNICEF also published messages around CDPF on its website and in social media.

While these activities contribute to raising awareness about CDPF among the public, they are interactive only to a limited extent and are not specific instruments for exchange of lessons learned and knowledge management.

In addition to the above, UNICEF regularly publishes evaluation learning briefs on different projects and activities such as CFS and Community Preschools. In 2015 a learning brief was published on the evaluation of CDPF Phase I. These learning briefs are instruments to harvest lessons learned from implementation of activities at the programme level.

Furthermore, CDPF reporting is an instrument to systematize and exchange information around progress. Evaluations are also used for this purpose, as all evaluations are published.

The above instruments are not interactive and serve the purpose of disseminating information around CDPF to large audiences rather than facilitating learning among specific target audiences.

The most specific and appropriate instrument for more interactive exchange of lessons learned and knowledge management has been CDPF Steering Committee meetings, which were used to exchange and discuss lessons learned and organize exposure to CDPF-supported activities and actors. The minutes of the Steering Committee meetings also serve as a tool to store lessons learned in CDPF.

While at the overall CDPF level, knowledge management and exchange of lessons learned has been limited, exchange of lessons learned and knowledge management has been more effective under specific outcome areas, e.g., through the documentation centre at NIE, the capacity development twinning relation between MoEYS, NIE and IIEP, and the exchange visits that occurred at national and international level.

CDPF, as a flexible fund with rather short programming periods, is somewhat fragmented and focusing on short-term capacity development interventions.

Because of the short-term planning horizons of both CDPF I and II, interventions have also been limited in duration. While this has allowed CDPF funds to be used as seed funding to kick start activities or projects that could later be rolled out by MoEYS with PB funds, thereby creating more dynamism in the sector, it has also contributed to a fragmentation of activities. As such, it has not provided a good match for the necessarily long-term nature of capacity development processes targeting organizational learning and systems change.

Many capacity development actions supported by CDPF were specific and entailed short-term training and instruction events. However, there have also been some individually focused capacity development interventions with a long-term focus that appear to have a stronger possibility to promote systems reform in the longer term. The large investments in master's degree training through RUPP (56 people followed a master's course) and through IIEP are seen by senior staff of MoEYS and beneficiaries themselves as strategic for further strengthening of their organizations and departments. However, the identification and selection of beneficiaries was not linked with longer-term staff career development plans and organizational staffing patterns. Notably, an opportunity to improve the gender balance in MoEYS staffing was missed: while individual women benefited to some extent from long-term training, this was not used as a strategic tool to support women's career advancement, preparing a larger number of women for higher management and leadership positions. The fact that women are a minority of long-term (master's degree) training participants means that this training will also not have the potential effect of increasing the percentage of women in higher management and leadership positions.

The multiplicity of small-scale, time-limited activities has also led to a focus on achieving outputs (e.g., completed activities, products, systems) as opposed to outcomes (substantive changes in knowledge, attitudes, organizational practice). Phase I and II CDPF reports and indicator frameworks, as well as KII data from the evaluation, provide limited information on

outcomes, and most of this is in terms of preliminary indications of changes likely to evolve, not yet measured, or difficult to attribute to specific actions funded by CDPF versus other actors, most notably MoEYS itself.

Although more technical departments of MoEYS participated in CDPF II activities and CDPF has become more shared, the structural organization of different tasks within a highly-compartmentalized ministry (there are 19 technical departments), is still a challenge to cooperation on the ground and integrated approaches. This is also reflected in the way projects and interventions in CDPF were developed as specific projects implemented by specific departments. This has further contributed to the somewhat fragmented nature of CDPF project implementation.

Key indicators for capacity development were not systematically developed in CDPF, and this has limited a comprehensive review of capacity development outcomes against baseline data and targets.

The CDPF Phase II indicator framework had 18 output indicators and 5 outcome indicators, against which progress of implementation of CDPF was measured. However, only a few indicators directly referred to capacity development effects; most indicators could be considered proxy-indicators (e.g., at the outcome level: 'number of ERC research papers published' or 'library/document centre of NIE is operational' or at the output level: 'manual on sub-sector based M&E is developed'). Most of the indicators developed for outputs and outcomes refer to the number and kind of products and services that are provided by the organizations targeted with capacity development actions, but not so much to the quality of these services and products and the appreciation of this quality by its users. The balance of output and outcome indicators in the framework is unequal and among the small number of outcome indicators, most are actually output indicators.

None of the output and outcome indicators is gender-specific and thus, the monitoring of effects of gender mainstreaming and gender specific actions is not encouraged and difficult to realize. This is also the case for other equity-related actions in CDPF.

Thus, the CDPF indicator framework is of little use for monitoring the progress of implementation of CDPF. The narrative reporting on CDPF II provides more insight in capacity development processes and results than the indicator framework. The indicator framework is not often referred to, and therefore, it seems that in practice it has not been used for planning and steering of CDPF interventions.

EQ.1.2. To what extent has the CDPF collaborated and coordinated internally and externally with strategic partners?

Summary of main findings:

- Higher level management and governance of CDPF has been adequate;
- Complementarity and synergy between the outcome areas of CDPF remained limited;
- Coordination among CDPF supporting DPs and in Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) is good; and
- Performance of JTWGs at national level is good, though less so at sub-national level.

Higher level management and governance of CDPF has been adequate.

According to the members of the CDPF Steering Committee interviewed for this evaluation and to the minutes of the relevant meetings, the Steering Committee has functioned well throughout CDPF implementation and meets regularly, at least twice a year. There are also records of extraordinary meetings.

The Steering Committee's tasks are to assess the activities in the past period and approve the annual work plan for the next period, while reviewing and updating budgets, including reallocations of budget. Relevant departments and UNICEF provide information on progress and problems encountered in implementation under different outcome areas and specific

arrangements with implementing partners are discussed, such as the selection of provinces for VSO-SEM implementation.

Interviewed members of the Steering Committee indicated that working relations are good and discussions and exchanges are open. However, given the high level of the committee's meetings, the information and details shared are often limited. In this respect, the field trips occasionally linked with the Steering Committee meetings were highly appreciated by its members, as they were helpful to gain more in-depth insights into CDPF implementation.

Complementarity and synergy between the outcome areas of CDPF remained limited.

The five outcome areas of CDPF were operationalized and implemented by different technical departments of MoEYS and with different implementing partners, particularly VSO and CARE. Some of these actions have also been rather small and specific in time and location, without clear linkages to other areas or actors, while some have been larger and involved multiple areas and actors. While actions under different outcome areas have produced their own results, this has not happened with a vision of synergy and complementarity of these actions together. This can be seen most clearly in the development and rolling out of the different Management Information System components in EMIS, FMIS and HRMIS. The systems were developed separately and MIS-data requests were parallel, causing sometimes a considerable degree of data-delivery related stress at the district and school levels. The different MIS systems are not yet sufficiently interlinked and have not yet reached reliable national coverage due to technical and connectivity problems.

Limitations in achieving crosscutting objectives were also observed in this evaluation. For example, gender was not mainstreamed in the activities under different outcome areas nor systematically implemented across all outcome areas or activities of CDPF. Gender mainstreaming was developed mainly as a component under the fifth outcome area of equity and gender equality and even under this outcome area actions have remained limited. Thus, CDPF at the overall fund level has not produced significant outcomes and changes in gender mainstreaming in education support interventions and in MoEYS staffing patterns. With respect to other equity-related dimensions, such as ethnicity, interventions have not been developed as crosscutting elements under different outcome areas, but rather as stand-alone actions under the fifth outcome area. For implementing partners such as CARE, ethnicity is mainstreamed in its overall programming, and this is also true for gender in both VSO and CARE. Because VSO and CARE were only involved in outcome areas 2 and 5 of CDPF, these mainstreaming efforts remained limited to actions in CDPF implemented by these NGOs.

Coordination among CDPF supporting DPs and in Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) is good.

The CDPF Steering Committee has collaborated and coordinated with all CDPF partners. In interviews, key informants of the participating DPs described the process of coordination and cooperation in the steering committee positively and referred to a positive working climate and a high level of trust. Through multiple formal meetings and monitoring missions and more informal interactions, all members could achieve a comprehensive overview of the overall intervention and they were able to balance interests and priorities among them.

Exchange and coordination was also evident within MoEYS, especially among the senior leadership, and all of those interviewed expressed strong commitment to CDPF and the importance of cooperation within it. Several respondents reported increased cooperation in the second phase of CDPF, as technical departments became involved with one another through their own project activities or when working on development of policies.

As MoEYS has 19 technical departments with different demands and different activities spread over multiple sub-national locations and delivery mechanisms, not all staff have or share a clear, complete or common understanding of the workings of CDPF at either the policy development or implementation level. This is further complicated by the fact that the boundaries of CDPF as a flexible fund are not strictly delineated; its many activities are often

linked and/or merged with one another or with other initiatives funded by MoEYS, DPs and NGOs. This is limiting the effectiveness of CDPF implementation.

Performance of JTWGs at the national level is good, though less so at the sub-national level.

The JTWG is the principal means to collaborate and monitor across the whole of the education sector, through joint oversight of MoEYS, DP and the NGO Education Partnership (NEP). It has evolved since its creation in 2004 when it met monthly to track DP-funded project implementation, and now meets quarterly as MoEYS has taken growing responsibility for what is perceived to be an increasingly more harmonized sector. Since 2011, CDPF has played an important role in supporting provincial level JTWGs as a means of enabling coordination of policy and implementation at that level. Not all established P-JTWGs are fully functional, however. POE directors, as Chairs, in some cases lack the requisite capacity and experience to coordinate such a multi-stakeholder forum; in some cases, weak commitment to JTWG objectives limits their serious and consistent attention.

The P-JTWGs are not used sufficiently for active dialogue and exchange among all partners and thus are failing to ensure that the ESP is effectively translated at the provincial level and translated into AOPs. P-JTWG meetings are also used by POE as opportunities to give instructions and provide guidelines on operational – as opposed to strategic – issues. Since a key task of the ESWG is to represent civil society in the JTWG, the lack of coordination capacity of some POEs in P-JTWGs has caused considerable concern among some NGOs that voices of communities and parents are not being effectively heard by the government.

CDPF has also supported the strengthening of the ESWGs at the national and sub-national levels, and to the NEP to facilitate better coordination among NGOs and with DPs. While the evaluation confirmed that ESWGs were established and functional in the provinces visited, coordination among NGOs or with MoEYS is not always translated into cooperation at the project level.

4.3. Relevance

EQ 2.1. To what extent are CDPF approaches to capacity development clearly spelled out and reflect the needs and the priorities of the main parties involved?

Summary of main findings:

- CDPF as a flexible and matching fund is generally based on needs-based planning, although it is not clear how consultations with local-level rights holders is securing that local-level needs are effectively reaching higher levels in the MoEYS hierarchy;
- Capacity development in CDPF focused on the individual and institutional levels and less on the organizational level, although approaches are gradually changing; and
- Understanding of the capacity development approach by MoEYS staff and stakeholders is still partial.

CDPF as a flexible and matching fund is generally based on needs-based planning, although it is not clear how consultations with local-level rights holders is securing that local-level needs are effectively reaching higher levels in the MoEYS hierarchy.

Most of the proposals and actions in CDPF were prepared by technical departments of MoEYS on behalf of sub-national level actors in the education delivery structure. Though there is consultation among the sub-national actors, it is not clear how extensive or how widespread these consultations are. According to several SDs and DOE respondents, capacity development in CDPF has thus far been more instructional than educational, focusing on the capacity of local actors to provide timely and quality information to management information systems rather than on how to be managers. In general, under the different outcome areas of CDPF ((Q)EMIS, FMIS and HRMIS), the capacity development support has focused more on improving capacities of sub-national actors to provide data for higher levels (extraction of

information) than on being supportive of local needs and strengthening existing capacities of local actors to manage and use data for policy and planning tailored to their own contexts.

At district and school level, consultation and needs assessments extend to the community level and rights holders, most notably in the SSCs in the Strengthening School Management project of CARE. DOEs and POEs apply consultative processes in planning of AOPs and ESPs, but it is not clear how and to what extent genuine concerns and demands of communities are taken into account. In interviews, community members of SSCs sometimes indicated that the SDs are not always transparent about the budgets they receive. In SSCs, the role of community members is not always as rights holders, as they are frequently requested to support schools with fundraising when budgets are limited. While there is some consultation of communities in preparation of district level plans, there are no mechanisms to aggregate and synthesize consistent community demands in more generally applicable planning proposals.

Capacity development in CDPF focused on the individual and institutional levels and less on the organizational level, although approaches are gradually changing.

The analysis of the activities supported by CDPF shows that capacity development is still understood largely as individual training and delivered and valued as such. Most activities supported by CDPF thus far have focused on workshops and short and long-term training for participants as individuals, rather than as holders of specific positions in their organization or as part of the wider system (e.g., as a monitoring officer within the system's M&E responsibility stream). Thus, for example, the focus is more often on learning isolated skills rather than broader competencies of teamwork, leadership or work planning. This focus on the individual is reinforced by capacity development arrangements that take officers away from their work environment for training, provide per-diems for individuals rather than work units, and use facilitation methods emphasizing content instruction over learner engagement (teacher-centred versus learner-centred training).

The approach has assumed that individuals would then apply and pass on knowledge that was obtained in these training and instruction workshops. Although of course this is happening to a certain extent, this approach is vulnerable as further embedding of capacity development and adoption of new practices at the organizational level directly depends on these individuals to pass on and replicate knowledge in their home organizations.

On some occasions, CDPF has applied other approaches in the form of longer-term coaching and mentoring assistance on the ground. This was done sometimes by MoEYS staff and particularly in the PCAs with VSO and CARE that have focused on these alternative capacity development approaches at the POE and DOE level. More recently, new approaches have been introduced by VSO in starting up action research activities where communities and organizations are involved in conducting research and applying research to their own specific situations.

Understanding of the capacity development approach by MoEYS staff and stakeholders is still partial.

During the fieldwork for this evaluation, team members regularly needed to explain to key informants what CDPF is because awareness of the fund, particularly at the local level, is limited. Once the link between CDPF and the Master Plan for Capacity Development (MPCD) and ESP was explained, most stakeholders recognized the value of CDPF-funded activities, as is particularly evident in the evaluation survey responses. However, there are challenges in this understanding. In particular, results of CDPF are strong in terms of people knowing *what* to do with respect to AOP, EMIS, FMIS, HRMIS and other systems that were introduced over the past years. And they are generally committed to providing all information needed and complying with requirements and formats. Only a few key informants showed substantially better understanding of the thinking behind the requirements and tasks, of knowing *why* requirements were in place and *how* they could best be addressed. Many key informants

confirmed that most training and workshops focused on instructions and on formats on what information to provide, rather than on why this information had to be provided and, even less, on how this information could be used in decision making, action planning and project implementation in the relevant context of these participants.

EQ. 2.2. To what extent is the CDPF strategy aligned with national priorities and international good practices?

Summary of main findings:

- CDPF programming choices are relevant and responsive to national education policies and plans and are appropriate to achieve core policy priorities of MoEYS;
- MoEYS shows clear ownership of CDPF at all levels, although awareness around CDPF was more limited among district and school level actors; and
- CDPF is strategically aligned with broader EU, Sida and UNICEF support to the education sector in Cambodia.

CDPF programming choices are relevant and responsive to national education policies and plans and are appropriate to achieve core policy priorities of MoEYS.

CDPF is directly aligned with the core objectives of the MPCD 2014-2018 and with the ESP of that same period. It shares the same outcome areas and is structured along the same lines as its results framework. Because CDPF is designed as a flexible fund, it can be applied in different specific areas of the MPCD, when and where MoEYS sees its support as most strategic and useful, e.g., in kick-starting activities, piloting approaches and projects that can later be rolled out, or providing support to actions that otherwise would be difficult to support on short notice. The CDPF has no explicit intervention logic or theory of change, but through its alignment with the MPCD supports MoEYS' capacity development strategy.

CDPF capacity development support is complementary to the material and infrastructure support needed for effective and efficient service delivery in education and mainly provided by the World Bank, ADB and other DPs.

The support given by CDPF to development of provincial and district ESPs and AOPs and School Development Plans enabled better alignment of these sub-national operational plans and strategies with the national ESP 2014-2018. CDPF interventions have increased awareness and understanding of the aims of the ESP at district and school level. At the provincial level, the development of ESPs and AOPs has increased possibilities for alignment with plans of other ministries and NGOs in P-JTWGs under leadership of POEs.

CDPF aligns with the education delivery system in serving as a catalyst and making the system more receptive to changes in institutional norms and practices through provision of well-targeted awareness building and training activities, workshops, study visits and guidance. This capacity building has focused on planning, management and implementation of education delivery interventions through POEs, DOEs and SDs and related local support structures, particularly the DTMTs, SCs and SSCs, as has been seen in several districts visited in this evaluation, particularly in rural and remote areas.

MoEYS shows clear ownership of CDPF at all levels, although awareness around CDPF was more limited among district and school level actors.

MoEYS has taken clear ownership of CDPF. Most important have been MoEYS actions in providing guidance and orientation to CDPF through its leadership of the Steering Committee and MoEYS decision to regularly complement funding from CDPF with its own PB funds to further roll-out and replicate capacity development actions.

From MoEYS staff perspective, the sense of ownership has developed gradually. In the first phase of CDPF, buy-in was mixed among the line departments and to some extent even today not all technical departments, POEs and DOEs are equally committed to, or capable of, supporting CDPF. However, it is evident from the fieldwork at the national level that support

for the capacity development actions during CDPF Phase II has become more widespread among all technical departments and buy-in has increased.

At the sub-national level, however, CDPF is less known and frequently confused with 'the usual' support from the national level MoEYS or other similarly focused interventions such as CFS, SIG and Inclusive Education initiatives. In this sense, CDPF is owned at local levels insofar as it has become part of the wider education change landscape. This is not entirely unexpected because CDPF, designed as a flexible fund supporting MPCD implementation, is much less visible at sub-national level as it is delivered indirectly and integrated in the stream of regular interventions of MoEYS. This is also clearly illustrated by the survey results that show that DOEs and SDs are much less aware of CDPF than the POEs.

CDPF is strategically aligned with broader EU, Sida and UNICEF support to the education sector in Cambodia.

CDPF is well aligned with sector support and programme priorities of the three funding DPs and related to their common commitment to the Paris Aid Effectiveness agreement to enhance local ownership and commitment to coordinate through platforms like the ESWG and JTWG. Prior to CDPF, there had been no overall analysis of capacity needs and availability of services; DPs were each doing their own capacity development support within the technical needs of their specific projects or general sector support.

CDPF has been consistent with UNICEF's Country Programme Action Plans (CPAPs) in its concern with equity of access, quality of provision and effective management. The Education Programme of CPAP 2011-2015 included two directly aligned results areas: strengthened capacities at national and sub-national level to deliver inclusive basic education service, and to plan and manage ESP implementation.

UNICEF's bilateral programme and CDPF focus on support to districts as they are now more in the driver's seat of planning and management functions, to provincial authorities in providing supportive technical and capacity development roles, and to communities to organize themselves to meaningfully engage in local development planning, including planning and management of schools. Toward these ends, the five "mutually reinforcing strategies"⁴⁸ of the CPAP of UNICEF articulate well those of CDPF.

Swedish support to CDPF is considered, in general, to dovetail effectively with Sweden's long-standing bilateral support to UNICEF and the RGC for the strengthening of systems for the delivery of early childhood, primary, and lower secondary education, with a focus on inclusive education and multilingual education. More specifically, evidence of CDPF-Sida alignment can be seen in the long-term support Sida has provided to the sector that is complementary to, and extends the reach of, CDPF. For example, through the support provided by the Swedish Schools Inspection for the Education Quality Assurance Department (EQAD) reform of its inspection policy, structures and functions. This was done in partnership with MoEYS for technical assistance through the funding of the SIG project.

The above is also true for the EU, the most important donor to CDPF. The EU has been providing support to the education sector in Cambodia as a priority for many years and will continue to do so in the coming years. The specific earmarked support to capacity development in CDPF is an important instrument for the EU to achieve more effectiveness in the education delivery system and within MoEYS.

The commitment of Sweden and the EU to continue providing support to a next phase of CDPF is a clear sign of the commitment of these development partners to support the education sector and to align capacity development with their other interventions in the sector.

⁴⁸ UNICEF (2016), CPAP 2016-2018: 10-11.

4.4. Efficiency

EQ 3. To what extent have resources been used as planned and was implementation on-time and has monitoring and reporting been up to standards?

Summary of main findings:

- CDPF efficiency has been generally good and funds have reached the sub-national level, although its short-term planning horizon and the large number of supported interventions pose challenges to efficiency;
- UNICEF brings added value in co-managing and implementing CDPF as it taps into international experience and networks for capacity development in education;
- From the beneficiaries' perspective, CDPF activities were generally worth their time and effort to participate;
- Monitoring systems of CDPF by MoEYS and UNICEF were adequate to ensure efficient fund management and implementation; and
- Monitoring of results and outcomes of CDPF, however, was not adequate.

CDPF efficiency has been generally good and funds have reached the sub-national level, although its short-term planning horizon and the large number of supported interventions pose challenges to efficiency.

The evaluation of CDPF Phase I and the 2016 EU Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) report expressed satisfaction with the efficiency of CDPF implementation. Funds were deployed without much delay and a significant amount of funds reached the sub-national level.

CDPF has funded many relatively small interventions, as noted in the section on effectiveness, and this has also limited to some extent the efficiency of the Fund because small fund allocations also require significant time and effort in planning, decision making, management, and monitoring and reporting.

Both phases of CDPF were originally designed as two-year phases and both were then extended by a year, which required additional preparation, planning and decision-making efforts to ensure that funding contracts could accommodate the additional available time and resources. It could have been foreseen that capacity development interventions require significant time to materialize and produce effects and therefore the short-term funding horizons did not match very well with the nature of this capacity development fund.

This evaluation confirms that CDPF capacity development and material support has reached all POEs and DOEs in the country, at least to some extent. At POE level, support was used effectively in preparing and providing management information and in preparing planning and implementation of services. This translation of capacity support into action was much more difficult at DOE level. The core challenge is not so much that support is not reaching the districts, but that existing capacity levels and staffing at the district level are too low to make effective use of support provided by CDPF.

The analysis of budget and expenditures (see Annex 8) shows that M&E and EMIS, FMIS, HRMIS and equity and quality of education delivery have received significant amounts of funding and this has resulted in achieving well-defined outcomes under the M&E and EMIS outcome areas. These investments have been strategic in setting up these systems and to generate the capacity to provide data for them. An emerging need, and next step, in capacity development is to build capacities to analyse and translate data into policy and action.

UNICEF brings added value in co-managing and implementing CDPF as it taps into international experience and networks for capacity development in education.

CDPF support is integrated in UNICEF's CPAP under the education sector outcome area (see also Annex 6). Within the UNICEF education sector, team knowledge and experience in different projects implemented in Cambodia is exchanged. This was clearly evident, for example, in the CFS Policy also supported by UNICEF and recently evaluated. The lessons of the CFS evaluation were well known within UNICEF, as confirmed by interviews with

education staff members of UNICEF. The cooperation with UNESCO-IIEP as a capacity development provider to MoEYS was facilitated by UNICEF's cooperation within the UN-system and coordination with other UN agencies and DPs in the ESWG. The education sector advisors provide effective technical assistance in the development of policies, systems and action plans. UNICEF regularly draws upon international resources, for example in peer-exchange that was conducted in Vietnam and Singapore. The capacity of UNICEF to ensure management and administration of a flexible fund of considerable size is also of value to CDPF, as this capacity ensures that the fund is efficiently managed and monitored, complying with reporting and auditing requirements. Overall, UNICEF's specific technical expertise together with its management and administration capacities provides additional reassurance to the international development partners entrusting resources to CDPF.

From the beneficiaries' perspective, CDPF activities were generally worth their time and effort to participate.

Survey results and interviews confirm that participants have generally valued their participation in CDPF-supported activities and consider the capacity development support useful (see Annex 13). This ranges from short-term training and instruction events to long-term (up to two years) master's degree courses.

When training is provided in the hometown or on the job and no per diem is provided, some participants do complain that the training events are time consuming. This indicates that there is an influence of 'per diem expectations' that can outpace the perceived value of the contents of training. Overcoming this per diem culture is not a challenge for MoEYS alone, but it is a common feature in training and capacity development activities in Cambodia.

Monitoring systems of CDPF by MoEYS and UNICEF were adequate to ensure efficient fund management and implementation.

Based on coding sheets for project items, all CDPF projects since 2013 were coded in two ways: a) per EU budget lines/items and b) per outcome area. This allows CDPF progress to be checked at the strategic level, confirming how budgets were distributed over different outcome areas, and also over different budget lines, including monitoring the extent to which the budget has been benefitting MoEYS directly at the national and sub-national level.

The monitoring systems of CDPF were generally adequate in terms of frequency of (quarterly) reporting and in monitoring progress of MoEYS technical departments and implementing partners. Narrative reporting gave good insight into progress, but as mentioned in section 4.1.2, the indicator framework was less useful for this purpose.

Staffing has been generally sufficient at both MoEYS and UNICEF. Department heads of all MoEYS technical departments were involved in CDPF planning and implementation, and the M&E, EMIS, Finance and HRM units and NIE had considerable staff that both benefited from and were involved in implementing CDPF. UNICEF had on average a staff of three persons and an intern working on CDPF. At the level of the Education manager and the management of CDPF at UNICEF there have been three responsible officers involved in the period of implementation thus far. While this represents some changes, there has not been any notable discontinuity in CDPF management, monitoring and reporting on behalf of UNICEF.

UNICEF has used its regular CPAP and financial monitoring and control systems for CDPF and its implementation is integrated in these systems. These systems seem adequate for the management of a fund of the size of CDPF, and also compared to other projects managed and implemented by UNICEF in Cambodia.

Monitoring of results and outcomes of CDPF, however, was not adequate.

CDPF has not been managed within a results-based management (RBM) framework. In fact, it has not used a logical framework, as it was considered inappropriate for this Fund, as a flexible support mechanism for capacity development. Rather, it opted to use the concept of a basic theory of change (ToC), although no ToC was formally developed or published. In

practice, CDPF follows the MPCD 2014-2018, but also this master plan does not have an explicit ToC, intervention logic or corresponding RBM framework. In this evaluation exercise, the evaluation team developed a ToC to facilitate analysis of causal results chains to outcomes claimed by CDPF. Such a method or instruments have not been used in CDPF reporting.

Some of the activities funded by CDPF have touched upon RBM principles, around HRM and in the development of the AOP assessment tool. There was evidence of increased interest in RBM in the Ministry and among stakeholders and it is expected that use of a more defined RBM framework will be included in the next and final phase of CDPF.

Monitoring of CDPF has been regular through quarterly reports of MoEYS technical departments and implementing partners. Additionally, annual reports have been submitted. VSO has commissioned an external evaluation of its SEM programme and CARE has participated in the CFS evaluation, where CDPF-funded activities in Ratanakiri were also looked at. The departments and partners that have conducted training events and training courses have also produced pre- and post-tests of training activities.

According to members of the Steering Committee, CDPF monitoring has been regular, including annual Steering Committee field visits. The Steering Committee bases its quarterly review on data gathered and summarized by the Secretariat of CDPF at UNICEF.

4.5. Gender equality and equity

To what extent have CDPF actions mainstreamed gender and equity in all its actions and has there been sufficient gender and equity target actions to ensure progress and results in achieving equity and gender equality?

Summary of main findings:

- Although MoEYS is committed to gender mainstreaming, equity and gender equality were not systematically integrated as a crosscutting dimension in CDPF;
- Capacity for gender and equity analysis is not yet strongly developed;
- No substantial changes have occurred in equal and equitable representation of women at all levels of the education delivery system during CDPF implementation; and
- Equity and inclusion at sub-national level, especially in schools, have improved during CDPF implementation.

Although MoEYS is committed to gender mainstreaming, equity and gender equality were not systematically integrated as a crosscutting dimension in CDPF.

MoEYS is strongly committed to Neary Rattanak IV, the five-year strategic plan (2014-2018) for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Cambodia led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The MoEYS State Secretary is the Gender Focal Point in MoEYS and participates in the inter-ministerial Gender Equality Working Group.

In response to Education for All and gender equality policies in the education and vocational training sectors, since 2008 MoEYS has achieved good results in terms of gender mainstreaming in policies and plans, including the Education Strategic Plan (2009-2013), the Curriculum Development Master Plan (2010-2014), the Teacher Development Master Plan (2010-2014), the Master Plan for Capacity Development in the Education Sector (2011-2015) and finally the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (2011-2015).

Currently, MoEYS is preparing for an institutional gender assessment together with the Ministry of Information (MoInf), the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA), the Ministry of Civil Service (MoCS) and the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD). This assessment will focus on an analysis of resources to deliver gender-related work under their ministerial portfolios, an analysis of Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups from the five institutions as well as the implementation and monitoring status of their Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans and relevant gender strategies. This will be complemented by a

field-based gender analysis of MoEYS, MoInf, MCFA, MoCS and NCDD at the sub-national level.

Although the commitment of MoEYS to implement gender mainstreaming in its policies and actions is strong, the challenges to translate commitments into implementation on the ground are considerable. CDPF has not provided strong support in this area and treated gender mainstreaming and gender equality less as a crosscutting priority than as a specific intervention under outcome area 5. Even in this respect, only a few specific actions (i.e., dissemination of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan and piloting a girl-counselling project in several provinces) were planned and realized during CDPF implementation.

From the perspective of most key informants in this evaluation, equity as a core right is largely being realized geographically by focusing on, and setting CDPF activities within, marginalized, poverty affected provinces and districts. This is being done mainly through the PCAs with VSO and CARE in less privileged provinces and in regions with significant ethnic minority groups, most notably in Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri. In these regions, MoEYS is committed to develop and implement a more comprehensive concept of rights-based education delivery. While there was keen attention to linguistic and socio-cultural issues in these two particular provinces, there appeared to be much less attention to gender and disability challenges. While all of these are noted as criteria to be applied in policy, programme and training interventions, there was little evidence of actions being taken to increase quality and access for these specifically challenged groups. SDs and SSC members interviewed rarely referred to disability-affected children in their communities and as a result they also did not mention specific actions taken to ensure that disabled children and their caregivers were approached to integrate (some of) these children in schools.

With respect to gender equality, most respondents interviewed showed awareness that the gender-gap in primary and secondary education is closing and also many respondents refer to the fact that girls generally achieve better results at school. The specific question of why girls perform better at school, however, remains un-answered in most cases; a more specific and detailed analysis of gender equality and the quality of participation of girls and boys in the classroom is usually missing. Specific challenges of girls at school, for example avoiding early drop-out and abuse of safety and physical integrity, are not commonly recognized.

A final equity-related challenge in the education delivery system is the urban-rural divide in education management and delivery, in terms of both quality and quantity of staff assigned to and deployed in different regions. Actors in rural areas require different and more substantial capacity development support to face the more profound challenges in their contexts. In the design of CDPF, this has been taken into account only to a limited extent and mainly through supporting projects of VSO and CARE in these more challenged regions.

Capacity for gender and equity analysis is not yet strongly developed.

Not many stakeholders interviewed expressed concern with equity and gender equality aspects of programming and in their organizations. Most respondents indicated that women and girls are participating in their activities and organizations and that the number of women and girls is monitored with gender-disaggregated data. However, gender analysis has not gone much beyond monitoring the number of women and girls participating in activities. In interviews with female MoEYS staff and stakeholders, however, concern is expressed on the possibilities for participation and career development and the lack of specific facilities and support for women in the education delivery system and for girls in the classroom. Concerns on inclusion of different ethnic backgrounds and disabled children are not common and awareness of inclusion and equity principles is still limited among many stakeholders.

While gender-disaggregated information is provided on education delivery and performance, this information is not yet translated into clear and coherent strategies and action plans. The GMSP of MoEYS is a step forward, but does not yet sufficiently address specific gender issues and gender analysis and focuses on gender mainstreaming, while gender-specific actions are

also needed to change the reality of education delivery and performance of students in the classroom. In addition, this evaluation notes that the GMSP has not yet been sufficiently disseminated at the sub-national level.

The implementing partners, VSO and CARE, however, have included gender analysis in their planning approaches and in staffing. For example, in the recruitment staff, VSO succeeds in achieving gender balance in its EMA and EPA teams. While these NGOs have developed gender strategies and actions, only to a limited extent do these experiences seem to be shared and to feed into and strengthen equity and gender equality approaches and strategies at the level of CDPF and in the framework of the MPCD and ESP.

No substantial changes have occurred in equal and equitable representation of women at all levels of the education delivery system during CDPF implementation.

Participation of women in the education delivery structure at most levels, and particularly at the management level, is limited, despite attention given to gender balance and gender mainstreaming in MoEYS policies and strategies. A recent CDPF-funded study on education managers at different MoEYS levels, for example, found that only 28 per cent were women and called for “more gender-sensitive recruitment.”⁴⁹ This figure is in line with the 27 per cent of women among the different evaluation respondent groups and respondents to the survey conducted in this evaluation. At the end of CDPF implementation, the percentage of women in higher and middle-management positions at the national and sub-national level of MoEYS has not gone up significantly. The same is true for women at the secondary school level as teachers or managers. Women only predominate as teachers in primary schools and as managers at the pre-school level.

In fact, there appeared to be a general air of resignation that things would not change for women unless they acted by themselves. In addition, many seem to think that the lack of participation and ambition of women to participate more actively and reach higher (management) positions is, to a considerable extent, the fault of women themselves.

Equity and inclusion at sub-national level, especially in schools, have improved during CDPF implementation.

Despite the critical findings in the previous section, the EMIS data show gradual improvement of girls' enrolment and advancement in education. QEMIS data also show that performance of girls in the classroom on average is better than performance of boys. Although advancement rates in secondary education go down significantly it also seems that the gender gap in education in secondary education is closing.

These developments and changes can only be attributed to a small extent to CDPF-funded actions because education delivery in the classroom was not considered in the CDPF framework, as many other development partners and NGOs are active in this field. The financial, material and technical support of MoEYS, DPs and NGOs and the implementation of the CFS Policy has been significant and growing in the past five years. The SIG, supported by Sida, has enabled schools to improve school and WASH facilities that have benefited girls' enrolment and attendance at schools. Also, investments in Teacher Training, where Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other DPs are providing significant support, have contributed to the improved performance of girls in the classroom.

Attention to disability in schools is least developed. The evaluators have seen limited (if any) actions to promote inclusion of disabled children in education in CDPF-funded interventions. Overall awareness of stakeholders on disability inclusion was not strongly developed.

Although EMIS and QEMIS data show increased participation and improved performance of girls in education, there are still challenges. The recent studies by the International Centre for

⁴⁹ CDPF (2017), 2015-16 Final Report, 86.

Research on Women (ICRW) and Plan International⁵⁰ and UNICEF⁵¹ referred to earlier have researched safety and abuse at school level and this study observed that despite many improvements, the school environment in Cambodia is not yet systematically providing safety for children, particularly for girls.

The CFS checklist, developed for monitoring of schools, has been an important instrument to more systematically assess and monitor equity and gender equality aspects at school. The CFS checklist is not an output of CDPF, but CDPF has supported training and coaching of DTMTs and SCs and SDs to apply these checklists. This means that while the contribution of CDPF to improve conditions for girls at school has been limited (mostly to WASH improvements), it has contributed to improving the capacity to monitor conditions for girls at schools, particularly through the CFS checklist and inclusion of gender-disaggregated indicators in EMIS and QEMIS monitoring. The EMIS and QEMIS data, however, have not yet been translated into specific policies or actions supported by CDPF to further support girls in education.

4.6. Sustainability

EQ 5. To what extent has CDPF enabled and prepared MoEYS, DPs and other stakeholders to continue capacity development actions in the approaches and activities beyond CDPF duration?

Summary of main findings:

- Capacity development results are integrated in MoEYS structures and systems, but capacities at individual level do not automatically translate into new organizational practices and over time capacities also decrease considerably, due to mobility of individuals;
- Incorporation of new thinking and practices by CDPF implementers and beneficiaries is gradually emerging;
- The commitment of MoEYS to continue CDPF is evident and this contributes to its sustainability and adaptation to changing needs and circumstances in the future; and
- Different options and actions to ensure the sustainability of the final Phase III of CDPF are already under consideration at the end of Phase II.

Capacity development results are integrated in MoEYS structures and systems, but capacities at individual level do not automatically translate into new organizational practices and over time capacities also decrease considerably, due to mobility of individuals.

CDPF has made a clear contribution to development, approval and publication of policy and strategy documents of MoEYS and by doing so has also contributed to institutionalization of capacity elements in these policies. The most notable policies and strategies are different generations of the ESP, MPCD and GMSP. While the ESP and MPCD have had clear follow up and replication at the national and sub-national level, the implementation of the GMSP has not been notable.

CDPF has contributed to the establishment and strengthening of institutions at the national and sub-national levels:

- The ERC was established with support of CDPF and its consolidation has also been supported by it. This institution is still recent, however, and further attention is needed to clarify its role and function within MoEYS and the education sector;
- At the district level, CDPF has provided support to training and capacity development of DTMTs, SCs and SSCs, although these teams and committees were not set up by it. Some

⁵⁰ Plan International (2015), Are schools safe and equal places for girls and boys in Asia? Research findings on school-related-gender-based-violence.

⁵¹ UNICEF (2015), Protecting Children from Violence (VAC): A Comprehensive Evaluation of UNICEF's Strategies and Programme Performance

of these entities at district level face clear capacity constraints and are not yet well consolidated and their functions are not always fully separated.

CDPF has contributed to the development and consolidation of MIS systems under its outcome areas, particularly in EMIS/QEMIS, FMIS, HRMIS and AOPs (and the AOP assessment tool).

The capacity of national and sub-national entities to generate and process data in these systems has been well established and is consolidated, although there is still work to be done to strengthen capacity for analysis and translation into policies and actions. A specific area in which this need is felt is gender analysis.

A shortfall that was identified in previous sections is that capacity enhancement is mainly achieved at the individual level and at policy and systems level, but less at the level of organizations and entities in the education delivery system.

There is considerable leaking-away of capacities. Retaining capacities within units has been hindered by the fact that participation in training sessions is often limited to one representative of a unit who may eventually leave that workplace. More importantly, it is difficult for one person to make significant changes to activities beyond his or her immediate space or to persist in a new way of working independently of colleagues, who may be reluctant to change. In many reported cases, the participants in training events do not transfer and disseminate their learning within their organizations and there are no instructions, tools or formats, nor tutoring or coaching activities to facilitate this kind of action.

Capacity development at the individual level does not automatically lead to changes in behaviour and practices. It requires systematically working on different steps and regularly assessing progress. Traditional training approaches have focused on knowledge and do not always check if the acquisition of knowledge also leads to changes in opinions and attitudes. Additionally, changing an opinion or attitude does not always lead to a behavioural change or new practice. Reaching the level of behavioural change requires longer-term capacity support; mentoring and coaching in particular are more successful in this. Not all training events are evaluated and pre- and post-tests are not always done. CARE is applying such pre- and post-tests, but these are usually linked quite directly with the capacity development event itself. Longer-term monitoring of behavioural change is needed to check if results of capacity development are sustainable at the individual level, and checks at the organizational level are needed to verify if new behaviour and practices are integrated in new practices, methodologies and instruments of organizations. No such systematic monitoring is applied in CDPF-funded capacity development interventions and although this evaluation verifies that capacity has increased in relation to planning, management and data-collection capacities, it is not possible to measure the incremental effects of capacity development because no baseline assessment of capacities was made at the start of CDPF Phases I and II.

Incorporation of new thinking and practices by CDPF implementers and beneficiaries is gradually emerging.

The most important new thinking and practices are incorporated in the education system through the development of management information systems and specific policies, instruments and formats to produce and process information.

There is general recognition that CDPF has mostly supported individual capacity development mostly in traditional training settings. Towards the end of Phase II and the start of Phase III, two shifts in thinking can be identified, but both are at an incipient stage and still need to be incorporated and consolidated into new practices:

- Replacing one-dimensional, instructor-centred and lecturer-based methods with interactive adult learning methods and on-the-job capacity development actions, and with longer-term time perspectives, aimed at enabling sustainable skills development and behaviour change. Coaching and mentoring are now gradually being introduced as

exemplary of such methods.

- Giving more attention to organizational learning to ensure that individual capacities are better embedded and replicated in organizational settings, and doing so with a focus both on competencies for negotiated planning, democratic leadership, problem solving, and communication, and on how positions and functions can be better integrated.

The commitment of MoEYS to continue CDPF is evident and this contributes to its sustainability and adaptation to changing needs and circumstances in the future.

An important sign of the commitment to the education sector of the Royal Government of Cambodia is that since 2012, the budget allocation has increased consistently from 13.6 per cent, and in 2016 was at 16.7 per cent of the overall budget.

Further, MoEYS has developed different generations of ESP, MPCD and other policies and plans; it is currently starting the preparation of the next versions of both for the planning period beyond 2018. All of this illustrates the importance given by the government to invest in strengthening the provision of education, and its commitment to continue to improve the quality of education provision through capacity development initiatives.

Of more immediate interest, MoEYS has complemented several of the capacity development initiatives that were kick-started or piloted with CDPF funds, something that has become a regular practice expected to continue in the next and final CDPF Phase according to KIIs.

Different options and actions to ensure the sustainability of Phase III of CDPF are already under consideration at the end of Phase II.

In general, MoEYS technical departments are satisfied with the current focus on single year, one-off activities. However, some departments, DGPP, ERC, and UNICEF itself are thinking more expansively. For these, the idea of planning for capacity development packages is beginning to be explored: multi-year framing with single year funding and benchmarks. The idea is to encourage thinking that is longer-term, developing a vision of where a department, issue or theme will be in 3-5 years with respect to its improved functioning. This includes considering necessary capacities and then working backwards to identify along a continuum of capacities and competencies, the capacity development steps needed to get there. Since much of this would be projections based on best professional judgements in a relatively risk-averse MoEYS culture, commitments to regular results-based monitoring would be critical, itself a challenge where recognition of the importance of consistent, accurate and well-analysed data is only beginning to take root.

Those technical departments that might take the most advantage of such a holistic, long-term approach are in the least strong position to take it up. Only a few have Master Plans, and these were developed, at least to some extent, through technical assistance (TA) with variable input or buy-in from staff. The idea does appear to have potential for traction, however, insofar as it is coming from within the sector and from DPs supporting CDPF.

Another option to enhance a more coherent and programmatic design of CDPF is to develop joint, multi-department proposals: several responsibility centres with common targets planning actions together on a priority theme (integrated data bases, inspection), an organization (the school for school-based management (SBM)), or some aspect of systems development (mechanisms for harmonized intra-system communication/cross-fertilization).

The idea here would be not thinking how to stop departments overlapping their activities as a negative, but about coordinating and integrating them as a positive, to produce more congruent, coherent impact. It might be a way of putting more control in the hands of the beneficiaries as they helped set the agenda for joint action, and monitored fidelity to initial plans (departments would also have to account to one another for keeping commitments).

The four-year time frame that is attached to the new phase of CDPF provides a time horizon that is sufficient to explore the lines of thinking presented above. Furthermore, the fact that

Phase III will likely be a final phase of CDPF also provides urgency for all actors to start thinking about exiting and transferring responsibilities and activities, and for MoEYS to gradually take over CDPF within the context of its next MPCD.

5. Conclusions

5.1. On effectiveness and realization of outcomes throughout CDPF implementation

While Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) Phase I prioritized actions and interventions at the national level, CDPF Phase II invested more budget and efforts and achieved more evident results at the sub-national level, although this has mostly been at the level of provincial offices of education (POEs), where staff capacity and systems have improved, and much less at the district and school level. The outcomes obtained are most pronounced in the timely delivery of improved Education Management Information System (EMIS) and Quality Education Management Information System (QEMIS) data and in clear improvements in educational planning and management capacities, particularly at national and provincial level under outcome area 2 of CDPF. At the provincial level this is most visible in the improved quality of Annual Operating Plans (AOPs). Outcomes are less pronounced under the other outcome areas of CDPF and less at district and school level. At the end of Phase II of CDPF, there is clear recognition of the need to increase efforts in capacity development support of districts and schools and to close capacity gaps with the provincial and national level, and this is particularly required in rural and remote districts.

Existing capacity constraints experienced at the district level have limited capacity development outcomes at district and school level. Within the structural and functional set-up of the education service delivery system of MoEYS, the district level education management and delivery entities (district office of education (DOE); District Training and Monitoring Team (DTMT); School Cluster (SC); School Directors (SDs) and School Support Committees (SSCs)) in particular face clear capacity constraints, both in terms of quantity and qualifications of staffing and in terms of available budgets, which in turn present bottlenecks to CDPF-funded capacity development interventions to produce sustainable outcomes. The DTMTs face difficulties to effectively monitor (internal inspection), train and guide SDs in improving their performance, especially with respect to implementation of Child Friendly School Policy. SDs have multiple roles and responsibilities in education delivery and management. The administrative burden placed on SDs by multiple and parallel EMIS, Financial Management Information System (FMIS) and Human Resource Information System (HRMIS) data requirements is significant. Although SSCs have become more consolidated as a mechanism for community involvement in school management and operations, they face continuity challenges and are effective in only a few of the roles assigned to them. Accountability relations between schools and communities are still under developed. More capacity development is not the right solution to solve capacity constraints faced by these local level entities. They likely benefit more from a functional revision of their tasks in education delivery and from improvements in the coordination and complementarity of these entities to decrease the burden of multiple tasks on small teams.

To a considerable extent, capacity development support provided by CDPF has focused on extracting information from the local level for management information systems (EMIS/QEMIS, FMIS and HRMIS). This was done by developing and by applying procedures, tools and formats and providing instructions on how to collect reliable data. Less attention was given to providing support to MoEYS staff, particularly at district and school level, to analyse and interpret data and to translate them into strategies and action plans. Although the efforts made by sub-national entities to collect and provide data have been significant, there are no mechanisms to encourage and reward better performance and to empower POEs, DOEs and SDs in their task and in the use of MIS-data. This evaluation identified an emerging demand among stakeholders at national and sub-national level for the introduction of results-based management principles. Looking at CDPF development over time, it can be concluded that the first phase of systems development and improved data collection to populate these systems was necessary, but the time is now ripe to shift the focus to empowering stakeholders at all levels to analyse and use Management Information System (MIS)-data for policy and

strategy development and action planning and there is potential to gradually include an RBM approach in this shift.

Training and mentoring support on-the-job provided by VSO and CARE were generally appreciated by local counterparts, provided it was aligned with priorities and plans of POEs and DOEs. The effects of this on-the-job capacity development support, however, are not significantly stronger than for other provinces where no such support was provided. The incremental effects of this support cannot easily be compared with other contexts, because VSO and CARE have prioritized districts where more capacity constraints were faced and it is more challenging to achieve quick improvements. CARE has applied a unique and important approach to reach out to both service providers in the education delivery system (duty bearers) and to communities and caregivers (rights holders). This approach has built capacities of both rights holders and duty bearers and is important to ensure balanced capacity development and strengthened accountability relations between these two stakeholder groups.

CDPF interventions have contributed to increased communication and coordination between MoEYS technical departments, particularly in the second phase of CDPF when support was spread more widely over the different technical departments of MoEYS. A challenge remains to move from information exchange and coordination to cooperation in concrete projects and interventions. Coordination among stakeholders active in the education sector is more complex due to the structural set-up and mandates of different ministries and institutions responsible for education service delivery and to the presence of many NGOs in the education sector. At national level, coordination in the education sector is strong with a well-established Education Sector Working Group and a Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) in which MoEYS shows clear and strong leadership. CDPF, during Phase I and II, had a strong focus on Early Childhood Education, primary and secondary education and did not consider wider linkages of these education sub-sectors with other sub-sectors such as community pre-schools, resorting under the Ministry of Interior or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) under the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training. Now that educational statistics show clear improvements in enrolment and educational performance of boys and particularly girls, the time might have come for CDPF Phase III to address wider education sector coordination to ensure that students flow further in the education chain and eventually into employment.

In light of the ongoing Decentralization and De-concentration process, provincial and district level coordination becomes increasingly important. At the sub-national level, Provincial Joint Technical Working Groups (P-JTWGs) were formally established, but are not fully functional in all provinces. POEs need specific capacities to deal with multi-stakeholder cooperation with other ministries and NGOs and not all POEs are sufficiently prepared to show the leadership needed to coordinate their P-JTWGs and align actions of other actors with the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and corresponding provincial ESPs and AOPs. Multi-stakeholder coordination is a critical area for further capacity development of POEs. While coordination and exchange has happened in Provincial Education Sector Working Group coordination meetings, there was less evidence of such coordination and cooperation between NGOs involved in project implementation on the ground. At the end of CDPF Phase II, the capacity of POEs and DOEs to lead development efforts in education still shows room for improvement and more investments in strengthening coordination capacity of sub-national MoEYS entities are desired.

5.2. On relevance

CDPF Phases I and II were well aligned with the RGC policies in education, particularly the MPCD and ESP, and the Fund complemented support to the education sector provided by other international development partners. Set-up and management of CDPF as a flexible Fund has ensured strong commitment and ownership of MoEYS at national and sub-national level. While at lower sub-national level (districts and schools), CDPF as such is not well known.

Alignment is ensured mainly through the ESP, which is well known at the sub-national level. The continued alignment of CDPF Phase III with country policies will be assured through its coordination with the new generations of the ESP and MPCD currently being prepared.

The approach to capacity development in CDPF has focused on individual capacity development through training sessions and workshops and on policy and systems development by providing technical assistance to development of policies, strategies, and action plans. Capacity development at the organizational level was given less attention in CDPF, and it was assumed that individuals would transfer capacities in their organizations and that systems would provide necessary guidance to organizations. These assumptions have not been met throughout CDPF implementation, and this evaluation shows that effects of individual capacity development are often short-term, easily decrease over time because of individuals' mobility, and are not automatically incorporated at the organizational level. Organizational capacity development was not made operational and measurable through appropriate indicators. These limitations in the approach of CDPF have been gradually recognized, and CDPF, particularly in Phase II, is including long-term capacity development instruments such as coaching and mentoring on-the-job and, more recently, participatory action research methods. To some extent, individual and institutional level capacities are conditional for organizational capacity and therefore the time is right in Phase III to pay more attention to organizational capacity development.

CDPF is a flexible Fund and does not have a strong programmatic and long-term approach to capacity development with a well-described intervention logic or theory of change. CDPF has remained a funding mechanism to support a rather large number of relatively small and short-term interventions based on needs that were identified and implemented by different MoEYS departments, entities and implementing partners. Implementation on the ground, therefore, has been somewhat fragmented. This evaluation has also shown that CDPF funds have served to leverage other funds and actions to strengthen the education delivery machine with CDPF funds being distributed as capacity development support across the entire system. Now that the new CDPF Phase III has a longer (4 year) timeframe, there is more room for integrating longer-term and more programmatic capacity development approaches, though the challenge remains to not lose the Fund's flexibility to provide seed money and matching funds for priority needs in ESP and MPCD implementation.

5.3. On efficiency

The implementation of CDPF under different outcome areas in combination with the compartmentalized structure of MoEYS has challenged a strategic approach to capacity development. The fragmented nature of the Fund has limited the possibility to develop a programmatic and well-focused approach to capacity development with a corresponding intervention logic or theory of change. Allocation of funds among the five CDPF outcome areas has not been equal: planning and EMIS-related actions have been prioritized and evidence-based research and policy development have received less attention and funds. The evaluation shows that variance in outcomes is related to these different investment levels. A more balanced distribution of resources over different outcome areas might have enabled better distribution of outcomes and more crosscutting relations between outcomes than was observed in this evaluation.

The timeframes of CDPF Phase I and II were very short-term, not recognizing that capacity development processes can generate sustainable outcomes only after longer periods. This has made it difficult to report on CDPF at outcome level and most reporting was output- and sometimes even input-based. Short timeframes have also caused inefficiency because of the need for new planning documents and concept notes for the extensions of CDPF phases. The fact that CDPF Phase III has a longer 4-year horizon presents a clear opportunity to move towards longer-term, more comprehensive and more programmatic capacity development interventions, which did not exist in CDPF Phase I and II.

Monitoring and reporting systems in CDPF have been adequate at the activity and output level and at the level of financial reporting, but have been less adequate to provide good outcome level reporting. Only a limited number of indicators in the monitoring framework of CDPF referred to outcomes and even those were not always accurate outcome level indicators. Measurement of progress and assessment of outcomes is difficult because of the lack of appropriate indicators to measure baseline, progress and end line results. This is particularly the case at the level of organizational capacity development processes and results that have received limited attention in CDPF Phase I and II. These challenges can now be taken up in the preparation and inception of CDPF Phase III.

5.4. On gender equality and equity

Despite priority given to gender equality in CDPF planning documents, women's involvement in education delivery has remained largely at lower bureaucratic levels and mainly limited to teaching in pre-schools and primary schools. Higher up in the system, and particularly at management level, women tend to disappear. Aside from the aspirations expressed in the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSP), the evaluation found little evidence of systematic attention to policies or strategies to ensure that women are recruited to create a better gender balance in education delivery. There were also no evident support structures or mechanisms for career advancement and leadership development of female staff.

Actions supported by CDPF on gender mainstreaming in the education delivery structure and systems have had limited effects. The GMSP was not available in the districts included in the fieldwork, and knowledge and understanding of the plan at the sub-national level was limited, in part because no supporting capacity development was provided to enable its integration into planning or operations. While many respondents were able to speak the 'gender language', actual awareness of what gender equality means in practice remains largely limited to numbers: for example, gender balance in enrolment of girls and boys, and gender-disaggregated data on participation rates.

At the district level, the evaluation identified persistent challenges in remote areas. Costs of travel and time investments in coordination and participation in DTMTs, SCs and training are significantly higher in these areas. And working conditions in remote areas are more difficult, leading to challenges in recruiting good quality staff and stimulating them to stay in these areas. Investments in educating education staff based in these rural and remote areas are not common, adding to the challenge of education staff deployment in these regions. These challenges have led to lower quality and equity of access to education in remote provinces as shown in education statistics. With the exception of VSO and CARE in Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri, supported by CDPF, there have been only a few tailor-made and contextualized projects aimed at lifting disadvantaged provinces to a higher level.

5.5. On sustainability

Long-term effects of capacity development are affected by the fact that technical and administrative staff and teachers regularly make career moves both within and outside the education system. Thus, there is considerable 'leaking away' of capacity development investments, an effect that is strengthened because capacity development of staff is often not embedded in career development plans or in organizational staffing plans and because limited attention is given to organizational capacity development in CDPF.

Sustainability of CDPF interventions was identified as a challenge in previous CDPF reviews. CDPF Phase III, which is currently under preparation, is expected to be the final phase of the Fund. This brings extra challenges and opportunities to work further on sustainable embedding of capacity development in MoEYS' organization and to structurally allocate sufficient funds for capacity development interventions. The fact that MoEYS already matched CDPF funds with its own funds is a good starting point for the next phase. Cost-effective approaches and

methods are needed to ensure that capacity development continues to reach out to the local level and this will require using capacity, already built at provincial level, to ensure capacity development support at district level.

6. Lessons Learned

Capacity development requires a long-term and well-focused step-by-step approach

The experiences in CDPF Phases I and II have shown that capacity development is a long-term process in which a variety of instruments need to be applied to ensure that capacities are not only developed at the individual level, but also that they are transferred at the organizational and institutional level. The effects of short-term and individually focused capacity development can easily decrease over time or not be used strategically at the organizational and institutional level. This means that capacity development interventions should be well focused on specific subjects and organizational challenges. Capacity development interventions subsequently require a gradual and step-by-step approach by the introduction of new ideas and skills, building upon ideas and skills that were introduced in previous phases. For example, the attention given to develop capacities of sub-national level entities to collect and deliver data for management information systems has paid off in timely and improved quality of statistical data. Now that this step is taken, follow-up programmes need to support competencies for interpreting and analysing these data, and using them to inform policies, strategies and action plans.

Consultation and participation of multiple stakeholders in interventions are crucial for inclusiveness of planning and implementation

Planning processes at the local level should be inclusive and participatory if they are to produce plans that those expected to implement them can readily understand and buy into. In addition, the process of consultation should be directly visible in the planning documents: implementers need to see themselves in the final product if they are to take their participation seriously and not consider it pro-forma. This need is recognized in the new version of the Annual Operating Plan assessment tool, developed by Directorate General of Policy and Planning which now includes an assessment of the quality and inclusiveness of the planning process.

Better recognition of the value of community and stakeholder participation requires a mind shift on the part of planners – to see participation and consultation during planning not as a slowing down of the process, but as an investment to be gained back during implementation. Inclusive planning improves quality, relevance and feasibility of plans.

Adult learning methods such as coaching and mentoring enhance the possibility of capacity development, producing more relevant and sustainable outcomes

Short-term training and instructional workshops can be effective to develop individual capacities at a limited level of introductory learning; as a result of these events, participants subsequently know better *what* to do. An important element is often missing or weak in these approaches, however, in failing to change the behaviour of participants in terms of empowering them in *how* to do things and to understand *why* things need to be done in a certain way. This requires a shift in capacity development approaches from instructional and teacher-centred learning to more competency and skills development with learner-centred instruction. Methods of capacity development involving coaching and mentoring can not only be applied at the individual level but are especially appropriate for organizational learning through longer-term, on-the-job and team-based interventions.

Measuring capacity development at organizational level is needed

While considerable practice has been seen in measuring the effects of capacity development at the individual level in terms of pre- and post-tests and exams, CDPF thus far has made limited (if any) use of methods to measure capacity development at the organizational level.

Organizational capacity assessment methods and instruments have gradually become more common in capacity development processes, but these are not yet commonly incorporated in the capacity development practice. This evaluation has concluded that capacity constraints and challenges at the organizational level are probably bigger than at the individual and institutional levels. This will require more attention to the organizational level of capacity development and the adherence to or adoption of organizational assessment methods that are applied by other development actors. Currently the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool developed by Mc Kinsey⁵² and the 5-Capabilities model developed by the European Centre for Development Policy Management⁵³ are internationally widely adhered to.

A cascading approach to capacity development is needed to cover the whole country

Cascading training and capacity development approaches are needed to achieve national reach to stakeholders at the local level. No other cost-effective alternatives are available to ensure that capacity development can effectively reach the lowest level of districts and schools, where existing capacity levels and absorption capacity are also considerably lower and needs for capacity development are higher. The fact that there are 165 districts in 25 provinces in Cambodia points to the need to apply cascading approaches to ensure that capacity development can eventually reach more remote schools in more remote districts. This was done only to some extent in CDPF-funded capacity development interventions and perhaps explains why capacity development outcomes reported at the local level were much more limited than at the provincial level. CDPF has also reached out more directly to the local level through subcontracting NGOs. While NGOs might be able to provide more direct capacity development assistance on the ground, this assistance will depend on continued project funding; therefore, longer-term financial sustainability is a challenge. Criticism that was voiced by stakeholders in this evaluation on quality of cascading capacity development and recent research on cascading approaches to capacity development in the education sector⁵⁴ point to the need to develop good support, monitoring and quality control of cascading capacity development.

Dealing with willingness for risk-taking and innovation is important for success

Meaningful change is difficult, especially for those without power in a hierarchical system with relatively linear and vertical decision making, and where innovation and risk-taking is not common. In such cases, there is significant risk in stepping outside the established box and getting it wrong. For example, despite having good technical knowledge, provincial offices of education are sometimes reluctant to change, take risks and innovate. School Directors (SDs) sometimes copy and paste elements into the School Development Plan, not necessarily because they do not know how to make a plan, but because these elements worked before. This is a compliance modality, inviting SDs to be reactive rather than proactive. Capacity development approaches and interventions therefore need to create a safe environment for stakeholders to learn, apply new insights and translate these into new practices. Actors at higher hierarchical levels need to empower lower level actors to build self-confidence in applying lessons learned and to change individual and organizational practices according to their needs. Projects and funds like CDPF could build in supporting measures for learning and innovation and a certain degree of risk-taking at national and sub-national levels.

⁵² Refer to: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/our-insights>

⁵³ <http://ecdpm.org/publications/5cs-framework-plan-monitor-evaluate-capacity-development-processes/>

⁵⁴ Refer to: Suzuki, Takado (2016). The Effectiveness of the Cascade Model for In-service Teacher Training in Nepal. Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University 2-1 Rokko-dai, Nada-ku, Kobe, 657-8501 Japan in Journal of Education & Social Policy Vol. 3, No. 2; June 2016.; - Karalis, Thanassis (2016). Cascade Approach to Training: Theoretical Issues and Practical Applications in Non - Formal Education. University of Patras, University Campus Rion, Patras, 26504 Greece.; and Hayes, David (2000). Cascade training and teachers' professional development in ELT Journal Volume 54/2 April 2000 © Oxford University Press 2000 135.

7. Recommendations

At the end of the evaluation field research phase, a multi-stakeholder debriefing and validation workshop was held on 18 October 2017. The main findings and conclusions of the evaluation were presented and discussed in a mixed participant group of central level MoEYS staff members, provincial office of education (POE) and district office of education (DOE) staff members and School Directors (SDs), UNICEF staff and CDPF supporting development partners and implementing partners. At the end of the workshop, possible areas and priorities for the development of recommendations were presented and then discussed. Recommendations were clustered to arrive at a limited set of comprehensive recommendations.

The following recommendations are presented in an order of priority that reflects both the priorities indicated by stakeholders and the evaluator's assessment of the importance and urgency of actions considering the conclusions presented in the previous section.

1. Ensure continued relevance and alignment of CDPF

It is recommended that MoEYS and UNICEF develop a more focused and programmatic approach to capacity development, while maintaining the flexible nature of CDPF as a capacity development support fund. MoEYS should remain firmly in the driver's seat of CDPF and provide leadership and direction to CDPF to ensure that CDPF can continue to flexibly support the education delivery machine with seed money and software capacities where and whenever needed and complement this with infrastructural and material support provided by MoEYS and other development partners.

MoEYS should ensure that CDPF Phase III remains well aligned with its current and new Master Plan for Capacity Development (MPCD). MoEYS should also develop a clear intervention logic or theory of change (ToC) to ensure that a long-term and programmatic approach to capacity development is well embedded in the MPCD and aligned with CDPF. The reconstructed ToC developed by this evaluation could serve as a reference.

While alignment of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESP) within MoEYS and with supporting development partners is strong, **increased effort of MoEYS and supporting development partners is needed to improve coordination and harmonization with other actors that are active in education delivery** (such as the Ministry of Interior on community pre-schools and the Ministry of Labour on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)) and with other important processes influencing education delivery on the ground, most notably the Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) process that is not advancing sufficiently.

2. Develop a comprehensive capacity development approach to CDPF

MoEYS and UNICEF should develop a comprehensive capacity development approach built on experiences and lessons learned in CDPF and identified in this evaluation. This new approach should match the longer-term four-year timeframe of CDPF Phase III. MoEYS and UNICEF should include the following specific elements in the updated capacity development approach:

- Now that management information systems have been built and rolled out at different levels and are populated with more reliable data, more **attention is needed to develop capacities of MoEYS staff at all levels for analysing and interpreting data collected** through (Quality) Education Management Information System, Financial Management Information System, and Human Resource Management Information System ((Q)EMIS, FMIS and HRMIS), and to translate these data into well-focused and well-targeted policies and actions.

- **Strengthen capacities of POEs, DOEs and schools to conduct consultative, participatory and inclusive planning processes.** Now that the planning process is included in the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) assessment tool, more specific guidance and support can be given to participatory needs assessments and appraisal processes, and attention can be given to translating context and needs analysis into realistic and SMART⁵⁵ planning frameworks (e.g., logical framework planning).
- More effort at all MoEYS levels is required to move from the current situation of basic gender awareness and commitment to gender equality to the development of **meaningful gender mainstreaming in policies, plans and actions. The CDPF Steering Committee should ensure that gender equality receives much more attention and funds from CDPF** because limited progress has been made in gender mainstreaming in either of the previous CDPF phases. In addition to gender equality, more attention could also be given to inclusion and equitable access for other vulnerable groups, e.g., ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities.
- **More attention to organizational capacity development interventions**, thus far the weakest level in CDPF-supported capacity development actions. This will require the development of approaches and tools for organizational capacity assessment and monitoring of changes, and for coaching, mentoring and team-building on-the-job as necessary complements to capacity development at the individual and institutional level.
- Promote, guide and provide tools for participants in capacity development events **to share and disseminate the contents of their training and their lessons learned with colleagues in their home organizations.** This could include producing YouTube videos of (elements of) training sessions so that they can be disseminated more easily and used regarding real-life situations of work responsibilities. Further, it is recommended that at least two persons from an institution be required to attend a capacity development event to support post-training application of learning.

In CDPF III, MoEYS should consider developing a pilot project to investigate the extent to which results-based and performance-based management mechanisms for supporting POEs, DOEs and schools could be introduced to support capacity development processes. This could include rewarding good quality planning with additional budget. MoEYS could allocate a specific budget to allow additional resources for POEs and DOEs that are performing well. If the pilot project shows promising results, **MoEYS should develop a vision and policy for results-based budgeting for the future and discuss these with the Ministry of Economy and Finance.**

3. Functional review of district level structures and entities in education delivery

MoEYS should undertake a comprehensive functional review of education delivery structures and entities at the district level, including the support and oversight functions of POEs. This more comprehensive perspective is needed **to identify the capacity constraints faced by these different structures at the local level**, including staff quality and sufficiency and budgetary needs, in properly carrying out their functions. If such a budget is not structurally available, offloading of tasks by different structures should be considered to solve the current capacity constraints. As reported by DOEs, District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMTs), School Clusters and SDs, they are overburdened with many different tasks and some elements of their mandates and functions seem quite similar, if not overlapping. Similar conclusions were drawn by the Child Friendly School evaluation in 2016. Relevant findings of this evaluation with respect to DTMTs should be incorporated in this review.

This review is needed in the start-up phase of the new CDPF III as an input to the CDPF Steering Committee to ensure that an increased focus on district and school level capacity

⁵⁵ Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound.

development is tailored to specific local needs and is appropriate considering existing capacities of education delivery entities at the local level.

4. Provide effective assistance to district level actors, particularly in remote areas

In CDPF III, MoEYS and UNICEF should continue strengthening the process of sub-national capacity development assistance, reaching out more effectively to the district and school level with on-the-job assistance, particularly in rural and remote areas.

More cost-effective local capacity development will inevitably require making use of capacities built at the POE level to design, deliver and monitor capacity development interventions for DOEs and schools. The quality of cascading capacity development approaches can be diluted as they trickle down to lower levels. Therefore, the capacity development process should be done step-by-step, gradually transferring tasks from national actors to provincial actors, while providing coaching assistance from the national level to lower levels and by building upon more effective integrated training approaches that have been gradually introduced in CDPF.

Additionally, **MoEYS and UNICEF should consider continuing working with NGOs** like VSO and CARE to provide tailor-made and long-term on-the-job capacity development assistance at the local level. It is further recommended that **VSO and CARE be encouraged to work in closer coordination and cooperation to ensure that capacity development approaches are consistent and complementary.**

In light of the ongoing D&D process and considering Ministry of Finance requirements for allocation of budgets and specific eligible budget lines, **MoEYS should investigate the extent to which budget lines and funds could become more flexible in providing effective responses to specific local contexts and needs.** Consideration should be given to the fact that budgetary needs in specific situations can vary significantly and independently from basic variables such as school size and number of students. Empowering districts and schools in planning and implementation will require entrusting them with sufficient and suitable funding. **MoEYS should discuss the outcomes of this investigation with the National Committee for Sub-national Democratic Development, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, relevant development partners, and CDPF's supporting development partners, the EU and Sida.**

Capacity challenges are clearly greater in rural and remote districts, meaning that solutions for education reform probably need to be differentiated. **Attention to the urban-rural divide in the education delivery structure should be structurally included in CDPF III** to ensure tailored capacity development services and possibly to also provide extra support.

An important element of capacity development at the district and school level is building and strengthening relations and mutual accountability between schools and communities. **MoEYS should consider the experiences and results obtained by CARE and integrate these in a stronger approach to strengthening accountability functions of School Support Committees** to ensure that School Development Plans are responsive to local needs and that schools are transparent in managing their budgets, including community contributions.

5. Develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system with appropriate outcome indicators, baselines and targets for capacity development at institutional, individual and particularly organizational level

To ensure more comprehensive measurement of the outcomes and impact of capacity development in specific areas, **MoEYS and UNICEF need to strengthen the current M&E system, particularly at the outcome level, and ensure that appropriate indicators are developed for both outputs and outcomes at the individual and institutional level, and particularly at the organizational level.** After establishing the baseline for each indicator at these three levels, realistic targets for outputs and outcomes will need to be set for the four-

year period of CDPF III, to be measured at mid-term and at the end of CDPF Phase III implementation.

6. Develop timely and appropriate exit and transfer strategies for CDPF to ensure longer-term continuation and sustainability of capacity development in the education sector

Considering the four-year timeframe of CDPF Phase III, and the fact that this is likely to be the final phase, **MoEYS and UNICEF should develop transfer and exit strategies overall and under the different outcome areas and support streams** to ensure that capacity development support to national and sub-national levels in the education system can continue in the future. The most important vehicle for this will be the next Master Plan for Capacity Development for the period 2019-2022, and an important condition for ensuring that capacity development continues to be part of education delivery strategies will be to ensure it includes budget provisions, which has not been the case in previous generations. **MoEYS should also explore, within its own programme-based budget and with development partners (the EU and Sida), providing support to the education sector, and to what extent specific funds can continue to be earmarked for capacity development in the education sector beyond CDPF Phase III.**

7. More attention to gender balance and mainstreaming in education delivery

MoEYS should develop and integrate gender-responsive planning and targets in its HRM policies and capacity development provisions to ensure a quicker pace of women entering higher policy, management and decision-making positions at all levels and in all aspects of the education system, national and sub-national. This will need to include career advancement strategies, identification of professional interests and potential for leadership among female staff, better gender-sensitive tailoring of capacity development support and, where appropriate, designing affirmative action modalities. It is further recommended that the CDPF Steering Committee prioritize capacity development actions in CDPF that will strengthen gender analysis and gender-responsive planning at all levels and in all projects and programmes developed and implemented by the Ministry. UNICEF should prioritize and provide the necessary technical assistance and capacity development to support MoEYS to improve gender-responsive planning and implementation at all levels in the education delivery structure.

8. Build leadership capacities of POEs and DOEs in multi-stakeholder coordination

UNICEF should provide capacity development support to better prepare and equip POEs and DOEs in leading multi-stakeholder coordination in the education sector at provincial and district level, replicating the good coordination experience that exists at the national level. The Education Strategic Working Group (ESWGs) and Joint Technical Working Group (JTWGs) are effective ways to exchange information and coordinate actions in the education sector at different levels, but while these mechanisms are strong at the national level, they need to be strengthened at the provincial level. This should include enhancing the role and clarifying the leadership of POEs in the provincial JTWGs (P-JTWGs) to ensure that other ministries and NGOs work in alignment with the ESP and AOPs. This coordinating role should also be extended to project implementation to ensure that NGOs not only exchange and coordinate in the provincial ESWGs (P-ESWGs), but also act in complementary and mutually reinforcing ways at the district and school level.