A comparative study of education and development in Cambodia and Uganda from their civil wars to the present

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CHAPTER II
EDUCATION POLICY AND FINANCE

A just society has to solve the possible tension between the benefits of education for individuals and their society to the satisfaction of both. M. Griffiths (2003, p. 23)

II.1 Introduction

The discussion in the theoretical framework in Chapter I demonstrates that at the early stages of development, especially for poor developing countries, investment in basic education has a more positive impact on a country’s economic development compared to post-basic education. Therefore, such investment should be prioritized. In post-basic education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) should be given more focus than higher education for the investment to have a more positive impact on the economy. Further, within higher education, scientific, technological and engineering, the disciplines of manufacturing and construction have a greater positive impact on the economy compared to social science, business, humanities, and arts, thus must be given more priority. All of these must be accompanied by equitable access and acceptable quality. In this sense, education consists of different yet interrelated levels with mutual effects. These levels and types of education in turn produce a mix of human capital that a country can use to pursue its development objectives (World Bank, 2008b, p. 166).

Therefore, a well-developed national education system with sound policy design and financial resource allocation is required to achieve desirable outcomes. Although, the actual results still depend on how policy and resources are implemented, policy and especially resource allocation are the indications of de facto priority; without them implementation is impossible. This chapter, therefore, examines the education policy design and resource allocation in Cambodia and Uganda after the end of the civil wars. This chapter first examines the historical background of political development and educational development in Cambodia and Uganda. Second, it analyses the public expenditures on education since the end of the civil wars in both countries by seeking to answer how political elites, the Ministries of Education, and external factors such as donors and NGOs influence decision making on resource allocation to the education sector. Third, it examines the situation in Cambodia and Uganda after the
end of the civil wars regarding the respective country's policy priorities on sub-sectors of education (basic education, TVET, and higher education) and the extent to which financial resource allocation reflects their policy priorities. Also, it examines what role political elites, Ministries of Education, and external factors such as donors and NGOs play in influencing priorities and financial resource allocation. The final section presents the concluding remarks.

II.2 Historical background of Cambodia and Uganda

II.2.1 Political developments since colonialism

Cambodia and Uganda were under French and British colonial protectorates for almost a century before they gained independence in 1953 and 1962 respectively. After gaining its independence, Cambodia enjoyed relative political stability until the late 1960s during which time extensive infrastructure was put in place by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. However, the Cold War conflict, especially the Vietnam War, affected Cambodia. In 1970, Prince Sihanouk was overthrown by his General Lon Nol who was backed by the United States. Sihanouk then fled to Beijing and allied himself with communist forces (Khmer Rouge) under Pol Pot to form the National United Front of Kampuchea to oppose the US-backed Republic. Seizing control over the capital Phnom Penh in April 1975, the Khmer Rouge founded Democratic Kampuchea based on an extreme Maoist form of communism.

The people welcomed the Khmer Rouge with the hope that it meant an end to civil war and a time of peace and development. On the contrary, during this autocratic rule, Cambodia suffered extreme social and political violence. All existing political and socio-economic institutions were arbitrarily dismantled and the civil service dissolved. In other words, the Khmer Rouge regime was a massive experiment in social engineering where the urban population was driven into the countryside and virtually the entire population was forced into intensive agricultural activities with heavy workloads, little food, and almost no medical care. By the time the regime collapsed after a Vietnamese military intervention in early 1979, approximately 1.7 million Cambodians had died of starvation, overwork, execution, and disease.
Throughout the 1980s, Cambodia continued to fight a civil war between the Phnom Penh government, backed by an occupying Vietnamese army and Russian aid, and the Khmer Rouge and other non-communist resistance factions – the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) funded by China, the United States and other Western counties. The changes in the world political order, due to the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), paved the way for a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia. The Paris Peace Agreement was signed on 23 October 1991 by the four factions, ending the civil war and bringing peace to Cambodia. The Paris Peace Agreement provided the mandate for UNTAC (United Nation Transitional Authority in Cambodia), a peace-keeping force, to implement the terms of the agreement that paved the way for general elections.

The general election was held in May 1993 and a majority of people voted, despite the withdrawal of the Khmer Rouge from the process. Unfortunately, after the election a political problem arose with regard to the transfer of power. The CPP (Cambodian People's Party), which led the country since the end of the Khmer Rouge regime, lost to the FUNCINPEC but strongly rejected the outcome and claimed the election was rigged. Immediately thereafter, high-ranking party members of the CPP formed a secession movement and threatened to divide the country in two if they were not allowed a share of power. Eventually, under an arrangement brokered by King Sihanouk, a new coalition government was formed in which Prince Ranariddh of the FUNCINPEC was to act as First Prime Minister and Hun Sen of the CCP as Second Prime Minister. It was under these coalition politics that the tasks of rebuilding the country began. Since then, Cambodia has held regular general elections with participation from multiple political parties, which have been generally described as relatively free and fair. However, it is important to note that over time the CPP has become stronger and finally consolidated its power in the late 2000s.

In Uganda, the 1962 election gave birth to the federal constitution in which Milton Obote, founder of the UPC (Uganda People's Congress), a party drawing its support from the northern regions of the country, became Prime Minister, and Mutesa II, the
King of Buganda Kingdom situated in the southern part of the country, which is by far the most powerful kingdom among Uganda's four traditional kingdoms, became the president. In contrast to Cambodia where conflict was partly a product of international conflict, in Uganda the political turmoil was caused by domestic rivalries. The coalition between Obote and Mutesa II proved to be short-lived. In 1966 the deteriorating relationship between the two came to an abrupt end; Obote sent a force, led by his army commander Idi Amin, to attack Mutesa's palace. Mutesa fled into exile in Britain. Obote immediately introduced a new constitution. This constitution abolished the four traditional kingdoms, ended the nation's federal structure, and provided for an executive president – a post he filled, in addition to his role as prime minister. With the help of the army and police, he terrorized any remaining political opponents. In an attempt to win support, Obote published the 'Common Man's Charter' with the aim of increasing the government's share of foreign-owned companies, especially those operated by Indians who flourished as a business class under colonialism (Ofcansky, 1996).

In 1971, Obote was overthrown by his General Idi Amin who made good use of widespread popular discontent. Obote fled to Tanzania, where he formed an army in exile to fight against the Amin government. Similar to the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, people in Uganda in general, and those in Bugandan and Busoga (two big traditional kingdoms that were abolished by Obote) in particular, welcomed the coup d'état since they feared the spread of socialism as Obote was turning to the left because of his 'Common Man's Charter' policy. People in Uganda hoped that it would help to unify the country that was torn apart by ethnic divisions. To win more popular support, in 1972 Amin ordered all Indians to leave the country. His measure was welcomed since Ugandans believed they were exploited by middle and upper-middle class Indians (Mamdani, 1978).

However, only a small number of wealthy Ugandans, mostly government officials and military officers, benefited from the seizure of assets from Indians. The country's economy was severely disrupted and damaged since these officers did not know how to run a business. In turn, economic decline and discontent stirred up criticism, and the government experienced several serious coup attempts. Amin promised that his
government was just a 'caretaker' administration and would transfer power to a
civilian government through democratic elections within five years. His government
encountered problems; he often used military force and violence to maintain power.
His obsessions resulted in the persecution of tribes other than his own. During his rule
between 1971-1979, between 100,000 and 500,000 Ugandans were reported to have
been murdered.

In 1978, Amin invaded Tanzania to pursue Obote's army, a move that triggered
tanzania, in collaboration with Obote's forces, to invade Uganda in April 1979.
During the following twelve months two interim governments were led by returning
Ugandan exiles. But in May 1980, a Ugandan general, Tito Okello, organized a coup
that brought Obote back into power. He was confirmed as president six months after
his UPC party's victory in an election generally believed to be fraudulent. Worse than
his previous government during the 1980s, Obote used violent means to once again
impose his rule, while the country continued to suffer economic chaos and tribal
massacres carried out by various armed factions. It is estimated that under Obote's
leadership more than 300,000 people died from political violence between 1981-1985.

Yuweri Museveni, who had played a critical role in the military overthrow of Amin,
did not accept the UPC victory and formed a guerilla group against the Obote
government. Museveni was supported by the Bugandans who had lost trust in Obote
since the 1966 conflict. Finally, the Museveni group found its way into Kampala in
1986. Immediately after seizing control of Uganda, Museveni announced a policy of
moral and economic reconstruction. It is important to note that it was not until a
decade later that the first presidential election was organized, and it was not until 2006
that a multi-political party system was reintroduced.

It should also be noted that after the end of the civil war in 1986 in Uganda and 1993
in Cambodia, both countries had one leader, President Yoweri Museveni in Uganda
and Prime Minister Hun Sen in Cambodia (in fact, Hun Sen had been serving in that
position since 1985), who have remained in power to the present, strongly supported
by the donor community attempting to rebuild and develop the countries after many
years of political and economic turmoil.
II.2.2 Educational development since colonialism

Traditionally, the Cambodian system of learning had practiced in the wat (pagoda) under the guidance of Buddhist monks. Students, mostly boys, learned how to read and write Khmer (the Cambodian language) and practical skills such as construction, crafts, and traditional medicine. In Uganda, learning also took place in local communities, but, unlike Cambodia, knowledge was passed down from one generation to the next through hands-on learning without formal/informal education institutions or written script. This kind of education changed with the arrival of Christian missionaries who taught the indigenous people how to read and write. Later, they taught arithmetic, agricultural, and technical skills (Ssekamwa, 1997; Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2000; Walker, 1917).

Because of these different traditions of learning, modern formal education in Cambodia and Uganda, which were introduced by the French and British protectorates at the end of 19th century, took on different patterns. Initially, the British protectorate easily introduced its education system in Uganda because there were no formal/informal institutes of learning and no written script, thus they accepted what the British had to offer. On the other hand, the French protectorate faced difficulty in introducing its education system as the Cambodian people continued to send their children to traditional wat schools. In response to this situation, the French protectorate introduced a new policy meant to modernize the wat school. The hybrid school — a combination of traditional and French education — was established with the aim of preparing children to enter French schools at higher levels of education and thereafter to serve the French colonial administration (Clayton, 1998; 2000).

Although this process contributed to increased enrollment and a higher number of wat schools as compared to Uganda, the Cambodian modern formal education system developed at a considerably slower pace. Uganda had a type of high schools long

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9 There were three different religious groups, Arab Muslim, British Protestants, and French Roman Catholics. Although Islam preceded the introduction of Christianity in the late 1870s, Koranic schools were not immediately set up nor were they widespread, as was the case with the Protestants and Catholics (Tomaševski, 2000).
before Cambodia did, for example, Mengo High School (1903), Gayaza High School (1905) and several others. By the time of independence in 1962, Uganda had about 400 secondary schools. The first high school in Cambodia was not established until 1935 when the Collège Sisowath was given full Lycée status, and by the time of independence in 1953 there were only eight secondary schools.

Before independence, there was no institute of higher education in Cambodia, while Ugandan higher institutes of learning existed even during colonial times. Makerere College, established in 1922, expanded over the years to become a Center for Higher Education in East Africa in 1935. In 1937, the college transformed into an institution of higher education, offering post-high school certificate courses, and in 1949 it became affiliated with the University College of London. The reason underlying the faster advancement of secondary and higher education in Uganda than Cambodia was that the British used Uganda as a center for training civil servants and skilled labourers for its East African colonial purposes, while the French colonial administration did not choose Cambodia. Instead it chose Vietnam as a center for higher education to train civil servants and skilled labourers needed for its Indochina colonial project. By 1939 only four Cambodians (in a population estimated at slightly over 3 million) had graduated from the senior high school that had been established in 1935. Others in search of higher education were usually sent to high schools in Hanoi or Saigon (Smith, 1964).

Although the educational situation in Uganda at the time of independence was better than Cambodia, still there was an enormous task ahead for both countries to develop their education systems as they needed more educated people to develop their countries. First, many educated people were needed to replace the British and French staffs when they pulled out of the countries at the time of independence. Second, the government of both countries needed to make education and training relevant to the needs of the local labour market and economy and finally to expand the education system as the majority of people, especially in rural areas, did not have access to education.
In Cambodia, education was expanded rapidly during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum 1955-1970 led by King Norodom Sihanouk. Sihanouk rightly understood that a country's economic development required good educational institutions. He also considered himself Cambodian's father of education. From 1955 to 1968, the number of primary schools increased from 2731 to 5857, and secondary schools increased from 10 to 180 (Pellini, 2007). However, it was not until 1960 that the first Cambodian University was established, followed by several other universities and technical schools.

While Cambodia focused on expansion of primary and secondary education before it embarked on the expansion of higher education, Uganda focused on the expansion of post-primary education rather than primary education. For instance, between 1962 and 1964, primary schools aided by the government slightly declined from 2447 to 2422, while secondary schools substantially increased from 421 to 558. The argument for expansion of secondary education was to fully utilize the resources spent on tertiary education as there was a lack of candidates for the expanded number of tertiary institutions (Chesswas, 1966). In the early years following independence, the Ugandan government devoted a large proportion of its expenditures to the post-primary stages of education with the aim of producing graduates to meet the requirements of the development of the country after its independence (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007, pp. 13-14). However, the attempt to make education an engine of development did not yield any significant results either at the primary or the post-primary levels.

First, their curriculums in primary education were found to be irrelevant to the country's needs as they were still based on a colonial model and lacked practical subjects (Muyanda-Mutebi, 1996; Ayres, 2000a; 2000b). In Uganda, in 1964, the government took full control over the education system in order to minimize religious influence, denominational rivalry, and duplication of service. Despite this reform, Balihuta (1999) notes that the education system 'remained largely sophist in approach, British in content and elitist in accessibility' (p. 29). In Cambodia, since 1963, educational reform was introduced and more practical subjects were included in the curriculum in response to an outcry. However, there was a lack of teaching materials
and other facilities to implement the policy so, therefore it failed to produce significant change.

Second, although the development of post-primary education helped to produce a greater number of graduates to assume economic, political, and technical posts, many of which had been held by the French and British, it did not produce graduates suitable for the improvement of their economies. Despite the fact that both countries were dominantly agricultural and majority of the population lived in rural areas, educational policy and practice were aimed at preparing a workforce for modern sectors in urban areas.

In Cambodia, in 1963, new and more practical subjects were introduced in tertiary faculties. However, students continued to study liberal arts and humanities, which could only be applied in the modern sector, especially in government offices. The available jobs in this modern sector could not respond to the ever-growing number of graduates from the tertiary education (Ayres, 2000b, pp. 51-55). This was compounded by the fact that 'upon leaving the Lycee or technical school, the young men prefer to remain in Phnom Penh, waiting to be called for a civil service job or lucrative position with one of the foreign aid missions, rather than go to the provinces where their skills are in demand' (Smith, 1964, p. 659).

In Uganda, courses in post-primary education were not suitable for local economic conditions. As in the case of Cambodia, students preferred to study liberal arts rather than practical skills. In addition, there are at least two other technical reasons. First, the Ugandan education system depends on expatriate staff, as shown in Table 2.1. At the time of independence, among the total graduate teachers (teachers with degrees) of 636, expatriate teachers accounted for 95 percent, while local teachers accounted for only 5 percent. Although the ratio decreased by 1963, it was not substantial. Expatriate teachers still account for 87 percent. Second, courses are tied to the Cambridge University Overseas School Certificate, which makes it difficult to reflect the local situation (Williams, 1966). Chesswas (1966) notes that 'although considerable modifications have been made to meet Uganda's special requirements, there remains much in the curriculum, even technical qualification, that is more
relevant to industrial urban British than to Uganda at its present stage of development' (p. 69).

Table 2.1 Number of local and expatriate teachers in Uganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduated teachers</th>
<th>Teachers with complete secondary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Expatriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Williams, 1966

Since the late 1960s, political instability and civil wars in both countries allowed no time or resources to reform the education system. In the 1980s, attempts to restore the educational systems in Cambodia and Uganda faced extreme difficulties, not only because both countries had experienced on-going civil wars that sucked the limited resources from social development such as education, but they also lacked the human resources to effectively design and implement the reform, especially in the case of Cambodia. A report by the Cambodian Ministry of Education indicated that by 1979 there were no more than 300 qualified persons from all disciplines left in the country and most of the educational materials and facilities had been destroyed\(^{10}\) (Clayton, 1998; Duggan, 1996).

When Yoweri Museveni’s government in Uganda and the first coalition government of Cambodia led by CPP and FUNCIPEC assumed power in 1986 and 1993 respectively, they inherited difficult situations. While the illiteracy rate among the population was very high, much of the educational infrastructure was underdeveloped. In the case of Cambodia, the whole education system had to be changed as it was no longer relevant, moving from socialist-communist ideology and planned economy to a liberal democratic ideology and a market economy. In this sense, there was an urgent need not only to produce human resources for the immediate task of

\(^{10}\) In Cambodia, I remember that during 1980s, educational materials were sold in the street for use as paper to wrap goods. There is a similar report in the case of Uganda after the end of its civil war (Sicherman, 2005). This was compounded by the brain drain movement in 1980s as many educated people left the country as a consequence of civil war and insecurity.
rehabilitation and reconstruction, but also to make education and training responsive to the needs of the local labour market for rapid and sustained economic development. Therefore, the task of rehabilitating, reconstructing and developing the education system was enormous for both governments.

Within this context, in Uganda, the Education Policy Review Commission was established in 1987 to review educational policy and the general situation. The commission suggested a blueprint for future directions in its 1989 report, which focused on universalizing primary education and recommended the gradual abolition of school fees and reform of other sub-sectors in the medium and long term. The overall goal was to establish a national education for national development. However, nothing changed in terms of policy and intervention as far as the budget allocation was concerned. This is due not only to the devastated economy in a country that had just emerged from civil war but also to the lack of priority given to the education sector by both the government and donors, as their rehabilitation and recovery programme focused on economic activity and macro-economic stabilization. Later, influenced by the International Conference on Education for All (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, which set a deadline for achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the year 2000, the Ugandan government appointed another committee to review the 1989 report, which led to the adaptation of the 1992 Education White Paper (EWP). However, the 1992 EWP, with minor changes from the 1989 report, focused on providing opportunities for all Ugandan children and building the manpower needed for the development of the country. The 1992 EWP served as the backbone of subsequent educational investment plans.

In Cambodia, there is no recognized policy instrument like the White Paper in Uganda. It was left to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to set the policy and seek approval from the Council of Ministers. In early 1990s, a series of national education conferences was organized by MoEYS with the participation of both local practitioners and expatriates working for various donor agencies led by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to identify issues facing the education system and to provide recommendations for future intervention. However, as in the case of Uganda,
EFA issues raised in 1990 at an international conference on EFA dominated the theme.

The 1992 EWP in Uganda and a series of national conferences in Cambodia in the early 1990s brought to life the first education investment plans in both countries (1992-03 and 1996-97 for Uganda and 1995-2000 for Cambodia). The plans share similar overall objectives. The first objective was to provide education for all children. The second objective was to link training and education to the needs of the labour market and economy in order to foster economic development. The plans also aimed at achieving equitable access to and quality improvement of education. These overall objectives have never changed, and in fact this is what a country needs in order to produce the human capital necessary for development. The question then is how both governments mobilized resources to finance their education expansions and reforms. What are the policy priorities, as reflected through resource allocation, given to each sub-sector of education in order to respond to the needs of the local labour market and the economy, as discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter I.

II.3 Financing the education sector after the end of civil war
The level and consistency of public spending on education are the first priorities in policy intervention to bring about the success of educational expansion and reform. However, education outcomes still depend on implementation. From data available immediately after the end of the civil wars, the levels of public spending on the education sector in Cambodia and Uganda were similar at around 10 percent of the total government public expenditure, as seen in Table 2.2. These levels were very low compared to other countries in similar situations. The difference is even sharper compared to East Asian countries, which before the enactment of their economic development invested at least 15 percent of their government expenditures on education, and later stages reached more than 20 percent (Hirosato and Kitamura, 2009b).
Table 2.2 % share of education out of government public expenditures in Cambodia and Uganda during the 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ear, 1997; SAPRIN, 2002

In Uganda since the late 1990s and in Cambodia since 2000, the situation has changed. The available data show substantial increases in public expenditures on education. By 2006, in Cambodia and Uganda, the share of spending on education out of their total public expenditures reached nearly 20 percent, as seen in Table 2.3. The spending on education in the two countries is comparable with other countries and can be considered generous given the low levels of local revenues and enormous tasks of reconstructing and developing other economic and social infrastructures. Both countries also created a special fund — in Uganda, 'Poverty Action Fund' through debt cancellation and in Cambodia, 'Priority Action Program' recently renamed 'Program Budget' (PAP/BP) — to protect the education sector from budget cuts (Williamson, 2003; Dom et al., 2003).

Table 2.3 % share of education out of government public expenditures in Cambodia and Uganda during the 2000s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>16.22</td>
<td>14.77</td>
<td>18.47</td>
<td>17.09</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>17.82</td>
<td>19.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20.06</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADB, 2009; MoFPED, 2009a; SAPRIN, 2002

It is important to note that since 2000, while Cambodia could continue increasing the level of public spending on education, Uganda could not. Uganda experienced a steady decline of the share of its education budget in total government expenditures.
from its peak of 26 percent in 1999-2000 to 15.4 percent in 2008-09. Further, recent budget allocations indicated a further decline of spending on education to 14.9 percent in 2011-12 (MoFPED, 2009a). In contrast, Cambodia’s share of the education budget of total government expenditures increased steadily, albeit in small increments, from 16 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2006. Further, recent resource allocations to the education sector increased to 20.85 percent of total government expenditures in 2010 (MoEYS, 2005).

The questions then are why were both countries able to increase public spending on education and why is Cambodia able to maintain the increased support while Uganda cannot? Resource mobilization faced several challenges, such as the limited availability of local resources and overall policy reform in the allocation of financial resources for the public sectors supported by the donor community; both countries depended on external sources to finance their reforms, while overcoming the impact of their historical circumstance. Further, the greatest challenge is the competition for scarce resources from other sectors influenced by political elites. The following section will analyse how these factors and actors influence resource allocations to the education sectors in Cambodia and Uganda.

As both countries emerged from civil wars, few local resources were available for financing public investment and expenditure during the 1990s. Therefore, much of the financing came from donors. Although, both Cambodia's and Uganda's education reforms received substantial support from donors, donor support in both countries differed substantially. During the period of low public spending on education in Uganda between 1991-1997, Official Development Assistance (ODA) to education accounted for only 6 percent of the total ODA, while in Cambodia between 1994-2000, ODA to education accounted for about 9 percent of the total ODA. Later, although donors in both countries increased their support to education, in Cambodia donors' commitment to finance education continued to be higher than in Uganda. While the ODA to the education sector in Uganda increased from around 6 percent in the early 1990s to nearly 10 percent of the total ODA between 1997-2000 in Cambodia, it increased from around 9 percent to over 10 percent during the 2000s (Berry et al., 2003; CDC, 2008). Further, in Uganda the donor community meeting in
2010-2011 decided to cut the budget support to the education sector by almost Ush 65 billion (Talemwa, 2010a).

In absolute terms, aid flow to the Cambodian education sector is also much higher than Uganda, despite the fact that the overall amount of aid flow to Uganda is substantially higher than to Cambodia (as presented in Chapter VI). In total, from 1994 to 2006, donor assistance to the education sector in Cambodia amounted to almost US$700 million, while the total amount of donor assistance to the education sector in Uganda from 1991-92 to 2005-06, a period two years longer than in Cambodia, was only US$530 million (CDC, 2008; Bategeka et al., 2004).¹¹

Why are donor commitments to Cambodia and Uganda different? In fact, the decision to invest in public service provisions by donors depends on the commitment of their involvement with and the historical circumstances of the recipient countries. During Uganda's rehabilitation period, donors neglected the education sector. This may have been influenced by two factors. The first is the introduction of the Structure Adjustment Programme (SAP). In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as a whole and in Uganda in particular, Lewin (1993) notes that SAP and increasing debt also influenced how public expenditures such as education are allocated. SAP was introduced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which were concerned more about macro-economic stability and aggregate economic growth and reducing the role of the state in service provision. As Irumba (1995) writes, '… SAP … aimed at improving the productive sectors, caused public concern about its negative effects on education. … People protested that under SAP, government regarded education as a non-priority sector' (p. 3). This is not new. For example, between 1981-1984, the first loan package to Uganda by the IMF and the World Bank came with recommendations to reduce government spending on social services such as education so that money would be invested in economically productive projects (Kalisa, 2006). Other scholars even strongly argued that the inability to move up the ladder of development in Africa in general and in SSA in particular is a restriction on public investment in education, which is a result of the SAPs (Carnoy, 1995).

The second factor stems from Ugandan historical development of the education sector. Despite the civil war, enrollment at all levels of education was improving, albeit slowly (Balihuta, 2005), therefore, such an increase caused no concern to donors. On the contrary, donors in Cambodia, led by the World Bank, although giving priority to agriculture and infrastructure in order to foster economic growth, gave equal priority to the education sector investment. Its policies and programmes for the recovery period suggest that ‘the dramatically low level of basic education in Cambodia deserves full and immediate attention' (World Bank [Cambodia], 1994, p. iii).

Staff from multilateral donor agencies who used to work in both Cambodia and Uganda claim that presently there are no serious donors in Uganda, while there are in Cambodia (interview, 14 May 2009). Her opinion holds true if we analyse the nature of donor involvement in both countries. A number of studies on aid distribution revealed that donor interest and political and strategic considerations, rather than the recipient country's interest and needs, were the key determinants of aid flows. Aid flow to Uganda lies within this context, as the country is situated in an unstable and unsecured region. Despite donors' rhetoric on the promotion of democracy, good governance, and sectoral reform, which includes public service provision, aid to Uganda has not been threatened during times of bad governance (Alesina and Dollar, 1998; Andersen et al., 2006; Piron and Norton, 2004; Sadie, 2002). Donors often overlooked the Ugandan government's absence of commitment to this reform. This is mainly because, as John-Jean Barya (2001) claims, ‘Many Western governments look at the NRM/Movement regime as a useful one for their own geopolitical, ideological and economic interests in the region' (pp. 223-224). On the other hand, aid to Cambodia is a result of international commitment to end a civil war stirred by world political ideologies during the Cold War – between socialist-communist and liberal ideology – which reconstructed Cambodia under the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement with the support of United Nations. Therefore, the international community committed itself to the projects.

However, it is the local political context that plays a more critical role in influencing such decisions, rather than external factors. This is reflected in the fact that public
spending on education, before it could increase, was not only low, but also fluctuated. This was due to the lack of a medium-term budget framework for resource allocation in both countries. Therefore, budget allocation to each sector depended on the annual bargaining power of each ministry. This bargaining power actually derives from the interest of top government leaders, especially to maintain their power. In Uganda during this period, Stasavage (2005) writes, 'On some occasions Museveni was actually disparaging about suggestions that more public resources should be shifted to education, referring to education as the "non-productive" sector of the economy' (p. 59).

Hughes and Conway (2004, p. 39) argue that policy-making in the context of keeping a network-oriented political system in power makes any systematic reform extremely difficult if not impossible. Any calculation for reform has to take into account not only how it will improve the overall development of a nation, but also how it can support the leaders to maintain their power. Within this context, reform does not happen across the board, but only in selected areas. Usually, in the context of ongoing insecurity and the threat from insurgents (in Uganda from Lord's Resistance Army, and in Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge), social services such as education were among the first victims of reductions as the governments concentrated on the military, not only to maintain security, but also to sustain their power. Consequently, available statistics indicate that in the early 1990s, Cambodian defense accounted about 50 percent and Ugandan security alone accounted for more than 20 percent of the total government expenditure (ADB, 2009; IMF, 1999). These expenditures on defense and security by both governments are far higher than their expenditures on education.

In the late 1990s, the change in external factors — overall public budget management reform and improvement in security and the demobilization programme — led to reductions of defense and security budgets, which provided more resources for social

12 It is important to note that high spending on defense in Cambodia is not only due to security issues, but most importantly due to the integration of military forces from different warring parties into a national military force after the general election in 1993, which led to a very high numbers of military personnel.
services, including the education sector, as seen in Table 2.3. In Cambodia, since 1993 government expenditures on education, health, rural development and agriculture combined just exceeded expenditures on defense for the first time in 2002. At the same time, the ‘Medium Term Budget Framework’ reform was introduced by the donor community, which outlines the available resources to the sector and guarantees a minimum level of funding to enable the Ministry of Education to plan effectively in the medium term.

Cambodia and Uganda went through similar situations as described above, which enabled them to increase their public expenditures for their education sectors, but why was Cambodia able to maintain the increase, while Uganda was not? Once again, it was the local political context that influenced this. In contrast to the early 1990s when Cambodia and Uganda shared similar political development patterns in which maintaining security was the key for regime legitimacy, now the pattern of their political development differed substantially, leading to a different emphasis on investment in education by political elites.

Answering the question why Cambodia is able to sustain the increase of budget for the education sector while Uganda is not, we need to look into the reasons and sources behind the budget increases in both countries. It is important to note that in Uganda the source for increases of the public expenditure on education were due to the introduction of general budget support in which funds were pooled from donors funding various projects. This project support was believed to have been not only fragmented in terms of intervention, but also did not respond to local priority needs, as donors always set the agenda for intervention. Therefore, general budget support was adopted to support the recipient country’s priority development plan. During the 1990s, the share of general budget support of the total aid was around 30 percent and increased to 50 percent by 2003. Between 1997-98 and 2003-04, general budget support contributed 31 percent of the real-term increase in public expenditure (Williamson, 2006). Donor objectives to promote political stability in Uganda, as discussed earlier, coupled with general budget support to provide the opportunity for Ugandan political elites to influence decisions over the investment in education as donors did not have strings attached to their support.
The budget increase to the education sector in Uganda in the late 1990s and early 2000s was due to the implementation of Museveni's promise to provide UPE during the presidential election in 1996, an issue discussed in the next section. The mobilization of funding needed to implement the education policy was possible, Avenstrup (2006) argues, not so much about the Medium Budget Reform, but 'only because of top political backing that empowered the ministry of education and other ministries to adjust their budget to meet the needed expenditure' (p. 234).

Since 2001, Williamson (2006, p. 147) has noted that in Uganda there is an increase of political involvement in the public finance system. Despite budget increases to the education sector since 1996, President's Museveni's electoral support has decreased steadily in the last two presidential elections. Consequently, the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES) receives less attention from President Museveni because it is considered politically insignificant to the power game of Ugandan politics. In recent years, the heavy emphasis on education sector reform as a strategy to win presidential elections was dropped, and President Museveni began to use a new political tactic of 'divide and rule'. This is reflected in the increases of its administrative unit — district — from less than 40 when President Museveni first came to power to 80 in 2008 and reaching 112 in 2010 (Semakula, 2010). The tactic of divide and rule is possible in the Ugandan context as the country consists of diverse ethnic groups (more than 10), which historically have harbored animosity towards each other. Using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, Green (2010) argues that district creation has functioned as a source of patronage. He further points out that these newly created districts served as a means to compensate for other patronage resources lost through public administrative reforms and that they have helped him to continue to win elections (Green, 2010).

Williamson (2006) also noted that action by donors in an attempt to control public expenditures, such as State House spending, has had little effect. Another study reveals that although the general budget support offers donors opportunities for engagement with the government of Uganda on a wide range of governance issues, it cannot buy governance reforms that threaten key political interests (Lister et al., 2006). Consequently, this leads to an increase in State House spending and the general
public administration spending from 17.5 percent in 2002-03 to 24.9 percent in 2005-06 of total government spending. This increase negatively affects government expenditure on other public sectors such as education.

Unlike Uganda where increased/decreased spending on education is motivated purely by political reasons, in Cambodia the reasons for increased educational spending resulted from MoEYS's open recognition of the need for radical reform to improve the sector performance after a 1999 assessment of the education sector showed poor results (Forsberg and Ratcliffe, 2003). As discussed earlier, donors in Cambodia are more committed to sectoral reform such as education than Uganda; consequently, donors put pressure on the government to increase social services such as education through World Bank Structural Adjustment Credit (Ratcliffe et al., 2009).

Although to some extent donors also tolerated the Cambodian government's unwillingness to initiate reform in some sectors like judiciary and anti-corruption units, donors in Cambodia are relatively more committed to sectoral reform such as education. Despite the push for global aid architecture to provide general budget support as in the case of Uganda, the majority of donors in Cambodia did not provide general budget support. Between 2006 and 2008, general budget support accounted for only about 6 percent of the total aid to Cambodia. Currently in Cambodia, over 90 percent of foreign aid bypasses the government public management system (CDC, 2008) and goes directly to both sector support and project support using the country's own financing systems. Among other reasons, a study by FTI (2009), as well as fieldwork interviews and personal conversations with education project managers and advisors in Cambodia, indicated that donors lacked confidence in public management systems and the government's will and capacity to prioritize sectoral investment (interview, 10 September 2008; personal conversation, 18 August 2008).

However, the sustained increase in budget allocation to the education sector in Cambodia is motivated by political reasons. Unlike Uganda, political competition in Cambodia increasingly depends on performance, and there is no ethnic card to play to win the election as there is in the case of Uganda, because Cambodia consists of one majority ethnic group — Khmer —that is well integrated among a few small minority
groups. Prime Minister Hun Sen's popular support has increased steadily since the 1998 general election, especially in rural areas. A survey by the International Republican Institute (IRI) indicated the CPP victory resulted from the improvement of social services such as education. Therefore, Prime Minister Hun Sen not only gives priority to public expenditure on social services like education, but he also has been able to run a parallel budget for social service provision through the financial support of businessmen. Although exact statistics are not readily available, anecdotal evidence reveals that the availability of budget for social services such as education in Cambodia through the CPP and Prime Minister Hun Sen are substantial.

II.4 Policy priority and resource allocation
An examination of the total expenditures on the education sector and its overall objectives — to provide EFA and to link education and training to the needs of the labour market and economy — does not reveal the policy priorities and resource allocation to each sub-sector. This section will first analyse policy priorities as reflected in the strategic education investment plans and analyse whether the resource allocation reflects the policy priorities. Second, it will examine what the factors and actors are that influence decision making given the complexity of financing education in Cambodia and Uganda.

II.4.1 Basic/primary education
As in the case of public budget allocation to the education sector, in Uganda, since the end of the civil war, prioritizing basic education in budget allocation has not been consistent despite the calls for universal primary education in all national education plans. In Uganda, financing basic education can be classified into four different periods. There was low expenditure between 1986-1996, a huge increase between 1997-98 and 2001-02, which flattened out between 2001-02 and 2006-07, and the

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14 It is important to note that while Cambodia clearly defines nine years of schooling, 6 years in primary plus 3 years in lower secondary school, as basic education as in many other developed countries, Uganda does not. In Uganda’s stated objectives of universal primary education, 7 years of primary education is considered basic education.
expenditures have declined in real terms below the level of 2001-02 since 2008-09, while basic education in Cambodia remained the single priority for the government.

In Uganda, immediately after the end of the civil war, budget allocation to primary education was very low, accounting for only 30 percent of the total public spending in the education sector between the late 1980s and mid-1990s. Uganda's first education investment plan in 1992-93 to 1996-97 also did not give priority to primary education in terms of resource allocation. By the mid-1990s, although there was an increase of budget allocation to primary education, its share never reached over 50 percent of the total public expenditure on education, despite a government commission report in 1989 and the 1992 EWP calling for universal primary education (Mehrotra and Delamonica, 1998).

As discussed earlier, education investment during this period was not the government's priority. At the same time, the donor community, although supporting the idea of education for all, had no plan to push for rapid expansion of an education provision through free public education; therefore, they did not pressure the government to increase budgetary support of primary education. According to Stasavage (2005, pp. 68-69), there is no evidence that the World Bank or other donors were advocating the immediate abolition of school fees. A World Bank report from this period noted that the issue of user charges in education was currently under discussion, and that decisions about education costs might best be decided at the local level. In fact, much of the donors' intervention on behalf of primary education focused more on quality improvement — in the name of software reform such as teacher training programmes and textbook provision — rather than on the expansion of access. This pattern of resource allocation and intervention did not reflect the priorities of Uganda at that time when many of the school-age population were not in school, nor did it reflect the global commitment to achieve EFA. Because of high poverty rates during this period, most families could not afford school fees for their children; consequently, gross enrollment rates in primary education stagnated at roughly just over 50 percent.
During the presidential campaign in 1996, Museveni promised to promote UPE by abolishing school fees, which he implemented in 1997. As a result, primary education's share of the total Ugandan government expenditure on education increased from 30 percent in 1989-90 to more than 60 percent in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In this sense, Uganda's move toward UPE was not under pressure from donors, but was motivated by the first direct presidential election since National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power in 1986. Oketch and Rolleston (2007) write, 'It appears that free primary education emerged from the transition to democratic politics. Political demand rather than rational planning seemingly triggered UPE in Uganda' (pp. 13-14).

Immediately after the implementation of UPE, school enrollment skyrocketed from roughly 2 million in 1996 to about 6 million in 1997, and to over 7 million in early 2000s. The World Bank (2004a, p. ix) noted that the increase in enrollment in Uganda was threatening the entire education system. Unless additional resources could be made available, the system would collapse. To save the system, the World Bank quickly introduced the Education Sector Adjustment Credit in 1998, combined with International Development Assistance credit that amounted to US$80 million. Later, another US$75 million was provided to Uganda to support the education reform through a Highly Indebted Poor Country grant. This ad hoc arrangement was necessary because Uganda was considered by donors to be a success story of macroeconomic reform during the 1990s and a model for Sub-Saharan Africa for the success of neoliberal economic principles. In this sense, donors' support to primary education in Uganda followed rather than preceded the reform.

It is important to note that much of Uganda's budget support to primary education came from donors under the new aid architecture. In the late 1990s, a review of the effectiveness of donors' project support led to the introduction of a sector-wide approach (SWAp). In fact, Uganda is the first country to adopt SWAp and continues to serve as a model in achieving UPE between the late 1990s and early 2000s, before its recent decline and deteriorating quality. Basically, SWAp attempts to encourage all donors to support a sector within a common management framework around a government priority programme in order to avoid different priorities of donors'
projects, as in the early 1990s. This change is characterized in official development assistance as a shift from donorship to ownership and partnership. Further, the introduction of general budget support, as discussed earlier, assists the MoES in meeting the recurrent costs of a greatly expanded system. Between 1998 and 2002, external assistance funded between 54 and 61 percent of the recurrent costs of basic education delivered through primary schools (Berry et al., 2003). This raised a concern about the sustainability of the system as well as the priority of UPE that is heavily dependent on external support and especially Museveni’s political motivation to win elections. In the early 2000s, the concern about the sustained priority of UPE in Uganda became a reality. There was a strong signal that the Ugandan government’s emphasis on primary education was no longer a priority. For example, Uganda fell behind schedule in meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) of having all children in primary school by 2015. Although Uganda was, in 2002, selected among the first beneficiaries of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI)\(^{15}\), later the Ugandan government rejected the donors’ selection.

The reason for the rejection was that if Uganda accepted the donors’ selection then the government would have to focus on primary education and could not redirect funds to other sectors or sub-sectors where the Ugandan government was used to funding pet interests when aid was provided through general budget and sector support. It is important to note that despite the introduction of UPE, the result of the presidential election in 2001 and 2006 revealed that President Museveni’s votes declined and so he had to change his policy priorities in order to regain votes. Around mid-2000, there was a shift of policy emphasis from primary education to post-primary education. During the presidential election in 2006 and recently in 2011, Museveni introduced the Universal Post-Primary Education and Training (UPPET) to gain votes. This led to the revision of the education strategic investment plan (ESIP) 2004-2015. The current ESIP 2007-2014 includes a focus on UPPET. With the change of emphasis to UPPET in the midst of declining public expenditures in education, as discussed

\(^{15}\) FTI is a global partnership between donors and developing countries to speed the progress towards the MDG of achieving UPE by 2015. All lower-income countries that show serious commitment to achieving universal primary education completion can receive support from FTI.
above, the initiative could possibly be implemented through the reallocation of budget from other sub-sectors within the education sector.

Consequently, there was a decline of budget allocation to primary education out of the total public expenditure on education from 72 percent in 2000 to 59.7 percent in 2006-07, and an increase of budget to post-primary education, mainly to secondary and higher education from 12.5 percent to 22.2 percent and 3.5 percent to 11.7 percent respectively, during the same period (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, 2008). Actually, the budget for UPE in 2010 was only USh495.1 billion, while the budget for Universal Secondary Education (USE) was USh210 billion, about half the budget for UPE, which further reduced the share for primary education of the total education budget to 41 percent (Baguma, 2009; Talemwa, 2010a).

As a result, the government’s subsidy to primary students remains very low compared to secondary and university students. Available data show that university students received 39 times more and secondary students 7 times more than primary students in 2002. This large discrepancy contrasts with successful countries in East Asia. For example, during this same period in Singapore and South Korea the difference between primary and secondary was less than two times. And the difference between primary and higher education in South Korea was less than three times. It is also important to note that the difference between each sub-sector of education was even smaller in Singapore and South Korea during their early stages of development (Goh and Gopinathan, 2008; Lee, 2008).

As usual, we observe that donors always follow a government’s initiative of reform. Donor support for primary education in Uganda was not sustained. Aid commitments to basic education have been uneven with a general downward trend. The share of basic education in total aid to education has declined from 93 percent in 1999 to 58 percent in 2006 (Purcell, 2009) and increased for secondary and higher education. As discussed earlier, the reason why the donor community in Uganda so easily ceased

16 Recently, the donor community led by World Bank and African Development Bank provided loans to Uganda valued at US$150 million and US$78 million respectively to support UPPET (Lirri, 2009; Bugembe, 2009).
supporting primary education was that donor support for primary education followed rather than preceded the introduction of UPE. Further, donors in Uganda are always ready to adopt the global agenda, which currently focuses on support for secondary and higher education in developing countries.

The problem, it appears, was lack of independent research evidence to support policy reform to meet the country's needs. Kiiza et al. (2006) argue that, 'The evidence used is politically constructed and/or reflects the norms, values and ideologies of IFIs... rather than Uganda's long term developmental goals' (p. 1). There are at least two reasons underlying this issue.

First, although Uganda established commissions to analyse the educational issues, their input is rather weak. Interviews and conversations with retired government officers who used to work in the education sector in Uganda reveal that the academicians who participated in the review commission and reform programme do not dare challenge the politicians (interview, July 28, 2009; personal conversation, July 27-31, 2009). Similar observations have been made by Ugandan scholars. Onyango-Obbo (1989) notes that those who set up the commissions proceeded to call up academics to serve on these commissions, and the qualification is almost always some connection to some big shot in government. This has one negative result for education. Academics who want to go on these commissions start courting the patronage of politicians and being subservient to governments or parties. As far as educational reform goes, these people either stop speaking out in support for the reforms, or some may even begin to oppose them. These are some of the ways in which what, on the face of it, looks like a simple failure to allocate resource to education, turns out to undermine other social and political institutions.

A similar observation is made by Irumba (1995, p. 20): top leaders in the ministry participating actively in every technical meeting is not a good sign, but a politicization

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17 IFIs refers to International Financial Institutions.
of education instilled fear among junior officials who either remained silent or spoke with caution, fearing to appear to disagree with top officials' views.

Second, there was a lack of input from NGOs in the policy process. In Uganda, the participation of civil society such as local NGOs and grassroots organizations was very limited. This limited participation from NGOs may also result from their involvement in the education sector. NGOs in Uganda tended to operate their own schools rather than support public schools. Therefore, the government did not see any significant contribution of NGOs to its public education system. Although they were often invited to the table in policy and planning discussions, they repeatedly expressed the feeling that their involvement in such discussions with government only occurred relatively late in the process. They felt that they were asked to consider decisions that had already been taken, for which their subsequent 'buy-in' was wanted. (Berry et al., 2003, p. 32)

A study by Namara (2010) also concludes that,

… NGOs are used in the political coordination system whereby even NGOs that claim to work for the interest of the poor inevitably remain loyal to the techno-managerial control system … NGOs participation has been mainly a low-path of participation. The principal concern of policy makers (donors and government) is to retain social control. Therefore participation is pursued not because it benefits the people but because it provides potential for control. (p. 26)

This shift also encouraged the education policy makers to revitalize its historical bias against primary education. The education strategic plan developed by the Ministry of Education argues that, 'A critical problem facing Uganda is that it does not have enough men and women with competencies needed to achieve its development goals' (MoES, 2008a). At the same time, the Uganda Poverty Eradication Plan 2004-05 to 2007-08 argues that

The planning of public expenditure … has to take into account the possibility that education would take place even without public intervention. For this reason, government will aim to focus its resources on those who would
otherwise not access education, particularly secondary and tertiary education where universal access is not yet achievable. (MoFPED, 2004, p. 154)

A commissioner in the Ministry of Education echoes this by saying, 'Some people have misgivings about USE but if we do not come up to support it, other programmes will be undermined. Failure to have USE will mean that we shall be undermining UPE’ (The New Vision, 2006).

This interpretation and calculation do not reflect the reality of local need. The reallocation of resources weighed down the unfinished project of achieving UPE, introduced in 1996, let alone quality improvement. This is because the demand for primary education remained high as there was no demographic change — the percentage of primary school-age children (6-12 years) reduced slightly from 21.9 percent in 2002 to 20.42 percent in 2006. The shift is also not consistent with the 1992 EWP, which argued that 'Only when every child is enrolled at the right age and does not leave school without completing the full cycle of primary education, would it be possible to ensure that all citizens have the basic education needed for living a full life, achieving a transformation of society and accelerating the economic growth'. The shift away from primary education in Uganda is also not consistent with its study of social and private rate of return, which shows that the investment in primary education yields the highest rate of return compared to the investment in secondary and higher level of education (Winkle and Sondergaard, 2008).

A Ugandan law maker, the chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Services, is also opposed to the shift as she rightly argues, 'It is no use concentrating on secondary education if students don't make it to that level. We want pupils to have a good foundation at primary school' (Butagira and Natabalo, 2009). The shift away from prioritizing primary education in Uganda is the opposite the trend of the successful experience of Newly Industrial Countries (NICs) in East Asia. NICs only shifted priority towards secondary and tertiary education when basic education was fully achieved (Cumming, 2009). Harrold (1996) notes that 'the decisive factor in East

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Asia's success was the allocation of public expenditure between basic and higher education. East Asia consistently allocated a higher share of public expenditure on education to basic education than elsewhere. The share of public funds allocated to tertiary education in East Asia has tended to be low (pp. 48-49). This explains why NICs have diffused mass education rapidly compared to other developing countries after colonialism.

While Uganda cannot sustain prioritizing primary education, in Cambodia basic education has remained the single priority for investment since the early 1990s. Although Cambodia has a better chance than Uganda to shift its focus away from primary education as it experiences a demographic change — the percentage of primary school-age children (6-11 years) are among the total population reduced from 18.1 percent in 1998 to 14.62 in 2006 (Forsberg and Ratcliffe, 2003; MoP, 1998) — Cambodia still focuses on basic education. All subsequent Cambodian investment plans, Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2001-2005, ESP 2004-2008, Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) 2001-2006, ESSP 2004-2008, and the revised ESP 2006-2010 and ESSP 2006-2010, were all committed to achieve and consolidate the existing priority focus on basic education rather than introduce new priorities. Even Cambodia's long-term education investment plan 'Education For All 2003-2015: National Plan' remains focused on basic education.

Cambodia's Poverty Eradication Plan since the 2000s has consistently stressed basic education as a means to alleviate poverty, in contrast to Uganda, which stressed post-basic education as a means to alleviate poverty. Although Cambodia emphasizes the importance of expansion of post-basic education, they call for the development of sector-wide pro-poor financing strategies that provide scholarships for the needy and disadvantaged groups, rather than stressing the need for the government to provide universal access, as in the case of Uganda discussed above (SNEC, 2004, p. 84). In this sense, it appears that Cambodia does follow the NICs experiences of sustained focus on primary education. NICs experiences show that educational development is
not a sprint but an endurance race built partially on a strong foundation of primary education (Cumming, 2009, p. 70).

The share of basic education of total public expenditures on education in Cambodia has always been high, even higher than Uganda, especially since mid-2000s. In Cambodia, the share for primary education of public expenditure increased from 62 percent in 2004 to 76 percent in 2008 (see Table 2.5 for detail annual).

Table 2.4 The share of primary education in total government expenditures on education in Cambodia and Uganda

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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodia (recurrent only)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: MoEYS, 2004; 2005; Policy and Operations evaluation department, 2008

Further, unlike Uganda, Cambodia not only accepted but also expended a great effort to obtain FTI funds of US$57.40 million to expand and deepen its basic education system. In addition, about 113 organizations (NGOs) supported 233 education projects in Cambodia at an estimated cost of US$225 million in 2003–2008, mainly focused on basic education (Tan, 2007). Also unlike Uganda, where NGOs tend to run their own schools and therefore not contribute to the public education budget, the majority of Cambodian NGOs are working with public schools. Therefore, the Cambodian government can see additional benefits to its public education system by involving NGOs.

Further unlike Uganda, in Cambodia at the beginning of the country's rehabilitation, the donor community, especially ADB, worked closely with the government to support education reform, focusing on expanding coverage of basic educational provision. Consequently, donors continue to support basic education amidst the global trend towards secondary and higher education. The ADB approach to education 'should evolve to lending within a policy framework over a sustained period … should
be planned within a broader sector policy context based on sector analysis, and conceived as part of a long-term strategies' (ADB, 2002, p. 29). This long term strategy not only comes from sectoral analysis of the demand side, but also from exchange of regional experiences in key aspects of educational development policy, reform, and good practices in which the consolidation of basic education is the priority. Between 2001-2007, five big donors — ADB, JICA, WB, EC, and UNICEF — which accounted for more than 70 percent of the total donor fund to the education sector, all placed their priorities on basic education.

Although planning and key government policy papers in Cambodia are, to a certain extent, donor-driven and are largely prepared by donors (McNamara, 1999; Maeda, 2007), Ayres (1999) claims they are formulated with regard for principles of modern government and institutional arrangement. The level of domination by donors has declined over time. Not only does the specialized ministry take an active role, but input is given by the people represented through NGOs. These NGOs are working on the ground, which reflects the reality of Cambodian education. Hughes and Conway (2004) noticed that the consultative Group Meeting, recently renamed Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum, since 1990s has been the forum for debating policy that involves not only donors and the Cambodian government but also NGOs. This is a form of policy-oriented discussion. They also noted that the NGOs represented there are the largest and most professional.

McCargo (2010) also notes that Cambodian NGOs working on social issues such as education enjoy greater freedom and ability to influence government policy through their membership in the Education Technical Working Group. Relations between the CPP and NGOs — both local and international — are improving (Brazier, 2009) for at least two reasons. First, the government led by CPP is more confident since it consolidated its power and so feels less vulnerable to criticism by NGOs. Second, NGOs enhance the government's performance and thus its legitimacy by providing the government with feedback as well as expertise. On the other hand, NGOs in Uganda have less influence on government policy. This is because in Uganda there is no such forum and NGOs are not members of the Education Technical Working Group. Policy
is greatly influenced by either political elites or donors as they negotiate privately (Williamson, 2008).

The sustained technical support from donors and NGOs also helped to improve the staff capacity of MoEYS in Cambodia. Several donor representatives reported positively that they increasingly consult with MoEYS officials over their development assistance plans. Another example of increased government capacity has to do with how documents are drafted. In the past, a number of official documents of MoEYS were reportedly drafted in English, first with significant assistance by foreign advisors, then translated into Khmer. However, both government officials and donor representatives stated that the recent drafting of the National Plan EFA 2003-2015 was conducted primarily by government officials with limited assistance from foreign advisors (Government-Donor Partnership Working Group [Sub-Working Group No. 3], 2004).

These decisions, however, might not have materialized if not for political support. As discussed earlier, CPP's victory in recent elections was made possible by support in rural areas. This situation forces the CPP to focus on rural development. In rural Cambodia, as discussed in Chapter III, people have just gained access to education for their children and many still lack it because of constraints on the supply side. This condition, therefore, gives incentive to the CPP to improve rural education. In this sense, it appears that the ruling party CPP offers opportunities for meaningful participation by NGOs and donors in the education sector because their work helps to strengthen its legitimacy (Un, 2006).

II.4.2 Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education

Uganda's lower emphasis on primary education than Cambodia's during the early 1990s means that it had more resources allocated to post-primary education. However, Uganda has not been able to give priority to BTVET over higher education. During

\[20\] In the case of Uganda, TVET encompasses business education and training, thus 'B' is added to the abbreviation BTVEET. However, for convenience in comparison with Cambodia that uses only TVET, the 'B' was dropped in this study.
this period, the priority pattern of resource allocation to each sub-sector of education followed the pre-war period, which put more emphasis on secondary and higher education over primary education and TVET. For example, Makerere University alone accounted for 78.25 percent of budget allocated to post-secondary education (Eisenmon et al., 1993). Consequently, between 1989-92, in real terms, the government spent only USh1,900 per primary pupil while it spent USh 430,000 per Makerere student or almost 225 times higher than primary pupils (MoES, 1992).

Uganda has spent more on higher education since colonial times because the cost of educating university students has been totally borne by the government, including student living expenses. Although during this period there was discussion about cost-sharing and privatization of higher education under the structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes, the government took only modest steps towards this reform.

In fact, reform in higher education was a very difficult task. For example, there was an attempt to rearrange students’ scholarships at the university in order to pass on the high cost to the government. Unfortunately, this attempt was met with some resistance because political forces hesitated to permit the government to do so, especially in the case where university students were familiar with this long legacy of sponsorships, as in the case of Uganda. ADB (2001) noticed that these groups were coming from the politically well-connected and wealthy families and were therefore willing to be vocal. For instance, Makerere University was closed during two separate periods (1989–1990 and 1990–1991) as a consequence of student demonstrations aimed at challenging the government’s withdrawal of transportation allowances and the introduction of a book bank to save on book costs (Sicherman, 2005).

Consequently, despite the push to cut the spending on higher education, the government decided to keep its funding high in order to prevent possible political instability emerging from protests by university students.21 Until the late 1990s, the share of higher education accounted for nearly 20 percent of the total government

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21 During my fieldwork in Uganda, protests and strikes among secondary and university students were frequently staged, which affected the quality of teaching and learning, while such protests and strikes are nearly absent in Cambodia.
spending on education, with some years reaching 28 percent (Court, 1999). However, it is important to note that because of the political commitment to provide universal primary education introduced in the late 1990s, as discussed earlier, there was a dramatic decline of budget allocated to higher education, to its lowest point of 3.5 percent in 2003. The decline of government support for higher education in turn led to higher education reforms; fee-paying classes in public universities were introduced and private higher education institutions grew rapidly to respond to the demand for higher education.

In Uganda, the declining priority on higher education in the late 1990s became an opportunity to strengthen TVET. Ugandan ESIP 1998-2003 launched resource development and management systems for the TVET sub-sectors. Immediately, after a restructuring of the TVET sub-sector, the responsibility for overseeing the activities of TVET institutions by various ministries was transferred to MoES. However, besides the structural change, no other serious reform took place. TVET was never given priority as far as funding was concerned. The allocation of budget to this sub-sector was between 3-4 percent of the total public expenditure on education since the late 1990s. Why did TVET have low priority, despite the outcry for its expansion? Interviews with a senior government officer in the TVET department of MoES revealed that since the SWAp and ESIP were introduced, the power of allocating budget belongs to the planning department of MoES, and the TVET department does not have power over budget planning. The officer also noted that as TVET is not a priority among the majority of major donors and ruling elites, the planning department ignores the TVET sub-sector (interview, August 14, 2009).

Philip Amis (2002) also notes that there is a tendency for partner countries to often mimic the development policy of potential donors to gain funding rather than to openly discuss potential differences. Berry et al. (2003, p. 22) also noted that although government and education funding agencies must agree during the education sector review to determine their priorities, most of the officers working in the education sector perceive the negotiation process as complex, and they often have to bend to the will of external partners if there is no political support from the top leaders.
Actually, in Uganda there is widespread skepticism about the role of higher education as many university graduates are either unemployed or underemployed, and there is an outcry for technical and vocational skilled workers. The drop in priority on primary education since the mid-2000s, as discussed earlier, provides an opportunity for the Uganda government to review its post-primary education policy. Although the Ugandan government stresses the need to expand the TVET sub-sector, TVET remains marginalized by policy makers as far as the budget allocation is concerned; TVET's share of the total public spending on education remains between 3-4 percent. It is for this reason that Nalumansi et al. (2003) argue, 'There is a totally unfair and unjustified bias in favour of higher education and against [B]TVET in Uganda. This bias does not only increase and reinforce the negative work attitudes, damage the image and status of [B]TVET, but also distorts demand for PPET' (p. 5).

Therefore, the lack of priority in TVET is not due to an overall decline of budget for education sector, as discussed earlier (although this affects the overall availability of the amount of budget), but more importantly is due to the inability of government to shift its priorities from higher education. While the TVET sub-sector budget allocation remains unchanged, the budget allocation to higher education from the total public expenditure on education increased from 3.5 percent in 2002-2003 to 9.9 percent in 2003-2004 and to 11.7 percent in 2006-2007. The increase financed the newly established universities in different regions of the country.

Several studies indicate that so far the Ugandan higher education provision does not produce highly skilled workers in the critical fields for the country's development because of its overwhelming enrollment in social sciences, business, humanities, and arts and a lack of student enrollment in science-related subjects. In response to the outcry regarding the lack of graduates in science-related subjects, in 2005 the Ugandan government introduced a quota policy system for its sponsorship in public universities by allocating 3000 slots or 75 percent of its total scholarships for science-related subjects, and another 1000 slots or 25 percent for art and humanities. This project of reemphasis on higher education in Uganda is also a reflection or a continuation of its historical project. First, because of its glorious past of higher education, some advocate for revitalizing higher education to become a center of
excellence, either within East Africa or Africa as a whole and beyond. Second, the Ugandan leadership's vision since independence has been geared towards modernization, which focuses on higher education. This is also reflected in the recent Ugandan national development plan 2010-2011 to 2014-15 that has an ambitious and unrealistic vision and favors higher education over TVET. The development plans attempt to improve the country's competitiveness to levels associated with middle-income countries by promoting science, technology, innovation, and ICT, as measured in terms of the share of exports with high-technology content in relation to total exports.

The shift from primary to higher education is also facilitated by the donor community in Uganda. The initial planning of post-primary education and training has been supported by a pool of technical assistance funding led by the World Bank during the early 2000s. Even if donors want recipients to define their own policies, the starting point of the whole process is the donors' conviction that present policies are in some way unacceptable (King, 1992, p. 261). This pattern of support follows the recent global trend of assisting education in developing countries by donor communities, especially by the World Bank after a series of its publications on higher education and development since 2000, such as 'Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise' and 'Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education'. These publications argue that for the past few decades African countries and the donor community have neglected higher education in favor of primary education and also demonstrate a positive link between higher education — especially in the field of science and technology — and economic growth. As a result, in Uganda, the World Bank approved a loan in the amount of US$30 million for 'Millennium Science Initiative Project' in 2006.

Cambodia's stronger emphasis on basic education means that it has fewer resources for post-basic education. However, in contrast to Uganda, Cambodia gives priority to TEVT over higher education. At least two possible reasons underlie less emphasis being placed on higher education in Cambodia. First, the lower emphasis may be influenced by Cambodia's historical circumstances, where higher education was completely absent during the genocide of 1975-1979 and was not prioritized by the
government in the 1980s when much of the government's efforts was placed on basic education. Further, there is recognition that the recovery during the 1980s is far from complete; therefore, more effort must be put on consolidating basic education and not higher education.

Second, Cambodia's initial challenge was for education reform to link education and training to the needs of the local labour market and economy, which is different from Uganda's challenge. In the early 1990s, there was a need to change Cambodia's entire education system in order to respond to the new economic and political environment. At least, at the policy level, the educational system had to prepare students to participate in transforming Cambodia from a planned economy into a free market economy and from socialism and a communist ideology to a democratic ideology. Such transformation and reform are seen as the foundation for the country's development.

In the early 1990s, the donors' mission assessment on Cambodia's future investment and development argued that the strengthening of the nation's economy could be most rapidly achieved by strong investments in education and training that provided immediate returns (Duggan, 1997). This argument led to priority being given to TVET over higher education by the Cambodian government and donor community, in particular those led by ILO, UNDP and JICA. JICA is one of the top donors in Cambodia. Worries were rampant about the absorptive capacity of the local labour force and, therefore, the government attempted to upgrade the quality of the labour forces through training and education as experienced in Indonesia (Irawati, 2010). This is because it takes four years for graduates to complete higher education. This long time frame cannot answer the immediate needs for a skilled labour force. Also, they do not expect the skilled workforce from primary education to participate in the labour market for at least two reasons: first, it takes 6 years for pupils to complete primary education. Therefore, education cannot answer the country's immediate needs for skilled workers. Second, graduates from primary education are too young to participate in the labour market and make significant contributions to the overall economy.
As a result, during the early 1990s, a large number of NGOs, both local and international supported by donors, provided a number of flexible, quick response programs to a range of diverse groups. Donors also arranged a number of schemes of vocational training, especially in non-formal training (ADB, 1995). Also during this period, there was an increase in private providers, mainly of English language and computer skills. This situation reflects the priority given to short course training rather than formulating a formal TVET system.

Although this assistance and development were welcome, they had been ad hoc, fragmented and dealt only with immediate needs, without addressing the need for consistent and systematic development of policy and planning for long-term skilled labour needs, quality assurance, as well as aid coordination mechanisms. Therefore, there was a need for a consistent and systematic policy development on TVET. It is within this context that the Cambodian government asked ADB to assist in developing a comprehensive TVET system. This systematic TVET policy was needed to address two critical issues. The first was the abolition of job guarantees in the public sector after the planned economy was abandoned. This development meant that market analysis was required to address the need for skilled labour. Second, the formal TVET institutes in Cambodia are run by different ministries so, they needed to develop not only a systematic coordination mechanism, but also a coordination agency (ADB, 1997).

As a result, in the mid-1990s, MoEYS, with donor support, took a more active role in the TVET sub-sector. Cambodia established technical and vocational centres in several provinces and later expanded to cover every province in Cambodia. Also, a National Training Board, which consists of different stakeholders — government officials, training providers and employers — was established under the leadership of MoEYS. This priority has been reinforced since the mid-2000s with the establishment of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) in 2005. Since then, more attention has been given to this newly established ministry as reflected in the increase of government spending of more than 250 percent within 3 years, from US$ 750,000 in 2006 to US$2 million in 2009. The emphasis on TVET over higher education is also reflected in Cambodian public spending on education.
spending per student on technical and vocational education amounted to 80 percent of the total unit cost compared to an estimated 67 percent on higher education.\(^ {22}\) In an interview, a senior officer at MoLVT indicated that the Cambodian government always gives priority to TVET, especially to the middle skilled workforce (interview 12 January 2010).

At the same time, because of the achievement gained in sustained support for basic education during the last decade, ADB supported a pilot project on strengthening TVET led by MoLVT. The Cambodian government also receives substantial bilateral support from Korea, which amounts to US$50 million towards the establishment and strengthening of the national polytechnic university (ADB, 2008b). The Cambodian government also committed to strengthen TVET by contributing about US$100 million to create a national polytechnic university in 2003, according to an interview with the president of the university (interview, 3 September 2008). This support and commitment to TVET are consistent with realistic development plans, which find competition in regional and world markets by focusing on agriculture aimed at rice exports and assembly industry, which requires an investment in TVET rather than higher education. This action taken by the Cambodian government shows a consistent emphasis on TVET over higher education, while such attempts have not been made by the Ugandan government.

The Cambodian education system did not initially prioritize higher education. Since the early 1990s, Cambodia spent an average of only 2 percent on higher education of its total public expenditure on the education sector. Although this may not reflect the situation on the ground as many higher education institutes are not under MoEYS, available data still indicates that Cambodian higher education received substantially lower support than their Ugandan counterparts. Between 1994-1999, the Cambodian government spent approximately US$4.5 million\(^ {23}\) on higher education, while in Uganda, even during the period where priority on higher education was declining, the

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government spent US$15.3 million in 1999-2000 for only one public university, Makerere University (Musisi and Muwanga, 2002, p. 42). Despite the push from some donors to reform higher education, until recently higher education was never among the top priorities within the education sector investment plans in Cambodia. This is reflected in the fact that until 2005, public spending on higher education in Cambodia was only US$3.67 million (Chen et al., 2007).

Within this context, any development in higher education during this time is mainly driven by external support. The early 1990s saw a refocus on higher education by foreign assistance, especially bilateral assistance rather than multilateral assistance. This assistance carried out two types of activity. First it focused mainly on the expansion of the language department, particularly French and English, in part because they had been prohibited during the 1980s. Second, this assistance supported several studies on higher education, resulting in reports and recommendations for future higher education reform (Denham (Ed.), 1997; Sloper (Ed.), 1999). In the late 1990s, because of the increasing number of graduates from general education, there was an increased demand for higher education. As in the case of Uganda, the limited funds for public higher education during this period led to a reform of higher education. However, Cambodia adopted a different approach from Uganda. While the Cambodian government called for private providers to answer the demand for more higher education, the Ugandan government played a more direct role.

Even the expansion of public universities to other urban areas in the late 2000s was not funded by government budget, as was the case in Uganda. An interview with the vice rector of one the recently established public universities in Cambodia revealed that millions of US dollars were provided by high ranking officials to build university campuses and their infrastructures, and he knew of at least another two universities undergoing the same process (interview, 17 October 2008). Within public higher education, fee-paying classes were introduced. This allowed public higher education institutions to raise their own revenue to supplement the limited support by the government. This also partially explains why high ranking officials became involved in supporting public higher education institutes. Although there were other political reasons behind this support, such as providing scholarships through their supported
public higher institutes for children of party supporters, it was a kind of business for high-ranking officials who supported these new universities as they generated income through fee-paying classes.

II.5 Concluding remarks
This chapter reveals that Cambodian policy design and resource allocation to the education sector and sub-sectors reflects a continuous effort to develop the education sector, which in part follows the experience of successful East Asian countries more than that of Uganda. While Cambodia can sustain its public expenditures on education and its policy's priority on basic education and TVET over higher education as reflected in the allocation of resources to these sub-sectors, such an effort is not seen in Uganda. Instead, Uganda gives more priority to higher education over TVET, and its priority on basic education has fluctuated with a current downward trend, as reflected in its resource allocation. However, while Uganda is aware of the issue of the irrelevance of some higher educational programmes and has attempted to address this issue through modifying its sponsorship program towards more science-related subjects, Cambodia has not done so.

Although there are different contributing factors such as historical circumstances, participation from NGOs, donor agencies, and the Ministry of Education, the political factors and political interest among ruling elites are mainly responsible for policy design and resource allocation. In Uganda, it is important to note that despite the priority given to the education sector and basic education since 1996, the result of the presidential election in 2001 and 2006 revealed that President Museveni's support from voters declined overtime. Therefore, the political interest in prioritizing the education sector in general and basic education in particular was no longer as strong. Consequently, President Museveni changed tactics in an effort to win the next election, moving from performance-based to 'divide-and-rule' tactics. This led to an increase in state-house spending to strengthen its operations and public administration as its administrative unit — the district — increased from less than 40 when he first came to power to 112 by 2010. In the context of lacking extra resources, the budget for other social development sectors in general and for the education sector in
particular was cut in order to meet the increasing needs of the general public administration.

Also, within the education sector, a priority on basic education was replaced by secondary and higher education. This was to fulfill President Museveni’s campaign promise made during the presidential campaign of 2006 and 2011 to provide UPPET. The change was also a reflection of Uganda’s historical focus on higher education and unrealistic development plans initiated by political visions to improve the country’s competitiveness, with a goal of reaching the level of a middle-income country by promoting science and technology, innovation and ICT, despite the fact that their size of industry was very small and low FDI in the high-tech industry (for more detail see Chapter VI). This would require the development of higher education, which includes secondary education as a pre-requisite to enter higher education rather than just basic education and TVET.

In contrast to President Museveni, Prime Minister Hun Sen's popular support has increased steadily since the 1998 general elections, especially in rural areas. Surveys indicate that these victories resulted from the improvement of social services such as education. This situation gives more political incentive for ruling elites, especially Hun Sen, to focus on education in general and basic education in particular as many rural people still lack access to education because of the constraints on the supply side. Unlike Uganda, Cambodia has a realistic development plan that insists on being competitive in regional and world markets by focusing on agriculture aimed at rice exports and the assembly industry, which requires an investment in TVET rather than higher education. This requirement coincides with political interests. Provision of basic education and technical training is very appealing to the vast majority of rural people and the urban poor. This is a strategy that reaps high rates of political return for the CPP.

From a policy perspective and the economics of education, policy design and resource allocation are considered necessary for successful educational outcomes. However, from the practitioner's view point, although they are necessary, they are not sufficient causes to ensure successful educational outcomes. Actually, desirable educational
outcomes depend much more on implementation, a point that will be addressed in the following chapters.