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

Un, L.

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CHAPTER III
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME: COVERAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF BASIC EDUCATION

'Something' must reach a certain level, amount or size, and then it will unleash an activity or event that will change the status quo. ... You need a 'critical mass' to bring about change, sustain it and render it long-lasting. A. Gaffar Peang-Meth, Pacific Daily News, April 20, 2011

III.1 Introduction

One of the major issues faced by many developing countries’ education systems is to provide basic education to all their citizens. Some studies show that the success or failure of education reform to provide education for all is a matter of policy priority and provision of adequate financial resources (London, 1993; Coclough and Al-Samarrai, 2000). However, other studies indicate that although right policy and sufficient financial resources are necessary conditions for the success of educational expansion, they are not sufficient. In fact, the failure or success of education reform depends on the actual implementation of policy and resources (Psacharopoulos, 1989; Nieuwenhuis, 1997).

As discussed in Chapter II, in general Cambodia and Uganda have increased their public spending on education, especially on basic education, although to different degrees. However, while Cambodia can sustain its priority in investing in education in general and basic education in particular, Uganda cannot. This chapter, therefore, examines the impact of policy priorities and the availability of finances and their implementation on educational outcomes in terms of enrollment and completion rates in Cambodia and Uganda after the end of civil war. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section will present the educational outcomes in both countries. The second section analyses the factors that affect the educational outcomes in both countries. This task identifies to what extent the different policy priorities and availability of resources, as discussed in Chapter II, and how their implementation affects the outcomes. The third section will compare the educational outcomes in both countries. The fourth section will identify the factors that led to different educational

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24 The completion rate is assessed because it is the level where graduates are supposed to master literacy skills necessary for carrying out written communication for their daily lives.
outcomes in Cambodia and Uganda. The final section contains the concluding remarks.

III.2 Coverage and distribution of basic education

Before the new millennium, in Cambodia and Uganda, the coverage of their primary educational provision measured in terms of gross enrollment rate (GER) was very low. In Cambodia, primary school GER actually declined from 94.50 percent in 1996-97 to less than 90 percent in 1998-99. In Uganda, between 1990 and 1995, primary school GER was even lower than Cambodia at around 70 percent (Deininger, 2003; MoEYS, 1999). Further, there was inequitable access to education among different social groups in both countries, especially between rich and poor children, as seen in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1  % of access to education among different social groups in Cambodia and Uganda in the 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girl</th>
<th>Boy</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Rich</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>NER</td>
<td>NER</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>CAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65.67</td>
<td>68.31</td>
<td>99.50</td>
<td>72.25</td>
<td>80.75</td>
<td>55.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>NER</td>
<td>NER</td>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>CAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>74.60</td>
<td>60.60</td>
<td>81.70</td>
<td>55.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NIS, 1998; Deininger, 2003; MoEYS, 1999; MoP, 1998; MoES, 1999

In both countries, two main causes are generally attributed to the low coverage and inequitable access to education. First, there is a lack of physical infrastructure such as schools and classrooms to accommodate more pupils as a consequence of the low public expenditure on education during this period as discussed in Chapter II. Second, due to this low budget spending, government in both countries introduced cost recovery programs, although the actual implementation is different. The cost of

25 GER (Gross enrollment rate) is the total enrollment of pupils of any age in school as a percentage of the age group population of the correct age for school.

26 NER (Net enrollment rate) is the percentage of correct age children compared to the school age population who enroll in school.

27 CAS (children attending school) is the actual percentage of children present in school.
recovery in Uganda allows public schools to charge tuition fees, which amounts to a semi-privatization of education. In Cambodia, there is no tuition fee system; schools are allowed to collect registration fees and contributions for teaching and learning materials at the beginning of each school year, but the fee is very small compared to the tuition fee system in Uganda. However, Cambodian parents bear the burden of informal fees imposed by teachers/school directors. Although, this is illegal, it was tolerated by the central government for at least two reasons. First, the ruling elites, in an attempt to retain loyalty for political support, made no effort to ban this practice. Second, they recognized that they could not provide decent wages for the civil servants and budgets for school operation; therefore, they allowed teachers and schools to find additional resources so the education system could effectively function.

Consequently, the majority of the cost of education was passed on to parents and communities. In Cambodia, Bray (1999) reported that households and communities shared about 59 percent of the total costs for primary schooling. In Uganda, it was even higher; the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey found that parents contributed about 73 percent of total school spending in 1991. Despite the increase in government spending, in 1995 parents still contributed an average of 60 percent of the total cost of primary education (Reinikka and Smith, 2004). As both countries had just emerged from civil wars, the level of poverty was very high; almost half their populations lived below the poverty line during this period. Therefore, poor parents, especially in rural areas, were less able to afford to send their children to school, and if there was a choice at all, boys were given priority over girls, and so poor children and girls in rural areas were less likely to obtain the education available to rich children and boys in urban areas.

At the turn of millennium, as discussed in Chapter II, more resources were allocated to the education sector, particularly to primary education, with the aim of boosting enrollment and addressing the issues of inequality. As a result, there was an enormous increase in the gross enrollment rate in primary school, from less than 100 percent in the early 1990s to over 120 percent in 2000s, as seen in Figure 3.1. Particularly in Uganda, the absolute number of primary school pupils increased from less than 3
million before the introduction of UPE to more than 7 million in the 2000s. However, in Cambodia the increase was modest, from around 2 to 2.5 million. This is because the reform in Cambodia started at a higher rate of enrollment than Uganda and in the midst of low population growth at 1.54. So Cambodia saw a decline in the percentage of school-age children compared to Uganda, which had a very high population growth at 3.6 with no significant decline of the percentage of school-age children.

Figure 3.1 Primary school GER in Uganda and Cambodia

![Graph showing primary school GER in Uganda and Cambodia]

Source: Education indicators from the Ministries of Education in Cambodia and Uganda: various years

The improvement, however, is far from satisfactory, especially in the case of Uganda, as there remains a significant proportion of school-age children who are not enrolled in school\(^{28}\) and a high rate of school dropouts. These phenomena lead to poor educational outcomes measured in term of primary completion rates (as seen in Table 3.2) and low adult literacy. In Cambodia, the adult literacy rate was 78 percent in 2008, and in Uganda this rate was 73 percent in 2010. Further, despite the increase in enrollment among all social groups, educational outcomes measured in terms of literacy\(^{29}\) are still unequal, as seen in Figure 3.2, 3.3., 3.4 and 3.5. As during the

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\(^{28}\) From the available data, in Cambodia the percentage of children aged 6-14 who never enrolled in school ranges between 14 to 20.60 percent (NIS, 2005; UNICEF, 2008), while in Uganda the percentage of children aged 6-12 who never enrolled in school ranges between 15.90 to 22 percent (UBOS, 2006b; UBOS and MoPS 2009).

\(^{29}\) The literacy rate was used because data on the completion rate among different social groups are not readily available.
1990s, the literacy gap between the rich and the poor remains large, larger than between boys and girls, rural and urban, despite both governments’ commitment to pro-poor public expenditures.

Table 3.2 % of primary completion rates in Uganda and Cambodia

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The poor performance in primary education leads to poor performance in secondary education. Although, the secondary schools in both countries have improved steadily since 2000s, their gross enrollment rate is still low, especially in the case of Uganda.
below 50 percent, as seen in Figure 3.6, compared to the world average which is 66 percent (UNESCO, 2007).

Figure 3.6 Secondary school GER in Cambodia and Uganda

Source: Education indicators from Ministries of Education in Cambodia and Uganda: various years

It appears that the educational outcome in Cambodia and Uganda resulted from their policies' priorities and the availability of resources, which helped both countries to tackle two issues. First, they provided both governments with resources to develop their physical infrastructure, such as schools and classrooms, to accommodate more enrollments. Second, they provided resources for both governments to address the burden of the demand side, which is widely believed to be the main barrier to access to education. In Uganda the tuition fees in public schools were eliminated through the UPE policy, and in Cambodia there was an attempt to reinforce no school registration fees and contributions at the beginning of the school year throughout the country. In return, schools received a capitation grant that was necessary to carry out their activities. However, policy priorities and availability of resources were not enough to retain all those enrolled in school until school completion and not enough to successfully enroll all school age children. This raises questions beyond the policy priorities and resource availability.

III.3 Cause of non-enrollment and school dropout

The questions are what are the barriers to accessing education and remaining in school?
III.3.1 Direct and opportunity costs

Despite the introduction of free education, some fees are still imposed legally and illegally by teachers and schools, which poor families find very difficult to afford. In Uganda, according to a study by Transparency International, a quarter of parents interviewed confirmed they paid such extra fees, while 18 percent reported that additional bribes had been demanded from them in the past year (Baguma, 2010). In Cambodia, a study has indicated that 41 percent of the respondents were confused about whether the fees they paid for primary schooling were official or unofficial (Deline et al., 2006).

In Uganda, although the percentage of respondents who cited lack of money as the main reason for pulling their children out of school declined from 79 in the late 1990s to 40 in the late 2000s, this percentage remains high compared to the level of poverty, with only 31 percent of the population living below the poverty line as of 2009. It is important to note the cost of schooling is high not only for the poor, but also for the non-poor. Over 10 percent of the non-poor are unable to afford the cost of schooling (UBOS, 2002; 2005; UBOS and MoPS, 2009). On average, Nishimura et al. (2008) found that spending on primary and secondary education per child is equivalent to 2.7 percent and 15.5 percent of total household expenditures, respectively. For poor families whose incomes are very low, their share of the cost of educating children is even higher.

In Cambodia, a national survey of 1513 households in five provinces reported that financial factors such as lack of money were cited with comparable frequency by both boys and girls as a primary reason for dropping out of school (27.4 percent for boys and 26.6 percent for girls) (Bredenberg, 2003). In addition to informal fees, the main costs of education include tuition fees, transportation costs, and other miscellaneous expenses.

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30 On average, families who can afford to send their children to primary school annually spent UShs20,900 (US$10) for day school and UShs449,000 (US$225) for boarding school per pupil. For secondary school they spent UShs196,000 (US$100) and UShs767,000 (US$335) respectively, with no significant differences between private, NGOs and government schools, but with great differences between regions (Nishimura, et al., 2008).
cost for the poor in Cambodia is private tutoring\textsuperscript{31} and the selling of lessons,\textsuperscript{32} which are widely practiced, especially in recent times. Such practices take place in public schools and even within official hours. On average, parents in urban, rural, and remote areas in Kampong Cham spent 19, 11 and 10 percent of their annual income, respectively, for sending one child to a public school.\textsuperscript{33} In this sense, if these informal fees were calculated, the actual parental costs of schooling were considerably higher than the estimates made six years earlier.\textsuperscript{34} Because of this, the study by NEP (2007a) notes that 'parents and children no longer view education as the intrinsic right of every child, and instead start to treat education like a commodity that is available only to those who can afford to pay' (p. 25). Parents who are not able to pay eventually delay enrolling their children or pull them out of school.

This practice is the result of low salaries and limited resources for schools; consequently, observers in Cambodia note that 'The imperatives of family survival and basic institutional reproduction often take precedence over the policy outcome goal' (Hughes and Conway, 2004, p. 42). According to interviews with people working in the education sector and doing fieldwork, Uganda shares similar characteristics regarding these issues. Actually, because of high inflation rates, especially in Uganda, the budget increases have been very limited, especially in recent years. In Uganda, there was also resistance from schools regarding the free education

\textsuperscript{31} A private class in Phnom Penh and other provincial towns costs 500-1000 riels per hour, while in the less urban areas the costs are between 500-700 riels, and in remote areas between 300-500 riels. This private tutoring is also widely practiced in Uganda despite a ban by the Ministry of Education.

\textsuperscript{32} Teachers make a summary of the lessons from the textbook, then make a photocopy of it and sell it in class, usually charging about 5 to 10 times higher than what they spent. This practice is also done in Uganda, but not widely practiced as schools already charge fees for related learning materials.

\textsuperscript{33} On average, parents in urban, rural and remote areas in Kampong Cham who can afford to send their children to public school spend an average of 613,900 riels (US$153), 600,200 riels (US$150.05), 440,100 (US$110) yearly respectively (NEP, 2007a).

\textsuperscript{34} There are two studies by Bray (1999) and Bray and Seng (2005) between 1997 and 2004 regarding the share that households pay for public education. They conclude that there was a dramatic reduction of household costs in every grade after the introduction of Priority Action Program in 2000, which had the objective of reducing the burden of the cost of education among households. Out of the combined resources of households and the government, household contributions decreased from 77 percent in 1997/98 to 56 percent in 2004.
policy introduced by the government, as schools in Uganda were used to charging fees when cost-sharing was implemented in the 1980s. In interviews with school directors, they argued that the fee that they arranged was suitable to their needs for effective teaching and learning compared to the limited budget provided by government (interview, 11 July 2009; 22 May 2009; 30 April 2009).

Although it seems that formal/informal fees are a school phenomenon, this phenomenon does not happen in the vacuum. Actually, Hughes and Conway (2004) argue that higher authorities continue to emphasize loyalty over efficiency and to promote opportunities for rent-seeking, which exploits the poor from the lowest rural school as a means to ensure the loyalty of their subordinates. In this sense, it is the tolerance as well as rent-seeking by the higher official authorities that keeps this kind of practice going on. Fieldwork in Cambodia reveals that at least 30 percent of what teachers are paid by pupils and parents must be passed on to school management, and this practice is prevalent in the higher levels of education as well. Consequently, no one has been punished for this illegal demand from pupils and their parents, although this behavior violates the Education Law.

In addition, many poor families are not able to afford the lost opportunity costs.35 A child works either directly in earning money or indirectly by taking care of siblings, which allows parent to work, which is crucial for poor families to survive. Studies that attempt to measure the opportunity costs in monetary terms in both countries reveal that the opportunity costs are even higher than the direct costs (Liang, 2002; ILO et al., 2006). For many Cambodian and Ugandan children, work and school attendance are largely substitutes for one another. Since children in both countries enter school late, they reach 'maturity' in terms of the value of their time by the end of primary school or the beginning of secondary school. This also coincides with the period of the greatest increases in direct education costs. Consequently, direct and opportunity costs reinforce each other to produce a critical barrier resulting in many children not enrolling in school or for those enrolled not being able to stay and thus drop out of school, especially the rural poor and girls, starting even at upper primary levels. This

35 'Opportunity cost’ is defined as the cost of a forgone economic-related activity when children are enrolled in school.
pattern contributes to low adult literacy rates and low enrollment in secondary schools.

III.3.2 Lack of infrastructure
Empirical evidence reveals that the non-enrollment and school dropout problems, especially in rural areas, are also a result of insufficient schools and classrooms, especially in the case of Uganda (Bredenberg, 2003; ADB, 2004a; UBOS, 2002; 2005; UBOS and MoPS 2009). As discussed earlier, the primary enrollment in Uganda tripled; consequently, this increased demand for more infrastructure, which the Ugandan government has not sufficiently provided. In Uganda, in 2000, about 47.55 percent of sub-counties (428 out of 900) were without government-aided schools. There was also an insufficient number of classrooms. Between 1993 and 2003, Ugandan primary classroom buildings could accommodate only 56 percent of the total school enrollment. And among those, 38 percent of the classrooms were listed as temporary, constructed from non-permanent material, needing rehabilitation, or were in poor condition. In 2005, the Ugandan education system still required up to 138,127 additional classrooms to accommodate the school-age population of 5.22 million (Theunynck, 2009, pp. 2-3).

In Cambodia, in the 1990s, some communities still had a significant proportion of incomplete schools, which means the schools did not have all the primary grades. Therefore, when pupils finished the highest grades in these incomplete schools, they had to transfer to other schools. However, these schools were far from their homes; consequently, the majority of the transfer pupils dropped out, especially girls. There were also a few communities without schools within close vicinity, which hindered the enrollment of school-age children (Bredenberg, 2003). As in the case of Uganda, in 1999 the Cambodian education system required an additional 11,214 classrooms (MoEYS, 1999) to accommodate every child in the school-age population of 1.58 million.

Cause of shortages of infrastructure in Cambodia and Uganda
The substantial lack of infrastructure, especially in rural areas, however, not only resulted from insufficient funds, but also from corruption, which drains resources
from building more schools and classrooms because of their urban bias intervention, especially in the case of Uganda. In Cambodia, and especially in Uganda, there are substantial 'ghost teachers' and 'ghost students'. Only ghost pupils are discussed here; the issue of ghost teachers is discussed in Chapter IV.

Although the exact figure is not available, in Uganda, in one district alone, about 40 percent of pupils were missing during headcounts. The report points out that of 142,000 enrolled pupils, only 85,000 are in school, and this causes the government to lose USh200 million annually since the introduction of UPE in 1997 (Eriku, 2010). Still worse, even 'ghost schools', schools without teachers and pupils, exist in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of MoES. In one district alone, 12 non-existent UPE schools were found by MoES. The existence of ghost schools costs the Ugandan government more than Ush100 million annually (Bategeka et al., 2004). The reason underlying such practices given by a school teacher is that schools receive more capitation grants from the government and school directors are paid higher salaries according to enrollment numbers (personal conversation, 27 July; 2 August 2009).

In Cambodia, this headcount exercise is absent; therefore, the scope of the problem is not known exactly. So far, only Save the Children Norway-Cambodia reported a case of ghost pupils in one province in its 2008 report. However, my fieldwork in four provinces in Cambodia confirms that the issue of ghost pupils does exist. As in the case of Uganda, the PAP/PB budget is paid according to the number of enrollments, which creates an incentive for such practices. However, the practice is not only limited to financial gain, but is also a result of pressure from central government and donors to see an increased enrollment. The World Bank (2003b) also notes that result-oriented development agendas adopted in the late 1990s lacked a focus on the process in which inputs are cooked to produce results. Consequently, the magic result was

36 In the context of Cambodia and Uganda, ‘ghost pupil’ and ‘ghost teacher’ refer to pupils and teachers whose names exist only on the school and pay-roll lists, but never physically existed.
37 This programme is designed to improve the education sector by providing direct grants to schools for their operation.
created to satisfy both donors and policy makers through either wrong methodological research findings or fraudulent reports, such as ghost pupils.

The broad practice of creating ghost pupils is the product of opportunists within both the Ministry of Education and schools. The success of dealing with ghost pupils is limited since educational reform is not clearly separated from electoral politics. Recently, school directors were recruited into NRM through the Ministry of Education in order to mobilize support for NRM (Kiggundu and Magomu, 2009). In Cambodia, the majority of school directors and government officers are members of CPP. Therefore, it is hard for the current ruling elites to give administrative punishment to school directors and government officers who are involved in the scandal as it might affect their loyalty. When measures are taken, they are directed towards only a few who do not support the ruling party.

There is also unequal distribution of schools and classrooms in both countries but to a different degree. In Cambodia, for example, during the 1990s, only 5 out of 77 schools had buildings are constructed from the government budget. Four of these five schools were in Phnom Penh, which suggests a severe imbalance in the distribution of the few available government resources (Bray, 1999). Also, the disparity of school and classroom construction among urban, rural and remote areas is compounded by the development of school clusters. The main objective of school clusters is to improve the quality of education through sharing human and material resources, thus allowing strong schools to assist weak schools and stimulating greater parent and local involvement in school activities. In 1995, after the publication of the positive influence of school clusters on high promotion rates, low dropout rates, and better quality teaching, the Cambodian government adopted the cluster model as a nationwide policy. However, in practice the main objective was abandoned. Rather than focusing on quality improvement, it focused only on infrastructure building, mainly in core schools (Geeves, 1999).

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38 A school cluster is defined as a group of 6 to 7 schools within a 7 kilometer radius, introduced by donors such as UNICEF and Redd Bana. Each cluster has a core school that generally has more resources and is situated in a more urban area.
This is because, as Bredenberg (2002) notes, the failure to animate all clusters everywhere is not entirely a matter of inadequate budget support, but of the limited availability of human resources. In the policy, national, provincial, and district cluster school committees help a school cluster’s activities. In Cambodia, high-ranking officers were members of several committees because the government was unwilling to allow the establishment of independent committees. Cambodian ruling elites used the reform to provide jobs and extra income for their political allies, rather than focusing on improving education’s overall performance. Consequently, these officers had neither the time nor the expertise to lead these committees. Eventually, as quality improvement is difficult to achieve, only hard infrastructure, such as classroom construction, became a reality.

In Uganda, MoES (1999, p. 59) argued that the economic disparities among regions and between rural and urban settings led to different physical facilities, as rich communities are able to contribute more than poor communities. Further, the introduction of the 'Local Government Development Program' in 2000–2001 — in which funds were transferred to both sub-counties and districts in order to implement the development project — reinforced inequality because the funds provided to sub-counties and districts required counterpart cash contributions of 10 percent. Poor rural communities could not raise sufficient revenue so they had no chance to benefit from this program. In the meantime, rich urban communities raised sufficient revenue and thus benefitted from this program.

Others, however, argue that what accounts for the disparities lies within the inequitable government budget allocation for the development program, despite the government’s rhetoric of promoting equity. The report by the education sector review reveals that 'In the North, none of the schools visited had received school facilitation grants' (MoES, 2004, p. 20). Currently, there is an outcry for fairness in sharing the 'national cake'. Members of Parliament pushed for new legislation that would ban government funding that did not match the constitutional provision of equity. They even 'alleged that imbalances of all forms were glaring in the government departments, insisting that sectors should produce certificates of equity before the approval of their budgets. This proposed legislation will ensure that there is no bill
passed without the certificate of equity' (Ladu, 2009a). Some other members believed that 'Whatever it takes to address the problem of marginalization in this country should be done, otherwise what's going on is unacceptable. This country is for all of us, including people from northern Uganda' (Ladu, 2009a).

Even within the same district, school facilitation grants and classroom completion grants are not shared inequitably. For example, in Mukono district, which consists of four counties, Mukono and Buikwe, which are more urban counties, each shared 36 percent of classroom completion grants, while the other two counties received only 28 percent. Again Buikwe received the largest share of school facilitation grants, accounting for 43 percent, while the other three received the rest (Katono, 2007). My interview with an education district officer revealed that politicians both at the local and national levels often interfere with the grants. Urban and populated areas, because of their influence in electoral outcomes, often received disproportional amounts of funding at the expense of rural areas (interview, 28 July 2009). In Uganda, school and classroom construction projects are decided by local councils (LC). As local councils are spread around the country, urban areas benefit.

III.3.3 Other reasons for school dropouts
In addition to the shortage of schools and classrooms and direct and opportunity costs, the irrelevance of educational content also causes school dropouts. In Uganda, one in four children who dropped out of school believed they had enough schooling. And this sentiment is higher in rural (26 percent) than in urban areas (15 percent) (UBOS and MoPS, 2009; UBOS and ORC Macro, 2002). The existence of this mindset is supported by a study conducted by MoES that reveals school dropout is caused by a perceived irrelevance, imbalanced and the overloaded nature of the curriculum (MoES, 1999). Eilor (2004, p. 24) and argues that there is a greater need to make the curricula more flexible to local needs to attract the interest of the pupils and encourage them to remain in school. But this task is difficult because of the standardization of the national examinations. This raises the question of the relevance of education, especially for rural pupils, in their daily lives and for economic improvement.
In Cambodia, the main factor that contributes to the low demand for schooling is the irrelevance of curricula to the current labour market need, especially for rural and remote areas. Related to this, Bredenberg (2003) found that lower secondary school pupils expressed skepticism about the value of the education they received in terms of its pertinence to their daily lives. Similar perceptions were also revealed by parents 'who do not appreciate that there is a real benefit to their children or themselves in investing precious time and money in education. They see little evidence that an education will make accessible any employment opportunities different from those available to uneducated children' (Nock and Bishop (Eds.), 2008, pp. 58-59). A conversation with a former rural school deputy director indicated that many pupils drop out or do not continue to higher levels of education because they feel that what they learn in school cannot help them generate more income (personal conversation, 15-18 February 2009). In addition to this, but to a lesser extent, the low quality of education in both countries is also reported as a reason why parents are pulling their children from schools, especially in rural areas.

III.4 Cambodia has a relatively wider coverage and more equitable educational provision than Uganda

It is important to note that Cambodia has a lower school dropout rate compared to Uganda. In Uganda, the dropout rate increased from slightly over 10 percent before the introduction of UPE in 1997 to about 50 percent in recent years, especially among girls (Ssenkabirwa, 2010; MoES, 1999; 2007). Available data indicates that despite having free primary education in Uganda, only 49 percent of girls of school age are in primary schools (Monitor Daily, 2005). On the other hand, in Cambodia the dropout rate in primary schools declined, albeit slowly from 15 percent during the 1990s to roughly above 10 percent in 2007-2008 (MoEYS, 1999; EMIS, 2007-2008).

Consequently, while Cambodia was able to steadily improve its primary completion rate, Uganda has not even been able to reach levels achieved during the civil war, as seen in Table 3.2. Further, from Figure 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, we note that Cambodia also has a smaller literacy gap among different social groups, as compared to Uganda. For example, in Cambodia the difference in the literacy rate between boys and girls aged 15 to 24 is only 8 percent, while this difference in Uganda is much higher, at
about 20 percent. In Cambodia, the difference in urban and rural literacy rates is 9 percent and the difference between rich and poor is 34.30 percent, while in Uganda the difference is almost 20 percent and 39.80 percent, respectively.

It is important to note that Cambodia continues to perform better than Uganda. While Cambodia can sustain its improvement in gross enrollment in primary education, in Uganda, since 2003, gross enrollment in primary schools has declined. The report by MoES in 2010 reveals that enrollments continue to decline in 12 districts (Talemwa, 2011). Further, secondary school enrollment in Cambodia is higher than in Uganda, as seen in Figure 3.6. This is because Cambodia has higher primary completion rates, as seen in Table 3.2, which enabled the country to increase its GER in secondary schools from about 20 percent in 2000-01 to over 40 percent in 2007-08, while in Uganda during the same period it increased from less than 20 percent to about 25 percent, as seen in Figure 3.6.

III.5 Factors that led Cambodia to perform slightly better than Uganda

Although it appears that the improved educational outcomes in Cambodia more so than in Uganda are associated with its continuous policy priorities and resource allocations to education in general and to basic education in particular, it is the quality of implementation that is actually the main stimulus for different educational outcomes in Cambodia and Uganda.

III.5.1 Cambodia has relatively lower direct and opportunity costs than Uganda

Given similar situations — high direct and opportunity costs — faced by both countries, why does Cambodia have lower non-enrollment and school dropout rates compared to Uganda? Concerning these issues — related to direct and opportunity costs that address the demand side, that is, the ability of a household to purchase the service — experience from other countries as well as Cambodia reveals that interventions can be made to reduce the burden of the demand side and increase enrollment and retention rates. With support from donors and NGOs, Cambodia adopted several strategic interventions that are pro-girl, pro-poor, and pro-rural.
Their first strategy was the double-shifting system. Cambodian schools are usually organized around two daily 4-hour shifts. Approximately 81 percent of primary schools used two shifts in 2005, a considerable jump from earlier years (Benveniste et al., 2008) and remained in effect until recently (EMIS, 2008-2009). This strategy not only enabled Cambodia to expand its capacity to enroll more pupils, but also helped to retain them in school. This flexible system allowed pupils involved in family work and other income-generating activities to go to school as they would like, in morning or afternoon classes. The education system in Uganda is, on the other hand, rigid. Schools operate in the early morning till late afternoon, which hinders working children from attending school. My interview with a rural deputy school director revealed that many village children do not enroll in school because of family work, and even if they enrolled they did not attend regularly (interview, 28 July 2009).

Public debate on this issue is not helpful. Rather than advocate for the reduction of school hours (actually, teachers never teach full official hours allocated to primary education, as seen in Chapter IV), the debate advocates that government provide lunch for more than 7 millions pupils currently enrolled in primary schools (Ladu, 2009b). This demand seems impossible given the current economic situation in Uganda.

The second strategy that the Cambodian government introduced in order to expand its educational coverage provision is multi-grade teaching: combined classes with pupils of different grades in one room and under the supervision of one teacher. Multi-grade teaching is crucial for expanding access in peripheral areas, particularly where populations are dispersed and density is low. Further, according to Benveniste et al. (2008), this allows for a more efficient allocation of limited human and financial resources by assigning one teacher to a class of multiple grades.

Double shifts and multi-grade teaching appear to be mainly a remote and rural area phenomenon, where there is a lack of teachers and classrooms, and where incomplete primary schools are predominant. In remote and rural areas, respectively 70 percent and 22 percent of primary teachers worked a full-day schedule. Just 6 percent of urban primary school teachers taught a double shift. In order to encourage teachers to
take on this additional task, the Cambodian government provides double salaries to double-shift and multi-grade teachers (Benveniste et al., 2008).

In Uganda, attempts to introduce these strategies in the 1990s faced some resistance, especially from teachers and school directors because of a lack of incentives for the workload. Recently, the Ugandan government introduced double shifts and multi-grade teaching in some parts of the country in order to increase access to education, especially in rural and remote areas. At this time, the government faces less resistance since it provides an incentive for teachers. To compensate for the workload, teachers received an additional 30 percent of their salary. This system is working, as one teacher claims, 'The allowance is a good move. We have been waiting for it for so long, but we do not know how we are going to get the money'. Other teachers even demand more: 'We appreciate the allowance but it should be higher. We incur transport, maintenance and lunch dues. The allowance should be slightly higher to at least 50 percent' (The New Vision, 2010a). Further, rural teachers complain that in some rural schools teachers do not receive additional salaries that they are entitled to (personal conversation, August 23, 2009). If this trend continues, it will demoralize teachers and the program will meet resistance, which will hinder the expansion of the program nationwide.

Third, Cambodia implements school feeding programs sponsored by the World Food Program (WFP). This program encourages pupils to enroll and stay in school. However, reduction of this program is associated with declining enrollments and attendance. There is a report that school attendance at participating schools across the country dropped by 20 percent within a month when WFP temporarily cut its breakfast program in January 2007 (Kurczy, 2008). A primary school director at Prey Veng province strongly agrees that a positive correlation exists between free breakfast and the rate of enrollment and retention (personal conversation, various occasions ). In another case, a school director at Pursat province was concerned about the decline in pupil enrollment due to the absence of a school breakfast program at her school. She said, 'I am afraid pupils will not enroll in my school and enroll in a nearby school which has a breakfast feeding program in the next school year' (personal conversation during the school visit, 2 February 2009). WFP was providing breakfasts at 1,344
schools, mostly in the rural and remote areas. In Uganda, this program operates only in regions that are seriously affected by the civil war and on-going conflict areas, especially in the northern part of the country. Therefore, its scope is smaller than in Cambodia.

Fourth, the Cambodian government launched a scholarship program\(^{39}\) for the poor for 30 pupils per school throughout the country. It should be noted that of the 30 pupils who received scholarships, 60 percent had to be girls. In addition to the government scholarship program, other organizations also provided scholarships to poor female pupils, including the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction and Belgium Aid. Studies on the impact of scholarships found that they helped to increase the enrollment rate between 15-20 percent since their introduction in 2003, and recently reached 25 percent (Filmer and Schady, 2009). In Cambodia, there was even a continuation of supporting beneficiaries when one donor pulled out. For example, Belgium Aid's project has been providing scholarships to over 6,400 beneficiaries at 69 schools over 3 school years (2004-05 through 2006-07), and in 2007 the World Bank CESSP program took over the programme following the withdrawal of Belgium Aid's project.\(^{40}\) These scholarship numbers outweigh the efforts of the Ugandan government, which offers only two scholarships to two needy pupils in all the sub-counties throughout the country.

Finally, in Cambodia school fees are informal and sometimes illegal so no children are sent back home or are not allowed to continue their studies. In most cases, poor students benefit from benevolent teachers and school directors.\(^{41}\) The situation in Uganda is different. Since the school fee is formal and legal, school has the authority to impose it on parents and pupils, and sometimes there is even administrative action

\(^{39}\) In 2003-04, PAP scholarships had a value of 180,000 riels (about US$45), which was disbursed in instalments of 80,000 riels, 60,000 riels and 40,000 riels.


\(^{41}\) Poor pupils can obtain a letter from the school director that indicates or directly informs teachers about their families’ poor status. With this verification, they either are not required to pay fees or pay a reduced fee for private classes and lessons.
against pupils who have not paid their school fee, such as not allowing them to enter school. In one school I visited, the school director deliberately told the guard during a staff meeting to check whether a student had a receipt of payment (participation in school meeting, 27-30 July 2009). If anyone did not have a receipt of payment, then they were barred from entering the school. Local newspapers repeatedly reported cases of students being evicted from schools (Muwanguzi, 2010). Most parents also pointed out that every term children were sent home because of their inability to pay the school fee and other related fees. Parents struggled hard to find money to send their kids back to school (UBOS and MoPS, 2009). Although some parents were able to send their children back to school, these children lagged behind their colleagues in school work and sometimes lost self-esteem, which could significantly impact their academic achievement.

III.5.2 Cambodia faces relatively less of a shortage of infrastructure than Uganda

Although during the 1990s both countries faced similar shortages of schools and classrooms, most Cambodian villages now have primary schools within their boundaries and the shortage of classrooms is rarely mentioned as a serious issue, as was in the case in the 1990s (MoEYS, 2009). On the other hand, Uganda continues to face serious shortages of infrastructure. In 2009, despite improvement, 38 sub-counties still remained without a single public school. The inability to solve the issue of classroom shortages is also noted by donors. During an education workshop in 2010, a representative from the donor community pointed out, ‘Ten years ago, the government raised the issues of a shortage of 50,000 classrooms. This year's workshop also dealt with the same problems of shortage which has now risen to 51,000’ (Talemwa, 2010a).

As a result, despite the lower population density compared to Uganda’s \(^{42}\), in Cambodia the average distance to the nearest primary schools in rural areas fell from 5.6 km in 1997 to 1 km in 2004. This change not only promoted the rate of enrollment, but also helped to prevent children from dropping out of school. Such a conducive environment is absent in Uganda. On average, rural children in Uganda

\(^{42}\) In Uganda, population density is 366 per square mile, while Cambodia is only 204. Retrieved March, 20, 2010, from [http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0934666.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0934666.html)
live about 4.2 kilometers from a primary school, with a significant difference in
distances among the regions; in the central region it is 2.8 km, 3.6 km in the eastern, 5.7 km in the northern, and 4.6 km in the western. This situation not only serves as a barrier for enrolling new school-age children, but also causes pupils already enrolled to drop out of school.

There are two reasons why Cambodia was able to solve the problem of school and classroom shortages while Uganda is not. First, Cambodia has more resources for capital investment, and, second, Cambodia is relatively less corrupt in its school and classroom construction when compared to Uganda.

**Availability of resources**

It appears that policy priorities and availability of resources contribute to the countries’ differing abilities to solve the problem of school and classroom shortages. First, as discussed in Chapter II, donor support in Cambodia is higher and geared toward capital development and not recurrent spending as the majority of support is in the form of project support, especially for infrastructure development. One primary school director expressed his feelings when he said, 'We are very pleased that our school has been upgraded, so that we can provide full primary education to all children living on this island. We thank ADB for its handy assistance to our urgent need' (ADB, 2007). On the contrary, much aid to Uganda is in the form of general budget support that covers recurrent costs and, therefore, reduces the availability of a budget for school and classroom construction.

Further, in Uganda the education sector review agreed that in the future funds allocated to school facilitation grants in primary education should be reduced (MoES, 2006b). Even the planned budget for school facilitation grants was diverted to other uses after an intervention by the central government. For example, in 2003-2004 a report by the education sector review revealed that the ‘Cabinet directed reallocation of school facilitation grant fund balances to be used to construct … feeder roads in the district affected by insurgency’ (MoES, 2004). This situation is described by the review team as diverting resources from the greater need of education by children in that region. In Uganda, interviews with school directors and education officers
revealed their concerns about the school buildings. In the end, they said, their communities would still have to shoulder the construction of schools and classrooms just as they had before the introduction of school facilitation and classroom completion grants.

The different domestic political contexts in Cambodia and Uganda also led to a difference in the availability of resources for school and classroom construction. Analysis of public expenditures on education reveals that Cambodia spends a higher proportion of its budget for capital development as compared to Uganda. This is because Cambodia is able to reduce wage spending as a consequence of the end of coalition politics; the wage share to total recurrent spending declined steadily from 78 percent in 1997 to 59 percent in 2005, well below the developing norm, which is 70-80 percent (World Bank, 2005c). In Uganda, the wage expenditure for the primary education sub-sector increased steadily, particularly since 2006 because of salary increases from Ush150,000 to Ush200,000. In 2005-2006, only 4.1 percent of central government grants for education allocated to local governments were meant for physical development, compared to 95.9 percent for recurrent spending, of which the wage bill accounted for 91.3 percent (Ssewankambo et al., 2008). Furthermore, the situation continues to deteriorate as a result of the recent proliferation of the districts. While a budget for school and classroom construction is lacking, the government unwisely spent large amounts of funds on new buildings for district headquarters and the salaries of district officials and local politicians in newly created districts in order to gain political support, as discussed in Chapter II.

Further, the problem of a shortage of schools and classrooms in rural Cambodia was solved by politicians, while in Uganda the problem remains unsolved. The most important source of financing for school and classroom construction in rural Cambodia is mainly derived from politicians, especially from Prime Minister Hun Sen, who constructed thousands of schools and classrooms bearing his and his wife's names (as seen in Pictures 3.3 and 3.4) around the country in order to gain votes, as discussed in Chapter II. By 1998, a CPP leaflet campaign claimed that 2000 schools with 9900 buildings had been constructed (Hughes, 2003, p. 77). However, in Uganda there is no such programme from NRM politicians and President Museveni.
At least two reasons underlie the different abilities of CPP/Hun Sen and NRM/Museveni to invest in school and classroom construction. While improved social services such as education in Uganda since 1997 do not increase NRM/Museveni’s legitimacy, he lacks political incentive to invest more in education. However, improved social services in Cambodia since the late 1990s do increase CPP/Hun Sen's legitimacy and thus provide him with political incentive to invest more in education. It is important to note that the Cambodian case is similar to that of Indonesia under Soeharto’s leadership, when corrupt money was used for off-budget fiscal activity to finance development such as the education sector (Macintyre, 2000). In Cambodia such support comes from centralized corruption, where corrupt money is concentrated in the hands of the ruling elite who disperse that money for patronage based development, while there is no such possibility in Uganda because of decentralized corruption, a pattern that prevented Museveni from accessing a large amount of slush funds that could have been used for large capital development, such as in the case of Cambodia – an issue that will be discussed in the next section.

Picture 3.1 School and classroom built by Prime Minister Hun Sen, Cambodia
Corruption in school and classroom construction

The recent inability of Uganda to improve the infrastructure is also due to its widespread corruption in school and classroom construction, as compared to Cambodia. In Uganda, the quality of new buildings and classrooms under central government grants, such as school facilitation grants and classroom completion grants, is very poor and the new buildings are deteriorating quickly. A report by the Ugandan central government notes that, 'The classrooms that were constructed two or three years ago have already developed major cracks, the rendering is peeling off, roof is falling … some floors have developed major cracks and holes, the desks supplied are either unfit for a particular age group or are already dismantling and some structures were abandoned uncompleted' (MoFPED, 2001-02, p. 95). Another report also revealed that some of the classrooms and latrines collapsed before they could be used (Karugaba, 2009). School and classroom construction in Cambodia appears to be better quality than in Uganda, as seen in Pictures 3.1 and 3.2. However, the maintenance of Cambodian schools and classrooms remains a point of concern.
Although this may result from different donor support models in Cambodia and Uganda\textsuperscript{43}, it is the domestic context that mainly accounts for the quality of

\textsuperscript{43} In Cambodia, because of its direct support for school construction, monitoring processes are not in the hands of the Cambodian government alone, but are also in the hands of donors that provide better quality construction. My contacts at the school level and even officers in provincial education departments support this argument. They further state that the school buildings and classrooms supported by ADB are of even better quality than the ones donated by politicians. One school principal
construction. There are different modes of governance in Cambodia and Uganda. In Uganda, basic services such as primary education are delivered within an ever-changing context of governance, from centralization to highly decentralized through a local council system of government with the district as the main unit of the sub-national government. The overall objective of decentralization is to improve the efficiency of the public service provision and bring services closer to the people. It also seeks to promote popular participation, to empower local people to make their own decisions, and to enhance accountability. In Cambodia, all social services are delivered by the central government with local administrations as their implementer, even after the recent introduction of decentralization. (This section will not explore in detail the decentralization and centralization process in Uganda and Cambodia, but will highlight their roles in school and classroom construction.)

Since the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power in 1986, there has been a strong wish — by both the Ugandan government and donors — to move towards decentralization of basic services delivery, such as primary education, through transferring political, administrative, financial, and planning authority from the central government to local government councils. The legal mandate broadens the role of local government, among other roles, to provide and maintain the physical

mentioned, 'For the ADB’s project there is a strict monitoring by technical staff from both ministry and ADB, while the one donated by politicians has no such procedures' (interview, 2 February 2009). In contrast, donors in Uganda move quickly from project support towards general budget support. General budget support leaves much of the implementation to the central government, and then the central government allocates it to local governments in accordance with the decentralization process. Such arrangements leave monitoring processes in the hands of the Ugandan government. Recently, the donor community reviewed its role in Uganda’s development efforts. A World Bank representative and chair of a donor group warned, 'The undeniable lack of government action to follow up cases of grant corruption is a key area of development partners' concern. Donors … are currently considering a range of actions … reprogramming away from direct budget support' (Biryabarema, 2010).

44 The local government structure incorporates five levels ranging from top to bottom as follows: District Council is referred to as LC5, County Council as LC4, Sub-County Council as LC3, Parish Council as LC2, and Village Council as LC1.

facilities and equipment in primary schools, while it limits the role of central
government to only policy formulation, planning, and inspection (Ssewankambo et
al., 2008).

In Uganda, before the late 1990s, local councilors played a role only in mobilizing
support — in cash and in-kind — from grassroots people to construct schools and
classrooms. As local people participated directly, they observed how local councilors
used their funds, which resulted in increased accountability among local councilors.
However, as the poverty level was high in the 1990s, the mobilization of support was
limited, resulting in a lack of schools and classrooms to accommodate all school-age
children. The role of local councils in school and classroom construction was changed
after education reform in the late 1990s. In an attempt to expand access to education
for all school-age children, the central government provided funds to local councils to
build more schools and classrooms under classroom completion grants, and especially
school facilitation grants and other programmes, such as district development
programmes, and officially eliminated contributions for school and classroom
construction by local communities.

The allocation of domestic development expenditures to local governments rose
rapidly from almost zero before the education reform era to nearly 30 percent between
1998-2005. Rushed implementation did not allow enough time to prepare for better
execution of the development project, and certainly there was no time to create
horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms. Although school facilitation
grants, classroom completion grants, and district development programmes were
funded by the central government, it was local government, consisting of a number of
councilors (usually called local politicians), who played a critical role in the whole
process of construction. Decentralization created a new set of rules and procedures,
thus increasing the power of local politicians vis-à-vis district staff, as local politicians
have power over the appointment of the District Tender Board (DTB), which is
responsible for awarding contracts, and the District Service Commission (DSC),
responsible for appointing all district staff including the District Chief Administrative
Officer (CAO) and the District Engineer in charge of construction supervision
(Francis and James, 2003).
According to legal procedures, tender for school and classroom construction is supposed to be allocated on the basis of a points system that takes into account a range of criteria including price, experience, and records of good tax payments. In practice, however, a letter of recommendation from local politicians is believed to be a crucial prerequisite, and it is widely believed that successful tenders are the companies of their friends and relatives, or protégés of the political class, or proxy companies operating on their behalf (Francis and James, 2003). This is compounded by the fact that Ugandan parents, especially the more financially secure families (local councilors fall within this category), have a long history of sending their children to the few traditional boarding schools. These are considered the best schools and are usually located far from their villages or towns. Therefore, there is a lack of personal interest among local councilors to ensure better quality school and classroom construction for their communities.

Consequently, there is a report that in some cases only a quarter of the tender sum or less is spent on the materials and labour for construction. A report by the Auditor General notes, 'From the site inspection, it was established that there was an estimated overall loss of about 16 percent (sh4.5b) in the sampled districts over the three year period. If this is extrapolated it translates into a countrywide loss of value of about sh15b' (Karugaba, 2009). The district engineers are not able to ask contractors to redo work on buildings since they have powerful ties. In some cases, they are afraid even to conduct site inspections for fear of reprisal because they are appointed by the district service commission that was, in turn, appointed by local politicians. The same feeling is also true for the district chief administrative officer. Those who cannot work within this system usually give up or are forced out. A chief administrative officer at Bududa district claimed, 'I was forced to flee Bududa because my work was interfered with by politicians and I could not make appropriate accountability' (Monitor Daily, 2009).

In Uganda, local teachers and officials express their concern over what they call 'decentralized corruption', which they believe is very difficult to control (personal conversation, 27-31 July; 29-31 July 2009). Decentralization spreads power around the country and involves many stakeholders at many different levels. Consequently,
when a grant is provided to a local government, the central government is not able to properly monitor its use for several reasons. First, there is a lack of staff from central government to monitor the ever-increasing number of newly decentralized offices. Second, there is a lack of funds for inspections because of the expense of monitoring processes. Finally, the most important factor is the attempt to use local politicians by the central government and ruling elites to create and sustain their power base in the countryside, as evidenced by the increase of the number of districts recently, from 30 in the late 1980s to 112 by 2010; thus they tolerate such corrupt practices by local politicians (Crook, 2003; Semakula, 2010). Experience from Ethiopia also reveals that if service delivery improvement is not the central objective of decentralization, there is a lack of commitment from the ruling elites to ensure better outcomes, and it is a very difficult process to overcome (World Bank, 2003a).

In other districts and sub-counties where such corrupt practices are not widespread, local councils and district staffs are not able to carry out their mandates properly because of the lack of capacity and funds. A study on decentralization in Uganda reveals that although there has been an improvement in the overall institutional capacity of the local governments due to the capacity building program in the decentralization process supported by donors, at the sector level technical expertise is still weak. In addition to the lack of capacity, Lister et al. (2006) note, 'The district education office and inspectorate … receive little financial or institutional support from the central ministry, and are solely reliant on districts' local revenues, which vary significantly across local governments (and have lately been undermined by the abolition of Graduated Tax)' (p. 100).

Because of the abolition of the Graduated Tax, local governments' revenues have declined from about 35 percent of total funds in 1995-1996 to the present level of less than 7 percent (Ssewankambo et al., 2008). There is an attempt to compensate the Graduated Tax by the central government so that local governments can carry out

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46 Graduated Tax is imposed by law on every male of the apparent age of 18 and every mature female with an income. Graduated Tax is the main source of local revenue — accounting for between 70 and 80 percent of the local councils’ total revenues — can cover much of the administrative expenditures, such allowances for councilors.
their responsibilities. However, the compensation does not reach the level of the Graduated Tax collected by local councils, and most compensation is getting stuck at the district level (LC5), meaning that the sub-counties (LC3) are being starved, which is taking a toll (Cammack et al., 2007, p. 35). As a result, grants from the central government are being spent by frontline service providers with no supervision or monitoring by local governments, especially in rural areas.

The experience in Uganda shows that the expectations for the decentralized reforms to bring services closer to people did not bear fruit. Since the mid-2000s, there has been a trend to recentralize the service provision in Uganda in order to reduce decentralized corruption. However, observers note that this is not a fundamental change, but a mere 'changing of the guard'. The change is from local government to central government, and from local politicians to national politicians. This change was intended to provide better services to people. However, the change could make the situation worse as there is a lack of cooperation and overlapping responsibility among the stakeholders. There are three ways in which decentralization was reversed and recentralized.

First, before 2005, all elected local political leaders, up to chairpersons of district councils and executive committee, were paid salaries, and other councilors were paid allowances and transportation costs for meetings and other official duties by their respective local governments. Due to different economic situations, resource-rich districts with the ability to collect relatively large amounts of revenue were able to pay fairly high salaries and allowances to their chairpersons and councilors, whereas those with fewer resources were not. This led to wide disparities in salaries and allowances, despite the fact that they were performing the same responsibilities according to their legal mandates.

The Ministry of Local Government has long noticed this inequality and sought reforms. As such, it welcomed the move by the central government to pay equal salaries to chairpersons and executive committee members at the sub-county and

47 For more detail see Green, 2008; Francis and James, 2003; Asiimwe and Musisi (Eds.), 2007; Cammack, et al., 2007; Ssewankambo, et al., 2008.
district levels since 2005. Although this seemed to solve the problem of unequal remuneration, it negatively affected the service delivery in two ways. First, due to the inability of the central government to support large members of local government committees, the number of members was reduced from 10 to 5, thus affecting the capacity of local government committees to carry out their mandates. Second, as discussed earlier, since the abolition of the Graduated Tax, districts and sub-counties faced difficulties in paying the other councilors' allowances for meetings and other official duties. This situation, Ssewankambo et al. (2008) argue, not only demoralized councilors, but also generated conflict between unpaid councilors and the executives as the latter are paid by the central government.

Second, district tender boards, which used to be appointed by local councils and answerable to local politicians, were abolished and replaced with local contract committees made up exclusively of civil servants who answered to a chief administrative officer. Meanwhile, the chief administrative officer was no longer appointed by local politicians after the amending of the constitution in 2005. The responsibility for appointment of these officers was recentralized and vested in the Public Service Commission. The change was justified because of the tendency in the past for some chief administrative officers and members of district tender boards to be subjected to influence-peddling and pressure by local politicians to accommodate some local politicians' demands to form instant companies and bid for contracts to provide services or supplies (Cammack et al., 2007, pp. 37-38). Further, the justification for the recentralized appointment of chief administrative officers was that they could then be transferred around the country, making them less rooted locally and therefore more objective. This argument was met with doubt by local people. A senior teacher claimed that in a country that is fragile because of ethnic divisions, having chief administrative officers come from elsewhere with different backgrounds and not be 'the son/daughter of the soil' might not help. It was feared they would just grasp whatever opportunity was given and run away (personal conversation, July 27-31 2009). This fear was rooted in local politicians seeing little transparency in the process of recruiting chief administrative officers. In 2006, all chief administrative officers were required to apply for their jobs alongside new applicants. The former chief administrative officer of Hoima district was not only highly qualified but passed
the interviews, only to be relieved of duty under unclear circumstances. This has led some to believe that appointments depended on more than just merit (Cammack et al., 2007, pp. 37-38).

Further, the appointment of chief administrative officers by the centre opened the way for chief administrative officers to strictly implement directives from the centre, directives that may or may not have been in line with the decentralization process and local interests. Moreover, it reduced local government accountability to local communities as they were not paid by local communities. Consequently, local people could not demand accountability as they did not pay for the services. As one district official commented, 'The one, who is paying for the music, sets the songs' (Cammack et al, 2007, p. 38). This may have caused some marginalization among local people; therefore, resentment was expressed and resistance emerged. This also led to tensions and a breakdown in working relationships among civil servants appointed by the central government and local politicians, thereby affecting service delivery and the quality of administration (Cammack et al, 2007, p. 38). This is because the mandates of local councils are legally anchored in the constitution and the Local Government Act of 1997.

Actually, according to the Corruption Perception Index assessed by International Transparency, Uganda ranks consistently as a less corrupt country when compared to Cambodia since the end of their civil wars. However, the corruption in school and classroom construction in Cambodia is limited compared to Uganda. Although, the decentralization program was introduced in Cambodia in 2002 with the first direct election of commune councils, there was no legal framework for commune councils to collect taxes or directly receive grants for school construction. Therefore, it does not have its own resources to finance school construction, let alone administrative costs. In this sense, it is just an administrative arm of the central government. Further, in contrast to Uganda where local councils have the authority over the tender processes including school and classroom construction, commune councils in Cambodia have no authority over the tender of school and classroom construction. It is still within the

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hands of the central government. Tender is being carried out at the central level by representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Economy and MoEYS.

In this sense, the way in which corruption is practiced is not so apparent, as opposed to Uganda where schools and classroom buildings around the country are built with sub-standard materials; Cambodian schools and classrooms follow a set standard that is strictly monitored by donors. Corruption, however, involves the reduction in the number of classrooms per school. For example, staff from the Ministry of Education mentioned that in the planned budget there were 10 classroom blocks, but when it came to construction only 9 or so classroom blocks were built (personal conversation, 2 February 2009). The lower incidence of corruption in Cambodia is due to its one-stop corruption at the central level, which involves fewer people than is the case with decentralization in Uganda.

III.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter shows that policy priorities and availability of resources appear to have an influence on the educational outcome in both countries as reflected in increased enrollment. The sustained increase in enrollment in basic education in Cambodia is associated with its consistent policy priorities and availability of resources, while the declines in priority and availability of resources for basic education in Uganda are attributable to a decline in enrollment. However, when a more refined educational impact was measured in terms of completion rates, adult literacy and distribution of educational provision among different social groups were taken into account; the results were less impressive, especially in Uganda.

This is because the policy priorities and resource availability were not enough to enroll all children in school and retain them once they enrolled. The high dropout and non-enrollment rates, especially among rural poor and girls — which leads to low adult literacy rates and unequal adult literacy rates among different social group in Cambodia and Uganda — result from the shortages of schools and classrooms and the high direct and opportunity costs, especially for rural areas.
Within the parameter of existing resources, however, Cambodia adopted strategic interventions such as double shifts, multi-grade teaching, school breakfast and scholarship programs to reduce the burden of costs (direct and opportunity) on the demand side and expand the capacity of the supply-side. This facilitated Cambodian students' ability to enroll and remain in school, while such strategic interventions were not fully pursued by the Ugandan government. Although these strategic interventions appear mainly initiated by donors and NGOs, the local political context creates an enabling environment for such policies to be adopted. After all, these are popular policies from which the ruling elites can benefit.

Although both countries faced similar shortages of schools and classrooms in the 1990s, the situation since 2000 in Cambodia has steadily improved. Such a shortage is rarely mentioned as a barrier to education, while the situation in Uganda remains unchanged. This is not only due to the different levels of corruption, but also due to the different patterns of political action in Cambodia and Uganda, which lead to varying depress of availability of resources for capital investment. Although Cambodia's government in general has been ranked consistently more corrupt than Uganda's, corruption in school and classroom construction is less widespread compared to Uganda. The centralized bidding process in Cambodia limits the opportunity for corruption and collusion because it involves fewer people than the decentralized mode in Uganda that allows opportunities for corruption and collusion to spread as it involves tender and people at many different levels of administration across the country.

As a result of the end of coalition politics, Cambodia was able to reduce wage share spending on education, thus it not only had more resources for infrastructure development but also offered more incentives for the CPP to accelerate the development of the education sector since there was no political conflict over the legitimacy of the progress. Parallel to this, Prime Minister Hun Sen and CPP members launched school and classroom construction campaigns around Cambodia that solved most of the school and classroom shortages. On the other hand, Uganda was unable to do this. In fact, the wage share of education spending is on the rise because of an increase in the number of administrative units — districts. The increase provides jobs
for political supporters; but the performance-based strategy that President Museveni adopted so far has not enhanced his legitimacy because of other factors such as ethnic division. This also does not provide any incentive for President Museveni and NRM's members to launch school and classroom construction campaigns, as is the case for Prime Minister Hun Sen and CPP in Cambodia. The centralized mode of corruption in Cambodia also provides ruling elites with a large amount of money to finance development projects, while ruling elites in Uganda are not able to mobilize a large amount of funds to finance development projects because of its decentralized mode of corruption.

There are other reasons for the high rate of school dropouts in Cambodia and Uganda, including the unwillingness of parents and pupils to continue schooling because of the low quality of educational provision and the irrelevance of educational content. This indicates that improving educational accessibility in terms of building more schools and classrooms and providing more teachers will not boost the participation rate if the issue of quality and relevance of curricula is not addressed. The issues of quality and relevancy of education to the local labour market and economic needs of the country will be discussed in Chapters IV and V of this dissertation.