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

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CHAPTER IV
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME: QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Our system of education … is to be contrasted with our highest ideas of perfection itself … The love of excellence looks ever upward towards a higher standard; it is unimproving pride and arrogance only, that are satisfied with being superior to a lower [standard].
Horace Mann (as quoted in Coulson, 2002)

IV.1 Introduction

Since 1990, quality education came to the fore of educational policy, not only because of the realization that pupils had not been learning substantially, but also because of the recognition that a quality education has a positive impact on daily life, whether social, political or, especially, economic, as discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter I. Cambodia and Uganda reaffirmed this recognition in all their development plans and policies. As far as education is concerned, both governments claim that it is only through an access to quality education that their societies can transform and prosper. In response to this, education reforms in Cambodia and Uganda were accompanied by increased budget expenditures by both governments and donor communities, as discussed in Chapter II, and although to a different degree, aimed to help schools improve their quality of educational provision.

As discussed in Chapter III, the limitation of the government, especially in Uganda to expand equitable access to primary education was the result not only of a lack of resources, but also of other factors, such as corruption and political interference. Therefore, this chapter will analyse the factors affecting the quality of education in Cambodia and Uganda. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will present quality education in both countries as measured in terms of the pupils’ proficiency in mathematics and literacy. The second section will explore the factors that determine quality education in both countries. This section is divided into two parts. The first part will explore the wider social and political contexts in which the education systems in Cambodia and Uganda are operating and how these factors influence the quality of education. The second part will examine the capacity of their education systems to deliver quality education in two aspects: the effective use of the instruction hour and the quality of teaching within. The final section is the concluding remarks.
IV.2 Quality of basic education

The quality of Cambodian and Ugandan education measured in term of pupils’ proficiency in mathematics and literacy is low in absolute terms, as less than half the pupils achieve proficiency (as seen in Table 4.1). Employers are also frustrated about this low quality, especially in Uganda. An employer remarked, 'What's on offer … is free sub-standard education, which makes an already bad situation worse, because … re-educating educated illiterates costs much more time and money' (BBC News, 2005).

Further, as in the case of access to education, a significant gap exists between urban and rural schools' performances. In Cambodia, on average, pupils from large urban schools have 8.15 percent more correct answers in mathematics and literacy than pupils from their small rural counterparts (MoEYS, 2006a; 2008a). An empirical case study reveals that the scholarship program in rural areas that contributes to the increase in the percentage of poor rural children attending school by 25 percentage points, does not translate into any significant improvement in mathematics and vocabulary scores (Filmer and Schady, 2009). In Uganda, the gap is even wider. A study of the primary examination results reveals that urban schools score 18 percentage points higher than their rural counterparts (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, 2008).

As in the case of access to education, there are different development trajectories in quality improvement in both countries. In Uganda, because of the almost triple increase of enrollment rates, as presented in Chapter III, attempts to improve the quality of education seem to have stagnated. The percentage of primary pupils achieving proficiency in literacy and mathematics declined from 31.82 in 1996 to 30.25 in 2006 (UNEB, 1999; MoES, 2007). This is reflected in the fact that among 21,413 pupils in grade 6, only 28.3 percent could clearly read and tell the time.

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49 Our analysis focuses mainly on basic education for two reasons. First, according to the standard classification of education prepared by UNESCO in 1997, primary education is the level at which basic competencies (literacy and numeracy) should be mastered, if it takes more than that the system is inefficient and might waste a lot of resources, both public and private. Second, a failure to provide quality of basic education would not lead to building a good foundation for higher levels of education.
An even more worrisome sign was the result of the 2009 primary exit examinations that revealed pupils' performances in all districts and municipalities declined (Butagira and Natabaalo, 2009). In contrast, the quality of education in Cambodia improved, albeit slowly. By 2008, about 50 percent of primary pupils achieved proficiency in literacy and numeracy, compared to 39 percent in 1995 (UNICEF, 1995; MoEYS, 2006a; 2008a).

**IV.3 Factors that determine the quality of education**

Although the factors that influence the quality of education are found both outside and inside schools, this dissertation is concerned with what is happening in schools. Schools in developing countries such as Cambodia and Uganda play the sole role of educating pupils because parents do not spend or have much time to spend or have the knowledge to educate their children, and their opportunities to experience technological knowledge in everyday life are rather limited, especially in rural and remote areas (Lewin, 1993). For the purposes of this study, we limit our analysis only to public schools because the presence of private schools in Cambodia remains insignificant. In Uganda, although the presence of private schools is significant, the ratio of pupils attending private schools to the total primary enrollment remains low at about 10 percent in 2006-07. And, in general, private schools do not deliver a quality education.50

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50 For example, in 2009, 60 percent of students who received government sponsorships (pupils who passed the national examinations with the highest scores) to study at public universities came from the best few schools (Namubiru, 2009). The inability of the majority of private schools to deliver a quality education is due to the commercialization of education. Most of private school owners are businessmen/women focused on profits, rather than educators who care about scholarly achievement (interview May 22, 2009). This is compounded by a lack of quality control by the MoES. First, although private schools do not meet the national standard requirements, the government still issues licenses for them to operate. Second, they are not properly supervised and monitored because of a lack of staff. As of 2009, the Private Education Department of MoES was not staffed; the approved 17 posts were still vacant (Jacob, et al., 2008; Uganda National Commission for African Peer Review Mechanism, 2007; MoES, 2009).
IV.3.1 Education systems: Wider socio-political context

As discussed in Chapter III, corruption is widespread in Cambodia and Uganda, although to different degrees. As education is supposed to train the workforce for increased productivity in the economic sector and to actively participate in social and political fields to promote overall development, it is ironic that the education sector is the most corrupt. In Cambodia, a survey found that corruption in the public education sector accounts for more than half the total corruption in public services (Nissen, 2005). Although exact data is not readily available, anecdotal evidence reveals that a similar pattern exists in Uganda.

Through these corrupt practices (practices that have not changed since the end of the civil war, as I personally experienced), pupils can pass each grade and examination. In Cambodia, pupils who buy snacks and lesson notes from classroom teachers and participate in private tutoring rarely fail. Those who do not are at risk for failing examinations or repeating grades. A villager complained, ’I have three children, I spend 4000 riel ($1) to buy my children's examination score, but not the knowledge for my children … no money, no score, no good record' (FitzGerald et al., 2007, p. 16). For parents, repeating a grade costs them even more. Therefore, for those who can afford to attend school, there is no option but to sustain this corrupt practice.

For many parents, their expenses are also an expression of sympathy for the teachers’ hard work to educate their children, despite low salaries. This is why there is not much complaining about the issue. There are also no complaints from the poor, as discussed in Chapter III, because they are exempted from these informal fees. However, this situation, according to a teacher, negatively affects the quality of teaching as it shifts the teachers’ concentration from teaching to assessing the pupils' financial conditions. This assessment consumes teachers' time and consequently reduces their teaching time (personal conversation, 17 September 2008.). Further, group discussions revealed that poor pupils experience feelings of shame from the teacher for their inability to afford lessons or to participate in the private class. Such shame could drain students' attention and motivation from learning and in extreme cases may result in pupils leaving schools (focus group discussion, August 30, 2008.).
During examinations, cheating by giving small amounts of money to teachers has become a standard practice for generations. It has become such an entrenched tradition that Cambodia even has a saying, 'Pel Brorlong Keu Pel Chamlong', meaning 'Exam time is time to copy from others or notes' (which rhymes in Khmer). Pupils who do not want to take the examination can simply buy their scores for $20 to $35 (Lebun, 2004). Actually, the whole system of corruption encourages this practice. Teachers point out, 'Why should we fail students if they can give money to officers at academic study offices and change the score? Therefore, we just let them pass and get whatever they offer to us' (personal conversations, 17 September; 6-7 October, 2008).

In response to the public outcry about corruption in the education sector, MoEYS launched an anti-corruption campaign to combat teachers demanding illegal pay from pupils. With support from NGOs and donors, advertising banners were placed in schools, and the media also disseminated information announcing, 'Lesson and snack selling and paying teachers are prohibited'. Also, as discussed in Chapter II and III, educational policy formulation and implementation were subjected not only to corruption but also to political influence. David Ayres (1999) argues that in Cambodia, 'The final theme dominating the current policy context is what has become a very substantial gap between educational policies as developed by MoEYS in consultation with donors and those policies which are realized in practice' (p. 59). Consequently, no one agrees to punish teachers who violate the law, the usual reason given by the government being that teachers' salaries are very low.

In Cambodia, low salaries for teachers may result from the overall low revenues. However, the controlling factor is ruling elites who deliberately keep salaries low until they find better strategies to earn the loyalty and support of civil servants in order to win elections. The low pay allows the ruling elites to directly control and maintain loyalty by tolerating the misbehavior of teachers and school directors, such as petty corruption and absences. Caroline Hughes (2003) argues that an increase in salaries would shake the foundation of loyalty. She writes, 'The assertion of demand for a living wage undermines the selectivity of such relations, and offers opportunities for horizontal alliances that can prompt the breakdown of vertical relations of loyalty' (p. 188). On the other hand, because of low salaries, civil servants in general and
teachers in particular are forced to find alternative jobs in order to generate more
income to support their families; therefore, they do not have the time and energy to
challenge existing political arrangements.

Under certain circumstances, Cambodian teachers are advised to let pupils pass. The
competition for the best schools across the country leads school directors and officers
at provincial departments of education to do everything possible to promote pupils so
as to avoid negative evaluations and to receive bonuses from their supervisors. This
practice includes not only allowing students to pass their classes automatically, but
also to pass critical examinations at each level of education. For lower secondary
examinations, the deputy school director who participates in the examination marking
notes that in the first round of corrections if there are too many pupils failing the
provincial departments (who may have directions from MoEYS) may curve the grades
in order to meet the required percentage of passing pupils (personal conversation, 5-
18 February 2009).

For high school, the percentage of pupils passing examinations is sky-rocketing,
especially since the introduction of private universities in the late 1990s. This
percentage increased from 7 percent in 1994 to over 90 percent recently (Duggan,
1997; MoEYS, 2009). By allowing more students to pass, MoEYS achieves two
objectives. First, it shows the improvement in the education sector, and, second,
MoEYS receives benefits from private higher education institutions. According to a
teacher and long term expatriate working in the education sector, these private
institutes pay MoEYS to help as many pupils pass as possible, but with low grades
(interview, 7 August 2008; personal conversation, 6-7 October 2008). In the 2008-
2009 and 2009-2010 school years, only two and one student(s) respectively passed
each year with the letter grade A among 90,000 candidates. The majority earned
grades of D and E. If they wanted to continue on to a university, they could do so only
by paying tuition fees (they would not receive scholarships).

51 This is not only in the lower levels of education, but also in higher education. During my teaching
years at the university, I also received these directions.
52 The government’s policy is to give around 2000 scholarships — fee-paying free — for pupils who
pass with the highest grades to study in public higher education institutions. Private higher education
The desire to achieve two sets of objectives by MoEYS, compounded by students' desire to pursue higher education, led to corruption during high school examinations. An exam controller explained that for wealthy families buying a passing grade is easy. Grades A and B have a fixed rate of $2000 and $1200 respectively, and grade C is negotiable, but generally costs around $700-800. There is also a cheaper method that pupils exploit (as seen in Pictures 4.1 and 4.2): The answer sheets are smuggled into classrooms and pupils pool $1 or $2 (sometimes higher) per subject and give the money to two controllers employed to monitor the exam. It happens in almost every school, but MoEYS never disrupts the process because the money is shared between those involved (Khouth and Mon, 2010; Khouth and Schonerker, 2010; Shelton, 2007).

Picture 4.1 Police guard the school grounds during an examination to control cheating, Cambodia

Source: Shelton, 2007

institutions also provide scholarships to pupils, usually an unspecified number. Pupils with grades of A, B and C receive 100, 75 and 50 percent fee-paying free, while the rest pay the full fee.

The desire to continue to higher education results from two factors; first, higher education is now a gateway to formal employment, and, second, the private return from higher education is higher than other levels of education. Details about higher education in Cambodia and Uganda will be discussed in Chapter V.
In contrast to Cambodia, which adopts a silent automatic promotion policy, Uganda openly declares a system of automatic promotion. Once children are enrolled in Primary One, they then move up to Primary Seven regardless of whether they have learned to read, write or calculate. Observers and analysts have noted that this situation has begun to undermine the quality of education. While the objective of universal education is undoubtedly beneficial for every Ugandan child, the absence of quality enforcement or alternative means for checking the progress of pupils might result in them receiving less than optimal quality education (Kalenma, 2009; The New Vision, 2010b; Ssenkabirwa and Mitti, 2010). Even grading was influenced by policy initiatives at the central level. As an examiner acknowledged, the government initiative was to boost science education, so there was almost 95 percent compassion in the exam grading (Nalubwama and Lumu, 2010).

As in the case of Cambodia, in Uganda pupils also desire to pursue higher education. Further, pupils desire to earn high scores on national examinations for two reasons. First, they may be eligible for not only the best schools and universities, but just to be admitted at all is difficult because of limited space. As discussed in Chapter III, the shortage of schools and classrooms in Uganda is a serious issue. Second, high scores allow them to receive government scholarships. It is important to note that the desire to obtain government scholarships is very strong in Uganda as pupils not only study
for free but also receive substantial support for living costs and learning materials. This kind of assistance is absent in Cambodia.

The desire to receive government assistance for pursuing higher education degrees leads to widespread dishonesty during examinations. These practices include cheating, collusion, impersonation (other people sitting for the candidates), access to examination questionnaires prior to the day of examination, smuggling notes into the examination rooms, using prepared answers to address the questions, candidates helping each other and teachers who serve as controllers helping candidates (UNEB, 2003). The issue of dishonesty during examinations was serious in Uganda, leading to a reform of control mechanisms, which included the introduction of CCTV monitoring cameras in and around examination printing areas in 2010 (Ainomugisha, 2010).

This corruption and dishonesty during examinations resulted in discrepancies between students' actual proficiency and the official passing rate that is almost two times greater, as seen in Table 4.1. This is because the socio-political contexts in which the education systems in both countries operate discourage hard work. The education systems also fail to form ethics and build character in pupils, which are necessary for self-sufficiency in order to participate in society in general and in labour markets in particular. It is in this sense that in Cambodia Marg Froude argues that cheating on examinations gives pupils 'a false sense of what they know and the country a false sense of what their graduates are capable of' (Kay, 2008). In Uganda, Matthew Odada similarly argues cheating 'is one manner of corruption and one sure way of corrupting youth. The youth who "passed" via malpractice are a danger to themselves and to society' (UNEB, 2003, p. 20).
Table 4.1 Comparison between the % of pupil's proficiency and pass rates in Cambodia and Uganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>Pass rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: EMIS, 2005-06; 2006-07; MoEYS, 2006a; 2008a; MoES, 2006a; 2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

IV.3.2 Poor quality education systems

Most of the literature on education reform treats the relationship between pupils and teachers where learning and teaching truly occurred as a black box (Leclercg, 2004). The quality of interaction between pupils and teachers that leads to improved learning results can be found in two aspects of education: the effective use of instruction hours and quality of teaching, which in turn depends on the quality of the teachers and their numbers and on teaching materials such as textbooks and laboratory equipment. This section will examine these two aspects of the Cambodian and Ugandan school systems.

Ineffective use of instruction hours

Studies conducted to assess how many actual instruction hours do happen in classrooms in both countries compared to the official instruction hours reveal a significant discrepancy, especially in rural schools. There are several factors that contribute to this discrepancy, such as schools being closed more than on just official holidays and teachers arriving late and leaving early. But the most serious issue is teacher absenteeism. Studies in Cambodia found out that 22 percent of respondents said that teachers were absent either frequently or very frequently, and in Uganda 55 percent of teachers considered teacher absences a serious problem, with a much higher percentage in rural areas (Geeves and Bredenberg 2004; Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, 2008). In Uganda, in the most egregious cases, teachers came to work only once every three weeks (Kagolo, 2009a).
The reason for teacher absenteeism: According to several surveys, the major reason for teacher absenteeism in both countries is related to their welfare, especially their low salaries. In Cambodia and Uganda, the average salaries of primary teachers are around US$65 and US$95 per month respectively, compared to the salaries of members of the national assemblies in both countries, which is more than US$2000, plus other benefits to which teachers are not entitled (Namutebi and Osike, 2007).\textsuperscript{54} In the case of Cambodia, Hughes and Conway (2004) conclude that 'inadequate pay is the fundamental constraint on improved state performance … particularly in labour intensive service delivery sectors such as education' (p. 42).

The high level of teacher absenteeism in Cambodia and especially in Uganda, however, is not only due to welfare related issues, but is also the result of weak leadership and management. In Cambodia, from the teachers' perspective, MoEYS and management at the school level are the greatest source of teacher dissatisfaction. This is compounded by corruption and nepotism, which distract teachers from effective teaching. If these factors were attributed to the same root causes and consolidated, they would outweigh salary issues and become the most significant cause of dissatisfaction (Nock and Bishop (Eds.), 2008, p. 14). This is more evident in the case of Uganda. A study by Jacob et al. (2008) noted that teacher absenteeism in public schools had been on the rise despite an increase in salaries of 50 percent since 2005. Further, on average, private schools pay their teachers 25 percent less than public schools, but their teachers are absent less frequently (Manafwa, 2009; UBOS, 2009a, p. 14).

A Ugandan researcher notes that, 'As private teachers, if you do not come to teach, you are not paid and might risk being fired. So you come to teach. But as the government civil servant, you still get paid although you are absent' (personal conversation, 7 May 2009). In Uganda, from a school perspective, the problem lies at a higher level of administration, where disciplining absenteeism is out of its control. Teachers have their salaries sent to their bank accounts, a practice generally believed to be effective from a public financial management and civil service reform point of

\textsuperscript{54} Yimust, R. Cambodia must take serious and painful reforms. Retrieved April 25, 2011, from http://www.mekong.net/cambodia/must-reform.thm BROKEN LINK
view, but school directors complain that they have no means of disciplining teachers by withholding the salaries of non-performing teachers (Jacob et al., 2008).

In other words, schools are not the bosses of teachers; schools are not the ones who hire and fire them. In cases where school directors would like to take actions against non-performing teachers, they face not only long bureaucratic processes, but also slow responses. This is not only because of the inefficient and ineffective public administration, but also because of political interference, as teacher support is crucial for electoral success. Anecdotal evidence indicates that a large number of teachers in both countries are members of the CPP and the NRM. Further, as pupils in Cambodia and Uganda entered school late, they reach the age of voting during their general education; therefore, teacher support in the electoral success is even more important as they can influence and mobilize their pupils. Furthermore, there is widespread corruption in teacher recruitment and the deployment process. Consequently, the corrupt officers at higher levels are not keen to take action against non-performing teachers. If actions are carried out, they are done selectively against those who are not part of their in-groups. Or non-performing teachers are merely transferred to other schools. A school director in Uganda complained, 'It takes too long to dismiss an erring teacher … call in the board and eventually you write to the ministry. The ministry then has to go to the disciplinary council. Sometimes, even the process is not followed because a troublesome teacher is transferred to another school, with unresolved issues' (Kibirango, 2010).

Still, wide-reaching empirical studies indicate that school directors have perhaps the most important single influence over teacher performance. In Uganda, a study found that, 'Within a few years, a school director can transform a school by attracting and retaining a well-qualified and highly motivated staff and by providing strong instruction leadership. The reverse is true: a poor school director can quickly turn an

55 In Cambodia, a case must be brought to the Ministry of Education, then to the Secretariat of Public Service through its district and provincial education departments, and in the case of Uganda, up to the Public Service Commission through district offices and the Ministry of Education. These routes are necessary because many mid-level (provincial and district) administrators do not have the authority to make decisions or act on information available to them.
otherwise good school into a bad one’ (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, 2008, p. 118). For example, in 2008 Jinja SS School was characterized by frequent strikes. Students and support staff took turns protesting in the streets of Jinja town. Only 20 teachers were present, yet the school had more than 130 teachers. With a new school director, in late 2009 follow-up school visits revealed operations were back to normal, although there was still room for improvement. In an interview with local newspapers, the new school director claimed that in 2008 the school operated as if there were no school director (Musasizi, 2010). In Cambodia, interviews with education advisors and project managers strongly indicated that school directors are the key to good school performances despite location — whether urban, rural, or remote areas (interview, 6 September 2008; 8 September 2008).

Unfortunately, in general, school directors in both countries lack the capacity and commitment to be effective leaders. Fewer than one-third of school directors in both countries have upper-secondary education with teacher training and beyond (EMIS, 2007-2008; Liang, 2002; Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, 2008). Further, school directors' absenteeism is also high. In Uganda, school directors at government schools are twice as likely to be absent from schools as are regular teachers. The overall percentage of school directors on task (found at work) actually declined from 70 percent to 62 percent between 2009 and 2010 (Vaughan and Izama, 2009; Talemwa, 2011).

In Cambodia, expatriates working in school leadership programs indicate that school directors almost never spent their time outside the offices. School directors do not serve as role models involved in communities, involved in such tasks as reading books, attending technical meetings, or talking to teachers and students. Therefore, they are not fully aware of teacher absences (interview, 6 September 2008). School observations as well as my own experience working in the education sector reveal that the majority of school directors in Cambodia who have been employed since the 1980s are nearing retirement age; some even changed their birth certificates to appear a few years younger so they can continue to work. In fact, they are 'working', just waiting for retirement and do not care about education. It is important to note that civil servants in Cambodia once employed remain in their posts until retirement,
unless they are promoted to higher levels. They are working without any official terms of reference that their performances can be measured against.

In Uganda, Herger, at al. (2010) conclude, 'The weak district inspection function, under the responsibility of the district inspectors, is one reason why significant teacher [and school directors] absenteeism remains unchecked' (p. 24). This is also true in the case of Cambodia. In both countries, despite reform in inspection systems in the late 1990s, schools are rarely inspected. In Uganda, although schools are supposed to be inspected three times a term, most schools were actually inspected only twice a year. Some schools are inspected only once a year, while others are never inspected at all, especially in rural areas (Makerere University, 2009; Ssenkabirwa and Oluka, 2010; Oluka, 2010). The overall number of school inspections even declined from 76 percent in 2009 to 69 percent in 2010 (Talemwa, 2011). In Cambodia, inspectors from MoEYS and the provincial Department of Education offices inspected teachers less than 15 and 40 percent of the targeted inspections, respectively. Surprisingly, inspectors at the district level, which is closest to schools, inspected teachers only 30 percent of its planned inspections (MoEYS, 2006b).

From a technical perspective, both countries face two challenges that together block the emergence of effective supportive and inspection system. First, there is a lack of (qualified) staff both at the central and local levels. For example, in Uganda, at the central level, as of 2008, 54 percent of posts in the Education Standard Agency are still vacant almost a decade following its establishment (Oluka, 2010). As of 2009, in the Directorate of Education Standard at the Ministry of Education and its regional offices, 80 and 40 percent of posts respectively are still vacant (MoES, 2009). This situation is worsened by the expansion of schools recently. Consequently, the inspector-school ratio in Uganda and Cambodia currently stands at 1:90 and 1:125 respectively, which is far above the internationally recommended ratio of 1:40.

Second, there is a lack of transportation and budget, especially to access the hard-to-reach areas where conducting inspections could cost more than the budget allocated to the schools (Ssenkabirwa and Oluka, 2010; Oluka, 2010; MoEYS, 2006b). In Uganda, although budget funds are allocated to schools through local government, no budget is
allocated to the district education office's (DEO) management and supervision functions, except salary. Hedger et al. (2010) write, 'For many local governments the role of DEO has been that of a postman, receiving funds from central government and transferring them on to school' (p. 22). A personal conversation with an inspector indicates that he inspected schools only if there is a budget. When there was no budget he stayed at his office (personal conversation, May 1, 2009).

At first this appears to be a technical problem. However, the corruption and political interference in the recruitment process, which provide no incentives and hinder the government's efforts to establish an effective inspection and supervision system, tends to lower any sense of accountability and commitment by teachers and school directors to professionally perform their jobs.

In Uganda, for example, over 50 teachers petitioned the district council to investigate the conduct of the commission in their district. The teachers claimed that they acted as school directors in various schools for over 10 years. But when the District Service Commission (DSC) conducted interviews, teachers' testimony was never considered because they did not bribe officials. An independent committee investigation into the recruitment process at Bushenyi District Service Commission found that public servants each pay 50,000 Ugandan Shillings to the commissioner secretary before they are shortlisted for interviews (Aruho, 2009). In Cambodia, David Ayres (2000b, p. 182) argues that educational policies in post-UNTAC Cambodia were subjected to the whims of the nation's political leaders. Educational policies developed by MoEYS in consultation with international advisors and in congruence with international practices were implemented only when they did not conflict with immediate imperatives of those in control of the apparatuses of the state. Examples following this line of thinking can be found in other areas of education, including building more schools and classrooms, but not to the extent that people are punished for absenteeism or for not working professionally since this might affect their loyalty.

Given the similar challenges, why are rural teachers and school directors absent more often than their urban counterparts? This problem does not stem from hard living conditions in rural areas and different quality of inspections and supervision, but from
teachers' and school directors' inability to earn extra income in classrooms and schools by selling snacks and lesson notes, and by charging informal fees for private tutoring that poor rural pupils and parents are unable to afford. Therefore, rural teachers are likely to be absent more often in order to find additional income to supplement their low salaries or from lack of incentive to be at school and teaching. In contrast, urban teachers must be present to teach in order to earn extra income in the classroom and school. The discussion among Cambodian professionals reveals that urban teachers have to pay up to 30 percent of their earnings through private tutoring and informal pay by pupils to school directors in order to secure their jobs. This situation forces virtually all teachers to be involved in earning extra income in school. As a teacher claimed during a conversation, 'Not doing so means we cannot socialize with other teachers nor be promoted by the school director' (personal conversation, 6-7 October 2008). In Cambodia's urban schools, in order to try to catch up with pupils who are more financially secure, many poor pupils skip their breakfasts to save money to attend private classes and buy lesson notes. This is because teachers use these fees as 'blackmail'. Usually, examination questions are the same as what is taught in private classes and appears in sold lessons.

In Uganda, private tutoring, commonly referred to as 'coaching', is illegal. However, reports reveal that these coaching sessions called 'Term X' are widely practiced in urban areas as rich parents can afford it. One pupil said teachers who attended 'coaching' started school breaks at the same time, but resumed two weeks earlier than others for coaching lessons (Musasizi, 2009). Similar to Cambodia, in Uganda coaching is used as 'blackmail' in the sense that what is coached is a continuation of the official curriculum and will not be repeated when the normal term resumes. Students who miss the coaching miss part of the official curriculum. Further, in Uganda, communities and parents in urban areas have more power to monitor schools' and teachers' performances than their rural counterpart as they contribute significantly — voluntary or compulsory — to the welfare of teachers and school development programs through Parent Teacher Association fees, while rural poor communities
have no such power as they do not pay the fees.\(^{56}\) The result is that urban teachers and school directors perform their duties more regularly than their rural counterparts.

**Poor quality teaching**

Successful education reforms to improve the quality of education require the availability of (qualified) teachers and teaching materials such as textbooks and laboratory equipment. These are the two keys so successful education, as compared to other types of inputs (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007). In fact, the findings of this study and others indicate that the lack of these key inputs (a lack of qualified teachers and the availability of teaching materials) have negative effects on learning achievement in Cambodia and Uganda (Kemp, 2008; Policy and Operation Evaluation Department, 2008). However, why there is a lack of these inputs and how these inputs could be used, if they exist, to achieve desirable outcomes has not been well investigated. This section attempts to answer this question.

**Lack of (qualified) teachers:** From the available official data, at the national level, there seems to be no significant shortage of teachers in both countries.\(^{57}\) However, school visits in both countries revealed shortages of teachers as evidenced by high teacher-pupil ratios in the classroom, especially in Uganda. Further, there is an unequal distribution of teachers. In rural Uganda, a baseline survey indicates that the teacher-pupil ratio is as high as 1:104 (MoFPED, 2009b) compared to a national average of 1:57. During field visits in rural areas, in some cases the teacher-pupil ratio stands at nearly 1:200 (as seen in Picture 4.3 and 4.4). In rural Cambodia, the teacher-pupil ratio is reported to be 1:80 compared to a national average of 1:49.3 (Benveniste et al., 2008). The serious shortage of teachers in rural Uganda is due to its high

\(^{56}\) There are two types of public schools in Uganda. One is pure free education offered by the government for which officially no fee is charged, but schools receive capitation grants from the government to run daily school activities. Another is the semi-private school in which the government allows its public schools to charge fees if they do not apply for school capitation grants, but they still receive government support in terms of teacher payment and infrastructure development. Usually, the semi-private schools are located in urban areas that rich urban parents can afford, while free education is found in rural areas where poor rural parents are unable to afford fees.

\(^{57}\) In 2008, in Cambodia, the teacher-pupil ratio in primary schools was 1:49.3 and in Uganda 1:57, compared to their target policy, which is 1:50 and 1:55 respectively (EMIS, 2008/2009; UBOS, 2009b).
teacher attrition rate of 9 percent compared to a national average of 4 percent, while in Cambodia teachers’ rates of turnover are very low in both urban and rural schools (Fox and Liebental (Eds.), 2006; Mulkeen and Cheen (Eds.), 2008; Benveniste et al., 2008).

Picture 4.3 A classroom in Masindi district, Uganda

Source: Nannyonjo, 2007

Picture 4.4 A classroom in Jinja district, Uganda

The shortage of teachers, especially in rural areas, is caused by ineffective and inefficient teacher management that is caused by political interference and corruption, rather than a shortage of funds to recruit teachers. In Uganda, in the early 1990s, 20 percent of the total government budget for salaries was paid to non-existent ghost
teachers (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, 2008; Hallack and Poisson, 2007; Reinikka and Smith, 2004). Although there is no official report about ghost teachers in Cambodia, it is plausible that they exist given the overall high number of ghost civil servants in recent censuses and the fact that teachers constitute a majority of civil servants. A 1995, 2000-2001, and an unfinished 2010 census uncovered roughly 18,000, 9,000 and 2,000 ghost civil servants respectively (Sam and O'toole, 2010). The attempt to fight against ghost teachers is far from complete; teachers abandoning their duties and the repetition of teachers' names still exists (MoES, 2008b).\(^{58}\) A field visit in Uganda revealed that one teacher continued to collect the salary of his colleague who went to the United Kingdom four years earlier (personal conversation, 27 July - 2 August 2009).

Further, there is a high percentage of non-teaching staff compared to teaching staff in both countries. Despite reform attempts to reduce the percentage of non-teaching staff, in Cambodia, after 8 years of implementation, the proportion of non-teaching staff remains almost the same: 22 percent in 1999-2000 compared to 21.52 percent in 2007-2008 (EMIS, 1998-1999; 2007-2008). A possible reason for the difficulty in achieving higher levels of re-deployment of non-teaching staff into teaching roles is that MoEYS is unable to reduce a substantial proportion of non-teaching staff who are deputy directors appointed through patronage, not only at the school level but also at the district and provincial levels (Geeves and Bredenberg, 2004). Hirosato and Kitamura (2009a) write that CPP and FUNCINPEC 'rival each other visibly over assignments of personnel within ministry. This structure is replicated in the education administration and finance on the provincial and district levels, leading to an increased transaction cost on education administration and finance and greatly affecting the resource allocation within the education sector' (p. 84).

This high transaction cost in Cambodia did not produce any improvements in management and supervision. The attempt made by FUNCINPEC to place supporters in state positions (which was dominated by the CPP since the fall of the Khmer Rouge

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\(^{58}\) This is possible as those teachers are willing to give some part of or their entire salary to the school management in return for keeping their names on the payroll. Even though teachers are poorly paid in Cambodia and Uganda, their social status is still desirable for many people, especially in rural areas.
in 1979) not only tolerates corruption practices by their officials, but also recruits incompetent officials. Robert (2002) writes, 'In a fragile and vulnerable political system resistant to power-sharing, one side struggled to enter the arena of state management without having a reasonable capacity to absorb the responsibility attached to the inherent duties' (p. 526). In Uganda, the proportion of non-teaching staff even increased, especially since the mushrooming of new districts, a consequence of the attempt to build a political client base that is based on ethnic division. Further, in some districts there are two education offices; one is responsible for urban schools falling within municipality council offices of education, and the other is for rural schools under district offices of education that employ the same number of staff.

Moreover, while there is a shortage of teachers in rural areas, there is a small surplus of teachers in urban schools (Benveniste et al., 2008). The strategy to deploy teacher-surplus from urban schools to the needy schools in rural areas has met with limited success. Teaching posts in rural areas are not very attractive, despite the introduction of additional allowance for health, transportation, and a Prime Pedagogique for at least two reasons. First, the low salary makes it difficult for teachers to work in areas without support of an extended family, existing housing, or land for subsistence farming (Geeves and Bredenberg, 2004); second and more importantly, there is a lack of opportunities to earn extra income in rural schools compared to urban schools, as discussed earlier. In Uganda, in addition to this, the use of the mother-tongue language, especially in the lower primary schools, makes deployment very difficult from one surplus region to another, as Uganda consists of a variety of ethnic groups with different local dialects (Mulkeen and Cheen (Eds.), 2008).

The inability of the government to allocate teachers more equitably throughout the country affects teachers' productivity. In Cambodia, while urban teachers do not fulfill their required teaching hours, rural teachers teach more than the required teaching hours and receive overtime teaching allowances. Although this is positive, it is a manipulation of the system. Because of the wide acceptance that there is a shortage of

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59 In Cambodia, education staff is paid a basic salary, but once they begin teaching, they receive addition pay call Prime Pedagogique.
teachers in rural areas, school directors usually report overtime teaching in order to receive the allowance. For example, in 2007 one school alone received from the government about 1.5 billion riels, of which the expenditure on overtime teaching accounted for more than 50 percent. Later, it was discovered that there was no overtime teaching in that school (Kong, 2008).

Low quality education is not only due to the lack of teachers, but more importantly to a lack of qualified teachers. The majority of teachers have only a few years of formal education higher than the grade they are teaching. Worse still, even with appropriate formal education, teachers in general possess low competency. In Uganda, the majority of teachers, especially in rural areas, enter the teaching position as a last resort. Interviews and personal conversations with employees in the education sector indicate that many entered the teaching profession only when they failed to get into higher levels of education or other jobs. Most of them teach mathematics and English subjects at which they did not perform well when they were pupils (personal conversation, 7 May 2009; interview, 1 May 2009). Although, teaching positions in Cambodia are desirable and highly competitive as reflected in the large surplus of candidates taking examinations, the government fails to recruit highly qualified candidates due not only to the unattractiveness of salary but also to corruption during the examinations.

This is compounded by the low quality training at teacher training colleges. In Cambodia, a study by the World Bank (2005b) noted that current teacher education programs have limited relevance to classroom practices and student-teachers are inadequately prepared, a conclusion shared by student-teachers during a group discussion (group discussion, 30 August 2008). In Uganda, a former school director argued that teachers today are half-baked (interview, 2 August 2009). A study by Ward et al. (2006, p. 40) reveals that the curriculum at the Primary Teacher Training Center in 2005 had still not been adjusted and adapted to the new curriculum introduced in the early 2000s.

Further, teachers do not update their skills regularly because in-service training is not institutionalized. In Cambodia, despite the heavy concentration on in-service training
at the primary level, only 35 percent of teachers reported having received some form of training during the last four years, and this was mostly provided by NGOs or donors (Benveniste et al., 2008). In Uganda, in-service training is rarely organized. Even training to orient teachers on how to use new curriculum was widely considered by schools, teachers, and district education offices to have been inadequate. There also has been a lack of monitoring and follow-up on curriculum impacts and requirements (Byamugisha and Nishimura, 2008; Ward et al., 2006, p. 40). An interview with a school director indicates that it is not even compulsory that schools must send all their teachers for refreshment courses on how to teach new thematic curricula (interview, May 22, 2009). This is the vicious cycle of poor quality education.

In Uganda, Mukisa et al. (2009) argue that the unequal distribution of qualified teachers is a big challenge to improving the quality of rural education, as about half the rural teachers are unqualified and the percentage of teachers without training is high in rural areas. On the other hand, the majority of teachers with B.A. or B.S. degrees are employed in urban areas. This also holds true in Cambodia where teachers with experience of less than five years account for 52.23 and 25.27 percent of total number of teachers in remote and rural areas respectively, compared to only 13.85 - percent in urban areas (EMIS, 2007-08).

More and more qualified and experienced teachers find large urban schools to be good places for doing business to earn extra income. Anecdotal evidence shows that many teachers bribed officials and school directors so that they could be transferred to larger urban schools. This situation even forces teachers to be creative in generating more income through whatever means possible to recoup their expenses (personal conversation, 17 September 2008). In Uganda, in addition to bribery, the differences in teacher quality and experience between urban and rural schools are compounded by central officers' interference. Field visits reveal that qualified and experienced teachers are placed at (large) urban schools because these officers' children and relatives study in those schools and they want to ensure their children and relatives

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60 The price depends on location; it ranges from US$500 to 1500, and even up to 5000.
receive quality educations from qualified and experienced teachers (interview 29 May 2009; personal conversation, 19 September 2008). Consequently, rural areas are always filled with inexperienced and unqualified teachers.

**Lack of supplementary teaching and learning materials:** In Cambodia, World Bank et al. (2005, p. 9) argue that the level of recurrent spending, especially for operational non-salary costs at the school level have been insufficient to optimize capital investments such as school construction and teacher training, which negatively affects the quality of education. Consequently, education reform since 2000 to improve the quality of education includes the decentralization of the budget whereby schools are entitled to receive grants necessary for their operation through the 'Priority Action Program' recently renamed the 'Program Budget' (PAP/BP). In Uganda, School Capitation Grants were introduced in 1997 with similar objectives. Schools are expected to spend the grants on different items selected by the central government, as seen in Table 4.2.
Table 4.2 School grant expenditure by items in Cambodia and Uganda\textsuperscript{61}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items purchased</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Items purchased</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional materials</td>
<td>50 percent</td>
<td>Teaching materials</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for all subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricula, sports, arts</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
<td>Sports, arts, crafts and agriculture</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School maintenance</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
<td>Small repairs, and school and classroom decorations.</td>
<td>48 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>7 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank et al., 2005; Bategeka et al., 2004

There has been criticism that this centrally-set policy lacks flexibility as every part of the country and each school has its own unique problems. Therefore, a grant is unable to address an individual school's needs (Liz and Rosemary, 2005). But if this were so, despite millions of dollars having been spent, why are teaching materials — which schools must purchase in accordance with the guidelines, see Table 4.2 — still in short supply? For instance, from the available data, the ratio of textbooks to pupils in primary school is declining in all grades, despite the fact that the Ministry of Education in both countries declared a 1:1 pupil-textbook ratio policy. Further, despite policy requirements for each school to have a library and a laboratory, many schools still do not. Of the schools that have a library and a laboratory, most are too small and

\textsuperscript{61} In principle, grants are provided to schools according to enrollment numbers. In Uganda and Cambodia, the governments provide Ushs6,550 ($3.25) and 11,434 Riel ($3) per primary pupil, respectively. This system seems to create inequitable distribution of funds in that schools with large enrollments receive more funds than schools with small enrollments while they support the same basic administration. This system later was replaced by a threshold fund for schools to run basic administrations. Per annum, each school in Uganda receives Ush900,000 ($450) with additional Ush3,464 ($1.8) per pupil compared to Cambodia 500,000 riels ($250) with an additional 6,000 riels ($1.5) per pupil (Bray and Seng 2005; Bategeka, et al., 2004). In Uganda, recently, as a result of dropping the priority on primary education, grants were further reduced and budget allocations were no longer available to purchase textbooks.
lack adequate shelves, study space, relevant equipment, and reading materials, especially in rural areas.\(^6\)

**Why is there a lack of supplementary teaching and learning materials?**

The idea of taking implementation seriously is that 'Even if the state elites make a correct diagnosis of the kind of intervention that is indicated and has the political will and command over material resources necessary to undertake the action, they may not be able to carry out, simply because the required bureaucratic machinery cannot be created in time' (Rueschemeyer and Evans, 1993, p. 51). This section will examine this issue.

**The delay of funds and their leakage:** Studies on the effectiveness of grants provided to schools to improve the quality of education in Cambodia and Uganda reveal that there is a delay of fund release — as much as 90 days and in some extreme cases up to a year — which makes it difficult for school management to execute their plans effectively. Studies also note that the delay of funds is due to the insufficient technical capacity at the sub-national level to cope with a new budgetary system (Ward et al., 2006; World Bank, 2005c; UNDP, 2007, p. 22). Despite recent reforms aimed at simplifying the procedures, the situation remains the same. School visits during fieldwork indicate that the release of grant money is still delayed between 3-6 months. In Uganda, a school director complains 'How can we keep pupils in school if we do not have money?' (Ahimbisibwe, 2009). In Uganda, some people claim that the delay is due to a lack of funds because educational expansion was motivated by political interests that never take into account the financial constraints. However, there is a report that more than Ush2.5 billion ($1.25 million) in funds for the education sector was overdrawn from the Bank of Uganda account under vague circumstances (Sunday Monitor, 2010).

\(^6\) It is also important to note that although some schools receive book donations from outsiders, the majority of these extra reading materials are not helpful for pupils. Fieldwork in both countries reveals that these books are either irrelevant or outdated. Cambodia and Uganda are places where outdated and irrelevant books are given in the name of donation.
Because of non-transparent financial transactions, Antonowicz et al. (2010) argue that the delay in distributing funds is not a matter of administrative inefficiency or lack of funds, rather it is an issue of corruption. This is reflected in the fact that schools never receive the total amount they are entitled to. In Cambodia, 64 percent of school directors reported having paid a facilitation fee (informal cash payment) from the officially allocated funds to the district education officials in return for the disbursement of funds, and this practice reaches the central level (World Bank, 2005c).

In Uganda, one study found that only two percent of the money released by the Ministry of Finance for non-salary primary school expenditures actually reached the schools in 1991, and even in 1995 the ratio was as low as 20 percent (Reinikka, 2001; Reinikka and Smith, 2004). In the late 1990s, a media campaign against corruption was introduced; since then there was a report that the percentage of funds reaching schools increased steadily, over 90 percent in 2006 (Hallack and Poisson, 2007). However, the level of leakage has increased recently. School management staff in two districts during field visits reported that funds reached their schools only between 50-70 percent of the time (interview, 1 May 2009; 29 May 2009). This is because the information posting and monitoring campaign has waned recently. A study by Paul Bubbaral (2007) claims that when viewed as a monetary amount rather than a percentage of entitlements, corruption did not fall as dramatically between 1995-2001. Using his calculations, the nominal amount of funds that leaked fell by less than a spectacular 12 percent over 6 years.

The availability of funds and their use: Despite the continuation in fund leakage, recent public expenditure tracking surveys in both countries found that the levels and amounts of funds reaching schools are improving. The question then is why is the availability of teaching materials declining? As a teacher claimed,

In my school, all teachers including myself never follow the rules that we have learned in the Teacher Training Center due to a lack of teaching materials. I have taught here for three years, but I have never been given any teaching materials, so my teaching is not effective. I have argued with the inspector who asked me why I do not use the teaching materials. I asked him how can I have those materials if the school
does not provide them to me. So this is a matter of school management which is beyond my responsibility. (interview 8 September 2008)

These claims were shared in many studies that indicate the issue of management at the school level is crucial for the success of educational reform, especially in quality improvement. To some extent, schools are self-contained systems, and different schools may respond to a given set of inputs in different ways (Nannyonjo, 2007; Adams, 2002). In their study, Hanushek and Kimbo (2000) raise the questions that it is not only a problem of how much funding a school has in order to see its impact on the quality of education, but what are the funds being spent on, and how efficiently and effectively are the funds used?

This study found that grants are regularly diverted from their intended uses. In Uganda, schools diverted funds intended for purchase of scholastic materials to administrative work, especially for transportation (Bategeka et al., 2004, p. 94). In Cambodia, a conversation with a teacher responsible for compiling school receipts, indicated that about 40 percent of school budget received from the government is spent on the school director traveling to clarify the incorrectness of the receipts and documents from district and provincial departments of education. He further points out that this travel is necessary only for those schools unwilling to pay kickbacks to district and provincial officers (personal conversation, 2 December 2008.). And what the remaining funds are used for remains a secret. In Uganda, a report stated that school directors who enjoy high status in communities continued to misappropriate UPE funds, often in collaboration with district officials (Ward et al., 2006, p. 108).

This is supported by the fact that only a small number of schools fully complied with fund accounting requirements, including the use of vouchers, availability of a cash book, utilization of effective methods for bookkeeping and regular reports on the uses of funds (Ward et al., 2006; World Bank et al., 2005; Antonowicz et al., 2010).

However, school management and district and provincial officers are not operating in a vacuum, especially in public schools in Cambodia and Uganda where funds are coming from the central government. In fact, technical staff in the education sector in Uganda considered good leadership and effective supervision mechanisms essential to
effective accountability (Mugumya et al., 2008). However, as presented earlier, the inspections and supervision by the central government are weak. Even when inspections were carried out, they were just symbolic. In Cambodia, the World Bank (2005b, p. xi) argues that monitoring activities have a limited effect because most school inspections do not follow standard procedures and, more importantly, do not result in any official report being issued. Moreover, inspections are carried out by MoEYS officials, thus external oversight is not a regular feature of the system.

In this neopatrimonial arrangement, the patrons protect their clients through ceremonial technical performances. This works against the ideal of effective organization. Meyer and Rowan (1977) write, 'Ideally, organizations built around efficiency attempt to maintain close alignments between structures and activities. Conformity is enforced through inspection, output quality is continuously monitored, the efficiency units are evaluated, and various goals are unified and coordinated' (pp. 356-357). But this oversight is absent in both countries. For example, in Uganda a school director in the Jinja district expressed disappointment with the inspection process. According to her, inspection does not help much because the inspectors do not have the capacity to diagnose the illness. According to the process, schools are supposed to receive school improvement plans, but her school has never received a plan after any inspections (interview, 30 July 2009).

Often inspections are an opportunity for officials at higher levels to extract money from schools, rather than look for ways to improve schools' performances. Interviews and personal conversations with school directors in both countries reveal that only large schools are inspected favorably, not because the inspection aims to improve the situation, but because there is a lot of money to be shared. In Cambodia, a school director pointed out that,

Before, we asked pupils and parents to contribute to purchasing teaching materials. Because of their contributions, we have to be accountable. Now we get money from the Ministry of Education, and we turn our accountability away from pupils and parents towards the Ministry, but the Ministry does not need our accountability; if we
are accountable in using money, they will get nothing (personal conversation 17 September 2008; personal conversation several occasions).

It is important to note that the demand for contributions to political party campaigns and development projects from high-ranking officers at the central and ruling-elites levels force officials to find ways to extract money by whatever means possible. In this sense, in Cambodia and Uganda corruption in the education sectors in general and in schools in particular is a result of broader political systems, especially in light of their political competition based on patronage and vote buying rather than on performance. This is evidenced by the fact that before the elections politicians made promises or gave gifts to people.

**Lack of knowledge on how funds should be used:** Finally, the lack of supplementary teaching and learning materials also result from the misuse of funds; scarce resources are spent on what is unnecessary. In Cambodia, a lot of resources are unwisely used, such as building huge fences and expensive gates. The situation became extreme when recently such misuse of funds was regarded as the only standard for a school management competition. Some schools attempted to build fences and gates before having proper classrooms, teaching and learning materials, libraries, laboratories, or toilets. Pictures 4.5 and 4.6 illustrate the Cambodian reality.

Picture 4.5 An incomplete school in Pursat province, Cambodia
Picture 4.5 is an incomplete school with only three classrooms, but has five classes and no library, laboratory, or toilets, and a shortage of teaching materials. Picture 4.6 is another school with a huge fence and expensive gate. When asked what aspect of her school she would like to develop, the school director (Picture 4.5) listed a fence as one of her priority projects (personal conversation during a school visit, 2 February 2009). This is because, on the one hand, it is a visible sign of school improvement, and, on the other hand, school directors lack technical know-how to improve the quality of education because of their own low level of formal education, as discussed earlier. In Uganda, studies underscore the need for channeling resources to what will improve pupils' learning opportunities (Kasirye, 2009, pp. 2-3; Nannyonjo, 2007). It is important to note that despite the lack of teaching materials and necessary furniture in primary schools, the government continued to budget for 65 percent of the total boarding expenses in secondary schools (Kajubi, 1991). Further, in Uganda secondary schools are underutilized. Pupil-classroom ratios have declined from 49:1 in 2005 to 36:1 in 2008, while there is a shortage of classrooms in primary schools, as presented above (UBOS, 2009b). This signifies that the Ugandan education system neglects primary schools, which are the foundation of the entire education system.

63 When one travels throughout Cambodia, one often sees this type of school that lacks the necessary materials for effective teaching.
Other types of misuse of funds can be found in the national policy on ICT in education. For example, one passage in the policy reads, 'The challenge for Uganda is to step up her efforts in building information and communication technologies, especially in the rural areas ... It is only when every village has access to communication technologies that the local populace will be enthusiastic to participate, and eventually gain a competitive edge in the job world' (The New Vision, 2009). Consequently, in Uganda as well as in Cambodia, much of the school budgets is earmarked to buy expensive equipment such as computers, TVs, DVD players, and LCD projectors, and to organize training workshops on how to use this equipment. Interestingly, fieldwork notes that most schools in both countries have no electricity to use this equipment. Further, this ICT knowledge has no practical application in rural areas. Moreover, this programme does not address schools' needs, such as housing for teachers and teaching materials.

In Uganda, a report by MoFPED (1999) reveals that communities are aware of the lack of accountability and transparency in school administration, particularly regarding budgets. But they do not have the power to voice their concerns because of the lack of checks and balances of power between schools and parents. Although Ugandan school management committees were introduced, they are predominantly dominated by appointed members from central and local governments in which parents play a marginal role. Out of its nine members, only two are appointed by parents, three by the central government through the Ministry of Education, and four by the district council's education committee through a process where members are proposed by school directors who, in turn, are mostly local elites. In Cambodia, although community participation is strong, Pellini (2007) and Shoraku (2008) found that this participation is only in the form of contributions, not in the form of monitoring and supervising school management. Cambodian School Support Committees, which consist of 10 members, generally do not include parents. Usually, a committee consists of a commune chief, village heads, other elders in the community, and a school director who usually holds a position of committee leadership such as secretary and accountant. Therefore, the use of grant funds depends largely on the school management, especially school directors. Good school directors,
whether in rural or urban settings, use grants to deliver better quality educations, in contrast to those who want only to enrich themselves.

**IV.4 Cambodia has a slightly better quality of education than Uganda**

Despite many similar weaknesses found within the education systems in both countries, Cambodia's quality of education appears to be slightly improved, while Uganda's has stagnated, as presented above. Why is Cambodia able to perform slightly better than Uganda?

**IV.4.1 Cambodia uses its instruction hours relatively more effectively than Uganda**

Although both countries experience a significant loss of instruction hours, as presented earlier, the loss in Cambodia is lower, ranging between 13 and 20.13 percent, compared to about 33.30 percent in Uganda (McLaughlin and Sprechman, 1999; MoEYS, 2008c; Ward et al., 2006; Musinguzi, 2010). The lower loss of instruction hours in Cambodia than in Uganda is partly due to its lower teacher absenteeism. In Cambodia, the estimated rate of primary teacher absenteeism is 7.1 percent, which is relatively lower than in Uganda, at 30 percent (Ward et al., 2006, p. 114; Benveniste et al., 2008). Other studies in Uganda suggest that teacher absenteeism might be even higher because only about 20 percent of primary teachers were actually found to be in the classroom (MoFPED, 2007; Vaughau and Izama, 2009; Papique, 2010).

Why is the level of teacher absenteeism lower in Cambodia than in Uganda? Despite similar challenges, as presented above, Uganda faces more challenges than Cambodia. First, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Uganda also hit the country's community of educators, leaving 38 percent of its serving teaches infected by HIV/AIDS (Muhanga, 2005). Second, the lack of teacher accommodations in Uganda is more severe than in Cambodia. This is due partly to a different process in recruitment and placement of student-teachers. In Cambodia, after training, student-teachers are automatically posted by the Ministry of Education through their training colleges. The policy priority is that teachers are posted at schools in or near their hometown villages (Benveniste et al. 2008). Such placement patterns solve the problem of
accommodations as they can stay with their families and relatives. In contrast, in Uganda, teachers are recruited from anywhere through public announcements, and they expect accommodations from the government through the schools where they teach. Because of budget constraints, shortages of accommodations for teachers remain largely unsolved; It has been reported that 71 percent of teachers lack accommodations (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, 2008).

Finally, there seems to be slight differences in teachers' motivations and commitments to teach in Cambodia and Uganda, which leads to different degrees of teacher absenteeism. In Cambodia, although teachers complain a great deal about the working environment and salary, a study found the most common reasons given by teachers for wanting to go into teaching are a strong interest in the job, a desire to help the country by improving education, and an enjoyment of working with children. As a result, Cambodian teachers consider the achievement of learners as their main motivation; as one teacher claims, 'The proudest time for me was when one of my pupils got the top award for physics in the whole country and received an award from [His Excellency] Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister' (Nock and Bishop (Eds.), 2008, p. 13). Another study concludes that teachers in Cambodia are largely a dedicated cadre that actively pursues education as a life career, which is reflected in a low turnover rate. An overwhelming majority of teachers (96 percent) reported that teaching was their top choice as a profession (Benveniste et al., 2008).

In contrast, the majority of Ugandan teachers enter the teaching position as a last resort and the rate of turnover is slightly higher compared to Cambodia, as discussed earlier. Consequently, they put their own comfort before pupil achievement. Only a small percentage of teachers (1.9 percent) consider learners' achievements to be a source of motivation. Others seem to recognize and appreciate the more tangible type of motivation, such as money and land (UNEB, 1999). A school annual meeting also reported that the motivation of staff increases because of the general increase in Parent Teacher Association allowances (Mbarara Municipal School, 2008).

This is also reflected in the fact that when critically assessing teacher salaries, the most important part of teacher welfare, reveals that Ugandan teacher salaries are not
only higher than Cambodia's in absolute terms, but the gap between salary and living cost is also smaller.\textsuperscript{64} Further, interviews with school management during field visits in Uganda reveal that teachers receive substantial additional support in cash from schools, such as a salary supplement, transportation, food, electricity, and water.\textsuperscript{65} This means that, relatively, the gap between living cost and salary is resolved. Furthermore, school visits during the fieldwork revealed that in some cases, despite the availability of accommodations at school, teachers still preferred to stay at the district town. Also, a local newspaper reported that, 'A group of angry parents … hold out teachers of Kinotima Primary School in Paicho Sub-county, Gulu district to task to explain why they continually skip lessons … The parents said they endeavoured to build huts for the teachers close to school, but some teachers still choose to commute from Gulu town about 30 kilometers from away' (Aber, 2006).

\textbf{IV.4.2 Cambodia has a slightly better quality teaching than Uganda}

The slightly better quality education in Cambodia than Uganda is also due to its slightly better quality teaching. Classroom observations in both countries reveal that Cambodian teachers devoted less time to dictation and spent more time on question-answers and explanations, compared to their Ugandan counterparts. In Cambodia, there is a report that of the 27 percent of teachers using teaching aid materials and textbooks in the classroom, about half of them had lesson plans readily available on the day of the unannounced classroom visits (MoEYS, 2006b). This situation is much better compared to Uganda. Although it is not a national survey, classroom observations during field visits in Uganda showed that more than 70 percent of a session was devoted to dictation, even in grade 12, with limited teaching materials and, in most cases, no teaching materials at all. A study by Harriet Nannyonjo (2007, p. 29) revealed that teachers hardly used textbooks during their teaching. Even teachers who brought textbooks to the class did not refer to them. The most common use of textbooks by teachers was to extract and copy work on the blackboard for pupils. In those observed classes made by the author, teachers did not have lesson

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} An interview with teachers about their necessary expenditures reveals that the gap between monthly salaries and living costs in Uganda is US$9 compared to US$30 in Cambodia.
\item \textsuperscript{65} This additional support comes from the Teacher Parent Association and other school income such as school fees (interview, 30 April 30 2009; 29 May 2009; 11 June 2009).
\end{itemize}
plans, an observation shared by a study that found that teachers are negligent when it comes to preparing work schemes (Muhumuza, 2004).

The slightly better quality teaching in Cambodia than Uganda results from their different education systems. The centralized plan system of education in Cambodia contributes to slightly better qualified teachers and more availability of teaching materials, compared to the decentralized system of education in Uganda.

**Cambodia has slightly more qualified teachers than Uganda**

While only 68 percent of the Cambodian teaching staff in primary schools has lower secondary education as their formal qualification, in Uganda, this figure is 85.59 percent. Overall, Cambodian teachers are more prepared to teach than their Ugandan counterparts, as seen in the lower percentage of teachers without pedagogical training. In Cambodia, in 2008 only 1.3 percent of the teaching staff were without pedagogical training, compared to 11 percent in Uganda in 2006 (EMIS, 2007-08; UBOS, 2009b). By 2008, 25 percent of primary teachers in Uganda did not meet the professional requirements (Vaughan and Izama, 2009). This is due to two factors; first is the different nature of education reforms, and second is the different teacher recruitment processes in both countries.

In both countries, the unqualified and untrained teachers who were recruited in the 1980s underwent a massive in-service training in the early 1990s, thus the percentage of teachers without pedagogical training was reduced significantly by the late 1990s. The difference in percentage of unqualified and untrained teachers in both countries began to emerge in the late 1990s when the reform to expand education coverage was implemented. In Cambodia, the reform to expand educational coverage was gradual and started with a relatively high enrollment amidst a decline in the population growth rate. Such a pattern of reform did not lead to a rushed expansion of teacher recruitment. Consequently, the remaining unqualified teachers who retired were replaced by young teachers who went through a gradual development at teacher training colleges since the late 1990s. This also resulted from a centrally planned education system. In Cambodia, teachers are not recruited by local governments but by the central government, as planned through the teacher training centers. The
number of student-teachers is selected according to government public service reforms, which sets quotas for each ministry, and thereafter student-teachers are automatically posted after their training. In this sense, there is no waste of resources, and schools are certain to be assigned teachers who underwent proper pedagogical training.

In contrast, in Uganda the sudden introduction of UPE in 1997 led to a huge increase in enrollment that immediately required a large number of teachers. This was compounded by the high population growth that also demanded more teachers. Consequently, many unqualified and untrained teachers were recruited because the reform was not strategically planned. The Ugandan central government neither plans nor recruits student-teachers. The teacher training colleges admit student-teachers according to their capacity and their only role is training, not job placement after graduation, as is the case in Cambodia. Primary school teacher recruitment in Uganda is decentralized. Local governments publicly announce the vacant posts and recruit people from every corner of the country. In this sense, there is no formal cooperation between teacher-recruiters and teacher-providers, both in terms of quantity and quality. This is not only ineffective but also inefficient. For example, there were 500 teaching posts advertised for Kitgum district, but only 210 applications were submitted, and only 180 were deemed suitable (Mukisa et al., 2009).

In other cases, the failure to improve the untrained teachers in Uganda is not only a result of a lack of candidates, but also a failure to enforce compliance to policies and guidelines, a consequence of corruption during the recruitment process, as discussed earlier. Local government recruits unqualified teachers and even teachers with fake diplomas. For example, in 2009 in just one district out of the 1,780 teachers, only 1,205 had valid documents. The report reveals that over 600 teachers held forged academic documents and appointment letters (Manafwa, 2009). Further, rather than compromise this situation in order to solve the problem of the shortage of teachers, especially in rural areas, Uganda scrutinized teachers’ qualifications, which resulted in expelling a number of teachers with forged academic documents. This made the situation worse. For instance, in 2005 the Ministry of Public Service expunged 586 teachers in the Arua district from the payroll for lack of academic qualifications.
However, there was no contingency plan to fill the vacancies, so the school director had to borrow teachers from other schools (The New Vision, 2005).

Cambodia has slightly more teaching and learning materials than Uganda
As discussed in Chapter III, Cambodia was able to invest more in its physical infrastructure than Uganda. Consequently, in Cambodia between 1998-99 and 2007-08, classrooms without roofs, blackboards, and walls were reduced from 15 to 11.66 percent (EMIS, 1998-99; 2007-08). While in Uganda, the physical infrastructure is deteriorating. Before the UPE, 10 percent of rural schools and 70 percent of urban schools had enough chairs, but after UPE none of the rural schools did and only 31 percent of urban schools had sufficient chairs (UNEB, 2003). Overall, 62.7 percent of respondents said that the school facilities were inadequate (UBOS and MoPS, 2009, p. 34). Consequently, the most common scene in Ugandan schools, especially in rural areas, is more than 100 pupils packed into one classroom and sitting on floors, as seen in pictures 4.3 and 4.4. An empirical study in Uganda finds out that an increasing number of pupils shared one desk, and not having a desk at all affects pupils’ performances. Clearly, such an environment, the study concludes, is not conducive to learning and leads to time wasted as pupils try to find a comfortable position (Nannyonjo, 2007).

Further, Cambodia has better teaching and learning materials, such as textbooks. In Cambodia, in 2000-2001, immediately after the reform, the pupil-textbook ratio was 1:1; however, by 2005-06 the ratio declined to 1.25:1 (MOEYS, 2007). The shortage of textbooks in Uganda is more severe. Immediately after the reform, in 1999, the pupil-textbook ratio was 6:1 and improved to 3:1 by 2003 (UNDP, 2003), but recently the situation began deteriorating. A study reported that the pupil-textbook ratio, even in the core subjects of mathematics and English, is rarely better than 5:1 and is frequently 10:1, and in some cases 20:1 or even worse (Ward et al., 2006).

66 Interestingly, not only does Cambodia have a better pupil-textbook ratio than Uganda, Cambodian pupils benefit from the availability of textbooks, while Ugandan counterparts do not. In Cambodia, as far as textbooks are concerned, a policy stipulates that textbooks must be accessible to pupils. As a result, they are allowed to borrow the books to use for the whole school year and return them at the end of the school year. In Uganda, there is no such policy. School visits during the fieldwork revealed that
The increased availability of textbooks in Cambodia is due to its central distribution system. Textbooks are distributed to schools through their provincial departments and district offices on the basis of reported needs. The borrowed textbooks are required to be returned and are subsequently redistributed to pupils. The issues in Cambodia are how to maintain and care for the distributed textbooks. In contrast, in Uganda textbooks are purchased by schools through grants provided by the central government. However, as discussed earlier, budgets did not reach intended targets because the money was diverted to other uses. A World Bank study (2008a) found that none of the schools surveyed in Uganda had allocated textbook budgets sufficient to reach even the minimum level of textbook requirements. Recently, the plan to improve the quality of primary education in its second ESIP 2004-2015 was changed in the middle of implementation when the policy priority on primary education was replaced by a focus on secondary and higher education, as discussed in Chapter II; consequently, there was a decrease of capitation grants from Ush6000 in 1998 to 3000 in 2008, and the textbook budget was no longer available as it had been in the previous few years (Hedger et al., 2010).

**IV.5 Concluding remarks**

Until recently, quality education in Cambodia and Uganda as measured in terms of pupil proficiency in mathematics and literacy was not only low, but also unequal because their urban schools perform better than their rural counterparts. Some people argue that there is a trade-off between quality improvements and quantity expansions, especially in poor developing countries where resources and efforts are mobilized to expand access to education (Throsby and Gannicott, 1990; Mingat and Tan 1986). However, as demonstrated throughout this chapter, low quality education in Cambodia and Uganda is hardly a matter of inadequate resources, but is the result of inefficient and ineffective uses of resources because of poor management, supervision, and inspection, especially from the central levels.

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none of the schools allowed pupils to borrow the books, even for use in the classroom. Pupils could borrow books only in the library. Unfortunately, library operating hours overlapped with class hours, restricting pupils’ access to textbooks.
The neopatrimonial politics that manifested in the forms of corruption and political interest to attract and retain loyalty from teachers, schools directors, and civil servants in general do not provide any incentive for the central government to establish an effective management, supervision, and inspection system. This situation led to significant loss of instruction hours because of absenteeism among teachers and school directors and poor quality of teaching because of the lack of (qualified) teachers and teaching materials. The fact that urban pupils perform better than their rural counterparts is hardly a matter of better management, supervision and inspection, but teachers and school directors respond to the incentive provided by urban parents through school fees and informal fees such as selling lesson notes and private tutoring.

The fact that there is no trade-off between quantity expansion and quality improvement is reflected in the improved quality of education in Cambodia, albeit slowly. The problem is how to design strategies to effectively and efficiently use the available resources. This comparative case study between Cambodia and Uganda reveals that where neopatrimonial politics are embedded with a centralized mode of governance, resources can be used relatively effectively and efficiently compared to when politics are embedded with the decentralized mode of governance. This is reflected in Cambodia's relatively efficient and effective use of the instruction hours and relatively better quality teaching that led to a relatively better quality education, compared to Uganda's.

The centralized and planned system of teacher recruitment and placement in Cambodia allows it to solve teachers’ accommodation problems, which led to lower teacher absenteeism and guaranteed teacher qualifications, which has led to better quality teaching, while the decentralized and unplanned system of teacher recruitment in Uganda has led to higher teacher absenteeism because the government was unable to provide sufficient accommodations for teachers, and a lack of teaching qualifications because corruption in the recruitment process significantly impacts the quality of teaching.
The centralized system of textbook distribution in Cambodia also led to more availability of textbooks at the school level compared to the decentralized system of budget allocation to schools to purchase textbooks of their own. Because of corruption and other factors, textbooks were not purchased by schools, which negatively impacted the quality of learning. It is important to note that the better quality of education in Cambodia than in Uganda is also a result of different teacher motivation and commitment in both countries. While Cambodian teachers seem to put the achievement of pupils as their main motivation to teach, Ugandan teachers seem to put their own comfort above pupil achievement.