



# New Generation Schools

## Year 9 Implementation

### Mid-Year Report

January – June 2024



Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

*List of Abbreviations*

*List of Tables and Figures*

*Quick Program Facts*

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Past & Future Trends in NGS Reforms	8
2.2 General Overview of Operations during the Reporting Period	10
<b>3. KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS &amp; ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD ..</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>System-wide Activities</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Update on Programming Scope	13
3.2 Entrance Examination Results for 2024	13
3.3 Updated Accreditation Results for 2024	14
3.4 Capacity-Building Events during the Reporting Period	15
3.5 Update on NGS Publications	16
3.6 Parental Financing Developments and Support for Poor Students	17
3.7 School Financial System Re-organization Update	18
3.8 Rationalization of the School Investment Planning Process Update	18
3.9 Progress on NGS Building Renovations for 2024	19
3.10 Exposure Visit to Thailand	22
3.11 New Collaborations, Partnerships, & Networking	23
3.12 Upgrading Library Management	24
3.13 Leadership Training with the CHOICE Center	25
3.14 Project Work Fairs in Planning	26
3.15 National NGS Oversight Board Meeting	27
3.16 Collaboration with UNICEF on Local Life Skills Education	27
3.17 Artificial Intelligence in Education Initiative	28
<b>NGS Secondary School Level</b>	<b>29</b>
3.18 Commencement of NGS Expansion in Siem Reap and Prey Veng	29
3.19 Gaming Technology Development Skills Accelerator Initiative Update	29
3.20 PISA Boost Initiative	30
3.21 Student Authored Books in Libraries Update	31
3.22 MoU Agreements with Universities & Private Sector Update	32
3.23 NGS Exhibition on Advanced Teaching Methodologies	33
<b>NGS Primary School Level</b>	<b>34</b>
3.24 General Overview of New Generation Primary School Operations	34
3.25 Participation in School Competitions	34
3.26 Sharing the Lessons of Full-day Programming in NGS	35
3.27 School Clinics Established in All New Generation Primary Schools	35
3.28 Achieving Accredited NGS Status	36
<b>New Generation Pedagogical Research Center</b>	<b>37</b>
3.29 Planning for New Mentor Intake in 2024	37
3.30 Implementation of the Face-to-Face Practicum in 2024	37
3.31 Development of a Prakas to Give Official Recognition of Mentors within the Education System	37
3.32 Development of a Pedagogical Magazine for Circulation to Schools	38

3.33 Research Activities Organized by NGPRC	38
<b>4. CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD .....</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1 Declines in Sustained School Income	39
4.2 Major Budget Constraints Have Emerged as a Result of Program Expansion	39
4.3 Collapse in the Ability of NGPRC to Post Mentors to NGS Sites	40
4.4 Poor General Understanding of the Difference between Mentor & Inspector	41
4.5 Continuing Battles with Anti-reform Teachers at Selected Schools	41
4.6 Teacher Shortages Resulting from Suspension of NIE/RTTC Intakes	42
4.7 Maintaining the Integrity of the NGS System	42
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Annex 1: Breakdown of Investment in Infrastructure &amp; Furniture at New NGS Sites</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Annex 2: National Oversight Board Meeting Agenda</b>	<b>46</b>

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFD	Agence Francaise de Development
AI/AR	Artificial Intelligence/Augmented Reality
BSD	Build Something Different
CAM	Cambodia Association of Mentors
CPE	Cambridge Partnership for Education
CDDE	Center for Digital and Distance Education
CFS	Child Friendly School
CICME	Cambodia’s International Conference on Mentoring Educators
CIES	Comparative International Education Society
CNI	Consonant Name Identification
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CTC	Community Tech Center
CWPM	Correct Words Per Minute
DCD	Department of Curriculum Development
DViTSA	Digital Visualization Technology Skills Accelerator
E2STEM	English E-Learning Science Technology Engineering Mathematics
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FFF	Franks Family Foundation
FWR	Familiar Word Reading
GSED	General Secondary Education Department
HS	High School
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KAPE	Kampuchea Action to Promote Education
LED	Lichtenstein Economic Development
LLSE	Local Life Skills Education
LNI	Letter Name Identification
M.Ed	Master of Education
MoEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport
MoTP	Ministry of Telecommunications and Posts
NGPRC	New Generation Pedagogical Research Center
NGPS	New Generation Preschool
NGS	New Generation School
NIE	National Institute of Education
ORF	Oral Reading Fluency
PCR	Pupil Classroom Ratio
PED	Primary Education Department
PS	Primary School
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SBM	School-based Management
SRS	Secondary Resource School
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
TTO	Thontean Obrom
USE-SDP	Upper Secondary Education – Sector Development Program

VCESS      Vientiane City Education & Social Services Office  
VNI         Vowel Name Identification  
WPM         Words Per Minute

## **LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES**

- Table 2.1:** Investment in New Generation Schools at All Levels, 2015-24
- Table 3.1:** Enrollment, Investment Sources, & Historical Background across all New Generation Schools (2024)
- Table 3.2:** Test Results among Students Applying for Entry to New Generation Schools, 2024
- Table 3.3:** Summary of Accreditation Results in 2024 (Semester 1)
- Table 3.4:** Summary of Capacity Building Workshops and Events (Jan-June 2024)
- Table 3.5:** Summary of Payment Basis & Revenues from Parents (End of 2023 to be used in 2024)
- Table 3.6:** School Operating Costs and Projected Income at the End of 2023 (for Use in 2024)
- Table 3.7:** Summary of On-going Renovations in Infrastructure in 2023
- Table 3.8:** Participation in Exposure Visits to Thailand, 2024
- Table 3.9:** Planning for Student Project Work
- Table 3.10:** Overview of LLSE Test Results by School Type Mean Score across All Skill Tests
- Table 3.11:** PISA Results in Cambodia 2017, 2022
- Table 3.12:** Printed Books Authored by Students
- Table 3.13:** Number of Universities That Have Signed MoUs with New Generation Schools
- Table 3.14:** Change in School Statistics, 2023 to 2024
- 
- Figure 1.1:** Policy Typology of School Development Models
- Figure 3.1:** Key Principles Guiding AI in Education Integration

## QUICK PROGRAM FACTS

Timeframe, Location, & Budget (All Sources)	
Start Date	January 2016
End Date	Open ended
Target Provinces	7 (Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Kandal, Kampong Speu, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Siem Reap)
Budget for Year 1 (2016)	• \$1,218,000 (Secondary)
Budget for Year 2 (2017)	• \$1,520,000 (Secondary) + \$40,000 (Primary) = \$1,560,000
Budget for Year 3 (2018)	• \$1,576,000 (Secondary) + \$296,000 (Primary) = \$1,872,000
Budget for Year 4 (2019)	• \$1,494,000 (Secondary) + \$250,000 (Primary) + \$163,000 (Tertiary) = \$1,907,000
Budget for Year 5 (2020)	• \$1,494,000 (Secondary) + \$250,000 (Primary) + \$163,000 (Tertiary) = \$1,907,000
Budget for Year 6 (2021)	• \$1,494,000 (Secondary) + \$250,000 (Primary) + \$163,000 (Tertiary) = \$1,907,000
Budget for Year 7 (2022)	• \$1,417,000 (Secondary) + \$263,000 (Primary) + \$163,000 (Tertiary) = \$1,843,000
Budget for Year 8: (2023)	• \$1,417,000 (Secondary) + \$251,000 (Primary) + \$170,000 (Tertiary) = \$1,838,000
Budget for Year 9: (2024)	• \$1,417,000 (Secondary) + \$251,000 (Primary) + \$170,000 (Tertiary) = \$1,838,000 plus \$172,000 in special support funds = \$2,010,000
Unit Costs (Primary) (2024)	\$102 per student
Unit Costs (Secondary) (2024)	\$179 per student
Beneficiaries	
<b>Students Supported</b>	<b>10,364</b>
<i>Primary Level</i>	Boys: 1,301; Girls:1,143; Total: <b>2,444</b>
<i>Secondary Level</i>	Boys: 3,714; Girls: 4,206; Total: <b>7,920</b>
<i>Tertiary Level</i>	31
<b>Teachers Supported</b>	<b>525</b>
<i>Primary Level</i>	84
<i>Secondary Level</i>	441
<i>Tertiary Level</i>	5
<b>Other Staff Supported</b>	<b>163</b>
School Administrators Supported	86
Librarians Supported	21
Counselors Supported	7
School Nurses Supported	9
Mentors Supported	40
<b>Schools Supported</b>	<b>13</b>
Primary Schools Assisted	4
Secondary Schools Assisted	9
<b>Classes Supported</b>	<b>301</b>
<i>Primary Level</i>	74
<i>Secondary Level</i>	227
Efficiency Indicators	
<b>PTR Level</b>	
<i>Primary Level</i>	29:1
<i>Secondary Level</i>	18:1
<b>PCR Level</b>	
<i>Primary Level</i>	33:1
<i>Secondary Level</i>	35:1
<b>Gender Parity Index (Enrollment)</b>	
<i>Primary Level</i>	0.88
<i>Secondary Level</i>	1.13
<b>Secondary School Dropout</b>	1.3% (2023)





## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**General Overview:** New Generation School reforms have now been in effect for nine years. The most significant development this year has been a decision to expand the NGS System into two new schools each in different provinces (i.e., Prey Veng and Siem Reap). About \$200,000 was invested in these new sites this year for a whole school configuration, starting with all classes in Grades 7 and 8. Expansions in grade level will be seen every year going forward until the whole school is covered. As a result, total funding to NGS has increased to \$2,010,000 in 2024 compared to \$1,838,000 in 2023. Some of these funds are also being used to supplement parental contributions in schools where rogue media outlets have challenged the legality of voluntary parental payments, undermining efforts to shift sustained operation away from government and to local communities. In addition, total enrollment in the NGS System finally broke the 10,000-student mark with total enrollment this year registering 10,364, up from 9,187 last year or 13%. This marks a major milestone for the NGS System and indicates continuing strong support from the public for NGS reforms, despite opposition from some quarters.

**Key Developments During the Reporting Period:** The present report provides an overview of 33 discrete activities and programming issues relating to scope and direction as well as a summary of key challenges. The following list of issues/activities provides a short summary of some of the key developments in the NGS System during the first half of 2024.

**1. Update on Programming Scope:** Enrollment increased in the NGS System causing *unit costs to decline further, dropping from \$201/student last year to \$179 this year for secondary level; primary school unit costs have also declined from \$130/student to \$102.*

**2. Entrance Examination Results for 2024:** Demand for entry in New Generation Schools continues to be very high with many more students applying than there are available seats. Across all schools, there were 3,393 applicants for only 2,396 available seats, indicating that demand for NGS services continues to exceed demand. The rate of admission at New Generation Schools decreased slightly from 65% in 2023 to 62% in 2024.

**3. Updated Accreditation Results for 2024:** Accreditation visits for existing New Generation Schools were completed at the end of 2023 while a new round of visits is planned for August 2024. Following the initiation of probation for some schools last year, three schools (i.e., Anuwvat PS, Akhea Mahasei PS, and Peam Chikong HS) were able to achieve accreditation while Angkor Ban PS did not pass and is now no longer considered an official New Generation School. This recommendation is now with the NGS National Oversight Board for action.

**4. Capacity-Building Events during the Reporting Period:** The NGS Team continued to organize many capacity-building workshops to maintain high standards of performance. During the reporting period, the NGS Central Office reported organizing 10 workshops at primary school level and 12 at secondary school level. Altogether there were 711 participants at the various workshops organized over the last six months.

**5. Update on NGS Publications:** Over the years, the NGS Central Office has developed and printed many technical publications on a variety of topics ranging from student assessment, constructivist learning, student clubs, project work, and many more. Altogether, the NGS Central Office has published over 20 manuals and policy documents as MoEYS publications. During the last reporting period, NGS has focused on the finalization of the *Financial Management Guidelines* for all recognized New Generation Schools. The NGS Central Office also published and distributed a revised version of the *Constructivist Learning Manual* to include a major section on Computational Thinking.

**6. Parental Financing Developments and Support for Poor Students:** To sustain

operations, New Generation Schools continued to collect annual fees usually range from as low as \$50/student per year in rural areas such as Angkor Ban PS to \$330/student at Preah Sisovath HS. The average annual payment is about \$180/year. Overall, about 17% of the students enrolled in New Generation Schools attend for free with this percentage reaching as high as 37% in certain schools such as Akhea Mahasei PS. Thus, there are clear provisions in place in the NGS System to ensure social equity and inclusion at each New Generation School.

**7. School Financial System Re-organization Update:** As all New Generation Schools reach the end of their investment cycles and negotiate parental support to cover recurrent operating costs, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response from communities resulting in a windfall of almost \$1.8 million across all schools (as of 2024).

**8. Rationalization of the School Investment Planning Process Update:** Now that most schools have shifted their reliance from government to community funding for most expenditures and with the rapid increase in available funds at their disposal, the New Generation School Office has had to move quickly to accelerate capacity-building efforts of all schools so that they can plan and program ALL funds in a rationalized manner with the school's best interests in mind. Such guidelines are laid out in the NGS Operational Guidelines as well as newly completed Financial Management Guidelines.

**9. Progress on NGS Building Renovations for 2024:** Most of the funding for infrastructure renovations this year was allocated to Preah Angduong HS in Prey Veng and Aranh Rainsei HS in Siem Reap. This included the emplacement of 13 renovated classrooms, six science labs, two ICT labs, and two 21<sup>st</sup> Century Libraries. In all, the project invested about \$206,048 in these new New Generation Schools.

**10. Exposure Visit to Thailand:** Using KAPE's extensive network of educators in Thailand, the NGS Central Office organized a study visit to three Thai schools in Buriram Province in late June/early July 2024. One of the reasons Buriram was chosen is because this is a Khmer-speaking province making it easier for Cambodian and Thai educators to communicate. Each of the schools visited demonstrates very high-performance but with very different approaches to how they achieve high outcomes. This year's visit accommodated 115 Cambodian educators including teachers (75), administrators from multiple levels (37) and community members (3).

**11. New Collaborations, Partnerships, & Networking:** The NGS System continued to do outreach and advocacy with both the public and private sector. New partnerships include those with Lichtenstein Economic Development (LED), Educational Broadcasting of Cambodia, Ministry of Telecoms and Posts (MoTP), and Rangsit University in Bangkok.

**12. Upgrading Library Management (in 5 schools):** The NGS Central Office undertook a new initiative in NGS libraries to further increase their efficiency by introducing a new library software called PMB (PhpMy Bibli). This new software enables librarians to save time managing their libraries by digitizing library services, catalogs, library user reports, and general management.

**13. Leadership Training with CHOICE Center:** The Choice Center, also known as Light Over Light & Co Ltd, is a research and training delivery firm focused on helping organizations, companies and educational institutions evolve, sustain, and grow their ideas into high performing activities. The NGS Central Office entered into a partnership with the center during the reporting period to support new leadership training activities for NGS school managers and mentors.

**14. Project Work Fairs in Planning:** The organization of project work fairs are an important tradition in the NGS System and are scheduled every year by nearly all New Generation Schools. These fairs provide students a chance to display their projects that result from schools'

embrace of Constructivist Learning methodologies in which students create their own knowledge products. This year, 2,370 projects involving over 7,000 students are in planning and will mostly occur during fairs scheduled for the second semester.

**15. National NGS Oversight Board Meeting:** The National NGS Oversight Board met at Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS to hold its semi-annual review meeting with all stakeholders who are implementing NGS programming. The meeting reviewed performance of New Generation Schools across many metrics, especially the national Bac II Examination where some schools like Peam Chikong HS underperformed badly in the most recent test administration.

**16. Collaboration with UNICEF on Local Life Skills Education:** The NGS System was brought into close collaboration with UNICEF to pilot Phase 1 of an expansion of national Local Life Skills Education (LLSE) programming. NGS students tended to perform quite well on these baseline tests in comparison to other schools receiving investment and in fact ranked number 1 at secondary school level for all soft skill sets that were tested, i.e., Critical Thinking; Self-Management; and Communication.

**17. Artificial Intelligence in Education Initiative:** At the request of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Central NGS Office was invited to nominate representatives to sit on a new national taskforce that seeks to help MoEYS integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR) into the education process in public schools. The taskforce comprises representatives from multiple departments. NGS representatives affiliated with KAPE have taken a leading role in this taskforce and have proposed a number of new initiatives that will help to jumpstart the AI/AR integration process.

**18. Commencement of NGS Expansion in Siem Reap & Prey Veng:** As noted earlier, the addition of two large secondary schools to the NGS System has been a major focus of activity during the first six months of 2024. This is the first major expansion of the NGS System since 2018 and may signal additional major investment in widening public access to the high quality of education offered by a New Generation School.

**19. Gaming Technology Development Skills Accelerator Initiative Update:** The DViTSA Project is funded by Lichtenstein Economic Development and has been in progress since January 2024. The project focuses on providing students with skills in gaming technology and has achieved several key activity milestones during the last six months. Key milestones include the finalization and expansion of the DViTSA curriculum (132 hours) and the development of competency assessment to monitor student learning (cf. attached link for an example of student-developed products: <http://bit.ly/4e6wemP>).

**20. PISA Boost Initiative:** Cambodia has been participating in the Program for International Student Assessment or PISA since 2017 with the most recent test administration occurring in 2022. Cambodia generally does very poorly on these tests among the 15-year-olds who participate with only 8 to 12% of students able to demonstrate minimum competency in tested subjects. Although scores are not broken down by school, the New Generation Schools that have participated in these tests demonstrate generally high performance in comparison to the rest of the country though to be sure, private schools participating in the test also do very well. In order to raise PISA scores, KAPE has suggested to MoEYS that it work with researchers to better understand how to build a strategy based on empirical evidence that would improve students' test performance on international measures.

**21. Student Authored Books in Libraries Update:** One of the initiatives started last year to promote student writing was an agreement with the Printing House of ThonThean Obrom (TTO) to print the best books written by students who are members of a Creative Writing Club. Last year, a large number of books were written by students from various schools of which the

best 147 titles were chosen and printed. This year, only 17 titles were printed, mainly from Kok Pring HS and Preah Angduong HS; however, it is expected that many more books will be reviewed and printed by TTO by the end of the year.

**22. MoU Agreements with Universities & Private Sector Update:** As part of the NGS experience for students, secondary schools are encouraged to do advocacy with universities both in and outside of Cambodia to increase the exposure and opportunities for post-secondary study among New Generation School students. So far, five secondary schools within the NGS system have established such relationships with tertiary institutions as far abroad as China, the United States, and Singapore.

**23. NGS Exhibition on Advanced Teaching Methodologies:** MoEYS requested the NGS Central Office to set up a booth showcasing innovative teacher training and reform initiatives to mark the inauguration of the Phnom Penh Teacher Education Center (PTEC) on 4 July 2024. The booth sought to highlight the government's commitment to empowering educators with the latest pedagogical methods and fostering a culture of continuous professional development. The exhibition provided a great opportunity for New Generation School programming to demonstrate the many publications that it has produced, the effective applications of new methodologies in real settings that support good governance, and the many innovations in methodology that have been promoted over the years.

**24. General Overview of New Generation Primary School Operations:** Enrollment across New Generation Primary Schools remained generally stable across at 2,444 students, down slightly from 2,452 in the previous year. Most schools saw slight declines in their enrollment year on year except for the Demonstration School in Kampong Cham, which actually saw an increase of 103 students (or 23%) in the current academic year. As a result of the slight decline in enrollment as well as a small increase in the number of teachers, PCR and PTR levels were tapped down somewhat with PCR now equal to 33:1 while PTR is down to 20:1.

**25. Participation in School Competitions:** New Generation Primary Schools have been very active in terms of alerting their students to participation in both national and international contests. This includes contests on reading, mathematics, technology, children's rights, and other areas. Such competitions are very stimulative for student learning, build confidence, and increase the profile of the school in the eyes of the public.

**26. Sharing the Lessons of Full Day Programming in NGS:** One of the key elements of the superior learning program in New Generation Primary Schools is the requirement that students study for six hours per day as per international standards. To learn from this experience, a delegation from the World Bank visited Akhea Mahasei PS in Kampong Speu to better understand how New Generation Schools program the extra time provided for student learning. The hope is that they can replicate the framework developed in NGS primary schools in the General Education Improvement Program, which is funded by the Bank.

**27. School Clinics Established in All New Generation Primary Schools:** The establishment of student clinics is one of the important features of a New Generation School and makes up one of the many important services available to students in such schools along with library services, ICT services, life skills education, clubs, wired classrooms, and other services that enrich children's learning experience. Student clinics are now available at all New Generation Primary Schools and are open both morning and afternoon.

**28. Achieving Accredited NGS Status:** Most New Generation Primary Schools have retained their accredited status with the exception of Angkor Ban PS, which did not pass its probation earlier in the year due to the refusal of the school director to adopt approved practices of financial management. Although the school generally receives high marks for the quality of its

teachers and mentor as well as a very well-run library, there is a problem with management. The report on the failure of the school to pass probation is now sitting with the National Oversight Board for final action.

**29. Planning for New Mentor Intake in 2024:** The NGPRC was planning for a 6<sup>th</sup> intake of degree candidates for 2025; however, the intake is now pending a decision from the Ministry of Public Servants unless the Center can provide justification for funding by producing an independent assessment report demonstrating the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

**30. Implementation of the Face-to-Face Practicum in 2024:** The face-to-face three-month practicum for the 5<sup>th</sup> Cohort of degree candidates students was originally planned to take place in three different schools, namely Preah Yukunthor HS (an NGS site), Chea Sim Sonthor Mok HS (a school that plans to eventually apply for NGS accreditation), and Anuwat PS at NIE. However, since the commencement of the new academic year has been moved up from January 2025 to November 2024, at least one of the schools on this list plans to close early (i.e., Sonthor Mok HS) requiring the identification of a substitute school while the other two schools will still be in operation during the practicum period. The Center has, therefore, chosen a private school known as the *Angkor Intellectual Academy* to stand in as the third school.

**31. Development of a Prakas to Give Official Recognition of Mentors within the Education System:** As part of its efforts to gain official recognition of the role of mentors within the education system, the Center has been working closely with MoEYS to better systematize the description of the master's degree program in mentoring along with multiple supporting documents. This includes developing a clear Terms of Reference for Mentors (adapted from the ToR produced for NGS Mentors), systematizing guidelines for the implementation of mentoring services, developing mentoring tools that will provide guidelines for mentoring and daily practice, and preparing a concept note entitled, *Mentoring in Cambodia and the Role of the NGPRC*. In addition, the Center has reviewed and revised the master's degree curriculum framework for the mentoring program. All of this documentation has been gathered and submitted to the leadership of MoEYS for review and approval. Although the MoEYS leadership has agreed and endorsed the idea that the status of Mentors should be equivalent to that of Inspectors, it has deferred a final determination of this issue to the Ministry of Public Servants.

**32. Development of a Pedagogical Magazine for Circulation to Schools:** One of the special activities that the Center has been working on during the semester relates to the development of a pedagogical magazine that would not be a research journal but rather a lay publication for educators at school, district, and province level. The magazine will be published online as a 'webizine' to share case studies of good pedagogical practices as well as provide educational tips. The magazine will be published twice a year starting by the end of 2024.

**33. Research Activities Organized by the NGPRC:** The Center has also been very active in terms of its animation of various research activities. As noted above, the Center developed an impact study on the mentoring program implemented under NGS. At the same time, the Center has entered into a partnership with Texas A&M University in which it will contribute book chapters to a new publication being developed by the university on *Mentoring and Action Research*. Such activities very much help to raise the profile of both the Center as well as NIE. Finally, the Center continues to provide tech support to master's degree candidates in Cohort 5 who are working on their theses as part of their degree requirements. This year, candidate theses will be presented as part of a Research Proposal Fair and published for archiving along with the theses produced by graduates from Cohorts 1 to 4.

**Challenges Encountered in Implementation:** A number of key challenges have been identified during the reporting period that will require additional support and advice from the

National Oversight Board. These challenges are summarized below:

**1. Declines in Sustained Income in Selected Schools:** The spread of fake news by rogue news outlets in Kampong Cham Province in 2023 relating to the legality of New Generation Schools to solicit voluntary payments from parents has led to a directive from MoEYS to suspend all parental payments to Peam Chikong HS starting from 2024. While many parents have voluntarily continued to pay support fees to the school, contributions are now down as there is some confusion in the community whether they need to pay or not. To make up for the shortfall, MoEYS provided an additional one-time \$172,000 in supplementary funds for Peam Chikong HS and other schools with similar shortfalls. However, this is a one-time payment, putting the sustained operation of such schools in some doubt.

**2. Major Budget Constraints Have Emerged as a Result of Program Expansion:** Although the program has achieved many savings by shifting many school support costs to parents and ending most infrastructure investments in older New Generation Schools, there has nevertheless been a considerable strain on the project's overall budget as a result of the decision to expand NGS programming to additional schools in two more provinces (i.e., Siem Reap and Prey Veng). Altogether, more than \$200,000 has been shifted to new schools (mostly for infrastructure investments).

**3. Collapse in the Ability of NGPRC to Post Trained Mentors in NGS Sites:** A major problem has occurred at the New Generation Pedagogical Research Center that may severely undermine its effectiveness as a training institution. This refers to a recent decision handed down by MoEYS and the National Institute of Education at mid-year requiring all trained mentors in the current cohort to return to their school of origin rather than being posted to New Generation Schools or other schools where they are needed. This represents a huge loss of investment in their one-year training and will create a major challenge for the NGS Central Office to provide mentors to New Generation Schools that need them.

**4. Poor General Understanding of the Difference between Mentor & Inspector:** The NGPRC has recently been advocating with MoEYS and the Ministry of Public Servants to create a special payment slot for Mentors that recognizes their high level of skill to mentor other teachers. Such recognition would greatly increase attractiveness of mentoring positions and greatly increase the applicant pool (and the quality of candidates graduating from the program). One frequent comment from officials involved in these discussions, however, is that they do not see the difference between a Mentor and an Inspector nor the need to create special recognition of Mentors. This fundamental misunderstanding misses the kind of teacher evaluation that Mentors and Inspectors are each engaged in (i.e., formative vs summative evaluation).

**5. Continuing Battles with Anti-reform Teachers at Selected Schools:** Although NGS Reforms have generally won kudos from the public and the MoEYS leadership, they continue to threaten the interests of many unprofessional teachers within the education system, particularly with respect to private teaching, also known as Shadow Education. This is because shadow teaching is not allowed under the NGS operating framework. Such conditions often lead many teachers in 'whole school' configurations to boycott participation in the New Generation School and even demanding that half of the school should be handed over to them so that they can extort fees from students. Such overt opposition represents a difficult challenge for NGS administrators, particularly when they receive little back-up from local officials.

**6. Teacher Shortages Resulting from Suspension of NIE/RTTC Intakes:** One of the key challenges facing NGS is the problem of teacher burn out. Some New Generation Schools where public demand is very high (e.g., Preah Sisovath HS) see a very high rate of teacher turnover. In the past, the MoEYS has been very flexible in allowing the NGS System to tap

into the pool of graduating teachers at NIE and RTTCs as well as teachers that apply from other schools to fill these positions. However, the education system has recently been much less flexible with regards to the process of annual teacher recruitment to fill vacancies. These changes in the recruitment context have created a significant challenge for the NGS System to fill teacher vacancies.

**7. Maintaining the Integrity of the NGS System:** The New Generation School System seeks to maintain a balance between ‘Structure’ and ‘Freedom.’ That is, the philosophy of New Generation Schools is Freedom in Structure in which schools are provided with high amounts of autonomy (i.e., freedom) and encouraged to create the conditions needed for educational innovation. The program seeks to maintain a very delicate balance between freedom and structure to prevent schools from veering into conditions of chaos (i.e., too much freedom) or repressed control (i.e., too much structure). Some schools in the NGS System have expressed a desire to be completely independent of the NGS operational framework while still being called New Generation Schools. NGS Programmers are hopeful that they can maintain ‘Freedom in Structure’ balance while keeping all schools within the NGS System.

### **General Conclusions**

After nine years of implementation, New Generation Schools have become a rallying point for educational reform and also a lightning rod for anti-reform educators who prefer to preserve the status quo. NGS reforms have increasingly attracted public attention in social media and the press through both positive as well as negative news stories, each representing the lines of battle between reformers and anti-reformers. As this acrimonious debate about reform unfolds, NGS more and more finds itself in the crosshairs of opponents though not without significant support from reform advocates within MoEYS as well. The way forward for NGS is, therefore, somewhat precarious as it seeks to navigate some of the key controversies animating education reform and anti-reform proponents.

It should also be noted that the educational landscape in Cambodia has recently seen some major changes with the advent of Model Schools, a new MoEYS reform initiative that seeks to accelerate improvements in educational quality. Partly, the increasing popularity of Model Schools is due to the inability of New Generation Schools to expand more rapidly stemming from the need for painstaking school selection to ensure local support (a critical condition for successful investment) as well as perceptions among bureaucrats that NGS investment is too expensive. Relatedly, MoEYS has been disappointed that most donors have ignored NGS investment because they feel it is either ‘elitist’ or ‘inequitable’ though there have been some major exceptions such as ADB. Thus, Model Schools have been presented as a ‘fast and cheap’ alternative to New Generation Schools though the MoEYS has been quick to point out that Model Schools should eventually evolve into New Generation Schools.

There are some major challenges facing the future of New Generation Schools that could pose an existential threat to their continued viability. Many of these challenges relate to recent changes in the flexibility in the way that teachers are posted, mainly as a result of interventions from the Ministry of Public Servants over which MoEYS has little control. Recent restrictions on the movement of teachers could have the effect of starving New Generation Schools and associated institutions such as NGPRC of the human resources that they need both in terms of the recruitment of talented teachers as well as the placement of mentors who are essential to their technical sustainability. Similarly, restrictions on the ability of schools to solicit parents for financial support could also spell doom for New Generation Schools. All of this suggests the need to better codify the autonomous freedoms that MoEYS policy extends to them, perhaps by lobbying Parliament to pass a law that legally recognizes the rights of New Generation Schools to do things that other public schools are not allowed to do.

## 2. BACKGROUND

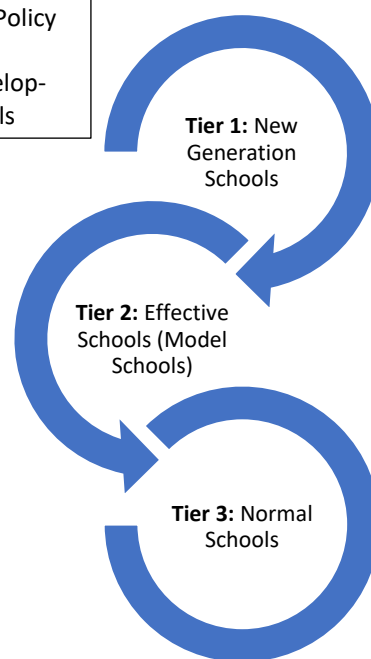
### 2.1 Past and Future Trends in NGS Reforms

In 2024, New Generation School reforms entered into their 9<sup>th</sup> year of implementation with increasing acceptance among the public that such reforms are both positive and here to stay, in spite of continuing opposition from anti-reform elements in the education system. This refers mainly to a minority of teachers who see NGS reforms as a threat to their ability to exploit students with mandatory private classes despite major increases in salary provided by MoEYS over the last several years. Under NGS Reforms, teachers are not allowed to force their students to pay for private classes, which is a prohibition that is very popular with parents. It is for this reason that NGS Reforms have proven to be very popular with the public while also enabling public schools to achieve many academic accolades in both national and international competitions. Thus, for parents, New Generation Schools provide high quality education at a lower cost than what they are used to when teachers are teaching private classes, also known as ‘shadow education.’

There are currently 13 schools that are observing NGS operational guidelines, and most are accredited. MoEYS has incorporated New Generation Schools into a school reform typology that outlines three school levels that start with Normal (unsupported) Schools, followed by Model Schools, and finally New Generation Schools at the top of the typology. The NGS Central Office has undertaken empirical research for MoEYS to help better inform Ministry decision-makers as they roll out the new policy framework on school development models.<sup>1</sup> New Generation Schools primarily differ from other school development models in that they espouse an ‘organic,’ bottom-up development approach, which ensures local ownership and sustainability. For this model to work, high levels of governance and strong local leadership are essential, which is why the selection of sites for NGS investment is so critically important. Only those schools where local stakeholders such as managers, teachers, and communities are strongly committed to NGS principles can investment be successful. To date, New Generation Schools have performed successfully on PISA tests and demonstrate a high proportion of student performance in the top tiers of national examinations (i.e., students with A, B, and C scores).

In terms of overall investment since 2016, Government and private donors have invested approximately \$16,107,000 where the vast majority of the investment (\$14.92 million or 93%) was from government (see Table 2.1). Total investment in NGS by government in 2024 was \$1.84 million (for primary and secondary schools), which includes a one-time supplementary investment of \$172,000 to defer some of the operating costs reverting to parents that were wrongly reported by a rogue news outlet in Kampong Cham Province. It should also be noted that an additional \$170,000 to operate the New Generation Pedagogical Research Center at the National Institute of Education (to train NGS mentors) is also part of the total annual investment provided to KAPE by MoEYS to run the NGS System, which altogether represents a total

**Figure 1.1:** Policy Typology of School Development Models



<sup>1</sup> Cf. [https://www.kapekh.org/files/report\\_file/384-en.pdf](https://www.kapekh.org/files/report_file/384-en.pdf)



investment of \$2.01 million for 2024.

**Table 2.1: Investment in New Generation Schools at All Levels, 2015-24**

Year	MoEYS	Franks Family Foundation	Child Fund Australia	Oaktree Foundation	Total	Schools & Institutions Receiving Investment
<b>Secondary Schools</b>						
2015	\$374,000	--	--	\$124,000	<b>\$498,000</b>	<b>2</b>
2016	\$355,000	\$141,000	\$150,000	\$74,000	<b>\$720,000</b>	<b>3</b>
2017	\$1,270,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$0	<b>\$1,520,000</b>	<b>5</b>
2018	\$1,417,000	\$59,000	\$100,000	\$0	<b>\$1,576,000</b>	<b>6</b>
2019	\$1,417,000	\$-- <sup>2</sup>	\$77,000	\$0	<b>\$1,494,000</b>	<b>6</b>
2020	\$1,417,000	\$-- <sup>3</sup>	\$77,000	\$0	<b>\$1,494,000</b>	<b>6</b>
2021	\$1,417,000	\$-- <sup>4</sup>	\$77,000	\$0	<b>\$1,494,000</b>	<b>6</b>
2022	\$1,417,000	\$-- <sup>5</sup>	\$0	\$0	<b>\$1,417,000</b>	<b>6</b>
2023	\$1,417,000	\$-- <sup>6</sup>	\$0	\$0	<b>\$1,417,000</b>	<b>7</b>
2024	\$1,417,000	--	\$0	\$0	<b>\$1,417,000</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,918,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$631,000</b>	<b>\$198,000</b>	<b>\$13,047,000</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Primary Schools</b>						
2017	\$40,000	--	--	--	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>2</b>
2018	\$296,000	--	--	--	<b>\$296,000</b>	<b>2</b>
2019	\$250,000	--	--	--	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>2</b>
2020	\$250,000	--	--	--	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>2</b>
2021	\$250,000	--	--	--	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>2</b>
2022	\$250,000	\$13,000	--	--	<b>\$263,000</b>	<b>3</b>
2023	\$251,000	--	--	--	<b>\$251,000</b>	<b>4</b>
2024	\$251,000	--	--	--	<b>\$251,000</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,838,000</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$1,851,000</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Special Supplementary Payments for Both Primary/Secondary from Government</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$172,000</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$172,000</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>New Generation Pedagogical Research Center-NIE (Higher Education)</b>						
2019	\$163,000	\$15,000	\$30,000	--	\$208,000	1
2020	\$163,000	\$0	\$0	--	\$163,000	1
2021	\$163,000	\$0	\$0	--	\$163,000	1
2022	\$163,000	\$0	\$0	--	\$163,000	1
2023	\$170,000	\$0	\$0	--	\$170,000	1
2024	\$170,000	\$0	\$0	--	\$170,000	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$992,000.00</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$1,037,000</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$14,920,000</b>	<b>\$328,000</b>	<b>\$661,000</b>	<b>\$198,000</b>	<b>\$16,107,000</b>	<b>14</b>

<sup>2</sup> Does not include \$272,000 interest-free loan to programming while government-funding was processed.

<sup>3</sup> Does not include \$330,000 interest-free loan to programming while government-funding was processed.

<sup>4</sup> Does not include \$365,000 interest-free loan to programming while government-funding was processed.

<sup>5</sup> Does not include \$282,000 interest-free loan to programming while government-funding was processed.

<sup>6</sup> Does not include \$238,000 interest-free loan to programming while government-funding was processed.

## **2.2 General Overview of Operations during the Reporting Period**

**Program Expansion:** The main area of activity during this reporting period relates to the expansion to two new NGS sites in two separate provinces, which brings the total number of supported schools from 11 in 2023 to 13 in 2024. After a rigorous review of stakeholder sentiment about NGS philosophy, investment conditions, and willingness to provide local investment (to replace government support during the first years of investment), KAPE chose two new secondary schools to expand NGS programming. This included Preah Anduong HS in Prey Veng Province and Aranh Rainsei in Siem Reap Province. The project began investment with a foundational workshop for teachers and major upgrading of infrastructure in both sites. By starting with Grades 7 and 8 only, the approach adopted by NGS programmers involves a whole school conversion that will eventually involve the entire school. An expansion to Grade 9 is planned in 2025 for both schools and additional grades in subsequent years until the entire school is covered.



**Physical Upgrading:** *Newly renovated classroom building at Preah Anduong HS in Prey Veng Province.* ↗

**Expanded Enrollment:** Enrollment in the NGS System continued to expand as two new schools joined NGS Reforms as noted above. For the 2024 academic year, enrollment crossed the 10,000 mark and reached 10,364 students. This represents an increase of about 13% from last year's number. About half of this increase was due to the addition of two new schools to the program but the rest was due to increases in the enrollment of existing schools as demand for admission to New Generation Schools continues to grow, which can be problematic as NGS guidelines require that Pupil Class Ratios not be allowed to exceed 36:1 at the very most.

**Increasing Sustainability:** By undertaking NGS investment in areas with a mixed student demographic (i.e., students from mixed social class backgrounds), New Generation Schools have also demonstrated a high level of local sustainability with strong support for parents. After three years of full government support, many New Generation Schools have now shifted to parents for operating support, which enables government to shift its investment to other sites. In this respect, parents provided \$1.78 million in support to their respective schools while government provided \$1.84 million in support to primary and secondary New Generation Schools. Thus, total investment NGS sites from both government and non-government sources reached \$3.62 million in 2024.

**Expansion of Gamification Programming:** The NGS Central Office acquired \$95,000 in extra funding from the Lichtenstein Economic Development (LED) to expand the Gamification pilot that was started in 2023. This new program, known as Digital Visualization Technology Skills Accelerator Program (DVtSA) provides specialized ICT skills to students interested in the development of simulations, games, and digital visualization. As Gaming Technology is the fast-growing subsector in ICT, such skills should serve the Cambodian economy well and aligns with the Skills Accelerator Initiative of the RCG and the World Economic Forum.<sup>7</sup> The program was successfully piloted at Preah Sisovath HS and is now being expanded to three additional secondary school in the NGS System complete with the emplacement of new specialized labs that are designed to support gaming technology.



*Teachers receive training in using the new Gamification Platform developed especially for New Generation Schools.*

**New Initiative in Artificial Intelligence Literacy:** In June 2024, MoEYS requested assistance from the

NGS Central Office to support a new task force that is designed to promote student and teacher literacy in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR). The new task force is led by the Deputy Prime Minister and will receive considerable support from NGS to develop guidelines for the use of AI/AR in schools and provide a road map for its integration into the teaching-learning process in all NGS sites. The work of NGS in this area should lay the groundwork for the expansion of AI/AR to other schools in the public education system in the near future.

**Completion of the Financial Management Guidelines Manual:** As New Generation Schools raise considerable funds from local communities for their sustained operation, it will be critically important to have clear guidelines for how these funds should be used, accounted for, and reported. As noted above, New Generation schools are raising hundreds of thousands of dollars from local communities and the potential for misuse of funds is great without clear guidelines for accounting. In 2023, KAPE engaged a consultant to help develop comprehensive accounting guidelines designed especially for schools that will provide proper management of local and government funds as well as transparent reporting to parents. These guidelines and an accompanying training manual were completed during the reporting period and is now being rolled out to all schools in the NGS System.

**Increasing Financial Independence of the NGS System:** The year 2024 was the first year in which KAPE was able to maintain operations at the beginning of the year without external loans or assistance from external foundations. In the past, the three to four-month period at the beginning of the year needed for MoEF to process financial grants to KAPE meant that the agency would have to initiate short-term loans from the Franks Family Foundation to keep operations running until government funds arrived. Although these loans from the FFF were interest-free, they represented a source of unsustainable dependence within the program. Due to the increasing financial independence of many New Generation Schools and increased

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<sup>7</sup> . <https://initiatives.weforum.org/accelerators-network/cambodia>

liquidity within KAPE resulting from a vast increase in its funding portfolio, KAPE was able to maintain NGS operations this year without any need for external assistance. This marks an important evolution for the program in terms of sustained operations and growing financial independence of the NGS System.



***Integrating ICT in Education:*** Biology students at a New Generation School record their observations on a microscope using smart phone technology.

### 3. KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD

#### System-wide Activities

##### 3.1 Update on Programming Scope

As the NGS System continued to add more schools in 2024, the enrollment increased this year to 10,364 students at the start of the 2024 academic year across both the primary and secondary school sectors; this is the first time NGS enrollment has exceeded 10,000 students (see Table 3.1). This year's enrollment compares with 9,187 students last year or an increase of 13%. *Unit costs have also continued to decline, dropping from \$201/student last year to \$179 this year for secondary level; primary school unit costs have also declined from \$130/student to \$102.* The decline in unit costs has been driven mainly by increasing enrollment demand, the completion of infrastructure upgrading at older New Generation Schools, and most importantly by the shift in financial support to parents in accredited schools. With plans in place to increase the number of New Generation Schools to 20 or more by the end of the decade, NGS enrollment will surely continue to grow. Analyses of Pupil Class Ratios and Pupil Teacher Ratios also indicate that most schools are maintaining accreditation standards to keep PCR and PTR levels below a level of 36:1 to ensure that large class sizes do not dilute educational quality. In this respect, the overall PCR and PTR level at secondary school level are 35:1 and 14:1, respectively; while for primary school level they are a respectable 33:1 and 22:1, respectively.

**Table 3.1: Enrollment, Investment Sources, & Historical Background across all New Generation Schools (2024)**

Province	School Name	Enrollment (2024)	No. of Classes	Teachers	Investment Source	Establishment Date	NGS Development Model
<b>Secondary School Level</b>							
Phnom Penh	Preah Sisovath HS	1,095	30	88	MoEYS-FFF	Oct 2015	School in a School
	Yukanthor HS	1,206	34	84	MoEYS	Jan 2023	Sisovath Annex
	Prek Leap HS	1,352	38	96	MoEYS-FFF	Oct 2017	Whole School
Kampong Cham	Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS	738	21	46	MoEYS-FFF	Oct 2015	New School/ Dying School
	Peam Chikorng HS	1,286	37	86	MoEYS-FFF	Oct 2018	Whole School
Kandal	Prek Anchanh HS	1,276	36	86	MoEYS-FFF	Oct 2017	Whole School
Prey Veng	Preah Angdoug	318	10	25	MoEYS	Jan 2024	Whole School
Svay Rieng	Kourk Pring HS	527	15	37	Child Fund-MoEYS	June 2015	Whole School
Siem Reap	Aranh Raingsei HS	199	6	19	MoEYS	Jan 2024	Whole School
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>9 schools</b>	<b>7,920</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>3 Sources</b>	--	<b>3 Models</b>
<b>Unit Costs/ PCR/PTR</b>	Unit Cost: \$179 per student		PCR= 35:1	PTR = 14:1	--	--	--
<b>Primary School Level</b>							
Kampong Cham	Demonstration School	549	15	25	MoEYS	Oct 2015	New School/ Dying School
	Angkor Ban PS	336	12	22	MoEYS	Oct 2017	Whole School
Kampong Speu	Akhea Mahasei PS	1,194	36	54	MoEYS	Oct 2017	Whole School
Svay Rieng	Svay Prahut PS	365	11	19	Child Fund	June 2015	Whole School
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4 Schools</b>	<b>2,444</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3 Sources</b>	--	<b>2 Models</b>
<b>Unit Costs/ PCR/PTR</b>	Unit Cost: \$102 per student		PCR = 33:1	PTR = 20:1	--	--	--
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13 Schools</b>	<b>10,364</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>687</b>	--	--	--

##### 3.2 Entrance Examination Results for 2024

Demand for entry in New Generation Schools continues to be very high with many more students applying than there are available seats. In order to maintain the learning conditions needed for high quality education, NGS guidelines limit class sizes to not more than 36 students

per classroom as one of the conditions for NGS accreditation. With the number of students applying for admission often exceeding the number of available seats, many (though not all schools) have had to introduce admission tests. Across all schools, there were 3,393 applicants for only 2,396 available seats, indicating that demand for NGS services continues to exceed demand. The rate of admission at New Generation Schools decreased slightly from 65% in 2023 to 62% in 2024 (see Table 3.2). Admission rates decreased at secondary school (from 65% to 60%) while increasing at primary school level (70% to 79%). Among secondary schools, Prek Leap HS had the most restrictive rate of admission (49%) while Preah Sisovath HS had the least restrictive rate (91%), a marked change from previous years. Rural schools like Angkor Ban (Kampong Cham) and Svay Prahut (Svay Rieng) continued to do normal admission with no testing requirements at Grade 1, as we can say that children at this level tend to be a blank slate. Urban primary schools continued to administer admission tests and require that children first attended preschool as an admission requirement. The Hun Sen Demonstration School in Kampong Cham reported a very restrictive rate of admission (47%) while Akhea Mahasei PS in Kampong Speu reported that all students met satisfactory requirements for study at the school.

**Table 3.2: Test Results among Students Applying for Entry to New Generation Schools, 2024**

Name of School	Total Seats Available	Applicants Tested	Total Passing	Total Applications Accepted	Students Accepted as a % Applicants
<b>Secondary Level</b>					
Hun Sen Kg. Cham HS*	--	--	--	--	--
Preah Sisovath HS	400	288	262	262	91%
Preah Yukunthor	684	907	540	540	60%
Prek Leap HS	339	654	322	322	49%
Prek Anchanh HS	281	526	278	278	53%
Kok Pring HS	108	137	107	108	79%
H.S Peam Chikorng HS	327	541	217	327	60%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,139</b>	<b>3,053</b>	<b>1,726</b>	<b>1,837</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Primary Level</b>					
Demonstration School	50	133	62	62	47%
Akhea Mahasei PS	207	207	207	207	100%
Angkor Ban PS**	--	--	--	--	--
Svay Prahut PS**	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>1,995</b>	<b>2,106</b>	<b>62%</b>

\*Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS has closed external Grade 7 admissions to accommodate children enrolled in the adjacent primary school (Demonstration School); \*\*Admission at Grade 1 at these rural schools is not subject to an Entrance Exam.

### 3.3 Updated Accreditation Results for 2024

Accreditation visits for existing New Generation Schools were completed at the end of 2023 while a new round of visits is planned for August 2024. Accreditation visits to New Generation Schools are becoming an increasingly frequent occurrence as all schools have now completed their investment cycles and are eligible for accreditation reviews. These reviews are necessary for a school to keep its New Generation School status and enjoy all the benefits afforded to such schools under MoEYS' NGS Policy Framework. This includes the right to solicit admission fees from parents and pay incentives to teachers. During the last accreditation visits at the end of 2023, four schools were placed on probation, which means they had three months in which to demonstrate compliance, mainly for improved financial record keeping and the cessation of private classes. As noted in previous reports, schools must achieve 100% of Absolute Performance Criteria (of which there are 12) and at least 50% of Preferred Performance Criteria (of which there are also 12). Strong financial record keeping and the abolition of private classes are considered mandatory requirements for accreditation. Following the initiation of probation,

three schools (i.e., Anuwat PS, Akhea Mahasei PS, and Peam Chikong HS) were able to achieve accreditation while Angkor Ban PS did not pass and is now no longer considered an official New Generation School (see Table 3.3). The Accreditation Team has sought to finalize a report to the NGS National Board to officially disqualify Angkor Ban PS from the NGS System, but the Primary Education Department has asked for a delay in taking this action until they can re-organize the school. Unfortunately, no resolution of the school’s status has been achieved during the last 6 months, which requires quick action by the National NGS Board.

**Table 3.3: Summary of Accreditation Results in 2024 (Semester 1)**

School	Province	Provisional Score Based on Performance Criteria	Accreditation Status	Next Steps
<b>Secondary School Level</b>				
1. Preah Sisovath HS	Phnom Penh	22/24 (92%)	Achieved	Prepare for 2024
2. Prek Leap HS	Phnom Penh	23/24 (96%)	Achieved	Prepare for 2024
3. Hun Sen Kg Cham HS	Kampong Cham	23/24 (96%)	Achieved	Prepare for 2024
4. Hun Sen Peam Chikong HS	Kampong Cham	20/24 (83%)*	Passed Probation	Revisit School at end of the Probation Period
5. Prek Anchanh HS	Kandal	22/24 (92%)	Achieved	Prepare for 2024
6. Kok Pring HS	Svay Rieng	23/24 (96%)	Achieved	Prepare for 2024
<b>Primary School Level</b>				
7. Svay Prahout PS	Svay Rieng	21/22 (95%)	Achieved	Prepare for 2024
8. Anuwat PS	Kampong Cham	20/23 (87%)	Passed Probation	Waiting for Accreditation Visit
9. Akhea Mahasei PS	Kampong Speu	20/23 (87%)	Passed Probation	Waiting for Accreditation Visit
10. Angkor Ban PS	Kampong Cham	16/23 (69%)	Not Achieved/ Failed Probation	Waiting for Decision from Board
<b>Schools Accredited</b>	--		<b>9 Achieved</b>	--

\*One Absolute Criterion not achieved.

### 3.4 Capacity-Building Events during the Reporting Period

The NGS Team continued to organize many capacity-building workshops to maintain high standards of performance. During the reporting period, the NGS Central Office reported organizing 10 workshops at primary school level and 12 at secondary school level. All workshops have not returned to a face-to-face format following the cessation of Covid19 outbreaks. Workshops scheduled so far this year required 36 days to implement. Workshop topics ranged from the critically important (and longest) Foundation Workshop for new teachers at Preah Angduong HS (Prey Veng) and Aranh Rainsei HS (Siem Reap) to shorter workshops on STEM Education, Active Learning, and Library Organization (see Table 3.4). Altogether there were 711 participants at the various workshops organized over the last six months.



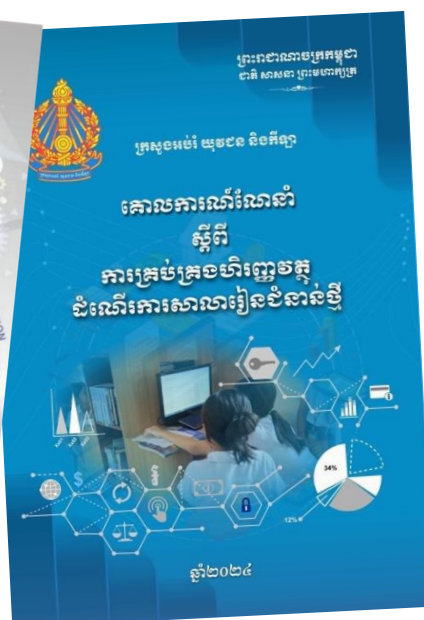
**Foundation Workshop with New Teachers:** KAPE Trainers organize small group discussions for new teachers at Preah Angduong HS in Prey Veng.

**Table 3.4: Summary of Capacity Building Workshops and Events (Jan-June 2024)**

Name of Workshop or Capacity-building Event	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Online	Face to Face	Number of Participants	Number of Days
<b>Jan to June 2024</b>						
1. STEM Education	1	1	--	1	75	1
2. Scientific Method Workshop	1	1	--	1	70	1
3. Promoting technology in the STEM Field	1	1	--	1	75	1
4. AI to Promote STEM Teaching	1	1	--	1	70	1
5. Project Work Method Orientation	1	1	--	1	100	1
6. Science Workshop	1	1	--	1	70	1
7. Science Lap safety	1	1	--	1	70	1
8. Active Learning Strategy	1	1	--	1	70	1
9. ICT Curriculum for Secondary		1	--	1	18	12
10. Library Organization Training	1	1	--	1	20	4
11. Foundation Workshop for New NGS Teachers		1	--	1	45	10
12. School Principal Leadership Training	1	1	--	1	28	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>36</b>

### 3.5 Update on NGS Publications

Over the years, the NGS Central Office has developed and printed many technical publications on a variety of topics ranging from student assessment, constructivist learning, student clubs, project work, and many more. Altogether, the NGS Central Office has published over 20 manuals and policy documents as MoEYS publications. During the last reporting period, NGS has focused on the finalization of the Financial Management



Guidelines for all recognized New Generation Schools, which will help to enhance good governance and transparency in how financial resources from all sources are managed by schools. Standardized financial management guidelines are now particularly important given the amount of funding that is flowing into many New Generation Schools from parents. The NGS Central Office recognizes the importance of preventing any sort of mismanagement of school funds and the damage that this could do to the credibility of NGS reforms. The final version of the NGS Financial Management Manual will be released early in the next semester.

The NGS Central Office also published and distributed a revised version of the Constructivist Learning Manual to include a major section on Computational Thinking. This revised manual was completed at the end of last year but was only published and disseminated at the beginning of 2024. The incorporation of this new section into the earlier developed manual is intended to amplify the ability of teachers to introduce new critical thinking skills such as pattern



recognition, decomposition, the use of algorithms, and other aspects of critical thought. These and other technical resources can all be found on the recently upgraded New Generation School Website (<https://ngs.edu.kh/en/resources/>).

### 3.6 Parental Financing Developments and Support for Poor Students

One of the controversial aspects of New Generation School programming is the negotiated support of parents to schools following a three-year period of investment (in which there are no fees) followed by accreditation. While some donors criticize this practice because they feel that education should be totally ‘free’, this attitude overlooks the observation that even in Western countries public schools are supported by taxpayer funding. In addition, public schools in Cambodia that are ostensibly ‘free’ are actually riddled with unofficial fees and private payments that far exceed the one-time annual fees charged by accredited New Generation Schools. NGS annual fees usually range from as low as \$50/student per year in rural areas such as Angkor Ban PS to \$330/student at Preah Sisovath HS (see Table 3.5) The average annual payment is about \$180/year.

New Generation Schools offer a much more rationalized payment system than normal schools where parental support flows into school coffers rather than the pockets of individuals where it usually disappears. The parental funds that schools receive, currently registering \$1.78 million, are actually allocated to support school services and can be easily monitored for purposes of transparency. Most middle-class parents indicate that the rationalized payment system offered by New Generation Schools is in fact much cheaper than paying the unofficial fees in ostensibly ‘free’ public schools. Unofficial fees in normal secondary schools have been reported to be as high as \$600 to \$1,000 per year, especially in urban areas. It is also cheaper than private schools and, in many cases, offers a higher standard of education. Safeguards are also in place so that qualifying students from poor families do not have to pay any fees based on a means-test. Overall, about 17% of the students enrolled in New Generation Schools attend for free with this percentage reaching as high as 37% in certain schools such as Akhea Mahasei PS. Thus, there are clear provisions in place in the NGS System to ensure social equity and inclusion at each New Generation School.

**Table 3.5: Summary of Payment Basis & Revenues from Parents (End of 2023 to be used in 2024)**

School Name	Student Enrollment	Annual Fee per Student	Total Student Payments	Students Paying	Paying Students as a %	Scholarships	%
<b>Secondary Schools</b>							
1. Preah Sisovath HS	1,095	\$330	\$339,372	1,028	94%	67	6%
2. Yukanthor HS	1,206	\$330	\$379,863	1,151	95%	55	5%
3. Prek Leap HS	1,352	\$260	\$288,314	1,109	82%	59	18%
4. Chea Sim Prek Anchan HS	1,276	\$250	\$266,500	1,066	85%	191	15%
5. Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS	738	\$150	\$99,555	663	89%	81	11%
6. Hun Sen Peam Chikorng HS	1,286	\$150	\$146,100	974	76%	308	24%
7. Aranh Rongsei HS*	0	0	0	0	0	All	--
8. Prek Andoung HS*	0	0	0	0	0	All	--
9. Kork Pring HS	527	\$85	\$40,740	479	91%	48	9%
<b>Primary Schools</b>							
10. Anuwath Hun Sen PS	549	\$150	\$65,445	436	80%	112	20%
11. Angkor Ban PS	336	\$50	\$13,900	278	83%	58	17%
12. Preareach Akkak Mahasei PS	1,194	\$150	\$112,875	752	63%	441	37%
13. Svay Prahuet PS	365	\$85	\$27,625	325	89%	40	11%
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>9,924</b>	<b>\$180</b>	<b>\$1,780,289</b>	<b>8,261</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>1,460</b>	<b>17%</b>

\*These are new investment schools where no fees are charged. During the first 3 years of NGS investment, MoEYS pays all costs. At the end of the 3-year investment cycle, schools undergo accreditation visits after which time fees may be negotiated with parents.

### 3.7 School Financial System Re-organization Update

As all New Generation Schools reach the end of their investment cycles and negotiate parental support to cover recurrent operating costs, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response from communities resulting in a windfall of almost \$1.8 million across all schools (as of 2024), as noted earlier above (see Table 3.6). Of course, some communities are better endowed than others and can provide funds to schools that well exceed the target of 70% coverage of operating costs. The remaining 30% of operating costs will be made up from government funds, mainly to provide a cushion for those households that cannot afford to pay an annual fee, currently about 14% of students (see Section 3.6 above). According to data received from schools, about 50% of schools have achieved or exceeded the funding target (i.e., 70% of operating costs) to sustain the operating costs of a New Generation School (see Table 3.6). Overall, 84% of running costs can be covered by parental contributions.

Given the huge quantity of funds that are now flowing into New Generation School coffers, there is an urgent need to put in place a more systematized set of financial regulations that will ensure transparent management of all transactions, as expected under the governance requirements of a New Generation School. To develop systematic rules of financial management of funding from all sources, the New Generation School Central Office has hired a Financial Management Consultant to develop a set of regulations that all schools will be expected to follow. This Financial Management Policy will be completed in July 2023 and will be followed by training of all school administrators and accountants in August-September. These new regulations should help the NGS System avoid financial scandals and ensure that parents can trust schools to be scrupulous in their management of the funds received.

**Table 3.6: School Operating Costs and Projected Income at the End of 2023 (for Use in 2024)**

School Name	Local Support (Est.)	Total Operating Costs	% of Costs Locally Sustained
<b>Secondary Level</b>			
Preah Sisovath HS*	\$559,000	\$660,553	85%
Hun Sen Kg Cham HS	\$83,900	\$172,508	49%
Prek Leap HS*	\$286,000	\$314,550	91%
Prek Anchanh HS*	\$276,000	\$231,967	119%
Peam Chikong HS	\$147,000	\$229,742	64%
Kok Pring HS	\$30,000	\$61,620	49%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,381,900</b>	<b>\$1,670,940</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Primary Level</b>			
Demonstration School*	\$42,000	\$35,000	120%
Akhea Mahasei PS*	\$135,000	\$123,553	109%
Angkor Ban PS	\$13,500	\$46,594	29%
Svay Brahuot PS	\$22,800	\$43,200	55%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$213,300</b>	<b>\$244,347</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,595,000</b>	<b>\$1,904,287</b>	<b>84%</b>

\*Schools that have achieved or exceeded the funding target of 70% or more for sustained operation.

### 3.8 Rationalization of the School Investment Planning Process Update

An issue related to the rapid increase in community funding of all New Generation Schools relates to the process through which schools plan and program the funds at their disposal. During the three-year government investment cycle, most planning and programming decisions (especially those relating to capital expenditures and teacher incentives) were made by the New Generation School Central Office. Only about \$10,000 to \$20,000 was entrusted to schools for purposes of discretionary spending (e.g., School Improvement Planning). Now that most schools have shifted their reliance from government to community funding for most expenditures and with the rapid increase in available funds at their disposal, the New Generation School Office has had to move quickly to accelerate capacity-building efforts of all schools so that they can plan and program ALL funds in a rationalized manner with the school’s best interests

in mind. Such guidelines are laid out in the NGS Operational Guidelines as well as newly completed Financial Management Guidelines (see above). School planning protocols align with the accountability provisions in the New Generation School National Policy. Similarly, schools have been trained to adhere to guidelines that ensure a balance between capital, personnel, and general administrative expenditures. All this guidance takes the form of rationalized annual budget documents that provide the center point for the financial management regulations in the Financial Policy document described in Section 3.5 above.

### 3.9 Progress on NGS Building Renovations for 2024

Most of the funding for infrastructure renovations this year was allocated to Preah Angduong HS in Prey Veng and Aranh Rainsei HS in Siem Reap. This included the emplacement of 13 renovated classrooms, six science labs, two ICT labs, and two 21<sup>st</sup> Century Libraries. These facilities conform to the standards of other New Generation Schools and include state-of-the-art equipment and classroom configurations, as well as fully wired study environments to promote student research and inquiry-based learning. In this respect, the program spent \$123,085 on facilities in Preah Angduong HS and another \$82,963 at Aranh Rainsei HS, which is a somewhat smaller school (see **Annex 1** for more details on expenditure by school). In all, the project invested about \$206,048 in these new New Generation Schools. The renovated facilities will serve students studying in Grades 7 and 8. As NGS programming expands to serve more grade levels (Grade 9 will join the program in 2025), more classroom facilities will be renovated and furnished.

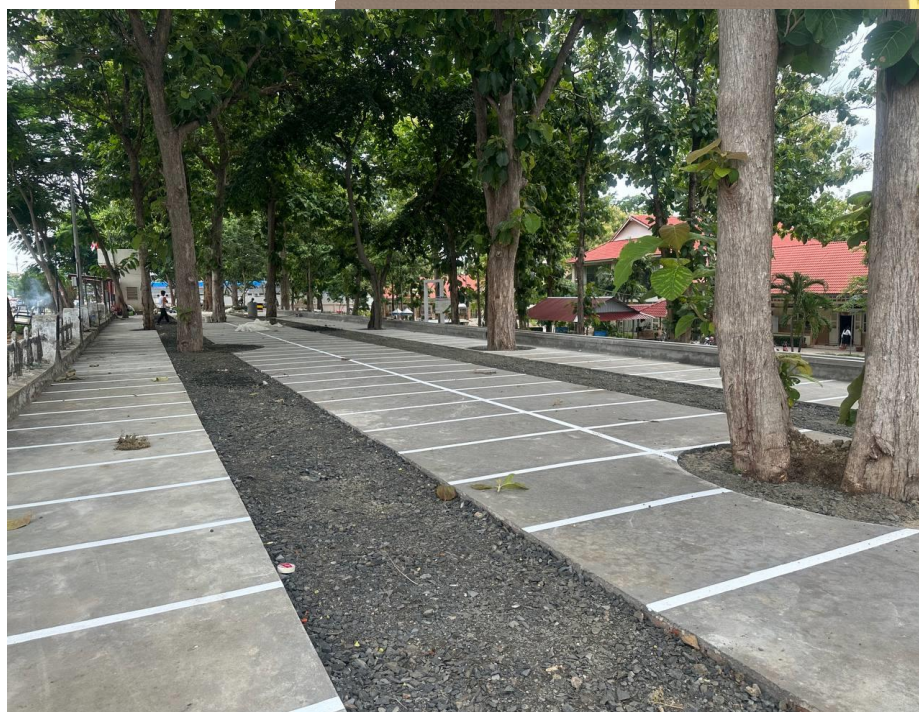


**Introducing New Library Designs:** A new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library at Aranh Rainsei HS introduces a new design that contrasts with earlier configurations.

Altogether, the program renovated 24 rooms in new NGS Sites that include modern libraries, computer labs, science labs, and color-coded subject classrooms, following innovations that were developed in previous renovations (see Table 3.7). Some of these renovations have improved on previous designs, which helps to make every New Generation School a bit different from other sites so that every school has its own unique identity. For example, library designs in new NGS sites have introduced new design features that are quite different from NGS libraries in other schools (see picture above). This evolution in design attests to the continued ability of NGS to be innovative and dynamic rather than falling back on overly standardized building designs as in other projects.

Although most funds this year were reserved for new NGS sites, the program did also reserve some special funds for extensive landscaping at Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS that integrates more parking space into the natural features of the school. Hun Sen Kampong Cham was the first New Generation School and the site where many innovative NGS design ideas were first introduced. The campus at Hun Sen Kampong Cham is unique for its size and natural setting, which seeks to integrate nature and school architecture. Recent investments in landscaping there have continued to support these previous trends in school architecture.

**Preserving Natural School Settings while Expanding Parking Facilities:** As Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS expands its enrollment, parking for new students has become a major issue. Recent investments in landscaping design at the school have succeeded in expanding parking while preserving the school's trees and natural settings. 📌



**Proposed new landscape design (above)**

**Actual emplacement of new parking areas at Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS, Kampong Cham Town. (left)**

**Table 3.7: Summary of On-going Renovations in Infrastructure in 2023**

School Name	Facilities Renovated											Total
	Non-science Classrooms	Science Labs	ICT Labs	Offices	Library	Bathroom	Wall painting (m2)	Clinic	Auditorium	Canteen	Landscape (m2)	
1. Preah Sisovath HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Yukanthor HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3. Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	695	--
4. Prek Leap HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
5. Prek Anchanh HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
6. Peam Chikong HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7. Kok Pring HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
8. Preah Andoung HS	7	3	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	13
9. Aranh Rangsei HS	6	3	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	12
10. Angkor Ban PS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
11. Akhea Mahasei PS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
12. Demonstration School (Kg Cham)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	325	--
13. Svay Prahout PS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>24 Rms</b>

## CASE STUDY: Transformation of Normal Schools into New Generation Schools



BEFORE ↗

Investments in new NGS sites such as Preah Angduong HS in Prey Veng and Aranh Rainsei HS in Siem Reap seek to create modern and attractive environments that promote student-led inquiry and research. School facilities need to support new methods of teaching and learning such as problem-based learning, project work, and inquiry-based learning. Access to technology and wired environments are essential to enable students to research projects and bring learning beyond the confines of the textbook. Students at Preah Angduong and Aranh Rainsei HS have so far adjusted very quickly to their new learning environments and are making maximum use of new facilities to acquire 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills.

AFTER ↘



↙ New science labs enable student demonstrations of their experiments as well as group-based inquiry in small groups. Student workstations each sit six students and provide access to a sink for experiments and an open work space that accommodates group work.

New computer labs in each school are well equipped with 30 workstations to introduce students to standard computer software, search engines, coding programs, and other technology. →



### 3.10 Exposure Visit to Thailand

This year's exposure visit is the third since the suspension of visits during the Covid19 Pandemic. The NGS Program has recommenced these exposure visits as an important means through which to broaden the horizons and understanding of New Generation School teachers and administrators by exposing them to new educational practices in other countries. The theme of this year's visit focused on differences in the organic model of school development among excellent schools in Thailand. This theme is important given the prominence of model school reforms in Cambodia today and discussions whether such development should be top-down or bottom-up (i.e., using an organic development model in which stakeholders determine their own development strategies). Using KAPE's extensive network of educators in Thailand, the NGS Central Office organized a study visit to three Thai schools in Buriram Province in late June/early July 2024. One of the reasons Buriram was chosen is because this is a Khmer-speaking province making it easier for Cambodian and Thai educators to communicate. Each of the schools visited demonstrates how they achieve high outcomes.



**Building Long-term Ties with Thailand:** The Director of Nang Rong HS (center) welcomes Cambodian school directors from Prek Anchanh, Santor Muk, Prek Leap, and Hun Sen Kq Cham HS.

- **Lamplaimat Pathana:** A famous independent school (with state support) in a rural setting that forbids competition but rather uses cooperation at all levels as the basis for improved student learning.
- **Chulaphorn Science High School:** This school is one of a network of schools that has patronage from the Thai Royal Family. Its approach is the total opposite of Lamplaimat Pathana School with a strong focus on high-powered learning in a very competitive environment.
- **Nang Rong High School:** A high-performing public school in a poor semi-urban area. This school achieves high results through its strong leadership where there is a strong bond between administrators and teachers. The School Director has strong relations with the community and teachers and is not averse to risk-taking, leading to an amazing level of performance.

The organization of the study tour in the way described above sought to demonstrate to teachers that there is more than one possible strategy to build a wonderful learning environment at one's school. This philosophy gets to the heart of what makes a New Generation School. That is, MoEYS seeks to use the NGS model to promote independent thinking and innovation at public schools by providing autonomy with accountability (i.e., Freedom in Structure). Another way of saying this is that there is no standardized formula for creating a 'good' school. Each school is expected to find its own way based on the desires and preferences of administrators, teachers, students, and communities.

This year's visit accommodated 115 Cambodian educators including teachers (75), administrators from multiple levels (37) and community members (3). Participants came from 11 New Generation Schools and two affiliated schools in Phnom Penh that seek to become New Generation Schools (i.e., Santor Muk HS and the Anuwat PS of NIE) (see Table 3.8). During the visit, Prek Leap HS, Prek Anchanh, Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS, and Peam Chikong HS

signed MoUs with several Thai schools to continue the dialogue started during the exposure visit.

**Table 3.8: Participation in Exposure Visits to Thailand, 2024**

School/Position	Location	School Administrators	Teachers	Community Members	PoE/DoE
1. Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS	Kampong Cham	1	9	0	0
2. Hun Sen Peamchikorng HS		1	5	0	0
3. Hun Sen Anuwath PS		0	2	0	0
4. Angkor Ban PS		0	2	0	0
5. Prek Leap HS	Phnom Penh	2	13	0	7
6. Santhor Muk HS*		2	4	0	0
7. Anuwat PS (NIE)*		2	3	0	0
8. Kourk Pring HS	Svay Rieng	3	5	0	1
9. Svay Prahout PS		3	0	0	0
10. Prek Anchan HS	Kandal	3	25	1	2
11. Preah Angduong HS	Prey Veng	4	0	0	1
12. Aranh Raingsey LSS	Siem Reap	1	2	1	0
13. Akkak Mahasei PS	Kampong Speu	4	5	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>
		<b>115</b>			

\*Not a New Generation School

### 3.11 New Collaborations, Partnerships, & Networking

The NGS System continued to do outreach and advocacy with both the public and private sector. During the reporting period, KAPE initiated a subproject within the NGS System that will promote skill development in gaming technology with funding from Lichtenstein Economic Development (LED) (see Section 3.19). The partnership with LED is new and will hopefully open new vistas of cooperation for digital education. KAPE also met with Educational Broadcasting of Cambodia, which operates an extensive communication network to promote important issues in education such as digital literacy, equitable access, and STEM learning. KAPE hopes that it can negotiate an MoU with EBC that will expand the ability of the NGS System to provide information to the general public about its philosophy and new initiatives to modernize the public school system in Cambodia. Through EBC, there have

also been extended conversations with the Ministry of Telecoms and Posts (MoTP) to expand investments in technology in New Generation Schools. KAPE met with representatives of the General Department of Information and Communication Technology of MoTP to share information about curriculum development, teacher training, and ongoing teacher support. MoTP is currently setting Community Tech Centers (CTC) and it is possible that one or more of these centers could be situated in or near a New Generation School. Finally, an NGS Delegation led by KAPE also met with the leadership of Rangsit University, a leading private university in Bangkok, to discuss an MoU that will focus on scholarships for NGS students and possible

#### Box 1: New & On-going Partnerships

- **LED** (Gaming Technology Grant Support)
- **Education Broadcasting of Cambodia:** (Educational Advocacy and Communication Networks)
- **Ministry of Telecommunications and Posts:** (Technology Investments)
- **Rangsit University, Bangkok:** (Scholarships for NGS Graduates; Research Cooperation with NGPRC-NIE)
- **East-West International School** (Pedagogical Exchanges)
- **HEAD Foundation** (STEM Education)
- **MangoSTEEMS** (Coding Curriculum)
- **InSTEDD** (Coding Curriculum)
- **Arduino:** (Electronics Club)
- **Meta** (ICT Curriculum Enhancement)
- **Tonthean Obrom:** Learning Aid and Book Production

research collaboration with NIE. A complete list of on-going partnerships with the NGS System is provided in Box 1.



*Reaching Out to Tertiary Institutions in Bangkok: A delegation of NGS staff led by KAPE meets with the directorate of Rangsit University to discuss closer cooperation with the NGS System.*

### **3.12 Upgrading Library Management (in 5 schools)**

The NGS Central Office undertook a new initiative in NGS libraries to further increase their efficiency by introducing a new library software called PMB (PhpMy Bibli). This new software enables librarians to save time managing their libraries by digitizing library services, catalogs, library user reports, and general management. Each system function allows librarians to create new documents, edit documentary records, and import data into Excel. The software costs 340 USD for just the software or 400 USD if one also buys a barcode scanner. The bar code scanner enables librarians to check out books easily and quickly with digitized reports of the status of each borrowed book. The PMB software was installed in six NGS target schools including Prek Anhchanh, Akkea Mahasei, Hun Sen Peam Chikorng, Preah Ang Duong, Kok Pring, and Svay Prohuot. Specific functions of the software include:

- **Streamlined Cataloging:** Digitized cataloging standards, which simplifies adding new materials to the library have



*Advanced Library Services: Improving services in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library in an NGS Setting.*



now been introduced. This reduces the time spent on manual data entry and ensures consistency across records.

- **Efficient Search and Retrieval:** Advanced search functionalities, which include thesaurus management and authority control make finding and retrieving information easier. This helps in answering patron queries more efficiently.
- **Automated Processes:** Features like the Z39.50 protocol may be used to import bibliographic records and the SDI for disseminating information, automating routine tasks, and freeing up time for more complex duties.
- **Integrated Digital Resource Management:** Managing electronic documents and digital resources within the same system reduces the need to switch between different platforms, streamlining your workflow.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** PMB's intuitive interface makes it easier for librarians to navigate and use the system, reducing the learning curve and minimizing errors.
- **Circulation Management:** Automated loan and return processes and real-time tracking of borrowed items help manage circulation efficiently. This reduces the time spent on manual tracking and follow-ups.
- **Reporting and Analytics:** PMB provides detailed reports and analytics on library usage, circulation statistics, and more. These insights can help in making informed decisions and improving library services.
- **Backup and Security:** Regular backups and robust security features ensure your data is safe, reducing the risk of data loss and the time spent on data recovery.

By automating routine tasks, improving data accuracy, and providing powerful tools for managing both physical and digital resources, the NGS Central Office believes that PMB can significantly enhance the efficiency of school libraries and allow librarians to focus more on engaging with students/teachers and improving library services. To facilitate the ability of libraries to use the PMB software, the project team organized a 4-day training workshop in Siem Reap in April 2024 to support NGS librarians in fully adopting the software program and create a Telegram User Group to ensure follow-up and troubleshooting support.

### 3.13 Leadership Training with CHOICE Center

The Choice Center, also known as Light Over Light & Co Ltd, is a research and training delivery firm focused on helping organizations, companies and educational institutions evolve, sustain, and grow their ideas into high performing activities. The CHOICE Center is a Malaysian-based firm that specializes in innovative educational leadership training. The NGS Central Office entered into a partnership with the center during the reporting period to support new leadership training activities for NGS school managers and mentors. Between January and June 2024, the CHOICE Center has initiated several workshops at the New Generation Pedagogical Research Center involving educators from all New Generation Schools as well as KAPE staff on new and innovative topics relating to education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These workshops use a mentoring format in which the



**Using a Mentoring Approach to Train Cambodian Educators:** Facilitators (in yellow) from the CHOICE Center work with NGS educators to expand their portfolio of skills that promote educational innovation.

trainers form a bond with develops a personal relationship with each participant so that they can act as a sounding board for self-development. Training topics include the 13 Commandments of Great Teachers, Peer Learning, What Makes a Great Teacher, and other topics developed especially for the NGS System.

### 3.14 Project Work Fairs in Planning

The organization of project work fairs are an important tradition in the NGS System and are scheduled every year by nearly all New Generation Schools. These fairs provide students a chance to display their projects that result from schools’ embrace of Constructivist Learning

methodologies in which students create their own knowledge products. The format of the fairs allow students to share their research and provide coherent explanations of what they have produced, how they researched it, how they chose the topic, and what problem it might address/solve. The fairs themselves give a sense of pride to the school in terms of how much their students have learned and also demonstrates to parents that schools are providing their children with an excellent education. This year, 2,370 projects involving over 7,000 students are in planning and will mostly occur during fairs scheduled for the second semester (see Table 3.9). Some schools like Preah Sisovath, Yukanthor, Prek Leap, Peam Chikong HS went ahead of schedule and organized very successful fairs in June 2024 while most other schools have indicated that they will do their fairs in July-August 2024. This even includes newly inaugurated New Generation Schools in Prey Veng and Siem Reap.



**Project Work Fair at Yukanthor HS:** The Deputy Prime Minister visits the Project Work Fair organized at Yukanthor HS.

**Table 3.9: Planning for Student Project Work**

School Name	Planned Dates for School Fair	Estimated Students	Number of Planned Group Projects
<b>Secondary Schools</b>			
1. Preah Sisowath HS	22 <sup>nd</sup> June, 2024	1017 students	379
2. Yukanthor HS	22 <sup>nd</sup> June, 2024	1129 students	385
3. Prek Leap HS	29 <sup>th</sup> June, 2024	1020 Students	270
4. Chea Sim Prek Anchan HS	22 <sup>nd</sup> June, 2024	948 students	254
5. Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS	24 <sup>th</sup> August, 2024	368 students	120
6. Hun Sen Peam Chikong HS	15 <sup>th</sup> August, 2024	689 students	250
7. Aranh Rongsei LSS	28 <sup>th</sup> September, 2024	140 students	60
8. Preah Angdoug HS	31 <sup>st</sup> August, 2024	157 students	70

School Name	Planned Dates for School Fair	Estimated Students	Number of Planned Group Projects
9. Kork Pring HS	27 <sup>th</sup> July, 2024	217 students	120
<b>Primary Schools</b>			
10. Anuwath Hun Sen PS	24 <sup>th</sup> August, 2024	245 students	72
11. Angkor Ban PS	No planning yet	267 students	80
12. Preareach Akkak Mahasei PS	20 <sup>th</sup> July, 2024	765 students	230
13. Svay Prahut PS	27 <sup>th</sup> July, 2024	208 students	80
<b>Total/Average</b>	--	<b>7,170 students</b>	<b>2,370</b>

### 3.15 National NGS Oversight Board Meeting

The National NGS Oversight Board met at Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS to hold its semi-annual review meeting with all stakeholders who are implementing NGS programming. This included representatives from multiple MoEYS departments, KAPE, school principals, and POE representatives. An agenda for the meeting, chaired by the National NGS Board Chairperson, H.E. Lao Chao Vanna, can be found in **Annex 2**. The meeting reviewed performance of New Generation Schools across many metrics, especially the national Bac II Examination where some schools like Peam Chikong HS underperformed badly in the most recent test administration. The Board was also briefed on the expansion of the program into new provinces and was happy about the expeditious pace of implementation in which NGS programming had become operational in a very short period of time considering that infrastructure improvements were still on-going.



*Mr. Aun Touch, representative of the Ministry of Economy & Finance and NGS Board Member, provides guidance to NGS about financial reporting and governance during a National Board Meeting.*

### 3.16 Collaboration with UNICEF on Local Life Skills Education

The NGS System was brought into close collaboration with UNICEF to pilot Phase 1 of an expansion of national Local Life Skills Education (LLSE) programming. This cooperation was achieved through an official contract awarded to KAPE by UNICEF to help implement national LLSE programming. As part of this cooperation, several New Generation Schools participated in baseline testing on multiple soft skills using test instruments developed jointly by KAPE, MoEYS, and UNICEF. The present section reviews student performance on this baseline test administration on three soft skills areas, namely Critical Thinking, Communication, and Self-Management. Performance scores are presented across different school types including New Generation Schools, current LLSE pilot sites (supported by UNICEF), Room to Read sites, and new sites that will join the LLSE pilot in 2025. Performance on baseline tests is expressed as a percentage mean score for each set of schools participating in the test (see Table 3.10). NGS students tended to perform quite well on this test in comparison to other schools receiving investment and in fact ranked number 1 at secondary school level for all three skill sets that

were tested, i.e., Critical Thinking – 72%; Self-Management – 68%; and Communication – 69%). Primary schools also achieved a rank of 1 on two test batteries, i.e., Critical Thinking – 55% and Communication 61% while ranking third for Self-Management – 55%. While these results are only a baseline and will be followed up by post-testing in Phase 2 implementation (which KAPE is also contracted to implement), they do demonstrate the high performance and learning standards among students learning in a New Generation School setting.

**Table 3.10: Overview of LLSE Test Results by School Type Mean Score across All Skill Tests (N=1,982)**

School Thpe	Primary Level Mean Scores			Secondary Level Mean Scores		
	Critical Thinking	Self-Management	Communication	Critical Thinking	Self-Management	Communication
Control	45% (2)	56% (2)	53% (2)	62% (3)	65% (3)	64% (3)
LLSE (Current Sites)	45% (2)	58% (1)	53% (2)	69% (2)	67% (2)	67% (2)
NGS	55% (1)	55% (3)	61% (1)	72% (1)	68% (1)	69% (1)
RtR	--	--	--	57% (5)	64% (4)	61% (4)
New Treatment Sites	45% (2)	54% (4)	53% (2)	60% (4)	65% (3)	64% (3)
<b>Average</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>65%</b>

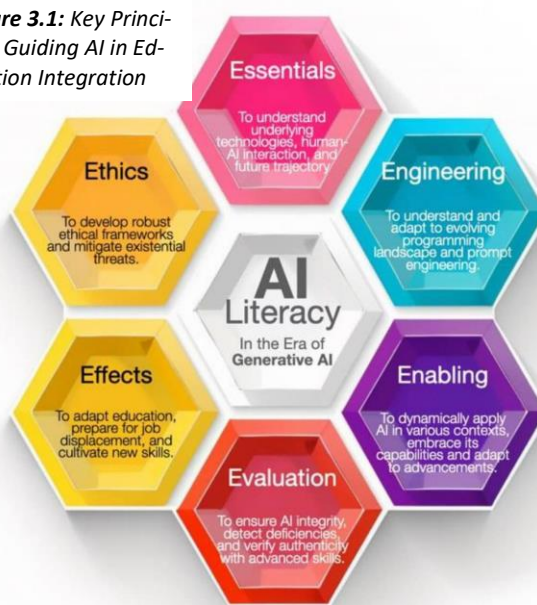
\*Rank is indicated parenthetically

### 3.17 Artificial Intelligence in Education Initiative

At the request of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Central NGS Office was invited to nominate representatives to sit on a new national taskforce that seeks to help MoEYS integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR) into the education process in public schools.

The taskforce comprises representatives from multiple departments. NGS representatives affiliated with KAPE have taken a leading role in this taskforce and have proposed a number of new initiatives that will help to jumpstart the AI/AR integration process. Given the focus of the *Education World Forum* in London on ‘AI in Education’ attended by NGS representatives earlier in the year (see Section 3.20), NGS believes it can bring to bear some of its extensive exposure to the latest ideas and trends about AI in education that were discussed at the London Conference (see Figure 3.1). This included an orientation about the recently developed *AI Guidance for Schools Toolkit* that was presented at the conference (cf. <https://www.teachai.org/toolkit>). Although the taskforce was only recently established in June 2024, the NGS Central Office has already started to move forward with a number of concrete initiatives that are summarized in Box 2. The NGS Central Office believes that it can resource these initiatives through KAPE’s extensive ICT network with the private sector that includes the ASEAN Foundation, Google, and Meta.

**Figure 3.1: Key Principles Guiding AI in Education Integration**



**Box 2: Proposed Initiatives to Foster AI/AR in Education Integration**

1. Recruit 65 Master AI Trainers and provide them with 20 hours of hybrid training on AI
2. Roll out the *AI Ready ASEAN Campaign* to 80,000 stakeholders including youth, educators, and/or parents using content from [Code.org](https://code.org) in selected schools/universities;
3. Localize the 3 AI Literacy Modules from the AI Guidance Toolkit, which will be linked with AI in Education Guidelines developed by MoEYS.
4. Organize a National Roundtable Discussion on AI Literacy for Youth, NGOs, Universities, MoEYS and other relevant stakeholders. This would be a good forum to introduce all localized materials on AI/AR.

## NGS Secondary School Level

### 3.18 Commencement of NGS Expansion in Siem Reap & Prey Veng

As noted earlier, the addition of two large secondary schools to the NGS System has been a major focus of activity during the first six months of 2024. This is the first major expansion of the NGS System since 2018 and may signal additional major investment in widening public access to the high quality of education offered by a New Generation School. With the expansion of NGS programming to Siem Reap (Aranh Ransei HS) and Prey Veng (Preah Angduong HS), the number of provinces with a New Generation School has grown from five to seven. As many as eight additional New Generation Schools may also be established through a loan from the Asian Development Bank in the near future. Investment in Prey Veng and Siem Reap has started with over \$200,000 in infrastructure and furniture upgrading as well as extensive teacher training along with mentoring support. The expansion started initially with only two grade levels (Grades 7 and 8) but will expand each year with additional grade levels so that by the end of a period of several years, the whole school will be able to access NGS services.



**Project Work:** Students in Siem Reap work on a project where they build a circuit linked to a light bulb.

### 3.19 Gaming Technology Development Skills Accelerator Initiative Update

The DViTSA Project is funded by Lichtenstein Economic Development and has been in progress since January 2024. The project focuses on providing students with skills in gaming technology and has achieved several key activity milestones during the last six months. Key milestones include the finalization and expansion of the DViTSA curriculum (132 hours) and the development of competency assessment to monitor student learning (cf. attached link for an example of student-developed products: <http://bit.ly/4e6wemP>). The project also identified 4 schools in which to emplace the DViTSA Project through a process of stakeholder consultation. Target schools include Preah Sisovat where the original pilot took place last year, Prek Leap HS, Yukanthor HS, and Hun Kampong Cham HS. A total of 9 teachers were recruited across each of these schools and are currently being trained by project mentors to implement the recently revised curriculum. Student surveys have been organized in each target school during the reporting period indicating reasonable demand for the implementation of the new gamification curriculum. Labs meeting gamification specifications have also been installed in each of the schools identified above (18 specialized workstations with Mac-Minis) and firm planning is in progress to integrate gamification courses into the school timetable.



**Expanding Teachers' Skills Set:** ICT teachers attend an orientation on how to use the recently developed gaming platform that students will start to access in Semester 2.

Although, the highest priority has been put on project implementation in target schools, the project has nevertheless sought to build a network of related institutions that may be able to amplify the use of the gamification curriculum. Plans are in place for a Launch Ceremony in September 2024 that will involve the MoEYS, development partners, and representatives from private schools and the private sector such as Sabai Code and Educational Broadcasting Cambodia (EBC).

### 3.20 PISA Boost Initiative

Cambodia has been participating in the Program for International Student Assessment or PISA since 2017 with the most recent test administration occurring in 2022. Cambodia generally does very poorly on these tests among the 15-year-olds who participate with only 8 to 12% of students able to demonstrate minimum competency in tested subjects (see Table 3.11). Although scores are not broken down by school, the New Generation Schools that have participated in these tests demonstrate generally high performance in comparison to the rest of the country though to be sure, private schools participating in the test also do very well. Public schools on the other hand perform very poorly. The PISA test administration report indicates that high student performance in other countries tends to be linked with school autonomy (see Box 3), which suggests that the autonomous school strategy embodied by the New Generation School movement is the right strategy for MoEYS to pursue in order to raise PISA scores.

In order to raise PISA scores, KAPE has suggested to MoEYS that it work with researchers to better understand how to build a strategy based on empirical evidence that would improve students' test performance on international measures. In response to these suggestions, KAPE and an MoEYS representative attended the Education World Forum in London in May 2024 to network with various education stakeholders about PISA performance. This led to several meetings in London with such agencies as Cambridge Partnership for Education (CPE), which is the gold standard for educational research. KAPE and the NGS Central Office are currently trying to follow up on these leads in order to better prepare for the next PISA test administration in 2025.

*Cambodia Delegation from NGS/MoEYS networking with international education stakeholders at the Education World Forum in London. ➔*

#### Box 3: Student Test Performance & School Autonomy

In Cambodia, 14% of students attended a school where principals had the main responsibility for hiring teachers (OECD average: 60%), and 61% were enrolled in a school where teachers had the main responsibility for choosing which learning materials are used (OECD average: 76%). Many high performing school systems tend to entrust principals and teachers with these responsibilities. -PISA 2022 Results, Vol 1 & 2, Phnom Penh, 2023

Table 3.11: PISA Results in Cambodia 2017, 2022<sup>8</sup>

Subject	Students demonstrating minimum competence or higher	
	2017	2022
Reading	8%	8%
Mathematics	10%	12%
Science	--	10%



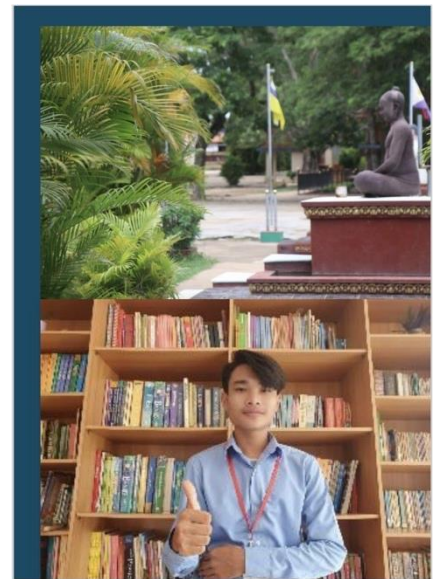
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/pisa/cambodia.html>

### 3.21 Student Authored Books in Libraries Update

One of the initiatives started last year to promote student writing was an agreement with the Printing House of ThonThean Obrom (TTO) to print the best books written by students who are members of a Creative Writing Club. Last year, a large number of books were written by students from various schools of which the best 147 titles were chosen and printed. This year, only 17 titles were printed, mainly from Kok Pring HS and Preah Angduong HS (see Table 3.12). It is expected that many more books will be reviewed and printed by TTO by the end of the year. Once books have been printed, they are marketed to the libraries of New Generation Schools where special collections of student-authored books are available for other students to read. This innovative practice serves several purposes. For example, it helps to inspire pride and encouragement among those student authors who get published; it helps to inspire other students to strive to write their own books; and it helps to enrich the collections of school libraries with a wealth of new Khmer literature, especially since the availability of books written in Khmer is very small. The print list provided below will be updated in the next semester report.

**Table 3.12: Printed Books Authored by Students**

School	Number of Printed Titles (2023)	Number of Printed Titles (2024)
1. Preah Sisovath HS	36	--
2. Prek Leap HS	37	--
3. Prek Anchanh HS	20	--
4. Svay Prahut PS	2	--
5. Kok Pring HS	3	15
6. Peam Chikong HS	27	--
7. Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS	11	--
8. Hun Sen Anuvat PS	8	--
9. Akhea Mahasei PS	3	--
10. Preah Angduong HS	--	2
11. Aranh Rainsei HS	--	--
12. Angkor Ban PS	--	--
13. Yukanthor HS	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>17</b>



↑ A student author from Kok Pring HS.



← Some samples of student authored books from Kok Pring HS that were recently published by TTO and displayed at the school's recent Project Work Fair.

### 3.22 MoU Agreements with Universities & Private Sector Update

As part of the NGS experience for students, secondary schools are encouraged to do advocacy with universities both in and outside of Cambodia to increase the exposure and opportunities for post-secondary study among New Generation School students. So far, five secondary schools within the NGS system have established such relationships with tertiary institutions as far abroad as China, the United States, and Singapore (see Table 3.13). For the three schools that have not yet established such contacts (mostly located in rural areas), the NGS Central Office will try to help with advocacy in order to enrich the NGS experience for students reaching the end of their secondary school studies.



**MoU Signing:** The Director of Prek Leap HS signs an MoU with the CEO Institute, which will expand the post-secondary study options for students.

**Table 3.13: Number of Universities That Have Signed MoUs with New Generation Schools**

Secondary School	Universities that Have Signed MoUs	Number of Institutions
1. Preah Sisovath HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jung Won University (JWU)</li> <li>• KMUTT, SoA+D</li> <li>• Harbin Institute of Technology ASEAN High School</li> <li>• HWPL Peace Academy</li> <li>• Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology</li> <li>• Aceleda Business Institute</li> <li>• Travinh University</li> <li>• East Asia Management University</li> <li>• Cam Tech University</li> <li>• The University of Wisconsin Green-Bay</li> <li>• ECIC-IMI International Management Institute</li> </ul>	11
2. Prek Leap HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aceleda Business Institute</li> <li>• Cam Tech University</li> <li>• East Asia Management University</li> <li>• Angelo State University</li> <li>• Kirirrom Institute of Technology</li> <li>• CEO Institute</li> <li>• LSI Business School</li> <li>• Harbin Institute of Technology</li> </ul>	8
3. Hun Sen Kampong Cham HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cam Tech University</li> <li>• East Asia Management University</li> <li>• University of Management &amp; Economy</li> <li>• Angelo State University</li> </ul>	4
4. Peam Chikong HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aceleda Business Institute</li> <li>• Cam Tech University</li> <li>• East Asia Management University</li> </ul>	3
5. Prek Anchanh HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cam Tech University</li> <li>• East Asia Management University</li> <li>• Aceleda Business Institute</li> <li>• Angelo State University</li> </ul>	4
6. Kok Pring HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• --</li> </ul>	--
7. Preah Angduong HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• --</li> </ul>	--
8. Aranh Rainsei HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• --</li> </ul>	--
<b>Total Institutions Linked with NGS</b>		<b>16 Institutions</b>



### 3.23 NGS Exhibition on Advanced Teaching Methodologies

MoEYS requested the NGS Central Office to set up a booth showcasing innovative teacher training and reform initiatives to mark the inauguration of the Phnom Penh Teacher Education Center (PTEC) on 4 July 2024. The booth sought to highlight the government's commitment to empowering educators with the latest pedagogical methods and fostering a culture of continuous professional development. The booth showcased five key components of MoEYS' teacher training and reform efforts that are a key part of NGS programming including:

1. **Modern Teaching Methods:** Introducing effective approaches like constructivism, flipped learning, and project-based work, aligned with the 21st Century Pedagogical Framework.
2. **ICT Tools & AI in Education:** Demonstrating how technology like digital learning resources, apps, and AI tools can enhance teaching, learning, and assessment.
3. **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Mentoring:** Promoting programs that equip teachers with ongoing skills development and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
4. **STEM Education:** Highlighting initiatives that encourage Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics education, fostering innovation and critical thinking skills in students.
5. **Improved School Leadership:** Showcasing strategies for developing strong school leadership through effective management and collaboration practices.

The exhibition provided a great opportunity for New Generation School programming to demonstrate the many publications that it has produced, the effective applications of new methodologies in real settings that support good governance, and the many innovations in methodology that have been promoted over the years. The exhibition was visited by many prominent people including the Deputy Prime Minister and many educators from both the private and public

**NGS Methodology Exhibit at PTEC:** NGS educators receive important education officials including the Minister of MoEYS and Secretary of State to explain some of the new educational methodologies promoted by New Generation Schools. This included the use of ICT in the teaching-learning process, Problem-based Learning, Project Work, and other key methodologies that are essential to build a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy. 🖱



🖱 H.E. Hang Chuon Naron, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport, visits the NGS Exhibit (above).

H.E Kim Sethany, Secretary of State, comes by to say hello to teachers at the NGS Exhibit (left).

## NGS Primary School Level

### 3.24 General Overview of New Generation Primary School Operations

Enrollment across New Generation Primary Schools remained generally stable across at 2,444 students, down slightly from 2,452 in the previous year. Most schools saw slight declines in their enrollment year on year except for the Demonstration School in Kampong Cham, which actually saw an increase of 103 students (or 23%) in the current academic year (see Table 3.14). This increase is due to the availability of more classrooms and teachers at the school. As a result of the slight decline in enrollment as well as a small increase in the number of teachers, PCR and PTR levels were tapped down somewhat with PCR now equal to 33:1 while PTR is down to 20:1. This is an important development as accreditation reports indicate that PCR levels in some schools were reaching dangerously high levels. Under rules for accreditation, schools may not exceed a PCR level of more than 36:1, which is required to prevent overcrowding as well as any detrimental impact on modern teaching methods (that work best with smaller class sizes).



**Advantages of Small Class Sizes:** A small group of primary school students listen to a documentary on personal health in the school library.

**Table 3.14: Change in School Statistics, 2023 to 2024**

Province	School	Student Enrollment		Classes		Teachers	
		2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Kampong Cham	Demonstration School	446	549	13	15	21	25
	Angkor Ban PS	361	336	12	12	22	22
Kampong Speu	Akhea Mahasei PS	1,268	1,194	36	36	54	54
Svay Rieng	Svay Prahuet PS	377	365	11	11	19	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 Schools</b>	<b>2,452</b>	<b>2,444</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>120</b>

### 3.25 Participation in School Competitions

New Generation Primary Schools have been very active in terms of alerting their students to participation in both national and international contests. This includes contests on reading, mathematics, technology, children’s rights, and other areas. Such competitions are very stimulative for student learning, build confidence, and increase the profile of the school in the eyes of the public. Some of the recent competitions that have taken place during the academic year so far include the following:

- Hun Sen Anuvat PS students in Kampong Cham recently won 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in a province-level reading contest.
- Angkor Ban PS students participated in a province-level competition on Child Protection and Gender Equality in which they developed a promotional video on the topic.<sup>9</sup> The students received 1<sup>st</sup> Prize for their knowledge product.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/tuDsYcGG7gMvkXh5/?mibextid=KsPBc6>

- Angkor Ban PS students in Grade 6 also participated in a girls' competition sponsored by Technovation in which they developed a learning app on mathematics, mainly as a result of their participation in the program's coding program.
- Svay Brahuot PS students in Svay Rieng are participating in mathematics contest sponsored by *Think! Think!*

### 3.26 Sharing the Lessons of Full Day Programming in NGS

One of the key elements of the superior learning program in New Generation Primary Schools is the requirement that students study for six hours per day as per international standards. In this respect, students study from 7 to 11 AM and again from 2 to 4 PM. The extra time that has been built into the NGS framework at primary level empowers both teachers and students do many more things than is usually possible in an abbreviated school day, which is only four hours per day including 40 minutes for breaks. The extra time enables students to do research in the library while they are still in school, as well as life skills, ICT lab work, project work, and club activities. Full-day programming did not add much to student learning when it was first piloted by the Primary Education Department several years ago because there was no clear framework or structure that would ensure teachers and students would spend the extra time on substantive activities. New Generation Primary Schools have avoided this mistake by having very clear guidance for teachers and students about how they should spend the extra time. Given this history, a delegation from the World Bank visited Akhea Mahasei PS in Kampong Speu to better understand how New Generation Schools program the extra time provided for student learning. The hope is that they can replicate the framework developed in NGS primary schools in the General Education Improvement Program, which is funded by the Bank.



**Full-day Learning Promotes Life Skills Education:** New Generation Primary Schools have advanced facilities to promote many kinds of life skills, which is further facilitated by the extra time during the school day.

### 3.27 School Clinics Established in All New Generation Primary Schools

The establishment of student clinics is one of the important features of a New Generation School and makes up one of the many important services available to students in such schools along with library services, ICT services, life skills education, clubs, wired classrooms, and other services that enrich children's learning experience. Student clinics are now available at all New Generation Primary Schools and are open both morning and afternoon. In some



**Clinic Services for Children:** All primary schools in the New Generation School System provide basic health services such as basic examinations when students are sick and first aid.

cases, one clinic serves both the primary school and a secondary school that shares the same campus. The clinics are well furnished and equipped with basic medical instruments to measure blood pressure, monitor breathing and heart rate, etc. Each clinic is staffed by a registered nurse and provide assurance to parents that their children are well taken care of when at school.

### **3.28 Achieving Accredited NGS Status**

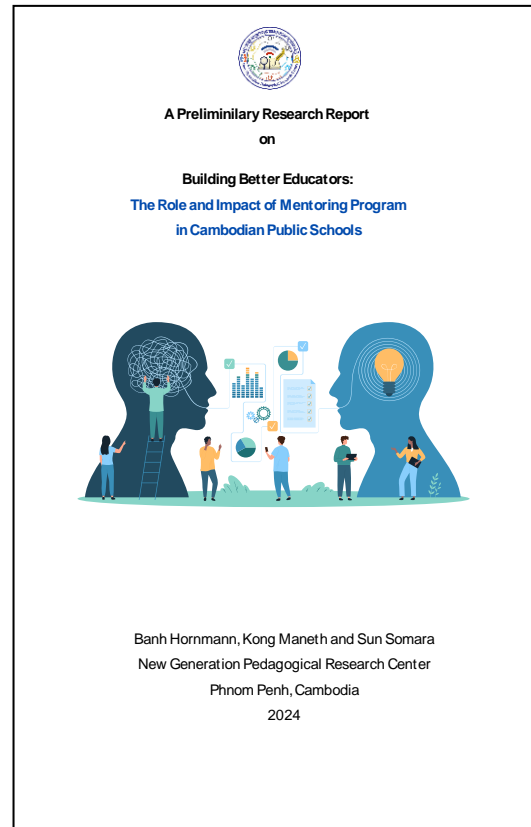
Most New Generation Primary Schools have retained their accredited status with the exception of Angkor Ban PS, which did not pass its probation earlier in the year due to the refusal of the school director to adopt approved practices of financial management. Although the school generally receives high marks for the quality of its teachers and mentor as well as a very well-run library, there is a problem with management. The report on the failure of the school to pass probation is now sitting with the National Oversight Board, which has been asked to delay action by the Primary Education Department until it can convince the school director to comply with financial management standards, which may require alerting the District and Provincial Governor of the problem as they are only ones who can make a decisive personnel decision at the school.



**Promoting ICT in Education:** *The use of technology in the teaching-learning process is a major focus of NGS programming, even at the primary school level. Such experience helps to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century work place.*

### 3.29 Planning for New Mentor Intake in 2024

The NGPRC was planning for a 6<sup>th</sup> intake of master’s degree candidates for 2025; however, the intake is now pending with the Ministry of Public Servants unless the Center can provide justification for funding by producing an independent assessment report demonstrating the effectiveness of the mentoring program. An internal assessment report (see inset) was already produced for this purpose, but it has been rejected because it was not conducted by an external consultant. It is not clear whether an assessment report of this magnitude could be prepared in the short amount of time remaining until the start of the academic term nor how such an assessment could be funded, unless KAPE makes available internal funds for the purpose. This recent decree further tightens the screws on the Center’s autonomy and academic freedom and could be an existential threat to its institutional viability. KAPE will seek to review the decision-making process leading to this point with the MoEYS to better understand what is driving the thinking described above.



### 3.30 Implementation of the Face-to-Face Practicum in 2024

The face-to-face three-month practicum for the 5<sup>th</sup> Cohort of degree candidates was originally planned to take place in three different schools, namely Preah Yukunthor HS (an NGS site), Chea Sim Sonthor Mok HS (a school that plans to eventually apply for NGS accreditation), and Anuwat PS at NIE. However, since the commencement of the new academic year has been moved up from January 2025 to November 2024, at least one of the schools on this list plans to close early (i.e., Sonthor Mok HS) requiring the identification of a substitute school while the other two schools will still be in operation during the practicum period. The Center has, therefore, chosen a private school known as the *Angkor Intellectual Academy* to stand in as the third school. The administrators of this school seem excited to partner with the Center for this purpose and look forward to prospective mentors working with their teachers to help improve their practice.

### 3.31 Development of a Prakas to Give Official Recognition of Mentors within the Education System

As part of its efforts to gain official recognition of the role of mentors within the education system, the Center has been working closely with MoEYS to better systematize the description of the master’s degree program in mentoring along with multiple supporting documents. This

includes developing a clear Terms of Reference for Mentors (adapted from the ToR produced for NGS Mentors), systematizing guidelines for the implementation of mentoring services, developing mentoring tools that will provide guidelines for mentoring and daily practice, and preparing a concept note entitled, *Mentoring in Cambodia and the Role of the NGPRC*. In addition, the Center has reviewed and revised the master’s degree curriculum framework for the mentoring program, which was already a substantial document. All of this has been done in close collaboration with the Policy Department of the MoEYS as well as through consultations with other stakeholders such as the Cambodian Association of Mentoring (CAM) and colleagues at the National Institute of Education (e.g., the Education Justice Commission chaired by H.E. Nath Bunroeun). All of this documentation has been gathered and submitted to the leadership of MoEYS for review and approval. Although the MoEYS leadership has agreed and endorsed the idea that the status of Mentors should be equivalent to that of Inspectors, it has deferred a final determination of this issue to the Ministry of Public Servants. Should this lead to final approval of the decree, it would enable an increase in the salary of individuals who are awarded a Master’s Degree in Mentoring.

### 3.32 Development of a Pedagogical Magazine for Circulation to Schools

One of the special activities that the Center has been working on during the semester relates to the development of a pedagogical magazine that would not be a research journal but rather a lay publication for educators at school, district, and province level. The magazine will be published online as a ‘webzine’ to share case studies of good pedagogical practices as well as provide educational tips. Although the magazine will mostly be written in Khmer to reach the largest audience possible, some articles may also appear in English. The goals of the magazine are to (i) bridge the gap in access to pedagogical knowledge for Cambodian teachers; and (ii) serve as a platform to share effective educational practices with practical activity examples. The magazine will have a creative design and will have sections that are organized using the same pattern as a school (e.g., classroom section, mentor office, library, admin office, playground, ICT lab, etc.). Each section will contain articles on that particular part of the school.

The magazine name nominated by the most people in a large survey of educators was *Key to Education* or *Konleuh Obrom* (see inset for possible magazine logo). The magazine will be published twice a year starting by the end of 2024.



### 3.33 Research Activities Organized by the NGPRC

The Center has also been very active in terms of its animation of various research activities. As noted above, the Center developed an impact study on the mentoring program implemented under NGS. At the same time, the Center has entered into a partnership with Texas A&M University in which it will contribute book chapters to a new publication being developed by the university on *Mentoring and Action Research*. Such activities very much help to raise the profile of both the Center as well as NIE. Finally, the Center continues to provide tech support to master’s degree candidates in Cohort 5 who are working on their theses as part of their degree requirements. This year, candidate theses will be presented as part of a Research Proposal Fair and published for archiving along with the theses produced by graduates from Cohorts 1 to 4.

## 4. CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD

### 4.1 Declines in Sustained Income in Selected Schools

The spread of fake news by rogue news outlets in Kampong Cham Province in 2023 relating to the legality of New Generation Schools to solicit voluntary payments from parents has led to a directive from MoEYS to suspend all parental payments to Peam Chikong HS starting from 2024. While many parents have voluntarily continued to pay support fees to the school, contributions are now down as there is some confusion in the community whether they need to pay or not. The number of contributions from parents in Peam Chikong has declined to \$146,000 (including funds raised in 2023 before the cease and desist directive from MoEYS) to sustain annual operational costs of \$229,742. This means that current contributions will only cover 64% of operations. To make up for the shortfall, MoEYS provided an additional one-time \$172,000 in supplementary funds for Peam Chikong HS and other schools with similar shortfalls. Indeed, there are several New Generation Schools, mostly in rural areas, that raise less than 60% of the funds needed to maintain yearly operations while 70% coverage has been set as the national target for all New Generation Schools to claim sustainability (the remainder to be covered by state subsidies to ensure that non-paying poor students can continue to enroll in equitable numbers). This includes Kok Pring HS (parental contributions cover 49% of operations), Angkor Ban PS (29%), and Svay Brahuot PS (55%). Shortfalls are currently made up from subsidies from the program or special (one-time) supplementary funds received from MoEYS. Thus, the current freeze on parental contributions (for some schools targeted by rogue media) will be a major challenge for future sustainability of programming.



***Negotiating Sustainability:** NGS meets with parents at a New Generation School to negotiate their voluntary support.*

### 4.2 Major Budget Constraints Have Emerged as a Result of Program Expansion

Although the program has achieved many savings by shifting many school support costs to parents and ending most infrastructure investments in older New Generation Schools, there has nevertheless been a considerable strain on the project's overall budget as a result of the decision to expand NGS programming to additional schools in two more provinces (i.e., Siem Reap and Prey Veng). Altogether, more than \$200,000 had to be shifted to new schools (mostly for infrastructure investments) while simultaneously providing subsidies to additional New Generation Schools that just joined the program who were previously supported by Child Fund Cambodia (i.e., Kok Pring HS and Svay Brahuot PS). As investments in newly added schools continue to grow as more grade levels join NGS programming (e.g., Grade 9 in 2025), these strains will continue to grow, especially if parental support is not allowed to grow and the current state budget remains static. Nevertheless, KAPE was able to achieve enough savings to enable the expansion to proceed as planned in 2024. It should



***Renovations at a new NGS site in Siem Reap.***

also be noted that a slight increase in the budget for 2025 has also tentatively been approved by MoEYS/MoEF with a hoped for confirmation in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter.

### 4.3 Collapse in the Ability of NGPRC to Post Trained Mentors in NGS Sites

A major problem has occurred at the New Generation Pedagogical Research Center that will severely undermine its effectiveness as a training institution. This refers to a recent decision handed down by MoEYS and the National Institute of Education during the semester requiring all trained mentors in the current cohort to return to their school of origin rather than being posted to New Generation Schools or other schools where they are needed and where an institutional framework is in place to ensure their effectiveness. In the past, institutions in need of trained mentors would coordinate with the Center and the Department of Human Resources to organize placements of trained mentors to posts where they were most needed. For example, 8 mentors are needed to staff recently established New Generation Schools in Prey Veng and Siem Reap. Now, mentors intended for these schools will simply return to their schools of origin and go back into the classroom with little scope to use the mentoring skills that they have acquired (at considerable cost to the government). This represents a huge loss of investment in their one-year training and will create a major challenge for the NGS Central Office to provide mentors to New Generation Schools that need them. KAPE has found that when mentors are assigned to schools or institutions that lack an institutional support framework for mentoring (e.g., laptop, a physical office, incentive pay, support from school director to observe teachers, etc.), they are generally underutilized.<sup>10</sup> Thus, there will be huge dislocation in the NGS System as a result of recent-decision-making.

In order to address the challenges created by recent decision-making, KAPE has proposed consideration of certain specific strategies to ensure the continued relevance of the NGPRC to the needs of the New Generation School System. These interim strategies are summarized in Box 4. KAPE is not certain whether the recent decision-making that freezes the placement of teachers is a short-term measure while the Civil Service Commission undertakes a census of all teachers or whether this is a permanent decision. KAPE hopes to get clarification from the Ministry regarding this very difficult situation.

#### Box 4: Interim Strategies to Address the Mentor Placement Challenges That Have Recently Arisen

1. **Local Recruitment:** The Center should consider recruitment directly from New Generation Schools that need mentors, especially proposed new NGS sites that will be supported by the ADB StepUp Project. This may present a challenge by diluting the Center's entrance standards, which will lead to lower quality graduates. Nevertheless, the Center should assess whether there are any good candidates in target schools who would meet established standards.
2. **Private Sector Candidates:** The Center should consider aggressively recruiting private, non-state candidates because this would give the NGS System full freedom to allocate such candidates anywhere that they may be needed. The challenge for this option is that New Generation Schools would need to fund their full salaries, which will be expensive. Nevertheless, many New Generation Schools are in a good position to fund such salaries, especially if the NGS Program can generate savings to help subsidize these salaries. The Center would also need to determine how much to charge these candidates in terms of tuition fees and where the revenues generated go to. This needs to be discussed with NIE and MoEF.
3. **Leave of Absence among Some Mentors:** The NGS System should consider creating a recruitment structure that enables high quality mentors recruited in earlier cohorts to take a 2-year leave of absence (disponique) so that they could take positions in schools that have funded position. Other well-resourced projects that need mentors (e.g., the HCC Project) may also consider this option. But for this option to be attractive to mentors to take a leave of absence (without state salaries), salaries would have to be competitive (e.g., \$700+).
4. **Advocacy for Exceptions:** The Center should explore the degree to which MoEYS would be willing to make exceptions for strategic placements such as filling mentor posts in new NGS sites since the failure to fill such posts would be an existential threat to the success of significant investments that MoEYS is making to these schools.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-7KDyfZJcelpfOM81ZLgWXA15D6IZtUj/view?usp=sharing>



#### 4.4 Poor General Understanding of the Difference between Mentor & Inspector

The NGPRC has recently been advocating with MoEYS and the Civil Service Commission to create a special payment slot for Mentors that recognizes their high level of skill to mentor other teachers. Such recognition would greatly increase attractiveness of mentoring positions and greatly increase the applicant pool (and the quality of candidates graduating from the program). One frequent comment from officials involved in these discussions, however, is that they do not see the difference between a Mentor and an Inspector nor the need to create special recognition of Mentors. This fundamental misunderstanding misses the kind of teacher evaluation that Mentors and Inspectors are each engaged in. Whereas Inspectors are undertaking evaluation whose purpose is ‘quality assurance,’ which is a summative function, Mentors are engaged in evaluation that is not summative but formative. Mentor-based evaluation is intended to lead to teachers’ personal development and evolution because it occurs frequently, is based on confidentiality, and generally flourishes when teachers do not see evaluators as a threat (which leads to distrust and the concealment of information). The activities of Inspectors on the other hand do not generally promote teacher development because their evaluations are infrequent, not based on confidential relationships with teachers, and are generally met with suspicion and hostility by teachers. But more importantly, the purpose of inspectors should not be teacher development but rather reporting to Ministry that teachers are in compliance with centrally set standards and performance guidelines. Thus, the evaluative purpose of Inspectors and Mentors is completely different; each purpose (one summative while the other is formative) is equally important but exhibit very different configurations to meet their respective purpose (e.g., evaluation frequency, the nature of reporting, the degree to which teachers have input into the evaluation process, power dynamics between evaluator and teacher, etc.). The failure of some decision-makers to understand these differences makes the task of advocacy for the mentoring profession very difficult.

#### 4.5 Continuing Battles with Anti-reform Teachers at Selected Schools

Although NGS Reforms have generally won kudos from the public and the MoEYS leadership, they continue to threaten the interests of many unprofessional teachers within the education system, particularly with respect to private teaching, also known as Shadow Education.<sup>11</sup> This is because shadow teaching is not allowed under the NGS operating framework. Such conditions often lead many teachers in ‘whole school’ configurations to boycott participation in the New Generation School and even demanding that half of the school should be handed over to them so that they can extort fees from students. Though parents generally oppose the activities of teachers engaged in Shadow Education, the strength of anti-reform teachers often depends on the willingness of local officials to give strong support to school administrators. While some schools have received strong backing from local officials to oppose anti-reform teachers (e.g., Kandal), others have not fared so well (e.g., Prek Leap in Phnom Penh) where there is little appetite to stand up to unprofessional teachers. This is why school selection and majority teacher support is so important in the process of identifying New Generation School sites. It is also another reason why MoEYS seems to now prefer configuring New Generation Schools as a ‘school in a school’ (such as at Preah Sisovath HS) so that unprofessional teachers can easily be relegated to a part of the school where they cause fewer problems. While the

##### **Box 5: What is Shadow Education?**

Shadow education refers to private tutoring and coaching that operate outside formal educational institutions like schools but where the agents of control often work in the public sector. It often involves tutoring services that mimic school curricula and is known for its implications on social inequalities and unethical educational practices.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Chapter 12: [https://www.kapekh.org/files/report\\_file/397-en.pdf](https://www.kapekh.org/files/report_file/397-en.pdf)

program continues to be hopeful that provincial and district officials everywhere will grow a backbone in standing up to unprofessional teachers, the program nevertheless must be realistic that the politicized nature of localized education control makes this very difficult (i.e., power over schools has shifted from the central Ministry to provincial and district level officials).

#### **4.6 Teacher Shortages Resulting from Suspension of NIE/RTTC Intakes**

One of the key challenges facing New Generation Schools is the problem of teacher burn out. Some New Generation Schools where public demand is very high (e.g., Preah Sisovath HS) see a very high rate of teacher turnover. In the past, the MoEYS has been very flexible in allowing the NGS System to tap into the pool of graduating teachers at NIE and RTTCs as well as teachers that apply from other schools to fill these positions. However, the education system has recently been much less flexible with regards to the process of annual teacher recruitment to fill vacancies. As noted above, there has been a freeze on teacher movement between provinces (see Section 4.3) while at the same time new teacher intakes at NIE and RTTC have been suspended following the Covid19 Pandemic. These changes in the recruitment context have created a significant challenge for the NGS System to fill teacher vacancies, maintain PCRs of less than 36 to 1 (as required by NGS accreditation standards), and maintain quality standards. The program hopes that there will be clarification from MoEYS whether a return to more flexible conditions of teacher recruitment and placement will occur in the near future after the completion of the teacher census.

#### **4.7 Maintaining the Integrity of the NGS System**

The New Generation School System seeks to maintain a balance between ‘Structure’ and ‘Freedom.’ That is, the philosophy of New Generation Schools is Freedom in Structure in which schools are provided with high amounts of autonomy (i.e., freedom) and encouraged to create the conditions needed for educational innovation. Nevertheless, schools are held accountable for their performance through a set of flexible but structured operational guidelines and accreditation standards. Such guidelines provide the ‘structure’ in the system. The program seeks to maintain a very delicate balance between freedom and structure to prevent schools from veering into conditions of chaos (i.e., too much freedom) or repressed control (i.e., too much structure). Some schools in the NGS System have expressed a desire to be completely independent of the NGS operational framework while still being called New Generation Schools. Such calls have particularly arisen as the NGS Central Office seeks to create more structure in the way that New Generation School administrators manage their financial accounts, especially as hundreds of millions of riels flow into school coffers from parents (see Section 3.7). NGS Programmers are hopeful that they can maintain ‘Freedom in Structure’ balance while keeping all schools within the NGS System.

## 5. CONSLUSIONS

**Media Attention & the Education Reform Movement:** After nine years of implementation, New Generation Schools have become a rallying point for educational reform and also a lightning rod for anti-reform educators who prefer to preserve the status quo. NGS reforms have increasingly attracted public attention in social media and the press through both positive as well as negative news stories, each representing the lines of battle between reformers and anti-reformers.<sup>12</sup> As this acrimonious debate about reform unfolds, NGS more and more finds itself in the crosshairs of opponents though not without significant support from reform advocates within MoEYS as well. The way forward for NGS is, therefore, somewhat precarious as it seeks to navigate some of the key controversies animating education reform and anti-reform proponents. Some of these controversies have been discussed in this report such as the poor understanding of the roles of Mentors and Inspectors, growing inflexibility in teacher placement, hesitancy to endorse a regime of parental contributions, and an unwillingness to face down anti-reform teachers who above all want to preserve their ability to extort money from students through unprofessional *rien kua*<sup>13</sup> practices (see Section 4). NGS Programmers and MoEYS supporters should, therefore, prepare themselves for continuing controversy, as they advocate for a different approach to public education that better fits the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.



**The Organic Approach to School Development:** The educational landscape in Cambodia has recently seen some major changes with the advent of Model Schools, a new MoEYS reform initiative that seeks to accelerate improvements in educational quality. Partly, the increasing popularity of Model Schools is due to the inability of New Generation Schools to expand more rapidly stemming from the need for painstaking school selection to ensure local support (a critical condition for successful investment) as well as perceptions among bureaucrats that NGS investment is too expensive. Relatedly, MoEYS has been disappointed that most donors have ignored NGS investment because they feel it is either ‘elitist’ or ‘inequitable’ though there have been some major exceptions including the Franks Family Foundation, Child Fund, and most recently the Asian Development Bank, all of whom have made significant investments in NGS programming. Thus, Model Schools have been presented as a ‘fast and cheap’ alternative to New Generation Schools though the MoEYS has been quick to point out that Model Schools should eventually evolve into New Generation Schools. The main contrast between Model Schools is perhaps not the cost of investment but rather whether school development should be either organic (i.e., bottom-up) or non-organic (top-down) using more a more standardized configuration linked to centrally set standards of performance. Because New Generation Schools are based on a philosophy that values school autonomy (to promote innovation) that is governed by a careful balance between ‘freedom’ and ‘structure,’ there is a clear contrast between the development approaches embraced by New Generation Schools and Model Schools.<sup>14</sup> New Generation School programmers have, therefore, sought to influence the evolving strategy for the roll-out of Model Schools to make it more bottom-up with less use of standardized indicators. For example, NGS programmers have presented a revised framework

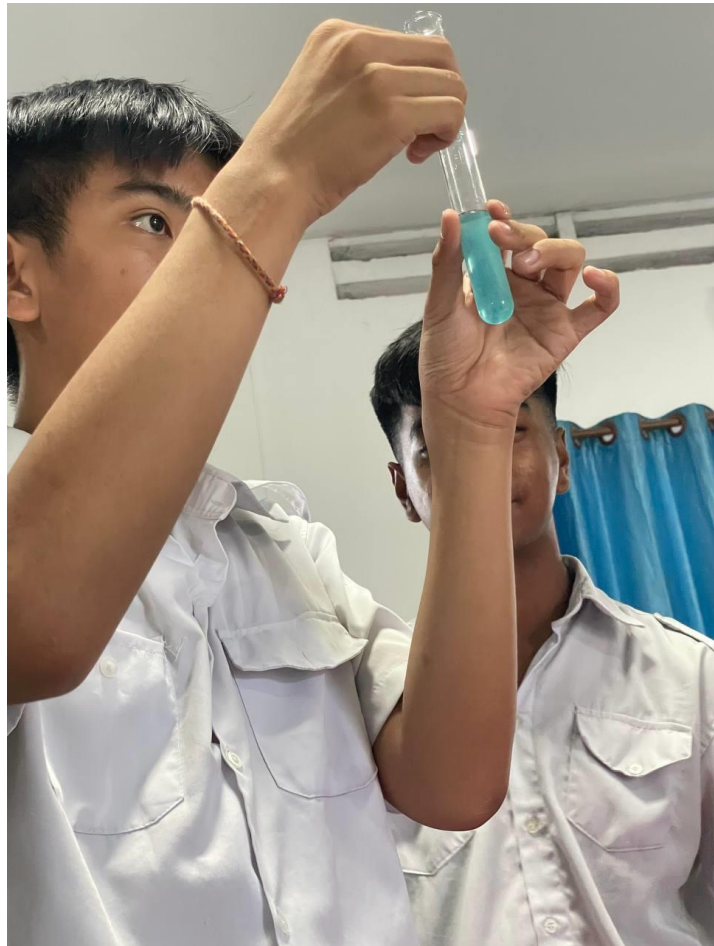
<sup>12</sup> E.g., <https://www.postkhmer.com/national/2024-9-10-1745-260270> ; <https://www.information.gov.kh/articles/139579> ; <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501557427/ngs-denies-rumours-of-corrupt-entrance-exam-practices/>

<sup>13</sup> i.e., private classes, shadow education.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. [https://www.kapekh.org/files/report\\_file/384-en.pdf](https://www.kapekh.org/files/report_file/384-en.pdf)

for Model School indicators that use more flexible rubrics to guide assessment in a way that would encourage more school autonomy. Whether the NGS Central Office can achieve such change will be a question of intense interest going forward.

**Resolving Major Challenges:** As recounted in this report, there are some major challenges facing the future of New Generation Schools that could pose an existential threat to their continued viability. Many of these challenges relate to recent changes in the flexibility (or rather loss of flexibility) in the way that teachers are posted, mainly as a result of interventions from the Ministry of the Public Servants over which MoEYS has little control. Recent restrictions on the movement of teachers could have the effect of starving New Generation Schools and associated institutions such as NGPRC of the human resources that they need both in terms of the recruitment of talented teachers as well as the placement of mentors who are essential to their technical sustainability. Similarly, restrictions on the ability of schools to solicit parents for financial support could also spell doom for New Generation Schools, particularly if a freeze on funding should be introduced. While NGS has been successful in advocating for continued funding from the government with an increase in the cards for 2025, structural changes in the operating environment could pose an even greater threat to their existence than opposition from anti-reform elements in the education system. All of this suggests the need to better codify the autonomous freedoms that MoEYS policy extends to them, perhaps by lobbying Parliament to pass a law that legally recognizes the rights of New Generation Schools to do things that other public schools are not allowed to do (linked to conditions for accountability), and/or pushing for their conversion into independent schools that are no longer under the supervision of local education officials.






### ANNEX 1: Breakdown of Investment in Infrastructure & Furniture at New NGS Sites

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Preah Angdoug</b>	<b>Aranh Raingsey</b>
Classroom Renovations	\$ 40,975.61	\$19,024.39
Industrial Cleaning Costs	\$ 1,463.41	\$ 1,463.41
Amphitheatre Furniture	\$ 34,146.34	\$19,512.20
Computer Lab	\$ 13,170.73	\$13,170.73
Computer Desks	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00
Library Furniture	\$ 8,731.71	\$ 8,731.71
Equipment/Furniture Maintenance & Spare Parts	\$ 975.61	\$ 487.80
LCD Projectors	\$ 2,341.46	\$ 1,951.22
Laptops for New Teachers	\$ 15,219.51	\$11,707.32
Science Equipment	\$ 1,097.56	\$ 1,951.22
Library Books	\$ 1,463.41	\$ 1,463.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 123,085.37</b>	<b>\$82,963.41</b>
	<b>\$206,048.78</b>	

**ANNEX 2: National NGS Oversight Board Meeting Agenda (Semester 1, 2024)**

**កម្មវិធីប្រជុំក្រុមប្រឹក្សាភិបាលសាលារៀនជំនាន់ថ្មីថ្នាក់ជាតិ**

	សាលប្រជុំ វិទ្យាល័យ <b>ហ៊ុន សែន</b> កំពង់ចាម ខេត្តកំពង់ចាម
	ថ្ងៃទី២៧ ខែកុម្ភៈ ឆ្នាំ ២០២៤
	ម៉ោង ៨:០០ព្រឹក ដល់ ម៉ោង ១២:០០ថ្ងៃត្រង់

ម៉ោង	ខ្លឹមសារនិងសកម្មភាព	មតិយោបល់
៨:០០-៨:១០	មតិស្វាគមន៍ដល់សមាជិកអង្គប្រជុំនិងបើកកម្មវិធី	ឯកឧត្តម ឡេ ឆវណ្ណា
៨:១០-៨:៥៥ (សាលានីមួយៗ មានពេល១៥នាទី ក្នុងការធ្វើបទ បង្ហាញនេះ)	របាយការណ៍វឌ្ឍនភាពកម្មវិធីសាលារៀនជំនាន់ថ្មីឆ្នាំ២០២៣ និង ផែនការអនុវត្តសម្រាប់ឆ្នាំសិក្សា២០២៤ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>បឋមសិក្សា អនុវត្ត ហ៊ុន សែន</li> <li>វិទ្យាល័យ ហ៊ុន សែនកំពង់ចាម</li> </ul>	នាយកសាលា
៨:៥៥-៩:១០	របាយការណ៍វឌ្ឍនភាពលើការអនុវត្តសកម្មភាពឆ្នាំ២០២៣ និងសកម្មភាពពង្រីកកម្មវិធីសាលារៀនជំនាន់ថ្មីឆ្នាំ២០២៤។	ប្រធានប្រតិបត្តិកម្មវិធី NGS លោក អ៊ុល រុន
៩:១០-៩:៣០	<b>បញ្ហាប្រឈម</b> ១. ការដោះស្រាយបញ្ហាសាលារៀនតាមរយៈការធ្វើបទបង្ហាញ ២. សេចក្តីប្រកាសរបស់ក្រសួងលេខ១៨ អយក សប្រព ស្តីពីវិភាគទានដែលមាតាបិតាធ្លាប់បង់កន្លងមកលែងជាកាតព្វកិច្ច ហើយរដ្ឋជាអ្នកបំពេញជំនួសវិញ ៣. អាណាព្យាបាលមួយចំនួនស្នើមិនបង់ថវិកាដោយសារកត្តាជីវភាព	ពិភាក្សារួមគ្នាដើម្បីដោះស្រាយបញ្ហា
៩:៣០-៩:៤៥	<b>សម្រាក (១៥នាទី)</b>	
៩:៤៥-១០:១៥	<b>បន្តពិភាក្សាបញ្ហាប្រឈមខាងលើ</b>	
១០:១៥-១០:៣០	របាយការណ៍ស្តីពីលទ្ធផលវាយតម្លៃទទួលស្គាល់គុណភាពកម្មវិធីសាលារៀនជំនាន់ថ្មីនិងផែនការបន្តសម្រាប់ឆមាសទី១នៃឆ្នាំ២០២៤។	លោក ផាន់ ប៊ុនណាត អ្នកសម្របសម្រួលកម្មវិធីវាយតម្លៃសាលារៀនជំនាន់ថ្មី
១០:៣០-១១:០០	របាយការណ៍ជួសជុលហេដ្ឋារចនាសម្ព័ន្ធ និងសម្ភារបច្ចេកវិទ្យាសម្រាប់សាលារៀនថ្មីពីរ	លោក ផា ស៊ីណាក់ លោក ជិន ភារុណ
១១:០០-១១:២០	របាយការណ៍វឌ្ឍនភាពកម្មវិធីនៅមជ្ឈមណ្ឌលស្រាវជ្រាវគុណភាពសិក្សាជំនាន់ថ្មី NGPRC ឆ្នាំ២០២២-២៣ និងផែនការសកម្មភាពឆ្នាំ២០២៤ (លទ្ធផលនៃការអនុវត្តកម្មវិធីសកម្មភាព) និងបញ្ហាប្រឈម	ឯ.ខ បណ្ឌិតសភាចារ្យ ចាន់ វិញ្ញា ប្រធានគ្រប់គ្រង NGPRC
១១:២០-១១:៣០	មតិបិទអង្គប្រជុំ	ឯកឧត្តម ឡេ ឆវណ្ណា