

SAFE TO LEARN PROGRESS 2019-2023 - CAMBODIA

(UPDATED AS OF DECEMBER 2023)

SUMMARY TABLE OF BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT

IMPLEMENT LAWS AND POLICIES

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
1.1	The national government includes prevention of violence in around schools as a specific strategy in education sector policies, plans and budgets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Cambodia Education Sector Plan <u>ESP 2019-23</u> does not specifically include violence prevention in schools as a specific strategy but mentions that the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS) promoted positive discipline, supported life skills training and contributed to the elimination of violence among youth. Strategy 1.3 of the ESP is dedicated to youth development and includes education for out-of-school youth through '<u>Basic Education Equivalency Programmes</u>'. A new ESP 2024-2028 is under development (Education Sector Analysis currently underway). GPE Compact refers to protection.[1]</p> <p>The Education Sector Needs Assessment developed during the COVID 19 pandemic includes indicators on violence against children (VAC) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and child protection indicators were included in <u>Cambodia Education Response Plan</u> to the pandemic. The National Policy on School Health (2019) developed by the MoEYS Department of School Health <u>includes physical and emotional health checks for children affected by violence. The National Action Plan on School Health (2021-2030)</u>, was developed to support the implementation of the policy.</p> <p>MoEYS with support from partners has revised and approved Safe School Framework in 2023. It was launched and circulated nationwide.[2]</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
1.2	There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and effective classroom management.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Corporal punishment in school was already prohibited prior to the STL Call to action endorsement by Cambodia, in both public and private schools since 2007 (Education Law, art. 35). The prohibition of physical punishment and mental punishment of students is also stated in Directive n.922 of the MoEYS to the Director of Provincial Education, Youth and Sport on the subject of “Punishment for students” and in the Sub-Decree on the <u>Teachers Professional Code</u> (art.12).</p> <p>The MoEYS has included positive discipline and effective classroom management in the five-year action plan (2019-2023) to implement the National Child Protection Policy for Schools and has <u>developed in-service training for teachers and school directors on positive discipline, MHPSS and gender-responsive pedagogy</u>. Between <u>2015 and 2023, 21,000 teachers and school principals from 2,590 primary schools have been trained</u>. The <u>MoEYS blended training on positive discipline for integration into in-service teachers training</u>. Positive discipline interventions have been evaluated and evidence shows it is <u>being effective in reducing violence against children at school in Cambodia</u>.</p>
1.3	The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>The MoEYS contributed to develop the multi sectoral national <u>Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children</u> (2017-2021, then extended to 2023) and its role and responsibilities are included in it, along with 12 other ministries and institutions. The Plan addresses all forms of VAC in a variety of settings, including at school. The role of the MoEYS is set out in Strategic Area 3 of the Plan dedicated to Multi-Sectoral Child Protection Response and in Strategic Area 2 dedicated to VAC Primary Prevention, including in schools, <u>through a multi-sectoral coordinated strategy</u>.</p> <p>The MoEYS has a Child Protection in Schools Policy (MoEYS, 2016) <u>with a comprehensive five-year Action Plan (2019-2023)</u> to implement it. An Operational Manual on Implementation Guidelines for Child Protection in Schools Policy (OMCPSIGCPSP) was also developed, endorsed by the MoEYS and disseminated.</p> <p>Cambodia Ministry of Cults and Religion has developed a <u>Child Safeguarding Policy in Pagoda</u>.</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
1.4	The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Cambodia has <u>not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.</u>

STRENGTHEN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
2.1	Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>MoEYS has implemented peace education curriculum.[3] In-service and pre-service teacher training programmes were developed in 2022, <u>covering inclusive education and life skills education.</u> A training package aligned with the Operational Manual on Child Protection in Schools (OMCPS) was developed and implemented to strengthen capacity of educators, school staff and students to prevent and respond to violence in schools. It comprises of a comprehensive training package for teacher curriculum and student councils, together with manuals for teachers and students on critical topics such as "child rights, self-protection, the risk of violence against children (VAC), positive school climate, gender equality and inclusion", as well as "identifying and reporting child-protection issues, mechanisms to empower children to protect themselves from violence, understand their rights, gender and diversity and other issues related to ensuring safe schools". [4] Domestic violence is one of the topics selected by students to learn and research as part of local life skill education.</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
2.2	Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>The country has an Operational Manual on Child Protection in Schools (OMCPS) and the MOEYS approved a <u>child protection reporting mechanism and launched it for implementation in all schools</u>. The MoEYS, with Save the Children support developed an e-learning platform for education staff including Provincial Office of Education (PoEs), District Office of Education (DoEs), school principals, teachers, students' councils and child protection focal points to strengthen their knowledge and capacities in implementing the OMCPS. [5] In all schools targeted by the STL project implemented by Save the Children and partners (52 schools) a child safeguarding code of conduct is in place according to the implementing partner final report. [6]</p>
2.3	Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Every school in Cambodia appointed a child protection focal point. Their main roles focus on child protection, as well as mental health issues. [7]</p>
2.4	The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the wellbeing of children in mind.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>MoEYS with support from partners has revised and approved Safe School Framework in 2023. It was launched and circulated nationwide.</p>

SHIFT SOCIAL NORMS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
3.1	There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Children's meetings were held as part of the launch of Cambodia as an EVAC Pathfinder country. Students' councils are actively involved in promoting a positive school climate and ending violence and a training package was developed to support them on this. [8] The evaluation of the national action plan to end VAC found that youth interviewed as part of the evaluation <u>'were well informed about a range of issues around VAC, and indicated how they were engaged in awareness raising in their schools and communities'</u>.</p>
3.2	Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Some initiatives exist to address social norms driving key forms of violence against children. The non-profit organisation Room to Read for example, engaged with 386 boys across four schools in the Banteay Meanchey province to support boys' life skills towards gender equality. The organisation <u>reports advancements in gender knowledge and positive attitudes among boys regarding gender-based roles, gender-based violence, perceptions of masculinity, puberty, sexuality, health, and gender norms.</u></p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
3.3	Young people, parents, teachers, and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on school violence.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) with UNICEF support developed a five-year national Communication Strategy to End Violence and Unnecessary Family Separation in Cambodia - Cambodia PROTECT - which was launched in February 2020. UNICEF is currently supporting MoSVY to conduct mid-term evaluation to measure changes in intermediate outcomes and inform the next phase of implementation. MoSVY established an inter-ministerial working group to coordinate its implementation with MOEYS a key member and playing a significant role to support implementation in schools. [9]</p> <p>Cambodia has a <u>strong school communication system relying on the collaboration of school principals, teachers, students, student council members, community members, local authorities, and social service providers</u>, to ensure the protection of children.</p> <p>Save the Children Safe to Learn/EVAC grant contributed to strengthening linkages and coordination between Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPM) and the School Child Protection Mechanism (SBCPM) to identify, address and refer child protection cases in and through primary schools. 188 billboards describing the reporting, referral and response mechanisms and 27,727 posters on the local helpline were distributed to 52 schools and surrounding communities. [10]</p> <p>During the Covid-19 pandemic key messages on child protection were included in the nationwide Back to School campaign, and an illustrated handbook for teachers and school principals '<u>The Safe Operation of Schools in the Context of COVID-19</u>' including information on child protection was developed and distributed with UNICEF's support to all 13,000 schools and 3,000 community pre-schools of the country. UNICEF developed a multi-sectoral SBC strategy in 2022 to be implemented as part of the UNICEF-Government of Cambodia Country Programme. The strategy has a <u>component on changing attitudes and norms condoning using violence to discipline children at home and schools</u>.</p> <p>Child protection initiatives are in place to also mobilize parents, caregivers and communities to end violence against children, such as Positive Parenting programme, the Pagoda programme and implementation of the '<u>Clinical Handbook on the identification and treatment of children subjected to violence</u>'.</p> <p>NC-ECCD revised and combined the parenting manual to Nurturing Care Parenting package for parents/caregivers of children under 6 years, which includes awareness raising on violence against children.</p>

INVEST RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
4.1	Domestic resources allocated to support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond to violence in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	There is a lack of sufficient budget support to fully implement the child protection policy at the community level and inadequate resource allocation to achieve progress under Call to Action component 2. There are limited local resources for primary prevention in school. [11]
4.2	Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>With contributions from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Safe to Learn supported a safe learning project implemented by Save the Children with World Vision and Plan International (in coordination with the MoEYS and MoSVY) between October 2020 to June 2022, which aimed to implement the Call to Action.</p> <p><u>UNICEF has been supporting the MoEYS</u> and through its Child Protection Programme works on VAC, including on VAC prevention and on VAC response and support services, legal land policy framework related to VAC, exploitation and abuse, parent/caregiver education, SBC and community engagement on VAC, protection from VAC in digital environment, multisectoral coordination mechanisms, evidence generation and use. UNICEF Education Programme in the new CPD (2024-2028) includes a pillar on SBC with focus on violence, gender focus and life skills. Graines de Paix (CSO Forum member) and local CSOs are working on Safe Schools. Cambodia has a GPE multiplier since November 2021 with The World Bank as grant agent and which supports, among others, capacity building including on GBV prevention in school. [12]</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
4.3	There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	

GENERATE AND USE EVIDENCE

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
5.1	Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Efforts are being made to <u>collect routine data on VAC response from the health system.</u>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
5.2	There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Cambodia DHS 2021-22 includes a module on child discipline and a module on age at first marriage. A SEA-PLM regional learning assessment conducted in 2019 and including Cambodia found differences in learning outcomes in the country related to children’s perceived safety at school (in all three learning domains of mathematics, reading and writing). <u>The study also provides information on the forms of violence experienced by children in Cambodian schools and the percentage of exposure of children to them.</u></p> <p>Some children study in Monastic schools. A research project “Assessing Child Protection in Buddhist Communities Including Monastic and Dhamma Schools” was conducted in 2021 - 2022 in Cambodia (Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam). [13] <u>A Child Protection Pagoda programme is also in place to ensure child safety in pagodas.</u></p>
5.3	Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trialled models and approaches.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>The national Action Plan to End VAC was evaluated in 2021. One of the evaluation purposes was to inform and support evidence-based decision-making processes on the development of a new five-year Action Plan. The evaluation found that Positive Discipline in schools is one of the three areas of the Plan where important change is taking place. ‘The findings show that it is possible to invoke rapid change with a well-considered intervention, with changes in educator conduct and educator behaviour. This change occurred despite objective conditions not having changed (e.g., crowded classrooms, disruptive behaviours)’. [14] The positive discipline intervention had also been evaluated in previous years, after piloting it, <u>with positive results and then adapted and scaled up based on findings.</u> Cambodia PROTECT includes baseline surveys. [15]</p>

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- [1] GPE input to STL CETF mapping 2022.
- [2] UNICEF Cambodia
- [3] MoE answer to STL Regional Roundtable in EAP pre-event survey 2022
- [4] Save the Children. END VIOLENCE FUND - SAFE TO LEARN. Final Project Narrative Report (October 2020 - June 2022)
- [5] Ibid
- [6] Ibid
- [7] UNICEF Cambodia
- [8] Save the Children. END VIOLENCE FUND - SAFE TO LEARN. Final Project Narrative Report (October 2020 - June 2022)
- [9] Cambodia PROTECT Fact Sheet
- [10] Save the Children. END VIOLENCE FUND - SAFE TO LEARN. Final Project Narrative Report (October 2020 - June 2022)
- [11] Report of Country-led Evaluation of the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children 2017-2021
- [12] Safe to Learn Country Engagement Task Force Mapping, 2023
- [13] Source: Arigatou International, CSO Forum member, member of Safe to Learn.
- [14] Report of Country-led Evaluation of the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children 2017-2021 p.76.
- [15] Ibid

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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For further information, please contact Line Baago-Rasmussen, Safe to Learn Global Coordinator at lbrasmussen@unicef.org.