

EXPLORING GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION:  
A CAMBODIAN CONTEXT

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## **Abstract**

Gender and education has become a popular component to mainstream development discourse over the past decade. In such a short span of time, the focus, aims, implementation, and monitoring processes have shifted quickly. Drawing on fieldwork carried out in Cambodia from May-August 2016, this thesis provides an exploration of gender mainstreaming in the context of primary education. The aim of the research was to understand, through stakeholder perception, to what extent does Cambodian primary education policy address gender issues? Guided by gender & feminist theory, the research was an attempt to conceptualize the sometimes broad and vague definitions of gender mainstreaming, on a practical level, in an uncommonly explored context. By critically examining the nature and dynamics of the policy, I have developed considerations for theoretical and practical implementations for gender, education, and development.

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF DIAGRAMS</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: GENDER AND EDUCATION: SIGNIFICANCE TO CAMODIAN DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	<b>1</b>
A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAMBODIA: AN EDUCATIONAL FOCUS.....	3
GENDER ROLES IN CAMBODIA.....	10
<i>Feminine Gender Roles</i> .....	10
<i>Masculine Gender Roles</i> .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<i>Masculinity and Gender as a Spectrum</i> .....	16
GENDER MAINSTREAMING DISCOURSE.....	17
<i>Gender Equality as Access</i> .....	19
<i>International Agendas and Dominant Western Discourse</i> .....	21
<i>Gender Mainstreaming in Education: Contesting Implementation</i> .....	23
<i>Gender &amp; Feminist Theory</i> .....	26
GLOBAL CASE STUDIES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EDUCATION.....	29
POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH.....	31
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODS</b> .....	<b>34</b>
OBSERVATION.....	37
LOCATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS.....	37
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	42
POSITIONALITY.....	42
CHALLENGES.....	44
POTENTIAL BIAS IN METHODOLOGY.....	45
<b>CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>48</b>
GENDER TRAINING.....	48
ACCESS.....	54
SOCIAL ATTITUDES.....	60
FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS.....	67
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>71</b>
THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	72
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	73
FINAL NOTES.....	74
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: Interview Questions</b> .....	<b>80</b>

**APPENDIX B: Demographics of Participants.....83**  
**APPENDIX C: Ethics Approval.....84**

**List of Tables**

<b>Table 1: Research Participants.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Table 2: Training Frequency.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Table 3: PTTC Management Levels.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Table 4: Positives and Negatives of Chbap Srey and Chbap Bros.....</b>	<b>63</b>

**List of Acronyms:**

**EFA:** Education for All

**EPSSEG:** Education as a Preventive Strategy Against Sexual Exploitation of Girls

**ESP:** Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018

**FAO:** The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

**GAD:** Gender and Development

**GADC:** Gender and Development for Cambodia

**GBV:** Gender-based violence

**MDGs:** Millennium Development Goals

**MoEYS:** Ministry of Youth, Education, and Sport

**PTTCs:** Provincial Teacher Training Centres

**SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals

**SPGEWE:** Five Year Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2014-2018

**UN:** United Nations

**UNDP:** United Nations Development Programme

**UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**WAD:** Women and Development

**WID:** Women in Development

**VVOB:** The Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance

**List of Diagrams**

**Diagram 1: Map of Cambodia.....38**



## CHAPTER 1: GENDER AND EDUCATION: SIGNIFICANCE TO CAMBODIAN DEVELOPMENT

Gender and education has become a popular component to mainstream development discourse over the past decade. In such a short span of time, the focus, aims, implementation, and monitoring processes of gender and education have shifted quickly. Though conceptions of gender and education have focused on parity and a 'get girls into school' mantra, critique has shifted the academic and policy discussion on the topic (King et. al., 2007; Miske et. al., 2010). There has been more pressure to focus on such things as intersectional inequalities, power dynamics, greater involvement of men and boys, and an expanded understanding of 'education' (Stromquist, 2001; 2006). With expanding demands of inclusion, the contemporary hegemonic description of 'gender and education' falls under the category of 'gender mainstreaming'. This is to say, mainstreaming gender in a way that it is present and accounted for in *all* policy. Yet, practically, has much changed? What are the consequences of such a mainstream discourse? This thesis will explore these questions, amongst others, through a case study in contemporary Cambodian public primary education policy.

With gender mainstreaming being so broad in scope, this research explores its meaning in state policy, through the perception of stakeholders<sup>1</sup>. The aim of the research was to understand, through stakeholder perception, to what extent does Cambodian primary education policy address gender issues? The objectives to achieve this aim were twofold:

1. *To critically examine the nature and dynamics of the policy:* How do stakeholders relate to it? What are the practical implementations that are taking shape?
2. *To consider the theoretical and practical implications for gender and education:* What do the nature and dynamics of the policy mean on an international level? How does my research speak to the larger literary community?

Through these objectives, I have focused on the relationship between the state (policy) and civil society (policy stakeholders) to answer my research question. Qualitative research was conducted with these stakeholders throughout seven Cambodian provinces from the period of

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<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders include students, parents, student teachers, teachers, and school directors.

May 2016-August 2016. Focusing on the practical implementation of policy, I interviewed school directors, teachers, student teachers, parents, and students.

As with the shifting discussion on gender and education in the development context, I believe it important to analyze whether progress is being made as fast as some international and local policy<sup>2</sup> may lay claim. If they are not, it is important to examine the discourse in which the topic is being framed, and analyze whether this discourse has repercussions for the success of gender initiatives in education. In the shifting landscape of gender and education, discourse presents itself as a highly powerful and influential component. In that case, a theoretical framework of contemporary gender mainstreaming discourse analysis (Miske et. al., 2010; Kabeer, 2015; Unterhalter, 2016; among others) will be used. In the context of this broader discussion, and in my research, discourse embodies a system of representation (Hall, 1997, 72) as a way of “constituting knowledge together with social practices” (Weedon, 1987, 108). Discourse is a connection between what one says and what one *does* (Hall, 1997, 72). Therefore, in international discussions on gender and education, as well as in my research, discourse embodies how language and practice are connected, and how they consciously and unconsciously form meaning through social relations of power (Hall, 1997, 72; Sawicki, 1988, 185). This becomes evident through international and local policy, and how they are practically integrated into education systems.

Policy conducted in this development sector is largely focused on youth, or specifically the ‘girl child’ (Aikman & Rao, 2012; Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2008; Fennell & Arnot, 2009). This thesis suggests further examination of shifting focus towards adults, and the gendered repercussions when their influence on youth is ignored. For example, in *Chapter 4: Findings*, I will explore the persistence of reoccurring topics such as teacher maternal health,

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<sup>2</sup> This research examines claims in the Cambodian government’s *Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018*, and the *Five Year Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment*. It also includes references to the UN *Millennium Development Goals*, the *Sustainable Development Goals*, and the UNESCO *Education for All* initiative.

and domestic violence, which is often missing in discussions on gender, education and development.

I will also analyze how concentrations of power affect policy implementation, and what this means on a broader scale. This is significant in regards to development as it dictates how gender mainstreaming practice takes place. Further, it dictates how development is defined. If development is defined through a modernist economic perspective, gender and education policy will reflect that, such as through girls' scholarships or infrastructural development. If development is defined more from a human development perspective, this may be reflected in policy through capacity development workshops for students, or teachers. As I will outline, the type of definition affects the distribution of resources (rural vs. urban), and (mis)understandings through the multiple ways gender equality is actually articulated. This was represented in a number of ways in this research, such as through the number of girls in classes, how men are involved in the conversation, and how frequently school faculty received promotions. A common thread was between a lack of resources, and passing blame for a lack of implementation. This brings up conversations related back to my research question in terms of which discourses shape how a policy is practically implemented, and how we can evaluate its potential faults (or successes) on a larger scale.

Given the popularity of topics of gender and education within international development agendas (i.e. *Sustainable Development Goals*), I hope for this thesis to provide a contemporary contribution to the effectiveness of transforming these topics from policy into practice.

### **A brief history of Cambodia: An educational focus**

Before Cambodia was under French colonial rule from 1863-1954 (Haque, 2013, 57), the country was one of the first in Asia to adopt religious concepts to socio-political institutions (Dy, 2004, 91). This included educational institutions, with Buddhist leaders regarded as teachers (Dy, 2004, 91). This system became widespread by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, providing basic primary education that focused on Buddhist principles of family, civil society, and basic literacy and

numeracy skills (Dy, 2004, 92). At this point, teachers were required to be Buddhist men, with temple school restricted to (primarily elite) men and boys (Dy, 2004, 92). During French colonial rule in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the school system became 'modernized' and 'Westernized', by integrating the French school system (Frewer, 2006, 60). It was during this time that women were able to partake in formal education (Lilja, 2013, 29). However, with the introduction of women to education also came traditional 'codes of conduct' and 'rules' separately for men and women in regards to becoming good members of Khmer society, which is the dominant ethnic group in Cambodia, associated Buddhist religious practices (Dy, 2004, 93). The *Chbap Srey* and *Chbap Bros* are traditional codes of conduct that, in regards to gender, encourages a 'good man' to be courageous, responsible, and hardworking, and for a 'good woman' to be caring, reserved, and quiet (Dy, 2004, 93). That being said, although each code is for segregated use of men and women, their depictions do go beyond specific gender roles. As expressed from some of my research participants, these codes also encourage general 'ways of life' such as being a good citizen and kind to one's neighbours (cited by participants Ary, Kalliyon, Leap, Phhoung, among others). It is not policy for these codes of conduct to still be taught today, rather it is at the discretion of the school/teacher, and is most commonly taught in secondary schools, not primary (cite by Thom, a school director). Historically, leaders of society (Buddhist teachers, community leaders, parents) were seen to have a responsibility for educating boys, both within and outside of the formal schooling system (Dy, 2004, 93).

It was not until the end of the French colonial rule that compulsory education for children aged 6-13 came into effect, and still it was not free (Tan, 2007, 16). The fact that it was not free is important in regards to the gender negotiations and the cost-benefit of parents enrolling their children in school (whether they choose to enroll sons or daughters first).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See *Chapter 4: Findings*.

In March 1970, General Lon Nol, supported by the United States in attempts to stifle any assumptions of communism, seized control of the then current monarchy regime of Prince Sihanouk (whose foreign policy was accused of supporting Communist Vietnam) in a coup, declaring the creation of the Khmer Republic (Dy, 2004, 95; Kissi, 2006). This began great civil conflict with the rise of the Democratic Kampuchea regime, known as the Khmer Rouge communist regime, led by Pol Pot, coming in to power in 1975 with the motive of creating a collective peasant agrarian society (Dy, 2004, 95; Kissi, 2006). During the Khmer Rouge regime, educational infrastructure and development was essentially abolished, along with other social services, as the entire population was forced into either army camps or onto collective farms (Dy, 2004, 93, 95; Kissi, 2006). Formal schooling of any Western kind was eradicated, and individuals were grouped into cooperatives by sex and age, with most children working daily (Dy, 2004, 95). Basic education under this regime was generally deemed unnecessary with the majority of the population working in factories or on farms (Dy, 2004, 95). Almost a quarter of the 7 million population were killed during this time (Dy, 2004, 95). In fact, teachers, doctors, and general intellectuals were specifically targeted as they were deemed most likely to successfully rebel, given their intelligence (Kissi, 2006).

With the fall of the Khmer Rouge, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), under the regime of Heng Samrin, started to rebuild the country and its institutions (Dy, 2004, 96; Haque, 2013, 57). There was large support from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), rebuilding roughly 6,000 educational institutions, and training thousands of teachers in a short period (Dy, 2004, 96). Continued into the late 1970s-early 1980s, similar to the larger global scene of development, measurements of educational success were not particularly focused on intersectional analysis (Dy, 2004, 96). For example, putting children in school, and increasing adult literacy numbers was not evaluated with combined factors of gender equality (Dy, 2004, 93). This was later to be revealed as a large oversight over deeper structural issues by donors and NGOs, especially in relation to boys' and girls' enrolment (Frewer, 2014, 60).

It was not until the late 1980s that quality of education began to gain ground, including the development of lower secondary (grades 7-9), and upper secondary (grades 10-12), as educational levels before university (Dy, 2004, 93, 96). However, it is worth noting in regards to navigating gender relations, at this time in any primary school (grades 1-6), about 30% of children had no father, 10% had no mother, and between 5-10% did not have surviving parents (Dy, 2004, 96). Altogether the nation faced more than 20 years of violence, which greatly affected all aspects of life, leaving a population largely experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, with little educational infrastructure, as well as prevailing military (Haque, 2013, 58). Curriculum at this time was highly politicized, with specific anti-Khmer Rouge teaching motives (Frewer, 2014, 61). This shifted slightly in 1991, with the Paris Peace Accords, after which Cambodian educational development focused on a 'modern' education system that mimicked those taking place in the West at that time (Frewer, 2014, 61). Curriculum was largely influenced by foreign aid donors (Frewer, 2014, 61). Overall, public expenditure on education increased steadily following the end of the civil war, from 10% following the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, to 20.9% in 2010 (Un, 2013, 479).

The new millennium saw a development of gender-equity targets within education through Cambodia's government, largely influenced by international development targets, such as *Education for All* (EFA), and the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs; particularly *Goal #2: Achieve Universal Primary Education* and *Goal #3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*) (Velasco, 2004, 38). Specific programs to the Cambodian government included interdisciplinary approaches such as *Education as a Preventive Strategy Against Sexual Exploitation of Girls* (EPSSEG), which looked at gender and education through the same lens (Velasco, 2004, 39).

Key concepts surrounding gender were emerging at that time. 'Gender equality', for example, from a Western perspective represents:

Women and men have equal opportunities for realizing their human rights and these rights contribute to and benefit from social, economic, culture and political development. Gender equality is the equal valuing by society of the differences and similarities of men and women including the roles and responsibilities. These are based on the relationship in home, community and society (UNESCO, 2003, in Sokhan, 2015, 1)

This development has come under large scrutiny, led by arguments that concepts of 'gender' and 'gender equity' are new, and that these terms do not directly translate into the Khmer language (the national language of Cambodia) (Frewer, 2014, 62). *The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations* (FAO) defines gender as "the social attributes and opportunities associated with being men and women including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age" (FAO, *The International Fund for Agricultural Development and the International Labour Office*, 2010, 1) which ignores the fact that not everyone necessarily identifies as 'masculine' or 'feminine'. As we will see from theoretical frameworks, and gender roles within Cambodia, this fact is often ignored. Therefore, in my research, I conceive 'gender' within this definition, but with the added understanding of gender as a spectrum of identities.

In the context of Cambodia, gender mainstreaming began to outline the implementation of gender equality practices (*Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2014-2018*, 26; *Five Years Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (SPGEWE) 2014-2018*). Sylvia Walby defines gender mainstreaming as ensuring all aspects of gender equality are embedded in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and social spheres (2005). Being quite a broad definition, practical implementations of gender mainstreaming in primary education have been critiqued for a lack of relevance and cultural flexibility at the local level (Frewer, 2014, 62; King et. al., 2007; Miske et. al., 2010; Walby, 2005; Unterhalter, 2010).

From 2006-2010 the government of Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) outlined the first *Education Strategic Plan* to put emphasis of equitable access to education, increase quality and efficiency of the education services, with a baseline goal of all children completing primary schooling by 2010 (no drop outs) (Tan, 2007, 19). Although not

central to the plan, there were measures to include elimination of gender inequality, primarily *between* urban and rural areas through interventions such as scholarships for girls coming from a low-income household in rural areas (Tan, 2007, 19). With emphasis on rural development, and the use of scholarships, one can see the alignment with and influence of the MDGs, and 'development' being defined from a modern, economic standpoint.

This similar model has continued to present time, with international agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (particularly *Goal #4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* and *Goal #5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*). There is comparable terminology in the current *Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018*, citing 'reducing gender gaps' and 'gender mainstreaming implementation' as priorities (2014). In terms of progress, the current strategic plan also states that "children's access to primary school has improved, with the net enrollment rate improving from 94.8% in school year 2008-2009 to 97% in school year 2012-2013 *with no gender disparity* [emphasis added], repetition rates have fallen and student drop out has declined" (*ESP 2014-2018*, 2014, 21). This statement is intriguing in regards to how this definitive zero gender disparity is conceded, while there are still gender mainstreaming programs and activities included in the current policy. For example, some of the capacity development and support programs for primary education include gender mainstreaming and inclusive education training for all MoEYS staff and teachers (training 2000-2500 primary teachers per school year), as well as the improvement of response to gender discrimination (*ESP 2014-2018*, 2014, 24, 26, 27). These trainings are conducted by MoEYS themselves, as well as NGOs that are appointed by MoEYS.

'Gender mainstreaming' is not defined in the policy; the one concrete practical interpretation of it is mentioned under national priority programs which is to address "specific cross-cutting issues. Firstly, gender with a focus on all levels of education targeted through the



use of *scholarships* [emphasis added] and capacity development for females” (*ESP 2014-2018*, 2014, 15). As the aim of this research is to critically examine the extent to which the Cambodian primary education policy is a form of gender mainstreaming, some of the vagueness of the policy and the variety of policy-implementers (multiple NGOs and government officials) allows for vast interpretation.

In regards to current demographics of Cambodians as it pertains to my research, children who survived the civil war are now the parents of a majority of the children in classrooms today (Eng et. al., 2014, 575). Only 6% of adults between 20-49 have obtained more than a secondary education, many suffering from long-term post-traumatic stress disorder (Eng et. al., 2014, 575). Due to the deaths of the previous generation, more than 70% of the current population is under 25 (Francoeur et. al., 2015). Owing to the turbulent political state in Cambodia, a large dependency on international support developed. This particular time in history coincided with when international gender agendas were beginning to continuously gain popularity (Beijing Platform for Action, MDGs, SDGs). Reflecting on the educational policy, this model of international support has resulted in a continued dependency on gender mainstreaming implementation measures, where systemic misinterpretations have been developed.

As we can see from the history of education in Cambodia, from traditional Buddhist monk education, to the current understandings of gender and gender mainstreaming initiatives, gender roles have continuously been embedded within the educational system in different formats. Although it seems that the latest developments of gender equity targets and international targets such as the MDGs and SDGs have brought gender equity to the forefront in Cambodian education, this thesis questions whether there is any connection between local perspectives of gender mainstreaming and the national strategic education policy which dictates the implementation of this term.

## **Gender Roles in Cambodia**

Haque defines the meanings of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' as sets of socio-cultural norms that shape gender identities which are negotiated by both men and women (Haque, 2013, 61). Within the Cambodian context, I will now analyze the conceptual representations of gender roles. This will provide understanding of how gender is interpreted locally in Cambodia, and how this can influence its educational system.

### ***Feminine Gender Roles***

Up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, women were significant actors in Cambodian politics and decision-making in the public sphere (Lilja, 2013, 29). This however declined following French colonial rule (Lilja, 2013, 29). It was during this time that the *Chhap Srey* and *Chhap Bros* were introduced into the school system (Lilja, 2013, 29). These codes of conduct are significant as they define specific qualities that women and men should have, as mentioned, outlining these qualities as 'rules' to be taught in schools (Lilja, 2013, 30). Although they are not currently legally enforced in education, historically they have held a larger role in teaching at all levels (Lilja, 2013, 37). Sokhan (2015) argues that guidelines like these conceptualize men as strong, and women are considered weak. This, she argues, is reflected in public policies and law enforcement systems, citing Cambodia and Laos as the two countries in Southeast Asia "still facing many challenges relating to power relations and dominant patriarchal views toward women" (Sokhan, 2015, 9). I would argue that Sokhan's statement is quite sweeping, more in line with Western international development discourse, yet some authors do agree that these power relations serve as a norm of behaviour that can constrain and/or facilitate certain educational outcomes (Eng et. al., 2014, 577). For example, the values associated with masculinity and femininity having a direct relationship to drop out rates. Girls tend to have higher drop-out rates (Velasco, 2004, 38). This is not only connected to individual values, but to the gendered division of labour, as many of these cases are attributed to girls caring for other siblings and working at home (Miske et. al., 2010, 452), which speaks to women's gender roles

being associated with the domestic sphere. These attitudes can be further translated into the classroom, by teachers' gender role attitudes, particularly if gender mainstreaming initiatives have not been articulated properly within a local context. For example, through teacher interviews, a *CARE USA* study conducted in Cambodia revealed teachers' gender attitudes, citing "low achievement among girls was due to lack of motivation or shyness, rather than to other barriers" (Miske et. al., 2010, 452).

All this to say, if historically traditional gender roles are assumed, there is a cost-benefit analysis that occurs in regards to putting girls in school. The costs of private school education are high, and therefore boys are often given priority (Wilson, 2004, 20). Tuition-free public school is available in Cambodia, which is the context of this research, yet it is considered much lower quality, and there are still costs to bare (Wilson, 2004, 20). For example, studies show that parents (for public school) bare approximately 75% of the real costs of education per child (textbooks, uniforms, transportation, etc.), while the Cambodian government accounts for 25% of the cost (Wilson, 2004, 20). It is noteworthy that, in the case of my research, it was true to be the case that there was a common stigma associated with high lack of quality of public schools in Cambodia (in comparison with private schools). This was expressed primarily by teachers themselves, and included opinions of a lack of quality teachers, and resources.

Gender inequality in education is less about the *enrollment* of girls in school, as international discourse suggests, than what is being *taught* (Velasco, 2014). For example, Velasco argues that it is the curriculum that is a large area for improvement, as it can be described as 'gender blind' (2014, 38). Velasco concludes that this is due to socio-economic and traditional cultural biases that are embedded within the system of education itself (2014, 49). I however would argue that this can represent a neo-colonial and modernization argument, relating the 'lack of development' to culture. Regardless, lack of quality is seen as a key deterrent of parents sending girls to school, which demonstrates that gender equity and

education is a multifaceted issue in Cambodia, with multiple influences such as family values and the gendered division of labour.

### ***Masculine Gender Roles***

Although masculinity is commonly seen as a set of traits that a given society associates with men, Haque (2013) argues how equating masculinity to men and boys' identity, or inherent in men is problematic:

Masculinity is composed of daily individual accomplishments that are constructed, negotiated, and contested within the complex power relations of institutions, including family, and related structures; it is a specific gender identity, developed using social processes and contexts. Individual men take up the identity which best suits them, given their relative positions in social and gender relations, the configuration of gender practice, configured within a unique structure of gender power relations under patriarchy (Haque, 2013, 61).

From the military and political history in Cambodia, how men negotiate masculinity over time has transformed, and is represented in the educational system. Haque (2013) describes masculinity during the time of conflict as representing fear and courage (61). There was a sense of fear from leadership, along with courage of masculinity that signified going to war for their country and engaging in physical violence (Haque, 2013, 61). However, following the civil war, the courageous vision of masculinity that was rewarded disappeared with the practicalities of posts-conflict survival (Haque, 2013, 65). Some authors argue that this history of colonization and decades of civil war has created a violent masculinity associated with 'disciplining one's family', and responsible for a highly patriarchal society contingent with gender-based violence (GBV) (Eng et. al., 2010; Sokhan, 2015, 10). However, others see this as outdated and generalized, placing more significance on a masculinity that embodies economic stability, and the ability to support one's family (Haque, 2013, 65). The 'family man' receives respect and honour, and represents a man that is not necessarily educated, but successful in making his family prosperous, and makes the correct financial decisions for his family (Haque, 2013, 73). This goes beyond a militant, violent masculinity that once was (Haque, 2013, 73). Contrarily,

marginalized representations of masculinity are rarely embraced (Haque, 2013, 65). For example, through his research concerning masculinities in Cambodia, Haque interviewed Pirun Leng, who transitioned from a paramilitary recruiter to a tuk tuk driver (cited as a 'low-esteem occupation') who was primarily concerned with his children receiving education (Haque, 2013, 66). Leng was pressured and compared to other men by his wife to engage in more mainstream masculinities which were concerned with their own highly-regarded employment, and less with the education of their child (Haque, 2013, 66). Here we can see an example of the external pressures of gender roles located both within the community and within the family and how these pressures can influence the importance of education within the family.

Men and boys were also rarely associated with gender empowerment in the local context of my research. Ary, a young woman who is a student teacher, asked '*what's the difference between gender and women's rights?*'. Vannak, a teacher, when stating improvements to gender training, emphasized that men should be able to participate in workshops as well, and that he was not invited to them, both for the school, and for International Women's Day events. In order to challenge manifestations of masculinity, Sokhan argues for gender mainstreaming from a boy's perspective of their roles at an early age, through feminist theory in primary education (Sokhan, 2015, 91). However, Sokhan does note how gender mainstreaming projects in Cambodia have not been as effective as planned within younger generations (Sokhan, 2015, 100). This is potentially due to lack of accepted input from younger generations, combined with international discourse concerning how gender roles are viewed in Cambodia, that don't take local perspective, agency, and ownership into account. Overall, some authors (Haque, 2013; Sokhan, 2015) touch on unique perspectives of gender equality initiatives in Cambodia that are not commonly addressed in literature: bringing the role of men and boys into discussion and action, as well as the influences mothers and wives have in maintaining historically traditional gender roles. One could argue that these factors would

significantly affect the extent to which Cambodian primary education policy is a form of gender mainstreaming, and the consequence of its implementation.

In the context of Cambodia, gender is a highly contested and evolving term that is shaped by historical violence and resulting gaps in social services, especially education. Within national education policy, the salient discourse has followed international trends and pressures of 'gender mainstreaming'. How such policy has taken practical form is explored within the findings of my research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

In connection with my research question, this literature framework will examine conceptual and theoretical debates related to gender and education. I will then relate it more specifically to primary education, with case studies in development. I will use contextual examples in Cambodia to explicitly relate to my research topic. I will emphasize where my research aligns with the literature, as well as where it has the potential to fill gaps.

As I explored in the previous chapter, the educational system in Cambodia has undergone many transformations, with the most recent being largely influenced by international agendas and targets. Gender mainstreaming is seen as a Western import by many authors (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 526; King et. al., 2007; Miske et. al., 2010; Walby, 2005). Authors argue that national gender agendas are therefore in danger of not just being a symbol of progress, but also a vehicle for neo-colonialism, as the concepts themselves are not locally accessible terms (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 526). Although gender mainstreaming may come from elsewhere, I would argue that to ignore it undermines local agency and a potential opportunity to address inequitable access to education, employment, and social/economic/political issues in Cambodia. Neo-liberal policy concerned with gender did not invent 'gender relations'. Global policy can be taken up selectively by local actors, granting them (government and civil society) the necessary agency and scope to apply such policies.

Authors note how restraining categories are established through gender mainstreaming and development discourse, such as 'Third World child' or 'girl child', intrinsically linking associations of 'lack of education', 'poor', and 'tradition-bound', not taking into account factors of race, social class, etc. (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 527; Mohanty, 1991; Said, 1978). Chandra Mohanty argues that the title of 'Third World Women' breeds generalizations, painting a singular identity to large groups of individuals; often linked to the above associations (Mohanty, 1991, 4). These associations "freeze third world women in time, space, and history" (Mohanty, 1991, 6). Notions of the 'girl child' can also tend to infantilize women and girls in the international

development discourse, not allowing room for agency (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 529). As a solution, Mohanty suggests an “imagined community”, where feminist struggles are constructed on the grounds of the *ways* we think about race, class, and gender, that link communities politically, instead of *how* we are (race, class, and gender) (Mohanty, 1991, 4). Similarly, binaries of the ‘North’ and the ‘South’, as well as the ‘East’ and the ‘West’ are often starting points for distinction in development discourse (Said, 1978, 10). These paradigms are often articulated as ways in which the ‘North’, or the ‘West’, dominate, restructure, and have authority over the ‘South’, or the ‘East’ (Said, 1978, 11). In the context of gender, education, and development, combinations of these classifications can result in very negative connotations, with little agency at an individual level. These examples support the critiques to the international discourse that improvements in gender are ‘not happening yet’, until international measures are presented to ‘fix’ these ‘problems’.

### ***Masculinity and gender as a spectrum***

Similarly, for masculinity, authors argue that this identity can take on multiple versions of hegemonic, complicit, subordinate, and marginalized (Parpart, 2008, 182; Haque, 2013, 62). It is always a negotiation, and marginalized and/or subordinate versions are often not celebrated, even outright opposed, making it easier to navigate society through a hegemonic or complicit masculinity (Connell, 1995, 2005 in Parpart, 2008, 182; Haque, 2013). However, Jane Parpart challenges the notion of a singular hegemonic masculinity, arguing that “multiracial/ethnic societies, multiple hegemonic masculinities often contend and even complement each other” (Parpart, 2008, 182). Particular historical events affect and shift gendered identities (Parpart, 2008, 182). For example, it is argued that during the Khmer Rouge regime, a particular masculine identity was not even a choice as much as it was a matter of survival (Haque, 2013). Although some authors mention masculinity, and framing perceptions of men through feminism,



there is a lack of inclusion of men in gender & education discussion<sup>4</sup>, with almost all focus on women and empowerment. Even more so than masculinity, the *spectrum* of gender in relation to gender mainstreaming is very rarely discussed (i.e. those associating themselves as transgender, or gender non-conforming). Specifically, in the gender mainstreaming and education literature, there is a majority focus on women and girls<sup>5</sup>.

### **Gender mainstreaming discourse**

The concept of gender mainstreaming has taken on different specific and general meanings, through both theory and practice. In Walby (2005), Mieke Verloo defines gender mainstreaming as “the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that gender-equal perspectives are incorporated in all policies at all levels at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making” (cited in Walby, 2005, 327). This describes a very technical understanding of the term, but it is quite broad, ignoring the spectrum of gender, and is left open-ended for specific interpretations. For example, in the context of my research, how does this look practically in education policy? In *Gender, Schooling and Global Social Justice*, Elaine Unterhalter describes the term as “going beyond the participation of women in equal numbers as beneficiaries of initiatives, to a form of participation that enables women as well as men to influence the entire agenda and basic priorities” (Unterhalter, 2007, 131). Although both are practical conceptions of the term, a key difference between Verloo and Unterhalter’s approaches is Unterhalter’s emphasis on ensuring gender mainstreaming goes beyond parity towards true equality (2007). Ramya Subrahmanian emphasizes that gender mainstreaming is inherently a state strategy, put in place to make the state more of an “agent of transformative change for women” (Subrahmanian, 2004, 89). Unterhalter critiques the role of the state, arguing that a lot of what she believes is a lack of success in implementing gender

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<sup>4</sup> This will be discussed in my findings.

<sup>5</sup> My findings will reflect on this, as these topics are not discussed in the *ESP* or *SPGEWE* policies either. On the topic of transgender, there were noted misunderstandings of meaning with participants as well.

mainstreaming and improvements towards gender parity in a society, is the lack of critical reflection on the internal system and those that govern institutional policy (Unterhalter, 2007, 140). By 'internal system', Unterhalter is referring to the social institutions themselves (i.e. from government ministry to primary education systems), insisting that gender equality assessment needs to begin from *within* institutions and policy, before gender mainstreaming programs are implemented practically in lessons (Unterhalter, 2007, 140). Otherwise, concepts of gender mainstreaming could be misconstrued from the beginning (King et. al., 2007; Miske et. al., 2010). As I will explore in the *Gender & Feminist Theory* section, understanding the inception of dominant institutional discourse is also important to understanding how gender mainstreaming is articulated in education. This institutionalizing approach depends on large assumptions that there are shared understandings and priorities that might exist within international mainstream development organizations (Leach, 1998; Silfver, 2010; Unterhalter, 2007, 140). Walby would agree with Unterhalter's critique, as she classifies gender mainstreaming into six major categories that overlap with Unterhalter's themes of lack of accountability and lack of critical reflection (2005). Of particular connection to my research is her discussion on contested visions of, and routes to, gender equality (how is gender mainstreaming practically implemented? What is considered 'gender equality?') (Walby, 2005, 321). Walby also discusses whether the *vision* of gender equality can be distinguished from *strategy* to get there (Walby, 2005), 321). In my research, there were cases of an evident divide between what was understood to be gender equality and the multiple strategies chosen to achieve gender equality. Another one of Walby's six theories of tension relates to the relationship of gender mainstreaming to other complex inequalities, such as race and ethnicity (Walby, 2005, 322). As my research was conducted in multiple provinces, in urban and rural areas, with ethnic minority and majority populations, this theory of tension was apparent, particularly in relation to gender training opportunities. Lastly, Walby discusses the relationship between 'expertise' and democracy, and whether a more participatory approach is taken to include majority inputs from various stakeholders (Walby,

2005, 322). Again, in the case of my research, this tension is clear, as power over knowledge on the topic of gender mainstreaming was often centralized. These categories are overlapping themes throughout the theory and practice of gender mainstreaming, which we will examine below, through other authors' examples, and policy practices, in the context of primary education.

### ***Gender equality as access***

Depending how it is interpreted, 'gender', 'education', and 'development' have meant different things for different authors, organizations, and time periods (Unterhalter, 2005, 15). These interpretations structure how gender education policy has been implemented (Unterhalter, 2005, 15). During early conceptions of development in the 1960s-1970s, international development agencies and governing bodies paid very little attention to primary education (Muedini, 2015, 45). As Fiat Muedini points out, even when education was introduced, it was usually for the development of physical infrastructure, such as building a school, as opposed to any gender analysis (Muedini, 2015, 45). It was during this period that the *Women in Development* (WID) approach gained popularity (Unterhalter, 2005, 16). Gender policy followed similar understandings of modernization and growth as development at the time (Unterhalter, 2005, 16). It emphasized parity and empowerment for its economic return benefits (instead of empowerment simply for the individual) (Unterhalter, 2005, 16). 'Gender' was largely equated to 'women's issues', ignoring intersectionality and the spectrum of gender (Unterhalter, 2005, 16).

Many authors agree that greater focus was put on tactics to introduce gender initiatives into primary education when the launch of the World Bank *Education for All* (EFA) occurred, with the goal of every child in the world gaining access to primary education (Aikman & Rao, 2012, 212; Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2008; Kabeer, 2015, 382; Muedini, 2015, 47; Stromquist, 2006, 146). Authors argue however, that although there began a focus on gender in education, the quantitative approach developed in the Global North still mirrored a lot of the

neo-colonial issues that exist in development (Muedini, 2015; Kabeer, 2015; Unterhalter, 2016, 27). This refers to increase in *number* of girls with *access* to education as a key indicator, as opposed to a qualitative approach analyzing *attitudes and content* of what was being taught within education systems. Unterhalter categorizes this as the 'get girls into school phase' where gender is introduced into education policy as 'gender as a noun' (Unterhalter, 2016, 112). Gender equality is largely concerned with numbers (parity) in this phase, and was championed by powerful global organizations, using political leverage to form state alliances on the issue (Unterhalter, 2016, 117). The EFA phase also shifted the education discourse from 'all countries' to 'developing countries' and from 'basic education' to 'primary education' (with the connotation of a school institution) (Unterhalter, 2014, 178). Unequal gender relations were seen to hinder (economic) development.

This approach, although characterized as a 'past approach', does still take shape today<sup>6</sup>. It is critiqued for a number of reasons, namely for the lack of acknowledgement of intersectional approaches such as through class and race (Unterhalter, 2016; Walby, 2005). It is also critiqued for a lack of acknowledgement of structural inequalities, such as violence, or through curriculum (Unterhalter, 2016, 117). Further, this approach categorizes development on a broad global scale, ignoring context, with a focus on economic growth, rallying behind messages of how educating a girl can 'lift her community out of poverty' (Unterhalter, 2016). This produces the message of empowerment *for* something else (the economy), as opposed to for oneself (which should be evident as this phase was steered by The World Bank). Subrahmanian argues that while this phase was broad in its reach, it also "imposed narrowness on what was actually a very diverse process...conflating advancement of women's 'cause' within institutions with often little mandate and power to effect real change" (2004, 90). Having followed world economic crises in the 1980s, this approach of the World Bank linked education access with debt relief

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<sup>6</sup> As argued through the findings of my research.

(and other NGOs followed suit) (Unterhalter, 2014, 179). Yet, applying neo-liberal economic analysis and discourse to social dimensions can result in a reductionist analysis (Subrahmanian, 2004, 91). Authors argue this created unreal expectations of how social change takes place (Subrahmanian, 2004; Unterhalter, 2014; Walby, 2005). In Malawi, despite infrastructural support and expansion of enrolments through gender mainstreaming policy implementation, less than a fifth of students completed primary school (Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007). This economic focus ignored how children's labour can be seen as valuable for survival in a family, while the perceived returns from schooling are not clear (Aikman & Rao, 2012). Similar cases were reported in Cambodia (Tan, 2007) and India (Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2008). Nelly Stromquist proposes that, despite all of its shortcomings, this 'access phase' prevailed as it was a "palatable compromise for change" (2006, 161). Meaning, profound structural changes were avoided due to their threat not only to elites, but to long-standing patriarchy (2006, 17). It was not until the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000, introducing *Goal 6: Integrated strategies for gender equality in education*, that there was a recognized need for change in attitudes, values, and practices (Unterhalter, 2015, 26-27; 2016, 118). For example, how individuals *experience* education, and what is the *nature* of the discrimination they encounter (Aikman & Rao, 2012, 212).

### ***International agendas and dominant Western discourse***

As we can see from Walby's six categories of tension with gender mainstreaming, the 'expertise' versus democracy dynamic (2005) provides critical opportunity to analyze how transnational policy is developed, and where complex inequalities exist within the gender-mainstreaming framework, as they are often framed on an international level, through Western discourse. Rosemary Gordon (1998) argues that in Zimbabwe, for example, education is based on Western colonial models which are seen as necessary conditions for 'modernization', and a solution to a 'problem' of 'backward' traditional gender ideologies and stereotypes (1998, 53). However, this simply perpetuates patriarchal ideologies in another form (Western), which are

taught to be 'superior' to indigenous ones, as they will lead to development as modernization (Gordon, 1998, 53). This ignores capacity development and ideas of incorporating gender equity more fluidly into culture, as a way of addressing stereotypes. Some authors argue that the MDGs which relate to achieving universal primary education, and promoting gender equality further reversed away from the Dakar Framework for Action and the Beijing Platform for Action, focusing back on 'just getting girls into school', as it was created through a narrow consulting process (unlike the Dakar Framework for Action) (Unterhalter, 2014, 180; 2016). It resembled the previous World Bank approach, being top-down and concerning practical measures such as financial cash incentives, expanding school buildings, and abolishing fees (Unterhalter, 2016, 119). Further, that indicators gave inadequate information for thorough assessment (Unterhalter, 2014, 180).

Many authors present research case studies during the MDG phase (2000-2015) where singular policy at the top, largely influenced by globalization, was very detached from beneficiary concerns and interpreted very narrowly (gender mainstreaming education policy in Mali and Cambodia: Miske et. al., 2010; education reforms in Laos: Silfver, 2010; NGOs in Kenya and South Africa, Bangladesh, Niger, Gambia: Unterhalter, 2016). In sum, Unterhalter states that "in the era of the MDGs there has been virtually no improvement for children from the lowest socio-economic groups in the number of school years completed. Similar trends are evident for the most marginalized ethnicities, those living in rural areas or regions that are socially distant from centers of power" (2014, 181). Overall, numbers of children enrolled increased, but what and how they learned was not assessed (Stromquist, 2006, 149-150; Unterhalter, 2014, 182). Even this assessment of enrollment is argued to be skewed, as some children who drop in and out of school may be classified simply as 'enrolled' (often schools would be incentivized for having higher numbers of students enrolled) (Miske et. al., 2010, 447, 452; Silfver, 2010, Unterhalter, 2014, 182). Therefore, educational progress measured purely in terms of enrolment is insufficient to alter gender issues (Stromquist, 2006, 148). Further, "a

minority of the innovations [of such international frameworks] consider undoing deeply entrenched gender inequalities, and the majority work with notions of quick technical solutions presented as innovations” (Unterhalter, 2015, 21). Even with a more recent shift of policy and international agendas putting more emphasis on quality, such as the SDGs, Nelly Stromquist argues that ‘quality’ is often defined through standardized tests, as opposed to teacher attitudes and broader issues of citizenship rights (Stromquist, 2006, 150). So why has education been continuously seen as a solution to social issues? Stromquist argues that it is because education is an effort with consequences that manifest in the distant future, as opposed to immediate (2006, 159). Changes through education tend to be peaceful, show concern for large groups of people, and tend to enhance state legitimacy (Stromquist, 2006, 159). Therefore, this policy approach (and global branding) is beneficial for both state and NGOs.

### ***Gender mainstreaming in education: contesting implementation***

Gender mainstreaming and education became intrinsically linked to development and ideologies of modernization for a number of reasons. Conceptually, authors have a similar understanding of gender mainstreaming goals, yet generally contend that we must further examine the ways in which schools manufacture gender identity (Leach, 1998, 16; Gordon, 1998, 54; Martin, 2006). Authors also debate how gender mainstreaming should be measured in education, and where/how its practical implementation should take place. Gender mainstreaming has become a prominent component to not only policy development, but specific development projects as well (as I will discuss through case studies). Yet, as Fennell & Arnot (2009) state, “national declarations of gender and education can be Trojan Horses: vehicles for ideologies, only some of which might be liberating” (526).

Fiona Leach uses examples of the US and Zambia and how the high number of educated women does not result in higher positions in the division of labour in the larger society, as there is still a traditional patriarchal division (Leach, 1998, 23-24). This begs the question of whether there needs to be more outreach and focus on learning within the family, and how that

would look from a local perspective (for example, family workshops). I agree with authors that, if we are accepting that societies are often structured along gender lines (and all the other intersecting levels of inequality), one of society's fundamental institutions, the school institution, may very well be a strong reflection of this structuring (Leach, 1998, 10; Gordon, 1998, 55; Martin, 2006).

A lot of international gender monitoring is modeled on binary divisions, such as the public/private spheres, dividing specific realms that are for certain purposes. For example, a space that is 'for educational monitoring' (public sphere, outside of the home), and a space that is 'not for educational monitoring' (private sphere, inside the home) (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 531). In the context of Cambodia, this may undermine the role of the community, and life within the family. As a solution, Fennell & Arnot suggest 'nego-feminism' as an approach to gender and education in the development context (2009, 531). This is a feminism of non-ego negotiation that challenges the duality of the public/private sphere and focuses on discourse, as opposed to social action (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 533, 535). It emphasizes the pathways and processes as opposed to the 'product' (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 533, 535).<sup>7</sup> It centers on identity located within the community and non-formal educational knowledge, as opposed to Western liberal democracy's focus on individualism (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 533, 535). In relation to my research, this could suggest policy that expands its focus beyond primary school institutions and their staff within Cambodia, focusing the conversation more within communities. It allows us to look at how education occurs, and how gender roles are formed, throughout the community, instead of just assuming gender equity education only takes place in the classroom, and that the 'solution' to gender equity is simply putting girls in formal schooling (Fennell & Arnot, 2009, 536).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Also see *Gender & Feminist Theory* section.

<sup>8</sup> Also see *Gender & Feminist Theory* section and my research findings.



In response, Subrahmanian offers discarding the term of gender mainstreaming all together as a solution to the critiques offered (2004, 93). She argues that if we break up its component parts (policy reform, administrative reform, analytical and conceptual strengthening, political advocacy), naming each more accurately, its practical use will be more effective (Subrahmanian, 2004, 93). Maretha De Waal on the other hand, would disagree, stating that some gender mainstreaming offers an integrated framework for putting development policy into practice (de Waal, 2006, 213). De Waal argues, "it seeks to enable [practitioners] to move beyond the convenient 'head counting' of the women and men participating in a given activity, and to increase the depth and breadth of the integration of a gender perspective in development projects" (de Waal, 2006, 213-213). However, expectations of affecting social change through bureaucratic action alone ignore wider political context and are argued by some to be ineffective (Miske et. al., 2010, 447; Subrahmanian, 2004, 93; Walby, 2005). In a bureaucratic process, it is often the intermediaries who are assumed responsibility for failure or success of implementation (Silfver, 2010; Subrahmanian, 2004, 93). Yet, it is also the intermediaries who have minimal decision-making power for change (Miske et al., Silfver, 2010; Subrahmanian, 2004, 93). Therefore, Subrahmanian argues that in contemporary practice, "models for understanding transformation and social change processes need to be applied not just to individuals 'out there', but also the individuals who work within these institutions" (2004, 93). Unterhalter would agree, citing the lack of monitoring within institutions as being a key detriment to the success of gender mainstreaming initiatives (2007, 140).

There is a recent shift of the private sector becoming more involved in policy, with the assumption that they 'will do better with gender' after much critique of the above mentioned public initiatives (Unterhalter, 2016, 16). However, there are many commercial conflict of interest discussions that arise from this approach. It is also not an approach that is dominant in the context of my research. Rather, the context of my research is more aligned with the 'access phase'.

## ***Gender & feminist theory***

As mentioned, Sylvia Walby has provided a highly-cited understanding of gender mainstreaming (Walby, 2005). She relates gender mainstreaming to feminist theory by stating that their arguments are aligned on the same key concepts (such as universalism, particularism, difference) (Walby, 2005, 326). She also highlights the significance of intersectional tensions (i.e. race, class, gender) within both gender mainstreaming and feminist theory (Walby, 2005, 322). Walby's discussion on how the tension between 'expertise' and democracy (whose voices are heard), and problematizing transnationalism also relates to key arguments associated with Third World Feminism (Parpart, 1995; Walby, 2005). Walby believes gender mainstreaming can be just as much a feminist strategy which informs feminist theory, as it is a specialized policy tool (Walby, 2005, 338).

However, there are authors that would disagree (Silfver, 2010; Walby, 2005). Kyoko Kusakabe in Silfver (2010) states that gender mainstreaming is "co-opting the feminist agenda, instrumentalizing and diluting it, and thus doing more harm than good for gender equality" (482). Silfver does agree with Walby however, that there are tensions in gender mainstreaming (Walby just has more confidence that these tensions can be overcome) (Silfver, 2010; Walby, 2005). For example, both agree that issues of gender need to be understood in relation to multiple intersecting inequalities (class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability), which is not articulated clearly (perhaps deliberately) in gender mainstreaming theory and practice, currently (Silfver, 2010; Walby, 2005). They also believe gender mainstreaming has tensions involved in the transnationalism nature of it, and the 'expertise' vs. local democracy dichotomy, in terms of how/who should implement it (Silfver, 2010; Walby, 2005).

Historically, liberal Western conceptions of feminism resulted in gender and equality being more thoroughly introduced into global development agendas (Parpart, 1995; Ramamurthy, 2000). As a critique to these conceptions, Parpart (1995) sees Third World Feminism as a theoretical and practical approach to the idea that all feminism has the same

issues and debates. It challenges the views of the Third World being seen as victims in need of saving, instead of participants of their own development and empowerment (Parpart, 1995). Parpart would also include a post-modern feminist approach towards gender equality, agreeing with Silfver (2010) and Walby (2005), that there is a need to incorporate multiple intersecting inequalities, beyond geographical location, into feminist analysis and gender mainstreaming (Parpart, 1995). The post-modernist feminist approach calls for “a creative synthesis of tradition and modernity, drawing on local knowledge and culture” (Ramamurthy, 2000, 254). This avoids distorted realities and reduces the possibility of negative coalitions, such as international campaigns for gender mainstreaming programs that do not relate to local context (Parpart, 1995, 255).

Other lenses we can look at gender within education are the aforementioned framework of *Women in Development* (WID), as well as *Woman and Development* (WAD), and *Gender and Development* (GAD). As mentioned, the WID approach has guided much of the infrastructural and economic goals of gender in education, led by a liberal feminist agenda (Hyndman & de Alwis, 2003, 214; Unterhalter, 2005). The WAD approach, emerging as a response to WID at the end of the 1970s, still had a focus on women, but with emphasis on development projects specifically *for* women, and designed *by* women (Hyndman & de Alwis, 2003, 214). In the context of education, this could be the creation of girls’ groups<sup>9</sup>. This deviates from previous WID approach of projects *involving* women, for *economic* development, such as girls’ scholarships or building school infrastructure. Emerging in the 1980s, GAD was influenced by socialist feminist critiques in response to the modernist perspectives that WID and WAD embodied (Hyndman & de Alwis, 2003, 214). Instead of focusing specifically on women, GAD approaches are concerned with the “social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations to women and to men” (Rathgeber, 1990, 494 in Hyndman & de Alwis, 2003, 214).

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<sup>9</sup> See ‘girls’ commissions’ in *Chapter 4: Findings*.

A GAD approach within the education sectors puts emphasis on intersectional power relations both in the school and within the community (Stromquist, 2001). GAD offers insight into who tends to embody the most power through social relations, and thus who makes decisions about schooling and school processes (Aikman & Rao, 2012, 215). Traditional forms of gender mainstreaming policy treat gender inequalities as deficits or barriers to overcome, which “avoids analysis of the ways in which power operates within institutions such as the school, and within society more widely” (Aikman & Rao, 2012, 214). This avoids acceptance that schools can be enabling environments, where abuse and violence can take place through enforced power relations (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Further, how education and authority (schools) create a setting of being watched, which influences behaviour (Feder, 2011).

This approach to power is aligned with gender mainstreaming critiques which concern themselves with visible lack of intersectional approaches that are also apolitical and ahistorical (Stromquist, 2006, 146). In the case of this theory, intersectionality influences not only the circumstance of an individual, but also how they will act (Lynch, 2011, 20) (how they experience and interpret gender mainstreaming policy in education). If looking at very micro-level power interactions, one may be able to understand why macro-level policy (i.e. gender parity) is not taking place. This approach also recognizes power relations to not be exterior from other relations and does not reduce power to a binary relationship (‘rulers’/ ‘ruled’) (Lynch, 2011, 22). This is in agreeance with gender mainstreaming critique and allows for further expansion of gender equity origins outside of school institutions (i.e. family). During the inception of gender mainstreaming policy, the advocacy and equity discourse was that “gender equity reform for girls benefited many students perceived to be ‘at risk’ and came down to being ‘good pedagogy’ for all students” (Blackmore, 2004, 269). With the underlying discourse of this approach being assimilation (efficient access, ‘get girls into school’), and procedural (effectiveness, remove obstacles too access), issues of structural and institutional barriers remained outside of mainstream discourse (Subrahmanian, 2004, 92-93). This discourse of ‘lifting girls up’ equated

girls to a negative self-image of failing (Aikman & Rao, 2012, 221). School institutions are also argued to lack acknowledgement of the importance of knowledge and experience that students themselves bring to the educational setting (Stromquist, 2006, 153). This combined with an individualistic liberal feminist discourse is argued to have dictated much of gender equity, development, and education practice (Subrahmanian, 2004, 92).

Institutions still tend to see educational conditions as a problem of efficiency in the production and use of resources, rather than of inequality in their distribution or concentration in the control over the means to produce them (Morales-Gomez & Torres, 1990). Yet, Richard Lynch argues that we can best study power at the micro-relationship level, not at the state level; looking more at the states' *effects* (Lynch, 2011, 22). This is what I am doing in the context of my research, following the proposition that it is not the *SPGEWE* and *ESP* policies themselves that are powerful and dictate how gender mainstreaming is implemented, rather I am looking at the *effects* of them, and how they are articulated through micro social interactions. Gender implementation strategy is interpreted in many different ways. In my research for example, Chamroeun, a school director, interpreted implementation through social relations with pregnant teachers, by assisting with their teaching. Here implementation is a strategy, not a property. Individual choices and strategies about how to exercise gender policy in education is where the real power of the policy is articulated. As will be discussed through the interviews of this research, these strategies are not static. They are constantly transforming through power relations (Lynch, 2011, 25). For example, how the varying ways school directors' implementations of gender mainstreaming tactics can be understood by their social interactions (with other teachers, ministry staff, families, etc.).

### **Global Case Studies of Gender Mainstreaming in Education**

This section illustrates specific examples of gender mainstreaming implementation in the context of education. The *India National Education Policy of 1986* is an early example of gender issues being brought to the forefront in educational policy reform (Bhog & Ghose, 2014, 51).

Practical implementations involved teacher training, curricula and textbook reform, and improving infrastructure (Bhog & Ghose, 2014, 51). However, these initial implementations support authors' arguments above (Kabeer, 2015; Muedini, 2015; Unterhalter, 2007; Walby, 2005), as the techniques were negatively described as 'add women and stir' (or a 'one size fits all' approach to gender mainstreaming) (Bhog & Ghose, 2014, 51). For example, text books included increasing frequency of female representation, and showing visible achievements of women, but not addressing gender inequality and rigid divisions of labour that were happening in the 'real world' (Bhog & Ghose, 2014, 51). Further, teacher training primarily revolved around curriculum training, as opposed to personal attitudes and beliefs (Bhog & Ghose, 2014, 51).

This case demonstrates an important understanding of how teacher attitudes and beliefs are implicitly connected to goals of gender equality (Bhog & Ghose, 2014, 51; Gordon, 1998). As Naila Kabeer (2003) recounts, the 'hidden curriculum': "reinforces messages about girls' inferior status" (179). For example, in a case in Kenya, teachers' attitudes were found to be the primary obstacle to girls' learning, having preference for teaching one sex over the other, associating boys with better outcomes of success in leadership (Kabeer, 2003, 180). Kabeer argues that the same can be said for some cases in India, where social inequalities are also reproduced through interactions within the school system, with segregation by caste (Kabeer, 2003, 179). This relates to Walby's concept of practical tensions of gender mainstreaming through multiple intersecting inequalities (Walby, 2005, 339). Similarly, from a critical analysis of gender mainstreaming technical frameworks being used in Cambodia, Miske et. al. (2010) emphasizes a need for gender mainstreaming design interventions to be based on a deeper understanding of girls' and boys' perceptions of empowerment and equality (456).

Based on case study information, common themes among authors tend to be a call for greater understanding of attitudes and beliefs of those interacting with these programs (i.e. students, teachers, parents); as opposed to the actual content (i.e. curriculum) of gender mainstreaming reforms. In Cambodian gender and primary education policy, 'social attitudes' is

stated as a useful measure of the success of such policy (SPGEWE, 8). In fact, there is less focus on curriculum materials, and more emphasis on attitudes, teacher training, access, and favourable conditions (SPGEWE, 8). Even in general, while national education policies may clearly subscribe to international discourses of gender equity and equality and include strong statements about the importance of mainstreaming gender through the system and its institutions, there are still few examples of curricula developed from a gendered analysis of society, including all individuals' expectations for the future (Aikman & Rao, 2012, 221)

Many education development policies have been largely donor-driven, with a focus on access, lacking address to the causes of the gender gap itself (Leach, 1998, 15). Silfver illustrates this through the case study of gender mainstreaming reform to the Lao People's Democratic Republic education system (Silfver, 2010). Local NGOs, in this context, perceived gender mainstreaming to be for the benefit of the donor, not thinking it was developed with the goal of benefitting the communities (Silfver, 2010). With little local ownership, gender was seen more as a buzzword to check boxes (Silfver, 2010, 483).

### **Potential Contribution of the Research**

My research focuses on the themes mentioned, specifically in the context of primary education in Cambodia. While this is a site that has had gender mainstreaming policy in place throughout the past decade, there are few case studies that have conducted research in this context. In terms of gender mainstreaming as a practical tool, the niche of my work is aligned with existing gender mainstreaming critique for its broad, vague scope, and continuous emphasis on parity as a measurement of equality, which ignores context and power.

With fairly contemporary accounts, authors have shown how gender mainstreaming in education has struggled to move beyond concerns with gender parity, towards facilitating the transformation of gender relations, and confronting multi-level on-going power dynamics in educational institutions (Miske et. al., 2010, 447). I believe the significance of the school as an

institution is somewhat of a gap in the literature, and how specifically gender mainstreaming plays out in that setting. Institutions for youth also add to the power of influence. Research on this topic tends to rely on quantitative methods with youth (if involving youth at all) (Aikman & Rao, 2012; Unterhalter, 2014; SDGs; MDGs). In my own research this was clear with some practices of the *ESP* policy as well, such as tallying the number of girls in classes. There was also skepticism from colleagues and interpreters in terms of why I would want to talk to students, whether students would be able to understand, and the value of data I would get out of interviews with them. I did however find it important to engage with students, as they are primary stakeholders in the policy. Not including their input or viewing them homogeneously would also weaken the research. On the other hand, with so much quantitative focus on students, the agency and gendered identities of teachers and community members are often neglected both as individuals and as professionals (Aikman & Rao, 2012, 224). In this case, much of my findings which relate to adults were informed by students, engaging with the influential affect adults have on students.

This analysis of the gender mainstreaming literature in education and development provides a critical overview of the themes of this research. As we have seen through the theoretical, conceptual, and historical frameworks of gender mainstreaming in education, there is tension both in terms of theory (different versions of feminism, whether they are an asset or not to gender mainstreaming in the context of educational institutions), as well as with its practice (whether it should be implemented at all, as larger policy, as community-driven, and how). From these debates, we can see how gender inequality lies in power relations, not as a specific *issue*, which is where one could argue the difficulty and conflicts in gender mainstreaming implementation come from (Sen, 2013, 46). These conceptions of gender mainstreaming also present the term as encompassing a very broad agenda in settings which may have very minimal resources. This is further stressed in education, where solutions and measurements to complex problems are distant and long term (Stromquist, 2006). For



education to be a resource for individuals, it has to be seen in its entirety, not only through bureaucracy and formal institutions (Stromquist, 2006, 157).

### CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODS

My research examines local interpretations of primary education gender policy in Cambodia, based primarily on interviews and participant observation. The aim is to contribute to understanding how mainstream policy discourse is articulated on the ground, in an institutional setting. Further, my research intends to analyze the effects of power relations within an institutional setting.

The research conducted was qualitative; I recruited participants from school visits and network connections through the educational development NGO, *The Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance* (known by its Flemish abbreviation of VVOB), where I was doing a research placement. Interviews focused on civil society stakeholders, primarily those working or studying within educational institutions where gender primary education policy is being conducted. These stakeholders could speak to their direct experience and the first-hand implementation of said policy. Interviews were semi-structured in the fact that I had pre-set questions, but they were open-ended in terms of allowing participants to direct their responses (varying the order/number of questions asked). Interview content varied according to the interviewees. The general themes included perceptions and attitudes of gender in primary education, gender mainstreaming education policy, and perceived capabilities through education. I chose to conduct face-to-face, semi-structured interviews as they are very flexible in allowing for any question/answer to materialize (McLafferty, 2010, 93). Further, face-to-face interviews allowed the ability to foster more intimate relationships and read body language (particularly as the interviews were translated between English and Khmer). Using an open-ended style to interviews allowed for the interviewee to shape the discussion, providing individual perceptions of the research topic. Observation was used as a research method not only during interviews, but to take note of the social relationships that form within an institutional setting (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Overall, I chose to conduct qualitative research as it allowed me to look more deeply into social behaviours and societal values (which are at the

centre of my research question), in comparison to quantitative research (Herbert, 2010, 71). Research also took place within institutional settings to remain close to the implementation measures the policy outlined. Upon returning to Canada, I downloaded and encrypted written and recorded data onto a computer to further secure and maintain anonymity of the data.<sup>10</sup>

I will now discuss the details of my interview process, and reasoning for choosing this method. The fact alone that my research question focuses on perceptions calls for qualitative measures as opposed to 'yes' or 'no' answers, or pre-defined responses. In interviews, questions can be clarified, body language can be interpreted with responses, and probing for deeper meaning can take place (McLafferty, 2010, 93). There is also the opportunity for human trust and relationships to develop, allowing for the potential to revisit the interviewee, or for the interviewee to facilitate access to new individuals to be interviewed.

All interviews were done in the language of Khmer, with the assistance of an interpreter. Interviews were particularly valuable because body language could be read in addition to the recordings of the translated interview. All interviews except two were recorded, with the interpreter translating to English as they proceeded. Given the circumstance, the inherent power dynamics of the researcher/research participant relationship cannot be avoided. I was conscious of my positioning and how that would change depending on the interview. I did my best to break down barriers and establish rapport that could not have happened through other non-interactive methods (i.e. surveys) (Jensen & Glasmeier, 2010, McDowell, 2010).

Although interviews were the primary method of research, they did vary depending on the context. It became quite transparent that interviews which take place on school grounds are highly formatted depending on the school director. School directors provided access, as they were the gatekeepers of the schools, and thus to more interviews. Interviews ranged from a

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<sup>10</sup> For details on my process of coding and identifying themes in the data, drawn in connection to my research question, see page 44.

private one-on-one setting, to some interviews containing multiple participants. Only one interview contained 5 participants, with others containing 1, 2, or 3 participants. The number of participants present in an interview was primarily dependent on their level of comfort, particularly with students. Being a Westerner/foreigner classified me as an outsider and could have contributed to their level of comfort.<sup>11</sup>

Though participants did introduce themselves, in the recording of the interviews, research participants remained anonymous (real names were not recorded throughout hard copy, soft copy, or on audio). In terms of consent, all participants chose to use verbal as opposed to written consent, with many skeptical of signing any document.<sup>12</sup>

There are both benefits and drawbacks to using an interpreter. Although not originally anticipated, interpreters were used for all interviews as all participants spoke Khmer, with most having limited to no proficiency in English. Contrarily, I also had very limited proficiency in Khmer, and I wanted the participants to be able to comfortably respond to all questions in their preferred language. Working with interpreters allowed for in-depth questions and answers to take shape that otherwise could not if understanding of the communicated language was an issue.

Altogether I worked with three interpreters. The one with whom I worked for the majority of interviews was a woman in her early twenties, studying law. The other two were NGO program coordinators. One was a woman in her thirties, and the other was a man in his thirties. I worked with the NGO employee who was a woman in five interviews, and the NGO employee who was a man in two interviews (the rest of the thirty-two interviews were conducted with the student interpreter who was a woman). As the interpreter who was a man just conducted two interviews with me it was not a sizeable number of participants to draw any conclusions as to the difference of participation based on whether the interpreter was a man or a woman. Also,

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<sup>11</sup> Discussed further in *Positionality* section.

<sup>12</sup> Discussed further in *Ethics* section.

anecdotally there was no obvious difference of presumed level of comfort and interview responses.

Overall, I found the interpreters very useful not only in navigating the translation of questions, but also with assisting in developing culturally appropriate framing to questions, which I could have quite possibly missed if on my own. Beyond simply being an interpreter, they acted as cultural liaisons.

### **Observation**

Between interviews, I also sat in on classes conducted by both teachers and student teachers. In these cases, I observed the dynamics between teachers/students as well as students/students (i.e. the levels of engagement and participation of girls and boys). I also took note of the number of girls in classes compared to the number of boys, and whether the teachers/student teachers were men or women. Lastly, 'girl commission' activity boards were put in place to give tasks to girls in school that ensured gender equality was taking place. These were observed for their content. Again, given power dynamics which were prevalent within the schools, these observations and quantitative assessments gave me an understanding of how gender dynamics may come into play. For example, do teachers engage equally with both boys and girls? Are boys more likely to participate and answer questions compared to girls? What types of gender mainstreaming implementations are taking place, as per the girl commission boards? Observation was also used within the schoolyards, not only examining gender group dynamics, but also if/how both girls and boys participated in traditionally segregated activities (i.e. soccer). These observations were recorded through field notes (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

### **Location and Demographics**

In terms of location, all interviews and collection of documented information took place in Cambodia in the following provinces: Stung Treng, Kratie, Banteay Meanchay, Battambang, Sihanoukville, Kampong Speu, and Kampong Cham. In total, 40 interviews were conducted with



cited the governmental stance on the topic (not their personal opinion). As for NGOs, there is only one main NGO (*Gender and Development for Cambodia*) that does gender training in the context of education, with whom I was not able to get in contact for interviews either. For those reasons, my target demographic shifted towards a younger age group, as well as a focus more on the ‘beneficiaries’<sup>13</sup> of gender education policy as opposed to policymakers and benefactors. This shift turned out to be a valuable because those interviewed who were furthest away from the policy-making process (students, parents, teachers) tended to give responses that were less congruent with what they may have thought I wanted to hear. This is unlike some of the school directors, highlighting the buzzwords of international agendas, such as ‘gender mainstreaming’, and references to the SDGs.

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<sup>13</sup> I have put beneficiaries in quotations as the purpose of this research itself is to analyze whether these stakeholders perceive benefits from gender education policy. Therefore, I am hesitant to assign them this title.

**Table 1: Research participants**

Who	Why	How
17 students, aged 4-12 (11 girls, 6 boys)	Directly impacted by gender mainstreaming in primary education as they are enrolled as the learners in primary education; carry firsthand knowledge and on-the-ground experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and contact through VVOB</li> <li>• Any connections made personally with local parents/ students (consent of parents, and assent of children)</li> <li>• Through school visits</li> </ul>
7 teachers of primary level education, various ages above 18 (5 women, 2 men)	Directly impacted and responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming in primary education systems (and possibly trained on gender-sensitive content); carry firsthand knowledge and on-the-ground experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and contact through VVOB</li> <li>• Through school visits</li> <li>• Any connections made personally in communities</li> </ul>
5 directors of primary level education, various ages above 18 (1 woman, 4 men)	Directly responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming in primary education systems (and possibly contributing to designing of new programs, content, and models); carry firsthand knowledge and on-the-ground experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and contact through VVOB</li> <li>• Through school visits</li> </ul>
2 parents/guardians of students in primary education, various ages (1 woman, 1 man)	Directly responsible and impacted by gender mainstreaming in primary education, as their children are enrolled as learners, and they directly influence their child's upbringing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and contact through VVOB</li> <li>• Through school visits</li> <li>• Any personal connections made</li> </ul>
9 student teachers, various ages above 18 (3 women, 6 men)	Currently being trained in teaching, therefore are experiencing the most recent curriculum and teaching format; directly responsible and impacted by gender mainstreaming in primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and contact through VVOB</li> <li>• Personal contact with any NGOs and/or gender specialists</li> </ul>



To ensure confidentiality and discretion, the interpreters signed confidentiality agreements in relation to their participation. For the interview participants, however, verbal consent was preferred and used in all interviews<sup>14</sup>. Participants, interpreters and colleagues cited signing a document as an untrustworthy option. Some believed it to be associated with some sort of unknown governmental use, the government trying to extract information from them, and/or an association of them signing away their rights. It is also illegal to record an individual's voice without consent in Cambodia, so verbal consent to record one's voice was also used before every interview. There was only one instance where an individual did not want to be recorded, and two interviews that were not recorded in total. The individual who chose not to be recorded did not elaborate on their reasoning, simply that it was their preference. The second unrecorded interview happened right after this, and with a limited amount of time the participant had available to answer questions, asking to take a few notes instead of explaining the reasoning behind the recording process, seemed most appropriate and efficient.

Given the specific topic of research, and that fact that the overwhelming majority of school directors were men, and overwhelming majority of teachers were women, gendered hierarchal dynamics could have been a factor that played out in interview participation as well. Again, to mitigate this, emphasis on voluntary participation was articulated, and if preferred, participants were able to interview with a friend or colleague. The interpreters and I tried to conduct interviews in settings participants felt were private and comfortable. The interpreters also played a key role in assessing the level of comfort of participants (and potentially adding to their level of comfort from shared language and culture). They steered questions based on comfort level.

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<sup>14</sup> Risk was minimal in this research for both the participants and myself. Pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Most of the interviews were done with an individual participant, myself, and an interpreter. However, dependent on the comfort of the participant (particularly youth), some interviews were done with more than one individual. Participation was on a voluntary basis with no compensation, monetary or otherwise, provided. Participants were notified that they could turn off the recording at any point, could leave the interview whenever they wished, and could choose not to respond to any question they did not want to.

From the guidance of colleagues and interpreters, it was not deemed culturally appropriate to request written consent. However, for some schools, a letter outlining my research and the intent of my visit (for interviews) was sent to school directors proactively. The purpose of this was to seek approval to interview at their school, if I was going to a school without VVOB. The letters however were sent from VVOB, still to show my affiliation, and therefore my 'credential', leading to my access.<sup>15</sup>

### **Interview Questions**

Initially, prior to the interviews, my questions focused largely on the specific education policy inducted by the Cambodian government. However, after beginning the interviews, it became clear that many were not familiar with specifics of the policy (particularly those who are presumed to be the 'beneficiaries'), and had their own unique understandings of 'gender'. Therefore, interview questions shifted to conversations surrounding the term 'gender', participants' own perceptions of the term, and how they believed topics of gender to be addressed and implemented in primary school institutions (see *Appendix A*). For example, asking teachers: 'Did you experience any challenges implementing gender mainstreaming programs? If so, what were they?' was removed. Generally, if there was awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming programming, it was at the school director level. Instead, broader questions about individuals' jobs and roles in society were asked, as well as whether they had received any gender training, and their conceptions of the term.

### **Positionality**

I found going into the field there was a lot of emphasis on positionality and the need to 'bare all' when it comes to our own societal placement, ideologies, and pre-dispositions.

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<sup>15</sup> The bias of this will be discussed further in the *Potential bias in methodology* section.

However, I believe Linda Finlay's reminder of how "the self...should be exploited only while it remains purposeful to do so" (2002, 215) resonated with my own understanding of positionality.

Finlay's 'reflexivity as social critique' was my most likely route of reflection (2002). The approach emphasizes power imbalance, and acknowledges tensions arising between class, gender and race (2002). With my interviews and observation taking place in school institutions, the authoritative structure of school, and the power dynamics between youth, teachers, directors, and myself were always present. My positionality, as every researchers', played a central role to my fieldwork experience. I was a white Western woman from a powerful, wealthy country, and I was associated with being a member of an NGO. NGOs generally had great respect among teachers and students, and participants were happy to do interviews. VVOB, where I did my research placement, had access to schools with the purpose of conducting teacher and curriculum evaluations. Potentially because of my positionality, directors never questioned what we were doing. With over 3,000 NGOs in Cambodia however, there is a large possibility that interviews with members of school institutions has become normalized. This position is also of importance when discussing interview power dynamics. Depending on whether participants liked, disliked, or were neutral on the topic of NGOs likely would have influenced their level of participation in the interview. Whether NGO workers were seen as authoritative figures, particularly for children, could have impacted individual participation as well. I emphasize this view on authority primarily as interviews were conducted within school institutions, a setting with inherent hierarchies.

One of the more seemingly obvious ways my positionality provided a hindrance to the research was with the level of comfort of the participants, particularly youth who saw me as a foreigner. How I looked and that I could not speak Khmer was unfamiliar to some. This level of comfort could therefore have affected how much participants wanted to open up to me. That is why, as I mentioned, my interpreters did not only provide language translation, but cultural liaison that brought a dimension of familiarity and comfort to participants.

Christine Stanley and Patrick Slattery argue that there are four characteristics which are integral to interdisciplinary research: prior theoretical knowledge, experiences of growth, understanding broader contexts, and a process orientation (2003, 724). In the context of my research, they are: prior theoretical knowledge of gender, education, and development; accepting growth in interviews by listening back and critically reflecting on them (what did I do wrong? What did I do right?); understanding the broader context of politics in Cambodia; and attempting to orient myself in a way that established trust with the research participants (ensuring anonymity, having less formal conversations at first).

My particular interest in gender equity issues may have swayed certain conversations in directions that would not have been there otherwise. Even though I was aware of my characteristics to a certain degree (in some cases more so than others), it did make me think of how alternative research results could have been developed, if those characteristics (White Western female, affiliated with an NGO, and actively interested in the topic of gender) were different. I hope that I have somewhat mitigated these variables by engaging in a reflexive practice of interdisciplinary research (Stanley & Slattery, 2003).

### **Challenges**

Many of the challenges faced were expected. For example, language was a barrier, and an interpreter was needed for the interviews. Further, speaking to youth had the additional challenges of gaining parental consent. The need to gain parental consent is a reason why the majority of interviews took place in the school setting, as parents were often picking up/dropping off their children there.

As mentioned, after seeing great value from beneficiary interviews, and what seemed to be (in some cases) quite scripted interviews higher authorities who believed I was looking for specific answers, my focus shifted away from higher authorities anyways. However, these hierarchies could not be fully avoided of course. Power relationships were navigated continuously and depended on the particular higher authorities within the school. One attempt to

deconstruct power barriers was to interview school directors first when entering a school, before interviewing other candidates. Establishing a level of respect to the school director allowed for a comfortable relationship with them to form, and thus provided more relaxed access to other participants.

### **Potential bias in methodology**

While this research does cover a broad scope geographically, access was highly dependent upon the NGO VVOB. They work closely with the government of Cambodia to develop specific aspects of primary education curriculum and enhance teacher training. As I would not be able to enter primary schools and speak with youth/teachers/staff as an individual researcher, I had to leverage my connection to this NGO to physically gain access to school premises. That being said, once on school premises I was able to go with my interpreter and interview individuals on our own. While individuals were open to discussing their opinions (and anonymity of responses was ensured), many did associate me as a member of an NGO. However, as a white Western woman, many would assume I was associated with an NGO, even if they did not know of my affiliation with VVOB. This of course presents a bias, which I would attempt to confront with participants in my explanation of the purpose of my research, emphasizing voluntary participation, and how it is not conducted for purposes of any NGO or the government. For the most part this was not seen as particularly negative or positive, or had much affect on the actual interview. The main aspect of being associated with an NGO was that at times I was associated with being a messenger from the participants, to the NGO. At the end of an interview, sometimes I would be asked to relay a message to the NGO, such as requesting different trainings or school materials.

Once interviews were completed, I listened to the interviews, transcribed content, and went through my notes. Renata Tesch's (1990) guide to coding was largely used to make sense of the data. I went through three interviews and wrote down codes in the margins that I felt best described what was being discussed. For example, 'gender definition', 'gender training',

'family circumstance'. Then, I cross-referenced the three interviews with each other to see if any of the codes could be understood synonymously. For example, I analyzed the data to see whether topics of 'school training' and 'gender training' could fit more broadly under the topic of 'training'. I used manual coding to observe what came up commonly in all interviews or which codes were outliers. Once a set list of themes was created from these codes, I assigned a number to each theme and went through the rest of my interviews, assigning a theme number to all sections of my interviews. I also added more themes if I felt new topics were coming up along the way.

After this, I connected back to my research question. I cross-referenced the developed themes with what is stated in the *ESP* and the *SPGEWE* (particularly the section *Education for Women and Girls and Attitudinal Change*, 8) as the policies' accountability. I used the policies to create proxies that guided my themes into categories. I wanted to see how my research question could be answered within what the policy takes accountability for<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, looking at my research question: 'To what extent, through stakeholder perception, does Cambodian primary education policy address gender issues?' I searched in the policies for *how* they define 'gender' or 'gender issues', and the *extent* to which they address gender issues. Further I looked at the dynamics and nature of the policy in connection to my research (i.e. What are the practical implementations?). Below are some examples from the policies. Keep in mind, the *SPGEWE* is published under consultation of the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP):

From *ESP*:

p.21: 3.2 Primary Education 3.2.1. Background: Children's primary school has improved, with the net enrollment rate improving from 94.8% in SY 2008-2009 to 97% in SY 2012-2013 *with no gender disparity, repetition rates have fallen and student drop out has declined* [emphasis added].

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<sup>16</sup> Four key topics on page 45.

p.24-26: Capacity development and support programs:

Development capacity for trainers at TTCs and primary teachers on teaching methodology, *gender mainstreaming and inclusive education* [emphasis added].

Programs and activities: *inclusive education and on gender mainstreaming for MOEYS staff of all levels* [emphasis added]. Develop curriculum and program for primary teacher training. *Train and supply 2000 to 2500 primary teachers per school year* [emphasis added].

From SPGEWE:

p.8:

Since 2008, gender has been mainstreamed in policies and plans in education...These policies have contributed to the promotion of gender equality through:

- Better *access* and opportunities for girls to education
- Better *social attitudes* and *favourable conditions* for the participation of women at all levels and in all sectors
- Increased levels of education and confidence in primary education
- At the primary level, the *enrolment* of girls is *equal* to that of boys [emphasis added].

I used these terms to imply the policies' accountability to four key categories: training, access, social attitudes, and favourable conditions. I then sorted my themes, from interviews as well as my field notes, under these categories.

I divided interview responses by themes (i.e. health conditions, family, resources), which appear under each four categories (Gender Training, Access, Social Attitudes, Favorable Conditions). I looked for commonalities, uniqueness, contradictions, and missing information in regards to my research question, with the end goal of crystalizing categories into research outcomes (Tesch, 1990). As research took place in seven different provinces, geographical location and any possible socio-economic information available was also analyzed. Data was also colour-coded based on the category of participant (students, student teachers, teachers, parents, school directors). With the above in mind, I then had a clear connection between my research question and my findings, which are outlined in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Using fieldwork data, in this chapter I will discuss research findings pertaining to four key categories: gender training, access, social attitudes, and favourable conditions. As discussed, these categories have been derived from the policies analyzed (*SPGEWE*, 2014; *ESP*, 2014) as ways of understanding the success of gender mainstreaming initiatives. I will use these findings to approach my research question, which aims to understand, through stakeholder perception, to what extent does Cambodian primary education policy address gender issues?

### Gender training

In this section I will examine three findings in relation to gender training. As discussed, the *ESP* policy states gender mainstreaming training as integral to capacity development, with an emphasis on training 2000-2500 teachers per year (*ESP*, 2014, 24-26). These findings will focus on the consistency of gender training by region, occupation, and demographics. They will also focus on training of practical implementation measures of gender mainstreaming, and critical understandings of 'absence'.

Overall the results of this research show a lack of consistency in regards to gender training through different regions. Remote areas with minority populations reported receiving training the least often. As in policy, gender training of school staff and ministry staff has been outlined as a pivotal piece to the success of gender mainstreaming in the primary education system (*ESP*, 24-26). Yet overall, responses from school directors and teachers show a lack of consistency to training through different regions. For example, in the more rural province of Kratie, a school director reported not having received training for 10 years: *'A training that an NGO came to teach here but that was 10 years ago...the training was specifically for the school directors...6 years before this, the sub-director (who is female) also got the training from the ministry'* (Arun). Similarly, in the northern province of Stung Treng, where many minority populations reside, the director expressed that he *'studied about gender in 2006 with the government officer who came to teach in Stung Treng province'* (Chamroeun).



Though there was still an inconsistency in equal training *between* more urban provinces, overall lack of training still occurred more in rural areas. In addition to the rural/urban divide, the majority of cases reported that it was only school directors who received training. Sometimes sub-directors were reported to be included, but it was rare for a teacher or student teacher to have been included in the training.

Here is a breakdown on the reported frequency of training mentioned by participants. It is colour-coded by demographic (see map of Cambodia, divided by province in *Diagram 1*):

**Table 2: Training Frequency**

Director	
Teacher	
Student Teacher	
Participant	Frequency of reported gender training
Champey	Once, 5 years ago
Chamroeun	Once, 10 years ago
Arun	Once, 10 years ago
Darany and Chantrea	Once, 5 or 6 years ago
Makara and Jorani	Never
Phhoung	Once, a few or several years ago (cannot remember)
Bopha	Once, 5 years ago
Mao	Never
Ary	Never
Leap	Never

Participants speculated as to why this is the case. One participant mentioned the following: *‘At the community level: recently there has not been much training to the people in the commune because of the budget.’* (Smnang, father of 3 students). Regardless of the rural/urban divide, it does appear that there has not been recent training reported from *any* of the participants. It also appears that attending training is not mandatory, rather it is an *opportunity* presented by the schools. Samnang stated *‘Every student teacher has the opportunity to receive the training on gender.’* Participants did report that they would receive compensation for attending trainings (i.e. per diem). Darany said *‘They had a short workshop class from the government or NGO. They would spend 3-4 days on it and the school will tell the teachers to*

*join in the program. The program will support them with \$10,000-20,000 riels for 3 days to go to it.'* However, depending on the distance from the participant to the training, it may not be enough incentive.

The second finding in regards to gender training relates to *who* is being trained. Often only directors are trained (as opposed to teachers or student teachers), therefore the transfer of knowledge and thus the success of the training is highly dependent on the school director.

The fact that it was primarily just directors who expressed receiving training at some point (see chart above) could particularly influence gender mainstreaming implementation within the school (if any at all). Even though the *ESP* policy does state training of all teachers on gender mainstreaming as a policy measure (24-26), this training was largely expressed as 'any information the director shared with his or her teaching staff, as well as access to any resources the director may have received from a training'.

All directors interviewed for this research were men, except for one, which is significant particularly for the fact that 'gender' or 'gender equality' was largely equated to a *women's* or *girl's* issue by participants<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, the transfer of knowledge was largely dependent on whether, or how much, men found importance in 'women's issues'. This appeared to vary by each case. Many directors interviewed stated that they did receive a book or document on gender training in education, which their teachers could reference for their own use. However, when pressed on the frequency of such use, or whether I could look at the book, one director, Chamroeun, stated that he did not bring that book that day. Chamreoun and another director, Sokhom, also state that teachers did not use the book, rather they would go to the library for any books they wanted (often the book would be in the directors' office).

The *ESP* and the *SPGEWE* do reference external social attitudes as influential to gender mainstreaming implementation, and do have community outreach programs, utilizing media (i.e.

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<sup>17</sup> See *Social Attitudes* section in *Chapter 4: Findings*.

television, radio) (*ESP*: 23-25, 27; *SPGEWE*: 8, 17-18, 34, 43). However, the policies' do rely heavily on practical implementations to take place within school institutions (*ESP*: 24, 26; *SPGEWE*: 8). This implementation is highly dependent upon one person, which can be problematic for a number of reasons, such as a very centralized distribution of power. As mentioned in the literature framework, this power is amplified for being in an institutional setting itself, particularly as the power is centralized in a hierarchal top-down manner.

Other participants presented a 'universal understanding' of gender, but did not elaborate much beyond key words, whether it was important, and where it stemmed from. Arunny, a female student teacher, said she *'believes it is about the equality of women and men, and that women and men can get the same salary (is what the school taught me)'*. Speaking more generally, Kalliyon, another female student teacher stated that *'women and men have equality right now so they can do any of the same things'*. Parents felt similarly, regardless of geographical location (each of these participants are from different provinces):

Roumjong, a mother from a rural area stated she *'almost forgot about it but remembers that gender is 'the equality between women and men''*.

Samnang, a father of three from a more urban area said to him, *'gender means equality between the two sexes (male and female)'*.

Sokha, a female student said she *'never heard of the gender term before, but I did hear from another person that the woman could do anything the same as the men also. I just heard it from people around me'*.

From these initial definitions, it can be seen that a binary definition of gender is dominant, regardless of where or how the concept was conceived. Though participants did not elaborate on why they conceived the term of gender in this way, overall participants expressed that they first learned about gender on TV/radio as opposed to in a training. This medium is much more frequent, with most receiving a maximum of one training, more than two years ago. For example, Jorani, a female teacher explained that how she knows about gender is *'from the advertisement (news, tv shows, radio), but outside that I've never received it from the workshops.'* Similarly, Phhoung said she's *'seen the word gender broadcasted, on the tv, in the*

*community workshops, on the radio.*' When the interpreter asked her to define it, she said she is *'hesitant to define'*. This is significant in terms of effectiveness of training, particularly in reference to the first finding in relation to rural vs urban, and the frequency of training. SPGEWE policy does also reference this form of communication (tv, radio) as part of a training effort for gender mainstreaming (34).

From my research, however, the 'effectiveness' (in terms of how much individuals understand and learn about gender) of ideas, learning, and dissemination through TV and radio broadcasts is unclear.

The last finding related to training is based on critical understanding of 'absence' and the broader social factors that are connected to this term. The MoEYS policy addresses 'absence' as something that they need to 'help' girls with (ESP, 21). However, the reality is that sometimes absence is understood as being a negative on the part of the student, therefore punishing those that are absent and watching them more closely. In this case, specifically punishing girl students, as they are more likely to drop out of school.

Dropping out of school was sometimes seen as the student's choice, and an obstacle primarily for the teaching staff as opposed to the girl student, even if family circumstance was acknowledged. For example, Sita, a teacher of 18 years in a rural minority-population area and leader of the girls' commission, said *'During my teaching, most of the students who are girls try to stop going to school. For example, sometimes they are in grade 4, but they are older than students in that grade, so they decide to drop out of school (I always meet this obstacle)'*. In addition, Mao, a student teacher from a different area of similar location and socio-economic status said *'the problem in my community is the students themselves not going to school (not the parents influencing them)'*.

On the other hand, some participants blamed parents for lack of their daughter's attendance at school, insisting they stay home to help work to produce income for the family (see Arun interview below). This suggests a misinterpretation of the purpose of monitoring

gender mainstreaming initiatives. This is cited in the literature by Gordon (1998), Martin (2006), Miske et. al. (2010), Silfver (2010), and Unterhalter (2007) in other case studies. This finding is significant to the gender mainstreaming and education literature as it suggests a 'blame the victim' approach that is still taking place today. That being said, it should be noted that some participants did mention training initiatives that enforced taking into consideration the family circumstance, which may cause students to be late, instead of blaming and punishing them right away for their absence. For example, Arun stated '*students who drop out of school are because of their situations. Some move, some of their parents are sellers, and if they are busy some days, the daughter will be called to help them. Some don't think studying is really important to them. To earn money is better. Sometimes, they drop out if they think they aren't very good at studying*'.

As we can see from examples though, this feeling was very mixed. Likewise, even in the case where individuals were informed or aware of social structural inhibitors, it was not necessarily a focus in *practice*. This relates back to critiques in the literature (Miske et. al, 2010; Walby, 2005) on how gender mainstreaming initiatives do not necessarily direct their attention to the larger societal culture and values towards gender, rather there is a focus on smaller tasks. For example, one of the practical implementation initiatives from the training is the creation of 'girl commissions'. These are set up in schools where one teacher or sub-director assigns responsibilities to girls (i.e. cleaning the washrooms, monitoring attendance), and teaches them about topics of health, cleanliness, and engaging girls to avoid absences. The one adult leader of a girl commission whom I spoke to, when discussing the purpose of the commission, emphasized the monitoring of absences, and steps taken as punishment for consistent absence, instead of how these groups empowered girls. This suggests a misinterpretation of gender mainstreaming, diluting the girl commission group to a measure of parity. That is, parity not for equality, but parity as a way to monitor and punish absence. These commissions were a salient finding and initiative documented because they engage with a very specific group of

actors (girls) on specific topics, potentially losing connection to broader influences and intersectional attributions.

## **Access**

In this section I will now connect three findings to the concept of access. As mentioned, the *ESP* and *SPGEWE* policies connect increasing girls' access to education as a measure of increasing gender equality (*ESP*, 2014, 21; *SPGEWE*, 2014, 8). In the *Literature Framework* section, I have also discussed the critiques of this measurement. My findings will suggest that this 'phase' of measurement has not passed in the context of my research (although some of the literature suggests we are in the 'beyond access phase'), and that, through misinterpretation, there are tangible repercussions for gender equality because of it. I will further support this argument of repercussions by extending the discussion of access to the discussion of adult employees in the education sector. I will conclude that much of these misinterpretations and repercussions for gender equality are largely to do with a lack of resources, and an immense expectation of social change on small institutions.

From stakeholder perception, which could be stemming from a larger narrative on gender mainstreaming, access is still largely equated to parity. Practical implementations illustrate this through such things as drop out 'control' measures, girl commissions, and stating how many teachers/students are women and girls.

As noted in the *Literature Framework* section, equating parity to equality is not necessarily a *new* finding, rather it is a *contribution* to existing gender mainstreaming critiques. I believe it is still relevant as the fact remains that practical implementations which are primarily focused on parity still take place, and we can see the consequences that come of this. Consequences include the 'blame the victim' sentiment. This consists of blaming girls for being absent from school, or blaming parents for their children's dropouts, instead of taking a more holistic viewpoint of the social attitudes taking place. Arun said '*The most important influence to students going to school: parents. They are the reason they come, and why they drop out.*

*Some families tell them [school staff] their family circumstance is more important than studying.'*

I was told many times by teachers and school directors that if I wanted to address gender issues, I should talk to the parents because they are the ones that do not understand about the topic, or that they are the ones keeping the girls from coming to school. That being said, it was acknowledged by school directors and student teachers in particular that although, yes, it was the parents keeping girls from attending school, they were doing so due to *family circumstance*. In interviews where it was specified, family circumstance related to poverty and the need to their daughters to work (a 'seller' primarily being a position designated to women and girls).

Lastly, on the topic of dropouts, most directors cited that when girls are absent from school, parents have to give a reason. However, the follow up on the reasoning was unclear. For example, what constitutes a 'good reason', and what qualifies as a 'not acceptable reason'? Working in the shop as a seller was a common reason for girls missing school or dropping out, and this fact alone is very gendered. Women and girls were expressed as being primary shop workers, with it being rare for a boy to drop out for that reason. With this lack of clarity, the deciding power is again largely left in the hands of one individual, usually a male school director, to monitor gender equity measures, determining what is 'acceptable' and 'not acceptable' reasoning for a girl to miss school. It is unknown from this research whether it was discussed in previous trainings, but measures are not outlined specifically in the *ESP* policy. It is also noteworthy to keep in mind that even if it had been discussed at trainings, no participants cited receiving training more recent than 'a few or several years ago'. All this to say, the reasoning and gendered roles that are often the *cause* for dropouts are overlooked: women and girls assuming the role of seller or family caretaker.

My second finding on the topic of access is connected to adult access. Directors and teachers express pride when stating the number of students, teachers, or teacher trainers that are women and girls. However, there is a lack of a deeper conversation about what this means, and what are some of the true positive effects of having more women in education, and at what

position. Otherwise, the understanding of women in education is reduced and diluted to a number or a checkbox, without analyzing inequalities that may be at work (such as the parity argument I have discussed).

Rather than focusing on students, there seem to be gender inequalities in terms of teachers/directors and how rapidly they receive promotions. For example, only one of five directors interviewed was a woman and she was working in primary education for thirty-four years before acquiring this position, which is the longest of any of the directors interviewed. On the other hand, directors who were men expressed being promoted to director within one year of being a teacher. This could be argued to have a causal effect in the 'social attitudes' policy category, as when asked about future aspirations, students largely seemed to base their future aspirations off what adults of their same gender in their life were doing (access and opportunities of their parents and school staff).

A similar divide is apparent in the 18 Provincial Teacher Training Centres (PTTCs). PTTCs are large primary schools throughout the country, where student teachers are also trained. In 2 of the PTTCs, 50% of the management are women. All others are below 50%, with 7 PTTCs having no women in management positions. This ratio significantly switches when going down in promotional level.



**Table 3: PTTC Management Levels**

PTTC	Management		Teacher Trainers		Student Teachers (Year 1 + 2)	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Banteay Meanchey	3	33%	15	40%	193	69%
Battambang (incl. Pailin)	3	0%	34	41%	411	66%
Kampong Cham	5	40%	30	50%	407	73%
Kampong Chhnang	3	33%	14	36%	178	57%
Kampong Speu	3	0%	19	26%	160	59%
Kampong Thom	3	33%	15	40%	214	64%
Kampot (incl. Kep)	3	33%	19	53%	165	64%
Kandal	4	50%	24	33%	269	71%
Kratie	3	33%	12	50%	126	77%
Phnom Penh (incl. Koh Kong)	3	33%	31	26%	152	73%
Sihanoukville	3	0%	10	40%	109	74%
Preah Vihear	2	0%	10	30%	204	65%
Prey Veng	2	50%	22	41%	339	64%
Pursat	2	0%	21	24%	129	58%
Siem Reap (incl. Odtaer Meanchey)	3	0%	29	38%	512	73%
Stung Treng (incl. Ratanakiri, Mondulkiri)	3	0%	18	22%	339	53%
Svay Rieng	3	33%	10	30%	116	49%
Takeo	3	33%	17	47%	199	68%
<b>Total PTTC</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>4,222</b>	<b>66%</b>

(VVOB Cambodia, 2016).

When speaking to participants, there was a lack of connection between why it could actually be considered *inequality* to have high number of women as teachers. These are significantly low paying jobs in Cambodia, and participants often expressed that women take on these jobs as the hours are relatively 'part time' compared to other jobs, allowing time for them to be able to do domestic work and care for their families as well. As Mao stated, *'Most of the women teacher trainers here become teachers because their family forces them to become teachers because they say they want to have another job also, but their family force them. And some women still have the mindset to become a teacher because they can still stay at home and become a housewife because in the future they still are housewives (its easy to stay at home as a teacher)'*.

In terms of students' future aspirations, there was a mix of what they *wanted* to achieve, and what they felt they *could* achieve. This was highly dependent on the gender roles witnessed around them. For example, a girl student, Sokha and and a boy student, Vireak said *'In the future I [Vireak] want to be an architect (because my uncle is an architect). And I [Sokha] want to be a doctor (my mom is a doctor)'*. This is not to say that young students modelling their future aspirations off of same-gender mentors is necessarily a bad thing, but that we can see the second-hand effects of a lack of diversity in gender roles, when it comes to social attitudes dictating access and achievement. If adult women are seen to be caretakers, and lacking formal education, how does that influence young girls? Vice versa, if young boys do not see any adult men as caretakers, how does that influence their future goals? Influential social pressures can be drawn from this quote from Theary, Veasna, and Sophaep [as interpreted]:

*She wants to be a doctor when she's older (wants to take care of her mom). He wants to be a banker because he would love to wear the uniform and work in the office. The boy said that his brother told him that when he grows up he should be an architect, but he doesn't want to (he wants to be a banker). He doesn't know why he'd like to work in a bank, probably because his dad does. The other girl said that in her family, her mom said 'when you grow up, you have to study to become a doctor' and her brother could become an architect, a doctor, anything else that she thinks is man's work.*

The SPGEWE does outline 'improving social attitudes' as a measurable factor of gender equality, but does not specify *how* (8). As we can see from the VVOB PTTC management chart, there are much higher numbers of women in lower-paying teaching roles, as opposed to managerial positions. This was, along with other careers involving nurturing qualities, reflected in some of the students' aspirations. Sophea, a girl student, said *'When I grow up I want to be an English teacher.'* Toch and Srey said [as interpreted] *'What they want to be when they grow up: one wants to be a doctor because she wants to help people and help people live better. The other wants to be a teacher because she wants to educate small kids to have good knowledge.'*

Reflecting on the misinterpretations of gender mainstreaming initiatives, and the repercussions of measuring gender equality only through access, my last finding in this section is related to resources. Many school directors, particularly in rural minority-populated areas, equated a lack of resources to a lack of gender mainstreaming implementation. This lack of resources, combined with great expectations for social change from small institutions, is at the root of the problems discussed in this section.

This is a noteworthy critique of gender mainstreaming in itself. Much of the literature (Miske et. al., 2010; Silfver, 2010; Unterhalter, 2007, 2016; Walby, 2005) critiques gender mainstreaming for being too broad and ambitious in its scope, with 'on the ground resources' being minimal. Grassroots NGOs or rural community schools are not necessarily equipped to take on such a drastic policy intervention. Participants expressed these concerns in a number of ways. Thom (school director, man) said *'after I finished at the Kampong Cham [gender] training, I got the information, but not the resources to improve it at my own school.'* As a solution, Sokhom (school director, man) suggested *'the thing to improve the gender term in this school: materials (text books, pictures, girl's clothes). Also human resources because teachers have to get more training. The ministry to come here and train is better. Gender books: they are easy to make a girl understand more and want them to read more about that.'* Arun, a male school director in a rural minority population said [as interpreted]:

*For his recommendations, he wants the ministry and NGOs to try to support more for the human resources (train the teachers here to understand more about the gender term and to be good teachers), build new buildings, more materials, make a training program that relates to the gender term for parents and how important it is for learning and for their students to come to school. They should go to people in the commune more than those at the school, their role is the most important for their children (teacher training is not as important as parental training).*

*Teachers don't know much about gender equality here because no one trained them, except the sub-director because she was trained on it, but the girl commission is not working well here because they need more materials, human resources, and money and text books about the gender term. He has never heard of the ministry coming to teach in this commune (not sure if it happened or not).*

This is not to say that it is the government's fault, or a lack of policy implementation, rather it supports the critique that the scope of gender mainstreaming policy far exceeds the resources available at local-level, particularly in rural areas with larger minority populations, and the consequences that can reverberate from a lack of resources. For example, three students, Vithu, Tola, and Sovanna stated:

*[We] are treated the same in school, everyone has to clean in the classroom, outside the classroom. They have to clean together. They will be divided into a group for a day to clean the class. Sometimes in 1 group has 10 or 11 members, so if some of them did not clean that everyone did, they will get the punishment from the director of the group. The punishment is 1 time wrong: pay \$500 riels to the group (the students). They will choose the director of the group, and then when they get \$500 riels from whoever did something wrong, **when the teacher needs the money to buy something (like when they study science, to buy materials), they will give all that money to the teacher to buy the resources** [emphasis added].*

With students having to pay for classroom resources in a roundabout way through the teacher, it is clear that resources and funding are lacking, particularly to those most disadvantaged.

### **Social attitudes**

In this section I will be engaging with participants' social attitudes in regards to gender equality.

As outlined in the *SPGEWE*, "policies and plans in education...have contributed to the promotion of gender equality through [among others] better social attitudes...for the participation of women at all levels and in all sectors" (2014, 8). My findings will be structured around social attitudes towards women in the context, codes of conduct for boys and girls, interpretations of transgender, as well as general social attitudes towards the meaning of 'gender equality'.

Many (women in particular) blamed other women for not engaging in gender equality opportunities. Participants articulated that the government has provided women all of the resources needed and it is up to them to take advantage of those opportunities. For example, Jorani, a teacher who is a woman, said *'Society gives many opportunities to the women to participate in society, but the obstacle here firstly relates to the women themselves, whether they want to receive that opportunity or not.'*

'Capacity' and 'opportunity' were frequently mentioned as individual abilities to better one's situation. For example, Samnang, a father and former school director said *'Personally, I think the opportunity in Cambodia in general or around my neighbourhood, is to have equal education (every girl, boy, men and women have been provided this opportunity). It depends on their capacity; how far they can go depends on the individual. The government does have the right system to keep every man and woman in the education system. Another opportunity: job markets. Every candidate has an equal chance to be recruited as a man woman, and even disabled people.'*

The one director whom I came across that was a woman, Champey, articulated this emphasis on 'grasping one's own capacity' quite definitively. She states, *'The only challenge for the women is the women themselves. The society gives the opportunity to them, but they don't take it. They just try to stay at home and do the housework, but they think in the old traditions, that women just stay at home and do the housework. The society gives a lot of work to them to go outside, to do the work. This is an obstacle created by the women themselves.'* It is difficult to definitively state why some felt this way, while others did not. For the female director, it could be that she reached this status in her career based on hard work and merit, or it could have to do with what connections she has, among many other scenarios. It was interesting however,

that she did not discuss the difference in time between her promotion and the promotion of many men in the same position as her.<sup>18</sup>

What was seen as an ‘opportunity’ or ‘attainable future capabilities’ was sometimes subtle. Comparisons can be drawn between students’ responses, and responses of the teachers and directors. For example, when asked what individuals do in their society, many girl students giggled at the idea of them having a job traditionally for men, or men staying at home with the children. When asked what jobs women and men can do in Cambodia, Sopheary and Sourkea (two girls students) said *‘teachers, assistants, bankers, accountants, lawyers, doctors, sellers, farmers. Architect though, the woman cannot do and men can do (women cannot know it well).’* When the interpreted asked *‘if the woman can learn about architecture, can the woman know also?’* students shake their heads and laugh. *‘Women could be doctors, sellers, teachers, but only architecture the women could not do’*, says Sopheary. Commonly across each demographic of participants, tasks that required a lot of ‘power’ and ‘physical strength’ were cited as tasks that men could do, but that women could not (or that women would need help with). Keeping this in mind, other students equally agreed that there were tasks that men could not do as women, suggesting social attitudes among students that are not fluid when it comes to gender roles, rather an understanding of historically traditional roles being associated to each gender, stereotyping men as well. For example, Sokha, a female student said *‘men can be shop assistants, flight attendants, fire fighters, nurses...The men could not do the housekeeping, if he is boy so he does not know how’*.

When looking at indicators of positive social attitudes, references to gender in the *ESP* policy use the binaries of boys and girls, and do not make any references to transgender or the view of gender as a spectrum. In any case, some research participants were asked about their understanding and thoughts related to the term ‘transgender’.

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<sup>18</sup> See second finding in *Access* section of *Chapter 4: Findings*.

Though it was not mentioned specifically in the policy, these are some of the social attitudes towards what I will generally classify as ‘individuals who do not conform to the traditional stereotypes of their gender’:

Kalliyon (student teacher, woman): *‘[On the topic of] transgender: one of my friends is a boy, but his actions seem like a girl. This is from his natural so we cannot force him to change his actions.’*

Jorani (teacher, woman): *‘[On the topic of] transgender: I don’t discriminate about it, but I don’t like it also. Like in society if the women become a man, its not really bad in society, but if the men become a woman, it makes many things bad in society, like how they wear their clothes, how they decorate their body, wear make up; it changes the traditional. So, I don’t like it, especially, the men becoming the women. I don’t discriminate at all, but sometimes I think that in my family, I don’t want to have this happen.’*

Phhoung (teacher, woman): *‘For myself, I will not do that. I like being the lady, but if others want to do that, it is their right/their freedom to do that. I have no right to tell them to become original sex or gender.’*

Generally speaking, it is difficult to comment thoroughly on understandings of gender being a spectrum, as in some cases it either did not translate or was a new term for some. As seen from these quotes, ‘transgender’ was sometimes conflated with the spectrum of sexuality, being bi-sexual, or with cross-dressing.

Policy language and social attitudes lacking input on gender as a spectrum could also be linked to historically binary national implementations, such as the teaching of the Chbap Srey and the Chbap Bros. As a reminder, these are the ‘codes of conduct’ for girls and boys respectively, which is no longer mandatory in the teaching curriculum in Cambodia, but is often still taught in secondary school, depending the teacher’s preference. There were mixed feelings from participants on this topic. For example, some believe the Chbap Srey teaches women and girls to be kind to their neighbours, but that it is also very traditional, such as insisting women and girls should stay inside the house and not travel far. Speaking with participants, there still was a common consensus that women and girls are not able to or should not travel far on their own. On the topic, most focused their opinions around the Chbap Srey, as opposed to the Chbap Bros.

Though the Chbap Srey or Chbap Bros are not mentioned in either the *ESP* or the *SPGEWE* policy in reference to primary education at all (in fact, they were not mentioned in reference to any level of education), I did feel that participant's views on these codes could speak to their social attitudes towards gender, and how gender mainstreaming policy would/should be implemented. As mentioned, some participants did feel that there were quite positive qualities of the Chbap Srey, particularly as it relates to being kind to your neighbour. However, many women (teachers and student teachers) primarily emphasized how it needed to adapt to current times, with emphasis on a woman's ability to travel. This did come up a lot in interviews. The ability to travel is relevant in terms not only of favourable conditions, but of social attitudes and access to education. If the *ESP* and *SPGEWE* policies are assessing access under categories of monitoring drop out rates and attendance, it should also be looking at the social attitudes that inhibit this access from taking place at all. When the *SPGEWE* policy discusses social attitudes, it is quite vague in stating "increasing the participation of women in all areas of education service delivery and management and promote gender-responsive social attitudes" (18).

Further, the emphasis on categorizing men/women by teaching students separate codes of conduct can be problematic and contradictory with a policy that emphasizes goals of equality between boys and girls. As mentioned, the Chbap Srey and Chbap Bros are taught in secondary school (not primary), at the discretion of the teacher. However, these codes of conduct could still influence participants' views on the topic, depending on their level of exposure to the codes throughout their lives. In fact, some student teacher participants did mention they were taught about the Chbap Srey in their teacher training centre (after secondary school).

Below is a table of what participants emphasized as positive and negative components of the Chbap Srey and the Chbap Bros. As you can see, there were many contradictions/disagreements among participants. Overall, more positive traits of these 'codes'



were mentioned, as opposed to negatives. However, the point that was brought up the most was the negative aspect of emphasizing for girls to stay as housewives. This point was mentioned only by women participants, not men. Some men either did not remember much from these codes, or did not think there was anything wrong with them (Leap, student teacher; Vannak, teacher). The fact that it was written in ‘old tradition’ was emphasized but it was not always seen as a negative. These findings are gendered in the responses given, namely as there are seen to be no negative views for men or boys in the Chbap Srey and the Chbap Bros, in responses given. Also, most responses regarded as ‘negative’ directly affect women’s and girls’ access to education.

**Table 4: Positives and Negatives of Chbap Srey and Chbap Bros**

Positives	Negatives
Emphasis on traditional clothes (Vannak)	Old traditions for women and girls: always stay at home, need permission to go outside, traditional clothes (Arunny, Rourmjong, Jorani)
Good tradition and customs (Vannak, Arunny)	Doesn’t allow the daughter to study like the son (Arunny)
Gives good advice for the daughter to have good behaviour and respect tradition (Vannak, Arunny, Kalliyon)	Putting pressure on women in general (Ary)
Gives good advice for the son to do good things in the family, to be good to the wife (Makara, Dara, Kosal)	Saying that girls should not travel (Jorani)
Not letting girls tell others about violence in her home, or to tell other about violence from other people’s homes, or other disagreements (Arunny, Rourmjong) <sup>19</sup>	For girls to stay as a housewife, cook, and take care of children (Arunny, Rourmjong, Kalliyon)
Giving advice for women to keep relationships and be friendly with relatives (Ary)	
It gives good advice to daughters on how to talk to people who are older than them (Kalliyon)	
It gives the idea of valuing yourself (Leap)	
Teaches critical thinking, and thinking before you act (Leap)	
Educates people to become good citizens (Phhoung)	

<sup>19</sup> Keeping ‘family matters’ and ‘neighbour matters’ of disagreements and violence quiet, was seen as a positive teaching of the codes of conduct. The reasoning behind this will be discussed further in the *Favourable Conditions* section of *Chapter 4: Findings*.

My last finding on the topic of social attitudes is a discussion on participants' views on the concept of 'gender equality'. Often, in the context of my research, gender equality was equated to being a women's/girl's issue. For example, Ary, (student teacher, woman) states: *'What's the difference between gender and women's rights?'*

Again, this is not a new argument, rather a confirmation of previous critiques (Bhog & Ghose, 2014; Gordon, 1998; Kabeer, 2003, 2015; Miske et. al., 2010). However, the fact is that this equation is still taking place, and it is a common discourse in international agendas as well. For example, *Sustainable Development Goal 5* is defined as to *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, with no mention of any other gender identity in the detailed goal targets either. This shows that there is still relevancy to this argument, as it is relevant to note that the issue is not 'solved'. Even though some international agendas do reference the importance of men's involvement in gender issues (and I would agree, this emphasis is growing) (i.e. Plan International Canada: *'The State of the World's Girls Report 2011: So what about boys?'*), it is often still an afterthought. With the institutionalization of education, the association of gender equality being a girl's/women's issue, and men/boys being an afterthought, can be further diluted to the point where men/boys are purposefully left out of the conversation.

Vannak (teacher, man) emphasized that men should be able to participate in workshops as well, and that he was not invited to gender training. The participant expressed that he does not know much about the topic and wishes to be included. Then when men are involved, sometimes this leaves out women, instead of emphasizing all to be involved in dialogue and implementation. Many directors stated they had received a gender training manual for the government or an NGO. However, there was either a lack of instruction on the use of the resource, or a lack of interest on the part of these directors to disseminate the information. Either way, the power over this defined 'women's issue' information was largely concentrated into the hands of one man for a school.

The false assumption that 'gender issues' are 'women's issues' causes segregation and resentment among those left out. The absence of men and boys is a finding not only placed in the context of my research. There are also international agendas which set the precedence of what constitutes 'good practices in gender mainstreaming'. As mentioned, in the case of my research, the *SPGEWE* was published under consultation of the *UNDP*. It is at this level that the power over discourse starts. Messages of 'raising girls up', 'even the playing field', and how 'girls lift their communities out of poverty' are primarily focused on girls and women. Although there is mention of the importance for men and boys to be involved in this discussion, we can see from participant accounts in my research, that this message can become diluted.

### **Favourable conditions**

I will now be examining the concept of 'favourable conditions' in order to foster gender equality. This concept is primarily being drawn from the *SPGEWE*'s statement that "since 2008, gender has been mainstreamed in policies and plans in education...these policies have contributed to the promotion of gender equality through...favourable conditions for the participation of women at all levels and in all sectors" (2014, 8). As there is not elaboration on the specifics needed to facilitate 'favourable conditions', this section is largely guided by conditions which participants mentioned most prominently, which could suggest solutions towards the success of the policy, and gender equality in general.

Firstly, health of teachers, particularly pregnant teachers, was often cited as an area of concern when it came to 'gender issues'. This concern included examples of teaching while pregnant, and support while being on maternity leave. Paternity or parental leave were not cited. This issue came up particularly with teachers who were women (even though none of my questions directly related to pregnancy or health concerns). Teaching conditions while pregnant (the length of time teachers need to stand without breaks, and managing overcrowded classrooms while pregnant, were mentioned), how the maternity pay leave did not cover the

cost of living, and childcare once returning to teach were mentioned. Bopha (teacher, woman) in a rural minority population, recounts [as interpreted]:

*When she was pregnant, the school let her off work 3 months, but she doesn't get to leave class early. Sometimes she also has experienced 'just getting the woman to teach' decreases human resources because when the woman teacher who is pregnant, has to do housework, etc. so sometimes she doesn't have time to teach (these are some of the pressures she's experienced from society). Sometimes when the baby cries, the mother has to take care of them, the students fail to understand the full lesson because she has to take care of the baby (the woman can only teach 70%). When she was pregnant after she had her baby, the government gave her \$150 for those 3 months. But the money that the government gives, she has to wait until her daughter is 6 months or 7 months to get the payment.*

From teachers and directors who were men, there were mixed reactions on the topic.

Chamroeun, director in a rural area took it upon himself to frequently (as he mentioned) cover for teachers when they were pregnant. He said he instructed their classes if their feet became tired, or if they needed to rest. He articulated an understanding of gender within these terms of women's health: *'The term gender sometimes relates to being equal for the woman who has the baby (sometimes she cannot stand for a long time to teach), so she will leave the class before like half an hour, and then I will go to teach in her place. But sometimes it is difficult because most teachers here are women. For example, if 4 or 5 women are pregnant at the same time.'*

On the other hand, Darany,(teacher, man) seemed to want more sympathy towards male teachers for when they are sick, and, although said to be joking, did not necessarily acknowledge difference between being sick and being pregnant. When responding to a woman (teacher) discussing the governmental assistance she received while on maternity leave, Darany stated that *'its not fair that when the men get sick, they have to spend the money by himself'*, suggesting pregnancy could be equated to 'being sick', and that women are getting special treatment.

Given how much the topics of pregnancy, maternal health, and social services came up, perhaps the policy could expand to focusing more on favourable health conditions for staff, setting an example to students, and increasing awareness of gender equality at all levels. This

would entail expanding from favourable conditions for students *only* (i.e. sanitary toilet facilities, separate facilities for boys and girls).

A second concern for favourable conditions was domestic violence. It was cited as an issue most prominently within the communities. Though the *SPGEWE* and the *ESP* policies do not directly link domestic violence to the accountability of gender mainstreaming policy in schools, it can be argued to fall under the category of 'favourable' conditions'. I am making this connection based on the expressed influence parents had on students, and the fact that domestic violence is a gendered issue, with women being the victims of any mention of domestic violence in my research. Also, with a population largely affected by post-traumatic stress disorder due to a violent historical past, domestic violence is a particularly prevalent issue (Eng et. al., 2014, 575).

As seen earlier, students showed to largely model their behaviour and aspirations based on family circumstances. Some participants quoted the 'old tradition' and aspects in the Chbap Srey related to 'keeping family matters private' and 'not speaking bad of one's neighbour' to the causes of this. One male director and parent stated the only two men who stay at home (historically traditional roles reversed) in his community drink and are domestic abusers (Samnang, Bantaey Meanchey).

Like pregnancy concerns, domestic violence was not part of the original set of questions for participants, yet the topic did come up specifically with five participants. Participants did mention how government officials have orchestrated community groups, workshops, and presentations, providing information about what to do if you are involved in a domestic abuse situation, and how to legally claim your rights. Participants however note the downfall is in both the cost of the legal process as well as social stigmas in place. For example, as mentioned in the Chbap Srey: 'not to talk bad about your neighbour', or 'keep family matters private', even if they are related to domestic violence. This raises concerns about how well gender mainstreaming initiatives can be implemented into primary education policy when there are

established 'codes of conduct' being taught in schools, and interpreted in a very gendered way. Moreover, codes of conduct can be tied to gender-based violence within the wider community.

If the policy is emphasizing favourable conditions for students, naturally domestic violence would have a direct effect on them, both in terms of how they internalize gender relations, and their understanding of violence. This finding can be connected to a need for a more post-colonial feminist and GAD approach to gender in this context (Unterhalter, 2014). Seeing gender issues in an individualistic manner would fall in line liberal feminism and a WID approach. This approach ignores the importance the family unit holds in some contexts, and the collectivity of gender issues such as domestic violence (Unterhalter, 2014).

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The geographically extensive research conducted for this thesis found that there are a number of contestations when it comes to practically implementing gender mainstreaming policy into education systems. In regards to gender training, my research findings have shown that there is a lack of consistency by region, occupation, and demographics. Rural areas with minority populations received gender training least often, and training was usually received by school directors only. This caused in some cases, a lack of critical understanding of 'absence', resulting in misinterpretation of practical gender mainstreaming implementations.

Findings also critically reflect on the 'access phase' of gender and education, arguing that this phase of measurement has not passed in the context of my research. Through misinterpretation, there are tangible repercussions for gender equality because of this phase. Therefore, a universal acceptance of a 'beyond access phase' ignores these repercussions. I further supported this argument of repercussions by extending the discussion of access to the discussion of adult employees in the education sector. Much of the misinterpretations of and repercussions for gender equality are largely to do with a lack of resources, and an immense expectation of social change on small institutions. Development initiatives in education are popular for their comparatively low cost and peaceful implementation. Yet, my findings demonstrate how assuming a low-cost implementation can result in a loss of awareness of social intersectionalities.

As I have discussed, social attitudes are outlined by both policy and stakeholders as determinants to the success of gender equality in education. Findings of my research which explore the meaning of 'gender equality', gender identity, and codes of conduct for boys and girls present a picture of not only what individuals' social attitudes and gender identities are, but which are deemed acceptable. This translates into contradictory opinions from multiple actors in terms of which progressions should be made, and which traditions should be kept; a confusing space for gender policy.

Lastly, my findings call for more policy awareness of adult influence and adult participation. Most policy in the context of my research focuses on the measurable outcomes of the learning conditions for boys and girls. However, ignoring the gendered division of labour, health policy for teachers, and issues of domestic violence undermines the reported grave influence adults have on students' beliefs, opportunities, and perceived capabilities.

### **Theoretical implications**

The concept of gender mainstreaming itself has been mainstreamed in discourse and therefore has gained power as 'the right way of addressing gender issues'. Yet, findings show disparities. This can be seen not only in the case of my research, but amongst many critiques in the literature, as noted. Although part of my critique is not new, I would argue its relevance for the fact that practical implementations of gender mainstreaming are still taking place within schools.

My findings support the critique of the practicality of gender mainstreaming in the literature. This is a critique of gender mainstreaming indicators, ignoring power relations, parity, and lack of context, to name a few. As Pradeep Dhillon states, "parity does not adequately reflect unequal power relations. Accessing school does not reveal complicated life choices that might be embedded in attending school" (Dhillon, 2011, 251). Practical policy implementations in this case conflate 'parity' with 'gender equality' and 'education' with 'school', which hinders its success by leaving systemic and intersectional gender issues ignored (i.e. power dynamics, rural area schools, family and societal beliefs). This ignores the specificities of schools as institutions, and its implications for strength of a mainstreamed discourse.

While much of the literature focuses on the natural power relations that take place within a school setting, and the socio-cultural settings that effect the implementation of gender mainstreaming within education, I challenge Western-centric conceptualizations of gender mainstreaming which assume a top-down implementation. In my research, I have attempted to demonstrate how gender mainstreaming discourses are reproduced and contested at multiple



levels of actors, institutions, and power. I hope my research has highlighted how gender mainstreaming policy taking place within an institutionalized setting can take different forms, and further opened the conversation to 'education' programs being more creatively manifested outside the confines of four walls. Even though the evaluated policy does somewhat address this (i.e. 'social attitudes', 'favourable conditions'), interviews demonstrate that there is still an focus on formal education.

### **Practical implications**

In terms of practical implications, I believe my findings are best connected to alternative policy development. For example, policy that emphasizes more engagement with men and boys. As participants reiterated, gender equality in this context is largely equated to being a 'women's issue' or emphasizing that 'women can do the same thing as men'. There does still seem to be quite a segregation in terms of practical implementations, such as *girls'* commissions, and focusing on *girls'* attendance and dropouts. This segregation arguably does not do much for the understanding and advancement of gender issues.

Acknowledging and deconstructing power relations, not just at the local level, but international agendas (i.e. EFA, MDGs, SDGs) focuses on staff as opposed to students, and is self-reflective of internal governance. As seen from this research, gender disparities primarily arose with adults, and staff within the educational system. Students relied heavily on these adults' behaviours and interactions to shape their attitudes, behaviours, and future goals.

Another practical implication of this research is to review how stakeholders define poverty, school, gender, and how they are connected. As seen from the research, there is responsibility that is passed around when it comes to these issues, often on parents. Reviewing how teachers are under pressure to meet targets, why blame is passed, and a holistic understanding of students' social dimensions of gender and poverty, creates opportunity for improvement (Unterhalter, 2013).

This research took place within a school setting to evaluate policy based on the policies' measures, which included indicators *within* schools (i.e. drop outs, girl commissions). However, with this research I hope to acknowledge the institutionalization of schools, and how 'education' can be garnered elsewhere. Even from the methodological process that had to be taken (process of approval, school gatekeepers), to the language used by participants, it can be seen that educational institutions provide a *particular* setting for gender mainstreaming, unique to implementations in other sectors. To break down power dynamics and increase fluidity of power, for future research I suggest the re-evaluation of the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming altogether, otherwise, an emphasis on more creative approaches to how we can compartmentalize education outside of an institutional setting.

### **Final notes**

The purpose of this research was to understand, through the perceptions of teachers, students, directors, student teachers, and parents, what extent Cambodian primary education policy addresses gender issues. By critically examining the nature and dynamics of the policy, I have developed considerations for theoretical and practical implementations for gender, education, and development.

The research was an attempt to further understand the sometimes broad and vague definitions of gender mainstreaming, on a practical level. Over the course of the research, my understanding of gender mainstreaming shifted from this vague understanding, to recognizing its tangible implementations, outcomes, and consequences. I hope this provides grounds to further explore gender mainstreaming policy in education from a higher level, and the discourses which shape policy and practical implementations.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Questions**

### **Initial interview questions (before revisions):**

#### **Students:**

1. How old are you?
2. What grade are you in?
3. Do you like school? What is your favourite class/favourite part about school?
4. Do you think boys and girls get treated equally in comparison to each other, in your school? If they are treated differently, how so?
5. If treated differently/unfairly, what do you think can be done better to stop that?
6. What is your least favourite part about school? How could it be better?
7. What do you want to be when you grow up?  
Do you learn the Chbab Srey and Chbah Pros in school? What do you think about it (like/don't like, good/bad)?
8. Do you know what the word 'gender' means? If so, what does it mean?
9. Are you interested in learning about gender? Why or why not?
10. Do you think boys in comparison to girls should be treated fairly? Why or why not?
11. Do you think boys and girls have the same opportunities, now and in the future? Why or why not?
12. Do you think you've learned things about gender? If so, what have you learned?
13. If you have learned about gender, for how long?
14. What are you hoping to learn about it in school?
15. Have these classes changed anything about your life outside of school? If so, what?
16. Do you hope to have this type of programming next year(s) in school?

#### **Teachers/student teachers of primary level education:**

1. What is the title of your current position and how long have you been working here? What are your main responsibilities? What did you do before working here (please explain your whole career if possible)?
2. Do you teach the Chbab Srey and Chbah Pros in school? What do you think about it (like/don't like it, is it good/bad)? Are you familiar with the term 'gender'? If so, how would you describe it?
3. What is your role in primary education? To gender?
4. Do you incorporate gender into your teaching? If you do, how so? If you don't, why not?
5. What are your thoughts on gender mainstreaming?
6. Do you believe you have the proper resources to incorporate gender into your teaching? Why or why not?
7. Do any of your students identify themselves as anything other than 'boy' or 'girl'?
8. Do you see students graduating with the successful skills and tools to increase/maintain gender equality? Where in society (examples)?
9. If you think these types of programs could be improved and/or changed, how? Do you think they should be removed?
10. Can you tell me about how you plan/organize your lessons/activities?
11. Do you find the curriculum, in regards to gender, relatable to local context? Or is it Westernized? How or how not?
12. Is there an interest from students on this topic? Why or why not?
13. Have you noticed any changes in the students through the duration of the courses you've taught them?
14. Did you experience any challenges implementing this program? If so, what were they?
15. How long has this programming taken place/how long have you been involved with it?



16. What are you hoping for this type of programming to accomplish?
17. Do you hope to continue teaching this type of programming? Why or why not?

**Directors of primary level education:**

1. What is the title of your current position and how long have you been working here? What are your main responsibilities?
2. Does your school teach the Chbab Srey and Chbah Pros in school? What do you think about it (like/don't like it, is it good/bad)? Are you familiar with the term 'gender'? If so, how would you describe it?
3. What is your schools role to primary education? To gender?
4. Is gender incorporated into your schools' teaching? If yes, how so? If not, why so?
5. Are the expectations of boys and girls at your school different, or the same? Why or why not?
6. What are your thoughts on gender mainstreaming?
7. Do you see students graduating with the successful skills and tools to increase/maintain gender equality? Where in society (examples)?
8. If you think these types of programs could be improved and/or changed, how? Do you think they should be removed?
9. Can you tell me about how lessons/activities are planned and/or organized?
10. Do you find the curriculum, in regards to gender, relatable to local context? Or is it Westernized? How or how not?
11. Is there an interest from students on the topic of gender? Why or why not?
12. Have you noticed any changes in the students through the duration of these courses taught to them?
13. Did you experience any challenges implementing this program? If so, what where they?
14. How long has this programming taken place/how long have you been involved with it?
15. What are you hoping for this type of programming to accomplish?
16. Do you hope this type of programming continues in your school(s)?

**Parents/guardians of students in primary education:**

1. Do you work outside or inside the home? What do you do/what are you main responsibilities?
2. Have you gone to school? If so, what school level have you completed?
3. How many children do you have? What is the sex of your children? Are you familiar with the term 'gender', if so, how would you describe it?
2. Does your child's school teach the Chbab Srey and Chbah Pros in school? What do you think about it (like/don't like it, is it good/bad)? What are your thoughts about gender? Do you have an understanding of this term?
3. Is it important to you for your child to go to school? Why or why not?
4. Is it important to you for your child to learn about gender issues in school? What are your thoughts on gender mainstreaming?
5. Do you see your child graduating with the successful skills and tools to increase/maintain gender equality? Where in society (examples)?
6. If you think these types of programs could be improved and/or changed, how? Do you think they should be removed?
7. Do you find the curriculum, in regards to gender, relatable to local context? Or is it Westernized? How or how not?
8. Is there an interest from your child on this topic? Why or why not?
9. Have you noticed any changes in your child through the duration of these courses taught to them?
10. How long has your child been in a system with this type of programming? How long has it been going on in your community?
11. What are you hoping for this type of programming to accomplish?

12. Has this type of programming changed your child's life in any ways outside of school? If so, in what way(s)?
13. Do you hope this type of programming continues in your child's schooling? Why or why not?
14. What are your future dreams and goals for your child?

**Some questions that were replaced with previous ones once recognizing a participant's limited awareness of the policy:**

1. What are some roles of men and women in your society?
2. Have you received gender training? When was that? Do you know if there will be another one in the future? If so, when?
3. Do you have some specific examples of things you learned in gender training?
4. Do you think women and men have different abilities? If so, what are they?
5. How many teachers are in your school? How many of them are men? How many of them are women?
6. Can you talk about some challenges/opportunities that you feel like you face being a woman/man in Cambodia?
7. Are boys and girls treated the same in school or different? If different, how?
8. Are you familiar with the term 'transgender'? If so, how would you describe it?
9. What do you think are some of the main challenges/opportunities are in your school when it comes to gender?
10. Would you want to incorporate gender into your school programming? Why or why not?

## Appendix B: Demographics of participants

Pseudonym	Sex	Position	Location
Arunny	Female	Student teacher	Stung Treng
Mono	Male	Student teacher	Stung Treng
Chanthou	Male	Student teacher	Stung Treng
Dara	Male	Student teacher	Stung Treng
Kosal	Male	Student teacher	Stung Treng
Thom	Male	School director	Stung Treng
Roumjong	Female	Mother of student	Stung Treng
Chamroeun	Male	School director	Stung Treng
Bopha	Female	Teacher	Stung Treng
Chariya	Female	Student	Stung Treng
Sokhom	Male	School director	Stung Treng
Sopheary	Female	Student	Stung Treng
Sourkea	Female	Student	Stung Treng
Sita	Female	Teacher	Stung Treng
Arun	Male	School director	Kratie
Mao	Male	Student teacher	Kratie
Ary	Female	Student teacher	Kratie
Kalliyann	Female	Student teacher	Kratie
Samnang	Male	Father of students, former school director	Banteay Meanchey
Leap	Male	Student teacher	Battambang
Sokha	Female	Student	Sihanoukville
Vireak	Male	Student	Sihanoukville
Sophea	Female	Student	Sihanoukville
Kiri	Male	Student	Sihanoukville
Darany	Male	Teacher	Sihanoukville
Chantrea	Female	Teacher	Sihanoukville
Theary	Female	Student	Kampong Speu
Veasna	Female	Student	Kampong Speu
Sophaep	Male	Student	Kampong Speu
Vithu	Male	Student	Kampong Speu
Tola	Female	Student	Kampong Speu
Sovanna	Female	Student	Kampong Speu
Vannak	Male	Teacher	Kampong Speu
Jorani	Female	Teacher	Kampong Speu
Champey	Female	School director	Kampong Speu
Acharya	Male	Student	Kampong Cham
Bunroeun	Male	Student	Kampong Cham
Toch	Female	Student	Kampong Cham
Srey	Female	Student	Kampong Cham
Phhoung	Female	Teacher	Kampong Cham

Appendix C: Ethics Approval



<b>Certificate #:</b>	<b>STU 2016 - 091</b>
<b>Approval Period:</b>	<b>06/29/16-06/29/17</b>

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS (ORE)



**ETHICS APPROVAL**

**To:** Julie Stinson  
 Graduate Student of Development Studies,  
 Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies  
 [Redacted]

**From:** Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics  
*(on behalf of Denise Henriques, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)*

**Date:** Wednesday, June 29, 2016

**Title:** **Exploring Gender Mainstreaming in Primary Education: A Cambodian Context**

**Risk Level:**  Minimal Risk  More than Minimal Risk

**Level of Review:**  Delegated Review  Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, “**Exploring Gender Mainstreaming in Primary Education: A Cambodian Context**” has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University’s Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics ([Redacted]) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, “**RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE**”.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: [Redacted]

Yours sincerely,  
 Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM  
 Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,  
 Office of Research Ethics

## RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal. It is the responsibility of researchers to ensure the timely submission of renewals.
  - a. As a courtesy, researchers will be reminded by ORE, in advance of certificate expiry, that the certificate must be renewed. Please note, however, it is the expectation that researchers will submit a renewal application prior to the expiration of ethics certificate(s).
  - b. **Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate** (or to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) **may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/ withheld.**
2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved **PRIOR** to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol;
3. **END OF PROJECT:** ORE must be notified when a project is complete;
4. **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;
5. **POST APPROVAL MONITORING:**
  - a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to post approval monitoring as per TCPS guidelines;
  - b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may similarly be subject to Post Approval Monitoring as per TCPS guidelines.

**FORMS:** As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website:

- a. Renewal
- b. Amendment
- c. End of Project
- d. Adverse Event