

Major International Development Partners and their Roles in Educational Aid to Cambodia: Situational Analysis in the 2010s¹

Ampa Kaewkumkong

*Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University, Rangsit Campus
Pathumthani 12121, Thailand
Email: ampa@asia.tu.ac.th*

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the roles of international partners in educational aid to Cambodia between 2010 and 2019 under the framework of foreign aid in conjunction with Cambodia's direction for economic and social development. This research employs descriptive mixed methods by investigating statistical data obtained from the Cambodia ODA Database and analyzing related documents. The output is presented using illustrative charts and tables to compare various issues, together with content analysis from relevant documents, which is then presented in the form of descriptive analysis and descriptive statistical analysis. The results show that Cambodia's top five international partners in terms of educational aid subsidies in the 2010s were the European Union, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, Japan, and Sweden. These donors had different types of aid and different orientations on development, yet these collaborations led to the development of numerous Cambodian education programs in order to achieve the global education agenda. When exploring trends in educational aid, the study found that there are "emerging donors," especially China and South Korea, who have played more crucial roles in Cambodia recently.

Keywords: international development partner, role, educational aid, Cambodia

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Introduction

In scrutinizing the direction of Cambodia's educational development in the 2010s, as described in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), it is clear that Cambodia has prioritized education and its role in national development. These policies made it clear that children, youth, and adults should have access to quality education and lifelong learning services that respond to the needs of the labor market. This direction was clearly in line with broader national policies. In order to achieve these goals, MoEYS needed to provide and mobilize specific educational resources, especially with regard to funding and the budget allocation, which, unfortunately, are weak areas in the development of education in Cambodia. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) through certain measures sought aid, while strengthening relationships nationally, regionally, and internationally with development partners, including communities, the private sector, civil society, NGOs, international organizations, and other countries. As a result, cooperation for the development of education has been manifested both bilaterally and multilaterally (MoEYS, 2010; MoEYS, 2014; MoEYS, 2019).

To carry out educational development, Cambodia needs to rely on external financial support. Because of this, Cambodia gives essential consideration to international agencies, NGOs, and countries providing such support. After implementation of the Rectangular Strategy Phase 3, it was found that Cambodia had made progress in collaborating with development partners, as reflected in the arrangement of Consultative Group Meeting (RGC, 2013). However, based on a report predicting a gap between the needs outlined in the educational budget and the existing limited resources, from 2014-2018 Cambodia faced an increasing budget shortfall every year, and during this five-year period the accumulated shortfall totaled about 163 million USD. It is clear that MoEYS needs to increase funding from partners abroad to mitigate budget risks (MoEYS, 2014). This effort to promote educational aid from abroad has been carried out in accordance with the National

Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) (RGC, 2014) and the Rectangular Strategy, which define the agenda for Cambodia's economic and social development. Since 2008, Cambodia has been able to raise approximately one billion USD from development partners, which has been utilized for economic and social development (RGC, 2018).

The RGC has implemented proactive policies to mobilize foreign aid, believing that support from these partners is critical to the country's development. From 2004 to 2018, Cambodia continued to expand the number of development partners, raising funds for national development (RGC, 2010; RGC, 2014). Many scholars agree that the provision and thorough distribution of sufficient resources are among the most important measures needed for successful education management in developing countries (Chansopheak, 2009). This issue has been discussed intensely in prominent conferences such as the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 1990, which addressed the need to increase international aid budgets. Later, this issue was re-emphasized and a commitment was given by donor countries to increase educational financial aid for developing countries (UNESCO, 2000). Cambodia joined the effort to increase educational opportunities for all citizens through basic education and to eliminate illiteracy by the year 2000. However, at the World Education Forum on EFA in 2000, the world community conceded failure in achieving the EFA goal. Participants thus re-committed to the goal of attaining universal education by 2015. Since then, Cambodia has actively implemented strategies for providing equal educational opportunities. The country still faces countless challenges in developing its basic education system, and progress is still slow. Cambodian officials agreed that running this campaign would be a difficult task without international aid and support, both technically and financially (Dy and Ninomiya, 2003).

This points to a recognition of Cambodia's need for sufficient resources in educational development. When examining the situation in Cambodia, it is found that there is still a strong need for funds from development partners. Cambodia faces a budget shortfall annually, and MoEYS has traditionally spearheaded the pursuit of foreign aid, dating

back to Cambodia's first election in 1993. This research, therefore, has examined the progress of raising funds for educational development in the 2010s and identified the major development partners that have contributed to the development of Cambodian education. It also analyzed the roles of these partners in various dimensions, such as the nature of support, concepts, and principles; and the types of assistance, activities, and achievements.

Conceptual and Literature Review

Foreign Aid

Foreign aid can be provided through different methods, one of which is supporting education as a tool for foreign policy that encompasses the economy, trade, and politics. According to Morgenthau (1962), foreign aid is the transfer of money, goods, products, and services from one country to another; it involves the donor country and the recipient country. Morgenthau also pointed out that foreign aid is part of foreign policy, which can be divided into six types: humanitarian, subsistence, military, prestige, and foreign aid for economic development, as well as bribery. Riddell (2007) proposed two meanings of foreign assistance: 1) giving or receiving assistance in terms of products, knowledge, technical skills, grant aid, and funds transferred to the recipient's country; and 2) giving or receiving assistance to tackle poverty, with the objective of developing basic welfare and reducing poverty in the recipient country. This is also known as development aid. Wells (2015) defined foreign aid as financial or technical assistance granted by the government of the donor country to the recipient country to be used for social assistance and economic development or disaster relief. This can be done through financial support or loans, technical advice, training, equipment, or product support. Phillips (1976) viewed educational aid as process in which the donor country provides educational resources, such as teachers, educational equipment, funds, loans, exchanges with various institutions, or training for students and educational personnel for the recipient country.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is one of the most widely-known forms of foreign aid provided to developing countries. The recipients receive assistance from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which is an agency under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The processes and conditions of ODA can be described as follows: 1) focusing on the primary objective of aiding in the economic development and welfare of developing countries, and 2) providing financial grants or loans and technical advice, with a grant of at least 25 percent of concessional loan (OECD, 2007). Meanwhile, there is another form of aid for development that is different from what is usually provided by traditional donor countries. This form of aid is evident in countries such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which comprise emerging markets and are crucial contributors in terms of cooperation for development of low-income countries. This assistance is different from the ODA framework, especially in the redefinition of relationships with recipient countries. An example of this is the South-South Cooperation, which is a collaboration among developing countries encompassing economic and technical components. It is also a platform through which developing and underdeveloped countries exchange mutual aid, with a focus on building “partnerships” rather than “donor-recipient” relationships that are created under the DAC framework. The foreign aid provided under the framework of development cooperation is focused on Africa and CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam) in ASEAN (BRICS Policy Center, 2019).

International Partners and Assistance for Education Development in Cambodia

International partners and assistance for educational development in Cambodia have been centered on the NSDP and the Rectangular Strategy. Cambodia places great importance on development partners, which are integrated into a long-term strategy to reduce poverty and attain economic and social development goals. Since the publication of

NSDP, Volumes 3-5, Cambodia has made use of tremendous amounts of expenditures, and the sources of the funding include assistance from development partners. When it comes to foreign aid, Cambodia aims to receive as much financial aid as possible since the money can be distributed promptly to the poor and to people in rural areas (RGC, 2010; RGC, 2014).

Under the Rectangular Strategy in the 2010s, Phase 3 aimed to promote the quality of education to meet the needs of the labor market and develop technical skills in order to increase work opportunities while continuing to implement the EFA global agenda. In Phase 4, the first priority was given to human resource development to enhance national competitiveness on both the current and a long-term basis. In this phase, Cambodia has continually increased its education budget and requested cooperation from the private sector and NGOs. The country also reached out for funding from donors to upgrade and improve the quality of education in accordance with international standards and national development (RGC, 2013; RGC, 2018; Channy and Ogunniran, 2019). Simultaneously, ESP Volumes 2009-2013 and Volumes 2014-2018 emphasize that educational reform should be in line with NSDP and the Rectangular Strategy. Funds were mobilized through an international development mechanism known as the Sector Wide Approach Program (SWAp), which brought together donors and all other stakeholders, and helped Cambodia synchronize donors with the education sector while minimizing the costs incurred by the transactions. Another initiative was the establishment of the Joint Technical Working Strategic Group (JTWG), consisting of government officials, donors, and NGOs to gather crucial opinions (MoEYS, 2010; MoEYS, 2014).

An important phenomenon in the 21st century is the growth of emerging donors, which differ from traditional donors in terms of both concepts and diversity in donations. The World Bank (2008) reported that in the mid-1990s, emerging donors began to play an important role. The new donors are seen as more flexible in their regulations and focused on harmonizing mutual benefit (Sato, Shiga, Kobayashi and Kondoh, 2011).

Education Policy Implementation and Its Challenges

In the past the Cambodian government focused on supply-side interventions, such as building more schools and providing teaching materials. Since the 2000s, however, the focus has moved towards demand-side interventions to support poor families, girls, ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged groups (Tan, 2007). The foundation strategy of MoEYS was aimed at providing complete primary schooling for all children by 2010 and basic schooling by 2015. In particular, Cambodia has attempted to extend education to all children by providing both formal and non-formal pathways in order to reach its global commitment to EFA by 2020 and the Education 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goal. Thus, in the 2010s, Cambodia executed various schemes in collaboration with development partners. Examples from the Cambodia ODA database are the following. (1) Teaching for Improved Gender Equality and Responsiveness (TIGER) funded by the EU, which is being launched during 2017-2021. The implementing agencies are both international and local NGOs. (2) Accelerating Policy Reforms in Secondary Education granted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and launched from 2016 to 2019; this program responded to the government's vision of improving the quality of human resources to sustain Cambodia's economic development and enhance its competitiveness. (3) Senior Volunteer Program, working for human development, funded by Japan (2012-2019) and implemented by various related Cambodian government agencies. (4) Inclusive Education Support (2014-2019) granted by Sweden and implemented by UNICEF. This program is intended to strengthen children's equitable access to quality basic education. Despite these and other policies and activities, however, challenges still exist. Major problems include limited staff capacity, under-funding, low public awareness, problems in monitoring and evaluation, and not reaching marginalized communities (UNESCO, 2014).

Methodology

This research employed a descriptive mixed-method strategy that gathered statistical data from the Cambodia ODA Database, which is published by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), (CRDB, 2020) together with qualitative data obtained from relevant documents. The statistical data were collected and limited to the years between 2010 and 2019 and accessed to the database in January 2020. The present article uses content analysis from related documents and presents data in the form of descriptive analysis, coupled with descriptive statistical analysis. The latter consists of data discussion and presentation in a comparative table, comparative charts showing the direction of educational support from development partners, and educational aid trends in Cambodia. This study analyzes the roles of the top five donors in the 2010s.

Results and Discussion

Education Aid Budgets in Cambodia Have Increased Every Year

In the 2010s, most of the educational programs were ongoing, some dating from as early as 2006. As a result, development partners' aid increased almost every year from 2010 to 2019, with a total increase of 229 percent. The largest amount of aid was provided in 2018-2019 (Figure 1). This high level of aid for Cambodia had been evident for several years (Euro-Trends, 2010). Based on the Cambodia ODA Database, the education funds received during the last three years (2017-2019) account for approximately 9.52 percent of the total budget. When compared to other sectors, social sectors (education and health (7.61 percent)) still receive rather limited funding and considerably less than other sectors, such as economic development (26.26), infrastructure development (42.65), and development of the service sector and cross-disciplinary projects (13.96). This data is in line with the reports of Ngoy, Say, Leang, Rinna, Sokunthy and Sovansopha (2019a), which state that the education sector currently

comprises less than 10 percent of the country's budget allocation. This rate is below the global average (15-20 percent). Notably, Cambodia is the country with the lowest educational expenses in ASEAN (Rany, Zain and Jamil, 2012a; Channy and Ogunniran, 2019).

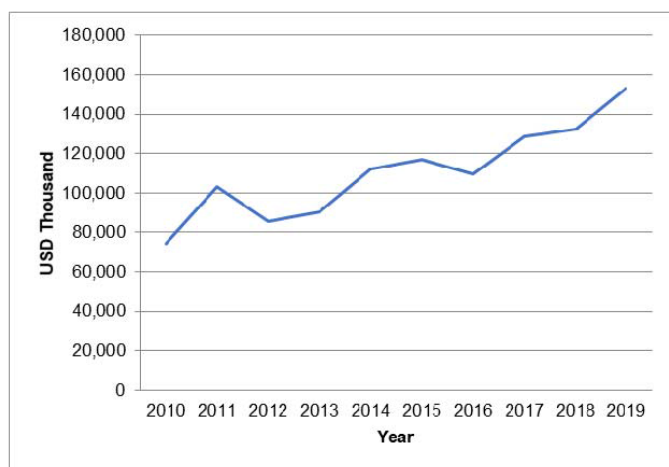


Figure 1 Educational aid contributions to Cambodia in the last 10 years

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from the Cambodia ODA Database

Most of the Aid Is Used to Improve Basic Education

Education budgets in Cambodia are distributed to be spent on eight activities, of which primary education received the highest allocation (Figure 2). Yuthyda (2019) reported that the budget for education allocated by the Cambodian government is to be implemented in various activities, including prior- to early-childhood education, primary education, and secondary education. Basic education was the highest-supported area because Cambodia is committed to the EFA global agenda. Japan played a vital role in this activity. Tertiary education was the second highest budget allocation area and ADB and the World Bank were key players. Projects launched are technical and skill training development and improving the quality of higher education and research. Generally, the assistance was in terms of

concessional loans with little grant money. The SWAp sector is controlled by the EU and works for promoting comprehensive budget support and good governance practices.

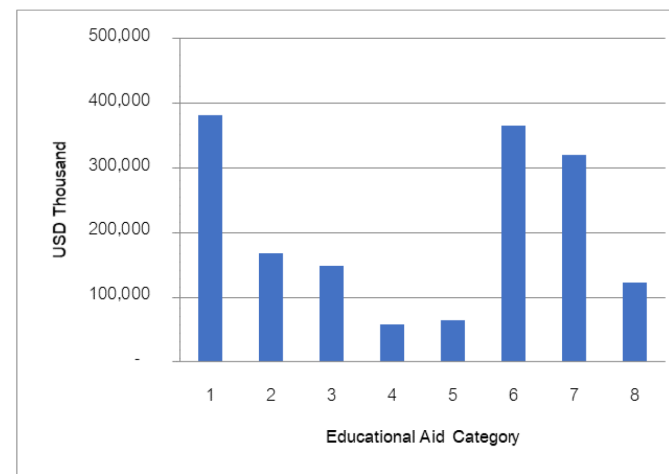


Figure 2 Aid budgets classified by types of education during 2010-2019

Note: 1 = primary/basic education, 2 = school and facilities, 3 = secondary education, 4 = sector policy, 5 = teacher training, 6 = tertiary, vocational, and higher education, 7 = SWAp, and 8 = other activities (NGO collaboration, inclusive education, research cooperation, ICT, senior volunteer program, etc.).

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from the Cambodia ODA Database

There Were 25 Development Partners Providing Educational Aid for Cambodia during the Period of 2010-2019

Assistance came from 25 organizations/countries, which can be classified into four clusters according to different types and terms of assistance. UN agencies like UNESCO, UNICEFF and UNDP were engrossed in education rehabilitation and in promoting child-friendly approaches (Dy and Ninomiya, 2003). International financial institutions such as the World Bank and ADB played vital roles in tertiary improvement mostly with concessional loans and small grants. The EU intends to implement financial management reform, and in terms

of bilateral and/or multilateral forms, it made grants to support various educational activities. Most subsidies in the 2010s were from Japan and Sweden. This is consistent with Kelsall, Khieng, Chantha and Muy (2016), stating that the important development partners for education in Cambodia include UNICEF, UNESCO, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the World Bank. In the 2010s, the top five providers, as shown in Table 1, when combined accounted for more than half of the aid received.

Table 1 Aid financing of top five development partners in the education sector (2010-2019)

Donors	Amount (USD Thousand)	Percentage (%)
1. EU/EC (European Commission)	187,985.02	17.27
1. ADB (Asian Development Bank)	147,867.95	13.59
2. World Bank	139,866.20	12.85
3. Japan	127,099.90	11.68
4. Sweden	91,527.46	8.41
Total from five donors	694,346.53	63.81
Total from remaining donors	393,870.22	36.19
Total from all 25 donors	1,088,216.75	100

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from the Cambodia ODA Database

Five Major Development Partners Providing Diverse and Varying Educational Support

The leading five international partners that provided Cambodia with assistance did so through different roles and approaches. The important characteristics can be summarized as follows:

1. EU/EC

The EU/EC has focused on sectoral budget support or SWAp, which comprised over 90 percent of the EU educational aid. The ultimate goal was to enhance the budget management in various activities at the maximum capacity through the “EU-Cambodia Education Sector

Reform Partnership 2014-2021” and “Education Sector Policy Support Program 2011-2015.” These projects were implemented by MoEYS working with UNICEF. Similarly, Channy and Ogunniran (2019) indicated that the EC was the largest donor during the years 2014 to 2018, in collaboration with the Cambodian government, MoEYS, and especially with international organizations. The EU has played a crucial role since the 2000s in providing technical assistance in policy and the capacity building of organizations, and institutionalization. The EC specifically spearheaded SWAp which continued into the 2010s.

Another important role of the EU is to support the decentralization of financial management at the provincial, district, and school levels, using demand-side approaches and focusing on citizen service concepts (Euro-Trends, 2010). In addition, the EU guaranteed aid to Cambodia for primary education. The funds were intended to develop initiatives of budget management for school assistance programs in various forms (MoEYS, 2014).

2. ADB

ADB mainly provided aid for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and construction of school buildings and teaching materials. This is consistent with Un and Sok (2018), who stated that, while the World Bank focuses on higher education development, ADB emphasizes support for technical and vocational training in Cambodia. The nature of ADB assistance is mostly in concessional loans rather than grant aid, which accounted for 38.46 percent. The ADB led important projects, such as “Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector Development Program (2015-2018),” “Strengthening TVET (2010-2015),” and “Skill for Competitiveness Development Project.” These projects aimed at generating income and employment and developing gender equality and women’s empowerment. ADB implemented the projects in collaboration with MoEYS and the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training.

Furthermore, since the 2000s, ADB has focused on promoting the right of children to access basic education by collaborating with three main groups of players: 1) multilateral bodies: World Bank,

UNICEF and EU; 2) bilateral bodies: Sida, USAID, and JICA; and 3) NGOs. In partnership with NGOs, ADB supports grants for rural primary schools that implement the “I’m Learning!” program, using a holistic approach to development in response to the complexity of education in the new era (Hang, Khorn, Prigent, and Yuth, 2017). Also, Rany et al. (2012a) found that ADB is a significant contributor to Cambodian higher education. ADB worked with the World Bank and USAID to act at the forefront to pass the law that established the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC), which is an independent organization that assures the ability of Cambodian universities to meet international standards (Rany et al., 2012b).

3. The World Bank

The World Bank has been the greatest resource for higher education in Cambodia. The Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project (HEQCIP 2010-2015 and 2018-2024) was initiated with both concessional loans and grant aid. This was the first and only project dedicated to higher education, leading to the policy entitled, Cambodia Higher Education Vision 2030, published in 2014. The Bank has worked closely with MoEYS, which in 2017 instituted the Higher Education Governance and Finance for Cambodia policy and began to develop other plans as well. These included the first long-term plan, Cambodian Higher Education Roadmap 2030 and Beyond (draft), and a medium-term plan, Higher Education Action Plan 2018-2022 (draft), with co-support from UNESCO (Ngoy et al., 2019b). In addition, the World Bank has undertaken a valuable project, “Scholarships, Student Loans and Subsidies.” As a result, there is a concrete policy and a pilot program with scholarships that were granted to more than 1,000 students from poor families, as well as for people with disabilities (Rany et al., 2012b; Un and Sok, 2018; Ngoy et al., 2019b). Under the HEQCIP, there was a goal to improve competitiveness and innovation by promoting research in higher education institutions (Eam, 2018). The World Bank is the only entity that provided scholarships supporting the master plan for research in the education sector 2011-2015 (Rany et al., 2012b). Other activities include expanding university libraries and building staff capacity.

It is also noteworthy that the World Bank has worked on EFA since the year 2000. In 2002, World Bank embarked on the EFA-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), a fundraising plan to guarantee the adequacy of budgets used to achieve educational goals for all. The World Bank is actively committed to increasing financial assistance with developing countries to attain EFA goals at important meetings and international conferences (Chansopheak, 2009). In Cambodia, it granted aid for expanding access to educational services with special focus on poor and underserved communities. MoEYS, civil society, and NGOs engaged in this activity.

4. Japan

Japan was the country that provided the most ODA during 2011-2016, of which 70 percent came in the form of grants and technical cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2020). MoEYS states that the JICA is one of the main partners in Cambodian education. Japan has provided ongoing assistance with a focus on basic education (Kaewkumkong, 2011). In the 2010s, Japan assisted in a distinct way by integrating educational aid and other sectors, as well as grant aid for all types of education. An outstanding project was that of constructing and improving the school learning environment across rural Cambodia, which has been working for 10 years. Other projects launched over the past decade include sending volunteers and experts to work in Cambodia and arranging technical training for local officials. One remarkable effort is that of providing scholarships for Cambodian officials to further their master’s and doctorate degrees, as well as providing other scholarships under the Human Resources Development Program (Channy and Ogunniran 2019).

Notably, Japan focuses on providing assistance that recipients can access directly through close collaboration with NGOs and local government agencies. This is a significant milestone in that Japan has adjusted its attitude to value NGOs as crucial players in Japan’s international diplomacy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2020). Japan thus has launched the JICA Partnership Program with the collaboration of NGOs, thereby supporting NGOs and civil society in

order to enhance development at the local and community levels. Important activities include a project for promoting community learning centers in rural Cambodia and inclusive education for children with disabilities. One of the most successful achievements is the promotion of educational equality in Cambodian society (Kaewkumkong, 2010). Another observation related to the involvement of Japan is that, when the current boards of key Cambodian universities selected representatives from among employees and main alliance, those who were selected had all graduated from Japanese universities (Ngoy et al., 2019a). In addition, the president of the Japanese-Cambodian Association of Tokyo joined the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) board of directors 2018-2019, the country's think-tank (CDRI, 2019).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2018) found that Japan's ODA corresponds to the need for Cambodian development at a satisfactory level and that Japan is successful in collaborating with other partners. The Cambodian government in 2013 also accepted the transformation of a "donor-recipient" relationship to that of a strategic partnership (Embassy of Japan in Cambodia, 2017), although educational aid still needs to be improved.

5. Sweden

Sweden granted the largest budget to school improvement and school operational activities. It aimed to expand access to education services and to reach the most vulnerable groups of children. Sida worked actively with MoEYS, UNICEF, INGOs and local NGOs, Cambodian agencies, Swedish agencies, and school and local school support committees. Sida has also promised to help with funding for the improvement of all primary schools equally (MoEYS, 2014). This grant will be transferred directly into the school accounts and Sida will closely monitor the schools' performance through the Swedish School Inspectorate Office (Hang et al., 2017). In addition, Sida is a major agency providing funds to operate the pilot program called the Child Friendly School (CFS), in moving towards quality education and responding to the UN declaration of children's rights. CFS also promotes

democracy, a child-centered education system, participation of children and communities, equal access to education for boys and girls, and inclusive education (Reimer, 2012; Kelsall et al., 2016).

Since the mid-2010s, Sida has paid attention to the tertiary sector, projects such as ICT, and workshops in universities, skill development and entrepreneurship, and vocational training. An important goal was preparing and starting research cooperation. CDRI has praised Sida as an unwavering partner that supports budgets and resources for research. Sweden collaborated with CDRI on the project, "Accountability Principles and Tendencies: A study on Entrepreneurship in Higher Education and Industrial Development, Human Capital and SME Development in Cambodia" (CDRI, 2019). Additionally, the Swedish working group plays an important role in the education sector. An example is Sida's former director in Phnom Penh, who regularly participated in educational activities and was invited to join the CDRI board of directors (2018-2019).

Emerging Donors/Non-DAC Countries

Emerging donors/Non-DAC countries played a more significant role in Cambodia in the 2010s, especially in educational aid. According to the Cambodia ODA Database, China and South Korea are ranked among the top five countries in terms of the number of ODA projects involving bilateral cooperation (Japan, South Korea, USA, Canada, and China). China, in particular, has given substantial financial support to Cambodia. For the 2017-2022 period, for example, China is slated to provide the highest level of assistance to Cambodia. South Korea prioritizes unique support for education in ODA, which often has higher value than other areas, and Cambodia is one of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region (after Vietnam and Myanmar) to which South Korea provides the most assistance (KOICA, 2018). In Cambodia, South Korea ranks as the eighth highest ODA provider for education, and is expected to move into the list of the top five countries that provide assistance in the coming years, with important ODA in the form of volunteers and educational consultants, teacher training, human resource development, and ICT in education.

China is different from other donors in that it provides most of its assistance in the form of concessional loans. By the end of the 2010s, however, China had provided more grants for operating projects that are likely to continue up to 2023. In the realm of education, the assistance is focused on school and facilities improvement, training centers, and vocational education. Sato et al. (2011) also found that emerging donors like China, India, South Korea, and Thailand had begun to increase aid in Cambodia, in line with the growing aid architecture of Non-DAC and emerging donors becoming increasingly important as ODA providers (World Bank, 2008).

Conclusion

The study found that key players in educational aid to Cambodia in the 2010s were the EU, ADB, the World Bank, Japan, and Sweden, each providing different kinds of assistance and emphasis. The EU initiated the SWAp approach to achieve a transparent and accountable budgeting mechanism. It is considered a reform of the financial allocation process for educational development. ADB and the World Bank have offered diverse assistance which provided more concessional loans than grant aid. While ADB significantly supported TVET, the World Bank focused on higher education development. It has also played a vital role in raising funds for EFA in Cambodia since 2000, working closely with both state and non-state actors. On a bilateral level, Japan has provided the most ODA in Cambodia. Unlike other development partners, Japan has the distinct approach of spreading educational aid to all types, especially promoting access to education in rural Cambodia. It is also significant that Japan has closely collaborated with NGOs. Meanwhile, Sweden has acted as the main supporter of equal education, working with partners such as the World Bank, ADB, EU, UNESCO, USAID and JICA. Moreover, Sweden has begun focusing more on higher education since the mid-2010s, especially on research cooperation with Cambodia.

Finally, the study also found that these international partners have worked together in various projects to achieve the global educational agenda. At the same time, emerging donors like China and South Korea are playing an important role in helping Cambodia.

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