ARNALDO PELLINI

Decentralisation Policy in Cambodia

Exploring Community Participation
in the Education Sector

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UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADRA	Adventist Development & Relief Agency
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BFDK	Buddhist for Development Kampong Thom
CARERE	Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project
CAS	Centre for Advanced Studies
CBRDP	Community Based Rural Development Project
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CEFAC	Commune Education For All Committee
CNGO	Cambodia Non-Governmental Organisation
CPK	Communist Party of Kampuchea
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DED	Deutscher Entwiklungsdienst (trans. German Development Service)
DfID	Department for International Development
DK	Democratic Kampuchea
EDUCO	Educación con Participación de la Comunidad (trans. Education with Community Participation)
EFA	Education For All
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
ESSP	Education Sector Support Program
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FUNCINPEC	Front Uni National pour un Camboge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif (trans. National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia)

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPWG	Government-Donor Partnership Working Group
GNP	Gross National Product
GRET	Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (trans. German Agency for Technical Cooperation)
HDI	Human Development Index
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
KHR	Cambodian Riel (Cambodian national currency)
KR	Khmer Rouge
LAMC	Law on Administration and Management of Commune Councils/Sangkats
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
MVFL	Most Vulnerable Family List
NEFAC	National Education For All Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Pacoco	Pagoda Association Coordination Committee
PAP	Priority Action Plan
PDRD	Provincial Department for Rural Development
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency

SWA	Sector-Wide Approach
TPO	Transcultural Pshyco-social Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USAid	US Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WEF	World Education Forum
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Acknowledgments

Abstract

This study analyses the characteristics of community participation in Cambodian rural schools. It looks at the spaces for participation created by the decentralisation reforms that the government of Cambodia has undertaken in the education sector through two main policies: school clustering and Priority Action Programme. While institutionalised spaces of participation created by these policies are relatively new, Cambodian communities, despite twenty five years of political turmoil, have traditionally provided support to schools through school associations. The study refers to bonding, bridging, and institutional social capital to explore, respectively, the characteristics of the horizontal links between community members as well as different forms of collective action, and the vertical links between community, schools and local government institutions.

Research activities have been conducted at two levels. The first, 'policy level analysis', concerned the review of relevant literature on social capital theory, the principles of democratic decentralisation, Cambodian modern history, national decentralisation reforms, and the human development profile of Cambodia. The second level, 'local level analysis', focused on the province of Kampong Thom to investigate traditions, norms and values that characterise community participation in schools and local social development. Qualitative as well as quantitative empirical data have been obtained through participant observations, questionnaires and checklists, project monitoring data, and semi structured interviews with community members, local government authorities, development workers, and project staff.

The analysis from Kampong Thom demonstrates that traditional associations, particularly under the umbrella of the local pagoda (Buddhist temple), represent forms of community actions that were among the first institutions to re-activate after the end of the civil war and Khmer Rouge period in 1979. The linkages between members of these traditional associations are strong and based on trust. This shows that bonding social capital is the driving force behind community mobilization and community support to schools. At the same time, bridging social capital between school association and other types of community based groups is still weak. Likewise, institutional social capital between school associations and schools is hampered

by mistrust towards school officials and parents' reluctance to become more involved in educational matters.

The conclusion of the study is that, while traditional associations provide material contributions and support to schools, their participation in internal decision making process as well as educational matters is still limited. The trauma caused by years of conflicts and the Cambodian socio cultural norms are factors that explain the difficulty in establishing more democratic spaces for participation. In addition, decentralisation policies in education have so far promoted community participation in schools through the creation of *ad hoc* committees and councils that have failed to gain the same legitimacy enjoyed by traditional associations at village and community level.

Tiivistelmä

Tämä tutkimus erittelee yhteisöjen osallistumisen ominaispiirteitä Kambodžan maaseutu kouluissa. Tutkimus tarkastelee hallinnon hajauttamisen, joka koulutuksen osalta on toteutettu pääasiassa kahden ohjelman; koulujen klusterionnin ja Priority Action Program ohjelman kautta, luomia osallistumisen mahdollisuuksia. Vaikka institutionaaliset puitteet yhteisöjen osallistumiselle ovat verrattain uusia, kambodžalaiset yhteisöt, kahdestakymmenestäviidestä poliittisen sekasorron vuodesta huolimatta, ovat tarjonneet tukea kouluille perinteisten kouluyhdistysten kautta. Määrittäessään yhteisöjen jäsenten välisiä horisontaalisia suhteita ja kollektiivisen toimiman muotoja, sekä vertikaalisia suhteita yhteisöjen, koulujen ja hallinnollisten toimielinten välillä tutkimus tukeutuu sosiaaliseen pääoman teorioihin.

Tutkimus on toteutettu kahdella tasolla. 'Poliittisten ohjelmien analyysi' sisältää kirjallisuuskatsauksen sosiaalisen pääoman teoriaan, hallinnon hajauttamisen periaatteisiin, Kambožan historiaan, Kambožan hallituksen toteuttamiin hallinnon hajauttamisohjelmiin, ja Kambožan inhimillisen kehityksen profiiliin. Toinen 'paikallisen tason analyysi' kuvaa yhteisön osallistumisen tapoja, normeja ja arvoja pakalliskehityksessä ja kouluissa Kampong Thomin läänissä. Tutkimuksen empiirinen kvalitatiivinen ja kvantitatiivinen aineisto on kerätty; observoimalla, kyselylomakkeiden ja tarkistuslistojen avulla, kehityshankkeiden seuranta-aineistoista, sekä haastattelemalla yhteisön jäseniä, paikallisvirkamiehiä ja kehitysyhteistyöntekijöitä.

Tulokset Kampong Thomin läänistä osoittavat paikallisten yhdistysten, ja erityisesti pagodojen (Buddhalainen luostari) yhteydessä toimivien yhdistysten, edustavan ensimmäisiä siviilisodan ja Punaisten Khmerien aikakauden päätyttyä 1970 elpyneitä yhteisöllisen toiminnan muotoja. Jäsenten väliset suhteet näissä perinteisissä yhdistyksissä ovat vankat ja perustuvat keskinäiseen luottamukseen. Jäsenten keskinäisten siteiden muodostama sosiaalinen pääoma onkin tukemassa yhteisöjen osallistumista mukaan lukien avunantoa kouluille. Samaan aikaan yhteydet perinteisten kouluyhdistysten ja muiden yhteisön sisällä toimivien ryhmien välillä ovat kuitenkin yhä heikot. Tämän lisäksi epäluottamus kouluviranomaisia kohtaan ja vanhempien haluttomuus osallistua koulutuksen kehittämiseen haittaa institutionaalisen sosiaalisen pääoman kehittämistä koulujen ja perinteisten kouluyhdistysten välillä.

Tämän tutkimuksen päätelmänä perinteisten yhdistysten osallistuminen koulujen sisäiseen päätöksentekoon ja koulutuksen sisältöön on vähäistä, vaikka ne tarjoavatkin merkittävää aineellista tukea ja lahjoituksia kouluille. Sodan aiheuttama trauma ja Kambožan yhteiskunnalliset ja kulttuuriin luomat normit selittävät osaltaan demokraattisten osallistumisen muotojen puuttumisen. Lisäksi hallinnon hajauttaminen koulutussektorilla on tähän asti toteutettu ohjelmien kautta, jotka luovat uusia komiteoita ja neuvostoja tukemaan yhteisön osallistumista kouluissa. Nämä uudet rakenteet eivät ole saaneet samanlaista asemaa ja luottamusta yleisöissä kuin paikalliset perinteiset kylä- ja kuntatason yhdistykset.

1 Introduction

> The core of education is the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up, and if possible for raising, the level of improvement which has been attained.
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> J. S. Mill, 1867 [1]

It's January 1979. Vietnamese troops enter the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh and find it almost empty. The Khmer Rouge leaders are fleeing north-west towards the Thai border. The country is on it knees. Years of civil war, the involvement in the American – Vietnamese conflict, and three and half years under the regime led by Pol Pot have caused the death of more than 1,7 million people and the displacement and break-up of hundred of thousands of families. The economy is nonexistent and money is no longer in circulation. People in rural areas, who had been forced to work in collective labour camps, suffer from serious food shortages. Roads and irrigation infrastructures are in very poor conditions. Most schools have not been used for years and health centres are non existent or empty. Unexploded ordinances or landmines litter the country and make rural areas extremely dangerous. Most of the educated people have gone abroad or have been killed and no more than 300 qualified persons from all disciplines are left in the country (Duggan 1996).

Cambodia, with its history, may be an extreme example; it does, however represent a significant case to ask some basic questions about development: where should development start? What are the interventions or sectors that need to be prioritised? Who should prioritise? Since the end of World War-II, answers to these questions have been different at different points in time. In the late 1950s and the 1960s, mod-

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[1]   Cited in Smith (1957).

ernisation theories emphasised the importance of industrialisation and economic growth. In the mid 1970s, development began to look also at *basic needs* such as education and health. In the 1980s structural adjustment and market economy reforms underlined development interventions, while poverty reduction, democratisation and good governance are the focus since the 1990s. On the one hand, all these approaches demonstrate the complexity of development. On the other, they demonstrate the influence that different, and at times contradictory, ideologies exert in the effort to lift Third World countries out of poverty.

1.1   Research themes and the development debate

Today a subtle sense of failure seems to permeate development and international aid. To simplify a complex debate, critics of current development approaches argue that the strategies and policies designed during the last fifty years have not worked mostly because aid and development are driven by *planners* who have failed to motivate countries, have risen expectations that have not been met, have adopted global blueprint approaches, and have shown a limited consideration of the local level (Easterly 2002, 2006). On the other hand, there are those who argue that aid and development need to be scaled up to become a global effort to address the main constraints in the social and economic sectors that are crucial for development and economic growth. The strategies, they argue, are there; indicators such as the Millennium Development Goals provide the framework, and industrialised countries should keep the promise of providing the 0,7 [2] per cent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to development assistance (Sachs 2005).

The debate is open and the challenges remain. About 100 million children are still not enrolled in primary school, 55 per cent of them are girls. Seven hundreds and seventy one million people aged 15 and above live without basic literacy skills (UNESCO 2006).[3] Poverty remains widespread. The percentage of people living below 1 or 2 USD per day is declining only very slowly in South Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa, has fallen quite sharply in China and East Asia, but at the same time has risen sharply in the former Soviet Union countries (Sutcliffe 2001). The efforts of international development agencies are described as suffering from 'donors fatigue', while the United Nations is described as "a troubled organisation that has never been so badly needed nor so ill-equipped to deal with the challenges it faces – in development, human rights, HIV/AIDS prevention, international security and peacekeeping (Guardian Weekly 2006: 11).

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[2]   This thesis adopts the English (UK) standard number format.

[3]   This is a global figure from the EFA Global Report 2006 which includes data from developing countries, countries in transition, and developed countries.

Today it is recognised, as Wheelan puts it, that "there is not a proven formula for growth that can be rolled out in a country after country like some kind of development franchise" (2002: 207). The complexity of development processes cannot be adjusted on a linear path, as argued by modernisation theorists, and it must be understood as a 'qualitative change' that involves, besides economic growth, social as well as cultural changes (Jacobs 2000).

The present study is concerned with this qualitative change. In particular, with the importance of local and traditional norms and values for development processes (see also Little 1999, Smith 2003). Focusing on the rural areas of Cambodia, the thesis explores three main themes: education as a key sector for development, institutional reforms based on good governance and decentralisation, and the community dynamics of participation. The main aim of this study is to contribute to understanding of the influence of local culture, defined as traditional norms and values of community solidarity and action, for local governance and education management at the school level. With regard to Cambodia, it is often assumed that due to the civil war and the Khmer Rouge regime, social cohesion outside the extended family circle is extremely rare or even missing. The underlying argument of this study is that traditional culture and social capital in Cambodia extend beyond these borders and that, though badly damaged, local culture and traditional forms of collective action have survived and can be considered an important element of the decentralisation reforms.

This introduction serves to present the research questions, the structure of the thesis, and to sketch the main themes of the study which are the followings:

Education as human capital and human right: early economic development theories considered education and knowledge as a vital element of economic growth and defined it as 'human capital'. This limited view of education has been challenged by the evidence that there is not a clear causal relation between education and economic growth (López et al. 1998, Easterly 2002). Moreover, education has its own complexities to deal with. Weick (1976) defined the education system as 'loosely coupled' - that is, a system where elements are tied together with minimum interdependence and, while all elements of the system are responsible for the final outcome, they also preserve an own identity and separateness. This complexity shows that the development of a sector such as education does not fit a linear model of development. Education has to be considered as a basic need and a human right in itself (Takala and Tapaninen 1995), which plays a fundamental role in enhancing the range of individuals' choices and capabilities (Sen 1999).

Democratic decentralisation as an element of good governance: "Decentralisation has quietly become one of the fashions of our time" (Manor 1995: 81). This is due to the fact that the aim of decentralisation is "to achieve one of the central aspirations of modernity: democratisation" (Agrawal 1999: 15). At the same time, decentralisation also represents a "refuge from the over-concentration of power in large bureaucracies" (Smith 1988: 211). Both aims are typical of the reformist view of 'third way'

politics which envisages the role of the state as being mid-way between "the view of the political right that sees the state as the enemy and wants to reduce its size and the left which sees the state as the answer" (Giddens 1998: 76).

Decentralisation policies have been adopted in a number of developing countries as a central element of institutional reforms based on the principle of good governance, defined here as "the process where rules and well functioning institutions are applied to manage a nation's affairs in a manner that safeguards democracy, human rights, good order and human security, and economics" (Tiihonen 2004: 18). Good governance has been found to have a casual relationship with development outcomes such as higher per capital incomes, lower infant mortality and higher literacy (Kaufmann et al. 1990). Decentralisation reforms are complex phenomena, with cultural implications that can challenge traditional norms and values as well as social structures. For this reason, various authors have emphasised the need for more country and sector-specific empirical evidence, particularly with regard to the link between decentralisation and community participation (McGinn and Street 1986, Lauglo 1995, Fiske 1996, Govinda 1997, Litvack and Seddon 1999, Manor 1999, McGinn and Welch 1999, UNESCO 2005).

Local culture and community participation: two extreme views dominate the debate about the relationships between culture and development. The *hyper-modernist perspective* argues that culture matters because traditional cultures are unsuited to economic growth and market-oriented development. The *cultural critics' perspective*, on the other hand, remarks that modernisation theories have led to a neo-colonisation of Western ideals in the developing nations which creates and exacerbates inequalities between rich and poor countries (Rao and Walton 2004). These two views represent the opposite ends of a continuum.

Culture is receiving increasingly attention within the development debate. The UNDP, for example, dedicated its 2004 Human Development Report to cultural diversity and stressed that "cultural liberty and human rights are important aspects of human development – and thus worthy of state action and attention" (UNDP 2004: 6). In this thesis, culture is analysed through the lens of community participation, defined as civic participation in political processes as well as forms of mutual interaction and social solidarity that are influenced by cultural elements (Sen 2004). In order to avoid, as suggested by Lewin (1999) and Sen (2004), taking a deterministic and insular view of culture, this thesis applies social capital theory to analyse the characteristics of community participation and explore the norms and values that characterise participation in local governance and school management in rural areas.

Cultural elements of a society may not always be visible and they can better be imagined as an iceberg with the visible part, the *manifest culture*, being the language, manners, food, etc. The underwater part, the *core culture*, is formed by moral norms values and the fundamental philosophies of life. The *collective culture* of the soci-

ety, and therefore the characteristics of community action, result from the interaction between these two parts (Vasko et al. 1998). Policymakers, therefore, in order to make informed decisions, need to be aware about the cultural elements that define norms and values and guide collective action (Bonnal 1997).

1.2   Research questions

This thesis is the result of four years spent in Cambodia working as an advisor for civil society and local governance in the province of Kampong Thom and, at the same time, collecting the research material. While this explains why Cambodia has been chosen, Cambodia represents a relevant case for other reasons as well. While it remains one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia, since 1998 Cambodia has reached a relative stability and has been implementing institutional reforms that focus on good governance and decentralisation which contrast with an extremely hierarchical social structure.

As in the case with other post-conflict countries, the transition towards a more democratic society implies a cultural change which can also be resisted. As noted by Kao Kim Hourn, "Cambodia's attempt to embrace democratic culture, values and ideas is not simple. The challenge to political stability today still emanates from mistrust, misperceptions and the impacts of a long history of conflicts and factionalism (1999: 17).

The largest part of the academic literature on Cambodia focuses on its history and, in particular, on the Khmer Rouge years. As noted by Coyne (2001), education has been a somehow neglected area until very recently (see Bray 1999, Sloper 1999, Ayres 2000, Clayton 2000, Bray and Bunly 2005). The specific analysis of the characteristics of community participation and Cambodian social capital have been limited to project reports and a World Bank publication (see Krishnamurthy 1999, Coletta and Cullen 2000). By placing itself amidst the field of community development and education, this thesis hopefully provides an additional perspective to the analysis of the links between democratic participatory governance and decentralisation reform in Cambodia. Lessons from Cambodia can also serve to inform policies in other post-conflict countries undertaking decentralisation and having limited community and civil society participation in development.

The main question of the study is the following:

> In the context of the decentralisation reform in Cambodia, what are the elements that characterise community participation – or lack thereof – in schools in rural areas?

The research analyses the effects of decentralisation from the local level point of view and the influence on norms and values that characterize Cambodian society and participation in rural areas with reference to education. In doing so, the following specific questions are asked:

- What are the characteristics of the decentralisation reform, in particular of the education sector?
- What is the meaning of 'community' in the cultural and social context of Cambodia?
- What are the characteristics of community participation in schools?

This thesis incorporates findings from the collection of empirical data with data from project activities. Apart from being a doctoral dissertation, it is directed at development practitioners that are approaching Cambodia for work and are interested in deriving in-depth information about the meaning of community and community dynamics vis-à-vis the decentralisation reform. The policy level, as well as the local level analysis of this study, provide information for researchers working on the relationship between communities and schools, as well as the link between social capital and community development in Southeast Asia.

1.3   Thesis outline

The theoretical framework of the research is presented in Chapter Two. The chapter starts with an overview of the debate on the role of the state in development and the arguments that underpin decentralisation reforms. The chapter then continues presenting some definitions of decentralisation and comparing different forms of the reform. In the last two sections, the chapter focuses on the central theme of this thesis, participation and decentralisation, using the analytical framework of social capital theory and the links with education and school based management. The chapter ends with examples of community participation in school management from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The history of Cambodia, with specific attention to the post-independence period since 1953, is the subject of the first part of Chapter Three. The chapter highlights the links between history and the norms and values of Cambodian society. The second part of the chapter presents the human development profile of Cambodia and, by comparing it with neighbouring countries, situates the human development of Cambodia in the context of Southeast Asia. The section focuses on education and, in particular, on the state of primary education.

The decentralisation reforms in education as well as public administration are presented in Chapter Four. The chapter concludes with a description of the main so-

cial and religious elements that characterise Cambodian social capital in rural areas and the meaning of 'community'.

Chapter Five describes the research methodology presenting also the personal context of the researcher during the four years in the province of Kampong Thom. The comparative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms is used in the second part of the chapter to present the data collection tools as well as the limitations of the study. The chapter ends with the description of the main research activities.

Chapter Six is concerned with the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative empirical data. As with Chapter Three, the province of Kampong Thom is presented through the comparison of its human development indicators with the ones of other provinces. The following sections present the results of the analysis of community participation and schools along the three main social capital dimensions: the bonding link between members of School Associations; bridging links and spaces of participation between different community groups; and the institutional link between community, schools, Commune Councils, and local government bodies.

The final chapter of the thesis summaries the main findings of the research referring to the main questions and the theoretical framework presented in Chapters One and Two. The final part of the chapter presents some policy options as well as the possible directions for further research and studies in this field.

2 Theoretical framework of the study and findings of previous relevant research

Development is a process of change. Whether it comes from within a society or is introduced through external support, the change must confront the traditional values of local cultures, often leading to unpredictable effects. Jane Jacobs (2000) highlights its complexity and unpredictability, describing development as an open ended process, a qualitative change that "can't be usefully thought of as a line, or even a collection of open-ended lines. It operates as a web of interdependent co-developments." (p. 19). In this respect, development is an incremental process that with time increases in complexity. Putnam et al's (1993) analysis of the elements that are fundamental to a pluralistic democracy is but one of many studies and theoretical positions that focuses on the *how* of development. Their starting point is that democracy is the predominant model that shapes the political values of our society. However, its application has also led to dissatisfaction with the practical results that democracy brings in different social and cultural contexts. According to Putnam et al. (ibid.), economic growth and institutional development are not sufficient to secure democracy. There is the need for two additional elements: decentralisation of power and an active citizens' participation in the form of social capital, which are the subjects of this study.

Decentralisation is a widespread trend in developing countries. In 1999, a study concluded that "out of seventy-five developing countries with more than five million inhabitants … sixty-three … are taking steps to decentralise" (Rossi 1999: 14). More recently, a study by Work (2002) indicated that most developing countries are making moves towards decentralisation reforms. In 1997, 52 countries had carried out fiscal decentralisation policies.[1] In 1999, out of 126 countries in the World Bank's World Development Report tables, 96 had at least one sub-national level of elected government and 46 had two sub-levels.

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[1]   See also World Bank (1997, 1999).

Decentralisation has been applied during the last two decades in different regions with different objectives and outcomes. Generally speaking, in Africa decisions to adopt decentralisation have coincided with the political change from one-party to multi-party democracies and the increased policy focus on poverty reduction. In Latin America, the shift from authoritarian regimes to democratically elected governments resulted in a greater attention to the integration of marginalised groups in economic development policies. In ex-socialist countries, decentralisation has been coupled with market-based economics to represent the alternative to centralised economic planning. Meanwhile, in East and South Asia decentralisation has been motivated by the need to provide and improve service delivery to large populations against a backdrop of recognising the limitations of a centralised administration (Bonnal 1997, Litvack et al. 1998, Ford 1999, Manor 1999, SDC 2001, Work 2002).

During the last twenty years, support to decentralisation and local governance have become major fields of operation for most bilateral and multilateral donors. According to an OECD (2004) report, support usually has a long term perspective and comes in three main forms depending on the specific circumstances in a particular country: a) Creating a favourable legal and political environment which involves advice and technical support for framing relevant legislation and policy; b) Assistance to start implementation through training programmes for government staff at various levels and assistance to frame specific regulations such as, for example, planning and fund transfers; c) Assistance to deepen and sustain decentralisation through assistance in sector devolution, fiscal decentralisation and/or support to civil society groups.

Despite its extensive adoption, there is limited evidence of the positive results which directly stem from decentralisation (Manor 1999, Turner 2002, Astiz and Wiseman 2005, UNESCO 2005). Dyer and Rose (2005) have suggested that this is the result of the increasing attention on *why* to decentralise and *what* we mean by decentralisation, and a limited critical discussion on "*how* to do decentralisation effectively" (p.109).

A salient characteristic of decentralisation is that it does not conform to a single political and economic ideology. Rather, as noted by Manor (1999), in each country where decentralisation has taken place, it represents a series of causes that led to different forms of decentralisation. For this reason, Mohan and Stokke (2000) argue that decentralisation is supported by both a neo-liberal perspective linked to economic efficiency arguments and a more radical perspective which favours a multiplicity of local initiatives through the promotion of the human development and knowledge at the local level.

This chapter presents the concepts that form the theoretical framework of the research. It starts with an overview of the debate, during the last fifty years, about the role of the state in development. The chapter then continues by presenting some key definitions and different forms of decentralisation. The third part of the chapter

explores the promises as well as the limitations of decentralisation reforms on the basis of findings from previous research and highlights a central theme of this study: the relationship between participation and decentralisation in the context of social capital theory. In the fourth part, the chapter presents some experiences of decentralisation in developing countries with participatory school based management.

2.1   State, education and development

Amartya Sen (1988) has noted that economic theory has always been about development. Nevertheless, the study of the economic development processes of developing countries gained recognition only after the World War-II because of the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes and the establishment of the World Bank (then called International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and the International Monetary Fund at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944.[2]

Keynes, in his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), asserted the importance of aggregate demand as the driving factor of the economy, breaking with most classical economists who, since the late eighteenth century, had argued that the economic process was based on continuous improvements in potential outputs. Keynes theory attributes a central role to the government in devising policies to promote demand and fight high unemployment of the sort seen during the great depression of the 1930s (Manor 1999). These theories also shaped economic polices in developing countries, which were (and in some cases still are) trapped in what Nurske (1953) defined as a 'vicious cycle of poverty'. In brief, this means that limited saving capacity results in limited capacity to invest, ultimately leading to the adoption of labour intensive production techniques versus technology improvements and increased productivity. This limits the creation of the necessary surplus to produce savings and therefore investments. To break this vicious cycle, economists argued that there was the need for a 'big push' (Rosenstein-Rodan 1961). Poor countries required large amounts of investment in basic industries such as power, transport, and communications. These were to be supported by other productive investments. Since the investments necessary for the 'big push' were considered to be beyond the means of the private sector, the state assumed a crucial role (ibid.).

During the 1950s, these theories led to the design of centralised modernisation strategies that aimed at achieving higher rates of economic growth and mirror the provision of public services in the developed world and/or the perceived successful rapid industrialisation of the Soviet Union (Turner and Hulme 1997, Burki et al. 1999, Manor 1999, Addison 2005). During the 1950s, development was equated with economic modernisation to be achieved, as described in the take-off model by

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2   I need to thank David Ayres for bringing this point to my attention.

American economist W. W. Rostow, through five linear stages of economic growth: traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity, and high mass consumption (Rostow 1960). Public services such as education did not receive specific attention, although it was believed that central planning could provide standard education to all and help consolidate a sense of national unity (Riddel Rubin 1997, Bray 2001).

In the early 1960s, the economic development debate shifted. Hans Singer reasoned that the main problem in economic development was not the increase in the capital stock but rather the 'capacity' to increase capital and produce wealth (1961). Theodore Schultz (1962) developed this idea further and coined the term *human capital* to describe the crucial contribution of knowledge and schooling for economic growth. Human capital, in other words, can be defined as "the sum of skills embodied within an individual (i.e., education, intelligence, charisma, creativity, experience). What would be left if somebody would be stripped away of all assets: job, money, home, possession" (Wheelan 2002: 99). Schultz argued that in developing countries "it is simply not possible to have the fruits of modern agriculture and the abundance industry without making large investments in human beings" (ibid.: 120). According to Schultz, governments had an important role to play in developing education and training institutions.

The following decade is important because of a "critical re-examination of the process of social and economic development" (Thorbecke 2000: 28). Qualitative as well as quantitative data from developing countries showed the persistence of high rates of underemployment and a generalised increase in the number of people living below the poverty line. The fact that economic growth did lead to poverty reduction helped to further separate the concept of development from economic growth (Arndt 1987). Of particular importance were the contributions by Dudley Seers and Mahbub ul Haq, who argued that the evidence from two decades of socio-economic data from developing countries showed that economic growth did not translate into poverty reduction. They suggested that poverty needed to be tackled directly, and that the focus should move from the rate of growth to the quality of growth. Meanwhile, the World Bank, under the presidency of Robert McNamara, began to support the idea that poverty should be tackled directly and introduced development plans defined by objectives and indicators aimed at increasing the income of the poorest living in rural areas (Arndt 1987). Singer (1979) posited that development should reach the marginalised and poor by concentrating on rural areas, providing education and health services, strengthening the participation of people in decision making processes, and supporting administrative decentralisation as opposed to central planning. The state, though, maintained a central responsibility in implementing what the International Labour Organisation defined in 1975 as a *Basic Needs Approach*.

In the late 1980s, "the intellectual pendulum swung back (albeit with considerable resistance) towards the market mechanism" (Addison 2005: 11). Three basic points

underline this shift. The first was the economic crisis in the developing countries (Thorbecke 2000). Second, with the Thatcher and Reagan administrations in the United Kingdom and United States, there was renewed emphasis on neo-liberal market mechanisms. This was supported by a critical perception by developing countries that the Basic Needs Approach would actually prevent modernisation and keep them permanently behind the developed nations by focusing, for example, on the untapped potential of the informal sector (Arndt 1987, Adelman 2000). A third point is linked to the polarisation between Western capitalism and Eastern socialism that proceeded the fall of the Berlin Wall (Addison 2005). The term *Washington Consensus*, coined by John Williamson to define a policy agenda of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to be desirable in Latin America, became the standard term to describe the policy prescriptions to developing countries during the 1980s and mid 1990s. The main thrust of the so called *Structural Adjustment Programme*, was to promote free trade, to reorient and reduce public sector expenditures, support privatisation, reduce price distortions by minimising government interventions in the economy, and achieve capital accumulation (Adelman 2000, Williamson 2004). Human capital accumulation continued to have an important role. Economists' influenced by the *Endogenous Growth School* stressed that progress stems from allocation of investments in research and development and the dissemination of know how between industries and sectors (Adelman 2000). Governments maintained, therefore, a limited but important role and the *New Institutional Economics School* argued that even in a neoclassical world, the success or failure of development efforts will depend on the nature, existence and proper functioning of a country's fundamental institutions (Thorbecke 2000).

By the early 1990s, the successful development of some East Asian countries that did not follow the structural adjustment principles and the worsening of human development indicators in several countries that did undergo structural adjustment, contributed to a return of the focus on poverty reduction (Adelman 2000). At the same time, the emergence of the political discourse associated with 'third way' politics started to influence the economic development debate. The 'third way' argument is that there is the need for the state to reform and acquire a new role in development and economic policy (Giddens 1998, 2005). For Thomas (1991), "governments need to do less in those areas where the market works, or can be made to work. At the same time, governments need to do more in areas where markets cannot be relied upon" (p. 8). This second area is of particular relevance for Giddens, who notes the importance for the state to become transparent and accountable, guarantee the rule of law, root out corruption, help to develop a civil society, pursue equality while embracing market mechanisms, and stimulates economic investments in education. In other words, the state should facilitate the creation of the conditions that expand individuals' freedom and choices (Sen 1999). These policies are even more relevant

for developing countries, "though more difficult to achieve given limited resources and inadequately developed institutions (Giddens 2005: 15).

Today, development theories describe this new role of the state and the set of institutions that are conducive to accelerated growth and socio-economic development (Thorbecke 2000). The state has therefore acquired the role of facilitator, in building an institutional environment based on the principles of good governance and democratic participation necessary to achieve sustainable development. One of the main strategies, decentralisation reform, is presented in the next section.

2.2   Definitions and forms of decentralisation

At a most basic level, decentralisation refers to bringing government closer to the people. However, as noted by Bray and Mukundan (2003), decentralisation means different things to different people. Govinda argues that it is neither possible nor desirable to identify one definition for decentralisation (1997). For these reasons, it is better to describe the forms that decentralisation can take, underlying one basic principle of decentralisation: 'subsidiarity', according to which "the most effective governance of any organisation occurs when authority for decision-making is located as close as possible to the site where the action takes place" (McGinn and Welch 1999: 94).

Rondinelli et al. (1983) have provided a first categorisation and differentiated between: deconcentration; delegation, devolution and privatisation. These categories have been developed further by other authors and represent the definitions adopted by the World Bank (Figure 2.1).[3]

- **Political decentralisation**: the aim is to give citizens and their elected representatives more power in public decision making. This form is often associated with pluralistic politics and support to democratisation. This is the most favoured form of decentralisation by international donors but also the most difficult to achieve as it requires constitutional reforms, the development of pluralistic political parties, strengthening of legislature, the creation of political units, and encouragement of effective public interest groups.

- **Administrative decentralisation**: is the transfer of responsibility for planning, financing and managing certain public functions from the central government and its agencies to field units or government agencies (e.g. provincial or district line agencies). This category is further divided into three sub-categories, depending on the degree of autonomy granted by the highest level authority to the local agencies:

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[3]   See also Litvack et al. (1998) and Rondinelli (1999).

FORMS OF DECENTRALISATION

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                    ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
              ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐
              │  POLITICAL  │ │ADMINISTRATIVE│ │   FISCAL    │ │  ECONOMIC   │
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                              ┌───────────┐                  ┌───────────┐
                              │ DELEGATION│                  │PRIVATISATION│
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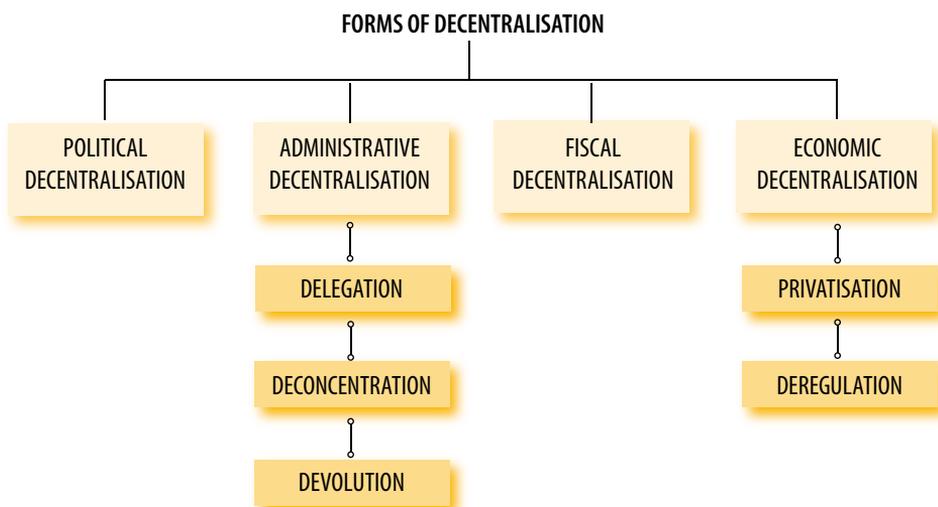
Figure 2.1. Forms of decentralisation

- ➤ **Deconcentration**: the redistribution of financial and management tasks and responsibilities among different levels of the central government. This is often considered the weakest form of decentralisation and is often used in unitary states.
- ➤ **Delegation**: the central government transfers decision making responsibilities to semi-autonomous organisations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it.
- ➤ **Devolution**: the transfer of authority, decision making, and management power to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status. These units have own geographical boundaries and may be able to raise funds locally.

- **Fiscal decentralisation**: local governments are given some autonomy for the collection and use of resources needed to implement planned tasks effectively. Forms of fiscal decentralisation are user fees, contributions of money or labour, and local taxes. This form of decentralisation is considered rare in developing countries.

- **Economic and market decentralisation**: the shift of function responsibilities from the public to the private sector. Functions that had been primarily or exclusively the responsibility of the government are carried out by businesses, community based organisations, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), and voluntary associations. It is possible to distinguish between two forms:
  - ➤ **Privatisation**: can range in scope from leaving the provision of goods and services entirely to the free operation of the market or to 'public-private partnerships' in which government and the private sector cooperate to provide services or infrastructures.

> ➢ **Deregulation:** the competition among private suppliers for services that in the past had been provided and that remain under public control.

Manor (1999) adopts a different approach to define different forms of decentralisation. He applies the principle that the central government must retain some form of control and involvement in the process, and then separates forms that belong to decentralisation from forms that fall outside. He starts with the latter group:

- **Decentralisation by default:** the situation when the public sector, due to severe administrative and financial constraints, cannot ensure the delivery of basic services. These are often taken up by community based organisations through self-help initiatives or NGO projects. In both cases, the central government has no control or cannot influence the activities at the local level, thus without a link between central and local level it is not possible to talk of decentralisation.

- **Privatisation:** the delivery of public services is taken over or is given to the private sector. Also in this case, the government loses the control over the activities at the local level. One risk associated with privatisation is that state monopolies can turn into private monopolies. As noted by Turner and Hulme (1997), privatisation has been added to the forms of decentralisation by Rondinelli due to the insufficient scope provided by the territorial dimension of decentralisation in defining different typologies of the policy.

- **Delegation:** when the responsibility to manage the implementation of projects and programs is given to para-statal bodies such as *ad hoc* inter or intra-ministerial committees. Manor argues that this solution has very limited evidence and, in the few occasions that it has been applied, has failed to transfer decision making power to those bodies.

For Manor, genuine types of decentralisation are:

- **Deconcentration** or **administrative decentralisation:** the dispersal of responsibilities from higher level of government to lower level agencies. In this case, the government retains political authority and control on the lower levels.

- **Fiscal decentralisation:** the process through which the central government gives financial responsibility to lower level of administration. Also in this case, local level bureaucrats remain responsible to higher levels of the administration.

- **Devolution** or **democratic decentralisation:** the transfer of political power, decision making authority, and accountability to lower level authorities which are largely or wholly independent of higher levels of government and which are democratic in some ways and some degrees.

Given the many forms decentralisation can take, Manor's typologies are useful because they help to separate what is 'in' and what is 'out', using the principle of gov-

ernment involvement. With regard to privatisation, it is possible to argue that the government may not completely lose control because, for privatisation to take place, there is the need to define rules and regulations that will provide a framework for private initiatives. The difference between deconcentration and decentralisation requires an additional comment. In Manor's view, deconcentration represents a relatively easy step, since the government retains political control. The difficulty arises with the delegation to local authorities of decision making authority and financial autonomy implicit in democratic decentralisation. For this reason, most decentralisation reforms have been limited to deconcentration (Manor 1999).

An additional description of the different forms of decentralisation is provided by Turner and Hulme (1997) who argue that the basis for transfer of authority and responsibility to lower levels can be twofold: 'territorial' and 'functional' (Table 2.1). It is territorial when services are geographically closer to the clients/citizens, while it is functional when authority is transferred to an agency that is functionally specialised.

Table 2.1. Forms of decentralisation and delegation

		Basis for Delegation	
		Territorial	*Functional*
Nature of Delegation	*Within formal political structures*	**Devolution**	**Interest Groups Representation**
	Within public administration	**Deconcentration**	**Parastatal and Quangos**
	Form state to non-state	**Privatisation**	**Privatisation of National Functions**

Source: Turner and Hulme 1997.

Turner and Hulme intersect territorial and functional delegation with different degrees of delegation, ranging from 'within the state' to 'non-state'. Along the 'territorial dimension' they define devolution, deconcentration and privatisation which have been seen earlier. Along the 'functional dimension', Turner and Hulme list three additional forms of decentralisation. The first, *Interest Groups Delegation*, has not received much attention in the decentralisation literature; the second refers to the transfer within the administration to *ad hoc* committees in charge of specific activities defined as *Parastatal* and *Quangos*,[4] likewise to the delegation in the definition

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4   *Quangos*, abbreviation of 'quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations'. These are semi-public advisory and administrative body supported by the government and having most of its members appointed by the government (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1982).

by the World Bank and Rondinelli. Differently to Manor, Turner and Hulme indicate *Privatisation* as the third form of decentralisation and specify that it does not refer exclusively to the private sector but also to 'third sector' actors such as NGOs.

For Turner and Hulme none of these forms may be found in reality alone; they are rather interlinked when the specific circumstances of a country are considered. Moreover, decentralisation does not imply that all authority must be delegated; the central government must in fact retain control over essential national matters and re-organise, if needed, decentralised units. An additional problem, in developing countries, is what Turner (2002) defines, as in the case of Cambodia, 'piecemeal decentralisation': when different forms of decentralisation result from initiatives planned by separate ministries in different sectors leading to policy coordination problems and discrepancies.

With regard to the decentralisation of education, two authors are particularly relevant for the present study. The first is Jon Lauglo, whose analytical starting point is the recognition of the traditional bureaucratic centralism inbuilt in the education sector (1995). Similarly to the territorial dimension of Turner and Hulme (1997), he considers decentralisation of education in spatial terms and defines it as the distribution of authority from a central point towards the periphery. Lauglo then proceeds by differentiating two main rationales for decentralisation: a 'political rationale', linked to the fact that education can be a source of change in the power relations among groups in the society (Table 2.2); and a 'quality rationale', whereby decentralisation should pursue quality and the efficient use of scarce resources (Table 2.3).

Table 2.2. Forms of decentralisation and quality rationale

		Characteristics	Type of decentralisation	Effect
QUALITY RATIONALE	**Professionalism**	Autonomy of specific professional categories (e.g. teachers). Being part of the category means to posses skills	Independent local level groups	Limited participatory democracy since professional groups have decision power
	Management by objectives	Promotion of efficiency and activities becomes goal oriented through the use of measurable Indicators	Centralised planning and evaluation	High skills needed and processes not always participatory
	Market mechanism	Competition improves services	Privatisation	No country has applied a 100% privatisation of public services
	Deconcentration	Transfer to local official of political authority and management tasks	Political decentralisation	Government is closer to local demands and needs through participation in decision making processes

Source: Lauglo 1995.

Based on these two rationales, Lauglo identifies eight forms of decentralisation. As with Turner and Hulme, he also mentions that no decentralisation process takes place in just one of these forms, but there is always a combination of these rationales behind certain decentralisation forms - for example, when the quality rationale of *management by objectives* results in an orientation towards the private provision of educational services.

Table 2.3. Forms of decentralisation and political rationale

		Characteristics	Type of decentralisation	Effect
POLITICAL RATIONALE	**Liberalism**	Individual freedom and trust in invisible hand of market mechanism	Market based privatisation	May increase inequality in access to basic services
	Federalism	Service provided under federal state authority	Federalism	Can offset independence movements
	Populist local-ism	Empowerment of communities and frequent expression of popular will. Use of management by objectives	Participatory management and community based bodies	Improvement in popular participation, little need for technical assistance and learning from experience
	Participatory democracy	Those who work in institutions should also be able to influence the decision making processes with limited outside control	Inside management through specific/local management bodies	Corporatism is enhanced and lead to creation of flat organisations

Source: Lauglo 1995.

This has been the case with market based decentralisation and privatisation characteristic of the structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s. At the same time, Lauglo argues that the post-modernist idea of people's participation may support the *populist localism* or *participatory democracy* political rationales together with the *deconcentration* quality rationales so to ensure the empowerment of local communities through parent-teacher associations and community school management committees. Lauglo's analysis is relevant because it links the political nature of education described by Fiske (1996) with different forms of decentralisation. For the present research, particularly relevant are forms of decentralisation related to popular localism and participatory democracy, because these forms are most closely linked to community participation in schools.

The second author, whose work is particular relevant to this study, is R. Govinda. He focuses on the decentralisation of the management of education and reasons that "decentralisation lexically implies moving away from the centre" (1997: 5). Depending on the specific context and circumstances, this can imply a spreading of central control to local units or a greater empowerment of these management units. Govinda refers to forms of decentralisation, but prefers to adopt the concept of trends. He identifies three main trends in decentralisation. The first trend is reflected by the decision to add to the "existing political and administrative structure a number of de-

concentrated or decentralised bodies, either at the local level alone or at two or three levels" (p. 6).[5] The second trend, 'delegation', relates to the "transfer of some decision making powers to bodies outside the government bureaucracy" (ibid.). Rather than NGOs, this generally involves "para-statal entities created by the state itself to handle special areas of public concern" (ibid.). A third trend is the one linked to 'devolution', which Govinda considers as the most genuine form of decentralisation of management functions. In this case, he explains, "specified powers are transferred to sub-national units through appropriate legal reforms; generally these units consists of local self-government constituted through democratic means" (p. 7). As with Manor, in the case of privatisation Govinda argues that there is no evidence supporting the idea that education is being completely handed over to the private sector and that the government should continue to exert some form of control on such an essential public service.

Several tasks and responsibilities can be transferred through decentralisation to the local level. The analysis of Govinda helps to focus on management and community participation, which is also referred to as *school-based management*. Included in the concept of school-based management are knowledge, technology, materials, people, time and finances, all of which are to be managed with a degree of autonomy within the schools (Abu-Duhou 1999). Caldwell (1994) suggests that school-based management refers to "developments in systems of public or government schools in which there has been significant and consistent decentralisation to the school level of authority and responsibilities to make decisions, in particular, to the allocation of resources" (pp. 5302-5303). "Therefore," he continues, "it is administrative decentralisation rather than political decentralisation" (p. 5305). When associated with increased participation by parents and community members, school-based management acquires a political dimension because local stakeholders receive a more direct responsibility in education. In this case, as argued by De Grauwe (2005), it is more appropriate to speak of 'school based governance', "which implies giving authority to a locally elected school board which represents parents and the community" (p. 1).

2.3   Findings from previous research on decentralisation

Kemmerer (1994), with regard to the objectives of decentralisation, has observed that "proponents both of greater decentralisation and greater centralisation rationalise their positions on the basis of equity and efficiency" (p. 1412). For Turner and Hulme (1997) reality shows that centralisation and decentralisation "represent hypothetical poles on a continuum that can be calibrated by many different indices [and] the per-

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[5]   The principle of 'subsidiarity' underlines this trend and, as a result, there can be an increased role of the state in local decision making processes.

sistent dilemma for governments is to find the right combination of central control and local autonomy that satisfies regimes' needs and popular demands" (p. 152).

All the studies reviewed in this chapter express a cautious optimism for the potential benefits associated with decentralisation. The interest in the decentralisation of education is demonstrated, for example, by a series of booklets published by the World Bank on the general aspects of the reforms (Fiske 1996) as well as more specific issues such as community financing (Bray 1996), demand-side financing (Patrinos and Asiasingam 1997), teacher's management (Gaynor 1998), and legal issues (Florestal and Cooper 1997). At the same time, however, they also make clear that decentralisation cannot be considered as a panacea to development problems and that decentralisation also involves risks. One problem is that the evidence to support the positive impact of decentralisation reforms is mixed. Since decentralisation has taken place in different forms in different countries, comparative analysis is difficult (Manor 1999, Azfar et al. 1999). Nonetheless, the increasing number of country studies, sector program studies, and assessments produced by donors and researchers is helping to expand the available information.

In order to explore the effects and limitations of decentralisation, this thesis refers to the 'quality' and 'economic efficiency' rationales articulated by Lauglo (1995) in section 2.2 and links them to the democratic participation argument (Kemmerer 1994, Ford 1999, Seddon 1999).

2.3.1   Quality rationale and economic argument

The most common argument in favour of decentralisation is that it has the potential to improve the efficiency of resources allocation. Decisions taken closer to the local level benefit from a reduced bureaucracy (Azfar et al. 1999). This notion accords with the principle of 'subsidiarity' seen earlier and a standard argument of welfare economics, whereby total welfare can be increased by allocating resources according to local preferences (Lister and Betley 1999).

Ford (1999) has suggested that decisions about public expenditures that are taken by a level of government closer to the local constituency are also more likely to better address local needs, resulting in a more efficient delivery of public service. In addition, clear definitions of tasks and responsibilities at different levels of the administration, are likely to improve efficiency (Rondinelli et al. 1989, Ford 1999). A more critical perspective is presented by Prud'homme (1994), who, referring to various World Bank studies on fiscal and redistributive aspects of decentralisation programs implemented during the first half of the 1990s, argues that the assumption that total welfare will increase when demand for services is matched by a supply for those basic

services at the local level does not hold in most developing countries.[6] The problem is that at very low levels of income, the main need for individuals is actually to increase income, while other issues are secondary.

A further important economic argument relates to cost-sharing. More demand oriented services provided by local authorities are likely to motivate individuals and communities to pay for those services and/or to contribute with cash or in kind to support local development activities. Typical examples are school construction or rural roads maintenance. While cost-sharing has the potential to strengthen transparency and accountability (Ford 1999, Lister and Betley 1999, Azfar et al. 1999), the evidence on this point is mixed. Central authorities may, for example, delay the definition of guidelines and regulations that assign a greater autonomy in the collection and use of financial resources; elected local representatives may be reluctant to impose taxes or contributions on local elites; and citizens may not want to pay taxes if they perceive the government corrupt (Parker 1995, Manor 1999). Moreover, fiscal decentralisation can lead to regional disparities when local authorities are given permission to collect taxes or user fees. This can in fact increase the gap between poor and rich regions of a country and lead to uneven development. In response, the central government has to design intergovernmental fiscal programs that help shift resources to disadvantaged areas. An example of such a program would be a scholarships system that complements the household income of poor families, enabling them to send their children to school (Prud'homme 1994, Litvack et al. 1998, Ford 1999). Other points that need to be taken into consideration from the economic argument point of view include:

- decentralisation normally leads to an increase in public expenditures due to the need to establish new line agencies at the local level, and recruit and provide capacity building for local officials (Ford 1999, Manor 1999),

- decentralisation has the potential to contribute to economic growth but cannot be an engine of growth (Shah 1997).

Evidence from Africa and Asia (but not Latin America) suggests that local authorities have often taken a narrow and less risky perspective of the development process by focusing on small-scale projects such as roads, bridges, school rooms, and wells. The result, according to Manor (1999), has been that basic public services "have suffered at least a little" (p. 94).

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6   Prud'homme refers to World Bank studies conducted between 1990 and 1992 on the whole Latin America as well as individual countries such as Venezuela and Argentina. Other studies mentioned by Prud'homme refer to Africa, Philippines, Poland, and Russia.

2.3.2   Political rationale and participation argument

The nineteenth century philosopher and economist, John Stuart Mill, poignantly remarked that "people can learn what democracy is, as a result of their active participation in political decision making processes at the local level" (Pateman 1970). Decentralisation reforms, by bringing the government closer to the people, foster political participation and help to establish more democratic institutions based on principles of good governance. Decentralisation can also help to reconcile the sometimes diverging interests or tensions between central and local authorities by granting some degree of responsibility to local level agencies and contribute to greater political stability and a broader distribution of political power. At the same time, it can improve the bottom-up and top-down flow of information and the overall dissemination of national plans and programs (Smith 1985, Manor 1999).[7] At the same time, the coordination between centre and the local level is for Manor the "*Achilles heel* of decentralisation" (ibid.: 99).

One of the significant ironies associated with decentralisation is that while decentralisation aims to provide a foundation for greater political representation and the participation of marginalised groups, decentralisation must be understood as a politically motivated initiative stemming from central government that is often the result of a political struggle (McGinn and Street 1986, Litvack and Seddon 1999, Manor 1999). Rondinelli (1983) describes this inherent paradox of decentralisation reforms and suggests that "strong central political commitment is necessary to initiate them; they cannot be effectively implemented and sustained without diffused political support and widespread participation. But those whose political commitment is necessary to initiate the reforms often consider such a diffusion of participation and power as a serious threat" (p. 134). In the case of education, the political nature of decentralisation stems from the inherently political nature of education itself (Fiske 1996). Schools are sources of political power because of the large number of people employed in the education system and the share of the national budget allocated to education. This can result in patronage and clienteles within the bureaucracy that can be threatened by the redistribution of power involved with decentralisation (Lauglo 1995, Fiske 1996).

Greater participation contributes to strengthened accountability and transparency. The more people are involved in decision making processes, the more they know about the availability and use of funds, thereby reducing opportunities for mismanagement. In addition, accountability and transparency are political tools that strengthen democratic leadership versus clienteles and patronage and increase the

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7   With regard to this point, it is important to note that in some cases decentralisation has been adopted to preserve the unity of a country. This is the case, for example, with Ethiopia, where ethnic differences have always been a source of tension. Decentralisation, by granting some degree of regional autonomy, has helped national unity (de Jong et al. 1999).

possibility for re-election of local leaders. In other words, decentralisation can help to break obsolete political power structures, at least at the local level (Kälin 1999). Seddon (1999) observes that, due to the 'symbiotic relationship' between participation and decentralisation, participation can be considered as a precondition for successful decentralisation. She points out that local governments need proximity with citizens in order to better assess local needs and the use of public funding. Moreover, in countries with hierarchical social structures and a poor tradition in participation, the process of decentralisation helps to increase interaction between citizen and the state (ibid.).

While one of the goals of decentralisation is to promote participation, greater autonomy at the local level can exacerbate existing power structures and empower local elites, rather than communities. For Manor (1999), "most of the empirical evidence indicates that greater local participation has tended – so far, in these young systems – either to undermine poverty alleviation or to have little positive impact upon it … I have as yet to discover evidence of any case where local elites were more benevolent than those at the highest levels" (pp. 106-107).

Two specific themes associated with participation and decentralisation reforms are important for the present research: the concept of 'spaces of participation' and social capital theory. They provide theoretical arguments for the analysis and discussion of participation and decentralisation of education in Cambodia.

Spaces of participation: during the 1970s, as shown in section 2.1, the limitations of development models based simply on economic growth were revealed. This led to the recognition of the increased need for citizens to be part of the development process. During the 1990s, as argued by Manor (1999), participation became a central element of the design of decentralisation reforms. At the same time, participation came under closer critical scrutiny with regard to its contributions to the process of development. Cleaver (2001) claims that despite the limited evidence of the long-term effectiveness in materially improving the conditions of the most vulnerable, participation has become "an act of faith … something we believe in and rarely question" (p. 36). Likewise, Cooke and Kohtari (2001) posit that the aura of dogma that surrounds participation today has transformed it from a 'mean' to support development processes into an 'end' in itself.

The discussion about the function of participation has recently returned to more mild positions and, as pointed out for example by Hickey and Mohan (2004), "the proper objective of participation is to ensure the 'transformation' of existing development practices and capacity gaps which cause social exclusion" (p. 13). Andrea Cornwall belongs to this group and observes that "the literature on participation in development largely focuses on methodologies or mechanisms and how they are supposed to work. Less attention has been paid to what actually happens in practice, to who takes part, on what basis and with what resources" (2002: 7). She therefore defines 'spaces for participation' as the "sites in which different actors, knowledge and

interests interact and in which room can be made for alternatives, but from which some people and ideas remain also excluded" (2002a: 51). A relevant theme that appears from this definition is that beneficiaries, who used to provide useful information to plan projects, have to acquire a more active role as doers and shapers of their own development (Hailey 2001). It is within the 'spaces' created by decentralisation reforms, for example, that individuals and community representatives have to play an active role in decision-making. The government therefore has an important role in guaranteeing the creation and existence of 'spaces' for participation that people can then shape according to their needs and priorities. For Bray (2001) this implies the move from participation to partnership: "partners share responsibilities, whereas participants may merely cooperate in someone else's activity" (p. 5).

According to Bonnal (1997), political decentralisation reforms often fail because they do not take sufficiently into account the influence of local norms and institutions. For this reason, Cornwall (2002a) calls for a more thorough analysis of spaces of participation by studying who is participating and who is excluded, how participation is taking place, and what the influence of the broader socio cultural environment is. She distinguishes two categories of spaces: 'transient spaces', which lack the official recognition from the government but play a supporting role. Examples of such spaces would include support to schools provided through self-help initiatives or community based associations. They are the result of the pressure or initiative from the bottom to participate in development activities and Cornwall considers them as traditional forms of participation. 'Institutionalised spaces', on the other hand, include the committees and councils that are part of the institutional design of policies and reforms. In the case of decentralisation, they aim at linking citizens and local government. Cornwall considers these as modern forms of participation. Her analysis of 'spaces' of participation highlights the importance and the need to understand what are the socio and cultural factors as well as the institutional arrangements that influence community dynamics and collective action (Cornwall 2002a).

Social capital and participation: social capital has entered the development policy debate in the 1990s, with differing opinions about its usefulness. Grootaert (1998), presenting the perspective endorsed by the World Bank, argues that social capital is the missing link in terms of understanding how different forms of capital lead to economic growth. Social capital, he explains, is concerned with the way the economic actors interact and organise themselves to generate growth and development. This concept has also raised criticism. Ben Fine, for example, defines social capital as the "latest conceptual wunderkind" (2001: 189). He is surprised by the extent and the pace of its influence in social development theory and its "ready acceptance as both analytical, empirical and policy panacea" (ibid.). Moreover, he points out that as a result of the number of varying definitions given to social capital during the last years, the meaning of the concept is akin to "a sack of analytical potatoes" (p. 190).

While the idea of social capital is a relatively new tool for economic analysis, in the political science, sociological and anthropological literature it has more established credentials and is concerned with the "connections among individuals" (Putnam 2000: 19). A World Bank report defines it as "the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions … [it] is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together" (World Bank 1999).

A number of definitions are used to explain social capital. Robert Putnam (1996) defines it as the "features of social life – networks, norms, and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (p. 56). This definition is primarily concerned with the horizontal linkages and associations between people. Putnam defines this *bonding social capital* as the "links that exists between like-minded people that contribute to reinforce homogeneity but can also build walls that exclude those who do not qualify" (Schuller et al. 2000: 10). Examples of bonding social capital include kinship relationships and religion. *Bridging social capital,* on the other hand, refers to the horizontal connections between heterogeneous groups. These links are likely to be more fragile but are more likely to foster social inclusion (ibid.). These horizontal associations consist of social networks and associated norms that have an effect on community productivity and well-being (see Bebbington 1997, Woolcock 1998, Narayan 1999, Krishna 2000). This analysis is also linked to the work of Coleman (1988), whose study of educational outcomes has included also vertical linkages between associations characterised by hierarchical and unequal distribution of power among members. This view recognizes that horizontal ties are needed to give communities a sense of identity and common purpose, but also stresses that without 'bridging' ties that transcend various social divides (e.g. religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status), horizontal ties can become a basis for the pursuit of narrow interests, and can actively preclude access to information and material resources that would otherwise be of great assistance to the community (Krishna 2000). The most encompassing view of social capital, according to Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002) includes the social and political environment that shapes social structures and draws on Olsen's (1982) and North's (1990) work to include formalised institutional relationships and is defined here as *institutional social capital.* This analysis extends the importance of social capital to formalized institutional relationships and structures, such as government, political regimes, rule of law, the court system, and civil and political liberties. This view not only accounts for the importance of the ties within and across communities, but recognizes that the capacity of various social groups to act in their interest depends crucially on the support (or lack thereof) that they receive from the state as well as the private sector. Likewise, the state depends on social stability and widespread popular support. In short, economic and social development thrives when representatives of the state, the corporate sector, and civil society create forums in and through which they can identify and pursue common goals.

The forms of social capital discussed above never exist in isolation. Societies always demonstrate a mix between them that is determined by the degree or orientation of a specific culture towards collective action. Therefore, Krishna (2000) poignantly argues that it is important to consider the specific cultural factors that shape and influence social capital formation.

Several analysts have identified trust as a critical element of all forms of social capital. Uphoff (2000) defines it as "the essential glue for society" (p. 227). The basic argument is that trust can grow and facilitate exchange and interaction between individuals, groups and institutions. It is linked to the availability of information as well as formal and informal norms and rules. We trust individuals and/or institutions because we know that in the past they have behaved correctly. We also trust them because we know that there are laws and a judicial system that regulate and punish wrong behaviours. There can also be strong informal norms and rules which, as in many parts of Southeast Asia, reward trustworthy behaviour by applying social sanctions such as shame to those who violate the norms (Pye 1999). Dasgupta (2000) suggests that trust is central in the discussion about social capital, though "until recently it was treated like background environment, present whenever called upon, a sort of ever-ready lubricant permitting voluntarily participation in production and exchange to take place" (p. 330). He argues convincingly that when trust erodes, for example through wars and civil conflicts, "it can bring an awful lot down with it" (p. 332).

This study adopts the social capital definition illustrated in figure 2.2, which synergises the three approaches outlined above including bonding, bridging and institutional social capital at the community level, and linking these to the notion of trust. The analysis of community participation and school governance, which is central to this thesis, is examined through bonding linkages between members of the same community groups or associations, the bridging linkages between different associations at the village level, and the vertical linkages of community based associations with schools and local government/agencies. The model builds on Uphoff's (2000) argument that *relational social capital* (bonding and bridging/horizontal) predisposes individuals for collective action, while *institutional social capital* (vertical) creates the conditions and spaces that facilitate collective action.
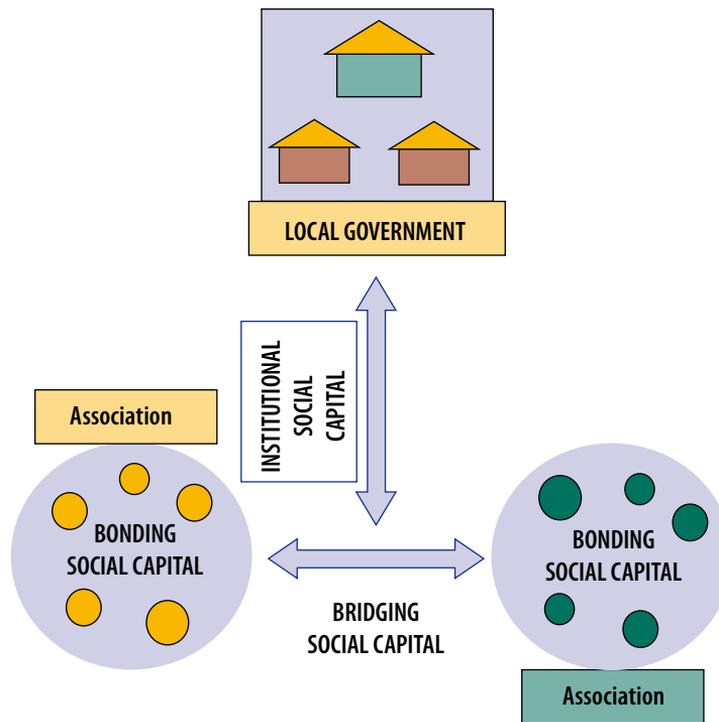
Figure 2.2. Synergised social capital model (Pellini and Ayres 2005)

2.4   Decentralisation and school based management: regional experiences

The decentralisation of education systems can be considered as one of the most important phenomenon in educational planning over the past 20 years (UNESCO 2005). The education system, more than other public sectors, seems to be particularly suited for decentralisation reforms as its structure typically consists of both a central-level administration and a network of local education offices and schools that extends throughout the nation and employ the largest share of public sector workforce (Winkler 1989).

This suitability becomes more relevant if we consider the crisis of education in developing countries described by Coombs (1985). Since 1980s, central governments have faced increasingly difficulties to direct and administer all aspects of expanding mass education. The result is that modern education systems have often failed to reach peripheral regions (i.e. rural areas) and have tended to serve the political interests of the centre (i.e. urban areas) (Cummings 1997, Whitacre 1997).[8] In Sub

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[8]   McLean (1983) expands this argument and gives it a more global dimension, arguing that Third World states (the periphery) have not benefited from education transfers from the developed nations (the centre).

Sahara Africa, for example, the situation has been exacerbated by the rapid expansion of school systems to achieve universal primary education targets (Rose 2003). This cannot be done by a central government alone and therefore requires the adoption of alternative approaches. As Cummings (1997) points out, during the 1990s there emerged the need to move from an old approach to education that entails standardised and centralised control, towards a modern approach that enables flexibility and diversity to shape education to local circumstances.

The earlier sections have explained that the appeal of decentralisation lies in the promises of improved efficiency, transparency, accountability, and service provision that reflect local priorities (McLean and King 1999). The main international conferences on education, from Jomtien in 1990 to Dakar in 2000, have emphasised these points and highlighted, among other things, the critical importance of community participation in schools to improve governance and strengthen democratic practices (see WCEFA 1990: article VII, WCEFA 1990a: sections I.2, I.3, I.6 and III.3, WEF 2000: pp. 18-19).

Unfortunately, the creation of spaces of participation does not automatically translate into democratic decision making practices. For this reason, research and studies such as the ones by Bonnal, Cornwall, Sen and others, have helped to clarify an understanding that participation and governance are strongly influenced by specific cultural and social norms. Moreover, it is important to remember that participation normally puts an additional burden on individuals in terms of time and/or resources that they need to contribute to the process. This, argues Shaeffer (1994), may be particularly demanding for parents and community members living in socially and economically marginalised regions. Other aspects that have to be taken into consideration in addressing school-community relations are the lack of community appreciation of the overall objective of education, the cultural gap between community and school, and the popular belief that education is a task of the state. Whitacre (1997) notes that decentralisation often has been limited to simple deconcentration and has in some cases actually expanded the control and presence of central government instead of tapping into indigenous institutions to support the decentralisation effort.

It is useful at this stage to present some examples of countries that have a longer experience than Cambodia with decentralisation reforms and participatory school governance. These examples are relevant because they highlight the critical importance of social capital in shaping democratic spaces of participation. The principles of democratic decentralisation are usually spelled out in general terms in national policies and guidelines and their translation into practical actions has to take into consideration different local circumstances. In other words, to search for the opportunities provided by diversity instead of homogeneity.

2.4.1   Asia

According to Chapman (2000), "at no time in history in no region of the world have education system expanded as fast or as effectively as have those in Asia, particularly in East Asia, during the past thirty years" (p. 283). He also notes that "virtually all developing countries in Asia follow a pyramidal model in which national policy, programmes and logistics are formulated by a central ministry of education … the ministry then works through a network of provincial, regional and district education offices that largely duplicate the structure of the central ministry and are responsible for ensuring that central policies are communicated and implemented in the schools" (p. 290). Despite this background, decentralisation reforms have been implemented also in Asia with important consequences for school management and school-community relations.

   Similarly to Africa, most Asian countries gained independence in the aftermath of World War II and inherited centralised administrations. Some countries had already experienced organised forms of local government. This is the case, for example, with the *panchayat* (village councils) that evolved in ancient India, and are still active today. In short, *panchayat* are formed by elected members taking decisions on issues that are relevant to the social, cultural and economic life of the village. They act as a link between local government and people (Govinda 1997).[9] In the Philippines, *barangays* represented an indigenous system of community organisation characterised by strong kinship links (Turner 1999). They were destroyed during the Spanish colonial period, but have been institutionalised through the Local Government Code passed in 1991 and given an ambitious list of services to perform (ibid.).

   With regard to forms decentralisation and community participation in education, *School Clusters* represent a particularly important experience in Asia. Their origin goes back to the 1950s when they were piloted in Thailand in a joint initiative by the Ministry of Education and UNESCO in the province of Chachoengsao. As the approach proved successful, it was expanded nation-wide between the 1960s and 1980s (Wheeler et al. 1994). During this period, School Clusters became a popular approach in several Asian countries affected by economic recession and high population growth (e.g. Burma, India, Papua New Guinea, Philippines).[10] In Asia, the first wave of school clustering lasted until the end of the 1980s when high rates of economic growth achieved in some countries provided sufficient resources to support education. During the 1990s, a second wave of school clustering took place in former socialist countries like Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam and was driven by the collapse

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[9]   **Gandhi, advocated the** *Panchayati Raj* **as a decentralized form of government, where each** village is responsible for its own actions and subsistence, as the foundation of India's political system (see Meenakshisundaram 1994, Singh 2006).

[10]   **Bray (1987) explains that the School Clusters have also been popular in Latin America and** have been introduced in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru.

of the socialist model of centralised administration and the pressure for more localized decision-making and democratization (Fiske 1996, Litvack and Seddon 1999, McGinn and Welch 1999, Bredenberg and Dahal 2000).

School Clusters are defined by Bray as "groupings of schools for administrative and educational purposes" (Bray 1987: 7). A typical cluster, shown in figure 2.3, consists of six to seven schools. At the centre there is a *core school* responsible of the administration of cluster activities. The core school is linked to *satellite schools*. In more remote areas, satellite school can be further linked to *annex schools*.[11]
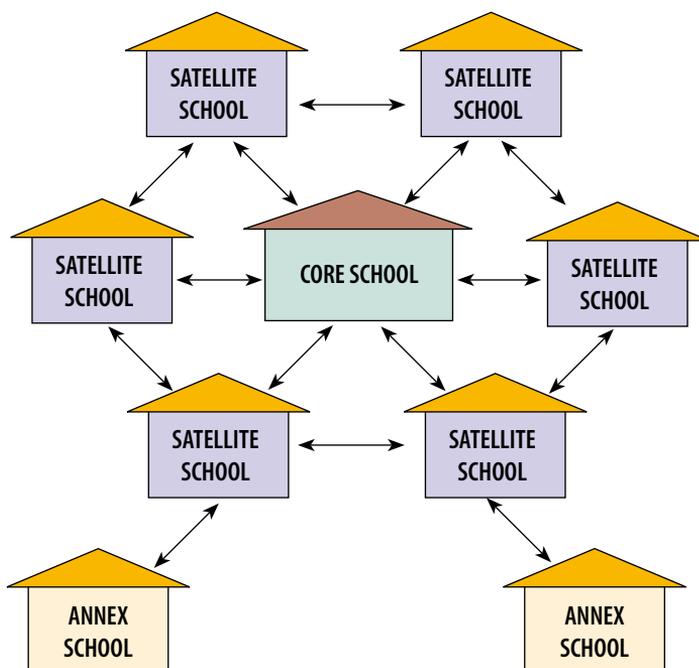
Figure 2.3. School cluster structure

There are a number of objectives linked to the School Clusters model. From the economic point of view, one of the most important is to improve cost effectiveness, by sharing facilities, staff and enabling bulk orders of material (ibid.). From the pedagogical point of view, the main objective is to improve the quality of education in individual schools by easing the access and sharing of educational resources. From the administrative point of view, clusters help to link districts with group of schools, and therefore reduce transaction and information costs. The cluster model also pursues political objectives such as consciousness-raising, community participation, reduc-

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[11]   The number of schools that belong to a cluster can vary greatly. Bray (1987) mentions that in Peru clusters (*nucleos*) can have up to 30 or 40 schools.

tion of inequalities, and ethnic harmony. [12] In India, clusters have helped to revitalise Parent and Teacher Associations, though community members are normally invited to make contributions but not to propose radical changes (ibid.). In the case of Sri Lanka, clusters have been promoted to reduce ethnic tensions.

The conclusion by Bray is that clusters can play a positive role and are particularly valuable for small schools since they provide "extra resources and wider social contacts" (p. 139). However, he warns that cluster success depends on a careful assessment and design of, among others, attitudes of the people involved.

A further example of school and community interaction is found in the Parents Learning Support System established in the Philippines (Cariño et al. 1994). The principle behind this programme is that "schools are not the only space which provides teaching and learning; homes and community can equally help" (p. 1). All three settings share a common objective, which is to provide learners with new skills, attitudes and values. The main feature of the programme is that parents and community members collaborate with teachers and administrators in teaching activities in schools. Parents and community members monitor children's teaching and assist them with learning tasks or projects. They also discuss together with teachers and administrators problems and achievements. The programme is considered to represent a break with traditional teaching and learning processes that have limited the role of communities to financial contributions to schools (ibid.).

In the case of Indonesia, the government has created Parent Organisations (*Badan Pembantu Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan*) in each school to mobilise parents and community resources to support education (Moegiadi et al. 1994). One objective of the approach is to encourage organisational and personal relationships among families, community, and schools. One weakness of the Parent Organisations is that in order to avoid interference, teaching staff cannot be a member. Therefore the Parent Organisations rely exclusively on the dedication of community members and their capacity to raise resources for the school. In the same way, Organisations' members are not supposed to interfere with teaching. This prevents community members giving educational support and, according to Moegiadi et al., contradicts the Educational Law which requires the development and application of local content in the curriculum. Parent Organisations in Indonesia represent an example of the limitations inbuilt in blueprint forms of participation designed at the central level and applied to a country characterised by a large population and diversity.

The case of Nepal, before the escalation of the Maoist insurgency and the adoption of martial law, represents an exceptional example of the opportunities as well as the problems associated with education decentralisation and community participation (Lamichhane et al. 1994). The establishment of a democratic system of government

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[12]   This is particularly relevant for Latin America where, according to Bray (1987), **clusters** (*nucleos*) in Ecuador, Nicaragua and Peru have had also a Freireian consciousness-rising function.

in 1950 marked a large increase in the number of primary and secondary schools in the country.[13] The National Education System Plan, started in 1971, helped this expansion of education, but failed to involve communities by placing the responsibility for implementation almost exclusively on line agencies. Moreover, the Local Development Act, which marked the beginning of decentralisation reforms in 1966, with election of Village Development Committees, did not go hand in hand with the decentralisation of education. Decentralised management and greater community participation in schools were introduced in the 1980s. Lamichhane et al. cite as examples three main projects (ibid.): the Education for Rural Development in the Seti Zone, the Primary Education Project, and the Basic and Primary Education Project. These programmes contributed, to different extents, to the establishment of School Clusters and the establishment of collaborative systems through a greater involvement of local communities. With regard to the last point, the authors note that the government has tried to re-activate school management committees through training programmes. However, Lamichhane et al., conclude that community members have not been in most cases aware of the role school education plays in their lives. This has contributed to creating a large gap between the central and the local level about the expectations linked to participation.

2.4.2   Africa

One of the most important legacies of the French, British, and Portuguese colonisation in Africa has been a centralised administration. For this reason, the modernisation effort during the post-independence period has been planned and implemented based on the same centralised institutional set up. Economic systems have been reformed with decentralisation only during the last twenty years. In addition, the experience from Sub-Saharan Africa suggests that reforms have often been limited to deconcentration (Whitacre 1997).

A study by Lugaz et al. (2006), on decentralisation of education in four Francophone countries, Benin, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, describes three main trends. The first is that decentralisation of education often goes in hand with general administrative decentralisation, which means that elected local authorities are given a number of responsibilities also in the field of basic education. A second trend is related to the widening of responsibility of regional and district education offices regarding the use of budget and nomination of principals. A third, less evident, trend is linked to a greater autonomy that is slowly being given to schools in resource management. In Benin, for example, the report notes that since the school year 2001-2002, funds are transferred directly from the central level to schools. An important effect of this

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[13]   Primary schools went from 321 in 1951 to 19.498 in 1992. Secondary schools from 11 in 1951 to 2.309 in 1992 (**Lamichhane et al. 1994: 167**).

greater autonomy is that community teachers are hired by schools and are paid small stipends through parents' contribution or collections by Parent and Teacher Associations. Despite these promising examples, the report concludes, in line with Manor's argument in section 2.2, that decentralisation in these countries has been driven more by a decision to supplement the lack of resources by the central government, rather than a genuine interest in devolving decision making power the local level.

With regard to school management and community participation, results are also mixed. A study by Rose (2003), defines two forms of participation. The first is 'genuine participation', implying the ability to take part in real decision making and governance of schools by parents and community members. In this case "all members have equal power to determine the outcome of decisions and share in a joint activity" (p. 47). The second form, 'pseudo-participation', is at best "a consultative process whereby citizens are merely kept informed of participation development at the school level, and are expected to accept decisions that have already been made" (ibid). In this case, participation is extractive and limited to contributions in cash or in kind for school construction. In Malawi, Rose's case study, communities have traditionally supported the provision of education with contributions in cash and in kind for school construction and maintenance. She reports that before independence, in 1964, self-help initiatives were the main source of support to provide education in rural areas, because the colonial administration favoured schooling in urban areas. Although Malawi gained independence in 1964, it was only after the first democratic elections in 1994 that the government introduced policies to guarantee free primary education which resulted in a 50 per cent increase in school enrolment. As for other countries in the region, the World Bank has influenced the move towards decentralisation of education within the framework of the Malawian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (Rose 2005). During the 1990s, as noted by Rose (2003), other donors increased their support to communities through, for example, the Community School Project funded by the British Department for International Development (DfID) and the Village Based Schools jointly funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAid) and Save the Children. These initiatives provided financial and technical support to remote schools and gave communities responsibility for school construction and maintenance, as well as being involved in school governance. According to Rose (2003), these projects have helped to improve community involvement in schools; however they have also raised the issue of coordination with national policies and their integration in the formal public system of schooling. In 1995, with support from the World Bank, the government tried a slightly different approach by starting the Malawi Social Action Fund which aims at poverty alleviation and community empowerment through proposals prepared by communities who have also to contribute 20 per cent of the of resources for the proposed project. This fund has been particularly influential in terms of school construction (Rose 2003).

The paradox of the policy in Malawi is that "the focus on community participation occurred without the involvement of different stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and communities. Local leaders and NGOs involved in education, in policy formulation, with the Ministry of Education and international agencies continue to dominate decision-making and planning" (Rose 2003: 51). In the 1990s, School Committees have also been introduced to bridge the gap between schools and community, but their involvement in school affairs has been rare in practice. The result is that the participation continues to be merely extractive. Rose concludes that, despite the evidence, participation is important and that to be successful "the motivation for participation needs to occur at the local level, rather than directed by policy makers" (p. 62).

Moving to Ghana, Pryor (2005) explains that the decentralisation reform policy of the government involves both a greater deconcentration to regional and district education offices and greater community participation. Donors are involved in both areas. DfID supports the Whole School Development which aims at providing logistical support to selected schools in pilot districts. A number of NGOs are involved at the same time in projects to facilitate community participation. Pryor, in his study, asks the question of whether community participation can mobilise social capital for the improvement of rural schooling. In his opinion, the development and implementation of the policy has been patchy and slow. With regard to participation, Pryor concludes that in rural areas he surveyed, poverty and the traditional support function of children for their households have reduced the importance that parents attribute to schooling. As school-community relationships also depend on the openness that schools show to parents and communities, the study by Pryor finds that parents do not have a strong interest for participation mainly "because the structures through which they were supposed to assume some control did not seem to include them [and] when they gave voice to their ideas, nobody appeared to be listening" (pp. 198-199). Pryor concludes that colonialism, migration, and the disintegration of matrilineal family structures affect the disposition of people towards schooling in rural areas. Chapman et al. (2002), also studying community support to schools in Ghana, concludes that "communities that have little experience with decentralised decision making process need adequate training on how to participate effectively in the decision process" (p. 187).[14] The study also notes that this need for capacity building is also a weakness that makes community members vulnerable to external manipulation about what practices constitute effective teaching. For this reason, government and donor driven initiatives in terms of decentralisation of education and

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14   The study was conducted in 1998 in 18 communities in five region of rural Ghana for a total of 643 interviews that included teachers/guardian, community members, school management associations executives, school management committees and other local leaders (Chapman et al. 2002: 183)

community participation often "operate on premises that do not correspond with those of the people in the village" (Pryor 2005: 200).

2.4.3   Latin America

Latin America is probably the region where, due to cultural factors and the colonial heritage, central administration remains the strongest. Turner and Hulme (1997), citing Harris (1983), argue that "the concentration of decision-making within central government ministries is a fundamental characteristics of Latin American governments" (p. 166). With regard to education systems, the decentralisation that has taken place during the last two decades can be explained by two factors: the fiscal constraints of government budgets and the increased demand for democratic societies (Cuéllar-Marchelli 2003).

In Colombia, for example, the first steps of the decentralisation reform go back to 1985 with the mayors' election at municipality level (Fiske 1996). In 1989, municipalities were granted a greater role in health and education. The strategy adopted by the government is described by Fiske as two-folds: municipalisation of education and increases in local schools autonomy. The first objective was reached by transferring resources for education to municipalities; the second by granting schools more decision-making power in managing personnel, designing aspects of the curriculum, and finance. While communities and parents also became more involved in school activities, the implementation of the plan encountered strong resistance from bureaucrats, politicians and teachers' unions that favoured national negotiations of contracts. As a result, the reform was re-drafted, considerably reducing the powers of municipalities and local schools.

Colombia is also known for the *Escuela Nueva* program which started in 1976. It stemmed from the recognition of the impracticality of providing each primary school with a multi-grade teaching staff in rural areas (Williams 1997). By 1978, more than 500 schools were involved; another 1.500 were added by 1982. Further expansion, partially financed by the World Bank, extended the support to 17.948 schools by 1989, serving approximately 800.000 students (Psacharopoulo et al. 1992). *Escuela Nueva* schools are in a rural school and have one or two teachers who offer all five years of primary education in one or two multi-grade classrooms.

The instructional materials reflect the reality of daily life in rural areas. Moreover, the curriculum is designed so that children can move to a government school at any time (Williams 1997). A comparative evaluation by Psacharopoulos et al. (1992), on students' performance in 168 *Escuela Nueva* schools and 60 traditional schools, found that the former had significantly improved student outcomes, reduced dropout rates, and a stronger community participation. Teacher training in the *Escuela Nueva* schools is given a high priority and teachers are expected to play a leadership

role in fostering the community-school link. The idea behind *Escuela Nueva*, is in fact to integrate, with limited government interference, students, schools and the community by encouraging teachers, students, and parents to participate in school activities. Examples of such activities include a school surroundings map, family records, a county monograph and agricultural calendar (Psacharopoulos et al. 1992, Williams 1997). One concern expressed by Psacharopoulos et al. is about the replication of the model and the conflict that can arise between the *Escuela Nueva* schools and the control by local administrators.

Turning to El Salvador, EDUCO (*Educación con Participación de la Comunidad*) is often cited as a successful example of decentralisation of education and community participation in schools. In the early 1990s, after the civil war fought during the 1980s, peace returned to the country. EDUCO started in1991 as "a major strategy to access preschool and basic education in poor rural areas" (Cuéllar-Marchelli 2003: 7). Under this programme, groups of parents are organised to form non-profit Community Education Associations responsible to manage schools financed by the state. The programme, after a pilot in six districts, received support from the World Bank and was expanded. The fact that the programme became World Bank-sponsored, according to Di Gropello (2006), contributed to its continuity despite frequent changes in government administration. The importance of EDUCO lies in the fact that the design of the programme "was based on the experience of peasant communities that had created local schools separately from the state" (ibid.). Through EDUCO, the central government has achieved two important objectives: it has gained control of the popular schools that were established outside the state system and has accessed additional resources that communities were willing to put in education. At the same time, the Ministry of Education has also helped to institutionalise the approach by signing partnership agreements with the Community Education Associations once they are established (ibid.). This helped to define clear roles and responsibilities in the use of funds transferred from the central government. Other Associations' responsibilities include the hiring of teachers and support staff and the purchase of classroom material. Association members are not paid for administering the services. Cuéllar-Marchelli points out that their main incentive lies in the socio and economic development of their community through education. EDUCO assessments have found that with close community monitoring and the potential sanction that teachers would not be rehired, teachers and students absenteeism was lower than in traditional schools, though students' achievements in EDUCO schools was no different from that of traditional schools (Jimenez and Sawada 1998, World Bank 2006). For Cuéllar-Marchelli (2001), EDUCO has improved equity in education, though she also admits that the programme has the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities in rural areas.

From the social cohesion point of view, EDUCO has provided the main benefits. Di Gropello (2006) has noted a growth of social cohesion in the communities where

parents' empowerment is strengthening democratic participation (i.e. bonding and bridging social capital) as well as the relations with schools and local government bodies (i.e. linking social capital). Considering the background of the civil war, EDU-CO, starting from existing forms of social capital, has contributed in "fostering community building, social development and democracy … making the school a community centre for education and social development" (Cuéllar-Marchelli 2001: 18).

2.5   Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented the main theoretical framework and some relevant research findings underpinning the present study on educational decentralisation and community participation. The literature and policy documents reviewed show that while decentralisation entails potential improvements in the efficiency of public service delivery and the creation of democratic spaces of participation, at the same time there are also possible shortcomings linked to the power of local elites and the exclusion of marginalised groups in local decision making processes. Likewise, as concluded by Bray (2003), community participation in education can increase the relevance and impact of education, but at the same time can also exacerbate dissonances within societies. When this happens it is usually due to the fact that policy makers "have failed to examine in sufficient detail the types of community being considered and the circumstances of operation" (ibid.: 41)

In the analysis of the decentralisation of education, it is important to remember the political nature of education and the need that governments have to find the right balance in terms of which responsibilities remain at the central level and which ones are decentralised. While the development and distribution of textbooks and the planning of curriculum and assessment systems should remain a responsibility of the central government, Govinda (1997) argues that community based organisations and Parent-Teacher Associations can be involved in day-to-day management such as maintenance. However, as shown by some of the country experiences presented in this chapter, community members can play a role in supporting teaching and learning activities as well. Moreover, the development of a 'participatory culture' should be based on local norms, and given sufficient time to develop further in a partnership with local governments, line agencies, and service providers.

In order to achieve positive results in terms of community participation in school governance, some pre-conditions seem to be of particular importance: communities need to be informed about the objectives of the reforms and need to have opportunities to express their preferences in a way that is binding for politicians and officials; the definition of community participation should take into account traditional forms of social capital such as community and self-help initiatives (bonding and bridging)

and define spaces where these can actively link with local institutions and make a concrete contribution to governance and management of public services (linking social capital); have local elections; cooperation (versus competition) between various levels of the administration; and harmonisation with other relevant decentralisation initiatives (Fiske 1996, Govinda 1997, Manor 1999). These are long term processes that require commitment from the government and, in most developing countries, external support from international donors in terms of financial resources and technical assistance. Keeping these pre-conditions in mind, the next section explores the case of decentralisation reforms in Cambodia.

3 Cambodia: history and human development profile

Journalist Tiziano Terzani, who reported about Cambodia during the civil war and the Khmer Rouge years, has written that "what happened in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979 during the Khmer Rouge defies any fantasy of horror – it was more frightful than anything a man could imagine" (1998: 242). Much of today's literature about Cambodia is concerned with those years. This chapter, while exploring the impact of the Khmer Rouge regime, will also investigate the social and cultural continuities that transcend the Khmer Rouge period and characterise the tension between traditions and modernity in today's Cambodia (Ayres 2000 and 2000a). The chapter starts by looking at the main historical events and links them with the development of education. In the second part it presents Cambodia's main human development indicators and compares them with other countries in the region.

3.1   Development and education in an historical perspective

The presence of the past in today's Cambodia is symbolised by the temple of Angkor Wat which, since its re-discovery by French explorer Henry Mouhot in the mid nineteenth century, represents the emblem of the past grandeur of the Khmer civilisation. The references that all political regimes have made to Angkor during the last fifty years shows the importance attributed to the past compared to the disruption of the present caused by war and genocide. This section provides an overview of the main historical events from the colonial period to present Cambodia and is divided along the main political changes as summarised in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Transition of political, legal and economic system in Cambodia

Era / Name	Legal System	Political System	Political power	Economy
Pre-1953	French-based code and judiciary	French protectorate	Held by French	Colonial type
1953–1970 (Kingdom of Cambodia)	French based civil code and judiciary	Constitutional monarchy	Held by Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Prime Minister	Market and nationalization
1970–1975 (Khmer Republic)	French based civil code and judiciary	Republic	Held by Lon Nol as Prime Minister and then President	Market, war economy
1975–1979 (Democratic Kampuchea)	Legal system destroyed	Extreme Maoist agrocommunism	Pol Pot and central committee of CPK	Agrarian, centrally planned
1979–1989 (People's Republic of Kampuchea)	Vietnamese-oriented model	Central communist committee and local committees	Kampuchea People's Revolutionary Party	Soviet style central planning
1989–1993 (State of Cambodia)	Greater economic rights	Central communist committee and local committees	Cambodia's People's Party (CPP)	Liberalized central planning
1993-present (Kingdom of Cambodia)	French based civil code combined with common law	Constitutional monarchy	Shared between FUNCINPEC and CPP	Transition to market economy

Source: Kato et al. 2000, Ayres 2000.

3.1.1 Origins and French protectorate: until 1953

The Indian traders who reached Cambodia around the beginning of Christian era represent the first known contact with the Khmer civilisation.[1] The 'indianization' of Cambodia provided "a writing system, a language (Sanskrit), a vocabulary of social hierarchies (but not a caste system), Buddhism, and the idea of universal kingship" (Chandler 1998: 12). The Angkor period reached its zenith in the twelfth century when, under King Jayavarman VII (1181–1219), its territory included what today are Cambodia, Thailand and parts of Myanmar, Viet Nam, Malaysia, and Laos.

Vickery (1993) describes the Khmer pre-colonial society as being divided between peasants, officials, and royalty. Each class had a specific function essential for the wellbeing of the society (Vickery 1984). The god-king (*dharmaraja*) was considered the protector of society (Ayres 2000). The king was connected to the villages through the administrative cadres (*oknyas*) (ibid.). The disappearance of the Angkor Empire in the fifteenth century did not produce changes in the division of society. The social position of the majority of the population was given, and "it would have been

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[1]   Cambodian and Khmer are used as synonymous in this and the following chapters.

unthinkable to rise above the class into which one was born" (Vickery 1984: 13). Buddhism legitimized the status of the king and the system of social hierarchy by asserting the imperfection of human beings and their need for guidance (Ayres 2000). Rural areas were distant from Angkor and were governed with relative autonomy by appointed officials. At village level a web of patron-client relationships "guaranteed those at the bottom their survival and, to the one at the top, a sufficient clientele to neutralize potential rivals" (ibid.). The Buddhist temple (*vat* or pagoda) represented the centre of education and maintenance of the social system (Vickery 1993, Ayres 2000).[2]

In August 1863, in order to secure the country against the territorial expansion by Viet Nam and Siam (today's Thailand), King Norodom signed a protectorate agreement with France.[3] While Cambodia remained officially a kingdom, the French had the political, economic and administrative control and established a centralised administrative system. The link between provincial cities and the capital, Phnom Penh, was maintained through appointed *residénts* (Chandler 1998). The French administration introduced the modern *khum* (communes) in 1908 as "the territorial and administrative division of the *Khet* (province) which is directed by the *Mekhum* and assisted by the *Khum* Council" (Title I, Article 1).[4] Elections that had been held sporadically since 1901, were formally introduced in 14 provinces though they never become general elections and took place in different parts of the country at different times. The main task of the *khum* was to act as an agent of the central authority, guarantee security, and collect taxes. The French authorities attempted without success various reforms to simplify the *khum* (i.e. in 1919, 1925, 1931, and 1935), but finally in 1941 abolished them (Flam et al. 2002, Locard 2002). Despite these attempts, it has been argued that overall the French *mission civilisatrice* did not show a strong interest in rural areas and that people continued to follow a Buddhist lifestyle and patron-client relationships of the past (Vickery 1984, Chandler 1991, Ayres 2000). In the early 1950s, however, French control of the colonial territories, starting from Viet Nam, began to weaken. King Norodom Sihanouk launched the 'royal crusade for independence', which concluded successfully when independence was obtained on 9th November 1953.

With regard to education, before the arrival of the French, pagodas and monks were mainly in charge of providing schooling by teaching the Buddhist scriptures and precepts (Ayres 2000). Teaching was provided to boys and only rarely to girls and teachers enjoyed a high status. The French administration focused on urban schools and introduced a French curriculum to form the future élite. Rural schools continued

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2   Vickery (1993) adds that villagers were divided into two groups: *neak mean* (the one who have) and *neak kro* (the ones who do not have).

3   Locard (2002), with regard to the French presence in Cambodia, notes that "the fiction of the protectorate was a flimsy legal veil for the reality of a *de facto* colonial rule" (p. 9).

4   Ordenannce Royale No. 42, 5th June 1908, in Locard (2002).

to be organised by communities around pagodas and to be financed through local contributions collected during religious ceremonies. In 1918 the French administration started a reform aimed at the modernisation of pagoda-schools, which ultimately failed because of the gap between the urban curriculum and the traditional forms of education in pagodas, a lack of trained teachers, and limited financial resources available to implement it (Ayres 2000).[5]

3.1.2   The "Golden Age": Kingdom of Cambodia 1953–1970

The period that goes from independence to the beginning of the civil war is remembered as a period of peace, security, sufficient food, and good salaries for teachers (Informant).[6] Chandler, however, considers this period more critically as the time when pluralism ended in Cambodia (1991). Having gained independence, King Norodom Sihanouk decided in fact to take an active role in politics. He abdicated in 1955, turning the throne to his father, Prince Suramarit, and created his own party, the *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* (Popular Socialist Community), which dominated politics until 1970 (ibid.). The political programme of the *Sangkum* was based on the idea of *Buddhist Socialism*, which blended the traditional moral order of Buddhism, kingship, nation and modern progress (Corfield and Summers 2003).

Admittedly, the programme was successful in mobilising society. At the same time, however, it perpetuated traditional social structures with references to Angkor and the legitimisation of the absolute power of Sihanouk (Chandler 1991, Ayres 2000). In 1961, Prince Sihanouk came under pressure from several sides. He struggled without much success to maintain the neutrality of Cambodia in the Vietnamese-American conflict. Since he had allowed, in 1965, North Vietnamese troops to use the harbour of Kampong Saom (also known as Sihanoukville) to supply weapons and medicines, the United Stated launched in 1969 a secret bombing campaign over Cambodia to hit Vietnamese troops stationed in the south of the country (Shawcross 1993).[7] Other sources of pressure against the prince were the growing economic gap between rural and urban areas, the anti-Sihanouk demonstrations asking for de-

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[5]   In the school year 1932–33 there were 225 pagoda-schools. In 1938–39, there were 908 (Ayres 2000).

[6]   The informant became a primary school teacher in 1956 and worked in the provinces of Kampong Thom and Preah Vihear until the beginning of the civil war. He remembered that the salary was 4.800 KHR per month (ca. 150 USD at the exchange rate of 1 USD = 30 KHR of that time). Today the average salary for a primary school teacher is 20–25 USD per month. KHR is the Cambodia currency: Cambodian Riel.

[7]   Shawcross (1993) maintains that in 1969, the Nixon administration began, without approval from Congress, B-52 bombing raids under the name of "Operation Menu". The bombings were disclosed in 1970 and carried on until 1973. By then, the total tonnage of bombs dropped on Cambodia was 539.129, compared to 160.000 tonnes dropped on Japan during World War II.

mocracy, and the growing number of students who were attracted to the communist insurgency that had started in the rural areas. The emerging urban middle class saw in this crisis the opportunity to seize power and ousted Sihanouk on 17th March of 1970 while he was on a state visit in Moscow. General Lon Nol, a right wing member of Sihanouk's *Sangkum* party, with the backing of the United States, became the leader of the nation.

Modernisation and the need for a qualified workforce were at the centre of the economic agenda. A report published by UNESCO in 1954, recommended a gradual expansion of education and linking the curriculum to people's educational needs.[8] While Khmer was reintroduced as the language for instruction, the government started a programme of rapid educational expansion through school construction and teacher training. The number of primary schools increase between 1955 and 1968 from 2.731 to 5.857, the Lycées from 10 to 180, and university faculties from 5 to 48 (Sangkum Reastr Niyum 1994).

As a result, education boomed. Vickery (1984) calculates that school attendance went from 50–60.000 children in primary schools in 1936, to 271.000 by 1954, to reach a million in 1970. Communities were active in their support to schools. One informant remembers a parents association and a teachers association linked to his school. The former was responsible for collecting contributions to support the improvement of the school buildings, while the latter provided support to help the families of teachers who had passed away (Informant). Since education had been neglected during the colonial period, the rapid expansion that took place under Sihanouk was not matched by improvements in quality and did not take into consideration the absorptive capacity of the labour market (Vickery 1984). Furthermore, education at that time was considered first of all as a vehicle to acquire higher social status, so that the increasing number of educated unemployed people considered themselves as deprived of the right for a social position (ibid.).

3.1.3   Khmer Republic: 1970–1975

Following the republican coup, Norodom Sihanouk took refuge in China and established an alliance with his former enemies, the communist guerrillas, which became known as the Khmer Rouge.[9] Lon Nol promised more participation and democracy, while the army was losing control of large parts of the territory to North Vietnamese

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[8]   Bilodeau (1954) in Ayres (2000).

[9]   Norodom Sihanouk used the term Khmer Rouge as a pejorative in the 1950s to discredit his critics in the democratic extreme left. In the 1970s the English language media picked up on the official rhetoric of the Khmer Republic and began to use Khmer Rouge for the Communist Party of Kampuchea to distinguish them from the Viet Cong (Corfield and Summers 2003).

troops and the Khmer Rouge (Thion 1993).[10] By 1974, the escalation of the civil war had caused the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and by 1975 the population of Phnom Penh had swollen with about two million refugees (Chandler 1998). In January 1975, the Khmer Rouge started their final offensive and entered Phnom Penh on 17th April.

This is the period when education suffered most of the material and human destruction (Vickery 1984, Chandler 1991, Ayres 2000). A study by the NGO Redd Barna (Kuløy 1996), found that in 1969 (the year before the coup by General Lon Nol), there were 5.270 primary schools in Cambodia. A year later, in 1970, the number had dropped to 1.064, while the number of students fell from 936.000 to 333.000. This had been mainly due to a rush to strengthen the Cambodian army by drafting children and youngsters. Education also became politicised and was used as a tool for anti-Sihanouk propaganda (Ayres 2000).

3.1.4   Democratic Kampuchea: 1975–1979

The arrival of the Khmer Rouge saw people fill the streets of Phnom Penh to welcome them. Their presence meant that the war was over (Ayres 1999). The citizens of Phnom Penh could not know that the regime that was going to rule Cambodia for the next three and a half years would cause 500.000 refugees and the death of over 1,5 million people (or one in seven) from overwork, starvation, misdiagnosed diseases, and execution (Vickery 1993, Duggan 1996, Chandler 1998).[11] As a result, the demographic structure of Cambodia was altered significantly (Figure 3.1).

The aim of the Khmer Rouge regime was to transform Cambodia so that "the poor could finally become the masters of their lives and the collective masters of their country" (Chandler 1998: 209). The political and economic programme included self-sufficiency through agricultural production, the return to barter by abolishing money, the prevalence of community ties and common property over families and individualism, the forced dissolution of religion, and, with the exception of China, international isolation (Vickery 1984, Chandler 1998).[12]

Transformation started immediately. A few hours after the Khmer Rouge had entered Phnom Penh came the order to evacuate the town. The same order was given in other cities of the country, and in the week after the fall of Phnom Penh over two

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[10]   Thion (1993) argues that the rural areas supported the Khmer Rouge in this initial stage largely because of the respect they had for the former king and his allies.

[11]   Shawcross (1993) and Kiernan (1996 and 2004) estimates are higher: between 1,6 and 1,8 million people.

[12]   The example of rice production shows how unrealistic the policies of the regime were. Rice production was targeted at an average national yield of 3 metric tonnes per hectare, from less than 1 metric tonne per hectare in pre-revolutionary period (Chandler 1998). In 2004 the average yield was 1,9 metric tonnes per hectare (FAO 2004).
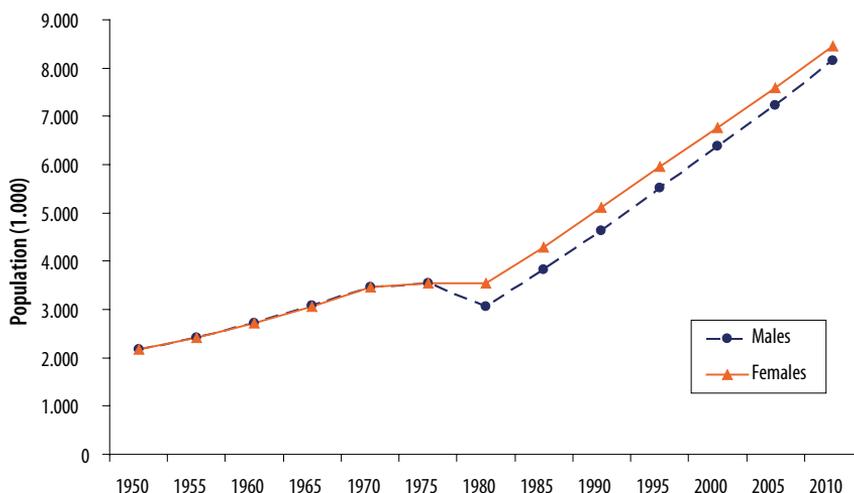
Figure 3.1. Demographic trend male/female 1950–2010 (expected) (FAO 2004)

million Cambodians were pushed into the country side (Chandler 1998). This is how one informant, who was about 15 at that time, remembered that time:

> "Before the arrival of the Khmer Rouge there were about two million people in Phnom Penh who had come from all over the country. During the first three to four days the Khmer Rouge started to evacuate the town. They went around with loudspeakers saying that the Americans were going to bomb the town any moment. Everybody had to leave. Anybody who delayed or tried to hide was shot. We were ten people, including family and relatives. The fourth day we started to walk in the direction of Kampong Speu [South West of Phnom Penh]. I saw many bodies on the side of the road: army people, Khmer Rogue, civilians. Dead bodies, burning houses, and shooting. I remembered injured persons pushed on their hospital beds. I saw the corpse of a woman. Her baby still alive trying to get milk from her breast. But we could not help him, we could not help anyone. They would have shot us. We stopped now and then for one hour and had then to continue pushed at gunpoint by Khmer Rouge groups behind us. We were ten when we left, and only four of us arrived."

The country was renamed *Democratic Kampuchea* (DK) and a new constitution was drafted (see Etcheson 1984, Jennar 2006). The leadership of the regime and the Communist Party remained secretive and was known as *angkar* (the organisation) and portrayed as an Orwellian omnipresent entity "comprising both the party leadership and the populace that should be worshipped by everyone" (Hinton 2002: 68). The main differences with the past were the dismantling of the market economy, the extreme violence of the regime, and the authority given to poor and illiterate people

from rural areas (Vickery 1984, Chandler 1991).[13] Despite the changes, continuities between DK and the past included the references to the Angkorean Empire, the extremely hierarchical organisation of the party structure, and the centralised control of power, and the return of Prince Sihanouk who remained a symbolic head of state during the regime (Ayres 2000).

Due to the international isolation pursued by DK, the atrocities that took place in Cambodia did not become apparent until 1978, and even then, as noted by Shawcross (1984), the accounts from refugees who managed to slip through the border into Thailand were received with scepticism in the West.[14] Vickery has labelled these personal accounts collected in the refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border as the *Standard Total View*. According to this view, the regime aimed at the extermination of all class enemies (e.g. civil administrators, army personnel, urban elite, teachers, doctors, and technicians) and abolished schooling, medical care, family, and religion all over the country (Vickery 1984). For Vickery, these accounts have elements of truth but they also contributed to oversimplify the real situation in the country. Vickery therefore proposes an alternative view which holds that the hardest living conditions were experienced in the Northwest where high numbers of urban people not accustomed to rural life died from overwork or execution. In the East, at least until 1978, and the Southwest, living conditions were better and urban people were given time to get accustomed to their new life by more experienced Khmer Rouge commanders (ibid.).

Vickery posits that the family policy in the DK was that marriages were allowed upon approval from authorities. For Vickery, the aim was not to discourage the nuclear family (wife, husband, and children), but rather to impede the formation of extended family links of the past which, from the DK perspective, had resulted in the diffusion of nepotism. With regard to religion and Buddhism, the DK Constitution stated that "every citizen of Kampuchea has the right to worship according to any religion" (Chapter 15, Article 20 in Etcheson 1984, Jennar 2006). The article then continues stating that "reactionary religions which are detrimental to Democratic Kampuchea and Kampuchean people are absolutely forbidden". The result is that no religious practices were tolerated, and on this, Vickery admits, the Standard Total View is correct. While Buddhist monks were on either side of the front during the civil war, Buddhism was seen by authorities "as a prop for traditional elites and an organisation that encouraged feudal attitudes and relationships" (1984: 191). Though

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[13] **People living in rural areas were called** *neak chah* (old people/rural people) to distinguish them from the people coming from towns, who were called *neak thmei* (new people/urban people).

[14] **As an example the economist Samir Amin described the experience of the Cambodian Com**munist revolution saying that: "the lesson of Cambodia is quite essential, because it occurred in a country whose structures and situation are highly reminiscent of those of the average African country and of some regions of Asia. Thus the victorious strategy of our Cambodian comrades must be systematically compared with those advocated elsewhere" (1977: 147).

Vickery argues that monks were not mass executed and had to disrobe and join the people working in the fields, Kent (2003) shows that prior to the 1975–79 era there was an estimated 88.000 Buddhist monks in the country and about 3.500 monasteries and that it is believed that one third of monks was executed and that half of the country's monasteries were razed, damaged or desecrated.

The personal account by Picq (1989) shows that hunger and fears were the tools used by DK to control people. Ebihara (2002), returning to the village of Svay, where she conducted her seminal ethnographic research in 1959–1960 (see Ebihara 1968), discovered that 50 per cent of the people (70 out of 139) she had known during her research period, had died during the DK. She records the following account from a villager:

> "People's worth was measured in terms of how many cubic metres of dirt they moved. We had to dig canals: measure and dig, measure and dig. I'd fall carrying heavy loads. You had to work and walk until you fell, so you'd walk and fall, walk and fall: even when you got sick you did not dare to stop working because they'd kill you, so you kept working until you collapsed. They used people without a thought as to whether they would live or die" (p. 97).

These personal accounts have an intrinsic value that reaches beyond genocide numbers, as they highlight the extent of trauma, guilt and loss that still affects individuals and their relationships today.

The collapse of the regime precipitated during 1978 when internal paranoia led to purges that caused the killing of thousands of Khmer Rouge cadres.[15] In addition, in 1978, the historic hatred with Viet Nam broke once more into war, and Vietnamese troops, after launching an attack at the end of December 1978, entered Phnom Penh by 7th January 1979. The Khmer Rouge leaders fled and took refuge in the forest areas bordering Thailand.

With regard to education, Vickery agrees that in DK beyond primary education, schooling was abolished, but adds that "the view of total destruction of education needs a good deal of modification" (Vickery 1984: 183). In better run areas, children where given few hours of teaching on rural matters and manual work. Teachers who had joined the revolutionary movement or showed a proper revolutionary attitude were also not in danger. Chandler (1998) presents a different perspective, arguing that teachers considered hostile to the regime were often killed or assigned to other tasks. Ayres (2000), argues that the regime did not attribute significant importance to education; the few who worked as teachers were mainly *neak chah* (old people/rural people), almost illiterate and rarely trained while the curriculum included revolutionary songs and slogans. As a result, basic schooling remained more a policy in

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[15]   This is the period when the S21 torture centre was set up at the Tuol Sleng high school in Phnom Penh. Of the 20.000 prisoners that passed through Tuol Sleng between 1975–1978, only seven survived when they were freed by the Vietnamese on 7th January 1979 (Chandler 1991, Chandler 1998).

principle during this period. When basic schooling or technical courses were started, they were often the result of local initiatives (Vickery 1984, Thion 1993, Chandler 1998, Ayres 2000).

3.1.5   The People's Republic of Kampuchea: 1979–1989

The Vietnamese brought with them Cambodians and ex-Khmer Rouge who had defected to Viet Nam and formed the National United Front for the Salvation of Cambodia. Heng Samrin was nominated as head of the government and the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was born. The new regime confronted devastation: "there were not institutions of any kind – no bureaucracy, no army or police, no schools or hospitals, no state or private commercial network, no religious hierarchy, no legal system. Infrastructures had collapsed through neglect, and there were no functioning urban centres. Millions of people wandered the country" (Gottesman 2002 in Blunt and Turner 2005: 76). Vickery (1986) writes that "basic health care was non-existent, medicines had disappeared and there were only fifty or sixty doctors left in the country." (p. 44). Duggan (1996) suggests that "no more than 300 qualified persons from all disciplines were left in the country" (p. 365). Feelings among the Cambodian people about the Vietnamese presence are still divided today between those who consider it the liberation from the Khmer Rouge and those who think it marked the beginning of the occupation by a long time enemy. Nevertheless it must be recognised that the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia started a process of reconstruction and recovery, albeit along socialist lines and with a strongly centralist emphasis (Blunt and Turner 2005).

Western countries, led by the United States, established an embargo that denied Western aid and assigned Cambodia's United Nations' seat to the Khmer Rouge (Mysliwiec 1988). Besides Viet Nam, most of the bilateral aid came from the Soviet Union, Eastern European countries, India and a few international NGOs. United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF and WFP, were allowed to provide only humanitarian assistance.

According to one informant "people were not ready to follow a communist ideology again". Indeed, one of the main preoccupations of the PRK government was to differentiate its socialist ideology from the Khmer Rouge communism. The distinction between *neak chah* (old people/rural people) and *neak thmey* (new people/urban people) introduced in DK was abolished, freedom of movement was reintroduced, and Buddhism was allowed in a controlled form. Kent (2003) mentions that, by 1981, over 700 pagodas had been restored with significant local contributions in terms of labour, time and resources in addition to money sent by Cambodians living overseas.

The government organised agricultural production in collective *krom samaki* (solidarity groups) formed by ten–fifteen families responsible for between fifteen–twenty hectares of land (Slocomb 2003). The groups were organised in different forms to suit specific local conditions but by the end of 1984, the government estimated that only 10 per cent of the 102.500 *krom samaki* established in the country had a real collective economy.[16] This confirms that people had little interest in socialist ideas and that to them a return to normality meant rather a return to pre-war life (ibid.).

The PRK government attributed a high priority to education and, contrary to DK, considered schools an important space to legitimise the new socialist state and education a vehicles of anti Khmer Rouge propaganda (Geeves 2002). One informant explained that education was organised in a very hierarchical structure in line with the socialist preference for centralised institutional structure and the French administrative tradition.

As noted by Geeves (2000), "people were together to rebuild education" and the reconstruction effort of schools received substantial help from communities and villagers, who contributed materials and labour. Despite these efforts, however, the system suffered from an insufficient number of qualified teacher teachers as "out of the 22.000 teachers in the country at the beginning of 1970, only 7.000 were alive and in the country in 1979 and only 5.000 returned to teaching" (Mysliwiec 1988: 40). Therefore, training of teachers was provided in large numbers.[17] Duggan (1996) suggests that the massive expansion of basic education that started in 1979 has to be balanced by the very poor teaching standards and that achievements of education during this period have to be assessed against the fact that the reconstruction had to start almost from scratch. Paradoxically, as noted by Sar Nak et al. (2002), the limited capacity of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to reach and control provinces and districts favoured, more by default than by intentions, the emergence of greater community involvement in education and a broad sense of ownership of the system.

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[16] There were basically three types of *krom samaki*: the first type was based on a more collective model where the *krom* directly managed all the rice land and where the krom leader was in charge of sharing the production and of food distribution within the group; a second type where the *krom* divided the land among smaller teams of 3–5 members and where the krom leader acted as supervisor; a third type where the *krom* worked some land but families were also given land to work separately or according to mutual assistance practices (Slocomb 2003).

[17] One specific aspect of this was the scholarships offered to government staff and university students in Universities in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc (Informant).

3.1.6   Transition towards peace and democracy: 1989 – present

The fall of the Berlin Wall, that triggered the beginning of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, brought to an end the Soviet support to Viet Nam and led to the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia in late 1989. For the following four years, the PRK became the *State of Cambodia* and adopted a new constitution which reintroduced private property, a market economy, and Buddhism as the state religion. In 1991, the peace negotiations held in Paris, resulted in the decisions to deploy a United Nations peacekeeping mission called *United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia* (UNTAC) which had three main objectives: oversee the return of the 370.000 Cambodians from the refugee camps in Thailand, the demobilisation of all armed factions, and the organisation of democratic national elections. While the return of the refugees proved extremely difficult and the Khmer Rouge refused to surrender their weapons, four million people took part in the national election in May 1993. The results gave an unexpected relative majority to the royalist party, the *Front Uni National port in Camboge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif* (FUNCINPEC), of Prince Ranariddh over the *Cambodian People's Party* (CPP) of Prime Minister Hun Sen. The post-election turmoil and negotiations resulted in the creation of an uneasy coalition with the two leaders as co-prime ministers.

The UNTAC period is significant also for another reason: the arrival *en masse* of international NGOs and Western donors (Ayres 2000). This is also the period when most Cambodian NGOs (CNGOs) were started, mainly by returnees from the refugee camps in Thailand who had been exposed to the NGO idea through the international organisations working in the camps. During and after the UNTAC period CNGOs received funding from international organisations reluctant to work with the government (Mysliwiec 1988, Mysliwiec 1993, Thida Kus 2000). Duggan (1996) mentions that, from 1991 onward, as security improved, projects started in the provinces, and by 1993 more than 30 international organisations provided support (though with little coordination) to over 100 educational programs mainly focused on teacher training.

In September 1993, the National Assembly promulgated Cambodia's sixth Constitution which, in its preamble, again makes reference to the glorious Angkorean past:

> "Accustomed to having been an outstanding civilization, a prosperous, large, flourishing and glorious nation, with high prestige radiating like a diamond. Having declined grievously during the past two decades, having gone through suffering and destruction, and having been weakened terribly. Having awakened and resolutely rallied and determined to unite for the consolidation of national unity, the preservation and defence of Cambodia's territory and precious sovereignty and the fine Angkor civilization, and the restoration of Cambodia into an Island of Peace based on multi-party liberal democratic responsibility for the nation's

future destiny of moving toward perpetual progress, development, prosperity, and glory" (RGC 1993).

The constitution changed also the name of the country from State of Cambodia to *Kingdom of Cambodia*. Sihanouk, who had been in exile since 1979, was reinstated as king, albeit with reduced powers.

The coalition between FUNCINPEC and CPP did not last long. Historically, "Cambodia has enjoyed stability only when one party had complete power and the power imbalance was greatest" (Informant). Troops clashed in Phnom Penh in July 1997. Donors and international NGOs suspended most of their activities in the country. Hun Sen emerged as the strong man and was confirmed as Prime Minister by winning the national elections in 1998 which were declared "sufficiently free and fair to the extent that it reflects the will of the Cambodian people" by international observers (in Vander Weyden 2000: 619). Hun Sen's party, the CPP, won the relative majority and established a new coalition with Prince Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC. The alliance was re-confirmed after a one year stalemate following the 2004 national elections. Since 1998, Cambodia has experienced relative peace and political stability. A trial of Khmer Rouge leaders has been painstakingly negotiated amid political resistance between the government and the United Nations since 1997 and is now scheduled to start in 2007. The government has embraced market economy and has opened its borders. It is a member of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) and entered the World Trade Organisation in 2004. Nevertheless, the main human development indicators, as shown in the next section, lag behind those of other Southeast Asian countries.

3.2   Human development profile of Cambodia

Cambodia borders Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam. It is the smallest of the three former countries of Indochina (Figure 3.2). The population is 13,6 million and is growing rapidly at a rate of two per cent per annum (World Bank 2004a). The growth is due largely to the young age of the population, result of post-Khmer Rouge demographic developments (Figure 3.3). The population is relatively homogeneous with an estimated 90 per cent ethnic Khmer and the remaining 10 per cent divided between Vietnamese (the larger group), Chinese, Khmer Lou, indigenous groups, and Cham. The majority of the people live in the lowlands of the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap Lake.

Figure 3.2. Map of Cambodia (WHO 2006)
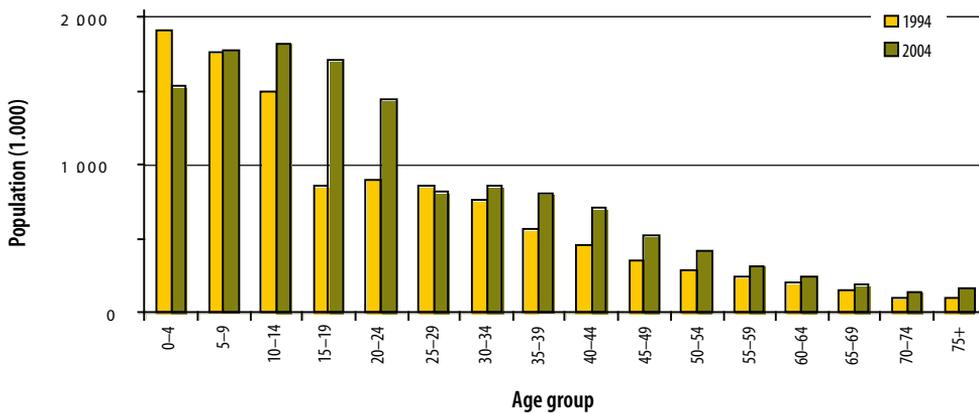
Figure 3.3. Population estimate by age group 1994/2004 (MoP 2004)

3.2.1   Human development and economic growth

The rate of economic growth between 1999 and 2003 has been high, at six–seven per cent per annum and comparable to the one of Viet Nam and Thailand (World Bank 2004, ADB 2005). Despite this progress, Cambodia ranks 130th (out of 177) in the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) and belongs to the lower end of the Medium Human Development group (UNDP 2005). During the last ten years, the HDI has remained well below that of Thailand and Viet Nam, while Lao PDR is closing the gap with Cambodia (Figure 3.4).
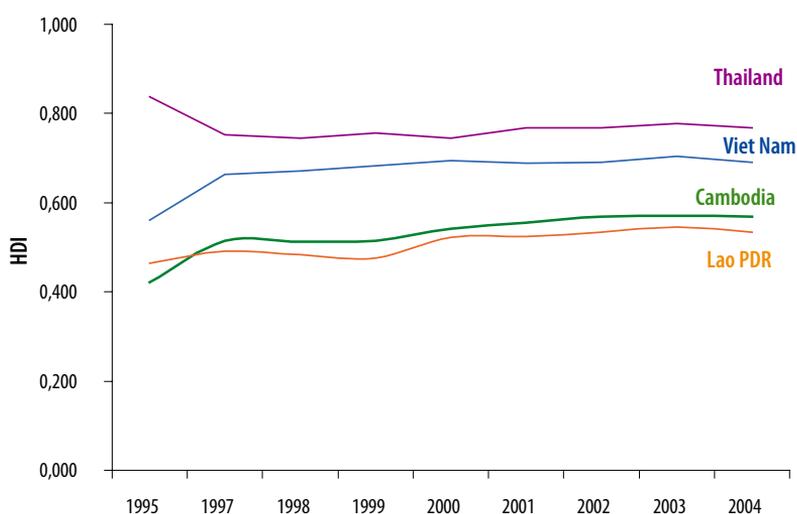
Figure 3.4. Human Development Index trend in selected countries
(UNDP 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005)

The analysis of the indicators that form the HDI (income, health, and literacy), shows in more detail some of the problems of Cambodia. Income per capital (at PPP) [18], between 1998 and 2002, has increased but remains the second lowest in the region, with an increasing gap with Viet Nam (Figure 3.5).

Poverty remains widespread in rural areas, where 85 per cent of the population lives. World Bank (2006a) estimates show that over the last ten years, the number of people living under the poverty line has decreased by between 10 and 15 per cent. Despite this, between 40 and 45 per cent of people in rural areas live under the poverty

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[18]   PPP – Purchasing Power Parity is a conversion factor that shows how much of a country's currency is needed in that country to buy what 1 USD would buy in the United States. By using the PPP conversion factor instead of the currency exchange rate, it is possible to convert a country's GNP per capita into GNP per capita in USD. For these reasons, PPP helps to compare GNPs of different countries more accurately (Soubbotina 2004).
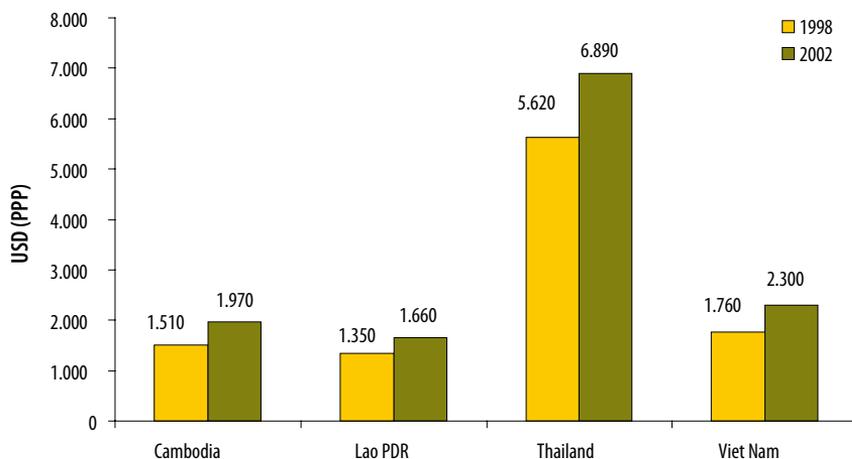
Figure 3.5. GNP per capita 1998/2002 at PPP (UNESCO 2006)

line, with peaks of 75–80 per cent in some areas around the Tonle Sap basin (ibid.).[19] According to Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates, about 35 to 40 per cent of the population has expenditure levels below the income poverty line, with 15–20 per cent living in extreme poverty (ADB 2005).

3.2.2   Human development and health

Life expectancy has increased slightly between 1997 and 2003 (from 53 to 56 years), though the gap with Viet Nam and Thailand has increased (Figure 3.6).

According to government statistics, in 2000 45 per cent of children suffered from moderate and severe malnutrition (MoP 2000). The mortality rate of children under the age of five continues to be the highest in the region and, after the improvements of the 1990s, has worsened since 2000 from 135 to 141 per thousand (Figure 3.7).[20]

Landmines casualties have markedly reduced from 4.320 (or 12 per day) in 1996, but were still high at 898 causalities in 2004 (more than 2 per day) (ICBL 2005). Psychological problems have been only recently recognised as a part of the health sector problems due to the publication of the results of studies such as the one by de Jong et al. (2001) which shows that 28,4 per cent of the population suffers from Post

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[19]   The poverty line in Cambodia was set in 2004 at 1.826 KHR per person per day which at the at 2004 exchange rates is about 0,45 USD (MoP 2004).

[20]   It should be noted that in the period 1973–1978 the figure has been estimated at 187‰ (MoH 1998).
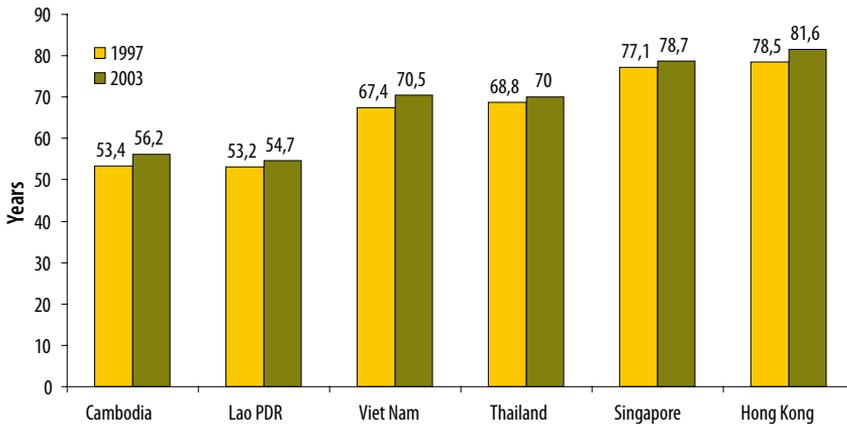
Figure 3.6. Life expectancy in selected countries 1997 and 2003 (UNDP 1999, 2005)
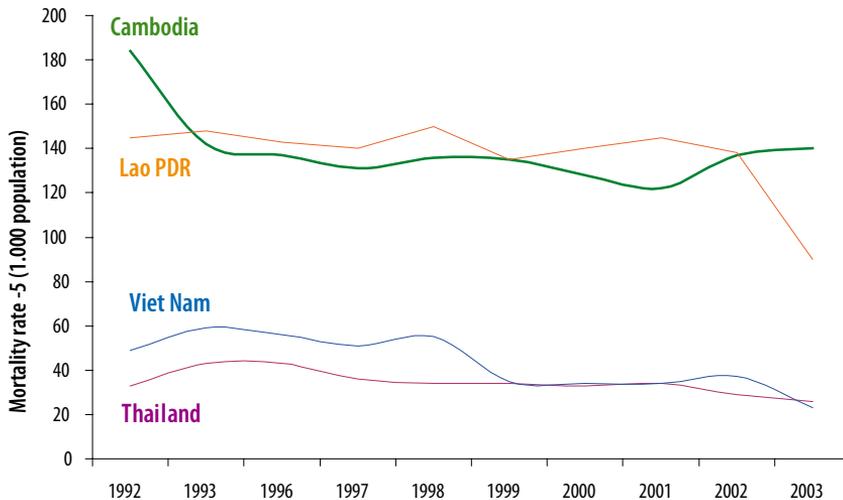
Figure 3.7. Mortality rate-5 in selected countries
(WHO 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005)

Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).[21] An additional problem which is causing great concern for the future is the HIV prevalence rate, which is estimated between 2,6 and 3,0 per cent (Bith 2004, World Bank 2006a) and is the highest in the Asia-Pacific region (Figure 3.8).

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[21] **The study was conducted between 1997 and 1999 among survivors of war or mass** violence (aged ≥16 years) randomly selected from community populations in Cambodia (N = 610) (WHO 2005).
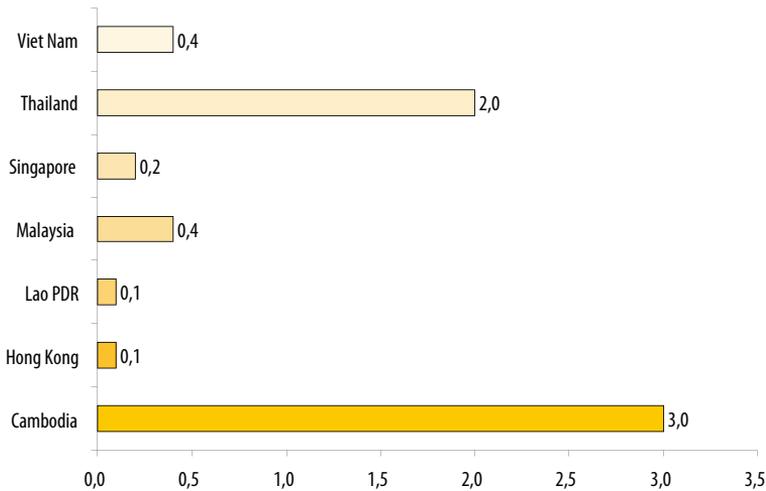
Figure 3.8. Prevalence of HIV in selected countries (% of population ages 15–49) (World Bank 2006a)

3.2.3 Human development and education

Cambodia's National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) states that one of the main causes of the high number of people living in poverty and below the national poverty line is the low level of capabilities of the population related to high illiteracy (CSD 2002). Thirty per cent of the adult population is estimated to be illiterate and the literacy rate of the population above 15 years of age in the period between 1997 and 2003 has remained the second lowest in the region (Figure 3.9) (World Bank 2006b).
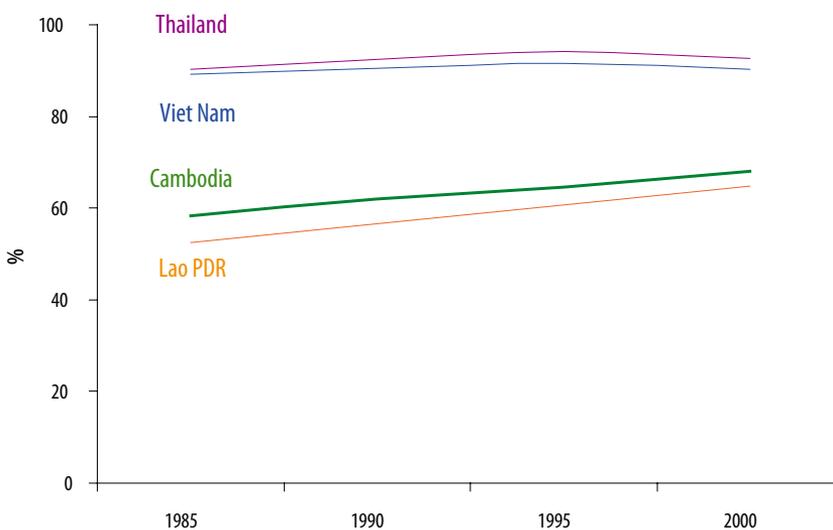
Figure 3.9. Adult literacy in population above 15 in selected countries (World Bank 2006b)

These figures have been checked with a systematic survey conducted by the MoEYS with support from UNESCO in 1999 (see So Chunn and Supote Prasestri 2000).[22]

While earlier survey were limited to questions such as "Can you read? Can you write?" with "Yes" and "No" answers, this study went more in depth by assessing functional literacy defined as "people having acquired essentials knowledge and skills in reading, writing, arithmetic and problem-solving to function effectively in all areas of their lives and contribute to their communities" (ibid.: 2). The results, projected nationwide, show that earlier estimates were optimistic and that a staggering 62,9 per cent of the adult population (or about 4 million people) in Cambodia are functionally illiterate, 36,3 per cent of the respondents were completely illiterate (24,7 per cent of males and 45,1 per cent of females) and 26,6 per cent had just a rudimentary literacy.

Table 3.2. Primary level Net Enrolment Ratio (%)

	1990	1995	2000	2003
Cambodia	66,6	97,7	90,9	93,3
Lao PDR	62,6	70,0	81,7	85,0
Thailand	75,9	n.a.	84,3	84,5
Viet Nam	90,5	87,8	95,3	94,0

Source: World Bank 2006b.

With regard to school enrolment, at the primary level, the Net Enrolment Ratio has improved since the beginning of the 1990s, to reach 93,3 per cent (Table 3.2), with male and female student enrolments at 95,5 per cent and 90,9 per cent respectively (World Bank 2006b).

Schooling in Cambodia is organised according to a 6+3+3 system: six years of primary school, three years of lower secondary, and three years of upper secondary. At the end of primary level, a diploma enables enrolment in lower secondary school, without passing any other examination. Entrance in upper secondary is determined by an examination and the availability of places. While primary education intakes have increased, dropouts remain a problem, as primary school completion rates for boys and girls are 85 and 78 per cent respectively (UNESCO 2004).

With regard to the education sector financing, the government strategy changed radically from 2000 onwards. Expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP, which were 1 per cent in 1996 and 0,9 per cent in 1997 and 1998, have risen to 1,9 per cent in 2002, although they remain lower than expenditures in some neighbouring countries (Figure 3.10), and below the average of 3,6 per cent for East Asia or 4,2 per

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[22] During the field work, 6.548 respondents aged 15 and over were interviewed and randomly selected from every province of the country with special effort to reach people in remote areas (see MoEYS 2000b in So Chunn and Supote Prasestri 2000).
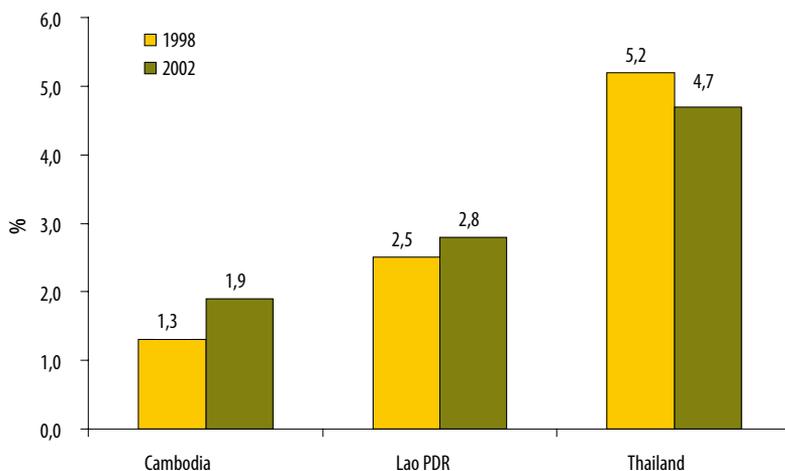
Figure 3.10. Education expenditures as percentage of GDP in selected countries (UNESCO 2006)

cent for developing countries (UNESCO 2006). The government budget allocation to education has also shown remarkable progress from between 8,4 per cent and 9,6 per cent in the period 1994–97, when in real terms funding for education fell, to 13,9 per cent in 2000 and 19,1 per cent in 2004 (Pheng et al. 2001, World Bank and ADB 2003, Bray and Seng Bunly 2005).[23]

The data presented in this section suggest that the positive rate of economic growth achieved since 1993 has not yet fully translated into an improvement in people's livelihoods. The Royal Government of Cambodia is aware of this and has drafted, with support from World Bank and the ADB, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003–2005 (NPRS) and the Second Socio-Economic Development Plan 2001–2005 (SEDP II).[24] The two papers form the basis for the Government's Rectangular Strategy 2004–2008, which aims at enhancing economic growth, employment, equity, and

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[23] Bray and Seng Bunly (2005) note that the larger proportion of this increase has been in the non-wage recurrent sector.

[24] The NGO Forum of Cambodia, an umbrella organization representing 73 local and international NGOs working in Cambodia issued a statement in 2001 questioning the need for two poverty reduction papers (NGO Forum 2001). The ADB (2005) and World Bank (2004) argued that the two documents share similarities but also have important differences. In particular, the SEDP II is a "comprehensive development program focusing on growth promotion, regional integration, and poverty reduction" (ADB 2005: 10), while the NPRS "is based on the SEDP II and elaborates the poverty reduction agenda that provides the framework for international development partners and a comprehensive set of indicators to monitor progress towards achieving Cambodia's MDGs" (ibid.). The World Bank acknowledges the problems emerging from overlapping documents, noting that "the situation has been further complicated by the production in 2003 of the Cambodia MDG Report, which introduced a third, only partially compatible official set of baseline and target indicators" (World Bank 2004: 113).

social justice (RGC 2004). Good governance is at the centre of this strategy. One of its central elements, decentralisation, is presented in the next chapter.

4 Decentralisation reforms in Cambodia and characteristics of Khmer communities

The administrative division of Cambodian territory is spelled out in Article 126 of the Cambodian Constitution (RGC 1993: Chapter XI):

> "The territory of the Kingdom of Cambodia shall be divided into provinces and municipalities. Provinces shall be divided into districts (*srok*) and districts into communes (*khum*). Municipalities shall be divided into *Khan* and *Sangkat*".[1]

The territory comprises 20 provinces and 4 municipalities, 183 districts, 1.510 communes and 111 *Sangkat*. The 13.409 villages are not considered as administrative units, but rather as administrative arms of the communes (Oberndorf 2004). This research is concerned with the administrative division of rural areas (provinces, districts and communes, as shown in figure 4.1.

As discussed in section 3.1, the current administrative structure has its origin in the colonial period, when the centre extended its control and influence to the periphery through centrally appointed officials. While provincial governors and district chiefs continue to be appointed by the government, the elections at commune level introduced in 2002 have been possible because "Cambodia has achieved a relative stability after the turmoil and political tension up to 1997, and there are the conditions to look at the future" (Informant).

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[1]   *Khan* can be translated as 'urban sector' while *Sangkat* as 'urban commune'.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           NATIONAL GOVERNMENT           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ⇕
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Province                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ⇕
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│                 District                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ⇕
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Commune Council              │
├─────────────────────────────────────────┤
│   ( Village )  ( Village )  ( Village )  │
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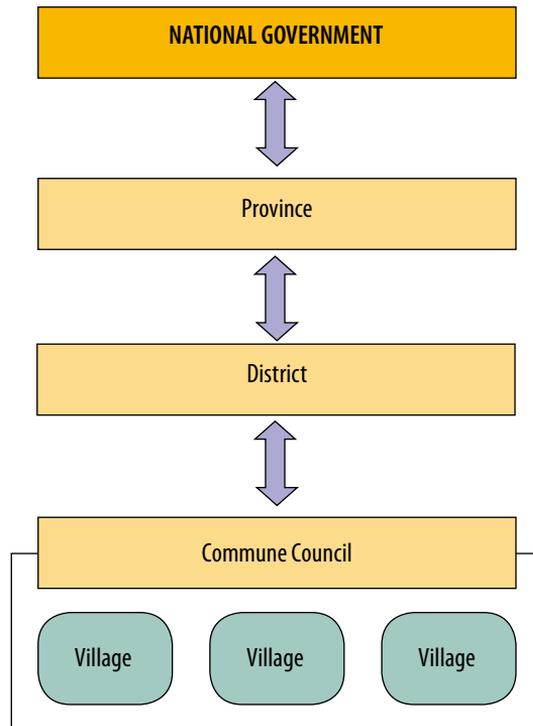
Figure 4.1. Administrative structure in rural Cambodia

The chapter is divided in two main parts. The first describes the origins and characteristics of the political decentralisation reform which started in 2001 with the promulgation of the Law on Administration and Management of Commune Councils (RGC 2001), and those of the education sector, which began ten years earlier. Reference is made to the main laws and sub-decrees that govern the process and set the main guidelines. Additionally, ministerial policy papers as well as reports commissioned by international donors providing technical assistance to relevant ministries are also reviewed. The second part of the chapter explores the main social and cultural elements that characterise and influence the meaning of 'community' in the Cambodian context.

4.1   Decentralisation and the election of Commune Councils

The origin of decentralisation in Cambodia can be traced to 1992 and the Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project (CARERE), a joint initiative between the government, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to implement reconstruction

projects at the local level (Rusten et al. 2004). CARERE II, implemented between 1996 and 2000, marked the beginning of the *Seila* programme, a joint initiative by seven ministries, and received support from donors forming the *Seila Task Force Secretariat*.[2] The second phase of *Seila* lasted five years and ended in 2005.[3] *Seila*'s goal is to contribute to poverty alleviation through good governance and the establishment of a decentralized and deconcentrated system (RGC 2000). *Seila* covers all 20 provinces of the country and has shown that decentralisation is possible by providing a role for the commune in local development (Biddulph 2000, Turner 2002, CDRI 2003). Critics of the *Seila* programme have argued that *Seila* depends heavily on donors funding and attracts skilled personnel with salary supplements (Turner 2002), the logic of its planning processes is too complicated and has led to a situation where a decentralised programme has been implemented in a centralised manner (Biddulph 1997, SIDA 1998, SIDA 2000), it has created a parallel structure to provincial and district line agencies (Informant), and has a tendency to prioritise rural infrastructure projects over sectors such as education or health.

With regard to community participation, *Seila* has contributed, since 1991, to the introduction and institutionalisation of Village Development Committees (VDCs) as the "foundation of the rural development structure and autonomous committee[s] that work to ensure coordination and communication between the village, civil society and government institutions" (MRD 1999: 4). However, according to a study by German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Ministry of Rural Development, among the approximately 8.000 VDCs that have been established, only those that receive external funding through *Seila* or NGO projects seem to be active (Hor Chan Rotha 2004).

Though *Seila* has been the basis for the design of the general decentralisation reform that were marked by the elections of Commune Councils/*Sangkats* (Commune Councils) in February 2002, its aim of 'establishing a decentralized and deconcentrated system' was only partially successful. Reverting to the definitions by Manor (1999) presented in section 2.2, *Seila* has achieved administrative deconcentration, but has produced only a limited transfer of political power and decision making authority to lower level authorities.

The Commune Councils election successfully marked the beginning of decentralisation reforms that, despite limited initial donor support, the Cambodian gov-

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[2] *Seila* is a Khmer name which means 'foundation stone' and evokes the concept of local efforts as the 'foundation' of all national development (RGC 2000). In addition to a Government contribution of 2,2ml USD, the donors supporting *Seila* during this phase were: UN, SIDA, Netherlands (total 60 ml USD). Support to local funds came from IFAD, UNCDF and World Bank. UNOPS executed the CARERE II programme (Rusten et al. 2004)

[3] *Seila* received donors' funding in two ways: a basked fund through the Partnership for Local Governance (PLG) comprising UNDP, DFID, SIDA (total 37ml USD), and additional donors' support for specific programmes and/projects by GTZ, DANIDA, UNICEF, WFP, IFAD, The World Bank, and AusAID (Rusten et al. 2004).

ernment has been determined to pursue. The reforms have three main objectives which recall the definition of political decentralisation by Rondinelli presented in section 2.2 (NCSC 2005):

- Promote democracy, good governance and equity of life;

- Give ordinary people greater opportunities to determine their future;

- Encourage greater and sustainable development, especially the delivery of basic services.

The election of the Commune Councils followed the passage of the two main pieces of legislation that form the present legal framework for decentralisation: the Law for the Election of Commune Councils (RGC 2001a) and the Law on Administration and Management of Commune Councils (LAMC) (RGC 2001). The election law has introduced a proportional system whereby votes are given to parties and not to individual candidates. In the 1.621 Commune Councils/*Sangkats* of the country, 11.261 councillors were elected, 951 (or 8,5 per cent) of whom were women (UNDP 2002). The CPP has won the 61,2 per cent of all the seats, followed by FUNCINPEC with 21,9 per cent and Sam Rainsy Party with 16,7 per cent. Other parties received the remaining 0,2 per cent (ibid.). As noted by Turner (2002), the proportional system means that more than one party can be represented in the same commune.

The LAMC (RGC 2001) states that the Commune Council must be formed by between five to eleven members depending on the population (Figure 4.2). The Commune Chief (the first name of the most popular list) has two deputies (from the list of the next most successful party/ies). The Commune Clerk, who is an appointed staff of the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for administrative (or agency) functions such as civil and election registration. The Commune Council can establish sub-committees composed by councillors and villagers to advise and assist the commune (RGC 2001: Chapter 3, Article 27). One sub-committee is mandatory: the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC), which is comprised of the commune chief, and two representatives (a man and a woman) from each village in the commune (RGC 2002a). The primary responsibility of the PBC is to "assist the Commune/*Sangkat* chief in the preparation of the Commune/Sangkat development plan, investment program and annual budget" (ibid: Chapter 2, Article 9).

The Commune Councils' role and functions are stated in rather general terms in the law and include: maintain public security and order; arrange for the provision of necessary public services and ensure the proper implementation of the services; promote and encourage the comfort and contentment of residents; promote social and economic development and upgrade the living standards of residents; protect and conserve the environment, natural resources, national culture and heritage; reconcile differences of opinion and encourage mutual understanding and tolerance between residents; undertake general affairs to meet the needs of residents (RGC 2001:

Elected members   Appointed member
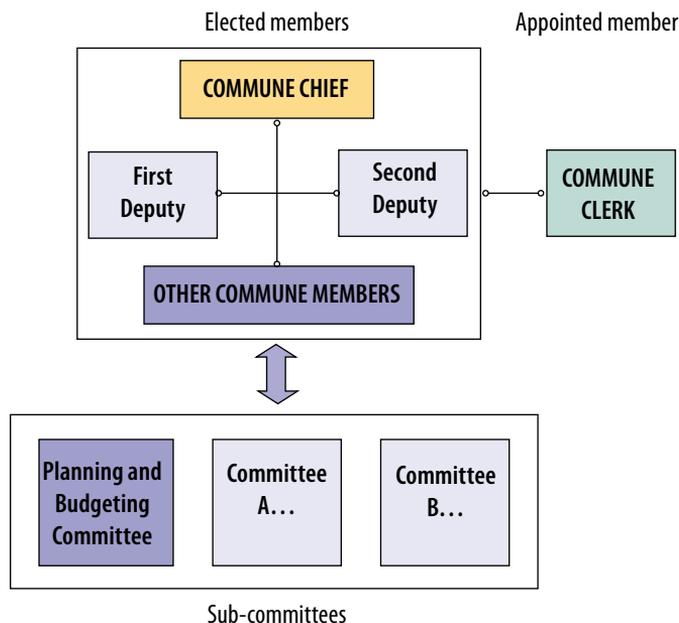
Figure 4.2. Commune Council structure

Chapter 4, Article 43). The LAMC is also not clear in its description of the mecha-
nisms that could enable greater consultations and participation by villagers in local
development and local governance, besides mentioning the mandatory selection (not
election) of village chiefs (*mephum*) by the Commune Councils (RGC 2001: Chapter
3, Article 30). It further states that the village chief "shall represent all residents of the
village and act as a main link between the village and Commune/*Sangkat* Council"
and that he/she should "participate in meetings of various commune committees
to share views on matters relating to the village; … regularly consult with residents
of his/her village" (RGC 2002: Chapter 2, Article 23 and 24). These are important
articles, for they describe the need to establish two clear links: a horizontal bridge
between village chief and villagers on matters of village development, and a vertical
link with the Commune Council.

Citizen consultation is described in sub-decree N. 022 (RGC 2002) which pre-
scribes that: "A Commune/*Sangkat* Council shall actively promote and facilitate the
process of democracy in the Commune/*Sangkat* by developing mechanisms to con-
sult with Commune/*Sangkat* residents and community organisations" (Chapter 1,
Article 12). It fails, however, to explain how this should take place. The main spaces
for citizens' participation described in the LAMC are the annual Commune Invest-
ment Planning process and the monthly Commune Council meeting where "every
Commune/*Sangkat* resident can attend … but cannot vote" (RGC 2002: Chapter 3,
Article 30*)*.

The first mandate of the Commune Councils will expire in the end of 2006 and must be considered mainly as a learning experience (Rusten et al. 2004). The government commitment to political decentralisation has produced positive achievements such as the preparation of five years commune development plans and improvements in internal administration of communes (Turner 2002, Rusten et al. 2004). A survey conducted in 2004 has shown that citizens perceive commune performance positively and trust them more than district or provincial authorities (Kim Ninh and Henke 2005). The main problems encountered by the reform so far are:

➢ The absence of an Organic Law on decentralisation which has resulted in the government relying on sub-decrees to regulate specific aspects of the reform and confirms the perception of an incremental and non unitary approach to decentralisation (Turner 2002).

➢ The distinctive policies that underline the present reform led to a perception that political decentralisation and administrative deconcentration are separate policies, with the two progressing at a different pace. The Cambodian government is responding to this perception through by drafting an Organic Law which is expected to be voted by the National Assembly during 2007.

➢ Communes have no financial autonomy and receive grants from the central government which are still limited. Turner (2002), calculated an average of 1.000 – 2.000 USD per Commune in the year 2002. These amounts were increased in 2003, when Communes were divided in two groups: 1A (1.037 Communes) receiving on average 6.846 USD for development activities and 1B (584 Communes) receiving 1.897 USD (STF 2003).[4]

➢ While the general tone of the law avoids the establishment of formalised and rigid spaces for participation and successfully limits the perception of an extension of the state into the realm of civil society, it is unclear about how to involve already existing bodies such as VDCs. Consequently it could limit local initiatives since it is not explained in more detail about how participation can take place within the existing legislative framework (Pellini and Ayres 2005).

4.2   Decentralisation in the education sector

Education is indicated as one of the most important sectors in Cambodia's NPRS. Accordingly, the government is committed "to address simultaneously supply, demand, quality, and efficiency constraints focusing especially on the poorest and the groups at risk of exclusion" (CSD 2002: 6). Several educational policies have been drafted to meet the targets mentioned in the main international conventions from

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[4]   **The total budget for Commune Councils' development activities in the fiscal year 2003 was 10ml USD to be disbursed in three instalments. In September 2003, only 42,5 per cent had been transferred to the councils (STF 2003).**

Jomtien to Dakar. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2001-2005 (MoEYS 2000), updated with the ESP 2006-2010 (MoEYS 2005), lists a series of strategies to achieve the policy goal of Education for All and, with regard to decentralisation, a greater delegation of authority and responsibilities to provincial, district, commune and school level. A second policy document, the Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) 2002-2006 (MoEYS 2001), now updated for the period 2006-2010 (MoEYS 2005a), describes how the policies and strategies laid out in the ESP will be put into practice. The ESSP stresses the importance of partnership for the education sector between government agencies, NGOs and civil society and defines the main guidelines for the decentralisation of education by listing a series of responsibilities delegated to Provincial and District Offices of Education, Communes and individual schools. In June 2003, the MoEYS launched a third policy document: the Education For All National Plan 2003-2015 (MoEYS 2003a), which defines the strategy for achieving the EFA targets and integrates the ESP and ESSP. The main feature of the Education For All National Plan is to introduce planning through Education For All Committees (EFAC) established at national as well as local level. The role of these Committees is to develop implementation plans which will lead to the achievement of Education for All targets.[5]

Historically, education was decentralised, in the sense that the teaching that took place in pagodas was organised locally. Centralisation of education started in the colonial period with the reform of the public administration. Today, decentralisation, as noted by Losert and Coren (2004), does not appear as a specific goal in any education policy document. It is rather a crosscutting issue to enable more localized decision making processes with a strong element of Manor's definition of deconcentration (see Chapter Two, section 2.2). Education is nevertheless regarded as the sector where there have been the greatest advances in both areas (Turner 2002a) and two government initiatives appear prominently: the Cluster School policy and the Priority Action Program.

4.2.1 Cluster Schools: key aspects

The peace process that started in 1990 and saw the arrival of UNTAC in 1992 opened Cambodia's doors to international aid. Due to security concerns, the initial assess-

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[5]   **National, Provincial, District and Commune EFA Committees. The Commune Education** for All Committee (CEFAC) is the committee at the lowest level. Its members are the school director, the commune chief, and the village chief. The CEFAC meets regularly to discuss the needs of schools in the commune. One informant mentioned that at the moment (i.e. 2006) the National EFA Committee (NEFAC) is the only EFA functioning body. CEFACs are not functioning as they do not receive funding from donors or action plans from the government. They may become redundant once Commune Councils will become more involved with education.

ments on the state of education were limited in their geographical coverage but found that primary schools had "regional variations but [were] fairly organized all over the country and with community participation" (Galasso 1990: 7). The main problems identified were the low quality of teaching, limited human and material resources at both the central and local levels, and centralized decision-making processes that limited participation in schools. "Based on these assessments and the experience of Thailand, the government decided in 1991 to implement a Cluster School approach" (Informant). In 1992, the MoEYS launched a pilot in cooperation with Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway) in three provinces and with UNICEF in six more (ibid.). The following year, the MoEYS established the National Cluster School Committee to start the planning of a nationwide expansion of the approach. This initial phase is described by Bredenberg (2002) as a period of 'cautious optimism', since the approach was implemented with control from the central ministry and a limited degree of autonomy for the clusters. In 1995, the development of Cluster Schools became a national policy through the adoption of the directive 334 EYS/S.N.N. (MoEYS 2000a: 5). This second phase, until 1998, is defined as a period of 'rapid expansion and stalled evolution'. Donors changed the form of support, from direct funding, to grants disbursed after proposals were prepared in the schools and clusters (ibid.). The third period, from 2000 to 2001, has been characterised by a 'convergence of project designs'. This phase is marked by the MoEYS recognition of its own limitations and shortcomings in managing a rapidly expanding education sector and study tour visits by MoEYS officials to other countries in the region (Geeves 2002).

Clusters are defined in the Cluster School Guidelines (MoEYS 2000a) as "an effective working mechanism to provide direct support for the community in order to promote educational access for children" (p.5). In Cambodia clusters average five to six 'satellite schools' around a 'core school' and follow the structure described by Bray (1987) presented in Chapter Two (section 2.4.1). Government statistics show that, in 2000-2001, 95 per cent of the 5.468 primary schools in Cambodia were grouped in a total of 760 clusters. Of these, 325 (43 per cent), received direct support from donors (Table 4.1).[6] The remaining 435 clusters lagged behind, with inadequate human and financial resources (Bredenberg 2002, MoEYS 2002, Losert and Coren 2004). The policy involves a certain degree of deconcentration by assigning to the Provincial Offices of Education tasks such as the creation of Provincial, District and Local Cluster School Councils, and the establishment of cluster libraries and resource centres (Pellini 2007).

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6   This figure does not include the clusters that have received support in the past and have now been phased out.

Table 4.1. Donor supported projects in Cluster Schools

Program/Agency	Number of clusters	Activity	Support started in
EQIP/World Bank	157	Technical assistance and materials	1998
UNICEF and SIDA	60	Technical assistance and materials	1993
Redd Barna	41	Technical assistance and materials	1992
Kampuchea Action for Primary Education (KAPE)	14	Technical assistance and materials	1999
World Education	Ca.50	Technical assistance	1998
CARE	3	Technical assistance	1998
Total supported clusters	325		
Total unsupported clusters	435		
TOTAL	760		

Source: Bredenberg 2002.

Furthermore, the MoEYS (2000a) guidelines prescribe also a complex structure of Cluster School Committees (CSC) at all levels of the education administration, from the National Cluster School Committee, to Cluster School Committees at provincial and district level. Cluster School Committees "must have a Council for consultation, discussion, evaluation of outcomes and planning continued activities" (ibid.: 19). This Council is called Local Cluster School Committee (LCSC) and is selected in the core school of the cluster. Members of the LCSC are the principal of the core school as chairperson and a senior monk, village chief, commune chief, chairperson of VDC, and local people (ibid.). The main tasks of the LCSC are to assist the development and implementation of all cluster's plans, liaise with local authorities, involve communities in school activities, and coordinate with the District Education Office. To make things more complicated, the MoEYS guidelines indicate that "in order to promote child rights in schools and communities", the LCSC is divided into a Cluster School Council and Local Cluster School Committee (ibid.: 22). These committees are meant to improve school governance and participation. The result, however, is a complex organisational structure that probably exists only on paper and in which members are not clear about tasks and objectives (Informant).

The cluster system has been the basis for several donor initiatives to support primary education. The Education Quality Improvement Project (EQIP), which started in 1998 with a 5ml USD loan from the World Bank and ended in 2004 (Turner 2002, World Bank 2005), aimed at producing a model for quality improvement through grants given to individual clusters. The grants are based on plans prepared by the

clusters through a consultative process involving school staff, communities and LCSC members (Geeves et al. 2002). The grants have been used to implement activities such as: staff training, improvement of the school environment, supply of teaching materials, support to community participation, and improving students' health and nutrition. EQIP was first started in 10 clusters in the province of Takeo and was gradually expanded to reach 157 clusters comprising 984 schools (representing 18 per cent of Cambodia's primary schools and 23 per cent of Cambodia's primary school enrolments) in three provinces: Takeo, Kandal, and Kampot.

EQIP is important for several reasons. First of all, it marked the decision of the government to implement education support projects that did not involve a construction component and addressed mainly educational quality (MoEYS 2002). Second, EQIP tried to encourage local level innovative activities and supported decision making processes at school level that involved community representatives. Third, it aimed at increasing accountability by providing a budget to clusters in the hands of the authors of the plans and letting them implement and monitor it (Geeves et al. 2002). EQIP coordination was given to a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) at the MoEYS. At provincial and district level, thirty-two 'animators' were in charge of training and activity support at cluster and school level. They were ministerial staff and received a salary supplement from the project. A total of sixteen expatriate staff provided technical assistance to the Ministry staff at the PIU and to district animators (ibid.).[7]

While EQIP has had a positive effect on promotion rates and in decreasing student dropout in the target provinces (World Bank 2005), the experience has also helped to highlight opportunities as well as limitations of the Cluster School approach. Clusters can be a channel of financial resources to locally planned activities. Accordingly, EQIP proved popular in participating clusters because the grant process that had been introduced was considered transparent and timely (Turner 2002a). EQIP has shown that accountability in the use of financial resources in clusters increases when a large number of stakeholders take part in the planning process. EQIP has therefore shown that it is possible to achieve localized decision making processes whereby planned activities reflect local needs and concerns (ibid.). The government cluster review concluded that "with their strong focus on planning, Cluster School projects have provided a structured context for schools to collectively make decisions based on a rationalized assessment of local needs" (MoEYS 2002: 9).

Clusters also represent a suitable structure to organize community contributions to education, which in Cambodia have traditionally been substantial. A study by Bray (1999) found that households contributed in various forms 77 per cent of the total expenditures for primary education. A follow up study by Bray and Seng Bunly

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[7]   The project employed or seconded a total of 56 full-time staff from the MoEYS. Technical advisers were divided into one at the MoEYS, one in each province and 12 Education Advisers (four in each province) from the Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) funded by DfID.

in 2004, found that household contributions remain high at 56 per cent of the total expenditures despite government efforts to increase its share (Bray and Seng Bunly 2005). The success of the school feeding programme implemented in cooperation with World Food Programme (WFP) under EQIP confirmed that parents and communities are ready to participate in groups at school level in charge of setting up a food preparation area.[8] This shows that clusters offer opportunities for informal (or transient) groups set up for specific purposes (Pellini 2005).

The positive elements of the cluster approach and the positive experiences of EQIP have to be balanced with some limitations. First of all, the low level of teachers' salaries posed a serious limit to the commitment to undertake new activities. Geeves et al. (2002) found that although teachers received additional training, often they did not apply what they had learned because they needed to find additional sources of income outside their teaching job. Second, the positive experiences of the EQIP project have not been sufficient to dissipate doubts about whether the model can be replicated. The establishment of a PIU helped to coordinate and monitor project activities but, at the same time, has placed the project 'outside' the official system. Additionally, a nationwide replication would pose serious problems in terms of high input of human recourses (e.g. animators) that the government is in no position to fund (Geeves et al. 2002, Turner 2002a). A third limit has been the emergence of a two-tiered cluster system whereby only clusters that receive external support seem to be operational. In this they are similar to VDCs, which also depend on the financial support from external sources.

The Commune Council elections brought additional elements of uncertainty. Education is not specifically mentioned in the role and functions of the Communes but is included in many commune development plans, in the form of school construction and renovation projects (Kim Ninh and Henke 2005). An additional difficulty in terms of policy coordination is that clusters aren't administrative units of the MoEYS and their borders, as shown in figure 4.3, do not correspond to the commune boundaries. Further, the commune chief is at the same time a member of the LCSC and the Commune Education For All Committee (CEFAC). Both committees are in charge of establishing plans to improve education in the schools of the cluster/commune (Losert and Coren 2004).

The MoEYS has addressed these problems in the cluster review of 2002, concluding that while education must remain a primary responsibility of the MoEYS and its line agencies, communes can play a role in strengthening the accountability of school staff by being informed about planning at the cluster level. A second area of cooperation is the exchange of information about poor families that could then be supported with scholarships. These are initial steps which have still to be translated into concrete moves.

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8   Geeves et al. (2002) mention that the school feeding programme in cooperation with WFP was so successful that it led to an increase in under-age enrolment in the first class.
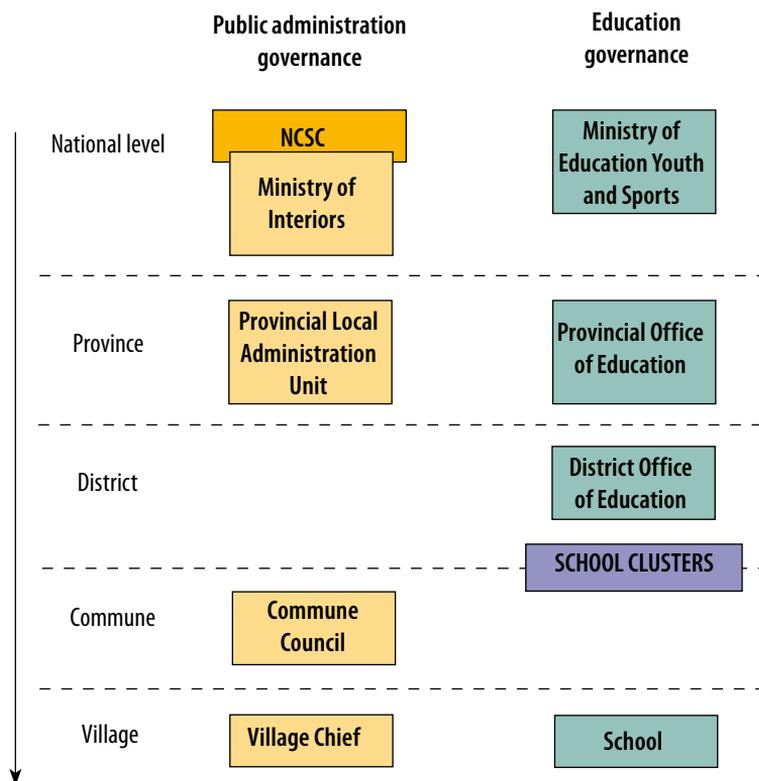
Figure 4.3. Decentralised governance of education and the public administration

4.2.2 Priority Action Program for basic education

A study by Pak Kimchoeun (2006), describes the Cambodian budget system as using a "traditional centralised approach derived largely from the French system … once the budget is approved, it is rigidly implemented with a high degree of centralised authority" (p.1).[9] Approval from the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoF) is required for fund transfers within budget lines. The Ministry and its provincial departments, as well as the national and provincial treasuries, oversee and approve spending, procurements and payments. The whole system is acknowledged to be ineffective and prone to financial leakages and lack of transparency. In 2000, to try to solve these problems, the government introduced changes in the national budget disbursement system for the education and health sectors. The MoF, in cooperation with MoEYS and the Ministry of Health, established the Priority Action Program (PAP) to channel funds more efficiently to the local level, bypassing rigidities and

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9   The study by Pak Kimchoeun (2006) was undertaken by the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) and involved 200 primary schools in 21 districts in seven provinces: in each school, interviews were conducted with the school directors, six teachers, three members of the school support committee and six parents. School records were also checked.

delays caused by the traditional centralised budget execution system. As shown in the previous chapter, section 3.2.3, the government decided at the same time to increase the financial resources to education (World Bank and ADB 2003 in Bray and Seng Bunly 2005).

PAP started as a pilot in ten provinces in 2000 with the aim "to reduce the cost burden of the poorest families and to increase participation of their children in grades 1-9" (Bray and Seng Bunly 2005: 13). It has been expanded to all 20 provinces and four municipalities in 2001 and represents the government strategy to finance the ESP and achieve the EFA goals (ibid.). The MoEYS has defined 12 PAPs (Table 4.2) that serve to guide the allocation of financial resources. The most relevant budget line in PAP is PAP 2 (i.e. Primary Education Quality and Efficiency) which represents over a quarter of the entire PAP budget (Pak Kimchoeun 2006)[10].

Table 4.2. Priority Action Programs for education

PAP 1	Education Service Efficiency
PAP 2	Primary Education Quality and Efficiency
PAP 3	Secondary Education Quality and Efficiency
PAP 4	Technical and Vocational Education Quality Efficiency
PAP 5	Quality and Efficiency of Higher Education
PAP 6	Continuous Teacher Development
PAP 7	Sustainable Provision of Core Instructional Material
PAP 8	Expansion of Non-Formal Education
PAP 9	Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness
PAP 10	Sports Development
PAP 11	Strengthen Monitoring Systems
PAP 12	Scholarships and Incentives for Equitable Access

Source: MoEYS 2001.

Under PAP 2 , particularly relevant is PAP 2.1, Primary School Operational Budget, which provides budget grants to schools based on a formula which comprises an equal lump sum for all schools of 500.000 KHR (125 USD) plus the total number of students multiplied by an individual allowance of 6.000 KHR (1,5 USD) (ibid.).

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10   In 2003 out of 77bl KHR (ca. 19ml USD) for the twelve PAP, PAP 2 received 34 per cent of the whole allocation (Pak Kimchoeun 2006). In 2002 out of 73,1bl KHR (ca. 18,2ml USD) for the whole PAP, PAP 2 received 23,9bl KHR (ca. 5,9ml USD) 32 per cent (MoEYS 2003).

Turner (2002, 2002a) has argued that while PAP is not decentralisation in itself, PAP could not work without the delegation of decision making. The disbursement of funds reached individual schools in an average of six instalments during the budget year 2002 (Pak Kimchoeun 2006). This transfer does not use the banking system. Instead the Provincial Office of Education picks up the cash from the Provincial Treasury and passes it to the District Office of Education and schools. For management procedures Budget Management Centres were created in Provincial Offices of Education and in 144 of the 185 District Offices of Education (ibid.). With PAP schools know how much they will receive and have to prepare yearly plans with the involvement of parents, community members, and Commune Councils.

Initial assessments of PAP have shown improvement in several areas. First of all, the decision that accompanied PAP to abolish school registration fees to increase school enrolment has produced a large increase in the number of students. Bray and Seng Bunly (2005) have calculated that between 1996-97 and 2003-2004, primary school enrolment expanded by 36,5 per cent. This means, for the primary level, an average annual growth of 10,2 per cent. Student enrolment increases have been faster than teachers' employment, which has contributed to a worsening in student-teacher ratios from 37,5 in 1985 to 55,1 in 2004 (World Bank 2006b).

A second achievement of the PAP is the improved allocation of government spending in education. PAP represents the largest share in the non-wage budget increase for education (Bray and Seng Bunly 2005). Overall, according to a World Bank report (2005), "though it is very difficult to ascertain how much of the recent improvement in enrolment rates, particularly at the primary level, can be attributed to the various PAPs …. it is safe to say that PAP has played an important role, particularly as to the removal of school fees and the accompanying school operational budgets" (p. 76).

The main change compared with previous policies has been the decision to provide budgets directly to individual schools, thus bypassing the cluster system. Unfortunately disbursements have suffered from delays and lack of coordination between the MoEYS and the MoF which controls the release of the budget. In the last quarter of 2001, only 56 per cent of the PAP funds for that year had been released (Turner 2002). The situation did not improve in 2002, when the MoEYS estimated that only 46 per cent of the PAP funds had been released. While disbursements are subject to delays, leakages of funds, especially in PAP 2.1, are quite limited, with a funding gap for the fiscal year 2002 calculate at only 4,2 per cent (Pak Kimchoeun 2006). The reason for this relatively low leakage is that schools know the formula and therefore how much they should receive, the various administration levels involved do not have much power to capture funds, and there is a justified perception among officials that inspections and audits of the fund are heavy.

With regard to participation in school governance, the achievements of PAP are mixed. Data from the MoEYS (2002) shows that between 60 and 80 per cent of parents know about the abolition of school registration fees and just 20 per cent indicated

that they had been involved in some form of awareness about the school committees' roles and plans. Only 10 per cent of parents have received information about school spending and the availability of budgets. For Pak Kimchoeun (2006), community participation in PAP is therefore still limited. School Associations are not much involved in PAP spending, as this is considered a responsibility of the school director and teachers. In addition, they also do not seem to have a role in the monitoring of the PAP, and focus on school construction and improvement. Only nine per cent of the parents interviewed in the study were aware of the PAP and none of the parents interviewed knew about the details of the funds.

According to Turner (2002) PAP has helped to decentralise decision making processes, but problems in the funds' release, and rules that impede shifts of unspent funds between PAPs raise questions about the willingness of the central government to provide and increase autonomy to schools and line agencies. For these reasons, PAP has been described as a weak form of decentralisation (World Bank 2004).

To conclude, Cluster School approach and PAP share similar goals: reduction of dropout and repetitions, and increases in parents and community participation in school governance. Both policies apply decentralised management. Where they differ and contradict each other is in the provision of funding to the local level. While clusters remain an official government policy, it is likely that in the future they will loose even more importance with the MoEYS as PAP has been relatively successful in strengthening the capacity of individual schools as well as Budget Management Centres in the provinces (Personal communication). This follows also the decision taken, with international donors, to continue the Sector-Wide Approach (SWA) in education, which in Cambodia started in 1999 (GDPWG 2004). [11] Based on the SWA principles funding is no longer organized via bilateral projects, but rather through a single sector policy and expenditure program and a closer cooperation and coordination with and between donor agencies that results in the government being in the proverbial 'drivers' seat' (Gould et al. 1998). The impact of SWA in the Cambodian education is reflected by the preparation of the ESP and ESSP, which as described by Takala (1998), are a typical result of the adoption of a sector approach.[12]

With regard to the link between communities and schools, Cluster Schools and PAP represent policies that attempt to create and strengthen spaces of community

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[11] The total amount of donor funding to education for the period 2001-2007 has been calculated at 321.164.224 USD, divided among the following donors now joining in the SWAP: ADB (26 per cent), France (6 per cent), AusAID (3 per cent), BTC (Belgium) (2,7 per cent), DfID (1,5 per cent), European Commission (8,9 per cent), JICA (10,1 per cent), SIDA (channelled though UNICEF) (3,1 per cent), UNESCO (1,8 per cent), UNICEF (10,1 per cent), WFP (7,5 per cent), USAid (2,1 per cent), World Bank (17,1 per cent) (GDPWG 2004).

[12] SWA can also have negative outcomes such as the creation of an 'inner' and 'outer' group of donors, the concentration of effort in the ministry in the capital, the exclusion of NGOs and civil society organizations from the discussion and decision making process, and an increase in the administrative burden and external tolls for monitoring and evaluation (Sack et al. 2004).

participation. They have helped to achieve a greater upward accountability from schools towards line agencies mainly through planning and reporting. However, with regard to downward accountability to parents and communities, the results have been weak. Turner (2002) shows that there is still evidence of 'etiquette participation' with communities responsible for planning and management of material contributions and teachers and headmasters responsible for educational issues. The expectations attached to participation have to be balanced with cultural elements that define which traditional norms and values characterise participation in education. In the next section, these elements are explored starting with the meaning of 'community' in the Cambodian context. This discussion serves as a background for the empirical analysis in Chapter Six.

4.3   Cambodian communities: main concepts

The search for a single definition of the word 'community' is not simple. Bray (2000) has pointed out that the term can mean different things to different people in different contexts. This diversity is reflected in the outcome of an international conference, the *Meaning of Community in Cambodia*, which took place in Phnom Penh in 1999. Thion (1999), in an article that summarised the proceedings, noted that the discussion did not result in one single definition of 'Cambodian community', but three.[13] The first made a clear distinction between pre-Pol Pot communities, characterised by a network of mutual relationships between individuals, and post-Pol Pot communities where relationships and networks had been destroyed (Meas Nee 1999, Watts 1999). The second argued that community feelings have survived the civil war and Khmer Rouge regime and that in Cambodia it is possible to apply two definitions: *geographical community*, the people who live and share common institutions in a certain geographical area (e.g. village) and *functional community*, people who join in formal or informal groups to share problems and act together to solve them. The third definition highlighted the importance of the *link between family members* and pointed out that in Cambodia cooperation between individuals rarely exists beyond this level.

Cambodian communities present elements of all three definitions. Ledgerwood and Vijghen (2002) have suggested that communities have neither been swept away by the war and the Khmer Rouge regime, nor are they returning to their pre-war characteristics. They argue that the concept of 'community' is rather being constantly recreated through people's everyday decisions, actions, the adoption of a market

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[13]   He also noted that the translation into Khmer of the word 'community' is not simple. The Khmer word *sahakum* can in fact be used indifferently for community, society, and union (Thion 1999).

economy, and the presence of donors with their development projects. The argument by Ledgerwood and Vijghen is relevant because it does not limit the idea of community to a specific geographical area such as the village, but expands it to include social capital elements such as individual relations and actions which go beyond the village's border.

As mentioned by Aschmoneit et al. (1996), in the rural areas of Cambodia it is common to find different organizations and groups involved in self help initiatives. At the village level, households often create mutual help groups that exchange labour, animals, or agricultural tools. Village associations, linking most families of a village, are also created to run more organized self-help activities such as credit groups. Beyond the village, the pagoda is usually the space where village groups and associations meet to organise and manage the collection of material contributions by villagers.

Based on these elements, the definition of rural community adopted in this study is the one by Aschmoneit et al. (1997): "a cluster of villages related to a pagoda as its social, cultural and religious center" (p. 3). The key elements that characterise the structure and nature of Cambodian rural communities which are explored in the following sections are: kinship and patronage, trust, and Buddhism. These elements are not just the basic social characteristics relevant for Cambodia, but also other Asian rural societies.

4.3.1   Kinship and patronage

Kinship and patronage constitute two important "building blocks of the Khmer peasant village" (Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002: 112). With regard to the former, Ebihara argues that "though kinship is not as critical for the organization and functioning of the Khmer peasant society as it is in some other cultures; nonetheless it constitutes one of the most important bases for interpersonal relationships in village life" (1968: 93). Most villages in Cambodia, she explains, originated from a cluster of households of close kinsmen so that the links between individuals include the extended family which has often represented the survival mechanism in periods of conflict (Ebihara 1968, Coletta and Cullen 2000, Thida Kus 2000). Kinship represents "an important base for the functioning of a Khmer peasant community" (Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002: 113). The bounds between kinsmen are strong, though the displacement and losses produced by the years of conflicts have altered the relationships between kinsmen in a way that it is not possible to think of a return to a pre-war kind of community (Aschmoneit et al.1997, Meas Nee 2003).

The bonding links between kinsmen also shape the social hierarchy and contribute to strengthen it in a way that can lead to exclusion and limited solidarity towards individuals who do not belong to one's family circle or hierarchical level (Pellini and

Ayres 2005). Gyallay-Pap (2004) attributes this, among other things, to the French *mission civilisatrice* which introduced a centralised administrative structures and the idea of nation state that influenced negatively the "shared cultural symbolism, religious and moral norms, and communal activities that characterised villages in rural areas" (p. 35). At the same time, it must be noted that the influence of the French administration has not been strong in rural areas, where villagers had no choice but to develop during periods of crisis coping systems and self-help initiatives.[14]

Patronage represents the second 'building block' of Khmer peasant society. In the past, as shown in Chapter Three (section 3.1.1), individuals were defined as either *neak mean* (the ones who have) and *neak kro* (the ones who do not have). Strong patron – client relationships have always been a characteristic of Cambodian rural communities and came under attack during the Khmer Rouge regime. While in the West patronage has a negative connotation and is usually linked to exploitation, in the Cambodian context, though it can also have negative effects, it is perceived as common sense, since people search for security during troubled times (Meas Nee and Hailey 1995, Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002). The reciprocity between patron and client is based on a form of trust linked to the moral obligations between the two parties and constitute a key social bond in the community (Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002). Patronage is inbuilt in Cambodian traditions and has provided, in addition to kinship, a survival mechanism. In Cambodian society, it is therefore only fair to support one's clientele and the interest of the group is often put before the interest of individuals in need. This has resulted in a preference towards hierarchical relations, a general unwillingness to take initiative without clear approval from above, and a reluctance by people to actively take part in public meetings (Ebihara 1968, Vickery 1984, O'Leary and Meas Nee 2001, Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002, Rusten et al. 2004).

Patron-client relationships are also changing as community relationships are being transformed by modernisation, liberalization of the economy, the monetarization of social relations, and rural-urban migration (Ovensen et al. 1996, Krishnamurthy 1999, Kim Sedara 2001). According to Meas Nee, 'traditional patronage' has now been replaced by a different kind of patronage linked to political power, thereby fuelling corruption. In his opinion, the limited trust between people has reduced community solidarity and pushed people to see money as the alternative. The long term effect is the emergence of a culture of corruption with repercussions in terms of trust towards public authorities (Meas Nee and Healy 2003).

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14   For a more in depth analysis, see Pellini and Ayres 2005.

4.3.2   The question of trust

One respondent, talking about his memories of village life during the Khmer Rouge period, concluded that "Pol Pot divided the people" (Informant). These words summarise the impact of the regime and the years of conflict on individual relationship and the erosion of trust. According to Meas Nee and Healy (1995), this erosion had started in 1970, with the coup that ousted Prince Sihanouk and marked the beginning of the civil war.

During the Khmer Rouge regime, the destruction of trust was almost total. The regime recruited people to spy on one another, family members were separated, monks were killed and pagoda destroyed. Meas Nee remembers that "as trust was broken, we reached a time when we could think only of ourselves and our great needs; the dignity and pride of our identity, formerly an important part of our lives, entirely disappeared" (ibid.: 27). After the defeat of the Khmer Rouge by the Vietnamese army, trust could not easily return to communities, as many Cambodians felt that they had been rescued by their long time enemy and the political ideology of the PRK reminded them one too much of the Khmer Rouge.

Despite this huge damage, it is argued here that trust and social capital have not been completely destroyed. For example, Krishnamurthy (1999) in her study of two villages in the provinces of Kampong Speu (Prey Koh and Prasath), found social capital linked to pagodas had been temporarily suspended, but not destroyed. During the PRK, the revival of spontaneous social and religious life was based on the urgent need for basic village infrastructure and, more importantly, on people's strong sense of self-help and the powerful role of Buddhist traditions (ibid.). For these reasons, the claim that trust is the missing element of social cohesion in Cambodian society, is not valid (see de Monchy in UNICEF 1996). Though solidarity and trust have been severely damaged, the re-emergence of self-help and associational initiatives have shown that these elements are not missing (Pellini and Ayres 2005, Pellini 2005a).

Putnam (2000) has noted that a society that relies on generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society, and that "other things being equal, people who trust their fellow citizens volunteer more often [and] participate more often in politics and community organization" (2000: 137). This is the case in rural Cambodia, where the presence of associations and networks that have emerged and re-emerged after years of war and conflicts means that it is possible to bring people together in the name of self-help. Development projects have, however, often tried to promote people's participation and community mobilisation by establishing new groups and committees, such as VDCs and LCSC, which have not been successful because they have been perceived as top-down initiatives (Meas Nee and Healy 2003, Gyallay-Pap 2004). Interestingly, traditional groups often struggle to be recognised as legitimate members of Cambodian civil society. Kao Kim Hourn (1999), for example, defined civil society in terms of mostly Phnom Penh-based organisations such as the growing

numbers of NGOs, political parties, independent media, trade unions, think tanks and research institutes, but failed to mention traditional associations.

4.3.3   Buddhism and communities

Buddhism, which is practiced by 90 per cent of the population, is an important part of Cambodia's social capital. Historically it has appealed to Cambodians because "salvation was promised directly through the efforts by every person - and not through corvée for the god-king along Hindus lines" (personal communication).[15] At the same time, there is the idea that Buddhism only focuses on 'own salvation', which contributes to the widespread view that Buddhism is hostile to progress by condoning the status quo (personal communication, Ebihara 1968).

This is a controversial point. Buddhism, on the one hand, stresses the principle of *karma* and the fundamental helplessness of individuals in their effort to change their actual condition (Ebihara 1968, Aschmoneit 1998, Franci 2004). At the same time, however, it also encourages group action and integration (Ebihara 1968). As individuals have the possibility to earn 'merits' in this life by doing good actions and improving their condition in the next life, people are motivated to participate in self-help initiatives and community based groups (Informant).[16] Ebihara (1968) has argued that "no matter how much the Khmer villager may value independence and individualism, the social reality is that each individual is inextricably bound with other in his life. Buddhism recognises this sociological fact in its precepts which urge harmonious, courteous, and generous relationships with others" (p. 422).

Pagodas are the space where Buddhism and the secular world meet. They are the moral centre from where monks disseminate Buddhist teachings and laymen earn 'merits'. They are the social centre where Buddhist festivals and ceremonies bring people together from different villages and for a long time, as shown at the beginning

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[15]   It is important to note that though Buddhism is the official and dominant religion in Cambodia, it coexists and is intertwined with a folk religion that is also of considerable significance in Khmer culture. This old native religious system is based on belief in a variety of animistic, ancestral, guardian, ghostly or demon-like spirits and it has its own rituals and specialists (Ebihara 1968).

[16]   Ebihara writes that 'merits' are earned individually but are also spread to family members. Becoming a monk is the highest means to earn 'merits' for a male, and this radiates also to family members. A second way is to participate in Buddhist festivals and ceremonies and making donations. A third way is to contribute food, money, and labour to the temple and monks (Aschmoneit et al. 1997). A fourth way, which is particularly important for women who cannot become monks, is to follow the Buddhist Four Nobel Truths: 1) existence is inevitable sorrowful because of the transience of all things; 2) unhappiness is caused by desire for such things; 3) such sorrow can be avoided by the extinction of such desire; 4) desire can be stopped by following the Eightfold Path: right understanding, right purpose, right speech, right conduct, right vocation, right effort, right alertness, and right concentration (Ebihara 1968).

of this chapter, represented the only opportunity for peasants to receive education (Ebihara 1968, Aschmoneit 1998, Collins 1998, Sasse 1998, Ayres 2000, Gyallay-Pap 2003). Typically, a pagoda in rural areas serves between three and seven villages (Figure 4.4), and is located on the outskirts of one of them.
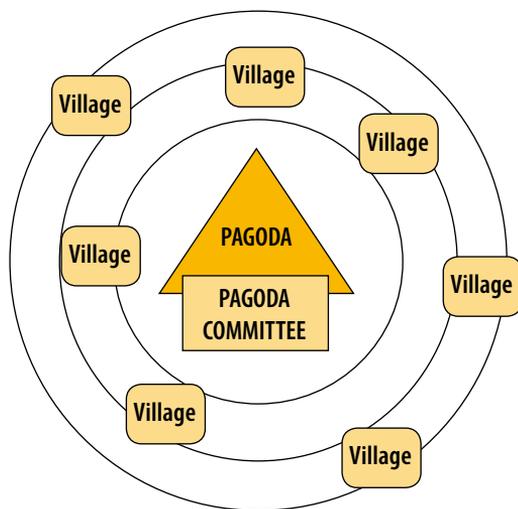
Figure 4.4. Pagoda as centre of community life

Its compound is surrounded by a brick or cement fence. As shown in figure 4.5, the main building within the pagoda compound is the *vihear* (sermon hall, sanctuary) which rises on a foundation, has steps on all sides, and contains the main statue of Buddha (Ebihara 1968, Aschmoneit et al. 1997). Another important structure is the *sala*, a roofed structure built on stilts, open on all sides, which contains a small altar. It serves as a shelter for overnight guests and is used by the monks for their meals, to receive visitors, and for community meetings (Figure 4.5).

Other structures in the compounds are one or more dormitories for the monks and the abbot (*kot*), the kitchen, various *stupas* to hold the ashes of the dead, the cremation tower (*pachar*), and some shrines for animistic folk spirits. Often the compound includes the Pali teaching school building (*sala rien plaey*) or a school (*sala rien*).

The organisation of the monk community (*sangha*) is hierarchical with the abbot (*mevat*) at the top.[17] His main responsibilities are to manage and supervise the personnel and property of the pagoda (Ebihara 1968, Aschmoneit et al. 1997). In the case of large pagodas, the head monk is assisted by two monks (*kru sot).* The rest of the *sangha* is formed by fully ordained monks (*pikuk*) above 20 years of age and novices

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[17]   The head monk is normally appointed by the superior in the national hierarchy with approval from the Provincial Department of Cults and Religions (Sasse 1998).

Figure 4.5. Wat Sangvorak in Kampong Thom (left) and training meeting in a *sala* (right)

(*samne*) who are under 20 (ibid.). In addition there are *konsuh look*, young children between seven and 12 years of age that spend some time in pagoda to receive education and earn 'merits' for their families. The number of monks in pagodas fluctuates, as it is common for people to spend some time of their lives as monks. In addition, everybody, including the head monk, is allowed is to disrobe and leave the monkhood at any time.

Most pagoda have a *Pagoda Committee*, a social and not political-administrative institution to see to the needs of the monks and novices, maintain and repair the pagoda buildings and compound and organize a number of activities to support the community. The members of the Pagoda Committee come from nearby villages and are normally appointed by consensus. There are usually seven elderly men who serve in the Pagoda Committee (rarely a woman) (Sasse 1998). Monks are not members of the committee but the head monk normally exchange information with them (Aschmoneit et al. 1997, Sasse 1998).

An important figure in the pagoda, and of the Pagoda Committee, is the *achar* (layman) (Figure 4.6). An *achar* is a mature man who has normally been a monk at some point in his life and who volunteers to support the pagoda (Ebihara 1968). *Achars* generally have relatively good education and sufficient time and resources to spend time in the pagoda (Sasse 1998). They usually come from poor families and belong to the ethnic Khmer group.[18] They are trusted members of the community, who

Figure 4.6. An *achar*

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[18]   Rich families in rural Cambodia are normally of Chinese origin and follow different religious ceremonies.

consider them as leaders (Aschmoneit et al. 1995). Several *achars* serve in a pagoda, usually one from each of the villages linked to the temple. One *achar*, the *achar vat,* is the leader of the group. The main responsibilities of the *achars* are to lead the community in ceremonies and act as a spokesman between monks and the community. Other responsibilities refer to teaching children and monks, organising the construction of public schools outside the pagoda compounds, reconciling conflicts, instruct villages to plant trees, advise villagers on hygiene and sanitation, cooperate with external projects, and educating villagers on moral, culture and traditions. According to Collins (1998), some of these tasks go back in history, when *achars* were the link between people and local authorities, and sometimes even the king.

A national survey conducted in 2003 found that 84 per cent of people in rural areas trust the pagoda as a public institution (Asia Foundation 2003). In some cases, as found in a study by the Centre for Advanced Studies and The World Bank (2006), traditional leaders linked to pagodas can also have a divisive role in their community due to the affiliation to major political parties. Nevertheless, the generalised trust towards pagodas as public institutions, explains why *achars* are usually responsible for collecting money and contributions during ceremonies. These funds are normally used to improve the pagoda compound. However, the Pagoda Committee can also decide to fund social development activities such as school construction, road maintenance, or the establishment of a credit group. In this case, the Pagoda Committee sets up an *ad hoc Association* to oversee and coordinate specific community based activities (Figure 4.7).[19]

Cash associations provide small loans. School Associations function as credit associations. Depending on the aim of the Association, interests or a share of the capital are used to fund repairs to the pagoda, maintain the school, construction work, and in some cases, very small emergency relief (Sasse 1998). Associations are managed by a committee whose members are usually appointed and in charge of the collection of contributions (cash, labour, and materials), the use of the funds, the distribution of credits, with links to the Pagoda Committee and sometimes the abbot. Pagoda Committees and Associations usually have a statute that emphasises the link between the religious aspect of their work as well as the development of the community.

According to Biddulph (2003), these traditional forms of collective action may not be active everywhere in Cambodia. Where they do exist, however, they can have a direct and positive influence on development. He suspects that there is still much to learn from these forms of collective action and to recognise their potential as well as their limitations. This is a core aim of this thesis.

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[19]   In her study, Ebihara (1968), wrote that "a striking feature of Khmer village life is the lack of indigenous, traditional, organized associations, clubs, factions and other groups that are formed on non-kin principles" (p. 181). This may have been the reality in the village of Svay where she conducted her research.

Figure 4.7. Pagoda organisation and social development

The starting point of this chapter has been the influence of historical events, traditional culture, and elements of Cambodian society such as patronage, trust, and religious norms and values. The violence of the modern history of Cambodia has certainly damaged the society, but key cultural elements have not been destroyed. The key traditional elements of Cambodian culture that characterise collective action seem to have adapted to different historical circumstances and have re-emerged when the political situation has accommodated it. Locard (2002), for example, mentions the unpublished memoirs by Nhiek Tioulong, a high profile administrator during the 1960s in the Sihanouk government, who wrote that solidarity among citizens and mutual help have always existed at village and pagoda level. These traditional associations show that social capital, though damaged, has not been destroyed and has the potential to support local development initiatives. It is explored more in depth in Chapter Six, which examines the characteristics of community participation in schools.

5 Research methodology

This chapter presents the methodology adopted during the study and describes the overlapping areas between project work and research activities. The chapter starts with the description of the project tasks during the four years spent by the researcher in the province of Kampong Thom. The second part focuses on the research methodology by comparing the characteristics of the quantitative and the qualitative research paradigms as well as presenting some reflections on the dual role of researcher – advisor during the research process. The third concludes the chapter by presenting the main research activities.

5.1   Personal context of the research

I arrived in Kampong Thom in December 2001 to work for the German Development Service (DED - Deutscher Entwiklungsdienst)[1] as advisor for civil society and local governance in the Community Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP). The project, which has duration of seven years (2002-2008), is implemented under the steering of the Cambodian Ministry for Rural Development in two provinces, Kampot and Kampong Thom. Financial support comes from the German Government, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), and from the Australian Government through Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The main technical assistance is provided

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[1]   DED is a governmental organisation receiving most of its funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It was founded in 1963 and is one of the leading European development services for personnel cooperation. Almost 1.000 development workers are currently working in approximately 40 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (www.ded.de).

by the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ - Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammearbeit).[2]

CBRDP is a multi-sectoral project which in Kampong Thom covers four out of the eight districts of the province. The main activities are support to agricultural production, rural infrastructure development, local economic promotion, and community development. The project objective, as stated in the *2004 Mid Term Review*, is "to reduce rural poverty [and] assist approximately 49.600 poor households in the project area to sustain increased food production and farm incomes from intensified and diversified crop and livestock production and increase the capacity of the members of the target group to use the services available from the government and other sources for their social and economic development" (IFAD 2004: 2).

As advisor for civil society and local governance, I worked within CBRDP's community development component at the Provincial Department for Rural Development (PDRD) of Kampong Thom. The set up of the project involves, between the two provinces, eight to ten international advisors from GTZ and DED, about 20 GTZ local staff, and about 70 government counterparts. In my work I supervised two local staff, one government counterpart, and six staff of CNGOs. The work of our civil society team focused on two main areas:

- Support to traditional associations

- Establishment and capacity building of Village Networks

The first area of work focused mainly on one district of the province, Stoung, where the project provided support to the 11 members of the Pagoda Association Coordination Committee (Pacoco), an elected body representing 96 traditional associations (about 6.000 households) involved in organising the collection of cash and rice contributions and providing small credits to association's members and support to schools. The civil society team provided training on management and administration, monitoring, and, in order to promote networking and exchange, study visits to meet similar associations in other provinces. With regard to local governance, Pacoco members received training on the role and function of Commune Councils and were encouraged to take part in the monthly commune meetings to present the activities of their associations and plan the community contributions to small rural development projects. The second area of work of the civil society team concerned the promotion of participatory local governance through the establishment of Village Networks. The aim of these Networks is to identify active individuals or groups at the village level, bringing them together in an informal group to link them with

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2   GTZ is an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development with worldwide operations. GTZ works mainly for the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and is implementing some 2.700 development projects and programme in over 130 countries (www.gtz.de).

Commune Councils while, at the same time, identifying ways for the Commune Councils to support the different groups. [3]

The topic of the present research touches on most of the areas of the project work, although the focus on the link between communities and schools provides a specific perspective that was not at the centre of project activities. In September 2003, during a researchers' seminar at the University of Tampere, where I presented the research questions and methodology, a fellow PhD student noted the possible problems that I could face in my dual role of researcher and project advisor, observing that I needed to be careful in keeping the research 'academic enough'.[4] I interpreted her remark as a warning about the possibility that my involvement with communities through project activities could limit the objectivity required by the conventions of a doctoral dissertation. That comment has accompanied me all along the research process and, I believe, has helped to better define the purpose of this research, the choice of the research methods and tools, and in a way clarify the question of whether the role of advisor and researcher can be compatible. The next sections present the research methodology and activities by reflecting also on the limitations and opportunities presented by the researcher – advisor role and how this has influenced the research process.

5.2   Research methodology and the dual role researcher – advisor

Theoretical and methodological approaches of scientific research are shaped, according to Husén (1994), by paradigms defined as "cultural artefacts, reflecting the dominant notions about scientific behaviours in a particular scientific community" (p. 5051). During the twentieth century, the two main paradigms employed in researching educational problems have been the 'scientific paradigm' and the 'humanistic paradigm', which have often been juxtaposed to describe different and somehow incompatible research philosophies (Keeves 1988, Muijs 2004).

The 'scientific paradigm' is "modelled on the natural sciences with the emphasis on empirically quantifiable observations which lend themselves to analyses by means of mathematical tools" (Husén 1994: 5051). As the task of the research is to establish casual relationships and to explain (*Erklären*), quantitative research is considered to generate knowledge for understanding which may be independent of its use in planning and implementation (Husén 1994, Cornwall and Jewkes 1995). The 'humanistic paradigm', on the other hand, is "derived from the humanities with an emphasis on

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[3]   For more details see Pellini and Ayres 2005.

[4]   I thank Nelli Piattoeva, academic assistant and PhD candidate at the Department of Education of the University of Tampere, for this comment.

holistic and qualitative information" and helps to provide an interpretation or under-standing of events (*Verstehen)* (Keeves 1988, Husén 1994).

The idea of opposed paradigms is useful to illustrate two theoretical ends. How-ever, as mentioned by Husén (1994), in reality these two positions are linked along a continuum and complement each other to the point that it is possible to speak of "only one paradigm but many approaches" (Keeves 1988a in Husén 1994: 5054). Likewise, Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) argue that the separation of between qualita-tive and quantitative approaches, with the former being the field of participatory research and the latter the field of conventional research, is actually too simplistic. This recognition has led to a generalised consensus that in most cases research in the social sciences is to some extent participatory, and participatory research relies on quantitative as well as qualitative tools of data collection and analysis that today more and more tend to be combined and characterise the so called 'post-positivist' approach (Muijs 2004). According to this definition, post-positivists "accept that it is not possible to observe the world we are part of as totally objective and disinterested outsiders … [post-positivists] believe in the possibility to approximate reality by re-alising that our own subjectivity is shaping that reality" (ibid.: 5).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, one important element of the 'scientific paradigm' was the neutrality and objectivity of the researcher in order to limit or avoid biases. The underlying belief was that the scientific method could handle social reality "without any moral commitment" (Husén 1994: 5053). In the 1930s, Swedish economist and politician Gunnar Myrdal, was among the firsts who questioned this assumption, arguing that social researchers could not be free of their own values and political convictions and that researchers could arrive at more valuable and credible conclusions by actually making their premises and values explicit (Myrdal 1969 in Husén 1994). The need for the researchers to remain a neutral observer of social re-ality has been questioned by other authors as well. C. Wright Mills, for example, in *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), argued that "there is no way in which any social scientist can avoid assuming choices of value and implying them in his work as a whole" (p. 196). The research is influenced by external political and economic factors and the social scientist can not be considered as an "autonomous being standing out-side society" (p. 204). Similarly, American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, argued in the late 1960s that "a professional commitment to view human affairs analytically is not in opposition to a personal commitment to view them in terms of a particular moral perspective" (1968: 157). Austrian-born philosopher Feyerabend (1999), writ-ing during the 1970s and 1980s, has posited that, given the complexity of reality, objectivity is difficult to reach since researchers are influenced by their worldview (*Weltaschaung*), personal values, the aim of their research, and the social and eco-nomic environment they live in. Both Mills (1959) and Feyerabend (1999) argue that the simple physical presence of the researcher creates a non-neutral situation and that information is absorbed through the prism of our experiences, interests, and val-

ues. Accordingly, the present study has been conducted keeping these views in mind and therefore applies a flexible and reflexive perspective "to explore local knowledge and perceptions" (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995: 1668).

The involvement of the researchers in the research process typical of the participatory methodology can take two forms: 'participating observer' or 'observing participant' (Bernard 1994).[5] These two roles represent the ends of a continuum along which the researcher and the research move. At one end the researcher is mainly an observer who consults individuals for their opinions; at the other end the researcher is a full participant together with local people in a project that he or she has initiated and manages (Glesne and Peshkin 1992, Cornwall and Jewkes 1995).

The initial plan for this research was to be based on action research principles which, as defined by Hall and Kassam (1988), would "combine social investigation, educational (and capacity building) work, and action … for the improvement of the lives of those involved" (p. 150). A mix of qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection would have enabled a closer dialogue with local communities and at the same time helped to plan and develop small scale community projects (Huizer 1997). This initial aim resulted in a conflict with the reality of the advisory work and therefore had to be changed. Direct involvement with a few communities has not been possible because the project activities extended in four (out of eight) districts of the province. The project work involved mainly coordination tasks rather than direct work with target groups and beneficiaries. In addition, the language barrier meant that project work and research activities had to be conducted with the help of interpreters or through field facilitators responsible for project activities at the village level (i.e. CNGO staff, project staff, government counterparts). Due to these circumstances, the research methodology moved towards the 'participating observer' end of the continuum described earlier.

One concern with the research process has been the need to maintain a link between project work and research activities. One pre-condition to conduct academic research while working as advisor in a development project, given the constraints in time and resources with the advisory work, is for the research and working topic to be the same or to overlap as much as possible. Only in this way is it possible to plan and organise data collection that could help both areas. In the case of the present study the overlap and differences between advisor and research activities are considered here at two analytical levels: 'local level analysis' and 'policy level analysis'.

With regard to 'local level analysis' (Figure 5.1), there has been substantial overlap with all the information related to the traditional, norms and values that characterise Cambodian communities today. In particular, the role of pagodas as spaces for community participation and mobilisation and the links between Commune Councils and communities. Specific data collection had to be organised about the relationships

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between schools and School Associations and their role not only in school governance but also in local governance through their link with Commune Councils. The gathering of these data involved members of traditional associations that were participating in project activities. At the same time, the research activities were limited mainly to Kampong Thom province. The link established with informants through project activities helped to offset one of the risks of participatory research described by Cornwall and Jewkes 1995, that is, the loss of interest by informants who do not see an immediate impact from their participation. In the case of this research, the two processes were mixed and, besides being a source of data and information on communities, project activities were helping individuals to strengthen their association as well as their participation with Commune Councils.

With regard to policy level analysis (Figure 5.2), the main overlap concerned secondary data on the history of Cambodia, national policies and donor policies on decentralisation and development. To complete the research material, a review was

LOCAL LEVEL ANALYSIS

PROJECT | RESEARCH

Norms, values and traditions of Cambodian communities

Meaning of community and role of pagodas for community development

Relationship between policy and the capacity at the local level

Awareness of role and functions of Commune Council

Capacity building

Roles of school associations

Community participation in school

Figure 5.1. Local level analysis

POLICY ANALYSIS

PROJECT | RESEARCH

Modern history of Cambodia

Theory of decentralisation and social capital formation

Decentralisation reform in Cambodia

Donor coordination and support to decentralisation in Cambodia

Education sector polices in Cambodia

Donor support to education

National data community participation in education
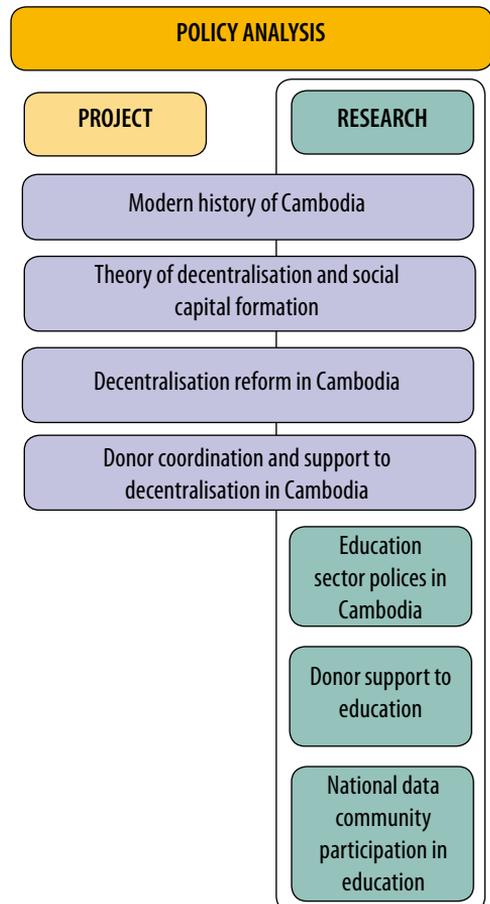
Figure 5.2. Policy level analysis

conducted of education sector policies as well as donor studies and reports on education on Cambodia and other developing countries.

Returning to the observation posed during the research seminar in 2003 and the risk that too much personal involvement could turn the study into an advocacy report, hopefully this has been avoided by making personal values explicit and by presenting also differing perspectives. One of the underlying values of this study is that participation is indispensable for sustainable and democratic development. To make this point, Chapter Two presented some critical views of participation. Likewise, while decentralisation reforms can promote democracy, they can also strengthen the power of local elites. This critical analysis helps to situate the research results in a specific context and analyse opportunities as well as limitations of community participation in the rural areas of Kampong Thom that can provide valid suggestions at a more general level. This critical perspective aims at helping to take into consideration the point of view of local as well as national stakeholders.[6]

5.3   Research activities and their limitations

The research activities described in this section refer to the period from December 2001 to December 2005. While decentralisation reforms in Cambodia are an ongoing process shaping not just education but also Cambodian society, the data and information presented here do not extend beyond 2005, when I returned to Finland.

Most of the field work, besides two study visits to the provinces of Kampong Cham and Kandal and various meetings in Phnom Penh, took place in the province of Kampong Thom. While recognising that this is linked to the fact that I was bound to the province because of my project work, the study explores traditional norms and values that are to be found in other parts of the country. As argued by Collins (1998), "the extremely lively and diverse civil society activity found in the villages of Kampong Thom may not be unique to this province in its preservation or traditional Cambodian social and cultural organizations, associations and activities" (p. 15).

The research activities encompassed the study of relevant literature and documents, interviews, a survey, a case study, personal communication, and observations from the field.

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6   I thank Angelika Fleddermann, GTZ CBRDP team leader, for bringing this point to my attention.

5.3.1   Literature and documents

The analysis of the main theories on decentralisation, social capital, and in participatory local governance formed the core of the initial stages of the research and contributed to shape the theoretical framework presented in Chapter Two. Research activities consisted of a review of academic literature and, with regard to Cambodia, the review of mainly English language sources on the history, politics and social development of the country.[7] A study by **Bijker and Henke (2007) on social capital**–related literature available in Cambodia found that English language sources are dominant. Out of 208 titles on social capital, community and participation, 198 are in English and 10 in French. Sixty-seven per cent of the sources are by authors whose first language is English, 22 per cent are Cambodians as the main authors, five per cent of the listed titles are by French authors, and six per cent are by donor organizations without reference to specific authors.[8]

Reports and policy documents by international donors, NGOs and government on Cambodian development policies, decentralisation reforms, and the education sector completed the documentary sources. With regard to Kampong Thom province, the documentary sources refer to GTZ reports, Khmer language documents from associations that have been translated into English by Mr. Sarin Samphors, and the statistical sources presented in table 5.1 below.

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[7]   Two exceptions are the GTZ report by Aschmoneit (1994), which is in German, and Franci (2004), which is in Italian. The research database, which contains all the publication reviewed for the research and which are not all included in this thesis, has 126 references on Cambodia divided into community (18), decentralisation (26) development (18), education (27), government (8) history (25), participation (3), social capital (1), all of which are in the English language or are English versions of relevant documents and publications.

[8]   One title has no indication of the author and is therefore missing from the total of 208. The total of titles with Cambodian authors is 60, with 12 per cent of these titles referring to Kim Sedara and another 12 per cent to Meas Nee, who therefore alone represent one quarter or all titles. Henke has noted that French remains somewhat underrepresented because relevant French material often does not enter the English public domain but remains in the Francophone NGO scene. In addition, French academic material is more difficult to find because the international academic social science debate is English dominated. German is also underrepresented because most of the sources are academic and therefore not available in Cambodia. Henke thinks that by including them the pattern will not dramatically change if the above under representations would be repaired by adding the French, German and Khmer publications (the latter not included in the study) that have been missed by the study (Personal communication).

Table 5.1. Sources of quantitative data and statistics

Database	Year	Source
Population census	1998	Ministry of Planning
Socio-Economic Survey	1999	Ministry of Planning
Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey	2000	Ministry of Planning
Commune Database (CDB) 5.3	2003–2005	SEILA / Ministry of Planning
Inter-Censual Population Survey (CIPS)	2004	Ministry of Planning
Education Statistics & Indicators 2004/2005	2005	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports
Most Vulnerable Families List	2005	CBRDP Kampong Thom

The following remarks need to be made with regard to the documentary sources. First, it is important to recognise the damage produced by the civil war and the Khmer Rouge years. As noted by Ayres (1997), "a significant concern in researching Cambodian modern history is the depletion of a plethora of potential sources. Documents were destroyed in Cambodia in acts of political malice, in an effort to obscure the involvement of certain individuals in the politics of a previous regime, or as an expedient for a shortage of raw materials" (p. 25). Second, the majority of the existing academic literature focuses on the war and the Khmer Rouge period. Little information is available on the field of social development and the years before the civil war and genocide. Third, it must be remembered that existing sources are influenced by the political orientation of authors, official documents relate to specific regimes and ideologies, government documents tend to emphasise the positive results and achievements over policy failures and donors' reports have to be balanced against their specific aim (ibid.). By reviewing different sources, this thesis attempts to present different perspectives of Cambodian history and development as well as the traditional norms and values that shape community participation.

5.3.2   Interviews

Interviews have been an important part of the research process. They have provided relevant information that complemented the documentary analysis, especially at the local level where such sources are scarce. This is also the area where project work and research have the strongest synergy, since interviews have provided extremely valuable information for the work with pagoda associations and Village Networks. A total of 58 interviews (53 individual interviews and 5 group interviews) have been collected through research as well as project activities. They have been coded and

divided into four main categories: Cambodian background, education background, community participation, and civil society (Table 5.2).[9]

Table 5.2. Number of research interviews

Category	Interviews
Cambodia background	9
Education background	9
Community participation	32
Civil society	8
TOTAL	58

When considered relevant, interviews collected for project activities have been included in the research database. Thirty one interviews were conducted in English with foreign advisors or Cambodian staff working for international NGOs and donors. Twenty-seven interviews were conducted in Khmer with translation by Da Nary, project assistant of the civil society component of CBRDP. Focus Group interviews were tried on two occasions, but were not pursued further because a few people, and often just one person, spoke for the group. Social mapping was used once in an interview with the abbot of a pagoda in Stoung district. Most of the interviews at the local level took place with community members and leaders who have been also involved in CBRDP project activities. By using a semi-structured format for the interview, based on leading questions, I have been able to keep a consistency in the enquiries and reduce the loss of information through translation.[10]

Two project visits outside Kampong Thom in the provinces of Kampong Cham (March 2003) and Kandal (August 2002) were conducted to interview foreign and Cambodian advisors involved in education and to observe annual school cluster planning meetings in three core cluster schools.

5.3.3 Surveys

Quantitative data was collected using a 'School Association Checklist', derived from Village Networks monitoring activities and adapted to interview School Associations' members. The checklist was designed to be simple and not time consuming questionnaires where the reply to specific questions was mainly 'yes', 'no', or 'I don't know'.[11]

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9   For the full list of interviews, observations, and personal communications refer to Annex 1

10   For leading question of interviews at the local level seen Annex 2

11   See the School Association Checklist in Annex 3.

The checklist also served as a capacity building tool for local staff to strengthen their experience with qualitative data collection and analysis.

The checklist was tested in June 2003, with the help of Ket Sobin as translator. The results helped determine the design of the final checklist used between July and August 2005 to interview 30 School Association Committee members. The exercise was conducted with the help of Sarin Samphor who carried out the interviews in the field and entered the data in an Excel spreadsheet. **Analysis was done using SPSS to** derive descriptive uni-variate statistics since the checklist contained mainly multiple choice answers and discrete information such as categories. **Among the 30 School** Associations surveyed through the checklist, 28 supported a primary school (7,2 per cent of the total 416 primary schools in the province, see MoEYS 2005b) and one a secondary school; 28 of 30 schools are a part of a cluster.[12] According to the MoEYS (2005b) estimates, the total number of students in the surveyed schools was 7.858, about 6 per cent of the total of the province. The checklist covered 30 villages in 10 communes of the province (12,3 per cent of the total of 81 communes) in 5 districts (of the total of 8 districts).[13]

5.3.4   Participants' observations, and personal communications

A case study to illustrate the experiences of a traditional association in the pagoda in Botum village in Kampong Thom since the late 1950s was derived from interviews, personal communication and recollections during meetings and interviews with community members. Project activities served as an important source of information about community dynamics through participants' observations. Observations and notes relevant for the research were derived from a research log book and from project notes. The observations and personal communications with project advisors and consultants based outside Cambodia with experience in the field relevant for the study, were coded and catalogued using the same categories as was used for the interviews (Table 5.3).

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[12]   Total number of schools in all clusters represented by the School Associations interviewed is 74 schools with an average 4,8 schools per cluster.

[13]   See survey map in Annex 4.

Table 5.3. Number of research observations and personal communications

Category	Observations	Personal communication
Cambodia background	4	4
Education background	2	4
Community participation	11	8
Civil society	1	0
TOTAL	**18**	**16**

5.4   Concluding remarks

This chapter has explored the limitations as well as the opportunities of the dual role of advisor – researcher for this study. During the four years spent in Cambodia, I have tried to minimise the former and maximise the latter by overlapping as much as possible project work and research activities. Had I been in Cambodia only as advisor, it is likely I would not have reached the same in-depth knowledge of the characteristics of the links between communities and schools. Moreover I would have not explored in-depth the concepts of social capital that were the basis for the Village Networks approach. Likewise, if I would have spent a shorter time in Kampong Thom only as a researcher, I would have not have had the possibility to contribute to produce some change through the project, and, at the same time, learn about the dynamics of local governance and community development. Moreover, I would have not been in a position to establish the same personal links with representatives of traditional associations, local CNGOs, and colleagues that also allowed me to enquire about painful memories. It is not easy to determine between the researcher and the advisor, who has benefited the most. But, on a balance, it seems that both roles have contributed to this doctoral dissertation.

6 Community participation in schools: findings from Kampong Thom province

Chapter Four reviewed the growing number of publications which explore the role of traditional associations in local development in Cambodia.[1] This chapter moves beyond this literature to analyse the quantitative and qualitative research data collected between 2002 and 2005 in Kampong Thom. The first part of the chapter sets the background by presenting the human development profile of the province. The next three sections present the results of the analysis of community participation in schools along the three main social capital dimensions: the bonding link between members of School Associations, bridging links and spaces of participation between traditional associations, and the institutional links between associations and schools as well as Commune Councils. While bonding, bridging and institutional links are presented separately for analytical and descriptive reasons, in reality they are not so clearly divided and show considerable overlap and interconnection.

Before moving to the description of Kampong Thom, it is necessary to clarify some terminology used in the chapter. The term 'School Association' used here includes all the informal groups set up voluntarily by community members to support local schools and which lack official recognition from the government as described by Cornwall (2002a) in section 2.3.2. 'School Association' is therefore used for Parents Associations and informal School Support Committees.[2] The definition excludes the official committees and institutionalised spaces of participation included

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1   See Aschmoneit (1998), Collins (1998) Krishnamurthy (1999), Coletta and Cullen (2000), Kim Sedara (2001), Kusakabe et al. (2002), Ledgerwood and Vijghen (2002).

2   With regard to School Support Committees there is some confusion on whether to consider them informal or institutionalised groups. The Cluster School Guidelines (MoEYS 2000a) do not mention them and one informant said that there was an attempt by the MoEYS, which failed to institutionalise them (Informant). For these reasons, this research considers them as informal or transient groups.

in national policy guidelines such as the Local Cluster School Committees or Local Cluster School Council organised at cluster rather than school level.

6.1   Human development profile of Kampong Thom province

Bordering the Tonlé Saap Lake in the west, Kampong Thom province is located in central Cambodia, north of the capital Phnom Penh. It is the third largest province in Cambodia, measuring 181.035 km² (De Agostini 2003).

   The economy of the province is mainly based on agriculture, although only 21 per cent of the land is under cultivation and soil fertility is low. Fifty-one per cent of the province is covered with forest, which represents an important source of livelihood that is declining at an alarming rate (Neth Top et al. 2006). The province is divided into eight districts: Baray, Kampong Svay, Stueng Saen, Prasat Balangk, Prasat Sambour, Sandan, Santuk, and Stoung (Figure 6.2). There are 81 communes, and 737 villages (SEILA-MoP 2005).
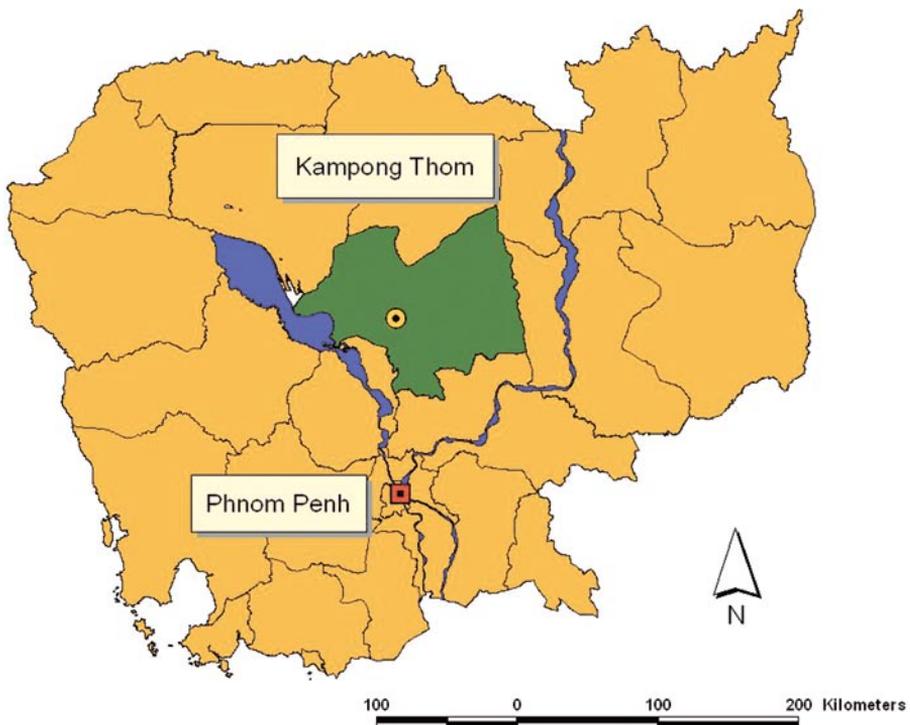
Figure 6.1. Map of Kampong Thom province within Cambodia
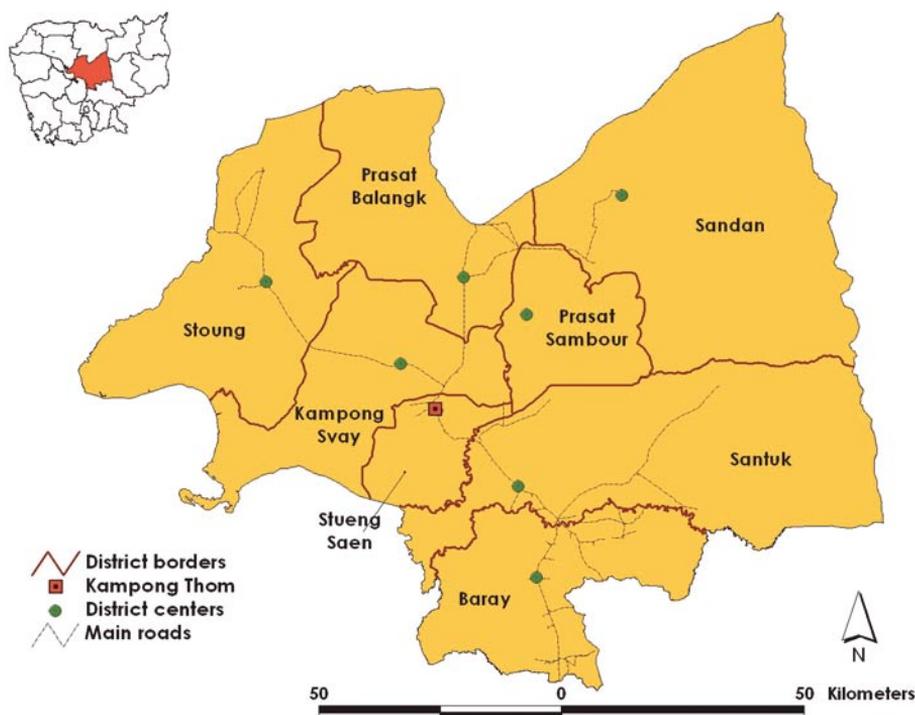
Figure 6.2. Map of the districts of Kampong Thom province

The population of the province, based on the last national census, is 569.060 or 4,8 per cent of the total of Cambodia (MoP 1998). The male population is 272.844 (48 per cent) and female 296.216 (52 per cent). The population is young and growing quickly, with 47,1 per cent under 17 years of age (SEILA-MoP 2005).[3] Population density, with 50 inhabitants per square kilometre, is just below the national average (MoP 2004). The average size of the population per village is 847 inhabitants (ibid.), while the average households size is in line with the national average of 5,3 persons. The total fertility rate is 4,3 children (MoP 1998, MoP 2000, SEILA-MoP 2005).

The average annual per capita income, calculated adding monetary and non monetary sources, is 4.926.200 KHR (1.231 USD) (MoP 1999, Diepart 2007).[4] The coefficient of variation of the incomes at 65 per cent shows a high disparity in the relative per capita incomes. In semi-urban areas, per capita income is 7.359.000 KHR (1.840 USD) compared to 3.781.000 KHR (945 USD) in villages (ibid.). The majority of the population is involved in agriculture, although economic development since 1998

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[3]   It has been estimated that between 2001-2021 the population of the province will grow by 51 per cent, with an annual average growth rate of 2,08 per cent. This is in line with national projections (San Sy Than and Has Bunton 2003)

[4]   Survey conducted in 25 villages of the province with a sample of 250 households. Exchange rate: 4.000 KHR = 1 USD.

has resulted in a slight shift of the workforce towards industry and services (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Percentage change of male and female occupation by economic sector in Kampong Thom

	Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	1998	2004	1998	2004	1998	2004
Male	86,1	75,6	1,7	4,6	12,2	19,8
Female	82,2	79,7	2,5	2,8	15,5	17,5

Source: MoP 1998, MoP 2004.

In terms of food security, Kampong Thom is among one of the four most vulnerable provinces in Cambodia. Due to the high rate of population growth, the amount of land owned by households is on average less than 0,6 hectares (MRD and GTZ 1995). The main staple food and cultivation is rice, while other important crops are fruits, vegetables, and cashew nut (GTZ 1998, Keskinen 2003). In the case of the district of Santuk, for example, it has been estimated that more than 50 per cent of households have food shortages between five and eight months per year (GTZ 1998).

With 29 per cent of households living below the national poverty line, Kampong Thom is situated in the mid range of Cambodian provinces (MoP 1998). More recently, CBRDP, through the Most Vulnerable Family Lists, identified a total of 26.887 households as most vulnerable, 21,8 per cent of the total number of families in the province (GTZ/MRD/MoP 2005, SEILA - MoP 2005).[5]

Health and sanitation are also of concern for villagers since, according to the 1998 census, less than 10 per cent of the rural population had access to safe water (MoP 1998). Malnutrition is also a serious problem, with 49,4 per cent of children being underweight. The high prevalence of respiratory infections and diarrhoea contribute to an infant mortality rate of 64,5 per thousand births, and a morality rate of children under the age of five of 98,8 per thousand. This is below the national average (MoP

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[5]   I need to thank Chan Sotheavy, GTZ community development advisor in Kampong Thom, for providing me with this information. The Most Vulnerable Family Lists (MVFL) are prepared by a Village Level Working Group with key village representatives. Villagers are asked to check and comment on the lists. The process is under the guidance of the Commune Councils that manages the process, agrees on criteria for inclusion, harmonises the village draft lists, and endorse them. Provincial authorities are involved by providing capacity training to Commune Councils. Criteria for inclusion in MVFL are: very basic housing conditions, no regular income outside agriculture and who depend on daily income for food (no reserves), no draught animals or only one young draught animal and no other means of transportation, less than two hectares of productive land, the family rice production can only cover two months of consumption per year (GTZ/MRD/MoP 2005).

2000).[6] HIV/AIDS prevalence is as worrying as in the rest of the country at a rate of approximately 2,2 per cent (MoH 2002). Landmines are not as serious a problem as in Western Cambodia, but still represent a threat. In 2003, 33 casualties were recorded being caused by mines or Unexploded Ordinances. This was 3,5 per cent of the national total (Cambodia Red Cross 2003).

Turning to education, the official statistics present relatively high illiteracy rates in Kampong Thom, with 17,4 and 14,7 per cent of the total female and male population being illiterate (SEILA-MoP 2005).[7] However, if only the female and male population over 15 years of age are considered, the values worsen at 29,6 per cent for female and 25,6 per cent for males (ibid). The primary school Net Enrolment Rate, at 89,9, is lower than the national average of 93,3 presented in Chapter Three (see table 3.2). On average, girls show a higher enrolment than boys in the 416 primary schools of the province, as shown in table 6.2 (MoEYS 2006).

Table 6.2. Net Enrolment Ratio boys and girls in primary school by district (school year 2004/2005)

District	Male	Female
Baray	91,6	91,2
Kampong Svay	91,4	96,0
Prasat Balangk	82,0	80,7
Prasat Sambour	88,2	93,3
Sandan	91,1	93,5
Santuk	81,7	97,0
Stoung	83,2	87,6
Stueng Saen	95,4	93,2
Total province	88,5	91,4
Rural	95,4	93,2
Urban	87,8	91,2

Source: MoEYS 2006.

Nevertheless, as shown in figure 6.3, the majority of students do not complete primary school. This data is confirmed by the low rate of primary school completion,

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6   Prevalence of diarrhoea is high, particularly among children, at 19,9 per cent, but in line with the national average of 19,4 per cent (MoP 2000).

7   These percentages are calculated on the total female and male populations respectively. If we consider the female and male population over 15 years of age, the percentages are higher, with 29,6 per cent for females and 25,6 per cent for males.

which sees Kampong Thom in the lower end of Cambodian provinces, with 34,9 per cent (MoEYS 2006).[8]
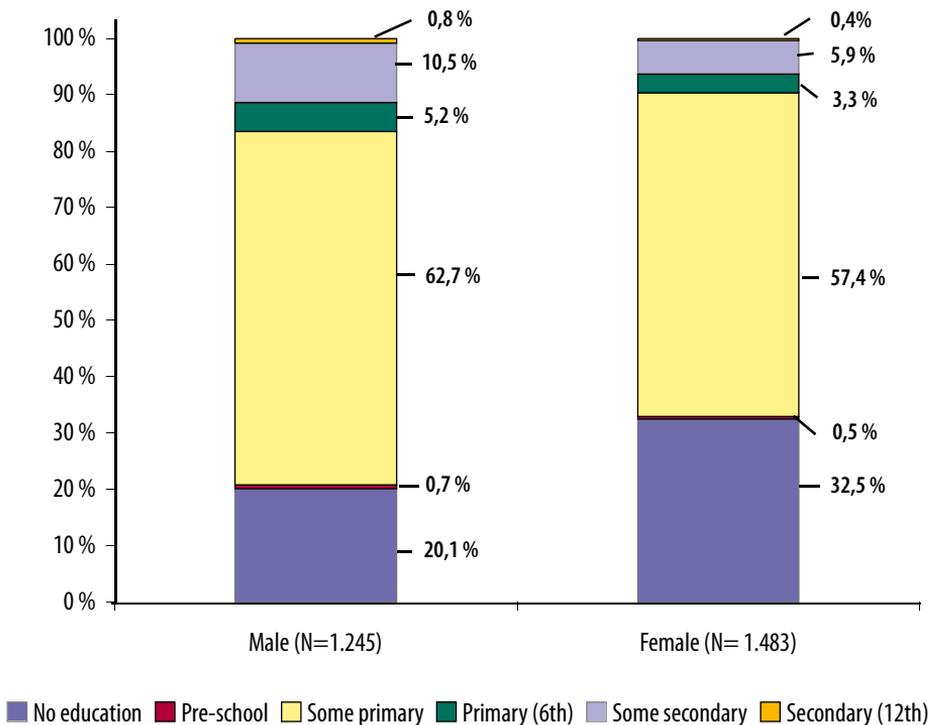
Figure 6.3. Education attainment male and female in Kampong Thom (MoP 2000)

As in the rest of the country, schools in Kampong Thom are organised in clusters. All but one of the 413 primary schools of the province are a part of the 55 school clusters of the province (MoEYS 2005b).[9] The average number of schools per cluster is 7,5, but the number can be higher in districts with more remote areas and sparse population such as Prasat Sambour and Stoung, with 10,7 and 15,2 respectively.

Several aid organisations are present in Kampong Thom. Most of them are involved, as CBRDP, in rural development and agriculture (Table 6.3).

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[8] The completion rate of grade 9 (lower secondary) is not better. Kampong Thom is in the lower end, with 15 per cent (MoEYS 2005b). The total survival rate from grade 1 through to grade 6 is 40,6 per cent (girls 41,8 per cent) (ibid.).

[9] The only school not in a cluster is the primary school in Kampong Thom town. In 2005 the MoEYS added 3 primary schools in Kampong Thom bringing the total to 416, with 64 core schools and 352 satellite schools.

Table 6.3. International development organisations in Kampong Thom province*

	Education	Agriculture and food security	Rural Development	Health / Sanitation
Donors	UNICEF	GTZ AusAID WFP FAO ADB	GTZ WFP IFAD ADB WB UNICEF	GTZ
International NGOs		World Vision Church World Service	World Vision Church World Service CARITAS GRET	World Vision Church World Service ADRA TPO

*   I need to thank Cristiano Calcagno, GTZ provincial coordinator in Kampong Thom, for helping with the information in this table.

The main agency in the education sector is UNICEF, which is providing support through the Provincial Office of Education (POE) and District Offices of Education (DOE) to 20 clusters in 4 districts for a total of 69 primary schools (MoEYS – UNICEF 2005). The main programme is the Child Friendly Schools, which is a component of the larger Expanded Basic Education Program (EBEP) 2002-2005 and its follow up the EBEP Phase II 2006–2010.[10] The basic idea of the Child Friendly Schools is to improve schools around six main characteristics (MoEYS – UNICEF 2005: 28):

- Schools include all children and pro-actively seek to enrol all school-aged children;
- Effective academically and relevant for children's lives;
- Healthy, safe and protective of children;
- Gender responsive;
- Strengthen the sense of responsibility and actions of families and communities towards educating children;
- Supportive and enabling education system.

Activities implemented in Kampong Thom consist of participatory planning at the local level and study visits for school staff. A total of 774 teachers have received training during the period 2002-2005 on topics such as classroom management, school self-assessment, child centred teaching and learning, supportive supervision, and inclusive education. In addition, a number of activities have also been developed under programmes such as school feeding activities, eco-clubs, sanitation education and well construction. The positive accomplishments of the programme in Kampong Thom prompted the provincial authority to request the expansion of the approach to

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[10]   The programme is implemented with assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in five provinces: Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, Svay Reang, Kampong Speu, Otdor Meanchey, and Stung Treng (MoEYS - UNICEF 2005).

118 schools in 29 clusters in 2005 - 2006 and to reach coverage of at least 70 per cent of the 416 primary schools of the province by 2008 - 2009 (MoEYS-UNICEF 2005).

6.2   Bonding social capital: characteristics of School Associations

This section is concerned with the specific characteristics of associations supporting schools and analysis of the links between the members of these associations. A survey conducted in Kampong Thom by Narak Sovann (2000) found two types of School Associations:

- School Associations (*Samakum Sala Rean*)
- Parents' Associations (*Samakum Meatda Beidasa*)

School Associations: according to Narak Sovann, the main objective of these associations is "to reconstruct schools in pagodas, promote education and help poor people to access education by applying the traditions of the past" (Narak 2000: 13). Figure 6.4 shows how these associations are usually organised.
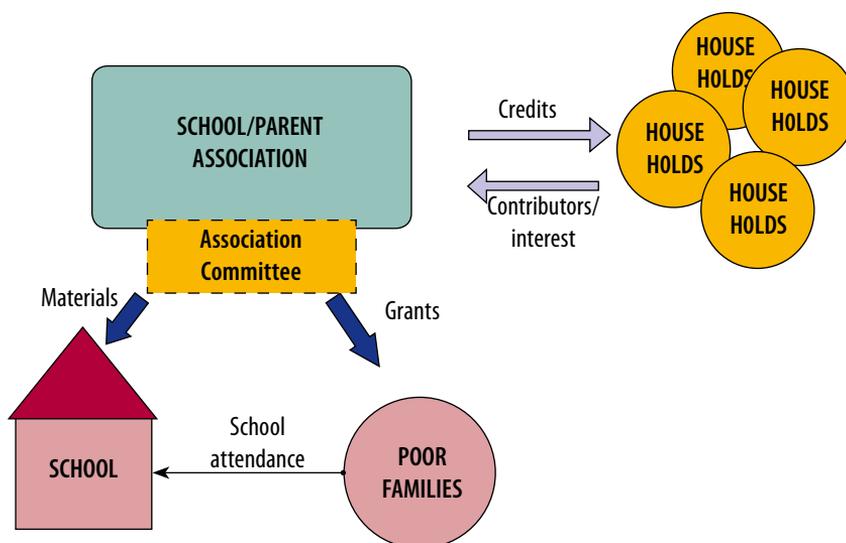
Figure 6.4. School Association structure and links

The initial capital of the School Associations is created through cash contributions by villagers, usually during a religious ceremony. The size of the associations varies from 50 to 200 members, with an average of 120. An 'Association Committee', formed by trusted *achars* and villagers, is appointed to manage the association and

record contributions, loans, and the interest payments. The Association Committee normally includes a chairperson, a deputy chairperson, a secretary, two persons in charge of the finances, and two additional supervisors (Informants). An association, regardless of whether it is located in a pagoda or village, is normally linked to just one school. Part of the association's capital can be allocated to provide financial support to the school through the establishment of an *ad hoc* sub-committee in charge of a specific activity. For example, in 2003, the headmaster and the School Association of Tbong Tuk primary school (Mean Rith commune, Sandan district) requested GTZ support for the repair of the roof of the school. In the request, the School Association mentioned that it would provide materials and labour as a local contribution and organise a 'Repair and Maintenance Committee' for the duration of the work (Informant).
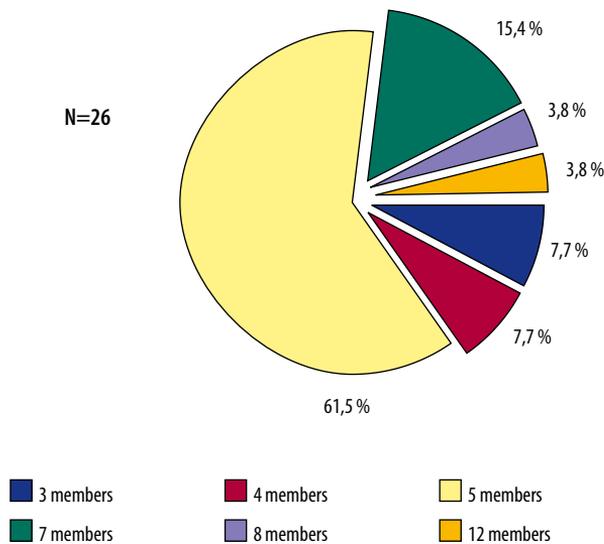
Figure 6.5. Distribution of committee members*

* Unless otherwise stated in the present and the following charts of this chapter N is the number of valid answers given by the informants to a specific question of the School Association checklist. Questions in the checklist allow for single and/or multiple answers. Therefore, N=30 means that all informants answered. N=26, as in table above, means that four informants did not provide an answer. N=132, as in figure 6.8, means that the informants had the possibility to provide more that one answer to a specific question.

The majority of the 30 School Associations interviewed for this research with the Checklist questionnaire have a 5 members committee, with a range between three and 12 members (Figure 6.5). The main task of the Association Committee is to discuss with teachers and/or the headmaster, usually at the end of the school year, the needs of the school and the required financial support. The members of the Association Committees are described as being respected and trusted members of the

community. One respondent, for example, mentioned that the School Association of Sangkor (Kampong Svay district) had been created following an idea by Mr. Choo Li, "a popular and respected man in the village who owned most properties, and the elderly people of the village without the help of any external organisation" (Informant).

Parents' Associations: the second type of associations identified by Narak Sovann (2000), the Parents' Associations, are organised in a similar way to the School Associations. The difference is that the association's members are parents who support the school that their children attend. In addition to financial contributions for school repairs, Parents' Associations also provide small grants to poor families whose children would otherwise drop out of school. These associations have a close contact with the local Pagoda Committee, the school director, and the education department. According to Narak Sovann (ibid.), there is evidence in Kampong Thom that some of these associations already existed before World War II.

According to MoEYS statistics, about 79 per cent of the 551 schools in the province of Kampong Thom have a School Association, with a higher percentage in districts with remote areas and sparse population such as Sandan, Stoung, and Prasat Balangk where the need to support the local school seems greater (Table 6.4).[11]

Table 6.4. Number of school in Kampong Thom clusters

District	Number of schools	With School Association	%
Baray	110	83	75,5 %
Kampong Svay	77	63	81,8 %
Prasat Balangk	38	33	86,8 %
Prasat Sambour	56	43	76,8 %
Sandan	54	47	87,0 %
Santuk	62	46	74,2 %
Stoung	89	75	84,3 %
Stueng Saen	65	47	72,3 %
Total province	551	437	79,3 %
Urban Area	65	47	72,3 %
Rural Area	486	390	80,2 %

Source: MoEYS 2006.

Slightly less than half of the checklist respondents (43 per cent) could not remember when their School Association was first established. Among those who did remem-

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[11] Kampong Thom is in the mid range of Cambodian provinces. The highest percentage of School Associations is in Kandal (89 per cent) and the lowest in Phnom Penh and the province of Ratanakiri (both with 62 per cent).

ber, in the case of Sambo and Prey Kuy primary schools, the respondents mentioned 1979. As both schools are located in the commune of Prey Kuy, about three kilometres from Kampong Thom town, it may imply the area was probably sufficiently safe after the arrival of Vietnamese troops to re-start the associations' activities. Most of the province, however, continued to suffer from continuous warfare between the government and Khmer Rouge guerrillas that impeded to resumption of community based activities in support of schools until the second half of the 1990s.

The elderly members of the community are usually involved in the School Association Committee. The average age of the respondents to the checklist is in fact 54,4 years for men and 54 for women. This is quite high, considering the average life expectancy for Cambodia is 56 years (UNDP 2005), and it reaffirms the importance of age in terms of holding a position of responsibility in the community. Interviews with School Associations' members have confirmed that *achar* and elderly people are commonly mentioned as members of the Associations' Committees and are normally 'asked' to take up this task. The presence of development projects, such as CBRDP, have introduced committees' elections, but they are not yet an established practice. As shown in figure 6.6, only 30 per cent of the associations included in the checklist hold elections regularly, the others mostly when the need arises to replace members who retire or withdraw. [12]
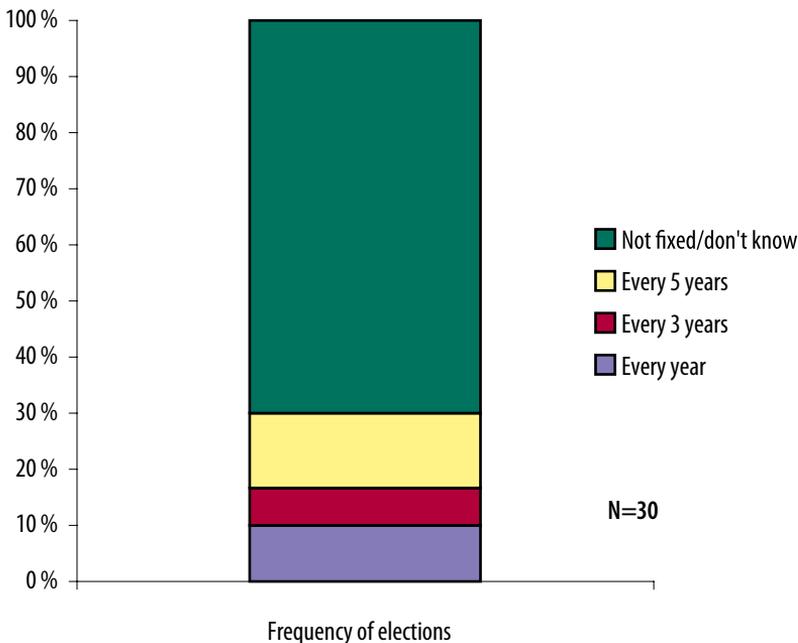
Figure 6.6. Frequency distribution of elections of School Association members

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[12]   Informants 23, 25, 32, 38, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59, and 67.

The members of the Association Committee tend to keep their position for long periods of time. Even where elections are held, office bearers are normally reconfirmed in their positions. An *achar* in Stoung district mentioned that he has kept the post in the School Association Committee since the time of its establishment in the 1960s. He stated that after the Khmer Rouge period, when the association was re-established, he was asked by the people to again lead the association (Pellini 2005).

The importance attributed to age and the combination of respect and trust for the Association Committee members results in their involvement in several associations at a time. The data show also a certain correlation between age and the number of roles assumed in the community, with the number of responsibilities increasing with age (Figure 6.7).[13]
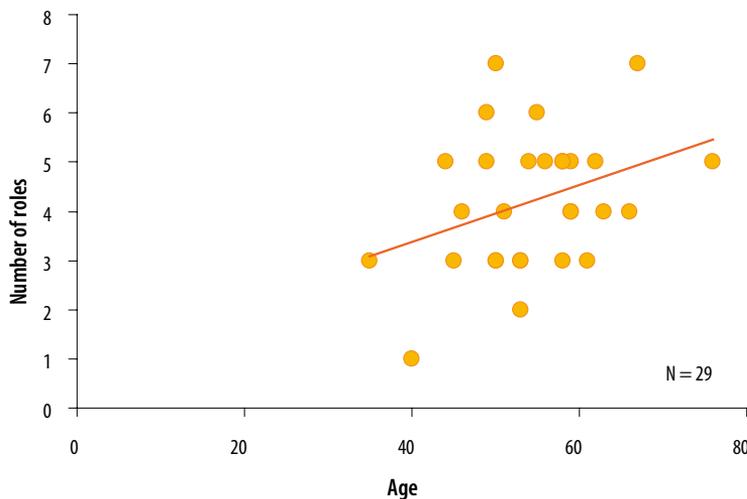
Figure 6.7. Correlation age/number of roles in the community

The results from the checklist also confirm that other leaders at village and commune level are a part of the Associations' Committees, with the Village Chief being the local authority that is most often involved (Figure 6.8).

The presence of local authorities shows, on the one hand, that they cannot be easily 'excluded' from community based groups. On the other, it offers the opportunity to link the association's concerns to village and commune governance. Villagers are mentioned with a relatively high percentage. Elderly people and *achars* are also important members and form the larger group of committee members, reflecting the importance of traditional leaders for community initiatives. This is linked to two elements: first, in rural areas, most individuals are involved in farming; second, not all of the Associations' Committees members are active in the same way and some act more as observers and exert a limited influence on decision making processes.

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13   The correlation refers to male respondents as only three women were interviewed with the checklist.

N=132

Others ▮ 1,5

Monk ▮ 3

Commune Council member ▮ 4,5

Women group leader ▮ 8,3

School principal ▮ 10,6

Teacher ▮ 11,4

Achar ▮ 12,1

Elder ▮ 13,6

Villager ▮ 17,4

Village chief ▮ 17,4

0   5   10   15   20
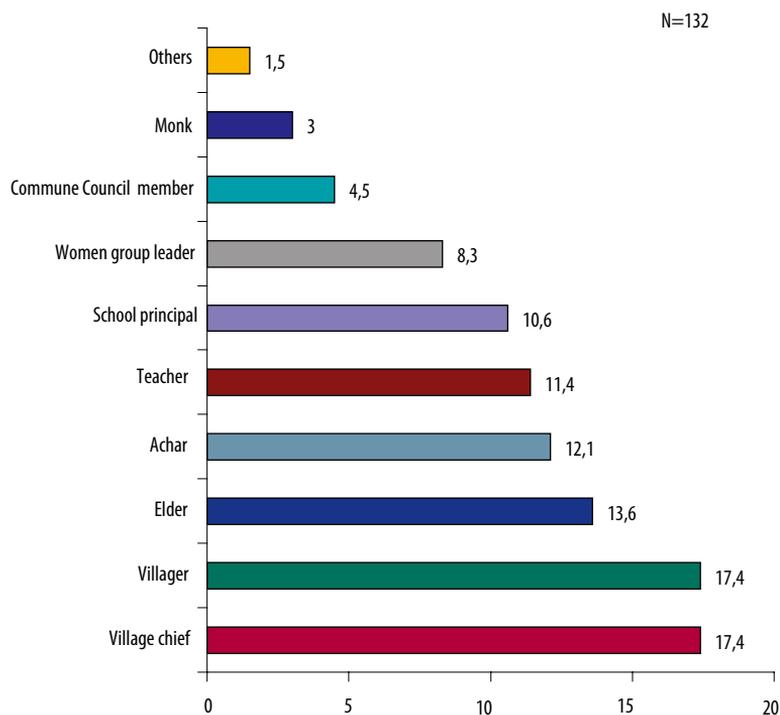
Figure 6.8. Membership of School Associations

The extent of the involvement in other community roles by the respondents of the checklist is shown in figure 6.9. Thirty per cent of the respondents mentioned that they have five roles in the community, while 20 per cent have four.

7 roles 7%
1 role 3%
2 roles 3%
6 roles 10%
3 roles 27%
5 roles 30%
4 roles 20%

N = 30
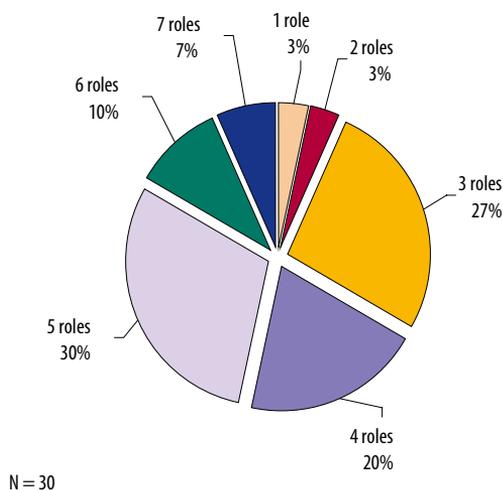
Figure 6.9. Percentage distribution of the number of roles in the community by associations' members

As show in figure 6.10, the participation of citizens in community roles encompasses both formal and informal groups and positions. The respondents also hold positions in credit associations as well as VDC and the Commune Council's Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC). What these percentages do not reveal is the extent of engagement in each of these positions. In other words, it is unclear to which role and position they allocate most of their time.
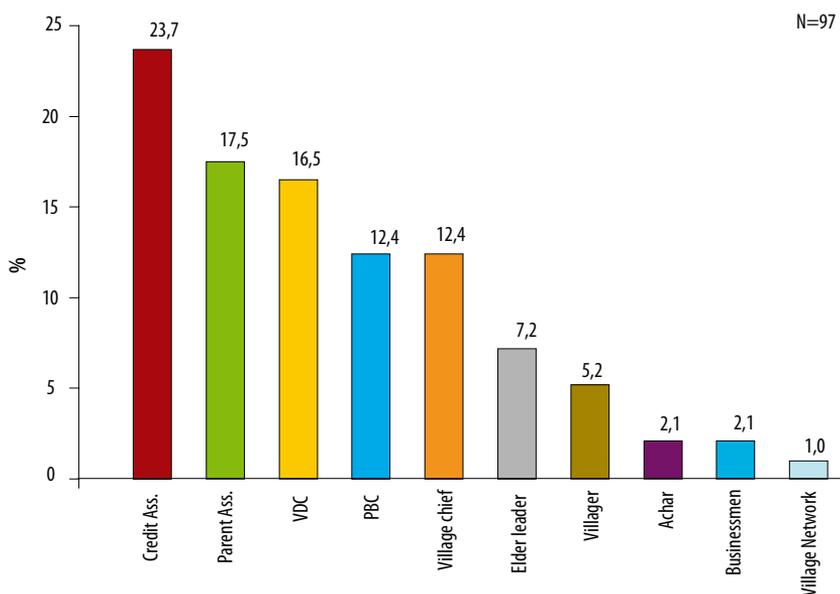
Figure 6.10. Cumulative percentage or roles in community and village

Women participate in just 56 per cent of the School Associations in the survey with the majority of the associations having only one female member as shown in table 6.5.

Table 6.5. Frequency of female membership in School Associations

N. of female members	Frequency	%
0	13	43,5
1	11	36,6
2	5	16,6
5	1	3,3

Only in one case, the School Association of Thnal Bek Primary School, the number of women was higher than the number of men.[14] As with the men, women also have

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14   Thnorl Bek Chueng village, Trapeang Ruessei commune, Kampong Svay district. The Association Committee has a total of seven members, five of whom are women.

more than one role in the community.[15] For example, a single woman, aged 52, who lives with her two daughters in the village of Bo Tasao, in Rong Rueng Commune (Stoung district), is a member of Pacoco, where she represents five cash, nine rice, and two schools associations, and she is the leader of the local cash and rice associations (Informant).

Associations have a statute that defines the scope of their activities, and keep records of their activities through registers that contain the names of people who have made contributions, as well as the names of the borrowers of small credits. In the case of School Association of Botum Base (Stoung) the statute mentions that:

> "According to the assembly meeting to create an association to support the Primary School, the capital was collected on 28th January 1989 at Botum pagoda. To educate and encourage memory and conscience of the Buddha's disciplines that supports Botum pagoda in order to support Botum Primary School in Preah Damrei Commune to rehabilitate the existing material base. The association records the contribution by 122 members to support Botum Primary School for a total of 6.448,90 KHR: the association also recorded the use of 5.400 KHR for credit to the members, starting from 28th January 1989. Each credit is recorded with the name of the borrower and the amount of the credit".[16]

The School Associations' links between members and committee are based on trust, respect, and religious norms. The main motivation for individuals to become members of associations and contribute to the starting capital and its activities is, in fact, the willingness to earn 'merits'. One respondent, who is also an *achar*, said that "people, when they contribute the money, they do not think about the credit, they contribute the money because they think about 'merits' and improvements to the school" (Informant). Two Pagoda Association leaders mentioned that "the laymen who established the associations are aware of the fact that the money collected by the association can help the poor. The people who make contributions, however, do not think about it. They believe in Buddhism and that if they do something good they will get something good back" (Informant). The abbot of the pagoda of Don Lao (Stoung district) pointed out that "Buddhism teaches that people have to be sincere because if we do 'good', we gain 'merits'" (Informant).

While participation of associations' members results in individual contributions, the same cannot be said in terms of the management of the associations, which is considered mainly a task and responsibility of the committee members.[17] The result is a weak demand by the associations' members for reporting or feedback. Most of

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15   The analysis of the checklist reveals that the average number of roles for men is 4,3 (N = 27), while for women it is 3,6 (N = 3).

16   Translation by Sarin Samphors.

17   Aschmoneit et al. (1996), with regard to this point, argue that associations are normally managed by benevolent elite through a paternalistic rather than empowering way, and that decision making involves a close circle of elderly and committee members. For further details see Sasse 1998.

associations in the checklist (63 per cent) hold public meetings during the year, with the majority of them holding a meeting every six months (Figure 6.11).

N=30
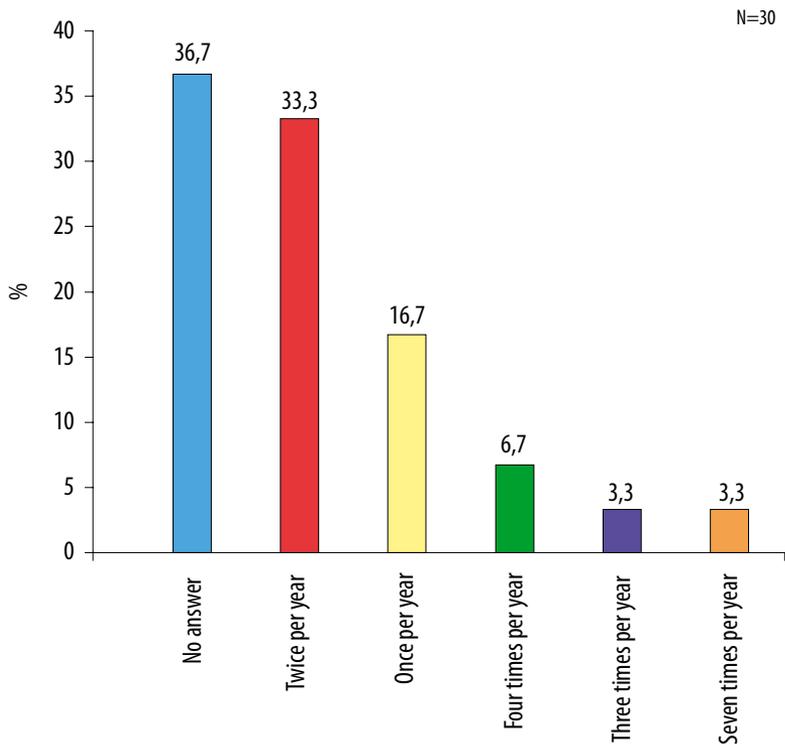
Figure 6.11. Frequency distribution of School Association meetings per year

The Association Committee informs the associations' members and villagers during village meetings (55 per cent) or religious ceremonies (19 per cent) by reporting about activities and contributions (Table 6.6). Participants rarely ask questions due to low literacy levels and the belief that leaders managing the associations are the most appropriate members of the community to do so. This is in line with Sasse (1998) argument that according to the Asian traditions of conflict-avoidance, distrust or disapproval is rather shown by not contributing to association's activities or by not showing-up at meetings.

The personalities of the individuals in the committee is the element that defines the dynamism of the association.[18] One association leader mentioned that "if I go two or three times every month to visit the associations, they become more active, but the ones where I go only once a month are not too active" (Informant). This could be observed also in a monthly cluster school meeting at the Provincial Office of Education in Kampong Thom where representatives of clusters and School Associations

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18   Informants 28, 30, 32, 35, and 50.

Table 6.6. Modalities of dissemination of information to parents and villagers

Village meeting	55 %
Through community members	19 %
Loudspeaker	3 %
Village Chief	3 %
School ceremony	3 %
Students	3 %
Information board	3 %
Letter	3 %
Don't know	6 %

N = 31

meet to report about activities and to prepare new plans.[19] The *achar*s with stronger personalities were also the ones who had more to report. They are the ones who know better how to mobilise the communities and are likely to receive training from NGOs and donors, thus making their position inside the associations even stronger. Traditional leaders, however, can also lack the necessary understanding or skills required for the tasks they need to perform (Informant). In this case, as observed in the yearly planning workshops in three primary schools in the province of Kandal, the association and community leaders who participated spoke very little during the three day workshops and did not participate actively in the planning discussions. On the other hand, strong and committed leaders tend to become involved in trainings and workshops organised by different development projects with the result that they become overburdened by these activities.[20]

6.3   Bridging social capital: the link between traditional associations

The analysis of the bonding links within School Associations indicates that traditional leaders tend to be involved in a range of community based initiatives. This section tries to answer the question whether this extended involvement also leads to the establishment of bridges between different associations. Chapter Four demonstrated

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[19]   Observations and meetings with UNICEF staff at POE in Kampong Thom, 2003.

[20]   For more details about high demands on traditional leaders (in terms of training, capacity building, and planning) posed by development agencies and NGOs see Pellini 2004.

the importance of pagodas as centres of community life, a point that also applies to community participation since, as mentioned by one informant, "in most schools 'community' means pagoda" (Informant).

Historically, the Buddhist temple was the only place where people in rural areas could receive some education. This link still exists today. In Kampong Thom, 47 schools (or 11, 3 per cent of the total) are located within a pagoda compound (MoEYS 2005b). In addition, it is often in pagodas where associations re-started their activities after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, as shown in the case study of Botum pagoda presented in the next section.

6.3.1   Case study: Botum pagoda as a space for community action

Botum pagoda is located in the village of Botum Lech, Rong Reung commune, Stoung district, Kampong Thom province. The village of Botum Lech is located along a laterite road; twelve kilometres from the national road that connects Kampong Thom with Siem Reap through the town of Stoung. The pagoda of Botum has six supporting villages: Botum Kaeut, Botum Lech, Kantong Rong, Prum Srei, Bos Ta Saum and Kantaueb (Figure 6.12).
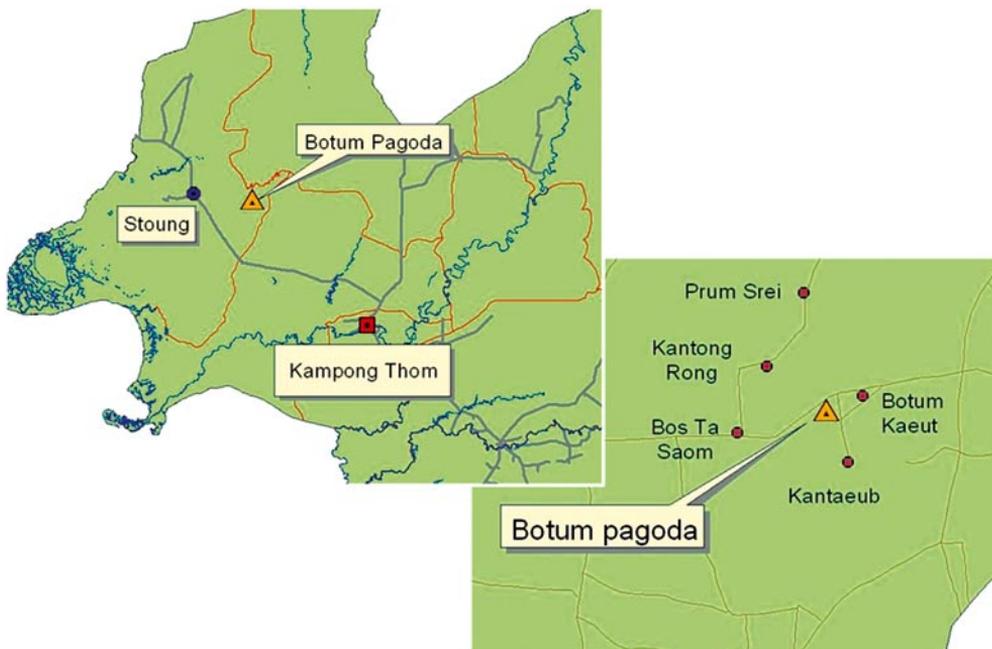
Figure 6.12. Map of the district of Stoung with Botum pagoda

The origin of the community development activities of the Pagoda of Botum, as remembered by Ms. Buon Norm and Mr. Hang Toy (Informant), goes back to the beginning of the 1950s. The abbot of that time, Venerable Theng Gna, after a period of study in Phnom Penh, organised in 1952, one year before Cambodia gained independence from France, the Pagoda Association (*Samakum Vat*) with the help of 12 *achars*.

In its preamble, the original statute reads:

> "We have the honour to create an association for the sake of our Buddhist religion, because we thought that the Pagoda of Botum is a shelter for monks and novices who endeavour to study the *Tripitaka* [holy Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist canon of scriptures]. These studies will be carried out well when there will be satisfactory buildings, as the saying goes 'the Joy of the Habitat'. Today the buildings of the pagoda are dilapidated. We Buddhists have the intention to construct a building, but our means are quite limited; we could only contribute 'one thousand Riel'. Therefore, we have the honour to invite all our friends of the community belonging to the Pagoda of Botum, to conquer their stinginess and to give a contribution, small or big, according to the personnel conviction to build up capital for credit. We are calling this endeavour 'Buddhist Aid' which is meant, first of all, to construct the *Vihear* [sanctuary, sermon hall] of the Pagoda of Botum. The merits of this religious contribution will certainly be our future treasure which will accompany us to pass the 'cycle of reincarnations' towards Nirvana".[21]

The main purpose of the Pagoda Association was to contribute to the improvement of the building in the pagoda compound. The original statute of the Pagoda Association has 17 articles that describe the structure of the association, its objectives, and activities. The Association Committee was comprised of a president and eleven advisers, all *achars* from the pagoda and surrounding villages. Following tradition, Venerable Theng Gna did not hold any position of responsibility. The association worked as a cash association, providing credit to contributing members. Article 3 states that "the capital must be given as credit, with interest, and be always in permanent circulation". In order to guarantee the loans, Article 6 states that "in the act of giving credit, two witnesses must sign the document" and Article 7 that "in case of eventual risks, the two witnesses must reimburse the amount borrowed".

In 1959, the Pagoda Association had sufficient capital to start the construction of a primary school near the pagoda compound. Additional funds were provided by villagers through contributions in cash and in kind. The Provincial Office of Education did not provide any contribution. The school in Botum pagoda was one of only three primary schools in the district of Stoung.[22] In 1970, the war reached Botum, and by 1972, the area came under Khmer Rouge control. People stopped repaying their loans and making contributions, so the association had to suspend its activities.

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[21]   For the full translated statute refer to Annex 5.

[22]   The others were in the villages of Samproach and Kampong Chan Chun.

At some point, after 1975, Venerable Theng Gna and other monks were brought to Kampong Thom and had to disrobe, dress in civilian clothes, and worked at collective farms with the other villagers. Moreover since the Khmer Rouge had outlawed all forms of associations, the *achars* of Botum pagoda took the important documents and statutes of the association and hid them in sealed bamboo sticks which were buried under their houses. They dug them out only after the end of the Khmer Rouge régime in 1979.

At the beginning of the Vietnamese presence in 1979, Theng Gna went back to the pagoda of Botum and became the chief *achar*. In those initial years, it proved difficult to restart the association for three main reasons: the government drafted a law that established solidarity groups (*krom samaki*) in charge of community activities and reconstruction in every village; people had no money and payments were made with rice; fighting continued and made the area unsafe until the beginning of 1996. Theng Gna and the *achars* managed to re-establish the Pagoda Association on 24th December 1988. The School Association of Botum was inaugurated one month later, on 28th January 1989. On that day, a School Association Committee composed by seven members was nominated and 122 people contributed an average of 53 KHR (0,2 USD) each for a total of 6.449 KHR (29,5 USD) to support the creation of the initial capital. A second collection of contributions took place four months later during Khmer New Year ceremonies. On that occasion, 96 people provided a total of 1.732 KHR (8 USD), which was added to the association's capital. Other contributions were recorded until 1992, for a total of 13.940 KHR (16 USD). A second school Association linked to the pagoda of Botum was created in the nearby village of Kantong Rong on 19th January 1992 with an initial capital of 9.900 KHR (11 USD). Table 6.7 shows the increase in the associations' capital and in the number of families that have received loans since 1989. The number of members/clients of the two associations increased considerably in recent years to reach, in 2006, 678 individual members (with 369 female) in Botum and 462 (with 239 female) in Kantong Rong.

Table 6.7. Capital and family support increase in the School Associations of Botum and Kantong Rong[*]

	Year	Capital	Families	Avg. loan
Botum School Association	1989	6.449 KHR (29,5 USD)	8	-
	2004	5.678.100 KHR (1.420 USD)	80	70.976 KHR (18 USD)
	2006	6.663.800 KHR (1.666 USD)	136	48.998 KHR (12,25 USD)
Kantong Rong School Association	1989	9.900 KHR (11 USD)	10	-
	2004	3.222.000 KHR (805 USD)	26	123.923 KHR (31 USD)
	2006	4.137.300 KHR (1.304 USD)	96	43.097 KHR (13,58 USD)

Source: Pacoco committee (Personal communication).

[*]   In 1989, the official interbank exchange rate was 1 USD = 218 KHR; in 1992 1 USD = 895 KHR. In the period 2003-2005 the exchange rate has been relatively stable at 1 USD = 4.000 KHR (Source: Chinese University of Hong Kong, available at http://intl.econ.cuhk.edu.hk/exchange_rate_re-gime/index.php?cid=13).

The original statute of the School Association of Botum states that the "Association is established to educate and encourage the memory and conscience of the Buddha [and] strengthen the national culture and society in Botum and ensure sufficient schooling for our children". In its Article 1, the association states that credits are provided for a period of four months with a monthly interest rate of six per cent. The Association provides loans in line with the capacity of the debtors to repay them (Article 2), and decisions concerning loans are discussed by the Association Committee (Article 7). Articles 3 and 4 clarify that only people living in Botum are entitled to request a loan and that they require the signature of two witnesses to guarantee it. Committee members are not entitled to use the association money for personal reasons (Article 6). Although the loans provided by the associations are normally very small, their repayment with interest has allowed the associations' capital to grow during these years. As shown in table 6.8, this has also allowed increasing the number of families that receive loans. In addition, the School Association of Botum has been able to support the primary school in buying new tables and chairs for students and repairing walls and bookshelves (Informant).

Currently, in addition to the two School Associations, in the pagoda of Botum are also active a cash association and a rice association. This is the result of the assistance provided by GTZ since 1995.

6.3.2   Strong or weak bridges?

The experience of Botum confirms that under a committed leadership, pagodas represent the space where community self help initiatives can start and develop. In this respect, a study of community initiatives linked to pagodas in Kampong Thom conducted by Narak Sovann (2000) found 29 different types of associations in the 203 pagodas of the province.[23] There seems, therefore, to be a strong link between pagodas and associations. If the abbot is involved in social development activities, then the link becomes even stronger. The leading role of Venerable Theng Gna before and after the war is still vivid in the memories of villagers around the pagoda of Botum. Another example comes from the district of Kampong Svay, where Venerable Ly Kom, abbot of the pagoda of Voy Yev, mentioned that he has been directly involved in the fundraising of community contributions for the construction of the pagoda primary school. Community contributions have totalled 4.000.000 KHR (1.000 USD), representing 10 per cent of the total budget. He remembers that most villagers, even the ones without children in the school, contributed between 500 KHR (0,10 USD) and 5.000 KHR (1,20 USD) (Pellini 2005a).[24]

A further example comes from the pagoda of Don Lao in Stoung district. Here Venerable Seik Chheng Ngorn, who is 46 years old and acts as abbot, said that his decision to start social development activities in his pagoda came after he learned that before the beginning of the civil war in 1970, there was a group similar to a cash association active in the pagoda. Today a number of associations are active in the pagoda.

Sangkor Primary School, in the commune of Sangkor, district of Kampong Svay, represents another example of the link between pagoda and community initiatives.[25] Some of the elderly members of the Association Committee mentioned that a School Associations providing small cash credits was already active during the *Sangkum* period (i.e. 1960s) (Informant). Today, out of the nine schools of the Sangkor cluster (one core + eight satellites), six have a School Association. The Sangkor School Association, based at the cluster's core school, started to support construction activities in the school. The Association Committee is comprised of seven members who coordinate the people's contributions and credits activities. The committee also advocates on the use of the association's capital to support the improvement of the school through repair of the school fence, the garden and environment, and the acquisition

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[23] For a full list of the associations, see Annex 6

[24] Venerable Ly Kom disrobed in 2005 and returned to civilian life. He continues to work as director of a local CNGO, Buddhist for Development Kampong Thom (BFDK) which he established in the pagoda of Voy Yev, where he was the head monk.

[25] Sangkor Primary School is located in the district of Kampong Svay, and is the core school of the cluster the same name and comprises eight satellite schools for a total of 2.881 students. Two schools of the cluster are in a pagoda compound (MoEYS 2005b).

of paper or tables and chairs. One hundred and sixteen families are members of the association and provide their contributions to the association's activities. One problem in Sangkor is the high drop out rate of children from poor families. For this reason, a Poor Student Association has been established in 2003. The statute of this second association states that:

> "The chief of Kampong Svay district and the monk and chief of Sangkor Pagoda, the nuns' association committee of Sangkor Pagoda and the School Association cooperated with the director of Sangkor School and have established an association named: *Poor Children and Orphans Saving Association*. The aim of the association is to provide credits to overcome the difficulties of poor students, children with no sources of assistance, such as orphans who can not go to school or they can go but are so poor that they lack clothes, studying materials, etc. and to encourage parents to urge all of their children to go to school and to participate against more illiteracy in their community".[26]

When asked the reason of the establishment of a new association while one was already in place, the committee members answered that a second association was considered necessary as the capital of the School Association was not sufficient. The establishment of a new association also gave the opportunity to organise a public ceremony in the pagoda of Sangkor that resulted in the collection of 800.000 KHR (200 USD) in addition to 400.000 KHR (100 USD) from the Pagoda Committee. In 2004, 13 students received support to buy uniforms, books, pens, and other materials. The aim of the association is to increase this number to 20.

These examples show that associations are set up with a specific task and objective. Most of them are active in providing small credits and do not show a great degree of cooperation with other associations. The experiences from the pagodas show also that, with time, the number of associations can increase. But to what extent are they liked with each other?

In the case of the pagoda of Don Lao, the association map shows that links have different level of strength.[27] Particularly strong are the links between associations that fulfil religious functions under the Pagoda Committee such as the Nuns Association or the Elderly Association. Cash and Rice Associations are also quite active due to the presence and support from CBRDP. More loose is the link with other kinds of associations such as the Dish and Pots Associations.[28] Notable for its absence in the map is the School Association which, as confirmed by Venerable Seik Chheng Ngorn,

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[26] Translation by Sarin Samphors.

[27] See social map in Annex 7.

[28] Dish and Pot Associations lend dishes and pots to villagers who organise a ceremony. The association has normally one committee member responsible for managing lending, verifying that all dishes and pots are returned, request money from the borrower to repay broken items (Narak Sovann 2000).

exists and supports the primary school of the pagoda, but has no links with the other associations.

The data collected through the checklist provides a mixed picture about exchanges between School Associations and other traditional associations. Though, meetings of School Association committees are open to the public for 63,3 per cent of the respondents, one third (or 36,7 per cent) of them consider these meetings closed. Meetings, as shown in the table 6.8, are announced to the community in a number of ways. The preferred channels are through the Village Chief (20,5 per cent) or by word of mouth in the community or village (20,5 per cent).

Table 6.8. Announcement of School Association meetings to the community

ANNOUNCEMENT		ANNOUNCEMENT	
Village Chief	20,5 %	Village meeting	2,6 %
Through community members	20,5 %	Announcement during ceremony	2,6 %
Students	10,3 %	School Support Committee	2,6 %
Loudspeaker	7,7 %	Teacher	2,6 %
Invitation letter	7,7 %	Don't know	23,1 %

N = 39

It is not clear from the answers to the checklist whether other community members take part in the meetings. Fifty-three per cent of the respondents mentioned that other community members attend the meetings, while 47 per cent replied negatively or that they do not know. This is also a sign that the exchange with other associations is somewhat limited. This was confirmed by observations in Kampong Thom, where it was evident that *achars* and members of the Pagoda Committee meet often and informally in the pagoda and that at official or public meetings, they tend to wear one hat, representing one association or one role at a time.

In Kampong Thom, GTZ has worked since 1995 to establish stronger bridges between the associations. Between 1995 and 1997, GTZ had contributed 50 per cent of the start-up capital of 22 new associations in 10 pagodas for a total of 9.200 USD and 81,300 kg of rice (Sasse 1998, Aschmoneit et al. 1996). The rapid increase in the number of associations led the representatives from 17 pagodas to meet, in 1997, at Preah Neang pagoda in Stoung to establish Pacoco (see also the description on Chapter Five, section 5.1).[29]

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[29] Pagoda association coordination committee. In Khmer, *Kanakammakar Somropsomroul Samakom Svayuphatham*.

The objective of Pacoco is clearly stated in its statute:

> "to facilitate/coordinate the work of cluster associations, relationships to the villagers, and relationships among each other, and to link to outside supporting organizations/ institutions and/or persons" (Pacoco 1997).

Figure 6.13. Pacoco members with two facilitators from GTZ and PDRD

In 2003, Pacoco represented a total of 94 associations, including cash, rice and School Associations in the district of Stoung (Table 6.9), for a total of 7.026 households as small credits beneficiaries as shown in table 6.10. Pacoco was initially formed by seven elected members. In 2004 the number was increased to 11 to better link with the 13 Commune Councils in the district of Stoung. Elections are held every two years, but since 1997 little has changed as the committee members are usually reconfirmed, in line with Cambodian traditions, in their positions.

A study by Warthon (2003) concluded that Pacoco members "have a strong feeling for a bottom-up approach to local governance and development and of their right and responsibility to participate" (p. 4). At the same time it is important to highlight the main weaknesses of the committee, which include limited cooperation between associations, limited dissemination of information to associations they represent (cash, rice, and school), and limited awareness about the benefits of linking more closely to different associations and breaking the perception that all associations can only contribute materials to local development.

These limitations are linked to the capacity and educational level of the members and to traditional norms that shape leadership. Age and experience are paramount,

Table 6.9. Associations represented by Pacoco in 2003

Cash Associations	N.
In pagoda	29
In villages	25
	54
Rice associations	N.
In pagoda	14
In villages	24
	38
School Associations	N.
In Pagoda	2
GRAND TOTAL	94

Source: CBRDP monitoring data, Pellini 2004.

Table 6.10. Associations' beneficiaries in 2003

RICE	Capital (Kg)	Households
38	343.148	2.154
Avg. capital	9.030	
CASH	Capital (KHR)	Households
54	367.022.631	4.766
Avg. capital	6.796.715	
SCHOOL	Capital (KHR)	Households
2	8.900.100	106
Avg. capital	4.450.050	

Source: CBRDP monitoring data, Pellini 2004.

which can result in a lower perception of the importance of transparency and accountability and the benefits from increasing networking and the transfer of knowledge to younger people (Warthon 2003). Nevertheless, Pagoda Committees and Associations are powerful instruments to reach communities (Aschmoneit et al. 1997, Sasse 1998). Their sustainability is linked to the fact that "their own purpose, management and funding are based in the community, and [therefore] these groups are often more trusted and more reliable than newly created groups due to the fact that committee members work primarily for merit and not for profit" (p. 118). The traditional structures are probably "the largest and most solid component of Cambodian civil society" (Gyallay-Pap 2003: 34), yet they have received little or no recognition by state agencies and international organisations in Cambodia, who often consider the hundreds of CNGOs they support as being the legitimate representatives of civil society (ibid.).

6.4   Institutional social capital: links between communities, schools and public institutions

The third social capital dimension to be explored is 'institutional social capital', that is the vertical links between schools and associations and, after the election of February 2002, Commune Councils. In doing so, this section focuses on three points: the support provided by the associations to schools, the nature of decision making processes, and the role of Commune Councils.

6.4.1   Characteristics of associations' support to schools

The MoEYS Cluster Schools' Guidelines describe clusters as "open and democratic forums [that] allow also a deeper involvement of communities as important party as teacher and school principals" (MoEYS 2000a: 5). The MoEYS then adds that "over the past year the Royal Government of Cambodia has tried its utmost to achieve the goal of guaranteeing to every child access to education and quality learning. However hard the Government has tried, it has not been able to reach this set goal. This is due to the inadequate participation of the commun*ity*" (ibid.).

This emphasis on poor community participation is surprising for two reasons. First of all, it seems to ignore the fact that households provide most of the resources for education. A study conducted by Bray in 1999 found that in various forms, families provide 77 per cent of the combined resources of household and government expenditures for primary education. Although the percentage is now down to 56 per cent, the reliance of education on private funds from families and communities is still high (Bray 1999, Bray and Seng Bunly 2005). Secondly, as noted by two respondents, while it is true that community participation could be stronger, the statement from the Ministry "puts too much responsibility on community themselves" and "calls to clarify what community involvement means" (Informant).

The informants to the School Associations checklist ranked the following three functions as their main priorities in supporting schools:

1. Collect and manage community funds for school improvement, repair, and maintenance

2. Discuss with teachers about problems such as repetition, drop outs, children with learning difficulties

3. Monitor the use of school budget and community contributions

Material contributions are therefore the main form of support provided by associations to schools. This was also confirmed by a number of informants.[30] A school

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[30]   Several informants pointed out this issue, N. 23, 25, 26, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 51, 54, 55, and 57.

teacher, for example, mentioned that "School Associations and schools meet two or three times a year to plan the construction and repair of the school" (Informant). Interviews in Kandal province also showed that material contributions are the main issues in the dialogue between associations and schools and that the discussion about children who are at risk of dropping out comes next. [31] Other studies have also confirmed this. As an example, Kampuchea Action for Primary Education (KAPE), a CNGO, conducted a survey in 14 clusters in Kampong Cham province, concluding was that material contributions constitute the main support that communities provide to schools (Ó Loisingh 2001).

The checklist used in Kampong Thom included a multiple choice question on the kind of contributions provided to school which included money, the organization of school ceremonies to collect funds, labour, materials, and ideas.[32] Most of the associations provided all five kinds of contributions, while only three per cent provided just one (Figure 6.14).
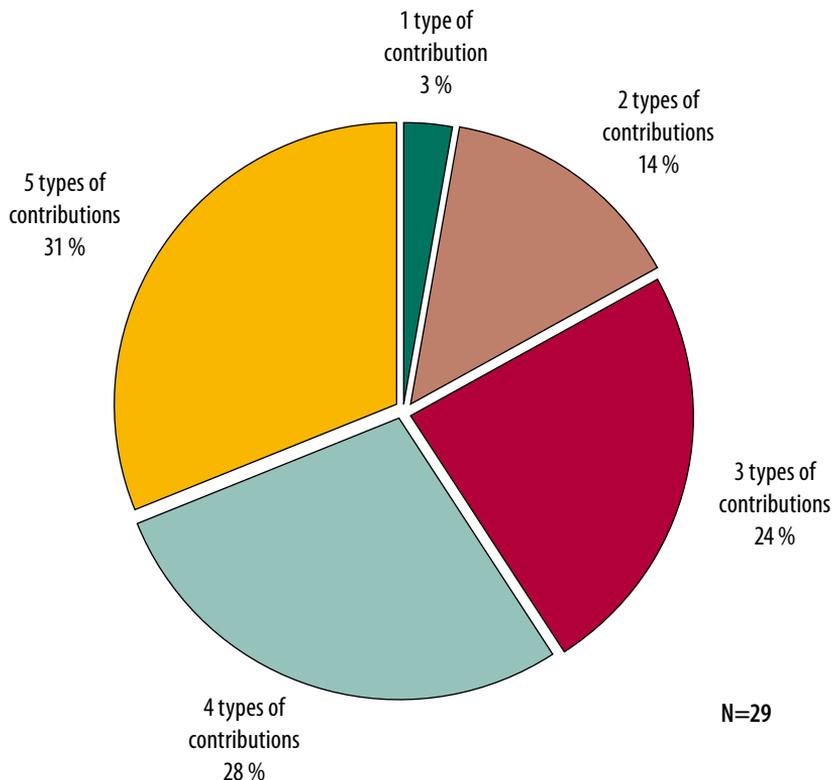
Figure 6.14. Distribution of number of contributions provided by School Associations

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[31] Informants N. 23, 25, 26, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 51, 54, 55, and 57.

[32] This last point was brought to my attention by Mr. Sarin Samphor, the translator hired to conduct the checklist. Informants suggested including it in the questionnaire, though a further analysis should determine which ideas are suggested by associations and if these are taken up by schools and put into practice.

This indicates that when associations are active, they tend to support the school in a number of ways. Money, labour, and the organization of ceremonies, are the main forms of contributions (Figure 6.15).
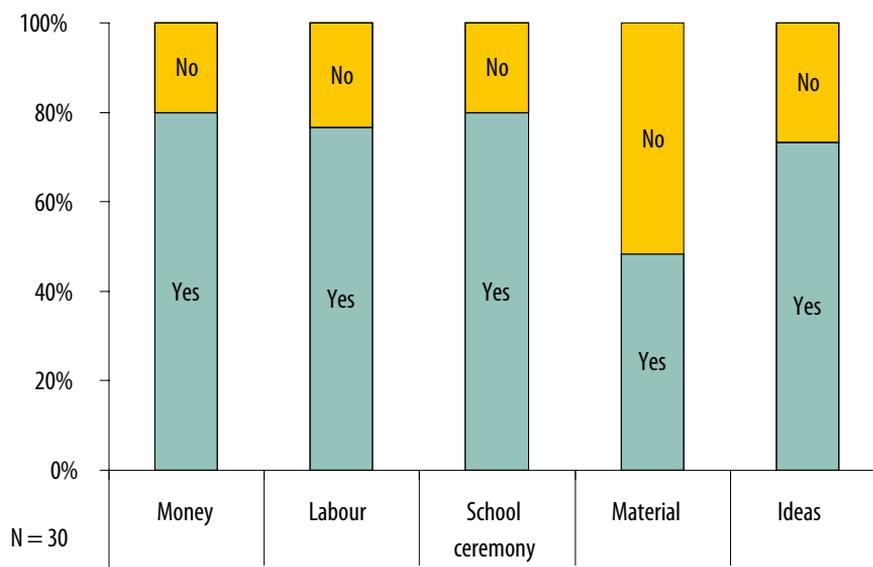
Figure 6.15. Types of community contributions to schools

Among material contributions, teaching aid materials (i.e. rulers, compass, paper, etc. – Personal communication), are the most frequently provided support to schools. Money and the provision of land follow in the list (Figure 6.16).

Although support for teaching materials is provided, teaching itself is not a topic of discussion between associations and schools. A teacher mentioned that "there is not a discussion about teaching between the people and teachers. Parents just send the kids to school and ask the teacher to take care of them" (Informant). This attitude, as mentioned by an international advisor, is consistent with Cambodian traditions and is also present in Cambodian communities leaving abroad: "Cambodia parents do not get involved at all because they have the perception that the teachers know everything" (Informant). The leaders of the School Association of Botum and Kontroung confirmed that besides contributions, there is very little communication between parents and teachers (Informants). Occasionally there are meetings to discuss the case of children who are at risk of drop out, which indicates the importance attributed to the problem of poor families who cannot send their children to school (ibid.).[33] The results from the checklist support information from the interviews,

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[33]   On the awareness of the importance that education has for their children and the reluctance to get involved in discussions that are perceived to be the main responsibility of the teachers, see also Ovensen et al. (1996) and O'Leary and Mean Nee (2001).
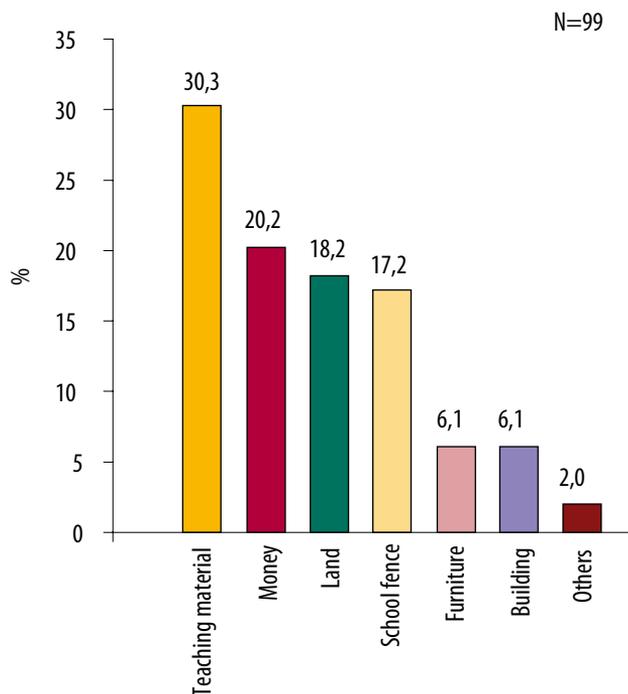
Figure 6.16. Types of material contributions % of positive answers

showing that school infrastructure and students are the main topics of discussion between associations and school staff (Figure 6.17).

While School Associations and school staff do meet. The results from the checklist in figure 6.18, show that just 30 per cent of informants mentioned that they have monthly meetings with school staff, followed by a 26 per cent who mention that their preferred option is twice per years.

This suggests that the dialogue between associations and schools is driven by school demands for material support, a pattern that, according to Bredenberg (2002), has been present since the early stages of cluster school development when communities were successfully involved as a source of local contributions for construction and maintenance of school buildings. However, "the relationship between schools and communities remains loose" (Informant). This limits opportunities for more inclusive participation and is perceived as a constraint by the checklist respondents who indicated that parents' limited involvement in students' learning is the most important problem for community participation, followed by limited interaction between parents and teachers (Table 6.11).[34]

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[34] A study on the perception of participation, conducted in 2004 by RTI International in 4 provinces and Phnom Penh for a total of 247 interviews, found that 60 per cent of them never attended a meeting with school staff. However, 95 per cent of the parents who did attend meetings "thought that their participation in school meetings has improved their child's education or helped make their education more relevant (CBEP 2004: 21).
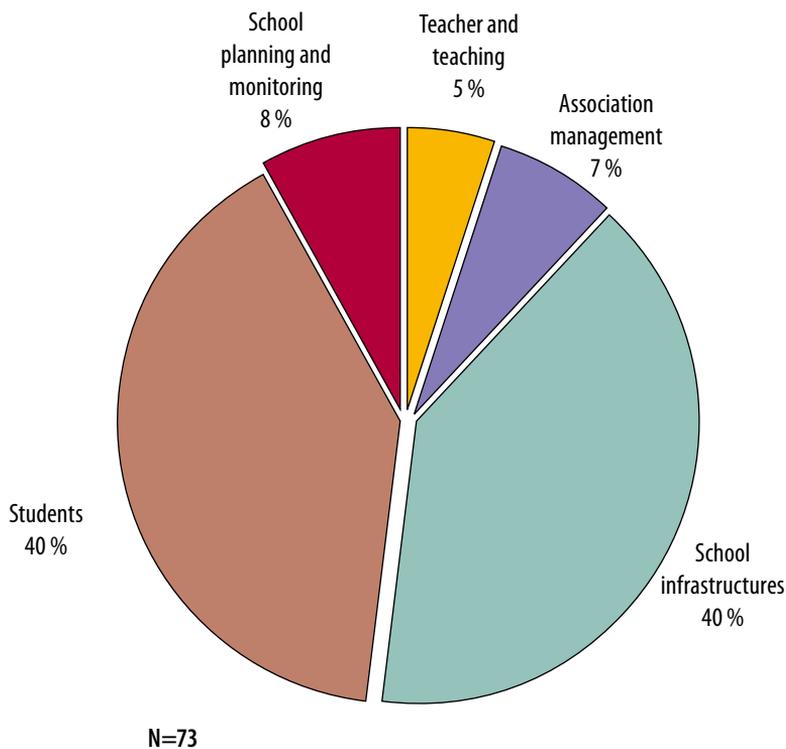
Figure 6.17. Discussion topic between School Association members and school staff
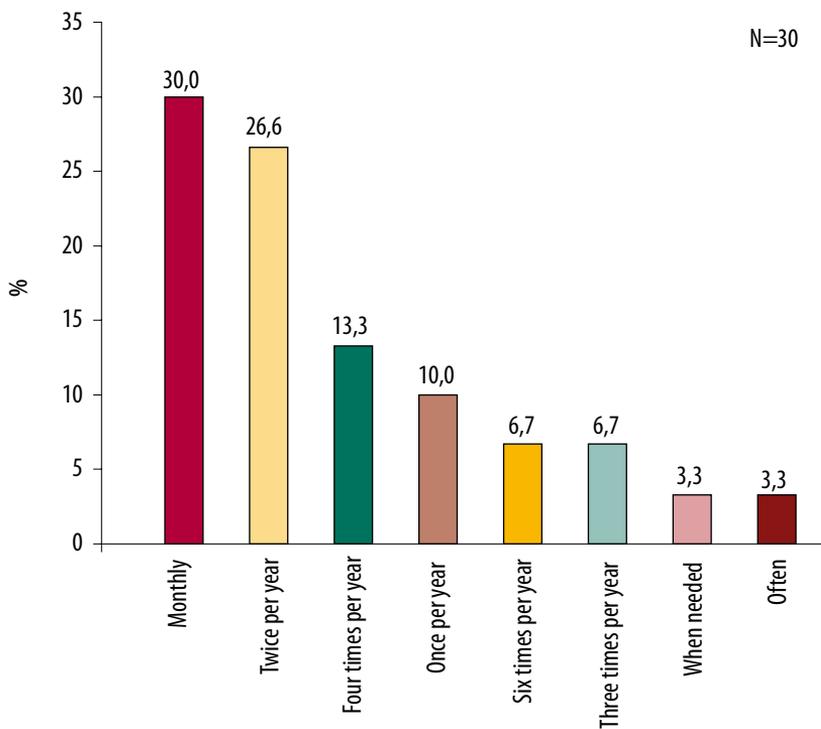
Figure 6.18. Frequency of meetings between School Association members and school staff

Table 6.11. Problems for community participation in school governance

	%
Parent's are not involved in child learning	33,3
No regular meetings between parents and teachers	30,0
Community is poor	16,7
Too many committees at village level and no time for participation	10,0
Low education in families	6,7
Community does not participate in school construction	3,3

N = 30

At the policy level, MoEYS officials are aware that communities can play a role but have not yet clarified sufficiently the possible roles of communities in the education system. The ministerial guidelines try to improve this situation prescribing, for example, outreach activities to disseminate information about school plans (MoEYS 2000a). Furthermore, there national guidelines provide also instruction on the formation of committees and subcommittees that aim at improving school governance by encouraging teachers to perform their job well or to mobilize communities for construction and school repairs.[35] Nevertheless it is not certain whether these committees are operational (Informant).

There are, however, some examples of more inclusive participation that were encountered during the research period. These are examples of alternative and dynamic spaces for participation created by pilot projects introduced by international NGOs and CNGOs in Kampong Thom and other provinces. The School Ecoclub established in the provinces of Kampong Speu and Kampong Thom by the CNGO Mlup Baitong, represents an example of the possible link between communities and school through extra curricula activities. The objective of the project is to improve the school eco-system and to increase the environmental awareness of the community and other stakeholders. School Ecoclubs are students groups (about 30) that meet at least once a week to learn about environmental conservation and to address environmental problems in and around their school with activities such as: tree planting, composting, waste collection, etc. (Informant in Pellini 2005).

Another example is the Life Skills Programme implemented in selected clusters in Kampong Cham province by the CNGO KAPE, with funding from UNICEF/SIDA. The programme "seeks to empower children to choose what they wish to learn with the objective to provide an opportunity for the community to participate in the learning of children" (KAPE 2002: 1). The project helps the children to select a skill they

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[35] As seen in section 6.2.1, the MoEYS guidelines define for each cluster various committees: Local Cluster Scholl Committee, Cluster School Council, Administrative Subcommittee, Technical subcommittee, Community subcommittee, Cluster School Resource Centre, District Cluster School Council, District Cluster School Committee, and Provincial Cluster School Council (MoEYS 2000a).

want to learn from among a list of available skills in the community, and to nominate a 'community teacher' they wish to teach them. Skills include bicycle repair, vegetable growing, market trading, baking bread and cakes, make-up for wedding guests, sugar-making, teaching, first aid, tailoring, playing music, chicken rising, and hair-dressing (KAPE 2002, Pellini 2005). KAPE experience with the Life Skills Programme has attracted the attention of other donors and is now being funded by the USAid (Personal communication). KAPE's Life Skills Programme has also been the basis for the National Life Skills Policy which the Cambodian government has adopted in the education sector. Life skills are now included in the national curriculum, although the MoEYS itself as yet to demonstrated, besides encouraging donors and NGOs in putting resources, on how to actively support the provision at school level (ibid.). An additional example from KAPE refers to the School Associations that have been started in 2003. These School Associations are formed by 15 children elected among the students of a school, who, under the supervision of a volunteer teacher and a community member, will try to make the school more children friendly (Informant in Pellini 2005).

Kosonen (2005), in his study of vernacular literacy for basic education in three Southeast Asian countries, with regard to Cambodia describes the successful experience of the introduction of vernacular as the language of literacy and media of instruction in the Eastern highlands provinces of Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri.[36] Pilot projects initiated by some international NGOs have shown that the successful adoption of vernaculars is also due to the major role played by indigenous minority communities. Language committees' have been crucial in language development, curriculum development, the production of learning materials in the vernaculars, as well as providing volunteers teachers. Additional elements are community governance of project schools, the employment of indigenous staff who speak the vernacular, and active participation of the local communities in curriculum development. This experience shows that communities can have an active role in educational matters.

6.4.2   Decision making and trust

"We do not trust the teacher; the associations' members trust more Pacoco and the [pagoda] committee" (Informant). These words by a community leader involved in several associations summarised the feeling as well as the gap that can separate communities and schools. The main reason for the tension seems to be the lack of transparency in the use of funds: "the use of local contributions is normally monitored by teachers and associations members, but last year [i.e. 2004] the teacher requested support to buy material to build a fence around the school. Until now, no fence has

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36   Vernaculars such as Brao, Krung, Mnong and Tampuan spoken by ethnic minorities.

been built. Therefore, we will now involve the Commune Chief to ask the teacher to clarify about the use of the money we provided" (ibid.).

This individual testimony, although it is based on a personal experience, highlights two relevant points: the importance of trust for the link between associations and schools and the role that Commune Councils may be asked to play in education. This section deals with the first point, while the second is addressed in 6.4.3.

One respondent mentioned that the link between school and community is marked by a "generalised feeling of distrust partly linked to the limited transparency in the use of funds by the school" (Informant). The dissemination of ideas of decentralisation and good governance have increased the awareness at community level about transparency and accountability. This is particularly relevant, since education turned out to be considered the most corrupt sector after the judiciary in a study by the Centre for Social Development (Nissen 2005).[37] According to this study, 53 per cent of the total yearly amount spent on bribes by households goes to education.[38] The study argued that the impact of bribes is not only financial; it also affects the way people perceive education, the decision about whether or not to send children to school, and the willingness of individual to make contributions to School Associations. Ironically, a study by The Asia Foundation (2003) found that teachers are the most trusted public officials.[39] Seventy per cent of the checklist respondents also expressed their trust for teachers and school masters.

Official meetings are spaces where transparency and accountability are tested. Seventy-three per cent of the associations confirm their participation in the annual PAP planning meetings (though still 27 per cent of the respondents do not or do not know what these meetings are). Three quarters of the respondents have attended meetings of the Local Cluster School Committee where they did ask questions and more often than not received answers (63 per cent). While associations are aware of the importance of transparency and require it from schools, their own accountability and transparency could be stronger. Fifty per cent of the checklist respondents say that their association does not prepare and activity report.

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[37] The survey covered all provinces of Cambodia with a total number of 2.000 questionnaire respondents, 60 semi-structured interview informants, field observations and two public forums with a total of 251 participants.

[38] Payments are made for enrolment, examinations and tests, snacks and drinks, private classes in the same school with the same teacher. The total annual sum of official payments: Remote Rural Areas: 34 USD, Accessible Rural Areas: 46 USD, Urban Areas 178 USD. Total sum of bribes: Remote Rural Areas: 3 USD, Accessible Rural Areas 6 USD, Urban Areas 44,5 USD. It is important to note that 85 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and that 9/10 of the 36 per cent of the population that lives under the national poverty line (0.50 USD/day) is in the rural areas (Nissen 2005).

[39] Followed by national assembly representatives, Commune Chief, and doctors in hospitals. Prosecutors and judges are at the bottom of the list of six professional categories. The trust towards teacher may be explained by the fact that families recognise that the extremely low salaries of teachers (25 USD per month) make the requests for bribes almost inevitable.

6.4.3   Commune Councils

According to Turner (2002a), Cambodia is an example of a 'piecemeal approach' to decentralisation, with different decentralisation reforms taking place at the same time in different sectors. Chapter Four showed that deconcentration of education started in 1993 with school clusters and continues today with the PAP. At the same time, Commune Councils were elected for the first time in 2002 and represent the heart of the Royal Government of Cambodia's decentralisation reforms.

According to the LAMC (RGC 2001), Communes are responsible for local development and local development planning but nothing specific is said about education. Schools, in fact, prepare their own plans following PAP and/or cluster guidelines. Both planning processes (Communes and schools) have to involve community participation, and community and association leaders, who are likely to participate in both.

One respondent recalled an inter-ministerial meeting held in Phnom Penh in 2001 to discuss, among other issues, how to involve MoEYS in the main decentralisation reform. The position of MoEYS at that time was clear. The Ministry had no intention to devolve any responsibility to Communes because they though that Communes could not do better than they could do and because the education sector already had systems in place (i.e. school clusters) (Informant). The position of MoEYS is today more open and reflects the reality at the local level. The data from Kampong Thom on the annual Commune Investment Planning process shows that Communes deal, at least in the planning, with some aspects of education and schooling and that education is perceived by villagers as part of overall local development.

As an example, the 2004 Commune Investment Plans for Kampong Thom related to 1.816 projects prioritised in the 81 Communes of the province.[40] Seven per cent of these projects were related to education and represented 21 per cent of all social development projects for that year (120 out of 563) (PRDC 2004). Construction, not surprisingly, represents the main focus for projects in the field of education (Figure 6.19).

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[40]   The Commune Investment Planning (CIP) is a yearly planning exercise that starts at the villages with an assessment of the current level of development and of the most pressing economic, environmental, institutional, and social development issues. It eventually results in the formulation of a Commune Development Plan (RGC 2002a).
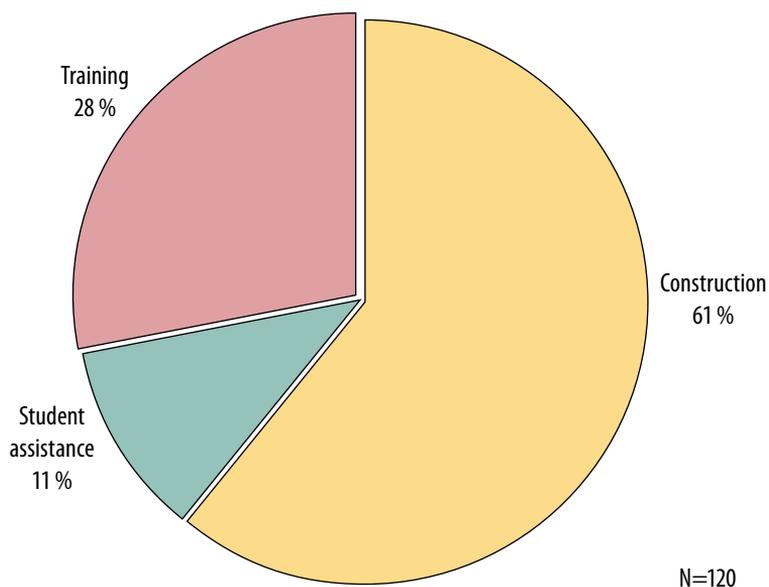
Figure 6.19. Distribution of education-related projects from Commune Priority Activity matrix Kampong Thom 2004 (PRDC 2004)

This reflects not only the preference for infrastructure projects in the early stages of decentralisation reforms (Manor 1999), but also is consistent with the results presented in section 6.4.1 and the preference for material support provided to schools. Meetings between schools, Commune members and associations do take place.[41] One respondent from Kandal province mentioned, for example, that the yearly planning in clusters normally involves the Commune Chief, Village Chief, and a community representative, who is often an elderly member of the Pagoda Committee or a School Association (Informant). However, as noted by two respondents, this participation is not always proactive and community members seem to attend the planning meetings mostly because they are told to do so (Informant).

An additional opportunity for community members to link with Commune Councils on the issue of education is the monthly public meeting that each Council is required to hold by law. Though participation at these meetings is far from ideal, the respondents from Kampong Thom replied that the main topic of discussion is requests to the Commune Council to support children at risk of dropping out of school. A primary school teacher, for example, mentioned that the "Commune Council helps to mobilize people to send the kids to school by meeting the Village Chief and telling him or her to meet with the families who are facing difficulties or keep their kids at home" (Informant).

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[41]   Observations N. 10,11,12,13, and 14.

The Cambodian Government is aware of the changing reality and has conducted some initial studies to explore the opportunities as well as the constraints for greater involvement of Commune Councils in education.[42] Moreover, after the Commune Council elections, Commune Chiefs became members of the Local Cluster School Councils and, at the same time, members of the Commune Education for All Committees. According to Losert and Coren (2004), the two committees seem to share similar objectives, but no cooperation is apparently planned between them. In addition, these committees seem to exist more on paper than in reality (Informant). An additional problem, in terms of attributing responsibilities, is that the public administration system and education do not match with clusters and communes having different borders and clusters being situated in between the district and the commune level (see figure 4.3 in section 4.2.1).

In Kampong Thom, the Village Networks experience of CBRDP represents an example for building bridges between associations and, at the same time, linking them with Commune Councils. As mentioned in Chapter Five (Section 5.1), the main rationale of the Village Networks is to identify active individuals or groups at the village level, bringing them together in an informal group to link them with the Commune Council while, at the same time, identifying ways for the Commune Councils to support the different groups (Figure 6.20).

Village Networks are formed, on average, by five elected members. Once elected, the members are provided with training which familiarises them with the basic concept of decentralisation, the role and functions of the Commune Councils, participation in commune meetings, the annual planning process, and conflict management. Reflection workshops, during the second year of operation, provide the Network members with the opportunity to discuss their experiences in participating in Commune Councils activities, the problems they have faced, and ideas for the future. (ibid.).[43] Initially, training to Village Network members has been provided by the staff of four CNGOs from Kampong Thom cooperating with CBRDP, while the community development facilitators of PDRD began to conduct these capacity developmental activities only in 2005.

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[42]   An example of studies conducted by MoEYS, which include also an analysis of the role of the Commune Councils, is Bredenberg and Ratcliffe (2002). The Ministry of Interior has also conducted a study with support from GTZ on this topic (Losert and Coren 2004). It should also be noted that the Organic Law, to be voted in 2007, is expected to increase the involvement of sector ministries in the decentralisation process.

[43]   The first 53 Village Networks (228 members) were established in 2003 with facilitation by four local CNGOs. In 2004 and 2005, the approach was expanded to 43 and 92 new Village Networks respectively (about 675 members). Cooperation between CNGOs and PDRD also improved. For more detailed description and analysis on Village Networks see Ayres (2003), Knight et al. (2005), Pellini and Ayres (2005), Ayres et al. (2006), and Pellini and Ayres (2007).
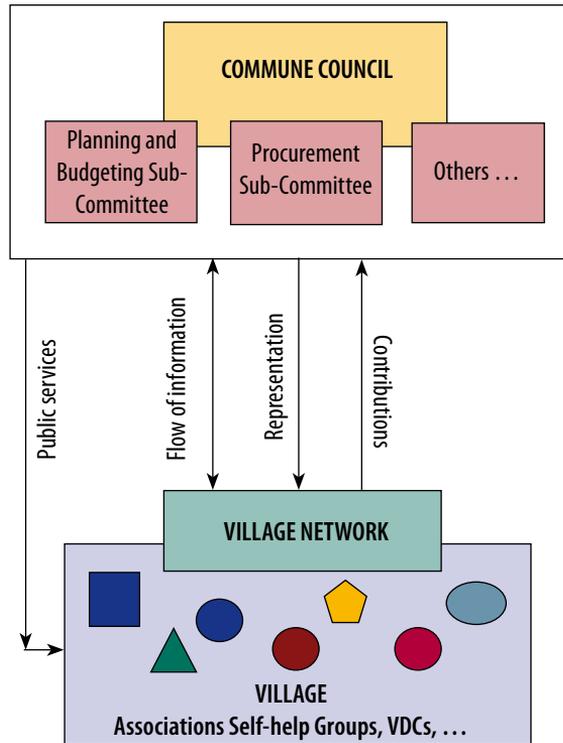
Figure 6.20. Village Network approach (Pellini and Ayres 2005)

CBRDP monitoring data shows that in March 2005, out of a total of 217 Village Network members, 25 were teachers. Their participation in capacity building and Village Network workshops provides two kinds of opportunities. First, it helps to familiarise them with traditional associations and strengthens cooperation as well as trust. Second, it creates the conditions to participate together with associations' members in annual planning and include school needs in the annual Commune Investment Plan. Data about the attitude of Network members towards Commune Councils is positive. Out of a total of 702 Village Network members interviewed between 2003 and 2005, 68 per cent express satisfaction with the work of their Commune Councils.[44] Moreover, in 2005, 66 per cent of the Village Network members (out of 233) agreed that the projects implemented by the Communes where the Village Networks are established reflect the needs of their villages.

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[44] CBRPD monitoring data 2005.

6.5   Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented the results of the analysis of the empirical data collected for the research, in addition to data for project monitoring purposes in Kampong Thom. The experience of Kampong Thom shows the difficulty for communities and schools to bridge the gap that divides them, especially in terms of more active involvement in school activities. This is due partly to the reluctance by community members and association leaders to get involved in matters that are perceived to be the responsibility of teachers; and partly to the limited efforts by the schools to provide greater room for participation in school activities. In the next chapter, these conclusions will be linked to the main research questions as well as the theoretical framework of the thesis.

7 Conclusions

George Orwell in his novel *1984* offers a telling sentence: "a hierarchical society in the long run is only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance" (1983: 191). Whether it is the social hierarchy that produces poverty and ignorance or the other way round, it is hard to say. However, societies with greater equality usually show lower poverty and higher literacy rates, while the promotion of education creates the conditions for increased demand for changes to social hierarchies (Sen 1999). Education is at the centre of the present research and is considered of critical importance for the development of a democratic society (ibid.).

This study demonstrated that hierarchy, poverty and illiteracy are all elements that characterise Cambodia today. Borrowing from Jane Jacobs (2000), they represent co-developments that influence to the overall change of society and therefore the institutional reforms that are being implemented by the government. While poverty and education are at the centre of the main government policy documents since the early 1990s, during the last five to ten years, the government has attributed greater emphasis to good governance, accountability, and transparency. Decentralisation is the strategy adopted to promote good governance and, with its emphasis on citizen participation in decision-making processes, it challenges established political and power structures.

This thesis has focused on the relationships between decentralisation and education through the analysis of the elements that favour or hinder community participation in schools in Cambodia's rural areas. This concluding chapter summarises the research findings and offers some policy options.

7.1   Summary of findings

Historian David Chandler, writing after the military clashes in Phnom Penh of July 1997, saw little reason for optimism about the future of Cambodia (1998a). Less than ten years later, Cambodia has been described as being at a 'crossroad' (World Bank 2004), with room for some optimism. The country is experiencing relative political stability and has embraced a market economy. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Cambodian government has started institutional reforms and has adopted decentralisation as one of its main strategies. Several studies presented in this thesis have revealed the substantial contribution by families and communities in the reconstruction of schools and educational facilities during the 1980s and 1990s, to such an extent that Cambodia is considered a special case in Southeast Asia (Bray 1996, Bray 1999, Duggan 1996, Ayres 2000, Bray and Bunly 2005). The decentralisation of education has the potential to provide citizens with spaces of participation that could extend beyond the education sector and merge with other parts of social life. The state, while retaining some core functions in the administration of education, has an additional function as facilitator for the creation of democratic spaces of participation. The case of Cambodia is interesting because, while the decentralisation reforms bring with them the idea of people participation in decision-making processes, Cambodian culture and social relationships are modelled on the hierarchical order of the past (Ovensen et al. 1996, Ayres 2000, Blunt and Turner 2005). The findings of this study are presented in the sections below.

7.1.1   Decentralisation of education

One of the three key questions of this study concerns the characteristics of the decentralisation reforms in Cambodia and in particular, in the education sector. Chapter Four described the characteristics of the political decentralisation that began with the election of Commune Councils in February 2002 by adopting Rondinelli et al's (1983) definition presented in section 2.2. The Chapter also described the two main decentralisation programmes in the education sector. The first is the Clusters School approach which started in 1992 with the aim of sharing scarce resources by a small group of schools. The second is the PAP which started in 2002 and aims at improving planning and resource allocation to individual schools. In both cases, the main rationale is to improve the allocation of scarce resources, while community participation is emphasised in terms of the financial and material contributions that communities can provide (as they have done before) to schools. Additional conclusions in terms of the spaces of participation available to community members are the following:

- The different decentralisations currently underway in Cambodia are characteristic of the 'piecemeal approach' described by Turner (2002). Though Commune

Councils have been elected ten years after the beginning of the Cluster School policy, the legislative process that preceded their election did not lead to the adoption of an Organic Law that would coordinate different approaches and reduce the fragmentation in the spaces of participation.

- The Cluster School approach and PAP are both national policies which use different funding mechanisms. In the case of clusters budget are prepared in the core school with the participation of community representatives; in the case of PAP, budgets are allocated to individual schools and bypass the cluster system. While PAP seems to be the policy that the government will pursue in the future, it is argued here that it also misses the opportunities for strengthening social cohesion and trust through networking and exchange inbuilt in the cluster approach.

- Although Cluster Schools remain a national policy, one of the main weaknesses of the approach is that that the government lacks the human and financial resources to support its implementation and expansion. Therefore, as the evidence shows, clusters have been active mainly with external support from donors or projects.

- The reform in the education sector has so far been consistent with the principles of deconcentration where, as in Manor's (1999) definition, responsibilities are dispersed from higher level of government to lower level agencies while the government retains political authority and control. In other words, the reform has so far failed to realise a greater delegation of decision making and financial autonomy implicit in democratic decentralisation. The result is a limited promotion of community participation in school based management and local governance.

As noted by Manor (1999), decentralisation alone is not 'the' solution to development problems, but rather 'a' solution. Therefore, if the objective of decentralisation is to promote democratic participation, it is important to understand which are the norms and values that characterise communities. One key conclusion of this thesis is that the promotion of participation in education through the creation of 'institutional spaces' of participation has not been successful because committees and councils designed by the reform have failed to gain a sufficient legitimacy at village and community level.

7.1.2   The meaning of 'community'

One pre-condition for the promotion of community participation in education, as shown in Chapter Two (see Govinda 1997, Manor 1999), is to take into account traditional forms of social capital and define spaces where these can actively link with local institutions and contribute to improve the governance of public services. This has been the basis for the second key question of the study: the meaning of 'community' in the cultural and social context of Cambodia.

Rural areas in Cambodia have traditionally been separated from the centre by an economic, social and cultural gap. Political decision making processes in Cambodia are traditionally determined by the interests of the ruling elite and have therefore overshadowed opportunities for active participation. Nevertheless there are also clear signs of long-standing social capital associated with traditional associations in rural areas supporting schools as shown in this study. Therefore, the claim that Cambodian civil society is limited to NGOs, trade unions, etc. is misleading and perpetuates the idea that traditional associations lack the legitimacy to contribute to institutional change. The data presented in this study confirms that traditional associations under the umbrella of the pagoda were among the first institutions to re-activate after the end of the Khmer Rouge period, or as soon as the political situation allowed them to restart their community activities. In the case of School Associations described in this thesis, they represent 'transient spaces' of participation with their strengths in the high value attributed to education and the commitment to support schools. Three social capital dimensions have been used to analyze them: bonding and bridging social capital for the characteristics of the associations and institutional social capital for the link with schools and local government bodies:

- **Bonding social capital**: the solidarity that underlines extended family networks and the importance attributed to Buddhism define the character and the activities of the traditional associations. Furthermore, leadership together with trust for respected community members such as *achars* and, in some case monks, is the driving force behind community mobilization which results in the establishment of associations and *ad hoc* committees involved in specific community-based activities. The capacity of these leaders in mobilizing local contributions and their link with religious norms support the process. Their authority is rarely questioned and they tend to keep their position for a long time. This accords with Aschmoneit et al's (1996) conclusion that associations are managed by a benevolent elite through a paternalistic rather than empowering way since decision-making usually involves the close circle of elderly and committee members. Associations' members, on the other hand, usually do not demand a greater involvement. The associated risk is a lower perception of the importance of transparency and accountability by committees' members and limited general improvement of knowledge and skills in terms of participation and management. Additional limitations of this leadership style are that the increased capacity and skills of the committee members are not transferred downwards to members so that villagers continue to rely on decisions taken by others. In line with the conclusions by Aschmoneit et al. (1996) and O'Leary and Meas Nee (2001), the data presented in this study demonstrates that the internal organisation and management of the School Associations follows the values attributed to age, gender, knowledge, reputation, and religious piety. Association's members have a close connection with their groups, suggesting the strength of bonding social capital is based on solidarity, respect for leadership, and trust.

- **Bridging social capital:** the links between school associations and other traditional community-based groups involved in social development are weak, suggesting a fragmentation of civil society at the local level. While pagodas represent the centres of communal life and the spaces where groups and traditional leaders meet, the cooperation and exchange between them is limited. The School Associations explored in this thesis are characterised by the volunteerism that defines civil society especially in its beginning, but show a limited perception of the importance of networking for influencing policy decisions and assisting decentralized authorities and service providers. In addition, low income levels limit the involvement of younger individuals already busy with work in the field and securing the livelihoods of their families.

7.1.3   Community participation in schools

The third key research question referred to the characteristics of community participation in schools. The concept of institutional social capital has been used as the conceptual backdrop to this question:

- **Institutional social capital:** the conclusion derived from the present analysis is that the link between associations and schools is weak in the sense that the dialogue is limited to the topic of financial and material contributions to support school improvement and/or children that are at risk of dropping out from school. This weak link is partly due to mistrust and tension related to the degree of transparency in the use of funds provided by the community. An additional element is parents' reluctance to become involved in their children's education which results in a low interaction with teachers. The links between School Associations and government institutions (e.g. Commune Councils) seem to be even weaker and, if they exist at all, are limited to reporting of associations' activities. The reasons are that line agencies at provincial and district level responsible for education are under pressure to follow national guidelines and bound to upward accountability; at the same time, a feeling of mistrust towards public institutions limits the associations' willingness to start a more fruitful dialogue with schools. As some of the examples presented in this thesis demonstrate, there are examples of community involvement in education that go beyond material support. A promising space, in this respect, is represented by the elected Commune Councils, which through annual planning exercises and monthly meetings could provide opportunities for greater exchange and bring issues related to schooling and education within the general local governance environment.

To summarize, trust and religious norms characterize the bonding, and to some extent the bridging social capital, while vertical links with schools and institutions are still weak. An equitable and sustainable development process needs a balanced combination of all social capital dimensions. Strong horizontal links based on trust

are important and necessary as they have the potential to mobilise resources and organise collective action. They are however not sufficient. There is also the need to strengthen the vertical relationship between civil society groups and government institutions, which, in the case of Cambodia, is closely linked to rebuilding citizens' trust in the state and recognizing, as remarked by Gyallay-Pap (2004), that these associations represent "indigenous forms of social capital that are not only a part of Cambodian civil society, but perhaps its largest and most solid part" (p. 36). The cases presented in this study suggest that, at the local level, the potential is present.

7.2   Situating the Cambodian experience and policy suggestions

Successful decentralisation requires a context in which dominant values are supportive of genuine decentralisation and circumstances are suitable to collective decisions (Manor 1995, Blunt and Turner 2005). Returning to the categorisation of different forms of decentralisation presented in Chapter Two (section 2.2), it is fair to say that the Cambodia's decentralisation of education is a 'deconcentration' with aspects of the 'management by objectives', described by Lauglo (1995), associated with the annual activity plans drawn at school or cluster level. At the same time, the stated 'political rationale' of 'participatory democracy' has so far resulted in a limited delegation of decision making authority and an inadequate consideration for the opportunities provided by greater spaces of participation for traditional associations members.

Cambodia's experience with community support to schools is not unique. As shown in Chapter Two, other developing countries have a tradition of community financing derived from a strong demand for schooling which was not met by adequate government funds (Bray 1996). Different societies have different ways of engaging with schools and education, therefore similarities or differences between the Cambodian experience and those of other countries reside in the institutionalisation of these forms of community support in the decentralisation process.

The example from four Francophone countries in West Africa presented by Lugaz et al. (2006) shows an important difference with Cambodia in that when administrative and education decentralisation go hand in hand, local government bodies can be given responsibilities for basic education. This avoids duplication of roles and tasks while, at the same time, requires an adequate capacity building programme. Although the reform's objectives in the four countries are, similarly with Cambodia, to access community resources to fund education, an organic and comprehensive decentralisation policy helps to promote greater community involvement and to include education in the overall local development process. Malawi, as shown by Rose (2003), has a similar experience to Cambodia in terms of traditional community support to schools. The institutionalisation of participation has been mainly extractive

and limited to contributions in cash or in kind for school construction. This has been the result of the attempt to bridge the 'participation gap' between communities and schools through the establishment of *ad hoc* school committees that have failed to gain legitimacy in the communities. The case of Ghana shows that communities, in order to achieve an active participation in school governance, need also to be given the capacity and skills required for active participation in school governance that goes beyond the limits of material contributions. This is similar to Cambodia's experience, where community members, based on the data presented here, are asked to join planning exercises without adequate preparation. The result is often 'etiquette participation'. One positive lesson, as shown from the case of the Sangkor School Association in Kampong Thom, is that community participation benefits when a teacher is also involved in the School Associations as this helps to include the teachers' perspective to association activities.

The examples from Latin America are not easy to compare with Cambodia. Some of the countries, such as El Salvador, have also suffered from years of civil war and have therefore a tradition of community support to school 'by default' as the only alternative. Furthermore, the state and civil society relationships have been, as Poggi and Neirotti (2004) put it, of indifference or cooptation. What is considerably different, however, is the influence of Freireian 'conscientisation' theories and the crucial importance of local alliances in strengthening community participation in local governance. These have led to the adoption of decentralisation as a long term strategy that influences the change of both design and management of the education system as well as citizens participation in the political arena (UNESCO 2005). The EDUCO programme in El Salvador is an example of the different perception of the role and functions of community support to schools. Though various evaluations of the programme show that educational standards in EDUCO schools are similar to those of regular schools, one additional and very significant contribution has been in rebuilding social cohesion. The growth of community social capital in communities where parents' empowerment has strengthened serves to promote trust and democracy.

The Cluster School approach to the decentralisation of education in Cambodia has been a strategy applied in other countries as shown by Bray (1987). The reasons that have led to adoption of the cluster approach have differed in different regions. In the case of Latin America, the 'conscietisation' objective was important. At the same time in some Asian countries (e.g. India, Sri Lanka and Thailand), the main objective has been administrative efficiency. This has also been the main objective in Cambodia, where the need to rebuild an education system has been coupled with scarce resources, while participation was a secondary aim. Though the experience of Cambodia can be compared with other Asian countries, it must be noted here that the current orientation of the MoEYS towards the PAP will reduce the relevance of the cluster system. As pointed out in the previous section, this missies the opportunity for increased social cohesion through the alliances and networking that clusters

can produce. Other Asian countries show that community participation can be limited to material contributions by preventing teachers becoming involved in parents' associations, as in the case of Indonesia. In the case of Cambodia, the research data show a greater formal and informal interaction between associations and teachers, although the main topic of discussion is material contributions.

It is usually more difficult to offer suggestions than it is to describe problems. During the research process, the perception from interviews and project activities at the local level has been one of optimism for the opportunities created by the election of Commune Councils, in contrasts with the conclusion by Blunt and Turner (2005) that "the broad historical, cultural and governance settings of decentralisation in Cambodia are not conducive to strong forms of decentralisation" (p. 85). This is a long term process requiring long term strategies which, with regard to participation, require a clear understanding of Cambodian social capital. The conclusions of this thesis therefore reinforce the claim by Collins (1998) that "any discussion about democracy building at the grassroots is going to have to consider the impact of any contemplated interventions on the relationships between government and rural Cambodia, the relationship between older and younger generations of villagers, and the relationship between more or less affluent members of the social and moral community centred on the *vat* – in a time of rapid social change" (pp. 20-21).

The policy suggestions presented below include proposals for the further development of community participation in schools and local governance. The aim is to identify ways to strengthen the weak dimensions of social capital (i.e. bridging and institutional social capital) through policy measures and initiatives at national and local level.

7.2.1   Suggestions for the national level

- The drafting of the Organic Law (due in 2007) should include an institutional and regulatory framework for spaces of participation by, for example, defining a 'Traditional Association's Council' at commune level that would bring together existing community groups active in different sectors and contribute strengthening local civil society.

- In order to strengthen bridging and institutional social capital, the government, with donors' assistance, should design clear and simple capacity building and awareness rising trainings on the principles of democratic governance to line agencies staff, teachers and headmasters, and community representatives. In order to strengthen the cooperation between line agencies and CNGOs, trainings could be facilitated by government staff in cooperation with CNGO facilitators.

- Donor agencies should assist the government in deepening the knowledge about the characteristics of traditional forms of collective actions and, at the same time,

avoid a rigid institutionalisation of spaces of participation by, for example, designing *ad hoc* committees that risk to duplicate existing forms community mobilisation. In other words, schools must open to communities and fluently engage with them as equal partners in management decisions.

- Traditional associations can play a vital role in the process of promoting community participation and representing community interests in schools. Policies to promote participation should start from the bottom, from 'existing' active community groups that are already supporting schools with material contributions and involve them in instructional activities. They should then be supported (together with the school cluster staff) through capacity building initiatives to strengthen their understanding of the principles of active participation, accountability, transparency as well as educational policies. KAPE's Life Skill Programme has shown that community involvement in educational and instructional activities can be successful. Now that 'Life Skills' are part of the national curriculum, the government has to take the lead in promoting this programme, gradually reducing the reliance on donors' funding and initiative.

- The government must demonstrate a more serious effort to overcome corruption and bad governance and promote more transparent and accountable management mechanisms in local departments as well as schools.

7.2.2   Suggestions for the local level

- Traditional associations usually work on *ad hoc* basis or are linked to a single school. This diminishes their strength. Based on the research's conclusions, donors, NGOs and CNGOs could adopt, in cooperation with line agencies, measures to strengthen bridging social capital by networking School Associations with other community based organisations through trainings, workshops, and discussion forums. This would contribute reducing the fragmentation of civil society, help the dissemination information to the village level, and produce a greater influence on local governance decision-making processes. The Village Network initiative in Kampong Thom in an example in this direction.

- While recognising School Associations' limitations in terms of management capacity, internal transparency, and dissemination of information, they have the legitimacy that comes from representing a considerable share of the population living in rural areas. Donor agencies could strengthen institutional social capital by supporting the dialogue between communities, schools, and local government, assisting them in organising regular meetings, workshops, and study visits where, with the help of simple participatory tools like social mapping, the participants could discuss opportunities for greater cooperation and exchange of information.

- Greater participation in school governance requires adequate skills. Community members need to be provided with these skills through capacity building and training organised by line agencies and/or donors' projects. Associations need the capacity to jointly implement activities with schools and Commune Councils, thus increasing their active participation in local governance processes, and then reflecting on their experiences and the implications of local governance for their livelihoods. Capacity building and trainings should therefore concentrate on basic issues such as participation in meetings, facilitation skills, and the use of simple training and education materials such as posters.

- Communes can offer, through their annual planning and the public monthly meetings, a space where this interaction can slowly start and hopefully lead to some results. Communes possess detailed information about the poverty situation of villages and even households and can therefore offer referral services related to education and support to families whose children are at drop out risk due to poverty.

7.3   Directions for further research and concluding remarks

This study has shown that, despite a history characterised by top-down decision making processes by all levels of government, participatory local governance can be developed in Cambodia. Social capital has survived the years of war and the Khmer Rouge and has shown that by taking into account values and norms associated with traditional forms of collective action, it is possible to create community based groups which are sustainable, i.e. are perceived as legitimate and have the capacity to adapt to change.

Given the limited number of studies on Cambodian social capital and traditional forms of collective action, more needs to be written on the history of these associations, their activities across the provinces of the country, their involvement in local development processes and their links with local government institutions such as Commune Councils. Moreover, more needs to be learned about the critical elements and themes that characterize Cambodian communities and that can have a direct influence of development projects. More evidence is also needed on the contribution of decentralisation to the development of education and improvement of the welfare of people. More comparative research has to be carried out to define the characteristics of a 'good' decentralisation programme for the promotion of participation in school based management as well as local governance. As suggested by Easterly (2006), it is important to experiment, evaluate, and document specific experiences with decentralisation in different local governance environments. These reforms cannot be considered as cure-all policies, and in order to promote democratic participation, gov-

ernment as well as donor support should always consider if targets and approaches are appropriate and sensitive enough to local constraints and views (Kuløy 1996).

The traditional forms of social capital explored in this thesis represent a point of departure to achieve one of the stated objectives of the decentralisation reform - that is, to give ordinary people greater opportunities to determine their future (NCSC 2005). The diversity of traditional forms of collective action which exist in rural areas can be strengthened further and contribute to a change that sees citizen's participation as a critical element of the development process and democratisation. These experiences will help Cambodian communities to be more involved in the 'substance' of education and, paraphrasing Gandhi,[1] to make democracy in Cambodia not only a way of governance, but also a way of life.

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[1] In Sing (2006).

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Annex 1 – List of interviews, observations and personal communications

Individual Interviews (alphabetical order)		
Mr	Bun Chan Lyla	Project manager, GTZ Kampong Thom
Mr	Bun Sath	Primary school teacher and staff of POE Kampong Thom
Mr	Bun Tean	Preah Damrei Primary School, Kampong Thom
Ms	Buon Norm	Pacoco member, Kampong Thom
Ms	Chan Sotheavy	Project manager, GTZ Kampong Thom
Ms	Chara Richards	Education advisor, VSO/EQIP Kandal
Mr	Cheat You Heat	Project assistant, KAPE Kampong Cham
Mr	Chhuon Vuthy	Lutheran World Federation, Phnom Penh
Mr	Chun Sim	Commune Council Chief, Kampong Cheteal, Kampong Thom
Mr	Cristiano Calcagno	Provincial coordinator, GTZ Kampong Thom
Mr	Daniel Adler	Legal Specialist, The World Bank Phnom Penh
Mr	David Ayres	Consultant
Mr	David Warthon	Consultant
Mr	Ek Tinavuth	Program assistant Seth Koma project, UNICEF Phnom Penh
Mr	Elis Karsten	Director, Finnconsult Oy Helsinki (Finland)
Mr	Ernesto Bautista	Governance advisor, UNDP Phnom Penh
Mr	Fiotán Ó Loinsigh	Education advisor, KAPE Kampong Cham
Mr	George Taylor	Education advisor, RTI International Phnom Penh
Mr	Hang Toy	Pacoco member, Kampong Thom
Mr	Huon Vannith	Chief of Provincial Local Administration Unit, Kampong Thom
Mr	Huor Kolvoan	Community development manager, Ministry of Rural Development Phnom Penh
Mr	Ismael Trasmonte Jr.	Commune Councils Support Project, Phnom Penh
Mr	John Evans	Education advisor, Basic and Primary Education Project Kathmandu (Nepal)
Mr	Keat Bun Than	Project assistant, Mlup Baitong Phnom Penh
Mr	Kurt Bredenberg	Education advisor, KAPE Kampong Cham
Mr	Lang Seng Horng	Project manager, Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC) Phnom Penh
Mr	Leng Vy	Director, Department of Local Administration at the Ministry of Interior Phnom Penh
Mr	Long Nuoeng	Village Chief, Kampong Cheteal Kampong Thom
Mr	Luc de Mesteer	Team leader, GTZ Administrative Reforms and Decentralisation Project Phnom Penh
Ms	Lynn Losert	Education advisor, USAid Phnom Penh
Mr	Michel Le Pechoux	Program manager, Seth Koma project UNICEF Phnom Penh
Mr	Nam Soth	Commune Council Chief, Rong Rueng Commune, Kampong Thom
Mr	Nebendra Dahal	Education advisor, UNICEF Phnom Penh
Mr	Nicholas Hinde	Education advisor, VSO/EQIP Takeo
Ms	Niem Lee	District animator, EQIP Kandal
Mr	Ouch Sorn	Project manager, BFDK Kampong Thom

Mr	Paddy Roome	Legal advisor, UNDP Phnom Penh
Mr	Pra Pah	Pacoco member, Kampong Thom
Mr	Richard Geeves	Director, World Education Phnom Penh
Mr	Roger Henke	Advisor, Centre for Advanced Studies Phnom Penh
Ms	Ruth Cinthe	Project manager, Lutheran World Federation Phnom Penh
Mr	Sam Samnang	Khmer language teacher, DED (German Development Service) Berlin/Bonn
Ms	Siap Sorh	School Association of Botum Pagoda, Kampong Thom
Mr	Siev Bot	*Achar*, Kampong Thom
Mr	Simon Molendijk	Education advisor, VSO/KAPE Kampong Chham
Mr	Son Siveth	Project manager, Lutheran World Federation Phnom Penh
Mr	Song Nguong	Director, Teacher Training School Kampong Thom
Mr	Srey Kun Chuon	Director, CODEC Kampong Thom
Mr	Top Ev	Pacoco member, Kampong Thom
Mr	Top That	Project manager, GTZ Kampong Thom
Mr	Ven. Ly Kom	Director, BFDK Kampong Thom
Mr	Ven. Seik Chheng Ngorn	Abbot of the pagoda of Don Lao, Stoung district, Kampong Thom
Ms	Yot Norn	Pacoco member, Kampong Thom

Group Interviews (alphabetical order)

Members of the Associations of Sangkor Cluster School, Kampong Thom

Members of Botum School Association, Kampong Thom

Members of Tbong Tuk Primary School Committee, Kampong Thom

Members of Kantorong School Association, Kampong Thom

Staff of the local CNGO APA, Kampong Thom

List of observations (chronological order)

19.07.02	Workshop on the definition of good and bad governance in Cambodia, GTZ RDP advisors in Kampong Thom
19.07.02	GTZ staff Kampong Thom, monthly meeting discussion on governance
29.07.02	Meeting between district animators and VSO/EQIP education advisor, Prek Tabenk Village, Kandal
01.08.02	Village annual planning, L'Ak village, Kampong Thom
05.08.02	Yearly school planning, Bok Dav cluster school, Kandal
06.08.02	Yearly school planning, Kbal Koh cluster school, Kandal
07.08.02	Yearly school planning, Kbal Koh cluster school, Kandal
09.08.02	Yearly school planning, Svay Rameak cluster school, Kandal
26.08.02	Monthly meeting and reporting on association activities, Pacoco members, Kampong Thom
02.10.02	Notes from a meeting on Natural Resource Management and community development with GTZ Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom
24.10.02	Key issues on education development in next few years, presentation by Richard Geeves at the VSO Cambodia annual meeting, Sihanoukville
25.11.02	Meeting cash and rice associations, Pacoco, Kampong Thom
17-18.2.2003	Workshop on decentralisation and good governance in Cambodia for GTZ Rural Development Project staff, Phnom Penh
13.03.03	Discussion on participation of communities in schools with EQIP district animators, Kandal

07.04.04		Community participation and traditional association meeting, Ban Dei Pagoda Kampong Thom
28.04.05		Notes about the structure of Pagoda Associations, Ms Da Nary Kampong Thom
03.08.05		Notes from a filed visit to Commune Councils and Village Networks in Kampong Thom by Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Interiors staff
15.09.05		Discussion on civil society and social capital with staff of GTZ Administrative Reforms and Decentralisation Project and GTZ Rural Development Project, Phnom Penh

List personal communications (chronological order)		
25.09.02	Mr	Nicholas Hinde, education advisor VSO/EQIP Takeo
01.06.02	Mr	Georg Müller, coordinator DED Cambodia
28.09.02	Mr	Walter Aschmoneit, consultant
09.02.03	Mr	Walter Aschmoneit, consultant
17.03.03	Mr	Nicholas Hinde, education advisor VSO/EQIP
24.07.03	Mr	Walter Aschmoneit, consultant
03.02.04	Mr	Walter Aschmoneit, consultant
06.09.04	Mr	Mark Turner, Professor at the School of Business and Government, University of Canberra (Australia)
27.09.04	Mr	Robin Biddulph, consultant
27.05.05	Mr	Walter Aschmoneit, consultant
12.06.06	Ms	Chan Sotheavy, project manager GTZ Kampong Thom
24.09.06	Mr	Roger Henke, advisor Centre for Advanced Studies, Phnom Penh
13.09.06	Mr	Sarin Samphors, teacher and translator
09.10.06	Mr	Walter Aschmoneit, consultant
20.11.06	Ms	Da Nary, project assistant DED Kampong Thom
25.11.06	Ms	Lynn Losert, education advisor USAid Phnom Penh

Annex 2 – Leading questions for interviews

LOCAL LEVEL	When was the School Association established?
	What is the objective of the association?
	What is the organizational structure of the association?
	What is total number of members in your association?
	Do you have discussion with the teacher about teaching and learning activities?
	What kind of cooperation does the association has with the school?
	Does the association provide also support to the teacher?
	How does the association support the poorest families to send their children to school?
	How long have you been involved with this association?
	Does the School Association report also to the Commune Council?
NATIONAL LEVEL	What are the elements of community participation in school which are reflected in national policies?
	What could be the role of Commune Councils in the education sector/schools?
	Are the school-community committees established following the national guidelines functioning?

Annex 3 — School Association Checklist

01	កាលបរិច្ឆេទ Date			
02	ភូមិ Village			
03	ឃុំ Commune name			
04	ស្រុក District name			
05	សាលារបស់សមាគមអ្នកឈ្លោះ School of your association			
06	តើសាលានោះបិតក្នុងកំរងសាលាដែរទេ? Is part of a school cluster?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes		ទេ No
06.1	បើក្នុងកំរង តើមានសាលាប៉ុន្មានក្នុងកំរងនេះ? If yes, How many schools this cluster has?	ចំនួន Correct		មិនដឹង Don't know
07	តើសាលានេះឧបត្ថម្ភអង្គការ UNICEF ដែរទេ? Does UNICEF support this school?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes		ទេ No
08-11	ឈ្លោះអ្នកដែលត្រូវគេសម្ភាសន៍ Name person interviewed	អាយុ: Age	ប្រុស M ☐ ស្រី F ☐	មុខរបរ: Profession:

12	តើអ្នកមានតួនាទីអ្វីខ្លះក្នុងសហគមន៍នេះ?	
	Which roles do you have in the community?	
	☐ សមាគមសណ្ឋាន Credit association	
	☐ សមាគមសាលារៀន School Association	
	☐ សមាគមមាតាបិតាសិស្ស Parent associations	
	☐ គណៈកម្មការទ្រទ្រង់សាលារៀន SSC	
	☐ គណៈកម្មការកសាងផែនការនិងថវិការ PBC	
	☐ គណៈកម្មការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ភូមិ VDC	
	☐ ប្រធានភូមិ Village Chief	
	☐ អាចារ្យ Achar	
	☐ ចាស់ព្រឹទ្ធាចារ្យ Elder	
	☐ អ្នកភូមិ Villager	
	☐ អ្នករកស៊ី Businessman/woman	
13	តើសមាគមសាលារៀនរបស់អ្នកបានបង្កើតដំបូងនៅឆ្នាំណា? In which year was your association established for the first time?	មិនដឹង Don't know
14	តើមានសមាជិកប៉ុន្មាននាក់ក្នុងសមាគមរបស់អ្នក? How many members have your association?	មិនដឹង Don't know
15	សមាជិកគណៈកម្មការទាំងនេះជាប់ដោយ: The members of the Committee are: ការចាត់តាំង Appointed ☐ ការបោះឆ្នោត Elected ☐ តើបោះឆ្នោតប៉ុន្មានឆ្នាំម្ដង? How often is the election? _____	មិនដឹង Don't know

16	តើសមាជិកគណៈកម្មការទ្រទ្រង់សាលារៀនរបស់អ្នកជានរណាខ្លះ? (សូមគូស √)
	Who is member of your School Support Committee? (please √)
	☐ ប្រធានភូមិ Village chief
	☐ សមាជិកក្រុមប្រឹក្សាឃុំ Commune Council member
	☐ អាចារ្យ Achar
	☐ ព្រះសង្ឃ Monk
	☐ គ្រូបង្រៀន Teacher
	☐ នាយកសាលា School principal
	☐ អ្នកដឹកនាំក្រុមស្ត្រី Women group leader
	☐ អ្នកភូមិ Villager
	☐ ចាស់ព្រឹទ្ធាចារ្យ Elder
	☐ អ្នកផ្សេងទៀត Others: _____
17	តើតួនាទីសំខាន់ៗបីរបស់សមាគមមានអ្វីខ្លះ? (សូមបង់លេខ ពី ១ ដល់៣ នូវតួនាទីដែលមានសារៈសំខាន់ជាងគេមុន)
	What are the three main function of the association? (please prioritize the 3 most important)
	☐ ប្រមូលនិងគ្រប់គ្រងមូលនិធិសហគមន៍ដើម្បី កែលម្អ ជួលជុល និង ថែទាំសាលារៀនៗ
	Collect and manage community funds for school
	☐
	ឧបត្ថម្ភដល់គ្រួសារក្រីក្របំផុតដែលមិនអាចបញ្ជូនកូនអោយចូលរៀនបាន
	Support poorest families that cannot send children to school
	☐ ពិភាក្សាជាមួយគ្រូបង្រៀន នូវបញ្ហាទាំងឡាយដូចជា សិស្សត្រូតថ្នាក់ បោះបង់ និង ក្មេងដែលមានការលំបាកក្នុងការ សិក្សា
	Discuss with teacher problems such as repetitions, drop outs, children with learning difficulties
	☐ ចូលរួមជាមួយបុគ្គលិកសិក្សាក្នុងការធ្វើផែនការប្រចាំឆ្នាំដើម្បីសាងសង់សាលារៀន
	Participate with school staff in yearly planning for school construction
	☐ ចូលរួមជាមួយបុគ្គលិកសិក្សាក្នុងការធ្វើផែនការប្រចាំឆ្នាំសំរាប់ការបង្រៀន
	Participate with school staff in yearly planning for teaching
	☐ ត្រួតពិនិត្យនូវការប្រើប្រាស់ថវិកាសាលា/ការចូលរួមវិភាគទានរបស់សហគមន៍
	Monitor the use of school budget / community contributions

18	តើការចូលរួមវិភាគទានអាចអ្វីខ្លះដែលប្រមូលបានពីសហគមន៍កាលពីឆ្នាំមុន? What kinds of contributions have been collected from the community during the last year?			
	☐ ថវិកា money			
	☐ ធ្វើបុណ្យផ្កា school ceremony			
	☐ កំលាំងពលកម្ម labour			
	☐ សំភារៈ material			
	☐ គំនិត/យោបល់ ideas			
19	តើសមាគមរបស់អ្នកជួយដល់សាលារៀនដោយវិធីណា? (សូមគូសសញ្ញា √ ក្នុងប្រអប់) In what way your association helps the school? (please √)			
	☐ សំភារៈជំនួយការបង្រៀន / Teaching aid material ☐ គ្រឿងសង្ហារិម/ Furniture ☐ អាគារសិក្សា / Building ☐ របងសាលា / School fence ☐ ដីផ្ទី / Land ☐ សាច់ប្រាក់ / Cash ផ្សេងៗ / Others _____ ☐ មិនបានជួយ/ No support			
20	តើអ្នកបានផ្តល់ជំនាញ /ការហ្វឹកហ្វឺនបន្ថែមដល់សិស្សរែរទេ? Do you provide skill/ additional training to the students?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
20.1	<u>បើមាន</u> តើជំនាញអ្វី? If yes, what skill?			មិនដឹង Don't know
21	តើសាលារៀនបានធ្វើការប្រជុំជាសាធារណៈរែរទេ? Does the school hold public meetings?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
21.1	<u>បើបាន</u> ប៉ុន្មានដង? (ក្នុង ១ អាទិត្យ, ខែ, ឆ្នាំ ...) If yes, how often?			មិនដឹង Don't know

21.2	<u>បើបាន</u> តើកិច្ចប្រជុំបានជូនដំណឹងដល់អ្នកភូមិដោយរបៀបណា? If yes, how are the meeting announced to the villagers?			មិនដឹង Don't know
22	តើមានស្ត្រីជាប់ជាគណៈកម្មការក្នុងសមាគមរបស់អ្នកដែ រទេ? Are there women sitting in your association?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	១ទ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
22.1	<u>បើមាន</u> ចំនួនប៉ុន្មាននាក់? If yes, how many?			មិនដឹង Don't know
22.2	<u>បើមាន</u> តើស្ត្រីបានសួរសំណួរដែរទេក្នុងពេលប្រជុំ? If yes, do women ask questions in meeting?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	១ទ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
23	តើសមាជិកសហគមន៍ផ្សេងទៀតបានចូលរួមប្រជុំដែរទេ ? Do others community members attend the meeting?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	១ទ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
23.1	<u>បើបាន</u> តើពួកគាត់ត្រូវការមានលិខិតអញ្ជើញដែរទេ? If Yes, do they need an invitation letter?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	១ទ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
24	តើអ្នកបានចូលរួមប្រជុំជាមួយក្រុមប្រឹក្សាឃុំដែរទេ? Do you attend meetings with Commune Councils?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	១ទ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
24.1	<u>បើបាន</u> តើអ្នកបានពិភាក្សាបញ្ហាអ្វីខ្លះ? If Yes, what do you discuss?			មិនដឹង Don't know
25	តើសមាជិកក្រុមប្រឹក្សាឃុំបានចូលរួមប្រជុំជាមួយគណៈ កម្មការរៀទ្រង់សាលា រៀនដែរទេ? Do Commune Councils members attend School Support Committee meetings?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	១ទ No	មិនដឹង Don't know

26	តើសមាគមនេះបានចូលរួមប្រជុំជាមួយបុគ្គលិកសិក្សា Does the association have meetings school staff, ☐ គ្រូបង្រៀន? with teacher? ☐ នាយកសាលា? school principal?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
26.1	<u>បើបាន</u> ប៉ុន្មានដង? (ក្នុង ១ អាទិត្យ, ខែ, ឆ្នាំ …) If yes, how often?			មិនដឹង Don't know
26.2	<u>បើបាន</u> តើអ្នកបានពិភាក្សាពីបញ្ហាអ្វីខ្លះ? <u>If yes</u>, what do you discuss?			មិនដឹង Don't know
27	តើអ្នកជឿទុកចិត្តលើ Whom do you trust? ☐ គ្រូបង្រៀនដែរទេ? Teacher? ☐ នាយកសាលាដែរទេ? School principal?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
28	តើមានអាជ្ញាធរភូមិបានចូលរួមប្រជុំដែរទេ? Do village authorities attend the meeting?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
29	តើសេចក្តីសំរេចចិត្តទាំងឡាយ ត្រូវបានផ្សព្វផ្សាយដល់អ្នកភូមិនិងមាតាបិតាសិស្សដោយវិធីណា? How are decisions disseminated to the villagers and parents?			មិនដឹង Don't know
30	តើសមាគមរបស់អ្នកបានរៀបចំរបាយការណ៍សកម្មភាព ដែរទេ? Does your association prepare an activity report?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
30.1	<u>បើបាន</u> តើអ្នកណាជាអ្នកទទួលខុសត្រូវក្នុងការរៀបរបាយការណ៍សកម្មភាពនោះ? If Yes, who is responsible for the preparation of the activity report?			មិនដឹង Don't know

31	តើសមាជិកសមាគមបានចូលរួមក្នុងកិច្ចប្រជុំគណៈកម្មការសាលាកំរង ដែរទេ? Do members of the association attend Cluster School Committee meetings?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
31.1	<u>បើបាន</u> តើអ្នកមានឱកាសសួរសំណួរដែរទេ? <u>If Yes</u>, do you have the chance to ask questions?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
31.2	<u>បើបាន</u> តើអ្នកបានទទួលចំលើយដែរទេ? <u>If Yes</u>, do you receive an answer?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
32	តើសមាជិកគណៈកម្មការទ្រទ្រង់សាលារៀនអាចសុំមើលថវិកាត្រីមាស រឺ ប្រចាំឆ្នាំរបស់សាលាបានដែរទេ? Do member of the School Support Committee have the possibility to see quarterly or yearly school budget?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
33	តើប្រធាន រឺ សមាជិកគណៈកម្មការសាលា/សមាគមបានចូលរួមក្នុងការប្រជុំធ្វើផែនការ PAP ដែរទេ? Do the leader or members of the school Committee/ Associations participate in PAP planning meeting?	បាទ/ ចាស Yes	ទេ No	មិនដឹង Don't know
34	តើអ្វីខ្លះជាចំណុចល្អ របស់គណៈកម្មការទ្រទ្រង់សាលារៀនរបស់អ្នក ក្នុងការងារសាលារៀន និង ការអប់រំ? What are the strong points of work of your school association?			មិនដឹង Don't know
35	តើអ្វីខ្លះជាចំណុចខ្សោយ របស់គណៈកម្មការទ្រទ្រង់សាលារៀនរបស់អ្នក ក្នុងការងារសាលារៀន និង ការអប់រំ? What are the weak points of work of your school association?			មិនដឹង Don't know

36	សូមជ្រើសរើសបញ្ហា ៣ ដែលពាក់ព័ន្ធនឹងប្រព័ន្ធអប់រំ ដែលអ្នកយល់ឃើញថា វាជាបញ្ហាសំខាន់ជាងគេក្នុងចំណោមបញ្ហាខាងក្រោមនេះ (សូមបង់លេខ ពី ១ ដល់ ៣ ទូរ បញ្ហាដែលមានសារៈសំខាន់ជាងគេមុន)	
	Please select 3 problems related to education system that you consider the most important of the following:	
	____ សិស្សមានចំនួនច្រើនពេកក្នុងថ្នាក់	classroom too crowded
	____ សិស្សរវល់ខ្លាំងពេកក្នុងការជួយឪពុកម្ដាយរប ស់ពួកគេ	students are too busy helping their parents
	____ គ្មានគ្រឿងសង្ហារឹមគ្រប់គ្រាន់ក្នុងសាលា	insufficient number of furniture in the school
	____ មានសិស្សស្រីតិចតួចតែប៉ុណ្ណោះដែលបានរៀនចប់បឋមសិក្សា	very few girls finish primary school
	____ កូនក្មេងមកសាលាទាំងស្រេកឃ្លាន	children come to school hungrily
	____ ខ្វះគ្រូបង្រៀន	lack of teacher
	____ ជីវភាពរបស់គ្រូបង្រៀននៅមានកំរិតទាប	teacher living standards are low
	____ ក្រុមប្រឹក្សាឃុំមិនបានចូលរួមគ្រប់គ្រាន់ក្នុង ស័យអប់រំ	CC are not involved enough in education
	____ ការបង្រៀនមិនបានជួយអោយសិស្សចំរៀន	Teaching does not help pupils to learn
	____ វិន័យសាលានៅមិនទាន់តឹងរ៉ឹង	discipline not strict enough in school

37	សូមជ្រើសរើសបញ្ហា ២ ដែលពាក់ព័ន្ធនឹងការចូលរួមរបស់សហគមន៍ និង ប្រព័ន្ធអប់រំ ដែលអ្នកយល់ឃើញថា បញ្ហាសំខាន់ជាងគេក្នុង ចំណោមបញ្ហាខាងក្រោមនេះ ៖ (សូមបង់លេខ ពី ១ដល់ ២ នូវ បញ្ហាដែលមានសារះសំខាន់ជាងគេបំ)
	Please select 2 problems related to community participation and the education system that you consider the most important of the following:
	___ មាតាបិតាសិស្សមិនបានតាមដានការសិក្សារបស់កូនផ្ទាល់
	Parents are not involved directly in children's learning
	___ សហគមន៍មិនបានចូលរួមក្នុងការសាងសង់ និង ជួលជុលអាគារសិក្សា
	Community does not participate in the construction and repair of school buildings
	___ សហគមន៍មិនបានចូលរួមក្នុងការធ្វើផែនការសាលា
	Community does not participate in writing school plans
	___ មានគណៈកម្មការច្រើនពេកក្នុងភូមិ គ្មានពេលចូលរួមប្រជុំបានគ្រប់កិច្ចប្រជុំទាំងនោះទេ
	Too many committees at village level, no time to participate in all meetings
	___ គ្មានការប្រជុំជាទៀងទាត់ទេ រវាងមាតាបិតាសិស្ស និង គ្រូបង្រៀន ដើម្បីពិភាក្សាអំពីសិស្សត្រួតថ្នាក់ សិស្សបោះបង់ និង សិស្សដែលមានការលំបាកក្នុងការសិក្សា។
	There aren't regular meeting between parents and teachers to discuss about repetition, drop outs and children with learning dicculties
	___ សហគមន៍ក្រ (គ្មានប្រាក់ រាល់គ្នារវល់រកលុយ)
	Community is poor (has no money, every one is busy finding money)
	___ គ្មានការអប់រំក្នុងក្រុមគ្រួសារបានគ្រប់គ្រាន់
	Not enough education in family

Thank you!

សូមអរគុណ!

Annex 4 – Map and list of School Association checklists

The Checklist interviews were conducted with members of 30 School Associations. The above map shows the villages where the School Associations are located (see also list in the table below). The map refers only to the checklists and it does not show the location of interviews, observations, and personal communications. All checklists interviews have been conducted by Mr. Sarin Samphors. The selection of the School Associations has been done taking into account two elements. First, the accessibility and safety of the area. Second, the presence of one CNGO working with CBRDP with the Village Network approach to help to identify the School Associations members and organise the interview meetings. Sandan was the most difficult district to access during the survey period due to extremely bad road conditions and has therefore been excluded from the checklists survey. The district of Santuk is sparsely populated, therefore the checklist interviews took place in the villages nearby the district centre. The district of Baray is neither a CBRDP target area nor has CNGOs linked to CBRDP working there and has therefore not been included in the survey. The district of Stoung has also been excluded since this is the area where there has been

the greatest involvement with pagoda and school associations through the support provided by CBRDP to Pacoco. Stoung is also the district where have been conducted most individual and group interviews as well as the location of the Botum Pagoda case study.

N.	School	Village	Commune	District
1	Thnal Bek Primary School	Thnal Baek	Trapeang Ruessei	Kampong Svay
2	Prey Preal Primary School	Prey Preal Ka	Trapeang Ruessei	Kampong Svay
3	Kouk Nguon Primary School	Trapeang Prolit	Trapeang Ruessei	Kampong Svay
4	Prasat Svay Prey Primary School	Prasat	Trapeang Ruessei	Kampong Svay
5	Romaing Gnopp	Trapeang Ruessei	Trapeang Ruessei	Kampong Svay
6	Mony Raingsei Primary School	Snao	Trapeang Ruessei	Kampong Svay
7	Chunlos Primary School	Thnal	Tuol Kreul	Prasat Balangk
8	Mareak Primary School	Mreak Ka	Tuol Kreul	Prasat Balangk
9	Ta Ream Primary School	Trach	Tbaeng	Kampong Svay
10	Po Primary School	Pou	Tbaeng	Kampong Svay
11	Tropaing Pring Primary School	Trapeang Pring	Sa Kream	Prasat Balangk
12	Veal Thnol Primary School	Veal Thnal	Sa Kream	Prasat Balangk
13	Tram Khla Primary School	Tram Khla	Tbaeng	Kampong Svay
14	O Sambour Primary School	Ou Sambuor	Kdei Doung	Stueng Saen
15	Kdei Daung Primary School	Kdei Doung	Kdei Doung	Stueng Saen
16	Sleng Primary School	Slaeng	Kdei Doung	Stueng Saen
17	Puk Yuk Primary School	Puk Yuk	Srayov	Stueng Saen
18	Kampong Chhen Teal Primary School	Kampong Chheu Teal	Sambour	Prasat Sambour
19	Kampong Rotes Primary School	Kampong Roteh	Kampong Roteh	Stueng Saen
20	Kampong Thom Village Primary School	Kampong Thum	Kampong Roteh	Stueng Saen
21	Pren Primary School	Pren	Prey Kuy	Stueng Saen
22	Chheu Loving Primary School	Chheu Lving	Tang Krasang	Santuk
23	Chambak Khang Cheung Primary School	Chambak	Tang Krasang	Santuk
24	Chambak Khang Tbaung Primary School	Tuol Chan	Tang Krasang	Santuk
25	Thoamneath Primary School	Thomm Neath	Tang Krasang	Santuk
26	Sangkum Thmei Primary School	Sangkom Thmei	Tang Krasang	Santuk
27	Taing Krasaing High School	Sang Khleang	Tang Krasang	Santuk
28	Vaing Khang Cheung Primary School	Veang Cheung	Tang Krasang	Santuk
29	Sambour Primary School	Sambour	Prey Kuy	Stueng Saen
30	Prey Kuy Primary School	Prey Kuy	Prey Kuy	Stueng Saen

Annex 5 – Statute of Botum Pagoda Association 1952

SAMAKUM VAT of BOTUM PAGODA

Established on October 17, 1952 in Vat Botum, Rong Roeung Commune, Stoung District, Kampong Thom Province.

"All beings are called to die; only their names will stay on."[1]

On October 17, 1952

Boun Hy and Chheav have donated this book and a sum of 1.030 Riel (one thousand and thirty Riel) to the president and the twelve advisers for the purpose of promoting the Buddhist religion.

We, President and Advisers, have received both and will follow closely the spirit of the statute in this book.

We avail ourselves to inform all our Buddhist friends:

We have the honour to create an association for the sake of our Buddhist religion, because we thought that Vat Botum is a shelter for monks and novices who endeavour to study the *Tripitaka* [holy Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist canon of scriptures]. These studies will be carried out well when there will be satisfactory buildings, as the saying goes 'the Joy of the Habitat'. Today the buildings of the pagoda are dilapidated. We Buddhists have the intention to construct a building, but our means are quite limited; we could only contribute 'one thousand Riel'. Therefore, we have the honour to invite all our friends of the community. Belonging to Vat Botum, to conquer their stinginess and to give a contribution, small or big according to the personnel conviction to build up a capital for credit. We are calling this endeavour 'Buddhist Aid' which is meant first of all to construct the *Vihear* [sanctuary, sermon hall] of Vat Botum. The merits of this religious contribution will certainly be our future treasure which will accompany us to pass the 'cycle of reincarnations' towards Nirvana.

If well constructed, this building will be reserved for hospitality of monks coming from all four directions to Vat Botum.

Once this building is finished, may it be allowed to devote these merits of Buddhist faith to all of our cherished ancestors so that they may be in peace and well-being.

---

1   The name in the book of the association; the capital will continue to create merit for the persons even after his death.

If my life has not yet definitely passed the 'cycle of reincarnations', I express the wish that I may be always be in good peace and well-being until reaching Nirvana, the world of absolute peace.

Names of the first donors:

Lay-people: M. Boun-Hy and Mme. Chheav.

STATUTE

The regulations to manage well the donations and contributions comprise seventeen points, as follows:

I.   There must be one President and eleven Advisers:

1. Pen Neang	7. So Nou
2. Ke Chah	8. Kim Oun
3. Phok Som	9. You Phath
4. Nop Sao	10. Srei Chun
5. Khiev Khol	11. Por Teng
6. Khiev Mao	12. Chum Chuong

II.   All forms of information and explication are authorised to invite contributions from the public.

III.   The capital must be given as credit with interests and be always in permanent circulation.

IV.   The amounts received and spent must be informed to monks and lay-persons.

V.   Concerning the borrowers, the right to decide who may borrow is with the members.

VI.   In the act of giving the credit two witnesses must sign the document.

VII.   In case of eventual risks the two witnesses must reimburse the amount borrowed.

VIII. At the date fixed for reimbursement when the borrower is not paying back the credit, the witnesses and the members have the right to confiscate mobile and immobile property.

IX.   In case the witness dies or disappears the members must reimburse the entire amount.

X.   In one year there are two cycles for reimbursement: the 15th day of the rising moon in the month *Cheth* and *Asath* from 8:00 to 12:00. In a year where there are two *Asath* the date chosen should be appropriate [a six month's period and not more – added by translator]. Capital and interest will be repaid at the same time.

XI.   This amount will be allocated to the construction and the repair of the pagoda buildings.

XII.   If a living house is needed the monks should make a request to the Committee of Buddhist Aid.

XIII.   For the project to construct the *Vihear* [sanctuary, sermon hall] or another building a meeting must be held to discuss and decide upon; an information meeting must be held after completion.

XIV.   In the meeting the decisions will be taken by majority vote.

XV.   If the President or one of the members become a problem, they must be replaced.

XVI.   The borrowers cannot be witnesses.

XVII.   The entire amount of this fund must serve the construction [of the pagoda] and the accommodation [of monks] until the end of the Buddhist religion.

Seen and approved   Seen and approved   Seen and approved
The Abbot   The *Achar*   The *Mekhum*

                                        Translated by Narak Sovann

Annex 6 – List of traditional associations in Kampong Thom

Pagoda level		
Pagoda Committee	គណកម្មការវត្ត	*Kanak Kamaka Vat*
Boat Racing	ក្រមទូកងង	*Krom Touk Ngo*
Cash Association	សមាគមប្រាក់	*Samakum Prak*
Rice Association	សមាគមស្រូវ	*Samakum Srov Bun*
Parents' Association	សមាគម មាតាបិតាសិស្ស	*Samakum Meatda BeidaSes*
Elder Community	សហគមចាស់ទុំ	*Sahakum ChasTum*
Funeral Association	សមាគម មរណសង្គ្រោះ	*Samakum Sorb*
Health Association	សមាគម មន្ទីរពេទ្យ	*Samakum Soka Pheap*
School Association	សមាគមសាលារៀន	*Samakum Sala Rean*
Village Level		
Cash Association	សមាគមប្រាក់ភូមិ	*Sakmakum Prak*
Rice Association	សមាគមស្រូវភូមិ	*Samakum Srao*
Rice Bank	ធនាគារស្រូវ	*Thonea Kea Srao*
Village Celebration	ក្រមបុណ្យភូមិ	*Krom Bunphum*
Pond Digging	ក្រមជីកស្រះ	*Krom Chiik Sras*
Road Construction	ក្រមលើផ្លូវ	*Krom Leuk Phlao*
Mutual help below village level		
Cow Exchange	ក្រមប្រវាស់គោ	*Krom Provahs Ko*
Draft Animal Exchange	ក្រមប្រវាស់កំលាំងអូសទាញ	*Provash Kamlang Osteanh*
Cooking Group	ក្រមចុងភៅ	*Krom Chong Pao*
Village Spirit Rising	ក្រមឡើងអ្នកតា	*Krom Leung Neakta*
Meal Offering	ក្រមវេន	*Krom Ven*

Emergency Help Group	ក្រុមសង្រ្គោះ បន្ទាន់	*Krom Sankrohs Bantoin*
Pot and Dishes Exchange	ក្រុមចានឆ្នាំង	*Krom Chan Chhnang*
Arak Spirit Waking Up	ក្រុមឡើងអារក្ស	*Krom Leung Arrak*
Credit Group	ក្រុមតុងទីន	*Krom Tong Tine*
Dike Construction	ក្រុមលើកទំនប់	*Krom Leuk Tom Nob*
Labor Exchange	ក្រុមប្រវាស់ដៃ	*Krom Pro Vahs Dai*
Animal Caring	ក្រុមខ្វាលគោ	*Krom Khveal Ko*
Fishing Exchange	ក្រុមនេសាទ	*Krom Nesath*
Puberty celebration organiser	ក្រុមរៀបចំ ពិធីចូលម្លប់	*Krom Chol Malob*

Source: Narak Sovann 2000.

Annex 7 – Social Map of Don Lao pagoda (Stoung district)