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CFS policy and Cambodian teacher education and training: Beeby revisited

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This paper explores educational policy implementation in Cambodia through the lens of teacher education and training. Acknowledging the centrality of teachers in the implementation of pedagogical reforms globally, this study investigates the extent to which the education and training of teachers in this study equipped them to implement the Cambodian Ministry of Education's Child Friendly Schools Policy. Using Beeby's 1966 Stages of Development as a framework, this paper considers how teachers' education and training affect their ability to enact pedagogical initiatives in the classroom. Using a case study methodology, data was collected, primarily, through a survey and interviews with educators in three government primary schools in distinct locations. Findings identified the following factors that inhibited teachers implementing CFS: weak content knowledge; inadequate pre-service preparation; and a lack of professional development. The findings underscore the importance of developing the requisite content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers on an ongoing basis.

Keywords: Beeby; Cambodia; teacher education; pre-service training; CFS

INTRODUCTION

An extensive body of literature has, over time, contended that factors such as classroom management, pedagogical content knowledge, utilizing a range of teaching methods, and ongoing professional development are key to developing effective teaching and learning (Hattie, 2009; Joyce, Calhoun, & Hopkins, 2010; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Shulman, 1987). Furthermore, the academic education and pedagogical training of teachers is acknowledged as critical for enhancing student learning experiences and for raising student achievement levels (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; UNESCO, 2014a). Indeed, several influential studies have asserted that highly educated and trained teachers play a crucial role in helping to achieve quality educational systems (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Luschei & Chudgar, 2011; Sahlberg, 2011). For example, Luschei & Chudgar, in their large-scale international study, found a direct correlation between a teacher's academic qualifications and student achievement. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that there is a clear connection between having certified teachers and an increase in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005).

In what has come to be called the Global South, international actors contend that, without well-educated and well-trained teachers, Education for All (EFA) goals will not be realised (UNESCO, 2015a). Additionally, achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2015), and target 6 of UNESCO's current strategy (UNESCO, 2014b) rely on well-educated and well-trained teachers. Indeed, the *Incheon Declaration*, as part of the 2030 international education agenda, seeks to make a grade 12 certificate or its equivalent the minimum entry requirement to the profession (United Nations, 2015).

This paper uses the lens of teacher education and training to explore educational policy implementation in Cambodia. It investigates the extent to which the education and training of teachers equipped them to implement the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport's (MoEYS) Child Friendly Schools (CFS) Policy. Beginning with an outline of the scholar and education minister, Clarence Edward Beeby's, "The quality of education in developing countries" (1966), which provides a framework for this study, this paper will then provide a brief outline of the educational situation in Cambodia with particular reference to the MoEYS' CFS policy and the pedagogical approach underpinning this initiative. It will then analyse data drawn from educators in three schools. In conclusion, it offers insights for those seeking to implement pedagogical reforms.

BEEBY'S "THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES"

Clarence Edward Beeby (1902-1998) was an educationalist, lecturer, government minister of education, ambassador, and advisor. Influenced by the work of progressive educationalists, like John Dewey, and the ideas of learner-centred education, he firmly believed that primary education should be open to experiment and change and that all young people had the right to continue their education beyond the compulsory years.

Drawing upon his vast experience in his home country of New Zealand and in the countries of the Pacific, particularly Western Samoa and South and Southeast Asia, Beeby's 1966 book, "The Quality of education in developing countries," developed an alternative model to improve the quality of primary education in the developing world, focusing on qualitative educational improvements in contrast to the prevailing human capital approaches (Schultz, 1961). Examining what occurred in the classroom and focusing on teaching and teachers, he argued that it was the quality of a country's teachers that was the key to improving the quality of education in any setting. He developed a hypothesis of stages of development that a primary school system must pass through if it is to develop a quality education system, contending that while these stages "may be shortened" they "cannot be skipped" (1966, p. 51). He proposed four stages of development that a primary education system passes through:

> Stage I: Dame School Stage. Characterized by: teachers who have little schooling themselves and are untrained; narrow subject content covering the 3Rs; reliance on rote learning; there may or may not be a syllabus, if there is, it will be very tentative. He later wrote that such schools may only exist in isolated areas (Beeby, 1980).
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> Stage II: Stage of Formalism. Characterized by: teachers who have little schooling themselves but are trained; teaching by rules; a rigid syllabus; set textbooks; with a "tight external examinations and a rigorous system of inspection of the work of both pupils and teachers" (1966, p. 62).
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> Stage III: Stage of Transition. Characterized by: teachers who are better educated, definitely to secondary school level and are trained; set textbooks; maybe a library; still a reliance on rote memorization of facts; external controls in the forms of inspections and examinations although less restrictive than at stage II; the syllabus is

> "more permissive and the adventurous teachers make forays beyond its bounds; the rest do not" (1966, p. 64).
>
> Stage IV: Stage of Meaning. Characterized by: teachers who are both well-educated and well-trained; students are encouraged to think for themselves; meaning and understanding become predominant with rote learning taking a subsidiary role; external examinations may still be present but do not have the prominent characteristic of early stages; likewise, inspection is characterized by "professional cooperation" (1966, p. 68); and the gap between home and school is reduced.

The central contention in Beeby's 1966 work was that the stage of a country's development must be considered when introducing educational innovations developed in very different educational settings. He argued,

> [T]here are two strictly professional factors that determine the ability (as distinct from the willingness) of an educational system to move from one stage to a higher one. They are: (a) the level of general education of the teachers in the system, and (b) the amount and kind of training they have received. (1966, p. 58)

He centred his argument on the role of teachers, maintaining that, as change agents, they play a vital role in the successful introduction of educational innovations. In a later work, he continued to assert that it was the lack of a qualified teaching force that hinders educational change (Beeby, 1980). Therefore, when considering introducing an educational innovation, the key question to be addressed is "not whether these techniques are effective, but under what conditions they are effective, with what types of teacher, and for what purposes" (Beeby, 1966, p. 93). In other words, while the innovation may have been proven to work in one setting, that does not, necessarily, mean it will have similar results when transferred into a different situation. This issue is highlighted in many different educational contexts in the international education policy transfer literature (Ball, 1998; Crossley, 2010; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). The critical consideration, therefore, that must not be overlooked when introducing an innovation is the education and training gap between those teachers in the country where the innovation is being introduced compared to those teachers in the country where the innovation originated.

Beeby's work has been criticized because it disregards the appropriateness of transferring practices developed in the West to countries with very different cultural, historical, political and economic systems. Beeby has also been criticized for positioning Western forms of "progressive" teaching and learning as more desirable than those found in other cultures, and for the theoretical underpinnings and methodology used in his Stages approach (Guthrie, 1980, 2011). Mindful of these criticisms, the core of Beeby's contention that teachers' level of education and pedagogical training are key factors in determining whether and how educational innovations are enacted in the classroom (Beeby, 1966, p. 58) are pertinent; these factors are often not accorded sufficient prominence when considerations are made concerning the introduction of an educational policy and/or pedagogical innovation. Therefore, using Beeby's Stages as a framework to explore educational policy implementation provides an alternate lens through which to examine the extent to which the level of education and training of teachers in this case study affected their ability to implement the MoEYS' CFS policy.

CAMBODIA AND CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

The Cambodian education system was devastated and its teaching population decimated as a result of the civil war and Khmer Rouge (KR) regime of the 1970s. International isolation in the 1980s then further hindered Cambodia's re-development. Since the 1990s, substantial developments have taken place aimed at quality improvements to the country's education system; however, considerable hurdles remain for the Ministry to reach its goal of achieving high quality in all sectors by 2030 (MoEYS, 2014).

A focal point for enhancing its education system since 2001 has been UNICEF's CFS initiative. Promoted in many countries in the Global South, this programme draws on a rights-based approach that focuses on the holistic development of the child (UNICEF, 2009), encapsulated in its framework's five dimensions: inclusive access to education; academically effective teaching and learning; health, safety and protection of children; gender sensitivity and responsiveness; and developing school-community engagement. In Cambodia, after an extended pilot phase the MoEYS developed its CFS policy (2007a). Updated in 2011, CFS has become the MoEYS' signature means to enhance the quality of its education system and meet its EFA commitments. The CFS pedagogical approach, embedded within the latest curriculum, is seen as the means to transform teaching and learning in the nation's classrooms.

The preferred pedagogical approach that UNICEF has adopted in CFS and incorporated into national CFS policies is variously known as child-centred, student-centred, or learner-centred education. With its roots in constructivism, and drawing upon the work of educationalists such as Dewey (1996), Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978), emphasis is placed on how the learner constructs knowledge. It views "learning as an interpretive, recursive, nonlinear building process" (Fosnot, 2005, p. 34) undertaken through contextually meaningful experiences. Importantly, while constructivism is not a theory of instruction, it does have implications for the form teaching should take and with it the role of the teacher.

In the literature on constructivism as well as in UNICEF's CFS documentation, teachers are viewed as facilitators of learning. Teachers who use a constructivist child-centred pedagogy are characterized as being able to: use a range of teaching and learning methodologies; develop safe and flexible learning environments; organize, plan for, and teach well-structured lessons using a range of activities conducive to open-ended enquiry that promote independent thinking; foster cooperation and collaboration that enable students to question, develop ideas, experiment, discuss and reflect, whether on their own, in groups or as part of the whole class; and effectively use formative and summative assessments to provide feedback to students and parents (Fosnot, 2005; Hayes, 2013; Schwarts & Pollishuke, 1991; UNICEF, 2009). In this interpretation, teachers play a central role in developing critical and reflective thinkers and problem-solvers. As such, teachers require in-depth content knowledge and wide-ranging pedagogical skills to develop engaging and challenging learning activities best suited to the learning needs of all their students. As Schweisfurth (2013, p. 172) contends, introducing child-centred pedagogies, "relies heavily on teachers' capacities and agency".

In the Cambodian CFS policy, a major objective is to develop teachers who "promote active, creative and child-centred approaches" in their teaching and encourage "co-operative learning" and "divergent thinking" in their students (MoEYS, 2007a, pp. 5, 8). In the accompanying "Effective Teaching and Learning" (ETL) (MoEYS, 2007b) package, a manual providing guidelines to educators, great emphasis is placed on child-centred pedagogies. For example, teachers are encouraged to include activities that foster participatory and collaborative learning in their lessons. They are to develop learning environments that promote creativity and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their students, through learning games, group work, and self-directed learning. Furthermore, teachers are to make their classrooms “attractive and stimulating” (MoEYS, 2007b, p. 15) places where students “can learn in different ways (whole class, individually, pairs, small groups)” (MoEYS, 2007b, p. 2). In other words, teachers are to provide a child-centred, flexible learning environment conducive to a range of teaching and learning activities.

My contention in this paper is that the introduction of CFS, with its emphasis on teachers incorporating a child-centred pedagogy into their classroom practice, appears to place greater demands on them. In particular, it requires that they have both in-depth content knowledge and comprehensive pedagogical skills, which has implications affecting the education and training of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This small-scale case study was focused on three Cambodian government primary schools situated in different locations reflective of the places where schools are found—urban, rural and remote. Each school offered the full primary grades (1 to 6) and had a large staff from which to gain sufficient data. Data is based primarily on semi-structured interviews with guided questions with the principals and all grade five and six teachers in the schools. Although many of the teachers interviewed had taught for, on average, 15 years, there were some who were relatively new to the profession and others who were nearing retirement. The numbers of male and female teachers interviewed was dependent upon those who taught grades five and six at each school. I interviewed more females than males reflecting the larger numbers of females teaching at the primary level. Data was also collected through an anonymous questionnaire-survey that was given to all teachers in each school. Out of a total of 106 teachers across the sites, 104 completed the questionnaire. This information provided base-line data on staff.

Teachers' perspectives have, largely, not been sought in Cambodia. Significantly, in this study, priority was given to seeking the views and perspectives of ordinary teachers concerning their education and training. Drawing upon their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, it is hoped that their insights will enable a more nuanced understanding of the challenges they face in implementing CFS. To provide further insights into the education and training of teachers, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the directors of the primary teacher training centres (PTTCs), MoEYS’ officials in each location, and expatriate advisors working for major agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in teacher education at both national and local levels. Interviews were conducted in Khmer or English, depending on preference of the interviewee.

Although the sample size is small, teachers in Cambodia form a fairly homogeneous group. It is hoped that findings will not only shed light on the situation faced by these particular teachers but will also act as a starting point for further larger-scale research. Reflecting on his 1966 work, Beeby wrote: “If it starts trains of thought . . . that lead to a better understanding of the role of teachers in the improvement of education in developing countries, it will, with all its flaws, have served a useful purpose” (1980, p. 472). Beeby's Stages provides a useful tool to compare the current education levels and pedagogical training of the teachers in this case study with what is being asked of them by the MoEYS. Using Beeby's Stages as a framework will, it is hoped, provide insights into the extent to which the teachers in this study are equipped to implement a child-centred pedagogy as outlined in the MoEYS' CFS policy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher education

The current entry qualification to train as a primary school teacher in Cambodia is a grade 12 certificate. Candidates are also required to pass an entrance examination. The following table provides data on the education level of teachers in this study.

Table 1: Education level of surveyed teachers

Ages	Lower-secondary education	Upper-secondary education
20-29	0%	1.8%
30-39	6.7%	37.4%
40-49	42.9%	49.1%
50+	50.4%	11.7%

Comparing the level of education of the teachers in this study against Beeby's stages, it would suggest that the majority would fit into Stage III—those with a secondary school education. However, although those who entered the profession more recently have completed a grade 12 certificate and four respondents, out of 104, held a university degree, what stands out from this data is the high number of teachers in the 50+ age bracket with only a lower-secondary education (grade 9). Even those in the 40-49 age bracket with a grade 9 education remain quite high. Comparing these figures to national data (MoEYS, 2016) indicates that the education level of the teaching force is improving. Of a total teaching force of 90,345 teachers (teaching pre-school to secondary school) 50,381 have a grade 12 certificate, 16,405 are graduates and 970 have a post graduate degree. However, there remain significant numbers with only lower-secondary schooling, 20,948, and 1,641 still only have a primary level of education.

One reason for this was explained by a director from a Provincial Teacher Training Centre where primary school teachers are trained. With few upper-secondary schools in remote locations, many students dropped out of school after grade 9. Generally, students from urban areas entered the PTTCs. Once they had graduated, many were posted to schools with teacher shortages, often in rural and remote locations. Far from family, they did not want to remain there. It was decided that if students with a grade 9 who came from remote areas were allowed to be trained, they would return to their local communities to teach and would remain there. Although this dual entry system, which has operated since the 2007/08 academic year, helps to explain the numbers of teachers with a grade 9 certificate in remote areas, it does not fully explain the whole picture.

Setting this data in the context of Cambodia's recent turbulent history, the reason why many older teachers only have a lower-secondary education becomes clearer. Those teachers born before 1970 had their education disrupted, some more than others, because of civil war (1970-1974) and the KR regime (1975-1979). Indeed, one of the most defining aspects of the KR regime was its systematic persecution of those marked as educated, particularly educators from all levels of the system. It is estimated that 75% of teachers had died or had fled the country during those years (Ministry of Education, 1983). With the collapse of the KR regime, a major strategy was to establish schools as quickly as possible and recruit, what a later report termed, “the emergency-recruited teaching force” (MoEYS, 1997). Post-1979, many primary school teachers had only received a primary or, at most, lower-secondary education. Indeed, a study conducted over a decade later (Shardlow, 1993) found the majority of primary school teachers in that dataset required assistance with most aspects of the curriculum and whose educational characteristics reflected those in Beeby's Stage II.

Although the education level of Cambodia's primary school teachers has improved considerably since the 1990s, many teachers in this study indicated they needed to improve their subject knowledge. Statements such as, “I need to increase my knowledge to teach my students effectively” (Teacher-C1), were common. Commenting on current teachers’ subject knowledge, an advisor working in teacher education observed:

> Content knowledge in certain subjects remains very poor. I believe not enough emphasis is placed on that by many donors. A lot of programmes are concerned with the methodology and not the content (Advisor-A).

A teacher, made the pertinent observation that, “in teaching primary students there are many challenges because the teacher must have knowledge in many areas” (Teacher-A7). Indeed, a substantial number of teachers shared how they wanted to increase their subject knowledge. However, of the four curriculum content areas in the primary curriculum: Khmer, Mathematics, Social Science and Science, it was in the latter two subjects where many teachers spoke of their need for in-depth content knowledge. For example, “In social studies I neither have the knowledge nor skills to teach this well” (Teacher-C7), and “In Science, my knowledge is weak, and I need further training from a teacher who really understands science and how to teach this subject” (Teacher-A8). An advisor observed:

> Those teaching science, have limited knowledge and weak reasoning skills, which leads to dependence on teacher books and teaching that relies on rote learning. There is little scope for students to think; instead they simply find answers in their textbooks (Advisor-B).

Indeed, teachers spoke about their reliance on teacher books that provided content knowledge and examples of how to teach a given topic in their lesson preparation. It is suggested that this dependence on these books was indicative of their lack of confidence in their subject knowledge. The overwhelming message from teachers in this study, regardless of their education level, was their acknowledgment that, in a number of areas of the curriculum, they lacked the requisite content knowledge to teach their students effectively.

To teach using a child-centred pedagogy, advocated in CFS policy, requires teachers who, it is argued, are characterized as having in-depth content knowledge reflective of teachers in Beeby's Stage IV. An interviewee posited: “Teacher knowledge is very important as those with deeper subject and pedagogical knowledge are more likely to be innovators” (Advisor-F). Elaborating on this, another advisor observed:

> Before you can take the step to child-centred approaches you need to master the content. A teacher who is not confident with their own content knowledge will never teach in a child-centred way because they will be afraid of losing face when their students ask questions or when an experiment fails and they cannot explain why (Advisor-A).

Pedagogical training

The second component of Beeby's analysis focused on the type and amount of pre-service training that teachers received. Since the 1980s, the primary pre-service course has been transformed from ad-hoc training delivered during school vacations to a full-time two-year programme. As Tan and Ng (2012, p. 128) state: “Cambodian teachers today are better qualified and trained, having learnt about new knowledge, theories and skills.” The following table provides data on the pedagogical training of teachers in this study.

Table 2: Pedagogical training of surveyed teachers

Pedagogical Training	Age 20-39	Age 40+
1 year or less	2.6%	97.4%
2 years of more	55.9%	44.1%

While all the teachers in the study had received some form of pedagogical training, there was an age divide with younger teachers receiving two years of pedagogical training and most older teachers receiving one year or less. How does this data compare with national statistics? MoEYS data (MoEYS, 2016), indicates that only 943 teachers out of 90,345 had no pedagogical training—some 0.01%. In other words, most teachers, at all levels of the system, have undergone some form of pedagogical training.

Although data from this study reflects national statistics, interviews with older teachers provided further insight into their training. After the collapse of the KR regime, providing a full-time training course prior to actual classroom teaching was out of the question as this would have exacerbated teacher shortages. A series of ad-hoc training programmes were developed to provide pedagogical training during vacations. A principal, who trained immediately after the collapse of the KR regime shared: “The government set up training courses to increase our skills. I received very little training, only studying for two months during the vacations” (Principal-B). This story was reiterated by many older teachers. One explained, “I attended a three-month course, a fifteen-day course, and a two-month course over a period of a few years. My training was done bit by bit” (Teacher-B3), while another shared, “I began my pedagogical training in 1982. It lasted for nine months” (Teacher-A2).

The current pre-service curriculum is planned by the central MoEYS and disseminated to the PTTCs. Four components make up this curriculum:

Training on Professional Skills: allocated 525 hours. This covers: psychology, general pedagogy, CFS, school readiness programme, inclusive education, multigrade, academic administration, professional ethics, civilisation, environment, gender awareness, library, and human rights.

Strengthening Basic Knowledge: allocated 425 hours it is designed to develop students' content knowledge in Khmer, Mathematics, Foreign language and ICT.

Strengthening of Primary Knowledge and Methodology: allocated 1,209 hours and focuses on all the areas taught in the primary curriculum and how to teach them.

The practicum takes 552 hours and takes place for six weeks in year one and eight weeks in year two. (data - PTTC Directors)

Interestingly, there appears little time allocated to assessment practices. Given that training in the use of summative and formative assessments is considered vital for effective child-centred approaches (Harber & Davies, 2006), this has implications for the successful implementation of CFS. The MoEYS, recognizing that, for student teachers to gain in-depth understanding and more experience in each component of the pre-service programme, is seeking to introduce a four-year pre-service course from 2020 (MoEYS, 2014). That may mean giving greater time to teaching important areas such as assessment practices.

Learning about child-friendly schools is allocated 51 hours in the current pre-service programme. While all PTTCs have adopted the CFS concept, a recent study of teacher training centres in Cambodia found that many practices reinforced teacher-centred approaches to teaching and learning (Tandon & Fukao, 2015). In interviews with PTTC directors, for this study, the extent to which student teachers were exposed to child-centred practices at their PTTCs or able to use this approach on practicum was not uniform. Only one PTTC director shared how student teachers were given opportunities to incorporate child-centred approaches while on practicum at the practice school attached to the PTTC and at a local school sympathetic to this approach. Interestingly, this director shared how their teacher educators had benefitted from ongoing support from an NGO in training them to use child-centred approaches including how to model them to their student teachers.

Moreover, the CFS concept is a relatively new addition to the pre-service curriculum and, for older teachers, remains a foreign concept. This is compounded with teachers teaching to a changed curriculum with accompanying new textbooks and teacher books that incorporate CFS' child-centred approach to teaching and learning. As an experienced teacher explained: "the new textbooks given by the ministry focus on child-centred learning." The teacher candidly added: "I have difficulty in teaching this and I know others do as well" (Teacher-C2). A reason why teachers in this study found difficulty in implementing the new curriculum with its child-centred pedagogy was provided by an advisor:

> At the national level they will tell you this is what the new curriculum should look like, yet, when you ask teachers they say they have not received any training to teach the new curriculum. (Advisor-D)

Indeed, this need for further professional development (PD) training was articulated by teachers at each of the schools. In the survey data, teachers were asked to indicate those areas they considered PD input was necessary (Table 3). Respondents could select multiple needs.

Table 3: Professional development needs of teachers by age, education & training

AGE	Classroom management	Preparation of lesson materials/plans	Use of group work in class	Child-centred pedagogy
20-39	51.3%	48.7%	48.7%	97.4%
40+	65.5%	60.0%	61.8%	94.5%
EDUCATION				
Lower-secondary	56.7%	50.0%	53.3%	96.7%
Upper-secondary or higher education	60.9%	57.8%	57.8%	95.3%
TRAINING				
1 year or less	58.5%	56.1%	56.1%	95.1%
2 years or more	61.5%	55.8%	57.7%	96.2%

What is apparent from this data is that higher proportions of teachers in the 40+ age group identified the need for further PD training in classroom management, preparation of lesson materials/plans and in the use of group work, as opposed to those in the 20-39 age group who did request further training but not in such large proportions. Teachers with upper-secondary or higher education were also slightly more likely to identify these needs than teachers with lower-secondary education only. Years of training did not seem to impact on the needs they identified. One of the reasons for this may be that younger teachers have benefitted from comparatively recent changes to the pre-service curriculum that has incorporated a range of new topics such as group work.

However, what was striking from the data was that, regardless of age, training, or education level, most teachers from each of the three schools perceived a need for training in child-centred approaches, which requires very different skills than in a traditional teacher-centred pedagogy. Furthermore, what was marked in interviews with teachers was their uncertainty in how to teach using a child-centred approach as the following comments suggest: “I want to learn more about the new teaching methodology” (Teacher-A4); “I lack the knowledge and skills needed to teach using a child-centred pedagogy” (Teacher-B7); “What I need most is further training in the new pedagogy” (Teacher-C8).

What this suggests is that most teachers in this study had received little or no training in the use of child-centred pedagogies in their pre-service course. It also implies that whether any of the teachers had received PD training in this approach or not, they recognized the need for further training. This raises the question as to both the quantity and quality of PD that they had received, given that child-centred learning is ministry policy. Shedding some light on this, a senior official remarked:

> The notion of teacher PD is not quite on the radar, even though it is being discussed by the Ministry and its development partners; the Ministry's focus remains pre-service training. (MO-E).

While focusing on pre-service training is necessary, it neither addresses the needs of practising teachers, like those in this study, nor equips them to implement child-centred approaches in their classrooms. As a teacher articulated: “I lack experience in using child-centred approaches and there is no-one able to provide the support and follow-up needed" (Teacher-A7). This point was reiterated by an advisor:

> Teachers need on the job support and someone to give them the confidence that they can implement policy changes. Providing more training is not the answer when it is not linked to ongoing school-based support to effectively implement policy at the classroom level. (Advisor-C)

Indeed, Beeby (1980, p. 466) posited that "[w]ithout continuing support and encouragement, the average teacher has a remarkable capacity for reverting to old practices under a new name." This point was illustrated by a teacher who openly shared how she resolved the issue of her lack of understanding in the use of child-centred pedagogies "by using the previous [teacher-centred] pedagogy and applying it to the new curriculum" (Teacher-A1).

What became apparent in information gathered from the survey and in interviews was teachers' perception that to effectively incorporate CFS' child-centred approach into their classroom practice, they needed to expand both their content knowledge and their pedagogical skills. Indeed, the overwhelming message from teachers in this dataset was their awareness of being unprepared to teach using a child-centred pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

Central to the introduction of any pedagogical innovation is that responsibility for its implementation rests with teachers. The introduction of the MoEYS' CFS policy and its child-centred pedagogy embedded in the new curriculum is no different. Using Beeby's Stages to frame this small-scale case study it became clear when mapping the teachers in each of the schools how closely they resembled teachers in Beeby's Stage III; teachers who had a secondary education and had received pre-service training. Also, this study highlighted that there remained teachers with only a lower-secondary education and the most basic of pedagogic training, whereas to effectively teach using a child-centred pedagogy requires teachers who have depth of content knowledge and comprehensive pedagogic training; resembling those in Beeby's Stage IV.

The key question to ask is whether the MoEYS, in asking teachers to implement a child-centred pedagogy in their classrooms, is placing unrealistic demands on them, given their levels of education and training. Indeed, interview and survey data would appear to show that, for teachers in this dataset, their content knowledge when faced with new subject material in the new curriculum was limited and their pedagogical training left them unprepared to use child-centred approaches in their classrooms.

If the child-centred pedagogy favoured by the MoEYS and envisaged in CFS policy, and embedded within the new curriculum, is to become widespread practice in the nation's classrooms, then serious attention must be paid to developing not only the pedagogical skills but also the content knowledge of teachers. This not only calls for the further development of the pre-service training course but also quality ongoing PD for all teachers to develop their requisite knowledge and pedagogical skills to effectively implement CFS. However, to do this effectively, this study suggests that incorporating the insights of teachers into future training programmes is crucial. Indeed, the importance of taking into consideration teachers' voices is highlighted in the literature (UNESCO, 2015b). In the Cambodian context, the potential role of the Cambodian Independent

Teachers Association (CITA), acting within the national education civil society organization, the National Education Partnership (NEP), may be a way to do this.

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