Behind on education

Sarah Taguiam

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Primary school students attend class at O’Chrey primary school in Battambang province’s Baraing Thleak village, where 219 pupils are enrolled despite there being no building.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

Cambodia is expected to attain only one of the six internationally agreed-upon education goals set by UNESCO in 2000.

Fourteen years ago, UNESCO urged countries all over the world, especially developing ones, to achieve six Education For All (EFA) goals by 2015.

Cambodia, however, is only close to meeting one of the goals: universal primary education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports spokesman Ros Salin said.

“Education in Cambodia is better than 15 years ago, and we will reach full enrollment for primary schools by 2015 . . . but I’m not sure about the other five goals,” Salin said.

Currently, 98 per cent of children aged 6 to 11 in Cambodia are enrolled in primary schools, he said.

Attaining universal primary education is also one of the eight Millennium Development Goals set by the UN for 2015.

Cambodia is lagging on the other EFA goals, which are early childhood care and education,
access to high school and adult education, a 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy, gender equality in schools and overall progress in quality of education.

One of the primary reasons, said Chin Chanveasna, executive director of National Education Partnership NEP, is the shortage of government funding allocated for education.

“The government has steadily increased education funding in the last few years but at the same time, it’s still not enough,” Chanveasna said.

Seventeen per cent of the 2015 budget has been earmarked for education, Salin said.

“It’s still lower than other countries, but we need to do more with less as Cambodia continues to develop.”

Contact author: Sarah Taguiam

Comments