

# Chapter 2

## Facilitating Scholarly Pursuits in Higher Education: Cambodia's Endeavors Toward Research Advancement

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter examines initiatives intended to cultivate a research-oriented advancement in Cambodian higher education and presents potential strategies for ensuring long-term progress in research. Cambodian higher institutions face significant challenges due to their limited capacity and resources. Still, they have aimed to boost research endeavors through various supports and make substantial contributions to the country's development. It is critical to cultivate academic networks and collaboration with different partners to advance research. There is a need to establish a research-oriented culture among novice researchers and educators by providing workshops and training, enabling them to recognize and address obstacles proficiently. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport is the most important body in helping higher education institutions enhance research capabilities. There are substantial prospects for expansion and improvement, with some obstacles, to research. However, Cambodia seems to be able to settle them with a crucial impact on driving research and social advancement.*

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## **BACKGROUND**

Currently, the growing importance of research in Cambodia's higher education (HE) has become more apparent. The country is emphasizing improving its research capacities in HE to strengthen its position in the global knowledge economy (Chamnan & Ford, 2018). In addition to tackling urgent socioeconomic issues, fostering innovation, and increasing competitiveness, this goal aims to enhance academic endeavors (Heng, 2024). The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), and other pertinent stakeholders are actively collaborating to support research projects (MoEYS, 2014). These institutions have tried to foster a culture of research productivity among students and faculty members, established financial support channels, and strengthened research infrastructure (Chea, 2020).

The primary goal is to raise the standard and relevance of research findings in Cambodia while ensuring that they are in line with both national development plans and international trends (Kim et al., 2020). In order to advance sustainable development, raise living standards, and address pressing social issues in areas like healthcare, agriculture, environmental sustainability, and technological convergence, Cambodia's vision calls for the establishment of a knowledge-driven economy through significant investments in research and innovation (World Bank, 2018). Taking a more global view, Cambodia's dedication to bolstering research inside its university system represents an amplified recognition of the significant impact that knowledge and creativity can have. Cambodia has aspired to become a center of academic research and technological innovation by developing a thriving research environment, which will benefit both its own development and the broader global knowledge economy (UNESCO, 2019).

### **Background of HEIs in Cambodia**

As of 2023, Cambodia had a total of 189 higher education institutions (HEIs). Out of them, 79 were government and 110 were private institutions. These institutions are located in the provinces and Cambodia's capital city, Phnom Penh. 17 ministries and organizations govern these institutions. MoEYS supervises a total of 90 HEIs. These 90 institutions are located in Phnom Penh, as well as in 20 provinces. Out of these 90 institutions, there are 17 government and 73 private institutions. Both private and government-run institutions, under MoEYS, have a total of 40 campuses. Besides, there are a total of 51 institutions that provide master's degree programs, with 10 being government institutions and 41 being privately owned. Moreover, 25

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