

# Learning Challenges and School Dropouts in Kratie Province

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## Research Team:

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# Disclaimer

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# Outline of Presentation

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  - Objectives
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  - Key questions, data collection methods, and sources of data
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  - Overview of the situation at the 30 primary schools
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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- Primary school dropout rate in Kratie is high- 16.6%
- Students also face challenges such as slower/insufficient learning, which leads to class repetition and dropping out
- Dropout rate is highest among girls- 25.6%
- Currently, through collaborations with state and non-state actors, KAFDOC is running projects to support 30 primary schools in Kratie to address dropout and learning issues
- However, there is a lack of specific evidence and data to inform the intervention as research related to school dropouts is lacking
- Thus, the role of this study is significant for KAFDOC and other stakeholders to provide the data and information necessary to implement effective interventions to address learning and dropout issues



## **Objectives:**

1. Describe the general situation at the primary schools in Kratie Province
2. Identify the causes of slower/insufficient learning and dropouts
3. Identify the supporting mechanisms that address slower/insufficient learning and dropout issues

## **Significance of the study:**

- To improve KAFDOC's Easy to Learn (E2L) project implementation in 3 different districts in Kratie province
- To give advice to school directors and teachers to improve their strategy to address dropout issues in the target schools
- To inform the strategic planning of the provincial department of education and district offices
- To inform donors' strategic decisions to address the dropout issue.

## 2. Research Methodology

### Key questions, data collection methods, and sources of data

Key Questions	Data Collection Methods	Sources of data
General situation at primary schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Number of teachers (grades 1 to 6)</li><li>- Number of students (grades 1 to 6), including marginalized groups</li><li>- Percentage of promotions, repetitions, and dropouts</li><li>- Other school facilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review of existing data</li><li>- Survey</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- DoE and school data</li><li>- Student interviews</li></ul>
Causes of dropouts and students' slower/insufficient learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Key informant interview</li><li>- Focus group discussion</li><li>- Survey</li><li>- Case study</li></ul>	Interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Students' who have dropped out</li><li>- Teachers</li><li>- Parents of dropouts</li><li>- Slower/insufficient learners</li></ul>
Existing mechanisms that promote children's learning and address school dropouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review of existing policy documents</li><li>- Key Informant Interview</li><li>- Observation</li></ul>	Interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- School support committee</li><li>- Village chief</li><li>- Teachers</li><li>- School directors</li><li>- Student council</li><li>- Existing policy documents</li></ul>

# Sampling for Survey and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

- Random sampling for survey to select 15 target schools among 30 primary schools in 3 districts (Selection includes: 8 in Chhlong district, 3 in Sambour district, and 4 in Chetra Borie district)
  - 7 primary schools are in remote rural areas
  - 8 primary schools in towns
- Purposive selection to select KIIs and FGDs participants for:
  - Children from Grades 1 to 6
  - School and Deputy Directors
  - Teachers from Grades 1 to 6
  - School Support Committees-SSC
  - Parents of Children Attending Selected Schools
  - Local Authorities



# Sample Size

Key Respondents	Number of Meetings	Number of respondents
School directors	1	23
Teachers	1	48
School support committee	14	56
Student council members	14	56
Grade 1-3 Students	16	64
Slower/insufficient learning students	1	42
Students with disabilities	1	1
Students who have dropped out of school	1	4
Parents of children who have dropped out of school	1	9
Local Authorities (village/commune)	1	13
	Total	316

## **Data Analysis**

Data analyses were undertaken in the following ways:

- Survey data processing included coding and computerized processing
- Descriptive statistics used to analyze the data

## **Limitations**

There are a few limitations that might affect key findings of this study:

- School closure caused by COVID-19 posed challenges on data collection:
  - The team was unable to conduct classroom observations, intended to find out the actual situation of teaching and learning.
  - It was hard to interview children during school closure. The team tried to reach them in the community, but some of them were not available as they had to help their parents in the field.
- It was hard to find students who had dropped out to interview because the identified respondents migrated with their parents. Thus, the team could not conduct the survey with this group as planned. Only three dropout students were interviewed.

## **3. Results**

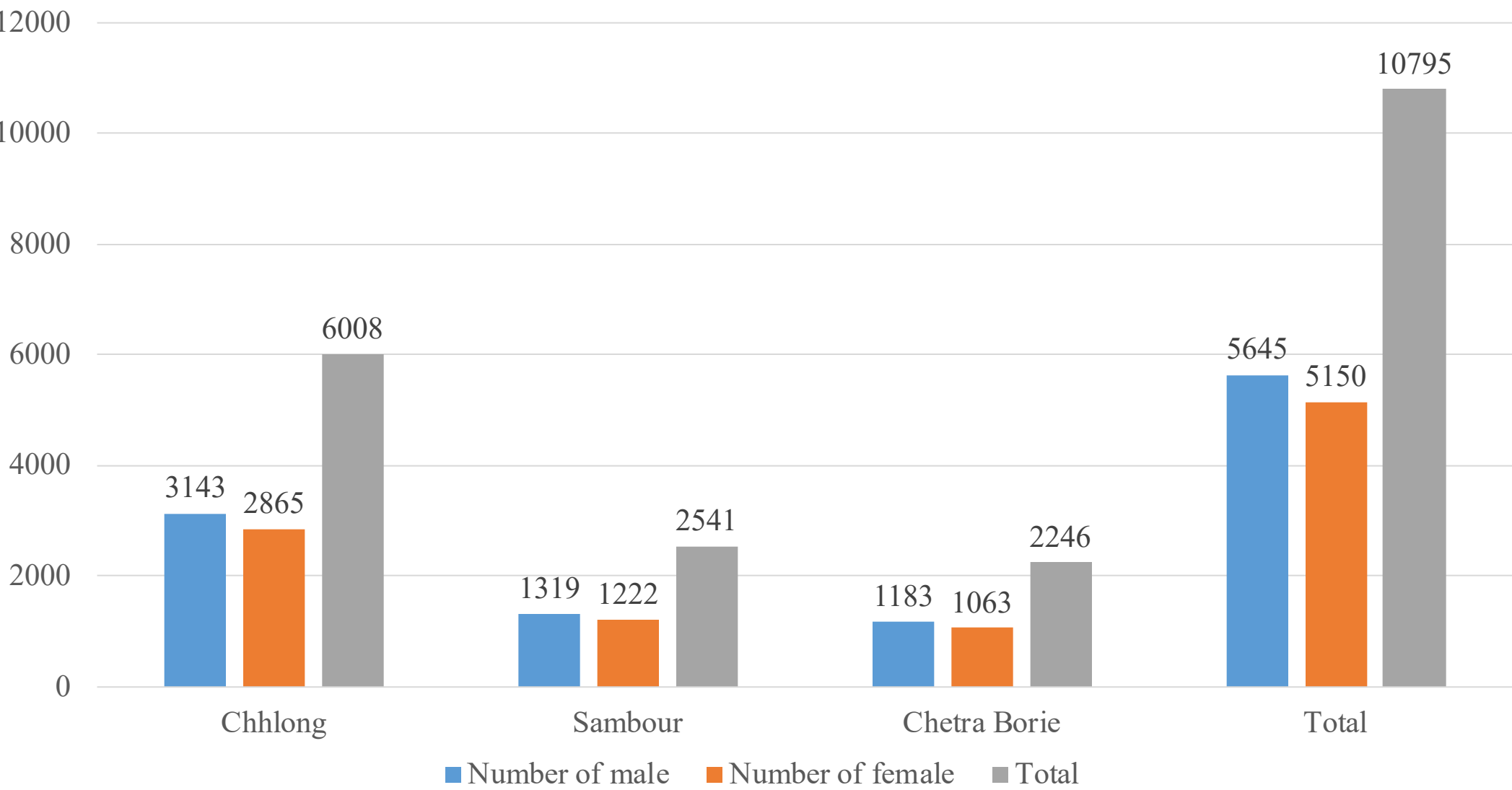
3.1 General overview of the target primary schools

3.2 Slower/insufficient learning and dropouts

3.3 Supporting mechanisms

## **3.1. General Overview of the Target Primary Schools in the 3 Districts**

# Number of students by sex in Chhlong, Sambour and Chetra Borie



Source: (DoE Sombor, Chet Borey and Chhlong, 2019-2020)



## Number of Students by Minority and Disability

	Chhlong <sup>(1)</sup>	Sambour <sup>(2)</sup>	Chetra Bore <sup>(3)</sup>
Total student	6005	2246	2573
Number of females	2865	1063	1235
Minority student			
Number of minority student	0	706	3
Number of females	0	329	3
Number of males	0	377	0
Total percentage	0	31%	0.12%
Students with disability			
Number of students with disability	78	21	0
Number of females	28	10	0
Number of males	50	11	0
Total percentage	1.30%	0.93%	0

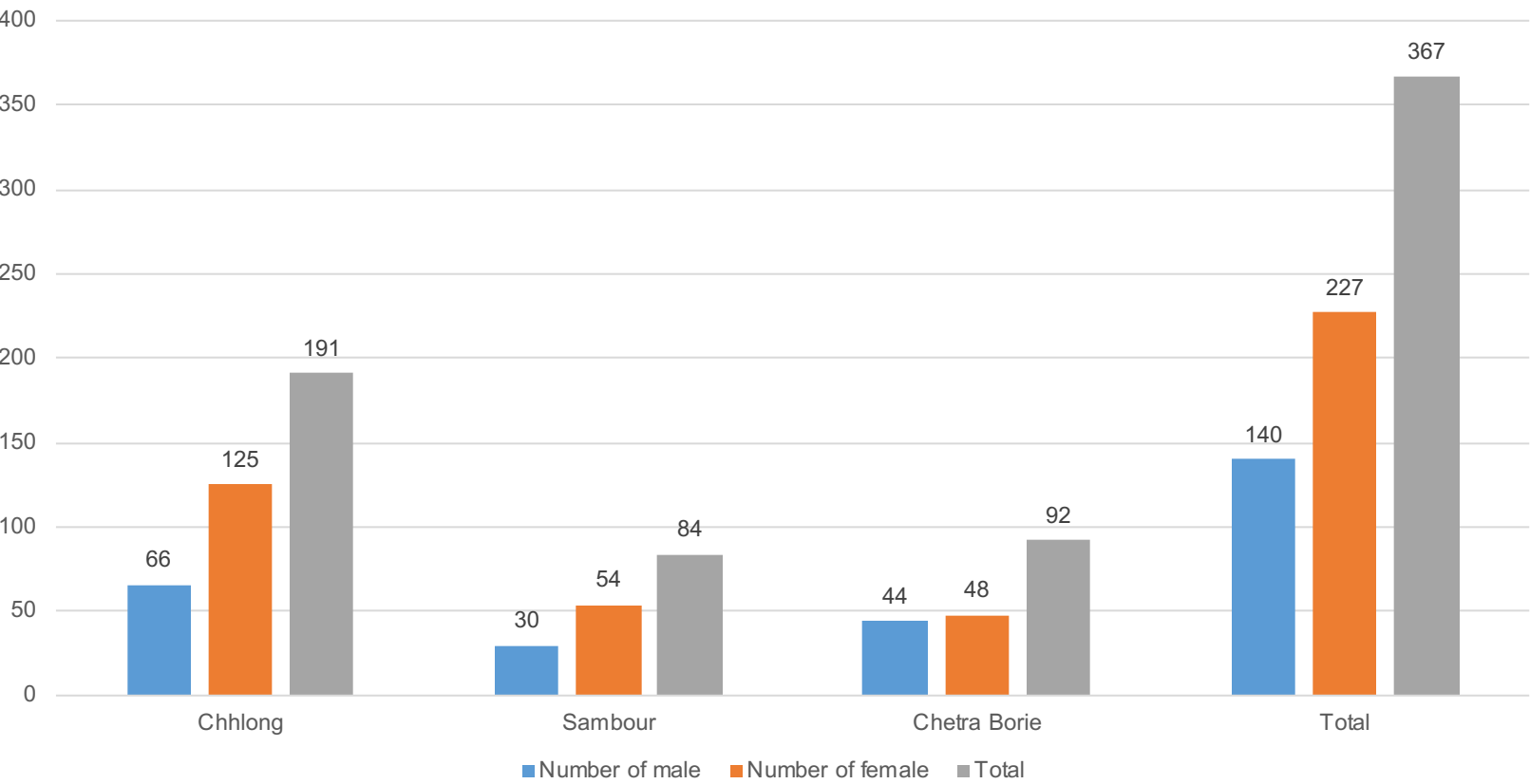
Source: (DoE Sombor, Chet Borey and Chhlong, 2019-2020)

(1) Data from 17 schools

(2) Data from 6 schools

(3) Data from 7 schools

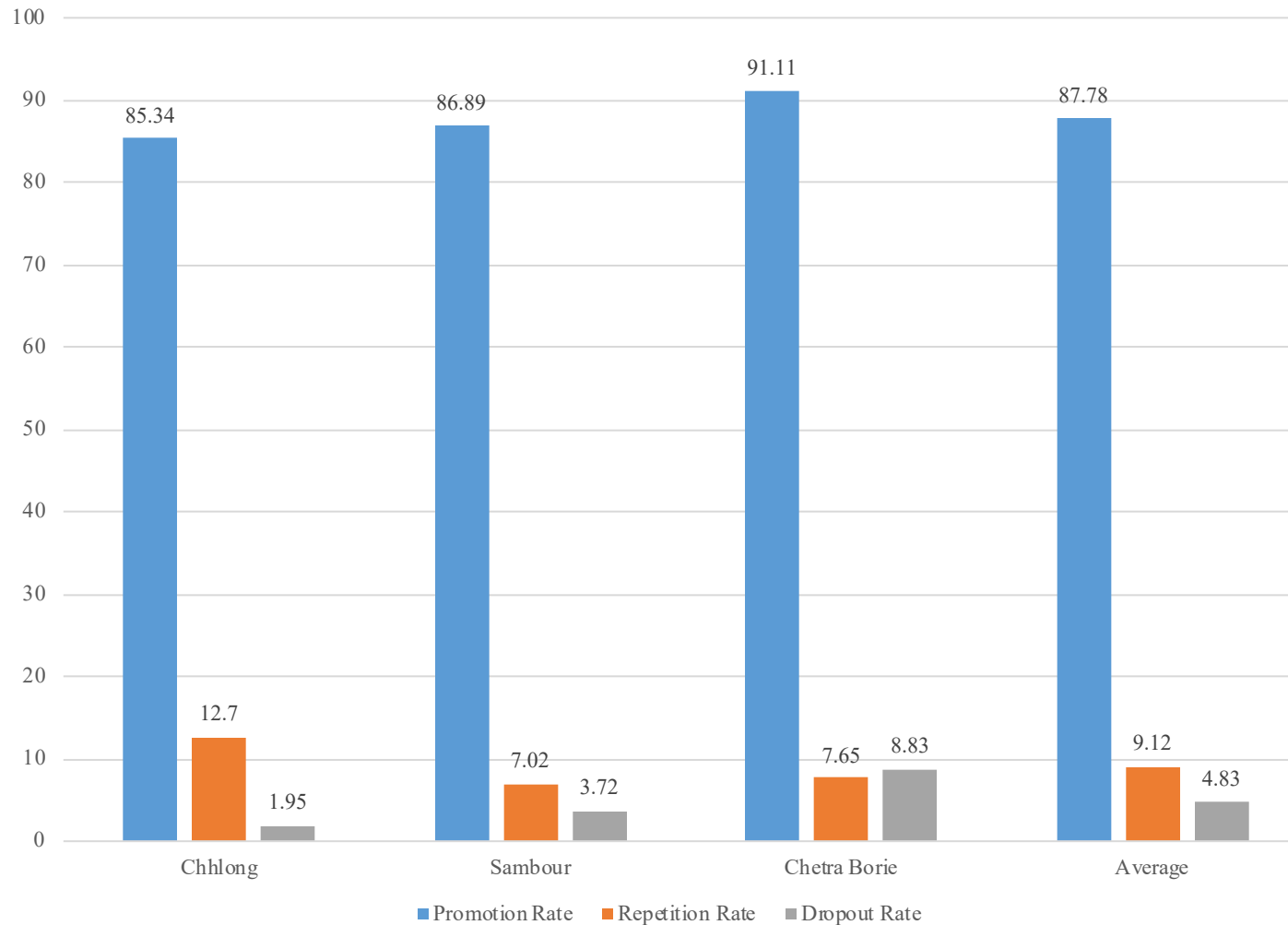
# Number of Teachers by sex in Chhlong, Sambour and Chetra Borie



- In Chhlong, there are 17 primary schools and a total of 191 teachers
- In Sambour, there are 6 primary schools and a total of 84 teachers
- In Chetra Borie, there are 7 primary schools and a total of 92 teachers

Source: (DoE Sombor, Chet Borey and Chhlong, 2019-2020)

## Percentage of Students' Promotion, Repetition and Dropout by District



Promotion rate:

- Chhlong: 85.34%
- Sambour: 86.89%
- Chetra Borie: 91.11%

Repetition rate:

- Chhlong: 12.70%
- Sambour: 7.02%
- Chetra Borie: 7.65%

Dropout rate:

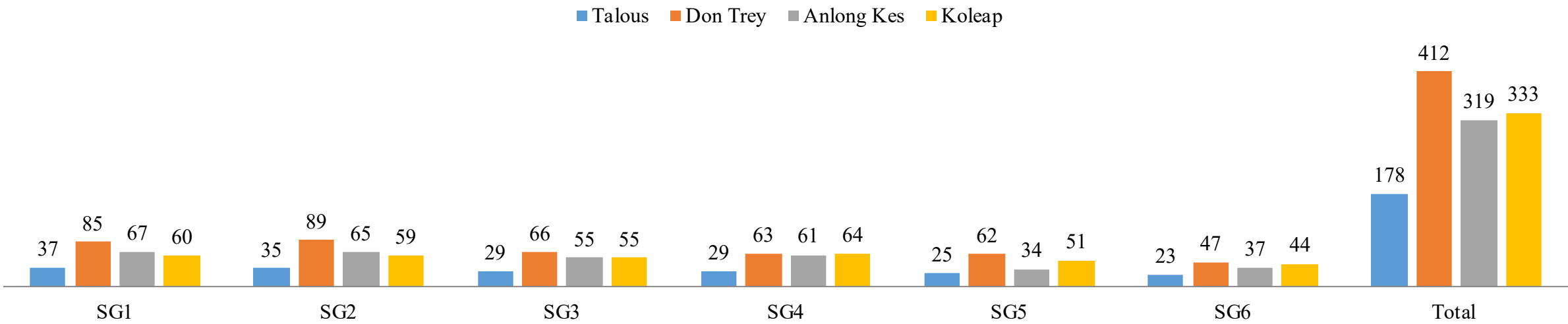
- Chhlong : 1.95%
- Sambour: 3.72%
- ChetraBorie: 8.83%

In Chetra Borie, the dropout rate is higher compared to others because most students there are indigenous and children dropped out because their parents migrated to other areas.

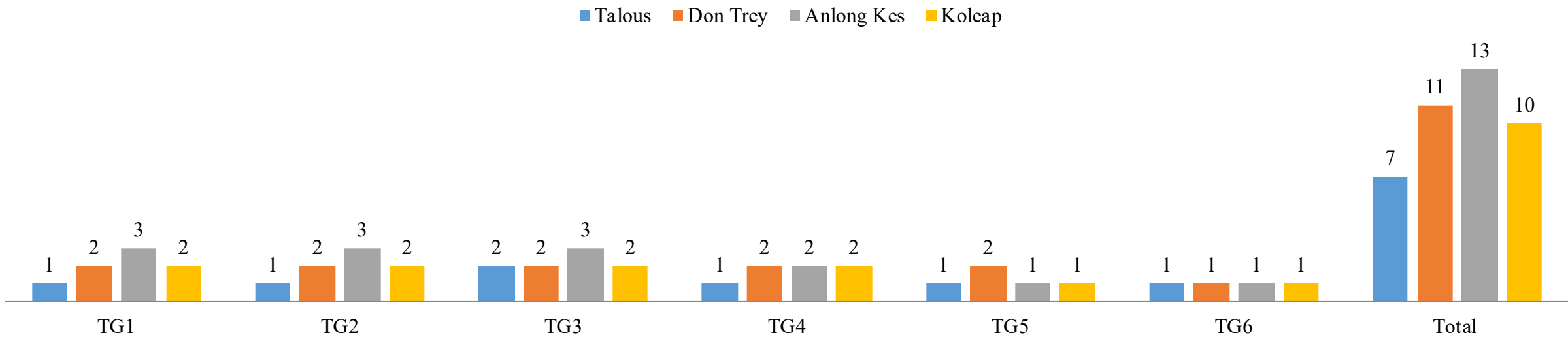
Source: (DoE Sombor, Chet Borey and Chhlong, 2019-2020)

# Number of Students and Teachers in ChetraBorie District

Students G1 to 6 in ChetraBorie

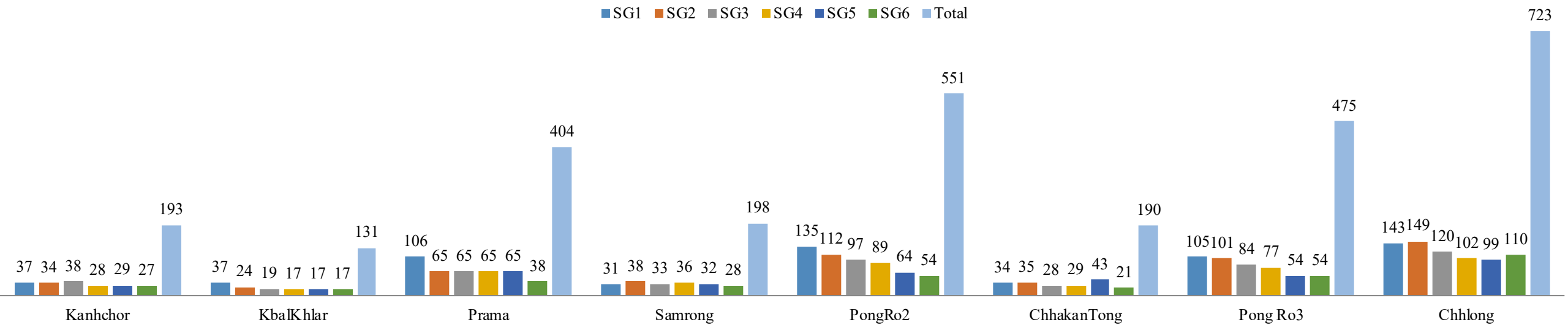


Teachers G1 to 6 in ChetraBorie

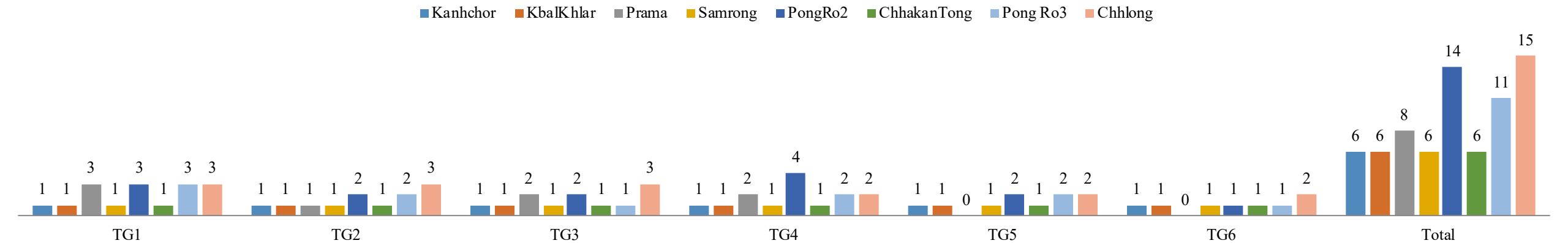


# Number of Students and Teachers in Chhlong District

Students G1 to 6 in Chhlong district



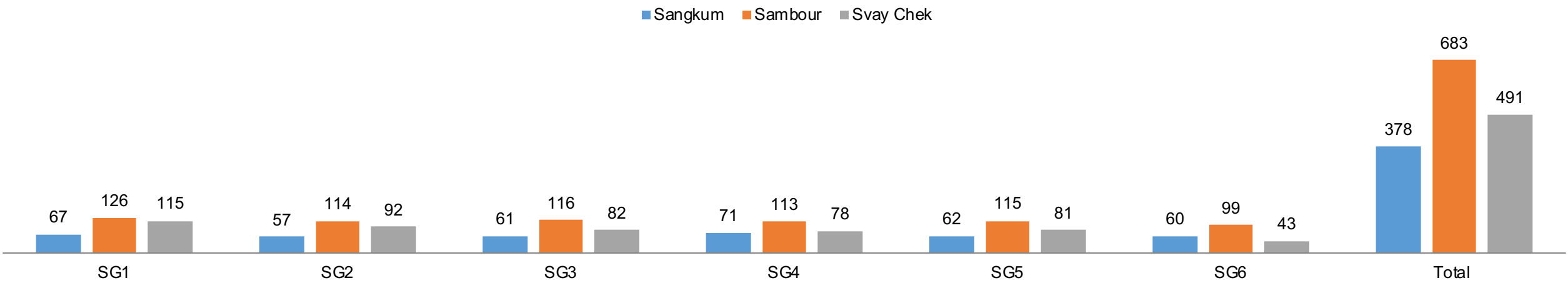
Teachers G1 to G6 in Chhlong District



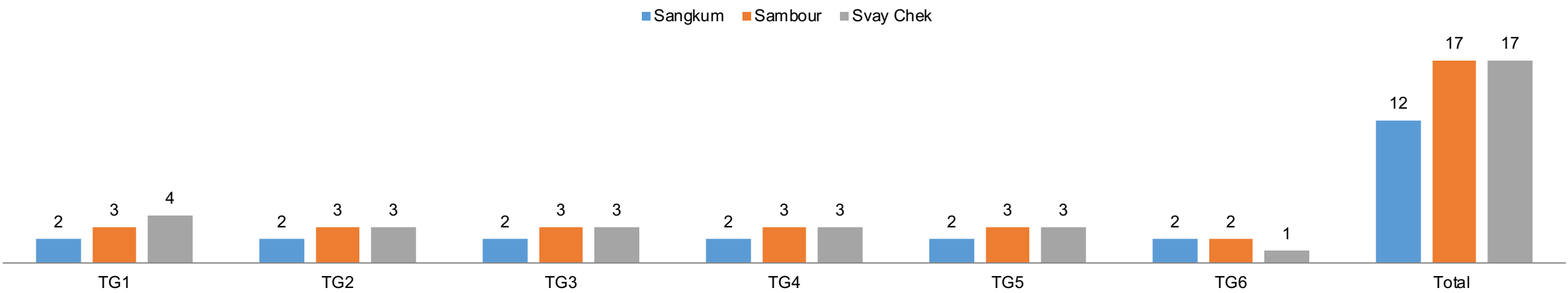
Source: (DoE Sombor, Chet Borey and Chhlong, 2019-2020)

# Number of Students and Teachers in Sambour District

## Students G1 to G6 in Sambour district



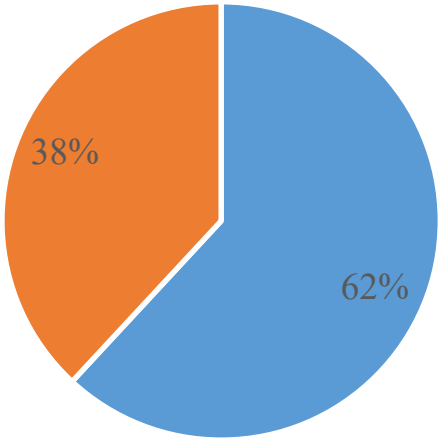
## Teachers G1 to G6 in Sambour district



Source: (DoE Sombor, Chet Borey and Chhlong, 2019-2020)

# Drinking water at schools

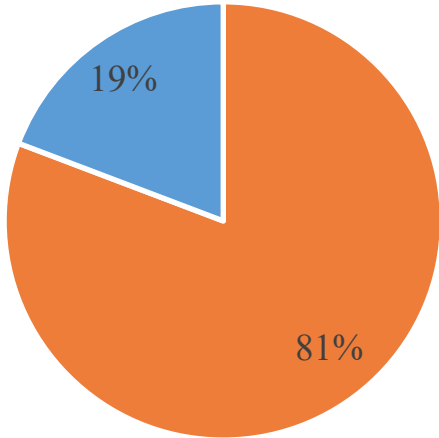
Does school provide drinking water?  
(N=42)



- School provides drinking water
- School does not provide drinking water

Source: (KAFDOC’s Survey, 2020)

Do you feel safe to drink the water?  
(N=26)

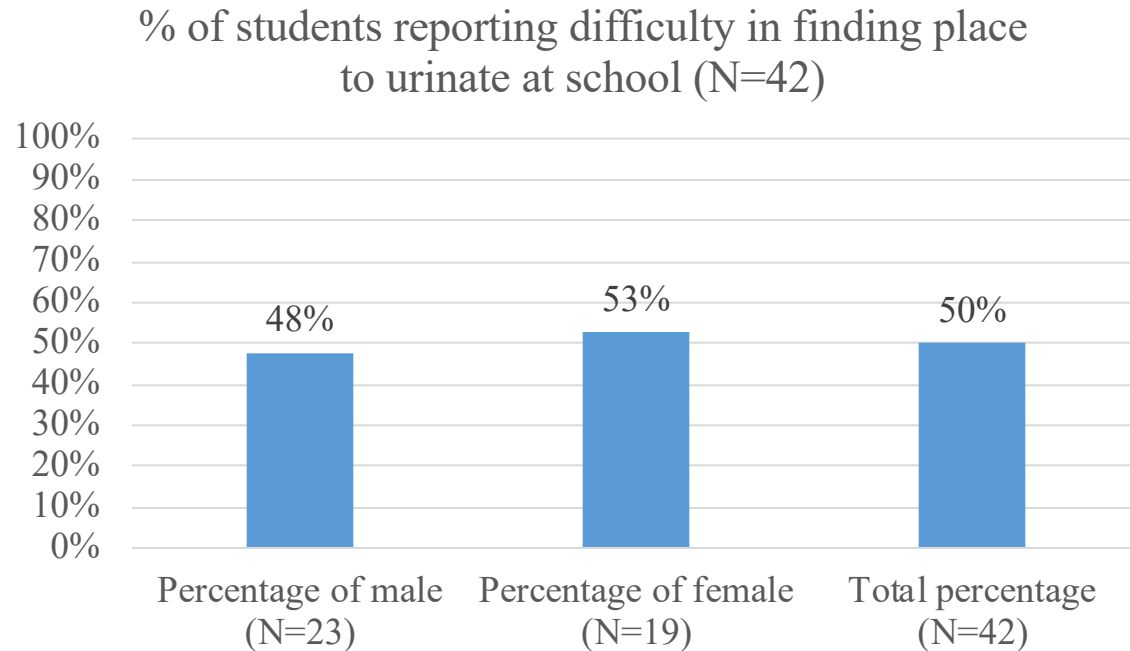


- I feel the drinking water is not safe
- I feel the drinking water is safe

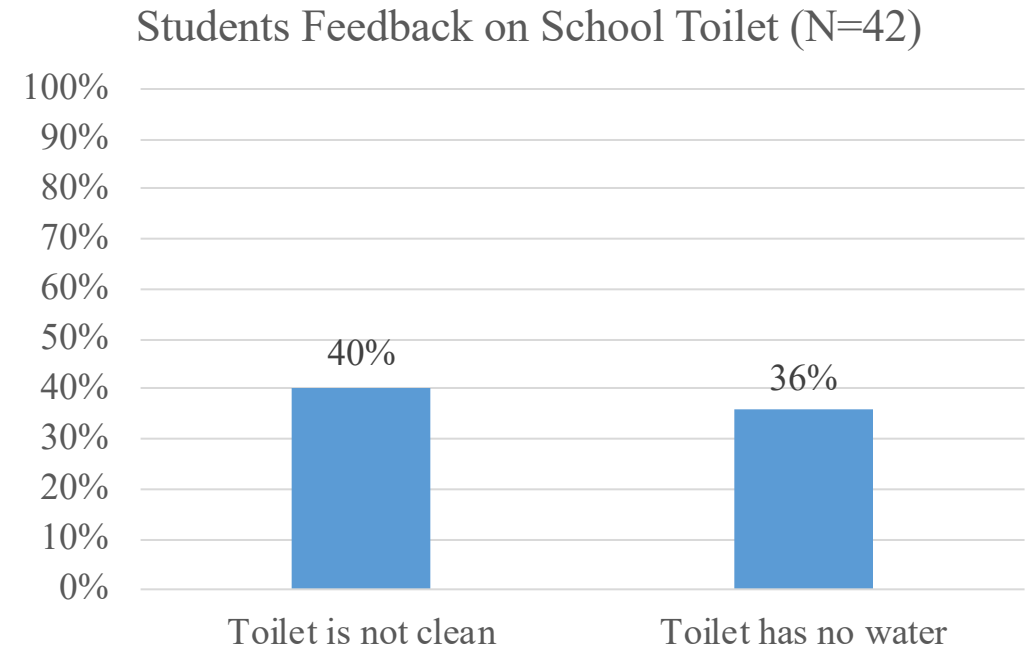
Source: (KAFDOC’s Survey, 2020)

- Though the majority of students said they have access to drinking water, they don’t feel the water is safe to drink.

# Toilets at school



Source: (KAFDOC's Survey, 2020)



Source: (KAFDOC's Survey, 2020)

- Half of students said they face difficulty in finding a place to urinate. This means schools do not have enough toilet facilities. It is also observed that most schools have no urinal.
- Toilets at school were also reported to be unclean and water in the bathroom is lacking.



## **3.2. Learning and Dropout Issues**

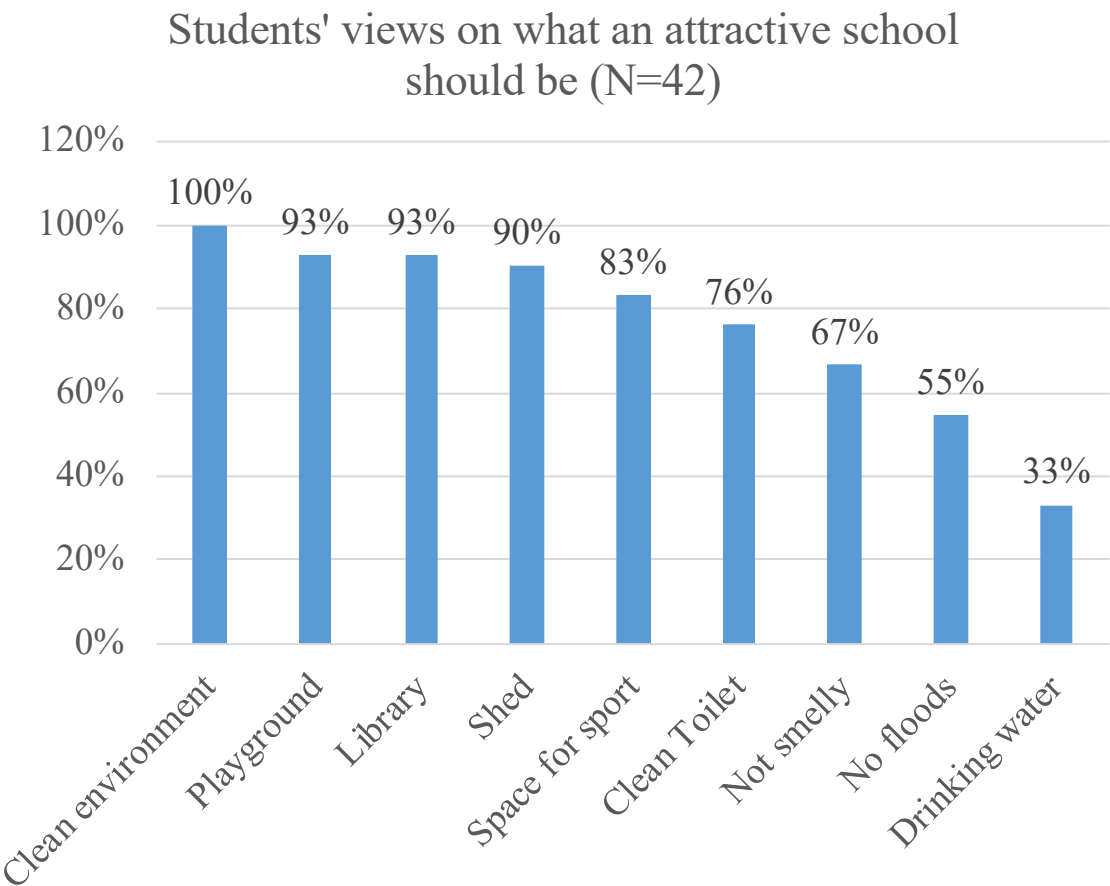
- Students' learning: challenges and needs
- Slower/insufficient learning issues
- Dropout issues

# Learning Challenges and Student Needs

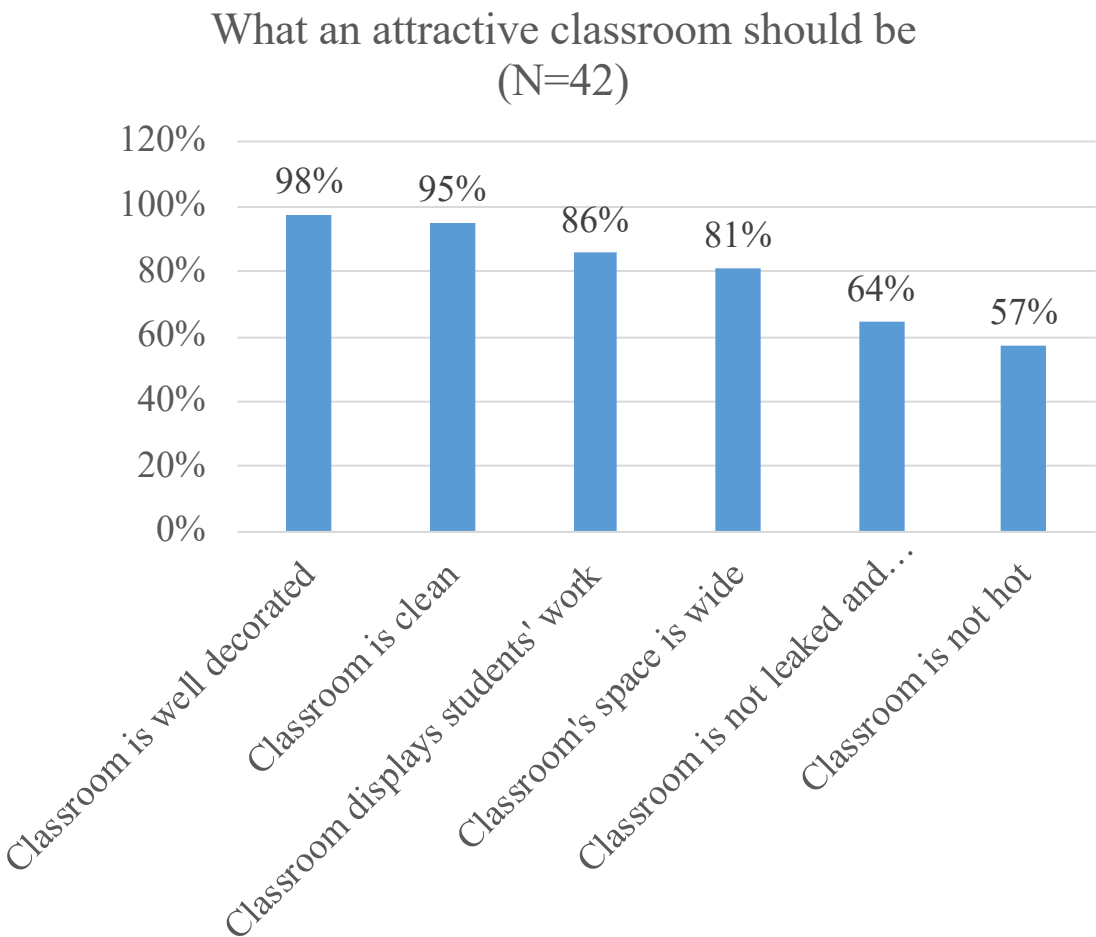
Based on Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) with grade 3-6 students,

- Students face learning challenges such as:
  - Their school is located far from their home
  - They lack transport to travel to school
  - They lack study material (textbooks, books, bag, etc.)
  - They lack the basic skills to keep up with school lessons. The Khmer language literacy of some students is limited.
  - Teachers teach too fast.
  - Although there are student counsellors (who are also students), their time to support learners is limited (during breaktime only).
- In order to learn better, they need:
  - Skilled teachers
  - More support from teachers
  - Motivation from parents
  - A clean and safe environment at school

# Student views on what an attractive school and classroom should have

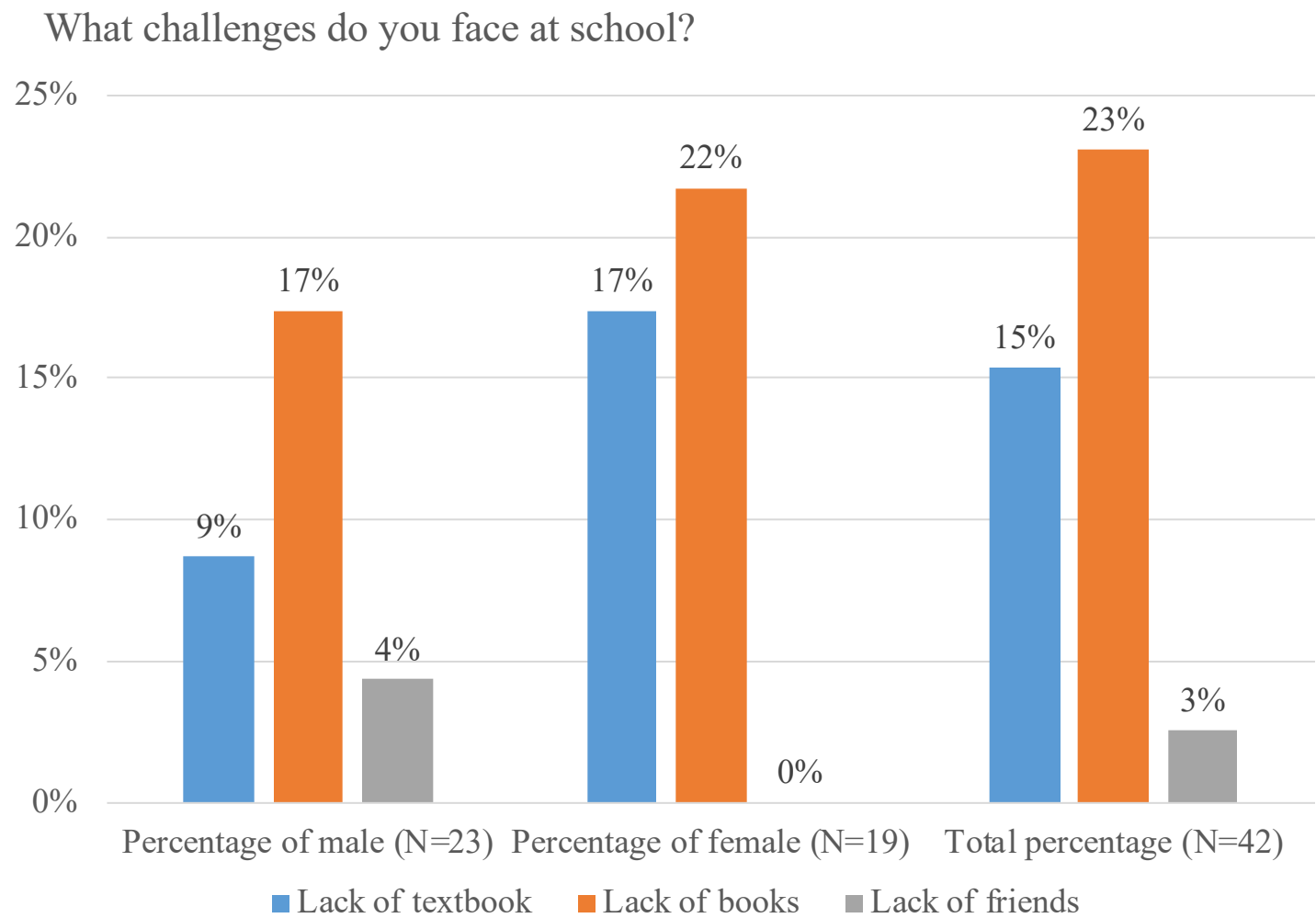


Source: (KAFDOC's Survey, 2020)



Source: (KAFDOC's Survey, 2020)

# Challenges faced by slower/insufficient learners

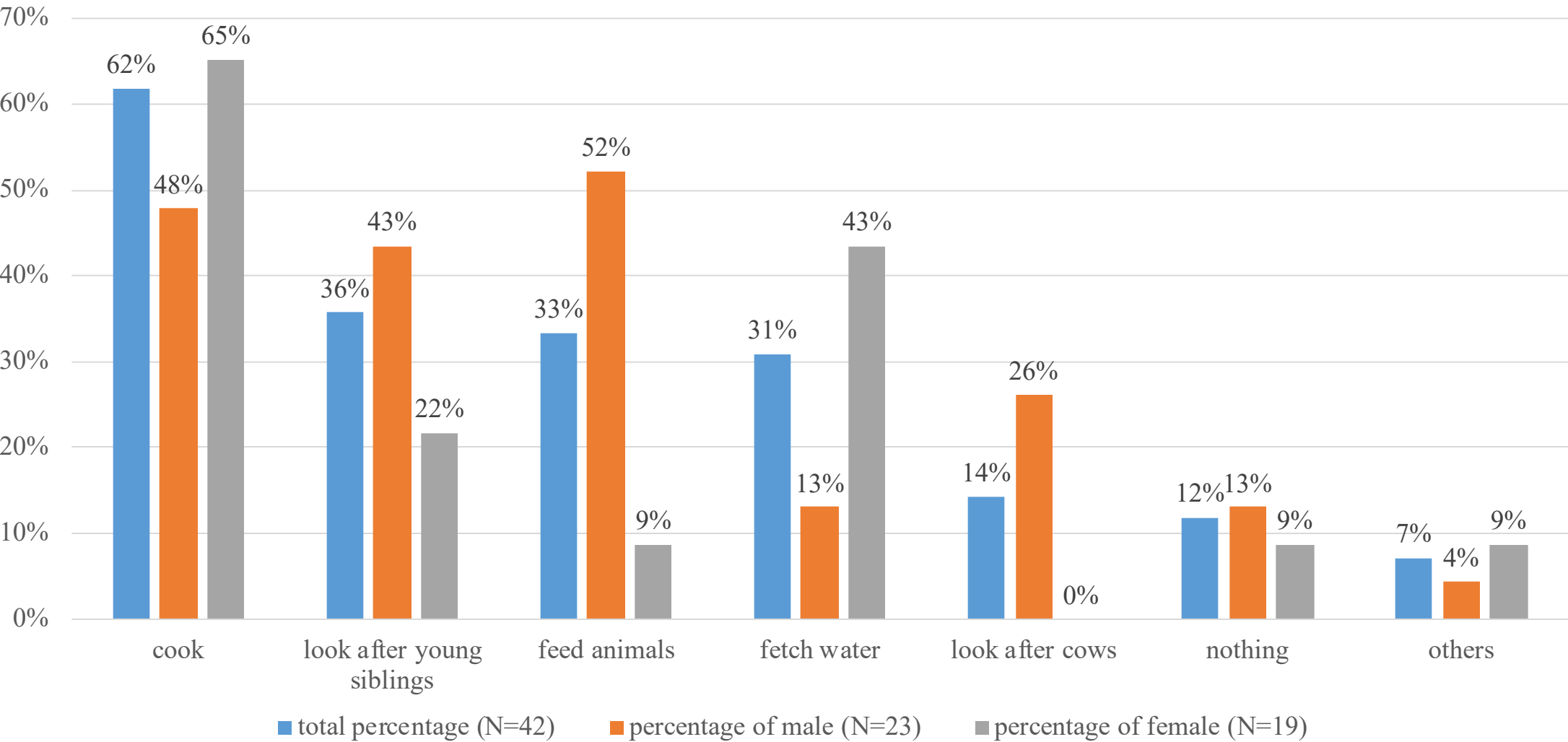


- 23% of students reported that they are lacking books.
- 15% of students reported that they are lacking textbooks
- 3% of learning-challenged students said they have no friends at schools

Source: (KAFDOC’s Survey, 2020)

# Challenges faced by slower/insufficient learners

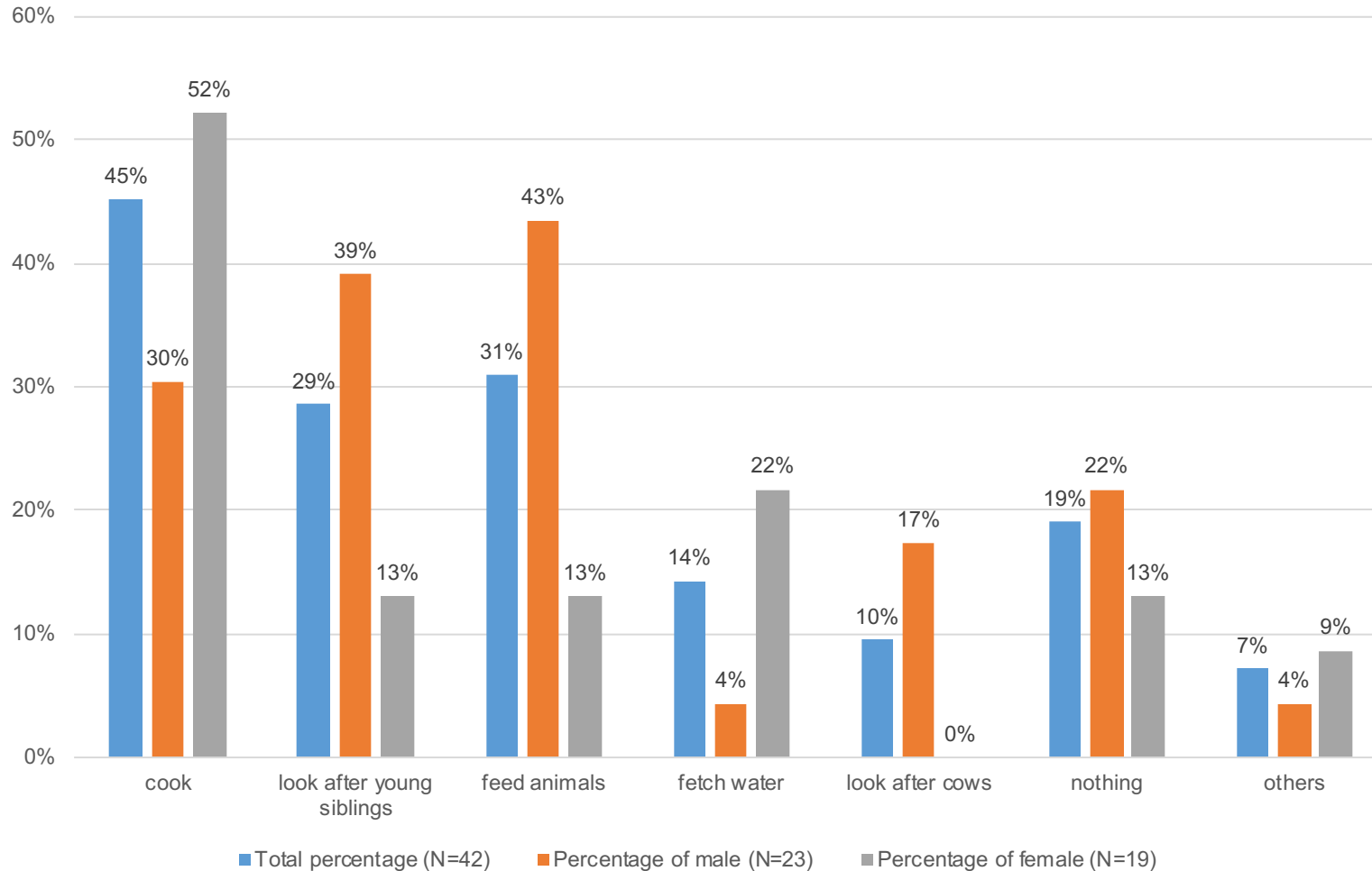
What do you usually do before going to school ?



Source: (KAFDOC’s Survey, 2020)

# Challenges faced by slower/insufficient learners

What do you usually do after school?

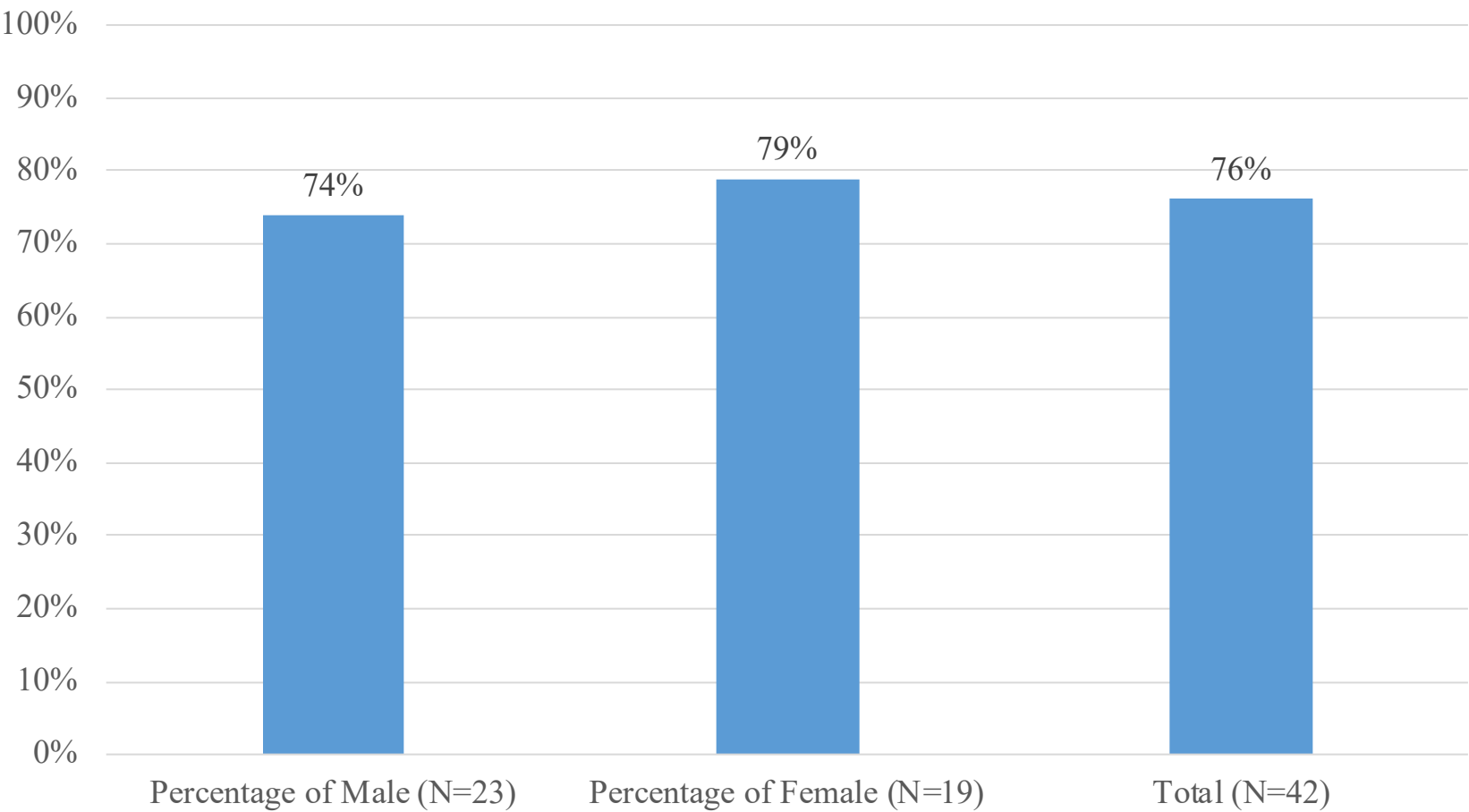


Source: (KAFDOC's Survey, 2020)

- Children are over-worked at home because of their families' socioeconomic status and living conditions
- This affects their education and they dropout from school easily.

# Challenges faced by slower/insufficient learners

Do you have enough study materials (Bags, books, pens, etc.)?  
% Reporting 'Yes'

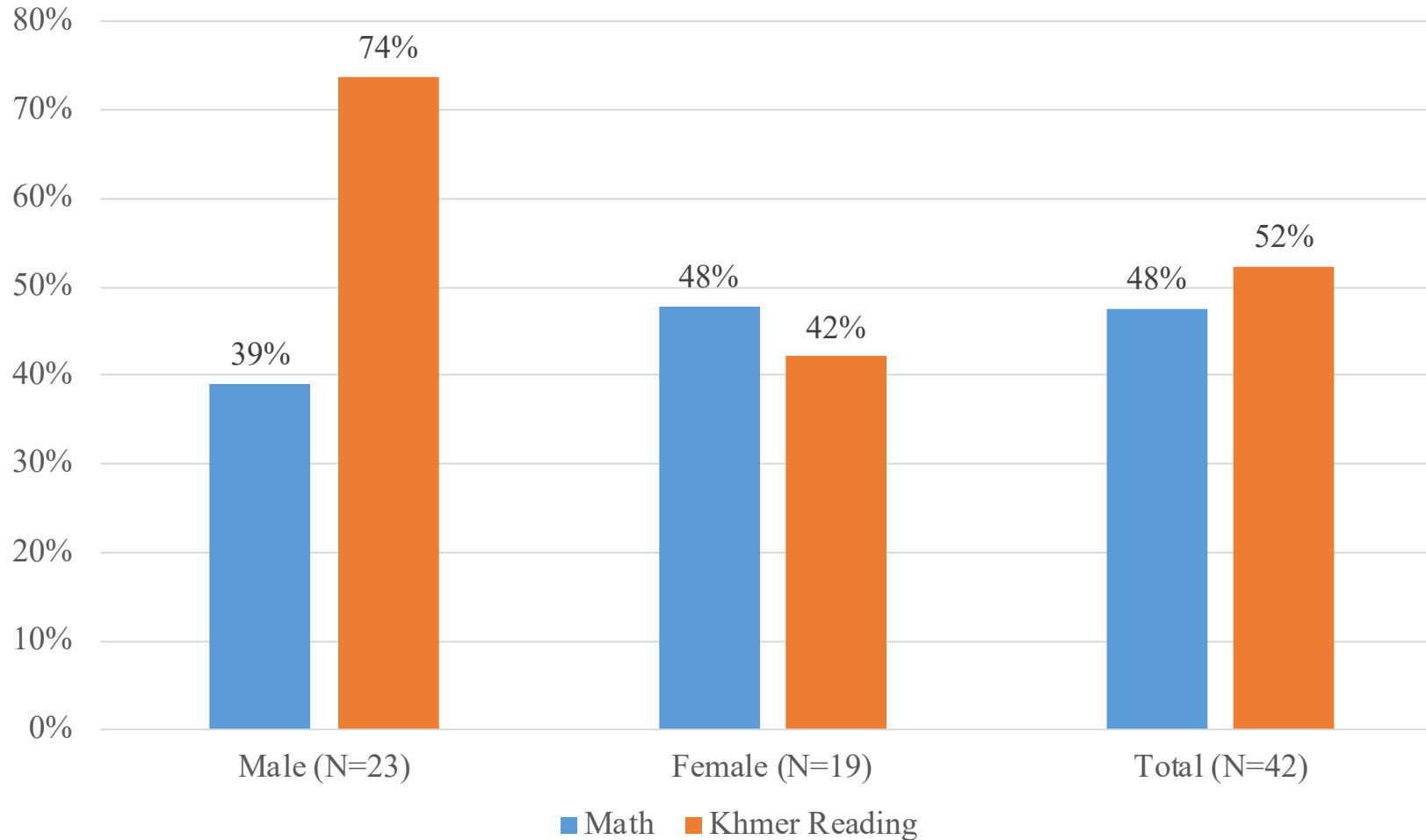


- Learning materials: Bags, bicycles, books, textbooks, pens, pencils, clothes, shoes aid in students’ ability to learn
- However, around 24% of students do not have adequate learning materials

Source: (KAFDOC’s Survey, 2020)

# Challenges faced by slower/insufficient learners

Between Math and Khmer Reading, which one is the most difficult?



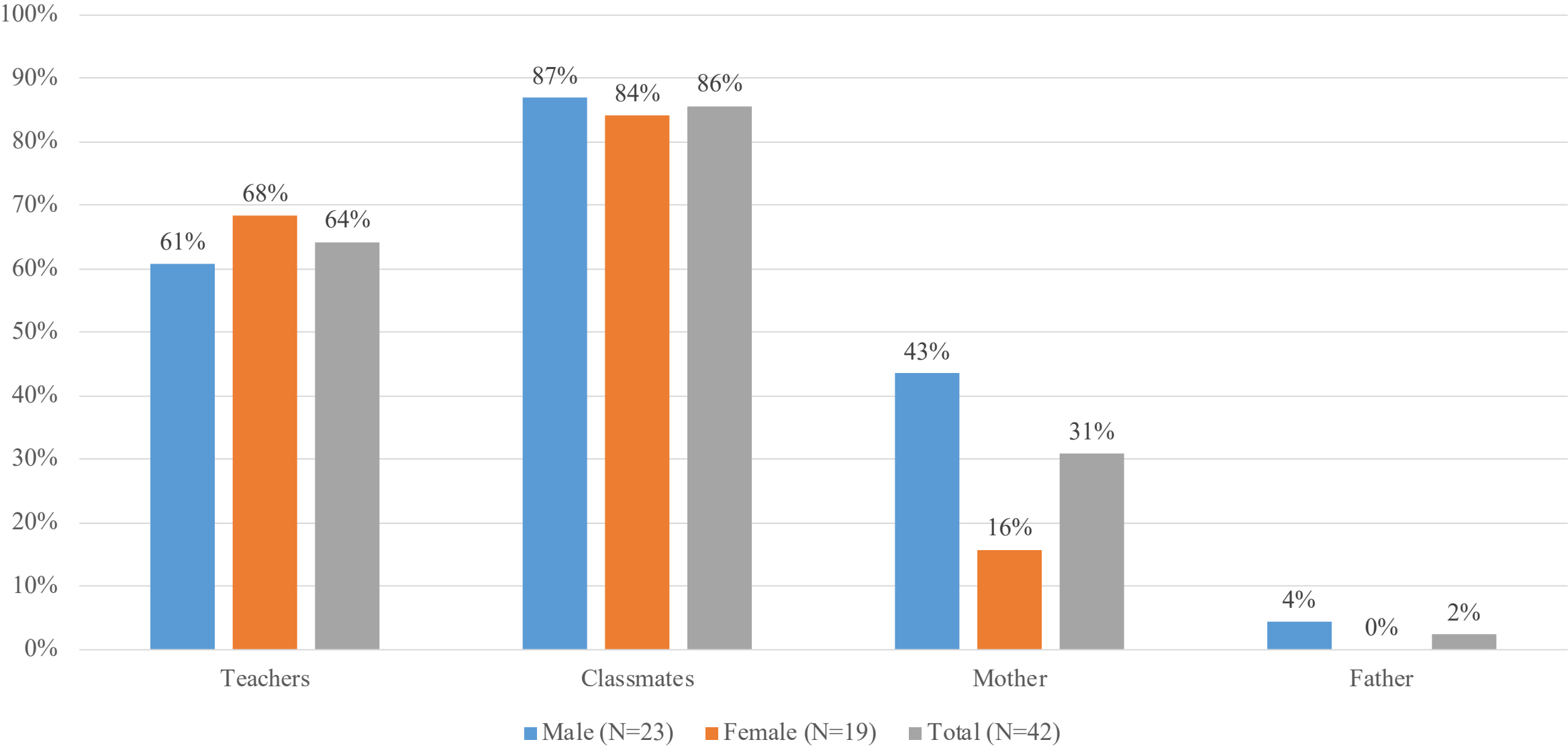
Source: (KAFDOC's Survey, 2020)

- Math and Khmer subjects are very important for early grade students, in particular from Grades 1 to 3.
- If they are struggling with these subjects in the early grades, they might not be able to study successfully in lower secondary school.



# Challenges faced by slower/insufficient learners

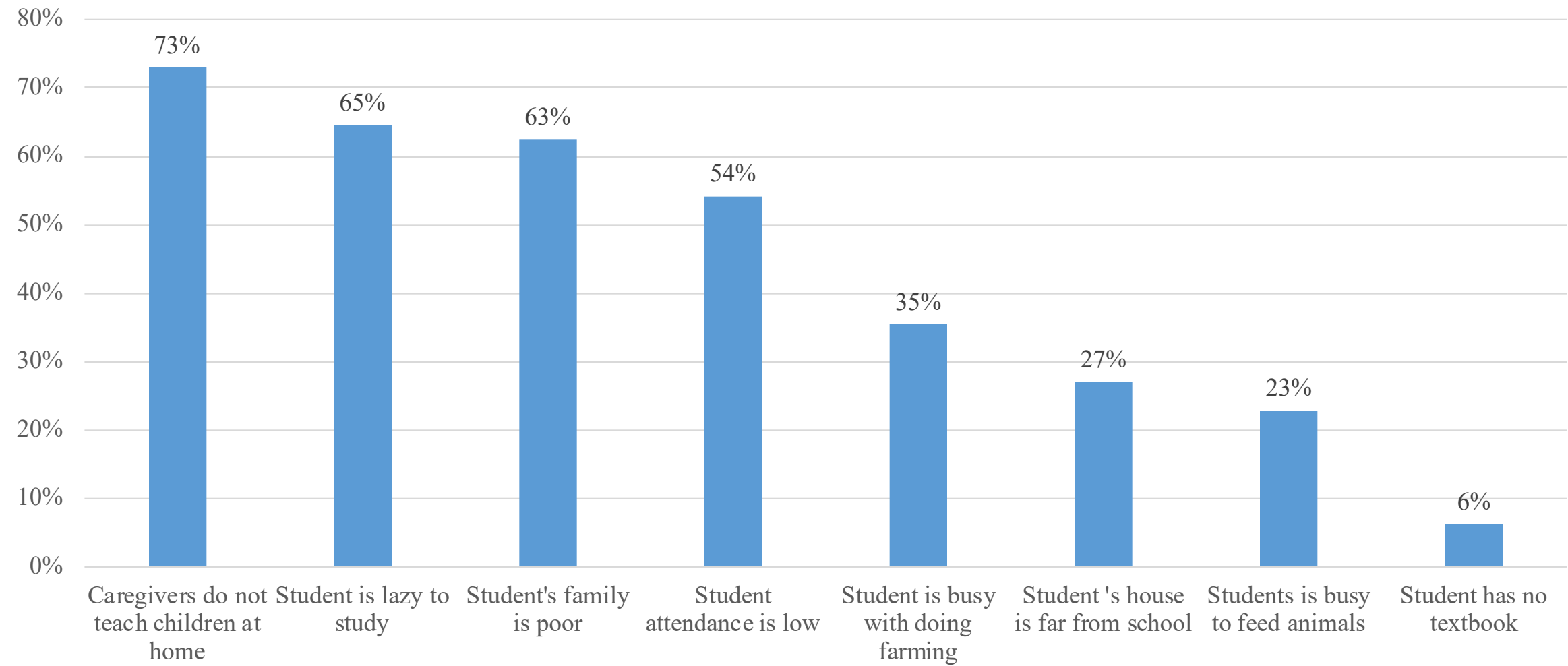
From whom do you seek support from when you don't understand lessons?



Source: (KAFDOC’s Survey, 2020)

# Teachers views on causes of slower/insufficient learning

What cause slower/insufficient learning?(N=48)



Source: (KAFDOC’s Survey, 2020)

## **3.3. Dropout Issues**

## Case 1: Dropout due to family debt

**Mengly** is a student in grade 5 at Sangkum primary school. He is 12 years old and he lives with his family in Sangkum village, Sandan Commune, Sambour district, Kratie province. Mengly is at risk of dropping out of school due to his family circumstances. Mengly's parents are farmers and because his family is in debt, they cannot support their children's education. In addition to this, his parents do not understand the value of education and so their children do not regularly attend school. Mengly said that most days he needs to help his parents work and he was often absent from class even though his teacher tried to encourage him to return. The teachers wanted to visit him at home once or twice a month, but he was always busy working with his parents. Mengly felt embarrassed to be in the class just one or two days a week. He also found it difficult to face his friends at school.

Source: (KAFDOC's Interview, 2020)

## Case 2: Dropout due to disability

**Sochea** is a student in Grade 3 at Svay Chek primary school. He lives with his parents in Cheurng Pheat village, Kosh Khnher Commune Sambour district, Kratie province. Sochea is 9 years old.

He has a weak left leg and usually his mother or father takes him to the school by motorbike but sometimes he needs to ride a bike to school by himself. He said it is around 6 or 7 km from his house to his school, so it takes more than 30 minutes every day.

It is difficult for him to walk and to join in some of the activities with the other children. With these challenges he struggles to study. His family do not have enough resources to support him.

Source: (KAFDOC's Interview, 2020)

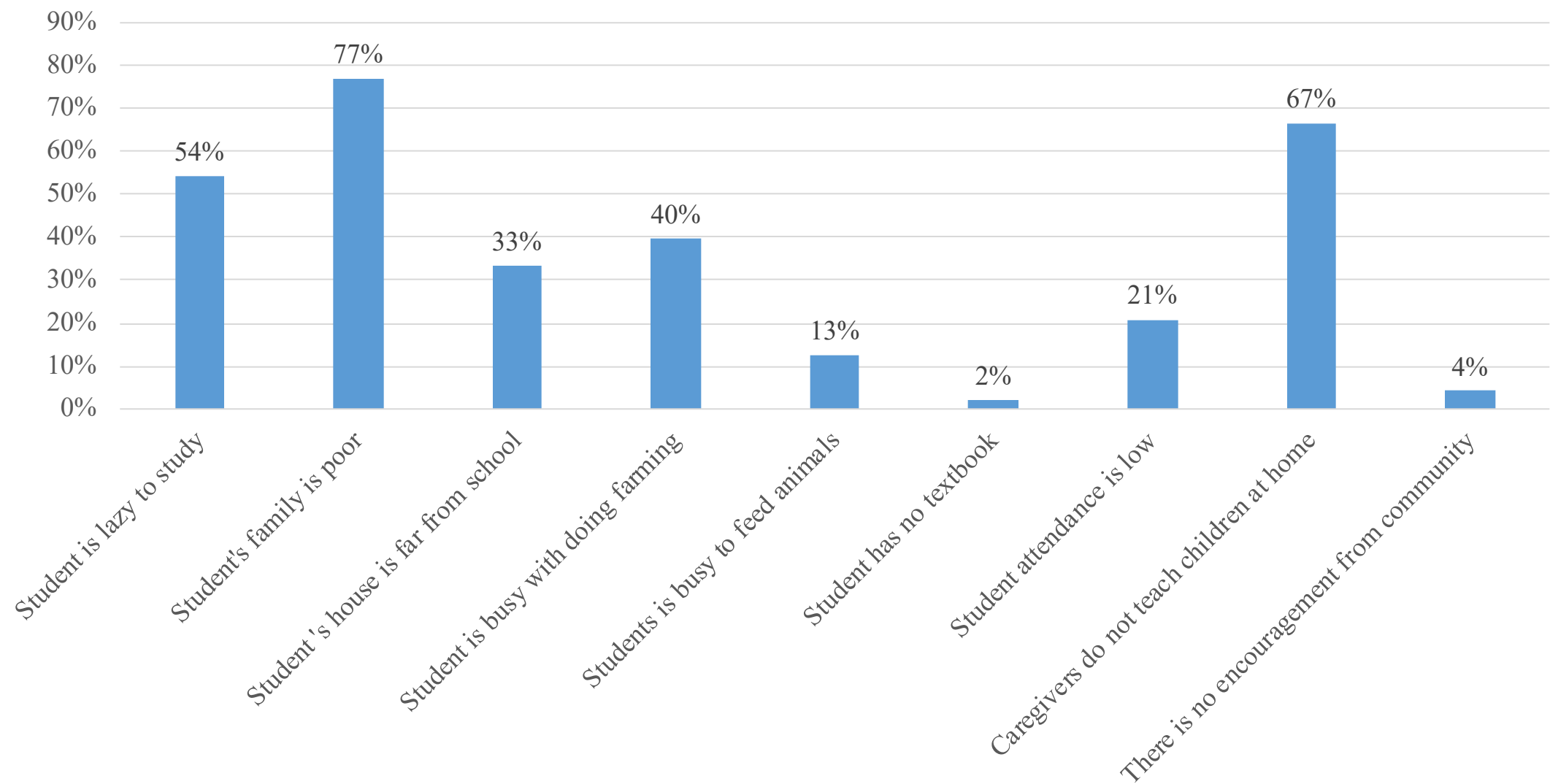
### Case 3: Dropout due to slower/insufficient learning

**Beong** is a student in Grade 5. He is 14 years old . He lives with his parents and he has dropped out of school. He has struggled to keep up with the pace of instruction at school. The teacher said he was at the bottom of the class, but they continued to encourage him. Because he wasn't doing well and his family didn't understand the value of education, he was forced to work with the family. He had to work before going to school and then ride his bike to school which is about 3km away from his home. It was tough for him to continue studying because of his familial commitments. This is the reason why he decided to stop going to school.

Source: (KAFDOC's Interview, 2020)

# Teachers' view of causes of dropout

What causes school dropout? (N=48)



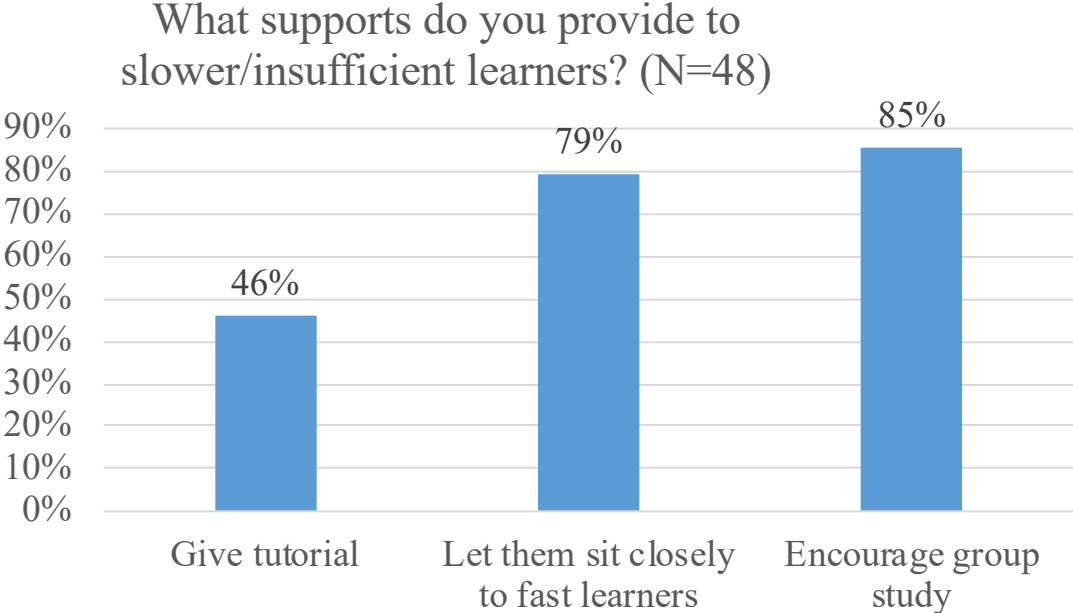
Source: (KAFDOC's survey, 2020)

## 4. Issues and Mechanisms addressing slower/insufficient learning and dropout issues

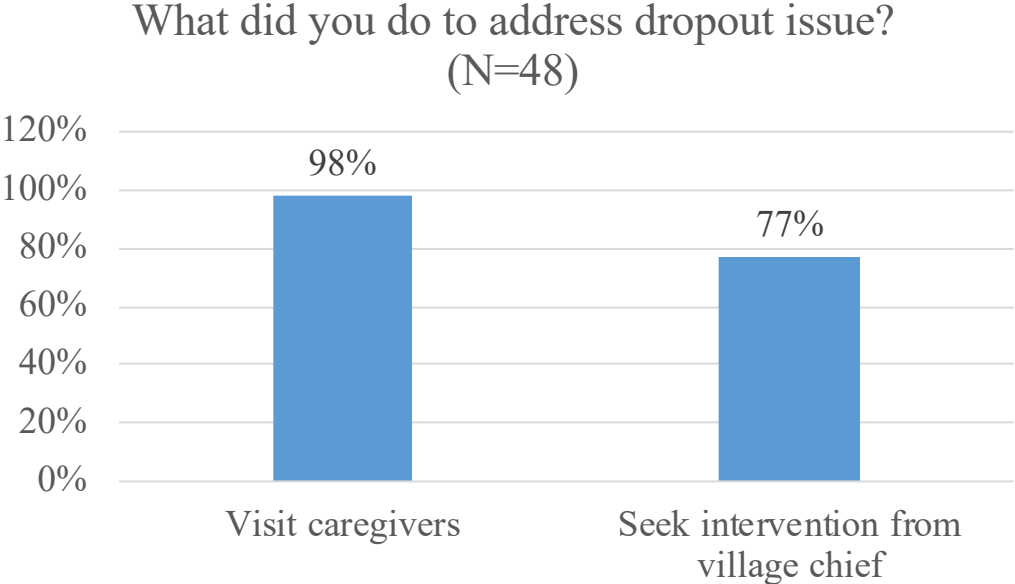
- Key actors
- Interventions
- Challenges



# Interventions on slower/insufficient learning and dropout issues from teachers

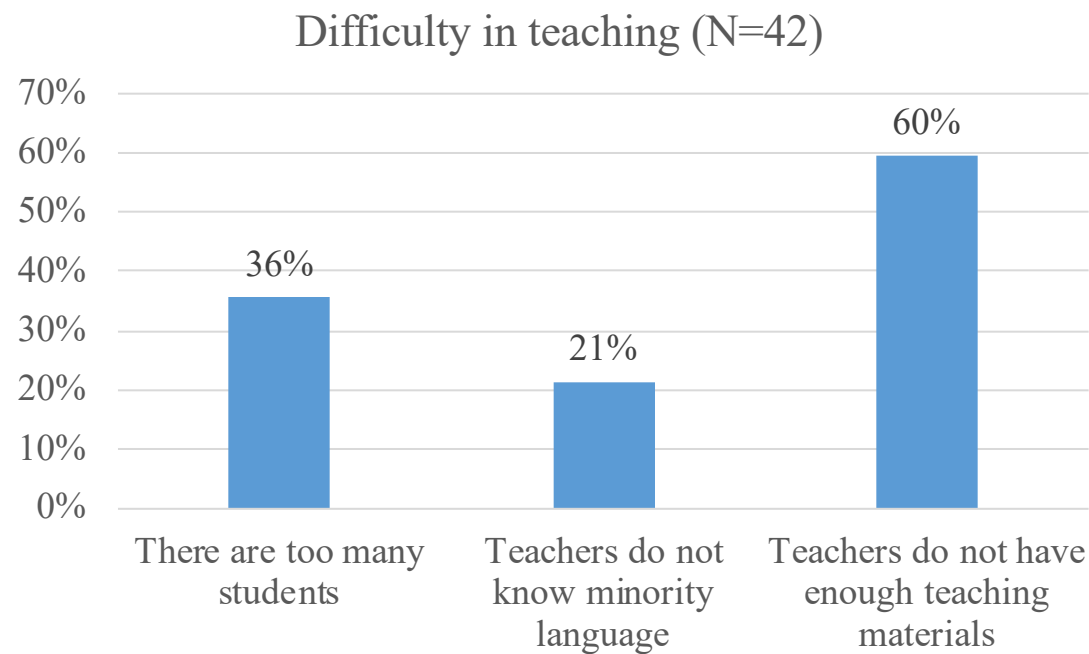


Source: (KAFDOC’s survey, 2020)

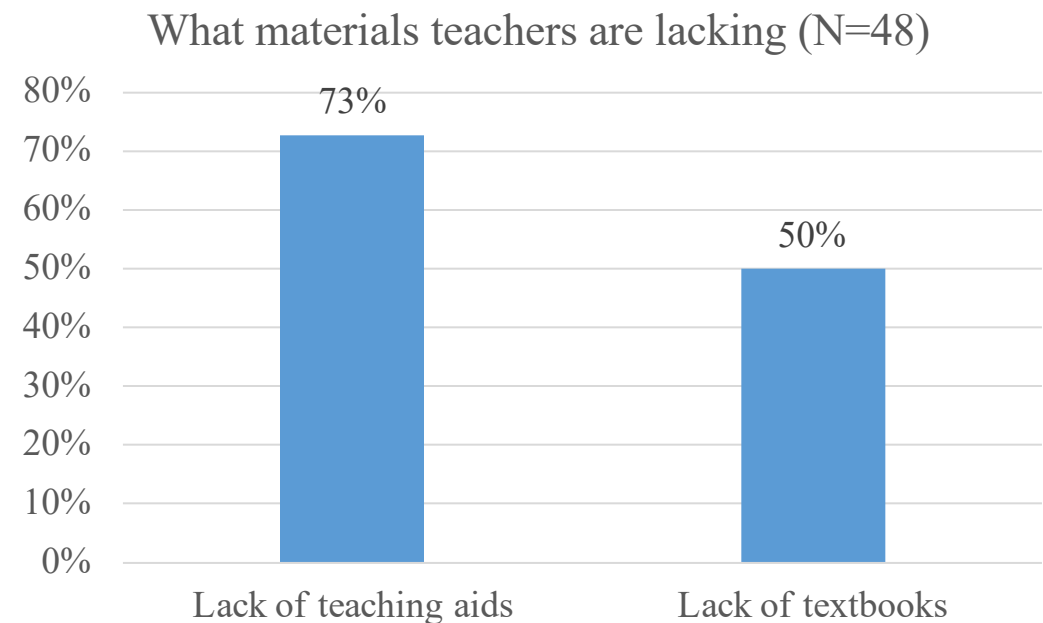


Source: (KAFDOC’s survey, 2020)

# Challenges Raised by Teachers



Source: (KAFDOC’s survey, 2020)



Source: (KAFDOC’s survey, 2020)

# Assessment of teachers' pedagogy and understanding of classroom management

Successful Approaches	Room for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They use “peer educator” approach to support slower/insufficient learners</li><li>• They use “student-centered” approach</li><li>• They arrange slower/insufficient learners to sit closer to outstanding students.</li><li>• They provide extra classes to slower/insufficient learners</li><li>• They develop lesson plans before teaching</li><li>• They use teaching materials for teaching</li><li>• They understand teaching methodologies well</li><li>• They make classrooms attractive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They should provide extra math class to slower/insufficient learners</li><li>• They should have a clear plan to support slower/insufficient learners</li><li>• “Student-centered” approaches should be applied more</li><li>• They should update and revise their teaching materials</li></ul>

# School Support Committee (SSC)

Issues	Interventions for slower/insufficient learning and dropout	Challenges
Slower/insufficient learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work cooperatively with schools to help slower/insufficient learners</li> <li>• Identify numbers of slower/insufficient learners in their areas</li> <li>• Do home visits regularly every month</li> <li>• Request schools to let children borrow learning materials</li> <li>• Visit students at home and encourage them to return to school</li> <li>• Meet with parents of students at home</li> <li>• Encourage the children's council to help teach students more slowly and advise parents to help teach their children more at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSC was not clear on their role in this intervention</li> <li>• Time allocated is still limited</li> <li>• They have never received training on how to use teaching materials</li> <li>• Some of them were not active</li> <li>• Lack of resources for travelling or doing home visits</li> </ul>
Dropouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit parents at home</li> <li>• Collect data on children/dropouts and ensure that it is available in one place and easy to find</li> <li>• Request support from CCWC</li> <li>• Conduct school monitoring regularly on school infrastructure to ensure that it is safe for children</li> <li>• Meet with parents whose children have dropped out and seek funds to support these families</li> <li>• Intervene to encourage students who drop out to return to school</li> <li>• Provide additional guidance at home and request the village and commune authorities to intervene as well</li> </ul>	

# Student Council

Issues	Interventions on slower/insufficient learning and dropouts	Challenges
Slower/insufficient learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help organize books in the library</li> <li>• Help oversee the library when students read books</li> <li>• Help teach weaker students and help improve the school and the school environment</li> <li>• Invite weaker students to study in groups and help with homework, especially during breaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slower/insufficient learning students do not show cooperation (they don't want extra learning support with student council)</li> <li>• They have no clear and formalized roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• They have limited capacity to document issues</li> <li>• They are not well trained</li> <li>• They lack incentives such as materials, financial support, and formal recognition</li> </ul>
Dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit and call home, encourage students to return to school</li> <li>• Promote children's learning at school and in the community</li> <li>• Visit with parents and teachers</li> </ul>	

# School Director

Issues	Interventions on slower/insufficient learning and dropout	Challenges
Slower/insufficient learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diligently highlight the importance of studying at every meeting with parents of students</li> <li>• Indicate the needs of the schools and inform parents about the importance of participation</li> <li>• Request additional teachers</li> <li>• Plan leadership and management activities</li> <li>• Improve the quality of teachers, including through teaching methods, lesson plans, and sufficient teaching materials</li> <li>• Encourage parents of slower learners and the parents whose children are usually absent to teach children at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School directors have limited resources (human resources and financial resources) to address the issues</li> <li>• School directors' capacity has not been strengthened especially the capacity to use technology for communication and storing dropout and slower learners' data.</li> </ul>
Dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to mobilize the community and strengthen relationships with the parents of these students</li> <li>• Diligently highlight the importance of studying at every meeting with parents</li> <li>• Strengthen the school system, teacher-community relations</li> <li>• Strengthen internal school regulations that encourage children to come school regularly</li> <li>• Strengthen relationships with the community and diligently invite them to join school meetings</li> </ul>	

## Local Authority (CCWC and Commune/Village Chief)

Issues	Interventions on slower/insufficient learning and dropout	Challenges
Slower/ insufficient learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate parents not to take children to the farm because it diminishes their ability to attend school</li> <li>• Visit households in the villages and meet with parents in order to communicate to the guardians of children the importance of studying</li> <li>• Help and support parents to educate their children</li> <li>• Encourage teachers or school management to visit children</li> <li>• Encourage parents and children to understand the importance of education and seek support from School Management Committee, schools' directors or teachers, and district education officials</li> <li>• Buy additional learning materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is less participation from households in the community meeting due to migration</li> <li>• It is difficult to communicate with households</li> </ul>
Dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage parents to communicate with teachers to provide support to prevent dropouts</li> <li>• Raise awareness on the importance of education- why we should go to school and the rights of children to education</li> <li>• Discuss with parents their reasons for not supporting children's education so that they can be more targeted in their approach</li> </ul>	

# **5. Recommendations**

Addressing School Dropout and Slower/Insufficient  
Learning Issues



## **Schools should:**

- Raise funds to buy study materials, especially textbooks, for poor students
- Raise funds to buy food and clean water for students from poor families
- Hold reading and math competitions frequently to stimulate and enhance students' reading and math skills
- Develop parent-oriented sessions on additional ways to educate children at home
- Encourage and support Children's Councils to help slower learners and encourage dropouts to return. Children's Council's roles and responsibilities should be formalized, incentives should be supported, and they should receive proper training
- Follow 'child-friendly' school guidelines
- Provide a sufficient learning environment, including: a clean environment, toilets with a good water supply, handwashing facilities with soap, clean drinking water, enough textbooks, a library, a vegetable garden, sports facilities, and secure fences
- Apply new techniques and provide innovative teaching materials to teachers such as textbooks, visual aids, pictures, tablets, and smart TV

## **Teachers should:**

- Provide extra math class to slower/insufficient learners
- Have clear plans to support slower/insufficient learners
- Update and revise their teaching materials
- Use “student-centered” approaches more frequently

## **Parents should:**

- Teach their children at home
- Communicate with school and teachers by attending regular meetings with teachers
- Allow their children enough time to study at home

## **Donors and NGOs should:**

- Fund special programs and provide financial support to disabled students
- Provide study materials to support students from poor families
- Provide funding support on bilingual education to indigenous students
- Provide funding support on home and farm education for slower/insufficient learners and dropouts who wish to return to school
- Develop materials and dissemination approaches for authorities to promote the importance of education
- Support improvements to strategic planning of provincial departments of education and district offices

## 6. References

- Statistics collected from Education Office at Sambour, Chhlong, and ChetraBorie districts.
- Data collection with school directors, teachers, Children's Council groups, School Supported Committees-SSC, village leaders and commune chiefs, Children parents, children with disabilities, children who have dropped out of education, and children with educational challenges.
- Schools' data collected from Provincial Department of Education and Youth and Sport (PDoEs)



Thank you

