



Youth Employment Policy Summary

CAMBODIA



International
Labour
Organization

Background Figures:

Total population:
15.8 million (2016)¹

**Youth population (%
total):**
20.6 per cent (2015)²

GDP (USD\$): 18.05
billion (2015)³

GDP growth: 7.0 per
cent (2015)³

**Urban-rural
breakdown:**
20.7/79.3 per cent
(2015)⁴

**Net migration rate
(per 1000):**
-2.3 (2010-2015)⁴

**Employment by
sector:**
51.0 agriculture; 18.6
industry; 30.4
services (2012)⁵

**% earning less than
\$2/day:**
41.2 per cent (2011)⁶

Source:

1. Worldometers
2. UNFPA
3. World Bank
4. UNESCAP
5. KILM
6. ADB



Source: Infoplease.com

Labour Market Situation of Young People

The Kingdom of Cambodia is a “young” country, with the youth population (according to the UN definition of those aged 15 -24 years) comprising 20.6 per cent of the total population of 15.8 million people in 2016. Approximately 80 per cent of Cambodians live in rural areas, and this is also reflected in the 50.4 per cent employment in the agricultural sector. In terms of educational attainment, 38.2 per cent of youth are enrolled in secondary education and 15.8 per cent in tertiary education.

The vast majority of youth (72.4 per cent) leave school because of economic reasons, and the average of leaving school is 16 years ([ILO, 2013](#)). Youth unemployment is low – 2.4 per cent in 2014 – compared to other countries in the region. Total unemployment in the population stands at 0.4 per cent in 2014. ([World Bank](#)).

The main challenge facing Cambodian youth revolves around employment quality. Many are in the informal economy, earning low wages, do not have a written contract nor access to benefits. Approximately half of youth are employed in the agricultural sector and 46.8 per cent are working as contributing family workers. Those not in employment, education or training (NEET) was 8.7 per cent in 2012, with young women more likely to have this status than young men, at 11.9 per cent and 4.8 per cent, respectively (ILO, 2015).

Table 1: Youth Employment Indicators

Indicator	%
Labour Force Participation Rate, 15-64 (2014) ¹	83.0
Youth Labour Force Participation Rate, ages 15-24 (2013) ²	72.7
Youth Unemployment Rate (2012) ³	3.8
Youth Unemployment Rate in South Eastern Asia and Pacific Subregion (2016) ⁴	13.0
Enrolment in secondary education (2008) ⁵	38.2
Enrolment in tertiary education (2011) ⁵	15.8

Source: 1. World Bank; 2. KILM; 3. Cambodia Labour Force and Child Labour Survey 2012, Labour Force Report; 4. ILO 2016, WESO; 5. UNESCAP

Youth Employment Policy Approach

As countries look to developing national plans based on the UN Social Development Goals up to 2030, the Royal Government of Cambodia will be seeking to build upon its progress in the previous Millennium Development Goal targets and has recently attained the status of a lower middle-income nation. Its recently approved *National Employment Policy*, as well as other policy strategies, illustrates the Government's commitment to reaching these goals. Within this framework, the approach of the Cambodian Government towards youth employment has been to focus on supply side interventions, particularly by improving the quality and relevance of general education, as well as of technical and vocational education. Through better education provision – including non-formal education – Cambodia hopes to create a strong human resource base. Its different policy provisions also target vulnerable groups such as out-of-school youth, ethnic minorities and illiterate youth. Addressing the gender dimension, the Government targets young girls by ensuring they have the opportunity to receive free non-formal education equivalent to the lower secondary level.

Policy and Legal Measures

Enterprise Development: One significant measure supporting young entrepreneurs is the short-term **income-generation training programme** highlighted in the [National Policy on Non-Formal Education](#). The programme prioritises youth aged 15-24 and focuses on providing skills for establishing a business, improving one's career and finding wage employment. It is linked to small-scale credit schemes and establishes revolving credit funds to support entrepreneurial initiatives. Training teams – in some cases mobile training teams – deliver the necessary training. In addition to this, other policy measures focus on soft skills and entrepreneurship education as well as providing services to young entrepreneurs to improve their business and understanding of market competitiveness ([National Policy on Youth Development](#)).

Industrial Development Policies: IDP policies for 2015-2025 focus on reforming TVET and enabling the private sector to have a greater role in identifying demand driven skills training requirements. The Government's Rectangular Strategy Phase III has been seeking to improve working conditions, enhancing technical and vocational training, building the labour statistics system and reforming the qualification framework, while also promoting the enforcement of labour law.

Documents containing youth employment policy provisions:

- Industrial Development Policies 2015-2025
- Non-Formal Education Action Plan 2008-2015
- Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018
- Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase III 2013
- Law on Education 2007
- National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development 2011
- National Policy on Non-Formal Education 2003-2015
- Labour Law 1997

For more information on the policy documents and their provisions, please visit the [YouthPOL webpage](#).

Education and Training: Within the field of TVET, the [Law on Education](#) sets out the different spheres of responsibility of vocational education and secondary schools and establishes the National Supreme Council of Education which is in charge of setting policy proposals, evaluating the education and vocational training sector. The [Rectangular Strategy](#) seeks to improve **skills training** for the industrial sector with priority to training for engineers and technicians and aims to facilitate the transfer of students from TVET to higher education. Young drop-outs are also targeted in the [Education Strategic Plan \(ESP\)](#) through the preparation of a mechanism and framework for their vocational training. In 2016, the ESP will be seeking to reform the curriculum by including scientific subjects, skills in high demand in the labour market as well as soft skills, in

Did you know?

Cambodia has ratified 13 ILO Conventions, including 8 Fundamental and 1 Priority Conventions:

Fundamental Conventions:

- Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)
- Freedom of Association and Right to Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98)
- Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111)
- Minimum Age Convention (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)

Priority Conventions:

- Employment Policy Convention (No. 122)

line with ASEAN priority curriculum standards. **Community Learning Centres** are part of the [Non-Formal Education Action Plan](#) and provide necessary training to young drop-outs, particularly in farming.

Regarding **skills recognition and standards**, the [Law on Education](#) gives the Ministry of Education the responsibility for setting the National Education Standards, National Training Standards and the National Capacity Standards, which must be fulfilled educational institutions. The [Rectangular Strategy](#) highlights strengthening the national qualification standard framework, monitoring competencies and reforming training curricula to meet the demands of the labour market.

Career counselling is addressed in the [Education Strategic Plan](#) targeting both students in the provision of career information and teachers in the provision of career counselling. There will also be a vocational orientation committee at secondary schools. Moreover, the same *Plan* includes provisions on **scholarships** to ensure equal opportunity to access quality education. Young girls and marginalised groups are targeted through scholarships for secondary education. The *Plan* also mentions establishing a scholarship fund for post-graduates, preparing guidelines for scholarships for non-formal education students and a scheme for secondary graduates who wish to enter higher education or technical training.

Remedial education receives a great amount of attention across several policy documents. The [Education Strategy Plan](#) mentions the formulation of guidelines for equivalency for lower and upper secondary education and necessary teacher training. The [Policy on Non-Formal Education](#) highlights programmes to establish primary equivalency, lower secondary equivalency and upper secondary equivalency through non-formal, part-time education. Primary equivalency programmes have a 70 per cent female target which will be gradually reduced to 50 per cent. Lower secondary equivalency programmes target youth aged 12 to 18, providing a 9th grade equivalency certificate. Classes will be held at community learning centres and will not exceed two hours per day. The upper secondary equivalency will be developed to provide 12th grade equivalency certification. It is estimated that the cost per person for primary equivalency is \$40 and for lower secondary \$100 per student.

Labour Law and Legislation: Cambodia's [Labour Law](#) covers several areas including apprenticeships, probationary periods, anti-discrimination and occupational safety and health. It outlines the nature of the **apprenticeship contract**, including who can act as an instructor, the required number of apprentices per enterprise, the granting of an apprenticeship certificate and means of lawful termination of contract. A Ministerial Order (Prakas) determines the occupations and types of work that apprentices over the age of 18 can engage in. Regarding employment, the **minimum age** for wage employment is 15, while for hazardous labour it is 18. The **probationary period** cannot last longer than one to three months, depending on the type of work to be done. Regarding **anti-discrimination**, the wage received by a worker should be equal regardless of origin, sex or age.

The [Labour Law](#) also regulates **night work and hazardous work**. Youth between 15 and 18 cannot perform hazardous work, the exact nature of which is determined by the Ministry in charge of labour. Minors between the ages of 16 and 18 can be employed at night in factories or gold ore refineries if it is for the purpose of training or an apprenticeship. In addition, minors cannot work more than 8 hours per day and there must be at least 13 hours between one time slot to another.

Labour Market Policies: Cambodia's [National Policy on Youth Development](#) highlights the importance of an integrated plan for monitoring and responding to the needs of the labour market and facilitating young jobseekers' access to employment information. The [Rectangular Strategy](#) further addresses these issues. Regarding labour market information, it mentions strengthening data collection, analysis and dissemination of labour statistics as well as providing information on wages. Moreover, it seeks to give increased support to the Employment Forum, which brings together job providers, job seekers and education and training providers. The Royal Government wishes to strengthen this entity by improving the exchange of labour market information, counselling and ensuring quicker responsiveness to changing labour market conditions.

Structure of Governance and Main Actors

The main actors in the areas of youth employment are the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)** and the **Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT)**. The MoEYS played a key role in the formulation of the *Non-Formal Education Policy and Action Plan*, as well as the *Education Strategic Plan*. It is also in charge of coordination implementation. Within the field of non-formal education, there is also the **National Education for All (EFA) Committee** which cooperates with the MoEYS and is responsible for strengthening relationships with formal education institutions and strengthening the data collection centre on non-formal education. As mentioned in the above section on education and training, the *Education Law* establishes the **National Supreme Council of Education**, which is led by the Prime Minister. The different members of the Council will be appointed by Royal Decree. Equivalency tests and the monitoring guidelines for skills standards are in the domain of the MoEYS. Another relevant agency is the **National Youth Development Council (NYDC)** which is established in the *National Policy on Youth Development*, which has a general secretariat and technical sub-committees. There will also be Municipal and Provincial Youth Development Councils, all with the aim of providing monitoring and evaluation and supporting in the youth development process. Finally, the **MoLVT** determines the regulations surrounding apprenticeships, including the trial period and apprenticeship duration. Labour inspection also happens through this ministry.

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Source: www.consulateofcambodiaca.org