

Empowering Youth in Cambodia Today

Youth Situation Analysis – Education for Youth
Empowerment Project (EYE)

KAMPUCHEAN ACTION FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION



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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asia Nations
CAMFEBFA	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations
CESSP	Cambodia Education Sector Support Project
CLC	Community Learning Center
CFS	Child Friendly School
CFSS	Child Friendly Secondary School
CR	Cambodian Riel
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRP	Career Resource Person
CRUMP	Cambodia Rural Urban Migration Project
CSES	Cambodia Socio-economic Survey
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DOE	District Office of Education
DOF	Department of Finance
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EEQP	Enhancing Educational Quality Project
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQIP	Educational Quality Improvement Program
ESCUP	Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
EU	European Union
EYE	Education for Youth Empowerment
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
HDI	Human Development Index
IBEC	Improved Basic Education in Cambodia Project
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KAPE	Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
KYA	Khmer Youth Association
LLSP	Local Life Skills Program
MARYP	Most At Risk Young People
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport
MFI	Micro-finance Institution
MoLVT	Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training

MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoWA	Ministry of Women’s Affairs
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NTB	National Training Board
NTQF	National TVET Qualifications Framework
PAP	Priority Action Program
PB	Program-based Budget
PCR	Pupil Classroom Ratio
PED	Primary Education Department
POEYS	Provincial Office of Education, Youth, and Sport
POLVT	Provincial Office of Labor and Vocational Training
PSOD	Phnom Srei Organization for Development
PTB	Provincial Training Board
PTC	Provincial Training Center
PTTC	Provincial Teacher Training Center (College)
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SBEP	School-based Enrichment Program
SCI	Save the Children International
SED	Secondary Education Department
SfL	Schools for Life Project
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMIL	School-based Management and Instructional Leadership
SOB	School Operating Budget
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSC	School Support Committee
TGL	Technical Grade Leader
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TTD	Teacher Training Department
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VOD	Vocational Orientation Department
VTSP	Voucher Skills Training Program

WDC	Women's Development Center
WEI	World Education, Inc.
YRDP	Youth Resource Development Program
YSA	Youth Situation Analysis

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Executive Summary

Background: In 2013, *Save the Children International* in Cambodia began the development of new programming that seeks to expand its target population from children under 12 to those who are 12 to 24. This includes youth who are both in- or out-of-school. This shift in programming seeks to respond to the dramatic evolution of Cambodia into what is known as a youth ‘bulge’ society in which 65% of the population is below 30 years old. The seminal program under this strategic shift is called the *Education for Youth Empowerment Project (EYE)*. A first step in this expansion is the completion of a Youth Situation Analysis (YSA) and Service Mapping that will help to inform the new project’s design. This YSA joins several similar analyses that have been completed by the United Nations (2009), Khmer Youth Association (KYA)(2012), and the Youth Resource Development Project (YRDP) among others. Yet because of the rapidly evolving situation of youth in Cambodia, it has been difficult to keep contextual analyses of Cambodian youth up to date. In addition, the current analysis is characterized by a *children’s rights perspective* that focuses on the local context in selected target provinces only. In this respect, the analysis presents new primary data on youth attitudes by a variety of stakeholders with respect to perceptions of economic, social, and political empowerment and the obstacles that constrain such empowerment. Data collection has been limited to three provinces where *Save the Children* currently has programming (i.e., Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, and Koh Kong).

Conceptual Framework: The conceptual framework developed for EYE and the current analysis has identified **social, economic, and political empowerment** as the main areas of engagement with children and youth that it would like to promote. The role of technology in youth development has also been included as a cross-cutting area of study that affects each of the three areas of empowerment noted above. ***The main objective of the EYE Situation Analysis is to provide a reliable overview of the actual adolescent situation in Cambodia that will inform and guide the development of the EYE strategy and plan. The analysis draws both on secondary data sources as well as primary data collection activities among youth, educators parents, government officials, civil society, and the private sector***

Country Context:

Demographic Population Structure: Since the last census in 1998, the proportion of Cambodia’s population aged between 15 and 29 years of age has increased dramatically from 26% of the total population to 31.5% today, due largely to the recovery in the birth rate after the Pol Pot years. Overall, an estimated 65.2% of the population is estimated to be below 30 years old. The total number of youth in the population is expected to increase by 7.7% over the next five years. These trends are expected to remain constant for at least the next ten years, demonstrating the profound need for improved services for this age group in the future. The latest UN Human Development Report indicates that Cambodia has continued to increase its Human Development Index (HDI) since the beginning of the century but that it is still lagging far behind most of the other nations in ASEAN (2013). Although the trend value for HDI in Cambodia is leading upwards, the country still ranks near the bottom of the list when compared to other countries within ASEAN and ties with Lao PDR for second to last place.

Economic Context: In terms of economic participation among youth, the overall unemployment rate in Cambodia is quite low at 1.5% using a strict definition defined as those actively seeking employment. However, in terms of all those available for employment but not yet working, the rate rises to 7.2% overall and 8.0% among females. While rural unemployment among youth is relatively low at 5.7%, this figure balloons to 20.1% among those in Phnom Penh, reflecting growing trends for youth to seek employment in the nation's capital and other urban areas. Because the majority of youth are employed in the countryside where wage labor is rare, under-employment is a better construct for gauging job-seeking behavior among youth. Current rates are believed to be over 40% and increasing though such estimates are speculative only. In spite of the relatively low unemployment rates among youth nationally, there is concern that the economy will find it difficult to employ the growing number of youth entering the work force each year. In this respect, it is estimated that the number of youth entering the workforce annually is about 300,000 with current trends suggesting that this figure could increase to 400,000 in the near future.

According to socio-economic surveys conducted during the last decade, the distribution of youth by service sector is also changing rapidly. In this regard, the proportion of youth working in the agricultural sector declined from 83.5% in 1999 to 69.8% in 2004, a change of nearly 20%. The sectors gaining youth workers include Industry, which nearly doubled its proportion to 15.7% and the Service Trade sector (mainly tourism), which nearly tripled to 13.6% in the same time period. These changes represent the rapid expansion in the garment industry and tourism sectors.

Education Context: Although the MoEYS has developed a sophisticated body of national policies designed to improve educational access, quality, and management, expectations are still running far ahead of reality. It is generally accepted by many educators that efforts to improve educational quality have shown the most disappointing results. Although official statistics report that the NER has reached 97.0% at primary level (and over 100% for rural populations), there is concern that these figures may not be accurate due to irregularities in reporting by schools. Nevertheless, the government's pro-poor policies inaugurated at the beginning of the last decade have clearly had a dramatic impact on overall enrolment at both primary and secondary school level, especially for girls where the gender gap has virtually disappeared. However, educational quality is an area where concern still continues. The dissatisfaction with educational quality is best reflected by plummeting NER levels in urban areas where middle class families are increasingly abandoning public schools to enroll in proliferating private schools. Inefficiency in the formal education system is very high, especially in the secondary school subsector where the overall dropout rate was 20.0% at lower secondary and 10.1% at upper secondary school level. Dropout among boys is higher in 8 out of the 12 grades of the formal education cycle, suggesting once again that boys are currently more prone to leave school than girls.

Skills Training – Formal Sector: In 2006, the MoEYS issued a comprehensive *Life Skills Education Policy* to address the unmet need for expanded curriculum content focusing on the preparation of youth to live in society effectively. The policy makes a distinction between **Basic skills** and **Career skills**. The former set of skills refers to those that are considered essential for all learners and which are integrated into the national core curriculum subjects of Khmer, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Basic Life Skills are further divided into two categories - **general life skills** and **prevocational skills**. General life skills are generic in nature and focus on

relevant content and planning for daily life and moral development. Prevocational skills focus on workforce readiness. On the other hand, **Career skills** are those that emphasize actual occupational competencies and are also further divided into two categories - *simple career skills* and *vocational skills*. *Simple career skills* are taught through the **Local Life Skills Program (LLSP)** from Grades 1 to 10, whilst vocational skills are offered as TVET electives at Grades 11 and 12. Recent programming supported by USAID (2010-14) has piloted a more structured life skills education curriculum that seeks to address some of the problems noted above. The new curriculum comprises 30 modules that are organized into three domains *including (i) Socially Relevant Curricular Themes; (ii) Economic & Business Studies; and (iii) Prevocational Topics.*

Skills Training – Non-formal and Tertiary Sector: Until 2004, TVET services were overseen by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. In 2005, this oversight was moved to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT). The MoEYS, however, still retains some involvement in TVET and is currently providing support to the development of Secondary Education Technical Schools of which there are currently five in the country (in Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, and Kandal) but only three are functioning. The involvement of several ministries in providing TVET services highlights the challenges of harmonization and coordination of services. The majority of TVET services is, nevertheless, provided by MoLVT through 36 training institutions spread across the country. The TVET system comprises 25 Provincial and Municipal Training Centers (PTCs) delivering non-formal technical training and 11 polytechnics and institutes delivering certificate and degree programs to a mainly urban-based population. Recently, five PTCs were transformed into Regional Training Centers (RTCs) with authority to provide formal two-year courses in vocational studies. Non-formal programs usually last about six months and do not currently offer certification. Indeed, graduates of the non-formal courses cannot enter formal courses on the basis of their non-formal training; thus, the formal and non-formal TVET institutions have historically operated as two separate systems, though the introduction of RTCs is intended to change this. In addition, students graduating from TVET formal degree programs cannot re-enter the regular tertiary system or vice versa, creating rigidities in the system that discourage young people from entering TVET institutions.

Skills Gap: Surveys of firms in the economic sectors that are expanding most rapidly indicate that there continue to be severe to moderate gaps in the skills possessed by workers (HR Inc Cambodia, 2009). The Hospitality/ Tourism sector appears to be the most badly affected with 88% of firms reporting gaps ranging from moderate to severe. Although the number of firms that report that such constraints are a major impediment is still small at 15.5%, it is growing rapidly, indicating that it would be wise to start to address these constraints now rather than later when they may become more insurmountable. To meet the need for skilled labor, formal TVET institutions produce slightly more than 2,000 graduates per year, which is rather low when compared to the 8,000 or more graduates who complete their studies each year at the country's 47 universities and colleges. Non-formal TVET providers on the other hand reported over 9,000 graduates in 2008. Data on private providers of short TVET courses is sketchy and incomplete but it is estimated that there are approximately 750 such providers in the private sector more than half of whom are not registered or accredited. When one considers that there are over 3.3 million youth, mostly school dropouts, who require skills training, the capacity of the TVET system to meet the needs of this population is greatly overshadowed. Additional initi-

atives such as the *Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project (STVET)* launched in 2010 with support from ADB, are greatly needed.

Primary Data Findings & Conclusions

Policy Formulation and Implementation: The present investigation found that there is currently in place an extensive policy framework to help guide key duty-bearers such as school and government officials, parents, vocational training institutions, and others in realizing adolescent rights. The central policy in this regard is the *National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development*, promulgated in 2011. However, the ability to coordinate and resource implementation of these policies has been highly problematic. Primary data collected during this survey found that only about half of teachers and less than half of commune chiefs were even aware that there was a youth policy, let alone what it said. Only about a third of youth themselves expressed any awareness of such a policy. Evidence of perceived policy implementation was even weaker. Thus, while the government, donors, and civil society partners have been successful in creating a useful policy framework at several levels to empower Cambodian youth, the main challenge appears to be on improving implementation. This suggests a strong need to provide more balance in development focus with a shift to greater emphasis on implementation challenges.

The Primacy of Education as the Best Option: The best option for Cambodia to maximize the social, economic, and political potential of youth to participate fully in society is through improved educational service at multiple levels: *foundational* (derived from basic education), *vocational-technical* (upper secondary, vocational institutions), and *transferrable* (workplace training, non-formal education). Yet this route to maximize potential is clouded by issues of *poor educational quality* (both perceived and real), *limited educational supply*, *economic barriers to access*, and *attitudinal factors* that place a high priority on avoiding opportunity costs. *Increased rates of migration* stemming from peer pressure, economic diversification (away from agriculture and towards industry and trade) and improved transportation networks have further amplified the opportunity costs associated with staying in school.

The Challenges to the Education System at All Levels: The demographic structure of Cambodia's population suggests a situation of great urgency. About 65% of the total population is under 30 years old; of those who should be in junior high school (i.e., those aged between 12 and 14), about 70% are either still stuck in primary school (perhaps between 10 to 20% of this number) or have left the education system completely. More than half of today's youth leave the system without adequate foundation skills. Employers often identify the lack of basic soft skills such as critical thinking and proper work attitudes as the most important deficits among their workers. Survey findings suggest that duty-bearers within and without the education system are very much out of touch with their students. Whereas many educators attributed high dropout trends to the failure of families and students to place a high value on education, students and parents tend to put the blame on the distance to school, its high cost, and low relevance. In spite of early successes of scholarship programs, NER levels at secondary level have become stagnant within a range of 30-35%. But even if one were to suppose that it were possible to further double the enrolment rate at secondary school, it is clear that the system could not accommodate this many youth, given very high PCR levels and national teacher shortages that are likely to be a major constraint for years to come. Similarly, intake capacity at the country's ter-

tiary and vocational training institutions is in the tens of thousands while the number of those exiting the basic education system or already exited is in the hundreds of thousands each year. These challenges are compounded by low educational relevance, poor coordination between Ministries and service providers, and weak management of existing resources leading to waste and inefficiency.

Youth Perspectives on Empowerment: Primary data generated by youth surveys suggest that Cambodian youth do think about their futures with some frequency. Access to advice, however, is usually limited mainly to one's parents, siblings, and to a much lesser extent, one's teacher. This advice appears to be mainly *ad hoc* and unstructured in form. Schools provide little in terms of formal career advice to youth. Cambodian youth in the provinces appear to lack exposure to the world of ideas through access to structured activities such as clubs, social media, and youth-focused publications. Survey data suggests that about two-thirds of youth in the selected provinces do 'not' read newspapers or magazines on a regular basis, nearly half have no hobbies preferring to spend their time watching television, and another half stated that they have no role models. Only about 20% of those interviewed have regular access to the internet and about a third said they have NO political convictions or interest in politics though 70% said they were likely to vote when old enough to do so. Female youth are more likely 'not' to have political convictions and are much less proficient in technology usage than young men. Most youth felt highly reticent to express political views, even to their own peers. Although the majority of youth interviewed felt sure that going to school had helped or would help them find a good job, many were currently unemployed or engaged in unskilled or seasonal labor; employers complain that schools are not providing key foundational skills. However, a test on soft foundational skills found a positive correlation between staying in school longer and a higher acquisition of soft skills. Clearly, staying in school provides youth with a more nurturing environment for their development than being out of the system, in spite of criticisms of the school system.

Improving Service Provision and Coordination: Survey findings strongly suggest service providers and government need to increase access to structured services that promote exposure to ideas, skills acquisition, and advice, particularly where this concerns career development and future educational opportunities. To be sure, there are already a great many services available to youth but penetration has been poor due to duplication and poor coordination among service providers. A telling example of this poor coordination refers to the parallel efforts of MoLVT to introduce 3-year vocational training certification for students who have completed Grade 9 at the same time that MoEYS is setting up technical high schools (that are very poorly resourced). There is considerable scope to improve communication between state schools, providers of vocational training (both formal and non-formal), MFIs, civil society organizations, and employers and clear mandates to educational institutions at all levels could help to remedy reported deficits. It must be acknowledged, however, that dialogue between TVET providers and employers has made significant strides and the institutional reforms in this area over the last five years are beginning to bear fruit with the recent creation of a National Employment Agency and other developments. Nevertheless, there remains a considerable gap between the state school system and TVET providers as well as the private sector.

A key challenge to improving the penetration of existing services is the lack of a systematic network through which to reach youth. The state school system with over 1,000 secondary schools nationwide provides the most extensive network through which to access youth. But even this

network is limited to only about 30 or 40% of the youth population at most. High mobility, seasonal and unskilled labor opportunities, and fragmented outreach networks, where they exist at all, make it difficult to reach the 50% or more of youth who are outside of the formal education system. Any approach designed to facilitate improved service outreach to Cambodian youth should nevertheless consider the use of the existing school system since it is the closest thing that Cambodia has to a nationwide network. Advocacy with school officials and support from the Youth Department should be able to build on this network as an outreach stepping stone. These efforts should be paired with activities to utilize social media as another channel for outreach, perhaps by creating a database of out-of-school at commune level for purposes of social messaging and communication about important events relating to youth. These efforts should be linked with the outreach services provided by the many youth organizations operating in Cambodia who can provide significant expertise in outreach and service provision.

The Need for a Balanced Approach: Service provision to youth should reflect both preventative and curative approaches. Keeping youth in school as long as possible provides the greatest likelihood that they will acquire the foundational skills employers say that they most desire. Doing so will also provide increased protection from the risks associated with migration and child labor. Additional investments in education can also improve the quality and relevance of education, especially through improved life skills provision, and increased access to career and counseling services. Schools should also be given an unmistakable mandate to reach out to vocational training institutions, those providing apprenticeship opportunities, and MFIs and provide opportunities for these service providers to meet with students before graduation. In parallel with this approach, there should be comparable efforts to design outreach services for out-of-school youth that provide information, advice, and assistance to access the many existing services designed for this population. These efforts can take the form of youth clubs, managed databases that utilize social media for social messaging, IEC materials in both print and electronic form, and exposure visits. The use of the state schools themselves should play a role in these efforts as well as commune councils and Community Learning Centers where functional.

Recommendations: The table below provides a summary of key recommendations by empowerment domain and duty-bearer.

Summary of Recommendations by Empowerment Domain & Duty-bearer

Duty-bearer Recommendations	Domain			
	Social Participation	Technological Empowerment	Economic Empowerment	Political Empowerment
Government/Donors				
1. Assist the Youth Dept. to review opportunities for more structured opportunities for youth engagement among those in and out-of-school, e.g., Youth Clubs. This could be linked with a more coordinated effort to disseminate the goals of the RCG Youth Policy.	√		√	√
2. Conduct an audit of existing materials to promote youth engagement to avoid duplication, building on what already exists.	√		√	√
3. Review the use of schools as a stepping stone for outreach to out-of-school youth, allowing for dual use of facilities .	√	√	√	√
4. Increase investment in technological access at school level (e.g. ICT labs, tablet		√		

availability, etc.).				
5. Give school directors a clear mandate to allow service providers (e.g., MFIs, companies, vocational training providers) to access schools with service messaging			√	
6. Sanction a special position in schools for Career Counselor (comparable to that of librarian), should staffing levels permit/Provide career counseling services for in and out-of-school youth.			√	
7. Invest in life skills programming at school level to incrementally roll-out recently developed curricula about safe migration, world of work, etc.	√		√	√
8. Accelerate efforts to 'vocalize' general education to make it more relevant to youth.			√	
9. Include foundational skills in vocational training courses			√	
10. Increase cooperation between MoEYS and MoLVT leading to systematic tracking of students from secondary school to PTCs & other vocational training institutions.			√	
11. Provide alternative routes to early school leavers to achieve a suitable vocation (e.g., distance learning)			√	
12. Create a set of protocols that redefines school spaces as more 'civics accommodating' leading to the emergence of debate clubs, school newspapers, etc.				√
13. Assist communes or other level of government to create a database of out-of-school youth who can be accessed and networked through social media (e.g., SMS texting).		√		
14. Allow commune councils to use part of the investment funds for youth empowerment activities, especially for out-of-school youth.	√			√
15. Provide orientations based on empirical data for educators at all levels regarding the behaviors of their students, particularly why adolescents leave school.	√			
16. Diversify capacity-building support to include civil society organizations working with youth to ensure a more sustained approach to development.	√	√	√	√
17. Review and revise capacity-building approaches for Student Councils to make them more functional & student-led.	√			√
18. Accelerate efforts by the National Employment Agency to open branches in all provinces			√	
Civil Society Organizations				
1. Work with government to develop user-friendly manuals that facilitate youth engagement.	√		√	√
2. Participate in an audit of existing materials led by Government to avoid duplication of earlier efforts	√		√	√
3. Develop and implement youth-focused programming as coalitions whenever possible to avoid duplication of the efforts of others and realize greater economies of scale.	√		√	√
4. Re-orient local outreach networks to increase the utilization of schools as a base for support operations in tandem with government efforts to re-define the role of schools in this way.	√		√	√
5. Develop media messages (film, publications, radio programs) that can feed into outreach channels that use social and other forms of media.		√		
6. Increase efforts to keep youth in school as long as possible through redoubling assistance to scholarship programs, parental outreach, etc.	√			
7. Work with government to support new channels for youth engagement including support for youth clubs, revitalized Student Councils, debate clubs, etc.	√	√	√	√
8. Advocate for various service providers (e.g., MFIs, PTCs, etc) to access youth through the state school system, in tandem with government efforts to do the same.				
Private Sector			√	
1. Expand in-house skills training to include the most vulnerable youth.			√	
2. Align support for training activities with national government priorities (e.g., agriculture as the 3 rd engine)			√	
3. Use existing channels of communication with government (e.g., NTB) to convey skill needs in order to ensure congruence between vocational training curricula and market needs.			√	

4. Assist in the enforcement of laws governing the use of children and youth in the work place.	√		√	
5. Re-orient giving away from political parties to more neutral Corporate Social Responsibility, focusing on youth.			√	

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose

Cambodia has entered the new century with one of the youngest populations in Southeast Asia and indeed has recently been providing a large part of its youthful workforce to support the economies of neighboring countries such as Thailand and Malaysia. An estimated 65% of the total population is under 30 years old (NIS, 2008) yet fewer than 35% of the country's youth ever enroll at lower secondary school level and only about 6% in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (World Bank, 2012). Given the youthful make-up of its population, Cambodia is defined as what is known as a 'bulge' country, meaning that a huge proportion of the country's population is clustered between the ages of 10 and 30. This evolution of its population is due mainly to the baby boom that occurred in the years immediately after the Pol Pot period when social life in the country resumed some level of normalcy. Many of the children born during that era have been reaching maturity since the late 1990s. The youthful complexion of its population could be a blessing for future development if the country can provide adequate human resource development services for its young population; on the other hand, the continuing deficits in the social and economic development of Cambodia's youth could result in significant social problems down the road, if not rectified. As a result, there is increasing interest among development partners and within government in formulating policies that promote the development of youth. SCI and other civil society partners are no exception in this regard.

In 2013, *Save the Children International* in Cambodia began the development of new programming that seeks to expand its target population from children under 12 to those who are 12 to 24. This includes youth who are both in- or out-of-school. The seminal program under this strategic shift is called the *Education for Youth Empowerment Project (EYE)*. A first step in this expansion is the completion of a Youth Situation Analysis (YSA) and Service Mapping that will help to inform the new project's design. The project will first be piloted in Kampong Cham with hopeful expansion to Prey Veng and Koh Kong Provinces, pending the availability of funding.

This YSA joins several similar analyses that have been completed by the United Nations (2009), Khmer Youth Association (KYA)(2012), and the Youth Resource Development Project (YRDP) among others. Yet because of the rapidly evolving situation of youth in Cambodia, it has been difficult to keep contextual analyses of Cambodian youth up to date. For example, this youth situation analysis is one of the first that has occurred in the aftermath of Cambodia's first 'social media' election in 2013 where youth played a significant role in determining the outcome for the first time. In addition, the current analysis is characterized by a *children's rights perspective* that focuses on the local context in selected target provinces only. In this respect, the analysis presents new primary data on youth attitudes by a variety of stakeholders with respect to perceptions of economic, social, and political empowerment and the obstacles that constrain such empowerment. Data collection has been limited to three provinces where Save the Children currently has programming (i.e., Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, and Koh Kong) in the primary education and ECCD sector but where it would eventually like to expand support services for youth. Thus, the current YSA has a very specific purpose and focus. Finally, this situation analysis is more selective in terms of the sectors on which it focuses, emphasizing youth issues primarily in

the areas of *education, employment, and social/political participation.*

1.2 Conceptual Framework

As noted above, the conceptual framework developed for EYE and the current analysis has identified **social, economic, and political empowerment** as the main areas of engagement with children and youth that it would like to promote. The role of technology in youth development has also been included as a cross-cutting area of study that affects each of the three areas of empowerment noted above. ***The main objective of the EYE Situation Analysis is to provide a reliable overview of the actual adolescent situation in Cambodia that will inform and guide the development of the EYE strategy and plan.*** Accordingly, the following investigation considers the status and trends of factors that either enable adolescents to enjoy their rights, or that are obstacles or constraints to their enjoyment now, and in the future. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), to which Cambodia is a party, provides a framework for analysis that puts children at the center and that brings out the challenges that have to be overcome in realizing children's rights, as well as the capacity of the institutions responsible to bring change. The analysis includes the following elements:

Table 1.1: Youth Demographic Statistics for Cambodia

Parameter	Value
Total Population (1998)	13.099 million
Total Population (2008)	13.395 million
Population 0-14 years	4,514,345 (33.7%)
Population 15-29 years	4,219,640 (31.5%)
Population 30-80+	4,661,697 (34.8%)
Mean Age of Marriage (Men)	26 years old
Mean Age of Marriage (Women)	23 years old
Estimated Youth Population in 2012	4,478,572

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| Estimated Youth Population in 2017 | 4,824,693 |
| Source: National Institute of Statistics; 2008 | |
- An overview of the general situation in the country (social, political, legal, economic, and cultural) including trends over time that affect adolescents
 - Focus on adolescent empowerment in social, technical, economic and political terms and the extent of violations of these rights as well as the associated root causes.
 - A focus on **duty bearers** (their identity, capacity, and political will to promote empowerment)
 - A focus on **accountability**, obligations, and the obstacles to meeting obligations that promote youth empowerment.
 - **Adolescent perspectives** of their current situation and empowerment in the three domains

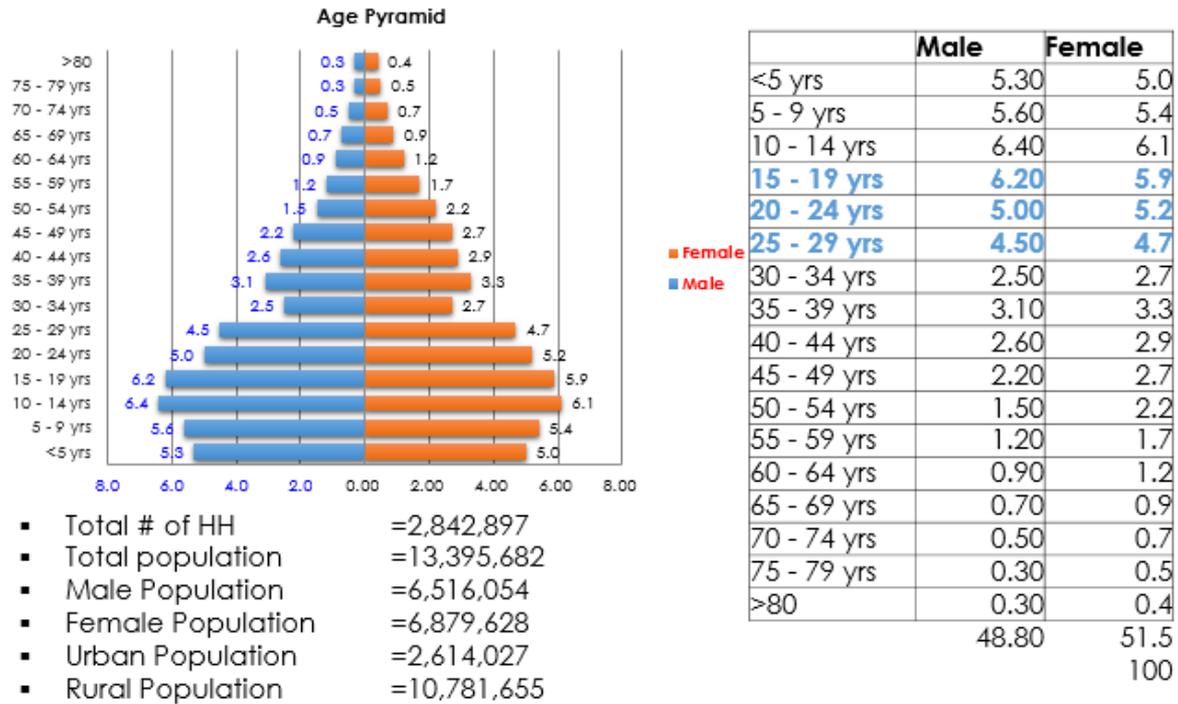
The present analysis has also sought to engage youth in the actual process of data collection so that youth stakeholders are not inhibited in their responding. Youth engagement in the compilation of the study is also itself an example of youth engagement in the process of empowerment, thereby modeling the process that the EYE Project seeks to promote. In this respect the average age of the enumerators participating in the study ranged from 22 to 27 with a mean age of 24.

1.3 Country Context

1.3.1 Demographic Background and Economic Development

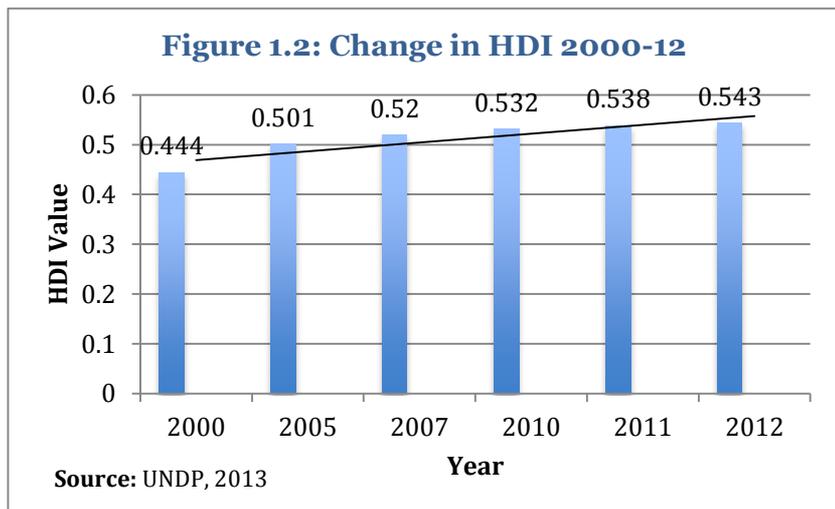
Over the last 15 years, Cambodia's population has grown by about 2.2% from 13.099 million (1998) to about 13.395 million in the last census (2008)(see Table 1.1/Figure 1.1). Annual population growth stands at about 1.5% currently. However, the proportion of the population aged between 15 and 29 years of age has increased dramatically from 26% of the total population in the 1998 census to 31.5% today, due largely to the recovery in the birth rate after the Pol Pot years, as noted above. Overall, an estimated 65.2% of the population is estimated to be below 30 years old. The total number of youth in the population is expected to increase by 7.7% over the next five years from 4,478,572 in 2012 to 4,824,693 in 2017. These trends are expected to remain constant for at least the next ten years, demonstrating the profound need for improved services for this age group in the future.

Figure 1.1: General Population Structure of Cambodia (2008)



Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2008

The latest UN Human Development Report indicates that Cambodia has continued to increase its Human Development Index (HDI) since the beginning of the century but that it is still lagging far behind most of the other nations in ASEAN (2013). Overall, Cambodia's HDI has increased by 22.3% since 2000 and currently has achieved a value of 0.543 (see Figure 1.2).



The maximum value of the HDI scale is 1.0 indicating the opportunity for a country's citizens to lead a long and healthy life with broad opportunities for education and a decent standard of living. Although the trend value for HDI in Cambodia is leading upwards, the country still ranks low on the list when compared to other countries within ASEAN and ties with Lao PDR for second to last place (see Figure 1.3).

In terms of economic participation among youth, the overall unemployment rate in Cambodia is quite low at 1.5% using a strict definition defined as those actively seeking employment (see Table 1.2). However, in terms of all those available for employment but not yet working, the rate rises to 7.2% overall and 8.0% among females. While rural unemployment among youth is relatively low at 5.7%, this figure balloons to 20.1% among those in Phnom Penh, reflecting growing trends for youth to seek employment in the nation's capital and other urban areas.

Because the majority of youth are employed in the countryside where wage labor is rare, underemployment is a better construct for gauging job-seeking behavior. Underemployment is defined as employed persons who express the desire to have more hours in their present job or in another job. However, little data is available on underemployment in Cambodia; the last figure reported by government was in 2001, when 38% of the work force was said to be underemployed. Current rates are believed to be over 40% and increasing though such estimates are speculative only (World Bank, 2009).

In spite of the relatively low unemployment rates among youth nationally, there is concern that the economy

will find it difficult to employ the growing number of youth entering the work force each year. In this respect, it is estimated that the number of youth entering the workforce annually is about 300,000 with current trends suggesting that this figure could increase to 400,000 in the near future (ILO, 2010).

Recently reported trends in the level of education of the youth labor force also indicate that there have been improvements when comparing older and younger cohorts entering the workforce. For example, younger workers (15-19 years old) have a much lower proportion of those with no prior education (13.4%) when compared to older cohorts such as those who are 20-24 years old (18.9%) and those 25-29 (23.7%). At the same time, younger cohorts exhibit a much higher proportion of individuals with lower secondary school level education (34.5%) whereas those over 20 have a much lower proportion (see Table 1.3). Nevertheless, employer surveys

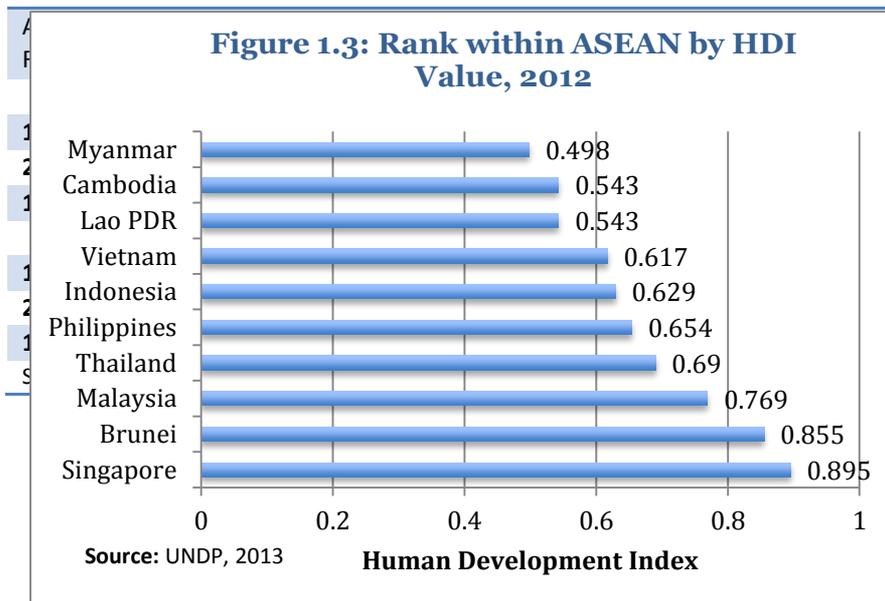


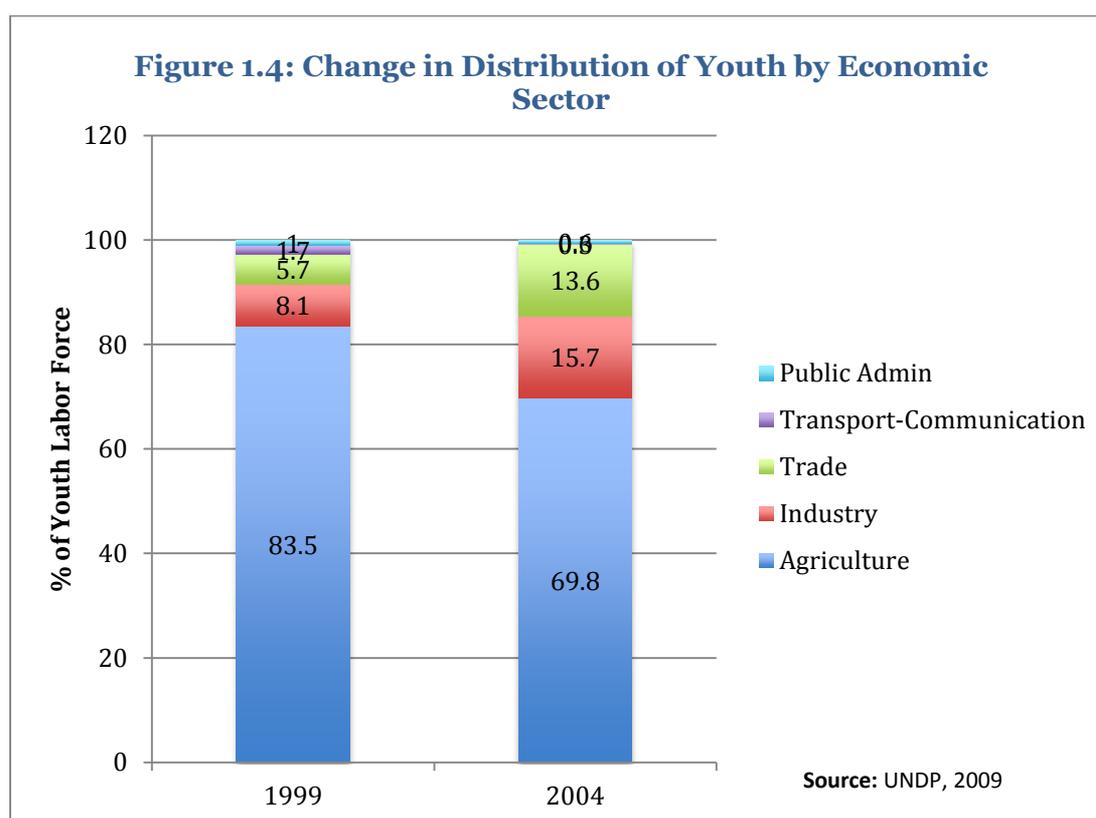
Table 1.3: Youth Labor Force by Level of Education

Age Group	No Education	Primary Only	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total
15-19	13.4	42.2	34.5	10.0	100.0
20-24	18.9	36.2	25.4	19.3	100.0
25-29	23.7	37.0	22.4	17.0	100.0

Source: UNDP, 2009

indicate that soft skills are the ones most lacking among their employees. For example, 52% of employers have noted that their unskilled employees lack proper work attitudes; 45% cited poor decision-making skills among their semi-skilled employees, and 64% reported deficiencies in analytical skills among skilled employees. Thus, access to higher levels of education has not been an assurance that new workers come with the necessary soft skills to work efficiently (World Bank, 2012).

According to socio-economic surveys conducted during the last decade, the distribution of youth by service sector is also changing rapidly. In this regard, the proportion of youth working in the agricultural sector had declined from 83.5% in 1999 to 69.8% in 2004, a change of nearly 20% (see Figure 1.4). The sectors gaining youth workers included Industry, which nearly doubled its proportion to 15.7% and the Service Trade sector (mainly tourism), which nearly tripled to 13.6% in the same time period. These changes represent the rapid expansion in the garment industry and tourism sectors.



In spite of the preponderance of workers at agricultural level (68% overall), however, it is sobering to reflect that the agricultural sector only contributed 7% to total GDP in 2007, reflecting extremely low levels of productivity. In contrast, the industry sector contributed 23% to GDP though it comprises only 9% of all workers overall; 75% of the sector is comprised by the garment industry. The services sector contributed the most to GDP (about 42%) and is now the second largest employer of workers after the agricultural sector. The key growth engine in this sector has been tourism. These characteristics of productivity suggest the need for significant investment in the agricultural sector to increase productivity and improved skills training to support continued growth in the other sectors. Thus, the government has envisioned the agricultural sector to be a 'third' engine of growth for the economy with the need for investments in human capital that will promote the availability of skills to support agricultural mechanization.

Although GDP growth and per capita income in Cambodia have recently recovered to their pre-economic crisis levels (i.e., since 2008) and poverty rates have been falling, inequality has been increasing with the result that there is a hard core of poverty within society that is less amenable to services designed to improve social welfare. In this regard, poverty rates have dropped from 45% in 1993 to 30.1% in 2008; however, the Gini coefficient has risen from 0.34 to 0.40 in the same period, with the highest levels registered in urban areas (0.43) compared to 0.36 in rural areas (UNDP, 2009).¹ Poverty rates appear to be marginal in Phnom Penh (though not in other urban areas) though current data does not include the absorption of new populations from Kandal Province by the capital city and may now be much higher. Although Foreign Direct Investment has also recovered to pre-crisis levels, declining levels of Development Aid have been a cause for concern with aid expected to drop to only 227.1 million USD in 2013 or a decline of 76% since 2008 (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Selected Measures of Economic Growth, Poverty Rate, & Development Assistance, 2008-2013

Parameter	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011 (Est)	2012 (Est)	2013 (Est)
Total Poverty Rate*	%	30.1	n/a	25.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rural Poverty Rate*	%	34.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
PP Poverty Rate*	%	0.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other Urban Poverty Rate*	%	21.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Annual GDP (Constant 2000 Prices)	Millions USD	7,061	6,917	7,268	7,725	8,184	8,704
GDP Growth Rate	%	6.7	0.1	5.0	6.0	6.5	6.5
GDP per Capita	USD	738	731	792	853	915	981
Development Aid	Millions USD	957.3	960.8	1,044.6	707.0	459.6	227.1
Foreign Direct Investment	USD	795	515	599	676	745	821

Source: RGC, National Development Strategic Plan, 2010; *Note: All indicated poverty rates are for the year 2007

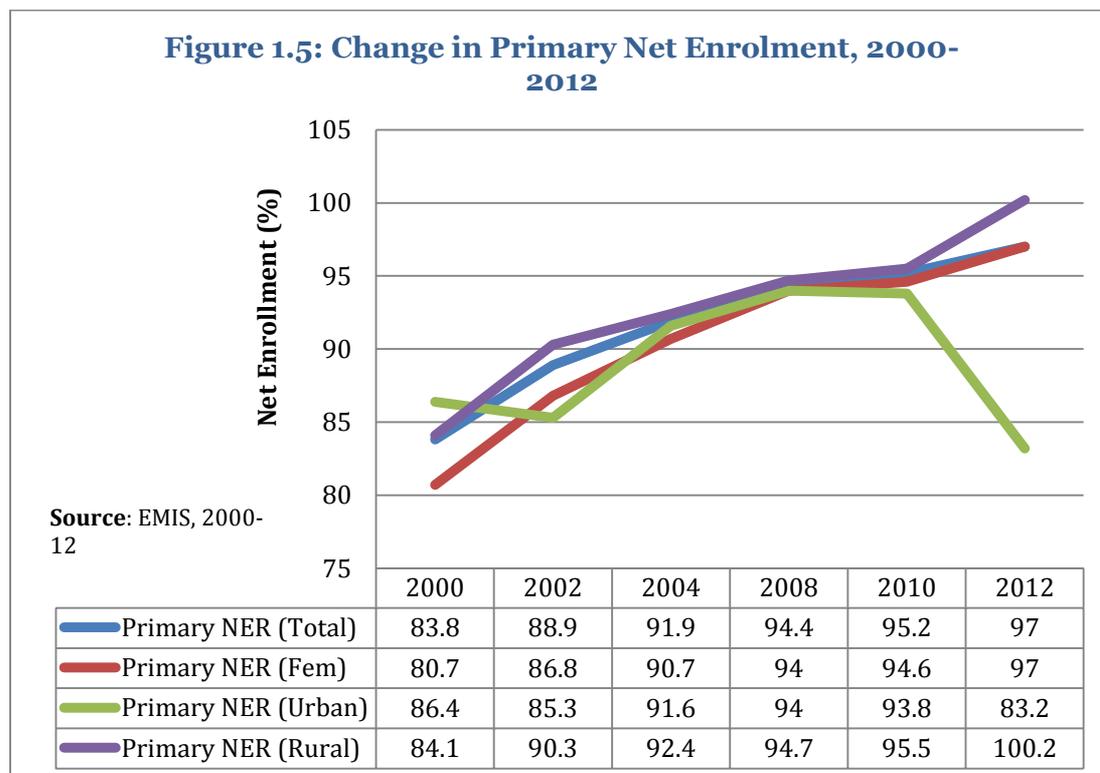
1.3.2 Education Trends in the Formal Sector Relating to Children and Youth

Although the MoEYS has developed a sophisticated body of national policies designed to improve educational access, quality, and management, expectations are still running far ahead of the reality. It is generally accepted by many educators that efforts to improve educational quality have shown the most disappointing results (e.g., Wheeler, 1998; Bredenberg, 2004; Bernard, 2005). For example, a World Bank-MoEYS study of early grade reading found that 54% of those tested at Grade 1 were not able to demonstrate expected reading skills (World Bank, 2010). Similarly, in this study, it was found that many of the children tested and interviewed at Grades 6 to 9 could not read, indicating that schools are promoting students to meet student flow rate quotas, which trump considerations of acquired competence in key subjects.

Although official statistics report that the Net Enrolment Rate has reached 97.0% at primary level (and over 100% for rural populations), there is concern that these figures may not be ac-

¹ The Gini coefficient measures the inequality among values of a frequency distribution (e.g., levels of income). A Gini coefficient of 0 expresses perfect equality, where all values are the same (i.e., where everyone has the same income). A Gini coefficient of "1" expresses maximal inequality among values.

curate due to irregularities in reporting by schools (see Figure 1.5).² Nevertheless, the government's pro-poor policies inaugurated at the beginning of the last decade have clearly had a dramatic impact on overall enrolment at primary level, especially for girls where the gender gap has virtually disappeared. However, educational quality is an area where concern still continues. The dissatisfaction with educational quality in the public schools is best reflected by plummeting NER levels in urban areas where middle class families are increasingly abandoning the public schools to enroll in proliferating private schools (e.g., KAPE, 2013). Enrolment rates in rural areas have remained higher because there are no educational alternatives and families would likely not have the financial means to enroll their children in private schools even if they were available.



At lower secondary school level, NER levels increased dramatically from 16.6% in 2000 to 35.1% in 2011 (see Figure 1.6), a considerable increase relative to the base figure (EMIS, 2000-11).³ In addition, transition rates are also very high at 78.9% in total and 80.4% among girls for the lucky ones that reach Grade 6 (see Table 1.5). NER among girls at lower secondary level has actually increased even more dramatically to the point where Female NER now exceeds Male NER. This is likely due to the expansion in lower secondary school scholarships for girls both by government and NGO-run programs since the early 2000s.

² Net enrolment cannot exceed 100% if calculated properly. MoEYS is currently investigating irregularities in EMIS reporting.

³ Note: EMIS did not report secondary school NER in 2013.

Figure 1.6: Change in Lower Secondary Net Enrolment, 2000-11

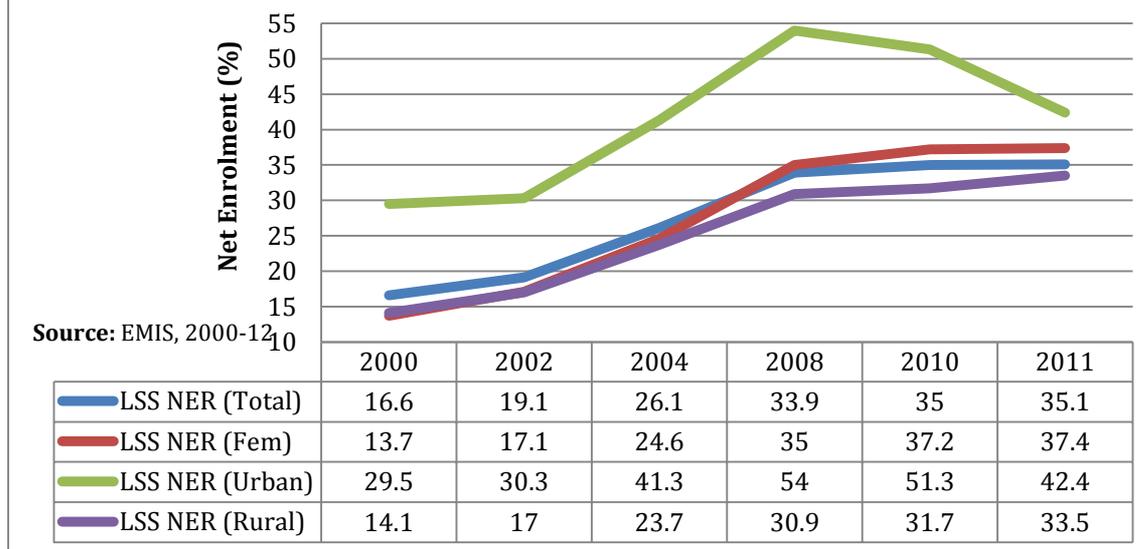
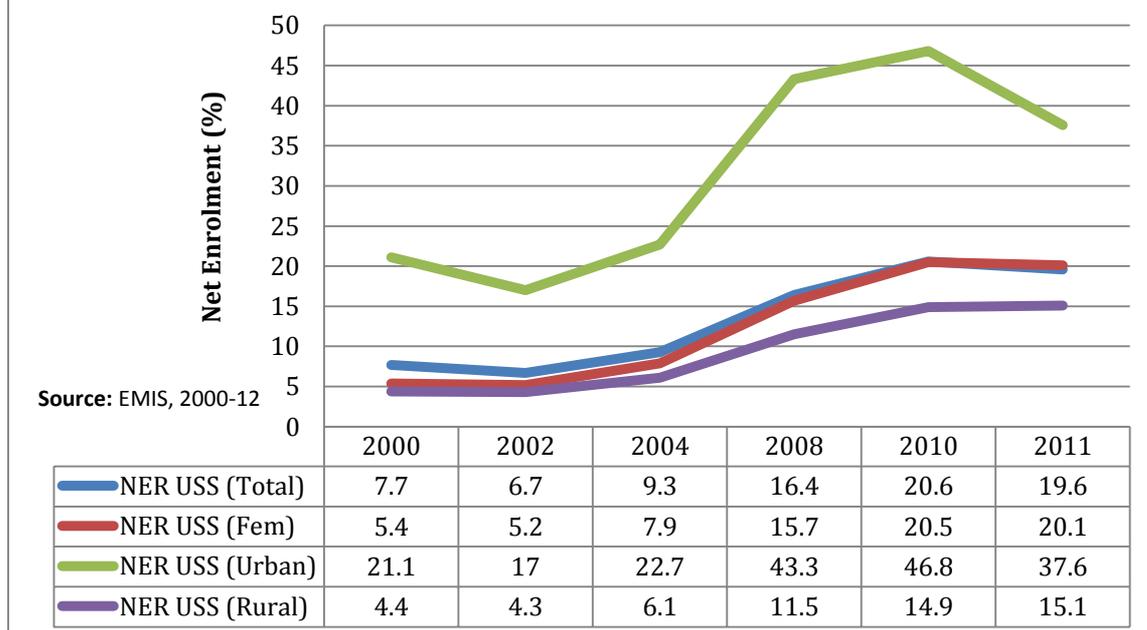


Figure 1.7: Change in Upper Secondary Net Enrolment, 2000-11



Since the middle of the last decade, however, NER at lower secondary school level has remained stagnant within a range of 5% and appears to have leveled off (EMIS 2012). Given these trends, it does not appear likely that the government will reach 47% NER at lower secondary school level by 2015 as planned.

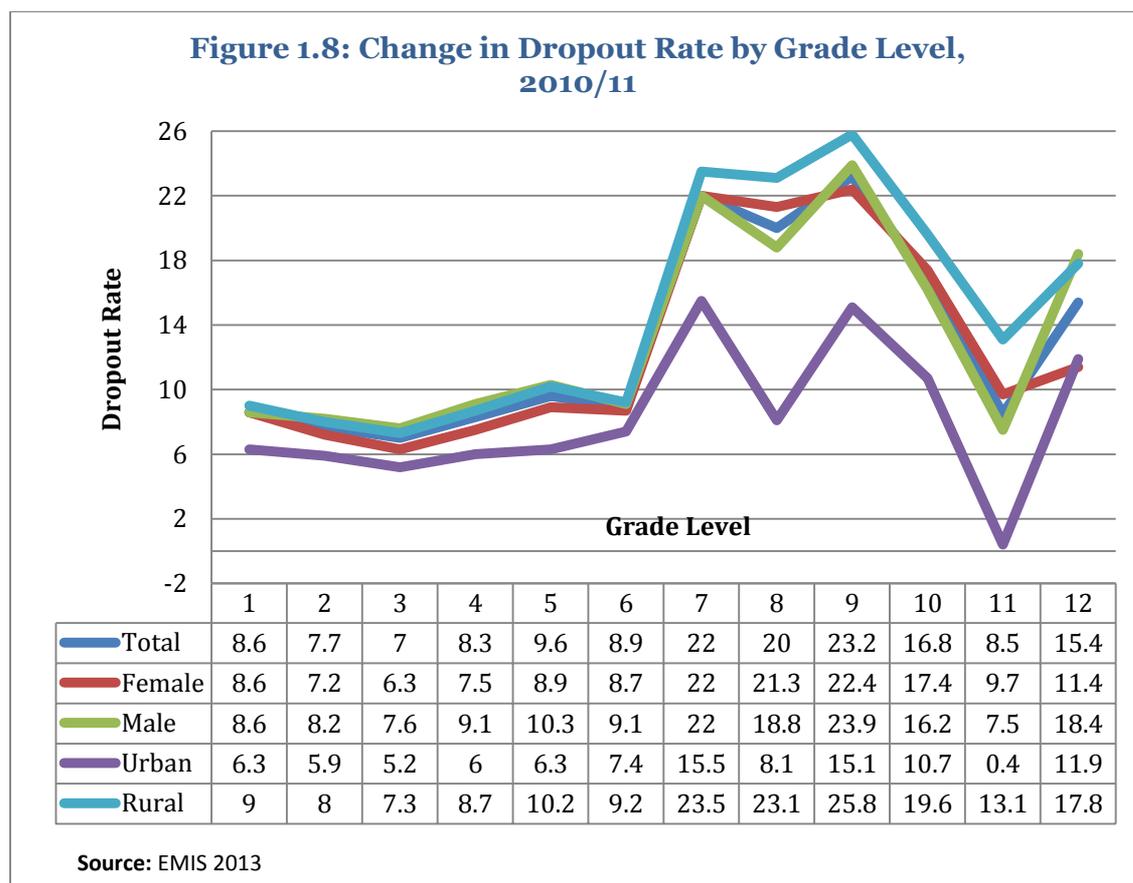
Although enrolment at upper secondary school level has also increased dramatically since the start of the last decade, absolute figures remain very low relative to primary and even lower secondary school level. Enrolment levels have actually tripled since 2000 but still comprise only about 20% of this age group. NER levels for this population of youth follow trends observed in the other education subsectors including a disappearance or reversal of the gender gap (e.g.,

female NER is now higher than male NER) and plummeting enrolment at public lycees in urban areas (due to middle class flight to private schools). At the same time, enrolment in rural areas has been steadily increasing and now stands at 15.1%, an increase of 243% since 2000. Nevertheless, an estimated 80% of this age group are either still stuck at lower secondary school level (as reflected by the extremely high overage enrolment figures for lower secondary – 29.4%) or have completely left the system (see Table 1.5).

Table 1.5: Overage Enrolment and Transition Rate by Education Sub-sector, 2011/12

Demographic Group	Overage Enrolment (%)			Transition Rate (%)	
	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary
Total	19.3	29.4	34.0	78.9	74.0
Female	16.7	25.8	28.9	80.4	76.3
Urban	26.6	30.2	3.0	95.6	95.0
Rural	20.8	30.2	36.1	75.8	67.2

Source: EMIS, 2013



Inefficiency in the formal education system is very high, especially in the secondary school sub-sector where the overall dropout rate was 20.0% at lower secondary and 10.1% at upper secondary school level. Dropout tends to be more modest at primary level but starts inclining higher at Grade 4 and spikes at Grade 7 to 22% and at Grade 9 to 23.2%. After that, it moderates to the mid-teens at upper secondary school level and drops to single digits briefly at Grade 11. Dropout levels in the rural areas are highest while those in urban areas are lowest. Dropout among boys is higher in 8 out of the 12 grades of the formal education cycle, suggesting once again that boys are currently more prone to leave school than girls (see Figure 1.8).

1.3.3 Trends in Skills Training for Youth

1.3.3.1 Life Skills Education in the Formal Sector

In 2006, the MoEYS issued a comprehensive *Life Skills Education Policy* to address the unmet need for expanded curriculum content focusing on the preparation of youth to live in society effectively. The policy makes a distinction between **Basic skills** and **Career skills**. The former set of skills refers to those that are considered essential for all learners and which are integrated into the national core curriculum subjects of Khmer, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Basic Life Skills are further divided into two categories - *general life skills* and *prevocational skills*. General life skills are generic in nature and focus on relevant content and planning for daily life and moral development. Prevocational skills focus on workforce readiness. On the other hand, **Career skills** are those that emphasize actual occupational competencies and are also further divided into two categories - *simple career skills* and *vocational skills*. *Simple career skills* are taught through the **Local Life Skills Program (LLSP)** from Grades 1 to 10, whilst vocational skills are offered as TVET electives at Grades 11 and 12.

The LLSP is intended to provide an opportunity for students to extend the learning that they have undertaken as part of the formal school curriculum, to develop simple career-oriented skills based on local needs and individual interests. Until recently, there has been no set curriculum and the MoEYS has allocated between two to five hours per week to the program. In theory, schools are expected to organize their own LLSPs as a means of increasing the relevance of the curriculum. In practice, schools have faced a number of challenges and constraints in the application of the MoEYS policy. These challenges include a lack of teachers and usable curriculum documents, budgetary constraints for materials, too little structure, inadequate subject-specific expertise, and weak institutional capacity to organize life skills programming.

Recent programming supported by USAID (2010-14) has piloted a more structured life skills education curriculum that seeks to address some of the problems noted above. The new curriculum comprises 30 modules that are organized into three domains *including (i) Socially Relevant Curricular Themes; (ii) Economic & Business Studies; and (iii) Prevocational Topics* (see Box 1.1). The new curriculum is organized as structured teacher lesson plans that also include student handouts, re-usable learning slides, and posters, thereby addressing constraints in resources and teacher expertise. Schools and students choose the topics that match their own priorities, thereby preserving the link with locally driven programming and empowerment. The

BOX 1.1: LIFE SKILLS TOPICS AVAILABLE FROM MOEYS

Domain 1: Socially Relevant Themes

1. Civics Awareness (pending)
2. Safe Migration & Trafficking
3. Alcoholism Prevention
4. Preventing Drug Abuse
5. Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
6. Cultural Issues (pending)
7. Environmental Issues
8. Personal Understanding
9. Gender Sensitivity
10. Music & Dance

Domain 2: Business & Economic Studies

11. Me and My Marketing Skills
12. Me and My Future
13. Money Management Skills
14. The World of Work
15. Social & Children's Enterprises
16. Saving & Spending
17. Information Technology

Domain 3: Prevocational Skills

18. Rice Cultivation
19. Vegetable Cultivation
20. Fish Raising
21. Frog Raising
22. Bio-gardens
23. Mushroom Growing
24. Raising Chickens
25. Bicycle Repair
26. Hair Cutting & Hair Dressing
27. Masonry
28. Cooking
29. Sewing
30. Food Processing

MoEYS has also developed a Life Skills Implementation Framework guide to provide a supportive institutional framework that includes guidelines on how to develop timetables for life skills, utilize Student Councils in life skills instruction, and store materials among other topics. The curriculum was piloted in 2011-12 and formally adopted by MoEYS in 2014 (IBEC, 2014), thereby greatly improving the ability of the education system to provide more relevant and effective life skills education for students, particularly those at secondary school level.

1.3.3.2 Trends in the TVET Sector

Until 2004, TVET services were overseen by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. In 2005, this oversight was moved to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT). The MoEYS, however, still retains some involvement in TVET and is currently providing support to the development of Secondary Education Technical Schools of which there are currently three that are actually functioning (in Kampong Thom, Kandal, and Kampong Chhnang). Two others have also been established but lack teachers and resources. These institutions tend to be under resourced by government and rely heavily on external support such as the *Qatar Foundation* (Kandal) and the Thai Royal Family (Kampong Thom). They also have no formal curriculum in Khmer language. Because MoLVT is also transforming some of its PTCs into upper secondary technical institutions (along side non-formal services), many have questioned the parallel effort of MoEYS as duplicative (e.g., World Bank 2010b). Some number of TVET services are also provided by the Ministry of Women's Affairs through Women's Development Centers (WDC) and Community Learning Centers (CLCs), which provide a more decentralized channel of service than MoLVT whose centers are generally based in provincial capitals, which are not easily accessed by youth in outlying districts. The involvement of several ministries in providing TVET services highlights the challenges of harmonization and coordination of services (World Bank, 2010b).

The majority of TVET services is, nevertheless, provided by MoLVT through 36 training institutions spread across the country. The TVET system comprises 25 Provincial and Municipal Training Centers (PTCs) delivering non-formal technical training and 11 polytechnics and institutes delivering certificate and degree programs to a mainly urban-based population (ADB, 2009b). Recently, five PTCs were transformed into Regional Training Centers (RTCs) with authority to provide formal two-year courses in vocational studies. Non-formal programs usually last about

Table 1.6: Key Facts in TVET, 2008-9

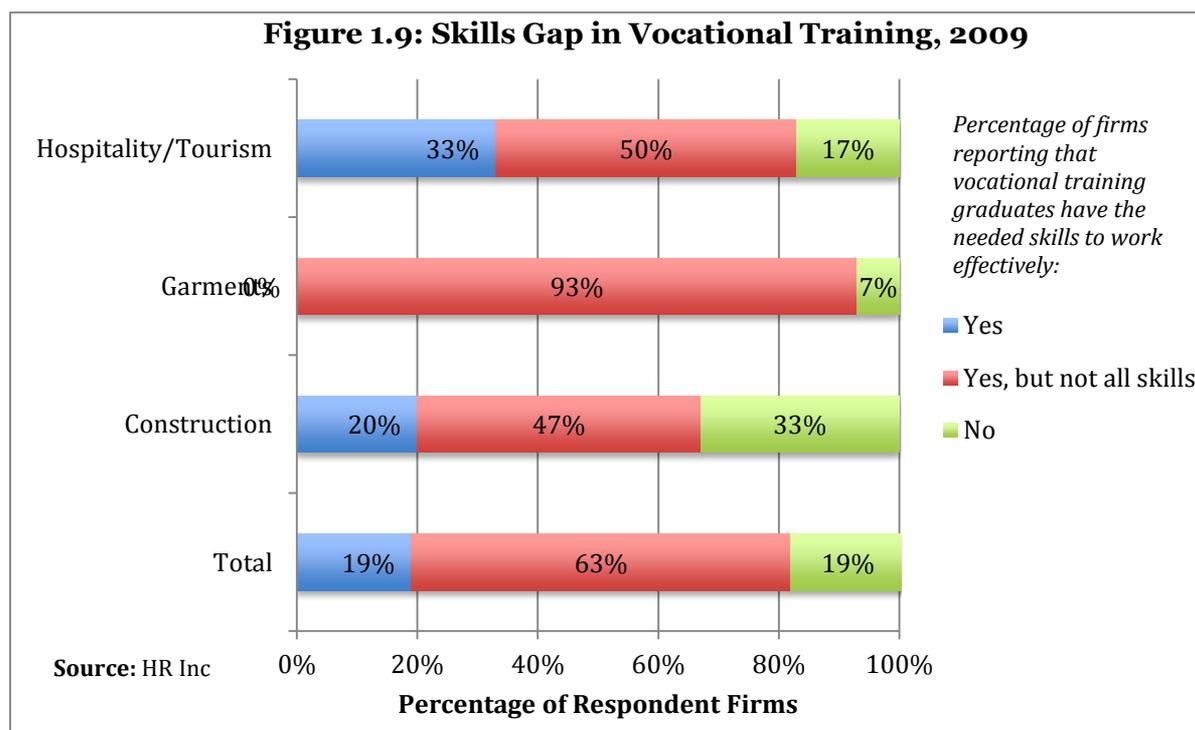
Parameter	Value
Number of Non-formal TVET Institutions	25 PTCs
Number of Formal TVET Institutions	11 Polytechnics & Institutes
Non-formal TVET Graduates per year (2008)	9,585
• Agriculture	74.3%
• Technical Trades	8.8%
• ICT	7.0%
• Textile & Garment	5.4%
• Business	0.6%
• Tourism & Hospitality	0.2%
Formal TVET Graduates per year (2008)	2,391
• Agriculture	0%
• Technical Trades	60.9%
• Business	23.3%
• ICT	3.0%
• Tourism & Hospitality	0.2%
• Textile & Garment	--
Wage Jobs Generated per Year	50,000
% of New Wage Jobs in Mid-level Skill Areas	65-70%
• Mechanics, Construction, Business Services, & ICT	

Source: ADB, 2009a

six months and do not currently offer certification. Indeed, graduates of the non-formal courses cannot enter formal courses on the basis of their non-formal training; thus, the formal and non-formal TVET institutions have historically operated as two separate systems, though the introduction of RTCs is intended to change this. In addition, students graduating from TVET formal degree programs cannot re-enter the regular tertiary system or vice versa, creating rigidities in the system that discourage young people from entering TVET institutions.

Entrants to the TVET formal institutions must have at least a Grade 9 education. Given the large number of youth who never enter lower secondary schools and the very high dropout rates at all levels as well as the increasing transition rates from Grade 9 to Grade 10, the flow of eligible candidates for study at formal TVET candidates is very much constrained. Since these trends are expected to continue well into the future, there is concern that the need for trained Cambodian youth in selected areas will continue to constrain economic growth, increasing the need to import such skills from abroad. With ASEAN integration looming in 2015, such a combination of factors could sideline many thousands of Cambodian young people in the future.

Surveys of firms in the economic sectors that are expanding most rapidly indicate that there continue to be severe to moderate gaps in the skills possessed by workers (HR Inc Cambodia, 2009). The Hospitality/ Tourism sector appears to be the most badly affected with 88% of firms reporting gaps ranging from moderate to severe. Although the number of firms that report that such constraints are a major impediment is still small at 15.5%, it is growing rapidly, indicating that it would be wise to start to address these constraints now rather than later when they may become more insurmountable (see Figure 1.9).



To meet the need for skilled labor, formal TVET institutions produce slightly more than 2,000 graduates per year, which is rather low when compared to the 8,000 or more graduates who complete their studies each year at the country's 47 universities and colleges. Non-formal TVET providers on the other hand reported over 9,000 graduates in 2008. Whereas most of the grad-

uates of the short, non-formal courses were in agriculture (74.3%) hardly any of those enrolled at the formal TVET institutions were in this area (see Table 1.6), which undermines the government's plan to increase productivity in agriculture (i.e., the 'third engine' along side industry and trade sectors). Furthermore, the number of youth enrolling in tourism and hospitality courses is also minimal at both formal and non-formal course institutions demonstrating the mainly supply-driven nature of TVET service provision. Current planning within MoLVT seeks to bring skills training more in line with mid-level skill areas, which comprise as much as 70% new wage jobs (e.g., mechanics, construction, and business services).

Data on private providers of short TVET courses is sketchy and incomplete but it is estimated that there are approximately 750 such providers in the private sector (ADB, 2009a); World Bank, 2010b) more than half of whom are not registered or accredited. This does not include NGO providers of whom the MoLVT reports there are mainly 12 organizations providing TVET services. Although the majority of private providers focus on TVET courses in language training, computer, business, and beautician skills (with none in agriculture), NGO providers working in the public domain have course offerings that more closely match those of PTCs (ADB, 2009a).

When one considers that there are over 3.3 million youth, mostly school dropouts, who require skills training, the capacity of the TVET system to meet the needs of this population is greatly overshadowed. In order to increase the reach of TVET services, the ADB and MoLVT piloted the *Voucher Skills Training Program (VSTP)* as part of the ESDP II Project in 2006. *VSTP* provides basic, non-formal short courses that are community-responsive in poor communes. Although they are only of short duration (e.g. one or two months) the *VTSP* course program creates a new track of training at community-level that may better feed intake to PTCs. Under the program, 161,400 youth (57% female) received training in short courses (64 in all, mainly in agriculture). *VTSP* has three kinds of training: i) center-based; ii) commune-based; and iii) enterprise-based that builds flexibility into the program so that it can match needs in different locations and contexts. To access *VTSP* funds at commune-level, commune councils must develop plans that address local training needs, which are submitted to Provincial Training Boards (PTBs) for review and eventually approved by the National Training Board (NTB), which is responsible for oversight of all vocational training content. The project originally focused on seven economically distressed provinces during the period 2006-09.⁴ An evaluation of the project found that 50% of those participating in *VTSP* had improved their incomes by 15% or more (ADB, 2009a). The project has now been extended and expanded to additional provinces including Kampong Cham.

Building on the experience described above, ADB launched the *Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project (STVET)* in 2010, which is currently providing extensive scholarships to over 2,000 PTC entrants a year; the project also aims to upgrade both formal and non-formal TVET institutions and increase their overall capacity. In this respect, five of the PTCs have been transformed into Regional Training Centers (RTC) that now offer formal training courses in addition to their non-formal programming. With the completion of *STVET* looming, RGC and ADB are currently designing a follow-up program to be known as *STVET 2*.

⁴ Battambang, Kampot, Kampong Chhnang, Svay Rieng, Stung Treng, Siem Reap, and Takeo

2. Methodology Employed

2.1. Summary of Research Questions and General Approach

As noted earlier, the conceptual framework developed for the current analysis focuses on the degree to which the Cambodian adolescent's right to economic, social, and political empowerment has been realized. The data generated by the analysis will help to inform the design of a new project to be called *Education for Youth Empowerment (EYE)*. As such, the main objective of the EYE Situation Analysis is to provide a reliable overview of the actual adolescent situation in Cambodia with respect to their rights. The main research question for the study has, therefore, been formulated as follows:

Key Research Question: *To what degree can adolescents actualize their rights for economic, social, and political empowerment and what are the key obstacles that exist in Cambodian society that inhibit these rights.*

The study also considers a number of *ancillary questions* such as the following:

- ⇒ What is the role of duty bearers with regards to helping adolescents to realize their rights?
- ⇒ What are the attitudinal views of adolescents themselves with regards to their rights and their future in Cambodian society?
- ⇒ What are the key conclusions of other situation analyses about youth?

The analysis has generated information about these questions by exploring youth attitudes and those of other stakeholders with regards to a wide number of different variables that are summarized below.

The general approach of the study has relied on both secondary data sources comprising a review of the existing literature on youth issues in Cambodia as well as primary data collection. With regards to secondary data sources, the increasing interest in youth issues has generated a growing wealth of relevant studies, especially in the area of training and employment. Earlier Youth Situation Analyses and their conclusions were also consulted, the most seminal of which was a study in 2009 by UNDP. A description of the youth socio-economic and political setting has also been included earlier to better gauge overall trends within the national context.

With regards to primary data collection, the study has relied on extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders from three provinces including two populous eastern provinces and a remote western one in close proximity to the Thai border where migration issues are severe. Each of these three provinces may host EYE programming in the future. National stakeholders based in Phnom Penh have also been consulted including representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, as well as the National Chamber of Commerce and various international and national organizations.

2.2 Summary of Relevant Factors Examined

Data collection activities for this research are intended to provide information for the design of a new project funded by Save the Children that will enable the empowerment of youth in three

areas, namely (i) Economic Empowerment; (ii) Social Participation; and (iii) Political Awareness. Issues within these three domains have guided researchers in the identification of numerous factors that are crucial to understand in order to effectively address the needs of today's youth, particularly vulnerable youth. In general, these factors have been examined from a child and youth rights perspective. The data collection instruments developed for this purpose, therefore, include questions that relate to variables across each of these three domains. There are a total of 21 different variables in all that are summarized in Table 2.1 below and **Annex 1**.

Table 2.1: Summary of Study Variables

Study Variables	
A. Employment Status/Rates	L. Awareness of career paths for different tracks – scholarships etc
B. Transition and Dropout Rates	M. Views of Education and Schooling
C. Vocational Training Rates	N. Lifestyle/Leisure
D. Prevalence of Child Labor (Perceptions)	O. Knowledge of rights/CRC
E. School Relevance/Quality and Employment	P. Social attitudes about
F. Intent to Study (Motivation to study)	Q. Family support for education, growth etc.
G. Obstacles to social empowerment and education	R. Role models
H. Knowledge of local services for youth e.g. vocational training – vocational training centers, etc.	S. Nature of Political views (strong/weak/none)
I. Migration issues and Intent	T. Political Activism
J. Personal Planning for the Future	U. Knowledge of laws/policies (e.g., Youth policy) & Political System
K. Knowledge of career paths – e.g., How did you become a teacher?	21 Variables Examined

2.3 Sample Construction

Data collection activities occurred with 11 selected groups across a wide continuum of stakeholders including those at the most local level (e.g., adolescents, teachers, etc.) to those at the policy level in Phnom Penh. Researchers sought to consult to a total of 851 respondents at all levels of whom 777 actually participated due to constraints in communication and organization. (see Table 2.2 and Section 2.6).

Sampling was not random but relied on a combination of selection techniques to ensure a balanced mix of informants within each group (e.g., gender, age, grade level, etc). For most informants that were interviewed during the research, a *judgmental sampling technique* was employed using agreed criteria and methodological protocols that are summarized below (see Table 2.2). Where this methodology was employed, enumerators generally worked with local stakeholders such as communes and schools to ensure a mix of respondents in terms of socio-economic status, age, sex, ethnicity, and in the case of out-of-school youth, their employment status. A more complete explanation of sampling protocols is found in **Annex 2**. For the selection of schools, a similar technique was used employing eight criteria that generated a mix of schools in each of the three provinces where schools were selected (see Table 2.3). More details on participating schools can again be found in **Annex 2**. Within each visited school, a *systematic sampling tech-*

nique was employed for the selection of students (at both primary and secondary school level). Enumerators chose a class at each grade level and ‘systematically’ selected students to participate in focus group discussions and self-administered questionnaires. Teachers were not allowed to select students.

Table 2.2: Summary of Key Informants, Respondent Numbers, & Sampling Technique

Key Informant	Sampling Technique and Criteria	Planned Number	Actual Number
1. Adolescents (in-school/ secondary level)	Systematic Sampling (FGD/Questionnaire) Systematic Sampling (Testing)	150 <u>180</u> 320	150 <u>180</u> 320
2. Children (primary)	Systematic Sampling	80	83
3. Adolescents (out-of-school) (both employed and unemployed)	Judgmental Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed • Unemployed • Completed secondary • Completed primary • Unschooled 	150 (50 per province)	87
4. School Directors/Managers	Judgmental Sampling (see Table 2.3)	10	11
5. Teachers (Secondary)	Judgmental Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All grade levels • Key subject teachers • Young and old 	54 (Sec) <u>24 (Prim)</u> 78 (Total)	54 (Sec) <u>24 (Prim)</u> 78 (Total)
6. Parents/School Support Committee (SSC)	Judgmental Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed socio-economic status • Khmer/Minority • Stature within the community 	150	147
7. Government (e.g., Provincial and District Offices of Education, MoEYS, MoLVT, etc)	Judgmental Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant departments at provincial level • Relevant departments at national level 	22	18
8. Commune Officials	Judgmental Sampling	12	11
9. International & National Organizations	Judgmental Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key international agencies working with youth • Key national agencies working w/ youth 	13	10
10. Employers/Chamber of Commerce	Judgmental Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and small enterprises • Multiple sectors 	11	11
11. MFIs and Banks	Judgmental Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large & small institutions 	5	5
Total		851	777

2.4 Data Collection & Instrumentation

Researchers designed and administered 16 data collection tools based on the key informants summarized in Table 2.2. The data collection tools developed for purposes of the present investigation took in a wide range of methodologies including *interview schedules*, *focus group discussions*, and *standardized*

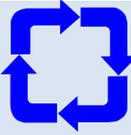
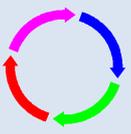
Table 2.3: School Selection Criteria

1. Provincial Location	5. Management Criteria
Kampong Cham	High Management Capacity
Prey Veng	Low Management Capacity
Koh Kong	6. Student Flow Rate
2. Enrolment Size	High Dropout Rate (10% +)
Less than 200	Low Dropout rate (9% or less)
201 to 499	7. Minority Representation
500 or more	Minority Area
3. Demographic Location	Non Minority Area
Urban/Semi-Urban	8. Education Sector
Rural	Primary (4)
4. Proximity to Economic Activity Areas	Secondary (6)
High Proximity	
Low Proximity	

questionnaires. Preliminary data collection instruments were administered during field-testing to determine how well specific questions worked followed by a period of analysis and revision. Formalized protocols were developed for the use of each form to help enumerators create equivalent conditions of administration, thereby ensuring acceptable levels of reliability.

A critical thinking test (Form C) was also administered to youth still in school to get some sense of soft skill aptitudes, since this is an area highlighted by employers as one of the most lacking among employees (e.g., World Bank, 2012). Questions focused on multiple skill areas such as prediction, classification, problem solving, concept analysis, and analyzing analogies (see Table 2.4). Test questions were pre-tested and subjected to item analysis to determine difficulty and discrimination levels. Only those test questions with moderate levels of difficulty and moderate to high discrimination were retained on the final test. A summary of the content of each test battery and a *Table of Specifications* is provided in **Annex 3**.

Table 2.4: Question Exemplars Reflecting Selected Critical Thinking Domains

Domain	Question Exemplar			
(1) Alternating Series	<i>What comes next?</i>			<i>Circle the best answer</i>
				
				
(2) Classification	<i>Circle the letter of the picture that does not belong.</i>			
	a 	b 	c 	d 
(3) Analogies	<i>Circle the letter of the element that forms the correct relationship in Pair 2</i>			
	<u>Pair 1</u> planet : sun	<u>Pair 2</u> moon : ____	a. earth	b. star
			c. meteor	d. Venus
(4) Concept Analysis	<i>After examining the definition of a 'fact' and 'opinion' above, determine what the following sentences represent.</i>			
	The visitor to Cambodia really should not miss the opportunity of visiting Kampong Cham Province. ____ (F=Fact; O=Opinion)			

Attitudinal questionnaires for students were designed to include a background section that enabled researchers to classify students according to their demographic origins (rural/urban), socio-economic status, minority status, and employment. In order to ensure honest responding, students were told NOT to indicate their name on returned questionnaires. School directors and teachers were similarly asked to give personal and professional background information relating to the subjects they taught, how long they had been an educator, etc.

Table 2.5 below summarizes the methodologies employed at different sampling levels, and the name of the form employed in each case. Structured interview schedules were mainly used where the number of informants was small as in the case of government officials, IO representatives, and employers. Questions comprised a range of question types including closed and open

question formats as well as the use of Likert scales. In several cases, these interviews were conducted jointly by a Service Mapping Team, which conducted a more highly focused study of youth services in the country separately but in parallel with the present analysis.

Table 2.5: Data Collection Methodology by Informant Grouping

Key Informant Group		Data Collection Method	Form
1.	Adolescents	Focus Group Discussion	A1
2.	(in-school/ secondary)	Attitudinal Questionnaire	B1
		Test (Critical Thinking Soft Skills)	C
3.	Children (primary)	Focus Group Discussion	A2
		Attitudinal Questionnaire	B2
4.	Adolescents (out-of-school) (both employed and unemployed)	Focus Group Discussion	A3
		Attitudinal Questionnaire	B3
5.	School Directors	Questionnaire	D
6.	Teachers	Focus Group Discussion	E
		Questionnaire	F
7.	Parents/SSC	Focus Group Discussion	G
8.	Government (e.g., Provincial and District Offices of Education, MoEYS, MoLVT, etc)	Interview	H1
9.	Commune Officials	Interview	H2
10.	Development Partners and NGOs	Interview	I
11.	Employers/ Chamber of Commerce	Interview	J
12.	MFIs and Banks	Interview	K
Total			16

The data generated through the use of teacher and student questionnaires provided a wide range of quantitative data regarding factors relating to life style habits, future career planning, technology proficiency, and political awareness, among others. This greatly facilitated the generation of correlation analyses between various variables of key interest.

Finally, the use of focus groups, as a research technique, was selected as a data collection strategy because it enables the emergence of the so-called *circulating* discourse in a given community or society. It allows for the contrast of positions and opinions of the participants in the group and the negotiation of different identities and social interests, all of which provide very refined and meaningful information. Of particular interest in this study, focus group discussions allowed data collectors to better gauge the expectations and attitudes of different stakeholders in areas where perceptions may be quite different. For example, it is always interesting to hear the different perceptions of parents and school personnel about educational services. Similarly, there was considerable scope for triangulation of views among those youth in and out of school as well as teachers, school directors, and other stakeholders. In addition to the usual batteries of open-ended questions in FGD forms, the FGDs also included various tasks that participants were asked to perform such as indicating their interests, priorities, etc. on an attitudinal map and other tasks that helped to enliven conversations and ensure participation by all those attending.

2.5 Data Treatment

Standardized spreadsheets were prepared for each data collection tool involving interviews or self-administered questionnaires while composite responding forms were prepared in the case of focus group discussions. All spreadsheets were reviewed to sort out discrepancies and inconsistencies through data cross-checks in SPSS. In the case of interviews and questionnaires,

data analysis techniques employed tabulation of frequencies and conversions into percentages and mean scores where appropriate. Data responding patterns have been analyzed with cross-tabs for such variables as gender, age, socio-economic status, and other attributed/ascribed social characteristics.

Quantitative data generated by questionnaires was analyzed using some number of descriptive statistics including correlation analyses (e.g., relationship between attributed characteristics and selected situational factors such as life style habits, dropout behaviors, attitudes towards social and political participation, etc.). In this respect, a *Pearson's r* and *Chi Square Test* were selectively calculated for relevant variables of interest using a confidence interval of $p=.05$ as the threshold for statistical significance. In the case of student scores on soft skill tests, *t-test* analyses were used to determine significance levels between divergent mean scores. No inferential statistical analysis techniques were employed for purposes of the present investigation.

Qualitative data collected from focus group discussions and interviews were woven into *composite sketches* of the contexts visited, focusing on variations in attitudinal views of economic, social and political empowerment as these relate to Cambodian youth. These are summarized in **Annex 4**.

2.6 Constraints in Data Collection

Enumerators reported difficulties in ensuring adherence to selection protocols designed to ensure a balance of the key informants interviewed. This was particularly true at commune level where the research teams were dependent on Commune Chiefs and Commune-based Women and Child resource persons (CWCs) to assemble out-of-school youth respondents for all data collection activities. Communes sometimes reported (unbelievably) that there were 'no' out-of-school youth in the commune because they had all migrated elsewhere, resulting in very small groupings of participants in the six communes that were visited. This explains why only 87 out-of-school youth were interviewed in comparison to the 150 that had originally been planned for. In many cases, the participating out-of-school youth contacted had to travel a very great distance to attend the meeting, which possibly contributed to an over representation of men in the out-of-school youth sample as well as a smaller number of minorities than expected. In addition, since these youth were clearly the ones who had 'not' migrated to look for work, they were more likely to be unemployed or between jobs, introducing another element of bias into the sample's composition.

Data collection activities were also constrained by the low literacy levels of youth at all levels, but particularly at primary level where about one-third to half of the children in Grade 6 could not read. In such cases, questionnaires had to be administered as interviews to those children who indicated that they could not read the questions asked, requiring considerably more time than originally estimated. Similar problems, but to a lesser degree, were also reported for lower secondary school students and for out-of-school youth.

Finally, *socially desirable response bias* patterns were observed in several of the questions asked, particularly among youth where many respondents reverted to standard answers that they have been drilled in while at school (e.g., 'schooling will help me find a good job' even though a

large number of respondents were unemployed or engaged in low level jobs). Males tended to be a bit more forthcoming in their responses in several cases while females were more reticent (e.g., 21% of male youth indicated that they had a 'sweetheart' while 0% of females did). The survey structure tried to respond to these tendencies by making questionnaires anonymous and also by approaching certain issues obliquely (e.g. Asking 'How many of your friends like school?' instead of asking 'Do you like school?'). In spite of these measures, however, socially desirable response bias nevertheless persisted in several instances.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Policy Framework for Implementing the Adolescent's Right

Cambodia is not without a legal framework to ensure that all children and youth get a basic education, gain access to skills training, and receive basic protections. In terms of key rights to education, the legal framework for addressing equity issues in the education sector was first laid out in the Cambodian Constitution proclaimed in 1993. Article 68 of the constitution states that the “state shall provide free primary and secondary education to all citizens in public schools.” Similarly, the RGC has also ratified the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* as stipulated under Article 48 of the constitution; it also participated in the various World Conferences on Education for All (EFA) and has agreed to abide by the resolutions of the conferences. With support from UNESCO, Cambodia developed a *National EFA Plan* that was disseminated in 2003 followed by a mid-decade assessment report that became available in 2009 (MoEYS, 2009). The most recent developments in education policy have seen the promulgation of *Child Friendly School (CFS) frameworks* as an official element in all future national investment plans (2008) as well as a *Life Skills Education Policy* aimed at both primary and secondary school level (2006).

Since the middle of the last decade, RGC ratified *ILO Convention 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor* and the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, Prevent, and Punish Trafficking in Persons* (2006). The government has also drafted a *National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms Child Labor* and has set time-bound targets for reducing the proportion of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor by 2015. These developments are significant for interventions that seek to meet the educational needs of vulnerable children and youth, since they demonstrate that such interventions are consistent with government policy.

With regards to skills training for youth, the Directorate-General of Technical Vocational Education Training (DGTNET) under MoLVT is responsible for implementing those aspects of the *National Strategic Development Plan* that focus on skills training for youth. It does this through 5-year plans that first started to be produced in 2006 (e.g., 2006-10). In particular, *the Strategic Development Plan for TVET* consists of provisions for: (i) improving TVET linkages with market needs; (ii) developing a national quality framework, national competency standards and accreditation of TVET courses, programs and institutions; (iii) expanding provision of TVET; and (iv) developing a labor market information system (World Bank, 2010b). The DGTNET works as the executive arm of the *National Training Board (NTB)*, which is responsible for developing policies and overseeing their implementation. The NTB has 35 members and is headed by the Deputy Prime Minister (H.E. Sok An); it comprises representatives from different Ministries, organizations, and private sector enterprises. In addition, the RGC has recently created a *National Employment Agency*, which seeks to provide consulting services for youth seeking employment as well as actual job placement opportunities. While its offices are currently limited to Phnom Penh and a handful of provinces, it has plans to expand its coverage to other provinces soon.

In 2011, the RGC also developed a comprehensive *National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development* that includes a statement of specific strategies for youth development as well as an action plan for implementation (RGC, 2011). The key Ministry responsible for implementing this plan

is the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport though other Ministries have developed policies that echo the same themes. For obvious reasons, the *National Policy on Youth Development* is a key policy for all youth-focused projects because it deals explicitly with youth. The policy includes 6 key policy goals summarized in Table 3.1. These goals focus on the adolescent's rights to access educational services (both formal and non-formal), skills training, social equity (especially with regards to gender), opportunities for personal development, and political/social expression. These goals dovetail with the rights framework set out in the CRC and are based on an intensive review of similar policies adopted by other countries in the region. The policy, however, differs in its definition of youth as those aged 15 to 30 whereas most definitions based on the UN standard define children as those under 18 and youth as those between 10 and 24.

Cambodia's youth policy was developed in a participatory manner with the creation of the National Youth Policy Network (NYP-Net) in 2006 comprising representatives from many youth-focused civil society organizations as well as government.⁵ Civil society organizations supporting youth had been lobbying government for the development of a youth policy since 1996 (KYA, 2012). The creation of the NYP-Net was a long-awaited step in the right direction, leading eventually to the development and promulgation of the *National Policy on Youth Development* in 2011.

Table 3.1: Policy Goals of the National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development, 2011

Overarching Goal: *'Youth have opportunities to develop their potential to access education, employment, and health services and to participate in decision-making and to contribute to family, community, national, and global development.'*

Policy Goal 1: Provide opportunities to get equitable access to quality education and vocational training.

Policy Goal 2: Motivate youth to develop their sense of initiative, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Policy Goal 3: Promote gender equity and equality and the creation of opportunities to empower young females in particular.

Policy Goal 4: Assist youth in their personal development in terms of physical strength, knowledge, morals, etc.

Policy Goal 5: Enable youth to share their perspectives, opinions, and decisions in their community and in the broader national development context.

Policy Goal 6: Mobilize efforts from all relevant ministries, institutions, development partners, civil society, communities, parents, or guardians towards youth development.

Source: RGC, 2011

Although the implementation of the Youth Development Policy is intended to be inter-ministerial in nature with shared responsibilities across many Ministries such as MoEYS, MoLVT, MoWA, and others, the Youth Department within MoEYS is understood to play a key

⁵ Civil society members in NYP-Net included Khmer Youth Association (KYA), Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP), Youth for Peace (YfP), Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC), Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD), and Khmer Youth for Development among others.

coordinating role. The MoEYS is currently developing and implementing National Youth Councils at both provincial and national level though progress in this area has so far been highly variable.

A summary of key policies affecting youth and children is provided in Box 3.1 for the reader's review.

3.2 Role of Stakeholders in Implementing the Adolescent's Rights

3.2.1 Access to Educational Services of Quality: Stakeholder Efforts to Move From Policy to Reality

Educational Services for Children and Youth during

the 1990s: Although the proclamations and legal

framework established by the government to ensure equitable access to education were an important step for Cambodia, they were not matched by the reality on the ground, particularly during the 1990s. With a crumbling educational infrastructure, inefficient resource distribution, low quality educational delivery, and a poorly as well as irregularly paid teaching force, the primary education system was in critical need of comprehensive support for most of the 1990s. These problems demanded the lion's share of government and donor support as educational development got under way in the mid- and late 1990s.

Educational Reform Period (2000 to 2010): In the first decade of the 21st century, the Royal Cambodian Government initiated a *pro-poor educational reform* program that led to dramatic increases in net enrolment at primary and secondary school level, as noted above, particularly among the poorest quintile of the population (Engel, 2010). Pro-poor policies have mainly taken the form of changes in the financing of state schools including the provision of school operating budgets, which have enabled the abolition of school fees, and the introduction of need-based scholarships for vulnerable groups at lower secondary school level. These reforms were first instituted as part of the MoEYS' *Priority Action Program* (PAP), which later evolved into what is known as *Program-based Budgeting* (PB). MoEYS has also worked closely with the World Food Program to introduce school breakfast programs in food insecure areas as a means of improving enrolment. These reforms marked a wise evolution of school development programming from an exclusively *supply-side approach* (e.g., infrastructure, teacher training, and textbooks) to a more balanced demand-driven approach that focused on activities to stimulate educational demand (e.g., scholarships, school feeding programs, etc.). The abolition of school fees was a centerpiece of the school reform program.

During the 1990s, little investment was made to address the needs of youth at secondary school level. As a result, enrolment levels languished in the teens for many years with a strong emphasis on 'talk and chalk' teaching methodologies. This changed, however, in the first decade of the present century with a number of large donor-funded projects aimed at secondary education development funded by the World Bank (CESSP); ADB (ESDP I, II, and III; EEQP); and USAID (ESCUP, Sfe, and IBEC). With the exception of USAID funding, however, most of this investment

Box 3.1: Key Policies and Conventions Affecting Youth in Cambodia

- Signatory to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (RGC)
- Signatory to ILO Convention 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (RGC)
- National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development (RGC)
- Signatory to UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, Prevent, and Punish Trafficking in Persons (RGC)
- Education for All National Plan (MoEYS)
- Child Friendly School Policy (MoEYS)
- Life Skills Education Policy (MoEYS)
- Strategic Development Plan for TVET (MoLVT)

was spent on infrastructure and equipment with much less invested in capacity development and direct aid to children. An important exception in this regard refers to major scholarship programs that were funded by the World Bank, ADB (Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction), and Belgian Aid. Scholarship programs were originally pioneered by NGOs such as KAPE, The Asia Foundation, World Education, and CARE in the early years of the last decade and eventually adopted and mainstreamed by multi-lateral and bilateral donors. Recent studies of these scholarship programs have validated claims that they do increase enrolment, reduce dropout, and contribute to higher completion rates (e.g., Filmer & Schady, 2006).

A key element of education reform was the introduction of more rights-based programming. *Child Friendly School* projects are the best exemplar of such programming. These projects focus on children's rights in a multi-dimensional manner. Since the promulgation of the Child Friendly School Policy by MoEYS in 2008, multi-dimensional school development models have gained increased currency among many development practitioners in Cambodia because they espouse a holistic approach to development. **CFS models are very popular among children's rights advocates because they provide a concrete vehicle through which to address multiple children's rights in a single, comprehensive framework.** In this respect, the regional CFS framework adopted by most Southeast Asian countries encompasses five dimensions of a child's learning environment, summarized in Box 3.2.⁶ Key advocates of a children's rights approach to school development such as UNICEF and Save the Children have been key supporters of the Child Friendly School model because it moves the discussion away from uni-dimensional discussions of the economic parameters of school development that often dominated development planning in the 1990s (e.g., school efficiency, cost-benefit, etc) to a discussion of the needs of the child (Bernard, 2005; Bredenberg, 2009).

A key development since 2005 has been the decision to expand the child rights-based CFS model from the primary education sector to include lower secondary school. USAID has been a key partner of the MoEYS in funding progress in this area with the development of the first comprehensive pilot framework for applying the CFS policy at secondary school level (ESCUP, 2007). UNICEF has also recently provided capacity-building support to MoEYS in this area. MoEYS officially incorporated lower secondary school into the Child Friendly School policy in 2012 (MoEYS, 2012). Important elements of *Child Friendly Secondary School* (CFSS) programming in the early pilots include Activity Menus that

Box 3.2: Child Friendly School Dimensions

- Dimension 1: Inclusive Education
- Dimension 2: Effective Learning Environments
- Dimension 3: Health, Protection, and Safety
- Dimension 4: Gender Sensitivity
- Dimension 5: Parental, Community, and Child Participation
- Dimension 6: Enabling Environments (Cambodia only)

Source: MoEYS, 2008

Box 3.3: Key Elements in Rights-based CFSS Programming

- *Activity Menus* ensuring choice & empowerment in planning,
- Participatory student engagement via *Student Councils and Student Clubs*
- *Elective Life Skills Courses*
- *Increased Access to ICT* to facilitate critical thinking
- *Child rights-sensitization focus* in planning and implementation.

Source: ESCUP, 2007

⁶ A sixth dimension involving support to Educational Management to enable the other five dimensions has been added to the regional framework in Cambodia.

ensure choice and empowerment in planning, participatory student engagement through Student Councils and student clubs, elective life skills courses that empower students, increased access to ICT to facilitate critical thinking skills, and a child rights-sensitization focus in planning and implementation (see Box 3.3). However, penetration of CFSS programming in the lower secondary education sector has been slow with only 37 schools piloted by MoEYS and 100 schools supported by USAID (2010-2014). Other mega-projects supported by multi-lateral organizations use a non-CFS approach that focuses mainly on infrastructure and equipment, as noted earlier. **The need for additional support to assist MoEYS in the expansion of the rights-based CFS model into the secondary education subsector, therefore, represents an important area of need.**

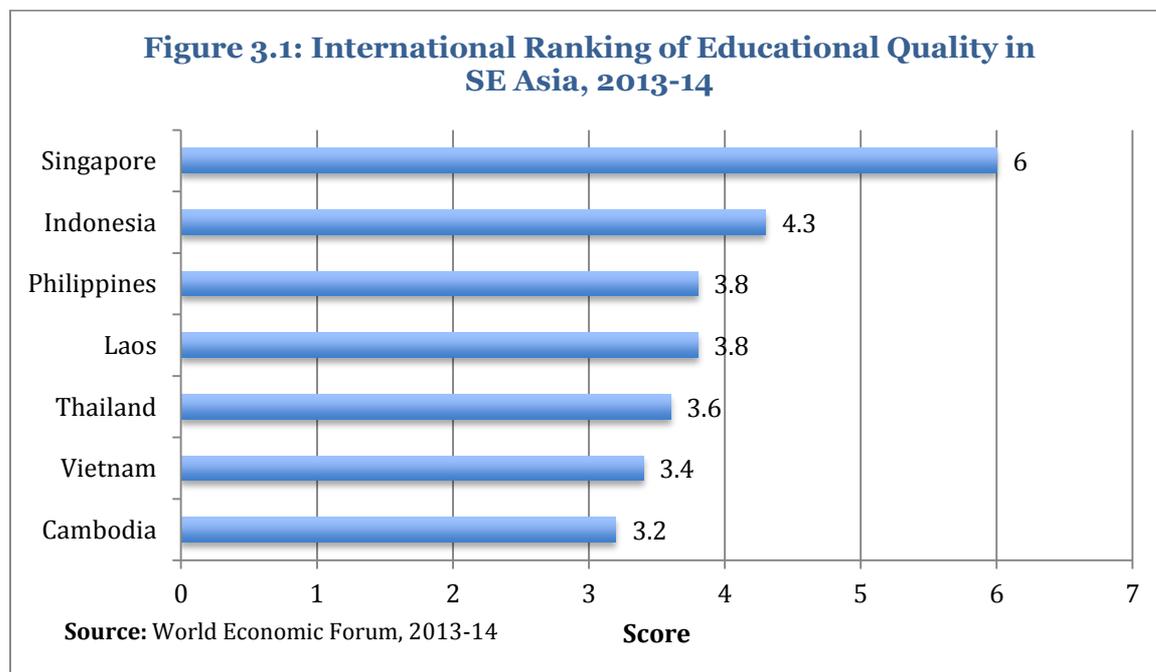
The decision to elevate CFS models to a high level of prominence follows a long period of piloting that began with UNICEF funding in 2001. The introduction of the CFS model in Cambodia has been a special instance of how development should ideally occur. The development of the CFS model with its focus on child rights was introduced as a tri-partite endeavor with joint involvement from MoEYS, an international/multilateral organization (UNICEF), and civil society partners (KAPE, Save the Children, World Education, VSO and others). The CFS pilots began in 2001 and continued until 2007 when the model became a national policy in 2008. Since that time, however, most bilateral and multi-lateral assistance has again shifted back to a more unitary focus on government, all rhetoric to the contrary. While there is generally great enthusiasm that the MoEYS has moved quickly in terms of policy development and dissemination of CFS programming, there is also concern that it has been premature to adopt the framework as a national policy (without any incremental roll-out) and that its rapid dissemination nation-wide at one step has greatly diluted its effectiveness and meaning in actual practice (KAPE, 2007).

Post-Education Reform Period (2011 to the Present): In spite of the significant progress made early on in the last decade, there is growing concern that reforms instituted during the early years of the century have now stalled. As noted earlier, NER levels at lower secondary school level have leveled off in recent years and while primary NER levels have nearly reached 100% (currently reported to be 97%), there are some concerns about the validity of the officially reported data, such as 'negative dropout rates' (e.g., SDPP, 2011, p. 8). In this respect, few educators actually believe that 100.2% of children in rural areas are now enrolled in school, as recently reported by EMIS (2013), nor has there been a satisfactory explanation of how rural NER levels have exceeded 100%, which is technically impossible.⁷ A study by UNESCO, VSO, and NEP commented that CSES figures while not national in scope are probably a more accurate indicator of NER levels at primary level (2014). In this regard, CSES reports that primary NER is closer to 84.3% (not 97% as reported by EMIS) and that NER at secondary school level is probably closer to 32% (2013). And in spite of the abolition of formal school fees, informal fees at both primary and secondary level continue to pose a significant challenge. A recent study of school fees in urban, rural, and remote areas found that 53% of student respondents reported paying some kind of fee while 67% of parents did so (Ang and Conochie, 2012).

But the area where education reforms have truly disappointed is in the realm of *quality*. For example, a large World Bank funded study of student achievement at Grade 3 found that 'student knowledge of the official grade three curriculum is low and this result is fairly uniform across

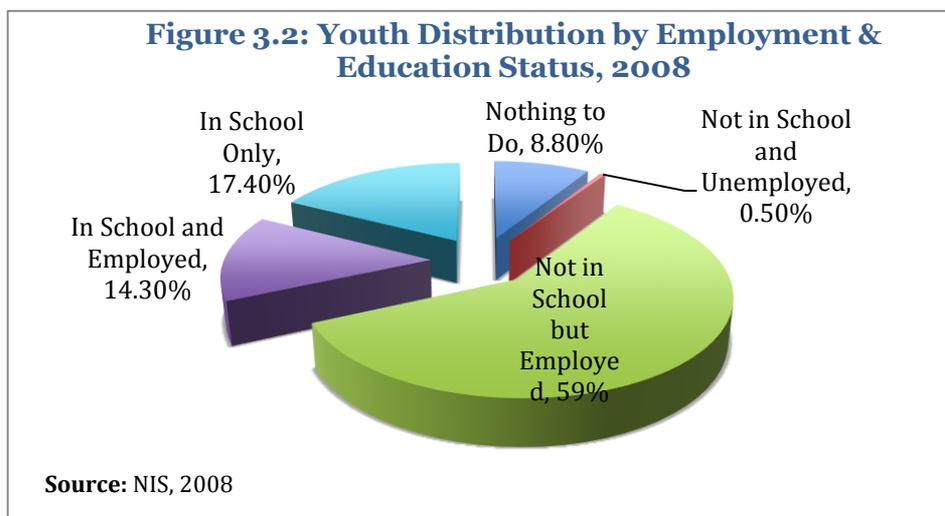
⁷ This could result from incorrect base population figures from NIS or from numerator values provided by schools.

subjects, cognitive skills, and content areas' (CESSP, 2006, p. 7). In addition, Cambodia's international ranking in terms of business perceptions of educational quality are among the lowest in the region. According to the *Executive Opinion Survey* of 2013-14, Cambodia ranked 106 out of 148 countries; within the Southeast Asia Region, its primary education system ranked at the very bottom with a score of 3.2 on a scale of 7 (World Economic Forum, 2014). This compares with 6.0 for Singapore and 4.3 for Indonesia (see Figure 3.1). As described earlier, poor educational quality stems from a combination of many factors including the lack of teachers, weak social accountability, disintegrating discipline among teachers, and poor management of resources (e.g., Wheeler, 1998; Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005; Bernard, 2005; Bredenberg, 2008).



The other major problem in the formal education sector that impacts youth rights to education refers to low retention rates, especially at secondary school level. In this regard, an estimated 60% of youth have left the education system in order to join the labor market (see Figure 3.2). Dropout rates at lower secondary school level have been averaging 20% or more for several years, which is about double the rate found at primary school level (EMIS, 2013). Historical studies of dropout at secondary school level have found that the leading causes of dropout are its cost (both direct and indirect), the distance to school, and the lack of quality and relevance. One study funded by the World Bank early in the last decade found that 41% of respondents cited direct costs as the key factor for leaving school while 24% cited opportunity costs (KAPE-World Bank, 2003). Another 21% of students cited distance factors as their leading obstacle in school attendance. More recent studies indicate that opportunity costs and migration have assumed a much greater role in leading students to dropout (e.g., ESDP III, 2012). This likely stems from the increasing penetration of the countryside by factories as well as improved transportation systems that allow more easy movement of youth to access employment opportunities along the Thai-Cambodian border and in economic development zones in Cambodia.

Imbalances in Stakeholder Involvement in Promoting Education Services for Youth: There are many international and national organizations devoted to helping youth. The *UNDP Youth Situation Analysis* identified 48 IOs/LNGOs working on youth-focused projects (UNDP, 2009). There are about 10 exclusively youth-focused national organizations in Cambodia mainly comprising those agencies in the NYP-Network mentioned earlier (KYA, 2012). However, most of these national organizations generally focus on non-formal education for youth, advocacy, and other programming outside of the formal sector. The number of LNGOs involved in formal education is quite small so that most efforts in this area tend to be dominated by large International Organizations such as Save the Children, World Education, Room to Read, and World Vision as well as bilateral organizations, and multi-laterals working directly with government (e.g., UNICEF, ADB, etc). For the few national organizations working in the formal sector, their projects tend to be very small with most of the support received targeted mainly at implementing interventions, not institutional capacity-building. This is in stark contrast with the Health Sector where programming is dominated by very large national organizations such as Khana, RHAC, and RACHA, mainly as a result of massive capacity-building investments from the US Government. Most multi- and bi-lateral donors have shown little interest in replicating this achievement in the formal education sector, however, with the vast majority of capacity-building support flowing primarily to government.⁸ **The failure to build national capacity among civil society organizations in the formal education sector will likely prolong dependence on expensive international organizations and have significant implications for cost and sustainability of most current investments. It also highlights another important area of need in youth programming supported by SCI.**

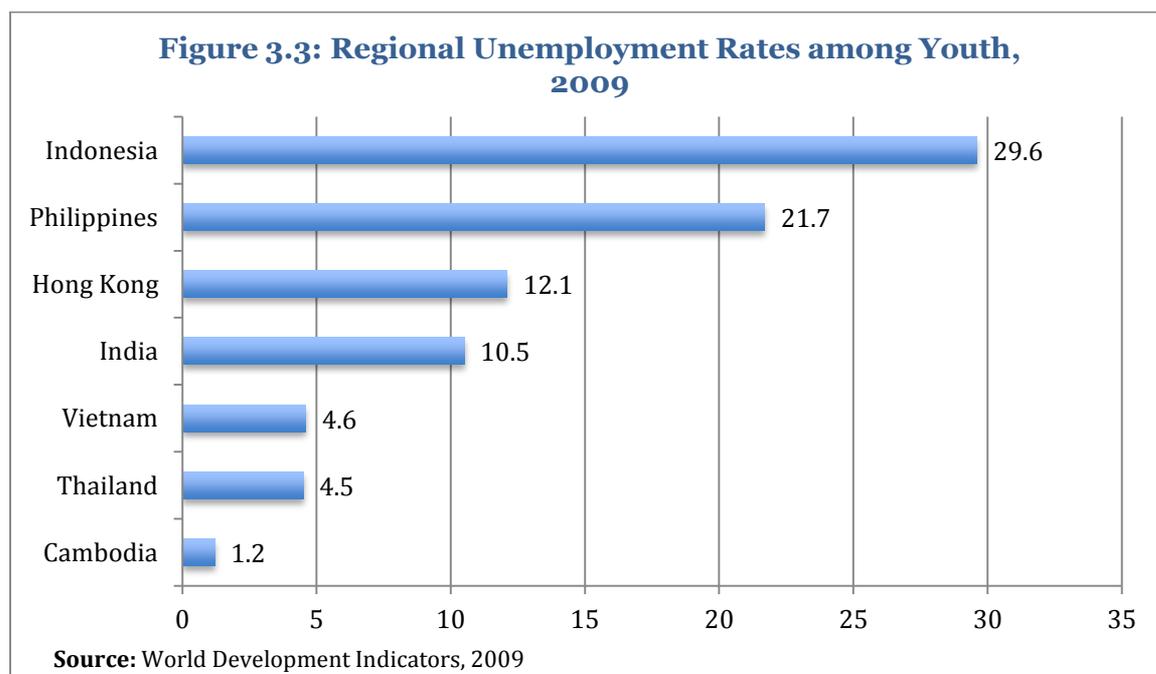


3.2.2 Stakeholder Efforts to Achieve Economic Empowerment for Youth through Skills Development

Youth Employment and Wage Returns from Education/Experience: Youth in Cambodia have very low rates of unemployment; indeed, these rates are among the lowest in the South-east Asia Region. For example, Cambodia's unemployment rate (1.2%) is but a small fraction of the rates found in countries such as the Philippines (21.7%) or Indonesia (29.6%) (see Figure 3.3). However, a low unemployment rate may not necessarily be a good indicator of 'economic

⁸ USAID is an important exception in this regard since RGC does not meet financial accounting requirements of the USG for direct budgetary support to government, requiring that most funds be channeled through civil society organizations. USAID has also funded capacity-building of civil society organizations (through World Education) involved in the formal education sector resulting in the coveted accreditation of two LNGOs by CCC (KAPE and BSDA).

empowerment.’ Rather, this may be an indication that most youth come from very poor backgrounds and cannot afford to be out of work for a very long time – that is, they need to take the first job that is available to them in order to survive. Often, these jobs are poorly paid, unskilled types of employment (World Bank, 2010b). This view is supported by the rather flat nature of Cambodia’s wage structure where wage premium returns to age, experience, and education are among the lowest in the region. For example, wage earners with tertiary education in Cambodia earn on average 67% more than wage earners with no education, whereas in the Philippines the ratio is 115% and 138% in Thailand (World Bank 2010b). This situation is a disincentive to try to upgrade one’s level of skill ability, which may partly explain why so many youth (about 63%) decide to leave school before completing the basic education cycle. This state of affairs paints a very daunting picture for stakeholder efforts to improve economic empowerment among youth.



Alternative TVET Training Channels and the Role of Apprenticeships: The primary strategy used by stakeholders to address economic empowerment issues has been skills training in both the formal education system and the TVET system. The TVET system is the primary modality of government to provide vocational skills training, relying on 25 PTCs and RTCs⁹ (mainly non-formal education services) and 11 Polytechnic Institutions (formal education services) to do so, as described in Section 1.3. However, there are also about 750 private businesses and NGO providers that offer informal skills training courses to low-skilled students in such topics as language, computers, beauty care, cosmetology, tailoring, motor repair, carpentry, welding and electronics. About 316 of these providers are reported to be registered with MoLVT (World Bank, 2010b). Skills training services in the private sector are highly variable and some providers have built strong reputations for high quality. Courses in the private sector can last for as little as a month or as long as a year and may be followed by certification. However, it is important to remember that there is no standardized National TVET Qualifications Framework (NTQF) in place yet to guide such certification. Youth nevertheless tend to prefer studying at

⁹ The RTCs can now offer both formal courses leading to certification as well as non-formal courses.

these private institutions, even in cases where there is no certification, because there are no basic education entry requirements as in the government-run TVET system and the courses are more affordable.

The large number of TVET service providers highlights once again the problem of coordination and harmonization of services, not just between Ministries as was observed earlier but between the state-run and private TVET training providers. Modalities for the clear communication of training needs between employers and training providers are also not well articulated. Large development partners such as the World Bank have suggested the need for a tri-partite system comprising the RGC, employers, and training providers that focuses on standardized, competency-based certification system linked to rationalized curriculum design of courses, and funding support for the service providers that best meet accreditation standards (2010b).

A large number of private sector employers also offer *apprenticeships* of both a formal or informal nature. These opportunities help youth to learn *transferrable skills* through actual observation and practice. An ADB assessment estimates that there are approximately 200 medium to large enterprises that offer formal apprenticeships to upgrade the skills of their own workforce, mostly in the garment sector (46%) (2009a). In 2008, it was reported that there were 12,500 such formal apprenticeships in place (2009a). In parallel with these provisions, there are many hundreds of shops and small-scale enterprises that offer apprenticeships of a more informal nature. Some of these apprenticeships may provide housing and be free though many require fees. These shops usually focus on practical skills that are easy to learn and are in great demand in the informal sector (e.g. motor repair, hairdressing)(World Bank, 2010b). As a result, it is thought that they are among the most preferred options for youth because they are cheaper and easy to access. There is not a great deal of systematized information about these informal apprenticeships but they are thought to be quite numerous. Nevertheless, under the STVET Project, there have been strenuous efforts to link apprenticeships with PTC training and these now form a major part of the outreach of the centers to make their training more relevant (ADB, 2009b).

Skills Gap and a Vicious Cycle That Reinforces Low Employer Demand for High Level

Worker Skills: Employer surveys have indicated that there is a large deficit in soft skills among workers at all skill levels. Soft skills are generally defined as those comprising (i) *critical thinking skills* (e.g., analytical skills) as well as (ii) *behavioral skills* (e.g., decision-making, attitude towards work, ability to use foreign language, etc.). These gaps reflect negatively on the ability of both the formal education and vocational training system to provide necessary skills. As a result of the skills gap, Cambodia's production technologies have adapted themselves to this low-skilled work environment, which has in turn blunted the demand for the kinds of innovative and creative thinking called for in the Youth Development Policy. This in turn creates a vicious cycle where the lack of demand for such soft skills is reinforced by training institutions, which see no need to place a high priority on imparting such skills to their students (World Bank, 2010b).

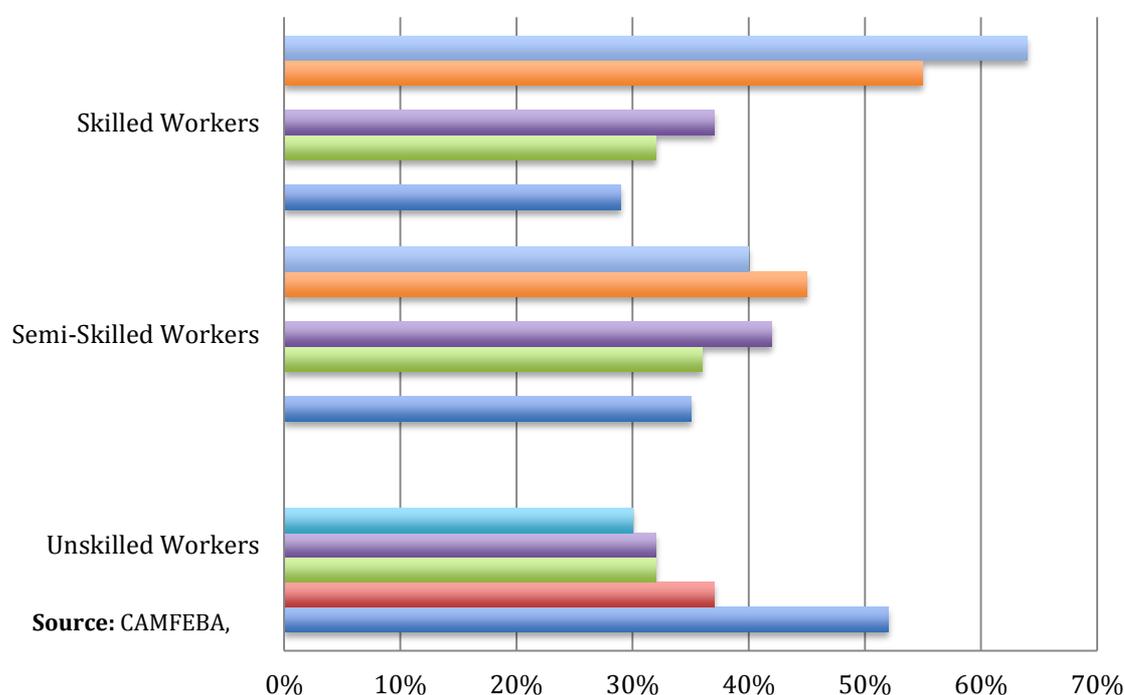
This partly explains why only 15% of employers have identified the 'skills gap' as a major constraint to growth, though this figure has been steadily increasing with each passing investment climate assessment (World Bank, 2008).

The trends described above may change dramatically as ASEAN integration takes effect in 2015, creating significantly greater competition in the labor market, as the nationals from neighboring

countries are allowed greater freedom to compete for skilled jobs in Cambodia. This change in labor market conditions will exacerbate deficits in the training system used by Cambodian workers, bringing Cambodia’s training institutions into direct competition with better-equipped institutions in neighboring countries.

Employer surveys conducted by CAMFEBA (2008) have indicated the kinds of soft skills most in short supply by worker category (i.e., skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled). These surveys occurred mainly in the most rapidly expanding economic sectors such as garments, tourism, and construction. Among skilled workers, the soft skill cited by employers as most lacking is ‘analytical’ thinking ability. In this respect, 64% of employers cited this skill deficit in the context of skilled workers and 40% in the context of semi-skilled workers. The lack of ‘decision-making skills’ is next most frequently cited deficit, again mostly in the context of skilled and semi-skilled workers (55% and 45%, respectively). Among unskilled workers, employers have cited ‘work attitudes’ as the soft skill most in need of improvement among workers (52%), followed by ‘foreign language ability’ (37%), and ‘technical/experience’ skills (32%). Poor work attitudes, the main deficit cited among employers of unskilled workers, refers primarily to punctuality, self-discipline, teamwork, and commitment (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Soft Skills Identified by Employers as the Most Difficult to Find, by Worker Category, 2008



Source: CAMFEBA,

	Unskilled Workers	Semi-Skilled Workers	Skilled Workers
Analytical	0%	40%	64%
Decision-Making	0%	45%	55%
Communication	30%	0	0
Experience	32%	42%	37%
Technical	32%	36%	32%
Foreign Language	37%	0	0
Work Attitude	52%	35%	29%

Efforts to Increase Youth Access to ICT: Knowledge of ICT is seen as one of the key skills for economic advancement in today's world. The Royal Cambodian Government has made youth access to ICT facilities a very high priority. In this regard, the MoEYS has created a *Master Plan for ICT in Education (2009-13)* that provides useful guidelines to schools and civil society organizations for the provision of ICT facilities in schools (ICT Office-MoEYS, 2010). Similarly, *the Education Strategic Plan* seeks to ensure access to ICT in at least 30% of all upper secondary schools by 2014 in each province (ESP, 2009). To facilitate this process, MoEYS has developed open source software such as Khmer Unicode and Open Office that support the use of Khmer fonts without dependence on licensed software, which can be difficult to sustain. The MoEYS has also developed an ICT curriculum for instruction in these software programs. Given the resource intensive nature of ICT investments and current resource constraints, the RGC has prioritized the emplacement of ICT facilities at upper secondary school only.

ICT access for youth in Cambodia has focused primarily on the use of computers though there has recently been a major proliferation in the use of tablets and smart phones both in the public and private sectors (www.investincambodia.com/default.htm, 2011). Youth gain access to ICT instruction through both the private sector where there are hundreds of shops offering both instruction and internet access as well as the school system; however, investment in the latter has been constrained by numerous factors including a lack of resources, maintenance issues, energy constraints, and poor management (USAID,-EQUIP 2008). A study by World Education, for example, found that many school-based computer labs using conventional technology fall out of use within two to three years, causing many supporting agencies to close or greatly curtail their ICT programs at school level (World Education, 2013). However, the recent introduction of new technologies known as *thin clients* has changed this situation dramatically. This technology reduces energy usage by over 85% enabling the economical usage of solar power to run ICT labs; the technology is also cheaper than conventional computers and reduces maintenance costs because it has no moving parts (USAID, 2012). Although there have been no nationwide surveys of ICT access in state schools, USAID and ADB appear to be the largest investors in school-based ICT technology in the state education system with over 170 secondary schools receiving investment for computer labs for student instruction (USAID, 2012).

Recent surveys have suggested that ICT access in schools, particularly rural ones, can act as an incentive to keep youth in school. One project reported that 65% of surveyed students in rural secondary schools had indicated that access to a recently installed computer lab had 'greatly' influenced their decision to stay enrolled; 82% reported that the new labs had provided their first access ever to ICT (IBEC, 2013). USAID-Creative Associates and KAPE are currently investigating the degree to which investments in ICT will curtail the very high dropout rates seen at secondary school among youth through the *School Dropout Prevention Pilot*.

3.2.3 Wages and Earnings among Youth and the Role of Migration

It has been reported that youth between the ages of 15 and 19 years old can earn between 200,000 and 299,000 Cambodian Riels (CR) (approximately \$50 to \$75) per month in Phnom Penh. Indeed, about 53% of the youth population between 15 and 19 years old residing in the capital reported earning at least this amount or more (NIS-CSES, 2004). This compares with only about 27.7% of youth in the same age range in rural areas of the country. Even in other urban areas of the country, only 26.6% of 15 to 19 year-olds report achieving this income level (see

Table 3.2). These trends are even more dramatic among youth who are 20 to 24 years olds where 67.5% earn 200,000 CR or more in Phnom Penh compared to 40% in rural areas. Thus, there are powerful incentives for youth to migrate to Phnom Penh and elsewhere in order to escape the low earning patterns of more rural areas.

Table 3.2: Youth Earnings by Age Group and Geographical Location

CR Per Month	Youth 15 to 19 (%)				Youth 20-24 (%)			
	All Areas	Phnom Penh	Other Urban	Rural	All Areas	Phnom Penh	Other Urban	Rural
Less than 50,000 CR	19.5	3.5	10.1	22.8	13.0	3.8	9.7	15.8
50-99,000 CR	18.6	9.2	26.8	18.9	12.9	3.6	20.8	13.6
100-149,000 CR	14.9	8.9	26.7	14.2	13.0	8.7	18.1	13.0
150-199,000 CR	16.7	25.5	9.7	16.3	16.4	16.4	10.0	17.5
200-299,000 CR	24.8	40.1	22.4	23.0	30.3	29.2	27.5	31.1
300-499,000 CR	4.3	8.0	3.9	3.9	10.1	23.3	8.3	7.3
500,000 CR and over	1.2	4.9	0.3	0.8	4.4	15.0	5.6	1.6

Source: CSES, 2004

A recent study by the Ministry of Planning reported that about 80% of recent migrants are under 30 years of age and that their mean age is about 26.5 years old (MoP-CRUMP, 2012 p. 48). The main destination of most rural to urban migrants appears to be Phnom Penh with 70% of the population living there reporting that they were born elsewhere. Of course, this astronomically high figure needs to be considered in the historical context of the forced migrations that occurred during the Khmer Rouge years in the 1970s. Nevertheless, 47% of the migrant population living in the city reported arriving there within the last five years. Village surveys indicate a very high rate of out-migration that is estimated to be about 4.81% (MoP-CRUMP, 2012). This means that villages in rural areas are losing on average nearly 5% of their population a year, a very high rate that is not sustainable in the long-run. Not all of this migration is moving to Phnom Penh; some of it is occurring to other rural and urban areas besides Phnom Penh. Needless to say, however, a large proportion of the population is moving to urban areas and youth populations appear to be disproportionately affected.

Table 3.3: Reason Cited for Migration (among Phnom Penh Migrants) (%)

Reason	Sex		Age		
	Males	Females	15-24	25-34	35+
Labor	75.5	74.7	65.5	84.3	74.6
Education	23.4	9.8	29.7	12.8	1.8
Marriage	4.0	9.3	3.7	13.1	3.2
Calamities	4.4	3.8	3.1	3.0	6.7
Other	12.1	18.2	10.8	7.9	31.8

Source: MoP-CRUMP, 2012

The overriding reason for migration across all demographic categories appears to be the search for work, particularly for those between the ages of 25 and 34; 84.3% of this grouping cited work as the main reason for migration (see Table 3.3). Among youth who are 15 to 24 years old, 65.5% cited work reasons for migration; the other major reason cited was education with nearly 30% of the 15-24 age group falling into this category but only 9.8% of females. Of those citing the search for work, 81% indicated that they had found a job within the first month of arriving in Phnom Penh, indicating the overall health of the labor market in the city. That is, most migrants of any age, including youth, are not unemployed. Key employment sectors among mi-

grants were found to include Business Owner (22.4%), Garment Worker (21.8%), Non-Construction Labor (8.8%), and Driver (8.5%). Occupations cited among males tended to gravitate towards Driver (17.6%), Business Owner (15.9%), Non-construction labor (16.2%) and Construction (8.1%); among women, key occupations cited included Garment Worker (Business Owner (27.7%) and Service/Entertainment Workers (11.0%) (MoP-CRUMP, 2012). Nevertheless, attitudinal surveys indicated high levels of stress among youthful migrants with 92.3% of those between 15 and 24 years old reporting that they worried about earning enough money and 20.5% indicating reporting that they were not optimistic about the future (see Table 3.4).

3.2.4 Stakeholder Engagement in Promoting Social and Political Expression

Legal Framework for Social and Political Expression:

Cambodia has a legal framework that allows the participation of youth in the political culture of the country. *Article 34* of Cambodia's Constitution affirms the right of all Khmer citizens who are 18 years or older of either sex to vote and to stand as candidates for election, if they so desire. *Article 31* of the Constitution also binds the government to recognize and respect the human rights of all of its citizens as outlined in the *United Nations Charter* and the *UN Declaration of Human Rights*. Efforts to operationalize these rights, however, have been slow (UNDP, 2009). The Prime Minister has advised the need for the creation of a *National Youth Council* to coordinate activities that help realize the policy goals of the National Youth Development Policy. In addition, the UN Country Team has sought to create a UN Youth Advisory Panel focusing on a structured dialogue with civil society organizations focused on youth, mainly the members of the NYP-Net mentioned earlier (UNDP, 2009). This panel has since evolved into a formalized forum for national level discussions on youth issues and is still active today.¹⁰

The Role of Volunteerism in Social Expression by Youth and Cultural Constraints: Key informant interviews have suggested that many of the national level efforts to create a formalized youth network have been slow to take shape or have much impact. Rather, most of the youth participation in the country's social and political life has taken place at the most local level through volunteerism with support from civil society organizations such as KYA, YRDP, KYC, and others. In this respect, small-scale studies have indicated a very high level of volunteerism among Cambodia's youth with as much as a third or more reporting some form of voluntary activity with an NGO, community organization, savings group, or public/private sector groups (e.g., Mysliwiec, 2005; Brown, 2008). The last several years have seen several major initiatives to tap into the proclivity of youth to volunteer with the establishment of several formalized volunteer organizations such as *Youth Star*, which has a far flung network of postings of 187 young university graduates throughout Cambodia (Youth Star, 2014). Recent developments in the evolution of Cambodia's *Organic Law* also provide useful opportunities for youth social participa-

Table 3.4: Percent Agreeing/ Disagreeing with the Following Statements (15-24 Year Olds)

I worry about earning enough money (Agree)	92.3%
In the last month, I have felt very lonely (Agree)	33.7%
I feel optimistic about my future (Disagree)	20.5%
In the last month, I have felt very happy (Disagree)	36.0%
Source: MoP-CRUMP, 2012	

¹⁰ Personal communication with Ms. Chuon Sophoan (Youth Empowerment Unit Assistant) from YRDP.

tion with its strong emphasis on *decentralization* and *deconcentration* (UNDP, 2009). Nevertheless, qualitative data from several studies suggests that youth participation in decision-making at local level has historically been constrained by the hierarchical nature of Cambodian society and cultural attitudes about the primacy of age (UNDP, 2009).

Youth Participation in Political Life: In terms of youth participation in the political process, participation rates have until recently been quite low (COMFREL, 2008). Youth understanding of such basic concepts as ‘democracy,’ ‘human rights,’ and ‘civic engagement’ is also understood to be quite low, according to several sources. Recent surveys have indicated that a majority of those youth interviewed could not define what ‘democracy’ is though they had heard the word used many times (KYA, 2012). Similarly, concepts about political pluralism are poorly understood and the same surveys found that only half of those interviewed agreed with the statement that elective bodies should represent ‘all’ citizens including minorities. Youth participation in the political life of the country is generally not supported by basic nation-building institutions such as the state-schools, since such spaces are seen to be strictly ‘neutral.’ Political discussions in schools are not generally allowed even as a matter of academic study. The only forums where political discussion appears to be tolerated is in the youth wings of the various political parties (UNDP, 2009).

It is important to note, however, that the MoEYS has recently given permission to the *Documentation Center of Cambodia* to provide training to secondary school teachers on the Khmer Rouge Genocide, using a text developed by the center.¹¹ Similarly, many school libraries are now allowed to contain general newspapers (though not overtly political ones) as well as more sensitive publications such as *TRUTH Magazine* (IBEC, 2012). Nevertheless, there are apparently limits to this growing liberal attitude as seen by the recent rejection by the MoEYS’ Textbook Review Council of a life skills manual developed by World Education and KAPE with USAID funding on civic engagement, intended for use with youth at lower secondary school level. The manual deals with sensitive subject matter such as how to register to vote, what is a political party, and political expression (IBEC, 2014).

There have also been innovative initiatives to educate youth about the structure of government and the role of citizens within that structure. For example, UNDP funded an interesting project known as the *Legislative Assistance Project (LEAP)*, which included a sub-activity to support Parliamentary outreach to youth at secondary school level. This led to the implementation of the *Cambodian Parliamentary School Outreach Project*, which involved structured visits to Parliament by 230 students from 15 schools across nine provinces (KAPE-UNDP, 2011). MoEYS has also put strong emphasis on the creation of *Children’s Councils* with elected officers in all primary and secondary schools and has produced a formalized manual as part of the *CFS Toolkit* to assist schools in the implementation of such councils (MoEYS, 2007). There have, however, been many issues in the implementation of the councils including the finding that most of them are teacher-directed with little self-direction from students. In a small scale assessment of the councils, it was found that only 30% considered themselves to be student-led while another 40% indicated that they never met at all (Children’s Rights Foundation-KAPE, 2009).

¹¹ *History of Democratic Kampuchea* by Khamboly Dy (2007).

More recently, youth participation in politics has greatly increased since the National Parliamentary Elections in July 2013. While there have not yet been any major studies on the role of youth in these elections, it appears that the event has been a watershed of sorts with COMFREL reporting that 70% of registered youth voters actually participated in voting, a new record; in addition, 93.4% of youth had reported registering to vote in sample interviews conducted by COMFREL (COMFREL, 2013). Many observers believe that the role of youth actually played a significant role in the final outcome. Billed as Cambodia's first 'social media election,' it appears that the rapid penetration of the population by smartphone technology, the high proclivity of youth to be proficient in the use of such technology, and the use of social media as a means of spreading information not carried in official news media and organizing political rallies were all key to the role played by youth in the general election, the outcome of which surprised many observers (COMFREL, 2013). COMFREL estimates that about one million citizens, most between the ages of 18 and 30 used Facebook and other social media during the last election as a medium for information including the exchange of political opinions (COMFREL, 2013 p. 39). **It is expected that the role of the internet and social media will increase even further in future elections, highlighting the role of ICT skills as an important tool to politically empower youth.**

Although COMREL also reported that there was a high number of youth candidates standing for seats in Parliament in the 2013 elections (defined as those from 18 to 35 years old), only 3 of the 176 youth candidates standing for election actually won a seat (two in the ruling party and one from the opposition) (2013). In addition, youth appeared to be underrepresented in the administration of the elections with only 9% representation on Provincial Council Committees overseeing the elections and 11% in Commune Council Committees (COMFREL, 2013). Thus, youth numbers in the administration of elections do not yet match their level of increased participation in voting.

3.3 Key Findings of Earlier Analyses

It was already noted in Section 1 that there have been several youth situation analyses in recent years. The most extensive of these was the one conducted by UNDP in 2009, which greatly helped to inform RGC efforts to develop a national youth policy and recommendations for follow-up actions, which are summarized in Table 3.5 below. The eventual promulgation of the National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development in 2011 was a major achievement stemming from this analysis. The recommendations of the UNDP analysis mainly focus on policy-level initiatives and advocacy. The UNDP youth situation analysis has been the most extensive to date and has formed the basis of many shorter analyses, including this one. It provides a comprehensive wealth of information on almost every dimension of youth development including their health, education, skills training, economic empowerment, and social/political participation in Cambodian society among others.

Other analyses have also occurred recently that are more focused on a specific purpose such as informing the development of an agency five-year strategic plan (e.g., KYA, 2012) or the development of recommendations about a specific issue such as vulnerable youth (e.g., MoEYS-UNICEF, 2010). For example, MoEYS and UNICEF conducted a behavioral risk survey in 2010 focused on informing risk-reduction strategies for the spread of HIV-AIDS (MoEYS, 2010). This

was a follow-up study of an earlier one conducted by MoEYS in 2004 (MoEYS, 2004). That national analysis found that only 50% of female youth and 45% of their male counterparts had comprehensive knowledge of HIV. The study also found that out-of-school youth tend to engage in more risky behavior regarding drug use and sexual relationships than youth in-school, highlighting the need for preventative strategies that keep youth in-school for longer periods of time.

Table 3.5: Summary of Recommendations from UNDP Youth Situation Analysis, 2009

Recommendations	Status
1) Provide technical and financial support to accelerate a final draft of The Cambodian National Youth Policy with inclusion of youth in decision-making and development planning within the policy.	Completed
2) Strengthen Strategic Information about young Cambodians to inform policy and programming in 2010 and beyond.	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on MoEYS support, implement a national baseline survey of mainstream Cambodian youth that includes the topics of sexual and reproductive health, education, disability, work, family life, media and IT influence, mental wellbeing, drug and alcohol abuse and selected health risk behavior. (<i>Led by the UN Adolescent, Youth and HIV Working Group in line with their planning document for 2009</i>) • UNCT will host a preliminary workshop to discuss the possibility of a comprehensive national youth survey. Experiences from a range of other Asian youth surveys will be presented and time given to consider and discuss the methodologies, scope of content, challenge of implementation, research partners and opportunities for mobilizing resources. 	Completed
3) Mainstream adolescent and youth needs and rights into the priority areas of UNCT work for 2009/2010 (through ensuring a deliberate lens on strategy development), into the UNDAF 2009, and into new UN documents/publications including the Democracy and Development safety nets in D and D.	On-going
4) Develop key messages focused on the risks and inequalities young people face, and advocate for policy protection, improved programming and services, including mobilizing resources for youth-focused and youth-led initiatives.	On-going
5) Mainstream youth focus on resource allocation and application of a youth lens in the poverty reduction process.	On-going
6) Require a disaggregation of findings by gender, age and geography (urban, rural, and remote) in all UN agency documents, monitoring and evaluation methods and grants to other partners). Youth-specific information should, where possible, be further disaggregated to reflect 10-14,15-19 and 20-24 age groups.	On-going

Source: UNDP, 2009

The more recent survey of vulnerable youth in 2010 was prompted by fears of an amplification of risky behavior as more youth leave school and engage in rural-to-urban migration to more economically vibrant parts of the country and across the border to neighboring countries (MoEYS, 2010). Not surprisingly, the study found that *Most At Risk Young People* (MARYP) do not value education but placed a high priority on a hedonistic life style that included drinking alcohol on a regular basis, using drugs, and engaging in unsafe sexual behavior. In this regard, the study found that 70% of sampled female MARYPs drank alcohol and that 91% of males did so. This behavior occurred even though most knew that alcoholic consumption in excess is harmful to one's health, highlighting the limits of 'health education and social messaging' as a deterrent. The study also found that male rates of drug use (mainly pill-popping behavior) among this population was nearly five times higher than that of females (15.2% versus 3.5%). Two-thirds of males reported having sweetheart relationships while 56% of females reported

having such relationships with 41% of males reporting that they were sexually active and 23% of females. These are very high rates sexual activity that greatly increase the risks of HIV-AIDS transmission. The study's finding that 'knowledge' of the dangers of risky behaviors does not seem to lessen the degree to which MARYPs seem to engage in them was a sobering finding that underlines the limits of education. Nevertheless, the study did also find that preventative behaviors among this risk group were also high including the use of condoms by young men (89%) and use of contraception among females.

4. Thematic Analysis: Main Challenges to Achieving Adolescents' Rights

4.1 Sample Demographics

4.1.1 Basic Demographics and Living Situation of Youth Samples

The current analysis has generated vast amounts of information among many key informants ranging from youth, teachers, government officials, parents, and others. But the most intensive efforts in data collection were made with youth still in school (both at primary and secondary school level), youth out-of-school, teachers, parents, and school directors. Responding patterns among these stakeholders have been analyzed according to several demographic attributes including their age, sex, location, education sector, and in some cases according to their socio-economic status particularly where measures of correlation were applied.

Basic demographics for youth populations are presented in Tables 4.1 to 4.4 below. The sex ratio among in-school youth was fairly symmetrical but among out-of-school youth, males were over represented (71%) causing some asymmetry in the sample. As noted earlier, this was due to the dependence of the investigatory teams on commune councils to bring together the sample based on given guidelines whereas enumerators had more direct control over sample construction in schools. Location of residence was self-defined with a sizable proportion of out-of-school youth classifying themselves as coming from remote areas (18%) whereas hardly any in-school youth did so. Given the propensity for secondary schools to be located in urban and semi-urban areas, a larger number of secondary school students classified themselves as coming from urban-semi-urban areas than was true at primary level (48% versus 36%). As one would expect, the majority of out-of-school youth were 15 years old and over (85%) whereas among in-school youth enrolled in basic education, the majority was under 15 (65%). Nevertheless, considering that youth are supposed to complete basic education (defined as Grades 1-9) by the time that they are 14, this suggests a considerable amount of overage enrollment. Only a very small proportion of the samples constructed classified themselves as coming from a minority group (3%), mainly Cham or Vietnamese.

Table 4.1: Basic Demographics for In-school Youth

Education Level	Total (N)	Male		Female		Urban Residents		Rural Residents		Under 15		15 & Over		Non-Khmer Speakers	
		T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
Primary School	83	45	54%	38	46%	30	36%	53	64%	64	77%	19	23%	0	0
Secondary School	150	74	49%	76	51%	72	48%	78	52%	88	59%	62	41%	3	2%
Total	233	119	51%	114	49%	102	44%	131	56%	152	65%	81	35%	3	1%

Table 4.2: Basic Demographics for Out-of-school Youth

	Total (N)	Male		Female		Urban Residents		Rural Residents		Remote Residents		Under 15		15 & Over		Non-Khmer Speakers	
		T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
Total	87	62	71%	25	29%	20	23%	51	61%	16	18%	13	15%	74	85%	3	3%

Inquiries on the living situation of youth indicated that the vast majority continued to live with their parents. Only 6% of in-school youth and 10% of out-of-school youth reported living with a non-parent. No one reported that they were married.

Table 4.3: Living Situation for In-school Youth

Education Level	Total (N)	Living With Both Parents		Living with Single Parent		Living with Others		Other Re-sponse	
		T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
Primary School	83	68	82%	10	12%	4	5%	1	1%
Secondary School	150	125	83%	15	10%	7	5%	3	2%
Total	233	193	83%	25	11%	11	5%	4	2%

Table 4.4: Living Situation for Out-of-school Youth

	Total (N)	Living With Both Parents		Living with Single Parent		Living with Spouse		Living with Other Family		Living with Friends	
	Total (N)	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
Total	87	76	87%	3	3%	0	0%	7	8%	1	>2%

4.1.2 Basic Demographics for Teachers and School Managers

A total of 78 teachers were interviewed or completed questionnaires for this analysis (see Tables 4.5 and 4.6). The majority (71%) were secondary school teachers. Female teachers tended to predominate at primary level in the sample (65%) while the majority of secondary school teachers were male (60%), reflecting commonly observed trends in the general teaching force. Most teachers indicated that they had had 5 years of experience in teaching or more with an average of 13.1 years of schooling themselves before they became teachers. Secondary school teachers appear to have more years of education than primary school teachers in spite of efforts to upgrade the primary school teaching force (12.3 years versus 13.5 years). Among school managers, the vast majority are men (91%), reflecting similar national trends in gender parity among school managers. School managers had more years of preparatory education than teachers (14.4 years) and 64% reported having served as school managers for 5 years or more.

Table 4.5: Basic Demographics for Teachers

Education Sector	Total		Male		Female		Less than 5 Years Experience		5 Years Experience or More		Average Years of Education
	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	
Primary School	23	29%	8	35%	15	65%	7	30%	16	70%	12.3
Secondary School	55	71%	33	60%	22	40%	11	20%	44	80%	13.5
Total	78	100%	41	53%	37	47%	18	23%	60	77%	13.1

Table 4.6: Basic Demographics for School Managers

	Total	Male		Female		Less than 5 Years Experience		5 Years Experience or More		Average Years of Education
		T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	
Total	11	10	91%	1	9%	4	36%	7	64%	14.4

4.1.3 Socio-Economic Status of Youth Samples

This analysis used several proxy indicators to assess the socio-economic status of youth since child/adolescent respondents often have difficulty citing exact income levels. These proxy indicators indicated parental occupation, mainly whether their parents were a farmer, worker, or housewife (Proxy SES Indicator 1); the kind of roofing materials used in their house (Proxy SES Indicator 2); and land ownership (Proxy SES Indicator 3). Sample breakdowns are provided in Tables 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9). An aggregate score across several variables (e.g., ownership of appliances, farm animals, landownership, etc) was also assigned to each youth respondent in the survey, which was used for correlation analyses. The maximum score on this scale was 37 and a distribution of scores across all youth samples is provided in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.7: Socio-Economic Status of Youth: Proxy SES Indicator 1-Parental Occupation

Sampling Group	Total (N)	Father						Mother					
		Worker, Farmer		Other Occupation		Unemployed		Worker, Farmer, Housewife		Other Occupation		Unemployed	
		T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
Primary School Youth	83	66	80%	16	19%	1	1%	74	70%	9	30%	0	0%
Secondary School Youth	150	83	56%	67	44%	0	0%	89	59%	61	41%	0	0%
Out-of-School Youth	87	64	74%	23	26%	0	0%	76	87%	11	13%	0	0%
Total	320	213	67%	106	33%	1	>1%	239	75%	81	25%	0	0%

Table 4.8 Socio-Economic Status of Youth: Proxy SES Indicator 2-Roofing Material

Sampling Group	Total (N)	Thatch		Zinc		Tile		Other	
		T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
Primary School Youth	83	7	8%	46	55%	27	33%	3	4%
Secondary School Youth	150	5	3%	76	51%	61	41%	8	5%
Out-of-School Youth	87	15	17%	47	54%	24	28%	1	1%
Total	320	27	8%	169	53%	112	35%	12	4%

Although two-thirds of the sample or more reported that their parents were either farmers, workers, or housewives, indicators about roofing material and landownership provided more insight about true poverty levels within the sample.

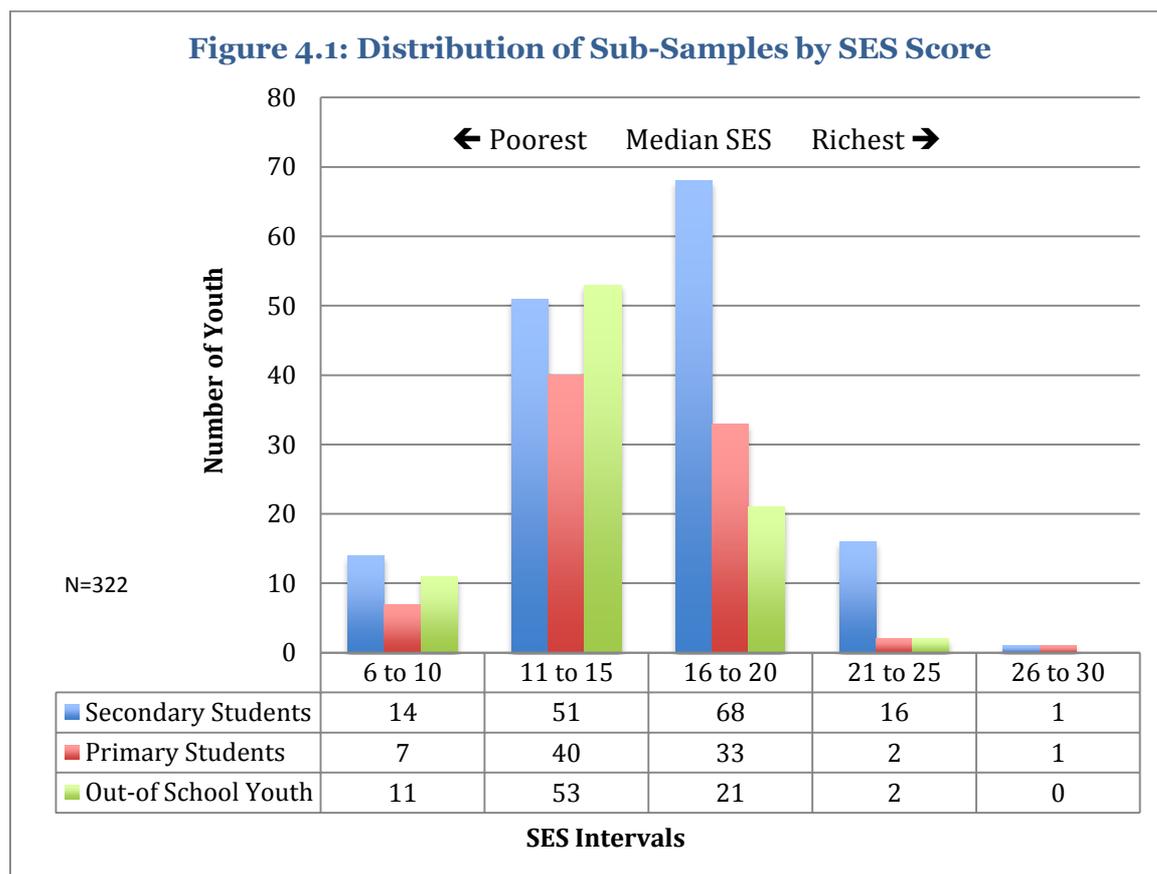
Table 4.9: Socio-Economic Status of Youth: Proxy SES Indicator 3- Land Ownership

Sampling Group	Total (N)	Parents Own Land		Parents Do Not Own Land		Don't Know if Parents Own Land	
		T	%	T	%	T	%
Primary School Youth	83	54	65%	23	28%	6	7%
Secondary School Youth	150	109	73%	22	15%	19	13%
Out-of-School Youth	87	52	60%	20	23%	15	17%
Total	320	215	67%	65	20%	40	13%

In this regard, 8% of the sample reported that their house had a thatch roof, an indicator of very high poverty. This rate reached 17% among out-of-school youth, indicating that this sub-sample in particular represented a sizable number of very vulnerable young people. In addition, about 20% of the sample indicated that their parents did not own any land while surprisingly, 13%

indicated that they were not sure about their parents' landownership. Overall, one infers from this information that between 10 to 20% of the sample was very poor, about half fell within a more moderate SES range while about 25% exhibited a socio-economic status that was higher than the average.

Using an aggregate SES aggregate score designed for the study, it was also found that secondary school students tended to cluster around the midpoint point in a 37-point scale (18.5) whereas primary school students and out-of-school youth tended to skew towards the lower levels of the scale. This distribution of sample members generally conforms with an expectation that primary school students and those who left school would be poorer while the lucky few who made it to secondary school would be somewhat better off (see Figure 4.1).



4.2 Social Participation Issues

4.2.1 Life Style and Leisure

One of the interests of this study was to better understand who exactly Cambodian youth are; that is, to better know what their interests are, how much exposure they have received to new experiences, do they have friends and hobbies, and other measures of social participation. To some degree, responding patterns were influenced by deeply ingrained social mores about how they 'should' respond; nevertheless, many appear to have answered frankly and in ways that were not expected.

Because reading habits can be one of the best ways for young people to learn about the world around them and beyond their immediate social environments, this seemed to be a good place to start our inquiry. Within each of the three youth sub-samples, reading habits appeared to be generally consistent across multiple demographic attributes (see Tables 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12). For example, there did not seem to be significant differences between male and female secondary school students in terms of what they read and how frequently. Similar patterns held true among primary school students and out-of-school youth, except perhaps that primary school boys did seem somewhat more likely to read more frequently than girls (except in the case of magazines) and rural primary school students read newspapers and magazines much less frequently than their urban counterparts.

Table 4.10: Student Reading Habits (in-School Secondary Youth) (N=150)

Reading Habits	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & over
Reading newspapers at least once a week or more	29%	25%	32%	31%	27%	35%	20%
Reading magazines at least once a week or more	30%	27%	32%	34%	26%	39%	18%
Students with a favorite author	44%	46%	42%	40%	47%	44%	44%
Students able to use a Khmer Dictionary well	9%	8%	11%	11%	8%	13%	5%

Table 4.11: Student Reading Habits (in-School Primary Youth) (N=83)

Reading Habits	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & over
Reading newspapers at least once a week or more	15%	22%	8%	30%	8%	15%	21%
Reading magazines at least once a week or more	11%	9%	13%	20%	6%	8%	21%
Students with a favorite author	33%	36%	29%	53%	21%	36%	21%
Students able to use a Khmer Dictionary well	28%	31%	24%	33%	25%	33%	11%

Table 4.12: Student Reading Habits (Out-of-School Youth) (N=87)

Reading Habits	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & over
Reading newspapers at least once a week or more	14%	15%	12%	35%	8%	6%	0%	16%
Reading magazines at least once a week or more	18%	13%	32%	25%	18%	13%	15%	19%
Students with a favorite author	28%	29%	24%	25%	27%	31%	23%	28%
Students able to use a Khmer	6%	8%	0%	10%	4%	6%	0%	7%

Dictionary well								
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The main differences in reading behavior, however, appear to be between subsamples. Not surprisingly, secondary school students seem to be more avid readers than either primary school students or out-of-school youth with about 30% to 40% or more reporting high frequencies for reading newspapers, magazines, and books (i.e., they had read enough books to report that they had a favorite author). The comparable frequencies among primary school youth and out-of-school youth seem to range from the low teens to the high 20% range. Surprisingly, only a small fraction of the older youth surveyed indicated that they could use a Khmer Dictionary 'well' (6-9%) with the highest rates being reported among primary school students (28%).

Table 4.13: Student Leisure Habits (in-School Secondary School Youth) (N=150)

Leisure Habits	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & over
Students stating they have a hobby	57%	59%	55%	50%	64%	59%	55%
Students with a sweetheart	3%	4%	1%	1%	4%	1%	5%
Students that have a 'best' friend	72%	69%	75%	69%	74%	73%	71%
Students who say dressing fashionably is extremely important to them	11%	14%	9%	7%	15%	13%	10%
Students who have ever visited a museum	9%	7%	12%	8%	10%	9%	10%
Students who have ever visited the beach	35%	46%	45%	51%	40%	44%	47%
Students who have 'never' been to Phnom Penh	16%	22%	11%	11%	21%	11%	23%
Students who have ever visited Angkor Wat	28%	27%	29%	28%	28%	25%	32%
Students who have ever tasted an alcoholic beverage	7%	12%	3%	8%	6%	8%	6%
Students who have ever used drugs	7%	8%	7%	3%	11%	2%	15%

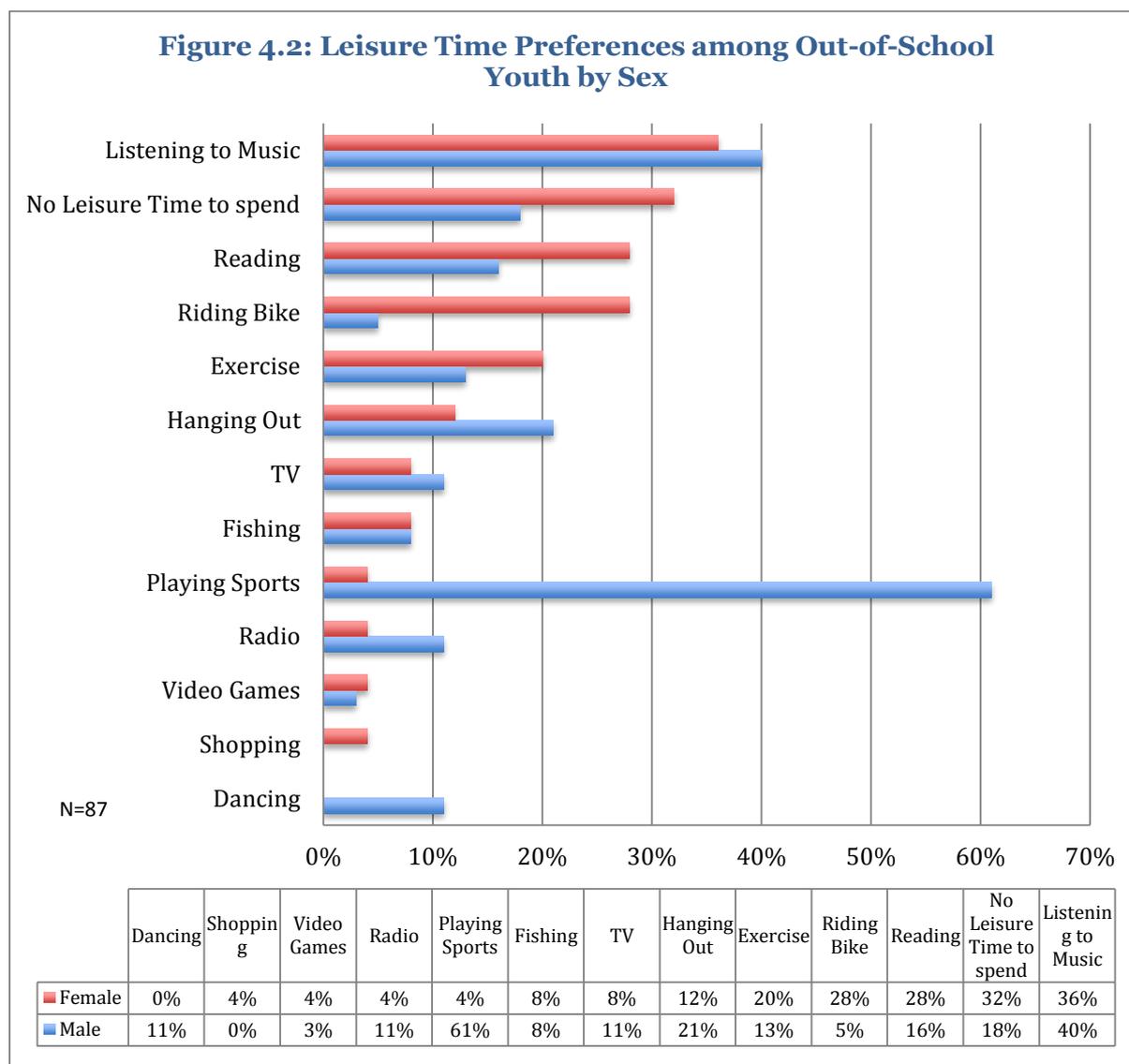
Table 4.14: Student Leisure Habits (Out-of-School Youth) (N=87)

Leisure Habits	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Re-remote	Under 15	15 & over
Youth stating they have a hobby	59%	60%	56%	60%	59%	56%	69%	57%
Youth with a sweetheart	15%	21%	0%	15%	10%	31%	0%	18%
Youth that have a 'best' friend	79%	79%	80%	85%	71%	100%	100%	76%
Youth who say dressing fashionably is very important to them	20%	26%	4%	25%	22%	6%	31%	18%
Youth who have ever visited a museum	10%	13%	4%	15%	8%	13%	8%	11%
Youth who have ever visited the beach	38%	40%	32%	35%	35%	50%	54%	35%
Youth who have ever visited Angkor Wat	11%	11%	12%	15%	10%	13%	31%	8%
Youth who have 'never' been to P Penh	37%	35%	40%	45%	37%	25%	38%	36%
Youth who have ever tasted an alcoholic beverage	18%	26%	0%	25%	18%	13%	8%	20%
Youth who have ever used drugs	3%	5%	0%	5%	2%	6%	0%	4%

A review of leisure habits among secondary school youth and those out-of-school indicated some dramatic differences (see Tables 4.13 and 4.14). Although a large majority in both groups indicated that they had a hobby of some sort (reading, sports, etc.), out-of-school youth were five times more likely to indicate that they had a 'sweetheart' than in-school youth (3% versus 15%). It is possible that socially desirable response bias was at work here (especially since

hardly any females indicated that they had a sweetheart); but this would not explain the number of youth who frankly indicated that they had ever used some sort of addictive or mood-altering drug such as *ya-ma*, *ya-ba*, *kansha*, or alcoholic beverages. Surprisingly, secondary school youth were twice as likely to report that they had used such drugs than out-of-school youth with proportions of rural youth also demonstrating relatively high frequencies of usage when compared with urban youth. These findings were not expected among youth populations who are not generally considered marginal; that is, far from being marginalized, secondary school youth are the lucky youth in Cambodia because they are among those still in school.

The responses provided by youth respondents also indicated very low levels of exposure to places of culture with 70% to 90% reporting that they had never visited Angkor Wat or a museum of any kind. While only 16% of the secondary school sample stated that they had 'never' visited Phnom Penh, over a third of the out-of-school youth sample said that they had never been there (37%). Similarly, nearly 40% of both samples said that they had never visited the beach or seen the ocean.



A review of leisure habits among male and female youth also provides some interesting insights into how their life styles differ (see Figure 4.3). During the survey, youth were asked to choose

any three of their favorite past times from a list. In this regard, it was found that nearly twice as many female out-of-school youth indicated that they had 'no' free time for leisure when compared to males (32% versus 18%). The top three past times of girls were *Listening to Music*, *Reading*, and *Riding their Bicycle*. Among boys the top past times indicated were *Sports*, *Listening to Music*, and *Hanging Out with Friends*. Many of these preferences appear to follow gender stereotypes with a strikingly large proportion of boys citing sports as one of their favorite leisure activities (61%) while only 4% of girls did so.

4.2.2 School Participation Rates

Study findings highlight the belief that most young people believe that school is very important in finding a good job, yet rates of school participation drop precipitously after Grade 6 and dropout increases dramatically. Despite the fact that the average dropout rate across the three target provinces is 10.7% for primary schools and 20.6% for lower secondary schools, most teachers felt that dropout was a minor problem at their school (see Table 4.15). Commune Chiefs seemed similarly misinformed with 73% of those interviewed indicating that dropout is not such a big problem in their communes. For educators who did believe that it was a serious problem, there was a clear urban-rural divide with 27% of urban-based teachers stating that it was a big problem against only 6% of their rural counterparts. While it is clear that the opinions of many teachers simply do not reflect the reality of the situation, 45% of school directors labeled dropout as a major problem. It is interesting to note, however, that almost a fifth of school directors polled believed the problem to be of minor importance.

Table 4.15: Educator Views on the Seriousness of Dropout

How big a problem is dropout at your school?	Directors	All Teachers	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Urban Teachers	Rural Teachers
Big Problem	45%	18%	17%	18%	27%	6%
Medium-sized problem	27%	27%	30%	25%	24%	30%
Minor problem	18%	55%	52%	56%	49%	64%
Hard to say/Don't Know	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

N=11 Directors; N=78 (Teachers)

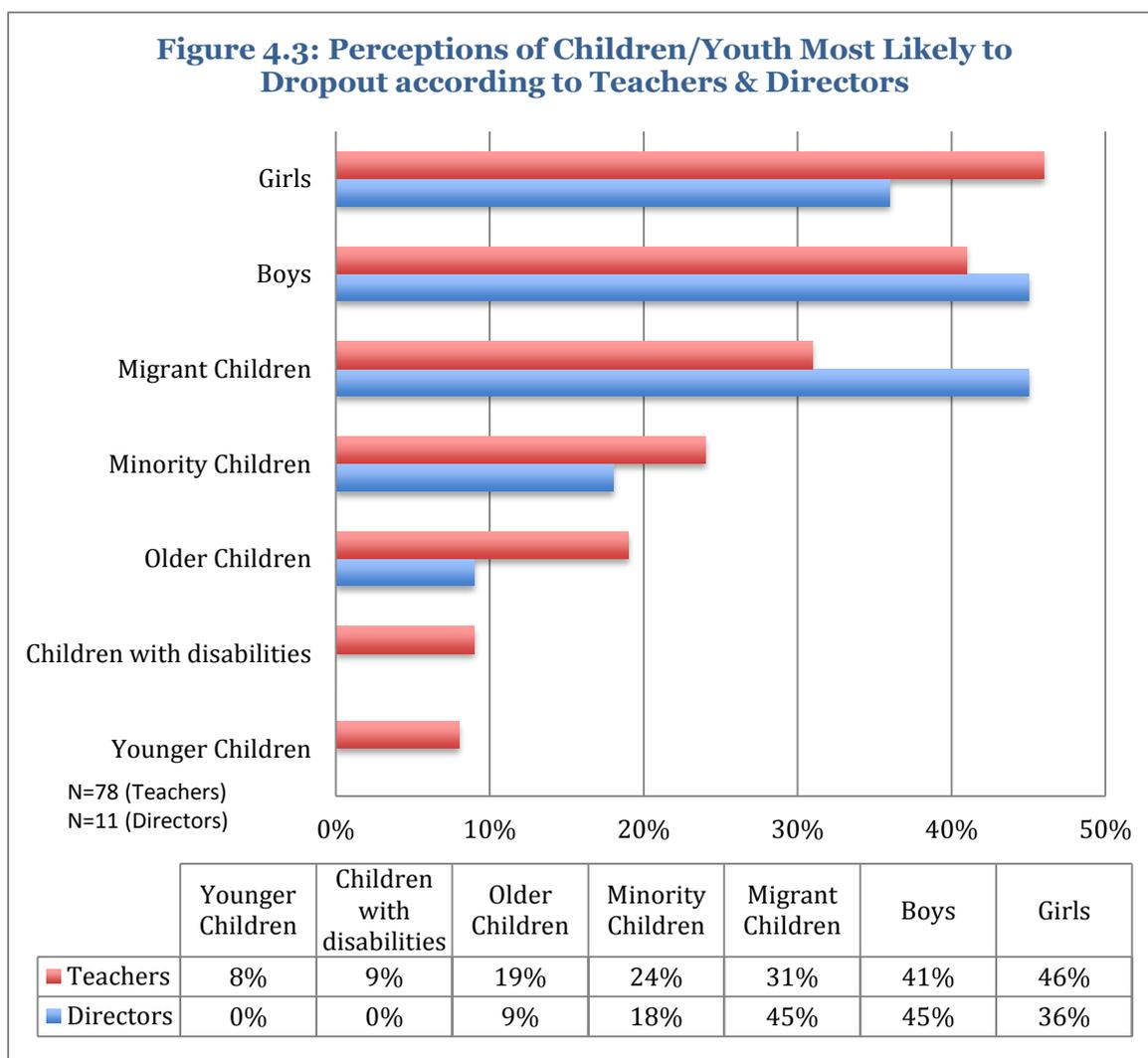
When asked about what grade to which they hope to study, secondary students from across the spectrum displayed a strong desire to complete their education with 65% of respondents stating that they are 'very hopeful' they will complete Grade 9 but dropping to 49% for Grade 12 (see Table 4.16). The data indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between students' gender or socio-economic background and their hopefulness of completing Grade 9/12. Nevertheless, older students seemed to show less hope of completing Grade 12, suggesting the ascendance of opportunity costs given the increased value of their labor.

Table 4.16: Student Beliefs about Grade to Which They Believe They Will Study

Student beliefs about grade to which they will study (Secondary)	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students very hopeful that they will complete Grade 9	65%	64%	67%	69%	62%	64%	68%
Students very hopeful that they will complete Grade 12	49%	50%	47%	57%	41%	55%	40%
Student beliefs about grade to which they will study (Primary)	All	Male	Female	Urban Schools	Rural Schools	Under 15	15 & Over
Students stating it is 'very likely' that they will move to Grade 7.	67%	69%	66%	67%	68%	75%	42%

N=150 (Secondary School); N=83 (Primary)

When Grade 6 students were asked about their future plans, a majority of students across the various groups answered that they were very likely to enter Grade 7 (see Table 4.16). There was, however, a notable difference in the answering patterns of younger and older students. 75% of the former group were confident that they would start lower secondary school, while those aged 15 and over, meaning those who fall into the category of being ‘over-aged’, were much less positive about their chances of continuing their education beyond Grade 6, with only 42% saying it was very likely. Clearly it is the over-aged students who feel the least confident in terms of their educational future. When pressed on what they would be doing instead, 80% of these students stated that they would be helping their family in the fields. The remaining 20% thought that they would be helping their family at home.



In terms of those demographic groups most prone to dropout, the school level educators surveyed seemed split in their opinions about gender with about half saying that girls were more likely to dropout while another half said boys were more likely to do so (see Figure 4.3). School directors were more likely to say boys were more at risk (45% versus 36%) while teachers were more likely to say that girls were (46% versus 41%). School directors were also more likely to put a much higher priority on the risk to migrant children than teachers (45% versus 31%)

with similar inverse patterns also holding true for minority and overage children. It is not clear why school directors and teachers have these divergent views about students most at risk but in several cases, school directors seem to have views which are more consistent with the actual situation in the country, their greater willingness to say that dropout is a major problem being an important example.

When asked to comment on transition rates between grades, the difference between primary and secondary school teachers was noteworthy. While 64% of secondary school teachers felt that, if they passed their exams, most of their students would carry on to the next grade, only 48% of primary school teachers felt this way. There was no discernible difference between urban and rural respondents (see Table 4.17). School directors in general and secondary school teachers in particular were very sanguine about their students' prospects for grade transition. However, primary school teachers tended to be largely pessimistic about their students' educational prospects with only 48% believing that most of their students will complete Grade 9 and 35% believing that most will complete Grade 12. The figures for the same question for secondary school teachers were 80% and 60%, respectively. This data upholds the conventional wisdom that by the time students enter lower secondary school, large numbers of them, often the more vulnerable, have already dropped out. The students that remain in school tend to be from wealthier families for whom the costs of educating their children are more easily met.

Table 4.17: Educator Views on the Seriousness of Dropout

<i>Educator Views on Grade Completion</i>	Directors	All Teachers	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Urban Teachers	Rural Teachers
Believe most of their students will pass to next grade	64%	59%	48%	64%	60%	58%
Believe most of their students will complete Grade 9	91%	71%	48%	80%	71%	70%
Believe most of their students will complete Grade 12	55%	53%	35%	60%	56%	48%

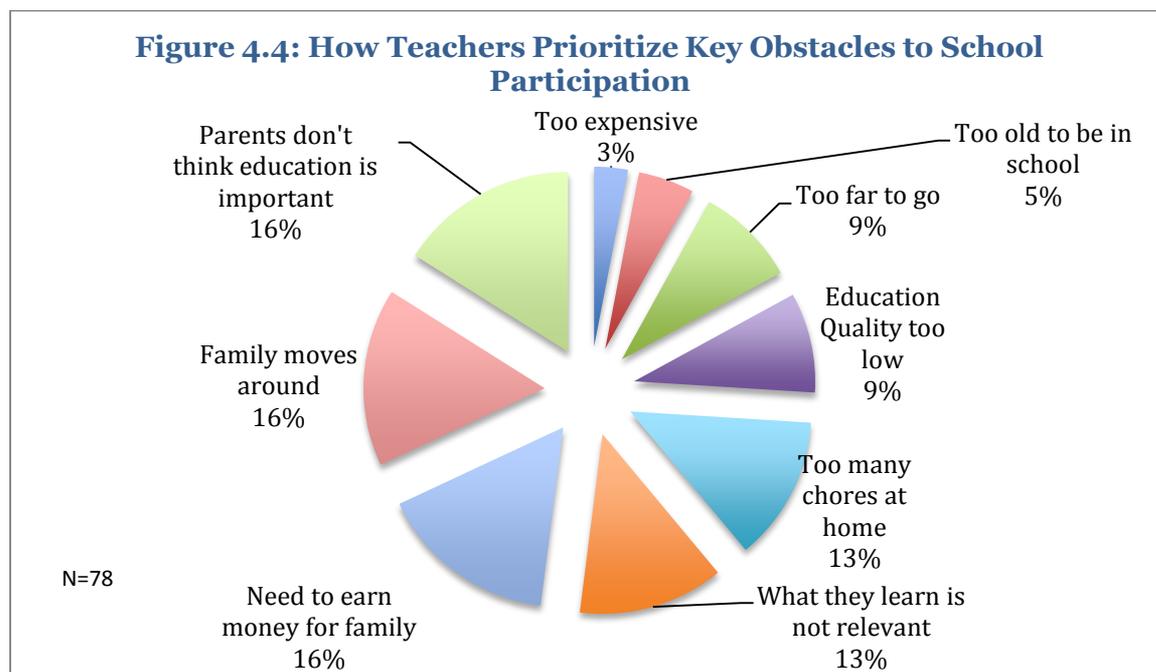
N=11 Directors; N=78 (Teachers)

For out-of-school youth, it is worth noting almost a fifth dropped out of school during the primary years and a further 24% failed to achieve more than a Grade 7 level of education. Girls, and those living in urban areas, were much less likely to drop out of primary school, although over a third of female students were unable to complete Grade 7. According to survey data, there exists a statistically significant inverse relationship between the SES score for female out-of-school youth and the grade at which they dropped out. That is, the higher the SES level, the lower the grade at which they dropped out ($r=-0.44$, $p=.05$). Although counterintuitive, this finding suggests that families with small and medium-sized businesses use their daughters from a young age to help them at home. No statistically significant relationship was found between the SES level of male out-of-school youth and the grade at which they left school.

4.2.3 Obstacles to School Participation

The worldview of teachers regarding school participation by students often does not seem to match the views of other stakeholders, including students themselves. When asked to attach the highest priority to the obstacles faced by students to attend school, teachers tended to gravitate towards three factors including the belief that *parents do not value education* (16%), *students'*

families move around a lot (16%), and students need to earn money for their families (16%). Nearly half of the teachers surveyed put the highest priority on these three factors (see Figure 4.4). Other key stakeholders also seemed to put a high priority on the low value attached to education by parents with 45% of commune chiefs citing this as the key factor and 82% among school directors saying so.



On the other hand, when asked to rank the possible obstacles to attending school, neither primary nor secondary school respondents identified factors that concurred with teacher rankings or with those cited by school directors or commune chiefs. Rather, they identified *distance* between their home and school as the major factor. Interestingly there was little difference in students from urban and rural areas in their propensity to cite distance as a major problem, although those secondary school students aged over 15 were far more likely than younger ones to rate it as the number one obstacle. FGD records indicated that young people from the three subsamples admitted to feeling unsafe and insecure during the journey to school. Other key obstacles that emerged from the surveys were the *cost* of attending classes and the *poor quality* of teachers and schools. The idea that going to school is *too expensive* was given top ranking by over twice as many girls as boys and substantially more urban than rural youth. This would seem to support the widely held view that teachers in urban areas demand higher payments for “extra classes” from their students than their rural counterparts. A larger proportion of older students also indicated the importance of cost as a factor.

Overall, it was found that 35% of secondary school students identified *distance to school* as the key obstacle to attending school, followed by *cost* (17%); *too many chores at home* (15%), and the *low quality of education* (15%) (see Figure 4.5). As part of the ranking exercise on survey forms, students were asked to rank the obstacles to attending school by placing the numbers 1, 2, or 3 in front of the factor that was for them the most problematic in attending school, according to its priority. The number 1 indicated the highest priority, the number 2 the next highest, and so forth. They were only allowed to choose the three most important factors and to rank them accordingly. A mean score was calculated for each rank value given to a particular obsta-

cle. These mean values were then expressed as an ordinal rank for each obstacle (see Table 4.18). This analysis found that *distance to school* continued to hold as the greatest obstacle to attending school identified by secondary school students across all demographic groupings, as it was for students overall. Differences in priority, however, appeared between groups when looking at obstacles that constituted the second and third highest priorities. For example, females tended to give a higher rank to educational quality than did males. Similarly, urban students identified *low educational quality* as their second highest priority where as rural students felt that their *age* was the main problem. For those under 15, the next highest priority obstacle after distance was *educational quality* whereas those 15 and over put a higher priority on *cost*.

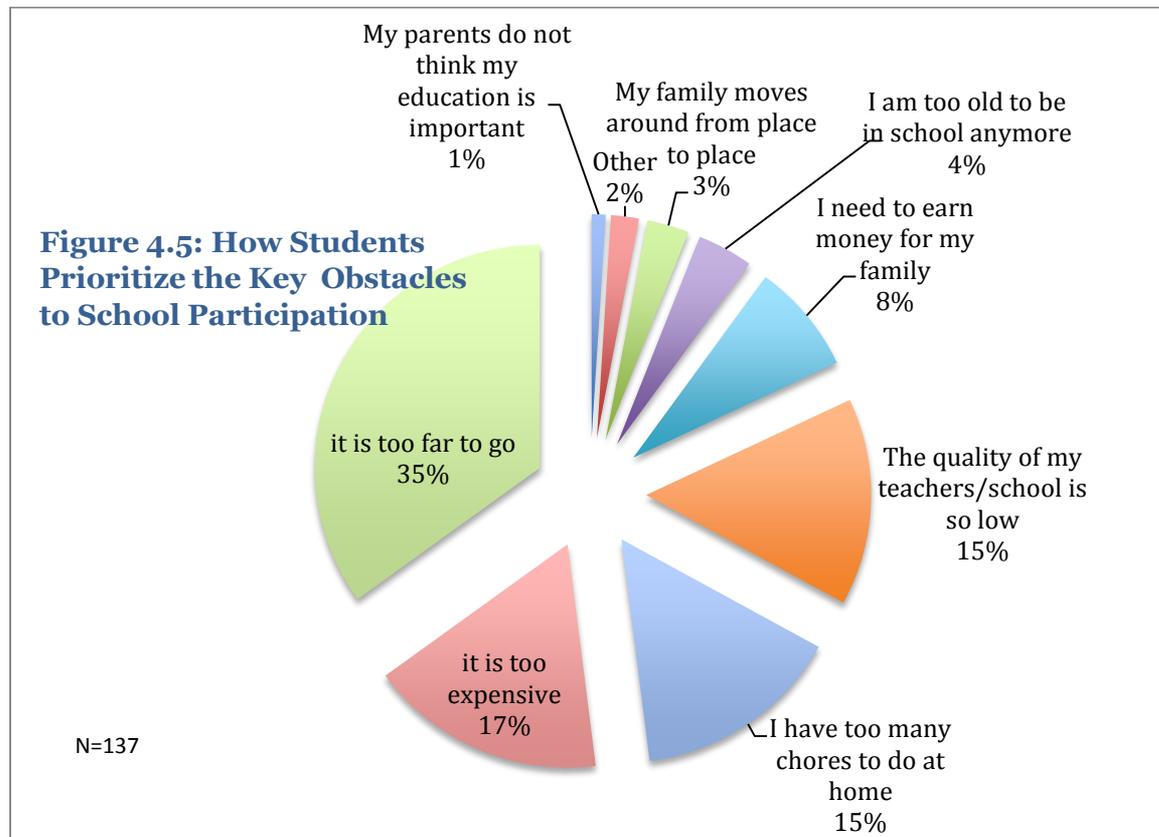


Table 4.18: How Secondary School Students Prioritize the Obstacles to Education by Demographic Grouping (N=150)

Obstacle Cited as the Most Important	Male		Female		Urban		Rural	
	Mean Value	Ordinal Rank	Mean Value	Ordinal Rank	Mean Value	Ordinal Rank	Mean Value	Ordinal Rank
It is too far to go	1.47	1	1.43	1	1.44	1	1.46	1
Quality & Relevance are too low	1.83	3	1.75	2	1.75	2	1.81	3
It is too expensive	--	--	1.80	3	1.84	3	--	--
Too many chores to do at home	1.76	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
I am too old to be in school	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.70	2
	Under 15		15 & Over					
Obstacle Cited as the Most Important	Mean Value	Ordinal Rank	Mean Value	Ordinal Rank	Note: A low mean value/ordinal rank indicates a high priority			
It is too far to go	1.53	1	1.37	1				
Quality & Relevance are too low	1.50	2	--	--				
I am too old to be in school	1.89	3	--	--				
It is too expensive	--	--	1.72	2				

Too many chores to do at home	--	--	1.91	3				
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While out of school youth also identified *distance to school* as a contributing factor to dropping out, responsibilities such as *needing to earn money for the family* and *doing chores at home* assumed much greater priority than was true for in-school youth (see Table 4.19). In an echo of the findings for secondary school students, more boys than girls felt that domestic tasks were a barrier to completing their education. The need to earn money for the family appeared to be the key obstacle to attending school with 30% of the sample attaching some priority to this factor, rising to 50% for youth in remote locations. Surprisingly, the quality of education did not figure as a prominent issue in the decision to leave school for this sub-sample.

Table 4.19: How Out-of-School Youth Prioritize the Obstacles to Education by Demographic Grouping (N=87)

<i>Obstacle Cited as the Most Important</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Need to earn money for my family	30%	27%	36%	30%	24%	50%	0%	35%
Too many chores to do at home	29%	32%	20%	20%	33%	25%	15%	31%
It is too far to go	22%	24%	16%	15%	24%	25%	31%	20%
It is too expensive	15%	13%	20%	5%	20%	13%	23%	14%
Quality & Relevance are too low	8%	7%	12%	10%	10%	0%	0%	9%

Both secondary and out of school youth were asked in FGDs whether they found it more difficult to stay in school the older they got. Secondary school students were clear that their parents wanted them to remain in school, but that there was also pressure to find work due to their families' economic difficulties. For out-of-school youth, the need to supplement the family income was more heavily emphasized to the extent that they reported that they were asked by their families to drop out, as they were old enough to find work.

Two factors emerged in the FGDs that weren't apparent in the survey data. All groups highlighted an inability to cope academically in class as a disincentive to continue studying (this was also mentioned in the parent FGDs). A number of out-of-school youth also referred to the actions of their peers as influencing their decision to stop studying. As more and more of their friends dropped out of school, this appeared to become a more acceptable option for them.

Interestingly, while school directors and teachers echoed many of the young people's above concerns, the teachers were the group that placed the most importance on the *low quality and relevance of education*. The most popular reason that school directors gave for students not attending school was the fact that their parents did not think that education is important. It must be noted that this charge of disinterest in their children's schooling is not supported by the findings of the parents' FGDs. High numbers of mother and fathers thought that encouraging their children to go to school was one of their main responsibilities. While the pressure to have young people add to the family income was often mentioned, parents were also convinced that education was a way that their children could have a better future and a higher standard of living. Poor communication between schools and parents and a belief that schools, parents and society in general have yet to start working together in order to improve students' educational lives were also noted as concerns. This last comment is particularly poignant in light of the discrepancies that have come to light between the beliefs of teachers, school directors and their students.

4.2.4 Adolescent Attitudes towards School

In order to find out young people's attitudes towards school, respondents were asked to comment on the opinions of their friends. This was thought to be a better measure of overall attitudes towards education, as the respondents would feel less embarrassed or shy about revealing their own opinions. According to the data, only about half to two-thirds of students thought that a majority of their friends enjoyed school, dropping to less than half among out-of-school youth (see Table 4.20). There were no clear patterns among urban and rural preferences expressed by the different sub-samples. Urban preferences for school tended to be weaker among secondary school students and out-of-school youth in comparison to rural youth except in the case of primary school youth, where urban preferences were stronger. Overall, out-of-school were much less inclined to say that most of their friends liked school with only 47% expressing this view, dropping to 42% among males and 40% among urban out-of-school youth, the lowest frequency reported of any sub-group.

Table 4.20: General Attitudes Towards School among Youth and Educators

<i>Youth Attitudes towards School</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Re- mote	Under 15	15 & Over
Primary students who believe most of their friends like school	57%	60%	53%	70%	49%	--	52%	74%
Secondary students who believe most of their friends like school	68%	68%	68%	63%	73%	--	66%	71%
Out-of-school youth who believe most of their friends like school	47%	42%	60%	40%	51%	44%	54%	46%
<i>Educators' Estimation of Youth Attraction to School</i>	Directors	All Teachers	Primary Level		Secondary Level		Urban	Rural
<i>Educators who believe that most of their students like school</i>	91%	83%	91%		80%		80%	88%

N=150 (Secondary School); N=83 (Primary); N=87 (Out-of-school Youth); N=78 (Teachers); N=11 (Directors)

When teachers and school directors were asked about the attitudes of their students towards school, the responses were overwhelming and consistently positive. Teachers at all levels and in all areas felt that the majority of their students (over 90%) have positive feelings towards their educational experience. School directors mirrored this opinion exactly with 91% expressing this view. Although large numbers of youth do appear to exhibit positive attitudes towards school, the difference between educators' estimation of youth attraction to school and those of youth themselves is quite stark and may exemplify a case of cognitive dissonance avoidance.

Table 4.21: Key Reasons Cited by Out-of-School Youth for Attending School (N=87)

<i>Reason Cited</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Re- mote	Under 15	15 & Over
Important for my future	47%	44%	56%	60%	41%	50%	38%	49%
Enjoy studying	32%	27%	44%	25%	41%	13%	15%	35%
Parents made me go	25%	29%	16%	25%	20%	44%	23%	26%
Other	12%	14%	12%	10%	16%	6%	0%	9%

When it came to out-of-school youths' personal motivation to attend school, three main factors were in evidence. This included the belief that it was important for their future cited by 47%, enjoyment of study (32%) and pressure from their parents to attend (25%) (see Table 4.21). There were some differences between the responding sub-groups. While parental influence appeared to be important for male respondents, their female counterparts were significantly more

likely to cite enjoyment of studying and the future benefits of an education as factors.

When considering where the respondents live, the reasons for attending school also varied. Parental encouragement played a stronger role for young people in remote areas than those in rural and urban areas. Urban out of school youth were more inclined to link education with a better future, while youth in rural areas evidenced a greater level of enjoyment of their studies in comparison with their peers. Although this education-better future link was mentioned in FGDs attended by out of school youth, numerous participants also felt that their educational experience had had little or no actual impact on their working lives. Issues raised included an irrelevant curriculum and a lack of life skills classes, which is discussed in a later section. Respondents also stated that they felt that the poor quality of the education that they had received, expressed in terms of large class size and insufficient textbooks/learning materials, had not left them well prepared to find employment, conclusions that diverged from some of the data received in questionnaires.

Parental attitudes towards school were not cited as significant motivators for either primary or secondary school students (see Table 4.22). Both of these groups identified enjoyment of school and the link between education and a better future as main motivators with secondary students favoring the former and primary students focusing on the latter factor. While attitudes towards school were largely uniform between the demographic sub-groups of secondary school students, the idea that going to school was important for their future was more again strongly expressed by girls than boys (83% versus 61%). This difference was even more marked among primary students with almost twice as many girls as boys citing this factor as important (see 61% versus 33%).

Table 4.22: Key Reasons Cited by In-School Youth for Attending School (N=87)

<i>Reason Cited (Secondary School Students)</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Important for my future	72%	61%	83%	76%	68%	70%	74%
Enjoy studying	41%	49%	34%	33%	49%	38%	47%
Parents made me go	11%	14%	8%	4%	17%	13%	8%
Other	5%	9%	4%	9%	7%	7%	11%
<i>Reason Cited (Primary School Students)</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Enjoy studying	61%	62%	61%	53%	66%	59%	68%
Important for my future	46%	33%	61%	43%	47%	53%	21%
Parents made me go	17%	18%	16%	20%	15%	17%	16%
Other	2%	2%	3%	0%	4%	2%	5%

N=150 (Secondary School); N=83 (Primary)

Secondary school respondents were united in their belief that studying at school would help them find a good job in the future, which is more thoroughly discussed in a later section. Reactions to this question were much more mixed for primary students with those living in urban areas being substantially more optimistic than those in rural ones, 90% versus 68%, respectively. Interestingly, in this case school directors were able to accurately determine the main motivating factors in students coming to school. Similarly, teachers were also largely correct in identifying students' attitudes towards school although they placed too much emphasis on the importance of having friends at school.

When asked about whether they would like to return to school if they had the opportunity, 76% of out of school youth responded positively (see Table 4.23). It should be noted that all respondents living in remote areas expressed a desire to return to school to continue their education. It would appear that boys (81%) were more enthusiastic about returning to school than girls (64%) and that youth in remote areas were particularly excited by such a prospect (100%).

Table 4.23: Attitudes to Various Educational Options Expressed by Youth

<i>Attitude Expressed by Out-of-School Youth</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Re- mote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth expressing a desire to return to school	76%	81%	64%	75%	69%	100%	62%	78%
Youth who were more interested in returning to school if vocational training was available. (Response: Yes, for sure)	39%	47%	20%	50%	35%	38%	23%	42%
<i>Attitude Expressed by In-School Youth</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Re- mote	Under 15	15 & Over
Secondary school students saying that more vocational topics would definitely make them more interested in coming to school	53%	59%	47%	57%	50%	--	51%	56%
Primary school students saying that more vocational topics would definitely make them more interested in coming to school	53%	47%	61%	53%	53%	--	50%	63%

N=150 (Secondary School); N=83 (Primary); N=87 (Out-of-School Youth)

All respondents were asked about the effect, if any, that the teaching of vocational courses on agriculture, computer skills etc. had on their attitudes towards school and whether this would increase their interest in attending. For out-of-school youth, the fact that their school did teach these subjects led to a certain, but far from overwhelming increase of interest in schooling; in this respect, only 39% said that the availability of such courses definitely increased their interest in returning to school. Notably, girls (20%) and youth aged under-15 (23%) displayed a particularly low level of interest in vocational topics. Just over half of primary and lower secondary students stated that they would definitely be more interested in school if these subjects were taught (53%). Again, however, female respondents from secondary schools were less inclined to answer this question positively, while primary school students displayed the opposite pattern.

4.2.5 Family Environment and Support for Education

One of the important threads in earlier discussions is the idea that the low value parents put on education is one of the key reasons students dropout. This view is widely held by educators (and also commune officials) as seen in Figure 4.4 above. An examination of youth views in all three sub-samples, however, did not bear this view out, suggesting that family environments are actually more supportive of children's education than most educators and even NGO workers think. Indeed, many youth respondents identified parental encouragement as being one of the reasons that they attend school, although it was by no means the most important.

Nevertheless, according to FGDs, family environment did play an important role in out-of-school youths' inability to finish school. Youth respondents mentioned family problems such as economic hardship and the need to contribute to the household's income as factors that caused their parents to ask them to drop out of school. There were, however, some differing opinions on this. Some youths stated that their parents had encouraged them to stay in school but they themselves had decided against this. Reasons given included wanting to learn a specific skill

that they thought would help them more in the future, as well as wanting to follow in the footsteps of their peers who had already dropped out.

For parents themselves, encouraging their children to attend school was a much-repeated responsibility. It was clear, that while many families faced great financial difficulties in continuing to support their children's schooling, there was little support for the common belief expressed by educators that parents, especially the poor ones, undervalue education. Indeed, 73% of parents thought that this was not generally true of most parents and a further 12% stated that while it may be partly true, parents' alleged lack of interest is often used as an excuse to cover up inadequacies in the school system. It must be stated, too, that when the data was analyzed further, no significant relationship appeared between frequencies of parental encouragement to stay in school and students' SES backgrounds, suggesting that this is not necessarily a social class based pattern.

4.2.6 Knowledge of Children's Rights and the National Youth Policy

Key informant interviews with major development partners such as UNICEF confirmed that there has been considerable investment over the years in promoting a children's rights approach to educational development, the centerpiece of which is the Child Friendly School approach and policy promulgated by MoEYS in 2008. Consultations with stakeholders and youth indicate that some of this investment has borne fruit with 65% of teachers and 71% of youth stating that they have ever studied about children's rights and the CRC while 55% of commune chiefs said they were 'familiar with children's rights issues' (see Tables 4.24 and 4.25). However, the reverse side of this reporting is that about a third of educators and youth/children have not studied the CRC or its provisions about children's rights. Along the same lines, only about a quarter or less of those responding (both educators and youth) indicated that they were 'very familiar' with the provisions of the CRC while about half of commune chiefs said they were. These frequencies were particularly low among teachers in rural schools (15%). When teachers were asked directly about how many of their students knew about their rights as children, only about 38% ventured the view that 'most' of them knew well about their rights, with the remainder believing that only 'some' or 'few' of them had a good knowledge base in this area.

Table 4.24: Selected Stakeholder Views & Awareness of Children's Rights/Youth Policy

Teacher Views on Selected Topics	All	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Urban Schools	Rural Schools
Teachers stating that they have ever studied children's rights	65%	61%	67%	71%	58%
Teachers stating that they are <u>very</u> familiar with CRC	27%	30%	25%	36%	15%
Teachers who are aware there is now a National Youth Policy	50%	61%	45%	47%	55%
Teachers who have NOT seen any evidence that the policy is being implemented	45%	30%	51%	42%	48%
Teachers who think that <u>most</u> children know about children's rights	38%	43%	36%	36%	42%
Commune Chief Views on Selected Topics					
Commune Chiefs very familiar with children's rights	55%	-	-	-	-
Commune Chiefs aware of the Youth Policy	45%	-	-	-	-

N=78 (Teachers); N=11 (Commune Chiefs)

When asked about the National Youth Development Policy promulgated by MoEYS in 2011, only about 50% of the teachers surveyed said that they had even heard of the policy, dropping to on-

ly 45% among secondary school teachers, where one would think awareness levels would be the highest. Similarly, only 45% of commune chiefs had ever heard of the policy. Among youth, awareness levels were even lower with only 29% of those consulted professing to be aware of the existence of such a policy. Rates of awareness were particularly low among females (14%) and among the Grade 6 students at primary level (12%). Similarly, about 45% of teachers said that they have 'not' seen any concrete evidence of the implementation of the policy, jumping to 72% among youth. These response patterns imply that the contents of the policy have not been well disseminated nor has it moved very decisively to concrete implementation.

Table 4.25: Youth Awareness about their Rights & Youth Policy (N=168)

Student Awareness Level of Rights and Policies	All	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Youth that have ever studied Children's Rights or the CRC	71%	79%	68%	72%	71%	75%	69%
Youth <u>very</u> familiar with the CRC	9%	6%	10%	11%	7%	10%	8%
Youth aware that Government recently disseminated Youth Policy	29%	12%	36%	44%	14%	33%	25%
Youth who have NOT seen much evidence that youth policies are being implemented	72%	81%	68%	61%	83%	65%	77%

4.2.7 Social Attitudes about Discrimination

The huge network provided by the state school system offers tremendous potential for teachers to act as advocates for the rights of those youth who are vulnerable to discrimination. This includes discrimination according to one's gender, social class, ethnicity, and other ascribed attributes. In order to determine how well teachers might be able to perform this role, investigators asked what kinds of training to prevent discrimination teachers had received (see Table 4.26). The two forms of training that teachers had most frequently received concerned gender discrimination (58%) and discrimination against those with HIV/AIDS. Other forms of training to prevent discrimination registered very low frequencies of less than 10%.

Table 4.26: Teachers Receiving Training to Prevent Discrimination (N=78)

Teachers who have ever had training to prevent discrimination in:	All	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Urban Schools	Rural Schools
Gender	58%	78%	49%	51%	58%
Ethnic Discrimination	5%	4%	5%	4%	5%
HIV/AIDS	62%	61%	62%	58%	62%
Disabilities	8%	9%	7%	9%	8%
Other	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%

Table 4.27: Youth Fears about Discrimination (N=168)

Students fearing that particular characteristics will prevent them from having a good career because of:	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Gender	9%	13%	6%	9%	7%	13%	7%
Social Class	15%	16%	15%	13%	18%	14%	22%
Ethnicity (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese, etc)	14%	13%	15%	14%	15%	12%	22%

Among youth, only about 9% to 15% of those surveyed expressed fear that they might be discriminated against because of a social or biological attribute (see Table 4.27). Social class and

ethnicity seemed to be the greatest concerns, expressed by 15% and 14% of respondents, respectively. Differences across demographic sub-groups were not great though youth aged 15 and over seemed to express the most concern with reported rates of 22%.

4.2.8 Relevance of Role Models

The presence of role models in a young person’s world can provide some grounding and direction for what they want to strive for and who they want to be. The role model can exemplify in concrete terms social values that provide some commonality among youth sub-groups and give a sense of ‘fitting in.’ Therefore, the study took the prevalence of role models among youth as an important measure of social participation. In this respect, it was found that both in- and out-of-school youth appear to have identified role models whom they admire in relatively equal frequencies, with between 44% and 47% of those responding indicating that they had a role model (see Table 4.28). This compared with 73% of school directors and 55% of teachers who believed that their students had role models. In actuality, survey findings demonstrate that more than half of the youth responding do ‘not’ have a role model or someone that they admired. Males tended to have role models slightly more frequently than females and out-of-school youth in remote areas registered the highest frequency of any sub-group. For those who had role models, these tended to be famous people such as authors, musicians, movie stars, and athletes among others.

Box 4.1: Role Model Traits Classification

Professional Values

- Successful
- Confident
- Strong
- Smart/Intelligent

Altruistic Values

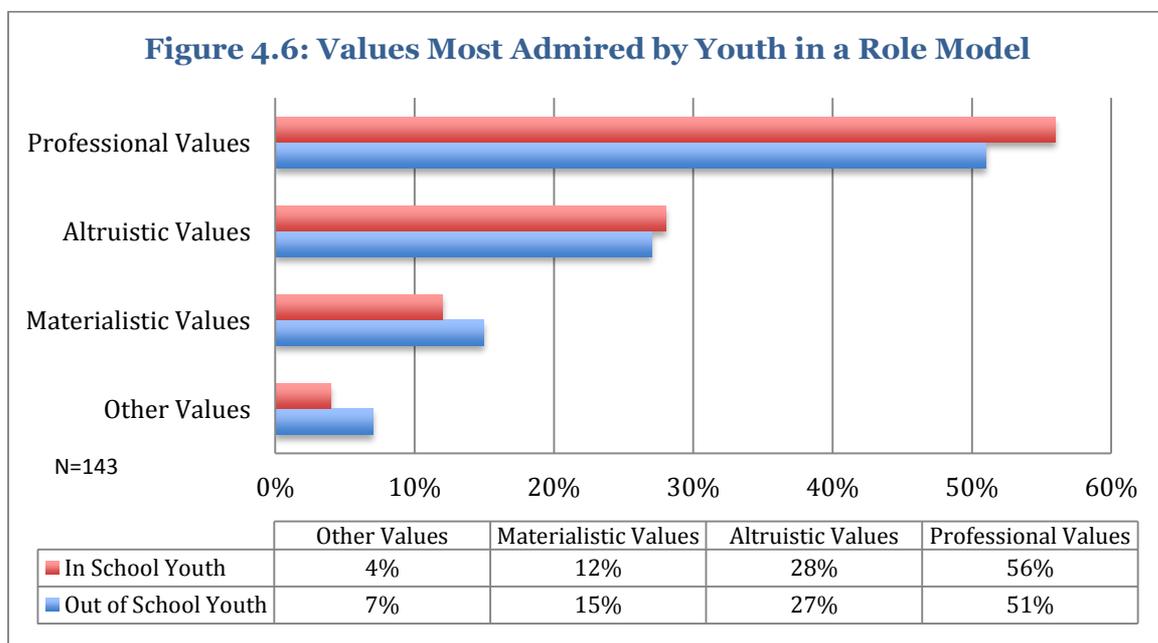
- Compassionate
- Helping others

Materialistic Values

- Handsome/Beautiful
- Influential
- Powerful
- Being Cool
- Rich

Table 4.28: Student Views on Role Models (In-School Youth) (N=322)

Role Model View	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Primary	Secondary
In-School Youth stating that they have a role model	44%	48%	39%	46%	42%	--	41%	45%
Out-of-School Youth stating that they have a role model	47%	53%	32%	40%	45%	63%	--	--



The study also examined what sorts of attributes or traits youth admired most in their role models. Respondents were asked to pick the one attribute from a list provided that was the most important to them. They were also allowed to add their own additional attributes to the list at their own discretion. These traits have been classified into three general groupings that exemplify *Professional Values*, *Altruistic Values*, and *Materialistic Values* (see Box 4.1). For those who had a role model, the most frequently cited trait that they admired most tended to exemplify a Professional Value (e.g., being strong, smart, confident). About 50% or more of the sample cited such traits. Altruistic Values were chosen at a frequency of 20% to 30% of the time while traits exemplifying Materialistic Values were chosen 10% to 20% of the time (see Figure 4.6). These tendencies for Cambodian youth to gravitate towards more positive value systems, however, must be weighed against the finding that more than half of those responding did not appear to have a role model of any sort or a particular value set to which they overtly subscribed.

4.2.9 Opportunities for Intervention to Promote Social Participation

A review of social participation issues among youth ranging from leisure habits, role model acquisition, school participation, knowledge of rights and policies, attitudes towards school, and other factors reveals multiple access points for development programming to promote better social integration. The diversity and scope of these access points, however, requires a need to prioritize what a project can do effectively. These concerns aside, the following possible list of interventions and activities could go a long way to enhancing the social participation of Cambodian youth. These have been organized according to an identified need or problem area discussed in previous sections and explained accordingly in Table 4.29 and below.

Table 4.29: Suggested Interventions to Promote Social Participation among Youth

Problem Area/Need	Suggested Intervention(s)
1. <i>Limited School Participation due to problems of distance, cost, and perceived low educational quality & relevance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimentation in new ways to address the old problem of educational quality and relevance (e.g., use of electronic media, ICT facilities, project work methods, etc.) • Scholarships to address the costs of education cited by youth • Education vouchers • Review of Life Skills programming with a view to increasing efficiency, student choice, and local empowerment
2. <i>Limited Access Points for School Re-entry (Formal or Non-formal) for Out-of-school youth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated Learning Programs for formal school re-entry • Better tracking of youth opportunities for training • Working with the Provincial Training Center on school outreach and information dissemination to out-of-school youth clubs
3. <i>Limited Reading Habits:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Clubs for both in- and out-of-school youth • Library development
4. <i>Lack of Outlets to Spend Free Time Constructively</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Clubs that focus on community outreach, involvement and service development • Hobby Clubs
5. <i>Few Opportunities for Girls to Engage in Sports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female Sport Clubs
6. <i>Limited Exposure to culture and new experiences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field trips • Improved use of electronic media to broaden horizons (e.g., use of film, Film Clubs, etc.)
7. <i>Dissonance between Educator Views of School Participation and Students/Youth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator action research to confront widely held opinions among educators and their lack of grounding in real evidence

Problem Area/Need	Suggested Intervention(s)
8. Drug Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on Life Skills education on drug abuse and alcoholism prevention
9. Low Familiarity with CRC and Youth Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Rights Sensitization as part of school planning • Working with Youth Department to Promote outreach on Youth Policy
10. Inadequate Role Model Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Reading Clubs to inspire youth about famous people (e.g., Sipar Famous People Series) • Self-reflection exercises in a structured club or class setting • Inviting Guest Speakers (e.g. a famous author, athlete, etc) to speak at target schools

School Participation Issues: Perhaps one of the leading problems discussed in this section is school participation, particularly at secondary school level where only about 30% of the youth population in this age-range is enrolled in school. Because being in school provides a much safer environment for youth (e.g., lower observed rates of alcohol intake, lower likelihood of migration, etc), investments to keep youth in school can act as an important preventative strategy that can save considerable resources later. Programming should, therefore, have a double-pronged approach that focuses both on keeping youth in school as well as addressing their needs for the unlucky one that decide to drop out.

Key obstacles to school participation such as distance and cost can partly be offset with traditional interventions such as scholarship packages that include a bicycle, educational supplies, and/or cash vouchers (currently being employed successfully by World Food Program). But the obstacle of low perceived educational quality has been a very stubborn problem in Cambodia that has been difficult to address successfully. Any proposed new programming should consider new and more radical approaches in educational experimentation that includes the use of electronic media (e.g., greater use of tablets), ICT hardware, constructivist learning methodologies, project work, etc. Similarly, life skills education programming (e.g., drug abuse prevention) should also be reviewed and modified to determine ways to increase efficiency and empowerment. For example, focus group discussions indicate that students have little or no choice in the life skills topics that they study; the school director decides who studies what. Reviewing implementation procedures such as this may improve efficiencies since youth and educator consultations both seem to imply that the availability of life skills courses improve retention.

Opportunities for School Re-entry for Out-of-School Youth: Many out-of-school youth indicated they would return to school, if they had the opportunity. Yet these opportunities to actually return to school seem very unclear. Government is supposed to have accelerated learning opportunities to promote certification and re-entry by out-of-school youth but these services do not seem to be systematically provided. Any proposed project aimed at youth empowerment should, therefore, consider advocacy to clarify possible re-entry points (e.g., outreach by PTCs, POEs, etc) and actual investment to support accelerated learning programs aimed at re-entry.

Reading and Leisure Habits: Youth appear to have very limited reading habits with only small minorities of surveyed youth in all categories reading magazines, newspapers, or having a favorite author. The support of reading clubs could provide a structured environment for youth to start learning more about the world around them as well as providing a forum for thoughtful discussion and reflection. Such clubs could have multiple purposes such as promoting better understanding of role models through various literature series available in school libraries (e.g., Sipar's *Famous People* series). Library development activities in schools can improve access to

stimulating reading materials by increasing the diversity of documentary holdings and also introducing new forms of media through which reading materials can be accessed (e.g., tablets). School libraries can be assisted to increase their outreach services to reach out-of-school youth, perhaps using the comfortable surroundings provided for such facilities as a convenient meeting place for out-of-school youth clubs.

About 40% of the youth consulted during this survey indicated that they have no hobbies or constructive past times, preferring instead to watch TV in their free time. The support of clubs for both in and out-of-school youth can provide a structured outlet to promote various interests such as photography, film, creative writing, reading, etc. Sports clubs aimed at girls are particularly recommended given the low frequency rates (less than 5%) with which female youth appear to participate in sports activities. Youth clubs also provide a useful mechanism through which to organize field trips to places of educational interest, thereby increasing the exposure of youth to new experiences. It was already noted in this survey that fewer than 10% of youth consulted said that they had ever been to a museum. In several cases, service providers have already developed structured manuals to facilitate the capacity-building activities needed to set up various clubs in a systematic and effective manner. Additional manuals can be developed based on the interests of youth in target areas. In-school youth can also be encouraged to participate in subject related clubs such as science, history, or drama. In addition, Youth Clubs can be used as a useful vehicle through which to promote social work in the community. Such opportunities can help instill altruistic values, promote communication and relationship-building with commune government, and benefit local people.

Cognitive Dissonance Aversion among Educators: One of the more interesting findings from this study was the profound disconnect in several instances between educator views of what youth think about school and issues that affect youth and what youth actually think. Teachers and School Directors seem to exhibit symptoms of Cognitive Dissonance Aversion by clinging to beliefs that apparently have little basis in reality. The most classic example of this is the belief that students dropout because parents do not value education when in fact the low quality of educational services provided by Teachers and School Directors is a much more important reason, according to the youth (and parents) consulted. Before educators can better address the problems of youth, they first need a better understanding of what those problems are. Thus, there is a need to provide opportunities for educators to discuss the problems of youth either through structured discussions based on research such as this or through their own action research that they conduct themselves.

Knowledge of Rights and Policies: Finally, this research highlighted the continuing gap in knowledge among youth about their rights as described in the CRC as well as the new Youth Development Policy. These gaps persist in spite of considerable investment by development partners. While structured workshops are the easiest way through which to address such gaps, these appear to have limited effectiveness given the large number of youth (about a third) who still profess a great deal of ignorance about their rights in spite of the fact that many have attended CRC workshops in the past. An even larger proportion profess ignorance about the RGC's Youth Development Policy. Suggested responses to this situation suggest training linked with concrete outputs such as a Child Rights Sensitization Workshop connected to the preparation of a formal contribution to annual School Improvement Plans at the beginning of each year. This approach would help to transform workshops that are often abstract into more meaningful ex-

ercises.

4.3 Role of Technology in Youth Empowerment

4.3.1 Familiarity with Technology

The profusion of technology in Cambodian society has been an exciting trend with considerable potential to promote development. Its rapid penetration of the rural countryside has been one of the most surprising developments observed in recent years. For example, the increasing ubiquity of mobile phones has been a striking manifestation of this profusion. Indeed, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications recently reported that the total number of mobile telephone subscriptions reached 20.2 million in 2013, exceeding the total population by about 5 million (Cambodia Daily, 2014).

The role of technology in society, however, can be a double-edged sword with tremendous advantages for the exchange of information and the promotion of critical thinking as well as less healthy tendencies such as servile dependency. For instance, a significant proportion of youth consulted in this survey indicated high dependency on such devices as calculators with 33% of out-school youth stating that they needed a calculator to do even simple calculations while 25% of in-school youth said that they needed one. When asked about their overall dependency on technology, however, majorities among both in and out-of-school youth samples felt that they were not overly dependent on technology with only 13% or less saying that they 'could not live without it' (See Tables 4.30 and 4.31). Males appeared to be slightly more dependent on technology than females, especially in the case of out-of-school youth. At the other end of the spectrum, fewer than 10% of respondents said that technology played no role in their life, except in the case of out-of-school females 36% of whom claimed technology played no role.

Table 4.30: Student Dependency on Technology Usage by Education Level (N=150)

Question	Cannot Survive without it		Use it from time to time only		Does not play a large role in life		Hard to say	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Some people use technology all the time. Some people use it only a little. How important is technology in your life?</i>	12%	7%	64%	67%	5%	8%	19%	18%

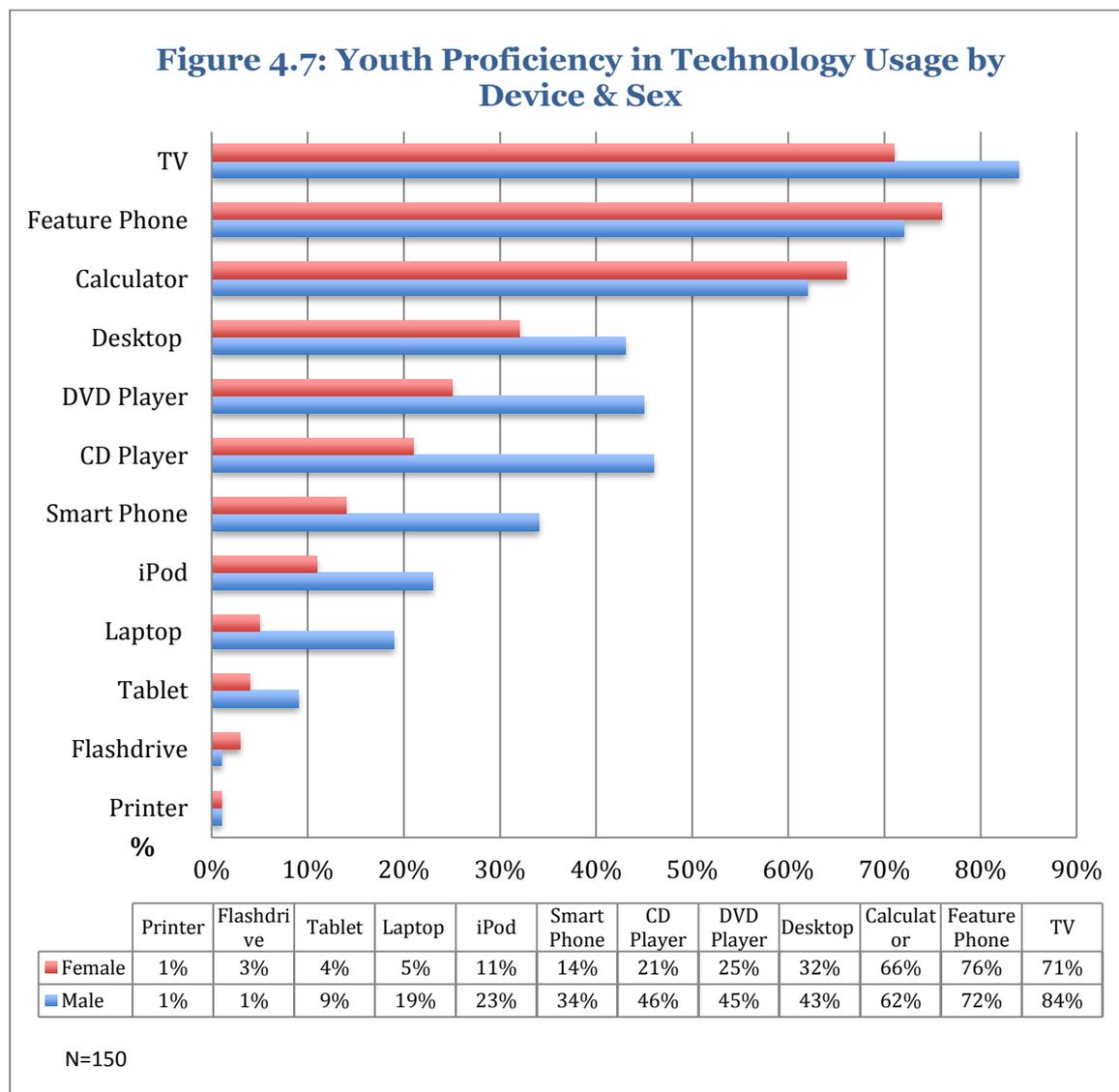
Table 4.31: Dependency on Technology among Out-of-School Youth (N=87)

Question	Cannot Survive without it		Use it from time to time only		Does not play a large role in life		Hard to say	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Some people use technology all the time. Some people use it only a little. How important is technology in your life?</i>	13%	0%	58%	36%	10%	36%	19%	28%

An assessment of proficiency for particular technological devices indicated that *television sets*, *feature phones*, and *calculators* are the devices with which youth are most familiar with 65% or more of those responding indicating that they could use these devices proficiently (see Figure 4.7). The devices in which youth showed the least proficiency included *tablets*, *flash drives*, and *printers* with less than 10% of those responding indicating any degree of proficiency. Neverthe-

less, it is important to note that tablets have started their penetration of Cambodian society and the fact that about 10% of the youth population can already use these devices is probably a sign of things to come.

When considering the use of individual devices, clear gender differences in proficiency also emerged. For example, out of 12 devices cited, females only exceeded the proficiency of males in the use of feature phones and calculators and only then by a very small margin; for most other devices, males tended to indicate higher levels of proficiency including in the use of television sets, desktop computers, DVD/CD players, and smartphones. In several cases such as DVD/CD players and smartphones, frequencies of proficiency were double those of females.



4.3.2 Impacts of Social Media on Youth Behaviors

A review of youth behaviors with respect to the use of electronic media indicated some interesting patterns. For example, between a quarter and a third of both in and out-of-school youth spend significant amounts of time watching television (see Tables 4.32 and 4.33). There were few differences in this pattern between male and female youth still in-school; however, out-of-school males were twice as likely to watch television than their female counterparts (32% ver-

sus 16%). In-school youth also seemed to exhibit a stronger tendency to play video games than was true of out-of-school youth (28% versus 10%) and males in both groups were more likely to use such games than females. Surprisingly, there did not seem to be that many instances where geographical differences in electronic media usage were particularly profound among either youth sub-group. There were a few exceptions in this regard, however, such as the tendency among rural and remote youth to listen to radio with greater frequency than urban youth, perhaps attesting to their more isolated locations. Similarly, in-school youth (both males and females) seemed somewhat more inclined to listen to radio everyday (19% versus 13%), although a fifth of males in each sub-sample demonstrated relatively higher frequencies of listenership in comparison to females. In terms of age differences in media usage, younger people under 15 who are still in school demonstrated very high rates of video game usage than was true among those out-of-school (30% versus 0%) suggesting greater access to such games among those in school and the role of peer imitation.

Table 4.32: Student Habits in the Use of Electronic Media by Education Level N=150

Media Usage Habit	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students watching TV 2 hours or more a day	24%	24%	24%	26%	21%	29%	18%
Students listening to radio everyday	19%	20%	18%	14%	24%	17%	23%
Students with a favorite movie	61%	68%	55%	67%	56%	61%	61%
Students playing video games at least a couple of times a week or more	28%	38%	18%	31%	26%	30%	26%
Students who use the internet at least a couple of times a week or more	16%	22%	12%	17%	16%	14%	21%

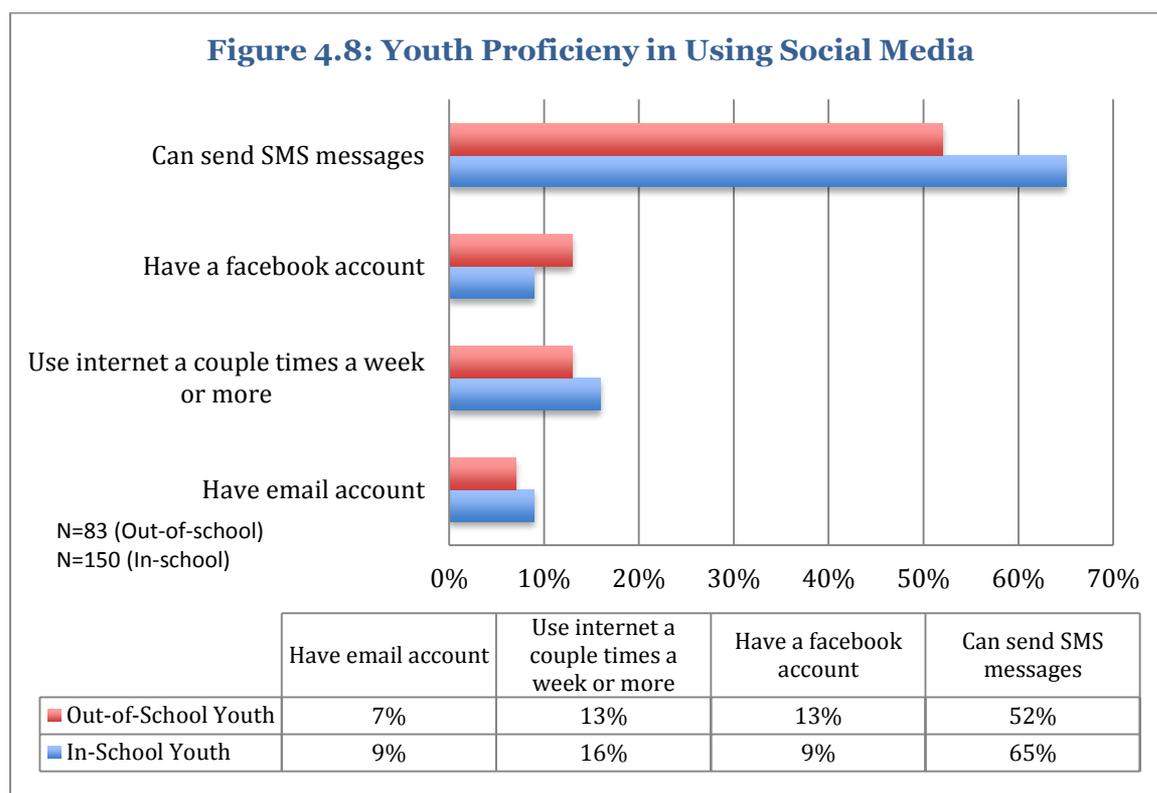
Table 4.33: Youth Habits in the Use of Electronic Media (Out-of-School Youth) N=87

Media Usage Habit	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth watching TV 2 hours or more a day	28%	32%	16%	30%	24%	37%	31%	27%
Youth listening to radio everyday	13%	18%	0%	10%	14%	13%	8%	14%
Youth with a favorite movie	54%	55%	52%	65%	49%	56%	69%	51%
Youth playing video games at least a couple of times a week or more	10%	14%	0%	20%	6%	13%	0%	12%
Youth who use the internet at least a couple of times a week or more	13%	17%	0%	15%	12%	19%	0%	16%

More than 50 years ago, Marshall McLuhan observed that film is a 'hot' medium (McLuhan, 1964) and this observation seems true today with one half to two-thirds of both youth samples indicating that they had a 'favorite' movie or film that had deeply affected them. These high frequencies of interest in film were fairly consistent across demographic sub-groups. Radio and television in contrast are considered 'cold' media whose effectiveness in impacting attitudes is more limited. The strong impact of movies and film on youth seemed to be true across gender, geographical locations, and age groups.

The social media that youth expressed the greatest proficiency in using was *SMS texting* with 52% to 65% of youth in each sample indicating that they used this medium frequently (see Fig-

ure 4.8). In-school youth evinced higher proficiency in this regard than was true out-of-school youth. Internet usage was far less prevalent than anticipated with only 13% to 16% of either sample indicating that they used the internet a couple of times or more a week. Males in both sub-samples seemed much more inclined to use the internet at this frequency level with as many as 22% of in-school males and 17% of out-of-school males claiming to use it with relatively high frequency. This contrasted with only 12% of in-school females and 0% among out-of-school females suggesting that internet usage is a predominantly male habit among Cambodian youth. Common reasons cited for internet usage included the need to find information, studying, and Facebook communication with friends. Surprisingly, the use of the internet as a tool for job searches was not cited frequently. Only about 10% of each sample indicated that they had a Facebook account with slightly fewer indicating that they had an email account. In general, in-school youth were slightly more likely to be using social media in most cases with the exception of Facebook in which case out-of-school youth demonstrated a slightly higher rate of frequency.



Several development partners noted much success in using electronic media to impart social messages to youth through specially designed programs or production efforts. The UN in particular has used television commercials effectively for many social messages targeting youth ranging from HIV/AIDS transmission to human trafficking. Such productions, however, tend to be very expensive. Some service providers such as the *Women’s Media Center of Cambodia* have created an excellent library of short but powerful educational films about young people and particularly young girls and women in Cambodian society, which are readily available on the internet. Other service providers such as *Equal Access* (now evolved into a Cambodian NGO called *Media One*) have used highly cost effective strategies to disseminate social messaging targeted at youth involving a combination of radio messaging, establishing listening-dialogue

groups in schools, and school mailboxes to mail in feedback to the radio production studio. The best programmatic exemplar of this approach has been M1's radio program known as, *We Can Do It*. This short list of successful outreach to youth using electronic media demonstrates that there is ample expertise and experience in Cambodia, especially among local NGOs to formulate social messaging about youth empowerment.

Although social media usage such as Facebook still appears to be limited, its potential is nevertheless great, particularly as smartphone technology penetrates the countryside. Yet it is surprising to note that most service providers affiliated with government such as the PTC have not developed Facebook Pages advertising their programming. This presents a potent area of action that could link capacity building in the use of social media by service providers and likely increases in social media usage among youth.

4.3.3 Opportunities for Intervention to Promote Technology as a Force for Empowerment

Technology usage is a cross-cutting issue whose influence has relevance to each of the three empowerment domains targeted by this study: social, economic, and political empowerment. Its use has already been mentioned several times as a potent tool to improve social participation in the previous section. The present discussion seeks to build on those ideas and elaborate further ways that technology and in particular social and electronic media can be used to promote youth empowerment. A list of possible interventions and technology usages are listed by problem area and issue in Table 4.34 below.

Table 4.34: Suggested Interventions to Promote the Use of Technology for Youth Empowerment

Problem Area/Need/Issue	Suggested Intervention(s)
1. Gender Split in Technology Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for girls and female teachers in ICT access in target schools • Opportunities for enhanced ICT access for out-of-school females through advocacy with existing school-based ICT labs
2. Infrequent Usage of the Internet for Job Searching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building opportunities for youth out-of-school to use the internet as a job search tool
3. Opportunities for Hot Media Usage to Promote Social Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film Clubs for both in and out-of-school youth that disseminate social messaging using existing libraries of Cambodian Film (e.g., Women's Media Center of Cambodia)
4. Opportunities for Outreach to Out-of-school youth through SMS texting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a database of out-of-school youth phone numbers in target areas • Utilize this data base to call meetings and announce special events for youth mobilization
5. Opportunities for Cost-effective Social Messaging Using Integrated Radio Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on existing models of social messaging using integrated radio programming (e.g., radio program production, structured listening-dialogue groups, interactive feedback)
6. Poor Utilization of Social Media by Important Service Providers (e.g., PTCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist key service providers such as the PTC to develop Facebook pages that can help facilitate more structured dissemination of information to potential social media users
7. Opportunities to Use Technology and Social Media to Improve Educational Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Table 4.29 above

The present data highlighted significant gender differences in technology proficiency with female youth much less prone to use ICT or even the internet. Proposed new programming should

include advocacy that can promote increased proclivity among females to use technology for information acquisition, job searches, and educational preparation. A good place to start would be to work with schools with existing ICT labs by organizing capacity-building opportunities for females in using computers, internet, and tablets. These opportunities should include female teachers at the school as well as in-and out-of-school youth.

Technology usage patterns highlighted in this research suggest several approaches to facilitate more effective use of technology to promote social messaging aimed at youth. Social messaging can rely on a combination of different approaches including the use of film provided by various service providers (e.g., to support film clubs), integrated radio programming, or SMS texting. Given that texting appears to be the social media channel that youth are most experienced in using, a project might consider the development of a database of phone numbers that could be used to communicate special job search events, youth club meetings, entrance tests to relevant institutions, or other events that promote empowerment. In addition, a project could also work with relevant service providers to youth, especially those in government, to improve their own usage of social media for information dissemination purposes. For example, the PTCs interviewed did not appear to have a Facebook Page to advertise their institutions, suggesting a good starting point for such efforts.

4.4 Economic Empowerment Issues

4.4.1 Employment and Educational Quality/Relevance

4.4.1.1 Perceptions of Educational Quality & Relevance among Stakeholders

Because behaviors are usually determined by perceptions, the latter assume a large measure of importance even if these attitudes are incorrect. Thus, local perceptions of educational quality have assumed a matter of some importance in this study, particularly as such perceptions relate to employment and work relevance. Among youth still in school, there seemed to be a strong belief that studying would enable them to get a good job in the future, as noted in an earlier section. This belief was particularly strong among secondary school student of whom 81% expressed this belief while 86% of those enrolled in urban schools did so (see Table 4.35). Yet, a large proportion of secondary school students expressed significant concerns about the educational quality at their particular school, even in spite of the tendency to give socially desirable responses. About 33% of students cited this concern overall and 39% of secondary school students cited such concerns. This concern seemed to be strong among most population sub-groups with the possible exception of primary school students of whom only 23% expressed such concerns.

Table 4.35: Student Attitudes about Educational Quality & Relevance N=233

Views on Educational Quality	All	Education Level		Sex		Location		Age	
		Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students that think school will help them find a good job	80%	76%	81%	80%	81%	86%	68%	79%	83%
Students citing quality concerns as an important obstacle for school attendance	33%	23%	39%	34%	32%	32%	34%	34%	32%

Those youth who were out of school were less positive in their views about the relevance and importance of school in finding a job. A majority of 57% still indicated that their previous education had helped them find a good job but this was significantly below the rates cited by in-school youth above (see Table 4.36). On the other hand, out-of-school youth seemed to be much less critical of the quality of education that they had received with only 8% citing such concerns overall. This is somewhat of a paradox that out-of-school youth would be less critical of the educational quality at their old schools but at the same time be less positive about the relevance of the schooling that they had received to find a job whereas the opposite pattern was observed among in-school youth.

Table 4.36: Out-of-School Youth Attitudes about Educational Quality & Relevance N=87

Views on Educational Quality	All	Sex		Location			Age	
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth that think school helped them find a good job	57%	66%	36%	70%	49%	69%	46%	59%
Youth citing quality concerns as an important reason for leaving school	8%	7%	12%	10%	10%	0%	0%	9%

The present survey also sought to investigate perceptions of educational quality by asking educators to self-evaluate their own schools. They were asked to venture an opinion about the quality of their school by comparing it with other schools that they had visited or knew about. School directors and teachers tended to offer somewhat divergent assessments of their respective schools. In this respect, school directors were more likely to rate their schools as worse than most other schools than were teachers (36% versus 22%); very few of either group, however, ventured an opinion in which they felt their school was better than other schools (see Table 4.37). Nevertheless, secondary school teachers were more likely than primary school teachers to rate their school as 'worse than most' with nearly a third venturing such an opinion (27%).

Table 4.37: Teacher and Director Views on the Quality of Education at their School

How Teachers & Directors Describe Quality at Their School	School Directors	All Teachers	Primary School Teachers	Secondary School Teachers
Better than Most	9%	5%	9%	4%
About the same as most	55%	62%	65%	60%
Worse than Most	36%	22%	9%	27%
Hard to say	0%	12%	17%	9%

N=11 Directors; 78 Teachers

In terms of educational relevance, most school directors were inclined to give a very high assessment of the relevance of the educational services that they offered at their school with 82% saying that education was 'very relevant' (see Table 4.38). Only 45% of teachers, however, offered this view with 56% of secondary school teachers indicating that education at their school was only 'a little relevant,' following the tendency observed above where secondary school teachers tend to be more critical of their school's educational services.

Table 4.38: Teacher and Director Views on Educational Relevance at their School

How Teachers & Directors Describe Educational Relevance at Their School	School Directors	All Teachers	Primary School Teachers	Secondary School Teachers
Very relevant	82%	45%	57%	40%
A little relevant	18%	53%	43%	56%
Not at all relevant	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hard to say	0%	3%	0%	4%

N=11 Directors; 78 Teachers

Interviews with a sample of employers comprising mainly small and medium-sized enterprises in Kampong Cham and Prey Veng Provinces gave a very different assessment of the educational relevance of local schools. Overall, 60% of the interviewed employers indicated that local schools were 'not' providing educational services that were relevant to the needs of local businesses and industries while 80% indicated that they had seen little improvement in educational relevance in recent years either. None of those interviewed indicated that

Box 4.2: Most Frequently Lacking Soft Skills Cited by Local Employers

1. Problem Solving: 70%
2. Financial Literacy: 60%
3. Vocational Skills: 60%
4. Critical Thinking: 50%
5. Questioning Skills: 50%
6. Basic Literacy Skills: 50%
7. ICT Skills: 30%
8. Basic Numeracy Skills: 20%

youth working in their establishments had come well-prepared to perform their duties though the majority said that they did at least come with some skills. Employers echoed the sentiments voiced in national surveys that youth lack important soft skills when coming to work. The most frequently cited soft skills lacking among Cambodian included problem solving skills (cited by 70% of employers), Financial Literacy Skills (60%) and Vocational Skills (60%) (see Box 4.2).

Although external perceptions of the education system's educational relevance appear to be low, both Government and NGOs have tried to make investments to make improvements. One of the key strategies NGOs and Government have used to increase educational relevance and quality in the state education system is through the introduction of life skills education. According to Ministry informants, the *National Life Skills Policy* gives schools considerable latitude in choosing the topics that they want to teach and how they teach them. However, this latitude has frequently left schools with too little structure and guidance about how and what to teach. Interviews with NGOs and international organizations identified three key problems with the implementation of the life skills policy: (i) teachers are unable to develop systematic curriculum documents through which to teach life skills (e.g., specifying objectives, making handouts for students, etc); (ii) teachers do not know how to teach or evaluate life skills instruction; and (iii) lack of resources in schools to teach.

In spite of the problems recounted above, a sizable proportion of in-school youth interviewed (70%) stated that their schools taught life skills to some degree though this rate seems to be higher among youth enrolled at primary schools (77%) than those at lower at secondary schools (65%) (see Table 4.39). Out-of-school youth, however, cited much lower rates of life skills instruction with only 47% reporting that their schools had taught life skills, dropping to only 38% among out-of-school youth at remote schools. This may partly explain the reason that they left school.

Table 4.39: Youth Stating That They Had Ever Studied Life Skills N=322

Views on Life Skills	All	Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
In-School Youth	70%	77%	65%	72%	67%	73%	67%	--	75%	59%
Out-of-School Youth	47%	--	--	48%	44%	55%	47%	38%	62%	45%

The views of in-school youth were validated by the responses of teachers of whom 65% stated that life skills courses were taught at their school (see Table 4.40). However, more secondary school teachers than those at primary level indicated that life skills was taught at their school (73% versus 48%). And it is not clear how frequently such courses are taught or whether these are just short topics integrated into the regular curriculum as described by Ministry officials.

Of some concern in the primary data collected from stakeholders in selected schools was the low frequency of life skills instruction at rural schools where only 39% of the teachers working there reported that life skills courses were taught. Nearly two-thirds of teachers believed 'firmly' that the availability of life skills instruction had increased rates of retention. In spite of the benefits of life skills education, however, school directors cited many obstacles to effective in-

struction. The obstacle most frequently cited by directors included the lack of materials and teaching aids (73%) followed by the lack of time to teach (36%) and a lack of teachers (18%).

Table 4.40: Educator Views on Life Skills Education N=11 Directors; 78 Teachers

<i>Educator Views</i>	All Teachers	Primary School Teachers	Secondary School Teachers	Urban Schools	Rural Schools
Teachers stating that life skills is taught at their school	65%	48%	73%	84%	39%
Teachers who firmly believe that life skills increases student retention	61%	82%	55%	58%	69%
Key Obstacles to Life Instruction Cited by School Directors	No Materials or Teaching Aids	No Time to Teach	No Teachers	No Reference Documents	--
Frequency Cited by School Directors	73%	36%	18%	9%	

4.4.1.2 Testing for Critical Thinking among In-school Youth

The present research also administered a standardized test to a sample of lower secondary school students in critical thinking soft skills in order to determine the extent of the acquisition of such skills in selected schools, possible variations by demographic background variables, and areas of strength and weakness. Overall, the results were better than expected. The test comprised six batteries of test questions on different aspects of critical thinking including predictive ability, classification skills, ability to identify relationships, as well as concept and textual analysis. The results are presented in Table 4.41 below.

The overall mean score of 58% for the test fell within a middle range of test scores with students performing best in 'predictive' ability and 'textual analysis.' Ability areas where scores were lowest included 'analogy' completions (53%) and 'concept analysis' (52%). In general, however, differences in scores across the six ability areas did not

Table 4.41: Critical Thinking Test Scores by Sex, Location, and Age N=180

Critical Thinking Skill Area	Mean Score	Correlation Co-efficient Tests of Significance
1. Predictive Ability	60%	<i>Mean Score & Sex</i>
2. Sequencing Ability	57%	No relationship (p=.05)
3. Classification Skills	57%	<i>Mean Score & Location</i>
4. Analogy Completion	53%	No relationship (p=.05)
5. Concept Analysis	52%	<i>Mean Score & Age</i>
6. Textual Analysis	70%	No relationship (p=.05)
Overall Mean Score	58%	<i>Mean Score & Grade Level</i>
Cross-tab Values		<i>Significant Relationship (p=.05)</i>
Male Mean Score	59%	Mean Difference not significant (p=.05)
Female Mean Score	56%	
Urban School Mean Score	56%	Mean Difference not significant (p=.05)
Rural School Mean Score	60%	

seem great. An examination of the test curve, however, indicated that the distribution was bimodal suggesting that different sub-populations of students clustered together at the lower and higher ranges of the test. Nevertheless, this pattern of clustering did not correlate with any demographic variables that were analyzed (e.g., sex, age, rural-urban differences) but rather seemed to occur based on other characteristics not controlled for in the test administration. Such characteristics could include average levels of teacher education at particular schools, management ability of school directors, or other school/student characteristics; however, such

suppositions are only speculative. Differences in mean score by sex, age, and demographic location were not statistically significant at $p=.05$ while Pearson r analyses also indicated non-significant relationships except in the case of grade level. That is, there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between test score and higher grade level ($r=0.36$; $p=.05$). This finding suggested that staying in school longer is a much better predictor of the acquisition of soft critical thinking skills than a child's age or sex, as one would normally expect.

4.4.2 Employment Rates & Child Labor

The current study found unexpectedly high rates of reported paid employment among certain of the youth sub-samples participating in the research. The highest rates of paid employment among each of the three youth sub-samples was reported by primary school students with 47% stating that they were engaged in some sort of employment and slightly less than half this number reporting that they were working more than one job (see Table 4.42). Secondary school students were the least likely to state that they were employed with only 11% stating that they were working one or more jobs. Only about 34% of out-of-school youth stated that they were employed, which is at odds with national figures of only 1.2% unemployment among youth who are no longer in school. However, as noted earlier, the out-of-school youth sample brought together for this study were the ones who were left in their communities (i.e., had not migrated in search of work) so it is not surprising that a large number of them would be unemployed. Nevertheless, commune chiefs lent some support to this view with 45% saying that the youth unemployment rates in their communes were very high.

Whether they were working one job or two, female primary school students seemed to be the most likely to be working (e.g., 55% versus 40%). However, this trend was reversed among out-of-school youth where 42% of males were working versus only 16% of the females. Sizable numbers of primary school students under 15 also reported that they were working indicating a significant incidence of child labor in the surveyed schools. Similarly, employment rates tended to be higher in rural areas with 57% of rural primary school students employed and 78% of rural out-of-school youth working one or more jobs. It is important to qualify these findings about child labor, however, by noting that the study sample focused on Grade 6 students only so that these rates of employment may not be endemic to all primary school grades.

Table 4.42: Employment Status of Youth

Sub-Sample	Working 2 or More Paying Jobs							Working 1 Paying Job							Total Employed
	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	>15	15 & Over	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	>15	15 & Over	
Primary School Students	18%	16%	21%	10%	23%	20%	11%	29%	24%	34%	20%	34%	28%	32%	47%
Secondary School Students	2%	1%	3%	0%	4%	1%	3%	9%	14%	4%	6%	12%	7%	11%	11%
Out-of-School Youth	14%	18%	4%	20%	29%	8%	15%	20%	23%	12%	15%	49%	23%	19%	34%

N=83 (Primary); N=150 (Secondary); N=87 (Out-of-school)

The type of employment most frequently cited by in-school sample respondents seemed to be those situations where youth were doing seasonal jobs (59%) followed by various forms of

part-time or full-time employment (22% and 18%, respectively) (see Tables 4.43 and 4.44). Among those in-school students engaged in seasonal employment, a majority were female students (64% versus 54%), from rural areas, as one would expect (64% versus 46%), and under 15 (63% versus 53%). Thus, the typical upper primary school working child is a rural female under 15 generally engaged in seasonal employment. Among part-time student-workers, the majority appeared to be secondary school students (44%), male (33%), and living in an urban area (38%). Full-time workers constituted less than 20% of those working and tended to be primary school students (21%) and mostly female (24%). These generalizations, however, must be weighed against the observation that the proportion of secondary school students who stated that they were working was very small (i.e., only 11% of the sub-sample).

Table 4.43: Types of Employment among Students at All Levels Stating They Are Employed (In-school Youth) N=55

<i>Employment Situation of Students</i>	All	Education Level		Sex		Location		Age	
		Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students working full-time	18%	21%	13%	13%	24%	15%	19%	19%	18%
Students working part-time only	22%	12%	44%	33%	12%	38%	17%	19%	29%
Seasonal Employment	59%	67%	44%	54%	64%	46%	64%	63%	53%
Employers Cited by Students									
Students working with their families	69%	84%	56%	54%	84%	69%	69%	75%	59%
Students self-employed	18%	21%	13%	29%	8%	23%	17%	19%	18%
Students working in a Small Enterprise	12%	3%	31%	17%	8%	8%	14%	6%	24%
Students working in a medium to large enterprise (5+ employees)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Among out-of-school youth, seasonal employment also seemed to be the most frequently cited form of employment (45%) but with a sizable proportion reporting part-time employment (34%). Only about a fifth stated that they were working full-time jobs (21%). Among those engaged in seasonal employment, 75% of the youth in remote areas reported that this was the kind of work they largely did. Seasonal and part-time out-of-school youth were more likely to be female (50%), under 15 (50%) and in the case of part-timers more likely to work in an urban area (57%). In contrast, those working full-time were all male (24%) and 15 or over (24%). Thus, the typical out-of-school worker tended to be a seasonal worker, female, under 15, and living in a remote area.

Table 4.44: Types of Employment among Out-of-School Youth N=29

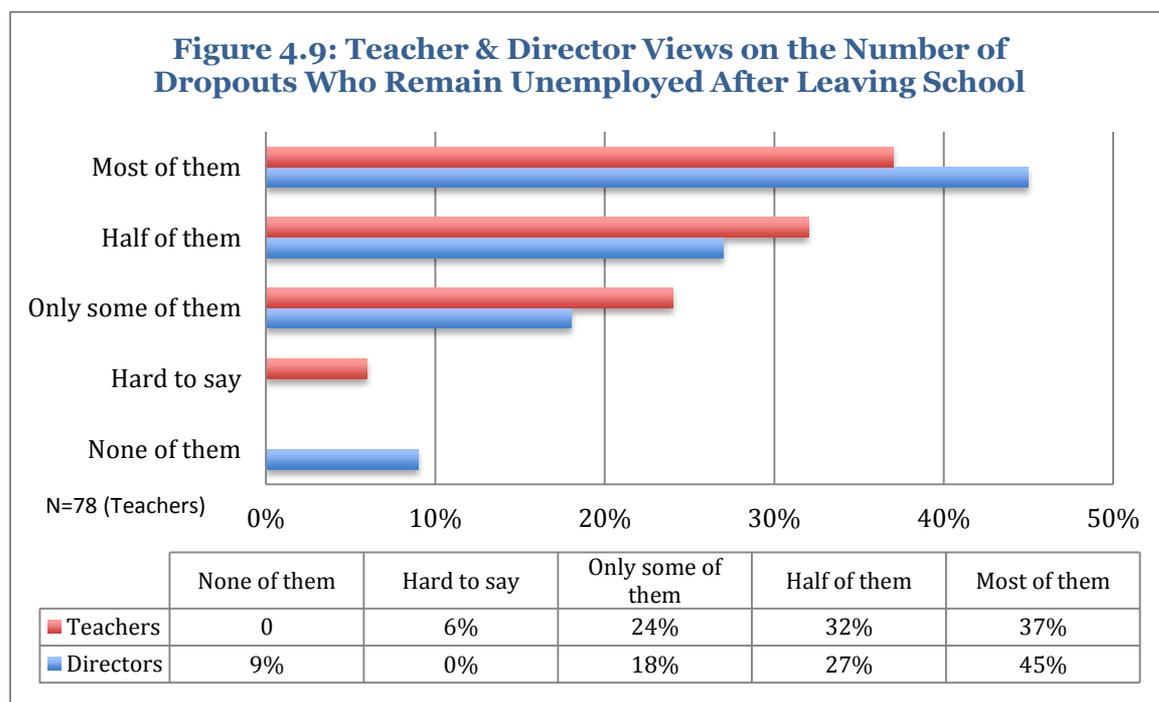
<i>Employment Situation of Out-of-School Youth</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth working full-time	21%	24%	0%	29%	21%	13%	0%	24%
Youth working part-time only	34%	32%	50%	57%	36%	13%	50%	32%
Seasonal Employment	45%	44%	50%	14%	43%	75%	50%	44%
Employers Cited by Youth								
Youth working with their families	41%	36%	75%	14%	50%	50%	25%	44%
Youth self-employed	17%	16%	25%	29%	21%	0%	0%	20%
Youth working in Small Enterprises	28%	32%	0%	29%	29%	25%	75%	20%
Youth working in a medium to large enterprise (5 employees or more)	7%	8%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	8%

In terms of youth employers, a majority of those still in school stated that they worked with their families (69%) and this was particularly true of primary school students (84% versus 56%), female students (84% versus 54%), and those under 15 (75% versus 59%). Very few in-school youth reported that they were working in a small enterprise employing less than five persons (12%) and none reported working in a medium to large enterprise. Working with families was also reported to be the most likely employer among out-of-school youth (especially among females – 75%) but at a much lower rate of frequency than for in-school youth (41% only). A far larger number of out-of-school workers reported that they were working in a small enterprise (28%) and to a lesser degree in a medium to large scale enterprise (7%) than was true of in-school youth. Surprisingly, about 75% of those reporting to be working in a small enterprise were under 15. About an equal number of youth across all sub-samples reported that they were self-employed (17-18%). A summary of most commonly encountered typologies of youth workers is summarized in Table 4.45.

Table 4.45: General Employment Typologies by Youth Category

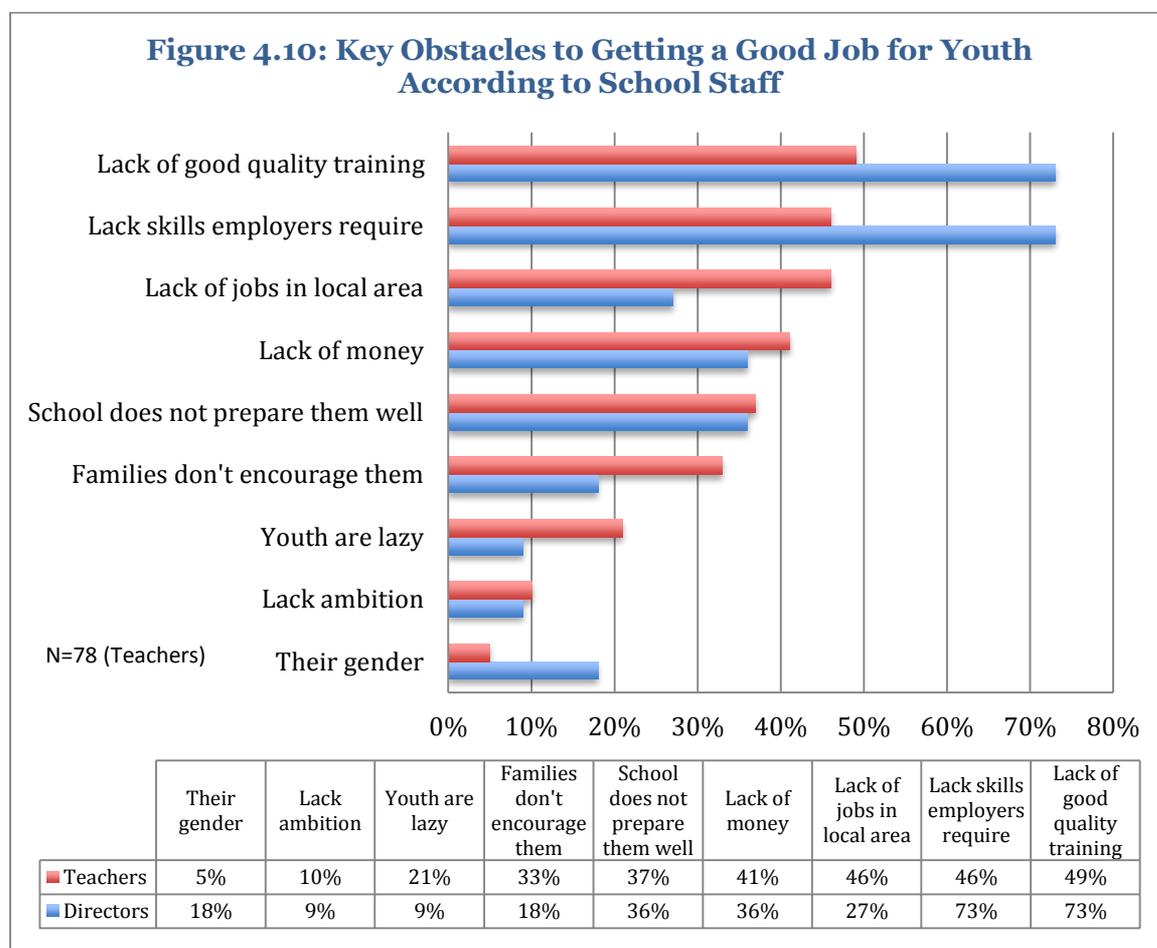
Youth Category	General Employment Typology
In-school Youth	Tends to be a primary school female student under 15 working as a seasonal worker in a rural area with her parents
Out-of-school Youth	Tends to be a female seasonal laborer working with her family in a remote area Or A young male under 15 working in a small enterprise in either a rural or urban area

Although about 20% of students dropout of lower secondary school each year, mostly to look for work, neither teachers nor school directors were very sanguine about the employment prospects of these youth. About 45% of school directors and 37% of teachers believe that ‘most of them’ will remain unemployed after leaving school. Overall, about two-thirds of the educators consulted in this survey ventured the belief that either half or most of those dropping out of school will probably remain unemployed after leaving (see Figure 4.9) with school directors being the most pessimistic.



According to educators at school level, the key factors preventing youth from finding a good job include a 'lack of good quality training,' 'a lack of skills employers require,' and a lack of jobs in the local area. School Directors in particular demonstrated very high rates of frequency in citing these obstacles with 73% citing the lack of high quality training and poor convergence with the skills employers desire as the key problems. Teachers also put a high priority on these factors but at a lower rate of frequency (see Figure 4.10). Surprisingly, more than a third of the school-level educators surveyed believed that inadequate preparation at school was also an important factor that prevented youth from finding a good job, echoing concerns expressed earlier. Although cited with less frequency, educators also tended to cite factors relating to poor encouragement from families (18% to 30%), laziness (9% to 21%), and even gender (5% to 18%). Teachers tended to cite these factors with greater frequency than school directors.

One-on-one interviews with local training institutions and employers tended to validate the views of school-level educators as they relate to poor skills training as one of the key obstacles that prevents youth from getting good employment. Several officials in the PoLVT cited concerns that there was poor tracking of students who leave school or any kind of active guidance to them to link up with training institutions in the area, leading to poor outreach and an under utilization of the TVET services available.



4.4.3 Perceptions of Migration among Youth and Educators

National youth surveys have affirmed that migration is mainly a young people's phenomenon with 70% of recent migrants falling into the age range of 30 or less. The current survey also indicated a high proclivity among youth to migrate either to another part of Cambodia or to another country in Asia. About a third of in-school youth indicated that they were somewhat or very likely to migrate, even though fewer than 10% said that half or more of their friends had migrated (see Table 4.46). Out-of-school youth expressed an even stronger desire to leave their current homes with an overall reported rate of 35% reporting that they were somewhat or very likely to do so (see Table 4.47). Out-of-school youth seemed much more likely to have many friends who had migrated with 14% reporting that half or more of their friends had already migrated; among males, this figure rose to 20%. Thus, peer pressure may be a stronger incentive to migrate than is true among in-school youth who report that fewer of their friends had migrated. For both in-school and out-of-school youth, males, those over 15, and those living in remote areas seemed to be the most likely to move. Nevertheless, a surprisingly large proportion of out-of-school youth under 15 also reported some likelihood to migrate (38%).

In terms of their final destination, most youth preferred to migrate to some other part of Cambodia (29% among in-school youth and 35% of out-of-school youth) while about a quarter stated a readiness to move to another country in Asia such as Thailand, Korea, or Malaysia. Once again, however, out-of-school youth demonstrated a slightly stronger motivation to move to a different part of Asia than in-school youth did (26% versus 21%).

Among educators, teachers seem to be generally aware of the issue of migration and its extent though they tend to underreport its incidence in comparison to the migration readiness levels expressed by their students. While 29% of in-school students indicated that they were very or somewhat likely to migrate to a different part of Cambodia, the comparable rate reported by teachers was only 17% (see Table 4.46). Teachers seem to be even more out of step with their students in relation to the readiness of youth to migrate to other parts of Asia with only 1% indicating that half or more of their students had migrated to other parts of Asia while 21% of their students are actually considering the possibility. On the other hand, commune chiefs were much more likely to recognize the proclivity of youth to migrate with 45% of those interviewed indicating that 'a lot of the youth' in their communes had already moved away in search of work.

Table 4.46: Perceptions of Migration by In-school Youth & Educators

<i>Perceptions of Migration by Youth (N=150)</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students who say half or more of their friends have migrated to other parts of Cambodia	8%	9%	5%	7%	8%	3%	9%
Students who say they are somewhat or very likely to migrate to another part of Cambodia	29%	33%	24%	29%	28%	24%	35%
Students who say they are somewhat or very likely to migrate to another part of Asia.	21%	25%	21%	21%	21%	20%	23%
<i>Perceptions of Migration by Teachers (N=78)</i>	All	Primary		Secondary		Urban	Rural
Teachers who say half or more of their students have migrated to other parts of Cambodia	17%	18%		20%		20%	12%
Teachers who say half or more of their students have migrated to other parts of Asia	1%	0%		2%		2%	0%

Table 4.47: Perceptions of Migration by Out-of-school Youth N=87

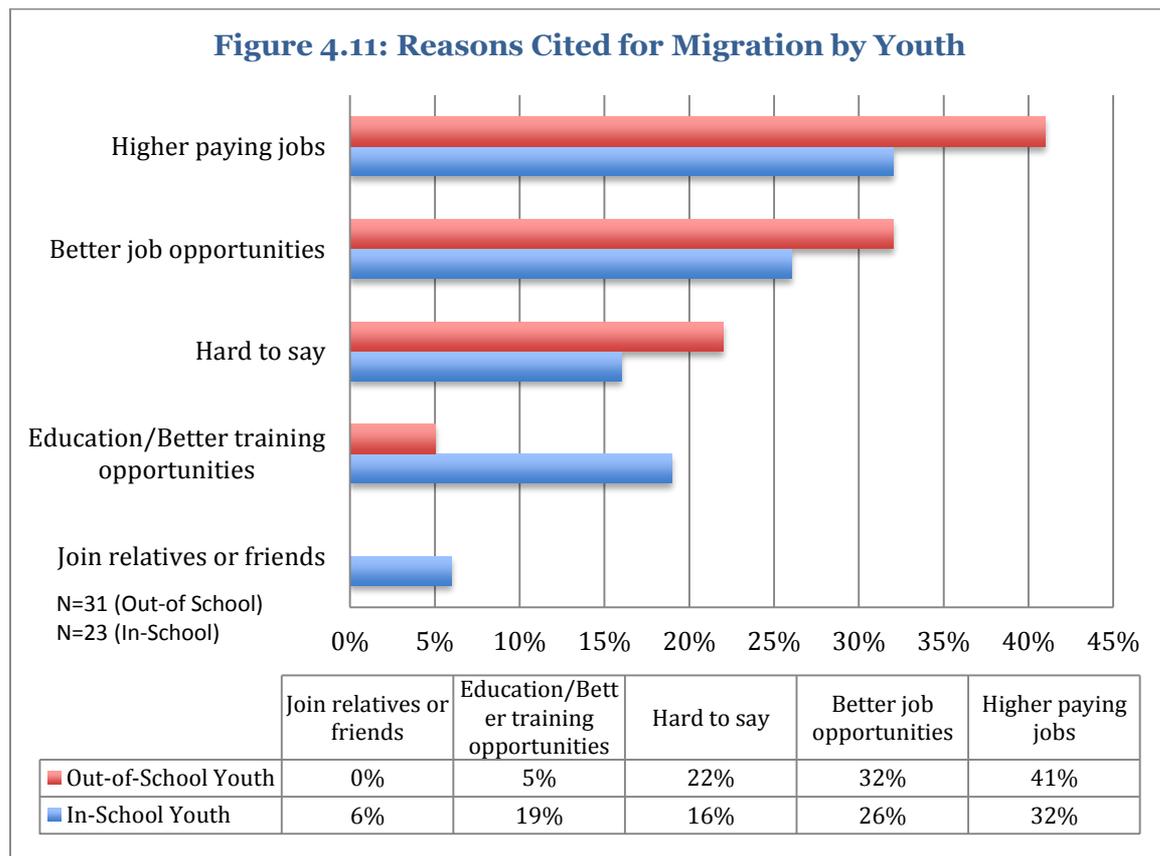
Perceptions of Migration	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth who say half or more of their friends have migrated to other parts of Cambodia	14%	20%	4%	15%	16%	13%	15%	15%
Youth who say that they are somewhat or very likely to migrate to another part of Cambodia	35%	37%	32%	35%	33%	44%	38%	35%
Youth who say that they are somewhat or very likely to migrate to another part of Asia.	26%	28%	24%	25%	26%	31%	23%	27%

Not surprisingly, the key reason for migration cited by youth is the lure of higher paying jobs that are found in other provinces or better job opportunities in general (see Figure 4.11). These two reasons were cited with the greatest frequency by both in and out-of-school youth, though out-of-school cited them with greater frequency (e.g., higher paying jobs – 41% versus 32%). Surprisingly, about a fifth of those answering said that they were not sure ‘why’ they would migrate, only that they might, suggesting the possibility of peer pressure and the need to follow others as an important reason to leave home. The other significant reason for migrating was for education or training purposes, which was cited by about one-fifth of those in-school but by only 5% of those out-of-school. This conforms to national surveys that found about a fifth to one-third of those 15 to 24 cited education as a leading factor in their decision to migrate (see page 32).

Box 4.3: Who Is Most Likely to Migrate?

- An *out-of-school youth*
- Originating from a *remote area*
- Of *male* gender

Figure 4.11: Reasons Cited for Migration by Youth



4.4.4 Access to Vocational Training, Knowledge of Available Services, & Career Planning

If one defines development as the process of giving people meaningful choices in how to improve their lives, the availability of information to help youth make informed decisions about their career planning must be a key element in any assistance program. This assumes that youth are actively looking for such information and thinking about their futures. Based on survey responses, this pre-condition appears to be present among most youth with only 5% to 6% of youth stating that they 'rarely' think about their futures (see Tables 4.48 and 4.49). These low frequencies appear to hold across all demographic categories.

In terms of accessing career counseling services at school, only about half of the in-school youth surveyed indicated that they had received counseling at school and this rate of frequency was relatively consistent across all demographic groupings. Reported rates of career counseling at school were slightly higher among out-of-school at 53%, though females reported somewhat lower rates (44%), as did those under 15 (31%) (see Table 4.49). It was not clear whether the counseling services received were formalized, used any documents or training materials, or occurred consistently. Focus group discussions among youth tended to indicate that such services were more *ad hoc* in nature and consisted of general encouragement rather than formalized services based on well-informed sources. Key informant interviews indicated that the Vocational Orientation Department had piloted a formal career counseling service in a small number of schools in 2012¹² with USAID funding but had not yet moved to introduce such services on a wider scale due to significant obstacles such as the lack of available teachers in schools to take responsibility for such services. Indeed, Cambodian schools do not have positions for 'guidance counselors,' which greatly complicates efforts by development partners to help government institute such services.

Part of the problem in providing career counseling services to youth is that there appears to be little knowledge among potential service providers about training opportunities at either school or commune level. For example, only 9% of the commune chiefs interviewed indicated that they were aware of any training opportunities for youth at district or provincial level (vocational or otherwise) while only 36% of interviewed teachers said they were aware of such opportunities. Employer surveys echoed these findings with 60% of those interviewed indicating that it was 'not' easy for youth to access vocational training services in the local area and only 30% responded that a fair number of youth in their community had actually done so. Thus, it is not so surprising that response rates among youth about opportunities for training are so low.

Table 4.48: General Student Views on Career Planning (In-school Youth) N=150

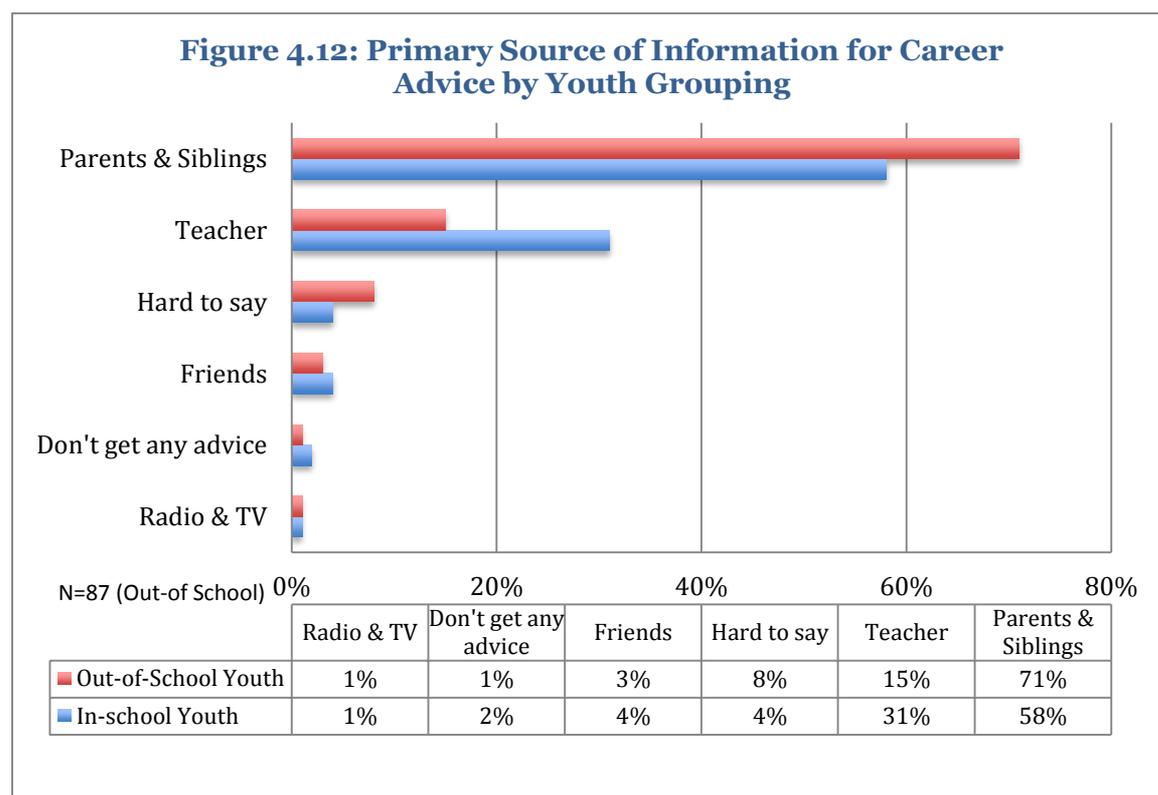
Student Views on Career Planning & Vocational Training	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students stating that they <u>rarely</u> think about the future	5%	5%	5%	8%	3%	8%	2%
Students that are aware of vocational training opportunities in their area	15%	15%	14%	17%	13%	15%	15%
Students who say that they received career counseling while at school	49%	49%	49%	46%	51%	47%	52%
Students that already have a career in mind for the future	74%	73%	75%	76%	72%	70%	79%

¹² The pilot took place in Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, and Kratie Provinces.

Table 4.49: General Views on Career Planning (Out-of-school Youth) N=87

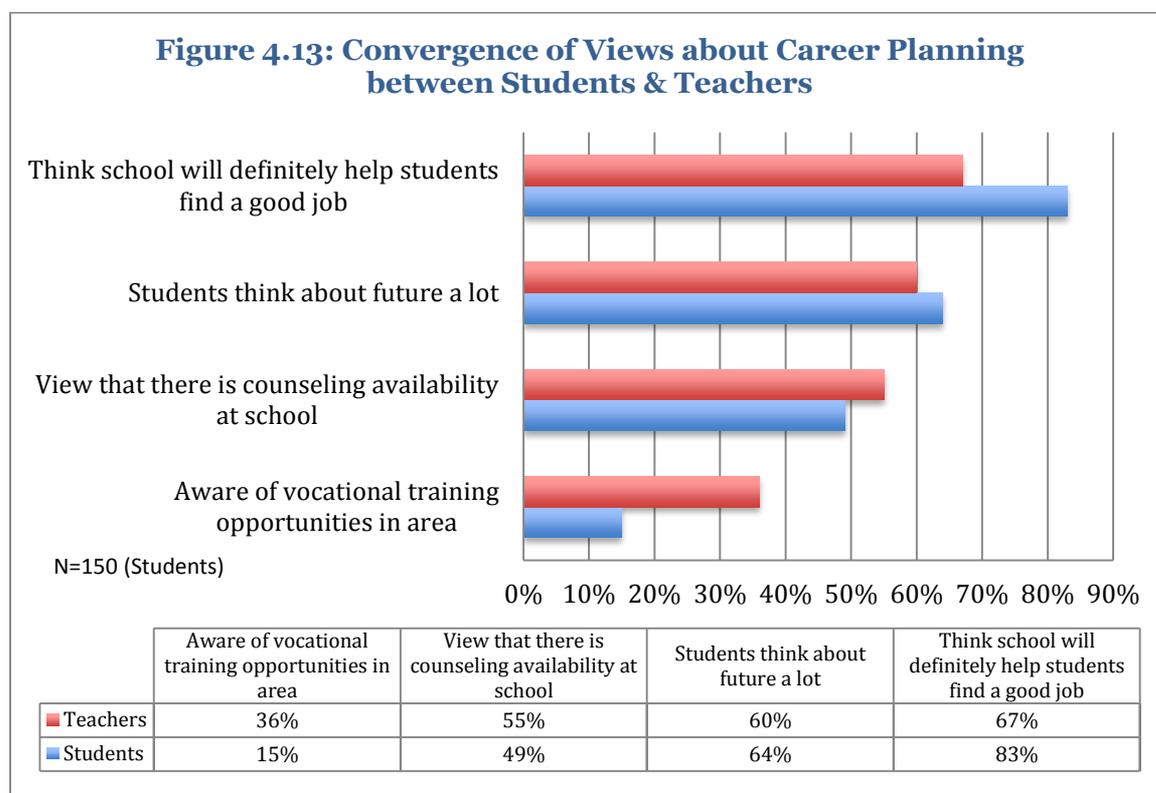
<i>Student Views on Career Planning & Vocational Training</i>	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth stating that they <u>rarely</u> think about the future	6%	8%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	7%
Youth aware of vocational training opportunities in their area	16%	19%	8%	35%	10%	13%	15%	16%
Youth who say that they received career counseling while at school	53%	56%	44%	60%	47%	63%	31%	57%
Youth who have ever attended a vocational or technical training course?	20%	19%	20%	30%	18%	13%	15%	20%

In spite of the availability of some counseling services at schools, informal though it may be, the level of awareness among youth about vocational training opportunities was very limited across both sub-samples. Only about 15% to 16% of youth surveyed indicated that they were aware of any training opportunities, vocational or otherwise, in their local area. This was generally true across all demographic groupings, although urban out-of-school youth appear to be the best informed (35%) while out-of-school females appear to be the least informed (8%). Nevertheless, about 20% of out-of-school youth indicated that they had actually attended one or more technical or vocational training courses in spite of the dearth of the dearth of information that they had received. In the same way, a large majority of in-school youth indicated that they had a career in mind that they wanted to pursue after completing school (74%). Thus, in spite of the constraints on informed decision-making, youth have demonstrated some ability to make career choices and attend vocational training courses.



The present survey tried to identify who or what the primary sources of information for youth decision-making regarding their career choices are. By far, the most important source of information cited in this regard includes parents and/or siblings with significant majorities of youth both in and out-of-school responding in this way (58% and 71%, respectively) (see Figure 4.12). This view diverges somewhat from earlier cited views among educators that families do not encourage their children when it comes to searching for a job/career (see Figure 4.13).

The next most important source of information regarding career planning referred to teachers who not surprisingly were cited with much greater frequency by in-school youth than those now out-of-school as an important information source (31% versus 15%), although focus group discussions clarified that this advice was provided when they were still in school. The least prominent source of information for career planning appeared to be friends/peers and radio/TV with fewer than 5% of youth in either sub-sample citing them as an important information source. Only a very small group of 1% to 2% of youth informants indicated that they receive 'no' advice from any source. These findings suggest that the two best channels through which to reach youth about career planning should focus on parents and teachers, though the radio listening behaviors of many rural youth suggest that there is potential for this medium to be used effectively, if there were a coordinated effort to do so.



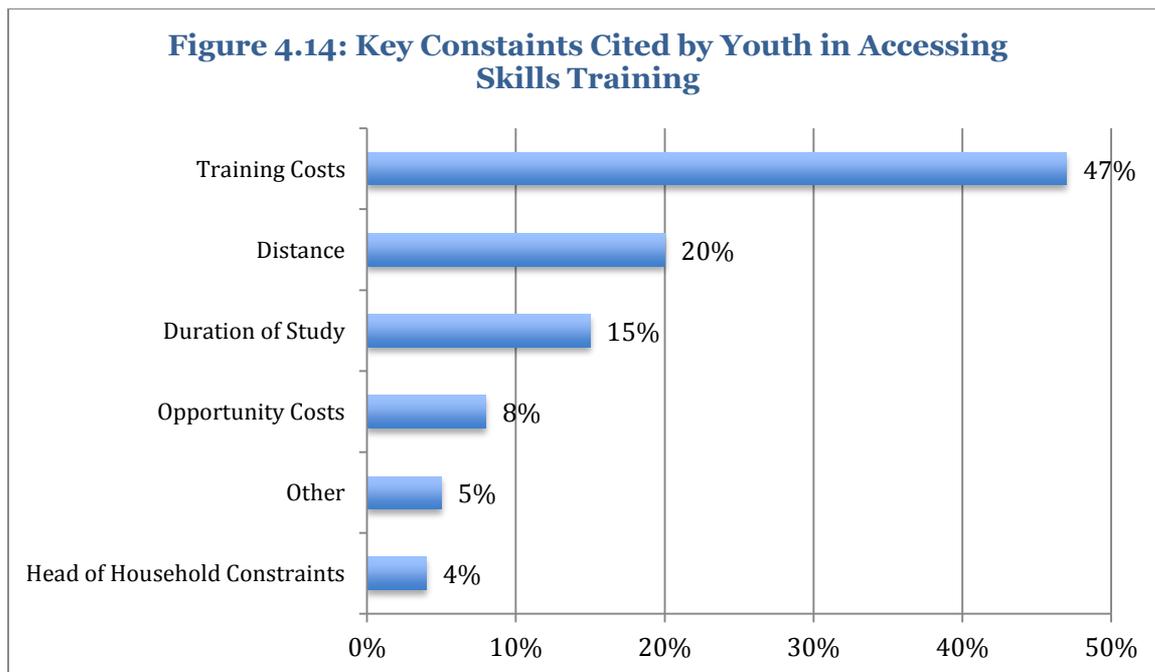
A comparison of student and teacher views about career planning for youth paints a picture of surprising convergence of views. In this regard, a comparison of views finds general agreement in the degree to which students think about the future, believe that school will help them find a good job, and have access to counseling services. The only area of divergence appeared to be that teachers have somewhat more awareness of the available training opportunities in the local area with 36% stating that they were aware of such services compared to only 15% of stu-

dents who were. Still, the observation that 60% or more of teachers are not aware of any vocational training services in their areas demonstrates a potent area for attention.

A parallel service mapping survey funded by Save the Children and shared with the current study found numerous obstacles to skills training provided by service providers. Youth interviews (both those in school and out of school) indicated that the major challenges faced in accessing skills training include lack of money to pay for training fees (cited by 47% of respondents), followed by the distance that they are staying from the training location (20%) and the long duration of training courses (15%), which indirectly impacts on the opportunity costs of training (8%) (see Figure 4.14). These findings correspond roughly with national level surveys that found that the lack of ability to pay for skills training was the leading cause of deciding not to seek skills (47%) followed by opportunity costs (32%) and lack of scholarship support (10%) (e.g., CAMBEFA-ILO, 2008). Surprisingly, distance did not emerge as a major barrier to accessing skills training in these national level surveys, whereas it appears to be a major factor in the present survey, which occurred among youth living in Prey Veng and Kampong Cham Provinces.

Box 4.4: Summary of Barriers to Accessing Skills Training by Youth

- Training costs
- Opportunity Costs of training
- Distance from home/ Centralized nature of many training institutions
- Poor visibility of training opportunities/Lack of information
- Lack of scholarship support
- Poor quality of skills training
- Entry requirements focusing on Grade 9 completion
- Supply-side constraints



On the supply side of the equation, it is also apparent that the availability of skills training facilities is concentrated in a few central locations, as noted by key informants or is poorly harmonized among private and public providers. At provincial level, there is only one Provincial Training Center per province, requiring potential trainees to commute between their outlying dis-

tricts or seek accommodation in the provincial town. Even within the public sector, there is poor harmonization as witnessed by the parallel efforts of MoLVT and MoEYS to create technical training programs comparable with an upper school certificate. Key informants interviewed under the present survey indicated that the government has tried to respond to these constraints by restructuring skills training services to include not only center-based training but also community-based services such as the *Voucher Skills Training Program*. Nevertheless, these attempts have been criticized as consisting of courses, which are too short in duration to be credible though assessments have indicated that these skills training boosts do increase local income potential.

The non-state sector including NGO programming adds considerably to the nation's capacity to provide skills training opportunities but there is little systematic tracking of this capacity. Key informants cited studies that there were about 278 non-public TVET and non-formal training institutions registered with MoLVT. This does not include the many small shops and enterprises, which also provide skills training to out of school youth as part of the apprentice system.

Many of the privately operated skills training institutions are not well regulated and have their own curricula, which are not based on any standardized skills framework. In addition, there is a reported lack of qualified trainers at many skills training institutes, especially the public ones, and many institutions complain about serious recruitment problems. To be sure, it has been reported that private skills providers have more direct contacts with employers and that the skills training provided better matches the needs of the private sector. Nevertheless, the curricular, equipment, and staffing described above issues have raised many questions about the quality of skills training in Cambodia both within the state-run institutions and those that are run by non-state actors. Although recent large investment in the TVET sector have made many improvements in terms of equipment and facilities, problems still remain, especially in terms of personnel. For example, only 9% of employers in national surveys rated the skills training provided at public institutions as 'effective,' compared to 17% who said that private providers had more effective programs. Effective in this context is defined as depth of understanding of skill concepts and the ability to apply these principles to concrete contexts. About 33% stated flat out that the skills training provided at public institutions was generally ineffective (World Bank, 2011). Thus, the quality of the TVET services provided currently is clearly a disincentive for students to study there.

Finally, there have been concerns about the entry requirements for out of school youth to enter formal and non-formal TVET institutions. Until quite recently, it was necessary for youth to have completed Grade 9 to gain entry to a PTC institution. Given that the government has reported that the completion rate for lower secondary school is only 40.6%, this suggests that until recent reforms in entry requirements came into effect, 60% of Cambodian youth could not enter such institutions due to the lack of minimum entry requirements, (ESP-MoEYS, 2014). And given that net enrolment rates at lower secondary are only about 35% to 38%, the figure is probably even less than this. Thus, basic entry requirements for TVET enrolment have historically been a major barrier to skills training access. Recent changes in the admission policies of TVET institutions have tried to recognize the seriousness of this barrier and provide alternative pathways for out of school youth to gain more flexibility in terms of admission. Currently, pro-

spective entrants into PTCs can now enroll with a Grade 6 education for a two-year non-formal course leading to certification that will allow entry to formal vocational training.

4.4.5 Financial Literacy Levels among Youth & Attitudes Towards Credit

As Cambodia's banking services become increasingly sophisticated, the need for financial literacy skills among Cambodia's youth becomes increasingly urgent. There are now 34 commercial banks and an estimated 20 microfinance institutions (MFI) operating in the country, many of which have banking and financial services down to district level, especially in highly populated areas of the country like Kampong Cham and Prey Veng. ATM services are now also increasingly available to the general public. However, a review of youth responses to some basic questions about financial literacy are indicative of the knowledge gap. For example, only 26% of the secondary school sample indicated that they had ever even visited a bank or MFI, dropping to 13% among the out-of-school sample (see Tables 4.50 and 4.51). Only 3% or less of respondents indicated that they had a bank account in either sub-sample and less than 6% of those currently without a bank account indicated that they knew the steps/documents needed to open one. In addition, few of the youth consulted indicated that they knew what an ATM card is with most saying that they had never heard the term before. Only 3 to 8% of the sample indicated that they knew what such a card is and what it is used for.

Table 4.50: General Indicators of Financial Literacy (In-school Youth) N=150

Financial Literacy Indicators	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students who have ever visited a bank/MFI	26%	24%	28%	28%	24%	22%	32%
Students stating they can manage money 'well'	23%	23%	24%	28%	19%	20%	27%
Students with a bank account in their own name or parent's name	2%	1%	3%	3%	1%	3%	0%
Students who say they know how to open a bank account (documents needed)	6%	7%	5%	4%	8%	4%	10%
Students who know what an ATM card is	8%	9%	7%	8%	8%	7%	10%
Students who say they have ever gambled	10%	19%	1%	7%	13%	8%	13%

Table 4.51: General Indicators of Financial Literacy (Out-of-school Youth) N=87

Financial Literacy Indicators	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Re- mote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth who have ever visited a bank/MFI	13%	15%	8%	25%	10%	6%	15%	12%
Youth stating they can manage money 'well'	16%	19%	8%	20%	14%	19%	15%	16%
Youth with a bank account in their own name or parent's name	3%	5%	0%	5%	2%	6%	0%	14%
Youth who say they know how to open a bank account (documents needed)	6%	8%	0%	16%	2%	7%	0%	7%
Youth who know what an ATM card is	3%	5%	0%	10%	0%	6%	0%	4%
Youth who say that they have ever gambled	25%	35%	0%	35%	14%	50%	8%	28%

In terms of the ability to manage money 'well,' only about a quarter of student respondents described their own skill level as such, dropping to only 13% among out-of-school youth. While more in-school females indicated a slightly higher ability level to manage money than males (28% versus 24%), out-of-school females demonstrated the opposite view with only 8% indicating they were good managers of money compared with 19% of males. In other respects, however, there seemed to be few major differences among demographic sub-groups in terms of

the ability level to manage money well. Surprisingly, a significant proportion of the youth surveyed indicated that they had ever gambled with money with about a quarter of out-of-school youth indicating that they had ever done so and 10% among in-school youth. The sub-groups most likely to gamble included males in both sub-samples (35% among out-of-school males and 19% among in-school males) and youth in remote areas (50%).

Several organizations have picked up on the need to build financial literacy among Cambodia's youth and have organized small-scale financial literacy programs accordingly (e.g., FIFLY, Sao Sary Foundation, KAPE, etc.). Many of these organizations have joined with an international organization called Aflatoun, which is a Dutch-based foundation with a highly regarded financial literacy curriculum linked to Children's Rights. Aflatoun has a global network of partners, including UNICEF, in over 100 countries. Key informant interviews have indicated that UNICEF has recently developed a partnership with Aflatoun and is currently disseminating a jointly developed manual on financial literacy linked to Child Friendly Schools. The Aflatoun curriculum has now been translated into Khmer and integrated into the new life skills curriculum recently adopted by MoEYS.¹³ Thus, there are already in place contextualized curricular materials to promote financial literacy to address some of the knowledge gaps recounted above.

Every long-term visitor to Cambodia is aware of the degree to which borrowing behavior is widely accepted at all levels. Every village usually has its own money-lender. With respect to youth borrowing behaviors, about a third of each sample indicated that they borrow money all or some of the time (see Tables 4.52 and 4.53), suggesting a high social acceptance level of borrowing behavior even at this young age. The sub-groups most likely to borrow appear to be out-of-school females (48%), out-of-school youth from remote areas (44%), and in-school youth 15 and over (42%).

Table 4.52: Student Views on Borrowing (In-school Youth) N=150

Views on Borrowing Money	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students who say they have to borrow money all the time	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%	1%	3%
Students who say they have to borrow money from time to time	34%	35%	33%	33%	35%	31%	39%
Students who think it is 'likely' and/or 'possible' that they will borrow money from a bank/MFI in the next 5 years	18%	18%	18%	21%	15%	17%	20%
Students who say it is very easy to borrow money in their village from a money lender	13%	16%	11%	14%	13%	14%	13%
Students who say it is possible but not easy to borrow money in their village	24%	22%	26%	22%	26%	27%	19%

Table 4.53: Out-of-School Youth Views on Borrowing N=87

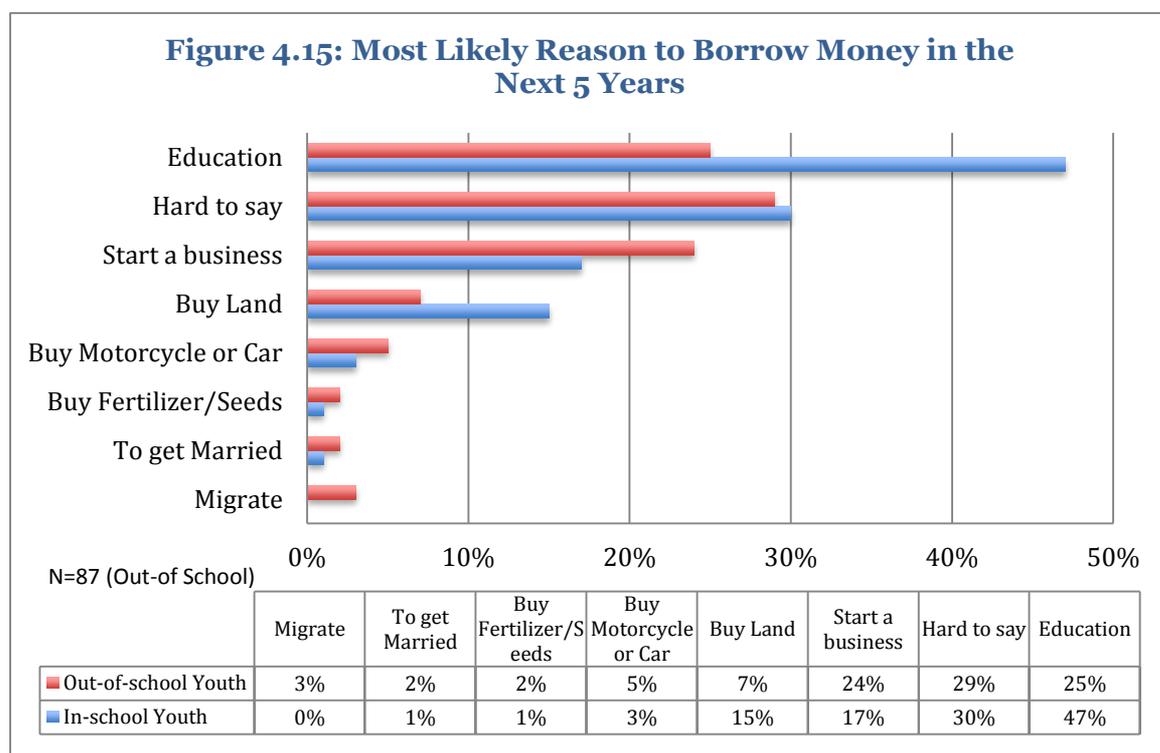
Views on Borrowing Money	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth who say they have to borrow money all the time	2%	3%	0%	10%	0%	0%	8%	1%
Youth who say that they have to borrow money from time to time	33%	27%	48%	30%	31%	44%	31%	34%

¹³ There are three such manuals: (i) *Child Enterprises*; (ii) *Spending & Saving*; and (iii) *Personal Understanding*.

Youth who think it is 'likely' and/or 'possible' that they will borrow money from a bank/MFI in the next 5 years	31%	35%	20%	30%	25%	51%	8%	35%
Youth who say it is very easy to borrow money in their village from a money lender	13%	16%	4%	20%	10%	13%	8%	14%
Students who say it is possible but not easy to borrow money in their village	29%	34%	16%	15%	33%	31%	8%	32%

When asked about the likelihood that they would borrow money from a bank or MFI within the next five years, between 20% and 30% of the samples indicated that it was possible or even likely that they would. Out-of-school youth seemed more likely to borrow from a bank/MFI (31%) with about 18% of in-school youth saying that they might. Once again, those appearing most likely to borrow included out-of-school youth in remote areas (50%) and out-of-school males (35%). Nevertheless, local credit availability did not appear to be easy with only about 40% of each sample indicating that accessing credit was 'easy' to 'possible' in their villages. This response pattern was concurrent with views among commune chiefs of whom only about 36% indicated that it was 'easy' for youth to get credit to start a small business.

The most likely reason for which youth said that they might borrow money in the next five years was overwhelmingly for 'education' with 47% of in-school youth saying that they would borrow for this reason and 25% of out-of-school youth saying that they would do so (see Figure 4.15). Surprisingly, a significant proportion of those saying that they might borrow could not say exactly for what reason they might borrow, only that they would. Nearly a third of respondents fell into this category. Other leading reasons for borrowing included starting a small business or buying land. Initiating loans to buy material things such as cars and motorbikes seemed to be surprisingly cited with much less frequency than expected with only 5% or less of respondents indicating that this would be a major reason why they might borrow money.



Key informant interviews with MFIs and banks suggest a considerable gap between the actual financial services available to help youth and what youth think is available, as the responding patterns above suggest. For example, a large majority of the financial services institutions consulted as part of this study indicated that they actually target youth as a special customer group. This is mainly true of MFIs, rather than the large commercial banks. In addition, about half of those consulted believed that it was 'not difficult' for youth to get credit even in cases of limited collateral. Many of the MFIs indicated that they tended to target youth from the poorer classes with very favorable repayment conditions and allowed flexible re-negotiations of loans depending on a client's changed situation. Because several of the MFIs operating in target areas are also faith-based organizations, they have a strong mandate to assist poor clients, unlike the larger commercial banks who did not appear to have much in the way of youth targeted programs and services. Financial service institutions reported that the most common reason for loan requests was to 'start a business' and for 'education.'

Several MFIs reported that they had actually developed special promotions to target youth, especially for *education loans* with no principal to repay until the completion of a university degree or a vocational training course. But they confided that the response rate to these promotions had so far been low. MFI consultations also indicated that it was difficult for these institutions to orchestrate outreach campaigns in state schools or vocational training institutions because school directors either were not interested or demanded kickbacks. In the case of PTCs, key informant interviews indicated that these institutions have their own start-up capital funds, which they lend out to students. These funds, derived from the ADB-STVET grant, are substantial and amount to as much as \$300,000 a year or more in some provinces. Nevertheless, there appeared to be few cooperative links between the state training sector and financial lending institutions. This suggests a possible advocacy role that could be played by a youth-focused project working with the state education system.

4.4.6 Opportunities for Intervention to Promote Economic Empowerment

As was true for possible interventions to promote social participation, there are many possible access points for action for any proposed project to promote youth economic empowerment. Based on the above discussion, a total of ten general problem areas and needs have been identified to develop appropriate programmatic responses. These are summarized in Table 4.54 below. Some of these overlap with problems cited in earlier sections such as the need to address educational quality and relevance issues and the role of technology in formulating solutions, especially as these relate to social messaging and improved skills training. Issues of educational quality in this context are considered more from the perspective of deficiencies in the preparation of youth cited by employers than from a retention perspective as in Section 4.2. As was true in earlier discussions, any proposed project will need to think carefully about how best to prioritize the selection and implementation of proposed activities as well as how the interventions selected can best complement and reinforce one another. A key cross-cutting strategy should focus on improved coordination between skills training institutions, schools, Ministries, employers and financial institutions.

Table 4.54: Suggested Interventions to Promote Economic Empowerment

Problem Area/Need	Suggested Intervention(s)
1. Poor Soft Skills Training in Schools to Prepare Youth for Job Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radical experimentation in methods to improve educational quality and relevance that considers the use of ICT as an important tool • Review of life skills implementation guidelines and existing curricula to improve efficiencies in implementation • Improve the relevance of life skills instruction by providing small family income grants linked to school-based life skills courses in prevocational topics (e.g. vegetable cultivation, chicken raising, etc. Form links between the receipt of such grants and retention.
2. High Proclivity of In-school Youth to be Engaged in Seasonal Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention drives when seasonal employment begins (e.g., just after the Khmer New Year Break)
3. High Incidence of Child Labor among Upper Primary School Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy with local employers (and parents) to structure employment of children in a way that does not affect their schooling • Establish commune tracking of child laborers in which information can be shared with schools to help identify the most vulnerable children
4. Barriers in Accessing Skills Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships for attendance of skills training institutes • Improved outreach by training institutions to youth (e.g., presentations at schools, radio advertising, webpages, etc. • Expansion of community-based training opportunities to address distance barriers
5. High Proclivity of Youth to Migrate in Search of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Research for Educators to raise their awareness of the incidence of migration among their students
6. Poor Awareness Levels among Educators about the Incidence of Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive provision of Safe Migration Life Skills courses for youth at all levels
7. Weak Career Planning Services for Youth at All Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review career planning services in schools to increase efficiencies • Identification and training of local resource persons to provide career counseling services (either at commune or school level or both) • Develop links with parents to improve their ability to provide career advice to their children • Integrated radio programming to disseminate social messages about career advice
8. Poor Awareness Levels of Youth at All Levels About Vocational Training Opportunities and Apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination activities on service mapping activities regarding vocational training opportunities in the local area • Work with existing vocational training providers to improve outreach and coordination of services through electronic media and other methodologies • Integration of service mapping information into existing career counseling manuals developed by MoEYS • Youth Career Fairs to disseminate information about opportunities in the private sector, training and educational opportunities, etc.
9. Poor Coordination between Training Institutions, Schools, Employers, and Financial Service Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy with schools and local training institutions to provide opportunities to local MFIs and employers for youth outreach activities • Training for youth at all levels about how to apply
10. Low Levels of Financial Literacy among Youth at All Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive provision of life skills courses focusing on financial literacy (using existing materials) to youth at all levels • Form linkages between financial literacy skills and credit services

Educational Quality and Relevance: Although many students expressed the view that going to school definitely helped them to get a job, a significant number of concerns were expressed by both students and teachers about the educational quality that characterizes school services.

These views were validated further by employment interviews that cited a lack of important soft skills such as critical thinking, team work skills, and problem-solving skills among their young employees. As was noted in Section 4.2, radical experimentation should be tried to address such problems using methodologies that have not often been used by other projects, since these have clearly been limited in their success. Possible strategies should include intensive introduction of ICT facilities (such as tablets) and accompanying guidance on how to promote integration of existing curricula into new technological modes of learning (e.g., project work, conducting research, synthesizing knowledge through PowerPoint presentations, etc). Because life skills has been identified as an effective tool through which to improve curricular relevance, a review of current life skills programming in schools should be conducted to identify places where efficiencies can be strengthened. An important opportunity now exists given the recent adoption by MoEYS of more learner-friendly life skills curricular materials, produced with support from USAID, with an entire domain set aside for modules focusing on Economic and Business Studies. Intensive provision of such courses should be made available to youth both in and out-of-school.

Youth Employment and Child Labor: The present research has also identified a very high incidence of child labor, much of it seasonal, among youth at the upper primary grade level. The planting season in Cambodia generally begins just after the Khmer New Year in April and this is generally when many students decide not to return to school when they re-open after the holiday. Retention drives should be organized to blunt the decision to leave school. New programming may also consider advocacy with local employers and parents to provide extra flexibility to youth workers (e.g., during exams) to help them keep their jobs (to support their families) and stay in school. Communes should also be assisted in tracking the incidence of child labor in their communities and sharing this information with schools to facilitate targeting of the most vulnerable children. Where an extra teacher exists (and they may not due to severe teacher shortages reported in most schools), a special teacher may be appointed and trained to help the most vulnerable youth stay in school.

Migration Issues: Migration is one of the key behaviors that youth use to survive in the labor market and a large proportion of the youth consulted in this sample at all levels indicated their readiness to consider migration as a possible option. Yet once again, educators seemed surprisingly uninformed about the extent to which their students are considering such options. New programming may consider the possibility of increasing the awareness levels of local educators about the dangers of migration through action research in which they conduct their own surveys of their students. Schools may also be supported in organizing life skills programming on Safe Migration, using the new curricula recently adopted by MoEYS.

Career Counseling Services: About half of the youth and teachers consulted in the current survey indicated that career counseling services had been provided though it appears that these services are largely informal and *ad hoc*. Half of those surveyed had received 'no' counseling support while at school. Although the MoEYS has attempted to introduce career planning services into selected schools, these efforts remain limited and have had mixed success. Nevertheless, very thoughtful and user-friendly documentary materials have been made to facilitate these efforts and these materials can possibly be further improved with information provided by service mapping activities. New programming should consider how existing efforts to provide career counseling services in school can be improved for in-school youth where a preven-

tative strategy can save considerable resources later on (after youth dropout). The shortage of teachers who can play the role of a career counselor in nearly all schools in the countryside is a considerable challenge, which may require using officials from commune level to assist or even lead such activities. For those youth now out-of-school, it should be possible to adapt existing career counseling materials developed by MoEYS to the needs of these individuals, focusing particularly strongly on parents, since 70% of such youth indicated that their parents are their primary source of career planning information. Once again, the use of commune personnel (properly trained) as a source of career counseling guidance may be a very effective approach to address this need for out-of-school youth.

Coordination and Dissemination of Vocational Training, Apprenticeships, and Credit Services: Knowledge of vocational training and credit opportunities was highly limited among youth at all levels and even among educators. Key informant interviews among service providers indicated some level of frustration with coordination efforts (e.g., between government departments, between MFIs and schools, etc) to reach out to youth looking for such services. Service mapping information may provide a useful tool through which to address this deficiency but the development of effective coordination structures through which to disseminate this information will be essential. New programming can play an advocacy role in schools to make time for presentations on vocational training, tertiary education, employment, and credit opportunities to interested students. Similar efforts can be applied to vocational training providers in the state sector on behalf of employers and financial services institutions. Coordinated and carefully planned events such as a *Youth Career Fair* may also be a suitable mechanism through which to bring different actors together for a common purpose.

Financial Literacy: The ability to manage money, prioritize spending, and other financial life skills are an essential ingredient for successful economic empowerment of youth. Yet, only very small minorities of the youth samples surveyed in this research considered themselves to have such skills. Existing curricula used in state schools does not appear to deal adequately or in any depth with financial literacy. Yet, there are considerable opportunities for improvement with the recent entry of newly contextualized curricular materials originally developed by Aflatoun, a leading financial literacy advocate. These materials are appropriate for both in and out-of-school youth and have now been officially adopted by MoEYS, providing another excellent opportunity for input. New programming should, therefore, consider the use of these materials in intensive life skills programs not only in schools but also with out-of-school youth. Such efforts could easily link with advocacy efforts in schools and communes on behalf of MFIs, which would reinforce both efforts.

4.5 Political Empowerment

4.5.1 General Political Views among Youth

Giving youth a political voice in society is seen by many as a key catalyst for positive social change. Since the vast majority of Cambodia's population is under 30, the need for political empowerment is especially urgent. While recent events suggest that Cambodian youth have a heightened sense of their role as a political force in Cambodian society, it is not clear to what degree youth outside of Phnom Penh feel politically empowered. For the purpose of ascertaining some sense of youth political empowerment, young people in this survey were asked about the strength of their political views and their interest in voting. In general there was a large degree of consistency across the various secondary school sub-groups (see Table 4.55). Overall, a slim majority of students polled (52%) stated that they follow Cambodian politics, although it was those aged under 15 that displayed the lowest levels of interest (46%). Only a small fraction of the sample (15%) felt that they had strong or very strong political views. Interestingly, here under-15s registered a higher frequency than older students (18% versus 11%), as did urban-based youth over rural ones (19% versus 12%); but in each case, the differences in magnitude were small. Although a third of the sample stated that they had no interest in politics, slightly more than half felt that voting has a big effect on society, approximately the same proportion who indicate that they follow Cambodian politics.

Table 4.55: Strength of Student Political Views & Attitudes about Voting N=150

Student Views on Politics	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students stating that they follow Cambodian politics to some degree	52%	53%	51%	53%	51%	46%	59%
Students stating that they have NO interest in politics at all	31%	32%	30%	35%	28%	33%	29%
Students stating that their political views are STRONG or VERY STRONG	15%	15%	17%	19%	12%	18%	11%
Students stating that voting has a BIG EFFECT on society	53%	55%	50%	50%	55%	50%	56%

Table 4.56: Strength of Political Views & Attitudes about Voting among Out-of-School Youth (N=87)

Youth Views on Politics	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth stating that they follow Cambodian politics to some degree	55%	61%	40%	75%	49%	62%	46%	57%
Youth stating that they have NO interest in politics at all	30%	27%	36%	0%	39%	38%	15%	32%
Youth stating that their political views are STRONG or VERY STRONG	18%	22%	4%	15%	14%	31%	15%	17%
Youth stating that voting has a BIG EFFECT on society	56%	58%	52%	60%	51%	69%	69%	54%

The political opinions expressed by out-of-school closely matched those of youth still enrolled in secondary school (see Table 4.56). However, there was more observed divergence between demographic sub-groups within this sub-sample. For example, considerably more out-of-school males exhibited a strong interest in following politics than females (61% versus 40%). Similarly, urban out-of-school youth were the most likely to follow politics closely with the highest fre-

quency of any sub-group (75%). Yet paradoxically, this group was also the least likely to say that their political opinions were strong or very strong (15%), suggesting a high susceptibility to changing sides on various political issues. In contrast, while young people in remote areas displayed some of the lowest levels of interest in politics (38%), they also demonstrated the highest percentages of respondents stating that they had strong or very strong political views (31%). They, along with youth under 15, were also the most likely to assert that the act of voting has a big effect on society. Indeed, on this last point all groups of out-of-school youth were more positive about the effect of voting on society than their secondary school counterparts.

4.5.2 Knowledge of the Political System

In order to assess young people's knowledge of the political system in Cambodia, the roles of various important figures such as the Prime Minister and Commune Chiefs were discussed in FGDs. In general, out-of-school youth were more able to articulate the various roles and responsibilities of political figures, a finding that is counter-intuitive until one realizes that political discussion in state schools is very much discouraged because they are seen as 'neutral' spaces (see Section 3.2.4). For both secondary school students and out-of-school youth, the Prime Minister's main functions are to *lead the country and to improve infrastructure*. The idea of *developing the country* was also seen as a prominent role with out-of-school youth who generally seemed to place more emphasis on increasing job opportunities and helping poor people, as an important political function of government. They also felt that the Prime Minister's duties included *protecting Cambodia's natural resources* as well as performing diplomatic functions.

For both youth sub-samples, the King represented someone who had little power but whose main responsibility lay in helping poor people. Out-of-school youth were also able to point to his constitutional role of signing bills into law. For members of parliament (MPs), again it was out-of-school youth who were most able to give examples of their responsibilities. For secondary school students, MPs were political figures who discussed and solved political issues while out-of-school youth were able to point to their legislative duties in making and changing laws. While both groups were able to cite numerous facets of the role of a Commune Chief, i.e. keeping records, helping to solve local problems, etc., it was interesting to note that some out-of-school youth stated that they had never seen their Commune Chief do anything of note. Others went on to declare that it was gambling and drinking that took up most of their Commune Chief's time, a remarkably cynical view of local political leaders.

Overall, students and youth in this survey were able to identify some of the relevant duties of political figures in Cambodia. However, there was considerable variability in the political knowledge expressed by FGD participants and many participants in both groups were unable to consistently use the correct vocabulary to describe the roles and responsibilities of the political figures in question. These results are perhaps unsurprising given the fairly substantial numbers of students and youth who claim to have no political views and who do not follow Cambodian politics closely, as noted above.

A clear majority of parents in their focus groups felt that it was important that young people understand how the Cambodian political system works. Some parents stated that it was only through understanding the system that youth could hope to change and improve the country. They also identified a relationship between an awareness of politics and knowledge of political

rights. Teachers and school directors echoed this need for youth to understand the Cambodian political system (see Table 4.57). However, both groups were pessimistic that most young people did indeed grasp it with less than 10% expressing the belief that most of their students really understood the political system.

Table 4.57: Level of Student Understanding of the Political System as Seen by Educators

Student Understanding of Political System	All
TEACHERS	
Teachers stating that MOST of their students understood the political system	9%
Teachers stating that it was VERY IMPORTANT that young people understand the political system	69%
SCHOOL DIRECTORS	
School Directors stating that MOST of their students understood the political system	9%
School Directors stating that it was VERY IMPORTANT that young people understand the political system	82%

Teachers N=78 School Directors N=11

4.5.3 Responsiveness of the Political System to Youth

Another important question investigated by researchers concerned the degree to which the political system in Cambodia accommodates the political empowerment of youth and in particular how freely they can express their political views. However, when looking at young people in Cambodia, it is important to note again that large numbers, about a third, declared that they held no political opinions at all, making an investigation of political expression somewhat problematic. That is, does the lack of political conviction held by so many young people make the system generally un-accommodative of political expression, or is it the other way around? A review of responding patterns regarding feelings of freedom to express political convictions to various social groups (e.g., peers, teachers, etc) suggests that the latter is probably the case.

In general, very few youth, whether in school or out, apparently feel very free to discuss their views with other people, including their peers (see Tables 4.58 and 4.59). Percentage frequencies in this regard hover around 10% or less across most demographic sub-groups, although out-of-school youth evince a slightly higher level of confidence when compared to youth still in school (see Figure 4.15). Surprisingly, the feeling of discomfort in expressing political views also includes youth peers. Although girls felt more confident to express themselves *in general*, it was the male students who felt freer with specific groups of people such as teachers and peers. This was particularly evident when asked about expressing opinions with members of the older generation where only 5-6% of either sub-sample felt any degree of comfort in political expression. Interestingly, as students got older, it gave them no greater level of confidence to air their beliefs in public. Political expression to peers seemed to be the only forum where confidence levels appeared to vary to any degree, particularly in the case of urban out-of-school youth (25%) and those under 15 (31%).

Interestingly, the frank responses among some commune chiefs seemed to echo the futility of political expression expressed by youth. In this respect, only 27% of the sample of commune chiefs in the area where youth lived answered 'yes' to the question whether expressing political grievances made any difference in Cambodian society. The other 73% of the sample either said 'no' (45%) or that they had no idea (27%). This remarkable level of cynicism expressed by local

political leaders partly helps to explain the political apathy and indifference to political expression expressed by so many young people.

Table 4.58: Student Views about Political Expression N=150

Student Views on Political Expression	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students who feel very free to express their political views IN GENERAL	9%	8%	11%	7%	12%	13%	5%
Students who feel very free to express their political views with their TEACHERS	6%	8%	4%	1%	10%	7%	5%
Students who feel very free to express their political views with their PEERS	7%	9%	4%	4%	9%	8%	5%
Students who feel very free to express their political views with the OLDER GENERATION	6%	11%	1%	3%	9%	7%	5%

Table 4.59: General Views about Political Expression among Out-of- School Youth N=87

Youth Views on Political Expression	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth who feel very free to express their political views IN GENERAL	9%	10%	8%	10%	12%	0%	23%	7%
Youth who feel very free to express their political views with their TEACHERS	9%	10%	8%	15%	8%	6%	8%	9%
Youth who feel very free to express their political views with their PEERS	16%	18%	12%	25%	16%	6%	31%	14%
Youth who feel very free to express their political views with the OLDER GENERATION	5%	5%	4%	0%	4%	13%	8%	4%

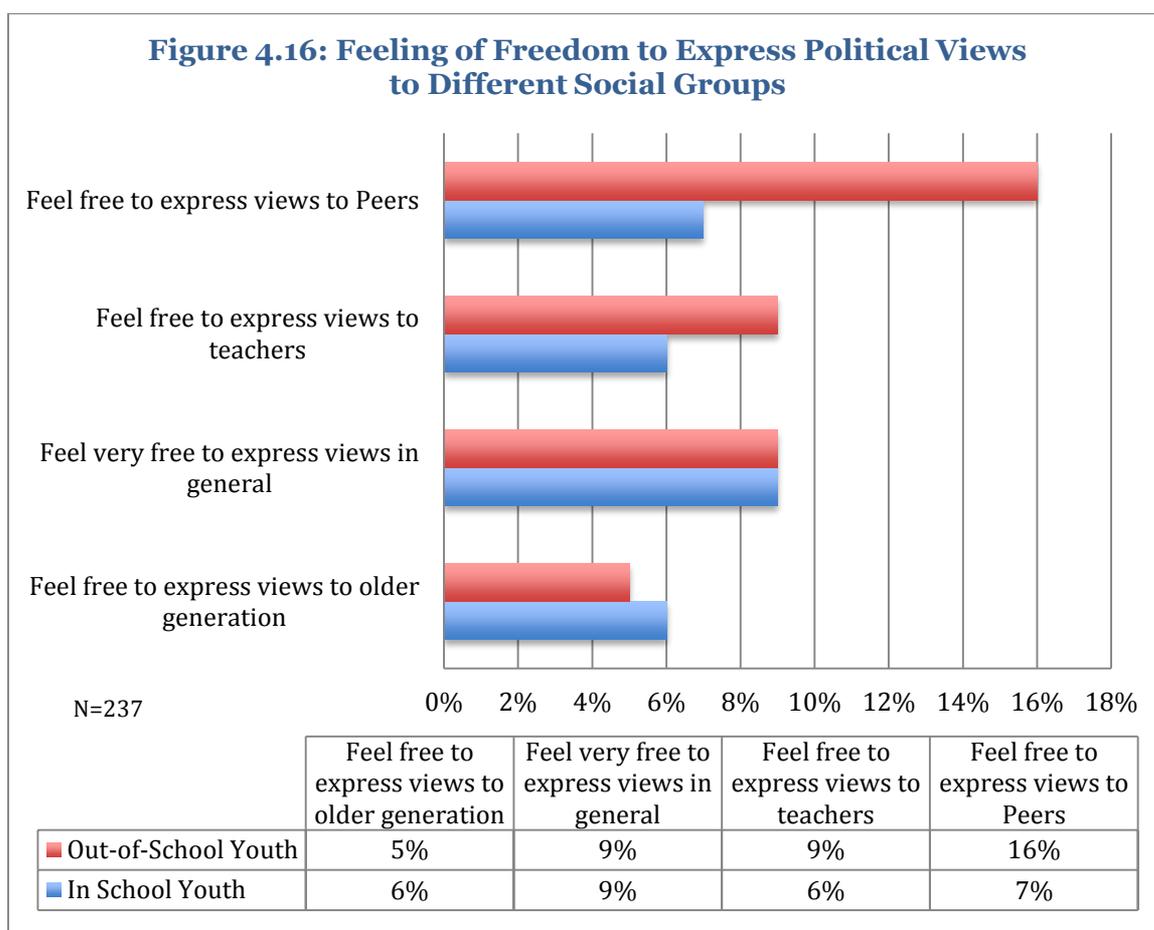
As was true in the case of identifying obstacles to school participation, it appeared that educational professionals and other stakeholders were largely unable to correctly estimate the level of freedom that their students felt in expressing their political views with others (see Table 4.60). There were some particularly interesting discrepancies. Teachers and School Directors wildly overestimated their students' comfort levels in terms of sharing their beliefs in class, with 27% of teachers and 18% of directors expressing the belief that their students felt such freedom. While these frequencies are still relatively low, they tower in comparison to the paltry 6% of students who stated that they actually felt such freedom. Another area where educators failed to grasp the extent of their students' reticence was their huge overestimation of young people's ease in discussing political issues with their peers. In this regard, 27% of teachers and more than half of directors believed that their students felt this way when in fact only 7% of students actually did so. Nevertheless, educators generally felt that most adults put a high value on those youth who express their political views (64% of teachers and 91% of directors) while only 27% felt that they should be quiet about their views.

While parents were more likely than educators to be able to correctly predict their children's level of freedom in expressing their opinions, they also tended to be prone to some degree of overestimation, as well. Clearly there is a substantial disconnect between how young people actually feel about political expression and how the adults in their lives believe that they feel. When the responses of students are compared with those of out-of-school youth, it is evident that the levels of a young person's feeling of freedom to express him or herself is highly dependent on the situational context (in-school or out) and whom one is talking to (see Figure 4.16).

As noted earlier, it would appear that it is the out-of-school youth that are more politically active and expressive than their in-school counterparts.

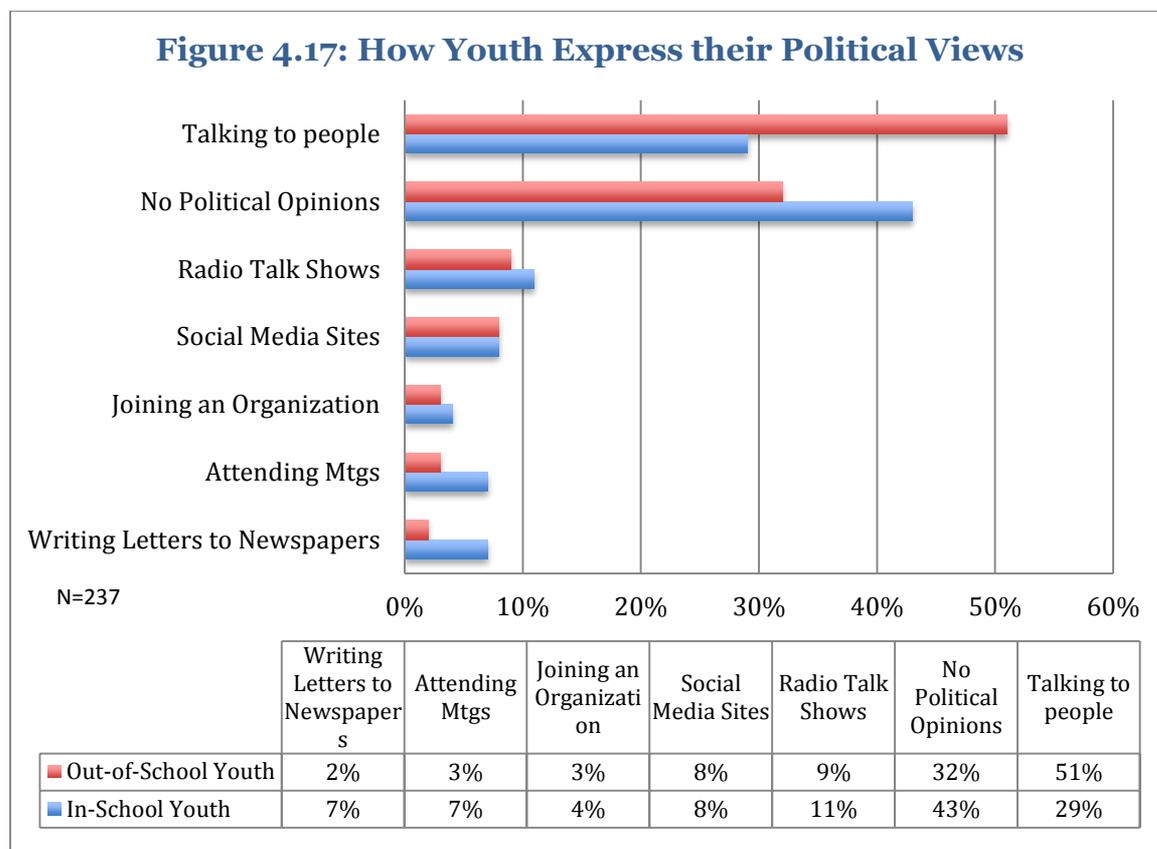
Table 4.60: Educators’ Opinions on Student Political Expression N=78; N=11

View Expressed	Teachers	School Directors
Believe that their students feel very free to express their political views IN GENERAL	14%	18%
Believe that their students feel very free to express their political views with their TEACHERS	27%	18%
Believe that their students feel very free to express their political views with PEERS	26%	55%
Believe that their students feel very free to express their political views with OLDER GENERATION	13%	9%
Believe that older people place a lot of value on youth who express their views	64%	91%
Believe that young people should be quiet about politics because they are too young to understand these things	27%	27%
Believe that youth should be quiet about political issues because it is dangerous	8%	0%



Those young people that did disclose that they held political views were additionally asked how they normally expressed them. The primary mode of political expression appeared to be *talking to other people* cited by 51% of out-of-school youth and 29% of in-school youth, a margin of difference of almost two to one (see Figure 4.17). The next most common mode of expression was *radio talk shows* followed by *social media sites*. Other modes of expression such as *joining volun-*

tary organizations were infrequently used and cited by less than 5% of either sub-sample. It was interesting to see how small a role social media played in allowing young people to express themselves, given the vaunted proclivities of Cambodian youth in social media. It is probable that limited access to the internet through smart phones or computers is inhibiting youth in Cambodia from accessing what is a vibrant and important platform in other developing countries. In terms of other modes of expression such as writing letters to newspapers or attending meetings, only a very small minority of youth indicated that these were important modes of expression for them, though frequencies among in-school youth were higher than for out-of-school youth.



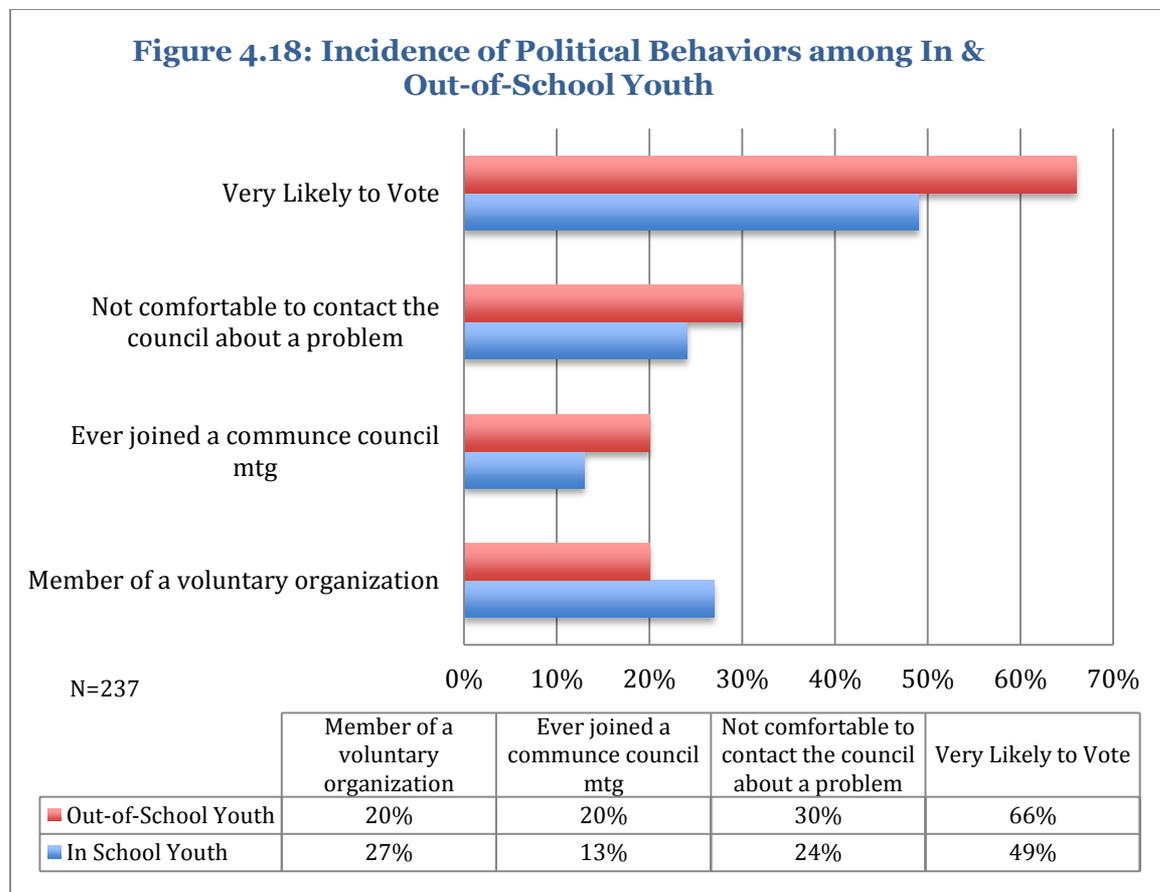
Other political behaviors among youth that were investigated in this study included voting behavior, joining voluntary organizations, and attending political meetings, especially at the local commune office. Almost half of student respondents (49%) identified themselves as being very likely to vote in a future election (see Table 4.61) with few discernible differences across demographic sub-groups. In focus group discussions, the importance of civic duty was overwhelmingly given as the most popular reason for voting by most participants, but especially among girls. Interestingly, the influence of media (social and otherwise) and of friends and family were not seen to be of any great import. Happily, only very few students responded that they would vote if someone gave them money.

Most students did not appear to be members of voluntary organizations, defined as a club, student council, or an organization of any kind; nevertheless, memberships in such organizations, when they occurred, seemed to be more popular among male students (34%) as well as those

aged under 15 (32%). While the proportion of students who have ever been present at a commune council meeting is small (13%), especially for urban youth (7%), it is sad to note that fairly large numbers of respondents (24%) did not see the council as a place where they can freely raise local issues of concern. Older students were the most confident in the regard and younger ones, the least so.

Table 4.61: Student Political Participation N=150

Indicators of Political Participation	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Under 15	15 & Over
Students stating that they are VERY LIKELY to vote when they are old enough.	49%	47%	50%	44%	53%	51%	45%
Students who are a member of a voluntary organization (e.g., club, student council, organization of any kind)	27%	34%	20%	29%	24%	32%	19%
Students who have ever joined a meeting at the commune council	13%	12%	13%	7%	18%	14%	11%
Students stating that they are NOT comfortable to contact their council about a local problem	24%	24%	24%	24%	24%	28%	18%



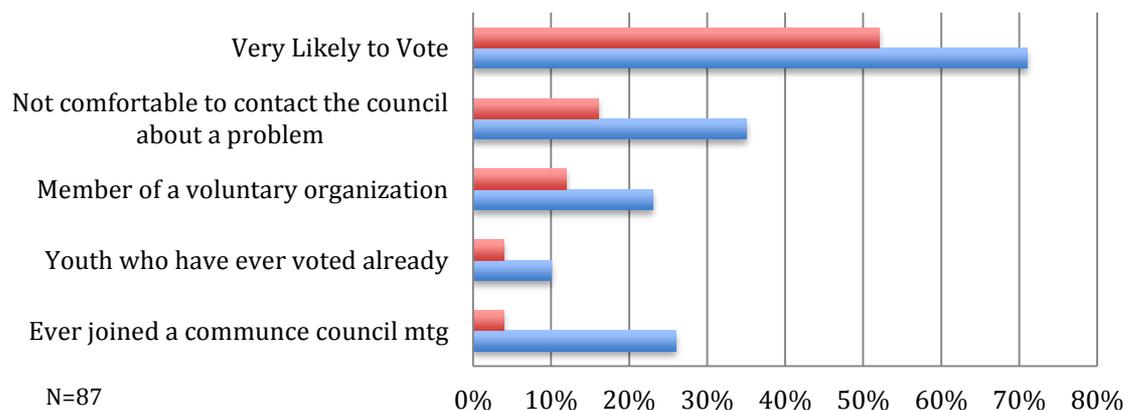
Overall, out-of-school youth appeared to be much more politically active when compared with in-school youth (see Figure 4.18), a finding due at least in part to the nature of the sample in which 85% are over 15 years of age. They exhibit higher frequencies of political behavior in most categories with the exception of membership in a voluntary organization. In this regard, 66% said that they were very likely to vote when they are 18, rising to 71% among males, but significantly lower among females (52%) (see Table 4.62). The proportion of out-of-school

youth who have participated in commune council meetings was, in general, higher than that of secondary school students (20% versus 13%) but still low as an absolute number. Once again, females evinced lower rates of membership in voluntary organizations (12%) when compared to males, whose frequency was nearly twice as high (23%).

Table 4.62: Out-of-school Youth Views on Political Participation N=87

Indicators of Political Participation	All	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Remote	Under 15	15 & Over
Youth stating that they are VERY LIKELY to vote when they are old enough.	66%	71%	52%	65%	61%	85%	69%	65%
Youth stating that they have ever voted in commune or national elections in the past	8%	10%	4%	15%	6%	6%	0%	9%
Youth who are a member of a voluntary organization (e.g., club, student council, organization of any kind)	20%	23%	12%	35%	16%	13%	8%	22%
Youth who have ever joined a meeting at the commune council	20%	26%	4%	20%	22%	13%	0%	23%
Youth stating that they are NOT comfortable to contact their council about a local problem	30%	35%	16%	15%	25%	63%	23%	31%

Figure 4.19: Out-of-School Youth Political Behaviors & Views by Sex



	Ever joined a commune council mtg	Youth who have ever voted already	Member of a voluntary organization	Not comfortable to contact the council about a problem	Very Likely to Vote
Female	4%	4%	12%	16%	52%
Male	26%	10%	23%	35%	71%

Overall, political activity was significantly less pronounced for female out-of-school youth than for males across most categories of behavior as well as among those identifying their locations as rural (see Figure 4.19). As noted above, females evidenced the least amount of interest in voting (52% versus 71% among males) among any demographic sub-grouping. However, when females were asked in focus group discussions about their feelings towards raising a local problem with the commune council, it was females who seemed to be the most prepared to do so suggesting the need for caution in interpreting these findings. Indeed, this pattern of behavior is

in sharp contrast to females who are still in school suggesting that higher levels of education likely increase political awareness and behavior.

4.5.4 Opportunities for Intervention to Promote Political Empowerment

The opportunities for intervention to promote political empowerment are varied and require reaching out to numerous stakeholders. Some of the possibilities in this regard are summarized in Table 4.54 below. Implementing interventions to promote political empowerment, however, is a sensitive undertaking given the existing taboos on using the state schools as a forum for civics or political instruction. Nevertheless, a variety of training opportunities presents themselves for consideration. For students still in the formal education system, this could include a 'discrete' civics course in order to increase young people's knowledge of the Cambodian political system. The Department of Curriculum Development (DCD) and World Education developed a civics manual as a life skills course to be used at lower secondary school level, but alas this document was not approved by the Textbook Review Committee in MoEYS due to heightened political sensitivities in the aftermath of the 2013 National Election, when the manual was unfortunately submitted for review. Nevertheless, this document provides an excellent starting point and could easily be revised for purposes of a new project with a mandate to empower youth politically. Developing such a manual, however, needs to consider on-going sensitivities and be done in a way that is non-threatening. A soft skills course of this nature could also afford both in and out-of-school youth with greater insights into the rights that they are guaranteed under the CRC, as well as giving them the opportunity to learn how infringements of these rights can be addressed. Naturally, any civics program would also involve comprehensive teacher training.

Since the most comprehensive outreach network for youth in Cambodia is the national school system with 1,622 secondary schools nationwide, increased advocacy should be considered to redefine these institutional spaces from 'neutral' to more 'civics friendly' settings. As noted above, there is a taboo against using the public schools as a forum for political discourse of any kind. Civil society organizations should lobby for a better-defined framework that respects the political sensitivities in government for political discourse in the schools but which moves the boundaries from completely neutral to more accommodative of discussions of civics and political engagement. Following the creation of such a framework, it would be easier to introduce such innovations as the establishment of school newspapers (linked to ICT labs), debate clubs, and other measures to promote political discourse among youth.

Along the same lines, support for the development of *student councils* at both primary and secondary school level should also be reviewed. While the MoEYS has already in place a formal framework sanctioning the creation of councils in all schools, the literature review suggests that many of these structures are non-functional or are at best teacher-led. School support programming among all donors should include specific assistance to strengthen these structures so that they are more student-led and undertake actual activities to improve the social environment in which youth study.

The advent of social media is a new and as yet underutilized tool to improve the political awareness of youth. The current study found that barely 10% of the youth interviewed were familiar with the use of social media to express their political views. The introduction of mobile technology devices to youth clubs, school libraries, and ICT labs along with investments in connectivity could be a very effective tool in demonstrating the power of social media for infor-

mation exchange and political discourse on issues of importance both locally and nationally. Facebook pages with selected political themes (e.g., improving local management of natural resources, reducing litter, etc.) could be established in existing youth clubs leading to a natural flow of political discourse and information exchange.

Any program designed to address young people's knowledge deficit when it comes to political issues must also include out-of-school youth, possibly in the form of workshops and training sessions implemented through the many civil society organizations focusing on youth (e.g., YRDP, KYA, etc). These organizations are in possession of a considerable outreach network both in rural and urban areas and could be highly effective in reaching youth with a message of greater civil engagement.

Table 4.54: Suggested Interventions to Promote Political Empowerment

Problem Area/Need	Suggested Intervention(s)
1. Limited Understanding of the Cambodian Political System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce civics programming as a discrete Life Skills course/ Revision of Civics Manual developed under USAID funding but not adopted by MoEYS • Design workshops and training programs for teachers in order to implement civics lesson in a discrete manual • Improved utilization of civil society organizations to inform out-of-school youth about the Cambodian political system through coordinated workshops, youth forums, etc. • Field trips to visit government institutions and legislative bodies at both national and sub-national level in order to inform young people about politics and their rights
2. Low Level of Youth Engagement in Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implement training workshops to build relationships between commune officials and youths • Explore the use of social media as a channel for youth to engage one another on political topics, e.g., Facebook Page development for youth clubs with a selected political theme such as improved local natural resource management, litter reduction, etc. • Create out-of-school youth groups or youth forums in order to work with community members in identifying and solving problems that affect young people e.g., a lack of available sports facilities • Review operation of Student Councils at secondary school level; Conduct training/workshops for teachers and students in the running of Student Councils focusing on making the councils more student-run. This will encourage a habit of student participation in decision-making bodies and will also lead to greater levels of confidence
3. Low Level of Political Engagement for Female Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct workshops/surveys to gain a fuller picture of the barriers that exist to greater political participation • Organize exposure visits to legislative bodies at both national and sub-national level where female youth can meet female parliamentarians • Introduce female-only youth forums • Encourage advocacy leading to the introduction of female youth representatives at commune meetings
4. Limited Confidence in Discussing Political and Social Issues with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce youth forums where young people can learn about and discuss issues freely • Develop a better defined framework with MoEYS that re-defines school institutional space from completely 'neutral' to 'civics friendly' • Support for school newspapers, debate clubs, and other school-based structures that promote political discourse and awareness

Visits to government legislative bodies (e.g., field trips), both at national and sub-national level, should also be integrated into formal and non-formal training programs on civics to increase both the interest in and knowledge of Cambodian politics among young people. The General Secretariat of the National Parliament, for example, has already in place a mandate to promote outreach to youth; thus, any initiatives from civil society for partnership in this area would likely be very welcome. Such dialogue could be particularly important in the case of exposure to female parliamentarians when one considers how much less likely female youth are to vote, take part in commune meetings, run for office, or join voluntary organizations, based on primary data findings in this investigation. A survey designed to pinpoint the barriers to greater involvement should be commissioned in order to tailor a more effective response to these needs.

In order to combat the inability or unwillingness of young people to discuss political and social matters with others, including their peers, youth forums should be organized so that youth, both in school and out, can learn about and discuss issues freely, in a non-judgmental and non-threatening environment. The possibility of hosting female-only youth forums should also be explored.

Currently young people are underrepresented in local and national politics. While they represent only 11% of the members of the influential political oversight committees, across Cambodia approximately 65% of the population is under 30 years of age. Thus, an initiative that seeks to increase young people's voice would be constructive. Opportunities could include an initiative to build closer relationships between commune officials and young people and commune chiefs could be encouraged to allocate some commune investment funds to youth projects. Youth representatives could be elected to run such projects who would report to and inform the commune council on matters that affect young people. Out-of-school youth groups should also be organized to identify problems in the local area, such as a lack of sports facilities, and could work together with commune officials and other community members to resolve any issues. For school-aged youth, training programs could be introduced to empower teachers and students to give greater autonomy to Student Councils, thus encouraging a habit of student participation in decision-making bodies and will also leading to greater levels of confidence.

5. Summary of Opportunities & Constraints for Youth-Focused Programming

5.1 General Conclusions

Policy Formulation and Implementation: In terms of the ability of Cambodian youth to actualize their rights for social, economic, and political empowerment, the key research question reviewed under this study, the present investigation found that there is currently in place an extensive policy framework to help guide key duty-bearers such as school and government officials, parents, vocational training institutions, and others in realizing these rights. The central policy in this regard is the *National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development*, promulgated by RGC in 2011. Youth rights for empowerment are also enshrined in the National Constitution, various educational and vocational training policies, and numerous international conventions to which the government is a signatory. However, the ability to coordinate and resource implementation of these policies has been highly problematic. For example, responsibility for vocational training appears to be spread between multiple Ministries with no central mechanism for coordination. Primary data collected during this survey also found that only about half of teachers and less than half of commune chiefs were even aware that there was a youth policy, let alone what it said. Only about a third of youth themselves expressed any awareness of such a policy. Evidence of perceived policy implementation was even weaker. Thus, while the government, donors, and civil society partners have been successful in creating a useful policy framework at several levels to empower Cambodian youth, the main challenge appears to be on improving implementation. This suggests a strong need to provide more balance in development focus with a shift to greater emphasis on implementation challenges. This is not to say that policy formulation should be abandoned, only that greater symmetry between policy development and implementation is urgently needed.

The Primacy of Education as the Best Option: The best option for Cambodia to maximize the social, economic, and political potential of youth to participate fully in society is through education at multiple levels: *foundational* (derived from basic education), *vocational-technical* (upper secondary, vocational institutions), and *transferrable* (workplace training, non-formal education). Yet this route to maximize potential is clouded by issues of *poor educational quality* (both perceived and real), *limited educational supply*, *economic barriers to access*, and *attitudinal factors* that place a high priority on avoiding opportunity costs associated with education (i.e., though education is seen as important, the value of lost income as a result of staying in school is more important). *Increased rates of migration* stemming from peer pressure, economic diversification (away from agriculture and towards industry and trade) and improved transportation networks have further amplified the opportunity costs associated with staying in school.

The Challenges to the Education System at All Levels: Based on a demographic analysis of the structure of Cambodia's population today, one could easily conclude that the current situation is one of great urgency as it relates to youth. About 65% of the total population is under 30 years old; of those who should be in junior high school (i.e., those aged between 12 and 14), about 70% are either still stuck in primary school (perhaps between 10 to 20% of this number) or have left the education system completely. Although census data suggests that the education level of youth in the workforce today is higher than that of earlier cohorts and increasing, the simple fact remains that more than half of today's youth do not complete the basic education

cycle and leave the education system without adequate foundation skills. Indeed, employers often identify the lack of basic soft skills such as critical thinking and proper work attitudes as the most important deficits among their workers. In addition, survey findings suggest that duty-bearers within the education system are very much out of touch with their students. Whereas many educators attributed high dropout trends to the failure of families and students to place a high value on education, students and parents tend to put the blame on the distance to school, its high cost (both direct and indirect), and low relevance as the key factors behind the decision to dropout.

Although interventions to reduce the barriers to secondary school education have been remarkably successful over the last 10 years with a doubling of NER numbers in the same time period, mainly through scholarships, these efforts appear to have maxed out; NER levels have become stagnant over the last four or five years within a range of 30-35%. But even if one were to suppose that it were possible to further double the enrolment rate at secondary school over the next five years, it is clear that the system could not accommodate this many youth, given that the national Pupil Classroom Ratio (PCR) is already 48 to 1 and national teacher shortages are likely to be a major constraint for years to come. Similarly, intake capacity at the country's tertiary and vocational training institutions is in the tens of thousands while the number of those exiting the basic education system or already exited is in the hundreds of thousands each year. These challenges are compounded by issues of low educational relevance, poor coordination between Ministries and service providers, and weak management of existing resources at school-level, leading to waste and inefficiency.

Youth Perspectives on Empowerment: Primary data generated by youth surveys in this study suggest that Cambodian youth across all youth sub-samples do think about their futures with some frequency. Very few said that they 'never' think about the future. Access to advice, however, during this cogitation is usually limited mainly to one's parents, siblings, and to a much lesser extent, one's teacher (for the lucky few still in school). This advice appears to be mainly *ad hoc* and unstructured in form. It is also not clear how well-informed this advice is, since there is a lack of advisory resources. In general, Cambodian youth in the provinces appear to lack exposure to the world of ideas through access to structured activities such as clubs, social media, and youth-focused publications. Survey data suggests that about two-thirds of youth in the selected provinces do 'not' read newspapers or magazines on a regular basis, nearly half have no hobbies preferring to spend their time watching television, and another half stated that they have no role models. 90% stated that they have never been to a museum. Only about 20% of those interviewed have regular access to the internet and about a third said they have NO political convictions or interest in politics though 70% said they were likely to vote when they are old enough to do so. Female youth are more likely 'not' to have political convictions and are generally much less proficient in technology usage than young men. However, they seem to be less inclined to participate in dysfunctional behaviors such as using drugs and drinking alcohol. Youth at all levels seemed very reticent to express their political opinions, even among their own peers.

Although the vast majority of youth interviewed felt sure that going to school had helped or would help them find a good job, many were currently unemployed or engaged in unskilled or seasonal labor. At the same time, many employers complain that youth come to work lacking basic foundational skills, which reflects badly on the formal education system. Interestingly, a

critical thinking test on soft foundational skills administered during the survey found a positive correlation between staying in school longer and a higher acquisition of soft skills. Clearly, staying in school provides youth with a more nurturing environment for their development than being out of the system, all criticisms of the formal education system notwithstanding.

Improving Service Provision and Coordination: The brief summary of youth attitudes and behaviors recounted above provides useful direction to service providers and government about the need to increase access to structured services that promote exposure to ideas, skills acquisition, and advice, particularly where this concerns career development and future educational opportunities (either formal or non-formal). To be sure, there are already a great many services available to youth but penetration has been poor due to duplication and poor coordination among service providers. An instructive example described earlier relates to the low response rate to educational loan services provided by several MFIs due to difficulties in working with schools to get the message out. There is, therefore, considerable scope to improve communication between state schools, providers of vocational training (both formal and non-formal), MFIs, civil society organizations, and employers. It must be acknowledged, however, that dialogue between TVET providers and employers has made significant strides and the institutional reforms in this area over the last five years are beginning to bear fruit with the recent creation of a National Employment Agency and other developments. Nevertheless, there remains a considerable gap between the state school system and TVET providers as well as the private sector.

A key challenge to improving the penetration of existing services is the lack of a systematic network through which to reach youth. As noted earlier, the state school system with over 1,000 secondary schools nationwide provides the most extensive network through which to access youth. But even this network is limited to only about 30 or 40% of the youth population at most. High mobility, seasonal and unskilled labor opportunities, and fragmented outreach networks, where they exist at all, make it difficult to reach the 50% or more of youth who are outside of the formal education system. Any approach designed to facilitate improved service outreach to Cambodian youth should nevertheless consider the use of the existing school system since it is the closest thing that Cambodia has to a nationwide network. Advocacy with school officials and support from the Youth Department should be able to build on this network as an outreach stepping stone. Many of the facilities in schools such as libraries, classrooms, and IT facilities (where they exist) could easily be used to mount major service outreach and information dissemination to out-of-school youth, particularly as these facilities are closed for 3 to 4 months a year, representing a significant opportunity for improved utilization of an existing resource.¹⁴ These efforts should be paired with activities to utilize social media as another channel for outreach, perhaps by creating a database of out-of-school youth at commune level for purposes of social messaging and communication about important events relating to youth. These efforts should be linked with the outreach services provided by the many youth organizations operating in Cambodia who can provide significant expertise in outreach and service provision.

The Need for a Balanced Approach: The observation that the majority of Cambodia's youth (i.e., those 12 years and older) are outside of the school system should not suggest that development activities to reach them should ignore the formal school system. Rather an approach

¹⁴ Most secondary schools are closed for July, August, and September as well as most of April. In addition, many schools in the countryside only operate a morning shift and are closed in the afternoon as well.

that focuses on both ‘prevention and cure’ is to be recommended. Keeping youth in school as long as possible provides the greatest likelihood that they will acquire the needed foundational skills that employers say that they most desire, as testing data from this survey seems to suggest. Doing so will also provide increased protection from the risks associated with migration and child labor. Additional investments in education can also improve the quality and relevance of education, especially through improved life skills provision, and increase access to career and counseling services. Schools should also be given an unmistakable mandate to reach out to vocational training institutions, those providing apprenticeship opportunities, and MFIs and provide opportunities for these service providers to meet with students before they complete the lower secondary education cycle. School directors often relegate these functions a much lower priority when it comes to their many other responsibilities. In parallel with this approach, there should be comparable efforts to design outreach services for out-of-school youth that provide information, advice, and assistance to access the many existing services designed for this population. These efforts can take the form of youth clubs, managed databases that utilize social media for social messaging, IEC materials in both print and electronic form, and exposure visits. The use of the state schools themselves should play a role in these efforts as well as commune councils and Community Learning Centers where these are functional.

5.2 Summary of Thematic Opportunities & Recommendations

A summary of key recommendations that cut across the various empowerment domains is provided in Table 5.1 below. These recommendations are a synthesis of the numerous suggestions made earlier for the various empowerment domains at the end of each technical findings subsection as well as other observations made throughout the report. Additional recommendations from other documents and agencies discussed in the Literature Review are also included here (e.g., UNDP, 2009; UNESCO, 2013, etc).

Table 5.1: Summary of Recommendations by Empowerment Domain & Duty-bearer

Duty-bearers Recommendations	Domain			
	Social Participation	Technological Empowerment	Economic Empowerment	Political Empowerment
Government/Donors				
1. Assist the Youth Dept. to review opportunities for more structured opportunities for youth engagement among those in and out-of-school, e.g., Youth Clubs. This could be linked with a more coordinated effort to disseminate the goals of RCG Youth Policy.	√		√	√
2. Conduct an audit of existing materials to promote youth engagement to avoid duplication, building on what already exists.	√		√	√
3. Review the use of schools as a stepping stone for outreach to out-of-school youth, allowing for dual use of facilities .	√	√	√	√
4. Increase investment in technological access at school level (e.g. ICT labs, tablet availability, etc.).		√		
5. Give school directors a clear mandate to allow service providers (e.g., MFIs, companies, vocational training providers) to access schools with service messaging			√	
6. Sanction a special position in schools for Career Counselor (comparable to that of librarian), should staffing levels permit/Provide career counseling services for in and out-of-school youth.			√	

7. Invest in life skills programming at school level to incrementally roll-out recently developed curricula about safe migration, world of work, etc.	√		√	√
8. Accelerate efforts to 'vocalionalize' general education to make it more relevant to youth.			√	
9. Include foundational skills in vocational training courses			√	
10. Increase cooperation between MoEYS and MoLVT lead-ing to systematic tracking of students from secondary school to PTCs & other vocational training institu-tions.			√	
11. Provide alternative routes to early school leavers to achieve a suitable vocation (e.g., distance learning)			√	
12. Create a set of protocols that redefines school spaces as more 'civics accommo-dating' leading to the emergence of debate clubs, school newspapers, etc.				√
13. Assist communes or other level of government to create a database of out-of-school youth who can be accessed and networked through social media (e.g., SMS texting).		√		
14. Allow commune councils to use part of the investment funds for youth empow-erment activities, especially for out –of-school youth.	√			√
15. Provide orientations based on empirical data for educators at all levels regarding the behaviors of their students, particularly why adolescents leave school.	√			
16. Diversify capacity-building support to include civil society organizations working with youth to ensure a more sustained approach to development.	√	√	√	√
17. Review and revise capacity-building approaches for Student Councils to make them more functional & student-led.	√			√
18. Accelerate efforts by the National Employment Agency to open branches in all provinces			√	
Civil Society Organizations				
1. Work with government to develop user-friendly manuals that facilitate youth engagement.	√		√	√
2. Participate in an audit of existing materials led by Government to avoid duplica-tion of earlier efforts	√		√	√
3. Develop and implement youth-focused programming as coalitions whenever possi-ble to avoid duplication of the efforts of others and realize greater economies of scale.	√		√	√
4. Re-orient local outreach networks to increase the utilization of schools as a base for support operations in tandem with government efforts to re-define the role of schools in this way.	√		√	√
5. Develop media messages (film, publications, radio programs) that can feed into outreach channels that use social and other forms of media.		√		
6. Increase efforts to keep youth in school as long as possible through redoubling assistance to scholarship programs, parental outreach, etc.	√			
7. Work with government to support new channels for youth engagement including support for youth clubs, revitalized Student Councils, debate clubs, etc.	√	√	√	√
8. Advocate for various service providers (e.g., MFIs, PTCs, etc) to access youth through the state school system, in tandem with government efforts to do the same.				
Private Sector				
1. Expand in-house skills training to include the most vulnerable youth.			√	
2. Align support for training activities with national government priorities (e.g., agri-culture as the 3 rd engine)			√	
3. Use existing channels of communication with government (e.g., NTB) to convey skill needs in order to ensure congruence between vocational training curricula and market needs.			√	
4. Assist in the enforcement of laws governing the use of children and youth in the work place.	√		√	
5. Re-orient giving away from political parties to more neutral Corporate Social Re-sponsibility, focusing on youth.			√	

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Annex 1:
Consolidated List of Variables

Study Variable	
A.	Employment Status/Rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates • Number in Wage Employment/Self-employment (for out of school youth • Employment trends among youth (have they considered working in plantations, factories, migration, construction, etc.) • Where are the most employment opportunities
B.	Transition and Dropout Rates
C.	Vocational Training Rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access • Relevance • Effectiveness of policy implementation
D.	Prevalence of Child Labor (Perceptions)
E.	School Relevance/Quality and Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial literacy • Quality of skills training • Critical thinking • Links with private sector
F.	Intent to Study (Motivation to study) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of Education and schooling • Desire to stay in school • Is school helpful to finding a job • Intention to migrate
G.	Obstacles to social empowerment and education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity costs • Direct costs • Distance • Parental Attitudes • Age Appropriateness/Overage enrolment • Child labour • Poverty • Disability (see Variable Q) • Language and Ethnicity (See Variable Q)
H.	Knowledge of local services for youth e.g. vocational training – vocational training centres = province based, courses not updated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles to implementation of policies/laws (asked to government)
I.	Migration issues and Intent
J.	Personal Planning for the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of information • Thinking about the future • Financial literacy (have you ever opened a bank account, can manage budgets, etc.)
K.	Knowledge of career paths – e.g., How do you become a teacher?
L.	Awareness of career paths for different tracks – scholarships etc
M.	Views of Education and Schooling
N.	Lifestyle/Leisure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Access to & knowledge of sources of info • Use of technology • TV watching • Hobbies • Electronic and social media • Role Models
O.	Knowledge of rights/CRC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to implementing/realizing CRC
P.	Social attitudes about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination • Gender • Ethnic groups • Disabilities

Q.	Family support for education, growth etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness with Family Environment
R.	Role models – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do youth have any role models • Use of peer role models (could be positive or negative, e.g., a sister that dropped out)
S.	Nature of Political views (strong/weak/none) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived ability to express views • Knowledge of political system • How did you come to get these views (parents, peers, siblings, media, etc)
T.	Political Activism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest and motivation in voting (have you ever, do youth think it makes a difference, what motivates you to vote, etc) • Expressing grievances – how? • Membership in voluntary organizations • Attendance of political events
U.	Knowledge of laws/policies (e.g., Youth policy) & Political System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles to implementation

Annex 2:
**Orientation for Data Collection Protocols for In and Out-of-School Youth &
 Associated Stakeholders**
Education for Youth Empowerment Project (EYE)
February 2014

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. **General:** Data collection activities for this research are intended to provide information for the design of a new project funded by Save the Children that will enable the empowerment of youth in three areas, namely (i) Economic Empowerment; (ii) Social Participation; and (iii) Political Awareness. The data collection instruments to be used for this purpose cover questions that relate to 21 different variables. These include the following:

Study Variables	
A. Employment Status/Rates	L. Awareness of career paths for different tracks – scholarships etc
B. Transition and Dropout Rates	M. Views of Education and Schooling
C. Vocational Training Rates	N. Lifestyle/Leisure
D. Prevalence of Child Labor (Perceptions)	O. Knowledge of rights/CRC
E. School Relevance/Quality and Employment	P. Social attitudes about
F. Intent to Study (Motivation to study)	Q. Family support for education, growth etc.
G. Obstacles to social empowerment and education	R. Role models
H. Knowledge of local services for youth e.g. vocational training – vocational training centres = province based, courses not updated, etc.	S. Nature of Political views (strong/weak/none)
I. Migration issues and Intent	T. Political Activism
J. Personal Planning for the Future	U. Knowledge of laws/policies (e.g., Youth policy) & Political System
K. Knowledge of career paths – e.g., How do you become a teacher?	21 Variables

- B. **Specific:** Data collection activities will specifically focus on (i) **youth and stakeholder attitudes** about the variables outlined in the table above as well as (ii) students' **soft skills** in areas relating to critical thinking.

II. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In order to collect information on stakeholder views on the stated variables, the study will employ a range of different kinds of data collection instruments. These instruments comprise different methodologies including the following:

- (i) Focus Group Discussions
- (ii) Standardized Questionnaires
- (iii) Standardized Tests

Each stakeholder grouping has a specific Data Collection Instrument or Form that has been designed specifically for that grouping. The following table summarizes which instruments are to be used with which stakeholder groupings and the nature of each form:

Forms to be Used with Different Key Informant Groupings

Key Informant	Data Collection Method	Form
1. Adolescents (in-school/secondary)	Focus Group Discussion Attitudinal Questionnaire Test	Form A1 Form B1 Form C
2. Children (primary)	Focus Group Discussion Attitudinal Questionnaire	Form A2 Form B2
3. Adolescents (out-of-school) 4. (both employed and unemployed)	Focus Group Discussion Attitudinal Questionnaire	Form A3 Form B3
5. School Directors	Questionnaire	Form D
6. Teachers	Focus Group Discussion (Secondary only) Questionnaire (Primary & Secondary)	Form E Form F
7. Parents/School Support Committee Members	Focus Group Discussion	Form G

III. SCHOOL SELECTION

Respondents in schools will be drawn from populations in 10 selected schools that have been selected in three provinces including:

- Kampong Cham (4 schools)
- Prey Veng (3 schools)
- Koh Kong (3 schools)

A list of school names and the specific criteria characterizing each school is provided in a list attached to this orientation sheet.

The schools where research is being conducted include 6 secondary schools and 4 primary schools.

IV. SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

A. General:

There are six groups of respondents that need to be selected from each of the schools and communes participating in this study. All respondents will be chosen from schools except for out-of-school youth who will be drawn from populations selected by local communes. The numbers of respondents to be selected from each school/commune and the formulae used for doing so are provided in the table below:

Respondent Group Numbers and Formulae for Selection

Key Informant	Expected Number	Formula for Sample Construction
1. Adolescents (in-school/secondary)	120 (FGD/Questionnaire) <u>180 (Test)</u> 300 (Total)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a systematic sampling methodology (e.g., every 10th student in a class) • FGD with 6 Lower Secondary Schools • FGDs should be a maximum of 20 students at each of the 6 participating schools (120 students) • Questionnaires in all 6 schools (same grouping as FGDs) • Critical Thinking Test is to be administered in parallel with FGDs/Questionnaires using a systematic sampling technique • 30 students are selected from each school x 6
2. Children (primary)	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a systematic sampling methodology (e.g., every 10th student in a class) • Use only Grade 6 students • 20 per school w/ FGD x 4 primary schools

Key Informant	Expected Number	Formula for Sample Construction
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FGDs should be a maximum of 20 students at each of the four selected schools that do the FGD activity (80) Questionnaires in all 4 primary schools (same grouping as FGDs)
3. Adolescents (out-of-school) (both employed and unemployed)	150 (50 per province)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of a judgmental sampling methodology that yields a mix of youth in terms of employment status, gender, ethnicity, and age. 6 communes x 25 out-of-school youth each 2 communes per province 25 youth per commune Get information from commune level Do interviews at village /commune level Work with PSOD and other partners to assemble
4. School Directors	10-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 or 2 per school
5. Teachers	54 (Secondary) 24 (Primary) 78 (Total)	<p><u>Secondary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of a judgmental sampling methodology that yields a mix of teachers in terms of grade level, subject, age, and sex 9 teachers per school x 6 secondary schools (54) FGDs and Questionnaires to be administered at all 6 schools Primary Request all teachers at all grade levels to complete the questionnaire (6 teachers/school x 4 schools = 24)
6. Parents/SSC	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of a judgmental sampling methodology that yields a mix of parents in terms of socio-economic status, age, and sex 20/school x 10 schools
7. Government (e.g., Provincial and District Offices of Education, MoEYS, MoLVT, PTC, etc)	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Dept: 3 Sec Ed Dept: 3 DOE: 10 POLVT: 3 Voc Tr Ctr: 3 MoEYS 3
8. Commune Officials	12	<p>Judgmental Sampling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/commune x 6 <u>Note:</u> Use communes where LSS's are located
9. Development Partners and NGOs	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADB: 1 UNICEF: 1 UNDP: 1 World Bank: 1 Mith Samlanh (KC): 1 BSDA (KC): 1 KYA: (KC/PP): 1 YRDP (PP): (1) Other
10. Employers/ Chamber of Commerce	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAMFEBA: 1 Rubber Plantations Factories in Oriang O
11. MFIs and Banks	5	<p>Judgmental Sampling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large & small institutions

B. Selection Process for Specific Groups

Adolescents (In-school)

Number	Grades	Methodology
30 per school	Mixed: Try to develop a sample of students from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When arriving at the school, choose any three

	Grades 7 (10 students); 8 (10 students) and 9 (10 students)	<p>classes at a different grade level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a <i>systematic sampling technique</i> to select students (e.g., choose every 3rd student in each class) until 10 students have been selected • Make sure that teachers are NOT allowed to choose students for you
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Adolescents (out-of-school)

Number	Commune Selection	Methodology
25 per commune	Work with the 6 communes in those areas that have secondary schools where data collection is also occurring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the commune to assemble 25 local youth who are no longer in school. • Request communes to be sure to include youth who are employed and unemployed • Upon arrival, break the group of 25 youth into two groups of 12 or 13. • Let one group complete the questionnaire while the other group will do an FGD. • After one hour, switch the groups. This will require a team of at least three persons to visit each commune (2 per FGD and at least one person to be responsible for the questionnaire)

Primary School Children

Number	Grades	Methodology
30 per school	<i>Work only with Grade 6 children</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a <i>systematic sampling technique</i> to select students from one or more Grade 6 classes at the school (e.g., choose every 2nd student in each class) until 30 students have been selected • Make sure that teachers are NOT allowed to choose students for you

School Directors

Number	Individual Selection
1 per school	The individual selected may be either the director or vice director if the director is not available

Teachers

Number	Subjects and Positions	Methodology
9 per school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to ensure a mix of teachers of different subject areas and/or seniority within the school (e.g., regular teachers as well as technical grade leaders) • Only interview teachers from secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a <i>judgmental sampling</i> methodology that ensures a mix of subject teaches and those with different levels of seniority

Parents/SSC Members

Number	School Selection	Methodology
15 per school	Parents should be selected from each of the participating schools (both primary and secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a <i>judgmental sampling</i> methodology that ensures a mix of parents as well as more senior community members from the School Support

		Committee (SSC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request school directors to assist in choosing appropriate community members to the school for the FGD
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V. ADMINISTERING THE INSTRUMENTS

Time Frame: Enumerators are advised to use the following time guidelines for each of the data collection methodologies indicated:

• Focus Group Discussions:	One hour to 90 Minutes
• Questionnaires:	1 Hour
• Soft Skill Test:	One hour and 10 minutes (70 minutes)

Timing: The following guideline should be observed to minimize disruption at the schools and minimize the occurrence of confounding factors.

1. Work with students from 10 AM onwards to minimize the amount of time that students might lose from learning in their classrooms
2. When interviewing parents and teachers in FGDs, make sure that school directors are engaged in completing the questionnaire to prevent them from participating in discussions that might inhibit responding from either of the former groups.
3. When working with secondary school students, it will not be possible to administer all three data collection instruments in one morning. It is recommended that enumerators start with an FGD (e.g. 10:00 AM to 10:45) followed by a questionnaire (10:45-11:45)
4. The test should be administered to different students chosen in the same way during the afternoon hours or alternatively on the following day.
5. Enumerators should work with directors, teachers, and parents earlier in the morning during the hours of 8 AM to 10 AM.

Administrative Guidelines for Administering Each Form

Questionnaires and Tests:

1. Ask respondents to complete basic personal information (sex, age, etc.) requested at the beginning of each form.
2. Enumerators should read the directions of each section of each form to respondents. This should be done for both the attitudinal surveys as well as the test.
3. Enumerators should explain to respondents how to complete each question (circling answers, etc.). This should be done for both the attitudinal surveys as well as the test.
4. For the tests, it is important for enumerators to assure students that their performance on these tests will not affect their grades. They should answer as honestly as they can.
5. For each test section, there is an example provided. Be sure to do the example with the students so that they can understand what later questions are asking them to do.
6. Enumerators should read/review each question on each form to respondents before they are allowed to start to complete them. On shorter forms, they may review all questions at once and on longer forms, they may need to do a review one section at a time.
7. Invite respondents to ask a question at any time during the completion period if they do not understand a given question, especially in the case of students.
8. When organizing students to complete questionnaires and tests, make sure that one student is sitting at one table and as far apart from other students as possible to avoid cheating. This is particularly important in the case of the test which relies heavily on multiple choice questions.
9. When collecting questionnaires and tests, make sure that respondents have properly completed the personal information requested at the start of each questionnaire.

Focus Group Discussions:

1. Be sure to read the introductory statement of each focus group form to respondents so that they understand the purpose of the discussion, who is asking the questions, and how the information will be used.
2. At least two enumerators should administer each focus group discussion. One person should lead the discussion while another records responses.
3. FGD Questions have discussion guides at the bottom of each cell to help the facilitator know how to probe for more information and what follow-up questions may be needed. Use these guides to help facilitate the ensuing discussions.
4. Some FGDs have follow-up activities that require specific activities to help respondents prioritize areas of concern or give emphasis to points earlier discussed. Follow the directions for each activity provided in the FGD form carefully to ensure that each activity is carried out in exactly the same manner in each site to ensure reliability.

Specific Schools Participating in the Situational Analysis by Criteria

Selection Criteria	School 1 Thnal Keng PS	School 2 Anuwat PS	School 3 Oriang O HS	School 4 Samdech hmae HS	School 5 Samaki Komar PS	School 6 Ba Phnom HS	School 7 Kg Trabek LSS	School 8 Sat Krahom PS	School 9 Chea Sim Smaech Mean Chey LSS	School 10 Tmor Sor HS	Required
1. Provincial Location											
• Kampong Cham	X	X	X	X							4
• Prey Veng					X	X	X				3
• Koh Kong								X	X	X	3
2. Enrolment Size											
• Less than 200	149							110			2
• 201 to 499		200			472				316		3
• 500 or more			831	1,294		1,657	412			356	5
3. Demographic Location											
• Urban/Semi-Urban		X	X			X	X		X		5
• Rural	X			X	X			X		X	5
4. Proximity to Economic Activity Areas											
• High Proximity		X	X			X	X		X		5
• Low Proximity	X			X	X			X		X	5
5. Management Criteria											
• High Management Capacity		X	X		X		X		X		5
• Low Management Capacity	X			X		X		X		X	5
6. Student Flow Rate											
• High Dropout Rate (10% +)				10%	13.7%	10.9				17%	4
• Low Dropout rate (9% or less)	X (0%)	3%	8%				3.7%	5.1%	0%		6
7. Minority Representation											
• Minority Area	X		X								2
• Non Minority Area		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
8. Education Sector											
• Primary	X	X			X			X			4
• Secondary			X	X		X	X		X	X	6

Annex 3: Critical Thinking Test Protocols and Table of Specifications

I. Overview

This test consists of 6 batteries of questions to gauge the degree to which children can think critically. The test is not intended as a measure of intelligence in that many of the questions consist of skills that it is believed many children can learn or improve. Because many of the tasks in the test will be new and strange to children, invigilators have been instructed to read the questions in each section to children in their entirety before they are allowed to start to answer them. Examples are provided at the start of each section to facilitate invigilator explanations of how to answer questions. In this way, the test was administered in a way so that it is a child friendly as possible.

II. Student Grade Level

The questions in both test batteries are not curriculum specific but do require basic proficiency in reading and writing. The test is intended to be used with children who are studying at Lower Secondary School Level.

III. Summary of Tasks

The Critical Thinking Test (Form C) covers *critical thinking skills* and includes the following tasks:

1. **Figural Series (Prediction):** The student is given a sequence of figures having some progressive relationship to one another and is required to choose from four possible responses the figure that continues the progressive relationship.
2. **(a) Discerning Logical Sequences (Figural):** Students are given a series of pictures and are expected to arrange them in a logical order.
(b) Discerning Logical Sequences (Verbal): Students are given a series of sentences and paragraphs are expected to arrange them in a logical order.
3. **Classification:** The student is given four elements (words, pictures, or numerical symbols) and is required to identify the element that is different from the other three.
4. **Analogies:** "A is to B as C is to _" is the usual form for analogies. Element A is related to element B. The student must identify the response that has the same relationship to C as B has to A.
5. **Conceptual Analysis:** Students are given the definition of a "fact" and an "opinion" and are then expected to determine how they would label a series of statements that fall into either category.
6. **Textual Analysis:** Students are given a short text and are asked to perform certain tasks based on what they understand from the text. The primary task given relates to filling in a chart based on the explanation in the text.

IV. Time Requirements

The critical thinking test contains 6 sections that are to be administered as a regular written test. This the test requires 1 hour and 10 minutes to complete. The 6 sections of this test are to be administered as a written test with a test booklet and answer sheet where students write their background information and answers.

V. Table of Specifications

Content	Construct Domain				
	<i>Verbal Skills</i>	<i>Quantitative Skills</i>	<i>Figural Skills</i>	<i>Verbal & Figural Skills</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
1. Alternating Series/Prediction			8 Q x 1 pts		8 pts
2. Logical Sequences	5 Q x 1 pts 5 Q x 1 pts		6 Q x 1 pts 4 Q x 1 pts		20 pts
3. Classification	6 Q x 1 pt	7 Q x 1 pt	13 Q x 1 pt		26 pts
4. Analogies	10 Q x 1 pt	5 Q x 1 pt	5 Q x 1 pt		20 pts
5. Concept Analysis (Fact vs Opinion)	6 Q x 2 pt				12 pts
6. Textual Analysis				7 Q x 2 pts	14 pts
TOTAL	38	12	36	14	100 pts

Annex 4: Composite Sketches of Focus Group Discussions with All Stakeholders

Composite for Lower Secondary School Students

No	Suggested Questions
1	<p>Are any of you worried that you may not be able to finish your studies at secondary school? Raise your hands if you think so. (Count hands)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 58%
2	<p>What are some of the reasons that make you have this worry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Illness ❖ Intellectual ability ❖ Lack of money ❖ Work outside the home to supplement family income ❖ Not enough teaching aids to support studies ❖ Parents ask them to drop out of school ❖ Parents want them to study English/Chinese instead of going to school
3	<p>How many of you think that you will need to get a job in a factory or in the market before you finish school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 0 <p>Tell me why you feel you need to get a job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Students don't work and study at the same time. When they have a job, they will have dropped out already
4	<p>Tell me how you feel about what you are learning in school. Do you think school will help you earn a living, as you get older?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ They feel happy when they come to school ❖ They think that studying at school will get them a better job in the future ❖ Life skills classes – veg planting, sewing ❖ Classes have many students and there are not enough classroom ❖ Maths/calculations are related to what they need to earn a living/find a good job
5	<p>Do any of you find that it is more difficult to stay in school the older that you get? What kinds of pressure, if any, do you feel to leave school as you get older.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ No – encouragement from teacher ❖ Most parents don't want them to drop out but there is economic pressure to do so
6	<p>How many of you think that you understand the Cambodian political system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 62%
7	<p>If I tell you some roles from the Cambodian political system, can you tell me what they do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Prime Minister – has power, management of country, developing infrastructure, protect the country, control economics, lead the country ❖ King – figure head, help (poor) people, develop the country, no power, hero/example for citizens ❖ Member of Parliament – discusses politics, solve political issues ❖ Commune Chief – commune security, oversee agricultural development, responsible for managing divorce proceedings, helps to solve problems in the community (domestic violence etc.), keeps family records (births, deaths etc.)

Composite for Primary School Students

No	Suggested Questions	Variable Reference
1	<p>Are any of you worried that you may not be able to finish your studies at secondary school? Raise your hands if you think so. (Count hands)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 51% 	B, F
2	<p>What are some of the reasons that make you have this worry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Slow learner ❖ Being poor – studying is expensive, low family income, need to earn money ❖ Distance from home but short teaching time ❖ Family economic crisis ❖ Insecurity form home to the school ❖ Busy to work at home <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ They are slow learners, they are from the poor family and they have to work to get money to help their family, they spend a lot of money to study and long distance from home to the school. ❖ Their parents don't have ability to help them to continue their studying, ask them to help to do work at home, don't have money for them to buy learning materials. 	B, G, E, F, R
3	<p>How many of you think that you will need to get a job in a factory or in the market before you finish secondary school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 28% ❖ Lack of parental encouragement ❖ Migration ❖ Volunteer to find a job ❖ Family economic crisis ❖ Low income and cannot support their studying 	A, D, G, F, R
4	<p>Tell me how you feel about what you are learning in school. Do you think school will help you earn a living, as you get older?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Life skills classes are good ❖ Enough textbooks ❖ Good teachers ❖ Good education, environment ❖ Vegetable plantation, sewing, fish raising, dancing ❖ Science can help them to do experiments and do research ❖ Math, they know how to add etc. ❖ Don't have life skill program ❖ In each class don't have many students, have enough textbook § ❖ They go to the school because they want to be happy 	B, G, E, F, R
5	<p>Do any of you find that it is more difficult to stay in school the older that you get? What kinds of pressure, if any, do you feel to leave school as you get older.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Feel shy being older – want to stop studying ❖ Want to help family with money issues ❖ Parents ask them to help to do housework ❖ They are slow learner, don't understand lessons ❖ They don't pay attention on their studying ❖ Feel shy when they fail examinations ❖ Don't have money to go to the school and then they ask their parents to leave the school to do the work at the rubber plantation 	B, G, E, F, R

Composite for Out-of-School Youth

No	Suggested Questions	Variable Reference
1	<p>How many of you were not be able to finish your studies at secondary school? (Count hands)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 80% 	B, F
2	<p>What are some of the reasons why you were unable to finish secondary school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic pressures ❖ Distance between house/school ❖ Curriculum in school irrelevant – no life skills ❖ Family problems ❖ Don't have ability (don't have money to buy materials) ❖ They follow their friends to stop studying ❖ Have work at home (their parents keep them to help at home) ❖ The school far away from home (7km) ❖ The school does not have life skill program ❖ Difficult to follow leasons ❖ Don't want to go the school ❖ Insecurity for them to travel from home to the school ❖ Lack of transportation ❖ Responsibility at home (take care of their sibling, doing farm <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ In the school did not life skill program for student to study. ❖ Slow learner, lack of teaching aids and because of they are from the poor family so they have to stop studying and because of they feel shy with their friends so they decided to quit and get a specific skill for their future. The parents try to encourage their children to go to the school but they themselves decided to stop studying. ❖ Job opportunity (work at rubber and cassava plantation). 	B, G, E, F, R
3	<p>How many of you think that you needed to get a job in a factory or in the market before you finished secondary school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 45% <p>Tell my why that was?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Large family – find jobs to support family ❖ Easy to find a job in a factory if there is already a family member working there <p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Their parents ask them to help to do housework ❖ Family economic crisis ❖ Become a factory worker to get more income to help their family ❖ Health problem ❖ During the vacation they go to the city to work as a construction worker and then they feel don't want to study anymore ❖ Don't have ability to pay for their studying and buy the learning materials and they try to work to get some money to help their family. 	B, G, E,F, R
4	<p>Tell me how you feel about what you learned in school. Do you think school has helped you earn a living, now that you are older?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ No specific skills taught in school ❖ Curriculum irrelevant ❖ Large class size ❖ No life skills classes ❖ When they are in school they feel they will get a job after they finish it. But the school did not have life skill program. Some of the teachers have a methodology to teach students. Lack of teaching aids, text book 	B, G, E, F, R

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Moto mechanic ❖ Know how to add etc. ❖ Feel happy because they can use what they have learned from the school to apply to their daily life and they can find a job after they finish their studying. ❖ Many students in the class 55/class ❖ Have enough text book and have life skill program 	
5	<p>Did any of you find that it was more difficult to stay in school the older that you got? What kinds of pressure, if any, did you feel to leave school as you got older.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Curriculum is not interesting ❖ Family asks them to stop studying – they are old enough to work ❖ They feel shy to go school ❖ Feel shy with their friends who are younger then ❖ Help their family at home, go to work at the factory, company to get more income to help their family ❖ Slow learner 	B, G, E, F, R
6	<p>How many of you have ever attended any kind of vocational training centre?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Number raising hands: 35% 	C
7	<p>What difficulties are there in accessing vocational training centres?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Prime Minister – help poor people, infrastructure, Protect the natural resource, develop the country, Lead the country, Meet the other countries, Increase job opportunity in the local area, life skill program and charity to people ❖ King – protect the country, charity, build the school building, join the meeting, Represent the country, make the rule, lead the country, signature, protect children, to region but don't have power ❖ Member of Parliament – create laws, justice, make the rule, conduct the meeting, Asian meeting, solve the politic problem, foreign communication ❖ Commune Chief- never saw him doing anything, just gambling, drinking, build roads, build schools, commune developing, go to visit people, make an announcement, communicate with other NGOs to get a job for youth, to be a represent for people, solve the domestic violent, working on family book, land, birth family book, identity card. 	C

Composite for Teachers

No	Suggested Questions		
1	<p>Is dropout in your school a problem for people living in the local community? That is, most children enroll at the beginning of the school year but then do not stay until the end. If dropout is a problem, who does it most affect?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic factors – jobs, income supplementation ❖ Migration to Thailand – especially for boys ❖ Approx 10% of students go to the city for work ❖ Enrollment rates the same at the beginning of the year, but by the end of the year, more girls have dropped out. ❖ 20% of students drop out – mostly in Grade 7 ❖ Probably 10% to 15% for the drop out students and most of them are from 11 years old to 15 years old who study in grade 7 to 8 and most of them are men. 		
2	<p>Do you see any differences in enrolment or dropout between boys and girls? If there are differences, how would you account for them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Enrollment rates the same at the beginning of the year, but by the end of the year, more girls have dropped out ❖ Girls generally go to the cities to work in garment factories ❖ Most of boy are more absent than girls ❖ Girls are less than boy for the enrollment rate in the beginning of the year. ❖ Male students drop out more ❖ Enrollment rates have more student in the beginning of the year but the dropout rate is less than 10% and the active students are girls ❖ 10% dropout 		
3	<p>What are some of the reasons that you think account for the dropout rate in your community?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="268 1016 1315 1267"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1016 791 1267"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic pressure ❖ Follow friends who have dropped out ❖ Friends who have dropped out encourage them to drop out too ❖ Low value given to education from community members/parents ❖ Parents are low educated people </td> <td data-bbox="791 1016 1315 1267"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of parental encouragement ❖ Low levels of education of parents ❖ Migration to other countries ❖ Curriculum is irrelevant ❖ Low quality of education ❖ Family economic pressure ❖ Distance from home to the school ❖ Health problem ❖ Lack of teaching aids </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Most of the parents are farmers and construction workers, most of them face with the financial crisis so they decided to stop their children from studying because of the school is far from their home, insecurity from home to the school and because of the students themselves saw some of their neighbor have work to do so they decided to stop and become a factory worker or work at the rubber plantation. On other hand, the education quality also effect with the students, some of teachers did not have enough ability to teach, lack of teaching aids in the class, lack of sanitation (bad smell in the toilet and don't have sanitation facilities), and some of them did not know what they are going to do after they stop studying from the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic pressure ❖ Follow friends who have dropped out ❖ Friends who have dropped out encourage them to drop out too ❖ Low value given to education from community members/parents ❖ Parents are low educated people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of parental encouragement ❖ Low levels of education of parents ❖ Migration to other countries ❖ Curriculum is irrelevant ❖ Low quality of education ❖ Family economic pressure ❖ Distance from home to the school ❖ Health problem ❖ Lack of teaching aids
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4	<p>Tell me how you feel about the quality of educational services offered at your school. Do you think staying in school will help the children earn a living, as they get older?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Quality of education is similar to other schools ❖ Large class sizes, lack of textbooks (esp French), lack of science labs, school buildings ❖ Lack of teaching aids ❖ No life skills classes so hard for students to use what they learn in school to help them earn a living ❖ Normally have 40 students /class ❖ Direct link between finishing school and a good job ❖ No life skills classes though ❖ Some of them like studying and some dislike. ❖ Lack of teaching aids, text books (chemistry and English book). ❖ Life skill just only has for grade 7, 8 and 9 like: vegetable plantation, workshop. ❖ Lack of books in the library 		

5	<p>Do you have any suggestions for the Government about how they might keep children in school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More scholarships to poor students ❖ Workshops for teachers to share knowledge at provincial and district level ❖ Create more job opportunities ❖ More teacher training to keep up with curriculum changes ❖ The government should set the rule of job opportunity, applicant should finish grade 12 at least to get a job. ❖ Increase teacher's salary ❖ The ministry of Culture and Art should broad their advertisement for the young students to follow the good manners. ❖ Should have a vocational training center in the village. ❖ More skills training – computers ❖ Increase teachers' salary ❖ Improve teacher shortage ❖ Provide programme to educate parents on the value of education ❖ The government should increase teacher's salary ❖ Teacher's motivation ❖ Should improve the internal regulation ❖ Should improve teacher capacity ❖ Encourage clever students ❖ Some of the text book from MoEYS missing some pages about life skill manual
6	<p>Tell me what kinds of things the government or NGOs could do to help solve some of the problems relating to dropout in your school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Scholarships ❖ Modify exam system to focus on quality not quantity ❖ Class size – 30 not 50/60 ❖ Create workshops – sewing, agriculture, sports, art in schools ❖ Teacher should wear one specific uniform for their own school ❖ Persuade students to do research ❖ Follow up the dropout rate students ❖ Provide them the teaching aids ❖ Increase more life skill in the school ❖ Improve school's environment ❖ Support life skills classes ❖ Provide programme to educate parents on the value of education
7	<p>Do you have any suggestions for the Government about how they might make education in public schools more relevant to children's futures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve quality of education through increasing teacher salary ❖ More study tours for teachers ❖ Improve the school environment ❖ Give more text book for students ❖ Life skills classes ❖ Should separate two classes of life skill class should have (khmer traditional cake class for girls) and workshop (boy students). ❖
8	<p>Tell me what kinds of things the government or NGOs could do to help solve some of the problems relating to youth empowerment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Scholarships ❖ Opportunities to study abroad for clever students ❖ The student council should have a regular meeting ❖ Provide scholarship to clever and poor students ❖ Introduce short courses – computers, sewing ❖ Should provide accommodation for poor students at school ❖ Provide learning aids to students ❖ Short courses for teachers to build their capacity ❖ The government should give them a chance to talk without any worry in the society ❖ Should let give them the opportunity to join any training.

Composite for Parents

No	Question		
1.	<p data-bbox="264 286 933 315">As a parent, what do you think your main responsibilities are?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="264 344 1305 714"> <tr> <td data-bbox="264 344 783 714"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Educate children ❖ Follow up their studies ❖ Encourage children ❖ Give them money ❖ Provide a good example ❖ Give them food ❖ Send them to the school ❖ Advise them to have a good friend in the school ❖ Send them to school ❖ Speak good words to the children </td> <td data-bbox="783 344 1305 714"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ask the teacher to advise children ❖ Provide a home ❖ Support children until finish high school ❖ Provide food ❖ Encourage them to go to school ❖ Find them money to support their children studying ❖ Give them advice to be a good children ❖ Give them shelter to live </td> </tr> </table> <p data-bbox="264 719 325 748">Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ We try to persuade them to study in this school only because we don't have any money to send them to continue their studying at other places. ❖ Prepare the food, shelter, ask them about their studying at the school, urge them to try to study hard and try to find money to support their studying. ❖ When they are at home we try to encourage them try to study hard in order to get a job in the future. ❖ Being a good parents we are responsible for giving them a shelter, educated them to be a good citizen and send them to the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Educate children ❖ Follow up their studies ❖ Encourage children ❖ Give them money ❖ Provide a good example ❖ Give them food ❖ Send them to the school ❖ Advise them to have a good friend in the school ❖ Send them to school ❖ Speak good words to the children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ask the teacher to advise children ❖ Provide a home ❖ Support children until finish high school ❖ Provide food ❖ Encourage them to go to school ❖ Find them money to support their children studying ❖ Give them advice to be a good children ❖ Give them shelter to live
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2.	<p data-bbox="264 963 1469 1025">How hopeful are you that your children will achieve a better standard of living than you? (Count hands for each option)</p> <p data-bbox="264 1055 1246 1084">34% Very hopeful 40% Somewhat hopeful 23 %Not at all hopeful 3% No idea</p>		
3.	<p data-bbox="264 1088 868 1117">What are some of the reasons for your previous answer?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="264 1146 1305 1547"> <tr> <td data-bbox="264 1146 783 1547"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Education will lead to a good job with a high salary ❖ More teachers nowadays – children are more likely to get a better education than before ❖ Low income ❖ Quality of education is good ❖ Family economic crisis ❖ Lack of textbook for students ❖ Migration about 70% to phnom penh, 3% to Tailand and Malaysia ❖ Lack of job opportunity in the community. </td> <td data-bbox="783 1146 1305 1547"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Long distance to vocational training centre ❖ Lack of money to support children's education ❖ Children more educated than parents ❖ Most attend school ❖ Better job opportunities – linked to better education ❖ Don't have enough money ❖ Don't have vocational training center in the community </td> </tr> </table> <p data-bbox="264 1552 325 1581">Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ We really want our children to have high education but we cannot because of the family economic problem. ❖ Migration ❖ They hope that their children will get a high score. However, after the children finish primary school they cannot continue to the lower secondary school because the school is far from home so they have to ask them to stop studying. ❖ The school curriculum right now is better than before so they hope that they children will get a job after they finish school in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Education will lead to a good job with a high salary ❖ More teachers nowadays – children are more likely to get a better education than before ❖ Low income ❖ Quality of education is good ❖ Family economic crisis ❖ Lack of textbook for students ❖ Migration about 70% to phnom penh, 3% to Tailand and Malaysia ❖ Lack of job opportunity in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Long distance to vocational training centre ❖ Lack of money to support children's education ❖ Children more educated than parents ❖ Most attend school ❖ Better job opportunities – linked to better education ❖ Don't have enough money ❖ Don't have vocational training center in the community
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4.	<p data-bbox="264 1827 1469 1890">Have things changed compared to what they were when you were a student or when some of your older children (or younger brothers and sisters) attended the school? (Count hands for each option)</p> <p data-bbox="264 1919 572 1948">78% Yes 22% No</p>		
5.	<p data-bbox="264 1948 603 1977">If yes, how have they changed?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="264 2007 1437 2038"> <tr> <td data-bbox="264 2007 783 2038">❖ Improved education, curriculum</td> <td data-bbox="783 2007 1437 2038">❖ Reduced respect for teacher</td> </tr> </table>	❖ Improved education, curriculum	❖ Reduced respect for teacher
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Create more job opportunities ❖ Introduce life skills classes ❖ Increase family income ❖ Improve quality of teaching ❖ Government should provide more vocational training to out of school youth ❖ Build more schools ❖ Introduce short courses from a young age ❖ Should train them about how sanitation at home and train teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ With extra classes, students work 7am-7pm – parents feel this is too much – needs to be addressed ❖ More regular communication between teachers and parents ❖ Training should be provided in small villages which are far from the towns ❖ Provide them scholarship ❖ Provide them a training class ❖ Don't have enough textbook for students ❖ Lack of sanitation in the school 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improving the school's environment has no effect on the dropout rate. ❖ Should provide a training for students since they was in primary school. 					
9.	<p>How many of you have heard about vocational training opportunities for youth in your area? (Count hands)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 53% 				
10.	<p>If yes, how easy it is for young people to access these vocational training opportunities? Are there any obstacles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Not easy – training schools far away from their community ❖ Students are not interested in attending these centres/not interested in the skills that are on offer ❖ No obstacles ❖ They heard the news but they just come to do the technical work but they don't provide them materials to use. ❖ Reduce drinking alcohol and domestic violent ❖ Dressmaker, construction, electric, makeup maker, chicken rising, IT, mechanic skills. 				
11.	<p>How prevalent would you say that child labor is in your community? (Count hands for each option)</p> <p>13% Very prevalent 45% Somewhat prevalent</p> <p>15% Not prevalent 27% No idea</p>				
8.	<p>What are some of the reasons that you think account for child labour in your community?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="268 1211 1302 1429"> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1211 783 1429"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic pressures – supplement family income ❖ Young people want money ❖ Low income ❖ Parents are low education ❖ Migration to other provinces (rubber plantation) </td> <td data-bbox="791 1211 1302 1429"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of parental encouragement to stay in school ❖ Poor quality of education – no reason to stay </td> </tr> </table> <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents have low income so they children have to stop studying in order to help their parents to get more income to support their family. ❖ Sometimes the teachers' absence so they ask their children to work at home. And because of they are poor, the school has only grade 6 and cannot go to the secondary school, the school far away from home, insecurity so they keep their children to work at home. ❖ The reason that cause the domestic violent because of the poor living condition, low educated parents, their friends and they themselves. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic pressures – supplement family income ❖ Young people want money ❖ Low income ❖ Parents are low education ❖ Migration to other provinces (rubber plantation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of parental encouragement to stay in school ❖ Poor quality of education – no reason to stay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic pressures – supplement family income ❖ Young people want money ❖ Low income ❖ Parents are low education ❖ Migration to other provinces (rubber plantation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of parental encouragement to stay in school ❖ Poor quality of education – no reason to stay 				
12.	<p>Are there plans in your family to migrate? (Count hands)</p> <p>19% Yes 81% No</p>				
13.	<p>If yes, where do you want to migrate and what are your reasons to migrate?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="268 1794 1302 1989"> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1794 783 1989"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Work in factories, corn farms ❖ Foreign countries ❖ Economic pressures, earn money ❖ More job opportunity ❖ Take care of their grandson/granddaughter </td> <td data-bbox="791 1794 1302 1989"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Help their family to get more income ❖ They saw other have high salary ❖ Find a job to do </td> </tr> </table> <p>Note:</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Work in factories, corn farms ❖ Foreign countries ❖ Economic pressures, earn money ❖ More job opportunity ❖ Take care of their grandson/granddaughter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Help their family to get more income ❖ They saw other have high salary ❖ Find a job to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Work in factories, corn farms ❖ Foreign countries ❖ Economic pressures, earn money ❖ More job opportunity ❖ Take care of their grandson/granddaughter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Help their family to get more income ❖ They saw other have high salary ❖ Find a job to do 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Go to korea to get a job and get high salary ❖ In the local study is not enough and need to go to study in the city. ❖ Because of their family are poor so they have to find a job to do and to get a high salary by migrate. 		
14.	<p><u>How do you think migration will effect your children's education?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Disrupts their education ❖ Students do not want to return to education when they are older – over-age ❖ Want their children to have high education ❖ No idea ❖ If they migrate to other country or other provinces they will not move their house ❖ Effect with their children feeling, lack of job opportunity, become illiterate person 		
15.	<p>Do you have any career plans for your children? What are they?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teacher ❖ Doctor ❖ NGO staff ❖ IT ❖ Researcher ❖ Veterinarian </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Car mechanic ❖ Moto driver ❖ Electrician ❖ Hairdresser ❖ Policeman </td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Have plans for children but don't want to force them – encourage them only ❖ Even if the students don't finish school, parents believe that they can help them to get one of these jobs ❖ Try to persuade their children, follow up them, ask their teacher about their studying at the school, see the record book and they want their children to have a good job in the future. ❖ They have plan but it is hard to reach the goal because of their income problem and don't have ability to get success for their future job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teacher ❖ Doctor ❖ NGO staff ❖ IT ❖ Researcher ❖ Veterinarian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Car mechanic ❖ Moto driver ❖ Electrician ❖ Hairdresser ❖ Policeman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teacher ❖ Doctor ❖ NGO staff ❖ IT ❖ Researcher ❖ Veterinarian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Car mechanic ❖ Moto driver ❖ Electrician ❖ Hairdresser ❖ Policeman 		
16.	<p>Do your children receive any career guidance from their school? (Count hands)</p> <p>45% Yes 56% No</p>		
17.	<p>In your opinion, who or what is the <u>primary</u> source of advice that your students receive about their life as it pertains to their future?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents ❖ Teacher ❖ Radio/TV </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sibling ❖ Friends </td> </tr> </table> <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Most of the students listen to their parents, teachers about the life skill program which can help them in the future. ❖ Some of parents listening to the radio, watch TV and they saw people around them. ❖ They listen to their parents, teacher, grandma/pa, old people and sibling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents ❖ Teacher ❖ Radio/TV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sibling ❖ Friends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents ❖ Teacher ❖ Radio/TV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sibling ❖ Friends 		
18.	<p>In general, do you think that young people appear to have long-term plans for their future career? 67% Yes 33% <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> No idea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If students stay at school and do well, they have plans for their future ❖ It is harder to plan for the future if students don't succeed in school ❖ Students have career plans – teacher/accountant ❖ They don't have any plan for their children, they just follow their children planning ❖ They need education people to work for the country. ❖ Don't have any plan for their future career 		
19.	<p>Many government and school officials often cite that parents undervalue education as one of the main reasons that many children do not finish school. What is your view about this belief? (Count hands for each option)</p> <p>15% It is most certainly true 12% It is partly true but is often used as an excuse to cover up the inadequacies of the school system 73% It is not generally true of most parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Issues of family finance and low educational status of parents ❖ The school have teaching aids ❖ The parents get involve to follow up their student studying and protect children. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teachers come to teach but the students feel lazy to come to study. ❖ No idea ❖ Try to persuade their children to go to the school ❖ If they have knowledge so they can find job to do in the future.
20.	<p>How much importance do you place on the opinions of young people? (Count hands for each option)</p> <p>25% A lot 48% Some 0% None 27% Hard to say</p>
21.	<p>Do you think that schools should help youth to understand how they might vote, participate in commune councils, and join voluntary organizations of that promote political activism among youth? (Count hands)</p> <p>52% Yes 48% No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The school has a responsibility to educate the students in this area ❖ Students will be able to form their own ideas about these issues ❖ They should go to vote ❖ They should join the volunteer activities in the community as harvesting ❖ No idea ❖ No idea ❖ Young people aren't interested in politic because they're interested in fashion only
22.	<p>To what degree do you feel free to express your opinions about political and social issues at home, in front of your children? (Count hands)</p> <p>19% Very free 27%, A little bit free 11% Not very free 43% Hard to say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents try to inform children about what happens in society and encourage students to think about rights and wrongs/what they should and shouldn't do ❖ As their children are studying now, they don't discuss many social and political issues with them ❖ Should express their opinion about politic s ❖ They just focus on their own business and they don't care about the politic issue. ❖ They are free to talk about politic but they don't have time to talk about that issue.
23.	<p>In your opinion, to what degree do your children feel free to express your opinions about political and social issues at home? (Count hands)</p> <p>14% Very free 20% A little bit free 0% Not very free 66%Hard to say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Children don't feel that they have enough knowledge about issues ❖ Children are afraid to speak their minds ❖ Children don't feel that it's important to give their opinions on issues ❖ Parents tell them not to speak freely about issues in public – dangerous ❖ They have the right to speak about these issues ❖ Their parents will tell them for what they don't understand things ❖ They are young so they don't interest in the politic ❖ They don't usually talk about politics at home.
24.	<p>In your opinion, to what degree do your children feel free to express your opinions about political and social issues at school? (Count hands)</p> <p>10% Very free 17% A little bit free 22% Not very free 51%Hard to say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Children don't feel it's important to give their opinions ❖ They are hesitant (afraid) to speak out on these issues – might go to jail ❖ Students can express their opinions with their teachers as this is where they receive information about these issues ❖ Students are too young to talk about these issues ❖ Because they are too young ❖ They don't feel any interest in the politic issue

<p>25.</p>	<p>In your opinion, to what degree do your children feel free to express your opinions about political and social issues with older generations? (Count hands)</p> <p>18% Very 3% A little bit free 32%, Not very free 47% Hard to say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Children don't feel it's important to give their opinions ❖ They don't talk about politic at home
<p>26.</p>	<p>What do you think of young people who express opinions about political and social issues? (Count hands)</p> <p>9%___ They should be quiet because they are too young to understand these issues 21%___ They are brave 15%___ They are foolish 22% ___They are right to express what they think 3% ___They are annoying 18% ___They should be quiet because talking about these issues is dangerous 12% ___They are arrogant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Young generation is braver than before ❖ Younger generation should be brave and try to learn about issues in society ❖ They are too young to really know about political and social issues ❖ Afraid the children might get into trouble/have problems if they express themselves ❖ Youth should express their opinion about the politic
<p>27.</p>	<p>In your opinion, how important is that young people understand how the Cambodian political system works?</p> <p>67% Very important 24% A little bit important 9% Not at all important Hard to say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Should know how to live in society ❖ If they know about politics, they will be able to change/improve the country – help it to develop in the future ❖ Because they can know about their own right

Annex 5: List of Key Informants

Key Informant	Position
Government	
1. Mr. Keo Minea	Vice-Director, Smach Meanchey District Office of Education, Youth Sports/Koh Kong
2. Mr. Chea Phally	Director of Provincial Training Center/Kampong Cham
3. Mr. Cheng Heang	Director of Provincial of Labor and Vocational Training/Prey Veng
4. Mr. Chu Serya	Deputy, Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sports, Koh Kong
5. Mr. Dong Sophat	Vice Director of Youth Department, Provincial of Education, Youth and Sports/Kampong Cham
6. Mr. Em Piseth	Officer, Primary Education Office of Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sports/Prey Veng
7. Mr. Hout Chamnan	Officer, Kampong Trabek District Office of Education, Youth and Sports/Kampong Trabek, Prey Veng
8. Mr. In Pov Sambath	Vice Director, Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sports/Kampong Cham
9. Mr. Khat Chheoun	Vice Director, Peam Chor District Office of Education, Youth and Sports/Prey Veng
10. Mr. Kim Cheoung	Thmosor Commune Council Member/Botum Sakor, Koh Kong
11. Mr. Ngem Pheap	Vice-Director, Job Office of Provincial of Labor and Vocational Training/Prey Veng
12. Mr. Nop Salux	Vice-Director, Provincial of Labor and Vocational Training/Koh Kong
13. Mr. Ny Sothea	Vice-Director of Primary Education Office, Provincial of Education, Youth and Sports, Kampong Cham
14. Mr. On Choevay	Officer, Pongekrek District Office of Education, Youth and Sports/Kampong Cham
15. Mr. Phan An	Director, Youth Department, Provincial of Education, Youth and Sports/ Prey Veng
16. Mr. Phat Bol	Officer, District of Education, Youth and Sports, Koh Kong
17. Mr. Pol Sarith	Secondary Education Department, MoEYS
18. Mr. Ros Bunthon	Chairman, Cheoung Phnom Commune Council/Ba Phnom, Prey Veng
19. Mr. Sath Monyrin	Officer, District of Education, Youth and Sport, Koh Kong
20. Mr. Seng Sothy	Vice-Director, Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sports/Koh Kong
21. Mr. Som Nuy	Thmosor Commune Council Member/Botum Sakor, Koh Kong
22. Mr. Tom Tith	Vice-Director, Thbong Khmum District Office Of Education, Youth and Sports/Kampong Cham
23. Mr. U Vantha	Commune Chief/ Oraing Ov, Kampong Cham
24. Mr. Vann Chan	Vice Chair, Life Skills Office, Dept of Curriculum Development, MoEYS
25. Mr. Yem Kimheang	Director of District of Education, Youth and Sports, Koh Kong

26. Mr. Yong Puth	Chob Commune Council Member/Thbong Khmum, Kampong Cham
27. Mrs. Meas Pisey	Kampong Trabek Commune Council Member/Kampong Trabek, Prey Veng
28. Mrs. Ngen Pheap	Director, Office of Labor of Provincial of Labor and Vocational Training/Prey Veng
29. Mrs. Soung Sokleang	Veal Vong Commune Council Member/Kampong Cham, Kampong Cham
30. Mrs. Yem Hun	Commune Council Member/Oraing Ov, Kampong Cham
International Organization	
31. Mr. Channra Chum	Education Specialist, UNICEF
32. Mr. Mar Sophea	Senior Social Sector Officer, ADB
33. Mr. Sieng Heng	Agreement Officer's Technical Representative, USAID
34. Mr. Chan Narin	IBEC Chief of Party, World Education
35. Mr. Chhay Sok Channa	IT Program Manager, World Education/IBEC
36. Mr. Eng Sok	Life Skills Coordinator, World Education/IBEC
Local Organization	
37. Mr. No Migy	Safe Migration and Prevention of Human trafficking Project Coordinator, Khmer Youth Association (KYA)
38. Mr. Ream Rathamony	Vice Director, Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP)
39. Mr. Dak Nhean	Vocational Training Center Manager, Mith Samlanh
40. Mr. Phoung Sopheab	Program Manager, BSDA
41. Mr. Chea Kosal	School Dropout Prevention Pilot Country Director (SDPP)
42. Ms. Chuon Sophoan	Youth Empowerment Unit Assistant (YRDP)
Private Sector	
43. Mr. Yun Sovanna	Government and Private Sector Forum Manager, Cambodia Chamber of Commerce
44. Mr. Heang Kimsreang	Branch Manager, KREDIT, Kampong Cham
45. Mr. Meng Sron	Sub-branch Manager, AMK Kampong Cham
46. Mr. Chheang Tiva	Loan Manager, ACLEDA, Kampong Cham
47. Mr. Khay Meanglin	Branch Manager, Amareth, Kampong Cham
48. Mr. Chhem Ratamony	Manager/Owner, Sathapana/Kampong Cham
49. Mr. Leang Houy	Owner, Motor Mechanic Ltd./Kampong Cham
50. Mr. Ngem Sophon	Manager, Metallurgist Ltd./Kampong Cham
51. Mrs. Chhoeun Sreyleap	Manager Metallurgist Ltd./Kampong Cham
52. Mrs. Hov Sodanet	Manager/Owner, Mini Math/Kampong Cham
53. Mrs. Son Sreylang	Manager/Owner, Embellishment/Prey Veng
54. Ms. Lok Kangnaleak	Manager/Owner, Embellishment/Prey Veng
55. Mr. Sam Gon	Manager/Owner, Metallurgist/Prey Veng
56. Mr. Oun Sokhon	Manager/Owner, Motor Mechanic/Prey Veng
57. Mr. Nge Sopheap	Manager/Owner, Car Washing/Prey Veng