

Cambodia Fact Sheet

Background: *Cambodia*

As a largely agrarian society, with 80% of the population living in rural areas and 70% depending on agriculture for a living, the development of the agricultural sector in Cambodia remains a priority to reduce poverty and inequality. Currently, about a third of Cambodia's population of 15 million lives under the poverty line. Developing human and institutional capacity to meet the challenges of rural poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity will require an effective and resilient education system to improve the performance of the agricultural sector.

The government of the Kingdom of Cambodia has clearly laid out priorities of human and institutional capacity building and development of agricultural research and education in its 2010-2013 Strategy for Agriculture and Water¹ and its "Rectangular Strategy" for growth, employment, efficiency, and equity², indicating the importance of a reformed AET system. A robust and vital AET system holds the promise of providing the necessary training and information to improve the livelihoods of millions of Cambodians.



Present Status

There are 34 public and 57 private higher education institutes in Cambodia, which include universities, institutes or technical institutes, and a royal academy. However, there are only a handful of institutions (including universities and technical and vocational schools) that offer agricultural courses. There specifically appears to be a shortage of technical and vocational schools that focus primarily on agriculture; however, there are a number of non-formal training and education courses provided by Cambodian NGOs that help to somewhat fill this gap. Key institutions include, but are not limited to:

¹ Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries; Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, (2007). *Strategy for agriculture and water 2006-2010*.

² Royal Government of Cambodia. (2004). *The rectangular strategy for growth, employment, equity, and efficiency in Cambodia*.

Universities with Agricultural Curricula in Cambodia

- Royal University of Agriculture (RUA)
- University of Battambang (UBB)
- Prek Leap National School of Agriculture (PNSA)
- The Institute of Technologies in Cambodia (ITC)

Technical/Vocational Schools of Agriculture in Cambodia

- Lom Orng Vocational Training Centres

Non-formal Training Courses/Services by NGOs in Cambodia

- Farmer Livelihood Development (FLD)
- IDE Cambodia
- JVC Cambodia
- Prom Vihear Thor Organization
- Skill, Knowledge, and Information for Life (SKIL)
- Srer Khmer
- Village Support Group (VSG)
- Wathnakpheap Organization (WP)



Challenges and Issues

Some of the most prominent problems facing agricultural education and training in Cambodia are the need for further curriculum development and staff capacity-building at schools, the development of proper infrastructure, the need for equipment and teaching materials, improvement in English language capacity, and the addition of practically-based courses to supplement theoretical classes. Additionally, a significant skills gap is evident in Cambodia when considering the skills of the workforce supply and the demands of employers. There are low numbers of graduates in agricultural science and technology despite there being a high demand for such employees. The results of this mismatch have led to high structural unemployment, productivity and economic growth constraints, and undiversified sources of growth.

Next Steps and Recommendations

To close the skills gap, it is vital that linkages between higher education institutions and other sectors of the Cambodian economy (i.e. employers, research institutions, companies, early education providers, and other higher education institutions) are created and strengthened. Potential ways forward include:

- Further investments by the Cambodian government in education and governmental support for TVET (technical and vocational education and training) programs
- Improvements to early childhood development programs
- Soft and hard skills training in universities through hands-on curricula
- Research and English language certification programs
- Improved counseling and career services at the secondary and tertiary levels
- Improved teacher training and retention
- Tracer studies of employment outcomes for graduates
- Internship/training opportunities in public and private sector agricultural organizations for current students