

Briefing note

National Assembly Commission 8 on Health, Social Affairs, Veteran Rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Women Affairs

TVET: Achievements and Challenges

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February, 2016

Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia



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1. Introduction

In Cambodia, it is reported that 300,000 young people enter the job market annually. This number is expected to increase to 400,000 in the near future.¹ Creating jobs for those new entrants has been a challenge for policy makers in Cambodia. The future of the Cambodian economy lies in its young workforce. A more relevant and responsive education and training system is required to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to become productive members of the workforces.² The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) recognizes the importance of having a skilled workforce as the foundation for a strong and competitive economy.

2. Achievements of TVET

2.1. National Level

In February 2011, the Prime Minister outlined five priority policies on the promotion of quality and effective technical and vocational education and training to emphasize the role of skills development, to reduce poverty through provision of basic skills to the rural poor and to support individual development by providing skills. These five priority policies are:

- (i) linking training to market demand;
- (ii) ensuring training quality for enhanced productivity;
- (iii) strengthening public-private partnerships;
- (iv) ensuring equity in training; and
- (v) promoting TVET for social-economic development.³

Over the past two decades, more than 86 thousands students have enrolled in TVET training centers and more than 80 percent of them are from the rural areas and 55 percent of them are female. The overall drop-out rate is low (4.5 percent). Out of the 38 institutions, 8 are located in Phnom Penh, the rest (30) are spread across the country. The total teaching staff is 1,784 of which 721 (40 percent) are female.

Table 1: Institutions, Students and Teaching Staff

Particular	Number of Institutions ⁴	Enrollment		Drop Out		Teaching Staff	
		Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Whole Country	38	86,616	47,669	3,932	1,796	1,784	721
Phnom Penh	8	15,168	6,325	874	235	254	135
Provinces	30	71,448	41,344	3,058	1,561	1,530	586

Source: Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Statistics, August 2014.

To understand the linkage between TVET and income generation it is important to look at the percentage of graduates who get employed upon the completion of their training. The overall employment rate after graduation stands at a respectable 66 percent. The employment rate increases to 75 percent for female graduates. Provincial graduates perform better than their Phnom Penh counterparts. While 73 percent of provincial graduates find employment, only 33 percent of Phnom Penh graduates get employed.

Table2: Employed after Graduation, Whole Country

Particular	Number of Institutions	Enrollment– Drop out		Employed after Graduation		Percentage (%)	
		Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Whole Country	38	82,684	45,873	54,919	34,270	66%	75%
Phnom Penh	8	14,294	6,090	4,677	1,766	33%	30%
Provinces	30	68,390	39,783	50,242	32,504	73%	82%

Source: Author’s calculation based on Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Statistics, August 2014.

2.2. Sub-National Level

The four provinces to be visited by National Assembly Commission 8 – Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Stung Treng and Kratie – have one training center each. However, Kratie province is leading the other three provinces on the number of students enrolled (2,654), followed by Ratanakiri (1,500). Stung Treng province has had only 260 students enrolled for the TVET program.

Table3: Institutions, Student and Teaching Staff by Province

Province	Number of institutions	Student				Teaching Staff	
		Enrollment		Drop out		Total	Female
		Total	Female	Total	Female		
Mondul Kiri	1	376	184	12	1	13	0
Ratanakiri	1	1,500	627	283	125	15	6
Stung Treng	1	260	156	0	0	23	8
Kratie	1	2,654	1,724	27	16	36	2
Other provinces	26	66,658	38,646	2,736	1,419	1,443	570
Phnom Penh	8	15,168	6,325	874	235	254	135
Whole country	38	86,616	47,662	3,932	1,796	1,784	721

Source: Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Statistics, August 2014.

3. Remaining Challenges

Though TVET has been relatively successful, it still faces various challenges, such as:

- (i) Inability to attract sufficient number of those who need skills training the most – unemployed, under-employed, disadvantaged and drop-outs;
- (ii) Inadequate qualified TVET personnel;
- (iii) Weak leadership and management;
- (iv) Poor communication and marketing;
- (v) Inadequate and inappropriate teaching/learning materials, equipment and environment;
- (vi) Inequitable access; and
- (vii) Limited public private partnership (PPP).⁵

According to ADB, the major constraints with TVET are:

- (i) an absence of entrepreneurial focus;
- (ii) lack of a quality assurance system and labor market information;
- (iii) poor quality control of TVET courses and institutions;
- (iv) weak links with enterprises and firms;
- (v) lack of access to formal training opportunities in rural areas;
- (vi) lack of articulation and flexibility in training provision; and
- (vii) inadequate financial resourcing.⁶

From Supply- to Demand Driven

A key policy question involving TVET is: should TVET be supply or demand-driven? Cambodia's TVET system is mainly a supply driven mechanism. Supply orientation means that training institutions produce the same types of graduates, year in and year out, without regard for the needs of enterprises and the labor market.⁷ Supply and demand driven training systems are different in terms of market feedback, governance, management of institutions, incentives, training programs and instructors.

The table below illustrates the difference between supply- and demand driven TVET.

Table4: Characteristics of Supply- and Demand-Oriented Training Systems

Area	Supply-Oriented	Demand-Oriented
Market feedback	Indifference to the market	Relies on market feedback, e.g., tracer studies
Governance	Bureaucratic, government dominated	Participation by end users – employers
Management of institutions	Little, if any accountability, for results	Sustainable accountability for results
Incentives	Obeys rules, please paymasters	Raise revenue by selling services in the marketplace
Training programs	Same year-on-year	Vary by market demand
Instructors	Full-time, often civil service tenure or long-term contracts, low turnover, spending time exclusively in the training institution	Short-term contracts, use of part-time staff, sometimes rapid turnover, visit enterprises to learn skill requirements
Trainees	Trained in the institution only	Work practice, internships in industry
Facilities and equipment	Fixed	Adaptable, possibly rented
Budget	Assured, regardless of performance	Has to be earned

Source: ADB 2009.⁸

What are the ways to move from a supply-oriented to a more market demand-oriented training system? Here are some of the steps that can be taken:⁹

- Emphasize employers in governance structures;
- Institute regular tracker studies and change program offerings accordingly;
- Pay curriculum developer for meeting market-based performance standards;
- Pay by performance against pre-defined standards of quantity and quality, e.g., per trainee on schedule, per graduates meeting competency standards, per graduates employed;
- Make managers and institutions accountable for results to boards of governors dominated by employers; and
- Require that all or some of the budget has to be earned in the marketplace; and make institutions autonomous, able to make their own decisions, with proper safeguards and accounting controls.

4. Conclusion

Over the past two decades, Cambodia has achieved a very good result in its TVET system. Enrollment has been steady across the country. In terms of employment, female graduates tend to out-perform their male counterparts, and provincial graduates tend to out-perform their counterparts from Phnom Penh. For these reasons, the TVET system should be scaled up with special focus on females and rural areas. As the country is heading into a new stage of economic development – the realization of the AEC, the imminent entry into the lower-middle income group, as well as the diversification of the pillars of the economy and the industrialization of the economy – TVET is expected to play an even more important role in filling the issue of skill gaps.

However, TVET has very limited capacity with only a 4,000 person in-take per year. The expansion or scaling up of the TVET system is an issue that is worth exploring by all relevant stakeholders. In addition to expanding, moving from a supply to demand-driven mechanism is a practice that has been adopted by some other developing countries. A move from a supply to a demand-driven mechanism would make TVET more responsive to the job market which would further enhance the employability of students.

References

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- ² ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK 2014 Cambodia: Country Partnership Strategy (2014-2018). Phnom Penh Asian Development Bank,.
- ³ UNESCO 2013. Policy Review of TVET in Cambodia Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO.
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- ⁵ TEP, O. 2011. Current Status & Future TVET Policy Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training.
- ⁶ ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK 2014 Cambodia: Country Partnership Strategy (2014-2018). Phnom Penh Asian Development Bank, .p.2
- ⁷ ASIA DEVELOPMENT BANK 2009. Good Practice in Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Philippines: Asian Development Bank, .p.13.
- ⁸ Ibid. p.15.
- ⁹ Ibid.pp.15-16.