



## Youth and Employment: *Bridging the Gap*



A study about youth and employer perspectives on education, skills, opportunities and the future



July 2008

**“Youth Employment and Social Dialogue” Project**



Youth Employment and Social Dialogue Project

YEP Project– CAMFEBA

Youth and Employment: Bridging the Gap

June 2008

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*This survey and publication was made possible with financial support provided by the Norwegian Government through the ILO's Bureau for Employer's Activities*

*(ILO ACT/EMP)*





## **“Youth Employment and Social Dialogue” Project**

The “Youth Employment and Social Dialogue” project is implemented by the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA). It is a joint initiative between CAMFEBA and the ILO’s Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ILOACT/EMP) funded by the Norwegian Government under the Social Dialogue Programme. The project aims to create decent work and promote income opportunities for young men and women in Cambodia through matching the skills supply and demand in the labour market in Cambodia.

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## List of Acronyms

<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>YCC</b>	Youth Council of Cambodia
<b>NTB</b>	National Training Board
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>KYA</b>	Khmer Youth Association
<b>YFP</b>	Youth For Peace
<b>CYFO</b>	Cambodia Youth Future Organisation
<b>CVCD</b>	Cambodia Volunteers for Community Development
<b>CAMFEBA</b>	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>PSE</b>	Pour un Sourir d'Enfant
<b>CCPCR</b>	Cambodia Center for the Protection of Children's Rights
<b>L-CDI</b>	Leadership character Center Development Institute
<b>RUA</b>	Royal University of Agriculture
<b>RUPP</b>	Royal University of Phnom Penh
<b>RULE</b>	Royal University of Law and Economics
<b>ITC</b>	Institute of Technology Cambodia
<b>UME</b>	University of Management and Economics
<b>BBU</b>	Build Bright University
<b>MTVETM</b>	Department of Technical Vocational Education and Training Management



## FOREWORD BY H. E. VONG SAUTH

### MINISTER OF LABOR AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Under the wise leadership of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia in the third legislature of the National Assembly has developed the **“Rectangular Strategy” for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency** to be used as the political platform for the development of Cambodia. One of the wings of this strategy is the Private Sector Development and Employment Generation which covers (1) strengthening private sector and attracting of investments; (2) promotion of SMEs; (3) job creation and ensuring better working conditions for workers employees (4) establishment of social safety nets for civil servants, employees and workers.

Even though Cambodia has enjoyed high economic growth within the last few years, there are still many challenges need to be addressed in order to free the people from poverty; the development strategy should focus on three main areas: providing jobs, improving productivity and promoting income generation.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has endeavored to attract the local and foreign investments attempting to create more employment opportunities for the people. However, this effort has yet totally resolved the unemployment. On the other hand, we will not receive a lot of benefits even though many jobs are created if only few people can do them. Therefore, it is very necessary that the qualified and productive labor forces with the right skills be produced.

In 2006, there are 94,310 students studying at universities in Cambodia. Of this number, 92% studied the service-related skills, 5% studied industrial skills and 3% studied agricultural skills. However, there are only 16,912 students studying at vocational and technical training centers. This number shows that most of youth are more favorable to pursue their education to universities than doing the vocational and technical courses. This shows the mismatch with the labor market which demands the technical labor forces than the managerial ones. To address this challenge, providing sufficient and right labor market information is very vital to orient youth to study the right skills in according to the labor market.

The Ministry of Labor and Vocational training wishes to congratulate the Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project of the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA's YEP Project) and BD Link Company for their success in doing this important survey. The information provided in this report is very useful for the Ministry as well as all concerned institutions and individuals to work out to bridge the gap between the supplies and the demands in skills in the Cambodian labor market.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, I would like to take this opportunity to express my highest appreciation to CAMFEBA's YEP project for their initiative to conduct this survey. I also would like to thank the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities (ILO ACT/EMP) and the Norwegian government for their financial supports to this survey. Last, my appreciation is sent to all representatives of the government, the employers, trade unions, youth and all concerned institutions and individuals for their active participations in this survey.

**Phnom Penh**

**Date: 19 September 2008**

**Vong Sauth**



## FOREWORD BY CAMFEBA

Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization representing employers in Cambodia mainly on labor-related issues. Since its establishment in 2000, CAMFEBA has been playing active roles to represent the interest of employers at both national and international level. CAMFEBA is a member of the tripartite constituency of the ILO namely the government, employers and trade unions. We are also the member of many national bi-partite and tri-partite committees and that of the International Organization of Employers (IOE), the ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE), and the Confederation of the Asia-Pacific Employers (CAPE).

Even if CAMFEBA's main objective is to promote the peaceful business environment in Cambodia through bettering up the relationship between employers and employees, we have also extended our core activities by partnering with other partners to work on social issues such as HIV/AIDS, the elimination of the worst forms of child labor and youth employment so that we are able to contribute to the socio-economic development in Cambodia.

The Youth Employment and Social Dialogue Project (YEP project) is a joint initiative between CAMFEBA and the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ILO ACT/EMP) in Geneva under the Social Dialogue programme funded by the Norwegian government. Launched in Cambodia in June 2007, the project mainly aims to create decent work and promote income opportunities for young men and women in Cambodia through matching the supplies and the demands in skills in the labor market so as the youth and employers' challenges can be addressed simultaneously. The activities in the project involve with providing Employability skills training to youth, establishing the Employment Information Resources Center, establishing the Youth Employment Network...etc.

The survey on youth and employers' needs is the first survey ever conducted in Cambodia in order to understand the gap between the supplies and the demand in skills in the Cambodian labor market. Even though a deeper research is needed, this survey provides valuable information on the youth situation in Cambodia in terms of education, skill development and employment. Likewise, this survey provides feedback of employers on the current challenges they are facing in terms of the shortage of people with the right skills in the labor market.

CAMFEBA is proud to produce this report which will inform where the gap of the supplies and demand in skills exists and what the government, employers, training providers and youth themselves should do to bridge this gap.

As president and on behalf of the board, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the YEP project team under the guidance of Ms. Sandra D'Amico, our Secretary General, and the BD Link team for their hard work to produce this survey report. Our deep gratitude is extended to Ms. Anne Knowles, the former Senior Specialist of Employers' Activities of the ILO Sub-Regional Office Bangkok, for her valuable advice and support to CAMFEBA while producing the project proposal. Our special thanks are also extended to Ms. Anne-Brit Nippierd, the Project Manager of the ILO ACT/EMP for her tireless support to the project. The wholehearted thanks are sent to the Norwegian Government for funding this project. Last but not least, we would like to send our gratitude to all representatives from the government, employers, trade unions, youth and other NGOs for the valuable participation in this survey.

**Phnom Penh, Date: 30 July 2008**

**Van Sou leng**  
**CAMFEBA President**

**Sandra D'Amico**  
**CAMFEBA Secretary General**  
**In charge of the YEP Project**



## FOREWORD BY ILO's BUREAU FOR EMPLOYERS' ACTIVITIES (ILO ACT/EMP)

The world is facing a growing youth employment crisis. Latest ILO data indicates that of the world's estimated 191 million unemployed people in 2004, nearly half or about 86 million are aged between 15 and 24. In many economies, young people are more than three times as likely as adults to be unemployed. Today, both industrialized and developing countries are failing to increase employment opportunities for young people.

Young people bring energy, talent and creativity to economies that no-one can afford to squander. Around the world, young men and women are making important contributions as productive workers, entrepreneurs, consumers, as members of society and agents of change. What the young people do today will create the foundations for what the economies will do tomorrow.

Decent and productive employment for youth is a major commitment of the Millennium Development Goals. The ILO has a special role to play in promoting policies and initiatives on youth employment as part of this commitment.

The tripartite constituency and global alliances of the ILO give it the global reach needed to catalyze support and action on youth employment. At the national level, governments and employer and worker organizations are major players in the development of youth employment policies programmes. Dialogue and alliances with civil society, public and private sectors and youth are also important to building support for and developing actions. At the international level, the ILO's leading role in the UN Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network (YEN)- a global partnership of the World Bank, the United Nations and the ILO, provides a major opportunity to build international consensus and influence the international agenda with a comprehensive strategy for the employment and social inclusion of young people.

The Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project was launched in mid-2007 in Cambodia and several other countries in the region. The project is implemented by the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) with technical support from the ILO-Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and funding from the Norwegian Government. A parallel project is also being supported by the ILO-Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and implemented by trade unions in Cambodia.

Even though the project has just been implemented for 14 months, we are very pleased with the achievements so far. For instance, this survey report is one of the valuable products of the project. Also, as of the important things to be mentioned is the social dialogue promoted by this project through the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) whose membership is a mix of representatives of the ILO tripartite constituency (Government, employers and trade unions) and other relevant stakeholders. We believe that with this 'tripartite-plus' mechanism all relevant partners will be able contribute to addressing the youth unemployment in Cambodia.

Last, on behalf of the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate CAMFEBA for their successes in implement this project, especially the production of this survey report which will provide needed information to all relevant stakeholders on the youth and employment situation in Cambodia.

**Geneva**

**Date: 30 July 2008**

A handwritten signature in purple ink, which appears to read 'Anne-Brit Nippierd'.

Anne-Brit Nippierd

Project Manager

ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities



## FOREWORD BY TRADE UNIONS

With the change of the economic system in 1993, Cambodia has attracted a lot of foreign investments. Since then, the country has enjoyed the rapid economic growth. Foreign investment has created a lot of job opportunities for Cambodian people. The booming garment industry has for example absorbed over 200, 000.00 young Cambodian people from all parts of the country. Yet, many young people are still unemployed; this needs to be addressed in a timely and effective manner.

ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities, ACTRAV, has the last years been supporting the Cambodia's labour movement through a variety of activities. This support has been provided in a time where the trade union activities in general have been growing very fast. In order to strengthen the labour movement and enhance social dialogue, we are working to improve our capacity in order to better represent the interest and benefits of workers by ensuring that the international labor standard and the rights of the workers are well respected.

ACTRAV has been actively involved with social issues such as the child labor and HIV/AIDS. Since early 2007, we started to implement an ACTRAV project focusing on youth employment and social dialogue. Since its inception, the project has worked closely with all relevant partners, especially the CAMFEBA who is the key partner and also implementing the parallel project.

Cambodia has a young industrial relations system. Employers and trade unions are faced with many challenges in working with each other. Traditionally, when we talk about the relationship between employers and trade unions, we always have a feeling of fighting. However, this relationship has improved and is continuing to improve every time we jointly carry out activities under the youth employment programme. We believe that this programme is a tool for the unions and employers to better understand each other.

Skills development targeting youth is the common interest of the government, the employers and the trade unions. Therefore, the government, trade unions and CAMFEBA have been working together in a cooperative and productive manner to address this issue. Under the coordination of the Norwegian funded ACTRAV Programme "Social dialogue and Youth Employment", we have nominated 4 representatives to sit in the Project Advisory Board of the Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project of CAMFEBA. Of the 4 nominees, 2 have been elected by the Committee's members as the first and second Deputy Chairman of this Committee.

This survey is the first product that the government, employers and trade unions jointly produced. We strongly believe that this survey will provide not only valuable information about the youth situation and employment in Cambodia, but is also the symbol of good social dialogue between the tripartite constituents.

Last, we would like to send our appreciation to CAMFEBA's Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project for their willingness to generate inputs and cooperation from trade unions in this project. Our wholehearted thanks are also extended to all trade union leaders and members who have actively participated in this survey.

**Phnom Penh**

**Date: 18 September 2008**

**Chuon Momthol**

**Representative of Trade Unions**

**And 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chairman of YEP-PAC**



## Acknowledgements

Many individuals and organisations have kindly provided their assistance on this project. This report was written by a team led by Ms. Norng Ratana (project manager) and Mr. Sean Power (consultant) with contribution from Mr. Chea Marong (project advisor) and Mr. Hem Tola who facilitated the consultation process with key stakeholders and coordinated the entire field survey with support from BDLINK field survey team members.

We would like to thank all NGOs, youth networks and associations, and the educational institutions that helped the BDLINK team collect the data from youth. This includes Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC), Khmer Youth Association (KYA), Youth for Peace (YFP), Youth Star Cambodia, Cambodian Youth Future Organization (CYFO), New Life Foundation, Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development (CVCD), Pour un Sourire d'Enfant (PSE), The Cambodian Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR), Rachana School (Svay Rieng), Leadership Character Development Institutes (L-CDI), Fine Art Association (Sihanouk Ville), Pe Vanna Language School (Kampong Cham), Salabai Siem Reap, ADC Language School (Sihanouk Ville), Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Royal University of Laws and Economics (RULE), Institute of Technology Cambodia (ITC), University of Management and Economics (UME – Kampong Cham and Sihanouk Ville), Build Bright University (BBU – Siem Reap) and many others. These groups helped to gather their members or arrange focus groups for the consulting team during the data collection process, both in Phnom Penh and in the provinces.

We would also like to thank to CAMFEBA's team such as Mr. Kaing Monika (Executive Secretary), Mr. Som Chamnan (Programme Manager of CAMFEBA's Youth Employment and Social Dialogue Project- YEP Project) for their facilitation with employers during the data collection. Our wholehearted thanks is extended to the ILO Workers Education Project (ILO WEP), the members of the Project Advisory Committee of the Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project (YEP-PAC) who are the representatives from the government, employers, trade unions, educational institutions, and NGOs for providing comments to the survey team from the beginning until the end.. In particular, the surveys were finalized with the contributions from Ms. Eva Mysliwiec, the YEP-PAC member representing Youth Star Cambodia, Mr. Normand Champoux, the YEP-PAC member representing the Pannasastra University of Cambodia, Mr. Hing Sideth and Ms. Kaknika from Department of Technical Vocational Education and Training Management (MTVETM) of Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Mr. Seng Bunthoeun, the YEP-PAC member representing the National University of Management, Mr. Srik Wathnak from Love Khmer Spirit Organization, Mr. Chek Lim, the YEP-PAC member representing the Department of Youth of Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, and Ms. Tep Kim Vannary, the YEP-PAC member representing the Cambodia Federation Independent Trade Union and a number of employers who helped to refine the employer questionnaire.

Our special thanks are given to Ms. Sandra D'Amico, CAMFEBA Secretary General and the YEP-PAC members representing employers and Ms. ANNE-BRIT NIPPIERD, the Project Manager of the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities (ILO ACT/EMP) based in Geneva, Switzerland for their close involvement in providing comments as well as guidance to the survey. This great success would not happen without their contributions.

On the government policy side, we would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Hoeung Sophon from Information System Department and Mr. Tho Bunthan from Department of Labour Inspection and other officials from Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training who spent the valuable time to meet with the team to share his knowledge about current policies and frameworks that the Ministry is developing and implementing with respect to Youth Employment in Cambodia.

Finally, we would like to thank all those companies and NGOs who participated in this survey by filling in the employer questionnaire. They have made a significant contribution to the issue of youth employment in Cambodia.



## Executive Summary

### *About this Report*

This report outlines the results of a comprehensive survey on youth, skills and employment. This is the first time in Cambodia that both youth and employers have been surveyed about their challenges and expectations relating to youth skills and youth employment. It represents a significant first step in promoting understanding and social dialogue on the important issue of youth employment.

This report covers many inter-related topics, including access to education and training, quality of education and training, perceptions about different careers and job opportunities, difficulties in finding employment and the types of skills demanded in the labour market. Between December 2007 and February 2008, more than 2,400 youth and employers were surveyed in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Kampong Cham and Svay Rieng.

**It is important to stress that this piece of work represents the first step on what is a long and complex road to improving employment opportunities for young Cambodians. The report is intended as a basis for further discussion, debate and research. It was never intended as the final, authoritative source of all information on youth and employment.**

The main findings will be disseminated to all stakeholders, including youth, employers, unions, youth associations, NGOs, education providers, the Government and other interested parties.

### *Youth Findings*

Youth face four crucial decisions that have far-reaching effects on their employment prospects:

1. As a high school student – what will I do when I finish high school?
2. As a university or vocational training student – how do I get practical experience?
3. As a graduate – how do I find a job?
4. As an employed person – how do I plan for my future (professionally and personally)?

Youth can only make realistic, well-informed decisions if they have access to accurate and relevant information which takes into account labour market supply and demand. Specifically, they require information about:

- Education – university courses, vocational training courses and other short training courses (including what skills they will develop and whether those skills are demanded in the workplace).
- Internships and volunteering – benefits of doing this kind of work and how and where to find it
- Careers – nature of the work, education and skill requirements, salary expectations and demand for those skills in the labour market
- Employment opportunities – where and how to look for work (including job-seeking skills).

The results of the youth survey highlight that many youth find it difficult to make these decisions, due to a lack of good information and advice. For example, high school students generally rely on the advice and direction of their parents when deciding what to do once they finish school, with schools and teachers playing a minor role. It is difficult for youth to access good information about higher education, careers, internships and job opportunities.

This survey is about much more than just access to information. Youth were asked their views on a wide range of topics related education and employment, including: internships, volunteering and part-time work; job-seeking experiences; salary expectations; plans for their personal and professional lives; and career progression.

Debates about education and employment often take place ‘above the heads’ of youth – by Government officials, NGOs, education providers and employer associations. With this survey, it is refreshing to hear the perspectives of youth themselves on the issues that directly affect their futures.



### ***Employer Findings***

Employers face three key decisions in their efforts to find employees with the skills they need:

1. Where do I find potential candidates to recruit?
2. Does my new employee have all the skills needed for their job?
3. If they don't have all the right skills, how can I develop their skills?

The results of the employer survey highlight that employers address these questions in a variety of ways. For example, 57 per cent of employers surveyed use company internship programmes to identify students with the right skills or attitude, while 21 per cent maintain relationships with particularly universities or training colleges. Similarly, 43 per cent of employers use external training providers to develop the skills of their staff, while 27 per cent send their employees overseas for training.

More generally, the findings from the employer survey highlight the two themes of *opportunity* and *frustration*.

In Cambodia today, employers demonstrate a strong sense of opportunity. Many employers, from small entrepreneurs through to large multi-national organisations, have ambitious plans to expand their operations. For many of them, the business environment in Cambodia has never looked better.

However, these ambitions are sometimes frustrated by the gaps in Cambodia's labour market. Employers are demanding a workforce that has the necessary practical and technical skills to take their businesses forward, but these skills are often in short supply. Only 13 per cent of employers believe that graduates have all or most of the skills they need for work. This suggests that Cambodia's education system is not producing young Cambodians with the right skills.

Employers continually highlight the importance of skills that are practical and relevant. These two qualities, which can be developed through a mix of formal education and training, practical experience and better linkages between stakeholders, are central to the challenge of youth employment.

### ***The Way Forward***

Improving employment opportunities for youth – and helping employers find the skills they need – requires the active involvement of all stakeholders. Youth associations, NGOs, universities, vocational training providers, unions, employers and Government ministries all have important roles to play in meeting what is arguably one of Cambodia's greatest challenges. In addition, youth themselves need to take a positive and proactive approach to their education and employment challenges.

Based on the findings of this report, there are a number of priority areas where youth should improve and where stakeholders can work together to develop specific action plans. These priority areas, which are intended to generate further discussion, debate and co-operation among stakeholders, touch upon the following key challenges:

- Youth: be prepared for the job market
- Getting the message to youth (information dissemination)
- Raising the value of vocational training
- Improving the skills of youth (and the quality of education)
- Improving dialogue between stakeholders
- Developing a Strategic Employment Plan.

These priority areas are considered in detail in the final chapter. Some suggestions are given as to how stakeholders can move forward on this issue.





# 1. Section 1: Introduction and Background

This report outlines the results of a survey on youth, skills and employment. This is the first time in Cambodia that both youth and employers have been surveyed about their challenges and expectations relating to youth skills and youth employment. It represents a significant first step in promoting understanding and social dialogue on this important issue.

This report covers many inter-related topics, including access to education and training, quality of education and training, perceptions about different careers and job opportunities, difficulties in finding employment and the types of skills demanded in the labour market.

**It is important to stress that this piece of work represents *the first step* on what is a long and complex road to improving employment opportunities for young Cambodians. The report is intended as a basis for further discussion, debate and research. It was never intended as the final, authoritative source of all information on youth and employment.**

The main findings will be disseminated to all stakeholders, including youth, employers, unions, youth associations, NGOs, education providers, the Government and other interested parties.

## 1.1. Cambodia at a Glance

Cambodia continues to enjoy strong economic performance. Real GDP grew by an estimated 9.6 per cent in 2007, following double-digit growth for each of the previous three years. Approximately 2,860 new businesses registered for operation in 2007, which is a 71 per cent increase over 2006.<sup>1</sup>

The construction sector has been a major contributor to Cambodia's economic growth. Construction activity doubled in 2007, with housing construction outpacing industrial construction.<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, Cambodia's financial sector enjoyed another year of very strong growth. Bank deposits rose by 74 per cent (after rising 45 per cent in 2006) and bank loans surged by 80 per cent (after increasing by 48 per cent in 2006).<sup>3</sup> Employment in the banking industry is booming. The Microfinance industry has also enjoyed very strong growth over the past few years.

The hospitality sector also continued its impressive growth. Cambodia received 2 million tourists in 2007, which is 19 per cent higher than 2006 and nearly double the figure for 2004.<sup>4</sup> The number of hotels continues to grow quickly, particularly in Siem Reap.

The telecom sector is booming. By early 2008, the number of mobile subscribers had reached around 2.5 million (17 per cent penetration) and is growing at an annual rate of around 50 per cent.<sup>5</sup> New telecom service providers have entered the market in 2007 and 2008, and employment in the sector is growing rapidly.

The garment sector is Cambodia's largest source of income, although the future prospects for this sector are uncertain after a disappointing end to 2007. The safeguards on Chinese textile exports to the US are due to expire by the end of 2008 while competition from Vietnam continues to grow. In addition, there are signs of an economic slowdown in the US, which is the industry's largest export market. With garment exports down 46 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2007, there is some uncertainty about the garment sector's ability to grow and provide employment for Cambodia's low-skilled workers. This highlights the need for Cambodia to diversify its economy so

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, *East Asia Update – Cambodia*, p.2, April 2008.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, *East Asia Update – Cambodia*, p.2, April 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Opening remarks by Governor H.E. Chea Chanto, National Bank of Cambodia, at bilateral meeting between National Bank of Cambodia and Bank of Thailand, Pattaya, 26 April 2008.

<sup>4</sup> *Tourism Statistical Report 2007*, Ministry of Tourism, Royal Government of Cambodia.

<sup>5</sup> *2008 Asia - Telecoms, Mobile and Broadband in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam*, Paul Budde Communication Pty Ltd., March 2008.



that income and job opportunities are created in other sectors. The Government recognizes these challenges, and is promoting economic diversification to expand other sectors of the economy to create more employment for Cambodian people in both Phnom Penh and the provinces.

The economy is expected to grow strongly in 2008, although at a slightly slower pace than in previous years. The projected growth rate of 7.5 per cent reflects continued growth in services (mainly tourism) and construction, combined with a slowdown in garment exports.<sup>6</sup>

Despite Cambodia's impressive economic performance in recent years, employment remains one of the biggest challenges facing Cambodian society today. This is especially true for young Cambodians. Youth aged 15–24 represented 22 percent of the population in 2004. Large numbers of young people are entering the labour force as a result of a baby boom in the 1980s. By comparing shares of youth (15-24 years) and adults (25+ years) in total unemployment in Phnom Penh in 2004, unemployment rates are higher for youth than adults. Youth represented 72 percent of total unemployment in the capital city, and one of the underlying causes of this problem is the mismatch between demand and supply of skills in the labour market<sup>7</sup>.

For Cambodia to provide its youth with employment opportunities in a variety of sectors, and in both city and provinces, it is crucial that youth have the right skills to meet these challenges. Improving the skills of young Cambodians will create employment, reduce poverty and improve the competitiveness of Cambodian businesses.

### 1.2. Youth Employment and Social Dialogue

The need to boost the skills of young Cambodians led to the creation of the Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project. This project is a joint initiative between the International Labour Organization (ILO)<sup>8</sup> in Geneva and the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA), **funded by the Norwegian Government**. CAMFEBA is the biggest employer association in Cambodia, with members from a wide range of industries. Not only is the youth employment attempted to be promoted in this project, but also the social dialogue between all stakeholders. As such, the Project Advisory Committee of the YEP Project (YEP-PAC) was established to oversee the tactical execution of implementation, coordination, development, expansion, monitoring and evaluation of the project's progress. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis to review the project progress and provide inputs on strategies at policy level and assist through their networks with approaches to address and implement the programme strategies.

The members of this Committee are nominated by their respective organizations based on the requests of the YEP Project. They work on voluntary basis.

**Table 1: Member of YEP - PAC**

No	Representative From	YEP Board Position
1	Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT)	Chairman
2	Trade unions- 1st Deputy	Chairman
3	Trade unions- 2nd Deputy	Chairman
4	National University of Management	Secretary General
5	Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT)	Member
6	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)	Member
7	CAMFEBA	Member
8	Trade Unions (2 members)	Members

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, *East Asia Update – Cambodia*, p.2, April 2008.

<sup>7</sup> ILO: *ILO Policy brief on youth employment in Cambodia*, ILO Sub Regional Office for East Asia, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> ILO: *ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities* is responsible for this project.



No	Representative From	YEP Board Position
9	Youth Star Organization	Member
10	Khmer Youth Association	Member
11	Cambodian Professionals Network	Member
12	Royal University of Phnom Penh	Member
13	Pannasastra University of Cambodia	Member
14	Office of UN Residence Coordinator	Member

A Cambodian consulting firm called BDLINK was commissioned to survey the views of employers and youth.

In this survey project, besides the 'macro' level-challenges of employment demonstrated briefly in the above section, the main part will focus on exploring the 'micro' level-challenge which is the mismatch between the skills that youth possess and the skills required by employers (the 'skills gap'). This study is expected to serve as the input to the stakeholders in developing their agenda in order to bridge the gap in the youth employment market.

The objectives, as outlined in the terms of reference, are to study the following target groups:

- **Employers:** The aim is to find out the views of employers based on their experience in hiring youth, in particular their views on youth skills, the challenges they face as employers of youth, workplace training issues, their future recruitment plans and ways to reduce the skills gap.
- **Youth (students, unemployed youth and employed):** The aim is to investigate youth's challenges, perspectives, opinions, suggestions and plans for the future, with a focus on their studies and employment. For employed and unemployed youth, the study also looks at their experiences in looking for work and their advice to students.

This is the first time in Cambodia that such a survey of both youth and employers has been undertaken (in relation to youth skills and employment). A key feature of the project is the emphasis on social dialogue. The project aims to bring together all stakeholders who have an interest in youth employment, including employers and their representatives (who require youth with appropriate skills), universities and vocational training providers (who develop youth skills), trade unions, NGOs and youth associations (who represent the interests of youth) and the Government (who develops policies and laws that impact on youth).

To understand the importance of social dialogue, it is useful to think of youth employment as a 'product' in a market – in the same way that a mobile telephone is a product, for example.

Consider the market for mobile telephones. The market consists of:

- **Demand:** people who buy (consume) telephones.
- **Supply:** companies that produce telephones and companies that distribute telephones.

For the telephone market to work effectively, consumers need to understand what functions the telephones have, and the producers need to understand what the consumers want to buy. In this way, they can produce and distribute the right kind of telephones to consumers.

In the same way, the market for youth employment consists of:

- **Demand:** employers who 'buy' the labour of youth
- **Supply:** education providers who 'produce' youth with the right skills, and employment agents, unions and NGOs who 'distribute' these skills to employers.

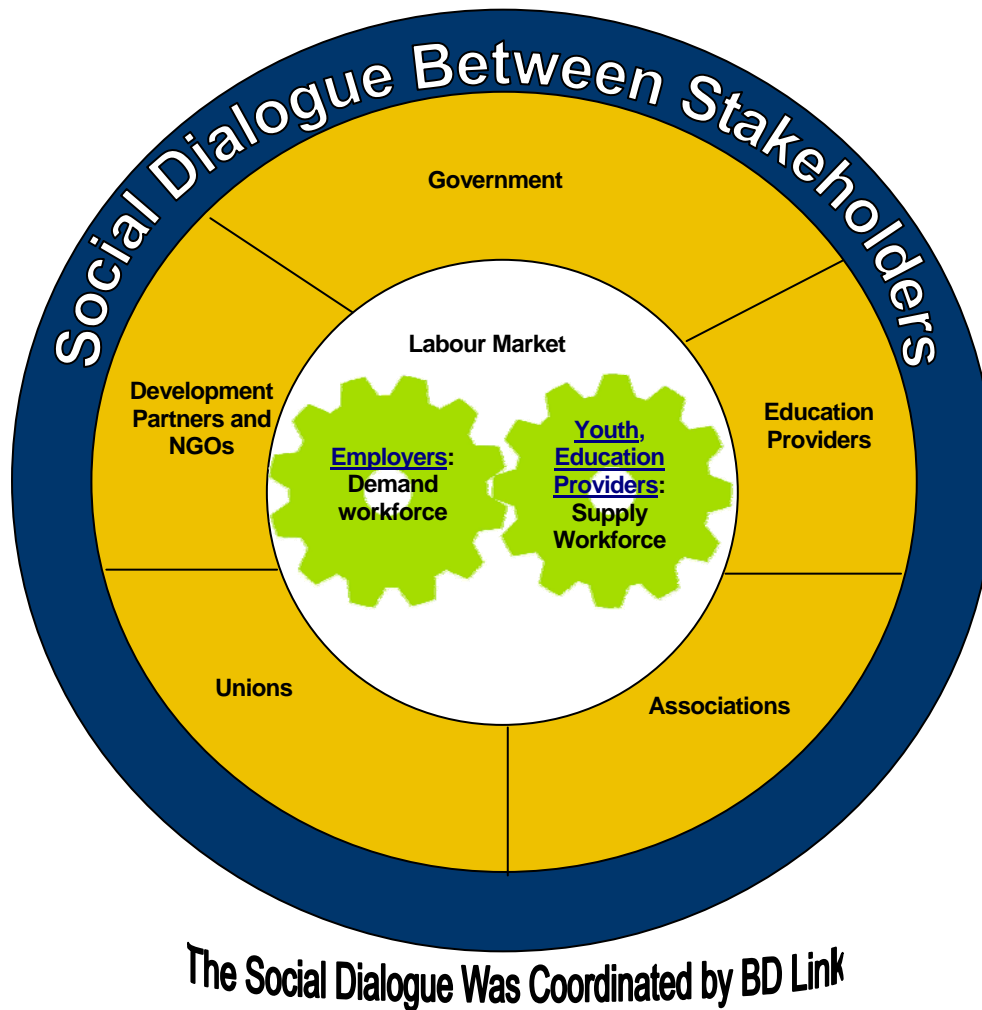
For the youth employment market to work effectively, employers (as consumers) need to understand the skills that youth possess, and education providers (producers) need to understand what skills employers are demanding. In this way, they can develop the right type of skills for youth. The Government also plays an important role in

'creating' this market, through its various policies that affect youth (education, training, employment opportunities, etc.).

Social dialogue, therefore, is about communicating this information to all stakeholders and improving the labour market for youth.

This framework is illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 1: Youth Employment and Social Dialogue Framework



### 1.3. Methodology and Approach to the Study

This study involved two key activities:

1. Desk research and expert interviews
2. Questionnaire-based survey of youth and employers.

#### 1.3.1. Desk Research and Expert Interviews

For the desk research component, the project team reviewed the relevant literature and previous studies on the issues of youth, education, training, employment and Cambodia's development challenges more generally. The team also reviewed all relevant documentation related to Government policies and programmes that impact on these issues, as well as information from universities and vocational training institutes.



The purpose of conducting expert interviews was to gather additional information on the issue of youth skills and employment. Expert interviews were conducted with a range of groups, including unions, education providers and government officials.

The project team invited nine target ministries to participate in expert interviews: Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Rural Development, and Ministry of Tourism. The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training accepted the invitation and participated in an interview. Where ministries were unable to meet with the project team, the relevant policies, laws and frameworks of the ministries were reviewed by the team.

The desk research and expert interviews were conducted mostly between October and December 2007.

### 1.3.2. Questionnaire-based Surveys

#### **About the Questionnaires**

The same questionnaire was filled in by all employers, irrespective of size, sector or location.

Youth filled in one of four different questionnaires, which each questionnaire tailored to a category of youth: high school students, university and vocational training students; unemployed youth; and employed youth.

The questionnaires were translated into both Khmer and English, so as to remove any language biases in the sample pool.

Further information about the questionnaires is provided in the Youth Findings and Employer Findings sections of this report.

#### **Sample Size**

The objective of the survey is to obtain the views of a wide range of employers and four groups of youth (high school students, university or vocational students, unemployed youth and employed youth). The target and actual number of respondents from each group is summarised in the table below:

**Table 2: Number of Respondents**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Students: high school, university, vocational training	500	1,474
Employed Youth	500	419
Unemployed Youth	500	301
Employers	500	220
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,414</b>

As can be seen from the table, responses from employed youth and unemployed youth were slightly below target, however overall numbers of youth were above target due to a large number of responses from students. In addition, the project team did not meet its target number of employers. This was despite an intensive and exhaustive campaign of emails, telephone calls, company visits and newspaper advertisements. (Difficulties encountered during the data collection process are discussed later in this chapter under “Scope, Challenges and Limitations to Data Analysis”.)

Nevertheless, the sample pool of 220 employers is still large enough, and of a sufficient quality, to give an accurate representation of employers’ views. As is detailed in the Employer Findings section of this report, the employer sample is highly representative of the Cambodian economy in terms of ownership (private sector and NGOs), origin (foreign-owned and local), size (large and small) and sector (garment, hospitality, etc.).

In terms of sample quality, many of Cambodia's most prominent companies participated in the survey. This includes large banks, luxury hotels, telecommunications providers, diversified industrial companies, logistics companies, multi-national companies and leading NGOs.

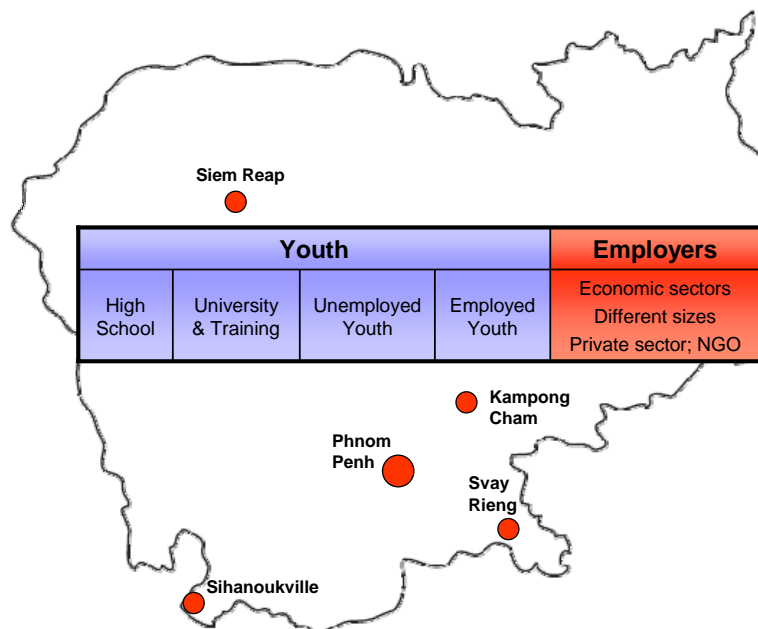
Reassuringly, the main findings of the employers survey were relatively stable as the sample size increased, giving further confidence that the results are high quality.

Finally, it is worth noting that this is the first time that such a representative sample of employers has been surveyed on the issue of youth skills and employment. This will provide an excellent base for future studies.

## Geographical Coverage

Employers and youth were targeted in five regions: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Kampong Cham and Svay Rieng (see figure below). This ensures the survey findings reflect the views of employers and youth in both city and the provinces.

**Figure 2: Geographical Coverage of Survey**



### 1.4. Survey Approach

#### Questionnaire Development: Peer Review, and Pre-Test

The questionnaires were developed in consultation with key stakeholders. Once the initial questionnaires were developed, they were reviewed by the YEP Project's Board. After that, all the questionnaires were pre-tested with small numbers of youth (organised through youth associations) and employers (mostly CAMFEBA members). These consultations provided valuable feedback which enabled the questionnaires to be refined and improved.

#### Employers: e-mail, call, direct meet

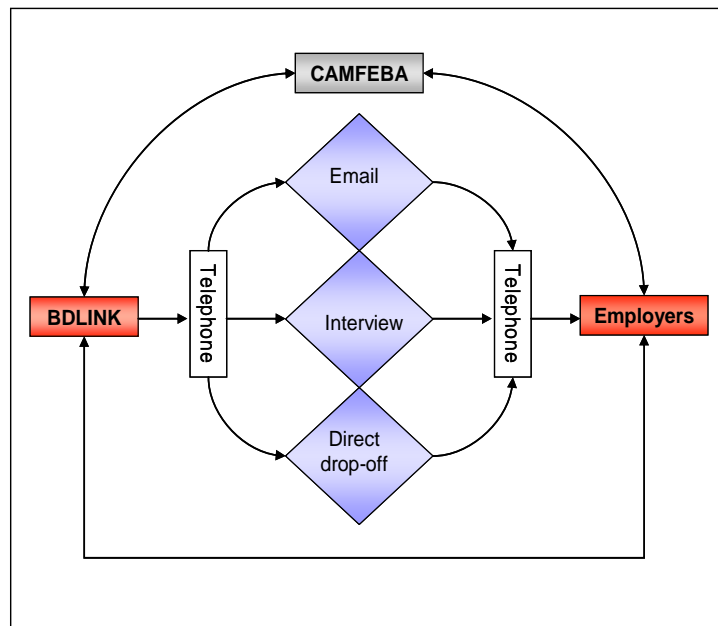
A combination of approaches was used to contact employers and seek their participation in the survey. This involved:

- Several mass email campaigns targeting employers in all sectors, using the project team's database of more than 1000 organisations
- Emails to all CAMFEBA members and association members (who in turn were asked to send the emails onto their own members)
- Telephone calls to employers in key sectors (such as Garment and Hospitality)

- Direct drop-offs of questionnaires at employers' place of business
- Face-to-face interviews with employers
- Posting the questionnaires on the BDLINK website
- Advertisements in the Cambodian Daily (English language) and Rasmei Kampuchea (Khmer language).

This process is summarised below:

**Figure 3: Approach to obtaining employer participation**



#### **Youth: Contact with local NGOs, Direct Contact.**

For the youth survey, the main approach was to target organisations with close links to youth, who had good access to their members or clients and could facilitate the data collection process. This includes youth-oriented NGOs, youth networks or associations and educational institutions. A lot of NGOs and youth association were contacted including Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC), Khmer Youth Association (KYA), Youth for Peace (YFP), Youth Star Cambodia, Cambodian Youth Future Organization (CYFO), New Life Foundation and Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development (CVCD).



The process is summarised below:

**Table 3: Approach to obtaining youth participation**

Institution	Target groups of youth				
High Schools	High School Students				
Universities & Vocational Training		Vocational Students	University Students		Employed Youth
NGOs & Training Centers	High School Students	Vocational Students	University Students	Unemployed Youth	Employed Youth
Youth Associations & Networks	High School Students		University Students	Unemployed Youth	Employed Youth
Employers					Employed Youth

In addition, advertisements in the Cambodian Daily and Rasmei Kampuchea newspapers invited youth download a questionnaire from the BDLINK website.

**Timeframe**

The questionnaires were distributed and data was collected during the period from December 2007 through to February 2008. (A handful of late responses from employers were received and processed in early March 2008.)

**1.5. Scope, Challenges and Limitations to Data Analysis**

The scope of the project is to collect and analyse the views of a wide variety of youth (students, unemployed and employed) and employers (private and NGO, large and small, all major sectors) in both Phnom Penh and select provinces (Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Kampong Cham and Svay Rieng).

This is the first time in Cambodia that such a comprehensive study of youth and employers' views on this issue has been attempted. As a result, the project team encountered a number of challenges in undertaking this exercise.

**On the youth side**, it was particularly difficult to collect data from unemployed youth. This is because, for the purposes of this survey, 'unemployed youth' is defined to exclude anybody who is undertaking studies (university or vocational training) or working part-time. It was difficult to find young people who are not studying or working part-time, because they often remain at home and help with housework and do not join youth networks or associations (particularly those in the countryside).

It was also difficult to collect data from employed youth. The survey period co-incided with a busy time of year for many employees, who were struggling to complete their various deadlines before the end of the calendar year. In addition, while the survey of employed youth is mostly about their personal experiences, some of them sought permission from their manager, which delayed the process. In the provinces, some employees were out in the field and so were not available to complete the survey.

Some vocational training schools were not running courses at the end of the calendar year, and so students were not present to complete the survey. Finally, the number of vocational training providers in the provinces was quite limited, which made it difficult to find sufficient numbers of vocational students from the provinces.

**On the employer side**, the project team encountered a number of difficulties in collecting responses from employers:





- The employer survey had to be filled in by a senior manager in the organisation, such as the owner, general manager, administration manager or HR manager. These people did not always have the time or inclination to fill in a survey.
- Given this is the first time such a survey has been conducted in Cambodia, some employers were unsure of how the information would be used and so were reluctant to participate.
- The survey was conducted in late December through to March, which co-incided with the annual holidays of some expatriate managers.
- In the provinces, most employers are small, family-run businesses with informal corporate structures. As well as being difficult to contact through email, many of these organisations see little relevance in such a survey to their own needs.

As outlined earlier, the project team attempted to overcome these challenges with an intensive combination of emails, telephone calls, face-to-face meetings, questionnaire drop-offs and newspaper advertisements.

Despite all the challenges outlined above, the project team managed to collect enough data from all the target groups to provide a reliable and representative sample base for analysis.



## 2. Section 2: Report Structure and Definitions

### 2.1. Report Structure

This report consists of 7 sections, as described below.

**Section 1 (Introduction and Background)** starts with an overview of Cambodia's economy. It also provides some background information on the Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project, and outlines the methodology and approach used in the surveys.

**Section 2 (Report Structure and Definitions)** – see this chapter.

**Section 3 (Youth in Cambodia)** provides an overview of some of the demographic, social and economic factors, as well as Government policies, that impact Cambodian youth.

**Section 4 (Survey Findings: Youth in Cambodia Today)** presents the detailed findings of the surveys of the four categories of youth (high school, university & vocational training, unemployed and employed).

**Section 5 (Survey Findings: Employers)** presents the detailed findings of the survey of employers in Cambodia.

**Section 6 (Conclusion and Recommendations)** brings together some of the key themes that emerge from the survey findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5. It also points to 'the way forward', by highlighting potential areas where stakeholders can work together to find solutions to the challenge of youth employment.

**Section 7 (Appendices)** contains supplementary information such as a list of references, as well as profiles of project team members.

### 2.2. Key Definitions Used in this Survey

Youth: The survey used the Government-accepted definition of youth as individuals aged from 15 to 30 years. Any references to 'youth' that are based on different definitions (such as the ILO's definition of 15 to 24 years) are clearly identified throughout the report.

Worker: A worker is a labourer or non-technical staff. Their work is mostly manual and repetitive. Examples include cleaner, brick packer and plantation worker.

Specialized Worker: A specialized worker requires some form of education or training to master skills. Their work is mostly repetitive, but requires a level of skill or understanding that is slightly more sophisticated than manual work. Examples include seamstress, carpenter, mechanic, maintenance staff, data entry operator, receptionist (small company) and cashier.

Professional Staff: Professional staffs are more independent and perform a variety of tasks. They require a higher level of education and/or experience to be able to fulfil their roles. Examples include managers, supervisors, accountants, IT staff, administrative staff and other employees engaged in professional services.

### 3. Section 3: Youth in Cambodia

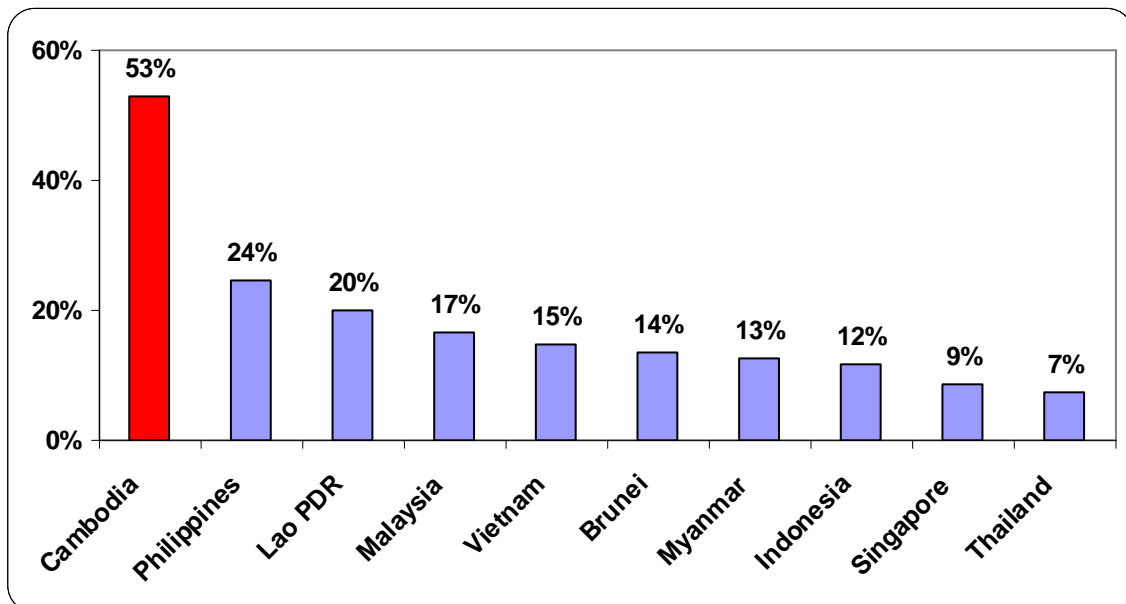
This part of the Report provides a brief overview of some of the demographic, social and economic factors, as well as Government policies, that impact Cambodian youth.

#### 3.1. Demographic Changes

The key demographic theme impacting on youth today is Cambodia's baby boom of the 1980s. Following the turmoil of the 1970s, Cambodia experienced a sharp rebound in its birth rate in the first five to seven years of the 1980s. Since the year 2000, these baby boomers have been entering the labour market and looking for work, which has made youth employment a major challenge for Cambodia in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>9</sup>. This challenge is made more difficult due to the lack of experienced middle-aged Cambodians who could have acted as mentors and coaches to today's youth – another unfortunate legacy of the Khmer Rouge period and its aftermath.

Between 2000 and 2006, Cambodia experienced explosive growth in its labour force. As highlighted in the figure below, Cambodia's labour force grew by 53 per cent over this period, which is more than twice as fast as the next-fastest ASEAN country, the Philippines (24 per cent).

Figure 4: Growth in labour force, 2000-06, ASEAN countries



Source: Data from *Labour and Social Trends in ASEAN 2007, Integration, Challenges and Opportunities*, Bangkok, ILO, 2007, p.77.

According to the ILO, the number of Cambodian youth (based on the ILO's definition of 15-24 years) was expected to grow from 3.2 million in 2005 to 3.6 million in 2011. Because of this, approximately 275,000 young job seekers are expected to enter the labour market each year over the five years from 2004-2005<sup>10</sup>. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for Cambodia's economic and social development. It provides an opportunity to grow and diversify Cambodia's economy, but also creates a challenge for the labour market to absorb all these new workers<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> NIS: *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2004, Summary Subject Matter Report*, Phnom Penh, September 2005, p.8.

<sup>10</sup> NIS: *Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2004, General Report*, Phnom Penh, November 2004.

<sup>11</sup> ILO: *ILO Policy brief on youth employment in Cambodia*, ILO Sub Regional Office for East Asia, 2007, p.1 and p.3.



### 3.2. Youth Unemployment

As highlighted in the table below, Cambodian youth (aged 15-24 years) experience much higher unemployment than 'adults' (aged 25 years and older).

**Table 4: Youth unemployment, Cambodia, 2004**

	Total %
Unemployment using "strict" definition <sup>12</sup>	
15-24	1.5
25+	0.6
Unemployment using "relaxed definition" <sup>13</sup>	
15-24	7.2
25+	4.7

Source: NIS, Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2004 (extracted from ILO Policy in Cambodia, pg.2)

This phenomenon is not unique to Cambodia. For the South-East Asia & Pacific region as a whole, the ILO recently commented that: "As a young person, your risk of being unemployed in the region [South East Asia & the Pacific] is almost five times higher than for an adult. Over the period 1997 to 2007, the unemployment rate for young people increased by 6.3 percentage points, the highest increase in the world."<sup>14</sup>

The problem of youth unemployment can also be highlighted by looking at the percentage of a country's total unemployment that is made up of young people. As shown in the figure below, more than half of Cambodia's total unemployed are under the age of 25.

There are several reasons why youth unemployment might be higher than for the rest of the population, including:

- Young people are more likely to 'shop around' for an appropriate job when they enter the labour market
- The cost to employers of releasing (making redundant) young workers is generally lower than for older workers, because they have invested less in training them
- Young workers are more easily replaced, because the nature of their work often involves fewer skills and less training.<sup>15</sup>

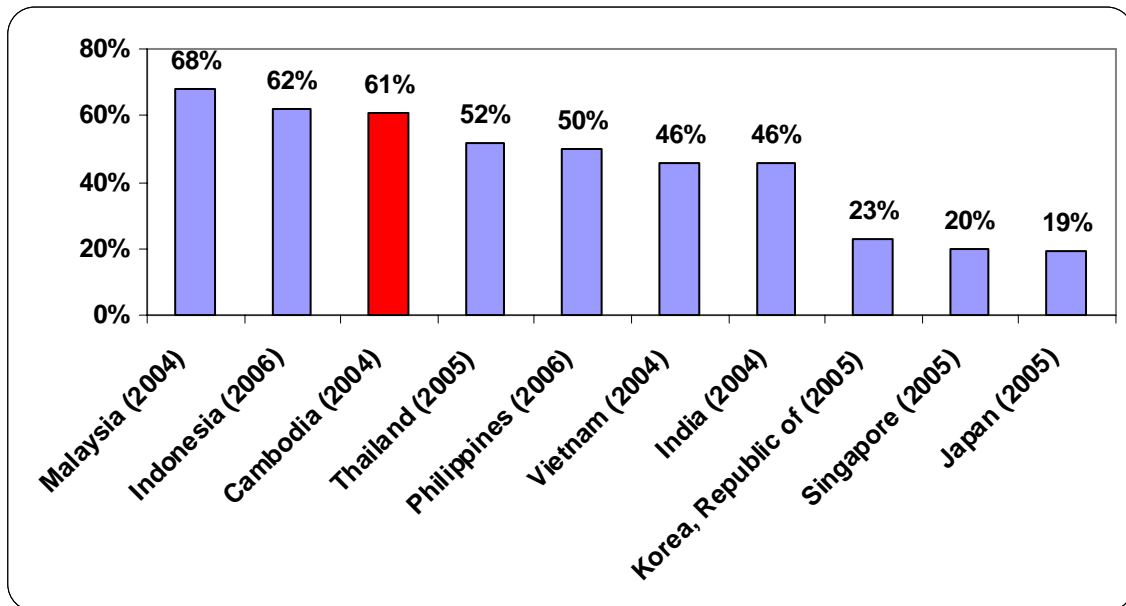
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<sup>12</sup> Strict Definition: the unemployed includes only those who are actively seeking work.

<sup>13</sup> Relaxed Definition: the unemployed includes those without work and available for work but not necessarily seeking employment.

<sup>14</sup> *Global Employment Trends*, ILO, 2008, p.27

<sup>15</sup> *Key Indicator of the Labour Market (KILM) # 9*, ILO, 2007, p.4.

**Figure 5: Share of youth (15-24) unemployed in total unemployed**

Source: Data from *Labour and Social Trends in ASEAN 2007, Integration, Challenges and Opportunities*, Bangkok, ILO, 2007, p.22.

### 3.3. Migration and Employment Trends

Over the past decade, there has been a clear trend of rural Cambodians shifting out of agriculture and into low-skilled urban industries, especially into the garment and construction sectors. The garment and construction sectors require low-skilled and unskilled workers, which makes it easier for rural people to move into them. The share of women employed in agriculture, as a percentage of total women employment, declined from 72 per cent in 1999 to 57 per cent in 2004, according to household surveys in those years. This declining share was largely attributed to the movement of rural women into the garment industry<sup>16</sup>

In addition to internal migration within Cambodia, some youth also migrate to work abroad. In terms of official migration, recent years have seen increasing numbers of Cambodians migrating to countries such as Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia and Thailand to seek paid employment. There are also large numbers of Cambodians working in Thailand on an irregular, unofficial basis.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.4. Efforts to Assist Youth

The Royal Government of Cambodia recognises the challenges faced by youth and has been working to improve the situation.

In its Strategic Plan for 2006-2010, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training aims to develop technical vocational education and training programs that respond to labour market demands, while also strengthening the management and provision of job-seeking services.

The Ministry also has plans to establish Job Centres in Phnom Penh and other Provinces. These Job Centres would be places where information on job seekers, employers and training providers is available. The National Training Board (NTB) has plans to create a website containing a Labour Market Information System. This system would provide labour market information with the aim of better matching labour supply and demand.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Cambodia Economic Watch*, EIC, April 2007, p.28.

<sup>17</sup> *Female Labour Migration In Cambodia*, Chen Chen Lee, ActionAid International, 2007, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> National Training Board meeting, 21 January 2008.



On the education front, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport sets out three priority strategies in its Strategic Development Plan for 2006-2010. These are: 1) ensuring equitable access to education; 2) increasing quality and efficiency of education services; and 3) institutional development and capacity building for decentralization.

By using different strategic tools, the Ministry aims to achieve the goals of “Education for All” – ensuring nine years of basic education for all children, reducing gender inequality and reducing disparity between urban and rural areas in upper secondary education and tertiary education. Another priority is to take action to expand education and training opportunities for young people aged between 12 and 24 years who have dropped out of school or have limited access to post-primary education and training opportunities<sup>19</sup>.

Some NGOs also play important roles in providing vocational training as well as encouraging youth involvement in social work<sup>20</sup>. They mostly provide skills training in agriculture and other basic skills such as sewing, food processing, weaving and motorbike maintenance.

Some NGOs, including Youth Star and Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC), also have programs to integrate youth into social work, which can provide valuable work experience to the young person as well as having community benefits.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.5. Conclusion

This section of the Report has provided an overview of the demographic, social and economic challenges facing Cambodian youth today. Powerful demographic forces are resulting in large numbers of young Cambodians entering the labour force every year, which is placing pressure on youth unemployment. This presents two key challenges for Cambodia:

- To increase the demand for labour by growing and diversifying the Cambodian economy
- To improve the supply of labour by increasing the employability of youth (that is, by improving their skills).

Many stakeholders are working to address either or both of these challenges.

Previous youth studies, such as the ones mentioned in this chapter, have provided valuable information on the issue of youth employment. However, to gain deeper insights into underlying causes of, and solutions to, the mismatch of skills in the labour market, it is necessary to analyse the views of youth and employers themselves. This is the subject of the following two chapters.

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<sup>19</sup> *Education Strategic Plan 2006-2010*, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, December 2005, p.14.

<sup>20</sup> Social work refer to the work relevant to human right, community participation, etc.

<sup>21</sup> Youth Star: Youth, Volunteering and Social Capital in Cambodia, Feasibility study result on Cambodia Youth Services Program, Phnom Penh, April 2005.



## 4. Section 4: Survey Findings: Youth in Cambodia Today

This youth survey was conducted during a period of nearly four months, from December 2007 to early March 2008. The questionnaire-based survey was conducted with 2,194 'youth', as defined by the Government as people aged from 15 to 30 years old.

### 4.1. About the Youth Survey and Respondents

This section provides an overview of:

- The different sets of questionnaires used in the youth survey
- Sample pool of the respondent group
- Geographical coverage and timeframe of the survey
- The respondent group divided by different target locations and by gender

### About the Questionnaires

Different questionnaires were developed for four types of youth:

- Employed Youth: those who are currently working full-time in the formal sector.
- Unemployed Youth: those who are not studying or working in the formal sector and who are trying to find a job.
- University and Vocational Training Students: those who are currently studying at university or at a vocational training centre.
- High School Students: those who are currently studying at high school (secondary level, starting from 7th grade).

Each questionnaire was adapted to each youth group, with the overall focus on the challenges they face related to their studies, their job, their current situation and their aspirations. The questionnaires invited youth to share their opinions, perspectives and experiences about their studies, job-seeking and work.

University and vocational training students received the same questionnaire, as both groups generally share similar experiences and challenges.

### Sample Pool

The target sample pool of youth is composed of four categories – high school students, university and vocational training students, unemployed youth, and employed youth. The following table shows the number of respondents in each category.

**Table 5: Respondent groups in number**

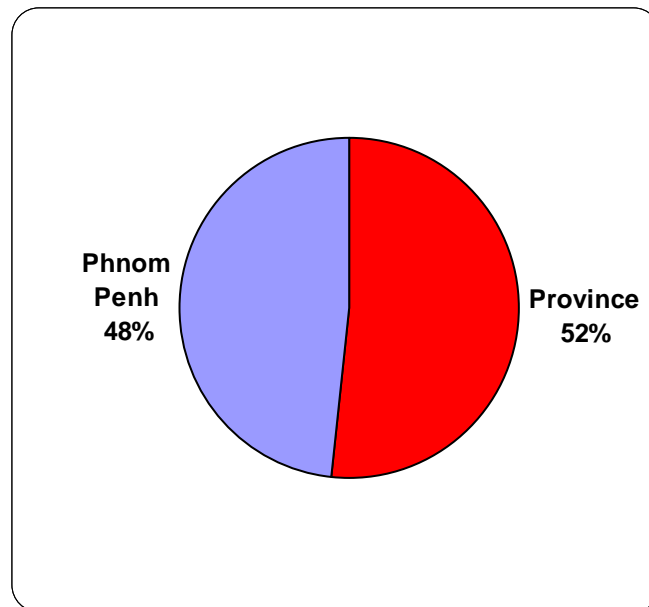
Category	Province	Phnom Penh	Total
High School	336	114	450
Vocational/Short course training	29	254	283
University	413	328	741
Unemployed	149	152	301
Employed	209	210	419
<b>Total</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>2194</b>



### Geographical Location

The target areas of the survey are Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Svay Rieng, Siem Reap and Kampong Cham. Around 52 per cent of respondents were from the Provinces (Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Svay Rieng and Kampong Cham) and another 48 per cent were from Phnom Penh. This is shown in the figure below.

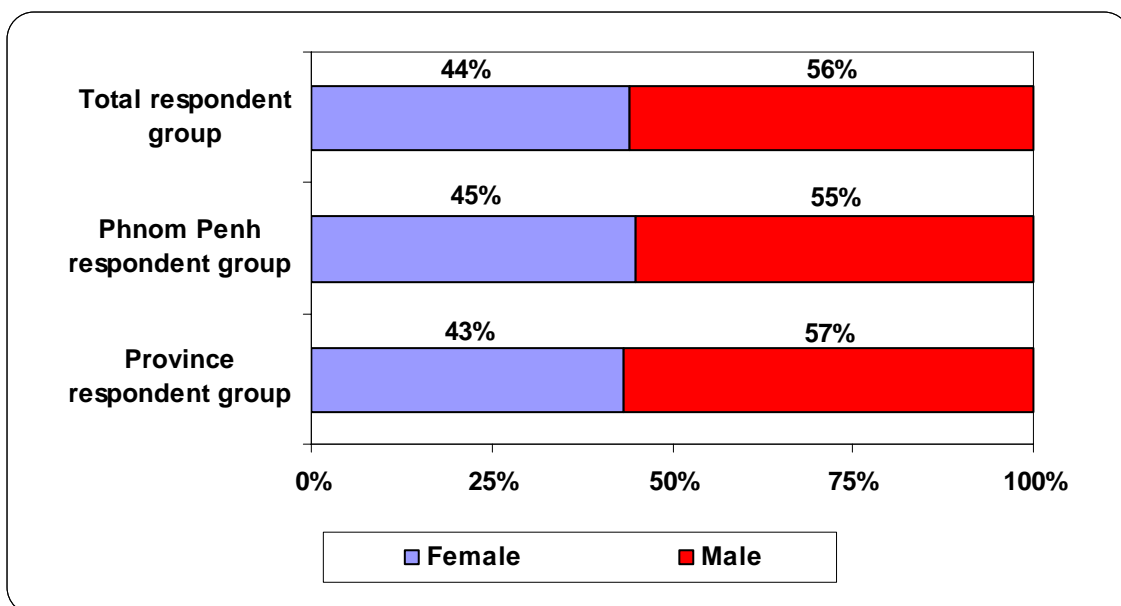
Figure 6: Respondent group distribution by area



### Gender Mix

The male-female distribution of respondents is fairly balanced, with slightly more males surveyed than females in both Phnom Penh and the Provinces. This is shown in the figure below.

Figure 7: Respondent group distribution, by gender







### **Different Approaches were Used to Collect the Data from Different Categories of Youth:**

- For high school and university students, the data was collected directly from high schools and universities located in the target areas.
- The vocational training data was collected from centres conducting short-term skills training and other short course training such as hospitality and IT skills.
- For unemployed youth, data was collected from youth who have nearly finished their study and are in the job finding phase, or who have already finished their study and are currently looking for work.
- For employed youth, data was collected from youth working full-time in the formal sector. Youth were surveyed from various sectors, including Banking and Finance, Microfinance (MFI), Construction, Logistics, Hotels and Tourism, Professional Services, Restaurants and Private Education.

#### **4.2. How to Read the Youth Findings Presented in this Section**

Different categories of youth received slightly different questionnaires, because some questions (such as job-seeking experiences) are relevant to some categories of youth but not others. As a result, some of the youth findings apply only to one category of youth, whereas other findings apply to two or more categories.

In this section, the youth findings are divided into two main parts:

- The first part presents findings that are unique to each youth category
- The second part presents findings that are common to two or more categories of youth.

This structure is summarised in the box on the following page.

The data is also presented according to gender and/or geographical area for particular questions where such analysis provides additional insights.



## Youth Findings – Structure of this Section

### Findings Specific to a Particular Youth Category

- High School
  - Plans after high school
  - Reason for not continuing study after high school
  - Students' plan if not win scholarship
  - Skills needed to be able to work after high school
  - Higher education and decision making
  - High School Students - Summary
- University and Vocational Training
  - Reason for choosing study major or skill
  - Knowledge on how to find job
  - Source of job information
  - View on possibility to find job
  - Internships, volunteering and part time jobs
  - Salary expectation for the first job
  - University and Vocational Training Student - Summary
- Unemployed Youth
  - Level of education of unemployed youth in survey
  - View on transition from study to work
  - Perceptions on what employers want
  - Further skills needed to find job
  - Unemployed Youth - Summary
- Employed Youth
  - Current and expected salary
  - Looking into the future – aspirations
  - Changing jobs: factors and consideration
  - Current jobs: possibilities and promotions
  - Importance of internships, volunteering and part time jobs
  - Employed youth: advice to other youth
  - Employed Youth - Summary

### Findings Common to two or more Categories of Youth

- Perceptions on minimum level of education to find job
- Industry that they want to work in
- Job-hunting skills
- Youth experience in job-hunting
- Youth suggestions to stakeholders
- Common issues to youth - Summary

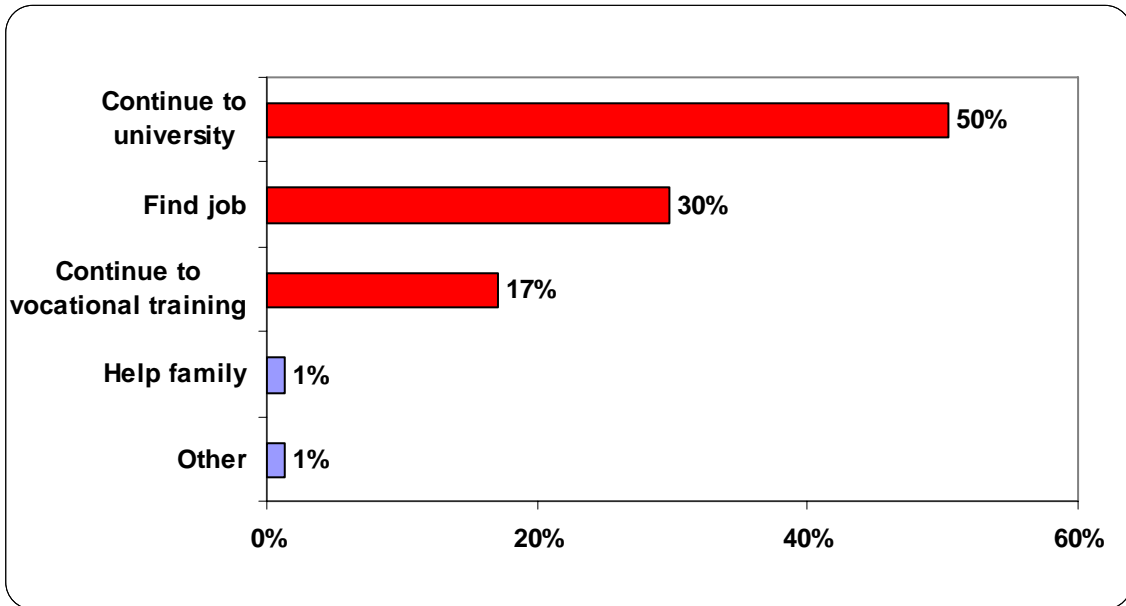
### Conclusion

### 4.3. High School Students

#### 4.3.1. Plans after High School

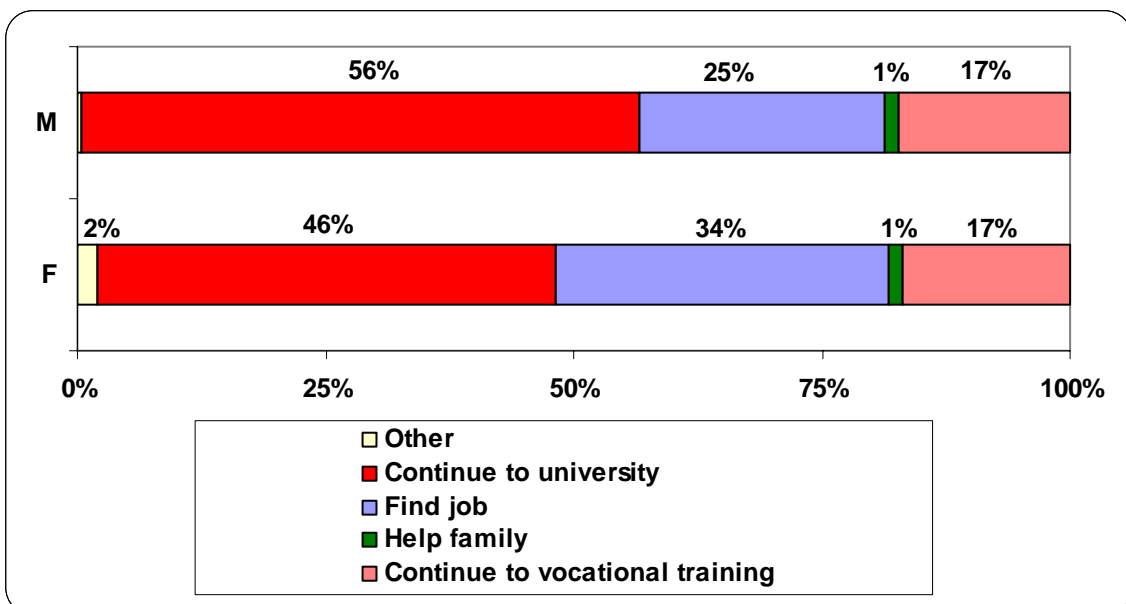
High school students were asked about their plans and aspirations after high school. As shown in the figure below, 50 per cent said they want to “continue to university”, 17 per cent want to “continue to vocational training”, and 30 per cent want to “find a job”. This means that the majority (67 per cent) of high school students want to continue study – at university or vocational training – after they finish high school.

Figure 8: Students’ plans after high school



As the figure below shows, slightly more males (56 per cent) want to continue to university than females (46 per cent). Correspondingly, more females (34 per cent) want to find a job than males (25 per cent). The percentage of youth who want to continue to vocational training is the same for both genders (17 per cent).

Figure 9: Students’ plans after high school, by gender

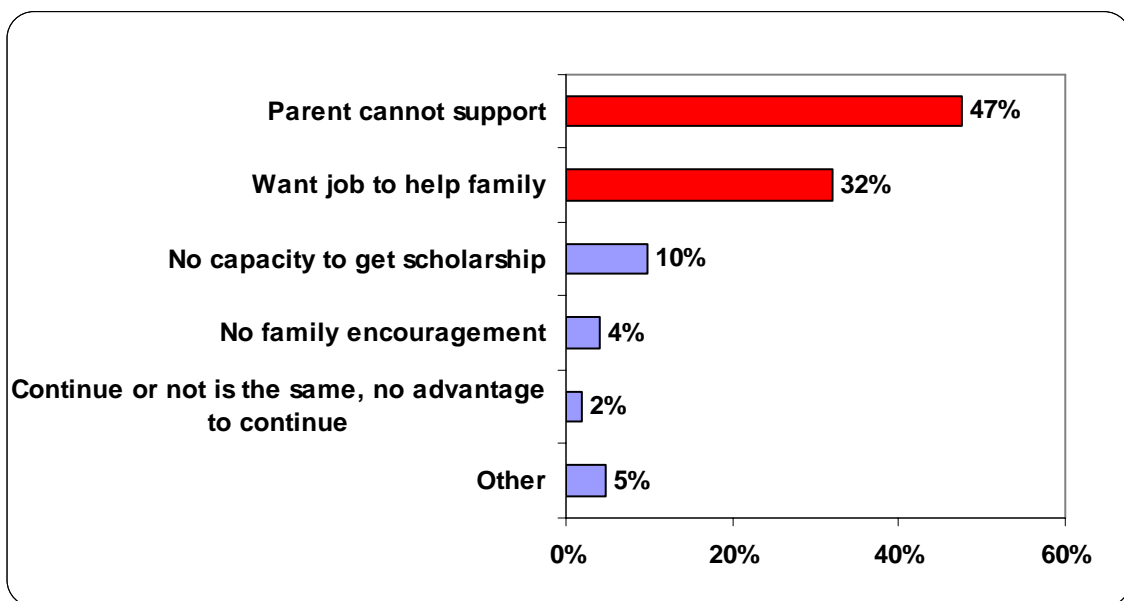


#### 4.3.2. Reason for not Continuing Study after High School

High school students were asked about what obstacles can prevent them from continuing their education. As shown in the figure below, obstacles that can prevent them from going to higher education mostly revolve around the family's financial situation. Around 47 per cent of the total responses said they cannot continue study because "parents cannot support" them. In addition, around 32 per cent of the total responses mentioned that they will not continue to study because they "want to find job to help family".

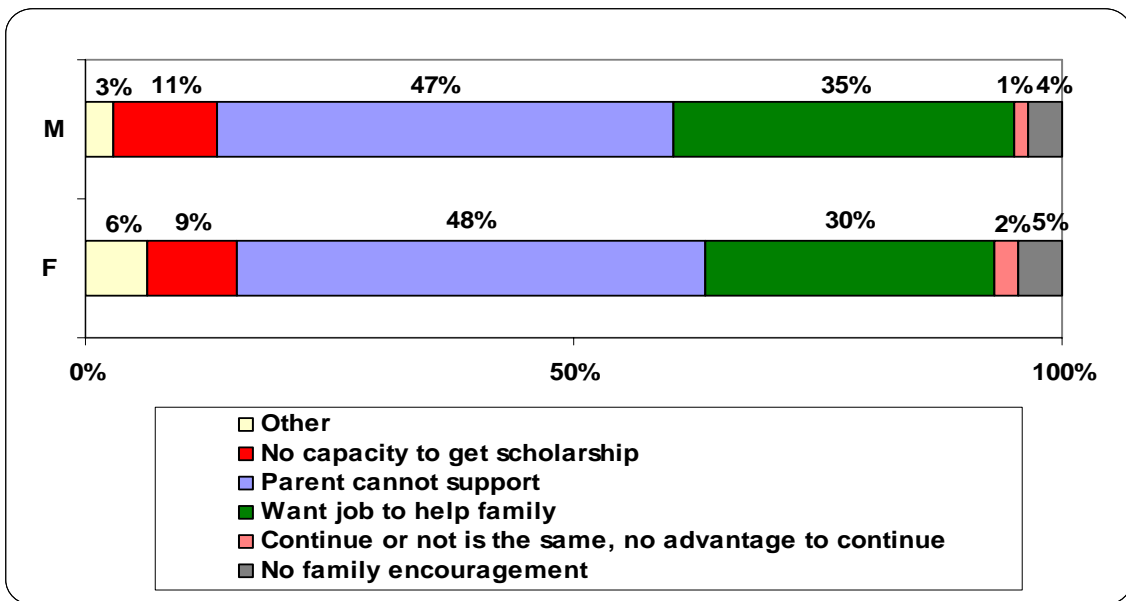
A further 4 per cent of responses indicated that the reason for not continuing their education was because they have "no family encouragement". Only 2 per cent of responses said they believed there was no advantage to continuing to higher education.

Figure 10: Reason for not continuing study after high school



The reasons given are very similar for both males and females, as shown in the figure below. The biggest difference between genders is that slightly more males (35 per cent) "want job to help family" than females (30 per cent).

Figure 11: Reason for not continuing study after high school, by gender



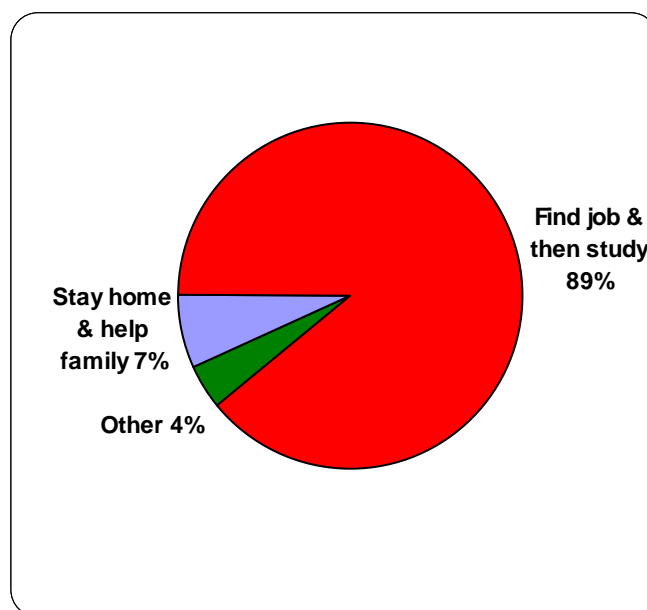
The response “no family encouragement” represents only a small percentage of responses for both males (4 per cent) and females (5 per cent). It is encouraging that females do not think they receive less family encouragement to continue their studies than do males.

#### 4.3.3. Students’ Plan if Not Win Scholarship

##### What to do if they do not get scholarship

High school students were asked the following question: if they intend to rely on a scholarship for higher education, what will they do if they do not win a scholarship? Around 89 per cent of the total response said they will “Find job and then study”. Another 7 per cent said they will “Stay at home and help family”. These findings are presented in the figure below.

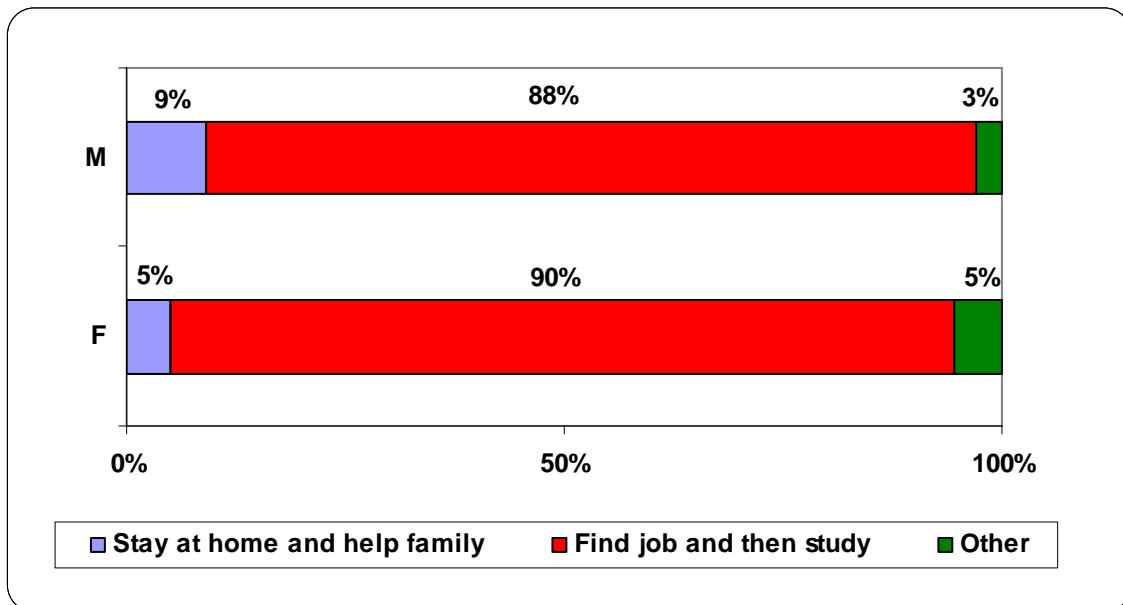
Figure 12: Students’ plans if they do not get scholarship



This finding suggests that most youth are active in facing the challenges that they encounter in terms of further education. Rather than staying at home, most of them think they will find a job and earn money, so that they can continue their study later on.

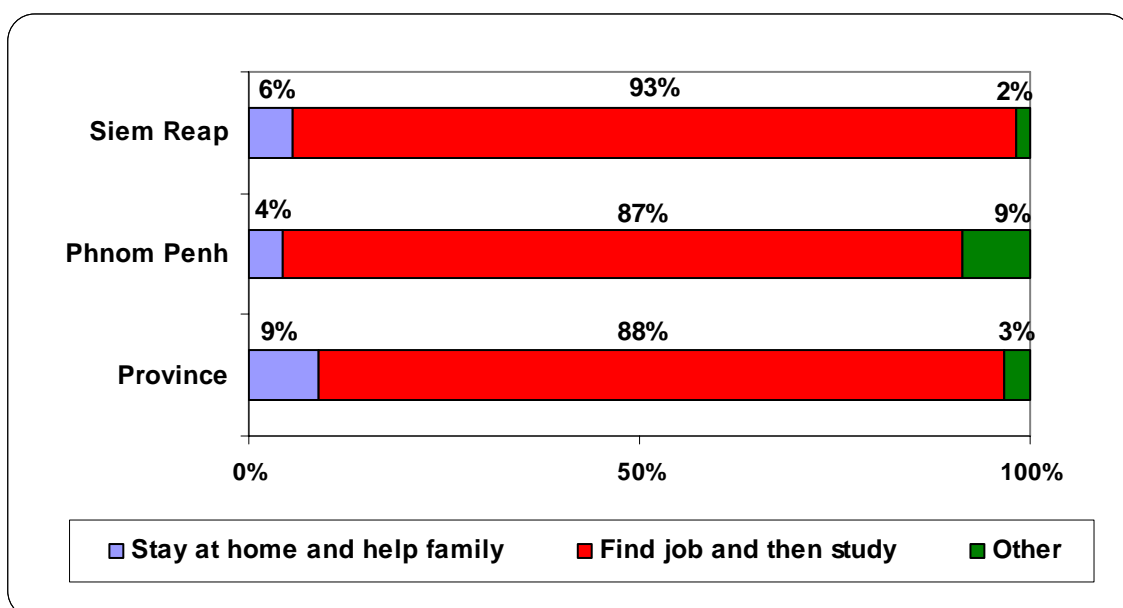
Once again, the results for this question are very similar for both genders. As shown in the following figure, the response “Find job and then study” accounts for 88 per cent of male responses and 90 per cent of female responses.

**Figure 13: Students’ plans if they do not get scholarship, by gender**



The results are also broadly similar for students living in different areas. As shown in the figure below, the response “Find job and then study” scores very highly in Siem Reap (93 per cent) and only slightly lower in Phnom Penh (87 per cent) and other provinces (88 per cent).

**Figure 14: Students’ plans if they do not get scholarship, by area**

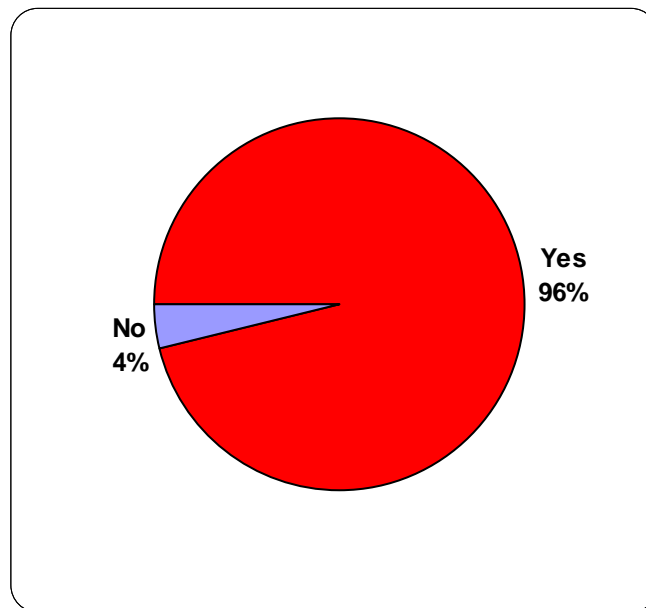


Overall, this finding reflects a positive view of high school students, in that they want to continue their education in the longer term even where they face obstacles such as not getting a scholarship. If this happens, they plan to find a job to generate more income and then continue study.

#### **4.3.4. Skills Needed to be able to Work after High School**

High school students were asked for their opinion on whether they need more skills to be able to find a job if they enter the employment market straight after school. The overwhelming majority of students (96 per cent) believe they need more skills in order to find work, as shown in the figure below. This is a concern, given that 30 per cent of students said they intend to look for a job when they finish high school (see Figure 8) and most high school students said if they could not further their education as they wish, then they will enter the job market.

**Figure 15: Do high school students think they need more skills to find job after high school?**



A possible explanation for why so few students believe they are ready for the workforce is that high schools focus on general knowledge (including literature, mathematics, history and geography), as opposed to specific skills or knowledge that is relevant to the workplace.

Currently, vocational training and other short course training aims to provide skills training, at relatively low cost, to students who cannot afford to continue to university. So vocational training plays an important role in teaching youth the skills they need for the workplace, especially for poor youth. Given its importance, it is crucial that vocational training provides the right type of skills and at a reasonable quality.

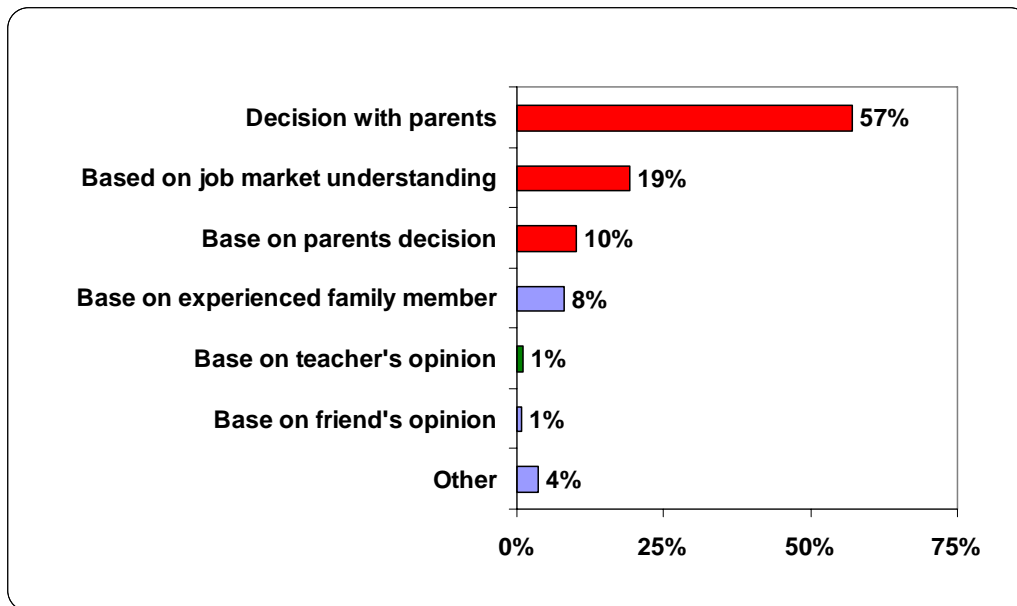
#### **4.3.5. Higher Education and Decision Making**

High school students were asked how they make their decision about higher education. The results indicate that when deciding what to study after high school, youth are very dependent on their parents. As shown in the figure below, the majority of responses (57 per cent) said they will make the decision with their parents, while another 10 per cent said the decision will be based on their parents' decision. A further 8 per cent will base their decision on the experiences of a family member.

Another 19 per cent said they will base their decision on their understanding of the job market, while only 1 per cent said they will base their decision on their teacher's opinion.

Within the "other" category (4 per cent), students indicated they will decide based on their own idea, suggesting that only a minority of them have clear goals on what they will study after high school.

**Figure 16: How high school students make decision on higher education**



To sum up, parents and other personal networks such as friends or relatives play an important role in supporting youth in making the decision on what to study. Notably, very few students rely on their teacher's opinion, even though this is a potential source of information about higher education and the real job market.

Choosing to study the right skills needed by the job market is very important for youth for their future career. Consequently, it is important that youth (and the people who advise youth) have access to accurate information about further education and the job market.

#### **4.3.6. High School Students – Summary**

Most high school students (67 per cent) want to continue their study to university or vocational training. Around 30 per cent want to find a job when they finish school. These aspirations are similar for both females and males, although females have a slightly higher preference for finding work.

Even though they desire further education, financial considerations prevent many youth from doing so.

For those youth who intend to rely on a scholarship to continue their education, most say they will look for work and study later on if they do not get a scholarship. This finding is similar for both genders.

Most high school students believe they need more skills to be able to enter the workforce.

Most high school students say they will decide what to study based on discussions with their parents, while some will also consider information about the job market. Very few students will consult with their teacher – even though they are a potential good source of information.

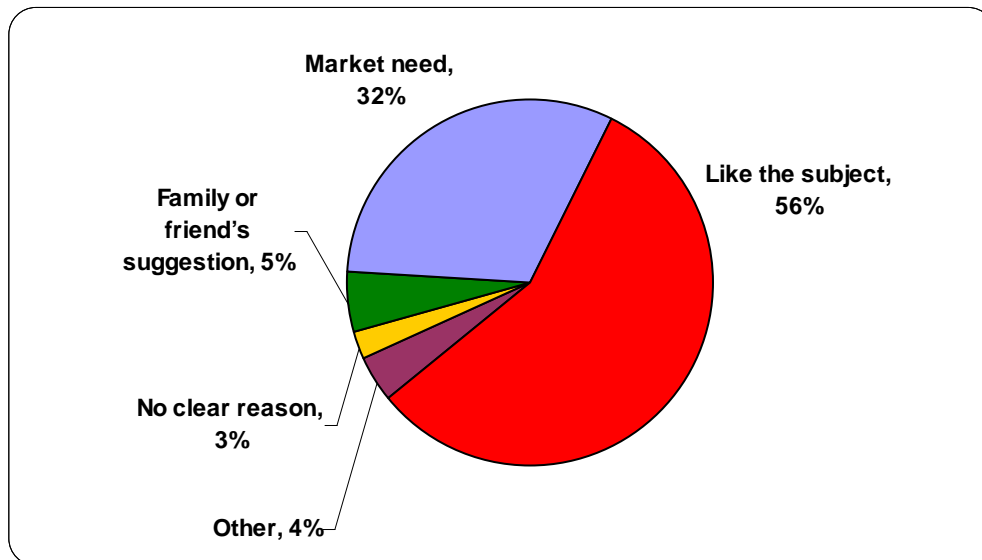


#### 4.4. University and Vocational Training Students

##### 4.4.1. Reason for Choosing the Major or Skill

University and vocational training students were asked about the reason for choosing their current study major or skill. As shown in the figure below, the most common reason was they like the subject (56 per cent). Another 32 per cent said they decided based on market need. Only 3 per cent said they have “no clear reason” for choosing the major/skill. While this is only a small percentage, it is still a concern for those students.

Figure 17: Reason for choosing study major or skill



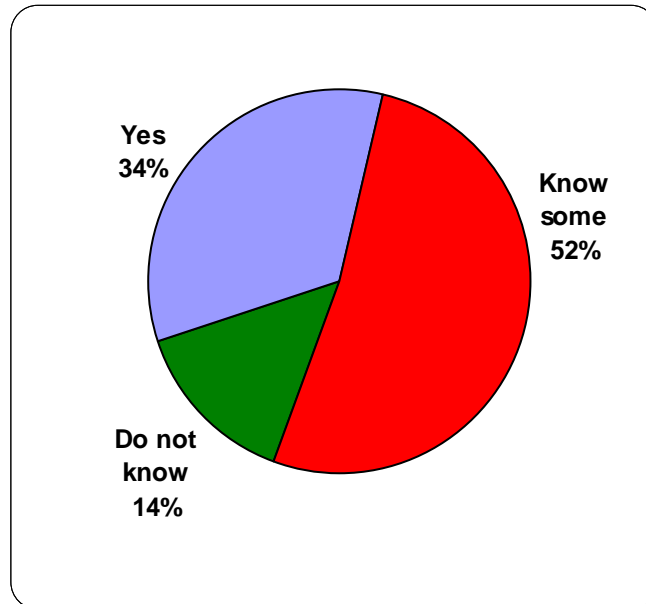
It is a very good sign that some youth at least try to take into account the market demand when they choose their subject. This once again highlights the importance of youth having access to accurate information on the job market so that they can make the right decision. If they base their decisions on the wrong information, youth may focus on skills that are not demanded by the market.

In addition, education providers can also play an important role in studying the labour market and adjusting their curricular to provide the right skills to youth.

#### 4.4.2. Knowledge on How to Find Job

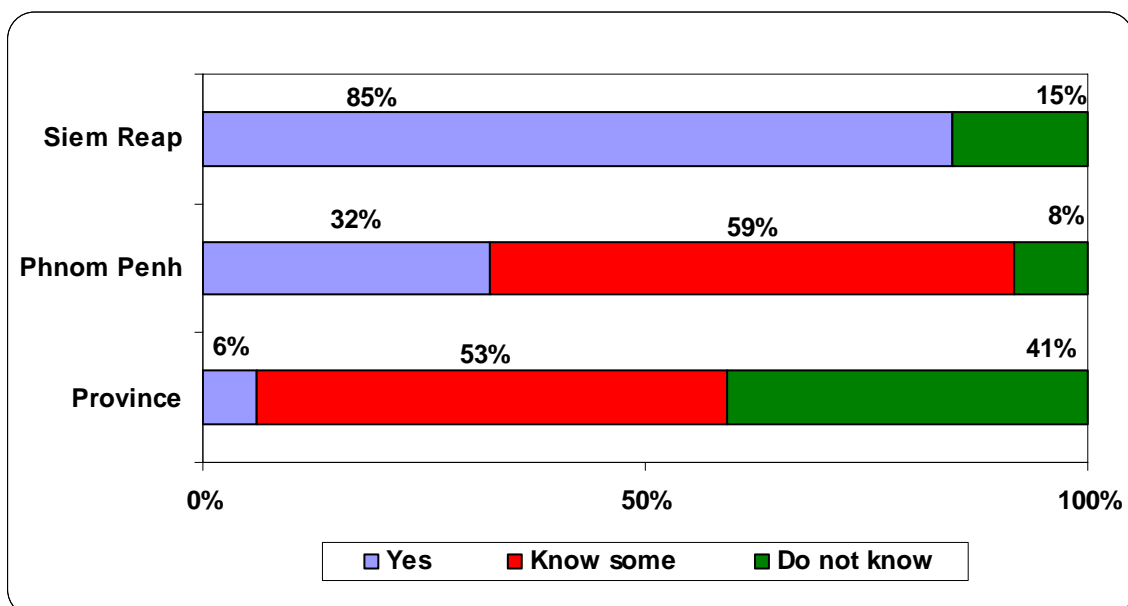
University and vocational training students were asked whether they know how to find a job. As shown in the figure below, 34 per cent of the responses said that they know how to find a job, while a further 52 per cent said they had “some” knowledge. Around 14 per cent said they don’t know how to find a job.

Figure 18: University/vocational training students who think they know how to find job



This overall finding hides some very important differences between **geographical areas**. As shown in the figure below, students in Siem Reap are very confident they know how to find a job (85 per cent) whereas students in Phnom Penh are less certain. Disturbingly, only 6 per cent of the responses from students in the provinces say they know how to find a job, while 41 per cent say they don’t know how to find one.

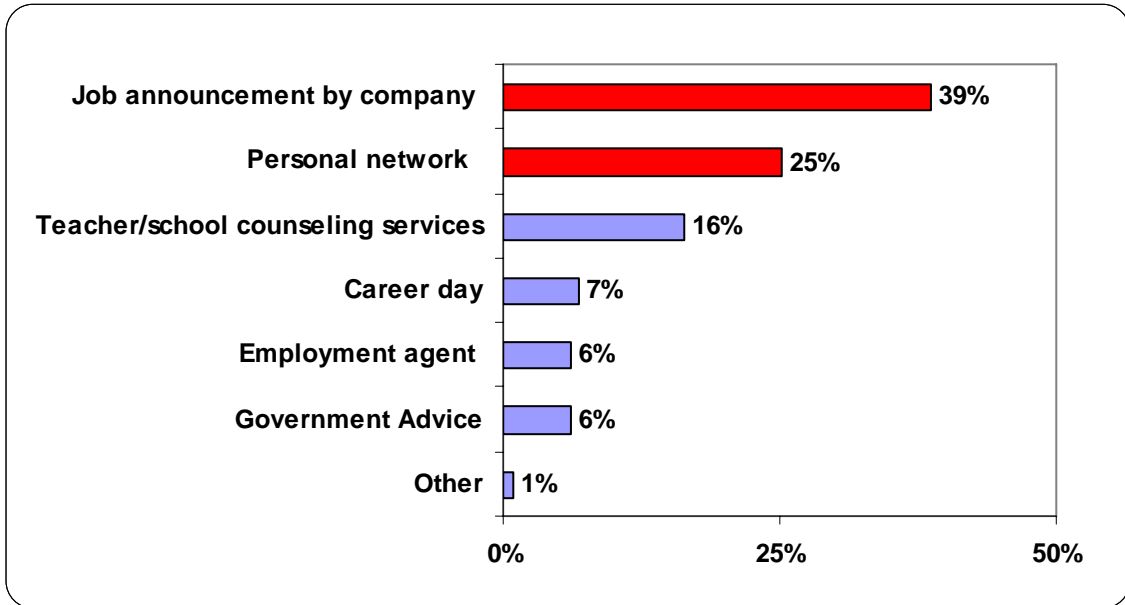
Figure 19: University/vocational training students who think they know how to find job, by area



#### 4.4.3. Source of Job Information

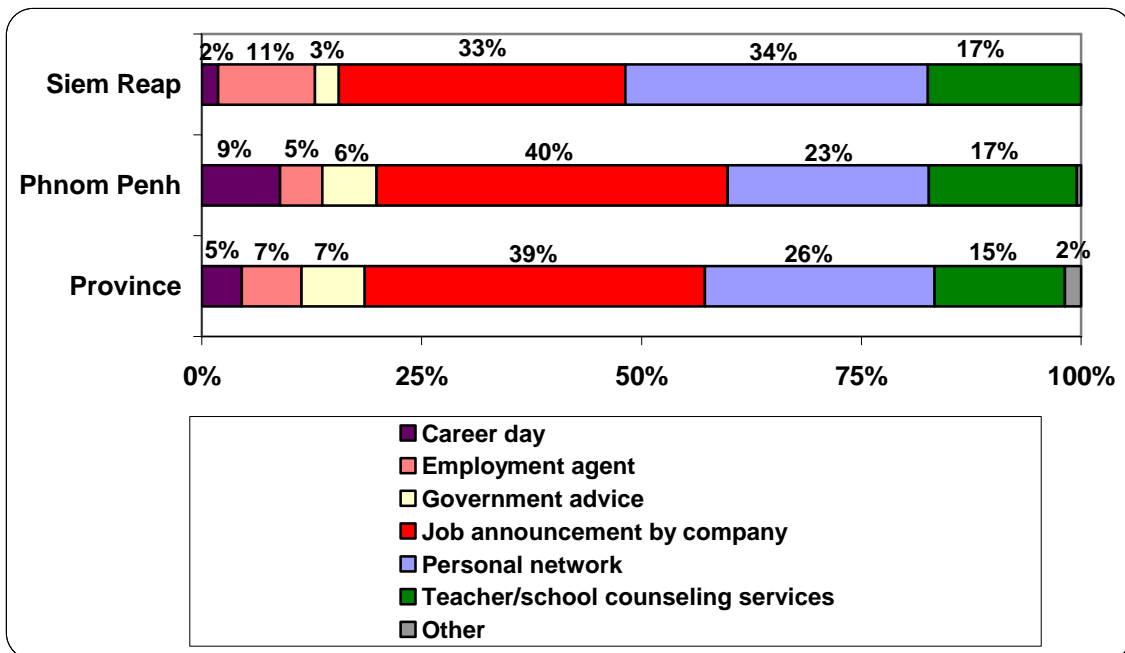
University and vocational training students were asked about the sources of job information that they know. As depicted in the following figure, most of their information comes from job announcements (39 per cent) or personal networks (25 per cent).

Figure 20: Source of job information for university/vocational training students



As highlighted in the figure below, job announcements are a more important source of information for students in Phnom Penh and in the other provinces (40 and 39 per cent respectively) than those in Siem Reap (33 per cent). Students in Siem Reap tend to place more importance on personal networks (34 per cent) than do students in other areas.

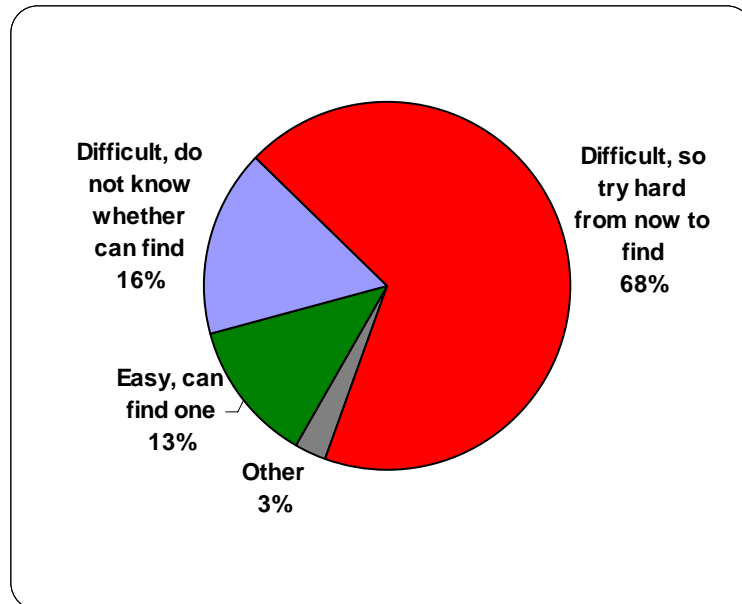
Figure 21: Source of job information for university/vocational training students, by area



#### 4.4.4. View on the Possibility to Find Job

The majority of responses from university and vocational training students (68 per cent) believe that finding a job will be “difficult, need to try hard from now to find one”. Another 16 per cent are more pessimistic, saying that finding a job will be “difficult, do not know whether can find one”. These findings are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 22: View on possibility to find job**



It is encouraging that most students realise that finding a job will not be easy, which hopefully will make them study harder and be more active in other activities that they think would help them to find a job after school. So the study about how to prepare themselves for the employment market is very important to youth. Besides, it also represents an opportunity to get youth to engage in activities that would help them in finding a job, such as internships, volunteer work or part-time work. To attract youth, information about these opportunities (and how they help in finding a job) need to be widely communicated among youth.

Currently, some organizations and youth associations who provide volunteer opportunities are trying to approach youth through various youth networks and education institutes. This is an opportunity that youth should capture.

#### 4.4.5. Internships, Volunteering and Part-Time Jobs

##### **Students who did not apply for internship, volunteer, or part-time jobs**

Those university and vocational training students who did not apply for these types of positions were asked why they didn't apply. As shown in the figure below, many students (38 per cent) said they don't know how to contact the employer, which may reflect a lack of knowledge and/or a lack of initiative.

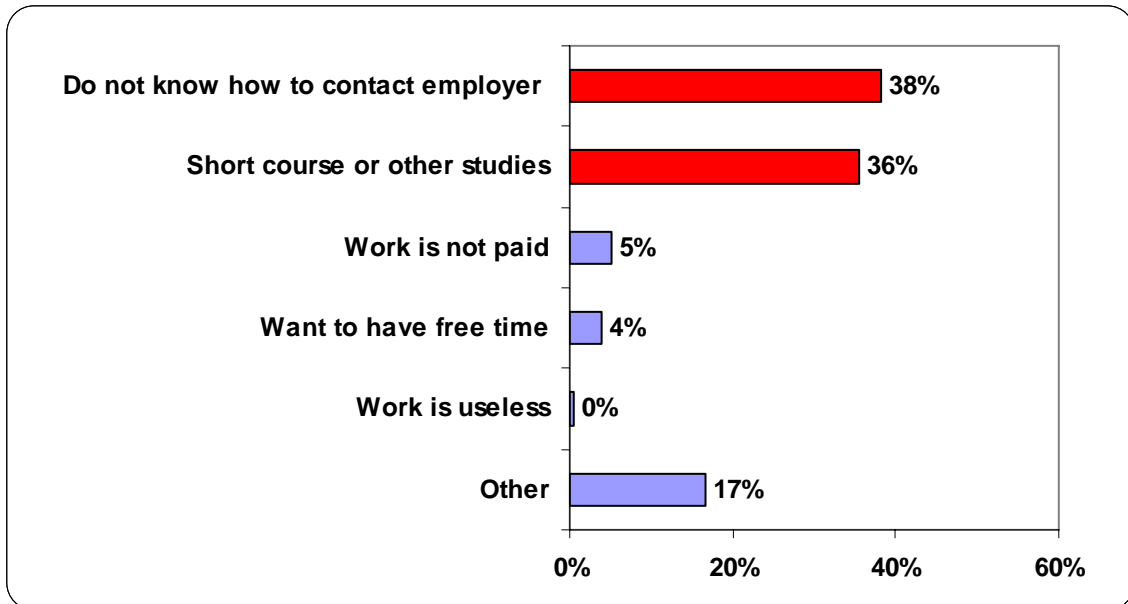
Another 36 per cent of responses indicated they did not apply because they want to do a short course or other studies.

Encouragingly, only a few responses said they did not apply because the work is not paid (5 per cent), because they want to have free time (4 per cent) or because the work is “useless” (0 per cent). Even though these percentages are quite small, these students should be informed about the importance of this type of work so as to stimulate them to be more active and to prevent this kind of passive attitude from growing.

Around 17 per cent of the responses gave “other” reasons, including they do not have time for work, they are busy with their family work or they do not have the capacity to apply for this kind of job.

Related to the internship issue, some education providers in Phnom Penh have linked with the private sector to teach students how to apply for jobs. Some providers also make internships compulsory or include them in student study programs. These are practical examples of how education providers can link students to real work experience<sup>22</sup>.

**Figure 23: Reason for not applying for internship, volunteer or part-time jobs**



These findings hide some interesting differences between geographical areas, as highlighted in the figure below.

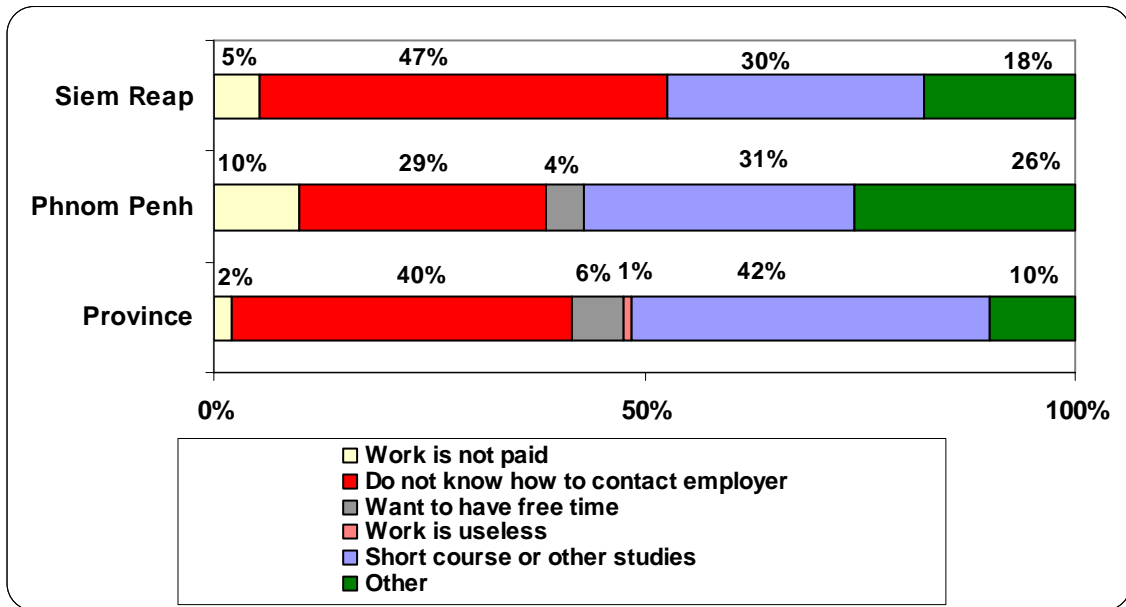
The main variations are:

- Students in Siem Reap were more likely to say they don't know how to contact employers, compared to students in Phnom Penh or other provinces.
- Students in Phnom Penh were more likely to say they didn't apply because the work is not paid, compared to students in Siem Reap or other provinces.
- Students in other provinces were more likely to say they didn't apply because they want to do other studies, compared to students in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap.

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<sup>22</sup> Expert interview with educational institutes.

**Figure 24: Reason for not applying for internship, volunteer or part-time jobs, by area**

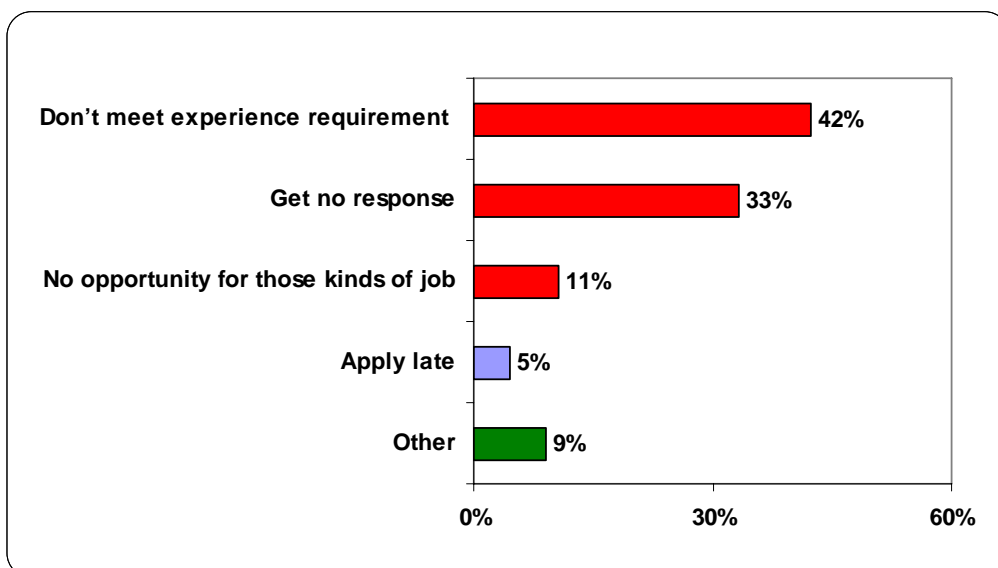


**Students who applied for, but did not get, internship, volunteer or part-time jobs**

As shown in the figure below, among those students who applied for these positions but were not successful, the most common reason for their lack of success was they did not meet the experience requirement (42 per cent). Furthermore, 11 per cent of the responses indicated that they were told there was no opportunity for these types of positions at the organisation.

Around 9 per cent of the responses gave “other” reasons, including the youth themselves were very busy with study or housework, and the organisation said it would contact them later. Some students did not even know what happened to their application – whether it reached the employer or whether they were short-listed.

**Figure 25: Reason for not being able to get internship, volunteer or part-time jobs**

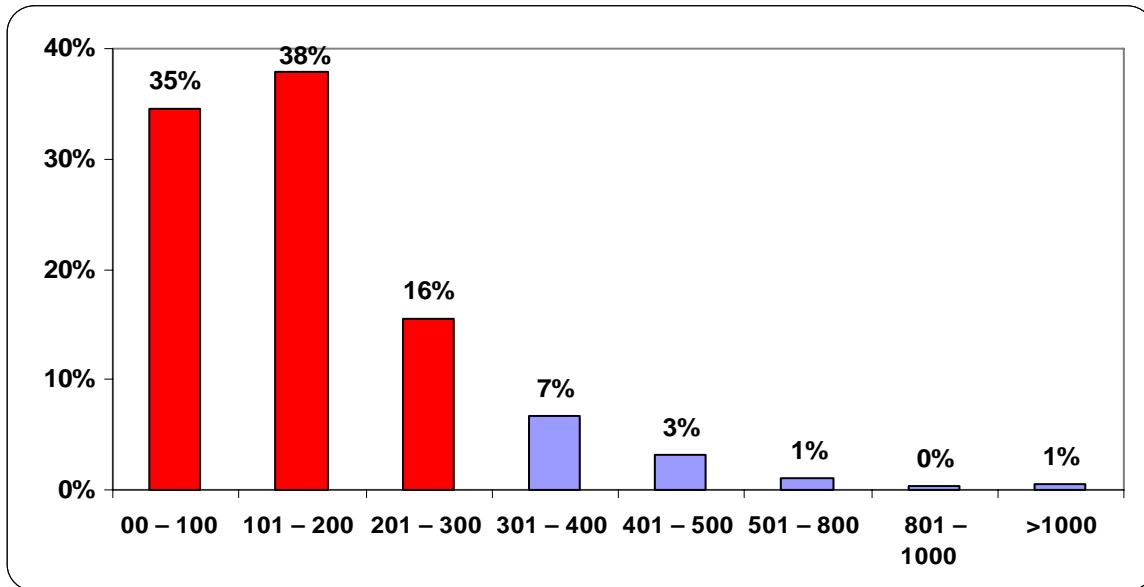


The requirement by some employers for students to have experience for these positions represents an obstacle for students. This is because many students are looking for these positions to provide them with their first job experience.

#### 4.4.6. Salary Expectation for the First Job

University and vocational training students were asked about the monthly salary they expect to receive in their first job. As shown in the figure below, a large majority of the responses (73 per cent) expect to receive less than 200 USD. Beyond 200 USD, the percentage of responses decreases as the salary rises.

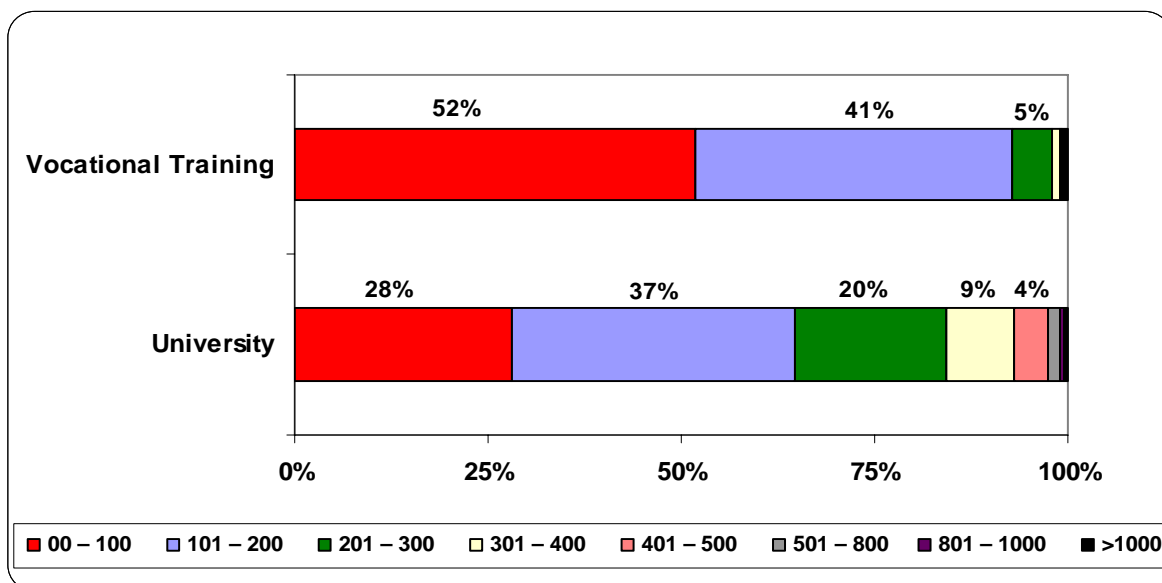
**Figure 26: Salary expectation for first job**



#### Salary Expectations: University versus Vocational Training

As shown in the figure below, vocational training students have much lower salary expectations than university students. Around half of the responses from vocational training students show they expect a starting salary of less than 100 USD, compared to just 28 per cent from university students. At the other end of the spectrum, only 7 per cent of responses from vocational students said they expect to earn more than 200 USD, compared to 35 per cent from university students.

**Figure 27: Salary expectation for first job, university versus vocational training**





#### **4.4.7. University and Vocational Training Students – Summary**

Based on the survey responses, most university and vocational training students choose their major or skill based on whether they “like” the subject or by looking at “market demand” for the skill. Only a small percentage of them mentioned that they have “no clear reason” when they decide to choose their current skill/major.

Related to the knowledge on how to find the job, the responses from the survey indicate that 32 per cent believe they “know how to find a job”, while around half indicate they “know some” about how to find a job.

As for sources of information about jobs, many students mention that their source of job information is job announcements or advertisements of the company. Notably, professional sources such as career days, employment agents and Government advice are used much less often.

In addition, most of them have a positive opinion/attitude on the possibility to find a job. Some of them said “it is easy” and others mentioned that “they think it is difficult so they need to try hard” so that they can find job after their study.

For students who never applied for internship, volunteer or part-time jobs, the response from the survey indicate that the reason is that “they do not know how to contact the employers” or because “they want to study short course”. It is encouraging that only the small percentage of responses said they did not apply because the work is unpaid or because they want to have free time.

For youth who applied for these positions, but failed in their attempts, many were told the reason was because they had no work experience (47 per cent), while most others didn't know the reason as they received no response from the organization (37 per cent).

Most students said they expected to receive a monthly salary of less than 200 USD for their first job. Within this figure, vocational training students have much lower expectations than university students.





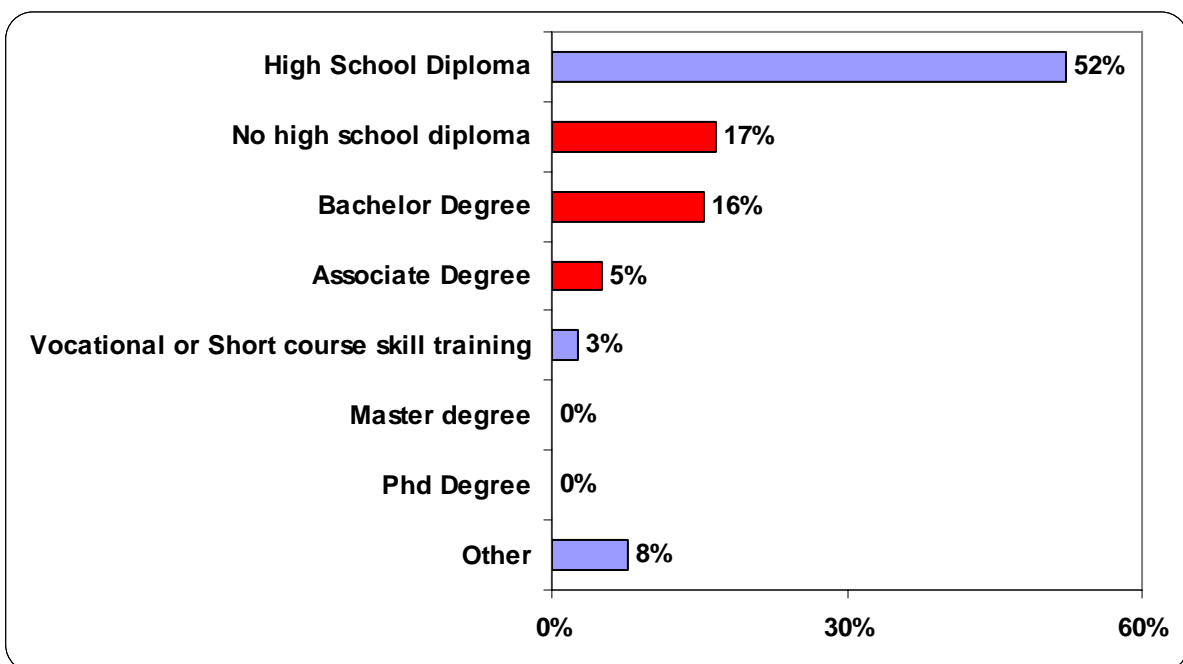
#### 4.5. Unemployed Youth

##### 4.5.1. Level of Education of Unemployed Youth in the Survey

Among the unemployed youth surveyed, over half of them have a high school diploma as their main education qualification (see the figure below), while another 17 per cent never finished high school. A surprisingly small percentage of unemployed youth had completed some form of vocational training (3 per cent). These results are summarised in the figure below.

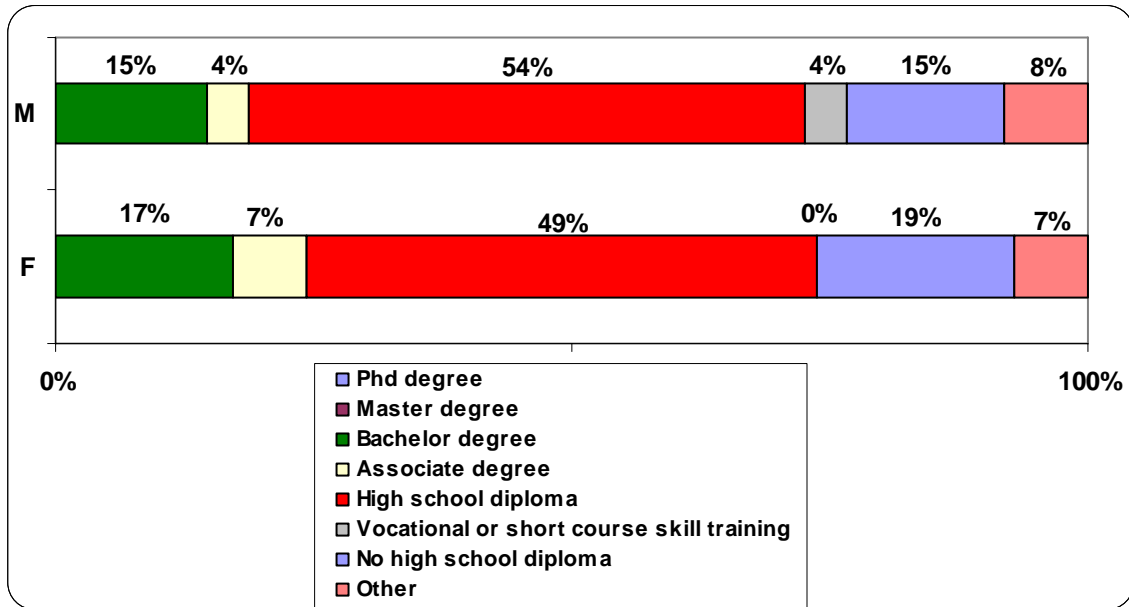
Around 8 per cent of the responses in “other” said they gained other degree which included mainly the short course non skill such as language course.

**Figure 28: Level of education of unemployed youth**



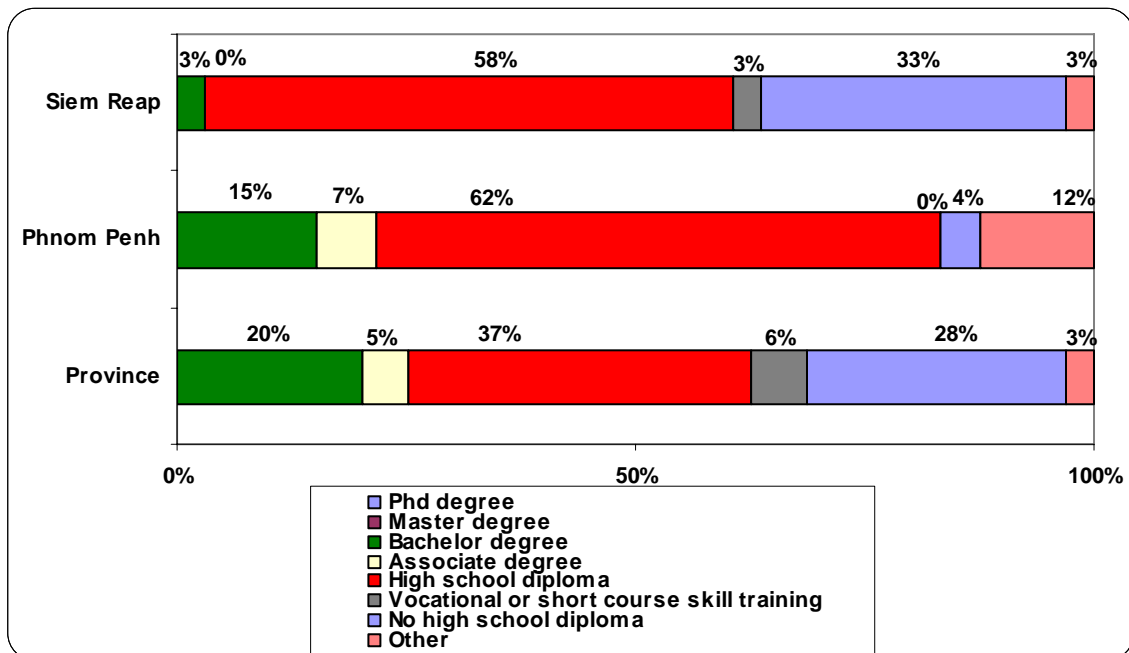
This level of education of unemployed males was broadly similar to that of unemployed females, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 29: Level of education of unemployed youth, by gender



However, as highlighted in the figure below, there are some significant differences in education levels of unemployed youth in different geographical areas. In particular, unemployed youth surveyed from Phnom Penh are much more likely to have at least finished high school (84 per cent), compared to those from Siem Reap (62 per cent) or other provinces (62 per cent).

Figure 30: Level of education of unemployed youth, by area



It should be stressed that the above findings reflect the education level attained by unemployed youth **who were surveyed**, and are not necessarily representative of Cambodia’s unemployed youth overall.



#### **4.5.2. View on Transition from Study to Work**

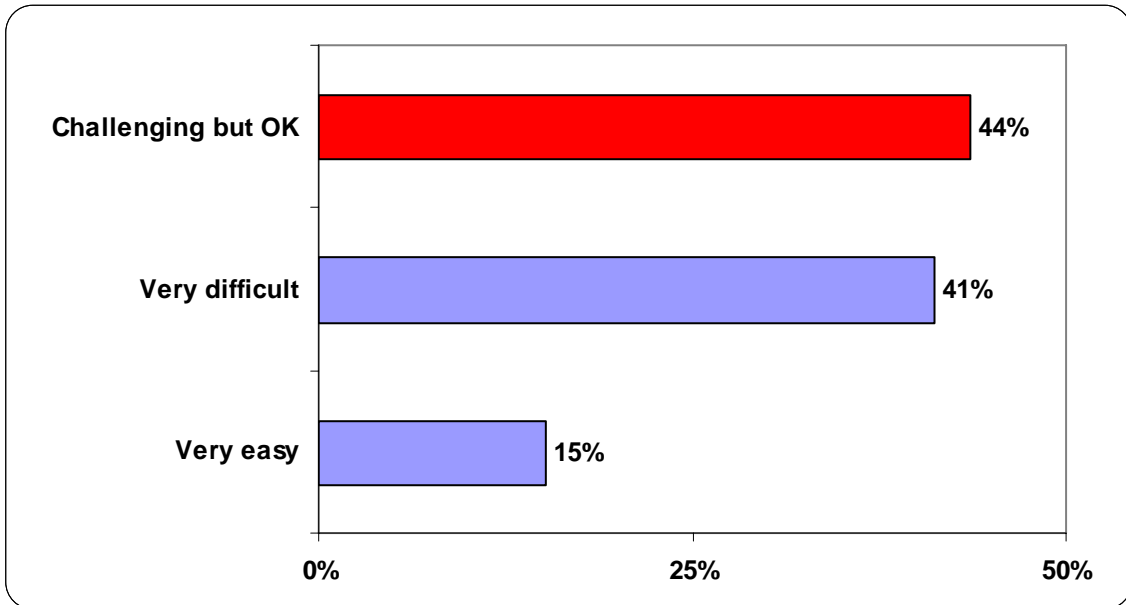
Unemployed youth were asked about their perceptions on the transition from study (whether high school, university or vocational training) to work. As shown in the figure below, 44 per cent of the responses said the transition is “challenging but OK”, while another 41 per cent said it is “very difficult”. Around 15 per cent of the responses said the transition is “very easy” – which is surprising, given they are still unemployed.

This finding suggests there is a need for the link between youth and work to be built before the time they finish school and go for work. Currently, most education institutes focus on building linkages with the private sector through internship programs to link their students to jobs. To promote the engagement of students in the real workplace, some education institutes have created good relations with private employers and made the internship compulsory in the study curriculum. According to the practical experience, this linkage during the study is very helpful for youth to find a job. Still, the remaining challenge is that only a minority of education institutes have been successful in building these links<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Expert interview with the education institutes.

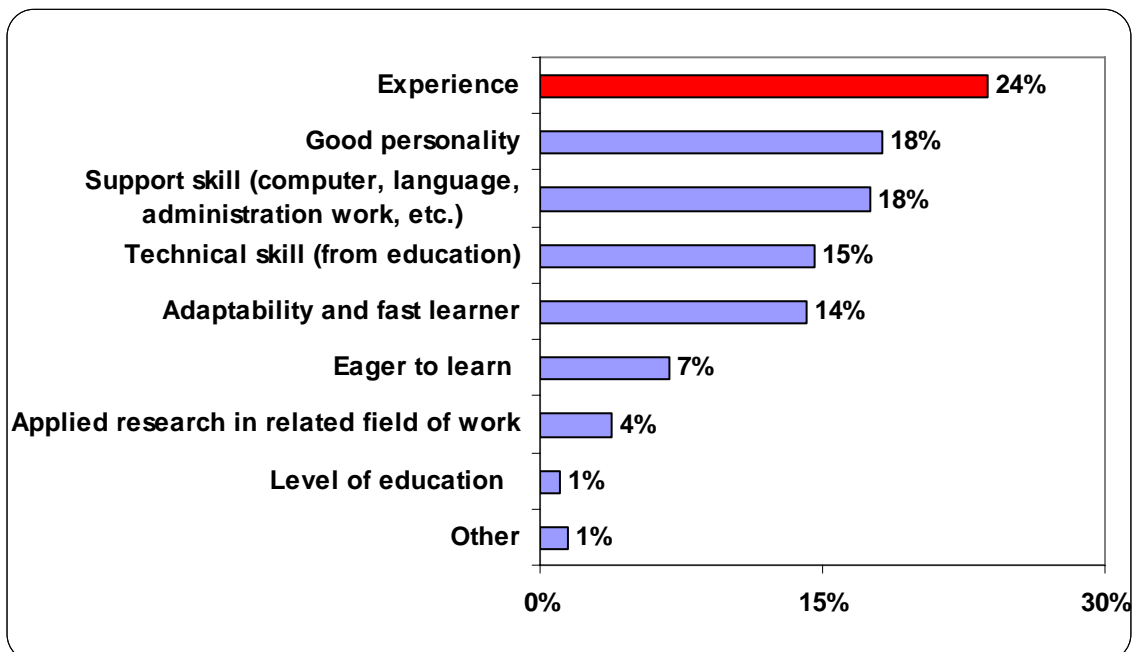
**Figure 31: View on transition from study to work**



**4.5.3. Perceptions on What Employers Want**

Unemployed youth were asked their perceptions about which criteria are required by employers. Based on their responses, they believe the most important criteria are Experience, Good Personality, Support skills (such as computers or languages) and Technical Skill.

**Figure 32: Unemployed youth’s perception on criteria required by employer**



The extent to which these perceptions match with employers’ own views is considered in the next chapter on employer findings.

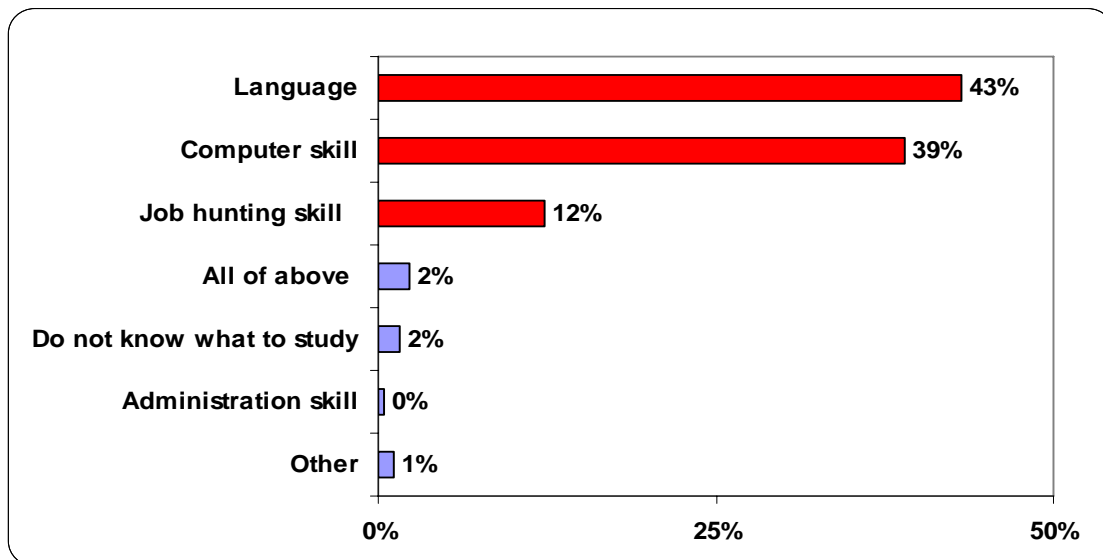
#### 4.5.4. Further Skills Needed to Find Job

In addition to their main skills, unemployed youth were asked about what other supporting skills they needed to develop in order to find a job. Their response highlighted two key skills – foreign languages (43 per cent) and computer skills (39 per cent). These results are shown in the figure below.

Only 12 per cent of the responses highlighted job hunting as a skill they needed to develop further. This is not a problem if those youth already have job hunting skills, but it is a significant problem if the reason is because they have less awareness of how this skill will assist them in job finding. This highlights the need to raise awareness of how important it is to know *how* to look for jobs.

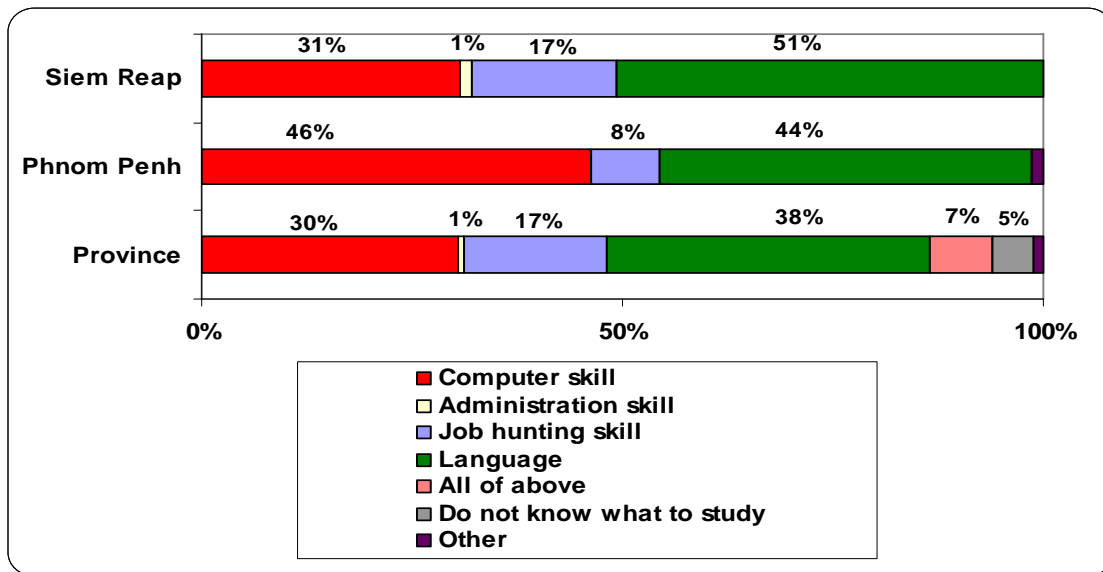
Only 2 per cent of the responses said they do not know what supporting skills they need to develop.

Figure 33: Further skills needed to find job



In terms of geographical differences, unemployed youth in Phnom Penh think they need more computer skills, while those in Siem Reap put more emphasis on foreign languages (which may reflect the importance of hospitality and tourism in that area). In the other provinces, some unemployed youth felt they needed to develop all of the supporting skills listed, while others did not know what skills they needed to develop. (Neither of these answers received significant scores in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap.)

Figure 34: Further skills needed to find job, by area



4.5.5. Unemployed Youth – Summary

Most of unemployed youth has high school degree (52 per cent). According to the finding from this survey, in term of level of education, there is no significant difference between genders. If looking into different areas, most of unemployed youth in Phnom Penh has at least high school degree (84 per cent), compared to those from Siem Reap (62 per cent) or other provinces (62 per cent).

Unemployed youth generally feel it is not easy to transit from school and enter the workforce. Around 44 per cent believe it will be challenging but okay, while another 41 per cent believe it will be very difficult.

Unemployed youth think that the two most important criteria that employers look for when recruiting staff are experience and work attitude. Both of these criteria also figure prominently in the survey of employers, as outlined in the next chapter. This is a lesson for youth to try to improve on these two qualities while they are still at school.

In terms of supporting skills they need to develop to help them get a job, most unemployed youth feel they need to improve their computer and foreign language skills. This finding applies to youth in all geographical areas, although there are some regional variations.



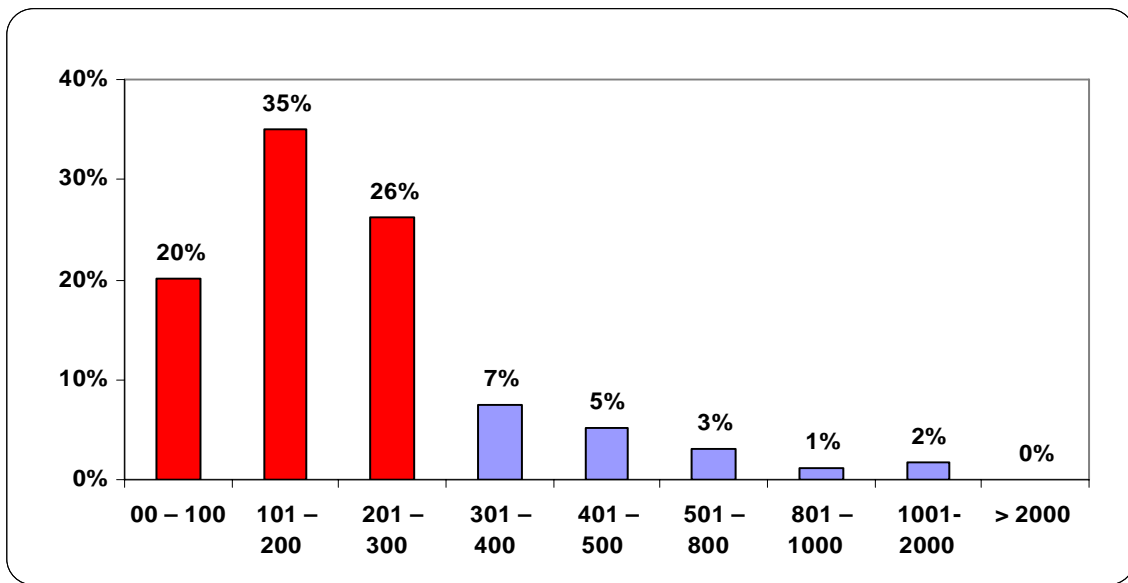
#### 4.6. Employed Youth

##### 4.6.1. Current and Expected Salary

###### Current Salary

Employed youth were asked to state their current monthly salary. As shown in the figure below, most of them earn 300 USD or less. Of the employed youth surveyed, only 18 per cent earn more than 300 USD.

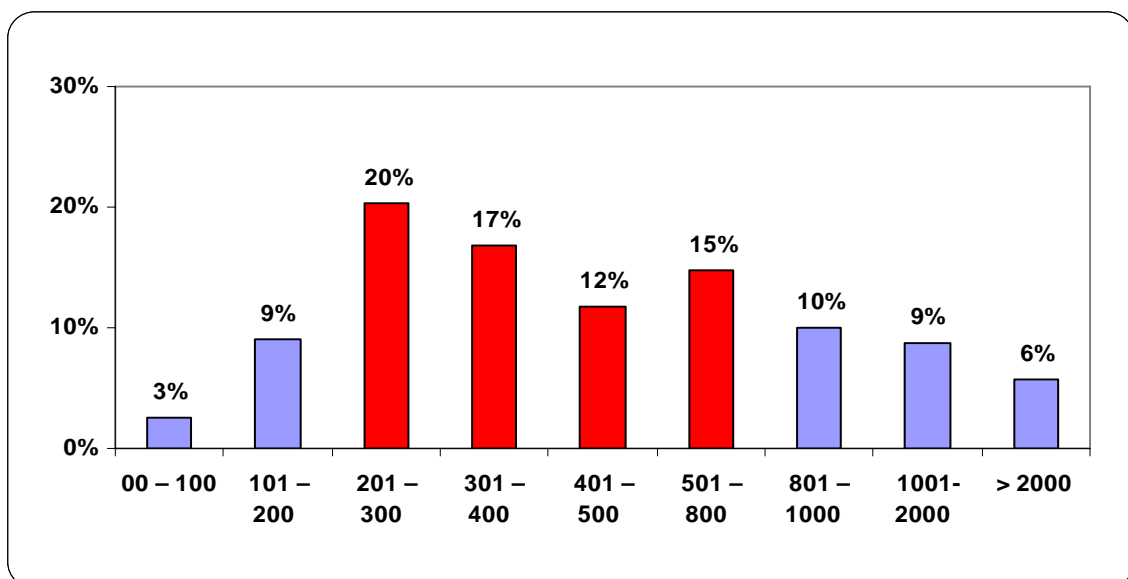
Figure 35: Employed youth current salary



###### Salary Expectation

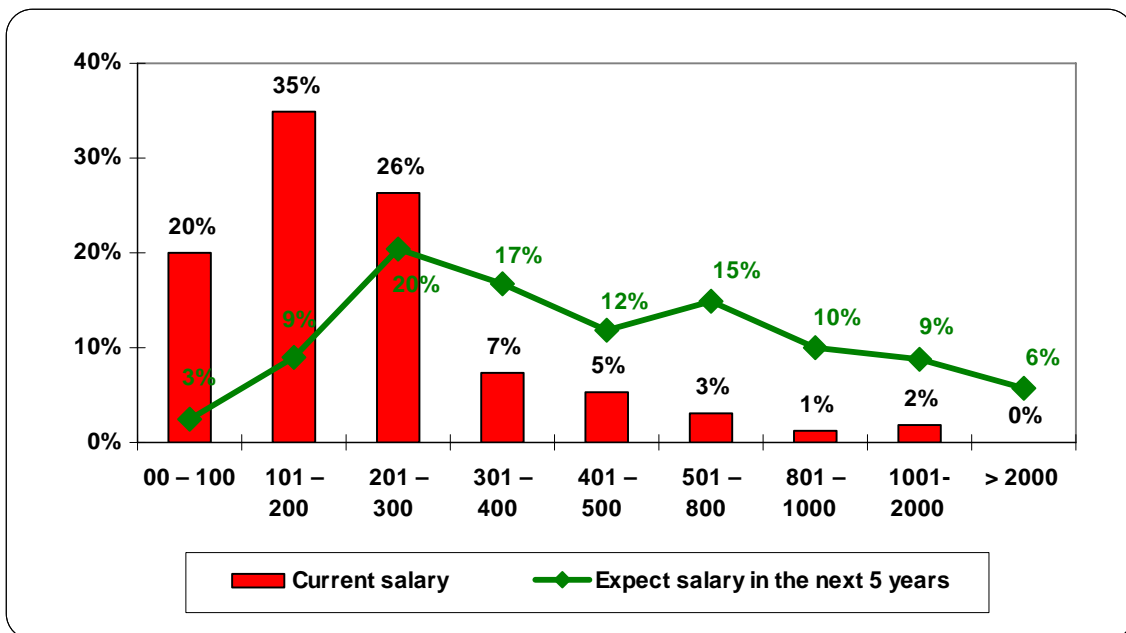
The survey also asked employed youth about the salary they expect to earn in 5 years time. They were not asked the basis for their expectations, so the responses reflect their subjective opinions and aspirations. Compared to their current salaries, employed youth have a much wider spread of expectations for their future salaries. As the figure below shows, the most common response was an expectation of 201-300 USD (20 per cent), although there were significant responses for salaries as high as 501-800 USD (15 per cent). Around one quarter of youth expect to earn more than 800 USD in 5 years time.

Figure 36: Employed youth expected salary in the next 5 years



The figure below compares current and expected salaries. It shows that the majority of employed youth expect to move from the first 3 ranks of salary to the middle 4 salary ranks over the next 5 years.

**Figure 37: Comparing current and expected salary over next 5 years**



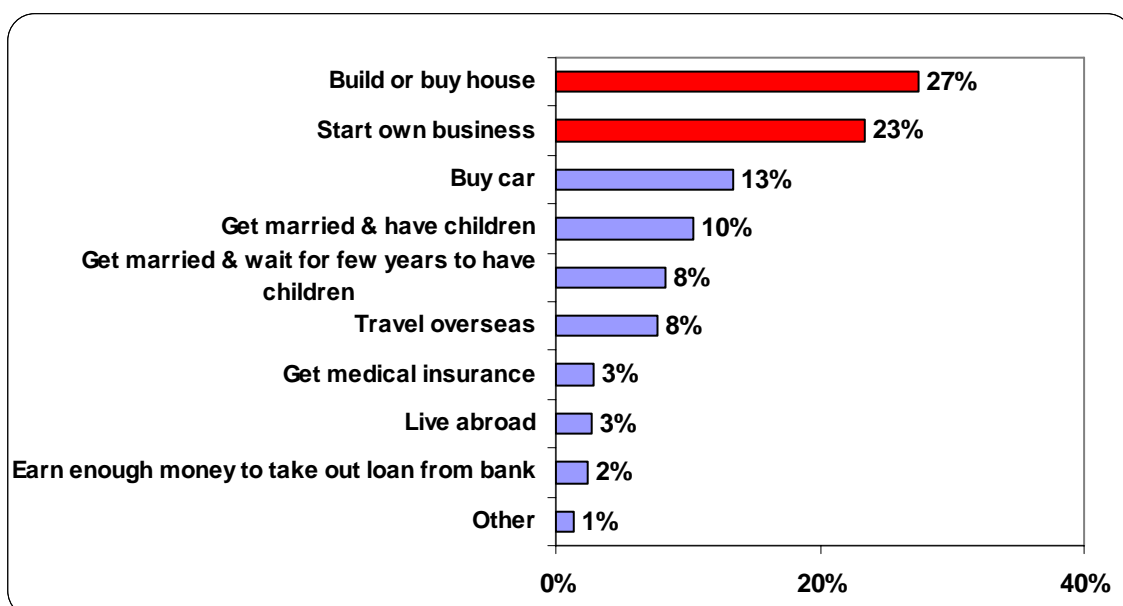
It is reasonable for employed youth to expect to earn higher salaries in 5 years time, as they move into more senior positions. Hopefully, this perceived potential to earn higher salaries will encourage youth to keep improving their skills and qualities, and to challenge them selves in work.

#### 4.6.2. Looking into the Future – Aspirations

##### Personal Plans and Aspirations

Employed youth were asked about their personal plans over the next 5 years. As shown in the figure below, the results indicate that “Build or buy house” (27 per cent) and “Start own business” (23 per cent) were the two most common answers.

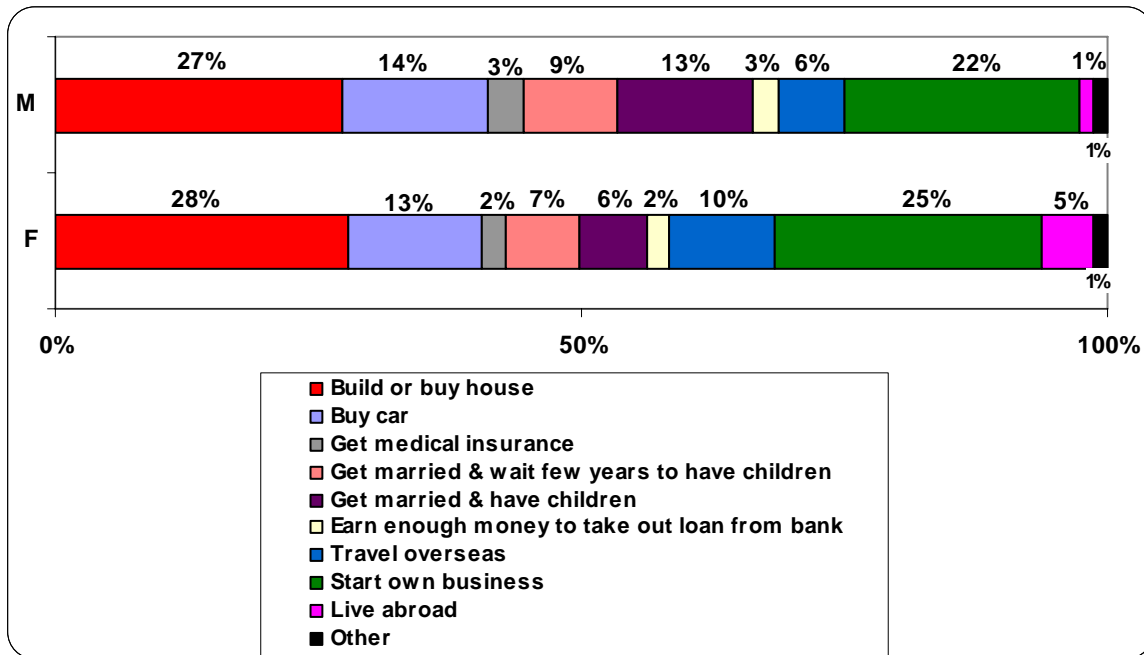
**Figure 38: Five year personal plan**





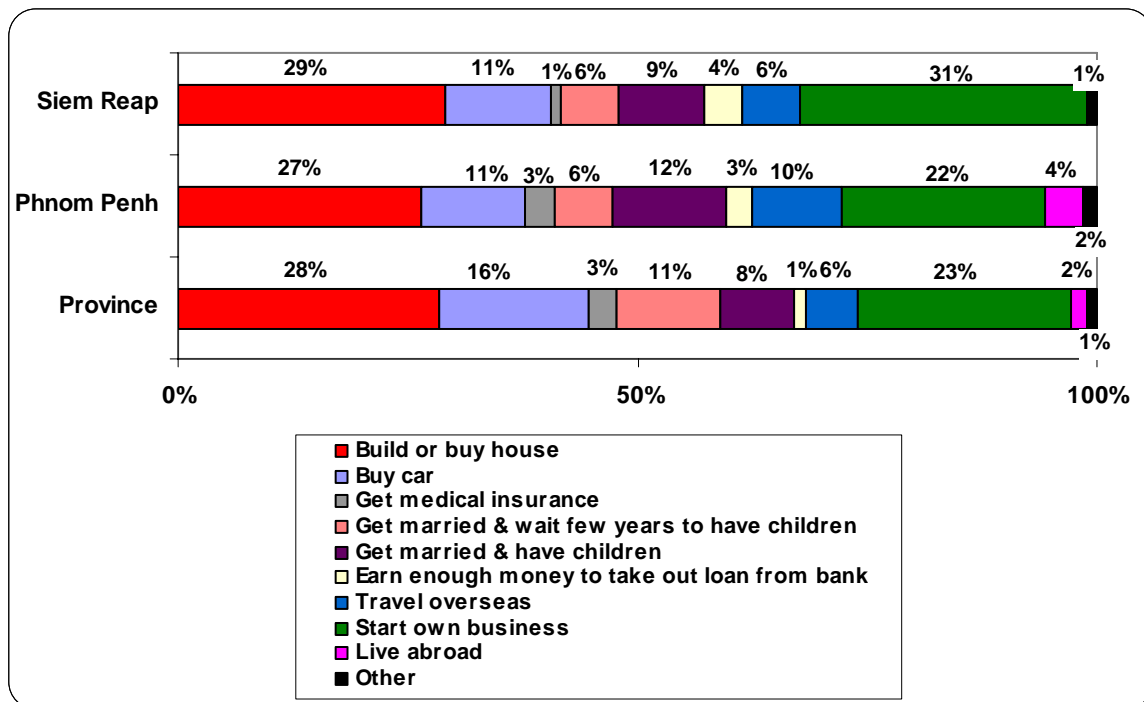
The results are broadly similar for both males and females, as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 39: Five year personal plan, by gender**



In terms of geographical areas, most of the responses are also broadly similar. The biggest difference is that more youth in Siem Reap want to start their own business (31 per cent) than youth in Phnom Penh (22 per cent) or other provinces (23 per cent).

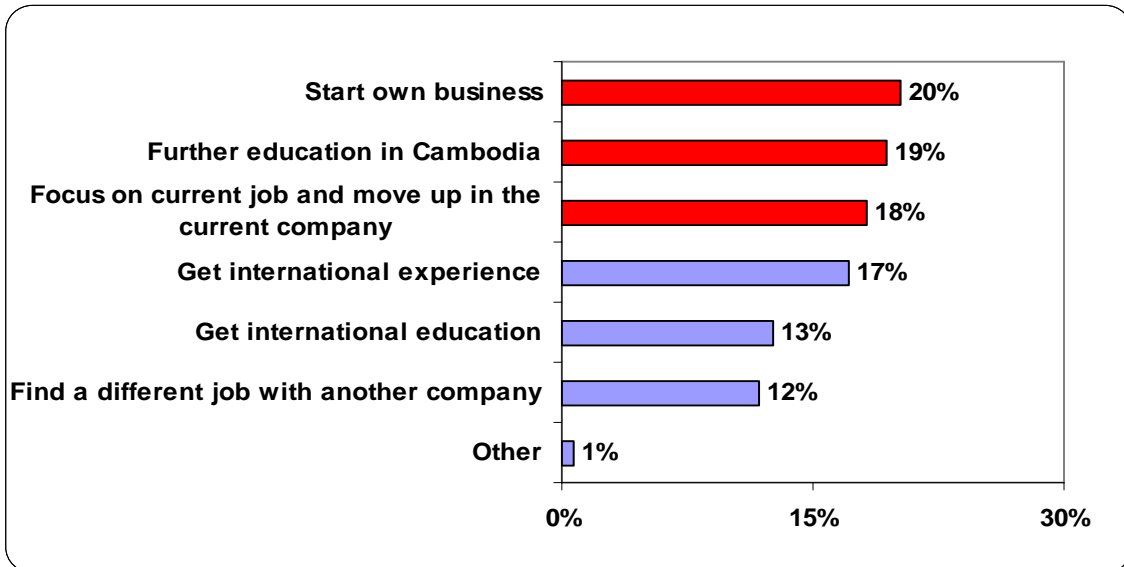
**Figure 40: Five year personal plan, by area**



### **Professional Plans and Aspirations**

In the survey, employed youth were also asked about their professional plans in the next 5 years. Youth gave a fairly even spread of responses, lead by “Start own business” (20 per cent), “Further their education in Cambodia” (19 per cent) and “Focus on current job and move up in the current company” (18 per cent). These results are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 41: Five year professional plan**

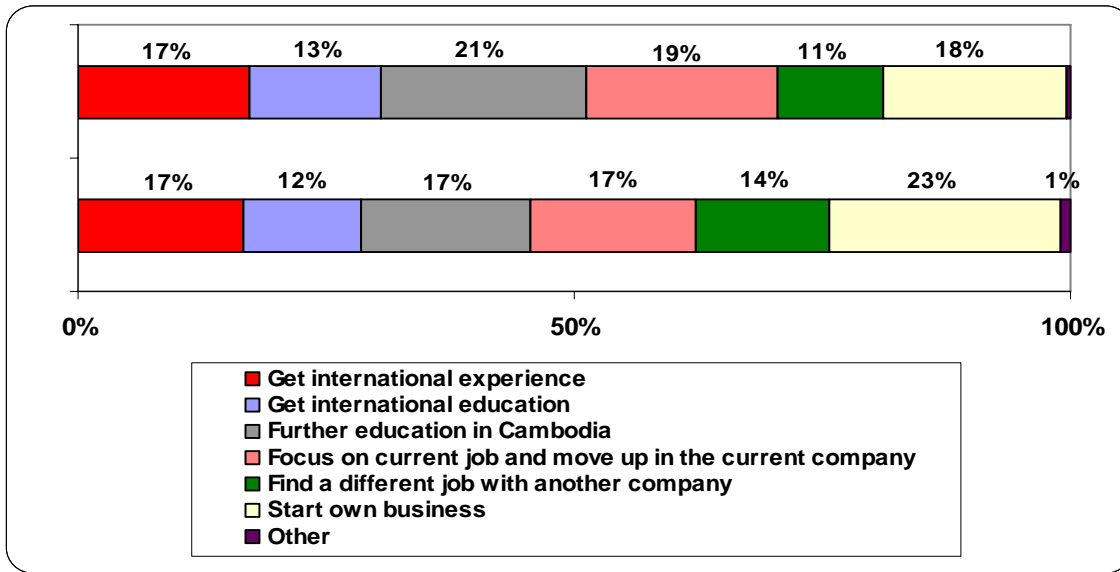


While wanting to start their own business is an encouraging and positive sign, it also raises the question: do they have the skills and experience to start their own business? This highlights the importance of the education system providing youth with the opportunity to develop skills relevant to starting their own business. Besides, there is a role for relevant stakeholders (such as NGOs) in preparing youth for starting their own business.

In terms of education, more employed youth expect to further their education in Cambodia (19 per cent) than overseas (13 per cent). This may be for a variety of reasons, including financial constraints, a desire to stay in Cambodia with the family or a preference to study part-time while continuing in their current job.

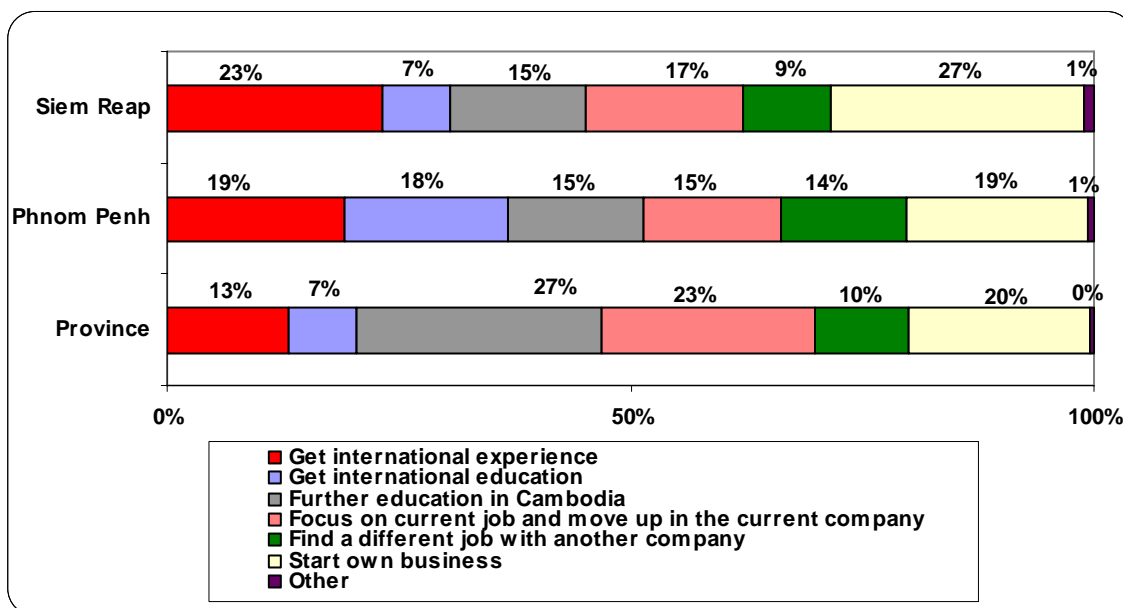
In terms of gender, males have a slightly stronger focus on furthering their education in Cambodia (21 per cent compared to 17 per cent for females). On the other hand, females place slightly more emphasis on starting their own business (23 per cent compared to 18 per cent for males). These results are shown in the figure below.

Figure 42: Five year professional plan, by gender



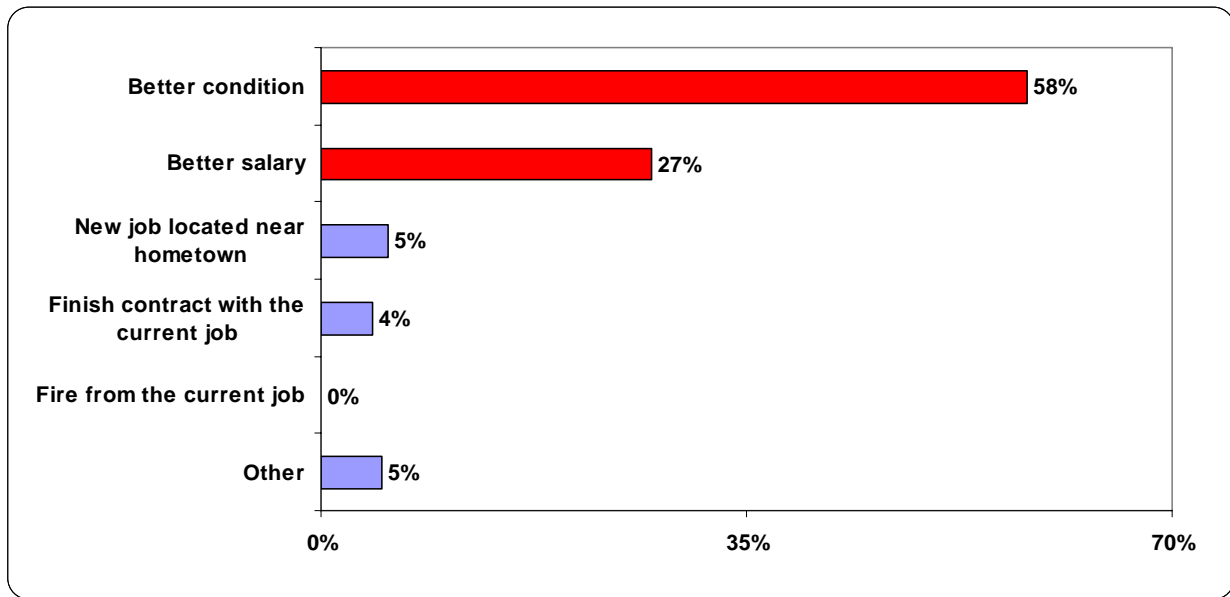
In terms of geographical differences, youth in Siem Reap place more emphasis on starting their own business (27 per cent) than youth in Phnom Penh (19 per cent) or other provinces (20 per cent). Youth in Phnom Penh are more focused on getting an international education (18 per cent) compared to those in Siem Reap and other provinces (both 7 per cent). Youth in the provinces are more concerned with furthering their education in Cambodia.

Figure 43: Five year professional plan, by area



**4.6.3. Changing Jobs: Factors and Considerations**

The question about the factors that make them consider changing jobs was also asked to employed youth. As shown in the figure below, the most common reason for considering a change in jobs is “Better conditions” (58 per cent), followed by “Better salary” (27 per cent). Only 5 per cent of the response said they would consider changing jobs if the new job was located near their hometown, which indicates that most youth are prepared to work far from home.

**Figure 44: Factors considered when changing job**

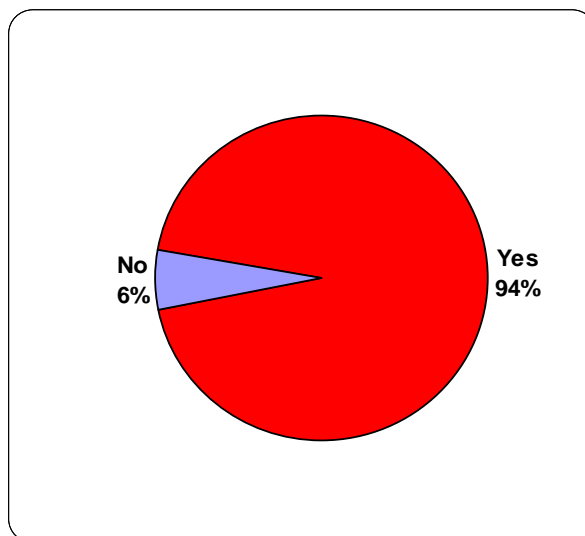
In addition to the previous analysis on youth's 5 year professional plans, these findings provide useful information to employers in terms of retaining key staff. The findings suggest that providing good working conditions will help employers retain their staff.

Interestingly, only 27 per cent of youth said they will consider "Better Salary" alone when changing jobs. This is encouraging, because making their decision based solely on the salary may not be in their best interests, in terms of their long-term career development.

#### **4.6.4. Current job: Possibilities and Promotions**

##### **Possibility to Progress in Current Job**

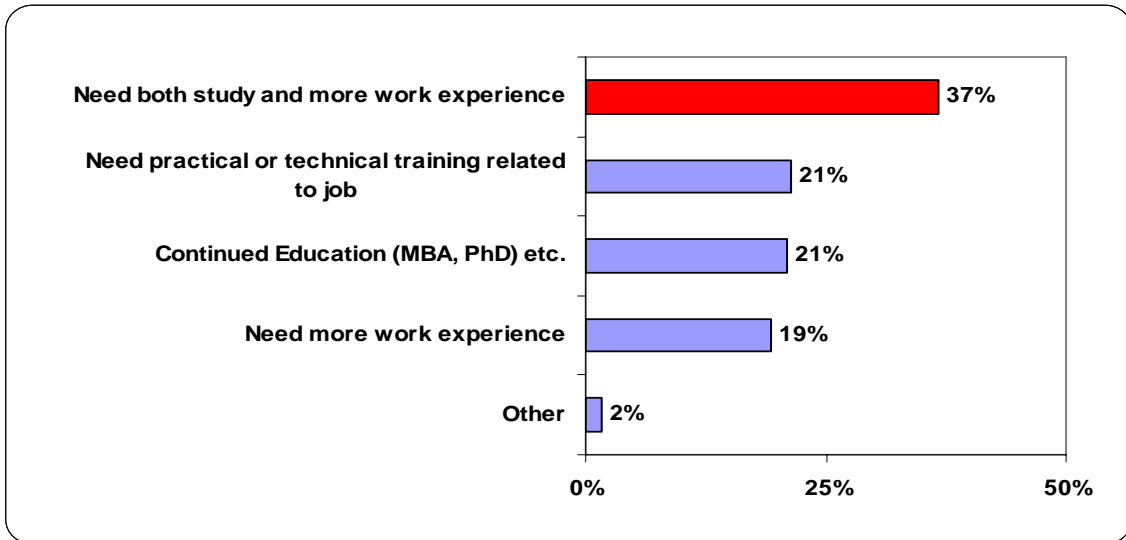
Employed youth were asked about the possibility to progress in their current job. Around 94 per cent believed they have the possibility to progress, as shown in the figure below. This is a positive sign, as hopefully it will encourage them to develop themselves so they can take advantage of the opportunity to progress in work.

**Figure 45: View of youth on whether they have possibility to progress in work**

##### **Requirements to Progress in Current Work**

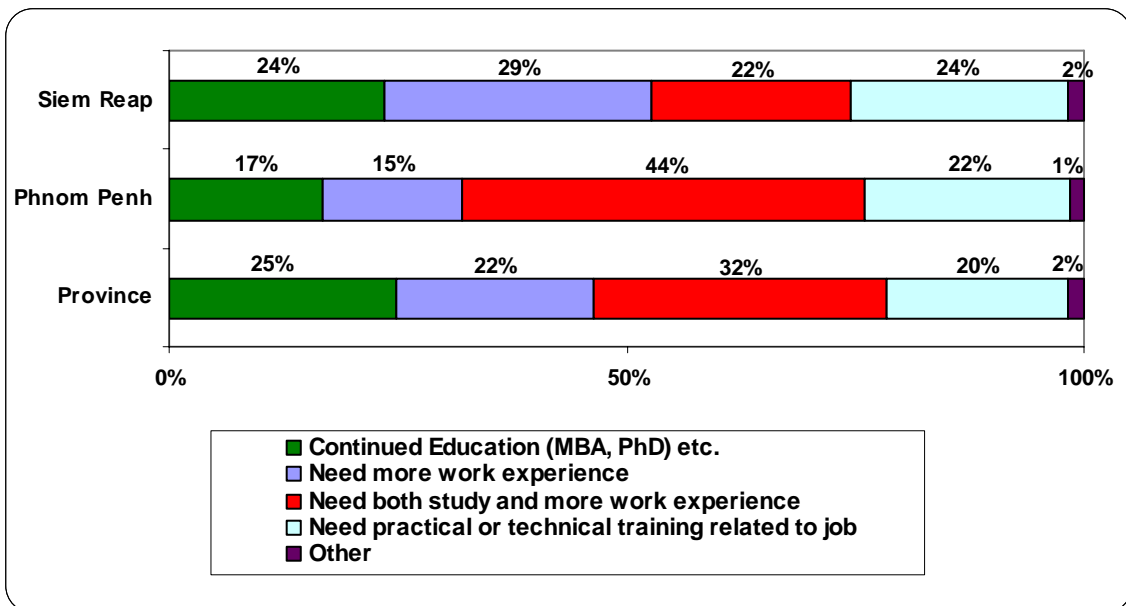
Employed youth were also asked what action they need to take to progress in work. As shown in the figure below, most of the responses (37 per cent) indicated that youth feel they need both study and more work experience.

**Figure 46: View on requirements to progress in work**



In terms of geographical areas, employed youth in Siem Reap more put emphasis on the need for more work experience (29 per cent) compared to those in Phnom Penh (15 per cent) or other provinces (22 per cent). Employed youth in Phnom Penh favour a combination of continuing education and more work experience (44 per cent) compared to those in Siem Reap (22 per cent) or other provinces (32 per cent). These results are shown in the figure below.

**Figure 47: View on requirements to progress in work, by area**

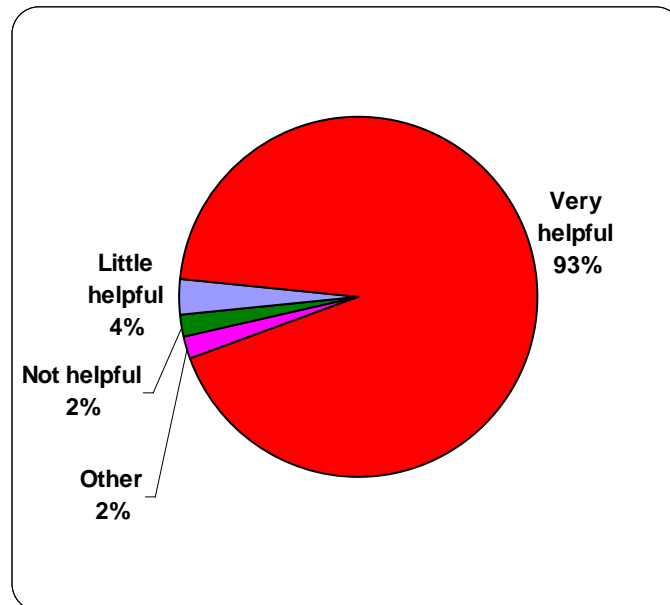


#### 4.6.5. Importance of Internship, Volunteer and Part-Time Jobs

Employed youth were asked for their perceptions of the importance of internship, volunteer, or part time jobs – many of whom have gone through this experience. A large majority of responses (93 per cent) thought these types

of work were “very helpful” for them to find a job. Only a small percentage (6 per cent) viewed this as either not helpful at all or of little help, as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 48: View on importance of internship, volunteer and part time jobs**



This viewpoint of employed youth is a positive message that should be shared among other youth, as it can inform and encourage them to become involved in this kind of work while they are still studying.

#### **4.6.6. Employed Youth: Advice to Other Youth**

Through the survey, employed youth provided some useful advice based on their experiences in job seeking. The following are some of the opinions and suggestions that they gave.

##### **Build Your Study Profile**

- Choose the right skill: Having the right main skill demanded by the market is very important when finding a job. So youth should study about the job market and about the subject before they choose.
- Learn the support skill: In addition to the basic main skill they learn, youth should try to learn more support skills which are mainly computers and foreign languages (especially English).
- Study short courses and learn job-finding skills.
- Have good performance in study: Youth need to try hard to get good results in their studies, which will help attract attention from the employers in the job market.

##### **Build Your Personal Quality**

Personal quality is also an important criterion that employers consider when deciding to hire staff. Examples include good attitude, self confidence, motivation, being dynamic, patient, etc.

##### **Build Your Experiences During Study via Internship, Volunteer or Part Time Job**

Building experience via internship, volunteer or part time work during study is also valuable as this kind of work will equip youth with more experience and with more understanding and links between their study and the real workplace. So youth should manage their time to get this experience even though most of those kinds of jobs are not well-paid or not paid at all.

##### **Build Your Knowledge of Different Job Sources: Use Different Sources of Job Information**



When applying for a job, youth need to search the job announcements from various available sources – internet, newspaper and company announcements – and the personal network which is also very important as some recruitment was done through networking.

### **Job Application and Benefit**

Apply for as many jobs as possible: Youth should apply for as many jobs as possible and not just target high salary jobs. Do not be afraid of failure, as whether they are accepted or not, they can still get benefits from trying. If they are accepted, they can get the job. If they are not accepted, they at least can learn from the recruitment process, or can reflect on what they need to improve for other job applications.

Think about the first job for experience building: It is important to think that the first job will build your experience and will help you to gain more salary later on. Plus, job opportunities are very rare. However, some employed youth recommended that before applying for a job, youth need to think whether it is the right job that fits their skills.

### **Well Prepared for the Interview**

To be success during the interview, youth need to understand about the employer that they are applying for. Knowledge of the company will help impress the interviewers. They also need to be self confident and to act professionally (including how to dress and prepare their behavior to look tidy and professional).

### **Build Your Career Goal and Commitment to Achieve It**

Youth should have their career goal and commit to achieve it. They need to have an optimistic point of view in trying to find a job. The important key to success is to think about their strengths and weaknesses, especially during the time that they fail, and keep improving whatever they need to. Also, youth need to manage their time well on useful things such as increasing their general knowledge.



#### **4.6.7. Employed Youth – Summary**

Most employed youth surveyed are currently working within the salary range of less than 300 USD per month (84 per cent). In the next 5 years, most of the youth expect a salary level of between 300 USD and 800 USD (64 per cent).

In the next 5 years, most employed youth want to build or buy house, or start their own business. This aspiration is similar for different gender groups as well as for youth from different geographical areas (Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and other provinces).

Females place slightly more emphasis on starting their own business, while males place slightly more emphasis on furthering their education in Cambodia.

For most employed youth, the key criteria when deciding whether to change jobs is better work conditions.

A large majority of youth (94 per cent) believe they have the possibility to progress in their current job. Most of them think they need to develop more qualities, especially in terms of further study, building up experience, and study more technical skills related to their job.

Related to the importance of internship, volunteer and part time jobs, most of them said according to their experience this kind of job is “helpful” for youth, especially the ones who are still in study. This type of work will help them to build up their working experience and consequently allow them more possibility to find a job when they finish study.

In addition, employed youth also provided some useful advice base on their experiences to share with youth. This advice included:

- Make the right decision when choosing the major skill demanded by the market and perform well in study
- Build up the necessary additional/supporting skills, such as job-seeking skills, computers and languages.
- Build up personal networks and learn about different sources of job information.
- Do not lose hope when they fail to find a job. They need to struggle and learn from the experience. They have to believe and keep finding until they get it.
- Build experience during their study via internship, volunteer or part time jobs. Do not expect a large salary from this job but think about it as experience building. In addition, develop personal qualities that are valued by employers, such as confidence, being dynamic and having a good work attitude.

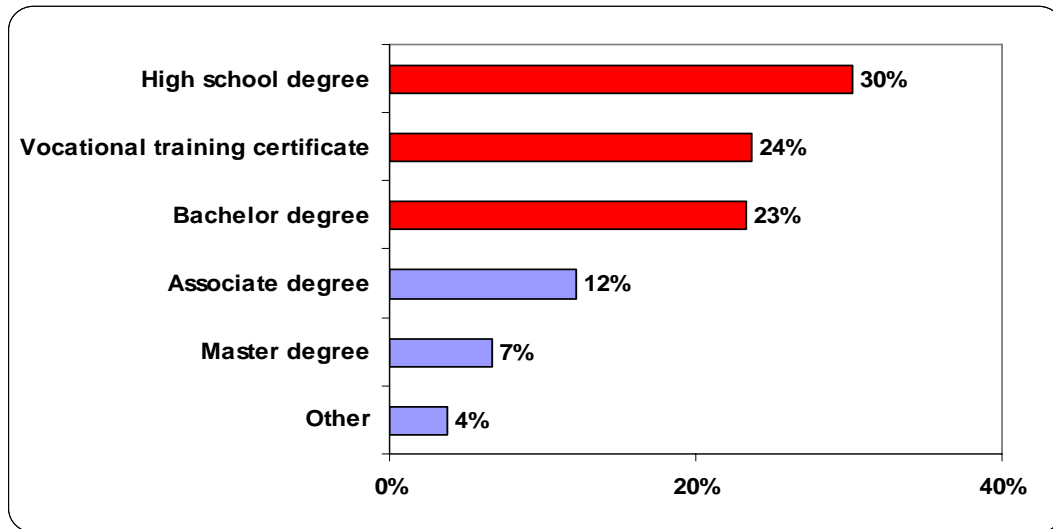


#### 4.7. Issues Common to All Youth

##### 4.7.1. Perception on Minimum Level of Education to Find Job

In the survey, youth were asked about the level of education they think could help them to find a job. As shown in the following figure, 30 per cent of the total response said high school degree, 24 per cent said vocational training certificate, 23 per cent said bachelor degree and 12 per cent said associate degree.

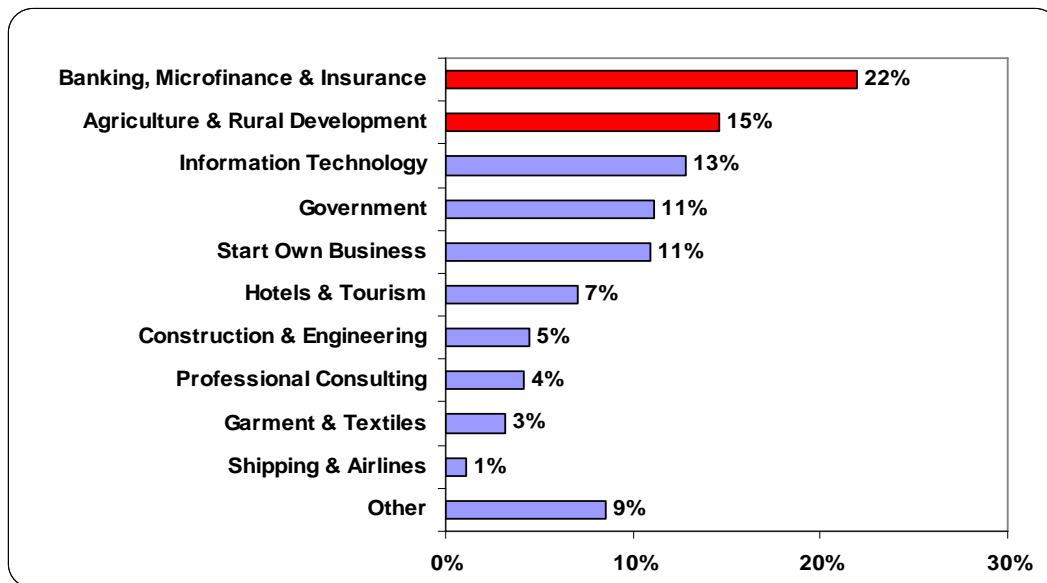
Figure 49: Perception on minimum level of education to find job



This indicates that most youth think that to get a job they need at least a high school degree, vocational training (or other similar certificate) or a bachelor degree. This is also true if we look at this issue from the employers' perspective, as will be discussed in the following chapter. (In summary, employers require higher education standards for more senior or professional types of work. This means that the higher the position, the more education level is demanded.)

##### 4.7.2. Industry that They Want to Work In

In the survey, youth were asked about the industry in which they want to work in the future. The results, as shown in the figure below, indicate that Banking, Microfinance and Insurance (22 per cent) is the most popular sector, followed by Agriculture and Rural Development (15 per cent).

**Figure 50: Industry that youth want to work in**

For Agriculture and Rural Development; the number of education institutes who provide this field of study is very limited. There exist a few public institutions which are located mainly in the city, such as Royal University of Agriculture, as well as other institutes under the authority of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery, and also some other specialized skill training institutes under the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport. Currently, to facilitate student's access, the Royal University of Agriculture has expanded to Battambang province<sup>24</sup>.

Some agriculture companies have contacted the universities to get students to work for them and sometimes universities could not provide the required amount of students majoring in the skill that those companies need. This means there is demand for workers with skills in agriculture and agri-business. However, despite its potential as an employment source for youth, agriculture does not have a good image in the society. It is viewed as a skill that requires physical hard work in the fields. Compared to other majors like business management or banking, agriculture is not considered as prestigious and so is less popular with youth. This could discourage youth from choosing agriculture as their major. Youth need to be made aware that there are attractive careers in agriculture besides simple farming<sup>25</sup>.

Also important to note is that 11 per cent of the total responses from youth want to start their own business. This response presumably includes a wide range of businesses, from small shops to larger companies.

A key finding is that relatively small percentages of youth want to work in those industries which provide a lot of employment and opportunities in Cambodia. Of the total responses, only 7 per cent were for Hotels and Tourism, 5 per cent were for Construction and Engineering, and 3 per cent were for Garment and Textiles. Those sectors are currently viewed as big sources of employment, especially for non-skilled labour. These three sectors are among the main job providers in Cambodia, so it might be an economic and social loss if most youth do not focus on building skills needed to work in those sectors.

Based on the survey with employer, Garment factories have difficulty finding local professionals who have garment-related skills. As a result, many high level production staff are mainly expatriates.

Finally, some youth (9 per cent) came up with "other" areas or sectors in which they want to work. Within this category, most of them want to work in NGOs, while others want to work in manufacturing companies (such as food processing), in law or in healthcare services. Less than one percent said they didn't care what industry they worked in, just as long as they got a job somewhere.

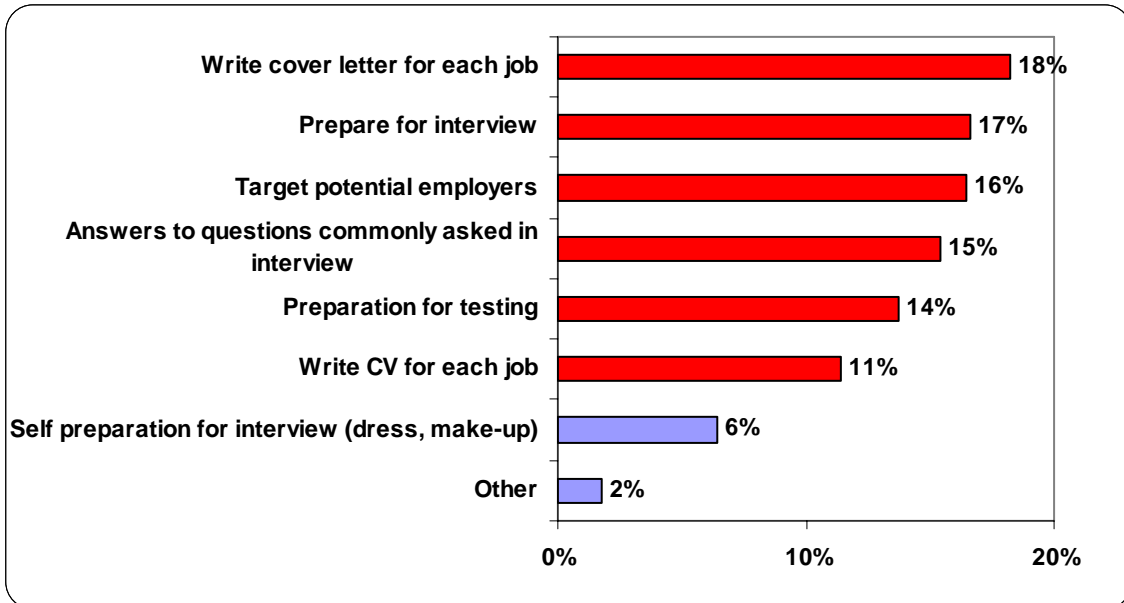
<sup>24</sup> Expert Interview with Educational Institutes and Relevant Ministry.

<sup>25</sup> Expert Interview with Royal University of Agriculture.

### 4.7.3. Job-Hunting Skills

In the survey, youth were asked about the job-hunting skills that are the most difficult for them. The response indicated that “Writing the Cover Letter” is viewed as the skill that most of youth think they have difficulty with (18 per cent). It is followed by “Preparing for Interview”, “Targeting the Potential Employer”, “Prepare for Testing” and “Writing CV” – see in the figure below.

**Figure 51: Perception on job-hunting skills that are difficult**



Seeing the importance of those skills in helping youth to find jobs, many NGOs provide short courses which aim to teach those skills to youth. There is also scope to teach these skills in various study programs at universities, foreign language classes and vocational training courses<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Expert Interview with Educational Institutes and NGOs.



#### 4.7.4. Youth Experience in Job Hunting

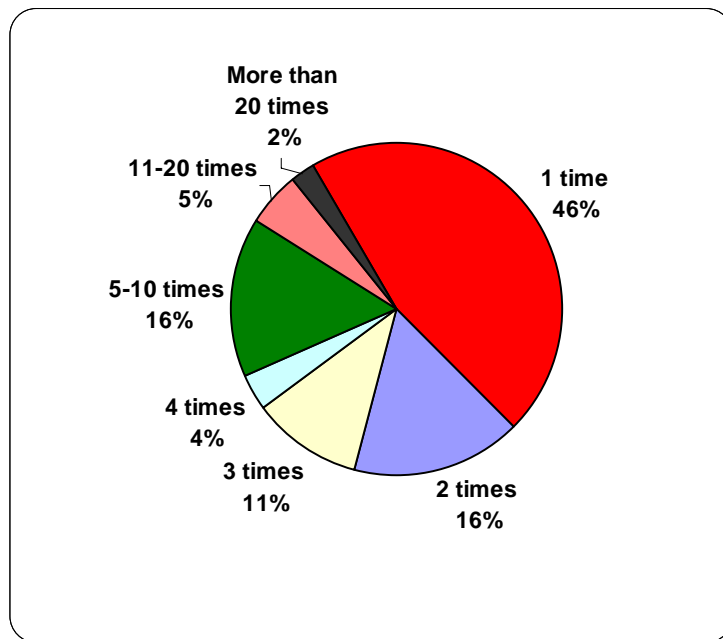
##### Number of Job Applications

Youth were asked how many job applications they made before getting their first job (for employed youth) or up until the present (for unemployed youth). The results for each group are presented in the figure below.

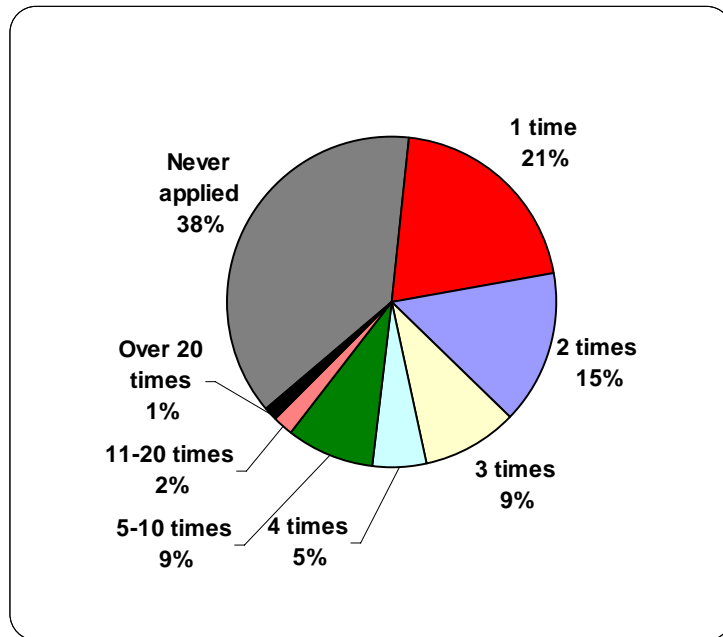
For employed youth, 46 per cent only made one application before finding work, which is a surprisingly high percentage. In total, 73 per cent made three or fewer applications.

For unemployed youth, 38 per cent have never applied for a job, and a further 20 per cent have only applied once. Given that many youth have been unemployed for a long time (see next question) this suggests that youth either are very passive, don't have confidence in their qualifications or skills, or don't know how to apply for a job.

**Figure 52: Number of job application of employed youth for their first job**



**Figure 53: Number of job application of unemployed youth so far**



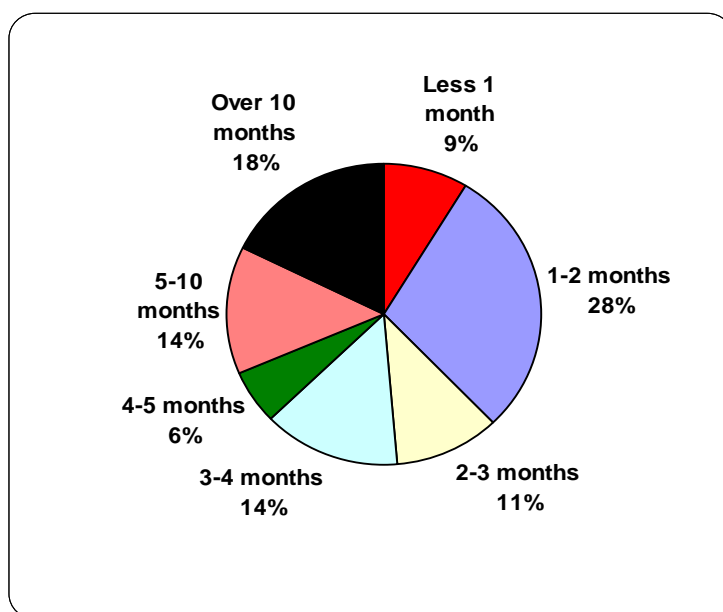
### Duration of Looking for Work

Employed youth were asked how long it took to find their first job, while unemployed youth were asked how long they have been looking for work so far. The results for each group are presented in the figures below.

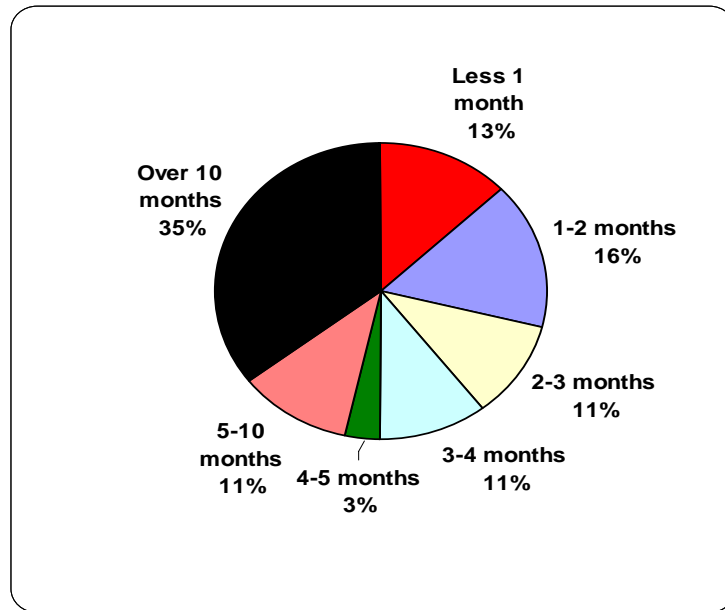
Around half of all employed youth took less than three months to find their first job. However, 18 per cent of these youth – or almost one in five – took more than 10 months to find work. (They were not asked how actively they had been looking for work over that time.) For unemployed youth, the situation is even more disturbing. While half of those currently unemployed have been looking for work for less than three months, 37 per cent – or more than one in three – have already been looking for more than 10 months.

The long time that some youth spend looking for work could be the result of a number of factors. For example, they may not have good qualifications or skills, they may not have good job-seeking skills, they may be passive in looking for work, or the economy may not be creating enough job opportunities.

**Figure 54: Employed youth – time taken to find first job**



**Figure 55: Unemployed youth – time spent looking for work so far**



### **Job Application Techniques**

HR professionals generally recommend that persons looking for work should tailor their CVs and cover letters to each job they apply for.

If we compare employed and unemployed, 70 percent of employed youth said they write different CVs and cover letters to apply for different jobs. In contrast, only 38 per cent of unemployed youth said they write different CVs and cover letters for different jobs.

**Table 6: Youth who prepare different job application for each job**

Employment Status	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Unemployed	38	62	100
Employed	70	30	100

### **4.7.5. Youth Suggestions to Stakeholders**

The analysis above has highlighted that youth face many challenges in finding employment. Those difficulties include lack of experience, lack of information about jobs, lack of knowledge about how to find a job, lack of skill demanded by the potential employers, and lack of other support skills such as computers and foreign languages (English especially). Some youth also complained about low paid work and unfriendly working condition..

In facing these challenges, youth have some suggestion to the relevant stakeholders who are government, education institutes, job providers and also the civil society such as NGOs and associations.

The following are the suggestions of youth to Government, education institutes, job providers, and civil society.

### **Youth Suggestions to Government**

Beside all of those aspects related to the “supply side” of the workforce, youth also perceived the lower level of potential job opportunities available to them (the “demand side”). So, at the macro level, youth believe government can work to attract more investment in the private sectors both from abroad and locally. In addition, the expansion of investment to provincial areas is also a convenient opportunity for youth to work in their local areas.



Also, youth believe the government should create a standard education quality with the participation or inputs from multilateral parties. This is to create a more even quality of education. In addition, accommodation for students who study away from home is also an important issue for youth. Currently, many higher education opportunities are located in the city or town of the province, so students need to find a place to stay during their study. Thus, student campuses are very important for youth.

### **Youth Suggestions to Education Institutes**

To the management level, youth feel the school curricula need to respond to job market demand as much as is possible. Besides, there should be more focus on support skills such as English and computers. Wherever possible, teaching materials such as books and other information should be updated to ensure students keep up to date with the latest knowledge. In addition, the applied research should be included in each field of study, as it will provide students with more analytical skill and more mastery of their subject studied. Furthermore, school should strengthen the study quality (for example by strengthening study discipline) to ensure the quality of student as well as to influence students' attitude on how to work hard and incorporate this habit within them.

The quality of teacher and the study facility are also important. Youth would like school to ensure the quality of teach and to improve the study facility such as easy access to the library, internet searches, etc.

To get student attach with the practical work, school should also include the guess speaker in the study program. The guess speaker should be invited from the professional.

School should have a counseling unit that could help youth in providing them with the information related to job finding. This unit should also play role as the contacting point about internship, volunteer or part-time work opportunities that students can apply for. The information about the school counseling service and the importance of this service should be widely publicised to students.

### **Youth Suggestions to Employers**

Youth suggest to employers – both private sector and NGOs – to further the relationship with the education institutes, such as allowing the companies to visit, guess speakers, communicate their job needs to universities, or give sessions about careers in their companies. Youth also suggest that companies give more consideration to providing opportunities for internships, volunteering, or part time jobs for youth.

Youth would also like employers to advertise their job opportunities more widely and to ensure transparency in the recruitment process.

More broadly, youth believe youth networks are important and should be improved and expanded in scope. They believe that stronger relations between Government, Educational Institutions, Civil Society and Employers is very important.



#### **4.7.6. Common Issues to Youth – Summary**

Most youth believe that high school, vocational training or university is the minimum required level of education which allows them to be able to find job.

Related to the sector that they want to work in, the biggest response was for Banking, Microfinance and Insurance, while there were low responses for important economic sectors such as Hotels and Tourism, Construction and Engineering, and Garment.

In term of knowledge on how to find a job, the skills that youth have most difficulty with include writing cover letters, preparing for interviews, targeting employer they will apply for, and answering questions commonly asked in interviews.

The survey asked employed and unemployed youth about their job-hunting experiences. Related to number of job application, 73 per cent of employed youth made three or fewer applications. For unemployed youth, 38 per cent have never applied for a job and a further 20 per cent have only applied once. This suggested that many youth are not active in looking for work.

Related to the duration of job hunting, around half of all employed youth took less than three months to find their first job. However, 18 per cent of employed youth took more than 10 months to find work. For unemployed youth, 37 per cent have already been looking for more than 10 months.

In terms of tailoring their CVs for each job, a much higher percentage of employed youth said they used different CVs for different jobs (70 per cent) compared to unemployed youth (38 per cent).

Besides the opinion and challenges they shared as mentioned above, youth also have some suggestions to the relevant stakeholders such as government, education institutes and employers.

- Government: Youth suggested the government try to expand job opportunities by attracting new investment (including in the provinces). They also had recommendations relating to improving the quality of education and the accommodation needs of students who were studying away from their hometown.
- Education Institutes: Youth highlighted the need for education institutes to provide a good quality education which is responsive to market demand. Their suggestions covered topics such as ensuring up-to-date curriculum, quality of teachers and teaching material, applied research in each field of study, experienced guest speakers in class, strengthen school discipline, and teaching other support skills such as languages and computers. Youth also felt that education institutes should help students in linking their study to the real workplace.
- Employers: In addition to efforts from government and education institutes, youth believe employers also play a crucial role in helping them build their practical knowledge as well as find a job. They believe it would be helpful if employers could give them knowledge about jobs in their company through the study program.





#### **4.8. Conclusion**

To sum up, youth face a lot of problems, starting from the basic education until they find a job. Their challenges in finding work relate not only to the employment market, but also to the education system. The quality of the education they receive has a big influence on their readiness for the employment market. So, the social dialogue on youth employment needs to involve stakeholders in the employment market (employers and unions) as well as those in the education system (universities, vocational training centers and the government) and other relevant stakeholders.

Key issues that impact on youth's ability to find work include: limited access to education; lack of responsiveness of the education system to the skills demanded by the market; lack of information about the job market; lack of knowledge necessary to find a job; and lack of job opportunities. In addition, youth attitudes and personal qualities are aspects that youth should pay attention to, in order to fulfill the demands of employers.

To solve this, the commitment and self improvement of youth is crucial. The cooperation and the assistance from stakeholders is also necessary to facilitate the enabling environment that youth can develop themselves and get more opportunities to develop their capacity.

Furthermore, some youth seem to be discouraged by the whole employment process, believing that job opportunities are not available to them. There is a perception that there is discrimination and nepotism in the job hunting process.



### Box 1: Lesson Learned from Rural Youth

Despite many challenges that youth face to find a decent job in Cambodia, Tola, a rural youth graduated from Maharishi Verdic University, managed to find a decent job in Phnom Penh. Even though Tola's story has a happy ending, he faced numerous challenges, such as applying for several internship programs, lack of job market information, targeting the right employer, how to dress and how to prepare for interviews.

Tola found it very difficult when applying for internship programs, to the extent that he could not even bypass the receptionist to speak with the person making the internship decision. Even though he failed many times, Tola did not give up on his commitment to pursue an internship program. He realised it could potentially pave his way to getting a reasonable job after his graduation. When asked about his experiences, Tola reveals many good points that other youth could take note of.

Tola believes in the saying: *"You will success if you don't stop"*. Keeping this statement in mind, Tola was eventually selected for an internship in a human resources consulting firm by requesting his lecturer to introduce him to the company. During his internship, Tola acquired substantial knowledge about the workplace and learned how the company operated. More importantly, he gained confidence in dealing with issues that a candidate is likely to face in seeking a job.

By the time Tola was approaching the end of his academic year, he was equipped with substantial knowledge on how to write a CV and cover letter, and how to prepare for interviews. This was complemented by computer skills he had learned during his part time class. As a result, a leading consulting firm offered Tola a job through a competitive selection process. He was satisfied that he had sacrificed his time and energy so at the end he could get a job with a proper salary to live in Phnom Penh.

Looking into the future, Tola is very optimistic about his career in consulting. He is planning to move along this career path step by step. He also has a dream to become a very professional consultant who is knowledgeable in assisting Small and Medium Enterprises to operate smoothly and successfully.

In addition to the story narrated above, Tola wishes to share one statement with other youth: *"Failure teaches you how to make success"*. He would also like to advise youth who are looking for a job about the following: (i) Develop your English language skills to be able to speak and write English; (ii) Know technical skills (eg. If you are an accounting student, you should know how to apply accounting knowledge in the workplace); (iii) Learn computer skills, in particular some applications such as MS Word and Excel; (iv) Develop the right attitude and have a strong commitment to perform a particular job; (v) Learn how to work independently; and (vi) Be confident and believe in yourself.

**Source: Interview with Tola, March, 2008**

## 5. Section 5: Survey Findings: Employers

This section of the report presents the findings of the survey of employers in Cambodia. Where relevant, this section makes reference to the youth findings (in the previous section) and to the report's recommendations and conclusions (in the next section).

### 5.1. *About the Survey and Respondents*

#### 5.1.1. About the Questionnaire

A questionnaire consisting of 16 questions was distributed to employers in Cambodia. The questionnaire sought employers' views on the skills possessed by Cambodian youth, perceived skills shortages, workforce training issues and future recruitment plans. Employers were also asked for their opinions on what can be done to reduce the skills gap.

The questionnaire was completed by 220 employers, who together employ approximately 32,000 employees in Cambodia. The composition of the sample is highly representative of the Cambodian labour market, in terms of organisation ownership (private and NGO), origin (foreign and local), size (large and small) and sector.

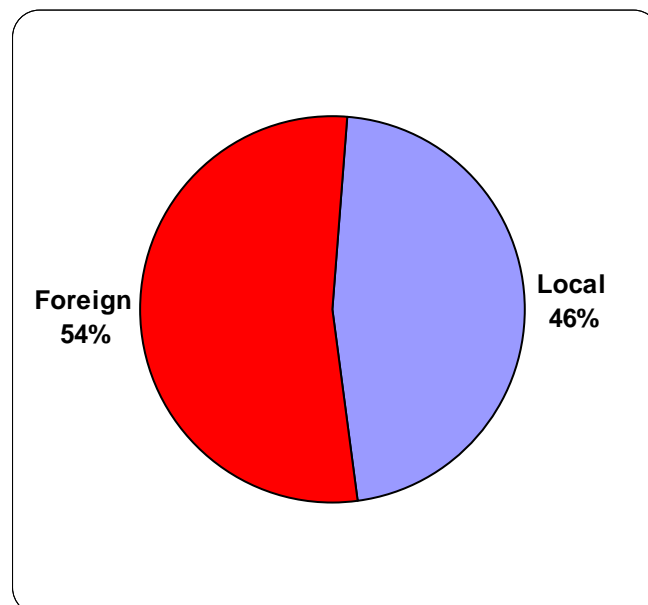
The questionnaire was typically completed by senior management within each organisation, such as the Chief Executive, Managing Director, Human Resources Manager or Administration Manager.

#### 5.1.2. Organisation Ownership and Origin

Approximately 71 per cent of respondents are private sector organisations, with the remainder being NGOs.

As the figure below shows, the split between "foreign" and "local" organisations is fairly even, with 54 per cent of respondents describing themselves as foreign. Foreign ownership is very common in the Garment sector (95 per cent) and less common in the Professional & Business Services sector (29 per cent).

**Figure 56: Respondents by origin**



Foreign ownership is more common among larger organisations employing more than 100 people (69 per cent) than smaller organisations employing 25 people or less (47 per cent). Among the smaller organisations



that are foreign-owned, there is a mix of small businesses set up by entrepreneurial expatriates, as well as multi-national companies that only have a small presence in Cambodia.

### 5.1.3. Respondents by Geographic Location

While efforts were made to ensure the participation of employers from the provinces, the majority of respondents (93 per cent) have their head offices in Phnom Penh. Nevertheless, representation of the provinces is actually much higher than these figures would suggest. This is because some of the respondents who have their head offices in Phnom Penh also have significant numbers of employees throughout the country. Therefore, while most of the questionnaires were completed by persons in Phnom Penh, in many cases the answers also relate to employees in the provinces.

### 5.1.4. Respondents by Sector

As the table below shows, there is a good spread of responses across Cambodia's major economic sectors.

The usual way of measuring a survey's sectoral representation is to consider *the number of respondents* from each sector, as a percentage of all respondents (see middle column in table below). Based on this measure, 27 per cent of respondents come from the NGO sector, followed by Hospitality & Tourism (15 per cent), Professional & Business Services (10 per cent) and the Garment sector (9 per cent).

While representation of the Garment sector might look a bit low, it is important to note that respondents from the Garment sector are typically very large and employ hundreds or even thousands of people. To reflect each respondent's significance as an employer, we can also look at *the number of people employed by respondents* from each sector, as a percentage of people employed by all respondents (see right column in table below). This gives a high weighting to respondents who employ a large number of people. Based on this measure, respondents from the Garment sector employ around 31 per cent of all the employees covered by this questionnaire. Other sectors covering large numbers of employees include Professional & Business Services (12 per cent), NGOs (11 per cent) and Hospitality & Tourism (10 per cent).

Table 4.1: Respondents by sector

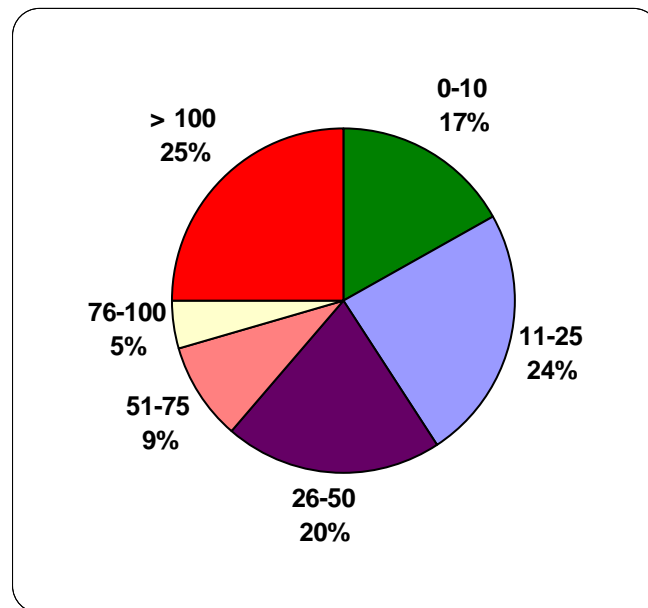
Sector	% of respondents	% of people employed by respondents
NGOs	27	11
Hospitality & Tourism	15	10
Professional & Business Services	10	12
Garment	9	31
Trading (export, import, commercial)	8	4
Industrial, Manufacturing & Petroleum	5	7
Telecommunications & IT	5	6
Construction & Engineering	5	2
Banking, Microfinance & Insurance	4	8
Transport & Logistics	4	4
Health (hospitals, clinics, dentists)	2	-
Other (handicraft, agriculture, etc)	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### 5.1.5. Number of Employees

As the figure below shows, the questionnaire was filled in by organisations of all sizes – from small “corner stores” employing only one or two people, through to large organisations employing thousands of people all over the country. Large organisations employing more than 100 people account for 25 per cent of all

respondents and are spread across most sectors. Once again, this highlights the broad and representative nature of the survey sample.

**Figure 57: Respondents by number of employees**



#### **5.1.6. About the Survey and Respondents – Summary**

The employer questionnaire was completed by 220 employers, who together employ approximately 32,000 employees in Cambodia.

**This is the first time in Cambodia that such a representative survey has been conducted of employers' views about labour market challenges and the skills of youth.** The survey is highly representative of the Cambodian economy, in terms of ownership (private sector and NGOs), origin (foreign-owned and local), size (large, medium and small) and sector (garment, hospitality, etc.).

### **5.2. *Employers' Views on Education and Experience***

Employers were asked questions about the education, experience and skills of three categories of employees:

- **Worker:** a labourer or non-technical person whose work is mostly manual and repetitive.
- **Specialised Worker:** a person whose work is mostly repetitive but requires a level of skill or understanding that is slightly more sophisticated than manual work.
- **Professional Staff:** a person who works independently, performs a variety of tasks and requires a high level of skill or understanding.

#### **5.2.1. Education**

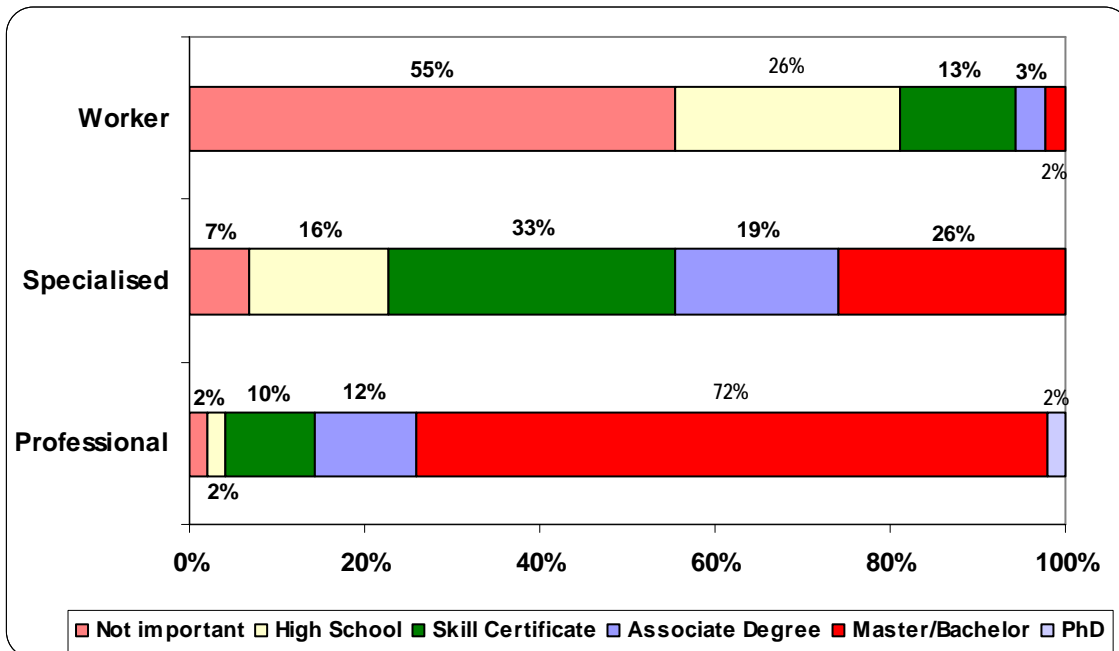
The survey findings on education and experience tell a consistent story. The more skilled the position, the more likely the employer will require some form of higher education and some level of experience. These results are summarised below.

Employers do not place high importance on education for *Workers*, as the figure below shows. Slightly more than half of all respondents believe that education is not important when hiring *Workers*. (For the garment



sector, this figure is as high as 78 per cent.). Another 26 per cent of all employers require only high school education, with only 18 per cent requiring some form of higher education. This lack of emphasis on education reflects the nature of the work involved, which is mostly repetitive, manual and lowly skilled. In most cases, education is not directly relevant to a person's ability to carry out these tasks.

**Figure 58: Education level usually required**



Employers place a higher emphasis on education for their *Specialised Workers*. Around 77 per cent of employers require some form of higher education, with the most common requirement being a skill certificate (33 per cent). The requirement of a skill certificate is higher for employers in the Garment sector (44 per cent), which may reflect the specialised nature of the work involved. Skill certificates are also popular with employers in Hospitality & Tourism (44 per cent), which may reflect the popularity of specialised hospitality training courses.

Around 26 per cent of employers require a Masters or Bachelors Degree for their *Specialised Workers*, with this requirement particularly common in the Professional & Business Services sector (54 per cent)

It makes sense that employers require higher education levels from *Specialised Workers* (compared to *Workers*) given that the nature of their work often requires some form of education or specialised training to master the necessary skills.

Higher education is even more important for *Professional Staff*. Some of the skills that are essential in many professional jobs – such as technical knowledge, ability to research and analyse information and the ability to work in a team – are skills that are taught (or at least should be taught) in higher education.

Around 96% of employers require higher education for their *Professional Staff*, with 72 per cent requiring a Masters or Bachelors Degree. The requirement of a Masters or Bachelors Degree is higher in the NGO and Professional & Business Services sectors, and lower in the Garment and Hospitality sectors (where an associate degree or skill certificate are generally sufficient).

One NGO observed that its staff turnover increased in 2007 primarily “because we are now insisting on university graduates, but they don't know what they want, other than money, and are much less loyal to us than our longer term less educated but more trained (by us) dedicated employees. The new university graduates are the new Cambodian ‘Me Generation’”.

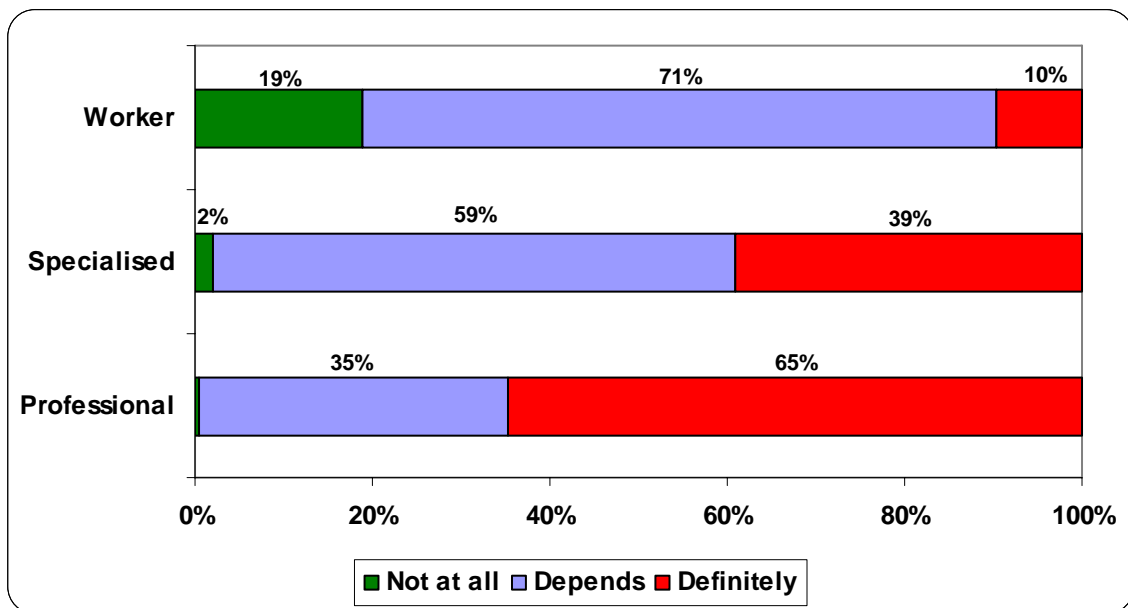
As discussed in the Youth Findings section of this report, high school students recognise the importance of continuing to higher education. Around 68 per cent of high school students said they intend to continue to

either university or vocational training. In addition, 66 per cent of high school students said they believe that some form of higher education is necessary to get a decent job.

### 5.2.2. Experience

Similarly, experience becomes increasingly important for more skilled job functions, as shown in the figure below. Only 10 per cent of employers “definitely” require experience when hiring *Workers*, but this percentage increases to 39 per cent for *Specialised Workers* and 65 per cent for *Professional Staff*. The importance that employers place on experience for Professional Staff highlights the challenge for students to obtain internships or part-time work during their studies.

Figure 59: Experience required



For many employers, whether they require experience “depends” on the circumstances, particularly for Workers (71 per cent) and Specialised Workers (59 per cent).

This shows that it is difficult for employers to generalise about experience requirements. They may require experience for some jobs but not for others. Also, it may depend on how easy it is to find workers with relevant experience. For example, one employer in the construction sector said that while it would be nice to recruit workers with experience, it is not always possible because Cambodia has a very young and inexperienced workforce.

As discussed in the Youth Findings section of this report, unemployed youth are generally aware that obtaining experience is a key issue for them. Around one quarter of unemployed youth believe that experience is the top criteria used by employers when it comes to recruiting.

In the next section, we look at some of the ways in which youth can gain this experience.

### 5.2.3. Employers' Views on Education and Experience - Summary

The survey findings on education and experience tell a consistent story. The more skilled the position, the more likely the employer will require some form of higher education and some level of experience.

Employers have different education and experience requirements for different types of employees. For unskilled workers, they generally do not place much emphasis on education and whether they require experience depends on the situation.

For specialised workers, most employers require some form of higher education (such as a skill certificate) and a significant percentage of employers require some experience.

For professional staff, nearly all employers require higher education (usually a master or bachelor degree) and most of them definitely require experience.

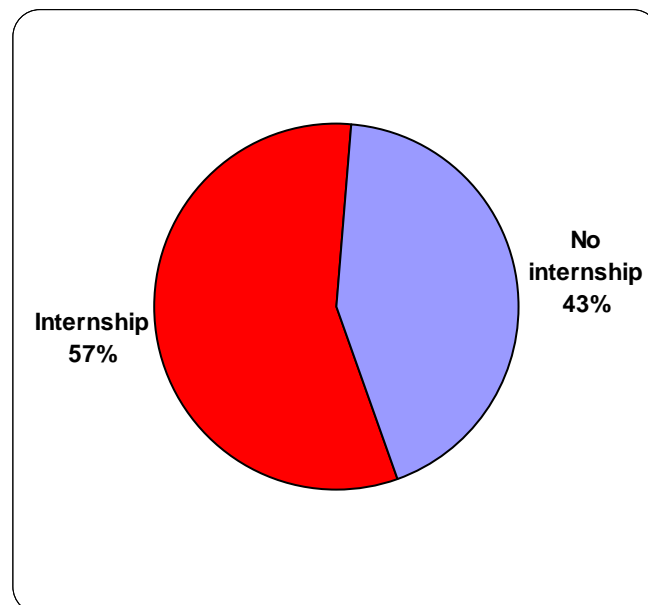
### 5.3. *Internships, Volunteering and Relationships with Higher Education*

#### 5.3.1. Internships and Volunteering

Internships and volunteering are effective ways for students to gain valuable work experience and to develop practical skills.

As the figure below shows, around 57 per cent of employers have internship or volunteer programmes, with the programme typically lasting for three months (and in some cases up to six or twelve months). These programmes are most common in NGOs (78 per cent) and least common in the garment sector (20 per cent).

**Figure 60: Employers who have internships or volunteer programmes**



For example, a large employer in the engineering sector has an internship programme which usually lasts for three months. The company views the trainees as potential candidates for future employment. The company says that “this gives us time to watch the trainees at work and monitor their behaviour. In this way, we can have greater trust in the person if we decide to offer them employment”.

Cambodia's youth are very aware of the importance of internships and volunteering. As discussed in the Youth Findings section of this report, 93 per cent of employed youth said they believe internships, volunteering and part-time work is “very helpful” in finding a job. However, some students are frustrated by





employers who reject their applications for these positions on the grounds they don't meet the experience requirements – the very thing the student is trying to obtain!

Employers who do not have internship or volunteer programmes gave a variety of reasons, including:

- The business is too small to employ interns or volunteers
- The business has only recently been established
- The business has never been asked to offer such a programme
- Volunteers tend to be unreliable
- It is too costly and time consuming compared to the value obtained
- The nature of the work is not appropriate for short-term trainees.

Of those employers who have programmes, 58 per cent provide some kind of salary or payment. Foreign employers (71 per cent) are much more likely to pay their interns than local employers (44 per cent). This may reflect the policies or practices of the foreign organisation in their home country.

### **5.3.2. Relationships with Higher Education**

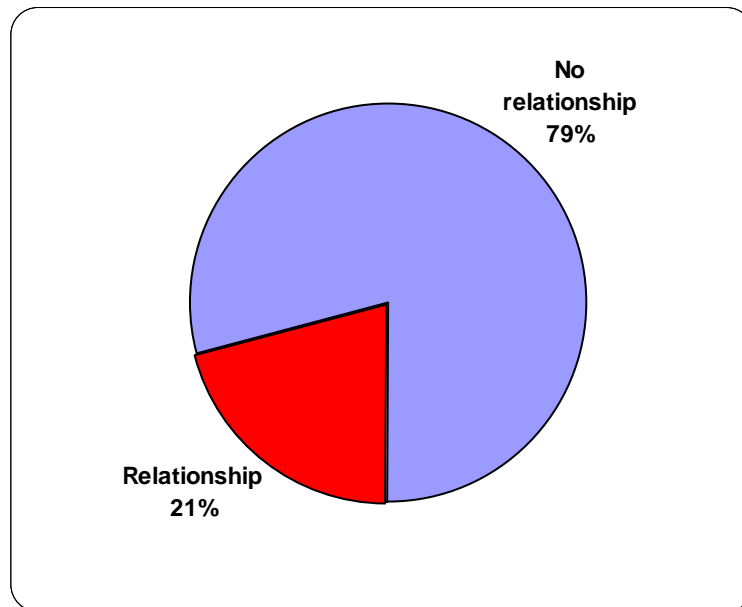
Developing close recruitment ties between individual employers and education providers can benefit both parties. From the employer's perspective, it provides them with exposure to the most promising students at a university or institute.

From the perspective of the university or vocational training institute, it helps them find jobs for its students, which may improve their reputation among potential students. It may also provide the university or institute with a better understanding of the types of skills demanded by employers. For example, one employer who has a relationship with a university said "we do what we can" to help the university staff, by inviting them to their workplace to see how they operate.

As highlighted in the figure below, the survey findings suggest there is scope for employers and higher education providers to develop more of these relationships.

Only 21 per cent of employers have a relationship with a specific university or institute from where they hire graduates. This is most common in the hospitality sector (32 per cent), which may reflect the sector's closer links with specialised hotel schools in Siem Reap. Garment factories are least likely to have a relationship with a university or institute (10 per cent), which possibly reflects the lack of relevant higher education that is tailored specifically to the garment sector.

Figure 61: Employers who have relationships with universities or institutes



The universities mentioned most frequently by employers were the National University of Management (NUM), Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC), Build Bright University (BBU) and Pannasastra University of Cambodia (PUC). Employers in the hospitality sector mentioned specialised hotel schools in Siem Reap, such as the Sala Bai Hotel School and the Paul Dubrule Hotel & Tourism School.

### 5.3.3. Internships, Volunteering and Relationships with Higher Education – Summary

Slightly more than half of employers surveyed have internships or volunteer opportunities for youth. Of these employers, slightly more than half provide some form of payment for these jobs.

Employers who do not have internship or volunteer programs gave a variety of reasons for not having them. In many cases, they said it was because the organisation was too small to offer these types of programs.

Most employers do not have relationships with specific universities or vocational training providers, in relation to their recruitment. These types of relationships have the potential to benefit both parties, and it is perhaps an area for greater cooperation between employers and higher education providers.

## 5.4. *Employers' Views on Skills Required in the Labour Market*

### 5.4.1. Overall Skill Level of Youth

Do employers believe there is a skills gap? Do they struggle to find youth with the right skills?

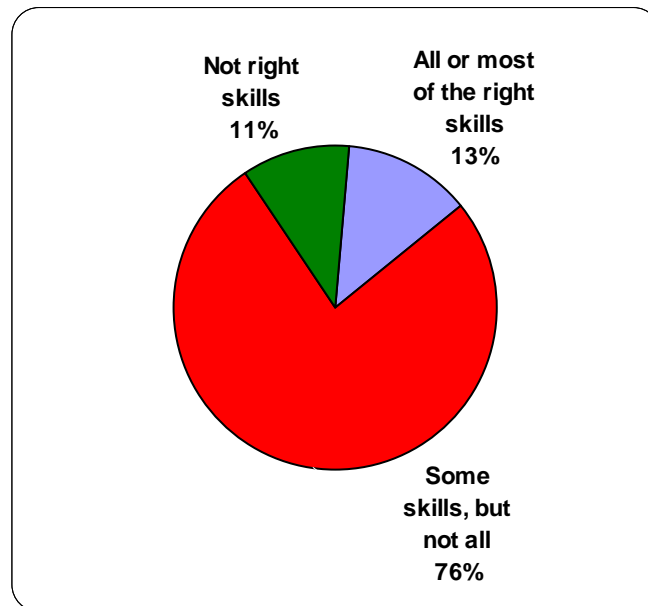
These are questions of utmost importance to all stakeholders, including employers, unions, education providers, governments, NGOs and of course youth themselves.

One of the key findings of the survey is that *employers believe there is a skills gap*. Employers are not satisfied with the skills possessed by youth.

As figure 4.3 shows, only 13 per cent of employers agree that graduates have “all or most” of the right skills for the job market. A large majority (76 per cent) believe that youth have some, but not all, of the required

skills, while 11 per cent believe that youth are not educated with the right skills at all. These figures are broadly similar for all sectors of the economy.

**Figure 62: Do youth meet the real demand for skills?**



These statistics highlight the difficult challenges facing all stakeholders. Based on employers' concerns, there is a genuine need to improve the skills of young Cambodians. All stakeholders will need to play their part in achieving this goal. These issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.

Several international studies have provided similar results on skills.

According to a study by McKinsey<sup>27</sup>, based on interviews with 83 HR managers in multinational companies, on average only 13 per cent of university graduates in low-wage nations are suitable to work for a multinational company.

Similarly, a recent study by the International Organisation of Employers concludes that: "A general shortage of skills is a problem experienced by enterprises in all parts of the globe ... In many cases fast growing economies are not turning out enough skilled school leavers and graduates. A clear message here is the need to closer connect the skill requirements of the labour market to the education systems. Policy makers need to work closer with the business community to this end."<sup>28</sup>

#### **5.4.2. Skills and Qualities**

One of the key objectives of this survey is to identify the skills and qualities that are important in the workplace, as well as the extent to which youth possess these attributes.

With this in mind, employers were asked to choose three skills and qualities that are *most important*, as well as three skills and qualities that are *most difficult to find*, when hiring youth. The analysis below focuses on the skills that are most difficult to find, with additional references to the importance of skills where relevant.

Employers were asked these questions for each type of worker: Worker, Specialised Worker and Professional Staff.

<sup>27</sup> *The Emerging Global Labor Market: Part II: The Supply of Offshore Talent in Services*, McKinsey Global Institute, 2005, p.7

<sup>28</sup> *Trends in the Workplace Survey 2008*, International Organisation of Employers, 2008, p.5.

## **Unskilled Worker**

As the figure below shows, the key attribute that employers struggle to find among Workers is a good work attitude (52 per cent). This finding is significant because the vast majority of employers (89 per cent) believe that a good work attitude is important when hiring Workers. These results are broadly consistent across all sectors of the economy.

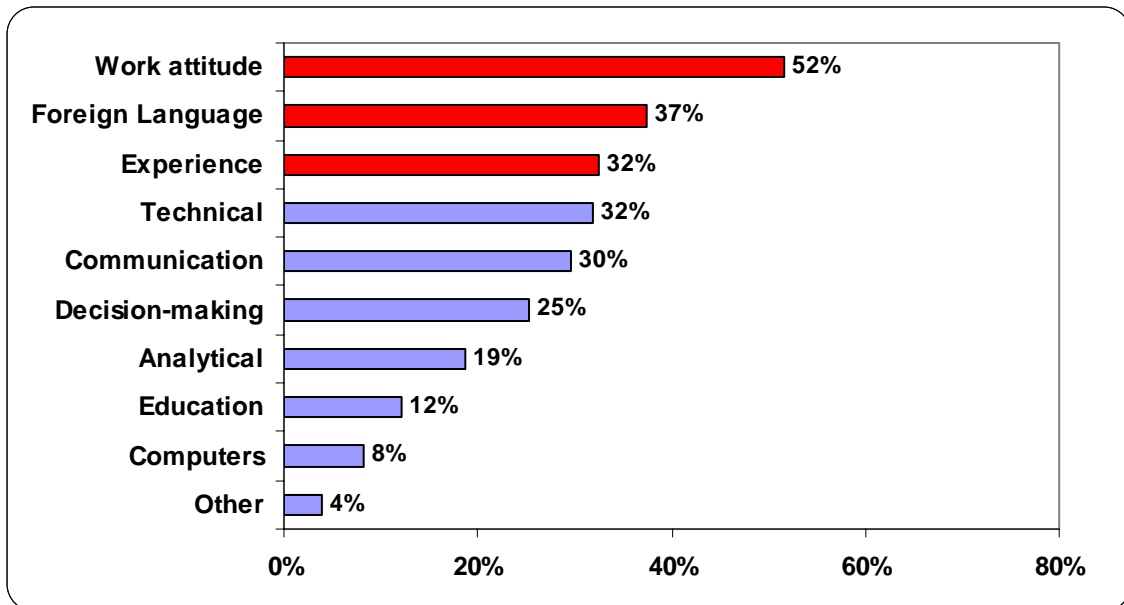
One employer in the garment sector observed that in his experience, the attitude of Cambodian workers is not as good as in Vietnam or Thailand.

Around 37 per cent of employers also feel it is difficult to find Workers with Foreign Language skills, although only 23 per cent consider this skill to be important.

Employers also believe it is difficult to find Workers with the necessary experience (32 per cent) and technical skills (32 per cent). These findings are particularly strong in the Garment sector and the Manufacturing, Industrial & Petroleum sectors, which reflects the similar nature of their manual work.

Some of the “other” qualities mentioned by employers as difficult to find among Workers include “being straightforward”, “honesty” and “high responsibility behaviour” – all of which relate to attitude and personality.

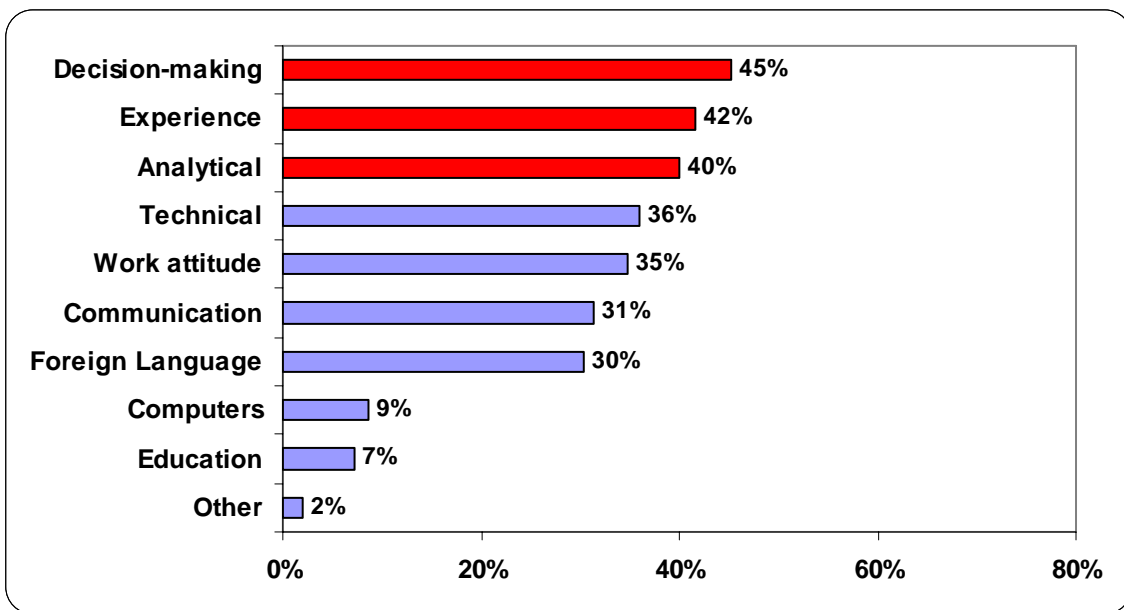
**Figure 63: Unskilled worker – needed skills & qualities difficult to find**



## **Specialised Worker**

In relation to Specialised Workers, employers gave a fairly even spread of answers regarding the skills and qualities that are difficult to find, as shown in the figure below. Employers have the most difficulty finding Specialised Workers with decision-making and problem-solving skills (45 per cent), followed by experience (42 per cent) and analytical skills (40 per cent).

**Figure 64: Specialised worker – needed skills & qualities difficult to find**



The even spread of answers masks some important differences between sectors of the economy. For example:

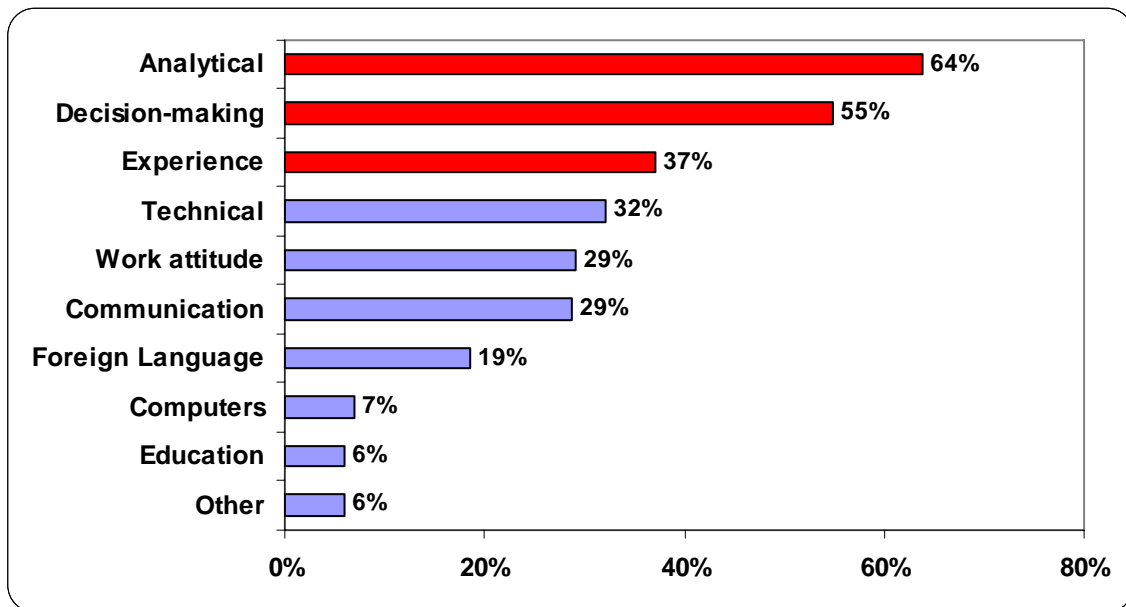
- The Professional & Business Services sector has particular trouble finding the right decision-making and problem-solving skills, as well as analytical skills
- Both the Garment sector and the Manufacturing, Industrial & Petroleum sector are more concerned about the right technical skills and the necessary experience
- Compared to other sectors, the Hospitality sector is more concerned about communication skills
- NGOs have the most trouble finding analytical skills.

## **Professional Staff**

As highlighted in the figure below, two related attributes stand out as being particularly difficult to find in Professional Staff: analytical skills (64 per cent) and decision-making & problem-solving skills (55 per cent). As in the case of Specialised Workers, these two attributes are of greatest concern to employers in the Professional & Business Services sector – although the concern is shared by employers in all other sectors as well.

Difficulty in finding analytical skills and decision-making & problem-solving skills is a significant problem for employers, because they also rank these attributes as the two most important ones that Professional Staff need to possess.

One employer said the reason it is difficult to find youth with decision-making skills is because the universities teach too much theory and not enough practical skills. “Decision-making is really a practical skill”, they said.

**Figure 65: Professional staff – needed skills & qualities difficult to find**

This is a key finding in the survey and has important implications for the way that students are taught in Cambodia – from school right through to university. These implications are discussed in detail in the Conclusion & Recommendations section of this report.

In addition, employers mentioned some other attributes that were not on the questionnaire, such as time management skills, sales skills, leadership skills, initiative and ability to work under pressure.

The international survey by the International Organisation of Employers also asked employers about the skills possessed by new entrants to the labour market. Overall, they were largely satisfied with the basic literacy/numeracy and positive attitude of new entrants, but were not satisfied with their business awareness, knowledge of job or self management.<sup>29</sup>

#### **5.4.3. Skills Required in the Labour Market – Summary**

Employers believe there is a skills gap. There is a mismatch between the skills they need and the skills possessed by young Cambodians. Around 11 per cent of employers believe youth possess *none* of the skills needed for the workplace, while another 76 per cent believe they possess *some* – but not all – of the required skills.

The skills that employers have difficulty finding depend on the type of worker they are looking for. In general, employers have difficulty finding unskilled workers with a good attitude, specialised workers with decision-making and problem-solving skills, and professional staff with analytical skills.

However there are some important differences between employers in different sectors.

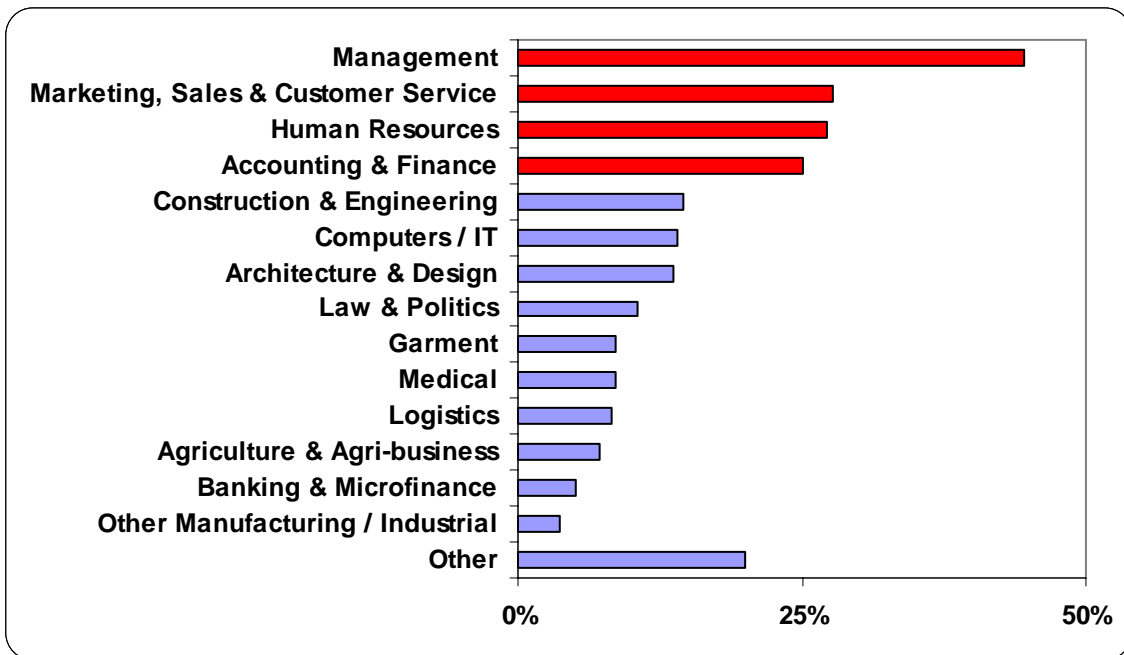
<sup>29</sup> *Trends in the Workplace Survey 2008*, International Organisation of Employers, 2008, p.31.

### 5.5. Challenging Jobs to Fill

Employers were asked to name the three job functions that they find most difficult to fill with suitable employees. Their responses are summarised in the figure below.

The job function that stands out as the most difficult to fill is Management (45 per cent). This finding is consistent for all economic sectors, for NGOs and private companies, for local and foreign organisations, and for organisations of all sizes.

Figure 66: Job functions most difficult to fill



A number of employers cited specific examples of management roles that were difficult to fill, including:

- research managers who are able to prepare project proposals and reports
- account managers who are able to plan work and “take the time to think”
- logistics supervisors who are able to communicate with drivers and customers
- administration managers who are smart, speak good English and are “affordable”
- finance managers who have analytical and time management skills
- civil engineering site managers who can oversee and handle all the on-site construction
- project managers who are able to manage a complete project life cycle
- education project managers who have knowledge of education systems, can analyse capacities and understand development strategies
- IT managers who have the necessary technical skills and can provide business-driven IT support.

One NGO commented that: “Generally, people we hire in management lack skills in fields like accountancy, team management, problem solving or communication. That is the reason why we provide them with training in the course of the year.”

Another function difficult to fill is the general category of Marketing, Sales & Customer Service (28 per cent). This difficulty is most common in the hospitality sector (47 per cent), where so many employees are involved in sales or customer service functions. For example, a hotel complained that it was difficult to find a director of marketing & sales who is able to “determine the market sector for the hotel business”. A restaurant cited the difficulty in finding waiters who have good English, a good attitude and who are “willing to actually make an effort”.



Employers also have difficulty recruiting people in Human Resources (27 per cent). Employers cited difficulty in finding Human Resources Managers who are able to recruit and maintain suitable staff, and who can understand and apply Cambodian labour laws.

Employers responded to the “other” category with a diverse range of job functions, including business consultant, telecoms specialist, senior merchandiser, real estate valuer, translator, statistician, geologist, gaming engineer, telecoms technician, restaurant & kitchen staff, television producer, social worker, psychologist, conservation & fundraising specialist, natural resources management, rural development, and advocacy.

Some employers complained that the education system doesn’t produce enough students ready to work in manufacturing and construction. For example, an employer in the garment factory complained that it was very difficult to find qualified staff with the right skills, particularly in areas such as Quality Control, Quality Assurance and Merchandising. As a result, they said garment companies need to recruit from overseas (Vietnam, Thailand), which is expensive.

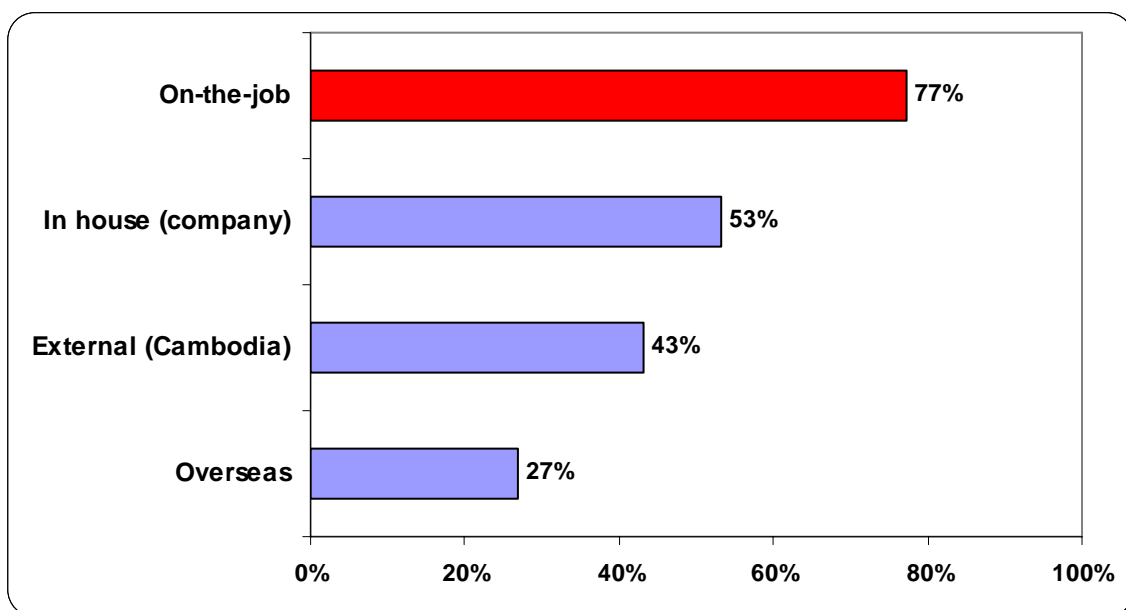
A number of employers believed their difficulty in filling some job functions is due to universities providing too many accounting, management & IT courses, and not enough specialized or technical courses. One employer suggested the reason is because business-related courses are easier and cheaper to teach than technical courses.

## 5.6. Employers’ Views on Training

### 5.6.1. Method of Training

Most employers provide their training using a combination of methods, as shown in the figure below. For many employers, this includes informal, on-the-job training (77 per cent) as well as more formal, in-house training (53 per cent). In addition, 43 per cent of employers use external training providers for at least some of their training needs, with this form of training particularly popular among NGOs (63 per cent). Interestingly, 27 per cent of employers send their employees overseas for training, with large, foreign-owned firms more likely to use this method. Very few employers in Professional & Business Services or Hospitality send their staff overseas for training.

Figure 67: Methods of training



While only 43 per cent of employers use external training providers in Cambodia, 80 per cent indicated they would be interested to find out more about training programmes by external providers. This suggests that employers are on the lookout for more effective ways to boost the skills of their workforce.



### 5.6.2. Training Priorities

As the figure below shows, the two specific training areas on which employers spend the most time and money are technical skills (39 per cent) and decision-making & problem-solving (39 per cent). The focus on decision-making & problem-solving is consistent with the earlier findings that employers have difficulty in recruiting these skills, particularly for Professional Staff.

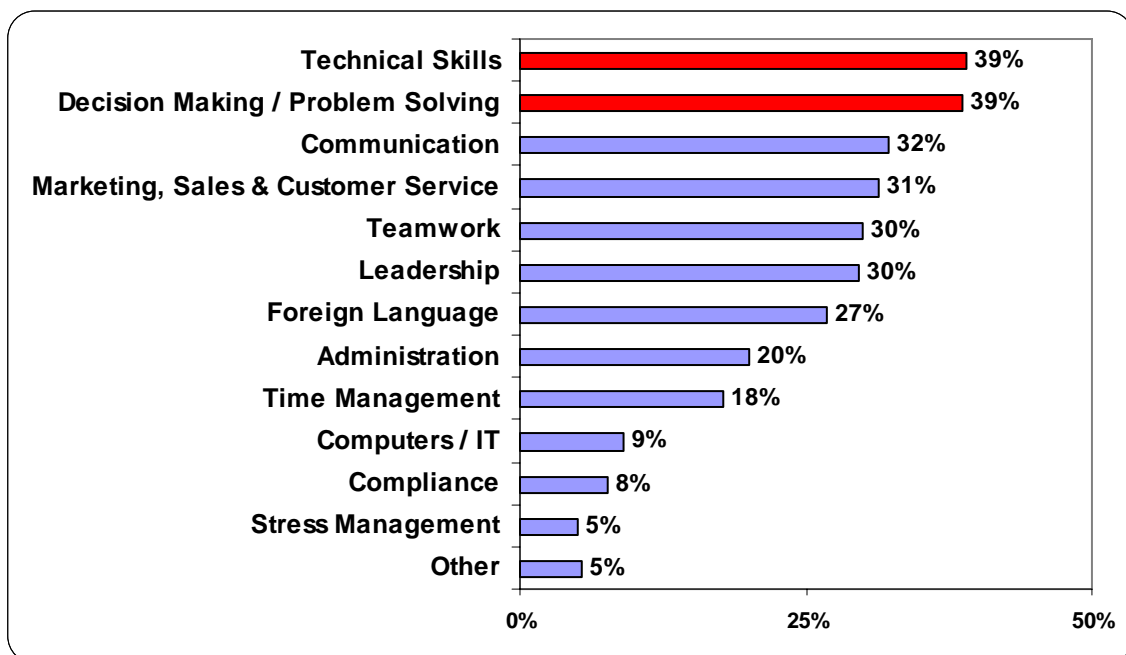
Some training areas were a key priority in particular sectors, such as:

- Technical skills in the Trading sector (53 per cent) and the Garment sector (50 per cent), but not in the Hospitality sector (21 per cent)
- Marketing, sales & customer service training in the Trading sector (76 per cent) and the Manufacturing, Industrial & Petroleum sector (50 per cent)
- Communication skills in the NGO sector (42 per cent)
- Foreign language training in the Manufacturing, Industrial & Petroleum sector (42 per cent).

Not surprisingly, large organisations with more than 100 employees have a greater focus on leadership training (42 per cent) than small organisations employing 25 people or less (19 per cent).

Employers also mentioned some “other” training areas that were not on the questionnaire, including attitude and behaviour, project management, analysis technique, and monitoring and evaluation (M & E).

**Figure 68: Training priorities**



### 5.6.3. Views on Training – Summary

Most employers use a combination of training methods. Ranked from most to least common, the training methods used are on-the-job training, formal in-house training, externally-provided training and overseas training.

Employers devote their training to a range of topics, including technicals skills, decision-making and problem-solving and communication skills. Employers in different sectors tend to focus on different training topics.

### 5.7. Employers' Future Employment Needs

Employers were asked to estimate how many staff they plan to recruit in each of the next five years, in each job function and for each type of worker.

Approximately 70% of employers answered this question. Some respondents provided information for each of the five years, while others only provided information for the next one or two years.

Many employers highlighted that it is difficult for them to estimate long-term recruitment numbers, because it is difficult to make long-term predictions about Cambodia's economic and business conditions. In addition, no attempt has been made by the survey team to assess the validity of employers' projections.

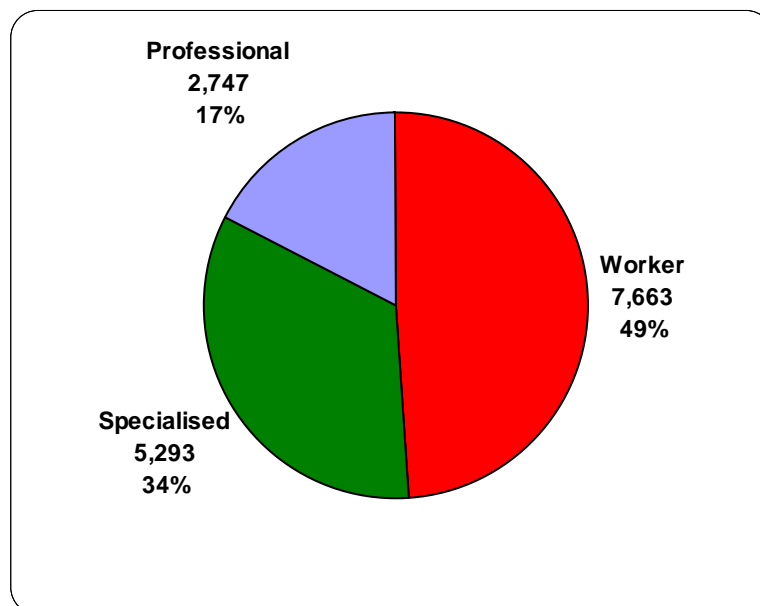
Consequently, these results should be interpreted with caution. They are intended to stimulate debate and further research, rather than as a basis for decision-making by students, universities or government officials.

#### 5.7.1. Employment by Worker Type

Overall, the employers who answered this question expect to recruit around 15,700 people over the next five years, including 4,800 in 2008.

As the figure below shows, the employers who answered this question expect Unskilled Workers to account for 49 per cent of their jobs growth over the next five years. They expect Skilled Workers to account for another 34 per cent and Professional Staff to account for the remaining 17 per cent.

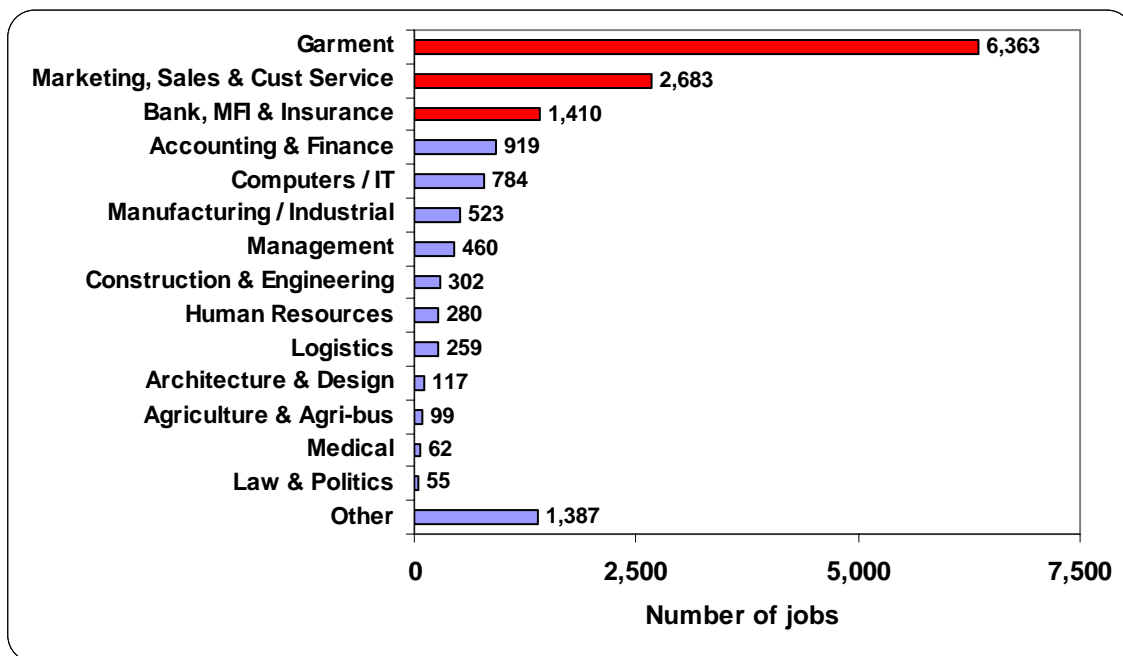
Figure 69: Recruitment plans by worker type, 2008-2012



### 5.7.2. Employment by Job Function

As the figure below shows, employers expect to create the largest number of jobs over the next five years in garment production (6,363). This is despite there being some uncertainty over the sector’s long-term prospects in Cambodia.

Figure 70: Recruitment plans by job function, 2008-2012



Other job functions to figure prominently include Marketing, Sales & Customer Service (2,683), Banking, Microfinance & Insurance (1,410), Accounting & Finance (919) and Computers (784). The high figure for the “other” category includes large numbers of jobs in the security and hotel industries.

Below, these overall recruitment numbers are broken down for each type of worker:

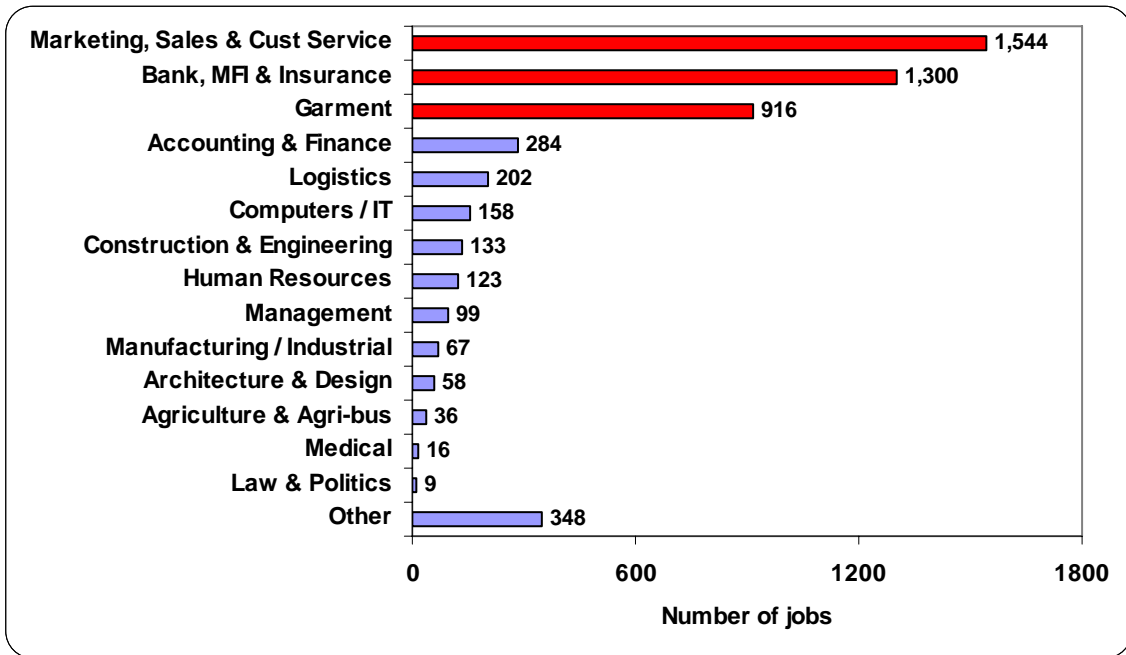
#### Unskilled Worker

Respondents expect the majority of new jobs in the Worker category to be Garment positions. Respondents expect to recruit around 5,300 Workers in the Garment sector, which represents close to 70 per cent of all jobs in the Worker category. Other significant Worker numbers are expected in Marketing, Sales & Customer Service (498), Computers (467) and Industrial & Other Manufacturing (411).

#### Specialised Worker

As the figure below shows, respondents expect to create the most Specialised positions in Marketing Sales & Customer Service; Banking, Microfinance & Insurance; and the Garment sector. Many of the customer service positions are in the hospitality & tourism sector.

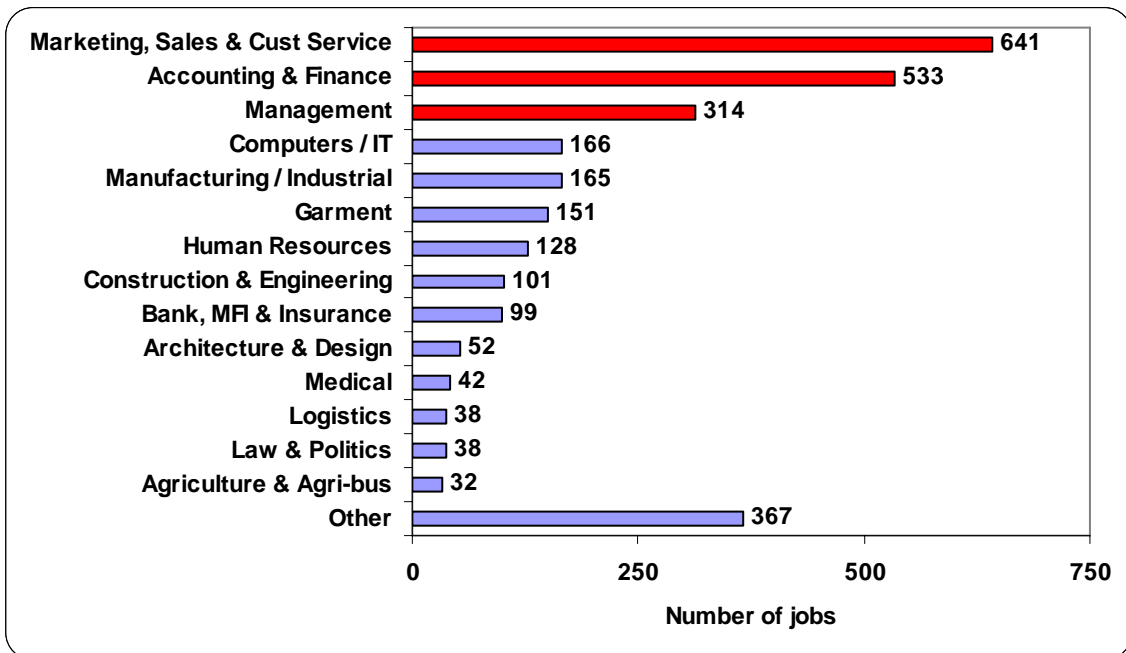
Figure 71: Recruitment plans for specialised workers, 2008-2012



**Professional Staff**

As the figure below shows, most of the new Professional jobs are expected to be in Marketing, Sales & Customer Service, Accounting & Finance, and Management. (The large “other” category includes many jobs in the security industry.)

Figure 72: Recruitment plans for professional staff, 2008-2012



**5.7.3. Future employment Needs – Summary**

The employers sampled have plans to significantly increase their workforce over the next five years. These recruitment plans are spread across a variety of job positions, including those in the Garment sector (especially for unskilled Workers), those in Banking, Microfinance & Insurance (for Specialised Workers) and Marketing, Sales & Customer Service positions (for Professional Staff).

Employers in the Garment sector still expect to add a large number of jobs over the next five years, despite recent uncertainty about the sector’s long-term prospects.

These results should be interpreted with caution, as not all respondents answered this question and some respondents found it difficult to estimate recruitment numbers.

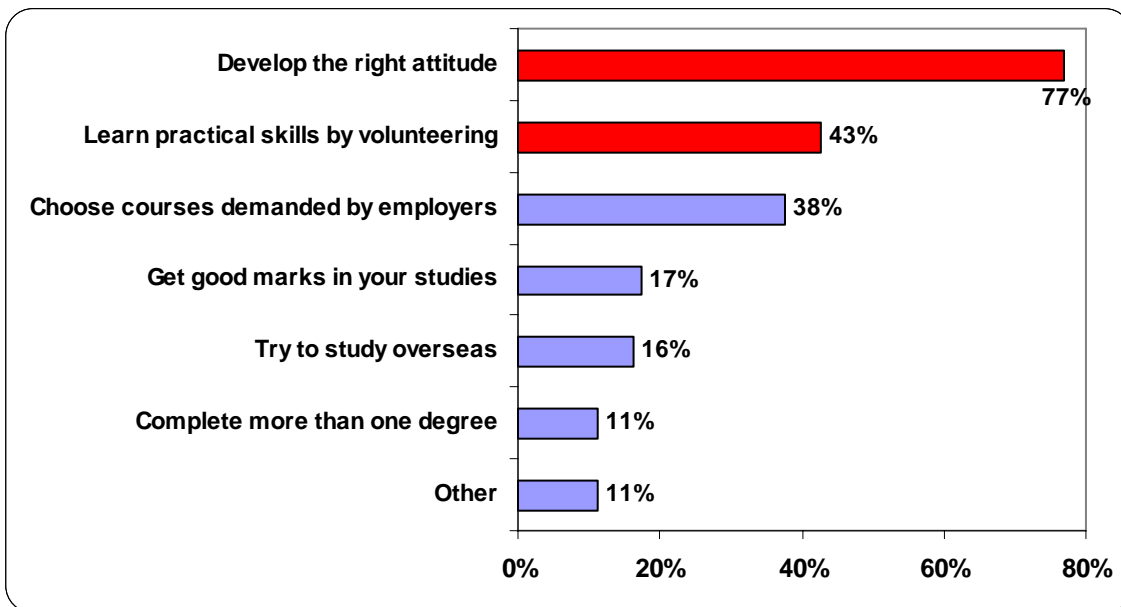
**5.8. Employers’ Suggestions on How to Reduce Skills Gap**

Employers provide a fresh and practical perspective on what can be done to reduce the skills gap. What they *don’t* recommend is just as important as what they *do* recommend. The findings challenge some of the commonly held views about ways to the skills gap.

**5.8.1. Advice to Youth**

When asked what two suggestions they would make to young Cambodians to help them find a good job, an overwhelming majority of employers (77 per cent) recommend that youth “develop the right attitude – be professional, prepared to work hard, willing to learn”. The focus on attitude is slightly higher among foreign organisations (84 per cent) than local organisations (68 per cent).

**Figure 73: Employers’ advice to youth**



Consistent with other parts in the survey, employers also stress the importance of youth having *practical* and *relevant* skills. Many employers (43 per cent) recommend that youth “learn practical skills by volunteering with youth or other organisations”. NGOs (63 per cent) are particularly keen on this approach. Another common suggestion is to “choose courses that are demanded by employers; not just the easy or popular courses” (38 per cent). This suggestion is most common in the Manufacturing, Industrial & Petroleum sector (58 per cent) and the Garment sector (50 per cent), which might reflect their frustration at finding qualified university graduates to work in these sectors.

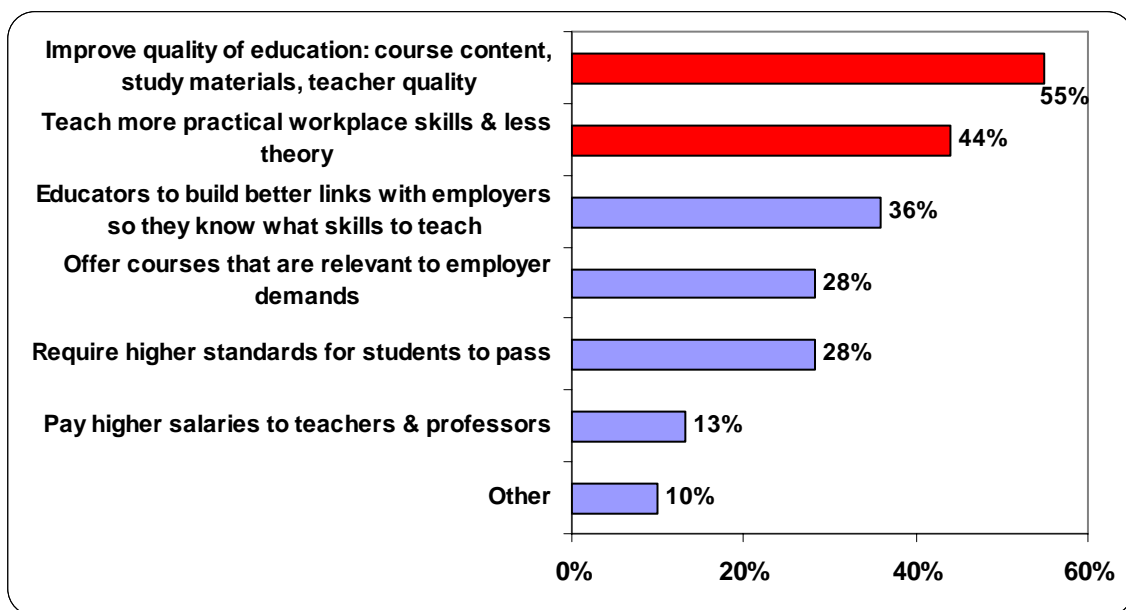
In contrast, most employers place relatively low importance on completing more than one degree (11 per cent), studying overseas (16 per cent) or even getting good marks (17 per cent). This highlights the view of many employers that developing the right skills involves much more than just getting the right qualifications.

On the question of overseas study, employers in the Professional & Business Services sector are more supportive of overseas study (38 per cent) than other employers. Interestingly, large or foreign organisations are no more likely to recommend overseas study than small or local organisations.

### 5.8.2. Advice to Educators

When asked what changes to the education system they would recommend, employers gave a fairly even spread of suggestions, as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 74: Employers' advice to educators**



Slightly more than half of all employers highlight the need to “improve the quality of education (course content, study materials, teacher quality)”. One NGO commented that: “Young Cambodian people may have the skills but the Cambodian standard of education is still very low. We can notice that, if they receive a grant, students prefer to go abroad to study.”

Employers also emphasise the need to “teach more practical workplace skills and less theory” (44 per cent).

This focus on practical skills is also reflected in the third most-common suggestion: that “education institutions should build better links with employers so they know what skills to teach” (36 per cent). This last suggestion is particularly popular among employers in the garment sector (60 per cent), who feel they are not well-served by the higher education system in Cambodia.

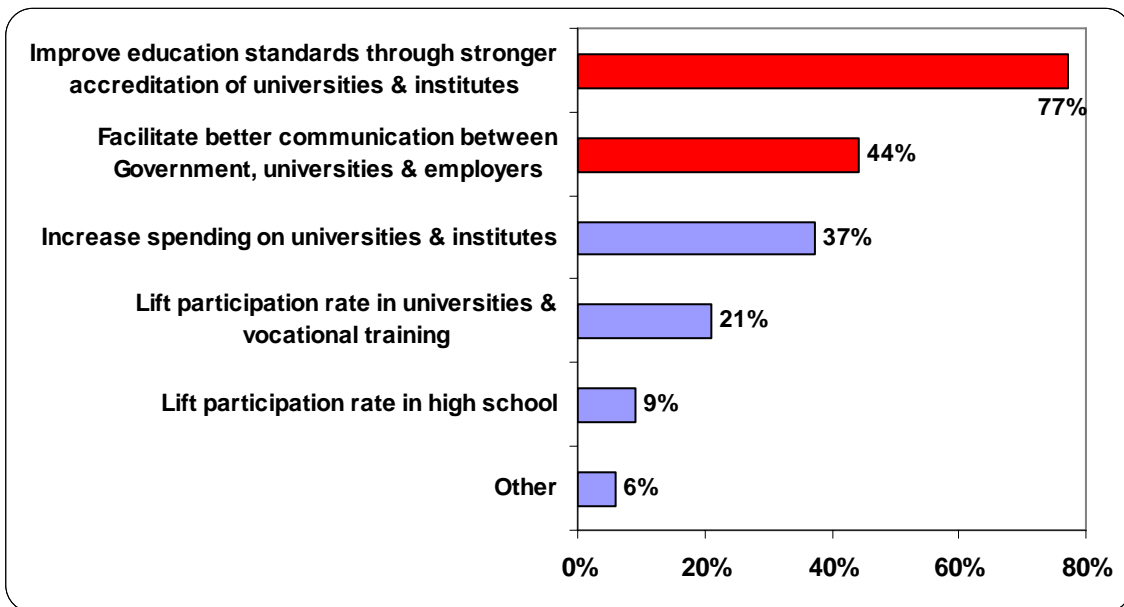
The low salary paid to teachers is often mentioned as a problem in Cambodia. However, most employers surveyed did not believe that higher salaries should be the top priority. Only 13 per cent of employers listed the need to “pay higher salaries to teachers and professors” among their top two suggestions.

### 5.8.3. Advice to Government

When asked what role the Government can play in addressing the skills gap, 77% of employers highlight the need to “improve education standards through stronger accreditation of universities and institutes”. The need for an effective system of accreditation is well recognised by all stakeholders in Cambodia.

The other key suggestion is to “facilitate better communication between Government, universities and employers” (44 per cent).

Figure 75: Employers’ advice to government



In contrast, few employers believe the answer to the skills gap will be found by lifting the participation rates either in high school (9 per cent) or in universities and vocational training (21 per cent). There may be good reasons for boosting these participation rates – such as poverty reduction and equality of opportunity – however employers do not believe it will make it easier for them to find employees with the right skills. For employers, it is about the *quality* of education, not just the *quantity*.

### 5.8.4. Employers’ Suggestions – Summary

Employers provide some very clear messages about what can be done to reduce the skills gap.

They believe that youth need to develop the right attitude and learn practical skills.

They believe that the education system needs to focus on quality and relevance – rather than quantity. Building better links between higher education providers and employers was also highlighted as an important issue

From a policy perspective, employers believe education standards can be improved by having stronger accreditation of education providers. They do not believe the skills gap can be reduced merely by increasing the participation rates at high school or universities.



### **5.9. Conclusion**

Employers are perhaps better placed than anyone to comment on the skills of young Cambodians. Every day, employers confront the problems that arise from having to rely on a workforce that does not possess all of the skills and qualities they require for their business.

In their responses to the questionnaire, employers provide some very clear messages. Most importantly, they believe that there is a significant skills gap in Cambodia. Young Cambodians generally do not possess the right skills for the workplace, particularly practical and technical skills.

Employers believe that part of the solution lies with reforming Cambodia's education system. Universities and institutes should offer more relevant courses (for example, for the garment, hospitality and construction sectors), teach more practical skills and generally improve the quality of education.

These and other suggestions are discussed in further detail in the next chapter.





## 6. Section 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

This section brings together some of the key themes that emerge from the survey findings presented in Section 4 and 5 of this report. It also points to 'the way forward', by highlighting potential areas where stakeholders can work together to find solutions to the challenge of youth employment.

Social dialogue partners reviewed the draft findings contained in this section and provided their comments. However, it is important to note that this section reflects the views of the BDLINK project team, and does not necessarily reflect those of CAMFEBA, the ILO or other stakeholders.

### 6.1. Key Decision Points for Youth and Employers

A key theme that emerges from this survey is that youth and employers each face several key decision points that have a large impact on the demand-supply dynamics of the labour market. These decision points are summarised in figures 76 (youth) and 77 (employers) below.

#### Youth:

As shown in figure 76 below, youth face three crucial decisions that have far-reaching effects on their employment prospects:

1. As a high school student – what will I do when I finish high school?
2. As a university or vocational training student – how do I get practical experience?
3. As a graduate – how do I find a job?

In addition, once they find employment, they also face a fourth question: how do I plan for my future, both professionally and personally?

The results of the youth survey suggest that many youth base their decisions on limited or unreliable information – either because the information does not exist or is not readily accessible, or because they are unaware that the information is accessible. The survey found that 70 per cent of youth rely primarily on the advice of their parents when deciding what to do after high school, while only 1 per cent rely on their teachers' advice. In addition, when they enter the job market, they lack information about how and where to find a job. These issues make it very difficult for youth to find the right job. Furthermore, even once they find a job, youth still face challenges in term of advancing their careers.

Youth can only make realistic, well-informed decisions if they have access to accurate and relevant information which takes into account labour market supply and demand.

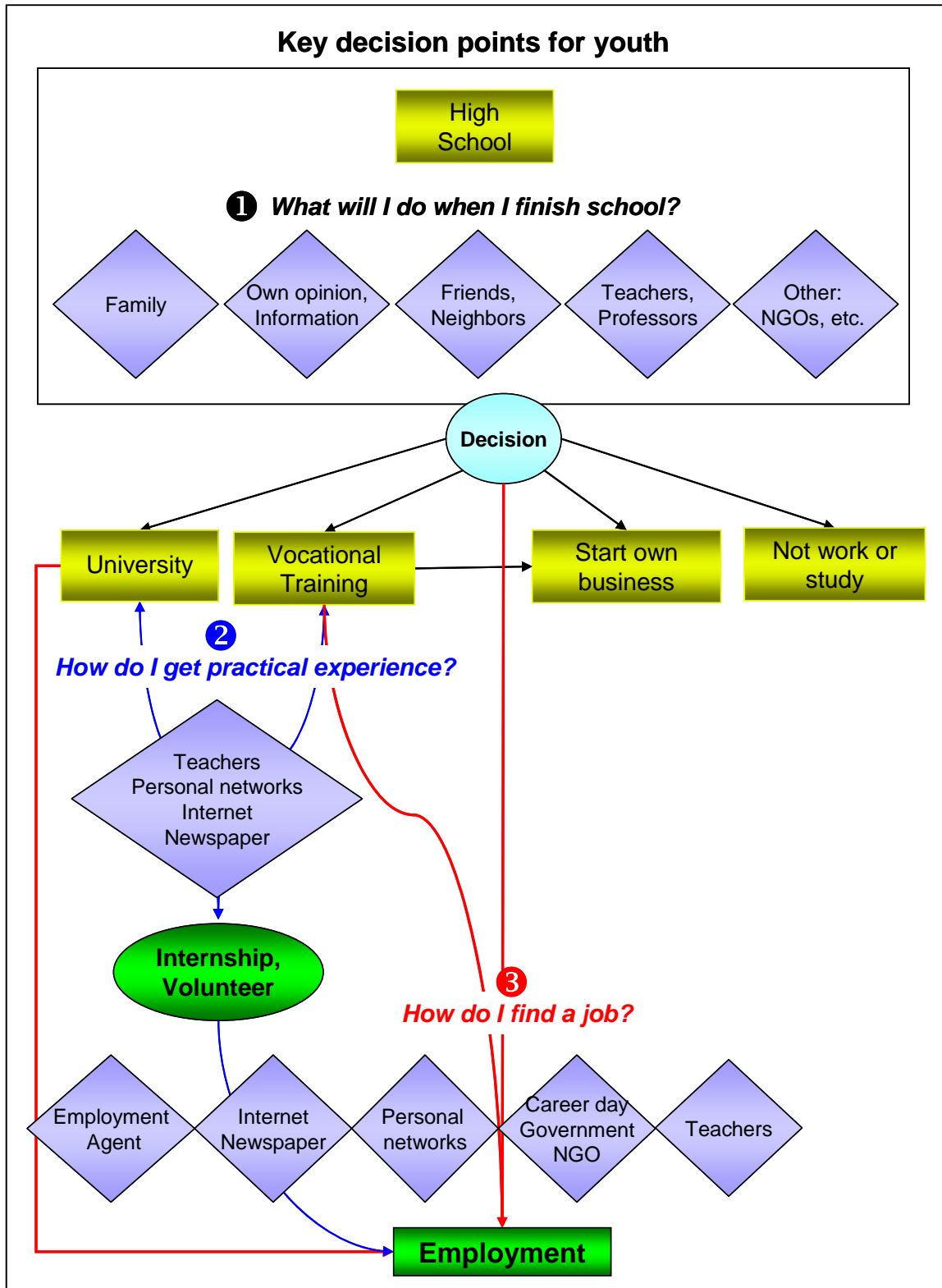
Specifically, they require information about:

- Education – university courses, vocational training courses and other short training courses (including what skills they will develop and whether those skills are demanded in the workplace).
- Internships and volunteering – benefits of doing this kind of work and how and where to find it
- Careers – nature of the work, education and skill requirements, salary expectations and demand for those skills in the labour market
- Employment opportunities – where and how to look for work (including job-seeking skills).

The lack of accessible information leaves them at greater risk of making poor study and career choices, which has negative consequences for their skills development and employment prospects – and in turn makes it harder for employers to find people with the right skills.

Consequently, there is a pressing need for stakeholders to ensure that youth have greater access to reliable, high quality information at each of these key decision points. Possible ways to address this need are discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 76: Key decisions for youth





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**Employers:**

As shown in figure 77 below, employers face three key decisions in their efforts to find employees with the skills they need:

1. Where do I find potential candidates to recruit?
2. Does my new employee have all the skills needed for their job?
3. If they don't have all the right skills, how can I develop their skills?

The results of the employer survey highlight that employers address these questions in a variety of ways. For example, 57 per cent of employers surveyed use company internship programmes to identify students with the right skills or attitude, while 21 per cent maintain relationships with particularly universities or training colleges. Similarly, 43 per cent of employers use external training providers to develop the skills of their staff, while 27 per cent send their employees overseas for training.

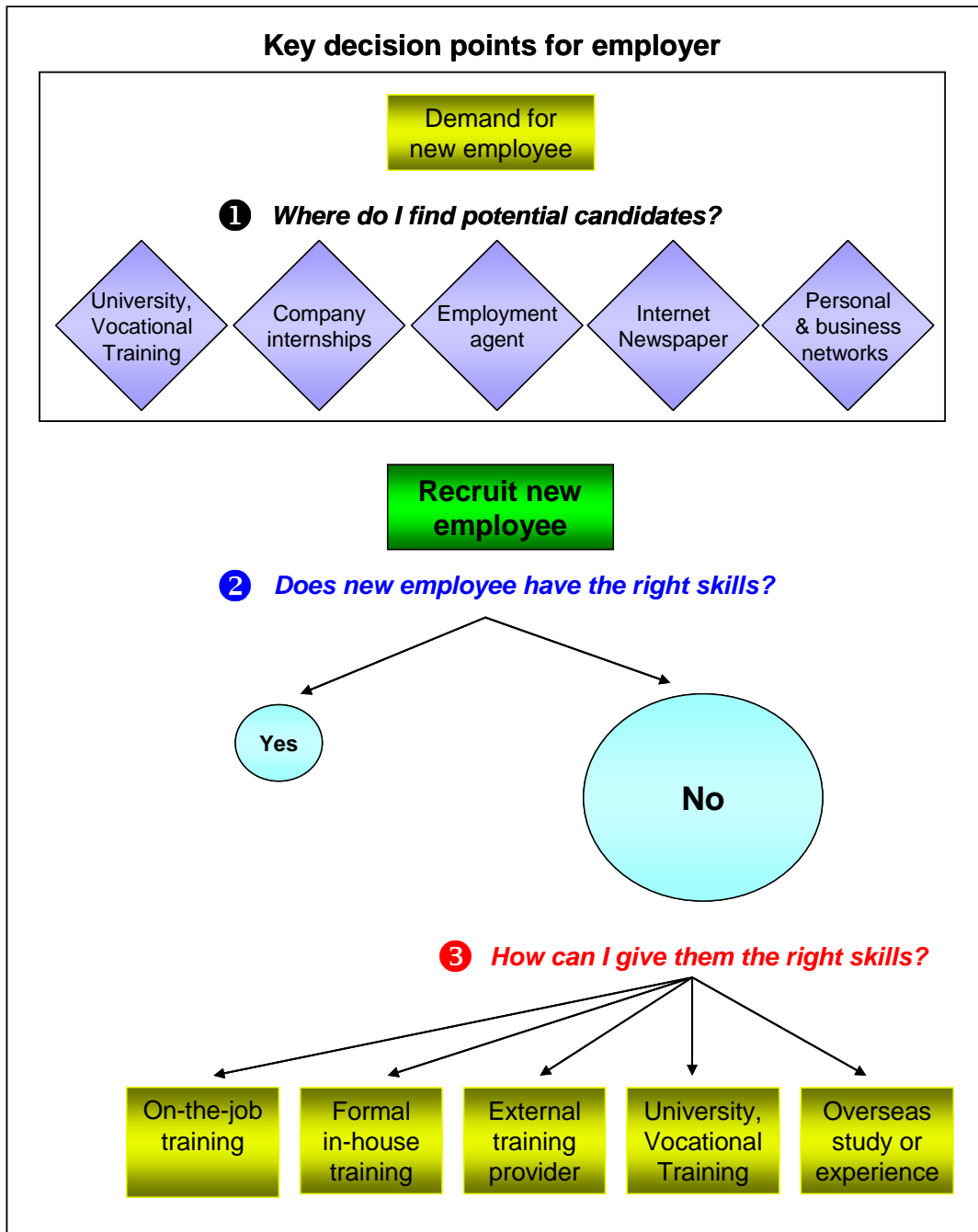
More generally, the findings from the employer survey highlight the two themes of *opportunity* and *frustration*.

In Cambodia today, employers demonstrate a strong sense of opportunity. Many employers, from small entrepreneurs through to large multi-national organisations, have ambitious plans to expand their operations. For many of them, the business environment in Cambodia has never looked better.

However, these ambitions are sometimes frustrated by the gaps in Cambodia's labour market. Employers are demanding a workforce that has the necessary practical and technical skills to take their businesses forward, but these skills are often in short supply. Only 13 per cent of employers believe that graduates have all or most of the skills they need for work. This suggests that Cambodia's education and training system is not producing young Cambodians with the right skills.

Employers continually highlight the importance of skills that are practical and relevant. These two qualities, which can be developed through a mix of formal education, vocational training, practical experience and better linkages between stakeholders, are central to the challenge of youth employment.

Figure 77: Key decisions for employers





**6.2. Comparing Youth and Employer Perspectives**

Some of the questions asked of youth and employers essentially look at two sides of the same coin. On these specific issues, it is interesting to compare the perspectives of youth and employers. Some of these issues are summarised in the gap assessment below.

Table 7: Youth and Employers' Perspectives: Gap Assessment

Youth		Gap Assessment		Employer
Criteria required by employer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work experience</li> <li>• Good personality</li> <li>• Support skills (computers, languages)</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> </ul>	➔	In a general sense, youth appear to understand the basic criteria that are most important to employers. However, they may have a gap in their understanding of the detailed criteria for different industries or categories of workers.	➔	Criteria required for each category of worker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worker: work attitude</li> <li>• Specialised worker: decision-making, analytical, technical, work attitude</li> <li>• Professional staff: analytical, decision-making, technical, work attitude, experience</li> </ul>
Factor need to progress in work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both study and experience</li> <li>• Further practical or technical training related to job</li> </ul>	➔	Employed youth understand what employers are looking for if they want to advance to more senior positions: more education and experience.	➔	Factor required by employer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The higher the position, the more education and experience required.</li> </ul>
Employed youth advice to youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose to study the right skill demanded by the job market</li> <li>• Try to get good marks in studies</li> <li>• Develop good work attitude</li> <li>• Build up experience during study through internship, volunteer or part-time job</li> </ul>	➔	Both employed youth and employers give similar advice to youth.	➔	Employer advice to youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the right attitude</li> <li>• Learn practical skills by volunteering, internships and part time jobs</li> <li>• Choose courses demanded by employers / job market</li> <li>• Get good marks in studies</li> </ul>



### 6.3. Key Skills & Education Level Required for Different Sectors

The analysis in Section 4 highlighted the skills that employers looked for, as well as the minimum education requirements, when recruiting staff.

In Table 7 below, this analysis is taken one step further by looking at the specific results from employers in each of Cambodia’s main sectors – Professional Services, NGOs, Hospitality, Garment and Industrial (except Garment).

For each sector, the table shows employers’ top three responses when asked which skills are: a) **most important**; and b) **most difficult to find**. Skills that rank in the top three in terms of both importance and difficulty are highlighted in *italics underlined*, because youth with these skills will be particularly attractive to employers. The table also shows employers’ top response when asked what is the minimum level of **education** generally required for the job.

Table 8: Key skills & education required for different sectors

Professional Services					
Worker		Specialised		Professional	
Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find
<u>Work Attitude</u>	Decision Making	Communication	Decision Making	<u>Analytical</u>	<u>Analytical</u>
Communication	<u>Work Attitude</u>	Technical	Analytical	<u>Decision Making</u>	<u>Decision Making</u>
Technical	Analytical	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	Technical	Communication
<i>Education Level: Not important</i>		<i>Education Level: Bachelor or Master Degree</i>		<i>Education Level: Bachelor or Master Degree</i>	
NGO					
Worker		Specialised		Professional	
Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find
<u>Work Attitude</u>	<u>Work Attitude</u>	Technical	Analytical	<u>Analytical</u>	<u>Analytical</u>
Communication	Foreign Language	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Decision Making</u>	<u>Decision Making</u>
<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	Work Attitude	Decision Making	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>
<i>Education Level: Not important</i>		<i>Education Level: Bachelor or Master Degree</i>		<i>Education Level: Bachelor or Master Degree</i>	
Hospitality (hotels & tourism)					
Worker		Specialised		Professional	
Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find
<u>Work Attitude</u>	<u>Work Attitude</u>	<u>Communication</u>	<u>Work Attitude</u>	Experience	<u>Decision Making</u>
Communication	Technical	<u>Work Attitude</u>	Decision Making	<u>Decision Making</u>	Analytical
<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	Foreign Language	<u>Communication</u>	Communication	Work Attitude
<i>Education Level: Not important</i>		<i>Education Level: Skill Certificate</i>		<i>Education Level: Bachelor or Master Degree</i>	
Garment					
Worker		Specialised		Professional	
Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find
Work Attitude	<u>Technical</u>	<u>Work Attitude</u>	<u>Technical</u>	Work Attitude	Analytical
<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Experience</u>
<u>Technical</u>	Education	<u>Technical</u>	<u>Work Attitude</u>	Foreign Language	Decision Making
<i>Education Level: Not important</i>		<i>Education Level: Skill Certificate</i>		<i>Education Level: Bachelor or Master Degree</i>	
Industrial (except Garment)					
Worker		Specialised		Professional	
Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find	Most important	Most difficult to find
<u>Work Attitude</u>	<u>Work Attitude</u>	<u>Technical</u>	<u>Technical</u>	Communication	<u>Analytical</u>
<u>Technical</u>	<u>Technical</u>	<u>Work Attitude</u>	Experience	<u>Analytical</u>	Experience
Communication	Experience	Communication	<u>Work Attitude</u>	Decision Making	Foreign Language
<i>Education Level: Not important</i>		<i>Education Level: Skill Certificate</i>		<i>Education Level: Bachelor or Master Degree</i>	

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To understand how to read the above table, consider the example of Professional Services:

- For Unskilled Workers, employers believe that having a good attitude is both important and difficult to find, and that education is not important.
- For Specialised Workers, employers believe that experience is both important and difficult to find, and that a Bachelor or Master Degree is generally required.
- For Professional Staff, employers believe that having analytical and decision-making skills is both important and difficult to find, and that a Bachelor or Master Degree is generally required.

In terms of education, a Worker's education level is generally not an important consideration in any of the sectors. Specialised Workers in Professional Services and NGOs are generally required to have a Bachelor or Master Degree, while a Skill Certificate is sufficient in other sectors. Professional Staff are generally required to have a Bachelor or Masters Degree in all of the sectors.

#### **6.4. Advice to Youth**

While youth face many obstacles, they need to take responsibility for their own development. Rather than passively accepting these obstacles, they need to be proactive in overcoming them. The question is: what can youth do to improve their prospects?

The following advice to youth is based on the results of the youth and employer surveys, as well as more general discussions with youth, employers and other stakeholders.

Youth need to start thinking about their future and prepare for their future job from the time they are studying especially youth in universities or vocational training centers. Youth need to study hard, think carefully when choosing the major/skill, learn supporting skills such as computers and languages, develop a good attitude to study and work, and build their work experience.

Choosing which major or skill to study is a key challenge for youth. Before choosing the major or skill, youth need to aware that it will determine what kind of job they will be able to perform. If they choose the wrong skill (ie. a skill not demanded in the labour market), they will have difficulty to find a job at the end.

There is no single, accurate source of information available to youth to help them make this decision. Therefore, youth need to consult as widely as possible with parents, teachers, education providers and NGOs working in the education field. It is also important for youth to discuss their work and study options with friends, neighbours and family members who have their own experiences to share. Youth can ask about what kind of skills they will gain after they finish the field of study, what kind of job that previous students have got, etc. Even though some of the advice they receive may not be based on accurate information, it will still be useful to their decision making.

In addition to choosing the field of study, students need to study hard to get good marks and, more importantly, to learn as much knowledge as possible from the course. Students should be prepared to ask for help from the teacher if they have any problems or don't know how to be a good student in the subject. They can also ask their teacher about what kind of job they get once they finish the course.

Based on the advice given by the experienced youth in the survey, as well as employers, youth should also build their capacity by learning supporting skills (such as computers and languages) and gaining some work experience (through internships, volunteering or part-time work).



Overall, youth need to prepare themselves for the job market. They need to understand that they are responsible for their future.

**Practical Tips for Youth:**

- Think carefully about what to study – speak to as many people as possible about different types of careers.
- Study hard – make the most of the opportunity.
- Gain practical experience through internships, volunteering or part-time work.
- Look for job advertisements in English-language newspapers, including *Cambodia Daily* and *Mekong Times* (especially for professional jobs).
- Look for jobs on the various Cambodian jobs websites.

**6.5. Recommendations**

Improving employment opportunities for youth – and helping employers find the skills they need – requires the active involvement of all stakeholders. Youth associations, NGOs, universities, vocational training providers, unions, employers and Government ministries all have important roles to play in meeting what is arguably one of Cambodia's greatest challenges.

Based on the findings of this report, there are a number of priority areas where stakeholders can work together to develop specific action plans. These priority areas, which are intended to generate further discussion, debate and co-operation among stakeholders, touch upon the following key challenges:

- Getting the message to youth (information dissemination)
- Stimulate the creation of public source of information
- Improving the skills of youth (education relevance and quality)
- Improving dialogue between stakeholders
- Developing a Strategic Employment Plan

Each of these areas is discussed below.

**6.5.1. Getting the Message to Youth**

There is a clear need to help youth make good decisions about their study and career plans, by providing them with accurate and relevant information at the key decision points discussed earlier. Stakeholders need to consider how best to provide this information to youth, as well as to people who influence youth. These challenges are discussed below.

**High School Students – increasing the role of high school teachers**

The goal is to provide high school students with reliable information to help them make well-informed decisions on their future studies. The best distribution channel through which to provide this information is the high schools – in particular the high school teachers.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, in consultation with other ministries and NGOs, should consider distributing a Higher Education & Careers leaflet to all high schools in Cambodia. The leaflet would be targeted at high school teachers. It would emphasise the important role that teachers can play in advising their students on study and career options. It would also outline the major fields of study – and possible career options – available at universities and vocational training centers. Finally, it would point to other sources of information about universities, vocational training centers and recruitment centers.





As a long-term goal, consideration should be given to including a 'career counselling' component in the study curricula for high school teachers. This training would give high school teachers the skills and information they need to properly advise their students on study and career options.

### **University Students – developing University Employment Counselling Units**

Some universities have a 'University Employment Counseling Unit' to assist students in finding jobs. These units should be strengthened and publicised more widely throughout the university. These units should be the students' main point of contact for information on job opportunities, internships and volunteer work. They should also provide advice on job-seeking issues such as writing a CV and cover letter, contacting employers, etc.

It is essential that these units have strong links with the private sector. They should actively participate in networking events such as conferences and employer association meetings.

Universities should promote this service to students as widely as possible.

### **Public Job Centres**

The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training plans to create 'job centres' in various locations in Phnom Penh and, eventually, in other provinces as well. The idea is that these centres will enable job seekers to access a range of information and advice on different jobs and careers, as well as how and where to find a job.

To be effective, these job centres will need to develop effective information systems and linkages with other relevant information providers, such as education institutions, NGOs and recruitment companies.

The main advantage of these job centres is that, by having a physical location, they can service those youth (and other job seekers) who do not use the internet. There may be scope for the job centre network to establish its own website containing all its information online – this could be done as part of the 'careers portal' idea (discussed below) or independently.

### **Careers Portal**

With more and more Cambodian youth using the internet, stakeholders should consider developing a 'careers portal' (called something like 'www.cambodiareers.org'). This website would act as a one-stop-shop for information about higher education and careers. It would be targeted at students (high school, university and vocational training) but could also be used by teachers and NGOs. Radio and newspaper advertisements could be used to promote the portal and direct people to the website. Development of the site would require the input of all stakeholders, particularly employers, higher education providers, unions, NGOs and Government ministries).

The careers portal could contain information about:

- Different universities and the courses they offer – to be supplied by universities and Government ministries
- Different vocational training providers and the courses they offer – to be supplied by training colleges, NGOs, unions and Government ministries
- Different careers: nature of the work, education and skills requirements, salary expectations and labour market demand – to be supplied by employers and recruitment companies (possibly co-ordinated by CAMFEBA)
- Tips on looking for a job: how to contact employers, prepare a resume, etc. – to be supplied by NGOs and recruitment companies
- Links to other information – NGOs, unions, employer associations, recruitment companies, etc.

Other countries have adopted a similar approach. For example, the US Department of Labor sponsors a website called CareerOneStop ([www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)). The portal offers career resources and workforce information to job seekers, students, businesses, and workforce professionals in the United States. It helps individuals explore career opportunities to make informed employment and education choices. It features occupation and industry information, salary data, education resources and self-assessment tools.



It is important to stress that this site would be an *information* portal, as opposed to a jobs portal. That is, it would provide general information and advice, rather than information on specific job opportunities. In this way, the site would be relatively 'static' and easy to maintain.

While content – and possibly funding – could be contributed by various stakeholders, one party would need to take the lead in maintaining and updating the portal. One possibility would be to integrate this concept into the Government's job centres programme.

Several websites already exist that contain information on education and careers in Cambodia. For example, KYOP ([www.kyop.org](http://www.kyop.org)) was created by Agir pour le Cambodge, CIAI and Enfants du Mekong to help social workers inform youth about education and career opportunities.

The new careers portal should attempt to build on these existing initiatives, rather than replace them. Stakeholders should work with these existing information providers by seeking their active involvement in the new careers portal and providing links to their own online resources. The aim is to consolidate existing information to provide a genuine one-stop-shop on education and careers.

It may even be the case that stakeholders decide to focus their energies on expanding an existing website, rather than creating a new one from scratch.

### **Labor Market Information System (LMIS)**

In its Strategic Plan for 2006-2010, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training outlined plans to create the Labor Market Information System (LMIS). While the details are yet to be finalised, the intention is to collect information on employment trends and to feed this information into Government policies and education priorities.

How best to collect this information, without imposing burdens on employers and other stakeholders, is a key challenge for this initiative and will require significant input from affected stakeholders.

### **6.5.2. Raising the Value of Vocational Training**

Stakeholders repeatedly stressed the need to raise public awareness of the value of vocational training. Relevant, high quality vocational training can provide youth with practical skills that are valued by employers. However there is a perception that vocational training is a 'second best' option for those who miss out on university. The challenge is how to correct this misperception held by some youth and their parents (and even by some employers).

There are no easy solutions to this challenge. Changing public perceptions is always difficult. In this case, it is made more difficult by the uneven quality of vocational training in Cambodia – while some courses are high quality and highly relevant to the workplace, other courses lack both quality and relevance. Any attempt to raise the profile of vocational training will only be successful if there are also continuing efforts to improve its quality and relevance.

One way to raise its profile is for the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training to hold a series of 'Vocational Training Information Days'. At these events, vocational training providers, as well as NGOs involved in training, could set up their own booths to promote their services and provide information. Students and other youth could visit these booths and receive information and advice on particular courses and providers. (Recruitment companies and private sector employers may also be interested in attending.) The events could be promoted through radio and newspaper advertisements, and could be held in both Phnom Penh and other provincial capitals.

It is also important that the vocational training system has appropriate linkages to the broader higher education system. Vocational training qualifications are of much greater value to students if they are recognised or accredited in some way by other higher education providers, such as universities. This enables students to use vocational training as a 'launching pad' to further study. Education providers and Government ministries should explore ways to maximise these linkages – but without sacrificing standards or quality.



### **6.5.3. Improving the Skills of Youth**

Central to the challenge of improving the skills of youth is the need to improve the quality of education and training they receive. Many survey findings highlight the need to improve the quality of higher education, with greater emphasis on teaching practical skills, effective accreditation of education providers, and improvements to course content, study materials and teacher quality. In addition, for those students who do not proceed to higher education, it is important that they develop some employable skills while still at high school.

#### **High School: Education for All and Basic Employable Skills**

While employers generally did not believe that increasing the high school retention rate was a top priority for reducing the skills gap, there is no doubt that students who complete high school have better employment prospects than those who drop out. The 'Education For All' initiative of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, which aims to keep youth in high school for at least 9 grades, is commendable.

Similarly, it is important to provide high school dropouts with a second chance to get a basic education. In this regard, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport has a policy to provide education and training opportunities to young people aged between 12 and 24 years have dropped out of school or have limited access to post- primary education and training opportunities. The Ministry also provides a flexible study programme for working-students (evening or weekend classes) so that they can study after their working hours.

Recognising that not all high school students will proceed to higher education, it is important that their high school education provides them with some basic employable skills. Wherever possible, high school programmes should include a component on employable skills, such as sewing, typing, basic carpentry and small business skills such as budgeting. Schools should seek the involvement of NGOs who may be able to assist in providing this type of training.

The focus on employable skills should be even stronger in rural high schools, where students may be less likely to proceed to higher education. A focus on employable skills may also help in reducing high school dropout rates, as students (and their parents) come to recognise the value of remaining in school.

#### **Higher Education: Improve Quality and Relevance**

Improving Cambodia's higher education system involves complex and difficult challenges. Detailed recommendations on reforms to Cambodia's education system are beyond the scope of this report.

What seems clear is that education providers need to become more in touch with the realities of the labour market, as reflected in the demands of employers. Education providers need to re-evaluate the following:

- Fields of study – less emphasis on courses that are popular or easy to teach (such as computers or accounting) and greater emphasis on technical courses (such as engineering). Education provider should include the future field of study prediction based on the market information in their annual meeting agenda. They should build the link with private sector and get them contribute their idea on the future field of study.
- Course content – less emphasis on textbook theory, and greater emphasis on practical workplace skills. The course content should be customized by discussing with the experience teacher and the professional in the relevant field. Those professionals may come from private sector, NGOs, or Government.
- Method of teaching – less emphasis on rote-learning, and more emphasis on teaching methods that encourage critical thinking, analysis and problem solving. The method of using case study in the teaching is useful to build student analytical thinking. Besides, getting the professional speaker to speak in class is also good information and analytical experience sharing. The company visit study should be considered too as it allow student to see the real workplace. Lecturer may ask student to do the analytical report based on what they see in the company and make the class presentation. These kind of methods which builds the student habit of getting the insight analysis should put in the teaching.

A step in the right direction would be for education providers to seek greater input from employers in terms of the courses they offer and the skills they teach. This is discussed below in the part of Improving Dialogue between Stakeholders.



One of the biggest obstacles to improving the quality of education is the lack of available information about the quality of different higher education providers. At present, the quality of the study programmes offered at various universities is not measured in any reliable or transparent way. There is only anecdotal evidence based on personal experiences. This makes it difficult for students to know which universities will provide them with a good education and increase their employability. It also makes it difficult for employers to know which universities produce the best graduates. As a result, universities do not have a strong incentive to improve the quality of their education, since nobody really knows how they compare to other providers anyway.

The Government, in consultation with employers and higher education providers, should investigate ways to measure the performance of universities. The first step would be to decide which criteria to measure – such as facilities, teacher-student ratios, course content, teacher qualifications, whether internships form part of the course, linkages with employers, and the success in graduates finding employment. The next step would be to consider how to measure these criteria and collect the information.

Once this information is collected, the Government could publish an annual report which assesses and ranks the performance of each university. This information will provide clear signals to students and employers to help them choose the right university, which will encourage universities to lift their performance.

To ensure impartiality, this report should be prepared by an independent committee comprising Government officials and respected members of the education, NGO and private sectors. These types of 'report cards' on universities are published in many other countries, which could be used as a model for Cambodia.

### **Creating the Enabling Environment for Youth to Build Experience**

The importance of students having practical experience is a key theme in this report. With this in mind, higher education providers need to design flexible study schedules which allow – and even encourage – students to do some work during their studies, such as internships, volunteering or part-time work. Making internships a compulsory component of a course can have large benefits, provided the university develops strong linkages with employers and NGOs.

#### **6.5.4. Improving Dialogue between Stakeholders**

Stakeholders – especially education providers and employers – need to develop closer links to improve understanding of their respective needs and challenges. This could lead to education and training outcomes that are more responsive to market demand, as well as improved access for youth to internship and employment opportunities.

There might be merit in the idea of CAMFEBA organising a series of workshops involving leading employers and higher education providers, with additional representation from unions and Government ministries. These sessions would provide a forum for detailed and focused discussions on how relevant and practical skills can be taught at universities and vocational training institutes. The workshops could lead to a variety of longer term initiatives. For example:

- For a particular study discipline, establishment of a Course Content Working Group that meets annually to recommend changes to course curricula.
- Participating employers agree to visit a university and present practical case studies to students several times a year.
- Participating employers agree to hold an 'information day' for teachers, where teachers are invited to visit their workplace and get a better understanding of how the business operates.

Obviously, such initiatives can only work if both parties are genuinely committed to the process. The working groups would provide committed employers and education providers with the opportunity to 'seek each other out'.

From an internship and recruitment perspective, there is also potential for employers and universities to develop closer links.



### **6.5.5. Developing a Strategic Employment Plan**

Many of the initiatives discussed in this chapter would benefit from a clearer understanding of projected employment trends in Cambodia. In this context, Cambodia requires a strategic, long-term 'employment plan' which sets out potential employment opportunities for the next decade. This plan should highlight the key skills that will be needed to take advantage of these opportunities. The results could feed into the refinement of study disciplines, course content and teaching methods, as well as into Government policies on education, training and employment. This type of consulting project would ideally be funded by an international donor agency.

The Strategic Employment Plan should outline the following:

- Macroeconomic analysis – What is Cambodia's economic outlook over the next 5-10 years, in terms of economic growth and employment growth?
- Sector analysis – Which economic sectors have the greatest employment potential? For example, is it in hospitality, construction, garment, other manufacturing, finance, etc.?
- Jobs and skills – For these high employment sectors, what types of jobs will be created? What types of skills and qualifications will be needed for these jobs? For example, will Cambodia need more engineering graduates, or more finance graduates, etc.?
- Implications for education and training – Which education and training courses will produce youth with these skills? Do new courses and curricula need to be developed?

Experience in other countries has shown that it is very difficult for governments or experts to 'pick winners' – ie. to predict which sectors will grow the fastest over the next 5-10 years. For example, 10 years ago, many people would not have imagined that Cambodia today would have a thriving telecommunications market that employs thousands of people. In the same way, it is possible that Cambodia's success stories in 10 years time will be in sectors that nobody expects.

As a result, people should not expect too much from the Strategic Employment Plan. While it would provide valuable information, it should not be seen as the definitive answer to all of Cambodia's employment challenges. The identified 'high growth sectors' should not be given preference at the expense of the broader economy, because it is possible that hidden opportunities will emerge in other sectors.

### **6.6. Further Research**

As stressed earlier, this report represents *the first step* on what is a long and complex road to improving employment opportunities for young Cambodians. The report is intended as a basis for further discussion, debate and research. It was never intended as the final, authoritative source of all information on youth, education and employment.

Many of the recommendations proposed in this chapter will require further research before specific actions can be taken. For example, further work needs to be done at the sector level to determine the specific skills that are needed for particular industries and the trend of the skill needed in each industry.



## 7. Section 7: Appendix

### 7.1. List of Expert Interviewsh

No	Category	Organisation Name	Contac Person Name
1	Government	Labor Market Information Department	Mr. Hoen Sophon
2	Government	Vocational Training Center	H.E. Bun Phearin
3	Government	Cabinet	Mr. Men Socheat
4	Government	Department of Labour Inspection	Mr. Tho Bunthorn
5	International Organization	The World Bank Office Cambodia	Mr. Bou Saroeun
6	International Organization	United Nation Development Program	Mr. Hin Wisal
7	NGO	Youth Star Cambodia	Ms. Eva Mysliwec
8	NGO	Youth For Peace	Mr. Long Khet
9	NGO	CEDAC	Mr. Sopha Phal
10	NGO	Disability Action Council	Mr. Chan Sopheak
11	NGO	Youth Council of Cambodia	Mr. Mak Sarath
12	University	Royal University of Agriculture	Mr. Ngo Bunthan
			Mr. Chheng Lyna
13	University	Royal University of Law and Economics	Mr. Yith Sovuoch
14	University	Royal University of Phnom Pneh	Mr. Lao Chhiv Eav
15	University	Institute of Technology of Cambodia	Mr. Om Romny
16	University	Build Bright University	Mr. Diep Seiha
17	Union	Cambodia Labor Union Federation	Mr. Leang Sun Heang

**7.2. List of Youth Network for Data Collection**

No	Category	Organisation Name	Contact Person Name
1	Government	JVC Technical School and Workshop	NA
2	Government	Provincial Vocational Training Center	Mr. Chea Phally
			Ms. Narith
3	University	University of Svay Rieng	Mr. Tum Saravuth
4	University	University of Management and Economics	Mr. Lam Socheat
			Mr. Sambath
5	University	Build Bright University	NA
6	University	Royal University of Agriculture	Mr. Chheng Lyna
7	University	Royal University of Phnom Pneh	Mr. Ponn Chhay
8	University	Institute of Technology of Cambodia	Mr. Pan Sovanna
			Mr. Touch Serey Sothy
			Mr. Phol Norith
			Ms. Srey Malis
			Mr. Phat Boné
			Mr. C.C Horng
9	Private School	Conversation With Foreigners	Mr. Huy Sambo
10	Private School	Pe Vanna Foreign Language School	Mr. Yon Chettola
11	Private School	ADC Language School	NA
12	High School	Samdach Ouv High School	NA
13	High School	Chek High School	NA
14	NGO	Youth Council of Cambodia	Ms. Chhay Sopheaktra
			Mr. Rat Chan Dara
15	NGO	Khmer Youth Association	Mr. Seyha
			Mr. Som Chenda
16	NGO	The Cambodian Center for Protection of Children's Right	Mr. Nget Thy
17	NGO	Leadership Character Development Institute	Mr. Sochan



			Mr. Mab
18	NGO	Rachana Organization	Ms. Sarun
19	NGO	Fine Art Association	Mr. Ly Sokha
20	NGO	Don Bosco Vocational Training School	Ms. Leeza John
21	NGO	Cambodian Volunteer for Community Development	Ms. Tho Thary
22	NGO	Pour un Sourire d'Enfant	Mr. Ou Pheanith
23	NGO	Youth Star Cambodia	Mr. Chan Virak
24	NGO	Youth For Peace	Mr. Sok Teang
25	NGO	Cambodian Youth Future Organization	Mr. Teung Socheat
26	NGO	Hagar Project	Ms. Myriam Geach
27	NGO	New Life Foundation	Mr. Darith
28	NGO	Sala Bai	NA
29	NGO	LHA	Chun Choeun
30	NGO	MAC	Mr. Gheat Ratha
31	NGO	CIST	Mr Gérard Aublet





### 7.3. List of Union

No.	Category	Unions / Organizations Name	Contact Person Name
1	Union	Cambodian Labour Confederation ( <b>CLC</b> )	Mr. Ath Thorn
2	Union	Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Worker Democratic Unions ( <b>C.CAWDU</b> )	Mr. Ath Thorn
3	Union	Cambodian Tourism and Service Workers Federation ( <b>CTSWF</b> )	Mr. Nhean Sony
4	Union	Cambodian Confederation Trade Union ( <b>CCTU</b> )	Mr. Vong Sovann
5	Union	Cambodian Workers Labor Federation Union ( <b>CWLFU</b> )	Mr. Vong Sovann
6	Union	Federation Union Solidarity ( <b>FUS</b> )	Mr. Nai Sok Veasna
7	Union	Free Union Federation of Khmer Labor ( <b>FUF</b> )	Mr. Sok Ravuth
8	Union	Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Unions ( <b>CFITU</b> )	Ms. Tep Kimvannay
9	Union	Union Federation of Independent and Democratic ( <b>UFID</b> )	Mr. Phoung Montry
10	Union	Trade Union Federation for Increasing Khmer Employees Lifestyle ( <b>TUFIKEL</b> )	Mr. Mom Sarorn
11	Union	National Union Affiliace Chamber of Cambodia ( <b>NACC</b> )	Mr. Som Aun
12	Union	Trade Union Workers Federation of Progress Democracy ( <b>TUWFPD</b> )	Mr. Kim Chansamngang
13	Union	Federation Union of Khmer Democracy Workers ( <b>FUKDW</b> )	Mr. Reim Bora
14	Union	Cambodian Industrial Union Federation ( <b>CIUF</b> )	Mr. Hem Sokponlork
15	Union	National Educators' Association for Development ( <b>NEAD</b> )	Mr. Im Onn
16	Union	Labor Development Union Federation ( <b>LDUF</b> )	Mr. Sok Sambath



17	Union	Cambodian Federation For Workers' Rights ( <b>CFWR</b> )	Mr. Chum Veasna
18	Union	National Independent Federation Textile ( <b>NIFTUC</b> )	Mrs. Morm Nhim
19	Union	National Union Federation Cambodian Workers ( <b>NUCW</b> )	Mr. Tol Phan Moeung
20	Union	Cambodia Federation of Trade Union (CFTU)	Mr. Lou Sak
21	Union	Khmer Youth Trade Union Federation ( <b>KYFTU</b> )	Mr. Yun Rithy
22	Union	Cambodian Industry Food Union Federation ( <b>CIFUF</b> )	Mr. Heng Bunchhun
23	Union	Worker Freedom Union Federation ( <b>WFUF</b> )	Mr. Va Chankosal
24	Union	Cambodian National Federation of Building and Wood Workers ( <b>CNFBW</b> )	Mr. Sok Sovandeth
25	Union	TUFTW	Mr. Srey Davy
26	Union	Khmer Occupational Citizenship and Transportation Association ( <b>KOCTA</b> )	Ms. Chhuon Neary



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## 7.5. Profile of BD Link Project Team

### **NORNG Ratana, Project Manager**

- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Masters in International Business
- Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), Masters in Economic Management
- Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), Bachelors, Economic Management (award by LYON II, France)
- Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), Bachelors, Economic Management with recognition from AIT

Ratana is an Associate consultant with BDLINK. During her studies, she wrote several academic research papers including “Bond Market Development in Cambodia” for the completion of her Masters at AIT. In addition, during her studies she also worked with the IFC/MPDF on business training program for SME's.

Prior to joining BDLINK, she worked as the Communication Assistant at the French Embassy where she gained practical experience in developing and organizing frameworks to collect, store and analyze information. In addition, she lead a team of researchers to “Evaluate the fluctuation for transportation demand of goods by air vs. ship” working closely with SCA/CAMS (A French concession on the Cambodian National Airport).

At BDLINK, Ratana has worked on a variety of projects and her client work extends to SME's, private sector, donors, and government. Selected and relevant project work has been highlighted below to demonstrate the breadth of her experience.

- *“Value Chain and Market Study for Carved Stone Products and Needs Assessment of Stone Carvers in Posat Province of Cambodia”, GTZ / UNDP*

The objective of the project to map out the value chain of stone carvers in Posat Province as well as understand the potential market (buyers) for the Posat Stone Carvers. The project spanned research in 3 provinces, working closely with government, stone carvers, NGO's and SME's. Ratana managed the project overall, client relations as well as expert interviews including managing her research team in the field.

- *“Cambodian Women Economic Empowerment in Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia” – UNDP*

The objective of the project to assess the economic environment in Kampong Speu Province as well as understand the value chain of Kampong Speu products that will have a positive economic and social benefit to the province. Importantly, the study recommended key sources for development to generate meaningful employment for women in Kampong Speu. Ratana was part of project team and lead the data collection, expert interviews and analysis for the project.

- *“Complex Building Feasibility Study”, Korean, Private Sector Investor*

The project studied the real estate market and complex buildings in Cambodia with the purpose of building a business plan for a development project for the team. Ratana was part of a larger project team with Emerging Markets Consulting, leading smaller streams of work and analysis which fed into the overall recommendations and feasibility study for the client. Her work included expert interviews, market assessment and data analysis.

- *“Assessment of Government Technical Working Group in Cambodia” – requested by Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC), UNDP*

The project assessed the needs of Government Technical Working Groups (TWG) with the objective of improved service delivery and offering from the CDC to strengthen the coordination and effectiveness of the TWG's. Ratana was part of a small team that interviewed high level government members, Technical Working Group Chairs and Co-chairs as well as the secretariats of the Working Groups. A highly sensitive project which required exceptional interpersonal and interviewing skills to be able to build trust, extract real information and work in very tight timeframe. The project also interviewed donors to understand their perceptions, challenges and experiences in working with the working groups. A substantial amount of qualitative and complex information to be presented in a structured and practical manner.

Ratana was responsible for expert interviews, data analysis, and transforming long interviews into measurable pieces of information. She also drew up the framework of the final report and assisted in drafting a first report.

Ratana speaks Khmer, English, French and Thai.

### **HEM Tola, Project Coordinator in Data Collection from Youth**



Tola joined HR INC to complete an internship to graduate with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting graduating top of his class from Maharishi Vedic University. During his internship, Tola worked in the finance and accounting department actively in processing, procedures, and compliance of the company.

In 2007, Tola moved to join BDLINK and has worked on a variety of projects with NGO's, SME's and supporting partner consulting firms on larger consulting projects. At BDLINK Tola was part of a large project team conducting a study on the Cambodia Labor Market for disable persons. Tola was specifically responsible for database management, market research and expert interviews in Private Sector. The project aimed to identify the barriers for disabled people to find employment as well as suitable positions in leading companies and NGO's that disabled people can apply for. In the SME sector, Tola has worked for a handicraft project in collaboration with Artisans Association of Cambodia (AAC) and Tradecraft, a leading NGO working in poverty reduction and Trade. The project aims to improve understand the business needs of AAC members through consultations with SME members and assist in the development of their operations to ensure long term sustainability. Tola is currently contracted to work for the second phase of this project to help those AAC members to understand the business plans so that they are able to implement effectively.

Tola has also been involved in variety of Private Sector research including the HR INC salary survey in the Garment Industry conducted in collaboration with the Garment Manufacturers Association (GMAC). The Garment Industry Productivity Centre (GIPC) funded through USAID as well as being a key support in market research for large private sector investments in Cambodia.

Tola also worked closely with a leading consulting firm in Cambodia conducting a pre-feasibility study on "Investment in complexity buildings in Cambodia". In the study, Tola took the lead in all data collection of one of the investor options amongst four. Tola's responsibilities included preparation questionnaire for research survey on tenants and the competitors, data entry and analysis, partial initial report writing up, and assist the team to conduct other options survey. In both parts of interview tenants and competitors, Tola arranged the interview schedules and met with top or senior managers of companies and organizations such as The World Bank, PriceWaterhouseCooper, CBM Corporation etc.

Tola speaks English, Thai, and basic Chinese.

#### **PONG Soleil Della, Project Coordinator, Employers Survey**

Della has bachelor degree of Art in English from Institute of Language, Pannasastra University of Cambodia, BBA in Human Resource Management from Maharishi Vedic University. He is currently pursuing a Master of Management at University of Cambodia. Della joined HRINC in 2006 in the recruitment division working closely with new investors, SME's and multinationals in the market. His work has extended to the not for profit sector and government sectors too. Della boasts an impressive list of clients and placements at HRINC as one of the leading recruitment consultants. He has successfully placed many candidates in a range of positions including senior management positions.

Besides placements and recruitment, Della has worked on a wide range of project related work including with Oxfam America, Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) a USAID funded project, USAID recruitment, IFC/MPDF, CDRI, GIPC, CLEC and World Bank Projects. Further project working includes working with SME's and training a variety of companies and organizations in effective recruitment techniques. Della has also managed an extensive country wide government recruitment process under the Performance Management Improvement Process the various ministries are undertaking. This includes setting up structured recruitment processes that are transparent and rigorous.

Della has extensive knowledge of the labour law in Cambodia and facilitates labour compliance processes for his clients. Della speaks Khmer and English.

**Mr. Chea Marong: Consultant, Project Advisor**

Marong joined BDLINK as a consultant focusing mainly on business research and development. He earned his Master of Science (MSc.) from Kyushu University in Japan specialized in Agricultural and Resource Economics as well as Bachelor of English from Institute of Foreign Languages. Furthermore, he almost received MBA degree from National Institute of Management specializing in Management and completed BBA in Marketing.

Prior to joining BDLINK, Marong had 3 years experiences with Cambodia's leading research institutes. He worked closely with government institutions, funding agencies, NGOs and farmers in conducting research projects. Recently, Marong is one of the key players in the MPDF Provincial Business Simplification (PBS) project undertaken in Siem Reap province. The objective of PBS is to do the assessment on the current business regulation, registration and licensing, and to find out the area which needs the reform to improve business environment in the province as a whole. Also, he used to work as a local consultant in the field of Rural Business Support Specialist in assessing project design, rural credit, market information, agriculture research and extension, and irrigation for Cambodia Agriculture Value Chain Program (CAVAC), AusAID, Cambodia. Interacting with various stakeholders complemented by overseas research, Marong is very knowledgeable in the field of rural development, assessment of the socio-economic conditions, and business/investment climate in Cambodia, especially at national level.

Marong's research has led him to write three research reports. The first paper a study on factors affecting farming household incomes, and the second report on Cambodia export diversification and value addition for human development funded by UNDP. The last research report was an assessment of the effectiveness of technical cooperation in Cambodia: A study on good practice of Japanese technical cooperation projects supported by Japanese Embassy.

Marong has a good understanding about statistical analysis. He has strong analytical skills in qualitative and quantitative data, particularly regression analysis and management science. These scientific techniques include Linear Programming, Decision Analysis, Forecasting Techniques, Project Management and Network Models. One out of these techniques, Linear Programming, mathematical programming, is a powerful tool in making the most effective use of an organization's resources, such as investment decisions, production decisions, employee scheduling, advertising policies, etc. Marong speaks English and Khmer Fluently.

**Mr. Sean Power, Project Advisor (Employers Survey)**

After completing his Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) at the University of Melbourne, Australia, Sean began his career as an Economist with the Industry Commission (which advises the Australian Government on economic and social policy). Sean participated in a year-long review of occupational health and safety (OHS) arrangements in Australia. He then worked as a Senior Policy Officer with the National Competition Council, with responsibility for advising the Australian Government on economic reforms to the gas and electricity sectors.

Sean then moved to London for two years to work as a financial journalist for an investment magazine called Shares. He wrote articles covering a variety of sectors, including electricity, oil, healthcare and biotechnology.

Moving back to Australia, Sean utilized his financial and communication skills as Head of Product Management for Portfolio Partners, a large investment company that manages funds in the shares and bond markets. There, Sean was responsible for developing new investment funds and promoting the company's existing product range. He also managed all the company's internal and external communications.

Sean next worked as a Senior Project Officer (Economics) within the Department of Justice in the State Government of Victoria (Australia). There, he undertook a high-profile review of the laws on gambling on sporting events, and developed new laws to replace the existing ones. These laws were passed by the Victorian Parliament in 2007.

Sean joined HR INC in 2007. He is working on a variety of projects, including assisting in the Private Sector Salary Review and the Garment Sector Salary Review.

**Ms. Sandra D'AMICO, Project Advisor & Secretary General of CAMFEBA.**

Sandra is a founder and Managing Director of HR Inc (Cambodia) Co., Ltd. and began her career in the garment industry in both design and production after completing her studies in Clothing Production and Design in South Africa, top of her class. In the Garment Industry Sandra worked in design and purchasing and later in production where she managed one of South Africa's leading niche garment factories running over 10 production lines with over 30 employees in each. She managed quality, production and sampling for Rand Hat & Cap which produced branded caps for leading brands such as Nike as well as production of intricate kiddies clothing. Sandra is also certified in CERT IV Workplace Training & Assessment

Prior to coming to Cambodia, Sandra worked for Bain & Company, a leading strategy consulting firm, in the Consulting and Human Resources division where she headed the recruitment division, recruiting consultants from the Tier 1 and 2 Schools around the world. Sandra has over 5 years of international corporate recruitment experience. In the consulting division at Bain, Sandra worked in the Airlines and Banking industry as well as with Government Organisations in South Africa.

For the past six years, Sandra has been working and living in Cambodia. Formerly the Manager of HR Consulting and Recruitment and later the Country Representative at Strategic Management Solutions (SMS), Cambodia, Sandra has worked on an array of projects in government, private sector and the NGO sector and is well versed with the Cambodian environment and culture. Her main focus in developing HR Services at SMS included the development, design and implementation of training programmes, salary surveys and reviews for clients as well as spear heading the development of recruitment services in Cambodia. Sandra also worked closely with the consulting team on feasibility studies, market research projects and played a key role in the development and management of the office including accounting and finance, labor compliance and government relations.

In 2005, following a business refocus at SMS, Sandra moved on to establish HR INC (Cambodia) Co., Ltd in partnership with two Cambodian HR professionals, providing a full range of HR Services to the market. In particular, Sandra worked on the development and strategy of the business as well as implementation of project work in organisation development and business planning for SME's, HR development for local and international enterprises and a range of research projects including the launch of the first Private Sector Salary Survey in 2005 which has grown to be Cambodia's largest and only salary survey in the market. Seeing the need for small medium enterprise consulting services, HRINC established BDLINK (Cambodia) Co., Ltd in 2006 address the needs of SME's in Cambodia from business planning to organizational development.

Sandra brings together a wealth of experience in a variety of sectors and levels of interaction. Her core strengths lie in relationship management and client management working at a range of different levels. Her passion lies in the development of people and teams and she brings together strategic and operational experience linking business objectives and strategies closely to the human resources function.

Besides work, Sandra is passionate about contributing to society and encourages her team to be part of external associations and take on leadership positions in areas of interest, outside work. Sandra holds the following leadership positions and external representations for HRINC in Cambodia.

1. **The Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Association (CAMFEBA) - Secretary General.**
2. **The Garment Industry Productivity Centre (GIPC) - Co-Chair.**
3. **The Woman's Association of Small and Medium Businesses (WASMB), Member).**
4. **The French Chamber of Commerce, Cambodia (CCFC) - Member.**
5. **Founder and Advisor, The Cambodian Professional Networking Association (CAMPRONET).**

To keep abreast international trends in human resources, Sandra is a member of SHRM, the Society of Human Resource Management, a global HR professional body. In 2008, Sandra was award the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurship Award by the ASEAN Global Women's summit in Vietnam, Hanoi.

Sandra's first language is English and she also speaks Afrikaans.



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