The Country Report

of National Educators' Association for Development (NEAD)

For ASEAN Education Conference in Singapore 22026

I-INTRODUCTION

Background

National Educators Association for Development (NEAD) was formed in 14 January 2007 by the group of teachers in Cambodia love the social justice, democratic, human rights, education, and independent. NAED have got register from ministry of interior in 4 April 2007 and have been an affiliated with EI in 03 December 2009 beside these NEAD have been affiliated with many NGOs and National Union Alliance Chamber of Cambodia (NACC) to empower the teacher voices.

Presently NEAD has recruited 15,000 members and organized 10 provincial branches among 24 provinces and 8 district committee among 162 districts.

II- GENERAL SITUATION OF EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

NGOs and government have difference views on education. Some NGOs they have showed their concerned about the morality of the society have been down and quality of education in Cambodia because the quality is not standardize like the other countries even though the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport have tried to improving the education system by reduce the corruption in the national examination and tried to updated the learning curriculum.

In the past school years Cambodia have totally number of public schools **18,830 schools and kindergartens** and total education staff 131.987 (teaching and non-teaching) according to data from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

-Kindergartens: 8,607 Among these schools Cambodia have 8.334 kindergarten school in 1.664 communes (with 4.563 kindergarten are public, 3.083 are community and 688 are private) with 330.801 children among those 49.74% are girls.

-Primary schools: 8,067 **Primary school:** Cambodia has 7.306 Primary schools and 2.036.566 students with 49% are female. The ministry indicated the finished rate of the basic education is 86.8% with 87.9% are female in national wide.

-Secondary schools: Cambodia has1,340 schools**,** There are 662.106 students and 52.65% are females. Ministry of education have tried to set the management plan by issues a declaration on (one commune one secondary school) and ministry of education youth and sport announced and encourage all partners to implement this declaration as

a result it remain only 80 commune among 1664. in national wide which is not yet have secondary school.

-High schools: 816 **High school,** In the last school year Cambodia have 770 High schools with 360.617 students and 54.48% are females

-University: Cambodia has a total of **132 recognized Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** according to the latest institutional data from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). These institutions are split between **48 public institutions is focus on STEM,** agriculture, public administration, and health sciences and **84 private institutions is focus on** business administration, foreign languages, IT, and international relations.

Among these 132 institutions, approximately **49 functions as major comprehensive universities** (20 public and 29 private), while the remainder are classified as specialized institutes, polytechnics, and colleges.

Cambodia now has informal education with 1318 classes and 1326 teachers including 439 are female teachers and 30 897 students including 20103 female students.

Access and Quality Gaps

Cambodia faces major education challenges, including low school completion rates, poor learning outcomes in rural areas, and a severe lack of science and computer labs. Though primary enrollment has grown, upper secondary completion remains near 28%, and many students lack basic reading and math skills.

- **High Dropout Rates:** Many students leave school early; completion drops from 84% in primary school down to 52% at lower secondary and 28% at upper secondary levels.
- **Rural Disadvantage:** Remote areas suffer from poor school infrastructure, water and sanitation shortages, and a lack of qualified teachers.
- **Low Learning Proficiency:** National assessments show many students fall below basic skill levels in Khmer reading and mathematics.

Resource and System Shortages

- **Inadequate Facilities:** Public schools often lack libraries, computers, and science laboratories required for modern STEM education.
- **Teacher Constraints:** Low pay and limited professional development lead to an over-reliance on private tutoring ("shadow education") that disadvantages poorer families.
- **Underfunding:** Public spending on education has lagged behind recommended targets relative to GDP growth.

Marginalized Groups

- **Disabilities:** Children with disabilities face extremely high out-of-school rates due to limited inclusive infrastructure and trained special-needs staff.
- **Ethnic Minorities:** Children from minority communities complete primary school at rates well below the national average.

-The drop out school

In Cambodia, primary school dropout rates dropped to 4.4% for the 2025–2026 academic year according to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, down from 6.2% a decade prior. However, secondary levels remain high, with UNICEF Cambodia reporting a 15.5% dropout rate at the lower secondary level.

Dropout Rates by Education Level

- Primary School: 4.4% dropout rate (2025–2026 data).
- Lower Secondary School: 15.5% dropout rate.
- Upper Secondary School: 13.7% dropout rate.
- Overall Children Out of School: Approximately 300,000 children and adolescents out of a total school-age population of 3 million.

Key Causes for Leaving School

- Poverty: Families facing economic hardship often pull children out of school to work or supplement household income.
- Migration: Seasonal or border migration leads to higher dropout rates in border and rural provinces.
    - Gender and Social Norms: Early marriage or family expectations impact girls, while economic pressures push adolescent boys toward labor.
    - Poverty in Cambodia. Through the National Institute of Statistic, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank,

Indicated that 17.8% of Cambodian people are living under the poverty line but NGOs and civil society said the number of the poor people are higher than this.

- Female students drop out school and go to work at garment factories

  Teachers have forced the student to pay money for extra classes and documents or lesson sheets because teachers have got low salary. when the poor students have no money to pay for extra classes or documents they cannot get a good score like the rich students. So that they decided to drop out school.
- Some teachers have done business in class like sell the toys, school materials, cakes or candy, specially the teachers in primary school.

-The Situation of teachers in Cambodia

Cambodia has approximately 125,597 education staff, managed under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). This total covers public and formal education sectors spanning preschool, primary, and secondary levels, alongside administrative and support personnel.

- **Total Education Personnel:** 125,597 workers nationwide.
- **Teachers and Professors:** Over 93,000 active teaching staff make up the largest portion of this workforce.
- **Administrative and Support Staff:** Includes national and sub-national office officials, contract staff, and literacy workers.

Public vs. Private Sector Breakdowns

- **Public School Teachers:** Around **93,700 to 94,000** educators are employed by the government, serving in state-run kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools.
- **Private School Teachers:** Approximately **14,000 to 15,000** teachers work in private institutions and international schools.
- **Higher Education:** Over **16,000** professors and lecturers teach in tertiary education programs and universities.
- **Gender Ratio:** Women account for roughly **52%** of the general teaching workforce, though they are heavily concentrated in early childhood and primary education.
- **Teacher Shortages:** Despite the large workforce, the country faces an acute shortage. MoEYS estimates a remaining nationwide deficit of approximately **30,000 teachers**, with the most urgent demands hitting primary schools and rural communities.

Cambodia is facing with the lack of teachers in the far or rural area because in the far or rural area teachers cannot collect money from student or opening extra classes to earn money to supply their living condition and the government provided low allowance for teachers who volunteer go to teach at far or rural area it could not enough for teachers.

In Cambodia, teacher's salary varies significantly between public schools (paid in Cambodian Riel, KHR) and private or international schools (paid in USD). Public primary school teachers earn base of roughly $340 to $370 per month, while university professors or elite international school teachers can exceed $1,500 to $2,500+ per month.

Salary Breakdown by Education Level

Education Level	Public School Salary (Monthly)	Private / International Salary (Monthly)
Primary School	$340 – $370 (1.4M – 1.5M KHR)	$700 – $1,400+
Secondary School	$360 – $420 (1.5M – 1.7M KHR)	$800 – $1,600
High School	$380 – $480 (1.55M – 1.9M KHR)	$1,000 – $2,500+
University	$450 – $775+ (1.8M – 3.1M KHR)	$1,200 – $3,500+

- Public vs. Private: Public sector wages are strictly structured by the Ministry of Education based on seniority. Private schools set independent rates.
- International Schools: Elite institutions in Phnom Penh offer western-scale salaries ranging from $20,000 to $55,000+ annually, often including housing and flights.
- Hourly Tutoring: Many teachers supplement their income with private after-school tutoring, earning an extra $10 to $25 per hour.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1- For private sector

As of institutional data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), Cambodia has a total of **6,805 registered trade unions**. This network breaks down hierarchically into **6,466 local unions**, **284 union federations**, and **42 union confederations**.

Hierarchical Breakdown of Labor Organizations

Organization Type	Registered Total	Primary Legal Definition & Role
Local (Enterprise) Unions	**6,466**	Formed directly at the grassroots factory or enterprise level by a minimum of 10 workers to manage immediate floor grievances.
Union Federations	**284**	Higher-level groups established by a coalition of at least **7 registered local unions** to negotiate across sector-wide industries.
Union Confederations	**42**	National-level coalitions formed by at least **5 registered union federations** to handle national labor policies.
Employer Associations	**13**	Separate organizations formed by a minimum of 9 distinct enterprises or businesses to legally represent the interests of management.

In Cambodia garment, textile, tourism, and agriculture are the most priority sectors which provided and employed more than 60% of the total work forces. Only garment sector could be employed 800.000 workers majority women and this sector are very important to support economic growth and country development.

In the private sector the rights and freedom of association was widely open, and these rights were guaranteed by the constitution, labour law, trade union law and ILO convention. Even though this right have guaranteed by the law but some of trade union leaders still challenge the discrimination from the employers and authority.

In this context the trade union movement is irreversible and growth up because we have technical support from ILO, SC, ACSIL, CLEC, and cooperation with international and global unions .But it still weak and more challenges because of:

- The competition and benefit fighting among unions and unions
- Some union members not paid dues
- No unity among unions now there are more than 6000 local trade unions, more than 150 federations, more than 20 confederations and 1 chamber of trade union and most organized workers predominantly in the garment and textile sector where unionization is pretty high, over 50% among roughly 800.000 workers in over 1256 factories and most of them are women. This multiplicity of union is just the opposite of CAMFEBA, the only one employer federation.

2- Public sector (Teachers and Civil Servants)

Freedom of association for teachers in Cambodia is legally recognized under international and national frameworks, but severely restricted in practice. Public school teachers face legal loopholes, discrimination, and direct intimidation from state authorities if they attempt to organize independent unions.

- The Constitution: The Cambodian Constitution guarantees freedom of association and trade union rights for all citizens.
- ILO Convention 87: Cambodia ratified ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association. Government representatives have repeatedly promised that teachers hold full union rights.
- The Trade Union Law (TUL) Exclusion: In practice, Cambodia's Law on Trade Unions does not apply to civil servants. Public school teachers are classified as civil servants, legally forcing them to organize under the more restrictive Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO). This heavily limits their collective

Freedom of association for Cambodia's public sector is legally highly restricted, as civil servants are explicitly excluded from the main protections of the country's Trade Union Law. While the Cambodian Constitution guarantees general associational rights, public workers face immense legal and political barriers to forming independent labor organizations.

- Governed by LANGO: Because they cannot form trade unions, public workers must organize under the strict Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO). This law requires burdensome government registration and mandates strict "political neutrality."

- No Collective Bargaining: Public sector associations do not possess the legal right to engage in collective bargaining or organize legal strikes over wages and working conditions.

Now Cambodia, has only one civil servants association but most of the members are teachers, and 6 teachers associations, and some NGOs who are working in education sector.

Cambodian government has adopted the demonstration and strike law and this law seem to strict the freedom of expression by defining place and number of people who join with demonstration.

IV-CONCLUSION

Even if the ministry of education youth and sport has tried to set the strategy plan to develop and improve the quality of education and promotion education for all (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). At the same time the government has agreed to increase 20% of basic teachers' salary every year, but the government has increased only 5$ every year for teachers. This increasing does not enough for teachers to live in dignity because of high price of goods it was became a main cause of the corruption in education.

More drop out school because of poverty and corruption. Presently NGOs and teacher representative have more concerned on the education quality

For the freedom of association and human rights, even if Cambodia has legal framework and regulations to guarantee this freedom but in reality, these regulations seem to open widely only for private sector and sometime unions is still challenging with the process of registration because of corruption. And the law enforcement is still limited specially for public sector (teachers and civil servants).

The public sector no right to form union and no right for collective bargaining and some of them have interference by authority when they were participated in association.

The adoption of demonstration and strike law, trade union and NGOs law seem to strict the freedom of association and human rights.

Recommendation

- To increase enough salary to teachers and high allowance for teachers go to teach in far or rural area and decrease high price of goods
- Promoting and publicizing freedom of association and rights in general
- Ensuring proper association of civil servant and teachers representative and collective bargaining by committing to applying and disseminating laws and legislation related to civil servants and teachers.
- Government should coordinate for process of registration of trade unions and association.
- To promote the social dialogue and collective negotiation for public sectors

Reported by
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