

# Higher Learning in Cambodia

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## By Indochina Research

Cambodia has a young population who are becoming increasingly connected and informed. Whilst there is some competition in Phnom Penh from the numerous universities, there is still a large population of school leavers, willing to learn and improve their chances of finding well paid employment. Outside of the main urban centers there are many young people willing to travel or migrate to cities for education.



However there is a low awareness of different career or job options and the educational or training routes into these. Business related degrees are very popular due to the availability and associated status of university courses, as well as aspirations to join the modern world of commerce and to work in clean office environments, or wearing smart clothes.

Similarly, hospitality is a popular option due to the proliferation of job opportunities (booming restaurant and hotel industries due to tourism and emerging middle class) and the appeal of the working conditions. There is low awareness of vocational training institutions, and the opportunities that they can provide. Indeed many of those that do exist are operated by non-profit organisations to help the very poor youth segment. Therefore there is possibly a

stigma attached to such schools and perceptions that vocational training leads to low paid manual work (some association with illiteracy). However, this is starting to change with the opening of new, private vocational training institutions such as National Polytechnic Institute of Cambodia.

Word of mouth via friendship groups is the most common means of learning about education and training institutions. There doesn't seem to be a go-to source of unbiased information regarding career and further education/training options.

Forthcoming ASEAN integration is a hot topic. Young people need to be prepared for this so that they can take advantage of opportunities to work abroad (and therefore gain knowledge and skills to ultimately bring back to Cambodia), but also to ensure they can compete in their own country for the jobs they desire.



There is an opinion amongst employers and experts in the field that there is a shortage of skilled labour in Cambodia, not enough to meet the needs of a country in a state of rapid development. This all creates opportunities for new schools. Contact Indochina Research to learn more about our Vocational School study here in Phnom Penh.