

**Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation Religion King**

Royal Government of Cambodia

National Policy on Youth Development

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Prepared by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

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1. Introduction

The Kingdom of Cambodia regards youth as a very important resource for economic, social, cultural and environmental development and maintenance of peace in both the present and the future.

In Cambodia's social, cultural and political context, youth is referred to as people of both sexes aging between 15 and 30 years and with Khmer nationality regardless of their marital status. According to Cambodia's 2008 national census, youth is equivalent to 33% of the total population.

The Royal Government has determined that education is very fundamental for sustainability of economic and social development and economic growth that lead to poverty reduction. In the academic years 2010-2011, the rate of students at elementary school was 96.1%, lower secondary school 33.9% and upper secondary school 20.8%. The number of literate people (aged between 15-24) was 87.5% (2008 national census), and that of students holding associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctoral degree was 263,000 (2009-2010 report of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports).

The Royal Government has focused its attention on youth by providing them with high quality of education that aims at strengthening their capacity for engagement in labor market. At the same time, some youth still lack access to educational service and others, especially women, can get only jobs with low payment. Some youth leave their hometown to find jobs in the city and others go abroad in order to find jobs. Moreover, they face with vulnerability such as school dropout, loss of choice, drugs addiction, alcohol consumption and work-related accidents.

In order to promote youth's rights and responsibility and prevent those above mentioned negative points, the Royal Government has developed a national policy on youth development aiming at providing all youth with capacity development.

National policy on youth development was developed in accordance with Cambodian constitution, law on education, labor law, rectangular strategy for the second phase, millennium development goal, strategic plan of national development and any other related international instruments.

2. Vision

In order to create human resources for national development, the Royal Government has a long-term vision by calling on all concerned sectors to work together to improve youth's capacity and provide them with opportunity to develop their potential in education, employment, health and decision making, and participation in development of their families, communities, nation and the world.

3. Objective

Develop youth in a way that enable them to have physical integrity, intelligence, conscience, morality, value, and skills so that they can become good citizens.

4. Goal

- 4.1. Provide youth with access to education and vocational training with quality and equality.
- 4.2. Encourage youth to have initiation, creation, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- 4.3. Promote gender among youth and especially give opportunity and rights to women.
- 4.4. Develop youth in a way that enable them to have aptitude, knowledge, skills, morality, spirit of peace loving, national loyalty, self-confidence, dignity, leadership and broad understanding of society.
- 4.5. Provide opportunity for youth to express opinions and to make decision concerning community and national development.
- 4.6. Call on all concerned sectors such as ministries, institutions, development partners, civil societies, communities and parents or guardians to join youth development.

5. Strategies

To achieve those above mentioned goals and objectives, strategies as followings are set:

5.1 .Develop legal framework and mechanism

- Create legal instruments and other mechanisms for support and effective implementation of the policies through cooperation of all parties concerned.
- Improve and speed up the implementation of national policy, legal frameworks and the new and existing mechanisms.
- Develop national action plans on youth development and other programs with clear activities, timelines, resources and responsibilities of each ministry and institution.

5.2. Promotion of education, training and capacity building

- Ensure that youth, especially the vulnerable and disable youth, can get access to education and vocational trainings.
- Promote life skills that respond to daily needs of youth and labor market.
- Promote quality of education of technology, science and foreign languages at all levels of education in response to social needs and in accordance with local and international standard.
- Ensure that Cambodian youth can complete at least basic education and reduce dropout rate at all levels of education.
- Create youth centers and vocational training centers and encourage youth to actively participate in education and vocational trainings at the community level.
- Encourage educational and vocational training institutions, public and private establishments and relevant authorities to motivate and provide opportunity for you to take part in various activities.
- Encourage training of entrepreneurship for youth with connection with opportunity to start small, medium and large business.

5.3. Increase the education, care and provision of health service

- Develop and broaden health education and increase opportunity to get information concerning education and prevention of certain problems such as health, productive health, traffic accidents, and work-related accidents, hygiene and clean water use, mental health, suicide and prevention of use of violence.

- Create mechanisms that engage youth to participate in health education activities and community outreach that benefit youth.
- Increase easy access to health care service for youth with quality, including physical and mental health care service and social service for youth victims of violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Strengthen social security network to ensure that youth living in extreme poverty can have access to health care service and continue to prioritize prevention, treatment and care of vulnerable youth.
- Educate, support and take care of girls who are pregnant prior to their maturity. Provide health care staff with good skills for them and with involvement of all relevant sectors and communities.
- Increase communication between parents or guardians and health care consultants on health service, attitude and sexual behavior.

5.4. Increase entrepreneurship and labor market

- Push forward cooperation among ministries, public institutions and private sectors in order to ensure improvement of labor market and entrepreneurship for youth, especially prioritized youth groups, and strengthen partnership with youth in education and trainings in order to ease the labor market.
- Promote skill trainings and provide information about job announcements to job seekers.
- Develop a plan to follow up and respond to the need of labor market.
- Promote safe working environment ensuring that there is no exploitation of workers' remuneration and any other forms of exploitation, and promote social support for families.
- Provide youth with opportunity for self-development and equal protection and freedom to express their concerns, management and participation in decision-making process that can affect their lives.
- Encourage youth to have a concept of entrepreneurship in initiating and managing their own business and provide services aiming at supporting their business and making them aware of market competition.
- Encourage and provide opportunity for youth to start small, medium and large businesses and provide some funds for their starting and strengthening of their business.

5.5. Promote protection of social security, peace and justice

- Push forward cooperation among all relevant institutions in protection of justice for youth and solutions for youth problems.
- Raise awareness among youth of laws, human rights, interests, obligations, structures and personal responsibilities and provide consultation concerning other issues.
- Develop and implement all initiatives at commune level to prevent all crimes occurring among youth.
- Reform judicial system and rehabilitation of youth who have committed crimes, reform prison condition, rehabilitate youth inmates, seek and push forward alternatives to imprisonment of youth.
- Facilitate communication between parents or guardians and authorities in judicial system in order to prevent violence, crimes and any other risks to youth.

5.6 Increase youth's participation

- Facilitate youth's participation in local communities and institutions.
- Push forward a formal mechanism for effective participation of youth with civil society.
- Push forward youth's representation in national commissions or national councils and any other commissions at the sub-national level and regional level, and guarantee integration of youth into the process of decentralization and co-decentralization.
- Seek support from policy makers, program managers, service providers and other leaders so that they will acknowledge youth's capacity and respect youth's rights to participate in the process of development of communities and the nation.
- Set up programs for youth to collect, discuss, analyze and impart information and to produce information that is suitable for youth.
- Push forward youth's participation, expression and decision making in educational sectors.
- Support youth's participation in making policies and legal regulations that serve their interests.

5.7 Promote relaxation, leisure activities, and sports

- Build sports infrastructures and stadiums and promote youth's participation in sports and sports training in order to promote their physical and mental health and to be better prepared for sports competition at the national and international levels.
- Promote youth's awareness of sports values, their participation in sports, physical education activities and sports competition, and seek supports from parents, communities, schools, clubs, sports federations and politicians in order to develop all kinds of sports.
- Promote leisure activities by individuals and in groups that are dignified (in a friendly way and for the purpose of cultural exchange).

5.8. Promoting Art and Culture

- Promoting the value of education and knowledge of national tradition, history, religion, and preservation of national heritage
- Promoting and supporting any initiative regarding the music, painting, architecture, film, Khmer literature, and other forms of art

- Promoting education basing on the basic principle of art and culture, youth participation in community-based cultural activities and artisans
- Encourage contribution and join responsibility in art and culture institutions, gathering human resource on training young writers and artists, promoting creative products

5.9. Promoting Knowledge on Environment, Agriculture, and Tourism

- Increase youth awareness of environmental issues, environmental protection and preservation
- Increase youth awareness between development and sustainability
- Increase the circulation of environmental issues, agriculture, and tourism through curriculum, and media, which focus on individual and group activities
- Promote the cooperation between youth and skilled training institutions, which aims to build up youth capacity on protection and preservation of environment
- Encourage an effort to protect natural environment and cultural environment everywhere, especially those near the temples and costal area
- Compile documents which relate to sustainable and responsible tourism development
- Increase youth understanding of business and other sectors.

5.10. Increase volunteer work

- Increase youth understanding of the important of volunteer work and its benefit and build volunteer network in national and sub-national level.
- Encourage volunteer movement and put it into the national strategic plan and charitable activities.
- Officially recognizing and awarding any youth who has committed to volunteer work
- Support local volunteer initiative, NGOs which relate to volunteer work and volunteer youth network
- Coordinate mechanisms has be established and effective cooperation between government, local and international NGOs has to be increased to assist the youth

5.11. Promote Gender Equity

- Strengthen the implementation of laws, policies, and legal framework which promote the gender equity in every situations
- Encourage public, private sector, and civil society to pay attention on inequity gender issue and find solutions to the problems
- Promote leadership roles and rights in decision making roles of young women in the families, communities and society.

- Integrate and carefully analyze gender inequality issues in every action plan of National Policy on Youth Development and raise awareness of this issue among our young men and women through education and vocational training.
- Raise awareness of gender knowledge among youth, building strong foundation on the respect of human rights in Cambodia and effective partnership between men and women in the process of sustainable and faire development in respect

5.12. Drug Prevention and Rehabilitation

- Establish mechanism and implement action plans to prevent and protect our youth from producing, selling, trafficking, and storing illegal drug
- Establish peer education mechanism to raise awareness of risk and consequence of drug
- Push for cooperation between ministries, public institution and private sector by creating and strengthening education, protection, and prevention strategies so that our youth can be safe from all kinds of illegal drugs
- Increase and develop rehabilitation centers to treat, rehabilitate, and provide skill training to victims and integrate them back to the society

6. Action Plan

In order to achieve the above mentioned strategies, the following activities have to be considered:

6.1. Mechanism Establishment

- Establish National Council for the Development of Cambodian Youth, a mechanism coordinating, monitoring, evaluating and assisting the government in the process of developing youth. The council has a secretariat and a few specialist national sub-committee who are in charge of implementing and supporting the activities
- Establish Ministry Council for the Development of Youth which is an institution monitoring, and evaluating the development of youth and preparing the report to the national council
- Establish Council for the Development of Youth in Province and Capital which is a network of National Council for the Development of Youth and a sub national council which coordinates and assist province/capital governors in developing the youth in the province/capital
- Establish District Council for the Development of Youth which is a mechanism coordinating the process of developing youth in district level

- Establish Council for the Development of Youth in Commune which is a mechanism coordinating the process of development of local youth
- Strengthen the existing mechanisms for the development of youth

6.2. Establishment of Legal framework

- National Council for the Development of Youth is under the leadership of prime minister. Member of the council have to be appointed by royal degree.
- The establishment and procedure of the council is set by the degree.
- Council for the Development of Youth of Ministries, Institutions, and sub-national committee and council for the development of youth in province and capital are set by decision of the National Council for the development of youth.
- Council for the Development of Youth in district is set by the decision of the Council for the Development of Youth in province and capital.
- Council for the development of youth in commune is set by the decision of the council for the development of youth in district’.

6.3. Financial Support

National Council for the Development of Youth uses the budget of the ministry of youth, education and sport and budget from other sources.

6.4. Capacity Building

In order to ensure the effectiveness of implementing policy on youth development, Cambodian has to focus its training on leadership skill, planning, and data analysis which relate to youth.

6.5. Process of Implementing the Projects

To prepare the youth development plan in a [វគ្គៈពេលវេលា] with consultation from all stakeholders so that the effective implementation of the policy can be insured. The plan has to reflect the government’s vision in future development of the youth and it has to response to national strategic plan. This plan has to be implemented in the framework of government political platform.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to ensure that the implementation of the policy covers all context of Cambodia, a system of monitoring, evaluation, review and request for the improvement of the implementation are as the following:

- Target, and strategies of national policy for the development of youth
- Indicators of national plan on the development of the youth

- Result compared to target
- Youth participation in the national building
- Benefits youth get from the implementing the policy

8. Conclusion

National Policy on Youth Development recognizes the dream, needs and condition of youth by precisely specifying the vision, purpose, goal and strategy to mobilize young Cambodians, aiming to develop youth to become good citizen with knowledge, skills, creativity, initiative, and entrepreneurship skill, which are the potential factors for the economical development of the country.

Government firmly hopes that the ministries, relevant institutions, development partners, civil society, communities, family, and individual work hand in hand to promote, circulate, implement, and support the national policy for the development of the youth in Cambodia.

Note: Informal translation by Khmer Youth Congress, Cambodian youth organization.

Website: <http://khmeryouthcongress.org/>

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