



UN Volunteers and youth volunteers engaged in a pilot innovative approach to develop youth skills through volunteering, as part of a partnership between UNV and Cambodia, funded by IBSA.

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## South-South Cooperation: Reducing poverty in Cambodia by developing the skills of youth through volunteerism

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has been partnering with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Cambodia on an innovative approach to developing youth skills through volunteering, funded by the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA) Fund. On the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the 1978 adoption by consensus of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, we showcase this successful example of South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

The partnership of UNV, IBSA Fund and the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport aimed to increase the ability of Cambodian youth to build their skills and find decent work through volunteerism, as well as contribute better to their own development and the economic development of their country by reducing poverty amongst youth.

“ From July 2017 to October 2018, the project mobilized 15 UN Volunteers onsite, 8 Online Volunteers online, 1,438 other volunteers. Through the project, ten knowledge projects were produced and 15,792 participants were reached. The project lasted 22 months, until June 2019.

Project activities include the Assessment of Youth Centers, Job Centers and CBRCs, Youth Volunteering and Employability Activities; Study Tour; Pilot Program for Volunteering During National School Holiday; International Volunteer Day and National Forum on Volunteerism; and Youth Volunteerism Outreach Sessions. In addition, there were activities related to Cambodia’s Entrepreneurship Day, International Youth Day, Dream Magazine and Thematic Workshops.

“ *Through better definition and recognition of skills gained through volunteering, the project aspired to change the perception of employers and the general public towards volunteerism, and impact positively on the lives of thousands of Cambodian youth.*

## Background

Cambodia has entered a period where youth is the predominant proportion of its population with more than 50 percent being youth aged below 25 years old and 20.6 percent between 15 and 24. The current context of this demographic dividend has posed both an opportunity and a challenge to Cambodia.

With a large portion of youth on the demographic dividend equals a large amount of labor force, an essential driving force for the development of

Cambodia. Yet, this will only work if there are adequate decent job opportunities as well as Cambodian youth possesses ability and skills to enter the labor market.

However, Cambodia has been trapped in cycle of systematic underinvestment in education and skills building at both macro and micro levels. Additionally, according to UNDAF 2016-2018, one fifth of Cambodian population remains in poverty, which is one among the factors why students do not attend class and decide to drop out from school.

This results in the reduction of human capital and an increase in low valued sectors like construction or manufacturing. What's more is that young people is more likely to be unemployed comparing to adult (three times higher). This in turn has forced many young Cambodian people to migrate from rural to urban in search for better paid jobs.



[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia\\_VNR\\_PublishingHLPF.pdf#page=37](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf#page=37)



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