

Summary Report on the Findings of the Survey

**“E-Learning Experiences of
Students in Cambodia”**



18 May 2020

1. Introduction

This summary report is prepared from the findings of a survey that was conducted with students and parents or guardians via an electronic system for three weeks, from 4-23 May 2020. The purpose of this survey was to understand Cambodian students' experience of e-learning after the announcement to implement such a system by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in late March.¹⁻²

The Social Action for Community and Development team is grateful for the valuable time given by students, parents and guardians who participated in this survey.

This report is a small contribution by the Social Action for Community and Development team to improve the quality of the public education for all in Cambodia.

2. Report and Limitations

This summary report is divided into four parts: Part 1 on Introduction, Part 2 on the Report and Limitations, Part 3 on the Summary of Findings and Part 4 on the Suggestions of Students and Parents or Guardians.

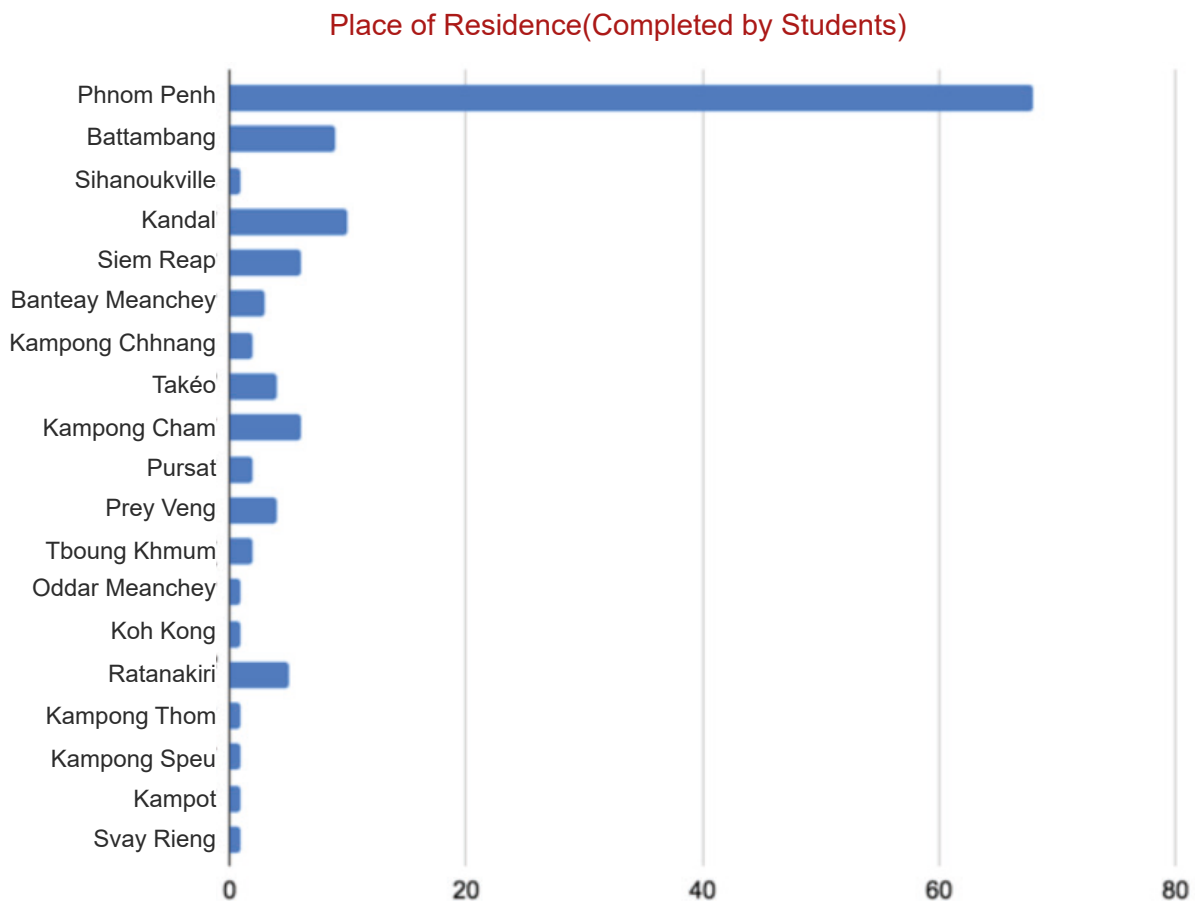
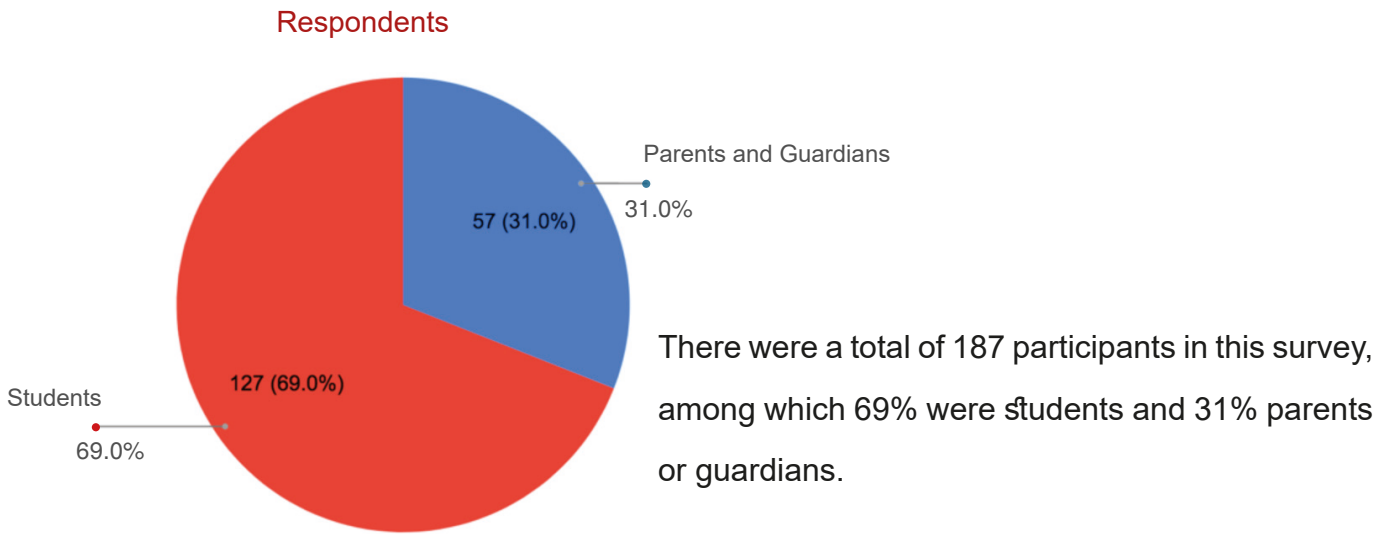
The findings in this report do not represent the voices and experiences of students across the country; rather it covers the specific experiences of students and parents or guardians who participated in this survey. Our team suggests that institutions active in this sector conduct a deeper study with a broader scope to cover the experiences of students across Cambodia.

¹ Press Release on E-Learning to Assist Students dated 13 March 2020

² Press Release on Implementation of Small Vacation with Undetermined Period for Public and Private General Education Institutions in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap dated 24 March 2020 in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

3. Summary of Findings

A. Information about Students and Parents or Guardians

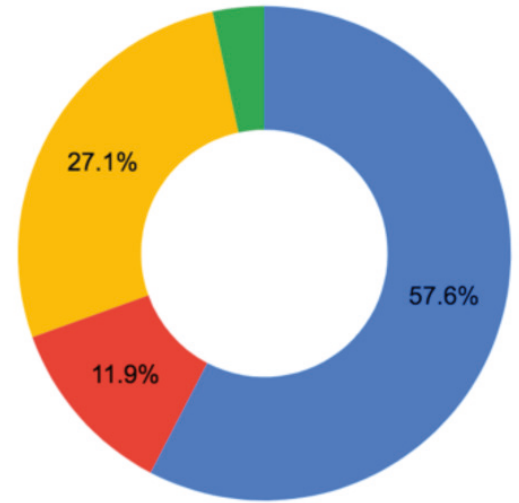
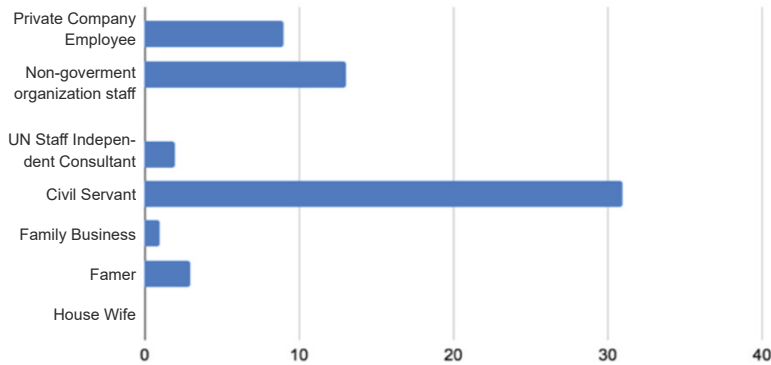


Almost 60% of the students that participated in this survey are female and currently reside in Phnom Penh. They are between 18 and 24 years old.

The Number of Children, Wieces, or Nephews who are studying

● 2 - 3 ● 4 -5 ● 1 ● More than 5

Parents and Guardians Occupation

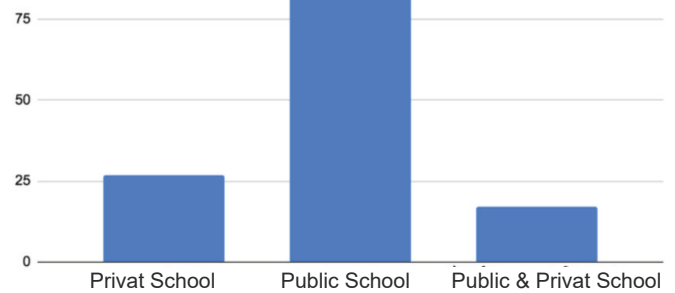


Most parents or guardians who participated in this survey are fathers or male relatives working as public servants residing in Phnom Penh. Almost 60% of the parents or guardians are looking after two to three children in school aged between 6 and 12 years old. Less than 40% of them have older children or nieces and nephews aged between 13 and 18 years old.

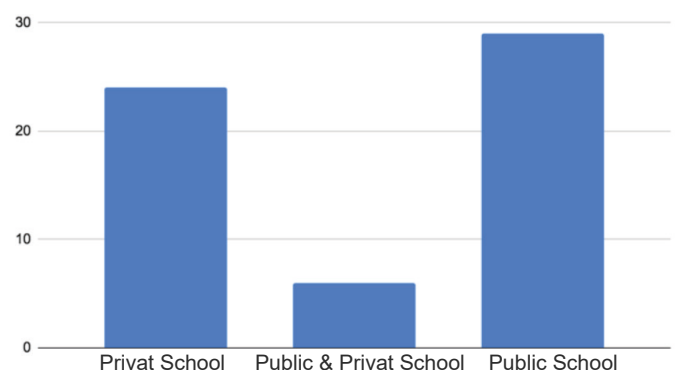
B. Information about the Studies

Nearly half of the students in the survey study at university level and almost 40% study in high school. Regarding educational institutions, 65% answered that they are studying in public educational institutions (state schools), while 21% are studying in private schools. More than 60% answered that their children or nieces/nephews are studying at primary school level and 20% have children or nieces/nephews studying at high school level. Similarly, 49% of the parents or guardians responded that their children or nieces/nephews are studying at state schools and another 40% are studying at private schools.

Educational Institution (Attended by Student)

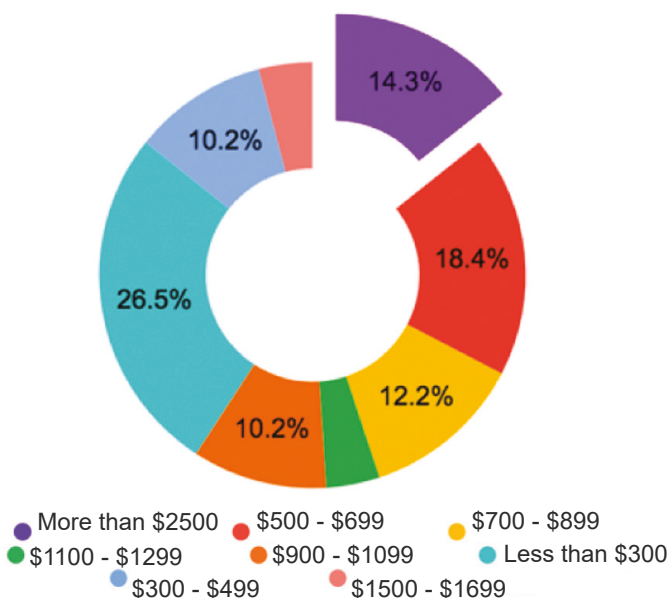


Educational Institution (Attended by Parents or Guardians)

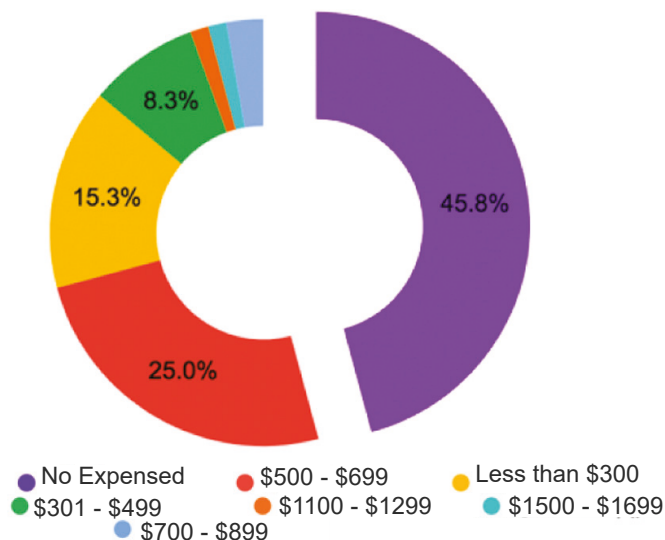


In Cambodia, general education from kindergarten to high school in public institutions is free. However, to continue onto higher education, students, parents or guardians need to spend money. More than 40% of the students answered that they do not spend money on (state) school tuition fees. Fewer than 30% of the students answered that they spend between 500 and 699 dollars per year on state school tuition fees. This expense appears high for the many students who struggle to pursue their studies at higher education level. But this fee is still low compared with the expense paid by the fewer than 14% of student survey participants who spend more than 2,500 dollars per year on their private school tuition fees.

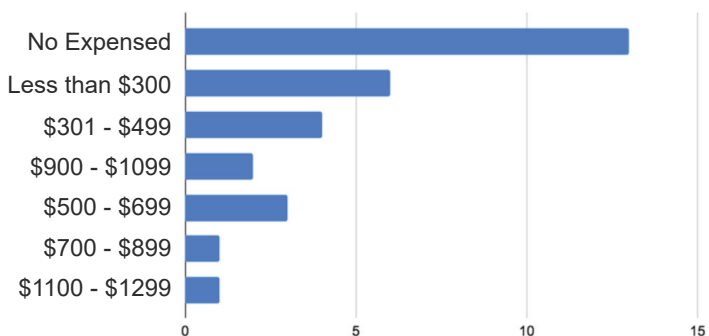
Private School Expensed (In USD)
Response by Students



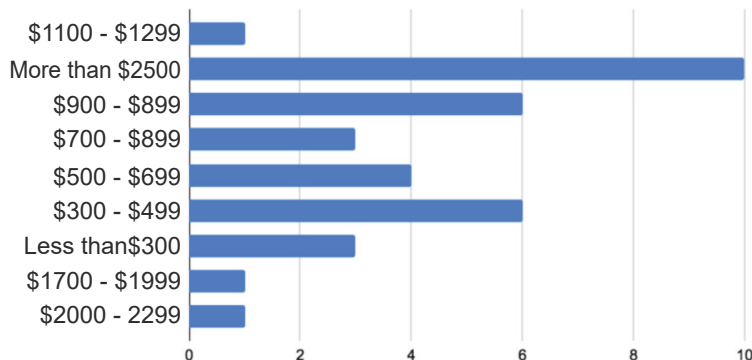
Public School Expense(In USD)
Response by Students



Private School Fee in USD
(Completed by Parents or Guardians)



Public School Fee in USD
(Completed by Parents or Guardians)



Almost half of the parents or guardians answered that they do not spend money on the education of their children or nieces/nephews who are studying at state schools. One in five parents spends between 301 and 699 dollars per year on education at public educational institutions. 30% of the parents or guardians spend more than 2,500 dollars per year on school tuition fees at private schools for their children or nieces/nephews. For some parents, the quality of education, safety, and progress of their children are priority. Due to greater confidence in the educational system provided by private institutions rather than public institutions, they have chosen to invest and spend a lot of money on their children's education in private schools. However, for a lower-middle income country (between 1,026 and 4,035 dollars per capita per year)³ such as Cambodia, the above expenses, including the cost of state higher education, reflect the inequity and obstacles in attaining an education. Therefore, strengthening the quality of education in public institutions is crucial to ensure that no one is left behind.

C. E-Learning Experiences

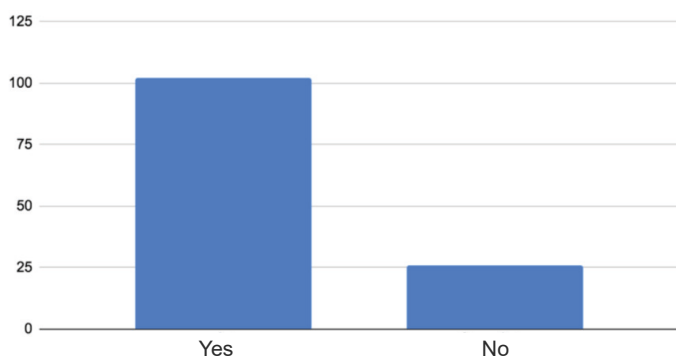
More than 80% of the students and parents or guardians are aware of e-learning and said that studying with such a system is beneficial to them. They reported that through e-learning, they:

1. Acquire new skills, especially skills on using the internet.
2. Build confidence on using the electronic system.
3. Gain knowledge on how to download the required data.
4. Receive up to date and mixed information.
5. Know that they can practice immediately.

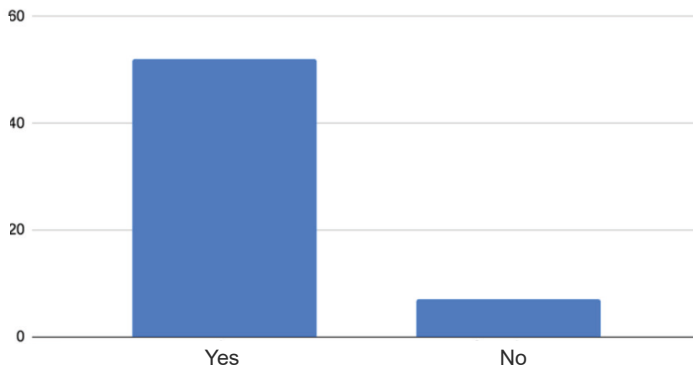
However, one respondent answered that he/she does not need to wear uniform and can behave freely during e-learning.

³ "Cambodia is now a lower-middle income economy: What does this mean?" World Bank Article (Retrieved on 18 June 2020)
<https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/cambodia-is-now-a-lower-middle-income-economy-what-does-this-mean>

Have you experienced any challenge in E-Learning?(Completed by Students)



Have your Children, nieces and nephews experienced or any challenge in the E-Learning?



Although some benefits have been mentioned, obstacles were also raised by most of the students and parents or guardians in this survey. These obstacles include additional expenses on internet fees and educational materials (computers, smart phones, iPad or tablets), and having to spend a lot of time online, especially when the internet connection is not stable. Family livelihood factor during COVID-19 period and the residency location are not in favour of e-learning. In addition to the above obstacles, some participants mentioned that they cannot meet friends and directly ask their teachers questions, or feel stressed because of the complicated e-learning system. Moreover, some participants mentioned their unreadiness because they have not received guidelines or did not know how to study via this system in advance.

Some parents and guardians also responded that they feel stressed because of the need to spend more time than before in helping to teach their children or nieces/nephews. For most parents or guardians who have more than two children in school, the e-learning system is a double burden for them. One of the parents/guardians raised a concern over the quality of education and their children's relationship in society during the e-learning period.

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“In my view, e-learning provides benefits to some learners who know how to use it and use it properly. But for those who do not know how to use it or do not know its impacts, especially children, it is extremely dangerous when used as the medium for learning. It can turn the kids into another person or the kids can lose their relationship in society.”

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“Schools or the ministry should not put more burdens on the teachers and students during this difficult time because of COVID-19. People need time to take care of the family but they need to take the additional burden. Teaching children is a normal thing but it is not necessary to do it during this time when everyone needs to stay patient and focus on our livelihood and family’s health.”

”

4. Students and Parents or Guardians’ Suggestions

“Request the state and private schools, during this difficult time, to provide support to students. Sometimes, teachers teach online for only 1 hour and then the students need to do self-study for the whole day. This is a serious mistake of those teachers who think that students need to be responsible for themselves. Even for schools to which I send my children to study in grade 5 and for which I need to spend up to 5,000 dollars, the quality of online teaching is not acceptable.”

Although some parents or guardians said that they are more confident in direct education (face-to-face education) than this e-learning system, there is a request to the state (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport) to continue providing support and subsidies to studies conducted via this system, especially during COVID-19 period to a broader extent. The parents or guardians also suggest that private and state schools give discounts on their children’s tuition fees. They believe that both the quality and study time do not reflect the fee that they spend when compared with direct face-to-face education. Some students suggest an exemption on internet charges and to push the use of this learning system across the country.

Some parents or guardians also mentioned that this e-learning can only be used for a short period and cannot be used in the long run, citing the lower quality of education via this system. For some other students who cannot afford e-learning because of livelihood factors or because the priority is given to food or family’s health, especially during COVID-19 period, it is likely that studying via this system does not help to strengthen their ability, help to improve quality of education or help their studies during this period. Some parents or guardians also expressed their concerns about the decreasing relationship between students and teachers and classmates during the e-learning period, which is a major feature of education.



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More Information



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