Motivational Level of Cambodian Teachers and the Government Policies to Attract and Retain Competent Teachers

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Teachers are the most important factors to bring out the education quality in students.

In 1966, the UNESCO-ILO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers was formed.

- Teacher status promotion (both social and financial)
- Rights of the teachers
- Responsibilities of teachers
- Recognition of their roles, etc.

Some countries adopt this recommendation; some ignore it; and some do more than the recommendation per se.

The countries which perform well on PISA or TIMSS have strong policies to attract and maintain qualified teachers. Finland, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, etc.
The most discussed teacher issues in Cambodia lie around the quality and shortage.

The Khmer Rouge killed and starved many Cambodian intellects to death (1975-1979).

To rebuild the human resources, Cambodia adapted a maxim ‘those who know little teach those who know nothing’. 5,000 primary schools were run by around 21,000 primary school teachers by 1980.

Now, there are 89,651 public teachers. Still, there is a shortage in rural areas due to transferring.

Multi-grade, double-shift teaching, contract teachers

Teaching is not the first option for most Cambodian students.
Again, based on much research in Cambodia, teaching is not the first option for most Cambodian teachers.

- Low salaries ➔ Low social status
- No social and health insurance
- No voice in educational decision
- High workload
- Low chance of professional development
- Poor teaching resources and working environment, etc.

⇒ Little attention to their teaching
⇒ Heavy lateness and absenteeism
⇒ Moonlight jobs or new jobs finally
WHY did they apply for this profession? And WHAT keep some teachers motivated in their jobs?

- They want to make changes in society by providing young generation with good quality education.
- They love teaching and working with children.
- They work with a hope that there will be a reform over teacher status, as it was in the former king’s administration.
- Some of them see it as the last option of jobs.
Recent Government Policies to Attract and Maintain Teachers
In 2013, the teacher policy was formulated.

To develop teachers with quality, competencies and accountability in line with their professional code of conduct as well as providing enabling conditions to fulfil their profession effectively and efficiently.

Policy 2 was created to attract competent persons into teaching profession.

Policy 7 is to motivate teachers so that they will not leave their profession once they have entered.
Since then, a number of actions have been taken. For instance:

- **January 2013**
  Professorship for the HEI teachers
  Best teachers for the general education level (reinforcement)

- **August 2013**
  Lowest salary was raised to around 80USD excluding the function payment (In total around 100USD)

- **July 2014**
  Mission and travel expense was raised to promote professional development of the government staff

Many other minor actions were also taken recently. Detailed action plan is under construction now (August 22).
The issues concerning teacher development in Cambodia are around their quality and shortage. These two problems are the results of their low professional motivation and no mechanisms to attract and retain teachers.

However, the fifth-mandate Royal Government of Cambodia has been putting much effort in reforming public sectors, and teachers are now receiving more and more attention and their statuses are being raised, as the new minister of education is committed to working out the teacher issues.
Thank You