



Research article

Development through vocational education. The lived experiences of young people at a vocational education, training restaurant in Siem Reap, Cambodia



Amanda Miller*

University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Education
 Vocational education
 Development
 Capabilities approach
 Migration
 Siem Reap
 Cambodia
 Unfreedoms
 Modernity

ABSTRACT

In Cambodia, approximately half the population experience multidimensional poverty. The youthful population provides a demographic opportunity to achieve sustained and diversified economic growth in support of increased well-being of the population, however, skill shortages amongst youth significantly limit Cambodia's ambitions. This paper explores whether vocational education is a constructive development initiative to redress gaps in education in Cambodia, and progress social and economic outcomes for the future. The dataset that underpins this article includes empirical research that was conducted on-site over two months in a Non-Government Organization (NGO) vocational hospitality school strategically located in the tourist district of Siem Reap, Cambodia. In addition to hospitality skills training, the NGO supported the human development of the students through a capabilities approach. The rights based, participatory research enquires into the lived experiences of one cohort of students who migrated to Siem Reap from poor rural communities to find employment and escape poverty and hunger. Results conclude that students faced competing demands between their gendered, traditional cultural values and the experiences of equity and empowerment provided in their hospitality training. Conclusions drawn through the student's narratives facilitate a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of impoverished migrant youth in Siem Reap and contribute to a better understanding of the human development impact of vocational training through a capabilities approach. These findings are pertinent for other communities navigating through development based, vocational education programs.

1. Introduction

Decades of civil war, the Khmer Rouge period, occupation by external forces, systemic corruption (ranked 162 of 180 countries, [Transparency International, 2020](#)) and an authoritarian government under Hun Sen (1985 to present), have left Cambodia far less developed than its neighbours ([UNDP, 2013](#)). Strong economic growth, fuelled in part by the garment industry and tourism have boosted the Human Development Index (HDI) ([World Bank, 2017](#)). However, this figure was downgraded by 20.1 per cent to reflect the 'loss' in human development due to the inequality of the 45.8 per cent of the population that experience 'multi-dimensional poverty' ([UNDP, 2018:6](#)). The inequality adjusted HDI reflects the three dimensions of 'long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living' ([ADB & ILO, 2015:6](#)). Malnutrition causes 45 per cent of child deaths and 32 per cent of children to be

stunted and 10 per cent wasted (too thin for their height) ([UNICEF, 2019](#)).

Home to the largest youth population in South East Asia, Cambodia has the potential to benefit economically and socially from a low dependency¹ ratio. Of the 16.5 million people, 65.3 per cent are under the age of 30 ([UNDP, 2020](#)), and only five per cent older than 65 ([ADB & ILO, 2015](#)). Each year approximately 300,000 young Cambodians enter the labour market, although most do not possess the necessary skills ([UNDP, 2020](#)). Cambodia requires a skilled labour force to 'take advantage of this demographic bonus period, a one-time opportunity for development' ([UNDP, 2020:n.p.](#)). These demographic features identify Cambodia as a fertile site for development initiatives facilitating vocational education programs to progress social and economic development.

Historical, political, economic and gender barriers have impacted educational attainment in Cambodia. The country is still recovering from

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: amiller1@usc.edu.au.¹ The number of dependents aged zero to 14 and over the age of 65, compared with the working aged population between 15 and 64.

the Khmer Rouge period (1975–79) that destroyed the education system and resulted in the death of approximately two million people, including 75 per cent of teachers, 96 per cent of university students, and 67 per cent of all primary and secondary school pupils (Benveniste et al., 2008). The influx of NGOs in the early 1990's was welcomed by the Cambodian Government who continue to rely on International support (Ear, 2013) including from NGOs for education (Guiney and Mostafanezhad, 2015). Cambodia allocates only 1.9 per cent of GDP to education and is ranked 183 of 197 countries (The World Bank, 2019). As a result, teachers are paid chronically low salaries. Although education is theoretically free, teachers survive financially by imposing unofficial charges for private tutoring (culturally accepted within the patronage system), for students to receive, for example, the curriculum content necessary to complete the subject, examination papers, or to park their bikes at school (Brehm and Silova, 2014). The inability to pay these informal fees was the most common reason parents gave for their children dropping out of school (IRIN, 2013). As is customary in the Cambodian, gendered, collectivist society, these families decided on which child or children (usually boys), based on available funds, would continue their education. Schools are also sparsely distributed in rural areas and difficult to access. Furthermore, there is little incentive for poor people to pursue education for long term economic benefit, because of a lack of confidence in the system, and, marginal differences in monthly earnings between workers with primary, lower, upper secondary education (ADB & ILO, 2015; Klutetz, 2015) or vocational education (ADB, 2018). This broad social and historical context points to present gaps in education and training that have potential to be redressed with funded vocational education training in Cambodia.

Tourism provides economic opportunities for young Cambodians, yet these opportunities are limited by existing inequalities in education and cultural capital, in particular, English language skills. In 2018, 2.5 million International tourists (Spiess, 2018) generating US\$116 million in income (Vannak, 2019), visited World Heritage listed, Angkor Archaeological Park near Siem Reap. This influx of tourists constitutes a thriving hospitality sector, which could provide major social, development and economic opportunities for Cambodians. Hospitality training programs are limited with only one per cent of Cambodians having received vocational training (ADB, 2018) which is for most prohibitively expensive, due to course, relocation and accommodation costs and a lack of income during training² (ADB, 2018). The cultural requirement for young people to financially contribute and care for the elderly are also impediments (Cheng, 2010). Education is often not perceived as a viable investment because the poor lack the resources to 'buy in' to the patronage system that provide work and social opportunities (Fitzgerald and Sovannarith, 2007). Employers identifies insufficient job skills with 42.5 per cent of youth undereducated (ADB & ILO, 2015) with low standards in reading, writing, mathematics, computing and communication (ADB, 2018). Young people from rural areas are further disadvantaged in gaining employment because they have not had an opportunity to develop an understanding of Western standards and expectations or 'soft skills'³ (Glasser, 2012), or develop English language (or other) proficiency (SNV 2011). Cambodian youth also face job competition from their more qualified and experienced free trade region neighbours from the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Cheng, 2015). For the poor, potential employment in tourism is therefore limited to the low paying and seasonal, informal tourist economy, which includes 1 and 2-star accommodation and small, locally owned restaurants, or selling to tourists on the streets (SNV, 2011). Therefore,

² Pers. comm. Mr Chheng, Youth Employment Scheme (YES), 14 December 2015. YES is a NGO providing job application and interview skills and information on available employment to disadvantaged youth.

³ 'Soft skills' are non-technical skills, such as leadership, teamwork, conflict management, problem solving, creativity, communication skills and personal hygiene (Doyle, 2019).

consideration of these social and cultural factors is vital when exploring the feasibility of vocational education in the Cambodian context.

The Asian Development Bank (2018:2) identifies additional challenges faced by, the Cambodian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system including lack of financial resources and quality assurance, inexperienced trainers and outdated training methods and equipment. International aid, on which Cambodia relies, channelled funds into basic education, a philosophy encouraged by Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2; achieve universal primary education (Cheng, 2015). Cambodia's high youth under and unemployed suffered as a result (Cheng, 2015). It is important to redress these deficits in future TVET projects.

The successor to the MDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were subsequently developed to address the root causes of poverty and the holistic nature of development (UNESCO, 2016). SDG 4 acknowledges the importance of (TVET) as a core part of successful and sustainable development for 'the acquisition of technical and vocational skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship; the elimination of gender disparity and ensuring access for the vulnerable' (UNESCO, 2016). TVET is now acknowledged as a 'necessary element in the development strategies of developing countries' providing employment and the skills needed for industry (Wilkins, 2002).

A literature review evidences the contribution of TVET for human and economic development in the region and beyond. The Asian Tigers⁴ and Japan are examples of countries with well-established and successful TVET programs that have contributed to their citizens human and their countries major economic development since the 1960s (Agrawal, 2013). Singapore is internationally recognised for TVET's 'relevance, quality and values in a world economy' and remains responsive to changing labour force requirements (Agrawal, 2013:23). During 2011 the Brazilian government prioritised resource allocation to TVET and targeted social and productive inclusion of the poor and vulnerable and emphasised 'entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, self-esteem, health, rights, duties and cooperative thinking' (Portela-Souza et al., 2015:17). As a result, average enrollments increased by 47 per cent from 2011 – 2014 and stimulated economic growth through new investment and innovation priorities (Portela-Souza et al., 2015). Palestine's TVET Program provided an 'eight fold benefit for young women compared to their non VET peers' and graduates of both sexes experienced half the unemployment rate of non VET graduates (Hilal and McGrath, 2016). Vocational education qualifications command higher wages than general secondary education, for example 20 per cent in India (Agrawal, 2017) and up to 12.5 per cent in Brazil (Portela-Souza et al., 2015). Therefore, where successful, TVET has capacity to boost wage growth and GDP.

Skill shortages are a significant constraint to Cambodia's aspirations for strong, sustained and inclusive economic growth. Strong partnerships between Government, NGOs and the hospitality industry are required to finance the Government's new TVET Policy of improving governance, providing equitable access and supporting sustainable development while producing the skilled labour required to meet national and international demand (ADB, 2018). Research presented herewith can support these learnings to contribute to design of more culturally appropriate, capabilities strong TVET initiatives, that deliver economic benefits that filter through local and international markets.

2. Methodology and approach: rights based, participatory research

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: What are the lived experiences of a cohort of students who migrated to Siem Reap from poor rural communities and are now enrolled at a NGO hospitality vocational training course? Has the capabilities approach been delivered by the vocational training provided

⁴ The Asian Tigers are the high growth economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan (The Economist, 2019).

by the NGO and if so how has this progressed the human development of these students? Does the training program support and align with the SDGs? That is, the three components of human development identified by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2010): physical and mental well-being; empowerment and agency; and justice and equity.

This research employed rights-based participatory, empirical research methodologies which are extensively used by children's geographers to enable children and young people to tell their stories from their own perspectives. This approach departs from previous works in this area that have critiqued NGO practice through measuring labour market outcomes rather than the students and their personal experiences of TVET (McGrath and Powell, 2015). Participatory research was incorporated into the research design as it acknowledges the active agency of individuals and involves working *with* people rather than obtaining data *from* them (Beazley and Ennew, 2006; Cahill, 2004). In this study, the rights based, qualitative data analysis processes outlined in Ennew and Plateau (2004), Dowling (2005) and Winchester (2005) were followed.

Rights-based research requires the participant be provided all relevant information to enable them to make an informed decision as to their participation (Ennew, 1995). The project, explaining all aspects of the research and how a rights based, participatory processes would be effected within the Cambodian context was approved by the Australian based University Ethics Committee. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the participant's identities. As a qualitative study, this data is not collected to generate statistical significance for quantitative analysis. Rather, the student's narratives contribute to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of impoverished migrant youth participating in TVET in Siem Reap, which is necessary to address the research questions. Qualitative data elucidates human environments, individual experiences and social processes.

The NGO where the research occurred does not usually engage foreign volunteers. This supports local employment and is also cited as one strategy in enforcing their rigorous child protection policies. However, I was granted special permission to conduct PhD research with the students by the Western (English) NGO regional manager, Cambodian teachers, social workers and other managers whom I am most grateful to because all agreed to participate in the research. All informants provided informed consent which included the option to withdraw their involvement at any time. The research participants comprised one cohort of 16 students aged 16–22 with an equal gender balance. I conducted my research during English classes where I supported the Cambodian English teacher for three half days per week for two months. This had the mutually beneficial goal of practicing English, and generating data. Central to the participatory approach is the process of building a rapport and progressively gaining the student's confidence and trust. Focus group discussions, writing and role play activities formed the basis of our English classes. FGDs enable children and young people to be active agents and explain the diversity of their own experiences, perceptions and perspectives (Beazley and Ennew, 2006; Beazley, 2015; Reas, 2015). I also taught the students how to use a digital camera which they subsequently utilised to capture scenes that we would later view and discuss together in our classes. These Photovoice activities were very popular with the students because they provided an opportunity to engage with technology. Students indicated this mixed methods approach was useful in building trust with the researcher, as it was demonstrable of a genuine desire to see their world through their eyes. Participant observation and notetaking were also employed and is a method extensively used and highly regarded by children's geographers to obtain information from target groups who are behaving normally; that is, as though the researcher is not there (Beazley and Ennew, 2006; Reas, 2015; Beazley, 2017). Frequent patronage of the training restaurant provided the opportunity to 'blend in' to the tourist scape and observe the student's interactions with each-other and the customers. Participant observation is also an important means of validating or refuting information.

This qualitative approach interrogates human development from beyond an economic approach, to include the freedom to develop, and

the capability or opportunity to achieve desired outcomes. Nobel prize winning scholar, Amartya Sen (1999:5) argued, 'the enabling conditions of development are good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives'. The three components of human development identified by the UNDP (2010): physical and mental well-being; empowerment and agency; and justice and equity. This pairs with Sen (1999) Capabilities Approach which focuses on the actual opportunities or freedoms that people have to access the processes that enable actions and decisions that result in the ability to lead lives they value. The denial of any substantive freedoms are therefore considered 'unfreedoms' (Sen, 1999). The Critical Capabilities Approach (CCA) expands on Sen (1999) human development and capabilities approach. This was developed especially for the VET context to progress beyond skills and immediate employment, to focus on young people's aspirations for meaningful work and lives (McGrath, 2018; Powell and McGrath, 2019). The concept of unfreedoms and human development through the capabilities approach, provide the theoretical framework for this specific research context. CCAs focus on 'attention to young people's voices' (McGrath et al., 2019) and aims to understand and respond to the student's experience of poverty, the intersectional disadvantage of women and that VET in facilitating 'decent work', provides respect, active citizenship and empowerment as outcomes (Powell and McGrath, 2018). The human development approach to VET removes the unfreedoms that constrain people to a life of poverty.

3. NGO vocational education hospitality school

The research site was an NGO restaurant and hospitality school, called Chnang, (a pseudonym meaning delicious in Cambodian) is a community development project designed to achieve sustainable, local ownership and management. This popular social enterprise in Siem Reap is solely funded by the proceeds of tourists dining at the training restaurant^{5,6}. It was 'created with the aim of graduating disadvantaged young adults into stable employment within the region's growing hospitality sector' (Asia Life, 2014). Training restaurants, financed by the proceeds of the socially conscious tourist diner, or *volummealism*⁷ has become a popular development initiative in the global South (Lyons et al., 2009:363).

Chnang operates on a residential apprenticeship system that predominantly caters to Western tourists. Students rotate through training in all aspects of the restaurant business: front of house, waitress/waiter, bar work, kitchen duties and chef. The students work six hours per day, six days per week and receive a small wage and uniforms. Accommodation is provided in a shared house (one each for girls and boys) under the care of a house mother who cleans and provides meals. The program typically takes 12–18 months to complete, with students progressing through the course at their own pace, graduating when deemed competent in all required skills. The course requires students attend English language classes for one hour each weekday. Viewed as a vital yet rare skill, the ability to speak English is a sought after attribute of employees in the hospitality sector (SNV, 2011). Globalisation and tourism have led to English continuing to grow in importance in Siem Reap (Hashim et al., 2014). The lack of fluency in English, experienced by many young Cambodians, can be regarded as an unfreedom, as it limits employability. The students' English language skills ranged from proficient to very good. Life skills including personal finance management, hygiene and health, (including the dangers of alcohol and drug use) were also an integral part of the students' training. A pedagogical approach that includes elements

⁵ Pers. comm., NGO Manager, 16 January 2015.

⁶ The high standard of training and quality dining experience is reflected in the restaurant being awarded number 7 of 717 restaurants in Siem Reap by TripAdvisor (2017).

⁷ A made up word to capture the dual function of giving back to society and feeding the tourist.

of a secondary school curriculum increases employability and citizenship (Lamonica et al., 2020) and was used by the NGO. The NGO has developed a reputation for developing high levels of job and social skills in their students so that all graduates are offered skilled positions in the hospitality sector on completion of the course⁸

Vocational education programs incorporating the critical capabilities approach require that the students' marginalised, disempowered and gendered experiences of poverty are understood (Powell and McGrath, 2019). This human centred approach generates and supports 'just livelihood opportunities' (Powell and McGrath, 2019:2). This research provides a culturally specific example of a NGO, vocational education model functioning in Cambodia. It is important to ascertain which models of VET can be implemented in different cultural contexts, and make any localised adjustments. In the unique cultural milieu of Cambodia, the VET model works well to scaffold onto the limited educational experiences of the students.

4. Migration, a calculated strategy of adaption

As a result of precarious work opportunities in Cambodia, migration is now 'a proactive, calculated strategy of adaption', where households respond to the unfreedoms imposed by poverty by sending family members abroad or to other major centres in country (Bylander, 2013:135). In 2016, 2.5 million people aged between 15 and 29 were classified as internal migrants (Van der Vaeren, 2016). Expenses are typically contributed by the family, borrowed from other village members or financed through microfinance institutions (MFIs), the access to which has 'grown dramatically throughout the developing world' (Bylander, 2014:284). This means that migrant youth often arrive in the tourist district with social and economic debts that must be paid off over their lifetime.

When asked why they migrated, discussions with the students revealed that farming in their villages was insecure and unprofitable, and that crops failed regularly due to an excess or lack of rain. This, they believed, was because the 'big woods were cut down'⁹ (Chantou, girl 16). With limited opportunities in the villages, and in accordance with Cambodian collectivist society, a family decision is made about which child will migrate (Gourley, 2009). Siem Reap was chosen as the destination because family and village members had heard of potential employment or support due to the large numbers of tourists and affiliated NGOs. Bonn (boy 18) explained that both his parents and five younger siblings lived on their small farm:

I liked school but the teacher was often not there because of the salary. My parents could not afford the costs of school. After I left school, I helped on the farm but our farm is small and there is not enough work or food so my family made the decision that I go to Siem Reap because we had heard of many jobs because of the tourists. Migration is a good opportunity, so often a family will sell land or borrow money from family.

Other students had made more independent decisions because there were few or no family members remaining in their village due to death or migration. Rathana (16) left his village at the age of 14 because:

my mother and father work in Thailand. My brother is dead. I lived with my grandmother but there was no school and no job so I decided to come to Siem Reap because of the tourists. I paid a man 5000 riel (USD1.25) to travel with him on the back of his motorbike.

Khorn (girl 18) explained that she migrated to Siem Reap one year ago because:

my parents are dead and my grandmother is sick. I want to help my grandmother and my younger sister but there was no money and many times, we are hungry so I decided to go to Siem Reap and stay with family. My uncle made contact with Chnang for me because he heard the training was very good. He drives a tuk-tuk and tourists told him that it was a very good and safe place.

In Cambodia, urban governments have not provided sufficient infrastructure and support mechanisms to cater for the social needs of migrants (Walton, 2005). This constitutes experiences of additional unfreedoms such as the inability to access accommodation and employment. All the boys, had travelled independently and without plans and initially lived on the streets while they sought employment. Life on the streets is particularly hazardous in Cambodia, due to the Government's 2006 legislation to remove children from the streets (Springer, 2009).

When I arrived, I stayed at the pagoda with the monks. I had to pay for food but not to stay. When there was no more money, I slept on the streets so I was arrested and sent to the centre (jail) to correct my mistakes¹⁰ (Rathana, boy 16).

By exercising their limited agency by migrating to Siem Reap, these young men found themselves in more precarious situations, where they encountered new unfreedoms that further constrained their choices.

5. Vocational education as a development initiative

All eight male research participants were found by the Chnang, NGO staff in jail having been arrested as street-children¹¹ or homeless, sheltering at night in the local market. Rathana (boy 16) explained:

when the staff found me (in jail), they were able to get me out and I stayed in the Chnang house. My family is very happy because this is good training and a good job.

After initial contact, the Chnang social worker travels with the potential student to their village to explain the training program and gain the consent of a family member or the village chief.

Another boy, Somnang (boy 17), recounted his story of being homeless when first in Siem Reap:

I am very lucky that they found me [homeless], took me to the student house and helped me. I am very happy that I am at the training restaurant. I enjoy the cooking very much and want to be a chef. Chnang gives us all a training wage and uniforms. We eat a big meal here each day and I am not hungry any more.

The students had lived in impoverished villages where their unfreedoms perpetuated their experiences of poverty, hunger, lack of economic opportunities and systemic social deprivation. They were grateful, excited and proud of the opportunities provided by the NGO and explained their families had noted positive physical changes because of the good nutrition and conditions they now enjoyed. The NGO provided the students with self-identity and self-worth, the foundations for human development and 'decent work'. The training of one young person at the hospitality school also benefitted their extended family. Khorn (girl 18) proudly stated:

my family say that I look very healthy and strong now. They want to know about what I have learned and they too want to learn about

¹⁰ The age of criminal responsibility in Cambodia is 14, although the lack of juvenile law means that children face 'the same legal prescriptions as adults and are imprisoned alongside criminals of all ages' (Holman, 2016:n.p.).

¹¹ Human Rights Watch (2016:n.p.) reported that, street-children are routinely detained in 'detention centres (jails) around the country ... for 'social rehabilitation'

⁸ Pers. Comm. NGO program director.

⁹ Cambodia has one of the worst deforestation rates in the world, and the primary rainforest cover was reduced from 'over 70 percent in 1970 to just three per cent in 2019' (Thomas, 2019).

these things [hygiene]. The money I send to my parents means that my family are not hungry anymore and my brother and sister can now stay at school. When they are 16 they will come to get training at Chnang.

Many of the boys also capitalised on their greater level of individual agency and freedom provided by their gender and actively sought additional learning experiences at other NGOs. Sokhom (boy 20) explained:

this is a very good opportunity. I want to be a chef and work in a five-star hotel. I also go to Chinese lessons one night a week at an NGO. I think that I have a better chance at a good job if I speak English and Chinese. I also want to travel overseas and I think that these skills will help me. On Sunday, I go to an NGO for computer class. They let me stay for a long time so that I can practice and learn about the computer and find out about the news on the internet.

Nobel Laureate Eric Maskin (cited in [Berger, 2014](#)) argues that while average incomes have risen as a result of globalisation, so has inequality. Of interest to this particular cultural context in Cambodia, Maskin (cited in [Berger, 2014](#)) continues, to note that the poor could also benefit from globalisation if provided with skills training which requires the commitment of governments, multilateral institutions, NGOs and private foundations.

Chnang has additional outreach activities with vulnerable children including children on the streets and children in jail. These children are provided with temporary supported accommodation and vocational courses, thereby supporting short term and promoting long term capacities. The NGO aims to address gaps in equity through the provision of accommodation, quality food and vocational training and therefore a pathway towards personal development¹². Thus identifying TVET as a strategic development initiative in Cambodia.

I later learned from the Cambodian English teacher that this student did in fact gain employment as an assistant chef in a five-star restaurant in Siem Reap. Vocational education in this cultural context can subvert existing inequalities, that have been reproduced by globalisation. The NGO through the capabilities approach has provided the students and their families with the opportunity to be proactive and realise aspirations to lead 'lives that matter'. The positive changes noted by the students support SDG 1; no poverty; 2: no hunger; 3: good health; 4: quality education and 6: clean water; 8: good jobs and economic growth and 10: reduced inequalities ([UNESCO, 2019](#)). In this context, VET has progressed social and economic outcomes in Cambodia.

6. Vocational education as a forum for cross cultural communication

The hospitality students are taught standards and behaviours considered appropriate in an upmarket Western restaurant. The personal interaction with customers at front of house and as wait staff were, according to the students, the most challenging aspect of their education. Brought up to believe they could not offer opinions and had limited rights ([Gourley, 2009](#)), the students had to effectively subvert traditional behavioural norms every time they served a customer. Again subverting social norms, students were directed by their Cambodian teachers to look customers (older adults) in the eye, address them directly, ask questions and offer opinions. While students agreed that the tourists were very friendly, they all expressed a feeling of being ill equipped socially and culturally to engage with tourists. These feelings were attributable to this frequent subversion of everyday social norms. Situations that presented this intercultural anxiety included:

it is very difficult for me to look at the tourist and speak to them. Cambodians do not talk to or look at older people, it is very rude (Kanya, girl 17)

most tourists are very nice and don't get angry with us when we make a mistake. Sometimes because I do not understand, I do the wrong thing (Khorn, girl 18)

what can I do when the booking is wrong? (Vithu, boy 18)

Pronunciation constituted a further barrier to cross cultural communication. English pronunciation practice highlighted that 'th' and 'v', for example, are not phonetic sounds made in the Cambodian language. Additionally, the 'th' sound requires the tongue protrudes from the lips and is temporarily visible. In Cambodia, this is considered rude and was an action that girls in particular found offensive to imitate. Accessing an education was therefore challenged by traditional cultural behaviours.

Role plays are an effective pedagogical approach in vocational education initiatives in cross cultural contexts. This is especially the case with rural to urban education migrants who had not previously encountered Westerners in their everyday lives. The activities provided an opportunity to practice certain phrases and interactions, and potentially become more at ease with Western adult customers. This activity also developed soft skills. Students repeatedly requested the scenario, 'what do I do if I give the customer the wrong food?' (Vithu, boy 18). The Cambodian English teacher and I would role play the situation, inviting the students to play the waiter/waitress or the customer. This activity provided insights into tourist behaviours and expectations, and the difficulties students experienced or situations where they did not know how to respond. The students also experienced some difficulty understanding they should initiate a short conversation with the tourists and that establishing a connection would increase the chance of a tip. Scripts for scenarios empowered students and together we developed and practised appropriate conversation starter questions and suggested replies during role-play activities. Successful engagement with tourists has increased in importance as a result of COVID 19; the 2.5 million tourists to visit Angkor Wat in 2018 is now 'measured by the dozens' ([Hunt, 2020:n.p.](#)).

The students also began to understand that obtaining good and secure employment with English speaking people involved more than just language acquisition and identified the need to develop Western practices. This process of enculturation, required learning the norms, values and behaviours required to be accepted in a culture. The girls especially were interested in the Western attitudes that enabled female voluntourists to travel independently (Chanlina, girl 16):

I try to learn about Western ways because I hope that one day I can get a job as a tour guide. This is a very good job. I like the Australian, American and British tourists and I would like to work with these people in the future so I must learn how to behave and work with Western people.

The students enthusiastically embraced the education that would empower them to access a better life in what was, to them, the new and modernising Cambodia. Their vocational education had expanded their aspirations to now include working with, rather than for Western people and organisations (SDGs: 8: good jobs & economic growth; 9: industry, innovation & infrastructure & 17: partnerships for the goals).

7. Vocational education redresses exclusion and promotes cultural identities

Tourism has been crucial in helping restore Cambodian culture and cultural heritage after decades of national tragedy ([Winter, 2004](#)). Cambodians are immensely proud of Angkor and the restoration of the temples, and international attention has done much in 'articulating contemporary formations of cultural, national and religious identities'

¹² Pers. Comm. NGO program director.

(Winter, 2004:337). The vocational training has enabled the students to express pride in their culture, the temples of Angkor and the interest shown by foreign tourists. Arunny (girl 18) explained:

it is good that the tourists come to Cambodia and will know about our wonderful culture and the many temples. I am proud that so many people come to Cambodia.

International interest in Angkor therefore enhances cultural identities and provides a sense of optimism and a positive outlook for the future. For Cambodians, domestic tourism to Angkor has become increasingly important 'as a form of living heritage ... [and] the context within which Cambodia's recent history is re-articulated and made meaningful for a population recovering from decades of national turmoil' (Winter 2004:330).

However, the government has asserted boundaries between the poor Cambodians and tourists. While Cambodians are able to access the Angkor Archaeological Park at no cost, the students did not visit this and many other places in Siem Reap which they believed are 'just for the tourists' (Sokhom, boy 18). Kiri (boy 19) explained:

we are not welcome because of the tourists, but I like to ride my bicycle and look at the tourists and Angkor Wat. One day I walked into Angkor Wat, but the tourist police kept pushing me and told me to go away.

For Davi (girl 19) her first visit to Angkor Wat saw her and her sister geographically marginalised to the grounds across the road:

my sister (21) and me went to Angkor Wat for a picnic. Angkor Wat is very beautiful and we are proud to see it. We buy some food from the market and we sit under the big tree and practice our English. Many other Cambodians come to have a picnic and watch the tourists.

Training and vocational education for government officials offers another opportunity for diplomatic, social and economic development. Existing Government institutions have been slow to respond to changing cultural expectations and would benefit from investment in vocational education for Government authorities¹³. Cultural heritage, as experienced at Angkor, is a 'commodified tourist space ... of ancient monuments for an international audience' where the poor are not welcome (Winter 2004:343). However, Angkor, especially during Khmer New Year, is a place that has been 'symbolically and metaphorically, imbued with a sense of national recovery for Cambodians' (Winter 2004:343). The Cambodian's expression and enjoyment of their cultural heritage is therefore limited to picnicking in the grounds outside Angkor Wat (Winter, 2004). International tourism has enhanced Cambodian cultural identity while simultaneously excluding local people from Angkor Wat, a site believed to give strength to their people¹⁴.

The students regarded the money and jobs generated by tourism as vital for Cambodian economic and human development, and the voluntourists pivotal to education and support services. Tourists were generally regarded as friendly and supportive, which further enhanced the students' opinions of them and desire to follow their examples. So overall there is a notion that the benefits and opportunities posed by tourism outweigh the marginalisation and oppression that Cambodian's experience in these international tourist sites. Thus the capacity for VET to expand economic and social development in Cambodia.

¹³ For example, the Australian Government has invested in a Community Policing Initiative to assist the Cambodian National Police 'in strengthening community policing management and oversight; performance effectiveness; ... police and community relations; and sustainability of a community policing approach in Cambodia' (DFAT, 2019).

¹⁴ Cambodians have taken advantage of COVID international travel restrictions to visit Angkor Wat and 'reclaim their cultural heritage' (Hunt, 2020:n.p.).

8. Vocational education, development and Cambodian modernity

For the students, migration from a small, traditional, rural village to large and busy Siem Reap was a frightening, yet exciting experience. Most had 'never seen a Western person, heard a different language or seen modern buildings' (Davi, girl 19). As the patronage system restricts the financial and social mobility of the poor (Welsh and Chang, 2012), tourists represent the only access to the new and modern world to which they aspired. Indicating a growing awareness of global inequalities, the students commented with amazement on the difference in health, appearance and lifestyles of the tourists compared to their own families. Rathana (boy 16) explained:

The tourists must have good jobs because they look happy and healthy. They have the money to travel and buy iPhones™. They can come to Siem Reap, eat in the restaurants, and stay in the nice hotels. People in my village are hungry and often they are sick.

All the students grew in confidence during their training and increasingly expressed their ideas and opinions and questioned the accuracy and relevance of some Cambodian traditions and practices. They remained respectful of the older generation because, as they reflected, their parents and grandparents had experienced a traumatic past, lack of education and had limited exposure to, or understanding of new ways. Cambodian psychiatrist Muny Sothara (cited in Brinkley 2011:138) suggests that because of their own traumatic past, parents have taught their children 'don't participate, don't get involved, be quiet'. However, the students were beginning to challenge the passive acceptance required of a child in Cambodian traditional society and reflect on principles of equality taught at the hospitality school. During our discussions, the students intimated transformation on several fronts:

I have changed a lot since coming to Siem Reap. I still follow old traditions but I like to know why. Now I ask questions and not just follow what older people say. For example, someone will go to the fortune-teller to find out if the marriage will work and then it does not. I want to know how this can happen (Bonn, boy 18).

my parents are very strict and do not understand about human rights. The old generation only understand about what affects their lives. The old people keep the culture, old medicines and have each other (Taeve, girl 17).

in Siem Reap, Cambodian people have good jobs and can work in a hotel. Children have good opportunities to go to school and people understand about society. We are also able to get news from TV, internet and other people. In Siem Reap many people do not care so much about the traditions and culture and are not so strict with their children (Sokhom, boy 20).

These discussions revealed that the students enjoyed expressing their opinions, questioning, and receiving informed responses from the adults with whom they worked. They were pleased, to be developing an understanding of other cultures and modern ways through tourist interaction and being a part of a globalised world. The freedoms associated with an education challenged traditional cultural behaviours; however, both boys and girls maintained conservative values associated with dress. One male student (20) rode his bicycle to Angkor Wat and took photos for the photovoice task 'things I do not like about tourists' to highlight his objection that:

tourists do not wear the proper clothes when they visit Angkor Wat. I do not like that many tourists do not care about Buddhist values and wear clothes that show their knees and shoulders and wear hats in the Wat. We are Buddhists and this is not respectful. There are signs to tell people, but many people do not care and just wear what they want (Kiri, boy 19).

Both the male and female students believed Western clothing styles were often too revealing, inappropriate and public displays of affection were offensive and an affront to their Buddhist values. However, many young Cambodians also adopt Western style dress. Kiri (boy 19) explained:

many Cambodian girls now try to look like tourists, they think they look beautiful. These girls look like bad girls and they do not care about their culture anymore. Good girls do not show themselves.

'Good girl' refers to maintaining a good reputation that brings honour to the family (Gourley, 2009). A 'bad girl' is one who breaks traditional norms of behaviour and therefore brings dishonour on her family (Gourley, 2009). The students regularly used these expressions to describe their traditional interpretation of inappropriate behaviour or dress of other Cambodian girls. The decision as to which cultural practices a culture in transition adopts is subject to multiple forces, including the pressure to conform and aspirations for modernity (Derks, 2008). The types of cultural change associated with modernity were open to interpretation as to what was acceptable and by whom, and the students were discerning in which practices they adopted and rejected. These changes were often gendered.

9. Gender, modernity and challenges to cultural traditions

Cambodian social constructions of masculinity and femininity are expressed in a highly gendered and often violent society. The traditional *Chbab Srei*, (code of women), teaches that women must be innocent and serve and respect their fathers and later their husband (Walsh, 2007). The *Chbab Proh*, (code of men), is by contrast a religious guideline and does not prescribe required behaviour for men (Walsh, 2007). These cultural requirements are exemplified by a well-known Cambodian proverb that states: 'boys are like gold, girls are like cloth – gold can be washed clean, but once cloth is stained it is ruined' (Walsh, 2007:10). The social construction of Cambodian masculinity is superior, strong and brave, the head of the household and dominant over women and girls (GADC, 2010). The extensive period of historical violence also appears to have nurtured a culture where violence is seen as understandable and acceptable (Brinkley, 2011). How gender is performed in Cambodia is a vital consideration of any VET programme, regardless of any explicit gender objectives built into programmes.

Although constrained by this highly gendered, patriarchal society, women in Cambodia have participated in the country's modernity, including through the garment industry which has contributed to national economic growth and, through wages, family development (Derks, 2008). However, the desire for modernity is more difficult for young women as they struggle to find the balance between the 'old and traditional' and what is often believed to be 'too modern' in the city (Derks, 2008:13). The students experienced social and cultural change through the NGOs' policy of gender equity. The demonstration effect of tourists and the Western constructions of femininity and masculinity also exposed the students to the principle of equity. Observations of the students provided no evidence of a gendered side to their professional practice or social interactions at this NGO. This cohort of students appeared to have embraced these ideals of gender equality (SDG: 5) as they aspired to become part of a modern and progressive Cambodia. Engaging the youth of Cambodia through education might be the most effective way to create a model of masculinity where gender-based violence is unacceptable and gender equity the norm.

In keeping with Cambodian culture, all their parents' marriages had been arranged. Both male and female students utilised the opportunity to develop knowledge of Western relationships and marriage by asking me questions. For example:

did you choose your daughter's husband or can a girl choose her own husband in Australia? was your marriage arranged? (Kiri, boy 19)

I will ask my family for their approval of the man that I meet and fall in love with. Most parents in the village would be happy with this (Davi, girl 19).

The girls had begun to think of themselves as having an individual identity, as shown by Davi's decision to choose her own husband based on love. The idea of female equality, rights and emancipation emerged, although gender equity was the term used by the NGO. A hybridised modernity incorporating traditional practices and Western modernity was developing amongst the students.

The Western celebrations of Christmas and New Year provided further insight into how students perceived tourist behaviour. However, as dictated by tradition, the boys continued to enjoy greater freedom when not at the NGO. During the Christmas period, the local government transforms the main tourist streets of Siem Reap with decorations of illuminated parcels and decorative umbrellas for the benefit of Western tourists. Kosal (boy 21) was pleased to share his photovoice activity. 'I like to see the decorations and lights that look very beautiful. People are very happy and celebrating with their friends.'

The students asked many questions about Christmas during our discussions. The girls were particularly interested in the significance of the celebration, asking:

Who is Jesus? Where is he? Is he real or a ghost? (Taevy, girl 17).

Do you give food or animals as presents? (Malis, girl 20).

The boys adopted a more pragmatic attitude and wanted to know why their Government was more interested in making tourists happy than their own people, as they perceived available funds were being prioritised on Western celebrations:

the Government thinks Western traditions are more important and forgets about Cambodian traditions (Sokhom, boy 20).

the Government does not care about us, they only care about themselves (Kiri, boy 19).

In the days after Christmas, the students asked many questions generated by the constant stream of 'Happy New Year' wishes expressed by the tourist diners. They knew nothing of the tradition other than it involved a 'big party'. The male students, with their traditional gendered freedom, ventured to the streets of Siem Reap on New Year's Eve, either before or, if working, after the Chnang restaurant closed at 11pm. This was the students' first experience of the tourist landscape on a large scale. No social exclusion existed on this night and young Cambodian men and Westerners became friends, enjoying the interactions and feelings of equality experienced. Sokhom (boy 20) found a good vantage point for his photograph on the balcony of a hotel. He spoke of the large numbers of Cambodians present. The 12 o'clock celebrations confused the boys who regarded these public displays of affection as inappropriate:

at 12 o'clock all the people start counting and then kissing and hugging. I do not understand why people do this. It is not good that people do this in public (Bonn, boy 18).

For Cambodians, traditional celebrations are a time to be with family. Malis (girl 20) explained the Cambodian New Year:

is celebrated over three days of public holidays in April. It is important for family to celebrate together and share special dishes, offer thanks to the monks, and give to the poor. The last day is for traditional games and dance.

The students were surprised Western tourists chose to spend an important religious occasion away from their families. The cultural explanation I provided for the Western New Year seemed rather frivolous in comparison to the Cambodian New Year's celebration of religion, family life and charity. The students' attitudes to and involvement in

Western New Year celebrations were gender based and the girls imposed their own geographies of exclusion and maintained traditional behaviours by remaining by not going out. They limited their movements to group shopping trips to the market or working at Chnang. The girls were: 'very tired, home, and asleep by midnight'. A Cambodian girl would not go to this celebration with tourists and drinking alcohol, if she did, she would be considered a 'bad' girl (Davi, girl 19). However, the girls were very interested in the boy's photographs and stories of the New Year's Eve celebrations over the following days.

Discussions quickly moved to the consumption of alcohol at New Year and were gender based and divisive. This was the only time the girls, as a gendered unit, strongly and emphatically expressed opinions contrary to the boys':

drinking alcohol makes men very angry and they hit their wife and children (Taevy, girl 17)

men buy alcohol and sometimes there is no money to buy food (Malis, girl 20)

sometimes I have beer with my friends and we are happy together (Kiri, boy 19).

The girls dislike of Cambodian men drinking alcohol, was based on the association with violent and aggressive behaviour in their own villages. Violent behaviour and alcoholism is often a manifestation of the PTSD suffered by half the Cambodian population (Brinkley, 2011). Alcohol is acknowledged as a significant contributing factor to violence in both urban and rural settings (GDAC, 2010). The opposition to alcohol is also one of the five precepts or ethics of Buddhism (BBC, 2020). However, in Cambodia, alcohol consumption is increasingly associated with being "stylish in modern society" (Koam, 2011:n.p.), while advertisements link alcohol consumption with "national pride [and] bravery" (Tong, 2013:n.p.). Drinking with friends for men is increasingly replacing Buddhist religious observance at the pagodas and alcohol blamed by many Cambodians for the erosion of culture and traditions (Tong 2103; n.p.).

Working in hospitality, the boys saw tourists drinking alcohol and related consumption to good times with friends and an expression of a better life:

Many young Cambodian men go to Siem Reap to enjoy 'Happy New Year'. I have never seen so many people before. They were mostly tourists but also many Cambodian men. My friends and me we don't know about the celebration but we enjoy being there. The tourists are very friendly, buy us beer and want to talk with us (Rathana, boy 16).

The male students spoke proudly of their new Western friends who were friendly and welcoming, included them in their celebrations, and bought them beers. The boys' interaction with tourists provided an increased understanding of Western behaviour that challenged customs and produced both individual expressions of identity and a group culture. They explained many young Cambodian males now drink beer despite Buddhist teachings Alcohol consumption did not appear to be a part of their weekly routine, although they expressed an increased confidence communicating in English while sharing beers with tourists on New Year's Eve.

10. Capabilities, agency, development and cultural tradition

Vocational education had provided the students and girls in particular (because of gender constraints), with the capability to realise agency. Development requires empowerment, agency and respect for human rights (UNDP, 2010), values that can be challenged in hierarchical, collectivist cultures where the self is 'part of the whole' (Gourley, 2009:20). However, the safe, inclusive and equitable environment created by the NGO empowered the girls to question and articulate their opinions and concerns, for example, on the consumption of alcohol.

Sokhom (boy 20) voiced his support: 'I do not like it that some boys try to force girls to do things. I would stop someone who tried to hurt a girl'.

The difference between the potential for, and realisation of agency was further highlighted by Nuon (girl 16), whose father had reluctantly allowed her to enrol in the vocational hospitality course.

My father did not want me to come to Siem Reap, but we are very poor and there was not enough food. My brother helped me and told our father that if I go to Siem Reap and send money, then it would help all my family. My father wanted me to marry a man in our village. I have met this man and I do not like him. He drinks and does not work very much in his business as a tuk-tuk driver. I told my parents that I would not marry him. I am very happy at this school and I want to be a chef.

Last week my brother came to the Chnang house and told me that I must return with him to the village because my father has arranged the marriage. I pleaded with my brother to go home and explain to our parents that I have a wonderful opportunity at this NGO and that I do not like this man.

The following week, Nuon's father had come to Siem Reap, beaten his daughter for disobeying him and taken her back to the village for marriage. She had made her father very angry and the family would be disgraced if the arranged marriage did not take place¹⁵. This was the first time that a parent had withdrawn a student against their will¹⁶. The students collective sorrow, concern and sense of injustice was expressed by Taevy (girl 17), 'it is sad that Noun is forced to leave the training and marry this man that she does not like. This would not happen to a boy. My parents are very happy that I receive the training and will allow me to choose my own husband' (SDG: 16: Peace, justice and string institutions). Noun aspired to a career in hospitality that would benefit all her family through remittances. However, her increased agency, individual expression of identity and gender empowerment taught and experienced at the NGO had placed her in conflict with her family and resulted in the enforcement of traditional roles. The use of 'violence in order to correct child behaviour' is traditionally acknowledged as acceptable in Cambodia (Gourley, 2009:38). Personal and family honour is so central to Cambodian culture that it impacts parental decision in all aspects of life. While Noun had tried to increase her agency by entreating her brother's support, she was disempowered by her traditionally prescribed role in Cambodian society that dictated she accept her father's will. The conflict is symptomatic of cultural change where there is often a breakdown and transition into new socio-cultural norms.

11. Conclusion

TVET is a constructive development initiative to redress gaps in education and progress social and economic outcomes in Cambodia. Furthermore, the incorporation of the Critical Capabilities Approach progresses vocational education beyond skill acquisition, to now also focus on young people's aspirations for meaningful work and enable actions to lead lives they value. Research *with* participants in TVET programmes provides an opportunity to quantify the value of these experiences to and for these young people, and when designed in a socially and culturally sensitive manner, understand the scope of TVET to advance employment opportunities and social outcomes for this generation. The potential of TVET to accelerate GDP growth in Cambodia could be unprecedented given the low dependency ratio. The need for economic growth and employment will be significant as Cambodia attempts to recover from COVID.

¹⁵ In Cambodia, the minimum legal age for marriage is not enforced and girls marry young, conforming to cultural traditions (Van der Vaeren, 2016).

¹⁶ Pers. Comm. NGO program director.

The students enthusiastically expressed their views, and shared their experiences and opinions; an integral requirement of the Critical Capabilities Approach to TVET. The holistic education of the NGO, expanded the student's freedoms (except Nuon) and provided the drivers for their personal development as defined by the UNDP and CCA; physical well-being, empowerment through education, agency and justice and in support of at least 11 of the SDGs.

The students expressed their limited agency in the decision to migrate to Siem Reap to escape the unfreedoms associated with their poor rural communities and improve their chances of survival by obtaining work. The education and experiences at the highly regarded hospitality school, has resulted in diverse employment choices for all graduates. The students expressed appreciation and pleasure in their physical well-being, enjoyment of the program and excitement in their future. A new realised aspiration was English language acquisition which is usually only accessible to the children of the elite. Acquiring English language skills confers cultural capital, opportunity, access into modern Cambodia and the global economy. Education and the values of equity and justice enabled the students to transgress existing power relations maintained and reinforced through the patronage system to further their own circumstances. Sokhom exemplified this increased agency through his additional efforts to learn Chinese, become computer literate and gain employment as a chef in a five-star restaurant. Remittances and shared knowledge also increased familial well-being and capabilities for realised aspirations. Challenging for the students and the girls especially was developing confidence and competence in English language conversation and cross cultural communication. Although against the NGOs ideal, it is suggested the addition of experienced English speaking volunteers in a role similar to my own, would support the student's enculturation into the tourist landscape and globalised world. The NGO also supported Cambodia's development by addressing skills shortages in the hospitality industry and active citizenship that contributes to generating cross cultural communication and understanding that are vital to integrating into a globalised world.

The humanistic and capabilities approach suggests that TVET has the potential to contribute to gender equality and a new Cambodian masculinity that values justice. The requirement and experience of equity at the NGO, empowered the girls to challenge, question and voice opinions including on gendered violence and arranged marriage. Girls and boys negotiated culturally related and gendered unfreedoms that still condone and even require, male domination over women, by violence if necessary. In some cases, tourism provided new ways for men to exercise power over women. Yet overall, belief in and adoption of gender equality values was perceived as modern and desirable by boys and girls.

Through exposure to tourists' lifestyles, young people became more aware of an alternative, more prosperous future to which they all aspired. Students understood the economic opportunities associated with large numbers of international tourists who came to visit their cultural heritage site in Angkor Wat. They were proud of this interest which was expressed as an increasing awareness and pride in their own Cambodian identity. This also contributes to notions of renewed nationalism.

Aspirations that were expanded and strongly expressed by the students, are a necessary part of the process by which empowerment is ultimately achieved. Strong partnerships between the Government, the hospitality industry and NGO providers are required to address the inadequacies and problems of the current system and ensure the effectiveness (employability) of TVET. The capabilities approach also provides the opportunity to realise the potential of the highly motivated rural to urban youth to progress Cambodia's continued human and economic development in support of the SDGs.

This research contributes to the study of marginalised youth in Southeast Asia. The research and the full employment of all graduates suggests this is a successful, effective and culturally responsive TVET model that should be widely adopted. The findings of this study will help inform TVET development and policy in a manner that elevates consideration of youth aspirations in Cambodia and elsewhere. Consideration

should also be given to providing TVET training to youth in Cambodian jails. There is opportunity for strong and effective partnerships between the Government and NGOs in TVET to contribute to development and social change in Cambodia. Further participatory research with young people is required to further inform the analysis of TVET beyond skill development to also include human development. Vocational education and the capabilities approach for this cohort of students, has provided physical well-being, education, careers that are chosen and valued and empowerment to develop active citizenship and diplomacy in the new and modern Cambodia and the globalised world.

Grateful appreciation is extended to the students who so enthusiastically participated in this research. Your interest, enthusiasm, quest for knowledge and determination to realise your aspirations and improve your lives are remarkable.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Amanda or A. Miller: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Funding statement

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability statement

Data included in article/supplementary material/referenced in article.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

References

- (ADB), A. D. B., 2018. Cambodia's New Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy. Asian Development Bank, Manila.
- Agrawal, T., 2013. Vocational education and training programs (VET): an Asian perspective. *Asia Pac. J. Chem. Eng.* 14 (1), 15–26.
- Agrawal, T., 2017. Vocational education and training in India: a labour market perspective. *J. Vocat. Educ. Train.* 69 (2), 246–265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820.2017.1303785>.
- Asia Life, 2014. Marum Siem Reap [Online] Available at: <http://www.asialifemagazine.com/cambodia/review-marum-siem-reap/>. (Accessed 3 June 2015).
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) & International Labour Organization (ILO), 2015. Cambodia, Addressing the Skills gap. A Diagnostic Study. Asian Development Bank, Manila.
- BBC, 2020. Buddhist beliefs [Online] Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zf8g4qt/revision/9>.
- Beazley, H., 2015. Multiple identities, multiple realities: children who migrate independently for work in Southeast Asia. *Child Geogr.* 13 (3), 365–378.
- Beazley, H., Ennew, J., 2006. Participatory methods and approaches: tackling the two tyrannies. In: Desai, V., Potter, R. (Eds.), *Doing Development Research*. Sage, London, pp. 189–199.
- Benveniste, L., Marshall, J., Caridad Araujo, M., 2008. *Teaching in Cambodia*, Phnom Penh: Human Development Sector East Asia and the Pacific Region of the World Bank and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. Royal Government of Cambodia.
- Berger, N., 2014. Theorist Eric Maskin: globalization is increasing inequality [Online] Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/06/23/theorist-eric-maskin-globalization-is-increasing-inequality>. (Accessed 29 May 2020).
- Brehm, W., Silova, I., 2014. Hidden privatization of public education in Cambodia: equity implications of private tutoring. *J. Educ. Res. Online* 6 (1), 94–116.
- Brinkley, J., 2011. Cambodia's Curse, the Modern History of a Troubled Land. Perseus Books, New York.

- Bylander, M., 2013. Depending on the sky: environmental distress, migration, and coping in rural Cambodia. *Ann. Tourism Res.* 43, 482–505.
- Bylander, M., 2014. Borrowing across borders: migration and microcredit in rural Cambodia. *Dev. Change* 45 (2), 284–307.
- Cahill, C., 2004. Defying gravity: raising consciousness through collective research. *Child Geogr.* 2 (2), 273–286.
- Cheng, I., 2010. Case studies of integrated pedagogy in vocational education: a three-tier approach to empowering vulnerable youth in urban Cambodia. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 30 (4), 438–446.
- Cheng, I., 2015. Re-modelling and reconceptualising development in Cambodia: how are social enterprises preparing young people for successful transitions between learning and work? *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 43, 134–141.
- Derks, A., 2008. *Khmer Women on the Move. Exploring Work and Life in Urban Cambodia*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.
- Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 2019. Development assistance in Cambodia [Online] Available at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cambodia/development-assistance/Pages/inclusive-participation-and-governance-in-cambodia>. (Accessed 30 May 2020).
- Doyle, A., 2019. Top soft skills employers value with examples [Online] Available at: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/list-of-soft-skills-2063770>. (Accessed 28 April 2020).
- Dowling, R., 2005. Power, subjectivity, and ethics in qualitative research. In: Hay, I (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods in human geography*. Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, pp. 19–29.
- Ear, S., 2013. *Aid Dependence in Cambodia*. Columbia University Press, NY.
- Ennew, J., 1995. Outside childhood: street children's rights. In: Franklin, B. (Ed.), *The Handbook of Children's Rights: Comparative Policy and Practice*. Routledge, London, pp. 210–215.
- Ennew, J., Plateau, D., 2004. *How to research the physical and emotional punishment of children*. Keen Publishing, Bangkok.
- Fitzgerald, I., Sovannarith, S., 2007. Moving out of poverty? trends in community well being and household mobility in nine Cambodian villages [Online] Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMOVOUTPOV/Resources/2104215-1187710751691/Cambodia_NSR_Final.pdf. (Accessed 6 November 2020).
- Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC), 2010. *A Qualitative Exploration of Gender Norms, Masculinity and Domestic Violence*. Phnom Penh: Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC).
- Glasser, M., 2012. Training restaurant serves stylish Cambodian dishes [Online] Available at: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/siem-reap-insider/training-restaurant-serves-stylish-cambodian-dishes>. (Accessed 3 November 2015).
- Gourley, S., 2009. *The Middle Way. Bridging the gap Between Cambodian Culture and Children's Rights*, Phnom Penh: NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Guiney, T., Mostafanezhad, M., 2015. The political economy of orphanage tourism in Cambodia. *Tour. Stud.* 15 (2), 132–155.
- Hashim, A., Yee, C., Pheak Tra Pich, A., 2014. English in higher education in Cambodia. *World Englishes* 33 (4), 498–511.
- Hilal, R., McGrath, S., 2016. The role of vocational education and training in Palestine in addressing inequality and promoting human development. *J. Int. Comp. Educ.* 87–102. Issue October.
- Holman, Z., 2016. Youth justice law due this year [Online] Available at: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/youth-justice-law-due-year>. (Accessed 15 December 2017).
- Human Rights Watch, 2016. *World Report* [Online] Available at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/wr2016_web.pdf [Accessed September 2018 2016].
- Hunt, L., 2020. Cambodians revel in now tourist-free Angkor Wat [Online] Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/cambodians-revel-now-tourist-free-a-ngkor-wat>. (Accessed 16 November 2020).
- Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 2013. Children miss out on school because of corruption [Online] Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/81825/cambodia-children-miss-out-on-school-because-of-corruption>. (Accessed 26 November 2013).
- Klutz, J., 2015. Reevaluating the relationship between education and child labour using the capabilities approach: policy implications for inequality in Cambodia. *Theor. Res. Educ.* 13 (2), 165–179.
- Koam, T., 2011. *The constructive Cambodian* [Online] Available at: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/lift/constructive-cambodian-9>. (Accessed 21 March 2017).
- Lamonica, V., Ragazzi, E., Sella, L., 2020. Including adolescent migrants in school through VET approach: evidence from a pilot action in Italy. *Empirical Res. Educ. Train.* 12 (6), 1–14.
- Lyons, K., Hanley, J., Wearing, S., Neil, J., 2012. Gap year volunteer tourism; myths of global citizenship? *Ann. Tourism Res.* 39 (1), 361–378.
- McGrath, S., 2018. *Education and Development*. Routledge, Abingdon.
- McGrath, S., Powell, L., 2015. Vocational education and training for human development. In: McGrath, S., Gu, Q. (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook on International Education and Development*. Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 276–288.
- McGrath, S., et al., 2019. Vocational education and training for African development: a literature review. *J. Vocat. Educ. Train.* 1–23. Issue Nov 5.
- Portela-Souza, A., et al., 2015. Vocational Education and Training in Brazil. Knowledge Sharing Forum on Development Experiences: Comparative Experiences of Korea and Latin America and the Caribbean. Inter American Development Bank [Online] Available at: <file:///C:/Users/L00413~1/AppData/Local/Temp/Vocational-Educati-on-and-Training-in-Brazil-Knowledge-Sharing-Forum-on-Development-Experiences-Comparative-Experiences-of-Korea-and-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean.pdf>. (Accessed 2 November 2020).
- Comparative-Experiences-of-Korea-and-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean.pdf. (Accessed 2 November 2020).
- Powell, L., McGrath, S., 2018. The long and winding road to the labour market. In: Nägele, C., Stalder, B. (Eds.), *Trends in Vocational Education and Training Research*. Zenodo: Proceedings of the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), Vocational Education and Training Network (VETNET).
- Powell, L., McGrath, S., 2019. *Skills for Human Development*. Routledge, Abingdon.
- Reas, J., 2015. So, child protection, I'll make a quick point of it now: broadening the notion of child abuse in volunteering vacations in Siem Reap, Cambodia. *Tourism Rev. Int.* 18, 295–309.
- Sen, A., 1999. *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- SNV, 2011. Cambodia [Online] Available at: <http://www.snv.org/country/cambodia>. (Accessed 11 September 2012).
- Spies, R., 2018. Ticket revenue at Angkor Wat jumps 72 per cent after price hike [Online] Available at: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/ticket-revenue-angkor-wat-jumps-72-percent-after-price-hike>. (Accessed 5 January 2020).
- Springer, S., 2009. Violence, democracy, and the neoliberal order: the contestation of public space in post transitional Cambodia. *Ann. Assoc. Am. Geogr.* 99 (1), 138–162.
- The Economist, 2019. After Half a century of success, the Asian Tigers Must Reinvent Themselves [Online] Available at: <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2019/12/05/after-half-a-century-of-success-the-asian-tigers-must-reinvent-themselves>. (Accessed 4 November 2020).
- The World Bank, 2019. Government expenditure on education, total % of GDP [Online] Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS>. (Accessed 18 May 2020).
- Thomas, J., 2019. Cambodia's sanctuaries under threat [Online] Available at: <https://theaseanpost.com/article/cambodias-sanctuaries-under-threat>. (Accessed 15 December 2019).
- Tong, S., 2013. Culture and traditions at risk [Online] Available at: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/culture-and-traditions-risk>. (Accessed 6 August 2020).
- Transparency International, 2020. Cambodia: overview of corruption and anti-corruption [Online] Available at: <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/cambodia-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>. (Accessed 4 March 2020).
- TripAdvisor, 2017. Marum [Online] Available at: https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Restaurant_Review-g297390-d3533708-Reviews-Marum-Siem_Reap_Siem_Reap_Province.html. (Accessed 9 August 2017).
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals. [Online] Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>, 2019 [Accessed 10 November 2020]
- United Nations Development Program UNDP, 2010. *Human Development Report*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2013. *Human development report* [Online] Available at: <https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/poverty/2013-hdr-analysis-on-cambodia.html>. (Accessed 5 March 2020).
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2018. *Human development indices and indicators: 2018 statistical update* [Online] Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/KHM.pdf>. (Accessed 28 February 2020).
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2020. About Cambodia [Online] Available at: <https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/countryinfo.html>. (Accessed 18 May 2020).
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2016. *Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), 2016-2021* [Online] Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245239>. (Accessed 20 May 2020).
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2019. *Health and Nutrition UNICEF Country Program 2019-2023* [Online] Available at: https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/media/2401/file/CountryProgramme_Health%20and%20nutrition.pdf%20.pdf. (Accessed 28 February 2020).
- Van der Vaeren, C., 2016. Challenges for Cambodia's youth [Online] Available at: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/analysis-and-op-ed/challenges-cambodia%E2%80%99s-youth>. (Accessed 8 January 2016).
- Vannak, C., 2019. Ticket sales revenue at Angkor temples down 9 per cent in Q1 [Online] Available at: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50592427/ticket-sales-revenue-at-angkor-temples-down-9-percent-in-q1/>. (Accessed 26 February 2020).
- Walsh, M., 2007. *Report on the Status of Cambodian Women*. University of Quebec, City of Quebec.
- Walton, M., 2005. International migration in Cambodia, a case study of push and pull factors of migration to Phnom Penh [Online] Available at: <https://www.tasa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Walton-marcia.pdf>. (Accessed 16 April 2017).
- Welsh, B., Chang, A., 2012. Political Change, Youth and Democratic Citizenship in Cambodia and Malaysia. Paper presented at the Conference on Democracy and Citizen Politics in East Asia, Taipei, viewed 17 March 2017. <http://www.asianbarometer.org/publications/eec2ca65a2e3c06ec9a9e6b8b0f50bd2.pdf>.
- Wilkins, S., 2002. Human resource development through vocational education in the United Arab Emirates: the case of Dubai Polytechnic. *J. Vocat. Educ. Train.* 54 (1), 5–26.
- Winter, T., 2004. Landscape, memory and heritage. *New Year celebrations at Angkor, Cambodia. Curr. Issues Tourism* 7 (4 - 5), 330–345.
- Winchester, H., 2005. Qualitative research and its place in geography. In: Hay, I. (Ed.), *Qualitative Research Methods in Geography*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 3–18.
- World Bank, 2017. *The World Bank in Cambodia* [Online] Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview>. (Accessed 28 February 2020).