

**Cambodian Students Association in Japan**

**Essay Competition 2010**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Topic:**

**“Being a youth of this generation and a leader of the next, how do you contribute to Cambodia?”**

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## **I) SUMMARY**

Cambodia had a serious tragedy of war, and everything was almost destroyed in the dark moment during the 1970s. War has left Cambodia many victims and has had a very bad effect to Cambodian youths. They need to tackle with poverty in order to live. According to UN-OHRLLS, Cambodia now is one of the least developing countries that are facing many problems such as poverty, low education system, corruption, drug, and so on. Youths in this generation have a very significant duty to develop the whole country because they will be a leader of the next, and the future fate of Cambodia will be under their hand. Being a good citizen and being in a positive way for the country's developing, sharing, participation in the society's activities either volunteer or charity, and being a role model for the next generation in order to guide them to follow my footsteps with a great ambition for developing the country are what youths in this generation need to do as their duties. Moreover, promoting Cambodia and Cambodian culture are other contributions that all youth can do while they are out of or in their home-country to enhance the mutual understanding about the Kingdom of Wonder, Cambodia to attract more tourists and promote Cambodia to the world. As a leader of the next in this digital era, using Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) are only the most significant tool for

Cambodia to achieve the country's problems and develop the country toward the strong economic growth, and also to achieve the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals(CMDGs) in order to combat poverty by 2015.

## **II) INTRODUCTION**

Cambodia, which is one of the least developing country<sup>1</sup>, had experienced many kinds of war such as colonization under France, occupied by Japan during World War II, civil war, Khmer Rouge Regime, and so on. Because of war, everything was strongly destroyed especially in Khmer Rouge Regime not only country infrastructure, but also human resource that is a great source for developing the whole country. As a result, war has left severe images of tragedy to the next generation of Cambodian youths in this generation along with hunger and poverty, illiteracy or uneducated, bad infrastructure, drug abuse, etc. Consequently, being youth in this generation and a leader of the next, how do I contribute to Cambodia?

## **III) DEFINITION: YOUTH & LEADER**

~~According to the Youth and the United Nations, youth is considered as the people who~~  
1: <http://www.unohrlls.org/en/ldc/related/62/>  
are between the age of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States<sup>2</sup>.  
Youths are similar to the diamond that has not been processed to be a valuable mine or diamond. Elders and society must take a part in providing guidance to all youths. Once we do not guide them in a right way, the fate of country will fall into the dark moment along with severe tragedy.

Leader is a person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a goal<sup>3</sup>. The fate of the whole country is now under the leader's hand and is influencing to youths in this generation and continues to affect to the next one; youths will inherit everything from the leaders that they have built up and continue their missions to develop the country by applying more approaches or concepts to develop the country.

#### IV) BEING YOUTH IN THIS GENERATION

Cambodian youths are the most significant resource and will play an important role for the next stage of Cambodia. The future of the country will be determined by them because they will be the leader in the future and will responsible for the fate of the whole country for not only the next generation of Cambodians, but also all people in the whole country. After reaching the age of being youth, I know that I have an obligation to take a part in contributing to my precious home country like other Cambodian youths.

**Being a good citizen** and **being in a positive way** for develop the country are the first two things in my life that I have done for my country. For instance, studying hard to gain more knowledge to be a valuable human resource for the country in the future. **Sharing** is another good thing that I have implemented with my friends and other Cambodian youths through the Internet networking like facebook or face to face. What and how can I share? There are many things I have faced and gotten many new experiences up to now such as studying experience to be a good student and experience studying abroad as a scholarship student and how to get the scholarship. Sharing this to the younger will help them to brighten up their future and what way they should choose to walk for their bright future. Moreover, sharing scholarship information, special events such as local and international conference, barcamp, etc, competition, and award 

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event will help the younger or other youths to reach these information they do not expect to get, so that they can pay more attention to participating in social activities, taking challenges, and gain more new experiences from those activities to become stronger and stronger.

2: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/qanda.htm>

3: <http://www.vtaide.com/gleanings/leader.htm>

“One society can be developed unless there is a participation from all the people in the society”, so **participation in the society** is really important for me either volunteer or charity.

The next and must be done is to be **a role model** for the next generation by left them with proofs that we have done for contribution and guide them to follow our footstep, and let's them to implement new approaches they have learnt from the modern generation.

While I was staying in Korea for one academic year as an International Exchange Student, I asked a question to one Korean person, "Do you know Cambodia?", and "No, I do not know Cambodia; where is Cambodia?" he replied. I asked another Korean guy; "Yes, I know where Cambodia is. But Cambodia has no place to visit except Angkor Wat Temple.", he replied. Those answers hit my heart; it started to pound as I am Cambodian. The sad feeling showed up on my face; as I am one of Cambodian youths who was staying outside of Cambodia, the first thing I could do was to **promote Cambodian culture** and **Cambodia** to foreigners not only ASEAN and Korea, but also the world through creating a good image about Cambodia in their mind and guide them to choose Cambodia as one of their destinations to visit or travel. This will help them to understand about Cambodia and attract more tourists from overseas. Another contribution that I have done during my staying abroad was to **enhance the mutual understanding about Cambodia** through social and cultural exchange. This helped them to gain more understanding on our lifestyle, culture, etc. Furthermore, those activities included people-to-people culture exchange, everyday living activities, and communication.

## V) **LEADER OF THE NEXT**

### **1. Current major problems that need to be solved**

As I have mentioned above, Cambodia is one of the least developing country. So there are several major problems still that need to be solved in this generation and continue to the next generation. This heavy duty will be transferred from one generation to another if those problems do not solved accurately, and the country will not have a sign of developing.

The main problem is **poverty**. According to National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, 80.5% of Cambodians (92% of poor people) are living in rural areas with the average of 4.7 people of household<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, based on UNDP, Cambodia ranks 87<sup>th</sup> among 135 countries in poverty with the value of 27.7%<sup>5</sup>. And the 35% of Cambodians live below the

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4: Poverty part: <http://www.cambcomm.org.uk/ff.html>

5: Human Development Reports (HDR) 2009 , page 177: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR\\_2009\\_EN\\_Complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Complete.pdf)

national poverty line from 2000-2006. By comparing to the neighbor countries, Thailand<sup>6</sup> and Vietnam<sup>7</sup> ranking 41<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> with the value of 8.5% and 12.4% respectively, Cambodia is still far from the escape gate of poverty though.

With the number of illiterates, the unemployed and underemployment remaining stubbornly stuck in Cambodia, **human resource development** and **unemployment** factor are still the one of the top problems. The quality of education is still low and truly cannot compete with the international standard and even cannot offer them a good position of the job market. Moreover, nowadays the number of universities (private sector) is exploding but some of them do not have enough facilities and facilitators for a better quality of education. UNDP reported that the Human Development Index for Cambodia is 0.593 ranked of 137<sup>th</sup> out of 182 countries with the adult literacy rate of 76.3% (ages 15 and above)<sup>8</sup> in 2007. 3,289,286 of Cambodians attended the school comparing the total number of populations in 2008<sup>9</sup>.

Those universities produce a lot of human resources that are more than demanding in Cambodian society along with small work's chances which cause a number of unemployment increases. More than this, all the supplying (human resource) not really qualifies to the demand in the Cambodian work society. Unemployment in Cambodia is officially defined by the government as working less than one hour (formally or informally) per week. By this measure, Cambodia has a 3.5% in 2009 and 2010 unemployment rate<sup>10</sup>. The Economic Institute of

Cambodia estimates that 85% of Cambodians hold no formal job. This can be helped if the government pays more attentions by putting the right national plan both practicing and monitoring.

**Corruption** is still in concerning as another serious problem. In March 2010, the government passed a controversial anti-graft law, which was drafted over 15 years. Several observers have expressed concern about the new law as it neither leaves loopholes for corruption, such as no provision of protection for whistleblowers nor requires government officials and their families to declare assets. In 2009, Cambodia scores 2.0 on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (highly clean) in Transparency International Organization's Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking 158 out of 180 countries suggesting widespread and endemic forms of corruption<sup>11</sup>.

6: Human Development Reports (HDR) 2009 : [http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_THA.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_THA.html)

7: Human Development Reports (HDR) 2009 : [http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_VNM.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_VNM.html)

8: Human Development Reports(HRD) : [http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_KHM.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_KHM.html)

9 :<http://www.moeys.gov.kh/Includes/Contents/EMISStatistic0708/Kingdom%20of%20Cambodia.pdf>

10: [http://www.indexmundi.com/cambodia/unemployment\\_rate.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/cambodia/unemployment_rate.html)

11: [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2009/cpi\\_2009\\_table](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table)

Beside the above problems, there are still many problems that need to be solved urgently such as drug trafficking, traffic issue, weak judiciary system, an alarming number of land issues throughout the country, crime issues, law enforcement and law usage.

## **2. Future Leader**

There are many ways to solve the above problems. But what we need to do is to put all theories/concepts into practice and/or apply to the real life. Upon my academic background in Computer Science and my experiences of attending several future leader programs, I have strong believed that Information and Communication Technology(ICT) are the most significant tool

either to solve the nowadays country problems or to develop the country in the digital era. The concept of ICT for Development (ICT4D) has been widely applied in every sector with a great contribution along with its advantages. What am I going to do to contribute to my precious home-country as I will be a leader of the next?

ICT4D must apply into all the country's frameworks and the top priority sectors to develop the country. With the concept of using ICT4D, we can offer a good government along with transparency in using national budget, a better education system that meets the needs of not only Cambodian society, but also the international standard, green environment and sustainable development, and so on. The next that must be established is the Research & Development (R&D) institutes focusing on Science & Technology(S&T). We can build up the Science Park for a system of R&D. The R&D will play an important role to do a research on providing a better life for Cambodians, taking a part in increasing GDP in order to combat poverty, and creating jobs based on S&T such as nuclear technology, Na-no technology, bio-technology, and etc.

As a member of United Nations, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is our duty in order to end up poverty by 2015. Cambodia has adapted the MDGs in 2003 and modified the 8<sup>th</sup> goals of MDGs to fit with the country's circumstance as Cambodia MDGs (CMDGs)<sup>12</sup>. According to UNDP in Cambodia, Cambodia seems to slowly achieve; and up to now, only goal 4, 6, and 9 of CMDGs are being on trace or seems to be achieving<sup>12</sup>. This shows that Cambodia needs a very long term to achieve all goals of CMDGs. The youth in this generation will be holding all these duties for Cambodia to achieve the CMDGs as they will be the leader of the next.

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12: <http://www.un.org.kh/undp/CMDGs/What-are-the-Cambodia-Millennium-Development-Goals.html>

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