

Case Study on Volunteerism: ③ Cambodia

Background

The Kingdom of Cambodia is the most youthful country in South East Asia with 52.2 percent of its total population below 25 years of age and 20.6 percent between 15 and 24. While roughly a fifth of Cambodia's population is estimated to live in poverty, reportedly 300,000 young people enter the labor market seeking job opportunities every year.

Volunteerism in Cambodia

Volunteerism is intrinsic to Cambodian culture. It is present in Buddhist structures and it is also now part of the policy arena in Cambodia as a result of several years of advocacy work undertaken by UNV in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, VolCam – the network of international and national volunteer sending and volunteer involving organizations in Cambodia, and other stake holders.

Young people are a driving force for peace, democracy, equality, good governance, eradication of poverty and sustainable development, and volunteerism is way to improve lives and build and strengthen communities.

Case Study 1: My Dream Home: Building houses, building hopes

Since 2013, My Dream Home (MDH) has worked on producing eco-friendly and easy to construct Le-go-like interlocking bricks for building affordable housing for the poor. The bricks are 20-40 percent cheaper than traditional bricks, and by using them less cement and labor force is needed in the construction process.

MDH defined a volunteer as someone who works without payment, but with a small

allowance only. The volunteer needs to have a clear purpose and understanding of what to do during their volunteering period as this makes their work more efficient and the knowledge and skills obtained more definite.

Case Study 2: Youth Star Cambodia

Youth Star Cambodia aims at enhancing the quality of life within the vulnerable communities by engaging and empowering youth for education and civic participation. Its founder Eva Mysliwiec strongly believes that Cambodian youths are powerful change agents. The new idea was that volunteering can be instrumental in developing citizenship, especially by transferring knowledge and skills to youth in rural communities.

In response to Cambodia's national development goals, Youth Star has been working hard to promote sustainable development by educating people in rural areas. In addition, in order to engage and promote volunteers, they encourage youth to put what they have learnt into practice and adapt and learn, changing their life and the life of their communities.

Source: Volunteerism and Youth Employment in Cambodia

https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/UNV_volunteerism_and_youth_employment_in_Cambodia_2017_compressed_1.pdf