

CONCEPT NOTE

PEP National Dissemination Workshop

“The Effect of Parental Migration on the Schooling of Children left behind in Rural Cambodia”

28 July 2021

Zoom Webinar, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Background

Millions of Cambodians are migrating in search of work. Over one million adults have migrated internationally – encouraged by national government policy – with neighboring Thailand being the main destination. However, it is the growth of urban jobs, particularly opportunities for low-skilled workers in the garment, textile and construction industries, that has led to high internal (rural-to-urban) migration. Nearly a quarter of Cambodia’s population (over 4 million people) have migrated within the country, leaving their families to find work. Most children are left with their grandparents – who are usually illiterate or have very little formal education – when their parents migrate. Cambodia’s Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and UNICEF have raised concerns that parental migration is having a detrimental effect on children’s education in the country. A team of local PEP researchers sought to investigate the effect of parental migration on children’s education and the reason for this effect.

We relied on a household-level panel survey conducted by the Cambodia Development Research Institute (CDRI) in rural villages to analyze the implications of parental migration on the educational outcomes of the children left behind. More specifically, we examined the following questions: (i) What is the influence exerted by parental migration on the completed years of schooling of the children that are left behind in rural Cambodia? (ii) Is this influence different depending on the age of the child, the gender of the migrants’ parent, and the internal or international nature of migration? (iii) What can explain the pattern that we uncover in the data?

Objectives

The national workshop will bring together stakeholders from the public and private sectors, development partners, and non-government organizations (international and local) working in the areas of migration and primary education. The main objectives of the conference are to:

- Disseminate the results of the study on the effect of parental migration on the schooling of children left behind in rural Cambodia.
- Discuss the findings against the wider issues, challenges, opportunities and risks facing the growing rural-to-urban and international migration and those faced the difficulties of attending education programme among the children left behind in Cambodia.
- Formulate policy recommendations/options for strengthening the education programme for the left-behind kids in rural areas.

Participants

There are about 30 participants invited to this dissemination workshop. They are from Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Center for Policy Studies, World Vision, Save the Children Cambodia, Plan International Cambodia, UNICEF, ADB, World Bank, USAID, Development partners, and NGOs.