

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION for YOU and ME

Youth Situation:

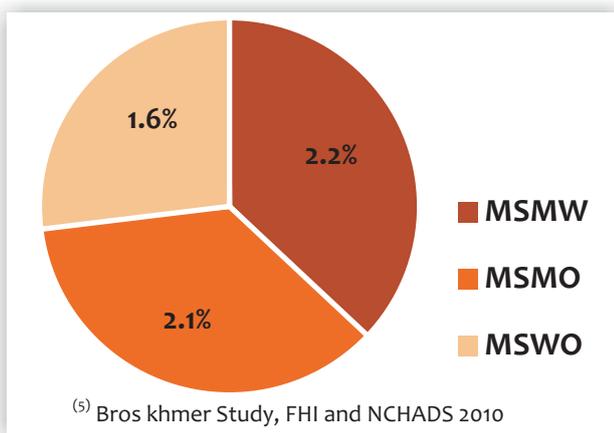
- In Cambodia, overall 11.3% of all students dropped out from their primary & secondary schools in the fiscal year 2010-11⁽¹⁾. The highest dropped-out rate was found in grade 9 (23.2%). With these trends, around 161,000 young people aged from 13 to 18 years of age annually – leave schools and became out-of-school young people, potentially facing all kinds of social issues including sexual and reproductive health issues.
- The majority of Cambodian primary or secondary students get little or no life skills education (LSE). Schools mostly provide no or very rudimentary education in reproductive health and sexuality. If students cannot get information when young, how will they be able to manage sexual and reproductive health in their lives when they are adults/parenthood? Ignorance is high among adults, and this needs changing.
- **Sexual activity is initiated earlier by many young people today.** The rural-to-urban migration of young people for employment and education contributes to their exposure to sexual reproductive health risks, including increased risk-taking behavior associated with HIV infection, and other health development risks, including drug abuse and gender-based violence⁽³⁾.
- Related to social issues, lack of LSE aggravated young people risky behaviors such as gender based violence, sexual abuse and trafficking, drug uses etc., which are the critical factors that inhibited the brightness futures of youths (good citizenship and parenthood).

Facts:

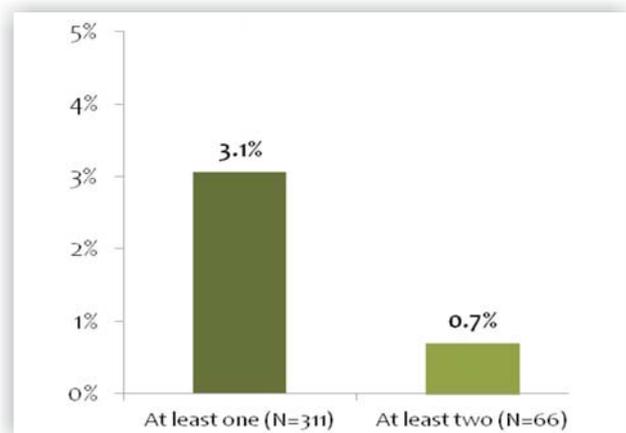
HIV prevalence under 30 years

In 2005, a survey⁽²⁾ revealed that the HIV prevalence among youth aged from 15 to 29 years old was 1.4%. Estimates from 2006 suggest that HIV prevalence among young pregnant women aged 15-24 was 0.41 per cent (nearly half of new infections occurring in married women, most of whom were infected by their husbands)⁽³⁾.

Young MSM HIV status⁽⁵⁾



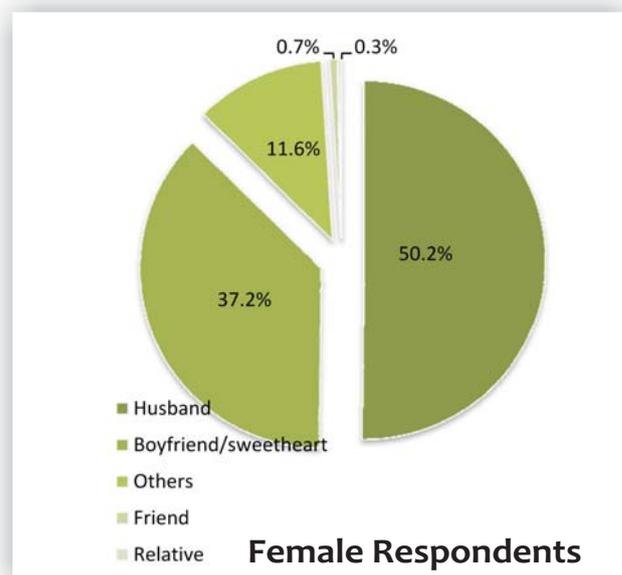
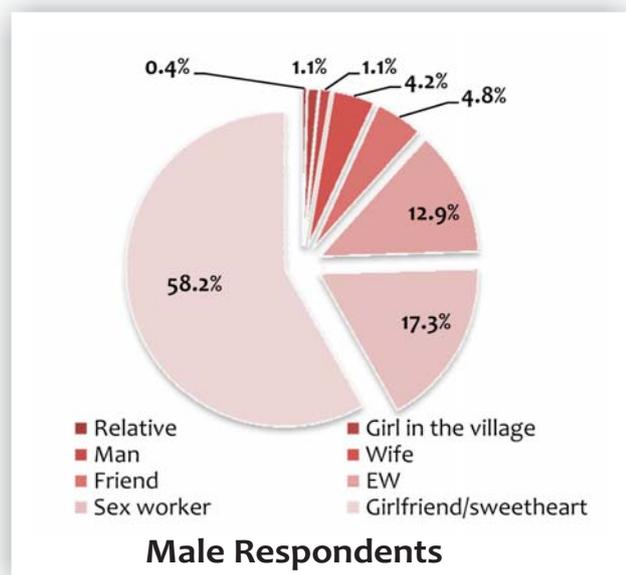
Abortion Practices among Young Women aged 15-19⁽⁴⁾



Related Social Issues

- 7.9% of young women aged from 15-19 experienced any physical violence and 18.6% of ever-married youth who have experienced any violence (physical, sexual, or emotional) by their current or most recent husband/partner⁽³⁾
- Median of age at first sexual intercourse was at 19 and 18 among male and female respondents respectively (10-24), while median age at first marriage was at 21 for male and 18 for female⁽⁷⁾

The patterns of sexual partners⁽⁷⁾



- There is a gender difference regarding drug use, as only 3.5% of female MARYP reported ever using drugs while over 15% of males reported so. However the highest levels of injecting drug use (in the last 12 months) were recorded by females⁽⁷⁾

Life Skills Education:

Life skills education consists of SRHR knowledge, a variety of critical skills and practices that are essential for making youth become good citizenship, good parenthood, gender equality, safety from SRH infections, drug uses and unwanted pregnancy. Life skills education also helps prevent gender based violence (GBV). Critical thinking skills play an important role to make young people become more mature in parallel to their physical, mental, psychological and social development. Such skills have been incorporated in all subjects mentioned in Life Skills Education curricula of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. As “It’s All One Curriculum” (CSE guideline)⁽⁶⁾ said that:

“Researchers have identified **gender inequality** as a key factor driving the **AIDS pandemic**. Policy makers have called for **sexuality** and **HIV education** that emphasizes **gender equality** and **human rights**, while educators want to teach young people the **critical thinking skills** needed to build compassionate and **just societies**”.

Key recommendations:

1. Life Skills Education (LSE), also known as Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), is fundamental for Sustainable Development. Getting life skills education is a human right
2. All educational programs – primary, secondary and vocational – should include Life Skills Education (Training).
3. Life Skills Education should be mandatory at every level of education in Cambodia
4. Life skills training needs to start early, in order to reach young people before they drop out of school.
5. The Budget allocation for class teachers to training Life Skills Education – CSE curricula for secondary school and primary school needs to be addressed.

References

1. Education Statistics and Indicators 2011 – 2012, EMIS Office, Department of Planning, February 2012
2. Cambodian Demographic Health Survey 2005
3. Situation Analysis of Youth in Cambodia, UN 2009
4. Cambodian Demographic Health Survey 2010
5. Bros Khmer Study, FHI and NCHADS 2010
6. It’s All One Curriculum (CSE guidelines and activities) 2009, The Population Council, Inc.