



PRESS RELEASE

Cambodia Launches National Campaigns to Keep Every Child in School

KAMPONG CHAM, 14 October 2025 – As Cambodia prepares to open its classrooms for the 2025–2026 academic year this November, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), supported by UNICEF, is launching two nationwide public campaigns to tackle persistent lower secondary school dropout rates and ensure that every child—from early childhood to adolescence—has access to inclusive, quality education.

Cambodia has made real progress in recent years. More children are enrolling in school, and more are surviving their early years. However, too many children and adolescents are still being left behind.

“Improving learning outcomes and reducing dropouts remain central priorities of our Education Strategic Plan. While Cambodia has made significant progress in expanding access to education, we must ensure that every child not only enters school but also completes it with the skills needed for life and work,” said H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport. “The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, in collaboration with UNICEF and our partners, is launching these campaigns to strengthen early childhood care and development, promote inclusive learning, and address the factors that lead children to leave school prematurely. Together, we are working to build an education system that is equitable, resilient, and responsive to the needs of every learner across Cambodia.”

In 2023, there were approximately 3 million school-age children in Cambodia (2 million in primary school and 1 million in lower secondary)¹. Out of these 3 million, around 300,000 children and adolescents were out of school. By 2024, dropout rates remained stubbornly high, with 15.5 per cent of students leaving school at the lower secondary level². Only 43 per cent of children aged 3–5 are enrolled in preschool³. While more adolescents are staying in school, just 60 per cent completed lower secondary school⁴.

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2023

² Education Congress Report, 2025

³ Education Congress Report, 2025

⁴ Education Congress Report, 2025

Additionally, the latest data from MoEYS reveals that 30 per cent of 5-year-old children are not enrolled in preschool⁵.

“Quality education is not a dream, it is a duty. And the future of our children cannot wait,” said Dr. Will Parks, UNICEF Representative in Cambodia, at the ceremony launch event in Kampong Cham. “We must act now to ensure that every child is seen, supported, and given a fair chance. That’s why we’re supporting the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in launching two public campaigns, united by a single goal: ensuring quality education for every child, from early childhood through adolescence.”

Children from poor families, rural areas, ethnic minority communities, and those with disabilities continue to face barriers to learning and are underrepresented in classrooms. Children with disabilities are twice as likely to never attend school as their peers.

The two public campaigns aim to raise awareness, mobilize communities, and strengthen support systems to keep children in school and improve learning outcomes. It will focus on early childhood education, inclusive learning environments, and targeted interventions for the most vulnerable children. The campaigns include two key components:

- *[Caring Parents, Smart Kids](#)* campaign is an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) initiative that supports caregivers in preparing children for school through growth monitoring, play, nutrition, and preschool enrollment.
- *[Your Choice, Your Future](#)* is a campaign to prevent adolescent dropout, encouraging them to stay in school and seek support while addressing pressures like early marriage, labour, and lack of motivation.

The campaigns will begin in Ratanakiri, Siem Reap, and Kampong Cham, provinces with the highest dropout rates and deepest inequalities. To support the campaigns, UNICEF and MoEYS are distributing practical tools for families, schools, communities, including videos, audio messages, printed materials, and interactive resources. These materials are available online at <https://unicef.link/46QraSN>.

The campaigns will be implemented nationwide through multimedia channels, including social media platforms, radio, television, and community outreach. MoEYS and UNICEF encourage all government partners, civil society organizations, and media outlets to actively promote and implement these campaigns in their respective provinces to ensure that all children in Cambodia—especially the most vulnerable—benefit from these interventions.

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⁵ Education Congress Report, 2025

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