

Segment Spotlight: Young People

In many ways, Cambodian youth are identical to youth all over the world. They enjoy spending time with their friends and sport such as soccer and volleyball. Local games include *sey* which uses a kicking toy with feathers on top (similar to a hackey sack in America). As other typical youth, they also enjoy watching television and playing video games.

Most children in the West grow up believing they have opportunities to do whatever they want to do as long as they put their mind to it. Opportunity and freedom nurture western youth to follow their dreams and attempt big things. This concept is virtually non-existent among Cambodian youth.

Over half the population of Cambodia is under twenty-one. Cambodian youth grow up in a country that is full of corruption, deceit, ulterior motives and few opportunities. Instead of thinking about the possibilities of the future, many youth are more concerned with how they will find food for the day.

Most youth in Cambodia are reared in fractured families. Some people expect men to be unfaithful in marriage. In fact, some men father families in numerous villages. In addition to unstable homes because of infidelity, youth are being raised by parents who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Forty percent of all young Cambodians suffer from stress disorders caused by growing up in such a fractured society.

Education is poor in Cambodia and relatively few youth are able to earn a high school diploma. However, young people recognize that in order to find

jobs and opportunities in Cambodia they must be able to speak English. Young people flock to language centers in hopes of learning the English language so that they can have access to jobs.

Youth seek escape in many ways. Some young people become extra motivated to produce financially and educationally. Other young people turn to gambling, computer games or drugs. The lack of available jobs does not encourage creativity and hopefulness among the youth.

Cambodians consider someone who

is not and never has been married to be a youth. Age does not necessarily determine youth in the Khmer culture. Cambodians expect youth to act childish and irresponsibly. Khmer do not expect youth to handle adult responsibilities until they are married.

Pray that the youth find hope. The economic, social, educational and spiritual condition of the country saps the hope of many young people. Hope exists only in Jesus Christ. Pray down the spiritual walls of darkness which hinder them from investigating truth claims other than the traditional teachings.

Pray that youth would have access to good medical care.

Pray that the love of Christ exhibited by churches in Cambodia would draw youth to Christ.

Pray that youth would find peace in Jesus and in the community of believers that does not exist in the culture.



Fast Facts

% of Total Population:

>50%

Top Concern for Many Youth:

Where they will get their next meal

Top Educational Priority for Many:

Learning English

Rite of Passage to Move from Youth to Adult:

Marriage

