

POST EDUCATION

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Race for private schooling raises the bar

THE rapid growth of private international schools in Cambodia is changing the Kingdom's education landscape, resulting in an abundance of learning opportunities for the younger generation.

The entry of private schools, mostly operated by foreign companies, is beginning to raise the bar in the education sector and fill the demand-supply gap in the school system.

Today, dozens of international schools offer a range of challenging curriculums – based on British, American, Singaporean and French models – that appeal strongly to both Cambodia's growing middle-

class and expatriate community.

"I think the international institutions play an important role because they serve as a model for our education sector and enable us to develop Cambodia's school system.

"In private international institutions in Cambodia, the standard of education is higher than in ours because they are designed to meet international standards, which largely exceed our educational standards," Sipar director Hok Sothik told *The Post*.

Sipar is a non-governmental organisation that has been promoting literacy in Cambodia for more than two decades.

Many English-medium education providers are capitalising on the need for quality education from aspirational middle-class parents, particularly in urban areas where there is pressing demand for better schooling.

Well-equipped private schools – providing better infrastructure, modern classroom settings and highly professional academic staff – are able to offer demanding curriculums to match market demand and serve those who can afford them.

According to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, a total of 218,357 students were enrolled in 1,222 private schools nationwide – from pre-school to high school.

Operating alongside public schools, private institutions play a pivotal role by promoting diverse education.

"These international institutions have also contributed to the needs of our country and the inquisitiveness of Cambodian children, especially for families who can afford them.

"Some institutions also adapt the official Cambodian curriculum, so young people can work in Cambodia when they graduate. For other institutions, their trend is to focus on international markets, such as Europe or the US," Sothik said.

However, he cautioned of a downside to the growth of private schooling in the Cambodian education sector. High fees and less priority given



Sipar director Hok Sothik says private schools have contributed to the education sector.



More Cambodian parents are opting for private schools.

to the teaching of the Khmer language were notable drawbacks, he said.

"Some Cambodian students who study in private international institutions do not study Khmer.

"They only know English, so it will be a challenge for them working in Cambodia if they do not speak Khmer properly.

"In private international schools,

Khmer language should at least be taught for Cambodian students. Sometimes parents desperately want their children to learn English, so they do not get the opportunity to fully learn Khmer.

"These children can speak Khmer, but they do not know how to properly read and write it – in the future this could affect their identity," Sothik said. ■

'Critical thinking will resolve challenges and generate greater opportunities for Kingdom'

HOW do we become distributors of ideas and what ideas are worth sharing?

Dr Ung Vannthoeun, vice-rector of Norton University, says critical thinking provides the answers to these questions.

Vannthoeun, a doctor of psychology, reasoned that critical thinking is "the weighing of facts and experience and balancing them with their own evaluations".

While education and skills training are crucial in entering the workforce, it is growing increasingly important for people to develop critical thinking skills, says Vannthoeun.

This, Vannthoeun says,

would generate additional income for Cambodia, as well as result dividends in that extend beyond the financial realm.

"We know that money is the tangible currency in our daily lives, but it is said that ideas are the new currency in the 21st century," he says.

Worryingly, according to the vice-rector, some university professors had expressed concerns that students were unable to think critically and clearly express their ideas.

He adds that misinformation had become more widespread through the consumption of fake news.

At the opposite end of the

spectrum, platforms like Ted Talks allow speakers from all backgrounds and disciplines to interpret discoveries and share their experiences.

Therefore, according to Vannthoeun, educators must find thought-provoking ways to engage students, while teachers must encourage their pupils to ponder on how the lessons apply to students' own experiences.

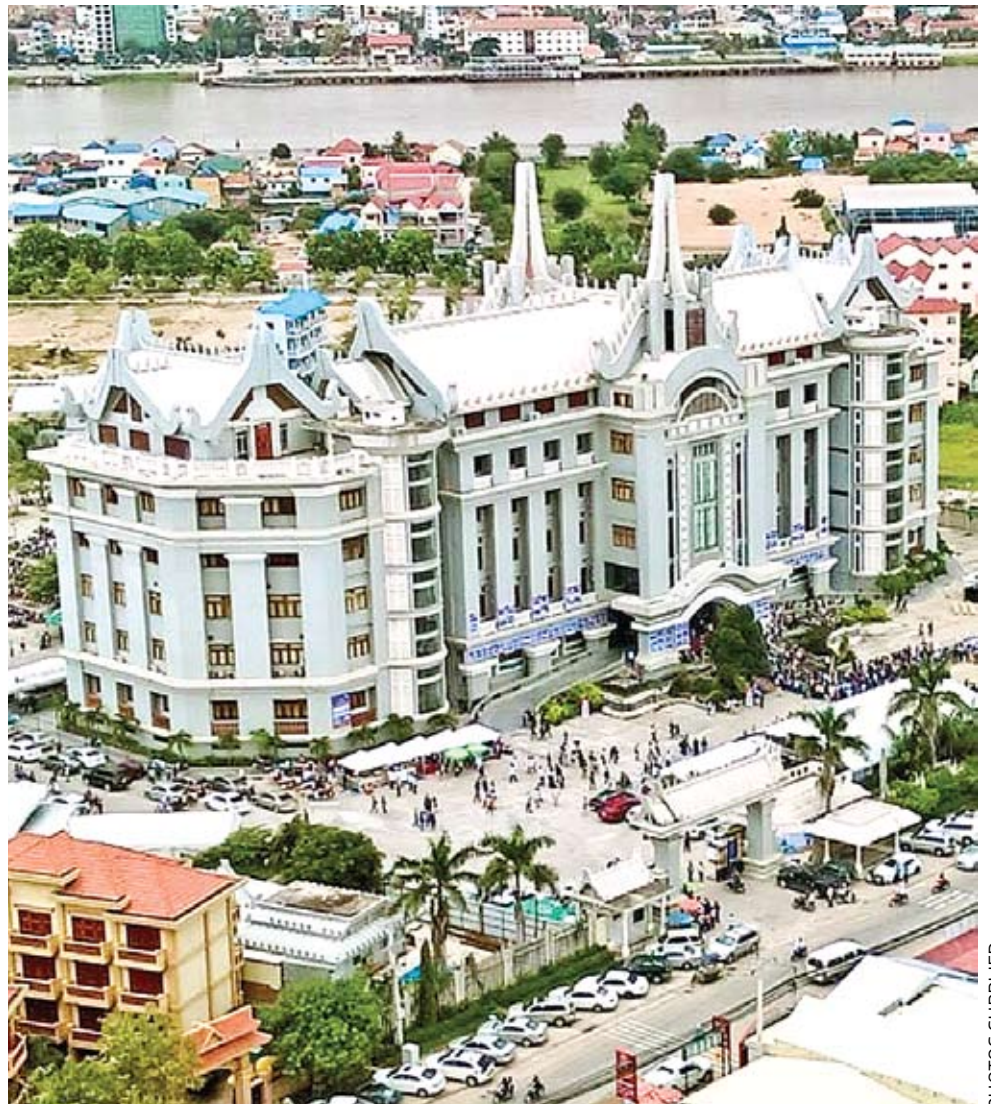
"For instance, if the crowd resorts to a mob mentality and takes justice into its own hands to kill the driver in the event of a fatal hit-and-run, it may consider justice to have been served.

"However, the crowd did not consider that the driver could have been charged with 'unintentional manslaughter', while the mob may have committed 'intentional manslaughter'," Vannthoeun says, citing a real world example.

"As an institution, and educators as a whole, must guide students to think, apply their ideas and strive to innovate in addition to providing lessons.

"The ability to think critically can help avoid problems and cultivate ideas that can be of purpose," he says.

Quoting US founding father Benjamin Franklin, he adds: "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." ■



The Norton University campus in Phnom Penh.



Dr Ung Vannthoeun: Education and skills are vital to enter the workforce.

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Invictus: New premium international school set to stand out from the crowd

A NEW player is set to enter the Kingdom's competitive international school sector – one promising to stand out from the rest with its unique approach to achieving educational excellence.

Invictus International School was founded in Singapore in 2015 by South African tech entrepreneur John Fearon to offer premium education at an accessible price.

It is to open its Phnom Penh campus in March, with quality learning available for \$8,000 per year.

The school focuses on holistic education and character development, with a particular emphasis on leadership, multilingualism and the highly effective Singapore Mathematics method to ensure graduates are equipped with the necessary skills to enter the higher learning institution of their choice.

Invictus is in the midst of expanding to other countries after the success of its campuses in Singapore and the strong recommendations from the expatriate community.

The Cambodian campus joins the two currently in Hong Kong, with plans afoot to bring Invictus' accessible international education to Thailand.

The management at Invictus includes seasoned educators, some of whom have served in senior appointments at the Singaporean Ministry of Education.

One, the school's principal Cecilia Ng, enthusiastically describes her passion for education, and her excitement at being the head of Invictus Phnom Penh.

"Teaching is my passion, and it's the only job I have ever done, from being a teacher to becoming a vice-principal and then a principal in Singapore's Ministry of Education.

"I am excited to come to Cambodia. I would like to make a difference by providing the necessary skills so [students] can contribute to the development and success of the country," Ng says.

The 30-year educator says the learning of three languages – English, Khmer and Simplified Chinese – will be one of Invictus' unique selling points.



Invictus International School focuses on holistic education and character development, with a particular emphasis on leadership, multilingualism and the Singapore Mathematics method.

"With globalisation, it is crucial that we hone the multi-linguistic ability of our students, and knowing more languages will give them a competitive edge. Knowing more than one language increases cultural awareness and allows for communication with many different people.

"A great deal of research has revealed that young children can learn and absorb different languages easily and quickly. The learning of multiple languages should start young, and that is why at Invictus, we are exposing children to three languages early," Ng says.

The Invictus philosophy is to provide students



It is crucial we hone the multi-linguistic ability of our students – knowing more languages will give them a competitive edge

CECILIA NG / PRINCIPAL

with a holistic education in both academic and non-academic areas.

"Holistic education in the classroom is dynamic and focuses on the subject matter, which is then brought to life through experiences, discussions, student-centred tasks and authentic learning.

"Character development is

also an important aspect of our curriculum as we believe very strongly that values education and the intellectual have to be balanced," she says.

Ng speaks of the importance of leadership in education. "Leadership is an area that we will focus on as we believe very strongly that 'Every Child is a Leader'. Our curriculum ensures that opportunities will be provided for every child to develop life skills so that they will be confident and able to interact well with the community.

"A true leader will be visionary, optimistic, adaptable, confident, decisive and have strong communication skills," she says.

The school also plans to equip students for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

"Computer literacy skills will also be featured in our curriculum. We have plans to teach coding and IT-related skills," she says.

All this means students are



South African tech entrepreneur John Fearon founded Invictus to offer premium education at an affordable price.

set to leave Invictus with the qualifications to enter university and the skills to succeed in life.

"We envisage our graduating students to be confident leaders with an international perspective, equipped with all the nec-

essary hard skills to enter the higher learning institution of their choice and the soft skills to positively influence the people around them – and lead them with love and compassion," Ng says. ■

More information:

<http://www.cambodia.invictus.school/>

<https://www.facebook.com/invictusintl.school/cambodia/>



The principal of Invictus International School's Phnom Penh campus Cecilia Ng.



Holistic education in the classroom is dynamic and focuses on the subject matter.



SCIA developing cross-cultural competencies in future leaders



The academic team at SCIA comprises some 40 teaching staff from 15 different nationalities, giving students exposure to global perspectives.



SCIA students learn three languages and participate in various cultural events and celebrations.



Values are not taught, but caught. SCIA students serve their local community through Service Learning projects.

MAJOR cities around the world are increasingly cosmopolitan. To thrive in this global age, youths of today must cultivate a broad worldview and the ability to work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, with different ideas and perspectives. However, taking pride in their own cultural heritage, staying well-informed about national issues, and contributing actively to their local communities ensure rootedness to the country of birth and appreciation of their heritage.

Singapore (Cambodia) International Academy (SCIA) recognises the importance of

developing cross-cultural competencies, as part of her mission to inspire future leaders. Besides academic performance, SCIA imparts soft skills through Holistic Education Learning Model and signature programmes comprising Leadership, Entrepreneurship and STEM.

Highlights of the Cross-Cultural Experiences at SCIA
Trilingual Education: SCIA students attend compulsory lessons in three languages – English, Chinese and Khmer. Early exposure to multiple languages lays a foundation for students to pursue them at more advanced levels later on in the upper grades of education. While English is the main

medium of instruction, SCIA also emphasises the appreciation of Asian culture through learning of Khmer and Chinese.

Cultural Activities: At SCIA, students participate in celebrations of major festivals of various cultures and nationalities. These include Khmer New Year, Pchum Ben, Mid-Autumn Festival, Chinese New Year and Christmas. One of the co-curricular activities offered is the Khmer Cultural Club, which is open to students from all nationalities for them to learn about local traditions and practices. By getting first-hand involvement, students gain a deeper understanding about the diversity amongst their

peers and the significance of these special occasions.

Learning Journeys and Immersions: Opportunities abound for SCIA students to travel overseas for Learning Journeys and Immersion; and at times, participation in overseas competitions. In the past academic year, SCIA students travelled to Singapore, China, Malaysia and Indonesia, appreciating lessons beyond the constraints of the four walls. More destinations will be planned in the next few years, to widen the students' horizons. SCIA has partnered the School of Science and Technology (SST) from Singapore in a Service Learning project for the local community

in Silk Island. Such trips provide an authentic platform for students to interact and forge friendships with their counterparts from other countries.

International Academic Team: On a daily basis, SCIA students learn from a team of qualified international teachers. SCIA's academic team comprises some 40 teaching staff from 15 different nationalities, led by school leaders experienced in the Cambridge curriculum and Singapore education system. The teachers bring their diverse know-how and perspectives to the classrooms, giving students a multi-faceted and global outlook, in the comfort of the SCIA facilities.

Values are not taught, but caught: Unlike facts and knowledge, cross-cultural skills and values such as empathy and respect cannot be imparted merely through lectures and reading of textbooks. Through meaningful activities such as experiential learning, participating in competitions, contributing to the disadvantaged communities, positive values are introduced and hopefully adopted by the students. By creating the above optimal learning experiences and environment, SCIA strives to sow seeds of cross-cultural competencies deep in the hearts and minds of the students, who aspire to be future leaders in this global age. ■

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SCIA
 Singapore Cambodia
 International Academy

SCIA OPEN HOUSE

Date
Sat, 15 Feb 2020

Time
2:00PM - 5:00PM

Venue
SCIA Campus

Call to register now!

English (855) 61 777 818
 Khmer (855) 85 777 814

One Park, Phnom Penh City Center,
 No. 58, Street R8, Sangkat Srah Chak,
 Khan Doun Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Choosing the right skills for success

THE importance of choosing the right skills to enhance your career prospects and employment opportunities cannot be understated. Choosing wrong will cost at the very least time and money, and could even leave you unhappy, trapped in an unsuitable job.

Great care needs to be taken before deciding on what skills to learn. Your talents, interests and passions need to be taken into consideration, otherwise you may find yourself unmotivated, unproductive and dissatisfied.

Experience and research shows that four key factors – talent, passion, market demand and the right institution – need to be considered before embarking on a course to acquire new skills.

Each person is blessed with different talents – some people are more logical, good at mathematics and solving problems, while others are artistic, able to draw or create music.

When choosing a career path, it is therefore essential to determine whether it is one that matches your innate talents before acquiring the necessary skills.

Passion is also hugely important in guiding you towards the right profession. Instead of asking “What skills should I learn?” as many people do, particularly high school students, the question should be: “What skills are right for me?”

Discovering your passions is



CamEd Business School is a leading institute offering a range of financial courses.

crucial. When you find an area of interest, spend time doing something related to see if are truly passionate about it. This will be rewarding beyond expectation.

While many skills are cur-

rently required by investors in Cambodia, there are also those that are not needed. Therefore, research is required into market demands. You will need to look into the required skills that inter-

est you and how they will benefit you in the future.

Your choice of institution is very important, with many having been established in the Kingdom's rapidly growing education sector. While this offers students numerous options, it can also bring challenges in selecting the right school.

Therefore, careful study is required before selecting a place of learning. You should carefully review all the information available, including the skills being taught and the standard of teaching. The quality of the education available can be ascertained through former students.

Studying is a long-term investment – it can take many years to complete a course. It is therefore crucial to seriously consider your

talents and passions, and thoroughly assess the market before carrying out research to ensure you choose the right school, one that is internationally recognised and has high standards of teaching.

CamEd Business School provides training in finance, accounting and auditing skills in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The institute is recognised by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Economy and the international Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), which is recognised in 183 countries across the world.

CamEd's accounting and financial education programmes are recognised by the CFA

Institute University Affiliation Programme, and have also been accredited by the Asean University Network.

It has been awarded ISO 9001:2015 Certification of the Quality Management System by the UK-registered Guardian Independent Certification.

With experienced international professors, recognised in the US, UK, Singapore and the Philippines, among many other countries, students will get an excellent educational experience and a professional experience.

Graduate having gained full knowledge, and the professionalism, soft skills and work ethics required for a career working both locally and internationally, with well-known global institutions such as PwC, KPMG, Deloitte, and Ernst and Young. ■



Students need additional skills to enter a competitive market.

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