



Kidshelp Kambodscha e.V. Newsletter, December 2020

Dear friends and supporters,

Having provided updates on the progress of our projects in the last [newsletter](#), we would like to focus once again on the general situation here in the country as we approach end of the year. Why? Simply because we receive regular requests wanting to know how your godchildren and the people in Cambodia are doing.



Figure 1: Our students on this year's DHL Express Cambodia Facility Tour¹

Like everywhere else in the world, the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences overshadow all developments in the country. Schools and other places of assembly were, as a precaution, closed as early as March. We had reported on this in the previous Corona Updates in our [blog](#).

Due to very low infection figures over a longer period, the government decided in October that schools could open under special hygiene measures. In addition, the final exams were initially scheduled for December but later for [high school were moved to January](#). They are usually in August. In previous years, we had always presented the candidates for a university scholarship in September. However, because the examinations will now only take place in January, we will

¹ You can read more about our visit to DHL Express on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/Kidshelp.Kambodscha/posts/3554472897968725>



not be able to present the candidates until February at the earliest. We will then share their profiles with you as usual via special newsletters and [Facebook](#).



Figure 2: Some of our scholarship holders with the Head of Human Resources of DHL Express Cambodia

Within the last few weeks, there have been two incidents that have been in the local news and are often referred to in the media as the November 3 and November 28 incidents:

November 3 incident:

After the reopening of the schools in October, the infection figures had initially not changed. The few new cases reported were all limited to people who had tested positive after entering the country from abroad. [On 3 November](#), the Hungarian Foreign Minister visited Cambodia for only one day. He was then [diagnosed with the virus on his return to Thailand](#). We do not want to engage in speculation as to whether he was infected on arrival or whether he had contracted prior to his visit. What was crucial for us and the people here on the ground was that this incident caused the schools in Phnom Penh and neighbouring Ta Khmau to be closed again for a fortnight. Considering the few intensive care beds and the generally weak health care, it is understandable that the government [acted cautiously](#) after this incident and took appropriate protective measures.



November 28 incident:

Because our school is located in the state of Kandal, we were not affected by the closures at the beginning of November. Less than a month later, however, there was another incident. [A Cambodian woman had developed symptoms and had herself tested on 28 November](#). Unfortunately, despite already having Covid symptoms, she had the previous day been out and about in one of the country's largest shopping centres. On the following days, all employees and people she had contact with during the previous week were tested. In the meantime, the government had identified several infections related to this incident and [officially announced that this is the first case of community transmission in Cambodia](#). On 10th December, the Ministry of Education announced that classroom teaching would be banned until further notice. This applies to all teaching institutions in the country. In addition, the [current school year at government schools would be terminated](#) with immediate effect. The final exams for students in the twelfth grade and the start of the new school year have been postponed until January. We hope that face-to-face teaching will be allowed again from that date at the latest. In order to be able to teach online, we firstly lack the financial means and secondly, many families also do not have sufficient internet-capable devices to be able to guarantee the participation of all children in such lessons.

All in all, the corona numbers here remain low. Fortunately, no deaths have been reported so far. [Since the government has acted prudently so far](#), we are cautiously optimistic that there will be no major outbreak. What is already noticeable is [the impact of the pandemic on the economy](#). Many textile factories are temporarily or permanently closed, major construction projects are at a standstill and no tourists are coming to the country. This is particularly evident in the last quarter of the year because this is usually the peak season. During October, [95.8% fewer visitors from abroad arrived in Cambodia](#). This economic crisis is of great concern. There is hardly any social protection. According to a recent World Bank study, 13.8% of Cambodians have lost their jobs since the pandemic began. 63.1% of those who continue to work reported receiving a lower salary. In addition, 74.7% of households surveyed responded that the number of remittances from family members working abroad had decreased. And these are



all [figures from May](#). The situation may have worsened significantly in the meantime.

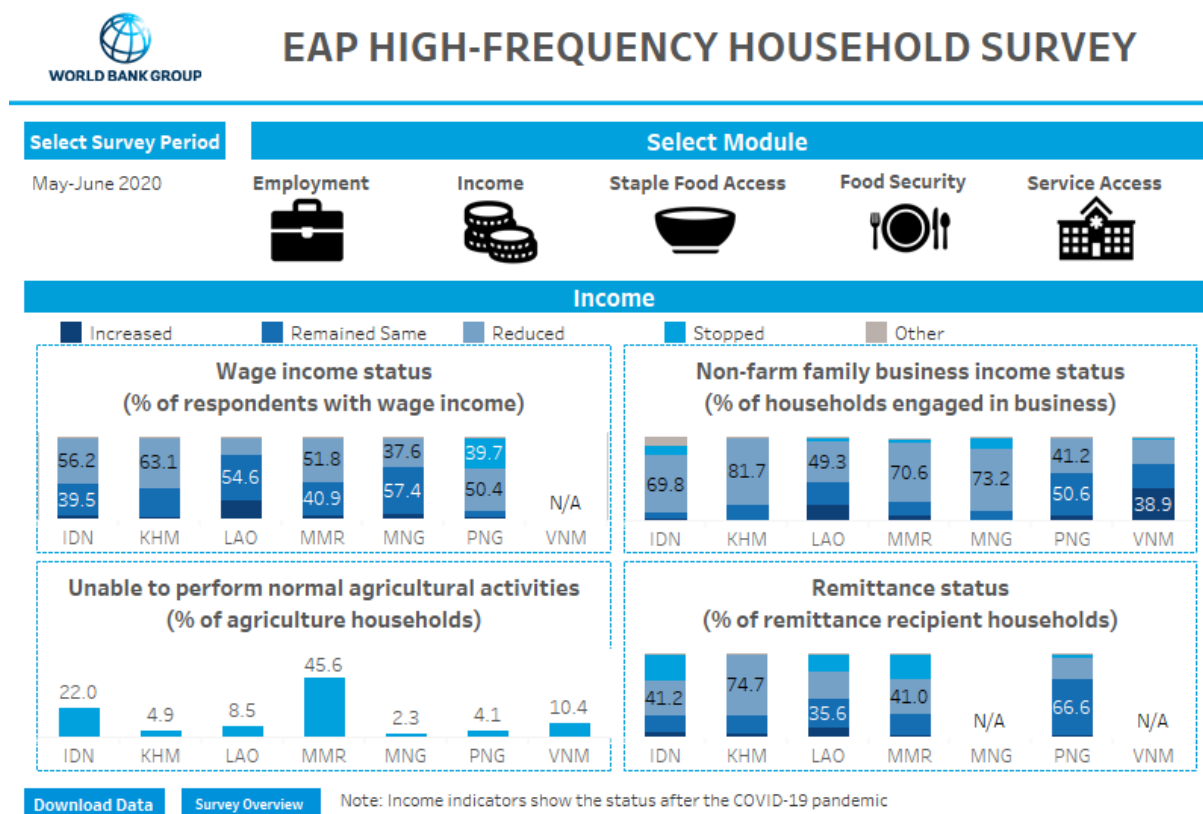


Figure 3: Income development since the beginning of the pandemic. Source: The World Bank Group ²

We are therefore concerned that the number of school dropouts, especially among teenagers, will increase in 2020 and 2021. Often the jobs that teenagers take are in [brick factories](#). There they are exposed to considerable health risks. Moreover, because employers usually pay the minors lower wages, the young people take jobs that could otherwise be filled by adults who have lost their jobs because of the pandemic. We hope to be able to reopen the school in January. The longer our staff and teachers do not have personal contact with the children, the higher the probability that they will not come back.

1) Christmas fundraiser

We are aware that many organisations are competing for your donations, especially during Advent. The update is intended to give you as realistic an idea

² Interactive graphic available at the following link: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/how-hard-are-families-hit-covid-19-crisis-six-insights-our-household-surveys-east>



as possible of the situation on the ground. We hope that this kind of unpolished, direct reporting will convince you to donate something to our initiatives. Even the smallest amounts help. Preferably directly to the charity's account, because then we can use the money flexibly for all projects and do not have to pay transaction fees, as we do with PayPal or BetterPlace. The account details are as follows:

Kidshelp Kambodscha e.V.
VR Bank Bergisch Gladbach

IBAN: DE84 3706 2600 0503 5030 18
BIC: GENODED1PAF

Even better than one-off donations are Kidshelp membership. It is the monthly support of our members that makes it possible to finance our daily work. A form for joining the charity and further information on membership can be found [HERE](#). On the same page you will also find information about our sponsorships.

If you would rather donate to the construction of our second school, you can do so at BetterPlace, preferably on one of the coming Sundays in Advent (13th and 20th December). You can find more information about this campaign [HERE](#).

And if you are celebrating a birthday soon or just want to collect donations instead of birthday gifts, we recommend the [fundraiser function](#) on Facebook. Over the last few months, several of you have collected donations for us on your own. We think that's fantastic.

Many thanks to each and every one of you. In 2020, we felt very strongly how much you care about your godchildren and our work. Without your regular feedback and support, our work would not be possible. We are proud and grateful that we have mastered this difficult year together with you and our staff.



Our whole team, our students and our pupils wish you, your friends and your families good health, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

