

WHAT PROBLEMS CHILDREN FACE IN ACCESSING AND COMPLETING SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CAMBODIA? AND HOW CAN THIS BE IMPROVED?

5 children currently attending lower and upper secondary schools around Cambodia shared their opinions, concerns and suggestions. They also consulted a bigger group of children during a workshop on 24-25 May in Phnom Penh, organized by CRC-Cambodia.

This report will be submitted as a response to this call: [link](#) →

CHILD CONSULTATIONS
on early childhood education, free pre-primary education
and free secondary education

Hi! Hello from the United Nations Human Rights Office!

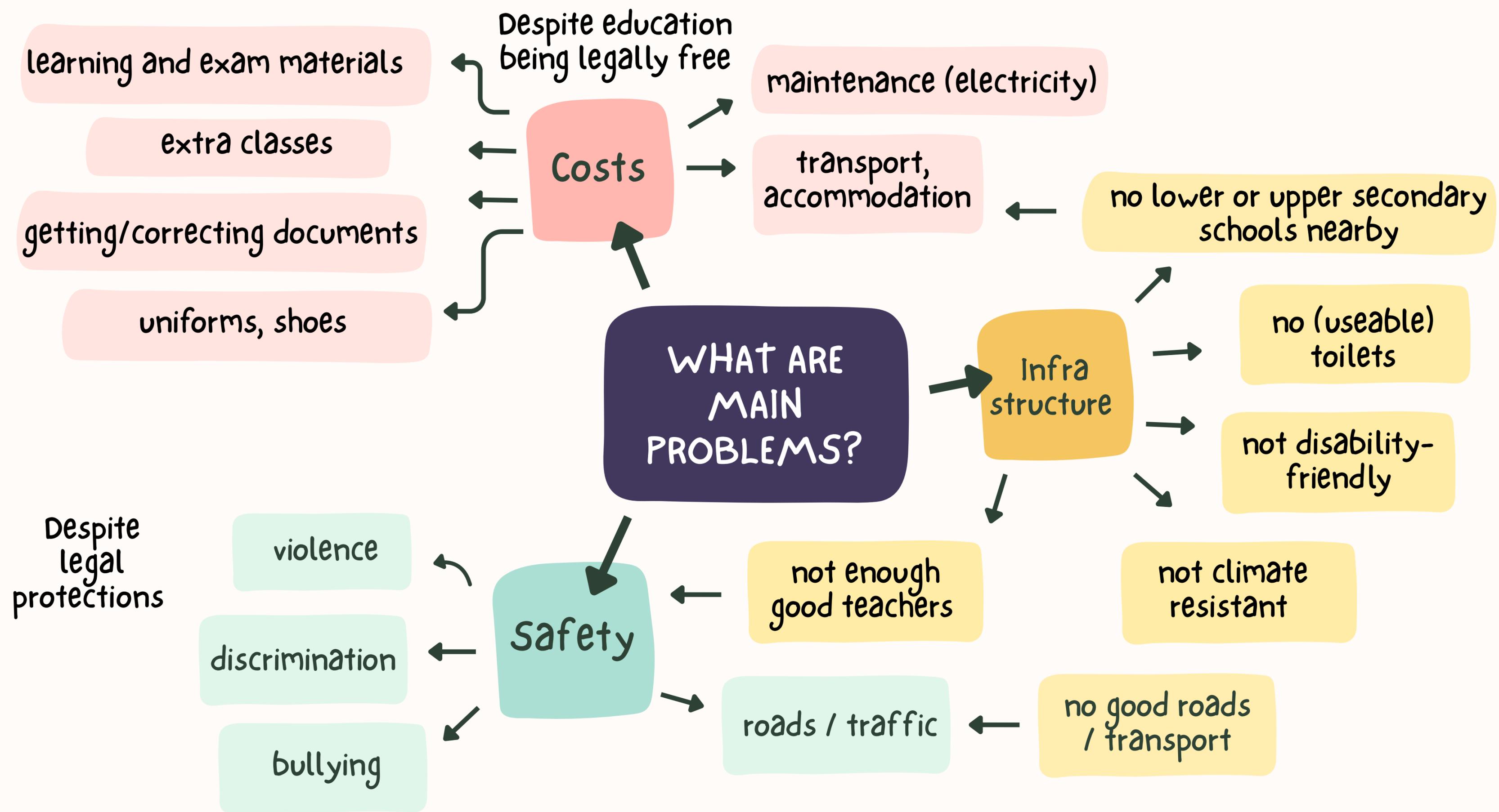
We want to hear from you! In September 2025, representatives of governments, organisations led by children and working on children's rights, other related organisations, and children themselves will meet in Geneva, Switzerland, to talk about **early childhood education, free pre-primary education and free secondary education**. We are working to ensure that children's views about these topics are included in the discussion. It's important that children, like you, can contribute with your thoughts and ideas. We want to make sure that your voices are heard because they are very important to make sure your rights are respected!

How can you participate and share your views?

Organisations are holding consultations with children about this process in different places around the world and probably you are reading this information sheet because you are interested to take part. The consultation will be a discussion led by an adult and/or child who is helping you to go through the main questions. After the consultation, the organisers of the consultation will prepare a report, which will be sent to the UN Human Rights Office. You can also help with that.

What will be the questions at the consultation?

- 1** Educational level
Do you attend pre-primary education (e.g. kindergarten, crèche, pre-school or similar)?
Do you attend primary education?
Do you attend secondary education?
- 2** What makes it difficult for children to attend pre-school and how does this affect them?
- 3** What makes it difficult for children to attend secondary school and how does this affect them?
- 4** Do some children have a harder time / greater challenges attending public pre-primary and secondary school than other children?
- 5** What should governments do to make sure that all children can attend public pre-primary and public secondary education for free?



WHICH CHILDREN FACE BIGGEST DIFFICULTIES?

Children unable to cover costs, including additional, often receive lower scores or face discrimination, increasing dropout risks.

poor families

In rural areas children contribute to family income

costs

- Rural and remote areas are not having adequate infrastructure.

- Ethnic minorities and indigenous communities live in remote areas with lack of infrastructure. Teachers from these communities are also rare.

infra structure

- Schools in urban areas are also not adapted to heatwaves and schools in flood prone areas are at higher risks, too.

SOGIESC-diverse are most affected by bullying.

SOGIESC-diverse and children with disabilities by discrimination from teachers

- mental health issues,
- dropping out,
- losing hopes for future

safety

- Some girls do not go to schools during menstruation because there are no (usable) toilets.
- Parents might worry more for girls safety if the school is far away, and decide to keep girls home.

- Children with disabilities are having even more difficulties because roads and transport, school buildings and equipment are not adapted.

HOW CAN THE GOVERNMENT MAKE THIS BETTER?

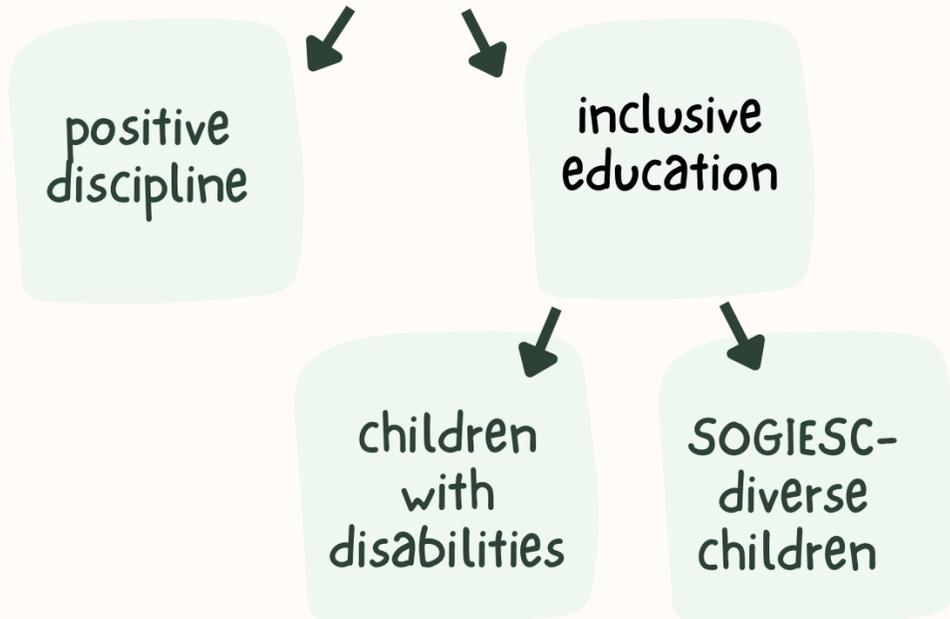
Costs

Safety

infrastructure

- Review the implementation of the activities of the Ministry of Education, schools and teachers to make sure that laws are followed in practice.
- Facilitate issuing and correcting birth certificates or other documents without payment and in a timely manner.
- Monitor the provision of scholarships to poor students and children with disabilities

• Make sure that schools have enough teachers trained and supported to practice:



Make sure that school buildings are

weather-adapted and disaster-resistant

disability-friendly

have good toilets for all children

• Make sure that children have a safe, confidential and effective channels to report problems (for example boxes)

• Make sure that schools have psychologists to help solve problems, prevent mental health issues

safety

infrastru
cture

- help organize and conduct community and peer-to-peer campaigns

- join educational campaigns



to learn why dropping out is risky

understand problems around them

share ideas for solutions

infrastru
cture

safety

costs

- report to village and commune authorities about the problems they encounter in and around schools

HOW CAN CHILDREN SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT?

provide peer-to-peer support and keep each other safe

dare to face and show who/what they are

seek mental health counseling

This child friendly summary report was developed by Jana Frick, translated into Khmer by Lay Yan and validated BY THE GROUP OF CHILDREN WHO WORKED ON THIS TOPIC during the 24-25 May Workshop.



June 2025 →



What will happen after?



- ✓ Stay tuned!
- ✓ A compilation of children's views will be sent to partners who organized child consultations and posted [online](#).
- ✓ An official update on the meeting and a child-friendly summary version will be published in June-July 2026. You can also regularly check the [UN Human Rights Office's website](#) for news.



What are children's rights?

Children's rights are promises that governments have made to children and young people under 18 years old to help them enjoy a good life in all places where they live and stay safe from danger. The **Convention on the Rights of the Child** explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.



What is the right to education?



One of these rights is the right to education. All children and young people have the right to education no matter who they are: for example, their race, gender or disability; if they're in detention, or if they're a refugee. Education is important for children's development and health. It helps them to keep them safe and well, and to prepare them for a good job and to be part of society.

However, [according to UNESCO](#), 251 million children and young people around the world are not going to school. There are many reasons why children and young people are not going to school and we would like to talk more about that today!