

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Standard of English in the Kingdom must be raised**

“The Presentation Clinic” believes it’s in everyone’s best interests

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Cambodia must address its standard of English as it claims an ever bigger role for itself on the world stage. While English does not enjoy “official language” status, there is no doubt that it is the “unofficial-official language” when it comes to the world of commerce.

Andrew Barnes, founder of “The Presentation Clinic” in Phnom Penh, believes it’s up to everyone working in the field of training & development to do their part in lifting the standard of English in the Kingdom:

“As Cambodia raises its international profile, thanks mainly to its participation in ASEAN, it must also raise the bar when it comes to English. One doesn’t have to look too far in the capital to see why international visitors make fun of Cambodia’s sincere attempt to adopt English as it’s business ‘lingua-franca’”.

Barnes believes business-owners need to invest more of their resources to fine-tune all aspects of their brand communication in English, especially with the West’s socio-economic influence growing:

“International brands are opening new outlets in Phnom Penh almost every week. The capital is also establishing new air routes, increasing Cambodia’s linkages with cities around the world. With 7% GDP growth safely on the horizon for at least the next two to three years, the pace of Cambodia’s globalisation is only going to quicken.”

The problem was highlighted by the World Economic Forum in June. Its ‘Human Capital Report 2016’ placed Cambodia 100<sup>th</sup> out of 130 countries when it comes to educating and training its workforce. Barnes believes that the government alone, though, cannot be expected to carry the burden of skills development:

“The government is certainly working tirelessly to meet its constitutional obligation to deliver ‘quality education at all levels’, thereby ‘guaranteeing an equal opportunity to earn a living’, but that living will increasingly have to be earned in English. The Minister of Education has already conceded that English is the “language of opportunity”. Dr Hang Chuon Naron rightly pointed out that capacity in English allows people to communicate better, negotiate efficiently and make better deals.”

If Cambodia doesn’t collectively raise its English standard, Barnes fears this will have consequences for economic growth and with it, the number of opportunities for Cambodians to share in the success of the country’s economic expansion.

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