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**Abstract**

Worldwide, markets challenge academics to keep their professional competency constantly improving. While in some countries governments, universities and individual scholars synergize their efforts to improve conditions for professional development, in others the stakeholders act in a chaotic and uncommitted manner. This paper examines the efforts of Cambodian policy-makers aimed at making structural alignments of interests, strategies, and resources at governmental and institutional levels in response to sporadic changes in academic labor markets. The qualitative research data shed light on a range of asynchronies generated by underinvestment in academic competence improvement and reliance on random actors that make choices in accordance with political circumstances, rather than professional norms. The Cambodian case stimulates thinking on what might be required to align national and institutional personnel policies and enhance opportunities for continued improvement of academic competence in a resource-deficient higher education system. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)