



វិទ្យាស្ថានកសិយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ និងគោលនយោបាយ
ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE



2023

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Message from the API Board of Directors and the Executive Committee

On behalf of the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), we, members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, confirm that we concluded successfully the implementation of API's 2019-23 Strategy, aimed at contributing to achieving the Organization's Vision: A Cambodian nation part of the world, which – through poverty reduction and protection of human rights – creates a national culture of harmony with sustainable democratic, political, and economic stability. This goal was pursued despite Cambodia running the 2023 national election without a true opposition party and the World facing great challenges in its economic recovery in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, while - at the same time – enduring the war on Gaza and the Russian War in Ukraine, which all caused negative impacts on the global economy, geopolitics, democracy, human rights and the global and international order, with unavoidable fallout also on API's Mission and Vision.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of API's funding, implementing and network partners, as well as beneficiaries and friends, who participated in and supported our mission and activities in 2023. For this year, our funding partners were: the European Union (EU), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Department of State (DoS), the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Voice grant facility, Brot für die Welt (BfdW), CARE International in Cambodia, DanChurchAid (DCA), East-West Management Institute, Inc. (EWMI), Family Health International (FHI360), Oxfam in Cambodia, Pact Cambodia, Transparency Cambodia, Wilde Ganzen Foundation (WG). Implementing partners were: Epic Arts, InSTEDD, IDEA, Old Age People Associations, Musical Association of People with Disabilities (MAPD), Phnom Penh Center for Independent Living (PPCIL) and the members of the Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD), the Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG), and the Budget Working Group (BWG), Committee for Cooperation in Cambodia (CCC), NGO Forum on Cambodia, Anti-Corruption Working Group, Digital Rights Working Group (DRWG), Social Protection for All Working Groups (SP4All), Technical Working Groups and Steering Committee of Social Accountability (ISAF PSC) and others.

We would also like to express our appreciation for our good collaboration with community-based organisations (CBOs), the Media and government institutions and local authority associations: the Local Councilors' Associations and Local Authorities of Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Kandal, Takeo, Kep, Sihanoukville, Koh Kong, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Kratie, Stung Trieng, Ratanakiri, Mondulkiri and Phnom Penh, the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD), the Ministry of Interior (Mol), the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS), and the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Information, Ministry of Economic and Finance, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Land Management, Urbanization and Construction, Ministry of Women Affairs and all local authorities and service providing institutions in contributions towards achieving our Strategic Plan (2019-23) with the goal of realising the rights and enhancing the voices of citizens working for sustainable development in Cambodia, especially the rights of women, youth and disadvantaged groups such as low-income citizens, persons with disabilities, youth, indigenous

people and out-of-school children and pursuing the goal of holding the government accountable, advocating for the right to information, more transparency, improving public services and local governance in Cambodia.

Finally, the Executive Committee would like to thank all members of API’s Governing Board of Directors: Mr. Chandara Soeung, Ms. Kasumi Nakagawa, Mr. Michael Engquist, Ms. Phoungmaly Nhean, and Mr. Bunthoeun Than and our advisor (Mr. Lars Krause) and all volunteers who offered to us their time and efforts on a voluntary basis, making precious contributions to the growing of API and its many successes. A special word of thanks goes to our staff members and volunteers and to all stakeholders, leaders, and members of the communities in our target areas, as well as government officials at all levels, who worked hard and contributed to the successes.



CHANDARA SOEURNG
Chair of Board



PHOUNGMALY NHEAN
Board Member



KASUMI NAKAGAWA
Board Member



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Treasurer



MICHAEL ENGQUIST
Board Member

Phnom Penh, January 13th, 2024
On Behalf of API’s Executive Committee

On Behalf of API’s Board of Directors

Mr. Socheat Lam
Executive Director
Advocacy and Policy Institute

Mr. Chandara Soeung
Chair of Board of Directors
Advocacy and Policy Institute

Acronyms

A2I	Access to Information
A2IWG	Access to Information Working Group
A4A	Access for All
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADHOC	Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
API	Advocacy and Policy Institute
BfW	Bread for the World
BWG	Budget Working Group
CAF	Community Accountability Facilitator
CamboJA	Cambodia Journalist Alliance Association
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CC	Commune Council
CCC	Committee for Cooperation in Cambodia
CCiM	Cambodian Center for Independent Media
CF	Community Forestry
CIP	Commune Investment Plan
CLEC	Community Legal Education Center
CPA	Community Protected Area
CPDD	Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CS	Council Sangkat
CSC	Community Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CtGA	Change the Game Academy
D&D	Decentralization and Deconcentration
D/M	District/Municipal
DCA	DanChurchAid
DCSC	Digitized Community Score Card
DFR	Department of Functions and Resources
DIP	District Investment Plan
DMK	District, Municipality, Khan
DNS	Domain Name System
DoS	Department of States
DP	Development Partner
DR	Digital Rights
DRAPA	Digital Right Asia Pacific Assembly
DRWG	Digital Rights Working Group

ELC	Economic Land Concession
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
EWMI	East-West Management Institute
FHI-360	Family Health International 360
GFA	GFA Consulting Group
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
I4C	Information for Citizen
ICS	ISAC Community Scorecards
ID	Identity
IDEA	Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association
iMAP	Internet Monitoring Action Project
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
InSTEDD	Innovative Support to Emergencies Diseases and Disasters
IP	Investment Program
Ips	Indigenous people
ISAC	Innovation for Social Accountability in Cambodia
ISAF	The Implementation of the Social Accountatbility Framework
ISAF PSC	Technical Working Groups and Steering Committee of Social Accountability
ISAF TWG	Social Accountability Working Group
ISD	Improved Service Delivery
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
JAAP	Joint Accountability Action Plan
JAAPC	Joint Accountability Action Plan Committee
KESS	KESS Innovation PLC
KH	Khmer
MAPD	Musical Association for People with Disabilities
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MoEYS	Ministry of Education Youth and Sport
MoH	Ministry of Health
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MS	Mobilizing Support
NCDD	The National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development
NCDDS	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP-2	National Program for Sub-national Democratic Development Phase 2
OAA	Old Age Associations
ODC	Open Development Cambodia

OONI	Open Observatory of Network Interference
OW4C	One Window for Citizens Project
OWSO	One Window Service Office
OWSU	One Window Service Unit
PALCs	Provincial Associations of Local Council
PFM	Public Financial Management
PPCIL	Phnom Penh Center for Independent Living
PPIF	Phnom Penh Internet Forum
PWD	People with Disability
RFA	Radio Free Asia
RFI	Radio French International
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNA	Sub-National Administration
SP	Strategic Plan
SP4All	Social Protection for All Working Groups
TELOS	Technical, Economic, Logistic, Organizational, and Sustainable analysis
TOR	Term of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainer
UK	United Kingdom
UK Embassy	United Kingdom Embassy
UN	United Nation
UNOCHR	United Nation Office of the Commissioner of Human Right
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
US Dos	United States Department of State
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USG	United State Government
Vlog	Video log
VOA	Voice of America
VOD	Voice of Democratic
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WG	Working Group



With API’s 4th Strategic Plan (SP) for the period 2019 to 2023, API pursued the strategic goal of realising the rights and enhancing the voices of citizens striving for sustainable development in Cambodia, with a focus on women, youth and disadvantaged groups (low-income citizens, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and out-of-school children in Cambodia).

This has been the final year of implementation of API Strategy 2019–2023, and API has achieved the four strategic outcomes listed below:

Outcome 1

Influenced policy and implementation to address the rights and needs of citizens, especially youth, women and disadvantaged groups*, and to secure democratic spaces for them to exercise their rights.

Project #1

Citizens Voices and Actions for Sustainable Development in Cambodia 2019-2022

Objective of API Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023: To fulfill the rights and enhance the voices of citizens for sustainable development in Cambodia.

The objective of Project: To fulfill the rights and enhance the voices and actions of citizens for sustainable development in Cambodia.

Funding: EUR 649,300 donated by BfdW and DCA

Target Areas: 40 rural districts, municipalities, and Khans (districts of Phnom Penh) in Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Kandal, Kep, Kratie, Pursat, Takeo, and Phnom Penh.



Results:

Project #1: influenced laws and policies at the national level and their implementation to address the rights and needs of citizens, API has led and participated in 9 CSO working Groups and Networks.

- ① The Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG) on access to information law, where inputs were provided.
- ② The Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD); where we advocated a sub-national budget for social service development to be successfully increased.

- 3) The Budget Working Group (BWG), where we advocated on national budget law and public procurement law.
- 4) The Social Protection for All (SP4All), where we successfully advocated on social protection for informal workers, and street vendors.
- 5) Social Accountability Working Group (ISAF TWG), where we advocated on social and disability inclusions, and social protection in the ISAF framework, which were successfully piloted in the ISAF framework.
- 6) Digital Rights Working Group (DRWG); where we advocated for media and internet freedom and freedom of expression, by producing internet censorship monitoring reports and organizing internet forums with most active CSOs and media, Development Partners in Cambodia as a new active working group after VoD Radio was closed in 2023.
- 7) Anti-Corruption Working Group, advocated on anti-corruption law and public procurement law amended in the 2023 process.
- 8) Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), where we advocated on CSOs enabling environment with development partners in dialogue with CSOs.

The CSO leadership and membership meetings agreed to have better coordination between the working group leadership and membership meetings and a joint WG meeting every 22nd of each month since Jan 2023 and joint advocacy efforts within Working Groups activities:



Project #2

Youth Debated on the Access to Information Law completed, and then continued to projects #15 and #18.



Activities

1 API led the CSOs Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG)

This A2IWG under the support of Project #15: US State Department-funded through EWMI funded Access for All: Promoting Access to Information in Cambodia, 2020–2023, #18: Women and Youth Empowerment in Leadership Program (WYEL), 2022–24 and Project #2: Youth Debate on Access to Information Law 2020–21.

- Raised awareness about the importance of an effective legal framework that provides access to information for Cambodians and empowers them to make requests for the information they need. As a result, there have been 126 out of 130 (97%) positive responses by the government to citizens’ requests for information. At the same time, 97 organizations, members of CSOs Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG) and Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD) jointly advocated and pushed the government to pass the Access to Information Law, in annual events (International Day on Right to Information, 28 of September).
- Trained youth and debated on advocacy about Access to Information (A2I) Law with the Ministry of Information, and political party representatives before the national election campaign. Those counterparts accepted inputs from CSOs, and CBOs representing indigenous people and people with disabilities. Government and political parties, especially the CPP, committed to pass the draft A2I Law in 2024–25. The Secretary of State of the Ministry of Information and the Minister Attached to the Prime Minister confirmed their support and reported to the new Prime Minister to pass the law soon.
- The Ministry of Information confirmed that the draft A2I Law was in the final stages of discussion between the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Justice and the Council of Ministers. Moreover, we expect that the Ministry of Information will further improve it based on CSO recommendations. However, the final copy of the draft was not shared with CSOs. CSOs’ inputs to the draft A2I Law were acknowledged by the government and Commission #5 of the National Assembly. The National Assembly advised the Ministry of Information to speed up the process. Strong commitments were made by H.E Kim Kumavath, Secretary of State Ministry of Information, and H.E Preap Kol, Minister Attached to Prime

Minister, to strongly push to promote the adoption of the Access to information Law during the celebration of the International Day for Universal Access to Information on September 28, 2023.

- Government, CBOs, DP, International NGOs, CSOs, private sectors, youth, street vendors, media outlets, and other relevant stakeholders acknowledged and supported the importance of access to information and the A2I law, and urged for the adoption of the Access to Information Law as soon as possible.
- API led the CSO Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG) to produce and submit the first Universal Periodic Review Report (UPR) of the Access to Information issue in Cambodia to the United Nation Human Rights Headquarters, and briefed development partners (EU, FHI-360, GIZ, UK Embassy, UNOCHR, EWMI, USAID) and Access to Information working group(A2IWG) members.

2 Project #3: API hosted the secretariat of the Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD) between 2019-21 and played the role as Chair of the CPDD Board of Directors in 2021-2024.



- The Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD)’s mission is to nurture democratic accountability and good governance through the promotion of a common voice and meaningful engagement of the civil society.
- In 2023, the government increased the sub-national budget on social service development from 2024 onwards, after API and CPDD advocated for years.
- API analysed the sub-national budget and launched Citizen Budget Analysis App. The CPDD used the API’s Budget App and presented sub-national budget reports and App to the government Ministry of Interior, and NCDD, and Ministry of Economic and Finance. We advocated to increase sub-national budget allocation on social service development and national resource management in the national workshop on public participation in the sub-national administration.
- API provided significant support to CPDD secretariats to develop the 10-year strategy 2021-2030, improved internal governance policies and systems and leadership, and joined with members to advocate on policy issues related to Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D) and successfully mobilized more funding, from USD 106,000 in 2021 to USD 252,000 in 2023.

3 API led the CSO Budget Working Group



- API was elected chair of the Budget Working Group for the 2022-23 mandate. Also from this position, it influenced the draft on public procurement by presenting results of the legal framework for public procurement transparency and its enforcement in the Kingdom of Cambodia to the leadership of the Ministry of Economic and Finance, Secretary of State, director general and senior officials before the public procurement law was passed in 2023.
- API provided legal inputs to the government based on international key procurement principles such as Transparency, Integrity, Economy, Efficiency and Value for Money, Openness, Fairness, and Accountability. MoEF accepted four recommendations from API. For instance, the draft PPL should specify the publicity of these procedures. The entire procurement process should be transparent. This also includes the contracts signed between the procuring entity and the awarded tenderer.
- API engaged with the government and the CSOs BWG and positively responded to some CSOs' inputs on public financial management reforms policy dialogues based on the results of Budget Working Group meetings monthly, sub-national, and annual national budget analysis report 2023.
- API provided advice to Development Partners, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and other government ministries. The CSO Budget Working Group (BWG) has as its mission to provide an institutionalised budget advisory platform to analyse, discuss and advocate on transparent, accountable, and inclusive national and sub-national budget decision-making and budget implementation and monitoring processes.
- API updated the First Citizen Budget Report for Cambodia 2023 and launched it with the participation of local authorities and CBO leaders in target provinces and development partners, CSOs, and government ministries.
- The BWG produced Universal Periodic Review Report on Anti-Corruption 2023 and submitted it to the UN HQ.

4 API participated in The Social Protection for All (SP4ALL)



- API became a member of The Social Protection for All (SP4ALL), chaired by YRDP and the Secretariat at Oxfam, which is a citizen-led platform aspiring to raise citizens' awareness on social protection and elevate citizens' concerns to the duty bearers.
- API brought to the group its advocacy efforts. As a result, the government issued a policy framework, and plans, and made significant efforts to implement the NSSF package and economic recovery development plan for informal workers and the informal economy (self-employed street vendors; domestic workers, and workers in the tourism and entertainment sectors) nationwide in 2023.
- API supported various civil society organizations (CSOs) in Cambodia and across the region seeking to learn and share knowledge about social protection topics.
- API provided inputs to the draft social protection law and government social protection programs for people with disabilities and old age people, as well as street vendors, which are excluded from the social protection assistance package.

5 API participated in the Social Accountability Working Group (ISAF) Technical Committee

- API joined the regular meetings of the ISAF Technical Working Group and completed the ISAF Demand Side Operation guideline for the district/municipality/Krong level (DMK).
- API produced technical guidelines and successfully led a pilot project on Social Protection in the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) in 6 Sangkat in Phnom Penh. For the first time in Cambodia, such pilot social protection (social service) was conducted and feedback from citizens was collected through the social accountability framework 2022-23, with the Voice-funded project in Khan Sensok for the improvement of social protection services around 1,000 people with disabilities, old age and ID Poor families in the urban city (Phnom Penh).
- API trained and mobilized leaders of the people with disabilities, old age, and ID Poor families' associations to advocate for social protections at the national level policy dialogues based on their project engagement experience in Khan Sensok. The government was interested in learning more about how social protection could be mainstreamed in the social accountability framework, and to be expanded to other areas.

- API produced operational guidelines on disabilities and social inclusion in ISAF, endorsed by the PSC and the government to strengthen implementation of ISAF for greater social inclusion in all aspects and full ISAF cycles including capacity building, implementation, monitoring & evaluation, and reporting.

6 The Digital Right Working Group (DRWG)



- API joined, as a core member, the Digital Right Working Group, with 14 CSOs to advocate for digital rights and internet freedom such as Sub-decree on Internet Gateway and others.
- API built the capacity of the working group’s members on internet freedom monitoring and internet security, right to information, and advocacy for internet freedom.
- API produced and released the second Cambodia Internet Censorship Report in 2023. Among its findings, the confirmation that 43 websites were seriously blocked in 2022 and 36 websites were blocked in 2023. This evidence-based advocacy report was used as a reference in the 2023 Universal Periodic Report on Internet Censorship in Cambodia.
- API submitted the Cambodia Internet Censorship Report in 2022-2023 and UPR to the Development Partners, USAID, and EU Member states, the media, and the public, as well as to the UN Human Rights HQ in Geneva, as part of the UPR review process in 2024 for Cambodia.

7 Anti-Corruption Working Group, A monthly meeting of the CSO Joint Working Group held on the 22nd of every month, supported the Anti-Corruption Working Group to update the First Citizen Budget Report for Cambodia 2023, produced the Universal Periodic Review Report on Anti-Corruption 2023 and submitted it to UN HQ.

8 Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), advocated for a CSOs-enabling environment with Development Partners (EU, EU member states, SIDA, SDC, Australian Embassy, INGOs, and others).



Outcome 2

Empowered disadvantaged citizens to voice their concerns and hold the Government accountable.

Project #3

Citizens Voices and Actions for Sustainable Development in Cambodia phase I was completed in 2022 and continues phase II 2023 -2025.

Objective of the Project: Citizens exercise their rights to participate in sustainable development in Cambodia.

Funding for the Project: EUR 750,000 funded by BfdW and DCA.

Target areas: 10 districts in 5 provinces and 1 Khan in Phnom Penh, Pursat, Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Thom, Kratie, and Kampong Speu Province.

Results

The engagement of citizens in local governance, especially women, youth, indigenous people, and people with disabilities, is strengthened with the following results:

- 62% of issues were resolved (6 advocacy issues were completely solved with 12% on deforestation, forest crime and encroachment, lack of fertilizer-mixing techniques, and vegetable-growing soil).
- 25 advocacy issues out of 50 were partly resolved, with 50% on land disputes, no code of conduct for people living with HIV/AIDS, issues of commune administrations not disclosing budget information (commune budget) to the public, issues of illegal fishery and issues of deforestation, encroachment on community lands.
- 40% of CBO members reported completion of at least 3 civic engagement mechanisms related to the budget public forum, commune council, and district dialogue meetings in 4 districts/municipalities (Serei Sophoan municipality, Mongkol Borei district in Banteay Meanchey province, and Pursat municipality, and Phnom Kravanh district in Pursat province).
- 30% of CBO representatives engaged with authorities. 18 CBO representatives/leaders (22% female) who joined public forums and meetings with districts and raised issues during the forum. Youth joined the public forum and meetings with districts and raised issues during the forum.

Transparency and access to information on budgeting, procurement, and ELC, ESIs at the national level are improved with the following results:

- Two Economic Land Concessions companies (ELCs) disclosed critical information in the target districts and municipalities.
- District administration opened to information about the revenue and expenditure in the 2022 and 2023 budgets and economic land concessions to community members in Chit Borey district, Kratie province.
- District administration conducted the dissemination and consultation forum to disclose district budget information to community members about income and expenditure in 2022-2023 in Prasat Ballangk district, Kampong Thom province.
- Report on ELC forum in Kratie and Kampong Thom provinces.

- A total of 33 out of 83 (45%) procurement plans in four target ministries were disclosed: announcement of specifications of procurement projects and announcement of quotation results, with the name of the company which got the award, and price of procurement projects only. No details about the contracts of Procurement National Levels is available.
- API empowered over 50 groups with around 250 leaders (70% women), members of the diverse disadvantaged citizens, around 500 ID Poor families, 1,000 elderly, 500 youth, 1,000 people with disabilities, 400 women from groups of street vendors, 20,000 community people, (30% indigenous people, 70% women, 60% youth), natural resource management commune-based organisations (CBOs). All these target groups were empowered to voice their concerns and hold the Government accountable to address community issues and to improve public services like social protection, health, education, and administration services, in nearly 300 communes and 50 districts in 11 provinces.
- API mobilized and strengthened 308 citizens, including 98 women, plus youth, indigenous people and people with disabilities to be engaged in local governance. They raised 50 issues, of which 25 issues were partly solved, and 6 issues were completed solved.
- 74 CBO members (21 female) increased their capacities to access information on local developments, and the functioning of the district, and the commune. 53 CBOs raised their voices to authorities to strengthen internal management and functioning and improve target communes and districts' transparency and access to information on budgeting, procurement, economic land concession, and economic social environmental impact assessment, (ELC ESIA's).
- During the Next Priorities Action Plans within the Annual Reflection Workshop, API consulted with 35 participants (12 female) from Development Partners, Donors, INGOs, CSOs, CBOs, Authorities, and Government bodies to gather and discuss inputs for the new API Strategy 2024-2028 and to disseminate a deeper understanding of API Civic Tech Tools and Reports on Sub-national Budget and One Window Service. API illustrated key challenges, and lessons learned, and informed about accomplishments.
- 51 participants (18 females), 50 NGOs, and 1 chief of PALC discussed mechanisms for work efficiency, multi-sectoral development partnerships, and sub-sectors at the national and sub-national levels.

Activities

- Baseline survey report completed.
- Uploaded the Citizen Budget Analysis Tool App to the App Store. Budget Analysis Tool Link (<https://citizenbudget.apiinstitute.org/>).
- Supported CBO functions with 74 CBO leaders (21 females) to increase their capacities and receive more information relevant to their local developments, and the functioning of the district and commune.
- Supported CBO implementation of advocacy action plans through dialogue meetings with District Governors, where CBOs raised issues or concerns.

- Completed review and tune-fining of CBOs empowerment and partnership strategy by receiving donors' comments.
- Co-organized National Public Forum on “Citizen Engagement in Budget Formulation and Monitoring on Public Budget Revenue and Expenditure Process with 130 participants (62 females).
- Promoted D/M administrations' use of social media for proactive information disclosure and public feedback: 7 times in 2 districts/municipalities (Sandan and Serei Sophoan).
- Regularly conducted reflection and sharing good practices among target D/M and annual good practice awards to API Civic Tech Tools and Reports on Sub-national Budget and One Window Services.
- Facilitated dialogue forum between CBOs/citizens and D/M administrations. The government and 50 NGO leaders had a clear understanding of the concept of mechanisms for working efficiency, and multi-sectoral development partnerships.
- conducted one policy analyses report on budget information analysis report with successfully for evidence for advocacy.
- Facilitated 2 policy dialogues and youth debates at higher government levels to raise advocacy issues that cannot be solved at the local level on Draft of Law on Public Procurement and Related Regulation” and A2I Law and its sectoral importance for ELCs and/or public financial management.

Lesson learns in Project

- When CBOs can develop advocacy action plans with clear objectives and activities, so, they can advocate more successfully.

Challenges faced in Project

- District and commune budgets are not allocated to natural resources and environment lines. So, Forest Communities could be funded by the government to implement activities.

The way forward in 2024

- Deliver capacity development program to CBOs.
- Strengthen CBOs functioning/coaching developing in CBO action plans.
- Support CBO implementation of advocacy action plans
- Conduct quarterly learning, reflection, sharing about good practices, annual good practice awards and evaluation of CBOs' advocacy.
- Capacity-building of newly elected district/municipal (D/M) councilors and D/M officials on citizen rights and civic engagement, information disclosure on budgets and procurement
- Promote D/M administrations' use of social media for proactive information disclosure and public feedback.

- Support D/M action on civic engagement mechanisms in budgeting and procurement processes (logistic and participants cost).
- Conduct reflection meetings for sharing good practices through online (meeting package)
- Identify and train volunteers for awareness campaigns and public procurement monitoring (CBO and youth leaders and members).
- Conduct public awareness campaigns (by classic outreach and use of civic tech tools.)
- Enhance capacity and cooperation of the Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG) and thematically related networks (CPDD, BWG, etc.).

Case study 1 : Community Rights and Capacity of Dab Bath Development Agriculture Cooperative for Finding Solutions through District Dialogue Meetings at Pursat Municipal, Pursat Province.



Since 2002, the **Dab Bath Development Agriculture Cooperative** has not been able to apply the technical of mixing fertilizer with vegetable soil, resulting in low yields, and lacked techniques for farming chickens and fish. Their community covers an area comprising 4 villages of 17 hectares with 68 families, in 8 committees. Low yields affected the people growing vegetables. If vegetables are grown with modern methods, higher yields can provide a good income for families. The issue

was reported to the agriculture department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the municipal governor, but no solution had been addressed. The CBO leaders/representatives requested technical support and helped to gather information and prepared workplan for participants who participated in public forums, monthly municipal meetings, and Sangkat meetings to raise issues they faced and find solutions at the sub-national level. After they received training and coaching, API organized a municipal dialogue meeting with relevant stakeholders. As a result, the community received coaching from the agriculture official and vegetable seeds from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The department and municipal are cooperating with relevant officials and NGOs to provide training on growing vegetables and raising animals to the community members.

At the beginning of 2023, the ADRA organization started implementing a project located in the Kravanh district but could not find CBOs as beneficiaries. API and Pursat municipal administration and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries cooperated and facilitated for **Dab Bath Development Agriculture Cooperative** to be a target group of this project. **Dab Bath Development Agriculture Cooperative's** members followed a capacity-building course on various topics, including making a business plan, leadership, marketing plan, and agriculture techniques such as using fertilizers, and use of pesticides. The cooperative was also provided with USD 3,000.

Case study 2 : The woman’s voice affected families’ living conditions



Kol Totueng Community Forestry is located in the project’s target area in the Khsetr Borey Village, Santreae Commune, Phnum Kravanh District, Pursat Province. The Community was established in 2016 with a total of 270 members including 210 females. **Kol Totueng Community Forestry** was established with the aim of promoting the management and protection of natural resources, contributing to poverty reduction, and improving livelihoods through sustainable community non-timber forest

products, with the active support of the forestry administration in monitoring and solving problems. The community has challenges including patrolling, crime prevention, and encroachment. However, the issue originated in April 2020, when PP-Mix Com intervened on 40 hectares of 30 families in Khsetr Borey village causing the citizens to lose their opportunities to farm rice or do plantations to get their income supporting daily life. This problem has not yet met the local authorities’ intervention on behalf of the community. Until August 2021, the 30 families submitted several proposals to villages and communes’ administration to solve the land encroachment in Sontre commune, Khsetr Borey village, Sentreae commune, Phnum Kravanh district, Pursat province. As a result, representatives of the company and the people involved including commune and district authorities have met with stakeholders to find a solution and resolve the problem. The company returned 6 hectares of land, to the benefit of 10 families. For the other remaining 34 hectares, the issue for 20 families is still unsolved.

On August 18, 2022, the land of another 20 families was encroached on by a Chinese contractor, named Kul, land encroachment and not allowing people to do their rice farming and potato growing. This issue angered the families, so they filed a complaint to the village and commune chiefs, however, the local authorities did not solve it.



Additionally, on 23rd May 2023, 10 families of Community members in Santreae commune, commune and district officials, and relevant stakeholders participated in the commune’s public forum organized by API. During the forum, all participants had the opportunity to raise the community’s issues, and concerns related to 34 hectares of land encroachment affecting 20 families. Not only community members can raise their difficulties to relevant stakeholders at the public forum but also post

excerpts of the discussion on social media. The issue caught the attention of the district governor of Phnom Kravanh district (**Mr. Heng Phana**), along with other relevant commune and district officials.



At the end of the forum, members of the district and commune working group, specialist officials, company representatives, and others. They visited the land encroachment to see the real situation and find a solution. While writing this case, the issue of 20 families was being partly solved. However, they need more time to find solutions between affected families and Chinese contractors after the election. **Ms. Seng Sokna**, 36 years old, supports a family has four members. She said that she was very happy to see action taken by district and commune officials take action to solve the issue and return the land to their family. 4 hectares were encroached in 2017. Before that, her family was able to earn a gross income of 3,000,000 riels (USD 750) to 4,000,000 riels (USD 1,000) by growing rice and tapioca. After losing their land, she and her husband have had to work as laborers (harvest and construction) with irregular income, and sometimes no income. For the

past two years, other families whose land was encroached on by the company affected their livelihood. So far, the company has returned only 1.5 hectares and the family's economic situation has recovered a bit because of this partial restitution of her land. **Ms. Seng Sokna** stated that if she had not accepted the 1.5 hectares of land, returned by the company, she would not have anything to plant rice and tapioca and little hope for the future.



Mr. Ben Born, chief of Khsetr Borey village, Santraee commune, Phnum Kravanh district, Pursat province, said: "I am very happy to see that 10 families in the village have received land back from PP-MIX, to grow their crops. The case of another 20 families whose land was grabbed by the Chinese contractor will be solved by the district governor who has promised to intervene. He said that this problem occurred in 2021 and is being resolved by the community members by submitting the cases to village and commune chiefs and through participation in a commune public forum organized by API in Phnum Kravanh district, Pursat province. He thanked API for organizing such a public forum and for giving them an opportunity to those families of receiving information and encouraging them to raise the issues. **Mr. Ben Born** promised to follow up on the requests put forward by the 20 families with

cases yet unsolved, so that the people, as well as community members living in his village or commune, can get their land back and practice plantation because the land is life and allows to earn a living and continue their lives.

Project #4

Strengthening youth participation in local planning and budgeting, 2019-2021

Objective: to support local government’s improvement in the delivery of social services, especially for young people, women, children and people from vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities.

Project Outcome: SNAs (Communes and Sangkats) prioritize the issues and needs of young people in CIPs and allocate resources to social services, to improve young people’s wellbeing.

Funding: USD 123,535 donated by SIDA/UNICEF.

Target areas: Khan Sensok in Phnom Penh; Sa Ang and Ang Snoul districts in Kandal Province and Chetborei district in Kratie province.



Result

- The government has confirmed its support to increase up to 20% of the sub-national budget on social service development, between 2024 to 2028.

Activity

- This project was completed in 2021 and then API used the Project’s Tech Tool Product (Citizens Budget App) to collect 2022-23 government district and commune budget data and analyse them. In 2023 The Budget Analysis Report was submitted to the government, Development Partners, and CSOs, specifically the 100 members of the CSO Budget Working Group and Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development members. In 2023, API used both the Citizen App and the findings of the evidence-based report to initiate a dialogue with the Ministry of Economics and Finance and the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development.

Project #5

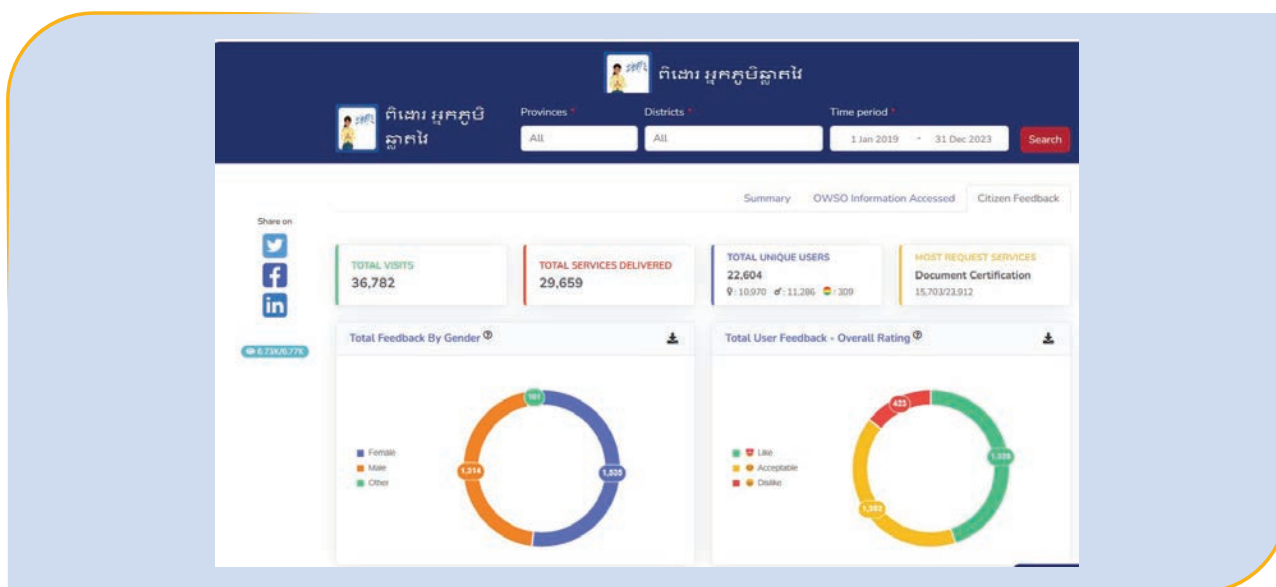
One Window for Citizens projects ended successfully in 2019- 2022

Funding for Project: API received USD 461,819.81, from October 2019 to September 2022.

Donor: USAID Cambodia

Implementing Partners for Project: API and InSTEDD (both organisations are members of the consortium led by Nickol Global Solutions).

Target Areas for Project: Communities surrounding OWSOs in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, and Kampong Chhnang provinces.



Result

- OW4C Civic Tech tool (Pidor Chatbot and Public Dashboard) was officially handed over to the co-ownership of API and Tech Company (KAWSANG). The One window service information was upgraded in 2023 and used in other 40 districts to educate the community in new target areas of the province with new financial support from DCA and BfdW, to sustain and maintain the Pidor function in 2022-25.
- As of 31 December 2023, 36,782 visitors; and 29,659 public services were delivered and tracked. 15,703 requests for document certification. 2,950 people (1,535 female, 52%) provided feedback that 1,325 people (44.9%) liked the services provided, 1,203 people (40.76%) confirmed “acceptable” the services provided and 423 people (14.33%) disliked the service provided, specifically as refers to the service’s prices.

Activity:

- The project was completed successfully in 2022 and then Its Civic Tech tool product (Pidor Chatbot and Public Dashboard) was officially handed over the co-ownership to API and Tech Company (KAWSANG) and updated its commune One Window service mechanism for public use nationwide in 2023.

Countering Rumors with Transparency

The Government of Cambodia’s decentralization efforts aim to shift services to citizens through the multi-ministry One Window Service Offices (OWSO) that first opened in 2006. In 2020 the USAID One Window for Citizens Project’s baseline survey found that only 45% of citizens were aware of the OWSOs. This lack of knowledge risks increasing rumors amongst citizens, manipulation, and exposure to corruption by denying transparent information on, or access to, government services such as notary services, business registration, and land titles, to name a few. To address these risks, the One Window for Citizens Project (OW4C) developed a hybrid approach that links traditional social accountability activities such as community scorecards, service improvement plans, and public forums with citizen-centred technology tools, in order to increase Cambodian citizens’ access to transparent information on government services, to open opportunities for citizens to provide feedback on government services and to create a safe forum for citizens to engage and hold government officials accountable for improved service delivery.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development

Washington, DC 205223-1000

<http://stories.usaid.gov>



Sophal proudly showing her business registration certificate.

“ I used to hear people say that business registration costed a thousand dollars. I didn’t register because I was worried about the costs and complicated procedures. After I used Pidor the Smart Villager chatbot I realized it only costed me 25,000 riels \$(7 USD) and it was not a complicated process.” **Pach Sophal**
Owner, Moha Heng Pizza ”

Prior to learning about the OW4C’s tech tool – Pidor the Smart Villager – **Ms. Pach Sophal** (32) was running her small, start-up pizza and bakery shop in Battambang, Cambodia, selling pizza, baked goods, and related items. **Sophal** started her business about a year ago but did not understand how to get a business license. “I didn’t know anything about the business registration process, and I had never used the OWSO before. Fortunately, I attended the Village Support Group’s Socio-Economic Rights Workshop where the USAID OW4C Project presented their tech tools providing information about the services available at the OWSOs in Battambang Province.”

After the workshop Sophal used OW4C’s Pidor the Smart Villager Facebook chatbot. She searched and found detailed information about the process of business registration and what documents she needed to prepare before going to the One Window Service Office. Before using Pidor she thought that business registration was a complicated and expensive process and that she would “have to pay extra money to get everything done.” Additionally, she reported that using the OW4C Facebook chatbot made her life easier by saving time and money by not having to go back and forth from the OWSO just to ask for information. As a result of her use of the OW4C tools, her business, “**Moha Heng Pizza**”, is formally registered, granting her a more secure future for her business, income, and family.

Project #6

Improved Service Delivery (ISD)

Funding for Project: API received USD 293,075 for activities from 2023 to 2025

Donors: The governments of Switzerland and Germany

Implementing Partners for this Project: GFA and GIZ

Target Areas for this Project: Siem Reap, Battambang, and Banteay Meanchey provinces

Result:

- API started to Improve Service Delivery (ISD) on One Window Services and Clean Water with financial support from Germany and Switzerland, through GIZ Project #19 from 2023 to 2025. Eleven (11) project-supporting staff and technical experts were recruited for fieldwork in Siem Reap, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey.
- Soft-skill training on hospitality, and citizen-centred services to 10 DM partners (Cooperation with DFR, Mol), a total of 40 participants, were delivered. Two districts were selected for piloting the mobile service delivery on One Window services.

Activities

Implementation approaches used:

- **1. DIGITAL SERVICE:** Provincial workshop on digital services to 10 DM partners, a total of 38 participants were conducted. An agreement on the scope of work between ISD and ADB regarding digital service delivery was made.
- ISD, Mol, and ADB collectively decided to select 09 services for piloting the digital service implementation, focusing on sectors like Legalization, Civil registration, and the tourist sector.
- KESS Innovation was selected as a short-term expert to set up a server for the operation of digital OWSO at Mol.
- **2. MOBILE SERVICE:** Two districts were selected for piloting the mobile service delivery. ISD conducted with the partner districts to discuss the TELOS on possible options for mobile service. The views of the citizens in the target area were also obtained on the types of information desired for mobile service. The district administrations made two decisions in support of the mobile services activities. The TELOS feasibility study was finalized.
- **3. WATER MANAGEMENT:** The target areas for project implementation were selected across four districts of Banteay Meanchey. A Water and Environment Sub-committee was established at the District/Municipalities (DM) level, comprising multi-stakeholders. A Climate Sensitive Water Management Plan was introduced in the target districts, and the capacity of key DM staff and sub-committee members was built to improve water management at the sub-national level. Training was provided to DM partners on "water sector regulatory framework and sub-national government functions."
- **OWSO:** Overlapped digital service project with ADB the ISD delayed digital OWSO activities and prioritised the mobile OWSO activities. Full support from the Mol (digital service project was aligned with the priority activity of NP-2). The committee was established to support the implementation of programs from the national to sub-national levels.

Project #7

Adopting and Adapting: Change the Game Academy (CtGA) for Mobilizing Support (MS) in Cambodia.

Objective: To secure resources for CSOs so that they are able to sustain their operations in Cambodia.

Implementing Partners: None

Funding: Stichting Wilde Ganzen donated EUR 50,000. Contribution from CSO participants USD 2,760.

Target areas: Nationwide.



Result:

- 2 CSO Mobilising Support participants implemented their MS plans successfully. Local authorities provided 105 ID Poor cards, and 259 PWD ID cards, and charitable persons contributed rice, beverages, and other food to support Don Bosco. Ten (10) CSOs are pursuing their MS plans.
- 2 CSOs mobilized support from communities, charitable persons, and local authorities to install billboards and boundary signs to protect community forests.

Activities

- Organized classroom training: after a leadership course and a main classroom course 5 days on Mobilizing Support, for 19 NGO senior staff and directors. A total of 19 participants of 9 CSOs successfully attended 4 modules of Mobilizing Support Training for 12 days and one full year of practice. Through 2 refresher workshops, 10 participants updated MS training materials in the Khmer version. 16 former MS participants shared their success, lessons learned, and next plans for MS implementation. Conducted 2 rounds of field coaching support, 12 MS plans have been updated and implemented.
- Conducted field coaching: 12 mobilizing support plans were prepared by participants. 12 mobilizing support groups updated their mobilizing support plans through first-field coaching. 12 mobilizing support groups were coached on how to tackle their challenges in implementing the mobilizing support plans. Meanwhile, they shared their success and next actions. 2 groups of 2 CSOs completed their mobilizing support plans and the other ten CSOs are implementing partly.

- A one-day refresher workshop: with former participants in 2022 showed that they were successful in implementing their mobilizing support plans. Meanwhile, 16 participants shared their challenges and lessons learned. Lastly, they were satisfied with the mobilizing support training courses because they contributed to improving their knowledge, experience, and skills to mobilize support to carry out project activities efficiently. They claimed to keep implementing mobilizing support concepts in the projects, and programs as well as sharing with others. A two-day refresher workshop led to updated training materials in Khmer versions. Vocabularies in Khmer were edited and finalized.
- Conducted linking and learning: A project staff attended Social Accountability in Ethiopia. He contributed and shared both documents and real practices of Cambodia.
- Promoted program marketing, coordination, and communication: The project produced two videos on success stories, which are related to mobilizing support from local authorities to install columns and billboards to protect community forests successfully. Meanwhile, they mobilized resources from charitable persons and local authorities to build small houses for the poor. API promoted its announcement through API Facebook page including the activities of training and coaching. API produced a leaflet for Mobilizing Support training. 19 participants registered and attended the MS training course till completion.

Lessons Learned

- Timely prepare support documents to advance cash for expenses for project activities.
- Take an appropriate period to conduct a dry run before delivering training.

Challenges

- We had only a short period of time to announce the training course on Mobilizing Support.

Ways forward

- Prepare leaflet, training course, and training schedule timely to be announced in the first month of each year, so that we have sufficient time to recruit the right participants for the right courses.
- Set clear and specific dates for the series of training modules, so that participants can join all events of the training.
- Take appropriate time to review, prepare, and do the dry run to ensure trainers understand the concepts, process, and use materials consistently.



Project #8**Covid-19 Emergency Support to Most Vulnerable Households**

The Project was completed and engaged the same ID poor families to participate in a new Project #10: **Citizen Engagement for Social Accountability in Social Protection**.

Project #9**People with Disabilities' Voices and Actions in Social Accountability**

(Originally set for the period 2019-2020, it was extended until June 2021)

Objective: Amplified voices of persons with disabilities for enhanced access to more equitable, quality public services in the target district.

Funding: The Voice Programme of Oxfam in Cambodia was funded with USD 156, 858.

Implementing Partners: Epic Arts.

Target Areas: Seven Communes in Tram Kak District, Takeo Province.

Project #9 was completed and phased out from Tram Kak district, Takeo province (rural poor), then piloted in a new target area in Khan Sensok, Phnom Penh (urban poor).

Project #10**Citizen Engagement for Social Accountability in Social Protection in ISAF in 2022.**

Project Overall Objective: Improve social protection public services for vulnerable people in urban areas

Funding: USD 58,728 granted by Oxfam.

Target Areas: Khan Sen Sok and 3 Sangkats, 7 primary schools, and 5 health centres.

This project was completed in early 2023.

Project #11**Supporting Meaningful Civic Engagement by Leveraging Digital Technologies**

Overall Objective: To develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels and ensure public access to information and fundamental freedoms (SDG 16).

Specific Objectives: To empower young ethnic minority citizens to make government more participatory, transparent, responsive, and accountable, including by leveraging digital technologies.

Funding: EU funded EUR 397,281

Implementing Partners: API, CARE, and INSTEDD and 14 local partner organisations.

Target Areas: Koh Kong, Kratie, Stung Treng, Mondulhiri, Ratanakiri provinces

Results

- The activities of this Project were mostly well completed and the expected results in most indicators were achieved. API has developed the capacity and coaching abilities of over 500 Community Accountability Facilitators in five provinces and rolled out ISAF implementation at the municipality level after local partner staff and CAFs followed a 3-day training and field coaching, at least one of two rounds, in all 30 districts.

As of December 2023, the project achieved the following results:

- Improved public access to information and open budgets for our target groups. 96% of the targeted service providers (174 communes, 539 schools, and 98 health centres) updated their digital I4C information boards.
- On average, 44% of the population was made aware of their rights and used these rights to access public services and their information on standards, performance, and budgets for commune administrative health centers and schools.
- 83% of CAFs are confident in training youths. This is consistent with capacity assessments conducted in November 2022 demonstrating that 82% of CAFs had improved leadership skills and could utilize the Youth Leadership Indicators tool in facilitating development planning at the commune level.
- Improved youth-friendly service delivery by public service providers as evidenced that 78% of joint accountability action plans (JAAPs) reflected the priorities of young ethnic minorities and aligned with the Commune Investment plan (CIPs) and District Investment Plan (DIPs) in 2022.
- More results are reported against indicators and classified by type of people, over project periods below.

Table: Summary of Citizen Satisfaction Levels (Baseline, Midterm, and Endline)

	All Citizens			PWD			EM			Female			Male		
	Base	Mid	End	Base	Mid	End	Base	Mid	End	Base	Mid	End	Base	Mid	End
Commune/village office	69%	64%	87%	62%	75%	84%	76%	71%	91%	74%	68%	88%	62%	53%	83%
District office	70%	68%	81%	57%	90%	87%	76%	88%	74%	72%	72%	84%	67%	27%	71%
Primary education	81%	72%	81%	71%	75%	77%	86%	86%	80%	82%	77%	83%	80%	63%	76%
Lower secondary school	75%	65%	72%	73%	74%	66%	69%	78%	73%	77%	70%	70%	72%	56%	80%
Health centre	75%	65%	81%	49%	62%	88%	77%	62%	78%	76%	69%	82%	75%	57%	76%
Operation District / Referral / Provincial hospital	69%	60%	79%	50%	73%	83%	66%	71%	77%	70%	62%	79%	69%	56%	81%
Waste disposal services	66%	48%	51%	80%	0%	42%	57%	93%	43%	53%	60%	53%	85%	10%	44%
Land title service	63%	61%	75%	50%	69%	82%	66%	73%	73%	68%	66%	78%	56%	49%	67%
Environmental management	31%	41%	55%	35%	38%	70%	47%	60%	64%	34%	44%	56%	27%	36%	50%
Average	67%	61%	74%	59%	62%	75%	69%	76%	73%	67%	65%	75%	66%	45%	70%

2. % of Joint Accountability Action Plan (JAAP) action items implemented (solved) within 12 months.

	2021	2022
Commune	78%	6%
Health center	74%	14%
Primary school	73%	23%

	Target	Year 3 (2022)	Year 4 (2023)
#of JAAP action items implemented (solved) within 12 months	60%	78%	80%

Outcome 2: Empowered young ethnic minority citizens to make government more participatory, transparent, responsive and accountable, including by leveraging digital technologies.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
1. % of young ethnic minorities (m/f) participate in development planning (CSC process, interface meetings, digital dashboard).	only 30% of young ethnic minorities	61.50% of 465 CAFs were ethnic minorities, 26.45% equal 123 youth, 6.02% equal 28 ID poor	26.05% equal 142 young 103 females	36.57 % equal 207 ethnic minority youth (including 56.52% equal 117 females) of 566 trained CAFs
		Target	Base line	End line
% of young ethnic minorities (m/f) participate in development planning (CSC process, interface meetings, digital dashboard).		60%	50%	75%

2. % of inputs of ideas from participants via digital platforms	2023: 85% of inputs from participants were via digital platforms. Digital platforms were significantly improved throughout the reporting period, with 7,542 project participants joining via the digital community scorecard (DCSC) (by 30 June 2023)
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Activities

- Increased capacities of civil society actors, Community Facilitators (CAFs), and local government in facilitating dialogue between local authorities and youths.
- Trained and coached 557 CAFs (360 females); 289 youth (213 females) and 207 Ethnic minorities (117 females) in 33 target districts/municipalities.
- Strengthened 14,400 young through digitised citizen-led service feedback meetings.

- A total of 30,348 people participated in the project awareness activities and got civic education on social accountability and rights. They are classified by the type of participants in the table below.

Citizens participated in the I4C awareness (2020-2023)						
Activity	Total participants	Women	Youth	ID-Poor	Ethic	People with Disabilities
					Minority	
In-person	30,348	7,797	4,008	2,753	5,795	205
Broad cast + social media	749,896					
Total	780,244	7,797	4,008	2,753	5,795	205

Lessons Learned

- Field coaching and field monitoring were very effective methods for capacity building of community accountability facilitators (CAFs), to understand how to prepare all materials, conduct the event with information for citizens (I4C), make posters in Khmer, and verbally explain in indigenous languages, which makes it easy for indigenous people to understand their rights and allows them to share their concerns and needs in their languages while participating in the citizen scorecard meetings meaningfully.
- The training combined both the traditional citizen score card process and practice on how to apply the digitized scorecard in class. These methods helped the facilitators understand better the ISAF cycle concept and process, and to practice it immediately after each stage.
- Good coordination with national and sub-national levels of the government encouraged supply-side government officials to mobilize citizens to evaluate their public services, conduct self-evaluation, and set plans together to improve their services based on citizens’ feedback.
- Data from the citizen scorecards, self-assessment, JAAP, and its implementation status should be collected nationwide from all ISAF implementors, NGOs, and government for the ISAF phase II, reflection, and setting of a new strategy for ISAF phase 3, for a national level policy reflection for better policy actions aimed to improve public service systematically nationwide.

Way Forward

- Project completed.
- Policy dialogue based on data analysis from the citizen scorecards, self-assessment, JAAP, and its implementation status for a national level policy reflection for better policy actions to improve public service systematically nationwide.
- Project closing and handover of Digital Scorecard App and public dashboard to API, CARE, INsTEDD, and others.
- JAAP will follow up action, to be reported by CAFs to the government.

Project #12
Innovations for Social Accountability in Cambodia (ISAC)

Project Objective: To support citizens to improve their capacity, access to information, and network for collective action, helping them to build public demand and develop solutions to address the community's priority.

Implementing Partners: The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)

Funding: USD 481,627 - Funded by USAID through FHI360

Target areas: 10 Sangkats in Ta Khmau municipality and 01 municipality of Ta Khmau, Kandal province, Cambodia.


Results

- Supported citizens in improving their capacity, access to information, and networks for collective action, helping them to create public demand and develop solutions to address communities' problems. The project overachieved (128%) the 2023 annual target, that is 1,671 people, of which 1046 were females.
- In four years (2020-23), 6,919 people (4400 female) were educated on civic education activities and provided feedback directly, face to face, to improve the public services of the targeted 10 Sangkat Admin, 05 Health Centre, 24 Primary School) and 01 municipality, Ta Khmau municipality, Kandal Province.
- In addition, 5,883 people (3,774 female) were educated on civic education topics through social media and online platforms.
- In 2023 a total of 285 out of 364 (78%) accountability activities, JAAPs activities, were implemented. The 128% achievement is notable, compared to the target indicator (50%).
- Sangkat Administration Services improved in 10 Sangkat, with 89% of JAAP activities of Sangkat services.
- Primary School Service improved in 24 schools with 74% of JAAP activities for primary school.
- Health Center Services improved in 5 health centres with 74% of JAAP activities of health centres service implemented.

- Krong Ta Khmau administrative services started to improve with 20 JAAP activities planned.
- Sub-National Administrations (province, district, communes) of Kandal province have significantly increased their ownership and sustainability. The Provincial Administration of Kandal has allocated a budget for social accountability activities implementation in Kandal in 2023. Kandal Provincial Administration: 4,000,000 Riels. Ta Khmau municipality: 2,000,000 Riel. Communes/Sangkat: 2,000,000 Riels. In total, all ten Communes/Sangkat received 8,000,000 Riel each per year in 2023 and next following years (USD 2,000). 7 Sangkat used their own government budget to implement ISAF in Kandal in 2023 as an extra contribution to the project-funded activities.
- In 2023, 555 persons (318 female), gained knowledge on civic educational quizzes through API Facebook page.
- Government-sourced information on national and sub-national budgets, planning, and spending was made more available to citizens, as 100% of 10 Sangkats and 1 Krong posted budget info.
- Citizens' knowledge of local government functions and responsibilities for budgeting, planning, and services increased. 1,671 people (1,046 female) gained knowledge on civic education at Sangkat and municipality level, and JAAPs dissemination. There was a 128% achievement, compared to the target indicator of 1,300 people.
- Increased citizen participation and collective action to hold local governments accountable for public services. People completed in-person civic education programs and demonstrated a general knowledge increase.
- Citizen-generated information on government decisions, processes, and performance increased and shared. Totally 11 scorecard meetings were carried out and 100% of targets were achieved. All 10 targeted communes and one Municipality are now using social accountability tools to hold local governments accountable for public services.
- Supported CSOs engaged in advocacy interventions through the Joint Accountability Action Plan (JAAP). 10 JAAP was formed in 10 Sangkats and 01 JAAP DMK was formed at Ta Khmau municipality.
- Joint Accountability Action Plan Committees were formed in all 10 Sangkat and one municipality (JAAPC) was established and/or strengthened because of ISAC initiatives or activities.
- The JAAP facilitated dialogue opportunities between government officials and CSOs and Citizen Representatives (CAFs and JAAPC) on local government accountability, through 11 meetings between citizen representatives and service providers at Sangkat and municipality levels, to organize consensus-building forums between multiple stakeholders.
- 78% of JAAP 2023 was implemented in 10 Sangkat councils, which took concrete action in response to citizen initiatives.
- Promoted or strengthened the civic participation of participation of women. 11 (06 females) CAFs were selected as CAF champions.

Activities



- Conducted 30 face-to-face awareness meetings with the participation of 979 local citizens (636 female) on their rights and access to public services in primary schools, health centres, Sangkat, and municipality services.
- Completed capacity building to 35 CAFs (21F) community accountability facilitator (CAFs) on social accountability, Information for Citizens I4Cs, and ISAC Community Scorecard.
- Created a Telegram group formed with 35 (21F) members. This social network is widely used with CAFs in Ta Khmau to provide training materials, appointments, and notifications about meeting arrangements.
- Discussed lessons learned, challenges, and best practices for implementing ISAC and 28 CAFs (18F).
- Conducted 39 shared vision meetings with 599 (350F) community members expressed their community's expectations of each service, and key issue, prioritized each service issue, and learned about the process of defining the vision, objectives, benefits, seven principles, cycles of social accountability, community scoring process of the ISAC project, define the community expectations, key issues and prioritize primary school and health center service issue.
- Conducted 39 community scorecard meeting with citizens (service users) 1,204 participants (774 female) and 39 self-assessment meetings of 302 government officials who are service providers (157 female) had provided scores on Sangkat, primary school and health center services and set plan to improve services.
- Mobilised 250 (156 female) to the interface meetings. CAFs gained an understanding of how interface meetings are conducted, CAFs' knowledge is gained and how priority actions are jointly agreed upon, and their skills are developed regarding the facilitation of interface meetings and the preparation of the JAAP. Moreover, the implementation planning techniques and potential sources of funding to support the implementation of the JAAP are learned. Furthermore, how remote community solidarity is learned, and the skills in managing conflict and finding win-win solutions are developed. In addition, 26 (19F) participants attended interface DMK meetings.
- Facilitated 156 (75 female) JAAPC members in JAAP committee meetings to support and monitor the implementation of the Sangkat solution and activities in the 10 JAAPs. There

were 285 among 364 JAAPs activities in year 3 implemented equal to 78% done. It was over achievement 28% if compared to the indicator (50%). In those JAAPs there were 33 among 80 external activities implemented (40%) and 252 among 284 internal activities implemented (89%).

- Delivered JAAPC training to 100 (49F) JAAPC members. The awareness deeply of JAAPC members’ roles and responsibilities, the mobilization of local resources to support JAAP and strengthen JAAP ownership is explained by JAAPC members; Furthermore, the awareness and monitoring tools usage for performance monitoring JAAP by JAAPC members. In addition, 17 (09F) JAPPC members DMK attended JAAPC DMK training as well.
- Supported 834 (551 female) community members to participate in the JAAP (Sangkats and DMK) dissemination meetings in 10 Sangkats.

Lessons Learned



- The committee on CAF champion role models’ selection comprised only 4 members, an even number that made the committee inefficient in its decisions. We suggest to raise the number to 5 members plus 1 member from FHI 360, as an observer.
- We suggest replicating the JAAP for citizens' participation in JAAP dissemination, to monitor JAAP in their own Sangkat.
- Some CAFs didn’t participate in Sangkat monthly meetings due to personal reasons. Thus, the API-ISAC team contacted/mobilized other CAFs in the same Sangkat.
- Schools are great venues for I4C dissemination meetings in person, but they can be noisy places when pupils take a short break from their lessons. CAFs will have to find solutions, for example, encouraging pupils to play farther from the classrooms where meetings take place.
- Print Calendars of the ISAC project, with pictures and texts explaining rights, and standards of work for Sangkat administration, health centres, and primary schools, are very necessary materials for both I4C dissemination in person and I4C dissemination through mobile loud-speakers, in order for people to learn not only during the meetings but also at home.
- CAFs pre-meetings before conducting Inception and Share Vision Meetings are very crucial activities. They provide a chance for CAFs to prepare materials for the meetings in advance, and to clarify the activity’s implementation. In addition, they finalize the meetings’ schedule for the group members.

- ISAC’s team divided staff members into two groups to timely follow the schedules of Inception and Share Vision Meetings in 10 Sangkats. Moreover. One team is needed to record Kobo data entry.
- There were 02 loudspeakers used for two parallel outreaches of dissemination meetings. They were helpful in enhancing our ability to better reach the participants, allowing facilitators to not talk loudly during the meetings.
- Schools are the best venues for dissemination meetings, as they already have most facilities such as chairs, tables, boards, and fans for the participants.
- The engagement with Department of Education Youth and Sport for the secondary and high school students’ participation is very important. It allows to engage more youth to participate in the project activities.
- ISAF focal person in the Ta Khmau municipality proved of great support during self-assessment and citizens scoring at Ta Khmau municipality hall and Ta Khmau primary school.
- New CAFs learned from more experienced CAFs about instant facilitation, preparation, moderation, communication, presentation, etc.
- Technical support from the FHI360 team through refresher training is the best way to refresh ISAC project staff and reach the project’s objectives.

Challenges



- Some JAAPC members were absent from the training due to personal reasons. Thus, API-ISAC team had to contact JAAPC chief for intervention.
- Some JAAPC members were very new to the topic of JAAPC training as they had just been elected from the commune/Sangkat election. To overcome this challenge, API-ISAC team provided training sessions step by step and allowed them to request clarifications. Moreover, pre and post-tests were conducted.
- Some Sangkat facilities and venues didn’t have sufficient space for JAAPC training as of the date API-ISAC conducted the event. Overlapping with other Sangkat meetings also happened. On occasion, API-ISAC team had to move the training to other appropriate venues (pagoda).

- The JAAP integration into the Sangkat investment program and presentation to the Municipal Integration Workshop overlapped its schedule with API's annual meeting, preventing the API-ISAC team from joining the latter. Ta Khmau municipality officer determined the number of CAFs participation.
- Some female participants accompanied by their small kids, did not pay full attention during our dissemination meetings. Cakes or candies were distributed by our staff.
- Some participants are illiterate and old, they could not complete the written pre and post-test of I4C dissemination, thus CAFs took time to assist them with this issue.
- Sangkat didn't invite CAFs to participate in Sangkat monthly meeting and the ISAC team had to report to the Sangkat chief.
- Some service providers didn't join the Inception and Share Vision meetings, and some were late to join as their personnel. However, API-ISAC team contacted their chief for intervention.
- Some citizens didn't join the Inception and Share Vision Meetings, and some were late to join either for their own reasons, thus API-ISAC team invited citizens nearby to join.
- Some service providers didn't join the inception and share vision meetings, and some were late to join for personal reasons. API-ISAC team requested their chair/chiefs' intervention.
- Most people with disabilities had difficulty to attend our Inception and Share Vision meetings due to the meeting's venue being far away from their residences. Therefore, API-ISAC team facilitated transportation in collaboration with the villages' security.
- It was a bit difficult to invite some students to attend the I4C MDK dissemination due to students having long vacations during the meetings period. API-ISAC team actively worked with the Department of Education, Youth and Sport of Ta Khmau to resolve the problem.
- There was not a post-on of I4C MDK Ta Khmau for dissemination. However, API-ISAC team printed the post-on of Khan Sen Sok as a model for dissemination.
- Some of the scorecard meetings at the Sangkat level, but also municipality District Krong (MDK) were delayed because of events/ceremonies organized by local authorities, such as roads and bridge construction-related events. The API-ISAC team worked with local authorities to reschedule the meetings.
- There were some challenges during citizen scorecard events at DMK level, as less citizens came to join MDK for 02 meetings, in spite of API-ISAC team being supported by Ta Khmau municipality. However, API-ISAC team rescheduled and changed the methodology by printing the letters and letting CAFs invite citizens who used the One Window Service in Ta Khmau municipality. In addition, the API-ISAC team sat down in front of the One Window Service for a day, directly inviting all citizens to the scoring meetings.
- An unplanned radio talk show was organized on the last day of Q4 of ISAC project implementation, thus API-ISAC staff spent a week preparing it, in spite of time conflict with preparations for the annual report.
- A training on Data literacy on SA which was provided by ODC in the last three days of Q4, was attended by 3 API-ISAC staff, in spite of overlapping with activities by the finance department and Kobo data entry for M and E.

- Some CAFs dropped out because of personal reasons and the ISAC project team had to recruit new CAFs during the ongoing ISAC outreach activities.
- The level of understanding of experienced CAFs and newly recruited CAFs (poor CAFs) differed, thus the ISAC project team needed to divide its staff and manage the various capabilities for outreach activities.
- Project staff had to multi-task not only in terms of project coordination, but also budget requests, settlement, reports, and data entry for M and E.

Way Forward



- Facilitate refresher trainings to CAFs
- CAF annual reflections (01 day)
- Conduct dissemination of I4C to citizens face-to-face meetings at village level (2 meetings conducted with citizens and 01 meeting with youth at school).
- Prepare Pre-meeting with CAFs before Inception and Share vision meeting at the Sangkat level.
- Organise Inception and Share Vision Meetings at the Sangkat level to ensure understanding and collaboration among stakeholders.
- CAF pre-meeting to discuss and prepare tools for community scorecards.
- Conduct community scorecard on service provider self-assessment.
- Conduct community scorecard – citizen scoring service providers.
- CAF pre-meeting to discuss and prepare the tool for interface meeting- CAF Sangkat.
- Organize interface meetings to develop JAAPs that address Sangkat priorities.
- Organise JAAP dissemination to the Community (JAAP Sangkats and JAAP Krong).
- Facilitate JAAP committee meetings to support and monitor the implementation of Sangkat solutions and activities in the JAAP.
- Conduct dissemination of I4C to citizens – through face-to-face meetings at village level (ISAF Kong).

- Prepare pre-meeting to discuss and prepare the tool Community Scorecard-Citizen scoring Krong - municipal.
- Conduct community Scorecard-Citizen scoring Krong-Municipal level.
- Conduct a self-assessment by Krong.
- Pre-meeting to discuss and prepare tool Interface meeting at MDK and Establish JAAP.
- Do meetings between citizen representatives and service providers at the municipality.
- Conduct one day of training for JAAPC DMK.
- Facilitate JAAP Committee Quarterly meeting at Krong level.
- Run education online I4C quizzes, one per Quarter.
- Run CAFs competition for citizen outreach at the same time with I4C educational quizzes.
- Conduct online I4C campaign via API's Facebook page and develop online quizzes and polls, to access the I4C online campaign (in consultation with ISAC Team).
- Deliver Mojo refresher Training and news writing Training.
- Mojo Video production.
- Participate in one in-depth two-day training session on social media campaigns for IPs.
- Organise annual municipal-level reflection meetings (organize peer learning workshops and reflection meetings in each municipality). Reflection and learning feedback into project and policy reforms.
- Select CAF women champion/role model selection.
- Provide Award Champion to CAFs at the municipality level.
- Engage CAFs to participate in Sangkat and Krong council's monthly meetings.
- Support CAF to participate at the Krong/Provincial level.
- Prepare refresher training on Data Quality including data collection form, Data Analysis, Report, and Success story writing, and related other MEL issues.

Case Studies:

- 1 Social Accountability Leads to an Improved Primary School Environment for Children: (Submitted Q1-Oct-Dec 2022).
- 2 Social Accountability Leads to an Improved Health Center Environment for local citizens: (Submitted Q2-Jan-Mar 2023).
- 3 Social Accountability Leads to an Improved Sangkat for local citizens: (Submitted Q3-Apr-Jun 2023).
- 4 Video Success story: (Submitted 43-Jul-Sep 2023). See the link provided: https://apicambodia-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/sorthy_so_apiinstitute_org/Etm9c2qLCyNImZ9Rrw8Qo2oBJvKr5riouEfgAIBIBdTAnQ?e=7XDjaS

Photos: 5 photos maximum: Visit API's server: P:\1. Programs and Projects\1. Current Program and Projects\047-Innovative Social Accountability in Cambodia ISAC\PHOTO ISAC-PROJECT

**Case Study:
Social Accountability Leads to an Improved Sangkat for local citizens.**



Sangkat Roka Khpos office in Prek Samrong village, Sangkat Roka Khpos, Ta Khmau municipality, Kandal province is a concrete building with a red tiled roof, built in accordance with the standards of the Ministry of Interior (MOI). The office hosts many public services such as civil registration, identification, mother and baby health, education, anti-violence, gender, child protection, water sanitation, people with disability (PWD), poor families, old age people, anti-drug and alcohol, gender equality empowerment, and social work. Previously, this Sangkat space was not large, and was untidy, with an old information board, no information-on-information board, and the service provision was not fast, Sangkat monthly meetings do not invite CAFs and citizens representatives, and no slope for people with disability. Sangkat councils and ISAF focal person didn't attend ISAF activities and don't have CAFs working in this Sangkat. In addition, the chief of Sangkat, a chair of JAAPC, is always absent in ISAF meetings and is not deeply involved in ISAC. Therefore, some of the JAAPC members didn't fully join ISAC.

Since late 2020, the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) funded by USAID through FHI 360, has been implementing the Innovations for Social Accountability in Cambodia (ISAC) project, throughout Ta Khmau municipality, including work in Sangkat Roka Khpos. The project aims to support citizens to improve their capacity, access to information, and network for collective action, helping them to build public demand and develop solutions to address the community's priority. Community Accountability Facilitators (CAF) accompanied API staff to facilitate I4C dissemination, inception, share vision, self-assessments, community scorecards, and interface meetings between citizens and service providers, including the Sangkat Councils, health centre, and primary school. Through this process, citizens had the opportunity to score the service providers' performance and standards.

In addition, API-ISAC launched ISAF MDK in late March 2023 and has since been implementing ISAF MDK at Ta Khmau municipality level.



Mr. Chhoueng Chhou, the chief of Sangkat Roka Khpos, participated in some of the ISAC projects but missed to join some of ISAC activities because of his core tasks. However, he authorized the ISAF focal person and Sangkats councils to join ISAC activities. There were some positive notices such as the public posting on the information board at the mechanism of the One Window Service office of the I4C, the Sangkat’s budget, and JAAPs

results for 2022. The results of citizen scorecards with all the Sangkat councils were shared, so Sangkat councils could understand their own strengths and weaknesses. The proposed activities to enhance the performance of Sangkat councils and standardize Sangkat were shared with JAAPC members.

Mrs. Douk Sreyrov, ISAF focal person of Sangkat worked with the Sangkat councils, charities, NGOs, and Ta Khmau municipality to address and prioritize actions. All the service providers then integrated their respective actions into the Joint Accountability Action Plan (JAAP). Mrs. Douk Sreyrov shared the proposed actions with all the citizens in the community and stakeholders.



As a result, 22 among 37 JAAPs actions were implemented. In those implemented JAAPs, there were 2 external JAAPs actions done, including 02 toilets for males and females funded with USD 1,500 by the Sangkat and constructed in early 2023. In addition, 650 poor and older families were supported and funded with 18 million Riels from the Cambodia government. A new information board was constructed with I4C posters funded by the Sangkat in the amount of USD 250. Moreover, Sangkat councils’ contact numbers were posted on Sangkat’s wall, funded by Sangkat in the amount of 40,000 Riels. A slope for people with disability was constructed, and the Sangkat environment was cleaned and is regularly

controlled by villages’ security. Equity cards to poor families were offered, the mechanism of One Window Service was prepared, and citizen representatives were invited to join the Sangkat’s monthly meetings. Furthermore, the Sangkat had internal regular meetings on discipline strengthening, working hours, and ways to speed up services offered. Finally, 3 primary schools of Sangkat actively implemented ISAC and the majority of JAAPs actions.

The I4C dissemination, inception, share vision meetings, community scorecards, and self-assessment helped **Mr. Chhoueng Chhou** to improve his management, leadership skills, and communication with citizens. The process helped to improve the performance of Sangkat councils. Citizens now say they are satisfied with the Sangkat's service delivery. **Mrs. Roeun Chen**, 50-year-old, a local citizen, living in Prek They village, Sangkat Roka Khpos said, "I am so glad that the Sangkat's chief has worked hard to improve the quality of Sangkat's services, management, and the Sangkat environment."

Mr. Chhoeung Chhou and all the Sangkat councils plan to continue to work closely with JAAPC members to raise more funds to implement further actions addressing the remaining issues.



Project #13

Voices and Action of Young Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs

Objective: enhanced capacities and created an enabling environment for youth and emerging young leaders and women micro-entrepreneurs to allow them to participate in entrepreneurship and business-related advocacy action and dialogue with the authorities. This will contribute to the improvement of equal opportunity and the strengthening of their socio-economic rights.

Funding for Project: USAID Cambodia through Pact Cambodia

Implementing Partners: Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA), Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD)

Target Areas: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, Sihanoukville.

Project #13: USAID funded through Pact, (API, CPDD, and IDEA) Voices and Action of Young Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs successfully achieved its objectives for 2019-2023. API got 1st Prize in the Best Performance Partner Award out of 42 partners from USAID/Pact, on Most Significant Change Story about API successfully implemented the WE ACT Project.

Project: Voices and Action of Young Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs to Influence Policy

API was founded in 2007 and is a leading Cambodian capacity building organization in advocacy, policy development, citizen engagement, and good governance. API's mission is to serve the long term democratic and social development needs of Cambodia by empowering people to interact with their government to protect their rights and provide for their needs.

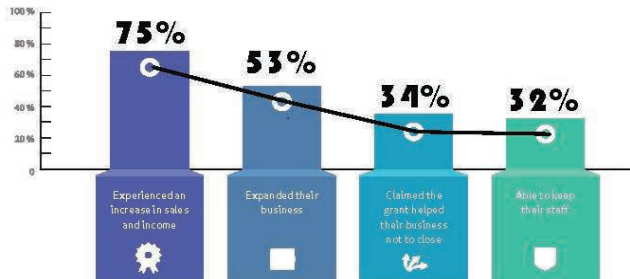
Period: February 2021-Dec 2022
Target Area: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Cham, and Sihanoukville

API Close Up

Under WE Act, API increased constructive civic engagement around socio-economic issues of young women micro-entrepreneurs (YWEs) and youth. Youth leaders and YWEs engaged with key decision-makers to drive towards solutions and influence policy change around prioritized issues that hamper their entrepreneurial success with a focus on women street vendors. Other WE Act partners cooperated with API to advocate on shared issues for policy dialogue.

API and WE Act's Achievements

- Supported micro-business owners to voice their issues to local authorities. Provided capacity building support to over 400 participants on the topics of socio-economic rights and business management, helping micro-business owners to gain the confidence needed to present their common issues to local authorities.
- Engaged in evidence-based policy dialogue at multiple level. Conducted research on issues of street vendors that served as a basis to advocate to the government for policy adjustments on multiple key issues, including access to the National Social Security Fund, eligibility for ID poor cards, and approvals for appropriate vending locations in multiple provinces.
- Supported street vendors with Covid-19 recovery and business expansion. Provided 120 street vendors (IDEA members) with business recovery grants of \$300 to help them maintain sales or even expand their businesses during the economic downturn, while also providing capacity building on financial management and digital skills. Overall, 75% of participating businesses saw an increase in sales.



"Sophea Protected her Street Business"

Ms. Thoeun Sophea, a street vendor in Phnom Penh

Ms. Thoeun Sophea is a street vendor selling coffee at Sunsky market near a garment factory in Phnom Penh. As a result, government stakeholders from the Ministry of Interior agreed to address the issues by providing a permit letter to informal business owners and released the statement, "we need to review these practices with the market authorities to ensure that vendors don't pay more for water and electricity than the official rate, and we should meet with street vendors, authorities, and the market committees to find solutions together."

WE Act partners also provided input on a draft policy paper for the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF) on "promoting and protecting the informal sector and economic development in the formal sector". After a consultation meeting, the MoEF concluded that the draft policy can cover the informal businesses more inclusively, speed up the business registration, enable more open discussions between local authorities and vendors, and provide capacity building for all entrepreneurs. As a result, the MoEF will share the draft policy for input from WE Act partners before it is finalized.

Sophea was pleased with the response from the government stakeholders to her concerns. The actions

and policies that resulted from WE Act's engagement will significantly impact her as well as other informal businesses as they will be able to receive protection from the government, avoid informal fees and taxation, and give them access to other services such as the National Social Security Fund.



Sunsky market near a garment factory in Phnom Penh. Sophea has met many challenges in her life and has a hard time to make ends meet and take care of her two sons. In 2021, Sophea participated in a policy advocacy training delivered by API, CPDD and the Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA). After the training, Sophea had more knowledge about her socio-economic rights and had gained skills and confidence on how to advocate for her issues and those of her community. She joined other street vendors to raise their needs to the government, such as: 1) The need to access information about social protection and business registration; 2) The need

for public places where street vendors can sell their goods without fear of being evicted; and 3) the need for a permit letter indicating their right to sell which will also help avoid having to pay informal fees.

Project #14**Enhancing the Institutional and Operational Capacity of the Provincial Associations of Local Councils, 2019-2021**

Objective: Strengthen the institutional and operational capacity of the Provincial Associations of Local Councils (PALCs) and their members in target areas to contribute to promoting accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of their constituents, particularly those from vulnerable communities.

Funding: EUR 445,031 of a total of EUR 977,938 were funded by the EU. DCA and BfdW provided matching funds.

Implementing Partners: Aide et Action Cambodia, the Association of Local Councilors of Pursat Province.

Target Areas: Six target provinces – Kampong Speu, Kandal, Kep, Kampong Thom, Pursat, and Banteay Meanchey provinces.

This Project was successfully completed in 2021 and continue online learning platform for local councilors.



Outcome 3

Improved access to, and disclosure of, public information on critical issues.

Project #15

Access for All; Promoting Access to Information in Cambodia

Project Objective: The overall goal of the project is to increase the availability of independent, evidence-based information and promote freedom of expression in Cambodia.

Implementing Partners: The United States Department of State (US DOS) CFDA Number 19.345 through a consortium project with the East-West Management Institute, Inc. (EWMI).

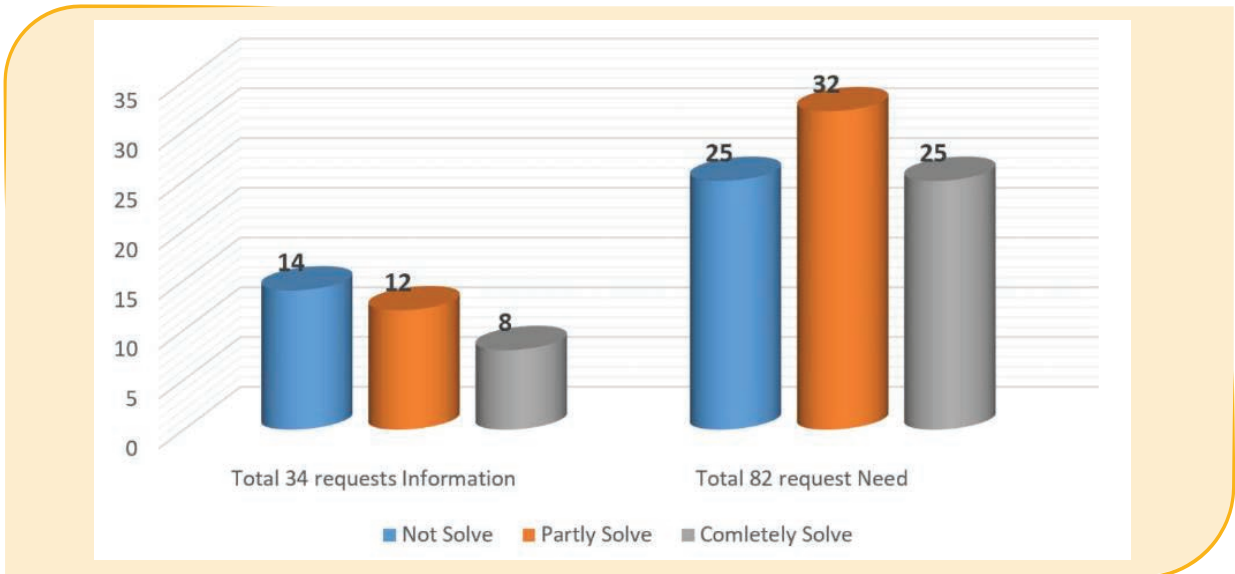
Funding: USD 564,902.49

Target areas: Three target districts: Phnom Kravanh district in Pursat province, Prasath Balangk district in Kampong Thom province, and Chetborei district in Kratie province.

Results

Vulnerable Cambodians Obtained and Used Information Necessary for their Full Participation in Cambodian Society:

- This project was successfully completed and achieved its stated objectives.
- The project trained and supported 90 vulnerable Cambodians indigenous women leaders to obtain and use information necessary for their full participation in the Cambodian society. By the end of the project, most of the 90 vulnerable Cambodians indigenous women leaders applied knowledge of the Commune and District Investment Plan (CIP/DIP) and local public meetings, several times in 3 years.
- In the local communities, trained CBO women-leaders learned 19 training topics and applied 11/19 topics (57.90%) in their community work, as reported by the indigenous women who participated in the project reflection workshops in 2023.
- Community capacity changes: Moreover, the indigenous people confirmed in the workshop that several changes resulted from the project training. The changes remarkably involved many aspects of life, including communities' improvement in their general knowledge and courage in dealing with the authorities to protect their interests, address their issues, concerns and needs, recognize true or fake information, understand rights to information, understand land laws and regulations, and write requests for information and for intervention, to address their community issues. This demonstrates a good development of understanding and self-education, which is an important factor within the indigenous people to balance the low degree of formal education. "Access to information is extremely important to democratic discourse and openness which promotes public involvement, citizen empowerment, and government transparency and accountability".
- 90 vulnerable Cambodians indigenous women leaders advocated 33 cases successfully raised issues with their commune/district-level officers benefiting 5,903 community members. They actively participated in 65 communes/districts monthly.



As a result, 116 requests were made, of which 34 were requests to demand information and 82 were requests related to issues and needs.

- Of the 34 requests for information, 8 received full responses, 12 were partly addressed, and 14 did not receive any response.
- Of the 82 needs object of requests: 25 were not resolved; 32 were partly resolved (road repair, career, protecting indigenous people’s traditions, forestry fence, community budget patrolling, and kindergarten) and 25 requested completely solved including budget information, infrastructures, fishery, road light, bridge gate, benefit 5,903 members of CBOs.

Raised awareness about the importance of an effective legal framework that provides access to information for Cambodians:

- 52 CSO actors, 4 media representatives, private sector representatives, and project beneficiaries participated in quarterly meetings to discuss access to information-related topics.
- Build community support for access to information principles. A total of 309 (105 government representatives, 18 CSO actors, and 186 Indigenous women) participated in meetings on international standards for access to information law.
- The community participants confirmed that 97% (126 out of 130) received from the government positive responses to requests for information.
- 104 human rights defenders trained and their organizations supported in participating to access to information workshops.

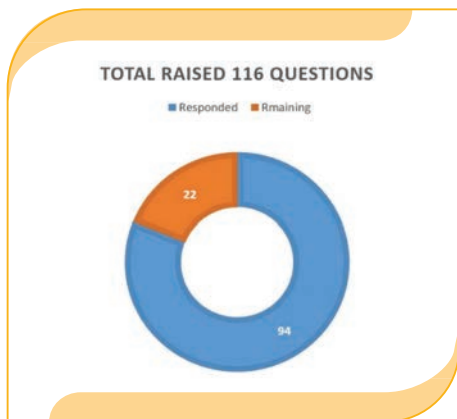
Activities:

- Capacity of Indigenous women: In total, 100% of activities were completed: 9 trainings conducted with an accumulated number of 365 indigenous women and non-accumulate 90 indigenous women. The main topics were 4: access to information (A2I law); budget literacy; grassroots advocacy, and advocacy on A2I. Details here below:

Target Province	Pre-test	Post-test	Increasing	Indigenous women participants
Access to Information Topic				90
Kratie, Kampong Thom, and Pursat	28.87%	91.51%	62.64%	
Budget Literacy				86
Kratie, Kampong Thom, and Pursat	59.42%	90.11%	30.69%	
Advocacy on A2I				104
Kratie, Kampong Thom, and Pursat	66.96%	85.8%	18.84%	
Grassroot Advocacy				85
Kratie, Kampong Thom, and Pursat	83.31%	87.31%	4%	

- A total of 33 advocacy plans were developed on topics such as: land disputes between community members and local powerful persons; deforestation in the community and loss of wild animals and peacocks; illegal fishing in the conservation lake; sediment increase caused by dams; unprofessional behavior of officials in providing public services call for conservation and reparation of Ancient temples and bridges; loss of Indigenous People culture; domestic violence; lack of wells and clean water; shortage of water supply; cultivation techniques and marketplace for agriculture produce; lack of toilets and dirty environment in the streets due to improper dumping of garbage; lack of kindergarten school buildings and teachers; people with disabilities’ lack of professional skills and capital for startup businesses.
- A total of 90 participants (100%) successfully installed their phone applications like Telegram and Signal. 63 out of 90 Indigenous women posted articles on their issues or concerns on messenger apps or social media and shared information with other members.
- A total of 595 articles were posted by the trained indigenous women about their activities in the communities, such as participation in the commune and district council meetings, community patrolling, the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, and meetings with our project team as well as their participation in other NGOs’ activities on health education, environmental protection, sanitation, community challenges, indigenous people’s culture and traditions, and gender equality training. As a result, there were 5,958 reactions, 951 comments, and 70 shares.
- Supported advocacy and community participation by Indigenous women. A total of 635 CBO members joined the commune and district monthly meetings, including 237 CBO representatives and leaders.
- 21 case studies were collected, showing the use of lessons learned in the project and their results.

- A total of 18 public (100%) were completed, with 1,503 participants (827 female). The participants were indigenous women, CBO members, commune councilors, district councilors and governors, and officials from relevant district offices/provincial departments.



As a result, a total of 94 out of 116 questions were answered and commitments were made to finding solutions. Of those 94 questions raised, many were related to revenue and expenditure of the commune/district budget, budget on social protection, requested budget for community patrolling, deforestation, and support for some budget in saving groups, forest borders, offenses of encroachment on community land and forest, budget, public service, and school building. Of those questions, 22 did not receive a reply or were not replied to immediately, and need further discussion.

Raised awareness about the importance of an effective legal framework that provides access to information for Cambodians.

- At least 97% (126 of 130) responses to requests for information.

Target Province	Commune/district meetings	Public forum	Multi-stakeholder meeting	Total	Responded	Not responded
Request Needs/issues	82	116	12	162	126	36
Request information	34			82	57	25

- 97 organizations participated in the Access to information National Workshop.
- Conducted annually 4 National workshops with 706 participants (326 female).
- Boosted A2I Video Animations on Facebook, about joint CSOs’ inputs to A2I Law.
- Co-hosted A2I young people Vlog Competition on the importance of A2i in business and economic development.
- Co-hosted A2I Fun dance with CSOs and media workers/journalists, young people, and the public to jointly celebrate Access to Information Day (September 28, 2023). Issued press releases. Around 3,500 people viewed the event Live. <https://fb.watch/nCij8iqH4J/?mibextid=cr9u03>
- A2I WG members’ monthly meetings were held 17 times. The participants from 21 A2I WG members, including 14 Indigenous women representatives, joined face-to-face and online. During the meetings, we discussed and updated the attendance about the progress and challenges related to access to information, and exchanged updates on activities of each member within the joint efforts to promote access to information for all. Updates on the draft law on access to information were shared and a concept note for a national conference, cycle campaign, plans, and media campaign with the A2I WG was drafted.

- 6 CSO letters were accepted by The Ministry of Information and the National Assembly to bring CBO issues to national policymakers.
- In the frame of the advocacy campaign to submit a letter to the Prime Minister, and policy-makers, we wrote articles for social media, radio, and online news for popular media like VOA, VOD, CamboJa, Phnom Penh Post, Khmer Times, RFA, Thmey Thmey, RFI, Cambodia Daily, ADHOC, VAYO, and others.
- A2IWG members started a social media campaign featuring 4 self-produced videos, several Facebook contents including livestreams, and 3 appearances of members in radio talk shows. Various Facebook content posted as part of the campaign reached a combined amount of 21,067 accounts and got 724 reactions. All the contents and messages in the social media campaign focused on the importance of A2I, public disclosure, and the celebrations of the Right to Know Day.
- 12 NGO representatives submitted in person our joint letter to the Prime Minister's office. And 11 media channels produced articles on this walk-in for social media news, radio news, radio programs, and Facebook Live. Coverage was granted by Camboja, VOD/CCiM, Phnom Penh Post, Khmer Times, VOA, RFA, Thmey Thmey, RFI, Cambodia Daily, Adhoc, and VAYO.
- A total of 5 statements to the government, specifically to the Ministry of Information, were reported by the media, to push the government to adopt the A2I law. As a result, the Prime Minister committed to adopting the A2I law in 2024 or 2025. In November 2023, a representative of the Ministry of Information responded that the Ministry would try to work with other ministries, especially the Ministry of Councils, on the draft access to information law, to move forward as soon as possible.
- A Universal Periodical Review (UPR) report on the Access to Information issue in Cambodia was digitally submitted to the United Nations Office of the Human Rights High Commissioner. The report of the Universal Periodical Review was preventively illustrated to development partner preventatives of USAID, EU, the UK Embassy, UNOCHR, EWMI, FHI-360, GIZ by the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) and members of the Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG).
- Critical information on Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) and ELCs' Environment Social Impact Assessment is still not fully accessible. Local governments have limited power to produce and distribute significant information on Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) and Environment Social Impact Assessment (ELCs). Commune and district authorities are hesitant to respond and share information with their communities.
- The complexity of public budgeting literacy: Public budget literacy is complicated for Indigenous women to understand, and they do not perceive that it directly impacts the family's economy.
- Local officials are accountable – but are not fully empowered: there was a dichotomy between the on-paper benefits of Cambodia's government decentralization with the political realities of a very top-down centralized government structure. Local officials should be held accountable within their communities and incentivized to serve the communities.

Lessons Learned

- The Provincial Multi-Stakeholder Workshop and the district’s public forum provided more space for the representatives of CBOs, Youth, CSOs, and sub-national government officials to honestly share and talk about their understanding, best practices, collaboration, and challenges for access to public information.
- Working on accessing information on environmental social impact assessment (ESIA) and economic land concessions (ELCs) requires strong technical knowledge, an understanding of the legal framework, and political commitment.
- The budget allocation for communities seems more complicated on procedural compliance and regulatory guidance. Advocacy for budgeting, then, requires strong leadership commitments and needs to be a top-down approach with both finance in charge and line technical ministries.

Publication completed

- Six videos on A2I were produced by youth.
- Four videos on budget education.
- Four videos of successful case studies.
- Six videos about the A2I national workshop.

Planned Publication

- Video on project documentary and animation.

Survey/Evaluation:

Case Study:

- **Case 01.** Ohphana Community Forestry (CPA)
- **Case 02.** Sala Chdor Community Forestry (CF)
- **Case 03.** Access to Information Makes a Positive Impact on My Community
- **Case 04.** Citizens Can Help Duty Holders to Become More Accountable
- **Case 05.** From Nothing to Becoming a Brave Indigenous Woman
- **Case 06.** Community Behavioral Change in the O Phanna Community.

Case study 1 : The Pror Gnel Forestry Community



The **Pror Gnel Forestry Community** is based in Pror Gnel commune, Phnom Kravanh district, Pursat province. The community was established in 1994 by local people, village, commune and district authorities, Provincial forestry Administration, and with the support of the Khmer Women's Development Organization and World Fish.

The Pror Gnel Forestry Community has 249 hectares of land with a total of 216 families (945 members of which 445 are female).

The Forest Community is managed by 15 community committee members, 4 women.

Ms. Vong Chantha, 40 years old (Living in Prangel Commune) mentioned that she is really worried about deforestation and forest burning in around 10 hectares of land because her family and community members get their income from this community forest.



After a district dialogue meeting, the Community leader mentioned that the Commune Council has arranged a meeting between deforestation groups and CBOs members to discuss the illegal land encroaching problem. As a result, deforestation groups agreed to remove materials used for deforestation and signed an agreement to stop this practice. Additionally, the Commune Council (CC) continued to address the issue with good results, and CC continued to follow up with CBOs about deforestation because of worries that it might happen again. The Commune Council also has a good cooperation with and supports the CBOs. The Committee and members of the community requested the Chairman of the District Council, the District Governor, and the Commune Chief and all relevant institutions intervene and fund the budget for patrolling.



Ms. Souy Sour, 45-year-old (lives in Prangel commune) stated: “I was very happy, when, all those families stopped deforestation, and participants protected it because the community members get a lot of benefits from the Community forestry and get income for our members”. She is determined to continue her efforts to participate in the community and to cooperate with all relevant authorities to take care of the community.

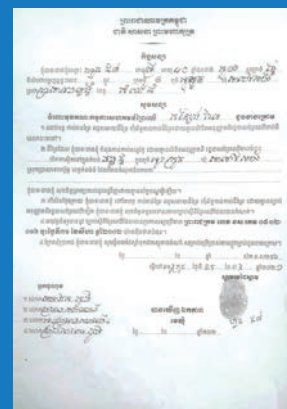
Case study 2 : Kanseng Veal Spiritual Forestry Community



This Community is located in O’Krouch Village, Salavisai Commune, Brasat Ballangk District, Kampong Thom Province. It was established in 2004 by the Provincial Forestry Administration in collaboration with the commune and district authorities. The community consists of 120 families covering an area of 790 hectares of land.

In August 2021, a group of people came to deforest the area belonging to the Kanseng Veal community This affected the spiritual forest, and its wildlife habitats, and caused a decrease in non-timber forest products. If prevented and addressed in time, the spiritual forest can be maintained for the community members, who can enjoy and celebrate their Culture Day for indigenous people and have stable livelihoods for the present members and future generations.

Local CBOs requested that the commune council and district council address this issue for the community. To support them, our Project conducted a district dialogue meeting with the district council and commune council to create space for the CBOs to raise their issue. Ms. Pov Ean one of the representatives of Kanseng Veal community, requested already in 2021 that the Chief of Prasat Ballangk District Council, the Governor of Prasat Ballangk District, and the Chief of Salavisay Commune and all stockholders, support the Community and find a solution.



Ms. Pov Ean, 43 years old (Living in Salavisay Commune) mentioned that she is really worried about deforestation and forest burning in the spiritual forest because her family and community members always believe and celebrate their Culture Day in this forest.

After the district dialogue meeting, Ms. Pov Ean, a representative of Kanseng Veal community reported that, in coordination among district authority, forestry administration, and Commune Council, a meeting was arranged between the group responsible for deforestation and CBOs members to discuss illegal deforestation that effected to spiritual forest for indigenous people.

As a result, the deforestation group agreed to give three trees back to the community and signed an agreement to provide evidence to CBOs that they stop deforestation. Additionally, the commune council and forestry administration continued to follow up with CBOs about the issue, in order to try and prevent this to be happening again. To this date, the Commune Council has maintained good cooperation with the CBOs.

Case study 3 : Ou Panha Forestry Community



The Project has been active since 2020, with the aim to improve the capacity of indigenous women on budget literacy, advocacy, Human Rights, Economic Land Concessions and Economic Impact Assessment, and law on natural resources and the environment. Ms. Yuth Thin is a member of the Ou Panha Forestry Community and actively

participated in the A4A project. “I am very delighted to share my knowledge and disseminate to my communities’ ways and methods to protect the forest and land that was recognized by the ministry”, she stated. “There is Prakas No. 189 on the management of Ou Panha community as a protected area in Kanteak village, Prich village, Veal Chas village, and Srae Veal village, Sakream commune, Prasat Ballangk district, Kampong Thom province in Beng Per Wildlife Sanctuary. Ou Panha community protected area covers an area of 5,618 hectares, and I have actively participated in the A4A project2.

After receiving training and coaching from the A4A Project, Ms. Yuth Thin shared her new knowledge and disseminated to her community information about natural resources management and the environment. She has been mobilizing and facilitating community members’ involvement in protecting the community forest through field visits and monthly meetings, not only with the community but also with the commune and district administration officials, to raise the community’s concerns about the destruction caused by powerful people, and to request that the environment officer and district provide training and disseminate info to the people about benefits of forest and land. Ms. Yuth Thin reported “The main challenge facing CPA communities is land tenure insecurity. Under the CPA legal framework, communities have partial land tenure rights, in that they may generally exercise access rights, use rights, withdrawal/extraction rights, and management rights. However, CPA communities lack exclusive rights (the ability to exclude outsiders from entering or using CPA land), which weakens CPA communities’ overall land tenure, greatly impairing their long-term planning, livelihood, and conservation decision-making”. Adjusting the CPA legal framework to explicitly allow communities to obtain more appropriate land tenure rights, including the right to exclude outsiders, would greatly increase the effectiveness of the existing legal framework. In addition, extending the duration of CPA tenure would allow communities to fully engage in consistent management activities over the long-term.

“With activities implementation, I always mobilize and facilitate my communities to attend the meeting of relevant partner and commune and district officers”, stated Ms. Yuth Thin. “At every meeting, I presented the needs of all CPA members advocating for those to be met. The current CPA management is largely male-dominated, and the inclusion of women, youth, and poor community members needs to be further encouraged. I deeply thank the A4A project team, which always supports us and provides training and coaching to my community to understand how to manage CPA, advocacy and demand the right and access to information.”

Case study 4: Salor Chhdor Community Forestry Indigenous Women

After the Project built the capacity of the Salor Chhdor community forestry indigenous women in Prasath Balaing district, Kampong Thom province, most of the women got knowledge of literacy budget and laws related to natural resources management and the environment. **Mrs. Hen Khim**, a member of the community forestry group stated: “Before, I was afraid of speaking with local authorities about our community forestry being destroyed and the district budget, during

commune meetings, public forums, and other meetings. Now I am very proud and confident to report about forest advantages and district’s budget plans with local authorities, both face to face and through other meetings at commune, district, and province level”.



During a public forum at the district level on 22 March 2023, **Mrs. Hen Khim** raised concerns about community forestry being destroyed by private sector entities and powerful people in Sala Chhdor community, in Prasath Balaing in Kampong Thom province. Additionally, **Mrs. Hen Khim** shared information on budget literacy, NRM, and the environment. In particular, regarding economic land concessions (ELCs) and economic impact assessment, she reported that “relevant local authorities did

not deliver or disseminate information to my communities so that there have been disputes between community members and the private company”.

After **Mrs. Hen Khim** shared her newly acquired knowledge with the villagers, a majority of them got an understanding of access to information rights in district and commune administrations, got involved in commune and district project implementation and financial reports, and bravely spoke freely to relevant partners and local authorities to demand respect for their rights.

Mrs. Loun Sinuon, member of the community forestry committee in Sala Chhdor community forestry, said that indigenous women gathered in committees, have been presenting complaints to court in order to protect their rights against companies, during community forestry disputes. “In my communities, the main challenges faced by indigenous women are land issues. We are involved in land disputes of CF with private companies which received economic land concessions from the government”, she said. The Project, noted Mrs. Loun Sinuon, “has mobilized and facilitated the engagement of indigenous women as members of community forestry, to attend meetings at local commune and district level, to raise their concerns about CF being destroyed by the company and powerful people”.



Project #16

EWMI-funded Internet Monitoring and Action Project (iMAP), 2021- 2024

Project Objective: Promote and safeguard Internet freedoms through better civil society understanding of internet censorship, digital rights, and safety in advocacy. Civil society and active citizens are trained on internet freedom, digital rights, and digital safety as a complement to API’s advocacy and A2I capacity development training.

Implementing Partner: EWMI

Funding: US DoS through EWMI funded USD 50,280.

Target areas: Phnom Penh

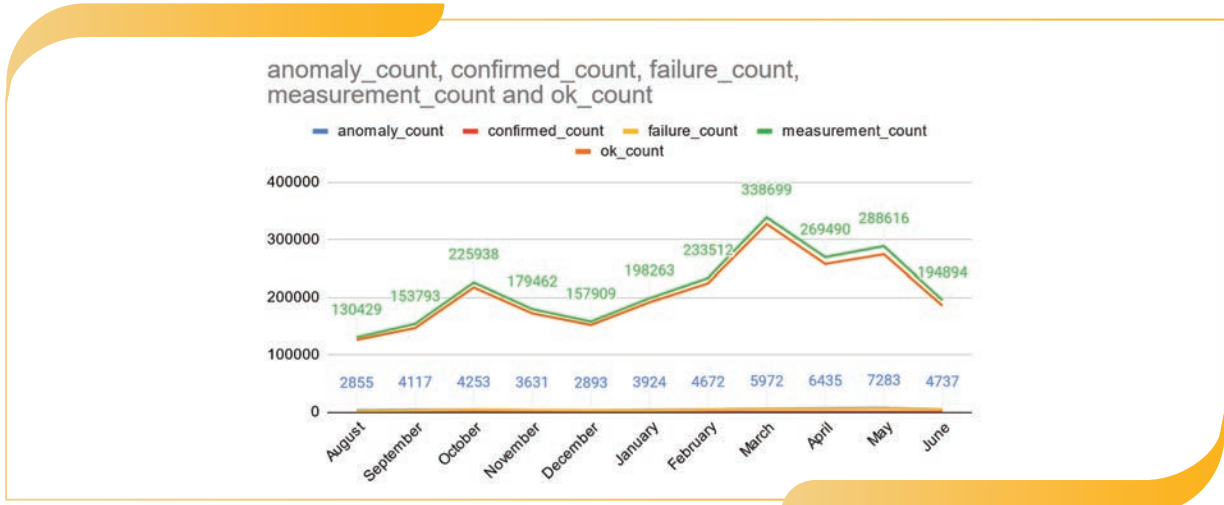


Results

iMAP Cambodia 2023 Internet Censorship Report was produced and posted on the API and SINA websites. The report was disseminated to 35 CSO networks with 140 representatives (55 female) of Development Partners (DPs), CSOs, and media. The report was utilized for producing the Universal Periodic Review Report 2023 on Freedom of Expression through media and social media and a news censorship report from Cambodia. Internet censorship report for Cambodia has been available on an annual basis in 2022, and 2023 and used to inform civil society action and advocacy of the Digital Rights Working Group.

Activities

- Built capacity of CSOs on digital rights and internet censorship, by monitoring website over 2,000 websites. The internet monitoring report found 43 websites blocked by Internet Service Providers in 2022, and 36 websites blocked in 2023, mostly belonging to Vietnam and Chinese Companies. The blockades were ordered by the government and affected independent media like Voice of Democracy (VoD); Radio Free Asia Khmer and others.
- Promoted the iMAP internet censorship monitoring tool, by using the OONI Probe Tools from the APP store, for Android and Windows. Volunteers promoting Online Digital Rights and Internet Freedom monitored censored websites through this OONI Tool on a daily basis. From June 2022 to July 2023, the highest measurement count was in March 2023 (338,699); the second one was in May 2023 (288,616) and the minimum one was in July (20,222). The result increased dramatically after training iMAP for some CSO groups. The graph below shows the monthly figure.



- Internet Censorship Report 2022 was endorsed.
- Co-organized Phnom Penh Internet Forum (PPIF) with the Digital Rights Working Group.
- Presented Internet Censorship Monitoring Report to UNESCO Cambodia.
- Hosted the annual meeting to review the draft Internet Interference and Censorship 2023.
- Produced the Internet Censorship Report 2023, disseminated on API and SINA websites and Facebook and social media, on radio Voice of America, (VoA) outlet, as well as on CSO and Journalists networks.
- Facilitated Digital Security Training and consulted on a draft Guide on Digital Rights and Internet Freedom for Cambodian Civil Society.
- Completed extra activities such as
 - Day-to-day internet monitoring action Plan (iMAP)
 - Endorsement of the Internet Censorship Report 2022
 - Co-organized Phnom Penh Internet Forum (PPIF) with the Digital Right Working Group
 - Presented Internet Censorship Monitoring Report to UNESCO Cambodia
 - Participated and shared the Internet Monitoring Censorship Action Plan (iMAP) with DWRG on website collection
 - Facilitated Digital Security Training section to Consultation Workshop Report, Draft Guide to Digital Rights and Internet Freedom for Cambodian Civil Society
 - Attended the Regional Digital Rights Asia Pacific Assembly (DRAPA) workshop in Thailand
 - Regional Internet Monitoring Action Plan (iMAP) meeting to raise up the challenges, and points to be improved.
 - Monthly Project Meetings with SINA project team

Challenges

- People can access the internet, but they don't understand what freedom of expression or digital rights are.

- People are afraid of expressing ideas related to politics or posting true information on social media.
- Internet service providers in Cambodia are owned by Vietnamese and Chinese companies. While data privacy and protection must go through the ISPs and mobile phone companies.
- Limited Knowledge of Digital Security techniques. Concerns about hackers, trojans, and viruses.

Way forward

- Internet censorship data entry using Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI)
- Document Internet censorship and the nature of such regulations
- Facilitate semi-annual national OONI network meetings of 25 members.
- Annual Cambodia country report on Internet Interference and Censorship, disseminated to relevant civil society working group(s) for joint advocacy.
- Organize and facilitate local partner workshop.
- Update country-specific test list
- Develop training module on internet freedom, digital rights, and safety complementing advocacy and A2I curricula for CSOs and active citizens.
- Conduct training policy advocacy to select civil society actors and active citizens.
- The two-day training will be undertaken on an annual basis for 25 participants.



Project #17

Towards Public Procurement Transparency (PPT)

Project Objective: Promote access to information and transparency in the public procurement law 2023.

Implementing Partner: Transparency International Cambodia (TIC)

Funding: EU/SIDA-funded through TIC.

Target areas: Phnom Penh



Results

- The public procurement law was adopted in 2023 and accepted with API’s inputs with some improved articles.

Activity

- Then legal analysis report on draft public procurement law was presented to advocate the government and development partners in the Technical Working Group Meeting in 2023 that was facilitated by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Ministry of Economic and Finance.



Project #18

Louder Voices for Social Protection in I-SAF in Khan Sensok, 2022-2023.

Project Objective:

Implementing Partner: Epic Art, Musical Association for People with Disabilities (MADD), Phnom Penh Center for Independent Living (PPCIL) and Old Age Associations (OPA),

Funding: Voice Grant Facility of funded by the Netherlands government through Oxfam

Target areas: Phnom Penh



Results

- The project mobilized 110% of the target of Community Based Organisation (CBO) members, who are old age and people with disabilities. They provided feedback to improve social protection service delivery. Trained 50 Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs), 50% female, are strongly confident and facilitated Information for Citizen (I4C) dissemination and meetings. Service providers implemented 79% of JAAP in 2023 (3 new Sangkats). They prepared a Joint Accountability Action Plan (JAAPs) with 236 improved actions including 36 social protection actions to improve public delivery services in 10 primary schools, 5 health centers, 6 Sangkat, and 1 Khan.
- The project has supported 259 people to receive People with Disability Cards; 75 received ID poor families of elderly people association members and 30 families identified as highly vulnerable condition families of elderly people association members in Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey registered as families and they received cash support monthly from the government in 2023. As a result of the project, they used their right to demand better services from service providers of the Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey Administration in 2023.
- Assessment of an elderly people sample: 1,383 elderly people of which 847 were females, the interviewed in target areas in 2023.
 - As a result, a total of 35% (475 of 1,383) of respondents declared to have joined the project activities and 66 % of the 475 respondents attended 5 times the project activities. The respondents mainly engaged in mobilizing community meetings, civic education awareness meetings, and digital scorecards. Old age people raised issues of health information and schooling for the children.
 - After the project intervention, 60% of 1,383 elderly people expressed that they had received faster public services in 2023

- 43 % of the 1,383 elderly people reported a better improvement in the behaviour of service providers
- around 10% of the 1,383 elderly people stated that there is some improvement in the government’s response to old age people’s needs, by providing ID Poor cards and High-risk family cards, improving access to public information, and improving security and environmental issues.
- 26% of the 1,383 elderly people stated that they understood their rights and entitlements to access public services at the Sangkat and Khan administration levels.
- 14% of the 1,383 elderly people stated that get more food and kits from the government.
- 24% of the 1,383 elderly people confirmed that when they got ID Poor cards, Risk cards, or Disability cards, no service fee was charged by the government, and noticed a quicker response by service providers when accessing public services.
- In addition, 19 CBO representatives (13 female) confidently continued raising issues as in JAAP such as NSSF, pensions, ID Cards for people with disabilities, social protection services for the poor, ramps, scholarships for poor students, and issues related to social services during they participated with Sangkat and Khan Sensok council meetings, and national workshops totally 15 meetings.
- In total, 120 CBO members and representatives (98 female) raised 130 questions and issues in 12 public forums. As a result, authorities responded and clarified all questions and requests immediately, and some issues related to requested ID Poor cards, PWD cards, Risk cards, and requested support to poor people and people with disability were responded.

Activities:

- **Built Capacities for CBOs and Government Officials:** A total of 656 CBO members (363 female) consisting of people with disabilities, elderly people, and poor families, equivalent to 109.33% compared to the planned 600 members for 2 years, were mobilised and understood the key concepts about their rights to access public services including social protection services through dissemination meetings.
- **CBOs applied their knowledge and advocated:** Totally 550 CBO members (301 female) applied their knowledge and raised 330 issues and requests (94 issues and requests in 2022 and 236 issues and requests in 2023) on social protection to seek intervention from service providers through digital community scorecards. As a result, 79% (74 of 94 issues/actions) of the Join Accountability Action Plan (JAAP) in 2022 were implemented in 2023 by 3 Sangkat Ou Baek K’am, Krang Khnong, Phnom Penh Thmey and Khan Sensok.

Table JAAP responded

Year	JAAP actions	JAAP responded
2022	94 actions	74 actions got responses and were implemented in 2023
2023	236 actions	To be followed up the result in 2024

- A total of 50 participants (25 female) from the supply side and demand side equivalent to 100% compared to the planned 50 participants, for 21 months. As a result, the participants increased their capacity by 63% on concepts of social protection, social accountability in all cycle I-SAF activity of demand and supply side, strategic plan of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), I-SAF, advocacy concepts, facilitation skills, and other soft skills.

Table: pre-test and post-test in 2022-2023

Training	Pre-test	Post-test	Result
Training to demand side (NGOs partners and CAFs) 2022	21%	92%	71%
Training to demand side (NGOs partners and CAFs) 2023	38.5%	97%	58.5%
Training to supply side (Khan, Sangkats, Health centers, Primary schools) 2022	26%	86%	60%
Average	28.5%	91.5%	63%

- **Awareness raising** A total of 1,074 CBOs and citizens (589 female) from the supply side and demand side (elderly people, people with disability, and poor families) directly engaged in the project’s activities and increased their understanding and knowledge about the rights of the elderly people, poor families, and people with disabilities rights to access public services and social protection services, social accountability concept and citizens’ rights, through I4C dissemination campaigns, digital scorecards, public forum, face-to-face meetings, Sangkat and Khan monthly meetings, national workshops, and 13 performances by Epic Art and MAPD.

Table of activities

Act Code	Activities	Males	Females	Total	Events
1.1	Identify and mobilize new members of people with disabilities, old age	293	363	656	20 times
1.2	Building Capacity for demand-side/CAF's and supply-side	25	25	50	6 times
1.3	Raise Awareness and Empowerment/ I4C dissemination	304	423	727	12 times
2.1.1	Community digital scorecard	249	301	550	32 times
2.1.2	Self-assessment	240	300	540	32 times
2.2	Interface meeting (Single+ Multi)	186	150	336	12 times
2.3.4	Epic Arts and MAPD performances	308	599	907	13 performances
1.4	Produce video documents				2
1.4	Writing Case studies				14
2.3.2	Public forum	358	418	776	12 times

- Consultations on a technical guideline on mainstreaming social protection in I-SAF were carried out, and received inputs, and updates from relevant stakeholders and government.
- Epic Arts performed all its activities, and service providers were made aware of the needs of people with disabilities and provided them with services priority. MAPD completed 2 advocacy dancing and songs. API updated and designed Technical Guidelines for Social Protection in Social Accountability Framework.
- A total of 14 out of 26 Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs) built the capacity to facilitate Information for Citizen (I4C) dissemination and attend meetings with confidence. Service providers of six Sangkat and Khan provided services to citizens in a friendly, timely, accountable, and transparent manner since late 2022, in six Sangkat and Khan administrations. Kraing Thnong administration built a ramp for people with disabilities to access public services in 2023
- Through the project activities on the public forum and awareness in six target Sangkats, 259 people with disabilities, members of the PPCIL and MAMD organisations advocated and received disability ID cards from the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2023.
- The Technical Guidelines on Social Protection in Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) were drafted and consulted with government and CSO stakeholders. API will continue to advocate with the government to endorse this technical guideline to be used by various entities.

Lesson Learned



- The project team received many questions from the participants and consulted, discussed, and documented in the reflection meetings with authorities, CBOs, and NGO partners such as elderly associations, Epic Art, MAPD, and PPCIL. Some examples:
 - ① *How can women (and men) from vulnerable groups make the best use of a local engagement mechanism like I-SAF for Social Protection to achieve positive outcomes for their lives and livelihoods, especially for those who have been particularly negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic? What barriers do they need to overcome, in order to make their voices heard loudly in a local engagement mechanism like I-SAF for Social Protection?*

The Participatory reflection meeting responded with the following points for action:

- Conduct I4C awareness campaigns and digital scorecard additional activities by going

door to door and ensuring that those who suffer from serious illnesses or serious disability, too, can participate, access information, and raise their voice about their issues.

- Mobilize and provide opportunities for women and men beneficiaries to participate in relevant activities to raise issues and needs into social accountability framework.
 - Representatives of women and men become members of the Joint Action Accountability Plan Committee.
 - Representatives of women and men attend meetings with the Joint Action Accountability Plan Committee and monthly meetings with Sangkat/Khan.
- ② *How can we support women from different vulnerable groups in making their voices heard, without excluding men from these groups?*
- I4C awareness and public forum mechanisms are effective spaces for women to raise their voices.
 - Strengthen the capacity and provide them with information to have the confidence to raise issues/needs in various activities from the local to the national level.
 - Coach them to be able to use social media to spread issues/needs on social media.
- ③ *How can we achieve good openness and responsiveness by service providers and local councils to provide feedback and louder voices to women and men from vulnerable target groups?*
- Collaborate with NCDD to provide social protection and I-SAF training to service providers.
 - Organize quarterly reflection meetings with service providers and recipients.
 - Conduct JAAP monitoring meetings and follow up at Sangkat and Khan monthly meetings.
 - Organize a public forum.
 - Disseminate information about the Ombudsman office mechanisms, role, and responsibilities.
- ④ *Has social protection-related service delivery to our target groups really improved through the louder voices of vulnerable women and men and constructive dialogue in the tested updated I-SAF mechanism? a) If yes, what can be done even better than in our original concept and included in an improved updated I-SAF Social Protection guidance document at the end of the project?*
- b) If not, why? What are the likely reasons? What are the lessons learned?*
- Yes, social protection-related service delivery to our target groups really improved for vulnerable women and men in target areas.
 - I-SAF Social Protection guidance should improve on the cooperation with NCDD, to establish sub-national to national-level social protection committees. Moreover, encourage the municipality, Khan, and Sangkat to allocate a budget to implement I-SAF as well.
 - The technical guidelines on social protection in I-SAF should be consulted with relevant government ministries, CSOs, and development partners rolling implementation of this project based on good practice in other target areas.

- ⑤ *How can we effectively use digital tools and online resources in our work with particularly vulnerable target groups?*
 - Ensure independent and confidential feedback to proposed action in the digital scorecard and JAAP.
 - Make educational videos to show experiences and case studies.
 - Create educational videos to compete for prizes.
 - Educational messages from well-known groups or individuals with the capability to influence the public.
 - Establish support groups.
- ⑥ *What way of social accountability implementation is best to improve Social Protection service delivery for vulnerable citizens at a wider scale? a) Mainstreaming social protection service feedback into standard I-SAF; or, b) deepening a sector-specific social protection I-SAF that can be expanded to Khan-level when new services are introduced and that focuses on women and men from vulnerable groups only?*
 - Select b) deepening a sector-specific social protection I-SAF that can be expanded to Khan-level when new services are introduced and that focuses on women and men from vulnerable groups only.

Case study 1 : See the Abilities, Not the Disabilities



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Sitting as a speaker explaining the challenges and needs of people with disabilities in front of people in the Citizens’ forum is **Navy**. She is a 37 years old woman with congenital blindness (severe visual impairment) and currently resides at the **Musical Association for People with Disabilities (MAPD)** in Chamrov Village, Sangkat Kork Roka, Khan Prek Pnov, Phnom Penh. She says that, before becoming a Community Accountability Facilitator,

“I did not know how to make anyone understand the problems and needs of people with disabilities. Essentially, most people think that people with disabilities like me can't do anything, and I also seem to despair because I do not know what to do to be respected and valued by society. [...] I had never attended a training course on social accountability in social protection and I did not know what it meant. I was happy, but also nervous when I volunteered to be a Community Accountability Facilitator because I had no idea of what to do. In particular, I was unsure about what to do for social accountability and social protection, and whom I would work with.”

“Since I volunteered to become Community Accountability Facilitator with the Advocacy and Policy Institute through the Voice project”, continued Navy, “I have been invited to attend many training and workshops with the organization and government officials, as well as some other meetings. API has built my capacity to understand the implementation of social accountability in social protection, the right of citizens to access public services, and the performance of service providers for citizens and other stakeholders in the process of the implementation of social



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accountability for social protection, especially for the disabled and the elderly. Joining the Advocacy and Policy Institute has made me more aware. I can now disseminate what I have learned to the members of the association, especially the 60 people with disabilities, to ensure they know their rights to access public services at the sub-national level. Today, I live with more hope because

I have found self-respect and a purpose within the community. I participate in social activities to promote the dignity of the public citizens, including people with disabilities to access public services”.

Mr. Chap To, president of the Musical Association of People with Disabilities, added that “Navy now understands more about social accountability and social protection, and has become more confident when speaking in public or disseminating information to members of the association”.

“I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the fact that, although I am a blind person, I can contribute to social work and promote the citizens’ rights and awareness of the use of public services, especially the poor and vulnerable”, stated **Navy**. “I want to continue to encourage them to inform themselves and dare to voice their needs to seek intervention from the government through local service providers. I commit to keep cooperating and volunteering as a Community Accountability Facilitator to promote livelihood, citizens’ rights, transparency, and sustainability while preserving the dignity of citizens including the poor, the elderly people, and other vulnerable groups, encouraging them to engage in the activities of the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework for Social Protection Project by API”.

Case study 2 : Sokchea Rum, is a 20-year-old second-year public administration student at the Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE). She lives in **Sensok II village**, Sangkat Khmuonh, Khan Sensok, and is one of the youth group members who have volunteered in Khan Sensok. Before she joined the training, she was a shy girl and did not know how to effectively communicate with others, especially strangers. As a result, she did not have the confidence to speak out in public. Moreover, she did not understand or have any knowledge about I-SAF in Social Protection.



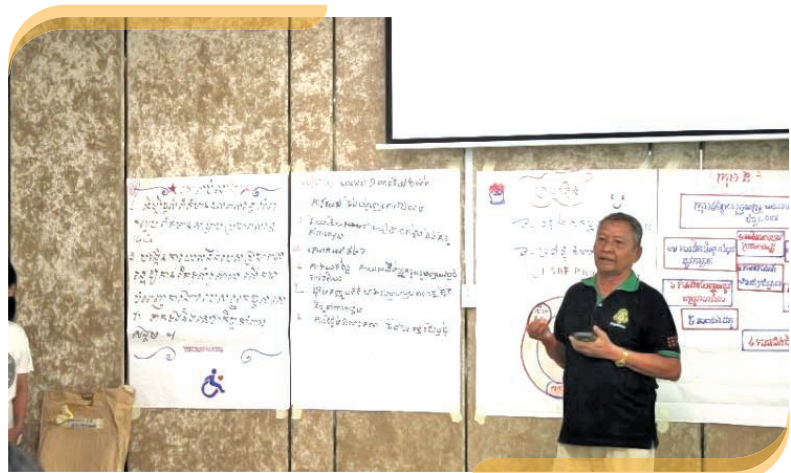
One day she saw an announcement for the recruitment of community accountability facilitators to support the project implementation in Khan Sensok. “I thought that it meets my goal to serve the vulnerable groups in my community”, she said. When I became a community accountability facilitator (CAF), I was first introduced to the project. Essentially, I and other CAFs

were trained and coached on the implementation of social accountability frameworks and social protection both in training rooms and through field work. I got the chance to learn from my team and project staff about conducting I4C dissemination to citizens and local authorities as service providers.

Through training, coaching, field practices, and many reflections, **Sokchea Rom**, not only learned much about the project activities but also found inner growth. *“I am a strong Community Accountability Facilitator, and I can support my team to run project activities with high confidence”*. **Sokchea** said that she is now able to facilitate I4C package dissemination, digital community scorecards, and self-assessments, and support the project staff to facilitate interface meetings in a confident way. She understands, explains, and provides clear messages to participants about key concepts of I-SAF and I4C posters. In addition to this, she takes time to support other CAFs of Voice Project to facilitate events in the I-SAF cycle. Sophorn Pho, a project officer of API, has this to say about her: “She is active and brave when communicating with citizens as well as local authorities. Since becoming a CAF, She has grown and increased her capacities so much in order to confidently coordinate and facilitate events.

Sokchea Rum wishes to be an advocate and ambassador to bring information and justice to vulnerable groups. It is her wish to see all members of her poor community have access to qualitative, transparent, and accountable public services.

Case study 3 : ID Poor is my Life



Mr. Chenda Kong is 63 years old and lives in **Phnom Penh Thmey village**, Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey, Phnom Penh City. His wife is **Bopha Kim**, and they have four children, three girls and one boy. He is a police officer; his wife has a physical condition and gets treatment at Calmette Hospital. When we met him, the husband had a sad face, because he was not able to pay for his wife’s treatment. The only way he could continue to pay was to sell his house and/or wait for death. Therefore, he decided to request an ID Poor from

Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey. One day, Old Age Association leader, **Mr. Logn Chhiv**. Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey and Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) started implementing the project Louder Voices for Social Protection through I-SAF in Khan Sensok, supported by Voice. **Mr, Logn Chhiv** used his knowledge and skills to mobilize support to advocate for and explain to the authorities all the issues, and difficulties that members of his association face, by participating in monthly meetings and meeting directly with Sangkat and Khan officials. Moreover, **Mr. Logn Chhiv** also cooperated with relevant stakeholders and the Help Age organization to seek more support from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to advocate and request ID Poor for Mr. Chenda Kong’s family. As a result, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation instructed the service providers/authorities in Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey to provide ID Poor for **Mr. Chenda Kong’s** family.

“ Since my family received the ID Poor card, we have benefited so much. Now I am able to bring my wife to get treatment at Calmette Hospital for free”, said Mr. Chenda Kong. “All doctors have been taking good care and treating my wife’s illness well. They behave differently from what I had heard before. ID poor has helped my family a lot and now I will not need to sell our only house to get the money for my wife’s treatment anymore, and I can use it to treat other family members who still are under my care. ”

Mr. Kong Chenda continued: “I felt so excited and happy. I am so thankful and grateful to the Old Age Association (OAA), MOSVYs, the government, and relevant stakeholders who helped to facilitate getting an ID Poor card for my family. ID Poor is not only covering the treatment for my wife’s illness for free but also helps my family’s overall living conditions to be much better than before. I will keep participating in all activities of the project, Old Age Association, and local authorities to get more updated news from Sangkat, the health center, and the primary school. Especially, knowing about my rights and using them to access all public services as much as possible.”



Project #19

Women and Youth Leadership Program

Project Objective: Increase civic participation related to national budget transparency and government accountability.

Implementing Partners: The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)

Funding: USAID funded through Transparency Cambodia with USD 60,500

Target areas: Phnom Penh, Battambang and Kampot provinces



Results

- Enhanced coordinated advocacy on public budget formulation and expenditure monitoring. Participated in the regular meetings of the Budget Working Group, Access to Information Working Groups, and CSO coalition, to monitor the national budget process.
- Engaged with the Access to Information Working Group and relevant stakeholders to push for the adoption of the draft law on access to information. API representative of A2IWG submitted a letter to the Ministry of Information proposing a meeting to discuss the progress of the draft Access to Information law.
- Two Youth debates on Fundamental Freedom and the importance of the Law on Access to Information met the target of 37 youth (25 female).

Activities

- API conducted monthly meetings of the Access to Information Working Group (A2I) and Budget Working Group, to promote information disclosure and advocate for the enactment of access to information law with the view of broadening democratic space and increasing public transparency and accountability in Cambodia, advocating to the government, mobilizing stakeholders, holding seminars and conferences, and raising awareness on access to information issues.
- Submitted the draft Access to Information law with CSOs’ inputs to the top 5 political parties participating in the 2023 national election, to request support on Access to information in line with international standards.
- Drafted Term of Reference (TOR) of Access to Information WG (A2IWG): Originally the A2I

WG was focused on pushing for the adoption of the A2I Law, however, the A2I WG's TOR needed to be updated to promote sectoral public information disclosure, based on the existing laws/policies that benefit citizens and ensure transparency. A2I WG intended to include an International Organization and Community-Based Organization, based on further discussion and input from the membership.

- Two statements were produced and released to the media and public about the national workshop's results and requesting the top 5 political parties' commitment to support the passing of the A2I law.
- Promoted the works of the 5 Working Groups (Access to Information, Budget, Social Protection, Digital rights, Anti-corruption), especially for the activity's implementation and campaigns.
- Briefed the Development Partner (DPs) and requested them to support and attend the workshop related to A2I Law and engage with the government on the adoption of an A2I law that meets international standards and best practices.
- A2I WG members and CBOs submitted their inputs to Ministry of Information representatives.
- The Ministry of Information representatives gave an update on the A2I draft Law status and committed to discuss the provide inputs at the ministry level.
- Prepared annual International Day on Right to Information (September 28, 2023).
- Prepared and submitted a UPR report on the Access to Information issue in Cambodia to the United Nations and briefed development partners (EU, FHI360, GIZ, UK Embassy, UNOCHR, EWMI, USAID), Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), and Access to Information working group(A2I WG) members.
- A2I WG members received a summary of API Strategy 2024–2028 from API consultant Ruud and provided some recommendations for API strategic plan.
- US Professional Fellow Program Visit: Understand the Situation and the Working Group's Work.
- National Forum on Fundamental Freedom and Access to Information with 215 participants (106 female) and our youth target of 71 (45 female). During the event, there were presentations on the CSO inputs to the draft A2I law and the importance of A2I law in all sectors, especially for the economic sector, freedom of expression, and technology. A strong commitment was made by H.E Kim Kunavath, Secretary of State Ministry of Information, and H.E Preap Kol, Minister Attached to Prime Minister, to promote the adoption of the Access to Information law during the celebration of International Day for Universal Access to Information on September 28, 2023.
- API organized and led two youth debates on Fundamental Freedom and the importance of the Law on Access to Information in Cambodia with 76 youth (49 female). Each youth group did a fantastic job and spent time searching for more evidence to support what they were arguing and to make their ideas more powerful. The youth debate events ended with fruitful results, and each group felt very satisfied with their accomplishments. They showed up with their greatest smile and feelings, and they would want API to keep the events going for other youth. Particularly, youth debate greatly increases understanding of the positive effects of

the right to information. The events were one of the greatest keys to empowering women and young people, especially young women in Cambodia, to effectively contribute to dialogue to improve public service delivery.

Lessons Learned

- A great synergized monthly 3 CSOs Working Group meeting (A2IWG, Budget, Anti-Corruption) on the same day, 22nd of each month included one-hour Debriefing meetings with the Development Partner.
- The team plans to ask for contributions/share costs with other facilitators in monthly meetings.

Challenges

- The budget was limited, we restricted youth participation in training and debating events and the schedule management between the project team, youth, and the ministry officials' availability for all sides was challenging to coordinate.



Project #20

Citizens Voices and Actions for Sustainable Development in Cambodia.

Objective: To fulfill rights and enhance voices and actions of citizens for sustainable development in Cambodia.

Funding: USD 104,747 funded by DCA.

Target areas: Pursat and Banteay Meanchey province



Results

- Strengthened engagement of citizens, especially women, youth, and people with disability and/or ID Poor, in public planning, budgeting, and holding authorities accountable for service delivery and budget implementation.
- The sub-national government responded to CBOs’ main issues by solving 83% of cases raised by 30 women and youth leaders from 10 CBOs. As a result, 10 CBOs’ advocacy actions were implemented to address their communities’ concerns and needs in four districts. 10 of 10 CBOs (100%) confirmed that their action plans had been implemented and monitored, and reported their results.
- Improved access to and disclosure of public information, especially on public budgets and procurement expenditures. Citizens access public information, especially on public services, budgets, and public procurement expenditures. 70% of targeted people became aware of their rights to public information, especially on public services, budgets, and public procurement expenditures. Result of survey amongst 502 CBO leaders/committee/members: 76% (of which 58% female) know their rights to access budget information and commune/district and that the service providers have an obligation to disclose their procurement activities to the public.
- The government received and acknowledged citizens’ feedback to improve public services and information disclosure. 17,292 people were reached through the offline public awareness campaign and 330,456 reacted to online messages.

Activities

- Delivered capacity development program (training and coaching), with CBO action plans in the areas of advocacy, sub-national governance, soft skills, and organizational development.

33 (10 female) CBO leaders were trained and coached on understanding advocacy tactics, local fundraising, social media, communication, and facilitation skills, in Banteay Meanchey and Pursat provinces.

- Facilitated CBO action plans in the areas of advocacy, citizen engagement in sub-national governance, related soft skills, organizational development, and local fundraising, the national and sub-national functions, planning, budget and its expenditures and public services, provincial and district One Window services, new decentralized district functions, especially DO functions, to improve the government process and performance and CBOs' institutional capacity development and governance.
- Conducted outreach activities to educate the communities on One Window services and citizens and district budget 2023 involving 1,521 (1,129 female) CBO members and citizens.
- Promoted citizen access to info and use of OWSO and OWSU public services through Pidor Chatbot and phone calls, as well as online public dashboard and District Ombudsperson functions, reaching a total of 308,674 people (112,681 female) through boosting on Facebook Pages and live on Access to Information.
- Annual district forum with 160 citizens (60 female), on budget of commune and district administrations and councils in 3 districts. (Banteay Meanchey 2 districts, Pursat 1 district/Krong. Community people gained a better understanding of the 2023 district budget information. Most importantly, communities got spaces to engage in District Investment Plan public consultations. They raised questions related to revenues and expenditures of commune/district budgets and budgets on social protection; all questions (100%) were answered by local authorities and solutions were promised, addressing community needs, including insufficient budgets for activities of the community forest patrolling, and financial support for savings groups.

Lessons Learned

- The CBOs' advocacy was more successful when they produced an advocacy plan.

Challenges

- District and commune budgets are not allocated for natural resources and environment (community forestry).
- CBOs still need support and technical assistance for Organisational Development and functioning.

Way forward

- National and provincial forums and workshops on budget expenditures and procurement.
- Support functioning/meeting to CSOs working groups on A2I, National Budget, Digital rights, D&D, PRM, social protection, and environmental code.
- Support CSOs Working Groups advocacy Campaigns (policy dialogue, workshop, and actions) on A2I law, DR-related law, D&D, PFM reform-related laws, social protection law, and environmental code.

- Video competition.
- Conduct a series of capacity-building exercises (a 3-day training followed by 2 one-day refresher training and ongoing coaching).
- Support small scale to CBOs (youth, Women, IPs, People with Disabilities, old age people) to implement advocacy plans, social dialogues, networking, and participation in annual commune and district planning/district investment workshop, public procurement processes, and project implement monitoring.
- Disseminate citizens' budget information of sub-national budget and public procurement (Upgrades tool, analyses, develops information chart).
- Upgrades Citizens Budget Analysis Tool.
- Door-to-door dissemination.
- Support API social media.
- Capacity strengthening for the authorities and action on A2I Law concept/enforcement in at least one critical area (public procurement, budgeting).
- Accountability working group meetings with District Ombudsperson on community issues (youth, women, IPs, old age people).

Case Study : Youth Unity for Community Development (YUCD)



Youths Unity for Community Development (YUCD) is a newly created community in Serei Sophoan municipal, Banteay Meanchey Province, with a vision to have more youth participation in community development. The formation of the group started in May 2023 by the initiative of young people who had never participated in any Council Sangkat (CS) activities in the past, and who attended a training by API about **Pidor Chatbot**. These youth recruited more youths to participate in the training and let them learn about public services available in the OWSO and OWSU and educate the communities. The Pidor Facebook Chatbot is seen as very successful in the community. It helps the YUCD understand what the services available in the OWSO and OWSU are, and their actual fees. The YUCD keeps educating local citizens in their area to use Pidor Smart Villager Facebook Chatbot about OWSO and OWSU services. Most people had no

idea about those services before, but Pidor Smart Villager Facebook Chatbot could help them a lot. They could also learn about supported documents to bring along with them, for the type of services they need to request. It is helpful and easy. Moreover, some other people used to pay more than the actual service fees before they knew about Pidor Smart Villager. One YUCD youth stated: “Pidor Smart Villager is so convenient for people in my community because they can access all types of public services, plus service fees and duration for the completion of the services.” In addition to the Pidor Smart Villager, API initiated a public forum in the community, which was deemed very fruitful. API conducted a public forum with participation from the citizens and Krong’s authorities. They made the citizens aware of the services and fees listed in

the OWSO and OWSU. They could ask the local authorities to acknowledge some under-table fees that used to be paid by the citizens to get a service. The YUCD's youth specified "We had a chance to ask questions in the public forum. I asked Krong's authorities about service fees for correcting information on the birth certificate. I got a reply that it was for free. We were so surprised to hear that. I frankly told them that some people used to spend more than hundreds of Riels to get a birth certificate. Yes, we gathered more information from our citizens and represented them to ask questions in the public forum. We dare to ask the kind of questions that our citizens do not dare to."





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ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

A leading Cambodian NGO active in advocacy, policy influencing, capacity building, good governance and dialogue facilitation between citizens and state actors

The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) is a Cambodian non-governmental organisation active in advocacy, policy influencing, good governance and civic engagement. Capacity building and dialogue facilitation are at the heart of our efforts towards democratic and sustainable development.

We have received widespread acclaim from both local and international organisations for our reliability, relevance and professionalism. Over a time span of almost two decades, API has helped institutionalise advocacy skills and has been striving to make local democratic and accountable governance a reality. To these ends, we have been conducting more than 300 training courses for over 10,000 participants affiliated with civil society and community-based organisations, local councils, media outlets, trade unions, Government institutions and the Cambodian Parliament.

API is unique in Cambodia's civil society in serving as a connector and facilitator for citizens' empowerment in their interaction with government at all levels. API has acquired first-hand experience on policy issues like access to information (A2I) through its grassroots work. Based on this vast experience, we are in the best position to make the voices of ordinary citizens count in policy-making at the national level. Here we have been trying to support government actors serve citizens according to the law and contribute to an enabling environment for citizens and civil society to express their concerns. Finally, we have been playing an important role in helping citizens understand their rights, access to information and make use of the opportunities for engagement offered by various laws and government policies.

Our programmes are guided by a human rights based approach. API serves all Cambodians and values the diversity of gender, sexual orientation and identity, (dis)ability, ethnicity, faith and political opinions. At the same time, we are especially committed to support the most disadvantaged in their efforts to make their voices heard.

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