



Project#11: Supporting Meaningful Civic Engagement by Leveraging Digital Technologies, 2020-2022

Overall Objective:

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

Specific Objective:

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

Funding:

EUR 396,288 of a total 2.5millions EUR funded by EU to CARE, API and InSTEDD.

Implementing Partners:

CARE, InSTEDD and 14 local partner organisations

Target Areas:

The provinces of Koh Kong, Kratie, Stung Treng, Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri





Activities and Results:

- 11.1 Implementing the Social Accountability Framework (I-SAF) through this tech project was acknowledged by the Secretariat of the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD-S).
- 11.2 Project staff was confident about the successful implementation of the project after the orientation session. The project team reviewed and updated I-SAF training materials, set up an online training platform and provided online training to project staff of API, CARE Cambodia and InSTEDD. The project team attended both the online and in-person monthly coordination technical meetings with the I-SAF demand side and improved the technical ISAF skills needed for the staff of our 33 local partners to implement field work.
- 11.3 The online learning platform has been well developed to support the Community Accountability Facilitators (CAF) in their field work efforts. The contents of this platform include all the steps of the I-SAF implementation, in particular specific guidelines for each action.
- 11.4 CAFs with experience in implementing I-SAF in Phase I improved their capacity and understanding of I-SAF implementation in Phase II. 117 experienced CAFs including 77 females (among 488 CAFs in 5 provinces) increased their knowledge of I-SAF Phase II implementation through four refresher training courses in all target provinces.
- 11.5 A total of 68 (39 female) new CAFs in 5 districts of Ratanakiri learned about I-SAF implementation for the first time. The results of the training showed that there was a big difference between the pre-test, in which 76% of the participants got very low scores, and the post-test, in which only six of them required more time to build their capacity, while the others got moderate and high scores.
- 11.6 In addition, 297 participants (68 females) representing municipalities, districts, communes, sangkats, health centres and primary schools in 4 target provinces (Kratie, Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, and Mondulakiri) on the second phase of I-SAF improved their capacity with the help of NCDD-S, API, and the provincial administrations. Relationships among local NGO partners, I-SAF focal persons at all levels of provincial, city / district, commune / sangkat have improved, and we strongly anticipate that the implementation of this project will lead to success.
The national workshop “Budget for Effective, Inclusive and Equitable Social Accountability Development”, held in October 2020 and mentioned above, brought good results for this project too.



Lessons Learned:

- 11.7 At least 85% percent of CAFs have smartphones and are able to access the internet, so we can send them our partner organisations' videos on how to install and set up Gmail and Google classroom accounts, which helps a lot during trainings. The project ICT specialist provided support to those who have problems related to their Google and Google classroom accounts. To provide further support and communication, the project team has created Telegram groups for each target group. Trainers brought tablets to support some participants who have no smartphones or their own can't access the internet. The Internet connection available in the training room is made possible by three wireless mobile routers.
- 11.8 Using common language and avoiding technical terminology during training enable indigenous CAFs to gain I-SAF knowledge. All terminology and acronyms have to be permanently present on the flipchart for the whole training days.
- 11.9 Both staff and CAFs have transformed the barriers of the Covid19 epidemic into technological performance enhancements. These proved to be very useful to keep people in contact, with less budget spent, and travelling time saved.

Challenges:

- 11.10 The increasing number of target communes and CAFs of each district lead to an increase in the number of training courses, as well as in the budgets and personnel resources needed. We will approach potential NGO partner representatives to join hands with API to provide the training. CARE Cambodia and API decided to reallocate budget from training courses offered to the supply side to the training of the newly selected CAFs.
- 11.11 During the reporting period, Covid-19 was a crucial issue, some actions were delayed many times, and local authorities did not allow any public meetings. Project activities were undertaken by keeping the social distance, and participants are required to wear masks wearing and use alcohol for disinfecting surfaces and hands. As meetings with over 50 participants, such as CAF training courses, are not allowed even at the private locations, I4Cs videos were published and CAFs were recruited using API's Facebook page and other online communication tools, replacing face to face public meetings.

The Way Forward:

- 11.12 Accelerate training courses to new CAF and supply side in new target districts and communes.