

# A-SASSY

Building One ASEAN Solidarity and Sustainability  
of the Partnership between Youth, CSO  
and Member States



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# I. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM BEFORE PROJECT STARTED

Cambodia is among the 50 countries most vulnerable to climate change (UNICEF, 2021) due to low adaptive capacity, poverty, and geographic location. Rising temperatures, droughts, and shifting rainfall patterns, exacerbated by extensive hydropower damming in the Mekong Basin, threaten food security and human health. Reduced freshwater availability has impacted agriculture and fisheries. Nearly half of Cambodia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions stem from deforestation and forest degradation, with agriculture as the second-largest emitter (USAID).

Most Cambodians are rural farmers, highly vulnerable to climate hazards such as floods, droughts, and tropical cyclones. Climate change threatens livelihoods, with 2.2 million children exposed to extreme heatwaves and multiple environmental shocks (UNICEF, 2023). Urgent investment in climate-smart policies and social services is needed. Children express concerns about pollution, deforestation, plastic overuse, and the loss of homes, schools, and income sources due to climate disasters (Save the Children Cambodia). Environmental pollution significantly affects children's health, nutrition, and education.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) is committed to climate resilience and low-carbon development, aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050. Cambodia joined the UNFCCC in 1996, ratified the Paris Agreement in 2017, and established the National Strategic Plan on Green Growth (2013–2030). However, young Cambodians (15–24) feel they could contribute more to government efforts (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021). With 46.6% of Cambodia's population under 24 (UN, 2019), equipping youth with climate knowledge and problem-solving skills is crucial for sustainable development.



Environmental education exists in grades 4–12 but remains limited. MoEYS, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and the Climate Change Alliance, developed a one-hour-per-week curriculum. However, it lacks comprehensive coverage of climate change, biodiversity, and extinction. Expanding environmental education is urgent to equip children with 21st-century skills, fostering lasting change and community resilience. Floods, storms, wildfires, and extreme weather are consequences of human impact on nature. Addressing climate change starts with education—ensuring future generations understand and protect the environment.

## II. OUTPUT OF THE PROJECT

1. **OP1.I1** At the end of the project, one million young people in age brackets 15-19, 20-24, and 25-35 in Cambodia have access to the e-learning platforms and receive digital EEP learning.
2. **OP1.I2** At the end of the project, 20,000 young people (at least 50% girls/women) trained in 200 webinars and 30 in-person training courses reported increased knowledge and skills in the use of participatory tools, climate issues, and confidence to effectively participate and collaborate with CSOs and government in promoting the green transition and disaster risk reduction.
3. **OP1.I3** At the end of the project, digital environmental education for young people of different age groups is included in extra and/or main curricula in 100 schools and universities in Cambodia.
4. **OP2.I1** At the end of the project, 100 Y4SDG groups with 1,000 members from 100 schools and universities (at least 50% girls/women) were established and are actively running in the schools and universities of Cambodia.
5. **OP2.I2** At the end of the project, 18 youth-led initiatives and actions contributed actively to reducing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, with 72,000 community members benefiting from the youth-led initiatives.
6. **OP2.I3** At the end of the second period, 1.5 million young people in Cambodia (at least 50% girls/women) reached through online social media campaigns and equipped with knowledge on the impact of the climate-environmental crisis and how to engage as active citizens.
7. **OP3.I1** At the end of the project, the Cambodian Y4SDG network will be established with 100 youth members. They will be encouraged and facilitated to fully participate in the ASEAN Green Generation network (AGGN) activities and campaigns and contribute their time/efforts /knowledge/skills (at least 50% girls/women)



- 8. **OP3.I2** At the end of the project, 2 million youth in age brackets 15-19, 20-24, and 25-35 were reached through social media and other visibility campaigns with content in their own languages; and from them, 100 youth taking the campaign's actions to combat climate change impacts, environmental protection, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Cambodia.
- 9. **OP3.I3** At the end of the project, 25 young policymakers, CSO representatives, and youth environmental champions in Cambodia learned/shared experiences following the exposure visits with ASEAN EU Member States.

## III. OUTCOME HAVESTING STATEMENT

### 3.1 DESCRIPTION

The A-SASSY project has successfully contributed to influencing the behavior and activities of key stakeholders, including government bodies, educators, students, and local organizations, fostering a systemic shift toward integrating climate change and environmental education into Cambodia's formal education system. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has expressed strong interest in the Environmental Education Program (EEP). The MoEYS is collaborating with NGOs and partners to jointly develop the EEP curriculum, roadmap, and a Working Group, ensuring a coordinated approach to integrating environmental education into the national education framework. These

materials have been translated into Khmer to enhance their relevance and accessibility for local implementation.

Educators have actively started incorporating EEP modules into their teaching practices, adopting interactive, context-based methods to address climate and environmental issues. Students - particularly those in Youth-for-SDG groups - have demonstrated leadership and ownership by initiating community-based climate action projects, signaling a grassroots commitment to addressing climate challenges through education and youth engagement.



Key achievements include the establishment of eight (8) Youth-for-SDG groups across eight (8) schools and universities in Cambodia, selected from among 100 schools nationwide, involving 236 active members, including 133 girls and women. These groups have successfully led youth-driven local solutions to climate challenges. Moreover, the project fostered partnerships with key organizations, such as UME campuses in Battambang and Kampong Cham, Mlup Baitong (MB), and Save the Children (SC), which contributed to implementing activities in these eight schools and universities. This collective effort signifies a growing momentum toward embedding environmental awareness and action within Cambodia's education system and communities.

### 3.2 SIGNIFICANCE

The project has laid a robust foundation for long-term sustainability and systemic change. Between January and December 2024, the project reached 4,507 students through 37 webinars and in-person training sessions, with 2,665 participants being girls and women,

demonstrating the project's strong commitment to inclusivity and gender equality.

The translation of three (3) EEP modules covering 15 topics into Khmer ensured that climate education materials were accessible to a wide audience, including students and educators in remote areas. Formal approval letters from provincial authorities in Battambang, Kampong Cham and Tboung Khmum facilitated smooth implementation at the local level, institutionalizing environmental education as a critical component of Cambodia's national education system.

These outcomes underscore the transformative power of education in driving behavioral change and fostering climate action. The establishment of eight (8) youth-led SDG groups across schools and universities showcases the role of young people as key agents of change, ensuring their active involvement in shaping a sustainable future. By empowering youth and promoting systemic integration of environmental education, the project is creating a ripple effect of sustainable practices that extend beyond schools into communities and society at large.



### 3.3 CONTRIBUTION

The success of the A-SASSY project is largely attributable to its strategic activities and partnerships. The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) played a pivotal role in driving the project forward by coordinating critical meetings with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) and other stakeholders, ensuring policy alignment and approval of key project activities. API facilitated the translation and adaptation of the Environmental Education Program (EEP) modules into Khmer, making them culturally relevant and accessible to educators and students. The organization also supported capacity-building initiatives by organizing grassroots workshops and orientation sessions for teachers, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to effectively implement the EEP.

API's persistent efforts, including re-submitting the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) multiple times and addressing bureaucratic challenges, were instrumental in securing formal approvals from MoEYS and provincial authorities. Additionally, API provided technical support for the formation of Youth-for-SDG groups, equipping 236 young members, including 133 girls and women, with leadership and project management skills to tackle climate challenges in their communities. The team also addressed logistical hurdles in Phnom Penh by introducing alternative approaches such as grassroots workshops and enhanced technical support, ensuring widespread participation and inclusivity.

Through these contributions, API successfully bridged the gap between policy, practice, and grassroots implementation, enabling systemic change and building a robust foundation for long-term climate education and youth engagement in Cambodia.



## IV. RESULTED BY ACTIVITY

**01. A2.** Operate e-learning platforms of EEP with multilinguistic, interactive, participatory, inclusive, and gender-sensitive Khmer language in schools and university partners.

The project team has successfully achieved several milestones in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) to advance environmental education and digital learning initiatives in Cambodia. Over the reporting period, four key meetings were held with MoEYS, leading to substantial progress in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In a significant step toward enhancing accessibility, the team translated three modules, comprising 15 topics, from English to Khmer. This process ensured the integration of Cambodian cultural and contextual relevance, making the learning

materials more relatable and engaging for local students. Additionally, 15 tailored topics have been developed specifically for the e-learning platform, creating a solid foundation for university and school partnerships. These partnerships are poised to enable student learning through interactive and participatory methods.



API has actively participated in pivotal meetings with MoEYS, reinforcing its commitment to the project's goals. During these engagements, the Minister of Education expressed strong interest in the Environmental Education Program (EEP), recognizing its importance in the national education system. MoEYS has demonstrated its commitment by collaborating with NGOs and partners to co-develop the EEP curriculum. This collaboration includes the creation of a roadmap and the establishment of a dedicated Working Group, ensuring a cohesive and structured approach to integrating environmental education into Cambodia's national education framework.

**01.A3.** Establish and strengthen youth EEP partnerships with 100 schools and universities.

During the reporting period, API successfully renewed service contract agreements with three key local partners: Mlup Baitong Organization (MB), the University of Management and Economics-Battambang Campus (UME-BTB), and the University of Management and Economics-Kampong Cham Campus (UME-KPC). These agreements focus on delivering 13 milestones per partner, ensuring structured and goal-oriented project implementation.

Both UME-BTB and UME-KPC campuses have actively engaged local authorities by submitting formal letters to the provincial governors of Battambang, Kampong Cham, and Tboung Khmum provinces, requesting approval for project activities. The governors have granted approval, enabling the implementation of activities in 35 schools and universities

in Kampong Cham and Tboung Khmum and 33 schools and universities in Battambang. This approval marks a significant step forward in expanding the project's outreach to educational institutions across these provinces.



In Phnom Penh, MB and API collaboratively issued letters to 28 universities to propose orientation meetings and present the school-university partnership model. Positive responses were received from several institutions, including five PSE schools, Prekleap National School of Agriculture, National Institute of Social Affairs (NISA), National School of Local Administration (NASLA), and the University of Puthisastra (UP), all of which agreed to collaborate on integrating the Environmental Education Program (EEP) into the A-SASSY project. The National University of Management (NUM) expressed interest but indicated that further internal discussions were required. The feedback from these meetings was overwhelmingly positive, with universities showing potential for collaboration. However, SecTech Institute, while supportive of self-learning initiatives, declined to officially associate its name with the project. The A-SASSY project successfully established formal partnerships with 13 schools and universities, including:

- 📄 Battambang: Four high schools and one university.
- 📄 Kampong Cham : Two universities and one high school.
- 📄 Phnom Penh: Four universities and one high school.

**01. A4. Implement and facilitate 230 webinars and in-person trainings/dialogues.**

During the reporting period, API and its partners made significant strides in advancing environmental education and youth engagement through the A-SASSY project. A total of 4,507 students were reached via 37 webinars and in-person training sessions across 37 high schools and universities in Battambang, Kampong Cham, and Phnom Penh. Of these participants, 2,665 were girls and women, reflecting the project's strong commitment to

conducting environmental awareness raising youth at the school base in project. This achievement resulted from the collaborative efforts of three key partners: University of Management and Economics-Battambang Campus (UME-BTB): Conducted 5 webinars and in-person training sessions, reaching 304 students, including 190 girls and women. University of Management and Economics-Kampong Cham Campus (UME-KPC): Played a significant role, delivering 31 webinars and in-person training sessions to 4,157 students, of whom 2,445 were girls and women. Mlup Baitong Organization (MB): Contributed by hosting 1 webinar and in-person training session, engaging 46 students, with 30 being girls and women.

**01.A5** Implement outreach strategy to mobilize young audience:

N/A

**02.A1** Establish 100 Youth-for-SDGs groups (Y4SDG) with youth members based in the selected schools/universities.

In collaboration with the University of Management and Economics in Battambang and Kampong Cham provinces, the project successfully established eight Youth for Sustainable Development Goals (Y4SDG) groups. These groups are comprised of 236 dedicated youth members, including 138 girls and women, demonstrating a strong commitment to gender inclusivity and empowerment. The formation of these groups represents a significant milestone in the project's efforts to engage young people in meaningful action toward sustainable development. By empowering these youth members, the project aims to foster leadership and drive youth-led initiatives that address pressing environmental challenges.

**02.A2** Facilitate 18 youth-led initiatives by Y4SDG groups in partnership with CSOs and (local) governments on youth solutions towards an ASEAN of solidarity and sustainability.



During the reporting period, the Youth for Sustainable Development Goals (Y4SDG) representatives at the University of Management and Economics (UME), Battambang

Campus, organized a remarkable environmental initiative that underscored their commitment to sustainability and community action. Thirty dedicated Y4SDG members, drawn from a larger pool of 3,700 students (including 1,980 females) at UME, led a “Cleaning Day” campaign in Battambang City. The event centered on addressing plastic waste management and promoting environmental conservation, aligning with broader sustainable development goals.

**03.A1** Establish the Cambodian Y4SDG network to represent Cambodia's youths to participate in the ASEAN Green Generation Network (AGGN) with active and engaged members.

 Not yet implementing.

**03.A2** Conduct one youth-led online and off-line campaign in ASEAN countries.

 Not yet implementing.

**03.A3** Host one exposure visit for the regional Y4SDG in Cambodia and attend 4 exposure visits within ASEAN Member States and with European Union Member States.

 Not yet implementing.

**03.A4** Conduct 2 in-person and live-streamed policy dialogues.

 Not yet implementing.

## V. ACTIVITIES

 **01.A2:** Operate e-learning platforms of EEP with multilinguistic, interactive, participatory, inclusive, and gender-sensitive Khmer language in schools and university partners.

 **01.A4:** Establish and strengthen youth EEP partnerships with 100 schools and universities.

 **01.A4:** Implement and facilitate 230 webinars and in-person training/dialogues.

 **02.A1:** Establish Youth-for-SDGs groups (Y4SDG) with youth members based in the selected schools/universities.

 **01.A2:** Operate e-learning platforms of EEP with multilinguistic, interactive, participatory, inclusive, and gender-sensitive Khmer language in schools and university partners.

 **01.A3:** Establish and strengthen youth EEP partnerships with 100 schools and universities.

- 📄 **01.A4:** Implement and facilitate 230 webinars and in-person training/dialogues.
- 📄 **01.A5:** Implement an outreach strategy to mobilize young audiences in age brackets 15-19, 20-24, 25-35 in the EEPs.



## VI. LESSON LEARNS IN PROJECT:

- 📄 **Effective Collaboration Enhances Impact:** The partnership with local universities and organizations, such as UME Battambang, UME Kampong Cham, and Mlup Baitong Organization, highlighted the importance of building strong local collaborations. These partnerships facilitated the successful implementation of activities and extended the project's reach into target communities.
- 📄 **Proactive Engagement with Stakeholders is Key:** The project underscored the value of maintaining regular communication and engagement with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS). While challenges, such as delays in signing the MoU, persisted, consistent follow-ups kept the dialogue active and improved understanding between parties.
- 📄 **Flexibility in Implementation is Crucial:** Adjusting the schedule of in-person training and webinars to align with student academic calendars significantly improved participation rates. This demonstrated the need for flexibility to accommodate the priorities of diverse stakeholders.
- 📄 **Inclusivity Drives Success:** The strong representation of girls and women in project activities, including Y4SDG groups and training sessions, reinforced the importance of gender-inclusive approaches. These efforts contributed to empowering female participants and fostering a balanced representation in climate action initiatives.



-  **Localized Context Increases Relevance:** Incorporating Cambodian cultural and contextual elements into the Environmental Education Program (EEP) and translated materials ensured the content was relatable and engaging. This approach proved effective in capturing the interest of students and teachers alike.
-  **Institutional Support Accelerates Progress:** While the project achieved significant milestones, the unsigned MoU with MoEYS emphasized the importance of securing institutional support early in the project. This serves as a reminder to prioritize and address administrative processes alongside implementation activities.
-  **Youth Engagement is a Catalyst for Change:** The establishment of Y4SDG groups demonstrated the potential of youth as key drivers of sustainable development. These groups acted as catalysts for promoting environmental education and mobilizing community-level actions.
-  **Standardization Ensures Consistency:** The need for a standardized EEP curriculum across partner organizations highlighted the importance of unified frameworks. This ensures consistent delivery of content and avoids discrepancies in program implementation.
-  **Promoting Visibility Enhances Outreach:** The initial limited awareness of Y4SDG initiatives underscored the importance of promoting activities and achievements through school and university networks. Increased visibility not only attracted more participants but also fostered greater community engagement.
-  **Overcoming Administrative Challenges Requires Persistence:** Administrative hurdles, such as gaining approvals from provincial governors and navigating institutional processes, highlighted the need for persistence and strategic communication to overcome barriers efficiently.

## VII. CHALLENGES FACED IN PROJECT:

### Challenge 1: Coordination With Local Authorities

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**Key Issue:** Direct communication with the Provincial Department of Education, Youth, and Sport (PDoEYS) or provincial governors was identified as a gap for effective field activity implementation in capital/provincial sites. UME Battambang faced difficulties accessing official letters without API's support.
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**Resolution:** API provided direct support by issuing letters to the universities, enabling smoother communication and coordination with provincial authorities. This ensured timely approval and collaboration for project activities.

### Challenge 2: Curriculum Integration For EEP

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**Key Issue:** The Environmental Education Program (EEP) lacked a standardized curriculum across partner organizations in Cambodia, creating inconsistencies in delivery.
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**Resolution:** A-SASSY partners committed to developing and implementing a unified EEP curriculum in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS). This standardized approach ensures alignment with national education standards and consistency in content delivery.

### Challenge 3: MoU With MoEYS Remains Unsigned

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**Key Issue:** Despite multiple engagements, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MoEYS for the project's e-learning platforms and Environmental Education Program (EEP) remained unsigned, delaying full institutional support.
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**Resolution:** API and its partners intensified efforts to engage MoEYS, addressing their concerns and providing additional information to expedite the approval process. Continued meetings and follow-ups have been scheduled to finalize the MoU.

## Challenge 4: Scheduling Conflicts With Student Curriculum

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**Key Issue:** In-person training sessions or webinars risked overlapping with student curriculum schedules, reducing participation and effectiveness.
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**Resolution:** Training sessions and webinars were rescheduled to Thursday or Saturday afternoons, minimizing conflicts with academic schedules and improving student engagement.



## Challenge 5: Limited Visibility Of Y4SDG Initiative

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**Key Issue:** Youth for Sustainable Development Goals (Y4SDG) initiatives required greater promotion to enhance awareness and participation in climate action.
- 
**Resolution:** A-SASSY partners emphasized post-training promotional activities, leveraging school partnerships to increase visibility and encourage active involvement in Y4SDG initiatives.

## Challenge 6: Partner-Specific Field Activity Approaches

-  **Key Issue:** Existing approaches to field activity implementation required updates to align with local needs and project objectives.
-  **Resolution:** New methodologies tailored to capital and provincial contexts were developed, improving the efficiency and impact of field activities led by local A-SASSY partners.



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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 the Cambodian 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 supporting the most disadvantaged in their efforts to make their voices heard.*

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