

ACCESS FOR ALL

2023 COMPLETION REPORT (A4A) Project

2023 COMPLETION REPORT



U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Access for All (A4A): Promoting Access to Information in Cambodia; Increasing the availability of independent, evidence-based information and promoting freedom of expression in Cambodia

Grantee

Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)

Project Title

Access for All

Grant Number

G 1777-2-100-3033-20

Country

Kingdom of Cambodia

Funding Amount

\$564,902.49

Grant Dates

October 1, 2020

Annual (Dates) being discussed

October 01, 2020 – December 31, 2023

Date Progress Report is submitted

December 15, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall goal of Access for All (A4A) Project was to increase the availability of independent, evidence-based information and promoted freedom of expression in Cambodia. The objective of the aimed at helping indigenous women and other vulnerable groups obtained and used information necessary to express their concerns and hold the government to account. The project sought to promote use of the existing legal framework, while laying the groundwork for the anticipated Access to Information Law. While the project's primary focus was on indigenous women, many of the impacts of Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) and local budgeting affected all vulnerable populations, and a needs assessment identified those opportunities and broaden the impact of the project's initiatives to all affected vulnerable communities whenever possible. The Access for All (A4A) Project was designed as Collaborative Learning Adaptive (CLA) Model, which the need and voice of indigenous women were used to adopt implementation throughout project's cycle.



KEY RESULT

Over 3-years project reporting period, Access for All (A4A) Project implemented by Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) achieved significant outcome, both quantitative and qualitative results, include:

OBJECTIVE 1: Vulnerable Cambodians Obtain And Use Information Necessary For Their Full Participation In Cambodian Society

Indicator 1.1.1: Number Of Indigenous Women Whose Needs Are Assessed By The Indigenous Group.

Target: 400 indigenous women reached for responses

Progress: 90 of indigenous women whose needs are assessed by the indigenous-led group

Assessing need of targeted beneficiaries, especially indigenous women (A.1.1)

Assessing need of communities: Throughout the project cycle, Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) collaborated with East West Management Institute (EWMI) and indigenous-led group to conduct an in-depth participatory assessment of the needs of indigenous women in the target areas. This activity helped inform the implementation of activities of gathering and analyzing information. This action resulted with 90 indigenous women from 33 CBOs were selected to attend activities of Access for All (A4A) Project from Year 1 to Year 3. Remarkably, the retaining rate is high, which almost all 90 targeted beneficiaries still engaging with project from the start until end.

Capacity to Indigenous women: Totally 100% completed, there are 09 trainings were conducted with accumulate number 365 indigenous women and non-accumulate 90 indigenous women. There are 4 main topics on the access to information (A2I law), budget literacy topic, grassroot advocacy, and advocacy on A2I. the detail topics as below:

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

There are 33 advocacy plans were developed such as community land disputes among the community member, and local powerful person, deforestation in the community and loss of wild animals, peacocks, Illegal fishing in the conservation lake, and sediment increasing of the dam, the official's attitude is unprofessional in providing public services, call for conservation and reparation of Ancient temple and bridge, concerning of Indigenous People culture's losing, domestic violation, lack of well and clean water, lack of water supply, cultivation techniques and marketplace for agriculture product, lack of toilets and dirty environment on the streets due to improper dumping of garbage, lack of kindergarten school building and teachers, and people with disabilities lack of professional skill and capital for startup business. Based on pre and post-test results, surprisingly, there isn't a big gap since most of the participants experienced advocacy work.



- Totally 100% of 90 participants successfully installed these applications with telegram and signal. Totally of 63 of 90 Indigenous women posted articles on their issues or concerns, shared information with their members. Totally of 595 articles were posted by the trained indigenous women on their activities in their communities such as participation in commune and district council meetings, community patrolling, the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, and the meetings with our project team and their participation in other NGOs' activities on health education, environmental protection, sanitation, community challenges, IP cultural & traditions and gender equality trainings. As a result, there were 5958 reactions, 951 comments, and 70 shares.

Indicator 1.2.1: Percentage Of Indigenous Women And Marginalized Groups Who Apply Knowledge Of CIPs, Follow Up On Requests With District Officials And Participate In The Local Planning Processes.

	Year 1	Year2	Year3
Target: % of participants successfully raise issues with their commune/district level officers	At least 25%	At least 60%	At least 65%
Progress:	98%	93%	129%

Indicator: 1.4.1: # Of Trained Citizens' Participants In 12 Meetings Annually

Target: 30 trained people x one meeting per month x 32-months= 960 trained people

Progress: Achieved 99% of all 958 of trained citizens' participants attended in commune monthly meetings.

Indicator: 1.4.2: Indigenous Women Or Organizations Report On Results Of Commune Level Meetings Within 3, 6 And 9 Months Of The Initial Meetings

Target: 12 case studies showing use of lessons learned in project and results

Progress: 18 case studies showing use of lessons learned in project and results

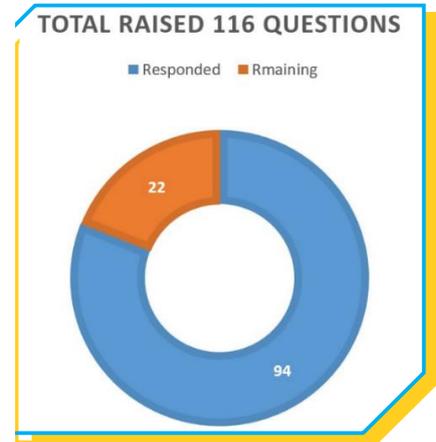
- Totally 99% (958 of 960 accumulate indigenous women) over the target participated in 65 commune/district monthly meetings. There are non-accumulate 213 participants (88 women) from indigenous representatives and their members.

A graph of a number of peopleAs a result, there were 116 requests made, of which 34 requests on demanding information and 82 requests on issues and needs.

- Totally, 34 requested information raised, as the result, there are 8 Responded, 12 partly responded, and 14 Not responded. Annex 2: table of information requested & table issues requested.
- 82 requested needs. There are 25 Not solved, 32 Partly solved on was on road repair, career, protecting IP traditional, 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. [Annex 3: describe on solution of issues](#)

- Totally 100% (18 of 18 public forums) completed. there are 1,503 participants (827 Females), the participants were from indigenous women, CBOs members, commune councils, district councils and governors, and relevance district offices/provincial departments. The topics of forum such as:

As the result, totally 94 of 116 questions were responded and committed to find the further solution. Those 94 questions/raised related to revenue and expenditure of the commune/district budget, and budget on social protection, requested budget for community patrolling, deforestation, and support for some budget in saving groups, forest border, offenses of encroachment on community land and forest, budget, public service, and school building. However, 22 questions were not replied immediately and need to need further discussion. [Annex 4: Table of questions in public.](#)



OBJECTIVE 2: Raise Awareness About The Importance Of An Effective Legal Framework That Provides Access To Information For Cambodians.

Crosscutting Indicator: Number Of Positive Responses Received By The Government To Information Requests (F Indicator DR 2.1-1)

Requests	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

Target: At least 130 responses to requests for information

Progress: At least 97% (126 of 130) responses to requests for information

2.2.1: Number Of Individuals From The Government, Private Sector, CSOs And Communities Participating In Meetings On International Standards For A2I Laws

Target: 30 government representatives, 6 CSO actors and 40 Indigenous women

Progress: 103 government representatives, 10 CSO actors and 211 Indigenous women



Crosscutting Indicator: Number Of Human Rights Organizations Trained And Supported (F Indicator DR 4.2-1) (Output)

Target: 60 organizations participating in CPDD workshops

Progress: 97 organizations participating in CPDD workshops

Access to information National Workshop

From 2021-2023, Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD), East West Management Institute (EWMI) with CSO members of The Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG) conducted 4 National workshops with 706 participants (326 females). boost A2I Video Animations on joint CSO's input on A2I Law on Facebook, Co-host A2I young people vlog competition on the importance A2I in business and economic development, Co-host A2I Fun dance with CSOs and media workers/journalist, young people, and public to join celebrate the Access to Information Day - September 28, 2023. And submitted press releases.

- There were the strong commitments and supports from H.E Kim Kumavath, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Information and H.E Pheap Kol, Minister Attached to Prime Minister on the importance of access to information, importance of CSO's inputs in promoting access to information, based on their official remarks in the Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) Day on September 28, 2023, in "Tedtalks" Phnom Phen Factory. 3.5K viewed live event. <https://fb.watch/nCij8iqH4J/?mibextid=cr9u03>
- Top four political parties (Cambodia people party, Local Democrat Party, FUNCINPEC party, and Khmer United National Party) show the commitment to support and adopt the access to information law.
- Totally of 5 statements to the government, respecify to ministry of information and media to push government adapt the A2I law. As the result, the prime minister committed to adapt the A2I law in 2024 or 2025. Moreover, in November 2023, the representative of the ministry of information responded that the ministry would try to work with other ministries, especially ministry of councils on draft access to information laws to move forward as soon as possible. [Annex 7: National workshop report.](#)

Monthly A2IWG meeting

- A2IWG members' monthly meetings were held 17 times. The participants from 21 A2IWG members including 14 Indigenous women representatives joined face to face and online. Meetings discussed and updated the progress and challenges related to the access information and activities of each member and joined efforts to promote access to information for all, esp. update of the draft law on access to information and reviewed the concept note for a national conference, cycle campaign, and media campaign with A2I WG, and to update about the next plan together.
- 6 letters were accepted by The Ministry of Information and National Assembly to bring CBOs issue to meet national policymakers. Moreover, In the advocacy campaign to submit the letter to the Prime Minister, and advocacy campaign through 11 popular media channels, wrote articles for social media, radio & and online news articles with the VOA, VOD, CamboJa, Phnom Penh Post, Khmer Time, RFA, Thmey Thmey, RFI, Cambodia Daily, Adhoc, and VAYO...etc.
- A2IWG members started a social media campaign featuring 4 self-produced videos, several Facebook contents including live streams, and 3 appearances of members in radio talk shows. All Facebook content posted as part of the campaign reached a combined amount of 21,067 accounts and 724 reactions. All the contents and messages in the social media campaign focus on the importance of A2I, public disclosure, and the celebrations of the Right to Know Day.
- On 16 June 2022, over 12 NGO representatives walked and submitted the letter to the prime minister's cabinet with around 10 international and national journalists. There are 6 letters that were accepted by the Ministry of Information and National Assembly to bring CBOs issues to meet national policymakers. Moreover, In the advocacy campaign to submit the letter to the Prime Minister, and advocacy campaign also through 11 popular media channels taken as articles for social media, radio news, radio program, and Facebook Live, there are Camboja, VOD/CCiM, Phnom Penh Post, Khmer Time, VOA, RFA, Thmey Thmey, RFI, Cambodia Daily, Adhoc and VAYO.

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- A Universal Periodical Review (UPR) report on Access to Information issue in Cambodia which digitally submitted to United Nation Human Rights Officer of the High Commissioner. The report of Universal Periodical Review was briefed to development partner preventatives of (USAID, EU, UK Embassy, UNOCHR, EWMI, FHI-360, GIZ,), Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) and member of Access to Information Working Group(A2IWG). [Annex 6: activities report of A2IWG meetings](#)



CHALLENGE

- Critical information on Economic Land Concession (ELC) and Environment Social Impact Assessment (ELC): The local government had both, limited power, and significant information on Economic Land Concession (ELC) and Environment Social Impact Assessment (ELC). The commune and district authorities then were hesitant to respond and share information to communities.
- Complexity of public budgeting literacy: Public budget literacy was complicated to for indigenous women to understand and not directly impacted family's economic of community, as perceived by indigenous women.

- Local officials are accountable – but are not fully empowered: there was a dichotomy between the on-paper benefits of Cambodia’s decentralization of government with the political realities of a very top-down centralized government structure. Local officials were held accountable within their communities and were incentivized to serve more communities.

LESSON LEARNT

- The provincial multi-stakeholder workshop and district public forum provided more space for the representatives of CBO, Youth, CSO 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 of environmental social impact assessment (ESIA) and economic land concession (ELC) requires strong technical knowledge, 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 top-down approach with both finance in-charge and line technical ministries.

PROJECT ACTIVITY AND RESULT

Objective 1: Vulnerable Cambodians Obtain And Use Information Necessary For Their Full Participation In Cambodian Society.

Activity 1.2: Build Capacity For Indigenous Women And Other Marginalized Groups To Obtain And Document Information To Participate In Their Communities.

Activity 1.2.1 Training on Access to Information (A2I Law)

Output

- Totally 100% completed, there are 09 trainings were conducted with accumulate number 365 indigenous women and non-accumulate 90 indigenous women. There are 4 main topics on the access to information (A2I law), budget literacy topic, grassroot advocacy, and advocacy on A2I. the detail topics as below:

Access to Information (A2I Law) topics as: Citizens' understanding of access to information, the essence and advantages of access to information, and open governance campaigns and legal provisions; and case study analysis.

Budget Literacy topics as: Citizen rights and obligations of get involved in public affairs, commune investment plans, district investment plans, FPIC orientation.

Grassroot advocacy topics as: Definition of advocacy and the reason why to advocate, role of the advocacy leader, original power of advocates leader, key principle of grassroots advocacy, grassroots advocacy step/Cycle, and develop an advocacy action plan.

Advocacy on A2I topics as: A2I international principle and legal frameworks, articles to promote access to information in ELC law, forestry law and land law, rights of expression in social media and risk, and networking and Community ownership.



OUTCOME

<i>Target Province</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post test</i>	<i>Increasing</i>	<i>Indigenous women participated</i>
Access to Information Topic				90
<i>Kratie, Kampong Thom, & Pursat</i>	28.87%	91.51%	62.64%	
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- There are 33 advocacy plans were developed such as community land disputes among the community member, and local powerful person, deforestation in the community and loss of wild animals, peacocks, Illegal fishing in the conservation lake, and sediment increasing of the dam, the official's attitude is unprofessional in providing public services, call for conservation and reparation of Ancient temple and bridge, concerning of Indigenous People culture's losing, domestic violation, lack of well and clean water, lack of water supply, cultivation techniques and marketplace for agriculture product, lack of toilets and dirty environment on the streets due to improper dumping of garbage, lack of kindergarten school building and teachers, and people with disabilities lack of professional skill and capital for startup business. Based on pre and post-test results, surprisingly, there isn't a big gap since most of the participants experienced advocacy work.

Activity 1.2.2 Quarterly coaching

Output:

Totally 100% (36 of 36 coaching meetings) completed. there are 09 trainings were conducted with accumulate number 155 indigenous women and non-accumulate 85 indigenous women. The Access for All Project (A4A) team developed information request forms. Indigenous women received coaching and utilized different types of information and skills such as:

- Practiced filling out the information request forms.
- Submitted actual written letter to the sub-national and national duty-bearer.

- Developing CBO Profiles and Compiling Issue Briefings.
- Advocating content through social media.
- Public speaking skills.

Through these numerous coaching, the community captured photos of those written application forms and posted them through personal and social media networks such as Facebook. The message of trained communities, especially indigenous women spread widely to publics.

OUTCOME

- In three years, targeted beneficiaries developed 34 request letters during the coaching, including 17 requests for information and 17 requests on issues to be addressed. In specific, the request letters contained: Annex 1: request letter table



Activity 1.2.4. Online exchange and learning platforms (simple ones like telegram, signal group), and self-monitoring/reporting information requests and progress in support for activists and journalists.

Output

Totally 100% of 90 participants successfully installed these applications telegram and signal. Totally of 63 of 90 Indigenous women posted articles on their issues or concerns, shared information with their members.

OUTCOME

Totally of 595 articles were posted by the trained indigenous women on their activities in their communities such as participation in commune and district council meetings, community patrolling, the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, and the meetings with our project team and their participation in other NGOs' activities on health education, environmental protection, sanitation, community challenges, IP cultural & traditions and gender equality trainings. As a result, there were 5958 reactions, 951 comments, and 70 shares.

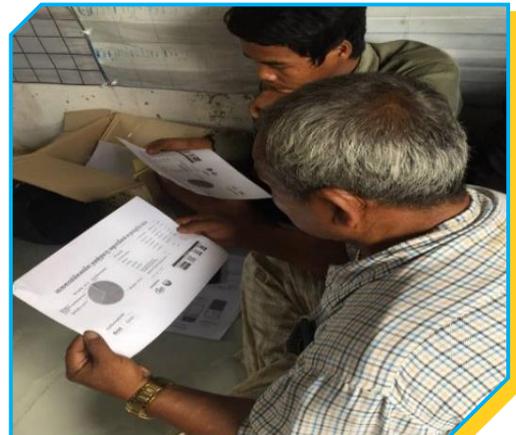


Activity 1.3 Develop Innovative Tools To Maximize The Use Of Information By Vulnerable Groups.

Activity 1.3.1: Promote through outreach activities in dissemination workshops in three districts of three provinces on using EWMI-developed ELC and Budget Tracker tools with gov't & community stakeholders on ELCs and Land Issues and Budget Trackers tool and policy and case-by-case solutions.

Output

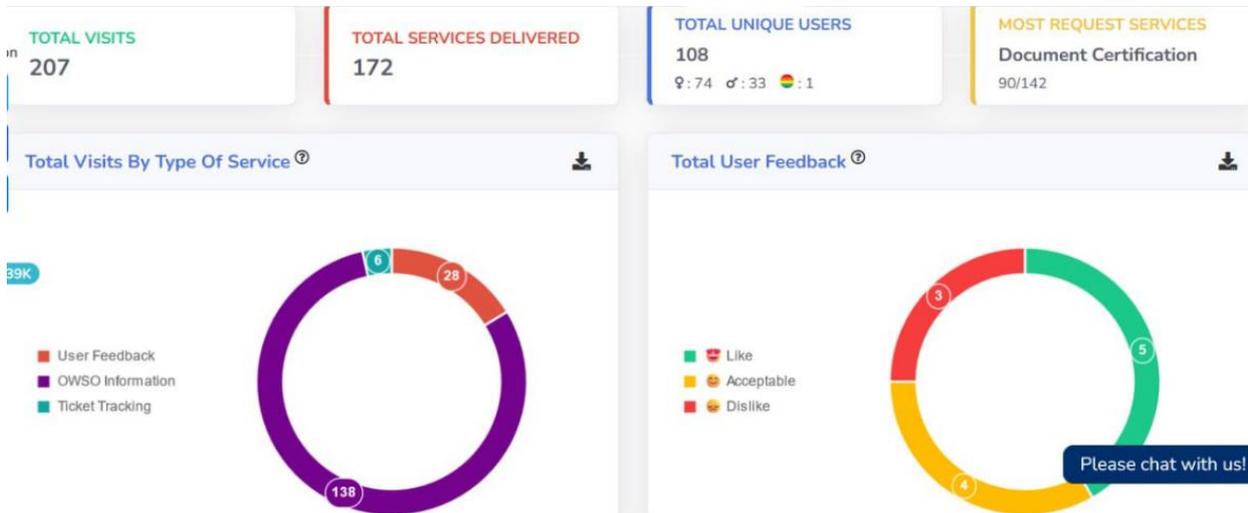
- In the project period, Total of 100% of outreach activities campaign completed on district budget information and on Pidor Chatbot on public service were conducted in the target districts. The dissemination campaigns disseminated on budget information and how to use the Pidor Chatbot App. <https://pidordashboard.org/>.
- There were 118 people (82 female) including 91 CBOs, 24 Govt, and 3 NGOs who participated in the promote through outreach activities workshop, Kratie, Pursat, and K.Thom provinces. The objective is to disseminate commune/Sangkat and district budget and how to use and practical the Citizen Budget analysis app and share relevant legal frameworks on collecting Commune/Sangkat budget.



OUTCOME

- Totally, 1,349 CBOs members (847 Females) understood on commune and district services through Pidor Chatbot App and district budget information at project target area. As a result, 554 of 1349 CBOs members used the Pidor Chatbot App to access the information to public services at commune and district level. Further, the most important part CBOs members knew the Ombudsman office and its role and responsibility. Some CBOs members understood on how to provide feedback about OWSO service to service providers through Pidor Chatbot App. Based on observation, the communities were excited and considered as smart villagers that could access more information through new technology.

- 80% of 118 participants downloaded the citizen budget analysis tool, and they have enough evidence for advocacy activities on the commune/district budget. All stakeholders become more understanding of each other on challenges seeking for commune and district budget and authorities can use district budget tool. They can install and monitor budget information and development in communes and districts.

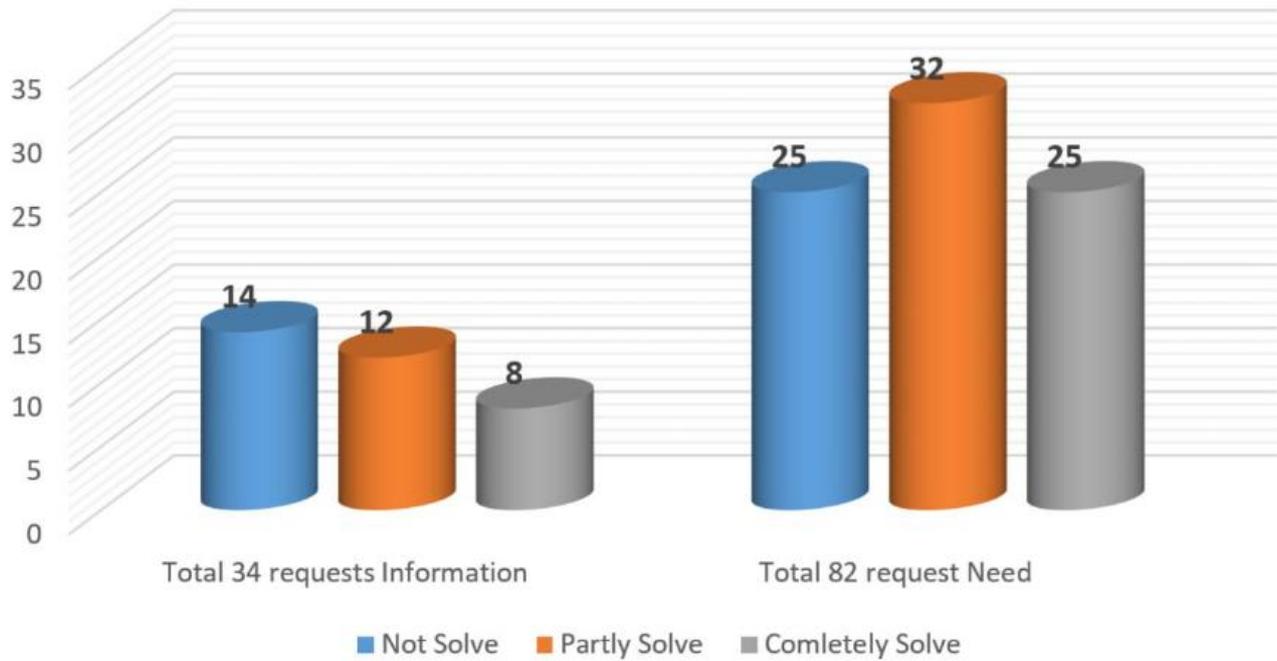


Activity 1.4: Support Advocacy And Community Participation By Indigenous Women

Activity 1.4.1. Support the participation of trained citizens in 12 meetings annually (budget forums (above), commune and district planning meetings, planning, and procurement committee meetings)

Output:

Totally 99% (958 of 960 accumulate indigenous women) over the target participated in 65 commune/district monthly meetings. There are non-accumulate 213 participants (88 women) from indigenous representatives and their members.



OUTCOME

As a result, there were 116 requests made, of which 34 requests on demanding information and 82 requests on issues and needs.

- Totally, 34 requested information raised, as the result, there are 8 Responded, 12 partly responded, and 14 Not responded. [Annex 2: table of information requested &: table issues requested](#)
- 82 issues that requested needs. There are 25 Not solved, 32 Partly solved on was on road repair, career, protecting IP traditional, 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. [Annex 3: describe on solution of issues](#)

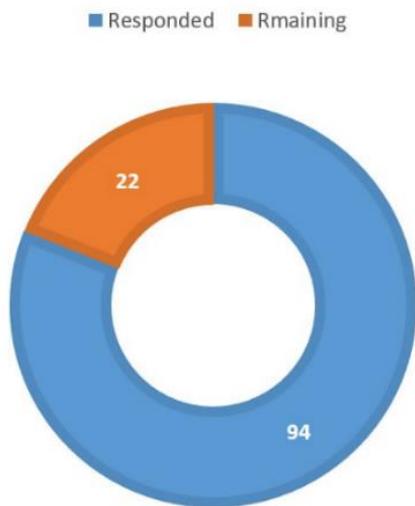
Activity 1.4.2 Local councilors public forum with IP CBOs and gov't and private sector (ELCs)

Output:

Totally 100% (18 of 18 public forums) completed. there are 1,503 participants (827 Females), the participants were from indigenous women, CBOs members, commune councils, district councils and governors, and relevance district offices/provincial departments. The topics of forum such as:

- Commune and district budget 2022 and 2023.
- Commune and district investment plan process.
- Disclose information on Economic Land Concession (ELC), Social Land Concession (SLC) and Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report.

TOTAL RAISED 116 QUESTIONS



Totally 94 of 116 questions were responded and committed to find the further solution. Those 94 questions/raised related to revenue and expenditure of the commune/district budget, and budget on social protection, requested budget for community patrolling, deforestation, and support for some budget in saving groups, forest border, offenses of encroachment on community land and forest, budget, public service, and school building. However, 22 questions were not replied immediately and need to need further discussion.

[Annex 4: Table of questions in public.](#)

OUTCOME

Activity 1.4.3 Reflection and refresher training after 12 months

Output:

Totally 100% (2 of 2 annual reflection) were completed. there are accumulate 110 participants (92 Females), and non-accumulate 63 participants (53 female) were from indigenous women, CBOs members, commune councils, district councils and governors, and relevance district offices/provincial departments.

OUTCOME

- Per-self CBO assessment, 60% of their knowledge on the process of economic land concession has increased better understanding on the definition: Land have contracted to the company, and sign agreement from the government or from the national, the company need to conduct need assessment and conduct impact evaluation with the community,
- Per-self CBO assessment, 30% of their knowledge of the district budget has increased. They have improved their understanding of the district budget on revenue, and expenditure, and what activities that authority expends.
- Per-self CBO assessment, 60% of the knowledge on the fundamental right to access information has increased such as citizen participation, citizen rights, writing the request letter to the local authority, knowing how to write the report and minutes for a meeting, participating in the district meeting to raise their concern, can use The Mapeo tool, District budget Tracking tool, and Awareness on citizen right and disability right.

Activity 2.2: Build Community Support For The Objectives Of The Anticipated New A2i Law.

1.4.4. Multi-stakeholder workshop to increase awareness and skills on A2i Law (if passed), 1 per each district (1x 3 districts), 60 pax, district level, 1 day.

Output:

Totally 100% (9 of 9 multi-stakeholder workshops) with accumulate 445 participants (315 females) and non-accumulate 176 participants (114 females) from indigenous representatives and their members, target commune councils, district councils and governors, provincial governors and councils, local NGOs, and relevance district offices and provincial departments.

OUTCOME

- Totally 80% of 99 CBOs received and understood ELC, EIA/ESIA information, the development plan of the commune, and other public service such as relevant legal framework, environmental and social impact assessment, Contract of environmental and social impact assessment with both Initial Impact Environmental Impact Assessment (IEIA). And understood the commune/district budget process and sub-national procurement process.
- A total of 12 questions were asked, and 9 requested an intervention for deforestation, 3 requested information related to the law on NRM, and advertised the right to access the land by 32 CBOs.
- Sub-national administration, stakeholders, and community representatives to openly discuss finance and public procurement, district administration. Indigenous women, partner organizations, and all stakeholders are aware of the district administration budgeting process and public procurement. There are 05 questions to the local government and other stakeholders with responded positively. [Annex 5: multi-stakeholder workshop](#)

Objective 2: Ensure An Effective Legal Framework That Provides Access To Information For Cambodians.

Activity 2.1: Advocacy Strategy Assessments (Which Includes A2i Working Group Meetings)

Activity 1.3.1. Monthly A2IWG meeting and National Conference on A2I with policymakers and communities.

Monthly A2IWG meeting

Output:

A2IWG members' monthly meetings were held 17 times. The participants from 21 A2IWG members including 14 Indigenous women representatives joined face to face and online. Meetings discussed and updated the progress and challenges related to the access information and activities of each member and joined efforts to promote access to information for all, esp. update of the draft law on access to information and reviewed the concept note for a national conference, cycle campaign, and media campaign with A2I WG, and to update about the next plan together.

OUTCOME

- Briefed objective of working group meeting for A2I working group and updated the draft of the UPR 2023 on A2I to Development partners (EU, FHI-360, GIZ, UK Embassy, UNOCHR, EWMI, USAID).
- TOR of Access to Information WG (A2IWG) was reviewed, discussed, and updated along with finalizing the A2IWG advocacy strategy 2023-2024.
- 6 letters were accepted by The Ministry of Information and National Assembly to bring CBOs issue to meet national policymakers. Moreover, In the advocacy campaign to submit the letter to the Prime Minister, and advocacy campaign through 11 popular media channels, wrote articles for social media, radio & and online news articles with the VOA, VOD, CamboJa, Phnom Penh Post, Khmer Time, RFA, Thmey Thmey, RFI, Cambodia Daily, Adhoc, and VAYO...etc.
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Access to information National Workshop

Output:



From 2021-2023, Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD), East West Management Institute (EWMI) with CSO members of The Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG) conducted 4 National workshops with 706 participants (326 females). The participants are from government, Assembly, DP, INGOs, NGOs, indigenous women. The topics are advocated to adapt the Access to information, celebrate the international right to know day, budget transparency, and economic land concessions (ELCs), promote disclosure on business sector. During the Celebrate the Right to know day Campaign, there are many activities such as Joint A2I Social Media Campaign, online & offline petition and posting CSOs and CBOs Leaders Messages/Quotes on the importance of disclosing public information. Conduct a series A2I live streaming debates between CBOs, including youth and policymakers by sectors on the importance of the online space for access to information and other relevant sectors, Post and boost

A2I Video Animations on joint CSO's input on A2I Law on Facebook, Co-host A2I young people vlog competition on the importance A2i in business and economic development, Co-host A2I Fun dance with CSOs and media workers/journalist, young people, and public to join celebrate the Access to Information Day - September 28, 2023. And submitted press releases.

OUTCOME

- There were the strong commitments and supports from H.E Kim Kumavath, Secretary of State Ministry of Information and H.E Pheap Kol, Minister Attached to Prime Minister on the importance of access to information, importance of CSO's inputs in promoting access to information, based on their official remarks in the Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) Day on September 28, 2023, in "Tedtalks" Phnom Phen Factory. 3.5K viewed live event. <https://fb.watch/nCij8iqH4J/?mibextid=cr9u03>
- Top four political parties (Cambodia people party, Local Democrat Party, FUNCINPEC party, and Khmer United National Party) show the commitment to support and adopt the access to information law.
- Totally of 5 statements to the government, respecify to ministry of information and media to push government adapt the A2I law. As the result, the prime minister committed to adapt the A2I law in 2024 or 2025. Moreover, in November 2023, the representative of the ministry of information responded that the ministry would try to work with other ministries, especially ministry of councils on draft access to information laws to move forward as soon as possible. [Annex 7: National workshop report](#)

Activity 1.4.4. Meeting and dialogues with gov't ministries on issue-based meetings at national level policymakers and key development partners.

Outputs:

Totally 100% completed 6 dialogues meetings with total 93 participants (22 females) from NGOs and including 9 indigenous women representatives. the topics discussed/raised to ministries and assembly such as:

- Ministry of Environment: disclose the ELC and EIA information and relevance legal framework, raise the issues on ELC and request information on EIA report.
- Ministry of Economic and Finance, representative from the Ministry of Planning: disclose the ELC and EIA information and relevance legal framework, raise the issues on ELC and request information on EIA report.
- Ministry of information: discussed and provided the CSOs inputs to draft access to information law.
- Commission #5 of the National Assembly: discussed and provided the CSOs inputs to draft access to information law.

OUTCOME

- 5 of the 09 CBOs representatives raised their concerns on EISA and submitted the company name to the Ministry of Environment.
- As a result of the event, CBOs had raised their issue briefing on Environment Impact Assessment in their area on Economic Land Concession (ELC) that they didn't get any update from the authorities and companies who were implementing their project. CBOs were seeking intervention from the commune and district levels but not responding to their cases.
- The representative of the ministries group has provided feedback and some intervention as disseminating regulations, policies, laws, and procedures widely to local citizens or communities. The representative of a group of ministries highly appreciates the increase of knowledge on rights and obligations communities in relation to economic land concession. The citizens or community should strengthen or improve their capacity to change their occupation or job by backing them to do business or work instead of the traditional jobs.
- The Ministry of Information expressed that the draft A2I law was in the final stages of discussion between the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Information is asking the Councils of Ministry to include some of the inputs provided by CSOs.
- The inputs to the draft A2I law were accepted by the Ministry of Information, which showed commitment to passing a complete and satisfactory A2I law.
- The inputs to draft A2I law were accepted by Commission #5 of the National Assembly and committed to review and pass when the draft A2I Law arrived at the national assembly. [Annex 8: Dialogue meetings with Ministries](#)

CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND ADAPTATIONS

Challenges

- The local government had both, limited power, and significant information on Economic Land Concession (ELC) and Environment Social Impact Assessment (ELC). The commune and district authorities then were hesitant to respond and share information to communities.
- Public budget literacy was complicated to for indigenous women to understand and not directly impacted family's economic of community.
- There was a dichotomy between the on-paper benefits of Cambodia's decentralization of government with the political realities of a very top-down centralized government structure. Local officials were held accountable within their communities and were incentivized to serve more communities.

Lesson Learnt

- The provincial multi-stakeholder workshop and district public forum provided more space for the representatives of CBO, Youth, CSO 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 of environmental social impact assessment (ESIA) and economic land concession (ELC) requires strong technical knowledge, 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 top-down approach with both finance in-charge and line technical ministries.

Adaptations

- 📄 Provide a training on land law, agriculture, and right and Alternative dispute resolution.
- 📄 Coaching on facilitation, leadership skill and writing report, awareness on access to information to CBOs, skill on request information, dissemination to CBOs members on grassroots advocacy.
- 📄 Conduct exchange learning to another province to teach each other and best practice.
- 📄 Project team, especially field staff will communicate and follow up on schedule at commune and district monthly meetings and monitor request information letters and encourage to submit request information based on CBOs needing their information and discuss with CBOs clearly on request information plan.

CASE STUDY

AND VIDEOS

THE SMILING OF KANSENG VEAL COMMUNITY

Access for All (A4A) is a consortium project and jointly implemented by the East-West Management Institute, Inc. (EWMI), as a lead applicant, and API as a co-applicant. A4A is inspired by the impact of API project namely Promoting Access to Information in Cambodia. The overall purpose of the project is to enable API utilizing its capacity building expertise in the areas of access to information, budget literacy and advocacy, through training and coaching, to women, youth, and people with disabilities from indigenous and disadvantage communities across the three targeted districts in three provinces. The A4A Project will be implemented in 12 communes in three districts across three targeted provinces. Those districts are Prasat Ballangk in Kampong Thom, Phnom Kravanh in Pursat, and Chit Borey in Kratie where heavily resided by indigenous community and have a record numbers of Economic Land Concessions (ELCs).



Ou Kroch village, Saela Visay commune, Prasat Ballang district, Komong Thom province

Kanseng Veal Forestry Community is in O'Krouch Village, Salavisai Commune, Brasat Ballangk District, Kampong Thom Province. The community 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,

During April 2021, three families came to community land grabbing for plantations, with the



coordination of the Forestry Administration, it was solved by signed contract to be stop invasion of community land again. Suddenly, a month later, in May, three more families came to encroach about 15 hectares of community forest, which will not be resolved yet.

This has affected wildlife habitats, deforestation, decrease of non-timber forest products, and declining community revenues. If prevented and addressed in time, the

community forest can be maintained for community members to continue to enjoy non-timber forest products, have a stable for community's livelihood and for future generations, and CBOs request to commune council and district council to address this issue.

Through dialogue meeting with district and commune council by project intervention to create space for CBOs raised their issue, Ms. Pov Ean one of the representative of Kanseng Veal community, she request the Chief of Prasat Ballangk District Council, the Governor of Prasat Ballangk District and the Chief of Salavisai Commune and all stockholders to support and find solution in the district meeting on September 29, 2021.



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Ms. CHhun Sothea, 45 years old (Living in Salavisay Commune) mentioned that “she is really worried about land encroaching and forest burning, because her family and community members got the income from the community forest.”

After the district dialogue meeting, Community leader mentioned that the Commune Council have arranged meeting between three family and CBOs members to discuss about illegal land encroaching problem. As a result, three families was agreed to remove material from the land encroaching and signed an agreement to stop encroach land and give land 3 hectares back to community, Additionally, Commune Council expressed that this issue was addressed with good result, but CC still continue follow up with CBOs about the encroach land because CC worried will happen again. Now a day, Commune Council also have a good cooperation with CBOs. the community planning to request money from commune and district and from NGOs in order to protect forestry to sustainable.



Ms. CHhiv Soeung, 45-year-old (live in Salavisay commune) mentioned that “I am very happy, when I get the forest back and all those family stop encroaching the forest anymore because community members get a lot of benefit from the Community forestry.



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ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

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**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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