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Cooperation Committee
for Cambodia
Comité de Coopération
Pour le Cambodge



ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

A survey from five provinces
with a specific case study support in Kampong Thom



*Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
and
Advocacy and Policy Institute*

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Partnerships for Sustainable Development in Cambodia



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enabling environment is the new development trend in democratic development. Whilst Cambodia following several reform through the rectangular strategy at the national level, and decentralization and de-concentration for better develop at sub-national administration. Moreover, the roles of CSOs are important notice as they play one of the key development actors. The study commissioned by CCC in 2012 identified significant contribution of CSOs which they have implemented 4 000 projects in all municipality and provinces of Cambodia. It benefits about 1.3 million people and dispersed funds of about 600-700 million dollars from the 1315 active registered NGOs.

However, enabling environment as development partnership between government and CSO sectors, there is still a question. Whether they are well operating and engagement for effective response and develop at the local community. The assessment from national study of enabling environment commissioned by CCC and CIVICUS focus on the regulatory framework and the implementation for CSOs operating in Cambodia showed the limitation, and has many areas need to take into consideration. For instance, the relationship between government and CSOs need room for improvement on mutual trust, confident, respect, and reciprocity. Whilst relationship among CSOs itself is increased but the depth cooperation is generally low. Therefore, the study here will look at current status of public performance, and the enabling environment for local development actors in response to democratic development and decentralization in Cambodia. The challenges and rooms for improvement will be suggested from a specific focus on the four thematic areas: operation, collaboration, information and resource management would be described in this report.

The study have been consolidated the challenges and suggestion as the following:

- The commune budget mostly used for physical infrastructures, while the quality is still a question. Moreover, the limited capacity for preparation and spending on non-physical infrastructures make commune councilors complicated to focus on the issues. Therefore, most of councilors still dependent support from higher level authorities and advisors of NCDD.
- The new councilors are difficult to perform their roles and limited connection to different line of authorities. Moreover, local administration still follows the hierarchy level of engagement, especially their own line ministries, and limited to engage with commune authorities, and some authorities is not clear such as between local police and commune authorities. Therefore, NCDD and other actors involves should try to provide them the opportunity engagement in capacity building opportunity, meeting at provincial and national level, and development work.
- The delegation of power is not well followed while the absent of commune chief, and bring to the delay of decision for work, therefore, it should be enforced for power delegation.
- The commune councilors should take time to participate and visit the local community to see and hear the community voices and their concern.
- The clerk should take over their own work, and not go beyond their own responsibility and interfere with commune councils' work. On the other hand, the financial budget on administrative, which coordinated by the clerk is not yet clearly transparency among commune councilors.
- CSOs should try to discuss among each other in the same target areas for effective and joint development practices. Not just keep focus on their own projects, and never talk together to find the strategic way for effective work together.
- NGOs don't yet have a common goal for harmonization and strategic development that lead to somehow a competitive rather than supportive, especially during the financial shortage.

- Financial and sustainability of the project is still a challenge while NGOs still more dependent on grant from donors, whilst some donors driven the development process and agenda.
- The incentives fee for the CSOs works is not consistence as some NGOs not pay or pay less, made the community people, and even the authorities reluctant to participate from one to another.
- Some projects are not consulted with local authorities to explore effective way before implement the projects, and get supported. Therefore, most of those projects are poorly work and not well cooperate from authorities.
- The working arrangement still difficult with authorities, especially line ministries as it is more likely need to have official MoU to work together, where the process of MoU is further demand to sign at the ministry level.
- The communication and engagement still limited. The sharing of information amongst authorities and CSOs is limited, and it goes further less at district level.
- People participation in the development is one of the difficulties, especially for invitation by local authorities, while NGOs engagement is better with some kinds of incentive support and real knowledge sharing.
- On the other hand, NGOs should get project through investment plan to make easier record and follow up. Moreover, some of the projects had agreed from NGOs at district investment, but they did not implementing.
- NGOs should closely communicate with local authorities, especially the commune level to consult their project agenda rather than follow the project design without the adaption to special conditions with specific community.

ACRONYMS

API	Advocacy and Policy Institute
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CC	Commune councillors
C/SF	Commune/Sangkat Fund
CIP	Commune Investment Plan
CNGO	Cambodian Non-governmental Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DC	District councilors
D&D	Decentralization and De-concentration
EIC	Education, Information, and Communication
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
LAs	Local Authorities
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NCDD	National Committee for Decentralization and De-concentration
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
WGPD	Working Group for Partnership in Decentralization

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1- INTRODUCTION

Enabling environment is an important issue of the new development trend to take into account. It is a critical question in democratic development following several reforms in Cambodia, where governance reform is noted into the rectangular strategy at the national level, and decentralization and de-concentration for better develop at sub-national administration. The ten years of implementation of development at sub-national level (2010-2019) has planned for its three phases, and the first phase has just finished in 2014. It is observed that there are several changes take places happening from the reform in Cambodia. However, beside the state actors' role drive in this development, the roles of civil society organizations, and other key actors could not be overlooked in democratization and decentralization process. The study commissioned by CCC in 2012 identified that CSOs have significant contribution to development in all provinces and municipality of Cambodia, which they have implemented 4 000 projects benefiting about 1.3 million people and dispersed funds of about 600-700 million dollars from the active of 1315 register NGOs.

However, enabling environment between government and CSOs sectors still be a questions whether they are well operating and engagement for effective response and develop at the local community. The assessment from national study on enabling environment for CSOs commissioned by CCC and CIVICUS which focus on the regulatory framework and the implementation for CSOs operating in Cambodia showed the limitation, and has many areas need to take into consideration. The relationship between government and CSOs need room for improvement on mutual trust, confident, respect, and reciprocity. Whilst among CSOs per se is increased but the depth cooperation is generally low¹. Therefore, the study here will look at current status of public performance, and the enabling environment for local development actors in response to democratic development and decentralization in Cambodia. The challenges and rooms for improvement will be suggested from a specific focus on the four thematic areas: operation, collaboration, information and resource management would be described in this report².

Background to democratic development and enabling environment in Cambodia

Democratic Development

Since the 1990s, there were various changes and reforms taken place to Cambodia, from the command economic to free market, from war to peace, and from authoritarian rules to democracy³. On the democratization a regular election had been conducted, in which governance is the vital value toward pursuing. Several reforms had been developed based upon this core value, and has developed since 2006 into the every four years of National Strategic Development Plan (with the new updated of NSDP 2014-2018), and in the Rectangular Strategic of Royal Government of Cambodia⁴ following the central

¹ CCC (2013). Assessment of the enabling environment for civil society, Country Report Cambodia.

² Following the enabling framework developed by CIVICUS and applied worldwide, ten dimensions which are five mandatory dimensions include: (1) Formation, (2) Operation, (3) Access to Resources, (4) Expression, and (5) Peaceful Assembly, and other five optional dimensions include: (6) Internet Freedom, (7) Government-CSO relations, (8) CSO Cooperation and Coalition, (9) Taxation, and (10) Access to Information. This framework had been applied for the national study on this enabling environment in Cambodia². Following the local context, and a long with the national study, this local enabling study will specifically look into the four dimensions 1) Operation, 2) Information, 3) Relationship and Cooperation, and 4) Resources Managing at community level.

³ Caroline Hughes, *The Political Economy of Cambodia's Transition, 1991-2001*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2003.

⁴ Chheat Sreang (2013), *"Democratic Governance and Local Politics in Cambodia"*, Panorama -Insights into Asian and European Affairs (Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung).

principles of good governance reform model. In addition, Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) evolved the reform of sub-national democratic development. In 2002, there was starting of national election of commune council with unconditional grant of C/SF for decentralize in development.

Since then the World Bank study identified that there's a huge amount of budget support for development initiatives with double every four years to reach about \$25 000 per year in 2010 from a starting point of (2007) identified the first term of CCs, fiscal transfer increased from 1.5 percent in 2002 to 2.80 percent in 2010. In total, for four years of implementation (2007-2010) USD 197 million was allocated to C/SF, 76 percent of which was from the government and PSDD/UNDP project, and 24 percent (USD 47 millions) from other development partners. From the total, 67 percent was earmarked for development work and 33 percent for administrative tasks. In 2012 each commune received around USD 27,517 of C/SF on average (RGC 2012). The government also continues to encourage local contribution to cover part of the cost of development projects, and this contribution accounted for USD 1.4 million from 2007 to 2010 (NCDD 2011)⁵. However, all those money are not match between the responsibilities and the demands; and mostly spending on some specific areas, especially infrastructures or roads, and only small part to services.

The roles of the commune councils are necessary importance to navigate within the commune level. The commune councils are the focal point of local decision-making, and primary responsible for developing the five-year commune development plan, disputed resolution as well as key contact for other development actors such as NGOs, line ministry programs, and so on⁶. Moreover, in the case for democratic governance, enabling institutions to facilitate civic participation in economic and political processes and its ability to promote the universal values of human rights is argued. It guarantees an appropriate mechanism for delegating power and resources to local authorities. Decentralization encompasses not only the transfer of power, authority and responsibility within government but also the sharing of authority and resources for shaping public policy within society (Cheema and Rondinelli 2007)⁷.

On other hand, development partners have played the important roles in Cambodia's D&D reform since CARERE/Seila. Development partners have been working to support the commune level⁸. Besides this, the significant contribution and participation from CSOs operating in Cambodia are not excludable. As discovered in several studies conducted by CCC and other researchers identified that CSOs play a significant roles in contributing to development of Cambodia. The result of the previous research estimated 1,315 CSOs are active in Cambodia with a dispersed fund of approximately up to US\$600-700 million in 2012, and direct employment of around 43 000 people working for the beneficiaries of about 20-30% of Cambodians⁹.

However, the United Nations in Cambodia describes the relation between NGOs and the government, in its own words, that "at the national level, while modest attempts are being made to include civil society organizations (CSOs) in policy-making the culture of participation is still weak and there are few institutionalized mechanisms for the participation of civil society in decision-making." The relation can also be seen through the lens of recent confrontation and debates on the government's attempt to get the

⁵ COMFREL (2013). Assessment of the second term of decentralization in Cambodia: *Commune council performance and citizens' participation*, 2007-2012.

⁶ The Asia foundation and World Bank, 2012. *Voice, Choice, and Decision: A study of local governance processes in Cambodia*.

⁷ Chheat Sreang (2014). *Impact of Decentralization on Urban's Governance*, Working Paper No.88, CDRI.

⁸ NCDD (2012). Final draft of Midterm review of IP-3 (2011-2013) of the national program for sub-national democratic development (2010-2019).

⁹ CCC (2013). *CSO contributions to the development of Cambodia 2012: Opportunities and Challenges*,

law on NGOs and associations passed even though it was rolled back only after the government was under mounting pressures from local and international players in Cambodia's development¹⁰.

Enabling Environment for democratic development

To push democratic development, inclusive partnerships from different actors, as well as civic space are really importance. Moreover, it is not only what said in the laws, but it is needed turn into the real practices; therefore, other actors could exercise, and engage in development process. However, following the study on Enabling Environment Assessment highlight several challenges relation to the operation and civic participation, and exercise their rights.

The relationship between Government and civil society need significant room for improvement in areas of mutual trust, confidence, respect, and reciprocity. It is noted that relations vary significantly depending on the nature of CSOs, its constituents and location, the type of work it carries out, and depend on different level of engagement. CSOs engaged in service delivery in sectors such as health, agricultural development, humanitarian responses and education generally have better relationships with government. CSOs promoting democracy and human rights tend to have greater difficulty establishing a common ground and mutual understanding with government. Relationships between civil society and government tend to be much stronger and more effective at provincial, district and commune level, but weaker at national level.

Moreover, the operation of CSOs at sub-national levels is affected by their relationships with local elected officials, and those officials' interpretation of the legal framework governing CSO activities. Government strategy documents contain mixed messages about the role and value of CSOs, and in practice, there is still considerable room for including more voices from civil society in public policy debate and formulation. However, it still lack of genuine cooperation between civil society and government, and potential roles of civil society in contributing to development is not fully appreciated though the main objective of the new mandate of Rectangular Strategy is to strengthening comprehensive partnership with all stakeholders.

In addition, looking at the coalitions of among CSOs is still gap in Cambodia. Cooperation among CSOs is increasing, but the depth of cooperation is generally low. Further, the extent of cooperation varies considerably by sector. Cross-sectoral cooperation is generally low. Umbrella groups have too few mechanisms of performance evaluation and limited opportunities to receive and address members' complaints. There is no government oversight of partnerships and alliances¹¹.

¹⁰ Chheat Sreang (2013). *"Democratic Governance and Local Politics in Cambodia"*, Panorama –Insights into Asian and European Affairs (Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung).

¹¹ CCC (2013). *Assessment of the Enabling Environment for Civil Society*, Country Report: Cambodia.

2- METHODOLOGY

Upon the above framework, the study was designed into different phases of exploration for both primary and secondary data to get comprehensive information. Initially, review on the existing data from NCDD, and other CSOs such as WGPD to learn the commune performance from both qualitative and quantitative, as well as to identify the best and the poorest performed communes, and where having CSOs activate its roles for the contribution in development.

The primary data collection was conducted from October 2014 to January 2015 applying different stages for data collection process. The first stage was to conduct the survey with all the targets five provinces of API, NGOs partners conducting the research, and then a comprehensive qualitative information was collected in the selected communes to explore and having specific case and evident to support for the analyse.

Review Secondary Data

The documents review was gathering information from various sources working related to D&D from government, especially NCDD, NGOs sectors working in the related field, and other research publications by research institutions and consultants following the enabling environment framework. The information in the review was used as guide for improvement of questionnaire survey and sharp the focus on the study; and it also shared in the workshop related to governance, and decentralization for Cambodia. The identified related documents for the review involved the research report related to D&D, WGPD discussion meeting, and minutes, and public forum report and/or minutes from NGOs working related to social accountability. Some of the reviewed documents also literates in the overview of the report.

Quantitative Data

In addition to the review other related articles to assesses the performance and collaboration work of the other development stakeholders, the empirical evident in quantitative method was conducted with the selected 49 communes in five provinces in Kampong Thom, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Kratie, and Banteay Meanchey, where API, a research partner working related to social accountability and decentralization. The survey questionnaire had been developed and improved with the existing questionnaire that used for monitoring on the good governance framework of API in their respective areas, and synergize to the enabling environment context. It was designed separately for different respondents between local authorities, and CSOs actors. Then discuss and improve with the research team to make sure the information is respond to the research framework. The questionnaires was pretested with the participants from different stakeholders come to join the meeting in Phnom Penh, and then finalize.

All the survey forms were trained to NGOs partners who collect the information in their target provinces. The survey questionnaire for commune authorities was conducted as group interview. Whiles CSOs sectors including the NGOs and CBOs operating in those communes had been shared the survey during meetings and then oriented to fill the forms.

The additional survey questionnaire specific explore the enabling environment had been attached separately from the specific study of API in the target communes, and part of the primary data from API also extract for the study. SPSS system had been used for data entry and analyses based on the types of respondents who were the authorities and CSOs actors.

Qualitative Data

Four communes of two districts in Kampong Thom province were selected based on best commune and poor practices communes in rural and semi-urban areas with considering potential diverse development actors, then detailed discussion with NGOs partners, and member of WGPD who operating their projects in the provinces for the selection.

The potential key informants relevant to the study were engaged such as village authorities, NGOs, CBOs, and other formal actors such as youth groups, woman groups, and minority groups. Other government authorities and related stakeholders at other level engaging with D&D work also met. In addition, representative of group for grassroots people as beneficiary in that target communes also selected. These actors were purposively selected for in-depth interview. Focus group discussions were organized in each of the selected communes which arranged separately for the state and non-actors. Totally, there were 44 interviews and discussions with different stakeholders in this study.

This qualitative data was used as supporting evident and argument to the quantitative analyse within this report. Moreover, some cases and/or quote as evident were added into the report. Challenges and suggestions were heavily draw from the qualitative data and analyse from the study.

Benefits and Limitation of the report

The report had produced specific and comprehensive of information and analyse from diverse communes among the best and poor practices communes in rural and semi-urban areas with having diverse development actors. The study would be flashlight for improvement of the working enabling environment and performance of local authorities, CSOs, and other stakeholders, as well as beneficiary for development effectiveness. It would help to development stakeholders discussion with government for strengthening the work of local staffs for development at local level under decentralization process. It also improve API programming area, and become a better guiding for the next study of enabling environment in the other province.

Moreover, it would be used as feedbacks to government for better implementation of decentralization policy, whilst the CSOs could improve and strengthen the work for more effectively. Therefore, besides the comprehensive studies, documentation of the keys challenges and proposed recommendations would be consolidated into the report.

However, it is still a gap and limit of information in this study. Due to possibility of resources and time available, it was a non-representation of the survey sampling as it was conducted with the target areas of the NGOs partners. The qualitative data was explored mostly within communes of NGOs partners which three of the four selected communes. Moreover, it only look at the key formal actors of the state, and CSOs actors but not other private and other political actors who could be influence in local development.

The report was analysed separately into two parts, part A is about information received from local authorities and part B from CSOs site where you can learn from different point of view to reflection on their perception and reality.

3- ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AT SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL

A-INFORMATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A.1 Operation and Performance

Commune Operation

The commune councilors come with the odd number from five to eleven varies due to the largely of the commune. Following the performance of commune/sangkat, councilors had a clear division of labors which define as roles and responsibilities of commune/sangkat. The councilor chief had responsible to overall administrative and management within the commune. The first deputy is responsible for financial management within the commune. The second deputy is responsible for conflict resolution within the commune, and the members of the councilors are generally support the work within the commune. However, the commune councilors still limited to perform their roles and responsibilities as stated. The chief often capture all the roles and ignore to delegate power, even in their absent. Moreover, the commune chief had more closely relation with the clerk, and violated their roles for their benefits. On the other hand, it is noted that the clerk acted beyond their roles and have some power over the councilors.

Another aspect of decision making, line authorities from other upper level such as district authorities could strongly influent to commune level (see figure 4). A study by The Asian Development Bank also identified that commune councilor was more accountable to their vertical line of authorities (top line) rather than horizontal line for their local constituency.

Following the in-depth study showed that the work at local community are bureaucratic and poor delegation of power to other councilors with the absent of chief. As stated by one of councilor *"harm bussantouch romlong phnom"* (not through the fishing net over the mountain). Though many councilors had understood about their roles, but it is not clear yet to what extend and what kinds work that they could really working on, therefore, most of the work still falling into the commune chief. With the serious issues such as big conflict, need discussion among councilors for decision making. Some other beyond the competence of commune, they would seek ideas further from the district authorities, or refer the case to the district levels. However, such as case had been improved compare to the previous mandate.

In contrary, some communes are prominent and appreciation with their performance. It is clearly expressed that the commune chief who are actively engagement, and function a key role would lead them better visibility and get much appreciation from local beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This results from their high commitment, and significant contribution from their own wealthy to make the things happened and play such a key roles for their popularity.

There are some challenges with the commune councilors, following the replacement and turnover, limitation of engagement and visiting local people as the constituency, and limit activate the role within the commune. Those affects to the effective operation. Following the complicate and pile of manual and procedures, new councilors need times to follow and understand that slow down to the work within the commune. Therefore, the commune clerk more likely takes violation role from their knowledge and experiences over the councilors. It is reported of having misconduct of commune clerk related to the commune budget. The group discussion from one of the communes raised *"It is observed the commune clerk is still the question for their services. Sometimes, they have performed their role beyond the responsibility, and ask for informal fee..... The clerk are better associated with the chief and sometimes manage and decide some activities within the commune in un-transparency way"*.

The other constraint is that the relationship between local community and authorities had been distrust from their slow services and limit connection. Local villagers experienced of poor services in respond from their access to civil status. In return, the local community would limit their engagement and participate in any activities/events organized by the local authorities. In contrast, it get much better between CSOs and local villagers. As a leader of the saving group told *“the villagers losing trust from authorities as they work slowly and not well follow the real work, but organization (NGOs) are good cooperate”*.

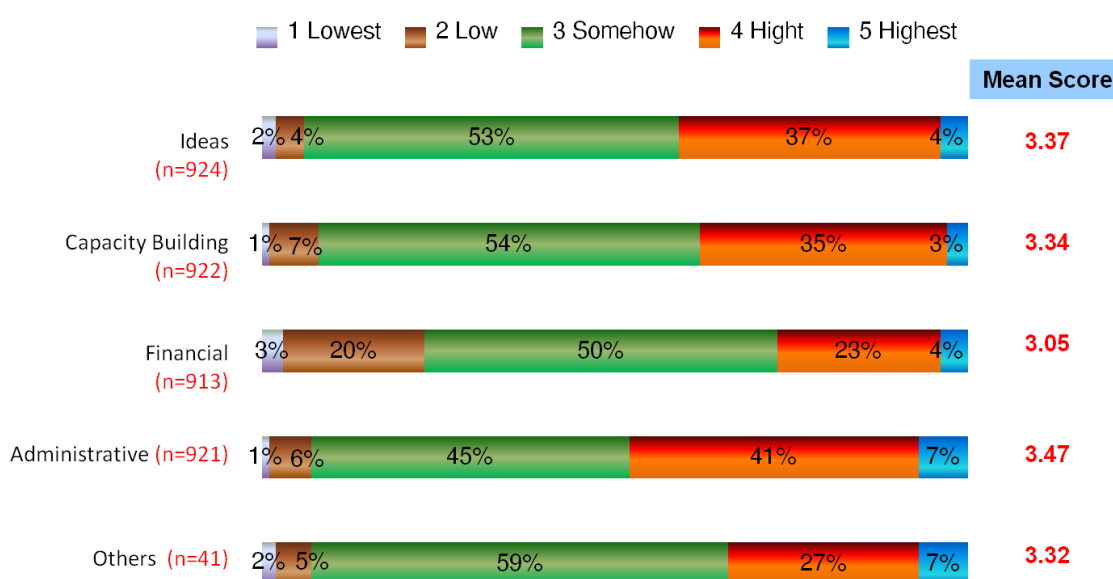
Following the law on commune/sangkat administrative management article 45 mentioned about undecided power of commune councilors, where they could not make decision over certain issues such as tax policy, forestry, post and telecommunication and so on. It limited to the capacity of local councilors to control over the own resources such as forestry issues, whilst the good cooperation from other competency authorities such as forestry administrative is still far and weak. Moreover, the boundary of commune power is not clear identified, especially by order (*deiyka*) of commune. A case in one commune related to the forest issue, where commune chief issue letter/order to allow villagers to cut the trees for their local house, but the forest administrative ignored the letter and still arrested the villagers. These challenges raised at the district meeting but was not well taken into action to deal with the issue.

Other factors that make challenges and poor services at the commune is that some communes, councillors’ home and their office is far away from each other, that affect to their regularity and presenting to work at the office. However, in monitoring and keep connection purpose most of the communes had managed their councilors members according to the dispersed commune areas to make sure that each councilors could present at some certain villages, where mostly they are resided.

Types of Services Support to Commune

Moreover, as illustrated in Figure 1 from the survey, the mean score of different support under the mandate of local authorities is similar though different services (3.32 to 3.37), only little more for administrative work (3.47), and except financing is less (3.05). If we look at the specific area of support from CSOs sector at the commune level, CSOs have diversified supported in all sectors mostly at the average level, and then follow to the high level of support.

Figure 1: Level of support from different kinds of services from CSOs to the commune level

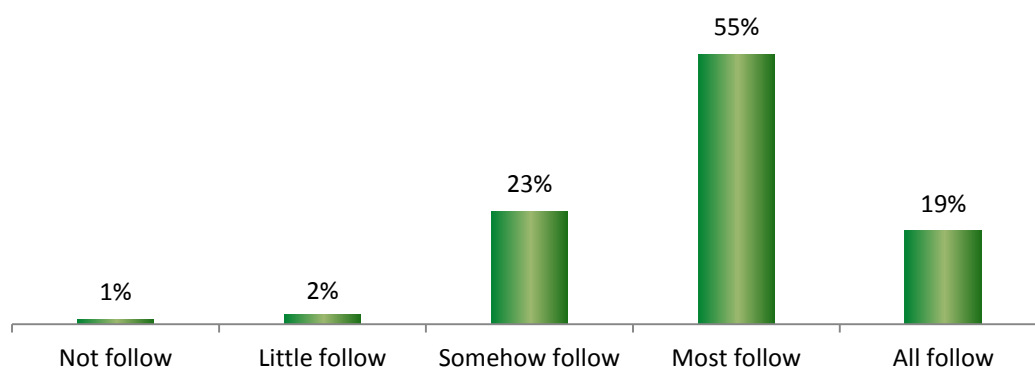


Commune Meetings

The monthly meeting of commune councilors is a schedule plan that needs to conduct every month, with a proposed date, but it could be somehow moved due to busy and availability of the councillors. Any moving the date of the meeting, it is needed to inform to different stakeholders for their participation. The councillors told that meeting is about the follow up of previous meeting, achievement, and further plan. With the introduction of policy on safe village-commune, the commune put it into one of the key agenda for their discussion. Normally, the commune meeting allow other stakeholders participate in the meeting to see what the councilors discussed and they could raise the issues or the share the comments at the last agenda where time is reserved for them.

Following the survey, only 19% could follow all the schedules to the conduct the meeting, and majority are followed the schedule most of the time (55%). This affect to the participation of other stakeholders at the commune level to participate in the meeting as the schedule had been changed. The in-depth interview shows sometimes, they got inform about the meeting from the phone, and others are not heard about the change, therefore, they lost interest to join the meeting.

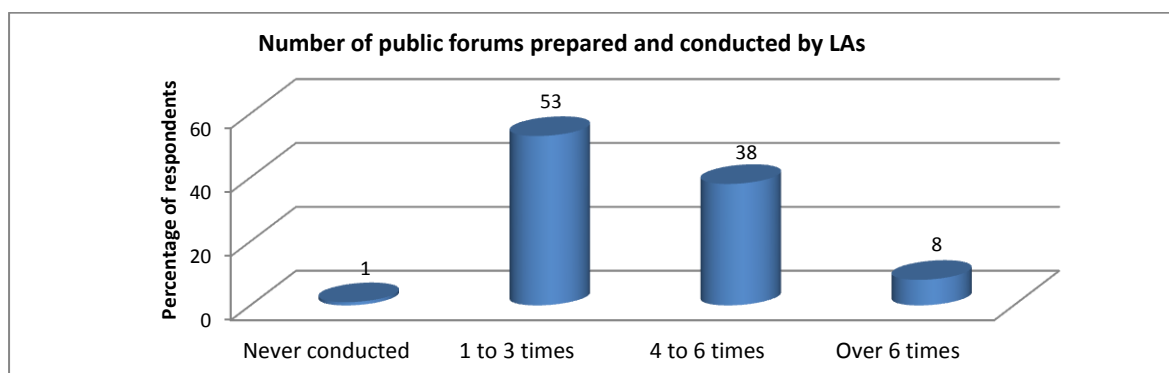
Figure 2: The level of councilor meeting conduct following the plan as disseminated



Public Forum

Public forum is the event to obtain information, consultation, and reflect what have been done related to the services provided for the local community. The public forums are encouraged to conduct from the government in the fifth mandate of government. Normally, there are different forums conducted such as provincial forum, district forum, commune forum and so on. The results from the survey showed a significant number of forums conduct in 2014 at the commune level (99%), in which 53% conducted at least 1-3 times, and 38% conducted from 4-6 times, and some communes (8%) conducted more than six times.

Figure 3: The frequency of public forum conducted by the commune in 2014



The in-depth study shows that the forum is really important to reflect the performance and services, as well as problems that happening at the commune. Thus some authorities feel challenging with the confrontation of issues raised, but they could learn and see their own issues to be further addressed. The interview with different stakeholders such as authorities, CBOs, and NGOs working at the commune level express their appreciation with the forum though many issue are relevant different level of institution and authorities that could not be addressed, at least they can prepare themselves for those issues. However, it is needed a response in a professional manner and accountability, if they just try to get the answer out of the hock, there will not catch further interest from local community, and will evaluate the forum just come to show their face at the meeting, where the issues would be worse.

A.2 Relationship and Cooperation

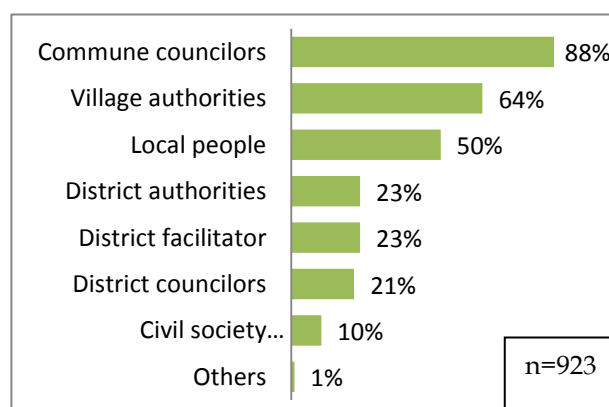
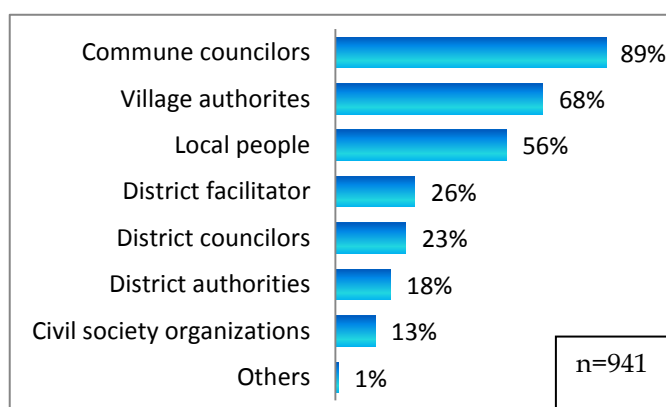
Relationship between authorities and line departments

The commune is working on multiple issues among councilors in collaboration with other technical departments associated to the councilors such as health commune, forestry and fishery, and so on. By comparison level of cooperation, the councilors have a good relationship among themselves and/or line of authorities, especially the same political line, but different line still cooperate in roughly way. However, it had been gradually getting better from one mandate to another. Even different parties try to give more constructive engagement rather opposing and challenging for their own popularity. The councilors also gradually change to accept the problems happening and facts rather than advocate to make it rights.

The cooperation amongst other line ministries are still limited such as forestry, fishery, and so on, but better for health sector. The limitation of cooperation and following different line of authorities, it unable the commune councilors could not take effective action dealing with the problems happening within their community.

Further look on the actors influent to development prioritize and any decision making within the commune, the survey show different actors engage to influent in prioritize on development plan such as commune councillors, village authorities, local people, district facilitator, district councillors, district authorities, and civil society organization. Among these actors, response to the fact that commune councillors who leading the process had more engagement in the process (89%), and then follow by village authorities (68%), and local people is only (56%). Other stakeholders also engage in the process of planning from district level such as district councillor and authorities, as well as district facilitator who are advisor from NCDD. It is noted that only 13% of engagement from civil society organization.

Figure 4: Actors influent to commune development plan **Figure 5: Actors influence to decision making**



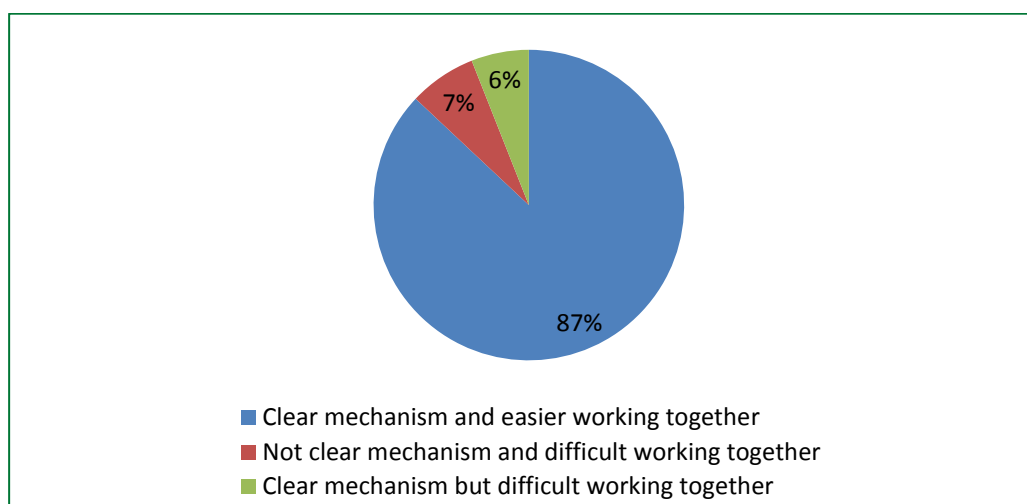
Moreover, look for the actors who influent on decision making those actors still relevant similar to the level of their influent to development prioritized. Further noted, district authorities and even district facilitator (district advisor) also influent to decision making on development plan (23%). CSOs could some level of influent (10%) of development decision at the commune as well.

The enabling engagement for CSOs

The relationship between authorities and CSOs is really important for enabling and effective local development. Being working in the commune there are different models of engagement among CSOs and local authorities. The enabling environment to work is also getting better from one mandate to another, but some mobilization for any hot issue and publicly impacts, it is needed a clear discussion and agreed.

The survey shows a good way of working together between CSOs and local authorities. There are 87% of respondents from authorities expressed the way that they are working with CSOs sectors is clear mechanism and easier to work together. Only 13% expressed difficulty to work together, in which 7% not had clear mechanism from the work connection.

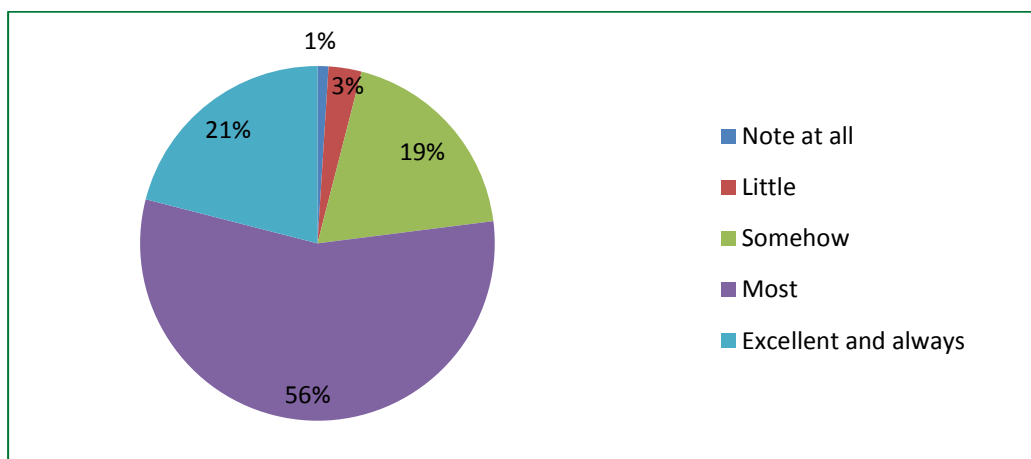
Figure 6: The mechanism and procedure working together



This may response to qualitative interview that some organizations are not well informed and updated their project with commune councils, but they are direct and closely work only the village authorities. In contrast, the commune councilors also spend little time to engage with CSOs work, and visiting to respective villages to see the problems and heart from local communities.

Moreover, the figure below reveal the evaluation of working environment that enable CSO working at the commune level, the survey shows a good result with 56% are the most providing a welcome environment for CSOs working in the area. There are only 3% that provide little enabling environment for CSOs. This mean that the space to have CSOs freely operation in the area is limited. They need to have an official letter identify about their organization and letter express their identity.

Figure 7: The good enabling environment from local authorities for the work of civil society



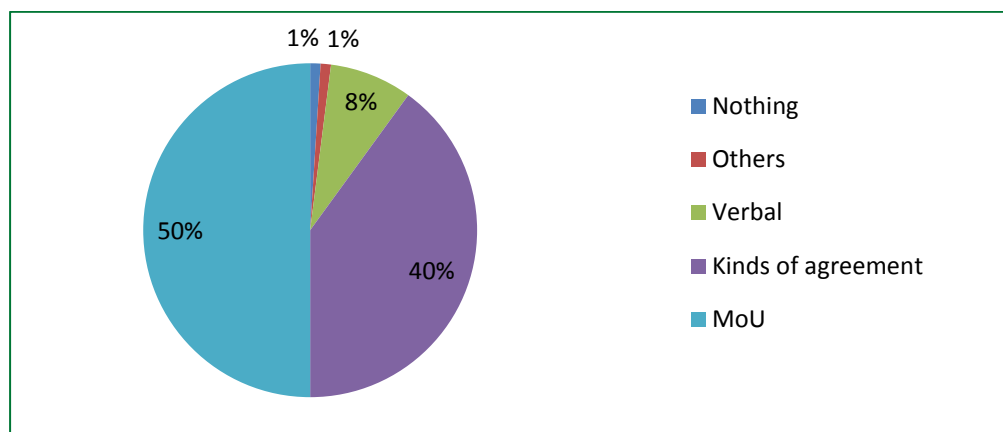
However, from the in-depth study, the councillor raised of some NGOs come directly to see the village authorities and implement their project, without prior and discussion the feasibility of their project with the local councilors. The councilors raised the past experiences of few people identify as working for CSOs, but could not proof their identification, and finally, it is known that they come to the local community to cheat the people for their own business.

It affect to the effectiveness of their project since planning, implementation, and other phase of their projects. Therefore having genuine cooperation, the councilors could share their knowledge, experiences to better response to the project and community needs and issues where could not identify by CSOs project holders. As raised from a group discussion with councilors *“one of the project on sanitation in building the toilet, only support concrete pipe, and toilet bowl for the most poor villagers, but they are unable to share cost with other materials, where the complete toilet cannot happen. In contrast, if they have discussed with authorities, there would not happen with such case”*.

Anyway, the collaboration between CSOs and authorities getting much better in the new mandate of councilors, especially after the new form of national government in the fifth mandate. The authorities give more open space and favour to attract and accommodate for CSOs provide development projects in their community. As one commune councilor raised *“Though some NGOs do not long term support, but I’m happy to have more NGOs to come and help for the community people”*.

To work together in the process of community development, LAs and CSOs have some forms of supporting documents to ensure implementation of program of activities. Otherwise, the survey results on the kinds of working engagement for processing to work together, normally, they have letter of agreement or memorandum of understanding to work within the commune level. There is only 8 % who made only verbal communication to work within the commune. Only 1% who work in the commune without any engagement with the commune level, but they may directly to work with the village level.

Figure 8: Kinds of engagement to work together



On other hand, for project implementation with CSOs, the local authorities observed some issues and suggested in qualitative discussion and consolidated as the following:

- ✚ There have been communicate between commune authorities and CSOs for the implementation of the activities, for intended seeking collaboration and any participation from commune level. CSOs inform, especially at the starting of the project, but later on the sharing of information is limited.
- ✚ The activities of CBOs or saving groups within the village level is less connected together, and rarely inform to the commune level, therefore, if any problem happened within the group members, it is difficult to deal or seeking for the solution. Unless, they come up with problem, and it had been heart to the commune, such as the experiences so far, the committee within the group take the money of the group members, then it is needed to help to dealing from CC, but CC intervene and deal with the problem.
- ✚ The commune is openly engagement, but the external actors itself who feel concern and less engage to commune councilors. If the project just implement without inform to CC, CC could not understand and measure, when it start and when will finish, and what the outcome or accomplishment from the project.
- ✚ If NGOs come to work in collaboration with CC, the project will be more effective as CC would help them in strategic direction and help when the project faced out. If NGOs just directly and work with village chief, he/s may have limitation of strategic to support. Sometimes, CC could just frighten villagers to push them to participate to get better outcome, i.e. CC could warning that if they don't participate to do it, they will difficult to access birth certificate, so they agreed to participate and serve for their own benefit.
- ✚ Authorities suggest NGOs come to collaborate in term of project during the investment workshop and get the project in order to make it better and more effective. NGOs just come direct immediate to the area and implemented is not so good. Moreover, brought the project through Investment, CC could catch up what have been done within the commune, and easier record the accomplishment of the project.

A-3 Information

Access to information is importance for the practice of social accountability. The information on public services and official fees and the information on citizens' livelihood have been disseminated through the communities. The extent of awareness and understanding of the content and process to approach the information vary from place to place. The effectiveness of the information dissemination depends on the methodology and capacity of the CCs, DCs and CBOs. From the interview, not only CCs and DCs who are obligated to circulate the information to the community but also CBOs are empowered to do so. CBOs have conducted meetings at village, where they have a space for circulation of information on public services and requested information by community.

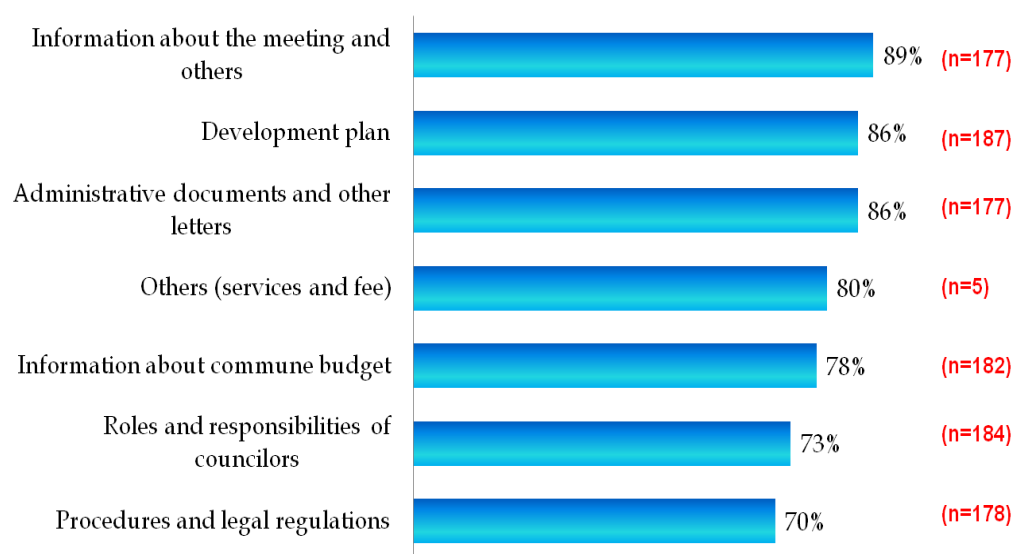
Access to information in target areas of Increasing Access to Public Information Project

As mentioned in the target area, NGOs also seeks to encourage coordination among governments, citizens and the private sector. NGOs were recognized and became a key partner of the sub-national government and the parliament in addressing the needs and concerns of Cambodian citizens, particularly marginalized and venerable groups. In many ways, NGOs has played a critical role in achieving goals of democratization, participation, good governance, poverty reduction, social accountability and development.

Types of most-sought information sought by NGOs/CBOs

Typically NGOs and CBOs go to the communes or district halls to seek for existing information and the one announced by the national level. Most respondents (89%) seek for information on meetings and announcements. Other types of information they also sought for include roles and duties of local councils, Information on commune budget, public services and official fees, and Administration documents and other letters/notifications. Information on Laws and Regulations were sought for by 70% of respondents.

Figure 9: Types of most information sought by NGOs/CBOs



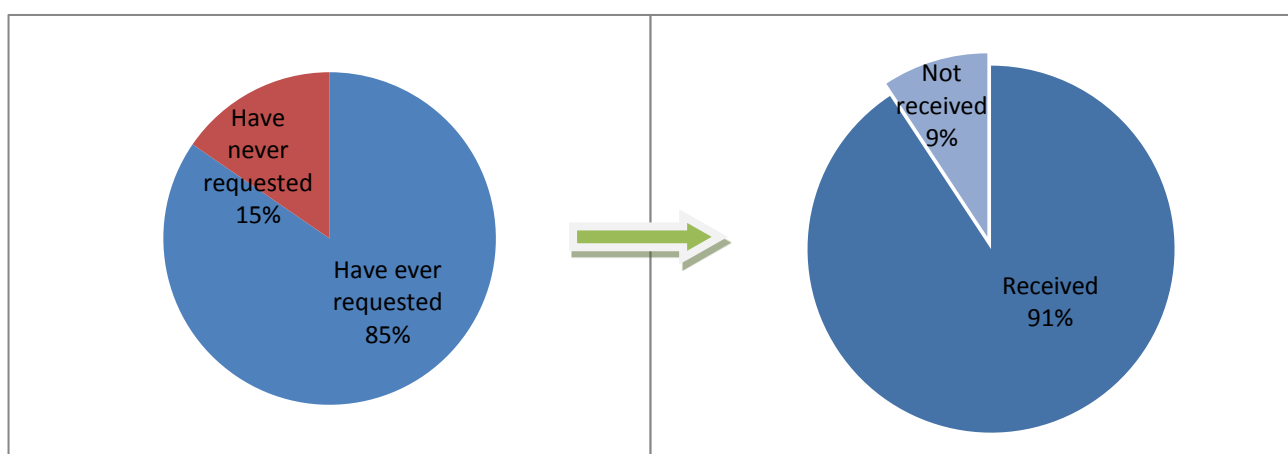
Information Sharing

In general, the local authorities and people in communities share information to each other through a variety of means, including meetings and public gatherings, such as monthly commune and district meetings, public forums, training workshops, community committee meetings, verbal reporting, door-to-door informing, community forest committee meetings, traditional ceremonies and festivals, consultative meetings to solve village issues, public posters and during the process of other events in the areas.

To answer to the needs of information from the citizens, local authorities have requested relevant information from different sources, particularly state institutes and higher level of authority. Based on the result of the survey, 84.58% of local authorities have requested the information from other sources to answer the needs of their work and to response to the request by citizens, while 15.42% have not requested.

Figure 10: Experience in requesting information

Figure 11: Requested information received



It is interesting if we look further, there are 91% of the requesters have received the information requested from the various resources. Only 9% have not received the information.

The Sources of Information

The accessibility of the information varies from place to place. In general, the information is accessible at government institutions, district and commune halls, social events, NGOs' outreach activities, public media, social media, Email and people (informants).

Table 1: Sources of information for Commune Councils

Places	Media	Events	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs and CBOs in the local areas State institutions/bodies, relevant ministries District, commune and province halls and village heads' houses Commune and district police stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TVs, radio, video show, Facebook, Telephones, Internet, whiteboard, information board, manuals, newspapers, magazines, books, brochures, advertising posters, information leaflets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promotion events, public information dissemination Citizens, public meetings, gatherings, public forums Training workshops, seminars Commune and district meetings and meeting reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commune councils, district councils, provincial governors, public leaders Village volunteers, CBOs Citizens

Types of information dissemination at commune

The districts and communes released a number of public information in 2014, mainly on laws and general information for livelihood. Some key contents and articles of laws are selected for the information dissemination activities at commune and district. They derived from the Laws on: Civil Registration, Land Traffic, Marriage and Family, Domestic violence, Fishery, Access to information, Environment, Land management, Guidelines for legal protection of Women's and Children's Rights in Cambodia, process of law development in Cambodia.

During the dissemination activities, they included also many other sub-topics, including public services and official fees at commune and district, CIP, DIP, agriculture, citizens' right to information, access to information, legal and illegal work migration, health care for mothers, gender equity, commune and district funding, vaccination for children and mothers, prevention on domestic violence, victim protection, information on project bidding, commune monthly reports, decisions made at commune, information on training workshops on agriculture and pesticide use, registration for national election, addictive drug, youth gangsters, official fees of electricity, principles of safe villages and communes/sangkats, hygiene, clean water, passport services, promotion for school registration, illegal businesses, flood prevention, nutrition, illegal deforestation, illegal fishery, ID Poor Card usage, small scale agriculture, family vegetable plantation, child trafficking, information on construction of new buildings of social services, loan for livelihood improvement, infrastructure for agriculture, and civic registration.

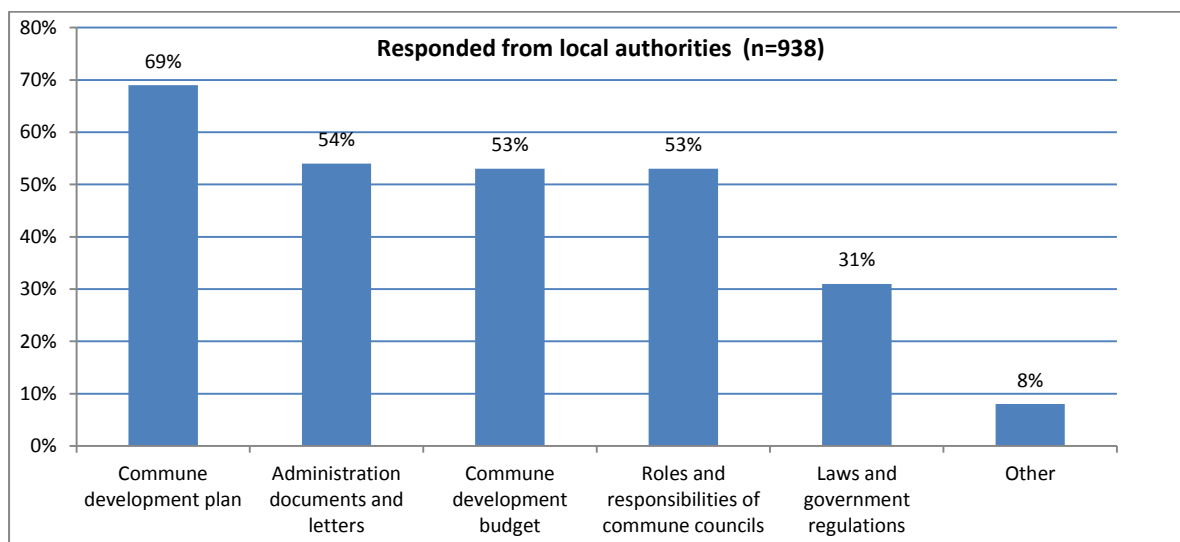
Access to Information at Commune

The LA expressed their need various types of information for their daily work, which list below:

1. Official fees of public services and list of public services at commune and district, including price and process to obtain a passport from the local service (i.e. from OWSO)
2. Price of clean water, electricity, and agricultural products (rice, potato etc.) and other goods in market, etc.
3. Procedure of administration at commune and district and at ministries
4. Current exchange rates, and weather forecasting
5. Laws of various sectors and other legislations such as degree, sub-degree, policies and guideline (Commune/Sangkat Administration, Administrative Management of the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts and Khans Constitution, Human Right, Court, Child trafficking, migration, forestry, domestic violence, access to information, land administration, land, traffic, environment, etc.)
6. Roles and responsibilities of local authority, financial officers, government offices
7. Organisational chart of commune councils, commune development committees
8. Social accountability of the local authority to citizens reported from NGOs, government offices, departments, institutions of different districts and provinces
9. Learning and teaching activities, including absenteeism of teachers and students, things to improve at school, enrolment rate, school bullying
10. Commune and district information, administration procedures at district and commune, at Ministry of Interior, Daily, monthly and annually reports from other local authorities reported to communes
11. Telephone numbers of district and commune councils, commune focal persons, district police, commune police
12. Training information notices on different skills (Email, public administration, admonition process), and other reading materials of general knowledge and experiences for different work
13. Information exchange from national level to sub-national level and vice visa
14. Monthly, annual commune funds, district budget and expense, national income, report of IP3-2 2015-2017, budget for development at district and commune, funds from donors, development plans at commune and district, program of activities at commune, budget for facilitation activities (whiteboard, marker, flipchart, refreshment, posters, etc.)
15. Other issues such as migration, election, addictive drug, commune safety and security, child care, gambling, infrastructure, construction of water systems for farming, religion, business administration, how to learn Khmer and foreign languages, agriculture, corruption, etc.

The below explain the types of information that can be accessed. Among the information, most of respondents including citizens, CBOs, NGOs responded that information that can be the most easily accessible is commune development plan (69%), while only 31% of them rated the other laws and regulations. About 50% of them rated the information about administration documents, letters, commune budget and roles and duties of commune councils as the most easily accessible documents.

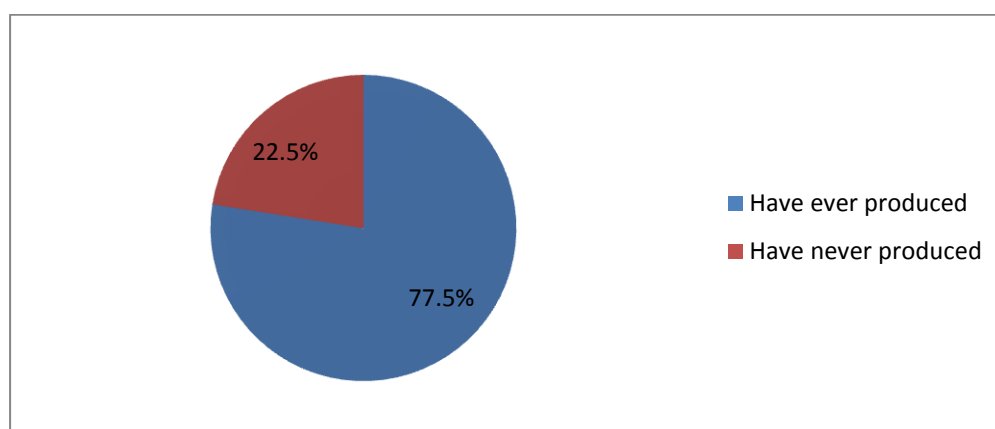
Figure 12: The types of information and rating most easily accessible



Strategies and Means for Information Dissemination and Information Disclosure

Varied from place to another, district and commune councils have employed various means of information dissemination and disclosure. They employed the following mechanisms for information dissemination and disclosure such as Information Education and Communication (IEC) material produced by local authority with various types of information. Following this means, the study found little high number (77.5%) of local authorities said that they have ever produced the information in the form of IEC materials or informal posters for the citizens, while 22.5% have never. This is more likely part of having NGOs support in those target areas.

Figure 13: IEC Material Produced by Local Authority



Most local authorities know about their roles to collect, manage, use and disseminate of the information of their institution. The survey shows that 93.3% of them know about the roles and only 6.7% do not know about that (figure 14). Moreover, refers to the response to adequate of information, it showed 68.4% local authority reported that the citizens have received adequate information for their livelihood, while 31.6% of them said the information is not adequate (figure 15).

Figure 14: Understanding of their roles in information collection, management, and dissemination

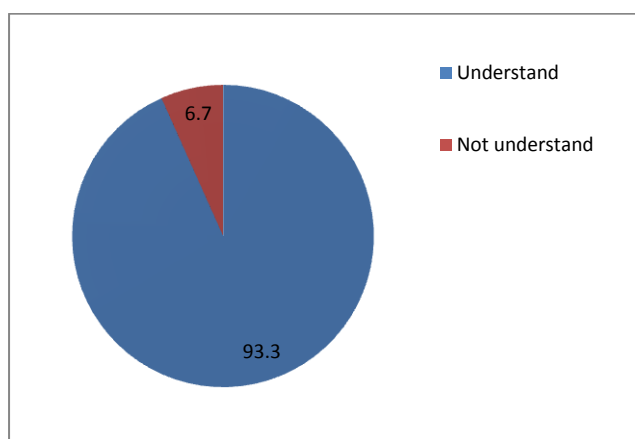
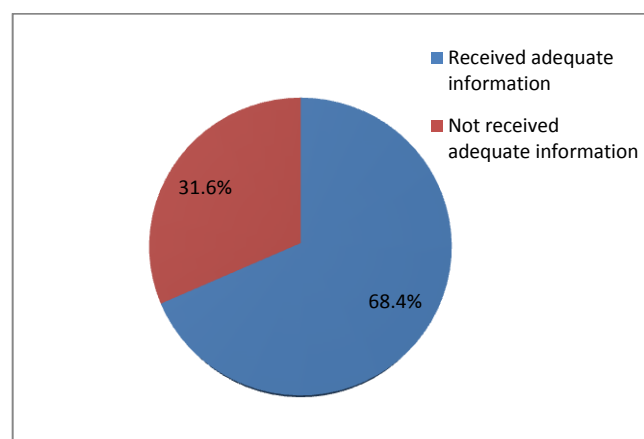
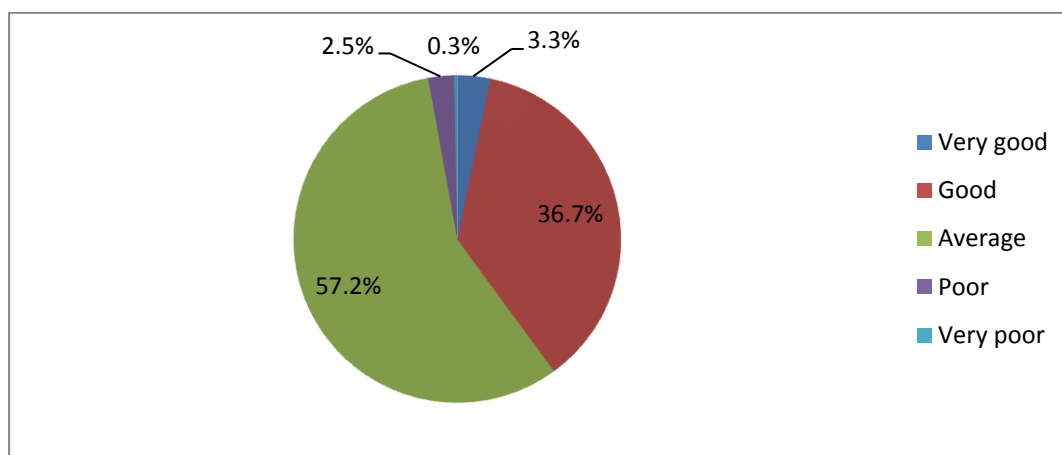


Figure 15: Responses about adequate information at commune about their livelihood



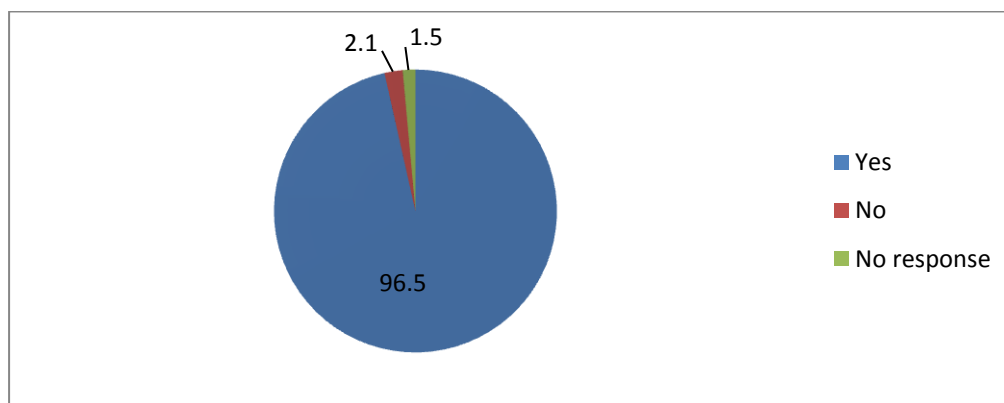
Local authorities' ability to collect, manage, use and circulate the information for their institution varies from place to place. Most of them (57.2%) rated their ability 'average', followed by 36.7% rated 'good'. Only 3.3% rated their ability at 'very good', while 2.5% rated 'poor' and 0.3% rated 'very poor'.

Figure 16: Ability in information collection, management, and dissemination



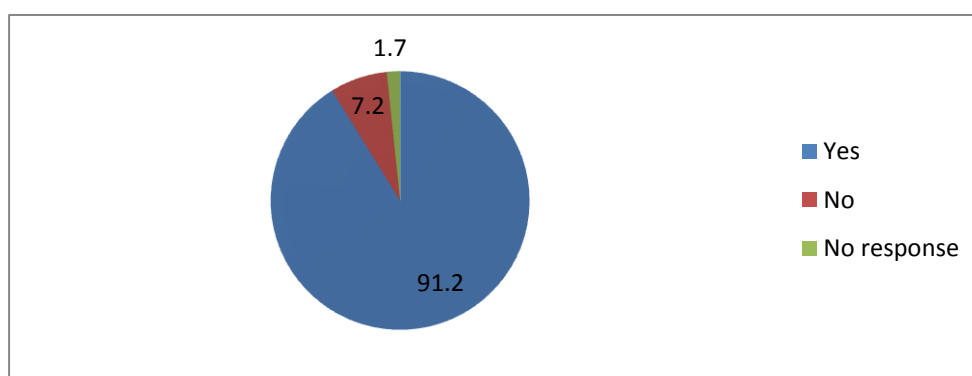
On their own judgment in the figure below, there are up to 96.5% of local authorities rated the accessibility of the disclosed public information at sub national that it is easily accessible by the citizens. The rest number are said 'no', and not response to the question.

Figure 17: The level of accessibility of the disclosed public information delivered by LAs



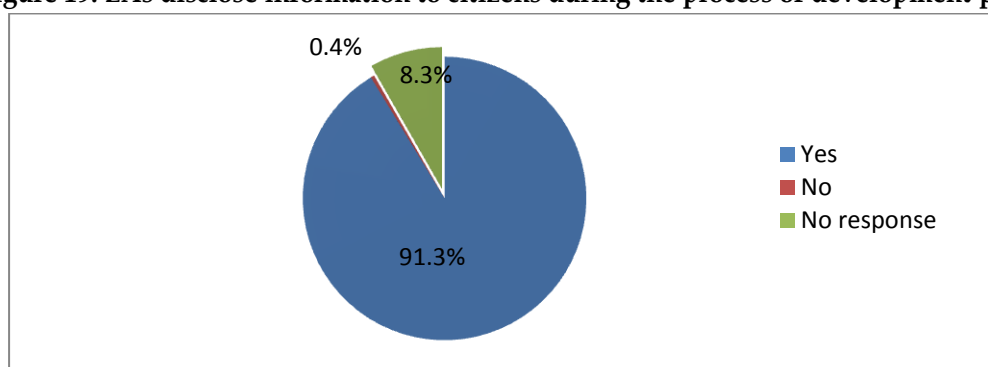
Most of local authorities (91.2%) see that the information has been disclosed according to the needs of commune councils, while only 7.2% said it has not. The public information is mainly about public services and official fees for those services at commune.

Figure 18: District and provincial authorities disclosed information to the needs of CC



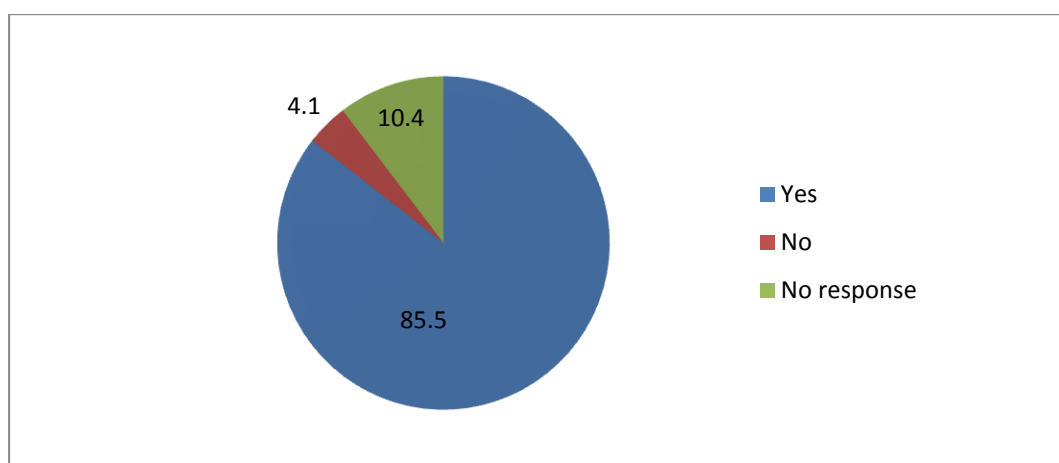
Most of local authorities (91.3%) have understood about their obligation in circulation and disclosure of the public information to the citizens, while only 0.4% thinks that they do not have any obligation to do so.

Figure 19: LAs disclose information to citizens during the process of development planning



To effectively develop CIP, commune councils need financial and technical supports or inputs. Most of LAs (85.5%) said they have received these supports, while 4.1% have not received any supports. With the 10.4% did not answer the question who might be either they missed the items or they do not know the answer. In general, they received various forms of support, mainly forms of inputs/ideas, capacity building, fund for commune, and implementation of community development. Other forms of supports include monthly nutrition, small loans for poor family, education service and infrastructure, scholarship for students, fund for health centre, animals, health care for mothers and children, disclosure of inter-ministry information, information board, fund for children, road building, forum organizing, and clean water for communes.

Figure 20: The received financial, and technical supports or information for CIP 2014



There are some reasons that lead to such difficulties for coordination and participation in development activities at commune. LAs raised a number of reasons as follows:

- ✚ Not adhere to the Law on administered and transferred responsibilities and roles
- ✚ Limited education of citizens and commune councillors
- ✚ Not paying attention to the guidelines from the national level
- ✚ Shortage of fund raising
- ✚ Low willingness and devotion of time for public interest
- ✚ Old mind set
- ✚ Chiefs of commune are not well aware of information; and they do not circulate and consult to validate the information
- ✚ Not clear methods of working
- ✚ Inconsistent and partisan work or lack of internal unity, trust, and mutual understanding
- ✚ Mixed skilled members of commune councils
- ✚ Not implemented according to plan or what agreed upon
- ✚ Citizens do not want to participate in any activities organized by commune
- ✚ Not respect to the working time
- ✚ Some chiefs of commune keep information for themselves and their partisan team only

Means of information dissemination

- ✚ Information boards, leaflets, posters, loud speakers and other IEC materials
- ✚ Forums, information dissemination activities at commune and village
- ✚ Information circulation at company premises, at CBO meetings,
- ✚ Information circulation at the gathering at pagoda, schools, *SalaChhorTea*n (community hall), state institutions, passing information from one to another, letters of information, national anthem session at school, training workshops, NGOs and reporting to stakeholders.
- ✚ Questions and answers at gathering places
- ✚ Outreach activities in the public places/areas, mobile loud speakers
- ✚ Outreach activities to households, television stations, radio stations, newspapers
- ✚ Online social media, information bookcases, social and ritual ceremonies (wedding, festivals), direct talk to citizens, information sharing on phone

Challenges of the practice access to information

- ✚ Low commitment to fulfil the responsibilities due to shortage of income
- ✚ Follow the traditional way of management
- ✚ Bad leadership
- ✚ No social accountability, budget issue, short budget for expense for administration
- ✚ Chief of commune does not share information and discuss the issues with others
- ✚ Implementation without monitoring
- ✚ Decision is done without proper discussion

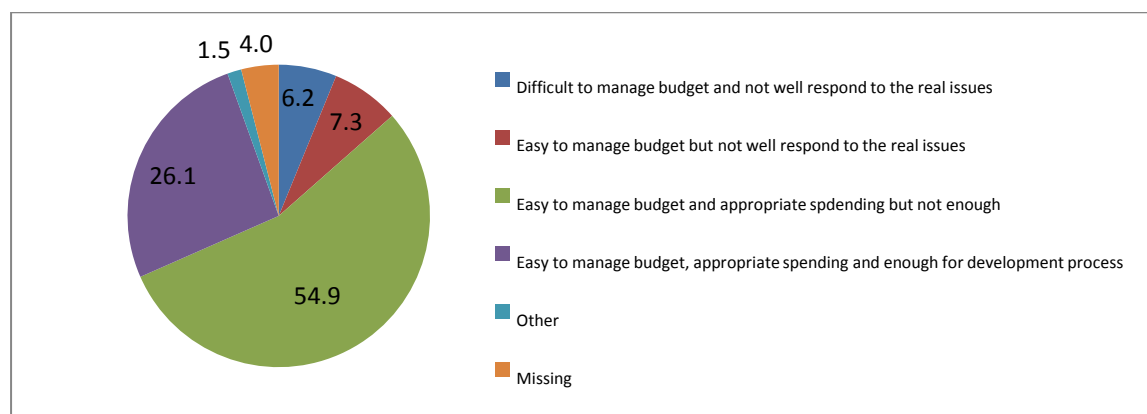
A-4 Managing Resources

Commune Resources for Need of Community People

Through decentralization process, the national budget had been allocated to the sub-national level through their own development plan. The budget for commune development plan had been increased from time to time. Some commune could manage the budget and set up appropriate plan response to the need of the community. However, there are challenges in managing the commune budget and several study noted that the commune budget is mostly use for physical infrastructures.

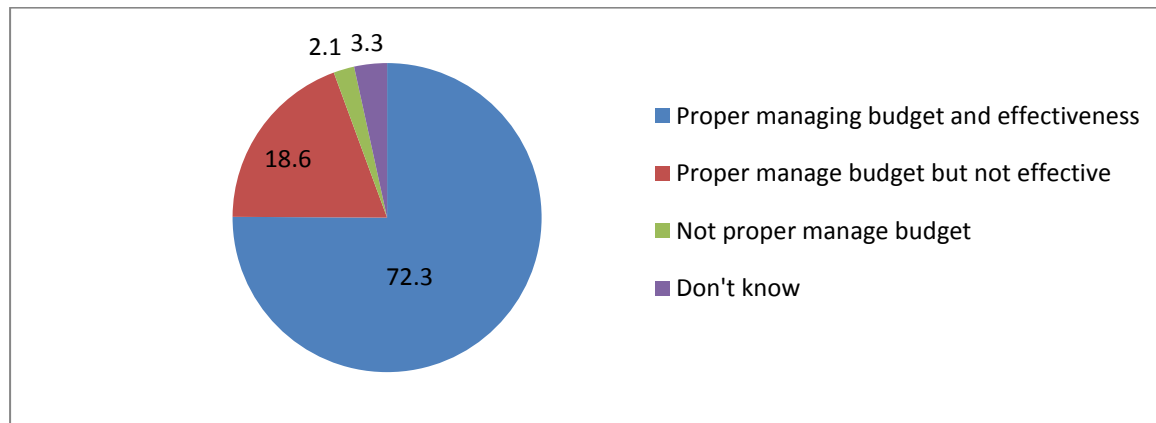
The figure below shows that local authorities reported the difficulties in using the budget and resources at sub national. Most of them (54.9%) said that it easy to manage the budget and appropriate spending, but the budget is not enough. With 26.1% said that it is easy to manage budget, proper spending and enough budgets for development. Of 6.2% said it is difficult to manage budget and not well respond to the real issues; and 7.3% said it is easy to manage budget but not well respond to the real issues.

Figure 21: Perception over the procedure and process of managing commune budget



Moreover, most of local authorities (72.3% of respondents) said that the process and procedure of budgeting and expenditure are effective and proper, while 18.6% said the management of budget is proper, but not effective. However, 2.1% reported that the process and procedure is not proper.

Figure 22: Effectiveness and properness of process and procedure of allocation of budget



In contrast, if we look at the contribution from CBOs, they have contributed to the development of the community in diverse range of support from capacity, services, and also some physical infrastructures. Through various workshops and meetings, they also help to collection of ideas and inputs for development activities and information dissemination for the community. Villagers are aware of the budget for commune development plan, but they do not know how effectively the budget is used to response to the local needs.

Challenges of community development

These are the causes and challenges that make slow development of the community extracted from the survey:

- ✚ Poor communication, lack of understanding among citizens
- ✚ Natural disaster, technical skills for project implementation
- ✚ People live with poverty, so they are not willing to or cannot afford to contribute any co-fund.
- ✚ Shortage of budget at commune and district
- ✚ Ineffective implementation by local councils and governors, who response to the requests, concerns and issues slow or not on time. Some head of villages rejects the requests by citizens.
- ✚ There are high demand of needs and issues raised by citizens
- ✚ Local authorities do not adhere to their roles and responsibilities.
- ✚ Some development activities, particularly by private companies, affect the livelihoods of the local people
- ✚ Safety and security that causing by some bad people/gangsters
- ✚ Local authority has limited knowledge and understanding
- ✚ Not enough information dissemination
- ✚ Local authority does not pay enough attention to the needs of the citizens
- ✚ Poor quality of bidding procedure

B- INFORMATION BY CSO SECTOR

B-1 Operation

Among CSOs

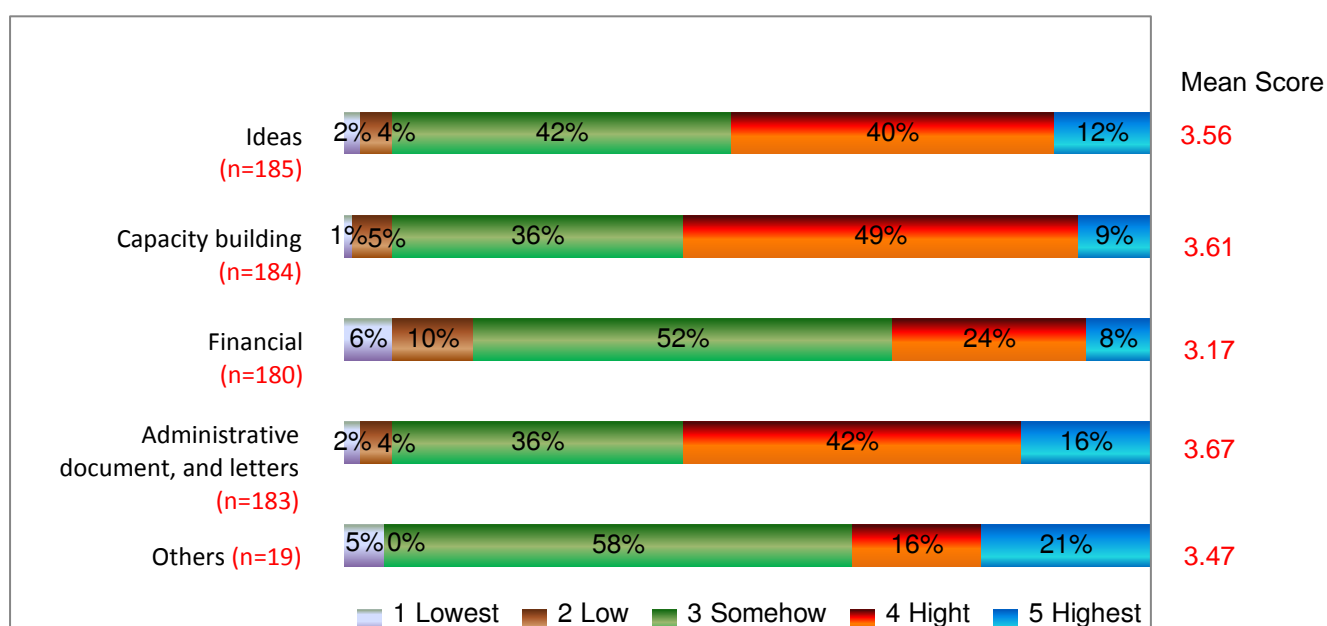
CSOs work on diversity of services to support for livelihood improvement and poverty reduction, and the protection of natural resources. CSOs provide technical, financial and other kinds of supports to their targets. Through the technical support, development facilitators provide the course of training on agriculture technique and practical experiences such as vegetable growing, animal raising and SRI and so on. Most of the projects also support in infrastructures such as canal, school, and so on. Beside the goods and services deliveries, some certain projects are working to promote better democratic space that promotes good governance and accountability for better democratic space in Cambodia. Currently, there is a promotion of public forum where NGOs support, therefore, the authorities could better reflect on the problems and their performance in the local community.

In this regards, CSOs normally receive much appreciation from beneficiaries and stakeholders in providing effective programing and good impacts to the community. However, the commune councillors have suggested to have a longer project cycle as some of the projects are too short, and then faced out from local community. It remains unsustainable development within the community, and unorganized to manage themselves. Moreover, they further raised the problem that most of NGOs operate independent projects, where all the respected organizations are not well connected and coordinated.

From CSOs to Commune

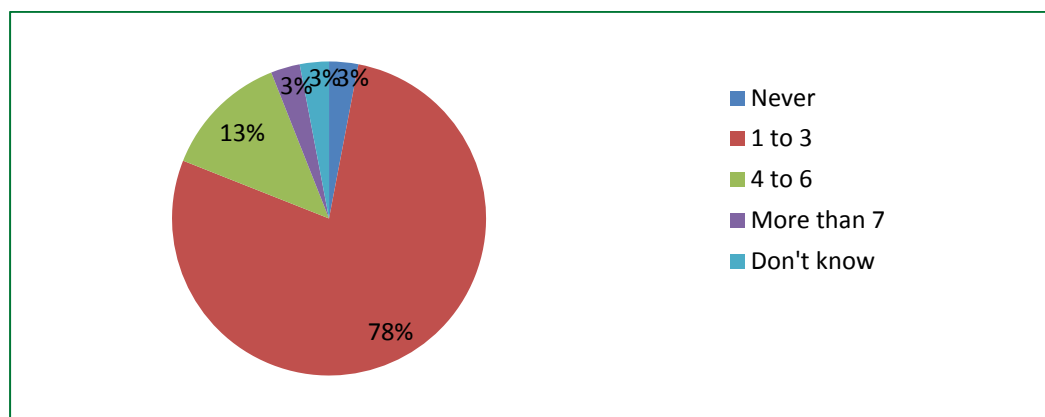
Moreover, as illustrated in Figure 1 from the survey, the mean score of different supports from CSOs sectors on different services is 3.49. Regarding the average level of support are nearly all variables reach to the high level of supporting. Among those services, it is higher for capacity building (3.61) and administrative support in documents and letters (3.67). It is similar response from local authorities where financial support is the lowest among other services to the commune level.

Figure 23: Types and level of support from CSOs to Commune



Public forum is the event to reflect what have been done related to the services provided for the local community. The results from the survey with CSOs respondents showed a significant number of forum conduct in 2014 at the commune level at least from 1-3 times a year (78%), and up to 4-6 times with 13%. It is noted some communes conducted more than seven times a year only 3%.

Figure 24: The frequency of public forum conducted at the commune level



The in-depth study shows that the forum is really important to reflect the performance and services, as well as problems that happening at the commune. Thus some authorities feel challenging with the confrontation of issues raised, but they could learn and see their own issues to be further addressed. The interview with different stakeholders such as authorities, CBOs, and NGOs working at the commune level express their appreciation with the forum. However, it is needed a strong coordination and appropriated response as well as take all problems into appropriate action, if they could not address all those problem properly, there will getting worse and losing trust from local people.

B-2 Cooperation and relationship

Among CSOs sector

NGOs have a coordination system at the provincial level by their selected representative where they have arranged the meeting every two months. The sectorial/sub-committee also formed to have a separated meeting with their specific areas of work such as on health, education, etc. Most of the agendas for the NGOs at the provincial meeting are updated about their challenges and progress, joint effort to take action, and sharing update information and capacity development support amongst CSOs. This coordination unit used to express about the effective and overlapping working among CSOs at the target community, but such problems still occurred at some target areas.

In an in-depth interview with the individual organization, they reported as they had expanse their program without notice for NGOs working in the area. On the other hand, some NGOs target the areas for the projects based on the needs of problems at the community. Whilst some of the target areas are identified from donors, which the implementing organization cannot changes. Therefore, some of the project implementation have overlapping with the target on the similar project. As told by of one the NGO. *"..... donor should not strictly identify the target areas as now we have more follow to the donor .."* (an NGOs working on women issues)

From the rank of discussions and in-depth interviews with many respondents about CSOs working arrangement with their own sector, we have learnt that many CSOs have been working with their own development agenda. They have mostly connected to the CBO and the focal points who are the active players in the community. NGOs development activists introduce with their ideas, projects implementation, and fine the way to have better integrate with the need of local people.

It is interest, from a range of interviews and discussions, there is no reported of having formally talked and discussed or arranged their working strategy together for effectively and efficient working together at the same target areas. Though it is not highly raised from them and the local organizations about the affect from such working arrangement, but local agents report about spending much time to propose meeting, and some confusion with the ideas where they want the local people to implementation the projects. For example, one local community people could belong to many saving groups coordinated by NGOs workers, and it could put some problems with loan shifting from one to another, and have to participate in many different saving activities. However, from the need of local community, both CBOs and authorities do not feel a problem of overlapping, but they try to engage to have more organizations operating the projects within their community.

NGOs and CBOs having projects operating at the local community, mostly, working on their own issues, such as saving activities. CBOs rarely come together to discuss about their strategy to work together. While in many respects civil society is working better together on key events and issues and there is a more varied and vibrant civil society emerging, there still remains issues with NGO cohesion and collaboration. As a 2010 review of the NGO Sector in Cambodia noted, “All NGOs carry out their mandate independent of each other and how all these contribute to the overall goal of the sector is unclear.”¹² One NGO representative interviewed described NGO coordination as like dealing with “crabs in a basket”, in that as soon as the NGOs are put in together they start to crawl out again. The main reasons cited for this lack of collaboration and mutual support was due to donor policies and funding, competition over financial resources, personalities and public image¹³.

CSOs identify the actors influent to development prioritize and any decision making within the commune

The result in this figure from CSOs is not much different having from local authorities described above section. The commune authorities could put high level of prioritizes planning and decision making among their councilors, which about 85%. Local people take the second lead in prioritize of plan, but this second lead come to replace by village authorities in any decision making at the commune. However, it also influenced from level of authorities who engage in the process such as district authorities (31%), and some more little from district councilors (11%), and CSOs as well.

Figure 25: Actors influent to commune development plan

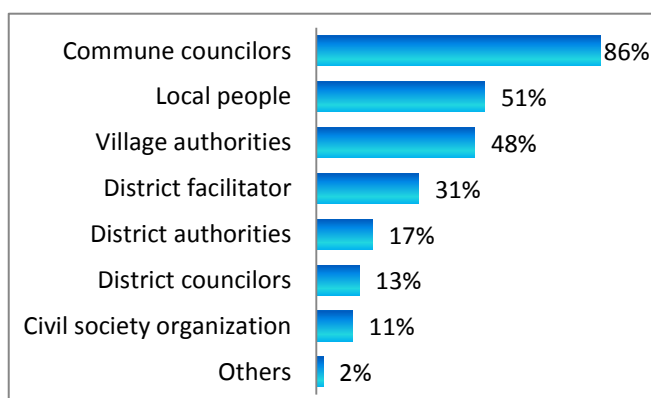
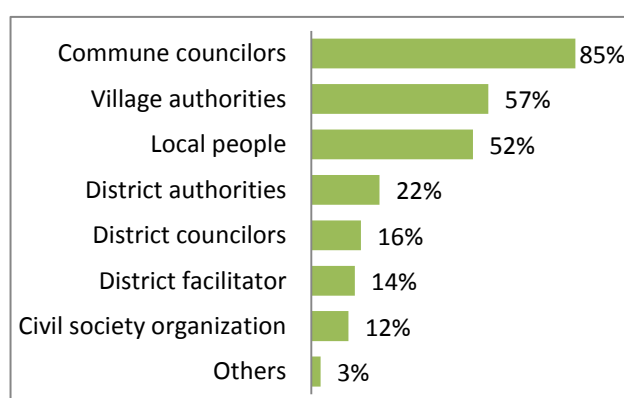


Figure 26: Actors influence to decision making

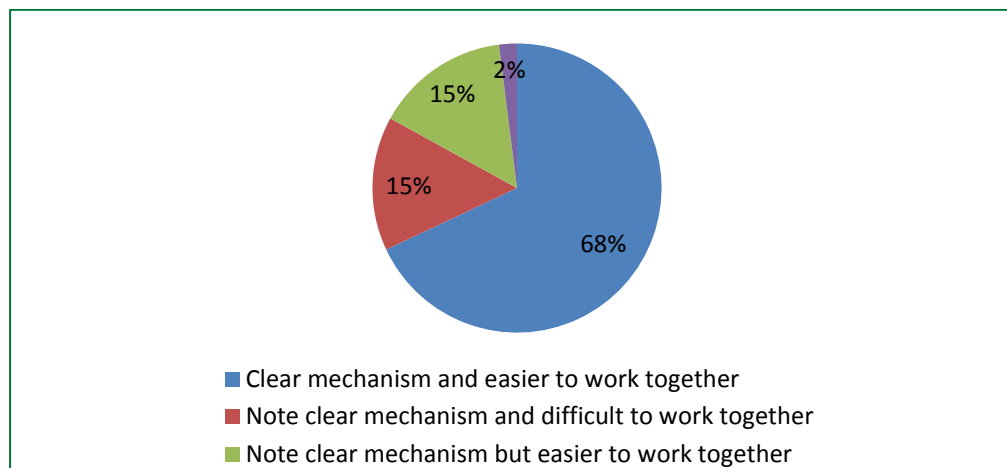


¹² Banez-Ockleford, Jane and Catalla, August 2010. Reflections, Challenges and Choices: 2010 Review of the NGO Sector in Cambodia. Phnom Penh: CCC.

¹³ Bottomley, R. (2014). The Role of Civil Society in Influencing Policy and Practice in Cambodia. Report for Oxfam Novib. Also available at <https://www.worldcitizenspanel.com/assets/The-Role-of-Civil-Society-in-Influencing-Policy-and-Practice-in-Cambodia.pdf>.

The survey with CSOs shows a good way of working together between CSOs and local authorities. This result is lower compare to the result from local authorities (68% viewed by authorities vs 87%viewed by CSOs) that express the way that they are working with CSOs sectors is clear mechanism and easier to work together. Up to 30% response don't have clear mechanism to work together, in which half by half having difficult and easy to work together.

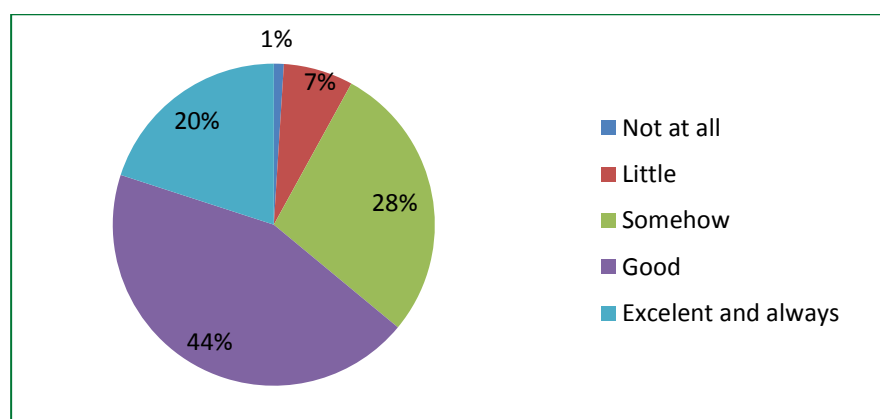
Figure 27: The thought over the cooperation of work among civil society



This may response to qualitative interview that some organizations expressed their difficult work to engage with local authorities. Moreover, they raised about the complicated system of working arrangement where they need to have MoU and agreed from other line ministries that sometimes departments slow acted, beside engagement with local authorities.

Moreover, if we look at the evaluation of working environment that enable CSO working at the commune level, the result of the survey from CSOs show less compare to local authorities (44% vs. 56%) in providing a good enabling environment for CSOs where they can work in the community. But the average level of enabling to let CSOs work with sometimes meeting with difficulty is 28%, which higher than the result from local authorities (19%). Whilst providing a great welcome and accommodate for the work of CSOs is similar result about 20% response excellent and always allow.

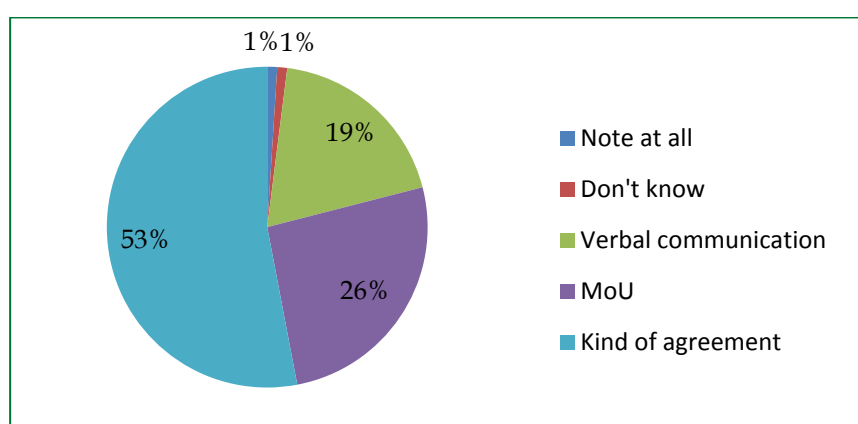
Figure 28: Whether the local authorities provide enabling the cooperation from civil society



However, the in-depth study provide further interesting the collaboration between CSOs and commune authorities getting much better, and more noted in the new mandate of councillors, especially after the new form of government in the fifth mandate. The authorities give more open space and favour to attract and accommodate for CSOs provide development projects in their community.

Moreover, if we look further for the working engagement between CSOs and authorities for processing to work together, normally, they have come to any level of agreement with local authorities. This could be just a letter of informing or other kinds supporting letter address to local authorities (53%), but not yet in the form of MoU. With 26% come up with MoU arrangement for their work, and is over 19% just a verbal communication for their work, which much higher compare to result from authorities (8%). The same result of 1% who work in the commune without any engagement with the commune level, but they may directly to work with the village level.

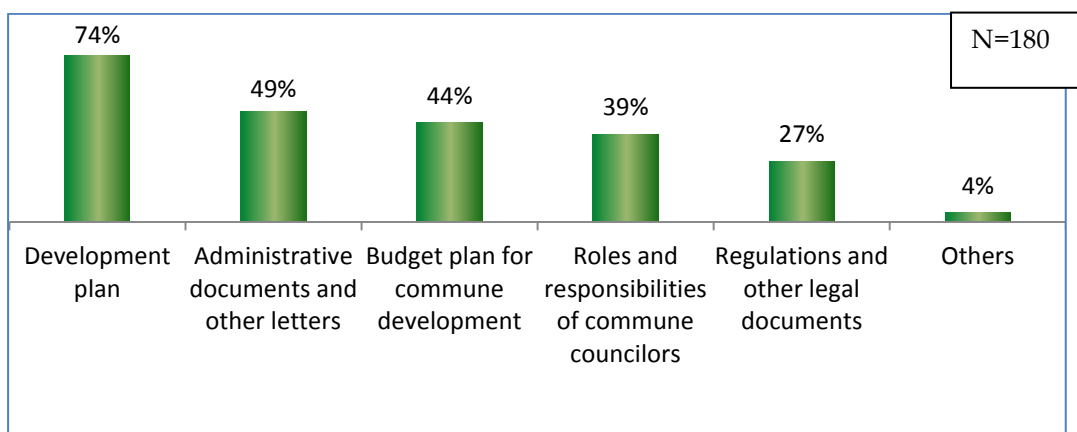
Figure 29: Working arrangement between civil society organization and local authorities



B-3 Information Access

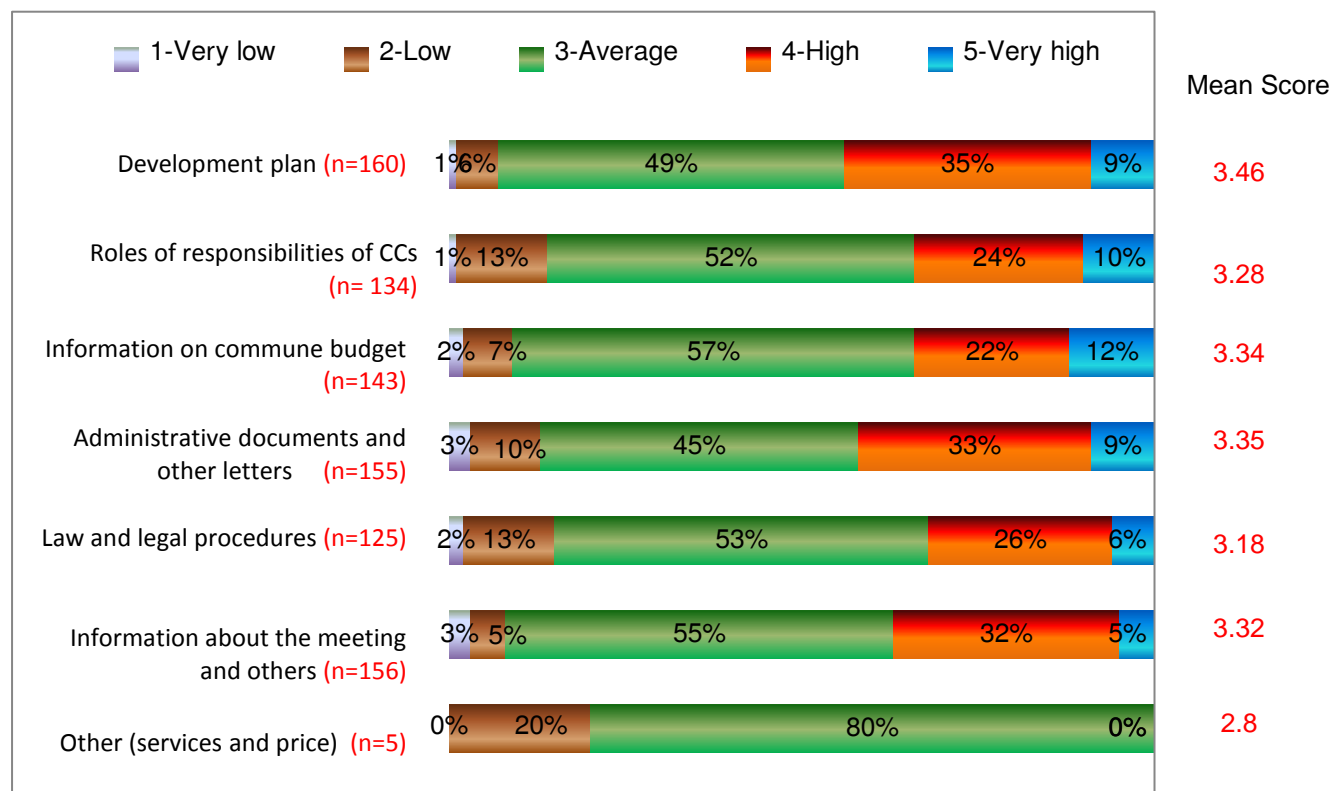
Access to information is really important in democratic development. It helps to promote awareness and participation of local commune. Result from the survey below explain they types of information that can be accessed, and it follow the similar types in the ranges of the result to the information from local authorities described on access to information section above. Among these types of information access is high for commune development plan (74%), while only 27% of them rated the other laws and regulations. About half of all other information access, except roles and responsibility is lower (39%).

Figure 30: Types of the most access information from the commune councillors



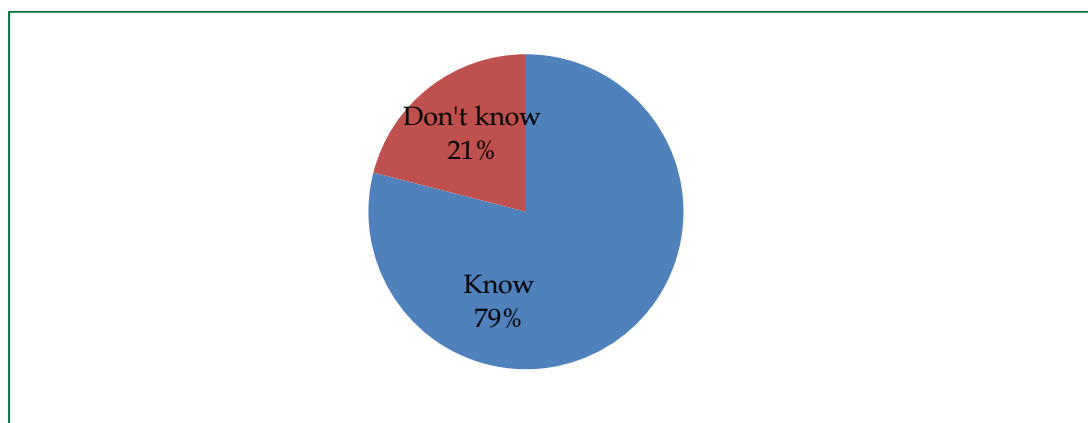
The survey result illustrated the most information, where access to CC is about development plan (mean score=3.46) and follow by administrative documents and letters (3.35) and information about commune budget (3.34). Therefore, all of the information access is still limited where people have access to commune level. As the data show it stay still high at the average level only that cover between at least 45% up 80 %.

Figure 31: The most information that easier access



The commune normally conducted a meeting with allow the participation from other stakeholders to observe and see what have been discussed. Those participants also allow to raise any issues and comments at the last agenda of the meeting. The information about the commune meeting is important for efficient participation. The survey showed there are 79% know the date, and up to 21% don't know when it was conducted.

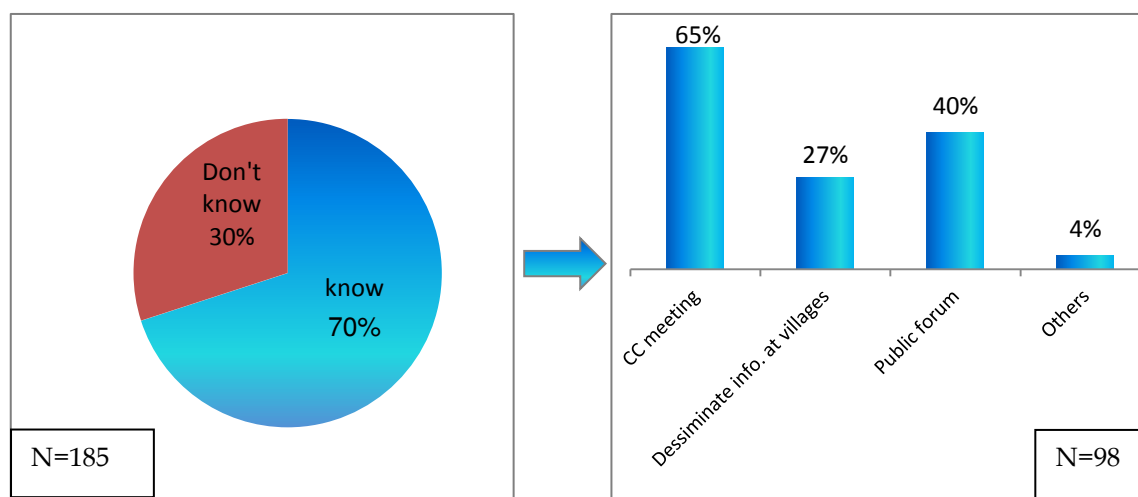
Figure 32: Know and not know the date of the commune meeting



B-4 Resource Management

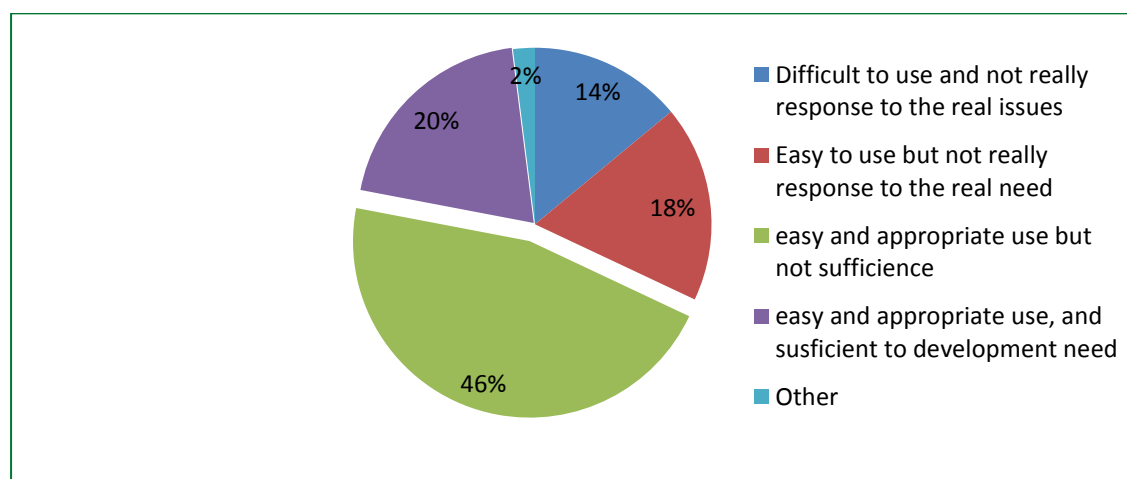
Resource management here is mentioned about the budget for commune development. Knowing about the budget is important as it could help better planning and hold more accountable to commune councilors and other actors. It is interesting there are 70% had been known about this budget, where they could learn it from the engagement in commune meeting (65%) and public forum (40%), and other source they could learn about budget information at the village level meeting (27%), and only 4% from other sources that could be an informal or individual meeting.

Figure 33: Knowing about commune budget and source of information



This question is explained the perception of the CSOs respondents over the commune budget system and how the process to manage it. The result explained similar to the result from local authorities, the process and budget is not difficult to follow and appropriate, but not sufficient is only (46%), and only 20% feel sufficient. There are 18% noted that it is easy use, not really response to the real need, and up 14% that feel that it is difficult to use and not really response to the real issues. From the in-depth interview, we can assume that it is depended on the capacity of commune councilors who familiar with the budgeting system and process to manage it for their development plan. Moreover, some communes that maybe not enough capacity or new to be on position could influent from other actors that affect to response to development issues.

Figure 34: Ideas evaluating over commune budget and process to manage



4- KEY CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS

For Sub-national Administration:

- ✚ The commune budget mostly used for physical infrastructures, while the quality is still a question from local authorities to intentionally and free to accept those infrastructures. Non-physical infrastructures should strongly turn into consideration, especially emerging issues at local community. Moreover, the limited capacity for preparation and spending on non-physical infrastructures make commune councilors complicated to focus on the issues. Therefore, most of councilors still dependent support from higher level authorities and advisors of NCDD.
- ✚ The new councilors are not strongly enough to fully activate their operation, especially beside the ruling party, additionally; they have limited connection to other level of authorities. Moreover, local administration still follows the hierarchy level of engagement, especially line ministries, and even limited to engage with commune authorities, and some authorities is not clear line of engagement such as between local police and commune authorities. In this regards, NCDDs and other actors involves should try to provide them the opportunity engagement in capacity building opportunity, meeting at provincial and national level, and development work, as well as giving clear direction of work and cooperation for effective dealing with local issues.
- ✚ The delegation of power is not well followed while the absent of commune chief, and bring to the delay of decision for work.
- ✚ The commune councilors should take time to participate and often visit the local community to see and hear the community voices and their concern as well as build up more connection.
- ✚ The clerk have taken over the own work, beyond their own responsibility and interfere with commune councils' work and decision. On the other hand, the financial budget on administrative, which coordinated by the clerk is not yet clearly transparency to all commune councilors.
- ✚ The process of consultation with local community to draw the priorities development issues are fully not consulted, and the approaches to analyse the problems for better response to the issue are not well understood.

For NGOs Development Actors:

- ✚ Better take seriously into account for CSOs who are working at the same community areas who never talk together to fine the strategic way for effective work, but keep focus on their own projects.
- ✚ NGOs don't yet have a common goal for harmonization and strategic development that lead to somehow a competitive rather than supportive, especially during the financial shortage.
- ✚ Financial and sustainability of the project is still a challenge while we still more dependent on donors, and also some donors driven the development process and agenda.
- ✚ The incentives fee for the CSOs works is not consistence as some NGOs not pay or pay less, made the community people, and even the authorities reluctant to participate.
- ✚ Some projects are not consulted with local authorities to explore effective way before implement the projects, and get supported.
- ✚ NGOs should get project through investment plan to make easier record and follow up as well as get more support from authorities, and more affectively after the project faced out. Moreover, some of the projects had agreed from NGOs at district investment, but they didn't implementing should well inform back to authorities.

The Engagement between CSOs and Authorities:

- ✚ The working arrangement still difficult with authorities, especially line ministries as it is more likely need to have official MoU to work together, where the process of MoU is further demand to sign at the ministry level.
- ✚ The communication and engagement still limited. The sharing of information amongst authorities and CSOs is limited, and it goes further less at district level.
- ✚ Participation in the development is difficult, especially for invited by local authorities, while NGOs engagement is better with some kinds of incentive supports and real knowledge sharing; therefore, it is necessary to building up more trust and effective work, better response to the need of local people.
- ✚ NGOs should closely communicate with local authorities, especially the commune level to consult their project agenda rather than follow the project design without the adaption to special conditions with specific community.

5- CONCLUSION

In getting different perception and reality from both authorities and CSOs sites for enabling environment at the local level, the study show that an overall to all dimensions including operation, collaboration, information, and resource management is similar result. It reach to some certain points, and there still limitation, and there are several issues that need to improve. However, it is getting better compare to the previous mandate of commune mandate. They get more cooperate and open from other stakeholders as well as try to gradually accept their own problems from the current practices.

Though the commune authorities working on multiple issues within the local community, and cooperation with other line departments such as health, forestry and fishery, local police, and so on, is still limited. The operation and relationship from local authorities is more following their line of authorities. In comparison, health is better connection to commune councilors, but getting less with other line departments such as forestry and fishery.

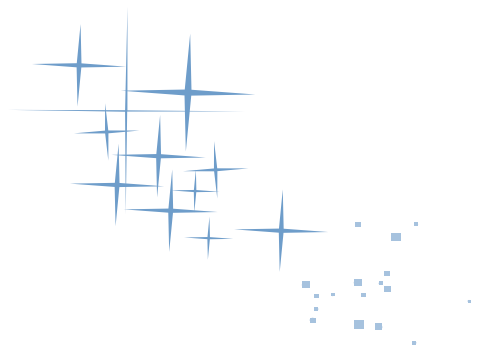
Though the relationship and enabling at the local level is more likely getting better, there is still an issue among the administrative relationship between local community and local authorities have been distrust from their slow services and limit connection with local community. Local villagers experienced of limit services for access to their civil status, and result to the limit engagement to local work organize by the local authorities. In contrast, it gets much better between CSOs and local villagers.

CSOs working in the target area at the commune level never formally talked or arranged their working strategy for effectively and efficiently working together. Mostly, they are working on their own issues. CBOs rarely come together to discuss about their strategy to work together. While in many other aspects civil society is working better together on key events and issues and there is a more varied and vibrant civil society emerging, there still remains issues with NGO cohesion and collaboration. Though it is not highly raised from CSOs and the local organizations about the affect from such working arrangement, but local agents report about spending much time to propose meeting, and some confusion with the ideas where they want the local people to implementation the projects.

Resources from CSOs site spent on diverse of sectors, and better response to the need of local community, though raised some targets and issues are driven from donors, but it is still useful and fulfil in the need to develop in the community. In contrast, resources from authorities are highly prioritized to physical infrastructures with quality in question from the beneficiaries. Following the decrease of funding support from CSOs, local authorities should try to allocate the local budget for non-physical infrastructures and emerging issues within the commune.

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Sustainable development for Cambodia.

Mission:

We provide high quality services to civil society and influence Cambodia's development actors.

Values:

- ★ Integrity
- ★ Cooperation
- ★ Responsiveness
- ★ Quality
- ★ Inclusiveness

Goal:

A Strong and capable civil society, cooperating and responsive to Cambodia's development challenges.