



តម្រូវការកម្ពុជា
TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
Cambodia

LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN CAMBODIA:



CURRENT STATUS AND CHALLENGES

About TI Cambodia

Transparency International Cambodia is the fully-accredited National Chapter of Transparency International and was officially founded on 5 July 2010 by a group of anti-corruption activists and professionals committed to the creation of transparent and accountable Cambodia. It has since built a strong institution arduously fighting corruption and promoting integrity, transparency and accountability in the country.

We work together with individuals and institutions at all levels including government, civil society, business, media and the wider public to achieve sustainable economic development, promote integrity and fight corruption.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Civil Society Organisation	(CSO)
Convention on the Elimination of All the Forms of Discrimination against Women	(CEDAW)
Focus Group Discussion	(FGD)
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	(ICCPR)
Key-Informant Interview	(KII)
Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer	(LGBTIQ)
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport	(MoEYS)
Ministry of Women’s Affairs	(MoWA)
National Strategic Development Strategy	(NSDP)
Non-Governmental Organisation	(NGO)
Royal Government of Cambodia	(RGC)
Sub-National Administration	(SNA)
Sustainable Development Goal	(SDG)
Transparency International	(TI)
Union of Youth Federation of Cambodia	(UYFC)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures and Tables	v
Executive Summary	vii
Key Terminology	xiii
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Study Background.....	2
1.2 Study Objectives.....	2
1.3 Study Methodology.....	3
1.4 Study Participants' Demographic Information.....	6
2. Policy and Issues in Context	10
2.1 Women and Youth in Leadership in Cambodia Today.....	10
2.2 Progress in Promoting Women and Youth in Leadership.....	13
2.3 Barriers to Promoting Women and Youth in Leadership Positions.....	15
3. Field Work Findings	45
3.1 Institutional Mechanism to Promote Women's Leadership.....	20
3.2 Progress in Women's Leadership in Cambodia.....	23
3.3 Support for Women's Leadership.....	26
3.4 Challenges to Women's Leadership in Cambodia.....	27
3.5 Summary on Barriers to Women's Leadership in Cambodia.....	29
3.6 Progress of Youth Leadership in Cambodia.....	34
3.7 Summary on Barriers for Youth Leadership in Cambodia.....	37
4. Discussion and Analysis	42
4.1 Barriers to Women's Leadership.....	42
4.2 Barriers to Youth Leadership.....	43
5. Recommendations	45
5.1 Recommendations for Promoting Women's Leadership.....	45
5.2 Recommendations for Promoting Youth Leadership.....	47
6. Conclusions	50
Bibliography	53
Annex 1: TOR for the Advisory Group	55
Annex 2: Data Collection Tool - Interviews	57
Annex 3: List of Participants' Recommendations by Category and Intended User	59

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figures

Figure 1 Breakdown of Participants by Age Range.....	6
Figure 2 What is Your Employment Status?.....	8
Figure 3 Are You Currently A Leader /Have Your Ever Been A Leader?.....	8
Figure 4 Global Gender Gap Report Score 2020.....	12
Figure 5 Old and Young Women Elected.....	13
Figure 6 Is There Existence and Knowledge of Gender Policy in Participant’s Organisation/Institution?.....	21
Figure 7 Is There Knowledge of Gender Policy - Male and Female Comparison?.....	21
Figure 8 Is There Systematic Engagement of Women in Decision-Making?.....	22
Figure 9 What Have Been the Changes in Women’s Leadership Since 1993?.....	23
Figure 10 From 2013 to 2018, Has Women’s Leadership Improved?.....	25
Figure 11 Is It Important to Have Women’s Voices in Decision-Making?.....	26
Figure 12 Is There Greater Female Support for Marginalised Groups Than Male?.....	26
Figure 13 Do Women Receive Enough Support to Become Leaders?.....	27
Figure 14 Are Women Holding Themselves Back?.....	27
Figure 15 What are Your Perceptions of Women’s Leadership (General Population)?.....	28
Figure 16 What are Your Perceptions of Women’s Leadership (University Students)?.....	28
Figure 17 What are Your Perceptions of Women’s Leadership Generating Positive Societal Change?.....	29
Figure 18 Are Cambodian Youth Active in Leadership?.....	34
Figure 19 Is There Systematic Engagement of Youth in the Decision-Making Process?.....	35
Figure 20 What are Your Perceptions of Youth Leadership?.....	36
Figure 21 Is it Essential to Have Youth Leaders in the Decision-Making Process?.....	36

Tables

Table 1 Respondents to the Study.....	7
Table 2 Selected Key Indicators on Women in Decision-Making 2000-2018.....	11



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction: Objectives, Methods and Scope of the Study

Empowering women and youth to participate in political and public life has been one of the core missions of Transparency International Cambodia since its inception. Through a variety of activities that TI Cambodia has carried out across the country, it was identified that women and youth are significantly under-represented in the public sphere, particularly in leadership positions at both the local and national levels. The overall objective of this study was to identify the main barriers and challenges facing Cambodian women and youth in participating in decision-making and leadership.

Specifically, this study aimed to:

- Document recent trends in women and youth leadership in Cambodia;
- Identify the progress and challenges in creating an enabling environment for youth and women to effectively participate in the decision-making process;
- Create concrete recommendations to the Government's institutions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)/ networks, and academics (schools) to effectively promote women and youth in leadership positions for the improvement of the democratic system in Cambodia.

The study relied on three methods of data collection. Primary data was obtained from in-depth interviews/Key-Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), while secondary data was acquired through desk reviews.

The primary data collection (field work interviews) was carried out from June 2019 to January 2020 and in total, 569 people responded (female 244 and LGBTIQ 10). These included officers from the national government in Phnom Penh and officials from sub-national state authorities in five provinces; Rattanakiri, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kamot and Prey Veng. In addition to the general population (male and female), 16 monks and 10 LGBTIQ people were interviewed to obtain their in-depth opinions and ideas towards youth and women's leadership.



II. Key Findings from the Literature Review

2.1. Barriers to Women's Leadership

Social norms in a patriarchal system are discriminating against women: Unequal gender relationships and power dynamics underpinned by male domination and control result in expectations that leadership roles are expected to be filled by males.

Double burden for women: Women and girls are faced with a disproportionate amount of work in their households, including unpaid work such as care for the sick and children/elderly.

Educational attainment remains a challenge for women: Access to higher education remains a barrier for many women and without access to school and to higher education, many girls are not able to access opportunities to enter leadership positions.

Lack of positive discrimination in political parties: Cambodian elections are based on a party system, and there is no quota set for women in the candidate's list for the majority of parties.

Lack of financial and political support: The financial requirements of the parties for accepting their candidates' nominations for electoral campaigns is also a barrier for women.

Institutional barriers: Historically, the decision-making process has excluded women, and this has sets barriers preventing women from becoming leaders.

2.2. Barriers to Youth Leadership

The general public has limited trust in the capacities of youth: Historical barriers include the general public in communities having a lack of trust in youth's capacity.

Financial constraints: Frequent migration among youth seeking employment opportunities can also impede youth's systematic participation in decision-making processes.

Institutional barriers: The institutional barriers that youth face while trying to access leadership positions stem from societal and cultural norms that undermine their capacities.



III. Key Findings from the Field Work

The study identified seven primary barriers to female leadership, which are summarised in the following box.

Barriers	Details
3.1. Barriers to Women's Leadership	
Family burden	Women are expected to be responsible for household chores, and must prioritise family issues, such as childcare therefore they may face obstacles in balancing family life and public life.
Lack of encouragement/ support	Many girls grow up without positive encouragement from their parents or teachers to become a leader, and they are expected to be married and to take care of the household.
Male dominance of the public sector	Decision-making or leadership in public sphere is dominated by males, and such a culture makes it difficult for women to enter the public sphere due to a lack of safe spaces for women to assert their opinions in the decision-making process.
Limited education/capacities/ confidence of women	Young women are not yet able to be leaders due to age-discrimination, or they may lack confidence to serve as a leader because they lack proper work experience.
Discrimination by men and other women	Prejudice and discriminatory attitudes from men and even other women towards female leaders were raised as barriers. The field work results also show only 38% of the participants agreed that women could make good leaders.
Stereotypes – Some teachings from the Women's Code of Conduct	"Women's Code of Conduct" were raised as a barrier and many participants to the study pointed out that stereotypes of "what women should be" restrict women's freedom and prevents women from entering public life.
Health (physical weakness and pregnancy prevent women from concentrating on decision-making/leadership)	The common perception was reported that women are physically "weak" and are not fit for public work, including taking leadership roles. Also, pregnancy was raised by many participants as a barrier to women continuing their work duties.

As with women, the study found seven major barriers preventing youth from achieving leadership roles.

Barriers	Details
3.2. Barriers to Youth Leadership¹	
Discouragement by parents	Many parents prevent their children from taking part in politics, including political events, for fear of security/safety or that their children may damage the family's reputation for any misconducts.
Age discrimination	Due to Cambodia's cultural and traditional patriarchal system, elders are tasked to make decisions, and they do not trust youth's capacities.
Limited space for youth to be leaders	The Cambodian political landscape is occupied by many experienced but elderly politicians. This gives the impression to the youth that there is no space for them to take leadership roles.
Migration for employment	Many youth are forced to drop out of school due to household financial constraints, and they migrate to work and they are busy making a living and do not have any spare time to take part in serving the public.
Limited space for freedom of expression	The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport prohibits university students from discussing politics, and this creates a significant barrier to youth engaging in the political sphere.
Nepotism	Nepotism linked to forms of corruption impede the youth from joining the decision-making process.
Lack of soft skills	Youth lack work experience and have limited soft skills but can be non-flexible to adopt themselves to the new work.

¹ Reflecting Cambodian patriarchal culture, many barriers to youth are connected to the barriers that women face.

IV. Recommendations

4.1. Recommendations - Women's Leadership

4.1.1. To State Authorities

To achieve Cambodia's Constitutional promises that a man and a woman are equal (Art.31) and equal in a family (Art. 45), take proactive measures to reduce women's burden from family responsibilities through some social protection mechanisms through the allocation of a separate budget exclusively for the use of women who wish to participate in politics, and carry out a national campaign to change society's mindsets and encourage everyone to share household work.

To facilitate the effective implementation of the Neary Rattanak V (2019-2023), the Ministry of Women's Affairs' (MoWA) five year gender mainstreaming policy and a new national policy on gender equality (2020-2030), provide women more chances to experience leadership roles by allocating sufficient budget for them through a variety of state-run programmes or special training courses and adopt more proactive policy measures to promote women in leadership roles by allocating a greater quota for women, 35% for example, in the election candidate lists for political parties. Additionally, utilise the national media network (TV and radio) and social media to promote women's leadership.

For accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality, consider accelerating positive discrimination in the hiring process for women to ensure that leadership opportunities will always be allocated to women and consider increasing the national budget to promote women's leadership, by ensuring effective mentoring and coaching for them.

To support achieving the National Strategic Development Strategy (NSDP) key goals to increase women's decision-making power, offer more scholarships to young girls and women in rural areas to allow them to have the opportunity to pursue higher education with increased numbers of safe dormitories for them, as well as encouraging parents to send their daughters to higher education.

In alignment with the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All the Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), take immediate measures to address the traditional stereotypes of women, and implement a nationwide campaign to change people's discriminatory views towards women's roles by fully utilising respected current female leaders and celebrities as campaigners to motivate people to believe "women can do anything".

4.1.2. To Civil Society Organisations

To reduce women's family burden, offer training courses on gender sensitisation for women and men to change their mindset that housework and unpaid work are only for women and that men are also able to do this work. Additionally, raise awareness among men in the community to understand that both women and men have the same capacity to be leaders and to take care of the household responsibilities.

To encourage more females to be leaders, encourage women to participate in more community development activities by providing more workshops and training courses for women to inspire them to become leaders, and create platforms and networks for women to share information and feel connected.

To change the male dominated political culture, proactively encourage women to apply for jobs at CSOs and increase the numbers of female staff members. Moreover, ensure that in decision-making process all female participants to the process are provided with opportunities to share their ideas and opinions beyond being merely 'at the table'.

To assist women in gaining leadership skills and obtain confidence, provide more leadership training programmes oriented toward girls and women, and set up mentoring programmes to boost females' confidence and facilitate the formulation of networks amongst women at different levels of society through social media.

To eliminate the negative stereotypes associated with women's roles and to change misperceptions that women are "the weaker sex", organise conferences by inviting school principals from all levels (from pre-primary to university) to promote

female leadership so that teachers will pay more attention to promoting female leadership.

4.1.3. To Schools and Academics

To encourage more females to be leaders, take more proactive measures to promote females to be leaders in academic institutions in a systematic manner. Recruit more female teachers and professors in higher educational institutions to demonstrate female capacities to the younger generation and that females can be academic leaders.

To change the male dominated political culture, to create a more female-friendly environment proactively recruit more female professors in the faculty of law and also provide a more gender-sensitive education to both boys and girls from an early age.

To assist women to gain leadership skills and confidence, offer specialised courses for girls and young women to learn about leadership, organise workshops and programmes to promote female leadership in the school curriculum starting from the early primary school grades.

To eliminate the negative stereotypes associated with women's roles and to change misperceptions that women are "the weaker sex", educate both boys and girls about gender equality by creating a gender-sensitive curriculum for all schools by using age-appropriate materials. Reach out to the older generation to gain support a change in their understanding that both boys and girls need to contribute towards the physical and emotional work of the household.

To understand more about the mentoring and coaching potentials in Cambodia, conduct research to identify what types of mentoring programmes have been implemented in Cambodia and create a Cambodian model for mentoring as it is not yet commonly available in the country.

To understand more about female leadership in the private sector, conduct research to identify enabling factors for females, especially young females, to become successful businesswomen, and inform the public about women's capacities as business leaders.

4.2. Recommendations - Youth Leadership

4.2.1. To State Authorities

To effectively implement the National Youth Policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, establish a committee of youth representatives from diverse backgrounds (ethnic minorities, youth with disabilities, young LGBTIQ people) in every ministry to systematically engage young people in the decision-making process.

To achieve Constitutional promises that everyone in Cambodia is equal (Art.31) and a principle of no discrimination enshrined in many international laws that Cambodia has ratified, promote more youth to be leaders by providing leadership training, and proactively recruiting and promoting youth in the state structure by providing more opportunities for young people to work through mentoring and coaching services to enable them to develop confidence and to learn from experienced and senior leaders.

To ensure the effective implementation of internationally agreed upon promises to uphold freedom of expression, such as in International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), remove a barrier to young people voicing their opinions of politics in academic institutions, and enhance dialogue about decision-making to inspire youth to join a decision-making process.

To facilitate its effort to accelerate anti-corruption measures by the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Royal Government of Cambodia, accelerate the process of reducing corruption and nepotism to make sure that all opportunities are equal, especially for female youth, from every background in all state institutions.

4.2.2. To Civil Society Organisations

To create more space for youth to be leaders, provide more internship opportunities for youth, especially targeting young females, help youth to gain more work and leadership experience, provide more training, and organise attractive workshops or short study courses by prioritising the needs of the youth. Provide systematic mentoring and coaching support as a part of the CSOs' programmes with the youth.

To eliminate age-based discrimination, create more campaigns and events, such as community gatherings, to increase older people’s awareness and understanding of the importance of youth participation in leadership and in decision-making processes, especially by promoting young females to reach out to the older generation to change their mindsets.

To encourage inter-generational learning opportunities, organise seminars and meetings that invite and encourage both youth and elders to share their challenges, experiences, and hopes for the future of Cambodia.

4.2.3. To Schools/Academics

To create more space for youth to be leaders, create youth leadership programmes in the school system, such as school clubs or student unions, organise more attractive events where youth can develop and present their managerial, organisational and planning skills, and offer more volunteering activities to develop their abilities and gain work experience.

To assist youth in accessing job opportunities, provide an enabling learning environment for youth to be inspired to contribute to social development, especially for young females who have fewer opportunities, and create more attractive youth oriented events or activities to motivate more youth, especially young women, to be leaders.

To understand the power dynamics in Cambodian society and the intersecting discrimination against youth, conduct more research about youth engagement in decision-making by identifying promising practices and collecting good role models, especially from young female leaders, and share information through social media to motivate and inspire more youth to be leaders.

To improve parenting skills to promote the younger generation to be leaders, reach out to parents of students through a variety of means, such as hosting seminars and events at schools, to invite parents to learn about parenting skills, how they can encourage their children to pay attention to social issues, and how to actively engage their children in public issues as young leaders.

Key Terminology

Terms	Definition
Women Leadership	According to Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, there is no universally agreed definition of women’s leadership.
Youth	According to the National Policy on Youth Development (2011), ‘youth’ is defined as between 15-30 years in Cambodia. On the other hand, for statistical consistency across regions, the United Nations defines ‘youth’, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.
Equality between women and men (gender equality)	Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development. (https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm)



សិក្ខាសាលា

ចំណុចដំបូង ដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

ល្អប្រសើរ

ចំណុចទី២ ដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

សម្រាប់ panel discussion ដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

ចំនួន	តម្លៃបឋម	តម្លៃសរុប
1.	150\$	200\$
	200\$	60\$

បណ្តាញសង្គមដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

សេចក្តីណែនាំសម្រាប់បណ្តាញសង្គមដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

1. ការវិភាគបញ្ហា

សេចក្តីណែនាំសម្រាប់បណ្តាញសង្គមដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

2. សកម្មភាពតាមបណ្តាញសង្គម

+ ការបង្កើត Clip Video ដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

+ ការដាក់សំណួរ និង ការឆ្លើយតប

+ ដាក់សំណួរសម្រាប់បណ្តាញសង្គមដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់ការងារ

ចំនួនសកម្មភាព	តម្លៃ	សរុប
1.	200\$	9
	200\$	2

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Study Background

It has been widely recognised that participation of women and youth is essential to building a just society and achieving inclusive and sustainable political and economic development. In Cambodia, despite recent progress, gender equality is far from a reality. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, produced by the World Economic Forum, Cambodia ranked 89th out of the 153 countries analysed for the report. The same report also placed Cambodia 119th out of 153 countries in the aspect of women's political empowerment, which was measured based on numbers of women in parliament, women in ministerial positions and years with female heads of state (in the last 50 years). Available data all demonstrates that the under-representation of women in all sectors remains a key issue for Cambodia.

A similar situation also applies to Cambodian youth. Although they are often considered to be a key driving force for economic, cultural and social development, in the political arena, the existing literature has noted that youth's role remains limited. Through a variety of initiatives aimed at promoting youth and women's political participation, TI Cambodia has likewise observed that young people are significantly under-represented in the public sphere, particularly in leadership positions at both the local and national levels.

Despite ample evidence and observations pointing to the low representation of women and youth in government leadership roles, relatively little is known about the opportunities and challenges facing women and youth in ascending

to and holding leadership positions. This study, commissioned by TI Cambodia, aims to contribute to addressing this issue. It seeks to understand the current status of women and youth in leadership positions, identify opportunities and underlying social, economic, political and cultural barriers and other structural barriers for the inclusion of women and youth in leadership positions, and examine the challenges faced by women and youth holding leadership positions².

1.2. Study Objectives

Specifically, the main objectives of the study were to:

1. Document the recent trends in women's and youth's leadership in Cambodia,
2. Identify the progress and challenges in creating an enabling environment for youth and women to effectively participate in the decision-making processes,
3. Create concrete recommendations for the Government, CSOs/networks, and academics (schools) to effectively promote youth and women in leadership positions for the improvement of the democratic system in Cambodia.

² In the context of this study, leadership is used flexibly but primarily referring to leadership in the public space rather than in the family group.

1.3. Study Methodology

1.3.1. Data Collection Approaches

The approaches to the data collection process prioritised inclusivity following the principle of leave no-one behind combined with a participatory, rights-based approach. As per the nature of the research topic, the research team paid particular attention to guaranteeing the participants’ confidentiality, protection of their privacy, and their ownership of the interviews.

The primary approach to data collection is participatory in nature, and everyone who was involved in the research did so voluntarily. In this study a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was utilised to collect information. The quantitative method generated general views towards certain issues (such as the perception towards female participation in decision-making process). On the other hand, the qualitative methods provided participants with an opportunity to describe their views and personal experience, if any, on women and youth leadership, challenges they observe, and their perception of achievements, including changes in their community, as a result of youth and women’s involvement in the decision-making process.

Specifically, the methods of data collection consisted of the following:

- **Desk Review:** Government reports and statistics, CSOs reports on youth’s and women’s participation.
- **In-Depth Interviews/Key-Informant Interviews (KII):** Government officials, both national and sub-national levels, CSO’s staff members, LGBTIQ people, researchers, female change makers³, and academics.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGD):** Group discussions with youth representative/ youth group members, university students, monks and the general public.

³ “Female change makers” are women who are in the leadership roles in CSOs empowering women or active in social media/networking to empower women.



1.3.2. Consultative Approach and Process

From the beginning of the study, an Advisory Committee was formed to guide and supervise the research process. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Advisory Committee is in Annex 2. The Advisory Committee met three times during the research process, and provided advice and suggestions to the research team. The findings were verified by the Advisory Committee for the finalisation of the report. Additionally, on 2 December 2019, a consultation meeting was held with the representatives from ministries in Phnom Penh.⁴ Based on the suggestions provided by the state officials attending this consultation, it was decided that some additional field work would be conducted to provide a more comprehensive view of the topics of the study.

1.3.3. Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools were developed in conjunction with the TI Cambodia's management team, which provided final approval of the tools before implementing the field work. These comprised:

- *Structured questionnaire/question guide for FGDs;*
- *Semi-structured questionnaires for KIIs.*

All the interviews were conducted in Khmer, but the tools were first developed in English to allow for broad consultation with the TI Cambodia's management and project team. The Advisory Committee also provided an overview of the tools and approved them. After the draft English language tools were agreed upon, the research team conducted several rounds of piloting to allow for the tools to be modified and adjusted as per the results of the pilots.

1.3.4. Research Target Areas

This study was carried out in Phnom Penh and the provinces of Rattanakiri, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong and Prey Veng (See map below). These provinces were selected following consultations with the TI Cambodia's management team.



Map of Cambodia - Study Target Areas in Blue

1.3.5. Data Analysis Approach and Process

Coding, the progressive refinement of data, was applied during the data analysis process, which went through several levels. Rough transcripts of all KIIs and FGD were produced from notes and/or audio-recordings. This research applied three levels of coding:

- **Level 1: Analysis:** This process aimed to make voluminous data into organised data with a manageable focus. A code is likely to be a word or short phrase that sums-up or captures the essence of what someone or a group of people have said in a FGD and a KII. The aim of this level of coding was to produce rough and basic concepts that seem to fit the data. At this level of coding, open coding was used which 'opens up' the data, fracturing them in the process if necessary, and breaking the data down so that the conceptual implications emerge in the later steps. Rough transcripts are used to do this level 1 coding.

⁴ Those ministries were the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Civil Service, and the National Committee for Decentralisation and Democratisation. Two representatives from each ministry participated and provided valuable inputs to the draft report.

- **Level 2: : Grouping the Level 1 Codes into Categories:** This process was category development. Categorisation is analytical in nature (rather than descriptive). Categorisation was done to provide indications of some of the emerging findings/themes from the field research. Field researchers and the lead researcher developed and organised the key categories in relation to the thematic areas that were investigated in the study.
- **Level 3: Analysis-Development of the Key Findings:** After the categories were finalised, the key findings were identified for each of the thematic areas. In this process, findings from the desk review were also referenced if of interest.

Furthermore, the field research team was debriefed after the completion of the field work in each province to discuss and verify the main issues in each province allowing for significant differences between the provinces to be highlighted.

The key findings are the basis for the final discussion between the researchers and the TI Cambodia team. Before conducting the process of writing the final report and to verify the preliminary findings, a summary of the findings based on the interpretations and analysis of the data was written and presented to the TI Cambodia team. This method was applied as it is a participatory and systematic way of analysing data providing utilisation focused results.

1.3.6. Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research field work process, the research team strictly followed and respected the Research Stakeholders’ Protection Policy and Code of Conduct during the implementation of this research. The research team adhered to the principles in line with the vision, mission and values of TI Cambodia and followed TI Cambodia’s standards when interacting with all vulnerable people.

1.3.7. Limitations of the Study

This study encountered a number of limitations, mostly during the collection of primary data.

- Literature/academic papers on youth leadership in Cambodia is limited.
- Some of the respondents (sub-national authorities in Prey Veng) ended the interview midway and left.
- Due to the domination of male respondents in the fieldwork (youth and university students), the number of women respondents was below the target.
- Due to logistical difficulties, only one person with disabilities was interviewed (a university male).

1.4. Study Participants' Demographic Information

During the field work (June 2019 - January 2020), a total of 569 people were interviewed (female respondents were 244). Representatives of the national government interviewed were from the National Assembly, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Civil Service, the National Human Rights Committee, and the National Committee for Decentralisation and Democratisation (NCDD). Additionally, six members of the youth networks from some of the key ministries were interviewed (female respondents were three, equaling 50% of the total respondents). Respondents from the sub-national state authority level were from Rattanakiri, Siem Reap, Battambang, Prey Veng and Kampot provinces.⁵

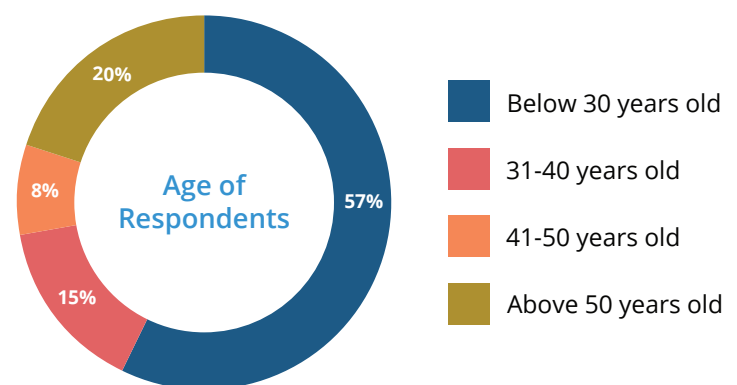
Youth activists who were engaged in the study were from TI Cambodia's networks in Rattanakiri, Siem Reap and Battambang provinces, and most of them were university students. Respondents in Phnom Penh were all university students and

were from many different universities - both state and private. These young people (youth activists and university students) accounted for 55% of the total participants (n=302, females 121). A total of 30 adults aged between 40 and 60 years old were interviewed through KIIs (14 females, 47%).

In addition to the general population, 16 monks, five female change makers, five academics, five researchers and 10 LGBTIQ people were interviewed to obtain their in-depth opinions and ideas towards youth's and women's leadership.

The field work was carried out in two stages: (1) July-August 2019, and (2) January 2020. The interviews conducted in January 2020 were a response to the recommendations by the representatives from the ministries participating in the consultative meeting on 2 December 2019. Interview participants in this round included officials from MoEYS, parliamentarians, members of the youth networks in some key ministries, and officials from the technical departments of each ministry at sub-national administration levels.⁶

Figure 1 Breakdown of Participants by Age Range



⁵ Interviews with sub-national authorities were made possible through TI's provincial officers sending out the official request letter to the provincial government in each province, which then informed the district/commune office to take part in the interviews with the research team.

⁶ In total, 14 people were met during the additional/second round of field work conducted in January 2020 (female 10), with the breakdown of each category being very small (such as from the National Assembly being only two persons). As a result, obtained data from this additional field work was utilised for qualitative analysis only.

Table 1 Respondents to the Study

Target group	Male	Female	LGBTIQ	Total Met	Original Target	% Achieved
Parliamentarian ⁷	0	2	0	2	5	40%
Female politician	0	2	0	2	0	Over 100%
National Authority (Ministries)	1	15	0	16	21	76%
Youth Network Member of the Ministry ⁸	3	3	0	6	0	Over 100%
Sub-National Authority (provincial, district and commune authority)	82	59	0	141	150	94%
Sub-National Technical Department	1	3	0	4	0	Over 100%
Researcher	2	3	0	5	5	100%
Academic	6	4	0	10	10	100%
CSO/NGO	7	13	0	20	20	100%
Female Change Maker	0	5	0	5	5	100%
Youth Activist	57	36	0	93	50	186%
Monk	16	0	0	16	0	Added group
University Student	124	85	0	209	250	84%
General Population	16	14	0	30	30	100%
LGBTIQ	0	0	10	10	10	100%
Total	315	244	10	569	555	103%

Female change makers were those female activists who are advocating for women’s rights in public, in this case they were mostly CSO staff members.⁹ The youth activists were mobilised by TI Cambodia from its networks in the provinces. Researchers were independent researchers/consultants who have been working on social research in Cambodia, while the academics were from two universities: the Royal University of Phnom Penh and Pannasastra University of Cambodia (PUC) in Phnom Penh.

The majority of participants were university students and youth activists, who were below 30

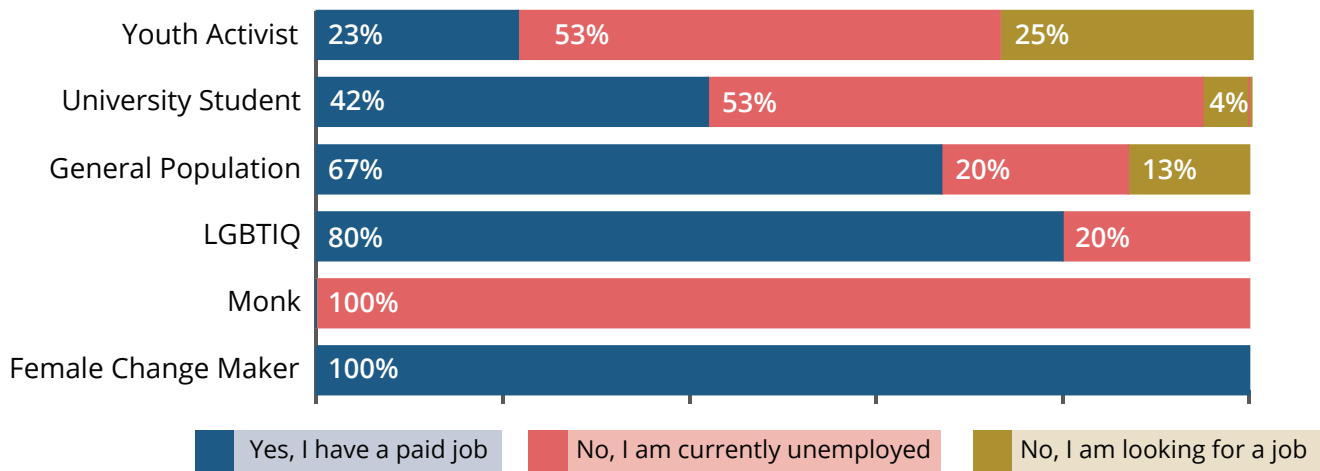
years old on average.

⁷ The interview overlapped with the break period of the current session of the National Assembly (January 2020), and, therefore, only one parliamentarian (the Chair of the 8th Commission) and her cabinet ‘member’ were met.

⁸ Members of the youth network met were from MOWA, the Ministry of Civil Service, and the NCDD. These members were suggested by the representatives from those respective ministries at the consultative meeting held on 2nd December 2019.

⁹ The field work research team interviewed some well-known female activists from CSOs about whether they preferred to be identified as CSO workers or female change makers, and those five women identified themselves as “female change makers”.

Figure 2 What is Your Employment Status?



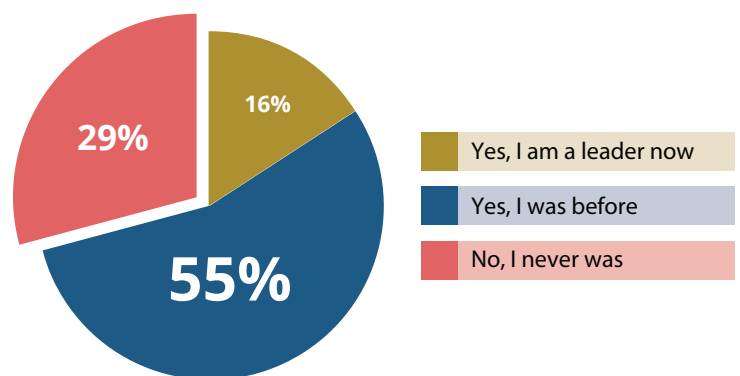
Regarding the employment status of the participants, all the state officials (n=157) and female change makers (n=5) were employed at the time of the study, but the status of other target groups varied (23% of youth activists, 42% of university students, 67% of general population and 80% of LGBTIQ people were employed).

Only female participants who are not working for government institutions were asked, "Have you ever been a leader?" Out of all 114 females responding to this question, 18 are leaders (16%), 33 have never been a leader (29%) and 63 (55%) have been a leader in the past but are not leaders at the moment.

A question was asked to female participants of their experience of being a leader; leader in a sense of being a class president or being a community group leader, to lead a group of people for some purposes.

Many female university students who are/were leaders noted that they were serving as class leaders or a leader for some school activities. A female university student said, "I have become a leader several times for youth volunteer groups. Before [the first experience], I had been afraid to be a leader, and I thought I could not make a good leader. However, I wanted to challenge myself and get experience by cooperating with other members [and so I became a leader]". A female change maker said, "[I became a leader] because I wanted to show the public that women can also be good leaders."

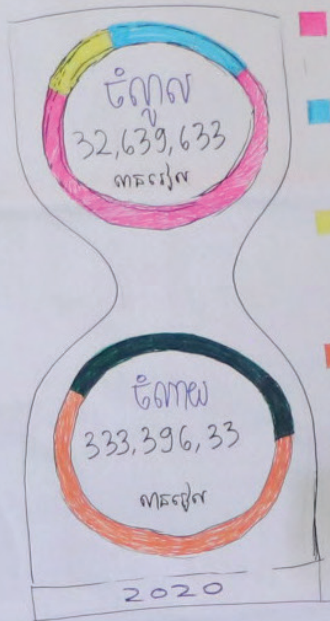
Figure 3 Are You Currently A Leader /Have Your Ever Been A Leader?



*"I am feminist. Some LGBT people do not want to call themselves [feminists], but it is important to confirm we are equal [as feminism believes], and we [LGBT people] have become a leader."
- LGBT person*

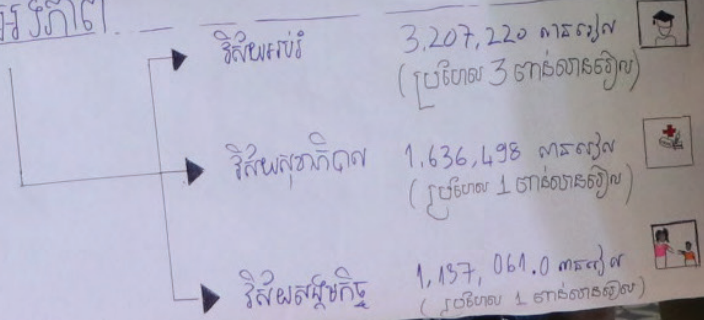


ថវិកាជាតិ National Budget



- ចំណូល**
- ចំណូលចរន្តថវិកាថ្នាក់ជាតិ: 23,899,324 ពាន់រៀល (73.22%)
 - ចំណូលមូលធនស្ថិតិប្រទេស និងកម្មវិធីប្រទេស: 6,496,153 ពាន់រៀល (19.90%)
 - ចំណូលចរន្តថវិកាថ្នាក់ក្រោមជាតិ: 2,243,778 ពាន់រៀល
- ចំណាយ**
- ចំណាយចរន្ត: 19,818,306 ពាន់រៀល
 - ចំណាយមូលធនថវិកាជាតិ: 13,521,327 ពាន់រៀល (40.55%)

វិនិយោគវិនិយោគ



POLICY AND ISSUES IN CONTEXT

Diversity in leadership position is vital and a prerequisite to the success of any democratic society. Both women and youth can provide unique perspectives of leadership positions, allowing them to contribute greatly to problem-solving and solutions.¹⁰ A report from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific outlines the benefits that women contribute to leadership positions, such as a greater awareness of social issues, and an awareness of the state of well-being and welfare of their communities. They provide an ability to strengthen communities and encourage stakeholder participation. Women tend toward developing a team approach and stimulate and encourage other women to take up leadership positions.¹¹ Additionally, youth can contribute greatly to democratic leadership in a similar way to women through their own unique perspectives and lived experience, as well as encouraging other youth to participate.

However, the institutionalised tradition of male dominance in leadership positions has created substantial barriers to women entering leadership roles. Women and youth are excluded from leadership because of Cambodia's patriarchal society that discriminates against women and which embodies age-discrimination youth. Historically, leadership has been almost exclusively associated with men, and only after the first national elections in 1993 under the new constitution did all Cambodian adult women have the right to vote and to stand for election. Therefore, women's engagement in leadership in the political sphere is still an evolving process.

Increasing the number of women and youth in leadership positions is critical, not only because of the creation of an inclusive and diverse society, but also for ensuring that concerns and voices of marginalised people can be heard and reflected in democratic governance. Additionally, women and youth can benefit greatly from being in leadership positions by increasing their autonomy. Leadership experience provides women and youth with the ability to exert influence on policy so that it follows a direction that, otherwise, may not have occurred, especially if it is beneficial to the rights of women and youth.

2.1. Women and Youth in Leadership in Cambodia Today

2.1.1. Women in Leadership

While Cambodian women comprise 51.5% of the country's population, all the available statistics show that their ability to access leadership positions is severely limited.¹² Women remain under-represented in decision-making positions in politics, the public sector, and the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.¹³

¹⁰ In Cambodia, the national policy on youth development defined youth as "people of both sexes aged between 15 and 30 years and with Khmer nationality regardless of their marital status."

¹¹ Malika, K. K. (2016), *Progress of Women in Politics, Cambodia*, Phnom Penh, Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia

¹² MoP (2019), 'Results of the Provisional Population Census', Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh http://www.nis.gov.kh/nis/Census2019/Provisional%20Population%20Census%202019_English_FINAL.pdf

¹³ MOWA (2014), 'Leaders: Women in Public Decision-Making and Politics', *Cambodia Gender Assessment*, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Phnom Penh

As of 2018, about 25% of Cambodia’s National Assembly members and 19% of the members of the Senate were women, a significant increase over the past decade nevertheless.¹⁴ In the executive, three Ministers, 45 Secretaries of State, and 69 Under Secretaries of State are women, representing 14.5% compared to 7.4% in 1998.¹⁵

leadership positions at different levels of government is presented in Table 1 above. Not only are women not winning seats, but official election data shows that fewer women were standing for office in the 2018 elections. According to the official result of political party registrations and list of candidates released by

Table 2 Selected Key Indicators on Women in Decision-Making 2000-2018

Indicators (% of women)	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018
National Assembly	12.3 (1998)	19.5 (2003)	21 (2008)	20.3 (2013)	20
Senate	14.75 (1999)	14.7 (2006)	14.7 (2008)	14.7 (2012)	19.3
Minister	7.4 (1998)	7.1 (2003)	7.1 (2008)	10.7 (2013)	10.3
Secretary of State	6 (1998)	6.6 (2003)	8 (2008)	20.5 (2013)	15.8
Under Secretary of State	4 (1998)	7.5 (2003)	15.1 (2008)	17.6 (2013)	15.3
Provincial Governor	0	0	0	0	1
Deputy Provincial Governor	0	1 (2003)	20 (2011)	17 (2014)	17.3
Commune Council (Member)	-	9.4 (2002)	15.1 (2011)	17.8 (2012)	14

Source: *Women in Public Service and Leadership (MOWA, 2018)*

The number of women in the civil service has increased as a result of improved incentives and appointments. Women represented 41% of all civil servants in 2017 showing a steady increase of approximately 1 percentage point a year and there is a higher proportion of women at the sub-national administration (SNA) level (43% in 2017, up from 40% in 2014) than at the national level (31% in 2017, up from 27% in 2014).¹⁶

Women are also under-represented at the lower levels of government. As of 2018, there is only one female governor at the provincial/capital level (Koh Kong province). At the municipal, district, and khan level, women hold 1% of Provincial Governor positions. However, more women hold the deputy governor positions, with 17.3% of positions being held by women. At the commune level, representation in the share of the total elected commune officials has increased over the years but still remains low at around 20%. A summary of the proportion of women in

the National Election Committee for the national election in 2018, 25.25% of the candidates were females.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the number of female candidates has increased by 6.29% when compared to the 2013 national election in which there were only 18.96% female candidates registered.

This lack of representation for women in politics has resulted in Cambodia being ranked 89th out of 153 countries by the Global Gender Gap Report’s 2020 assessment. From Figure 4 below,

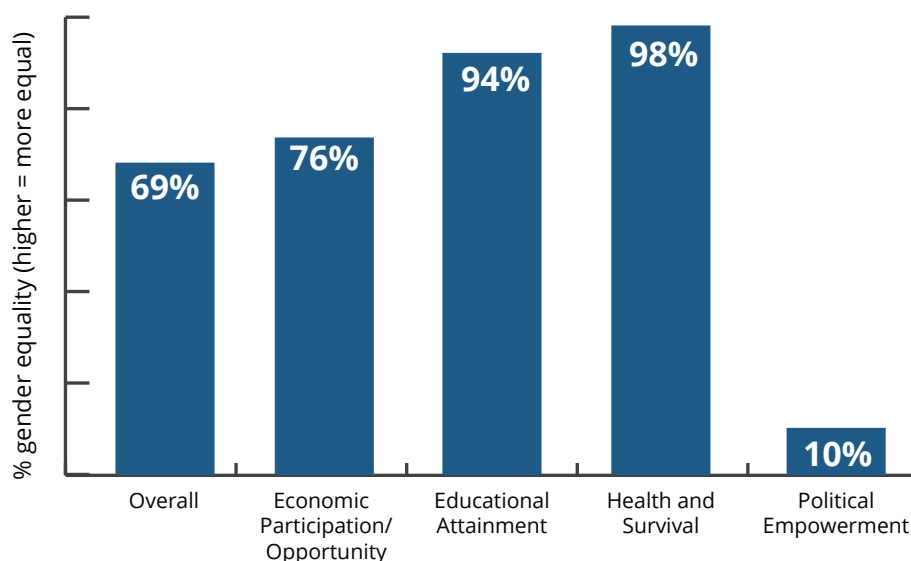
¹⁴ RGC (2019), Cambodia's Voluntary National Review 2019 of the Implementation of 2030 Agenda. Phnom Penh, Royal Government of Cambodia

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ MOWA (2018), *Women in Public Service and Leadership*, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Phnom Penh

¹⁷ COMFREL (2018), *The Empowerment of Women in Politics and the 6th Legislature National Assembly Elections 2018*, Phnom Penh, Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia

Figure 4 Global Gender Gap Report Score 2020



Cambodia’s political empowerment of women severely lags behind every other indicator.

The limited number of women in leadership positions also extends to public service positions. Women are often restricted to lower-level positions, with few women in management roles. However, there have been increases over the years, with the proportion of women in the civil service increasing from 32% in 2007 to 37% in 2013¹⁸. Traditional beliefs are deeply rooted in Cambodian culture and are highlighted by the Women’s Code of Conduct (or called the “Code of Women”) that provides instruction on the appropriate behaviour for girls and women, such as to be submissive and not assertive. While some of the teachings in the Women’s Code of Conduct are today considered oppressive to women, some of the teachings are considered good moral instructions on how to be a good Khmer citizen. Despite being withdrawn from the national school curriculum, the beliefs that the “Women’s Code of Conduct” promotes women’s values still have significant impacts on the mindsets of both women and men and impede women from entering leadership positions.¹⁹

2.1.2. Youth in Leadership

Youth aged 15 – 29 years old comprise around 43% of the working age population in Cambodia, yet they do not often have access to leadership positions.²⁰ Due to high levels of economic inequality, a large rural-urban divide, high school dropout rates, and low access to opportunities to join the decision-making process, there are not many youth leaders.

Following the 1993 national elections, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has made progress in improving the once ruined education system and among other measures has empowered youth in a variety of ways. Based on the national Net Enrolment Rates, Cambodia achieved near gender parity at the primary school level in 2007. Since then, gender parity levels (at the national level) have remained relatively constant with a total primary net enrolment of 93.5% (girls: 93.9%). Gross Enrolment Rates at both lower and upper secondary levels also show slightly higher enrolments for girls as well as higher dropout rates for boys.²¹

¹⁸ MOWA (2014), Leaders: Women in Public Decision-Making and Politics, Cambodia Gender Assessment. Cambodia, Phnom Penh., Ministry of Women’s Affairs

¹⁹ Child Rights Coalition Cambodia (2019), The implementation of the convention on the rights of the child in Cambodia 2008-2018, Phnom Penh, Child Rights Coalition Cambodia

²⁰ Key Issues affecting Youth in Cambodia, OCED, retrieved 6 September 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/countries/cambodia/youth-issues-in-cambodia.htm>

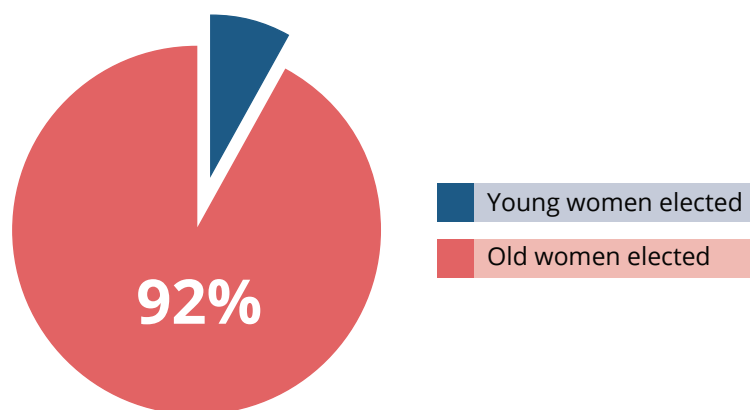
²¹ UNICEF (2018), Narrative on Gender Cited from Description of Actions (DoA), submitted to the EU, Phnom Penh, UNICEF

Overall, the female literacy rate is 79.3% and the male rate is 90 %, but male and female literacy rates vary considerably by age groups and geographical domains, with female rates being slightly higher than males up to the 15-24 age range after which women lag increasingly behind men, with the biggest gender gaps at the 65+ age group.²² Literacy rates in Cambodia are high (91%), but secondary school dropout rates are also high (38%). However, Cambodia's Youth Development Index, a measure of 18 indicators regarding youth development, is only 0.67 giving it a rank of 76 out of 170 countries.

Volunteering is a common way for youth in Cambodia to access leadership positions. A study conducted by Youth Star, an organisation working with 24,000 volunteers, found that Cambodian respondents to a mapping survey indicated that a total of 28.2% (male) and 39.7% (female) of volunteers were under 17 years of age. Approximately 4% of the volunteers were between the ages of 17 and 24 years old. In another study by Youth Star, the areas in which these youth volunteered was analysed showing that out of 215 respondents, one third (79) had volunteering experience, ranging from community work (47%), NGOs (25%), the private sector (13%), youth associations (9%), the public sector (5%), and international organisations (1.3%).

However, despite this apparent potential, younger people, especially women, are often not elected to political leadership positions in Cambodia. This can be seen in Figure 5 below showing that of the elected female officials only 8% are young. In spite of this, the same is true in much of the world, with only 1.65% of parliamentarians worldwide in their 20s.²³

Figure 5 Old and Young Women Elected



Source: COMFREL (2018), *The Empowerment of Women in Politics and the 6th Legislature National Assembly Elections 2018*, Phnom Penh, Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia

2.2. Progress in Promoting Women and Youth in Leadership

2.2.1. Progress of Women's Leadership

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has taken several concrete steps to increase gender equality and advance women in the decision-making process, in policies, laws and programmes.²⁴ Since 2001, these efforts have increased at the national level with the MOWA launching its strategy, the Neary Rattanak V for (2019 – 2023), for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Cambodia. The core RGC policy for development is the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency IV (2018-2023) and the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP, 2019-2023), which is the implementation framework for the Rectangular Strategy with clear indicators for women's advancement.²⁵ Also, the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW), with her Majesty the Queen as the Honorary Chair, has established a Five-Year Strategic Plan (2010-2014). Other relevant policies are the National Programme for Sub-National Democratic Development (2010-2019), and the National

²² MOWA (2019), *Cambodia Gender Assessment, Education & Public Behavioral Change*, Phnom Penh, Ministry of Women's Affairs

²³ UNDP (2010), *Youth Civic Participation in Cambodia: Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, and media*. Phnom Penh, UNDP Cambodia

²⁴ MOWA (2014), *Cambodia Gender Assessment, Women's Economic Empowerment*, Phnom Penh, Ministry of Women's Affairs

²⁵ NSDP (2014-2018) set a target of 29% by 2030 for the proportion of women holding management positions in public sector at all levels.

Policy on Youth Development adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2011. Lastly, the majority of ministries in each sector have formulated and implemented gender mainstreaming action plans addressing the importance of institutional gender equality.

There are several international conventions calling for women's equal participation in leadership positions, highlighted by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was ratified by Cambodia. As a state party to CEDAW, Cambodia is obliged to protect women's basic rights to participate in public life and be free from discrimination at all levels. Cambodia ratified the CEDAW in 1992 and its optional protocol in 2010. In compliance with the spirit of Article 4 of the CEDAW, several affirmative actions have been enacted to enhance women's roles in decision-making. For example, in 2013, the Prime Minister of Cambodia established a target of 38% of public administration positions to be filled by women.²⁶ Additionally, there are positive recruitment policies that mandate that 30% of positions must be filled by women although anecdotally, the practice falls short of the ideal²⁷. Moreover, Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also calls for the "achieve[ment] [of] gender equality and empower[ment] [of] all women and girls". Furthermore, as a part of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women II (2014-2018), Cambodia has implemented the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 for the purpose of promoting women's equal and meaningful participation in post-conflict states.

Backed up by a strong legal and policy framework, there is a huge opportunity for Cambodian women to become leaders. A USAID

study reported that regardless of entrenched cultural beliefs, the majority of Cambodians support women entering various political roles, and there is little variation in opinion by gender: serving in the Commune Council (77% support for this), serving in the National Assembly (67% support for this), joining political parties as members (62% support for this), running as candidates during elections (62% support for this) and heading a political party (60% support for this).²⁸

However, women's participation in decision-making bodies remains limited, as the above national data indicates. Despite the substantive increase in women's participation in leadership positions, across sectors it remained less than 20% in the government institutions (Table 2).

2.2.2. Progress of Youth Leadership

Youth participation in leadership positions has been promoted by both the RGC and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and youth have become more informed and involved in civic and political activities.²⁹ Promoting youth in Cambodia is under the mandate of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and the National Youth Policy was adopted in 2011. This policy was formulated through a series of workshops engaging youth and children with a number of surveys being conducted. A large number of consultations with United Nations organisations, youth-led associations and development partners were also held. The strategic objectives for the policy which aim to increase youth leadership include establishing youth centres, promoting youth organisations, and increasing youth's involvement in the media. The National Youth Policy also includes provisions for a Cambodian National Council for Youth Development and the creation of a National Youth Action Plan.

²⁶ MOWA (2014), Leaders: Women in Public Decision-Making and Politics, Cambodia Gender Assessment. Cambodia, Phnom Penh., Ministry of Women's Affairs

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ USAID (2012), Voter Registration and Elections In Cambodia Key Findings From An IFES Public Opinion Survey, Phnom Penh, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, United States Agency for International Development

²⁹ UNDP (2010), Youth Civic Participation in Cambodia: Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, and media. Phnom Penh, UNDP Cambodia

However, youth participation in the decision-making levels is low (8%) when measured in terms of youth voicing their opinions with public officials, either to government officials or to NGO staff.³⁰ One of the challenges for policy-makers is securing the meaningful participation of youth in the policy formulation process. Securing this is particularly difficult because youth represent generational change and are seeking to establish their autonomy.³¹

There are many youth-focused NGOs providing programmes and services for education, civic engagement, and citizenship. The most prominent is the Union of Youth Federation of Cambodia (UYFC). Another organisation, the Cambodian Children's Fund, promotes youth leadership in Cambodia through the Annual Youth Leadership Event, in which 10 students are awarded a scholarship to attend the Global Youth Leadership in the USA, an international learning event. There are many NGOs in Cambodia promoting youth leadership through capacity building, increasing access to opportunities, and awareness raising.

Additionally, the BBC's Media Action's "Strengthening Democracy Programme/Component: Youth Multimedia Civic Education Initiative" was implemented to reach 3 million young Cambodians through a series of TV and radio broadcasts to raise awareness about youth's civic rights and responsibilities, and change ideas about youth's position in public life.

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Mansfield, C. (2008), *Youth in Cambodia: A Force for Change*. PACT Cambodia, Phnom Penh

³² MOWA (2009), *Violence Against Women 2009 Follow up survey*, Phnom Penh, Ministry of Women's Affairs

³³ Eng Netra, A. L. (2019), *Cambodia's Young and Older Generation: Views on Generational Relations and Key Social and Political Issues*, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Development Resource Institute

³⁴ Sineath, M. M. (2009), *Promoting political participation of indigenous women in Cambodia*, Phnom Penh, Committee to Promote Women in Politics

³⁵ Navy, M. (2009), *Strengthening the voices of women leaders: lessons from Cambodia*, (J. H. Gell, Ed.) UK: Practical Action Publishing Ltd in association with Oxfam GB

2.3. Barriers to Promote Women and Youth in Leadership Positions

No national laws impede women's access to leadership positions; however, as above data demonstrates, women and youth are excluded from leadership positions in Cambodia to varying extents. Despite a strong policy and legal framework prohibiting gender-based discrimination, the gender gap has failed to narrow. Existing literature suggests that there are many barriers to women's and youth's participation in leadership positions, including cultural, historical, socio-economic, institutional, and political factors.

2.3.1. Barriers for Women

Social norms discriminating against women in a patriarchal system: Unequal gender relationship underpinned by male domination and control is a driving force of discrimination towards women in a patriarchal society, such as Cambodia.³² Within such a system, leadership roles are expected to be filled by males. According to a USAID report in 2010, this has led to 47% of men and 51% of women believing that men and women have different rights, including regarding business, decision-making, access to public office, social and sexual freedom, and freedom of movement. Traditional norms are embodied in Cambodian mindsets, and these stereotypical discriminatory views constrain the ability of women to become leaders. A Cambodia Development Resource Institute study also documented that both old and young people are skeptical about women's suitability for leadership.³³ Stereotypes are perpetuated by family, mainly by parents, and at school where children learn about gender roles that are discriminatory toward girls. This power dynamic puts women in a weaker position compared to men.³⁴ Also, some women are simply of the opinion that politics is men's work in which women should not be involved, and such perceptions of women not being capable discourage women from standing for election.³⁵

Double burden for women: Women and girls are faced with a disproportionate amount of work in their households, including unpaid work, such as caring for the sick and children/elderly.³⁶ Therefore, a cultural and socio-economic barrier to access leadership positions is the amount of time required to be in the households or caring for the young or old in the households. This reduces the opportunities for women to pursue leadership positions. A study reported that many Cambodian female leaders could not carry out their leadership roles unless their family members (husband) agreed to manage household chores (cooking and washing) and permitted them to travel to fulfill their political roles.³⁷

Educational attainment remains a challenge for women: Cultural and historical barriers also influence women's socio-economic barriers while trying to access leadership positions. Access to education and gender discrimination still remain a barrier for many women, especially amongst women who could not access higher education due to the civil war.³⁸ The gender gap in education, for example, is a substantial barrier to women and girls accessing leadership positions. Due to the cultural expectations and stereotypes surrounding women and girls, the higher education of boys is often prioritised.³⁹ The USAID's Gender Assessment in 2010 revealed that 45% of women agreed that it is better to educate a son than a daughter.⁴⁰ The lack of education for women and girls makes it difficult for them to access leadership positions as these positions often require a certain level of education and knowledge (for instance, literacy or basic arithmetic). For young girls, many leadership opportunities arise in the schooling environment. Without access to school and education, these girls are not afforded the same opportunities to access leadership positions.

³⁶ MOWA (2014), Cambodia Gender Assessment, Women's Economic Empowerment, Phnom Penh, Ministry of Women's Affairs

³⁷ Maffii, M. (2013), Women's Leadership: A Case Study from Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Einrich-Böll-Stiftung

Lack of affirmative action by political parties: Cambodian elections are based on a party system, and there is no quota set for women on the candidate list. As a 2018 COMFFEL report noted, a lack of affirmative action to enforce the political parties' commitment to promoting women's leadership resulted in lower numbers of women elected in 2018 national elections.⁴¹ Women are at a disadvantage relative to men in fundraising due to their limited mobility and network. Some women, fearing that their husband or family will not support their political campaign, take out loans that they hope to repay after winning an elected position. While the parties do not have written policies requiring financial contributions, failure to proactively promote women in the candidate's list is likely to result in the continuing low representation of women in politics.

Lack of financial support: There are barriers to political activity faced by women, such as the financial requirements that a potential nominee must meet before receiving the support of the party in an election campaign and discrimination against women during the candidate selection process in the parties.⁴² Even when a female candidate shows loyalty to the party and possesses the qualifications for the job, a candidate cannot get her name on the candidate list without also raising substantial funds for her own campaign.⁴³

³⁸ Hon Vimealea, O. S. (2009), Leadership in Local Politics of Cambodia: A Study of Leaders in Three Communes of Three Provinces, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Development Resource Institute

³⁹ According to the MOYES's Education Statistics (2018-2019), regarding public schools, from grade 7 to grade 9, enrolment of female students was 52% and from grade 10 to grade 12, enrolment of female students was 53%. On the other hand, The latest report by World Economic Forum pointed out that there was only 12.2% of Cambodian women enrolled in tertiary education compared to men 14.1% (World Economic Forum, 2018)

⁴⁰ Charlotte Johnson-Welch, (2019), Cambodia Gender Assessment, Phnom Penh, USAID

⁴¹ COMFREL (2018), The Empowerment of Women in Politics and the 6th Legislature National Assembly Elections 2018, Phnom Penh, Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ NGO-CEDAW (2017), CEDAW monitoring report 2017, Phnom Penh, NGO-CEDAW

The candidates contribute money dependent on the candidates' ranking from 1st to 3rd: around USD 30,000 to USD 60,000 for each candidate.⁴⁴ Such a patronage system negatively impacts women as it perpetuates the practice of paying to obtain an appointment to higher-level positions and women do not have as much access to resources as their male counterparts; thereby, they are excluded from opportunities to get involved and advance to more senior positions.⁴⁵

Institutional barriers: Historically, the decision-making process has excluded women in preference for male domination, and this has become systematic discrimination, or institutionalised discrimination against women. This historical background has created barriers to women becoming leaders. Being a leader requires being responsive to the needs and possessing flexibility to manage situations, yet due to women's double burdens, it is not always easy for women to have this level of responsiveness and flexibility.

2.3.2. Barriers for Youth

Limited trust over the capacities of youth by the general public: For youth, historical barriers include a lack of trust of youth among the broader community. Additionally, there can be a fear of participation in leadership positions due to the legacy of the war in Cambodia, which causes these positions to be associated with risk. For youth, Cambodian society places a heavy weight on the wisdom of elders, often dismissing the value or importance of respecting the views and opinions of youth. This cultural and historical barrier prevents youth from accessing leadership positions as they are often dismissed or not taken seriously due to the entrenched cultural perceptions of youth's capacity.

⁴⁴ COMFREL (2018), The Empowerment of Women in Politics and the 6th Legislature National Assembly Elections 2018, Phnom Penh, Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia

⁴⁵ USAID (2014), Women's Leadership as a Route to Greater Empowerment: Cambodia Case Study, USA: Management Systems International, United States Agency for International Development

⁴⁶ According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) produced by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative in 2018, Cambodia has the largest share (in East Asian and Pacific countries) of the poor population living in rural areas (97%, with 84% rural population share).

Financial constraints and nepotism: Although Cambodia has been rapidly developing, there are large numbers of poor people in rural areas.⁴⁶ Frequent migration amongst the youth seeking employment opportunities can also impede youth's systematic participation in decision-making processes.⁴⁷ One study found that in rural

"Youth whose family members and relatives have important positions in government enjoy favoritism, such as employment in public institutions and rapid promotion."
- EU-OECD 2017

Siem Reap areas, young people tend to choose short-term economic gain over long-term personal development by migrating to Thailand.⁴⁸ ⁴⁹An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report on Cambodian youth also noted that nepotism creates a significant barrier for youth to be able to access important positions in the government.⁵⁰

Institutional barriers: The institutional barriers youth face while trying to access leadership positions stem from societal and cultural norms with similar structures to those faced by women. For instance, both women and youth may be marginalised once they attain a leadership position, barred from accessing training opportunities, or shown disrespect by their male or adult counterparts, preventing them from succeeding in the leadership position.

All of these barriers make it difficult for youth to access or succeed in leadership positions in Cambodia today creating an environment where few youth are present.

⁴⁷ Eng Netra, A. L. (2019), Cambodia's Young and Older Generation: Views on Generational Relations and Key Social and Political Issues, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Development Resource Institute

⁴⁸ The same study (2013) documented that 64% (n=39) of students in grade 8 and 9 dropped out from school to migrate to Thailand for work.

⁴⁹ Sochampawatd, A. M. (2013), Fostering youth leadership in rural Cambodia, Promoting Education Empowering Youth

⁵⁰ EU-OECD (2017), Youth Well-being Policy Review of Cambodia, Paris, OECD Development Centre

Negative perceptions of youth toward politics: It is also widely accepted that the political environment in Cambodia limits rather than facilitates political participation of youth.⁵¹ The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia noted that the major concern of supporters of democracy is that the space for freedom of expression has become smaller due to the cases of arbitrary arrest of political activists.⁵² In one study, a third of the sample (320 youth) stated that they had no interest in politics.⁵³

⁵¹ Chantarasingh, B. C. (2017), Research Brief: Youth Political Participation in Cambodia. Cambodia: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Cambodia in cooperation with Politikoffee

⁵² COMFREL (2019), Democracy, Elections and Reform in Cambodia 2018, Phnom Penh, Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia

⁵³ KAPE (2014), Empowering Youth in Cambodia Today Youth Situation Analysis – Education for Youth Empowerment Project (EYE), Phnom Penh, Kampuchean Action for Primary Education



FIELD WORK FINDINGS

The field data collection findings are presented in this chapter in the order of that the questions were discussed by sub-themes.

3.1. Institutional Mechanism to Promote Women's Leadership

3.1.1. Gender Policy

For state institutions, academics (who are all university professors), researchers (who belong to research institutions/researchers for NGOs/CSOs) and staff members of NGOs/CSOs, the question was asked whether they have a gender policy applied in their respective institutions/organisations. For academic institutions, four participants (80%) replied that they did not have one while one participant (20%) did not know whether they had one or not. For NGOs/CSOs, 15 participants (75%) knew that they had a policy while five participants (25%) said they did not have one.

According to a MOWA official, the RGC was at the final stage of adopting a new national policy on gender mainstreaming to be implemented by all government institutions, both at national level and sub-national level.⁵⁴ Additionally, MOWA will also renew its Neary Ratanak, but it will be transformed into MOWA's policy with a new

"Personally, I felt very happy and proud that our Prime Minister has such a strong passion to develop our country by providing opportunities for women and encouraging the promotion of female leadership in Cambodia."

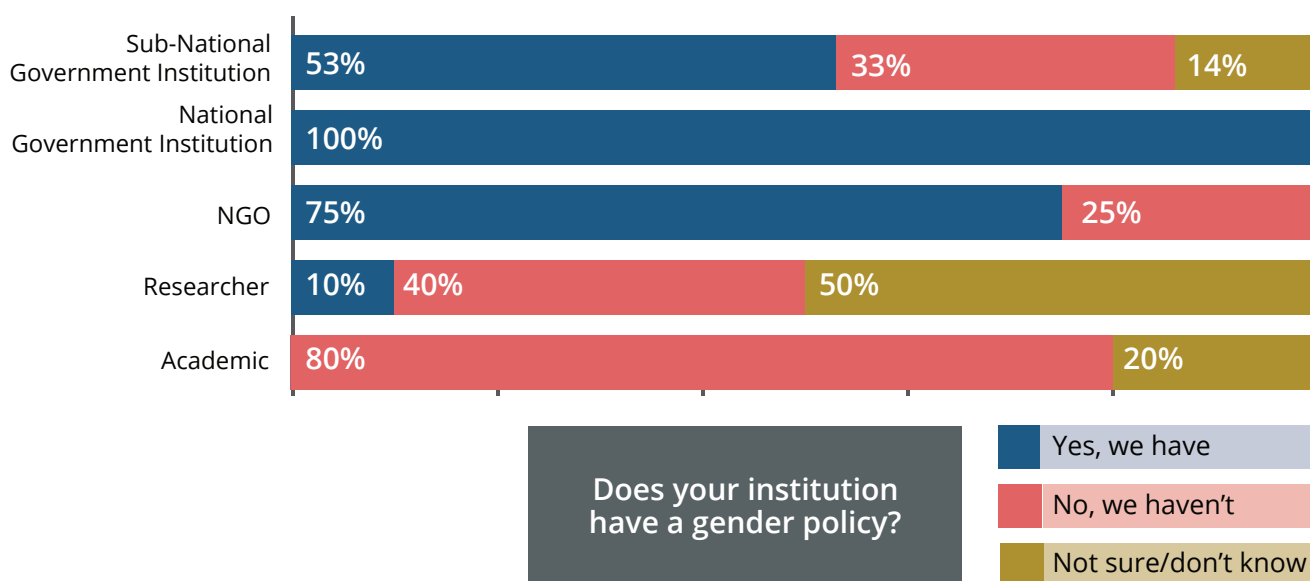
- H.E Chhay Kimsothy, Secretary of State, Ministry of Civil Service

national gender equality policy to replace the current overarching gender policy of the RGC. A technical department director at the sub-national level also noted the visible progress of more women participating in leadership positions by referencing the national strategy, "Our Government's Rectangular Strategy has a component for promoting and empowering women and enhancing gender equality. With this strategy in place, we have seen that female participation in decision-making and politics has been dramatically increasing in comparison to the 1990s. More and more women have been selected [to be leaders in sub-national governance] and women are promoted to hold leadership positions." To echo this, a deputy director of the technical department at a sub-national administration also noted, "The Government's policy to enhance women's participation in the public sphere has dramatically changed the situation and more and more women have started to work in the public service in comparison to the time when we had no such clear policy."



⁵⁴ As of February 2020, this policy has not yet been adopted, but a draft has been circulated for public comment and CSOs have responded and submitted their comments to the MOWA for further consideration.

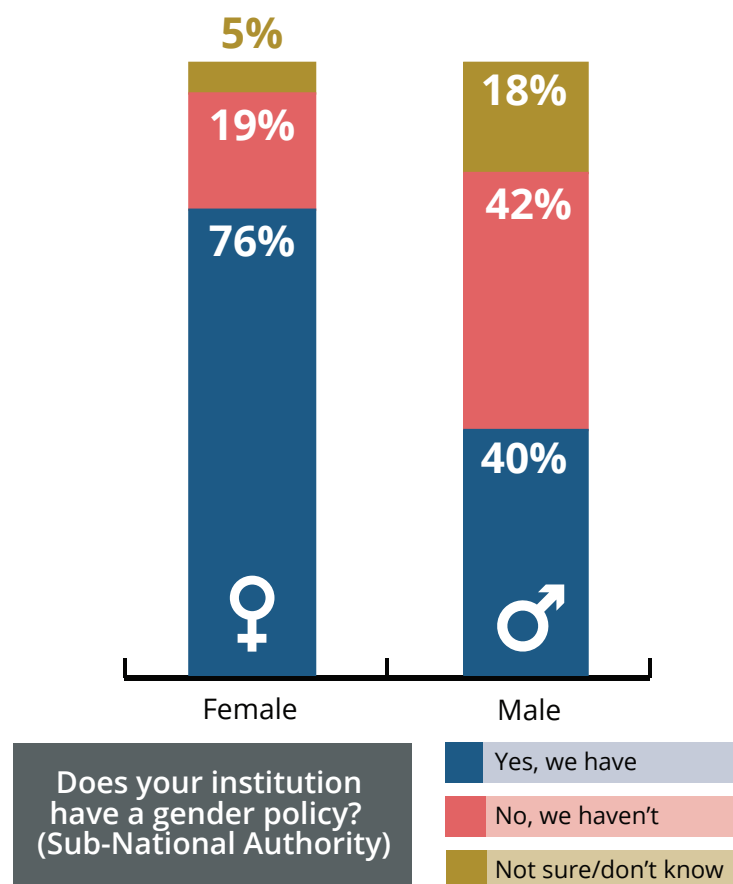
Figure 6 Is There Existence and Knowledge of Gender Policy in Participant's Organization/Institution?



Notably, all officials from the national government institutions (100%, n=15) answered that they had a gender policy. On the other hand, at the sub-national level this drops to 54 officials (53%) responding affirmatively, 34 officials (33%) replying in the negative, and 14 officials (14%) replying that they did not know at that time.⁵⁵ An officer of the Cambodian National Council for Women said, "CNCW has set up a monitoring system for the national gender equality policy. We have been implementing the Five-Year Strategy of the Government, and we work to promote women and encourage women to work in every high position." Of particular note, no academics (0%) reported their institutions having a gender policy or being aware of their institution having one.

A significant difference between the male respondents' and female respondents' (state authority, NGOs/CSOs, academics and researchers) knowledge of a gender policy was observed as female respondents are more aware of the gender policy of their respective institutions.

Figure 7 Is There Knowledge of Gender Policy - Male and Female Comparison?



⁵⁵ The sub-national administrations follow the national policy and guidelines for gender equality. Some were aware of those mechanisms, but others did not know about the national policy and guidelines if it had not been disseminated to them.

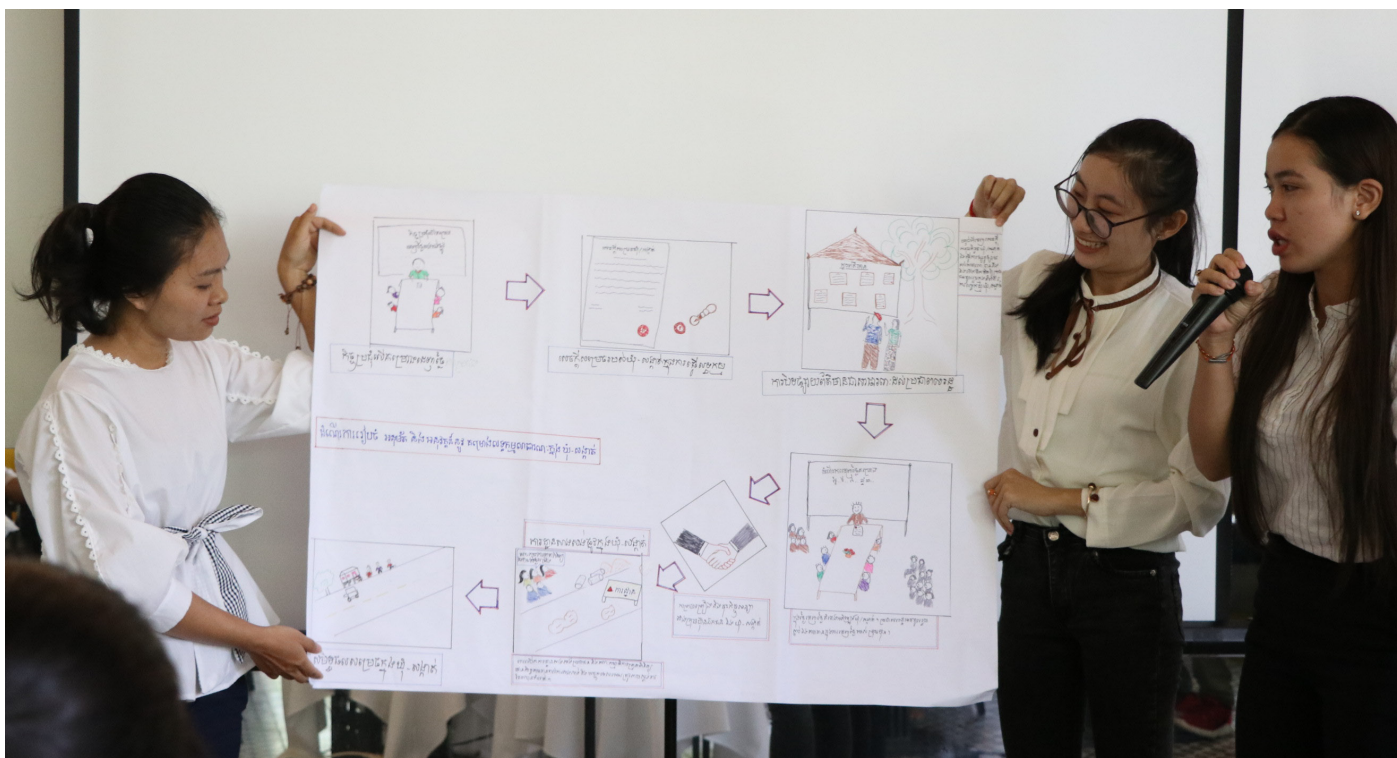
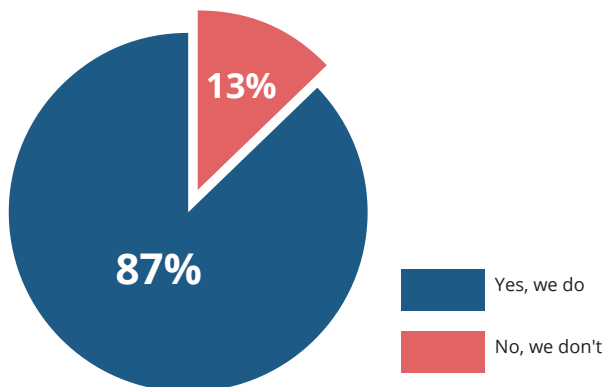
An officer from the sub-national authority said, “There are still an unequal number of female leaders compared to males. Males are handling the main positions in delivering services.” As for academics, a university professor said, “Within my university, there is a basic instruction guideline addressing gender, but we do not have a specific policy on gender.”

3.1.2. Systematic Engagement of Women in Decision-Making

To assess institutional mechanisms to ensure women’s participation in decision-making, a question was asked of the national authority (n=15), “Does your institution systematically engage women’s input?”

With all respondents providing a response to this question, the majority (87%, n=13) answered Yes, whilst 13% (n=2) said No. The sub-national authorities and technical departments at the sub-national administrations commonly reported that they are implementing gender mainstreaming-type policies that include and specify the mandatory engagement of women in decision-making. A deputy director of a technical department at a sub-national administration confirmed this, “In my department, males and females were equally hired and assigned to equal jobs or task forces. Also, before we reach any agreement, we always provide support for female staff to engage in discussions equally.”

Figure 8 Is There Systematic Engagement of Women in Decision-Making?



3.2. Progress in Women’s Leadership in Cambodia

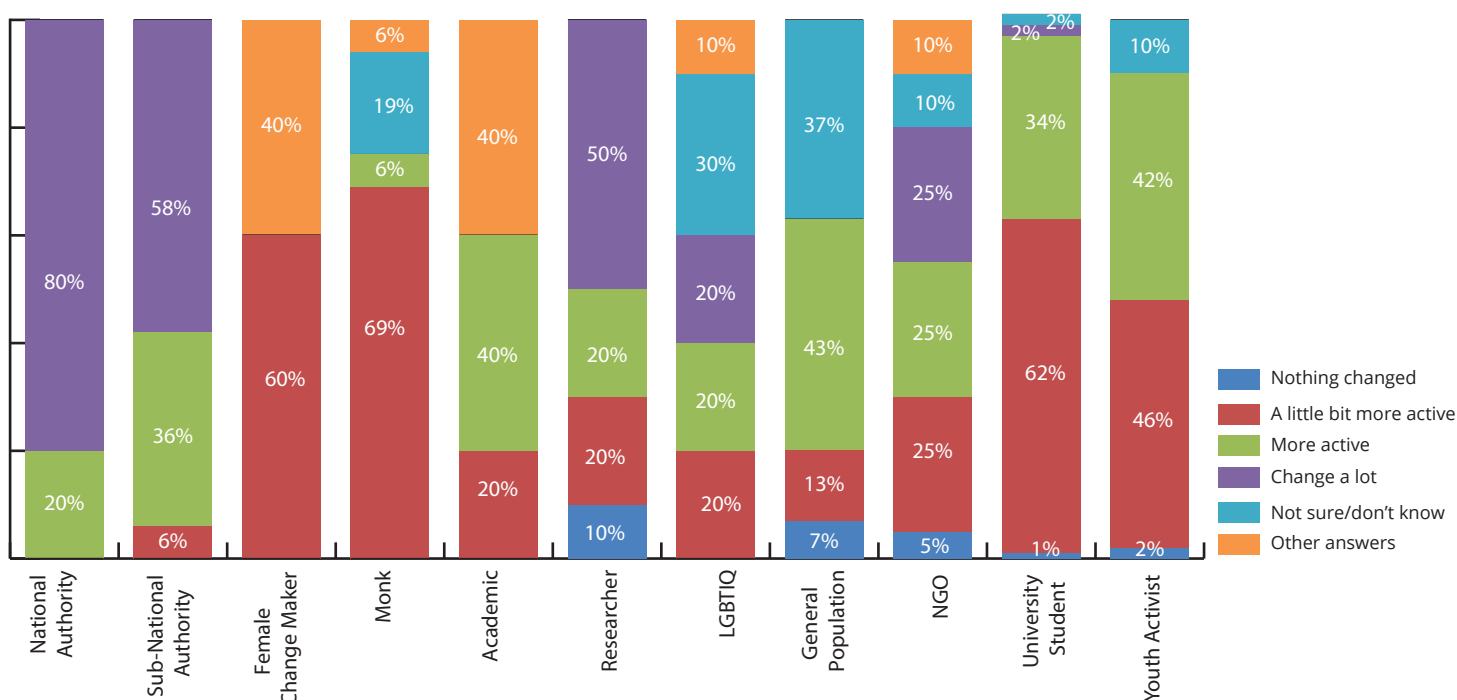
3.2.1. Progress Since 1993

This sub-section investigates participants’ views toward women’s participation by comparing the past (from the 1990’s) with the present. A question was asked, “From your observation, what has been the women’s leadership situation since the first national election in 1993 until now?”

The Chair of the 8th Commission of the National Assembly, H.E. Mrs. Lork Kheng, said, “During past two decades, women have gained more knowledge and the Government and political parties have been supporting and promoting women. Women’s capacities have become well-known, and female leaders at the grassroots

Figure 9 What Have Been the Changes in Women’s Leadership Since 1993?

What has been the situation of women’s leadership since the first national election from 1993 until now?



Apparently, there was a significant difference found between participants belonging to state authorities and participants from non-state authorities. All the state officials who responded to this question (n=146), 0% said there was no improvement, eight officials (6%) said there was a little improvement and 50 officials (34%) said women had become more active in leadership roles. The majority (n=88, 60%) said that women had become more active than before. There were some factors that made them feel positively, for instance, policy implementation to promote more women in leadership roles, more women actually filling leadership roles, and women getting better educated and asserting their opinions.

level are very good because they know the reality for women in their communities. Women are also very hard working and the parties understand their contribution to society.” An official from the National Government said, “The inter-sectoral and gender policies of the Government work to support female issues, such as domestic violence, the promotion of rights to express ideas, and this has made females engage more [in leadership] than before. There are so many training courses to encourage females [to be leaders] that we [the National Government] provide to the provincial level. These efforts made it possible to enable females to become a lot more active.” A sub-national authority respondent said, “The number of women are starting to improve though women are still...behind men, but women

will make their way to the top for real. Talking about this point, women are not just working in the house, but they are now taking part in addressing social matters as well.”

Another sub-national official said, “There have been a lot of positive changes. Even though some women aren’t taking leadership roles, more women participate in social activities. Women are a lot more educated than before. Women take part in various workshops and dialogues to voice their concerns and present suggestions and recommendations in the communities. From my observation, I see that women are more confident in speaking and answering than men.”

“I think women now are making their progress toward leadership. However, women’s participation in leadership is still low if compared to men.”
- An academic

On the other hand, female change makers, academics and researchers, presented mixed views (both positive and negative) toward female leadership because they are well aware of the actual situation of women’s engagement in decision-making from analytical and critical viewpoints. A CSO staff member noted, “I think women have been more active if compared to the past, but this number is not reaching the international standard yet. The government’s efforts are more about producing policy that promotes women. However, there is still not enough support for women to take leadership”. A female change maker said, “There are gender mainstreaming and gender promotion activities that are helping women to stand out and exercise their rights in society both in leadership and voices... but our society is very complex in terms of tradition and a mindset that tends to put more value on men and devalues women and that causes a serious impact on the gender balance.” On the positive side, a researcher pointed out, “Social media also plays a key role in developing the capacities of women and has enabled women

to find their female role models to build their capacity”.

The majority of university students and youth activists (n=261, or 92%) also had rather positive views towards female leadership (only three young people, 1%, said that there was no positive change). A youth activist said, “[There is] less discrimination against women and women have more knowledge [than before]. Women are independent more than before. And now our society seems to be open a lot for them.” A university student also noted, “More women are leading CSOs”.

Amongst the general population (n=30), 11 people (37%) said they were not sure about the progress, and amongst the monks (n=16) three (19%) said that they were not sure about any changes. A member of the public also noted, “Though many women are participating in politics and decision-making, there are some women who are still trapped inside their family traditions.” A monk said, “I don’t really know if women are really participating in leadership as I see that women do not really care about politics as they are now still suffering from being responsible for household work, and this work covers almost 70% of their time. However, there are still many young women who live in the remote areas, lack education and do not receive enough information which makes them to be running behind in the society, and they even receive pressure from the social context as parents and people over there lack of understanding of gender roles.”



Interview with local authority, Prey Veng Province

3.2.2. Progress Since 2013

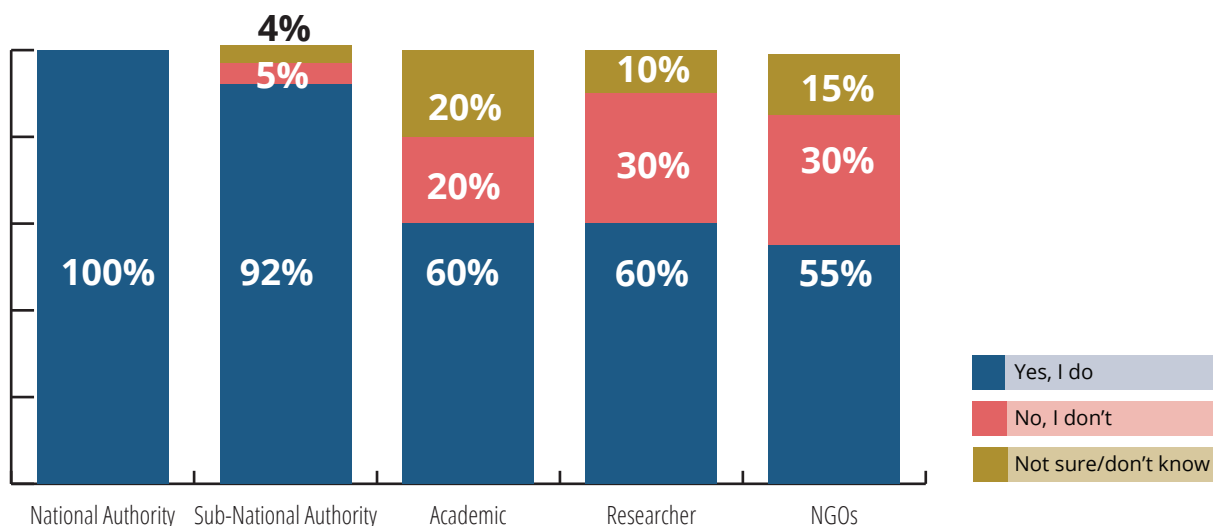
To verify the results from the previous question asking about the previous 20 years of progress, a follow up question was asked, “If you look back over the last 5 years (from the 2013 national election to the 2018 national election), do you think women have more roles as leaders in politics/decision-making?” This question was asked only to state authority representatives, academic/researchers, CSO staff members, and female change makers with a total of 181 people answering (females 84). The result was very positive, and 155 participants (86%) said that they thought more females were participating in the decision-making process in comparison to 2013.

“A good working environment and supportive surroundings have enabled me to continue working in this office [a sub-national technical department] for more than ten years now. There have been good mentors who show support to me and have always shared experience with me.”
 – Deputy Director of Technical Department

that women can join leadership roles at the national level and really make their voices influential because of complete male domination [in decision-making]. Since 2013, there has been a huge change that has shaped the improvement to the gender balance, but women still have a low

Figure 10 From 2013 to 2018, Has Female Leadership Improved?⁵⁶

If you look back in the last 5 years (2013, election year – 2018, election year), do you think women have more roles as a leader in politics/decision-making?



Similar to the previous question, some positive responses came from the state authorities, as a sub-national authority member said, “The number of women keeps increasing day by day, and I think this number will continue to grow according to the policy set by government.” A national authority member said, “Absolutely [improved], from 2013 to 2018, females have gained more rights to express their ideas in politics and in the decision-making process as men. There are so many quotas for females for all the high positions, so we have the evidence [of such improvements].” On the other hand, researchers, CSOs, and academics had mixed views. A researcher said, “It is hard to really say

representation and are not able to get into high leadership positions or even get promoted.” A CSO staff member said, “From my personal point of view, I don’t think women are getting better in terms of education and opportunities to get involved or to participate in any policy-making process. Women still lack the fundamental protections, such as social protections and freedom of expression. Women’s voices are not really influential enough at the level of the decision-making process if compared to men in terms of their scope of influence and power.”

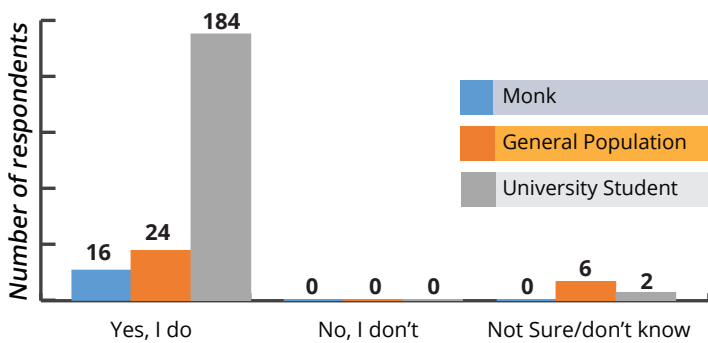
⁵⁶ This question was only asked to the five respondent groups featured in the chart.

3.3. Support for Women’s Leadership

Specifically, monks, university students and the general population (n=232) were asked, “Do you think it is important to have women’s input or voices in the decision-making process?” The result was largely positive with 224 people (96%, or 125 females) responding that it is important to have women’s voices in decision-making.

Figure 11 Is It Important to Have Women’s Voices in Decision-Making?

Do you think it is important to have women’s inputs or voices in decision-making process?

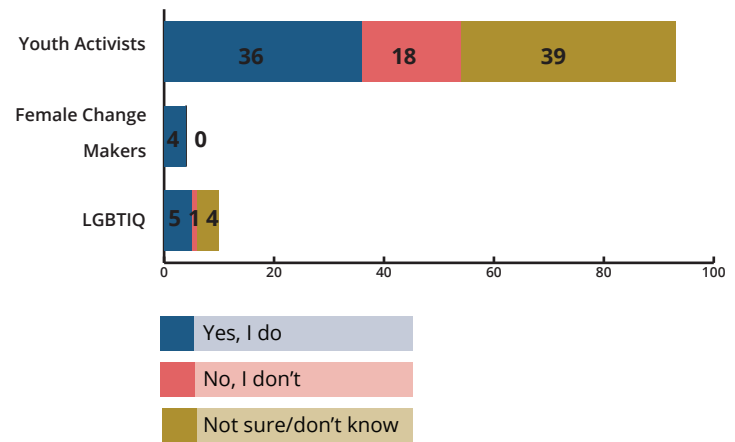


A monk said, “Women’s participation in the decision-making process is absolutely necessary because women also need to have their voices heard and their concerns addressed during the process of decision-making.” Moreover, a general population respondent said, “Women are also human, that’s why we need to include them [in the decision-making process].” Generally, participants noted that it is important to engage women because women are also human beings, and women themselves can address women specific-issues that men cannot suitably address.

Another question was asked to assess people’s perceptions of the capacity of female leaders, “Do you think female leaders support (more than male leaders) marginalised populations, such as people with disabilities/LGBTIQ people?” This question was asked to LGBTIQ people, female change makers, and youth activists (n=107).

Figure 12 Is There Greater Female Support for Marginalised Groups Than Male?

Do you think female leaders support (more than male leaders) for marginalised population such as people with disabilities/LGBTIQ people?



This question received diverse responses, as one LGBTIQ person said, “It depends on a person’s personality; it’s nothing to do with gender”. The opinion provided by many youth activists was that 39 activists (42%, 11 females) were not sure, 36 activists (38.7%, 17 female) agreed that female leaders supported marginalised groups more than the males while 18 activists (19.3%, 10 female) disagreed that female leaders were more supportive than men. Clearly, there was a split among the youth activists in regard to their trust that female leadership would be more sensitive to marginalised groups of people than men’s.

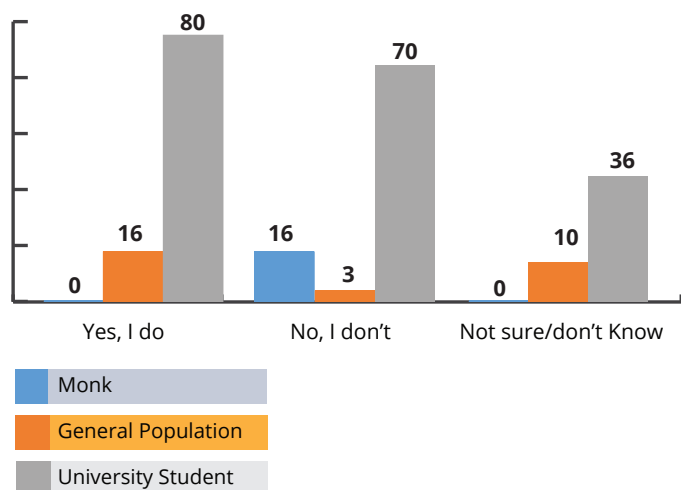
3.4. Challenges to Women’s Leadership in Cambodia

3.4.1. Support for Women to Become Leaders

This sub-section inquires about participants’ views toward the barriers for women to become leaders. A question was asked, “Do you think women have received enough support from their surroundings, such as society, family, and the government, to become a leader?” Of monks, university students and youth activists, a total of 231 people responded (127 female) with all the monks (100%, n=16) replying that women do not receive enough support while university students were divided with 80 students (43%) agreeing and 70 students (38%) disagreeing. 36 students (19%) were not sure about this. Amongst 127 female respondents, 52 females responded affirmatively, 48 negatively, and 27 were not sure or did not know.

Figure 13 Do Women Receive Enough Support to Become Leaders?

Do you think women have received enough support from their surroundings such as society, family, and the government to be a leader?



Although opinions towards the amount of support women received to become leaders varied as can be seen in the above figure, the majority of state officials interviewed in this study pointed out that in reality women do not get enough support in order for them to play a public role outside of the family.⁵⁷ H.E. Lork Kheng, a National Assembly member said, “[If we are working in] politics in Cambodia, we will have no free time. There are calls around the clock, such as a drug case. Someone may call you in the

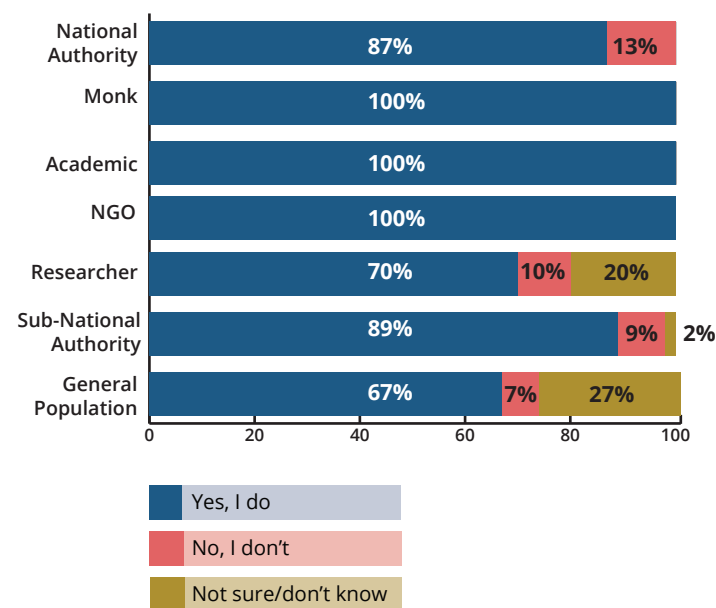
middle of the night. Many urgent issues occur at the late night and we need to respond to those problems. When we look around female leaders [holding high positions], most of them are widows or old single women.” A similar comment was voiced by a national authority representative who said, “If women are not supported by their husband, then it is almost impossible for them to be leaders because leaders are required to do so much work even during holidays. Furthermore, if girls are not encouraged to take a leadership position by their teachers and parents, the motivation to be a leader may never be born within a girl’s mindset, so the family and society need to encourage girls to be brave and to be leaders.” Another national authority representative also noted, “Women face many challenges in taking public positions. To reduce their burden, there should be more incentives for women in public service and more support should be provided to develop their capacity.”

3.4.2. Are Women Holding Themselves Back?

Another question linked to barriers was, “Do you think women hold themselves back from becoming leaders?”

Figure 14 Are Women Holding Themselves Back?

Do you think women hold themselves back from becoming leaders?



⁵⁷ Quantitative data on this question (Figure 13) was not asked from state officials.

The majority of respondents agreed that women are holding themselves back: 100% of monks (n=16), 100% of academics (n=10), and 100% of CSOs (n=20) followed by other groups mostly agree that women are holding themselves back. A national authority said, “The majority of female staff [in my ministry] lacks the ability to be promoted. So, they end up giving up and they prefer to stay in lower positions as if there is a limit to female staff being able to hold important positions”. A monk said, “Women themselves lack self-confidence to step up [to take leadership roles] as they still feel pressured by the social context [to behave in ways defined by societal expectations].” A general population participant said, “Women lack confidence, and lack the encouragement from her family members. Some women are highly educated, but their family members do not want them to be a leader. Therefore, it creates the mindset [among women] that my family does not want me to be a leader, so it is better to stay where I am”. At the sub-national level, similar attitudes among females were observed as one of the technical department staff at the sub-national level said, “Our Cambodian traditions and cultural context prevent women from actively joining in public work. Our culture pressures women to hold themselves back when participating in public works, and also it prevents women from actively pursuing further careers, as well as forcing women to hold themselves back from changing and developing their lifestyle [to be more independent]”.

3.4.3. General Perceptions of Women’s Leadership

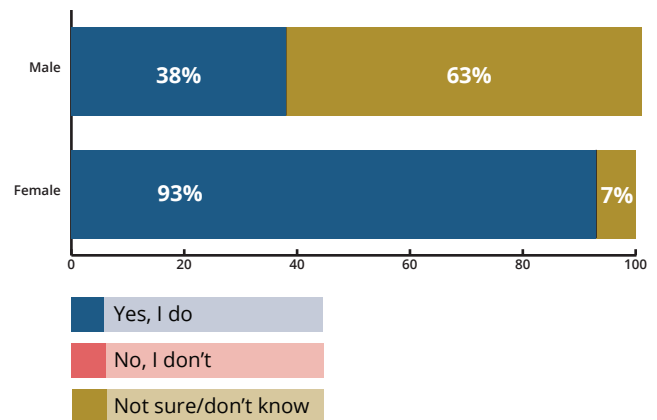
A question was asked to the monks, general public, and university students, “Do you think women can be a good leader?” All 16 monks (100%, n=16) thought women could be good leaders with one monk saying, “Women are more detailed and highly committed. If more women become leaders, our society would be better.”

Interestingly, there is a gender dimension among the general public, and more females (93%, n=13) than males (38%, n=6) agree with this statement.

During focus groups, it was observed that many male participants were reluctant to voice negative opinions about women’s leadership. The majority of males (63%, n=10) were not sure about this statement, demonstrating that they prefer not to make negative remarks regarding female leadership, and only one female participant (7%) said that she was not sure about this statement.

Figure 15 What are Your Perceptions of Women’s Leadership (General Population)?

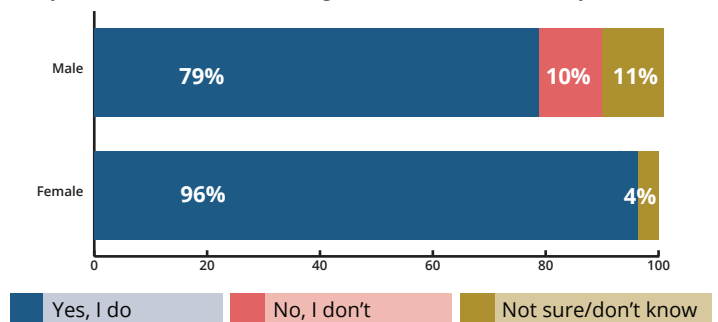
Do you think women can be a good leader? (General Population)



In regard to university students, a similar gender difference is observed. More females (96%, n=110) agree with this statement than male students (79%, n=57). There are no female students who disagree with this statement, but 10% of males (n=7) said that women cannot be good leaders.

Figure 16 What are Your Perceptions of Women’s Leadership (University Students)?

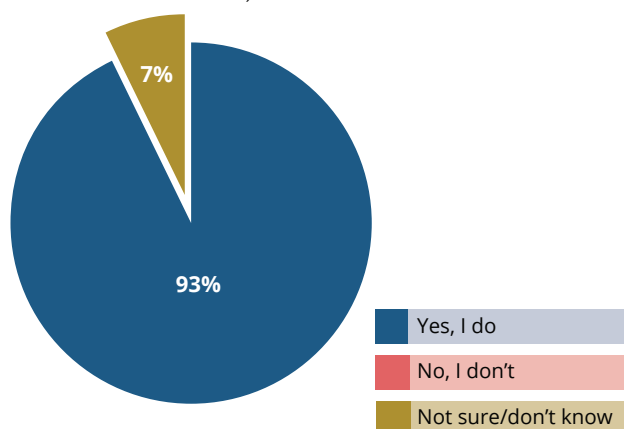
Do you think women can be good leaders? (University Students)



As a follow up, national authority representatives (n=15) were asked, “From your perspective, do you think female leadership will help to generate any positive changes for society?” with the majority (93%, n=14) agreeing with this statement while there is no one who disagreed with this statement, and only 7% (n=1) noted that they did not know or were not sure about this statement.

Figure 17 What are Your Perceptions of Women’s Leadership Generating Positive Societal Change?

From your perspective, do you think female leadership will help to generate any positive change for the society? (outcome and effectiveness)



A researcher said, “Women are very detail thinking. They think about all issues, even small things, and about solutions to be accurate with other people around themselves. I think women always think about their responsibilities before benefit for them.” The majority agreed that including female capacities would generate better outcomes if more women joined decision-making. Some male university students also noted that it is important that women would represent in decision-making because “Women know better than men about their livelihood and they can provide information to make a good decision for the society”.

3.5. Summary on Barriers to Women’s Leadership in Cambodia

This sub-section specifically inquires about the participants’ views about the barriers to women occupying roles in leadership. Respondent numbers do not represent statistical significance and so primarily, qualitative responses have been provided. There were seven main barriers identified: family burdens, lack of encouragement/support, male dominance of the public sector, limited education/capacities/confidence of women, discrimination by men and other women, stereotypes that oppress women’s freedom, and health (perceived weakness and pregnancy).



“Women face many challenges to be leaders; mostly, those challenges are because of culture and tradition. For example, if family members do not support women [to be leaders], they cannot be leaders. First of all, a woman must know her own capacities clearly and understand them. Then she needs to ask for support from family members, such as parents or sisters or brothers. However, if she is married, her husband and children are important factors. If her husband does not support her [to be a leader], then it is impossible for her to be a leader.”

H.E. Mrs. Lork Kheng, Chairperson of the 8th Commission of the National Assembly

3.5.1. Family Burdens

Many university students referred to a Cambodian proverb, “Women cannot leave the kitchen” as women are expected to be fully responsible for household chores and give priority to family issues, such as childcare and elderly care. This notion is embodied by men and women in Cambodian society making it extremely difficult for women to step forward to break such traditions. Even when women enter a public leadership position if family matters pressurise them, they are expected to prioritise the family, and without appropriate social support networks, women cannot balance family matters and their public lives, and so they may need to give up their leadership roles. H.E. Mrs Kim Sethany, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport said, “In Cambodian society, women are not valued and supported by

3.5.2. Lack of Encouragement or Lack of Support for Women

Commonly girls are not encouraged to be leaders by their parents or by their teachers in school, and society as a whole does not encourage women to take leadership roles. There are very limited mentoring and coaching programmes available in Cambodia for females to obtain support and encouragement. Additionally, if a married woman wishes to take up a leadership role or to take part in politics, her husband may not support her decision or even prevent her from taking the role. Of 231 people participating in this study (127 female), all the monks (100%, n=16) replied that women do not receive enough support while university students were divided with 80 students (43%) agreeing and 70 students (38%) disagreeing. A female change maker said, "Sexism is very serious when women want to take the leadership role. Men do not support women to work, but they will catch and blame them if women leaders make a mistake." A CSO staff member said, "According to my observation, women suffer from being a wife and a housewife because it will upset their husband if they start working on their own and getting independent – it means the husband thinks that women's independence will destroy the family happiness as it dissatisfies their husband."

"Mostly, Cambodian husbands want their wives to stay home."

- A monk

"Family burden is the biggest barrier for women to reach out to the public. Women are restricted by either the family or their partner [husband]. Poor family conditions do not allow women to have the opportunity to work as much as they want as they will have to support their family or if they have a brother, she will need to earn money to support her brother's studies."

- A researcher

Also, a monk said, "Women are suffering because they must be so responsible for household work, in addition to their paid work. On the other hand, men seem to be more free from household work than women, even when their wife is a leader." A national authority respondent also pointed out that "A lack of opportunity is a barrier because of their family responsibilities. Women are being prohibited [from becoming leaders] by their husband." A LGBTIQ person noted, "Women have a lot of tasks to handle. For example, working outside and having children at the same time; this will negatively affect both sides." A female change maker who is also a mother of primary school children said, "The big problem is to meet the responsibilities for the family (children and parents), cook, prepare the house, care for children, clean everything and ensure family life." An academic said, "The gender issue is a problem: many Cambodian men or husbands stop their wives from doing that kind of job [leadership role]."

"Male leaders should have more understanding about gender equality and should try to empower females to have more roles in our society."

- Director of Sub-National Technical Department

"There is a lack of support from family members and the society. The husband sometimes prevents them from being a leader and insists that they stay home, look after the children and do the household chores."

- A youth activist

A youth activist said, “Women are often criticised by the people around them and do not receive any support. Women are not valued by the people around them. No encouragement for women when they are working for society or in the workplace. Sometimes women are even blamed by family and society that they are neglecting their important tasks at home.” Also, a sub-national authority respondent pointed out, “A lack of emotional support from the husband and family is a barrier for women. For example, when the office requires women to travel away from home, they can’t do it if the husband doesn’t assist her with the housework. Sometimes, when she’s new to the job, there’s a lack of support, and seniors don’t help share their knowledge or experiences related to the job, especially male superiors.”

3.5.3. Male Dominance of the Public Sector

Many respondents noted that decision-making is dominated by males, and such a male dominated decision-making culture makes it difficult for women to gain access to those sharing information, and to create a safe space for women to assert their opinions as part of the decision-making processes. A female change maker said, “In the workplace, male dominated culture pressures women. Women think they can influence women and control women through men’s power.” A university student said, “Decision-making in the government is done by men. We see only men at the important government meetings on television. Women have no space to join as such domination has existed for a long time.”

A LGBTIQ person said, “Women face difficulties in communicating with men [due to the male dominated culture]. If women work outside, they will have to work with men who don’t think that women can make decisions like them. Plus, women are often scared to approach men; for example, if that person [a man] has a spouse, they are afraid that their spouse will get jealous with her.” Several sub-national authorities pointed out the lack of highly educated female leaders, and one authority said, “Education is still

limited for some women leaders, and therefore, they lack the ability to work. Some women at the sub-national level rarely join the national level capacity building workshops because they sometimes are not interested in learning. Women have too much work at home, and they don’t have time to fully concentrate on their work.”

3.5.4. Limited Education/Capacities/ Confidence

“Most women are still not ready for leadership because they have insufficient knowledge and skills about leadership and other relevant skills. Women do not have enough confidence to take a lead.”

- An academic

“Cambodian men mostly think that women should take care of their children more than having a chance to get involved in society.”

- An LGBTIQ person

Despite the fact that young women are obtaining a higher education in comparison to those in previous generations, they are not yet ready to be leaders due to age-discrimination, or they may feel a lack of confidence in serving as a leader due to their young age. The majority of respondents to this study agreed that women are holding themselves back: 100% of monks (n=16), 100% of academics (n=10), and 100% of CSOs (n=20) followed by other groups mostly agree that women are holding themselves back.

Those women who are serving as leaders face obstacles as they lack education mainly due to the civil war, and they are equipped with limited capacities to be a leader because there have been very few opportunities for them to learn leadership skills, including communication skills, public speaking, and so on. A monk said, “Women still have less capacity if compared to men in leadership. Women need more training to strengthen their capacity and they need to work in the real world so that they can earn working experience.” A national authority representative said, “Women lack self-confidence, and they do not believe in their capacities.”

Also, a male director of a technical department of a sub-national administration noted, “Women themselves aren’t being confident or brave enough.” There is limited availability of support for females through coaching and mentoring in Cambodia, and this also imposes challenges for women to gain confidence. An academic also pointed out, “Females are holding themselves back: they are shy and have fears, and do not trust in themselves.” Limited confidence may be linked to the limited educational attainment of female leaders. Nevertheless, social norms that instruct women to stay behind men or to be responsible for only housework may prevent them from believing in their capacities helping them to have greater confidence.

3.5.5. Discrimination by Men and Other Women

“Men don’t want women to express themselves. They don’t want someone female to take their place.”

– An academic

“Until now, many women suffer from conservative mindsets and culture. Such a culture affects women and causes them to be scared to talk in public, scared to be involved in public work. Women think that if they do something contradictory to the culture or old mindset, they will be judged by the society or by their own family to be bad women.”

– A CSO staff member

Prejudice and discriminatory attitudes by men towards female leaders were raised by many participants. As the data from this study shows, only a minority of male participants (38%, n=6) agree that women can make good leaders. Also, many women raised the problem that women gossiped about a female leader’s capacities in a negative manner (especially women in rural areas) and pressured women to feel scared of accepting a leadership position. A university student said “Even when we are away from home and studying in Phnom Penh, our neighbours in

the village are gossiping about me all the time. So, I can imagine that if I become a leader and make mistakes, they will gossip about me and talk about bad rumours about my family too, and that my parents were bad parents who brought me up like that.” A national authority representative and many others also pointed out that women do not support female leaders, by saying, “Women lack support from women.” A sub-national authority also noted, “Jealousy among other women is widespread, and they do not support or vote for women to be a leader: the jealousy from other women who did not support or vote for a woman to be a leader holding any position in the departments.”

A young female change maker and a leader of a CSO said, “I face double discriminations as a young woman and a female leader. I was harassed and bullied many times at the official meetings, simply because I was young and maybe because I am a female. Men at the table once said that this meeting was for the senior people [to make decisions] when it was only me in the room who was a woman and young. Men use their [men’s] standards to judge people, and when I was speaking at the meeting, men asked me why I was so aggressive, yet when men expressed themselves in a similar way [as me], men said they were brave and good”.

This young female leader experienced such discrimination at countless meetings because her sector was male dominated, and leaders who are attending these meetings are always men. This was confirmed by many participants, and as one person from the general public said, “Men don’t respect women and don’t give equal rights to women even though men say they will [respect women]. Men usually look down on women.”

3.5.6. Stereotypes – the Code of Women

“A Cambodian proverb says women cannot leave out from kitchen. This belief is still held by many elders, but we [young women] are now attending university and that is something that they have never imagined, and we are capable to do what we want. We do not have to depend on men when we have a high education and when we have capacities to earn our living.”
– A female university student

Some participants explicitly referred to the “Women’s Code of Conduct” (or “Code of Women”) that restricts freedom of women and limits women from entering the public decision-making process.⁵⁸ At the same time many participants did not refer to the “Women’s Code of Conduct”, but they mentioned “traditionally appropriate behaviours for Cambodian women” by being submissive and following men’s decisions, and this is a barrier for women to be leaders who are perceived as independent and assertive. A monk said, “The old mindset still prevails, and it puts pressure on women. Such traditions still limit women’s potential, and it makes women hesitant to be a leader.” Referring to traditional norms, an academic also noted, “Gender stereotypes are a barrier. Society always judges women and that good women are supposed to stay at home and look after their children, and they should not be making decisions.” A CSO staff member also noted, “Women tend to be very sensitive when it comes to judgments [by others towards them]. Our cultural and religious teachings also play important roles and force women to hold themselves back. The traditional concept of forcing women to stay behind men is unfair.” Additionally, some participants though not many pointed out about the influence from Buddhism. A sub-national technical department staff member said, “Even in the context of Buddhism, men are valued more than women. Such traditions and cultural mindsets amongst people prevent women from being involved in important

roles in the society or from taking responsibility in public. Instead, society offers women the roles in the household as a care taker.”

A national authority representative also noted, “People’s mindsets and social norms considerably pressure women and limit their potentials. Generally, a lack of respect for women is observed in our society. Women are not powerful due to a small number of them in leadership”. Another national authority representative pointed out that social norms are big barriers for women by saying, “When people see women leading, people, especially men, they think it is useless to join such activities because women leaders are not valuable. Such stereotypes cannot be changed quickly.” A sub-national authority member also noted, “In general, people think that women cannot take a role in leadership and are not capable of working in a high position. There is also social discrimination and stereotypes that look down on women, and there is no support from surrounding people.” A female change maker said, “Women have a strong fear [to be blamed when making mistakes]. A barrier is the patriarchy notion embodied in women themselves. The patriarchy system is difficult for women to challenge, for example, if a wife faces a problem with her husband, they are afraid to divorce. Even if they know the woman’s rights, obstacles are a backlash from family, society, and even friends. Those women who may divorce may have to face discrimination (gossiping and harassment). If women are not strong, they can be easily broken down. Being a leader is not easy for women in this society.”

⁵⁸ Although this “Women’s Code of Conduct” or “Code of Women” is referred to as a “Code”, this is not a law, but rather, it is a traditional set of teachings for women about how a ‘good’ Khmer or Cambodian woman is expected to behave. Up to 2007, this Code was taught in the school curriculum as a part of morality classes, but this was ended in responding to the recommendations by the UN CEDAW committee to Cambodia.

3.5.7. Health (Perceived Weakness and Pregnancy)

There is a widely held but incorrect perception that women are physically weaker than men and are not fit for public work, including fulfilling leadership roles, and this was repeated by all types of participants. A LGBTIQ person said, “Women are weaker than men both physically and emotionally. When women face problems, they are likely to take longer time [than men] to recover. For example, when women are bullied or mocked by other people, they are more likely to feel upset, and it takes time to get over those problems [more than men].” A youth activist said, “In general, the perspective is that women are weaker [than men].” A general population respondent said, “Women are weak from nature.” An academic also noted the stereotypes about women’s “weak” health by saying, “Society has the mindset that ‘men are stronger than women.’” Generally, both the younger and older generation respondents believe that women are “weak” and cannot manage difficult work. As a result, it is impossible for a woman to be a “strong leader” in Cambodian politics.

3.6. Progress of Youth Leadership in Cambodia

This section discusses the perceptions of the study participants toward youth leadership in Cambodia.

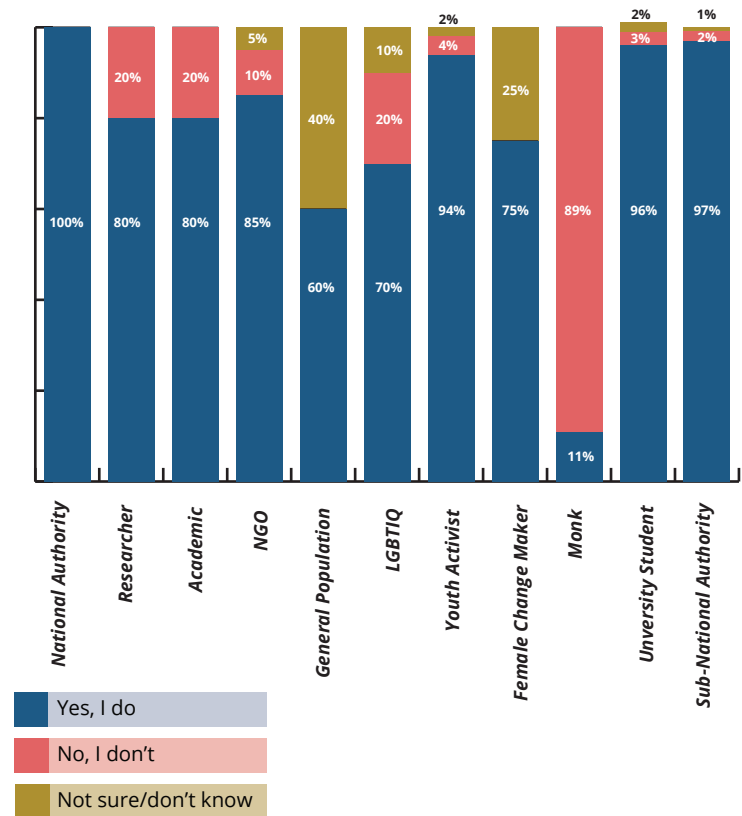
3.6.1. Youth Leadership in Current Cambodian Society

Initially, the question was asked, “Do you think Cambodian youth (aged 18-30) are taking active roles in the decision-making process (in the public sphere)?”

LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN CAMBODIA: THE CURRENT STATUS AND CHALLENGES

Figure 18 Are Cambodian Youth Active in Leadership?

Do you think Cambodian youth (age 18-30) are taking active roles in the decision-making process (in public sphere)?



The majority of respondents agree that youth are active in taking leadership roles, except for monks with only 11% agreeing (n=2).

A female change maker said, “Demographically, youth have more opportunity than ever, and especially, during the 2013 election, youth participation is huge in supporting the political campaign.” A researcher noted, “Youth are now very active, but there are the same conditions as for women with youth being active and being provided the opportunity to be leaders only in the private sector and in NGOs.” A youth activist said, “Because we’re a lot more active and educated, and our parents understand [about us] in comparison to previous generations, and they usually encourage their children for their best. Parents offer as much emotional and financial support as they possibly can. Also, the technology helps us to be able to share what other youth do”.

On the other hand, the majority of monks have negative views towards the progress of youth leadership. A monk said, “I do not think youth now have [more] opportunities to join leadership

roles as we can see that only those youth who are members of the UYFC are active and have the opportunity to take up leadership roles or to join decision-making. Other youth clubs do not really have the same opportunities as them [UYFC] to join in any programme". A CSO staff member also noted, "Youth are currently living in a very nice situation with tons of opportunities, such as voluntary work and community work, and they are creative. Youth are also capable because many of them are pursuing higher education, which makes them aware of their potential, and they can find opportunities that match their talents. However, youth's participation at the decision-making level is unclear and whether or not youth really get into there. Youth have less influence to advocate their needs to policy-makers." A sub-national technical department staff member also noted, "Personally, I do have concerns that the youth nowadays aren't being represented enough in the public service, especially in the decision-making process and politics. I think our government has already shown concerns about how to develop and provide opportunities for the younger generation."

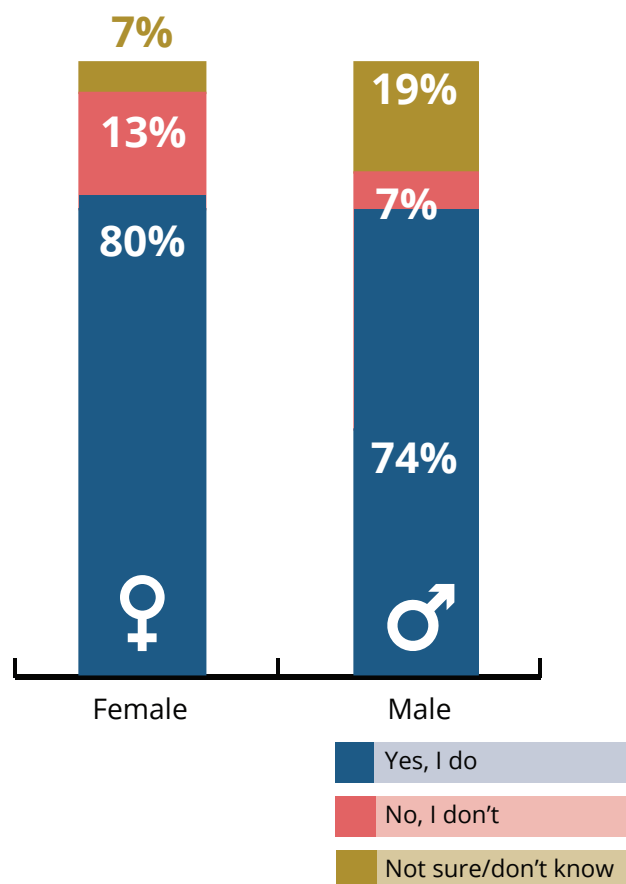
"Although youth are highly educated and smart, young people lack experience, and that can impose a problem. Because young people want to move quickly, they want to move fast, but they need to learn experience from their elders."
- H.E. Mrs Lork Kheng, Chair of 8th Commission of the National Assembly

3.6.2. Systematic Engagement of Youth in the Decision-Making Process

To the sub-national authority representatives, the question was asked, "Do you systematically engage youth in any decision-making process?"

Figure 19 Is There Systematic Engagement of Youth in the Decision-Making Process?

Do you systematically engage youth in any decision-making process? (Sub-National Authority)



In total, 119 people answered this question (45 females) and the reply was similar: 80% of females (n=36) and 74% of males (n=55) agreed that they systematically engage youth in their local decision-making process. A sub-national authority representative said, "Youth have joined in youth forums to express their opinions and about the issues that they face in society, for example, job opportunities, youth networks, and exchange programmes." Because of there being many older generation members in the state authority who will retire in coming years, all the ministries are also encouraging and proactively hiring young people for the civil service. A national authority representative also noted, "Our Government has also paid close attention to our governing succession plan for future development and consider the effective way for the next generation's involvement." In referring to the systematic promotion of women, another official also noted, "When older officials retire

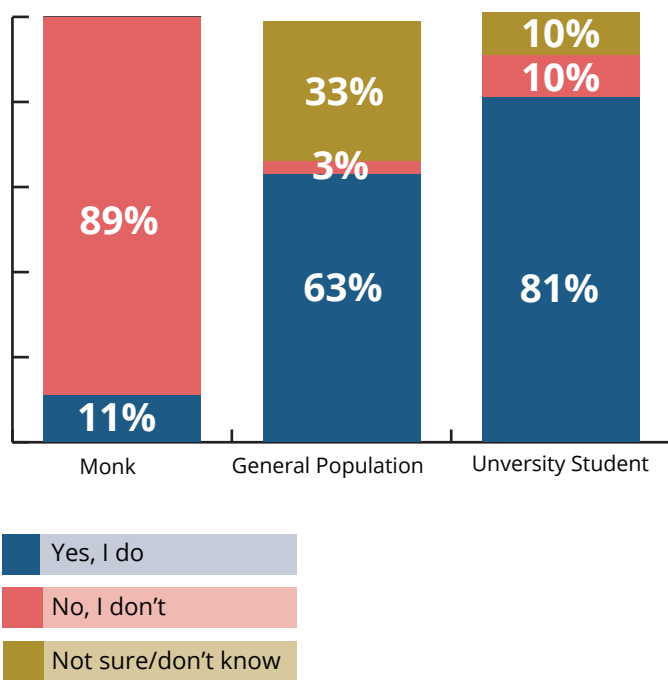
from our ministry, we try to hire young women to work instead to promote young women as a proactive measure to increase the number of women in the civil service, and we do not think that it is discrimination against males because young women are disadvantaged already. We want to produce more female role models for young girls to be inspired to be leaders.”

3.6.3. Can Youth be Good Leaders?

To monks, university students and the general population, the question was asked “Do you think youth can be good leaders?”

Figure 20 What are Your Perceptions of Youth Leadership?

Do you think youth can be good leaders?



Together the majority of respondents had a positive perception of youth leadership with 92% (n=171) agreeing that youth can be good leaders while almost one-fifth or 19% (n=35) disagreed with the statement. A general population respondent said, “Youth have a lot of new ideas and they seem to like taking risks. They are willing to learn from their failures.” A university student said, “Age is not important, it depends. Some youth are good in leadership – but elders may see more problems than solutions because young people are less experienced.”

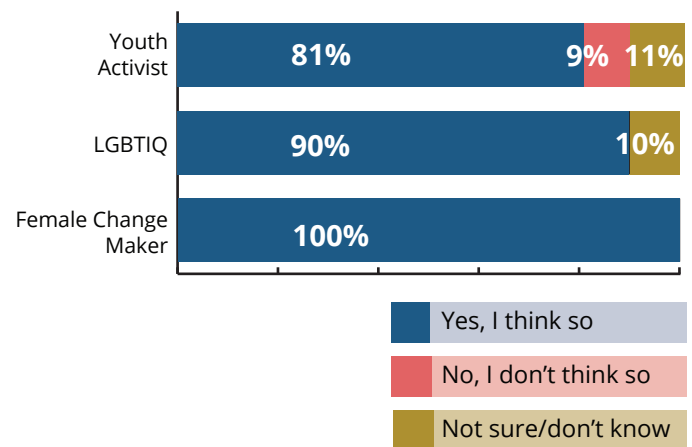
However, the majority of monks (89%) do not trust the capacity of the youth to be leaders. A monk said, “Youth cannot be good leaders even though they have better education and are capable with technology because youth are still young both in age and experience, and some of their ideas do not consider every corner of the issue unlike those from the older generation who are full of experience. More importantly is that youth are less patient as they want to show off their ability and want to get things done faster, which causes a lack of accuracy and results in mistakes in their work.”

3.6.4. Perception of Youth Leadership

The question was asked to female change makers, youth activists and LGBTIQ, “Is it essential to have youth leaders in the decision-making process?”

Figure 21 Is it Essential to Have Youth Leaders in the Decision-Making Process?

Is it essential to have youth leaders in decision-making process?



The majority (89%, n=89) agreed that it is important to engage youth in the decision-making process. A youth activist said, “Young people are full of new knowledge that can deal with new problems. They come with technological knowledge and can adapt to a new environment easily. And they’re a lot more liberal compared to the older generation. They accept diversity and learn from their mistakes easily.” A female change maker also noted, “Young people know the demands and the needs; what is the best for modern life. They are creative. They are willing to learn from people around them in order to improve themselves”.

3.7. Summary on Barriers to Youth Leadership in Cambodia

When people were asked “What are the most significant barriers to youth taking roles in leadership?”, seven key interlinked barriers were identified: parents’ prohibiting youth from being leaders (especially in decision-making), age discrimination, limited space for youth to be leaders, migration for employment, limited space for freedom of expression, nepotism and lack of soft skills. Notably, many barriers are reflected in the barriers that women face linking them to Cambodia’s patriarchal culture.

3.7.1. Discouragement by parents

“The family sets a barrier; parents do not allow their children to make any decisions but force children to listen to them and respect their decisions and ideas instead.”

– An Academic

Young participants to this study, both males and females, reported that their parents prevented them from talking about politics, or they prevented them from joining political events. A president of a youth network in the ministry said, “At the national level [Phnom Penh], the youth may not face many struggles [to be leaders] in comparison to the youth at the sub-national level. Young people in the provinces or rural areas don’t have enough capacity to engage in development, especially the female youth who commonly face financial struggles and cannot think about public issues. Also in rural areas, most families tend to follow the traditional pathway for life, such as farming and growing vegetables around their house”. A researcher who migrated to Phnom Penh from a rural area also said, “[Before I got this position as a researcher at a CSO], my parents instructed me not to engage in political issues. Actually, I was working with one union back then. My parents never supported me and always asked me to stop working with the union whenever they saw me.” Therefore, even when youth may leave their homes in rural areas, traditional mindsets embodied by their parents may continue to

prevent them from actively engaging in public issues.

Moreover, a general population respondent noted, “Some families are traditional and very strict and control their children. It means that actually parents are worried about their children [for safety reasons]. Parents are also afraid that their children might damage their family reputation [if they engage in politics].” In Cambodia, family is a very important unit, and without parental/family support for children, it is difficult for youth to step forward to take leadership roles in public”. A LGBTIQ person said, “Lack of support from their own family is a big barrier [for youth to take leadership]”. Also, an academic pointed out, “Cambodian youth depend on their parents. They are not independent. They rely on their parents paying for schools. Therefore, when parents instruct youth to do this and that or do not do this, then the youth cannot say no.” A national authority representative also referred to Cambodian culture limiting children’s opportunities by saying, “Improving parenting skills should be the important goal for us to make our country have continuous development”.

3.7.2. Age Discrimination

“Some of the youth do not have enough confidence to serve as a leader, and they lack real experience [in leadership]. Thus, sometimes, youth’s ideas and perspectives cannot be taken [by the state authority] as a serious input for the policy-making process.”

– A researcher

It was widely reported across participants to this study from diverse backgrounds that Cambodian culture instructs youth to respect elders and to not challenge them. This culture sets a barrier for youth to be leaders in society beyond youth-group leaders or school class leaders. Although the majority of respondents to this study had a positive perception of youth leadership with 92% (n=171) agreeing that youth can be good leaders, almost one-fifth or 19% (n=35) disagreed with the statement.

A participant from the general population said,

“Age discrimination is a barrier for youth to be leaders. If youth are assigned to be a leader with older people, they must be humble. They have to be respectful toward the older members who are under them.” Also, the youth themselves have been educated from when they were small that they have to respect their elders. A young female change maker said, “Our society has stereotypes saying that the elders know better than the youth. Currently NGOs and state authorities have many elderly leaders, and they think they are stronger and more powerful [than the younger generation], and they show that they are more clever than the youth, but such attitudes from elderly leaders negatively influence youth and prevent them from being leaders”. A youth activist also said, “The conservative concept that old people are always better, especially in the public sector, [makes it difficult for youth to be leaders]”. The participation of older people is also reported to decline following the leadership of a youth as leader. A LGBTIQ person said, “Older people rarely accept the decisions of the youth because they think the youth have a lack of experience. The old people will not allow us to make decisions.” A CSO staff member noted, “Youth leaders might not be respected by elders with limited support being provided by older people because they are young and lack experience”.

“When I wanted to start my own business, my mother told me, ‘You cannot do it as you are too young.’ But I wanted to and thought I could manage, so I secretly started my small company. When my mother found out, she became mad and said to me, ‘Why can’t you wait 5-10 years until you finish your degree and have some experience?’ In reality, many elders discriminate against me and also cheat me in business. But I struggled and now my business is running smoothly.”

– A female university student

A negative view towards youth was also expressed by a national authority representative who noted, “Youth need more experience and education about leadership and to learn from the elder generation. The youth are not fully united due to many different platforms. They need more

training to improve their capacity”. Interestingly, during the field work, a young female researcher experienced discrimination due to her gender and age. When she was conducting FGDs with male local authority members, many started to ignore her and became occupied in checking the documents that were sent to them for signature, and they did not pay any attention to the researcher’s interview process. This is a single incident that occurred during the field work; however, female change makers also voiced similar experiences to such forms of double discrimination.

3.7.3. Limited Space for Youth to be Leaders

“Most youth are given limited opportunities to serve as leaders.”
– A youth activist

“Very old politicians should retire so more youth can take those positions.”
– A university student

The RGC has been led by older leaders for decades sending a message to the youth that elderly, experienced politicians will continue to dominate the decision-making, and this normalises such culture dominated by the elderly. A CSO staff member said, “Cultural taboos instruct us that the young have to respect the elderly people or respect the hierarchy.” Also, an academic pointed out that “70% to 80% of young people who work in the government are judged by older people, who say that the youth do not have any experience. Therefore, elders do not give value to the youth. Most elderly Cambodians don’t respect young people.” Another academic said, “The youth cannot access a position to make decisions due to the culture. The culture of Cambodia is that the youth respect the elders, so they have to find a way to not challenge the elders, but to persuade the elders to accept youth leadership.” Additionally, rural youth have fewer opportunities in comparison to youth in urban areas where more opportunities are available for youth to join a variety of

activities and get a chance to be a leader. A deputy director of a technical department of a sub-national administration said, “The older generation should openly share experience and ideas and actively provide assistance to the youth to boost their commitment and increase their passion for the development of our society.”

3.7.4. Migration for Employment

Many young people are reported to be migrating to urban areas or to Thailand (especially in Siem Reap Province) for employment as they are struggling to make a living. An academic said, “Family [financial] conditions are a barrier: many youth have dropped out from school, but they cannot find a decent job because they lack competency. Then, it is difficult for them to think about taking a leadership role.” A university student said, “In rural areas, many children drop out from school and start to work. Some migrate to urban areas and they simply have no free time to think about social work or to be a leader.” A CSO staff member said, “In rural areas, high school students are very busy, and it is very difficult for us to engage them in our activities. They have no time to think about taking a leadership role, and if they have no experience as a leader while they are in school, it is then difficult for them to be a leader in their future life as they lack some foundational strengths to be a leader.”

It was also reported that youth in urban areas are more aware of the importance of joining in social activities while youth in rural areas have fewer opportunities to join social activities where they can experience acting as a leader that is positively changing their society. A monk noted “Youth themselves are not ready to grasp the opportunity, and sometimes they do not find the opportunity because they are busy making money. Instead they keep waiting for their opportunity.”

3.7.5. Limited Space for Freedom of Expression

Many university students noted that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport’s ban on students (and teachers) discussing politics in universities has impacted their mindsets. A university student said, “When our school posts the information that we should not talk about politics, it is difficult for us to pay attention to politics as we must keep silent about it.” For many youth, there is limited space for freedom of expression around them, even in the university. Also, a general population respondent said, “Government pressures us in that we shouldn’t evaluate their [government’s] ideas. It doesn’t give the youth freedom to express their ideas.”

3.7.6. Nepotism

Nepotism (preferential treatment for older politicians’ younger family members or relatives) was pointed out as a problem by many participants, especially by youth activists and university students. A university student said, “If someone belongs to UYFC, you can be a leader. But for us, no chance.” A CSO staff member said, “There is the gap that youth are not really welcome into the leadership roles unless that youth comes from a good background”. A youth activist said, “Corruption is a barrier; older people are still taking leadership roles and they do not give any chances to youth”.

“Nepotism is a virus in our society and spreads into everywhere”.

– A university student

Incidentally, a recent scandal at the time of the field work of this study in which nepotism at the Ministry of Information was reported by the media might act as an example of how people’s perceptions of the transparency of the government is undermined and that nepotism continues to play a significant role in gaining access to the leadership positions in the government structure.

3.7.7. Lack of Soft Skills

“The Royal Government should offer more opportunities and trainings for the youth in a comfortable environment [so they can improve their capacities]. Especially, soft skills training in the work place is essential because youth lack such skills.”

– A national authority representative

Many participants pointed out that despite the fact that young people have high education and can handle difficult technical skills, such as computer software, they also noted that youth lack experience and do not learn patiently from their elders. H.E Mrs Kim Sethany, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, said, “Young people have gained a high education; however, they are not flexible. Generally young people lack experience and thereby they lack soft skills, and they are not actively learning from their seniors.” H.E. Mrs Lork Kheng, National Assembly member, noted, “Both [my political] party and the National Assembly are discussing the “reintegration” of different generations. We do not want to divide the youth from their elders. Many youth have PhDs, while their elders do not have, but they have profound experience [at work]. So, we try to learn from each other and encourage the youth to learn from their elders. We teach, ‘cooperation with elders’. We teach youth what is social work; how to do it. We also teach them to be patient as if sometimes they need to eat traditional food and not always eating hamburgers.”

A representative from MoWA commented, “Young people are very clever, especially in regard computer literacy. But they sometimes lack the patience to learn the work step by step. They are in a hurry or want to move fast. They know the theory that they learn from university, but they lack the soft skills.” Many others pointed out that young people are not flexible, they are not patient enough to learn from the elders about the work process, and sometimes youth become arrogant with their elders as if they look down on them due to their lack of decent education.

Commonly, those comments delivered by the state officials are not critical in themselves, but rather, delivering their hopes that the younger generation would be more open to learn soft skills.

As an encouraging comment, a technical department officer at the sub-national level noted, “I think the youth may have the capacity and skills, but they often lack work experience. Also, I think some youth who are smart and have a high position tend to be arrogant and show-off. Commonly, youth lack ethical attitudes and lack the soft skills for a real office environment, especially the flexibility of working under different circumstances. Therefore, we have been trying to empower youth in our society through moral support, and we try to have an understanding [about their attitudes] and provide support and teach knowledge.”



DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This sub-section analyses correlations between the findings from the literature review and the findings from the field work.

4.1. Barriers to Women's Leadership

In many aspects, findings from the field work reflected what were also found in the literature review. Discrimination against women is linked to stereotypes and prejudices towards women's capacities and the expected roles for women, and these were the strongest barriers to women becoming leaders. Those barriers were highlighted in many different ways: some respondents referred to the Women's Code of Conduct ("Code of Women") that is still widespread and deeply entrenched in Cambodian society and culture.

Field work indicates that even in urban areas, where people have more understanding of the importance of gender equality, in reality, regardless of age and gender, many people still regard women as "the weaker sex", and that they lack the capacity to make decisions in the public sphere. As noted by H.E Mrs Lork Kheng, a National Assembly member, "People still say women should not leave the kitchen" emphasising a common belief among Cambodians that women should be submissive and obedient to men no matter how modern the country becomes. The fact that few female role models are present in the media and the majority of participants to this study did not know of many female leaders, negatively contributes to reinforcing people's perceptions that women lack the capacities required to be leaders. The fact that Cambodian politics has been mainly led by male leaders for decades, who present themselves as strong, survivors and veterans from the war, and this perpetuates the image of leaders strongly being associated with masculinity in Cambodia.

Combined with the stereotypical views towards women's roles, many people reported that women's place in society is largely limited to the family sphere (or the private sphere). As mentioned, this was highlighted by the Khmer proverb "Women cannot leave the kitchen" - that it is not appropriate for women to go out to join in public decision-making. Also, it is reported that girls' and women's behaviour in public is always "monitored" by neighbours, and that girls/women and many Cambodian parents are concerned about their family's reputation resulting from the judgement of neighbours towards their daughters. In the case that a boy in a family makes mistakes in public, people do not care and the family's reputation may not be damaged to the same extent. On the contrary, the field worker reported that when a girl in a family tries to be a leader, fails or makes a mistake, this will generate rumours in the community and can destroy a family's reputation as well as the leader's reputation. Those stereotypes were also reported as a barrier for women to hold themselves back from becoming a leader. Women are afraid that they will not be supported, not listened to, and not evaluated fairly because they are women who are trying to occupy a male dominated decision-making process.

The prejudice held by many respondents, regardless of gender, was that women are a weaker sex and that women cannot make a good decision when they are pregnant, and are overwhelmed by having children to take care of. Apparently, such a misperception is held by many, and even women themselves regard "pregnancy" and "child-care" as a barrier related

to their biological health. Because no young female leaders of reproductive age can be a role model while also a “wife”, “mother” and “a leader” in Cambodian society, it is very difficult for the general public to believe that women with many different responsibilities can make a good leader. The lack of female role models impact the people’s mindsets, not only for the older generations who may already have pre-defined stereotypes and prejudices towards women, but also for younger generations that cannot appreciate women’s capacities outside of family life.

4.2. Barriers to Youth Leadership

There are some strong correlations between findings in the literature review and the field work results with some commonalities and differences. Some of the common barriers identified were; age-discrimination, institutional barriers (limited space for youth to join leadership roles), and financial constraints that youth are struggling to make a living and cannot spare their time for or have interest in social or political issues. The research team noted that age-discrimination demonstrates a similar pattern to that for women: that older people do not have confidence in the capacities of the youth, and they do not support young people to voice their opinions because they are “young” and lack experience. Stereotyping young people as inexperienced and discriminating against them was identified as a common aspect of Cambodian culture across all study participants. In addition, findings from the field interviews indicate that parents prohibit their children from taking advantage of decision-making opportunities, there is limited freedom for young people to discuss politics or decision-making, youth are commonly perceived as lacking necessary soft skills by their elders, and nepotism is regarded as prevalent. For example, many civil servants especially at the national level pointed out that youth need to learn patience and be motivated to learn soft skills from their seniors, especially from their elders, and that many university students and young activists reported that they cannot be a leader (even if

they wanted to) because of the widespread practice of nepotism in Cambodia.

However, it should be noted that no study has clearly documented the fact that Cambodian parents are prohibiting their children, especially daughters, from joining decision-making spaces, particularly in politics. It is also worth considering that many older people have experienced a brutal civil war in which youth were victims as well as perpetrators of war crimes, that the current generation of parents holds deep-seated views that politics is dangerous, and that many parents feel their children should be protected from risky behaviours, especially their daughters.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the interviews (FGD/KII), participants were asked for their recommendations for the state authorities, CSOs, and academic institutions/schools to promote women's leadership in Cambodia. Below is a summary of the participants' views, combined from the field work and desk review by the research team's analysis.

5.1. Recommendations for Promoting Women's Leadership

5.1.1. To State Authorities

- *To achieve Cambodia's Constitutional promises that a man and a woman are equal (Art.31) and equal in a family (Art. 45),* take proactive measures to reduce women's burden from family responsibilities through some social protection mechanisms, such as setting up day care for babies and small children through the allocation of a separate budget exclusively for the use of women who wish to participate in politics, and carry out a national campaign to change society's mindsets and encourage everyone to share household work.
- *To facilitate the effective implementation of the Neary Rattanak V (2019-2023), the ministry of women's affairs' five year gender mainstreaming policy,⁵⁹ and a new national policy on gender equality (2020-2030),* ensure that all officials are aware of the gender policy of their own institutions, and provide women more chances to experience leadership roles by allocating a sufficient budget for them through a variety of state-run programmes or special training courses, including internships for women, and adopt more proactive policy measures to promote women in leadership roles by ensuring the substantive participation of women, such as allocating a greater quota for women in the election candidate lists for political parties, for example 35%, and by strengthening MoWA's functions to reduce barriers for women to be leaders. Additionally, utilise the national media network (TV and radio) and social media to promote women's leadership. Also, an effective monitoring and evaluation system with an accompanying realistic budget should be utilised to ensure the substantive participation of women in decision-making by setting clear and SMART⁶⁰ indicators to measure progress and to identify gaps.
- *For accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality,* consider accelerating positive discrimination in the hiring process for women to ensure that leadership opportunities will always be allocated to women and increasing the national budget to promote women's leadership, such as funding to provide leadership training for females, by ensuring effective mentoring and coaching for them. More programmes should be oriented to female leaders in the current system to ensure substantive participation of women in decision-making to improve democratic governance.

⁵⁹ The RGC is preparing to adopt a national gender policy (2020-2030). However, at the time of writing this report, this new national policy has not yet been adopted.

⁶⁰ SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

- *To support achieving the National Strategic Development Strategy (NSDP) key goals to increase women's decision-making power*, offer more scholarships to young girls and women in rural areas to allow them to have the opportunity to pursue higher education with increased numbers of safe dormitories for them, as well as encouraging parents to send their daughters to higher education. Additionally, enable young women to participate in leadership, including internship opportunities, at local authority offices, by providing opportunities for them to experience how actual decision-making is being made in state institutions. Provide more job opportunities for women so that they gain more confidence and obtain negotiation skills and more authority and power.
 - *In alignment with the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, take immediate measures to update traditional stereotypes of women, and implement a nationwide campaign, such as a "Good Men Campaign", to change people's discriminatory views towards women's roles by fully utilising respected current female leaders and celebrities as campaigners to motivate people to believe "women can do anything".
- ### 5.1.2. To Civil Society Organisations
- *To reduce women's family burden*, offer training courses on gender sensitisation for women and men to change their mindset that housework and unpaid work, such as childcare and caring for an elderly family member, are only for women and that men are also able to do this work. Additionally, raise awareness among men in the community to understand that both women and men have the same capacity to be leaders and to take care of the household responsibilities, and opportunities for girls and women to be leaders should be supported by men.
 - *To encourage more females to be leaders*, encourage women to participate in community development activities by providing more workshops and training courses for women to inspire them to become leaders, and create platforms and networks for women to share information and feel connected. Such networks need to focus on empowering women to gain confidence in themselves and to share experiences to support each other.
 - *To change the male dominated political culture*, proactively encourage women to apply for jobs at CSOs and increase the numbers of female staff members, including female interns, yet a recruitment process would also need to prioritise the merits of the applicants. Moreover, ensure that women are provided with opportunities to share their ideas and opinions beyond being merely 'at the table'.
 - *To assist women to gain leadership skills and obtain confidence*, provide more educational programmes sensitive toward girls and women, and set up mentoring programmes to boost females' confidence. Furthermore, facilitate the formulation of networks amongst women at different levels of society through social media so that they feel connected to and empathise with other potential leaders.
 - *To eliminate the negative stereotypes associated with women's roles and to change misperceptions that women are "the weaker sex"*, organise conferences by inviting school principals from all levels (from pre-primary to university) to promote female leadership so that teachers will pay more attention to promoting female leadership. Additionally, encourage school principals to take more proactive measures to promote females to be leaders in academic institutions in a systematic manner, such as by introducing a gender policy. In addition to the programmes/activities that they have been conducting, some component/mainstream activities/sessions should be added to inform adults/parents in their target

communities about the importance and value of girls' education, that girls have the same capacities as boys to be able to become a good leader, and establish more programmes to eliminate the old, negative concepts about women's roles in society.

5.1.3. To Schools and Academics

- *To encourage more females to be leaders*, take more proactive measures to promote females to be leaders in academic institutions in a systematic manner, such as by introducing a gender policy, not only among the students but also among the teachers and management. Recruit more female teachers and professors in higher educational institutions in all the faculties to demonstrate female capacities to the younger generation and that females can be academic leaders.
- *To change the male dominated political culture*, proactively recruit more female professors in the faculties of law and public administration from where many civil servants qualify to create a more female-friendly environment. Also, provide a more gender-sensitive education to both boys and girls from an early age so that they perceive boys and girls as equals, and the boys have respect for women's public roles.
- *To eliminate the negative stereotypes associated with women's roles and to change misperceptions that women are "the weaker sex"*, educate both boys and girls about gender equality by creating a gender-sensitive curriculum for all schools by using age-appropriate materials, and ensuring that school teachers do not have any biased views towards girls and proactively promote female students to be leaders. Reach out to the older generation who hold misperceptions about women's roles to support a change in their understanding that both boys and girls need to contribute towards the physical and emotional work of the household.

- *To understand more about the mentoring and coaching potentials in Cambodia*, conduct research to identify what types of mentoring programmes have been implemented in Cambodia, compare promising international examples, and create a Cambodian model for mentoring as it is not yet commonly available in the country.
- *To understand more about female leadership in the private sector*, conduct research to identify enabling factors for females, especially young females, to become successful businesswomen, and inform the public about women's capacities as business leaders.

5.2. Recommendations for Promoting Youth Leadership

5.2.1. To State Authorities

- *To effectively implement the National Youth Policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport*, establish a committee of youth representatives from diverse backgrounds (ethnic minorities, youth with disabilities, young LGBTIQ people) in every ministry to systematically engage young people in the decision-making process, and create outdoor adventure activities for youth to be able to build networks and a supporting environment. Additionally, organise more events or activities to inspire and motivate young people, especially targeting female youth, about the positive aspects of being a leader.
- *To achieve Constitutional promises that everyone in Cambodia is equal (Art.31) and a principle of no discrimination enshrined in many international laws that Cambodia has ratified*, promote more youth to be leaders by providing leadership training, internship opportunities, and proactively recruiting and promoting youth in the state structure, especially female youth. Provide more opportunities for young people to work in any position, especially female youth,

including internship opportunities for them by ensuring that mentoring and coaching services are provided to them to develop confidence and to learn from experienced and senior leaders.

- *To ensure the implementation of internationally agreed upon promises to uphold freedom of expression, such as in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),* remove a barrier to the young people voicing their opinions of politics in academic institutions, and enhance dialogue about decision-making to inspire youth to join a decision-making process.
- *To facilitate its effort to accelerate anti-corruption measures by the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Government,* accelerate the process of reducing corruption and nepotism to make sure that all opportunities are equal, especially for female youth, from every background in all state institutions.

5.2.2. To Civil Society Organisations

- *To create more space for youth to be leaders,* provide more internship opportunities for youth, especially targeting young females, help youth to gain more work and leadership experience, provide more training, and organise attractive workshops or short study courses by prioritising the needs of the youth. Provide systematic mentoring and coaching support as a part of the CSOs' programmes with the youth.
- *To eliminate age-based discrimination,* create more campaigns and events, such as community gatherings, to increase older people's awareness and understanding of the importance of youth participation in leadership and in decision-making processes, especially by promoting young females to reach out to the older generation to change their mindsets.
- *To encourage inter-generational learning opportunities,* organise seminars and meetings that invite and encourage both the youth and elders to share their challenges, experiences, and hopes for the future of Cambodia.

5.2.3. To Schools and Academics

- *To create more space for youth to be leaders,* create youth leadership programmes in the school system, such as school clubs or student unions, organise more attractive events where youth can develop and present their managerial, organisational and planning skills, and offer more volunteering activities to develop their abilities and gain work experience.
- *To assist youth in accessing job opportunities,* provide an enabling learning environment for youth to be inspired to contribute to social development, especially for young females who have fewer opportunities, and create more attractive youth oriented events or activities to motivate more youth, especially young women, to be leaders.
- *To understand the power dynamics in Cambodian society and the intersecting forms of discrimination against youth,* conduct more research about youth engagement in decision-making by identifying promising practices and collecting good role models, especially from young female leaders, and share information through social media to motivate and inspire more youth to be leaders.
- *To improve parenting skills to promote young generation to be leaders,* reach out to parents of students in a variety of forms, such as hosting seminars and events at schools to invite parents to learn about parenting skills, how they can encourage their children to pay attention to social issues, and how to actively engage their children in public issues as young leaders.



CONCLUSIONS

This study was a result of a desk review and field work by the research team with the strong support of the TI Cambodia's management team and the study's Advisory Committee members. The Advisory Committee verified the desk review results and identified key issues, which became the basis for the field work research framework. After the completion of the field work, the KIs/FGDs' results were challenged and verified against the desk review results through a validation process with the TI Cambodia's management team and the Advisory Committee members.

The desk review indicates that there is considerable, rich data for the analysis of women's leadership in Cambodia, produced by both state authorities and CSOs/UN agencies. However, literature on youth leadership is very limited. As the main focus of this study was women's leadership, issues surrounding women's leadership received greater in-depth analysis from diverse angles than youth leadership. Furthermore, analysis of youth leadership was also limited due to the lack of literature that could be referenced to corroborate and verify the field work findings. Additionally, the inherent complexity of a study that includes 11 categories of respondent and collects the views, perceptions and experiences of youth's and women's leadership also presents a significant challenge when drawing conclusions. The data demonstrates some areas have a uniform consensus, such as progress on women's leadership in Cambodia after the 1993 general elections, and the barriers that women have faced, such as the family burden and lack of support. Nevertheless, there was variability in the observations between the sub-groups.

The main focus of this study was to identify barriers to women becoming leaders in Cambodian society. To answer this question, some common variables were identified as being key barriers to women becoming leaders: the patriarchy system that discriminates against

women, a lack of encouragement and support for women, and a male dominated political landscape. Firstly and most importantly, the patriarchal system discriminating against women has been identified as a significant barrier. For example, women are expected to take care of housework as a priority, men are decision-makers and women should follow their decisions. Such structural discrimination that does not trust women's capacity to make decisions constricts women's life to the household, and this is a significant factor.

The belief in the patriarchy was also internalised by many women who do not know their own capacities, including how assertive they can be. The perceived weak health of women was identified by many participants to this study as a barrier for women, but in reality life expectancy in Cambodia is greater for women than men (males achieve 67.3 years of life on average while women achieve 71.2 years). Both male and female participants held the perception that women cannot be a strong leader due to their health, including the impacts of pregnancy. Notably, such structural discrimination embodied in the patriarchal system was also identified as setting a barrier for the youth in that youth should follow the opinions of the older men. Those patriarchal social norms confining women at home or to the private sector were identified as a barrier for women across the sub-groups despite the fact

that some progress has been observed in women's advancements.

Secondly, a lack of encouragement for girls and women to become leaders, especially by family members, was identified as a critical barrier. Parents do not aspire to see their daughters as leaders or school teachers, and there are not many female role models to inspire girls to be leaders. Once they grow up, women are expected to marry and raise a family with children, and their husbands do not encourage them to take public roles. Even when husbands may support them, women feel they have to prioritise their family matters, and they may not be able to fully concentrate on their public roles for fear of being accused of being a bad mother or bad wife by the local community. The former emphasis in school's on the subject of the Women's Code of Conduct (or "Code of Women") has a significant impact on the mindsets of women; that they have to be responsible for their family and serve their husband to maintain the family's reputation. Such traditional concepts may also impede women's access to a tertiary level education that can help them to be good leaders, as their parents do not see the importance of sending their daughters to higher education when they expect them to be housewives and mothers. Additionally, women may lack the financial means to become leaders without support from their family members.

Lastly, men dominate a political landscape in which women and youth are not valued and are excluded from the main decision-making processes. Traditional perceptions that exclude women from decision-making in the public sphere still remain, and it was reported that family members are not supportive when daughters (or even sons) join political activities. Due to societal pressure and the family burden, girls and women are not encouraged to take a lead in the public spaces, they were holding themselves back due to a lack of support or encouragement, and they are not confident in their capacities to be leaders. Girls are not inspired to be a leader from childhood, but rather, instructed to follow elders/parents and men, as described in the Women's Code of Conduct ("Code of Women").

Some notable barriers for youth to be leaders were: patriarchal social norms that discriminate against youth, as noted above, financial constraints, and limited space or encouragement to join public decision-making processes. The structural barriers produced by Cambodia's patriarchal social system is a significant constraint on youth wanting to speak out in front of their elders, as they are supposed to show respect to and follow the decisions of elders. These social and cultural considerations are taught by the family and at school from childhood.

Moreover, financial constraints are also a barrier for the youth from poor families who need to focus on their daily survival, and therefore, may lack the interest or the time to join social activities or politics that are not directly related to supporting their livelihoods. Many youth participants to this study also reported that young people are migrating to urban areas or Thailand seeking better employment opportunities, and therefore, they lack time to focus on public issues, or they are not inspired to be leaders. Furthermore, limited space within which youth can express their views and opinions on public matters was identified as a barrier. MoEYS prohibits political dialogues within educational institutions and this creates a barrier to youth becoming interested in politics and this prevents them from being motivated to become leaders. This discrimination is magnified for young women whose parents are concerned about their safety and also their family's reputation. When their daughters may make mistakes in public, the family's reputation may be damaged and their daughters may shame their parents. Limited opportunities for youth to join public decision-making were also considered a negative factor reducing opportunities for elders to begin to build trust in the capacities of youth as leaders. Although there are some mechanisms within state authorities at all levels to enable youth to join in public forums, the number becoming leaders has been reported as limited, and participants to this study did not see any young, prominent leaders in the political sphere. This is also true for women and especially young women, who are considered to lack the capacity to be a leader.

Interestingly, diverse opinions were provided by researchers, academics and female change makers who are more critically examining women and youth leadership in Cambodia. Many respondents from those categories noted that they see advancement of women and youth in decision-making processes in Cambodia. However, they also noted that these examples are primarily quantitative with the focus on increasing numbers rather than the substantial improvement in the quality of the engagement of youth and women in decision-making. These respondents commonly highlighted the positive progress by noting that more needs to be done to actually enable the voices and concerns of youth and women to be truly reflected in decision-making to enable a more responsive democratic society.

Based on these findings, a set of recommendations were developed as in the above section. The recommendations are presented two-fold: for women's leadership and for youth's leadership. With this research study, deeper current understanding of the barriers to women joining decision-making are identified informing better programming and improved project implementation that directly addresses those barriers. Barriers to youth becoming leaders also present intersecting discrimination for young females. Considering the fact that "discrimination" is deeply rooted in Cambodia's patriarchal power dynamic, it is, in all its manifestations, a significant barrier to both women and youth with the need to change negative social norms that discriminate against women and youth a priority across all sectors.

A developed democratic society requires the full and meaningful participation of all people, regardless of sex, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, ability or disabilities. Despite the aspirations enshrined in the Constitution of Cambodia, this study identifies that women and youth are not able to enjoy full participation in the development of such a democratic society. More efforts are necessary to dismantle the patriarchal society and beliefs embodied in such a male dominated power system. Proactive measures should be taken to effectively promote women and youth so

that their voices and concerns are better reflected along the pathway to a truly representative democracy.

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ANNEX 1: DATA COLLECTION TOOL - INTERVIEWS

Master Tool

Transparency International Cambodia: Leadership of Women and Youth in Cambodia: The Current Status and Challenges

Section 1: Progress in Women's Leadership in Cambodia

1. From your observation, how would you describe the situation for female leaders and female leadership since the first national elections from 1993 until now? (National/Sub-national)
2. From your view, what has the Government done to promote women's leadership? What are the outcomes and how effective has it been?
3. From your view, what have NGOs done to promote women's leadership? What are the outcomes and how effective has it been?
4. (If not yet answered in above) Could you give some visible and concrete examples of progress in women's leadership?

Section 2: Challenges to Women's Leadership in Cambodia

5. What are the barriers to women becoming leaders?
6. How have women received support from their surroundings, such as their family/the government/society to be a leader?
7. What are the biggest challenges for female leaders?

Section 3: Progress in Youth Leadership in Cambodia

8. Do you think Cambodian youth (aged 18-30) are taking active roles in the decision-making process (in the public sphere)?
9. Can you tell me about any visible progress that youth have made in taking roles in leadership? (For example, organising events, advocacy/campaigns, or increasing activities led by youth)
10. (If not yet answered in above) Could you give some visible and concrete examples of progress of Youth Leadership?

Section 4: Challenges to Youth Leadership in Cambodia

11. What are the most significant barriers to the youth becoming leaders?
12. What challenges are faced by youth leaders in Cambodian society?

Section 5: Recommendations for Promoting Women's Leadership

13. What should the Government do to improve the promotion of women's leadership?
14. What should the NGOs do to promote women's leadership?
15. What should academic institutions/schools do to promote women's leadership?
16. What can men/boys do to support women's leadership?

Section 6: Recommendations for Promoting Youth Leadership

- 17.** What should the Government do to improve the promotion of youth leadership?
- 18.** What should NGOs do to improve the promotion of youth leadership?
- 19.** What should academic institutions (Level of education)/schools do to improve the promotion of youth leadership?
- 20.** What can the older generation do to support youth leadership?

ANNEX 2: TOR FOR THE ADVISORY GROUP

Term of Reference

1. Research on Women's and Youth Leadership in Cambodia

Gender equality is not yet a reality in Cambodia. According to the Gender Gap Report 2020, produced by the World Economic Forum, Cambodia ranked 89th out of 153 countries that were investigated in the report. In the Gender Gap Report (2020), it also recorded that Cambodia ranked at 119th out of 153 countries in regard to women's political empowerment, which was measured by the number of women in parliament, the number of women in ministerial positions and the years with a female head of state (in the last 50 years). Available data all demonstrate that under-representation of women in all sectors remains a key issue in Cambodia.

Despite the availability of this data and statistics, relatively little is known about opportunities and the underlying challenges facing women and youth in leadership positions in Cambodia. This study will therefore contribute to fill the knowledge gap by seeking to understand the current status of women and youth in leadership positions, identify opportunities and the underlying social, economic, political and cultural barriers and other structural barriers to the inclusion of women and youth in leadership positions, and to identify the challenges faced by women and youth in leadership positions.

In addition to understanding how men and women perceive, experience and behave towards women and youth leaders at the level of the policy decision-making process, TI Cambodia also hopes to formulate a project based on this research study on Women and Youth Leadership.

TI Cambodia's approach to the promotion of transparency and integrity is through constructive engagement. Thus, the study will be undertaken in a participatory way with the involvement of a variety of stakeholders. For that purpose, professionals from various backgrounds are invited to contribute to a joint diagnosis of the current status regarding women and youth leadership issues. This is expected to build trust and develop a joint understanding among relevant stakeholders and contribute to credible and widely shared assessment outcomes, providing a sustainable foundation for the subsequent implementation of an identified reform agenda.

2. Mandate of the Advisory Group

The mandate of the Advisory Group is to provide advice to the TI Cambodia team and the consultant team that is conducting the research study during the execution of the research process in order to identify the actual conclusions and acceptable findings to the main/sub research questions and recommendations. More specifically, members of the Advisory Group are asked to:

- Participate in a meeting with TI Cambodia and the consultant team to provide constructive feedback on research design. Provide technical support, if any, for TI Cambodia and the consultant team in conducting the research study;
- Participate in a meeting with TI Cambodia and the consultant team to review the first draft and final draft of the research finding and propose actionable recommendations;
- Contribute to the promotion of the research findings after publication.

3. Timeline

The meetings of the Advisory Group are expected to be convened on three occasions. The first one is scheduled on 11 June 2019 while the second and third ones are expected in September and October 2019.

No	Activity	Date
1	Constructive feedbacks on study design and questionnaire	11 June 2019
2	Review the first draft of the research report/ findings	19 September 2019
3	Review the final draft of the research report/ findings	02 December 2019

4. Membership

Members of the Advisory Group are selected according to their expertise and the stakeholders involved in the topic. As far as possible, membership shall be balanced in terms of gender and sectors, including the public sector, private sector, civil society, academia and international organizations with expertise on research, gender, leadership and other areas of importance.

The Advisory Group should have no more than 10-15 members (excluding TI Cambodia and the consultant team), with at least 60% female members.

5. Governance

TI Cambodia acts as the secretariat of the Advisory Group. All external activities related to the study or its Advisory Group shall be coordinated with TI Cambodia. The member's main contact person at TI Cambodia is Ms Phearong Sdeung (psdeung@ticambodia.org).

The Advisory Group members shall maintain the confidentiality of all information regarding the study and refer to TI Cambodia for media and other inquiries.

ANNEX 3: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS BY CATEGORY AND INTENDED USER

Recommendations for Promoting Women's Leadership

No.	To Whom?	Recommendations
Family Burden		
1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help ease women's family burden through support mechanisms, such as day care for her children.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer more leadership training to women. • Offer public training for women about leadership roles and change women's mindset about housework being not only for women but also men's work.
Lack Encouragement and Support		
1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give women a chance to experience leadership roles through exchange programmes or any other special training. • Create new policies that promote females in leadership into higher levels and equal share of positions. Promote women's economic independence and reduce political discrimination against women by giving more support to MoWA to work on reducing women's societal challenges. • Consider or promote women by allowing them to work in any public sector. • Provide and support women with social protection. Provide opportunities for women to take a leadership role by enforcing special mechanisms on quotas for women in leadership roles. • Allocate national budget for gender studies and encourage women to participate in politics. Enhance the law on implementation and create quota that allow women to work

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short courses for females on women’s leadership. Increase the quota for female civil servant intakes. Heads of departments should encourage women and work to end discrimination. • Broadcast short videos on social media or on TV about women’s leadership.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote being a leader to women. Strengthen the human resources (especially of the new generation). • Encourage women to participate in society by providing more workshops and trainings. Help women to create their own network. Cooperate with the government. • Help women in difficulty and protect them by disseminating awareness on harassment. Encourage women to join events or share their decisions. • Create more seminars to inspire more female leaders. • There should be a long running project that would focus on women’s empowerment, but before implementing the project, make sure that all indicators will respond to the existing women’s issues.
3	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer space to learn about women’s leadership. Strengthen the educational systems. Share good experiences from aboard to boost their desire. Learn more about team building and group work. • Design workshops and programmes to help promote and encourage leadership. Introduce the topic in the school curriculum for younger grades. • Recruit more women in work. Give more chances to young women. • Create events or activities to motivate female students to become leaders. Give credit to female students who are outstanding. • Allow girls to join in all extracurricular activities.
4	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create space for female students to discuss their issues and provide them with solutions that develop confidence and prepare them for the opportunity to be a leader.

Male Dominance in the Public Sector and Leadership

1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should consider having specific quota for women to work to ensure that opportunity will not be taken by men. • Initiate specific mechanisms in term of labour division for men and women, and increase the budget for further development, including existing policies and mechanisms to ensure that those policies and mechanisms will serve the interests of the beneficiaries.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer jobs and encourage women to apply. • Understand more about women before implementing projects. Promote gender equality. Run campaigns to raise awareness of women’s leadership. • Offer more chances to work or intern. Provide more working space for them. Offer more trainings, seminars, workshops or short courses. Provide the best consultations for them.

Limited Education/Capacities/Confidence

1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer scholarships to young girls in rural areas to allow them to have the opportunity to participate in leadership roles. • Government should provide more scholarships, specifically for women who live in rural areas to pursue their higher education. • Provide capacity development for women to effectively take leadership roles. Increase the budget for women’s empowerment measures. • Encourage females to get a higher education and allow them to work in higher education. • Educate parents to urge more girls to enter higher education compared to boys. • Training youth in soft skills. Support or provide more reading books, especially book related to leadership. • Introduce social ethics that include the promotion of female leadership. • Advertise nationwide and raise awareness at the provincial level to persuade parents to allow their daughter to go to school. • Continue to encourage parents to let their daughters to continue education rather than becoming garment workers.
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2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider to promote women’s leadership and gender roles from a very young age. • Encourage women to work and help them to strengthen and build their capacity to have a better understanding about practical work and gain experience. • Create a friendly environment for women to strengthen their capacity and earn experience in leadership and other important skills, so that they can become more competent. • More educational, capacity building, leadership, mentoring to boost female confidence via workshops for women.
3	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with the government by including lessons on gender for children to improve their understanding. • Provide workshops on women’s leadership. • Create conferences with school principals helping to promote them. • Include the more programmes about being good leadership skills from Grades 1 to 12.
4	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise exchange visits and more training on leadership skills, especially for women. • Provide short training courses, such as on gender, law, environment and health. • Highlight women’s achievements to motivate them. Award the best women in institutions in terms of capacity. • Provide more training to women. Encourage women to challenge the status quo. Encourage women by offering employment opportunities. • Establish university scholarships for women with a quota for women. • Introduce soft skills to help women build their confidence.

Discrimination by Men and Other Women

1	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop harassment – many women are harassed. • Prevent sexual harassment. • Work harder to end discrimination of all kinds, and eliminate outdated social perceptions that degrade women, especially in the music industry, which release songs disrespect women.
2	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote school transportation to make it easier for those who live far from schools.

3	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide gender and other relevant courses in university, so that it helps to reduce all kinds of discrimination. • Educate more people about gender discrimination against women and girls. • Provide psychological encouragement. Avoid sexual harassment or negative language toward women. Schools should encourage working together.
Stereotypes – some negative teachings in the “Code of Women”		
1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish vocational schools to make increase knowledge and awareness.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote a gender balance. • Provide more training for women to understand about the changing of attitudes and the status quo. Raise awareness of the importance of women’s roles in society. • Provide basic knowledge about leadership and the importance of women’s roles in society. Change attitudes toward women by both society and men. • Disseminate information to parents about the importance and value of girls’ education – in rural areas parents have stereotypes that girls do not need much education. • Change societal perceptions that women cannot do anything and always make bad decisions. • Create more training regarding reducing female stereotypes.
3	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let young boys and girls know about the importance of gender roles in society, politics and leadership roles. • Create curricula that will help to develop more women’s roles and women’s leadership for the children to have greater understanding of the importance of women’s roles in society. • It is important to let the children know about gender sensitivity from a very young age by specifically teaching them the right way to understand it. • Include gender roles in the curriculum from primary school so that both boys and girls will have a better and clear understanding about the importance of men and women’s roles in society. • Provide greater understanding about leadership, gender equality, and life skills among young people

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct lessons on feminism to promote women’s rights and their rights in society. • Stop using all Khmer proverbs and poetry that disrespect women.
4	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate and strengthen women’s leadership and gender balance to allow women and men to understand clearly about the roles of men and women in society.

Recommendations for Promoting Youth Leadership

Older People do not Give Leadership Space/Opportunities to Youth

No.	To Who?	Recommendations
1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give more opportunities and open public forums for youth to raise their concerns and access leadership roles. • Do not think negatively about youth’s ideas and also support those ideas. • Produce more social activities regarding youth groups, team building and group work. • Spread more information to local communities, especially in remote areas where the youth are not involved much in society. • Establish a committee, possibly in each ministry, that includes youth representatives, so they can raise their voices. • Provide more scholarships and opportunities for youth, and allow youth to join equally in any events. Provide training that will contribute to their life skills and leadership skills. • Create camping activities for youth where youth get to make new friends, build networks and learn new things. • Give opportunities to get jobs and provide scholarships. Offer opportunities for youth about volunteer work. • Give opportunities for youth to work as interns. • Give more space to the youth. Allow youth to be involved in the political activities. Give more space to youth to be involved. Let them be involved and do by themselves.

2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more internship opportunities for youth. Help youth to gain experience and practice knowledge. • Provide training, workshops, and short courses of study. Mental and confidence support via NGOs' programmes. Disseminate information in local communities. Address youth' issues to get regular study.
3	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome youth leadership into the school system, such as school clubs or student unions. • Create more student clubs or events, so youth can show their management skill.
4	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give opportunities to youth by providing scholarships and effective courses. • Offer more volunteer activities at the institutions to promote their capacity and work experiences. • Offer strong academic curriculums for specific skill. • Promote research skills to work more effectively. • Offer education of a high quality. • Support what youth do in their communities. Encourage youth to participate in more community development activities.

Nepotism

1	State authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce corruption to make sure that all opportunities are equally shared with youth from all backgrounds. • Consider making policy that will provide more protection to youth and offer more opportunities that will allow youth to ensure their presence at a certain level. • Provide more internship opportunities for youth. Help youth to gain experience and practice knowledge. Reduce nepotism.
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Discrimination by Elders - Youth Lack Experience

1	State authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer more scholarships for youth. • Create more policies and mechanisms to support youth. • Allow youth to join with any policy making - at least as an observer. • More scholarships should be offered. Work harder to end discrimination of all kinds.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide scholarships to youth for both studying abroad and domestically. • Reduce all kinds of discrimination toward youth and their leadership.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to strengthen youth's capacity through training.
3	Academic institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more effective courses about leadership for youth to make them feel confident when they start doing real work.

Many Youth Migrate/ Busy Working/ Lack Interest in Leadership

1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more promotional videos about how youth can play a role in society. • Create events or activities to motivate young people about leadership. Provide opportunities for young people to work in any position.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the awareness and understanding about the importance of youth participation in leadership, politics and the decision-making process. • Create events or activities to motivate young people for leadership. Provide opportunities for young people to work in any position. • Encourage young people to explore and learn.
3	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design workshops and programmes specifically to help promote and encourage leadership among youth. Introduce the topic to the school curriculum for younger grades.
4	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a new learning environment about youth participation in society. • Include moral discipline courses in some universities, such as personal growth in the learning courses. • Create events or activities to motivate young people about leadership. Provide opportunities for young people to work in any position.

Very Limited Space for Freedom of Expression

1	State authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect youth regardless of political party affiliation.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help guarantee youth's safety.

Many Parents Prohibit Their Children from being Politically Active

No specific recommendations were raised by the participants

Lack of Capacity/Support

1	State Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial support to strengthen youth capacity. Adopt good strategies for youth. • Provide more scholarships, especially to the poor.
2	CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth and help them to build their leadership capacity through NGO projects. • Continue to work with youth and support them by providing vocational training and other training that will allow youth to have a better perspective about their life and their future. • Provide more youth opportunities to be interns, and provide more capacity building and leadership skills. Engage youth in any field that they have the capacity for and help them gain more experiences. • Promote rights and capacity building of youth to let them aware what are the rights they can take the benefit from if they come into trouble.
3	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise life skills learning for youth to effectively join society. • Encourage youth role models to be speakers sharing their experiences with other students. • Ensure that young people have a sense of being a leader from a young age.
4	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide theory along with real practice. • Support more scholarships because they are the best way to help youth. • Teach and encourage critical thinking skills, not only positives but also negatives.



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