API'S ACHIEVEMENTS

2014 -2018

CONTENT

FORWARD

SINCE its beginnings as the Advocacy and Policy Program in 2003, the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) has been committed to ensuring that the rights of citizens, particular of the most disadvantaged groups among Cambodians, are guaranteed by law, and are promoted and protected in any circumstances, place and time – rights including, but not limited to, the right to live, to participate, to assembly, to express opinion, to raise and demand, to access to public information, to fair trial, etc.

At the same time it has been API's mandate to "build capacity for change" to enable citizens to raise their concerns and seek solutions with government and other stakeholders at all levels. Continuing its mission, API has set its strategic goal 2023 – "to realize rights and enhance voices of citizens for sustainable development in Cambodia".

The significant successes achieved in the last five years aim to be highlighted in the following report. These would not have been possible without the splendid and highly esteemed enthusiasm and active support of our partners at subnational and national levels, government institutions, the Cambodian Parliament, civil society organizations, networks and donors as well as the unremitting efforts of the API-Team, to whom all we would like to express our sincerest thanks.

With gratitude for having successfully, and with integrity, led API to where it stands today, a reputed, independent, professional Cambodian NGO with a dedicated and capable team, we particularly thank Mr. Neb Sinthay. In line with API's policy, he completed his second term as Director by the end of 2016. In December 2018, he also completed his role as Senior Technical Adviser and, hence, his contribution to API's mission. His leadership and advice have been invaluable!

We are looking forward to continuing to work together with our partners to make this strategy a successful reality, to share opportunities and challenges, and to move
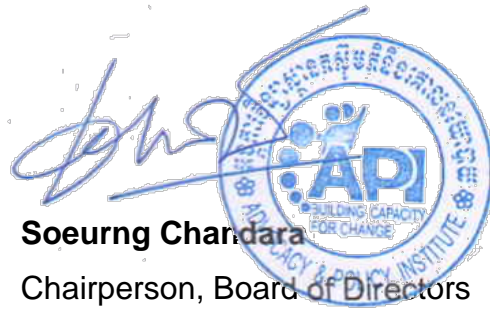
towards the highest achievements and results for Cambodia's sustainable and democratic development.

Phnom Penh, 19 January 2019

Lam Socheat

Director

Soeurng Chandara

Chairperson, Board of Directors

INTRODUCTION

The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) is a leading Cambodian capacity building organization in the areas of advocacy, policy influencing, citizen engagement and good governance. API's mission is to serve the long term democratic and social development needs of Cambodia by empowering people to interact with their government to protect their rights and provide for their needs.

Since its formation in 2003, API has engaged in direct policy advocacy highlighted with two successful campaigns for a law on access to public information and information disclosure, and a new traffic law for road safety which was adopted in 2015. API has worked on building communication channels amongst members of the Parliament, national Government, local authorities and civil society organizations from community to the national level. It has received widespread positive feedback from Cambodian and international organizations for its reliability, relevance and professionalism. In November 2018, API was awarded the "CARE Partnership Award 2018" by CARE Germany-Luxemburg as an outstanding partner globally for its contribution to supporting rural communities and civil society actors in Cambodia in implementing the Social Accountability Framework, as well as for its long-term mission to build advocacy capacities. API has forged its reputation through the delivery of advocacy training courses and the production of a range of publications in both Khmer and English to promote understanding of advocacy, access to information and the Government's Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) reforms. It has done pioneering work on public information and budget disclosure at the local level, and on enabling rights-holders and duty-bearers in local governance.

API has developed its 4th Strategic Plan based on reflections of the results achieved over the past 5-years and extensive consultations with key stakeholders from community to national government and development partners levels. It had considered the challenging environment of constrained space for civic and civil society engagement and decreasing international development assistance for Cambodia. (See Annexes B+C)

Key conclusions from reflections and consultations included:

API'S UNIQUENESS

API has established its reputation and leadership role in Cambodia's civil society by serving as a connector, facilitator and capacity builder for citizens' empowerment in their interaction with government at all levels. API has uniquely acquired knowledge of policy issues like access to information (A2I) through its grassroots work at the local level and built up capacity to influence national policy-makers in addressing these issues through national legislation. API links interventions with citizens in the communities to civil society networks and all government levels up to national policy-making – and back again, to help enable government stakeholders to serve citizens according to the law and contribute to an enabling environment for citizen and civil society engagement. API has built bridges among rights-holders (the demand-side) and duty-bearers (the supply-side), and among the diversity of Cambodians, no matter of what gender, political orientation, (dis)ability, ethnicity, faith, etc.; whilst not compromising on a Rights-Based Approach.

A2I – ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

API has advocated for an Access to Information Law (A2I) since its establishment in 2003. The 2018 draft A2I law completed with CSO inputs facilitated by API, has not seen progress in its passing by the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly yet. Further pressure by civil society will be needed and continued lobbying will remain a priority for API. At the same time API has worked on practical citizen empowerment on their Right to

Information and government capacity development on information disclosure, with a focus on the sub-national level. This work has e.g. made access of the people to basic documents easier, and has reduced corruption by making fee structures transparent. The disclosure of sub-national budgets has helped communities to understand and influence the priorities of local development. While there has been progress in A2I, transparency and the fight against corruption sub-nationally, challenges prevail at all levels due to slow progress in legal reforms and with e.g. Chinese investments in Cambodia going largely unchecked. API's

consulted stakeholders agreed that, in the new phase, API should lead campaigns for disclosure of information about critical issues like public budgets, NRM/access and user rights, public-private contract disclosure and private sector investment, building on A2I law adoption advocacy and promoting implementation, as well as current existing sectoral laws that regulate disclosure, such as the Budget Law, Organic Law (on D&D Reform), NRM Law, etc. to safeguard people's Right to Information.

API'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

3

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2018: ACHIEVEMENTS

The goal of API's 3rd five-year strategy had been to contribute to poverty reduction and better protection and promotion of rights and voices, particularly for young people, women, and disadvantaged persons and groups, by promoting a culture of public information disclosure, strengthening democratic participation and transparency and accountability within the Decentralization and De-concentration framework in Cambodia, particularly in the targeted Commune and District Councils, and advocating for equitable and sustainable public policy.To achieve its strategic the goal, API received financial and technical support a number of partners from European Union, Bread for the World

(BfdW), Danchurch Aid (DCA), Open Society Foundation (OSF), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)/UNESCO, United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), CARE, British Embassy, Results for Development Institute, Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)/Bloomberg Philanthropies, Transparency International, Development Innovations/DAI/USAID, and others.

API worked on five strategic outcomes, at the national level and in Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Banteay Meanchey, Kratie, Pursat, Kampot, Uddor Meanchey and Preah Vihear provinces.

OUTCOME 1

Increased information availability and disclosure on critical issues at sub-national levels in 20+ communes, 5+ districts, 7 provinces and the national level ministries, Ministry of Information and Ministry of Interior.

93%

Of people reported their understanding of A2I

Increased understanding **about rights to information, information about standard of public services among target groups in seven provinces**: around 2 million people, particularly young people, women and disadvantaged persons and groups, 90% through direct outreach activities, the media and the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) tool and App. It was highly achieved regarding understanding of access to information, with a very high 93% of citizens surveyed reporting understanding the right to access to information and why it's important. This strongly correlated with having attended a community meeting in the last few years, with 97% of those who attended a meeting reporting understanding their right to information compared to 80% who did not attend a meeting, a statistically significant difference[1].

[1] *API (2018) - Final Evaluation Report on Promoting Good Governance by Increasing Access to Information and Strengthening the Independent Media Project, 2015-18'* Based on Pearson Chi-Square tests carried out on survey data

75%

Of citizens
attended a public
forum

Increased the availability of information about commune and districts' public administrative services, development plan and budget among target groups, particularly women, youth and disadvantaged groups. Subsequently, citizens took action to influence the commune and district decision making. 33% of citizens surveyed directly requested information from local authorities and 75% attended a public forum where

information sharing took place[2] and nearly 40% of all local citizens have made at least a demand to their local authority (either by requesting for information, making complaint, or requesting for services from their Local Authority)[3].

17

Key issues
examined

Policy analysis undertaken of 17 key local issues and increased citizens and non-state actors demand for and use public information.

92%

Of CBOs raised
concerns/problems
to LA

Enhanced capacities of 150 civil society organizations (NGOs, CBOs), at least 450 leaders, 3 per each NGO/CBOs working at sub-national government to advocate for greater transparency and information disclosure. The 2018 project's evaluation show that almost all (92%) CBOs have raised concerns or problems about their community to LA. Moreover, the issues and problems raised by CBOs were put into Commune and District Investment & Development Plans (CIP, CDP, and DDP)[4]

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[2] *API (2018) - Final Evaluation Report on Promoting Good Governance by Increasing Access to Information and Strengthening the Independent Media Project, 2015-18; "Meaningful survey data regarding gender and access is not available as 89% of citizens surveyed in the evaluation were female".*

[3] *API's (2018) Project Evaluation on "Promoting Rights, Voices, Choices, and Decision for Citizens (Pro-Citizens)"2016-18*

[4] *API's (2018) Project Evaluation on "Promoting Rights, Voices, Choices, and Decision for Citizens (Pro-Citizens)"2016-18*

OUTCOME 2

Access to information and information disclosure legislation and policies debated and adopted.

100%

Completion of the draft law

Access to Information Law drafted: At the national level, API has been well-known as leading civil society organization that actively engaged in drafting the law on Access to Information (A2I) by an Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group under the lead of the Ministry of Information. As was identified by its recent external evaluation, over the past strategic phase API has succeeded in mobilizing resources and experts to support the process, including donors, relevant government institutions as well as representatives from civil society organizations, to contribute into the draft law. It was also found that, in this process, API does not only play a role in mobilizing resources, but also created space for CSOs to engage in dialogue with the government, especially with the Ministry of Information on the "A2I Law".

60%

Of citizen-contributions were incorporated into the draft law

Although the law is still in draft stage and needs more consultations before it can be finalized, API's leadership role has been acknowledged by the Minister of Information and other key stakeholders. At the same time, the draft A2I Law was analyzed by international experts, and then A2I law was improved again with updated version (August 2018). According to estimates by API, more than 60% of the contributions that originated amongst civil society groups have been incorporated into the text of the draft law. Furthermore, as part of API involvement, A2I has been integrated into the I-SAF (the implementation of the Social

Accountability Framework) and become part the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)5. Moreover, through API facilitation, a very good level of coordination and cooperation with United Nations agencies present in the country and involved in this endeavor existed, i.e. with UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights which was seen as unprecedented achievement in mobilizing support by these high level institutions.

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[5] *API and UNESCO's (2018) Project Evaluation Report 2015-18*

OUTCOME 3

Productive dialogue and effective participation in democratic decision making to enhance the voices of and protect the rights of Cambodian people (young people, women, men and people with disabilities) in the target areas at sub-national level.

127

CBOs received a capacity building training

Good practices in local governance: At the sub national level, API has developed and promoted good practices in local governance, particularly at the commune and district levels to address issues and promoted voices of young people, women, men and people with disabilities and children. At least a few cases of CBOs' advocacy efforts in various target communes were successful. This success was a result of API collaboration and cooperation between CSOs and the local government, to ensure effective communication and coordination between the commune and district councils. Through this process, space has also been created for open dialogues between local multi stakeholders, to discuss or deal with issues linking to community livelihood, and at the same time, to demand for improved service support from the local

government constituencies. A significant achievement has also been observed in the area of promoting gender equality in the governance leadership, where women councilors are able to voice their concerns as well as to articulate their views with confidence, in public meetings and in the meetings amongst members of the councils.

40%

Of the population participated in the commune project selection

Community empowerment: API also placed strong emphasis on empowering the community to engage constructively with their local councils, by providing capacity building support to leaders of 127 CBOs, so that they have both knowledge and skills to work more effectively with all local services and key stakeholders including to keep their commune councils accountable in 7 target provinces. For example, API trained local staff of 7 Local NGOs and around 100 Community Accountability Facilitators (CAF) to facilitate citizens scorecards and citizen monitoring activities to improve performance, responsiveness and accountability of local government and service providers (specifically 20 communes, 20 health centers and 80 primary schools) and mobilized community people to participate in decision making processes on commune and district development processes in Kampot province. As a result 40% of the population participated in commune project selection; 59% agreed with the project selection; 37% discussed development issues with other villagers in the past month, 14% of villagers attended meetings at commune council offices in the year of 2017[6].

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[6] *2017 World Bank's National Survey on Implementation Social Accountability Framework (I-SAF)*

OUTCOME 4

Increased capacity development of local government and councils to improve functions, transparency, accountability, human rights, information disclosure, and collaboration with communities, local civil society and national Government.

429
Female councilors were strengthened

API strengthened capacity of 429 female councilors from provincial, municipal, district, commune and sangkat bodies in 15 provinces in Cambodia on skills of meeting facilitation, public speaking and advocacy, implementing the general mandate of councilors and inter-/intra-governmental relations; writing proposals, regional networking; and the reflection the implementation of female councilors' roles and the roles and responsibilities of councils.

455
Community and district councilors obtained capacity training

Before the opposition party (CNRP) was dissolved in 2017, API had strengthened capacities of elected local councilors from different political parties, approximately 445 commune and district councilors, 20% of them women, on partnership approach and working with CBOs and NGOs in response to public needs; 865 local councilors and officials, 20% of them women, to disclose and provide public access to information about the services and performance of local authorities; and

166 provincial, district and commune councilors, 30% of them women, on contents of the draft A2I Law and further consultation and further implementation preparation in target provinces.

OUTCOME 5

Enhanced effective participation and contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and their networks in the national government policy development and implementation regarding to democratic governance, human rights, environmental governance, decentralization, transparency and accountability, information disclosure and development processes at national level.

Passage of a new road traffic law. API worked closely with networks on road safety as regulated in a new road traffic law, where experiences and knowledge were exchanged and used as basis for advocacy campaign on road safety. This law has been passed by the parliament and endorsed by the government, and API led Road Safety members to advocate with Ministry of Information. As result, a Prakas of Ministry of Information on Alcohol Control Advertisement on targeted

hours has put in place since 2017. API conducted series of advocacy policy surveys, trainings and policy dialogues with policy makers, members of parliaments, public forum with youth and local authority.

Social Accountability Framework Policy and Implementation Plan and Operation Guidelines: API contributed to improve government policies, guidelines and practices on social accountability framework through enhanced learning, feedback and monitoring-documented

lessons learnt and best practices from I-SAF implementation in Kampot province as it was confirmed in the project evaluation report 2018 and ISAF Phase II framework document 2019-23 to address more sectoral issues at district level and more inclusion of disadvantaged beneficiaries.

Primary Education Policy: API build advocacy capacity to Aide et Action's National Budget Law and budget disclosure: Through API networking with CSOs, constructive dialogue has also been created on the A2I related issue of budget monitoring and transparency, and to a larger extent, it opened spaces for CSOs to work closely with Ministries including Ministry of Information to promote budget disclosure, A2I, transparency and accountability.

Anti-Corruption Law: API participated as a member of both a government and a CSO technical working groups to improve the quality of the Cambodian government produced reports of the implementation of the United National Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report 2018 to directly address the situation of Cambodia; however, government limited API's inputs as it was the only local NGO invited to join the government working

(AEA's) 25 partner organizations including staff of CARE, Save the Children, Plan International, PSE, NEP in advocacy on education for a comprehensive Cambodian inclusive education system that caters for every child including children with disabilities, indigenous, girls, poor, remote, and over-aged; particularly out of school children.

group on UNCAC. In a parallel manner, API also led a CSOs Working Group consultation workshops with other CSOs & UN stakeholders and produced a shadow report of the UPR process in 2018 on access to information and access to justice chapters and the report was submitted to UN Human Rights Office in Geneva in later 2018 for the discussion at the UN plenary session in early 2019. Moreover, in the year 2016, API participated in the discussion on two new draft laws (Law on Witness Protection and Law on Reporting Person Protection), under the leadership of the Government's Ant-Corruption Unit (ACU). These two legislations have been discussed with different stakeholder

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-18: KEY CHALLENGES

Amidst progress and achievements, API has also faced critical challenges that could either help or harm its current operational works and achievement of outcomes. These challenges have included:

A2I LAW DRAFTED BUT NOT ADOPTED AT ITS SET TIMELINE.

Although with a claim that the formulation of the A2I law has still been in progress, some key concerns have been raised. As the recent evaluation of SIDA-supported A2I legislative work highlighted, "concerns remain with regard to the actual power of the Ministry to push the draft law forward in order for it to be endorsed by the whole Cabinet and then discussed and adopted by the National Assembly and the Senate". This was not surprising to API, who has been aware that this process may take longer time than expected and, perhaps, could face even further delays.

POLITICAL UNREST AND NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIAN DEMOCRACY.

impacted potentials to get closer to API's vision "national culture of harmony based on sustainable political, economic and social development stability". Due to political unrest after the national election in 2013; dissolution of the main opposition party in 2017, national election in July 2018 without participation of the main opposition party; API needed to put additional efforts into re-planning projects and activities by focusing more of our support to demand side (right holders), not the supply side (duty bearers) because of no functional democratic and elected councilor system any more. At the grassroots communities, spaces and freedom of assembly amongst civil society organizations and NGOs have either been monitored or put under scrutiny. This pressure has been further exacerbated by government efforts to reinforce the NGO Law that is seen as threat to CSOs' freedom. This political climate appears to have some consequences on the work of API with local community; for example, activity related information has to be provided to government before community meetings or

people forum can be organized. API has had to lower its tone on advocacy, but focusing more on building the capacity of people to engage in constructive dialogue with their local constituencies, and this work has been carried out through strengthening mutual relationships and trust between the former and the latter rather than confronting.

LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF SUBNATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS (SNAS) TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES RAISED IN API-SUPPORTED FORUMS.

SNAs functioned within the restrictions of the government's annual transfer of funds. SNAs, especially at the DM level, find it difficult to cope with their new functions and to respond to the critical issues raised at API and CSO forums such as larger-scale infrastructure and community knowledge about road safety. The transfer of functions to SNAs along with their limited capacity, resources and political commitment will continue to be significantly challenging.

GOVERNMENT NGO LAW ADOPTION AND ENFORCEMENT.

Regulations on taxation, and control of social media and website, and other government requirements for organizational operations have restricted independent CSOs', media's and especially blacklisted NGOs' space to meaningfully do their work. Even though API has not yet faced significant obstacles, the law of Association and NGOs has required API to amend its By-Law and other changes of Board and staff structure and it caused tremendous additional and non-essential tasks in the management team.

CONSTRAINTS OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES LIMITED API'S GROWTH.

Financial sustainability is a challenge due to a low number of long-term funding sources but with many short-term funding sources to support many relatively small projects. API implemented many activities with inadequate donor funding, particularly on staff and office running cost. As a direct response, API has met this challenge by undertaking an organizational development assessment and respective follow-up actions in 2015/16.

CHANGES OF API'S LEADERSHIP AND RE-STRUCTURING.

Transitioning of leadership and handover took longer time. The first director, Mr. Neb Sinthay, finished his ten years mandate in 2016. A new executive director, Mr. Chea Vantha, was recruited but resigned after only eight months in 2017. Mr. Lam Socheat has been recruited as executive director in November 2017.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

YEAR	TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET	DONORS
2014	**USD 588,463**	- Bread for the World (BfdW) - British Embassy (BE)
2015	USD 921,944	CARE Cambodia
2016	**USD 543,980**	Change the Game Academy of Wild Ganzen Foundation
2017	USD 469,229	- DanChurch Aid/Christian Aid (DCA/CA) - European Union
2018	**USD 413,635**	Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP)/Bloomberg Philanthropies
TOTAL	**USD 2,937,251**	- Open Society Institute (OSI) - Oxfam in Cambodia - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)/UNESCO - Results for Development Institute - Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) - The Results for Development Institute (R4D) - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - Transparency International - United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) - USAID/Development Innovations Development

OUR TEAM

From left: *Ms. Am Muykim, Mr. Lars Krause, Mr. Phan Phorp Barmey, Ms. Pauline Knoepper, Mrs. Meas Lida, Mr. Em Poly, Mrs. Nob Sreyleak, Mrs. Van Phearum, Ms. Chorn Somaly, Mr. Chea Sokhalay, Mr. Man Vanpannit, Mr. Lam Socheat*

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND API STAFF

From left: *Mr. Lam Socheat (Director), Mr. Man Vanpannit (PM), Mr. Khuon Bunsang (BoD Member), Mr. Soeurng Chandara (Chair of the BoD), Mr. Michlael Engquist (BoD Member), Ms. Chorn Somaly (FM), Ms. Meas Lida (PM), Ms. Nhean Phoungmaly (BoD Member), Mr. Kim Sokleang (BoD Member), Ms. Nakagawa Kasumi (BoD Member), Mr. Lars Krause (Advisor), Mr. Phan Phorp Barmey (SPM)*