



**Project#5: Strengthening Youth Participation in Local Planning and Budgeting, 2019-2021**

**Objective:**

Support local government improvements in the delivery of social services, especially for young people, women, children and people from vulnerable groups and those with disabilities.

Sub-national administrations (communes and sangkats) prioritize the issues and needs of young people in Commune Investment Plans and allocate resources to social services to improve young people’s wellbeing.

**Funding:**

123,535 USD funded by SIDA/UNICEF (2019-2021)

**Target Areas:**

Khan Sen Sok in Phnom Penh; Sa Ang and Ang Snoul Districts in the Kandal Province and Chetbori District in the Kratie Province.





## Activities and Results:

- 5.1 Youth/CBOs leaders and representatives increased their capacity to analyse local planning and budget documents and social services budgeting guidelines in target districts. By the end of 2020, **we achieved 102.5% of this target. In total, 82 (targeted: 80) youth representatives in 20 communes received capacity building training** and they engaged with Commune Investment Plans (CIPs) and budgeting in their communes. Activities started with project kickoff meetings in all four target districts with 144 stakeholders from local authorities (53 female) and national level MOI officers. They contributed to the discussion on the importance of youth participation and engagement with local authorities to develop their communities. Local authorities agreed with youth participation in the CIP process. Then youth leader selection meetings were conducted and a total of 97 (61 Female) youths were selected as representatives in the CIP process. API has prepared all the four training course packages planned, and secured their development and delivery. The three-day training course focusing on local planning & budgeting, budget analysis and social services budgeting guidelines and soft skills was offered to 82 youths (50 female).
- 5.2 Commune / sangkat budget analysis, issue identification and advocacy strategy for engagement in local planning and budgeting for communes was produced and implemented. API has achieved 100% of the target according to the 20 action plans: A set of recommendations for youth participation and integration into CIP planning and budgeting processes for social services was produced by youth groups. The recruited youth and emerging leaders have not only been trained on commune budgeting, but also on how to use media platforms as part of communication and policy campaigns. Two Telegram and Facebook messenger groups have been created for the purpose of sharing information and strengthening connections across the network.
- 5.3 At the national level, the consortium with UNICEF has also produced a wonderful budget tracking tool. The budget template for citizen engagement in the budget formulation process has been developed which has allowed a meaningful and active participation of youth in the budget formulation process, thus contributing to the enforcement of the sub-decree on public participation on budgeting. API presented the draft template to local authorities and youth during consultation meetings and focus group discussion in each target commune. These meetings had a total of 80 participants (45 female). Comments and concerns were documented and addressed, and later incorporated into the template which was adopted and launched by the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Economic and Finance in late 2020 as a pilot project to be implemented from 2021 onwards in 20 communes of the targeted 4 districts.



### Challenges:

- 5.4 It is necessary to build good cooperation with national and local authorities and education departments so the project can effectively engage youth, especially high school students. The engagement with the Ministry of Interior is time consuming.
- 5.5 The project was initially designed for two years but ended in mid-2021 due to changes in the development cooperation agreements between the governments of Sweden and Cambodia. Thus, the project team doubled its efforts to complete all planned activities in a shorter time frame.
- 5.6 Youth and commune councils have conflicting schedules. Youth representatives are often free during the weekend after their study. The commune councillors, on the other hand, work and host meetings during the week which poses significant challenges for our recruited participants to attend the meeting. Some youths do not have enough confidence to attend meetings with commune councillors, perhaps due to the social norms which discourage them to question or challenge their elders.

### The Way Forward:

- 5.7 Improve the skills and knowledge of youth groups in each target commune, concentrating particularly on citizen rights and the roles of local authorities in local planning and budgeting.
- 5.8 Start a process of regular quarterly follow-up and coaching sessions with youth representatives to review their involvement and effective participation and to highlight their demands in the planning and budget processes.
- 5.9 Continue to support an online tool (Facebook group / Messenger) aimed to provide an enabling environment for youth representatives and group leaders.
- 5.10 Improve partnerships with local authorities both at the district and at the commune administration level, and ensure that youth representatives are able to be members of district planning and budgeting.