

The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) Cambodia

“Social Inclusion in local planning process
and emerging opportunities for new social
media uses

Toward CIP 2025

Implemented by



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Disclaimer

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Introduction

RATIONALES, OBJECTIVES
AND METHODOLOGIES

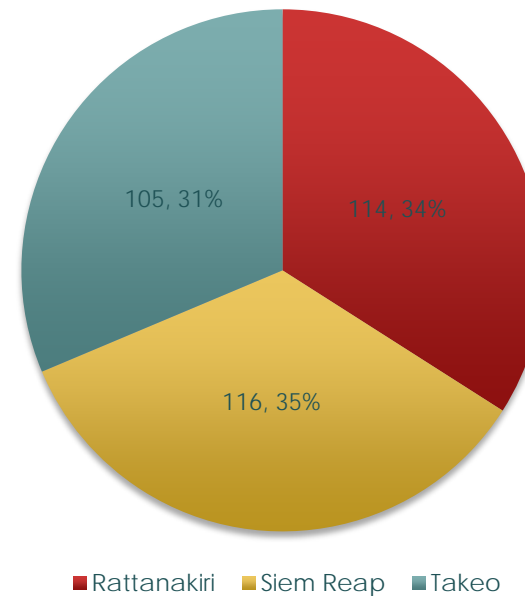
Background and rationales

- ▶ The Royal Government of Cambodia has developed and implemented key policies aiming at addressing the need of vulnerable group.
 - ▶ Among key populations: youth, women, people with disability, minority,
 - ▶ Key policies: Social protection, ID poor program, local governance
- ▶ There is a need to pay even more attention to vulnerable groups, especially in the context of post-Covid 19.
- ▶ Social inclusion is about ensuring engagement from vulnerable groups and making their voice heard.
- ▶ Within the decentralization reform, participation of vulnerable groups is a key policy objective.
 - ▶ Promotion of participation in the Commune Investment Planning (CIP) process
 - ▶ Implementation of Social Accountability Framework at local level (ISAF)
- ▶ Fast changing socio-economic trends require assessment and adjustments to the existing policies and responses.

Objectives and methodologies

- ▶ The objectives of the research:
 - ▶ To identify key socio-economic trends and policy trends around social inclusion at local level
 - ▶ To assess the actual practice of social inclusion within the current local planning process
 - ▶ Suggests key areas for consideration, including more use of social media to promote social inclusion
- ▶ Methodologies
 - ▶ Policy and research document reviews,
 - ▶ Rapid review of current use of digital means for service delivery and local participation
 - ▶ A field survey in 3 provinces with 335 respondents
 - ▶ Qualitative interviews and field observations

Survey sample (N=335)



Key messages

- ▶ Demographical changes, migration, Covid-19, and high penetration of internet and social media are among key factors shaping socio-economic trends in Cambodia,
- ▶ The Government has increasingly given more attention to vulnerable groups, especially amid the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts,
- ▶ Local participation for vulnerable group has already been provided in the current CIP process, but the actual implementation varies across places.
- ▶ Youth together with ICT are emerging solutions for improving local governance, but innovative thinking (and the spirit of learning by doing) is needed to harness such potential, and
- ▶ NGOs and CBOs are potential partners for communes/sangkats in initiating and pursuing the emerging solutions.

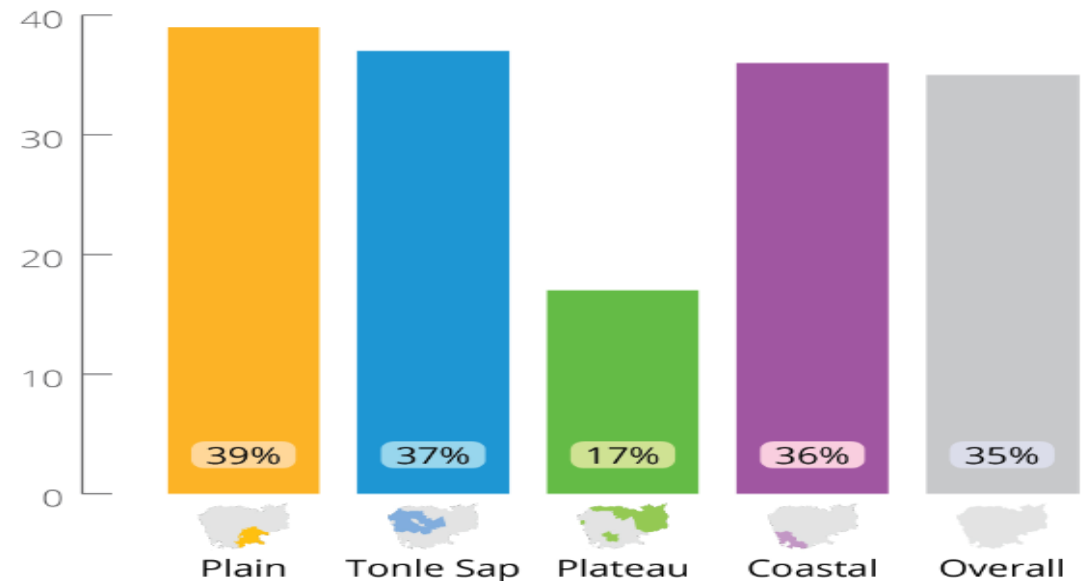
Key socio-economic trends

LATEST DEMOGRAPHIC
DATA, MIGRATION AND
INTERNET USES IN CAMBODIA

Latest demographic data in Cambodia

- ▶ Key population groups according to the 2019 Census
 - ▶ Female: 51%
 - ▶ Youth (18y-35y): 31%
 - ▶ Elderly people (>60 y): 10%
 - ▶ Minority groups: 4%
 - ▶ People with disability: 5%
- ▶ Migration as a key socio-economic phenomenon across the country

Percentage of HHs with at least one migrant (as of 2018), based on WFP (2019)



Emerging vulnerability due to Covid-19

- ▶ COVID-19 might double the poverty rate to 17.6 percent, with 1.34 million might fall back into poverty (UNDP, 2020)
- ▶ COVID-19 leads to decrease in workers' average income by 30% (from \$237.4 in January to \$167) due to temporary closure of factories, reduced working hours and no pay for overtime work (CPS et al, 2020)
- ▶ At least 60% of small business owners expected a decline in business' revenue. Tourism/hospitality business are the most affected by COVID-19 (UNIDO, 2020; CPS 2020)
- ▶ Almost 100,000 Cambodian migrants were reported to return home from Thailand due to Covid-19 (ILO, 2020).
- ▶ Cambodian households' debt increased, and people took out new loans. A Survey by Households' debt increased from 59% in January to 61.7% in April 2020 (CPS et al, 2020)
- ▶ Unemployment rate could increase to 4.8% (UNDP, 2020).
 - ▶ Will migrants in urban areas return home to rural areas due to job loss?

Internet and social media uses in Cambodia

Based on #Digital2020 report for Cambodia

- ▶ Internet users in Cambodia as of January 2020
 - ▶ 9.70 million internet users
 - ▶ Increased by 1.3 million (+15%) from 2019
 - ▶ Internet penetration rate of 58%.
- ▶ Mobile connections
 - ▶ 21.24 million mobile connections
 - ▶ Increased by 765,000 (+3.7%) from 2019
 - ▶ Equivalent of 128% of the total population

▶ Social media users in Cambodia

- ▶ 9.70 million social media users
 - ▶ Increased by 1.4 million (+17%) from 2019
 - ▶ Social media penetration rate of 58%
- ▶ As of 2018, the percentage of internet subscribers over the number of voters:
- ▶ High % areas: SHV (550%), PNH (400%)
 - ▶ Low % areas: OMC, PVH, RTK, MKR (50%)
 - ▶ But on rapid rise even in remote provinces

Key policy trends

KEY POLICIES ON LOCAL
PLANNING AND EMERGING
DIGITAL INNOVATIONS

Overview of the current local planning process and key policies



- ▶ In policy:
 - ▶ Focusing on the need/voice of all citizens, especially vulnerable groups
 - ▶ The 2nd 10 Year National Program emphasizing social inclusiveness
 - ▶ Starting to give more focus on e-governance
 - ▶ The Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) plays critical roles when it comes to vulnerable group

Other policies/ initiatives with focus on social inclusion

- ▶ Social protection policy and programs
 - ▶ Social assistance and cash transfer for specific groups
 - ▶ Contributory schemes (security fund, pension for wage workers)
- ▶ The expansion of Poor Households (ID Poor) program
- ▶ Cash transfer for Covid-19 affected groups
- ▶ Recent expansion of contributory-schemes for workers in formal sector.
 - ▶ The challenge however is the still huge in informal sector
- ▶ Village, Commune and Sangkat safety policy (2021) also mentions vulnerable groups
- ▶ More focus on social services at the local level
- ▶ Plans to increase budget for social services
- ▶ Reform to improve local budgeting process
- ▶ The Social Accountability Framework (ISAF)

Emerging e-governance initiatives at the local level

- ▶ The 2nd 10 Year National Program on D&D emphasizing urgent need for E-governance:
 - ▶ E-Services
 - ▶ E-Administration
 - ▶ E-Feedback/participation
- ▶ Existing examples of E-services
 - ▶ Provision of administrative services through the One Window Services
 - ▶ More use of banking system for cash transfer operation at the local level
 - ▶ More use of online information sharing and support for clients
- ▶ Existing examples of E-Administration
 - ▶ Common use of social media (especially Telegram) among officials at SNAs
 - ▶ More (fragmented) use of MIS (Management Information System) by selected local service providers
- ▶ Existing examples of E-Feedback
 - ▶ Creation and testing of various App such as ISAF
- ▶ Main challenges
 - ▶ Momentum on the rise, but not yet strong
 - ▶ Fragmented and not-institutionalized
 - ▶ Changing mind-set as the most challenging

Key findings from the fields

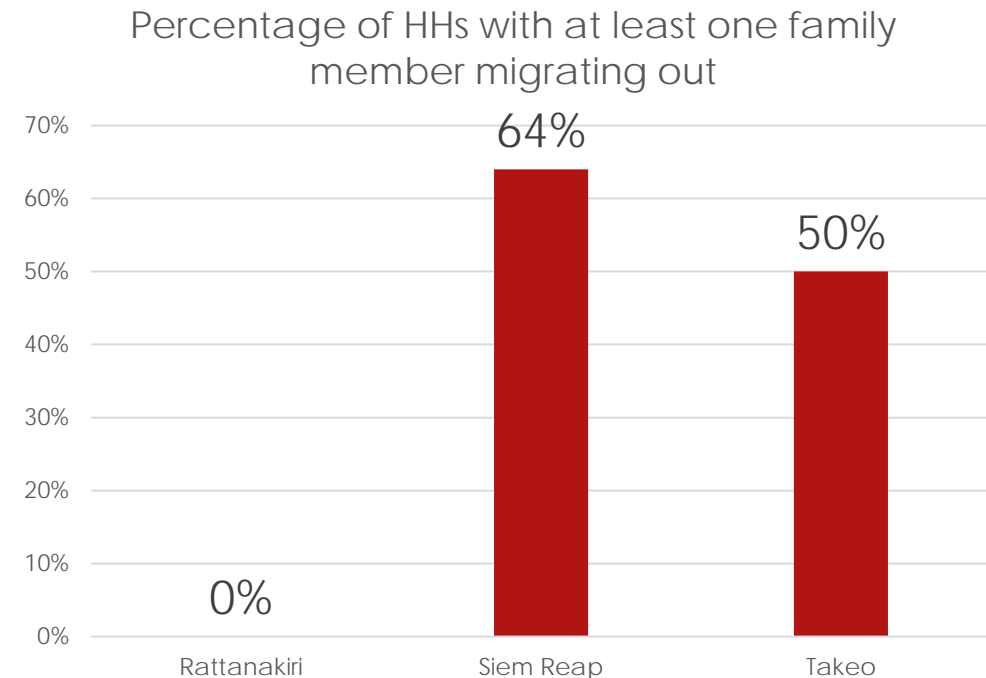
SURVEY FINDINGS &
QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

The sample

Key demographic groups	% of the 335 respondents
Female	65%
Youth (18-35y)	34%
Elderly people (>60y)	13%
People with disability	3%
From HH with at least one migrant	34%
People in Ratanakiri (proxy for 'minority' group)	34%

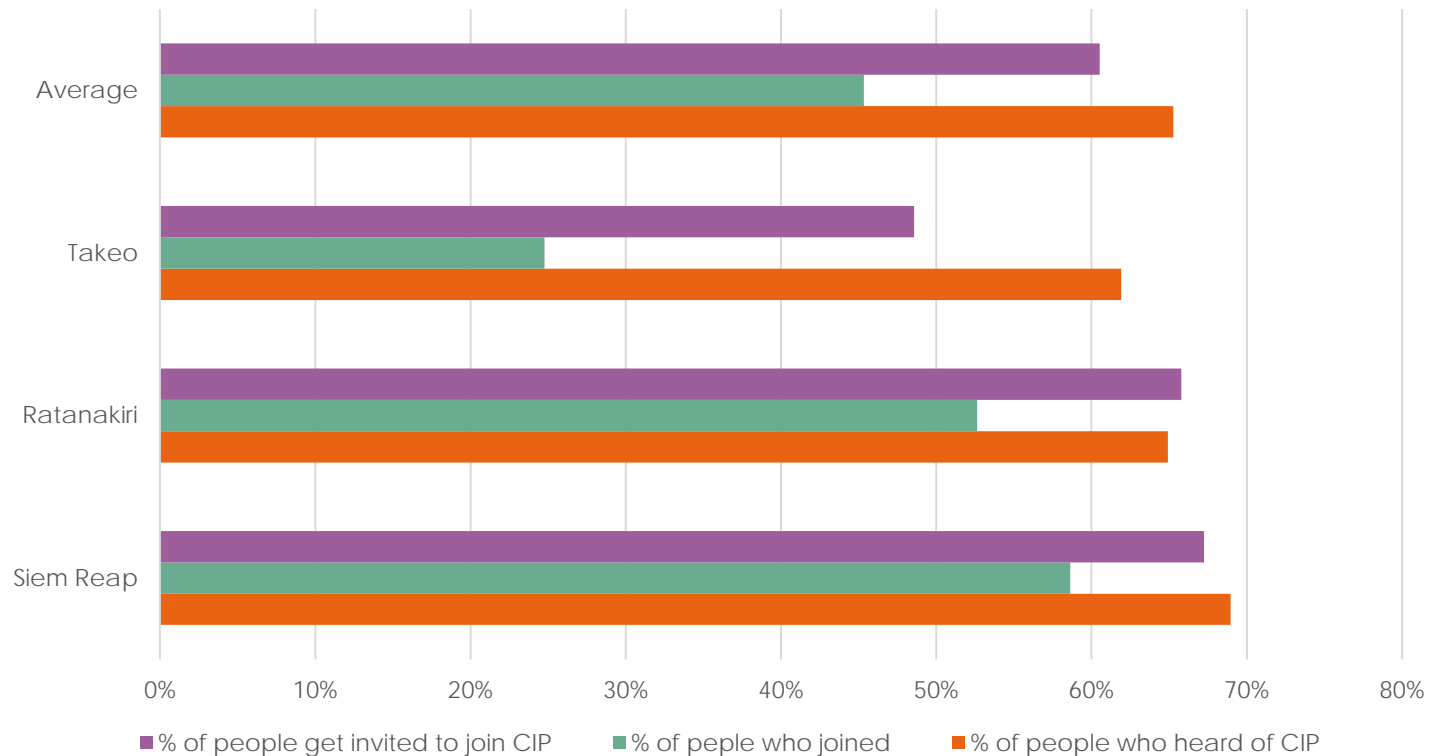
Migration situation and Covid-related insights

- ▶ Very high percentage of migration in SR and TK, but almost none in RTK
- ▶ Migrants mostly youth
- ▶ The main reason for migration: looking for job
- ▶ Reported concerns over ability to pay back debts to MFIs
- ▶ With the Covid-19, not sure if the migrating family members will come back
- ▶ General concerns and uncertainty around the Covid-19



Level of engagement by provinces (1)

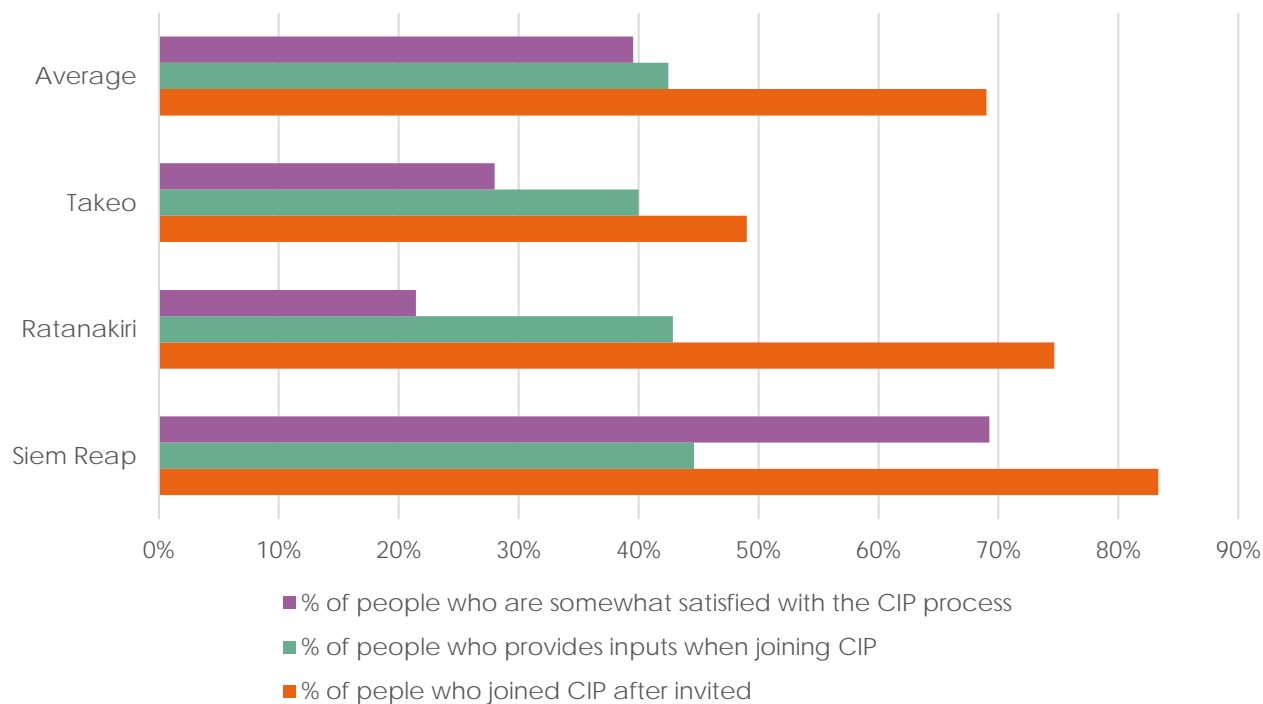
Level of engagement in CIP by provinces



- ▶ As an overall picture:
 - ▶ 60% said they were invited to join CIP.
 - ▶ 45% said they actually joined CIP
 - ▶ 65% of people heard about CIP.
- ▶ Geographical differences:
 - ▶ Takeo province has the lowest percentage of people reported having joined in CIP meeting (only 25%).
 - ▶ Siem Reap has the highest percentage (almost 60%).

Level of engagement by provinces (2)

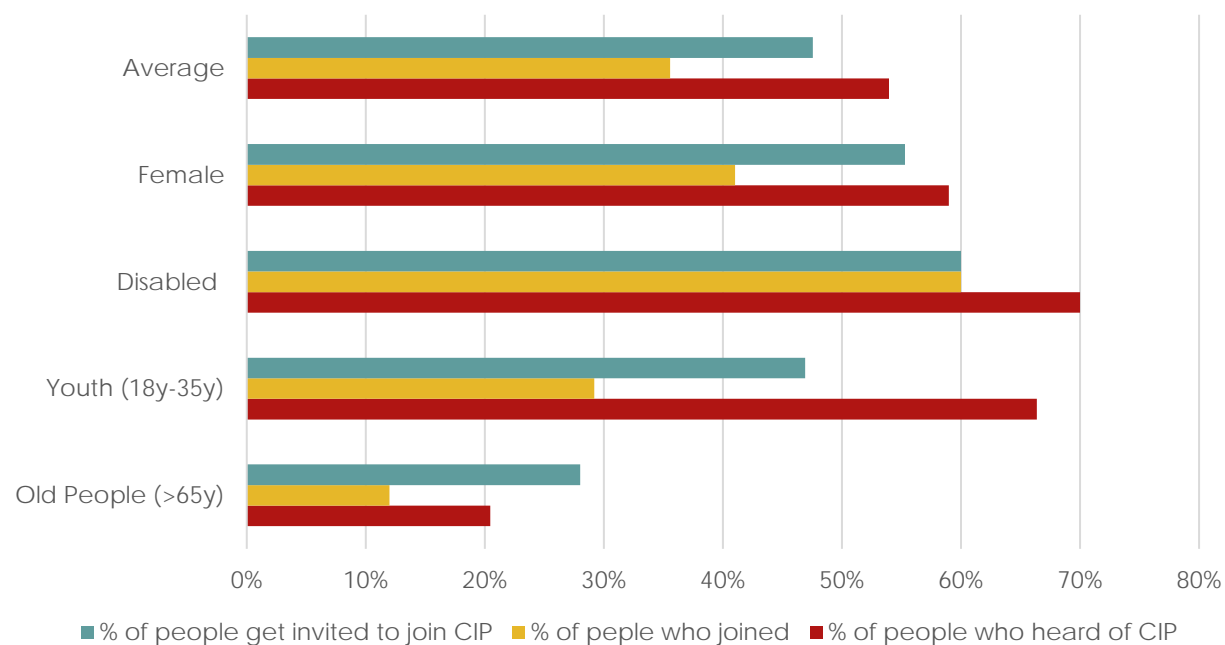
Level of engagement in CIP by provinces



- ▶ As an overall picture:
 - ▶ 40% of the respondents said they were somewhat satisfied with the CIP processes
 - ▶ About 40% reported having provided inputs when joined in CIP
 - ▶ Nearly 70% said they joined in CIP meetings after being invited.
- ▶ Geographical differences:
 - ▶ Less of people reported being satisfied with CIP in Ratanakiri (only about 20%)
 - ▶ Siem Reap has the highest percentage of people reporting satisfaction with CIP (nearly 70%.)

Level of engagement by types of respondents (1)

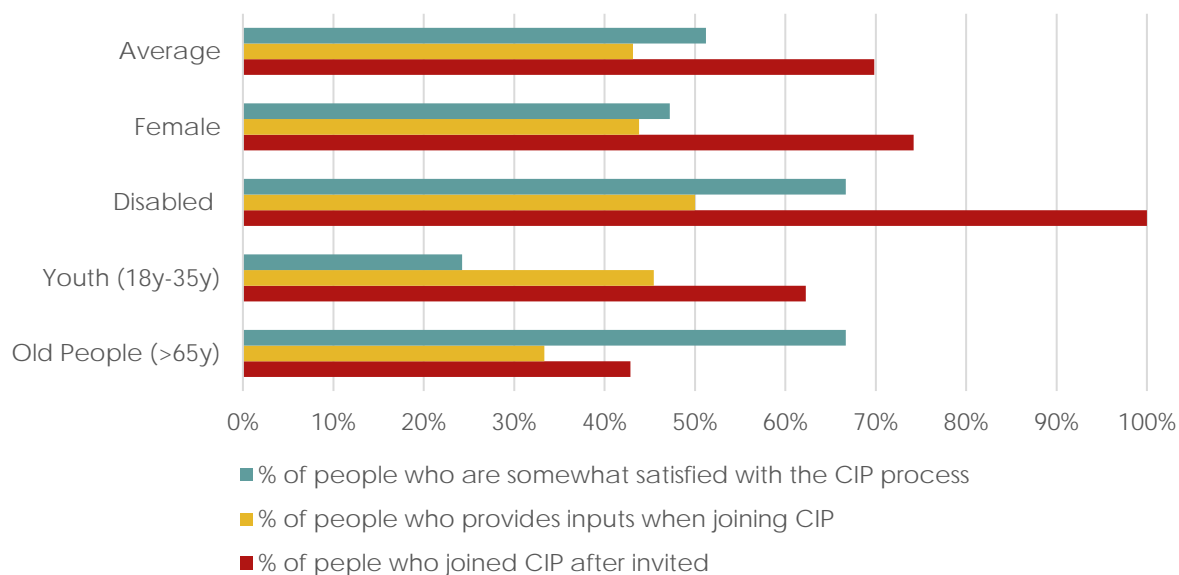
Level of engagement in CIP by types of respondents



- ▶ Local citizens need to be invited to participate in CIP.
- ▶ Virtually all the invitation is done face-to-face.
- ▶ Village chiefs and authority still play active roles in doing the face-to-face invitation.
- ▶ This face-to-face increase the risk of political exclusions (i.e. people know to have different political views are some times not invited).
- ▶ Youth usually less frequently invited as seen as not easy to be mobilized and not easily 'guided'.

Level of engagement by types of respondents (2)

Level of engagement in CIP by types of respondents



- ▶ Overall, regardless of their specific characteristics:
 - ▶ Relatively high percentage of people reported joining CIP after they were invited,
 - ▶ However, fewer reported providing inputs at the meetings,
 - ▶ About half reported they were somewhat satisfied with the CIP process
 - ▶ All indicate that the Covid-19 make face-to-face interaction more challenging
- ▶ Many youth have migrated, therefore, not able to participate in CIP

Key qualitative findings

- ▶ Many commune officials report using Telegram to communicate with their colleagues and higher level,
- ▶ For everyday work on planning and budgeting, most is still done using papers,
- ▶ There are more young people interested to work as commune assistants/ contract staff. Young people are noted to be very helpful especially with administrative work and computer,
- ▶ Covid-19 requires that more people get familiar with using ICT/online means to stay connected.
 - ▶ But still a big barrier for those not familiar with the new technology (e.g. elder people, people with no access to internets...)

Recommendations

Key recommendations (1)

- ▶ The impacts of Covid-19 should be accounted for when identifying vulnerable groups in the community level. This should be aligned with the process used in the ID Poor.
- ▶ Groups to pay extra attention:
 - ▶ Families with migrant workers who rely on remittance
 - ▶ Wage workers (especially those in tourism sector, garment sector)
 - ▶ Elder people with health issues
- ▶ The current CIP is sufficient and comprehensive enough to encourage local participation, including from vulnerable groups. To be further improved is its actual implementation which varies across places.
 - ▶ More innovative approach is needed in raising awareness among commune/Sangkat officials about the CIP process. The current approach of face-to-face training is not effective.
 - ▶ Simple online dissemination and technical support (such as through Telegram groups, Facebook, YouTube...) should be more aggressively pursued, tested and improved.
 - ▶ Political discrimination should be explicitly addressed as an issue to alert local officials.

Key recommendations (2)

- ▶ More use of ICT should be explored to get voices and feedback from local people, but:
 - ▶ The solution needs to be simple and practical,
 - ▶ Citizens need to be convinced 'why' they should participate,
 - ▶ An initiative should be developed, tested and continuously adjusted based on people feedback (i.e. 'learning by doing' approach).
- ▶ ICT solutions to local participation should start with youth (and later scaled up to other groups)
 - ▶ Provide training on relevant ICT skills to local youth so that they can engage in local development and governance.
 - ▶ Develop an online platform for youth interested in local governance.

Key recommendations (3)

- ▶ Promote youth volunteers/ interns/ assistants to work for commune/ Sangkat administrations and equip them with ICT-related skills:
 - ▶ Create formal platform/mechanisms to recruit volunteers to work for commune
 - ▶ Provide targeted training on ICT to youth who work for local administration,
 - ▶ Link ICT trainings to daily administrative works of a commune/Sangkat (i.e. administrative paper-work, planning, budgeting works).
- ▶ Where possible, create partnership between CC and NGOs/CSOs on how to promote youth participation and ICT solutions at local level.