



# Talkback Programming

**Cambodia Communication  
Assistance Project**  
Impact Research Briefing

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International Development  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation





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# Background



The Cambodia Communication Assistance Project (CCAP) is a media development initiative (2012-2014) funded by Australia's aid program. The project is implemented by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's International Development (ABCID) unit, in collaboration with four Cambodian Provincial Departments of Information (PDIs) and the Department of Media and Communication (DMC) at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP).

The project targets provincial media in Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampot and Siem Reap. The goal of CCAP is to contribute to the achievement of better governance in Cambodia. This is achieved by using communication for development tools that enhance citizens' voices and promote transparency and accountability of local authorities.

The CCAP Endline Research Briefing illustrates the progress and impact of the project over the previous three years (2012-2015). One of the objectives is to assess the impact of CCAP at an audience level – to determine their understanding and engagement on governance issues. It explores audience knowledge and perceptions of governance, transparency, and accountability and

specifically draws upon comparisons between radio talkback listeners and non-talkback listeners. The briefing examines the potential changes in the capacity of PDI staff in radio program production and professional skill development. This research briefing provides some of the key findings of the Endline Study analysis at the audience and PDI level.

The Endline Research Briefing is based on quantitative audience research with 119 talkback program listeners and non-talkback listeners from the four targeted provinces – Kampot (30), Battambang (29), Kampong Cham (26), and Siem Reap (34). A comparative analysis was also conducted against baseline indicators. A slightly higher baseline sample (177) was achieved.

This briefing note is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on citizens' understanding of governance and related concepts, and audience feedback on CCAP supported talkback programming. The second section focuses on the development of PDI staff capacity to produce CCAP supported radio programs and their professional skill development during the three years of CCAP support.





# Understanding Governance

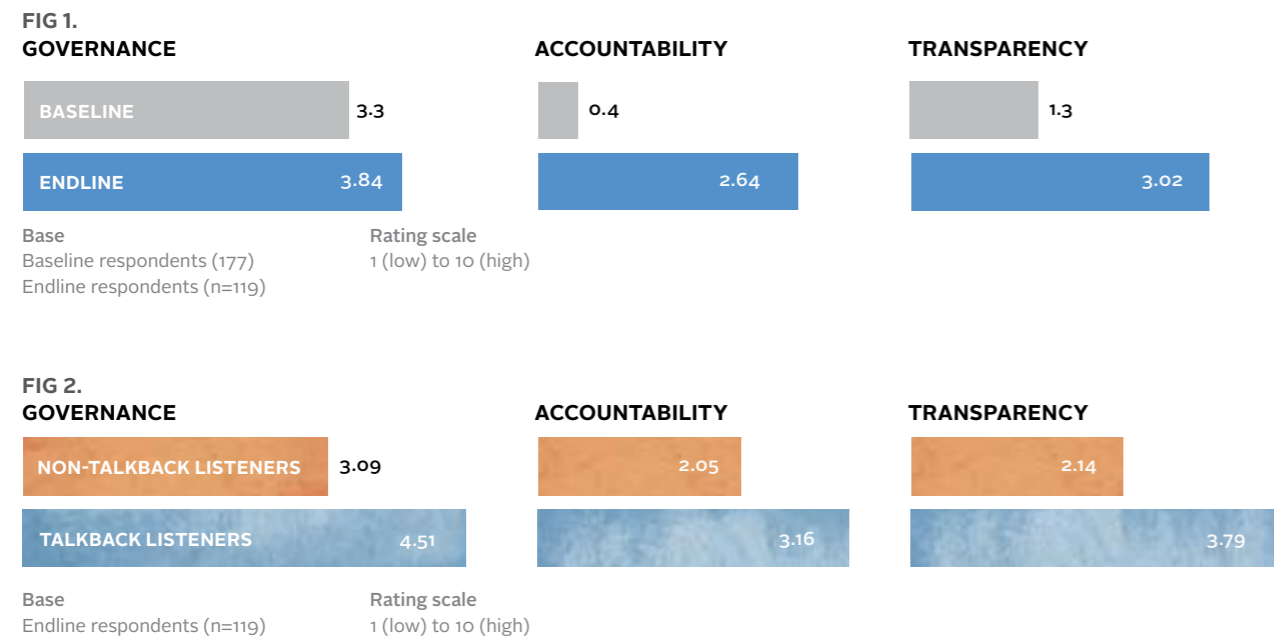


## GOVERNANCE CONCEPTS

Citizens' comprehension of good governance<sup>1</sup> improved between the baseline and endline<sup>2</sup> study for both talkback program listeners and non-listeners, but was low overall. Similarly, while citizen's understanding of accountability and transparency was low in the endline study, it did improve upon the baseline study. Across each topic, talkback listeners were more likely to have a higher average understanding of these concepts compared with non-talkback listeners.

There was a higher level of understanding of governance and related concepts in the endline study compared to the baseline (Fig 1). This is supported by a statistically<sup>3</sup> higher level of knowledge of most governance issues among talkback listeners compared with non-talkback listeners (Fig 2). It also suggests an impact of talkback programming in building an understanding of commune and provincial government processes amongst listeners.

FIG 1. & 2. UNDERSTANDING OF GOVERNANCE CONCEPTS



1 Measured as *governance* in the baseline study 2012.

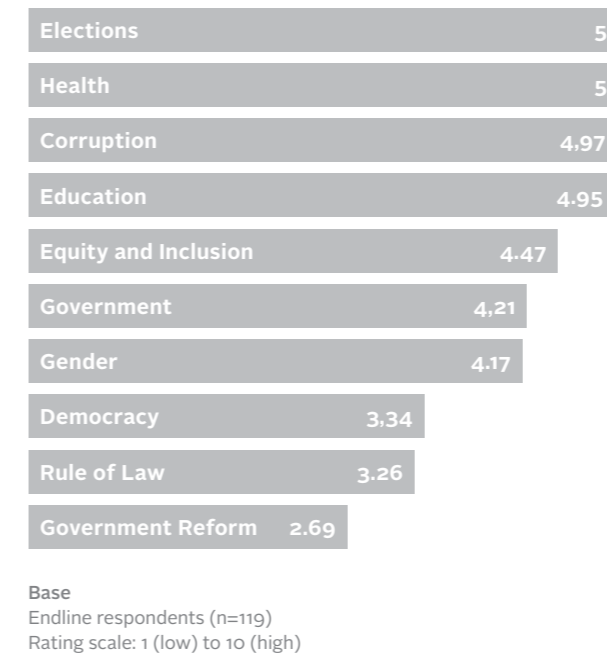
2 As part of the endline study, research participants were asked about their understanding of good governance concepts and terminology without any examples to ensure comparison with the baseline study.

3 Statistically significant at the .05 level

## GOVERNANCE RELATED CONCEPTS

Similar to people's comprehension of governance, transparency, and accountability, understanding of governance-related concepts also varied, but was again low overall. Citizens were asked to plot their understanding on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 representing a high level of understanding and 1 a low understanding. Elections and health issues had the highest average level of self assessed understanding (5.1) for participants, followed by corruption (4.97), education (4.95), equity and inclusiveness (4.47), and government responsiveness (4.21). Understanding of democracy (3.34), rule of law (3.26), and reforms (2.69) were reported as the least understood on average (Fig 3). Low understanding of governance concepts provides an opportunity for media to target these areas to increase people's understanding.

FIG 3. UNDERSTANDING OF GOVERNANCE CONCEPTS

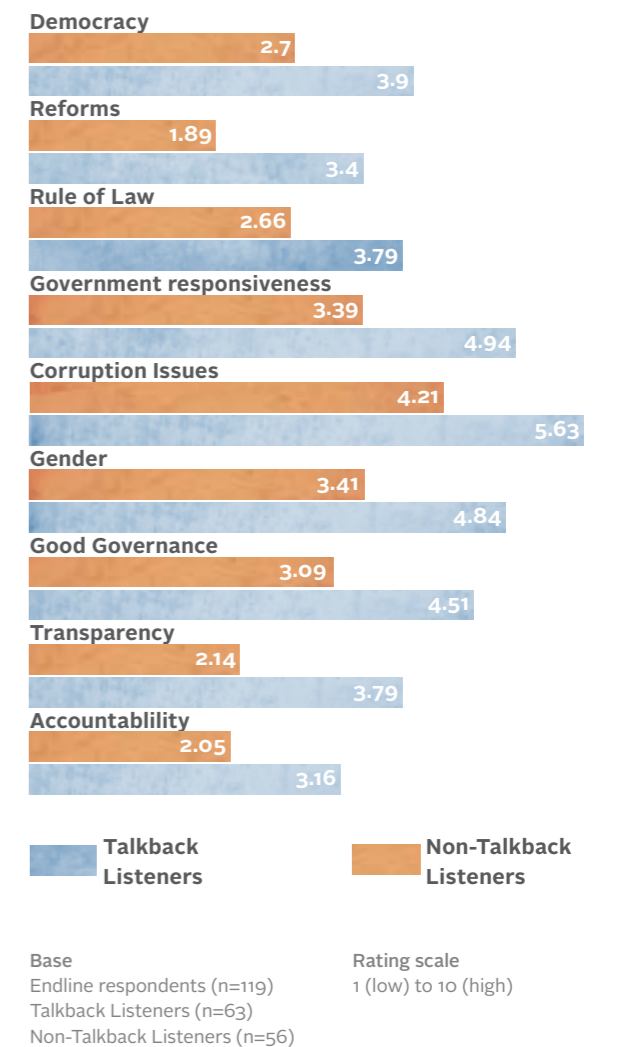


4 Two sample t-test, p < 0.05

5 Two sample t-test, p < 0.05

It appeared that listening to talkback programming increased people's understanding of these issues<sup>4</sup>. Talkback listeners reported having a higher level of knowledge of most governance concepts over those that did not listen to talkback programs. Talkback listeners reported a significantly higher understanding of good governance, accountability, transparency, and reforms compared with non-listeners. Likewise, they also appeared to be more informed, reporting significantly higher knowledge of democracy, rule of law, government responsiveness, gender, and corruption issues. Talkback listeners also appeared to be more informed about, and report a better understanding of, key governance concepts and related topics (Fig 4).

FIG 4: UNDERSTANDING OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND RELATED CONCEPTS<sup>5</sup>





The Baseline study also reported participants' perspectives on their engagement and understanding of government functions at the different village, commune, provincial and national levels. Perspectives on youth and women in government and trust in information provided by the media were also captured (Fig 5).

Almost all participants (96%) agreed that women can play an important role in governance issues. However, there was a stark difference in the understanding between the different functions of government at the commune and village level (73%) compared to provincial government (31%) and national government (24%) functions. When it came to discussing governance issues, it is interesting that for such an important issue, only 82 percent of respondents thought it should be discussed publicly.

The knowledge of talkback listeners was higher compared to non-talkback listeners in all areas of government function across different levels. However, the difference is only marginal in some cases (trust in media) and much higher in others (governance and politics). Four areas were identified that reflect a significant difference<sup>6</sup> in knowledge between talkback listeners and non-listeners. These included

accessing the media to improve awareness of governance issues; feeling confident to participate in discussions with provincial government; understanding the different functions of commune council; and understanding that governance is not a politically sensitive issue (Fig 6).

The desire to increase governance knowledge is reflected in the increasing number of individuals seeking governance information. This intersection of learning and the accessibility of governance information lead to a higher level of efficacy when participating in discussions with government. These areas of impact include understanding of governance and participation at the provincial, commune and village level but not necessarily the national level. This is also a strong indicator of the impact of talkback programming as this format focuses more on local and provincial level issues rather than national level governance. The difference between listeners' and non-listeners' understanding of governance concepts, perceptions, attitudes and behaviour or intended behaviour suggests that talkback programming can have a positive impact in delivering important governance information.

6 & 7 Chi-Squared test, p < 0.05

FIG 5: PERSPECTIVES AND UNDERSTANDING ON GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS AND MEDIA

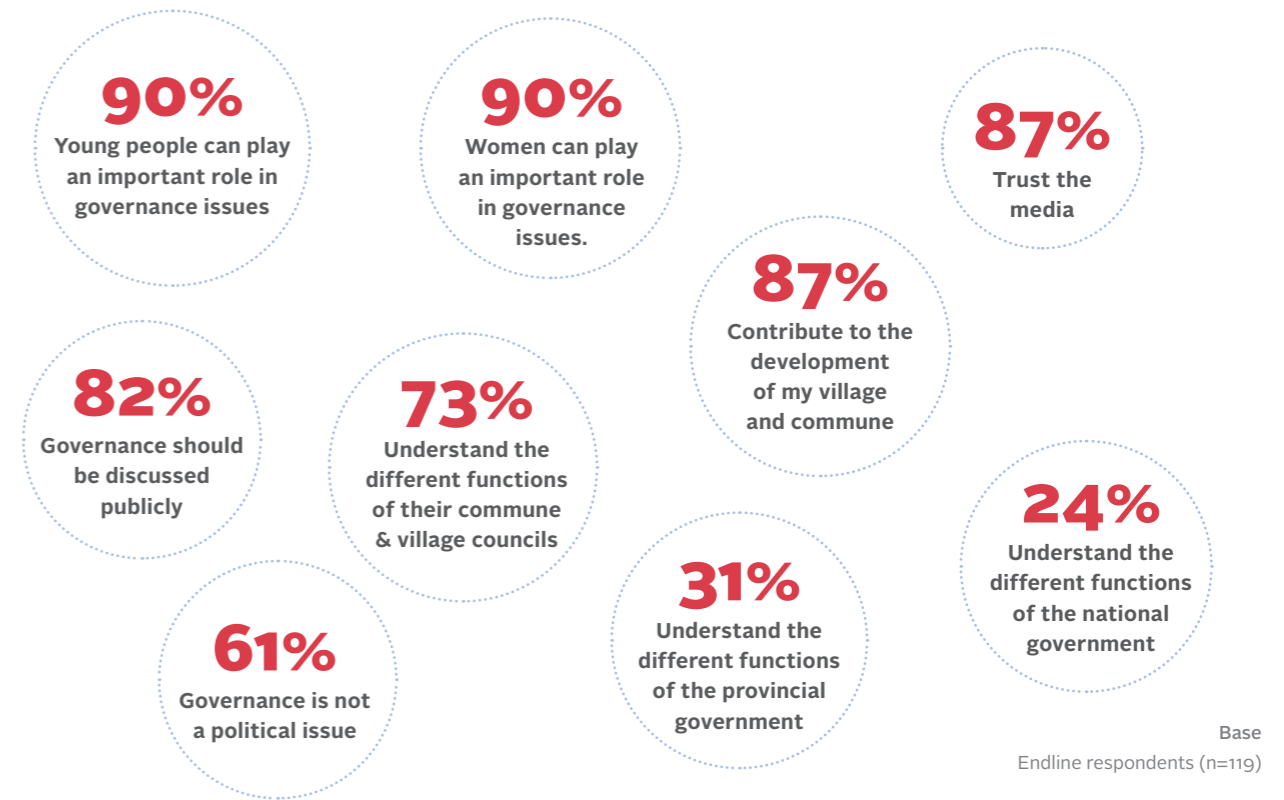
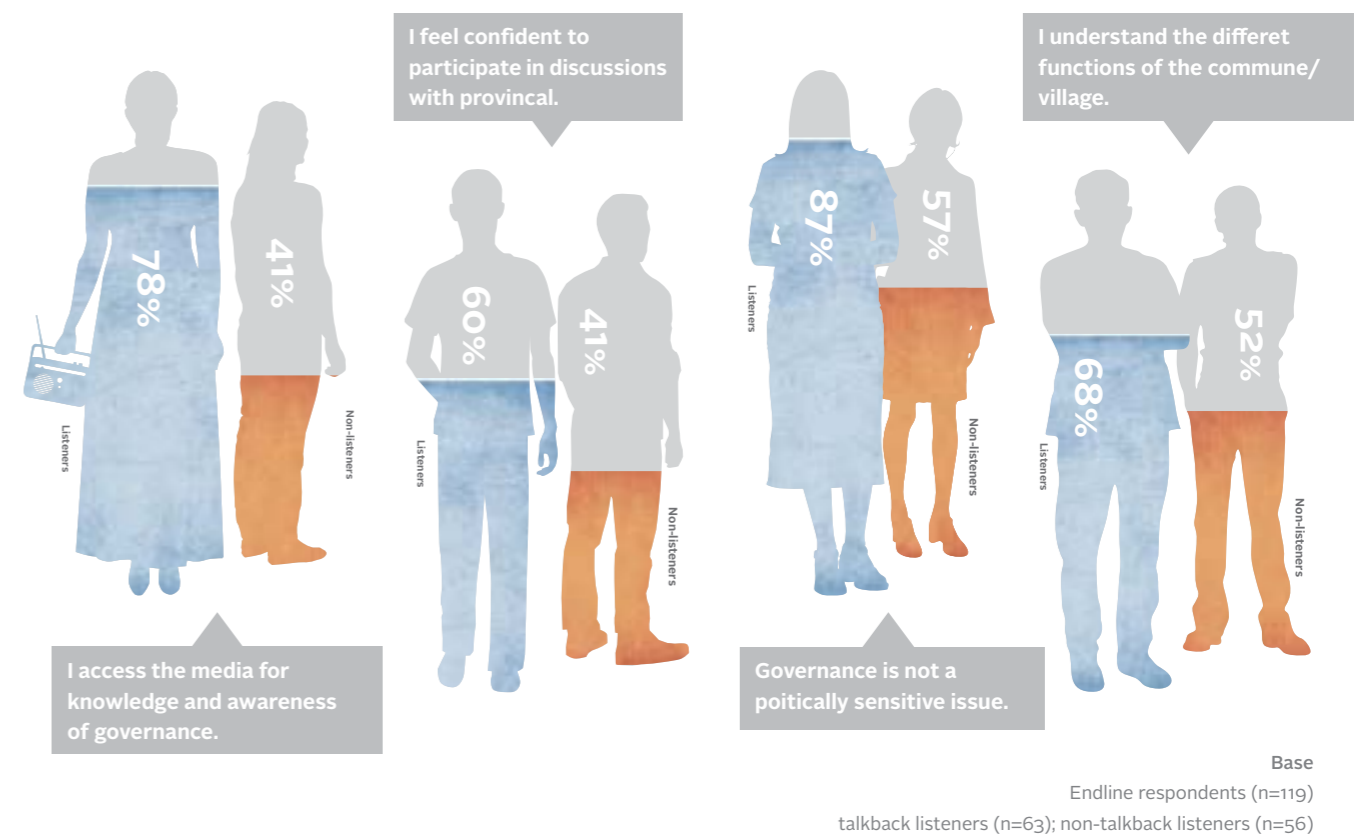


FIG 6: KNOWLEDGE ON GOVERNMENT FUNCTION AND MEDIA<sup>7</sup>





# Talkback Programming Governance Impact

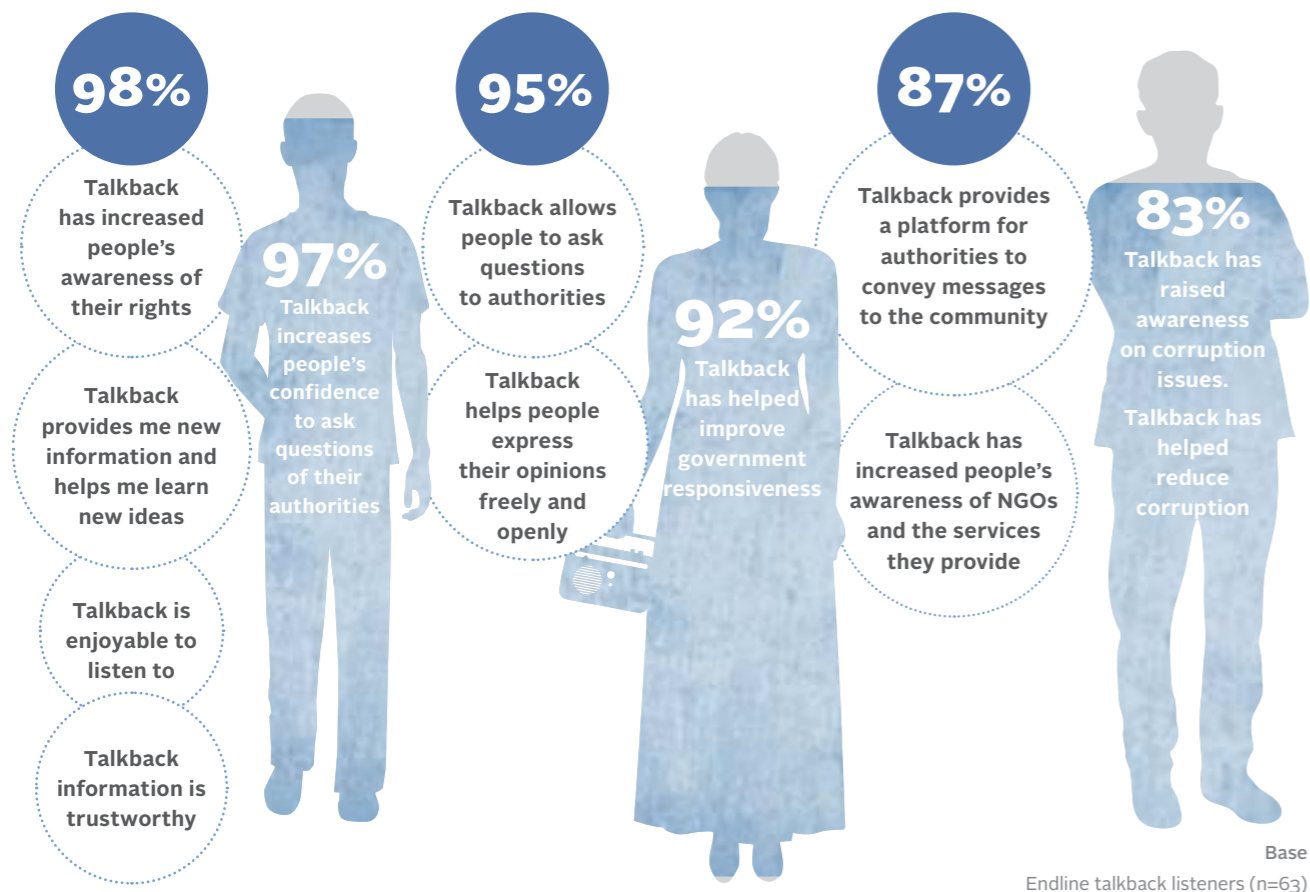


This section summarises feedback from talkback listeners on the impact of talkback programming on promoting accountability (promoting citizen access to authorities), transparency (providing a platform to authorities to convey messages to community) and enhancing citizen voice (helping citizens to express their opinions).

Talkback programming is considered a trusted source of information, which is both enjoyable and educational. Almost all respondents (98%) reported that they enjoyed listening to talkback and that it taught them new perspectives. Respondents also noted the civic importance of talkback programming as a platform that promotes mediated dialogue between authorities and citizens.

More than 90 percent of listeners identified the program as having helped to improve government responsiveness, increased citizens' awareness of their rights, provided citizens with access to authorities and enabled them to ask questions of authorities. Almost all listeners believed that the program helped citizens to be more confident in asking questions of authorities and in expressing their opinions freely and independently (Fig 7).

FIG 7: TALKBACK PROGRAM FEEDBACK AND IMPACT



# CCAP Impact on PDI Staff



The impact of CCAP support on PDI staff was assessed in two main areas – skill development and awareness of governance and related issues. A comparative analysis was undertaken against the baseline and endline measures to determine shifts in the level of skills and thematic knowledge of PDI staff. Please note that Siem Reap PDI was not included in this comparative analysis because the PDI participated in CCAP at a later stage and therefore baseline figures were not collected for this station.

PDI staff reported that the support from CCAP has enhanced their skills and enabled them to produce relevant content for talkback programs. Almost all content production skills, specialist reporting skills, and awareness of governance and related topics increased between the baseline and endline studies. Furthermore, several of these skills, knowledge, and capacity development areas recorded a statistically significant<sup>8</sup> shift between the two studies (Fig 8).

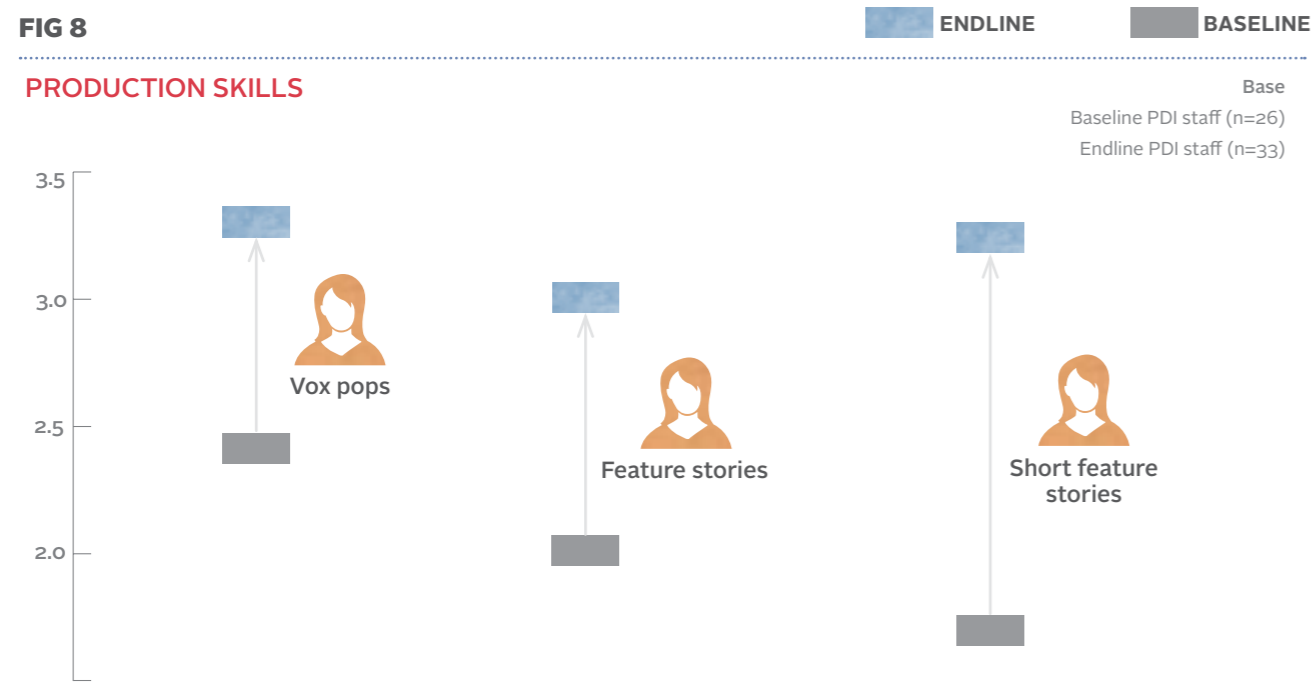
Overall, PDI staff reported being significantly better equipped at producing vox pops, and writing features and short feature stories than they were prior to receiving CCAP support. PDI staff also reported a statistically significant shift in their understanding and adherence to editorial policy (Fig 8).

The largest shift in skill development between the two studies was in specialist skills reporting. Significant shifts in PDI skills were reported in the coverage of court and legal issues, investigative journalism, anti-corruption activities, and gender and youth issues. Significant improvement in staff understanding of local governance processes, and citizen voice and participation in local governance issues was also visible between the two studies. PDI staff recorded a significant shift in their ability to coordinate activities with other programs and other sectors at a provincial level and were better able to communicate topic areas and identify guest speakers from within sub-national administrations (Fig 8).

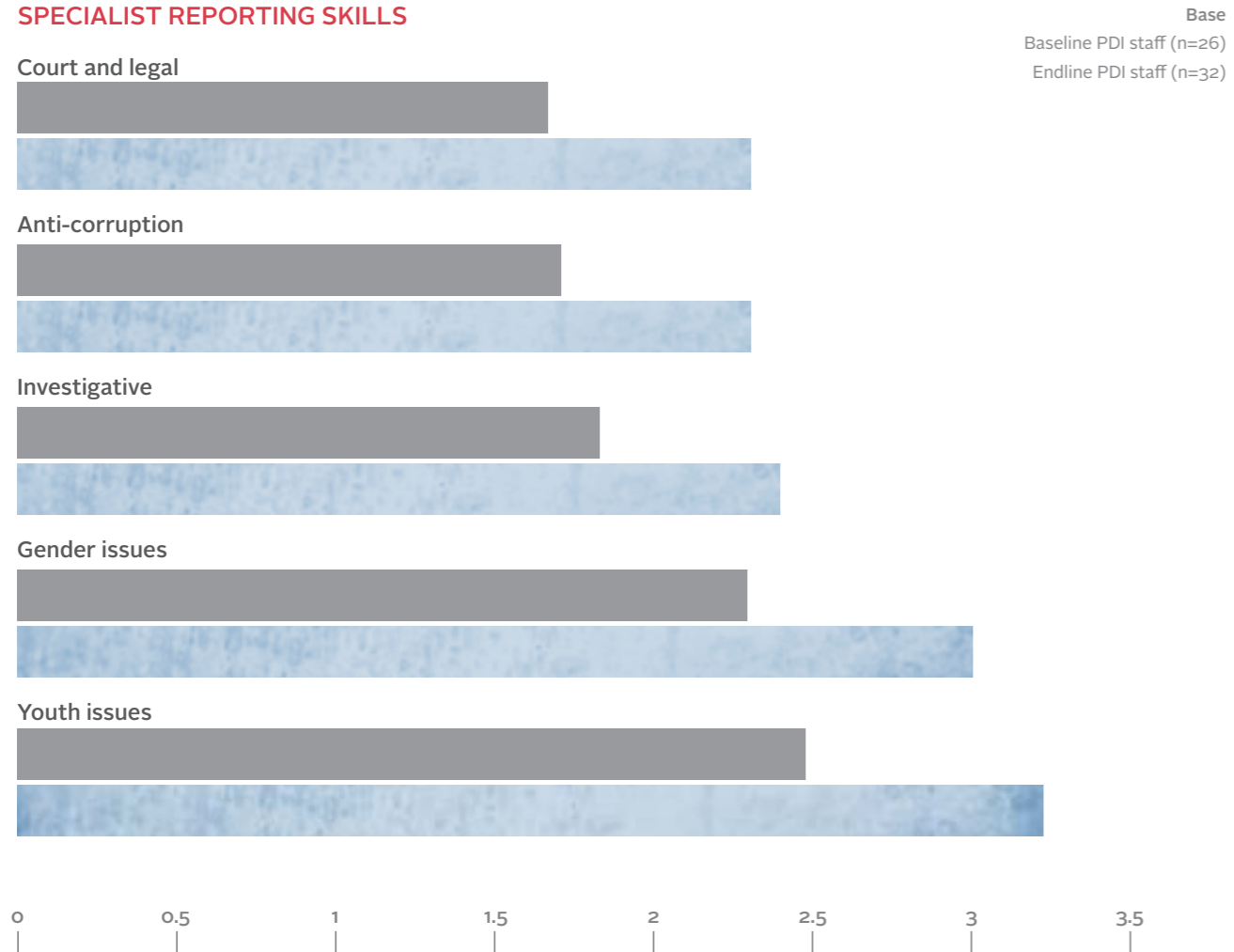
<sup>8</sup> Two sample t-test, p < 0.05

FIG 8

PRODUCTION SKILLS

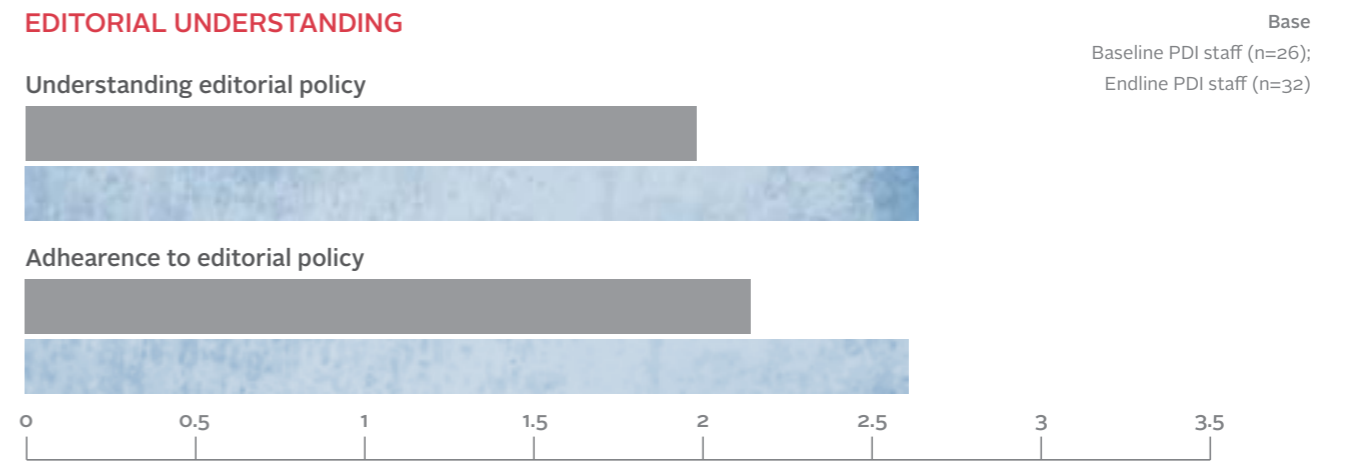


SPECIALIST REPORTING SKILLS

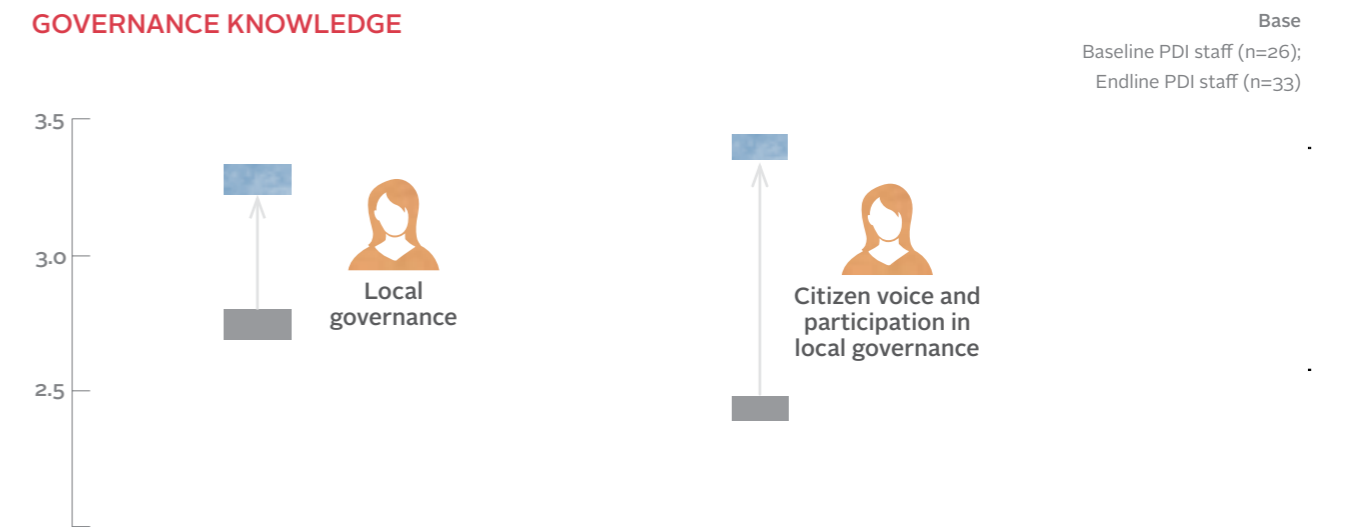


Scale: 1 (clear need for increased capacity), to 5 (very high capacity)

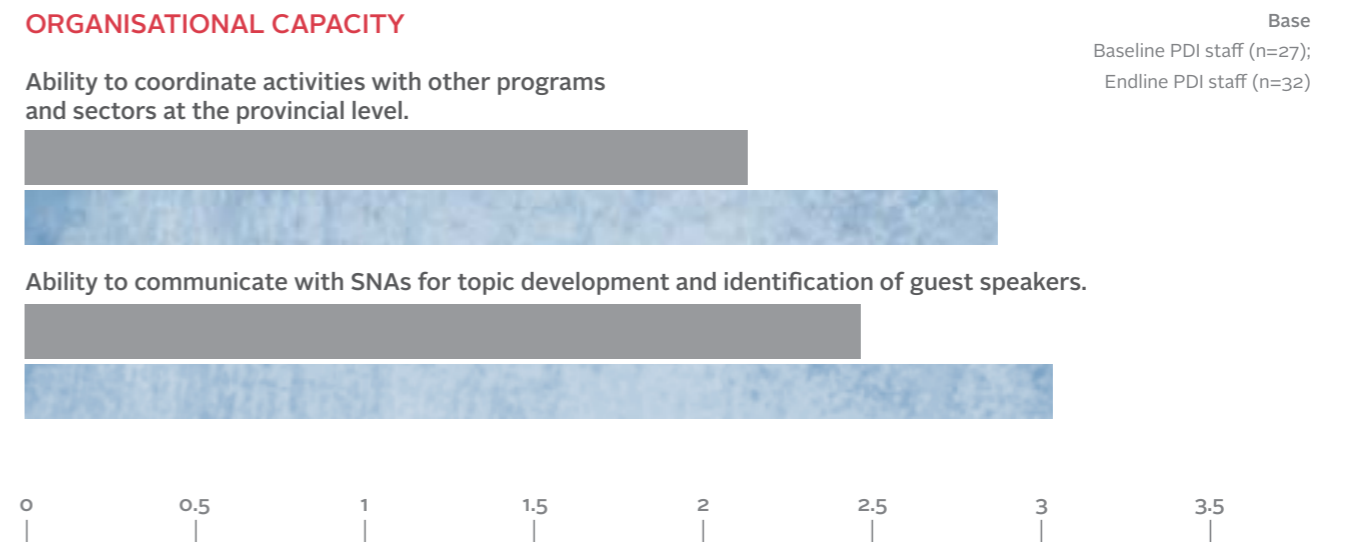
EDITORIAL UNDERSTANDING



GOVERNANCE KNOWLEDGE



ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY





## REFERENCES

United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration. (2006). *Definition of basic concepts and terminologies in governance and public administration*. New York: United Nations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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