



Talkback Program

Cambodia Communication Assistance Project Impact Briefing

February 2019



Contents

- 3 Introduction**
- 4 Talkback Program (TBP) Highlights**

- 5 Endline Findings**
 - 5 Impact on Listeners
 - 6 Staff Expertise
 - 8 Staff Capacity

- 9 Accountability and Community Impact**

- 11 Acknowledgements**



Introduction

The Cambodia Communication Assistance Project (CCAP) was a media development initiative (2012-2019) funded by Australia's Aid Program. The goal of CCAP was contributing to the achievement of better governance in Cambodia. This was attempted using communication for development tools that enhance citizens' voices and promote transparency and accountability of local authorities.

The Talkback Program (TBP) was implemented by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's International Development (ABCID) unit, in collaboration with four Cambodian Provincial Departments of Information (PDIs)-Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Cham, and Kampot to produce talkback radio programs.

This impact briefing will present the impacts of the program in delivering targeted governance results. These impacts will be divided into four sections: (1) the impact of the program in increasing knowledge of governance concepts for listeners (2) program impact on staff expertise (3) the impact on staff in terms of PDI capacity building and (4) the impact of the program at on the accountability of authorities.

The endline results should be considered against the changing political and media freedom context in Cambodia. Reporters Without Borders ranked Cambodia 142 out of 180 countries for press freedom in 2018. This position has dropped considerably from the commencement of the most recent CCAP phase when Cambodia sat at 128 in 2016

Talkback Program (TBP) Highlights

Accountability



15,000
Questions raised with local authorities by citizens



216 promises made by local authorities during **3,000** discussions

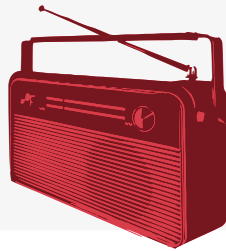
43% (122) of those promises were fully or partially met

Role of TBP

95% of listeners think that TBP has increased citizens' awareness of their rights.

97% of listeners agree that TBP provides citizens with the opportunity to question authorities

95% of listeners believe that TBP has helped improve government responsiveness



Female Participation

192 topics focused on women's empowerment

Women made up **36%** of the total callers.



Operation



Out of the produced discussions, **97%** have met the good governance content standards set by CCAP

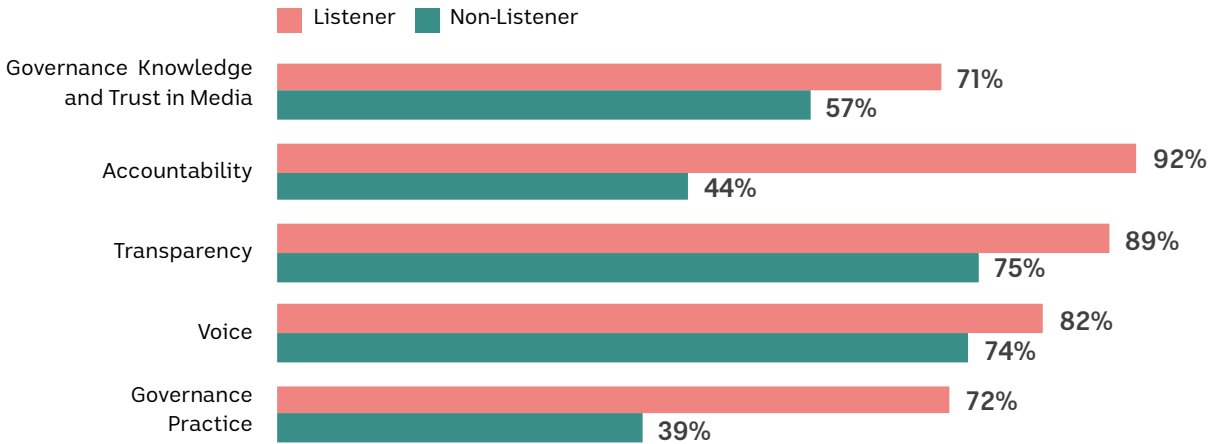


Endline Findings

CCAP aimed to develop and enrich the understanding of governance concepts to promote greater citizen engagement. Knowledge of Governance concepts was tested through surveys and multiple-choice tests.

Impact on Listeners

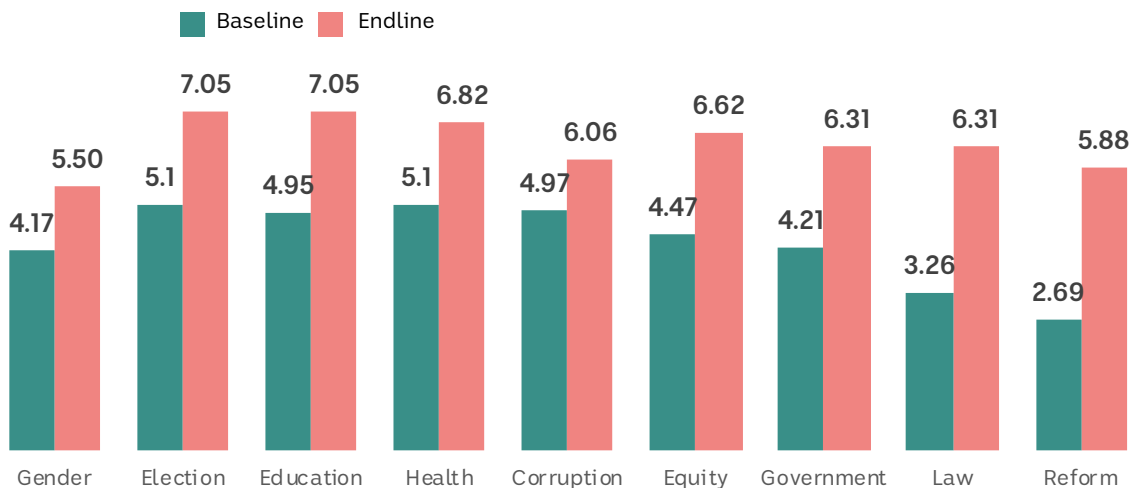
TBP and Non TBP Listener Knowledge of Governance



Listeners showed greater levels of understanding across all tested aspects of Governance Theory. In multiple choice assessments, listeners consistently outperformed non-listeners. Overall knowledge of governance for listeners was 81.2%, compared with non-listeners recording an average of 57.8%. The greatest discrepancy was demonstrated in answering questions on accountability; this topic was poorly understood by non-listeners (who recorded an accuracy rate of 44%) but well understood by listeners (who recorded an accuracy rate of 92%). Knowledge of governance practice was also low among non-listeners (39%) compared with listeners (72%)

Listeners also demonstrated improved confidence in their knowledge of governance concepts after the introduction of TBP. Self-evaluations at the baseline and Endline stages reveal better understanding as a result of TBP. Understanding of reform, law, and equity showed the greatest gains

Understanding of Governance Concepts (rated out of 10)



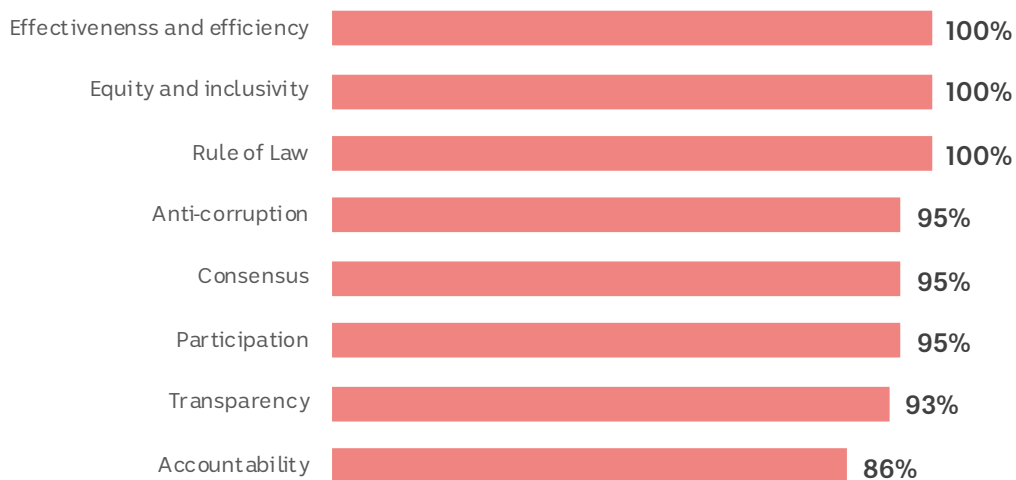


Staff Expertise

“TBP improved my knowledge about authorities’ roles and citizens’ needs. I am like a message sender digging all the problems and bring them up into the discussion having authorities to answer.” (KC PDI staff)

The increased levels of knowledge in listeners is reflected in the levels displayed by PDI staff. PDI Staff demonstrated high levels of comprehension of governance principles. Despite reporting their levels of knowledge as moderate, PDI staff excelled in their understanding of all tested concepts. 100% aptitude was shown in terms of ‘rule of law’, ‘equity and inclusiveness’, and ‘effectiveness and efficiency’.

Talkback Staff Understanding of Governance Principles



From Baseline to Endline studies, self-evaluated levels of knowledge increased across all cited subjects. Staff's perceived level of understanding on citizen voice and participation in local governance increased by 20%. Local governance understanding enjoyed a modest rise of 8%. Understanding of transparency of commune and district councils increased by 5 and 6 percent respectively.

Staff-Evaluated Capacities

- Understanding on citizen voice and participation in local governance increased by **20%**
- Local governance understanding improved by **8%**
- Understanding of transparency of commune councils increased by **5%**
- Understanding of transparency of district councils improved by **6%**



Staff Capacity

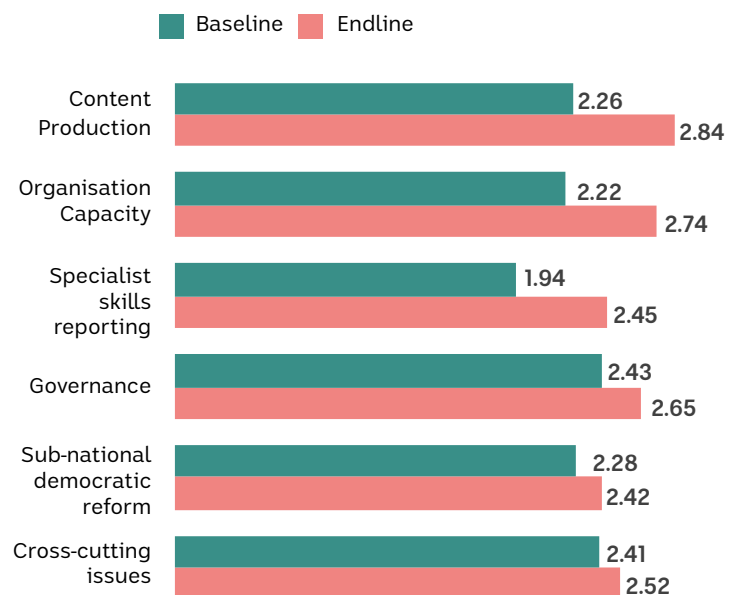
Technical Capacity Building

A pillar of the CCAP design was to build technical capacity so that local media organisations were given the tools to produce and manage TBP. This provided a measure to ensure autonomy and sustainability. Staff self-evaluated their levels of media competency and specific skills from baseline to endline, with improvements across the board. The greatest capacity gains were made in content production and organisation capacity. Perceived skills in producing short radio stories increased by 60%, court and legal reporting skills by 31% and interview skills by 28%. Perceived skills in reporting gender and disability issues improved by 20 and 12 percent respectively.

Staff-Evaluated Skills

- producing short radio stories rose **60%**,
- court and legal reporting skills rose **31%**
- interview skills increased by **28%**.
- reporting gender issues raised **20%**
- reporting on disability issues improved by **12%**

Talkback Staff Self-Evaluations (out of 5)





Accountability and Community Impact

“In the past, we didn’t have TBP so the authorities did not know about the people’s concerns. During TBP people raised issues, so the authorities got to know about it and took actions such as health services, schools...etc, we see changes and it is social accountability.” (TBP listener)

Voice and Accountability through Political Engagement

TBP has given citizens the ability to express their preferences and needs to representatives of the government and local authorities. Promisingly, 93% of listeners claim that their free and independent expression of opinions has been facilitated by TBP. Furthermore, listener feedback suggests that the introduction of TBP has raised the confidence of citizens to engage in political dialogues. 93% of listeners credit TBP with enabling citizens to be more confident to ask questions of authorities.

Listeners perceive TBP as a platform through which they can engage with authorities and policy makers to effect change. Listeners acknowledge a threefold role of TBP; (1) to educate and inform, (2) to create a dialogue between authorities and community members, (3) to install a mechanism of accountability.

Education

- **95%** of listeners think that TBP has increased citizens’ awareness of their rights.
- **84%** of listeners believe that TBP has raised awareness about corruption issues.

Dialogue

- **97%** of listeners agree that TBP provides citizens with access to authorities, enabling them to ask questions directly.
- **93%** claim that TBP provided a platform for authorities to convey messages to the community.

Accountability

- **95%** of listeners believe that TBP has helped improve government responsiveness.
- **88%** of listeners credit TBP with helping to reduce corruption issues.

An example of improved responsiveness is demonstrated in this listener testimony:

“I received effective solutions for the water and irrigation system in my commune after TBP brought it up into the on-air discussion. At that time, I was so scared to talk, but I decided to speak because it is a big issue in my commune. I used to tell the authorities many times about that issue, but I’ve never received any solutions. In 2017, TBP discussed the matter with the commune chief, and it was solved.”
(TBP listener)



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Further information:

abc.net.au/abc-international-development