

Cambodian Communication Review 2016

Department of Media and Communication
Cambodia Communication Institute
Royal University of Phnom Penh

Say SOK, PhD

Editor

Acknowledgements

The editor would like to sincerely thank all the contributors who have submitted their works in this publication; this volume would not have been possible without their contribution. Thanks are also due to the anonymous reviewers, who spent invaluable time to give their opinions and comments on the previous version(s) of the works to help the authors improve their papers. My sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Ratana Som, the head of the Department of Media and Communication (DMC) and Cambodia Communication Institute (CCI) of the Royal University of Phnom Penh for his unwavering support to the project and DMC/CCI staff, including Ms. Chanmakara Kol and Mr. Dolla Soy, who provide every possible support from the beginning until the end of the project.

Mr. Dolla Soy and I would wish to express our gratitude to the junior of the 2015-16 academic year at the DMC below for updating some of the media indicators for this publication: Bun Sreymom, Chin Sreyleap, Chorn Chanbota, Hang Yuttivong Jamy, Heng Sorita, Hun Keolydeth, Kea Theasrun, Kunvuth Monykanchna, Noy Theany, Oeng Chhoun, Por Kimhok, Proeun Panhary, Rithy Odom, Sam Socheatenh, Sam Tola, Samoeurth Seavmeng, San Bunsim, Say Lalis, Seyhak Parinha, Sok Sopheakpanha, Sorn Chhorvyvatey, Toun Serey Ratana, and Mech Sereyrath.

Disclaimer *Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors or the cited sources, and are neither representative of nor endorsed by the Department of Media and Communication and the Cambodia Communication Institute and their supporting partners.*

Copyright © 2016 DMC & CCI, RUPP

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced in whole or in part, in any form, without written permission from the publishers.

ISBN 978-99963-779-4-5

Printed in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

CONTENTS

Foreword	<i>i</i>
Preface	<i>ii</i>
Introduction	<i>1</i>
	<i>Say SOK</i>
Cambodian Media Snapshot 2016	<i>4</i>
	<i>Dolla SOY & Say SOK</i>
Beyond Curiosity: A Re-examination of Positive Preventative Message within the Cambodian Press	<i>11</i>
	<i>Philip J. GOVER and G. J. Daan AALDERS</i>
Cambodian Film Industry: A Paradox to Glorious Revival	<i>35</i>
	<i>Bun Y UNG</i>
Exploring How Local Online Media Portray Persons with Disabilities in Cambodia	<i>44</i>
	<i>Chanpolydet MER</i>
About the Editor and Contributors	<i>52</i>

FOREWORD

The *Cambodian Communication Review 2016* is the third publication of the series since I took the position as the acting head of the Department of Media and Communication (DMC) of the Royal University of Phnom Penh. The first two issues published prior to my tenure were released in 2010 and 2011, respectively, when Dr. Chivoin Peou was the editor. The publication was then suspended for two years when the former editor went on to pursue his doctoral degree abroad and amid the change in DMC chairmanship. The revival of the *Review* series started in late 2013, when I invited Dr. Say Sok and the former editor to resume the publication. Dr. Peou declined the invitation given his study commitment, and Dr. Sok accepted the invitation, and hence the publication of the series was resumed in 2014.

Throughout my various careers, I have been a firm believer in academic research and its contribution to knowledge building and the promotion of peace and development and the role of a public university in enhancing and building research culture. And the Cambodian Communication Review series represents a sincere effort to establish a platform and space for all concerned stakeholders to share thoughts and thinking and to promote mutual dialogue and understanding, especially for scholars and experts in the fields of media and communication, broadly defined.

I wish to take the opportunity to thank all the people involved in the publication of this issue. My sincere thanks go to Dr. Say Sok for his unpretentious commitment to the *Review* and promotion of academic research and leading the editorial team and Mr. Dolla Soy for coordinating the publication of the *Cambodian Communication Review 2016*. I would like to acknowledge the assistance from Mr. Chanpolydet Mer, a DMC alumnus, for the book layout and design and all the DMC and CCI staff who help with the administrative support. The valuable contribution from the authors and reviewers is highly acknowledged. Without their contribution, the publication of the current issue would not exist in the first place. Finally, I am very much thankful to our partners who contributed financial support to make the publication possible.

I hope this work can be of good use to its audience and herein present it to you.

Ratana SOM
Head

PREFACE

The publication of the *Cambodian Communication Review 2016* represents yet another genuine commitment of the Department of Media and Communication and the Cambodia Communication Institute of the Royal University of Phnom Penh in promoting a research culture at Cambodian higher education institutions. The *Review* series aims to provide scholars, experts and practitioners with a platform to express their thoughts and ideas, especially on issues related to media and communication as well as to promote university as a public space, whereby ideas, thoughts, and thinking are openly expressed, contested, and debated.

There are three key sections in the *Cambodian Communication Review 2016*: the media snapshot, research work, and critical commentaries. The papers were carefully written and then internally and externally reviewed, and the authors of the accepted articles (research papers and commentaries) were required to respond and revise their works, accordingly. The articles in this issue touch on three important themes: the press and its promotion of critical public health issues; the challenges and opportunities in the 'revival' of the Cambodian nascent film industry, and the portrayal of persons with disabilities in Cambodian online media.

The publication would not be possible without the valuable contribution from the authors, all of whom had put a great deal of effort to produce excellent pieces of writing for this issue and who had taken the pain to respond to the critiques and comments and to revise the previous version(s) of their works to meet our requirements. We would love to thank the contributors as well as the reviewers for their contribution.

We are very open to constructive criticisms and comments and new initiatives from our supporters and readers to improve the quality of the future publication. We now present you the *Cambodian Communication Review 2016* and hope it can be useful to your study, research and/or careers in one way or another.

Say SOK, PhD
Phnom Penh, December 2016

INTRODUCTION

Say SOK

The *Cambodian Communication Review 2016* is made up of three sections: the Cambodian media snapshot, one research article and two critical commentaries. The media snapshot provides readers with important data on the latest economic, political, and demographic indicators and more importantly media and communication indicators for Cambodia. This is followed by one research article which examines the use of positive preventative messages within the Cambodian press. Two critical commentaries follow suit. The first looks into the ‘revival’ of the Cambodian contemporary film industry, and the second discusses how online local media in Cambodia portray persons with disabilities.

In their research article published in the *Cambodian Communication Review 2014*, Philip J. Govers and Daan G. J. Aalders presented their audit and assessment of the use of positive preventative messages in public health-related articles in two local English newspapers for a period of one year in part to highlight the use (or lack) of such messages to enhance the role of media in the promotion of public health. In this current issue of CCR, the two authors continue their audit exercise of the two newspapers to cover a period of 24 months running from 2013 to 2015. They find out that the reporting of the six public health-related themes varies from year to year and between the two newspapers and in both newspapers. Four of the six public health issues – i.e. Smoking, Drowning, Alcohol, and Elderly Health – received little media coverage, with the Elderly Health the least reported theme. This low media coverage could be a ‘significant cause for concern’ given the scale of these issues and the potential negative impact they may have upon the society and economy in the longer term.

The use of positive preventative messages in the public health-related articles varies quite significantly from theme to theme within each newspaper, across the two newspapers and in terms of the frequency of their appearance in the articles and number of words use to construct the positive preventative messages. In general the use of such messages in both newspapers can be said to be quite promising, although the ‘costly missed opportunities’ remain. To illustrate, according to the authors, “no thematic subject area [with the exception of Elderly Health] dedicated more than 10% of its article word count to PPMs, with the majority falling short of 5%.”

They continue to call for 'more proactive approach and considered style of communication' in the reporting of public health specific news to make the stories more newsworthy and to enable journalism to contribute to public health promotion and enhancing positive social change. In their words, "journalism that points out social problems and awaits external reform is insufficient, especially in light of the burden of disease and enormity of social reform that is carried by the population being reported. We suggest that more positive theory of change includes communication that fully engages the reader in the full realm of information, evidence and opportunity, which in turn helps fully explain and animate the subject matter in its entirety. This can be achieved without necessarily drifting into the territory of campaigning or lobbying."

In the critical commentary on the Cambodian film industry, Bun Y Ung aims to present the challenges in the revitalization of the 'Golden Age' in the film industry as well as outlines a few suggestions as to how the industry can be revitalized. Ung begins his commentary with the 'reeling' of the film industry to the 'Golden Age' in the 1960s, its destruction during the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979; the struggling effort to restart the industry in the 1990s and early 2000s, and the more recent attempt by the government as well as filmmakers to support the growth of the industry.

The author outlines a few key contributing factors to the low quality of film making in Cambodia – i.e. lack of competent human resources in the sector in every facet ranging from script-writing to post-production; limited financial resources and access to the resources by film producers, many of whom are new to this sector, and the unfavorable market conditions for film production development.

The film industry banking on a small pool of young and committed local filmmakers, Ung sees a glimpse of hope in the development of this sector. He calls for a 'shared commitment' from all the key stakeholders to revitalize the film industry. Given producing quality films requires big money and investment in human resources, equipment and production budget, it is very important for the private sector to jump in to promote the local film industry. Another key actor is the government. While the recent effort to ban foreign films and programs to be screened in the evening TV prime time is laudable, he argues that the government needs to do more to promote the film industry. Effort may include support to send potential students and individuals to attend film making class abroad; pro-local film tax policy, and provision of other financial incentives or support to the film industry.

The second commentary by Chanpolydet Mer examines the portrayal of persons with disabilities by online media through auditing seven local online media outlets

in 2016. In total, he audited 338 articles published by the media outlets in a period of nine months. He argues that the reporting of persons with disabilities can be categorized into disempowerment (i.e. in line with the medical model of reporting); empowerment (i.e. in line with the social model lens), and more in the form of individual publicity. Few articles (95 of the audited articles) portray persons with disabilities in the first lens, and almost half of the articles audited (43%) portray persons with disabilities through the social model lens. Should the author adapt a bi-category reporting (i.e. disempowerment and empowerment), the other 48% of the articles fall in either of the two categories. However, Mer makes the case that these articles are in another category of reporting – individual publicity – i.e. instead of mainly reporting persons with the disabilities, these articles focus predominantly the other protagonists in their stories, especially public figures and celebrities doing good deeds to the persons with disabilities.

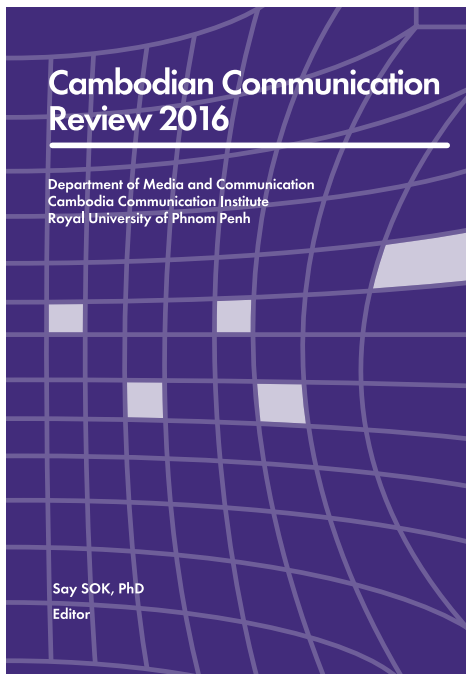
The author cautions that while reporting of persons with disabilities, especially through the social model lens, is amendable, he also notes that reporting coverage and frequency of persons with disabilities are relatively limited, if compared with the total number of persons with disabilities in Cambodia, who constitutes 2 per cent of the total population, and incidents that happen to them. He further notes that there are different categories of persons with disabilities, and many of them are not covered in the news media. Many of the articles focus on (ex)-soldiers and a few other categories of persons with disabilities. It is observed that “these online news media outlets clearly reported on persons with moving or self-care/washing and visual difficulties.” There are other disabilities types which “cannot be seen by naked eyes” such as hearing difficulties and intellectual disabilities, and they are rarely covered in the online media.

In his concluding remarks, the author commences the reporting of the persons with disabilities through the empowerment lens in the local online media and encourages media to report more and more frequently persons with disabilities through this lens. However, he cautions that reporting of persons with disabilities should be done with extra care given the negative impacts and backfire it may have on them. Reporting of persons with disabilities through the disempowerment lens and more to serve ‘publicity’ purposes are discouraged. Angles of reporting should be carefully chosen, and when it is not necessary, there is no need to portray disabilities in the reporting. Word use to portray persons with disabilities should be carefully chosen and articulated. Where possible, effort should be made to involve persons with disabilities in the reporting or the media sector more broadly to ensure that their voices are heard in preparation of the reporting.

We now present to you in order: the Cambodian media indicators, the research article and the two critical commentaries.

Cambodian Media Snapshot 2016

Dolla SOY & Say SOK



This section provides a number of indicators for grasping an overall picture of the state of media in Cambodia by assembling the currently scattered information related to Cambodian media. Existing data are both limited in quantity and challenging in currency and accuracy. What is offered here is a brief snapshot by way of presenting existing indicators from a number of sources. These indicators are collated from different points in time, and they are every now and again at odds. Therefore, the sources are acknowledged here for every indicator, so that the readers can further access the sources and evaluate their currency and accuracy.

We first present a set of contextual indicators for Cambodia, from demographic to economic and socio-political, so as to allow the readers to draw a contextual sketch of the country to which the subsequent media indicators are related. Following the media-related contextual country indicators, we present accessible indicators, in order, for

Cambodian newspaper, magazine, radio, television, cinema and audio-visual production, the Internet, social media and the telephone.

Thanks go to the following year three students of 2015-2016 academic year who persistently approached a number of institutions and individuals to collect some of the figures presented above: *Bun Sreymom, Chin Sreyleap, Chorn Chanbota, Hang Yuttivong Jamy, Heng Sorita, Hun Keolydeth, Kea Theasrun, Kunvuth Monykanchna, Noy Theany, Oeng Chhoun, Por Kimhok, Proeun Panhary, Rithy Odom, Sam Socheatenh, Sam Tola, Samoeurth Seavmeng, San Bunsim, Say Lalis, Seyhak Parinha, Sok Sopheakpanha, Sorn Chhorvyvatey, Toun Serey Ratana, and Mech Sereyrath.*

1. CONTEXTUAL COUNTRY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Economic & Socio-Political		
GDP per capita, 2015	US\$ 1,158 (low middle income country)	World Bank (2016)
Human Development Index (HDI) 2015 ranking	143 of 188	Human Development Report (2015)
Higher educational institutions (countrywide), 2015	118	Ministry of Education, Youth & Sport (MoEYS) (2015)
Private higher educational institutions, 2015	72	MoEYS (2015)
People living on less than US\$2/day (PPP), 2012	2.2%	World Bank (2016)
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines, 2012	17.7%	World Bank (2015)
Income share held by highest 20%, 2012	40.2%	World Bank (2016)
Income share held by lowest 20%, 2012	9.1%	World Bank (2016)
Global Competitiveness Index 2016-17	90 of 140	World Economic Forum
Legatum Prosperity Index 2016 ranking	91 of 149	The Legatum Institute (2016)
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2016 ranking	104 of 129	Bertelsmann Foundation
Network Readiness Index 2016 ranking	110 of 143	World Economic Forum
Freedom of the Press 2015 ranking	154 of 199 (Not Free)	Freedom House
Press Freedom Index 2016 ranking	128 of 180	Reporters Without Borders
Demographic		
Total population, July 2016 estimate	15,957,223	CIA World Factbook (July 2016)
Urban population, 2015	3,251,712 (20.7%)	CIA World Factbook (July 2016)
Phnom Penh population, 2015	1.731 million	CIA World Factbook (July 2016)
Population growth rate, 2016 estimate	1.56%	CIA World Factbook (July 2016)
Youth (15-19) population, 2013	10.62%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Urban youth (15-19) population, 2008	9.71%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Life expectancy at birth, 2015 estimate (M : F)	67:71	WHO (2016)

Number of households (average size), 2013	3,163,226 (4.6)	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Number of urban households, 2013	658,000	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Adult literacy rate (countrywide), 2013	79.7%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Adult literacy rate (urban), 2013	90.3%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Adult English literacy rate, 2008	3.25%	Population Census 2008
Tertiary enrollment, 2015-16, % gross	12%	MoEYS Congress Report (2016)

2. NEWSPAPER

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Registered Khmer-language newspapers in Phnom Penh, 2013	242	Ministry of Information (2014)
Registered foreign-language newspapers in Phnom Penh, 2013	35	Ministry of Information (2014)
Imported press institutions	14	Ministry of Information (2014)
Local press-broadcast related associations in Phnom Penh, 2013	37	Ministry of Information (2014)
Foreign press-broadcast service representatives in Phnom Penh, 2013	14	Ministry of Information (2014)
Printing houses and publishing institutions in Phnom Penh, 2013	108	Ministry of Information (2014)

3. MAGAZINE

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Registered Khmer-language magazines in Phnom Penh, 2013	237	Ministry of Information (2014)
Registered foreign-language magazines in Phnom Penh, 2013	35	Ministry of Information (2014)

4. RADIO

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Radio stations countrywide, 2013	132	Ministry of Information (2014)
Radio stations in Phnom Penh, 2013	68	Ministry of Information (2014)
Radio stations by provinces, 2013	64	Ministry of Information (2014)
AM frequencies countrywide, 2013	2	Ministry of Information (2013)
Foreign services in Khmer language, 2014	3	Ministry of Information (2015)
International broadcasters (in foreign languages) received in Cambodia, 2014	2	Ministry of Information (2015)
Percentage of households owning at least a radio set, 2013	31.8%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of urban households owning at least a radio set, 2013	35.7%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of rural households owning at least a radio set, 2013	30.8%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of households owning two radio sets or more, 2013	1%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of urban households owning two radio sets or more, 2013	2.8%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of rural households owning two radio sets or more, 2013	0.5%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013

5. TELEVISION

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
National broadcast channels in Phnom Penh, 2013	13	Ministry of Information (2014)
Relay stations by foreign broadcasters in Phnom Penh, 2013	2	Ministry of Information (2014)
State broadcaster, 2014	1	Ministry of Information (2014)
Relay stations by local broadcasters in provinces, 2013	69	Ministry of Information (2014)
Cable TV providers in Phnom Penh, 2015	2	Ministry of Information (2015)
Number of channels by cable TV providers, 2013	98	Ministry of Information (2014)
Percentage of households owning at least a TV set, 2013	60.1%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of urban households owning at least a TV set, 2013	69.5%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013

Percentage of rural households owning at least a TV set, 2013	57.6%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of households owning two TV sets or more, 2013	5.5%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of urban households owning two TV sets or more, 2013	20.7%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of rural households owning two TV sets or more, 2013	1.4%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013

6. CINEMA & AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTION

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Registered production companies, 2016	33	Cinema & Cultural Diffusion Department (Oct. 2016)
Number of films and TV dramas licensed for production, 2016	22	Cinema & Cultural Diffusion Department (Oct. 2016)
Number of films and documentaries licensed for production (foreign production), 2016	35	Cambodia Film Commission (mid 2016)
Number of films and TV dramas licensed for showing, 2014	195	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2015)
Number of karaoke video volumes licensed for production, 2016	49	Cinema & Cultural Diffusion Department (Oct. 2016)
Number of karaoke video volumes licensed for showing, 2016	50	Cinema & Cultural Diffusion Department (Oct. 2016)
Commercial cinema houses in Phnom Penh, 2014	5	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2015)
Cinema houses in provinces, 2014	9	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2015)

7. INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Internet users in Cambodia, by June 2015	4,100,000	www.internetworldstats.com (accessed November 2016)
Internet users per 100 inhabitants, by June 2015	25.7%	www.internetworldstats.com (accessed November 2016)
Internet subscriptions in Cambodia	7,157,409	Ministry of Post and Telecommunication (MPTC), 2016
Fixed (wired) Internet subscriptions, by June 2016	82,926	MPTC (2016)
Fixed (wired) Internet subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2012	0.20	ITU (2012)
Mobile Internet subscriptions, by June 2016	19,722,810	MPTC (2016)

Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2015	0.53	ITU (2015)
Internet Service Providers (ISP) licensed, by June 2016	33	MPTC (2016)
Total domain names, by November 2016	7,621	webhosting.info (accessed July 2016)
Ranking for domain names, by November 2016	66	webhosting.info (accessed July 2016)
Total com.kh domain names, by June 2016	2,222	MPTC (2016)
Number of Internet cafés, by June 2016	217	MPTC (2016)
Personal computer per 100 people, 2013	1.5	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of households owning a personal computer, 2013	9.3%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of urban households owning a personal computer, 2013	30.2%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of rural households owning a personal computer, 2013	3.8%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of urban households owning two personal computers or more, 2008	2.60%	Population Census 2008
Number of Facebook users in 2016	3,400,000	Geeksincambodia.com
Number of LinkedIn users in 2015	156,211	angkor.co

8. TELEPHONE

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Fixed telephone lines, 2016	238,118	MPTC (2016)
Fixed telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2015	2	World Bank, 2015
Mobile subscriptions, 2016	19,484,692	MPTC (2016)
Mobile-cellular suscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2015	133	World Bank (2015)
Ratio of mobile subscriptions to fixed lines, 2012	33 : 1	ITU (2012)
Mobile operators, 2016	42	MPTC (2016)
Fixed line operators, 2016	19	MPTC (2016)
Number of mobile phones in households, 2015 (Ages range from 15-65)	10,214,830	Mobile Phones and Internet in Cambodia 2015
Percentage of households owning telephone, 2015	94.5%	Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia (2015)
Percentage of urban households owning telephone, 2015	95.9%	Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia (2015)

Percentage of rural households owning telephone, 2015	93.5%	Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia (2015)
Percentage of households owning at least a mobile phone, 2015	81.4%	Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia (2015)
Percentage of urban households owning at least a mobile phone, 2015	35.4%	Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia (2015)
Percentage of rural households owning at least a mobile phone, 2015	21.5%	Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia (2015)
Percentage of households owning two mobile phones or more, 2015	12.2%	Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia (2015)
Percentage of urban households owning two mobile phones or more, 2013	71.6%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013
Percentage of rural households owning two mobile phones or more, 2013	27.4%	Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013

Beyond Curiosity: A Re-examination of Positive Preventative Messages within the Cambodian Press

Philip J. Gover and G. J. Daan Aalders

ABSTRACT

This paper presents details of an audit and assessment of prevention-based messages that have been identified within published news articles, within two Cambodian newspapers, between 2013 and 2015. Building on the results of a previous audit published in (CCR, 2014), the paper re-examines the prevalence of Positive Preventative Messages (PPMs), within articles that are associated with six distinct public health themes. For consistent comparison, the same quantitative methodology has been adopted throughout.

Using published material as the primary source of data, the authors highlight the significant disparities that occur in relation to varying public health themes, which are reported and communicated to the public. Across both national newspapers, distinct variations occurred in the frequency of newspaper articles that covered the issues investigated. Furthermore, clear distinctions also appear within the printed media, when considering the importance of public health and the value that prevention-based messaging can provide. Given the extent to which PPMs occur, the authors advocate that a more proactive approach and considered style of communication is needed, in the routine reporting of public health specific news. This view offers both opportunities and challenges to those who produce news and information for wider public consumption.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the notion of public health, as a concept, has been able to draw together and focus the attention of an increased global audience. Amongst many factors, this shift in awareness can in part be credited to those large mainstream media agencies, who have systematically delivered cross border accounts of new, spontaneous and often aggressive health conditions (Walsh-Childers, 2016). The outbreak, impact and contemporary control of Ebola, as well as the more recent identification and spread of Zika virus, are good examples of how the media industry in action, impacts upon human health (Evans, Smith, and Majumder, 2016). As such, and combined with the significant improvements in the collection of scientific data (Regmi and Gee, 2016; Kim, 2012), the value and importance of both public health and public health development, is perhaps now, more clearly understood, than it has ever been, amongst the global community (Lim, 2016).

Alongside reports of such scalable threats, we have also seen the rapid development, expansion and adoption of new forms of social media, which have been acknowledged as

important and powerful tools in the promotion and monitoring of public health and wellbeing (Torres, 2015). Amongst this variety of evolving social media platforms, Facebook, Youtube and Twitter have all been extensively used and adapted, to help forge, channel and shape gravitating interest in critical health related issues. This dynamic capability has stimulated further growth within the sector (Lin et al, 2016) and enabled media agencies, and the public alike, to report, share and collaborate on critical issues, during both emergency and non-emergency situations (Lachlan, 2016).

Beyond its utility in emergency situations, social media has also gained traction in capturing the public's imagination in other areas, such as policy development (Bongaarts, 2016). Here electronic messaging and online surveys, collectively helped facilitate new forms of dialogue, advocacy and participation amongst the wider global population. In turn, this helped form and shape the agenda for the new Sustainable Development Goals framework (Fox and Stoett, 2016). In this sense, the utility of these digital media channels marks a key step change, in the evolving development of communication instruments that directly help facilitate improvements in both human and public health spheres.

Yet it may or may not come as a surprise to find that common awareness of the concept of public health remains tied to, and associated with, advances in medicine and pharmaceutical development (Merrill, 2014). Whilst this is not necessarily bad, or incorrect, it does detract from the underlying base of knowledge, which explains the recurring and systematic nature of poor population health. Whilst individual lifestyles, behaviour and patterns of consumption remain important, the evidence to date routinely identifies that poor health thrives upon poverty, poor social conditions and inequality (Marmot, 2005; Wilkinson, 2003; Link and Phelan, 1995).

In this sense, the overarching responsibility for improving public health is not stationed within the realm of the medical profession, nor should it be. Public health is, by definition, a shared concept, with obligations that span a variety of social, political and economic agencies. In this sense, the future development and optimisation of public health will continue to rest with an increased awareness of, and commitment to, this interdependent relationship (Axelsson and Axelsson, 2006).

Within this collaborative relationship, the media industry has always been understood as playing an important and critical role in the development of human health and health related systems. This is largely because the media is associated with presenting and describing the problems, developments and achievements that exist within both the public spaces, and communities in which we live (Wakefield, 2010). How we think about and view health problems, and what we do about them as a result, is largely determined by how they are reported by television, radio, newspapers and social media (Wallack, 1993). The ways in which health related behaviours are portrayed and sold in the media, is also an extremely powerful tool for change (Brown and Walsh-Childers, 2002).

Without the integrity and purpose of the media, vital information relating to the 'satisfaction of human need', would all risk being concealed from the very audience it aims to serve. In view of this, the media plays an essential role in both collecting and broadcasting information, that directly relates to, and impacts upon public health, public interest(s) and the common good (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). Given its new methods to augment its presence within the social

sphere, it could now be argued that the cognisance and behaviour of the media industry, now lies at the very heart of the health improving landscape.

In this sense, and in relation to more traditional methods of media communication, how can we be sure that newspapers do enough, when publishing stories that are of critical importance to human health? Given its inherent value, how can we be sure that the incidents that newspapers report on are communicated in the most meaningful way? Do newspapers fully understand and embrace the critical role that they play, in the 'health information supply chain'. Aside from new pandemic threats, how are under acknowledged risks, like road traffic accidents and drowning presented to the wider consumer? How can newspapers ensure that the composition of their stories are sufficiently challenging, engaging and contain enough flavour, so as to eclipse the routine appetite of reader curiosity?

This paper seeks to assess the characteristics and nature of newspaper articles, by scrutinising both the content and distinct composition of important public health stories, as published by two Cambodian daily newspapers. For the purposes of analysis, the paper focuses upon six distinct public health themes, as reported, across a 12 and 24-month period. It seeks to understand how public health related stories occur and combine with prevention-based messages. It seeks to articulate which types of story, routinely grant inclusion of prevention-based messaging and which stories remain at the fringe of potential behaviour change. This follow-up audit also serves as a means of articulating the extent to which systematic patterns of publishing behaviour and preference occur vary. As such, these questions and the inherent wider considerations are explored in light of the burden of disease and public health conditions, which Cambodia is currently exposed to.

Positive Preventative Messages

Positive Preventative Messages (PPMs) can often be found in newspaper articles. PPMs relate to and add value to the centrality of the storyline, and provide additional information that helps enable the reader to understand how the outcome of the story could have changed or differed. This style of communication is different from that which typically seeks to collect, compose and report, using naked facts. PPMs provide a balance to a story, in that they help the reader to understand and learn more about the critical elements, which underpin the circumstances, which define and characterise the story being reported.

In the absence of a definition, and for the purpose of expanding the subject matter, the following working definition of a PPM has been constructed, adopted and understood as:

Any term, phrase or collection of words that seeks to inform and/or warn the reader of either a) distinct circumstances, or b) alternative action, that would, could or may have prevented and/or led to a positive alternative outcome.

This working definition has been used for the purposes of concision and utility.

The relationship between PPMs and Public Health issues is of particular importance, especially where the burden of disease, health and social problems are acute. Given the latent impact that these pressures have on individuals, families, employers and the wider economy, there is further value and justification in scrutinising this relationship (Sim and McKee, 2011). As health economists routinely point out, where the concept of prevention

is absent, society in its entire guise, almost always pays a high and avoidable price (Gover and Aalders, 2014).

The inclusion of PPMs within national newspaper stories can be either subtle or explicit, as the fictional examples below illustrate:

Example A:

Police and ambulances were called to the scene, when two motorcycles collided on Thursday morning, on a road, on the outskirts of Takeo. One man, aged 18, was pronounced dead at the scene, whilst the other, aged 54, sustained minor injuries. Both men were commuting to work when the collision occurred.

Example B:

Police and ambulances were called to the scene, when two motorcycles collided on Thursday morning, on a *dangerous potholed* road, on the outskirts of Takeo. One man, aged 18, was pronounced dead at the scene, whilst the other, aged 54, *who was wearing a motorcycle helmet*, sustained minor injuries. Both men were commuting to work, *along an unlit road*, when the collision occurred. *Records illustrate this is the 99th fatal accident to occur, in three months, on this stretch of road between Takeo and Phnom Penh.*

These examples serve only to illustrate the explicit contrast that can occur between two stories, when PPMs are adopted. One story, formed using 51 words, is devoid of PPMs, and another, constructed using 86 words, includes 5 PPMs. 35 words are used to construct the PPMs, which in turn, transforms the story.

METHODOLOGY

This paper develops a discussion from its examination of a range of articles that were published within two Cambodian newspapers. These two national newspapers are printed daily, in English. The articles that were identified for the purposes of audit appeared across two 12 month periods, 2013-14 and 2014-15. All of the articles collected relate to one of six distinct public health themes, namely:

- Alcohol Abuse
- Drowning
- Health in the Elderly
- Gender Based Violence (Inc. Rape)
- Road Traffic Accidents
- Smoking

In the process of identifying relevant articles, a database was developed and used. The database was designed to systematically collect all of the published material that appears in the media sector in Cambodia. In order to establish both relevant and total subject specific samples, the database was interrogated, using a variety of distinct subject specific search terms and phrases. This process management methodology was used to both identify and avoid duplication, amongst individual articles and across subject specific clusters (Krippendorff, 2014).

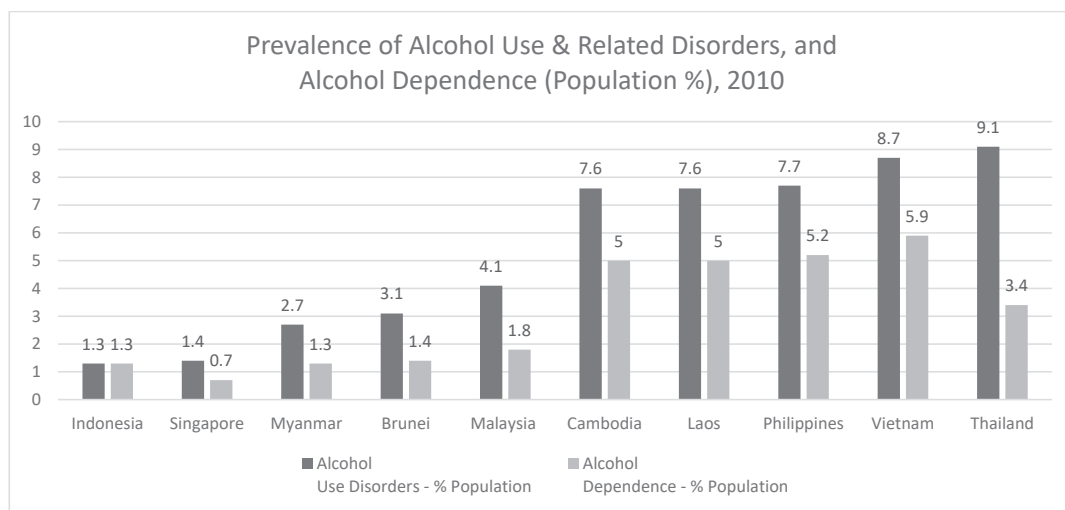
Using recognised assessment methods and content analysis techniques, this approach established a range of quantifiable metrics (MacNamara, 2005). The quantifiable metrics that were generated included details that related to article volume, word counts, frequencies and rates of PPM inclusion and absence. Within this paper, we highlight and discuss a number of these metrics against the backdrop of subject specific statistics that are drawn from the wider field of Public Health. By combining this material, within the epidemiological context of Cambodia, a core framework for discussion can be built.

RECENT FINDINGS

Alcohol

In the broadest sense, a clear body of evidence exists, which details the damaging effects that alcohol has on human health (Room, Babor, and Rehm, 2005). Its consumption is also known to impact upon other activities that evoke human and social risk (Klingemann, 2001). Within Cambodia, more localised studies have also illustrated the extent and impact that over-consumption of alcohol has on women and the family environment (Banta et al, 2012 and Brickell, 2008). Amongst many of the preventable dimensions in Cambodia, evidence suggests that access to and excessive consumption of alcohol is strongly associated and linked to poor health, chronic disease, domestic violence and accidents. Cambodia is not alone in its over-consumption of cheap and readily accessible alcoholic products. The table below illustrates how alcoholic consumption patterns occur across a range of ASEAN countries:

Graph 1: Prevalence of Alcohol Use & Related Disorders and Alcohol Dependence



(Population %), 2010

Who.int. (2017).

According to the Regional Forum on Protecting Young People from the Harmful Use of Alcohol (RFPYP, 2017), young people are more vulnerable to alcohol-related harm because of specific biological, neurological, social and psychological factors. It is the biggest risk factor for deaths in young people 15–29 years of age. This is an important public health

concern in the Western Pacific Region, where 22% of the population (235 million people) is 10–19 years of age. In terms of consumption patterns, around a third of older adolescents (aged 15–19 years) are current drinkers, and more than one in 10 (12.5%) engage in binge or heavy episodic drinking. Consumption in young people is expected to increase due to marketing strategies of the alcohol industry that appear to target the youth. New sweeter, fruit-flavoured and “lighter” alcohol beverages with the same alcohol content appeal to younger consumers, and advertising is shifting from traditional approaches to sponsorship of musical and sporting events that young people patronize. Social media, which is popular with youth, is now a key marketing instrument.

Naturally, the consumption of alcohol is cause for concern given the inherent health implications. However, this is compounded when considering the geographic locations where alcohol is consumed in areas where access to healthcare services are weak, fragile or absent. In these circumstances, the impact of excessive and harmful consumption patterns is exacerbated in poorer and more rural economies, as access to health care systems are either restricted or under-developed. Where there is unequal access to treatment or other resources, the health and social consequences of a given level or pattern of drinking are likely to be more severe for those with less resources (Shi & Stevens, 2005; WHO, 2007; Blas & Kurup, 2010).

With excessive or harmful alcohol consumption providing links to circa 6% of all global deaths, it should come as no surprise to understand why this social issue is considered a significant contemporary and recurring risk (WHO, 2014a). In view of this, the volume of alcohol related stories, as printed in the two sampled newspapers, has been recorded accordingly:

Table 1: Published Articles Reporting on Alcohol in the Cambodian Media (2013-15)

ALCOHOL	Press Combined Years					
	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Cambodia Daily	Phnom Penh Post
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2013-15	2013-15
Articles Published	12	14	69	27	26	96
Articles Containing PPMs (as a % of all articles)	4 (33%)	6 (43%)	56 (81%)	16 (59%)	10 (38%)	72 (75%)
	Increase		Decrease			
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs (as a % of all articles)	8 (67%)	8 (57%)	13 (19%)	11 (41%)	16 (62%)	24 (25%)
	Increase		Decrease			
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	5,203	5,258	11,372	5,480	10,461	16,852
	Increase		Decrease			
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs (as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)	212 (4.07%)	281 (5.34%)	701 (6.16%)	313 (5.71%)	493 (4.72%)	1,014 (6.01%)
	Increase		Decrease			
Number of Identifiable PPMs	6	6	56	18	12	74

From the data collected, a selected sample of comparative and summative points would include the following:

- Across the term, the Phnom Penh Post published the most articles relating to alcohol.

- Combined, significantly less articles relating to alcohol were produced and published in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14.
- Of all the articles published, relatively high rates of PPMs were found within the content.
- Compared with the Phnom Penh Post (74), between 2013-15, The Cambodia Daily incorporated fewer PPMs into its published articles that related to alcohol.
- Between 4%-6% of all the words used in all article composition were associated with PPMs.

Drowning

The significance of drowning is an important aspect of public health, especially given its impact upon child health. The issue of drowning, and the consequences resulting non-fatal drowning, have attracted increased attention in recent years, given the preventable nature associated with these phenomenon (Leavy et al, 2015). This should also be of increased importance to Cambodia, whose population is often exposed to seasonal weather patterns that lead to both predictable and unplanned flooding. The risk of water related accidents is also exacerbated by a large rural population, whose communities and livelihoods are often tied to irrigated land and water for subsistence purposes (Linnan, 2014). Of all child related drowning, most children drown before the age of four. This represents a distinct vulnerability and group at risk. Children aged between 5 and 14 also face high and significant risks, given the continuous low levels of swimming proficiency that pervade.

Despite the on-going and sterling efforts to help remedy this problem, some NGOs suggest that up to six children drown in Cambodia every day (Swim Cambodia, 2016), whilst other studies have suggested that the prevalence of drowning could be much higher than imagined, given the under reporting that is typically known and associated with it (Linnan, 2012). The World Health Organisation provides some useful baseline data and guidance on the subject matter (WHO, 2014b); however for the most part, there is little official or reliable systems and sources of data, that accurately capture the precise rates of drowning in Cambodia.

With Cambodia nestled within the Asian region, and given that the Asian region contains the majority of world’s children, it can be argued that more preventative interventions associated with drowning is needed. One might imagine that such action might figure explicitly in the nation’s public health publicity campaign (UNICEF, 2012).

In view of this, the volume of stories relating to drowning, as printed in the two sampled newspapers, has been recorded accordingly:

Table 2: Published Articles Reporting on Drowning in the Cambodian Media (2013-15)

DROWNING	Press Combined Years					
	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Cambodia Daily	Phnom Penh Post
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2013-15	2013-15
Articles Published	19	10	17	22	29	39
Articles Containing PPMs (as a % of all articles)	10 (53%)	6 (60%)	9 (53%)	12 (55%)	16 (55%)	21 (43%)
	Increase		Increase			

Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs (as a % of all articles)	9 (47%)	4 (40%)	8 (47%)	10 (45%)	13 (45%)	18 (57%)
	Decrease		Decrease			
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	6,950	41,885	10,280	39,310	48,835	49,590
	Increase		Increase			
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs (as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)	261 (3.75%)	1,459 (3.48%)	286 (2.78%)	950 (2.41%)	1,720 (3.52%)	1,236 (2.49%)
	Decrease		Decrease			
Number of Identifiable PPMs	11	8	10	15	19	25

With an annualised estimation exceeding 2,000 drowning related deaths per year, a selected sample of comparative and summative points would include the following:

- Across the term, the Phnom Penh Post published the most articles relating to drowning (39).
- Combined, less articles relating to drowning were produced and published in 2014-15 (32), compared to 2013-14 (29).
- Of all the articles published, relatively high rates of PPMs were found within the content (43%-55%).
- Between 2013-15 the Phnom Penh Post (25) incorporated more PPMs into its published articles that related to drowning than The Cambodia Daily (19).
- Between 2%-4% of all the words used in all article composition were associated with PPMs.

Elderly Health

For the most part, life expectancy in Cambodia has increased, and whilst this gives cause for celebration, it also presents new challenges in terms of health service provision, social care and quality of life.

At present, the elderly population of Cambodia, as defined by those aged 65 years and older, and thus outside of the formal workforce (NIS, 2014), is estimated to be 661,258. Described in this way, the elderly population, (composed of 248,454 males and 412,804 females), represents approximately 4.14% of the total population (CDP, 2016). Estimated forecasts suggest that this section of the community is likely to expand, double and exceed 8.5% by the year 2025 (Knoema, 2017).

Given the natural and preventable health complications that are associated with health in later life, elderly health has now become a priority interest area, especially amongst those who are concerned with the relationship between both public policy and public health (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2000). The implications of deteriorating health in later life are significant, especially in low and middle income economies, where the elderly population are typically the poorest and most vulnerable, in both health and monetary terms. The health of rural dwellers within these circumstances often remain fervently worse, especially where access to, and adequate health care systems are remote and fragile.

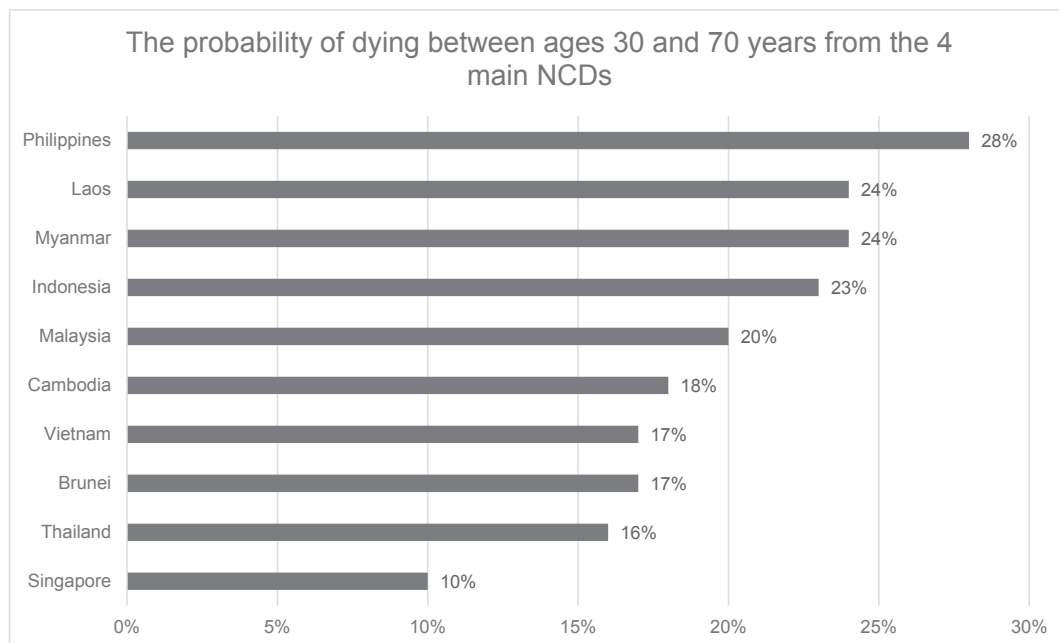
Of all the major health threats to emerge, none has challenged the very foundations of public health so profoundly as the rise of chronic non-communicable diseases. Heart disease,

cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases, once linked only to affluent societies, are now global, and the poor suffer the most.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) or non-infectious diseases are typically long term health conditions that are beyond cure and often require distinct medical surveillance and pharmacological management. Across the globe, NCDs are now accounting for a prolific number of preventable deaths. NCDs include conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, high blood pressure, mental health disorders and cancers. The 4 major NCDs, excluding mental health conditions, include, Cardiovascular Diseases, Chronic Respiratory Diseases, Cancers and Diabetes.

While data on the incidence of such diseases for Cambodian elderly population is not readily available, the incidence of such diseases in neighbouring Vietnam has reached alarming levels. As many as 70% of annual mortality is caused by non-infectious diseases, of whom 40% are under 70 years old (Vietnam News, 2017). For the most part, many of these NCDs have preventable dimensions associated with them, however for the time being, the impact that they have on population groups and their quality of lives are profound.

Graph 2: Probability of Dying between ages 30 and 70 Years from the 4 main NCDs, 2014



WHO - (NCD) Country Profiles (2014)

As such, if Cambodia is to develop and transform its low scoring life satisfaction status (Deaton, 2008), it might well consider the merits of a smart and sustainable healthcare system, which can be trusted and which responds to the changing needs of its elderly population (Ozawa and Sripad, 2013). If it is to avoid the financial costs and burden of

disease that is associated with poor elderly health, one might imagine that a priority of action might include a national planned programme of health development and promotion that appreciates how finance and equitable access can combine to serve and provision the health needs of the current and future population (Annear et al, 2015; Ensor and Witter, 2016). This approach has, in forward planning economies, yielded significant fiscal benefits (Jamison, 2006; Fried, 2016), and moreover, improved the quality of life and dignity that is expected by the respective population (Beard et al, 2016).

In view of this, the volume of stories relating to elderly health, as printed in the two sampled newspapers, has been recorded accordingly:

Table 3: Published Articles Reporting on Elderly Health in the Cambodian Media (2013-15)

ELDERLY HEALTH	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Press Combined Years	
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	Cambodia Daily	Phnom Penh Post
	2013-15	2013-15				
Articles Published	3	0	2	2	3	4
Articles Containing PPMs (as a % of all articles)	3 (100%)	0	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	3 (100%)	4 (100%)
	Increase		No Change			
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs (as a % of all articles)	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	No Change		No Change			
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	730	0	770	1356	730	2126
	Increase		Decrease			
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs (as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)	219 (30%)	0	159 (21%)	147 (11%)	219 (30%)	306 (14.39%)
	Increase		Decrease			
Number of Identifiable PPMs	6	0	5	5	6	10

In view of the 661,258 elderly people living in Cambodia, and from the data collected, a selected sample of comparative and summative points relating to elderly health would include:

- Across the term, the Phnom Penh Post published the most articles relating to elderly health (4).
- In this combined audit, Elderly Health was the public health theme with the lowest overall number of published articles (7).
- Combined, less articles relating to Elderly Health were produced and published in 2014-15 (2) compared to 2013-14 (5).
- Of all the articles published, the highest rates of PPMs were found within the content (100%).
- Between 2013-15 the Phnom Penh Post (10) incorporated more PPMs into its published articles on elderly health, than The Cambodia Daily (6).
- Between 14%-30% of all the words used in all article composition were associated with PPMs

Gender Based Violence (Inc Rape)

The relationship between GBV and public health is obvious. Reducing episodes and incidents of physical and mental harm not only rest within the health model, but also within the stature of legal and human rights legislation. Whilst Gender Based Violence (GBV) as a concept has attracted a range of definitions (Russo, 2006), for the most part, it can be understood to include any act of violence by one gender upon another, that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering. This includes threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, either in public or in private life. The concept is typically, but not exclusively, associated with violence, perpetrated by men and boys, upon women and girls. Rape is unambiguously included within this concept (Simister, 2012).

In the broadest sense, it can be persuasively argued that gender based violence erodes the pursuit of equality, and inequality invariably leads to poorer health and wellbeing (Pickett and Wilkinson, 2011). The World Health Organisation has dedicated a distinct programme of action to help reduce GBV, and provides a useful source of information and statistical data relating to the health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence (García-Moreno, 2013).

In a survey conducted in Cambodia in 2005, research illustrated that over 20% of women aged 15-49 years, who were ever married, reported experiencing physical violence since the age of 15 (CDHS, 2005). More recent research has helped illustrate the precise range of factors that are failing to protect women and children’s human interests (Brickell et al, 2014). With low levels of awareness of the subject matter, legal deficiencies and poor law enforcement practice, coupled with the profound economic dependence that exists amongst family relationships, Cambodia and its NGO sector may well have to collaborate further, in order to reduce the profanity associated with this critical Public Health issue.

In view of this, the volume of stories relating to GBV (Inc Rape), as printed in the two sampled newspapers, has been recorded accordingly:

Table 4: Published Articles Reporting on GBV (Inc. Rape) in the Cambodian Media (2013-15)

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (Inc RAPE)	Press Combined Years					
	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Cambodia Daily	Phnom Penh Post
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2013-15	2013-15
Articles Published	103	139	70	84	242	154
Articles Containing PPMs (as a % of all articles)	57 (55%)	67 (48%)	48 (69%)	44 (52%)	3 (100%)	92 (60%)
	Decrease		Decrease			
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs (as a % of all articles)	46 (45%)	72 (52%)	22 (31%)	40 (48%)	0 (0%)	62 (40%)
	Increase		Increase			
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	27,225	41,885	19,629	39,310	730	58,939
	Increase		Increase			
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs (as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)	1,494 (5%)	1,459 (3%)	1,187 (6%)	950 (2%)	219 (30%)	2,137 (3.62%)
	Decrease		Decrease			
Number of Identifiable PPMs	73	72	56	46	145	102

From the data collected, a selected sample of comparative and summative points would include the following:

- Across the term, The Cambodia Daily published the most articles relating to GBV (Inc Rape) (242).
- In this combined audit, GBV (Inc Rape) was the public health theme with the most overall number of published articles (396).
- Combined, more articles relating to GBV (Inc Rape) were produced and published in 2014-15 (223) compared to 2013-14 (173).
- Whilst more articles were produced in 2014-15 (223), the articles contained in percentage terms, (albeit high) fewer PPMs, when compared to 2013-14.
- Between 2013-15, the Phnom Penh Post (102) incorporated less PPMs into published articles relating to GBV (Inc Rape) than The Cambodia Daily (145)
- Between 3.6% and 4.3% of all the words used in all article composition were associated with PPMs

Road Traffic Accidents

Alongside drowning, the exacerbating frequency and impact of Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) has attracted increasing global attention, as a preventable public health issue. RTAs and collisions account for a significant number of deaths in all societies, and the World Health Organisation highlights an annual estimate of 1.25 million deaths, globally (WHO, 2016a). Notwithstanding this, the World Health Organisation further highlights that RTAs are the leading cause of death among young people aged 15–29 years.

For Cambodia, this is even more important, if not troubling, since over 90% of the world's fatalities on the roads occur in low and middle-income countries, albeit that these countries use approximately half of the world's vehicles (WHO 2016).

Half of those dying on the world's roads are typically classified as vulnerable road users, that is, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Without action, road traffic crashes are predicted to rise, and become the 7th leading cause of all deaths by 2030. The social impact that both fatal and non-fatal road traffic accidents has on the family, and the family economy, is also significant (Kumar, 2012).

In Cambodia, the rate of fatal road traffic accidents stood at 17.4, per 100,000 population. This national figure camouflages the concentrated figures that exist within the urban and rural environment. With 1,950 reported road traffic linked fatalities per year, a daily rate of 5.3 potentially preventable deaths occur across Cambodia roads (WHO, 2016b). Of course, these figures exist alongside non-fatal road traffic accidents, where long term injury and disability typically impacts upon the health and wellbeing of both the individual and family.

Amongst many factors such as speed, and law enforcement, knowledge, attitudes and customary practices of individuals play a large role in the systematic occurrence of road traffic accidents. Whilst alcohol and speed are acknowledged as significant influencing factors associated with road traffic accidents, many people reported driving whilst under the influence and believing that they were safe to do so (Bachani, et al., 2017).

The newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals has set an ambitious road safety target of halving the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020. As such, Cambodia’s plans to comply remain challenging. Cambodia has witnessed significant year on year increases in road traffic accidents, dating back as far as 2005. As such, articulating the action that is needed to meet the SDGs, whilst transforming its cities and urban environments into smarter and healthier places (Giles-Corti et al., 2016) will invariably preoccupy the attention of the National Road Safety Committee.

In view of this, the volume of stories relating to Road Traffic Accidents, as printed in the two sampled newspapers, has been recorded accordingly:

Table 5: Published Articles Reporting on Road Traffic Accidents in the Cambodian Media (2013-15)

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Press Combined Years	
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	Cambodia Daily	Phnom Penh Post
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2013-15	2013-15
Articles Published	35	101	79	76	136	155
Articles Containing PPMs (as a % of all articles)	21 (60%)	49 (49%)	58 (73%)	58 (76%)	70 (51%)	116 (75%)
	Decrease		Increase			
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs (as a % of all articles)	14 (40%)	52 (51%)	21 (27%)	18 (24%)	66 (49%)	39 (25%)
	Increase		Decrease			
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	9,655	33,956	12,070	15,335	43,611	27,405
	Increase		Increase			
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs (as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)	577 (6%)	1,297 (4%)	1,196 (10%)	1,450 (9%)	1,874 (4.29%)	2,646 (9.65%)
	Decrease		Decrease			
Number of Identifiable PPMs	34	57	83	65	91	148

In contrast to 1,950 fatalities and 16,296 permanent disabilities resulting from RTAs in Cambodia, during 2013 (WHO, 2016c), a selected sample of comparative and summative points from the data collected would include the following:

- Across the term, the Phnom Penh Post published the most articles relating to Road Traffic Accidents (155).
- Combined, more articles relating to Road Traffic Accidents were produced and published in 2014-15 (177), as compared to 2013-14 (104).
- In percentage terms, lower and similar levels of PPMs were present in articles identified in 2014-15, as compared to 2013-14.
- Between 2013-15, the Phnom Penh Post (148) produced more PPMs relating to Road Traffic Accidents than The Cambodia Daily (91).
- Between 4.2% -9.6% of all the words used in all article composition were associated with PPMs

Smoking & Tobacco

Of all public health related risk factors, smoking and tobacco use is recognised as a root cause of preventable disease and mortality. Tobacco is the major observable and hidden cause of many of the world's top killer diseases – including cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive lung disease and lung cancer and hypertension (abnormally high blood pressure). In total, tobacco use is responsible for the death of about 1 in 10 adults worldwide. As a primary risk factor to human health (GBD RFCs, 2016), smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and accounts for no fewer than 6 million deaths per year (CDC, 2016). Current trends show that tobacco use will cause more than 8 million deaths annually by 2030 (WHO, 2011).

The prevalence of smoking is especially high in Asia, compared to other regions. Smoking in Cambodia is particularly high, especially amongst the male population, aged 15 and over. Here, 44.1% or 5.25 million are routinely consuming tobacco on a daily basis (WHO, 2016d). Questions relating to the tobacco industry, and its methods of recruiting young smokers continue (Glantz, 1996), whilst e-cigarettes, legal and promoted in some countries (Dockrell, et al., 2013), remain banned in Cambodia.

In view of this, the volume of stories relating to Smoking and Tobacco consumption, as printed in the two sampled newspapers, has been recorded accordingly:

Table 6: Published Articles Reporting on Smoking & Tobacco in the Cambodian Media (2013-15)

SMOKING & TOBACCO	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Press Combined Years	
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	Cambodia Daily	Phnom Penh Post
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2013-15	2013-15
Articles Published	6	7	10	7	13	17
Articles Containing PPMs (as a % of all articles)	6 (100%)	5 (71%)	7 (70%)	5 (71%)	11 (85%)	12 (71%)
	Decrease		Increase			
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs (as a % of all articles)	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	3 (30%)	2 (29%)	2 (15%)	5 (29%)
	Increase		Decrease			
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	4,051	2,427	4,864	2,561	6,478	7,425
	Increase		Increase			
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs (as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)	190 (4.69%)	193 (7.95%)	310 (6.37%)	174 (6.8%)	383 (5.91%)	484 (6.51%)
	Decrease		Decrease			
Number of Identifiable PPMs	8	13	9	7	21	16

In relation to the number one risk factor that is associated with most preventable deaths globally, and from the data collected, a selected sample of comparative and summative points would include the following:

- Across the term, the Phnom Penh Post (17) published the most articles relating to Smoking and Tobacco use.

- Combined, less articles relating to Smoking and Tobacco use were produced and published in 2014-15 (14) compared to 2013-14 (16).
- In percentage terms, lower and similar levels of PPMs were present in articles identified in 2014-15.
- Between 2013-15, The Cambodia Daily (21) produced more PPMs relating to smoking and tobacco use than the Phnom Penh Post (16).
- Between 5.9% - 6.5% of all the words used in article composition were associated with PPMs.

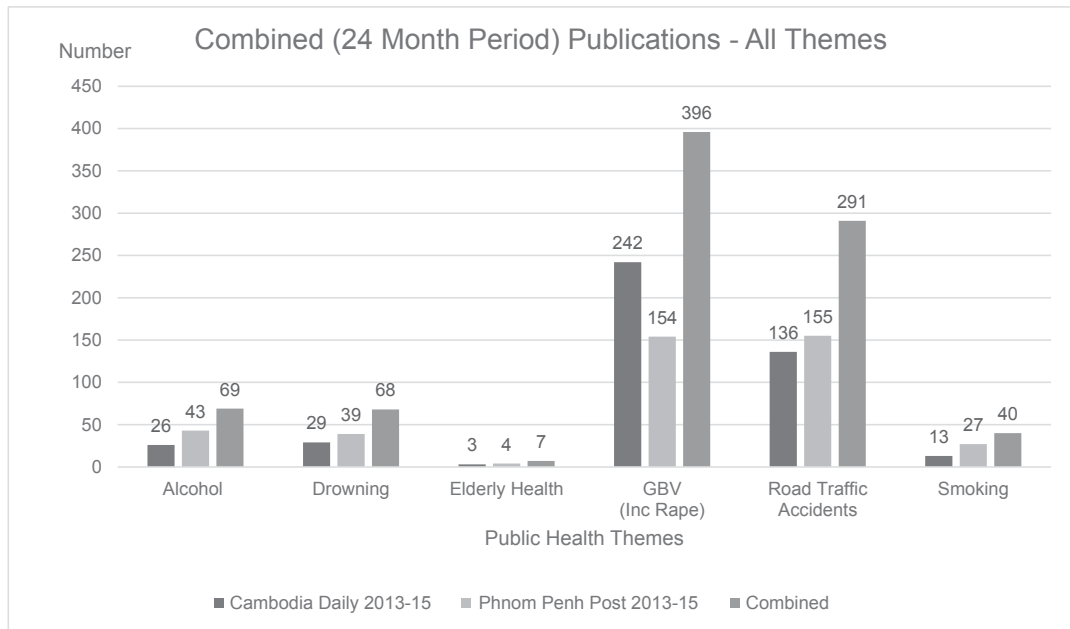
DISCUSSION

From the outset, we raised important questions concerning two newspapers and their relationship with six public health issues. We wanted to understand and appreciate the ways in which these newspapers report on issues that are of critical importance to the reader and furthermore human health. Within this paper, we demonstrated how we identified distinct articles that were published by the two Cambodian newspapers, across two similar timeframes. In doing so, and guided by subject specific terms, we demonstrated how this aspect of the media landscape can be readily assessed. By considering the scope of the published articles, we gained new insights into the nature of the relationship that these newspapers have, in regard to the distinct areas of public health and social development.

As such, we queried whether newspapers communicated information in the most meaningful way. We contemplated about how newspapers managed information, within the notion of a 'supply chain'. We queried how under-acknowledged health risks would be presented, in relation to those that are more familiar, amongst the wider population. Besides this, we wanted to understand if newspapers were currently communicating information, using dynamic and prevention-based methods of journalism. This seemed important, given the health needs and aspirations that Cambodia and its population currently face and demand.

In this regard, what conclusions and further discussion can be drawn from the data that has been produced and presented?

It was not the author's intention to judge one newspaper against another; moreover, our appreciation simply derives from understanding patterns that occur both in comparison and from multiple sources. In this respect, we can reflect upon the contributions of both newspapers, and each draw our own subjective conclusions. The merit underpinning these conclusions will be subjective, and invariably based on both our own understanding of the world around us, the importance of the subject matter to us, and in combination, amended by our expectations and knowledge of the media, as a wilful agency of change.

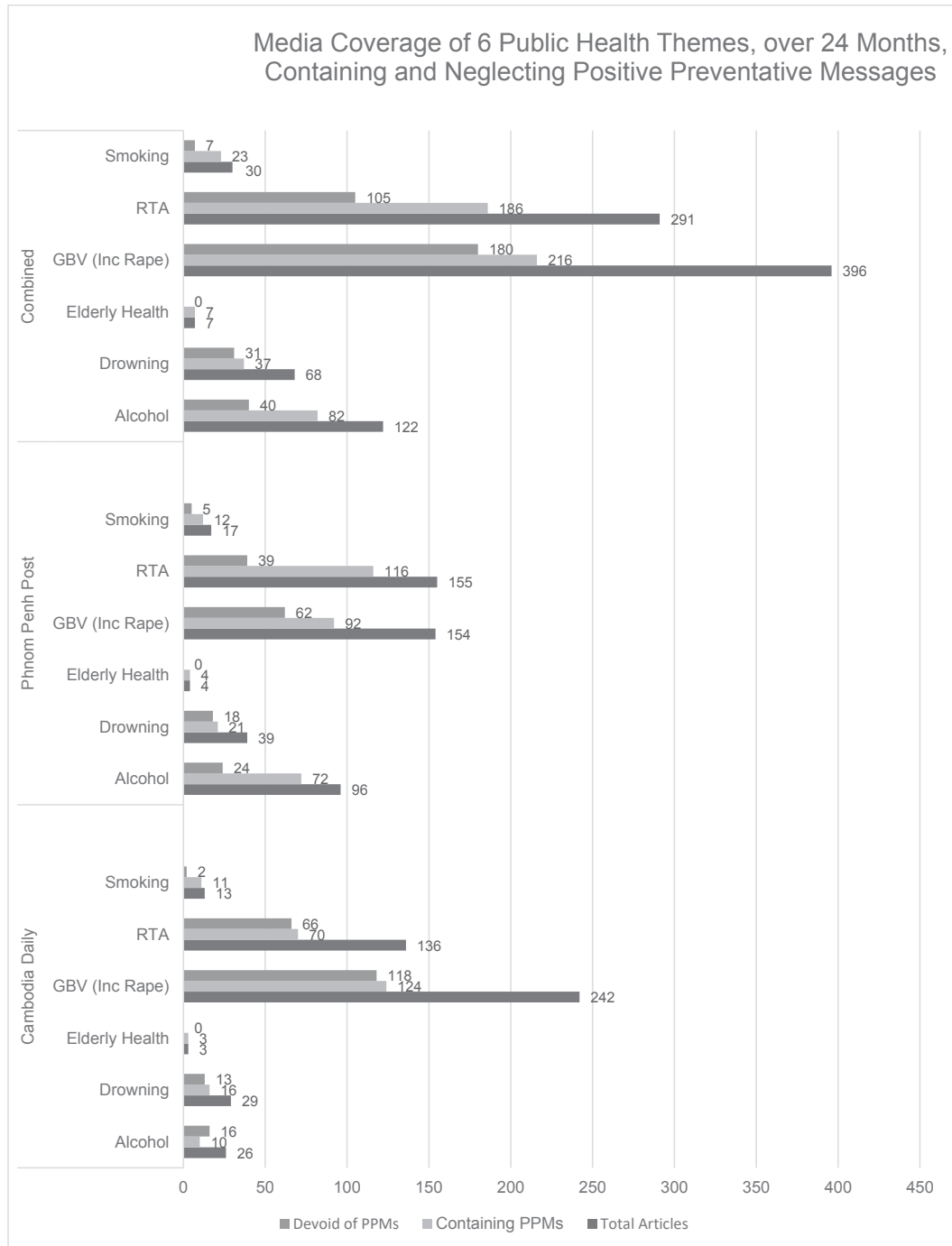
Graph 3: Combined (24 Month Period) Publications - All Themes (2013-15)

In totality, it is our view that all of the thematic subject areas, with the exception perhaps of GBV (Inc. Rape) and RTA, attracted exceptionally poor levels of media coverage, given the burden of problems, and magnitude of evidence that besets these social issues. The exceptionally low levels of media engagement in issues associated with Elderly Health, Alcohol and Drowning is significant cause for concern. It is highly likely that this view would also be shared, had the audit occurred in any national context.

Whilst there appears to be variation in the number of articles containing PPMs, both across the years and by subject matter, across the two-year term, all of the published newspaper articles appear to have captured and incorporated a reasonable amount of PPMs within the content. However, as stated, four out six thematic areas appear significantly under-reported.

The study has also identified a range of “lost opportunities”, which represent newspaper articles that gravitate around public health issues, but provide no preventative-based material within the article structure at all. For all that can be celebrated by the newspapers and their efforts to inform, educate and warn, these lost opportunities seem both shameful and wasted, given the environment that suffers some of the worst public health indices across the whole WHO Western Pacific Region.

Graph 4: All Themes Combined (24 Month Period) – Containing or Neglecting Positive Preventative Messages (2013-15)



One might imagine that across all of the published articles, many would contain multiple PPMs. With the exception of (what is considered under reporting in) Elderly Health and Cambodia Daily's coverage of Smoking (again lightweight in volume), not one thematic area ever produced more identifiable PPMs, than articles published. This particular aspect may represent an important benchmark and quality assurance indicator for newspapers, as many observers might expect to find both more and multiple PPMs within stories that lend themselves to it. Where published articles are devoid of PPMs, one can only deduce that these are costly missed opportunities.

If column inches count in the media environment, then some thematic areas were always likely to capture more newspaper attention than others. In this respect, Elderly Health, Smoking and Alcohol are the least demonstrable out of six. The Cambodia Daily contributed no column inches to news pertaining to Elderly Health across 2014-15 whilst the Phnom Penh Post contributed 1,356 words. Given the nature, knowledge and impact associated with smoking, both newspapers managed to communicate all of their content in no more than 2,500 words each.

As stated earlier in the paper, there is a view that PPMs provide a balance to a thematic story, especially when the subject matter lends itself to it. The reporting of newspaper stories that are salient to public health, using only naked facts, invariably denies the reader and the record of critical opportunities that matter. In this regard, we recognise the important relationship that exists between the volume of words used to construct a published story, and the volume of words used to construct PPMs that are adopted within it. As a result, we found that in all thematic areas, similar percentage levels existed, when comparing these two features. With the exception of Elderly Health, no thematic subject area dedicated more than 10% of its article word count to PPMs, with the majority falling short of 5%.

When this audit was first designed, we considered how newspapers might adopt and perhaps adapt Porters concept of shared value (Porter and Kramer, 2011) within their own corporate structure. By this, we considered the possibility of newspapers using their industrial know-how, workforce and position in the market to fully engage in known social problems, as the raw material from which to develop competitive advantage. We do believe that newspapers have the potential to do this, however without awareness of performance or the desire for change, we would seriously question whether the likelihood of this gaining much traction.

From the published articles that were subjected to audit, it became clear that the journalism underpinning it is distinct in style. We found significant and compelling opportunities from which increased intervention and advocacy could have both emerged and been communicated. This distinct style of journalism carries with it a distinct representation of the theory of change. It is of the authors' opinion that journalism that points out social problems and awaits external reform is insufficient, especially in light of the burden of disease and enormity of social reform that is carried by the population being reported. We suggest that more positive theory of change includes communication that fully engages the reader in the full realm of information, evidence and opportunity, which in turn helps fully explain and animate the subject matter in its entirety. This can be achieved without necessarily drifting into the territory of campaigning or lobbying.

This audit has, on both occasions, sought to understand how newspaper articles that cover important public health themes, are produced and occur. There are of course natural limitations associated with this study, in relation to the broader scope of public information and messaging. The public are not solely dependent for information on the two newspapers in question. Indeed, the newspapers we assessed are newspapers that are typically printed in English. We recognise the importance that wider media channels have in communicating important messages, no more so than TV, Radio and of late, social media. In this sense, this study merely represents a snapshot of how two national newspapers operate across a distinct time frame.

In this sense, we welcome the opportunity to audit future articles, across a broader spectrum of public health related subjects, in the hope that newspapers proactively plan, report and communicate in ways that surpass simple curiosity.

REFERENCES

- Axelsson, R. & Axelsson, S.B, (2006). 'Integration and collaboration in public health—a conceptual framework', *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 21(1), pp. 75–88.
- Bachani, A.M., Risko, C.B., Gnim, C., Coelho, S. and Hyder, A.A., (2017). Knowledge, attitudes, and practices around drinking and driving in Cambodia: 2010–2012. *Public Health*, 144, pp. S32-S38.
- Banta, J.E., Addison, A., Job, J.S., Yel, D. and Singh, P.N, (2012). Patterns of alcohol and tobacco use in Cambodia. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 25(5_suppl), pp. 33S-44S.
- Beard, J.R., Officer, A., de Carvalho, I.A., Sadana, R., Pot, A.M., Michel, J.P., Lloyd-Sherlock, P., Epping-Jordan, J.E., Peeters, G.G., Mahanani, W.R. and Thiyagarajan, J.A, (2016). The world report on ageing and health: a policy framework for healthy ageing. *The Lancet*, 387(10033), pp. 2145-2154.
- Blas, E., & Kurup, A. S. (2010). *Equity, social determinants and public health programmes*. World Health Organization.
- Bongaarts, J, (2016). 'World Health Organization Health in 2015: *From MDGs, millennium development goals, to SDGs, sustainable development goals*. Geneva: WHO Press.
- Brickell, K, (2008). 'Fire in the house': Gendered experiences of drunkenness and violence in Siem Reap, Cambodia. *Geoforum*, 39.5 (2008): pp.1667-1675.
- Brickell, K., Prak, B. and Poch, B, (2014). Domestic Violence Law: The gap between legislation and practice in Cambodia and what can be done about it.
- Brown, J.D. and Walsh-Childers, K, (2002). Effects of media on personal and public health. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 2, pp. 453-488.

- CDC, (2016). Fast facts. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/ [Accessed: 10.12.2016].
- CDHS, (2005). *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2005*. Phnom Penh: National Institute of Public Health, National Institute of Statistics (Cambodia) and ORC Marco.
- CDP, (2016). Cambodia demographics profile 2016, Indexmundi.com. Web. [Accessed 9 Dec. 2016].
- Crosby, B.C. and Bryson, J.M, (2005). *Leadership for the common good: Tackling public problems in a shared-power world*. San Francisco: Jossey-bass.
- Deaton, A, (2008). Income, health, and well-being around the world: Evidence from the Gallup World Poll. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(2), pp. 53-72.
- DMC and CCI, (2014). *Cambodian Communication Review 2014*, pp.12-31. Phnom Penh: DMC and CCI.
- Dockrell, M., Morrison, R., Bauld, L. and McNeill, A., 2013. E-cigarettes: Prevalence and attitudes in Great Britain. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 15(10), pp. 1737-1744.
- Ensor, T., So, S. and Witter, S, (2016). Exploring the influence of context and policy on health district productivity in Cambodia. *Cost Effectiveness and Resource Allocation*, 14(1), p. 1-11.
- Evans, N.G., Smith, T.C. and Majumder, M.S, (2016). *Ebola's message: Public health and medicine in the twenty-first century*. Vancouver: MIT Press.
- Fox, O. and Stoett, P, (2016). Citizen participation in the UN Sustainable Development Goals consultation process: Toward global democratic governance? *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 22(4), pp. 555-574.
- Fried, L.P, (2016). Investing in health to create a third demographic dividend. *The Gerontologist*, 56(Suppl 2), pp.S167-S177.
- García-Moreno, C, (2013). *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. World Health Organization.
- GBD RFCS, (2016). Global, regional, and national comparative risk assessment of 79 behavioural, environmental and occupational, and metabolic risks or clusters of risks, 1990–2015: A systematic analysis for the global burden of disease study 2015. *The Lancet*, 388(10053), pp. 1659–1724.
- Giles-Corti, B., Vernez-Moudon, A., Reis, R., Turrell, G., Dannenberg, A.L., Badland, H., Foster, S., Lowe, M., Sallis, J.F., Stevenson, M. and Owen, N., (2016). City planning and population health: A global challenge. *The Lancet*, 388(10062), pp. 2912-2924

- .Glantz, S.A, (1996) Preventing tobacco use--the youth access trap. *American Journal of Public Health*, 86(2), pp.156-158.
- Gover, Philip J, & Aalders, D.G.J, (2014). Does prevention have anything to do with it?. *Cambodian Communication Review 2014*. Phnom Penh: DMC and CCI, pp.12-31.
- Jamison, D.T., Breman, J.G., Measham, A.R., Alleyne, G., Claeson, M., Evans, D.B., Jha, P., Mills, A. and Musgrove, P. eds., (2006). *Disease control priorities in developing countries*. World Bank Publications.
- Khmer Times, (2016). Webservice: <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/29272/two-children-drown-in-battambang/> [accessed: 10.12.2016].
- Kim, J.Y. (2012). Data for better health—and to help end poverty', *The Lancet*, 380(9859), p. 2055.
- Klingemann, H. and Gmel, G. eds., (2001). *Mapping the social consequences of alcohol consumption*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Knoema, (2017). Cambodia population forecast old-age dependency ratio, 2000-2100, Web source, available via: <https://knoema.com/atlas/Cambodia/topics/Demographics/Population-forecast/Old-age-dependency-ratio> [accessed 10.12.2016].
- Kumar, G.A., Dilip, T.R., Dandona, L. and Dandona, R., (2012). Burden of out-of-pocket expenditure for road traffic injuries in urban India. *BMC Health Services Research*, 12(1), p.1.
- Krippendorff, Klaus. (2012). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage.
- Lachlan, K.A., Spence, P.R., Lin, X., Najarian, K. and Del Greco, M. (2016). Social media and crisis management: CERC, search strategies, and Twitter content. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, pp. 647–652.
- Leavy, J.E., Crawford, G., Leaversuch, F., Nimmo, L., McCausland, K. and Jancey, J. (2015). A review of drowning prevention interventions for children and young people in high, low and middle income countries. *Journal of Community Health*, 41(2), pp. 424–441.
- Lim, S.S., Allen, K., Bhutta, Z.A., Dandona, L., Forouzanfar, M.H., Fullman, N., Gething, P.W., Goldberg, E.M., Hay, S.I., Holmberg, M. and Kinfu, Y., (2016). Measuring the health-related Sustainable Development Goals in 188 countries: A baseline analysis from the global burden of disease study 2015. *The Lancet*, 388(10053), pp. 1813-1850.
- Lin, X., Spence, P.R., Sellnow, T.L. and Lachlan, K.A., (2016). Crisis communication, learning and responding: Best practices in social media. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 65, pp. 601-605.
- Link, B.G. and Phelan, J (1995). Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, pp. 80-94.

- Linnan, M. (2012). *Child drowning: Evidence for a newly recognized cause of child mortality in low and middle income countries in Asia*. UNICEF Innocent Research Centre.
- Linnan, M., Scarr, J. and Linnan, H, (2014). Drowning prevention in low-and middle-income countries versus high-income countries. *In Drowning*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Lloyd-Sherlock, P, (2000). Population ageing in developed and developing regions: Implications for health policy. *Social Science & Medicine*, 51(6), pp. 887-895.
- MacNamara, Jim. (2005). Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 6.1 (2005), pp. 1-34.
- Marmot, M., (2005). Social determinants of health inequalities. *The Lancet*, 365 (9464), pp. 1099-1104.
- NIS, (2015). Cambodia socio-economic survey. Phnom Penh: National Institute of Statistics, October 2015, cited in Ly, S. (2016). Cambodia economic update: Improving macroeconomic and financial resilience. *Cambodia Economic Update*. Washington, D.C: World Bank Group.
- Ozawa, S. and Sripad, P, (2013). How do you measure trust in the health system? A systematic review of the literature. *Social Science & Medicine*, 91, pp. 10-14.
- Porter, Michael E., and Mark R. Kramer, (2011). Creating shared value. *Harvard Business Review*, 89.1/2 (2011): pp. 62-77.
- Ray M, Merrill, G.B.L. (2014). The contribution of public health and improved social conditions to increased life expectancy: An analysis of public awareness, *Journal of Community Medicine & Health Education*, 04(05).
- RFPYP, (2017). Wpro.who.int. Retrieved 11 May 2017, from http://www.wpro.who.int/mental_health_substance_abuse/ebulletin1.pdf?ua=1.
- Room, R., Babor, T. and Rehm, J, (2005). Alcohol and public health. *The Lancet*, 365(9458), pp. 519-530.
- Russo, N.F. and Pirlott, A. (2006). Gender based violence. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1087(1), pp. 178-205.
- Shi, Leiyu, and Gregory D. Stevens, (2005). Vulnerability and unmet health care needs. *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 20.2, pp. 148-154.
- Sim, F. and McKee, M, (2011). *Issues in public health*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Simister, J.S., (2012). *Gender based violence: Causes and remedies*. Nova Science Publishers.

- Swim Cambodia (2016). In Cambodia, a new effort to end drowning deaths. <http://aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/in-cambodia-a-new-effort-to-end-drowning-deaths/698247> [Accessed: 10.12.2006].
- Torres, J. (2015). Bringing the social media #revolution to health care, *Health Promotion Practice*, 16(6), pp. 785–787.
- UNICEF, (2012). *The state of the world's children 2012: Children in an urban world*.
- UNICEF, (2016). *The state of the world's children 2016: A fair chance for every child*.
- Vietnam News (2017). Non-infectious diseases kill 400,000 Vietnamese per year. Available at: <https://goo.gl/3Po2vh>.
- Wakefield, M.A., Loken, B. and Hornik, R.C, (2010). Use of mass media campaigns to change health behaviour. *The Lancet*, 376(9748), pp. 1261-1271.
- Wallack, L.M., Dorfman, L, Jernigan, D and Themba-Nixon, M., (1993). *Media advocacy and public health: Power for prevention*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Walsh-Childers, K. (2016). *Mass media and health: Examining media impact on individuals and the health environment*. Devon: Routledge.
- WHO, (2007). *WHO expert committee on problems related to alcohol consumption. Second report*. World Health Organization technical report series, (944), 1.
- WHO. (2011). *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2011*. Geneva: WHO.
- WHO, (2014a). *Global status report on alcohol and health*. World Health Organization.
- WHO, (2014b). *Global report on drowning: Preventing a leading killer*. World Health Organization.
- WHO, (2014). Noncommunicable diseases (NCD) country profiles. [online] Available at: <http://www.who.int/nmh/countries/en/>.
- WHO, (2015). *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2015: Raising taxes on tobacco*. World Health Organization.
- WHO, (2016a). *World health statistics 2016: Monitoring health for the SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals*. World Health Organization.
- WHO, (2016b). *Global status report on road safety 2015*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- WHO, (2016c). Cambodia country profile [relating to road traffic accident prevention and public health – steps & measures http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2015/country_profiles/Cambodia.pdf?ua=1] [Accessed 10.12.2016].

WHO, (2016d). World health statistics 2016: Monitoring health for the SDGs

http://www.who.int/gho/publications/world_health_statistics/2016/Annex_B/en/ [Accessed: 10.12.2016].

Who.int. (2017). WHO. Country profiles 2014. [online] Available at: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/profiles/en/.

Wilkinson, R.G. and Marmot, M.G., (2003). *Social determinants of health: The solid facts*. World Health Organization.

Cambodian Film Industry: A Paradox to Glorious Revival

Bun Y Ung

INTRODUCTION

After a few decades of slumber, Cambodian film industry has been struggling to revive during the last couple of years. It is quite surprising to see Cambodian films produced by various local filmmakers screened continuously in cinemas alongside with Hollywood films and other films from Asian countries including Thailand, China, and South Korea. With the presence of a number of modern cinemas in town, many Cambodians make it their leisure activity to see new movies in the cinemas. Though the market is still small, some filmmakers have been trying to produce small budget films to compromise the production expense and profit. A few others even tried to invest in bigger budget films in an attempt to have better quality products for local and international market. But many of them can hardly make profit out of the screenings while others earn from direct or indirect sponsorship and advertising.

Apart from the efforts to revive the Cambodian film industry as well as to make it well known again, several experienced Cambodian filmmakers, including young ones, have set their mark on international stages through some outstanding film festivals. Although some of them were backed up by international production or crew, this, more or less, has engaged Cambodian filmmakers with international communities as well as inspired the young and local filmmakers to aim for better film quality in terms of conceptual and technical aspects. However, with limited opportunity for formal or informal training in film production, Cambodia falls short of qualified filmmakers who would be powerful forces in pushing this industry to move forward at the right pace.

As observed, the ongoing commitment to make film industry 'great again' has been a good move, yet there is more at stake. Though the progress is not going down the hill, it is struggling to soar. Given the recent efforts in promoting local films by the government, relevant stakeholders, and filmmakers themselves, it is important to look at the prominent challenges and how to alleviate them to make way for the revitalization of Cambodian film industry.

REELING TO THE 'GOLDEN AGE'

Filmmaking is not a new phenomenon in Cambodia. This industry was once blossomed in the 1960s, which was considered the 'Golden Age' of Cambodia in many economic and social spheres, including film production. The former King Norodom Sihanouk himself was one among many famous Cambodian filmmakers back then. Richardot (2013) indicated that the common stories of the King's films at that time "featured the Kings' family, his generals and ministers" and the themes were seen as "mostly positive and encouraged a modern outlook amongst Cambodian audiences".

Such development of film industry did not happen by chance. In the attempt to promote Khmer film at that time, former King Norodom Sihanouk sent a number of Cambodians to learn film production in France (Koam, Sun, Mak, & Kim, 2010). According to www.cambodianfilm.gov.kh, “[t]he first Cambodian-made films were made in the 1950s by filmmakers who had studied overseas.... The United States Information Service held training workshops during this era and provided equipment.” These probably shed more light on the film production in the country as well as inspired the local filmmakers to produce their own films and contributed to the development of Cambodian film industry. Albeit without any film school, some self-taught directors like Ly Bun Yim and Tea Lim Koun were able to produce quality films, which were successful both in Cambodia and abroad. For instance, “Pos Keng Kang, a Khmer horror film, was a big hit in Thailand, and [the] Crocodile Man (1974) was screened successfully in Hong Kong. Such successes opened the way for foreign screenings of Khmer films such as Puthisen Neang Kongrey and The Snake Girl” (www.revolvy.com).

Back then, it was fairly unbelievable that a small country like Cambodia could produce a big number of films. Noticeably, “more than 300 Khmer films were made and cinemas screen[ed] Western, Indian, Khmer and Hong Kong films” which attracted a big number of moviegoers into more than thirty cinemas in the country (Lim, 2012). “Before 1975, Cambodian films were very famous and there were a lot of producers, filmmakers, actors and actresses,” said Dy Saveth, one of the well-known actresses, who survived the Khmer Rouge regime (McPherson, 2015).

However, Cambodia did not enjoy those glory days for long enough. The Khmer Rouge put an end to the country’s development after its rule in 1975. Filmmaking has no exception. Lim (2012) wrote in his book, “Actors and directors were killed, films prints were stolen or destroyed and filmmaking equipment was smashed.” As a consequence, the vibrant film industry was devastated by the regime and “the only footage that came out of the era that followed was communist propaganda” McPherson (2015).

THE REVIVING FILM INDUSTRY

After the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, the revival of Khmer film industry was noticeable, yet the progress was gradual. Alongside the imported films, a number of local productions resumed producing Khmer films and some remaining cinemas were renovated and reopened. Nevertheless, those film productions failed to survive “in the early 1990s due to the rising production costs, the poor quality of films they produced, and the competition from video and television” (Lim, 2012). Meanwhile, McPherson (2015) mentioned that the imported horror movies and romantic comedies would rule the Cambodian film market. Local TVs back then would fill their airtime with different movies and dramas from Thailand, China, Singapore, India, and Hollywood. In addition, some remaining cinemas “have been torn down or changed into snooker halls and karaoke bars” (McPherson, 2015).

Later, Khmer film industry seemed to have a chance to thrive again after Cambodian government banned all Thai films and television programs in the country following the early 2003 riots against Thai actress, Suvanant Kongying, who allegedly claimed that Angkor Wat belongs to Thailand. There were some slots for Khmer movies to jump into its fragile

market; yet many movies or dramas that were produced were deficient in quality. Lim (2012) wrote that the production value itself was very limited; the acting was so poor; and the story was way too cliché. “Poorly made low-budget horror flicks and slapstick comedies predominate in a creative economy that is unsustainable due to the lack of funding and equipment, trained technical, creative and acting crew, and copyright enforcement to protect intellectual property.”

During the last decade, a small number of Cambodian films and dramas still manage to appear on the cinemas’ big screens as well as a few local televisions though the majority of viewers tend to like foreign-made ones. While local cinemas are dominated by films from Hollywood and Thailand, many television screens are occupied by movies and dramas from China, Korea, India, Singapore and the Philippines. Until recently, Thai dramas, which were very popular back then among Khmer viewers, have returned to appear on Cambodian TVs and got widespread again. On the one hand, this posts a threat to the weakening and unsustainable local movie industry, and on the other hand, it pushes local filmmakers as well as the government to work harder in order to survive the blow.

THE RECENT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE LOCAL FILM INDUSTRY

Last year, 2015, the government took a stricter policy on the screening of foreign films and foreign-made contents to promote the local films and programs. The Ministry of Information “bans the broadcast of any foreign-made film between the hours of 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. and is intended ‘to restore Cambodian culture and Khmer movies’” (Oum & Yun, 2015). To fill in the two-hour prime time, the ministry urges TV stations to air Khmer movies and other Khmer programs. As a consequence, the station will have its license stripped off if it does not conform to the rule (Oum & Yun, 2015).

In response, many local filmmakers, producers, and artists appreciated the approach seeing this beneficial to boost local contents. According to Chea (2015), Cambodian well-known filmmaker, Chhay Bora, considered “the measure as a positive way to keep foreign films from flooding the market and drowning out Cambodian productions.” However, the order may affect the country’s business-oriented TV stations. Som Chhaya, PNN’s Deputy Director General, told Khmer Times, “The only reason PNN screened foreign films was because of local demand. The ban would affect PNN’s \$3 million contract for Thai films but they would comply” (Chea, 2015).

Although the number of production companies is quite numerous, the number of films licensed for production annually is still quite small. According to the figure from the Department of Film and Cultural Diffusion, the numbers of registered production companies in 2014 and 2016 were 39 and 33, respectively. The number of films and TV dramas, which were licensed for production, were 22 in 2013 as well as 2016 (CCR, 2015; CCR 2016), suggesting that some production companies are not so active. In 2014, the number of films and TV dramas licensed for screening was 195 (CCR, 2015). According to the author’s observation, the ban on broadcasting of foreign-made contents on prime time has enabled a good number of Khmer dramas and movies produced and aired to fill in the golden time of TVs. At the same time, the locally produced feature films take turn for screening in the capital modern cinemas. By 2015, there were 5 commercial cinemas in Phnom Penh and 9 in provinces

(CCR, 2016). Nonetheless, television viewers and moviegoers can obviously observe the surge in quantity of films and dramas rather than the quality.

CHALLENGES TO BETTER THE FILM QUALITY

Though Cambodian film industry is slowly improving, there are obvious challenges that hinder further quality development. According to Rithy Panh, a well-known Cambodian-French filmmaker whose film “The Missing Picture” was nominated for the Academy Award, “[a] good movie needs a combination of an engaging storyline, good direction, talented actors, and well-composed cinematography” (as cited in Say, 2015). As observed, there has been a good move on technicality, yet the story and creativity are still in the gridlock. There are a number of contributing factors to the low quality film, but the most outstanding ones include the lack of human resource, financial resource, and market.

Until now, there is no formal training ground in film production while this struggling industry is in great need of well-trained production crew and talent. With the scarce resources in script writing, directing, cinematography, lighting, acting, and post-production, improvement in film quality is relatively slow. Many local filmmakers learn the skills from experience, workshops or short courses while a few could manage to earn proper degrees from abroad. On the irregular basis, some film-related institutions like the Cambodia Film Commission (CFC) and Bophana Audiovisual Resource Centre organized some filmmaking workshops ranging from producing, to location scouting, cinematography and script writing. In addition, some graduates from the Department of Media and Communication of the Royal University Phnom Penh have moved to be filmmakers utilizing their documentary filmmaking skills gained from the department combined with their additional training and experience.

In recent years, the establishment of the International Film and Television Academy (IFTA), a public-private partnership with the Department of Cinema and Cultural Diffusion of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, is another noticeable move. Claiming to be “the first school for film and acting in Cambodia” the school aims to “promote and support the development of the Cambodian film industry operating under the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts,” according to www.filmacademy.tv. The school offers courses including, but not limited to, acting, filmmaking, directing, producing, and script writing. Filmmaker Rithy Panh also agrees that film training is “currently the most important element missing in the Kingdom’s nascent film industry” and with skills, Cambodian filmmakers will be able to produce better quality films that can walk into international market to sustain the film industry (Morn & Igor, 2015).

Aside from the lack of human resources, budget and market (or the lack of, to be precise) are also big concerns for filmmakers. With the total population of 15 millions in 2015 and Phnom Penh population of 1.6 million in 2014, the number of moviegoers is still relatively small. Given this narrow market, it is difficult for local filmmakers to make profit out of their film business. In Cambodia, ghost and comedy are seen as the much like genres for the majority of audience. Such genres are considered to use low production cost. Whereas many are producing low-budget horror and comic flicks, a few have tried to invest more in different genres, which put them at risk of losing profit. Expecting to make money from this movie industry, many filmmakers chose to follow the audience by producing mainstream films or cliché storyline.

According to Hang and Matt (2016), another well-known film director, Sok Visal, said that it is tough for filmmakers to survive making feature films right now unless they produce “really commercial films” that fit the majority of Cambodian moviegoers. He adds, “Filmmakers had to sacrifice profits in order to make quality feature films.” Similarly, Cedric Eloy, an advisor to the Cambodia Film Commission, adds that to make profit from the industry, filmmakers either “produce movies on small budgets for the smaller local market, or target the larger international market by upping production values and budgets”. These are two challenging scenarios for local productions while many of them have limited financial resources and tend to prefer the first one. It looks like there are not many local filmmakers or producers who are likely or willing to throw their money away for the sake of having quality film since they need to survive the deal too.

Still, producing low-budget films that fit small local viewers with story taste that does not work somewhere else besides Cambodia cannot sustain the film industry. Moviegoers will just get bored of that same genre and move to different better contents from foreign films instead. Regarding the film content in Cambodia, Michael Chai of Westec Media, the leading film distributor company in the kingdom, mentioned that there are “essentially two different kinds of Cambodian content. One which will not transfer out of the market really well, and one which is actually catered for audiences out of the market, but will not do well in Cambodia” (Hang & Matt, 2016). Though improved technically, Cambodian films are still far beyond those of the neighboring countries in terms of contents, according Jimmy Henderson, an Italian filmmaker, adding, “What is produced here, can’t really be exported overseas. So most of the time, profit out of a film is marginal or non-existent” (Hang & Matt, 2016).

Given the above scenarios, local filmmakers or producers find it challenging to produce enough films for the screening. It is risking enough to make low-budget film for this limited local market not mentioning about investing on higher quality film that may not sell in Cambodian market and too competitive to jump into other neighboring markets. The country imports many foreign films every year to fill in the capital’s six cinema houses in addition to the small number of locally produced ones. According Say (2015), “Cambodia import[s] at least 150 foreign movies annually to supply cinemas in Phnom Penh, representing about 90% of total screen time. Hollywood movies top the table at around 100 per year, followed by about 30 Thai productions, Cambodian-made movies and Korean films.”

Ironically, importing the foreign films with better quality costs cinemas less than buying local films with just acceptable quality. While a typical ghost or comedy movie costs the production company around \$20,000, the better one may be triple the cost or even much higher. Sin Chansaya, director of the Department of Cinema and Cultural Diffusion, mentioned, “A good Hollywood movie costs theatre owners about \$30,000 and a good Thai movie \$20,000, yet they are expected to pay \$50,000 for a made-in-Cambodia movie that might not draw nearly as many people” (Say, 2015). Similar to the big screens, the majority of the local televisions prefer the imported movies, as the contents are better and cheaper to buy. A big production company like Hang Meas, which owns both music production and TV channels, plays only imported movies given cheaper cost and better quality. He stated, “While a good imported movie costs about \$400 per hour, an acceptable quality Cambodian costs \$1,500” (Say, 2015). Too few production houses would be willing to invest big budget to produce higher quality film; however, they tend to hesitate to do so since the returns are uncertain in this market.

PROSPECTIVE TAKES

In spite of the many different challenges laying on its way ahead, Cambodian film industry keeps moving. Lots should be done and serious effort should be put in. As can be seen from other countries like Thailand and Korea, film industry has the potential to boost the country economy. Korean Pop Culture, which embraces fashion, music, and film, benefits the Korean economy in many ways ranging from exporting merchandise and cultural products to tourism. According to Tada-amnuaychai (2006), when international consumers buy Korean products, not only the products themselves that satisfy them, but also the culture, which is cultivated in those products. "When they consume Korean cultural products in the form of media consumption either watching drama series, films or listening to the songs, things attached [are] involved with culture and most of the consumers take it unintentionally" (Tada-amnuaychai, 2006). Thai film industry has been doing quite well during the last decade and is seen to strengthen the country both "economically and creatively". In 2015, "Thailand's film industry generated over \$750 million [in] revenue, with an addition \$100 million produced by the animation and computer graphics industry. By the end of 2016, it is expected that these figures will have risen by 10-15%" (www.thaitradeusa.com).

With this potential, strengthening the film industry in Cambodia is essential. However, it is not the responsibility of any specific individual or institution, but a shared commitment from various stakeholders. Seeing the recent rise of Cambodian young filmmakers who are willing to learn and improve local film quality, it is a hopeful sign that the industry is taking off. Yet, establishing the film school is still important in order to produce film professionals and strengthen the existing resources. Without those newly produced professionals and the improved existing personnel, Cambodian film cannot be recuperated to reach the standard quality in terms of techniques and contents. In addition to the establishment of film school, sending potential students or individuals to learn film production from abroad is essential. From what we can learn from the Golden Age, sending people out to learn from those developed countries would bring back important new skills and techniques to improve the existing ones. Moreover, they would be beneficial resources not only in producing but also transferring the knowledge to the next generations.

At this critical point, private sector plays an important role in promoting the local film industry since it needs big investment in human resources, equipment, and production budget. With enough investment, filmmakers would be able to put more focus on producing quality films that is not just for entertainment but also for education and economy. From the South Korean experience, private investment played a vital role in boosting the country film industry as well as pop culture. Noticeably, South Korean film industry has a unique story moving from propaganda film to the hit of K-pop culture. Rousse-Marquet (2013) wrote that Korean conglomerates like Samsung, Daewoo, and Hyundai started to finance the film industry in early 90s and they totally transformed the structure of this industry. Those Korean conglomerates "got involved in every stages of the cinema industry: financing, production, exhibition, distribution, as well as international sales and video release of films.... The number of screens increased drastically, and went from 588 in 1999 to 1,451 in 2004". Apart from these big investors, venture capital companies also shared another essential role in film investments. However, in Cambodia, real private investment on film production is seen to be insignificant because of the perceived small chance of return.

In addition to the investments from the private sector, the government contributes another part in promoting film industry. The South Korean government created the Korean Film Council (KOFIC) to give assistance and foster its film industry to both local and international markets. The council serves the South Korean film industry in many ways including “providing grants and funding, supporting R&D for Korean films, supporting art house theaters and independent productions, helping in the marketing activities of Korean sales companies in international film festivals”. KOFIC also sponsors and organizes film festivals, and publishes a number of books and magazines in English (Rousse-Marquet, 2013). Moreover, KOFIC coordinates the release and screening of Korean film in foreign countries and assists international production shooting in South Korea with 25% grant incentive.

Back to the Cambodian context, a few approaches have been executed by the government, and noticeably is the prime time policy for local movies and programs. This is a good move though the current response is the boost in quantity to fit the slot rather than the quality. Another approach for the time being may be the practice of better tax policy for imported films and programs as well as the translation of those contents given the fact that the country import a big number of international films and programs annually. Sin Chansaya said, “We adopted a zero tax on imported movies and we’ve lost millions of dollars in tax revenue each year.... Cambodian authorities should change the policy to tax imported movies so that we will have a budget to support local film production” (Say, 2015).

By so doing, the cost margin between the imported films and the locally produced ones can be tapered to the minimum. Sin Chansaya also suggested that there should be a policy to limit the quotas of the imported films into the country and at the same time, to encourage local filmmakers to advance their productions (Say, 2015).

With the recent initiatives of organizing different big film events like the Cambodian International Film Festival or other short film festivals, local filmmakers have good platform to showcase their movies. Furthermore, some of them are one step ahead of others in grabbing awards even at the international stage through various international film festivals. Such experience will make them try even harder to polish their next film for international accepted quality in the future. As long as the film quality is improved, we can broaden its market by taking another step to international markets, specially, the neighboring ones.

CONCLUSION

The recent efforts to make Cambodian film industry thrived again have been noticeable though a lot still need to be done. From the government side, a few approaches shall be considered. While the establishment of a quality film school in the country is still ideal, yet uncertain, sending talented people to study film abroad is an alternative as Cambodia is very much in need of a great number of film professionals. Besides, the government should adopt appropriate policies to make ways for the development of the sector. For instance, blocking the prime time for locally produced contents is a great initiative, yet the quality of the content is still questionable. Another approach to be considered may be the better practice of tax policy on both imported films and locally produced films or contents. By so doing, the industry will not be too overwhelmed by the foreign programs and will create more rooms for local producers or filmmakers to enhance their programs or movies for the market. Moreover, the government may allocate a sum of budget to support the rising talent, who lack financial resource to kick off their quality films, as well as to promote Cambodian film to

the world.

As a backup, we also need the solid support from the private sector given that financial restraint is one among outstanding challenges for local filmmakers. They need good budget to hire good talents and crew. With such investment, filmmakers will be able to try their best to concentrate on the acquired quality that could work in both local and international market. To better control the quality, the investors may involve in different stages of the production ranging from financing to promotion and distribution.

Last but not least, sturdy commitment from local filmmakers and Cambodian viewers is badly needed to make sure that Cambodian film industry is not at risk of dying again. Lately, there has been discussion that local viewers tend to give high value to foreign films while degrading the local movies. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to blame the audience since the made-in-Cambodia films own low production value and quality. Nevertheless, it would be ideal that local films producers try their best in cooperation with the private sectors and government to advance the film quality, and as a comeback, it is also time for the audience to learn to appreciate local films in spite of the limitations discussed above. Cambodian film industry will be prominent in the near future as long as those various stakeholders substantially join forces to support and promote this emerging industry.

REFERENCES

- Chea, Vannak. "Foreign Films Banned From Prime Time." *Khmer Times*. Sept 27, 2015. Accessed Dec 11, 2016. <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/16225/foreign-films-banned-from-prime-time/>.
- Soy, Dolla and Sok, Say. "Cambodian Media Snapshot 2016" in *Cambodia Communication Review 2016*, edited by Say Sok. Phnom Penh: DMC & CCI, 2016.
- Hang, Sokunthea, and Surrusco Matt. "Film Industry Torn Between Quick Hits and Quality." *The Cambodia Daily*. Nov 19, 2016. Accessed Dec 11, 2016. <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/business/film-industry-torn-quick-hits-quality-120748/>.
- Koam, Tivea, Narin Sun, Kuleka Mak, and Samath Kim. "The Golden Age: Cambodian Films from the 1960s and 70s Were Well-loved by the Audience and Are Still Fondly Remembered Today." In *KON The Cinema of Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: DMC (2010): 6-9.
- Lim, David C.L. "Introduction: Southeast Asian Film as a Site of Cultural Interpretation and Social Intervention" In *Film in Contemporary Southeast Asia: Cultural Interpretation and Social Intervention*, edited by David CL Lim, and Hiroyuki Yamamoto. (London: Routledge, 2012).
- McPherson, Poppy. "Cambodia: Dawn of a New Cinematic Golden Era." *The Diplomat*. March 06, 2015. Accessed Dec 11, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/03/cambodia-dawn-of-a-new-cinematic-golden-era/>.
- Morn, Vanntey, and Igor Kossov. "Film School Slated for Capital." *The Phnom Penh Post*. Dec 24, 2015. Accessed Dec 11, 2016. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/film-school-slated-capital>.

Oum, Raingsy and Samean, Yun. "Cambodia Limits Broadcasts of Foreign Films to Promote National Culture." *Radio Free Asia*. Sept 09, 2015. Accessed Dec 11, 2017. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/cambodia/films-09252015155002.html>.

Revolvy. "Cinema of Cambodia." Accessed Sept 09, 2017. https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Cinema%20of%20Cambodia&item_type=topic.

Richardot, Sarah. "Cinema Reborn: A Profile of Cambodian Films." *ASEF Culture360*. Feb 13, 2013. Accessed Sept 09, 2017. <http://culture360.asef.org/film/cinema-reborn-a-profile-of-cambodian-films/>.

Rousse-Marquet, Jennifer. "The Unique Story of the South Korean Film Industry." *Inaglobal*. Sept 30, 2013. Accessed Dec 11, 2016. <http://www.inaglobal.fr/en/cinema/article/unique-story-south-korean-film-industry>.

Say, Sokunpanha. "Screen Test in Cambodia: Local Movie Producers Struggle to Develop a Viable Industry in a Small Market Where Many Consumers Prefer High-quality Foreign Fare." *Bangkok Post*. Jan 19, 2015. Accessed Dec 11, 2016. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/print/457970/>.

Song, Sokhuong, and Sok, Say. "Cambodian Media Snapshot 2015." In *Cambodia Communication Review 2015*, edited by Say Sok. Phnom Penh: DMC and CCI, 2015.

Tada-amnuaychai, Montira. "Korean Media Industry and Its Cultural Marketing Strategy of K-pop." *Asia Culture Forum 2006*. Accessed Dec 11, 2016. http://cct.pa.go.kr/data/acf2006/aycc/aycc_0504_Montira%20Tada-amnuaychai.pdf.

www.cambodiafilm.gov.kh. Accessed July 16, 2017.

www.filmacademy.tv. Accessed Dec 11, 2016.

www.thaitradeusa.com. Accessed Dec 11, 2016.

Exploring How Local Online Media Portray Persons with Disabilities in Cambodia

Chanpolydet Mer

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (2011, p. 7) states, “Disability is part of the human condition – almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life, and those who survive to old age will experience increasing difficulties in functioning” in one form or another, if not in multiple forms. From the medical model of disability, disability refers to restriction or lack of ability. People who share this understanding would view persons with disabilities as less productive than persons with non-disabilities (World Health Organization, 2011) given their physical, mental or psychological conditions. Adopting the medical model into news reporting, media can be said to portray persons with disabilities (PwD) in terms of misrepresentation, defamation, and lack of representation (Barnes, 1991). In this regard, Barnes (1992) identifies eleven common stereotypes in portrayal of PwD in all forms of media; i.e. persons with disabilities are viewed as being pitiable and pathetic, survivors of violence, sinister or evil, curio, super cripple, objects of ridicule, their own worst and only enemy, burden, being sexually abnormal, being incapable, and being normal.

Another lens (i.e. adopting the social model of disability) to report persons with disabilities is to report them as a result of social discrimination and social norms rather than physical impairments or ‘lack of ability’. According to the United Nations in its Convention on the Rights and Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (2007), “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” Few media, both entertainment and news media, report disabilities in the area of “barriers” and “participation in society” and many instead choose to portray disabilities as impairments or lack of ability. Barnes (1992) argues that the negative portrayal of persons with disabilities results from the fact that many people do not understand disabilities as a human right issue.

Promoting media to adopt the ‘social model of disability’ in their reporting of persons with disabilities, the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2010), according to its Media Guideline for the Portrayal of Disability, suggests that media should support the reporting of

The author is grateful to Dr. Say Sok, who provided valuable comments and suggestions to improve the previous drafts of the paper. Thanks also go to Mr. Uychhorng Khan and Mr. Bunlong Cheng for their constant encouragement and informal discussions about disability in the media. I own special thanks to Mr. Vanthon Srey, Country Director of ADD International Cambodia, who always provides me with leadership skills, valuable knowledge and opportunities to contribute to disability movement and guidance towards disability and right. My final sincere gratitude goes to Ms. Vansitha Suos and Mr. Samoeun Prum for sharing their experience on working with persons with disabilities.

persons with disabilities positively. Such practice includes reporting disabilities to promote awareness of challenges faced by persons with disabilities; the discussion about the taboo subject related to disabilities; exemplary persons with disabilities as having expertise or being a role model; call for better resource allocation to improve their conditions; promotion of relevant policies, services and environment to promote them and their causes; dissemination about support services and contact information for PwD, and promotion of messages that persons with disabilities have same emotions, interests, talents, skills, etc.

In this regard, media play an important role in the promotion as well as demotion of persons with disabilities, depending on how much and how they report disabilities. This article attempts to audit how seven local online media outlets, published in the Khmer language, report and feature persons with disabilities based on the common stereotypes proposed by Barnes (i.e. disempowerment frame) and ILO's alternative proposal for media reporting of disabilities (i.e. empowerment frame) as well as the reporting of disability for individual publicity purposes, which is quite common in Cambodian local media.

The exploratory audit was done on the following popular online media outlets: www.freshnewsasia.com (Fresh News Asia); www.cen.com.kh (CEN); www.postkhmer.com (Post Khmer); www.thmeythmey.com (Thmey Thmey); www.vodhotnews.com (VOD Hot News); www.kampucheathmey.com (Kampuchea Thmey), and www.newssabay.com (News Sabay) and ran for a period of nine months from January to September 2016. During this period, the seven online news media outlets reported a total of 338 articles which, to a varying extent, featured or mentioned persons with disabilities.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE LOCAL ONLINE NEWS MEDIA

The audited articles can be categorized into three quite separate categories based on the frames they used to portray persons with disabilities – that is, empowerment, disempowerment, and individual publicity.

Amongst the 338 audited articles, 145 articles or 45% of them reported or featured PwD in the frame of empowerment. Fresh News Asia had the highest rate of reporting of disabilities in this frame (i.e. 51 articles out of 145 or 35%). This is followed subsequently, from more to less in frequency, by Post Khmer (25 articles or 16%); Thmey Thmey (23 articles or 17%) and Kampuchea Thmey (23 articles or 16%). The other three online media outlets had the lowest reportage using this frame: i.e. VOD Hot News (10 articles or 7%), Sabay News (9 articles or 6%), and CEN (4 articles or 3%). Amongst the seven categories of issues audited, promotion of relevant policies, services and environment (49 articles) and call for better resource allocation to improve the conditions of PwD (36 articles) topped the chart, while there was little discussion about the taboo subject related to disabilities (0 article) and presentation of exemplary persons with disabilities as having expertise or role models (1 article).

It is noteworthy that among the 145 news articles that portray PwD as empowerment, 77 articles (53%) featured specifically persons with disabilities and as the central theme of their reporting. Nonetheless, amongst the 77 articles, only 31 articles (21% of the 145) featured the individual PwD's barrier and participation in the society. The rest are mostly announcements of government policy and law reinforcement, other people's view on specific activity, expression of commitment or proclamation of activities of the government or public

figures in public speeches or their meetings on disability. To illustrate, one article focused on the participation of a Cambodian delegate in the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Conference in New York City.

The other 68 out of the 145 articles (47%) only gave a brief account or briefly mentioned PwD as one of the target groups that broader projects, policies, and announcements may cover or impact them directly or indirectly. For example, one article entitled “The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport released a new education policy to respond to market need”, published by VOD Hot News on 29 March 2016, did not feature PwD directly or extensively. It just briefly mentioned in the article, “There would be no more gap in education attainment across genders and between persons with and without disabilities.”

Generally, that many articles covered PwD in this positive frame does not necessarily suggest that they are all newsworthy. Many of them mainly cover persons with disabilities in the margin or were merely public announcements of policies, programs or ad hoc support to them, and thus they cannot raise broader awareness about their competence and capabilities and are not able to highlight that they can fully participate in every activity in their communities and broader society. Table 1 below briefly presents how the seven online media presented PwD in the empowerment frame.

Table 1: Media's Portrayal of Persons with Disabilities as Empowerment

EMPOWERMENT	CEN	Fresh News Asia	Kam-puchea Thmey	Post Khmer	Sabay News	Thmey Thmey	VOD Hot News	Total
Improving awareness of challenges faced by PwD	0	7	1	4	0	1	0	12
Discussion about taboo subject related to disabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Examples of persons with disabilities as having expertise or service assistance	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Call for better resources to improve conditions PwD	0	18	8	1	1	4	4	36
Promotion of relevant policies, services and environment	2	18	8	11	1	5	4	49
Dissemination of support services and contact information for PwD	1	3	4	4	1	7	2	22
Promotion of messages that PwD have same emotions, interests, talents, skills	1	5	2	2	6	8	0	24
Total	4	51	23	23	9	25	10	145

Fortunately, few articles directly presented persons with disabilities in negative light. Amongst the 338 articles that reported or featured PwD, 30 articles (9%) reported or featured them through the disempowerment frame. These were mainly news stories that featured individual cases. 27 articles (90%) reported PwD as ‘pitiable and pathetic’, and one each reported them as a survivor of violence, being incapable, and being a criminal. Amongst the seven

online media outlets, in line with their reportage of PwD as empowerment, Fresh News Asia had the highest percentage in negative reportage, i.e. 17 out of 30 (or 57%). Kampuchea Thmey had the next but distant highest reporting in this frame, i.e. there were six articles (mainly reporting PwD as being pitiable and pathetic and one article featuring a person with disability as a criminal). VOD Hot News and Thmey Thmey had no reporting of PwD in this frame. Table 2 below briefly captures the reporting of PwD in the 'disempowerment' frame.

Table 2: Media's Portrayal of Persons with Disabilities as Disempowerment

DISEMPOWERMENT	CEN	Fresh News Asia	Kam-puchea Thmey	Post Khmer	Sabay News	Thmey Thmey	VOD Hot News	Total
Being pitiable and pathetic	1	17	5	1	3	0	0	27
Survivors of violence	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Being super cripple	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sinister or evil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curio	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Object of ridicule	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Their own worst and only enemy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Being sexually abnormal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Being incapable	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Being criminal	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	2	17	6	2	3	0	0	30

Following the categories proposed by Barnes and ILO, the other 146 articles (or 46%) of the total could be categorized under being pitiable and pathetic, being incapable, promotion of policies, services and environment for PwD or dissemination about support services and contact information for them. However, the nature of these articles seems not to focus on the PwD or their challenges themselves predominantly. They are more to do with improving the public relations and promotion of specific public figures or institutions via the local online media. Among the 163 articles of this category, some 68% featured a politician, super star or owner of a company handing out lifesaving or household supplies to the poorest and/or PwD, mainly, former soldiers with disabilities. Amongst the seven online media outlets, again Fresh News Asia tops the list with 109 articles (70%) categorized as promoting public figures, politicians and public institutions. This is followed distantly by Kampuchea Thmey (22 articles or 14%), Post Khmer (12 or 7%), Thmey Thmey (4 or 6%), VOD Hot News (9 or 4%), CEN (4 or 3%). Table 3 briefly presents the results from the audit.

Table 3: Media's Portrayal of Persons with Disabilities for Individual Publicity

PUBLICITY	CEN	Fresh News Asia	Kam-puchea Thmey	Post Khmer	Sabay News	Thmey Thmey	VOD Hot News	Total
Promotion of specific public figures, politicians or institutions	4	109	22	12	0	4	9	163

All in all, few articles from the seven online media outlets presented PwD in the disempowerment frame (i.e. 9%), whereas a much larger percentage reported and featured persons with disabilities more positively; that is, 45% of the articles audited presented them in the empowerment frame.

Yet still, interestingly, the other 46% featured PwD in their reports; however, their reporting seems to highlight the good deeds and actions and hence by extension promotes the public figures, politicians and public institutions involved in the reporting rather than to highlight PwD as a central focus of their stories. Table 4 below briefly presents the portrayal of persons with disabilities (or lack of) through the three frames.

Table 4: Portrayal (or Lack of) Persons with Disabilities through the Three Frames

MEDIA PORTRAYAL	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	PERCENTAGE OF ARTICLES
Empowerment	145	43%
Disempowerment	30	9%
Individual Publicity	163	48%
Total	338	100%

Thousands of Persons with Disabilities and Cases Left Behind in the Online Media

While the reportage of persons with disabilities, especially through the empowerment frame, shall be applauded and encouraged, for it has helped promote the virtuous causes (i.e. promotion of PwD in their communities and larger society) and enhanced public awareness of the conditions they are facing, the local media still have a large room to promote persons with disabilities.

The online media outlets audited reported merely a small fraction of PwD, especially former soldiers with disabilities and few other categories of them. Based on the official data from 1999 (Cited in Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of PwD, 2009), 2 per cent of the Cambodian population was persons with disabilities, 12 per cent of this population was caused by landmines and war and the other 88 per cent by birth, accidents, diseases and other causes. In a sense more than two hundred thousand PwD, especially non-soldiers, are left beyond in the online media's reporting. Besides, these online news media outlets clearly reported on persons with moving or self-care/washing and visual difficulties. There are other disabilities types which cannot be seen by naked eyes. Examples include people with speaking or hearing difficulties and learning or remembering difficulties (commonly known as intellectual disabilities). Many of them remain trapped in a vicious circle where stigmatization and discrimination lead to extreme vulnerability and exclusion from social and political life and economic opportunities (Srey, 2016) and these people are not adequately covered in the local media.

Another limitation is that the reporting of PwD is quite limited in media coverage, especially if compared with the incidents that happen to them. The lack of reporting on violence against women and girls with disabilities is illustrating. From the online media audit, there was only one online media article reporting a case of violence against women and girls with disabilities. According to a large-scale survey of 21,557 individuals conducted by the World Health Organization in 2013, PwD suffer from physical, sexual or intimate partner violence

1.5 times higher than persons with non-disabilities (Astbury, & Walji, 2013). In a pilot project on Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities in 2016 (the year when the audit took place), ADD International Cambodia found that there were 134 cases of violence against women and girls with disabilities (129 domestic violence cases and 5 rape cases) in 4 communes of Kampong Speu province alone (Srey, 2016). There was a report about the same cases happening across Cambodia. The research conducted in 5 provinces of Cambodia with the sample size of 117 women with disabilities also found out that more than 50% of women with disabilities experienced emotional violence and 25% of them received physical violence (Astbury, & Walji, 2013).

This limited coverage by the local online media could result from the fact that media practitioners probably understand the harm in highlighting impairment in news articles. Second, many of the cases of violence against women and girls with disabilities are hidden in local communities or even families, and thus the media might have not received accurate or adequate information about such violence and cannot report these cases. In general, ILO (2010, p. 15) correctly puts it: "Many persons with disabilities are hidden or excluded from society, either in their homes or in institutions because of social stigma"; therefore, their media exposure is limited.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The reporting on persons with disabilities by online news media should be applauded, and the media are encouraged to report them through social model lens in the form of empowerment, i.e. focusing on promotion of the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities to enable them to learn and fully participate in the society and community rather than on the impairment of individual PwD. Such doing can motivate PwD to participate as active citizens and enable the broader society to better aware of their conditions and involve in the promotion of their causes. The persons with disabilities, especially the most vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the hearing and intellectually impaired, need to be provided with space and opportunities to raise their voices so that they can remove the social barrier for their engagement in the society (ILO, 2015).

The reporting through the medical model in the form of disempowerment and individual publicity frames shall be refrained and discouraged given that this can have a negative impact on the self-esteem of PwD and the promotions of their rights and freedom and engagement in their communities and society. Such reporting could even create more and higher social barrier for full social engagement and reinforce negative stereotypes of persons with disabilities.

Online media need to report on PwD with extra care too. The angles of reporting and choices of words could create favorable social norms or break social barrier faced by persons with disabilities. From the perspective of some religious followers, disability is resulted from "karma" (bad deeds) from the past life (Miles, 2013). Contributing money or handing out lifesaving supplies to perceived unfortunate people are believed to be good deed in Cambodian culture and religion. Reporting such events whereby prominent and rich individuals are involved could be a motivation for them as well as others to keep contributing and giving back to society. However, portrayal of PwD in such events and in such a manner can lead to the misconception that they are at the receiving end of the good deeds and cannot be a strong fighter for their rights and freedoms and an equal citizen and break the social

barrier of discrimination. Audience who exposes to such content would feel that PwD are an object of sympathy that cannot fend for themselves and who mainly need one-off support or supplies rather than rights. Such wrong portrayal would negatively impact on policy makers and service providers in their designing of services and policies for PwD as well – i.e. they may be “systematically excluded from...the fundamental elements of citizenship: education, employment, equal social membership and well-being” (Gartrell, as cited in ESCAP, 2012).

The use of language and terminology in the news media to address and discuss about PwD could (dis)empower them, and hence media should be careful with their word choices that they use to address and/or discuss disabilities. Clark and Marsh (2002) correctly warn that the language on disability in the media can influence the approach people deal with the situation. ‘Persons with disabilities’ rather than ‘disabled persons’ is recommended, for instance. That is, they should not be defined by their disabilities. Words like ‘blind’ and ‘deaf’ in Khmer imply strong discrimination, negative connotation and religious implication, and hence they should be replaced by terms like ‘persons with visual impairment’ or ‘persons with seeing difficulty’ and ‘persons with hearing difficulty’, respectively, in media reporting.

In some cases, when it is not necessary, ‘disabilities’ does not need to be added, featured or portrayed at all in discussion of PwD if such addition does not add any news values. Persons with disabilities would prefer to hear people address them the same as persons with non-disabilities. In some news articles from the audit exercise, the reporters used the terms like “unfortunate; incapable; sadly; very pity, and too starving to live, etc.” to make the news stories more touching and to give more visual sense to the audience as to how difficult and sad the individual PwD are facing. Nonetheless, these words can also carry hidden messages that they are burdensome and hopeless, and should be avoided as much as possible. News media should also be attentive to photo choices and camera shooting. If possible and necessary, the part of impairment can be avoided altogether or reduced from focus as much as possible. Persons with disabilities could feel disappointed to see their impairment. Where possible, they should be captured in the situation whereby they are having a good time and without showing their impairment. “The choice of words, images and messages can determine perceptions, attitudes and behaviours” (ILO, 2015, 7).

Media are encouraged to involve persons with disabilities in the process of creating media content and news writing (Penas, 2007) to ensure that media content about disabilities address the issues and challenges properly and to bring their voices to the public. Barnes (1991) argued that most of the media contents are produced by persons with non-disabilities, and this case is also true in Cambodia. From the author’s personal experience working in news media outlets and a non-profit institution working on disabilities, the number of persons with disabilities who work in the media sector is too low and some of the institutions do not even provide the opportunities to PwD. Given that many media practitioners are not adequately trained or qualified to report on PwD, such engagement is even more important to create more balanced news content which is content-friendly with persons with disabilities. Media have a big potential to be a powerful ally to the disability movement by challenging popular negative stereotypes and promoting the good images of PwD. They could also play a vital role in providing accurate and timely information about disabilities and provide a platform for PwD to meaningfully engage in and with their community and society. While their reporting is important, caution should also be made as to how the reporting is done to ensure that it does more good than harm to persons with disabilities.

REFERENCES

- Astbury, Jill, and Walji, Fareen. *Triple Jeopardy: Gender-based Violence and Human Rights Violations Experienced by Women with Disabilities in Cambodia*. (Phnom Penh: AusAid Research Working Paper, 2013).
- Barnes, Colin. "Discrimination: Disabled People and the Media." *Publishing* (1991). <http://pf7d7vi404s1dxh27mla5569.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/files/library/Barnes-Media.pdf>.
- Barnes, Colin. "Disabling Imagery and the Media." *Halifax: Ryburn Publishing* (1992).
- Clark, Laurence, and Marsh, Stephen. "Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability". In the 2nd Draft of a Discussion Document for Future Publication. (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2002).
- ESCAP. *Disability, Livelihood, and Poverty in Asia and Pacific: An Executive Summary of Research Findings*. (ESCAP, 2012).
- "Guide to Reporting Disability." PWDA. Last modified September 02, 2016. <http://www.pwd.org.au/documents/pubs/Guide-to-Reporting-Disability.doc>.
- Haller, Beth, and Lingling Zhang. "Stigma or Empowerment? What Do Disabled People Say about their Representation in News and Entertainment Media?" *Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, 9, no. 4 (2014).
- Inimah, Gertrude Musuruve, E. Mukulu, and P. Mathooko. Literature Review on Media Portrayal of People with Disabilities in Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2, no. 8 (2012).
- International Labour Organization. *Reporting on Disability: Guidelines for the Media* by Sanchez, Jeannette. (Geneva: ILO, 2015).
- Miles, M. "Buddhism and Responses to Disability, Mental Disorders and Deafness in Asia." *West Midlands, UK* (2013).
- Royal Government of Cambodia. *Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Person with Disabilities*. (Phnom Penh: RGC, July 2009).
- Sanchez, Jeannette. *Media Guidelines for the Portrayal of Disability*. (International Labour Organization, 2010).
- UN General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Its Optional Protocol*. December 13 (2006).
- Vanthon, Srey, and Chanpolydet, Mer. "Improving the Inclusion of 200 People with Intellectual Disabilities into Social and Economic Activities of their Communities: Lessons Learned for Good Practices." (Phnom Penh: ADD International Cambodia, 2016).
- World Health Organization. *Summary: World Report on Disability*. (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2011).

About THE EDITOR AND CONTRIBUTORS

Say SOK was educated in Cambodia, Japan and Australia in education and political science. He earned a PhD in Political Science, majoring in political economy of resource governance, from Deakin University Australia in 2012. Since 2014 he has been serving as the national technical advisor on higher education governance and management to the Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project, co-funded by the government of Cambodia and the World Bank. At the DMC/CCI, he has served as a lecturer, an advisor and the editor to the Cambodian Communication Review series since 2013. He was a founding member and lecturer of the Department of International Studies of the Royal University of Phnom Penh and is currently a research fellow at the Department. He held a senior research fellow position at the Center for Khmer Studies from March 2015 to January 2016, when he conducted research on community building and local development. From 2002 to 2009, he worked as a lecturer at the Department of English of the Institute of Foreign Languages. Dr. Sok has published articles, book chapters and research reports on higher education, political economy of resource governance, the state, state-society relations, communication for development, and media and governance with both local and international publishers. He can be reached via saysok@gmail.com.

Bun Y UNG is a deputy director and lecturer at the Department of Media and Communication of the Royal University of Phnom Penh. He has been teaching multimedia and online journalism since 2010. He received an MA degree in International Journalism Studies from Hong Kong and a professional certificate in Multimedia and Online Journalism from Germany. He can be reached via buny.ung@chenlamedia.com.

Chanpolydet MER graduated from the Department of Media and Communication of the Royal University of Phnom Penh, majoring in Media Management. He worked in the media sector for a few years as a journalist in print, broadcast and online at news agencies, including the Phnom Penh Post and DMCPPost.com. During his undergraduate years, he was selected to intern at the Nation Newspaper and Krungthep Turakij TV of the Nation Multimedia Group, Thailand. He is currently a communication and M&E officer of ADD International Cambodia, a UK based NGO working to bring positive change for persons with disabilities. He represented his organization to attend the International Meeting on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy in Istanbul, Turkey, and received the capacity building in communication on reporting and featuring persons with disabilities at Dhaka, Bangladesh. For these two years working on disabilities, he has been contributing

to producing several publications and reports about persons with disabilities within his organization. His recent involvement was leading the online survey to identify the most vulnerable groups with several coalition organization partners as a contribution to the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) localization in Cambodia. He can be reached via chanpolydet.mer@gmail.com.

G. J. Daan AALDERS is the director of Media Matters, and graduated from VU University Amsterdam with an MSc (Political Science). He has over 8 years' experience working in the media sector for a range of large clients across Europe and the US and is the founder of Media Matters International, a Hong Kong based research agency that provides a wide range of media services with a particular focus on Asia. In 2011, he started operations with Media Matters International in Cambodia, providing a range of clients across Europe and Asia with daily press reviews and strategic analytic media insights. Using a unique database developed for advanced analysis, Media Matters analysts have translated and analyzed over 25,000 newspaper articles from Khmer and English language newspapers in Cambodia.

Philip J. GOVER is the Director of Health Squared (UK). He graduated from Durham University Business School (UK), with an MA (Business Enterprise Management). Additional academic studies include an MPH (Public Health) from the University of Northumbria (UK), and a BA Hons' in Community Development from Durham University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health and a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute. He has worked in developing countries in East Africa, South East Asia and various youth settings across Europe. Following 3 years' involvement with Northumbria University Sustainable Cities Institute, he spent 12 years working as a Senior Public Health Manager with the UK NHS. Philip is a Founding Member of Health Squared, a UK Social Enterprise and Public Health Consultancy. He can be reached via phil.gover@healthsquared.org.

Editor : Say SOK
Coordinator : Dolla SOY
Design and layout : Chanpolydet MER

Department of Media and Communication
Cambodia Communication Institute
Royal University of Phnom Penh
Russian Federation Boulevard, Tuol Kork,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Website: www.dmc-cci.edu.kh

Phone: (855) 23 884 408

Email: DMC@online.com.kh & admin@dmc-cci.edu.kh



PUBLISHED BY



SUPPORTED BY



ISBN 978-99963-779-4-5

