Cambodian Communication Review 2014

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

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Acknowledgements

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FOREWORD

Ever since my taking position at the Department of Media and Communication, and the Cambodia Communication Institute of the Royal University of Phnom Penh, I have been thinking of where I shall bring these institutions to in the next few years. Among my new role resolutions was a wish for the resumption of the publication of the *Cambodian Communication Review* (CCR) after an inescapable halt due to the shift of administration at mid-2011. Personally, I see universities are not just a place where students learn, and teachers teach, but a place where valued ideas are formed, and better development paths are built from logical observations and/ or scientific research. Rationale behind the establishment of modern universities in Europe and in North America was the fact that universities are there to stay not just to share, but *to create* new knowledge for a better world. As the academician and lecturer myself for the last 15 years, this is what I have held and hailed thus far, and this is what the CCR hopes to contribute.

It was not until mid-2012 during my visit to Australia via the invitation of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that I took a chance to meet Dr. Say Sok, the lead editor of this publication, who is also a friend of mine, and persuaded him to become the editor of this series and to help mentor my junior staff on research and research methodology. With supports from Ms. Manika Pin, a DMC lecturer, and Dr. Chivoin Peou, ex-lead editor who was then burning the mid-night oil for his Ph.D. dissertation in Australia, Dr. Say made the resumption of this research series possible. Uncontestably, the very relevant and insightful contents of the series will contribute significantly to the field of media and communication in Cambodia in particular, and in the world at large. The great works therein reflect and manifest well the admirable efforts and high determination our contributors invested into their writings, which will become indispensable sources of knowledge for all stakeholders.

As the head of the institution, I cannot thank Dr. Say enough for taking quite a tough job with little personal benefit, and his other afore-mentioned supporters—Ms. Manika and Dr. Chivoin, who have been taking part in building up a stronger research culture for Cambodian tertiary institutions. I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Mr. Chandara Tith, DMC lecturer, for his contribution on the part of cover and layout designs, other contributors for their excellent works, all anonymous reviewers for their critiques and comments on the papers, and some DMC students for collecting information for the media snapshot section.

The Department of Media and Communication and the Cambodia Communication Institute of the Royal University of Phnom Penh are genuinely committed to continuing this great job, which will certainly be impossible without your contributions. Let's join hands to help us achieve our vision and to help create a knowledge society.

Phnom Penh, December 2014
Ratana SOM
Head

PREFACE

2013-14 marks a year of significant transformation for the media sector in Cambodia as it has, to a considerable extent, moved from a country with very low Internet penetration and heavy reliance on traditional media, especially radio and television, for scheduled, mostly dubbed and one-way, news updates to a country that sees the popularity of social media, notably Facebook, as a platform to share information and to raise and discuss issues of social and political concerns. The years also mark the commitment of the Department of Media and Communication and the Cambodia Communication Institute to resume the publication of the *Cambodian Communication Review* (CCR) annual series. Certainly, media and information communication technologies (ICTs) provide platforms to bridge all sectors of the economy and society to achieve development and positive changes and to disseminate thoughts and new findings. In this regard, CCR*,* a publication consisting of the collated Cambodian media snapshot, research articles and commentaries, aims to offer another platform for scholars, experts and professionals in media, communication and other related inter-disciplinary fields to share their views and research findings and to discuss and debate issues of their interests.

The *Cambodian Communication Review 2014* features six research articles and commentaries on communication, media, and related issues in contemporary Cambodia. In this publication, we are very fortunate to have the contributions from some academicians from DMC/CCI, and external local and foreign professionals and experts from a range of relevant fields of study and professions, and this has made the themes covered more diverse and this publication a big success. In the main, the three research articles cover the use of positive preventative messages in local newspapers, communication strategies of nonprofit organizations, and how local NGOs promote freedom of expression. The three commentaries focus on the changing media landscape in Cambodia, youths and social media for political participation, and mass information dissemination for safe cross-border migration. These works have a common purpose of, rather than providing solutions to the issues under study or discussion, raising awareness and promoting academic discussions and debates – at the empirical, conceptual and theoretical levels. This is to ensure and enhance a space of scholarly engagement and a chance for sharing and debating insights and knowledge amongst scholars, experts and professionals in and on Cambodia.

At the core of this publication are indeed all the contributors, without whose works this CCR 2014 would not have come into existence. We would, therefore, like to sincerely express our gratitude to all of them for their time, effort, patience and willingness to contribute writing to this publication. They demonstrated their utmost patience and eagerness to produce best quality works through willingly revising previous draft(s) of their works in accordance with comments from our anonymous reviewers and the editors; some even took personal extra care to revise and review their writing to include new data and/or theories they had found. We strongly believe that their contributions do not only make this publication possible, but also help encourage other scholars, experts and professionals to share their experiences, knowledge and views openly and with us on issues of academic interests and benefits, of public concerns and for common good and positive change in Cambodia and beyond. Their writing will certainly serve as references for future study and research, thus enriching the literature on the fields and Cambodia. We are eagerly looking forwards to contributions from you and other scholars, professionals and experts to our upcoming publications.

To our readers and supporters, we are more than happy to hear your constructive criticisms and comments on this publication so that we can improve the quality of our future publications. And finally, we now present the *Cambodian Communication Review 2014* to you and hope it can be of benefit to your study, research and/or careers.

Say SOK, PhD & Manika PIN

Phnom Penh, December 2014.

INTRODUCTION

Say Sok and Manika Pin

The *Cambodian Communication Review 2014* is composed of a media snapshot section, three research articles and three commentaries on media and communication. The snapshot aims to provide readers with a quick glance of the latest basic economic, political and demographic indicators, and media & communication indicators for Cambodia.

The articles and commentaries touch on a range of contemporary themes. The first research article by Philip J. Gover and G. J. Daan Aalders entitled 'Does prevention have anything to do with it?' audits and assesses the extent that two Cambodian English language newspapers embed positive preventative messages (PPMs) in their news stories. A PPM is defined in the article 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" (p.14). Six important public health issues, namely alcohol abuses, road traffic accidents, smoking, gender-based violence and rape, drowning, and elderly health are the central themes of their analyses. The authors argue for the participation of the media sector in developing the public health sector. One of the means is through integrating prevention-based messages into news stories. In so doing, print media can add more value of the stories to the consumers and help arguably alleviate pressure on the public health sector.

Gover and Aalders start their article with the discussion of the six themes at lengths, focusing on both the global and regional scales and in Cambodia. Based on a quantitative content analysis method of news stories published by the two papers, over a twelve-months period, they observe that there is a wide variation in coverage of the six issues in terms of article quantity, with gender-based violence and rape tops the chart, while smoking and elderly health rank the very remote 5th and 6th places. The rest of the themes occupy the middle ground. A low rate of PPMs, amongst the stories that carry them, is noticeable, and generally there is relatively limited number of words used to construct

the messages. There is a remarkable imbalance too. In terms of combined volume of all published articles that contained PPMs and volume per each public health issue, articles about gender-based violence and rape have the most PPMs, and articles on elderly health carry the least. Similarly, articles associated with gender-based violence and rape use the most words to construct PPMs, while those associated with elderly health used the least to convey PPMs. In all the three cases above, the rest of the public health issues occupy the middle ground. The authors are of the view that no one public health issue is more important than another, and hence the huge imbalance in coverage of the six issues can be a cause for concern, as some important issues deserving more coverage may miss the public attention. The low rates of PPMs amongst the stories embedded with such messages and few words used to construct them in articles that contain PPMs are also alarming, and the media sector is recommended to attend to this to increase its value to the readers, their families and their communities.

In the second article, Danièle Alder investigates whether, how much and how three non-profits in Cambodia use social media to promote and brand their organizations. Based on qualitative content analysis of their posts on social media platforms and field interviews with three practitioners, one each from the three international NGOs, she explores their social activism, motivation in using social media for public relations purposes, social media content strategies and impact that digital communication has on their communication strategies.

The research results suggest that social media, especially Facebook, have become 'a key pillar of their communication'. Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn have recently increased in popularity, and in addition to Facebook, the three organizations use at least one of them to reach their supporters. The increasing use of social media to brand non-profits is in line with practices elsewhere in other parts of the world. Raising public awareness of their causes and activities; strengthening their brand identity, and fostering engagement with their contributors through such means as publishing their names as 'social proof effect' and reliance on third-parties PRs are the main motivation that drives them to use social media. In this regard, social media are perceived as the most effective and efficient way to communicate with their supporters and followers and a "very powerful tool" to raise public awareness. Like other non-profits worldwide, the Cambodian NGOs, with the exception of PiCoSol Cambodia, do not use social media for fund raising purposes. In short, Cambodian NGOs use social media as a PR rather than marketing tool.

In terms of content strategies, not only do the NGOs post their daily activities, but there is also a dialogical relationship between the supporters and the organizations and between the supporters, besides posting other things such as news stories and job advertisement. The posts are written in a language that increases proximity between the organizations and their followers. Visual contents such as videos and photographs are usually used to attract their attention, and the Cambodian Children's Fund, in particular, has developed 'a powerful storytelling strategy'. The NGOs understand that their social media platforms should not be overfed with contents; thus the posting frequency, albeit varying between social media platforms and organizations, ranges from once every other day to two or three posts per day. According to the three social media strategists, numbers of followers and supporters, and interactions between them and the organizations, clearly their social media strategies have attracted a large number of audience and

supporters and helped brand and promote their organizations, to a great extent.

In the final research article, Monyrath Sovan and Say Sok explore how NGOs promote freedom of expression in Cambodia. Based primarily on field interviews with 15 key informants working in 8 local organizations, the authors examine 6 approaches NGOs use to achieve this goal. The followings are the key findings of their study. First, due to limited space of engagement and power imbalance that tilts heavily towards the state and the ruling party, advocacy NGOs (and perhaps civil society, more broadly) can hardly engage with them in a meaningful way. Recently, an increasing trend to engage with the main opposition party can be seen. Understanding that those holding the purse have the power and owing to their inability to mobilize large public support to their causes, NGOs often turn to Cambodia's foreign donors and buyers to lobby or pressure the state on their behalf.

Second, traditional, new and social media are key to their endeavor too. Radio programs – news briefing and talk shows – are commonly used to promote freedom of expression. The NGOs use websites and blogs to update their activities, to release statements and other documents, and to conduct public campaigns. Currently, there is an increase in reliance on social media, and some NGOs have even increased their activities on social media and decreased or suspended their traditional radio programs. This is mainly resulted from decreasing financial support from donors for such projects and the fact that recipient NGOs' agendas and activities are shaped by their donors' agendas and global normative discourses, and perhaps a response to increasing number of social media users, and more affordable Internet fees. Third, given the high penetration of telephone countrywide, NGOs have tried to exploit mobile phone to increase citizens' knowledge of human rights and freedom of expression. Bulk SMS and interactive voice recordings are two common tools to share information and news update to subscribers and a platform for them to voice their concerns to the organizations.

Fourth, human rights education and ICT training are usually conducted by NGOs to promote freedom of expression too. Like the increasing reliance on social media, some NGOs have now increased ICT training – this is, especially, to create a pool of citizen journalists or netizens to share information and provide news update to their communities. Fifth, campaigns are perhaps the least common approach NGOs adopt to promote this freedom. There are public campaigns, both online and offline, mounted by NGOs; however, unlike their counterparts in more liberal, democratic developing countries like the Philippines and Indonesia, Cambodian NGOs are rarely directly involved in public protests or demonstrations. This could be resulted from the power imbalance between the state/ political society and the NGO sector, and a need to walk a fine political line for fear of being painted as working for or being in the opposition camp. Finally, the most common approach almost all the NGOs adopt is provision of legal and emergency support. This allows the voices of the victims heard in/outside court and aims to protect their freedom of expression. The authors conclude the article with a discussion of the findings in regional and global contexts. They observe that the approaches used by Cambodian NGOs and the changing trends in how they promote freedom of expression apply to many other developing countries as well.

In the first commentary, Manika Pin and Say Sok try to explore whether social media are a platform for discussion or a cause for social divide in Cambodia. The authors observe that a synergy of youthful population, the rise in popularity of social media (and new media) as an alternative to traditional media for receiving and sharing information and exchanging views, and wider accessibility of the Internet and smart phones and tablets has contributed to the most heated and contested general elections and most active political discussion and exchange, online and offline, in the recent history of Cambodian elections during the last two decades. Social media, especially Facebook, users and pages affiliated with political parties and groups created to discuss social and political issues had mushroomed rapidly in the lead-up to the elections. In a matter of months, social activism and political manoeuvre on social media had helped transform users from being apolitical to political users and kicked off a generation of netizens who take politics more seriously and energetically.

Pin and Sok embark on their queries by questioning why there was a move towards new media and social media for information and exchange. They see limited independence, lack of timeliness, and limited dialogical communication (and hence limited newsworthiness) in traditional media as ones of the most decisive push factors, catapulting many citizens to rely on social media (and new media) to get news update and information and to exchange information and ideas. Social media are thus seen as the alternatives to (if not substitutes for) traditional media for news consumption and exchange, since they can provide more timely and perceivably more reliable information and news, and users can even enter into multiple and simultaneous exchanges with others who share similar or opposing views and can stay more anonymous (if they want to). Social media, to an extent, have helped transform Cambodian political culture of '*korob kaud klach*' (respect, admiration, and fear) (Ojendal and Kim, 2006) to the emerging culture of civic and political engagement. Thank to them, the political landscape before and upon the elections has changed quite significantly.

In this regard, social media have been an important tool for political transformation. Amongst others, they allow users to share information and ideas with people within their networks and provide a platform for users to form groups and create pages for discussion, campaigns and information sharing. As a consequence, perhaps the watershed in the history of elections in Cambodia was partly resulted from this active social and political participation through social media. How social media help transform the access to information and how much many state agencies have tried to outreach to Cambodian netizens in the post-election period via social media are certainly the work of this new generation of netizens. Yet, there are concerns in how social media are misused, abused and manipulated for inappropriate private or political gain. A lot of misinformation and inappropriate posts have been circulating around, and rude and instigating exchanges between supporters of different political parties and views have often (if not routinely) been posted. However, on balance, the authors contend that social media have a big, positive part to play in transforming Cambodian political and social landscape and that to mitigate the negative impacts from the misuses and abuses of social media does not lie in a draconian cyber law and censorship, but more on ICT education, training on (media) ethics, especially through incorporating them into the general education and non/informal training programs. There is also a must to reform the media sector as a whole.
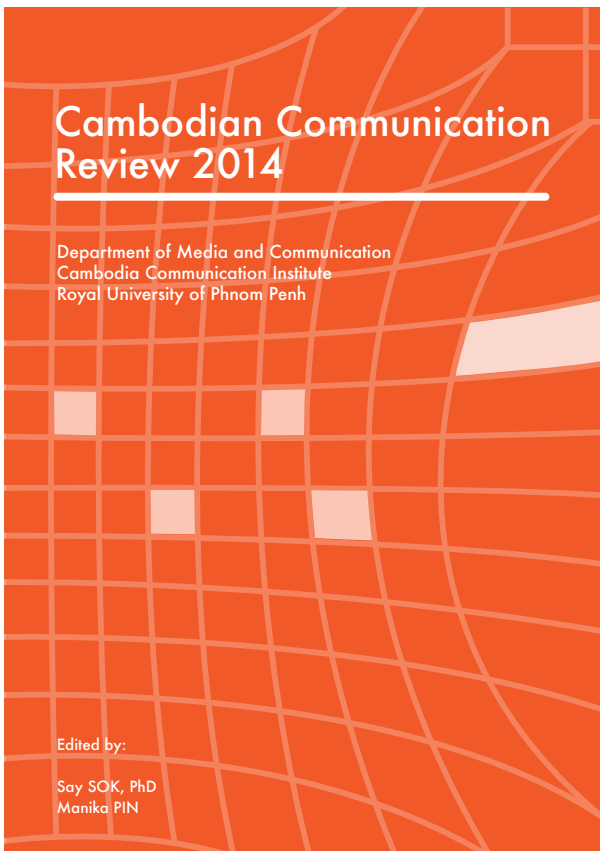
The second commentary by Theara Khoun examines the changing media landscape in Cambodia, noticeably after the 2013 general elections and argues that Cambodian traditional media have the options of reforms or irrelevance. Khoun is of the view that the changing trend in news consumption in favor of social media and foreign broadcasters is a consequence of availability and popularity of the new media platforms which allow the public to receive news and information more quickly and to openly discuss and express their thoughts, lifting them from the "culture of fear, silence and political ignorance and mov[ing them] toward a culture of civic engagement". The author presents some key arguments for reforms of the government-allied traditional media to gain popularity and viewership/readership and believes that to balance media consumption, substantial reforms will be inevitable, especially by the traditional media politically allied with the government and/or the CPP, which mainly produce one-sided, sometimes propaganda-like news stories. To gain support and trust from the public, the traditional media need to revisit their content strategies, meaning the media reforms shall be translated into "more balanced news coverage, wider space for pluralistic views and accessibility to credible, verifiable resources".

This volume closes with a rather long commentary on the roles of mass information dissemination to ensure safe cross-border migration. Rosa Yi and Say Sok embark with a discussion of the exodus in June 2014, when, for the first time in its history, Thailand hastily expelled reportedly more than a quarter of a million Cambodian illegal migrant workers from its country in just a matter of days. Zooming this unfortunate event into a broader migration governance practices, the authors lament the lack of systematic measures to guarantee safe cross-border migration during the pre- and post-exodus periods. While Thailand does not have any real intention to engage with Cambodia to cope with illegal migration, successive governments in Cambodia have generally failed to deal with the issue head-on and systematically. The June event, when Cambodian fellow citizens were packed on enclosed trucks and sent en mass to Cambodia's doorsteps, should have been a wake-up call for more systematic responses. Yet unfortunately, the core issues have never been seriously addressed.

Yi and Sok then go on to discuss migration theories to argue that mass outflow of migrant workers from Cambodia is inevitable and can even be beneficial to its economy, state and society if migration is properly regulated and supervised. Although migration has a huge economic value and social impact, information on safe migration is quite limited, and this can be a cause for concern. There is a direct link between 'awareness, knowledge, and change in behavior;' thus both authors conclude their commentary with the presentation of some potential strategies the government should consider to improve access to and dissemination of information to ensure safe migration. They propose mass information dissemination through mass media via a systematic campaign to raise awareness of safe migration and migration issues so that the information can reach potential migrants and their families efficiently. The last section hence outlines how the government can use print, broadcast, new media and community media to address cross-border migration and to ensure safe migration.

In this introduction, we aim to provide an overview of key arguments and findings from all the articles and commentaries in the entire volume. Next, we present to you the whole articles and commentaries for your thoughts and critiques.

Cambodian Media Snapshot 2014

Cambodian Communication
Review 2014

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Edited by:

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Manika PIN

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 then 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, and the telephone.

1. CONTEXTUAL COUNTRY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Economic & Socio-Political		
GDP per capita, 2012	US$ 971	National Institute of Statistics (2014)
Human Development Index (HDI) 2014 ranking	136 of 187	Human Development Report (2014)
Higher educational institutions (countrywide), 2010	91	Ministry of Education, Youth & Sport (MOEYS) (2011)
Higher educational institutions (Phnom Penh), 2009	39	MOEYS (2010)
People living on less than US$2/day (PPP), 2009	49.5%	World Bank (2014)
People living below national poverty line, 2011	20.5%	World Bank (2014)
Income share held by highest 20%, 2009	44.5%	World Bank (2014)
Income share held by lowest 20%, 2009	7.9%	World Bank (2014)
Global Competitiveness Index 2013-2014	88 of 148	World Economic Forum
Legatum Prosperity Index 2013 ranking	110 of 142 (lower middle rank)	The Legatum Institute
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2014 ranking	105 of 129	Bertelsmann Foundation
Network Readiness Index 2013 ranking	106 of 144	World Economic Forum
Freedom of the Press 2014 ranking	147 of 197 (Not Free)	Freedom House
Press Freedom Index 2014 ranking	144 of 180	Reporters Without Borders
Demographic		
Total population, July 2014 estimate	15,458,332	CIA World Factbook (July 2014)
Urban population, 2008	2,614,027 (19.5%)	Population Census 2008
Phnom Penh population, 2008	1.55 million	CIA World Factbook (July 2014)
Population growth rate, 2014 estimate	1.63%	CIA World Factbook (July 2014)
Youth (15-19) population, 2008	31.53%	Population Census 2008
Urban youth (15-19) population, 2008	39.33%	Population Census 2008
Life expectancy at birth, 2014 estimate (M : F)	61.35 : 66.32	CIA World Factbook (July 2014)
Number of households (average size), 2008	2,841,897 (4.7)	Population Census 2008
Number of urban households, 2008	506,579	Population Census 2008
Adult literacy rate (countrywide), 2008	77.6%	Population Census 2008
Adult literacy rate (urban), 2008	90.4%	Population Census 2008
Adult English literacy rate, 2008	3.25%	Population Census 2008
Tertiary enrollment, 2011, % gross	16%	World Bank (2014)

2. NEWSPAPER

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Registered Khmer-language newspaper countrywide, 2012	383	Ministry of Information (June 2012)
Registered Khmer-language newspapers in Phnom Penh, 2014	226	Ministry of Information (2014)
Registered foreign-language newspapers countrywide, 2012	35	Ministry of Information (June 2012)
Registered foreign-language newspapers in Phnom Penh, 2014	33	Ministry of Information (2014)
Imported press institutions	10	Ministry of Information (2014)
Local press-related associations countrywide, 2012	34	Ministry of Information (June 2012)
Local press-related associations in Phnom Penh, 2014	17	Ministry of Information (2014)
Foreign press-broadcast service representatives, 2014	11	Ministry of Information (2014)

3. MAGAZINE

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Registered Khmer-language magazines countrywide, 2012	200	Ministry of Information (June 2012)
Registered Khmer-language magazines in Phnom Penh, 2014	150	Ministry of Information (2014)
Registered foreign-language magazines countrywide, 2012	32	Ministry of Information (June 2012)
Registered foreign-language magazines in Phnom Penh, 2011	26	Ministry of Information (2014)

4. RADIO

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Radio broadcasters countrywide, 2013	188 (69 in PP)	Ministry of Information (2013)
Radio broadcasters by provinces, 2012	113 (49 Relay Stations)	Ministry of Information (May 2012)
FM frequencies countrywide, 2013	186	Ministry of Information (2013)
AM frequencies countrywide, 2013	2	Ministry of Information (2013)
Foreign services in Khmer language, 2014	5	--
International broadcasters (in foreign languages) received in Cambodia, 2014	4	--

Percentage of households owning at least a radio set, 2008	40.81%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning at least a radio set, 2008	50.35%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning at least a radio set, 2008	38.72%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of households owning two radio sets or more, 2008	1.48%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning two radio sets or more, 2008	3.78%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning two radio sets or more, 2008	0.97%	Population Census 2008

5. TELEVISION

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
National broadcast channels, 2012	13	Ministry of Information (May 2012)
Relay stations by foreign broadcasters in Phnom Penh, 2012	2	Ministry of Information (May 2012)
Local broadcast channels by provinces, 2012	7	Ministry of Information (May 2012)
State broadcaster, 2014	1	Ministry of Information (2014)
Relay stations by local broadcasters in provinces, 2012	52	Ministry of Information (May 2012)
Cable TV providers in Phnom Penh, 2014	2	--
Number of channels by cable TV providers, 2014	>60	--
Percentage of households owning at least a TV set, 2008	58.41%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning at least a TV set, 2008	80.81%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning at least a TV set, 2008	53.5%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of households owning two TV sets or more, 2008	3.18%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning two TV sets or more, 2008	11.93%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning two TV sets or more, 2008	1.26%	Population Census 2008

6. CINEMA & AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTION

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Registered production companies, 2013	76	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2013)
Number of films and TV dramas licensed for production, 2013	22	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2013)
Number of films and TV dramas licensed for showing, 2013	27	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2013)
Number of karaoke video volumes licensed for production, 2013	70	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2013)
Number of karaoke video volumes licensed for showing, 2013	101	Department of Film and Cultural Dissemination (2013)
Commercial cinema houses in Phnom Penh, 2014	5	--
Cinema houses in provinces, 2010	9	--

7. INTERNET

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Internet users in Cambodia, by June 2012	662,840	www.internetworldstats.com (accessed July 2014)
Internet users per 100 inhabitants, by June 2012	4.4	www.internetworldstats.com (accessed July 2014)
Internet subscriptions in Cambodia, by December 2012	2,706,922	Ministry of Post and Telecommunication (MPTC), 2013
Fixed (wired) internet subscriptions, 2011	47,000	ITU (2011)
Fixed (wired) internet subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2011	0.32	ITU (2011)
Mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2012	6.9	ITU (2012)
Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2012	0.2	ITU (2012)
Internet Service Providers (ISP) licensed, by 2012	24	MPTC (2013)
Total domain names, by July 2014	3,625	webhosting.info (accessed July 2014)
Ranking for domain names, by July 2014	103	webhosting.info (accessed July 2014)
Total .kh domain names, 2011	686	MPTC (2011)
Number of Internet cafés, 2012	316	MPTC (2013)
Personal computer per 100 people, 2008	0.4	WB – ICT At-a-Glance (2010)
Percentage of households owning a personal computer, 2008	3.65%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning a personal computer, 2008	15.76%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning a personal computer, 2008	1.00%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning two personal computers or more, 2008	2.60%	Population Census 2008

8. TELEPHONE

INDICATOR	FIGURE	SOURCE
Fixed telephone lines, 2012	584,475	MPTC (2013)
Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants, 2012	4	ITU (2012)
Mobile subscriptions, 2012	19,105,115	MPTC (2013)
Mobile subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2012	132	ITU (2012)
Ratio of mobile subscriptions to fixed lines, 2012	33 : 1	ITU (2012)
Mobile operators, by March 2013	6	MPTC (2013)
Fixed line operators, 2012	7	MPTC (2013)
Number of mobile phones in households, 2008	2,817,637	Population Census 2008
Percentage of households owning a telephone, 2008	1.13%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning telephone, 2008	3.44%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning a telephone, 2008	0.62%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of households owning at least a mobile phone, 2008	37.35%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning at least a mobile phone, 2008	76.16%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning at least a mobile phone, 2008	28.84%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of households owning two mobile phones or more, 2008	11.30%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of urban households owning two mobile phones or more, 2008	40.90%	Population Census 2008
Percentage of rural households owning two mobile phones or more, 2008	4.81%	Population Census 2008

Does Prevention Have Anything to Do with It?

Public Health and the Media :
An Audit and Assessment of Prevention-Based Messages within the Cambodian Press

Philip J Gover & G. J. Daan Aalders

ABSTRACT

This paper examines and describes an audit of articles that were published by two Cambodian newspapers. The aim of the audit is to assess the extent to which Positive Preventative Messages (PPMs) appear within printed articles. Using published materials as the primary source of data, the authors highlight the important health and socio-economic opportunities that can be gained and lost, on a daily basis, by virtue of the inclusion or absence of PPMs. In view of the evidence, the paper explores how the proactive adoption and integration of PPMs can help improve the value of a story to the consumer, assist in the challenges of social development and behaviour change, and improve the integrity of a publisher.

INTRODUCTION

Public health is concerned with the health and wellbeing of populations. Be it local or national, the overarching concept is as important an issue to both individuals and families, as it is to policy makers and politicians.

In the short term, the development of public health involves acknowledging and understanding the variety of behaviours, circumstances and opportunities that in isolation or combination shape the state of human health within our communities.[1] In the long term, the development of public health will depend on how we value and promote the concept of sustainability within them. [2] In this sense, public health is not the sole responsibility of either the medical profession or healthcare sector, public health is everybody's business.[3]

Promoting and communicating the importance of this subject matter can be challenging. The development of public health typically requires means and methods. Naturally, leadership, passion and a desire for change is essential. However equally important is persuasive purpose and effective communication.[4] In this context, the media sector, as a key stakeholder, plays an important role in the development of public health. This is especially true of news agencies, which gather, assemble and routinely communicate a diverse range of information to the public. The production and distribution of newspapers represents an important aspect of public health promotion, as their existence represents a scaled method of informing, educating and amplifying the activities and interests of the public, in

1. Israel, Barbara A., et al. "Review of community-based research: assessing partnership approaches to improve public health." *Annual review of public health 19.1* (1998): 173-202.
2. Swerissen, Hal, and Beth R. Crisp. "The sustainability of health promotion interventions for different levels of social organization." *Health promotion international 19.1* (2004): 123-130.
3. Koplan, Jeffrey P., and David W. Fleming. "Current and future public health challenges." *JAMA 284.13* (2000): 1696-1698.
4. Kreps, Gary L., and Edward W. Maibach. "Transdisciplinary science: The nexus between communication and public health." *Journal of Communication 58.4* (2008): 732-748.

public.[5]

In this sense, newspapers and news stories can be understood as critical social instruments, which have a dynamic capability to communicate and stimulate discussion across social, political and economic communities.[6] It can be argued that the very existence of a published news story represents both a judgement of importance and relevance to its target audience.[7] However, the composition and presentation of such information can often alter the way in which a story is consumed, used and understood.[8]

For public health practitioners, the most effective news stories are those that carry accurate detail, clear circumstantial information and more importantly, positive preventative messages (PPMs). PPMs help inform the reader about the important 'prevention' related elements that are directly connected with essence of the story. In this sense, public health promotion, in the form of PPMs, has the capability to both reach out and ripple from the readers that comprise the circulation base.

PPMs can be drafted and understood as either related facts or supporting contextual narrative. They help inform the reader of those important prevention related aspects that are inherent to actions and activities being reported. Whichever way they are adopted, it can be argued that their presence both informs the reader of the incident, and provides optimised information that has public health utility and future value.[9]

Using published data, this paper argues that integrating and adopting the value of prevention, within the construction of public targeted information, improves the value of the story to the consumer, assists in the challenge of social development and behaviour change, and improves the integrity of a publisher.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This paper draws its conclusions as a result of an examination of a range of articles that relate to six public health issues, as published by two Cambodian national newspapers. The articles that were identified and examined were drawn from newspapers that were printed in English, across a 12 month period, between 2013 and 2014. The articles that were identified were subject to audit, to assess the extent to which national newspapers present and integrate information alongside PPMs.

In the process of identifying relevant articles, a database was used. The database was designed to systematically collect all published material that appears in the media sector in Cambodia. In order to establish both relevant and total subject specific samples, the entire database was interrogated, using a variety of subject specific search terms. For assessment and audit purposes, articles that were identified as relevant were categorised into thematic clusters, across six public health domains:
- Alcohol Abuse
- Road Traffic Accidents
- Smoking

5. Altschull, J. Herbert. *Agents of power: The role of the news media in human affairs.* New York: Longman, 1984.

6. Saxena, J. C., and J. L. Sachdeva. "Role of Adult Education and Mass Media for Civic Education. *Report of the Asian Pacific Seminar* (New Delhi, India, September 10-14, 1985)." (1986).

7. Graber, Doris Appel, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris, eds. *The politics of news: The news of politics.* Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1998.

8. Farrell, Mike, and Mary Carmen Cupito. *Newspapers: a complete guide to the industry.* Vol. 6. Peter Lang, 2010.

9. Smith, Katherine Clegg, et al. "Newspaper coverage of residential fires: an opportunity for prevention communication." *Injury prevention 13.2* (2007): 110-114.

- Gender Based Violence (Inc. Rape)
- Drowning
- Health in the Elderly

A process management methodology was used to avoid duplication, amongst individual articles and across subject clusters.[10] Using recognised assessment methods and content analysis techniques, this approach established a range of quantifiable metrics.[11] The quantifiable metrics that were generated include details that relate to article volume, word counts, frequencies and rates of PPM inclusion and absence. Within this paper, we discuss a number of these metrics against subject specific statistics that are drawn from the wider field of Public Health. Combined, this material and approach provides the core framework from which to develop further discussion.

DEFINING AND ILLUSTRATING POSITIVE PREVENTION MESSAGES

For the purpose of expanding the subject matter, the following working definition of a positive prevention message (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.

In the absence of any universal understanding, 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 known 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.[12] 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

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10. Krippendorff, Klaus. *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology.* Sage, 2012.

11. MacNamara, Jim. "Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology." *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal 6.1* (2005): 1-34.

12. Sim, Fiona, and Martin McKee. *Issues in public health.* McGraw-Hill International, 2011.

using 86 words, includes 5 PPMs. 35 words are used to construct the PPMs, which in turn, transforms the story.

It can be argued that the use of PPMs in the press wilfully helps alleviate pressures on distinct Public Health issues.[13] Naturally, there is no precise or scientific way of establishing if the incident used in the fictional examples would have been avoided if the road had been brightly lit, or of an even camber. There is no way of determining if the victim of the accident would have survived, had he been wearing a helmet. Equally, there is no way of determining if the survivor would have died, had he not been wearing a helmet. However, extensive research and epidemiological data does exist, that illustrates the relationship between health, risk, hazards, probability and behaviour.[14] In the presence of such available data, it can seem remiss, to compose, report and communicate information to the public, regarding such issues, without integrating this type of information. As health economists routinely point out, society pays a high opportunity cost, when interventions that yield the highest health return on investment are not adopted or implemented.[15]

ALCOHOL

The use and abuse of alcohol is commonplace amongst many community groups and populations. For the most part, alcohol consumption is understood as an acceptable social activity. However, trends in the recreational use of alcohol, coupled with its addictive properties, can lead to overconsumption, which in turn can have disparaging effects on the health and wellbeing of the individual, families and the wider community. In the USA, research has estimated the economic cost of excessive drinking to rest at $223.5 billion. [16]

It is difficult to communicate the full impact that either wilful or mindless overconsumption of alcohol has on health, as alcohol has both an intrinsic and attributional capability of exacerbating a range of health conditions, including neuropsychiatric disorders. Other non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cirrhosis of the liver and various cancers are also attributable to sustained patterns of alcohol consumption.

The World Health Organisation ranks alcohol consumption as the 8th highest risk factor that directly impacts on human health.[17] The net effect of alcohol consumption on health is without doubt detrimental, with an estimated 3.8% of all global deaths and 4.6% of global disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs), [18] attributable to alcohol. With a national estimated burden of 15,216 cases of cancer (2014), studies in Australia have illustrated that circa 1.6% of total cancer deaths among men and 1.2% among women are directly attributable to alcohol drinking.[19]

13. Wallack, L., L. Dorfman, and D. Jernigan. "Media advocacy and public health: power for prevention." (1993).

14. Porter, Dorothy. "Health, civilization and the state." *A history of public health from ancient to modern times.* Londres y Nueva York: Routledge 47 (1999).

15. World Health Organization. "WHO guide to identifying the economic consequences of disease and injury." Geneva: World Health Organization (2009).

16. Bouchery, Ellen E., et al. "Economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in the US, 2006." *American journal of preventive medicine 41.5* (2011): 516-524.

17. World Health Organization, ed. *Global health risks: mortality and burden of disease attributable to selected major risks.* World Health Organization, 2009.

18. *DALYs for a disease or health condition are calculated as the sum of the Years of Life Lost (YLL) due to premature mortality in the population and the Years Lost due to Disability (YLD) for people living with the health condition or its consequences.*

19. English DR., Holman CDJ., Milne E. *The quantification of drug caused morbidity and mortality in Australia,* 1995 edition. Canberra, Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, 1995.

The disease related burden of poor health can also be related to average consumption patterns of alcohol,[20] and for every unit of exposure, its effect appears to be strongest amongst poor people and those who are marginalised from society.[21] Beyond this, a significant proportion of the disease burden, attributable to harmful drinking, arises from both unintentional and intentional injuries, including those linked to road traffic accidents, violence, and suicide.[22] With exception of binge drinking,[23] disease related mortality tends to be linked to long term patterns of alcohol consumption in the older population; whilst fatal accidents and severe injuries tend to occur most in relatively young people.[24] In 2010, the World Health Organisation published its global strategy to help reduce the harmful use of alcohol. This report provided a comprehensive link to information, evidence and policy guidance on preventing alcohol related risks and conditions.[25]

With limited regulations surrounding the sale and consumption of alcohol in Cambodia, the World Health Organisation identified reported consumption preferences resting at 53% for spirits and 46% for beer. The report also estimates the prevalence of alcohol related disorders impacting upon 7.6% of the male population and 1.4% of the female population. In this most recent report on alcohol, the World Health Organisation reiterates the global status of alcohol and health and presents a comprehensive perspective on the global, regional and country consumption of alcohol, patterns of drinking, health consequences and policy responses.[26] Within the report it also notes that on average every person in the world aged 15 years or older drinks on average, 6.2 litres of pure alcohol, per year. However, as less than half the global population (38.3%) actually drinks alcohol, this means that those who do drink consume on average 17 litres of pure alcohol annually. Interestingly, for Cambodia, which is regarded by the World Bank as a low income country, average consumption patterns for recorded drinkers (male, 15 years plus) was acknowledged to be 19.9 litres.

Across all of the World Health Organisation reports, guidance is explicit, in identifying that "the media play an increasingly important role, not only as a conveyer of news and information but also as a channel for social and commercial communication." From a structural and organisational perspective, the World Health Organisation proactively encourages the media sector to support the intentions and activities of the global strategy.

At the heart of this paper is the desire to examine and audit the extent to which national newspapers in Cambodia both present and integrate information alongside PPMs. For the purpose of contrast, this audit has systematically used newspaper articles that were published in two Cambodian National Newspapers (The Cambodia Daily and the Phnom Penh Post), over a twelve months period, between the years 2013 and 2014.

Table 1 below, and those that follow, systematically illustrate details of the frequency of specific

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20. Rehm, Jürgen, et al. "The relationship of average volume of alcohol consumption and patterns of drinking to burden of disease: an overview." *Addiction 98.9* (2003): 1209-1228.

21. Rehm, Jürgen, et al. "Global burden of disease and injury and economic cost attributable to alcohol use and alcohol-use disorders." *The Lancet 373.9682* (2009): 2223-2233.

22. Teplin, Linda A., and George W. Lutz. "Measuring alcohol intoxication: the development, reliability and validity of an observational instrument." *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs 46.06* (1985): 459.

23. Herring, Rachel, Virginia Berridge, and Betsy Thom. "Binge drinking: an exploration of a confused concept." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 62.6* (2008): 476-479.

24. Fuller, Mark G. "Alcohol use and injury severity in trauma patients." *Journal of addictive diseases 14.1* (1995): 47-54.

25. World Health Organization. "Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol." (2010, p.20).

26. World Health Organization. *Global status report on alcohol and health-2014.* World Health Organization, 2014.

published articles and their association with PPMs, across that twelve month period. The articles that were identified for audit were ones that illustrated a clear correlation between the focus of the article and alcohol as a public health theme. Percentage comparisons and PPM inclusion rates have also been illustrated.

	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Number of Alcohol related Articles Published	12		69		81	
Articles Containing PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	4	33.33%	56	81.15%	60	74.07%
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	8	66.66%	13	18.85%	21	25.93%
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	5,203		11,372		16,575	
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs *(as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)*	212	4.07%	701	6.16%	913	5.50%
Number of Identifiable PPMs *(rate of PPMs, for all stories containing PPMs)*	6	1.5 / 1	56	1 / 1	62	1.03 / 1

Table 1: Alcohol and Press Coverage

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS (RTAs)

The historical and contemporary importance of both accidents and accident prevention remains consistent across epidemiological science and public health medicine.[27] Indeed, it can be argued that accidents are not in themselves seldom, nor random incidents.[28] However, these insights remain eclipsed by the burden of problems that both accidents and road traffic accidents present on a daily basis.

Significant attention has been given to accident and road traffic accident (RTA) prevention, both globally and across Cambodia. In recent months, the World Health Organisation published its 'Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013', which illustrates the collective burden that RTAs have across the globe.[29] On the international stage, this distinct public health pressure is immense, with the total number of road traffic deaths estimated to be 1.24 million per year. All too often, the victims of this preventable activity fall largely upon young adults. Indeed, young adults aged between 15 and 44 years account for 59% of all global road traffic deaths.

The benchmarked evidence for Cambodia is both clear and concerning. In 2010, 1,816 reported fatalities occurred as a result of RTAs. This 5 deaths a day figure, and rising projections, should be understood as quite distinct from all other non-fatal RTAs that routinely occur, and which can often result in long term injury or other long term health debilitating conditions.[30]

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27. Cooter, Roger, and Bill Luckin. "Accidents in history: an introduction." *Accidents in History: Injuries, Fatalities and Social Relations* (1997): 1-16.
28. Davis, R. M., and B. Pless. "BMJ bans accidents: accidents are not unpredictable." *British Medical Journal 322* (2001): 1321-1322; Evans, S. A. "Banning the "A word": where's the evidence?" *Injury Prevention 7.3* (2001): 172-175.
29. World Health Organization. *WHO global status report on road safety 2013: supporting a decade of action.* World Health Organization, 2013.
30. World Health Organisation (2011) *Cambodia Country Profile.* 2011 (web reference, accessed 7th February 2014).

Table 2 below illustrates details of the frequency of specific published articles regarding RTAs and their association with PPMs, across a twelve month period. The articles that were identified for audit were articles that illustrated a clear correlation between the focus of the article and RTAs as a public health theme. Percentage comparisons and PPM inclusion rates have also been illustrated.

	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Number of RTA related Articles Published	35		79		114	
Articles Containing PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	21	60%	58	73.41%	79	69.29%
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	14	40%	21	26.59%	35	30.71%

	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	9,655		12,070		21,725	
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs *(as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)*	577	5.97%	1,196	9.90%	1,773	8.16%
Number of Identifiable PPMs *(rate of PPMs, for all stories containing PPMs)*	34	1.61 / 1	83	1.43 / 1	117	1.48 / 1

Table 2: Road Traffic Accidents

SMOKING

The use of tobacco is prevalent amongst virtually all global societies, with cigarettes forming the base of a global industry that is estimated to be worth $610 billon.[31] However, with the seminal report on the health hazards of smoking, Surgeon General Luther marked the beginning of a series of authoritative scientific statements that began to alert the global audience of the health consequences of tobacco. [32] Today, the impact of tobacco and smoking is well known. Tobacco use is the major cause of many of the world's top killer diseases – including cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive lung disease and lung cancer.[33] Yet the prevalence of smoking is still buoyant amongst key groups, and broad gender related consumption patterns vary across national borders and between cultural groups.

In Cambodia, the World Health Organisation illustrates that 42% of the male adult population and 3% of female population routinely used tobacco.[34] In the same report, the same consistent message was communicated to its global audience, "The prevalence of current tobacco smoking is an important predictor of the future burden of tobacco related diseases." Although a global framework exists to control and limit the effect of tobacco use, two thirds of the global community is still to benefit from any one of its six elements. With the exception of a few distinct studies, the precise extent of Cambodia's tobacco consumption patterns is still relatively unknown.[35] Whilst marginal demographic data is available to inform planning activities, few areas have been designated as smoke free zones. This

31. Euromonitor International. *Passport: The Future of Tobacco.* London, 2011 (web reference, accessed 7th February 2014).

32. General, Surgeon. "Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service." US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service Publication 1103 (1964).

33. Mackay, Judith, and Michael Eriksen. "The tobacco atlas." World Health Organization, 2002.

34. World Health Organization. "World health statistics 2013: a wealth of information on global public health." (2013, p.107).

35. Banta, Jim E., et al. "Patterns of alcohol and tobacco use in Cambodia." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health* (2012).

is important to public health, as passive smoking represents an involuntary risk to everybody that is exposed to it. [36]

Whilst a ban on tobacco advertising exists in Cambodia, in terms of television, radio and print, this does not extend to all other forms of direct and/or indirect advertising. Furthermore, national health warnings are reported to be missing some key and appropriate characteristics.[37] With state taxation resting at 17% of the product value, coupled with the limited supply of evidence based quit products, Cambodia appears to be facing an uphill challenge in improving this aspect of its population's health.

Table 3 below illustrates the frequency of published articles regarding Smoking, and their association with PPMs, across a twelve month period. The articles that were identified for audit were articles that illustrated a clear correlation between the focus of the article and Smoking as a public health theme. Percentage comparisons and PPM inclusion rates have also been illustrated.

	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Number of Smoking related Articles Published	6		10		16	
Articles Containing PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	6	100%	7	70%	13	81.25%
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	0	0%	21	30%	35	18.75%

	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	4,051		4,864		8,915	
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs *(as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)*	190	4.69%	310	6.37%	500	5.60%
Number of Identifiable PPMs *(rate of PPMs, for all stories containing PPMs)*	8	1.3 / 1	9	1.28 / 1	17	1.3 / 1

Table 3: Smoking

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND RAPE

Gender based violence (GBV) refers to a range of abuse driven activities conducted and directed by one gender on another. In a World Health Organisation report, GBV is categorised into three distinct areas: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence and collective violence.[38] In turn, each concept is further understood across four characteristic themes, notably physical abuse, social abuse, psychological abuse and either deprivation or neglect. Today, GBV, which includes all forms of rape, is one of the major public health and human rights problems in the world.

Following the rape and subsequent death of a female student using public transport in India, the global community is perhaps more aware and sensitive to this pressure, than at any former point in time.[39] Policy instruments, cultural norms and attitudes to equality appear to be some of the decisive

36. Sargent, Richard P., Robert M. Shepard, and Stanton A. Glantz. "Reduced incidence of admissions for myocardial infarction associated with public smoking ban: before and after study." *BMJ 328.7446* (2004): 977-980.
37. World Health Organization. *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2013: enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.* World Health Organization, 2013.
38. García-Moreno, Claudia, et al. *WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses.* World Health Organization, 2005.
39. *The Hindu.* "Delhi gang rape: Chronology of events": 31st August, 2013, (web reference, accessed 7th February 2014).

elements that determine the prevalence of this type of injustice.[40]

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.[41] In Cambodia, more recent research has helped illustrate the precise range of factors that are failing to protect women and children's human interests.[42] 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 may well have to review its total approach to tackling this critical issue, if it is to rise above the shame and injustice that is associated with GBV.

Table 4 below illustrates the frequency of published articles regarding GBV and Rape, and their association with PPMs, across a twelve month period. Again, the articles that were identified for audit were articles that illustrated a clear correlation between the focus of the article, and GBV and Rape as a public health theme. Percentage comparisons and PPM inclusion rates have also been illustrated.

	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Number of GBV & Rape related Articles Published	103		70		173	
Articles Containing PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	57	55.33%	48	68.57%	105	60.69%
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	46	44.67%	22	31.43%	68	39.31%
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	27,225		19,629		46,854	
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs *(as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)*	1,494	5.48%	1,187	6.04%	2,681	5.72%
Number of Identifiable PPMs *(rate of PPMs, for all stories containing PPMs)*	73	1.28 / 1	56	1.16 / 1	129	1.22 / 1

Table 4: Gender Based Violence & Rape

DROWNING

Over the last decade, increasing attention has focussed upon the prevalence of drowning, as a preventable public health issue. Worldwide, the combination of both RTAs and drowning are understood to be the most common causes of 'injury categorised death' amongst children.[43] Across the globe, and excluding adults, the incidence of drowning, amongst children aged 1–19 years, has been cited as high as 135,261. More importantly perhaps, is that the Southeast Asian nations account for at least 50% of all childhood drowning.[44] In Asia, drowning is the leading cause of accident mortality in children and young adults.[45]

40. Decker, Michele R., et al. "Understanding gender-based violence perpetration to create a safer future for women and girls." *The Lancet Global Health 1.4* (2013): e170-e171.

41. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2005, National Institute of Public Health, National Institute of Statistics (Cambodia) and ORC Marco. *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2005.* Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Calverton, MD, USA.

42. Brickell K., Prak B. and Poch B. *Domestic Violence Law: The gap between legislation and practice in Cambodia and what can be done about it.* (2014), Research Report, (web reference, accessed 7th February 2014).

43. World Health Organization. *Child and adolescent injury prevention: a global call to action.* WHO, 2005.

44. Alonge, Olakunle, and Adnan A. Hyder. "Reducing the global burden of childhood unintentional injuries." *Archives of disease in childhood 99.1* (2014): 62-69.

45. Blum, Robert W. and Kristin Nelson-Mmari. "The health of young people in a global context." *Journal of Adolescent Health 35.5* (2004): 402-418.

However, in Cambodia, UNICEF shed an alternative light on these global statistics, claiming that the recorded figures are highly distorted in relation to reality, with less than 1 in 10 incidents of drowning ever being reported.[46] Following a nationally representative sample of 67,500 households, UNICEF claims that in Cambodia, in 2006, an adjusted prevalence of fatal drowning amongst children (0-14 years) is likely to stack up at 1,871 cases, which is 74% higher than those recorded within the World Health Organisations Global Burden of Disease Records (2004).   UNICEF claims that the great majority drowning's are never seen by, or reported to a health-care facility, whether immediately fatal or subsequently fatal.[47] The field work underpinning the study, illustrated that:

- Given the immediacy of death from drowning, families saw no reason to seek medical care.
- In circumstances surrounding medically unattended deaths, the cost implications of initiating an autopsy by the person reporting the death was a major financial disincentive for the individual reporting it.
- A default preference of non-contact with authorities was often adopted, for fear of being blamed for the child's death.

With Cambodia nestled with the Asian region, and given that the Asian region contains the majority of world's children, it is argued that preventative interventions associated with drowning should be at the forefront of national public health attention.[48]

Table 5 illustrates the frequency of published articles that report on Drowning, and their association with PPMs, across a twelve month period. The articles that were identified for audit were articles that illustrated a clear correlation between the focus of the article and drowning as a public health theme. Percentage comparisons and PPM inclusion rates have also been illustrated.

	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Number of Drowning related Articles Published	19		17		36	
Articles Containing PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	10	52.63%	9	52.94%	19	52.77%
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	9	47.37%	8	47.06%	17	47.23%
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	6,950		10,280		17,230	
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs *(as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)*	261	3.75%	286	2.78%	547	3.17%
Number of Identifiable PPMs *(rate of PPMs, for all stories containing PPMs)*	11	1.1 / 1	10	1.1 / 1	21	1.1 / 1

Table 5: Drowning

Elderly Health

Due to war and civil unrest, historical factors have altered an otherwise natural evolution of the population

46. Linnan, Michael. *Child drowning: Evidence for a newly recognized cause of child mortality in low and middle income countries in Asia.* UNICEF Innocent Research Centre, 2012.
47. Linnan, M., T. Reinten and J. R. Wei. *A final report to UNICEF Cambodia on the Cambodia Accident and Injury Survey, 2007,* Bangkok: The Alliance for Safe Children.
48. UNICEF *The state of the world's children 2012: children in an urban world.* eSocialSciences, 2012.

base in Cambodia. Today, with an estimated population of 14.676 million, and notwithstanding that 52.9% of the population are under the age of 25, Cambodia can be understood to be disproportionately young, compared with other countries of similar size.[49]

However, in view of these circumstances, and in spite of its population growth being seen in decline,[50] Cambodia faces a new set of challenges, notably those associated with maintaining good health in old age. As more effective evidence based medicine and public health interventions drive up global life expectancy rates, increased pressure will invariably occur to meet the demand for elderly healthcare.[51]

Statistical reports currently illustrate that 8.8% of Cambodia's population is over the age of 55. Table 6 below further illustrates the breakdown of Cambodia's older population with its aggregate proportion of gender split accordingly.[52]

Age	Population Percentage	Male	Female
55-64 years:	4.9%	287,073	464,991
65 years and over:	3.9%	221,356	367,156
Combined %	8.8%	508,429	832,147
Combined Total Population		1,340,576	

Table 6: Elderly Population of Cambodia, by Age, Percentage and Gender

For the rural population of Cambodia, (currently understood to be 80% of the total population),[53] the ability to access and finance appropriate general or specialist healthcare services (either via state or private sponsored provision) is challenging.[54] This challenge also exists for those responsible for policy development and health care provision.[55] As such, and as the population base ages, access to affordable healthcare solutions in later life for rural citizens could well appear to be a stiffer challenge than those urban dwellers of the same age.

Table 7 illustrates the frequency of unique stories that focus upon Elderly Health, and their association with PPMs, across a twelve month period. The articles that were identified for audit were articles that illustrated a clear correlation between the focus of the article, and Elderly Health a public health theme. Percentage comparisons and PPM inclusion rates have also been illustrated.

49. CIA *World Fact book,* (web reference, accessed 7th February, 2014).

50. Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs & Communication. *Analysis of the Preliminary Results of the Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013,* (web reference, accessed 7th February, 2014).

51. Cooper, C., G. Campion, and L. J. Melton III. "Hip fractures in the elderly: a world-wide projection." *Osteoporosis international 2.6* (1992): 285-289.

52. Index Mundi 2014 Cambodia - *Demographics Profile 2013,* (web reference, accessed 7th February, 2014).

53. Index Mundi 2014 *Cambodia - Rural population,* (web reference, accessed 7th February, 2014).

54. Damme, Wim Van, et al. "Out-of-pocket health expenditure and debt in poor households: evidence from Cambodia." *Tropical Medicine & International Health 9.2* (2004): 273-280.

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	Cambodia Daily		Phnom Penh Post		Combined	
Number of Elderly Health related Articles Published	3		2		5	
Articles Containing PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	3	100%	2	100%	5	100%
Number of Articles Devoid of PPMs *(as a % of all articles)*	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Words Used to Construct all Articles	730		770		1,500	
Total Words Used to Construct all PPMs *(as a % of the total words used to construct all articles)*	219	30%	159	20.64%	378	25.20%
Number of Identifiable PPMs *(rate of PPMs, for all stories containing PPMs)*	6	2 / 1	5	2.5 / 1	11	2.2 / 1

Table 7: Elderly Health

FINDINGS

This paper has explained, defined and introduced the concept of a positive preventative message. It has shown how PPMs can easily be drafted and integrated into routine news stories and published by national newspapers. Following a research methodology, the paper has endeavoured to identify all the key articles, associated with 6 public health issues, as reported and published by two national newspapers, across a calendar year, between 2013 and 2014.

Figure 1 below illustrates a comparative appraisal of the number of public health stories that were identified as relevant and fit for audit. The chart illustrates the combined volume of stories, by each public health theme, that were published across a 12 month period between (2013-14).

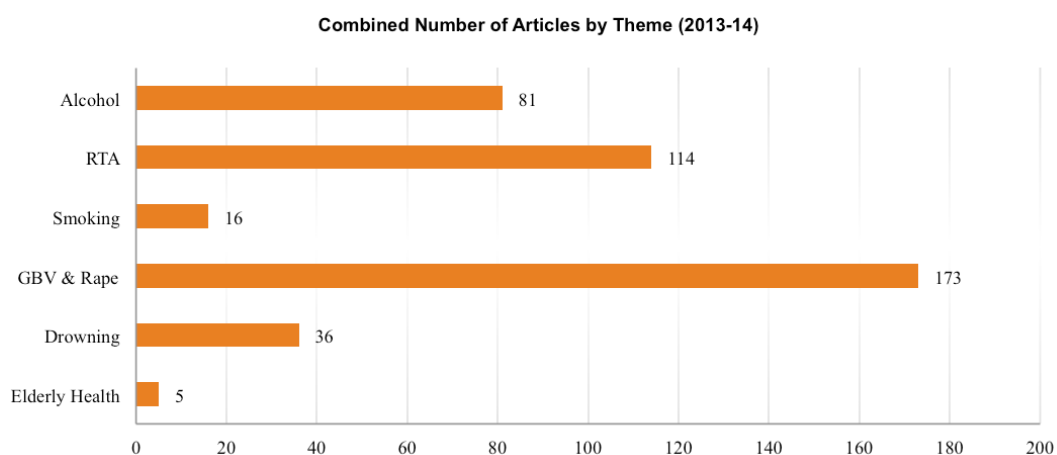**Combined Number of Articles by Theme (2013-14)**

Figure 1: Combined Number of Articles, by Theme, (2013-14)

Here we can see that GBV & Rape appears to be the most frequent type of article, published across both newspapers, carrying 40.7% of the total share of all published articles audited. Elderly Health (1.1%) represents the least frequent story, with RTA (26.8%), Alcohol, (19%), Drowning (8.4%) and

Smoking (3.7%), occupying the middle ground. Given the sample of published articles audited, and which were clustered into 6 public health themes, the average number of articles, per theme, is measured at 70.8.

In Figure 2, further analysis illustrates a comparative appraisal of the combined volume of words that were used to construct all of the published articles, as identified by each public health theme, across a calendar year between 2013 and 2014.

Words Used to Construct Articles by Theme (2013-14)

Alcohol — 16,575
RTA — 21,725
Smoking — 8,915
GBV & Rape — 46,854
Drowning — 17,230
Elderly Health — 1,500
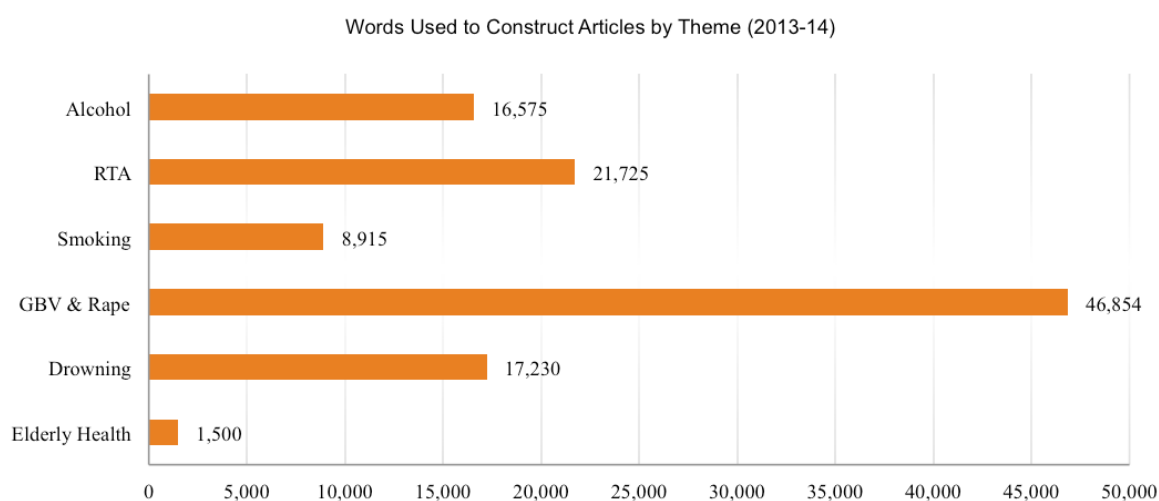
Figure 2: Volume of Words Used to Construct All Articles, by Theme, (2013-14)

Here we can see, combined across both newspapers, articles relating to GBV & Rape used the most words in composition, carrying 41.5% of the total share of words used across all of the thematic articles that were audited. In contrast, articles that focussed upon Elderly Health contained the fewest composed words, with 1.3% of the total share. RTAs (19.2%), Drowning (15.3%), Alcohol (14.7%) and Smoking (7.9%) occupy the middle ground in terms of word composition. Given the sample of published articles audited, and which were clustered into 6 public health themes, the average number of words used to compose any one article, is measured at 265 words.

Figure 3 illustrates a comparative appraisal of the combined volume of published articles, across both newspapers that positively integrated PPMs within the composition of the article, across a calendar year, between 2013 and 2014.

Combined Articles Containing PPMs (2013-14)
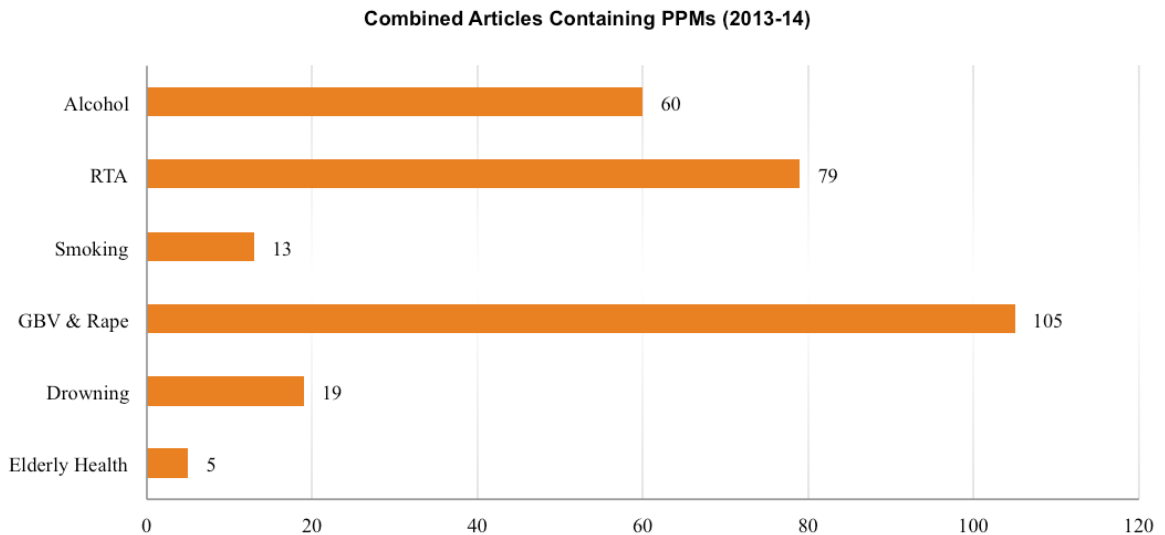
Figure 3: Combined Articles Containing PPMs, by Theme, (2013-14)

In relation to the combined volume of all published articles that contained PPMs, articles associated with GBV & Rape carried the most PPMs, with a 37.4% share of all PPMs. Elderly Health (1.8%) carried the least number of stories containing PPMs, with RTAs (19.2%), Drowning (15.3%), Alcohol, (14.7%), and Smoking (7.9%) occupying the middle ground.

Figure 4 illustrates a comparative assessment of the number of PPMs used, across both newspapers, which were integrated within the composition of all thematic articles, across a calendar year, between 2013 and 2014.

Combined Numbers of PPMs (2013-14)
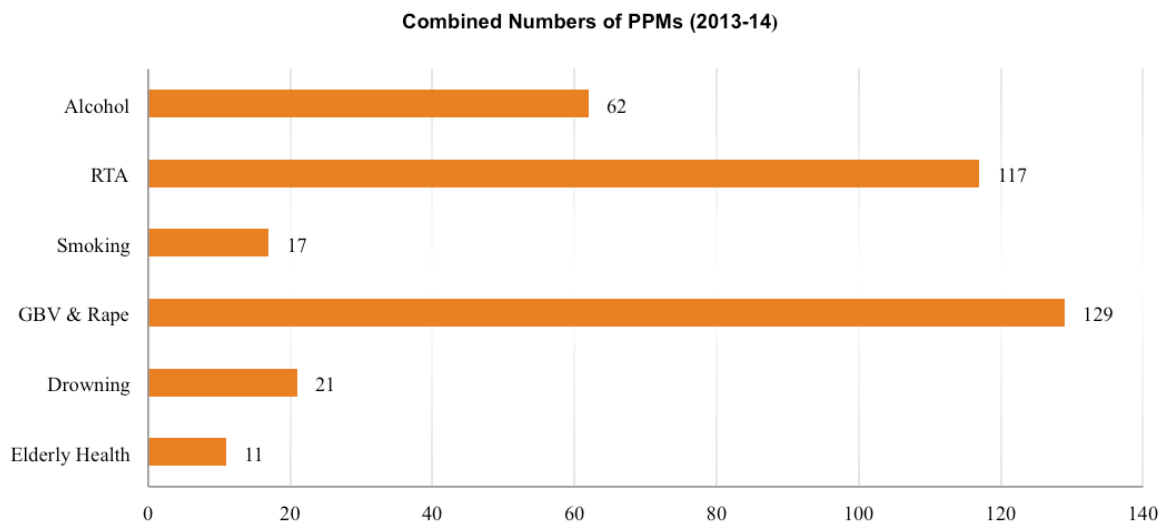
Figure 4: Combined Number of PPMs, by Theme, (2013-14)

Combined Words Used to Compose all PPMs (2013-14)
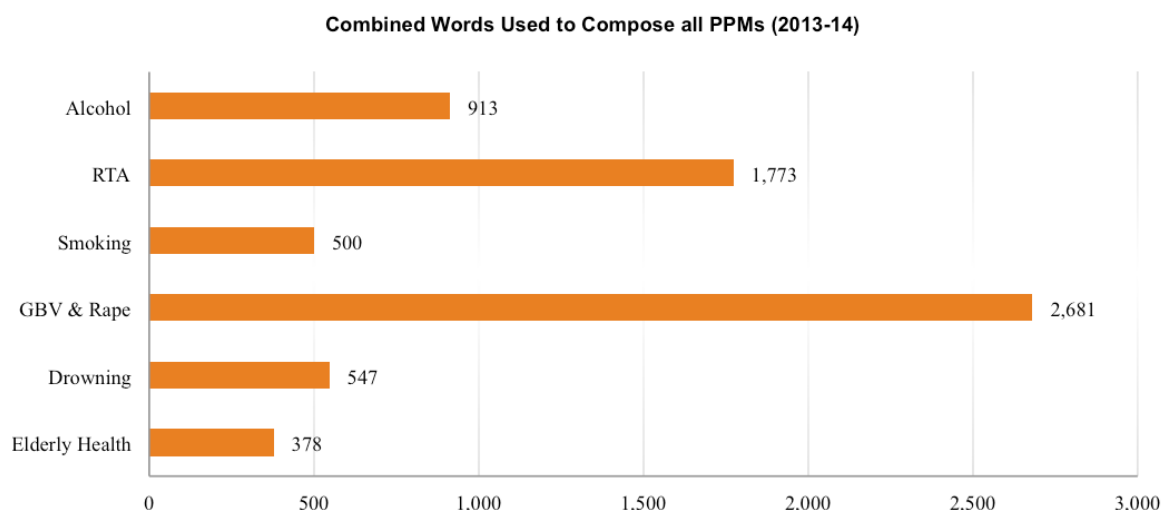
Figure 5: Volume of Combined Words Used to Compose all PPMs, by Theme, (2013-14)

Here we can see that published articles associated with GBV & Rape, as a public health theme used the most words to construct PPMs, with 39.4% of the total words used in all PPMs, across all thematic articles. Articles associated with Elderly Health (5.5%) used the least number of words to convey its PPMs. RTAs (26.1%), Alcohol (13.4%), Drowning (8%) and Smoking (7.3%) occupied the middle ground.

Figure 6 illustrates a combined and comparative assessment of those published articles that were identified as relevant to the subject matter audited but devoid of any PPMs, across a calendar year, between 2013 and 2014.

Combined Number of Stories Devoid of PPMs (2013-14)
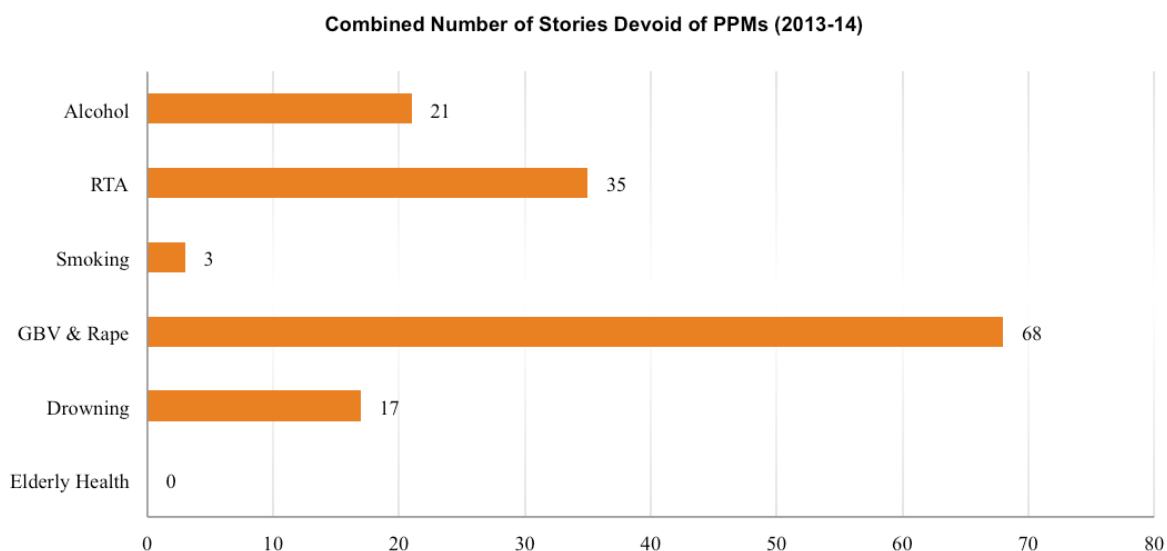
Figure 6: Combined Number of Stories Devoid of PPMs, by Theme, across both Newspapers (2013-14)

In terms of volume, all of the published news articles associated with Elderly Health carried one or more PPM. However, 68 published articles relating to GBV & Rape, or 47.2% of the total share, were devoid of PPMs. Published articles associated with RTAs (24.3%), Alcohol (14.5%), Drowning (11.8%) and Smoking (2%) occupied the middle ground.

DISCUSSION

A discussion of the material presented in this paper could take many directions. It is heartening to see all six public health issues being covered by both national newspapers in Cambodia. However the disparity in coverage between themes can seem alarming. From an objective point of view, it is acknowledged that no one public health issue is more important than another, with the exception of those activities that pose a more direct or immediate risk to life. All are worthy of attention and investment.

However, there is a noticeable and obvious imbalance in the quantity of articles that relate to the public health themes outlined. The frequencies of articles related to elderly health, drowning and perhaps more surprising smoking are eclipsed by others. To gain further insight into what appears to be a disproportionate spread, more public health themes, (such as maternal health, sexual health, food and nutrition, house fires, prison healthcare etc.) and broader instruments could be incorporated into a future audit/study.

The routine and daily occurrence of both GBV (including Rape) and RTA's across Cambodia may in part explain their frequency within the scope and content of the press. Yet if this is the reasoning, how can we explain that lack of relevant news articles featuring details of those other areas, given the common knowledge and accumulating burden that is associated with them? Some answers to this may be wrapped up in the notion of what is and what isn't considered newsworthy.

On reflection of the audit, and in appraisal of the visibility of PPMs, this audit could appear to demonstrate a low rate of PPMs, amongst those stories carrying PPMs. This could give specific rise for concern. This concern would be reinforced, given the relative low word count that has been found to compose the identified PPMs. However, there are no direct comparable benchmarks for these types of activities, and hopefully this initiative will go some way towards either establishing them, or raising professional awareness of their importance within the media sector.

At a micro level, it might follow that what makes a good newspaper story is defined by both the journalist and his/her ability to both gather and combine relevant content with accurate detail. Consistency in the composition of news articles will more often than not vary. Journalism is a human activity. In relation to this audit, the authors are aware that journalists are sometimes physically present at the scene of an event, whilst on other occasions, information gets relayed via a witness at the scene, via telephone or other means. As such, this audit offers no insight into the extent of this operational relationship, but acknowledges the working pressures that journalists face in constructing daily news stories, around tight deadlines.

On a macro level, this audit also poses important questions for the media sector too. By acknowledging the extent to which PPMs can make a real difference to the wider population, the media sector could acknowledge and be aware that they alone have the power to encourage and demand their inclusion, as both a quality assuring element of their publishing process. Any step towards embracing this position serves only to strengthen their institutional identity as a positive health promoting stakeholder.

On reflection of the audit, the newspaper articles that were used were drawn from Cambodian newspapers, which are printed in English, on a daily basis. Both newspapers prepare and sell Khmer versions. However, it is unclear, without conducting a parallel exercise, if the same consistent characteristics follow within the translated version. Therefore, no inference to this is made. Clearly, this

is an important exercise to conduct, for both comparative assessment purposes and for considering and appreciating the impact that such prevention based messages have on the population that prefer to read newspapers in Khmer.

As stated at the outset, positive prevention based messages can be drafted and incorporated into news stories, in either subtle or explicit ways. This audit did not characterize or distinguish this difference; however, for any future exercise, this feature should be adopted and included.

CONCLUSION

Whilst Cambodian newspapers routinely generate value for their customers, by reporting on a variety of daily activities, additional value can be generated by reporting on them, using PPMs and other creative methods. This audit has identified significant numbers of articles that are devoid of PPMs, and these can be seen as grey articles and lost opportunities. They serve as curiosity gaps and offer marginal information and limited value. There appear to be no justifiable grounds for producing public information that on the one hand warrants preventative guidance, but avoids it.

News stories that carry relevant content, accurate detail and where appropriate, PPMs are more valuable to the reader, their families and their community. This is largely understood because of the enhanced educational content that the article provides. As well as representing healthy journalism, this approach can be compared and understood within the business concept of shared value. Creating shared value involves responsible organisations recognising the role they play as part of the community, creating new forms of value for society, by addressing its needs and challenges. By wilfully improving the rate of PPMs within news stories, the media sector has the opportunity to elevate its own status, by offering news that carries practical health improving value. For any publisher, this represents a challenge worthy of editorial consideration.

In view of the target population and the wider socio-economic circumstances that Cambodia population face, there is perhaps no better common ground in which to deliver this challenge, than within news articles that directly connect and impact upon public health. In view of this recommended approach, considerable mutual advantage can be generated, with the consumer being more informed, empowered and healthy as a consequence.

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Nonprofits and Social Media in Cambodia

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An Empirical Study of Local NGOs' Digital Communications

Danièle Adler

ABSTRACT

For the past five years, there has been a dramatic growth in the number of Internet users in Cambodia. Today, nearly 3 million people are connected to the Internet; and more than 1.1 million Cambodians are registered on Facebook, while other social networks, such as YouTube, Twitter, or LinkedIn, have started emerging among the early adopters.

In this article, we study the impact of the social media on the way Cambodian nonprofit organizations communicate with their stakeholders. We, therefore, analyzed the social networking's strategy of three Cambodian charities: Pour un Sourire d'Enfant, Cambodian Children's Fund, and PicoSol Cambodia. While exploring their activism, motivation, content strategy, and impact, we found that social media have become a key pillar of their communication. Even though they are all quite new in social networking, they have effectively developed a two-way relationship with their stakeholders, which explains why they can rely on strong and loyal communities of supporters. The study also showed that the strength and dynamism of these communities depend mostly on the organizations' social media maturity and activism.

INTRODUCTION

Social networking is a digital practice that started in 2002-03, with the launch of Friendsters, LinkedIn, and MySpace in the United States. However, it was the birth of Facebook in 2006 that has made social media a global success. Ten years later, while the number of social platforms has significantly increased[1], there are 1.47 billion regular users worldwide, and these platforms now draw most of the traffic online.[2]

In Cambodia, the social media phenomenon took off only three years ago; since then the country has been increasingly catching up with the global trend. In 2008, less than 10,000 people had access to the Internet[3], and it was extremely slow. Four years later, the Internet penetration rate reached 16% of

1. In 2013, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, WeChat, SlideShare, MySpace, and even blogs were among the most popular social networks. In Cooper, B. B. (2013, Nov. 18). *10 Surprising social media statistics that will make you rethink your social strategy.* Fast Company. Retrieved from: http://www.fastcompany.com/3021749/work-smart/10-surprising-social-media-statistics-that-will-make-you-rethink-your-social-stra.

2. Social networking reaches nearly one in four people around the world (2013, June 13). eMarketer. Retrieved on June 25, 2014 from: http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Social-Networking-Reaches-Nearly-One-Four-Around-World/1009976.

3. Meyn, C. (2013, Nov. 11). Virtual Democracy. *Southeast Globe.* Retrieved from: http://sea-globe.com/virtual-democracy-social-media-elections-cambodia-cpp-cnrp/.

the population[4], and in November 2012, 2.5 million Cambodians were connected from home. This can be explained by the economic boom the country has experienced in the past decade. The growth has fostered the emergence of a middle class[5]. It has also turned Cambodia into a valuable market, and the subsequent competition between telecom operators to get the most customers has contributed to make the Internet much more affordable. Over the past six years, the price of unlimited broadband connection has plummeted down to 12 dollars[6], and the success of smart phones has enabled even more people to go online on a regular basis[7].

In this favorable environment, and with 65.3% of the population being under 30[8], no wonder social media are achieving a great success in Cambodia. Among all networks, Facebook is by far the leading player. More than 1.12 million people have already registered, and the trend should keep growing, as there is an average of 1,100 new users every day[9]. Even though there is no official statistics, observation has shown that YouTube is also very popular. Other social networks, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, and Instagram, are more restricted and still confined to the early adopters' community.

Globally, organizations, both from the private and nonprofit sectors, have massively leveraged on the social media phenomenon to renew the way they engage with their stakeholders (Carim & Warwick, 2013). In Cambodia, even though this is the second country in the world for the number of NGOs per capita[10], there has been no study exploring the usage of social networking by local nonprofits. This paper, therefore, aims to fill the gap and explore how Cambodian charities have been integrating Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in their communications strategy and daily practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of nonprofit branding

A decade ago, nonprofits started expanding their brand paradigm, thus following the for-profit organizations' trend (Kylander & Stone, 2012). At the time, they would mostly focus on creating a visual identity in order to differentiate from other charities, raise awareness of their cause, and achieve fundraising success.

The private sector, however, had already shifted their brand paradigm, due to a number of crises which, throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, affected the reputation of well-established brands,

4. Kemp, S. (2012, Nov. 7). *Social, Digital and Mobile in Cambodia.* We are social. Retrieved from: http://wearesocial.net/blog/2012/11/social-digital-mobile-cambodia/.

5. According to Banerjee and Duflo (2008), the middle class in the developing countries covers all the people living on between 2 and 10 USD. Since in 2012 the World Bank estimated Cambodia's GDP per capita (PPP) to be 2,690 USD, which amounted to an average of 6.3 USD per day, we can state that there is, indeed, an emerging middle class in Cambodia. In World Bank. Retrieved on June 25, 2014 from: http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx.

6. Meyn. Op. Cit.

7. According to Rattana Keo, two million Cambodians go online daily using their smartphones. *In Mobile Trends Cambodia 2014* (2014, March 5). Geeks in Cambodia. Retrieved from: http://geeksincambodia.com/mobile-trends-cambodia-2014/.

8. In UNDP. Retrieved on June 25, 2014 from: http://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/countryinfo/.

9. Infographic: *Facebook in Cambodia* (2013, Sept. 4). Geeks in Cambodia. Retrieved from: http://geeksincambodia.com/infographic-facebook-in-cambodia/.

10. Domashneva H. (2013, Dec. 3). NGOs in Cambodia: It's complicated. *The Diplomat.* Retrieved from: http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/ngos-in-cambodia-its-complicated/.

such as Nike. The 2000 Edelman Trust Barometer even showed that branding was not only about recognition; it was also about the trust between an organization and its stakeholders, whether the general public, the customers, the donors, the supporters, the partners, and even the authorities.

For several nonprofit executives, it was a turning point. They realized that taking their brand beyond the sole visual identity may actually enable them to strengthen both their organization and their cause by "building operational capacity, galvanizing support, and maintaining focus on the social mission" (Kylander & Stone, 2012). As a consequence, the nonprofit brand scope expanded significantly, becoming both more personal and strategic. Today, it embodies the whole identity of the organization, expressing its mission, values, and distinctive positioning (Kylander & Stone, 2012). Charities, just like their for-profit counterparts, now use their brand to convey their 'true' characters. Practically, it means that the communications now have three objectives, which are: producing meaningful discourses; disclosing the organization's ethos,[11] and giving the stakeholders the opportunity to fully live the nonprofit experience (Koshmann, 2011).

Social media and nonprofit brand identity

In the meanwhile, social media had emerged, further changing the way organizations communicate with their stakeholders. These media can be defined as digital platforms – for instance, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or LinkedIn – that enable users to create and share content and allow organizations "to engage their publics in conversation" (Carim & Warwick, 2013). In only one decade, social networking has become a global, massive and long-lasting phenomenon, and it has already drastically changed the way people consume media. According to Simon Kemp, Regional Managing Partner at the digital communications agency, We Are Social, social channels now take up to 26% of the people's media time around the Asia-Pacific region[12] . In Cambodia, in particular, the 2013 legislative elections demonstrated how deeply social networking has transformed the media usage. During the electoral campaign, Cambodians, especially the youth, would get their information on Facebook and YouTube rather than on the traditional news channels[13].

In view of all these data, all the organizations have had no choice but to adapt their communications practices and fully embrace social media. This has been especially the case for nonprofits, which are now among the most active users of social media (Carim & Warwick, 2013; Cho et al., 2014). According to MDG Advertising Agency, 98% of American charities have a presence on Facebook; 74% on Twitter; 66% on YouTube; and 48% on LinkedIn[14] .

For nonprofits, social networking has many benefits. In addition to being free to use, it is a powerful tool to strengthen a brand identity. Using them has proven to be very effective to enhance an organization's profile and reputation (Briones et al., 2011), but also to raise the awareness of a cause (Waters et al., 2009). Moreover, social networking has the potential to engage stakeholders in a manner that has no equivalent (Kanter & Fine, 2010; Carim & Warwick, 2013). Theoretically, nonprofits could even use their social channels to build up a true dialogical relationship with their audience by developing a "two-way symmetry communication," as described by Grunig and Hunt (1984) in their four models of public

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11. Koshmann defines the nonprofits' ethos as their "particular way of working and relating in society" (Koshmann, 2011).

12. Kemp, S. (2014, Jan. 23). *Social, Digital & Mobile in APAC in 2014.* We are social. Retrieved from: www.wearesocial.net/blog/2014/01/social-digital-mobile-apac-2014/.

13. Meyn. Op. Cit.

14. *2012. It was a very good year for social giving.* MDG Blog. Retrieved from: www.mdgadvertising.com/blog/2012-it-was-a-very-good-year-for-social-giving/.

relations (Waters & Jamal, 2011; Paek et al., 2013; Cho et al., 2014). However, with a few exceptions[15] (Briones at al., 2011), studies have shown that most nonprofits have not achieved the full potential of social media. Most of them are actually content themselves with "broadcasting information" (Carim & Warwick, 2013) and "engaging in asymmetrical communication" (Waters & Jamal, 2011).

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

Research problem and questions

Throughout the above literature review, it was clear that the current research focus on NGOs based in developed countries, mostly in the US and the UK. We could hardly find any articles related to the situation in developing countries, and certainly not in Cambodia. Given the context's evolution since the early 2010s, it seems now relevant to pay attention to the use of social media by local NGOs. The practice of social networking has expanded greatly in these countries in the past few years, and it should keep growing in the coming years. That is why this study intends to show to which extent the development of social media have impacted the communications of Cambodian NGOs.

The main research questions in this study are:

RQ1: Have Cambodian nonprofits followed the global trend and incorporated social networking into their communications strategy?

RQ2: How do they use social media in their daily marketing and public relations practice?

RQ3: To which extent have they managed to achieve the social media's potential by developing a two-way dialogical relationship with their publics?

Methodology

To explore these questions, from an empirical point of view, we focused on three well-established Cambodian nonprofits, which are: Pour un Sourire d'Enfant (PSE), Cambodia Children's Fund (CCF), and PicoSol Cambodia (PSC). We selected these organizations because they have been operating in Cambodia for more than five years[16]. They also have the same scope of action, which is education-related. PSE and CCF both aim to lift the most disadvantaged out of poverty through education, and they directly help around 2,000 children living in Phnom Penh's slums. As for PicoSol Cambodia, which is a small-sized organization, its mission is to promote solar energy among entrepreneurs, professional technicians and potential users in rural areas. Finally, all these nonprofits rely on a similar funding model, as individual funding accounts for a significant part of their financial resources.

To determine how these organizations have integrated the social media into their communications strategy, we conducted a twofold qualitative study. To get a first-hand insight, we chose to contact the practitioners who were responsible for managing and/or implementing their organizations' social media strategy. We, therefore, interviewed Edvige Bordone, PSE's Communications Manager; Anthony Karge, CCF's Communications Officer in charge of all online contents, and Romina de Jong, PSC's Country Director. Then, we conducted a content analysis of the organizations' discourse on their main channels. We focused on their activity on Facebook, and to a lesser extent, on Twitter and YouTube; we put a special emphasis on the period between October 26, 2013 and March 26, 2014.

15. Briones et al. (2011) showed that the American Red Cross succeeded in "using social media dialogically […] through active responses to posts and allowing the organization to gain ideas from its various publics."
16. PSE was founded in 1996; CCF in 2004, and PSC in 2006.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Social media activism

Since the early 2010s, more and more nonprofits have made social networking a key element of their communications strategy (Carim & Warwick, 2013; Cho et al., 2014). According to the Nonprofit Communications Trends 2014,[17] a survey among 2,135 nonprofit professionals in the United States, social media are considered very important by 86% of the interviewees. For them, these are actually the third most important communications tools after the website and email marketing. Among all the existing social media, the four most popular among the interviewed professionals are Facebook (for 95% of the sample), Twitter (64%), YouTube (38%), and LinkedIn (26%).

Our sample of Cambodian nonprofits has followed the global trend. Whether it is Cambodian Children's Fund, Pour un Sourire d'Enfant or PicoSol Cambodia, they are all active on social media, and just like their American counterparts, they have made Facebook a high priority. For instance, between October 26, 2013 and March 26, 2014, CCF has published 124 posts on Facebook, which is an average of 20 posts per month; PSE has been as active, with 100 posts over the same period; and PSC has managed to share news nearly six times a month.

When we interviewed Bordone, de Jong, and Karge, they were all aware, though, that social networking is not only about Facebook. That is why they have been trying to be active on at least one additional channel. Overall, they have been using the same channels as the American charities, which are: Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. However, as they have limited resources, they have often had to make choices, which have been different from one charity to the other depending on the organization's objectives and stakeholders.

For example, PSE, whose founders have always used movies to promote their organization among individual donors, is not surprisingly more active on YouTube than on Twitter, which has not reached their expectations[18]. Since the organization created its own channel in January 2012, they have posted 72 videos, which amounts to an impressive average of 32 videos a year.

By comparison, Cambodian Children's Fund is much less focused on YouTube, where it has published only 50 videos over the past five years. Instead, since March 30, 2010, they have been especially active on Twitter, which Karge said he uses to share "quick facts, statistics, and information about the Cambodian context". In nearly four years, CCF has tweeted 2,078 times, which is an average of 519.5 tweets a year. In addition, the organization has developed a strong presence on most existing social channels, whether through their Pinterest and Google+ accounts or the MyCCF blogging platform. Paradoxically, at the time of the study, there was no CCF LinkedIn profile,[19] which can be explained by the fact that the CCF targets the general public in priority.

Finally, PicoSol Cambodia, which has started its social media journey in the beginning of 2014, is involved in a number of networks as well. They have strongly invested both in Twitter and YouTube, where it has published five videos in only one month between February and March 2014. They have also used a crowdfunding platform called GoFundMe in order to raise money to organize solar workshops.

17. Leroux Miller, K. (2014). *Nonprofit Communications Trends 2014.* Nonprofit Marketing Guide. Retrieved from: http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/dev/2014-nonprofit-communications-trends-report/.
18. Last tweet on PSE's account was in October 2013
19. The CCF LinkedIn page was activated in June 2014.

Organizational motivations

Raising awareness

For these Cambodian nonprofits, social networking has been an affordable, easy-to-implement and effective communications tool (Carim & Warwick, 2013), with which they can raise awareness of their organizations and their cause among their current and potential supporters (Briones, 2011).

Bordone explained that social networking is indeed a "very powerful tool in Cambodia," and that it has helped them reach out to some of their key stakeholders, such as the organization's employees, alumni, candidates, children's sponsors as well as donors. In addition, using social media has enabled PSE to achieve one of its organizational goals, which is to "open the people's eyes on poverty and education challenges in Cambodia". PSC has followed more or less the same line. It has used Facebook to connect with the general public and "get or keep them interested in PicoSol," while leveraging on Twitter to "receive and distribute solar news from other social NGOs". Finally, Karge from CCF agreed with both Bordone and de Jong, "social media [have been] very effective at raising awareness and keeping the community involved and supporting the organization."

Strengthening the nonprofit brand identity

For the three studied nonprofits, there is another motivation that is even more important than raising awareness; it is building their brand identity. And since they fully control the content published on their social channels, they have been using them to emphasize the main components of their brand. Both de Jong and Karge even mentioned it as the first motivation for their organizations to embrace social media.

As Karge stated it, the Cambodian Children's Fund uses "social media primarily for branding purposes. For us, it is a way to explain what we are doing, […] and Facebook is almost the best way to show our brand in a minute." Indeed, CCF has fed its Facebook page with stories, news, and statements that tend to embody their identity and express their organization's "ethos" (Koschmann, 2012).

In this respect, the post on "little Lina[20] " was outstanding. CCF's founder, Scott Neeson, told the fans the story of this "very happy wee girl". Lina used to suffer deep malnutrition, but today, she is "alive," healthy, and deeply cared by her mother, who incidentally was hired by the association. Lina has also "confidence and sense of self that belie her size," and as she will join the soon-to-be-open Center of Education Excellence, this 6-year old girl already "readies herself to start it to the university".

While telling Lina's story, Neeson could actually share the core elements of CCF's brand identity in a very subtle yet powerful way. The story perfectly illustrated the organization's mission, which is to provide nutrition, self-shelter and high quality education to the most vulnerable children. In addition, with this single post, Neeson could refer to the CCF's values of dedication, compassion and responsibility. Eventually, he enabled the audience to experience the CCF mission. And this was echoed in the comments on the post. For instance, Khmerization Khmerican said, "I became emotional reading about Lina, not because the story is too sad but because the way she was saved. Imagine if Scott didn't discover her she would be dead by now. Great on you Scott."[21] Inga Spice concurred with this statement, "A tiny miracle in a world of hate and shame. Beautiful."

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20. This post was published on CCF's Facebook page on March 9, 2014.

21. In this paper, we reproduce the comments of the followers exactly as they appear on the organizations' Facebook pages.

Fostering engagement

As studies have shown, social media are also – and maybe primarily – about relationships and public engagement (Waters et al., 2009; Briones, 2011; Waters & Jamal, 2011; Carim & Warwick, 2013; Cho, 2014). However, of all the professionals we interviewed, only Karge clearly stated public engagement and community-building as a communications goal. However, looking at the three organizations' practice on their social channels, it is clear that they have all been trying to engage their followers as much as possible.

To achieve this objective, they often leverage on the "social proof" effect, which is one of the six principles of influence defined by social psychologist Robert Cialdini in his 1984 book "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion". Cialdini defined this concept as "the tendency to see an action as more appropriate when others are doing it," and he used it to explain the success of canned laughs on television. Even though everyone says they dislike canned laughs, studies have shown that they are actually very effective to involve an audience and have them laugh longer and more often. When viewers hear other people laughing at a joke on TV, Cialdini explained, it gives them social evidence that it is also right for them to feel amused; and it indirectly allows them to laugh as well.

It works the same way on social networks (Kanter, 2013). Facebook, Twitter and YouTube make public the data about an organization's supporters. In particular, they disclose statistics and the names of the followers interacting with the organization's content. By doing so, they trigger the social proof effect. For instance, on Facebook, whenever an individual likes a page, it appears not only on his/her own newsfeed but also on the ones of his/her friends. And since the messenger is fully independent, it contributes to foster positive "word of mouth" about the organization itself (Brown et al., 2007). As a result, the friends who receive the notification are more likely to trust the organization and like it as well. The process is similar on Twitter and YouTube.

PicoSol Cambodia has been using this social proof strategy, and they tend to regularly publicize the name of their supporters. For instance, on March 25, 2014, they thanked nine people for following their Twitter account. They even gave these people's pseudo, so PSC's tweet would appear directly on their timeline. They have also tapped into the same mechanism for fundraising purposes. When it launched the Educate Cambodian Kids About Solar campaign on GoFundMe in early 2014, PSC made sure to publicize the name of the donors as well as the amount they donated. They did it both on the platform itself, and on Twitter in order to encourage similar behavior among their existing followers.

As for PSE and CCF, they have mostly relied on third-parties caution, such as well-established public figures or high profile celebrities, to trigger the social proof effect and foster further engagement. On March 20, 2014, PSE thanked on its Facebook page Rano Reach Sy Fisher and Marina Shafik for promoting their Cambodian Cuisine Festival on The Advisor, Phnom Penh's leading arts and entertainment newspaper. By doing so, they showed their followers that some respected journalists supported their event by covering it, therefore giving it further credibility.

Cambodian Children's Fund also used the same strategy on Twitter. On November 27, 2013, they publicized the support the organization received from renowned American skateboarder, Tony Hawk. This contributed to raise the organization's profile among the general public. When CCF tweeted the photo of the encounter, it was retweeted 49 times and added into favorites by 80 people.[22] And since it was retweeted by Hawk himself, it means that his 3.67 million followers were potentially exposed to the news as well.

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22. Usually, CCF's results on Twitter are rather limited, with no more than 5 retweets per tweet.

Fundraising

Waters et al. (2009) have shown that fundraising is usually not the main priority of nonprofits on Facebook. In Cambodia, NGOs turn out to follow the same pattern: in the early 2014, fundraising on social media was not the main goal of the nonprofits we studied, even though we expect it to take an increasing part of their social networking activity in the future.

Karge said, "We do not focus on fundraising, [but] we do some small fundraising campaigns," such as the Gift that Matters campaign CCF has launched for Christmas since 2013. Pour un Sourire d'Enfant has the same policy. Bordone explained, "PSE mostly raise funds in France," when the two founders of the organization do their annual "tour de France". However, in 2014, the nonprofit innovated by launching on Facebook their first campaign targeting Cambodian potential donors.

In comparison, PicoSol Cambodia has been much more active in fundraising, probably because they have less fund than the other organizations. In the first quarter of 2014, de Jong decided to use crowdfunding to finance two solar workshops. She explained, "We turned to crowdfunding, because it is particularly difficult to have companies pay for this activity."

Content strategy

To achieve the above communications objectives and increase their impact on their audience, Cambodian Children' Fund, Pour un Sourire d'Enfant and PicoSol Cambodia have started transforming themselves into "Networked Nonprofits" (Kanter et al., 2010). It means that they are not only active on social media; they have also opened up their organizations and "encourage[d] two-way conversations between people, and between people and organizations" (Kanter et al., 2010). This new approach has, of course, impacted these organizations' activity on social media and their content and voice strategy.

Publishing frequency

All social media – Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are no exception to the rule – put a premium on recency. For instance, on Facebook, 75% of the people who view an organization's post have seen it within the first two hours following the publication. That is the reason why most experts recommend organizations to post news on a regular basis, as today it is the best way to increase the organic reach. [23]

At the time of the interview, Karge, Bordone and de Jong were well aware that publishing frequency is, indeed, a key factor to achieving social media success, and they had all defined posting objectives for their organizations. Karge tries "not to be overactive on Facebook with two posts a day maximum," and on Twitter, he "post[s] a few tweets a day". Bordone has defined a "clear posting policy," with three to four Facebook posts a week. Finally, while sharing content on Facebook only once a week, de Jong is more active on Twitter and GoFundMe. She "check[s PSC's Twitter account] thrice per week and retweet[s] or tweet[s] about PSC activities on average once per week." On GoFundMe, during the campaign, she also posted "thrice per week, including thank you messages to donors".

Content development

In 2009, Waters et al. showed that, even though Facebook was an effective tool for disclosure, charities often failed to disseminate organizational information to their fans. In 2014, we found that this was not the case for all of the Cambodian nonprofits we studied, and they usually prefer to use one social

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23. The organic reach is defined by Facebook as "the total number of unique people who were shown your post through unpaid distribution." Retrieved from: https://www.facebook.com/help/285625061456389.

channel to disseminate this type of information.

On its Facebook page, Pour un Sourire d'Enfant releases information on the association's activity, news about the education programs, and also stories of sponsored children, events announcement, and job ads. For instance, between February 26 and March 26, 2014, the organization published a total of 18 posts. Eight were related to the organization itself (including stories about the students, programs, daily activity, etc.); six were devoted to PSE's Cambodian Cuisine Festival; two covered the You're a Hero fundraising campaign; and two were dedicated to international events, such as the International Women's Day.

Cambodian Children's Fund has a different approach and primarily uses Twitter to disseminate organizational information. Between February 26 and March 26, 2014, CCF tweeted 42 times, and it covered in priority the nonprofit's daily activities (24 tweets), volunteering opportunities (6 tweets), and Cambodian news (6 tweets). On Facebook, CCF shared a few organizational information as well, but the vast majority of the posts was dedicated to telling the students' personal stories.

As for PicoSol Cambodia, it is the organization of our sample that discloses the least corporate news. Just like CCF, the prime channel for organizational disclosure has been Twitter, Facebook being mostly dedicated to the organization's daily life. Between February 26 and March 26, 2014, PSC tweeted 10 times: half of the tweets covered the workshops it organizes and also the participation of its representatives in national conferences. Interestingly, PSC is the only organization that has to promote the relevancy of its cause, as it is quite new in Cambodia. Over the same period, it, therefore, devoted 20 percent of its tweets to explaining which benefits solar technology can bring in rural Cambodia.

Visual Content

In 2009, Waters et al. found that nonprofits would rarely post multimedia files, such as videos and photographs, on their Facebook pages; five years later, the situation has dramatically changed, since all the organizations we studied systematically use visual language on their Facebook pages.

Bordone stated, "We mostly use pictures, because it is the most efficient way to attract likes and shares." Karge concurred with this statement, "We always put a photo and a text, because it comes out better on Facebook." Indeed, for each post on Facebook, Pour un Sourire d'Enfant, Cambodian Children's Fund and PicoSol Cambodia all use a photo or video to show their beneficiaries or employees in action. It is interesting to note, though, that the situation is different on Twitter: neither CCF nor PSC systematically use pictures or even videos to boost their tweets' reach.

Voice

While the content is key to the organization's communications strategy, it is not enough. Studies have shown that, in order to truly build up a direct and powerful relationship with the stakeholders (Kanter & Fine, 2010; Briones at al., 2011; Waters & Jamal, 2011; Carim & Warwick, 2013; Paek et al., 2013; Cho et al., 2014), it is critical to develop a voice that fits with the brand identity and that is effective to engage with the supporters. The three nonprofits we studied have managed to create both a personal and engaging tone – in particular on Facebook – and effectively foster the commitment of their followers.

Proximity. Bordone explained that Pour un Sourire d'Enfant has mostly tried to build up a relationship with its followers based on conversation and familiarity. For instance, on March 5, 2014, PSE promoted on Facebook the Cambodian Cuisine Festival, a charity event they organized at the end of the same month. To engage with the page's fans, they spoke to them, using direct questions to encourage responses as much as possible: "Looking for a night of fun and good recipes from Cambodia? Wanna

help us raising money for the children of this beautiful country?" And this engagement strategy paid off, as the post was liked by 225 followers and shared by 228 people.[24] They even received the support of a few followers who voluntarily promoted the post to their own friends. This was the case of Chea Virak who invited several people to join the event: "Horn Srey Nuon Roth Jf Koeurn Vicheka Dmo Trap if u interest please join to help the kids n to test various khmer food from many place in the country[25]."

Storytelling. Cambodian Children's Fund, on the other hand, has developed a powerful storytelling strategy. In the past decade, there has been a renewed interest in this ancient narrative practice. It has been used by both for-profit and nonprofit organizations for communications purposes, and it has proven to be very effective. While telling stories, the narrator can share knowledge, convey meaning and leverage on his/her own experience and authority to create a personal connection with the audience (Gill, 2011). For CCF, it has been an efficient way to share their branding values and engage with their stakeholders. As Karge explained it, CCF's founder, Scott Neeson, writes most of the organization's Facebook posts, and he is usually "very emotional and philosophical". He does not speak so much to the fans; instead, he tells them stories, which are always personal, meaningful and impactful.

Neeson has, indeed, managed to develop a voice that is both sincere and engaging, and he is all the more inspirational that his own experience is very special. The founder of CCF used to be the President of 20th Century Fox International; in 2004, he decided to quit everything to move to Cambodia and devote his life to helping out the destitute children of the Phnom Penh's slums. As he often relates to his own story in the first person, he has become the face of the organization, therefore using his weight and authority to further promote the credibility of CCF.

The second reason why Neeson's posts are so effective in grabbing the audience's attention is because he usually leverages on what copywriting expert Sonia Simone describes as the three key elements for a compelling story.[26] In his posts, we can always find a hero, a helper and a pinch of cliffhanger. As a general rule, the "heroes" are CCF beneficiaries, whose courage and determination enable them to take action and unlock the door to their future; the "helper" is the Cambodian Children's Fund, which gives these children the chance to change their fate; and the cliffhanger effect comes from the fact that most of these young people have to overcome a great amount of impediments before they can succeed in life.

To show how the storytelling mechanism works, we can focus on 14-year old Borey, whose story was told on the CCF's Facebook page on March 19, 2014. Neeson described Borey as "a real hero," and throughout the post, he emphasized the boy's personal virtues, showing his sense of responsibility and great willpower. Until he was 10, Neeson told us, Borey "had never set a foot in a classroom". Of course, it was his dream to go to school, but as the oldest son, "his role was to ensure the family could at least survive." Only when he was sure CCF could take care of his relatives, "he seized the opportunity to study." He soon became one of the most motivated students of CCF, attending "every class, at all hours, writing and reading 7 days a week, no matter how challenging".

Then came the impediment. While the audience expected Borey to have embarked on the path of success, the young boy had to go through another ordeal. In February 2014, his father passed away. In such a difficult situation, the young boy showed his great sense of responsibility, again. He came to Neeson with the news "not as a sad or bereaved boy, but as a concerned family member". His mother

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24. At the time, PSE's posts were usually liked by 70-100 fans.

25. In this paper, we reproduced the comments of the followers exactly as they appear on the organizations' Facebook pages.

26. Simone, S. (2014). *3 Must-Have Elements for a Compelling Marketing Story.* Copyblogger. Retrieved from: my.copyblogger.com/marketing-story/.

had to borrow money for the funerals, and Borey was to leave CCF to help her pay her debts. "Now clearly, Neeson said, CCF helped with the funeral costs and his wonderful sponsor stepped up with a generous donation (without being asked)." Neeson, then, explained the arrangement to the boy, and once reassured, he finally "returned to his room and cried over the loss of his father".

Even though the text is quite long for a Facebook post (394 words), the story truly captivated CCF's audience, who expressed their deep concern for Borey. For instance, Vicky Cook said, "Reading stories like this break your heart. However, at the same time there is joy knowing that this child will be able to pursue the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty in his family." This echoed Amanda Ramos' feelings, "What a beautiful young man. He will achieve everything his heart desires and more." CCF's followers also appraised Neeson for his devotion to the children. Inger Marie Beck said, "You are a hero Scott - proud to know you!!;" and Sothearos Lim claimed, "You are my real HERO DAVID NEESON!"

Impact on the relationships between the organizations and their followers

Reach

The practitioners we interviewed were mostly satisfied with the results of their social media strategy. Karge said, "Social media are very effective at raising awareness and keeping the community involved and supporting the organization." De Jong explained, "In terms of Likes, Shares, Views, Followers, the numbers are all rising, so we are satisfied for now." Bordone confirmed, "With social media, we have an impact in terms of awareness."

If we focus on the available statistics on March 26, 2014, results are, indeed, satisfactory. PicoSol Cambodia, which started developing a consistent digital strategy in the end of October 2013, had reached 300 fans on Facebook by March 22, 2014, and it had acquired 51 Twitter followers in only four months. Pour un Sourire d'Enfant, which was more advanced, had nearly 15,000 fans on Facebook, and its videos on YouTube were viewed more than 18,000 times. As for the Cambodian Children's Fund, which had a full-time community manager, they had more than 26,000 supporters on Facebook and almost 1,100 followers on Twitter, and their videos on YouTube were viewed 48,000 times.

Level of Engagement

To assess the true efficiency of a social media strategy, scholars have shown that it is key to measure the level of supporters' engagement, in addition to the reach. On Facebook, for instance, the key indicators are the Likes, Shares and Comments. According to Cho et al. (2014), each weigh differently. Likes and Shares are the lowest level of engagement;[27] Comments, which requires ones to directly respond to an organization's messages, imply more involvement by the followers. The level of engagement can be assessed in the same way on both Twitter and YouTube.

Our study showed that Facebook is by far the platform, on which supporters are the keenest to engage with the organizations. For instance, on March 4 and 5, 2014, Cambodian Children's Fund posted a video about the graduation of 19 CCF's students on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. On Facebook, the video was commented 13 times and shared by 13 people; on YouTube, it received only four comments and was shared four times, and on Twitter, it was neither retweeted nor added into anyone's favorites.

A similar phenomenon happened to Pour un Sourire d'Enfant. On October 11, 2013, they posted a success story video on YouTube. It received no comment and was shared only once. Ten days later,

27. Cho et al. (2014) explained that Likes are the easiest way "to express enjoyment of Facebook posts without verbal expression," while Shares enable the fans to convey the organization's message to its own social group.

it was released on Facebook; it was commented twice and shared five times. The main reason for this lack of engagement on YouTube may be because it is required to have a Google account in order to be able to comment on the videos. As for Twitter, it seems that the followers are less willing to get involved with the organization.

The study also found that the level of engagement is directly related to the level of organizational involvement in the social platforms. Indeed, PSC, which is the organization with the least activity on Facebook, mostly got Likes but almost no Shares and Comments. PSE, which has been active for a longer time, received much more Likes and Shares, but in March 2014, only 2 percent of its fans liking the posts would actually comment on them. On the other hand, Cambodian Children's Fund, whose publishing frequency is by far the highest of the sample, has actually managed to involve their followers the most and have them like, share, and comment on the organization's posts. For instance, on March 8, 2014, Scott Neeson published a post to celebrate his 10th anniversary in Cambodia. The post was liked more than 3,200 times, shared by almost 400 people and commented 230 times, which was a ratio of 7% per like.[28]

Nature of Relationship

These results show that while PSC is still in a one-way relationship, both PSE and CCF are following the same path as the American Red Cross. This organization has been acknowledged for its online communications strategy. As early as 2011, it built a two-way relationship with its supporters, using social media dialogically (Briones, 2011). For instance, the American Red Cross leveraged on Facebook and Twitter to recruit volunteers, inform their community on disaster preparedness, boost their media relations, and get feedback from their publics to improve the organization itself (Briones, 2011). However, this remains not so frequent, and until today, most nonprofits still do not utilize social networking to the most of their potential (Waters, 2009; Waters and Jamal, 2011; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Cho et al., 2014).

In Cambodia, with the exception of PSC which is still new to social media, both the Cambodian Children's Fund and Pour un Sourire d'Enfant have reached the first step of a true dialogical relationship with their followers. Even though they do not ask so much for their supporters' feedback, they have, nevertheless, succeeded in engaging them in a continuous dialogue. Indeed, their fans, whether international or Cambodian,[29] do not hesitate to share their thoughts and feelings on these organizations' Facebook pages. And today, the social platform has become the home for dedicated "online communities,[30]" which is perfectly illustrated by the very emotional way fans react any time a new story is published.

For instance, on March 22, 2014, CCF released a post about its partnership with World Housing. While the post was liked 2,729 times, all the 46 comments turned out to be very emotional. Justine Leeder said, "No words can describe how great this is. Just beautiful," echoing Teresa Bilowus who said, "This is extraordinary. I love what you are doing." Macca Mc was even incited to offer his services as a volunteer, "I'm coming over in May. Is there any way I can volunteer my time and take an active role?" Neeson also received the support of several Cambodian followers who commented on the post as well. This was the case of Chan Kampong Cham who said, "Thank you for helping Cambodia children," and Selina Chun Beautiful added, "I'm also Cambodian but this had made me smile!"

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28. If we compare CCF with Charity: Water, another nonprofit which is often referred to for its good digital practices, the Cambodian Children's Fund community turns out to be much more active on Facebook.

29. According to Karge and Bordone, Cambodian supporters represented, respectively, 42% of CCF's followers and 70% of those of PSE.

30. According to Rheingold (quoted in Brown, 2007), "online communities form when enough people carry on computer-mediated non private discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to develop what are considered "social relationships" with other online participants."

As for PSE, social media have helped the organization to maintain consistent relationship with its alumni and employees, therefore further building up the PSE community across Cambodia. On February 7, Uth Phallin said, "I miss papi mamy[31] hope when I'm back I can visit them." On March 3, Sopheara echoed her former classmate, "Love I love PSE, I love teachers, I miss PSE, I miss teachers so much," and on March 5, 2014, Samneath Umchea stated, "Oh i miss PSE!." It also happened that some PSE teachers commented on some Facebook posts. For instance, on January 1, Seiha Hoeurn said, "Being an English teacher at PSE, I am so happy to see all the PSE's helps! PSE has helped many poor people in Cambodia so far!! Many thanks!!"

Future opportunities

In view of such quantitative and qualitative results, all the NGOs we studied were, therefore, willing to continue growing their presence on the social networks. De Jong said, "Our intention is to become even more active on social media." Bordone was even willing to start integrating social media experts into her team. And as for Karge, he wanted to go one step further by being more involved into new channels such as Instagram and Pinterest.

However, all these professionals are also well-aware of the social networking's limits. Bordone said, "It is key for us to use modern tools, and even though social media are important, we have to keep in mind that they are not everything." Her main concern was that social media are not so effective to reach institutional stakeholders, such as public authorities, educational institutions, and companies. Indeed, as de Jong stated it, "stakeholders in Cambodia (e.g. solar companies and educational institutions) still prefer to communicate in real life, by phone or meeting." More importantly, Karge explained, "People who donate are mostly older people," and they are still not very active on social media. Therefore, all these practitioners believed that more traditional forms of communication, e.g., newsletters (both email and print), annual reports, postcards, brochures, or direct mail, were still the most efficient way to "reach a larger audience".

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study highlights that Pour un Sourire d'Enfant, Cambodian Children's Fund, and to a lesser extent, PicoSol Cambodia have already reached the first step of being "networked nonprofits". They have not only embraced social media, but they have also fully incorporated them into their communications strategy. All the studied organizations have been particularly active on Facebook and, at least, one additional social channel, and even though they are quite new to digital communications, they are already using them in a dialogical manner, therefore further strengthening their communities of supporters. Social media have, indeed, enabled both PSE and CCF (and PSC to some extent) to create direct, informal and regular links with their international supporters, and to maintain and expand their Cambodian community – in particular, by engaging with the youngsters. However, as we stated above, they have not fully opened up to their supporters' feedback. As a result, the co-creation process, through which the stakeholders of an organization can be involved in the product/brand development, is not yet a reality among our sample.

Though these findings may be significant in a practical and a theoretical sense, there are limitations that also need to be considered. First, as we focused the study on three organizations and three social networks, it can only be considered as an exploratory examination. In addition, for linguistic reasons, we had to focus on organizations whose content was written in English. Further research on these matters could, therefore, attempt to study a larger sample of Cambodian nonprofits,[32] including those

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31. "Papi" and "Mamie" are the nicknames given to PSE's founders by the students.

32. According to the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia, there are about 3,500 registered NGOs in Cambodia, but only half of them are active. Domashneva, Op. Cit.

communicating in Khmer. It could be especially interesting to analyze the way they use social media, by differentiating the local organizations with the international ones. On the other hand, as other forms of social media are poised to expand in Cambodia in the coming years – LinkedIn and Google+ are already growing very fast – it could be interesting to study how Cambodian nonprofits will be using them.

Nevertheless, this study is the first to investigate the use of social media by Cambodian nonprofits, and from its findings, both practitioners and scholars, can learn how to make the most of social networking to achieve their nonprofit mission.

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Cambodian NGOs' Promotion of Freedom of Expression

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Preliminary Results

Monyrath Sovan and Say Sok

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the approaches adopted by Cambodian NGOs to promote freedom of expression in Cambodia. It is based primarily on individual interviews conducted in mid-2014 with 15 key informants who work for 8 local NGOs in Phnom Penh. The results reveal that lobbying the state, political parties, and foreign donors; human rights education and information communication technology training; online and offline campaigns, and legal and emergency support are the main approaches NGOs use to promote freedom of expression. The article then locates the practices in Cambodia into the regional and global contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Since Cambodia re-adopted the multi-party political system in the late 1990s, Cambodia's donors have chosen non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as their proxies to monitor democratic development and to sow liberal democracy. Thus far, undeniably Cambodian NGOs have had a significant impact on democratic building and promotion of freedom of expression. However, not much has been written about how they promote it. Earlier studies by John Marston (2000) and John Vijghen (2001) demonstrate that lobbying the government and legislature was an important approach; that is, they engaged with the state through negotiation and constructive dialogue. Knowing that those who hold the purse have the power, NGOs have relied on the 'international community' to pressure the state for more democratic space and space of engagement to ease their operation and for Cambodian citizens. Cambodia is not alone in this regard. Many local NGOs in the region, having limited power to bargain with the states in which they operate, depend on donors of the recipient states to assist them in this regard; they have likewise chosen to engage with the states rather than to work against them (Kausch, 2009; Kukkamaa, 2008; Sani, 2005; Suharko, 2003).

According to research by Vijghen (2000; 2001) and Say Sok (2012), NGOs are actively involved in mobilizing and empowering citizens, especially youths and affected communities, through organizing public forums for dialogue and exchange of ideas, and workshops to raise awareness and understanding of human rights and freedoms so that they can voice their concerns on issues that affect them. This approach is commonly shared amongst NGOs in the region, especially in countries where political space is more secured and open enough to conduct such activities above ground. NGOs in Malaysia and Indonesia, for example, often conduct such public forums and workshops throughout the countries (Alagappa, 2004).

When engaging with the state is ineffective, NGOs may explicitly or implicitly support or help the affected to mount public campaigns, demonstrations or protests against it or powerful individuals whose actions infringe on their rights and freedoms. NGOs are sometimes the key players in mobilizing civil disobedience. The mass protests to oust Marcos and Estrada in the Philippines and Suharto in Indonesia are two prime examples. Nevertheless, in Cambodia NGOs engaging directly in or leading mass protests or demonstrations are more seldom; unlike many of their counterparts in such countries as Indonesia, the Philippines, and sometimes even Burma, where NGOs are more active in leading affected communities to demonstrate or protest against activities that violate their freedoms and livelihood (Alagappa, 2004; Sok, 2012; Suharko, 2003; Vijghen, 2001).

Another common approach NGOs in Cambodia and elsewhere in the region adopt to help people express their opinions and claim their rights and freedoms is through provision of support, especially legal and financial, to the affected (at risk of) facing violence, harassment, arrest or imprisonment (Alagappa, 2004; Suharko, 2003; Vijghen, 2000; 2001). The support is necessary as many of the affected often come from marginalized and poor communities, who cannot afford a lengthy and expensive legal battle and whose legal knowledge is limited.

There is no denial that Cambodian NGOs have contributed substantially to promoting freedom of expression. Yet recent academic research on how they promote it is scarce; thus it is the intent of this paper to examine this issue in-depth and to discuss the Cambodian experience in broader regional and global contexts.

The cross-sectional study is qualitative and exploratory in nature. Potential NGOs – those working on human rights promotion, democratic building, and media – were first identified and enlisted. Only Cambodian/local NGOs (defined as NGOs enlisted with the Ministry of Interior) are selected to participate in this study. This is because they are the ones that deal directly with this issue and are often the main intermediaries between the state, its citizens and donors. Based on the purposive sampling technique, 9 local NGOs were contacted, and 8 agreed to take part in the study. NGOs having been selected, the purposive sampling technique is again used to contact potential key informants. Then the chain referral sampling technique is used to identify and contact more informants.

This research employs in-depth key interviews with NGO staff to collect the data. In total, 15 Phnom Penh-based NGO staff were interviewed from May to June 2014. The informants are made up of 3 NGO executive directors, 7 project coordinators/ managers, and 5 project implementers. For their personal safety and security, they are made anonymous in this article. Qualitative content analyses are used to analyze the data and to create categories and patterns.

The next section presents the main approaches Cambodian NGOs adopt to promote freedom of expression. In order, they are lobbying the state, political parties and donors; media to promote freedom of expression; human rights and information communication technology (ICT) training; public campaigns, and legal and emergency support. The authors then try to locate the Cambodian case into the broader contexts.

LOBBYING THE STATE, POLITICAL PARTIES AND DONORS

Lobbying the state (the government, to be exact) is what NGOs often have on their agenda. This involves persuading and conveying constructive criticisms and recommendations to the government in order to improve freedom of expression. However, the state is often cynical about NGOs' intention and activities. Only one NGO sampled is able to engage with the state with some success. An NGO project coordinator complains, 'We really wish to lobby the government in the area of freedom of expression, but it seems impossible for us. We always have this on our agenda and have sent out many meeting requests to the government [over the years], but they are usually rejected" (Informant 1, personal communication).

The only NGO that can engage with the state is able to discuss with and encourage it (i.e. selected state agencies and the legislature) to respect the freedom of access to information and freedom of expression entailed in the Constitution and to implement and enact the laws. An NGO representative explains how a meeting with a state agent can take place,

> To lobby the government and the National Assembly, we need personal connections with high-ranking officials. We often persuade them on phone or during informal meetings or meals [during a workshop or public forum] to take our recommendations to discuss in the National Assembly or to join our public forums through explaining to them the importance of the forums or workshop for them, the people and the nation.
> (Informant 13, personal communication).

The NGO has also managed to hold dialogue with selected commune councils to promote access to information and freedom of expression at the local level and citizens' participation in decision-making processes. It has provided training to commune officials in selected locations and encourages local authorities to hold public forums and regular monthly commune meetings and to disseminate information from the forums and decisions made at the meetings to local people.

That this NGO has more access to the state does not mean that there is no limit to what they can raise. A fine line it can walk exists. The NGO staff above continues that to lobby government officials from the ruling party 'we need to avoid raising sensitive issues and inviting them to join public forums on these issues' (Informant 13, personal communication).This boundary certainly does not only confine to this NGO. Previous research clearly indicates that while cooperation between the state and NGOs has been increasing, especially over the past decade, NGOs working on sensitive issues usually have a more troubling relationship with the state and collaboration between them is rare, if at all (Un, 2006; Sok, 2012).

Lawmakers from the main opposition party are the lobby targets too, and they are 'more approachable', according to the NGO. As an example, this NGO approached lawmakers from the two big parties (then the CPP and the Sam Rainsy Party) to consider passing a law on access to information. To this end, the NGO brought a draft bill to the attention of lawmakers from the Sam Rainsy Party. A lawmaker from the party then produced another draft bill and submitted it to the assembly several times (without success). Interestingly, in this mandate the passage of the law was raised in the National Assembly by CPP lawmakers and the government declared that it would be enacted in the next three years.[1]

Besides engaging with the state and political parties, NGOs usually lobby key international actors, including major foreign embassies, multilateral institutions, and even big foreign corporations that are the clients of Cambodian exported products, to negotiate with or pressure the government to improve the state of freedom of expression in Cambodia. This choice of top-down, patronage-based pressure is understandable, given that the space for NGOs to maneuver against and to engage with the state and the sphere for civic mobilization and engagement are quite restricted (cf. Hughes, 2003; Sok, 2012). All NGOs interviewed confirm that they rely on support from the 'international community' to make their voice stronger and their endeavor more effective. Embassies (especially, Western, powerful ones) and big multilateral lenders have significant influence on the government's decision; hence they are the main lobbying targets. Pressure and warning from big buyers abroad has considerable influence on the government's behavior too, since Cambodia relies heavily on foreign export and currency for its survival and development. The mobilization from trade unions and NGOs to insist foreign buyers on pressuring the government to investigate the killing of a few demonstrators, who were protesting along Veng Sreng Street, during the post-election demonstrations, is a good case in point.

Based on the interviews, lobbying international actors can take two main forms. First and foremost is through sending a formal request letter to an ambassador or a representative of a multilateral institution for a meeting to discuss freedom of expression and related issues. Once NGOs have a chance to meet them, they raise cases of violation and persuade them to help take action to promote

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1. Currently, UNESCO and the Ministry of Information are working closely to prepare a draft of the law.

freedom of expression and solicit their support, especially by asking ambassadors or multilateral institution representatives who hold talks with the government regularly or who are about to meet Cambodian high ranking officials to raise the cases and urge the government to take action. The case of the annual universal periodic review by the Human Rights Council provides a good illustration of how NGOs solicit such support. One NGO project coordinator explains,

> My organization sent the UPR[1] to the Human Rights Council. I then sent request letters to many embassies, namely British, EU, German, Swedish, Australian and Czech, all of which are the permanent members of the Council, and some embassies of ASEAN member states. Next, when having a chance to discuss with some of them, particularly the Western ones, several staff [from my NGO] and I raised many concerns... and persuaded them to raise the issue and cases in the review meeting. Interestingly, countries/regional bodies like Britain and the EU did raise the concerns we had discussed with them and the representative from the Czech Republic even proposed our recommendations to the government during the presentation session (Informant 1, personal communication).

The second way to pressure the government to promote freedom of expression and to respect human rights is through soliciting support from foreign buyers. To this end, local NGOs, individually or as a coalition when a case is serious and needs rapid and collective responses, release a joint statement to express thier concerns against an act of violation and send it, together with reports and videos/audios of the abuses, to them. With serious cases, the foreign buyers have now and then issued statements to express their concerns and 'request' the government for a solution.

MEDIA AS A MEDIUM TO PROMOTE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Radio programs

Currently, radio programs are still an effective means for NGOs to promote freedom of expression. Each NGO interviewed has its own radio program(s) to disseminate news, to provide human rights and legal education, and to discuss related issues. Such programs can take a few different formats. A common program is news briefing. The Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM), for instance, provides news briefing every hour. A "roundtable talk show" is another regular program NGOs have. It allows speakers to discuss an issue and audience to call in to ask questions and/or express opinions. CCIM has "VOD Roundtable," which is broadcast every other working day for an hour. The program allows speakers, be it, politicians and/or analysts, to talk and discuss on a topic such as "Journalists' Security" or "Cambodia's Political Deadlock" and listeners to call in to share their opinions (Informant 7, personal communication). A similar program is one that invites only one speaker to share knowledge with the listeners or to talk on a particular issue and then receives calls from audience either to ask questions or share their thoughts. The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) has two such radio programs broadcast via Beehive Radio and Vayo Radio Stations every Thursday. Another program allows audience to call in straight away to share certain issues with listeners or to get their support or to demand for accountability and intervention from concerned state agencies or public figures. So, obviously enough, radio programs provide a vital platform to promote freedom of expression.

Social Media

Social media are another means to promote freedom of expression. Several reasons drive NGOs to use them for this purpose. Social media have certain unique functions traditional media lack. More than a communication tool, they allow users to receive news and information more quickly, engage in information sharing and exchange, name and shame acts of violation, and receive feedback and comments in real time through posting, sharing, liking and commenting (UNESCO, 2012). They provide an online public forum for debate and discussion, which is strictly monitored and controlled on the ground.

Their unique functions depend largely on types of social media, which range from websites to social networking sites, especially Facebook, Twitter, blogs and YouTube. One NGO officer gives the reasons

his organization created its website. He explains, "The main purpose for our organization to set up the website is to draw public attention to the state of human rights in Cambodia via posting press releases, alerts, reports and other related publications" (Informant 12, personal communication). Another respondent adds, "Ours has one more special feature called 'live stream,' allowing audience to update news and activities by themselves when there are protests, demonstrations, and important events" (Informant 10, personal communication).

Staff from two other NGOs explain how the websites of their organizations support the promotion of freedom of expression. According to Informant 6, "the public can listen to live broadcast from the radio program on our website; this helps offset the limited coverage of certain issues not covered in actual radio programs." The other respondent adds, "CCIM has three websites. The website http://www.ccimcambodia.org is similar to other NGO websites which aims to share its press releases, alerts and other reports. The other two:vodhotnews.com and www.vod.com/tv are to disseminate hot news; people can read and watch online news on the websites" (Informant 7, personal communication).

All respondents agree that social networking sites have a great impact on the promotion and protection of freedom of expression. As an illustration, in the past few years, Facebook has enabled the revelation of many sensitive issues like corruption, illegal logging, human rights abuses, impunity, and legal manipulation that are rarely exposed, heretofore, by traditional media. Through posting and sharing factual, reliable and independent information, some Cambodians and NGOs have raised their concerns online and offline in the hope of influencing the government decision-making. One human rights activist shares the reasons his organization created a Facebook page,

> The sharp increase of Facebook users is undoubtedly a major reason. In 2013 around 1,000 Cambodians became new members every day…. Many of them, especially youths, have accessed to it on the daily basis, and we have to catch up with this trend….Facebook is [perceived as] one of the very few platforms to get independent news because traditional media are influenced by the ruling party, and social media provide a great and safe platform to raise and share concerns…and to call for change in behaviors (Informant 8, personal communication).

Besides having Facebook pages, several NGOs have posted videos on YouTube to share information about human rights abuses, and to share their human rights promotion and protection activities. Such posting also aims to garner support from citizens and for them to raise their concerns to the state. Blogging is another activity to promote freedom of expression, even though only one NGO has used it. Some blogs are created for specific causes, e.g. petition such as "Stop suppression of freedom of speech in Cambodia" (established in response to the controversial conviction of Mu Sochua a few years ago); "Cambodian [Khmer Rouge] survivors seek justice," and "Mistreatment of three teachers who reported corruption in Kroal Kol High School" (CCHR, 2013).

The remarkable growth of users in Cambodia in the past several years is seen as a major push factor encouraging NGOs to use social media to promote freedom of expression. The rapid increase in users is simply because of more affordable Internet fees. In late 2012, it was estimated that there were around 2.7 million Internet users, accounting for 17% of the population, while only 3.1% of the population had Internet access in 2011. Households can now subscribe to high-speed Internet connection at as low as $12 per month, and this was unimaginable in 2011 (CCHR, 2013; Royal Embassy of Cambodia, 2013). The cheaper Internet fee is coincided with wider access to and more affordable personal computers, tablets and smart phones, allowing media consumers who possess the gargets to access to the Internet anywhere and anytime (Helmkhemara, as cited in CCHR 2013).

Moreover, a majority of users are youths, who are eager to know, learn, share and drive changes, so they are the NGOs' main target group. Owing to the Internet fast speed and less censorship from the state, news and information are spread more quickly than ever before, which attracts the public to social media when they want to get updated news and information. According to an activist, "Cambodian citizens, particularly youths, have posed new and great demand for media content and accessibility…. Media consumers of this technology era do not have the patience to wait for the

contents, which are influenced by the government, that traditional media outlets schedule to deliver at a fixed time" (Informant 5, personal communication). Due to this latest social development, now each organization has a special working group working on social media. This group works to disseminate hot news, share reports, and post statements on its social media platform. One NGO employee states,

> Besides posting hot news, reports, alerts and videos of human rights violation and promotion like other NGOs do on Facebook, CCHR posts and shares related international laws and the Cambodian Constitution. To make such posts effective, we use pictures embedded with meanings to attract attention from social media users, get our messages across and have them share the posts with other (Informant 1, personal communication).

USE OF MOBILE PHONE TO PROMOTE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

CCIM and the Community Legal Education Center (CLEC) are the only NGOs sampled to have used bulk SMS to promote freedom of access to information and freedom of expression. It is one of the latest technological tools to promote human rights and freedoms. Obviously, the definition of bulk SMS shows how important it is. According to a respondent, bulk SMS is a system that allows an institution to send or receive a large volume of SMS; it permits NGOs to send and share news and information in brief on a regular basis through sending a single SMS to a numbers of subscribers at any instance. He continues,

> Using bulk SMS can benefit both our NGO and the subscribers. For us, we send news in just one SMS, but it reaches thousands of subscribers. The SMS is not restricted to texts, but it can be voice SMS as well, and it is not only in English, but also in Khmer. For subscribers, they can get news briefing, which matches their interests, automatically. Moreover, they can express their opinions too as the system allows them to reply to us (Informant 6, personal communication).

The two NGOs reveal that they are planning to launch another new mass sharing system called Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) to promote freedom of access to information and freedom of expression in the very near future. IVR is a telephony technology allowing users to access to a database of information via phone (Vashistha and Thies, 2014). The system has several menus of prerecorded options for callers to select from. The choices are in numbers and callers can dial a specific number to proceed. Besides, callers can verbally respond to the system to express their opinions and provide feedback to the organizations. A media coordinator from one of the NGOs stresses,

> IVR is a new system that our organization is about to launch; we plan to establish it because of the sharp increase in mobile phone users. As I remember, around 93% of the population could access to telephone, and 50% of them owned mobile phones (USAID, 2012). So now there must be more users… IVR allows people not only to listen to prerecorded news, information on human rights and our recorded radio program, but also to drop us news and ask for emergency support like free legal consultation or for lawyers (Informant 6, personal communication).

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND ICT TRAINING

Human rights training is still a fundamental approach to promote freedom of expression. It is an effective means to build and enhance citizens' capacity and knowledge of human rights and freedoms and to empower them to take action to protect their interests and public spheres, at large. Such training often provides participants with knowledge of international and domestic human rights norms and laws. Understanding these instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Cambodian Constitution helps people know their freedoms, rights, obligations and duties. They know how to exercise and/or reclaim their rights and freedoms. Such training can help alter the "culture of silence" in Cambodian society.

According to some informants, in the past several years their organizations have conducted capacity building training to empower communities affected by human rights abuses, e.g. victims of forced eviction. One informant reports that his organization provides training on international and domestic

laws on human rights and freedom of expression, and some other legal instruments and policies such as the land law. The NGOs also teach people how to work collectively to achieve a common goal, advocacy and negotiation skills, and report writing and public speaking skills.

In this cyber age, ICT knowledge, particularly on the Internet and social media, is of great importance for people to express opinions and raise their concerns to the attention of the public and governments. All NGOs unanimously agree that training should go beyond human rights education. Staff from CCIM and CLEC inform the authors that currently the training their organizations offer tend to cover ICT education such as how to use the Internet, social media and smart phones/tablets to promote freedom of expression.

The ICT education often involves training young, rural (sometimes urban) community activists or citizen journalists, who can understand how information technology works and how to make use of it to promote human rights and freedoms. When recruited, the trainees are provided with a smart phone and a computer to do their work. Through training, they are equipped with knowledge on human rights, basic journalistic and IT skills and how to use smart phones and computers to carry out their activities. Once trained, the citizen or community journalists are required to send information obtained to the media unit of the organizations via Line and emails before having the stories posted on NGOs' websites and Facebook pages.

PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS

To date, mounting a campaign, a vital means to express public opinions, is a common approach all NGOs sampled use to promote freedom of expression. Informant 8 states, "A campaign is a way to raise awareness and inspire people and the government to achieve social change; it is not about blaming or shaming." In Cambodia, campaigns are done to raise public awareness and call for support from the public or for social change.

Both online and offline campaigns are often used by NGOs. An employee from *Sahmakum Teang Tnaut* raises a few online campaigns his organization has created. Examples include "Black Out," a campaign to request the Electricity Authority of Cambodia to release electricity cut-off schedules and "Trash" to collect information on trash dumps not collected for weeks in Phnom Penh through creating posters and posting them on its Facebook page and website everyday for three months. Offline campaigns are conducted along or on the streets or at the Freedom Park. According to Informant 15, the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee and other NGOs launch the "Human Rights Day" campaign on 10th December every year to promote human rights values and to end violations in all forms in Cambodia. On 20th February, another campaign "Social Justice" is organized every year to promote effort to tackle such issues as poverty, exclusion and unemployment and to call for equal distribution of resources, based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

LEGAL AND EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Five out of the eight NGOs sampled choose to provide legal and emergency support to the victims. In order to provide the support, several steps need to be followed. Initially, the case has to be investigated. After receiving a complaint from a victim or his/her relatives, the legal support unit of each NGO approaches them to investigate and verify the claim. Then the unit goes to meet, inquire and discuss with concerned authorities and witnesses to fact-check the case. According to a CCHR officer, "it is vital to collect and consider the information from all sources; some of them might witness the case themselves, and some may just hear from others. The information serves to decide whether the case is an abuse and forms the basis for the assistance provision" (Informant 13, personal communication).

To decide whether support is granted, some organizations send the case and information collected to a 'lawyer committee' under the supervision of a senior lawyer, whilst others rely on the decision of

individual lawyers. Once the case is selected, the NGO helps file a complaint to the court. In some cases, victims and their families are provided with emergency relief too.

THE CAMBODIAN EXPERIENCE IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

Lobbying: This research shows that lobbying is a common approach Cambodian NGOs use. This is in line with a global trend where many NGOs prefer (or try) to engage with governments, political society and/or international donors to promote freedom of expression. Studies by Kristina Kausch (2009), Tiina Kukkamaa (2008), Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani (2005) and Suharko (2003) show that NGOs in Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Tanzania oftentimes lobby their governments to enlarge political space and to loosen their grip over civil spheres. Given the NGO-state power imbalance, NGOs, particularly in aid-dependent countries, sometimes resort to rely on international actors, especially big donors, to put pressure on the recipient states to achieve their goals (Cardenas, 2005; Haque, 2002). The Cambodian case is similar to experiences elsewhere such as the Philippines, Egypt and Brazil (Act Alliance, 2011; Kausch, 2009).

NGOs in countries where opposition parties are gaining public support try to engage with this political society as much as possible. Malaysia and South Korea are two telling examples (Alagappa, 2004). With the emergence of a stronger opposition in Cambodia, local NGOs have engaged with it to push for political concession from the government, or ruling party. This is especially the case after the 2013 elections, which saw the main ruling party, the CPP, losing considerable ground to the CNRP. The election results indicate that the levels of support for both parties are comparable, and the opposition currently holds 55 seats (vs. 68 for the CPP) in the National Assembly.

Media: Media, traditional, new and social, are a good medium for NGOs and citizens to promote freedom of expression. They are the means to share information and keep the public posted of any development, a forum to disseminate international and domestic human rights norms and practices, and a watchdog over the state and political and economic societies (Alagappa, 2004; Cardenas, 2005; European Commission, 2012). If properly exploited, they can even set public agenda and frame how citizens see what is happening around them and may impact their behavior (Harper, 2003; Willis, 2007). The development of the Internet and social media have allowed citizens to become netizens and citizen journalists, sped up information flow and exchange, and even enabled them to be content providers and agenda setter (Clarke, 2004; Moeller, 2008; Willis, 2007; Powell, 2003). NGOs have thus grabbed this latest technological development to facilitate their promotion of freedom of expression.

Cambodian NGOs have also relied on media to promote freedom of expression. Existing studies demonstrate that in other countries NGOs use the Internet and social media to promote online social activism. Notably, in Egypt social media like Facebook and Twitter provided a virtual venue for citizens to express opinions and to mobilize and organize protests against government suppression, leading to the demise of the Mubarak's government in 2011 (Eddlem, 2013). Local NGOs' increasing reliance on media can be understood in the context where world politics is shaped by globalization and development of modern communication technology (Gomez and Gan, 2004; Schmidt and Hersh, 2003; Wood, 2008), which increases free flow of information, ideas, people, goods, services and capital and which eases their effort in promoting freedom of expression. Because of this global inter-connectedness, the agendas of local NGOs and how they manage their operation are largely influenced and shaped by their donors, global agendas, and global trends in normative discourses, through the exchange of communication and technological knowledge, and sometimes NGOs' pure desire to get funding (Hughes, 2009; Ou and Ojendal, 2013; Sok, 2012).

As an illustration, while currently radio programs organized by NGOs are still considered one of the most viable means to promote freedom of expression, allowing people to get updated and independent news and air their concerns, the programs of two NGOs have been axed owing to the reduction of funding from their donors (Informants 4 and 13, personal communication), one of whom confides to

the authors, **"**In 2013, our NGO had a radio program allowing the victims of land grab to raise their problems, and we think that such is very influential and effective; however, we need to suspend it now that we lack funding. We were suggested by our donors to use Facebook and YouTube instead." And certainly that donors shapes and influences how NGOs change from reliance on traditional media to online activism and social media is not confined to Cambodia (Dupuy, Ron and Prakash, 2012; MANGO, 2005; Mawdsley, Porter and Townsend, 2000).

Human Rights and ICT Training: In many developing countries, the role (or even intention) of the states to promote freedom of expression via human rights training is quite limited given their desire to maintain power and protect self-interest. NGOs are, therefore, usually positioned at the forefront of human rights training to effect social and political change and demand for justice through collective action (Andreopoulos, 2002; Cardenas, 2005; Iacopino, 1998; Plantilla, 2002). In Malaysia and Brazil, for instance, NGOs actively conduct public forums and workshops to disseminate human rights principles and practices and to allow citizens to raise their voices and concerns (Act Alliance, 2011; Sani, 2005). In Cambodia, besides offering training on human rights, Cambodian NGOs also focus on improving citizens' knowledge of information communication technology (ICT) to enable them to exploit modern technology to promote human rights, democracy and freedom of expression.

The promotion of freedom of expression is in part resulted from the intention of the West to re-construct a worldview through dissemination of Western symbols, norms, values and other cultural traits through communication and interaction with others (Schmidt and Hersh, 2003; Scholte, 2005), and the intention of development practitioners (and scholars) in developing countries to reshape the political and social landscape in their countries. This may trigger *global consciousness*, which motivates people to conceive themselves as global citizens, who share with each other similar values and interests and aspire to change the status quo. An NGO worker from CLEC underlines,

> Nowadays, we need to thank the development of technology and spread of globalization. Technology helps us to have the Internet and social media. Plus, globalization, through our contact with donors, teaches us how to use such advanced communication technology, which we can rely on to improve freedom of expression in Cambodia (Informant 6, personal communication).

Training provided by NGOs is also shaped by the global trends in normative discourses, global technological development and donor agenda. Some local NGOs now tend to increase spending on ICT training whilst expense on human rights education has decreased significantly. This is because of the popularity of social media and availability of fund from donors for ICT projects.

Campaigns: Like their counterparts in other developing countries, Cambodian NGOs often conduct public campaigns to promote freedom of expression and human rights. Studies by the International Federation of Journalists (2014), Kukkamaa (2008), Pratt (2004), Sani (2005), Suharko (2003), for example, show that public campaigns are commonly carried out by NGOs in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Egypt, and Tanzania. A subtle difference noticeable is that while NGOs in these countries often mobilize people to protest and demonstrate against the states on the ground, rarely do Cambodian NGOs, at least those sampled, lead any protest or demonstration against the state. Cambodian NGOs usually adopt a more subtle and benign approach to confronting the government. This subtlety is perhaps resulted from the power imbalance between the state and the NGO sector, which is tilted towards the former, and the latter's inability to mobilize public support to pursue their causes (Hughes, 2003; Sok, 2012, Vijghen, 2001). Unlike their counterparts in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, their states are more accommodative to changes and public opinions. Cambodian NGOs are more prone to accusation of incitement offenses and of being on the opposition camp, given their similar agendas.

Legal and emergency support: Provision of such support to victims of human rights abuses is one of the most common approaches NGOs adopt. As Cambodians are more aware of their rights, thanks

to thousands of donor-funded projects on democracy and human rights, better information flow due to the development of modern communication technology, and indeed availability of donors' funding, local NGOs have a significant role to play in supporting the victims. Such support has encouraged social activism and protection of public spheres and promotes freedom of expression. This finding is consistent with other studies, which indicates that provision of such support is a necessary approach for local NGOs in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Egypt and Tanzania to promote freedom of expression and human rights (IFJ, 2014; Kukkamaa, 2008; Pratt, 2004; Sani, 2005; Suharko, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Cambodian NGOs use a few key approaches, namely lobbying, media, training, campaigns, legal and emergency support, to protect and promote freedom of expression. Only one sampled NGO can engage with and lobby the state with some degree of success. There is also a trend to engage more intently with the main opposition party given its recent rise in public support. Because of the power of the purse and limited political space for civic engagement and NGOs to operate, donors are oftentimes lobbied to help pressure or encourage the state to ensure the political space and spheres, and protect human rights and freedoms. NGOs use media, traditional, new and social, to promote freedom of expression too. Many radio programs on news briefing and radio shows on human rights, freedoms, and democracy are commonly run by local NGOs. There is recently an increasing reliance on social media, and NGOs also offer training on both human rights and, more recently, use of ICT. NGOs are quite active in organizing public campaigns, online and offline, to raise public awareness or to condemn human rights abuses. Finally, they provide legal and emergency support to victim of human rights abuses so that their voices are heard in and outside court.

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List of Interviewees

No.	Informant	Position	Date of Interview
1	Informant 1	Project coordinator	19 May, 2014
2	Informant 2	Project coordinator	23 May, 2014
3	Informant 3	Executive director	26 May, 2014
4	Informant 4	Senior communication officer	27 May, 2014
5	Informant 5	Citizen journalist	27 May, 2014
6	Informant 6	Project coordinator	27 May, 2014
7	Informant 7	Executive director	28 May, 2014
8	Informant 8	Project officer	29 May, 2014
9	Informant 9	Project officer	3 June, 2014
10	Informant 10	Technical coordinator	4 June, 2014
11	Informant 11	Community project manager	4 June, 2014
12	Informant 12	Media project officer	4 June, 2014
13	Informant 13	Project coordinator	6 June, 2014
14	Informant 14	Program manager	9 June, 2014
15	Informant 15	Executive director	9 June, 2014

Footnotes

1. For the UPR procedure, go to http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/BasicFacts.aspx.

Political Discussion on Social Media: A Platform for Discussion or a Cause for Social Divide?

Manika Pin and Say Sok

Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms were introduced to Cambodia as early as in 2008, but it was not until the last few years that they have become popular, with reportedly 1.12 million users in September 2013[1] due to more affordable Internet connection fees, better access to the Internet, and increasing users of smart phones and tablets. In the lead-up to the 2013 general elections, the number of users, especially amongst the first and second time voters, had increased significantly, and it was in this period that the use of social media started to be more political.

Immediately before and during the election campaign period, many online news articles and posts (written and visual) related to the elections were liked, posted, shared and commented on actively on Facebook. Plus, many political parties' Facebook pages and groups affiliated with them were created and employed to conduct virtual campaigns and to discuss and share news and information on the elections. Many political activists and politicians become well known through this social media platform too. The political discussions, exchanges of views and even curses, and campaigns did not abate during the more-than-one-year-long post-election political impasse. Observers of Cambodian electoral politics agree that this electoral competition was the most tense in the past 20 years of post-conflict electoral politics in Cambodia, with supporters of both main political camps actively involved in campaigns, online and on the streets; many post-election mass street protests, and tense, at times harsh, political rhetorical exchanges between them.

Intrigued by this latest political development and online social and political activism, we aim to discuss the development of media consumption in Cambodia; youths' online participation in recent political contests, and how their participation could lead to political transformation and/or social divide. This commentary is based mainly on our observations of the electoral competition, campaigns and exchanges of views in 2013, as they played out both online and offline.

FROM TRADITIONAL TO NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA

It is a given that because traditional media were not an effective and independent means for information sharing, political campaigns, and discussion, social media were heavily used, especially by the oppositions, in any way possible during the elections and election stalemate to get in touch with and maintain the support of their constituents. Only a few newspapers are currently affiliated with the oppositions, while the others are inclined towards the ruling party or the government. Reports by CCIM (2013) and Peou, Pin and Sok (2013) indicate that many of these newspapers mainly promote the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the government and rarely voice their criticisms, especially against the central government agencies and prominent public figures in the party and

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1. http://geeksincambodia.com/infographic-facebook-in-cambodia/ *as of 1st October, 2014. The number of users should have increased substantially in the course of a year.*

government. In addition, newspaper coverage is very low, and newspapers are mostly circulated in Phnom Penh and big provincial towns, where people can afford them and are literate. According to CCIM (2013), the readership covers only 2% of the population. Therefore, newspapers are not an effective means for both major political parties and citizens to receive and disseminate party-related information and to express opinions.

Currently, television is the most reachable, but allegedly the least independent means, amongst all traditional media. Its broadcast capacity reaches the population across the country, yet it mainly broadcast positive news about the government. Radio is noticeably one of most reachable means after TV and the most independent, compared with newspapers and television. Although many radio broadcasters are allied with the government and ruling party, some international Khmer language and national, mostly NGO-run, broadcasters and programs are more impartial and broadcast more balanced news (CCIM, 2013; McCarthy, 2012; Peou, Pin and Sok, 2013). In this regard, radio can be the best means for political parties to share information and get connected with their supporters, and for the public to voice opinions and exchange views. However, based on such factors as timeliness, convenience, and dialogical communication that social media offer, even radio cannot beat social media in popularity.

New and social media are platforms for information sharing and discussion, and they distinguish themselves from traditional media by their timeliness, convenience, unlimited coverage, users-cum-content-providers, two-way communication, their stronger shield for users to stay anonymous, and wide range of users (Clarke, 2004; Moeller, 2008). Seeing these potentials, many Cambodians start to move from traditional media consumers to new and social media consumers, especially for information and discussion. Among all social media platforms, Facebook, which is the most popular in Cambodia, was initially used mainly to stay connected with friends, relatives and colleagues (e.g. to express feelings and share photos) – i.e. it was merely for entertainment and social purposes. However, after political parties and affiliated pages and online groups found the potential and power of social media to disseminate political propaganda and share information and users perceiving them as a more 'independent' and reliable means to receive and share information and to exchange ideas, they have become a tool intensely exploited for political purposes. The recent experience seems to suggest that youths and social media could help achieve significant political transformation. Although there are still more continuities than changes in how elite politics is played out, the political landscape and how internal politics is conducted in Cambodia have changed to a considerable extent, thank partly to how political parties and activists and users use social media for political purposes.

YOUTHS AND POLITICAL DISCUSSION: NOTICED CHANGES IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Perhaps the highlight of the 2013 elections was the massive outflow of electorates, especially youths, to campaign for the parties they supported in the campaign period; their participation in the post-election opposition-led demonstrations; their active political engagement online and as activists, and the generally open political discussion on social media. Before the elections, social media platforms such as Facebook were mainly used for social connections and chiefly by urban youths who are: one, able to afford both the gargets and Internet access and two, basic information communication technology and everyday English literate. Yet, when the Internet access expanded and the connection fees decreased substantially, plus the Khmer language is available on Facebook, the number of users, especially amongst the urban 'middle class' and even those not English literate, sky-rocketed. Still, the majority of users are youths who are impatient with the status quo and the perceived underdevelopment, and this makes Facebook a very successful, free and effective platform for political discussion and information exchanges among Cambodian citizens and between political parties and their supporters. While the cultural values of '*korob kaud khlach*' (respect, admiration, fear) of the authorities and the fear of voicing alternative or opposing views are deeply embedded in the older generation (Ojendal

and Kim, 2006; Chandler, 2008), Facebook has helped usher in a generation of younger Cambodians, especially those born after the civil war, who are more courageous to voice their concerns about social and political ills.

Based on our observation, we could think of several reasons why the Cambodian political landscape has changed dramatically during the last elections. If we look at the demographics of our population, Cambodia has a very young population, with 65.3% of its people under the age of 30 and 33% between 15-30 (UNDP Cambodia, 2013). This explains the relatively higher level of youths' involvement in electoral politics, compared with the previous elections. Experiences elsewhere such as the recently attempted umbrella revolution in Hong Kong and mass protests against the government in South Korea in 1980s (Alagappa, 2004; Armstrong, 2007) firmly demonstrate that youths strongly support and seek social and political changes, unlike their parents and grandparents who rather stay in a 'political comfort zone' than go through a political change that might cause instability or even chaos. Youths are keener to achieve changes they wish to see, more active to attain it, and certainly more vocal in condemning social and political vices.

YOUTHS AND WIDE ACCESSIBILITY TO SOCIAL MEDIA: A POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION?

The special utilities of Facebook that differ from those of traditional media outlets are that users do not only like, post, share or comment on news and information from other news sources and users, but also share their very own videos, audios, photos or information that are not covered or are manipulated by traditional media. As we noticed, during the election campaign and even during the deadlock, a lot of news and information, ranging from common political news, political activities and campaigns, and public forums and political debates, to election and campaign irregularities were posted by users, pages and groups and shared from one to another, and then not only did they become very hot topics on Facebook, but they also spread among non-Facebook users and were picked up by some traditional media outlets as well. It seems that few of the posts were overlooked by the public, and they tended to believe or like the posts and news if they were in the forms of videos and photos. We observed that many posts by popular activists, public figures, pages and groups were liked by thousands of supporters and followers instantly, and commented on and shared by thousands of them too. Besides information sharing, Facebook serves as a discussion forum amongst groups or even public users, who exchanged comments and opinions with their Facebook friends and users on news and information they were interested in. Perhaps, to the surprise of some veteran Cambodian observers, users daringly expressed their ideas and concerns (even if some contradicted with the government's positions and were critical of the government and ruling party) freely and openly. Because of this free and open discussion on social media, the extent of political discussion and criticisms offline and in the public space was quite intense too.

Social media users, especially youths, widely use Facebook as a means for political participation. Facebook creates a sense of privacy and security for them in expressing their ideas. They can express and share opinions either openly or in private groups and group chat. They could stay perceivably anonymous while openly criticize any political party or public figure. They can just create a fake account. Another specialty of Facebook is its features allowing users to create groups amongst people who may support the same political parties or have similar interests (either closed or open groups) and pages to garner support for political parties (e.g. I Love Cambodia Hot News; I Hate Page "I Love Cambodia Hot News"). In these features, they can share information, express opinions, and discuss political issues openly or privately. This helps those politically active users, pages and groups to gain more supporters, so that their voices could be more powerful and they could attract more public interests and political support to the parties they like.

While it is still far from certain as to the extent of contribution from social media, especially Facebook, to the recent political transformation, one cannot deny their fair share to the recent transformation,

whereby the main opposition party has been slung into a more prominent position, through gaining many more seats in the parliament. The opposition has, thus far, used its newly awarded power to seek for some legal and electoral reforms and there are some successes in its endeavor. Perhaps what manifests the power of Facebook in this transformation too is the change in how the ruling party and state agencies engage with Cambodian citizens via this social medium, more intensely. Facebook pages of numerous state agencies and CPP-affiliated groups and pages have experienced more traffic in recent months. There is no denial that Facebook has transformed the Cambodian political landscape and perhaps ushered in a generation of more active and outspoken netizens.

YOUTHS AND SOCIAL MEDIA: A CAUSE FOR SOCIAL DIVIDE?

While the contribution of social media to the political transformation is quite impressive, how users misuse and manipulate them may be a cause for concern too. Some may argue that the online media platforms give so much freedom and many possibilities to the users who exploit them to attack other people or groups without caring about the damage to others and regard to their rights. Many strongly worded and even legally libelous statuses and posts are posted, shared, and commented on amongst users and groups by supporters of political parties. These posts openly and directly criticized politicians and parties, and sometimes they accused them without evidence or reasons. We could also see the frequent trading of harsh arguments and accusation between supporters of different political parties when they disagreed on one status or post/response. When those arguments became extremely fierce, they led to cursing (such words as *ah/mi* (a derogatory word in Khmer), and references of people to dog and puppet were common) and sometimes even threats. Besides inappropriate statuses and news, many other forms of unethical conducts and exchanges were posted, shared and commented on. Things such as photo-shopped pictures of politicians with animal bodies or heads, and sometimes accompanied by offensive language, were frequently posted, shared and commented on by users, pages and groups of all political tendencies. Videos of unwarranted accusation, defamation, and swearing of political parties and prominent politicians were filmed and posted, and some of these people who produced them were not even afraid to show their identifies in these videos.

Another concern is the manipulation of information sharing to misinform the public. Information sharing is good for a democracy, but when false or manipulated information is disseminated to manipulate the public, it is not good for any democracy and society. Unfortunately, such posts were pretty frequent, and some were spread like wildfire. There are a number of plausible explanations for this misuse and abuses of social media. Some users might just want to raise public awareness and were enthusiastic to engage in politics and share information with their Facebook friends and users to the extent possible. However, there might be some users who were so careless and ignorant that they just shared stuff for the sake of sharing to perhaps get likes and comments. Still there might be hidden agenda of some users behind the politically affiliated pages, groups and accounts, whose aim was perhaps to fool the public and to gain support for their parties, irrespective of the means, or to stir public outrage and hatred against another political party or its supporters.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The shortcomings aside, social media have the potential to be a powerful virtual platform for engagement, discussion and debates amongst and between people and groups of different political tendency and a good means to receive and share information. Personally, we are quite skeptical of any proposed law that aims to regulate and restrict social media and any censorship attempt; instead we think that it is important to enhance (social) media ethics and education and an ethical society at large. While the harsh verbal exchanges between users, especially youths, can be a concern, users themselves are the most potential solution to overcome the issue. Fundamental skills in and knowledge on ICT should be introduced to the general education curriculum to familiarize (potential) users with this 'new means of media'. Amongst others, they may be introduced to an overview of

the platforms, social media for problem solving, and responsible netizens. Besides ICT education, a media literacy course should be integrated into the general education program too.

Perhaps the general education (besides the family and religious institutions) should aim to produce a moral and responsible society through strengthening its curriculum on developing ethical understanding. Amongst others, youths should be introduced to issues, nature, and concepts of ethics; human and Cambodian values, rights and responsibilities, and reasoning in personal decision-making and actions.[2] In the meantime, there is a need for more informal or non-formal training, through, say, workshops or public forums, on ICT and media literacy and ethics, tailored to enhance responsible netizens. We do not build an ethical society by preaching rules and norms and breaking them ourselves; amongst all else Cambodian youths perhaps need role models of ethics and accountability, especially amongst leaders they admire – and this need for role models does apply to social media users too.

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2. For an overview of such a curriculum for Australia, see http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au as of 1st October, 2014.

Cambodia's Changing Media Landscape:
Reformed or Debilitated?

Theara Khoun

INTRODUCTION

The elections of 2013 should have been a wakeup call for real reforms, not only for the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), but also for its allies in the traditional media sector. In the previous mandates, the CPP was able to effectively shape public opinions in its favor courtesy of its domination over the mainstream media, including local television, radio and newspapers, which more than less serve as government's mouthpieces. The rapid proliferation of these outlets in the aftermath of the UN-organized elections in 1993 means greater dissemination of the governments' policies, activities and achievements, and greater alienation of alternative views, especially from the opposition. Partisan information together with 'muted' political culture and post-traumatic mentality made most Cambodians apolitical, shying them away from engaging in policy debates and challenging the status quo. As a result, prior to the recent elections, the ruling party could mobilize increasing support from its electorates at the expense of weakened opposition parties.[1]

However, since a few months before the 2013 elections, the situation has begun to change quite significantly. Many Cambodians have started to break out of the culture of fear, silence and political ignorance and move toward a culture of civic engagement.[2] They actively participated in political campaigns, demonstrations, and the elections themselves. The public domain has become a common place for political discussion and expression of dissatisfaction with the government's failure and inaction.[3] As a consequence, it comes as no surprise that the CPP's seats in the National Assembly were drastically reduced – from 90 in 2008 to 68 in 2013 – while the remaining 55 seats went to the sole opposition in the parliament, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP).

THE RISE OF NEW MEDIA ALTERNATIVES

The election outcome per se questions the efficacy of mass media that was once instrumental in mobilizing support for the incumbent ruling party.[4] Deterioration of its power grip can be explained by growing discontents with failure to address major social and political issues, echoed by a growing youth population and social media outreach, leading many to be critical of and disgruntled with those in power.

1. Hun Sen's CPP won 64 out of the 123 seats in the National Assembly in 1998, 73 seats in 2003, and a landslide victory, with 90 seats, in 2008 before it plummeted to just 68 seats in 2013.

2. Khoun, Theara, "Cambodia: Politics and a Legacy of Trauma," *Middle East-Asia Project,* Middle East Institute, 7 January, 2013, http://www.mei.edu/content/cambodiapolitics-and-legacy-trauma.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Meyn, Colin "Virtual Democracy," *Southeast Asia Globe,* 11 November, 2013, http://sea-globe.com/virtual-democracy-social-media-elections-cambodia-cpp-cnrp/.

The rise of social media as a better alternative, if not substitution, to the pro-government media means information can no longer be monopolized, concealed and manipulated. Low yet fast-growing Internet penetration in the country is estimated at about 2.7 million Internet users, or about 18% of the population;[5] of this figure, over one million users have Facebook accounts, not to mention other quite popular social media such as Twitter and YouTube.[6] While traditional media (read: pro-government media) often generate pro-government and obsolete contents, social media features more varied contents, and users can comment, share, and express their opinions without fear of censorship. Sensitive issues such as human rights violations and land grab, which are concealed in traditional media, are often accessible online, especially via Facebook. In addition, increasing popularity of international broadcasters such as the Voice of America, Radio Free Asia and Radio France International, citizen journalism, donor driven media initiatives, and such foreign language newspapers as the Cambodia Daily and Phnom Penh Post provide news consumers with better alternatives and wider access to more independent news coverage. As a result, the CNRP dominates in most of the populous provinces/capital where access to the Internet and information is most prevalent.

WHY ARE MEDIA REFORMS A RATIONAL MOVE?

The irrelevance of traditional media in drumming up electoral support for the ruling party should trigger a need for comprehensive media reforms for both the government and its politically allied media. First, to continue to generate one-sided news will compel more and more news consumers to substitute traditional media with new media alternatives. Despite alleged election irregularities skewed toward the ruling party, the CNRP constituents are almost the same size of the CPP supporters, i.e. 2.9 vs. 3.2 million, respectively. This pro-opposition's support will continue to surge should comprehensive reforms, including media reforms, with a solid political commitment, does not take place. Any attempt to silence the voices of the opposition and their supporters will only make the society even more deeply divided. Media reforms, in this sense, are an efficient strategy to reinvigorate its credibility, thereby ensuring more readership/viewership.

Second, despite prompt, pluralistic and interactive information posted online, some contents, which are subject to unreliability, propaganda and provocation in nature, may put the CPP in a disadvantage position. The growth of Internet users at the current pace without any proper policy intervention will make the party vulnerable to losing more support in the next elections. Yet, any attempt to suppress cyber freedom is unrealistic and unpopular, prompting unpleasant responses from youths, academia and the international community. At present, rights workers and many Internet users regard the ongoing drafting of a cyber-law as an attempt to suppress Internet freedom.[7] A few days before the 2013 elections, the government issued a directive to temporarily ban programs from international broadcasters, including VOA and RFA Khmer services. In response, the Cambodian public immediately voiced their condemnation online, echoed by the US government and international media outlets, resulting in the government's reversal of the ban the following day.[8] Thus, instead of restricting social media and independent media outlets, a decent counter-balance measure is to strengthen the value

5. "Cambodia Reports 60 Pct Rise in Internet Users Last Year, *Xinhua,* 14 March, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/sci/2013-03/14/c_132234173.htm. However, ITU puts it lower at 5% in 2012, http://www.internet-worldstats.com/asia/kh.htm.

6. As of September 2013, there were about 1.1 million Facebook users in Cambodia, http://geeksincambodia.com/infographic-facebook-in-cambodia/.

7. Khoun, Theara, "Internet Users Fear Online Suppression With Draft of Cyber Law," *Voice of America,* 1 December, 2012, http://www.voacambodia.com/content/internet-users-fear-online-suppression-with-draft-of-cyber-law/1556142.html.

8. Soeung, Sophat, "Social Media's Growing Influence on Cambodian Politics," East-West Center, *Asia Pacific Bulletin* 222, 23 July, 2013, http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/social-media's-growing-influence-cambodian-politics.

of local mass media, the CPP traditional base.

Media reforms are also to do with moral and professional responsibility. While social media has significant roles in contemporary society, it should not be the only news reference for citizens in a democracy. William E. Todd, U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia, once said, "They [Cambodian citizens] expect the media to act as their eyes and ears, investigating issues and problems that are important for the people to know about."[9] Hence, this vital social bond should be reinforced, as well-informed citizens are a foundation to any democracy.

CONTENT REVISIT AND REFORM AGENDA

What do media reforms mean? They mean more balanced news coverage, wider space for pluralistic views, and more accessibility to credible, verifiable sources.

Gaining trust from the public, especially the CPP non-constituents, is probably the most challenging task for Cambodian ruling elites and traditional media; yet it is feasible. First, the government and mass media should work in tandem to ensure the dissemination of more timely and accurate information and to provide a platform to voice alternative views. However, content improvement cannot occur with a restricted space for freedom of expression. In this sense, threats to independent media and media practitioners should be minimized. Such threats would create an atmosphere of self-censorship and naturally limit critical and alternative views. Second, meaningful and constructive debates and policy discussion on social and political issues should be on the agenda. Silence is not good to both the ruling party and the mass media; instead they should face with and demonstrate efforts in addressing the problems, and justify their responses and decision if problems remain unresolved. Competent officials' proper clarification of issues or allegation via traditional and non-traditional media is fundamental in this trust building process and seemingly embeds the culture of transparency and accountability.

Third, in line with these reforms, well-defined institutional procedures to access public and classified information should be established. Access to information in Cambodia is customarily eased by personal contacts and relationships rather than through institutionalized and translucent mechanisms (Leos, 2009).[10] Information related to institutional expenditure, project bidding and financial management, for instance, is largely off limit to the public and media.[11] Hence, governmental information and data that are of public interests should be publicized, and legislation granting citizens and the media the right and freedom to access to such information should be adopted and implemented, thereby fostering an open government, public debate, and social integrity. Effort in drafting a law on access to information has been ongoing in the past 10 years, but thus far its scope and development still remain at large.[12]

CONCLUSION

In the aftermath of the 2013 elections, the government and traditional media might have realized the repercussions of their obsolete and one-sided media strategies, as witnessed by some recent reforms. Some local televisions, newspapers and radio stations have begun to cover land grab, CNRP-led protests and demonstrations and other sensitive issues to some extent, which should be applauded and encouraged. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of professionalism

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9.   Todd, E. William, "Media Freedom Is Crucial for Cambodia's Democracy," 9 August, 2013, http://blogs.usem-bassy.gov/todd/2013/08/09/media-freedom-is-crucial-for-cambodia's-democracy/.

10. Leos, Raymond, "Access to Information in Southeast Asia and Cambodia," 2009, http://www.cchrcam-bodia.org/admin/media/report/report/english/2009-01-08-%20Access%20to%20Information%20in%20 Southeast%20Asia%20and%20Cambodia-%20EN.pdf.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Meyn, Colin and Hul, Reaksmey, "Freedom of Information Law Still Unrealized," 5 December, 2013, http:// www.cambodiadaily.com/archives/freedom-of-information-law-still-unrealized-48639/.

and balanced news reporting. The government has also expressed its commitment to comprehensive reforms, including improving access to information and freedom of expression and aimed to pass a law on access to information by 2017. Nevertheless, despite rhetoric of deep reforms, its commitment to credible reforms still remains to be seen. For thousands of years of its history, Cambodia has been characterized by the culture of secrecy, hierarchical rule and patronage among rulers and within its governments. Any reform, in this regard, cannot take place over night. It requires some degrees of patience, political commitment and collective actions to demand for change.

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Mass Information Dissemination for Safe Cross-border Migration in Cambodia

Rosa YI and Say SOK

"My friend and I left our home village in Pursat and set off our uncertain job-seeking journey to Poi Pet town, hoping to get any employment out there. We took this adventure with no concrete plan. We had no one in particular to refer to; thus we were just wandering around the town, hoping to meet someone who could offer us jobs or to get any information about job opportunities. At one point a man came to us and offered us jobs in Thailand if we were willing to illegally cross the border. We needed jobs and the prospect for a better living was just so appealing that we took his offer. The next evening we met him along with more than ten other fellow job seekers. It was an illegal journey; hence we needed to cross the border in the evening so that no one would spot us. The man led our way by crossing a creek, which divided Cambodia and Thailand. Waiting for us on the other side of the border was a Nissan pickup. At the back of the truck, wooden shelves covered by sleeping mats were horizontally organized into several bunks to accommodate us. We were told to lie on the shelves, bunk by bunk, as if we were goods or animals to be transported. Then the back of the truck was covered with tents to make it look as if the truck were transporting goods to avoid any attention from Thai authorities. It was a full two-day trip before we reached the final destination. At meal times, they would drive into nearby forests and stop to let us eat. During the first stop, one of us suffocated and died, and the rest got badly carsick. But there was nothing we could do about it. We kept going till we reached Bangkok, at which point some of us, mainly women, were dropped at various construction sites. The rest continued till we finally reached Pak Nam, a coastal part of Thailand. We arrived there at midnight and were headed into a building where we would stay for a week.

We were locked up in a 5-by-6 square meter room along with about 50 other guys. The room was just way to small for this number of people, so we needed to take turn to sleep. There was a hole fended by iron bars where they could hand us food twice a day. After a week, at midnight, we were led out to a beach, where a boat was waiting for us. The boat took us into the sea where another gigantic fishing boat was anchored and waiting for us. Transferred into the big boat, we were shortly informed that we were sold to work on the sea, and to be free again we needed to repay them a huge amount of money as they had paid the brokers to have us too. We were so blank having heard that, but there was no way out. We were in the middle of nowhere at the sea. There were around 40 of us on the boat. We were

working as slaves with the armed guards keeping eyes on us all the time. They frequently beat us up with steel bars and threatened to shoot or throw us into the water. We were living with constant over-work, humiliation, death threats, beating, torture, and forced drug abuses. However sick we became, we were forced to work, with no medical treatment available, except some basic medicines.

There was a time when my palms were badly wounded and swollen since I was always pulling fishing nets. I could hardly move my hands and decided to sit back a bit. A guard then threw a steel bar at me and seriously injured my back. I still have the scar on the back. It clearly appeared to us that we would have to work till we died. They forced us to work to a point that we would be too sick to work anymore. When we reached that point, we became absolutely useless for them to keep us; they then gave us two options: jumping into the sea by ourselves or being shot and thrown into the sea. Some of us ended with this fate.

One day, the boat came close to the shore of Malaysia and five of us decided to risk lives and jump into the sea. Actually, we did not know that it was Malaysia; what in our mind was that to get a chance to survive we had to take the risk. We were swimming ashore hoping to reach the land before getting killed on the way. We made it, luckily, and ran to the police so that we would be arrested and saved."

The true tragic story above was shared by a rescued Cambodian migrant who was brokered and enslaved to work on a fishing boat in Thailand and with whom Rosa talked back in 2009. We recalled this tragedy from his personal account, as the chronic issue of illegal labor migration to Thailand has recently reached its boiling point, when hundred thousands of Cambodian illegal migrant workers were repatriated by Thailand. Markedly, such a story is just one of the many tragedies Cambodian migrant workers have encountered during their stay in some host countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and China, to name just three. Accounts and testimonies by former migrants of human trafficking, enslavement, exploitation, abuses, cheating and the likes are common. And listening to all these stories may break our hearts. Nonetheless, it is even more heartbreaking to learn that little has been done, if at all, so far to improve the status quo. Until now, this issue has become a grave social concern left unresolved.

A fundamental reason motivating us to write this commentary is to draw the public attention to this long-standing saga, to divulge the implications and, of our hope, to offer some ways out. We strongly believe that Cambodia is able to trade off far better in helping its people cross borders to work in other countries legally and more safely, should its government be more politically committed to dealing with the issue head-on. Given the socio-economic gains that cross-border migration can produce, Cambodian government has every good reason to invest its efforts in facilitating, easing, and regulating this cross-border migration. And one thing in the to-do-list, we strongly advocate for an active role of mass information dissemination campaigns through mass media and communication for effective migration governance. To ensure that migrant workers are able to move legally and safely, it is imperative that right information on safe migration be widely disseminated, and reach out to current and prospective migrants, their families and communities.

Our commentary is structured as follows. We set off with a quick glance at the recent mass repatriation of Cambodian irregular workers from Thailand and what we should learn from it. We then brief the socio-economic roles of cross-border labor migration in Cambodia, which essentially helps necessitate

the need for more active national intervention on the issue. The last section illustrates the roles of mass information dissemination and communication in promoting safe migration.

06/14 EXODUS IN RETROSPECT: *A wake-up call and lessons unlearned*

Between June 6 and 22, 2014, the unusual busy-ness was more than apparent at two main Cambodian-Thai border crossings of Poipet in Banteay Meanchey and Cham Yeam in Koh Kong as hundred thousands of Cambodian migrant workers were flooding home from Thailand. The news of this large-scale repatriation made headlines in every single local newspaper and in no fewer than several international ones. Shock and doubt had taken the floor and concerned Cambodian authorities were unusually busy bringing these returnees from the border back to their home villages.

Photo courtesy of www.Movetocambodia.com.

However, it is crucial to note that illegal cross-border migration to Thailand is anything, but new. More importantly, the deliveries of illegal Cambodian migrant workers by the Thai authority's trucks to Cambodian doorsteps are also anything, but new. Alas, nothing thorough and systematic had been done to solve this problem. This exodus then should be a wake-up call for Cambodian government to radically rethink about its labor migration policy and governance. Sad as it seems, it is pretty apparent that the Cambodian authorities had so far taken irregular cross-border migration and deliveries of migrant workers for granted, before this trickle suddenly became an exodus, following the Thai military junta's announcement of its migrant labor policy and the subsequent crackdown on illegal migrant workers.

In retrospect, this incident represents a tale of two neighbors. It is very illustrative of poorly committed joint cooperation, limited effective legal mechanisms, policy and law enforcements and, most importantly, political will of both sides to deal with the issue. The crackdown on illegal migrant workers has opened up discussion on the inability of the governments of Thailand and Cambodia alike. On the one hand, the Thai government has successively failed to regulate recruitment of foreign workers to

ensure that they would enter the country legally. It has failed to sufficiently and effectively co-operate with its neighbors over this shared concern. For some reason, it has turned blind eyes to the work of smugglers, traffickers, and brokers of illegal workers from neighboring countries. Also involved is the Thai employers' collusion in order to have cheap and easy-to-control illegal labor force. For years, for example, the Thai fishing industry has been notoriously known as a safe haven for labor exploitation, abuses, trafficking, and modern-day slavery. And for years, nothing of significance has been done about this. If anything, the fact that Thailand has recently been downgraded by the U.S. State Department to its list of the world's worst centers of human trafficking tells it all (New York Times, June 2014).

Much more at play, though, is the ineffectiveness of the Cambodian government to provide proper prevention and protection to its own people. It cannot ensure that its citizens have proper documents before they travel despite their frequent deportation at the country's doorsteps. The government cannot manage to get its Thai counterpart to cooperate in controlling and combating the trafficking and smuggling of its people, to properly regulate their recruitment in Cambodia and their employment and stay in Thailand, and to ensure their full protection while out there. In a broader context, Cambodia cannot afford to address the issue of cross-border migration at large, legal and illegal migration alike. Accounts of exploitation, abuses, and even killings of its workers during the pre-departure and during their stay in the host countries have been persistent, too much to just simply overlook it.

As an instance, the government has thus far failed to create an environment convenient and conducive for prospective migrants to obtain legal documents to cross the border and work in Thailand. Expensive, complicated, time-consuming bureaucratic procedures to obtain necessary legal documents have hindered and discouraged prospective migrants from seeking for a legal status. Illustratively, a report by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2013 found that the cost gap between legal channels and illegal smuggling to send migrant workers to Thailand is way too big to encourage prospective workers to seek assistance from the formal channels. The total costs a legal migrant needs to pay to get a job in Thailand and Malaysia are approximately US$700 and US$850-1200, respectively. Comparatively, it could typically cost an illegal migrant only US$100 to be smuggled into Thailand with much shorter waiting time. These issues are coupled by reported corruption, collusion, and poor law enforcement by concerned authorities. Offering a legal status through authorized recruitment agencies for prospective migrant workers has not been effective either, as recruitment agencies are not well regulated since they are well connected to politically influential figures (ADHOC, 2012).

THE AFTERMATH: *Addressing the real issues at a sideline*

In his speech of the incident, Prime Minister Hun Sen publicly acknowledged that this exodus was perhaps the biggest one Cambodia had ever experienced. And as always, certain actions would always come right after his words. Many high-ranking officials led their subordinates to the border crossings to 'kindly welcome' the repatriated migrant workers. Temporary shelters were established; food and water were freely distributed, and endless military trucks along with a few others from NGOs were prepared to transport the workers back to home villages. Mass media were tied up with endless reports of these activities. Without reaching to the crossings in person, we could just watch, listen to, or read about these warm welcoming home events as local television channels and radio stations were actively broadcasting them, while most local newspapers colorfully made such visits their front-page headlines. Television and radio program hosts along with some so-called analysts proudly discussed about and appreciated these 'generous and caring attitudes' of the top-rank government officials. Interestingly, some even went as far and called this immediate ad hoc intervention a 'huge success' of the government. A phrase like *"His or Her Excellency … has kindly visited the repatriated migrant workers at this or that border crossing"* had become a cliché.

Yet the real problem, which needs addressing, has remained at the sideline. The aftermath was largely dominated by political propaganda and has finally faded away from the public attention. And

the issue is an issue for good. What we badly need at this political level is serious commitment of the country's leadership. For the best interests of migrant workers, current and prospective alike, the high level stakeholders need to learn to envision and set goals in the long run of what they want to see with regard to cross-border labor migration. It needs to systematically address real problems and look for ways out through serious policy discussions and debates.

At a more technical level, following the recommendations from the prime minister, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT) has quickly implemented its initiatives to assist migrant workers to obtain necessary legal documents to move to work in Thailand. MoLVT has granted 47 labor recruitment agencies the authority to endorse migrant workers to Thailand by providing all necessary permits and documents for a flat fee of US$49. Also, currently the Ministry of Interior and MoLVT are working together to open four one-window service offices at Poipet, Pailin, Cham Yeam, and O'Smach checkpoints (MoI, 2014). Seemingly, these moves represent a very good start, which will help enhance migration processing to Thailand and prevent potential illegal migration.

Yet, as far as the issue of cross-border migration is concerned, such initiatives will only be successful should their voids be thoroughly addressed. Tellingly, Cambodia needs much more political commitment to support its technical work so as to enhance fruitful policy implementation and law enforcement for better migration governance. A commonly shared concern regularly raised by NGOs and civil society organizations is a lack of political commitment from the government to strictly regulate recruitment agencies. Since many of the authorized agencies have poor human rights records, giving them such broad control over the process of cross-border migration may do more harm than good. This will certainly increase the vast control the private firms already have over migrant workers. Such cases as involuntary debt bondage and confiscations of workers' passports and ATM cards by their recruitment firms are far from just a few (ADHOC, 2012). Of concern, the newly proposed measures to ease workers' return to Thailand after the exodus also look less likely to succeed given such a big political loophole. While the Ministry of Labor outsourced the legwork of its plan to those 47 private recruitment agencies, it does not have proper measures in place to ensure the firms are following the prices or procedures laid out by the government. It was reported recently that one of the selected recruitment agencies is now charging migrant workers up to $600 to help them find work in Thailand and, practically, no action has been taken to deal with this legal misconduct (Cambodia Daily, August 2014).

The central problem that has thus far hindered any committed national effort is perhaps the conflict of interests, the byproduct of political and/or familial connectedness between powerful individuals and those who own recruitment agencies (Cambodia Daily, April 2014). Despite reports of abuses of maids at the hands of employers, few have ever been prosecuted (Human Right Watch, 2011). This conflict of interests frantically jeopardizes potential success of migration governance in Cambodia and the connections between powerful people in the ministry and the recruitment agencies they regulate could stifle efforts to clean up the industry. It is compulsory that political commitment go hand in hand with technical implementation if Cambodia really wants to seek for a way out of this problem and sets its sights on successful cross-border labor migration among its citizens so as to reap socio-economic benefits from it. As the country is aiming to vastly increase the number of cross-border migrants to 1.5 million workers in the next few years to boost its economy and release unemployment pressure, it has to be serious as there is no magic in getting expected results without doing it.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION: *Does it matter?*

Back in 2012, amidst a growing concern of en masse outflow of labor force to Thailand, Prime Minister Hun Sen called on existing and prospective Cambodian migrant workers to stay in the country and seek for local employment. The PM got it right with his call, because the economy has been doing well and the country was, at the time of his speech, and even now is, still lacking labor force for many critical labor-intensive sectors like garment, construction, and rubber plantation. Unfortunately, this

cannot stop rural villagers from making a move. Right before the exodus took place, according to the International Organization for Migration (2013), approximately 438,000 Cambodians, excluding illegal migrants, were working in Thailand. The Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that in total now there are almost 700,000 Cambodian migrants and that does not include those who were repatriated (RFI, August 2014). Given this, we argue that, however we try to stop it, cross-border migration to Thailand is inevitable.

Such inevitability of labor migration is well explained by Hein de haas in his work on *"Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective".* De haas (2008, 17) develops a theory which *"acknowledges the fact that migration tends to increase in particular in the early phases of "development", in which improvements in transport and communication, flows of knowledge, a perceived lack of local economic opportunities, and growing level of welfare increase both the capabilities and aspirations of people to migrate"* (authors' emphasis). Similarly, Amartya Sen also extensively discussed the development and capacities of individuals. His capabilities approach suggests that as an economy progresses forward, there is a substantial increase in the capabilities of the people. One of the components of the approach is the importance of real freedoms an individual is able to possess in order to assess his advantage in joining an economic activity (Sen, 1999), and this definitely includes the freedom to choose whether or not to migrate.

It is clearly evident in the Cambodian context, as just right after the mass deportation, Cambodian workers are already heading back to Thailand en-masse (Cambodia Daily, July 2014). This confirms what we were told by some of the recent returnees we met and talked to in Battambang. They were firmly committed to returning to work in Thailand, once the tension in Thailand after its military coup subdued. It makes sense, though, as one crucial note is that migrant workers are economic agents, who should be guaranteed freedom to decide what they personally assume will bring them more advantages. Statistically, a Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey (CSES) found that the daily wage for agricultural workers in Cambodia was US$3.44, in 2009. The Cambodian Institute of Development Studies (CIDS) in its 2012 wage survey on plantation workers found that plantation workers earned on average US$3.28 a day. Comparatively, the daily minimum wage in Thailand in seven provinces as of April 2012 was US$9.78, while in the other provinces, the minimum wage rose by 40% (cited in ILO, 2013). Therefore, for many Cambodian rural villagers, this wage differential seems too appealing to them not to migrate.

Also, trying to forcefully stop the rural folks from making their own choice (to migrate) would clearly violate their true freedoms as argued above. Good news is, we believe, cross-border migration can do much more good than harm both at individual and national levels, should the right national policy interventions are well in place. In terms of financial advantage, migration plays a critical role in socio-economic development of Cambodia, through remittances sent back home by migrant workers. The World Bank's Migration and Remittances Fact Book 2010 estimated that Cambodian migrants sent home about US$364 million in remittances, accounting for around 3.2% of the national GDP of the same fiscal year. In comparison, net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows were US$0.8 billion, and net overseas development aid (ODA) received was US$0.7 billion (World Bank, 2010). However, the International Fund for Agricultural Development put the figure much higher than the Bank's estimation since 2006, when a report on its website said that remittances to Cambodia by then totaled more than $559 million, or 7.8% of its GDP (Cambodia Daily, May 2013). Given that the number of cross-border migrants has increased significantly over the years, the sum of remittances should be higher than previous figures. Though estimation varies and is rather arbitrary, the amount of migration remittances sent home annually is sizeable and represents a critical contribution to the national economy as a whole.

MASS INFORMATION DISSEMINATION: *The missing link for safe migration*

We further attempt to answer a similar question discussed in the preceding section: Why do Cambodian rural villagers still wish to cross the border and work abroad amidst persistent stories of cheating, human trafficking, exploitation and abuses. Are these rural poor simply stupid, ignorant, and/ or irrational? Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith (2011) argue that the poor always act rationally, just as the general others, but their rationality is, by and large, shaped and limited by the knowledge they possess and information they obtain. Taking this into the context of migration, it definitely necessitates the need to provide potential migrants right, necessary information on safe migration to guarantee that they are well informed of the challenges and to ensure that they can do it safe and sound. Then, it is highly imperative that the Cambodian government open up opportunities for prospective migrant workers, their families, and communities to access to necessary knowledge and information on safe, legal migration.

Empirical experiences of and academic works on migrant sending countries suggest that one of the most pressing problems facing migrants and the good governance of migration is widespread lack of awareness about the complexities of migration process. Legal and policy initiatives are only effective when the necessary information is made available to potential migrants, their families and the general public so that they become much better aware and are able to make better informed migration decision. It has also been recognized that initiatives to disseminate information about these issues can significantly reduce the negative effects and enhance the positive outcomes of migration.

Not unlike other sending countries, Cambodia has long identified the significance of information dissemination for safe migration. In 2011, the Cambodia Working Group on ASEAN Migrant Workers One Community, One Destiny for ASEAN 2012 singled it out as one of the key areas and challenges for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers from Cambodia. Regrettably, necessary actions have yet to follow suit. So far there has not been any formal and credible mechanism to provide information on safe migration procedures. Lack of formal and credible sources of information has made potential migrants easily prey to fraud and cheating by unscrupulous recruitment agencies and brokers. The working and living conditions of migrant workers in receiving countries are greatly compromised by their lack of knowledge about their rights and duties. This necessitates the creation of more awareness on safe migration and protection against illegal crossing and trafficking through more effective dissemination of "Safe Migration" messages. Information dissemination engages a wide range of actors, including concerned central state agencies, NGOs, and sub-national and local authorities. This campaign can be done most effectively and efficiently through well planned, structured, and long run mass media strategies and campaigns aiming to create and raise awareness of safe migration.

THE MASS MEDIA AND MIGRATION INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN CAMBODIA

We argue that the best means for nationwide information dissemination is to use the mass media. Mass media play a critical role in the development process of a country. They are channels of communication that are capable of reaching a wide range of audience simultaneously with the same messages. Their broad reachability enables mass media to disseminate ideas and information to target audience effectively and efficiently. They primarily possess the functions to educate, inform, and entertain the audience (Tosanwumi, 1994 as cited in Nelson, 2013). On top of these functions, they help catalyze social mobilization. The mass media are powerful sources of information with definite capacity to spread information to every part of the society and influence people from all walks of life.

Existing literature has acknowledged the importance of mass media in creating awareness of certain issues in society. There is a linear linkage between awareness, knowledge, and change in behavior. A widely agreed conclusion is that awareness leads to knowledge, and knowledge leads to change of behavior (Rimal, 2000 as cited in Nelson, 2013). Existing studies have emphasized the importance

of mass media in creating a better-informed and aware society in a wide context of theories and models. Babatunde Folarin (1998), for example, discusses this linear linkage from the 'agenda-setting' perspective. The theory stresses the ability of mass media in advising audience what issues are major and relevant. This results in agenda setting in a social context. This can be achieved by predetermining what stories/information is/are newsworthy and how much prominence and space the mass media give to these stories. Via their presentation of selected stories/information, mass media are able to force attention on the audience to particular matters.

Mass media have the influence to pre-determine issues that people should be aware of in society. Space and awareness creation among the public on certain issues can also be explained in the 'precaution adoption' theory, which recognizes that mass media play a major role in disseminating information and raising awareness. According to the theory, awareness is an essential component that moves an individual in various stages (Weinstein and Sandman, 2002). In the labor migration context, for instance, the migration decision-making stages offer an individual or household awareness of potential issues or benefits induced by migration. Not only do mass media inform individuals about certain issues, but their messages can also influence individuals to take action. The 'diffusion of innovation' theory further explains how critical mass media are in influencing beliefs, attitude, and finally behavior. With regard to labor migration, it is likely that once we construct the 'safe migration' belief, this belief could help trigger a tendency of prospective migrants wanting to hold a legal migrant status. This will then help move them from wanting to migrate legally to actually seeking for legal channels.

Traditionally, mass media are categorized into two: print and broadcast media. Print media primarily refer to newspapers and magazines, but there are other forms of print media such as billboards, posters, handbills, pamphlets, and brochures. Print media have two cutting-edge advantages in disseminating information or mobilizing the public: They are more permanent and enable information stored for reference and future use. Nonetheless, effective and efficient print media options in Cambodia are largely limited to pamphlets and booklets. Newspapers and magazines are not very viable due to their accessibility and affordability, especially for the targets of this proposed mass information dissemination campaign who are, by and large, poor rural population. Print media in any form share a problem and it is that they require the target audience to be somewhat literate. For safe migration dissemination in Cambodia, this posts a big challenge as the literacy rate among Cambodian rural population is very low and most of the current and prospective migrants are from this group (see ILO, 2013). Bearing this in mind, any content design on safe migration information needs to ensure that the messages can easily be understood by the target population.

Broadcast media primarily refer to radio and television, but they also include audio and video recordings and the Internet. However, in the Cambodian context and especially in the context of migration, radio and television represent the most viable options. Radio has been regarded as the most pervasive and effective medium to reach the audience nationwide, thanks to its advantages of being the cheapest, simplest, and most portable medium of mass communication. Radio broadcast in Cambodia is not hindered by the country's limited access to electricity supply, especially in very remote areas as it can do with just a pair of battery. Most importantly, radio can overcome the illiteracy challenge that print media face. Television, on the other hand, has unique characteristics of sound, sight and motion (Nelson, 2013). And like radio, it transcends the bounds often imposed by illiteracy concern.

Radio and television have a big part to play in disseminating mass information on safe migration. They both are able to reach a wide range of audience at the same time with the same set of information in both rural and urban settings. Television and radio sets are very common media tools among Cambodian people. According to the 2008 National Population Census, 58.41% of Cambodian households owned at least a television set (80.81% of urban households and 53.5% of rural households). The percentage of household owning at least a radio set in the same year was 40.81% (50% of urban households and 38.72% of rural households). Access to radio broadcast in Cambodia should have increased drastically due to high affordability of rural people to get cheap phone and radio sets.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND AWARENESS CREATION: MASS MEDIA STRATEGIES

Against the backdrop that emphasizes the significance of mass media in creating awareness and enhancing informed migration decision making, the government of Cambodia needs the hands of mass media, and in this section we will look into experiences of three big migrant sending countries, namely the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, for effective strategies to best exploit mass media for a mass information dissemination campaign, as discussed by Tasneem Siddiqui, Rozana Rashid, and Banjamin Zeitlyn (2008). We try to accommodate and synthesize the lessons learned into the Cambodian context giving due consideration to only four types of mass media, i.e. the broadcast media (radio and TV), print media (newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and migration guides), community information centers, and interactive voice recording and the bulk SMS system.

Our recommendations for the use of mass media are as follows:

Broadcast media: In Cambodia, radio and television represent the most viable means for effective mass information dissemination. For effective use, there are three crucial elements that need to take into account: program airing time, types and contents. As the target audience is rural villagers, mainly farmers, radio/TV programs on migration issues should be allocated to primetime when most of these people are available to stay tuned. Program types are of a huge variety; however, a critical component that any program needs to take into account is clear agenda setting. Simply, each program should be precise with their expected outputs. In other words, they must be clear as to what exactly the target audience is expected to gain after listening to or watching the programs. Radio/TV programs may be presented in the forms of discussions, debates, documentaries, shows, dramas, comedies, commercial spots, call-ins, short films, story-telling, letter reading, interviews, on-air counseling, etc.

All programs could produce contents which aims to inform about the realities of migration, setting off from the pre-departure to life in host countries and these include both challenges and opportunities. These programs should aim to make aspirant migrants and their families aware about the pitfalls of migration and inform them of how they can avoid negative consequences of migration. Some shows should provide opportunities for prospective migrants to ask questions. Main themes of the programs may include such issues as legal migration procedures, legal rights, sexual health, child protection, financial management, everyday lives management, access to emergency assistance, and reintegration into communities upon return. Radio/TV program production can be collaboration between and facilitated by concerned government agencies and relevant NGOs and civil society organizations. One major source of information and awareness raising comes from the migrants themselves. Current or returning migrants can be invited to share their experiences with other migrants and prospective migrants on air. Other sources include people from the government agencies (e.g. MoLVT and its line departments), local and international NGOs, and the private sector.

Here are a couple of examples of how radio/TV programs set clear agenda and some other instances of how the programs can help spearhead prospective migrants to be better aware of cross-border migration issues and to make better migration decision. Television can be used to set an agenda by creating awareness of migration issues through scrolling messages on primetime news bulletins and programs. Radio can be used to set an agenda by introducing musical commercials about safe migration during prime-time periods. Other television programs can be used to create hints for action by broadcasting documentaries that focus on the nature, causes, and consequences of migration. A program could feature an episode in which a character gets trafficked, which could help enlighten and educate people on the legal procedures about cross-border migration. Most Cambodian local TV broadcasters run weekend music concerts, which normally ends with a comedy show. The shows generally attract the biggest number of viewers; therefore, it is a great opportunity if migration issues are regularly integrated into them, say, once a month or once every two months. Furthermore, two TV broadcasters, Bayon TV and CTN, are running entertainment programs, namely *Dontrey Srok Srae* and *Samnerch Tam Phum*, which are held in various local communities around the country. Hence, information dissemination campaigns can become part of these music concerts and directly target big

sending communities to provide edutainment to them with agendas and messages about migration issues.

Print media: Print media can serve as an effective way to create awareness or to remind the public of critical information about safe migration. They are unique in being able to quickly reach mass audience with a standard message, and thus create awareness or provide "how-to" information. Not unlike radio/TV programs, print media can apply the agenda-setting function in publishing news reports of migration issues on the front and back pages. Print media should be used to produce stories about migration issues, which aims to present both success stories and the usual stories connected to migration, focusing on tragedies. However, as noted earlier, newspapers and magazines may fall short of their expected functions in information dissemination in Cambodia.

Thus, we suggest that the use of print media in this proposed information dissemination campaign looks into more viable options such as booklets, pamphlets, and guidebooks, which can be more cheaply and directly distributed to rural communities. So far, sporadically concerned NGOs and civil society organizations have produced some materials of such; however, it has not been large-scale enough to cover significant proportion of the target population. Also, to ensure the sustainability of such a campaign, it requires the leadership of the national government and its lead agencies in collaboration with supporting local and international NGOs and civil society organizations.

Selected print media should focus on similar issues covered by the broadcast media, but with more simple and standard messages. For example, a migration guidebook could introduce prospective migrants and their families to the step-by-step cross-border migration procedures. Stories of migration experiences shared by former and current migrants should also be illustrated so as to give some ideas to the prospective ones so that they can decide whether or not they should migrate and if they will, they can be more prepared. Similar to the aforementioned radio/TV programs, topics on saving, entrepreneurialism, family management, and the like should be introduced in a clear easy-to-follow format for prospective, current, and returning migrants.

Community media: Community media are defined as those that are developed and managed by people who share common values and aspirations in a small, geographically defined area and that promote access to and participation in local development (Asia Institute of Journalism, 1983). Essentially, community media help bridge the knowledge gaps between the literate and illiterate people, as well as the appreciable differences in learning in both urban and rural settings (Nelson, 2013). Community media include community newspapers, community radios, and community information centers. Community media provide alternative channels through which people's needs and interests can be articulated. In Cambodia, many provinces own provincial radio broadcasters (both public and private), whose primary function is to provide information related to their own provinces. The set agendas are more province-based; hence they are able to cover more specific issues and need of the local people. It is important that these provincial radio broadcasters, especially those in the major migrant sending provinces, devote airtime to addressing migration issues, but within more specific settings.

Also usual and seemingly effective for migration information dissemination is the use of community information centers. These centers offer forums to provide needed information to rural populace. It is noted that a community information center is a controlled theater for imparting knowledge and serves as a rallying point for people in rural areas to be adequately informed. Importantly, the effectiveness of community information centers is in carefully selecting the materials to be viewed relative to the peculiar needs of a given local area (Onabanjo, 2003, as cited in Nelson, 2003). For example, the centers can serve as a platform to show documentary programs aimed at creating awareness of safe migration. Given that prospective migrants in Cambodia are generally uneducated or lowly educated, their ability to perceive information targeting them is limited. Given the high illiteracy rate among rural Cambodians, the employment of community information centers proves necessary to offer information both verbally or in written forms

Interactive voice recording and bulk SMS: Recently, some local NGOs have started or planned to introduce interactive voice recording (IVR) and the bulk SMS system to disseminate news and information, including human rights and freedoms (see Sovan and Sok, in this publication). This dissemination of pre-recorded messages and voices, which can be accessible even through non-smart phones, can be a good means to reach the target population. NGOs, line ministries and local authorities can perhaps explore options for collaboration to produce recordings and messages related to cross-border migration. The most recent data seems to suggest that virtually all Cambodian households own at least one telephone set, and hence disseminating information via IVR and the bulk SMS system can be an effective and efficient way to reach the potential migrants and their families.

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