

Political Participation of Women with Disabilities in Cambodia

Research Report, 2010

*“We are determined and we have
strong commitment too”*

Women from Phnom Penh



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The views represented in this report only reflect the views of the implementing research agency based on the data collection and analysis in the frame of this study. They do not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABC	Association of the Blind in Cambodia
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CC	Commune Council
CDPO	Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation
CDRI	Cambodia Development Research Institute
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CMDG	Cambodian Millennium Development Goals
COMFREL	Committee for Free & Fair Elections in Cambodia
CPWP	Committee to Promote Women in Politics
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWPD	Cambodia Women for Peace and Development
DAC	Disability Action Council
DDP	Deaf Development Programme
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
GAD/C	Gender and Development for Cambodia
HIF	Handicap International Federation
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
KC	Kampong Cham
KS	Kampong Speu
LEMNA	Law on Elections of Members of the National Assembly
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoIF	Ministry of Information
MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans & Youth Rehabilitation
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NA	National Assembly
NCDP	National Centre of Disabled Persons
NEC	National Election Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICFEC	Neutral and Impartial Committee for Free and Fair Election in Cambodia
PP	Phnom Penh
PPRPD	Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SHG	Self-Help Group
WFP	Women for Prosperity
WWDF	Women with Disabilities Forum

Foreword

The UNDP's *Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia Project (SDEP)* is pleased to introduce the study report on “**Political Participation of Women with Disabilities in Cambodia**”, conducted from August to December 2010. This study was commissioned by UNDP and conducted by Handicap International France (HI-F) in partnership with the Cambodian Disabled People's Organization (CDPO) and the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL).

Prior to this study, consultations were conducted with a variety of stakeholders working with persons with disabilities and women with disabilities, with the aim of better understanding the background to the participation of women with disabilities in political processes. During the consultation, there was widespread support for conducting the first ever study on the topic. Women with disabilities have been marginalized not only from social and economic participation but also political participation. They face the double challenges of being discriminated against as women and as disabled, seriously limiting their capacity to exercise their political rights. In order to address these challenges, concerns and recommendations, SDEP is exploring ways to further support to enhancing the civic engagement of women with disabilities.

This report examines the interests of women with disabilities, as well as the barriers to their participation. It also provides recommendations for the promotion of their electoral and political participation, while highlighting opportunities and strategies for intervention and engagement by relevant stakeholders.

SDEP would like to express its appreciation to the members of the research team who have been working to conclude this study successfully within a very tight timeframe. Participation from key informants from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA), the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Information (MoIF), the National Election Committee (NEC) and representatives from National and International Non-Governmental Organizations provided important input to the study. Finally, the research would not have been possible without the contribution of respondents especially persons with disabilities from Kampong Cham and Kampong Speu provinces and Phnom Penh who gave up their valuable time to provide information for the study.

I do hope that this study would not be an end but would represent the beginning of an increased engagement in this area by providing a useful source of information for all stakeholders that leads to the continuation of support to promote the greater participation of women with disabilities in political processes.

Aamir Arain
Project Manager
SDEP – UNDP

“I demanded my right to vote. I registered and on Election Day, I went to vote. I cannot see, so I asked a motor taxi to take me to the polling station. He charged me 500 Riel, which was fine, I am happy to pay. At the polling station, the staff should have facilitated for me to vote before everybody else because I cannot see and I was there. They told me: “You cannot see, so stand aside and give way to others. You wait there for other people to vote first”.

I felt so upset. At the polling station were only people from NEC so I asked the guy: “Why should I wait? I am here to vote. I want to fulfill my rights. I cannot see. It is not easy for me to come to the polling station. Why not let me cast a vote now so that I can go back home? I'm not going to wait, I will return home now without casting a vote”.

My voice was so loud because I felt so upset. The guy let me vote. He guided me to the room, after I got the ballot, to have someone help me tick the ballot. But I was upset, so I told him “Help me tick the ballot outside here. I don't need the room because I cannot see, inside or outside the room doesn't make a difference to me. It's all dark”.

I share my story with you to let you know that I demanded my right to vote.”

Woman from Kampong Cham

Summary

This report presents the findings of a study on ***‘Political Participation of Women with Disabilities in Cambodia’***. It was implemented to inform the UNDP Country Programme as well as national and international stakeholders and development actors.

Although increasing, women’s share of space in the political arena is still limited in Cambodia. The reasons for this include cultural and social norms, stereotyped gender roles, poverty, heavy economic and family burdens and lack of support. Lower self-evaluations of political efficacy, civic skills, and political interest and structural factors are all considered to contribute to lower political participation among women. These effects are likely to be compounded in women with disabilities who in addition often experience negative ‘social constructions’ of disability and economic and social disparities. These gaps may additionally discourage their political participation and exclude them from political processes.

Given the fact that these effects have been so far unexplored, this study aimed at examining how gender, disability and structural factors affect the political participation of women with disabilities. It sought answers to how women with disabilities in Cambodia already participate in political processes, what limits and what facilitates their political influence and what their understanding of political participation and respective processes is. Lastly, the study provides recommendations for policy and practice for the promotion of their political participation.

Women with disabilities’ understanding of politics and political participation

Women with disabilities show determination and recognize the importance of accessing leadership positions to achieve greater impact. Thereby, they place a high responsibility within themselves in overcoming barriers. Especially in rural areas, women with disabilities perceive ‘politics’ as a sensitive issue and the sole responsibility of leaders. Gaps in knowledge on political concepts and processes may further alienate them from mainstream politics, although many participate in political activities without being aware of it. Women with disabilities identify a clear gap between their own levels of political participation and that of women without and men with disabilities. They find participation in decision-making and leadership particularly difficult and link this not only to a lack of opportunities but a lack of capacities due to poor education. Internalized social images of disability and gender lead to ‘shyness’ and low self-esteem which additionally discourages self-appreciations of their capacities for participation.

Attitudes towards women with disabilities political participation

There is a general agreement on the importance and benefit of political participation of women with disabilities in local decision makers and key informants. However, local decision-makers have less awareness on disability and legal frameworks compared to national decision-makers and key informants and poorly recognize discrimination based on gender and disability. Many local decision makers and key informants consider lack of education as the primary obstacle to their political participation. Especially local decision-makers seem to equate it with lack of capacities to engage in politics and identify barriers to their political participation rather within the women themselves than in barriers in their environment. Thus, there is little reflection on how mechanisms can be adapted or specific plans to promote the political participation of women with disabilities as part of their action/mandate.

Facilitators for women with disabilities’ political participation

Analysis of the existing facilitators shows the need for a two pronged approach to effectively promote women with disabilities political participation: Women with disabilities report a supportive family/community environment as well as the (physical) accessibility of the actual processes and structures to be most helpful. Thereby, local authorities and village chiefs hold a key role as potential role models, multipliers of information and facilitators of their participation. Appropriate dissemination

and communication means that are accessible and acceptable to women with disabilities in their localities are considered key in improving their civic knowledge. SHGs/DPOs prove an effective way of increasing awareness and support to women with disabilities in local authorities but also to increase civic knowledge in women with disabilities themselves, especially at the village/commune level. Women with disabilities perceive especially women SHGs as primary means to promote their political participation and get their needs included in the disability movement and political decision making.

Barriers to women with disabilities' political participation

Women with disabilities have significantly lower levels of participation in voter registration and election, in party politics and thus, in governance and decision making at all levels compared to men with & women without disabilities. They consider participation in local decision making through commune and village meetings as *most* important, however their actual participation is a lower compared to men with & women without disabilities. Women with seeing, hearing, mental and intellectual impairment have frequently lower participation or less access to political processes, self-representing structures and civic information. Women with disabilities are disproportionately affected by key problems in Cambodian election and political systems, e.g. partisanship and the male dominance in leadership. Key barriers to their political participation reported by women with disabilities include discriminative practices in political institutions and local authorities, poor knowledge in duty bearers on their needs and rights, stereotyped perceptions of their capacities, inaccessible processes and facilities, lack of assistive devices and facilitating measures, socio-economic gaps (education, income), lack of encouragement by family and community and above all poor access to (civic) information. Women with disabilities have lower levels of external political efficacy and interest which significantly influence their participation. The dominant male leadership in the disability movement hampers a gendered approach and their participation in national level decision making in self-representing structures.

Recommendations for the promotion of women with disabilities' political participation

General recommendations: 1) Multi-stakeholder action in promoting the political participation of women with disabilities, 2) Building upon lessons learned from disability and gender mainstreaming into politics and 3) Including disability into gender mainstreaming into politics and 4) develop evidence base.

Promote gender equity in self-representing structures of persons with disabilities

- To strengthen women SHGs including leadership training and the development of capacities on political issues in women with disabilities;
- To support the leadership of DPOs/SHGs in facilitating environment that is conducive for the membership of women with disabilities and their participation in decision-making.

Address the underlying socio-economic gaps that restrict women with disabilities' political participation

- To promote gender and disability into education, poverty reduction and employment programs.

Promote the political participation of women with disabilities at commune/sub-national level

- To support policies and programs that address barriers and foster local solutions for women with disabilities' increased participation in political spaces in their localities;
- To promote action of local authorities to actively reach out to women with disabilities and identify their problems as a crucial prerequisite for any measures.

Promote the political participation of women with disabilities at national level

- To further develop the capacities of MoSVY in taking the lead in ensuring that the political participation of women with disabilities is addressed across the relevant sectors and a gender perspective in the implementation of the disability law is promoted;
- To provide assistance to MoWA and national (non-) governmental gender actors in the further promotion of women with disabilities; political participation in the implementation of their policies, strategic planning and monitoring and research.

1. Approaching the issue

1.1. Disability, gender and political participation in Cambodia

There is increasing democratic stability in Cambodia. However, the democratic transformation process remains complex and dynamic. The integration of especially poor and less educated groups into the country's political life presents a key challenge: Many have little understanding of democratic and civil rights and are not used to representing their own interests, while a centralist mindset prevails among the political classes and civil servants. In general, public advocacy, in the form of protests or demonstrations, and open political critique were and still are regarded with hesitancy. Thus, increased political participation in the process of elections as well as in the legislative branch are seen as key strategies by development actors in furthering the democratic transformation process.

European election observers attested improvements in the facilitation of parliamentary and communal elections (EU, 2008). No massive fraud or violence tainted the 2007 communal and 2008 parliamentary elections. The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (Comfrel) reported fewer cases of intimidation and vote buying compared to the 2003 elections. Thereby, close monitoring by diverse actors, including civil society is considered key (Comfrel, 2008). Yet, challenges in accessing and participating in electoral processes remain (Comfrel, 2009 & 2010). The commune elections of 2007 faced the lowest voter turnout (around 70%) since the first elections in 1993. Voter apathy was seen as a growing problem and many Cambodians are disillusioned: According to a 2008 Gallup poll, 74% of the population voiced dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in their country. In addition, lack of knowledge on political affairs and opportunities for political involvement on commune or national level hampers political participation: Research shows that 50% of citizens on commune level have 'no idea' on how to participate in politics (Comfrel, 2009). According to a nationwide survey, around 55% of the people surveyed said that there was either no difference between competing parties in the 2008 election or that "they didn't know what the differences" were (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009).

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CAMBODIA

Gender stereotyping in Cambodia is rather strong and reflected in the *Chbab Srey*, a code of conduct of 'gender-appropriate behaviour', which has been criticised by the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women: *"While noting the value of the cultural heritage of Cambodia, the Committee is concerned about strong gender-role stereotyping, in particular that reflected in the traditional code of conduct known as Chbab Srey, which legitimizes discrimination against women and impedes women's full enjoyment of their human rights and the achievement of equality between men and women in Cambodian society"* (UN, 2006). Cambodian women's great economic responsibilities are not yet reflected in their political participation. Leadership in Cambodia is principally male. In contrast, women are still often not considered capable.

However, the participation of women at all levels of decision-making has increased: The proportion of women elected to the National Assembly increased from 5% in the 1993 elections to 22% in the 2008 elections. The proportion of women as Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State increased from 7% and 9.6% in 2003 to 7.7% and 14.6% in 2008. Today, women make up 12.6% of municipal, district and khan counselors. According to the 2009 National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has appointed women as Provincial Vice Governors in 24 provinces/cities.

In comparison to national politics, women have been more active in civil society oriented activities and in commune level affairs (Comfrel, 2009). Participation at national, provincial and district level as well as in the executive branches of governance however remains challenging (RGC, 2008). The government is committed to further advance their political participation and targets in its Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDG) an increase of the proportion of seats held by women in the National

Assembly and Senate to 30% and in commune councils to 25% by 2015 (RGC, 2005). The Secretariat of State of Civil Service issued guidelines on affirmative action with a quota ranging from 20% to 50% for women among the new recruits. In addition, the women's movements and wide range of local and international NGOs focusing on gender issues play an important role in raising awareness about women's political rights and succeed in keeping them on the national agenda. The impact of these efforts may be reflected in the findings of a recent study according to which 70% of the population consider women as equally capable political leaders (Comfrel, 2009).

Despite general acceptance of the need for and benefit of gender balance in decision making bodies at all levels, a gap between *de jure* and *de facto* persists. Deep-rooted cultural and social norms and stereotyped roles and a lack of support limit women's access to political life. Poverty falls particularly heavy on women, especially on female headed households. Heavy economic and family burdens restrict women's time for political engagement. Some ministries have not developed gender mainstreaming strategies and their senior leadership does not understand the need to address gender disparities in policy development and implementation. And lastly, the ways in which political parties choose their candidates still seriously disadvantages women candidates.

DISABILITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CAMBODIA

Persons with disabilities are estimated to represent 4% of the Cambodian population (RGC, 2004a). While reliable data on their political participation is missing, anecdotal evidence suggests their widespread exclusion from political processes: In 2009, persons with disabilities expressed their concern regarding discrimination experienced in accessing political processes, their exclusion from commune decision making, and their difficulties to exercise their rights to vote and stand for election in a claim list produced in a consultative workshop. They suggest local authorities and the Ministry of Interior to explore possibilities for their increased political participation and recommend increased cooperation between the MoSVY and the National Election Commission (NEC) in order to reduce discrimination in electoral processes and to promote their participation as election staff (Claimlists: Chapter 8 & 12, 2009¹). Between 2006 and 2008, CDRI organized a series of round tables between NEC, political parties and NGOs, including DPOs during which barriers and potential solutions to increase access of persons with disabilities to electoral processes were discussed. As a consequence, in 2008, the Association of the Blind in Cambodia (ABC), Action on Disability and Development (ADD) and the Cambodian Disabled People Organization (CDPO) participated in monitoring the elections (Comfrel, 2008). Based on experience from ABC as well as Comfrel, persons with disabilities are at times not registered, or their names were removed from the voter lists (Comfrel, 2008; Thomas, 2005). ABC also expressed concern regarding discrimination in the 2003 elections due to the lack of tactile voting options and problems of blind people to register (Thomas, 2005). 2008 saw for the first time accessible ballot papers for blind people (Comfrel, 2008). However, the extent of availability of these ballot papers and the dissemination of relevant information to persons with visual impairment and election authorities was not monitored. Despite those first findings and participation of persons with disabilities in the election monitoring, no concrete recommendations were made with regards to investigating further or addressing discrimination experienced during the election process (EU observer report 2008; Comfrel 2008).

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN CAMBODIA

There is very scarce research on political participation of women with disabilities in general, especially in low-income countries. The few publications include a report on Gender Mainstreaming and Disability Sensitization in Civic and Voter Education in Namibia (USAID, 2004) and an investigation into political activism in women with disabilities in the USA (Schur, 2003). Likewise, there is no evidence on the

¹ Available as hard copy at CDPO office

political participation of women with disabilities in Cambodia and how gender, disability and other factors affect their political participation and their perceptions of discrimination. Lower internal political efficacy, civic skills, and political interest due to socialization, traditional gender roles and structural factors such as income and occupational status contribute to lower political participation among women in general. These effects are likely to be pronounced in women with disabilities who in addition often face discrimination based upon their impairment. Moreover, gender and disability are associated with economic and social disparities: Women with disabilities often have lower employment, education, and income levels, fewer opportunities for vocational training and less access to transportation or social events. Research on political participation in general would tend to predict that these gaps among women with disabilities would decrease their participation and studies on political participation among women suggest that their participation would be especially low (Schur, 2003).

Those risk factors are also found in the Cambodian context: We do have evidence that women and girls with disabilities face barriers in accessing basic services and education which is reflected in lower literacy rates and limits their employment and livelihood opportunities. Little knowledge on disability and widespread discrimination against persons with disabilities prevents their social participation. Strong traditional gender roles and discrimination due to gender inequality, especially in rural areas, are compounded by discrimination based on their impairment and stereotypes regarding the capacities of women with disabilities. These factors may discourage their political participation and engagement with civil society.

Thereby, attention needs to be paid to the fact that the group of women with disabilities is heterogeneous: While women with mild to moderate physical impairments are less likely to miss out on education, women with hearing, intellectual and visual impairments are more likely to face double discrimination given the lack of accessible teaching materials and teaching methods. Preliminary findings of a household survey by HI F indicate that with increasing severity of impairment, persons are less likely to access services, or to participate in commune affairs. Likewise, perceptions and attitudes towards persons with disabilities vary depending on the type of impairment. This may also impact on the level of political participation of women with disabilities.

1.2. Legislative framework on gender, disability and political rights in Cambodia

SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

In 1992, the RGC became a state party to the ***International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)***. Article 25 of the ICCPR establishes the right of everyone "*to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and be elected at periodic elections and to have access, on equal terms, to public service in his or her country.*" Also in 1992, the RGC ratified the ***Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)***. Article 7 of the CEDAW requires state action to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life. It calls for action to ensure among others women's rights to vote, to be eligible for election, to hold public office and to participate in NGOs/associations concerned with political life.

In 2007, the RGC signed the ***UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*** (UN, 2006). The CRPD requires state parties to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully participate in political life (Art. 29). It recognizes the multiple discriminations women and girls with disabilities experience based on their gender and impairment. It highlights gender issues throughout the convention and includes a separate article on the rights of women with disabilities: Article 6 stipulates measures to ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and

girls with disabilities. It calls for state action to ensure the full development, advancement, and empowerment of women to have the same rights as others as set out in the CRPD. The RGC agreed on a timely ratification of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol: The MoSVY included action to lobby and promote its ratification into the National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities, including Landmine/ERW Survivors 2008-2011 and its strategic 5-year plan (RGC, 2008a; RGC, 2008b).

CAMBODIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

With regards to Cambodia's national framework, the **Constitution** (RGC, 1993) guarantees all citizens of either sex the right to participate actively in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation (Art. 35). However, in its last report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the RGC acknowledges that women in Cambodia have had traditionally very little involvement in public life, whether in political or in community leadership positions (RGC, 2004). Legislative action to improve their participation in political decision making include Article 19 of the **Sub-decree On Decentralization of Powers, Roles and Duties to the Commune/Sangkat Councils** (RGC, 2002): "*The Commune/Sangkat Council shall appoint a female councilor to take care of women's and children's affairs. In case the Commune/Sangkat Council does not have any elected female councilor, it shall appoint a woman as an Assistant in charge of women's and children's affairs*". Furthermore, Article 22 requires the Commune/Sangkat Council to select a Village Chief in each village who shall appoint a Village Deputy Chief and an Assistant and one of them must be a woman.

In terms of electoral and voting rights, article 34 (new) of the constitution affirms the right for all citizens of either sex to vote and to stand as candidates for the election. However, it provides for potential restrictions to these rights to be defined in the Electoral Law. The latest **Amended Law on Elections of Members of the National Assembly (LEMNA)** (RGC, 2007) prohibits "*insane persons or persons under guardianship, who are certified as such by a competent institution*" to stand as candidate in the election of the National Assembly and to register (LEMNA, Art. 34 & 50). Likewise, the latest **Amended Law on Elections of Commune Councils** (RGC, 2006) prohibits persons that are certified by a competent institution as being insane or under a guardianship to register or vote in the CC election (Art. 20). These restrictions put persons with intellectual or mental impairment at a high risk of being excluded from these political processes.

In 2009, the RGC adopted the **Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PPRPD)**. However, no reference is made to women with disabilities and gender-specific discrimination they may face. Article 45 stipulates the prohibition of discrimination or stigmatization against persons with disabilities that run for election. Article 44 affirms the equal right to vote or be a candidate for election for all persons with disabilities, *in accordance to the constitution and applicable election law*. Thus, it remains yet to be seen if the disability law will translate into amendments of the above discriminative provisions in national election laws for the upcoming elections (senate election in 2012 and NA election in 2013). In any case, as a signatory to the CRPD, the RGC is obligated not to violate the objectives of the Convention: Those clearly stipulate the equal participation of all persons with disabilities in electoral processes, irrespective of their impairment and considers the exclusion from these processes a violation of their rights (Art. 29). Also, the convention requires States Parties to recognize that all persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life (Art. 12). Of importance is in this context Article 49 of the national disability law which states that international treaties in link with the Disability Law should be considered as the principle provision: In case of conflict, the convention's obligations will precede over national law.

2. Study objectives

Based on the background described in the previous chapter, this study had the following objectives:

- 1) To examine how women with disabilities already participate in political processes, in terms of their numbers, but also in terms of the quality of their involvement (i.e. their roles and positions);
- 2) To identify barriers that limit or obstruct their political participation;
- 3) To identify facilitators that enhance or promote their political influence and opportunities for them to enter into public formal and informal political spaces;
- 4) To provide in-depth understanding of the interest/understanding of women with disabilities for political participation and their main needs for increased participation;
- 5) To formulate recommendations for the promotion of women with disabilities' political participation in Cambodia.

3. Methodology of the study

3.1. Conceptual framework and definitions

This study examines the levels of *political participation* of women with disabilities through the interface of formal and informal politics, considering a variety of contexts of political action: It encompasses more formal political activities, i.e. running for and holding office from commune to national level, membership in political parties and participation in elections (registration and voting). And it includes informal ways by which women with disabilities may influence political decision-making. Those activities may not necessarily take place in public spaces, and may not even be seen as political by women with disabilities themselves. They involve participation in respective civil society activities, participation in public local decision-making (e.g. attendance of commune planning meetings), campaigning as well as membership in self-representative structures, i.e. in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Disabled Peoples' Organisations (DPOs).

Furthermore, the conceptual approach of this study is firmly rooted in the objectives of the CRPD (UN, 2006). In line with the CRPD, we understand *disability* as the result from the interaction between persons with impairment (physical, mental, intellectual, seeing, hearing and speech impairment) and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society. Thus, while impairment refers to the loss of or limited functions in a person (medical condition), *disability* can be avoided or minimized, if barriers in society are eliminated or reduced. Such actions or factors which enable persons with disabilities to equally participate in society are facilitators. They include measures to reduce discrimination at all levels of society as well as actions to increase an individual's independence and capacity. In understanding this relationship between impairment, the society/environment and disability, we realize that *disability* and equal participation is influenced by various factors that act as either barriers or facilitators to a person with an impairment.

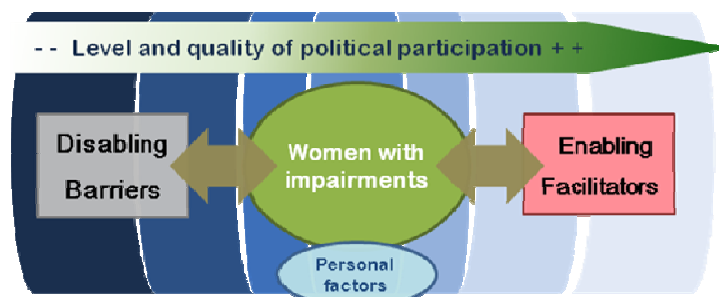
Lastly, we recognize the disability dimension of gender discrimination: We understand that disability can compound with discrimination on the basis of gender and create "*double discrimination*" and multiple barriers to women with disabilities' empowerment and advancement². As such, gender discrimination may be intensified by disability. Likewise, we understand that disability does not affect

² In line with the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) which highlights cross-cutting factors such as age, disability and socio-economic status that together with gender discrimination create particular and multiple barriers for women (UN, 1995).

men and women in the same way. Thus, without explicit recognition and analysis of the different life experiences of women and men with disabilities, other forms of discrimination might go undetected.

Based on our understanding of these key concepts, the study is based on the following framework:

Figure 1: Research framework



It assumes deeply engrained underlying (environmental and institutional) barriers that may cause discrimination against women with impairments in politics and hinder their political participation. And it considers (environmental and institutional) factors that may facilitate their political participation and minimize these barriers. Formal and informal political activities presuppose public roles and visibility and thus, also assume basic levels of confidence. Therefore, the framework includes beyond those external facilitators and barriers also rather internal personal factors in women with disabilities (e.g. levels of self-confidence and interest in politics) which may influence their *political participation*.

3.2. Study design and sampling

To generate 1) greatest possible understanding of the complexities of political participation of women with disabilities and 2) strong evidence for recommendations for practice and policy, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative one (QUAN – QUAL). The study took a cross-disability approach to ensure that the diverse perspectives and experiences of women with disabilities are included and commonalities and differences are identified and incorporated in the recommendations. Control groups (men with & women without disabilities) in the quantitative part allowed for the identification of gender and disability gaps, i.e. disproportionate differences between these three groups due to gender and/or disability.

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire survey was implemented in Kg. Speu and Kg. Cham provinces and Phnom Penh³. The sample comprised 300 women with disabilities (Kg. Cham: n = 100; Kg. Speu: n = 100 and Phnom Penh: n = 100) and control groups of 90 men with disabilities and 90 women without disabilities (each: Kg. Cham: n = 30; Kg. Speu: n = 30; Phnom Penh: n = 30)⁴. The sample of women and men with disabilities was identified using a purposive sampling technique. A set of criteria defined the eligibility of respondents in line with the study objectives and ensured information-rich cases:

- Age 18 years and above
- Representation of all six impairment types
- Representation of different age groups
- Representation of urban and rural respondents

The sample of women without disabilities was identified in the field using a convenience sampling technique. It involved women older than 18 years and from different age groups. The interviewer-

³ Kg. Cham: Batheay, Chamkar Leu, Cheung Prey, Prey Chhor, Tboung Khmum. Kg. Speu: Chbar Mon, Odongk, Samraong Tong. Phnom Penh: Chamkar Mon, Doun Penh, Toul Kouk, Dangkao, Mean Chey, Ruaessei Kaev, Sen Sok.

⁴ For a detailed summary of the final sample, please refer to Appendix 1.

administered questionnaire⁵ explored the dependent and independent variables of political participation of women with disabilities as identified during the planning process, being:

- *Demographics/socio-economic background*
- *Political efficacy, civic knowledge and interest in politics*
- *Participation in election processes (registration and voting)*
- *Participation in representative political structures*
- *Participation in informal politics and local decision-making*
- *Self-representation and disability activism*

To ensure cultural appropriateness, applicability and conceptual equivalence of the questionnaire, it was back-translated (English - Khmer - English), field tested and reviewed with all partners, interviewers and women with disabilities.

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The qualitative phase aimed at deepening the understanding of the data obtained through the questionnaire survey using Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs), interviews and a consultative workshop:

- 1) Eight FGDs were implemented:
 - Six FGDs with 63 women with disabilities in Kg. Speu, Kg. Cham and Phnom Penh (two FGDs each) to further explore their understanding of political participation and their perceptions, wishes, and obstacles concerning their role and representation in politics.
 - Two FGDs with 18 local decision makers (commune and sangkat council members) in Kg. Speu and Phnom Penh to identify attitudes towards women with disabilities in political processes as well as entry points for the promotion of political participation of women with disabilities.
- 2) Eleven key informant interviews with representatives of (non-) governmental actors working in disability, gender, political participation and human rights. The interviews collected in-depth information on attitudes and knowledge on the needs and rights of women with disabilities in political processes and identified gaps and opportunities within existing mandates, frameworks and structures for the promotion of their political participation⁶.
- 3) A workshop for women with disabilities from national and local level and (non-) governmental actors in the field of disability, gender, politics to jointly discuss the findings and specify recommendations on how political participation of women with disabilities can be promoted.

3.3. Challenges and limitations

- Given the study's exploratory nature, the quantitative data collection aimed at indicative findings and not data that is representative of the whole female population with a disability in Cambodia.
- The time frame limited an evolving research process and challenged CDPO's capacity development.
- Gender equity in the implementing team was at the core of the planning, but difficult to translate into practice during data collection, e.g. due to the limited availability of female data collectors, particularly in the rural study areas.
- Due to social hierarchies, village chiefs and/or community members were at times present during the interviews which may have influenced the responses.
- Comparisons between different impairment types could not always be drawn due to the unequal sample sizes for each impairment type: The time frame limited especially the further identification of persons with intellectual, mental and speech impairment.

⁵ The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

⁶ The schedule of key informants can be found in Appendix 3.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1. Socio-economic situation of women with disabilities in Cambodia

As suggested in chapter 1, gender and disability are associated with socio-economic disparities. These in turn may affect the perceptions, wishes, and obstacles of women with disabilities regarding their role and participation in politics. The findings of the study confirm that many women with disabilities face disability and gender gaps in economic and social measures in general and in education in particular:

Table 1: Socio-economic measures/Comparison between women with disabilities and control groups

Area of interest	Women with Disabilities (1)			Men with Disabilities (2)			Women without Disabilities (3)		
	KC + KS	PP	Total	KC + KS	PP	Total	KC + KS	PP	Total
Education:									
Never went to school	49.0%	19.0%	39.0%	25.0%	6.7%	18.9%	25.0%	10.0%	20.0%
Daily household income:									
0 to 25,000 Riel (mean)	7,420	14,833	9,217	8,311	18,300	11,385	7,686	18,929	10,108
More than 25,000 Riel	0.0%	13.1%	4.4%	0.0%	16.7%	5.6%	1.7%	36.7%	13.3%
Income generation:									
Earned income in the past 12 months	35%	67%	45.7%	43.3%	86.7%	57.8%	60%	73.3%	64.4%
N=	200	100	300	60	30	90	60	30	90
Source of income:									
Self-employed	71.4%	13.4%	43.1%	61.5%	23.1%	42.3%	80.6%	22.7%	58.6%
Regularly salaried job ⁷	14.3%	77.6%	45.3%	19.2%	38.5%	28.8%	5.6%	68.2%	29.3%
Daily worker ⁸	14.3%	16.4%	15.3%	34.6%	42.3%	38.5%	27.8%	9.1%	20.7%
N=	70	67	137	26	26	52	36	22	58

- Disability and gender gaps in access to education: Women with disabilities have significantly less access to education compared to men with & women without disabilities, indicating severe barriers in accessing education, especially in rural areas.
- Disability and gender gaps in income levels: Women with disabilities have significantly lower household income than men with & women without disabilities. Thereby, we found significantly higher daily household and personal income levels in all groups in Phnom Penh compared to respondents from Kg. Speu and Kg. Cham. This urban/rural divide is particularly evident when looking at the proportion of persons in higher income brackets (>20,000 Riel for personal and >25,000 Riel for household income) which is significantly higher in Phnom Penh.
- Disability and gender gaps in access to income generation: Significantly fewer women with disabilities have access to income generation compared to the control groups, especially in Kg. Speu and Kg. Cham. Thereby, women with hearing, speech, mental and intellectual impairments are least represented among women with disabilities that earn an income, indicating impairment-specific barriers in accessing livelihood opportunities.
- Significantly more women with disabilities are self-employed compared to the control group (women without & men with disabilities). Women with hearing, mental and intellectual impairment are over-represented among self-employed women with disabilities, indicating less access to and maybe less relevant skills for the open labor market.

⁷ Regularly salaried job in private, public, agricultural, non-agricultural and NGO sector

⁸ Daily worker in industry or agriculture

EDUCATION IN WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES – QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

It seems obvious that formal education is associated with political participation and effectiveness as it helps develop relevant civic and social skills. The analysis of our quantitative data showed **no** significant relationships between levels of education and selected indicators of political participation of women with disabilities⁹. However, women with disabilities, local decision makers and key informants cited in our discussions most frequently the lack of or poor education as a key barrier to political participation: The levels of formal education seems to strongly influence the self-perception of women with disabilities and of others regarding their capacities to participate in political processes.

Literature shows a significant gender gap in terms of girls' schooling in Cambodia, increasing in size at each stage from primary school to university, and greater in rural than in urban areas (MoWA, 2008). Thereby, girls face additional gender-specific constraints such as transport, security and household duties. Low literacy remains a major gender issue with 40% of women that self-report as illiterate vs. 22% of men (MoWA, 2008). Less information is available on education of girls with disabilities: The Cambodian socio-economic survey shows that only 65% of children with one or more impairment attended school compared to 83% of their peers (Knowles, 2005; RGC, 2004). According to the Office for Special Education, girls with disabilities are less likely to attend school than boys with disabilities.

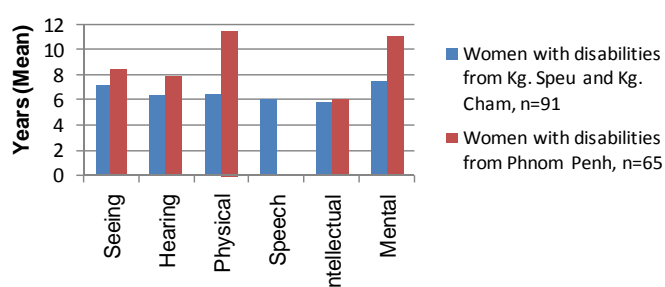
The quantitative results confirm the above gender gaps for women and girls with disabilities and reveal the additional gaps based upon their impairment:

Table 2: Education/Literacy in women with disabilities/Comparison with control groups

Area of interest	Women with Disabilities (1)			Men with Disabilities (2)			Women without Disabilities (3)		
	KC + KS	PP	Total	KC + KS	PP	Total	KC + KS	PP	Total
Literacy	33%	74%	46.7%	61.7%	80%	67.8%	63.3%	86.7%	71.1%
Years of education (mean) ¹⁰	6.64	9.68	7.9	7.02	8.78	7.94	6.84	11.88	8.69

- Gender and disability gaps: Women with disabilities have lower literacy rates and spend in average fewer years than men with & women without disabilities in the education system;
- A strong rural/urban divide: Women with disabilities in rural areas have the lowest literacy rates and lowest average school attendance in years. The latter applies to all impairment types:

Table 3: Participation of women with disabilities in formal education according to impairment type¹¹



In addition, the analysis of the quantitative data showed:

- Poor access to higher education for women with disabilities with strong geographical differences: Only 1 out of 200 women with disabilities in Kg. Cham and Kg. Speu attended university compared to 15 out of 100 women with disabilities in Phnom Penh.

⁹ Considering the following variables: Party membership, participation in elections, membership in DPOs/SHGs and standing for election.

¹⁰ Based on the highest grade for each level from Primary School to Post-graduate: Primary School: 6 years, Secondary School: 9 years, High School: 12 years, Under-graduate: 16 years and Post-graduate 18 years.

¹¹ In interpreting this data, one has to consider the unequal sample sizes for each impairment type (see appendix 1).

Women with disabilities report a variety of reasons which they feel are hampering their right to education and thus, their overall participation in society:

- A ‘mistaken’ sense of care and protection in parents of girls with disabilities who worry that their daughters face difficulties and cannot take care of themselves and thus, prefer them to stay at home rather than attend school;
- Poverty in families with disabled family members that leaves not enough financial resources to send the children to school;
- Discriminative attitudes in peers but also in teachers;
- Lack of or poor transport to school;
- Traditional gender roles that imply that women and girls don’t need education.

The negative impact of traditional gender roles and the fact that parents often still don’t realize the importance of education was stressed by most key informants and local decision makers. The qualitative findings confirm the conclusions of the MoWA (2008) that attitudes to girls’ education remain a significant constraint to achieving gender equity in education and reveal the additional dimension of discrimination that girls with disabilities face in accessing education based upon their impairment. Key informants from the disability sector highlight the fact that exclusion from the education system also limits their opportunities to acquire civic skills, to learn how to interact and participate in society, to express themselves and to mitigate negative and discriminative experiences. This, in turn is strongly felt to contribute to the frequently (self-) reported lack of self-confidence and ‘shyness’ in women with disabilities.

“Education for boys is still seen as more important than for girls and between girl and boy with disability they still send the boy to school but not the girl”

Woman from Kampong Speu

Given the quantitative results, it is difficult to conclude that more formal education would increase women with disabilities’ participation in politics. The findings rather support available evidence on the relevance of other cultural, institutional or environmental variables that determine the capacity of women to participate in politics (Goetz, 2003), for example how political institutions and processes treat and address women with disabilities, internalized social perceptions and discrimination and/or access to popular civic education.

Summary:

- *Women with disabilities face gaps in socio-economic measures that are considered to influence political participation.*
- *Gaps in employment, household income and education indicate that women with disabilities face disparities based on their gender and impairment.*
- *Lower access to employment and education means less exposure to opportunities for girls and women with disabilities to develop social and civic skills which are considered important prerequisites for political participation.*
- *Women with disabilities, local decision makers and key informants cite lack of or poor education as a key barrier to political participation. However, the findings of this study show **no** relationship between formal education and political participation of women with disabilities.*
- *This indicates that promotion of formal education as the main activity to be provided in this area is not sufficient and points to the relevance of an in-depth analysis of the dynamics between women with disabilities and political actors and processes and their self-perceptions.*

4.2. Women with disabilities' understanding of politics and political participation

4.2.1. Perceptions of politics and political processes

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Our discussions with women with disabilities showed how sensitive the issue of 'politics' is in Cambodian society: Participants from Kg. Speu and Kg. Cham initially expressed fear and insecurity when hearing the word 'politics'. Many stated that they don't know what the term 'politics' means. They thought that it is something that only leaders do, something they are called upon, or that takes place under the leadership of the commune or village chief. Many associate it with political party power and partisan control. Key informants from the gender sector confirm these sentiments as being rooted in the historical experience of Cambodians and in a lack of knowledge and understanding of politics, particularly in women. This often leads not only to fear but also to a reduction of the political spectrum mainly to elections. Thereby, women with disabilities may be disproportionately affected given potential barriers in accessing relevant information and civic education.

When asked what they think 'political activities' are, participants identified a wide range of actions:

- *Participation in the election, voter registration and verifying one's name on the voter list;*
- *Being a member of the electoral committee, at the polling station or an election observer;*
- *Being a member of a political party;*
- *Participation in village and community meetings and commune plan consultations;*
- *Being a member of a SHG or DPO*
- *Participation in electoral/political campaigns*
- *Standing as a candidate to be elected representative (NA, province/district/commune councils);*
- *Demanding for rights.*

In addition, women with disabilities from Phnom Penh cited:

- *Campaigning, lobbying, advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities;*
- *Demonstrating/protesting to demand something;*
- *Consultation, discussion;*
- *Mobilize to get support;*
- *Join different groups – civil society, etc.*

Interestingly, after identifying the various politics actions, the majority of women with disabilities in Kg. Speu and Kg. Cham realized that as a matter of fact, they have participated in some of these activities and thus, in politics, even without knowing so.

Becoming aware of the actual meaning of the rather abstract term 'politics' and linking it to their own actions, they acknowledged that they perceive the term now as less sensitive and scary.

Women with disabilities perceive the impact of political processes largely in the development of their communes and an increase of their living standards (infrastructure, roads, electricity, livelihood, education etc.). Only participants from Phnom Penh referred in addition to the above also to improved democracy and gender equality and equity. This may reflect their better access and exposure to relevant information and their proximity to national processes, and thus increased capacities to reflect on strategic gender interests.

"I am afraid of politics. Without the village chief calling and informing me, I don't dare to do anything".

Women from Kampong Speu

"I used to feel cold at my hands and feet when I heard the word politics. I felt as if a machine is operating in my chest – chook chak chook chak. But now I don't feel like that anymore. I voted many times but I didn't know that I was doing politics."

Woman from Kampong Cham

4.2.2. Civic knowledge and understanding of their role in political processes

Civic knowledge and political efficacy are considered important factors in political participation: For women with disabilities to participate effectively, they need accessible information on relevant processes and a positive perception of their own role.

QUANTATIVE RESULTS

The findings confirm gaps in women with disabilities' understanding of political processes:

Table 4: Knowledge on voter eligibility criteria/Comparison between women with disabilities and control groups

Area of interest	Women with Disabilities (1)			Men with Disabilities (2)			Women without Disabilities (3)		
	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total
Know all requirements	0%	9%	6%	0%	6.7%	4.4%	0%	18.3%	12.2%
Know some requirements	66%	61.5%	63%	80%	71.7%	74.4%	100%	76.7%	84.4%
Don't know any	30%	27%	29%	16.7%	18.3%	17.8%	0%	5%	3.3%

- Disability gaps: Women and men with disabilities have lower levels of knowledge on voter criteria compared to women without disabilities.
- Gender gaps: More women than men with disabilities do not know any voter eligibility criteria.
- Urban/rural divide: Significantly more respondents in Kg. Cham and Kg. Speu report to know all requirements for voting compared to respondents in Phnom Penh.

In addition, the analysis of the quantitative data revealed:

- Gender and disability gaps in levels of interest in politics: A significantly higher proportion of women with disabilities report that they have no interest in what local authorities or the government is doing compared to the control group (women without & men with disabilities).
- Gender and disability gaps in levels of knowledge on party programs: More women with disabilities (79%) report not to have knowledge on the different party programs compared to men with disabilities (61%) and women without disabilities (54%). Thereby, this proportion is higher in rural respondents in all groups than those from Phnom Penh.
- Gender and disability gaps in knowledge on CC: 43% of women with disabilities know that CC members are elected compared to 60% of men with and 72% of women without disabilities.
- Gender and disability gaps in levels of political efficacy: Women with disabilities report lower levels of internal political efficacy (a sense that one can understand and participate in politics) and external political efficacy (a sense that politicians are responsive to one's interests) compared to the control group (men with & women without disabilities).

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Women with disabilities identified a variety of reasons why they think their political participation is important: Increasing recognition of their rights and needs, reducing stigma and discrimination, influencing local planning, choosing a good leader, and improving their living conditions. However, they recognize a clear gap between their own level of and access to **opportunities** for political participation compared to men with disabilities and women without disabilities, due to:

- Social norms and gender roles (e.g. men can stay away overnight, women have household tasks);
- Stigma and social perceptions of women with disabilities based upon their gender ("*women cannot go around their stove*") and impairment ("*women with disabilities work as slow as an inchworm*");
- The absence of support depending on their type of impairment;
- Lack of encouragement from family, community and local authorities;
- Double discrimination.

But most frequently women with disabilities refer less to their environment but an interplay between low self-confidence, shyness and a perceived lack of capacities as major reasons for their lower political participation. Feelings of discomfort or shame because of their impairment often prevent them from socializing. They think men with disabilities to be stronger and better equipped to deal with discriminative attitudes. Lack of relevant capacities is for most women with disabilities inextricably linked to and a direct result of poor education. Key informants from the gender and disability sector explain this with internalized gender stereotypes and roles which traditionally don't include political activism, compounded by feelings of insufficiency in women with disabilities due to internalized social constructions of disability. These dynamics may contribute their lower levels of political efficacy and interest reflected in the quantitative results.

"Men with disabilities are advanced because they are cleverer and have more education than us. We women are ignorant and know little about politics".

Woman from Kampong Speu

"I also want to stand for election. Unfortunately, I don't have capacity because I never went to school."

Woman from Kampong Cham

By consequence, many women with disabilities perceive a limit to the scope of their political participation: Compared to elections or commune meetings, participation in political decision-making and leadership is often considered more difficult or even impossible. Women with disabilities attribute this to a lack of opportunities but most frequently to a lack of capacities, low self-confidence and yet again poor education. At the same time, women with disabilities especially from Phnom Penh realize the importance of accessing the decision-making level in order to have a substantial impact on policy development and national planning. Self-confidence and capacities are thereby perceived as essential prerequisites. They particularly call upon their own responsibility and determination to develop relevant capacities and overcome barriers to their political participation which may reflect the level of internalization of public images of women with disabilities and their capacities.

"If we only vote, I think we get only to a certain level. If we have opportunities, we can get into decision making level, we can influence the policies, we will achieve more then."

Woman from Phnom Penh

Summary:

- Many women with disabilities, especially in rural areas, participate in political activities without being aware of it: Gaps in knowledge on politics, related terminology and processes indicate barriers in accessing civic information. This may contribute to the lower self-evaluations of their capacities to participate in politics and points to the relevance of accessible civic education.
- Internalized gender roles and stigmatisation additionally discourage their political involvement. The messages they receive and the disparities they face may cause women with disabilities to feel powerless, which is reflected in lower levels of political efficacy and interest.
- Due to a lack of knowledge and the historical experience, many women with disabilities in rural areas perceive politics as a sensitive issue which further alienates them from mainstream politics.
- Women with disabilities identify are conscious about the gap between their own political participation and that of women without and men with disabilities. They find participation in decision-making and leadership particularly difficult due to a lack of opportunities but even more because of a perceived lack of capacities and poor education.
- Women with disabilities show determination and recognize the importance of accessing leadership positions in order to achieve greater impact. Thereby, they place a high responsibility within themselves in overcoming barriers and developing relevant capacities.

4.3. Attitudes towards political participation of women with

Compared to key informants on national level, local decision-makers have less knowledge of existing legal instruments on the rights of persons with disabilities: None of the decision makers in Kg. Speu and only some in Phnom Penh are aware of the National Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Only decision makers and key informants in Phnom Penh know the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Interestingly, some decision-makers in Phnom Penh claim not to have any persons with disabilities in their constituencies or to know of discrimination against them in accessing political processes. By consequence, they don't see any need for action.

Key informants as well as local decision-makers agree that women with disabilities should participate in politics because:

- They can be a role model to other women as well as men with disabilities, women without disabilities and other disadvantaged groups;
- Their participation can help reducing discrimination;
- It can help bridge the gap between persons with and without disabilities;
- It can help improve living conditions and the status of women with disabilities;
- They can influence party policies/ministries and civil society to include and address their needs;
- The needs and rights of women with disabilities are considered and included in commune planning;
- They can exercise their rights;
- They understand and can represent their needs best.

Our discussions revealed little awareness in local decision makers on the discrimination women with disabilities face based upon their gender and disability. By consequence, none of the decision-makers report to have specific measures in place that promote the political participation of women or persons with disabilities. Likewise, the majority of key informants did not yet have any specific plans in place to promote the political participation of women with disabilities within their mandate.

"We want women to get involved in politics but it is hard to encourage them. When it is hard to encourage general women, you can imagine how much more difficult it is to encourage women with disabilities. They do not have self-confidence."

Decision-maker from Phnom Penh

Key informants and local decision-makers consent that levels of women with disabilities' representation and participation in politics is still too low. Local decision-makers identify the reasons for this largely within the women themselves and reflect less on social barriers and poor access to opportunities: Low capacities, shame, lack of education and illiteracy, poor communication skills and self-confidence and a lack of will and determination are most frequently mentioned. Few refer to poor living conditions and a disabling environment

In contrast, key informants from the disability and gender sector focus in their analysis on discrimination and discriminative practices. Inappropriate means of information/communication lead to lower levels of civic knowledge: For example CCs don't always provide information in an accessible manner and thus, put women with disabilities at a disadvantage. Lower income levels in women with disabilities are seen as another important barrier (1, lack of financial resources to be politically active and 2, women with disabilities cannot live from the salary paid to CC members) confirming that the economic disparities shown in chapter 4.1 negatively affect their political participation at commune level. Low self-confidence and shyness are seen as direct results of the traditional gender roles, feelings of guilt, internalized stereotypes and poor access to education, thus the lack of opportunities to acquire relevant civic and communication skills (see chapter 4.1). Housework and family duties impose additional (time) constraints to their political engagement. And lastly, key informants from the disability and gender sector cite poor awareness of laws and policies on persons with disabilities and gender in political actors as a key barrier.

Summary:

- *Local decision-makers and key informants agree on the importance and benefit of political participation of women with disabilities, with varying reference to human rights.*
- *Local decision makers have less awareness on the 2009 disability legislation and the CRPD compared to national level decision makers and key informants.*
- *Discrimination based on gender and disability is poorly recognized and taken into consideration by local decision makers.*
- *Many local decision makers and key informants have a 'stereotypical' view of lack of education as the primary obstacle to women with disabilities' political participation. Especially local decision-makers seem to equate poor education with lack of capacities and skills. Their lower education and political engagement leads to skepticism about their capacities to govern and participate effectively.*
- *Local decision makers see the barriers to women with disabilities' political participation rather within the women themselves than in barriers in their environment. Thus, the idea is largely how women with disabilities can adapt their capacities to fit the political standards/mechanisms and not how these can be adapted to allow women with disabilities to participate.*
- *Local decision makers and non-governmental key informants have not yet included the promotion of political participation of women with disabilities into their mandate and often lack relevant information.*

4.4. Participation of women with disabilities in election processes

4.4.1. Level of participation in voter registration and election

Elections are the starting point of any democratic system, but effective participation in these processes requires access to relevant systems and procedures.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The quantitative results show that overall, women with disabilities have lower levels of participation in both registration and election processes:

Table 5: Participation in 2009 voter registration/Comparison between women with disabilities and control groups

Area of interest	Women with Disabilities (1)			Men with Disabilities (2)			Women without Disabilities (3)		
	KC + KS	PP	Total	KC + KS	PP	Total	KC + KS	PP	Total
Participation in 2009 voter registration	55%	44%	51.3%	53.3%	46.7%	51.1%	80%	70%	76.7%

- Disability gaps in participation in registration: Lower levels of participation in the 2009 voter registration in women and men with disabilities compared to women without disabilities¹².

In addition, the quantitative data showed the following:

- Regional differences: 62% of women with disabilities in Kg. Cham registered against 48% in Kg. Speu, indicating region-specific barriers/facilitators.
- Members of a DPO/SHG are more likely to participate in voter registration.
- Women with seeing and intellectual impairment and deaf women are less likely to register.

¹² On a national level, women's participation in registration is at an average of 53% to 54% (Interview with NEC; 24/11/2010).

Table 6: Participation in 2008 NA election/Comparison between women with disabilities and control group

Area of interest	Women with Disabilities (1)			Men with Disabilities (2)			Women without Disabilities (3)		
	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total
Participation in 2008 NA election	41.6%	67.5%	58.8%	43.3%	76.7%	65.6%	96.7%	93.3%	94.4%

- Disability and gender gaps in participation in elections: Women with disabilities have the lowest level of electoral participation¹³.

In addition, the quantitative data showed the following:

- Regional differences: Higher participation in women and men with disabilities in rural areas.
- Overall, more women with disabilities (24%) than men with disabilities (20%) and women without disabilities (3%) **never** voted.
- Women with disabilities with high levels of external political efficacy are more likely to vote.
- Women with seeing, hearing, intellectual and mental impairment are less likely to vote.

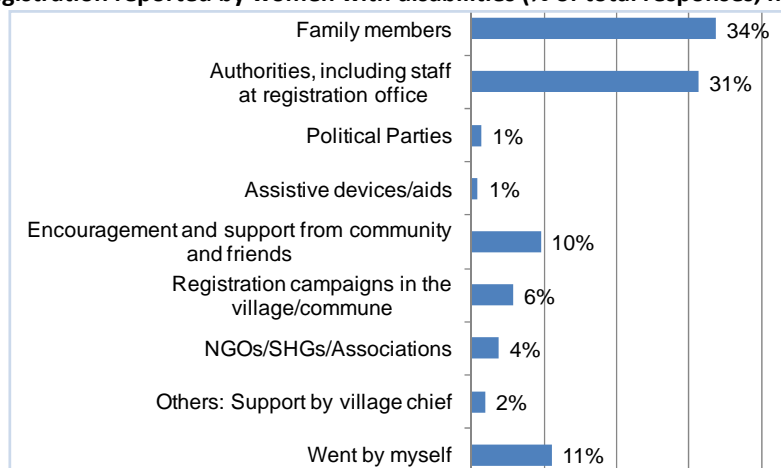
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Almost all participants in our discussions were members of SHGs and we found the above positive correlation between SHGs/DPOs membership and participation in voter registration confirmed: The women considered registration and election to be key political activities. Some even think registration to be the most important, expressing a clear understanding of registration as a mandatory prerequisite for participation in voting. This indicates the opportunities DPOs/SHGs present for increasing access to relevant civic information and levels of political efficacy in their members.

Women with disabilities conceive the participation in election as their right or even obligation, and the opportunity to elect their leader as crucial. They strongly connect this process to their lives and localities: Choosing the 'right' leaders/representatives to lead the country to development and peace. And even more important, choosing the 'right' commune leaders/representatives to ensure village/commune development, thus improvement of their very own lives.

4.4.2. Facilitators for participation in voter registration and election

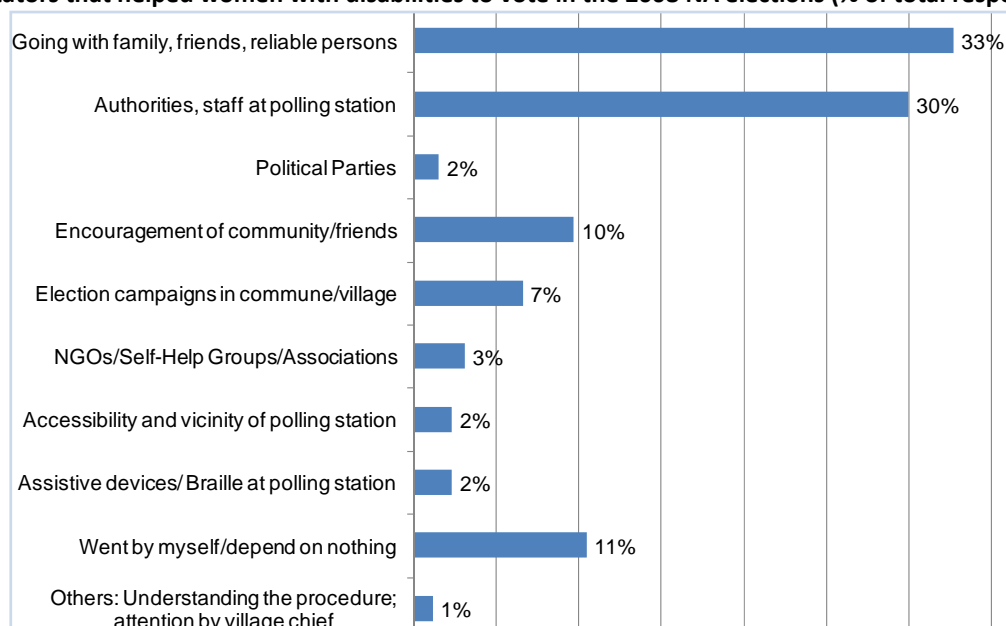
In order to improve the participation of women with disabilities in voter registration and elections, it is important to identify what they consider helpful and supportive in accessing these processes.

Figure 2: Facilitators in registration reported by women with disabilities (% of total responses, n=207)

¹³ In contrast to findings from a 2009 survey, according to which more women voted in the 2008 elections (Comfrel, 2009)

- Personal support systems, especially family members are most important facilitators for women with disabilities followed by support from staff at the registration office.

Figure 3: Facilitators that helped women with disabilities to vote in the 2008 NA elections (% of total responses, n=257)



- Again, personal networks to accompany them as well as facilitation at the polling station are key facilitators for women with disabilities.

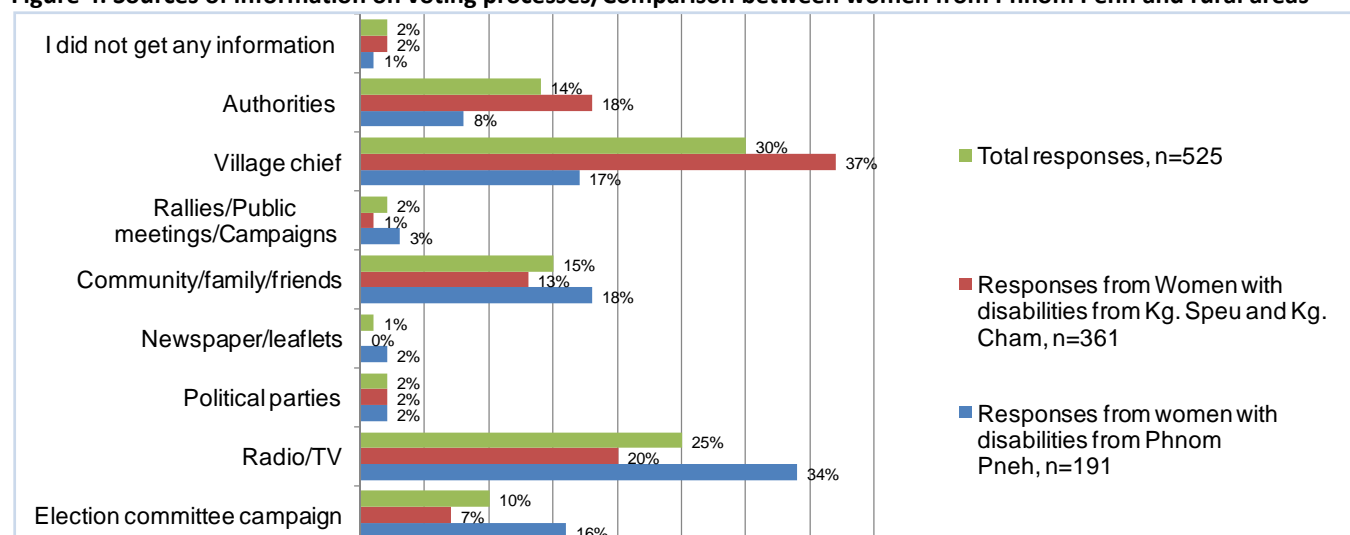
In addition, the quantitative data showed the following:

- Only 29% of men with disabilities identified the company of family and friends as a facilitating factor compared to 44% of women with disabilities. This shows how social norms, especially in the provinces determine the access to these processes for women and how important the support of their immediate family is in participating in these activities.

The above results suggest the need for a two-pronged approach: Promoting a facilitating and supportive environment in the community that recognizes the rights of women with disabilities and ensuring the accessibility of the actual process at the registration office and/or polling station.

Looking at the sources of information on voting processes, the findings suggest the need for information that is accessible to women with disabilities based on their localities and their impairment:

Figure 4: Sources of information on voting processes/Comparison between women from Phnom Penh and rural areas



- The village/commune chief presents the most important source of information for women with disabilities in the rural study areas of Kampong Speu and Kampong Cham.
- Radio and TV are the most effective means of accessing civic information for women with disabilities in Phnom Penh.

In addition, the analysis of the quantitative data showed the following:

- The group of those that reported did not get any information comprises only respondents with hearing impairment, indicating severe barriers in accessing civic information to deaf persons.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS:

The findings from our discussion with women with disabilities confirm the crucial role of local authorities and especially the village chief as key facilitators in rural areas: Participants from the provinces reported how village chiefs informed, reminded, encouraged and facilitated women with disabilities to participate in voter registration and/or elections. Participants noted positively, if priority is given to persons with disabilities (e.g. no queuing). Radio programs were also cited as an important means of information. Some participants remarked that leaflets, radio or TV spots regarding elections/registration should specifically address/mention persons with disabilities. Access to a mobile ballot box was considered extremely helpful. However, according to the NEC, their use was stopped after complaints from some parties. And lastly, women with disabilities cite the positive impact of their SHGs in lobbying local authorities to support persons with disabilities in participating in voter registration and election processes.

"In my village, the village chief rented a motorbike to take all disabled people to the polling station".

Woman from Kampong Speu

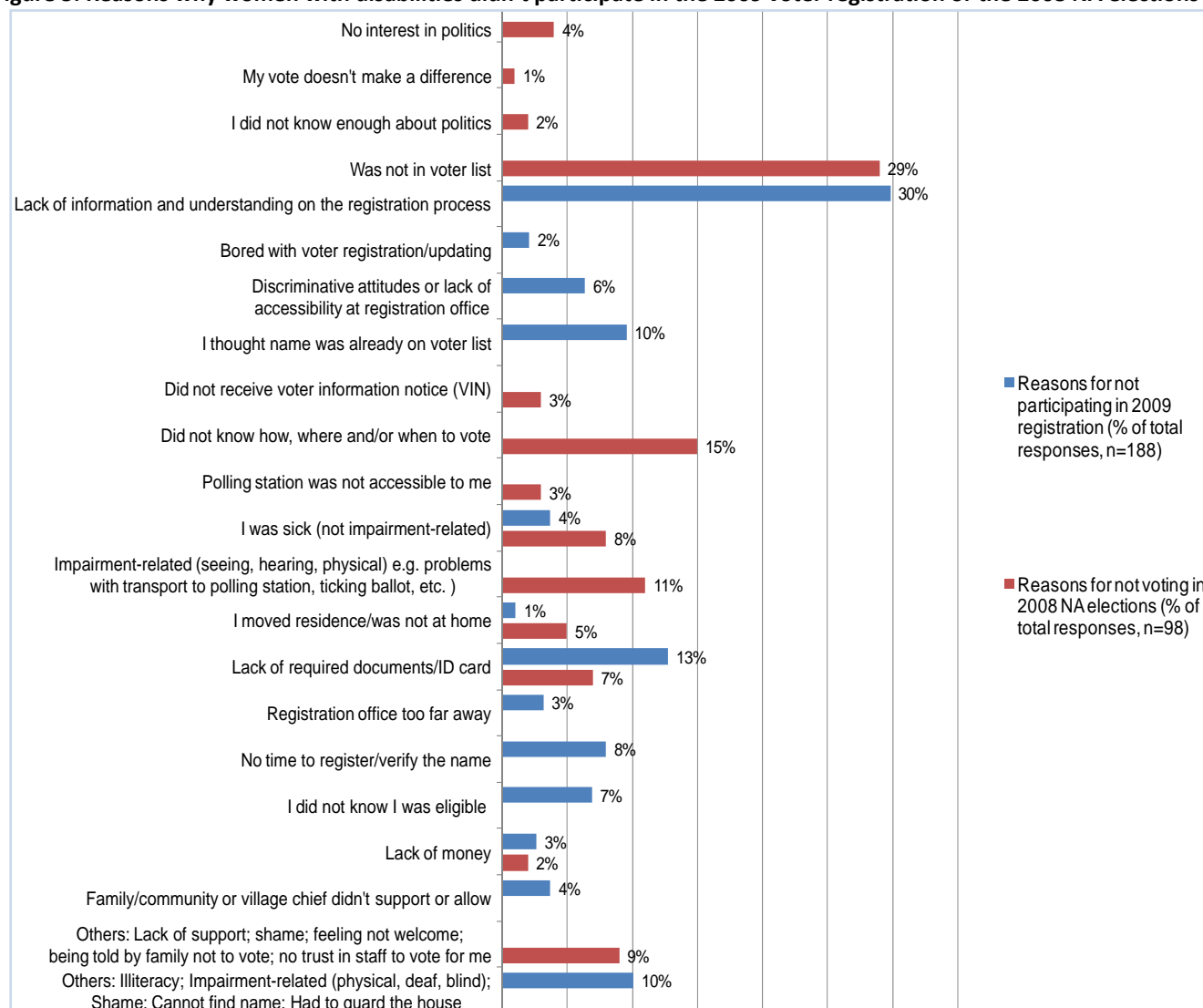
Participants suggested in our discussions for local authorities to inform the electoral committee in each community on the requirements of their commune members with disabilities. Given the higher participation of women with disabilities in rural areas in registration and elections, key informants suggest the effects of migration as one cause. But the results may also reflect a comparatively better infrastructure at the grass root, thus, a more approachable election system as well as the positive impact of civil society in disseminating relevant civic information. In addition, both key informants from the disability sector and the government stressed the positive experience of consultations between persons with disabilities and relevant (non-) governmental actors in the past which provide opportunities to jointly discuss barriers and identify solutions for their increased participation.

4.4.3. Barriers to participation in voter registration and election

Increasing the participation of women with disabilities in voter registration and election requires a thorough analysis of the barriers and obstacles they face in accessing these processes in their localities.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

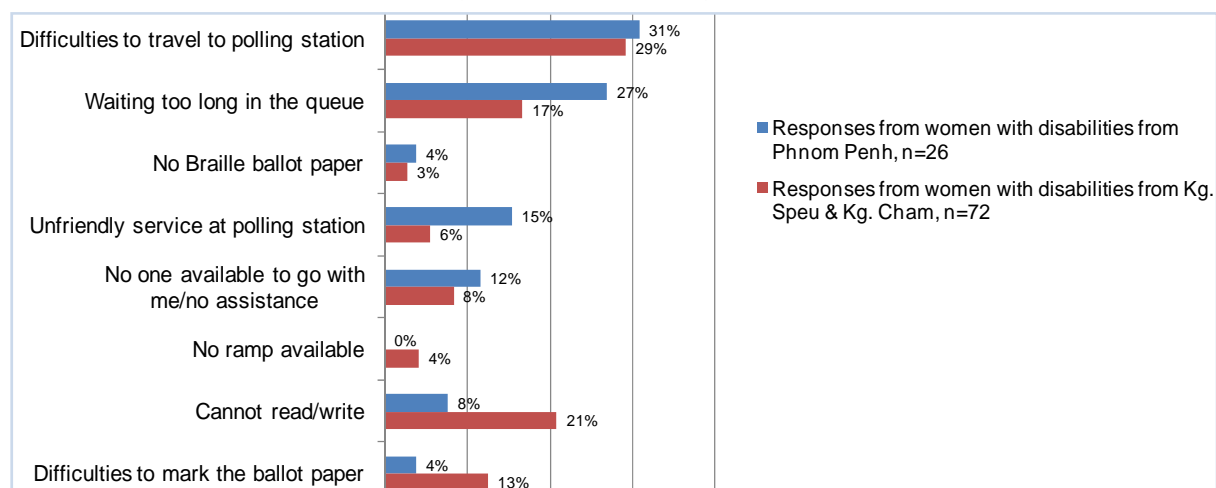
Figure 5: Reasons why women with disabilities didn't participate in the 2009 voter registration or the 2008 NA elections



- Lack of information is a key barrier for women with disabilities' participation in voter registration and elections, indicating disability gaps in accessibility and acceptability of disseminated information (tools and modes of dissemination).
- Lack of relevant documents (e.g. ID card) accounts for 13% in registration and 7% in election processes, indicating difficulties in obtaining required papers and potentially discriminative practices in local authorities.
- The absence of the name in the voter list presents the main barrier to participation of women with disabilities in the 2008 elections and reflects barriers in accessing the registration process.
- Impairment-related barriers are most frequently reported by persons with visual, hearing and physical impairments and point to a lack of impairment specific support, e.g. accessible ballot papers, transport, ramps etc.

Looking at women with disabilities that actually voted in the 2008 NA elections, 30% report difficulties in the process compared to only 7% of women without disabilities. Thereby, more women with disabilities in Phnom Penh (36%) than from Kampong Cham and Kampong Speu (28%) faced problems:

Figure 6: Difficulties women with disabilities experienced when voting in 2008 NA election



QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Almost all women with disabilities and key informants report barriers to voter registration and election, confirming the above findings: Lack of accessibility was frequently cited, including lack of Braille ballots to ensure confidentiality (making a hole is considered impractical), lack of sign language interpreters, absence of mobile ballot boxes, lack of ramps, and poor facilitation at the registration or polling station. Travel and transportation impose additional financial barriers due to the need to accommodate a support person. Moreover, women with disabilities face gender-specific barriers in traveling to registration and polling stations, as they need a family member to accompany them while men with disabilities can go with anyone. Poor access to information was reported especially for rural areas: While information through radio, TV or newspaper is easily accessible in the city, people in the village depend to a great degree on local authorities and the village chief to inform them on the date for registration or voting. Thus, women with disabilities greatly depend on their level of awareness and attitude towards persons with disabilities. They feel deeply affected by discriminative or unfriendly attitudes and the lack of support some experience in their communes: Aside of poor support from family and community members, women with disabilities from the provinces reported local authorities/village chiefs discouraging them or even informing them that they are not allowed to register or vote.

Lack of required documents presents a key barrier to women with disabilities: For once, they lack information on how and where to get them. Participants and key informants from the disability sector also report problems in obtaining required documents due to discriminative practices and poor knowledge on the rights of persons with disabilities in local authorities, who by consequence deny to issue the required papers. Low levels of external political efficacy in women with disabilities were cited as an important barrier in remote areas, where women with disabilities often don't think that elections could bring about any change in their community and their situation. And lastly, women from Phnom Penh highlight the discriminative legal provisions in

"I was once prior to Election Day teasing the village chief that even though I am blind, I would be able to walk as far and as fast as other people if I am allowed to vote, and I am sure I will be able to tick if someone reads for me at the polling station. He replied: "No, why do you want to go? You can get lost". He added: "Please, do not go, it would be disturbing." I missed the election three times already."

Woman from Kampong Speu

current election laws against persons with mental and intellectual impairment and the absence of any positive affirmation with regards to persons with disabilities.

Summary:

- *Women with disabilities have significantly lower levels of participation in voter registration and election, compared to men with & women without disabilities, indicating that current systems do not yet fully meet their needs and realities.*
- *They are disproportionately affected by key problems in the election system, e.g. disparities in media access, obstructions and problems for voters in obtaining relevant documents (Comfrel, 2008) due to their gender and impairment, and thus experience multiple barriers.*
- *Appropriate dissemination and communication means that are accessible and acceptable to women with disabilities in their localities are effective means to address poor levels of relevant civic information as a key barrier to their participation in voter registration and election.*
- *SHGs/DPOs prove an effective way of increasing awareness and support to women with disabilities in local authorities but also to increase civic knowledge on these processes in women with disabilities themselves, especially at the village/commune level.*
- *Participation in electoral processes requires a two-pronged approach involving a supportive family/community environment as well as the accessibility of the actual process to be effective.*
- *Local authorities and village chiefs hold a key role in the facilitation of women with disabilities' participation in voter registration and elections being a key entry point and multiplier of interventions to promote their participation.*

4.5. Participation of women with disabilities in representative political structures

4.5.1. Level of participation in representative political structures

Representative political structures in this context refer to political parties and elected representative structures, especially at local level (Commune Councils). Political parties are an important medium for political participation and access to decision-making power and thus, can play a central facilitating role in the political advancement of women. Likewise, local governments present an important entry point to the political system for women. Given their domestic responsibilities, becoming politically active on the local level is often considered a more accessible starting point.

QUANTATIVE RESULTS

The quantitative results reveal the low visibility of women with disabilities in formal political structures both in terms of their representation and participation:

Table 7: Membership of women with disabilities in political parties/Comparison to control group

Area of interest	Women with Disabilities (1)			Men with Disabilities (2)			Women without Disabilities (3)		
	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total
Political party membership	16.0%	14.5%	15.0%	26.7%	23.3%	24.4%	26.7%	30.0%	28.9%
N=	100	200	300	30	60	90	30	60	90

- Disability and gender gaps in representation: Women with disabilities have the lowest level of participation in political parties compared to men with & women without disabilities.

In addition, the analysis of the quantitative data showed the following:

- Impairment gaps: Women with intellectual, mental and hearing impairment are least represented. As for women with hearing impairment, this indicates a lack of sign language in respondents and thus, barriers in communication.
- Gender gaps: Only 4.3% of women with disabilities that are members of a political party hold a leadership position (on village level) compared to 19.1% of men with disabilities who also bear leadership positions at commune level.
- Women with disabilities with high levels of external political efficacy are more likely to be a party member, suggesting that aside of social barriers low perceptions of politicians' responsiveness to their interests significantly contribute to their low participation.
- Gender and disability gaps: Only 1% of women with disabilities ever stood for elections and only one woman from Phnom Penh is an elected representative (member of sangkat council).
- Disability gaps: 12% of women with disabilities feel that their needs are not included in the commune development plans compared to only 7% in women without disabilities.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS:

Women with disabilities are aware of both the decision-making power elected representatives like commune council members have and of parties being main political bodies. While they consider participation in political parties less of a problem, access to political decision making and leadership is perceived as very difficult: The groups knew only about one woman with a disability in Kampong Speu who became chief of commune council. Participants agreed that women with disabilities are not represented in decision making, neither in councils nor in party structures.

However, looking at party membership, decisive factors for women with disabilities in rural areas are less participation in decision making but access to a local support system in case of problems (e.g. if they are short of rice, need treatment), a sense of belonging to a bigger group, avoiding isolation in the community as well as access to information. In contrast, participants from Phnom Penh stressed the opportunity to sensitize parties on disability issues, influence party policies to include their needs and rights and to stand as candidate for election thus, reaching the decision making level: They express that being an elected representative would provide them the sole opportunity to bridge the gap between persons with and without disabilities, eliminate discrimination, and ensure that their needs and rights are addressed. Moreover, they feel that becoming an elected representative would show that persons with disabilities and women with disabilities in particular are accepted and their capacities are acknowledged. In contrast, only the group in Kampong Cham considered standing for election as relevant, which may reflect the lack of opportunities they experience in being included in any candidate list. Key informants from the gender sector are not surprised by these findings. They cite the difficulties women in general face in participating in Cambodian formal political structures, and the additional barriers women with disabilities experience due to their impairment and the public perceptions of their capacities.

"We don't have any women with disabilities as decision makers at village, commune or district level.

We do have many disabled persons in our village but no one becomes a member in the decision making body".

"I am not sure whether disabled like us have a chance to stand as candidate. I think, they don't let us because we cannot walk or work as fast as they do".

Women from Kampong Cham

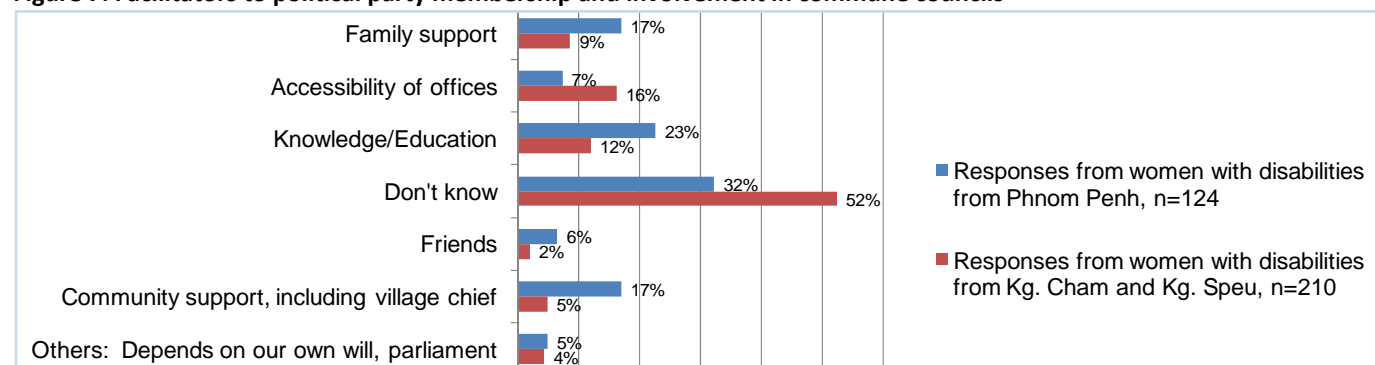
4.5.2. Facilitators to participation in representative political structures

In order to improve the participation of women with disabilities in representative political structures, it is important to identify what they consider helpful and supportive in accessing these bodies.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS:

- Women with disabilities from the rural study areas see less means for improving their participation in political parties and local representative structures compared to respondents from Phnom Penh:

Figure 7: Facilitators to political party membership and involvement in commune councils



- Regional differences: Increased knowledge and education present a major facilitator for women with disabilities in Phnom Penh but less in rural respondents.
- Under 'others' almost all respondents refer to their own responsibility and determination as the major 'facilitating' aspect, which may indicate the level to which they internalize public perceptions of their capacities.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Women with disabilities in Kampong Speu stress the important facilitating role of political parties in providing opportunities for women with disabilities to political participation and to act as role models in the elimination of discrimination. All groups of women with disabilities consent on the need for political parties to actively consider women with disabilities in their candidate lists and the benefit of a quorum for women with disabilities in party and public decision-making structures.

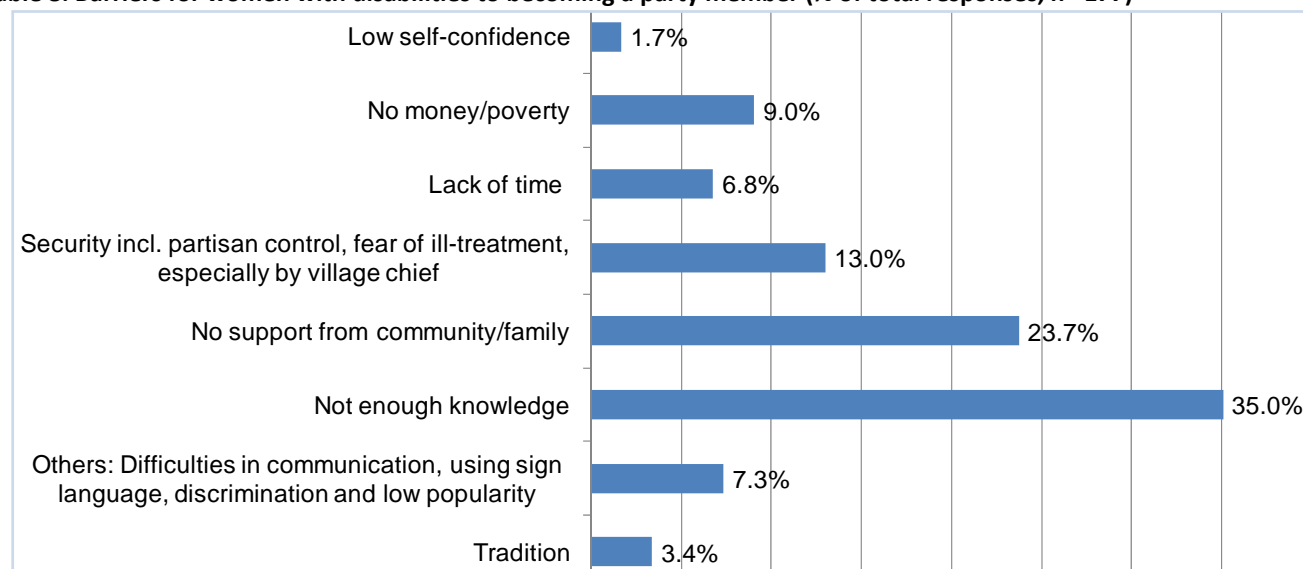
Furthermore, given the lack of support women with disabilities experience in accessing formal political structures, participants emphasize the need for accessible and acceptable support, especially with regards to transport and travel which are barriers to primary prerequisites for participation, i.e. being mobile to attend meetings etc. Women with disabilities also stress the facilitating role of DPOs/SHGs in promoting their participation and representation in representative political structures. And lastly, they frequently revert back to self-evaluations of their own capacities to fulfill such roles and stress the need to further develop their self-confidence and capacities in order to gain opportunities in and access to political parties and elected representative entities.

4.5.3. Barriers to participation in representative political structures

Increasing the participation and representation of women with disabilities in formal political structures requires the analysis of the barriers and obstacles they experience in accessing these entities:

QUANTATIVE RESULTS

Table 8: Barriers for women with disabilities to becoming a party member (% of total responses, n= 177)



- The main barrier reported by women with disabilities is a lack of knowledge, which may include lack of education/schooling and thus, may be perceived as lack of capacities.
- Lack of support from community and family members is a key barrier indicating discouraging or discriminative attitudes and practices within the respondents' localities.
- The majority of responses under others refer to respondents with hearing impairment and the lack of sign language/communication which imposes a major barrier to their engagement.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Women with disabilities feel that barriers in accessing electoral processes are almost the same for men and women with disabilities, however, in terms of access to political decision making, the barriers are different and by consequence the level of their participation much lower: Some say, we lack capacities, which prevents them from being considered or feeling capable to stand as candidate and be in decision making level. Thereby, the majority of women equals the lack of capacities with their lack of education. Others say 'we have capacities but we lack opportunities': Women with disabilities both in Phnom Penh and the provinces are interested in these activities but face discrimination based on their gender and impairment, a lack of encouragement from local authorities and by consequence, lack of opportunities. Women with hearing or speech impairment cite in addition the lack of sign language which prevents them from participating and accessing relevant information.

"Get involved with a political party-as a party member can be a threatening one, in the sense that democracy is still young and people do not understand about politics and democracy".

Woman from Phnom Penh

According to Cambodian laws, candidates for the commune councils' elections have to be appointed by political parties and included in their candidate lists. In the actual system, only a position at the top of the list will provide some chance for being elected. Thus, the entire process of selection and ranking is crucial for women with disabilities to succeed. Participants report that persons with disabilities and women with disabilities in particular stand hardly any chances of being selected, let alone making it to

the top of the lists. Equally, they are given hardly any opportunity to access decision-making levels within the party systems. Key informants from the gender sector suggest that this also reflects fear in political parties of losing out on popularity if they include women with disabilities in leadership positions or in candidate lists. In addition, many women with disabilities feel that prevailing nepotism and partisan in political parties or government structures disproportionately affect them. Security issues and fear in relation with poor knowledge and experience on politics and 'democratic concepts' limit their motivation to get involved with a political party and their freedom of choice.

(Non-) governmental key informants from the gender and disability sector also cite the lack of relevant financial resources resulting from their lower economic status: Obtaining a nomination as a political candidate requires substantial amounts of money, which women with disabilities generally do not have and often cannot raise. And lastly, poor knowledge on the rights and capacities of women with disabilities in party members and other political actors and by consequence, the absence of any mechanisms in political parties to ensure the inclusion of women with disabilities as key barriers to their participation in formal politics.

Summary:

- *Women with disabilities have significantly lower levels of representation and participation in party structures and politics and by consequence equally low participation and representation in governance and public decision making positions at all levels.*
- *Women with disabilities are disproportionately affected by problems in the political system (e.g. partisan control) and face in addition exclusion based upon their gender and impairment.*
- *Women with disabilities in rural areas consider party membership less as an opportunity for political participation but rather a support system.*
- *Current practices reflect a lack of knowledge on the rights of women with disabilities and stereotyped perceptions of their capacities. Thus, the promotion of women with disabilities' engagement in formal politics may not so much depend on the development of their capabilities but a change in the way political institutions view and address women with disabilities.*
- *Key for women with disabilities' participation in elected representative structures is the endorsement from political parties and the promotion of women with disabilities on candidate lists.*

4.6. Participation of women with disabilities in informal political activities

4.6.1. Areas of participation in informal political activities

According to a recent gender mapping in Cambodia, women have been more active in political activities that are more civil society oriented in comparison to national politics (Gender Helpdesk, 2010). However, the results of our study indicate a mixed picture regarding the level of participation of women with disabilities in such more informal political activities.

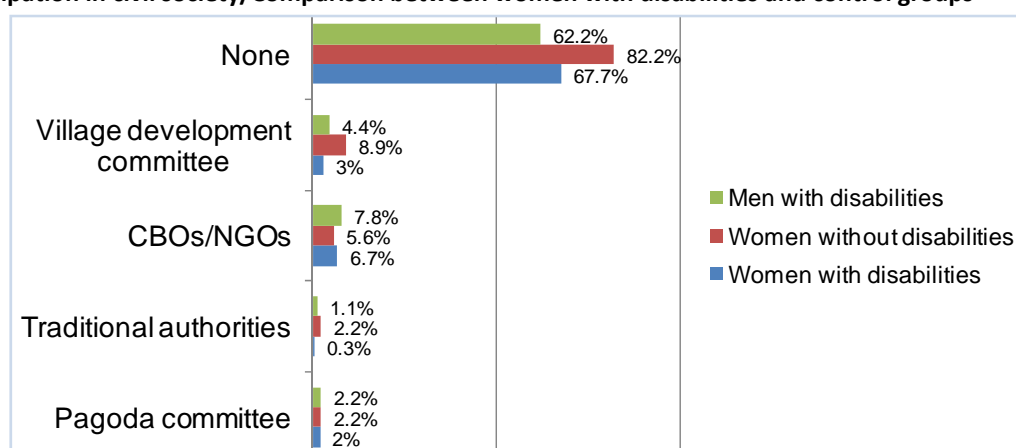
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Table 9: Participation in informal political activities/Comparison between women with disabilities and control groups

Participation in informal political activities	Women with Disabilities (1)			Men with Disabilities (2)			Women without Disabilities (3)		
	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total	PP	KS + KC	Total
Supported a party during election	18%	8.5%	11.7%	40%	11.7%	21.1%	26.7%	20%	22.2%
Signed a petition	4%	0.5%	1.7%	6.7%	0%	2.2%	10%	1.7%	4.4%
Wrote to an elected representative	3%	0.5%	1.3%	3.3%	0%	1.1%	0%	0%	0%
Participated in public meeting	8%	4.5%	5.7%	16.7%	6.7%	10%	10%	8.3%	8.9%
Attended a CC meeting	8%	5%	6%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	23.3%	15%	17.8%
Written a political article	0%	0%	0%	3.3%	0%	1.1%	3.3%	0%	1.1%
Was a election observer	3%	4%	3.7%	6.7%	11.7%	10%	10%	0%	3.3%
Worked with others on a community problem	12%	2.5%	5.7%	23.3%	8.3%	13.3%	20%	1.7%	7.8%
Attended a meeting on social or political issues	16%	3%	7.3%	26.7%	11.7%	16.7%	16.7%	8.3%	11.1%
Contacted a government official	17%	3%	7.7%	26.7%	5%	12.2%	33.3%	3.3%	13.3%
None/Never	53%	80.5%	70.7%	33.3%	71.7%	58.9%	40%	66.7%	57.8%
N=	100	200	300	30	60	90	30	60	90

- Gender and disability gaps in participation in informal political activities: Women with disabilities have the lowest level of participation of in informal political activities compared to men with and women without disabilities.
- Notably, women with disabilities have the lowest level of participation in commune council meetings, compared to men with and women without disabilities.¹⁴
- Regional differences: Levels of participation is for all groups lower in rural areas compared to Phnom Penh.

Figure 8: Participation in civil society/Comparison between women with disabilities and control groups



- In contrast to the above findings, the results on the participation in civil society show higher levels of involvement of women and men with disabilities compared to women without disabilities. This may also reflect the membership of respondents with disabilities in SHGs/DPOs.

¹⁴ Compared to findings from a Comfrel survey, which indicate that the number of women that participated in commune/sangkat councils meetings is higher than that of men (Comfrel, 2009).

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Key informants from the gender sector suggest that in general, informal political activities and civil society provide more room for the participation of women with disabilities. Likewise, in our discussions, women with disabilities identify a wide range of informal political activities, including participating in election campaigns, being an election observer or staff of the electoral office/polling station, and attending commune council/village meetings. Notably, participants from Phnom Penh and Kg. Speu also cited advocacy, lobbying and campaigning for the rights of persons with disabilities and one group in Phnom Penh added understanding party programs and demonstrating to demand for something. Interestingly, none of the participants mention opportunities of becoming Women and Children's Focal Points, which are often female community volunteers, and not elected councilors.

"If we attend the meeting, we can raise our needs to be included in the commune plan, e.g. suggest that the construction of the community health center should have a ramp for wheelchairs. We saw some of the commune offices also have ramps, but those are narrow and steep because they made them for their motorcycles not for our wheelchairs".

Woman from Phnom Penh

Overall, women with disabilities from Phnom Penh and the rural study areas clearly prioritize the participation in commune and village meetings/consultations, thus participation in local decision making and planning and often perceive the chief of village and commune as key decision-makers¹⁵: They consider village and commune meetings as a main means of getting support, accessing knowledge and information on local development and planning but also civic information (e.g. election and registration dates). But above all, these meetings are perceived as a key opportunity for women with disabilities and SHGs/DPOs to raise their concerns and issues and get them included in local planning (commune investment plans).

4.6.2. Barriers and facilitators to participation in informal political activities

In line with earlier findings, the discussions reveal the key role of village and commune chiefs in the facilitation of women with disabilities' participation in informal political activities: Many participants

positively note the efforts of village and commune chiefs, encouraging and inviting them to commune and village meetings and even doing home visits to share the results with them. However, equally women with disabilities report discrimination by commune councils or village chiefs that don't inform them about these meetings and other commune/sangkat council activities thinking they may face mobility problems or have difficulties in sitting. Aside of lack of information on opportunities for informal political engagement, their participation is hampered by the lack of transport and accessibility of relevant facilities (e.g. commune halls, pagodas etc.), low self-evaluations of their capacities and value of their contributions, social pressure which prevents them from socializing in fear of ridicule and low levels of political efficacy. Women with hearing and speech impairments cite in particular the lack of sign

"My village chief always supports and encourages women with disabilities to participate. He told me that it is important to participate in activities such as village meetings to get to know other people".

Woman from Kampong Speu

"Being an election observer is important but they didn't choose disabled persons. We wanted to but they did not let us, may be they think that we are disabled, we could not do."

Woman from Kampong Cham

language which hampers their participation and access to information on such opportunities.

Notably, many women with disabilities refer to being an election observer as an important activity: In the context of a former cooperation between NEC and CDPO, some of the participants participated as

¹⁵ This confirms earlier findings on the role and the influence of the village chief where the majority of respondents preferred to elect the village chief instead of having him appointed (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009).

election observers in the 2008 NA elections and noted this as a very positive experience. Given the negative attitudes some women with disabilities experience in accessing such position, this cooperation has proved to be a most effective facilitator for their participation.

Summary:

- Overall, women with disabilities engagement in informal political activities and organizations is lower compared to men with and women with disabilities. The key barriers to participation include impairment related barriers, discriminative practices in village and local authorities, low self-evaluation of their own capacities and values of their contributions, social pressure which prevents them from socializing; and low levels of external political efficacy.
- Women with disabilities consider participation in local decision making through commune and village meetings as most important, however their actual participation in these meetings is a lot lower compared to women without and men with disabilities.
- Community meetings are seen as key opportunities to voice their needs and get them included and addressed in local planning (commune investment plans and commune development plans) and to access (civic) information.
- The village chief plays a key role in the facilitation of participation of women with disabilities in local decision-making.

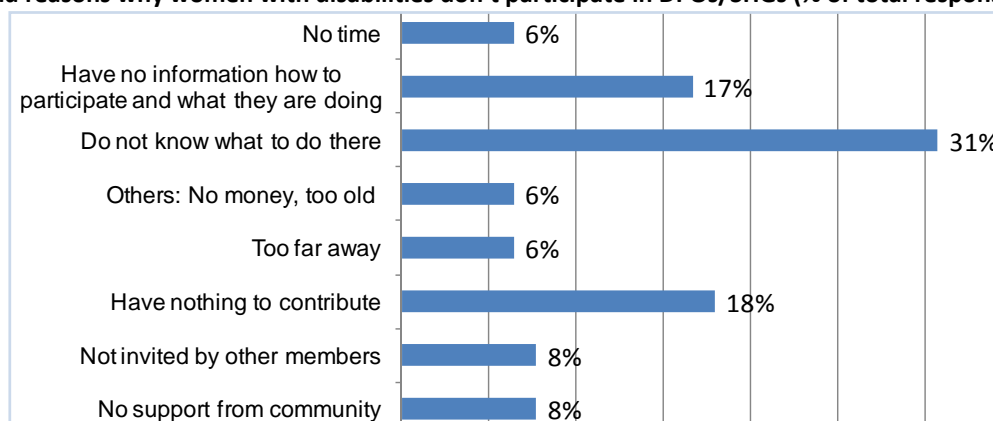
4.7. Self-representation of women with disabilities

4.7.1. Women with disabilities' participation in self-representing structures

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS:

- Slightly more men (40%) than women with disabilities (33.3%) are a SHG/DPO member.
- While the majority of interviewed women with seeing and physical impairments is a member of a SHG/DPO, the majority of women with hearing impairment is not, pointing to barriers to participation based upon impairment types, especially in rural areas.

Figure 9: Barriers and reasons why women with disabilities don't participate in DPOs/SHGs (% of total responses, n=78)



- The major reasons for women with disabilities to not participate in SHGs/DPOs are related to a lack of information on their activities and perceived benefit to their situation.

In addition, the quantitative data collection revealed the following:

- Only 18% of female SHG/DPO members feel fully represented by DPOs/SHGs which may lack of ownership due to their lower participation in decision-making and leadership.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS:

Women with disabilities consent that there are no gender-specific barriers or differences in joining a SHG/DPO. Yet, they experience clear gender gaps in decision-making at all levels within the Cambodian disability movement: Except for the Women's Disability Forums and its women SHGs, many SHGs and most federations and DPOs from village to national level are led by men (only one federation in Voir Sar out of five in Kg. Speu is led by a woman). In the current structures and mechanisms, women with disabilities from the provinces remain in a serious distance to national decision-making within and outside of the movement. The

"Almost all DPOs at district and provincial level are led by men. Many women with disabilities joined SHGs/DPOs but still they don't talk, feel shy and don't yet try to overcome barriers."

Woman from Phnom Penh

few female leaders with disabilities are seen as role models to other women with disabilities, providing an image of strength and capacity. They are considered more patient in their work and closer and more committed to their needs.

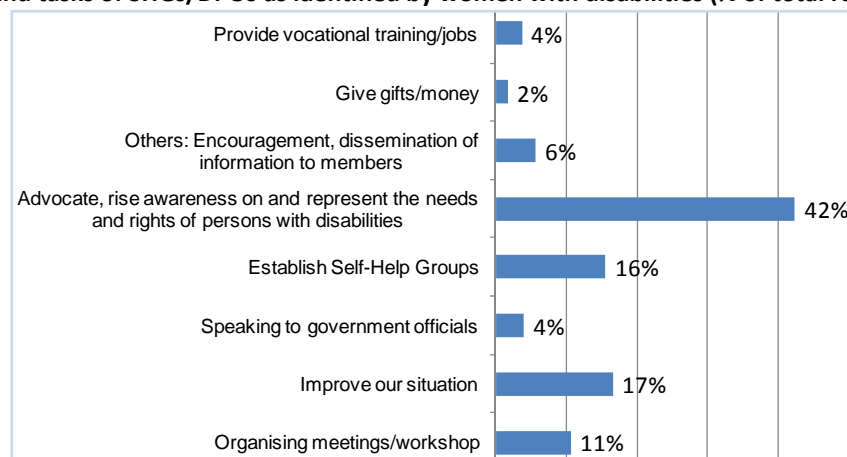
Women with disabilities cite various reasons for their disproportionately low representation in decision-making and leadership in SHGs/DPOs. For once, the higher number of male members, gender stereotypes and thus, the more active participation of men: The traditionally unequal share of tasks among women and men leaves women with a higher work load. Thus, less time is available for equally active participation. However, the main reasons identify women with disabilities not in barriers within the movement and its mechanisms or structures (e.g. internal democracy) but in personal attributes of women with disabilities: Shyness, low self-confidence and a lack of leadership skills and capacity. Consequently, they consider the further development of (leadership) capacities and strengthening of female SHGs as key to their successful promotion to decision-making in the disability movement and beyond. Similarly, male key informants from the national disability movement cite poor social power and skills and low self-esteem in women with disabilities as main barriers to their efforts to promote them in their own organization.

4.7.2. Role of SHGs/DPOs in the promotion of political participation of women with disabilities

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

- Women with disabilities identify advocacy, awareness rising and representation of their rights as key objectives of SHGs/DPOs, thus clearly assigning a political moment to their mandate:

Figure 10: Objectives and tasks of SHGs/DPOs as identified by women with disabilities (% of total responses, n=302)



In addition, the quantitative findings indicate that SHG/DPO membership is an important facilitator for women with disabilities in accessing relevant civic information:

- A significantly higher proportion of female SHG/DPO members knows about the National Disability Law (71%) compared those that are not SHG/DPO members (21%).
- Likewise, a significantly higher proportion of female SHG/DPO members knows about the CRPD (65%) compared to women with disabilities that are not SHG/DPO members (25.4%).
- 59% of female SHG/DPO members in our survey have already participated in training on Human Rights compared to only 36% of male SHG/DPO member.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Women with disabilities cite various reasons why people don't join SHGs/DPOs. These include lack of belief in the collective movement, low motivation to take on leadership positions (e.g. SHG chiefs), families being a better support for some, the absence of a 'substantial' disability, but above all differing expectations (e.g. expecting treatment, money, jobs). This reflects the need to address basic needs such as livelihoods, being one of the key problems that women with disabilities face aside of self-representation and advocacy.

"Being in the SHG, we have one strong voice to advocate for our needs and rights to be addressed and included."

Women from Kampong Speu

Women with disabilities identify a variety of benefits in being a member of a SHG: Given the above situation, the Women with

Disabilities' Forums¹⁶ and women SHGs are considered a vital resort and opportunity: They provide a space to talk freely and enjoy mutual support and understanding, based on their common experiences as women with disabilities. Moreover, they are a support system, which includes often not only emotional but material support to meet basic needs. However, the problem of discrimination and exclusion of their needs and rights, gender specific problems, the need and benefit to address them as a group, access to information and knowledge and the development of individual leadership capacity and self-confidence are at the core of many women SHGs.

¹⁶ There are currently 8 Women with Disabilities' Forums which are Federations of SHGs of women with disabilities.

Women with disabilities see an important role for DPOs/SHGs and the Women with Disabilities Forums and its SHGs in particular in the promotion of their political participation:

- Provision of opportunities to engage in political processes, e.g. becoming a member or elected SHG chief or participating in electoral processes as election observers.
- Access to and dissemination of information: Discussions among members to understand the importance of the political participation and to access relevant information and knowledge. Likewise, participants cite the relevance of dissemination of information on barriers to political participation by SHGs and DPOs to decision makers and authorities.
- Women SHGs as a vehicle for advocacy and means for women with disabilities to engage with decision makers and in local decision-making: Through these structures, women with disabilities take part in village/commune meetings to draw attention to their needs and promote their inclusion in local planning.
- Female SHGs as a primary place for the development of self-esteem and leadership capacity in women with disabilities.

“When more women with disabilities have capacity, the advocacy for and representation of women with disabilities in political decision-making will be hopeful.”

Woman from Phnom Penh

Given organisational weaknesses of the relatively recent women SHGs and the Women with Disabilities’ Forums (WWDFs), participants stress the need for further strengthening of their organisations in order for them to increasingly fulfil such role. Some local decision makers and key government actors recognise the role of DPOs/SHGs and women with disabilities in particular, as a driving force (e.g. in the inclusion of a disability dimension into gender mainstreaming) or as a consultative or implementing partner.

Summary:

- *Being a member in a SHG/DPO can effectively facilitate higher levels of civic knowledge and participation, however access to SHGs/DPOs is also shaped by type of impairment.*
- *Women with disabilities perceive women SHGs/DPOs as means to promote their political participation and getting their needs included in self representing structures and general politics. Being a SHGs member may encourage women’s self concept and a “political translation” interpreting their personal experience as relevant to the sphere of politics.*
- *Lack of organizational and individual capacity and leadership skills are considered key barriers in accessing decision-making both within and beyond the disability movement. By consequence, strengthening of their organizations and their members is deemed essential.*
- *Dominance of male leadership in the disability movement hampers a gendered approach in self-representing structures. It requires more effective mechanisms to increase their participation from village to national level while also bridging the gap between women at local and national decision-making, within and outside of the movement.*

5. Opportunities for the promotion of political participation of women with disabilities

The findings of the study showed that the challenges to women with disabilities' political participation are considerable. This emphasizes the need to build on available opportunities for their empowerment. In our discussions, women with disabilities, key informants and local decision-makers identified a range of opportunities and entry points for the promotion of women with disabilities' political participation:

1) Including a gender perspective into existing self-representing structures

Cambodia has a growing network of self-representing organizations which includes SHGs at village and commune level, federations at district and provincial level and national-level DPOs (ABC, CDPO and NCDP). The Women with Disabilities Forums (WWDF) with their women SHGs were established with support from CDPO in 2006 and currently operate in eight provinces (Kg. Cham, Kg. Speu, Kampot, Kandal, Kratie, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng and Takeo). NCDP is implementing a program to promote persons with disabilities as assistant Commune Council clerks.

2) Including a disability perspective into gender mainstreaming in politics and use lessons learned

There are a variety of established gender actors which promote the political participation and leadership of women in general, including:

- The CPWP network with its members (Silaka, GAD/C, Comfrel, WFP, NICFEC, CWPDP, CDRI) develop networks of female political activists from various political parties and link them to the national level. COMFREL/CPWP currently engage with the main elected parties on the development of a gender policy.
- The Female Councilor Forums (FCFs) were established by WFP under the supervision of the MoI in 2004 to build the capacity of female councilors and has wide support from administration in all level particularly commune council.
- Pact established Women's Empowerment Groups to support the development of women's social leadership.

3) Including a gendered disability perspective into governmental actors and gender/decentralization policies and mechanisms

Study participants identified a range of governmental actors, policies, strategies and mechanisms that may be used for the promotion of political participation of women with disabilities. Thereby, including a gendered disability perspective into decentralisation is deemed particularly effective as it will foster local action where the majority of women with disabilities live.

- Relevant mechanisms and structures include the National League of Commune/Sangkat Councils which was established to represent commune and sangkat interests in the design of the National Program, the Commune Committees for Women and Children (CCWCs), an advisory sub-committee to the Commune Council on Government policy and other tasks related women and children's issues and the National Committee for the Management of Decentralisation and Deconcentration (NCDD) and the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW).
- Important national programmes, strategies and policies include the Decentralization and Deconcentration Strategy (D&D) with its gender component, the National Program for Sub-national Democratic Development (NP-SNDD) 2010-2019 which includes gender equity and women's empowerment and the Neary Rattanak III which already explicitly refers to women with disabilities and targets with its Gender Mainstreaming Program national and sector policies and plans, and government reform programs including the sub-national level.
- Representatives from MoSVY cited their PRC and CBR networks as entry points and multipliers.

4) Including a gendered disability perspective into non-governmental mechanisms on political participation

- The Working Group for Partnerships in Decentralisation (WGPD) which provides civil society with a forum to increase their capacities to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government and the Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform Working Group (DDWG).

6. Recommendations for the promotion of political participation of women with disabilities

During this study, participants identified the following cross cutting recommendations on project design and implementation:

- 1) Multi-stakeholder action (government, civil society and private sector) in promoting the political participation of women with disabilities;
- 2) Building upon lessons learned from gender mainstreaming into politics and disability mainstreaming;
- 3) Including disability consistently into programmes that mainstream gender into politics;
- 4) Developing an evidence base on barriers to political participation of women with disabilities and solution in both policy and practice;

The following more specific recommendations are the result of FGDs with women with disabilities and a joint workshop of women with disabilities and relevant (non-) government actors:

Promote gender equity in self-representing structures of persons with disabilities

Develop and/or setup programs which promote women with disabilities' role in their representative organizations:

- To support SHGs/DPOs in including political participation of women with disabilities into their mandate and governance and implementing gender equity and relevant advocacy measures;
- To support the leadership of DPOs/SHGs in facilitating an environment that is conducive for the membership of women with disabilities, including more effective dissemination of relevant information to women with disabilities, provision of sign language interpretation during meetings, appropriate communication to meet the diverse levels of knowledge and understanding and the provision of more opportunities for their participation in their decision-making;
- To strengthen women SHGs, including leadership training and the development of capacities in women with disabilities on political issues, e.g. process of participation in commune planning;
- To support pilot projects (small grants etc.) for authorities and/or DPOs/SHGs to implement local solutions to the barriers identified in this study;
- To provide small grant schemes for SHGs/DPOs to effectively disseminate the findings of this study to decision makers, and relevant institutions in all provinces.

Address the underlying socio-economic gaps that negatively influence the political participation of women with disabilities

- To promote gender and disability in education, poverty reduction and employment programs and policies to address the disadvantages girls and women with disabilities face in these areas and to foster sustainable change in socio-economic dynamics which disproportionately affect women with disabilities.

Promote the political participation of women with disabilities at commune and sub-national level

Support policies and programmes that address local barriers and foster local solutions to women with disabilities' increased participation in political spaces in their localities:

- To support the various actors (e.g. DPOs/federations, MoSVY, MoIF, MoWA etc) in the effective dissemination of information on existing legislation and the rights of persons with disabilities to local authorities and civil society, including SHGs.
- To promote action of local authorities to actively reach out to women with disabilities and identify their problems in accessing political processes in their villages/communes as a crucial prerequisite for any measures to promote their participation;
- To encourage local authorities to act as role models and facilitate a supportive environment and opportunities for the participation of women with disabilities in political decision-making, including invitation of women with disabilities and self-representative organizations to planning and consultative meetings and inclusion of their needs in meetings and planning at commune, district, and provincial levels;
- To develop capacities in local authorities and development actors to adopt information sharing mechanisms that ensure that civic information and training is accessible and acceptable for women with disabilities, e.g. using existing village/commune structures.
- To support the accessibility of local election systems, infrastructure and procedures for women with disabilities through inclusion of disability and gender into trainings of relevant staff and local authorities, guidelines, etc.
- To develop and support networking among local (non-) governmental development partners to identify and exchange on good practice and promote mutual fertilization between disability and non-disability actors;
- To support cooperation between SHGs and local mainstream development actors in the promotion of women with disabilities' participation and representation in local decision-making through pilot projects (e.g. to include disability and gender into the 2013 CDP development process).
- To promote political parties to facilitate women with disabilities on their candidate list.
- To provide resources to women's organizations which are involved in supporting or researching the participation of women with disabilities in electoral processes;
- To strengthen sign language training and promotion of Braille documentation to eliminate primary communication barriers to political participation.

Promote the political participation of women with disabilities at national level

- To support key ministries (MoIF and MoSVY) in ensuring legal literacy on relevant provisions of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in national stakeholders and coordination mechanisms;
- To consider the allocation of a budget for the promotion of women with disabilities' political participation;
- To further develop the capacities of MoSVY to take the lead in ensuring that the political participation of women with disabilities is addressed across the relevant sectors and a gender perspective in implementation of the disability law is promoted;
- To assist NEC in the implementation of a project to mainstream gender and disability into all stages of the electoral process and related policies and guidelines, considering the needs of all impairment types, training on electoral processes to women with disabilities and consideration of additional provisions in the election law to promote participation of persons with disabilities;
- To provide assistance to MoWA and national (non-) governmental gender actors in the further promotion of women with disabilities' political participation in the implementation of their policies, strategic planning and to intensify cooperation and collaboration with women federations and women SHGs to strengthen their capacities;

- To support provide technical and other resources to facilitate the inclusion of disability into data collection in the national (gender) surveys and M&E on gender in politics implemented by MOWA and supported by their development partners;
- To pilot a programme supporting MoIF in cooperation with NEC and MoSVY in the development of means of communication and dissemination of civic information that are accessible and acceptable for women with disabilities showing appreciation, high level of commitment and persistence and including their immediate environment;
- To further promote efforts of political parties to formally endorse the participation of women with disabilities in their structures and decision making and their candidature.
- To mainstream women with disabilities and their political participation into the port folio and strategic planning of concerned donors/NGOs/INGOs (e.g. gender actors) and to harmonize their efforts on gender and disability mainstreaming.

7. Lessons learned and recommendations on data collection with persons with disabilities

Development of the questionnaire to be used with persons with disabilities

- Ensure the use of simple language and terminology in your questionnaire if you include persons with intellectual and severe mental impairments;
- Ensure that the questions in your questionnaire refer to the personal experiences of the respondents and avoid abstract questions;
- A participatory approach in the development of the questionnaire is increasing the quality of your data collection tool and thus, the quality of results;
- If you plan an interviewer-administered questionnaire, involve the sign language interpreters in the development of the questionnaire and the phrasing of the questions to ensure compatibility of the questions with the actual level of sign language in the deaf communities.

Development of the code of conduct for data collectors

- Promote the participation of persons with various impairment types in the development of the code of conduct for the interviews to ensure that it is applicable in various situations;
- Field-test the code of conduct beforehand;
- Finalise the code of conduct *after* field-test of the questionnaire has been completed.
- If the data collectors are accompanied by local DPO/SHG representatives, ensure that they are familiar with the code of conduct.

Planning and implementation of training and field test for data collectors

- If the questionnaire will be administered by data collectors that are not familiar with disability and persons with disabilities include a disability orientation and trainings component in your induction training;
- Assess the level of knowledge on disability in data collectors before designing the trainings module;
- Choose duration of training, materials and training methodology to meet the level of knowledge in data collectors;
- Ensure that your disability training covers all key concepts and terminology used in your questionnaire;
- Ensure a participative approach in the trainings implementation to maximize understanding.
- Allow for sufficient field-testing of the questionnaire during the training. Provide opportunities for data collectors to exercise the questionnaire with persons with different types of impairments.

Administration of the questionnaire

- Especially if you collect data in rural areas, prepare a mapping of the location of the interviewees beforehand;
- Cooperate with local DPOs/SHGs during the data collection. This can be beneficial in developing a rapport with the interviewees and facilitate their consent to participate in the interview;
- Consider the involvement of family members or assistants, especially for persons with intellectual and mental impairments.

Follow-up of data collection

- The implementation of a follow-up session for data collectors upon completion of the data collection provides an important opportunity for the collection of lessons learned as well as the sharing of experiences and debriefing of data collectors.

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Appendix 1

Table 10: Sample summary - Phnom Penh

Impairment	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+	Total
Women with disabilities:						
Visual	20	7	3	0	3	33
Hearing	24	1	1	0	0	26
Speech	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physical	23	6	4	2	0	35
Intellectual	0	1	0	0	0	1
Mental	0	1	4	0	0	5
TOTAL	67	16	12	2	3	100
Men with disabilities:						
Visual	5	2	2	1	1	11
Hearing	5	0	0	0	0	5
Speech	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physical	5	2	2	2	0	11
Intellectual	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mental	1	0	1	1	0	3
TOTAL	16	4	5	4	1	30
Women without disabilities:						
N/A	18	5	6	1	0	30

Table 11: Sample summary - Kampong Cham

Impairment	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60 +	Total
Women with disabilities:						
Visual	6	7	3	5	11	32
Hearing	4	6	3	2	5	20
Speech	0	1	0	1	0	2
Physical	5	7	4	8	6	30
Intellectual	1	0	1	0	0	2
Mental	2	3	5	3	1	14
TOTAL	18	24	16	19	23	100
Men with disabilities:						
Visual	2	1	1	4	0	8
Hearing	1	2	1	2	1	7
Speech	1	0	0	0	0	1
Physical	1	3	1	2	1	8
Intellectual	1	0	0	0	1	2
Mental	1	1	0	1	1	4
TOTAL	7	7	3	9	4	30
Women without disabilities:						
N/A	5	5	11	8	1	30

Table 12: Sample summary - Kampong Speu

Impairment	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60 +	Total
Women with disabilities:						
Visual	7	7	5	4	9	32
Hearing	6	4	5	6	3	24
Speech	1	1	0	0	0	2
Physical	4	5	9	4	3	25
Intellectual	4	1	2	3	0	10
Mental	0	1	2	3	1	7
TOTAL	22	19	23	20	16	100
Men with disabilities:						
Visual	1	0	1	4	3	9
Hearing	1	2	1	0	1	5
Speech	1	0	0	0	0	1
Physical	0	1	5	2	0	8
Intellectual	2	1	0	0	0	3
Mental	1	1	0	1	1	4
TOTAL	6	5	7	7	5	30
Women without disabilities:						
N/A	4	2	15	6	3	30

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

1. Demographic Information/Socio-economic Background

Gender of interviewee (*ENUMERATOR TO SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
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Q 1.1. How old are you? (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	18-30	<input type="checkbox"/>	31-40
<input type="checkbox"/>	41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>	51-60
<input type="checkbox"/>	61 plus		

Q 1.2. Can you read and/or write? (*MULTIPLE ANSWERS*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Read	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 1.3. What is your highest level of education, including official and non-official education? (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Never went to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary school (1-6)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary school (7-9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	High school (10-12)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Associate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	University Under-graduate
<input type="checkbox"/>	University Post-graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non formal education	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

Q 1.4. Have you been earning money during the past 12 months? (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No, I helped in family for no money (<i>go to Q 1.7.</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No, I have not been working at all (<i>go to Q. 1.7.</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (<i>go to Q. 1.7.</i>)

Q 1.5. If yes, in which area have you been working in the past 12 months? (*MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-employed (including farmer, fishery, vendor, moto driver etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regularly salaried job in private non-agricultural sector (industry, service, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regularly salaried job in private agricultural sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regularly salaried job in the public sector (governmental administration etc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily worker in agriculture/fishery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily worker in industry, service etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regularly salaried job in NGO/INGO/Association	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):		

Q 1.6. What was/is your average total daily income? (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 3,000 Riel	<input type="checkbox"/>	>3,000 – 6,000 Riel
<input type="checkbox"/>	>6,000 – 10,000 Riel	<input type="checkbox"/>	>10,000 – 15,000 Riel
<input type="checkbox"/>	>15,000 – 20,000 Riel	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 20,000 Riel
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response		

Q 1.7. What was/is your average total daily household income? (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 3,000 Riel	<input type="checkbox"/>	>3,000 – 6,000 Riel
<input type="checkbox"/>	>6,000 – 10,000 Riel	<input type="checkbox"/>	>10,000 – 15,000 Riel
<input type="checkbox"/>	>15,000 – 20,000 Riel	<input type="checkbox"/>	>20,000 Riel – 25,000 Riel

<input type="checkbox"/>	> 25,000 Riel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response		

Q 1.8. How many persons live in your household? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 7
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response		

Q 1.9. Do you belong to any of the following ethnic groups? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vietnamese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tapoun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jaray
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pnhong	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kuoy
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):		

Please verify the type of impairment the informant has with the following questions:

Q 1.10. Do you have one of the following difficulties?**1.10.1. Do you have difficulties seeing? (SELECT ONE)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	No, no difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, some difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, a lot of difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot see at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

1.10.2. Do you have difficulties walking or climbing? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	No, no difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, some difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, a lot of difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot do at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

1.10.3. Do you have difficulties hearing? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	No, no difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, some difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, a lot of difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot hear at all (deaf) Do you have difficulties using sign language? <input type="checkbox"/> No, No difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> yes, some difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> yes, a lot of difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know sign language <input type="checkbox"/> no response
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

1.10.4. Do you have difficulties communicating with others using your own language, meaning understanding others or being understood by others? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	No, no difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, some difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, a lot of difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot speak at all

<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
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- 1.10.5. Do you have difficulties in learning or understanding things? (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	No, no difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, some difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, a lot of difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot do at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

- 1.10.6. Do you feel often nervous, anxious or worried (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly
<input type="checkbox"/>	A few times a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

2. Participation in election processes (voter registration and elections)

- Q 2.1. Did you register or verify your name in the voter list in October 2009? (*SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (<i>go to 2.3</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (skip 2.3)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (<i>go to Q 2.4.</i>)		

- Q 2.2. If no, what were the reasons for not registering? (*MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	No information on the voter registration/updating process	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of required document
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bored with voter registration/updating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration office too far away
<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration office is not friendly or accessible	<input type="checkbox"/>	I registered already before 2009
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thought name not on voter list	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough time to register/verify the name
<input type="checkbox"/>	I was sick (not related to my disability)	<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not know I was eligible
<input type="checkbox"/>	Move the resident	<input type="checkbox"/>	No money
	Other:.....		No response

- Q 2.3. If yes, who or what helped you? (*MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encouragement of community/friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration campaigns in the commune/village
<input type="checkbox"/>	Political party	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGOs/Self-help Groups/Associations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aid devices/tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible place
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):

- Q 2.4. Since you have been eligible to vote, have you...? (*READ OUT and SELECT ONE*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Voted in all elections
<input type="checkbox"/>	Used to not vote but then voted in all elections (increasing)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Used to vote but then stopped voting (decreasing)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No clear voting pattern
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never voted (<i>go to 2.6.</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (<i>go to 2.6.</i>)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know/remember
<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A as only 1 election since

Q 2.5. Did you vote in the last National Assembly election in 2008? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (to to 2.7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (go to 2.9)		

Q 2.6. People have different reasons for not voting. Can you tell me the main reason why you did not vote in the last election? (CODE FIRST ANSWER IN TABLE BELOW. SINGLE RESPONSE ONLY. DO NOT READ.)

Reasons	Main reason
No interest in politics	<input type="checkbox"/>
My vote does not make a difference	<input type="checkbox"/>
I did not know enough about politics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was not in voters list	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could not register	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not receive voter information notice (VIN)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not know how to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not know when to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not know where to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling place was not accessible to me	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because of my disability (Probe to specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was not at home or moved residence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too expensive, could not afford it	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was given money/gift not to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
No particular reason	<input type="checkbox"/>
No response	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of required documents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 2.6.A PROBE FOR OTHER REASON. DO NOT READ OUT. MULTIPLE RESPONSES OK (after this question, please go to 2.9)

Reasons	Main reason
No interest in politics	<input type="checkbox"/>
My vote does not make a difference	<input type="checkbox"/>
I did not know enough about politics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was not in voters list	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could not register	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not receive voter information notice (VIN)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not know how to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not know when to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not know where to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling place was not accessible to me	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because of my impairment(Probe to specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was not at home or moved residence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too expensive, could not afford it	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was given money/gift not to vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
No particular reason	<input type="checkbox"/>
No response	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of relevant document	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 2.7. Did you have any difficulties when voting the last time? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (<i>go to 2.8</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (<i>go to 2.8</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 2.7. A If yes, what kind of difficulties did you face? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waiting too long in the queue
<input type="checkbox"/>	No ballot paper for the blind	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service at the polling station not friendly
<input type="checkbox"/>	No family member was available to accompany me	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannot read/write
<input type="checkbox"/>	No ramp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to mark the ballot paper
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):		

Q 2.8. What help you in voting the last time? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encouragement of community/friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	Braille available	<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration campaigns in the commune/village
<input type="checkbox"/>	Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGOs/Self-help Groups/Associations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Political party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible place
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aid devices/tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 2.9. What are the requirements to vote? (DON'T READ OUT. MULTIPLE RESPONSES OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Age 18 years and above	<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name on voter list	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Documents
<input type="checkbox"/>	Khmer national citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living in the commune
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):		

Q 2.10. How satisfied are you with the information you received about the voting procedure? (SELECT ONE)

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mildly satisfied	Not satisfied	I don't know	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 2.11. What source gave you information on the election process from? (DON'T READ OUT. PROBE and SPECIFY. MULTIPLE RESPONSES OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Election campaign of the Committee of elections in commune/province	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbours/community members/family/friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio/TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rallies/Public meetings/Campaigns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Political parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	Village chief
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newspaper/leaflet/poster	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not get any information on the election process	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):		

Q 2.12. Why do you want to vote? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	I was forced to	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is my rights
<input type="checkbox"/>	Because the other do	<input type="checkbox"/>	So I can vote for my party
<input type="checkbox"/>	I was suggested or encouraged to go	<input type="checkbox"/>	I can sell my vote

<input type="checkbox"/>	I want my party to win election	<input type="checkbox"/>	To have the social justice
	For the development of my country		To elect the leader I like
	No response		Other:.....

3. Participation in Informal political activities

Q 3.1. Are you a member of any of the following groups or organisations? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pagoda committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of village development committees
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traditional authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Help Groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	DPO/SHG for persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	School committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community-based organizations/NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (go to 3.3)
<input type="checkbox"/>	None (go to 3.3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 3.2. What is your position in the organization? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-leadership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):

Q 3.3. Have you ever done any of the following activities? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Supported a party during election	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed a petition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wrote to a government official or elected representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participated in public meeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted a government official in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended CC meetings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended public meeting on social or political issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Written a political article
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worked with others on a community problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participated as observer in elections
<input type="checkbox"/>	None		Other (<i>Specify</i>):

4. Civic knowledge

Q 4.1. How much do you know the programmes of political parties? (SELECT ONE)

Know well	Know	Know little	Don't know	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 4.2. How do you think are the members of the commune council established? (SELECT ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Elected	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appointed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

Q 4.3. How much do you know about the role of the Commune Council ? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES OK)

Very good knowledge	Good knowledge	Not enough knowledge	No knowledge (go to 4.4)	No response (go to 4.4)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 4.4. What are the roles of the commune council in your community? (NOTE ANSWER)

Note:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

Q 4.5. Have you ever done one of the following? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilitated a meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gave a speech in commune meeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Initiated a local cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spoke to a government official/elected representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raised an issue in community	<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5. Political efficacy and interest

Q 5.1. How much are you interested in what local authorities (commune council) are doing? (SELECT ONE)

Very interested	Interested	Mildly interested	No interest	I don't know	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 5.2. How much are you interested in what the government is doing? (SELECT ONE)

Very interested	Interested	Mildly interested	No interest	I don't know	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 5.3. "Political issues are too difficult for a person like you"? How do you agree? (SELECT ONE)

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 5.4. How much do you understand political issues? (SELECT ONE)

Understand well	Understand	Understand little	Don't understand	No response	Do not understand the word "politics"
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 5.5. Some people say that it does not matter who people vote for, it won't make any difference to what happens. How do you agree? (SELECT ONE)

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 5.6. Do you think how much Public officials care about you? (SELECT ONE)

Care very much	care	care little	do not care	do not care at all	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Participation in formal political structures

Q 6.1. Are you member of any party? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (Go to Q 6.4.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (Go to Q 6.4.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 6.2. If so, what is your position? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Leadership position	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-leadership position
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Ordinary member/activist	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
	Others (<i>Specify</i>):		

Q 6.3. At which level are you fulfilling this position? (ONE ANSWER)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Village level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commune level
<input type="checkbox"/>	District level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provincial level
<input type="checkbox"/>	National level	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response

Q 6.4. Have you ever stood for elections for the commune council? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (Go to Q 6.7)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 6.5. Are you a member of commune council? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (Go to Q 6.7)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (Go to Q 6.7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 6.6. If so, what is your position? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Commune chief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deputies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Others (<i>Specify</i>):	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 6.7. How satisfied are you with the inclusion of your concerns and needs into the CDP? (CHOOSE ONE)

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mildly satisfied	Not satisfied	I don't know	My concerns were not included
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 6.8. Do you think there are any obstacles for you towards involvement in political parties?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (go to 6.9)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (go to 6.9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 6.8.A If so, what are for you the main obstacles/barriers in getting involved in a political party?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/>	No support from community
<input type="checkbox"/>	No support from family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Security
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	No time
<input type="checkbox"/>	No money	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
	Others (<i>Specify</i>):		

Q 6.9. Do you think there are any obstacles for you towards involvement in commune council?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (go to 6.10)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (go to 6.10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 6.9.A If so, what are for you the main obstacles/barriers in getting involved in commune council?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Tradition	<input type="checkbox"/>	No support from community
<input type="checkbox"/>	No support from family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	No time
	Lack of information	<input type="checkbox"/>	No money
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
	Others (<i>Specify</i>):		

Q 6.10. What would help you to get involved in parties or commune councils?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Family support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessibility of offices
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
	Others (<i>Specify</i>):		

7. Disability activism (ONLY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES)

Q 7.1. Are you aware of any DPO or SHG?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (go to 7.7)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 7.2. If so, can you name them?

Note:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know the name		
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response		

Q 7.3. What do you think should be the objectives and tasks of a SHG or DPO?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Representing our needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organising meetings/workshop
<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking to government officials	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve our situation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish self help group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate the concerns/needs of disable person
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know
	No response		Other:.....

Q 7.4. Are you member of a DPO or SHG yourself?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (skip 7.5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (skip 7.5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 7.5. What are the main reasons for you not being involved in a SHG or DPO? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	No support from community	<input type="checkbox"/>	No support from parents/family
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not invited by other members	<input type="checkbox"/>	Too far away
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have nothing to contribute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not know what to do there
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):

Q 7.6. Do you feel that DPOs and SHGs represent your situation and your needs? (CHOOSE ONE)

Always	Often	Sometimes	Few	Never	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 7.7. Do you know of the National Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Q 7.8. Do you know of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 7.9. Have you ever attended any training/capacity building? (CHOOSE ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No (<i>end the interview</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No response (<i>end the interview</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q 7.10. If so, in which area? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS OK)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Rights/UN CRPD	<input type="checkbox"/>	National laws and policies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocacy/Lobby	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	No response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (<i>Specify</i>):	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 3

List of key informants

Name	Position	Institution/organization
Mrs. Chan Kunthea	CPWP Coordinator	SILAKA
Ms. Tith Hieng Seka	Program Coordinator Livelihood	Disability Action Council
Ms. Buon Amara	Administrator	ABC
Ms. Um Amraroeth	CPWP Advocacy Officer	SILIKA
Mrs. Mak Monika	Admin/Assistant Manager	NCDP
Mr. Sem Sokha	Secretary of State	MOSVY
Ms. Chea Phalline	President of Women's Association for the Ministry of Information	MoIF
Mrs. Khim Cham Roeun	Secretary of State	MoWA
Mrs. Tep Chanbora	Advocacy & Networking Programme Manager	Gender & Development for Cambodia
Mrs. Lay Onry	Chief of Cadre office of Personnel and Vocational Training Department	Mol
Mr. Tep Nytha	Secretary General	NEC

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