

ISAF

The Implementation of the Social
Accountability Framework



Social Accountability for Social Protection

**Learnings from the piloting of
ISAF for the On-Demand
IDPoor Services**



ISAF FOR IDPOOR IN BRIEF

This pilot project, implemented from November 2020 to March 2021, aimed to improve the access of the most vulnerable households to social protection programmes through social accountability (ISAF Programme).

Objectives



- Improve, through social accountability, the identification and registration of vulnerable households through the IDPoor programme by the commune administration.
- Ensure the participation of the most marginalized citizens in the project through the piloting of new activities focusing on social inclusion.
- Generate evidence and learnings to support a quality scale-up of ISAF for social protection.

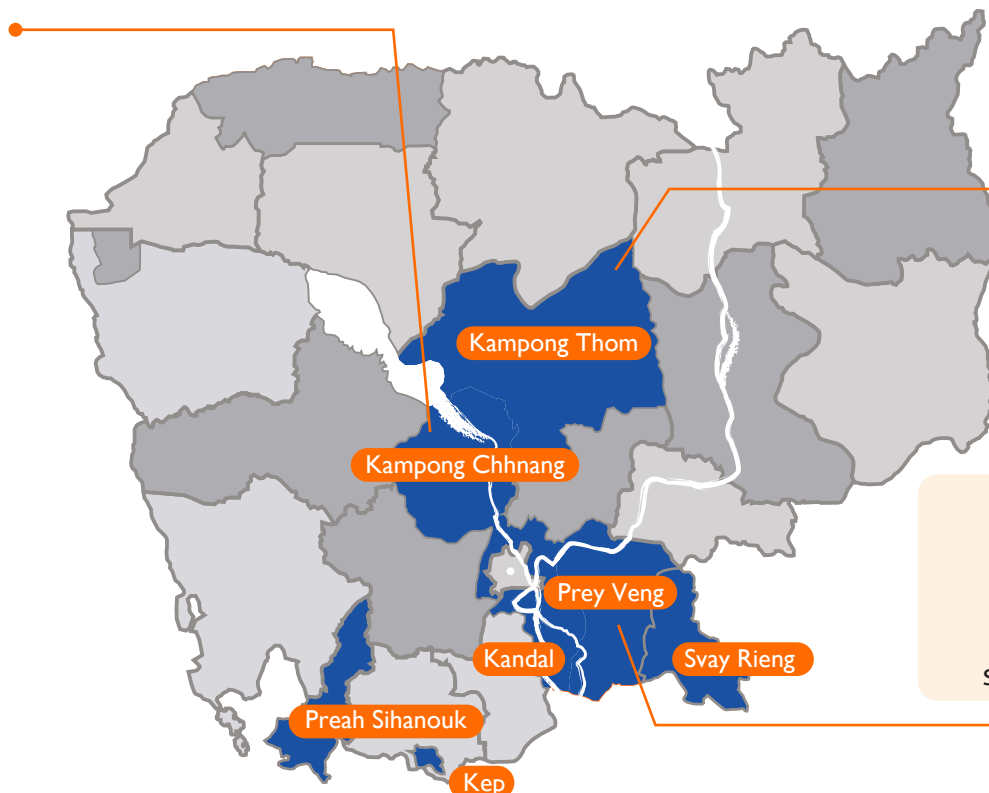
Key Facts



Implemented from
November 2020 to
March 2021



44,000 citizens
and local officials
participated



208 communes and
sangkats in 7 provinces

THE BARRIERS TO ACCESS SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

Social Protection for poor families in Cambodia

Over the past years, Cambodia introduced several programmes to support the poorest families in the country such as:



Conditional cash transfers for pregnant women and children under 2 years old



Free health care in public facilities (Health Equity Fund)



Scholarships



Cash transfers to respond to COVID-19

The IDPoor programme

- To benefit from the social protection programmes presented above, the poorest families need to have been registered through the Identification of Poor households (IDPoor) programme and to have received an Equity Card.
- The identification process used to be conducted exclusively through national campaigns (covering a third of the country every year).
- This approach changed in June 2020 when 'On-Demand' (OD) IDPoor services were made available at the commune and sangkat level.
- Through these new services, any citizen can ask the commune administration to be registered as IDPoor, triggering a process to assess the eligibility of the household.

Several barriers to access for the most marginalized

Several challenges are preventing the most marginalized and vulnerable households to access these services and to become registered as IDPoor:

- Very recent change from a "top-down" approach (national campaigns led by national and local authorities) to an "on-demand" system for registration and limited understanding among citizens of these new services;
- Limited capacities of local authorities and, in some cases, lack of clarity on their responsibilities;
- Absence of a complaint or appeal mechanism for the citizens who would have faced issues during their registration process;
- Limited knowledge of the citizens on the benefits associated with the Equity Card.

ISAF FOR IDPOOR

The pilot project aimed at verifying if social accountability, serving as both a community information campaign and a collective feedback mechanism, could improve the implementation of the new on-demand IDPoor services at the commune and sangkat level.



The ISAF Process

The pilot adapted the ISAF Process to empower citizens and support dialogues at the commune and sangkat level.

4 steps



First, citizens receive information on the national standards that local services are supposed to meet and on the budgets of local service providers



Citizens and service providers monitor the quality of services available locally to identify potential issues



Citizens, service providers and local authorities agree on a Joint Accountability Action Plan (JAAP), prioritizing a short list of actions to address the issues identified



The implementation of the JAAP is monitored by a committee including citizen, service provider and local authority representatives

All these activities were implemented at the local level by the Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs).

Empowering citizens on their new rights related to the IDPoor On-Demand Services

- Through the pilot, citizens were informed about the new services and about their rights, such as:
 - How to request to be registered;
 - The eligibility criteria to meet to be recognized as IDPoor
 - How to complain in case of issues related to the OD IDPoor services
- This information was shared with citizens through community meetings, home visits and mobile kiosks.
- This information was then shared another time with the citizens just before the Citizen Monitoring of the performance of the commune administration (scorecard meetings).

Social Inclusion for the participation of the most marginalized

To ensure the participation of the poorest and most marginalized households, new activities were implemented:

- A social mapping to identify the most marginalized households was developed for each commune in the target area.
- Home visits to inform the most marginalized households were conducted in each commune.
- Small scale meetings targeting the most marginalized households for the assessment of the performance of the Commune Administration were organized.



Participation

44,000 citizens, officials and service providers took part in the pilot project:



- 16,000 citizens took part in the Information for Citizens activities;
- More than 24,000 people took part in monitoring of the performance of the Commune Administration (Scorecard Monitoring)
- 3,600 officials and service providers took part in the Self-Assessment of their performance.

However, the pilot project was affected by the restrictions related to COVID-19 and only 89 communes and sangkats (43% of the target area) managed to finalize an action plan.

02

An increase in the number of new registrations in the target area during and immediately after the pilot project confirms the impact of ISAF on the delivery of the On-Demand IDPoor services

- A review of the official data from the IDPoor database shows that, in the target area, the number of new IDPoor registrations increased immediately after the activities aiming at informing citizens on the new registration services.
- A similar increase was not registered in a control group of communes situated outside of the target area of the pilot project.
- The increase in registration in the communes and sangkats targeted by the pilot project appeared to be very brief, lasting for less than a month. Beyond this period the data shows that the level of new registrations returned to similar rates as before the pilot project. This suggests that information promotion and the following dialogues led to a phase of “correction” during which some specific households were registered without sustainably altering the registration trend.



03

Citizens have limited knowledge about On-Demand IDPoor services, leading to misconceptions about their rights



- The M&E data shows that the understanding of the citizens about their rights, and especially their right to request to be registered, was limited before the pilot project and significantly lower than their understanding of their rights regarding the other services provided by the commune administration, primary schools and health centres.
- The consensus among local authority members, volunteers and staff members involved in the implementation of the project was that the information shared on the On-Demand IDPoor during the I4C activities was totally new for the citizens.

04

Citizens and local authorities believe that some households meeting the criteria to be recognized as IDPoor are still not registered in the target communes



- The feedback from both citizens and local authorities during the assessment (or self-assessment) of the performance of the Commune Administration and the actions included in the action plans focused exclusively on the registration services. It suggests that there is a common view that more families meeting the eligibility criteria should be registered.
- This is an interesting finding as it suggests that some poor and vulnerable households that likely meet the eligibility criteria are currently not able to access the relevant social protection programmes and projects implemented by development partners using the IDPoor database for the targeting of their beneficiaries because they have not been registered as IDPoor.

05

Local authorities have a very positive opinion on the use of social accountability to improve the delivery of the IDPoor services



- 98% of the local authorities surveyed agreed that ISAF can contribute to improve the implementation of the OD IDPoor process.
- 93% of the local authorities surveyed agreed they are able to better perform their role and responsibilities regarding the implementation of the IDPoor services after the pilot.

06

Increased participation of the most marginalized households



- The pilot project activities implemented to promote increased participation of the most marginalized households (such as social mapping, home visits and targeted meetings) proved to be highly effective. For example, while around 20% of the participants in the information meetings were IDPoor, more than 50% of the citizens reached through home visits belonged to this group.
- Beyond the increased participation, the data shows that home visits enabled marginalized citizens to better understand their rights than the citizens who had taken part in the community meetings. Factors that reinforce the added value of home visits include:
 - Participants in community meetings may be distracted by other participants and may struggle to follow the content of presentations.
 - During the home visits, citizens have more opportunities to ask questions and interact with the community volunteers presenting the information.

Data and methodology of the report

The analysis presented in this report builds on multiple data sources:

- Tests conducted before and after the activities to inform citizens among more than 8,600 citizens.
- Feedback collected during the assessment of the performance of the commune administration (scorecard meetings) from 24,000 people in 112 communes of the target area.
- Performance self-assessment conducted among 3,600 officials in 90 communes.
- Actions identified in the Joint Accountability Action Plans in 72 communes and sangkats.
- Perception surveys conducted among 96 members of local authorities, 97 CAFs and 23 field staff from the 7 provinces of the target area.
- Data from the IDPoor Database for 64 communes in the target (compared with the data from 127 communes in a control area).

This data was all collected between the beginning of implementation in November 2020 and March 2021. For more details, please visit this link <https://bit.ly/3JJRiq>

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Royal Government of Cambodia

- Nationwide, an information campaign would be needed to ensure that citizens have a minimum level of understanding of the On-demand IDPoor services, especially on the option to request to become registered and on the benefits of the Equity Card.
- This information campaign would have to employ tailored strategies to ensure that the poorest and most marginalized households in urban and rural contexts are reached.
- Similarly, it would be important to ensure that local authorities have full confidence in their capacities to implement their role and responsibilities regarding the On-demand IDPoor process. The data collected for this report suggest there is a need for additional capacity strengthening. The upcoming commune and sangkat elections will also increase this need for capacity building.
- The pilot project has shown that CAFs can fulfil an important role in informing citizens at the community level and in supporting dialogue with local authorities. Their involvement in the implementation of the IDPoor programme in the future (outreach to the most marginalized, support to the citizens that want to become registered, etc.) could help to address some of the barriers identified in this report and ensure a higher level of satisfaction and trust from the citizens.
- The findings from this report show that a collective feedback mechanism (such as ISAF) can improve the implementation of the IDPoor programme. As the Royal Government of Cambodia is expanding social protection, ISAF should be considered in relation to these new programmes to complement individual complaint mechanisms.



RECOMMENDATIONS

For ISAF implementers

- The pilot showed that there is a risk that citizens may be overwhelmed by the amount of new information shared in the initial stage of the ISAF process, leading to poor retention and confusion. To mitigate this risk, implementers should:
 - Limit the information shared to the most relevant aspects of the services (to the citizens), especially during the first year of implementations.
 - Use simple visual aids (posters) focusing on the IDPoor services.
 - Ensure that staff and CAFs are properly trained and prepared to answer all questions of the participants.
- It is important for ISAF implementers to inform service providers that the roles and responsibilities of the commune administration regarding the delivery of the IDPoor services will be presented to the citizens and discussed. Implementers should also check that the members of the commune administration have an adequate level of understanding of their responsibilities to take part in a constructive discussion with the citizens.



ISAF - ENGAGING CITIZENS TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) in Cambodia aims to improve local service delivery (health centres, primary schools and commune administration) through enhanced accountability. ISAF originated from the National Programme for Sub-National Democratic Development (SNDD) of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) in Cambodia. Under the leadership of the Royal Government of Cambodia, donors, international organizations and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) joined forces to deliver this programme.

- **ISAF Phase I (2015-2018)**

ISAF was successfully implemented in relation to the services provided by 760 commune administrations, 1,400 primary schools and 600 health centres.

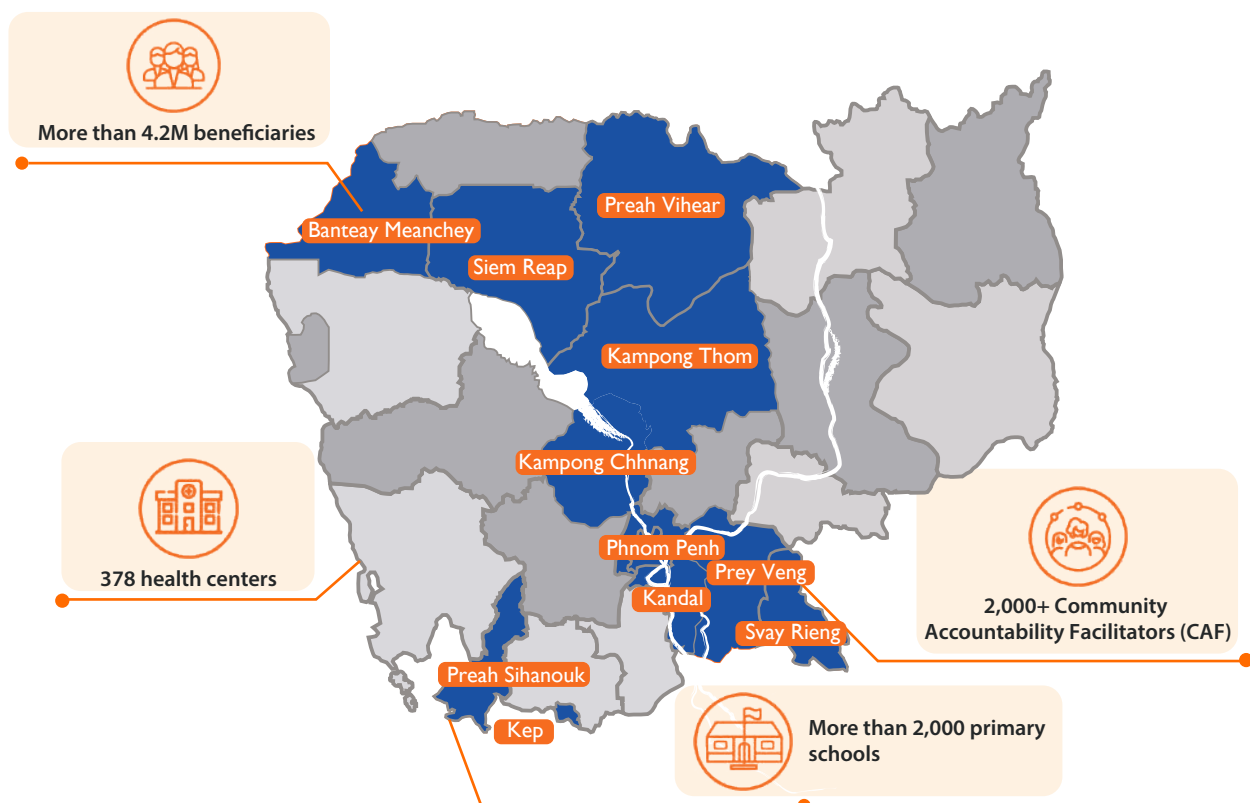
- **ISAF Phase II (2019 - 2024)**

ISAF Phase II is building on the good achievements of Phase I to continue to improve the performance of public service providers through improved transparency, strengthened citizen engagement and responsive action. It also aims to progress the institutionalization and enhanced sustainability of ISAF processes for the long term.

- **World Vision International Cambodia and ISAF**

World Vision International Cambodia was a key implementer of ISAF Phase I and started supporting ISAF Phase II in 2019 in 5 provinces through a grant of the European Union. From 2020, World Vision received a new grant from the World Bank to expand to 10 new provinces and Phnom Penh.

Target area of World Vision for ISAF Phase II



This pilot project was developed and implemented under the leadership of the National Committee for Sub-national Democratic Development (NCDD) and the Ministry of Planning (MoP)



With the technical and financial support of



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