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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCESS	Australia-Cambodia Cooperation for Equitable Sustainable Services
AP-CBID	Asia-Pacific Community-Based Inclusive Development
CDPO	Cambodian Disabled People's Organization
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAC	Disability Action Council
DAC-SG	Disability Action Council Secretariat General
DAWG	Disability Action Working Group
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DI	Disability Inclusion
DISP	Disability-Inclusive Social Protection
DWPWD	Department of Welfare for Persons with Disabilities
GDSP	General Department of Social Policy
GS-NSPC	General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
IDPoor	Identification of Poor Households Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoPWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
NDSP2	National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSAF	National Social Assistance Fund
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
PDAC	Provincial Disability Action Council
PPDI	Project to Promote Disability Inclusion
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WWDF	Women with Disability Forums

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Project to Promote Disability Inclusion (PPDI)* successfully implemented the majority of its planned activities and delivered the expected outcomes within the given timeframe and budget.

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Disability Action Council Secretariat General (DAC-SG) has made significant progress in drafting a new disability law, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (NDSP2), drafting Guidelines on Disability-Inclusive Social Protection, and supporting persons with disabilities in Cambodia.

The DAC-SG drafted a new disability law with input from a wide range of stakeholders. The law is currently being reviewed by the General Department of Social Policy (GDSP) and may be submitted to the Council of Ministers by the end of 2023. This is a major step forward in ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected by law and in establishing Cambodia's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

During the NDSP2 implementation period, several legal instruments were established to support the project's objectives and activities. These included the Government Decision on the Provision of Financial Assistance for People Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, which aimed to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups, and the Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Driving Licences for Persons with Disabilities, which facilitated the inclusion of persons with disabilities in road transport services. The established regulations, guidelines and legal frameworks reflected the commitment and collaboration of relevant ministries and stakeholders to advancing the NDSP2 agenda.

The DAC-SG has also established a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team to track both progress and challenges of the NDSP2 implementation. The M&E team developed a digital web application reporting tool to collect input towards the NDSP2 report and has collected and analyzed reports from the line ministries and Provincial Disability Action Councils (PDACs) that are implementing NDSP2 activities. The M&E team also provided training to line ministries and PDACs on how to use the web application and a mobile app to report on NDSP2 implementation. This has ensured a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the NDSP2, which helped to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. The first training increased 190 participants' knowledge by 12 percent between pre- and post-training assessments. The second training, which was provided to 104 participants, resulted in 78 percent of participants (25 out of 32 who completed the post-test) having at least some understanding of data collection for web applications.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has taken further initiative by including persons with disabilities in the social assistance programme of the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) and Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF). The RGC's COVID-19 cash transfer programme has provided financial assistance to **60,660 households of persons with disabilities** that were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as of 24 March 2023 through a total of 33 cash transfers.

Five PDACs have been trained on workplan and budget plan development, monitoring and evaluation, and disability inclusion. In early 2022, these PDACs (located in Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Speu and Tbong Khmum) developed five work plans with 149 activities across the five provinces. Although there were limited human resources and funding, they were able to complete 99 activities - 65 percent of their target. This has enabled **75,041 persons with disabilities**, including **31,552 women and girls with disabilities**, to access public services and social protection schemes such as physical rehabilitation services, COVID-19 vaccination, disability identification assessments, pension schemes and employment, in five provinces. The five PDACs were assessed three times over a period of 14 months using a five-point scale (1=poorly functioning, 3=partially functioning, 5=fully functioning). The average score of the PDACs increased from 3.3/5 (67 percent) in March 2022 to 3.8/5 (76 percent) in September 2022 and finally to 3.9/5 (78 percent) in May 2023, indicating a steady improvement in the performance of the PDACs over time.

The project also collaborated with the DAC-SG, GS-NSPC and the working group on disability-inclusive social protection (DISP) to produce the final draft of the guidelines on DISP in English. The project will work with the DISP working group to complete the Khmer version of the guidelines by the end of August 2023 and submit them to the DAC-SG and GS-NSPC for approval.

While the implementation of the NDSP2 has achieved some significant results as detailed above – notably through the revision of the national disability law, the development of disability-inclusive policies and budgets, and the strengthening of coordination mechanisms at the national and subnational levels – there were still several challenges that need to be addressed in order to ensure the effective and sustainable realization of the rights of persons with disabilities in Cambodia. Some of these challenges include:

- The indicators for the NDSP2 were not responsive to its strategic objectives, which made it difficult to monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of the NDSP2 and to identify areas for improvement and learning.
- The capacity of line ministries and PDACs to implement the NDSP2 was limited, especially in terms of disability inclusion, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization. There is a need to provide regular and tailored training and coaching to these actors to enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes on disability issues.
- The monitoring and evaluation team of the DAC-SG lacked sufficient capacity to collect, analyze and report on the data related to the implementation of the NDSP2 and other legal documents on disability. There is a need to strengthen their technical skills and provide them with adequate tools and resources to perform their functions effectively.

Overall, the RGC and DAC-SG have made significant progress in promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Cambodia over the project period. The DAC-SG is committed to continuing its work in this area and to ensuring that all persons with disabilities have the opportunity to live full and productive lives through the implementation of the new NDSP.

1 OPERATING CONTEXT


Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has been implementing social protection and social assistance measures to support the populations whose socioeconomic situations have been most affected by the pandemic. One of the key ministries involved in this effort is the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), which established three general departments to provide support to these actions as of early 2022. Among them, the General Department of Social Policy (GDSP) is responsible for reviewing and monitoring all policies and laws related to disability and social services.


In August 2022, the Disability Action Council (DAC) Chairperson delegated GDSP to review the final draft of Cambodia's new disability law, which was previously the role of the DAC-Secretariat General (DAC-SG) before the establishment of the GDSP. However, due to the new institutional arrangement of MoSVY, the GDSP faced some challenges in developing their structure and systems to function effectively. Meanwhile, the RGC agreed to host the 5th Asia-Pacific Community-Based Inclusive Development (AP-CBID) Congress in March 2023, which was an important event for MoSVY. As a result, the progress of the new disability law was delayed and could not be submitted to the Council of Ministers as planned in early 2023. Furthermore, as Cambodia organized its national election on 23 July 2023 and some time is required to form the new government, the new disability law may continue to be postponed until late 2023 – support for which will be considered through phase two of the ACCESS programme.


The project team faced some challenges in their work with the Provincial Disability Action Councils (PDACs) due to changes in PDAC leadership. In late 2022, three PDACs (in Battambang, Kampong Cham and Tbong Khmum provinces) had new chairpersons appointed as part of the structural reform of the deputy governors of all provinces by the Ministry of Interior (Mol). This affected the progress of the PDACs' activities, especially the development of annual workplans for 2023, which required the approval of the new chairpersons before implementation could commence. To address this issue, the project team met with the new chairpersons in late 2022 and briefed them on the achievements and plans of each PDAC for 2023. As a result, all three PDACs finalized their workplans for 2023 at the quarterly meeting in March 2023.

2 OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS

Rating (colour codes)	Rating (colour)	Brief comments
1. Overall level of progress against workplan	Completed	The project successfully implemented the approved workplan.
2. Adequacy of progress towards project outcomes at this point in the project	Completed	The project successfully delivered towards the project outcomes.
3. Adequacy of progress in budget expenditure	Completed	Overall, the project budget was delivered according to the project workplan. There was a minor balance at the end of the project as a result of shifting government priorities which were outside of the project's control (detailed in the following section).

 Significant issues— there is a danger that the project won't achieve this result

 Minor issues—slightly behind but should catch up soon

 All on track to achieve

3 PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

3.1 Progress towards Outcome 1

The Disability Action Council (DAC) effectively develops, coordinates and monitors the implementation of the NDSP2 and relevant national legal frameworks (including a new disability law, NDSP2 action plan matrix, accessible web application, mobile application and disability-inclusive social protection).

The expected results were met for Outcome 1 of the project, as follows:

Legislative reform: Cambodia's new disability law, NDSP2 implementation and Guidelines on Disability-Inclusive Social Protection development

In August 2022, the DAC-SG drafted a new disability law with input from a wide range of stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations, development partners, donors, individual disability experts and persons with disabilities. The Minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, who was also the chairperson of the DAC, delegated the new GDSP to review the law. The GDSP is still reviewing the law and it may be submitted to the Council of Ministers after the national election in July 2023.

The National Disability Strategy Plan 2019-2023 (NDSP2) is a policy framework that aims to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society. The review of the NDSP2 was an important achievement as it assessed the progress and challenges of the plan's implementation. The assessment report identified gaps and opportunities for improvement and provided recommendations for the next phase of the NDSP. The recommendations from the review were collected through consultation with government agencies, civil society organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities and development partners. The recommendations focused on six areas: livelihoods and economic security, health and well-being, education and lifelong learning, social protection, inclusive and accessible communities, and safety, rights and justice.

The report highlighted that it has not been possible to record the full extent of progress made in implementing the NDSP2 due to challenges in obtaining quantitative data. A significant challenge remains to ensure that indicators to measure progress in the M&E framework are compatible with the management information systems of line ministries, agencies and other service providers. This may be considered for development and utilization over the lifespan of a new NDSP.

However, through the active advocacy and implementation of the NDSP2 by the DAC-SG and ACCESS programme, the RGC has enhanced the legal framework to promote disability inclusion, as follows:

- The RGC has continued to provide the Cash Transfer Programme for Persons Affected by COVID-19 since 24 June 2020, including persons with disabilities. As of 24 January

2023, the RGC had provided the cash transfer programme to 64,576 persons with disabilities.

- The RGC issued an official letter on 1 December 2022 to implement the Social Assistance Cash Transfer Programme for Vulnerable Households Severely Affected by Floods (through the NSAF and MEF). The letter provided for disability inclusion, whereby households with persons with disabilities would receive an additional US\$4 per cash transfer.
- The Ministry of Interior issued a circular on 18 May 2022 requiring capital and provincial administrations to include physical accessibility infrastructure in their construction plans.
- By the end of 2022, the Department of Welfare for Persons with Disabilities (DWPWD) of MoSVY had identified 256,665 (121,195 women) persons with disabilities. The DWPWD intends to issue 200,000 disability identification cards to persons with disabilities in late 2023.

The RGC's commitment to supporting persons with disabilities is commendable. The cash transfer programme has provided much-needed financial assistance to persons with disabilities, and the inclusion of disability in the social assistance programme of the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) and Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) is a positive step. The Ministry of Interior's circular is also a welcome development, and it is important that capital and provincial administrations take steps to ensure that their construction plans are accessible to persons with disabilities. The DWPWD's efforts to identify and issue disability identification cards are also important and will help to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the services and support they need.

In addition to support towards establishing the legal framework and obligations, the project team, together with the disability law core working group, provided technical support to DAC-SG to finalize the draft of the first state report on the CRPD in Khmer. This report is required by the CRPD committee within two years of Cambodia's ratification. It covers the period from 2012 to 2020 and was widely consulted with relevant line ministries, organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations and development partners. By March 2023, the report had been translated into English and reviewed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) team. The DAC-SG will submit the report to the Council of Ministers after the national election.

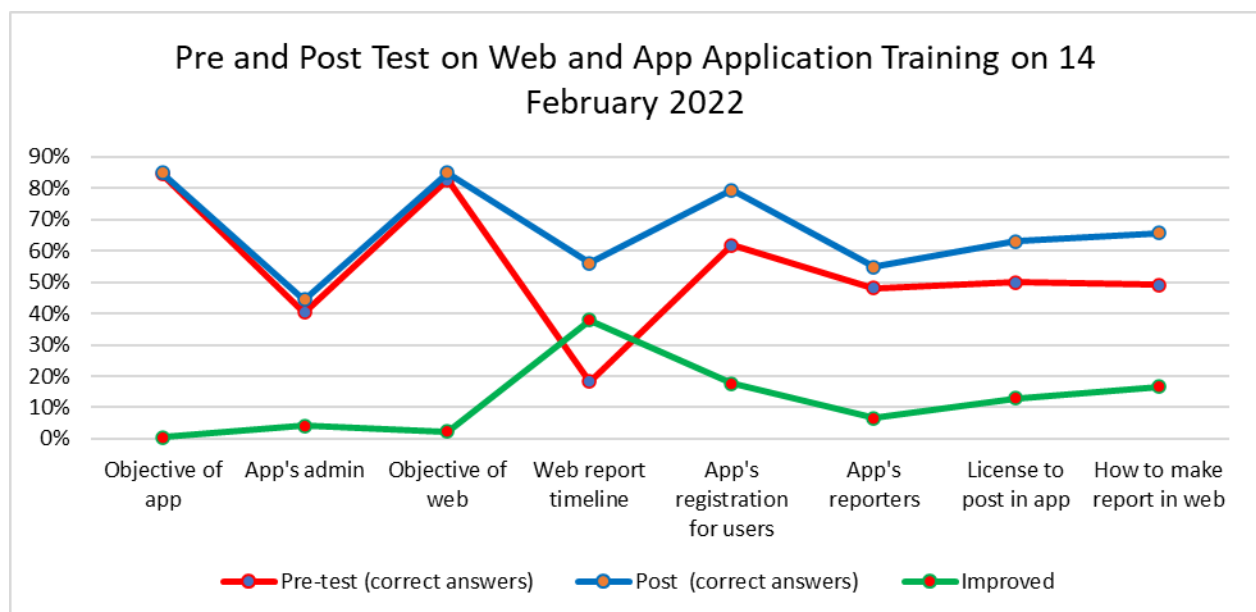
Institutional strengthening and capacity development

To monitor and evaluate the progress and challenges of the NDSP2 implementation, the DAC-SG has established a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team with the support of UNDP and the DAC-SG Advisor since February 2022. The team was responsible for collecting and analyzing reports from the line ministries and PDACs implementing the NDSP2 activities.

With technical support from UNDP, the DAC-SG established a web application with 198 indicators from the NDSP2 action plan matrix. In January 2022, the M&E team received training from the web application developer on how to manage the application. Using the knowledge gained from the training, the M&E team provided two trainings to line ministries and PDACs on how to use the web application to report on the NDSP2 and how to use the mobile app (named Cambodian Disability News).

The first training was organized online on 14 February 2022, for 190 participants from the Disability Action Working Groups (DAWGs), Cambodian Disabled People's Organization (CDPO), Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The participants' knowledge was found to have increased by 12 percent between the pre- and post-training assessments (see the detailed results in Graph 1 below).

The DAC-SG organized a refresher training (in-person) on 14 July 2022 for 104 (24 women) participants from line ministries, national institutions and PDACs. The refresher training allowed them to practice using the web and mobile applications and to understand the relevant indicators for their respective institutions needed for data entry and reporting. As a result, by the end of 2022, the DAC-SG M&E team successfully coordinated and collected reports from four line ministries and 12 PDACs, covering various sectors such as health, rehabilitation, education and social protection. The team also provided feedback and guidance to the reporting entities to ensure the quality and consistency of the data. The collected reports were compiled and synthesized into a NDSP2 review report drafted by a consultant.



Graph 1. Results of assessments at the web and mobile application training in February 2022 for reporting on the NDSP2

During the project cycle, the project team and DAC-SG also provided training on workplan and budget plan development, monitoring and evaluation, and disability inclusion to the five PDACs. As a result, the PDACs have been able to develop and implement their annual workplans for 2022 and 2023, which has helped to ensure that a total of **75,041 persons with disabilities, including 31,552 women and girls with disabilities**, can access public services and social protection schemes, including rehabilitation services, the COVID-19 vaccination, pension schemes, disability identification assessments and employment in five provinces (Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Speu and Tbong Khmum).

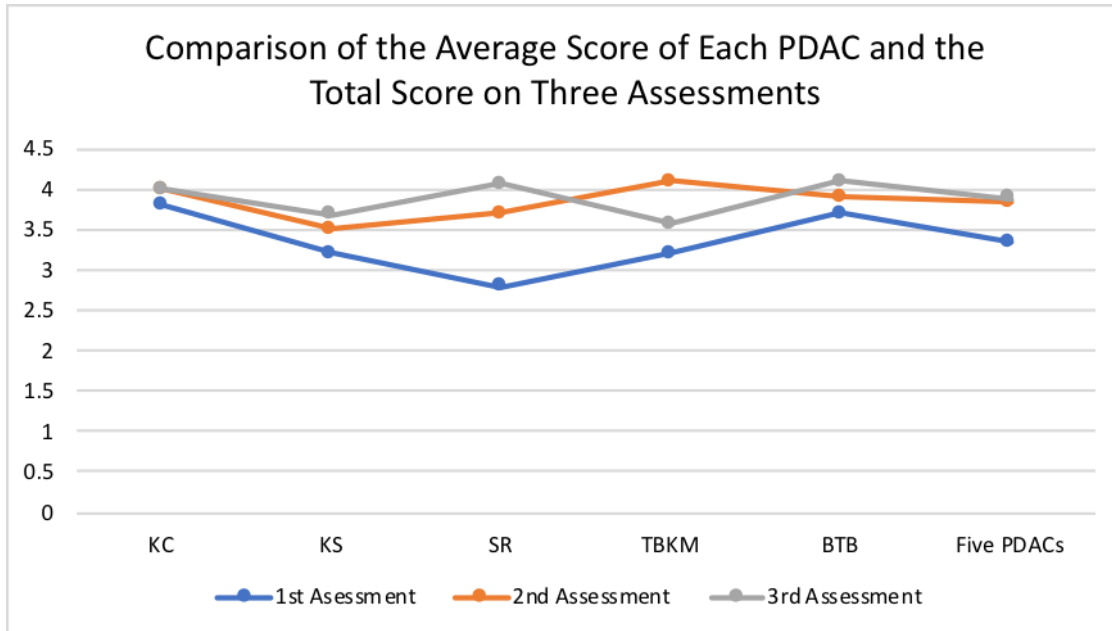
Among this group, 8,920 (11.89 percent) persons with disabilities (6,478 women and girls with disabilities) received disability identification assessments; 17,484 (23.30 percent) persons with disabilities (3,972 women and girls with disabilities) received rehabilitation services; 42,310 (56.38 percent) persons with disabilities (18,241 women and girls with disabilities) received COVID-19 vaccinations; 4,173 (5.56 percent) persons with disabilities (1,703 women with disabilities) received disability pension schemes; 255 (0.34 percent) persons with disabilities (144 women) gained employment; and 1,899 (2.53 percent) persons with disabilities (1,014 women and girls with disabilities) received other public services, including education, vocational training, referrals, etc¹. This was a significant achievement, and is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the PDACs, as well as the support of their partners.

The functioning of the PDACs was assessed using a rubric monitoring tool that was applied three times by the members themselves. A rubric scale with five levels of scoring was used, where a score of 1 indicates that the PDAC is not functioning, a score of 3 indicates that the PDAC is partially functioning, and a score of 5 indicates that the PDAC is fully functioning. The assessment included nine questions, which covered:

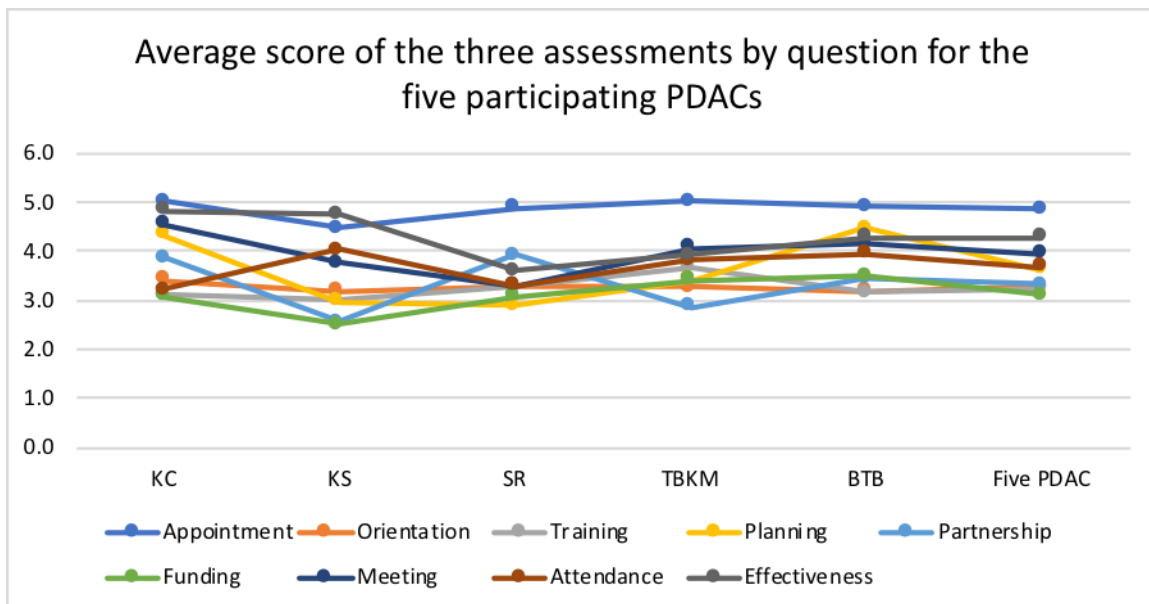
1. Appointment of the PDAC
2. Orientation on roles and responsibilities
3. Training
4. Development of the workplan
5. Partnerships
6. Funding
7. Regular meetings
8. Attendance of members
9. Effectiveness of meetings

During the project cycle, the five PDACs and their members conducted a group assessment twice, in March 2022 and September 2022. The results showed an improvement in the average score from 3.3/5 (67 percent) in March 2022 to 3.8/5 (76 percent) in September 2022. To control bias and influence from the chairperson of each PDAC on the members' scoring, the project changed the method of collecting the survey to an online format. This allowed individual members of each PDAC to provide their own scores from 6 April to 25 May 2023. The results showed that the average score of all five PDACs was 3.9/5 (78 percent) (see Graphs 2 and 3 below).

¹ This report was collected from the 2022 annual reports and the first quarter reports of five PDACs with an estimated number of women and girls with disabilities in a few provinces and the Persons with Disabilities Foundation PRC Statistics 2022 and March 2023. The disability identification assessment was counted from August 2021 until March 2023.



Graph 2. Comparison of the average score of each PDAC and total score on three assessments



Graph 3. Average score of the three assessments by question for the five participating PDACs

Overall, the results of the assessments show that the PDACs are functioning well. However, there is still room for improvement in some areas, such as orientation, training provision, planning and fundraising. The project will continue to work with the PDACs to address these areas in ACCESS Phase II and ensure that they are fully functional.

With a strong commitment to following the RGC's decentralization strategy of moving all services to the subnational levels, the Kampong Cham PDAC set an example by establishing disability action working groups in all nine districts. These working groups created a more enabling environment for persons with disabilities to exercise their rights and contribute to the development of their communities. The working groups were comprised of members of the commune councils and organizations of persons with disabilities or disability self-help groups. This mechanism provided a platform for the commune councils and organizations of persons with disabilities or disability self-help groups to discuss the rights and preferences of persons with disabilities and to find solutions to any challenges or complaints raised by the groups.

In collaboration with General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council (GS-NSPC), MoSVY also established a working group on disability-inclusive social protection (DISP) on 7 February 2023. The working group included representatives from MoSVY, DAC-SG, GS-NSPC, CDPO, civil society organizations (CSOs), ACCESS programme team members and development partners, and was established to develop guidelines on DISP. With the technical support of UNDP, the working group developed a draft English version of the DISP guidelines completed by the end of March 2023. The project team will continue to solicit final comments on the English version and translate it into Khmer by June 2023, after which it will collaborate with the working group to finalize the guidelines before submitting it to the DAC-SG and GS-NSPC for endorsement.

The project team also provided technical support to the Royal Government of Cambodia through MoSVY to promote the implementation of the CRDP and Sustainable Development Goals by organizing the 5th Asia-Pacific Community-Based Inclusive Development (AP-CBID) Congress on 15-17 March 2023 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The congress provided an international platform and opportunities for 712 participants from 22 countries to share best practices, lessons learned and innovative solutions to address the barriers and opportunities faced by persons with disabilities.

Finally, a core working group on establishing a driving license for persons with disabilities which would include DAC-SG, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MoPWT) was not officially established. It was suggested to instead use the existing mechanism of a group Telegram, which is composed of DAC-SG, MoH and MoPWT, as a platform for communication and discussing information and concerns about the driving license for persons with disabilities. As a result, 83 people with disabilities received driving licenses during the project period.

3.2 Gender equality and social inclusion

Gender equality

The project ensured that at least 30 percent of the participants in any workshops, meetings or trainings held throughout the project were women. The project also ensured that there was an enabling environment for women – particularly women with disabilities – to share their voices and feedback throughout. For example, 83 women (38 percent) out of 220 participants attended the reflection workshop on the NDSP2 on 28-30 November 2022. Additionally, 26 women (41 percent) out of 63 participants actively attended the first consultation workshop on the development of the Guidelines on Disability-Inclusive Social Protection on 1 April 2022. Seven

women's disability forums (WWDFs) were invited to attend the reflection workshop on the implementation of the NDSP2 and five WWDFs were invited to attend the consultation workshop on the development of the Guidelines on Disability-Inclusive Social Protection. This participation ensured that the voices of women with disabilities were heard and that their needs were taken into account in the development and implementation of the DISP guidelines. It also helped to identify the challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities during the implementation of the NDSP2. For example, they highlighted the challenges faced by girls with disabilities in accessing primary education and legal services, and recommended that the NDSP3 address these issues and ensure their inclusion and empowerment. The project team took note of the challenges and will take this feedback into account to present at the NDSP3 consultation workshop in June 2023.

The project also provided technical support to the DAC-SG to include an article about "Children and Women with Disabilities" in the draft of the new disability law that has been reviewed by the GDSP of MoSVY. This article will ensure that the rights of children and women with disabilities are specifically mentioned in the new law.

Social inclusion

The project also promoted social inclusion throughout its implementation. For instance, the project invited different types of persons with disabilities, including persons with physical, intellectual, psychosocial, hearing and visual disabilities, as well as LGBTQI+ persons, to participate in consultation workshops, meetings and trainings. This participation ensured that the voices of all persons with disabilities were heard and that their needs were taken into account in the development and implementation of the project. It also helped to identify the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in accessing and participating in the project activities.

Sign language interpretation was additionally provided for participants who are deaf, physical accessibility at the venues was ensured for participants with mobility impairments, and a safe and supportive environment was emphasized for participants to share their experiences and perspectives at all events. The project has gone a step further to draft the Guidelines on Disability-Inclusive Social Protection in collaboration with the DAC-SG and GS-NSPC.

3.3 Innovation and private sector engagement

The project developed a research abstract based on the assessment results of the functioning of the five PDACs. The abstract was accepted by the Abstract Committee of the 5th AP-CBID Congress and presented at the parallel session on 16 March 2023 by a Deputy Secretary General of DAC-SG to participants at the congress to share lessons learned from the PDACs.

The project also shared lessons learned between the five PDACs for replication and knowledge sharing. For example, the Battambang PDAC found success with holding regular quarterly meetings which led to the official endorsement of its annual workplans, in particular its 2022 workplan, which was approved since August 2021. The Kampong Speu PDAC was then able to apply the lessons learned from Battambang by developing its annual workplan for 2023 with official endorsement since August 2022. The Kampong Speu PDAC also learned from the Kampong Cham PDAC by adding one clause in the new nomination of the Kampong Speu PDAC on the establishment of a District Disability Action Council issued on 29 March 2023.

The project did not conduct many activities with the private sector, however, it did engage the private bank ACLEDA at the reflection workshop on NDSP2 implementation in November 2022. A representative from ACLEDA Bank shared the disability inclusion activities the bank has been implementing, including:

- Physical accessibility: ACLEDA Bank has made its branches and ATMs accessible to persons with disabilities by providing ramps and accessible toilets.
- Employment: ACLEDA Bank employs persons with disabilities in a variety of roles, including customer service, banking and information technology.
- Reasonable accommodation: ACLEDA Bank provides reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities, such as modified equipment.

In addition, in the draft of the new disability law, the DAC-SG included the duties of the private sector in several articles. These duties include:

- Providing accessible facilities and services to persons with disabilities.
- Hiring and promoting persons with disabilities.
- Providing reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.
- Providing discount rates or scholarships for students with disabilities.

3.4 Operating in the context of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread in Cambodia during the first and second quarters of 2022, which affected the project's implementation plan. This included impacts on workshops, trainings and meetings of the DAC-SG and PDACs.

To ensure the safety of participants, the project team made the following changes:

- Moved some trainings, meetings and workshops to online events. This allowed the trainings and meetings to continue, albeit virtually.
- Reduced the size of groups for training, meetings and workshops. This was done to comply with social distancing guidelines.

These changes made it possible for persons with disabilities and other participants to safely continue offering their input and feedback at these events.

Despite these changes, a few activities were delayed to later quarters in 2022. This led to the development of the guidelines on DISP not being completed by the end of the project cycle (31 March 2023). However, the project team remained committed to working on the guidelines with the DISP working group even after the project ended.

4 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

4.1 Operations

The Project to Promote Disability Inclusion (PPDI) had a positive impact on the legal and institutional development at the DAC and PDACs, which was recognized by UNDP. Despite the limited budget of this project, UNDP ensured its successful implementation by allocating funds from other projects to support staff salaries. The key project team, consisting of the project coordinator and project assistant (finance/administration), received more than 40 percent of their salaries from other projects to guarantee the quality of the PPDI project implementation.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the planned project activities had to be adapted to virtual formats, such as meetings and workshops with stakeholders and partners. One of the key outputs of the project was the development of Guidelines on Disability-Inclusive Social Protection, which were expected to be used for a training of trainers' session. However, the guidelines could not be finalized before the project ended due to government's prioritization of the 5th AP-CBID Congress and therefore the training session was not conducted. As a result, there was an underspend of US\$6,794.72 in the project budget, as reported in the UNDP financial system.

4.2 Monitoring and evaluation

The PPDI project team, under the guidance of the UNDP Programme Analyst, executed the project with the supervision of the Programme Manager and Deputy Resident Representative. The project team reported the project's progress on its activities, outputs and outcomes, as well as its financial delivery to the management team every two months at regular project review sessions to receive their strategic direction and recommendations on the project.

To foster a productive partnership with the DAC-SG, the project team consulted with their implementation and M&E teams on the project workplans at the beginning and established quarterly meetings to exchange updates, challenges and recommendations for collaborative action. Moreover, the project set up a Telegram group between UNDP and the DAC-SG for swift communication and information sharing. Similarly, each of the five PDACs had a Telegram group that included its members and OPDs to address any concerns raised by them.

The project team also used Telegram groups as a way to monitor and communicate with the five PDACs involved in the project. The project team and the Deputy Secretary General of the DAC-SG would contact the Chair and Deputy Chairperson of each PDAC through Telegram to arrange quarterly meetings. After every meeting, the PDAC Secretariat would follow up on the actions taken by the PDAC members and share the results with them via Telegram before the next meeting.

Finally, the project team collaborated with the DAC-SG and the ACCESS Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager to develop a monitoring tool that assesses the performance of the PDACs based on nine criteria, as described in the previous section. This tool was applied by the DAC-SG and PDACs three times throughout the project cycle to track the progress of each PDAC. The results indicated that all PDACs consistently improved their performance by the end of the project implementation period.

4.3 Safeguards

UNDP was committed to taking all necessary measures to prevent and address sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in programming activities, as well as sexual harassment and child exploitation. It has developed global policies to raise awareness and a reporting mechanism to address sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse. Investigations of allegations will be carried out by UNDP in accordance with its rules, regulations, policies and procedures. The UN staff rules 1.2 prohibit sexual exploitation and abuse, including the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex². UNDP projects are screened for potential social and environmental impacts, including human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability. The Social and Environmental Standards (SES) includes three principles and seven standards, and the Accountability Mechanism is central to the SES³.

As part of the efforts to enforce the policy on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse among its partners, UNDP organized a half-day training session on this topic for 28 staff members (7 women) from the DAC-SG and 11 staff (3 women) from CDPO in 2022.

UNDP also followed the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) Framework, which is a risk-based approach that assesses the macro environment of the country's public financial management system and Implementing Partners' capacity before determining how cash is transferred to respective partners. Embedded within the framework are assurance activities (audit, spot check and programme monitoring) to make sure that funds are used for intended purposes and to monitor the project's activities. There are clear policies and procedures for handling and reporting fraud. During the PPDI project cycle, UNDP did not provide a grant to the DAC-SG, but the UNDP did the HACT assessment on the DAC-SG in 2020, and the result showed low potential risk for this government institution.

5 LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

5.1 Emerging issues, risks and challenges

By the end of 2022, the Chairperson of the DAC, the Minister of MoSVY, had delegated the GDSP, a newly established institution, to review and take further action on the drafted new disability law. However, due to the GDSP's prioritized work – in particular, on the organization of the 5th AP-CBID on 15–17 March 2023 – the progress of submitting the drafted new disability law to the Council of Ministers was delayed. Additionally, due to the national election in July 2023, the progress of the new disability law will be continued with the new government in late 2023. However, the project team at UNDP is committed to following up on the progress of the law with the GDSP after the national election and will include this implementation plan in the next ACCESS programme phase 2.

As previously mentioned, the 5th AP-CBID Congress on 15-17 March 2023 was an important and prioritized event for the RGC (MoSVY and DAC-SG). This also led to a delay in the development of the guidelines on DISP with the DISP working group. By the end of March 2023,

² UN staff rules 1.2: point (e): <https://hr.un.org/handbook/staff-rules>

³ UNDP Social and Environmental Standards: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/accountability/social-and-environmental-responsibility/social-and-environmental-standards.html>

the project coordinated with the technical consultant and the DISP working group to draft the final version of the guidelines. However, due to the need for further revisions, the planned training on this topic did not take place within the project timeframe. UNDP remains committed to coordinating the endorsement of these guidelines and the delivery of the training in collaboration with the DAC-SG and GS-NSPC after the project's closure. This is to ensure that the guidelines are endorsed by the DAC-SG and GS-NSPC by the end of 2023.

In addition, the workplan implementation, monitoring and reporting of the PDACs need to be strengthened. Although most of the PDAC members from different sectors had developed and submitted their action plans on disability inclusion, some members did not report the results of their activities to the PDAC at the quarterly meetings. This limited the annual report of the PDAC workplan, especially on key sectors such as education, employment, accessibility, social protection, health and others. The project supported the PDACs to request progress reports from all members before the quarterly meetings, but many members did not provide them. This challenge was in large part due to a lack of knowledge on disability inclusion, workplan development, monitoring and reporting, which should be improved by the next phase of the ACCESS programme. Best practices from the Kampong Cham PDAC should be replicated and documented as a guidance document for all targeted PDACs.

5.2 Lessons learned

The Kampong Cham PDAC is a provincial-level mechanism that aims to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the NDSP2, disability law and CRPD in Cambodia. One of its initiatives was to establish disability action working groups at the district level, which served as a model for promoting the rights, inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in their respective districts. These working groups were composed of representatives from relevant district offices, commune councils, civil society organizations and persons with disabilities themselves. They are responsible for identifying the challenges and needs of persons with disabilities in their districts, developing action plans to address them and advocating for disability inclusion at the community level. The working groups also facilitated the referral and access of persons with disabilities to various services and opportunities, such as healthcare, education, livelihoods, social protection and participation in decision-making processes.

The Kampong Cham PDAC created a more enabling environment for persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights and contribute to the development of their communities by establishing disability action working groups at the district level, where all nine district DACs have been established. These district DACs should strengthen their knowledge on disability inclusion, workplan development, implementation and monitoring in the coming programme of ACCESS phase 2 to ensure that they can respond to the rights, inclusion and preferences of persons with disabilities at the ground level.

The project also found that establishing the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team of the DAC-SG was a sustainable mechanism to monitor the implementation of the NDSP2 and legal documents related to disability even after the end of the project. The project engaged the M&E team of the DAC-SG in the development of a web application to track the implementation of the NDSP2. The project also provided capacity building to the M&E team on monitoring and evaluation and how to manage the web application. After receiving training and building confidence in managing the web application, the M&E team provided further training to Disability Action Working Groups (DAWGs) from relevant line ministries and PDACs. After the training,

the M&E team monitored the trainees to ensure that they submitted progress reports on the NDSP2 to the DAC-SG. As a result, four line ministries and twelve provincial DACs submitted NDSP2 reports to the DAC in late 2022. The M&E team will also play an important role in understanding the M&E framework of the next NDSP 2024-2028, which is expected to be officially endorsed in early 2024.

The establishment of the M&E team at the DAC-SG is a significant achievement of the project. The team has played a critical role in ensuring the effective implementation of the NDSP2. They are well-positioned to continue to play a leading role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of future disability-related policies and programmes. However, capacity building on monitoring and evaluation, monitoring tool development, analytics skills and reporting should be provided to the M&E team of the DAC-SG in the future.

5.3 Recommendations

The project made significant progress in achieving most of its intended outputs and outcomes, especially the draft of the new disability law, the review of the NDSP2 to inform the NDSP3 and the capacity building of M&E for the NDSP2 implementation, as well as the enhancement of the functioning of the five PDACs. These achievements were possible through the recommendations from the project board to engage the OPDs and different types of persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual, psychosocial, hearing and visual disabilities, to actively participate and share their voices and preferences in the development of the new disability law and the review of the NDSP2. Furthermore, to ensure compliance with the CRPD and to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, involvement of OHCHR was important for providing technical support on a legal and rights-based approach to the development of the new disability law and the review of the NDSP2. This ensured that these legal documents are consistent with international conventions, treaties and best practices.

The project's management team has given some suggestions for the future priorities that the project should focus on, which include:

- Working together with the DAC/MoSVY to finalize the draft of the new disability law and submit it to the Council of Ministers as soon as possible.
- Evaluating and reporting on the progress and challenges of the National Disability Strategic Plan (NDSP) 2019–2023 and identifying key recommendations for the next NDSP 2024–2028 with clear M&E frameworks.
- Strengthening the skills and knowledge of the M&E team of the DAC-SG to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the legal components, policy and strategies related to disabilities, especially the new NDSP.
- Maintaining and enhancing the functioning of the five PDACs by documenting and sharing best practices and lessons learned from other PDACs, especially from the Kampong Cham PDAC, and applying them to other PDACs. Disability inclusion training is still a priority topic to deliver to the members of the PDACs, the district DACs and commune councils.

Annex 1: Table of achievements against indicators

Project outputs/indicators	Baseline (2021)	Target (2023)	Current status
The Disability Action Council (DAC) effectively develops, coordinates and monitors the implementation of the NDSP2 and relevant national legal frameworks (including a new disability law, NDSP2 action plan matrix, accessible web application, mobile application and disability-inclusive social protection (DISP).			
1.1. Annual NDSP2 report (using a designed web-based report) provided by Provincial DACs and DAWGs.	0	10 (reports from DAWGs and PDACs)	Achieved: Four DAWGs from line ministries and 12 PDACs provided the NDSP2 report through the developed web application to the DAC-SG.
1.2. Five Provincial DACs improved their function and disability coordination (average score of 5/5)	N/A	3/5	Achieved: Following the online survey on the functioning of the PDACs based on nine questions (as detailed above), the results showed that the average score of all five PDACs was 3.9/5 (78 percent) .
1.3. Percent (%) of developed activity plans 2022 of five PDACs implemented	Action plan	50%	Achieved: The PDACs developed a workplan in early 2022 that included 149 activities extending across five provinces. However, due to a variety of challenges and constraints, they were only able to complete 99 activities, accounting for 65 percent of their target.
1.4. The new disability law submitted to the Council of Ministers.	The new disability law has been reviewed by the DAC-SG Technical Working Group	Final revised disability law	Almost achieved: The DAC-SG Technical Working Group finalized the draft of the new disability law, and the law has been reviewed by the GDSP (the new General Department) of MoSVY before being submitted to the DAC Chairperson for final review.
1.5. Number of training/dissemination workshops on NDSP2 Matrix tool provided to DAWG	0	Two training/dissemination workshops (December 2022) 50 (DAC-SG,	The matrix indicators were integrated into the web application report for Activity 1.7. Please see the results of that activity.

and Provincial DAC		DAWGs, P-DACs) participated At least 70 percent of participants satisfied with the training	
1.6. DAC-SG monitoring and evaluation team/unit established/formed and functioning	No DAC-SG monitoring and evaluation team/unit established/formed	DAC-SG monitoring and evaluation team/unit established/formed (June 2022) - Two M&E teams provided training on NDPS2 M&E and tools to 50 DAC-SG, line ministries and P-DACs - Four M&E team meetings	Achieved: The monitoring and evaluation team of the DAC-SG was established in February 2022 to monitor the progress of the NDSP2.
1.7. Number of trainings on M&E tools (accessible web application and mobile app) conducted with DAWGs and Provincial DACs	N/A	Two trainings (December 2022) with 50 (DAC-SG, DAWGs, P-DACs) participants. At least 70 percent of participants satisfied with the training	Achieved: Two trainings on the web application and mobile app provided to DAC-SG, DAWGs and PDACs in February 2022 (online) and July 2023. The first training was provided to 190 participants and the participants' knowledge increased by 12 percent between the pre- and post-training assessments. The second training was provided to 104 (24 women) participants. Among 32 participants who completed the post-training assessment, 25 (78 percent) of them reported that they had some, high or clear understanding of how to find the data to complete the web application.
1.8. The core working group of DAC-SG, MoH and MoPWT was formed	N/A	The core working group of the DAC-SG, MoH and MoPWT was formed with a clear	Partially achieved: The DAC-SG suggested using the existing Group Telegram between the DAC-SG, MoH and MoPWT as a platform for

		TOR and Action Plan	communication and discussing information and concerns about the driving license. Therefore, the official establishment of the working group was not recommended.
1.9. Number of awareness trainings to healthcare providers	0	One training (December 2022) With 40 (healthcare providers...) participants. At least 70% of participants satisfied with the training	Partially achieved: Due to the concern of the DSA limitation for government staff, MoH did not organize the awareness training, but MoH has shared the information about the driving license, including the physical health assessment, in the group Telegram which includes leaders from the provincial health departments and hospitals.
1.10. Number of persons with disabilities that received physical health certificates from healthcare providers	0	50	Achieved: 83 persons with disabilities received physical health certificates from healthcare providers for applying for driving licenses.
1.11. Number of persons with disabilities that received the driving licenses	0	50	Achieved: 83 persons with disabilities received driving licenses from MoPWT to legally drive vehicles.
1.12. Number of reflection workshops on the NDSP2 conducted	0	One reflection workshop on NDSP2 implementation (December 2022)	Achieved: The DAC-SG organized one national reflection workshop on the NDSP2 review from the 28-30 November 2022 with 220 (31 persons with disabilities and 83 women) participants from relevant ministries/institutions/Provincial DACs.
1.13. Number of PDAC meetings conducted	10	15	Achieved: Five PDACs conducted 17 quarterly meetings with their members to review the progress of the workplan, challenges and recommendations for the next

			activity plan.
1.14. Number of lessons learnt workshops/ meetings conducted	0	1	Achieved: One policy dialogue was organized during the reflection workshop, which included the DAC-SG, OHCHR, UNDP, DFAT and CDPO who presented at the dialogue session on the ways forward to ensure an inclusive society through the effective implementation of national disability policy frameworks (including NDSP3).
1.15. Number of persons with disabilities who received the coordination and referral support of five Provincial DACs	N/A	5,000 with at least 30 percent being women who received DISP services such as IDPoor, Disability ID, cash transfer programme, etc. (March 2023)	Achieved: 69,513 (31,366 women) persons with disabilities received DISP services such as IDPoor, Disability ID, cash transfer programme, etc. through coordination and referrals from members of the five PDACs.
1.16. Number of annual action plans (2022 and 2023) officially finalized by Provincial DAC chairpersons	Drafted workplan 2022, but workplan 2023 was not developed yet (by December 2022)	The workplans 2022 and 2023 of Provincial DACs were officially finalized by chairpersons (March 2023)	Achieved: The workplans for 2022 and 2023 were finalized and implemented by the five PDACs.
1.17. The DISP developed	N/A	The DISP developed (July 2022)	Almost achieved: The DISP guidelines were finally drafted in English by the technical consultant in collaboration with the DISP working group. The UNDP project team will work with the DISP working group to translate the guidelines into Khmer and submit them for endorsement even if the project is finished by March 2023.
1.18. DISP Training of Trainer (ToT) training manual developed	N/A	DISP ToT training manual developed (September 2022) One national launching of DISP	Almost achieved: The DISP ToT training manual was drafted in English by the technical consultant in collaboration with the DISP

		ToT training manual conducted; 30 (DAC-SG, GS-NSPC, P-DACs, DPOs) attended online ToT; at least 70 percent of participants satisfied with the training	working group. The UNDP project team will work with the DISP working group to translate the manual into Khmer and submit for endorsement even if the project is finished by March 2023.
<input type="checkbox"/> delivery exceeds plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> delivery <i>in line with</i> the plan		<input type="checkbox"/> delivery <i>below</i> plan

ANNEX 2: Case studies/stories from the field

Addressing the needs of persons with disabilities at the subnational level: Improvements to disability coordination mechanisms through Provincial Disability Action Councils

The Royal Government of Cambodia has established various mechanisms to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, such as the Disability Action Council (DAC), the Persons with Disabilities Foundation (PWDF), the Department of Welfare for Persons with Disabilities (DWPWD) and the Disability Rights Administration. These mechanisms are tasked with coordinating, collaborating on, promoting and implementing effective and appropriate measures and responsibilities to address the needs and challenges faced by persons with disabilities. In 2014, Proclamation No. 002 on the Organization and Functioning of Disability Action Councils at the Capital and Provincial Levels was issued and circulated. This Proclamation aims to define the organization and functioning of the Capital and Provincial Disability Action Council (PDAC) as a mechanism for coordination and consultation on disability issues at the provincial level. PDACs consist of representatives from government, civil society and organizations of persons with disabilities. They are responsible for developing and implementing plans of action for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities at the provincial level.

The PPDI project is a UNDP initiative that supported the implementation of the National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023 in Cambodia. The project aimed to enhance the functioning of the five PDACs by providing training on disability inclusion, workplan development, monitoring and evaluation, and supporting them to develop annual workplans and hold quarterly meetings. The project cycle ran from January 2022 to March 2023.

To assess the improvement of the five PDACs, located in Tbong Khmum, Kampong Speu, Siem Reap, Battambang and Kampong Cham provinces, the project developed a rubric assessment tool with five scales (scale 1 is poorly functioning, scale 3 is partially functioning and scale 5 is fully functioning). The project asked all PDACs and members to conduct their own assessments in groups by PDAC on two occasions – in March and September 2022, respectively – and through an individual online assessment in April and May 2023. The results showed consistent improvements in the functioning of the PDACs, with the average score increasing from 3.3/5 (67 percent) in March 2022 to 3.8/5 (76 percent) in September 2022, and finally to 3.9/5 (78 percent) in May 2023.

Promoting disability rights and inclusion across five provinces

According to the Disability Action Council Secretariat General (DAC-SG), the five PDACs have made significant progress in promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Cambodia.

Each of the PDACs have excelled in different ways. The Tbong Khmum PDAC implemented a disability policy scheme in 2022 that benefited 2,017 persons with disabilities (990 women) in Ponhea Krek and Memot districts. The scheme provided cash assistance through ACLEDA Bank and in-person direct cash delivery to poor persons with disabilities in the communities.

The Kampong Speu PDAC also demonstrated a best practice of integrating persons with disabilities into the private sector, especially in the garment industry. By March 2023, 51 garment factories in the province had employed 281 persons with disabilities (177 women) as workers.

In Siem Reap, the PDAC successfully advocated for a budget allocation of \$2,500 for 2022 from the Siem Reap provincial administration to support its activities, such as building accessible walkways for blind people and wheelchair users on 38 new streets in the province.

Ms. Vann Channa, a member of the Siem Reap PDAC from the Department of Women's Affairs in Siem Reap, reported that:

"The PDAC members, led by the Deputy Provincial Governor and other departments, have completed 38 roads in Siem Reap in 2022, including the accessible roads for blind people. Each member had specific work activities to support persons with disabilities according to their role and responsibility. They also

have regular meetings to discuss and monitor their progress. For example, the department of women's affairs has solved the case of abuse of women with disabilities by providing legal assistance and advocacy for the victims. They have also promoted the rights and participation of women with disabilities in 2022."



Ms. Vann Channa shares her thoughts at the Siem Reap PDAC meeting in March 2023

Nearby, the Battambang PDAC has demonstrated its commitment to planning and implementing its annual workplans, which were endorsed by its members in August 2022 and February 2023. An attendee at the meeting in March 2023, **Mr. Kosam Sophinara**, the Director of the Red Cross in Battambang province and a member of the PDAC, shared his thoughts on the achievement of the PDAC:

"We have been working hard to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in our province. We have provided them with various services such as healthcare, education, legal aid and social protection. We have also advocated for their rights and inclusion in the society. In my opinion, regarding the establishment of the Disability Action Council working group, I think it is good because we know that persons with disabilities have limited access to social services. If we set up the disability working group, we can help them through the Red Cross such as to find a job and refer them for skills training at the Department of Vocational Training. In addition, they can also help with financial support or other materials for their employment, which makes them have a better life."



The Kampong Cham PDAC has been recognized as a role model for other PDACs in the country, as it has established effective mechanisms to listen

The Kampong Cham PDAC visited persons with disabilities in the communities to understand their situation and provide support as needed.

to and support persons with disabilities at the community level. For example, it has set up nine District Disability Working Groups, comprised of commune council members, to foster disability inclusion at the subnational level and to address the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities in their respective districts. Moreover, the Kampong Cham PDAC has mobilized funds from various sources, including \$2,500 from its own budget and additional government funds, to provide public services to 16,465 persons with disabilities (7,147 of whom are women and girls) in the province in 2022.

Mr. Soy Sokhorn, who is the Director of the Kampong Cham Organization of Persons with Disabilities and a member of the Kampong Cham PDAC, expressed his appreciation for the leadership and commitment of the PDAC to improve the situation of persons with disabilities. He said that whenever he raised any issues or challenges faced by persons with disabilities, the PDAC always took immediate action to assist them and to coordinate with relevant service providers.



Mr. Soy Sokhorn presents the results of a group discussion on annual work planning at a Kampong Cham PDAC meeting.

The way forward for Cambodia's PDACs

The five PDACs have been working hard to implement their annual workplans for 2022 and 2023, which were developed in alignment with the National Disability Strategic Plan (NDSP). The PDACs have achieved some remarkable results, such as providing training on disability inclusion, facilitating COVID-19 vaccination for persons with disabilities and improving physical accessibility infrastructure in the communities. However, the PDACs have also encountered some challenges that hinder their work, including:

- Insufficient funding and resources to support persons with disabilities at the ground level;
- Limited knowledge on disability inclusion and monitoring of the workplans among PDAC members, especially the new ones; and
- Poor coordination and referral of persons with disabilities across different sectors within the PDACs.

Ms. Ieng Sophoeun, a member of the PDAC in Battambang, shared her concerns regarding the revised structure of the PDAC. She said that many of the attendees were newcomers who did not clearly understand their roles and responsibilities as members of the Disability Action Council (DAC), a government body that promotes the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities in Cambodia. She also said that they lacked a formal recognition letter and a specific action plan to guide their work. She suggested that regular quarterly meetings be held to provide capacity building to PDAC members and to exchange experiences with other provinces.



Ms. Ieng Sophoeun shared her comments at the Battambang PDAC meeting in March 2023.

Mr. Kosam Sophinara, another attendee at the Battambang PDAC meeting, mentioned that some departments or institutions did not have the budget or resources to support persons with disabilities, who were prone to depression, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak. He said that this affects their livelihoods and income. He suggested that the PDAC in Battambang should set up a working group to encourage persons with disabilities and to collaborate with partner organizations to provide them with resources and training.

PDACs represent crucial actors in advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities at the subnational levels in Cambodia. Specifically, they contribute to the development and implementation of the current and new NDSP and the new disability law on the ground, in coordination with the local authorities, organizations of persons with disabilities and CSOs. Moreover, PDACs can advocate for disability inclusion in all sectors at the subnational level, to ensure that persons with disabilities have a voice and that their needs are addressed.