



Press Release

National Youth Forum 2022

Phnom Penh, 10 August 2022: Today, Transparency International Cambodia (TI Cambodia), ActionAid Cambodia (AAC), Cambodia Centre of Independent Media (CCIM), Cambodia Living Arts (CLA), Diakonia, Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC) and their networks of youth joined forces to launch the first annual Youth Forum. The event was held as part of the celebration of the International Youth Day 2022 to highlight the significance of youth participation as a crucial component of an inclusive and democratic society.

Financially supported by Transparency International (TI), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the European Union (EU), and The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Youth Forum brought together a diverse range of youth groups and delegates from the government, civil society, academia, and international development agencies in an effort to showcase and promote young people's participation in governance and development as well as government decision making processes in Cambodia.

In his welcome remarks, Transparency International Cambodia's Executive Director, Mr. Pech Pisey noted: "While young people make up a substantial share of the Cambodian population, available evidence has shown that they continue to encounter significant barriers in the civic and political spheres. These include a lack of awareness about their political rights, limited interest and knowledge about the country's public affairs, and a low degree of involvement at all levels of government. The organisation of this Youth Forum is a response to these critical challenges."

Approximately 120 participants representing civil society, government ministries, international agencies, and youth groups, attended and contributed to the event.

Speaking during the event, Ms. Eng Chandy, Executive Director of GADC and a representative of the Youth Forum organising committee said, "The Forum provided youth participants with an opportunity to showcase their work and interact and exchange knowledge, experiences, and views on civic and political issues among themselves. It also served as a platform for the youth to advocate for their rights and discuss and debate policy issues, priorities and solutions with relevant stakeholders, particularly policy makers".

The one-full day event featured a range of activities, starting with a booth exhibition in which nine outstanding youth community projects focusing on education and skills, gender, health, environment, civic engagement, and community development were displayed.

The booth exhibition was followed by the organisation of a plenary session under the theme "Youth and Civic Engagement". During this session, panellists from the government, CSOs and youth discussed key benefits, challenges, and opportunities for young people's involvement in the country's social and political development, particularly at the grassroots level. To close the morning session, four breakout rooms were held to provide space for youth and experts to discuss in details about specific topics such as mental health, education and employment, women and technology, and youth and environment.

The afternoon session featured a panel discussion on 'Youth and Arts', which was then followed by a musical performance. The next activity consisted of an Inspirational Talk session, in which selected notable youth leaders in Cambodian society recounted their journey and shared their advice with the youth participants. The talks were meant to motivate and engage other youths to think positively, see opportunities, and move forward with action to contribute to their community. The forum ended with the announcement of the top projects showcased and the most popular project booth of the event. The top three projects were awarded with grants to implement future youth led initiatives.

Media contact

Mr Pech Pisey, Executive Director of Transparency International Cambodia,

(855) 89 972 620, piseypech@ticambodia.org

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