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# KNOWLEDGE AND OPINIONS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN CAMBODIA'S PRE-ELECTION PERIOD



July 2013

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# **Knowledge and Opinions of the Electoral Process in Cambodia's Pre-Election Period**

*Findings from a National Survey and Focus Groups*

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July 2013



International Foundation for Electoral Systems



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## Overview

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) commissioned a survey of the national population in Cambodia (n=1,752) to gather data on opinions and attitudes on electoral issues in the pre-election period. IFES also commissioned 10 focus groups held in five regions across Cambodia to examine and probe these themes in more detail to qualify quantitative survey findings.

This report will present the full survey results and will include relevant focus group findings and quotations to clarify patterns identified through survey findings.

## Survey Details

**Sample size:** 1,752 respondents representing the voting-age population in Cambodia (18 years+), covering all 24 provinces of Cambodia.

**Margin of error:**  $\pm 2.34\%$  within a 95% confidence interval, assuming a pure random sample.

**Questionnaire:** Composed of 46 closed questions and seven open-ended questions, plus demographics.

**Sample area coverage:** Nationwide coverage; the sample was stratified proportionately by all provinces of Cambodia. A national sample of n=1,752 was achieved in addition to a booster sample of n=367 in the coastal region of Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk and Kep. The booster sample was included to allow for more focused analysis of these coastal region areas of interest following the 2011 IFES survey.

**Fieldwork dates:** April 4 to 13, 2013.

**Survey firm:** IFES contracted with BMRS Asia of Cambodia to conduct fieldwork and data processing for the survey.

**Funding:** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding for this survey.

**Comparative Data:** Some data from the IFES 2011 survey will be presented. The fieldwork for that survey was conducted in January 3-18, 2012. The sample size was n=1,752 with an oversample of 367 in three of the communes (Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk and Kep) that experienced flooding during voter registration time. The survey had a margin of error of 2.34% at a 95% confidence level.

**Weighting:** The data was weighted by region and age groups to adjust for slight discrepancies between the achieved sample and population parameters.

**Demographic Groups Sample Sizes:**

**Gender:**

Male = 876  
Female = 876

**Age groups:**

18-24 = 271  
25-34 = 490  
35-44 = 340  
45-54 = 389  
55+ = 262

**Education groups:**

No education = 215  
Incomplete/Complete Primary = 788  
Incomplete/Complete Intermediate = 455  
Incomplete/Complete Secondary = 237  
Incomplete/Complete University = 33  
Refused = 1

**Residential density:**

Urban = 214  
Rural = 1,538

**Monthly income levels:**

\$0-\$100 USD = 175  
\$101-\$200 USD = 721  
\$201-\$300 USD = 501  
\$301-\$400 USD = 186  
\$401 USD and higher = 156  
Do not know = 13

**Geographic Regions:**

Plain Region (Kampong Cham, Kandal, Phnom Penh, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Takeo) = 768  
Tonle Sap Lake Region (Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Kampong Thom, Pursat, Siem Reap, Oddar Meanchey, Pailin) = 528  
Coastal Region (Kampot, Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk, Kep) = 216  
Plateau and Mountain Region (Kampong Speu, Kratie, Monduliri, Preah Vihear, Rattanakiri, Stung Treng) = 240

**Note about charts in report:** For charts and tables where percentages are based on filtered respondents or certain demographic groups, the appropriate, unweighted sample base for each percentage is specified in the relevant chart or table (example: n=456). For all other charts or where not otherwise specified, the sample base is the total sample size of 1,752 (n=1,752). There may be slight variation between numbers presented in the analysis and the data figures or tables due to rounding. This occurred in only a few cases and the difference was never greater than one percentage point.

## Focus Group Details

IFES commissioned 10 focus groups in five provinces across Cambodia: Phnom Penh, Preah Sihanouk, Battambang, Kratie and Kampong Cham. Two focus groups were held per region, each with eight to 10 participants. The purpose of the focus groups was to obtain an in-depth understanding of citizens’ opinions related to elections.

**Fieldwork dates:** May 7 to May 17, 2013.

**Survey firm:** IFES contracted TNS Cambodia to conduct the focus groups.

**Funding:** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding for this survey.

**Presentation of Focus Group Findings:** In the report, focus group findings will be presented, along with demographic information of the quoted participant: the participant’s gender, age, location of focus group and urban/rural classification. An example is as follows:

*“Quote”—Female, 40, Kratie, Rural*

**Focus Group Participants:** Focus group participants were recruited from these five regions: Phnom Penh, Preah Sihanouk, Battambang, Kratie and Kampong Cham. Two focus groups were held per province. Separate focus groups were held with men and women and also with younger participants (defined as age 18-30) and older participants (defined as age 31 and older). TNS advised IFES to split the discussion groups by gender and age to ensure participants would feel free to discuss a variety of issues. Details of the focus group participants can be found below.

Province	Number of Participants							
	Urban				Rural			
	Youth Female	Youth Male	Older Female	Older Male	Youth Female	Youth Male	Older Female	Older Male
Phnom Penh	9			8				
Preah Sihanouk		9	10					
Battambang					8			9
Kratie						9	9	
Kampong Cham					9			9

## Key Findings and Recommendations

### Knowledge of Electoral Issues and Information Sources

- Survey findings reveal Cambodians are interested in the election process and feel they have enough information on various aspects of the elections, such as how to mark their ballot (92%), where to vote (87%), documents needed for voting (78%), hours for voting (76%), qualifications of who can register (71%), documents needed for registration (68%) and registration/updating information on the voter list (55%). While a high percentage believes they have enough information on some of these aspects of the electoral process, there are some areas where a significant percentage says more information is needed. This includes information on registration/updating information on the voter list (42%), documents needed for registration (31%), qualifications of who can register (27%), hours for voting (24%) and documents needed for voting (21%). Focus group findings reveal other aspects of the elections that are unclear. Many focus group participants are unsure of the election date, voting times, documents needed for voting and the participating candidates and parties. These findings indicate specific information on election procedures and topics should be emphasized in public information campaigns prior to the elections, which include: what documents are needed for voting and registration; how to check information on the voter list; the date of the election and voting hours; and information on the parties and candidates running in the election.
- Self-reported knowledge levels are similar between men and women and urban and rural residents, yet urban residents seem to require more information on where to vote than rural residents (22% and 8%, respectively). Consequently, stronger efforts in urban areas on informing residents where their voting center is located would appear to be beneficial.
- By age, those in the youngest age group (18-24) report in the highest percentages that they need more information on each electoral aspect. The next youngest age group (25-34) also expresses a disproportionately-high need for more information. This suggests public information campaigns ought to ensure they appropriately target younger citizens in their messaging content and media approach.
- Survey data also shows Cambodians need more information about the National Election Committee (NEC). Only 15% of Cambodians are able to name the organization in charge of running the elections. Focus group findings reiterate this low awareness of the NEC. Some focus group participants say they have heard of the NEC, but very few are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Increasing awareness of the NEC's functions could potentially improve transparency around election operations and enhance confidence in the electoral process overall.

## Information Sources and Timing of Information

- Community-based methods of receiving information – such as from village chiefs; commune chiefs and friends; family or relatives – are preferred over mass media sources and would ensure reaching the most voting-age citizens. Village chiefs and commune chiefs are cited as the most helpful sources of information for citizens to learn about elections (70% and 25%, respectively). Information dissemination through family and friends is also preferred (24%), as is media sources such as private TV (32%), State TV (19%), private radio (24%), State radio (11%) and local media (10%). In addition, the data does not show important differences in terms of citizens' preferred sources of information by age groups, gender or urban and rural areas. Consequently, similar information dissemination tactics may be employed for all voting-age citizens. Primarily focusing on community-level methods of dissemination, followed by TV and radio, would be most effective.
- Only 22% of Cambodians start paying attention to election issues such as who the candidates are, where to vote, and how to vote more than two months before the elections. Most citizens (67%) pay attention one to two months (24%), three to four weeks (15%) or one to two weeks before the elections (28%). Data shows most citizens have heightened attention for electoral issues in the one-month period preceding elections, which is a prime time to disseminate voter information.

## Opinions on the Electoral Process

- Cambodians express a strong sense of civic responsibility when it comes to voting, but, concurrently, are split on whether their individual vote makes a difference. The vast majority of Cambodians strongly (83%) or somewhat agree (16%) voting gives them a chance to influence decision-making in the country, yet there are as many Cambodians who agree (47%) as those who disagree (44%) their vote may not make a difference. Undertaking campaigns explaining the importance and value of each citizen's vote, as well as building knowledge of and confidence in all aspects of the electoral process may encourage more citizens to vote.
- Focus group findings highlight a lack of awareness regarding other forms of civic influence besides voting. When discussing how citizens can be a part of the democratic process, very few focus group participants are able to cite other examples. While enthusiasm and belief in the importance of voting is very positive, the low awareness of how to be civically active highlights the need to inform citizens about other avenues of civic participation that can help them express their views on social and political issues.
- Just as Cambodians believe in the importance of voting, most citizens believe elections are crucial and participation is the obligation of people living in Cambodia (84%). Still, four in 10 (43%) acknowledge there is room for improvement in the electoral process. Many respondents suggest obtaining more information about, and easing access to, the electoral process in order to

improve the process. Respondents also mention addressing procedural issues, such as improving accessibility of polling stations for persons with disabilities, taking steps to improve the voter registry, adding more polling stations and providing better oversight and organization of elections overall. Focus group participants reveal similar opinions. Providing more voter education information; taking steps to improve the transparency and fairness of the process; and making the voter registration process easier to understand are all mentioned as ways to improve the electoral process. These findings highlight citizens' recommendations on how to improve the process, and consequently their opinions of the process, and could be taken into consideration in future strategic planning initiatives.

- Cambodians also express strong support for public disclosure of campaign contributions in higher percentages than in the 2012 IFES survey. Eighty-five percent of Cambodians believe it is very (45%) or somewhat (40%) important for candidates and parties to publically disclose the money received for their campaigns. This compares to 2012 data, in which 73% of Cambodians said it is very (34%) or somewhat (39%) important for candidates and parties to publicly disclose the money they receive for their campaigns. This increase illuminates heightened awareness of the importance of disclosure in campaign finance over the past year.

## Experiences Voting

- Cambodians report positive experiences voting in previous elections and over nine in 10 respondents indicate various polling procedures took place when they voted, such as a polling station official inking their finger with indelible ink after they voted and checking their identification. However, slightly fewer respondents report a polling station official checked their fingers to look for previous ink, or that information on how to mark the ballot was posted in the polling station and focus group findings also uncover some issues with Election Day procedures. While many Cambodians report these procedures occurred correctly, data indicates there is room to improve the visibility of voter education materials in the polling stations and to improve instructions to polling officials about checking and cleaning fingers for previous ink.
- Questions asked regarding the voter list illuminate problems voters encountered and skepticism regarding the accuracy of the list. One-third of Cambodians (29%) say they or somebody they know had problems related to the voter list. The main type of problem identified was the name not being on the list (63%), the name was misspelled on the list (47%) or the wrong date of birth was indicated (27%). Voter list problems are reflected in focus group findings as well. Many focus group participants report hearing about people having problems with finding their name on the voter list.

Additionally, Cambodians are split in their opinions on whether the voter list is inclusive: 49% believe *all* eligible voters are on the list, while 42% believe *most* are on the list and 5% believe many eligible voters are missing. These perceptions and reported problems with the voter list suggest further examination of the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the voter list might be

needed. Therefore, conducting a voter list audit – including checking for inclusivity of eligible voters and accuracy of the information – and also working toward increased citizen participation in voter registration update periods could help improve the quality of the voter list, and thus voters' confidence in the election process.

### **Participation in the Voter Registration Update**

- Almost all Cambodians say they heard or saw some type of information about checking their name on the voter list in September and October 2012. Yet, when asked how much information they received, more Cambodians feel they just had *some* information about this process (57%), and a minority had *a lot* of information (42%). The data points to a need for increasing the amount of information citizens have on this process ahead of future voter registration updates.
- Seventy-three percent of citizens say they checked their registration status during the voter registration update process in September and October 2012, however, it should be cautioned that this figure may be overstated.
- Reasons people did not check their registration status include not having time (56%); not having ID or supporting documents needed to register (20%); lack of awareness of the registration period (12%); the belief that their name is already on the list (6%); or the registration center being too far away (5%). Exploring options for making the process easier, more convenient and/or lengthening the period of time people can check their status could allow more Cambodians to check their status.
- Men and women say they checked their status in nearly equal percentages, as did citizens of different regions. However, there is an age gap in terms of checking during the voter registration update. Young citizens were much less likely to have checked than those 25 and older (50% compared to 74-86% for older age groups). As previous data suggests, targeting the youngest voting-age citizens in the next round of voter registration updates should be a priority, as they tend to be the least informed.

### **Opinions on Issues Related to Youth and Women**

- Cambodians believe younger citizens, those aged 18-30, should have more of a role in how the country is governed (86%) and are supportive of increasing the proportion of youth representation in the National Assembly and commune councils (92%).
- Cambodians are also supportive of women in various political roles, such as working for the National Election Committee (98%), serving in the commune council (98%), serving in the National Assembly (95%), running as candidates in elections (95%), serving as ministers (94%), being political party members (95%), participating in political protests (94%) and working for a candidate campaign (95%). Yet, while there are majorities of respondents who strongly support women in

these roles, between one-quarter and one-third of respondents say they only somewhat support women in these roles. This indicates there is still room to strengthen support among a significant portion of the population to ensure citizens genuinely encourage women's involvement in politics and to ensure the sustainability of such support over time.

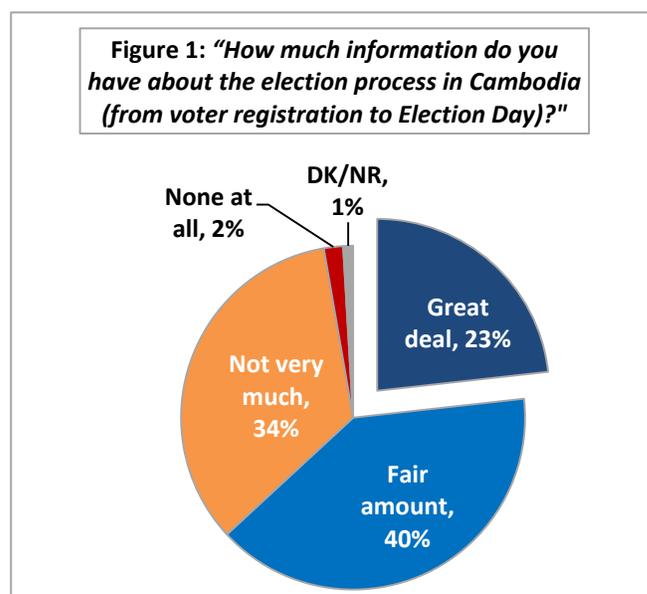
- Very few Cambodians are aware of gender quotas (9% know a lot and 35% know a little), but knowledge of gender quotas increases with educational attainment. Despite the low awareness, when explained that the purpose of quotas is to reserve a share of seats for women in elected bodies, most Cambodians either strongly (63%) or somewhat (34%) support introducing gender quotas in upcoming elections. Efforts to increase awareness of gender quotas among most of the population will be important for ensuring citizens are on board with efforts to increase women's representation in Cambodia. It is a positive sign that support for introducing gender quotas is high, but – similar to support for women in political roles – there is a significant portion of citizens who only somewhat support their introduction. Informing the public of the benefits of gender quotas and their importance in increasing female representation could strengthen this support.

## I. Knowledge of Electoral Issues and Sources of Information

A primary goal of the survey was to assess knowledge of electoral issues and information needs ahead of the July 28, 2013 parliamentary elections. Thus, respondents were asked questions to understand their information needs ahead of these elections and their preferred information sources. Survey findings indicate Cambodians are interested in the election process but report moderate levels of information on the process overall. Citizens feel they have enough information on various aspects of the elections, such as how to mark their ballot and where to vote, however, a significant portion report they need more information on various electoral elements; very few are aware of the body that manages elections. Self-reported knowledge levels are similar between men and women, yet older citizens feel more informed than younger ones. Community-based methods of receiving information such as from village chiefs; commune chiefs; and friends, family or relatives are preferred over mass media sources. Nonetheless, TV and radio are popular sources of information, as well.

### Cambodians Interested in Elections, Report Moderate Levels of Information on the Process Overall

A majority of Cambodians are very (64%) or somewhat interested (31%) in elections. However, only 23% have a great deal of information about the electoral process in Cambodia, 40% have a fair amount, 33% have not very much and 2% have none at all (Figure 1). Women and men, as well as urban and rural residents, report the same low percentages of those with a great deal of information. However, by age group, younger voters are least likely to say they have a great deal of information on the election process compared to older age groups. The proportion of those informed about the election process remains unchanged from data from the 2012 IFES survey, also fielded in the pre-election period (prior to the 2012 Commune Council elections).



### Majority of Citizens Report Having Enough Information on Some Electoral Aspects, but Significant Portion Needs Additional Information on Other Aspects

When presented with specific aspects of the electoral process and asked whether they have enough or need more information, a majority of Cambodians say they have enough information on various electoral aspects, including how to mark their ballot (92%), where to vote (87%), documents needed for voting (78%), hours for voting (76%), qualifications of who can register (71%), documents needed for registration (68%) and registration/updating information on the voter list (55%).

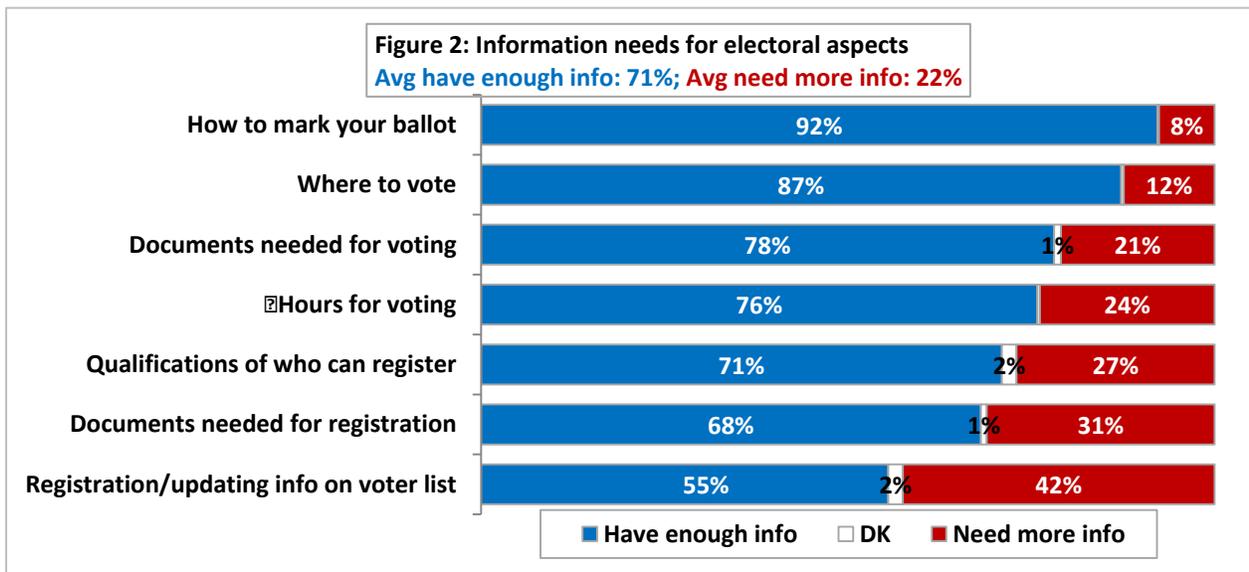
Averaging the percent of those who say they have enough information on these seven aspects, 77% of Cambodians say they have enough information. While a high percentage believes they have enough in-

formation on these aspects of the electoral process, there are some areas where a significant percentage says they need more information. This includes information on registration/updating information on the voter list (42%), documents needed for registration (31%), qualifications of who can register (27%), hours for voting (24%) and documents needed for voting (21%) (Figure 2). Focus group findings reveal other aspects of the elections that are unclear. Many focus group participants are unsure of the election date, voting times, documents needed for voting and the participating candidates and parties. Focus group findings confirm a lack of understanding regarding the documents needed to vote. Some participants know they can use the national ID, while others believe they can use the family book or the voting slip provided by the NEC. Additionally, some focus group participants were unclear of the exact date of the elections or the voting times.

*“I would like to know what kind of documents I need for Election Day, because for me, during the previous elections, I was not able to join because the information [was] not clear. We would like to [know] what we should bring with during the election because like me, last time, I did not vote. It is because I was afraid I did it incorrectly.”—Male, 27, Preah Sihanouk, Urban*

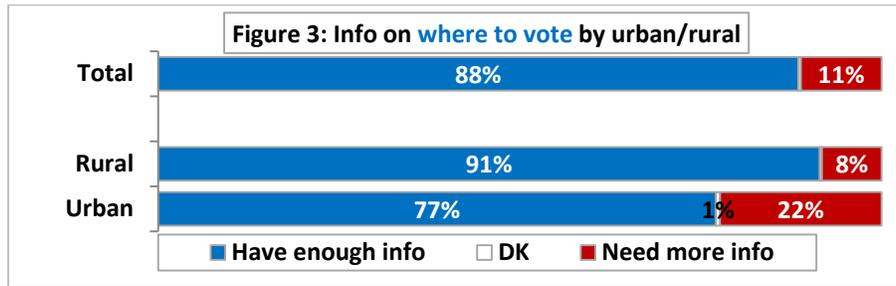
*“I suggest that there should have been announcement on the flyers or posters in the public places and the other relevant documents about the needed documents.”—Female, 26, Phnom Penh, Urban*

*“I want to know when the voting day is.”—Male, 37, Kampong Cham, Rural*

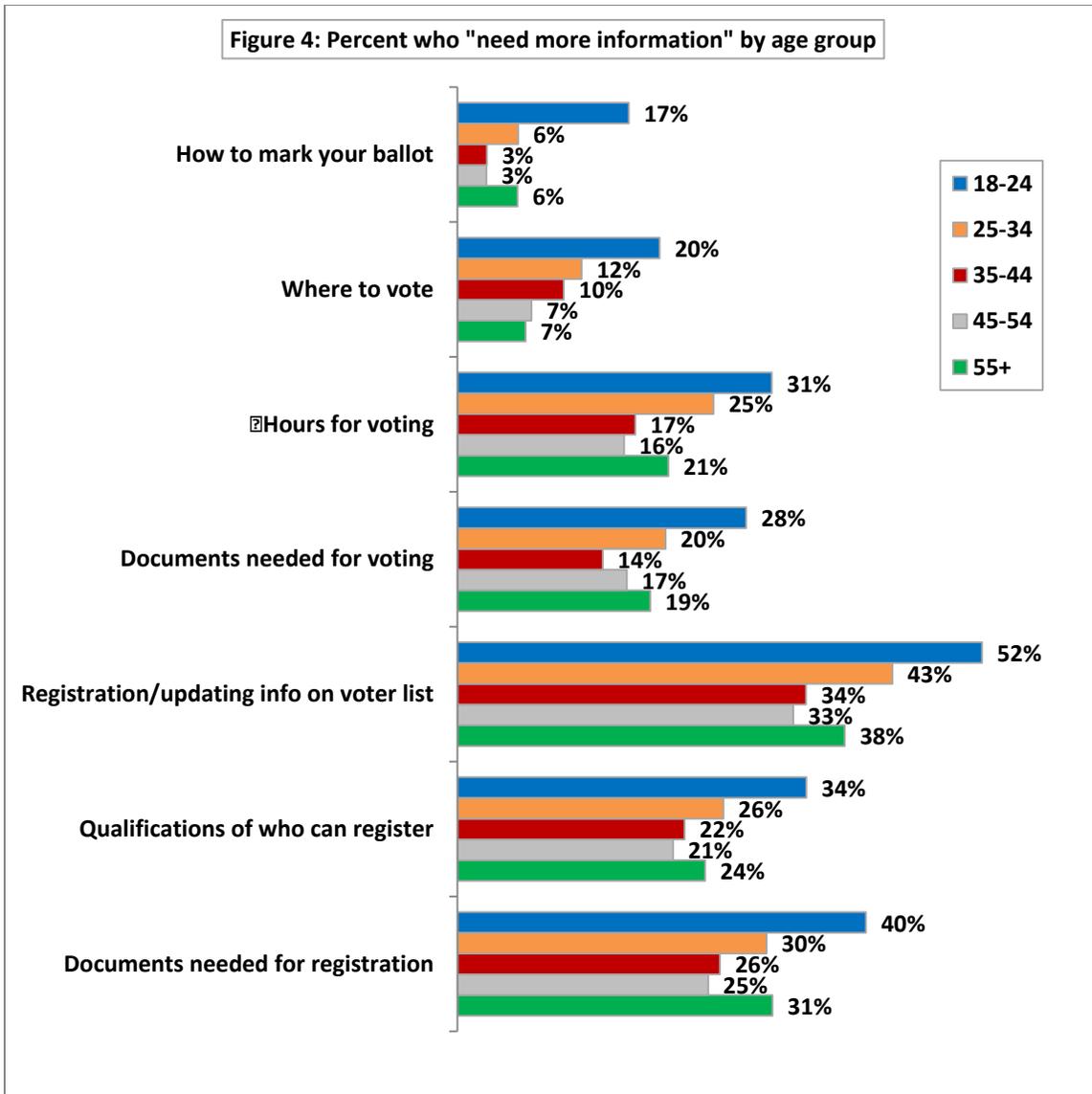


There is no gender disparity in information needs. On most electoral aspects, high percentages of rural and urban residents report having enough information, yet, urban residents require more information on where to vote than rural residents (22% and 8%, respectively) (Figure 3). Comparing to 2012 survey data gathered in the pre-Commune Council Elections period, more citizens prior to the 2013 parliamentary elections say they have enough information on how to mark their ballot (87% in 2012; 92% in 2013) and where to vote (77% in 2012; 87% in 2013). However, nearly the same percentage of citizens in 2013

as in 2012 indicates having enough information on registration or updating information on the voter list (55% and 56%, respectively).



Those in the youngest age group (18-24) are the most in need of information on these electoral elements, indicating they should be a target of public information campaigns (Figure 4). In some areas, the next youngest age group (25-34) also expresses a disproportionately-high need for more information.



Survey data also shows Cambodians need more information about the NEC. Only 15% of Cambodians are able to name the organization in charge of running the elections. Focus group findings reiterate this low awareness of the NEC. While some focus group participants say they have heard of the NEC, very few are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Of that small proportion aware of the NEC, 52% are very confident and 35% are somewhat confident in the NEC's ability to manage elections in the country. Only 9% are not very and 3% are not at all confident in the body.

*"I hear [about the NEC] only when the election is near! Now, I hear it every day."—Female, 30, Battambang, Rural*

*"I have only heard of the name, but I have no idea of what it is."—Male, 33, Kampong Cham, Rural*

### Community-Based and Face-To-Face Methods of Information Dissemination Most Popular, Most Trusted

Data from the survey indicates voter education efforts should emphasize the use of community-based sources of information, as they are not only used by a significant percentage of Cambodians, but they tend to be more trusted than mass media sources. Focus group findings reinforce the questionable trust in the media and preference for face-to-face sources, yet many focus group participants mention TVK, the national government television station, as the most trustworthy TV source.

A majority of Cambodians receive their information on political and economic developments in the country from community leaders, such as the village chief (59%) or the commune chief (27%). People also receive information from either private TV channels (50%) or State TV channels (27%); private radio (41%) or State radio (16%); and relatives, friends or neighbors (30%). In terms of sources of information that are trusted, village chiefs are also the most trusted source of information (48%), followed by private TV channels (12%), private radio (11%), State TV channels (10%), Commune Chiefs (4%), relatives/friends/neighbors (4%) and private radio (3%).

**Figure 5: “What do you feel are the most helpful information sources for you to learn about election-related issues and procedures?”**

Type of source	Source	% of cases
Face-to-face	Village chief	69%
Media	Private TV channels	32%
Face-to-face	Commune chief	24%
Face-to-face	Family, friends, neighbors	25%
Media	Private radio	24%
Media	State TV channels	19%
Media	State radio	11%
Media	Local media	10%

Both face-to-face methods of disseminating information, as well as media, are cited as the preferred sources of election-related information. Village chiefs and commune chiefs are cited as the most helpful sources of information for citizens to learn about elections (69% and 24%, respectively). Information dissemination through family and friends is also preferred (25%), as is media sources such as

private TV (32%), State TV (19%), private radio (24%), State radio (11%) and local media (10%). Flyers, newspapers and magazines are rarely mentioned as preferred sources of information (less than 1% each) (Figure 5).

Survey results indicate there is little difference in preference for particular sources of information between men and women or between urban and rural residents of all age groups. Women are only slightly more likely to cite relatives and friends than men as a preferred source of information (27% and 22%, respectively). Women are also slightly less likely to cite private TV channels than men (16% and 22%, respectively). Focus group participants in rural areas mention radio, community screenings, as well as vehicles with loudspeakers as being helpful (but only for short messages or reminders).

Prior to the Commune Council elections in 2012, most Cambodians received information from community leaders, either the village chief (74%) or the commune chief (25%). TV ads (45%), radio ads (37%), motorbikes/vehicles with loudspeakers (25%) and family/friends (18%) were also sources of information for citizens. A majority of Cambodians say the information from these sources was very (65%) or somewhat

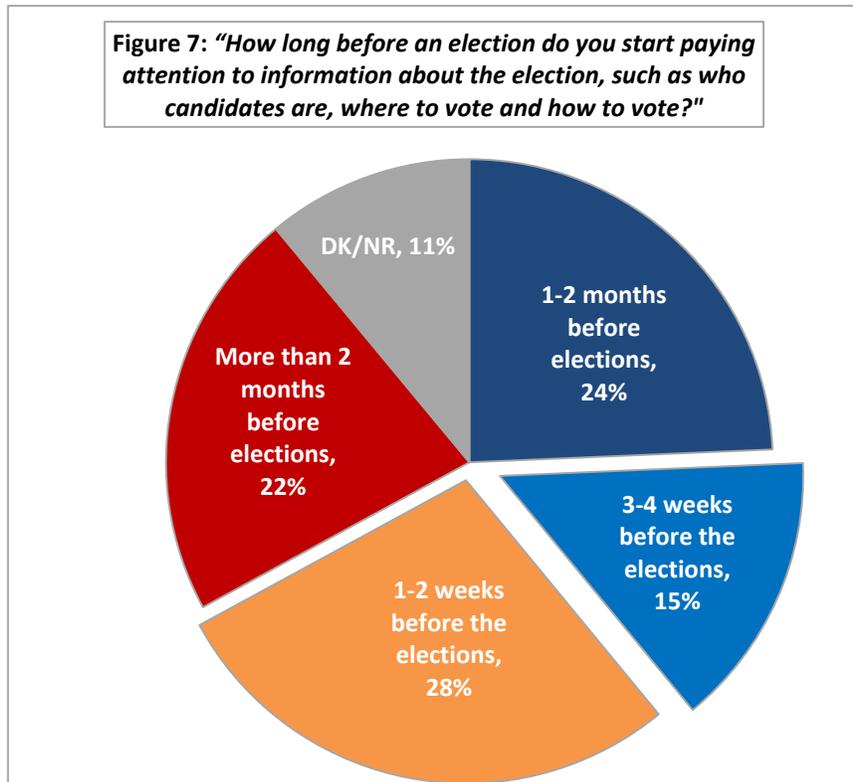
Figure 6: [Of those who received information from the source] Percent who say information was "very clear"	% very clear
Posters/flyers	78%
Chief of commune	74%
Village chief	69%
TV ads	68%
Radio ads	63%
Street banners	60%
Motorbike/vehicle with loudspeaker	62%
Family/friends	61%

clear (25%), and only 8% say the information was unclear. Evaluating the clarity of the most frequently-cited information sources, Figure 6 shows the majority of those who received information from these sources say the information was very clear. Of the few who feel the information was unclear, most say it was because they still needed more information, such as where and when to vote (40%), what documents were needed to vote (24%) or how to mark the ballot (15%).

### Most Cambodians Pay Attention to Election Information within Month of the Election

Data shows most citizens have heightened attention for political and electoral issues in the period immediately preceding elections, which is a prime time to disseminate voter information. The plurality of citizens pay attention to political affairs only in the period before elections (48%), 23% follow politics in general but not closely throughout the year; 16% are not interested in politics at all, and only 10% of Cambodians closely follow politics all the time. More women only follow politics closely around the time of elections (52%) compared to 42% of men, and nearly double the percentage of women than men are not interested in politics at all (20% and 11%, respectively). By age, citizens 18-24 are most likely to only follow politics around the time of elections compared to older Cambodians (18-24, 53%; 25-34, 46%; 35-44, 47%; 45-54, 45%; 55+, 43%).

Similarly, only 22% of Cambodians start paying attention to election issues such as who the candidates are, where to vote and how to vote more than two months before the elections. Most citizens (67%) pay attention one to two months (24%), three to four weeks (15%) or one to two weeks before the elections (28%) (Figure 7).

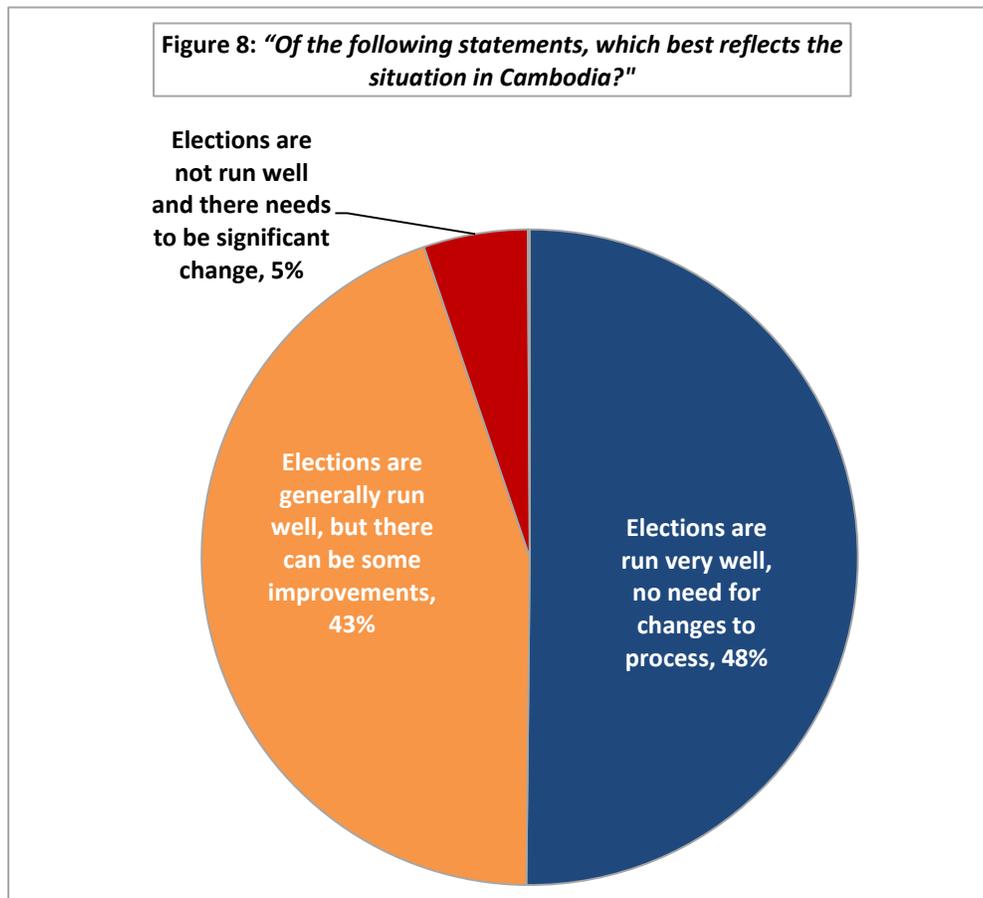


## II. Opinions on the Electoral Process in Cambodia

In this pre-election period and one year after the local Commune Council Elections, most Cambodians believe participating in elections is crucial for citizens. Still, four in ten acknowledge there is room for improvement in the electoral process. Cambodians believe the process can be improved by having more messages in the media; more information on where and how to vote; improving the voter registry; adding more polling stations; and providing better overall organization and preparations for elections. The data shows Cambodians are generally supportive of regulation and disclosure of money in election campaigns as well. Majorities of citizens view aspects of voting and the electoral process positively, but recognize sometimes mistakes are made. The vast majority of Cambodians agree voting gives them a chance to influence decision-making and they are free to vote without pressure, but concurrently are split on whether their vote always makes a difference.

### Elections Viewed Positively Overall, but Citizens Believe Improvements Could be Made

Most Cambodians believe elections are crucial, and participation is the obligation of people living in Cambodia (84%). Only 14% feel elections are generally important, but it is a personal choice whether one participates in them; 1% believes elections are not useful and it does not matter if one participates. When evaluating the election process overall in Cambodia, 48% believe elections are run very well and there is no need for changes to the election process. Still, 43% believe elections are generally run well, but there can be some improvements to the election process. Only 5% say elections are not run well and there should be significant changes to the election process (Figure 8).



When shown a list and asked to select some of the positive aspects associated with the electoral process in Cambodia, 45% cite the perception that voters did not have problems marking their ballots, there has not been an increase in violence (42%), elections are well-organized (40%) and people did not have trouble locating their polling stations (39%) (Figure 9).

<b>Figure 9: “And in your view, can you tell me what you think are positive aspects, if any, of the electoral process in Cambodia, or the things that you like?” [SHOWCARD, Multiple Response]</b>	
Voters did not have problems marking their ballots	45%
There has not been an increase in violence	42%
Elections were well-organized	40%
People did not have trouble locating polling station	39%
There were no problems with counting	27%
More equitable media access and coverage for political parties	15%
Number of women elected as Commune Councilors increased to 18%	15%
Don't know/No response	5%

Some of the perceived negative aspects of the electoral process in Cambodia include views that there is a lack of transparency in election campaign financing (19%), a media bias in favor of the government (18%), a complicated voter registration process (18%) and that election officials need more or better training (18%). Other criticisms center on perceptions of abuse of State resources, biased election administration officials and intimidation of opposition parties (Figure 10).

<b>Figure 10: “And what would you say are the negative aspects of the electoral process in Cambodia, or those that you think can be improved?” [SHOWCARD, Multiple Response]</b>	
No transparency on election campaign financing	19%
Election officials (voter registration and polling officials) need more/better training	18%
Media bias in favor of the government	18%
Voter registration process is complicated	18%
Abuse of state resources (vehicles, government officials campaigning)	16%
Perceived lack of impartiality of election administration at all levels undermines overall confidence in electoral process	14%
No democracy curriculum in schools	13%
Electoral system does not allow for voters' choice of independent candidates	11%
Requirements for political party registration too rigid for Commune Council Elections	10%
Authorities at all levels closely observing activities of opposition parties contributed to an atmosphere of intimidation	10%
Complaints procedures often lack coherency, clarity, transparency	9%
Don't know/no response	27%

Cambodians were also asked to identify changes to the voting procedures they believe could help improve the electoral process. The focus in responses is on more information about, and easier access to, the electoral process. Forty percent mention more messages in the media about elections (40%), followed by polling stations that are more accessible to persons with disabilities (34%); authorities taking steps to improve the voter registry (30%); more information on where and how to vote (26%); more polling stations (26%); providing oversight/fairness and independent for the elections (25%); and better overall organization and preparation (17%). Focus group participants reveal similar opinions. Providing more voter education information, takings steps to improve the transparency/fairness of the process and making the voter registration process easier to understand are all mentioned as ways to improve the electoral process. Additionally, long queues and long distances to polling stations are also frequently mentioned as problems encountered when voting.

*“We want independency and fairness, that’s why we go to poll and we want them to organize such a fair and independent election.”—Female, 40, Kratie, Rural*

*“To make it easy for us to transport from home and before voting means we have to queue for a very long time. It takes us a lot of time. It wastes our time. For women, they need to cook or they have to watch the children. They will have to wait at that time too. Also, the raining season makes it even more difficult.”—Male, 29, Preah Sihanouk, Urban*

### **Majorities View Aspects of Voting and the Electoral Process Positively**

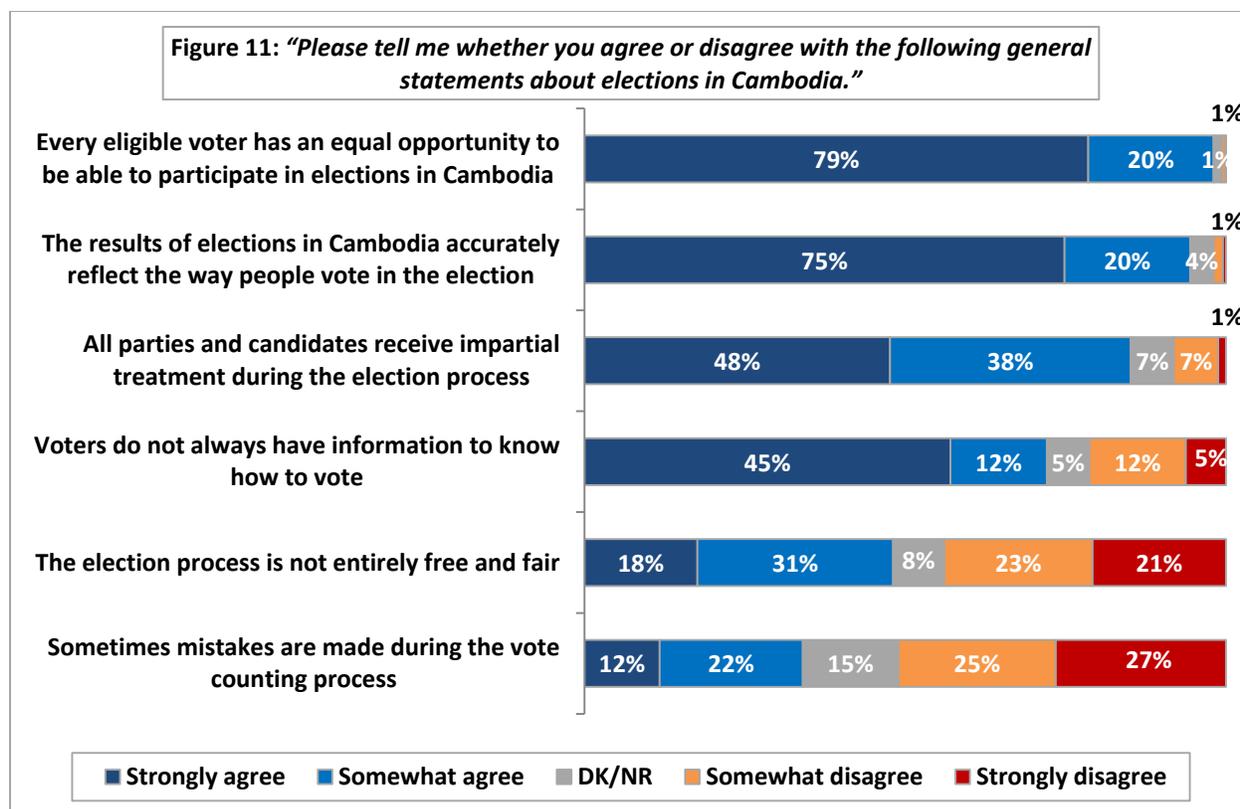
The vast majority of Cambodians believe every eligible voter has an equal opportunity to participate in elections (75% strongly agree, 20% somewhat agree). Although the majority of voters in Cambodia also agree the results of elections accurately reflect the way people vote in elections (75% strongly, 20% somewhat agree), a significant percentage (34%) recognize mistakes are sometimes made during the counting process (Figure 11). While these respondents may not believe these mistakes significantly impact the accuracy of the results, there is recognition that errors may be made during the counting process.

Similarly, while the majority of Cambodians express satisfaction about the electoral process, 49% agree the election process is not entirely free and fair (Figure 11). They may not express dissatisfaction with the overall process, but do sense some practices may compromise the complete fairness of the election. Focus group participants also believe the fairness of the elections could be improved. A few mention this could be accomplished through improving transparency of electoral elements, such as vote counting.

*“We want independency and fairness, that’s why we go to poll and we want them to organize such a fair and independent election.”—Female, 40, Kratie, Rural*

*“I would like to know about the process of counting the number of ballots. Who are the ones that count the ballot? Can we trust on them?”—Male, 22, Preah Sihanouk, Urban*

When asked to evaluate their own level of information on the election process overall, a majority of Cambodians say they have a great deal or fair amount of information (as seen in Figure 1). However, a majority of Cambodians (57%) also say voters in general do not always have information on how to vote (Figure 11). Because voters base their response to this type of question on what they know of their relatives, friends and neighbors, this may reflect a general lack of knowledge on voting issues in Cambodia.



Cambodians express a strong sense of civic responsibility when it comes to voting, but, concurrently, are split on whether their individual vote makes a difference. The vast majority of Cambodians strongly (83%) or somewhat agree (16%) that voting gives them a chance to influence decision-making in the country and 83% strongly and 15% somewhat agree they are free to vote for whoever they want on Election Day without external influence (Figure 12). Yet, just as many Cambodians agree (47%) as disagree (44%) their vote may not make a difference, which may reflect a lack of confidence in the difference just one vote can make. While the survey data does not point to any significant differences on this question based on gender, age or education level, those higher up on the socio-economic scale are more likely to voice this opinion that those lower on the scale.

Focus group findings give additional insight into this sentiment. While focus group participants nearly unanimously agreed on the importance of voting, and that selecting a good leader was very important to their social and economic well-being and was the duty of every citizen, some skepticism emerged. A few participants made comments such as, “What difference is one vote?” Additionally, many participants cited discontent with the fact they can only make their voices heard every five years in national elections. Some do not believe local elections are as important as national elections, and they believe waiting five years between national elections is too long.

*“[I vote because] we have to fulfill our role as citizens.”—Female, 40, Kratie, Rural*

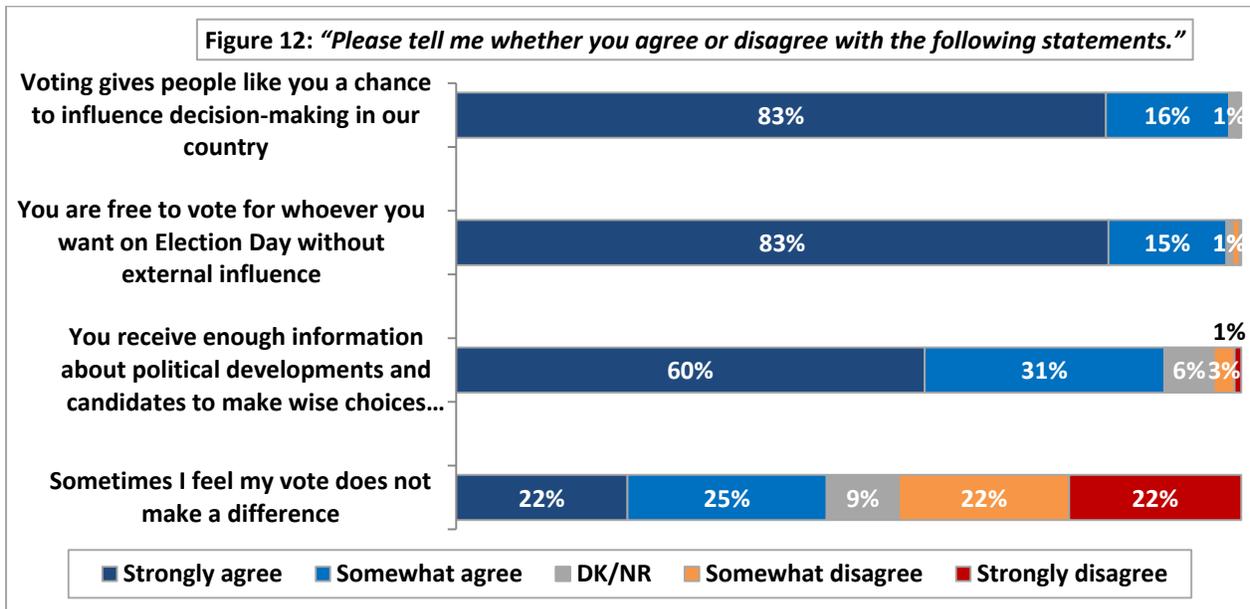
*“For me, I think it is so important, because we have only one chance per 5-years to choose a good leader to lead and develop our country and people.”—Male, 37, Phnom Penh, Urban*

*“We can express our right to politics, making a real decision to choose a leader. Secondly, it shows the democratic leadership, respecting citizens’ rights, opinion, and decision.”—Male, 34, Kampong Cham, Rural*

*“The reason we have to vote [is] because it represents our citizenship. It is how we take reasonability in deciding the leader of country. It is very essential.”—Male, 23, Kratie, Rural*

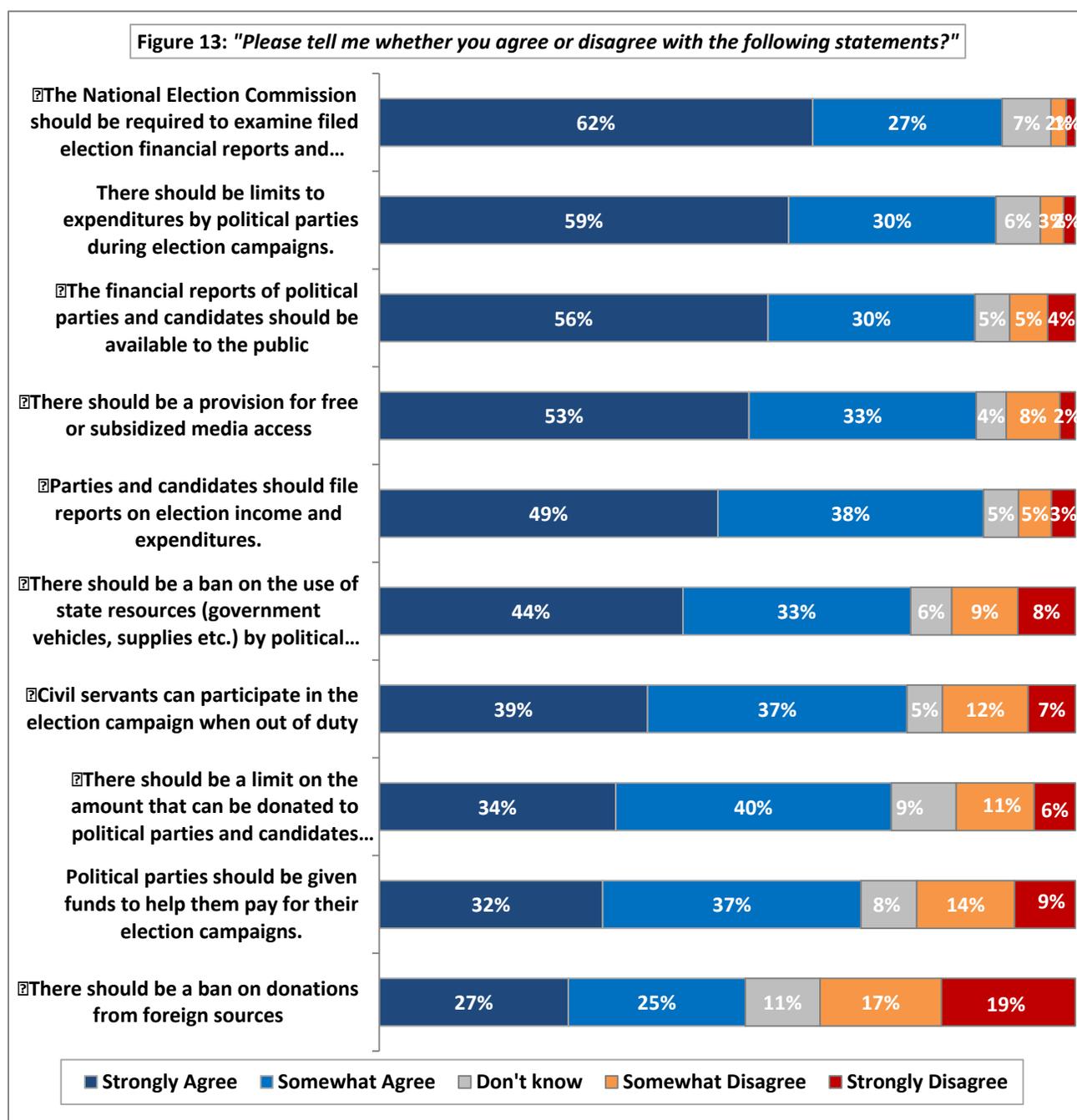
Consistent with aforementioned data, less certainty is expressed regarding whether voters receive enough information about political developments, political parties and candidates to make wise choices when it is time to vote. While 60% strongly agree, 31% only somewhat agree (Figure 12). This finding reiterates that while many citizens report having enough information on certain aspects of the electoral process, there are many who do not feel fully informed to make wise choices. Focus group participants mention the need for more information on candidates and parties for the upcoming elections.

*“I don’t think we have enough information on the candidates.”—Male, 30, Kratie, Rural*

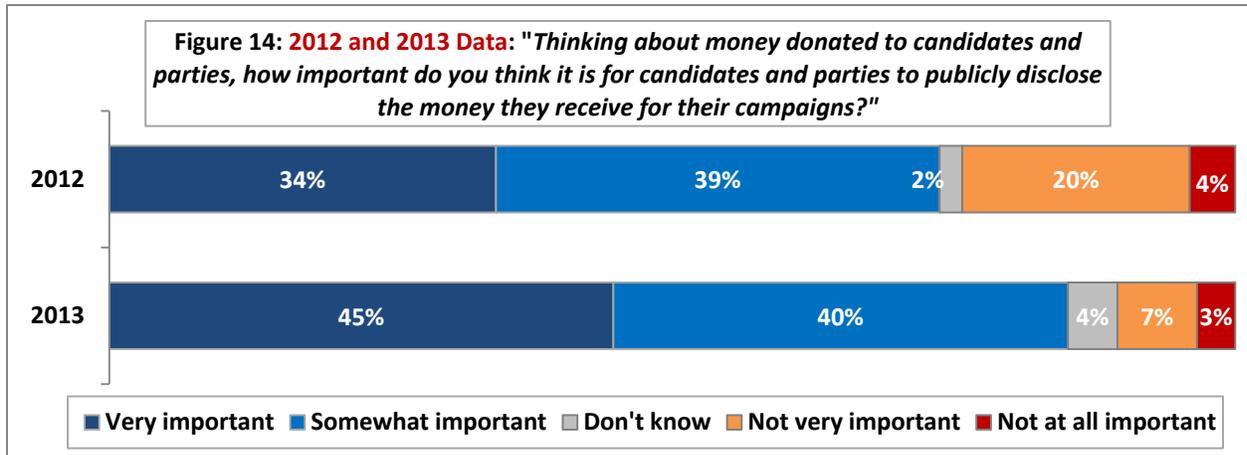


### Support for Political Finance Regulations and Disclosure

Consistent with the data that highlights a lack of transparency of campaign finance as a criticism of the electoral process (seen in Figure 10), Cambodians express support for more disclosure in this area. Asked a series of questions regarding campaign finance, data shows Cambodians are generally supportive of regulation and disclosure of money in election campaigns. Majorities support various regulations with the strongest support expressed for requiring the NEC to examine filed election reports (89%), establishing limits on campaign expenditures (89%), making financial reports publically available (86%) and creating a provision for free or subsidized media access (86%). Less support is shown in terms of giving parties money for campaigns (69%) and banning donations from foreign sources (52%) (Figure 13).



Cambodians also express strong support for public disclosure of campaign contributions, and in higher percentages than in the 2012 IFES survey. Eighty-five percent of Cambodians believe it is very (45%) or somewhat (40%) important for candidates and parties to publically disclose money received for their campaigns. This compares to 2012 data that showed 73% of Cambodians who said it is very (34%) or somewhat (39%) important for candidates and parties to publicly disclose the money they receive for their campaigns (Figure 14). These findings highlight heightened awareness of the importance of disclosure in campaign finance over the past year.



### III. Experiences Voting and Voter Registration

Cambodians report positive experiences with voting in previous elections. They report proper procedures took place and that understanding polling station procedures was easy. Yet survey findings reveal one-third of Cambodians say they or someone they know has had problems. While many Cambodians view the voter list as inclusive and accurate, a significant portion feels otherwise. A majority of Cambodians were aware of the voter registration update period and most Cambodians feel they had some information about this process and a minority of these respondents had a lot of information. Most say information was clear and they received it from the village chief or TV ads. A majority of Cambodians checked their registration status, but young citizens were much less likely to have checked than those 25 and older. Those who did not check say it is because they did not have time.

#### Cambodians Report Positive Experiences Voting in Previous Elections

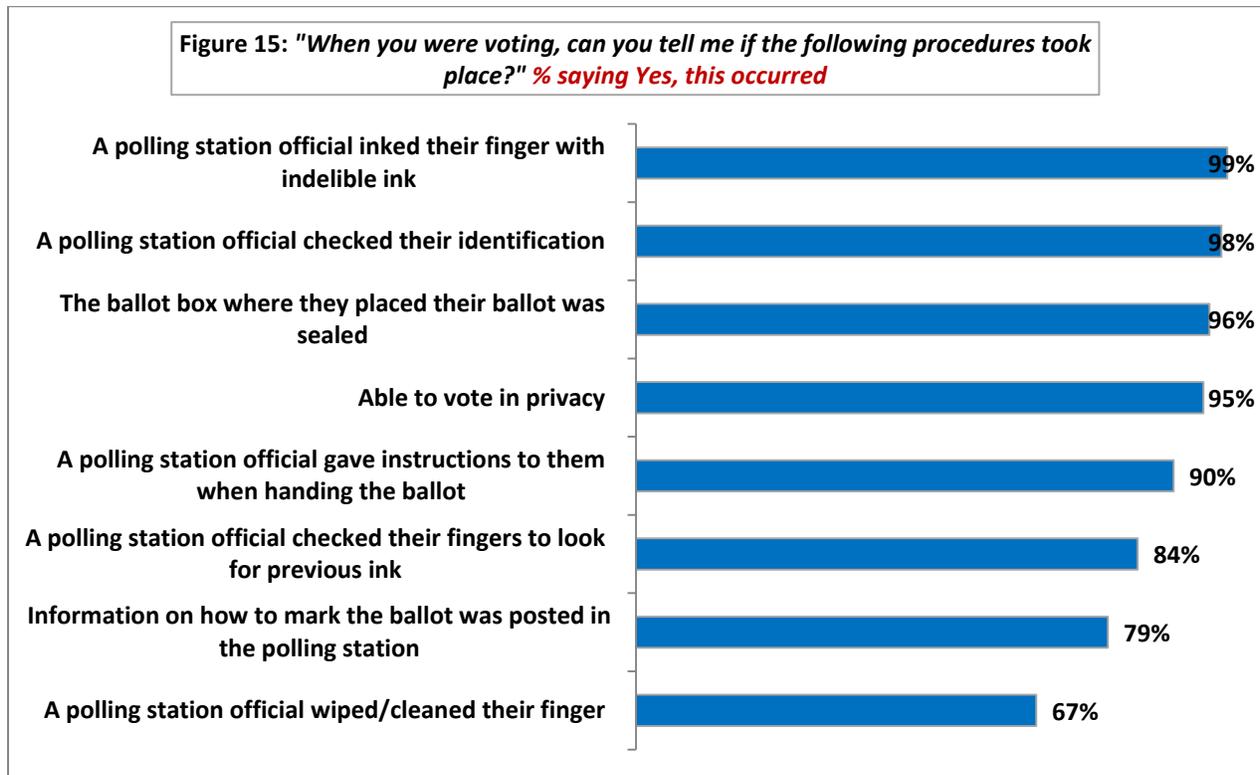
Eighty-four percent of Cambodians say they voted in the 2012 Commune Council Elections. Given the concern about respondents answering positively to a “societal good,” the questionnaire used a list experiment methodology to deduce the actual percentage that may have voted. In this methodology, the sample is split into two parts with respondents in one half of the sample given a list of activities and asked how of many of these activities they took part in over the past year. The second half of the sample is given the same list, but the item of interest (i.e., whether they voted) is also added to this list. Respondents are only asked to tell the interviewer the number of activities they took part in, not which activities. This helps preserve secrecy and allows the respondent to feel secure in responding accurately. The difference in means between the two samples allows researchers to estimate the actual percentage that voted. Using this methodology, the turnout figure is likely closer to 53%. This methodology, however, does not allow for further analysis of those who voted because they are not identified individually in responses. The analysis that follows is based on those who responded that they voted in the original question where respondents are asked directly whether they did so.<sup>1</sup>

Those who say they voted say it was very (89%) or somewhat easy (11%) to locate their polling station. They also report it was very (89%) or somewhat easy (10%) to understand and follow polling station procedures and say the polling officials seemed very (88%) or somewhat knowledgeable (11%) about procedures. Voters also report smooth operation of polling stations on Election Day. Eighty-five percent saw observers present in the polling stations, 93% did not see security personnel in the polling station, 97% did not see large crowds causing disorder, 97% did not view political agents campaigning inside the polling station and 96% did not see poll workers influencing voters’ choice.

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<sup>1</sup> In surveys dealing with electoral issues, participation in political activities that are generally seen as being a “societal good” (e.g. voting or registering to vote) is likely to be over-reported. This is especially the case in surveys with face-to-face interviews, such as this survey in Cambodia. The data on participation in the 2012 elections and the 2012 voter registration process may be overstating actual levels of voter participation and voter registration.

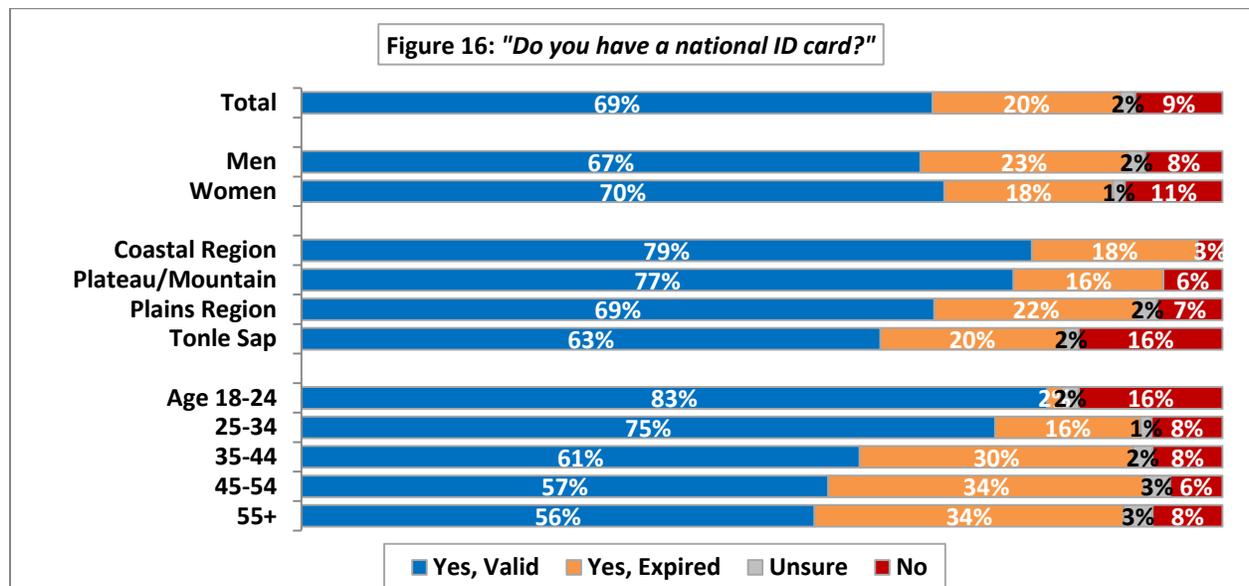
Voters also say various polling procedures took place when they voted: a polling station official inked their finger with indelible ink (99%), a polling station official checked their identification (98%), the ballot box where they placed their ballot was sealed (96%), they were able to vote in privacy (95%) and a polling station official gave instructions to them when handing the ballot (90%). While still a majority, fewer voters report that a polling station official checked their fingers to look for previous ink (84%) information on how to mark the ballot was posted in the polling station (79%) and a polling station official wiped/cleaned their finger after they have deposited their ballot into the ballot box and before the voter dips her/his finger into the jar of indelible ink (67%) (Figure 15). While still a high percentage report these procedures occurred, data indicates there is room to improve the visibility of voter education materials in the polling stations and to improve instructions to polling officials about checking and cleaning fingers for previous ink.



Focus group findings uncover additional criticisms of Election Day procedures. Focus group participants mention problems either they have encountered or have heard others encounter when voting. Problems with the voter list is mentioned by many participants, as is long distances to the polling station, long queues to vote and large numbers of citizens who migrate without the option of out-of-country voting. Distrust of the voting system is also mentioned by a few participants.

*"Some people didn't have their name listed in the voting list. Some people went to live in another area far from their home so they decided not to back home to vote since they thought they would have to spend so much money on travel expenses."—Female, 40, Kratie, Rural*

The national identification card is one of the documents, but not the only one necessary, that can be used as an ID to vote. Expired ID cards can also be used to vote, due to the special decree made last year that extended the validity of expired ID cards to December 2013 for electoral purposes. Most Cambodians say they have either the valid national ID card (69%) or the expired national ID card (20%). Two percent are not sure if their card is expired and 9% say they do not have a national ID card. Of those with the national ID card, 7% say it does not fully reflect their current situation. Slightly more men than women have expired IDs (23% and 18%, respectively) and Cambodians 18-24 are least likely to have the national ID than Cambodians in older age groups (16% do not have the national ID). The Tonle Sap Region has the highest percentage of citizens who do not have the national ID (16%) (Figure 16). Attempting to reach residents of Tonle Sap and young and/or first-time voters with information on obtaining the national ID card would help increase the amount of citizens who have the national ID.



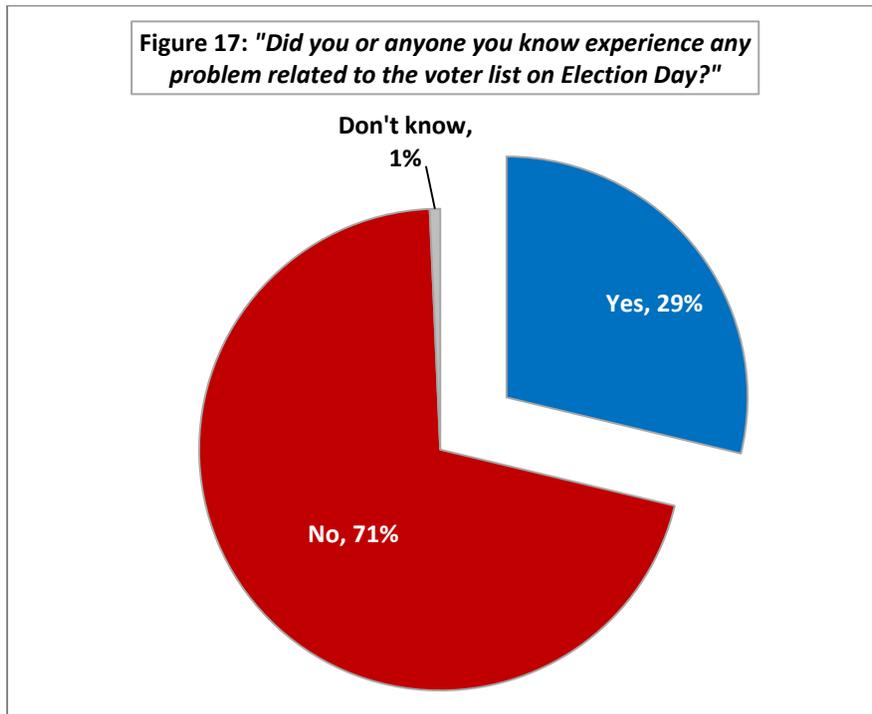
### Nearly One-Third of Cambodians Report Problems with the Voter List

Despite positive reviews of the electoral process and high proportions of voters saying various electoral procedures took place when voting, 29% of respondents say they or somebody they know had problems related to the voter list (Figure 17). The main type of problem identified was a name not being on the list (63%), a name was misspelled on the list (47%) or the wrong date of birth was indicated (27%).

Voter list problems are reflected in focus group findings as well. Many focus group participants report hearing about people having problems with finding their name on the voter list. Further, some of the female participants say if they encountered such a problem when trying to vote, they would just return home rather than try to discuss the problem with a polling official.

*“No, [I did not vote in 2008] because the election location was changed. I used to vote at one particular place, but I tried to find that place and other places, I couldn’t see my name. I tried to find my name at three places and I still couldn’t see my name. Because of this reason, I believe a lot of people couldn’t vote in 2008.”—Female, 46, Preah Sihanouk, Urban*

*“Some have their cards, still they could not vote. Some already registered before the elections, but during Election Day they did not find their name on the list.”—Female, 27, Battambang, Rural*



Additionally, Cambodians are split in their opinions on whether the voter list is inclusive: 49% believe *all* eligible voters are on the list, while 42% believe *most* are on the list and 5% believe many eligible voters are missing (Figure 18).

Asked to what extent they believe the voter list is accurate and people's information is listed correctly (such as their name and where they live), again some skepticism emerges: while 66% believe it is completely accurate, 29% believe it is only somewhat accurate, 2% say it is inaccurate and 3% do not know (Figure 19).

Of those who believe there are inaccuracies in the voter list, most believe there are eligible voters missing from the database (62%). Fifteen percent say people are not removed from old addresses/one person can be listed at multiple addresses, 12% believe the database may include people who do not exist/who no longer live in Cambodia, 12% think names and addresses are incorrect, 7% say their friends have told them/they have heard from other people that the list is inaccurate, 7% believe the voter list contains dead people and 3% say birthdays are incorrect.

Figure 18: "How **complete** do you believe the voter list is—meaning eligible voters are included on the list?"

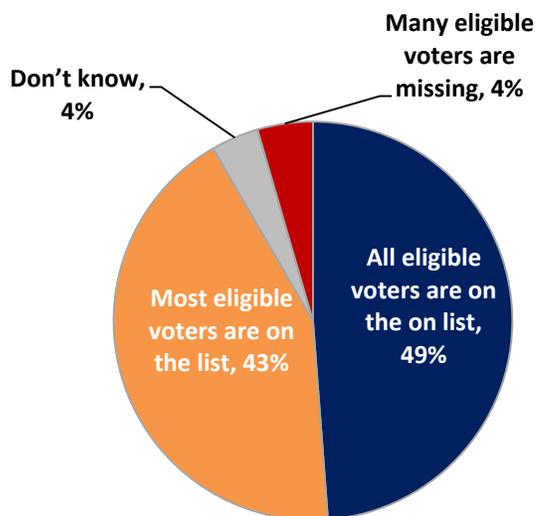
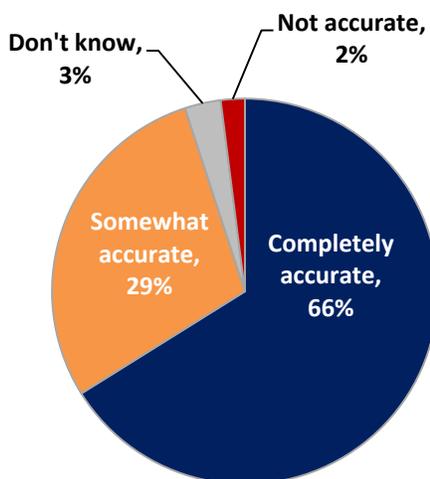


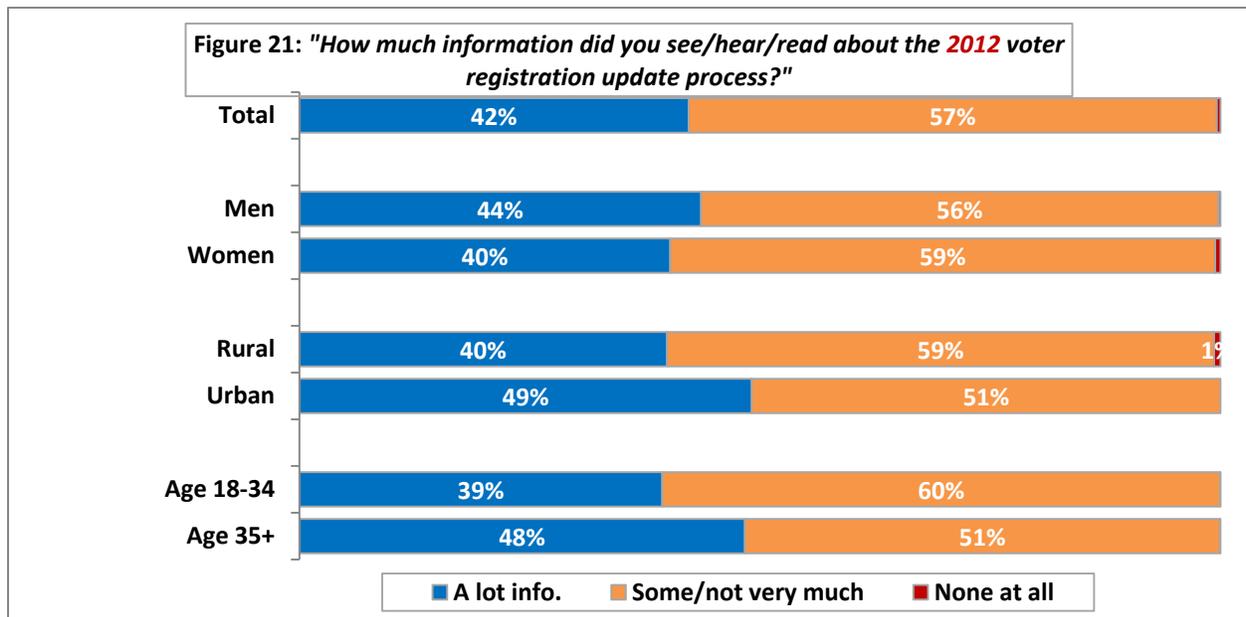
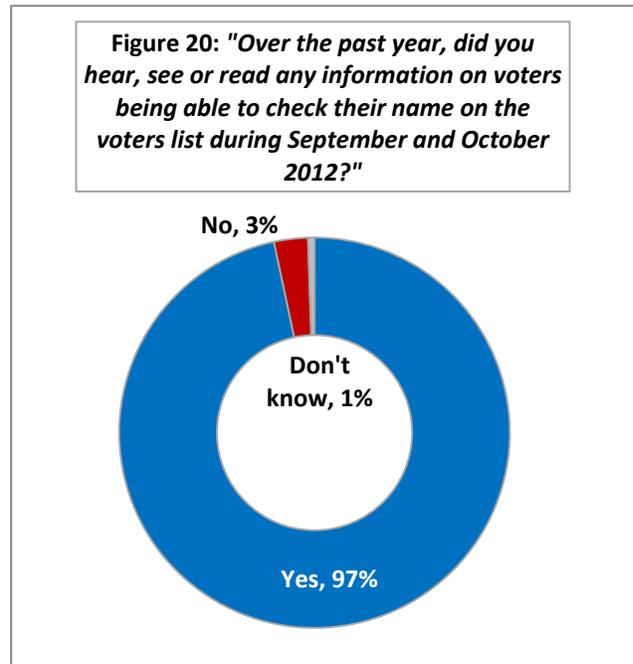
Figure 19: "How **accurate** do you believe the information is on the voter list—meaning people's information is listed correctly including their name and where they live, etc?"



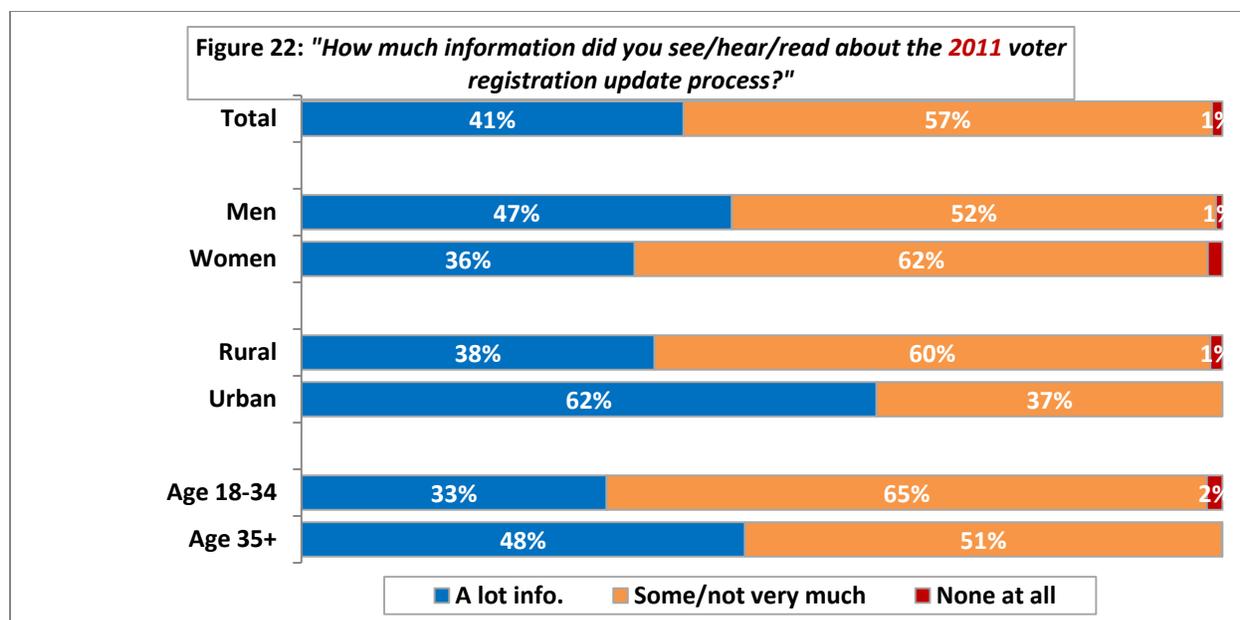
### Majority of Cambodians Were Aware of the Voter Registration Update Period

A majority (97%) of Cambodians say they heard or saw information in the past year about checking their name on the voter list in September and October of 2012 (Figure 20). Yet when asked how much information they had on this process, the data shows that only a minority of these respondents had a lot of information (42%) and over half only had some information (57%).

Women and men report having information in nearly equal percentages, but Cambodians over age 35 saw more information than those 18-24 (48% and 39%, respectively). More urban residents also saw a lot of information compared to rural residents (49% and 40%, respectively) (Figure 21).



The national level figure remains unchanged, yet slightly more women in this survey say they saw, heard or read a lot of information on voter registration during the September/October 2012 update process than during the September/October 2011 update process (36% in 2012; 40% in 2013). Also, younger citizens who are 18-34 saw more information during the 2011 process than 2012, as well (39% and 33%, respectively) (Figure 22).



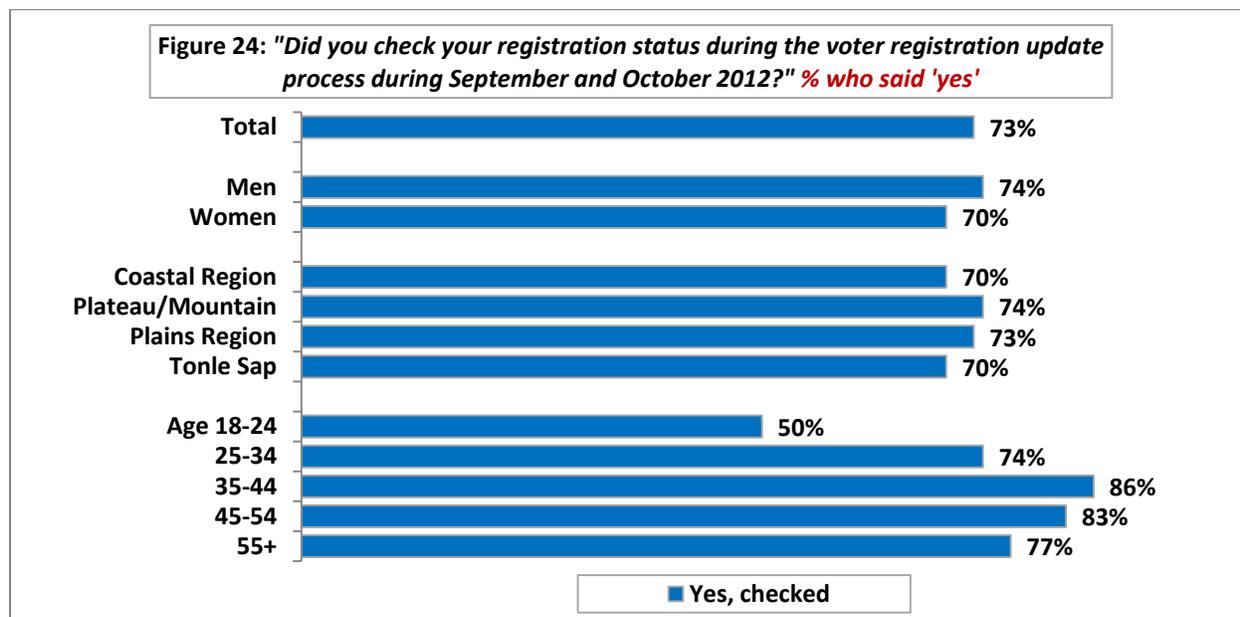
Asked about the clarity of the information on the 2012 voter registration update process, 74% say the information was very clear, while 24% say it was somewhat unclear and 1% say it was unclear. Those who say the information was somewhat clear or unclear say it is because they were not aware of the registration period (36%), they did not know which documents were needed to register (19%), they did not know where to check their information (18%) or they did not know how to check their information (13%).

Various sources provided information on the voter registration update process in Cambodia. Local-level leadership was the most-cited source of information, as most respondents who heard/saw/read about this information listed as their sources village chief (82%) or commune chief (37%). Mass media was also mentioned by a significant percentage, with 49% citing TV ads and 38% citing radio ads. Family and friends (24%), motorbikes with loudspeakers (27%) and street banners (12%) were also mentioned, albeit less frequently (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Sources of Information on 2012 Voter Registration Process	% of cases
Village chief	82%
TV ads	49%
Radio ads	38%
Commune chief	37%
Family/friends	24%
Motorbike/vehicle with loudspeaker	27%
Street banners	12%
Posters/flyers	11%
Cultural troupes	8%
Political parties	6%
Songs about voter registration	4%
Cultural troupes	3%
Public events	2%
Newspaper articles	1%
Government officials/political candidates	1%

### Most Cambodians Checked Registration Status during 2012 Voter Registration Update

Seventy three percent of citizens say they checked their registration status during the voter registration update process in September and October 2012. Men and women checked their status in nearly equal percentages, as did citizens of different regions. However, there is an age gap in checking during the voter registration update period. Young citizens were much less likely to have checked than those 25 and older (50% compared to 74%-86% for older age groups) (Figure 24).



Reasons people report not checking their registration status include not having time (56%); not having ID or supporting documents needed to register (20%); lack of awareness of the registration period (12%); the belief that their name is already on the list (6%); or the registration center being too far away (5%) (Figure 25). Given the main reason people did not check their registration status was due to a lack of time, exploring options for making the process easier, more convenient and/or lengthening the amount of time people can check their status could allow more Cambodians to check their status.

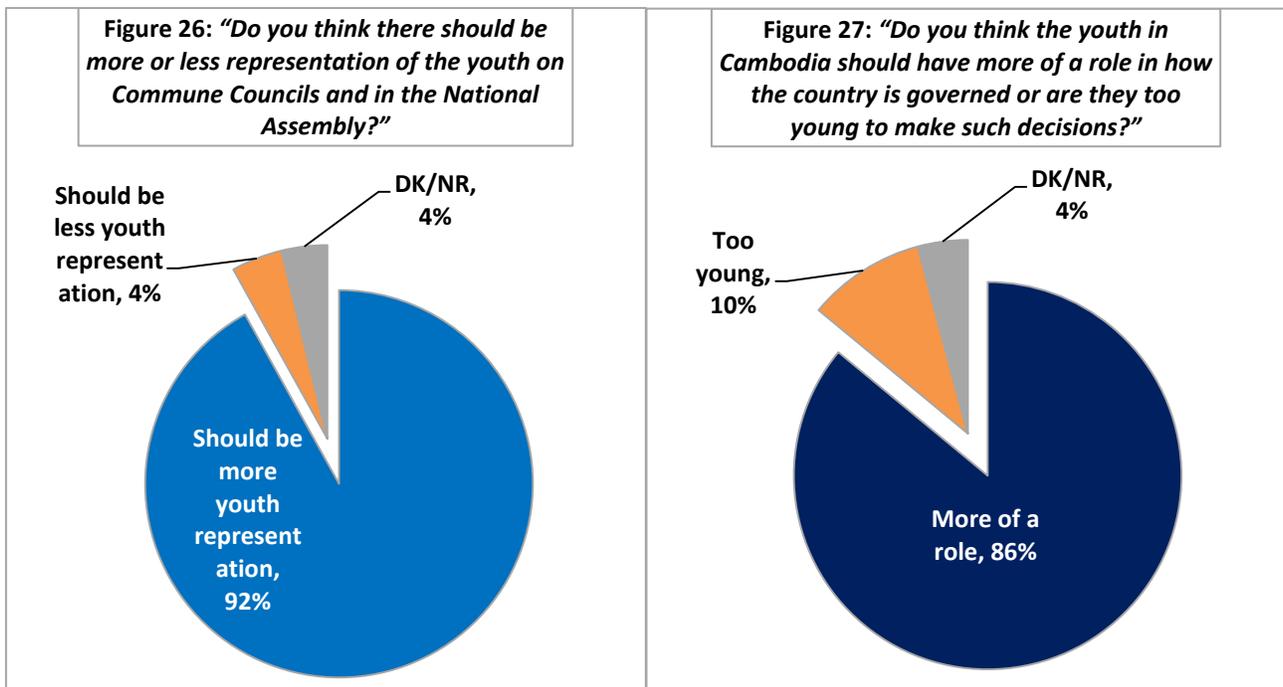
Figure 25: Reasons for not Checking Registration Status	n=482
Did not have time	56%
Do not have ID or supporting documents	20%
Was not aware of registration period	12%
Already know name is on list	6%
Did not register yet	6%
Registration center too far	5%
Not interested in registering	4%
Someone checking for me	2%

## IV. Opinions on Youth and Gender Issues

Cambodians believe younger citizens, those 18-30 years old, should have more of a role in how the country is governed and are highly supportive of increasing the proportion of youth representation in the National Assembly and Commune Councils. Cambodians are also supportive of women in various political roles, such as working in the election commission; running as candidates to national and local office; and participating with political parties. Yet, while there are majorities of respondents who strongly support women in these roles, between one-quarter and one-third of respondents only say they somewhat support women in these roles. Very few Cambodians are aware of the notion of gender quotas, but citizens with higher education levels are more knowledgeable. Despite the low awareness, when explained the purpose of quotas is to reserve a share of seats for women in elected bodies, most Cambodians support introducing gender quotas in upcoming elections.

### Support for Larger Youth Representation in Government

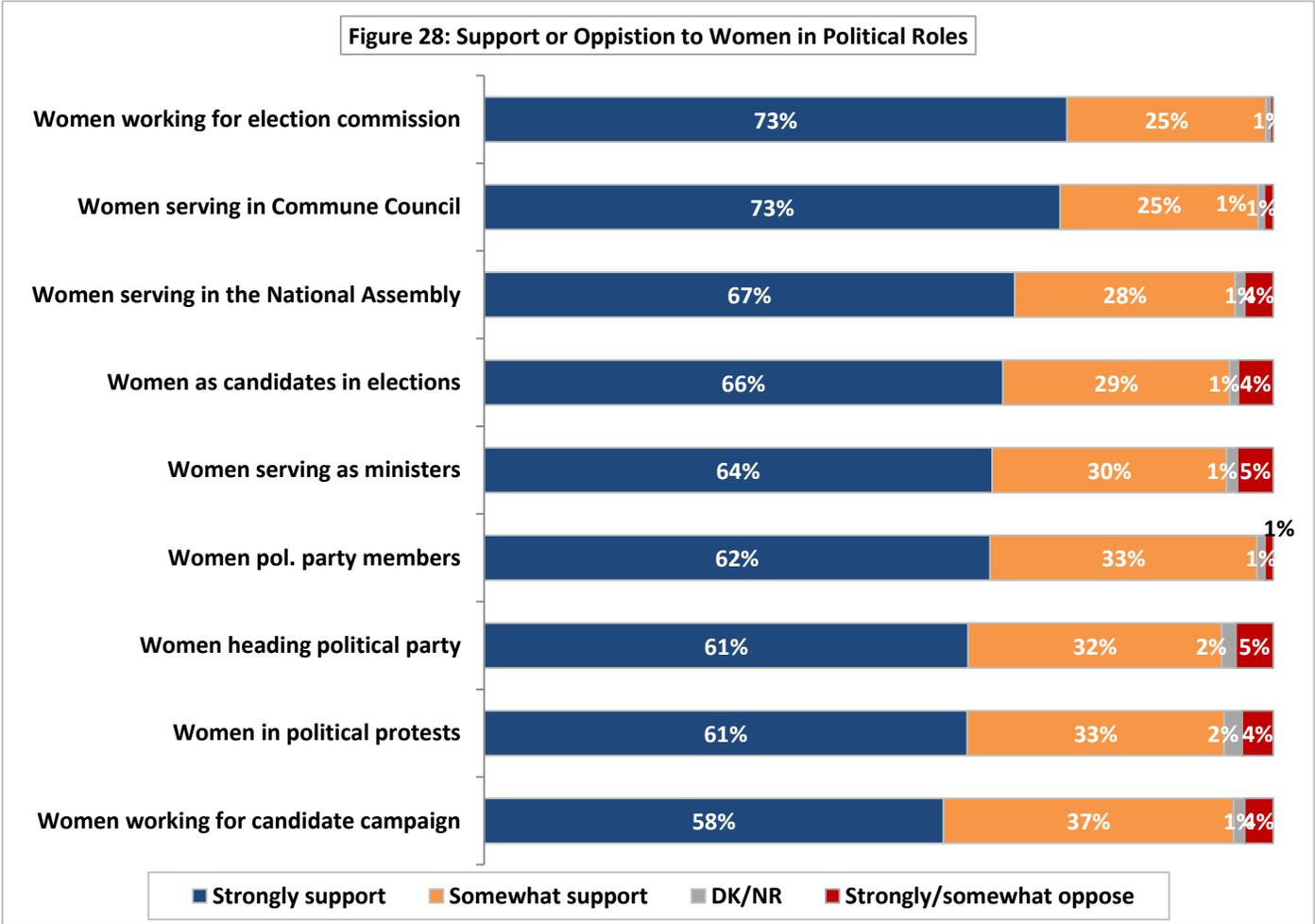
Over eight in 10 Cambodians (86%) believe youth should have more of a role in how the country is governed. Only 10% say they are too young and 5% are unsure (Figure 26). An overwhelming majority (92%) of Cambodians believe there should be more youth representation (Cambodians aged 18-30) on the Commune Councils and the National Assembly. Only 4% believe there should be less youth representation and 4% say they do not know (Figure 27).



### Cambodians Supportive of Women in Political Roles

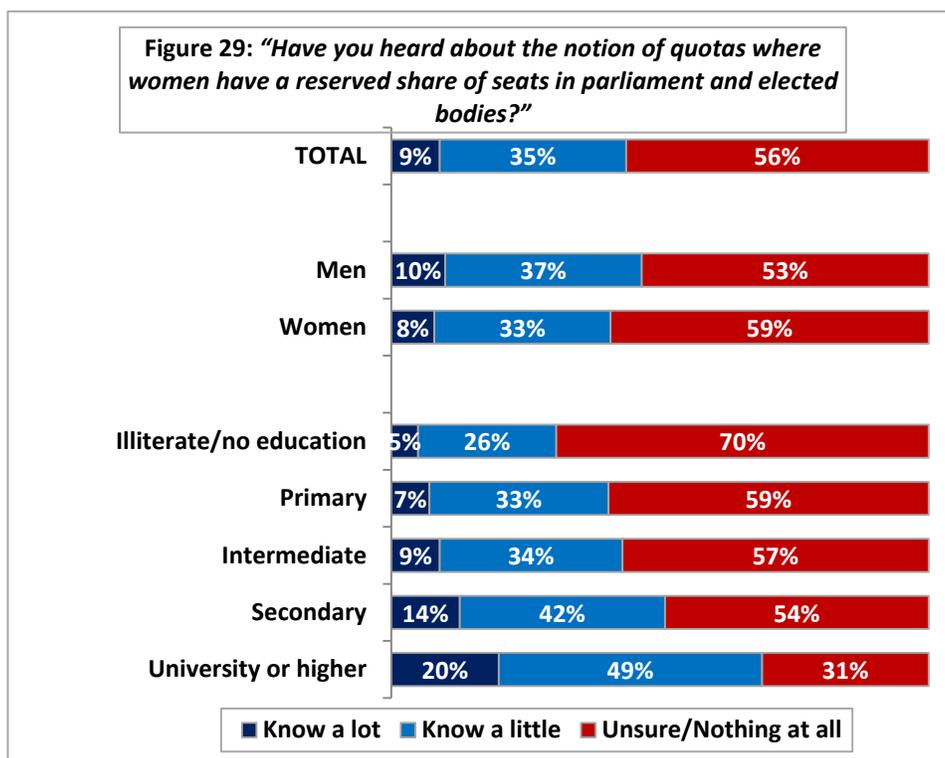
Asked whether they supported women being involved in politics, data shows large majorities of respondents strongly or somewhat support women in a variety of political roles, such as working for the election commission (98%), serving in the Commune Council (98%), serving in the National Assembly (95%), running as candidates in elections (95%), serving as ministers (94%), being political party members (95%), participating in political protests (94%) and working for a candidate campaign (95%) (Figure 28). While there are majorities of respondents who strongly support women in these roles, between one-quarter and one-third of respondents only say they only somewhat support women in these roles.

Figure 28: Support or Opposition to Women in Political Roles

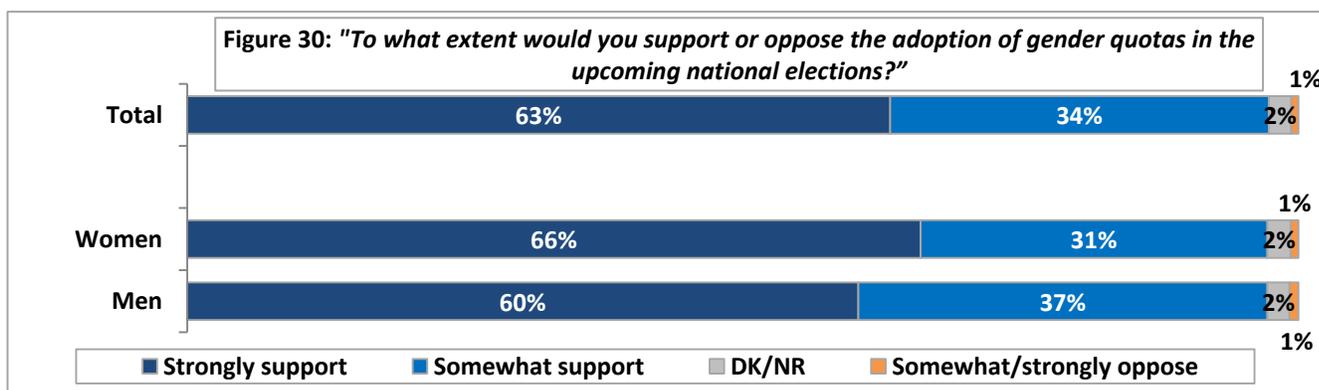


### Limited Knowledge of Gender Quotas

A majority of Cambodians have not heard of gender quotas (56%). Only 9% say they have heard a lot, while a majority has heard a little (35%) or nothing at all (38%) (Figure 29). More men than women have heard at least a little about gender quotas (47% and 41%, respectively) and knowledge of gender quotas increases with educational attainment (Figure 29).



Although a significant number of Cambodians are unaware of gender quotas, a majority either strongly (63%) or somewhat (34%) support the adoption of a gender quota system for upcoming national elections. Majorities of both men and women support such a system, but women express higher levels of "strong support" than men (66% and 60%, respectively) (Figure 30).



Those who support gender quotas cite the belief that women should have the same rights as men/no difference between men and women (75%), women are just as qualified/educated as men (62%), women should have a role in political life (22%) and women are better at representing women’s demands (16%) (Figure 31). The sample of those who oppose gender quotas is too small a figure to report their opinions on why they oppose them.

<b>Figure 31: “Why do you support gender quotas?” (n=1,703)</b>	
Women should have the same rights as men/no difference between men and women	75%
Women are just as qualified/educated as men	62%
Women should have a role in political life	22%
Women are better at representing women’s demands	16%







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