HOW HAS THE PROGRAMME LOY9 AFFECTED YOUTH CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN CAMBODIA?
Media and audience research: a key part of BBC Media Action’s work

BBC Media Action, the BBC’s international development charity, uses the power of media and communication to support people to shape their own lives. Working with broadcasters, governments, other organisations and donors, we provide information and stimulate positive change in the areas of governance, health, resilience and humanitarian response.

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Methodology

The reports summarised in this briefing were written by BBC Media Action, Research and Learning Group. The evidence contained in these reports was collected through a nationally representative quantitative survey of 2,597 15 to 24 year olds across every province in Cambodia during August 2013 (the fieldwork took place after the National Assembly election and before the announcement of the election results).

To read more about these findings and the technical aspects of this research please visit www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction.

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Page 3 image: Filming series three of Loy9, credit: BBC Media Action

Page 6 image: Drama scene from Loy9 series three, credit: BBC Media Action

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Introduction

The Multimedia Initiative for Youth Civic Education in Cambodia is a governance project funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of its Strengthening Democracy Programme. Since September 2010, UNDP has funded BBC Media Action in Cambodia to implement this multimedia intervention of TV, radio, online and mobile content plus live events, renamed “Loy9” for the public, in order to reach young people aged 15–24 with key information about democratic institutions and civic participation.

In 2012, UNDP also submitted to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) a concept note for the extension of the Multimedia Initiative until the end of 2013. As a result, SIDA have also contributed significantly to further funding for Loy9 in 2013.

The radio phone-in show has been broadcast weekly for the last two years, and two series of a combined TV drama and magazine show were broadcast between January 2012 and June 2013 for a total of 32 episodes. The TV magazine show consists of factual and entertainment segments which allow the audience to explore, in greater depth, the governance-related themes raised in the drama. When on air, the TV show is broadcast every week and repeated at least once. Both the TV and radio shows are broadcast across most of the country on privately owned partner TV channels and radio stations. Loy9 also has its own website and social network pages, and has organised several key events including a blood-giving campaign in 2013 to get 999 people to donate blood in nine different locations in Cambodia in just nine days. This multimedia project aims to reach young people in Cambodia in order to improve civic knowledge and encourage youth to engage in civic participation.

Key programme objectives include improving knowledge and awareness of opportunities for civic participation, gender equality and the skills required for the empowerment of youth. The analysis conducted for this research briefing focused on examining the impact of Loy9 by looking at key differences in outcomes (on civic knowledge,
participation and attitudes) between young people who were exposed to Loy9 and young people not exposed to Loy9. This analysis did not control for socio-demographic differences (gender, age and education) between the exposed and unexposed groups.

Loy9 is reaching over two million young people in Cambodia

Loy9 has successfully reached over two million youth in Cambodia, equal to almost two-thirds of the youth population (63%). Loy9 TV reaches the most people, twice that of Loy9 radio: over half (53%) of youth in Cambodia report they have seen Loy9 TV, while one in five (19%) have listened to Loy9 radio. There is a greater overlap between these two audiences than might be expected: almost a quarter (23%) of the overall Loy9 audience report watching Loy9 TV and listening to Loy9 radio, suggesting that at least some segments of the Loy9 audience find the two programmes useful or interesting in different ways.

Loy9 has a loyal audience who regularly watch and listen. The majority of both the Loy9 TV and the Loy9 radio audiences watch or listen regularly to the programmes (defined as at least twice a month) when they are on air (63% and 53% respectively).

There is a significant difference between being exposed to Loy9 across multiple types of media and the level of audience recall of topics in the programmes: audiences remember more topics covered by Loy9 if they have watched and listened to Loy9. More than half (58%) of the Loy9 audience who watch Loy9 TV as well as listen to Loy9 radio are able to recall a topic, compared with half (52%) of those who only watch Loy9 TV and just a quarter (25%) of those who only listen to Loy9 radio.

**Loy9: Reaching a diverse population of young people**

Loy9 is reaching a diverse range of young people in Cambodia. The overall Loy9 audience closely resembles the overall youth population in Cambodia in terms of gender, age, location, household income and education. There are some differences between the exposure of certain demographic groups to Loy9: for example, youth in the younger age group (15–19s), and youth in urban areas are more likely to have been exposed to Loy9.

The Loy9 TV and Loy9 radio audiences closely match the profile of youth with access to these media. Loy9 is therefore reaching a range of youth across traditional media, and reach is potentially restricted largely by media access rather than any issues relating to the appeal of Loy9 among different groups. This illustrates the broad appeal of the programme even among those groups that might be expected to have less interest in programmes providing information about civic participation.

**Audience reach**

A respondent was considered to have been reached by Loy9 (or “exposed” to Loy9) if they reported having watched, listened to or used a Loy9 output at least once (this included Loy9 TV, radio, online, or the voter education spots, but excluding promotional spots). Estimated audience size was calculated using the number of 10–19-year-olds in Cambodia’s 2008 census as a base. At the time of the survey in 2013 this group made up the population of interest, 15–24 year olds.
Impact of Loy9

Loy9 audiences show greater levels of civic knowledge

Loy9 audience members are overwhelmingly positive about the role Loy9 plays in increasing their knowledge and understanding of civic engagement. Amongst the Loy9 audience who remember hearing about voting in elections from the programme, 98% felt they had improved their understanding of this topic. This was also the case amongst those who remembered hearing about teamwork from the programme. Ninety-seven per cent felt that Loy9 had improved their understanding of this topic.

In the general youth population, there are low levels of awareness and understanding of key terms important for civic knowledge and understanding: National Assembly, Commune Council and democracy. However, youth exposed to Loy9 report greater awareness and knowledge of these key terms than those who have not been exposed to Loy9. For example, over two-fifths (45%) of those exposed to Loy9 report that they know what the Commune Council is, compared with less than one-third (29%) of those not exposed.
Loy9 gives audiences more confidence to express their opinions

Loy9 audiences feel the programme helps them to express their opinions and discuss the programme with those around them. Nearly the whole Loy9 audience agree (56% strongly agree, 42% agree) that Loy9 encourages youth to be brave. The majority of the Loy9 audience also feel that Loy9 encourages youth to express their own opinions (96%). In a context where voicing and expressing opinions has previously been uncommon, Loy9 evokes discussion, a key determinant of efficacy and action. A third (34%) of the Loy9 audience report discussing the programme with a variety of people, particularly friends and siblings. Reflecting this confidence in expressing their opinions, Loy9 audience members are also better able to report their key concerns at both national and local levels. They are much less likely than other youth to say they ‘don’t know’ what the key national issues are (12% compared with 21%).

However, it is clear there are still areas of expression and participation where young people do not feel as open or confident, in particular where the attitudes and actions of older people are perceived to constrain young people’s capacity to voice their opinion. This is particularly true for certain groups (such as those with lower educational attainment), and some young people still feel they do not have the courage to speak out when older people in their family expect them to follow their views. This feeling is more common among those not exposed to Loy9: 56% of those exposed to Loy9 disagree that they do not have the courage to speak out when older people in their family expect them to follow their views, compared with 43% of youth unexposed to the programme.

Loy9 has an impact on awareness and involvement in civic participation

Young people in Cambodia have a high awareness of opportunities for civic participation. The majority (89%) have heard of at least one opportunity for participation such as contributing to the commune development plan, community service or participating in religious associations. Youth exposed to Loy9, however, demonstrate greater awareness of opportunities for community participation than those who are unexposed. Exposed youth, for instance, are much less likely than unexposed youth not to have heard of any opportunity (6% compared with 18%). Loy9 audiences are more likely to act on this awareness with levels of participation higher among youth exposed to Loy9 compared with those who have not been exposed. For example, Loy9 audiences are more likely to be doing community service through school (36% exposed compared with 23% unexposed), attending leadership training (19% compared with 13%) and participating in political organisations (27% compared with 19%).

Further highlighting the link between Loy9 exposure and civic participation, electoral participation is higher among those exposed to Loy9 compared with those unexposed. A higher proportion of exposed youth compared with unexposed youth, for instance, has voted in national elections (68% compared with 63%). Similarly, youth exposed to Loy9 are more likely than those not exposed to have voted in the Commune Council elections (52% compared with 44%). They are also more likely to say that they would vote in future elections.
Implications

Loy9 is successfully reaching over two million youth in Cambodia and evoking discussion among audiences. Audiences exposed to Loy9 show higher levels of understanding of key civic terms and report higher civic and electoral participation, showing a continued role for Loy9 in supporting knowledge, supporting young people to express themselves, and enabling confidence among young people to act as well as to participate in their communities.

Despite these findings, it is clear that some young people either lack the knowledge or the confidence to be able to say what they think. Loy9 therefore should continue to play a role in enabling young people to feel confident to express their opinions. Furthermore, although awareness among youth in Cambodia of opportunities for participation, particularly formal opportunities, is good, this does not consistently translate into participation in these opportunities. There are still key issues to address to ensure more young people who can vote, do vote. Young people reported not having registered to vote in time, not having the relevant documentation or feeling they did not have time to vote, as reasons for not voting. These key issues still need to be addressed to encourage young people who can, to vote.

This research shows evidence of the need for Loy9 to continue to address knowledge gaps and enable confidence for greater civic awareness and engagement of youth. As such, future programming could seek to address themes such as democracy and decision-making, rights of citizens, the role of the National Assembly and Commune Councils, the importance of participation and equality. This would enable greater knowledge and understanding around civic participation, give confidence to act and potentially translate young people’s awareness of participation opportunities into greater civic participation both at a community level and through formal electoral participation.