

Understanding how young Cambodians (15-30 year olds) use media and information

Research Briefing¹

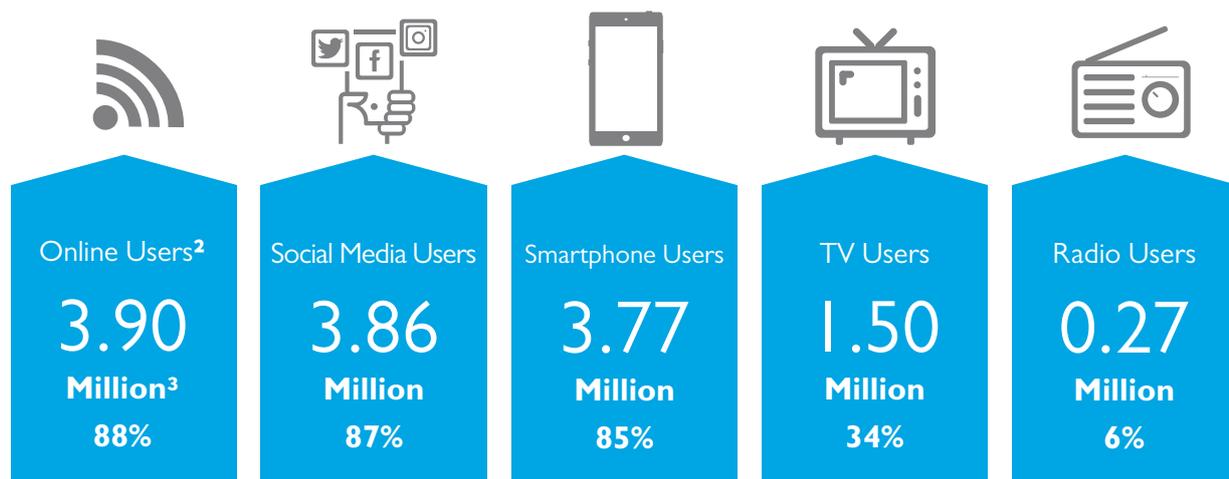
May 2021

Young Cambodians' Media Consumption

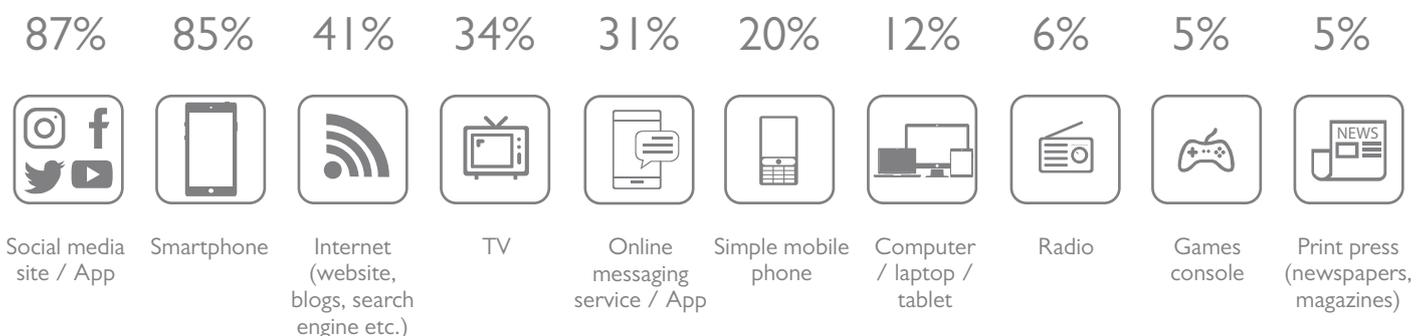
Access to and use of digital media continues to grow and attract young people in Cambodia:

- Social media is the most popular form of media, consumed by 87% of 15-30 year old Cambodians. Nevertheless, traditional mass media (television and radio) remain important, particularly for more vulnerable groups. For example, TV usage is higher amongst women, those from rural locations, and those from lower socio-economic groups.
- Whilst the vast majority of young Cambodians now go online in some form (using websites, social media or online messaging services) and use smartphones, there is still some disparity between demographics – usage is higher amongst men, those from urban areas and higher socio-economic groups.

Media usage of 15-30 year olds in Cambodia



Media and device usage

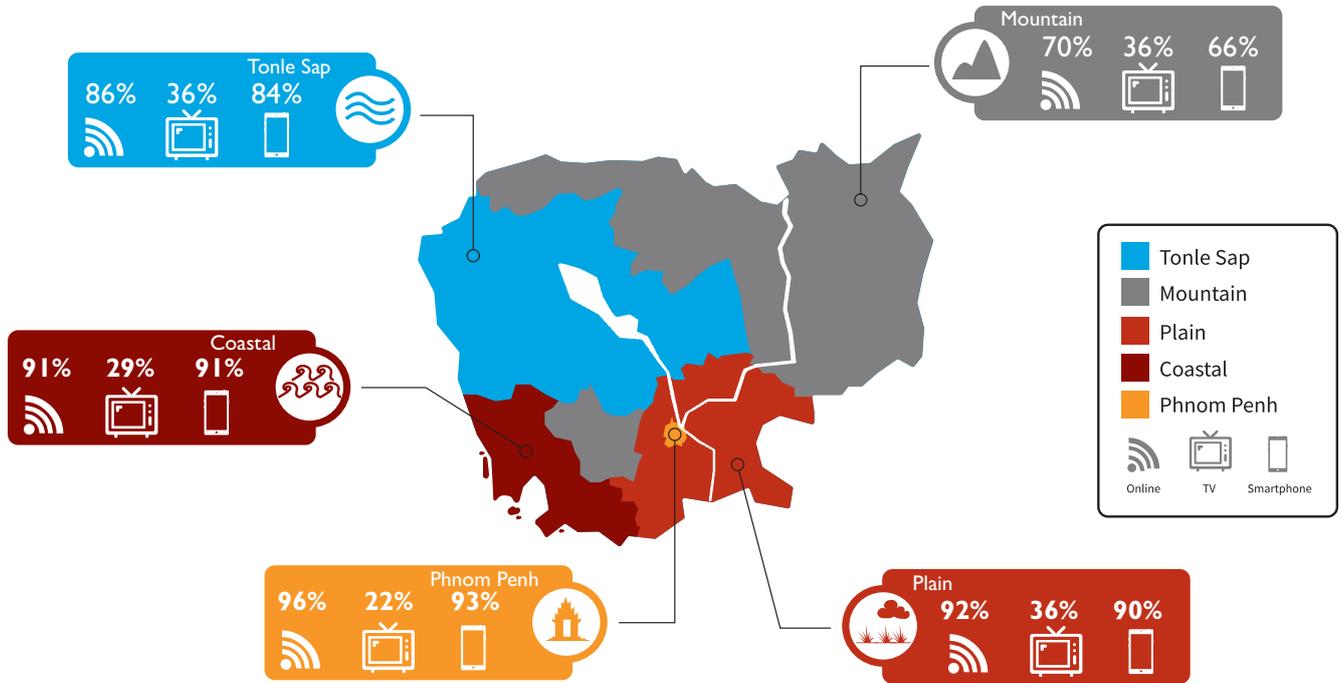
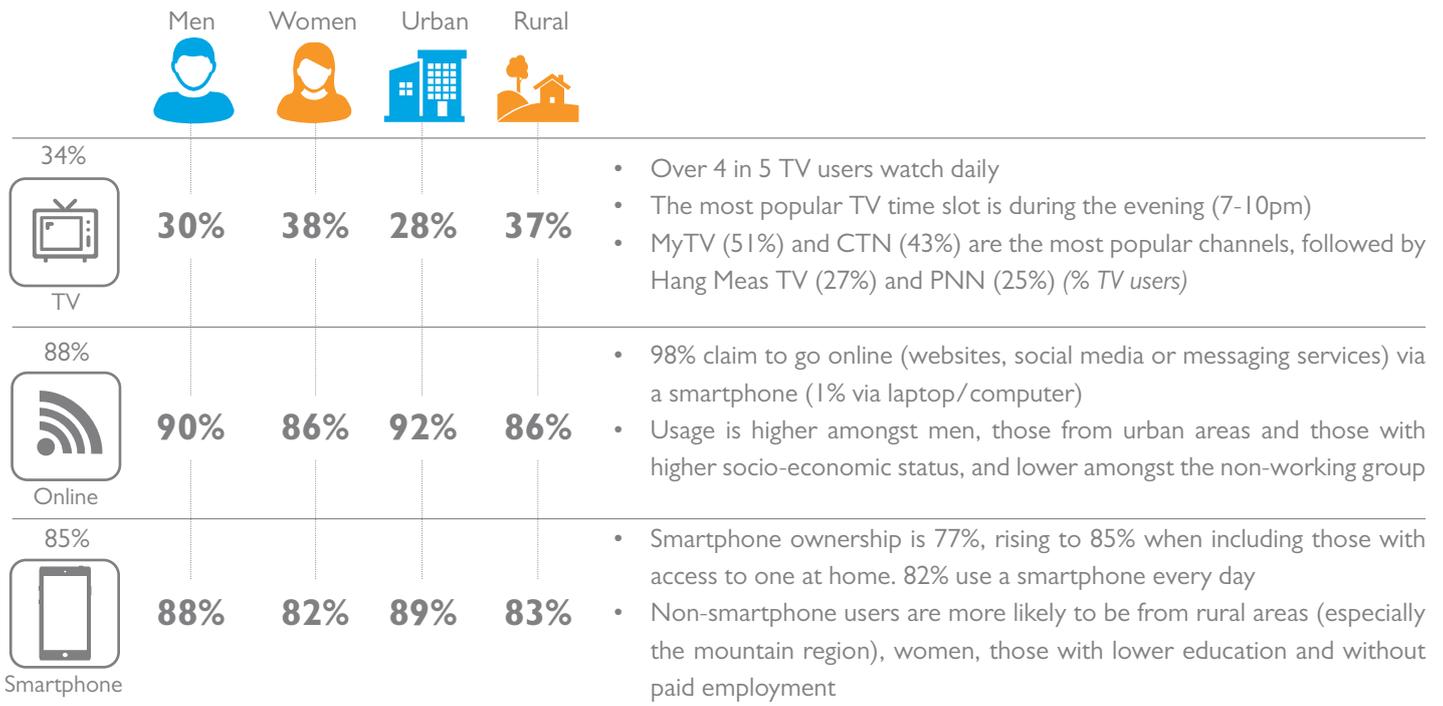


¹ These insights are excerpts from a media and information study conducted in December 2020, consisting of a nationally representative survey with 1,510 15-30 year old women and men in Cambodia, qualitative in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) semiotics, with follow up online community research. To ensure representation survey data was weighted by age, gender and location using the 2014 population data of National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) / Ministry of Interior (MoI).

² Online users defined as those using websites, social media sites/apps or online messaging services/apps.

³ Data projected to the national population of 15-30 year olds using the same 2014 population data.

Media and device usage in detail



Multiple device usage: Just over a quarter (26%) of young people report using multiple devices at the same time.

This is higher amongst women than men, and those who watch TV.



Place and time spent online: Majority of young internet users (98%) go online at home, followed by at work (15%) – mainly 25-30s and those working. Only 8% report going online at school (15-17s, students) or at a coffee shop / restaurant.

59% spend at least 1 hour online per day during the week, 65% at the weekend.



Average time spent online:

- Weekday: 151 minutes
- Weekend: 173 minutes

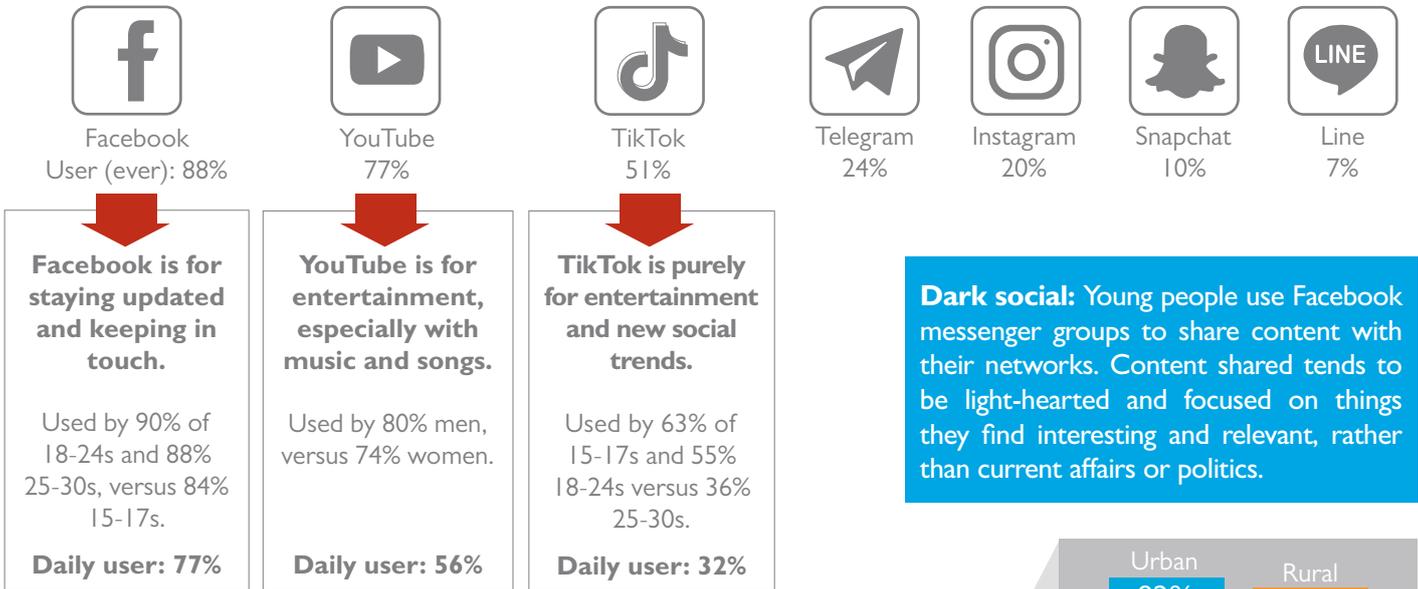
Content/topic preference across all media:



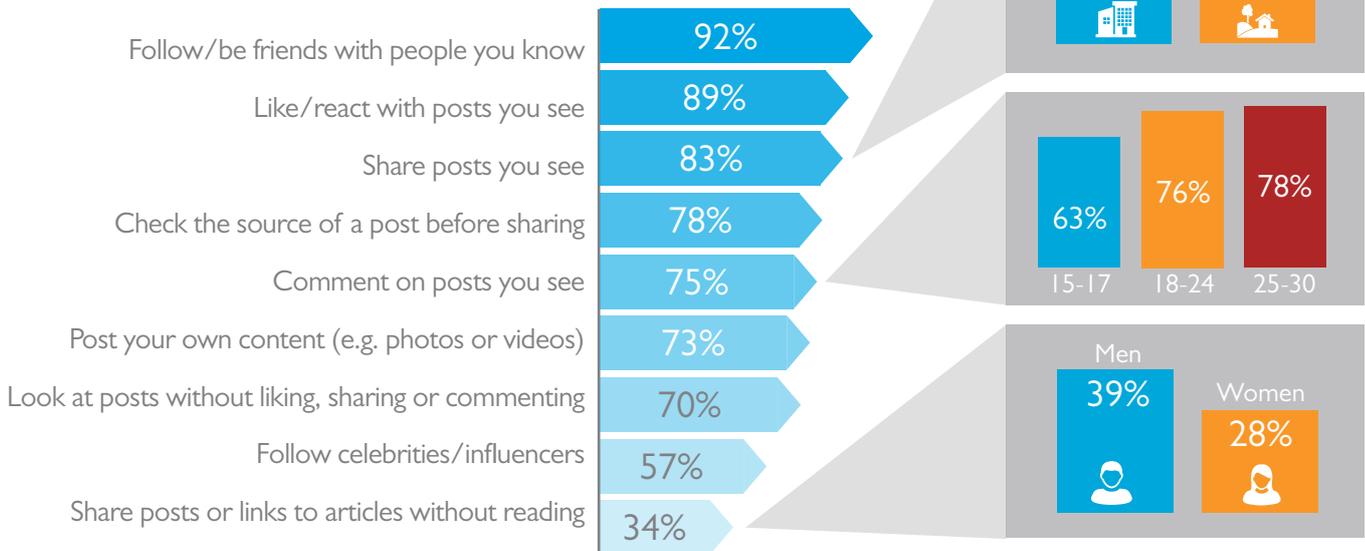
Social media consumption

Social media is the most popular media platform for young women and men in Cambodia: 87% report using social media sites or apps. Facebook / Facebook messenger, YouTube and TikTok are the most popular.

- Over 4 in 5 social media users (81%) use social media daily (66% several times a day).
- Different social media platforms fulfil different purposes for different people.



How young Cambodians are using social media



Nearly all users follow people they know on social media. Young Cambodians also report interest in following successful and relatable influencers (such as life advisor DJ Nana Tips, educator and business advisor Mengly J Quach and a new rising influencer Heng Visal) for inspiration and motivation.

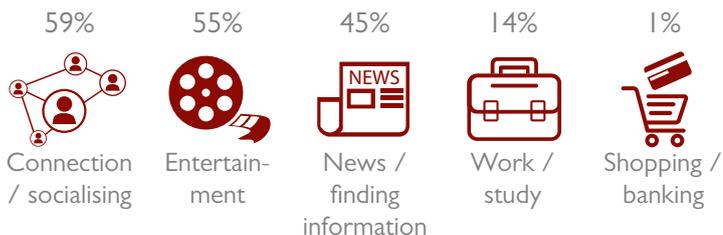
Nearly all social media users claim to like/react to content but slightly fewer engage more deeply through sharing, commenting or posting their own content. Older groups are more likely to post their own content: 63% of 15-17 year olds report posting content on social media, rising to 76% of 18-24s and 78% of 25-30s. Amongst older groups (25-30 year olds) posting content is also more likely to be done by men: 86% report posting their own content compared to 70% women in the same age band.

Young Cambodians are happier to share engaging and light-hearted content on social media (such as fun moments, family trips and gatherings). They are more hesitant to use it as a place to discuss more serious issues – like politics, drugs, or anything deemed immoral.

78% report checking the source of a post before sharing it (those from rural areas, younger groups and who are less educated are less likely to). 34% also report sharing posts or links to content without reading it first (this is more prevalent amongst younger groups, as well as men).

Main purpose of using the internet and social media

Grouped categories:



- Young Cambodians report going online for connecting and socialising with others, for accessing news and keeping up to date with current issues, and for entertainment.
- Interest in news content is higher for older demographics: 27% of 15-17s claim to access news, increasing to 42% for 18-24s and 52% for 25-30s
- Young people like to engage with content that is relatable, emotional, motivational, funny and useful but most avoid more sensitive topics – like politics, drugs and immoral content.

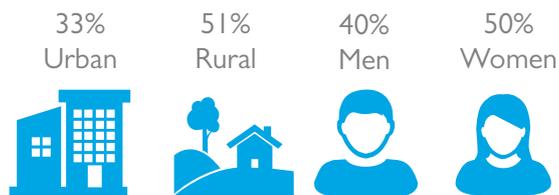
Barriers to going online

A lack of time, access and skills can prevent young people going online when they would like to.

- **Internet connectivity:** Nearly half (49%) of those aged 15-30 claim not to have good access to the internet, over a third (35%) say they do not have money for internet data, and 14% say they lack sufficient data.
- **Socio-economic status and social norms:** Young women from poor families report being busy with household and childcare work as well as having a lack of access to smartphones and internet, as well as lower or no digital skills. Women who do have internet access also report consuming social media content for their children’s interests, rather than their own.

Digital skills tend to be higher among men, those in urban areas and those with higher access to technology, whilst rural Cambodians, and those with lower levels of education are less likely to be able to perform certain basic tasks.

Whilst the majority of young people say they can conduct audio/video calls over the internet, or use messaging apps, **nearly half (45%) of young people say they are not able to create a social media profile and this is higher for some groups:**



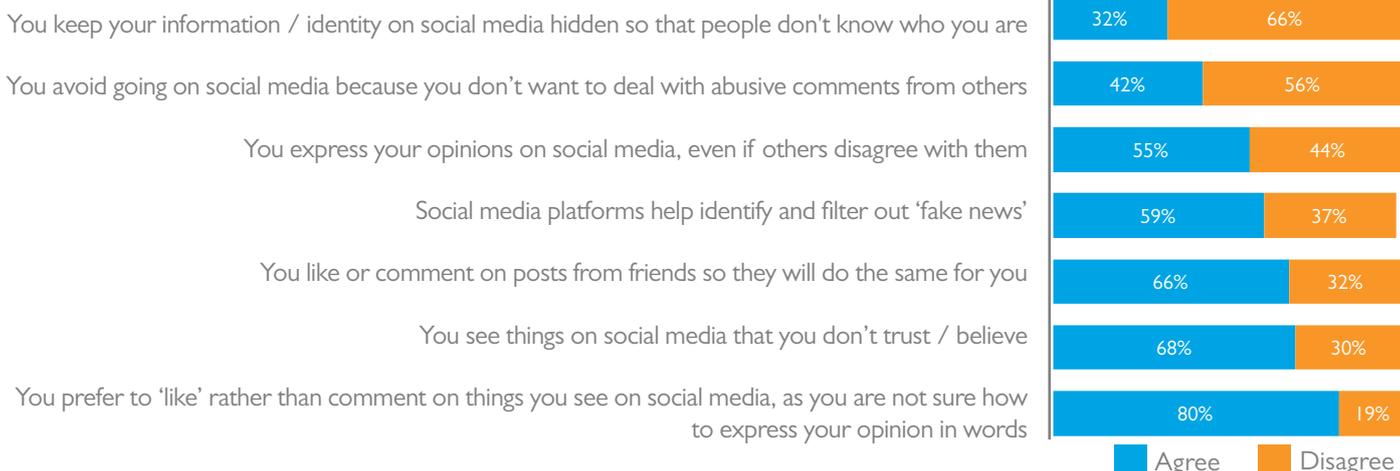
Engagement on social media⁴

More than half (55%) agree they express their opinions on social media, even if others disagree, although this is lower amongst those aged 15-17 (49%) than slightly older groups (57% for 18-24s, 56% for 25-30s).

Qualitative research found that young people can feel hesitant expressing their opinion or doing certain actions online – such as commenting or sharing – due to perceived judgement from others or feeling fearful of criticism.

However 4 in 10 say they avoid going on social media as they do not want to deal with abusive comments from others and 70% prefer to ‘like’ rather than comment on content as they are not sure how to express their opinions.

People identifying as LGBTQ or those with a disability say they like to share content related to their situation to motivate others, however they also mention taking care with what they post, for fear of negative feedback.



⁴ The chart does not include any neutral, don't know or refuse to answer responses. The question was asked to all respondents claiming to use at least one social media platform.

Priorities of young Cambodians

BBC Media Action surveys conducted in 2018, 2019 and 2020 have shown that education and health are the key priorities for Cambodians.

This study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that health, education and the support of parents are most valued by young Cambodians.

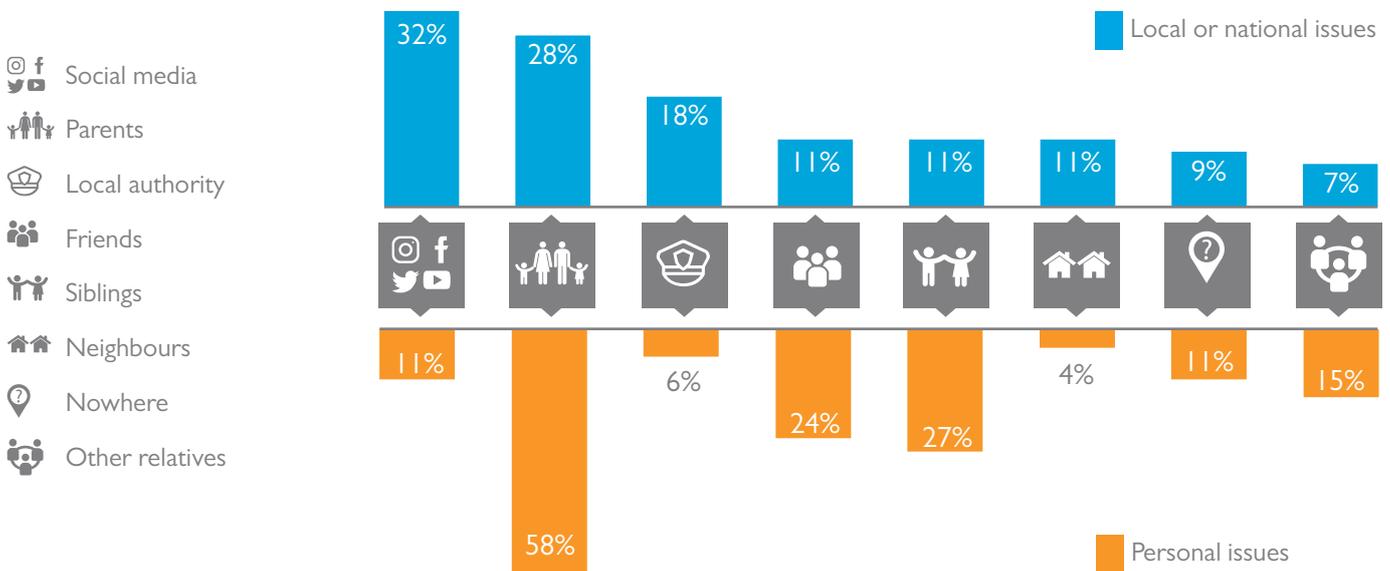
National and local issues: The impact of COVID-19 on health (50%) is raised as the biggest issue affecting

young people nationally, closely followed by the impact of COVID-19 on employment and income (48%). Locally, crime and security is seen as the biggest issue facing young people although the same proportion reported being unsure about local issues.

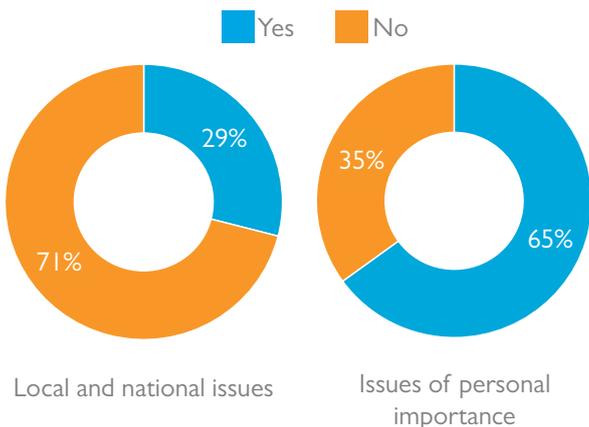
Challenges: The biggest challenge raised is finding a job – although this is less of a concern for younger groups (11% for 15-17s, rising to 35% for 25-30s), followed by having enough money to spend on things they need.

Information sources on local and national / personal issues

► Where or who do you usually go to find information about local and national / personal issues that matter to young Cambodians?



Discussion with others



Young Cambodians are more likely to discuss issues of personal importance than local / national issues, where a lack of time, knowledge and confidence are the main barriers to discussion.

 Social media is the main source of information about local and national issues, reported by 32% of young Cambodians, followed by parents (28%) and local authority (18%).

 However, for personal issues young people turn to those they know: 58% go to parents for information, followed by siblings (27%) and friends (24%).

 Parents and siblings are also most likely to be considered as role models to help with decision making (80% and 31%, respectively), and are most trusted sources for information.

Discussion of issues

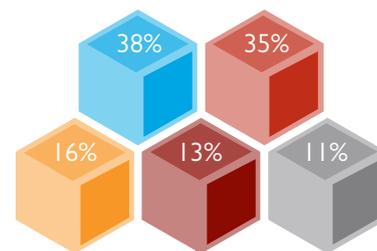
Younger groups are less likely to discuss either their personal issues (62% 15-17s, 65% 18-24s and 67% 25-30s) or issues of local or national importance (21% 15-17s, 30% 18-24s, 33% 25-30s).

Non-working groups and those with lower education are also less likely to discuss either personal or local/national issues with others.

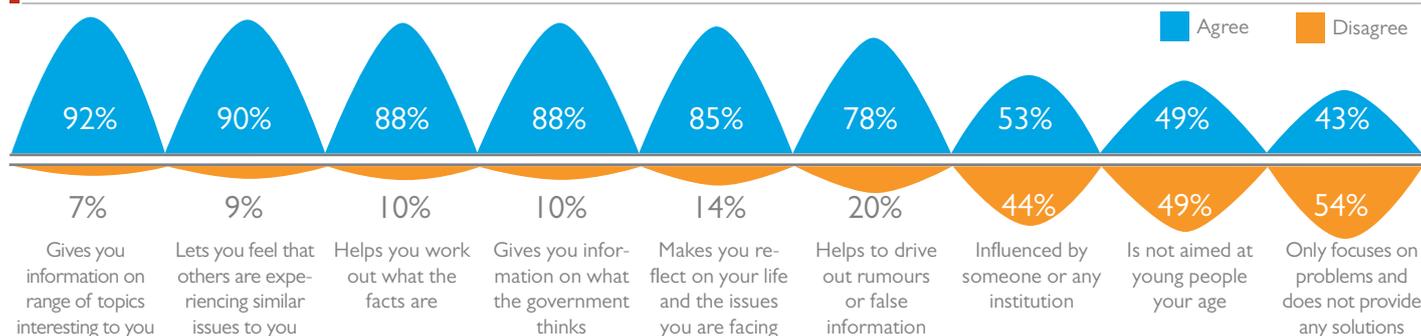
Verification of information

Young people were asked about factors which make them think an information source can be trusted. The most commonly mentioned response is how neutral the source was (38%), followed by how credible the presenter or journalist is (35%) and the presence of any verifying features – like live footage (16%). However 13% also said they did not know of any ways to check information sources, or did not consider doing so. This is more prevalent amongst those from lower socio-economic groups and those without access to the internet.

-  Neutrality of source
-  Credibility of the presenter/journalist
-  Presence of verifying features
-  Nothing/Don't know
-  Reputation of information source



Perceptions about Cambodia media



Young Cambodians and media practitioners have both positive and negative views on the media. Whilst the majority of young people believe the media provides information on a range of topics of interest, those from rural or poorer backgrounds are more likely to agree the media is not aimed at people like them.

Most media practitioners agree there is a large amount of content available, however they believe content about certain topics – such as women's health, and education – is more limited.

Media practitioners and influencers also observe more limited engagement from young people about news and politics, owing to a lack of interest, having other priorities or being fearful of repercussions.

Key recommendations for communication



- **Ensure content is relevant to the audience:** Content should not consider young people in Cambodia as one homogenous group. They represent a wide range of differences – in age, situation, life stage, and values – and content should be tailored appropriately – thinking about the best platform, format, length, style – to ensure it is relevant to the audience it is targeting.



- **A multiplatform approach is recommended to widen reach,** using traditional media and outreach as well as digital to ensure more vulnerable groups are included.



- **Content which is easy to navigate** is recommended for those with lower digital literacy.
- **Provide practical information to build young people's skills and confidence.** A lack of information or a lack of knowledge about where to find information can limit young people's ability to engage with issues that matter to them.



- **Provide safe spaces to encourage young people to access and discuss information** on topics which matter to them and enable them to build and establish networks with peers.
- **Communication should also target parents and care givers who are key role models and influencers for young people.** Equipping these groups with the knowledge and information to provide effective advice can enable them to provide further support to young people.

- **Work with media practitioners to further understand young people's needs and fill gaps in content.** This may help to improve the content offer to young people, making it more relevant and accessible.

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