The Involvement of Youth toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Cambodia

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Abstract

The involvement of youth toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) can be seen as a trend in terms of youth and society. The SDGs are almost three years old and stem from the Millennium Development Goals. There have been many activities related to achieving the SDGs but it seems that youth awareness about SDGs is low. In this research study, we aimed to find out further information related to youth and SDGs in Cambodia. To undertake this research, we selected 100 UC students to participate in the study by giving them the opportunity to answer the questionnaire. The study found out youth in Cambodia, especially university students, still have a limited understanding toward SDGs and some have never been involved in anything related to SDGs. Furthermore, we asked the students mainly about SDGs- Goal 9 and the majority of the students did not know what Goal 9 was. However, we found out that the majority of youth understand that SDGs are important for the society and youth themselves. Therefore, this research will mainly help youth in Cambodia to refocus on what they can do to make society a better place.

I. Introduction

1. Background of the study

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that Cambodia had adopted to the national plans in the early 2000s came to an end in December 2015, and the country is readying itself for the new Sustainable Development Goals. According to the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia, to understand the extent Cambodia is prepared to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, it is imperative to visit how the country has performed with regards to Cambodia MDGs. Ou Sivhouch and Chheat Sreang (2015) stated, “Cambodia has achieved at least four out of the 9 set goals (child care, maternal health, communicable diseases and partnership) and it is moving to close to meeting the poverty reduction goal (poverty dropped from 47.8% in 2007 to 19.8% in 2011, which is just 0.3% above the target of 19.5%)” (RGC, 2013, 2014). Followed by the success of MDGs in 2015, the post agenda for the development goals declared by the United Nation called Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) were created for all countries, both rich and poor. In the period of nearly three years since Cambodia has adopted the SDGs, not all the people have had the opportunity to get to know what the SDGs are. Significantly, to be more specific, most youth in universities are not aware about the SDGs while they are the key important workforce for achieving these global goals. Hence, their involvement is crucial toward the SDGs being achieved globally by 2030.

In the recent years, youth are becoming more informed and engaged in civic and political activities, especially through the rapid penetration of social media. In 2015, about 40 percent of Cambodians had access to the internet and/or Facebook and Cambodia’s youth participates actively in community-oriented activities (OECD, 2018). Their eagerness to learn and willingness to participate in something new can be a great opportunity for them to make a better change in society. If most youth are aware about the SDGs and get involved in achieving the SDGs, the outcomes can be achieved along with the youth being involved in social participation.
2. Significance of the research study
Throughout our academic experience, we have been made aware that most youth in the universities did not know the importance of SDGs. And there are few research studies that focus on the awareness of youth toward SDGs. We decided to do further research about youth and their opinion toward SDGs and as we will not focus on all the goals but one that seemed to be less achieved, Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure). This research represents an introduction for youth to get to know SDGs and importance of their involvement toward SDGs and Goal 9. As a result, this research focuses more on youth awareness and their involvement to let them think critically toward SDGs and their necessary knowledge. We aimed to investigate and see how much students at The University of Cambodia know about SDGs and Goal 9.

3. Research questions
In order to conduct a reliable research study, we have raised 2 questions to address the problem for further information and exploration:
1. To what extent are UC students aware of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
2. How can UC students contribute and be engaged in achieving SDGs, mainly focused on Goal 9 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”?

4. Research objectives
The main purposes of this research study are to get to know how aware UC students are of SDGs and their achievements so far. As youth are the key roles in developing the society, bringing further information and exploration about SDGs to them may result in great changes for society. To be specific, we divided our main objectives into 3 sub-areas:
- To gather information and to explore how much the youth know about SDGs and Goal 9 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure” in Cambodia.
- To show them how important it is to understand about SDGs in Cambodia.
- To tell them, youth are the key workforce in helping to achieve SDGs by 2030.

5. Limitations
This research study on SDGs is very limited, as SDGs are the global goals and with only 100 students from University of Cambodia as the participants in survey could be limited in terms of sample size. We have mentioned that this research study is focused on UC students which the data can be different in others universities. And in this research we focus mostly on general information about SDGs and Goal 9. We decided to pick Goal 9 because less progress is needed to achieve the targets by 2030, and Cambodia is a less developed country (LDC). We believe that LDCs should mostly focus on their economic growth in the age of globalization and high technology. Therefore, “industries, innovation and infrastructure” play an important role. However, the research analysis and the exploration are possibly reliable in the scale of UC students but we have considered this limitation.

II. Literature Review
1. Definition of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
According to United Nations Development Programme (n.d.), “the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.” The Sustainable Development Goals were built to take place on the successes implemented by Millennium Development Goals, and will take place for 15 years and end by 2030 to achieve the seventeen goals. The SDGs added more specific areas of goals include improve economic growth, responsibility of product consumption, peace and justice in society, improve people’s prosperity, and also focus on the environment related to climate change (UNDP, n.d.).

Based on United Nations Department of Public Information (2015), “the SDGs, unanimously adopted by the UN’s 193 Member States at an historic summit in September 2015, address the needs of people in both developed and developing countries, emphasizing that no one should be left behind.” At the same time,
SDGs create for people and planet, in action to check on the whole issues in the world from the gender issues to climate change (Thomson, 2015). Therefore, parts of Sustainable Development Goals are implementing on gender equality on women, and youth; where they can feel secure and get more protection in society, also have more chance in finding job in the society (Ban Ki Moon Centre, n.d.). In this paper, SDGs goal 9 “Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure” refers to the quick of recover the strength of infrastructure, support the sustainable of industrialization, and also encourage the new innovation on technologies, aims to build the successful communities over the globe (Global Goals, 2016).

2. ASEAN Community and the Sustainable Development Goals
A joint report by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Government of Thailand, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) underlined the adoption of complementarities between the ASEAN community Vision 2015 and the 2030 Agenda in 2015 (Paul, 2018). According to Simon H. Olsen, Shom Teoh and Ikuho Miyazawa, the adoption is known as a new global set of development goals – the Sustainable Development Goals – which comes to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It shows that ASEAN member states now challenge not only the achievement of economic integration but also principles of long-term sustainability (SDGs), and assurance of the sustainability aspirations of the ASEAN Charter form the bedrock of ASEAN’s regional integration (2015, p. 59-60).

2.1 SDGs Awareness and Support in ASEAN
Mr. Zahedi mentioned that “he is excited about this phase of our collaboration and reiterated the UN commitment to support the ASEAN 2025 Blueprint in the context of the SDGs (2016).” The meeting on 25 June 2016, Bangkok, launched a joint ASEC-ESCAP preliminary report on the challenges and possible way forward which may be released in 2017 in the Philippines along with the 50th anniversary of ASEAN. Both sides shared and highlighted the effective ways to promote sustainable development. They keep supporting the achievement of the SDGs which is the United Nation’s blueprint for ending poverty in the world and building a sustainable future for all by 2030 (ASEAN taps on Vision 2025 to support SDGs).

At the meeting on 20 November 2017 in Bangkok, the Secretary-General of ASEAN Le Luong Minh (ASEAN to partner with EU on achieving the SDGs, 2017a), stated “We look forward to enhancing cooperation with the EU in sustainable development, including through promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Vision 2025 and SDGs.”

A central area for both ASEAN and the European Union remain in the promotion of sustainable development through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In terms of increased development cooperation funding between both regions potentially on the key global issues of sustainable development, the EU has increased funding to support to ASEAN regional integration to € 170 million in the period 2014-2020 and to over €2 billion funding to ASEAN Member States bilaterally over the same period. The regional integration processes of both EU and ASEAN shared mutual commitment in order to help ensure that “they are people-centered and leave no one behind” (European Commission, 2017a).

2.2 SDGs Achievements and New Development Challenges in ASEAN
The report “Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Action”, underlines the key areas needed to be focused on – namely “poverty reduction, infrastructure and connectivity, sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable consumption and production (SCP), and resilience.” The analysis of these areas shows that the governments in the region have succeeded in reducing poverty, yet other areas remain a problem to improve such as investing in transport and communication infrastructure; modernizing energy, water and sanitation services; limiting waste and emissions while managing natural resources responsibly; supporting resource productivity and decoupling; and enhancing the resilience of people, processes and infrastructure (UN-ESCAP, 2018).
In accordance with the inaugural dialogue between the EU and ASEAN on 20 November 2017, there was much focus on several areas known as important “crosscutting development catalysts towards the achievement of multiple SDGs” such as “promoting gender equality, green growth and circular economy, sustainable consumption and production, and addressing the challenges of climate change”, and a roadmap on ASEAN-EU Sustainable Development Cooperation would be. The next higher level ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development is supposed to take place in 2019 aiming to review progress in further improvement of cooperation between both regions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals explored (ASEAN to partner with EU on achieving the SDGs, 2017b).

To attain the SDGs, the ASEAN initiative to enhance complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III, and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 were welcomed as important tools (European Commission, 2017b).

### 2.3 Achievements of ASEAN toward Goal 9

According to a report “Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in South Asia: Key Policy Priorities and Implementation Challenges” from UNESCAP (2017), it states that improving the employment rate and economic growth (SDG 8) is important to attain poverty reduction in SDG 1 and apparently it is also connected to SDG 9 “industrial development”. Based on statistics in the same report about “Infrastructure availability in South Asia” (p.5), the illustration shows the achievements of infrastructure in ASEAN such as 132 people (per 100 people) have access to telecommunications (2014), 77% have access to electricity (2012), 90% have access to improved water (2015), 72% have access to improved sanitation (2015), 29 people (per 100 people) use the internet (2014), 5 km (km of railway per 1000 km2) of rail density (2012), 276 km (km of road per 1000 km2) of road density (2011), and 55% of paved roads (2012).

Another report “ASEAN SDG Baseline” from UNESCAP indicates data progress status of Goal 9. The status stands at the less progress needed to achieve target in 2030, meaning that it has not even reached the target point in 2015 yet (2017a, p.2). Pertaining to statistic “dashboard of SDG targets,” the goal 9 related to “Manufacturing % in GDP” is the “current trend needs to be REVERSED to meet the target” (2017b, p.4).

### 3. Cambodia and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Back in 2003, Cambodia refocused on setting the national plans when adopted the Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) that aimed to achieve their eight goals by 2015. However, many observers believed that the focus of these goals still took too much of a global perspective, which hampered the local implementation of the Millennium Development Agenda (Open Development Cambodia, 2018).

The transition of MDGs to SDGs in late 2015 made understanding how the SDGs tie in to each other and the need to align knowledge and perspectives at the country level more accessible. During the course SDGs unfold in the context of Cambodia, the outcome might follow the trend of CMDGs, areas such as poverty, economic growth, hunger eradication, improving quality of education, responsible consumption and industrial innovation and infrastructure may move faster than the previous MDGs (CCC, 2015). The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is promoted as more participatory and equitable. Thus, the co-ordination of the planning and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals with local development strategies such as the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2014–2018 has been prioritized (ODC, 2018).
III. Research Methodology

1. Research design
This research study used a quantitative approach in order to answer the research questions that addressed above. Moreover, we used a questionnaire as the research tool to allocate and explore the awareness and involvement of youth in Cambodia toward SDGs. With regard to our questionnaire, there were four main parts, a total of 18 questions (not including personal information), and two open-ended questions. It is important to note that the first part of the questionnaire asked for students’ personal background such as college, major, year, gender and age. The second main part of the questionnaire asked the necessary information about ASEAN community and SDGs plus with the awareness about SDGs itself and youth involvement toward SDGs. Thirdly, we turned the attention of the participants mainly to focus on SDGs in the context of Cambodia. We sought to know how far they know about SDGs in Cambodia and what their opinions toward SDGs were. Finally, point number 4 which is the last point stood as the main role of our research question number 2 and asked about the awareness of SDGs Goal 9. Finally, the two open-ended questions allowed the respondents to freely express their knowledge and suggestions for other youth to get to know SDGs Goal 9 deeper.

2. Data collection and sample size
The questionnaires were conducted in English because we focused on the respondents from Bachelor’s degree international track students. Due to the limited time and budget, we could not take the entire UC student population as our respondents; however, we chose 100 participants to be the representatives of the university youth. We used one of the probability sampling techniques (i.e. simple random sampling) and non-probability sampling techniques (i.e. convenience and judgmental samplings) to distribute questionnaires. The reasons we used three of these technique was because everyone who was international track students had the chance to participate in our survey. It was easier to approach students using our emotions in observing the behaviors of the respondents and it was easier for us to focus on The University of Cambodia students alone.

3. Ethical issues
We researchers adopted the code of ethics and gave them the right to comment on the questionnaire. All the respondents were willingly to participate in the process and all information was kept confidential.

4. Data analysis
Microsoft Excel and mathematics were used to analyze the data after we collected all the questionnaires from the respondents. We divided all the questions into their main categories, highlighted and coded the sections starting from the personal information to the last close-ended questions. By doing so we were able to select the crucial questions that needed to be analyzed and then used the formula of average in Microsoft Excel to analyze important questions. For questions that needed to be analyzed in each category, we sorted them into their own categories first and then we counted them all and use the traditional method of mathematics, since it was faster and easier to use mathematics. For the open questions we scripted all the available answers from respondents into tables in each questions and then we use the content analysis divided it into categories and sort out to fine the most given opinions. When all were completed, the data are was transferred to Microsoft Excel then create the graphs in according to the data to show the percentages.

IV. Findings and Data Analysis

1. Findings
The first section of the questionnaire discusses the personal background of the 100 respondents who are currently studying from year 1, 2, 3, and 4 at The University of Cambodia. Based on the data, it shows that 58% of respondents were female, and another 42% were male. Additionally, there were 13% of respondents in group of ages from 15 to 19, and 81% from ages 20 to 24, and another 6% from ages 25 to 29.
From part II, for the 1st question, 72% of respondents were aware of the SDGs while 28% were not (see Figure 1). According to Figure 2, the data was calculated into percentages of UC student’s awareness of SDGs from each college in The University of Cambodia. For the College of Social Sciences (Yes=75%, No=25%), College of Law (Yes=87.5%, No=12.5%), The Tony Fernandes School of Business (Yes=72%, No=28%), College of Science and Technology (Yes=75%, No=25%), and College of Arts, Humanities, and Languages (Yes=53%, No=47%).

![Percentage of UC Student's Awareness of SDGs](image)

*Figure 1: Percentage of UC Student's Awareness of SDGs*

![Percentage of UC students' awareness of SDGs from each college](image)

*Figure 2: The University of Cambodia Students’ Awareness of SDGs from each College*

Furthermore, in part II of the questionnaire, there also have the rating scales to respondents to show their point of views on SDGs toward ASEAN Community by ticking 1 to 5 from “Strongly disagree”, “Disagree”, “Fair”, “Agree” to “Strongly Agree”. It was about general knowledge about SDGs in ASEAN Community. As we can see in Table 1, all of the results of the respondents show the positive perspectives of SDGs toward the ASEAN Community as a whole. By seeking out the statement 1, about the “ASEAN Community has been achieving collaboration with SDGs” most of respondents give a thought on “Fair” has 55, and “Agree” has 35 among 100 respondents, with the average 3.38. Similarly, between statement 2 and 3, the average of those statements is quite similar, with the average 3.82 of statement 2, and average 3.65 of statement 3. However, statement 4 is quite different from those three statements which were mentioned above, because it has a higher average 4.27 on the statement “SDGs is a necessary topic for ASEAN youths to know”.

**Table 1: Average of UC Students’ Awareness of the ASEAN Community and Sustainable Development Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>ASEAN Community and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In your opinion, ASEAN Community has been achieving collaboration with SDGs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASEAN has been encouraged to SDGs involvement from any international organization.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Awareness of SDGs in Cambodia</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personally, Cambodia has been involving actively in SDGs.</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cambodia has been encouraged to SDGs involvement from outsiders.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cambodia still faces challenges through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDGs).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It is important for Cambodian youths to know SDGs.</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cambodia’s youth has been familiar with SDGs.</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SDGs involvement in social activities rather than only awareness should be promoted.</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In part III, another point worth noting is the awareness of UC students of SDGs in Cambodia. In this part, it was designed as the rating scale to determine the average from each statement. In Table 2, the rating scale shows the number and average of respondents on each statement. Statements 1 and 5 had the lowest average among of the six statements. With the lowest average 3.27 of statement 5, which focuses on “Cambodia’s youth has been familiar with SDGs.” Mostly of respondents chose “Fair” so it cannot be determined if they positively or negatively about the statements. Yet, statement 1 has an average 3.38, respondents personally thinking on “Cambodia has been involving actively in SDGs”. Meanwhile, statement 2, 3, and 6, has similar averages of 3.55, 3.77, and 3.59 respectively. Nevertheless, statement 3 seemed higher than statement 2, and 6. Additionally, for statement 4 has the highest average up to 4.36 which statement focus on “it is important for Cambodian youths to know SDGs” that had 55 of respondents out of 100 “Strongly agree” on this statement.

Part IV in the questionnaire aimed to know about how many percentages of UC student’s awareness of SDGs on Goal 9 “Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure”. Question 1 aimed to collect the percentages of UC students’ awareness of SDGs goal 9. In Figure 3, the statistics show that the higher percentages 68% “No” of UC students who were not aware of SDGs on goal 9, and only 32% were aware of what is SDGs goal 9. It is the problem of UC students should focus on, while goal 9 is very important among 17 goals of SDGs.

Regarding part IV, there was a rating scale for respondents who know about the SDGs goal 9. Table 3 shows the number and average of UC student’s awareness of SDGs goal 9. Even if respondents were not
aware of SDGs goal 9, 27% out of 68% of “No” they are still giving their serious consideration on the rating scale. Statement 2 had zero people who strongly agreed with the statement, and zero people strongly disagreed with Statement 3.

*Figure 4: Percentages of Awareness of UC’s youth on SDGs Goal 9*

![Pie chart showing awareness percentages](chart.png)

*Table 3: Average of UC Student’s Awareness of SDGs Goal 9*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Awareness of SDGs Goal 9</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>From your perspective, Cambodia has been gradually accomplishing this goal so far.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To Cambodia’s current situation, Goal 9 should be focused most among other SDGs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, beside the “Yes” and “No” questions and rating scales, there were also the open-ended questions. The purpose of the open-ended questions aimed to find out what the UC students’ perspective on the topic by giving their personal ideas in detail. First, question 4 indicates the importance of the Goal 9 “Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure” of SDGs toward Cambodia’s youth based on opinions of respondents. The question aimed to encourage the respondents to express their personal thinking for what reasons that make this SDGs goal 9 is important to Cambodia’s youth. Due to answers of the respondents, 48% out of 100 respondents agrees that this goal 9 is very important to Cambodia’s youth. 43.6% of respondents focused on the country’s development, such as to make economic stability, and economic growth of transportation service, strengthen on human resource, and labor. Another 4.4% provided other reasons that show Goal 9 is important to youths, in terms of leading to new ideas and innovation on technology, improving youth’s ability, and also help with sustainability over a period of time. Otherwise, other 52% of respondents did not have any ideas on this open-ended question section.

The second open question was “What are strategies that encourage Cambodians’ youth to get involved in the Goal 9?” The purpose was to seek for effective strategies and new ideas to encourage the youth to access the information on SDGs Goal 9. According to the responses, only 33% out of 100 answers answered this question while 67% left it blank. Among said 33%, 26.8% suggested a strategy which is “Educating and Providing the Goal 9 of SDGs” such as adding courses to study, promoting though campaigns or social media and so on, and another 6.2% gave other strategies, namely conducting research more, providing
benefits in terms of participation, encouraging schools and the government to promote and the youths to join the activities or workshop.

2. Data Analysis

**Table 4: Extraction from Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 extracts from the data of previous Table 1 (*Average of UC students’ Awareness of ASEAN Community and Sustainable Development Goal*). As shown in the illustration, the number of responses has a tendency to neutral and positive sides. Question 1 (55%) and 3 (43%) had a large number of 100 of respondents in “Fair” box. Both questions are about the achievement and challenges of ASEAN through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDGs). Therefore, the data can be analyzed that about a half of the respondents may have no idea or uncertainty toward the answers of said questions. Otherwise, it is noticeable that question 2 about the support of SDGs involvement from international organizations toward ASEAN got the highest percentage (60%) of “Agree” box and question 4 regarding the necessity of SDGs awareness toward ASEAN youths received about a half of respondents (44%) in “Strongly agree” box. It is concluded that even though the responses seems hesitant and uncertain the progress of ASEAN toward SDGs, they show a strong belief that SDGs is an essential topic for ASEAN youths to know, and there has been a profound support for ASEAN toward SDGs progress from the outsiders.

![UC Students' Awareness of SDGs](image)

*Figure 5: UC student’s awareness of SDGs.*

Figure 5 sketches out the data of UC students’ awareness of SDGs only from two colleges, namely the College of Social Sciences (CoSS) and the College of Arts and Humanities (CoAH). Among the four colleges illustrated on figure 2, CoAH had the lowest percentage of students knowing Goal 9 of SDGs. There were 9 students out of 20 (i.e. about 50%) who were not aware of Goal 9. Its result is not a big surprise and is predictable since their major courses provided might hardly focus on SDGs. On the other hand, data from CoSS is noteworthy. SDGs knowledge is normally introduced by said college’s major courses while a third (33%) or 9 out of 27 of CoSS students do not even know of SDGs. It can be assumed that there may be less focus in any factors such as courses provided by colleges or class lectures or less attention of students themselves regarding SDGs knowledge.
The table illustrates the trend of UC students’ awareness of SDGs in 6 questions (on the previous Table 2). As can be seen, there is a tendency to both “Fair” and “Agree” responses. Most of 100 of respondents tend to “Fair” option in question 1, 2 and 5. Especially, question 5 on the table shows 49 out of 100 respondents choose “Fair”. Said question was asked about the familiarity or awareness of Cambodia’s youth towards SDGs. It can show that the respondents chose not to stay neither negative nor positive. It is conclusive that there was hesitation and doubtfulness of the respondents to awareness of Cambodia’s youth towards SDGs so far. However, there is a trend to positive side in question 3, 4 and 6. Noticeably, question 4 received the highest number of “Strongly agree” option. This shows that more than half (55%) of the respondents believe the importance for Cambodian youths to know SDGs. Besides, around half (47%) of responses in question 3 indicates the challenges for Cambodia through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDGs).

Figure 6 shows the percentages of respondents’ perspectives on Cambodia’s achievements in Goal 9. Overall, two most outstanding percentages stand at “Fair” at 32% and “No Comment” at 44%. We can infer that 32% of respondents who chose “Fair” may not be sure about Goal 9’s accomplishment in Cambodia so far. They do not stand at both negative and positive sides. Furthermore, around half (44%) decided to leave the answer blank. Based on Figure 3 (Percentages of Awareness of UC’s youth on SDGs Goal 9), it also obviously indicates that the data of 68% of respondents do not even know what goal 9 of SDGs is. Therefore, this analysis can be implied that Goal 9 gets very little awareness and attention from UC students.
V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The research has been the result of university students’ knowledge toward SDGs, we have seen that the awareness of youth toward SDGs is still limited. Out of 100 respondents 28 students had never heard about SDGs and only 32 students knew about SDGs Goal 9. In addition, they are the students from one of the top 5 universities in Cambodia. We can conclude that there are more youth in other universities and those do not attend university who have little knowledge about SDGs. However, through the findings, we found out that almost all the youth were aware that the SDGs are important and valuable to them.

Despite the limited understanding of SDGs agenda in youth’s knowledge of 100 UC students, we believe further and bigger research will result in great understanding of SDGs among youth in Cambodia. This research maybe seemed convincing but the sample size is too small to understand the whole youth population in each university. And youth involvement alone will not be enough to raise the awareness about SDGs to the other youth in less developed cities or those who are not in the universities. However, universities play a necessary role in term of spreading, teaching and promoting SDGs to students in which it will truly influential in their understanding towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

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References


Appendix A

Questionnaire
The Involvement of Youth toward SDGs in Cambodia Survey

Hello! We are from University of Cambodia conducting a research on the topic “The Involvement of Youth toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Cambodia”. The main research objectives are to raise awareness about SDGs to Cambodia’s youth and to create the perspective of change for a better society through working toward achieving of SDGs. Therefore, we hope you can spare your time to answer our questionnaire. We really appreciate your contribution and valuable time. If there is any concern or suggestion, please feel free to drop your message via email solindabouy@gmail.com. Again, thank you.

I. Personal Background
College: ___________________
Major: ___________________
Year: ___________________
Please check (☐) your choice below:
1. Gender
   ☐ Female       ☐ Male
2. Age
   ☐ 15 -19    ☐ 20 -24    ☐ 25 -29    ☐ Other_____

II. ASEAN Community and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
1. Have you ever heard about SDGs?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Have you ever had a course lectured about SDGs in detail?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Have you ever involved in any activity relating to SDGs?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
Please chose your preferences and check (☐) based on your viewpoint to statements below rating from 1 to 5
*Note “NC” = No Comment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In your opinion, ASEAN Community has been achieving collaboration with SDGs.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>ASEAN has been encouraged to SDGs involvement from any international organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ASEAN still faces challenges through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDGs).</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>SDGs is a necessary topic for ASEAN youths to know.</td>
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III. Awareness of SDGs in Cambodia

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</table>
1. Personally, Cambodia has been involving actively in SDGs.

2. Cambodia has been encouraged to SDGs involvement from outsiders.

3. Cambodia still faces challenges through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDGs).

4. It is important for Cambodian youths to know SDGs.

5. Cambodia’s youth has been familiar with SDGs.

6. SDGs involvement in social activities rather than only awareness should be promoted.

### IV. Awareness of SDGs Goal 9

1. Have you known Goal 9 of SDGs “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   If YES, please choose your preferences and check (☐) to the statements below rating from 1 to 5
   - 1. Strongly disagree
   - 2. Disagree
   - 3. Fair
   - 4. Agree
   - 5. Strongly agree

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>From your perspective, Cambodia has been gradually accomplishing this goal so far.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To Cambodia’s current situation, Goal 9 should be focused most among other SDGs.</td>
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4. Personally, do you think that Goal 9 of SDGs is important to Cambodia’s youth? Why or why not?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

5. If it is important, what are strategies that encourage Cambodia’s youth to get involved in the Goal 9?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
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