

Research Summary

Cambodia

Loy9

Summary

- In Cambodia, BBC Media Action is using *Loy9*, a multimedia initiative funded by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to increase youth access to information about civic life and opportunities for participation.
- *Loy9* on radio, TV and online entertains and informs audiences throughout the country and places the stories and voices of young people on a national platform.
- Since its inception, qualitative and quantitative research has fed continuously into production and project strategy.
- Research has found that that young Cambodians generally find the output entertaining, educational and often inspirational.



Context

Young people are key to development in Cambodia. In the country with the youngest population in South East Asia, young people have very low levels of understanding of key facts and concepts necessary for meaningful engagement in decision making. The idea behind *Loy9* was to create a programme which was fun, enjoyable, aspirational and would inform young people about Cambodian civic life and encourage them to participate, by asking, for example, questions of people in authority. In Cambodia, media is constrained and often of low production and editorial quality. But young people in Cambodia are significant media consumers and they place considerable trust in the media. This means that media for development output continues to have the potential to make an impact on a very wide youth audience.

The project

UNDP has engaged BBC Media Action to implement the 18-month Multimedia Initiative For Youth Civic Education In Cambodia to increase youth access to information about civic life and opportunities for participation. Known to the public as *Loy9* – a slang term of praise amongst young Cambodians – it combines a TV magazine, a TV drama, a phone-in radio programme, public service announcements, websites, apps and live games and events.

Research methodology

Solid qualitative and quantitative research underlies BBC Media Action's production work, and *Loy9* is no exception. The formative KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) study took place in August 2010, and in 2011 the research team was primarily engaged in user-testing a wide range of ideas being developed by production teams. Since then, qualitative research has fed continuously into production and project strategy. One example of this is the use of *Loy9* audience panels of 60 young people from across Cambodia. The BBC Media Action research team selected a sample of Cambodian youth, which included a slightly higher proportion of online users than in the general population. The researchers got to know the panellists, finding out in particular about their experiences of civic participation, and revisiting them every one-to-two months to learn whether they are viewing or listening to *Loy9* on TV, radio or online, and if so what their reactions have been.

Findings

“[Loy9] changed my view on whether or not we should speak out what is on our minds. In the past, I thought we should not speak it out. Now I think we should speak it out because others can help us”

School student, male, 18, Kampot

“The programme is good because it makes us happy, it is educational and encourages people to be brave... Because I saw other young people show their abilities, this makes me and people like me want to be brave and do the same”

Student, female, 20, Phnom Penh



In just six months, *Loy9* has become a household name. Its weekly TV audience is around 2.5 million¹; its Facebook page is the second most popular media page in the country; and its online episodes have so far been watched 250,000 times. In a country of 14 million with only 7% internet access, this online success has been particularly striking.

Learning about civic life and opportunities for participation is at the heart of *Loy9*. Therefore the meetings with the audience panels have all included a significant discussion about what, if anything, the panellists have learned from their exposure to *Loy9*. In recent research, over half of the 60 panellists interviewed said they had learned something specific about civic engagement from *Loy9*. Many reported having learned several things, and every *Loy9* segment on every *Loy9* platform was specifically mentioned at least once as the source of civic education learning.

Overall, research with *Loy9* audiences suggests they generally see it as enjoyable and entertaining, and at the same time as educational and inspiring. A common response has been to say that *Loy9* encourages young people to be “brave”. This is interesting because it is not a word that has been often used in the programmes

Implications

The first half of 2012 has been highly successful for *Loy9*. It has a very large, enthusiastic audience of young people who are participating actively in the initiative. Research suggests that the audience is learning accurate, significant, practical information about civic life and opportunities for participation. Reviewing research findings has helped BBC Media Action to prepare for the months ahead. The *Loy9* team have based their strategy on these insights, to ensure future *Loy9* output is even more entertaining and educational to make an even greater contribution to engaging young Cambodians meaningfully in civic life.

Contact

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¹ Audience estimation based on 2012 data from Cambodia Media & Research for Development (CMRD)