

Service User Feedback Survey (SUFS)

“The People’s Government, by the people and for the benefits of the people”

The key message from the Party

Report



Supported by: Governance and Public Administration Reform – Governance for Inclusive Development Project

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Acronyms

DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DDF	District Development Fund
DoHA	District Office of Home Affairs
DSDMS	District Service Deliver Monitoring System
DSEDP	the district socio-economic development plan
EDC	Enterprise and Development Consultant CO., Ltd
GPAR-GIDP	Governance and Public Administration Reform – Governance for Inclusive Development Program
GPAR SBSB	Governance and Public Administration Reform – Support for Better Service Delivery
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs -
PPA	People’s Provincial Assembly
SUFS	Service Users Feedback Survey
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

I. Introduction

A. Background

The Service Users Feedback Survey (SUFS) is a tool to collect feedback from the local people regarding public service delivery. It is used to determine the level of people's satisfaction and their suggestions towards the improvement of the services. ¹

SUFS, supported by the Governance and Public Administration Reform – Support for Better Service Delivery (GPAR SBSD) (Ministry of Home Affairs - MoHA), was piloted in 2015 in two districts, namely Houn District in Oudomxay Province, and Saravan District in Saravan Province. The results of the pilot survey became an important reference to improve the governance reform, specifically to improve services in different sectors closely linked to people's livelihood, such as education, public health, agriculture, etc. Moreover, the survey allowed people to participate, and be actively involved in local administration and development.

Therefore, SUFS has continued to scale up in the country. In 2018, the Minister of Home Affairs approved to continue the SUFS implementation in 4 districts: Hinboun District in Khammuan Province, Xaysettha District in Attapau Province, Xiengkhor District in Huaphan Province, and Kua District in Phongsaly Province.

B. Importance

SUFS is a mechanism used for collecting feedback from the citizens. Through this tool, citizens can participate in the administration and the development of their respective districts. With the feedbacks from the citizens, the local government can improve their services to the citizens in order to fulfil their mandates as stated by the Party, that “the government is owned by its citizens, working for the benefits of the citizens”. Good governance depends on the people's participation as it helps the administration to focus on providing services relevant to the actual needs of the local people, to ensure ownership of the people in the implementation process, and to ensure sustainable development. The comments from the people serve as strong reference points for concerned sectors to improve their services so as to be more effective.

C. Objectives

- To improve the public services at the local level, particularly at the district level
- To provide information to district authorities for their district socio-economic development plan periodically
- To serve as the mechanism that collects and analyses feedback of public service users and provide information to the relevant sectors
- To provide information to the People's Provincial Assembly (PPA) to oversee the implementation of the relevant sectors
- To promote people's participation in the governance or public service reform.

¹ Decision No. 536/PM, dated 9 October 2018

D. Underlining Principles of the survey

SUFS asks people to rate level of improvement needed for the service delivery. It collects people's suggestions for improvement. The survey was designed to focus on constructive feedback rather than negative complaints.

The following factors were the basis for selecting target villages and informants:

- Location (rural remote, hardship or urban areas);
- Social-culture aspects (ethnicity);
- Populations (gender, age and disability);
- Economic factor (household poverty).

II. The Implementation

A. Organization structure for SUFS implementation

Learning from the pilot implementation, to ensure the ownership and sustainability of this survey it was designed that the survey is implemented by the government organizations. A responsible taskforce and committees were established at the national, provincial and district level.

1. National level:

At central level, a ministry level taskforce was established for implementing SUFS and District Service Deliver Monitoring System (DSDMS), having official assignment by the Minister of Home Affairs with Official Decision No. 536/HA, dated 9 Oct 2018. The taskforce consists of 11 members. They are representatives from four departments, namely Department of planning and cooperation department, Department of Local administration, Department of Ethnic and Religion matters, Department of Citizen Management, and Public Administration Research Institute and Training Centre. The taskforce is led by the Deputy Director General (DDG) of Planning and cooperation department/Deputy program manager of Governance and Public Administration Reform – Governance for Inclusive Development Program (GPAR-GIDP) and DDG of Department of Local Administration. Other members of the taskforce are staff members from these departments and center including those who are head and deputy head of divisions and technical officers.

During the implementation the taskforce was divided into four teams. Each team was responsible for training and supervising the district team in one particular district. The team also was responsible for data cleaning, analysis and writing the report for that particular district.

2. Provincial level:

The committee at provincial level will be appointed which consist of members from Home Affairs department, Planning and investment department, Agriculture and forestry department, Education and sport department, Public health department, Public work and transport department, provincial people's assembly.

3. District level:

At the district level, a supervising committee was established. The committee comprises of head or deputy head of district line offices, namely, district home affairs office, planning and

investment office, Agriculture and forestry office, Education and sport office, Health office, Public work and transports office, Lao women union, Youth union and Lao Front office.

The key implementors at the district level is the survey team. The survey team consists of 10 – 12 members from District Office of Home Affairs (DoHA), District Statistic Center and mass organizations, namely Lao Women Union, Lao Youth Union, Lao Front for Reconstruction. The representatives from DoHA acted as the team leader, while the representative from District Statistic Center acted as the deputy team leader and quality controller. Other members were data collectors/facilitators. During the actual data collection, the survey team was divided into two sub-teams.

(TOR of the taskforce, of the committees and of the survey team are specified in the SUFS manual).

B. Implementation steps

Step 1: Review and redesign the SUFS

A national consultant was contracted by the GPAR-GIDP/UNDP to review and redesigned SUFS. The new questionnaires were developed with intensive inputs from the taskforce. The SUFS implementation manual was drafted. The draft was presented to the taskforce and representatives from line agencies from provincial and district level in the workshop organized at central level. The manual was adjusted and finalized according the comments from the line agencies provided in the workshop.

The consultant also designed data collection tool – data base for data entry using KoboCollect. It was designed and trained to the survey team how to use KoboCollect on tablets to do data collection and entry.

Step 2: Train the trainers

Training of trainers (ToT) was conducted for taskforce members in Hinboun district, Khammouane province for three days. The national consultant with IT technical support from her team was the trainers/facilitators. The TOT aimed for the taskforce members to master the survey tools, i.e. survey methodology, including questionnaires, data entry program – KoboCollect and how to select sampled household representatives, who to conduct interview and facilitate the village meeting. Another objective of the TOT is to equipped the taskforce members with the facilitation / training skills, so that they can further train district survey team.

The TOT has four main sessions. The first part was to learn about the survey tools, including questionnaires and KoboCollect program and how to use it on tablets. The second part was introduction to presentation and facilitation skills. The third part of the TOT was half-day field pilot testing and practicing the questionnaires. The pilot test was conducted with four groups of villagers in the village nearby Hinboun district town. After that the pilot test results and lessons learned from field practice were discussed at the final part of the TOT.

The TOT participants, i.e. taskforce members, mastered the survey tools to a great extent. That was because they have been involved in the questionnaire's revision and development process. They learned more during the pilot testing and field practice.

However, it was observed that the session on presentation and facilitation skills was too short. It was sufficient for some taskforce members who have certain experiences in delivering presentation and being a trainer before. Some taskforce members were new to

making presentation. It was obviously too short for them. Thus, some were not confident in delivering sessions during the training to district teams.

Step 3: Train the district survey team

The first district survey team training was conducted right after the TOT in Hinboun district. It did not go as well as it was expected. The number of the training team was too big and the number of participants was too big as well. Although the main team of taskforce who was assigned to supervise the SUFS in Hinboun district consisted of 4 members, but the whole team stayed after the TOT to observe the first district training. During this first district training, the provincial committee was also invited. Thus, it made the group rather large, consisting of almost 20 participants. Despite this, the district team had chances to familiarised with the survey tools and to practice conducting interviews and using KoboCollect program on tablets.

Subsequently, the district survey team training was conducted in the other three districts, namely, Khoua district, Phongsaly province; Xiengkhor district, Houaphanh province; and Saysettha district, Attapeu province by the taskforce teams that were assigned to supervise SUFS in these districts.

Step 4: Data collection and data entry

The data collection was conducted not right after the training because the district needed time to prepare budget and get logistic arrangement done. The data collection commenced at about 1-2 weeks after the training. The district team was divided into two sub-team, consisting of 5 members each. The data collection was conducted during the period between early June to middle of July 2019.

During the first week of data collection, the taskforce travelled with the district team to provide technical support and quality assurance. In Hinboun district, the taskforce had to provide refreshed session to the district team during the follow up support trip.

With regards to data entry, it was advised during the training that the district team assign one or two persons, acting as quality controllers and data entry persons. In practice, due to time limitation and some other difficulties, such as difficult travel due to bad road condition and internet connection during the field work, the data entry was done after the field work.

Step 5: Data cleaning and analysis

The national consultant conducted three-day training for the taskforce on how to clean data. The Excel database template as designed and trained to taskforce. The team of taskforce then did the data cleaning. This process took longer than expected, five days instead of three days. It was due to the fact the collected data was rather huge and the quality of data was not as high as expected. This could be because of the limited skills of district teams due the fact the training was too short.

The data analysis training was conducted after all data has been cleaned in another three-day workshop. The taskforce worked hard trying to comprehend new tool for data analysis and to actually do the analysis. As the results from this step, the taskforce teams produced the survey results into the form of tables and graphs ready for report writing.

Step 6: Presenting and verifying SUFS initial results

The tables, graphs and summary of comments were put together on PowerPoints presentation. This was prepared for sharing the initial results with the district survey team, with district line offices – service provision offices, with provincial committee and PPA.

A two-day workshop convened in each of the four districts. During the workshop, the PowerPoints showing the SUFS initial results was presented. These results were discussed by the representatives from line offices, provincial committee and the PPA in groups by sector.

In general, the results of group discussion shown that the representatives from line offices, provincial committee and PPA agreed with the SUFS results. They provided some clarifications to some of the villager's comments and suggested some rewording to the comments to reflect the actual social cultural situation of the locality in the district. The taskforce teams referred to the provided comments when writing the reports to ensure that the appropriate wordings and explanation were provided in the reports.

Step 7: Report writing

The training on report writing was conducted in combination with write-shop during the second week of December 2019. The training was facilitated by the national consultant. The structure of the report was provided and agreed upon. To prepare for actual writing, the taskforce members learned about the basic principle for report writing, which is 7 Cs: (1) Clear; (2) Concise; (3) Concrete; (4) Correct; (5) Coherent; (6) Complete; and (7) Courteous. They also learned about writing styles and the use of appropriate language. One of the important parts of the training was about how to use tables and charts. The training ended with the session on how to write conclusion and recommendations.

The training was conducted in a rather informal workshop, combing presentations, plenary discussion and write-shop. During the write-shop the taskforce teams were writing section by section. Once they finished a section, it was shared and discussed with the whole group about good points and areas for improvement referring to the 7Cs principle. Most of the teams completed the first basic draft of their report, but had to finish up and submit to the GPAR-GIDP secretariat. The complete draft of the reports was sent to the national consultant for proof reading, editing and for translating into English.

Step 8: National Stakeholder workshop

The objectives of this workshop were to obtain feedback from stakeholders on the SUFS results and suggestions on what and how to use the results for improving service provision. Ideally, the national stakeholder workshop should involve representatives from line ministries, for example, ministry of education and sports, ministry of health. However, due to fact that the time was not suitable, the stakeholders from national level could not be invited. There were only delegates from provincial level, including provincial committee and PPA, district survey team and representatives from district line offices participated. The workshop was organized in Vientiane on the 24 – 25 January 2020 after the reports were finalized. During the workshop, the taskforce teams presented the complete SUFS results again to the district team, representatives from line agencies, provincial committee and the PPA.

During this workshop, the participants were divided into groups by sector to discuss the results of the survey. Similar to the results of the workshop at the district level, groups mostly agreed with the presented SUFS results. They provided some clarifications and suggestions regarding the feedbacks received from the villagers.

The participants also had chances to work in groups by the district/province to discuss about how the SUFS results can be and will be used in their district.

Step 9: Hand over SUFS results

After the stakeholder workshop, the reports were further refined the reports. The reports were also translated into English. The last step was to hand over the reports to district authority to use as a reference for evidence-base socio-economic development planning. It is highly recommended that the district line offices use the SUFS results to develop short term, medium term and long-term service improvement plans.

It is also planned to handover the reports to the PPA. The PPA play crucial roles in monitoring the implementation of the socio-economic development plan of the districts. The SUFS gathered feedback from the citizens – the service users. PPA will have key roles in follow up the possible improvement of the service provision. PPA can also provide information on the status of the improvement and information on why some of the feedback have not been able to implement.

B. Methodology

During the implementation, the SUFS district team followed the methodology that is specified in the manual, which they have been trained on how to use it.

The team conducted individual interviews with village authority using Questionnaire – A. They collected general information about the village and about public services available in the village and in the village vicinity. This was done by the survey team leader.



The individual interview using Questionnaire – B was also employed by the survey team members, interviewing selected household representatives. This is crucial part of the survey. This is the part during which the villagers provided their assessment and gave their rating/scores about to what extent the service provision needs to improve. The questionnaire B provides a scale from 1 to 5 to rate the level of improvement needed, whereas: “1” means “Good, no need to improve”; “2” means “Improve a little”; “3” means “Improve moderately (by 50%)”; “4” means “Improve a lot”; and “5” means “Improvement needed urgently”. An informant could only select one option out of these 5 numbers.

The survey teams also conducted focus group discussion to explore further detailed feedback of interviewed household representatives using guiding questions provided in the Questionnaire C. The groups of household representatives were divided into groups of female and male informants. They discussed separately. This was to ensure that female villagers do not feel shy to speak up and have sufficient opportunities to express their opinions. During these group discussions, the district survey team members who facilitated the sessions were required to have good facilitation skills. Some of them have the required skills, which they obtained partly from the training and from their own experiences working with the rural community. This is crucial aspect, to ensure the maximum participation from villagers.



(Please see Annex 1- questionnaires forms)

Data analysis: Kobotoolbox Program was used to synthesize data and Microsoft Excel was used for analysis, with the design and technical advice from Ms. Somchay Soulitham and her team, Mr. Vixay Xayyavongsong from Enterprise and Development Consultant CO., Ltd (EDC).

C. Time for implementation

The actual implementation took several weeks (probably up to 13 weeks intermittently) if to include ToT, training of district teams, preparation, data collection, data analysis, presentation of the initial SUFS results, report writing, stakeholder workshop and hand over the report to district authority and PPA. The data collection itself took two to three weeks starting from early June (e.g. 11 June) to middle of July (e.g. 17-19 July 2019).

D. Limitation and challenges faced during the data collection

❖ The taskforce and the committees:

Members of committees both at central and local level are juniors. They lack experience particularly in presentation, data collection and analysis and report writing. In some districts, the data collection plan drafted by the district committee was not so clear because this area of work is very new to the committee. It was pointed out as one of the limitations that the training provided to the taskforce and the district team was too short, not sufficient for them to obtain sufficient knowledge and skills. It was reported that some district survey team members have limited experiences and did not comprehend the questionnaires sufficiently well yet. Some needed to put more efforts or be more attentive in implementing the survey.

❖ Samples – selected informants

In some villages, the village authority could not gather the informants – target household representatives who meet the provided criteria (age range, ethnic background, wealth rank status, etc.). The main reason for this was that many villagers were busy with agriculture production. The survey was conducted during the production season. In some villages, it took long time to gather villagers. Another reason could be that the survey only targeted to interview only 20% of the households. It was designed that these 20% of household send one or two representatives to join the interview. In such a case, many households send the representatives who were not involve in the agriculture production. They were mostly senior citizens, despite the fact that preferred age range (not older than 55/60 years old) was emphasized.

❖ Timing and duration of the survey

The survey was conducted during the rainy season, i.e. June and July. That was not the right timing and thus caused numbers of difficulties. The road to rural villages was difficult and it got more difficult during the rainy season. It was rather difficult to travel to remote villages.



The roads were bumpy, muddy and slippery. In the Northern mountainous districts, such as Khoua and Xiengkhor, the roads to rural villages are steep and winy. In some cases, the survey teams had to stay in the villages. In a few cases, the teams had to travel by boat the remote villages. In such villages, there is not electricity, no telephone connection and no access to clean water.

The SUFS implementation duration seemed rather long, taking approximately 13 – 14 weeks spread over several months. However, the actual duration of some steps was too short from the perspectives of the implementors. For instance, the time for TOT, for training of district team and time for data analysis workshop was too short. To analyse huge amount of data covering six sectors for newly

experienced group of taskforce members definitely require sometimes longer that it was provided.

❖ Questionnaires

Some parts of the questionnaires were not clear and not relevant to the local situation. For example, Part III: Utilization of Public Services - 3.2: Utilization of toilets/latrines was not relevant to the local context. In some villages, villagers have and use latrines but their own latrines not latrines that were provided by the government agencies/projects. In such a case, the informants did not understand how to respond, whether to respond “Yes” or “No”. That was also because the survey team did not have sufficient training on this issue. So, some villages responded that they do not use toilets. This question will need to be revised.

❖ Communication with informants

Many district SUFS teams faced difficulties communicating with villagers using Lao language. In some villages, majority or all villagers are ethnic groups and many of them could not speak and understand Lao. Besides, there were no district SUFS team members who could speak that particular ethnic language. In such a case, the teams would have to ask village authority or those who can speak Lao to help interpret. Conducting interviews through interpretation made it difficult for the informants to understand the questions. Sometimes informants did not understand the purposes of the interviews. Thus, they have not been able to contribute so many feedbacks. Some were shy or felt considerate to share opinions. So, the information gathered were not rich and in some cases was not clear.

❖ Budget for allowances

It was reported that the district committee had limited budget to go out providing follow up support to the district SUFS teams. In some cases, they had to use their office budget, which was rather limited, for traveling to some villages with the team to monitor and to provide support.

E. Samples and the selection of informants

The SUFS design indicates that the samples should be 20% of the villages in a district. This does not fully scientifically correct to the statistic principle of random sampling. This

percentage was based on the consideration of several factors: budget, time consumption, number of enumerators that would be required to conduct the survey. The district statistic centre in cooperation with the representative from DOHA chose the villages to cover urban villages, rural villages accessible whole year around and rural villages accessible only during dry season (herein after the term “remote rural village” will be used sometimes interchangeably with the term “rural villages accessible only during dry season”).

However, not all districts have type 3 of villages, which are rural villages accessible only during dry season. In fact, only in Khoua district, Phongsaly province, that the SUFS covered 2 remote rural villages (11% of the sampled villages). Saysetha district, Attapeu province is rather an urban district. It has no remote rural villages. Thus, the district committee only chose type 2 villages. The district committee decided not to choose the urban village. That’s is because the number of villages in this district is rather small, with the total of 22 villages. Another reason for selecting these six rural villages was to capture opinions/feedback of villages in the villages that are target beneficiaries of District Development Fund (DDF) supported water supply project.

The number of sample villages varies across the target districts depending on the total number of villages. The biggest number of sampled villages was in Hinboun district, while the number in Saysettha district was smallest. Table 1 below show details about the sample villages.

Table 1: Number of sampled villages

District	Total Number of sampled villages	Number of villages by types of villages		
		1. Urban villages	2. Rural villages accessible whole year around	3. Remote rural villages, accessible only during dry season
Khousa district, Phongsaly	18	2 (11%)	14 (78%)	2 (11%)
Xiengkhor district, Houaphanh	12	1 (8%)	11 (92%)	0
Hinboun district, Khammouane	20	3 (15%)	17 (85%)	0
Saysettha district, Attapeu	6	0	6 (100%)	0

Similar criteria were used for identifying number of informants and informants. SUFS intended to capture feedback from 20% of households in the target villages. Besides, the 20% of households should include both male and female representatives, households of all ethnic groups reside there, households of all wealth status and households with person/s with disability. Being aware that some villages might have small number of households, e.g. less than 50 households, thus it was advised in the design that in case the sample village has less than 100 households, then the survey team should take 20 households as survey samples. In each sample household, one person was invited as the representative to the interview. The detailed number of interviewed informants in each of the four districts is provided in the table 2 below with disaggregation by sex as well as the number of informants, who are persons with disability or representatives of the households with members who are person/s with

disability. In fact, the survey covered 95 households with person/s with disability or 6% of total number of informants.

Table 2: Number of informants, % of informants by sex, and by disability status

District	Total	# of informants by sex		Number of HH rep. with disability or HH with members who are person/s with disability
		Female	Male	
Khousa district, Phongsaly	335	169 (50%)	166 (50%)	54
Xiengkhor district, Houaphanh	315	148 (47%)	167 (53%)	7
Hinboun district, Khammouane	534	246 (46%)	288 (54%)	17
Saysettha district, Attapeu	504	241 (48%)	263 (52%)	17
Total	1,688	804 (48%)	884 (52%)	95 (6%)

The district teams put extensive efforts to include all ethnic groups into the survey. The survey covered almost all ethnic groups present in the districts. The percentage of the informants of the ethnic groups varies depending on the actual population of the ethnic groups. Informant from Khmou ethnic group, for instance, ranged from 0.2% in Saysettha district, Attapeu province to 69% in Khousa district, Phongsaly province. Please see table 3 below for more details on distribution of informants by ethnic groups.

Table 3: Number of informants by ethnic groups

District	Total	# of informants by ethnic group						
		Keummou	Phounoi	Yang	Lao	Akha	Tai	Hor
Khousa district, Phongsaly	335	230 (69%)	07 (2%)	29 (9%)	15 (4%)	45 (13%)	09 (3%)	-
		Keummou	Xingmoun	Mong	Lao	Ew- mien	Tai	
Xiengkhor district, Houaphanh	315	-	34 (11%)	47 (15%)	102 (32%)	20 (6%)	112 (36%)	-
			Phouthai		Lao	Xek	Tai	
Hinboun district, Khammouane	534	-	37 (7%)	-	457 (86%)	20 (4%)	20 (4%)	-
		Keummou	Cheng	Sadang	Lao	Brao	Yea	Alack
Saysettha district, Attapeu	504	1 (0.2%)	134 (27%)	4 (1%)	148 (29%)	182 (36%)	15 (3%)	20 (4%)

III. SUFS findings

SUFS gathered citizen’s opinion about **six main public services**, namely **(1)** primary education (services of primary and lower secondary schools), **(2)** primary health care services (services of health centres and district hospitals), **(3)** water supply and sanitation service (WASH), **(4)** public work service (road and bridges), **(5)** Agriculture extension services (services of district agriculture extension stations/centres), and **(6)** civil registration service (services of DoHA).

The survey looked into dimensions related to the governance of these services. These dimensions include: service usage, access to the services, quality of the services and transparency in services provision. These dimensions are defined as follow:

Public Service usage – is whether or not the citizens use the service that the local government provides. If they do not use, the survey explored more about why.

Access to public services – is about how easy or difficult citizens can go and get services from public service facilities, for instance, health centers, schools, agriculture extension stations and in some cases from district line offices, for example district home affairs office and district public works office. Access can include physical access, which means how easy or difficult it is to go/travel to the service facilities. Access also means procedures that requires citizens to follow to receive the services.

Quality of the services – refers to the quality of the service process, of the outcomes, of the design and of the relationship with the service users. The service quality relates very much with user's expectation towards the public services and the extent to which the service providers can or cannot meet the user's expectations.

Transparency in service provision - means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media.

In addition to these, the survey also explored about suggestions/complains mechanism, about people's contacts/relationship with district authority, especially leaders and Provincial People Assembly (PPA). Since people's participation is crucial, this survey also captured villager's participation in the village development planning. Lastly, the survey asked villager's opinions about capacity and attentiveness of staff, who provide services.

Competence – it is the professional skills of those who deliver services, that are continuously maintained and strengthened in order to improve their output and impact. Public officials are motivated to continuously improve their performance. Practical methods and procedures are created and used in order to transform skills into capacity and to produce better results.

The findings on the above-mentioned dimensions of different public services covered in this SUFS are presented in the following sub-sections.

A. General Findings

1. Service utilization

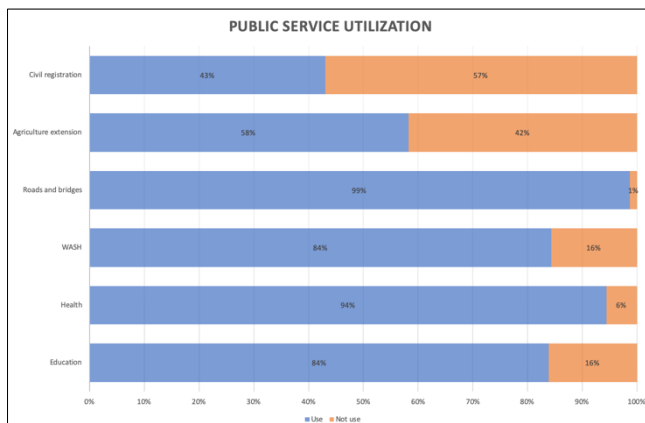
As shown in figure 1, it is obvious that roads and bridges, which is the services of public work sector, has the highest utilization rate. Almost all (99%) interviewed informants reported that they used these. Second to his service is primary healthcare service has been used by most (94%) of interviewed informants. Many people (84%) use Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and primary education service.

The service that has been used least was Civil registration service provided by district home affairs office (DoHA). Less than half (43%) of interviewed informants reported that they used this service. Agriculture extension service, which is provided by the district agriculture extension technical stations / District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO), has not been

used much also by the villagers. Only slightly more than half (58%) reported that they used this service.

Figure 1: Public service utilization

The interviewed informants report some reasons for not using the service. The key reasons for not using services reported by the informants, which have significant implications for service providers include:



- Lack of money to send children to schools
- Lack of money to pay for treatments and the healthcare service facilities are far
- No authorities came to discuss about WASH service in their areas
- The geographical / environmental condition surrounding some villages is not favorable for building water supply system
- No money to purchase materials and for building toilets
- The extension service do not reach the villages yet or do not see any unit coming to the village
- They do not have access to agricultural land
- There is no road access to a few sampled villages, thus the informants reported that they do not use this service. They travel by boats from their villages to elsewhere especially to service facilities, such as health center or hospital.

2. Ease of access

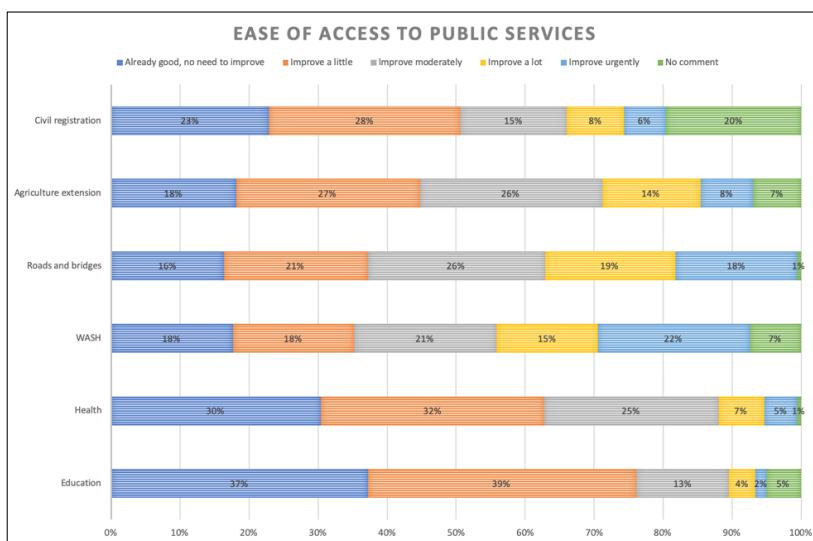
People’s feedback on service accessibility varies. In general, people are satisfied with the accessibility to public services. Access to primary education and primary healthcare are of the highest satisfactory of many informants. 37% and 30% of informants reported that access to these services is already good.

For service like roads-bridges, about 37% of informants urge for an improvement urgently. They suggested to fix damaged roads, expand road’s size, and pave small streets within villages with asphalt. About 27% of informants propose that the responsible authority should fix the borehole system and other water sources. Some of them requested for toilet bowls and urge the authority to promote usage of toilets.

Another 22% of informants suggested to improve agriculture extension service. They suggested that the agriculture extension staff should go out more to villages and provide training and advises to villagers. Some requested for supports in terms of agriculture production inputs.

Figure 2: Feedback about access to public services

14% of informants suggest to improve civil registration service. The responsible authority should disseminate information about civil registration to people so they would understand the importance of this. In fact, from this survey, about 40% of informants did not provide their comment on civil registration. This may be because it is a new service with low usage so far; people can, therefore, not be able to provide comment for improvement. For details please refer to figure 2.



3. Service Quality

As shown in figure 3 below that the quality of the civil registration received good feedback more than others. 41% of informant indicated that this service is already good, whereas 46% said that it is needed to improve only a little. Primary education also received rather good feedback on service quality. 23% of informants indicated that the quality of the primary education service is already good, while almost half (45%) said it needs to be improved a little.

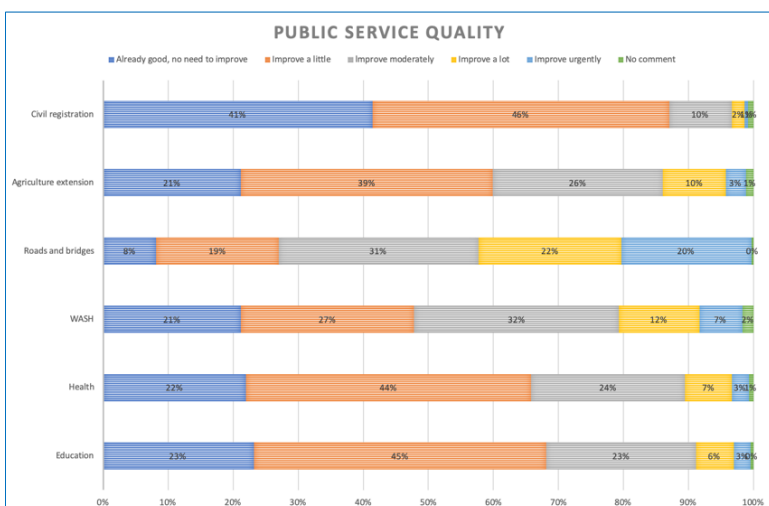


Figure 3: Feedback about service quality

to observe that while some percentages of informants indicated that they satisfied, suggesting that the quality of WASH is already good, 17% of informants suggested that this service's quality should be improve a lot and urgently.

Primary healthcare receives similar rating, having 22% of informants said the service quality is already good and 44% suggested that it only needs to be improved a little.

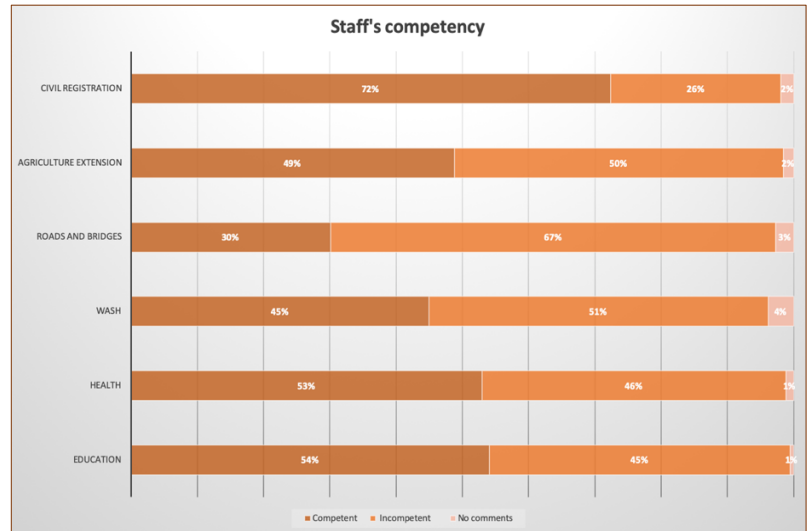
People seem not very happy with roads and bridges. Majority of informants (73%) suggested that it needs to be improved moderately to urgently. Of these 22% suggested to improve a lot and 20% said that it requires urgent improvement. It is interesting

4. Staff's competency

Delivering good quality service requires competent and attentive staff. The SUFS results show that the district staff in several sectors still have limited capacity from villager's perspectives.

As shown in figure 4, majority (67%) of informants indicated that staff from public work office (roads and bridges) are not competent. Approximately half (45% - 51%) of the informants suggested that staff who provide primary education, healthcare, WASH and agriculture extension services are incompetent. Although the proportion of informants who said that education and healthcare staff are competent outweighed this, but the this does not make the overall picture good. The only sector that majority (72%) of informants indicated that staff are competent is home affair office, which provides civil registration service.

Figure 4: Staff's competency

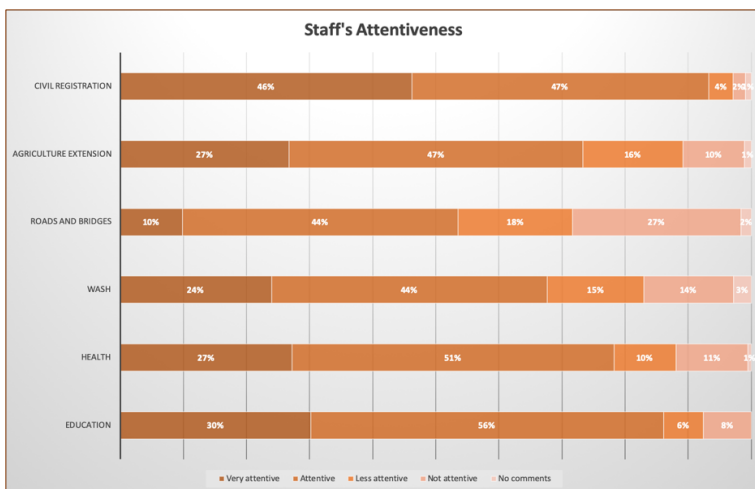


Yet, this can be bias because the staff from DoHA were part of the survey team. Thus, this shows strong needs for capacity development of district staff.

5. Staff attentiveness

Good service also requires staff be attentive to their clients when providing services. When assessing staff attentiveness, the informants have similar rating pattern to the rating for staff competency. As shown in the figure 5, civil registration service staff of DoHA received high rating. 46% of informants indicated that DoHA's staff are very attentive, while 47% specified that DoHA staff are attentive to a satisfactory level. Second to this service is primary education service. 30% of informants suggested that education staff are very attentive and 56% said that education staff are attentive to a satisfactory level. Healthcare and agriculture extension staff are rather attentive in the opinions of many informants. 27% indicated that staff from these two sectors are very attentive and approximately half (47% - 51%) of the informants said that the staff are attentive.

Figure 5: Staff's attentiveness



27% indicated that staff from these two sectors are very attentive and approximately half (47% - 51%) of the informants said that the staff are attentive.

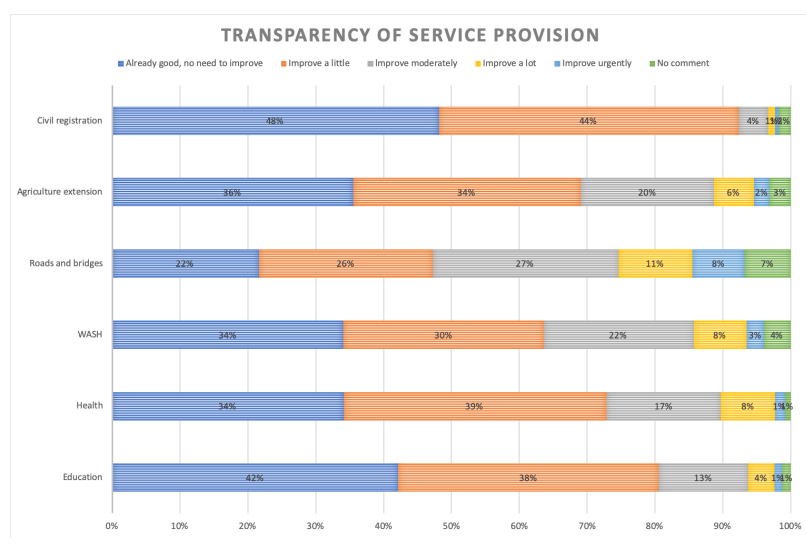
Public work staff and WASH staff have been rated as least attentive. While only 10% of informants suggested that Public work staff are very attentive, many informants (together 45%) suggested that the staff are less and not attentive at all. There were small percentage

(24%) of informants indicated that WASH staff are very attentive, while quite a number of informants (together 29%) said that WASH staff are less and not attentive when doing their jobs.

6. Transparency of service provision

The survey results indicated that people have high level of satisfaction towards the transparency of sectoral services. As shown in figure 6 below citizens appeared to satisfy with civil registration’s transparency to the highest level, followed by the primary education service. Almost half (48%) of informants indicated that the civil registration is already transparent and 44% only suggested to improve a little. Very few people (1%) said that this service needs to improve transparency a lot and urgently. Similarly, 42% of informants specified that primary education service is already transparent, while 38% suggested to improve only a little. People are generally happy with transparency of healthcare, WASH and agriculture extension service. 34% and 36% of informants indicated that healthcare, WASH and agriculture extension service are already transparent.

Figure 6: Transparency of service provision



People have lowest level of satisfaction towards transparency of Public work service (roads and bridges). Only 22% of informants think that this service is already transparent. There are larger percentage of informants (8% and 7%) suggested that this service needs to improve it’s transparency a lot and urgently as compare to 1%-4% of informants suggest other service sectors to improve a lot and urgently.

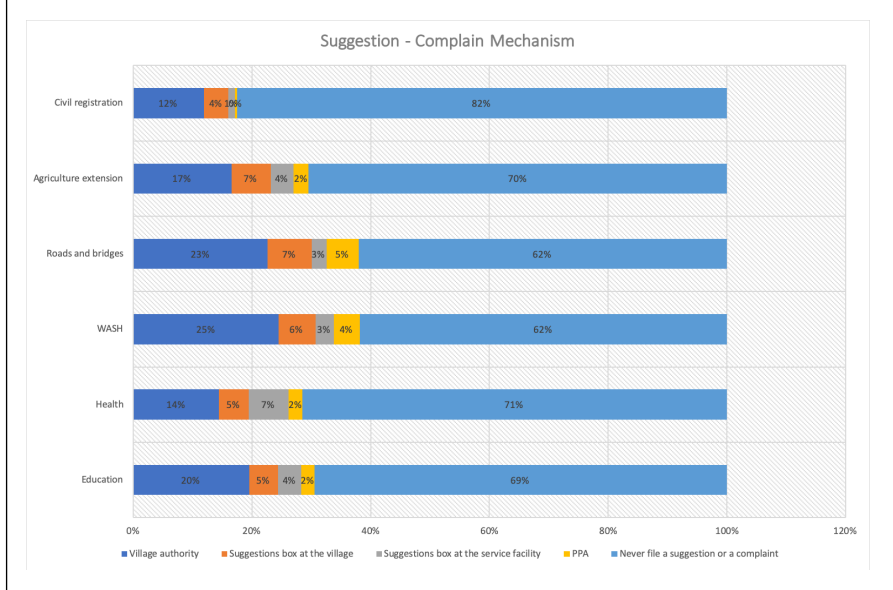
7. Complain mechanism

As shown in figure 7, majority of people (approx. 60% - 80%) never provide a suggestion or file a complaint about public service. The percentage of informants, who indicated that they gave suggestions or file complaints about WASH service and roads and bridges, was the highest. 38% of informants provided their suggestions. Of these, 23%-25% gave suggestions through village authority, 6%-7% dropped their comments in suggestion box in the village (where available), 3% put their comments in the suggestion box in the service facility and about 4%-5% gave comments to PPA. In fact, village authority is the first and main point of government contact for villagers, especially rural villagers. Suggestion box does not available in all villages and in all service facilities. PPA is new phenomena for Laos. Many people are not aware of PPA’s roles. Many are not aware that PPA is their representatives and that they can actually give suggestion through PPA and file complaints with.

Those to never give suggestion or file a complaint reasoned that:

- The services are already satisfactory
- Do not know what to suggest, to who, where and how to file a complaint
- Do not have enough courage, feeling considerate
- Some already complained but have not receive response / issues have not been solved. They ended up solving by themselves.
- Many rely on village authority to give suggestions to the public service providers and to work with the public sector. Village authority know more and have higher authority than villagers, reported by some informants.

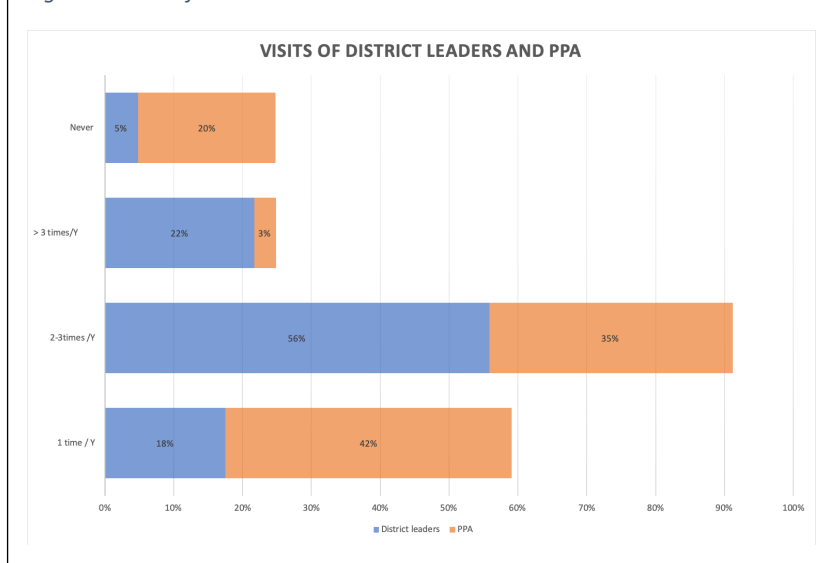
Figure 7: Suggestion – Complain mechanism



The suggestions or complaints that villagers asked were mostly resolved by the concerned district offices. Approximately 60% - 70 % reported that their suggestions were resolved. Sectors that could not respond to and resolve villager’s suggestion much are WASH and public work (roads and bridges). This could be because these two sectors deal solely with infrastructure: water supply systems, roads and bridges. To solve issues relating to these, would require budget, which is often scarce.

8. Visits from district leaders and PPA

Figure 8: Visits of district leaders and PPA

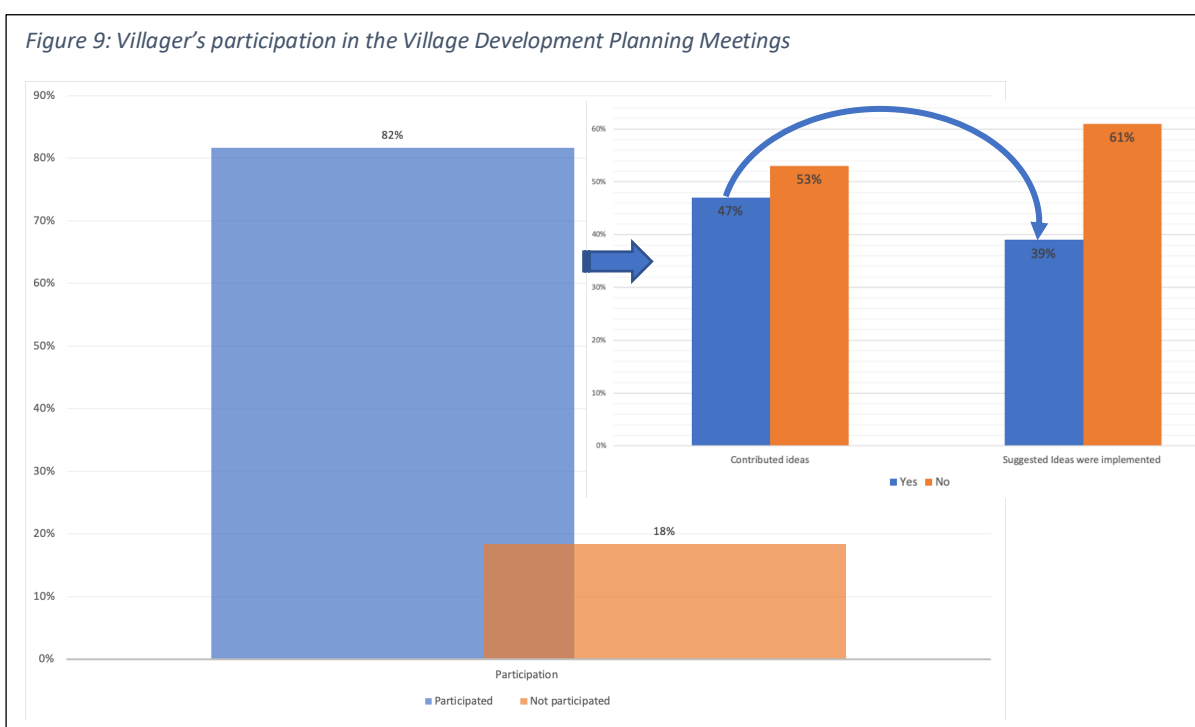


It was found that the district leaders visit villagers and work with them at the grassroots level relatively often. Majority (56%) of informants reported that district leaders visited their village 2-3 times in the past year. For local community, a visit or visits from district authority, especially the leaders is crucial. The leader’s advices and guidance motivate local people to follow. In fact, in the feedback, informants

suggested that they would like leaders to visit them often to provide guidance on livelihood development.

The PPA made fewer visits to villages than district leaders. Majority of informants reported that PPA visit their village only once in the past year. Some (35%) informants reported that PPA visited their village 2-3 times per year. It is interesting to note that 20% of informants reported that PPA never visited their village. Visits from PPA are equally if not more significant for villagers. PPA can provide advices to villagers on livelihood development, monitor progress of socio-economic development at the village level – implementation level according to Sam Sang policy and to gather villager’s feedbacks and their development needs.

9. Citizen’s participation in village development planning



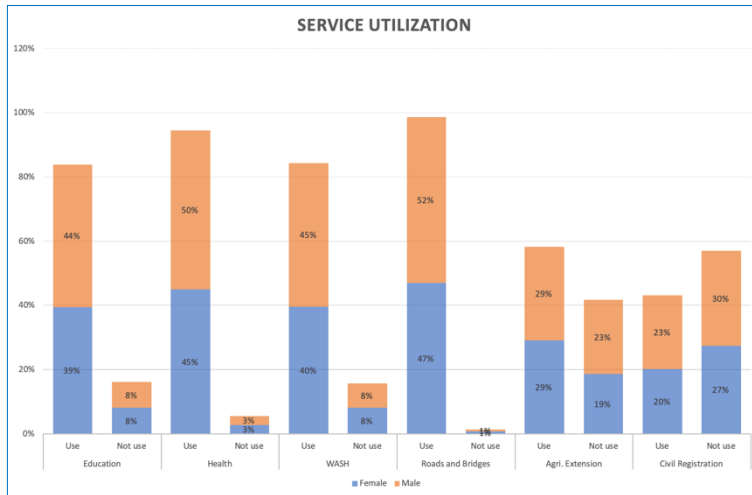
It is encouraging to find that majority of villagers (82%) participated in the village development meeting.

However, many (53%) of those who attended the planning meeting said that they did not contribute ideas to village development plan. It is rather typical phenomena. Culturally Lao people are generally rather shy to speak up. Villagers from rural areas are even more so. Village planning meetings are often led by village authority in a rather formal manner. In such setting, it is highly likely that villagers only show up to get head counts but not for idea contribution. The fact that the suggested development ideas have not been implemented further discouraged people from contributing meaningful ideas. 61% of informants who reported that they contributed ideas confirmed that their ideas have not been implemented. Practically, not all villager’s ideas can possibly be included in the development plan as development priorities and that ultimately be implemented due to several reasons, such as budget availability, practicality, etc. However, villagers should be informed about the reasons why and why not their ideas have not been implemented.

B. Findings disaggregated by gender

The SUFS covered almost the same number of female and male representatives of households – survey informants. In total, 48% of informants were female, while 52% were male. The results of the survey show very similar perspectives of female and male informants. The difference between the opinion of female and male informants is not more than 6%.

Figure 10: Service utilization by male and female groups



In terms of utilization, male citizens seem to use public services more than female although the difference is only up to 5%. For example, 44% of informants who indicated using education service were male, while 39% were female as shown in figure 10.

Figure 11: Access to services by female and male groups

When asked about accessibility to public services, it appeared women are more satisfied with the access to many public services than men. Again, the difference in percentage is very small, less than 3-4%. For example, 16% of informants who indicated that the access to healthcare service is already good was women, while 15% was men.

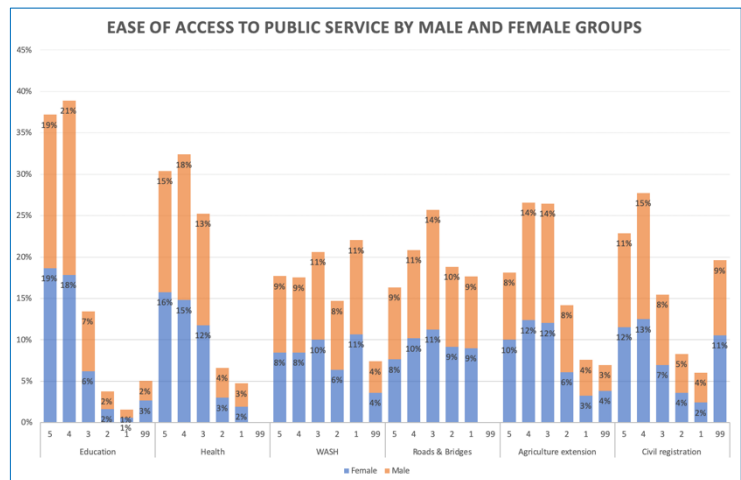


Figure 12: Service quality by female and male groups

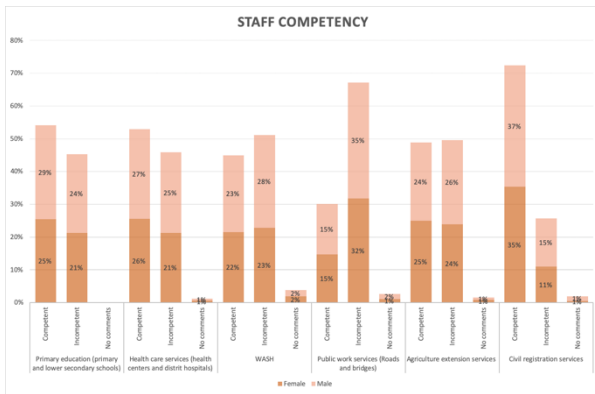


The opinions of women and man towards service quality are almost the same. From the big picture, slightly more women satisfied with quality of several services than man. For example, 12% of informants who said quality of education service is already good were women, while 11% were men.

Figure 13 and Figure 14 also show very similar pattern of women's and

men’s opinions about staff’s competency and attentiveness. The differences are only 1 to 6%.

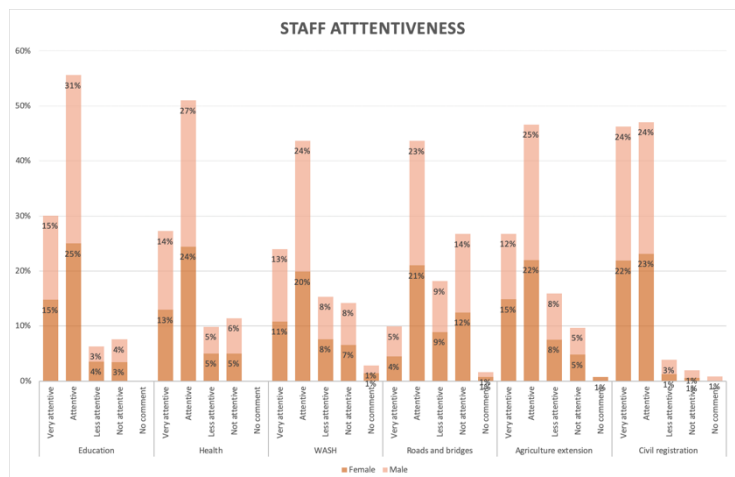
Figure 13: Staff competency by female and male groups



More men perceived that staff of many sectors, such as education, health including WASH and DoHA, are competent. For example, 19% of informants, who suggested that education staff are competent, were men, while 25% were women. 37% of informants who said that civil registration staff are competent were men, 35% were women.

Figure 14: Staff Attentiveness by female and male groups

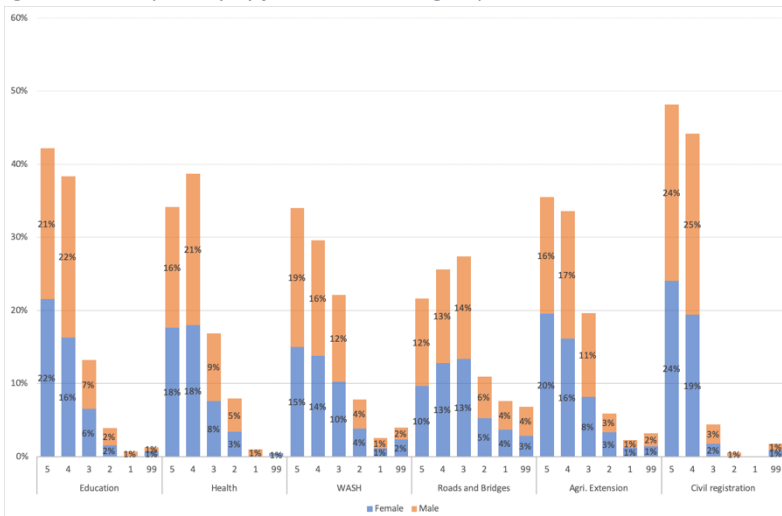
Similarly, more men than women thought that staff are attentive. For instance, 31% of informants, who said that education staff are moderately attentive, were men, while 25% were women. 24% of informants, who indicated that civil registration staff are very attentive, were men, while 22% were women.



It is interesting to note that more female informants tend to favour agriculture extension staff than male.

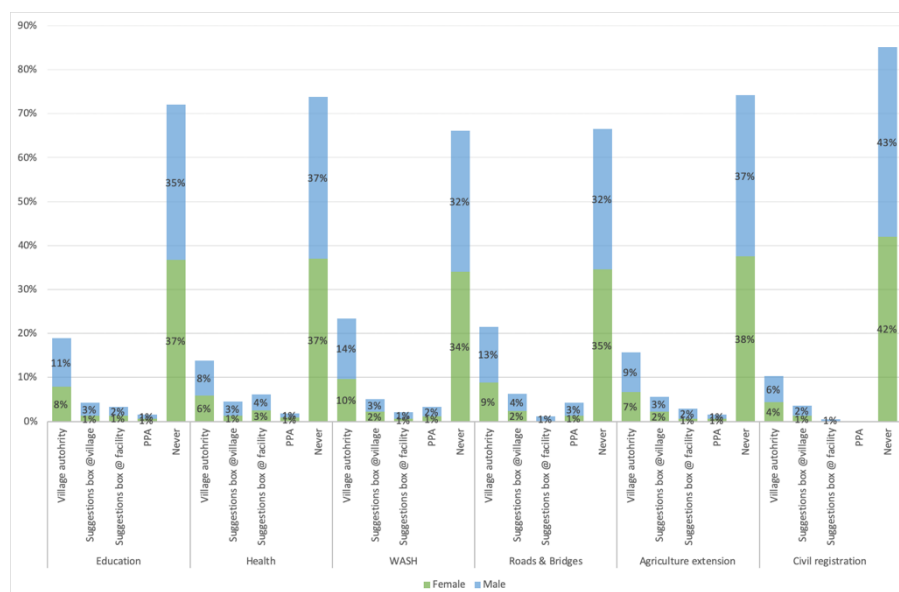
More female informants (25% were women vs. 24% were men) specified that agriculture extension staff are competent. Likewise, 15% of informants, who indicated that agriculture staff are very attentive, were women, while 12% were men.

Figure 15: Transparency by female and male groups



The opinions of female and male groups of informants toward transparency of service provision are very similar. There is slight difference which is less than 6%. For example, 12% of informants who said public work service (roads and bridges) is transparent were men, while 10% were women.

Figure 16: Suggestions/complains by female and male groups



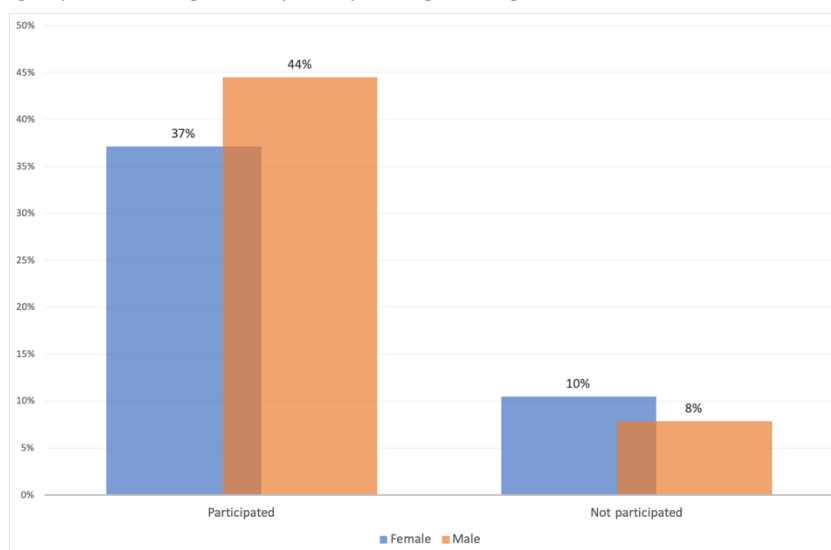
Nationally women tend to be shier than men, especially when it comes to voicing their concerns. This is even more true in the culture of Asian rural communities. Among the many informants who never give any suggestion or complain about the public services larger percentage is female

informants, although the difference is not significant. For example, 37% who never suggest improvement to education service were female informants, while 35% were male. 35% of those who never complain about roads and bridges were women, while 32% were men.

IV.

Figure 17: Participation of female and male groups in the village development planning meeting

The difference in participation of women and men in village development planning process is also not so big. However, it is not surprising that less women participated than men. 37% of those informants who participated in the village development planning meetings were female, while 44% were male. Obviously, there is strong need to encourage women to participate more in the development process, starting from the planning stage. They also have to be given opportunities to share ideas, especially to share their needs and their needs should be highly considered.

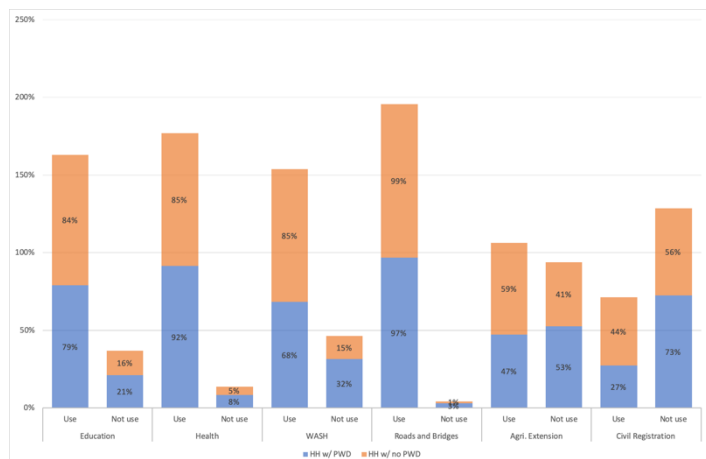


A. Findings from perspectives of persons with disabilities

The SUFS captured perspective of persons with disabilities and/or representatives of the households with member/s with disabilities as well. The results of the survey show some differences in opinions of households with person/s with disabilities and households without person/s with disabilities in some areas.

1. Utilization

Figure 18: Utilization of services by persons with and without disabilities



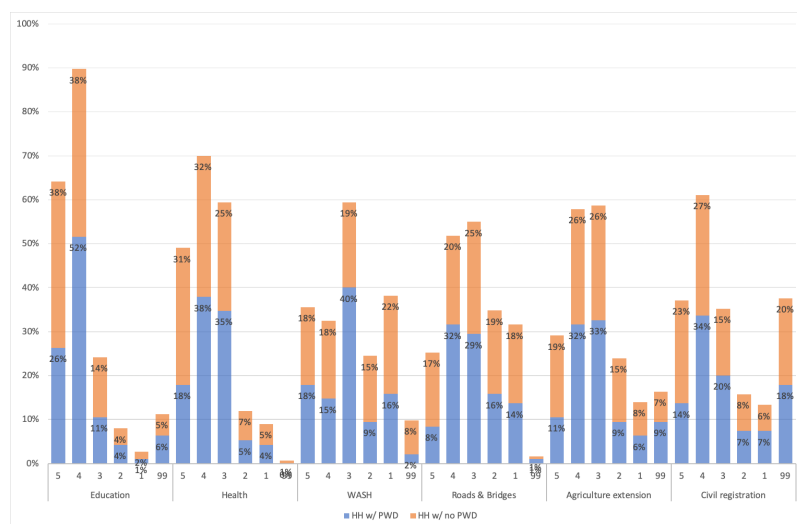
It is not very surprising that persons with disabilities or their household representatives use services more than households with no members with disabilities, except of healthcare service. More (92%) persons with disabilities or households with members with disabilities use healthcare service than persons without disabilities (82%). It is interesting to note that persons with disabilities use WASH service and civil registration service relatively less than persons without disabilities.

service and civil registration service relatively less than persons without disabilities.

2. Access

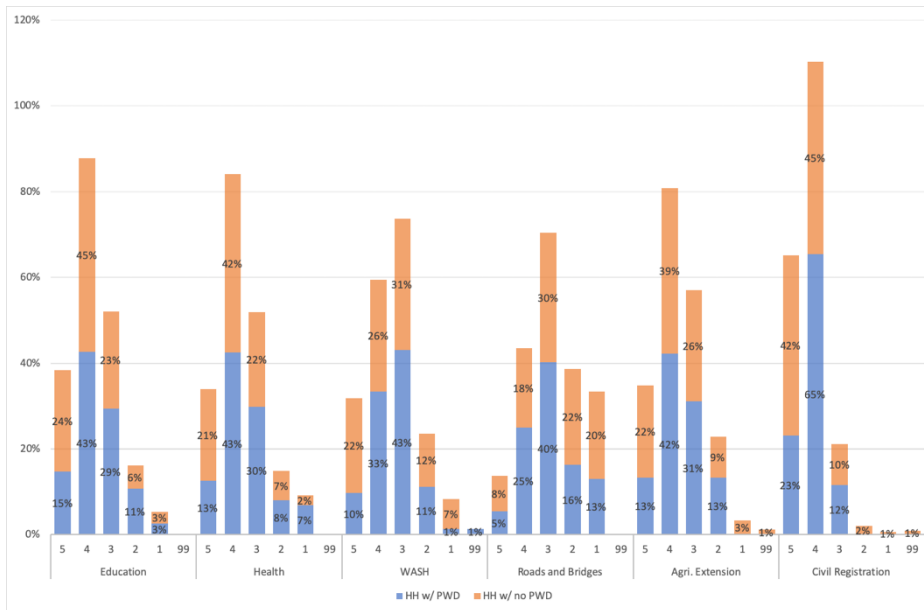
Access to services is clearly an issue for persons with disabilities. Smaller percentages of persons with disabilities indicated that access to almost all services is already good. For example, 18% of persons with disabilities indicated that the access to healthcare service is already good, while 31% of persons without disabilities suggested so. That means that while 78% of persons with disabilities want this service to improve, only 64% of persons without disabilities suggested so. Only access to WASH, there is equal percentage (18%) of persons with and persons without disabilities indicated that the access to this service is already good.

Figure 19: Access to services by persons with and without disabilities



3. Quality

Figure 20: Service quality from perspective of persons with and without disabilities



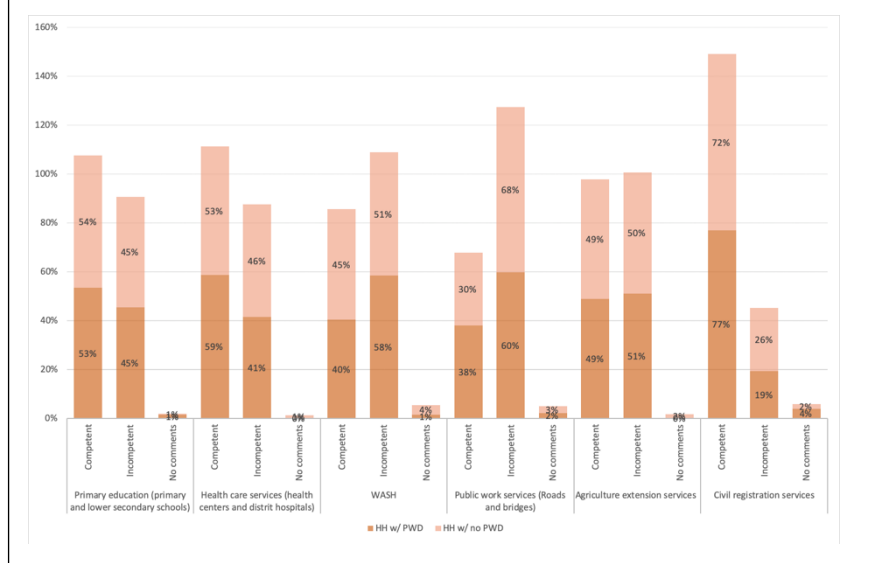
Similar to opinions about other aspects of services, persons with disabilities seem less happy with the qualities of all services covered in this survey than persons without disabilities. For example, only 15% of persons with disabilities indicated that the service quality is

already good, while 24% of persons without disabilities said so. At the same time, 14% of persons with disabilities Vs. 9% of persons without disabilities indicated that quality of this services needs to be improve a lot and urgently. Likewise, 15% of persons with disabilities Vs. 9% of persons without disabilities suggested that the quality of healthcare service need to be improved. It is worth to note that there is rather big difference in opinions about quality of civil registration service. Majority of persons with disabilities (65%), which is more than percentage of persons without disabilities (45%) suggested to improve the quality of this service a little. Yet, the percentage of persons without disabilities, who indicated that this service already has good quality, is much higher than percentage of persons with disabilities.

4. Staff competency

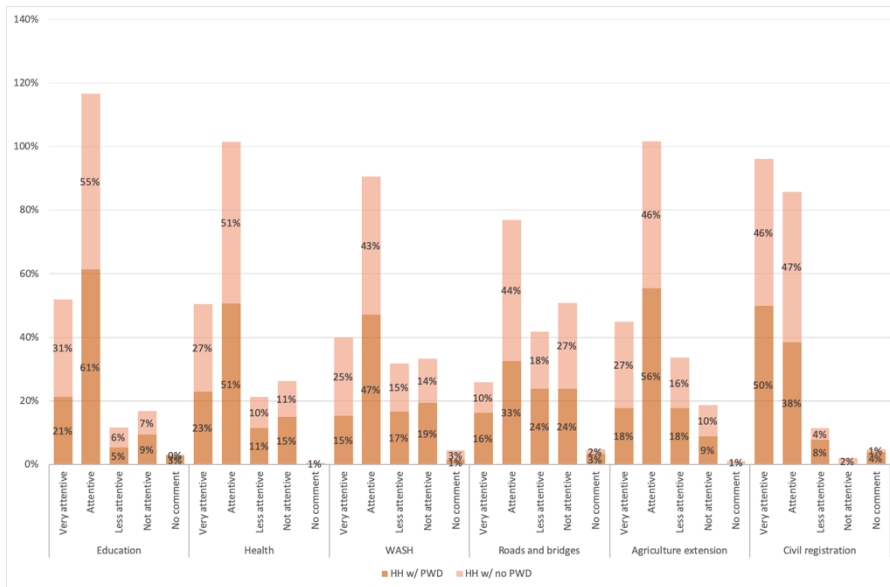
There is no significant difference between opinions of persons with and without disabilities about staff competency. The difference is only up to 8%. For example, 38% of persons with disabilities Vs. 30% of persons without disabilities indicated that staff from public work and transportation office (roads and bridges) are already competent. 53% of persons with disabilities Vs. 54% of person without disabilities indicated that education staff are already competent.

Figure 21: Staff competency from perspective of persons with and without disabilities



A. Staff attentiveness

Figure 22: Staff attentiveness from the perspectives of persons with and without disabilities

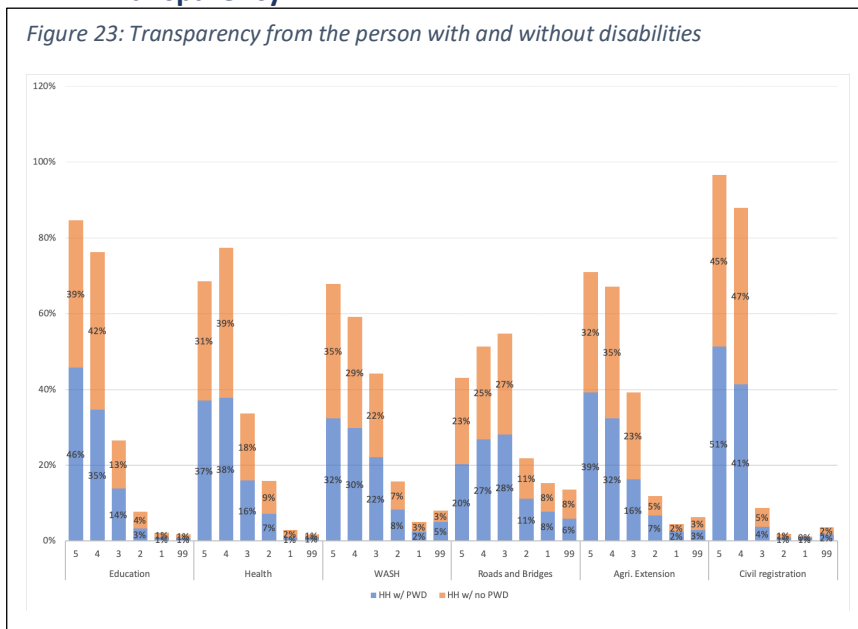


Obviously, the staff attentiveness related strongly to the quality of the services. The informant's opinions about staff attentiveness has similar pattern as their opinions about service quality. Persons with disabilities are less satisfied with the staff attentiveness than persons without

disabilities. For instance, percentage of persons with disabilities, who indicated that staff from education and healthcare services are very attentive, is 10% less than the percentage of persons without disabilities who said so (21% vs. 31% and 15% vs. 25% respectively). There are more (15% of) persons with disabilities indicated that staff of healthcare service are not attentive, than persons without disabilities (11%). 19% of persons with disabilities Vs. 14% of persons without disabilities indicated that WASH staff are not attentive.

B. Transparency

Figure 23: Transparency from the person with and without disabilities

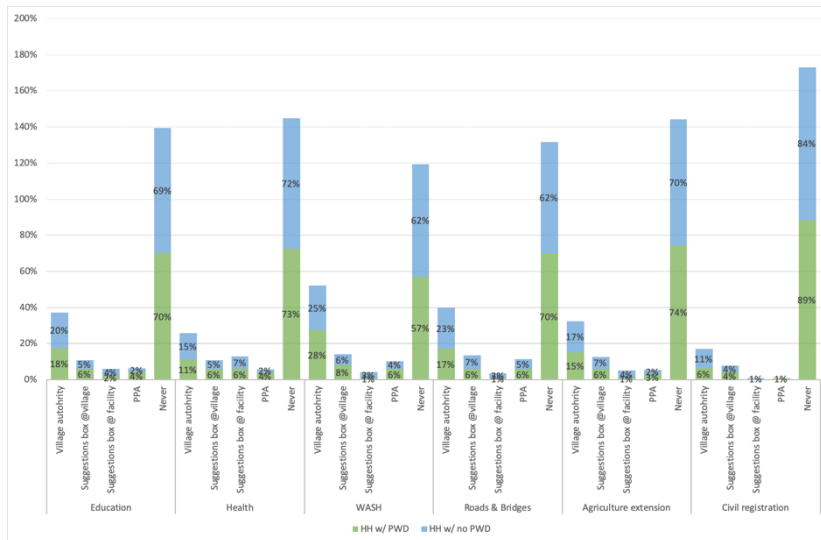


There is only slight difference in the opinions of persons with and without disabilities about transparency in service provision. The biggest difference is only 7%. For example, 46% of persons with disabilities vs. 39% of persons without disabilities suggested that education service is already transparent. 20% of persons with

disabilities vs. 23% of persons without disabilities indicated that public work and transportation (roads and bridges) service is already transparent.

5. Suggestions/Complain mechanism

Figure 24: Suggestions channels used by persons with and without disabilities

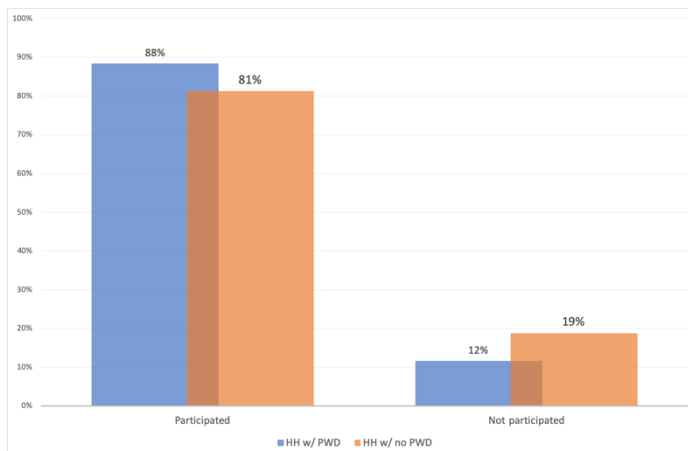


Similar to overall population surveyed, majority of persons with disabilities also never suggest comments or complain about the public services. 57% to 89% of persons with disabilities indicated that they never suggest. It is interesting to note that persons with disabilities tend to provide comments using suggestions box that is

available in their village. This can be due to limited mobility or shyness. For instance, 8% of persons with disabilities vs. 6% of persons without disabilities indicated that they provided comments through suggestion box in their village.

6. Participation in village development planning

Figure 25: Participation of persons with and without disabilities in the village development planning



It is interesting to note among persons with disabilities many (88%) reported that they participated in the village development planning. In fact, if compare the percentage the percentage of persons with disabilities who participated in the planning meeting is slightly higher (which is 88%) than the percentage of persons without disabilities (which is 81%). Almost half of those who joined the meeting contributed ideas.

V. Citizen's Feedbacks

A. Primary education (primary and secondary schools):

- Increase the number of teachers and improve the quality of teaching, for instance using variety and better teaching methods. Art teachers are in demand for some schools.
- Enhance teacher's capacity by providing training and teacher's education level upgrading. For instance, providing a chance to teachers who have diploma to study further to get bachelor and for those with bachelor to get masters, etc.
- Improve teacher's attentiveness. The teachers should be committed to teaching and teach regularly completing all sessions required meeting the required full number of hours they have been assigned to teach in each semester. In the case that teachers cannot come to teach in a particular day, they should inform the family that the class will be cancelled. As part of the solution to this problem, villagers recommended that teachers, who are from other villages, should stay or live in the village that they teach in. This is particularly the case of remote village. If the teachers stay far from the village they teach in, there are chances that they come late, miss the class and/or take long leave to visit their family. It was also recommended to construct dormitory for teachers. Preferably the government should recruit and assign teachers who are local people to teach in their own village.
- The government should provide financial support to teachers, especially those who are working as volunteer teachers.
- We would like to have a kindergarten and upper secondary school in our village;
- Improve access road to the school, so that children can travel to school during both dry and rainy season. In some cases, the villagers suggested to move the school to a more convenient location.
- Improve school building and in some cases, requested to build not school building.
- Provide support to students. For example, having a policy to provide quota for outstanding students to study further at the higher level. Provide lunch to students.
- Improve school facilities such as toilets with water supply, electricity, tables, chairs and boards. It was requested also support for improving school environment, for instance, building/fixing fences and yards. The villagers also ask for supports in terms of teaching and learning equipment.
- Fee collection or collection of cash contribution for school repair each year should be done in a more transparent manner. The amount ask should be appropriate to the income level of the people in that area. The line office should disseminate regulations regarding to educational fees and service fees. The collected fee and school finance management in general should be done transparently. It was requested that the schools report to student's parent about school's revenue and expenditures.
- District education office should assign its staff to meet villagers and encourage parents to send their children to schools
- Have school regulations with strong enforcement such as starting time and finishing time, the dress code of students at secondary school;

B. Primary health care (district hospitals, health centers):

- We would like have more convenient road access;
- Increase the number of doctors and nurses;

- Develop professional capacity of healthcare staff, including doctors, nurses, especially the capacity to come up with precise diagnoses on the patients' symptoms. It was suggested to also improve capacity of village volunteer and provide some medicine to use in emergency cases.
- Improve healthcare staff's attitudes, ethics and disciplines. The feedbacks said that staff should be more punctual. They should be more attentive when taking care of the patients. They should speak to patients in a politer manner. They should work in a transparent manner and follow the code of conduct. They should show high commitment. They should now have discrimination against gender, social status, ethnics, economic status of patients. It is suggested that they treat everyone fairly and equally. Specially attention and care should be given to pregnant women, especially those who are near due time to deliver.
- Improve service delivery, including speed of service delivery. They should improve the service process to provide fast service, such as receiving patients, providing treatment in a timely manner and referral process. The referral letters should be issued quickly. It was requested also that the medical staff stay in the health centres 24 hours, so that when there is health emergency case happen the injured people could be saved. It is also suggested that preferably, there is at least one experienced medical staff stay on duty.
- Improve facilities: there were a lot of request for having modern medical equipment and supplies in the health centers and district hospitals. These facilities should have sufficient supply of medicines. There should also be more patient's rooms/beds to accommodate many parients especially emergency cases. If possible, the villagers would like district hospitals to be able to provide treatment, for instance, small operations, not having to refer the cases to provincial hospitals. That is because going to the provincial hospital is a big concern and financial burden for many villagers.
- In relation to the facility, some villagers requested to have a health center in their village. This is not always possible. This shows that district health office could provide information about healthcare provision policy. For instance, information about a health center should provide services covering villagers in the vicinity of 10 km.
- Health treatment fee: There was a request to provide fee exemptions for poor people. Health care policy information, especially information about what villagers have to pay and what are the costs that the government covers. Villagers also requests for government's support to cover the expenses such as daily allowance of drivers, petrol cost, in case of transferring patients from the health centres/district hospitals to the provincial hospital.
- It was suggested that the authority to implement health prevention measures/policies.

C. WASH:

- Improve water systems so that the amount of water is sufficient for consumption all year around. The villagers requested for more boreholes and water pipes/taps and water tanks. This were requests for improving the upstream and water basins areas. The villagers asked for budget to build drainage and waste management in the areas of upstream and basins. There was also a need to improve road access to water basin. In some areas, the villagers proposed to the concerned sectors to recheck the spring source structure and filters at the upstream basin to ensure that water is clean and

safe for consumption. It was requested that the WASH sector staff to have more regular visit to villages in order to be aware about whether the villagers have sufficient water for consumption or not and help check the water quality;

- Some villagers request for support to provide water system built in their village, especially the newly settled villages.
- WASH office staff should monitor water supply system use in the villages and provide instructions/advises to villagers on how to maintain the system. They also educate households on how to maintain cleanliness the areas surrounding the upstream water source areas.
- Improve water treatment to remove/reduce water contamination level;
- Consider reducing the prices of water supply because people have low income and have difficulty to pay for water fees;
- Request WASH staff to be more attentive when on working on duty and help to improve the water quality; They should help solve issues quickly after received requests for help.
- Request to the authority to provide latrines and encourage villagers to use it. The authority should also help to mobilize funds for building toilets
- Improve solid waste (garbage) management. Villagers also want to know how garbage collector/company manages garbage collection fee from rubbish collection and who is responsible for this.

D. Agriculture extension services

- Technical supports:
 - We would like the extension staff to come to villages often to meet people and to provide trainings and technical advice on how to growth crops, using techniques that will give high yield, pest control and how to raise animal, how to prevent animal diseases.
 - Inspect the areas – geographical location and the environmental condition of that areas and specify which area is suitable for animal farming. In that area that is not suitable for animal raising, the officers should instruct them not to do so and try to help locate suitable place. For example, in the area nearby the residence area, some families raise pigs or having a pig farm. This creates air pollution for residents living nearby.
 - The agriculture office should help resolve the forest fire problems; They should collect detailed data on the impacted households. So far, the data collection did not cover sufficient details. Thus, some households that have their properties damaged as severe impacts from the forest fire, did not receive the assistance. So, it is proposed to the relevant sector office/s to re-investigate this matter and re-check with the impacted households.
- Inputs provision:
 - Provide seeds, breeds, fertilizer and pesticide on time.
 - Provide animal vaccines widely and sufficiently because so far people have to buy by themselves.
 - Adjust the prices of pesticide. The DAFO sells pesticide more expensive than in the markets.
- Marketing:
 - Help us find sources for marketing for rubber
 - Often, the DAFO promotes agriculture production and animal husbandry hence encourages farmers to produce and raise. However,

there is still limited support to market and help farmers to sell their products. There are cases in which there is excessive quantity of products and the traders tend to give very low prices to farmers.

- Irrigation:
 - Construct irrigation system for us so that we can grow rice during dry season.
 - The fees for irrigation system are too high, propose to reduce the fees.
 - Water supply to rice fields is not enough so propose to resolve this problem.
 - Propose to Irrigation sector to prioritize and manage water to rice fields.
- Agriculture land:
 - The agriculture office to consider allocating agricultural land for growing paddy because there is no land for rice fields.

E. Public work and transportation services (Bridge - road):

- Check the conditions of each road because in the raining season those roads were damaged a lot and difficult to use.
- There were many requests for roads and bridges repair and improvement. That include improving small streets in urban areas and big roads to be in better conditions as some parts were damaged. Some requests the repair of small alleys accessing to villages that are in bad conditions, and upgrade some of them to sealed alleys. Some requested to widen streets inside the villages to enable the use in both dry and rainy seasons. Some requested to improve roads access to schools and villages and health centres. There was a request also to upgrade the road to Mae Cave, a tourist attraction in Khoua district, to a pave road. There is a request to improve the road between Nathong-Nadua (Khoua district), to build road access to water sources and villager's farms.
- There was a request to repair the bridge crossing the Nam-Ma River (in Khoua district) because the agricultural lands are on the other sides of the river. It is difficult for villagers to cross the river to their land to do agriculture production. In some cases, the villagers requested the authority to replace the suspension bridges with a more permanent structure bridge, like metal-concrete bridge. There were requests to build a bridge crossing Nam Bod, a bridge crossing Nam Nau, a bridge crossing Nam Ou, and improve the bridge crossing Hoy Sleng.
- There were also requests for improving the drainage system within villages.
- There were requests from some villages to the district public work and transportation office to help develop village's housing plan or village's residence areas plan. This will help identify the available residence area land and the authority can then allocate the land for housing.
- There was a strong urge for the staff from district Public Work and Transportation office to strengthen and stricken the monitoring of road and bridge construction projects. It was suggested that the staff should monitor the actual construction in the field more regularly. They should stricter to ensure that the finished roads meet the standards and in accordance with the approved budget specified in the contracts. The staff should also inspect the negative impacts of the construction projects to the villagers and to the existing roads, which the companies – construction project owners should provide remedy and repairs. The office should also develop regulations for the villages to

manage/maintain the roads. After the regulation is in place, the technical staff should follow up and encourage villagers to take part in the road maintenance.

- There was a suggestion to improve qualification of technical staff of the sector so that they can provide quality services.

F. Civil registration

- Organize information dissemination campaign to provide information about the importance of civil registration and people's duty in this regard, about relevant legislations and documents to villagers; The information to be disseminated can also include information about official fee for different kinds of document, regulation regarding marriage between a Lao citizen and a foreigner, etc. The campaigns would help raise awareness of villagers – service users about the process, steps and the importance of civil registration;
- Make civil registration forms available in the village office so it is convenient for people to use for applying for registration
- There was also a suggestion to conduct mobile registration campaign at the village level.
- There was a feedback that there are too many procedures and fees for registration. Thus, it was suggested to reduce civil registration fee, e.g. marriage registration fee. If possible, DoHA should exempt fee for death certificates issuance;
- The DoHA should provide quicker services.
- A service for changing names and/or surname should be provided at the district level (no need to go to provincial level).
- A request for an official certification of moving from one province to another should be issued at the district level

G. District leaders and PPA:

- District leaders should come to visit villages more regularly, at least 1-2 times per year, so that:
 - Villagers can raise their concerns and provide feedbacks to authorities for their consideration and action;
 - To provide information about new regulations or any update;
 - To provide guidance to villagers on improving livelihoods to help villagers getting out of poverty
- Request to the district authority to supervise/guide the improvement of road condition so that it is more convenient to travel.
- All relevant district office leaders should come and disseminate information about regulations, about their roles, provide training and work closely with people
- District leaders should bring projects to develop villages in the district, including electricity installation projects

H. Village development planning:

- We would like support for us to construct village office and equip it with speaker phone system so village authority can use for broadcasting news, information and for calling villagers to meetings
- Improve services of village authority;
- Village authority should work regularly;
- Help villagers to get employment;

VI. Conclusion

In general, it can be concluded that this round of SUFS was successfully completed and relatively effectively implemented. The taskforce and committee were set up swiftly. The taskforce contributed greatly to the implementation of the SUFS from the design to the report writing step. The district committee in all four districts closely supervise the district survey team during the implementation, participated actively in the results presentation workshops. The district survey teams put tremendous efforts in data collection overcoming numerous difficulties faced during the survey, traveling to remote villages on the difficult road condition, difficulty in communicating with villagers, who speak ethnic languages.

The findings of the survey indicated that the majority of people use public services. They have high satisfaction with many sectoral services. Citizens were satisfied most about the access to primary education and healthcare services. However, some percentage of informants suggested that access to roads and bridges service need urgent improvement.

In terms of quality of service, people seem to satisfy most about quality of civil registration service, followed by education and healthcare services. Staff, who provide civil registration service, received high rating for their competency. Large percentage of informants also indicated that education and healthcare staff are competent. Likewise, civil registration staff are attentive from the viewpoint of many informants. This followed by education, healthcare and agriculture extension staff, who are also very attentive as indicated by many informants.

In terms of transparency, civil registration service, education, agriculture extension services seem to gain good reputation from many informants. Among the services, public work and transportation (roads and bridges) and WASH received some urges to improve.

Many people never suggest any comment to the government – public service providers. Many feel considerate and did not have courage to voice their concerns. They are not aware about where and how to file a complaint. In fact, district leaders and PPA did have some visits to their village. However, many people were not aware that they can actually suggest comments to PPA.

With regards to participation in the village development planning, many attended the meeting, but not contributed ideas. It could be because they were shy. Another reason could be because some people experienced that the ideas that they suggested have not been implemented.

Thus, to improve the services as well as to improve the SUFS implementation, the following recommendations are suggested for stakeholders to consider.

VII. Recommendations

This survey has a large geographical coverage and the topics are related to many sectors, particularly the administration offices from central to local levels. Therefore, for future improvement, some recommendations are proposed:

A. The taskforce at central level (MoHA):

- The taskforce should take charge of re-design questionnaires to simplify them and make them more precise. The change to the questionnaire re-design could be for instance, group the the questions related to one sector together under

one section. From the experiences conducting SUFS this round, it found that asking all questions relating to one sector, e.g. education is easier for the interviewers and the informants to follow. There will also be the needs to adjust the tools to aid the communication with informants who can only communicate in their own ethnic language. All taskforce members will need to work together on this and come to common understanding from the beginning before conducting another round of the survey.

- The taskforce members should actively participate in all activities from the beginning until the end of the process. Preferably, those members who are assigned to be responsible for which district, it is best if they can work with the district team from that particular district from the start to the end of the SUFS.
- The taskforce should maintain clear communication and active coordination with local level from the initial stage to build up the close working relationship with the district team. This will help to smooth the preparation and implementation process.

B. District SUFS committee at district level:

- Disseminate results of the survey to sectors within district that was covered by this survey to create good understanding about the survey purpose and its results.
- Consider to use the survey results as one of the key bases for preparing the district socio-economic development plan (DSEDP). This will enhance the credibility and practicality of the DSEDP, as it will be more evident based and needs based. This will also help to find the way to improve and resolve problems related to the service delivery.

C. District sectorial offices – service providers:

- Consider using the SUFS results as baseline indicators for their service delivery and for developing development plans. The sector offices should analyse the results and the feedback gathered from villagers until root causes are identified. This will help to come up with practical development plans that enable sector offices to address the issues raised by the villagers in the short, medium and long run.
- Sector office should organize awareness raising campaign to provide information regarding public service provision to local community. This will help citizens to have better understanding about the roles, rights, duties and obligations of service providers and service users/the citizens. This can address many concerns that informants provided as feedbacks in SUFS results.

D. Consultants:

- Conduct refresher training of trainers (ToT) for MoHA taskforce members. The consultants should also coach the taskforce team in conducting the training for district survey teams on data collection, data quality control and data cleaning. The consultant should lead the training on data analysis-report writing and having some (3-4) key taskforce members as co-trainers. This will ultimately build the capacity of the taskforce members and district survey team.
- Adjust the SUFS manual: simplify it so that the users, especially district survey team can follow easily. The manual should also include the part on data cleaning, data analysis and report writing. The report structure should be included in the manual.

E. District survey teams:

- Participate in the process of drafting questionnaires, data coordination, analysis-report writing;
- Carry out the SUFS – data collection following code of ethics of good surveyors/enumerators and focus group discussion facilitators. They are the key people to will ensure the data integrity, data quality, while enhancing villagers’ motivation and participation in the focus group discussion. This will ensure that the SUFS can gather many comments and genuine constructive feedback for improving public services.

F. Donors (through NGPAR):

- Continue financial support at this stage, during which the SUFS is still in the trial and error stage and the capacity of staff at the central and district level is still limited. SUFS is important and necessary for the public sectors. It also builds capacity for the government staff in many ways such as TOT, research and policy making skills, etc.

Annex 1: Data

Table 4: Service utilization

	Use	Not use
Education	1416	272
Health	1594	94
WASH	1424	264
Roads and bridges	1666	22
Agriculture extension	983	705
Civil registration	727	961

Table 5: Access to services

	Already good, no need to improve	Improve little	improve moderately	Improve a lot	Improve urgently	No comment
Education	628	657	227	64	27	85
Health	513	547	426	112	80	10
WASH	299	296	348	248	372	125
Roads and bridges	276	352	434	318	298	10
Agriculture extension	306	449	447	240	128	118
Civil registration	386	468	261	140	102	331

Table 6: Service quality

	Already good, no need to improve	Improve little	improve moderately	Improve a lot	Improve urgently	No comment
Education	328	637	326	82	37	6
Health	350	699	377	115	42	11
WASH	209	263	311	122	65	17
Roads and bridges	136	314	512	366	333	5
Agriculture extension	208	381	257	95	31	11
Civil registration	301	332	70	14	4	6

Table 7: Staff competency

	Competent	Incompetent	No comments
Education	766	642	8
Health	844	731	19
WASH	444	505	38
Roads and bridges	502	1119	45
Agriculture extension	480	488	15
Civil registration	526	187	14

Table 8: Staff attentiveness

	Very attentive	Attentive	Less attentive	Not attentive	No comments
Education	426	787	89	107	7
Health	434	813	157	182	8
WASH	237	431	151	140	28
Roads and bridges	165	727	302	445	27
Agriculture extension	263	458	156	95	11
Civil registration	336	342	28	14	7

Table 9: Transparency

	Already good, no need to improve	Improve a little	improve moderately	Improve a lot	Improve urgently	No comment
Education	597	543	187	55	16	18
Health	544	617	269	127	23	14
WASH	336	292	218	77	25	39
Roads and bridges	360	427	456	182	127	114
Agriculture extension	349	330	193	58	22	31
Civil registration	350	321	32	7	4	13

Table 10: Suggestion – complain mechanism

	Village authority	Suggestions box at the village	Suggestions box at the service facility	PPA	Never file a suggestion or a complaint
Education	335	83	67	38	1191
Health	250	87	116	41	1238
WASH	421	106	53	75	1063
Roads and bridges	388	126	44	92	1062
Agriculture extension	286	113	67	43	1216
Civil registration	178	62	16	6	1234

Table 11: District leader's visits

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 time / Y	296	17.5	17.5	17.5
2-3times /Y	943	55.9	55.9	73.4
> 3 times/Y	367	21.7	21.7	95.1
Never	82	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	1688	100.0	100.0	

Table 12: PPA's visits

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 time / Y	702	41.6	41.6	41.6
2-3times /Y	596	35.3	35.3	76.9
> 3 times/Y	53	3.1	3.1	80.0
Never	337	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	1688	100.0	100.0	

Table 13: Participation in the village development meetings

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Participated	1378	81.6	81.6	81.6
Did not participate	310	18.4	18.4	100.0
Total	1688	100.0	100.0	

Table 14: Service utilization by gender

	Use		Not use	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Education	666	750	138	134
Health	758	836	46	48
WASH	668	756	136	128
Roads and bridges	793	873	11	11
Agriculture extension	490	493	314	391
Civil registration	341	386	463	498

Table 15: Access to services by gender

	No need to improve		Improve a little		Improve moderately		Improve a lot		Improve urgently		No comment	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Education	315	313	301	356	105	122	28	36	10	17	45	40
Health	266	247	250	297	199	227	51	61	33	47	5	5
WASH	143	156	143	153	169	179	108	140	180	192	61	64
Roads and bridges	129	147	172	180	190	244	155	163	152	146	6	4
Agriculture extension	169	137	209	240	203	244	103	137	55	73	65	53
Civil registration	195	191	211	257	118	143	61	79	41	61	178	153

Table 16: Service quality from gender perspective

	No need to improve		Improve a little		Improve moderately		Improve a lot		Improve urgently		No comment	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Education	171	157	294	343	144	182	41	41	14	23	2	4
Health	173	177	333	366	171	206	59	56	16	26	6	5
WASH	98	111	123	140	148	163	54	68	27	38	7	10
Roads and bridges	74	62	132	182	240	272	187	179	158	175	2	3
Agriculture extension	107	101	187	194	126	131	48	47	17	14	5	6
Civil registration	158	143	140	192	34	36	5	9	2	2	2	4

Table 17: Staff competency from gender perspective

	Competent		Incompetent		No comments	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Education	361	405	302	340	3	5
Health	408	436	340	391	10	9
WASH	213	231	225	280	19	19
Roads and bridges	245	257	530	589	18	27
Agriculture extension	246	234	235	253	9	6
Civil registration	257	269	80	107	4	10

Table 18: Staff attentiveness from gender perspective

	Very good		Moderately satisfactory		Satisfactory to less extent		Poor		No comment	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Education	209	217	354	433	50	39	49	58	4	3
Health	206	228	389	424	80	77	80	102	3	5
WASH	107	130	196	235	75	76	65	75	14	14
Roads and bridges	74	91	350	377	148	154	208	237	13	14
Agriculture extension	146	117	216	242	74	82	47	48	7	4
Civil registration	159	177	168	174	9	19	4	10	1	6

Table 19: Transparency from gender perspective

	No need to improve		Improve a little		Improve moderately		Improve a lot		Improve urgently		No comment	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Education	305	292	231	312	92	95	22	33	6	10	10	8
Health	281	263	287	330	121	148	54	73	7	16	8	6
WASH	148	188	136	156	101	117	38	39	11	14	23	16
Roads and bridges	161	199	213	214	223	233	88	94	61	66	47	67
Agriculture extension	192	157	159	171	80	113	33	25	12	10	14	17
Civil registration	175	175	141	180	13	19	3	4	3	1	6	7

Table 20: Suggestion – complain mechanism from gender perspective

	Village authority		Suggestions box at the village		Suggestions box at the service facility		PPA		Never file a suggestion or a complaint	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Education	135	189	21	51	22	34	10	17	629	606
Health	101	139	23	54	44	62	15	16	640	636
WASH	166	237	39	49	10	25	19	38	585	551
Roads and bridges	152	217	41	66	5	20	22	51	593	547
Agriculture extension	115	154	38	58	10	40	11	15	640	625
Civil registration	75	101	21	39	5	9	2	2	717	735

Table 21: Participation in the village development meetings

	Participated		Not participated	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Participation	627	751	177	133

Table 22: Service utilization by persons with disabilities

	Use		Not use	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Education	75	1341	20	252
Health	87	1507	8	86
WASH	65	1359	30	234
Roads and bridges	92	1574	3	19
Agriculture extension	45	938	50	655
Civil registration	26	701	69	892

Table 23: Access to services by persons with disabilities

	No need to improve		Improve a little		Improve moderately		Improve a lot		Improve urgently		No comment	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Education	25	603	49	608	10	217	4	60	1	26	6	79
Health	17	496	36	511	33	393	5	107	4	76	0	10
WASH	17	282	14	282	38	310	9	239	15	357	2	123
Roads and bridges	8	268	30	322	28	406	15	303	13	285	1	9
Agriculture extension	10	296	30	419	31	416	9	231	6	122	9	109
Civil registration	13	373	32	436	19	242	7	133	7	95	17	314

Table 24: Service quality from perspectives of persons with disabilities

	No need to improve		Improve a little		Improve moderately		Improve a lot		Improve urgently		No comment	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Education	11	317	32	605	22	304	8	74	2	35	0	6
Health	11	339	37	662	26	351	7	108	6	36	0	11
WASH	7	202	24	239	31	280	8	114	1	64	1	16
Roads and bridges	5	131	23	291	37	475	15	351	12	321	0	5
Agriculture extension	6	202	19	362	14	243	6	89	0	31	0	11
Civil registration	6	295	17	315	3	67	0	14	0	4	0	6

Table 25: Staff competency from perspective of persons with disabilities

	Competent		Incompetent		No comments	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Education	40	726	34	608	1	7
Health	51	793	36	695	0	19
WASH	29	415	42	463	1	37
Roads and bridges	35	467	55	1064	2	43
Agriculture extension	22	458	23	465	0	15
Civil registration	20	506	5	182	1	13

Table 26: Staff attentiveness from perspective of persons with disabilities

	Very good		Moderately satisfactory		Satisfactory to less extent		Poor		No comment	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Education	16	410	46	741	4	85	7	100	2	5
Health	20	414	44	769	10	147	13	169	0	8
WASH	11	226	34	397	12	139	14	126	1	27
Roads and bridges	15	150	30	697	22	280	22	423	3	24
Agriculture extension	8	255	25	433	8	148	4	91	0	11
Civil registration	13	323	10	332	2	26	0	14	1	6

Table 27: Transparency from perspective of persons with disabilities

	No need to improve		Improve a little		Improve moderately		Improve a lot		Improve urgently		No comment	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Education	305	292	231	312	92	95	22	33	6	10	10	8
Health	281	263	287	330	121	148	54	73	7	16	8	6
WASH	148	188	136	156	101	117	38	39	11	14	23	16
Roads and bridges	161	199	213	214	223	233	88	94	61	66	47	67
Agriculture extension	192	157	159	171	80	113	33	25	12	10	14	17
Civil registration	175	175	141	180	13	19	3	4	3	1	6	7

Table 28: Suggestion – complain mechanism from perspective of persons with disabilities

	Village authority		Suggestions box at the village		Suggestions box at the service facility		PPA		Never file a suggestion or a complaint	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Education	17	319	6	77	2	65	4	34	68	1122
Health	11	239	6	79	6	109	4	27	72	1166
WASH	27	398	8	97	1	51	6	68	56	1007
Roads and bridges	17	371	6	120	1	43	6	86	70	994
Agriculture extension	15	275	6	106	1	65	3	39	73	1123
Civil registration	6	172	4	57	0	15	1	4	85	1348

Table 29: Participation in the village development meetings of persons with disabilities

	Participated		Not participated	
	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD	HH w/ PWD	HH w/ no PWD
Participation	84	1294	11	299