



## DEMOCRACY DIALOGUE SERIES

on

### THE ROLES OF INTELLECTUALS IN CAMBODIA

#### Speakers

- 1) Meas Nee, Social Development Researcher
- 2) Em Sovannara, Lecturer of Political Science
- 3) Ly Sreysrors, Young Analyst

#### Moderator

Chanroeun Pa, President of CID

**Date:** 9 July 2023

**Time:** 9:00-10:30a.m

#### Questions for Discussion

- 1) Who are the intellectuals?
- 2) What are the intellectuals' roles in Cambodian society?
- 3) Why intellectual's roles are important in the society?
- 4) What are the challenges for the intellectuals to exercise their roles in Cambodia nowadays?
- 5) How to Promote the Intellectual's contribution in Cambodia?

#### Summary

The dialogue shed light on who the intellectuals are within Cambodian society. The intellectuals in Cambodia are individuals who possess advanced knowledge and expertise in various fields such as academia, arts, sciences, and social sciences. Their roles in Cambodian society are vital, as they serve as catalysts for progress and development. Intellectuals play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, promoting critical thinking, and advocating for social justice and human rights. The importance of intellectuals' roles in society cannot be overstated. They act as the conscience of the nation, challenging existing norms and practices and pushing for positive change. Their contributions help foster a culture of innovation, creativity, and intellectual growth. Intellectuals also act as bridges between different segments of society, facilitating dialogue and promoting understanding.

However, intellectuals in Cambodia face numerous challenges in exercising their roles. One of the main challenges is the lack of freedom of expression and the limited space for intellectual discourse. Many intellectuals in Cambodia are often silenced or face censorship when they attempt to speak out against injustice or criticise government

policies. Additionally, the lack of financial support and recognition for intellectual endeavours further hinders their ability to make a significant impact. Despite these challenges, intellectuals in Cambodia remain resilient and continue to find creative ways to convey their message and advocate for change, often utilising social media platforms and international networks. Their unwavering dedication to promoting critical thinking and social justice serves as an inspiration to others and highlights the crucial role they play in shaping a better future for their society.

By delving into the intellectuals' roles in Cambodian society, valuable insights were gained regarding their contributions and impact on various aspects such as education, politics, the arts, and social progress. These intellectuals have been instrumental in challenging societal norms and pushing for progressive reforms. Through their work, they have sparked important conversations about human rights, equality, and freedom of expression. Their influence extends beyond Cambodia's borders, as they actively collaborate with like-minded individuals and organisations around the world, amplifying their message and fostering international solidarity. This collective effort is instrumental in driving positive change and building a more inclusive and just society in Cambodia and beyond.

Understanding why intellectuals' roles are important in Cambodian society allows for a deeper appreciation of their influence in shaping public opinion, advocating for change, and promoting human rights. Intellectuals possess the knowledge and critical thinking skills to challenge societal norms, question authority, and offer alternative perspectives. Through their writings, speeches, and activism, they can inspire and mobilise others to stand up for their rights and demand equality. In a country like Cambodia, where freedom of expression is often suppressed, intellectuals play a crucial role in giving voice to marginalised communities and shedding light on injustices. Their courage and dedication pave the way for a more open and democratic society where everyone's rights are respected and protected.