

## Country and Government Context

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, between the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The country's capital, Phnom Penh, is situated at the junction of the Mekong, Tonle Sap, and Bassac rivers. Cambodia's population was 13.4 million in the 2008 census, with 57% of the population aged between 15 and 64 years. In terms of literacy rate, 76.3% of the population is literate and about 30.1% lives below the poverty line.<sup>a</sup>

Cambodia is a constitutional monarchy with a democratic bicameral legislative system. No party gained the required majority of votes to form a government in the July 2003 elections. After protracted negotiations, a coalition government was formed in July 2004. Prince Norodom Sihamoni was crowned king in October 2004 after his father, King Sihanouk, abdicated. Elections in 2007 and 2008 were relatively peaceful.

The legal system is primarily a civil law mixture of French-influenced codes from the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) period, royal decrees, and acts of the legislature, with influences of customary law.

<sup>a</sup> World Bank. 2007. Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey (CSES). Phnom Penh. (Available online at <http://data.worldbank.org/country/cambodia>)

## Civil Society: An Overview

Traditionally, the dominant form of social organization was Pagoda-based associations, which encouraged volunteerism and social service in Cambodia, with strong participation at the village level. Pagoda associations existed before the Khmer Rouge, survived through that time despite repression, and are now again present in numbers in rural Cambodia. Pagoda associations currently do not seem to be linked systematically into development programs or decentralized government structures, and are considered quite separate from the nongovernment organization (NGO) sector in Cambodia.<sup>1</sup>

Other types of grassroots organizations or community-based organizations (CBOs), on the other hand, are numerous and usually linked to development projects. CBOs based on location (e.g., Village Development Committees); a certain interest (farming, fisheries, and water and sanitation); or a group of people (women, the elderly) are present in most villages in Cambodia, but are essentially endogenous to communities and reliant on outside support.<sup>2</sup>

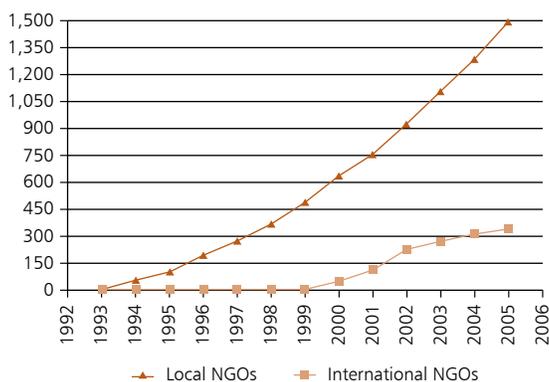
The local NGO sector is vibrant but, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has relatively weak grassroots foundations.<sup>3</sup> Both local and international NGOs are plentiful in Cambodia, and are active across the spectrum from advocacy and human rights organizations through to service delivery, humanitarian and service organizations of many types.

Cambodia's first local NGO was established in 1991. Many more local NGOs were then established during the 1992–1993 United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) period. Most were involved in human rights and voter education activities. Some of these NGOs have since disbanded, while others have switched their focus to development-based activities, partly in response to the availability of external funding, a pattern also followed by international NGOs.

## International and local NGOs play a major role in providing or supporting basic social services, often in remote areas and communities, and are present in every province and major sector in Cambodia.

International NGOs played a major role in providing relief and other humanitarian services during the Kampuchean Emergency following the 1979 ousting of the Khmer Rouge. They conducted an advocacy campaign during this period on behalf of the Kampuchean (Cambodian) people, earning international NGOs the respect of the authorities. Throughout the 1980s and most of the 1990s, international NGOs that were operating in Cambodia were largely focused on service delivery programs; however, after bilateral and multilateral donors entered in 1993, international NGOs shifted their activities to more traditional community development work.

Throughout the 1990s, the numbers of local and international NGOs in Cambodia increased dramatically. The diagram of official registration numbers below shows the growth of the NGO sector in Cambodia over recent years.<sup>4</sup> Despite the increase in NGO numbers in the early 2000s, the sector retains some of the characteristics of a post-conflict civil society. For example, some of these NGOs continue to use models more suitable to humanitarian relief than long-term



Source: Council for the Development of Cambodia, Natural Resources and Environment Programme. 2006. *Mapping Survey of NGO/Association Presence and Activity in Cambodia*.

development, such as parallel service delivery and informally seconding government staff into projects.

The Government of Cambodia and development partners recognize the important contribution of CSOs to the rehabilitation, development, and reform of Cambodia over the last two decades. In a 2008 report for the Brookings Institution, *Aid Effectiveness in Cambodia*, Chanboreth and Hach of the Economic Institute of Cambodia estimated that 45% of the 1,500 local NGOs and 93% of the 316 international NGOs registered with the government were active.

Today, many development-oriented CSOs continue to implement programs that are focused on service delivery, though these programs are now often undertaken in partnership with the government. Agriculture, health, and education are the top three sectors in which local and international NGOs implement programs. In 2009, programs implemented and managed by NGOs accounted for 20% of overseas development assistance according to Cambodian government figures. The majority of total NGO disbursements are used to implement public health programs.<sup>5</sup> Total disbursements for other major program areas include those for rural development, social and community development, and education. In 2006, NGOs employed just under 25,000 people, of which nearly 1,200 were believed to be international staff.<sup>6</sup>

International and local NGOs play a major role in providing or supporting basic social services, often in remote areas and communities, and are present in every province and major sector in Cambodia. NGOs also bring alternative models and approaches to development—emphasizing participation, equity, gender sensitivity, and environmental sustainability. NGOs have advocated national reforms to improve health, education, governance, human rights, legal system, social services, environment, and women and children’s welfare.

International NGO activities in Cambodia can be broadly classified into five main categories:

- large-scale service delivery dependent on bilateral and multilateral funding and implemented by large NGOs with experience in reconstruction and infrastructure development;
- service delivery in conjunction with government institutions working through local structures and providing institutional capacity building, especially at the provincial, district, and commune levels;
- community development activities carried out by well-established NGOs with experience in working



at the village level to tackle the basic causes of poverty;

- development of local NGOs and CBOs, encouraged and directly supported by international NGOs, and including direct funding and capacity building through training and mentoring; and
- research and other analytical work and related advocacy activities covering a range of development topics/issues.

Local NGOs in Cambodia similarly can be broadly classified into five main categories: (i) democracy and human rights organizations; (ii) development organizations involved in education, health, credit, income-generating, and other activities; (iii) support organizations focusing on human resource and organizational development training activities; (iv) CBOs; and (v) research and other analytical work and advocacy activities covering various development issues.

A core group of local NGOs continues as vocal human rights advocates, including the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association, the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense

of Human Rights, and Legal Aid of Cambodia. While often critical of the government, some of these organizations have gained respect because of their autonomy.

## Government–Civil Society Relations

In recent years, the NGO advocacy sector in Cambodia has begun to suffer from a perception of being overly critical of government, particularly in the area of human rights. This is tied to what some observers identify as a decreased tolerance of political opposition.<sup>7</sup> However, in other areas, local and international CSOs continue to work closely with government policies and programs, particularly in the agriculture, education, and health sectors. NGOs have attended consultative group and Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF) meetings between donor agencies and the Government of Cambodia since 1992. The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and the NGO Forum on Cambodia (see *Umbrella and Coordinating Bodies*) have coordinated drafting the NGO statement that is delivered at every CDCF meeting.



According to the 2010 statement, Cambodian NGOs are concerned about the enforcement of Cambodia's existing legal framework, especially the land law (including the sub-decree on economic land concessions), forestry law, the Law on Mineral Resource Management and Exploitation, and Law on Environment Protection and Natural Resource Management; strengthening the judiciary; access to government information and budget transparency; and monitoring government commitments on land and forestry reforms.

The government has attempted to increase the participation of citizens and civil society in the development process through decentralization. The more than 1,600 commune councils were first elected in February 2002, with a second set of elections in 2007. The 2007 elections resulted in approximately 11,350 Council Members taking office, of whom 85% were men and 15% women. Although women's representation is very low, the gender gap is shrinking, as about 20% of the candidates in 2007 were women as compared to only 9% in 2002.<sup>8</sup>

As decentralization and deconcentration reforms unfold in Cambodia, it is hoped that the relationship between the government and civil society will improve alongside enhanced transparency and accountability. The government's capacity to adjust to new demands of external and local stakeholders for greater transparency, accountability, and public participation has led to slower-than-expected reforms, although there are now some strong examples of CSO-government cooperation at the commune level.

Civil society in Cambodia, however, has been described as having shallow grassroots linkages.<sup>9</sup> Most professional NGOs in Cambodia today owe their existence more to the influence and financial support of international donors than to the gradual opening up of democratic space, the natural scaling up of grassroots organizations, the emergence of a culture of volunteerism and social activism, or the organized charity of an established middle class.<sup>10</sup> This could have implications for the ability of NGOs to impact grassroots governance, as there is an absence of strong local constituencies for reform.

## The Legal Framework for Civil Society

Currently, local NGOs register with the Ministry of Interior. International NGOs must register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and may also have cooperation agreements with relevant line ministries, such as the Ministry of Health. International NGOs are required to submit quarterly activity and financial reports to the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). The CDC also grants permission for duty-free purchase/importation of vehicles and equipment or materials used for NGO-supported projects. An advisor to the Council of Ministers has served as the government's chief focal point on NGO matters, working with the CCC on matters of interest to NGOs operating in Cambodia. The CDC/Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board has a national-level mandate for coordinating NGO activity across sectors.

Although the 1993 constitution recognizes NGOs, there have been various proposals from civil society, government, and donors for a stronger legal framework for civil society. The first of several draft laws was made public in 1996; however, it was not passed due to resistance from civil society. Several drafts have been released since that time, but no final law has been promulgated.

## Umbrella and Coordinating Bodies

CSOs in Cambodia have organized themselves into a large number of thematic and other networks and coalitions which, by some counts, number more than 60. There are generally considered to be two main peak bodies for CSOs (including international and Cambodian NGOs): CCC and the NGO Forum on Cambodia. Other networks, such as Star Kampuchea, exist as support mechanisms for sections of Cambodian CSOs. CCC is a membership organization of NGOs committed to facilitating information exchange among members of the development community in Cambodia. CCC produces a wide range of information on, about, and for NGOs in Cambodia. Distributed to member organizations, government departments, and other organizations in Cambodia, these publications include a directory of Cambodian NGOs, an agency personnel listing, and security briefing reports.

CCC maintains a resource center with an extensive collection of documents. The resource center is one of the few libraries available to NGOs, students, researchers, government staff, and the general public. It also has a growing collection of government

laws and policies, and maintains a comprehensive set of the proceedings of the annual government-donor consultative group meetings on Cambodia. CCC provides advice to NGOs on government accreditation, registration, and protocol; NGO personnel policies, salaries, and benefits; and NGO operations in Cambodia.

For several years, CCC has played a coordinating role on NGO input to the Cambodia Consultative Group and Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum meetings and other forums of funding agencies. CCC has taken a lead in compiling information and recommendations on various development issues of interest to NGOs, preparing NGO statements, and selecting NGO representatives to meet with development partners. CCC holds monthly meetings for its NGO members.

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The NGO Forum on Cambodia consists of more than 60 organizations, including local and international NGOs, with experience in humanitarian and development assistance to Cambodia. The NGO Forum evolved from an international campaign that began in 1986 to end the embargo on aid to Cambodia. An office was established in Phnom Penh in 1994, and the NGO Forum is now managed and focused solely within the country. The agenda for advocacy has subsequently shifted from international to national issues, although the NGO Forum maintains close ties with NGOs in Australia, Europe, Japan, and North America, which assist and support its advocacy agenda.

The NGO Forum exists to advocate issues of concern to Cambodians and to enhance economic and social justice, respect for human rights and democracy, peace and nonviolence, sustainable use of resources, respect for cultural diversity, and development with equity. The NGO Forum has an important role in highlighting the impact of development processes and economic, social, and political changes on Cambodians. Current project areas are the Core Program (representational, governance, and coordination roles); Development



Issues Program (including coordination of NGO input into the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum); Environment Program; and Land and Livelihoods Program.

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There are several thematic NGO networks, the most well known of which are the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) and MEDiCAM.

NEP was established in 2000. At a meeting between education NGOs and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, NGOs were invited to discuss and draft advice on a strategy for improving Ministry–NGO partnership in education sector management.

Following consultation and a study on a Strategic Partnership, an “NGO Education Partnership” was provisionally established. NEP was formally constituted a year later with the adoption of a Charter, election of a 5-person Board, and registration of 17 member organizations.<sup>11</sup>

NEP is committed to developing dialogue between government and civil society on education issues, undertaking and disseminating research on key issues, and helping education NGOs increase their effectiveness.

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MEDiCAM is an organization of NGOs active in Cambodia’s health sector. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and nonsectarian organization that

**The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia currently runs an NGO Good Practice Project, which is a voluntary certification scheme.**

**Certified NGOs are registered and have been operating for at least 3 years, and agree to be held accountable to a Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs.**

serves as a focal point for health-related information sharing. More than 100 international and local NGOs are members of MEDiCAM.

MEDiCAM's main objectives are to facilitate communication and share health-related information among NGOs, the government, and all other health players in Cambodia; act as an interface between its member NGOs and the government, particularly the Ministry of Health; represent its membership at official forums, including Ministry of Health Coordination Committee meetings, Consultative Group, and other meetings of funding agencies, and health-related workshops; facilitate discussion on key health issues to help develop and strengthen national health policies and services in Cambodia; and act as an advocacy think tank for health-related issues in Cambodia. MEDiCAM also facilitates working groups on specific health issues and maintains a Cambodia health-related resource center, database, and e-mail network.<sup>12</sup>

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## Civil Society Directories

Most international NGOs and many local NGOs are CCC members, and their contact numbers and information about their budgets, sectors, and geographical areas of work are available online, in the CCC database ([www.ccc-cambodia.org/resources/ngo-directory.html?view=ngosearch](http://www.ccc-cambodia.org/resources/ngo-directory.html?view=ngosearch)).

The Council for the Development of Cambodia also maintains a database of NGO activities, which may be found online (<http://cdc.khmer.biz/>).

## NGO Principles, Mandates, and Standards

Compared to many countries in the region, Cambodia has a large number of CSOs with a wide range of development philosophies and standards of governance. Given this context, many CSOs recognize the importance of strengthening their own governance structures and management systems that will, in turn, increase their accountability and transparency, particularly to the communities and people with whom they work. CCC currently runs an NGO Good Practice Project, which is a voluntary certification scheme. Certified NGOs are registered and have been operating for at least 3 years, and agree to be held accountable to a Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs. In July 2010, there were 21 certified NGOs, and CCC was preparing for a second phase of the project that would focus on a certification and compliance system.

## Civil Society Capacity

The Cambodian NGO sector is historically strong on advocacy. Through the 1980s, international NGOs based in Europe, North America, and Australia advocated their governments for international recognition of the Phnom Penh Government and the end of the aid embargo. This advocacy focus still shapes Cambodian civil society—one of the peak umbrella bodies, the NGO Forum on Cambodia, for example, had its beginnings with this international NGO campaign in the 1980s.

There continue to be strong relationships between international and local NGOs through funding and capacity-building partnerships. Some international NGOs go beyond capacity building for specific projects and take a longer view of development of civil society, particularly in facilitating development processes. Capacity building of local NGOs requires

long-term attention to ensure that NGOs remain viable and less dependent on external assistance. A challenge facing NGOs working in this area is helping empower people to voice their own concerns and effectively engage in dialogue with their respective local governments.

Policy dialogue is a challenge for Cambodian NGOs.<sup>13</sup> For the size of the sector, overall coordination and cooperation between government, donors, and civil society is weak and dependent on specific sectors. Some formal Technical Working Groups play an important role as a mechanism for NGOs to provide input on national policy, such as the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)—water and sanitation, and education are two sectors where this dynamic works well. However, in other sectors, particularly those that are more contentious, policy dialogue is much weaker or not evident.

On the other hand, Cambodia has some well-respected research NGOs that are able to provide original research as an evidence base for policy discussions. NGO Background Papers, produced by CCC for the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum, are an example of high-quality policy research, which influences development planning. Certain sectors, such as environment, forestry, and explosive remnants of war, also have a strong background of NGO-driven research forming the basis of policy.

As part of preparations for their engagement in the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in 2011 in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2010, Cambodian NGOs went through a process of defining their role in the development effectiveness agenda. CCC facilitated a workshop in which NGOs identified their main challenges: the lack of access to long-term, sustainable funding; uncoordinated donor demands for reporting; difficulties in accessing relevant information (for example, from the government) in a timely manner; struggles in effectively engaging community ownership in their activities; coordination within Cambodian civil society (due to its diversity); low capacity in governance; and the lack of recognition of civil society's place in the development dialogue.

## ADB–Civil Society Cooperation in Cambodia

ADB opened the Cambodia Resident Mission (CARM) in 1996. CARM is the first contact point with Cambodian civil society and also coordinates high-level policy dialogue and aid; and leads country programming, technical assistance administration,

new project development and processing, portfolio management, and project administration.

CARM maintains regular dialogue with CSOs on ADB assistance in the country at several levels:

- through a semiannual NGO Roundtable Meeting;
- through consultation in the programming cycle; for example, during the preparation of the Country Partnership Strategy; and
- through consultation at the project level; during project preparation, implementation, monitoring, and review.

CSOs in Cambodia have, historically, participated in numerous ADB national consultation workshops, including on preparing the accountability mechanism (August 2002); developing the ADB–Government–NGO Cooperation Framework 2003–2005 (August 2002); ADB assistance to the education sector (January 2005); developing the National Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Strategy (November 2009); and updating the Public Communications Policy (July 2010). In November 2004, ADB organized a tripartite national workshop for CSO input into the Greater Mekong Subregion regional cooperation strategy and program update 2006–2008.

## ADB Draft Country Partnership Strategy 2011–2013

ADB's draft Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) identifies two strategic objectives: (i) inclusive economic growth, through investments in physical infrastructure, support to vocational training, support to agriculture and irrigation, financial sector development, integration into regional economies,

### Cumulative ADB Lending as of 31 December 2010

Sector	Loans (no.)	Amount (\$ million)	% <sup>a</sup>
Agriculture and Natural Resources	11	192.81	16.51
Education	6	123.00	10.53
Energy	6	120.77	10.34
Finance	8	90.30	7.73
Health and Social Protection	2	40.00	3.43
Industry and Trade	2	35.60	3.05
Public Sector Management	4	50.00	4.28
Transport and ICT	10	321.26	27.51
Water Supply and Other Municipal Infrastructure and Services	4	46.26	3.96
Multisector	3	147.80	12.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,167.80</b>	<b>100.00</b>

ICT = information and communication technology.

<sup>a</sup> Total may not add up because of rounding.

Source: ADB. 2011. *Asian Development Bank and Cambodia: Fact Sheet*. Manila.

and support to the private sector and economic diversification; and (ii) social development and equity, through basic education, water supply and sanitation services, social protection measures, and community-based development in the Tonle Sap provinces.

Four crosscutting themes or challenges have become increasingly important to Cambodia's development process in recent years, and are likely to become more critical in the future: (i) environment and climate change, (ii) decentralization, (iii) urban–rural linkages, and (iv) regional cooperation.

Following the Strategy 2020 requirement for increased partnerships, ADB-CARM staff will strengthen linkages selectively with civil society amongst other partners, through consultations and regular ADB–NGO Roundtables that allow frank and open discussions; and also think tanks and research centers, through cooperation on analytical work. Cambodian CSOs were consulted as part of the ongoing CPS preparation and review cycle.

## ADB-Supported Activities Involving Civil Society

ADB recognizes CSOs, including NGOs, as significant players in the development process and cooperates with them to improve the impact, sustainability, and quality of its services. NGOs add value in promoting sustainable development through innovation—identifying new approaches and models for specific development activities and drawing upon their close knowledge of local communities; accountability—helping ensure that project components are implemented as envisaged and planned; responsiveness—encouraging the implementation of projects to respond to local needs; participation—serving as bridges between project authorities and affected communities, and providing structures for citizen participation; and sustainability—nurturing continuity in project work, especially when implementing agencies lack capacity or when staffing changes.

ADB in Cambodia has supported many projects involving civil society in different combinations of the above strengths. As part of ADB's long-standing commitment to the Tonle Sap provinces, an ADB project supports 40 communes in the development and upgrading of rural infrastructure through a combination of community-led and -executed activities. Planned activities include formation of self-help groups to improve livelihoods through community-driven development.<sup>14</sup>

## ADB recognizes CSOs, including NGOs, as significant players in the development process and cooperates with them to improve the impact, sustainability, and quality of its services.

ADB is also partnering with Cambodian universities and research institutes to enhance the capacity of the government to design, manage, and supervise income restoration programs for resettlement-affected people. A partnership has been established with the Royal University of Phnom Penh's Graduate School of Development Studies. The technical assistance is supporting short-term certificate programs and long-term degree programs. This project also works, at the community level, to improve the capacity of affected people to manage their community-based self-help organizations. During the design phase of this project, consultations took place with community groups and affected households in Prey Veng Province (Stung Slot and Kraing Khok savings and credit groups) and NGOs, including Mekong Watch, Oxfam Australia, NGO Forum, and Conservation and Development of Cambodia (CDCam).<sup>15</sup>

## Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction

The Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) is an untied grant facility established by the Government of Japan and ADB in May 2000. From an initial contribution of \$90 million, the Fund now stands at well over \$392 million, of which \$335 million has been committed. The JFPR assists ADB clients to provide direct relief to the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society while building up their capacities for self-help and income generation. Specifically, the JFPR initiates and supports innovative programs with high potential for improving the affected countries' situations; provides relatively rapid, demonstrable benefits through initiatives that can be developed and sustained in the long term; and helps local populations and civil society design and implement programs.

**A group of CSOs were involved in an ADB project to support women entrepreneurs and develop the handicraft market in Cambodia. This project assisted the Ministry of Women's Affairs to build a new Women's Development Center (WDC) facility at Siem Reap and upgrade an existing center at Kampong Chhnang into a WDC facility.**

The JFPR provides an opportunity for local communities and CSOs, including NGOs, to actively participate in the development.

NGO participation is deeply ingrained in JFPR operations—the JFPR is widely recognized as one of the primary grant facilities available to NGOs. NGOs and community groups are routinely involved in project cycles' different stages. They take part as an executing agency; implementing agency; resource NGO providing information, community organizing, or some other specialized service; or a consultant to ADB during the course of the project's supervision.

One project develops and delivers community-responsive training in agricultural production techniques and postharvest technology, as part of a vocational skills program. The aim of this project is to increase skills and productivity in rural and urban communities, linking this to broader economic growth and poverty reduction. As part of this project, the Don Bosco Foundation of Cambodia is implementing a skills bridging program aimed at getting out-of-school youth back into formal technical and vocational education and training.<sup>16</sup>

Another project partnered with the Shanti Volunteer Association to help improve facilities in schools that cannot offer the full range of primary education

(due to lack of classrooms or teachers) through school improvement grants that schools, parents, and community groups can apply for. School activities, such as school enrollment and attendance campaigns, small-scale classroom expansion and rehabilitation, provision of safe water supply and toilets, and library initiatives, were proposed to help retain poor children in the upper grades. The project also established school development planning communities in the project schools and helped schools, parents, and community groups to apply for, manage, and implement these school improvement grants.<sup>17</sup>

A group of CSOs, including Carpets for Communities, Baskets of Cambodia, the Artisans Association of Cambodia, and the Trailblazer Foundation, were involved in an ADB project to support women entrepreneurs and develop the handicraft market in Cambodia. This project assisted the Ministry of Women's Affairs to build a new Women's Development Center (WDC) facility at Siem Reap and upgrade an existing center at Kampong Chhnang into a WDC facility. WDCs are envisioned to be one-stop, women-friendly facilities that provide support beyond traditional skills training and promote greater participation for women in the mainstream economy.<sup>18</sup>

In the Tonle Sap Basin, an ADB JFPR project is working with community leaders, organizations, and concerned government staff so that they can participate effectively in the poverty reduction efforts under the Tonle Sap Initiative. Training, learning, and knowledge sharing, supported by CSOs the Cambodian Development Research Institute and The Learning Institute (formerly Community Based Natural Resource Management – Learning Institute), are used to build community participation and community-driven development. The project aims to bring the support of these local NGOs to build capacity of local groups to plan and drive their own development processes.<sup>19</sup>

ADB in Cambodia has also worked with local civil society and research institutes in policy research and monitoring and evaluation. A recent example is a Participatory Poverty Assessment of the Tonle Sap, which was carried out by the Cambodian Development Resource Institute (CDRI) and completed in 2007.<sup>20</sup> The Economic Institute of Cambodia was the external monitor for the Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, completed in 2010.

## NGO Concerns about ADB Initiatives

ADB recognizes NGOs as development partners and aims to document and respond to any NGO concerns that materialize during the design and implementation of ADB-assisted projects and other initiatives. ADB's NGO and Civil Society Center collaborates with operational departments to inform senior staff, members of the Board of Directors, and management of any issues and to obtain feedback about how NGO concerns are being addressed. Specific concerns in the past have included

- *Procurement* under the Tonle Sap Sustainable Livelihoods Project – Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), a Cambodian NGO
- *Resettlement* under the Phnom Penh to Ho Chi Minh Highway Project – affected communities working through Conservation and Development of Cambodia (CDCam) with the support of international NGOs, such as Mekong Watch and Oxfam Australia
- *Resettlement* under the GMS Rehabilitation of the Railway in Cambodia – Sahmakum Teang Tnaut, Bridges Across Borders–Cambodia
- *Consultation with civil society* under Enhancing the Resettlement Legal Framework and Institutional Capacity – Mekong Watch, NGO Forum's Housing Rights Taskforce, and others

## Resource Centers

ADB has established a network of depository libraries throughout Asia and the Pacific. Each library receives some 300 documents a year from ADB, free of charge. The documents range from technical assistance reports to country economic reports, to basic information about ADB, posters, videos, and CD-ROMs. The libraries are open to the public and assist clients through on-site research and interlibrary loans. ADB depository libraries in Cambodia are as follows:

Learning Resource Centre  
Open to the public Tuesday–Saturday  
8:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Asian Development Bank  
Cambodia Resident Mission  
No. 29 Suramarit Blvd. (268/19)  
Sangkat Chaktomuk  
Khan Daun Penh  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
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Cambodia Development Resource Institute  
56 Street 315, Tuol Kork  
P.O. Box 622  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Tel +855 23 883603/881701/881384/881916  
Fax +855 23 880734  
www.cdri.org.kh

Chea Sim University of Kamchaymeas  
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Economics and Finance Institute  
Ministry of Economy and Finance  
Street 92  
Sangkat Wat Phnom  
Khan Daun Penh  
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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Cambodia. 2010. *Civil Society Empowerment and Democratic Governance in Cambodia – Draft report*. Phnom Penh.
- <sup>2</sup> UNDP. 2010. *Civil Society Empowerment and Democratic Governance in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh. pp.14–15; also World Faiths Dialogue. 2010. *Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development in Cambodia*. Berkeley. The latter considers that Pagoda associations and the Buddhist sangha are largely untapped development resources, particularly at the level of faith-inspired community development.
- <sup>3</sup> UNDP. 2010. *Civil Society Empowerment and Democratic Governance in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh.
- <sup>4</sup> Source: Royal Government of Cambodia, Council for the Development of Cambodia, Natural Resource and Environment Program. 2008. Mapping Survey of NGO/ Association Presence and Activity in Cambodia. Quoted in Cooperation Committee for Cambodia. 2010. *NGO Contributions to Cambodia's Development*. Phnom Penh.
- <sup>5</sup> Cooperation Committee for Cambodia. 2010. p. 7.
- <sup>6</sup> Royal Government of Cambodia. 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> See, for example, the campaign run by some Cambodian nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in 2009–2010 protesting restrictions on the freedom of expression: [www.adhoc-chra.org/article.php?language=english&art\\_id=119&currentpage=1](http://www.adhoc-chra.org/article.php?language=english&art_id=119&currentpage=1)
- <sup>8</sup> Source: The Asia Foundation website. *From Cambodia: Women's Rising Power in Local Government*. Available online at <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2007/04/04/from-cambodia-women%E2%80%99s-rising-power-in-local-government/> (Accessed 14 March 2011)
- <sup>9</sup> UNDP. 2010.
- <sup>10</sup> World Bank Cambodia. 2009. *Linking Citizens and the State*. Phnom Penh.

- <sup>11</sup> Text adapted from NEP website. (Available online at [www.nepcambodia.org](http://www.nepcambodia.org))
- <sup>12</sup> Text adapted from MEDiCAM website. (Available online at [www.medicam-cambodia.org](http://www.medicam-cambodia.org))
- <sup>13</sup> Some NGOs working in Cambodia would not see policy dialogue as part of their work, aligning themselves instead to a counter-hegemonic position, which provides space for organization against prevailing values that they see as unjust, exclusivist, or favoring the powerful. See I. Landau. 2008. Law and Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. 38 (2). pp. 244–258. May 2008.
- <sup>14</sup> ADB. 2008. *Tonle Sap Lowlands Rural Development Project*. Manila.
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## Definition and Objectives of Civil Society Collaboration

Civil society is a very important stakeholder in the operations of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and its borrowers and clients. It is distinct from the government and the private sector and consists of a diverse range of individuals, groups, and nonprofit organizations. They operate around shared interests, purposes, and values with a varying degree of formality and encompass a diverse range—from informal unorganized community groups to large international labor union organizations. Of particular relevance to ADB are nongovernment organizations, community-based organizations and people’s organizations, foundations, professional associations, research institutes and universities, labor unions, mass organizations, social movements, and coalitions and networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) and umbrella organizations.<sup>a</sup>

ADB recognizes CSOs as development actors in their own right whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector, and who play a significant role in development in Asia and the Pacific. ADB has a long tradition of interacting with CSOs in different contexts, through policy- and country strategy-level consultation, and in designing, implementing, and monitoring projects.

In 2008, ADB launched Strategy 2020, which articulates the organization’s future direction and vision until 2020.<sup>b</sup> Above all, Strategy 2020 presents three complementary strategic agendas to guide ADB operations: inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. These agendas reflect the recognition that it is not only the *pace* of growth, but also the *pattern* of growth, that matters in reducing poverty in the region. In this new strategic context, partnerships with a range of organizations, including CSOs, will become central to planning, financing, implementing, and evaluating ADB projects.

<sup>a</sup> ADB. Forthcoming. *Strengthening Participation for Development Results*. Manila.

<sup>b</sup> ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila.

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