

## **Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)**

### **Final Progress Report for Knowledge Support Programme July – December 2004**

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**Project Title: Strengthening CCC Network Support for Provincial NGO Linkages**

**Grant No: OC/Arnet/NSP/03/02 - CCC**

**Period: July –December 2004**

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#### **1. Overall Goal of the Project:**

The overall goal of this project is to promote the NGO sector contributions to the development of Cambodia by building relationships with the Royal Government of Cambodia donor agencies and other agencies.

CCC and Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) will jointly organise a seminar between Provincial and District Governors and NGOs working in the provinces throughout the country in order to increase mutual understanding of government and NGOs roles in the development of Cambodia and to explore future collaboration, particularly with relevance to the new decentralised structure of the government (commune councils) and the recent passage and partial implementation of the new Land Law.

This activity would also extend CCC's outreach work to the provinces and set the foundation for the improved coordination of information and services to NGOs in the provinces and feedback into the CCC NGO Coordination role for such activities as the NGO Publications Unit and the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group Meeting. These seminars could also forge a new strategic partnership with CCC, Member organisations, Provincial Governors office and Provincial NGO Networks.

#### **2. Specific Objectives:**

1. NGOs and Provincial Governors have increased understanding of the roles of NGOs and Governors in contributing to the economic and social development for Cambodia through active dialogue and information sharing.
2. Strengthen CCC and Provincial Networks capacity to share, exchange and disseminate information on NGO coordination activities and rural development issues, including new land law and NGO Statement to Consultative Group Meeting 2003.

#### **3. Specific Activities and Purpose:**

##### **3a) Seminar with Provincial Governors and NGOs (CCC and CDRI)**

CCC and CDRI prepared, organised and conducted a one day seminar in May 2003 for the purpose of facilitating dialogue between provincial leaders and leaders of NGOs in order to identify strategies for strengthening cooperation and partnerships in the provinces.

*(see KSP Report period March –November 2003 for details)*

### **3b) NGO Provincial Network Workshop**

CCC proposed to make at least two visits to two different NGO Provincial Networks to follow up with identified actions from the seminar in May 2003 on Government-NGO Collaboration.

CCC also planned to organise a smaller workshop with Provincial NGO Networks to enhance cooperation between CCC and the Provincial NGO Networks in Cambodia through discussions and information sharing, as well as a follow up activity to continue working on recommendations during the NGO-Governor Seminar.

#### **Activities and Outputs**

*CCC organized a one and half day workshop on March 22-23, 2004 with Provincial NGO Networks from around the country. Thirty-nine (39) NGOs from 15 cities and provinces joined the workshop aimed at strengthening cooperation amongst CCC and NGO Networks in the Province. (see KSP Report period December 2003-June 2004 for details)*

*CCC organized a second two day workshop on November 22-23, 2004 with Provincial NGO Networks from around the country. Thirty-four (34) NGOs from 16 cities and provinces joined the workshop aimed at strengthening cooperation amongst CCC and NGO Networks in the Province. NGOs from the following provinces attended: Banteay Mean Chey, Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Kampot, Siem Reap, Kratie, Svay Reang, Prey Veng, Kandal, Stung Treng, Takeo, and Sihanouk ville. (To see the list of participants; please refer to Appendix A.)*

*The workshop was divided into four sessions. The first session focused on the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group Meeting, with special presentations on key land and governance issues. The second session involved participant feedback and discussion on the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group Meeting. The third session included presentations by the CCC NGO Good Practice Principles Project (NGO GPP) followed by discussions and activities on NGO good practice. The final session reviewed the CCC NGO Project Database, the new CCC website with searchable links and CCC NGO Publications.*

#### **Summary of Workshop**

##### *Session 1: Overview of Consultative Group Meeting and NGO Statement to the CG Meeting*

Highlights from the NGO Statement to the 2004 Consultative Group Meeting were presented. The Statement focuses on three cross cutting priority issues in Cambodia that NGOs believe are undermining progress in development, contributing to social inequity and increasing poverty. These key issues include Corruption and Poor Governance, Lack of Rule of Law and Threats to Rural Livelihoods.

Several recommendations related to each of the key cutting issues were presented and discussed. Many recommendations focused on better implementation of policies, stronger enforcement of law and improved monitoring of plans and progress. This presentation was followed by two important discussions on key issues and information relating to land issues, particularly indigenous minority groups, and governance and transparency issues within the public sector. (Refer to NGO Statement to the 2004 Consultative Group Meeting and Appendix C)

##### *Session 2: Small Group Discussions/Presentations on NGO Statement to CG Meeting*

Participants then discussed and provided feedback and additional input on the presentations, drawing from their own experiences working with rural communities. They highlighted and reinforced the following issues in the NGO Statement to 1) Improve governance 2) Improve public health services 3) Strengthen and improve education system

4) Enforcement of Land law and land titling 5) Strengthen democracy and rule of law 6) Eliminate corruption.

Some other points they raised included 1) Strengthening collaboration between NGOs and the government 2) Elections of village chief and senate 3) Natural resources management 4) Strengthen the court system 5) problems of drugs and other illegal actions (sex trafficking, gambling)

### *Session 3: Presentation/Activities by NGO Good Practice Principles Project*

The third session on the morning of the second day included presentations and activities by the CCC NGO Good Practice Principles Project (NGO GPP). The two main objectives of the NGO GPP Project are to:

- Strengthen the NGO sector by encouraging and promoting good practice principles
- Foster the credibility and recognition of NGO contributions to the development of Cambodia by government, donors and other civil society organisations

The presentation focused on the topic of NGO good practice explained as ensuring the legitimacy and credibility of NGOs by means of accountable guidelines, such as a practical code of conduct, which would describe how well-managed and responsibly-governed NGOs should and do operate. Discussions centered on the fact that NGOs have a growing responsibility to be accountable to their stakeholders, including donors, governing board, staff, beneficiaries, public and government.

Four main key issues related to NGO good practice were presented, discussed and acted out through role plays by the participants. These included NGO Accountability, NGO Transparency, NGO Leadership and Conflict of Interest.

Some of the key points from the discussions included:

1) NGO Accountability focused on Credibility, Effectiveness, and Sustainability.

*Factors to improve NGO accountability included:* account system arrangement, regular monitor and follow up activities such as finance and plan, honesty and truth, assigned responsibilities, staff promotion, learn from each other and good environment in communication, decision making through participation from the start of the project.

2) NGO Transparency focused on Development of Plans and Project Implementation Relation, Financial Transparency and Staff Recruitment.

*Factors to improve NGO transparency included:* Open all relevant information, reports reflect actual performance, recognition from stakeholders, build up capacity of staff.

3) NGO Leadership focused on Decision-making, Communication, and Participation.

*Factors to improve NGO leadership included:* Initiative leader, good management, clear plan, recognition of facts and internal and external changes, staff promotion and encouragement, Enough capacity and good morals, non-partisan and no nepotism, monitoring work, commitment, responsible person, verifying activities.

4) Conflict of Interest focused on Organization's activities were buried, Internal solidarity broken, and Bad reputation of the organization

*Factors to avoid conflict of interest included:* Promote governance, promote democracy, and promote participation and responsibilities.

The NGO GPP Project Team described some of the future activities and plans in more detail, which include awareness raising activities and discussion forums with broad range of NGOs, liaise with donors and various networks, documentation of good practice, standards and codes of conduct, selection of a focus group of 35 NGOs interested in NGO Good Practice Principles, and a working group to develop NGO Code of Conduct.

*Session 4: Presentation on CCC Publications, CCC Website and NGO Database*

The fourth session focused on information collection, exchange and dissemination through the CCC Publications, new CCC Website and NGO Project Database. The CCC Publication schedule was presented which included a list of directories, survey reports and newsletters, the preparation and distribution schedule as well as some description of the content and purpose of each of the publications. The presentation stressed the importance of these publications in promoting the work of NGOs in Cambodia as well as to assisting the NGO community in information exchange.

The CCC Website was presented and participants were shown the different information displayed, how to search the website and how to find information. The new NGO Project Database was also explained in detail, including the importance of providing accurate information on the NGO community as well as assisting with the exchange of information with the broader development community. NGOs were also encouraged to regularly visit the CCC website and to update their information.

As a final activity, a questionnaire was distributed to participants to get feedback on CCC publications as well as gather information on email and internet communication, use and access in the provinces. The results will be used to improve the CCC Publications, the distribution system as well as inform some future activities between CCC and Provincial NGO Networks. *(Please see attached Workshop Report for complete details on all sessions.)*

### **3c) Series of Meetings/Visits with NGO Provincial Networks**

CCC is a focal point to collect and provide information for and about NGOs and their activities for CCC/NGO publications. CCC has long established links and relationships with the NGO community and NGO Provincial Networks for almost 9 years through CCC membership, NGO project activities, CCC activities and outreach to local NGOs participation in different activities.

#### **Activities and Outputs**

CCC combined many of the field visits to Provincial NGO Networks and the newly established Community Information Centers. CCC received funding in 2004 to improve and link the NGO project database with its new comprehensive searchable website. This makes contact with and access to information easier and faster between CCC, Provincial NGO networks and NGOs in the provinces. The project funded by The Asia Foundation ran from January to September 2004 and complemented the Strengthening CCC Network Support for Provincial NGO Linkages Project.

During this period, CCC staff visited six different provinces with both active Provincial NGO Networks and the Community Information Centers (CICs), whose purpose is to help with dissemination of information to provinces and local communities in Cambodia. CCC staff continue to promote NGO information exchange and dissemination utilizing the CCC NGO Project Database and new CCC website, Provincial NGO Networks and their contacts as well as the CICs and some of our active members in the province.

The new provinces visited by the CCC staff during this six-month period were Kratie, Siem Reap, Kompong Thom; while Battambang, Pursat, and Kompong Chhnang were revisited to promote the new NGO Project Database and linkages between CCC, Provincial NGO Networks and the CICs.

CCC completed the translation, printing and distribution of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Provincial NGO Network Directory 2004-2005 since the first directory was published in 1997. This publication aims to disseminate important Provincial NGOs Networks information to the broader development community in order to contribute to improved communication and information sharing. The 5<sup>th</sup> edition was the first time the Directory was translated into Khmer and almost 200 copies have been distributed to CCC Members, Provincial NGO Networks and other key agencies and government departments. (see *KSP Report period December 2003-June 2004 for more description on the Directory*)

Linking the CCC Publications and NGO Database with the CICs, Provincial NGO Networks and holding workshops and making field visits to provinces has been an excellent strategy for promoting information exchange, reinforcing the important role and work of the provincial NGOs and to assist them to voice their experiences and concerns on issues related to the development in their area.

One platform for this was through providing input to and feedback on the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group Meetings. The Provincial NGOs Workshop on 22-23 November provided background information to the CG Meeting and better prepared the NGOs on the key issues presented in the NGO Statement to the 2004 CG Meeting.

### **3d) NGO Statement to the 2004 Consultative Group Meeting and Civil Society Forum on 2004 Consultative Group Meeting**

The Provincial NGOs attending the CCC workshop were invited to participate in the Civil Society Forum on the 2004 Consultative Group Meeting held on 30 November 2004, where almost 250 participants joined to learn and discuss the important development issues that NGOs prepared to raise at the Government-Donor Consultative Group Meeting on 6-7 December 2004, in Phnom Penh.

NGOs have been invited through the CCC to observe and participate in the Consultative Group Meetings between key donor agencies and the government since 1992. In preparation for these meetings, CCC coordinates NGO preparation of the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia which includes sectoral and issue papers as well as a short main statement of cross cutting priority issues from the NGO perspective.

The objectives of the NGO Statement are to 1) Inform/influence the policy dialogue, formally and informally, between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the international donor community from the NGO perspective 2) Provide information to the Royal Government of Cambodia and the international donor community about the development of Cambodia from the NGO experience and perspective 3) Raise awareness and advocate NGO concerns regarding the development policies of Cambodia from the NGO operational perspective 4) Provide information on and advocate the NGO sector contributions and role in the development of Cambodia, to the Government and international development community

CCC in collaboration with NGO Forum, NGOs and NGO networks held a series of coordination meetings between September and December to prepare the 90 page document for the CG Meeting. The NGO Statement includes 21 separate issue papers covering such important topics as agriculture and rural development, land reform, gender in poverty reduction, governance and transparency, trade policy, to name but a few. Cross cutting priority issues related to important development issues and poverty reduction in Cambodia are then identified and selected by the NGOs and compiled into a 8-10 page main statement with key recommendations for government, donors and NGOs.

The NGO Statement is published in English and Khmer languages. Close to 2000 copies were distributed to government ministries and officials including the Prime Minister and all Ministers of State, Embassies, Multilateral and Bilateral Funding Agencies, NGOs and other

civil society organisations. The NGO Statement is now included in the official proceedings of the CG Meetings and is widely referred to by donor agencies, international organisations and government officials. NGO Representatives are selected to attend the CG Meeting and to make key interventions based on the issues and recommendations within the NGO Statement.

This year as part of the preparation and distribution of the NGO Statement, NGOs also organized a one-day special event on 30 November prior to the CG Meeting to release, discuss and highlight the key important issues within the NGO Statement. The Civil Society Forum on the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group Meeting aimed to promote the NGO Statement to a wider audience prior to the CG Meeting, to gain further support for important development issues raised by the NGO Statement and to demonstrate greater civil society interest and concern in the policy dialogue between government and donor agencies. Almost 250 people attended the event, including over 80 NGOs from the provinces, over 20 key donor officials from the World Bank, ADB, JICA, USAID and AusAID, and a few government officials.

The Civil Forum included short presentations and four panel discussions on Good Governance and Improved Service Delivery, Rule of Law, Rural Livelihoods and the Main Statement. Thirteen guest NGO speakers presented key issues and recommendations on topics ranging from specific areas such as health and education, gender and domestic violence, land and fisheries reform and indigenous minority affairs as well as the broader public issues such as civil service reform, election reform, legal and judicial reform and corruption. At the end of the day, a press conference was held and a press release was issued capturing the main messages from the NGO Statement to be delivered to both donor and government officials joining the CG Meeting. *(See NGO Statement to the 2004 Consultative Group Meeting, Agenda for the Civil Society Forum and the Press Release)*

### **Constraints and Follow-up**

With the formation of a national government in July 2004, after almost a year long political deadlock, many previously scheduled activities including meetings and seminars involving government officials, finally took place.

For example, The Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia delayed since early 2004, was finally held on 6-7 December 2004. A Pre-CG meeting was held on 10 September 2004 in which the government presented its new Economic Platform for Poverty Reduction called the Rectangular Strategy. This paved the way for CCC to coordinate NGOs to prepare and complete the NGO Statement to the CG Meeting.

Even though these delays led to less than optimal input from Provincial NGOs in the early stages of drafting the NGO Statement, we were able to utilize the second Provincial NGO Workshop and the Civil Society Forum to increase and deepen the awareness amongst the NGO community of the CG Meeting and the important role that NGOs play in contributing to the policy dialogue.

### **Conclusion**

**The Strengthening CCC Network Support for Provincial NGO Linkages** has been a huge success for CCC and has complimented and supported many other existing activities of CCC such as the CCC NGO Project Database, Website and Publications, NGO Statement to CG Meeting, NGO Good Practice Principles Project as well as reinforcing the work of the Provincial NGOs and other NGOs through their Networks, their programs and the CICs.