



CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION: PERSPECTIVES ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN CAMBODIA

Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning
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“So now we have a disaster management law, but it’s just a piece of paper if it’s not acted on. It doesn’t jump off the shelf to help you! (H. E. ROSS Sovann).”
The key ingredient is action and follow-through, and civil society is an essential element of that.



CREDITS

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction: Opportunities at the ‘Riceroots’- Civil Society and Climate Change in Cambodia..... | 4 |
| Opportunities for Mainstreaming CCA and DRR into CSOs in Cambodia: | |
| ■ Researchers’ Perspectives..... | 6 |
| ■ Government Perspectives..... | 10 |
| ■ Community Perspectives | 14 |
| ■ CSO Perspectives..... | 19 |
| Conclusion..... | 23 |
| References | 26 |

INTRODUCTION: OPPORTUNITIES AT THE 'RICEROOTS' - CIVIL SOCIETY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN CAMBODIA

Climate change is real, and it is already here— especially in the form of erratic rainfall: floods and droughts are becoming more frequent and severe, making farming more and more precarious. When we visit villages and talk to people, they speak of differences in the weather, and how farming is more uncertain than ever. You don't need to be an expert or a scientist to understand that the weather is different now, and farmers across Cambodia are already affected – and are already coping as best they can. Examples include sending teenaged daughters to work in garment factories, planting new or different crops, and planting traditional 'low risk' rice varieties that have smaller overall yields but are highly resilient to the vagaries of weather.

Cambodia is often pointed to as one of the countries which is most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. In 2014, for example, Standard and Poor's ranked its economy as the single most vulnerable to the effects of climate change worldwide¹ (Kraemer and Negri 2014). The reasons for this are socioeconomic as well as environmental. Much of Cambodia lies on a river basin which floods seasonally; indeed, Cambodians are more exposed to flooding than any other nation in the world (PreventionWeb n.d.). **Many of the drivers of vulnerability, however, are poverty, inequality, and high dependence on natural resources for livelihoods.** Despite impressive economic growth surpassing 7% per year since 2011, per capita GDP hovers around US\$1,000 per year, but the poorest 10% hold only 4%

of the nation's income while the top 10% accounts for 27% of it. Some eighty percent of the population remains rural (World Bank 2014), and 65% works primarily in agriculture (FAO 2014). Cambodians are overwhelmingly rural farmers and fishers and even small variations in weather can have an enormous impact on a family. Rice and fish are the traditional staples of the Cambodian diet. **Rural livelihoods and food security are dependent on subsistence**

agriculture and small-scale fishing, which are both highly sensitive to both gradual climatic changes and extreme weather events. Climate change is by no means the only stressor: environmental degradation and poor natural resource management compromises farming and fishing nationwide. Indeed, one of the chief concerns about climate change is that Cambodia's ecosystems have become so fragile that it may take very little to 'tip' them into crisis.



¹ In fact, Cambodia had the highest average for the three variables evaluated by Standard & Poor's. Firstly, the country has 10.6 % of its population living at an altitude of 5 meters (less than 17 feet) above sea level. Secondly, agriculture accounted for 35.6 % of Cambodia's GDP. Finally, the country's ND-GAIN vulnerability index (developed by the Notre Dame University Global Adaptation Index) -- which "measures the overall vulnerability by considering vulnerability in six life-supporting sectors" -- food, water, health, ecosystem service, human habitat and infrastructure -- was ranked 106th out of 116 countries. (S&P 2014).

The UNFCCC (n.d.) defines climate change adaptation (CCA) as “adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change”

Cambodia was one of the first least-developed countries to embrace climate change adaptation (CCA) in public policy, and there has been increasing interest – and funding – from development partners to confront climate change. **Climate change is a global problem – but adaptation is fundamentally local. What constitutes “successful” adaptation varies enormously from place to place, even within a given country.**

Civil society organizations (CSOs) – including both professional non-governmental agencies and informal grassroots associations –

have been working for years at the grassroots level on various village projects, already including CCA and DRR considerations to make their programs stronger, more effective and their impact more durable. There are many opportunities, however, to further mainstream CCA into their operations. Resources and capacity building are essential inputs, so that they can partner with communities and local governments to make a real difference on the ground. Not all the opportunities, however, are a question of simply being included in government strategies and processes, or ‘big development

money’. **Because CSOs work at the community level, they are in the best position to witness and take stock of how communities are already adapting to climate change, and identify innovative and strengths-based approaches which fit local cultures and ecosystems.** It is thus essential not just for them to mainstream CCA into their own programming and advocacy strategies – but for them to transmit knowledge and skills and for government and development partners to listen and learn from them and help transform isolated small scale initiatives into a broad national effort.

This newsletter helps put some of these opportunities for CSOs on the table for discussion. Rather than a single long research paper, a series of short essays capture different viewpoints, including government, researchers, CSOs and their networks, as well as the voices of villagers themselves. This is the first in a series of papers, multimedia, and other knowledge products produced by the Civil Society Support Mechanism of ADB’s Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning Project, implemented by Plan International. Together, we will explore the experiences, lessons, and insights from Cambodian CSOs working at the ‘riceroots’ to address climate change.

Photo: Fisherman in Kampot Province

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAINSTREAMING CCA AND DRR INTO CSOS IN CAMBODIA: RESEARCHERS' PERSPECTIVE

Colleen McGinn and Ian Christoplos, October 2016



Photo: CSO CWDC and community members build a walkway to accommodate ecotourism activities around a mangrove restoration area by vulnerable fishing communities in Kampot Province.

Climate change arguably represents the greatest development challenge of the twenty-first century. Incremental shifts in weather patterns and increased frequency and severity of disasters threaten lives and livelihoods across the planet. Those who are already poor and vulnerable will be the most affected, and have the fewest resources with which to cope. Climate change adaptation (CCA) is not just an option. It is a necessity and is already underway. Cambodians have always struggled to adapt to climate uncertainty and variability. The central question facing us today is what form these struggles will take in the future as risks become increasingly acute.

Spontaneous adaptation strategies among Cambodians may include rural-to-urban migration, intensified (and possibly unsustainable) use of natural resources, and continuing to farm traditional rice varieties and techniques which are hardy in the face of uncertain weather, even though they produce both lower yields and market prices (Thavat, 2015).

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have the opportunity to engage with poor communities and facilitate strategies which respond to their immediate needs and are environmentally sustainable. These often include 'climate-smart' agriculture, water management (collection, storage, and distribution)

ecosystem-based adaptation strategies, livelihood diversification, and disaster risk reduction.

Indeed – like Cambodians themselves – CSOs will have to adapt. The effects of climate change are already changing the context in which they work and the priorities they need to make. When Plan International's partners were conducting Vulnerability Reduction Assessments across Cambodia in late 2015, there was broad consensus among farmers that weather was already changing – particularly that floods and droughts were more frequent and more severe, and the weather more unpredictable in general. This makes it difficult to make decisions on when, how and what to plant. More formal research in communities echoes these observations (see, for example, CCCN 2014).

Climate change presents many challenges for both communities and for CSOs, but there are also opportunities for effective collaboration. Many of the challenges and opportunities are widely recognized – for example, the need for new capacities and resources. Adaptation is a complex topic, and while many in Cambodia do recognize that climate change is here to stay, some CSOs are perplexed as to how, exactly, to deal with it. Climate change, after all, stretches far into the future and well beyond the lifespan of a given program. Adaptation spans sectors, scales and levels of intervention.

However, these challenges are not necessarily as new as they seem, as there is considerable

overlap between CCA and general development aims. It will be important to recognize what development efforts need to be scaled up, and what needs to change. As Spearman and McGray (2011) argued, “Not all development is adaptation and not all adaptation leads to development” (p. 11).

Over-optimistic assumptions about the co-benefits between adaptation and other aims, unfortunately, also make it easy to sidestep the need to confront tough choices around how to prioritize adaptation efforts and ensure that “no one is left behind” (as per the Agenda for Humanity) in protecting people from climate risks – and recognize that vulnerability is not evenly shared. Climate change poses more risk to some than to others, even within a single community. Those who are already poor and marginalized are likely to have the fewest resources with which to cope. There are inevitably tensions, tradeoffs, and political sensitivities surrounding adaptation priorities that need to be confronted in a transparent manner.

We have observed considerable confusion in some quarters in Cambodia as to how adaptation is distinguished from ‘business as usual’ development efforts and what the implications are for mainstreaming CCA and disaster risk reduction (DRR) into CSO operations. Not everything that gets rained on is an adaptation target! Indeed, one of the chief difficulties Plan International had when reviewing a round of CSO grant proposals was distinguishing how a given project actually addressed adaptive capacities per se, beyond (for example) standard agriculture



interventions which may or may not directly respond to changes in the climate-related risks facing different groups of farmers.

A second, and somewhat contradictory issue, is that in Cambodia there is a record of CCA training/capacity building coming in at too high a technical level. When this happens, agencies are unable to actually apply this knowledge. For example, the evaluation of Cambodia's Joint Climate Change Initiative (Dalhgren, Christoplos, and Phanith 2013) highlighted that effectiveness of trainings in climate-smart agriculture was hampered by weak or even non-existent agricultural extension services to begin with. They noted that both government and CSO approaches tended to be heavy-handed, top-down, and preoccupied with 'modernization' rather than a learning approach which recognized local strengths and capacities and built partnerships with smallholders. Promoting climate-smart agriculture that is 'smart' for smallholders will thus necessitate investing

in reformed and strengthened agricultural services as a whole.

We do recognize that the two points we are making – for more technical assistance, but fewer technicalities – may come across as a paradox, but really they underscore the **need for a more holistic approach which appropriately brings together technical and local knowledge.**

A critical challenge – but also opportunity – for CSOs in Cambodia is to strike this balance and in doing so challenge approaches that are only likely to reach a small minority of farmers and which can instead demonstrate effective alternatives at the 'riceroots.' Climate change is not simply a technical problem to be solved by outside experts; risk and resilience is too profoundly shaped by socioeconomic factors.

A body of critical research and reflection on climate change adaptation in Cambodia is beginning to emerge (e.g. Käkönen et al., 2014; Mahanty et al., 2015; Work, 2015; Christoplos & McGinn 2016), pointing to the need to challenge

policy and programming narratives which, in Käkönen et al's (2014) words, "render climate change governable" (p. 355) by framing it in technical terms which support rather than challenge dominant development paradigms, which in themselves often marginalize the most vulnerable by leaving them out of future plans and visions for what is expected to be 'climate smart'.

At the village (or urban poor) level, programming silos do not make much sense because the many dimensions of risk and resilience are too deeply intertwined within people's lives. CSOs are well-placed to identify and encourage strengths-based approaches, as well as to potentially interjecting 'riceroots' perspectives on national discourse and programming. Advocacy is essential to achieving this. Our research, however, highlights that this is one of the thornier opportunities that CSOs are struggling with in Cambodia. We observed a sharp divide between agencies embracing 'hard' versus 'soft' advocacy strategies.



Photo: Flood in poor urban neighborhood in outskirts of Phnom Penh, October 2016.

The 'hard' advocacy groups represented an eclectic mix of strong rights-oriented groups with a strong legal focus, plus a newer emerging cluster of 'rabble-rouser' community-based organizations. Service-oriented CSOs – many of which see themselves as 'professional' development agencies implementing programs funded primarily by international donors – focus on implementing projects and soft (or no) advocacy which largely sidesteps the political controversies that determine whose adaptation needs are addressed. We noted that nearly all agencies adopt advocacy positions which are driven by how they want to situate themselves within the Cambodian political landscape, rather than by an analysis of what was needed to effect change. This is understandable, but also unfortunate – particularly since the hard and soft advocates sometimes compete rather than collaborate around common aims.

There are signs that emerging politicized community-based organizations seem to be challenging not only authorities, but also the professional CSOs – both legal 'hard' advocacy and development 'soft' ones. We also noted that some 'soft' service-oriented CSO representatives were clearly 'connecting the dots' across complex issues, but felt that their hands were if the factors that generate climate vulnerability were politically sensitive, because they need government approvals and permissions to operate. This echoes Frewer's (2013) observation that CSO staff "navigated a precarious path between the demands of donors and what was possible and safe for them in their day-to-day existence" (p. 106).

There is clearly both need and opportunity to strengthen CSO capacities around advocacy and programming for CCA. The current thrust of policy and programming is

to separate mitigation (i.e., reducing climate change itself through reduced greenhouse gas emissions and protecting forests and other 'carbon sinks' which absorb them) and adaptation (i.e., coping with the effects – rather than causes – of climate change). In a country like Cambodia, these two are actually inextricably interlinked. Ecosystems – including farmlands and other 'human habitats' – are much more likely to be adversely affected by climate change if they are already under strain for other reasons. In this sense, climate change is an exacerbating factor amidst widespread unsustainable natural resource extraction. Cambodia has the third highest rate of deforestation in the world (Hansen et al. 2013, as cited by Milne & Mahanty 2015); aquatic ecosystems are similarly under enormous stress.

We are concerned, however, that there is an emerging narrative which labels all environmental degradation as 'climate change' and that this in turn is used to shift responsibility for natural resource management to global actors. Many of the issues that Cambodian farmers report that they are now struggling with – including droughts and floods – are also driven by deforestation and unsustainable water resource management. Ecosystem-based adaptation is built upon the premise that a healthy environment is essential to successful human adaptive capacities. Because CSOs are – or should be – grounded in local-level experiences in Cambodia, it simply does not make sense to divvy up issues into separate sectors, because at the local level they are so intertwined. Deforestation is not just a "mitigation" problem: it is an adaptation one, because it affects farming and fishing.

Food security and nutrition also represents an opportunity for advocacy and targeted programming. The Ministry

of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) has a (2014) Climate Change Action Plan which discusses food security, but its strategy (and performance measures) ultimately emphasize maximizing crop yields to strengthen national food security and increase commercial exports. It lacks, however, a strategy to address household-level food security and nutrition. CSOs can and should demonstrate as well as advocate pro-poor strategies to improve nutrition across Cambodia, to reduce the toll that climate change will take on food security.

Perhaps the single most explosive public policy issue in Cambodia today is land tenure security, a full discussion of which is well outside the scope of this essay. However, it would be grossly over-optimistic to expect that community-based adaptation projects will build resilience amidst widespread dispossession of small-scale farmers. Adaptation often implies significant – and sometimes expensive – investments in water management infrastructure and systems, soil conservation, and adoption of new seed varieties. These investments are much more risky if land tenure is not secure. As more CSOs formally adopt rights-based approaches, it will be more difficult to sidestep political tensions, especially with regard to land.

Climate change adaptation presents both challenges and opportunities for CSOs in not only implementing new types of projects and programs, but also contributing to mediating the public policy discourse and the 'space' between citizens and authorities. This is not only a question of capacity building, amassing technical expertise, and leveraging global funds to pursue this critical work. Opportunities also lay in reframing the discourse of development in Cambodia, to better promote bottom-up and more holistic approaches.

GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVES

Cambodia is widely recognized as an early embracer of climate change policy and programming, particularly around adaptation. What, however, has been – and will be – the role of CSOs within official strategies? Many changes are underway in Cambodia aside from climate, which are affecting the policy environment. These include decentralization, tightening donor funding, growing confidence of the political opposition, economic growth, and degradation of natural habitats. All of these changes affect how both government and civil society approaches the long-term and thorny problem of climate change.

To get a better sense of government perspectives on emerging opportunities for civil society to address climate change in Cambodia, three government representatives were interviewed: His Excellency CHHUOP Paris (National Council on Sustainable Development), His Excellency ROSS Sovann (National Committee for Disaster Management), and Mr. SAR Kosal (Ministry of Interior's Democratization & Deconcentration unit).

They expressed a diversity of opinions and perspectives in wide-ranging, open-ended interviews, but **above all, they expressed appreciation and, indeed, enthusiasm, for the contributions of civil society towards achieving climate resilience.** Each expressed different views and emphases, but across their thoughtful, and incisive reflections some common themes emerged. We will briefly touch on five of these, which help frame opportunities for strengthened partnerships with civil society in the years to come.



- 1 • Cooperation: Or, the government really does need civil society!** One of the simplest yet strongest themes that came through across all the interviews is how eager the government is to partner with civil society, because **CSOs help get things done. They also bring a great deal to the table: technical expertise, strong and meaningful ties with communities, and bottom-up approaches – all of which are needed to help effect change on the ground.** Climate change is a new issue, and there is a great deal of uncertainty as to what to do about it. CSOs have been trained, and have been implementing community-based projects for several years now, and this knowledge and experience can help the government try to make its policies more systematic in both theory and practice. Cambodia has an ambitious policy framework for climate change and related topics – the chief challenge is implementation.



As His Excellency **ROSS Sovann** (photo left) commented, “So now we have a disaster management law, but it’s just a piece of paper if it’s not acted on. It doesn’t jump off the shelf to help you!” The key ingredient is action and follow-through, and civil society is an essential element of that. Getting things done will require partnerships, cooperation, and leadership – and there is opportunity for everyone.

2. Decentralization: The New Climate Change Opportunity. Climate change may be global, but adaptation is fundamentally a local process. Administrative reforms are underway, bringing new levels of both authority and responsibility to sub-national governments, which are more responsive to local priorities and perspectives. Climate change funding too is increasingly directed to – or at least including – local governments. Very significant capacity gaps remain, however, both in how to address climate change, and how to embrace bottom-



up, participatory work. The government welcomes CSO strengths in this regard, which can and should smooth decentralization efforts and, in so doing, strengthen their own operational bases. Indeed, **there are signs of lost opportunity in this regard. For example, some CSOs are so focused on accessing foreign donor funds that they are not fully recognizing that funding may be available with and through local government, and therefore do not engage.** There is strong consensus among our interviewees that decentralization poses enormous opportunities for local-level partnerships.

SAR Kosal (photo left) particularly urged CSOs to directly approach commune councils in regards to new opportunities for climate change adaptation projects. Aside from the fact that money may become available, projects will be more sustained if they enjoy ongoing local government support.

3. Scaling Up and Out. There is strong consensus among the three interviewees that **CSOs do excellent work at the community level, but lack resources and capacity to scale up and out.** Yes, water security is improved in one village – but what about the village next door? Government can learn a great deal about good practice (and bad) from the experience of CSOs – but CSOs simply are not equipped to roll out models on a large scale, or sustain projects over the long term. This is precisely what government can and should do. CSOs can experiment, identify best practice, but ultimately their effectiveness is limited unless it is recognized and replicated on a larger scale. **This only the government can do – but it, in turn, relies on CSOs to show them the models.** His Excellency ROSS Sovann was probably the most articulate on this point: “On DRR, there is no one with strong power, mandate, or capacity to really mobilize all the players. Now there are fragments of good practice, but they are unsustainable... CSOs are doing a good job on CCA and DRR, with good results at the community level. But there is no scale... they are isolated, fragmented, scattered.” He strongly argued that **effective partnership between government and CSOs is critical – and that the main limitation is not capacity or resources, but leadership and willpower.** The others echoed him in some respects, directly or indirectly emphasizing that CSOs need government to achieve systematic and sustainable results.

4. *Policy and Advocacy.* Interviewees expressed strong interest in an expanded role for CSOs in the public policy arena. Because of their strong technical expertise and knowledge about effective programming at the grassroots, their input is welcome and, indeed, needed to craft public policy.



As **CHHUOP Paris (photo left)** argued, “We cannot protect the environment alone! We need civil society and the development partners to work together with us.... We need to mobilize others... and integrate local with international expertise... CSOs help us more and more.” To do so, however, **more sophisticated and nuanced advocacy strategies would be welcome.** There were calls for input to be stronger, better, more effective, and useable – and paired with more trust and professionalism. There were comments about new leadership and ways of working within the government itself – “**the old style is gone**” and **there are meaningful efforts to be more inclusive and bottom-up than in the past.** While problems persist, there was some defensiveness about CSOs which are seen to either just argue for the sake of arguing, or else to extend input that is simplistic or generic rather than based on more incisive analysis – particularly ‘big picture’ thinking and highlighting of policy gaps which, indeed, can be better thought of as policy opportunities.

There were also calls for less passivity among CSOs: that **too many wait to be told what to do rather than speak up and out.** ROSS Sovann added that many of these comments also apply to donors! “CSO advocacy needs to push on policy because policy determines resources and mandates. Development partners too! We are not as donor-driven as people think! I am a little disappointed in them, actually, because they should do more advocacy too. They have a lot of expertise, and we need more constructive thinking. And the CSOs should initiate more too, not just wait. They do such good work at the grassroots, but we need them at the policy level too, so that we can all do a better job.” SAR Kosal echoed, “Very few CSOs strategically advocate for climate change. We need to build a network with a stronger voice. I think the government will support them if it’s done well.... More sophisticated, informed, positive, and with evidence. The government can support that.”

5. *The climate is not the only thing that’s changing! Cambodia is in transition, and this too poses both challenges and opportunities.* This theme appeared again and again across the interviews. Cambodia is a country undergoing rapid change on many levels, and it is imperative to be nimble and not get stuck in old habits if they no longer fit the current situation. All this change – even climate change itself – can represent an opportunity to do things differently. CHHUOP Paris emphasized a new era of government responsiveness and collaboration with civil society; SAR Kosal too highlighted enormous opportunities for collaboration not simply in terms of style, but in funding and other resources to address climate resilience at the local level. As budgets devolve, CSOs will find new opportunities for funding well beyond their usual international donor base. He urged CSOs to recognize and act on this early, in order to shape new partnerships as well as secure a new source of funding. Concerns were also expressed in different ways

that opportunities were being lost for both government and CSOs to do things differently. ROSS Sovann, for example, regretted that climate change is “rich” but too often just a buzzword dropped into funding proposals without any real change in strategy or direction. Climate change is broad – but it should also be meaningful. He urged stakeholders to think critically about what CCA really means. One strategy is for a more comprehensive DRR approach to be integrated across Ministries. SAR Kosal similarly called for CSOs to pursue more systematic approaches and strategies for both implementation and capacity building, in order to achieve more sustainability. “The role of CSOs is very important at the local level,” he argued, “but they need more systematic and strategic support” and decentralization is a new key. If one Ministry is still top-down in Phnom Penh, go to their local department in the province and figure out how to action plan together. This can be a model for the Ministry – but also CSOs themselves. The era of waiting for government invitations is over, or should be.



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

MR. KHOUN SOKHA, 53, PHNOM PENH

Mr. Khoun Sokha is a vice chief of Prek Takong village, Sang Kat Boeung Tumpun, Khann Mean Chey in Phnom Penh city. He is 53 years old, and lives with his wife and son. He first came to this village in 1984 but he traveled a lot for business. Since 1993 he has stayed there full time, farming morning glory. Like others in the area, he uses chemical fertilizers and other modern inputs. He just got married a few years ago, and now has a 4-year-old boy. His wife is a hairdresser, but recently quit working because she is pregnant with their second child.

“My name is Khoun Sokha. Over the past few years, I see that the environment and climate are different from before. These changes affect people’s health badly, especially young children. The sun is hotter, and this affects schooling. It’s so hot during the day and young students have to walk far from home to their schools. Some of them don’t go on hot days. It is a hard for school children, the sunlight harms their health. In this community we are poor, so we cannot afford bicycles. The children have to walk 2 kilometers to school. The price of food is also higher. Before, in 1990, I sold one pack

of morning glory greens for 70 riels; now I sell them for 700-800 riels! But when we buy food that costs a lot more, too. We spend more money buying food.

The upper stream is polluted and full of dirt, and we cannot grow morning glory and other vegetables there. It might have acid or other bad things. Such dirty water harms health, it causes diseases and skin allergies. The government has a plan to remove the waste water out from here to Prek Ho River, but I haven’t seen any action yet. My community uses pump wells, 30 meters deep. One well in a neighboring community has so much arsenic they can’t use the water.

People in this community own their land, and built their houses themselves. Normally, our houses are built on wooden stilts, but the walls and roof are metal. So hot! We are trying to renovate the houses so that the children are more protected by shade. For example they build houses next to ruins of old ones, where it is shady. We try to fix up the houses so that they can cope with three hazards: wind, flood, heat. Some of the houses are in bad condition.

There is more rain now, and strong winds. The village is on open land, no trees or shade. When I was young, it was not hot like this. The last 5-6 years have been really different.”

Some community members want to sell land to a company, but they want a higher price than the company will pay. There are also some renters here. There is some gambling, despite some CSO education on this it doesn’t stop. In Prek Takong 1 village, we have some self-help groups: savings groups, water user groups, and also an agriculture cooperative. We have several saving groups, and my group is the best. Last year our total closing balance was 40 million riels [≈US\$10,000]! Every month, group members come to join together and save money. Each saves between 4-5 shares (20,000 riels per share), and each group has 35-40 members. Members can borrow from the group, some members can borrow up to 10 million riels to expand their morning glory business and pay back step by step. These groups are supported by World Vision Cambodia. If a group member has an accident or other emergency, he/she can borrow 40,000 riels at a time.



MRS. PRAK KHOEUN, 53, KAMPONG SPEU

My name is Prak Khoeun, I am 53 years old. I have been living in Krang Serey village in Kiry Vorn commune, Phnom Srouch district, Kampong Speu Province since 1979.

I have three children. My daughter works in a garment factory in Phnom Penh, my eldest son got married and lives in another nearby commune, and my youngest son studies in Phnom Penh. My husband and I are farmers. We farm rice during the rainy season only but we grow vegetables year round.

Over the past few years, water has become more scarce, and it's hard for villagers to find enough for households and for farming. The ponds and stream are dried up now. The environment started to change around 1993, since then there is less rain, and now droughts always happen in the village. I am a farmer, but because rain is less, my yield is less too. Ten years ago, I could sell rice 2 tons of rice per year, but not now. Now there is only enough for my family to eat ourselves, no more to sell.

Because of changes in the environment, I have noticed that more diseases affect my community and especially the elderly and young children. The changes also affect livelihoods in Krang Serey, because villagers can no longer survive on farming. It's hard to cope with the situation, but there are a few things we can do, like growing vegetables, and digging ponds for growing many kinds of vegetables.

The vegetable season lasts around nine to ten months, community households can get between 700,000 riels [≈US\$175] and 2 million riels [≈US\$500] during a month. If there was more water, we could earn more from growing vegetables. My husband is 63 years old now, he is a rice farmer. We villagers always stay here, because we need to be here if it rains, then we can farm rice and grow vegetables. We are happy when we think about earning money that way.



The villagers eat green vegetables from their gardens, and more people understand about eating nutritious food. In this village, my sister and I are the nutrition focal points, and we share our knowledge through village meetings. The villagers learn from us the three food groups, how to prepare healthy food, and the importance of green vegetables.

Krang Serey depends on rainwater for farming. Our water system built by the CSO KSCF (Krang Serey Community Forestry) and is for household needs. KSCF charges 500 riels per cubic meter. Based on our experience, each family can use up to 7-9 cubic meters per month for washing and cooking. Some people drink purified water purchased from the community's mini bottling factory, while others drink boiled water from the pipe.

I find that these years, the sun is hotter and sometimes people get sick. I am a village health volunteer, so I always educate others during village meetings. Others rely on faith and ritual, though.

During the March and April hot season, it's more and more hot at night. It's so hot that some people sleep outside, and so does my family. We have good security in the village. During the hot season, villagers can get sick with diarrhea or typhoid. But we know how to prevent it now, and we get support from the health center as soon as they get sick.

Climate change doesn't affect schooling so much though, children go to school every day, and teachers go too. I am also a member of the school support committee, and I often join meetings to support the school director about decisions like what to buy, how to manage the school budget, and promoting things like handwashing. The school has toilets for students too.

Since I've noticed climate change, only a few people migrated away from Krang Serey, mostly those who are newly married. Around 30 young people work as garment workers, but they come back home at night. A few work in Phnom Penh, but none have moved abroad, like Korea or Thailand. People who work outside the village always send money back home and some of them visit home during important festivals.

To reduce risks from the changing weather, I have a few suggestions that a CSO could do with a government department to help my community. My idea is that digging more family ponds would be a great choice so that people could have more water to use. The piped water is just not enough for all our community's needs. Some people have their own ponds, but others don't. A pond usually costs around 1,500,000 riels [≈US\$375] for each family. If the government supported this, the family ponds would be good. It is also good to educate people about climate change.

I would be happy if there was CSO funding to support my community, it doesn't need to be the government's budget. If we had our own ponds, we could grow vegetables and also raise fish in the ponds, as these are the best of ways for us to cope with less rainfall. I am an optimist! I would also like to plant more trees to absorb carbon and give shade. We need to consider the futures of younger generations.

We have been asking for support from the department of land management in order to obtain land title documents. Still this problem has not been solved for all 360 families here. We need these documents, so that our land can be secure.

One way to reduce climate change is to plant more trees. This is the best way to reduce heat from the sun, and CSOs help the government do this. CSOs work directly with us here in our community. The village and commune authorities are so busy, and they don't know so much about climate change.



MS. RON DYNA, 28, PREY VENG

My name is Ron Dyna. I live in Chan village, Prek Kandieng commune, Ba Phnom district, Prey Veng Province. I am 28 years old. I was born in this village.

Before, we used to experience floods every year. It was difficult, and there weren't any CSOs who came and helped, so we did not get any information. We did not know how to deal with extreme floods, either before or after. We did not have a good way to keep animals and poultry safe from floods. There were few safe hills or high grounds or places where families could keep their animals during a flood, except for a faraway pagoda. There were a few boats, but most families did not have one. When a flood came, many people got diarrhea from drinking unclean water. Most people in this village got sick. And people did not know how to live healthily, they kept practicing their traditional ways of living. Some families drew water from a well and boiled it for drinking, but some families drank water directly from the well.

The need for water wells has increased in the last two years. That's why some families have taken out loans to dig wells. A few families around my house took out a loan to dig wells, and some were supported by an CSO called "Sralanh (Love) Cambodia." The CSO helped pay for digging wells and equipped them with pumps. Every family has a latrine in their house. When it flooded, the water reached under their houses [which are built on stilts], but the houses were not affected or destroyed. The flood occurred during school holidays and thus did not affect the studying. After the flood, some families migrated to work in other provinces or outside the country,

they went to places like Phnom Penh and Thailand. Most of them went to Thailand. They left their young children at home with relatives. Mostly, it was parents who migrated, and brought older children with them. One girl drowned while traveling by boat with another 3 people during the flood. She didn't know how to swim, and there was no one brave enough to help her at the time.

Storms also affect my village, but it's not been so serious. We have had drought over the last two years, since 2014. The water dried up. The pump wells did not work. We had to use an air pressure motor to

get water out of the wells. During that drought, we could only grow a little rice. Not much grew and moreover, a lot of animals and poultry died from water shortages. There was no income, only spending every day. Our biggest worry was not having enough to eat. We had to buy rice. Villagers are not so surprised when there is flood, because that happens almost every year. But the villagers here are so worried about drought: our survival depends on our ability to access enough water. We can cope when normal floods come, but when there is drought we face great difficulties. People and animals need water for drinking and living.



The government and CSO called Sralanh Cambodia provided emergency assistance such as seed, rice, tents, knives and many more things, like water, food and shelters. Villagers could borrow seed from the community on a small scale. When there is any emergency or when a disaster happens in a community, the village authority reports it to the government including the Committee for Disaster Management and it will organize a response to the victims. A village

self-help group helps villagers with small low-interest loans.

There is good mutual support in the community. Villagers share food, clothes and rice with those in greatest need. The pagoda also gives rice to poor villagers. We collaborate with a CSO to choose families who need wells and then the CSO built them. There are some families in the village who can do some planting/gardening for their families because they have enough

water. We can get some income from gardening and we can also support our own family. We need CSOs and the commune council to help us improve home gardening and animal raising practices. This is my first time to be involved with the CSO WOMEN to learn about climate change and disaster risk reduction. It is good to learn and it helps us a lot. I suggest that we receive more trainings on agriculture and that those trainings be extended to more families in my village.



Photo: Climate Vulnerability Reduction Analysis (VRA) process conducted in Kandal Province by Plan international's partner Child Rights Foundation (CRF) as part of its project identification process (November 2015)

CSO PERSPECTIVES

CSOs and villagers are already coping as best they can with the floods and droughts that have resulted from a changing climate in Cambodia, but there are opportunities to do so in a way which is more strategic and sustainable. To learn more about these opportunities, three Cambodian CSO leader were interviewed: Mr. HENG Sok from the local agency Sovann Phoum, CSO partner of Plan International under ADB's Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning – Civil Society Support Mechanism (MCRDP-CSSM), Ms. IM Phallay from NGO Forum (an association of NGOs in Cambodia), and Mr. NOP Polin from the international NGO Danish Church Aid. They all spoke with great enthusiasm and commitment, each expressing their own opinions and perspectives, but often echoing each other as well. This article presents some of the common themes that emerged from our discussions.

1. It is essential to trust – as well as build - local capacities. Capacity building and capacity gaps are something of a preoccupation of the development community in Cambodia, and unsurprisingly our interviewees all emphasized on the need for training, mentoring, and capacity building for villagers, CSOs, and government alike. However, there were strong assertions that local capacities also needed to be better recognized and embraced by outsiders.



IM Phallay (photo left), for example, spoke at length about her experiences mobilizing illiterate village women for DRR activities. “In the end, I was so proud!” she exclaimed. “Many people think that uneducated people cannot do anything, but in fact they became real leaders. And in the end they are better able to cope with floods – and also to persuade the Ministry, the pagodas, and others to support them, too.” HENG Sok commented at length about recognizing and supporting spontaneous adaptation in villages. “Sometimes people address the problem by themselves, without expert knowledge. They don’t intend to adapt to climate change exactly, but they adapt to the water shortage or other problems that they are experiencing.” Community-based work that draws from local strengths is more effective, and outsiders who respect and act upon that get better results.

2. The biggest capacity gap is not knowledge, but leadership, long term empowerment and effective follow-through. All of those interviewed made strong calls for donors to go beyond simply information and training courses – and, indeed, short-term one-off projects – toward long-term efforts which include mentoring and funding that is consistent enough to promote more meaningful sustainability for both CSOs and communities. It is not simply a question of opportunities for CSOs to access donor funds: climate change is a long-term problem which needs long-term solutions, and this in turn represents an opportunity for donors to adjust their funding modalities in order to be more effective. There were complaints about “many trainings” without adequate resources for follow-through, or investment in the leadership to carry the work forward. To really apply new knowledge and information, training needs to be

embedded within a strategic – and stably funded – pathway that stretches over time. IM Phallay made an especially impassioned plea to invest in leadership training and mentoring champions – not simply technical trainings. A commitment to filling capacity gaps needs to be based on a more empowering and holistic approach, and explicit nurturing of promising and committed individuals at all levels. Capacity building thus needs to be resourced differently, not simply adequately. Trainings alone are not enough, especially when people are uncertain as how to directly integrate learning into their own work. While everyone agrees that training should be integrated into longer-term efforts to apply new knowledge and skills, the fact is that funding is too often for short-term on-off trainings and projects. Champions are change agents who make things happen: but they are much more effective when others also support their work over time.

3. *Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is one of the most important adaptation strategies for Cambodia.*

. As NOP Polin succinctly declared, “DRR is the key.” Because the country is so prone to floods and droughts, more systematic investment in DRR is imperative – not just managing disasters after they already occur. This in turn requires partnerships with communities and local authorities to enhance leadership and plan ahead: for example, invest in Disaster Management Committees in villages, as well as contribute to crafting local government strategies to ensure a focus on the poor and most vulnerable. Too often, it was asserted, there are missed opportunities regarding disaster planning and preparedness. And while this point should seem obvious, our interviewees pointed to very specific and concrete examples. “Sometimes the commune councils just build roads and don’t think about other options until there is an acute drought and it is too late,” NOP Polin explained, and argued for CSOs to look for opportunities to offer innovative and practical suggestions to local government planners as well as villages. HENG Sok explained that community people may not know about climate change per se, but they certainly know that droughts are getting worse and keenly welcome any support to lessen their impact.

There was also acknowledgements that for some CSOs, talking about climate change has been seen as an easy way to make proposals more fundable. CCA should not be just a fundraising strategy – nor should it somehow crowd out ‘old’ DRR programming if that is precisely what is needed. In Cambodia, capacities to cope with climate change are embedded in capacities to cope with disasters, and that requires effective investment and partnerships across the nation’s villages. While it is true that climate change calls for new strategies and approaches, it also calls for re-shuffling existing priorities, and chief among these is greater emphasis on DRR. Mainstreaming climate change is not only about ‘new and improved’ techniques, it also catapults long-standing DRR work to even greater importance. And again: this is fundamentally an issue of leadership and vision – not just capacity.

4. *Government partnerships include both new opportunities and old problems.*

Widespread enthusiasm was expressed for Cambodia’s ongoing efforts to devolve responsibility, authority, and budgets from central to local levels. Because CSOs can and are at the forefront of community-based programming, they are well-poised to be influential partners and leaders in the transition towards a new style of government. IM Phallay especially commented on the importance of CSOs having a place at the table surrounding new local-level government strategies and plans. “This is very important,” she asserted, “I think

bottom-up approaches are better and [government officials] do not always know the villages.” CSOs can gently persuade a wider range of thinking and planning.

There were also comments, however, that government partnerships at any level are hardly the ‘magic bullet’ that everyone would like them to be. Government processes can be slow and representatives passive, and frustration was expressed that they are less accountable than they should be to either communities or to funders. Decentralization is indeed an important opportunity for CSOs to navigate new ways of working to address climate change at the local level – but the opportunity is undermined if government representatives do not embrace more pro-active and participatory ways of working. Enthusiasm is high, but must be tempered by realism paired with concern that funding local government may exclude CSOs and community-based approaches – or simply fail to deliver.



5. *Climate change should usher in a meaningful agenda for change, and CSOs can play a leadership role in bridging science with local knowledge, and bridging national policy with local needs and applications.*

IM Phallay argued that CSOs should be a change agent, and that climate change itself is driving innovation across the country. Livelihood strategies are transforming because they must. Climate change is transforming agriculture, fishing, and livelihoods in Cambodia: old strategies may become less effective, but villagers are uncertain as to what they can do differently and more effectively. Meanwhile there is a new bevy of international climate change experts – but their advice may not always be workable in the local context. “Climate change experts think in big terms, but they are not always practical!”, **HENG Sok explained (photo left).**

NOP Polin made similar comments that “we need to blend science with local knowledge” and that CSOs can bridge these in order to forge practical solutions at the community level – and also ensure that public policy too reflects these perspectives. Interviewees especially emphasized how strategies must be culturally sensitive, not just technical, and that the best solutions are often quick, easy, and inexpensive. HENG Sok discussed one example: local chickens are highly adapted to Cambodian conditions (including floods and droughts) compared to commercial breeds – but are prone to dying en masse from disease breakouts. Actually, it is not ‘modern’ chickens who are stronger, but rather that those who raise them are large operations which can afford to invest in vaccines! Vaccines themselves are only available in bulk quantities, however – but with modest resources, a CSO can mobilize a village and vaccinate the hardier, more resilient local chickens, and thus safeguard food security.

HENG Sok emphasized that poor Cambodians are very, very risk-averse: they simply cannot afford to experiment, or to try again if something fails. One result is that they quickly abandon a farming or other livelihood strategy – whether new or old – in favor of something seen as safer or more reliable. Outside expert (or government) strategies often fail to account for the priorities and perspectives of the poor, and particularly that they simply cannot afford to take chances. Climate change is



transforming smallholder agriculture in Cambodia – and villagers can and are already adapting to new circumstances. But the experts too need to adapt: better understand villagers themselves, rather than regretting that Cambodians are backwards or uneducated. This takes long-term effort and a humble attitude, but in the end it is the most effective way to promote resilience at the community level.

NOP Polin (photo left) echoed, “Our civil society role cannot substitute for the government, but we can try to give support, evidence, and collaborate to fill the gap and widen the space to better include the most vulnerable” as well as broader thinking about the effects of climate change, so that issues like migration, nutrition, market access, and human rights are included – not simply infrastructure.

The climate is changing – and so, indeed, is Cambodia. CSOs are widely recognized for their skills, expertise, and commitment to community-based programming in Cambodia. They serve as bridges between villages (or city neighborhoods) and the policy arena, and translate international knowledge into local-level efforts. Government and donors do support them, extending funding, capacity building, and other support. However, the overarching theme from conversations with CSO leaders is leadership, decision-making, consideration for local circumstances and inclusion. Neither CSOs – nor, indeed, Cambodian citizens themselves – are simply passive recipients of aid. Government and donor funding for climate change (and otherwise) is increasingly being channeled to local levels, but this requires new ways of working – not simply allocating budgets differently.

This is an opportunity for CSOs to not simply fundraise, but become models and leaders of community-based programming, demonstrating what does and does not work, and ultimately influence public policy and praxis across the nation.



CONCLUSION

Several key themes emerge from our conversations with villagers, CSO workers and activists, government officials, and donor representatives. Everyone agrees that the weather is already changing: the effects of climate change are clearly here, and this is one of many reasons why farmers and fishers feel more insecure. Old people confidently knew when the best time to plant and harvest was, and remember when the rivers swarmed with fish. This is no longer always true, and so livelihoods are more precarious. Aside from these gradual changes and uncertainties, there are more dramatic effects. Floods and droughts have always been part of life in Cambodia, but now it is different. They are more frequent, and more severe. Risks are somewhat balanced by the advantages of modern life: remittances sent by relatives working in the city, and government and CSP projects reduce disaster risks and send emergency relief. Still, everyone is worried. Climate change will only get worse, and that means constantly struggling with either too much or not enough water.

What then, are the opportunities for CSOs to address these risks within the communities they partner with? And what are the opportunities for government and donors to do things differently, so that their own resources are used more effectively? In this newsletter, we have presented a variety of viewpoints and voices, including farmers, scholars, CSO workers, and government officials. Taken together, they point to ways forward to build strength and resilience. What, then, are the most

promising entry points for CSOs to mainstream climate change into their operations?

Mainstreaming Climate Change into CSO Operations

Over the past few years, the international development community has extended considerable funding towards CCA in Cambodia. Indeed, CCA is no longer a brand new issue that is not understood: there is considerable awareness about climate change and adaptation among CSOs – including the fact that referring to climate change helps get projects funded.

What is less clear is how to do CCA well and fully apply learnings from formal trainings more broadly. There is consensus that motivation, commitment, and leadership at all levels is essential to take concerns about CCA and translate them into concrete actions.

Ways to do this can be:

1. Systematically include climate change concerns in needs/ vulnerability assessments – even when it is not explicitly required.
2. Think through climate change implications and opportunities during 'big picture' strategic planning sessions.
3. Think about whether and how CCA is different from development 'business as usual.' While there is overlap between adaptation and sustainable development, too often CCA is valued as a 'co-benefit' and / or a fundraising opportunity, rather than a new set of projects and priorities. (see below). There may also be other new type of interventions, such as the provision of climate information services, which CSOs could provide to a growing demand as a direct result of climate change.

Climate Adaptation versus Business as Usual

There is an opportunity for more careful and strategic thinking about whether and how CCA calls for things to be done differently. In some cases, there may be little difference between CCA and development 'business as usual' on the individual project level: a well, after all, is still a well. The distinction would lie in how projects are prioritized. In other cases, however, CCA does indeed mean doing things differently. Just because farming is sensitive to the weather does not mean that any agriculture project is CCA. Likewise, dry season is not the same as "drought"! By now, CSOs are familiar with CCA and are certainly integrating the core terms and concepts into funding proposals. Going forwards, the next step is to improve the quality and coherence of strategies and processes to genuinely mainstream CCA into usual business processes.

4. CCA is now taken for granted as an important consideration in some sectors, like infrastructure and agriculture. How might it apply to other sectors, like education, health, and urban development? Think outside the box. There are signals that there are missed opportunities in other fields.

5. CSOs may be so focused on

securing international climate finance that they may be missing new opportunities – and funding – for partnerships with local government.

6. Embrace rights-based approaches to climate change programming (see below). This would specifically seek to ensure transparency, accountability (particularly accountability to

communities themselves), participation, and non-discrimination across programs. In doing so, we would expect to see different emphases in both advocacy and programming, including ‘big picture’ questions about development winners and losers, and whether / and how efforts are benefitting and empowering the poor and marginalized.

Climate Change and Rights Based Approach

Considerations to be reflected in all climate action and included in OHCHR’s submission, Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change, to the 21st Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (27 November 2015), and to help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts are adequate, sufficiently ambitious, non-discriminatory and otherwise compliant with human rights obligations:

1. To mitigate climate change and to prevent its negative human rights impacts
2. To ensure that all persons have the necessary capacity to adapt to climate change
3. To ensure accountability and effective remedy for human rights harms caused by climate change
4. To mobilize maximum available resources for sustainable, human rights-based development
5. International cooperation
6. To ensure equity in climate action
7. To guarantee that everyone enjoys the benefits of science and its applications
8. To protect human rights from business harms
9. To guarantee equality and non-discrimination
10. To ensure meaningful and informed participation

More effective advocacy around climate change

Some might be surprised at how many stakeholders in this newsletter focused on how CSOs can and should engage in advocacy and public policy – and particularly the strong calls from government representatives for CSOs to fully engage. This may seem to contradict the ‘expert’ observation of the split between hard and soft advocacy CSOs, but a closer reading of both essays suggests that the perspectives may not be that far apart: the common ground is the space between them. The government representatives called for more incisive, targeted, evidence-based, and solutions-oriented CSO inputs into policy discourse. The implication, of

course, is that the service-oriented CSOs are simply too passive, and the advocacy-oriented ones too ‘knee-jerk’ and shrill rather than constructive. In short, there is ample opportunity for more and better CSO advocacy and engagement on climate change policy in Cambodia. We fully recognize that CSOs in Cambodia are not financially independent, and they rarely have discretionary budgets that they can direct towards priorities of their choices – especially for advocacy initiatives, which are less likely to produce concrete, short-term results. Nevertheless, it is also clear that there may be opportunity for CSOs to do things differently.

For example:

1. There is broad agreement that CSOs are doing excellent project work at the grassroots, but do not always fully engage in larger public policy fora. CSOs can and should identify a few specific advocacy priorities and pursue them. They need not be complex; it might instead be, for example, that DRR should be a greater priority. In other cases, there is opportunity for more seasoned and nuanced analysis. For example, MAFF’s climate change (and other) policies tend to be more oriented towards agri-business. Rather than simply regret that smallholders are being left out, CSOs can and should identify specific changes and speak out. Another example is that DRR is a body of programming which does not fit

neatly into any given Ministry. As a result, it is too easily seen as 'someone else's problem' rather than a sector priority. Because CSOs work at the community level, they see the key cross-cutting linkages and thus are in an excellent position to advocate for Ministries to prioritize DRR within their own policy instruments.

2. Individual CSOs – especially service-oriented CSOs – often miss opportunities to mainstream advocacy into their everyday work and operations. Advocacy/policy engagement might be included in funding proposals more often than it is, for example. A related point is that advocacy and policy engagement is often left to a small handful of associations and umbrella groups like NGO Forum to do on behalf of participating CSOs. There is ample opportunity for CSO staff and activists to better integrate advocacy into their everyday work, for example by raising points with officials that they interact with – rather than simply letting an umbrella group do it for them.
3. CSO advocacy work and policy engagement will be most effective if they help policymakers translate village-level good practice into more systematic policies. 'Big picture' thinking and a good understanding of the government's policy development process are essential.
4. CSOs and governments generally have very good relations, and everyone is invested in keeping it that way! Still, there are signs that 'professional' service-oriented CSOs are hesitant to speak up – and also to interact with more 'rabble-rouser' advocacy groups. This is unfortunate. It is true that some may be reckless, but many also dedicate time, energy, and resources to incisive policy analysis and often raise important concerns. CSOs can and should help bridge policy discourses and help convert external critiques into more positive and constructive policy solutions.

What government and donors can do better

It is rare for a Cambodian CSO to be fully independent: most are entirely dependent on securing international funding and official permissions in order to operate. It is easy for outsiders to give advice – technical or otherwise – but it is just as important for them to be mindful of the real constraints which limit them. Yes, there are opportunities for CSOs to more effectively mainstream CSOs into their operations – but there are also opportunities for government and development partners to improve the enabling environment. Key takeaway messages include:

1. Stable, long-term funding is essential for CSOs to fully mainstream CCA. They are almost all dependent on outside funding, which too often is short-term and oriented towards quick-impact projects and/or one-off trainings rather than sustained capacity building. CSOs express frustration that they cannot engage in long-term strategic planning in this funding context. Funding does not necessarily need to be increased – although that would certainly be warmly welcomed! – but structured specifically to better enable long-term and strategic engagement and capacity building.
2. CSOs which benefit from grants of course need to be held accountable for meeting targets and spending funds appropriately. However, each donor has its own specific paperwork/reporting requirements (in English!), and CSOs point out that some are onerous. Administrative requirements can be so burdensome that they compromise programming by siphoning too many resources away from grassroots-level work. Indeed, there can be more training/capacity building about use of specific forms than about climate change itself! It is encouraging that many donors are

supporting CSOs, but sometimes they are not conscientious about the resource implications of their expectations. If donors want to directly fund local agencies, they may need to rethink their own ways of working.

3. It is easy to advise CSOs to be more pro-active and strategic – but the same goes for government! Indeed, there are complaints that CSOs are held to a much higher accountability standard than government agencies. CSOs express concerns that government "partnerships" are one-sided and that official inertia and top-down approaches can be challenging to deal with. It would be helpful for government agencies to explore ways to better foster leadership, motivation, and downwards accountability.
4. A major reason why CSO engagement on specific public policy matters (e.g., a Ministry Climate Change Action Plan) might be because the advocacy work of the more outspoken organizations is necessarily concentrated on other, very serious problems within Cambodia. In one recent global review of rule of law, for example, Cambodia ranked 112 out of 113 countries worldwide (Maza 2016), and its human rights record is poor. The draft Law on Associations and NGOs and the draft Agricultural Land Law, for example, threaten very basic freedom of association and the property rights of the poor. CSOs have limited resources, and necessarily need to prioritize the most important issues that affect them and the communities they work with. They would be better able to fully engage on climate change policies and official action plans if they did not have to defend basic issues like land tenure security. These matters are well outside the scope of mainstreaming climate change into public policy, but it is important to recognize what limitations are operating.

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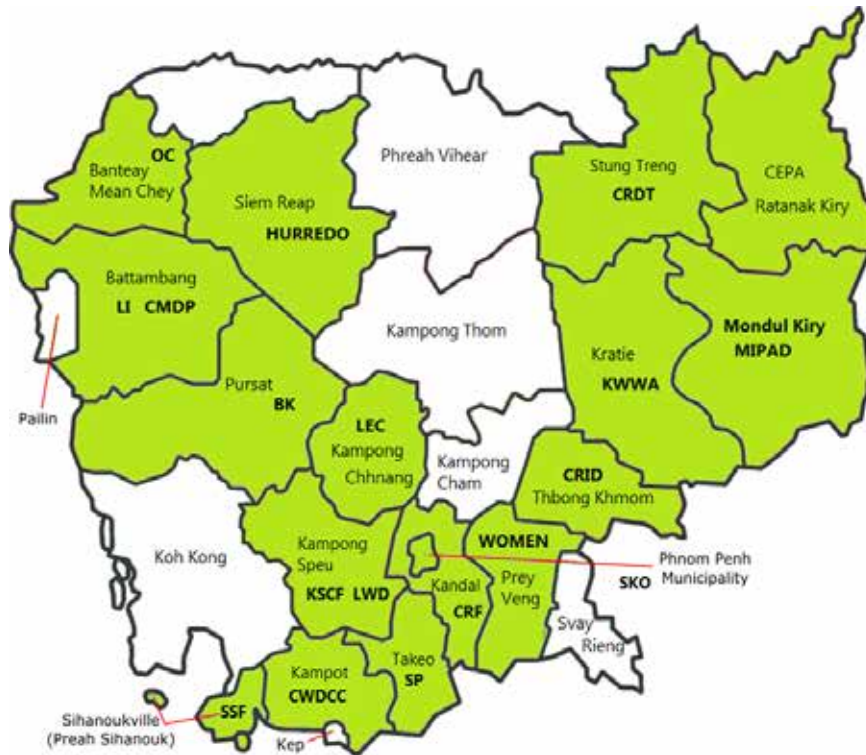
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Plan International's Civil Society Support Mechanism under the ADB funded Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning project funds 19 Cambodian's CSOs in 17 Provinces of Cambodia to implement Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) projects in a variety of sectors and targeting various vulnerable groups. Grants range from \$40,000 to \$100,000 and each lasts 18 months.



List of CSOs

- 1. Ban Teay Mean Chey = 1
- 2. Battambang = 2
- 3. Pursat = 1
- 4. Kampong Chhnang = 1
- 5. Kampong Speu = 2
- 6. Kandal = 1
- 7. Takeo = 1
- 8. Kampot = 1
- 9. Sihanoukville = 1
- 10. Prey Veng = 1
- 11. Phnom Penh = 1
- 12. Thbong Khmorn = 1
- 13. Kratie = 1
- 14. Mondul Kiri = 1
- 15. Ratanak Kiri = 1
- 16. Stung Treng = 1
- 17. Siem Reap = 1



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