

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ASSOCIATIONS IN CAMBODIA

A review for policy development of Community
Empowerment Program of Japan International
Cooperation Agency

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Research team:

Kyoko Kusakabe

Sri Sugiarti

Bao Vuthy

Sopha Phal

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The study "EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ASSOCIATIONS IN CAMBODIA" was commissioned and published in Phnom Penh in March 2002 by Japan International Cooperation Agency Cambodia Office.

The opinions and interpretations expressed therein are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

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Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

P.O.Box 613, House No. 36, Street No. 184

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Office Phone: 023-211 673

Fax: 023-211 675

E-mail: info@jica.org.kh

Website: <http://www.jica.go.jp/>



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research team would like to thank the association members and the staff members of the supporting NGOs who have cooperated in the case studies. Without their support, we would not have been able to conduct this study. We would like to express our appreciation to CEDAC, PADEK, USG, and FTUWKC for their openness and frankness in the whole process.

Our acknowledgement also goes to all the valuable comments and information that was given by the people who have kindly accepted our request for interview, and those who have taken their time to come to the presentation sessions. Especially, our thanks go to Kurt MacLeod of Pact, Veena Krishnamurthy of ACR, Mr. Alex Marcelino of Concern, John McAndrew and Sally Brooks of CIDSE, Carol Strickler of CCC, Yang Saing Koma, Khim Sophanna, Hour Sre Ng, Suon Seng, and Suon Sing of CEDAC, Chhay Sarata of Ponlok, and Shivakumar of World Bank for their suggestions, advice, and input during research and in the early draft of this report.

K C Meera, Karen Rasmussen, and Minako Shiotsuka have kindly edited English for this report. We are deeply indebted for their help. Yoshiko Ogawa has contributed in translating this report into Japanese, and Yang Phirom, Prak Sokhany into Khmer.

The research team would like to thank Satoko Kono, Project Formulation Advisor of JICA, for her initiative, support and guidance in bringing out this study. Last but not least, we would like to thank JICA Cambodia Office for providing us with an opportunity to conduct this study.

Kyoko Kusakabe
March 2002

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kyoko Kusakabe is an assistant professor at Gender and Development Studies, School of Environment, Resources and Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand.

Sri Sugiarti is a consultant of gender and rural and regional development.

Bao Vuthy is a senior researcher at CEDAC (Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien).

Sopha Phal and Chey Tech are junior researchers at CEDAC.

The chapters have been written by primary authors as follows:

Chapter 1: Sri Sugiarti with Kyoko Kusakabe

Chapter 2: Sri Sugiarti with Bao Vuthy and Kyoko Kusakabe

Chapter 3:

Case study 1 Kyoko Kusakabe with Bao Vuthy, Sopha Phal and Chey Tech

Case study 2 Sri Sugiarti with Bao Vuthy, Sopha Phal and Chey Tech

Case study 3 Sri Sugiarti with Bao Vuthy, Sopha Phal and Chey Tech

Case study 4 Sri Sugiarti with Bao Vuthy, Sopha Phal and Chey Tech

Chapter 4: Kyoko Kusakabe

With the overall conceptualization and editing by Kyoko Kusakabe.

English editing has been done by K C Meera and Karen Rasmussen.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JICA's community empowerment program has a mandate to strengthen grassroots self-management capability. The aim of this study is to understand the factors that create an enabling environment for people to express their opinions and participate in public decision making through forming of associations. The study reviewed the existing associations in Cambodia through literature reviews and key informant interviews, and then carried out case studies of four associations.

The literature review showed that existing associations in Cambodia can be classified into seven different types, namely: mutual-help associations, resource management associations, occupational associations, business associations, advocacy associations, ethnic associations, and religious/ recreational associations. These classifications are not mutually exclusive, and often one association can be categorized into two or more of these categories.

Mutual-help associations provide social services, such as credit, health services, and other emergency assistance to their members. There are indigenous mutual help associations and those initiated by outsiders. The former include pagoda committees, funeral associations, and *chan chnang* (dishes and pots) associations. The latter include village development committees, self-help groups, and village banks.

Resource management associations are formed for the purpose of managing common property resources, such as forestry and fisheries, as well as water resources. These associations include community forestry, community fisheries, and water users' groups.

Occupational associations are formed around a group of people with the same occupation. This includes teachers' associations, mid-wife associations, and journalist associations. **Advocacy associations** are formed in order to negotiate with the government and private enterprises. This includes trade unions, urban poor's associations, and micro-vendors associations. **Business associations** are formed for the purpose of enhancing member's businesses through sharing market information and regulation. The most prominent business association for micro and small enterprises in Cambodia at present is the rice millers' associations. **Ethnic associations** are formed according to ethnicity, for mutual help and to protect the rights of minority groups. These include Kampuchea Krom associations, Cham associations, and Chinese-Khmer associations. **Religious and recreational associations** are mostly indigenous and include village celebration groups and boat racing groups.

The four associations that have been selected for the case studies are: a farmers' association, self-help groups, a squatter community, and the trade union.

Case study 1, the farmers' association, is partly an occupational and partly a mutual-

help association that was set up with the initiation of the NGO, CEDAC. They have shown that it is important to have a small group meeting where people can discuss issues and share ideas. Case study 2, the self-help groups, are mutual help associations that are centered around savings and credit and other development initiatives that have been set up with the initiation of the NGO, PADEK. This association showed the encouraging influence of an NGO to create an environment for people's participation, but at the same time displayed the difficulties associated with working under a project framework when dealing with emerging issues. Case study 3, the squatter community, is an advocacy as well as a mutual help association. It was set up working together with the Urban Sector Group. It was formed to fight the issue of eviction, but at the same time it also has savings and credit projects and other training and provision of social services. This case showed the importance of combining advocacy and economic development projects, and the role of external support agencies to strengthen the community's capacity to negotiate with authorities. Case study 4, the trade union, is an advocacy association that still has some elements of mutual help, such as providing medical support and finding loan sources for members. This association showed the effectiveness of having a homogeneous group of people as members. The members have similar education levels, age, marital status, and working conditions, and this has enabled the group to have better solidarity and has created an environment for members to voice their opinions. The effectiveness of training for awareness raising can also be seen in this case.

Based on the literature review and the case studies, the study divided the conclusion into three parts: (1) how associations emerge, (2) factors that affect the development of associations, (3) the relationship between associations and external supporters. There are several ways for associations to emerge. They can be externally initiated, or can emerge indigenously. They can emerge based on the need for mutual help, or as a reaction to adversity, or for identity and visibility.

Factors that influence the development of associations are:

- (1) People having a sense of security and acceptance, so that they feel more confident in expressing their opinion, especially to authorities. In order to allow people to have such confidence, it is necessary to challenge the existing power structure.
- (2) Gaining knowledge is a powerful tool for women and men to become confident enough to speak out and also to effectively express their feelings and opinions to the authorities.
- (3) It is important that the members appreciate the benefit of information-sharing and interaction. There is a tendency for members to be secretive. Once this is overcome, more effective solidarity is expected.
- (4) Responsiveness to emerging issues is important in order to demonstrate to members that justice can be achieved and to build up trust in the community. Some issues are not considered crucial by development workers or even by the community members themselves. Issues that are not addressed include domestic violence and gender inequality. It is important for the external support agency to listen to the voices of those who are not heard so that these important issues can

be addressed. It is also important that advocacy activities for emerging issues are accompanied by economic development activities. This has been observed to have a motivating effect for the members. In this study, it has also been observed that even in many of the strong associations, inequalities in gender relations are left untouched. It is clear that there is a need to give special attention to women's participation. Relationships between associations and external supporters are recognized as an extremely important issue to consider in the development of associations. However, this study was not able to cover substantially this important issue, and suggests that this be addressed in future studies.

Based on the findings, the study made some suggestions for the guideline development for strengthening people's initiative by developing associations through JICA's Community Empowerment Program.

It defined empowerment for CEP as:

Both women and men have a sense of security and acceptance in the society where they are comfortable to speak out with confidence and be heard without intimidation and discrimination. Both women and men have access to knowledge and resources to improve their lives and protect their rights, enjoy the opportunity of learning from each other, and are able to collectively take action to take control of their own lives.

The grant objective of CEP was defined as:

To create an enabling environment for the poor and the vulnerable women and men to have access to knowledge and resources, their own voices heard, and have control over their lives.

In order for the work to influence public decision making, it is necessary to change the existing power relations and structures. In the case studies, it has been seen that the poor and the weak got organized and/or received support from NGO in order to create their own space to express their opinion in public. In this light, the project of the supporting NGO should not have a welfare approach to community development, but a right-based approach. That is, the project should recognize that both women and men are entitled for resources and opportunities to improve their lives.

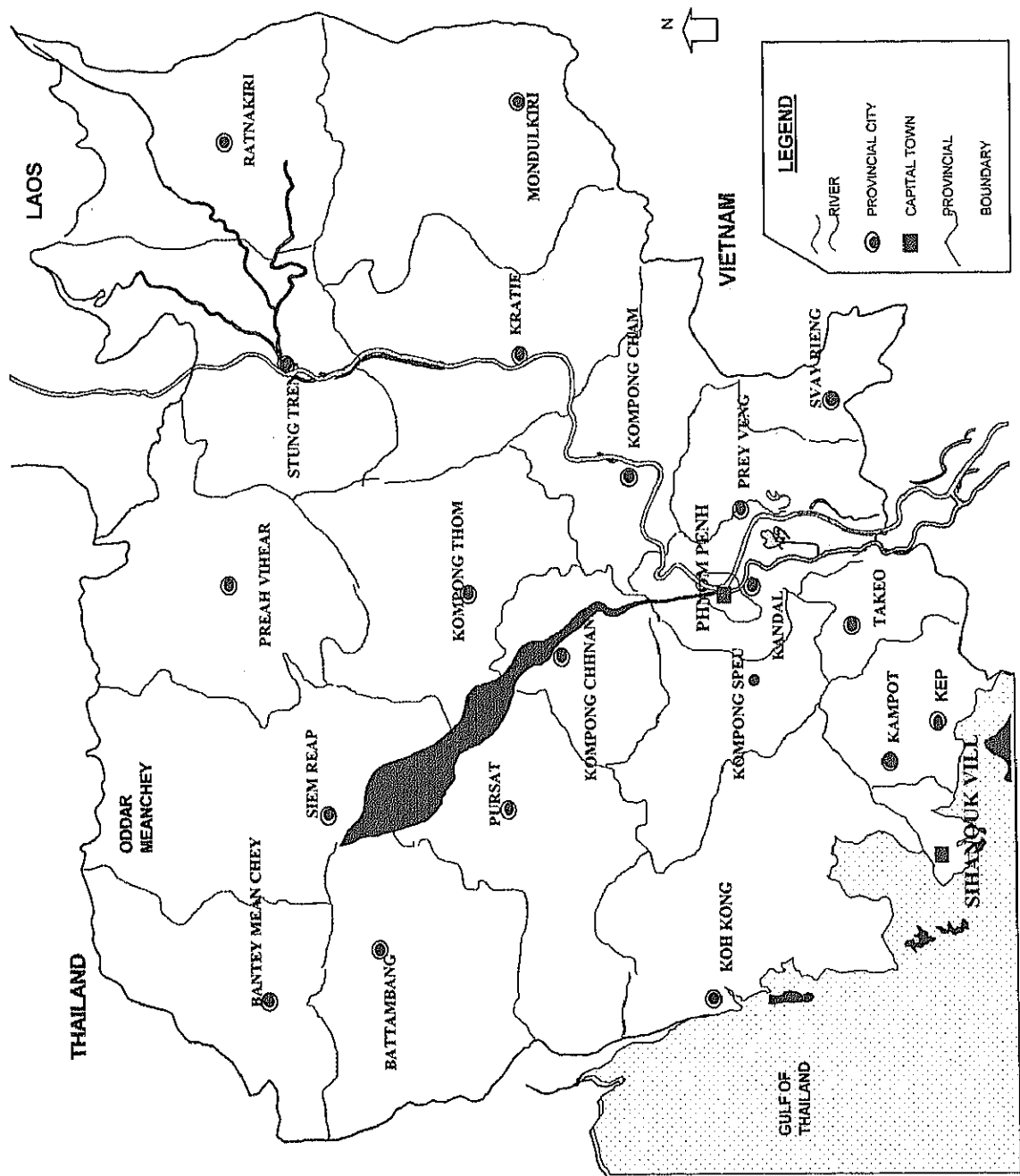
As can be seen in the case studies, the relationships between supporting NGOs and the associations are sensitive. There is a need for more research in this area, but even with this limited study, it is clear that it is important that the supporting NGO are not patronizing the community people, but are supporting the community women and men to access what they are entitled for. It is important that the supporting NGO be self-critical about its relationships with the community.

In order to achieve this, the supporting NGO has to have sufficient understanding on human rights and women's rights, as well as being sensitive about the power structure in the community and regions that they are working in. The case studies show that even if associations were set up, the intra-association relationships can be unequal.

Especially, many associations have not been able to achieve gender equality in participation and decision making power. It is unavoidable to refer to women's rights when discussing about development of associations in Cambodia.

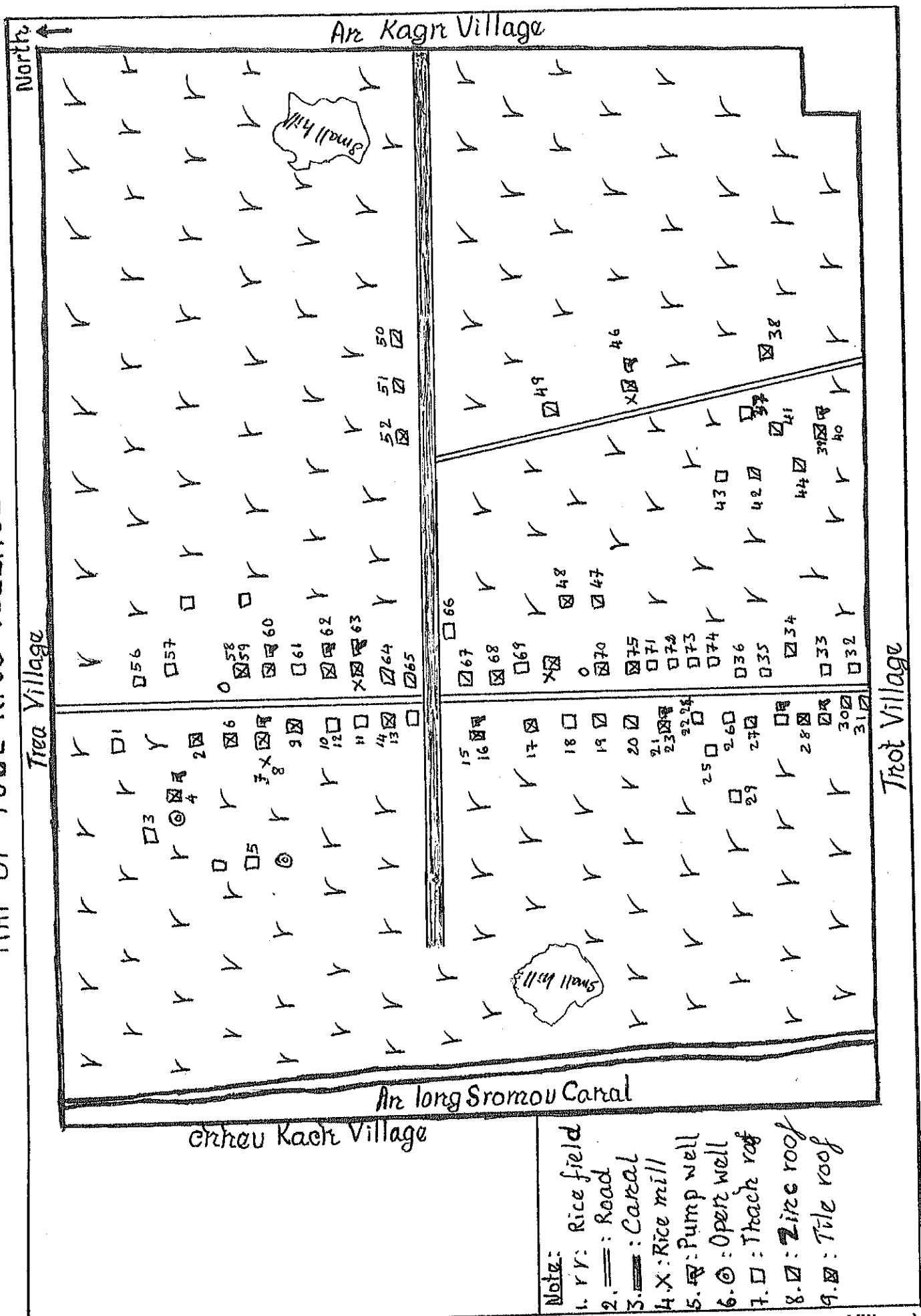
The supporting NGO also needs to develop participatory strategies and strategies to encourage information-sharing among community members, as well as strategies for gender equality and leadership development. It is important that strategies are emphasized to enable people to realize the usefulness in sharing information and fostering interaction and information/experience sharing.

It is recommended that CEP's support be in long term, at least for three years with a possible extension of another three years. It is also important that the project framework has the flexibility to meet the emerging needs during the course of development.



Map 1 : Cambodia

MAP OF TOUL KPOS VILLAGE



- Note:**
1. ✓✓: Rice field
 2. = : Road
 3. — : Canal
 4. X: Rice mill
 5. ☒: Pump well
 6. ⊙: Open well
 7. □: Thach roof
 8. ◻: Zirc roof
 9. ◻: Tile roof

Map 2 : Case Study 1 Farmers' Association in Prey Veng (Tuol Khpuos Village)

Ta Lei south Village

Ar Kagr Village

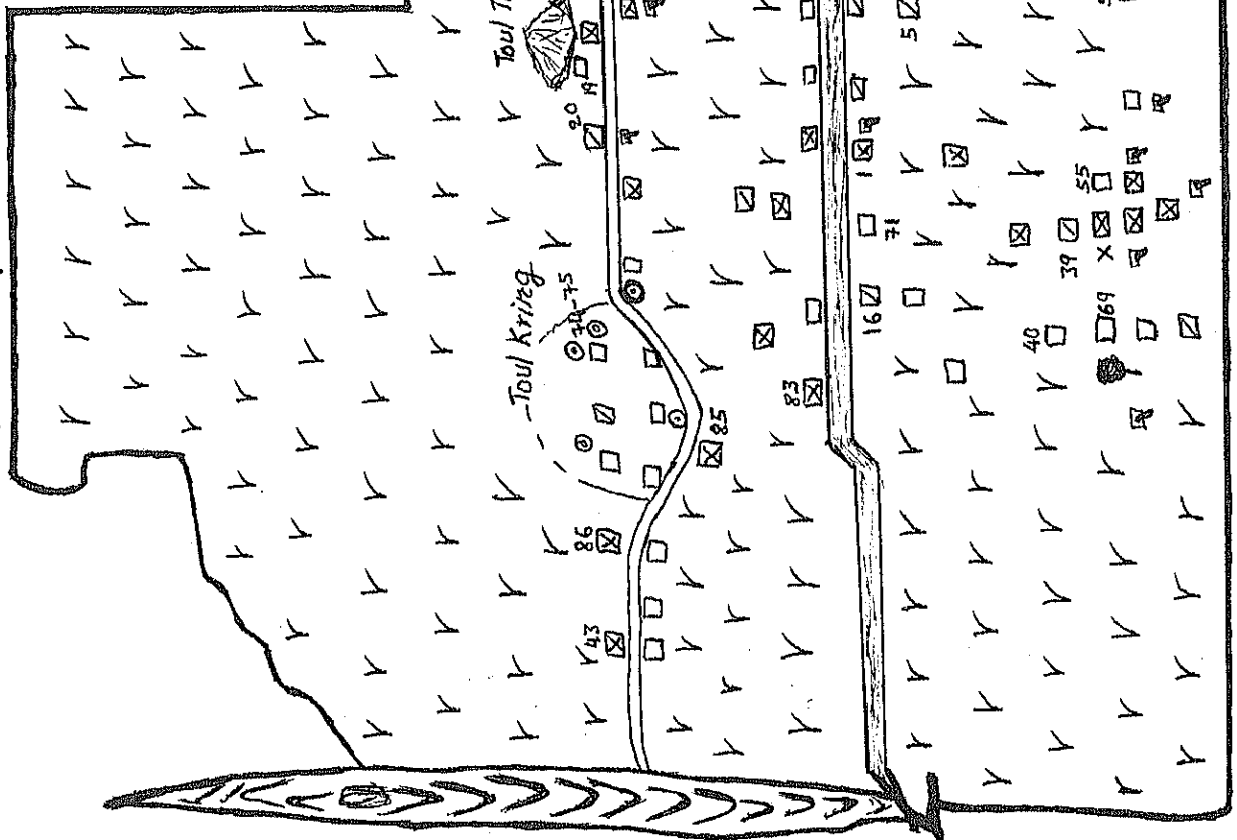
North ↑

- Note:
1. A : Pagoda
 2. rr: Rice field
 3. =: Road
 4. =: Canal
 5. X: Rice mill
 6. P: Pumpwell
 7. ⊙: Open well
 8. □: Thach roof
 9. ⊠: Zinc roof
 10. ⊞: Tile roof

MAP OF TREA VILLAGE

Voyav Village (krinsla)

Toul Kpos Village



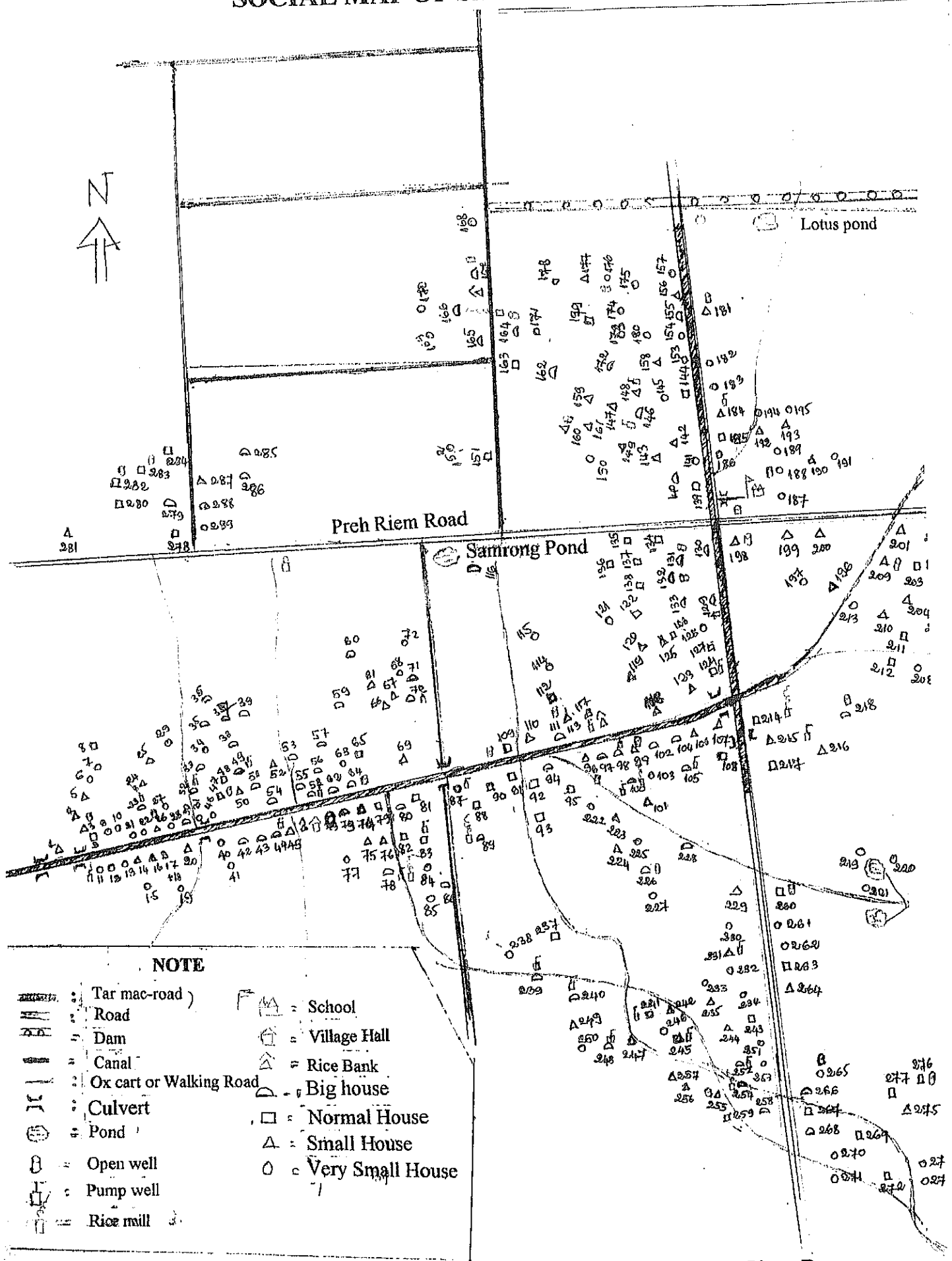
Along Thom Canal

Chheu Kach Village

Krol Ko Village

Map 3 : Case Study of Farmers' Association in Prey Veng (Trea Village)

SOCIAL MAP OF SAMRONG VILLAGE



Map 4 : Case Study 2 Self-help group in Siem Reap

RESOURCE MAP OF SAMRONG VLLAGE

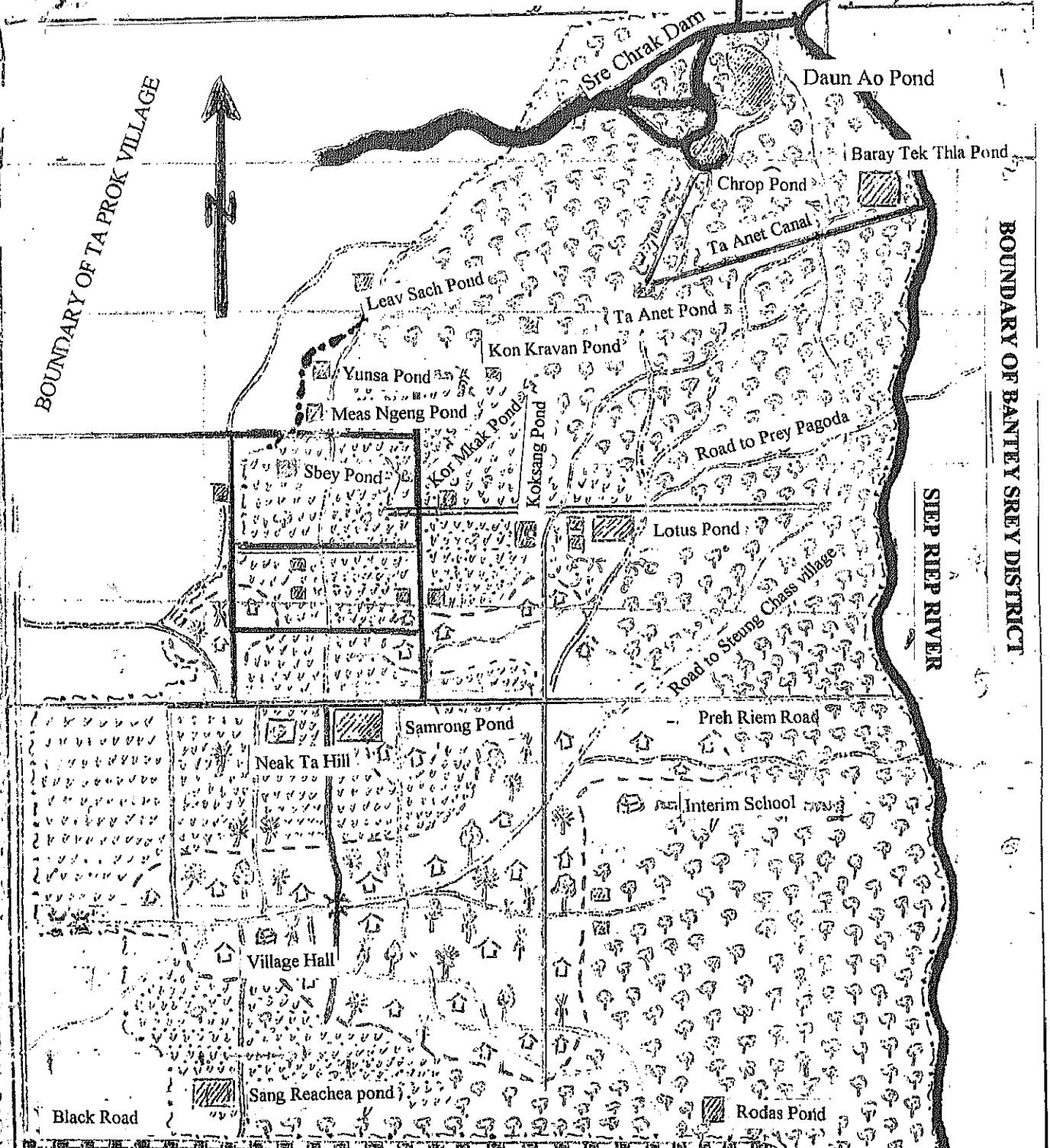
Steung Toch Canal

1995

BOUNDARY OF TA PROK VILLAGE

BOUNDARY OF BANTEY SREY DISTRICT

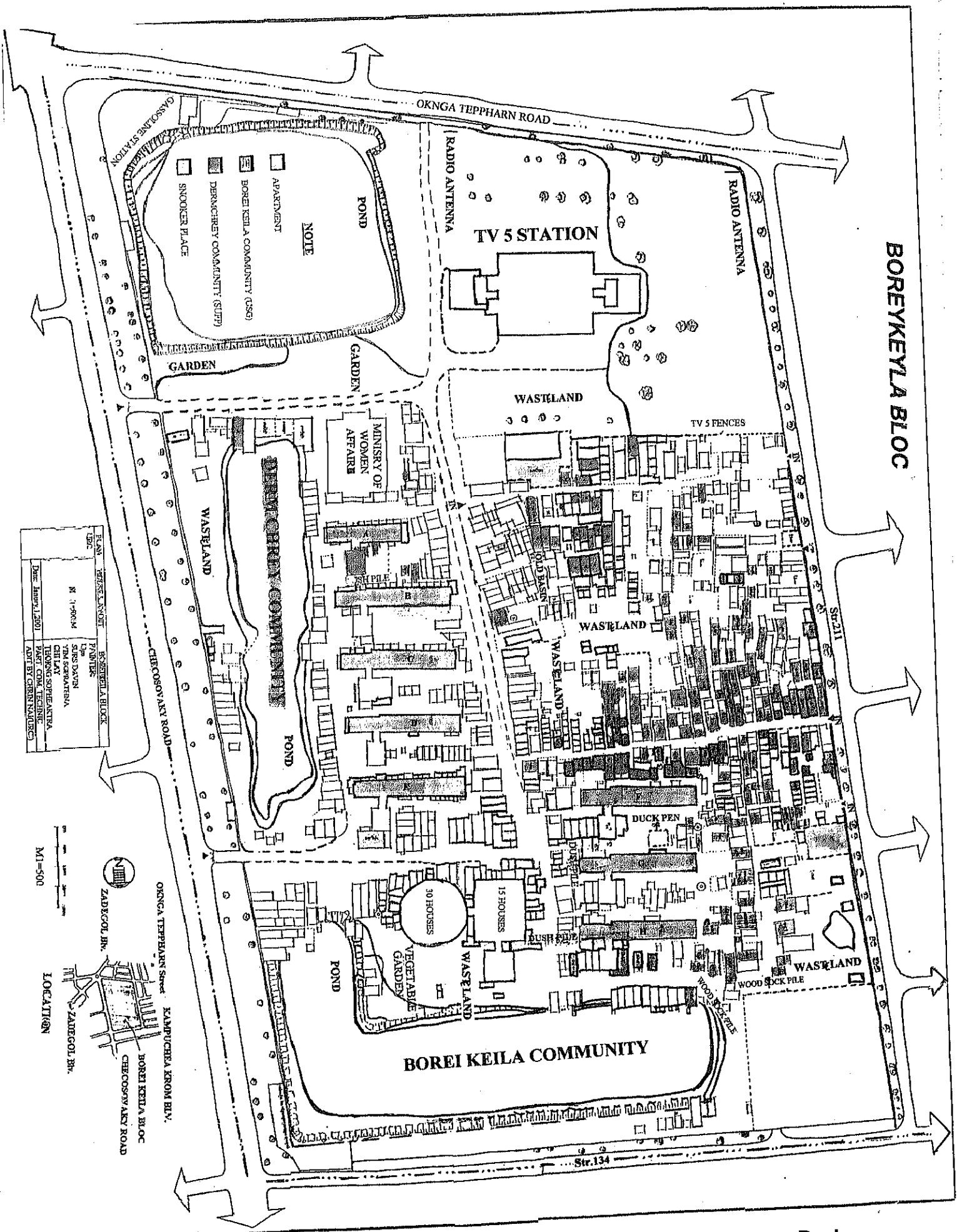
SIEM REAP RIVER



NOTE

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|-------|--|-----------------|--|-------------------------|--|------------|--|-------------------|
| | Village Boundary | | FERTILITY PADDY FIELD | | ROAD | | TREE AND FOREST | | Ox cart or Walking Road | | FRUIT TREE | | CULVERT OR BRIDGE |
| | CANAL | | SCHOOL OR VILLAGE HALL | | RIVER | | HOUSE | | BLACK ROAD | | POND | | DAM |
| | SANDY LOAM PADDY FIELD | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Map 5 : Case Study 2 Self-help group in Siem Reap



Map 6 : Case Study 3 Borei Keila Community in Phnom Penh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	pages
Acknowledgement.....	i
About the Authors.....	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Maps	vii
Table of Contents	xiii
List of Abbreviations	xvi
Glossary	xviii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Objectives of the Study	1
1.2. Definitions of Association	2
1.3. Scope and Limitation of the Study	2
1.4. Methodology	3
2. Associations in Cambodia	4
2.1. Mutual-Help Associations	4
2.1.1. Indigenous Mutual Help Association	4
2.1.2. Mutual Help Associations set up with external help	6
2.2. Resource Management Associations	10
2.2.1. Community Forestry	10
2.2.2. Community Fisheries	11
2.2.3. Water Users' Association	12
2.3. Occupational Associations	12
2.3.1. Teachers' Association	13
2.3.2. Midwives' Association	13
2.3.3. Farmers' Association	14
2.3.4. Waste-Pickers' Association	14
2.3.5. Journalists' Association	15
2.4. Advocacy Associations	15
2.4.1. Micro-Vendors' Association	16
2.4.2. Sex-Workers' Union	16
2.4.3. Trade Union	17
2.4.4. Squatter or Urban Poor Association	18
2.4.5. <i>Srey Sroh</i> (transvestite) Association	19
2.5. Business Associations	20
2.5.1. Mushroom Growers' Association	20
2.5.2. Chicken-Raisers' Association	20
2.5.3. Rice-Millers' Association	20

2.6. Ethnic Associations	21
2.6.1. Kampuchea Krom Association	21
2.6.2. Chinese-Khmer Association	22
2.6.3. Vietnamese Association	22
2.6.4. Cham Association	23
2.7. Religious and Recreational Groups	23
2.7.1. Boat Racing groups	23
2.7.2. Village Celebration groups	23
2.7.3. <i>Krom Yiey</i> (elderly women's group)	23
2.7.4. Youth Association	24
2.8. Conclusion	25
3. Case Studies	25
3.1. Case study 1: Farmers' Association	25
3.1.1. Profile of the villages studied	26
3.1.2. History of the villages	26
3.1.3. History of cooperation in the villages	27
3.1.4. Profile of the association	30
3.1.5. Other associations in the commune	31
3.1.6. Lessons learned	34
3.2. Case study 2: Self Help Groups	34
3.2.1. Profile of the village studied	34
3.2.2. History of the village and cooperative movement	35
3.2.3. Indigenous associations and groups in the village	36
3.2.4. Associations and groups created with PADEK's support	37
3.2.5. Other groups	38
3.2.6. External support in the commune and village	39
3.2.7. Profile of the self help groups <i>Reaksmei Chamroen</i> (The Light)	41
3.2.8. Issues in the commune	42
3.2.9. Lessons learned	44
3.3. Case study 3: Squatter Community	44
3.3.1. Profile of community studied	45
3.3.2. History of Borei Keila community	45
3.3.3. History of the struggle against eviction in Borei Keila Community	47
3.3.4. External support and networking in the community	48
3.3.5. Development of Borei Keila as a community	52
3.3.6. Lessons learned	55
3.4. Case study 4: Trade Union	55
3.4.1. Background of Mithona Textile Factory	55
3.4.2. The Trade Union Movement in Cambodia, and the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)	57
3.4.3. Profile of FTUWKC in Mithona Textile Factory	60
3.4.4. Perceived changes due to the union	61
3.4.5. Lessons learned	61

4. Conclusions and Recommendations	63
4.1. Conclusion	63
4.1.1. How do associations emerge?	64
4.1.2. Factors that affect the emergence and development of associations	65
4.1.3. Relationship between associations and external supporters	69
4.2. Recommendations for Community Empowerment Program	69
4.2.1. Definition of empowerment	69
4.2.2. Towards association development through CEP	70
4.3. Suggestion for future research.....	71
4.3.1. Verify findings with other associations	71
4.3.2. Intra-association relationships and the associations' relationships with external organizations	71
4.3.3. Associations that are externally supported vs. indigenous vs. spontaneous uprising	71
4.3.4. Sustainability of spontaneous uprisings	72
References	73
Appendix	77
1. List of Interviews for Part 1	77
2. Associations Registered at Ministry of Interior (1994-2001)	78
3. Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Initiatives in Cambodia (WWF Study)	79
4. Wealth ranking for Case 1	80
5. Wealth ranking for Case 2	81
6. Wealth ranking for Case 3	82
7. Wealth ranking for Case 4	83
8. Guide questions	84
8.1. Guideline for questions for members of associations	84
8.2. Question guideline for leaders of associations	86
8.3. Question guideline for key informants	89
8.4. Question guideline for non-members of associations	91
8.5. Question guideline for external supporting organizations	92

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHR:	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
ADB:	Asian Development Bank
ADHOC:	Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
AIT:	Asian Institute of Technology
AKKK:	Association of Khmer Kampuchea Krom
AMDA:	Association of Medical Doctors of Asia
CAA:	Community Aid Abroad
CAKC:	Chinese Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia
CAPJ:	Cambodian Association of Protection of Journalists
CARERE:	Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project
CBO:	Community Based Organization
CCAWDU:	Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union
CCJ:	Cambodian Club of Journalists
CCTUF:	Cambodian Construction Workers Trade Union Federation
CDC:	Commune Development Committee
CEDAC:	Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien
CEP:	Community Empowerment Program (of JICA)
CFDT:	Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail
CFITU:	Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union
CIDSE:	Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité
CITA:	Cambodian Independent Teacher's Association
CLUF:	Cambodian Labor Union Federation
CMA:	Cambodian Midwives Association
CNGO:	Cambodian Non Governmental Organization
CRS:	Catholic Relief Services
CSARO:	Community Sanitation And Recycling Organization
CUF:	Cambodian Union Federation
CUFBWW:	Cambodian Union Federation Building and Wood Workers
CWCC:	Cambodian Women's Crisis Center
CWLFU:	Cambodian Workers Labor Federation Union
CWPD:	Cambodian Women for Peace and Development
DANIDA:	Danish International Development Agency
EDC:	Enterprise Development of Cambodia
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTUWKC:	Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia
GRET:	Groupe de Recherche et d'Échanges Technologiques
GTZ:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IDRC:	International Development Research Center
IE:	International Education
IJU:	Independent Journalists Union
ILO:	International Labour Organization
IWDA:	International Women's Development Agency
JICA:	Japan International Cooperation Agency

KID:	Khmer Institute of Democracy
KJA:	Khmer Journalists Association
KYFTU:	Khmer Youth Federation of Trade Union
LCJ:	League of Cambodian Journalists
LICADHO:	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights
MCC:	Mennonite Central Committee
MoEYS:	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoI:	Ministry of Interior
MoSALVY:	Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation
MoWVA:	Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs
MRC:	Mekong River Commission
MRD:	Ministry of Rural Development
NGO:	Non Governmental Organization
NIFTUC:	National Independent Federation of Textile Union of Cambodia
NOVIB:	Netherlands Organization for International Development Co-operation
NTFP:	Non Timber Forest Product
PACT:	Private Agencies Collaborating Together
PADEK:	Partnership for Development in Kampuchea
PRDC:	Provincial Rural Development Committee
PRK:	People's Republic of Kampuchea
PSF:	Pharmaciens Sans Frontières
RACHA:	Reproductive and Child Health Alliance
RHAC:	Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia
SHG:	Self Help Group
SHGA:	Self Help Group Association
SME:	Small and Medium Enterprises
SUPF:	Solidarity with the Urban Poor Federation
TAF:	The Asia Foundation
TICFDA:	Takeo Integrated Community Forestry Development Association
UNCHS:	United Nations Center for Human Settlements
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UPDF:	Urban Poor Development Fund
UPWD:	Urban Poor Women Development
URC:	Urban Resource Center
USAID:	U.S. Agency for International Development
USG:	Urban Sector Group
VAPP:	Vietnamese Association of Phnom Penh
VDC:	Village Development Committee
VSF:	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières
WAC:	Womyn's Agenda for Change
WFP:	World Food Program
WUED:	Workers' Union for Economic Development
WWF:	World Wildlife Fund

GLOSSARY

<i>Achar:</i>	Wise elder men who normally conduct ceremonies
<i>Chah tum:</i>	Respected elder
<i>Chan chhnang:</i>	Dishes and pots
<i>Chap huuy:</i>	Grocery stores
<i>Kampuchea krom:</i>	Ethnic Khmer who originally came from the Mekong Delta
<i>Khan:</i>	District (in Phnom Penh)
<i>Khmer Leu:</i>	Upper Cambodian, the highlander ethnic minorities in the Northeast
<i>Krom:</i>	Group
<i>Krom dop:</i>	Group of ten
<i>Krom samaki:</i>	Solidarity group
<i>Krom Yiey:</i>	Elderly women's group
<i>Leak kania:</i>	Secretive
<i>Neary klahan:</i>	Brave women
<i>Provah dai:</i>	Labor exchange
<i>Reaksmei Chamroen:</i>	The Light (an SHG)
<i>Riel:</i>	Cambodian currency. 1 US\$ = 3900 riels
<i>Sahakor:</i>	Cooperative
<i>Sahakum:</i>	Community
<i>Sangkat:</i>	Sub-district (in Phnom Penh)
<i>Srey sroh:</i>	Transvestite
<i>Wat:</i>	Pagoda/temple

1. INTRODUCTION

With the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1991, and the first UN-sponsored democratic election in 1993, Cambodia entered the global community. International Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) assistance poured into the country, and many Cambodian Non Governmental Organizations (CNGOs) were founded during the period. Their number has been steadily increasing since then, and there have been several studies done on the capacity of Cambodian NGOs (Mansfield, 2001; Richardson, 2001).

These international and Cambodian NGOs tried to organize the community and encourage its sense of ownership of projects. However, their focus on service delivery was so strong that Barbero (2002) was concerned that the NGOs might foster dependency. There were fears that the pressures of foreign funding could take priority over the efforts of the local movement to define and pursue its own agenda and objectives (Mysliwicz, 1999).

To counter these fears, international and Cambodian NGOs helped form a number of grassroots voluntary membership associations, including Community Based Organizations (CBOs), trade unions, occupational associations, and traditional associations. Some were organized for business or livelihood purposes, some for lobbying or access to resources, and some for mutual help. Some groups emerged spontaneously in response to threats to people's livelihoods.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)'s community empowerment program has a mandate to strengthen grassroots self-management capability. The aim of this study is to understand the process of how people start expressing their opinions in public and participating in decisions that affect their lives.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to identify the factors that contribute to the emergence and growth of local associations, and to identify strategies for JICA to support such initiatives. Specifically, the study will:

- (1) Give an overview of the existing associations in Cambodia through secondary information.
- (2) Research the history of some associations and identify the factors that contributed to their emergence and growth.
- (3) Analyze the relationships of these associations with external support such as from NGOs, and identify effective support for their growth.
- (4) Examine their management and communication structures, and project/financial management capabilities.

- (5) Analyze how the associations have brought about change, and identify the lessons learned in the process.

The report is divided into two parts. Part 1 is an overview of existing associations, and classifies them into different types. Part 2 consists of four case studies, which examine the factors that create an enabling environment for people to speak out.

1.2. Definitions of Association

According to Krishnamurthy (1999), an association is a group attempting to meet certain common needs. Some associations have a clear identity, and function within a framework of shared objectives, rules and responsibilities. However, some are loose structures barely meriting the name association, but are included in Krishnamurthy's description because they have the potential to develop into associations.

Megan Richardson (2001), in her study of the Cambodian NGO sector, identified four types of organizations in Cambodia: community-based organizations (CBOs); membership groups or associations, Cambodian NGOs, and networks of associations.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) requires "associations" to register with them. Generally, in Cambodia, the term "association" is not so much a legal entity, because any group activity is often referred to as "association". For the purpose of this study, an association is defined as:

Any voluntary membership organization, with or without membership fees, and with or without external assistance, organized to benefit its members. Association members can be but are not necessarily people from similar social groups, such as youth, women and farmers, or can have particular purposes such as for mutual help, advocacy or business.

This study includes CBOs and membership groups/organizations attempting to meet certain common needs of their members, but not Cambodian NGOs, because they are working for a target group outside their staff members. This study also does not include networks of associations, as their members are associations and not individuals.

1.3. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Because of time constraints, the study could not cover every association in Cambodia. Four associations were covered for the case studies, but they do not represent all possible types of associations in Cambodia. Also, spontaneously organized associations could not be located in time, and had to be left out of the study, even though they are of particular interest. However, the study has attempted to cover as many types of organizations as possible through existing literature.

The study could only briefly touch upon the relationship between the associations and the NGOs that support them. We hope future studies will be able to cover these important aspects in detail.

1.4. Methodology

This study was conducted from mid-January 2002 to March 2002, in two parts. Part 1 is the literature survey, and Part 2 consists of four case studies. Part 1 was carried out by collecting and reviewing existing reports, and by interviewing key informants (see Appendix 1 for list of key informants).

After Part 1 was nearly finished, associations were selected for the case studies in Part 2, based on these criteria¹:

- Is known to be successful and active
- No similar study has been conducted on the association.
- Selected from varied types of associations (based on the categorization of Part 1)

Based on these criteria, the following associations were selected for the case studies:

- Farmers' association supported by CEDAC in Prey Veng province
- Self-help group supported by PADEK in Siem Reap town
- Squatter community organization working with USG in Phnom Penh
- Garment factory trade union under FTUWKC

During February 2002, the research team went to the project site, and collected data by the following methods:

- (1) Face-to-face individual interviews with both female and male members and non-members using a survey. The survey asked questions on personal profiles, reasons for becoming or not becoming members, and perception of changes after the association was created. The number of respondents differed from association to association, depending on the availability of respondents during the limited time of the study, although ten respondents – 6 members and 4 non-members - were scheduled to be individually interviewed for each association.
- (2) A focus group discussion with village and association leaders, and another discussion with the members of the association.
- (3) Key informant interviews with village elders, village leaders, leaders of the association, and leaders of other associations in the area.

The data was not analyzed quantitatively, so the findings cannot be generalized for the whole area. The information, which was analyzed by reflecting on the responses obtained, should be considered more as food for thought. The aim of the analysis is to get insights from studying individual cases.

¹ In the original criteria, associations that were started spontaneously were mentioned. However, because of lack of time, the study could not identify such associations.

2. ASSOCIATIONS IN CAMBODIA

This section reviews existing literature on associations in Cambodia, and categorizes them into the following seven types according to their reasons for establishment:

- Mutual-help associations
- Resource management associations
- Occupational associations
- Advocacy associations
- Business associations
- Ethnic associations
- Religious or recreational associations

The classification is not mutually exclusive, and the demarcation between types is often fuzzy. For instance, a local expertise association (health, agriculture, veterinarian, etc) at the commune level was formed as a professional group, but the members came together more for mutual help rather than to promote their careers.

Between 1994 and 1999, the number of associations formally registered at the MoI² reached 295; of which 222 were established in Phnom Penh. In 2000-2001, 117 more associations were registered, 70 of them established in Phnom Penh (See Appendix 2). However, many of the associations discussed below are not registered.

2.1. Mutual-Help Associations

Mutual-help associations mostly provide welfare delivery services, such as credit (cash or in kind), health services, food security, or other emergency assistance to their members. They look after the well-being of the members. Normally a household is the unit of membership. Two main types of mutual-help associations are examined: indigenous associations, and associations initiated by outsiders.

2.1.1. Indigenous Mutual Help Association

Collins (1998) points out that the traditions, customs, rules and expectations evident in informal mutual self-help groups suggest that they are an ancient element of Cambodian civic life. He added that, contrary to the lament so often heard in Phnom Penh that the Pol

² In order to register, each organization or association must fill in an application form (provided by the MoI). The completed form has to be approved by the commune/*sangkat*, district/*khan* and province/city governor. In addition to the completed form, a proposal must include details of the organizational structure, activities/programs, profile of leaders, list of members, and bylaws of the association/organization. After completing this process, the document will be submitted to the Council of Ministers through the MoI. This process can take from one week to several years.

Pot regime had destroyed Cambodian culture, indigenous civil society is alive and flourishing in the countryside.

Below are some examples of indigenous associations:

Wat or Pagoda Committees

The pagoda is at the center of Cambodian village life. It is not only a place for meditation, but also serves as a social safety net for orphans, the elderly, or poor families. It also acts as a hospital, a center for study, and the focal point for social activities from celebrations to weddings and funerals (Working Group on Social Organization in Cambodia, 1999:10). All this is done under the direction or with the support of the pagoda committee. The temple area has legitimacy for the people because of its moral power.

In most villages, there is a pagoda committee or *wat*. The abbots select the pagoda committee from people who are pious and religious, and are prepared to work without pay. Pagoda committees play an important role in Cambodian development; building schools, bridges, hospitals, sidewalks, digging wells and ponds. The committee members are generally monks, former monks, and *achars* (wise elders) (Working Group on Social Organization in Cambodia, 1999).

Pagoda committees are completely dependent on community donations. They not only mobilize (local) resources through donations from the community, but also undertake public governance functions like encouraging mutual help, mediating domestic conflict, and advising villagers about health, sanitation, and agricultural issues such as fertilizers and insecticide. Sometimes they even maintain contacts with international organizations. Many of the indigenous associations listed below are often, but not always, associated with a pagoda committee.

Cash association

It raises money through donations to provide credit to the poor and to finance pagoda construction.

Merit rice association

A merit rice association collects and stores rice donations from farmers seeking merit. When needed, the rice is given or lent to poor families or victims of natural disaster.

Village emergency association

Members of the association contribute some money each month to an emergency fund. In emergencies, such as illness, fire, or flood, members can borrow money, at no interest, from the association.

Funeral association

A group of villagers form an association to cover funeral costs in case one of their family members die. There is an annual fee for membership, and each member contributes money or rice for the funeral. This type of association is very popular across the country.

School building association

This association collects funds from villagers for school maintenance and to pay teachers. It is often found in rural areas, where schools receive little support from the central

government.

Parents' association

This, like similar associations around the world, is made up of a group of village parents concerned about the education of their children. In rural areas, they are commonly concerned with the availability of teachers, and raising money to pay them.

Pond digging groups

These groups dig ponds for common use. Sometimes they are formed by pagoda committees; at other times they are formed spontaneously by villagers in response to a felt need.

Cooking groups

A cooking group normally consists of about 5 to 6 women. They prepare feasts, parties, funerals, pagoda ceremonies and other village ceremonies. They are usually paid in kind.

Chan-chhuang association (dishes and pots association)

Each member contributes some amount to buy cooking equipment for parties, ceremonies and other social events. The families can then borrow the utensils, for a certain amount of money, whenever needed.

2.1.2. Mutual Help Associations set up with external help

Village Development Committee (VDC) of Seila

In Cambodia, the Seila program set up a model for decentralized participatory development planning and implementation (Seila is the program to facilitate the decentralized administrative structure of the government). The development structure includes Provincial Rural Development Committees (PRDC), Commune Development Committees (CDCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs). VDCs/CDCs are expected to bring up the needs of communities for discussion and funding to district level. At district level, government departments and donors are to listen to the needs, problems and plans of the villages and communes and plan development activities through prioritization.

A government decree of January 11, 1999, gives the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) the responsibility of forming CDCs and VDCs. One of the MRD's goals is to establish a VDC in every Cambodian village. MRD officials estimate that 3,000 VDCs have been established so far in the country's 13,000 villages (McAndrew, 1999).

The VDC is the lowest administrative level in a rural development structure, intended to become "the mechanism by which civil society can interact effectively with Government to take an active part in decision making for its own development" (Simmons and Bottomley, 2000). According to Collins (1999), VDCs are designed to moderate the power of the state apparatus at the grassroots level by broadening citizen participation in development planning within the Seila planning process.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and VDCs supported by NGOs

Since the early 1990s, NGOs working with the communities have formed VDCs to identify local needs better, make services delivery more efficient, and foster ownership of the project. Self-help groups (SHGs) were initiated in 1995 by some NGOs such as Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK). SHGs engage in saving and credit activities, health, food security, agriculture, environment and forest depletion, advocacy, gender mainstreaming, infrastructure, etc.

Ideally, an SHG is small, with 12-15 members of similar economic background. It is assumed that such a group is easier to manage, communication is more interactive, and each member feels freer to express their opinion. Membership of the group is not individual, but familial, which means that only one member of a household can apply to be a member. About 85% of the members in SHGs created by PADEK are women, and the figure is similar for Cooperation Internationale pour le Developpement et la Solidarite (CIDSE). SHGs exclusively run by women are called women's groups³.

PADEK's experience shows that SHGs evolve in three phases:

- Group formation, which takes about one year,
- Consolidation, which takes 2-4 years.
- Phasing out of external assistance, meaning PADEK gradually pulls out when the SHGs are mature enough to manage on their own. This can take 5-6 years; depending upon the maturity of the development stages of the group⁴.

Self-Help Group Associations (SHGA), consisting of several SHGs in the village, promote communication and cooperation among SHGs.

Community Sanitation and Recycling Organization (CSARO)'s CDCs are also one form of SHG. After an extensive study of the living conditions of squatter areas in Phnom Penh, CSARO initiated discussions with the squatters about their living environment, following which the squatters decided to set up CDCs. There are now 24 CDCs in poor areas of Phnom Penh that aim to provide communities with access to basic human needs, including water supply, sewerage systems, road maintenance, and electricity.

CSARO helped develop project plans, provided technical assistance on design, costing and budgeting, and conducted training on how to apply for and get approval from municipal authorities for projects. To support their projects, CDCs can request up to 50% of the construction costs through a proposal to CSARO.

Some examples of development infrastructure by CDCs include: installing sewers, alleyway paving, connection to water supply and electricity, latrine construction, and health and

³ Banteay Srey, formerly IWDA, focuses on women, especially the poorest of the poor, who are not covered by other NGOs in the same community. They work to build the self-esteem of the poorest women (usually widows) that are too poor to be served by other saving-credit groups in the village.

⁴ Discussion with Mr. Kep Kannaro, PADEK's Program Support Officer

hygiene awareness. To date 50 small-scale projects have been undertaken by CSARO that benefit an estimated 20,223 residents.

Village Banks

Village banks support and strengthen village-based lending institutions. Their operations are governed by by-laws developed by the Village Bank Committee, who are elected by the members. PADEK, Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques (GRET) and Catholic Relief Service (CRS) have in the past introduced village banks in their project areas⁵. GRET's credit program in Kampong Speu province is a good example of how village banks work.

GRET's program aims to provide credit to poor villagers for productive activities at low interest. GRET provides capital for the village bank, and the village chief is responsible for collecting repayment and keeping the records. The members of a village bank are organized into guarantee groups, with 5 persons in each group. The loan available to each group increases after they finish their repayment cycles. Interest is charged at 4% per month, which is lower than rates charged by moneylenders. Interest is collected monthly and principal is collected at the end of the cycle (about one year).

One problem with village bank loans is that they have to be used for certain set activities approved by the bank, unlike informal loans that can be used for a wide range of activities. As in many credit programs, poor people are often excluded because they do not have the courage to take a loan, as they are afraid they will be unable to repay it.

CRS is developing village banks in partnership with seven Cambodian NGOs, and expects to include other NGO partners in future. CRS channels loan capital to a partner based on the amount requested by the village banks organized by the NGO partner. Some organizational partners of CRS are implementing the village banking program in conjunction with other community development activities.

Expert Associations at commune level

PADEK has established expert associations at the commune level in their working areas (Kampong Speu province, Siem Reap province and Prey Veng provinces). In the process of introducing and formulating SHGs, one or two persons are elected by group members as focal points. These individuals receive intensive training by their facilitating NGOs in specific fields, such as agriculture (Village Farmer Volunteer), literacy (Village Teacher Volunteer), health (Village Health Volunteer), etc. To help the experts share experiences, and receive additional training, PADEK initiated expert associations at the commune level, on the SHG model⁶.

Rice Bank and Livestock Bank

During the Sihanouk period, the government sponsored the establishment of rice banks, but these collapsed at the end of that era. No rice banks existed during the Pol Pot regime or during People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). With the return of relative peace and

⁵ The National Bank of Cambodia now requires all the credit providers to register as Micro-Finance Institutions.

⁶ These associations can also be classified as occupational associations.

security, the people started to rebuild the rice banks, either with the assistance of village leaders or assisted by external agencies.

A rice bank allows poor people to deposit rice during the harvest period, when the price of rice is low, and borrow rice between harvests when their rice stock is over, and the cost of rice is high. This provides food security during lean periods, and evens out large fluctuations in rice prices in the village. It also protects the villagers from predatory businessmen who demand high interest rates for rice or money loaned during periods of rice shortage.

The establishment of a rice bank is often one of the strategies NGOs use to assist people at the grass-roots level for food security, and to establish and strengthen trust among people. This model is adapted from the traditional forms of rice associations. Livestock banks for chickens, cows, ducks, etc. have been formed following the traditional model of sharing (*provah*) of cows.

Consumer Association (Village Cooperative Shop)

The idea of cooperatives was introduced during the Sihanouk period but destroyed during the Pol Pot regime. It then returned in some parts of Cambodia during the Heng Samrin period as the cooperative shop. Krishnamurthy (1999) mentions in her study that in 1980, in Prusac, Kampong Speu province, the communist government established a cooperative according to the communist policy of the time. The capital for the shop came from collecting cash and rice from households in the village. The families or households in the village were divided into groups of twelve, and each group took turns managing the shop for a month at a time. This shop survived only two years, mainly because of a lack of accountability.

The village shop concept was brought back by CIDSE for their pilot project in Mouk Kompoul District, Kandal province. CIDSE staff studied village cooperatives in Thailand, and then set up four shops in Kandal province and two in Ratanakiri province. The shops provide everything from agricultural inputs to groceries and gasoline, and are run by women. Each shop has its own committee members, who are recruited from SHG members in the village. The average membership of each shop is 65-80 individuals. Membership is open to everybody within the village, and shares generally sell for about 20,000 *riels*. Rules for the operation of the shop are discussed in meetings, then set by the committee. For instance, members are allowed to buy more than one share. But to avoid the domination of “the haves” over “the have-nots”, the number of shares owned does not affect overall benefit or profit. This is presumably to discourage people from buying too many shares. However, members who make large purchases get a bonus at the end of the year. CIDSE assisted the

shop in the beginning with construction materials and capital (about US \$1,000 for one shop).

2.2. Resource Management Associations

Some associations are formed to manage common resources, such as forest, fish, and water. Since control of natural resources is often a hotly contested area, conflicts have arisen with some of these associations. Consequently, some associations have a strong advocacy component. Typical natural resource management associations are formed around community forestry, community fisheries, mangrove management, water usage, and salt production.

2.2.1. Community Forestry

International agencies, Cambodian NGOs and government agencies are trying to address environmental conflicts by promoting community-based principles and approaches, particularly in forestry and fisheries. The formation of forestry or fisheries groups varies depending on the degree of problems or types of conflict in the area. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has conducted a study that provides comprehensive project and program information on community forestry and community fisheries in Cambodia⁷ (see Appendix 3).

There are several organizations promoting community forestry, such as Asian Development Bank (ADB), Non-timber Forest Product (NTFP), and Integrated Community Forestry Development Association of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

ADB has set up some specific steps in establishing community forestry at the provincial level and local level (ADB, 2000).

The NTFP project was founded to address the growing conflict over resources between indigenous people in six villages in Ochum district, Ratanakiri province, and an expanding immigrant population of ethnic Khmers. The indigenous community was not happy about the encroachment of others on their forest, while at the same time they were being blamed for destruction of natural resources because they practice a traditional form of agriculture called shifting cultivation. The villagers asked NGOs for help in protecting the forest from logging and other land speculation. In response to the request, in 1996 OXFAM and Netherlands Organization for International Development Co-operation (NOVIB) founded the NTFP project, which eventually was transformed into a local NGO. The NTFP facilitated the establishment of community associations and consultation committees. Typically, five villages joined to form an association. The NTFP and the associations developed draft regulations for forest protection that prohibited burning the forest, hunting elephants and tigers using firearms, or exploiting minerals inside protected areas. The draft permits collection of forest products in accordance with regulations and environmental sustainability.

⁷ According to the discussion with Mr. Toby Carson from WWF. In early 2002, WWF conducted an in-depth case study on community forestry on the selected areas.

MCC, an NGO focuses on two provinces, Takeo and Prey Veng. In Takeo province, MCC works with the Takeo Integrated Community Forestry Development Association (TICFDA). MCC started the first community forestry project in Cambodia and served as a role model for other community forestry initiatives. TICFDA works on meeting villagers' basic needs, and on developing sustainable community forestry with peace and dignity. In Prey Veng province, MCC also works on a small-scale irrigation project, and provides technical assistance to local government agencies.

In 1994, TICFDA gained the right from the local government to manage 500 ha of communal forest after extensive negotiations. In total 18 villages are involved in the association, representing 2,445 families. The program began because of heavy deforestation in Tram Kok district, Takeo province. MCC introduced community forestry practices designed to improve the villagers' socio-economic status while at the same time reducing the cutting of trees. They also began activities like well digging, latrine construction, rice banks and credit programs. In the agreements between the community and local authorities, the forest is divided into three parts. One is a reservation, where the community is not allowed to cultivate, gather or cut anything. The second area has already been cut, and is reserved for reforestation, so as to maintain forest sustainability. In the third area the communities are allowed to collect forest products, but 10% of what is collected must be given to the community forestry association, 20% goes to the Forestry Department, and the other 70% can be kept by the villager.

2.2.2. *Community Fisheries*

The basic idea of establishing community fisheries is to involve local communities in the management of local resources, under the assumption that by decentralizing management of resources, the local communities will ensure sustainability⁸. The sub-decree on fisheries is in the process of being finalized, and discussions between NGOs/CNGOs and government agencies are going on. The NGOs are urging the government to involve communities in a national workshop on the community fisheries sub-decree.

The approaches to fisheries communities differ depending on the context. In some cases, communities have lost access to resources they traditionally enjoyed, and they have set up groups to lobby for renewed or greater access. In other communities, where over-exploitation has led to a decline in yields and threatened their livelihood, people have organized themselves to maintain the sustainability of the resources.

There are about 160 community fisheries projects in the whole country, 70 of which are in Kratie province and Strung Treng province. A partial listing of community fisheries, and their supporters, is given below:

⁸ Discussion with Ms.Ngin Navirak Oxfam/GB.

- Community Kang Dechhor village in Upper Mekong River in Stung Treng province (CAA)
- Upper Mekong River in Kratie province (CAA)
- Upper Mekong River in Ratanakiri province (CARERE)
- Middle Mekong River in Kampong Cham province (MRC)
- Great Lake in Siem Reap province (FAO)
- Great Lake in Kampong Thom province (GTZ)
- Coastal zone in Koh Kong province (IDRC)
- Coastal zone in Kampong Som province (DANIDA)

2.2.3. *Water Users' Association*

One of AGRISUD's⁹ development priorities is to establish water pump user associations in Pursat and Battambang provinces. In these areas, farmers had difficulties in managing water resources to irrigate their crops, often causing disputes or conflicts among farmers.

Often the water pump user association is a sub-committee under a farmer association. The objective of this association is to give poor farmers access to a water pump so that they can expand their cropping activities, but avoid the high cost of renting a water pump.

AGRISUD described one example of the formation of a water user association. To join the association, members should have their own plot of land and access to a water source (this can be a pond or a well), and attend some training provided by AGRISUD. Group members who rent the pump pay 1000 *riels* per hour to the association. This is to pay for management and maintenance. Users have to pay for their own petrol while using the pump.

Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC), MCC, and other NGOs are also initiating the establishment of water users associations. In CEDAC groups, water user associations usually consist of 4-8 members. If the group can provide 30% of the cost of a pump, CEDAC will provide loans to cover the rest. Then the members can share the pump, and rent it out to other farmers, while re-paying the loan to CEDAC at 10% interest per year.

2.3. Occupational Associations

In recent years, many occupational associations have been formed across the country, especially in Phnom Penh. Some are recent, while others are well established. Some were formed after stimulation by an international organization with the same specialty (for example, some teacher associations were formed by NGOs working on education issue). Giving a standard classification for these organizations is difficult, as some have the form of traditional occupational associations, some function like cooperatives, and others, particularly those engaged in advocacy or some form of collective bargaining, resemble nascent workers' unions.

⁹ AGRISUD is a peri-urban agriculture development programme funded by the French Agency for the Development (AFD).

2.3.1. Teachers' Association

In the 1960s, the Teachers' Association was quite influential, being formed by the government partly to instill government ideas. It died out during subsequent changes of regime. One of the most recent teacher's associations, formed in March 2000 with support from the NGO International Education (IE), is called the Cambodian Independent Teacher's Association (CITA). The objectives of CITA are to increase solidarity among teachers from primary school to the university level, to make education more effective, and to negotiate with the government for increasing teachers' benefits and salary.

Leaders are elected from the 600 members from the provinces and Phnom Penh. Members pay monthly fees, which go toward maintaining the organization, and for activities such as workshops on negotiation skills, or socialization among the members. IE provided some funds, training, and helped set up the organization objectives and structure. Other CITA partners are United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) and the US Embassy. A representative of CITA mentioned that the organization is operating under financial constraints. At the provincial level its work is sometimes hindered by local government perceptions that it is aligned with a particular political party.

2.3.2. Midwives' Association

In 1994 the Cambodian Midwife Association (CMA) was established. The idea came after some Cambodian midwives attended an international conference for midwives. They began as an executive committee of seven, with 17 members in Phnom Penh, but have grown to have 2,850 members in 21 provinces.

To be a member, individuals have to be a certified midwife and pay an annual membership fee of 3,000 *riels*. They get free newsletters, and health insurance up to 50,000 *riels*.

CMA has conducted vocational training and workshops in several provinces, including Kampong Cham province, Prey Veng province and Banteay Meanchey province, and sponsored festivities for an international midwife celebration as well. As well as midwifery skills, they teach English, communication skills, and how to work with the community. CMA works closely with Reproductive and Child Health Alliance (RACHA) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) on program implementation and for the development of their training curriculum.

To support their activities, CMA have received funds from the Royal College of Midwifery in England, the Netherlands Embassy, USAID through Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT), and personal donations from H.E. Samdech Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Currently the association is not very active, as funds are decreasing. They now have a limited number of staff, who work as volunteers, because there is not enough money to pay them.

2.3.3. Farmers' Association

The impetus for the formation of farmers' associations varies. The experience of AGRISUD in forming farmer organizations in Pursat province, Battambang province and Siem Reap province was different in each case.

In Pursat province, for instance, the farmers' association was formed through training on rice and vegetable cropping techniques. Attending the training is mandatory to become a member. AGRISUD also provides agricultural implements and materials, as well as two months' worth of rice during the training.

Another model developed by AGRISUD in Siem Reap province was based on the landless. AGRISUD leased land from the Department of Agriculture for the landless poor to cultivate. Before lending out the land, AGRISUD interviewed and selected the farmers. The farmers who were selected had to form an association. Training, management, agricultural techniques and other agricultural inputs were also provided.

CEDAC has developed different strategies for facilitating farmers associations. Their experience began when two farmers from Kandal province came to their office to ask for help. When they saw that this collaboration was successful, the two farmers and CEDAC decided to set up a farmers association to introduce the integrated approach to other farmers in the area. The concept expanded, and there are now satellite associations in several other villages. CEDAC has designated one association as its center, and they sponsor regular meetings there that are attended by the satellite associations, represented by 2-3 key farmers.

This type of model was adopted by other CEDAC projects in Prey Veng and Kampong Cham provinces. The CEDAC principles for the formation of farmer organizations are:

- The request should come from the farmers themselves,
- Processes should be introduced through demonstration and working together,
- Training on management and agriculture should be provided,
- There should be a phasing-out process when the local association has joined a network with other associations outside the province.

2.3.4. Waste-Pickers' Association

The idea for a waste-picker association was conceived in 1997, based on CSARO's study on the socio-economic situation of waste-pickers in Phnom Penh. In 1998, the organization started to make contact with waste pickers through a mobile educational outreach team, which contacted and held classes for adult and child waste pickers.

CSARO staff then encouraged waste pickers to visit their Waste Picker Development Center to take other educational courses and benefit from socio-economic activities. Adult waste pickers got involved in the recycling center as part of the solid waste management program of CSARO, where they sorted waste, then sold the plastics and metals recovered.

In the afternoons, waste-pickers participated in non-formal education. In this group, they started to talk about the importance of regular meetings. They formed a group and collected a membership fee of 500 *riels* per month. The group later joined with other groups that received training in areas such as leadership and team building, making handicrafts from recycled materials, and understanding weights and measures so they do not get cheated when they sell their outputs¹⁰.

Thus the process of establishing an association among waste picker members started with the activities. The association came later.

As CSARO wanted to show that waste pickers can manage and generate jobs themselves, they made a contract with the municipality to develop a garbage management system¹¹ for two areas of the city. Waste pickers formed autonomous work teams. CSARO provided uniforms, rubber gloves and masks, and an initial loan to buy wheeled carts.

Each group manages its own money. It is anticipated that in the future the city will contract directly with the work groups (as cooperatives), rather than through CSARO, and CSARO will move to other areas of the city.

2.3.5. Journalists' Association

There are six journalist associations in Cambodia:

- Khmer Journalists Association (KJA)
- League of Cambodian Journalists (LCJ)
- Independent Journalists Union (IJU)
- Cambodian Club of Journalists (CCJ)
- Cambodian Association of Protection of Journalists (CAPJ)
- Free and Fair Journalists

The objective of these associations was to protect freedom of speech and human rights. LCJ started in 1995, separating from KJA. LCJ works in 10 provinces. At present, there are 400 individual members and 53 institutional members. Members of LCJ get price discounts for printing, and legal help if they have to go to court. LCJ also conducts training for journalists and published informational materials.

2.4. Advocacy Associations

Some associations are formed in order to negotiate with the government and private enterprises. Some examples are trade unions, sex-workers' unions, squatters' associations, micro-vendors associations, and *srey sroh* (transvestite) associations.

¹⁰ According to Mr. Heng Yon Kora, CSARO director, it is difficult to ask the waste pickers to conduct regular activities such as saving, because they are mobile and difficult to locate.

¹¹ The municipality has a contract with one private company for garbage collection throughout Phnom Penh. Garbage is collected 3 times a week by a truck.

2.4.1. Micro-Vendors' Association

A micro-vendors association was initiated in Phnom Penh in 1998, and grew to 302 members in August 2000 in three markets (Banwell, 2001). They are planning to expand to one more market¹². USG, an NGO, helped the micro-vendors organize themselves as an association, provided them with rights education, leadership training and negotiation and advocacy skills training so that they could negotiate with the market committee in cases of harassment and also assert their rights as vendors. The association also gives social support services like access to low-cost healthcare clinics, daycare service for infants, savings and credit activities, and access to vocational training. Even though credit and other services were considered beneficial, the largest incentive for the members to remain in the association was because of the protection the association provides vis-à-vis the authorities (Kusakabe et al., 2001).

2.4.2. Sex-Workers' Union

The Womyn's Agenda for Change (WAC) program of OXFAM Hong Kong focuses on assistance for women working as sex workers, and women working in garment factories, rubber plantations and the agricultural sector. WAC's approach is to challenge current practice by providing a direct service, rather than empowering facilitators (Cambodian NGOs). Therefore, when WAC felt it was needed, they started a sex-workers union to protect the interests of women sex-workers.

The strategy used is to increase self-awareness by providing an understanding of women's position in the global structure and its implications for their living conditions. This is a comprehensive and broad vision for finding long-term solutions rather than merely practical (social-economic services) and short-term solutions¹³. To date, WAC has a membership of 1,748 sex workers.

Other organizations working in this sector include USG, which works with 25 groups of 855 sex workers in Phnom Penh. Their objectives are to prevent HIV transmission and empower women to improve their living conditions. To reach this objective, they use the following strategies and methodology:

- Promotion of working relationships with authorities and police.
- Network with other NGOs such as Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC), Pharmaciens Sans Frontières (PSF), Indradevi Association (IDA), Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA), Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD), OXFAM Hong Kong, Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs (MoWVA) and the Russian Hospital.
- Facilitate awareness sessions on human rights, women's rights and health issues.
- Provide information on savings and credit, and build alternative business skills.

¹² These associations have been organized initially with the help of The Asia Foundation (TAF) and Urban Sector Group (USG).

¹³ Discussion with Ms. Rosanna Barbero, OXFAM Hong Kong.

2.4.3. Trade Union

Garment factories began opening in Cambodia in the mid-1990s. According to a report of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSALVY) February 2001, there are about 264 factories operating in the country employing 109,730 workers, of which 97,568 (88.91%) are women.

The first trade union in Cambodia was established in 1979. Like any other association of the time, they were considered a tool for the socialist government to implement government policy. In 1992 they started to become more independent, and in 1997 the Free Trade Union of Workers of Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC) led a movement of about 3,000 workers that marched to demand better working conditions. However, it was only after the amendment of the constitution in 1997 that under Article 36 workers were guaranteed the freedom to form or join a union, and the workers could legally fight for their rights.

Currently there are about 10 federations registered with the MoSALVY. These are¹⁴:

- Cambodian Construction Workers Trade Union Federation (CCTUF),
- Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (CFITU),
- Cambodian Labor Union Federation (CLUF),
- Cambodian Union Federation (CUF),
- Cambodian Union Federation Building and Wood Workers (CUFBWW),
- Cambodian Workers Labor Federation Union (CWLFU),
- Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union (CCAWDU),
- Free Trade Union of Workers of Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC),
- Khmer Youth Federation of Trade Union (KYFTU),
- National Independent Federation of Textile Union of Cambodia (NIFTUC).

The federation officials normally work full time to serve and to support trade union activities, and assist the trade union in registering with the MoSALVY. Federations conduct regular meetings with trade union representatives, and training sessions in worker's rights, conflict resolution, gathering information on work conditions and other issues. The unions charge a membership fee, ranging from 400 *riels* to 1,000 *riels*¹⁵ per month¹⁶.

In a single factory, there can be several unions from different federations, each having a membership in the factory of between 200–800 members, sometimes more. Conflicts between unions are a frequent occurrence. In reaction to these problems, the MoSALVY set up union committees in factories to accommodate the different views of each union and to minimize the tensions in the factory.

¹⁴ Discussion with Mr. Noun Rithy, ILO Natuinal Project Coordinator, on the 9 February 2002.

¹⁵ The different membership fees for each trade union within the same factory is one of the problems in recruiting members.

¹⁶ The federations rely heavily on the membership fees to conduct their activities. Some federations take 50% from the union (FTUWKC), or 40% (CUF), while others take only 10% (CFITU). The federations have received some external support, although this has mostly been for training.

Unions are active in industries like plywood manufacturing, rubber plantations, port workers, cement factories, cigarette factories, beer producers, salt works, drinking water plants, wine factories, etc. The union movement in Cambodia is relatively strong considering that the opening of these factories is a relatively recent development.

Oxfam Hong Kong and International Labour Organization (ILO) work directly with garment workers, or through federations and worker's unions. Oxfam Hong Kong specifically addresses issues related to women workers.

ILO-Cambodia, under its Worker Education Program, has been assisting six federations and unions (WUED, CUF, CFITU, FTUKWC, CCAWDU, NIFTUC) since 1998. The main objective is to strengthen their individual organizational structures and communication between them. It is not easy to develop networks among the federations, as the competition and suspicion between the federations is very strong¹⁷.

Two committees were established, the Child Labor Committee and the Women's Labor Committee. These two are considered neutral, and were agreed on by the federation advisory team (representatives of six federations under the ILO project). The objective of the committees are to strengthen networking and understanding of federations so that they can address important issues related to gender and child labor.

The most critical problem in the unions is gender-related terms of leadership. There are hundreds of women workers in each trade union and only a few men; however, men make up the largest proportion of the committee members of the unions. The direct implication is that more men will have access to training than women, worsening the existing power imbalance. In order to enable women to participate in outside workshops and network with others, ILO is providing English training as part of the regular training to their members.

For a number of reasons, the impact of union advocacy on government policy has been limited so far. Unions are relatively new, and in addition to their financial difficulties, many also have a weak structure and management. Additionally, they have focused their advocacy on achieving better working conditions at the factory level (short term), rather than tackling structural and policy issues at the national level (long term).

2.4.4. Squatter or Urban Poor Association

There are several local NGOs working with and focusing their activities on poor urban or squatter areas. Some of these are the Solidarity with the Urban Poor Federation (SUPF), the Community Sanitation and Recycling Organization (CSARO), Urban Poor Women Development (UPWD), Urban Resource Center (URC) and the Urban Sector Group (USG).

¹⁷ Discussion with Mr. Nuon Rithy, ILO National Project Coordinator on Workers' Education Project.

SUPF is one of the largest federations of community savings groups, and was established in 1994. They work in 143 communities in Phnom Penh, covering all 7 *khan*, or districts¹⁸. In 1998 total membership of SUPF was about 37,000. The annual membership fee is 3,500 *riels*. The program has been implemented through savings and credit groups at the household level¹⁹. SUPF also works at the district level (*khan*) in helping to solve problems related to land security, housing, pollution and sanitation, and other basic infrastructure services. SUPF works closely with the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF). While SUPF focuses on community development and organizing, UPDF provides funds for credit and revolving funds for improving housing and settlements in poor communities in Phnom Penh.

2.4.5. *Srey Sroh (transvestite) Association*

The order from Prime Minister Hun Sen to close down karaoke bars throughout the country has had a large impact on the lives of people who work at night in bars or other services. One of the groups of people who were affected most are the *srey sroh* (transvestite - literally “charming lady”) community. These workers normally work in karaoke bars and specialize in singing, dancing and playing music, and some also provide sex services. Since they did not have a place to work officially after the regulation, they have had to go on their own without a pimp or manager, and have become more vulnerable to abuse.

A USG survey learned that the *srey sroh* would prefer to be in a group, for mutual protection and to avoid the social stigma and stereotyping associated with their lifestyle. USG became concerned about their situation and began providing them information on health-issues, use of condoms, HIV/AIDS prevention, and human rights issues.

They also set up a special program for the group on discrimination awareness and advocacy. The objective of the program is to have transvestites accepted as women in society without any discrimination. USG claims that the local authorities have agreed to list them as female on their ID cards, rather than male. This achievement was not easy, and only came about after a long process of encouraging open mindedness in society and among the local authorities.

There are 18 groups or associations of *srey sroh* in Cambodia, 14 of them in Phnom Penh. The rest are in Kampong Cham province, Kampong Speu province and Takhmau in Kandal province. Besides advocacy, education and human rights awareness, the groups also have savings and credit activities.

¹⁸ About 35,000 families (180,000 people) live in 502 low-income settlements or communities within 7 municipal districts or *khan* (Environment and Urbanization Vol. 13 No 2 October 2001).

¹⁹ The mechanism of the savings and credit groups is similar to SHG activities.

2.5. Business Associations

Members of business associations can enhance their businesses through associations in a number of ways such as :

- Improving quality control,
- Regulating and controlling production,
- Joint purchase of production inputs,
- Collecting and sharing marketing and market information,
- Accessing credit for business purposes.

Business associations that exist in Cambodia include: rice-millers associations, mushroom growers' associations, charcoal-makers' associations, chicken-raisers' associations, and traders' cooperatives, as well as chambers of commerce and Rotary clubs.

2.5.1. Mushroom Growers' Association

Mushroom growers' associations were first formed under the farmer associations established by AGRISUD in Siem Reap province. The association was initiated to try to control production and stabilize the fluctuating price of mushrooms. AGRISUD provided them with productive inputs, equipment and credit. Each member had to pay a monthly fee of 500 *riels*. However, the association did not work well, because members were not interested in getting credit and they did not see much importance in joint action (CEDAC, 2000).

2.5.2. Chicken-Raisers' Association

Unlike the mushroom growers' association, which was formed to exert control over supply, the chicken raisers' association was formed by AGRISUD because there was high demand for chicken in the market, and farmers could produce more. AGRISUD provided huge support for this activity, including subsidies for feed (from Thailand), chicks (from Thailand and Phnom Penh), and vaccinations (from Thailand and Phnom Penh). So far, the association is not able to access production inputs from abroad by themselves and is still dependent on AGRISUD (CEDAC, 2000).

2.5.3. Rice-Millers' Association

There are nine rice-millers' associations in eight provinces (5 in the northwest and 4 in the south). Enterprise Development of Cambodia (EDC) initiated their establishment. EDC's mission is working with small and medium enterprises (SME) on private sector self-governance. They hope that through the establishment of professional business associations, producers will be able to increase production and have a better understanding of the larger market and economic policy issues that effect their businesses, so that they can compete more effectively in this era of globalization and free trade.

Building trust among the individual millers was the first task. Business operators tend to see others in the same business only as competitor. EDC took the strategy of first contacting individual millers personally and explaining to them the concept of business associations. Then EDC took a group of rice millers to see a similar business association in Thailand. Through such tours, the rice mill owners learned about the usefulness and management of such associations. This activity also helped to build trust among them.

After realizing that by forming an association they would be able to have better negotiation power and better control over the market, the millers decided themselves to set up an association, and its regulations and management. The associations, and the EDC staff, work closely with the government on potential problems. Government representatives are included in the study tours outside the country, so that they can learn how other governments are working with small and medium-size enterprises and associations. There is also a network that links the nine rice-miller associations through a federation based in Phnom Penh that monitors production and prices of rice in various parts of the country.

2.6. Ethnic Associations

Some associations are formed according to ethnicity, for mutual help and to protect their rights when faced with discrimination. These groups also promote their own culture through language, religion and education, and help in job placement and legal disputes. Some examples are: Kampuchea Krom associations, Chinese-Khmer associations, Vietnamese associations, Khmer Leu or highlander associations²⁰, and Cham community associations.

2.6.1. *Kampuchea Krom Association*

Kampuchea Krom are ethnic Khmer who originally came from the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. These types of associations have been around for 2-3 generations, and throughout Cambodia, Kampuchea Krom communities are known for their cooperation and solidarity.

The Association of Khmer Kampuchea Krom (AKKK) in Phnom Penh was established in 1991. According to the chairman of the association, Dr. Liv An, there are about 400,000 Kampuchea Krom in the country, mostly in 6 provinces and municipalities, namely Phnom Penh, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Speu, Prey Veng and Sihanoukville. The objectives of AKKK are to protect the Khmer Kampuchea Krom against human rights violations, and to promote their social, economic, political, and religious development. They assist the Kampuchea Krom community to gain legal rights to become Khmer citizens.

The only criterion for membership is to be above 18 years old. There is no membership fee, and any nationality or ethnicity can join, thus keeping the door open for sympathizers of Kampuchea Krom. The activities of the associations involve promoting human rights and democracy (they are actively involved in election observation), the health sector in

²⁰ This was established in Rattanakiri province in 1992-1993 but no longer exists.

areas such as HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, micro-business at the village level, etc. Some partners of Kampuchea Krom associations are LICADHO, Khmer Institute of Democracy (KID), and ADHOC.

2.6.2. Chinese-Khmer Association

There are about five large and many small Chinese associations in Cambodia. Their objective is to preserve Chinese culture and restore it within the legal framework (Mansfield, 1999). According to a study conducted by a NGO, Ponlok, most Chinese organizations and schools in Phnom Penh are informally associated with the Chinese Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia (CAKC). Resources to fund CAKC activities normally come from individual businesses and Chinese families, as well as the founders of the organization. Membership in the association is voluntary, and no transportation costs or administrative fees are given to the members and the activists in the association. Their strong commitment is the key to running these Chinese associations.

Information is shared among the community through Chinese language newspapers. The associations provide support not only to Chinese families, but others as well, regardless of race.

2.6.3. Vietnamese Association

The main objective of the Vietnamese Association of Phnom Penh (VAPP) is to preserve Vietnamese culture, advocate for the legal rights of Vietnamese living in Cambodia, and help Vietnamese suffering from disasters such as flooding. Membership of the association is approximately 3,000 *riels*, and there is a required annual membership fee. For relief from natural disasters or fire, the association often receives donations from international agencies such as the UN, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the World Food Program (WFP). The association maintains personal networks and relationships throughout the country among the Vietnamese community, which makes them strong.

2.6.4. Cham Association

Muslims often live separately from other Khmers. They usually live along the riverside, making a living from fishing, making fishing nets, and slaughtering animals²¹. The *imam*, or religious leader, has a central role in Cham communities. The *imam*'s main duties are to maintain and strengthen solidarity, culture, and most importantly Islamic teaching in their community.

According to their religion, the Cham people must contribute 10% of their income to society, with an additional compulsory contribution during Ramaddhan. Most of this money is given to poor families, or used for community buildings such as schools and mosques. They also receive support from other Muslims (particularly from Arabic countries) outside Cambodia. The strength of the Cham community is their trust in the accountability of their

²¹ Khmer Buddhists are not allowed to kill a living animal, so the Cham traditionally do this job.

leaders, and their belief in Islamic teaching, which means they are willing to sacrifice for the sake of their community. There is no membership fee, as they normally stay in a group as a community and not as an association. The meeting of community members is done regularly on a religious basis (every Friday for men), during which time they recite the *Qurán*, or Muslim holy book. This is done regularly for men, women and children in separate places and often at different times.

2.7. Religious and Recreational Groups

Many indigenous associations form for religious or recreational purposes. Some examples are: *Krom Yey* (elderly women's group), village celebration groups, boat racing groups, and youth associations.

2.7.1. Boat Racing groups

Boat racing is a traditional religious and sporting activity. The boats are kept at the pagoda, and once a year are taken out to compete with boats from other pagodas around the country at the annual boat races in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap (Collins, 1999).

2.7.2. Village Celebration groups

Village celebrations are organized by *chah tum* (respected elders) to celebrate the rice harvest. The rice is collected from the villagers to get a blessing from the monks so that there will be a better harvest in the next planting. Traditional music and dance are a part of the celebrations (Collins, 1999).

2.7.3. *Krom Yey* (elderly women's group)

This is a group of elderly women who study the teachings of Buddha. The study can take place in any place, but normally near the temple where people can meditate peacefully (Krishnamurthy, 1999).

2.7.4. Youth Association

One youth association based in Battambang province is pagoda-based and was formed by *Chas Tum* (respected elders) and the leaders of the monks. The members come from different villages around the pagoda. They select the youth leaders representing each village. For each group a girl is selected to be the chief (girls are supposed to be more patient than boys, and know better how to prepare food for the monks). For the *P'chum Ben* festival the youth association collects money, and in return they have a special party on the 15th day reserved only for the youth (Sokhom, et al, 1999).

2.8. Conclusion

The division between one type of association and another is not always very clear, and there is often an overlap. Some of the significant factors that have contributed to an environment conducive to association formation in Cambodia are:

- Availability of external financial support and technical assistance
- Political stability
- Economic development
- Past experience with some types of associations during earlier regimes
- Increased opportunity to learn from others' experiences (increased access to information)
- Increasing levels of societal trust

3. CASE STUDIES

3.1. Case study 1 : Farmers' Association

3.1.1. Profile of the villages studied

Two neighboring villages were selected for the study: Tuol Khpuos village and Trea village in Cheu Kach commune, Ba Phnom district, Prey Veng province.

There is one primary school in the commune, and one secondary school in the district center, 2.5 km from the village. There is one pagoda in the commune located in Trea village, and a government health center in the neighboring commune. However, people normally go to the private clinic in the district center.

In the past, villagers used to cut firewood in a small area of land nearby. Now, however, the people living around that plot have cut the trees to expand their paddy fields. Any remaining woodlands are now owned by the paddy field owner.

There are three canals in the villages that were dug during the Khmer Rouge regime. They have water only during the rainy season, and cannot be used during the dry season.

Table 3.1: Profile of the studied villages

	TUOL KHPUOS	TREA
Number of households	75	107
Average land holdings	1 ha	0.5 ha
Number of rich households ¹	2	3
Number of medium households	48	64
Number of poor households	18	2
Number of poorest households	7	38

People in the commune take products such as vegetables to sell in the district market, which is about 30 minutes on foot from the villages. They rarely go and sell in the provincial market or at Neak Luang market (around 1 hour by car from the village).

Some villagers migrate seasonally for work to Phnom Penh, Poipet province, Kampong Speu province, or Pursat province. Some go to Thailand, but none to Vietnam. Since 1995, it has become easier for women to find employment in Phnom Penh, as there are more opportunities for them in garment factories and in the informal sector.

¹ See Appendix 4 for criteria derived during the focus group meeting for the wealth ranking.

3.1.2. History of the villages

Village Trea had only 10 households during the 1950s. In the 1960s, there was a district-level cooperative, which sold daily necessities cheaply. Each household was given a ration card and was able to buy at the cooperative.

By the Lon Nol period, the number of households had increased to 20-25. War started in this area in 1970, at which time the village became a war zone.

Village Tuol Khpuos had only 6 households during the French occupation (1930s-40s). During the Sihanouk period, this increased to 25. At that time, the village had a group of *neary klahan* (brave women) who fought the French.

During 1975-79, under the Khmer Rouge regime, people were divided into groups (women, youth, children, etc.), and worked under cooperatives (*sahako*). The Khmer Rouge forcefully brought in many “new people”. All the men and women in these villages were mobilized to dig canals. Three canals were built during this time in the two villages.

In 1980, land was divided and given to individual households². The number of households by this time had risen to 70-80 per village, partly because some of the “new people” stayed on.

During the Khmer Rouge time, the pagoda was destroyed. After the Khmer Rouge regime, the pagoda was rebuilt and the festivals revived. A *Wat* committee was organized with volunteers, and later sanctioned by the district department of religion. All the *wat* committee members are men, since there are no nuns in the pagoda.

3.1.3. History of cooperation in the villages

In the Sihanouk period, before the Khmer Rouge regime, there was a tradition of *provah dai* (labor exchange) in the villages, although only for harvesting. After the Khmer Rouge regime, there was one year when *provah dai* was practiced for both transplanting and harvesting. Now people hire others for transplanting, though there still exists *provah dai* for harvesting.

Some respondents attributed the disappearance of *provah dai* to their bad experiences during the Khmer Rouge time and under *krom samaki*. Some said that land-holdings are smaller now, so there is less necessity for cooperation. During the Sihanouk regime, households used to have an average 5 ha of land. Therefore, villagers needed each other's help to transplant and harvest.

Since the 1960s, people have been working on their own lands independently, without sharing information about their rice fields or businesses. One respondent explained that in

² Land measuring 0.18 ha was given per adult in the household. If the household had cattle, additional 0.18 ha was provided per cattle.

tha. period there was enough land, and people were easily able to produce enough rice to support their family. There was no incentive for people to share information or upgrade their farming techniques. However, with smaller land-holdings, if farmers do not increase their per-unit production through sustainable agricultural techniques, they will not be able to feed their family for the whole year.

3.1.4. Profile of the association

(a) How it started

The NGO, Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC) started to work in the villages in 1999. The NGO staff started organic home gardening courses, and took villagers on exposure tours. CEDAC selected key farmers who had begun implementing the recommended techniques. They also gave wells to farmers who lacked wells and therefore were unable to plant dry season vegetables. CEDAC organized water pump groups, with the members investing 40% of the price of the pump, and CEDAC lending 60%. In this district, CEDAC started to work first with two villages, Tuol Khpuos and Trea. Now the organization works with 34 villages.

(b) Profile of members

There are now 22 members of the farmers' association in Tuol Khpuos village (13 women and nine men), and 26 members in Trea village (21 men and 5 women). In Tuol Khpuos village, there are 4 well groups (18 members, 10 men and 8 women), 2 water pump groups (6 members, 3 men and 3 women), and 7 key farmers (4 women and 3 men). In Trea village, there are 4 well groups (25 members), 3 water pump groups (7 members) and 8 key farmers³.

Table 3.2: Wealth ranking of members

	TUOL KHPUOS VILLAGE	TREA VILLAGE
Number of rich members	0	0
Number of medium members	12	5
Number of poor members	6	7
Number of poorest members	4	14

There is one farmer promoter in each village, selected from the key farmers by CEDAC. Key farmers are expected to disseminate technology, encouraged to experiment with new technology and report on their results in meetings. Farmer promoters have the additional role of training and following up with other members and non-members. One-third of key farmers are women, but both of the farmer promoters are men.

³ Some members are both well group members as well as key farmers, or water pump group members. Thus, the totals do not match. In Trea village, gender stratified information on members was not available.

(c) Activities of the association

The major focus of the association at present is to improve rice production and home gardening technologies. CEDAC organizes training, farmer-to-farmer learning sessions and field visits. Members have monthly or bi-monthly meetings to discuss technical problems. There are formal as well as informal meetings among the members of the sub-groups. Both the well group and water pump group members also attend the village level meetings.

Well group members have to pay 1000 *riels* (US\$0.26) per month to the group in order to save money for repairing the well in case it breaks. The group leaders keep the money.

Although the members trust the leaders in the maintenance of the collected money, the members interviewed were ignorant of its current status. Water pump groups rent out the pump to other villagers and receive payment accordingly.

There is now a plan to bring these small groups into a larger association involving five villages. They have elected the committee members of the association⁴. The president of the association is the farmer promoter of Trea village.

Since at present the activities are based more on small groups, and do not have much need for financial management aside from the well group, administrative management of the groups is not a very important issue.

One of the leaders of the association said that of all the sub-groups, an all-woman group of three women works the best and hardest. He thinks the all-women group is better because women do not let criticism affect their personal relationships. A man, on the other hand, is likely to break ties with the man criticizing him. For this reason, the leader thinks that it is easier to disseminate technologies to women than to men.

In 1999, 20 wells were constructed in 2 villages. By 2001, this number went up to 78 for 5 villages. Key farmers' groups were formed at the end of 2000. In 2001, water pump groups were formed.

(d) Reasons for joining the association

One female respondent said that she joined the farmers' group to learn about agricultural technology and access small credit. For her, the new knowledge was particularly attractive. As she puts it, "ideas come first, material later".

The vice president joined the group because he thinks the NGO has a vision. He told others that even though the NGO speak about organizing groups, it is for the benefit of each individual household.

⁴The committee members are all men.

One of the respondents used to be a member of a village bank. However, after repaying the money, he quit the program, because he did not require credit anymore. According to him, in associations there is always more room for improvement, so unlike the bank, he would never feel like leaving a farmers' group.

Some said that by joining the association, they could interact more with people outside the villages. Some said development makes people feel closer to each other.

Some non-members said they did not join because no one asked them. Many have income from sources other than vegetable production, or have larger rice fields. Some said that they do not have time to join meetings and training sessions. Many said that if they see the current members benefiting from the group, they too would consider joining. At present, becoming a member gives no extra privileges, since non-members still access agricultural knowledge from members, and get vegetable seeds from them.

(e) Changes in attitude

One of the repeated comments on the changes in attitude after joining the farmers' groups is that villagers are less secretive (*leak kania*). Once they started sharing their experiences in CEDAC-organized meetings, people began to understand that they would not lose anything by sharing, but on the contrary, would be able to gain by learning from others' experience⁵.

About sharing, the head of Ang Kagnn village said,

"After I joined the group, I shared my vegetables with others. People will come to my garden and ask for this vegetable and that vegetable, and ask for this seed and that seed. I give it to them. Some plant by themselves, some do not. And they come back again to ask for vegetables. But... they will feel ashamed to ask many times. So, they will eventually stop coming to ask, or start planting by themselves."

Some respondents' reasons on why it is important to work together:

- (1) The members are trying to produce crops without pesticide, and if others use pesticide, it might affect their own crop.
- (2) If others also plant vegetables in their backyard, they will be careful about their livestock and not let them wander around.
- (3) It is good for everyone to be equally prosperous. If everyone lives well, there will be no thieves in the area.

⁵ Mr. Tony Knowles of Enterprise Development Cambodia made similar observations and comments while he was organizing a rice millers' association. When he took Cambodian rice millers to Thailand, he first observed that the Cambodian millers were reluctant to share information. However, after they saw Thai millers sharing information with them and seeing that they would be able to become powerful by sharing information, the Cambodians learned that they would not lose by sharing information but rather would gain from it (personal interview in January 2002).

The members said they did not have any group before because:

- (1) There was no leader,
- (2) The people did not know what to talk about,
- (3) People still had bad memories about working in groups.

Group meetings might be more important for women than for men, who have many opportunities to socialize. Although women do visit each other, they cannot stay long, due to work pressure⁶. Meetings give women time to interact with each other, and to discuss issues with men. Although women and men do talk and even visit each other to discuss farming techniques, such meetings are brief. In the meeting, women have a chance to discuss these issues more fully.

In these small groups, interaction between members as well as between members and non-members are observed to give moral support and encouragement.

However, when the issue of forming a larger association arises, the members do not seem to have a concrete understanding of the need for a larger association⁷. Formal processes such as the election of a president and committee members are considered necessary in order to coordinate “plans that trickle down from above” (*phenkar thleak mok phi khang leu*).

However, this goes against the spirit of small group-based mutual learning. Overcoming the tendency towards bureaucratization is a challenge⁸.

3.1.5. Other associations in the commune

(a) Funeral association (*samakhom moranak songkroh*)

The funeral association was created in 1992. Currently the association has over 100 families as members. The committee members of the association are the same as the pagoda committee members, though they function separately.

People pay 1200 *riels* (US\$ 0.31) per year per family to be a member. When any one in the family dies, the family receives 20,000 *riels* (US\$ 5.13). Families whose babies die immediately after birth receive 10,000 *riels* (US\$ 2.56).

The funeral association (and the pagoda) covers four villages. When the villagers created the association, the leaders of the association asked permission from the district and commune authorities. Members said, “We did not want to have any trouble later on.”

⁶ It is not only that they have a lot of work but also because it is culturally not seen as appropriate for women to be out of the house for a long time for socialization.

⁷ It should be acknowledged that a few people do have a clear vision for creating a larger association. One vice president of the association said that aside from the coordination role, a larger association would enable them to negotiate effectively with the government and also would enable them to access bank loans. One member said that it is important that people have similar ideas as much as possible.

⁸ Such bureaucratization is often seen among VDCs and CDCs, which were created to be the implementation and coordination body for providing social services.

(b) Village Bank

Groupe de Recherche et d'Échanges Technologiques (GRET) has been offering micro-credit services in this area since 1989. The credit group has a president and a vice-president, who are elected from the members and are responsible for collecting repayments. These individuals receive 70,000 *riels* (US\$17.95) per year for their work.

GRET also has an emergency assistance scheme for couples. A husband and wife who are creditors of the village bank can enter the scheme by paying 500 *riels* (US\$0.13) per year. If the members die, if their houses burn down, or if a member gives birth to a child by cesarean, they receive 10,000 *riels* (US\$2.56).

In terms of death benefits, the credit program covers only the husband and wife, while the funeral association covers all the family members. The head of the village (who is also an *achar*) finds this restrictive. "Children are also family members. Why are they not included?" His comment shows the Khmer concept of family and sense of fairness. For Cambodians, the family unit is not only husband and wife⁹, but also children and parents. Even though the number of family members differs from family to family, this does not bother the association members. For them, one family, one unit is fair enough regardless of the size of the family.

(c) VDC of *Sit Koma*

Sit Koma literally means children's rights in Khmer, and is a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) program, under which a VDC has been started in the village in December 2000. They have five VDC members, one of whom is a water-pump group member in Tuol Khpuos village. The project has distributed vegetable seeds, hoes, and toilet bowls. The program dug one well in the village for potable water and also organized a kindergarten.

(d) Other external assistance in the commune

The World Food Program has been operating a breakfast program for school children since February 2002. They also assisted road construction by providing food for work.

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (VSF) has a veterinary office in Tuol Khpuos village. A government veterinarian is stationed there, and provides veterinary services to villagers for a free.

3.1.6. *Lessons learned*

(a) The importance of small group meetings where people can discuss topics of common interest (group with a purpose).

⁹ It should also be noted that a number of men have several wives.

It has been repeatedly pointed out by the members of the farmers' group that in the past they had nothing to discuss, so they did not hold meetings. Now that they have the agenda of rice production and home gardening, they have plenty to discuss. Khmer households are often described as islands, because they do not interact. Such forums are important to improve the relationships between households.

In addition, at common discussion forums, new ideas and initiatives arise. The funeral association is a case in point. The initial concept arose in the regular meetings of *achars* on religious days.

(b) Importance and limitations of pagoda-based associations

The funeral association demonstrates the effectiveness of pagoda-based associations. Their financial management and decision making is considered transparent and fair. The committee members are also not worried about the lack of funds, because if they run short, they can always raise money through religious festivals.

It is interesting to note that while no criticism or complaint was heard of the funeral association, this was not the case for the other associations. A few people complained about nepotism and selfishness. Although some said funeral associations escaped criticism because the money involved was very small, it might be useful to study the way in which indigenous groups such as funeral associations operate, compared to externally initiated groups, in order to understand the differences in people's perception.

However, the objective of pagoda-based associations is limited to mutual help and welfare, and not adopting new technologies or challenging power structures. For example, there are no women among the pagoda committee in this commune. Even though the wives of *achars* can influence their decisions (as one wife of an *achar* said, it was she who suggested that the amount collected for the association should be 1200 *riels* [US\$ 0.31] per year), they are not formally represented.

Although William Collins (1998), in his research in Battambang province, found that women are active members of pagoda committee, this was not the case in this study. Thus, it is dangerous to generalize and romanticize the role of pagodas in rural communities.

(c) Wider social and political awareness of NGO staff and association members including gender awareness

The farmers' group in this case study has been successful because of the agricultural techniques that were introduced and because farmers were organized along their interest in agricultural technology. However, if the association is to grow larger, it is necessary to have a wider social and political awareness so that the members will be able to understand the situation and the environment surrounding their association and their relationship with other institutions and authorities better. Otherwise, there is a danger of the association becoming a bureaucratic structure that only disseminates instructions from outsiders. The same applies to gender awareness. Even though the association has improved

communication between women and men, and women attend exposure trips and workshops to Phnom Penh and other areas, the association leadership still consists of men.

(d) Legal and political support for associations

It is generally perceived that successful associations need approval and support from the authorities, and without it, they could run into trouble. Even though people are not as afraid of the authorities as they were in the early 1990s, they still watch the reaction of the state to their activities. The association can be quite vulnerable to the state, since there is no place for them to go for consultation (besides the NGO that is supporting them) when they run into trouble. In this sense, there is need for legal and political support that local associations can contact in case there is any difficulty with the authorities.

(e) Sense of security and confidence

Being able to work together not only provided members/villagers with knowledge, but they also say that they feel more secure about food, because when they run short, they can borrow from each other. The external supporting organization has also made them confident. They have seen the NGO providing rice seed to them when they suffered from floods, giving them a sense of security that they have someone to rely on when they are in trouble.

3.2. Case study 2 : Self Help Groups

3.2.1. Profile of the village studied

Samrong village is located in Lieng Day commune, Angkor Thom district, Siem Reap province. The village is located within the boundaries of the Angkor Wat conservation areas near Angkor Thom, about 18 km from Siem Reap town.

Samrong village is one of eight villages in the commune. The population is 1,609 persons (779 male and 830 female) or 288 households. The total area of Samrong village is 180 ha, which includes 34.56 ha of *chamkar* field (vegetable garden). The average cultivated land of each household is 0.63 ha. Forest land is 163 ha and covers the three villages of Samrong, Taphrok and BOMPIENG RIECH¹⁰.

According to Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK), 75% of the population is illiterate. Most women have no formal education and have not gone to primary school. In 1998, Samrong village had one primary school (grades 1 and 2), one village hall, and one rice-bank. A district health center is located 4 km from the village, and a pagoda 5 km from the village. The nearest market is in Siem Reap town, half an hour by motorbike on a relatively good (gravel) road.

The major occupation is agriculture, such as paddy field, *chamkar* vegetables, and rain-fed rice field (no irrigation). Some families go to Thailand seasonally to work as porters or work in Siem Reap town in house construction. Some men work at collecting sand from the river. Some villagers collect firewood from the forest.

3.2.2. History of the village and cooperative movement

The oldest man in the village, Ruh Nyep (80 years old) recalled the French period (1930s-40s). He was born in Samrong village, which had 25 households then. The main occupation of the villagers was collecting forest products and hunting wildlife. Tigers roamed the village at night. *Provah dai* (shared labor) was practiced to help cultivate each other's rice-fields. Villagers were free to clear the forest to grow rice.

Freedom of movement was limited. The villagers could not afford to buy an ID card, which cost 5 *riels* and had to be renewed annually. French soldiers in the village demanded to see the ID card of anyone who wanted to travel out of the village.

During the Sihanouk period (1950-1970), there were about 50 households in the village. The village was quiet, and people came back to the village and resettled. An old woman recalled a *sahakor* (cooperative) in the neighboring district where people could buy cheaper groceries. However, the *sahakor* was not popular.

¹⁰ Sources: PADEK Baseline Survey (2001) and group discussion in the commune.

Between 1970-1975, there was collaboration between Vietnamese troops (Viet Cong) and the Khmer Rouge. These groups recruited villagers, men and women, to be soldiers while Lon Nol troops recruited soldiers in town¹¹.

In 1972, like the rest of the northeastern part of Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge occupied the village and set up groups, called *krom dop* (groups of ten), consisting of youth (older boys and girls), couples, elders or children, to perform different tasks. Samrong village had 2-3 groups of *krom dop*.

Krom sahakor was the coordinating body for *krom dop*. During *krom sahakor* meetings the *sahakor* leaders (who came from outside the province or district) would decide which group should build bridges, and which should work in the paddy fields.

In 1975, people were transferred from Takeo and other provinces to Samrong village.

During 1979-1980, the Heng Samrin regime formed another group called the *krom samaki* (solidarity group). They divided the land clearly within the villages. Each group cultivated their own land and the harvest had to be shared among members evenly. The village was insecure; fighting was still on with the Khmer Rouge.

During 1980-1987, the villagers still practiced *krom samaki*¹². The village still suffered regular attacks from the Khmer Rouge. This continued until UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) came and the first democratic elections were conducted.

In 1994, international NGOs such as PADEK started coming to Samrong village to talk about development, although the security situation was not very good. Only since 1995 has the village become relatively safe.

3.2.3. Indigenous associations and groups in the village

(a) Funeral association

In October 2001, villagers in Samrong initiated a funeral association, based on a model adopted from a neighboring district. Samrong village has four funeral associations. Each group collects 2000 *riels* (US\$ 0.51) and 3 cans of rice when one family member within their group dies. There is no membership fee, but each member has to be registered in a group.

¹¹The old man in the village either could not recall the Lon Nol period or he would not tell us anything. Thus, we could not get enough information on this period.

¹² The villagers called it *provah dai* (labor exchange) as well. It was not clear whether the villagers wanted to say that the traditional form of labor sharing was revived, or the *krom samaki* introduced some element of *provah dai*, that is, allowed the family to keep their own harvest.

(b) Traditional music group

Eight villagers have set up a music group in the village. They also play in neighboring villages. They charge for their service, but not for religious ceremonies.

(c) *Chan Chnang* (dishes and pots) association

The 3-member committee collects money from the villagers. Each person can decide how much money to contribute. There is no membership fee. Any member can borrow the dishes and pots without fee, but must replace any pot that is broken. The committee members were elected by the villagers.

(d) Cooking group

A group of 6-8 women help the village festival or ceremonies. They charge a fee for wedding ceremonies or other parties, but not for religious ceremonies.

(e) Pagoda committee (*Pagoda Ang Kramaw*)

After the Khmer Rouge left the area in 1987, people rebuilt the pagoda in 1988 and set up a pagoda committee. Each village has a representative on the pagoda committee. Local residents and monks elect the committee members. Activities include fund raising, conducting village festivals and ceremonies, and assisting the elders in the villages in festivals and ceremonies.

3.2.4. *Associations and groups created with PADEK's support*

(a) Rice bank

In 1994, about 20.5 tons of rice was given to set up a rice bank for food security. The rice-bank committee members are elected by the villagers.

According to PADEK, the rice-bank now runs by itself, without intervention from PADEK. The number of people borrowing rice from the bank has decreased in the past 2-3 years, so the rice bank is now selling rice instead of lending to their members.

(b) Federation of Self Help Groups

At the village level, there is one Self Help Group (SHG) association. This is a network of eight SHGs in the village. Each SHG sends a representative to the association meetings. There is a federation of SHGs at the commune level, which includes 8 SHGs from Samrong village, 6 from Taphrok village, 3 from Spien Thmey village, 4 from Plueng village, 3 from Trapeang Svay village, 4 from Daun Awy village, 6 from Lieng Day village, and 8 from

Bompieng Riech village. Each member of the Federation committee is elected by the village Association of SHGs to represent the village.

(c) Commune local experts

Each village in the commune under the PADEK program is required to provide local volunteers to help accelerate the development process. Each village has 1-2 local experts in health, literacy, and agriculture. Every month the experts meet in a training hall to discuss their achievements or problems. They also have savings and credit activities and organize training to improve their technical skills.

(d) Village Development Committee (VDC)

The VDC in Samrong village was established along with the rice bank in 1994. Social development training such as organization and leadership was provided by PADEK. For formal recognition by the government structure, the VDC was handed over to Seila (the program to facilitate the decentralized administrative structure of the government) in December 2001, but without any change in its structure or committee members.

(e) Literacy class

During 1996–1998, an adult literacy class was conducted under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) program. PADEK followed it up to establish one literacy class in each village in the commune. A voluntary teacher is normally recruited within the village with an educational background of grade 3.

3.2.5. Other groups

(a) *Krom*

There are 12 *kroms* under the village structure. Each *krom* consists of a chairman, a deputy and a treasurer; they are chosen by the villagers. Meetings are held as necessary, such as when a health worker visits their village, when people are asked to clear the forest, dig a canal, and engage in other communal work.

3.2.6. *External support in the commune and village*

Other than from PADEK, the village and commune received support from the following organizations.

Table 3.3: External support in the commune

Organization	Activities
UNESCO	An adult literacy program was run between 1996-1998. The literacy program included children who were not able to study in a formal school. In the beginning, UNESCO worked in almost all villages. At present, only one adult literacy class is still operating under the UNESCO program.
WFP	Villagers would receive food for work. This program operated in 1998 for road construction.
ILO	The ILO operated a road construction program in 1996.
Banteay Srey	An NGO called Banteay Srey started its program in 1995. It works with the Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs (MoWVA) and has one office in the district. The target beneficiaries are women, especially the poorest. In Samrong village Banteay Srey started to work in 2002, helping about 20 selected (very poor) families that do not have access to credit or other support programs. The organization also helps with programs on domestic violence and other gender related issues.
CWCC (Cambodian Women's Crisis Center)	CWCC focuses on domestic violence. They started their program in this commune in 2001.
Seila	Seila, a national program for decentralized planning and decision making in relation to rural development, started in early 2002 in this commune. The VDC in Samrong village was initiated by PADEK but was then handed over to Seila through a new election.
Catholic missionaries	The missionaries started their work in the village about two years ago. missionaries They distributed rice, food and money and took Bible classes. About ten families continue to practice this religion.

3.2.7. Profile of the self help groups Reaksmei Chamroen (*The Light*)

(a) How it started

In 1992 PADEK did a baseline survey in the area, which found that the crucial issues were food security and public security. People were not able to grow rice, because they had to hide in the forest to avoid attacks from the Khmer Rouge.

In 1994, after the security situation returned to relative normalcy, PADEK started a rice-bank (see also section 3.2.4.a.). In 1996-1998, PADEK helped local residents with credit for micro-businesses, animal raising, fingerlings, and seeds.

In 1997, a group of women conducted a meeting initiated by the community development facilitator from PADEK. They discussed the need to set up some kind of organization for mutual help among families in the village. They agreed to set up a savings group, which they called a SHG. The group began with 10 members and started to save and give loans to other members.

By 1999 eight SHGs were established in the village. At that time people borrowed from traders at interest rates ranging from 10% to 20% per month. Poor families were not given credit by traders, since they did not have collateral.

Regulations for saving and credit procedures, and organizational matters were established, step by step. The community development facilitator helps the group out especially with accounting, writing the minutes, and reviewing the regulations.

Finding leaders and committee members for the group was difficult as the local residents lacked confidence, mainly because they could not read and write well. The SHGs had to be given training in organization, leadership, management, basic accounting and other income generation skills.

After some months, PADEK lent them capital to accelerate saving activities in the group. First, the group got 1,520,000 *riels* (US\$390). The second loan was for 1,700,000 *riels* (US\$436). PADEK did not charge any interest for these loans. The first loan has been repaid. The members pay 2% interest to the group (1% for administrative work and 1% for social funds or for family member needs when they get sick or their house catches fire, etc).

(b) Profile of members

All seventeen members in the savings and credit group are women. Among the members, only one is considered rich; 11 members are considered middle income, and the other five are poor (See Appendix 5 for wealth rankings). They have regular monthly meetings.

Only the group leader is able to read and write well. The rest of the members can read a little, having attained grade 2-3 as a result of the adult literacy class in the village.

The members are mostly engaged in rice and vegetables growing and raising animals.

One woman works as a trader, buying vegetables from the villagers and selling them in the market in Siem Reap provincial center.

Each member contributes monthly savings of 1000 *riels* (US\$0.26). Originally, the total number of members was 19. In May 2001 two people left the association.

(c) Activities of the Self Help Group

They conduct meetings every month to discuss how much money the group has and how many members have plans to borrow money. They then decide who will get loans and how much.

Other topics are also discussed. For instance, they may discuss human rights when staff members of human rights organizations like ADHOC and LICADHO join. They discuss domestic violence with people from CWCC. They have also exchanged information about pesticide, agricultural technology, gender issues, sustainable agriculture, health, family planning and other family issues.

According to the community development facilitator who assists the group, they plan to soon share the interest they have earned in the group with village community development programs. They proposed to divide it as follows: 20% for infrastructure in the village, 50% for increasing capital, 10% for social funds, 15% for general assembly, and 5% for administration. The total interest gained since they started the savings and credit group in 1999 now amounts to 1,043,600 *riels* (around US\$267).

(d) Reasons for joining Self Help Groups

The main reason for joining the group is so that members can borrow money, especially for emergency needs such as sickness. Traders charge high interest, and do not lend to the poor at all, since they do not have any collateral to give. From the SHGs, they can borrow at low interest, and use the money to buy agricultural equipment, build a house, and for educational support for their children.

(e) Reasons for leaving Self Help Groups

Two members had quit the group: One had moved out of the village; also, because the business she established with the loan from the association improved, it became hard for her to find time to attend the meetings. The other member said she failed to repay her loan and, being sick for a long time could not attend the monthly meeting. She felt embarrassed about that, and decided to quit.

(f) Reasons for not joining Self Help Groups

One 41-year-old woman with 7 children said her family was too poor to pay the monthly saving amount. She joined the Banteay Srey program instead, because she does not need to save every month with that group. The NGO, Banteay Srey lent her 100,000 *riels* (US\$25.6). She repays 10,000 *riels* (US\$2.56) every month plus interest of 400 *riels* (US\$0.1) per month.

(g) Changes in attitude

Most participants in the group discussion and face-to-face interviews agreed that the group helped build their self-confidence. They were delighted to be able to save and repay loans. Now they know they have a place to go when they need emergency cash, especially for family members who are sick and for women who gave birth.

Another experience that built self-worth among the group leaders was going outside the village and sharing their experiences. It also increased their communication and interaction with local authorities and NGOs.

Increased knowledge about growing vegetables and other technical aspects of agriculture, as well as the ability to contribute to and help build public facilities such as the village hall, roads, wells, canals, a dam, and a school helped establish solidarity and confidence among the villagers.

Although there is concern among SHGs that PADEK is going to leave their village (by end-2003), the leaders seemed confident about continuing the savings group, although they are worried about writing reports and doing the accounting.

3.2.8. *Issues in the commune*

(a) Land

Land, particularly forest land, has always been a sensitive issue in this area. There is no clear information about land management, such as who can use it or which group can manage it. Thus people are vulnerable to land grabbing by local authorities. According to PADEK, there are about 91 households that have conflicts over forest land. PADEK is trying to form SHGs in the affected area. However, due to limited funds, it is not clear whether there will be further intervention by PADEK.

(b) VDC PADEK and VDC Seila

A Village Development Committee (VDC) was established in Samrong village along with a rice-bank program by PADEK in 1994-1995. According to the committee leader, between 1994-2001, VDC Samrong have organized projects such as building roads, a canal and a dam, a village hall, a rice-bank, a school, open wells and pump wells.

At the end of 2001, the VDC handed its duties over to Seila in order to integrate the VDC into the government structure. There are 7 committee members in the VDC: one chief, one deputy, one treasurer/secretary, two information officers, and two members. VDC Seila's leader and some committee members are the same as VDC PADEK.

According to VDC leaders, the function of the VDC in the village is the same for VDC PADEK and VDC Seila. However, the VDC leaders said there was one difference, Seila involves the community less in the implementation of projects.

This was corroborated by the area manager of PADEK, with regard to their experience in constructing culverts. The cost was 780,000 *riels* (US\$200) per culvert if the people managed it by themselves, while it cost three times more under the Seila project. Seila did not involve community members in the process of constructing the culverts. Each family was asked to contribute 1,000 *riels* (US\$ 0.26). A private company came to their village and built the culverts for them.

The chairwoman of both the VDC and the rice bank of Samrong village, described the difference between VDC PADEK and VDC Seila as follows:

"In VDC PADEK, people participate in labor work. We make a plan together; we use our available resources from the village. We make a plan and a budget by ourselves. In case we have a technical problem, PADEK staff will help us to find an expert from outside the province to help us out. People have to contribute some amount of the budget and contribute their labor to build a school, village hall, etc. This makes us feel better. These things make us confident that we can do things by our own hands — by our people. This makes us think that we are strong enough to build our own community."

The people are also worried about the 3% of the project budget given to the CDC for administration costs, which is not accountable to the villagers.

3.2.9. Lessons learned

(a) The importance of small groups

Often, women feel more secure expressing their opinions in small groups, especially if they come from the same socio-economic background. Group members encourage and help each other to achieve their objectives. They now know where to go when they are in trouble. The sense of self-worth has been growing among the members.

(b) Combination of economic activities and advocacy

The SHG focuses heavily on savings and credit activities. Recently, they have begun discussing education, gender issues, health, domestic violence, human rights, etc, making the group a medium for other activities. SHGs can support other villagers who are having land disputes. However, the members have not used their collective advocacy power

so far. Although there have been cases of land grabbing in neighboring villages, this issue has not been discussed in Samrong.

(c) Vision for the future

The understanding by the members of SHGs of their present situation and the need to respond to changes in the future is limited. For instance, we could not find any activity of the association that would relate to tourism, even though the village is relatively close to the world-renowned tourist site Angkor Wat. This omission might be partly because of the lack of situational analysis by villagers, but also partly because the issue is outside the project framework.

(d) Sustainability issues

At present, leaders work for the groups voluntarily, but financial compensation for their work could become an issue in the future.

(e) Indigenous association and external support

Indigenous groups have been operating autonomously without external support. The question is whether external support should touch upon these groups or not. There is a danger that external support would disturb the traditional management style. There is a need to study the dynamism of these indigenous groups and how the management differs from externally supported groups.

(f) Women's participation

PADEK claims that over 85% of savings group members are women. In Samrong village, all members are women. This might indicate that starting the project with savings and credit is a good way to start involving women. PADEK also makes sure that women leader in the savings activities would be involved in other development projects in the village or in the commune that PADEK supports. Thus women become involved in the planning process and its implementation not only in small savings group in the village, but also in the commune.

Involvement of women in project activities improves their mobility. The leader of the savings group mentioned that if she did not belong to a savings group, she would never have left the village. At the commune level, the leaders share opinions not just on problems related to savings, but also on domestic violence, human rights, and planning infrastructure for their commune.

3.3. Case study 3 : Squatter Community

3.3.1. Profile of community studied

Sahakum or community Borei Keila is located in Sangkat Viel Vong, Khan 7 Makara, Phnom Penh. This is one of the poorest areas in Phnom Penh. During the rainy season the area is muddy and paths are almost impassable. The population disposes of garbage underneath the houses or within the neighborhood, creating a bad stench and an unhealthy environment for the settlers.

Diarrhea, colds, stomachache, and dengue fever are common sicknesses of the population, especially among children. Some families have an individual toilet in the house, but most of them use a common outside toilet.

There is no health center within the area. When people become ill, they normally go to a small drug store and get medicine according to the advice from the drug store owner. For a serious illness they might go to a clinic run by an NGO where they could receive free treatment and medicine.

There is no water available from city services. The people normally buy from vendors. For bathing and washing, some people go to the pond nearby, within the Borei Keila compound.

The population is divided into two groups. One group stays in apartment buildings and the other lives in the squatter area around the apartments. Those living in the apartments are considered to be better off, and are mostly government employees such as police and lower-ranking ministry employees. People in the squatter areas mostly work in micro businesses in the market or as hawkers along the road, selling ice cream, sugarcane and fruit. Some are garment factory workers or have other blue-collar jobs such as construction workers, market porters, or motorbike taxi drivers, or they work in small grocery stores (*chap huuy*). Most of the people in the squatter earn just enough for day-to-day survival.

There are three communities within the compound: Dam Chreuy, Borei Keila, and Rovung Moul. Borei Keila community is divided into two segments: one community is under the assistance of Urban Sector Group (USG) and the other under the Solidarity with the Urban Poor Federation (SUPF) program. This case study focused on the part of Borei Keila community under USG assistance.

The Borei Keila block is surrounded by wire fences. One main entry is in front of the MoWVA office, and others are around the block¹³. At one time this area was a compound for Cambodian athletes.

According to the USG 2001 report, the population in 1998 was around 130 households (excluding those living in apartments). In 2000, the number increased to 200 households or 860 people. There are 832 Khmer and 28 ethnic Vietnamese.

¹³ Only after an agreement was reached between the municipality and the community have several entry points been created to enter Borei Keila block.

According to key informants in Borei Keila, wealthy families comprise 1%-2% of the population; however they are not considered to be part of Borei Keila community, because they live in the apartments. Medium income families make up 28%, poor families 60%, and very poor 10% of the population (see Appendix 6 for wealth rankings).

3.3.2. History of Borei Keila community

During Sihanouk's time, Borei Keila was an undeveloped part of town, with no settlement in the area. There were only the Borei Keila apartments, occupied by government staff. The stadium was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS).

In Lon Nol's time, soldiers came and set up a base camp, staying temporarily in Borei Keila before moving on. During the Khmer Rouge regime, a massacre took place in Borei Keila. Some people were killed (mostly government staff) and others were moved out to the provinces, and the land was abandoned.

After 1979, with the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, people started returning to Phnom Penh from the provinces. There were only apartment buildings, and the former government employees came back and lived in the apartments.

In early 1990, people moved in from the provinces to live in Borei Keila. Some families started to occupy the area by fencing plots of land and claiming them. The population in Borei Keila grew. Between 1993-1994 some people started to sell the land to newcomers. This situation has continued until the present.

A report from USG stated that although the population is considered illegal or temporary settlers, they pay between 195,000 *riels* (US\$50) and 312,000 *riels* (US\$80) per household to local authorities when they build the houses. However, no services such as water or electricity are available in the area.

3.3.3. History of the struggle against eviction in Borei Keila Community

According to key informants in Borei Keila community, 10-20 houses occupied the area in 1994. By 1996, the population had increased to about 50 houses. Settlers came from different provinces, particularly from the southeast, Svay Rieng and Prey Veng provinces. Others came from the outskirts of Phnom Penh, and a few came from refugee camps in the northwest. There was no community structure at that time.

In August 1996, the first eviction letter came from the eviction committee of the municipality. The eviction committee consisted of the MoI and the MoEYS and the municipality.

Around 100 people from Borei Keila protested in front of the Palace, National Assembly and other ministry offices involved. According to the community chief, the Sam Rainsy Party was once involved in supporting this demonstration.

People in Borei Keila also started looking for help from NGOs. Three members of the community, acting as representatives of the Borei Keila population, contacted NGOs to assist them in negotiations with local authorities. USG worked to help the population negotiate with the municipality to delay the eviction. They sent letters to the government, to Prime Minister Hun Sen and other persons in high positions.

According to community leaders, they were afraid when they decided to demonstrate, so they then talked to staff in the MoI, MoEYS, and the municipality. At the beginning, they did not know how to convince the authorities and did not know who was the right person to talk to in the government. They were relieved to receive support from NGOs and the Sam Rainsy Party.

The response from the second Prime Minister was that the municipality had to stop the eviction and conduct a thorough study of the population before relocation. The negotiations between the community and municipality continued. The municipality agreed to recognize the families only in the apartment buildings (223 households), but not the people in the squatter area (70 households). Compensation of 11,700,000 *riels* (US\$3,000) per family would be given to the occupants in the apartments, but nothing would be given to the squatter community. However, at the end of negotiation, the municipality agreed to allow the squatters to live in the area until the year 2000.

In early 2000, the municipality sent another eviction letter, based on the first eviction letter of 1996. The community again started to organize themselves and formed the committee-eleven¹⁴ to negotiate with the government. The committee-eleven consisted of 11 representatives; six from Borei Keila community (the area that USG works), two from other Borei Keila areas and three from Dam Chreuy and Rouvong Moel¹⁵ communities (supported by SUPF). They requested the municipality to stop fencing the Borei Keila area, so people could have access to their houses.

On 16 August 2000, another eviction letter came from the municipality, which stated that the population had to move without any compensation. The committee contacted USG, SUPF and United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and requested them to meet with the municipality. The committee-eleven collected 500 signatures from community members to submit to the municipality. There was no involvement of any political party in this activity.

A workshop was conducted to discuss the eviction issue, attended by the municipality, SUPF, USG, UNCHS and the committee-eleven. At the workshop, the municipality agreed to provide appropriate resettlement, with some infrastructure. But first the municipality wanted to know the clear boundaries of the area and details on the number of families staying in the areas¹⁶.

¹⁴ Consists of eleven persons who act as Borei Keila representatives.

¹⁵ At that time Rouvong Moel had not been established as a separate community, although people lived there. It was only after 2001 that they formed a community.

¹⁶ The number of families staying in Borei Keila keeps increasing. As of early 2002, there are approximately 1270 households.

There was no final decision on the compensation, but the municipality agreed to stop fencing the area, and started taking a census. The municipality also agreed to recognize the total number of families living within Borei Keila.

In December 2000, the municipal eviction committee plan was handed over to the municipality office. People were aware of this change, and that from now on they would have to deal only with the municipality. But there was no further action from the municipality, and people were curious about its next actions. People still follow information seriously from newspaper, TV or radio.

According to community leaders, although living in the squatter community is full of uncertainty, many find the location attractive. Because it is in the center of town, a variety of employment is available such as cyclo drivers, motorbike taxi drivers, drinking water vendors, etc. At the same time, however, they worry about fire as several squatter areas in Phnom Penh have burned down¹⁷.

The people in the squatter section of Borei Keila have heard that people who live in the apartment buildings will be moved to Phnom Penh Thmey, about 7 km from Borei Keila, provided with land plots and some compensation. The residents in the squatter community want to have a similar type of compensation – land not far from business centers, schools, markets, and hospitals.

The people in the community feel they are being treated unjustly, and therefore compelled to speak out. They decided to stay until the government agreed to find a proper place for them, provide houses or land and some money to start a new life.

3.3.4. External support and networking in the community

(a) USG (Urban Sector Group)

USG started out as a dialogue group of people concerned in urban issues, grew into an activity group that worked on squatter issues, and later evolved into an NGO. The Borei Keila community has been with USG since they were a dialogue group. USG works with the community to get legal status to be registered, so they will have access to development.

USG has been giving the community training on negotiation and lobbying. They also give vocational training, often in collaboration with other NGOs, and support a savings and credit program.

(b) URC (Urban Resource Center)

Set up in 1996, URC is helping communities to gather information on the city. They also assist communities with technical inputs for infrastructure improvement, development of

¹⁷ Settlers are suspicious that these fires were not accidents.

housing layouts, exploring cost-saving construction techniques, formalizing settlement maps, producing working drawings for municipal permissions, computerizing survey data, and documentation.

(c) ACHR (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights)

ACHR is a regional network of grassroots groups, NGOs and professionals involved in urban poor development processes in Asian cities. They helped set up the Urban Poor Federation/SUPF in Phnom Penh and funded SUPF for their economic activities through Urban Poor Women Development (UPDF).

(d) UNCHS (United Nations Center for Human Settlements)

UNCHS acts as a community facilitator. They assist in workshops and in the negotiation process between communities and local authorities, and provide local development infrastructure, such as brick and cement for local development in Borei Keila community. Projects under UNCHS have to be agreed upon by local authorities.

(e) SUPF (Solidarity for the Urban Poor Federation)

SUPF is a local community network at the city and district level. They have established a partnership with the district (*khan*) level and district authorities. They have a close network with Borei Keila community on human rights issues, and they work together on housing rights.

(f) ADHOC and LICADHO

These two NGOs work with the squatter communities, including Borei Keila community on human rights issues. They give human rights training and legal assistance when there is a case of human rights violation.

According to the deputy of Borei Keila community, many organizations have been helping Borei Keila, but they have been giving contradictory advice. For example, one NGO advised people to stay in the community, but the other NGO advised them to find a new settlement place in order to propose to the government. There is another organization which encouraged the community to collaborate with the government to solve problems.

3.3.5. *Development of Borei Keila as a community*

Although living conditions are very poor, especially in terms of sanitation, people still keep moving into the community, and the size of the population is increasing. According to a leader of the community, this is because the Borei Keila is cheaper than other squatter areas in Phnom Penh, and relatives of community members keep coming in from the provinces to stay with them.

(a) How it started

While following up with the negotiations between the community and the municipality on the issue of eviction in 1996, USG worked with them in starting to form a community. Three community leaders were elected and a community structure was set up. They named themselves Borei Keila community.

After choosing the committee of Borei Keila, they set up some activities. There are gender focal points (two persons, one male and one female) and savings and credit groups. The gender focal points are called Gender Community Watch Team, and have the responsibility to report instances of domestic violence, and to disseminate information on human rights, including housing rights and women's rights. They also build a gender network with other communities in Phnom Penh, and provide gender awareness training to encourage women's involvement in decision-making in the community.

There are 10 savings and credit groups under the savings and credit committee in Borei Keila community. Savings groups were introduced along with other development activities in Borei Keila in 1998 by USG.

According to a savings group leader, the savings group started because people realized that life in this area is full of uncertainty, and they need to save some money to prepare for moving to another area. However, too much uncertainty can discourage savings. So far, the community is not sure if they can get compensation from eviction, how much compensation they may receive, and when they may have to move. This is one of the reasons why some savings groups have discontinued their saving activities.

(b) Profile of community leaders

The three community leaders were chosen because they were willing to help people with the eviction case. These leaders can read and have basic knowledge of the law, which they share with the people in the community.

One community leader said that not many people in this community are willing to spend time to work for the community. According to him,

"When a community has a problem, and they do not know what to do, where to go, to gather information, and to communicate with the outside community, there should be somebody to do the work".

The other two leaders agreed. All the three have only finished secondary school. One of the leaders said he has a relatively higher education compared to the other leaders and community members, but higher education does not guarantee one will be a good leader if one is not willing to help people¹⁸.

¹⁸ He graduated from Baccalaureate II, which is equal to high school or grade 12 under the present system.

As leaders, they are aware that they are not uniformly popular. Some people were angry because they refused to lend them large loans, as the money available was very limited. However, since the beginning of the struggle, no leader has dropped out.

(c) Activities of the community Borei Keila and its savings group

There are other economic development activities in the community in addition to advocacy. These include: training on health and sanitation; pathways construction; sewage systems; advocacy and negotiation; training on housing rights; leadership training; training on savings and credit; dissemination of information on human rights issues; skills training (such as hair dressing, sewing, mechanical repair, etc). USG has also been encouraging the community to register¹⁹.

Out of 200 households in Borei Keila community, 123 persons are members of saving groups. Nearly 25% of the members are women.

USG helped the community set up a school committee and erected a pre-school building in the community. People contributed money and labor. USG helped recruit the teacher and pay her salary of 78,000 *riels* (US\$20) per month. They also pay for school materials. The school committee maintains the school building, controls the number of students, and assists students in obtaining further education by negotiating with primary schools for deduction of the entrance fee.²⁰

(d) Reasons for staying in a community and joining a savings group

In the beginning, most people were suspicious about the purpose of setting up the community. But they gained confidence when they saw the development happening in their areas. Most respondents said that hopes of compensation from the eviction keep them in the community.

One member, a motorbike taxi driver, said he and his wife stayed in the community and joined a savings group not only because he expects compensation from eviction, but also because they feel the community leaders are honest, stand up for people, and can facilitate the issues of the community. Further, he said, regulations in the group are clear. Being a member of the savings group is not a large burden for him, and when he has an emergency need, he can borrow money from the group.

Another member who is a small grocery seller agrees with him. She can borrow money from the savings group, especially when her children get sick. In case of eviction she will have some money saved. Infrastructure development such as the school building, wells and pathways give her hope that the community is dynamic.

¹⁹ Mr. Lim Pai, USG director, said that by registering the community, they could maintain their neutrality towards political pressures as well as have access to services from the government.

²⁰ The parents normally pay 39000 *riels* (US\$10) entrance fee for primary school.

Another member, a pre-school teacher and committee member of the community agreed, and added that there is now a forum to discuss eviction issues and family issues. The leaders of the community are active and trustworthy. There is a place where she can express her opinions and share ideas among committee members.

Another pre-school teacher said that one of the reasons she joined the savings group is because the objective of the group is to help people in need. She also believes the leaders will help find a solution to eviction. She also benefits from USG's training for improving her teaching skills.

A member, a cake seller, joined the savings group because she could discontinue borrowing from moneylenders, who charge 20%-26% interest per month. The savings group charges only 5% and it is relatively easier to borrow from them. She also expects that by being a member of the savings group, she can get compensation from the eviction in the future.

(e) Reasons for leaving the group

The pre-school teacher mentioned that three families left the group. Two families went back to their village to raise ducks in Takeo province and the other family has opened a tailor business. They withdrew from the savings group. However, not many other families have left the area.

(f) Reasons for not joining the group

Some people feel that they will not stay long in this community, so they are not interested in joining a savings group. However, they are still active in community development activities, such as road construction and pre-school management.

One female *sangkat* (sub-district) staff member, and one motorbike taxi driver, said that most people still believe in keeping their money with themselves. This *sangkat* staff member is new to the community, and does not know about savings groups. She prefers to wait and watch. The motorbike taxi driver said that he is not interested in borrowing money from the group because the amount available is too small to use for a business.

One leader of a savings group said that not being able to save money is another reason why people do not become members of a savings group. They earn very little and have to send some to their family back in the village.

(g) Changes in attitude

Some changes have taken place after community development activities started in Borei Keila. Below are some of the changes people see in their community:

The two pre-school teachers mentioned that there is a place now for discussion of the eviction problem. They at least have courage now to discuss the eviction issue among committee members.

One member is a student, motorbike taxi driver and gender committee member. He said he has noticed increasing interaction with the outside population and NGOs through training and workshops. He also said relationships among community members are better. Neighbors have become friendlier and help each other more.

Community leaders have more confidence to talk and discuss issues with local authorities, know how to negotiate, and know where to go when problems occur.

3.3.6. *Lessons learned*

(a) Advocacy and capacity building

The ability of people to negotiate in a group is growing through interaction and pressure on the population. For example, people are able to refuse the involvement of political parties in their struggle²¹.

Advocacy and the capacity to enable the community to negotiate on their own do not come overnight. External support such as comprehensive training, responding to the current needs of society, and understanding the community background are some approaches and strategies used by the NGO for building trust among the squatter population so the community members can achieve their common objectives.

Consistent assistance from external agencies such as NGOs is needed to strengthen confidence, not only among the leaders but also for the whole population. A non-patronizing attitude and relationship between the community and supporting NGOs is important for the autonomy of the community.

(b) Advocacy and economic development

Advocacy needs to be accompanied by infrastructure and economic development activities to keep up the momentum of the struggle. People feel encouraged and enthusiastic when they see development occurring in their communities.

Savings groups are a place where people can get in touch with each other and gain access to information on the eviction cases, as well as share information on gender issues and other human rights. However, personal disputes on the issues of repayment in the savings group can affect the solidarity of the community. Trust comes from transparent financial management and accountability to the population.

²¹ According to one community leader, after they established and set up a community structure in Borei Keila community, they did not want any political party involved in their movement. The reason for this was that if they do not maintain neutrality, the population will not trust the leaders anymore, there will be suspicion among the population and the situation could become chaotic. The leaders have to remain neutral because right now they are in the process of negotiation with the government. He mentioned that the Sam Rainsy Party was involved in the first eviction because at that time the community needed help and sympathy for their movement.

(c) Leadership

Leaders are very important for building trust among the population, especially in squatter areas, where people usually do not have strong ties to the place, do not really know each other, and are too busy to be involved in community activities. People's focus is to earn a living and send some money back to their home in the provinces. The eviction issue also discouraged people from contributing to community building.

The residents are willing to stick together because the leaders are fulfilling their needs. Thus, the burden on leaders is very heavy. Currently, financial compensation for the leaders is under discussion.

(d) The role of external support

External support has helped build confidence and has enabled the community to negotiate with the government. Some successful examples of external support are discussed below:

- Training on advocacy, negotiation and building networks. This should not be provided only to leaders but to all community members. One community leader's statement shows the importance of training:

"USG once invited the entire community of Borei Keila to a meeting where they discussed housing rights. According to the Constitution, everyone has the right to a house, and the government can move them but with proper compensation. In doing so they have to be able to talk to and negotiate with the government".

The community members need basic tools such as knowledge on law, housing rights, freedom of speech and human rights, and access to information on the government's policies and plans. These would enable them to understand their present situation, and make a better community plan. The people need skills to enable them to talk to authorities and the ability to convince the authorities that they deserve compensation if they have to move out.

- Vocational and income generation training. Some training provided by USG such as hairdressing skills, mechanical repair, marketing and income generation help people to earn better incomes.
- Infrastructure such as wells, pathways, and schools help improve strong ties and give people hope, and help them show the government that they are able to build a good community.
- Savings group. The savings group alone does not make people stay in the community but works as a forum to discuss eviction issues. The community leader said, *"The role of the savings group is for solidarity. If the savings group is strong, the solidarity will be strong. If we are strong we will be able to talk together."*

(e) Participation of women in the community

The membership of the savings group is based on family membership. Many members record the wife's name on the membership form for the savings group. According to community leaders, the opportunity is given equally to both men and women if they are willing to be involved and contribute ideas. But most women do not participate in community activities, especially as committee members.

3.4. Case Study 4 : Trade Union

3.4.1. Background of Mithona Textile Factory

Mithona Textile factory is located in Borei Moey Roy Khnong, Sangkat Tek Khla, Khan Russei Keo, Phnom Penh. The factory started operating in 1993. Mithona is a Chinese-owned garment factory, and exports most of its products to the United States.

The factory operates from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day in two shifts, one in the morning (6 a.m. – 2 p.m.), and the other in the evening (2 p.m. – 8 p.m.). The garment-making process is divided into 8 steps. A small working group performs each step, and each group has one leader. The groups are: cutting, sewing, printing, quality control, ironing, clothes organizers, packaging and storage, and machine control.

According to one union leader in the factory, women comprise 97%, or 4,850 out of 5,000 workers. All group leaders in each segment are women, except machine control, in which all the 16 workers are men.

Settlements around the factory have grown rapidly along with the factory's development. Some are brick houses, some temporary shacks, and some are wooden houses. The area is unsanitary, and during the rainy season, the housing area floods.

The workers' choice of housing is limited by their low salary. Women workers usually share a rented room with friends. Houses have 7-10 rooms, accommodating four people per room. Each room rents for 78,000 *riels* (US\$20) per month. Most of the women workers are single, or if they have family, the family stays in the village.

3.4.2. The Trade Union Movement in Cambodia, and the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)

Article 36 of the Cambodian Constitution in 1993²² guaranteed Cambodian workers the right to organize unions, to be recognized, and to be respected. On December 10, 1996, International Human Rights Day, three women representatives of 158 workers in Phnom Penh entered into negotiations with companies for the protection of workers, and on December 15, 1996, the group (FTUWKC) officially declared itself the first free trade union established in Cambodia. This event is seen as the beginning of the trade union movement in Cambodia.

FTUWKC conducted their biggest demonstration in 1997 (3,000 workers) in front of the National Assembly. The tension between the factory owners and workers at this time was high, and several union leaders were dismissed. This convinced FTUWKC to formally register with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSALVY) in 1998.

²² Article 36: Both male and female Khmer citizens have the right to set up a trade union and to be a member of this union.

Following FTUWKC's example, other unions were quickly formed. Today there are 11 large unions or federations of unions in Cambodia in 264 factories. FTUWKC claims that they have 23,000 members in 48 branches. Their members come from different types of factories in different areas, such as a shoe factory in Sihanoukville, a rubber plantation in Kompong Cham province, and garment factories in Phnom Penh, Kompong Cham, Kandal, and Kompong Speu provinces.

Each member of FTUWKC is required to pay 1,000 *riels* (US\$0.26) as membership fee every month, but the unions often have difficulty collecting the money, especially if the membership fee for another union in the same factory is lower. Whenever this is the case, FTUWKC lowers the fee by 50%²³. Other unions' membership fees range from 400 *riels* (US\$0.10) to 1,000 *riels* (US\$0.26) per month. In total, FTUWKC collects membership fees from only about 25% of its members.

The money collected is divided so that 50% goes to the central office and 50% remains in the branch. The central office uses the funds for running the office; conducting workshops/training on unionism, health, child labor, etc.; for negotiation and discussion with companies; etc. The branch uses its share of the money to support practical issues related to workers' activities in the factory, such as medical treatment for members, transportation, communication and administrative work.

It is not easy for the union to meet its objectives. Some constraints include:

- Dismissal of workers from the company, because they are too vocal. Group leaders and union activists are the first victims.
- Demonstrations or strikes are common, as the unions find it difficult to reach an agreement between workers and company.
- Difficulties in making contact or communicating with the company.
- Lack of budget to conduct training both in the provinces and in Phnom Penh.

Some external support has been received by FTUWKC. In 1996, Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail (CFDT), a French union, provided training on labor issues. From 1997-2000, this support was continued by the French Khmer Association in France. ILO gave training support for two years.

Compared to associations related to community development, support for trade union activities is limited. Therefore, it is hard for the union to stay independent, if political groups have an interest in them.

²³ Discussion with the finance staff in FTUWKC central office, Phnom Penh.

3.4.3. Profile of FTUWKC in Mithona Textile Factory

(a) How it started

The union in Mithona factory was established in August 2000. Before they set up the union, the workers had been protesting for an increase in salary to at least the minimum monthly wage of 175,500 *riels* (US\$45), and end to forced overtime and reduced working hours. FTUWKC then approached the workers to set up a union.

Five committee members were elected: President, Vice President, Secretary General, Treasurer and Advisor. The five committee members are responsible for informing the group leaders in each part of the factory.

There are two other unions present in the Mithona factory: the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (CFITU) and the Cambodian Union Federation (CUF)²⁴. The unions in the factory have never gotten along. The most severe conflicts occur when one union goes on strike and the others do not join. However, FTUWKC union leaders say the situation improved after MoSALVY and the Mithona factory management set up a coordinating body to accommodate different views from different unions.

Interestingly, the workers in general do not really care which union they belong to. Their biggest concerns are better working conditions and more pay. Conflicts among them are more commonly personal disputes.

(b) Profile of members and the problems that they face

FTUWKC has 1,113 members in Mithona factory. Except for the machine control group, all the group members are women.

Workers in Mithona factory come from all parts of the country, but mostly from nearby provinces such as Kompong Cham, Takeo, Prey Veng, Kompong Speu, Svay Rieng and Kandal. A few are from the northeast or northwest.

In a group discussion with the union committee leaders and some union members of FTUWKC, they estimated that 2% of workers would meet the definition of rich, 10% medium, 28% poor, and 60% very poor (see Appendix 7 for wealth ranking).

It is interesting to note how workers in the factory define relative economic status. They not only look at the workers' material possessions, but also the origin of the materials; the type of food the workers eat; their health (how often they get sick); and their access to credit. It seems the wealthier workers come from Phnom Penh, may be because they have higher formal education, and so get a better salary.

²⁴ The union leaders mentioned that the other two federations are not very active anymore. CUF has about 400 members, and membership in CFITU is dwindling.

There are five committee members in the union (four men and one woman), but only the four men are active. These individuals have a relatively higher education than other workers, are better off, and have been working in the factory for a long time.

Although the union is relatively active in advocacy for their members, there are still some common problems in the factory that were expressed by our respondents:

- Insufficient time for rest, only 30 minutes to eat their meal.
- When they make a mistake they are forced to give a signature (three signatures/ mistakes means they will lose their job); no warning or advice is given in advance of this procedure.
- Dismissal without warning.
- No sanctions when the employer violates the labor code.

Both men and women feel that there is strong discrimination against women in the factory. Some specific problems women have that men do not are listed below. This information was gathered during our group discussion with the committee members of the union, both in the central office and branch office of Mithona factory.

- Women are more likely to be threatened than men (forced signatures, etc.).
- Women are physically abused by the (Chinese) woman supervisor.
- One out of 10 women working in the factory have children out of wedlock²⁵, and they find it difficult to combine work with looking after the baby.
- There is no special treatment for pregnant women. They still have to stand all day long without rest, causing swollen legs.

(c) Activities

The union has been very active in supporting better working conditions in the factory, through strikes and demonstrations and education. Between 1997 – 2001 they:

- Demanded a clinic/health service be established in the factory.
- Demanded a parking lot for the workers' motorbikes and bicycles.
- Demanded drinking water at all times, proper toilets, eliminating physical abuse to women workers, setting up baby-sitting or day care in the factory.
- Provided a copy of the labor code to all members.
- Provided information on workers' rights to the members

Not all strikes were successful, but some suggestions were followed, such as setting up a parking lot, toilets and drinking water. Physical abuse of women has decreased.

²⁵ Information from one group leader in the factory.

Training is another important activity of the union. When the central office conducts training, the committee members select one or two group leaders to attend. Most of the union leaders feel that there should be more training sessions, so that all group leaders can get training. They also say the training only covers issues such as labor codes and unionism. They would like more computer skills and English training.

In return for the membership fees, union members receive:

- Medical support of 30,000 *riels* (US\$7.69) for serious illness.
- Help in asking permission to take leave from the company.
- Negotiating with the employer not to dismiss the worker, except in the case of serious problems such as stealing.
- Help in finding loans for members in financial difficulty.

(d) Reasons for joining the union

Based on our discussions with members and group leaders in the factory, some of the reasons why workers join the FTUWKC union are that the union provides support for both personal problems such as personal disputes and financial difficulties, as well as for needs related to the working conditions in the factory.

Some of the members interviewed named the following benefits of joining the union:

A 23-year-old female member from Svay Rieng province said that there is solidarity among the members. When the employer threatened to dismiss her from the factory, she got emotional support from the union. A 45-year-old female member from Kompong Speu province agreed, and noted that the group leader and union leader help immediately by talking to the manager when they have a problem related to work. She added that the quality of leadership keeps members in the union.

A 23-year-old woman from Prey Veng province said the union leaders help resolve personal disputes between members, and assist in getting a letter from a medical doctor so they can get permission from the manager to rest when they are sick²⁶

A 27-year-old member and a 23-year-old member, both from Prey Veng province, said that the union supports them by giving them 30,000 *riels* (US\$7.69) when they get sick, and women who give birth get 50,000 *riels* (US\$12.82).

²⁶ As the research team was having a discussion with one union leader, someone called him on his mobile phone for help. Half an hour later he came back and brought some forms. He mentioned that he had to help fill in the form of a union member, otherwise this member would not be able to get permission to take leave from the manager. He further said that he has to deal with this issue a lot.

A 22-year-old female member from Prey Veng province said the union protected workers from physical abuse by the supervisor, by advising the supervisor that such abuse is against the law. Increased knowledge and better understanding of the labor law are some reasons that a 25-year-old male member from Kandal province is a member of the union. He is one of the active group leaders.

(e) Reasons for leaving the union

According to the committee leader, quitting their job is the only reason workers stop their membership in the union. Members confirmed that they have never heard of any member quitting the FTUKWC union.

(f) Reasons for not joining the union

Four respondents who are non-union members gave several reasons for not joining the union in the factory. Although they understood the benefits of being a member of the union and they have joined in demonstrations, they still choose not to join the union, preferring to be independent. Others are taking a “wait and see” approach:

A 22-year-old worker from Prey Veng province believes that as long as they do not make any mistake while working in the factory they will not have problems with the employer; therefore there is no need to be a union member.

A 22-year-old worker from Kompong Speu province said that she wanted to be independent and not belong to any union in the factory. However, she did join a demonstration in 2000 for increased salary.

3.4.4. *Perceived changes due to the union*

The respondents felt that the union had brought positive changes, especially the increase in pay to minimum wage, with a rise of 7800 *riels* (US\$2) per month per year, and loans of around 78,000 *riels* (US\$20) at Khmer New Year.

Two female members said that now there is less pressure to work overtime and on Sundays. Another woman said there is less fear of dismissal from work without warning. She also said that relationships among the members have improved.

One male worker said the employer now has more respect for the labor code. A woman worker said now when she makes a mistake in the factory, the employer just comes and explains the mistake to her (instead of taking a forced signature).

Two female members said the workers now have paid sick leave for up to three weeks, and they get three months of fully paid maternity leave with one additional month at 50% of the salary. One of them added that there are no more workers younger than 18.

3.4.5. Lessons learned

(a) Ability to negotiate and gain power

Trade unions seem to have been an effective means of promoting and advocating workers' rights, as well as improving their living and working conditions. Although unions in Cambodia still have a long way to go in order to help factories meet international working standards, they have been remarkably successful in certain areas, and some significant aspects that contributed to this success are:

- The level of education of workers is relatively homogenous (most have some formal education) so they can relate to workers' issues relatively easily.
- The issues of the worker's movement are global, and touch basic human needs - the need to be treated with fairness and respect.
- The number of people involved is large (there is a mass base for action).
- Most members are relatively young and single, so they are more willing to take a risk, are highly motivated, and have dedication and solidarity.
- The workers have a high level of trust in their leaders and fellow members.
- The unions are mostly self-financed, and have an organized system for collecting membership fees for the movement at the union level.

(b) Health and working conditions

Health and working conditions are still very poor. Sickness among workers is quite common. The employees had to fight for basic needs like drinking water, toilets, and a place to take rest. They are still struggling for childcare services, a canteen with clean and healthy food, and pleasant and safe living conditions outside the factory. Ironically, such benefits would actually improve the health and loyalty of the workers and increase their productivity, benefiting the company.

(c) Management and leadership

The union leaders are strong in bringing forward the ideas of the movement, and have the ability to respond quickly when needed. They are helpful and trustworthy, and are one of the main reasons workers join this union.

The other factor that seems to make this union strong is the flexibility and practicality of their leaders in responding to a changing situation. For example, the change in the membership fee in some circumstances (reduced by 50%), and the reduction of the amount sent to the central office (between 10% - 30%), shows that the union leaders respond to market demands for a competitive price for membership.

(d) Gender bias

Although women make up most of the workers in the factory and contribute significantly to the union, their access to training and other benefits is much lower than men. This is

reflected in the number of women in the union committee; only one out of the five committee members is a woman, while 4,850 out of 5,000 workers at the factory are women. At the central office, there is more of a gender balance: 13 out of 23 members are women. But men hold almost all the senior positions.

Negative stereotypes of women are still very strong in the factory, among workers and employers, men and women. Women are abused by their superiors more often, and often stuck in positions that are considered lower skilled. There is not much of a career path for women due to limited access to training, and because women workers with children have no daycare facilities.

(e) Relations to global trade

The factory workers and union leaders are aware that their work at the factory depends on political stability in the country. If the country is not stable, investors will not come to Cambodia and invest in a factory, and the workers will lose their jobs. The survival of the garment industry is totally dependent on the export quota system to the US²⁷. The workers have heard about a quota system but do not know how it would affect their lives.

²⁷ The main reason why the number of foreign-invested garment factories is increasing in Cambodia is in order to benefit from the export quota of Cambodia to the US.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

Civil society in Cambodia has been much discussed, particularly with relation to its contribution to the democratization process (Yonekura, 1999; Collins, 1998) or more broadly in relation to people's participation in development processes in general (Sokhom et al., 1999). On the other hand, there has been much debate on Cambodian NGOs (CNGOs) and their capacity to bring about changes, and their capability in empowering the grassroots level (Mansfield, 2001; Richardson, 2001).

This study has focused not on NGOs, but on community groups and these organizations' beneficiaries, in order to understand what made these individuals participate in communal activities and speak out in the public arena. It started from the level of individuals and tried to understand the enabling environment for people at the grassroots level to speak out. How do individual women and men start to speak out? How do they start to communicate with each other on communal or private issues? How is the spirit of mutual help kindled? The creation of an enabling environment has much to do with the approaches and strategies of the supporting NGOs. Although the study recognizes the importance and relevance of the relationships between NGOs and the local associations, due to time limitations this study could only briefly touch upon this important issue.

Many students of Cambodian society point out that Cambodia has not had a voluntary association in recent history. However, there have been spontaneous rebellions, when people reacted jointly to particular problems, throughout history except during the Khmer Rouge era (Martin, 1989; Mysliwiec, 1999; Yonekura, 1999). There have been indigenous mutual help and religious associations attached to the *wats* (Collins, 1998; Krishnamurthy, 1999).

In the 1990's, many community organizations were created by NGOs. Most of them organized the community in order (1) to have efficient delivery of services, (2) to foster a sense of ownership of the project for the people in the community, and (3) to have long-term sustainability, that is, in order to allow the community to take over the project after the phasing out of the NGO. It is understood that such an approach was necessary because there was no functional administrative organization at the commune and village levels. However, now that commune councils are in place²⁸ and the Seila structure is in place in many provinces, community organizing can be more centered on how to help disadvantaged women and men speak out, claim their rights, and participate in the public debate of development. In this sense, it is important to understand what enables people to speak out and interact with each other.

²⁸ The roles and functions of commune councils are not yet clarified, and it is understood that it is not possible to expect commune councils to deliver social services to the population immediately. It is all the more important at this stage to empower villagers so that they can effectively participate in the process of decision-making for deciding the role of the commune council.

JICA's Community Empowerment Program (CEP) aims to benefit people in communities at the grassroots level, and supports participatory projects that make effective use of local resources (Nagasawa, 2001). CEP has not yet defined the term "empowerment" for its program.

O'Leary and Nee (2001) stated, "... the development relationship is primarily to empower – to liberate people from fear and dependency so that they can be self-confident and self-reliant" (p.98). This study first broadly defined empowerment as the capability to speak out. Through literature review of associations in Cambodia and the case studies, this study aims to understand and refine the definition of empowerment in the context of Cambodia, and to identify the enabling conditions for such empowerment to happen. Finally, this study recommends guidelines for project selection for involvement in CEP.

4.1.1. How do associations emerge?

There are many factors that make people interact and come together. According to the association reviews and case studies, these incidences can be divided largely into who initiated the association, and why the individuals came together. The "who" can be divided into an external agency or agencies, and internal forces. The "why" can be divided into mutual help/community management, reaction to oppression and for identity and visibility. For example, the case studies 1 and 2 can be classified as externally initiated community management/mutual help associations. The funeral association described in case 1 and the dishes and pots associations in case 2 can be classified as internally-initiated community management / mutual help associations. The associations in case studies 3 and 4 emerged as reactions to oppression, but both are externally initiated. The initial stage of the trade union before they became FTUWKC can be classified as an internally initiated reactionary association. The case studies did not cover those associations that emerged for identity and visibility. But a literature review showed professional associations and ethnic associations to be in this category. Professional associations can be either externally or internally initiated. This is summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Classification of associations by reasons for emergence and initiators

WHY	WHO	
	External	Internal
Community management/ Mutual help	Case studies 1 and 2	Indigenous association (ex. Funeral association in Case 1)
Reaction to oppression	Case studies 3 4	(Case study 4)
For identity and visibility	Professional association	Ethnic association, Professional association

4.1.2. Factors that affect the emergence and development of associations

(a) Having a sense of security and acceptance

Meas Nee, from his experience, has said that when dissenting voices start to be heard, it means that people are finally daring to defend and claim their rights and speak out. It took him three years of working in the villages until people started to speak out (O'Leary and Nee, 2001:98). Since villagers are not used to speaking out to outsiders, especially those who they consider as "superior" in the social hierarchy, it requires effort to break this. Case study 1 of farmers' associations showed that villagers care what the local authorities think about any initiative that they might take.

This study showed that it is important that leaders and members feel there is someone who will stand by them when they speak out to authorities, although there is always a danger of the community being dependent on the supporting NGO if they are not self-critical about their approach. This has been seen in case study 3 of squatter communities and case study 4 of a trade union. There has been less dependence on supporting organizations in these two cases. The example of the micro-vendors' association also showed the importance of support groups/organizations for the active continuation of the association. Case study 2 of SHGs showed how a powerful NGO shielded the influence of local authority in order to provide room for VDCs. The NGO used its influence to establish an autonomous community structure in the community. When the NGO-established VDC was subsumed into Seila VDC, some uneasiness was felt by the VDC members themselves and the community partly because of the perceived change in the relations between the NGO, VDC, and the local authorities. Case study 4 showed that the support does not have to come from one organization. Support from various organizations and the general public as well as from the media were also important.

Although CNGOs working on advocacy are not afraid of the authorities, there is a fear of authorities among development practitioners at non-advocacy CNGOs. As noted by O'Leary and Nee (2001:43), some practitioners are "afraid the villagers will do something which will impact on the authorities or the powerful and they will blame us that the villagers are no longer afraid of them". It is important that the practitioners working with the villagers feel confident and competent in order to provide support to villagers trying to challenge the authorities to protect their rights.

Material benefits also make people feel accepted and legitimized in society. Case 3 of a squatter community is a case in point. These associations not only have advocacy activities against relocation, but also infrastructure development activities with external support. Considering their "illegal" housing situation, this has made urban squatters feel part of the country's development.

(b) Gaining knowledge as power

Not only are external mentors and supporters important, but the knowledge that these mentors provide to the association leaders and members on their rights, advocacy, and

negotiation, as well as management and technical skills, help to enhance members' confidence. In case studies 3 and 4, leaders said the most useful external support they had was training on rights and advocacy. In the micro-vendors' association, there is strong resentment at the attitude of the authorities. Through training, they learn how to effectively display this feeling and get the justice that they deserve. This leads to self-confidence and a sense of pride, which is an extremely important feeling for people attempting to speak out for their own rights. Case study 2 showed how the capacity for good management made the leaders confident enough to carry on the work after the NGO phases out, and case study 1 showed how empowering knowledge on agriculture techniques could be.

(c) Appreciating the benefit of information-sharing and interaction

One of the difficulties pointed out by many development practitioners is that people do not share information. This occurs in the villages and urban areas, among middle-class business people and development workers themselves. This has been a major obstacle to bringing people together in associations like case study 1 of farmers' associations, and in rice-mill associations.

Some of the strategies that the supporters of these associations (CEDAC and EDC) have taken are (1) exposure and networking tours to see other areas where members benefit by sharing information, and (2) small group meetings with specific topics of discussion to enhance interaction among group members. When the members start to see the benefit of learning from each other, they are able to interact with each other on their own without external agencies calling for a meeting.

(d) Responsiveness to issues

(d-1) Importance in responding to emerging needs and issues

One of the reasons why the squatter community in case study 3 and the trade union in Case Study 4 are active and operating without waiting for initiatives and guidance from external agencies is because they are responding to pressing issues. On the other hand, case study 2 showed that even though there were land-grabbing issues in the area, the association did not respond. The problem with some development projects is that it can be difficult to accommodate emerging issues in the area, especially if they are outside the framework of the project. Resources are not allocated, there is no staff with the expertise needed, and thus it can be difficult to respond immediately. However, responding to emerging human rights violations and needs is an effective way of showing the populace that justice can be achieved. It can also be an effective means of building up trust and a sense of solidarity in the community.

Responsiveness to emerging issues of human rights violations is important for creating an environment where people can speak out and be empowered. In this sense, the supporting organizations need to have a holistic understanding of the area that they are working in, and to have flexibility in changing their project framework when needed²⁹.

²⁹ In order for the supporting organization to be flexible, they need to have financial backing. This is the reason why in section 4.2.2., some budget allocation for emerging issues is suggested.

It should be noted that case studies 3 and 4 are urban associations and case studies 1 and 2 are rural. The differences in their initiative might be due to the differences between urban and rural environments, differences in the people's average education level, homogeneity of the groups, population density, etc. In the urban areas, people might be more ready to speak out, while in rural areas people may need more courage to do so because they are less confident, they are less used to dealing with authorities and the media, they are more marginalized and have less contacts, and they have more difficulty in mobilizing critical mass. The patron-client relationship can be stronger in the rural areas and people can be intimidated more easily. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to fully analyze how the urban-rural differences contributed to the activities of the associations; this would be ideal material for future studies.

(d-2) Need for situational analysis to link local situation to wider issues

It is important that the supporting organization is able to analyze the regional and global situation surrounding their target community, and to be able to communicate it to the community so that they will be able to discuss and influence national policies. In most of the cases, associations and their supporting organizations were preoccupied with immediate problems that the communities face. If the associations are interested in forming federations, it is important that they have a wider understanding of the structure that puts constraints on their development.

(d-3) Addressing issues

Issue-based activities can be complex; an issue only becomes an issue when it is recognized as such. If the development worker does not recognize something as an issue, it will not be taken up. The land issue in case study 2 is such an example. At the same time, in some cases, even the villagers themselves do not consider such problems as an issue. When this is the case, the situation is not likely to be addressed. Domestic violence is a case in point: wife beating is often considered a normal incidence in Cambodian households, and the victims frequently suffer quietly.

Many issues become non-issues because they are "private" issues. When members discuss issues in meetings, the discussion topics are on "public" and economic issues such as credit, rice and vegetables, livestock, evictions, wages, etc. Most of the time, members feel it is not appropriate to bring up family problems for discussion in meetings. Thus, issues such as domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, girls dropping out from school, and drug addiction are not brought up in meetings, unless they are specifically addressed. People require training in order to transform the private experience of transmission of HIV/AIDS between husband and wife into a public health issue, or the private issue of a "quarrel" with a spouse into the public issue of domestic violence. Even in meetings exclusively of women, these private issues do not come about easily. In micro-vendors' associations, they talk about their personal experiences in the market, such as harassment from the authorities, in their meetings. However, when it comes to their personal experiences at home, people prefer to talk only with close friends or community organizers in a one-on-one private and intimate setting. If leaders or external supporters are not aware that issues at home are also public social issues, they will never be recognized.

(d-4) Problem of indigenous associations maintaining the power structure

In this sense, there is a limitation in indigenous associations such as associations attached to a pagoda. These associations, based on religious traditions, tend to maintain or strengthen the current power relations in the community. Accordingly, they discourage the young to address their elders frankly, wives to talk openly with their husbands, and the “smaller” people to speak with the “bigger” people, in the hopes that this will encourage people to live in harmony and hope for a better life in the next incarnation. This can maintain current patterns of oppressions.

(d-5) Advocacy and development work

Although working on issues is important, the associations under study incorporated some mutual help or development aspect in their activities. For example, in the squatter community (case study 3), the association had infrastructure development as well as micro credit activities. In the trade union (case study 4), they provided medical support as well as assistance in finding loans for members in financial difficulty.

(d-6) Leadership

There is no question that good leaders are essential in encouraging people to participate in associations. All of the associations studied had good leaders who could encourage people to participate. Particularly in case studies 3 and 4, informants mentioned that the role of leaders was very important for keeping people together and recruiting new members. Leadership training as well as legal training and training on negotiation and advocacy skills for the leaders have been effective in further improving their capabilities. At the same time, since the association is so much dependent on the leaders, it might pose a threat to the association if the leaders move out of the association. There is a great need to foster a second rung of command. Strong leaders can bring people together, but also can dominate the group. Training on facilitation is important for leaders' development.

It should also be mentioned that in all the case studies except case study 2, the leaders are all men. In case study 2, the VDC leader is a woman, because the supporting organization asked them to have a woman leader. In the trade union (case study 4), even though almost all of the members are women, the leaders are all men. However, except for case study 2, no specific effort has been made on the part of the supporting organization to encourage women to take up leadership roles. When a certain leadership style is developed within an association, it can be difficult for women to take on leadership roles. For example, in case study 4, male leaders are better paid, and can afford to make monetary contributions to the union or treat other members to a meal. Such a patronage leadership style is often seen as effective in bringing up followers in Cambodia. This style is difficult for women, who are paid less and may have heavier financial responsibilities to their families, to adopt.

In case study 1 of the funeral association, the leaders were all men because all the members of pagoda committee were men.

This raises the issue of gender inequality within associations. Indigenous leaders and “natural” leaders can be effective in leading associations. However, if no conscious effort is made to encourage women leaders, gender inequality in decision-making will persist.

4.1.3. Relationship between associations and external supporters

As mentioned in section 4.1.2(a), it is important to have supporting organizations as mentors, advisors and supporters for people to speak out and challenge authorities and to protect their rights. The relationship between the association and the supporting organization is very sensitive, because it can easily be developed into dependency relations. Especially when the culture of patron-client relationship is strong, as Khmer society has often been, practitioners can easily behave as patrons and benefactors of the “poor and helpless”. When a pressing issue exists, like in the case of associations emerging as a reaction to issues, the association/ community itself can take the lead. However, in a place where no apparent pressing issue exists, an NGO’s work in the community can create dependence if people cooperate with the NGO simply for the sake of direct economic benefits.

The role of external supporter is effective when providing knowledge and skills for better negotiation and problem solving, support when dealing with authorities, highlighting new issues that people might not have recognized as important, and for creating opportunities for the communities to network with others. This is not to say that the external supporters should be distanced from the associations and communities. External issues come out only through intimate conversations when the practitioners eat and stay with the people.

4.2. Recommendations for Community Empowerment Program

As has been stated in the limitation of this study, the research approach that this study has taken is not enough to generalize the findings to the whole of Cambodia. However, through selected individual cases, it was able to come up with some tentative insights and analysis. Based on these analyses, we attempted to make some recommendations for CEP to contribute to the development of people’s initiatives through strengthening of associations.

4.2.1. Definition of empowerment

Based on the definition by O’Leary and Nee (2001:98) stated before that “... the development relationship is primarily to empower – to liberate people from fear and dependency so that they can be self-confident and self-reliant”, and based on the findings and conclusions above, the suggested definition of empowerment for CEP of JICA Cambodia is:

Both women and men have a sense of security and acceptance in the society where they are comfortable to speak out with confidence and be heard without intimidation and discrimination. Both women and men have access to knowledge and resources to improve their lives and protect their rights, enjoy the opportunity of learning from each other, and are able to collectively take action to take control of their own lives.

4.2.2. Towards association development through CEP

The study showed that associations could be effective in bringing out “empowerment” among the people in the community. Associations have the possibility of bringing women and men together, and can offer a forum for them to exchange and share information and experience, and negotiate collectively for their rights, without fear of persecution.

As have been seen in the case studies, NGOs have played a large role in supporting and fostering the development of associations. The following points are suggested for CEP to examine when selecting projects of NGOs that will provide support to the community.

First, we set the grant objective of CEP as:

To create an enabling environment for the poor and the vulnerable women and men to have access to knowledge and resources, their own voices heard, and have control over their lives.

The project of the supporting NGO would not have a welfare approach to community development, but a right-based approach. That is, the project should recognize that both women and men are entitled for resources and opportunities to improve their lives. In order to do this, the supporting NGO should have an awareness and understanding on the structural constraints that limits their exercise of rights, and to create a forum for them to participate in decision-making. Some of the critical questions to ask are:

- Does the project promote and protect women and men’s rights for security, participating in decision making, being free from discrimination and having basic human rights to have a decent life and a decent work?
- Does the project create a forum for women and men to participate in decision-making?
- What problems does the project address? Is there an analysis of the structural causes of the problem? Does the project analyze the structure of discrimination and vulnerability of the target people?
- How does the project analyze and define an enabling environment for disadvantaged women and men to speak out in public?

The understanding of the community cannot come if the NGO is seen as a benefactor, because the community will relate to them as such, and would only say what the NGO wants to hear. Thus, the supporting NGO must be self-critical about its relationships with the community. Some critical questions to ask are:

- Does the NGO present an analysis of social power relationship including gender, age, ethnicity, in the community?
- Have the staff members of the NGO undergone human rights training/gender training/ etc.? What follow-up activities have been undertaken after the training?
- Has the NGO developed a rapport and relationships that are not patronizing?
- Do the community women and men have the sense of ownership and leadership for the project/initiative?

In order to achieve this, supporting NGO needs to develop participatory strategies and strategies to encourage information sharing among community members, as well as for gender equality and leadership development. Critical questions to ask are:

- What are the strategies to encourage people's participation?
- What are the strategies to encourage information sharing?
- What are the strategies to ensure gender equality in access to and control over resources, and participation in decision-making?
- What are the strategies for leadership development?

Such partnership development and support of relationships between NGOs and associations is a process. Therefore, support provided by JICA should also be a process. It is recommended that a support be long-term, at least three years with a possible extension of another three years. It is also important that the project framework has the flexibility to meet emerging needs during the course of development. For example, it is suggested that 10% of the annual budget be allocated for emerging issues.

It is also recommended that JICA focus on areas of special concern every three years, according to the priority areas of JICA assistance. This will concentrate the limited budget to have maximum effect from JICA's input.

4.3. Suggestion for future research

4.3.1. *Verify findings with other associations*

This study was a very preliminary study, which was conducted in the short time frame of three months, with only one month of field research. Since it did not have either extensive geographical coverage or coverage of many different types of associations, it is necessary to further verify its findings with further studies.

4.3.2. *Intra-association relationships and the associations' relationships with external organizations*

A more in-depth study on the relationship between NGOs and associations can contribute to strategies for organizing developing communities. At the same time, the development of power relations inside the association is a concern that has to be understood and considered.

4.3.3. *Associations that are externally supported vs. indigenous vs. spontaneous uprising*

It is important to compare the functioning and capability of these three different types of associations. This will provide insight into how sustainable externally supported associations are; whether indigenous associations can respond well to emerging issues; and how spontaneous uprisings are formed and can be sustained in relation to other associations. This will also provide ideas on making external support effective.

4.3.4. Sustainability of spontaneous uprisings

There is a history of spontaneous uprisings in Cambodia. These are direct expressions of the disadvantaged in trying to make their voices heard. What happens after the spontaneous uprising? It is important to follow up its aftermath, examine why it declined, and how such people's efforts of voicing their concerns can be supported by external agencies.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 : List of Interviews for Part 1

Date	Organization	Resource Person
18 January 2002	NGO Forum	Mr. Russel Peterson
	Ponlok	Ms. Cristina Mansfield Mr. Bun Ma
	Concern	Mr. Alex Marcelino
19 January 2002	ILO-Consultant PACT	Ms. Karen Rasmussen Mr. Kurt MacLeod
22 January 2002	CRD Mlup Baitong	Mr. Ly Saroen Ms. Chan Chantoel
23 January 2002	PADEK	Mr. Kep Kannaro
24 January 2002	TAF	Mr. Eap Sophea Mr. Kut Inserey
26 January 2002	ILO	Mr. Nuon Rithy
28 January 2002	OXFAM Hong Kong	Ms. Rosanna Barbero Ms. Pru Phanlie
29 January 2002	MCC	Mr. Kung Bunna
30 January 2002	CEDAC	Mr. Soun Seng Mr. Sam Vithou
31 January 2002	EDC	Mr. Tony Knowles Mr. Po Samang
11 January 2002	GAD/Cambodia	Ms. Margaret Slocomb
12 February 2002	USG	Ms. Nit Tha Ms. Ouk Sokha Ms. Phal Sophak Ms. Tun Somphie Mr. Neup Ly
	WWF	Mr. Toby Carson
	CSARO Inter-Consult	Mr. Heng Yon Kora Mr. Robert Deutsch
13 February 2002	Banteay Srey	Ms. Chhoeun Thavy Ms. Sophie Kavoukis
16 February 2002	OXFAM/GB	Ms. Ngin Navirak
19 February 2002	UPDF SUPF	Mr. Visal Mr. Hem Sun
21 February 2002	SMRP/GTZ	Mr. Min Bunnara Mr. Rob Obeinhardt

Appendix 2 : Associations Registered at Ministry of Interior

Province	1994-1999	2000-2001	Total
Phnom Penh	222	70	292
Battambang	21	8	29
Kandal	9	8	17
Takeo	9	1	10
Kampot (Kep)	5	4	9
Kompong Cham	4	4	8
Siem Reap	3	5	8
Pursat	2	4	6
Svay Rieng	4	2	6
Kampong Thom	3	3	6
Kampong Chnang	2	3	5
Kratie	2	1	3
Banteay Meanchey	2	1	3
Kampong Som (Sihanouk ville)	2	1	3
Koh Kong	1	1	2
Ratanakiri	2	0	2
Kampong Speu	1	1	2
Prey Veng	1	0	1
TOTAL	295	117	412

Source : Ministry of Interior (MoI) (1999, 2000, 2001) "The List of NGOs/Associations Registered at MoI", General Department of Administration, Department of Political Affairs, Phnom Penh.

Appendix 3 : Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Initiatives in Cambodia (WWF Study)

WWF-CBNRM Case Study Project (Scoping Phase) Supported by IDRC

Name of Initiative	Organization	Location	Resource Management Issues	Defining Attributes
Participatory Natural Resource Management in the Tontle Sap Region	Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)	Siem Reap	Community forestry (flooded forests, mixed dry dipterocarp forest), small-scale fisheries, fisheries concession issues	Large and well established, involves a variety of key sectors and resource issues; highly trained and interested staff; need for documentation of experiences; potential to be a model training site
Community Forestry Conservation in Area of Angkor Temples	UNV/ABDO	Siem Reap	Community forestry in protected area	Transition from UNV to local NGO; smaller program with few staff; process not yet documented
Community Forestry and People Empowerment	Buddhism for Development (BFD)	Battambang	CF; replanting, advocacy to address fisheries concession issues	Local Buddhist NGO; very organized; involved in field activities and advocacy work; not much documentation yet
Community Forestry	PED/Carere	Battambang	Upland forest area, communities taking over process	Transition from PED/Carere initiative to local community taking over process; the issues are not yet documented
Community Co-Management of Fisheries	CEPA & Community Aid Abroad (CAA)	Stung Treng	Community fisheries	One of the only known community fisheries initiatives in the country, relatively new initiative
Community Forestry Program	Concern	Porsat and Kampong Chhnang	Community forestry (CF) field activities, training & policy development	Well established, long-running CF program; trained staff; combination; some case study documentation already
Community-Based Natural Resource Management Project	Carere/IDRC	Ratanakiri	Community forestry, logging concession issues, trade, swidden agriculture by hill tribe people	Well organized and established CBNRM project; working with hill tribe peoples
Non-Timber Forest Product Project	NTFP	Ratanakiri	Community forestry; issues of land speculation and forestry concessions, rights of local indigenous population	Long-running and ground-breaking, locally-based initiative; community land use planning activities; working with hill tribe peoples; some case study documentation already available
Community Fisheries project	Provincial Office of Fisheries	Ratanakiri	Community fisheries	Small funding; few staff
Community Forestry initiative	SMRP (GTZ/MRC) and DoF	Piehrada district, Monduliri	Community forestry, semi-dense forest area, shifting agriculture	Relatively new initiative, cooperation between Forestry department and SMRP (GTZ/MRC)
Community Forestry project	Memnonite Central Committee	Takeo	Community forestry in severely degraded areas	One of the first CF initiatives established in Cambodia
Participatory Management of Mangrove Resources (PMMR)	MoE/IDRC	Peam Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary, Koh Kong	Mangrove, fisheries, sustainable livelihoods, community participation in protected area planning and management	Trained and experienced staff, although few and busy; working on a variety of relevant natural resource management issues; some case study work already done
Integrated Sustainable Livelihoods project	American Friends Service committee (AFSC)	Sre Ambel district, Koh Kong	Community forestry, mangrove, fisheries, forest concession issues	Medium sized initiative; working on a variety of relevant natural resource management issues; some trained staff
Community Co-Management of Fisheries in Ream	Wetlands International MoE, ADB, (before ETAP/UNDP)	Preah Sihanouk (Ream) National Park, Kampong Som	Mangroves, fisheries (inshore and marine), protected area management, jurisdictions between MoE and Dept. of Fisheries	One of the few initiatives working on community fisheries issues in Cambodia
Multi-Sectoral Approach to CBNRM	Mhup Baitong	Kiriom National Park, Kampong Speu	Protected area/buffer zone management, general NRM	Work with CBNRM is relatively new

Appendix 4 : Wealth ranking for Case 1

- Rich: Have ideas
Possess property such as more than 2 ha of land, 2 pairs of cows, motorbike, ox cart, rice milling machine, water pump, well, surplus rice that can be sold
- Medium: Have ideas
Possess property such as 1 ha of land, one pair of cows, motorbike or bicycle or ox cart, rice just enough to eat for the whole year (or a little surplus like 10 tau of rice)
- Poor: Do not have much ideas
Possess property such as less than 0.5 ha of land, one cow, one bicycle, not enough rice for 2-3 months a year
Go to Phnom Penh for manual labor work
- Very poor: Do not have any ideas
Do not own land for planting
Make a living either by manual labor or fishing
Have only 0.2 ha of land to build a house

Appendix 5 : Wealth ranking for Case 2

Rich:	Enough food all year round Lot of money to run business Has motorbike Has an ox-cart Has rice surplus 3 ha of rice-field Has more than 7 cows Has generator Permanent house with brick construction
Medium:	Enough food Land 1 ha Has bicycle Has an ox-cart Has a wooden house with thatch roof Has a draft animal
Poor:	Has 1 cow Land about 1600 sq. meters Has an old bicycle Less than adequate food during 6-7 lean months Has many children Lack of formal education Lack of occupation Has a small hut
Very poor:	No land to be cultivated No cow or buffalo Very small hut No agriculture equipment Less than adequate food in every month

Appendix 6 : Wealth ranking of Case 3

Rich:	Has a good occupation Has car High income Has house with facilities such as electricity, water, etc. Size of house is about 50 x 120 m
Medium:	Has motorcycle Enough food to live Has a house
Poor:	Earn money only enough to live a day Cyclo driver Construction worker Vendor Do not live in a brick house
Very Poor:	Jobless Beggars House has partial wall and roof Have debt

Appendix 7 : Wealth ranking of Case 4

- Rich: Has a house in Phnom Penh
 Has own transportation
 Has enough and good food
 Has a hand phone
 Has kitchen utensils, etc. to conduct a party
 Nice clothes (new style)
- Medium: Rent room US\$20 per month share by two
 Has old motorcycle or bicycle
 Come from the province
 Just enough food and clothes
 Often borrows money when sick
- Poor: Rent room US\$20 per month share by 4-5 persons
 Wears old clothes and does not have suitable food
 Does not have means of transportation
 Comes from the province
 Often borrows money for family needs
- Very poor: Rent room US\$20 per month and share with 6-7 persons
 Does not have access to credit
 No suitable clothes or food
 Does not have kitchen utensils
 Often gets sick

Appendix 8 : Guide questions

Appendix 8.1: Guideline for questions for members of associations

Province/District :
Village :
Date of interview :
Name of Association :
Type of Association :

A. Personal characteristics

1. Sex:..... Age:..... Education level:.....
2. Occupation (list all productive activities)
.....
.....
.....
3. Since when have you been living in this village?
4. Land-holding size

B. Access to credit

1. Do you have access to credit? What is the source? How much? What have you used it for?
2. How did you learn about this source of credit?

C. Problem solving

1. With whom do you discuss problems related to your main occupation? (Agriculture, fishery, etc.)
2. With whom do you discuss family problems?
3. With whom do you discuss problems related to the association?

D. Membership

1. Who are the members of the association?
2. What are the criteria for becoming a member?
3. Do members have to register? Do you pay membership fees, or make some contribution?
4. How many members are there? When did it first start? How many members are there now?
5. How does the association recruit new members?
6. Have you heard of any member dropping out? Why did they drop out?
7. Why did you become a member?
8. Are you registered as a member under your name or your family's name?

E. Activities of the association

1. What activity/activities does your association do?
2. How often do you have meetings? Where? Who attends? What do you discuss?

3. What is your role in the association?
4. How often do you attend meetings?
5. How often do you speak up in meetings?
6. How often do you participate in other activities?
7. In your household, who normally goes to meetings? Any other activities of the association?

F. External assistance

1. Has your association received any external assistance? From whom? How? Since when? What kind of support did you receive?
2. How did you learn about that organization/ person? How were you able to get their support?
3. How important was the external support? Do you think that even without the support, the association would have existed? Do you think it would have been different without the support? Do you think it would have been different if you had more/ other kinds of support?
4. What is your present relationship with the organization/person who supports the organization?
5. What support was most effective? Why?
6. What support was the least effective? Why?
7. What other support do you think you still need?
8. Have you contacted other places (organizations, institutions, and persons) for support? What was the result?
9. Have you (or your association) ever gone to other organizations/government institutions/ private companies to negotiate something? What did you go for? How was it initiated? Who actually went to the negotiation? How were these people selected (who were these people)? What was the result?
10. What is your (and your association's) relationship with the head of the village? Commune chief? District chief? Provincial governor?
11. Have you ever gone to government authorities for any discussions? If yes, what did you go for? If no, did you not contact them?

G. Perception

1. What do you like/enjoy about the association?
2. What do not you like about the association?
3. How does the association help you/ your community?
4. Do you think the association is achieving its objectives? Why do you think so?
5. What do you think about your members? Who are they? Are they active?
6. What do you think would make them more active/inactive?
7. Have you observed any change in the community since the association was formed? If yes, what are the changes? If no, why do you think there were no changes?

H. Problems faced and future plan

1. What are the problems faced by your association? How do you intend to solve them?
2. What is your future plan for the association? Have future plans been discussed in meetings?

Appendix 8.2 : Question guides for leaders of associations

- Province/District :
- Village :
- Date of interview :
- Name of Association :
- Type of Association :

A. Personal characteristics

- 1. Sex:..... Age:..... Education level:.....
- 2. Occupation (list all productive activities)
.....
.....
.....
- 3. Since when have you been living in this village?
- 4. Land size

B. Access to credit

- 1. Do you have access to credit? Where from? How much? What did you use it for?
- 2. How did learn about this source of credit?

C. Problem solving

- 1. With whom do you discuss problems related to your main occupation?
(Agriculture, fishery, garment sector, etc.)
- 2. With whom do you talk when you have problems in your family?
- 3. With whom do you discuss problems related to the association?

D. History of the association

- 1. When did it start?
- 2. How did it start?
- 3. Why was it formed? (In order to solve certain problems? Which problems?)
- 4. Who initiated it?
- 5. How did people get organized? (Process)
- 6. What is the purpose of the association? (Do you think the association has been able to meet the purpose?)
- 7. When did the association grow? Why did it grow at that period?
- 8. Was there ever a period of difficulty? When was that period of difficulty? Why was it difficult at that period?

E. Membership

- 1. Who are the members of the association? (Can do wealth ranking and determine which group the members are from.)
- 2. Are there any qualifications to becoming a member?
- 3. Do members register? Pay membership fees, or make some contribution?
- 4. How many members are there? When did it first start?

5. How do you recruit new members?
6. Did you have any members who dropped out? Why did they drop out?
7. Why did you become a member?
8. Are you registered as a member under your name or your family's name?

F. Activities of the association

1. What activity/activities does your association do?
2. How often do you have meetings? Where? Who attends? What do you discuss?
3. What is your role in the association?
4. How often do you attend meetings?
5. How often do you speak up in meetings?
6. How often do you participate in other activities?
7. In your household, who normally goes to meeting? Any other activities of the association?

G. External assistance

1. Has your association received any external assistance? From whom? How? Since when? What kind of support did you receive?
2. How did you learn about that organization/ person? How were you able to get their support?
3. How important was the external support? Do you think that even without the support, the association would have existed? Do you think it would have been different without the support? Or would it have been different if you had more/ other kinds of supports?
4. What is your relationship with the organization/person who supports the organization now?
5. What support was most effective? Why?
6. What support was the least effective? Why?
7. What other support do you think you still need?
8. Have you contacted other places (organizations, institutions, and persons) for support? What was the result?
9. Have you (or your association) ever gone to other organizations/ government institutions/ private companies to negotiate something? What did you go for? How was it initiated? Who actually attended the negotiation? How were these people selected (who were these people)? What was the result?
10. What is your (and your association's) relationship with the head of the village? Commune chief? District chief? Provincial governor?
11. Have you ever contacted government for any discussion? If yes, what did you contact them regarding? If no, why have you never contacted them?

H. Perception

1. What do you like/enjoy about the association?
2. What do you not like about the association?
3. How does the association help you/ your community?
4. Do you think the association is achieving their objective? Why do you think so?
5. What do you think about your fellow members? Who are they? Are they active?

6. What do you think would make them more active/inactive?
7. Have you observed any changes in the community since the association was formed? If yes, what are the changes? If no, why do you think there were no changes?

I. Leadership

1. What is difficult about being a leader?
2. What do you pay the most attention to as a leader?
3. Do you know all the members personally?
4. If not, how do you contact them? How do you get their participation? How do you get to know their opinions?
5. Have you run for commune elections? If no, why not? If yes, why?

J. Problems faced and future plan

1. What are the problems faced by your association? How do you intent to solve them?
2. What is your future plan for the association? Have future plans been discussed in meetings?

Appendix 8.3 : Question guideline for key informants (Chas Tum, Achaar, Village chief)

Province/District :
 Village :
 Date of interview :

A. Personal characteristics

1. Sex:..... Age:..... Education level:.....
2. Occupation (list all productive activities)

3. Since when have you been living in this village?
4. Land-holding size

B. Village Coverage

1. How was the village originally started? (What changes during the Sihanouk period, Khmer Rouge period, People's Republic of Kampuchea period, during and after UNTAC)
2. What is the population of the village? (By sex and by age)
3. What is the total number of households in this village?
4. How much are they related?
5. What are the major occupations of the people in this area?
6. What do the people do for income generation? (Men and women)
7. Average number of livestock per household?
8. Average land-holding size per household?
9. Irrigation availability?
10. Arrangement for access to common property resources (fishing, forestry, land, water resources)?
11. Who can exploit, how much, who manages?
12. Access to market?
13. Access to public services?
14. Do people in this area migrate to another province/country?
15. Where do they go? To do what? When did migration start? How often do the villagers who migrate come back to the village?
16. How is the solidarity in this community?
17. Do the people participate well in communal works? How? If no, why not?

C. Associations in the village

1. Has your community ever received any assistance from NGOs? Which NGO/ NGOs? What do they support? How do they work? What is their purpose/objective? How do people manage that support?
2. Has a neighboring village ever received any assistance from NGOs? Which NGOs? What do they support? How do they work? Who can be a member?

3. Kinds of indigenous associations in the village? When and how did they start? Who initiated them? Are they still working?
4. How do people cooperate in these associations?
5. In which association do people cooperate better, associations supported by NGOs or indigenous associations? Why?
6. Why do you think people like to join the associations?

D. People's Perception

1. Do you think people get benefits from being a member of associations? Why?
2. Do you know the purposes or the objectives of each association (supported by NGOs and indigenous associations)?
3. Do you think these associations are achieving their objectives?
4. Have you observed any changes in the community since the association was formed?
If yes, what are the changes?
If no, do you think there were no changes?

E. People's expectations

1. In your opinion, what should people do to make a better community in your village?
2. In your opinion, what should the local authorities do to make a better community in your village?
3. In your opinion, what should the NGOs do to make a better community in your village?
4. In your opinion, what should the associations (supported by NGOs and indigenous associations) do to make a better community in your village?
5. What type of assistance is necessary to help build a better community in your village?

Appendix 8.4 : Question guideline for non-members of associations

Province/District :
 Village :
 Date of interview :
 Name of Association :
 Type of Association :

A .Personal characteristics

1. Sex:..... Age:..... Education level:.....
2. Occupation (list all productive activities)

3. Since when have you been living in this village?
4. Land-holding size

B. Access to credit

1. Do you have access to credit? Where from? How much? For what purpose did you use the credit?
2. How did you learn about this source of credit?

C. Problem solving

1. Who do you talk to when you have problems with your main occupation? (Agriculture, fishery, etc.)
2. With whom do you discuss family problems?

D. Reasons for not being a member in the association

1. Have you heard of the association in your village?
2. Why did you not become a member?
3. Why did you quit the association? (For members who have dropped out)

Appendix 8.5 : Question guideline for external supporting organizations

Province/District :
Village :
Date of interview :
Name of Association :
Type of Association :

A. Knowledge of the association

1. How did you learn about this association?
2. What help did you extend?
3. How did you identify the need?
4. How effective do you think your assistance to the association was?
5. What are the strengths of the association? Its weaknesses?
6. What are the current relations between you (your organization) and the association?
How often do you meet? What do you discuss?
7. What is the future support plan for this association?



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