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Cooperation Committee
for Cambodia

Comité de Coopération
Pour le Cambodge

CSO CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAMBODIA 2011

A Report Commissioned by
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Foreword

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have played an integral role in the development of Cambodia for the past three decades and have made significant contributions towards improvements and social transformation for the lives of the country's poor and marginalized. CSOs support development from the grassroots level, empower individuals and communities, advocate for inclusive and fair policies, protect the rights of the marginalized and work toward societal solidarity. Their contributions should be acknowledged and celebrated and this report aims to consolidate, quantitatively and qualitatively, those contributions.

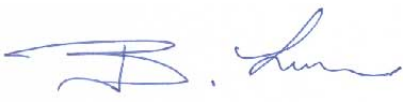
Governments and donors have likewise, and rightly so, recognized CSOs as *important development actors in their own right*. The Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, both recognize CSOs as important development actors and obligate governments to provide an enabling environment for CSOs.

CSOs, while eager to affirm their positive contributions, also do not hesitate to recognize their own weaknesses and shortcomings. Through wide and inclusive global consultations, CSOs have developed a common set of principles, the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, which define and guide effective CSO practice. Subsequently, the Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, a collective and consolidated statement of global civil society on CSO development effectiveness principles and practices was endorsed.

In Cambodia, since 2004, CSOs have developed a set of minimum standards modeled on international best practice. CCC is the proud steward of the NGO Governance & Professional Practice (NGO GPP) Voluntary Certification System (VCS). Many of the CSOs surveyed for this report are eager to become certified under this program in order to demonstrate their good governance. While there is a definite enthusiasm for the program, more work is required to ensure that CSOs fully engage with and complete the process.

The majority of CSOs are already taking steps to ensure professional and best practice such as external auditing, while a significant proportion are engaged in strategic planning. Furthermore, the research shows that many CSOs in Cambodia are members of umbrella organizations or local, regional or national networks, indicating that CSOs understand and value cooperation.

I hope that the findings of this report not only remind all of us of the significant and important contributions that CSOs make to Cambodia, but that it will also encourage discussion and reflection among government and donors as to how they can improve and ensure an enabling environment for CSOs, so that they are able to continue and expand their vital work. I also believe this report can be instrumental in identifying gaps in CSO support, so that organizations nationwide can reflect on and consider extending their reach to previously neglected or under-deserved issues, social groups and geographic areas.



Lun Borithy,

Executive Director, CCC

Executive Summary

This report captures the findings of a research study in late 2011 into the contribution of Cambodia's CSOs to economic, social and democratic development, as well as important details on the current status of the civil society sector. This report is an update of CCC's first contribution in this area, the 'rapid assessment' report on civil society contributions to development published in 2010, which elaborated on strong NGO contributions in certain sectors (public health, disability, education, community development), as well as through advocacy and public policy engagement.

There has been a dramatic rise in the size, scope and capacity of civil society in recent decades, globally and in Cambodia. Much of the appreciation of civil society stems from CSOs' important, clearly noticeable contributions in social, economic and democratic life, including but also beyond providing basic social services where governments cannot or will not. However, civil society engagement on development issues is also underpinned by international human rights norms and standards, including obligations on state parties: this is significant for CSOs' work on social accountability and good governance, promoting and defending human rights, holding public servants to account, and stimulating civil participation in social life and decision-making processes, even as democratic shrinking space is shrinking.

The quantitative data in this research helps build a picture of CSOs' nature, priorities and activities in Cambodia, as well as the beneficiaries of their work and their contributions to national development. Analysis of the qualitative data explores this pro-poor contribution, from service delivery to capacity building and policy change to system strengthening, in more detail.

Respondents to this study identified as providing direct benefit to the lives of a minimum of 650,000 to 1 million Cambodians. To put this number of beneficiaries in greater perspective, with the estimate of 1,350 NGOs in Cambodia as determined by the 2011 census, then 2.8 to 4.5 million Cambodians, or approximately 20-30 percent of the population (NIS, 2009), *directly* benefit from the activities of NGOs.

These benefits were identified as coming through diverse and largely unique areas of intervention, as categorized in the table below:

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Education and Training	Child welfare and rights	Gender and women's issues	Advocacy and policy dialogue
Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS	Agriculture and rural livelihoods	Humanitarian response and disaster relief	Water & Sanitation
	Community development	Credit & Savings	Business/Organizational development
	Environment and natural resources	Disability	Providing grants to NGOs/CBOs
			Research and consultancy
			Tourism, arts and culture

In terms of pure numbers, this report shows that the overall budget for the NGO and CSO sector is likely to be far higher than previously estimated by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), and indications are that the NGO sector alone accounts for nearly as much spending (in the order of US$550 million) in the social sector as the government. Partially, this money is spent on employing an estimate of approximately 52,650 Cambodians in skilled positions with the opportunity for greater capacity development.

While it is hard to measure the true size of the entire CSO sector, the NGO sector contributes greatly to the grassroots development of Cambodian civil society, disbursing an estimate of US$44 million to local community-based organizations.

It is because civil society participation is recognized as crucial to development that CSOs have been invited to engage in the international processes on aid effectiveness, which has recognized the particular strengths of CSOs. The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, in particular, speaks of the increasing contribution and valuable experience it brings; recognizes CSOs as "independent development actors in their own right"; commits to greater engagement of donors and partner governments with CSOs; and commits the other development partners to working with CSOs to provide an enabling environment that maximizes their contributions to development. This commitment to civil society was further endorsed in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in late 2011.

The Royal Government of Cambodia's Rectangular Strategy (for growth, employment, equity and efficiency) also specifically "welcomes the participation of the NGOs in the process of socio-economic rehabilitation and development, and the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights".

While proud of its contribution and confident of its place in development, civil society is mindful of the challenges that other development actors present in increasingly politicized discussions about development cooperation as to CSOs' effectiveness and accountability. This report shows that the majority of CSOs surveyed have high commitment to basic tenets of good governance in their organizations through statutes, regular reporting and financial auditing. The research also indicates that many CSOs are eager to engage in the NGO GPP Voluntary Certification System, which Cambodia's civil society sector has developed to improve standards and accountability.

CSOs are keen to maximize their contributions to development, as called for in the Accra Agenda for Action, and their commitment is clearly evident in the agreement of the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness in 2010 and the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness in 2011.

In striving to maximize CSOs' contributions to development in Cambodia, civil society will continue to pursue the establishment of an enabling environment that allows CSOs to maximize their contribution to social, economic and democratic development. CSOs will also continue to work for a respectful partnership of equals with the development partners, which can abide through the tensions, challenges and constructive, channeled conflict that will inevitably arise from their important and distinctive roles in development.

Glossary of Organization Types

CSO There are myriad academic definitions but, in practice, civil society organizations are those that have *emerged beyond the spheres of the state*, the private (family networks) and the market (profit-driven entities), and which *have some type of formal structure and coherent non-profit agenda*, with any financial surpluses typically ploughed back into the organization to further their objectives. To be considered CSOs, such organizations must also be able to *practice independent self-governance*. The term CSO is generally considered to be an umbrella term that includes the subset of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NGO Non-government and non-profit organizations are established for a specific purpose, or set of specific purposes – often a social goal such as relieving suffering, defending the rights or promoting the interests of the poor, protecting the environment, or undertaking community development. They do not belong to any state or government apparatus, although they may collaborate with them (sometimes closely and/or over a long period) if there are shared goals and objectives.

Local NGO This type of NGO is formed and operates in a particular country. This may be at the national level, with representation in provinces/districts (sometimes known as a national NGOs); or can be a more local/district-based NGO, concentrated on a particular locality. In the context of this report, local NGOs are those NGOs that operate within Cambodia by Cambodian nationals, and that do not have other international operations.

INGO International NGOs are those NGOs which operate across more than one country, whether through multiple international operations, a foreign registration, or merely a founder who is foreign to the country in which operations are based. Some INGOs are thus highly localized. In the context of this report, INGOs are those which meet any of these criteria and which operate in Cambodia.

Association Associations are those organizations that are primarily established to serve their own members. They are usually made up of members that formally join the association in order to share services, resources, experience, or for the ability to negotiate as a single entity. Associations, like NGOs, are non-profit, although their members may engage in profit-making activities.

CBO Community based organizations (CBOs) are typically established by a particular group or community (whether a geographic community or 'community of interest') to advance specific and shared interests, most commonly on a small scale. They usually comprise members whose interests are directly at stake, and generally operate by mobilizing and representing communities to government (local or national), aid/development partners, private companies or others, with regard to social, cultural, economic or environmental issues. Many CBOs do not employ paid staff and function on a voluntary basis, which can be one distinguishing feature from NGOs.

Acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CRDB	Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GPP	Governance & Professional Practice
HLF-4	Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
LANGO	Law on Associations and Non-governmental Organizations
LNGO	Local Non-governmental Organization
MOFA/IC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NGOF	The NGO Forum on Cambodia
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia

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Introduction

This report captures the detail of a research study in late 2011 into the contribution of Cambodia's CSOs to economic, social and democratic development, as well as important details on the current status of the civil society sector.

The background section sets out the context and value-added of civil society roles and interventions in development. A rationale and methodology section then provides details of the research for this report. The next section offers a detailed qualitative analysis of the contributions that the surveyed CSOs themselves report making on behalf of their direct beneficiaries. Following this, the report details the qualitative findings of the research, effectively profiling the sector in terms of organization types, funding, scope, activity type and location, and beneficiary details. The closing section offers some conclusions, highlighting important aspects of CSOs contribution to development and underlining why they are key players in Cambodia, and how their contributions can be further enhanced.

Context

There are myriad academic and often contested definitions of civil society and, therefore, civil society organizations (CSOs). In practice, though, drawing from different descriptions and typologies, we can observe CSOs as organizations that are neither state, market (profit-oriented) nor private (family) entities; have some type of formal structure; practice at least a measure of self-governance; and have a coherent, non-profit agenda to generate some social good. This may involve, for example, relieving suffering of a particular community or population group, promoting the interests of the poor, protecting the environment, providing basic social services, undertaking (or supporting) community development, or helping to hold authorities and other powerful interest to account.

There is a wide variety of civil society organizations, with a diversity of motivations, institutional forms and operating spaces, but some typical characteristics of CSOs are that they are voluntary, diverse, non-partisan, autonomous, non-violent, working and collaborating for change, and often depend in large part on voluntary contributions from communities, members or other supporters as well as whatever institutional funding (such as donor or foundation grants) they manage to obtain.

CSOs include such forms as formal development, environmental and human rights NGOs, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, coalitions and advocacy groups, among others (Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness, 2011).

There has been a dramatic rise in the size, scope and capacity of civil society in recent decades, one of the main sources of which is often identified as increasing democratic governance, or pressure for democratic governance, in the late 20th century. The 1990s was also an important decade for civil society as a result of major UN conferences and global summits that embraced strong civil society participation and follow-up, as well as the trend to increasing privatization and economic globalization, informed by failing belief in the role of the state and increasing belief in the role of the market and private actors (ACT Alliance, 2011).

Civil society organizations, and especially the subset of NGOs (which are CSOs established for a specific purpose to advance a beneficial social goal *that typically extends beyond the community of those who establish them*) have become major players in the field of international development over the last 40 years.

The World Bank estimates that the annual expenditures of the non-profit sector worldwide is $1.3 trillion, that it employs over 40 million people and that the sector channels some $20 billion in financial assistance to developing countries per year.

Meanwhile, statistics from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the industrialized Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries show that CSOs manage at least 13 percent of total official development assistance provided by DAC members.

The Cambodia Development Effectiveness Report (CDRC, 2011) reported *confirmed disbursement* by NGOs of $200 million in 2010, although the data from this research illustrate that this significantly under-represents the spending of NGOs (and then, of course, CSOs more broadly), since the total average annual budget for the past three years reported by 282 of this report's sample of 309 organizations amounted to $146 million.

In short, civil society has emerged as a major force in international development in the last 20 years, and is now officially recognized in international agreements as an important development actor.

The Value-Added of CSOs in Development

Much of the appreciation of civil society, its legitimacy and importance, stems from CSOs' observed importance in social, economic and democratic life, not just in providing for basic social and economic rights where governments (the primary duty-bearer) cannot or will not meet those rights, but also in relation to governance, promoting and defending human rights, civil and political rights, holding to account, stimulating civil participation in social life and decision-making processes, and broadly supporting progressive social, economic and democratic change.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), a crucial actor in international development policy and practice, attests to the importance of CSOs and NGOs by pointing to their 'comparative advantage' in certain areas. These include: working closely with beneficiaries; bringing different perspectives to policy discussions than those of governments and donors; having the ability to respond rapidly in emergencies; raising funds (additional to those from official sources); and raising awareness of important issues through education and advocacy.

Although the nature, scope, quality and effectiveness of CSOs can vary widely, the World Bank cites some of the strengths identified with civil society engagement in development processes, including:

- strong grassroots links;
- field-based development expertise;
- the ability to innovate and adapt;
- process-oriented approaches to development;
- participatory methodologies and tools;
- long-term commitment and emphasis on sustainability; and
- cost effectiveness.

Others, such as the EU, have highlighted the role CSOs can play across a range of spheres from humanitarian relief and rehabilitation to development interventions, peace-building and conflict prevention. The EU especially notes as important roles for civil society: advocacy, monitoring and promoting good governance, defending and promoting human rights, contributing to equitable economic policy, and giving voice to the perspectives of marginalized groups.

The World Bank cites how CSOs have demonstrated an increased influence and ability to shape public policy at national, international and global levels (including at the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, climate change negotiations and other forums) during the past two decades, as demonstrated by successful advocacy movements that have mobilized

thousands of supporters around the world on issues such as debt cancellation, poverty reduction, and climate change. The Bank notes that it has learned through three decades of working with civil society, including CSOs, NGOs, social movements, trade unions, faith-based groups and foundations – and even given relations that have been variously in constructive, at odds with each other, or in open and sometimes bitter conflict – that:

> "The participation of CSOs in government development projects and programs can enhance their operational performance by contributing local knowledge, providing technical expertise, and leveraging social capital. Further, CSOs can bring innovative ideas and solutions, as well as participatory approaches, to solving local problems."

In recent years there has also been an increased emphasis (especially through internationally influential writers such as Robert Putnam and Paul Collier) on the civil society role in building 'social capital', essentially the idea that the social and cultural coherence of a society, and especially relations of trust, contributes materially to a society, since there can be no economic growth or human well-being without it (Collier, 1998).

Particular emphasis is placed on CSOs' role in relation to a 'bridging' type of social capital, built when people and organizations progressively become engaged on issues that are not primarily about their self-interest, and with people/groups of people that may not necessarily be alike, but where they undertake to work together for some broader social good. In doing so, it is argued, they build social networks that deepen and strengthen civic culture and social stability in ways that help both the economy and democracy.

While it is considered hard though not impossible, and often inadvisable, for states or governments to *foster* civil society (since it involves autonomous action and voluntary participation by citizens, and thus does not include behaviors organized, required, or coerced by the state), it is recognized that they can play an important role in creating an enabling environment by establishing the political culture, legal and regulatory framework, policy space, financial climate, etc.

CSO Roles and Relations with State in Southeast Asia and Cambodia

Chong, Elies et al (2011) report that CSOs in Southeast Asia have played a variety of roles from delivering basic services to capacity building and knowledge transfer, and from humanitarian and disaster response to advocacy work. CSOs have been crucial to the representation of marginal communities, the protection of the environment, and the raising of public awareness over such issues as gender, education and health.

CSOs are also often seen to have an important role as agents of *social change*, especially in the context of participatory democracy, which involves engaging and listening to the citizenry in daily life as well as at election time. Such social change can range from support for education and health services that help transform the life of a nation to engagement with more structural elements of social life, such as underlying values and behaviors, good governance, aid and development processes, respect for human rights, management and regulation of the economy, policy coherence for development, and democratization, depending on the social and political context (ibid).

The particular strengths of CSOs and role they have to play in development cooperation are well recognized in the international High Level Forums on aid effectiveness and particularly in the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, which speaks of the increasing contribution and valuable experience it brings; recognizes CSOs as "independent development actors in their own right"; commits to greater engagement of donors and partner governments with CSOs; and pledges to work with CSOs to provide an enabling environment that maximizes their contributions to development.

In November 2009, speaking at thirtieth anniversary celebrations for NGOs' partnership for development with the Cambodian government and people, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen specifically recognized civil society's contribution since the national trauma of the Khmer Rouge era. He called for NGOs to continue their work in the country's construction, in partnership with government, and urged a collective focus on health, education, environment, good governance for rule of law and other fields "to serve the benefit of the people and the country".

Furthermore, the government's Rectangular Strategy (for growth, employment, equity and efficiency) in Cambodia specifically "welcomes the participation of the NGOs in the process of socio-economic rehabilitation and development, and the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights" – although relatively few are engaged in the latter areas.

The Human Rights Basis for Civil Society Participation in Development

Importantly, the role of CSOs in social, economic and democratic development is also underpinned by human rights law. Although there may not be an international human rights instrument that explicitly guarantees or protects the commitment and work of CSOs, there has rarely been an important UN or other international document since the 1990s that does not promote state recognition of and engagement with civil society organizations. While this does not constitute a legally binding obligation in international law, civil society contends that it is more and more an accepted standard of behavior and *de facto* obligation on states and governments, particularly in the context of democracy, good governance and rule of law (ACT Alliance, 2011).

In addition, the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), for instance, recognizes development "as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals *on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom*" (our emphasis).

"The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized", the Declaration continues. In this regard, *"States should encourage popular participation in all spheres as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights"* (our emphasis).

Individuals acting in or on behalf of CSOs (and the civil society activist engaging on his or her own) are also entitled to all basic human rights, such as the right to life and free speech, and the freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Furthermore, the human rights principles of non-discrimination, participation and transparency are general to the implementation of all human rights, and all states are obliged to respect, protect and fulfill these standards (ACT Alliance, 2011).

So the contributions, value-added and effectiveness of civil society, the functions they perform and the vital role they play for poor and excluded people on the margins of society, are not the only arguments for CSOs to have the civil, political and operational space to engage with development: the enabling environment for CSO mobilization, participation and advocacy for the full range of social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights is also substantially underpinned by international human rights norms and standards (ACT Alliance, 2011).

The Development Roles of CSOs

CSOs, and particularly NGOs, have sometimes been regarded as either 'operational organizations' whose primary purpose is to implement projects or 'advocacy organizations' whose primary purpose is to defend or promote a specific cause, or to influence official policies and practices. However, the diversity and scope of CSOs means that such typecasting is not always meaningful, and neither are these two categories mutually exclusive, with many CSOs engaged in both 'operational' work and policy advocacy.

Box 1: Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles:

1. Respect and promote human rights and social justice
2. Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girl's rights
3. Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation
4. Promote Environmental Sustainability
5. Practice transparency and accountability
6. Partnerships and solidarity
7. Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning
8. Commit to realizing positive sustainable change

CSOs' own roles, and development partners' understanding of those roles, are continually changing, as society does. A rights-based understanding of development underpins the evolving role of many CSOs, as recognized in the Istanbul Principles. These Principles hold CSOs to account and to a high standard for their actions in development. Internationally, CSOs increasingly see their roles in advancing sustainable human development and tackling the poverty, inequality and social exclusion that undermine it. This means engaging with decision-making and policy processes to promote sustainable development outcomes, holding duty bearers to account, promoting participation and equity, creating a level playing pitch for society's poor and excluded people, as well as any delivery of basic services or humanitarian relief they may undertake (Open Forum, 2011).

The European Union captures an element of this shift when it states that the role of CSOs is evolving from being implementing partners in development to "sharing more responsibility with the state on poverty reduction" as key actors in democratic governance processes – and adds that CSOs are "vital partners for decision-makers, as they are best placed to know population's needs in terms of development".

In Southeast Asia, coinciding with global discourse on democratization in the 1990s, there has emerged strong CSO interest and activity not just in service delivery or disaster relief, but in relation to human rights and democracy advocacy, with CSOs advocating popular demands like the vindication of civil and political liberties for citizens, battling human rights abuses by state/government, and urging political liberalization and more participatory democracy (Chong, Elies et al, 2011).

Such CSO involvement is often promoted by development partners, including donors, in the interest of building a social demand for 'good governance', where governance is understood as the processes of political or public decision-making, and then translating these decisions into policies and practices.

Useful CSOs contribution in this area include, for instance: offering expert information, and grassroots experience to inform decisions and policies; raising public awareness of relevant issues, and people's right to seek to influence policies; facilitating citizen input, especially from poor or marginalized groups; monitoring and offering feedback to authorities on the consequences of decisions, policies, practices, etc.

Such civil society input can typically come through official, structured and mediated development processes, through public awareness raising, advocacy and campaigns, or some combination of these approaches.

In addition to being an exercise in transparency (putting some of the key facts, figures and contributions from the CSO sector in the public domain so that all development stakeholders can better understand their

roles and value-added), this report captures some data and trends that will help inform continuing discussions about civil society roles and contribution. CCC is committed to continuing and enhancing this research process, including the outcomes, learning and change processes that emanate from it, into the future.

Government and Civil Society Relations

Civil society's roles in building social accountability and good governance, and in supporting equitable social change (founded on democratic values and a rights-based approach to development), means that critical areas of some CSOs' work can bring contestation and sometimes dispute with government, private companies or other duty-bearers and holders of power. This can be the case whether CSOs are working on particular policies and immediate flashpoint issues, or with regard to wider processes, human rights concerns, due process issues, governance concerns, etc.

The type of issues that often involve contestation or conflict with governments – less so in more confident, democratic ones – include access to productive resources such as land rights, access to natural resources, identification of special areas for unhindered economic activities, construction of infrastructure and industrial plants, labor regulations and laws, and energy infrastructure/generation projects considered strategic by the state (ACT Alliance, 2011).

Chong, Elies et al (2011) refer to what seems be a complex, dynamic tension at work in CSO-government relations in Southeast Asia, with a questioning of the role of CSOs in some areas, as well as recognition that progress in many areas of development can only be made with their participation. This gives rise to tensions, with governments often approving of the work of CSOs in certain sectors and areas, while seeking to limit their roles in others.

Many of the ASEAN states recognize the need for civil society (in service delivery, for example) and provide some facilitation and incentives, such as tax-free status for registered organizations; and they encourage approved or officially recognized CSOs, as well as those operating in particular sectors. At the same time, government–civil society relations are strained, sometimes severely, in many of the ASEAN countries, with CSOs that are critical of the official discourse, or government policies, often viewed with suspicion, subjected to restricted operations or terms, and sometimes intimidated or harassed (ibid).

In Cambodia, in such areas as the economy, democratic development, governance, human rights, land and resource use, the government's policies and practices are creating clear winners and losers in society, with rapid but inequitable economic growth (World Bank, 2009). Civil society's efforts to inform, advise upon, and occasionally challenge the government's approach in certain areas of policy and practice has led to sometimes strained relations.

In this context, government-civil society relations can perhaps be understood as a type of dynamic flux (depending on the time and the type of issues and flashpoints that are current) between three common types of these relations that Chong, Elies et al (2011) identify in Southeast Asia:

- 'Tacit understanding' and some convergence of interest in the area of public service delivery, with close working relations in such areas as health and education;
- A 'mediated' relationship, where CSOs enjoy some autonomy but the state establishes a political climate and regulations that seek to define and limit their scope and autonomy; and
- A more conflictual relationship where CSOs engage in advocacy work, represent poor and marginal groups, and champion their interests in such areas as human rights, indigenous rights, women's rights, sustainable development and environmental concerns (including land and resource use).

At the same time, Chong, Elies et al (ibid) identify some interesting trends in CSO focus in Southeast Asian countries. These include CSOs continuing to be engaged, or becoming more engaged, with agricultural, climate change, environmental, sustainable development, and human rights issues across the region; and strong interest in economic issues, as well as the delivery of basic social services, where the state is unwilling or unable.

If these regional trends are evidenced over time in Cambodia – and it is clear already that CSOs are engaging with many of these issues, which are among the most important development concerns in Cambodia – then there is likely to be a degree of tension within the dynamic flux of government-CSO relations, and that this needs to be managed constructively.

Managing Tensions with Civil Society

It is because civil society participation is recognized as crucial to development (and its absence from the process leading to the Paris Declaration was recognized as a serious oversight and problem) that CSOs have been invited to engage in, and have been increasingly engaged in, the international processes on aid effectiveness, seeking to shift the paradigm to a wider emphasis on development effectiveness. The role of civil society organizations was specifically endorsed within this process when they were formally recognized as "actors in their own right" by the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) in 2008. This commitment to civil society was further endorsed in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in late 2011.

Cambodia is a signatory to the Paris Declaration, the AAA and the Busan Partnership (as well as human rights treaties and conventions encapsulating rights and freedoms to assembly, free speech, etc), which underscores its binding international commitment not just to aid effectiveness but to engaging with civil society for development, and to working to create an enabling environment for CSOs to maximize their contributions to development.

Contestation, strained relations and sometimes tense power dynamics are common, perhaps even inevitable, as civil society actors and organizations fulfill their social accountability role by trying to counterbalance the power of governments, other institutions of the state and private companies. CSOs do so in an effort to preclude (or at least monitor and mitigate) abuses of power – or, more positively stated, to ensure that the voices of the poor are heard and heeded at the juncture of politics, economy and social/policy affairs, in an effort to make progress toward a more just and equitable society.

Much of the engagement between CSOs, the state and other actors (donors, private sector, etc.), internationally and not just in Cambodia, is thorny and difficult work, but it is also important and worthwhile, as recognized by all the development partners. Members of the OECD/DAC identify clear challenges in working with civil society – ranging from the difficulties of dealing with many and diverse organizations, to coordination issues, tensions regarding alignment versus autonomy of activities, and challenges surrounding finances, reporting and outcomes (OECD/DAC 2011) – yet remain convinced that working together in partnership, and managing the issues that arise, is vital in development cooperation.

In another example, even though global civil society and the World Bank have frequently been in adversarial relations–with lively, often fierce, contestation of development strategies and approaches, economic liberalization, policy conditionality and major infrastructure projects, to mention just a few issues – the Bank states that it has learned to appreciate over the years that civil society has a valuable place. In particular, it outlines how civil society plays important roles in development and pro-poor social change by

- ensuring that *voices of poor* and marginalized people can be heard by governments, and that their views are factored into policy decisions;
- promoting *public sector accountability and transparency* through increased support for good governance;

- building common ground through *participatory approaches* and strengthening national development strategies and poverty reduction initiatives;
- providing *technical expertise* and offering innovative and cost-effective solutions to local problems; and
- partnering with governments to *provide social services*, particularly in fragile governance and post-conflict settings.

In 2009, focusing specifically on Cambodia, the World Bank suggested, among other things, that: mechanisms for more and better CSO participation in development; more high-level meetings between government officials and civil society to build trust; and some dispute management mechanisms to mediate the difficulties that arise, would help improve government-civil society relations.

Addressing Civil Society's Development Effectiveness

While proud of its contribution and confident of its place in development, civil society is also mindful of the ever-changing environment in which CSOs work (globally, regionally and nationally), and the various criticisms and questions that beneficiaries, governments, donors and civil society actors raise about CSOs' relevance, effectiveness and accountability. Most CSOs understand and appreciate that development partners are looking for more transparency and accountability from them, especially downward accountability to those people, often poor or excluded, with and on behalf of whom CSOs often work – and not just for their activities but, more and more, for sustainable results.

Through the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness, a global consultative process, civil society organizations globally achieved a broad consensus on commonly accepted principles to improve their development effectiveness, as well as the minimum standards for enabling environment (laws, policies, regulations, practices and civil space) that would enable CSOs to strengthen their contribution to development (See Box 1 for Istanbul Principles).

The International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness (also known as the Siem Reap Consensus, since it was agreed in the Cambodian city at the Open Forum global assembly, co-hosted with CCC in 2011), is a landmark development, being the first ever statement from global civil society on the effectiveness of CSOs' work in development.

The significance of this initiative has also been recognized by the Cambodian government, with His Excellency Chhieng Yannara, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister and Secretary General of the Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, stating in June 2011 that the Istanbul Principles "resonate inside and beyond the CSO community, and the Royal Government of Cambodia recognizes much of the Istanbul work as represented in its own National Strategic Development Plan that guides our work in Government, as well as in our partnerships with others."

In the Busan Partnership from the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in late 2011, all development partners – including the Cambodian government, as a signatory – recognized the Istanbul Principles and encouraged CSOs to implement practices to strengthen their effectiveness and accountability *guided by the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness* (our emphasis). Importantly, they also encouraged progress on a rights-based enabling environment for civil society.

In Cambodia, the CSO development effectiveness agenda being promoted through the Open Forum is also complemented by civil society sector-led initiatives on governance, minimum standards and self-certification. From agreeing on ethical principles and then strengthening them to include minimum standards for NGOs, through establishing guidelines and indicators for their implementation, and more recently through a voluntary certification system, Cambodia's civil society sector is well recognized

internationally for its commitment to self-regulation, good governance and CSO accountability for good practice.

Maximizing CSOs' Contribution

The civil society sector in Cambodia is clear that further progress can be made on enhancing CSO effectiveness, accountability, governance and, ultimately, impact – and it is moving forward with initiatives to do so within the parameters of the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness. However, it is clear to civil society in Cambodia, as it is to CSO colleagues worldwide, that an absolute precondition for contributing optimally to development is the creation of an enabling environment for their work.

CSOs globally are arguing for basic minimum enabling standards for CSOs – in laws, regulations and practices – that must be in keeping with international human rights guarantees, including freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, the right to communicate and cooperate, the right to seek and secure funding, and the state's duty to protect (Better Aid/Open Forum, 2011).

As we have seen earlier, significant progress on the enabling conditions for CSOs, which are under acute pressure in many countries around the world, is not just a demand of civil society but is also endorsed in the AAA and the Busan Partnership document. In addition, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC) includes specific recognition that "the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved *if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights*" (our emphasis).

Facing the Challenges Ahead

In this Introduction, we have noted the well-recognized contribution that CSOs make to development, the broad recognition they have earned for this, their commitment to continuing their efforts to improve their work and contribution – and also the commitment that other development partners have made to engaging with them, and to enabling their work.

In the main body of the report, we will see these contributions fleshed out further, with details of the energy, expertise and funding being brought to Cambodian society, and analysis of the breadth and depth of contributions that CSOs are making. Yet, civil society is often not appreciated by the Cambodian government, which is increasingly restricting its space to operate.

Ahead of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in late 2011, civil society in Cambodia identified as key obstacles to CSO development effectiveness: the lack of political will to engage CSOs as full and equal partners in development; the restrictive draft Law on Associations and NGOs (LANGO), along with other laws and measures limiting civil space; inadequate mechanisms and processes for engaging civil society in development; and restrictions on CSOs and their activities, especially at the community level.

CSOs emphasized the need for democratic country ownership of development priorities and processes, which requires freedom of expression and association; modalities for meaningful civil society participation; and enabling political, legal and social conditions.

A key challenge then, in Cambodia as elsewhere, is to progress CSOs' contributions to development through a meaningful, respectful and constructive partnership of equals with government and other development partners. This will involve establishing an environment that allows CSOs to maximize their contribution to social, economic and democratic development, and working to build government-CSO relations that will

abide through the tensions, challenges and constructive, channeled conflict that will inevitably arise from their important but distinctive roles.

Cambodia's civil society is fully committed to bringing to the table its acknowledged value added, including knowledge, experience, expertise, grassroots connectedness, popular mobilization, innovation and cost effectiveness, along with the voices and interests of the poor and excluded in order to contribute to the country's social, economic and democratic development.

CSOs are paying close attention to the means by which they can improve their individual and collective contributions, and account for their effectiveness, but they urgently require a genuine and constructive approach to partnership, including the increased commitment to and actualization of an enabling environment to maximize their contributions as envisaged (and indeed required) for development effectiveness.

Rationale

The international processes on international aid among development partners has brought increased focus on aid effectiveness and management for results in recent years, as well as greater recognition of civil society's contribution to development and the need for all development partners to recognize, engage with, and create an enabling environment for CSOs.

This report is an update of CCC's first contribution in this area, the 'rapid assessment' report on civil society contributions to development published in 2010, which elaborated on strong NGO contributions in certain sectors (public health, disability, education, community development), as well as advocacy and public policy engagement in a summary and discursive style. What the 2010 report captured was that NGOs were innovative, contributing substantially in a variety of ways, especially for poor and marginalized people, and were responsive to emerging needs, whether in the development or humanitarian relief areas.

However, when CSOs speak of development effectiveness and contribution to development, they are looking at much more than efficiencies in the delivery of aid: they also include an emphasis on democratic country ownership of development priorities and processes; the fundamental link between development and human rights; and important aspects of transparency, social accountability and good governance. In short, CSOs are concerned with the results of aid, over the processes of aid. To capture the breadth of CSO development work, qualitative self-reporting of what CSOs see as their most important contributions was sought, without assessment against indicators or benchmarks for those achievements.

The separate quantitative data in this research will help stake out CSOs' number and nature, priorities and activities, as well as the beneficiaries of their work. It does not focus specifically on 'gap areas' in CSO interventions but will help point to ways and means by which CSOs can assess and, as necessary, revise their collective efforts to contribute most effectively to the development of Cambodia – as well as providing a basis in evidence from which to speak openly with development partners about the need for genuine engagement with, and participation of, CSOs in development.

The research for this report was undertaken in a context of conflicting views in Cambodia on the role and contribution of CSOs to development, which has not helped dialogue and trust between CSOs and government – despite official and international recognition of the important, independent role civil society has to play. In that context, it is hoped that this report will be welcomed as an exercise in enhancing civil society transparency and accountability, as the sector seeks to make available more information about funding (volume, nature, and trends), stakeholder groups, sector and geographical focus, activity types, etc.

The report will serve as a complement to Cambodia's international human rights and development commitments to popular participation, and to engagement with civil society organizations, by advancing a strong *pragmatic* argument for improved government-CSO relations and the progressive realization of what is an urgently required for an enabling environment for CSOs.

It is also hoped that this report will be useful for organizations working in Cambodia to take stock of their collective efforts toward the positive development of Cambodia and to also recognize the gaps. Furthermore, this report should also be useful in advocacy efforts for an enabling environment for CSOs.

In parallel to the research for this report, CCC has conducted a census of active CSOs in Cambodia, which may help to further address some of the issues and concerns, real or imagined, about an unregulated free-for-all in Cambodian society, with too many civil society organizations. That exercise will help CCC clean and update its database to provide a better picture of the active, functioning CSOs/NGOs in the country, for reasons of outreach, communication and coordination, CSO effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

NGO Census

Since the mid-1990's, the number of CSOs in Cambodian has grown exponentially. Currently, there are 3492 local and international organizations registered, leading some observers to say that there are too many of them and that the sector is unwieldy. The Prime Minister stated that Cambodia had become "a heaven for NGOs," and the large number of registered NGOs and Associations was one justification for the Law on Association and NGOs (LANGO), the first draft of which was released in 2010. However, as the lists with the institutions governing organization's registration are not kept up to date, the actual number of active NGOs and Association has long been thought to be significantly lower. Since, no thorough study has been made of how many of the registered organizations continue to operate in the Kingdom, any numbers cited have been speculative. The 2011 NGO Census was therefore carried out in order to determine the number of active NGOs and Associations in Cambodia.

The census sought to determine how many previously registered organizations fall into the 'active' and 'inactive' categories. For the purpose of the census an organization is considered 'active' if it is engaged in activities at the time of the census. 'Inactive' organizations are those which no longer carry out any activities. 'Closed' organizations are those that are inactive and have confirmed no future activities. Those registered organizations that could not be tracked down through numerous means, are listed as 'not contactable' and are assumed 'inactive.'

Box 2: Contacting Organizations

1. NGO names and registration details
   - MOI annual lists in Khmer
   - MOFA/IC list in English
2. Translated name where possible and cross-checked with:
   - CDC NGO Database
   - CCC Database
   - Other available databases of NGO sectoral groups (MediCAM, NGO Forum, NGOCRC, NEP, Gnet…)
3. Tried calling where phone number existed, over a period of three days if no original answer
4. Looked in Yellow Pages
5. Searched on the Internet
6. Checked Cambodian Chamber of Commerce directory
7. Searched in Green Book
8. a) Contacted Commune Chief if last known address outside of Phnom Penh
   b) Visited last known address for organizations registered in Phnom Penh

Methodology

The lists of registered organizations from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFA/IC) were used as a starting point. The organizations registered with the MOI are not maintained in a single, consolidated list. Rather, the MOI issues an annual list of organizations that have registered during the previous year. For some years, there is more than one list and these lists had to be first collated by the census team. The lists for MOI also contain the names of organizations that have closed and contacted the ministry to inform them of the fact during the previous year.

The lists from both ministries were reviewed and checked against the CDC NGO database and the CCC database in order to gather contact information where available. The earliest lists from MOI contain no contact information at all, while lists until 2007 are inconsistent, with contact details listed for some organizations but not others. All organizations listed with MOFA/IC have contact information. It is important to note that the contact information is not kept up to date in either the MOI or the MOFA/IC lists, meaning that a significant proportion of organizations had to be researched further in order to make contact with them. After cross-checking with the CDC and CCC databases, a consolidated list of organizations was prepared for the census.

Census takers were contracted during two time periods, the first from November 14 to November 25 and the second from March 9 to March 25. Census takers contacted each of the organizations on the consolidated list from the MOI and MOFA/IC. For organizations with contact information, census takers called the organization directly and collected basic information on contact details and current activity status. Census takers made several attempts to the contact number over a period of three days. For organizations which could not be reached at the listed contact information or those with no listed contact details, census takers utilized numerous methods in attempts to locate the organization (See Box 2 on previous page).

All contact attempts, activity information, and complete contact details, where available, were entered into the CCC database.

At the conclusion of the work by census takers, the Member Service Unit (MSU) of the CCC, compiled lists of all remaining organizations which could not be contacted according to province. These were sent to the relevant provincial network leaders to determine if they know of any that are still active. For those which were, MSU staff followed up with contact details provided by the network leaders.

At this point, any remaining organizations which could not be contacted were posted on the CCC website and disseminated through various networks, inviting individuals to scan the lists and correct any information. This exercise is on-going and part of the regular maintenance of the CCC database.

There were several challenges with completing the survey. The first was the inconsistent listing of contact details of the organizations registered with the MOI prior to 2007. In addition, the translation of names of organizations from Khmer to English for Yellow Pages or Internet searches was often not viable as inconsistent alternatives and similar names of NGOs were created through the translation process. Finally, several NGOs that were contacted refused to provide any information at all, including whether they were active or not and are recorded as being not contactable.

History of Registration

International NGOs are registered with the MOFA/IC and local NGOs and associations are registered with the MOI. Figure 1, below, shows the total number of organizations registered with the two ministries, as well as the breakdown by type of the organizations registered with the MOI.

The MOI began registering local organizations in 1991 and currently maintains unconsolidated annual lists in Khmer which contain 2982 organizations up to the end of 2010. The MOI lists for 2011 had not yet been made public at the time the census was carried out and were not included. While the MOFA/IC maintains a single current list, there was also no updated 2011 list available.

Of the total number of organizations registered with the MOI, 54.4 percent are registered as NGOs and 46.3 percent are registered as associations. However, there is some crossover between NGOs and associations as some organizations registered as associations, function more like NGOs and vice versa. The very small and almost negligible number of community organizations registered with MOI indicates that such organizations are not generally interested in formally registering.

There are 508 INGOs listed with the MOFA/IC in the years up to 2010.

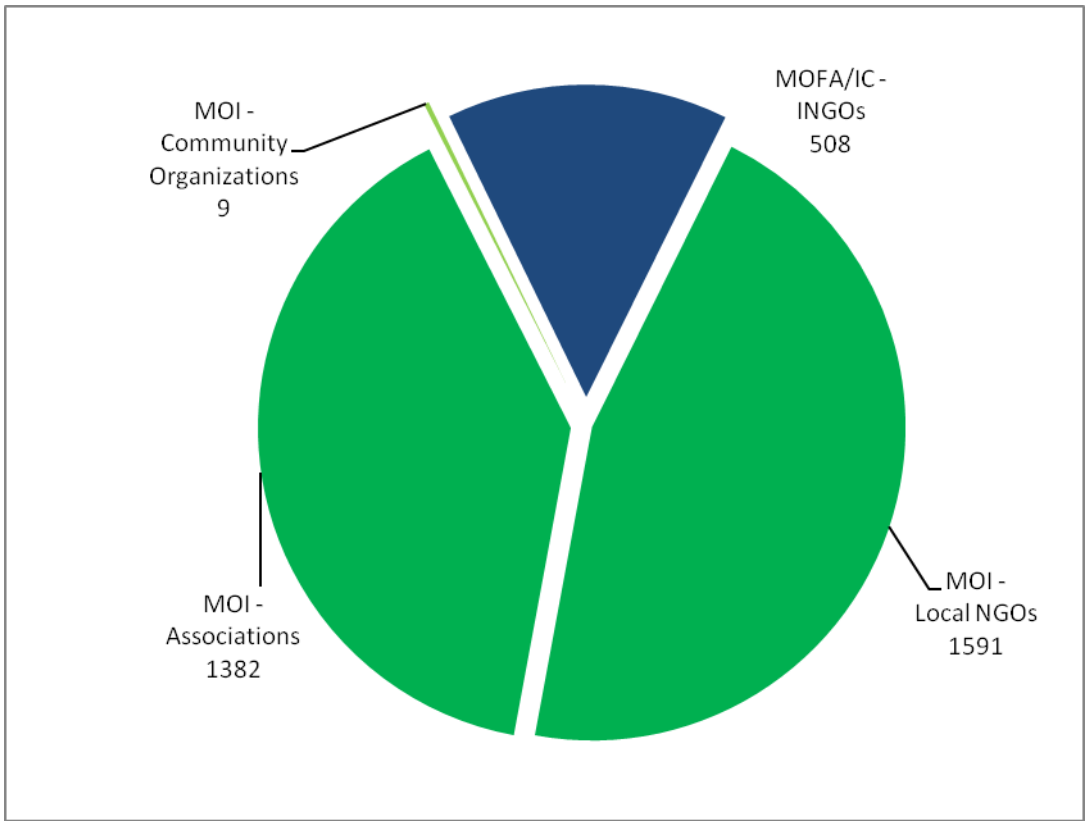

Figure 1 Organization type and number as registered with MOI and MOFA/IC

Figure 2, shows the breakdown of INGOs by originating country. Three countries, the USA, France, and Japan account for more nearly 50 percent of all INGOs.

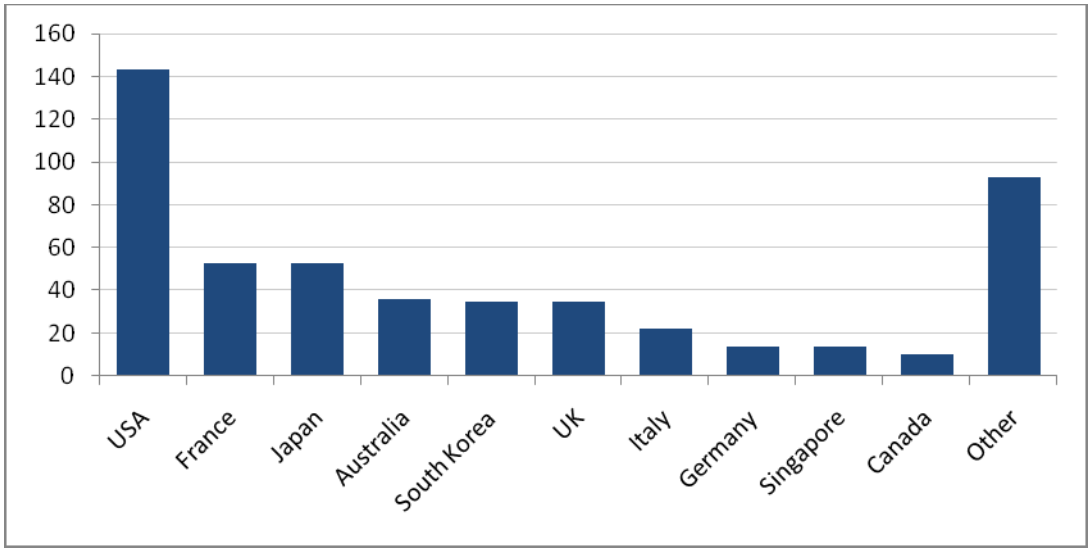

Figure 2 International NGOs by country of origin

Active Organizations

Of the total 3492 organizations registered with the MOI and MOFA/IC, the census found that 1226 or 35 percent remain active. 3 percent reported to be inactive while another 4 percent were formally or informally

closed. The remainder were not contactable by any of the means described previously and can be considered inactive. Figure 3 and Figure 4 illustrate these trends.

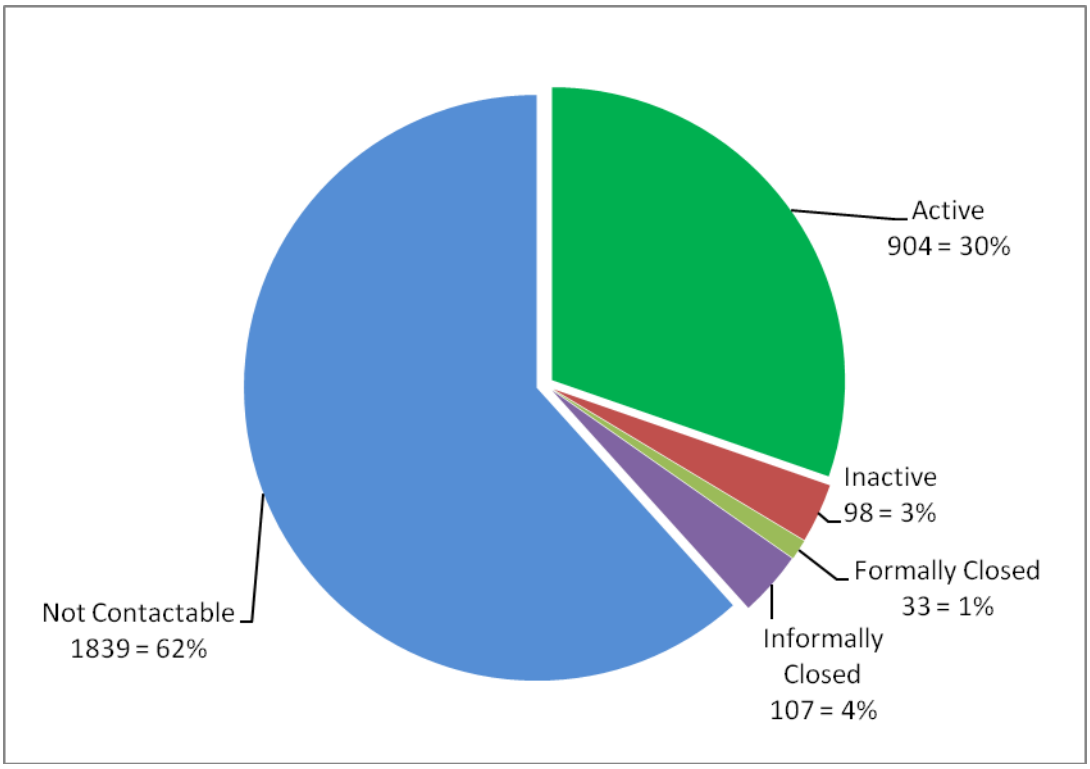

Figure 3 Status of all CSOs registered with MOI

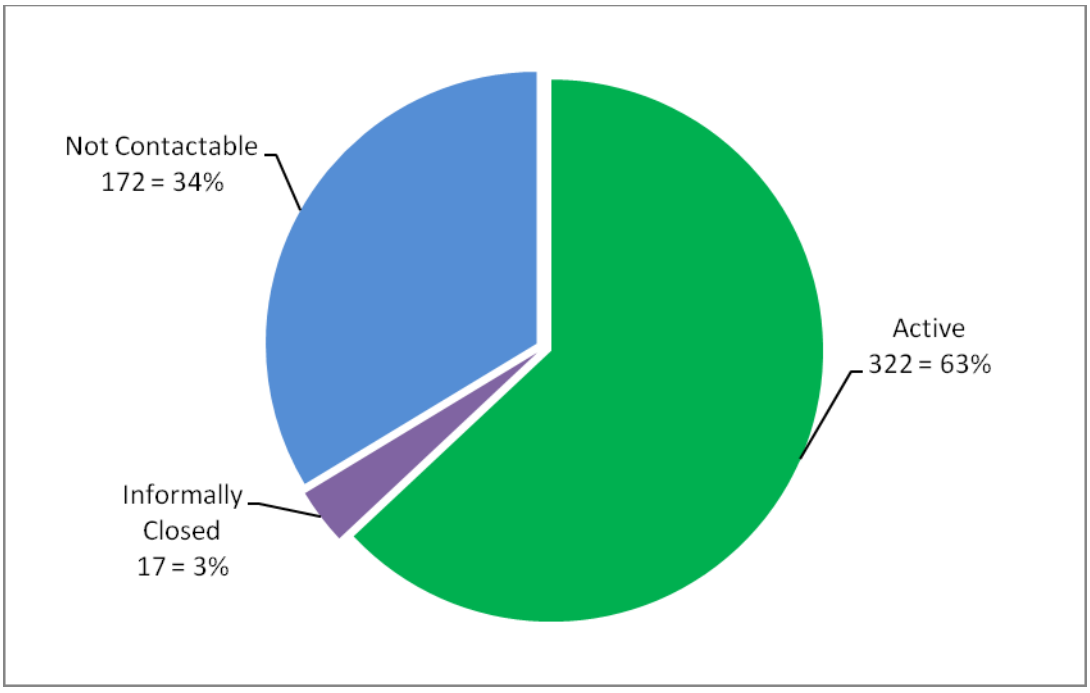

Figure 4 Status of all INGOs registered with MOFA/IC

Of the 2982 organizations registered with the MOI, 904 or 30 percent are active and 98 (3 percent) indicted they were inactive. 140 (5 percent) have closed, however, only 33 of those (23.6 percent of the 140) have officially reported this to the MOI. This indicates that registered organizations which close are unlikely to

inform the MOI. Whether this is because they intend to renew operations at some point in the future or because they simply do not feel it necessary to inform the MOI, is unknown.

Despite the census takers' numerous strategies and attempts to track them down, 1839 organizations on the MOI list were not contactable. This number is significant as it represents 62 percent of all registered organizations. While a few may have moved address, changed phone numbers, and not come to the attention of their local commune chief, it can be reasonably assumed that the majority of these not contactable organizations are inactive.

The results for INGOs show that 322, or 63 percent of the total, remain active. 17 (3 percent) are informally closed while 34 percent are not contactable. This significant difference in the percentage of INGOs remaining active could be due to the fact that INGOs are more likely established with more funding resources and support.

Registration and Longevity

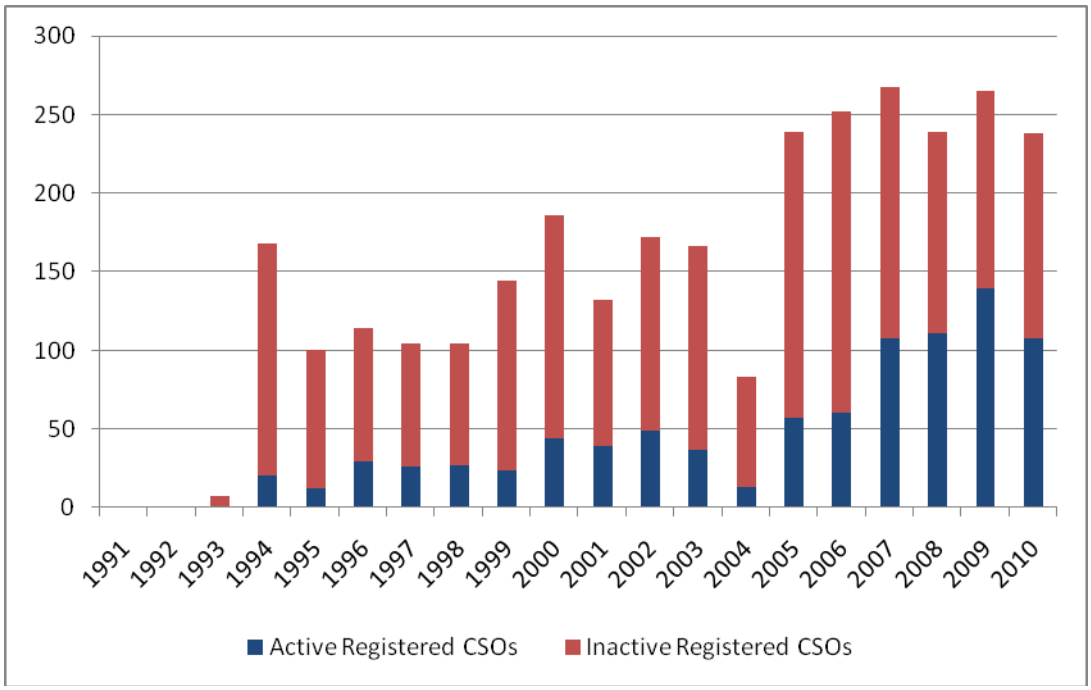

Figure 5 Status of local NGO activity by year of registration with MOI[1]

Figure 5, above, shows the total number of organizations registered by year and also shows the number of those organizations found to be active. INGOs are not included here as the MOFA/IC does not provide

[1] The 2004 annual list of local NGOs was excluded from the CSO Census, resulting in the sharp decline in registered CSOs seen in the year 2004 in Figure 5. As a result there are 98 local NGOs registered in 2004, and 20 local NGOs registered in 2003 that have not been included in this census or any subsequent analysis in this report.

It is important to note that this omission does not result in any significant changes to the total number of estimated active organizations utilized in this report, and will be corrected in ongoing updates to the census.

information on the year of registration, but the CCC (2011) report shows a decreasing trend in the number of newly registered INGOs per year since the earliest years of registration.

The graph indicates a general increase each year in the number of registrations with the exception of 2004 which shows a sharp decrease, although registration numbers have remained relatively steady since 2005. The graph also illustrates the longevity of registered organizations, showing that a larger proportion of organizations registered in the past four years remain active compared to those registered earlier, but that there is a long tail of registered CSOs from even the earliest years which are still active as of 2011.

It is surprising that even from the two most recent years included in the census – 2009 and 2010 – approximately half of all registered organizations are inactive, closed, or not contactable. There are a number of possible explanations, as many newly established CSOs may quickly run out of funding, support, or enthusiasm without capturing the needs of the communities they seek to serve, while others may be deliberately established to receive short term or one-off funding for a short-term project, and some may be set up for reasons other than the public interest. By virtue of not being contactable it is difficult to determine the reasons for this sharp decline in activity after registration, but the question of why so many recently registered CSOs cannot be contacted deserves future scrutiny.

Activity Areas

The graph below shows breakdown by province of registered local and international organizations. While the number of organizations appears disproportionately high for Phnom Penh, this is not reflective of the actual distribution of their activities. This is due to many organizations registering in Phnom Penh as it is the location of their head office, while many of their activities take place in the other provinces. This trend is reflected in the survey results regarding the geographical locations of CSO activities seen in Figure 16.

Many of the earliest registered CSOs had no recorded address, and it is not surprising that they are inactive, or simply impossible to locate.

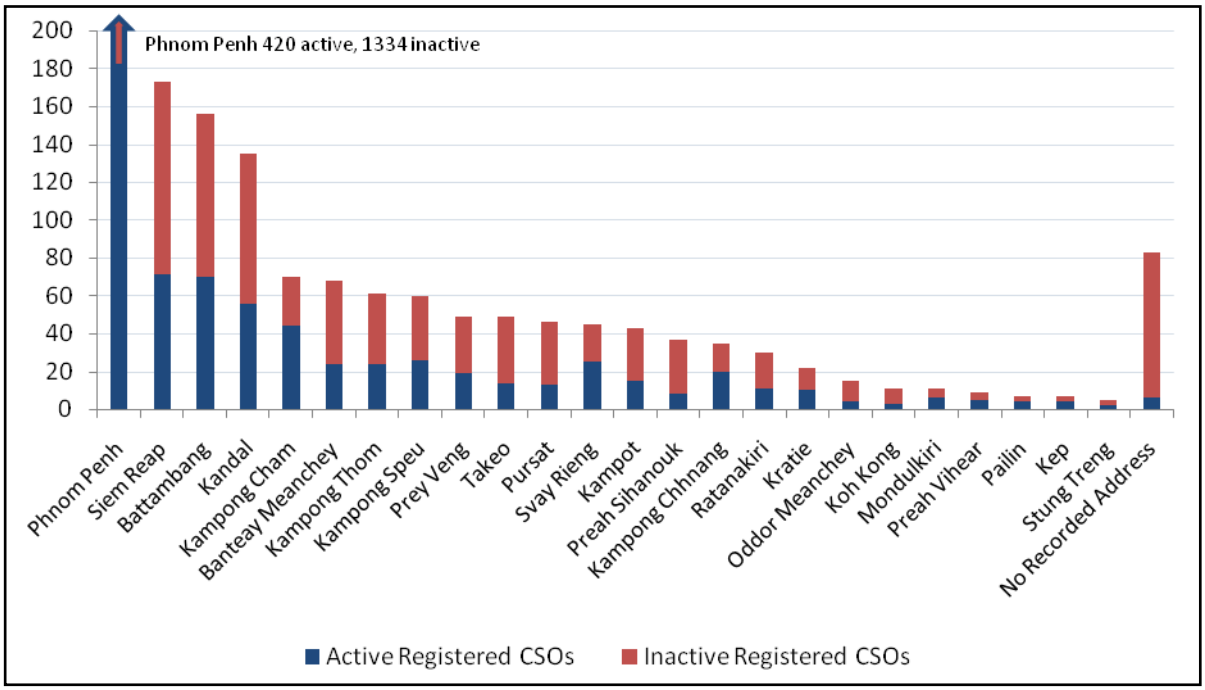

Figure 6 Status of registered CSO activity according to province of registration with MOI or MOFA/IC

Final Estimate

The figure of 1226 confirmed active CSOs from those organizations registered with the MOI or MOFA/IC can be considered final for the purposes of this census. All efforts were made to contact organizations on all lists from the ministries and those that could not be located after numerous steps, can be reasonably assumed to be inactive. However, if the trends of 2009 and 2010 have continued in 2011, then 100-130 additional local organizations with some capacity for ongoing activity will have registered with the MOI, and a handful more with MOFA/IC, so a final estimate of 1350 will be used in this report.

Estimating the true number of all Cambodian CSOs meeting the broadest definition of that term remains a difficult exercise which will not be attempted in this report. CCC will continue to update its database as new information is gathered and as lists from the MOI and MOFA/IC are made available for each year. For the most current up-to-date estimate of active organizations working in Cambodia, contact CCC.

Survey Methodology

As the survey was conducted prior to the completion of the census, the first element of the research project was to come up with a sampling frame of CSOs, drawing on the available lists and databases of NGOs and CSOs more widely.

The generation of a 'consolidated list' of CSOs from which to select a sample involved cross-checking and verifying an integrated list of both local and foreign NGOs from all available sources, including CCC's existing database, lists of NGOs from The NGO Forum on Cambodia and MEDiCAM, and official lists from government sources, namely: the MOI, MOFA/IC, and the Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC).

Box 3: CSOs or NGOs?

Where possible we aim to extrapolate conclusions to the broader CSO sector in Cambodia, but the consolidated list of available contact details was heavily skewed toward NGOs, both local and international, who are much more likely to be registered with the government and to be included on the membership and contact lists of NGO sectoral organizations.
This survey is thus primarily into the contributions of NGOs rather than the wider CSO community.

The research involved undertaking a mainly quantitative survey with CSOs. The survey instrument was developed, coded, and supervised, by an independent academic researcher and field-tested with eight Phnom-Penh based organizations, and contained 42 questions with multiple choice-type responses and one additional open question. The questions were initially devised in English, with the final questionnaire translated into Khmer (the questionnaire can be downloaded from the CCC website at http://www.ccc-cambodia.org/resources/publications.html). Organizations selected for in-depth interviews were given a choice of language for the survey.

The quantitative questions were designed to elicit information on some areas of particular interest with regard to CSOs and development in Cambodia, including activity level/status, contact details, sources of funding, types and regions of activities, stakeholders, accountability and networking position, position and disposition regarding governance and the CCC-managed NGO GPP. The questionnaire also elicited contact information about the CSO respondents for verification purposes.

The one open question, included to allow for consideration of the participating CSOs' own perspectives of their significant contributions to Cambodian society, but especially to those who represent the intended focus of their interventions, asked respondents to report and rank the three most significant contributions their organizations have made to its target beneficiaries.

More objectively verifiable means of assessing CSOs' individual and collective impact on beneficiaries (drawing on baseline studies, control groups, etc.) are notoriously difficult, time-consuming and expensive, and were outside of the scope of this study. However, this research will provide some useful baseline data which may be linked with development effectiveness benchmarks and guidelines, to build related CSO contribution reports in the future.

The research methodology also involved a review of relevant literature, which helped locate the place and contribution of CSOs in the international development context, and helped with interpretation of the data in the current Cambodian context.

Sampling and Data Collection

In establishing the sampling frame, the research team spent two weeks integrating lists of CSOs from the sources mentioned above (although the contact details available through the MOI were found to be too unreliable and were excluded), which resulted in the consolidation of a list of 1,409 CSOs, including 1,010 local and 594 international NGOs.

It was impossible to approach every CSO, for time and cost reasons, and the research team decided to concentrate on a subset of five geographic areas in which the CSOs' head offices are located: Phnom Penh, Battambang, Siem Reap, Kandal and Kampong Cham, on the basis that these provinces are where most CSOs (local and international), are located and therefore offered most representativeness and accessibility within the scope of the research. The population of NGOs in these five provinces represents about 80 percent of the whole population of NGOs in the consolidated list.

The research team devised a sample of 60 percent of the total number of CSOs/NGOs in the consolidated list (1,409), which established a sample size of 688 organizations. The number of CSOs to be taken from each of the five areas identified above was established in proportion to the weight of the areas' representation in the consolidated list. The individual CSOs to be contacted for inclusion were then selected at random from the CSOs listed for each of the five areas.

A formal email invitation was sent from CCC's Executive Director to the 688 CSOs selected to participate in the survey a week before data collection. Research team members then either made phone calls or personal visits (when phone numbers were not available) to schedule appointments for the survey/data collection. Coordination for making appointments or verification of NGO status in all five provinces was assisted by network representatives in the respective provinces.

Four teams of experienced data collectors consisting of 16 members (4 supervisors and 12 enumerators) were recruited and trained to conduct the survey. Two additional research team members coordinated the data collection and controlled data quality.

Data collection was undertaken over a two-week period in November 2011. Of the 688 CSOs approached to participate in the research, 309 CSOs (representing 45 percent of the proposed sample number) eventually participated in the face-to-face interviews and contributed to the research. The geographic breakdown of these respondents was as follows: Phnom Penh – 207; Siem Reap – 38; Battambang - 34; Kandal - 16; Kampong Cham - 14. The non-participating CSOs from among those 688 chosen for the survey sample, were unreachable, closed or were unable to participate at the time of the data gathering.

Data Management and Analysis

The 309 completed surveys went through an editing and coding process, supervised by a data collection coordinator, before they were ready for data entry. After editing and recoding, the completed surveys were entered into a database designed by an independent contractor, Digital Divide Data, with double data entries to ensure quality, before exporting the data to Excel and SPSS formats for the research team.

Statistical analysis of the data was done in SPSS, which was also used to generate descriptive statistical summaries, such as frequency tables, graphs and charts. The statistical analysis of the quantitative data, as well as qualitative, interpretive analysis of the open question (Q39) has provided the substance for the two analytical sections of this report.

CSO organizational details and contacts have also been used to update CCC's database of CSOs.

Analysis of CSOs' Reported Contributions to Beneficiaries

As we have seen, a key motivation for this research was to build on the 2010 CCC report into NGO contributions to Cambodia's development between 2004 and 2009, by bringing more rigorous qualitative and quantitative analysis to bear. This section of the report focuses on the qualitative dimension, analyzing CSO respondents' own identification of their key contributions to direct beneficiaries, and therefore Cambodian society as a whole.

Based on the weight of responses and qualitative analysis of results to establish categories of contribution areas (not any categories suggested within the questionnaire), there are four broad tiers of contribution areas for CSOs, explored more fully in the text below:

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Education and Training	Child welfare and rights	Gender and women's issues	Advocacy and policy dialogue
Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS	Agriculture and rural livelihoods	Humanitarian response and disaster relief	Water & Sanitation
	Community development	Credit & Savings	Business/Organizational development
	Environment and natural resources	Disability	Providing grants to NGOs/CBOs
			Research and consultancy
			Tourism, arts and culture

Table 1 Important contribution areas identified by CSOs

Tier 1 Sectoral/Thematic Areas of Reported CSO Contribution

A very high proportion of the important organizational contributions identified by CSO respondents can be categorized, through interpretive analysis, in the Tier 1 areas: education and training, and, some way below that, health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS.

Education and training was an area in which a high volume of respondents reported CSO contributions; there was also an overlap with contributions toward children and youth. The education and training contribution areas ranged from formal and non-formal or out-of-school education, to quite a strong emphasis on vocational and skills training, as well as community education, cultural education, and various elements of capacity and institutional support. Many respondents also focused on their CSOs' contributions in terms of particular social groups, including orphans, children with disabilities, and children in rural areas, or those otherwise without schools.

In relation to **formal education**, many of the reported contributions involve direct provision of services or promoting/supporting improved access (often for poor children, orphans, etc, but also for gifted or outstanding students) through grants, scholarships, payment of fees, food or material supports, and awareness-raising of the merits of schooling, among other means. Other contributions noted were language training (Khmer, English or other); school and teacher assistance, including training; teacher exchanges; and supports in particular subject areas (mathematics, languages, science). Other respondents reported bringing

education to informal or non-school settings, including rural, community and other institutional contexts, such as orphanages.

CSO respondents also pointed to strong contributions in the area of **vocational education**, often emphasizing a focus on particular target beneficiary groups (children, youths, orphans, women), and linking this to related job creation. The contribution areas cited, with the focus on combining increased knowledge and practical applications, included: teaching, medicine, tourism, agriculture, computers, small-scale manufacturing, tailoring, animal husbandry, arts, crafts, publishing and commerce.

Survey respondents reported making notable contributions in relation to aspects of **community and cultural education**, as a contribution to positive social change. These ranged from raising awareness of the law and human rights to means by which to tackle specific issues such as domestic violence, child trafficking, sanitation and climate change; and from HIV awareness and behavior change to social and civic education, including through music, arts and cultural projects. Respondents also noted aspects of youth engagement, health and drug awareness, community training, leadership and problem-solving.

Addressing another dimension, CSO respondents frequently cited what can be termed contributions to **capacity-building, institutional support and sector development**. These included human resource practice, enhanced skills and professional practice, teacher salary support, enhanced school systems and administration, and improved school leadership, as well as contributions in other areas such as engagement with government departments, library development and educational publishing.

Similarly, civil society contributions in the areas of **health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS** were noted in relation to service delivery, awareness and education, capacity building and sector strengthening. From the responses, it is clear that many CSOs' focus in this area is again on especially vulnerable sub-groups within the population, including orphans, people infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, women or sub-groups among them (especially pregnant women, mothers with young children), prisoners, children, poor people, and sex workers.

Many CSOs report making their contributions in **service delivery**, such as: operating clinics or other services, providing neo-natal and post-natal care, offering direct health provision to prisoners, providing eye operations, offering HIV testing and counseling, dental health and targeted nutrition interventions, as well as offering health interventions in a humanitarian crisis, such as that arising from the 2011 flooding.

Many of the CSO respondents cited contributions with regard to **health awareness and education**, including through linkages with formal and informal education efforts. Respondents reported significant contributions in relation to aspects of personal healthcare for individuals and specific groups; education of communities and sub-groups (youth, women) around issues like hygiene, household environment, and sanitation; awareness and knowledge of disease prevention and treatment (malaria, HIV, etc); information on nutrition (women, mothers, children, the elderly); sanitation and health links; and important aspects of maternal health, childcare, protection, family planning and family life.

As seen with regard to education and training, and child welfare and rights, CSOs cited contributions with regard to **capacity building and strengthening of the sector response** as well as service delivery. In this regard, respondents variously reported meaningful contributions through: advice and support with enhancing standards and practices in public health services; support for infrastructure and equipment provision; medical and administrative training in health centers; raising awareness of patient rights, and those of particular groups (women, children, people living with HIV, disabled people, prisoners); and human resource development, including for particular specialties (e.g. cardiac, eye treatment).

Tier 2 Sectoral/Thematic Areas of Reported CSO Contribution

A second cluster of meaningful CSO contributions, judged by response weight and categories through qualitative analysis, was observed in the areas of:

- child welfare and rights
- agriculture and rural livelihoods
- community development
- environment and natural resources
- democracy, governance, accountability and human rights

In a loose category of **child welfare and rights,** CSO respondents highlighted their organizations' contributions in a range of areas from basic service provision to protection services, and policy engagement to a focus on promoting adherence to children's rights. Many of the CSOs noted particular contributions to vulnerable sub-groups among Cambodia's children (poor children, orphans, scavengers, homeless, those from stressed or broken homes, children affected by sexual violence) as well as the category of 'children' more broadly.

In the area of basic services, respondents variously reported contributed to children's welfare and rights, notably for vulnerable sub-groups, through providing: education, including formal education, language and vocational skills, as well as support (financial, school feeding) to children to allow them access to education; health services and supplies; food, clothing and shelter; civic and health education; and outreach services for vulnerable children.

CSO respondents also reported contributions in relation to adoption services; after-school programs; support of children with disabilities, and their families; financial and other family supports for vulnerable children; outreach and supports to homeless children; support for women's and children's groups; and assistance to children who have been subjected to rape.

In addition, survey respondents reported meaningful CSO contributions to policies and guidelines to safeguard children and improve their lives; informing progressive attitudes to children and childhood; and raising awareness of, and helping to vindicate, children's rights.

In the area of **agriculture and rural livelihoods**, the CSOs surveyed identified a wide range of ways in which they contribute meaningfully to Cambodian society and economy – including education, training and disseminating technical knowledge for improved practices and productivity; provision of animals, seeds, tools and equipment; and funding.

Different CSOs referred to contributions, particularly supporting targeted poor households and communities, that enhance choices and livelihoods by contributing livestock (e.g. pigs, chickens, fish, cows) or related training, such as feeding and fencing techniques.

CSO respondents also cited contributions in support for rice production (seed provision), improved practices (e.g., livestock, fish breeding, cotton production, storage), efforts to increase income levels (e.g., increased farm or off-farm production, fertilizer creation from waste materials), support for farmers groups (technical and organization know-how); and communities knowing and claiming their rights.

Crosscutting many of these areas were CSOs' provision of food and nutrition support, education (general and agriculture/livelihood-related), health interventions, training/extension services; enhancing capital at community level (providing or rehabilitating wells, canals; providing equipment) and household level (animals, farm equipment, etc), new or improved inputs (seeds, tools, etc), and innovation (introducing new breeds, seeds, approaches, techniques, or knowledge).

In the area of **community development**, CSO respondents cited contributions that can variously be considered service delivery, capital development, and capacity building. The service delivery-type contributions reported included: health and education provision, water and sanitation, water management facilities, family/maternal support groups, and play groups.

Survey respondents reported meaningful contributions in relation to supporting community infrastructure and capital. This included both physical capital (building education facilities, health centers, libraries, playgrounds, pagodas; and, frequently, road improvement, and providing wells, pumps, dams, dykes, etc) and social capital (community and youth groups, disabled people's groups, school committees, etc). A range of ways and means were reported to achieve the latter, including training, skills development, income diversification, enhancing links with markets, leadership support and funding efforts to strengthen community participation, problem-solving and conflict resolution, among other means.

A number of respondents also cited CSO contributions to communities organizing to understand and claim their rights, prevent forced evictions and secure adequate compensation for commercial disruption to community life, or the lives of individuals and families within their communities. A number also reported contributions to cultural and artistic life, and efforts to promote a positive, empowered sense of community generally.

CSOs' reported contributions in relation to **environment and natural resources** cluster around information and awareness raising, education and training, conservation and resource protection, and community support. Respondents variously reported contributions in improving the knowledge and understanding of students, farmers, fishermen, community and school leaders, and communities more generally.

Among the particular areas in which CSOs cited particular contributions were the economic well-being/sustainable living of certain people in conservation areas; support of community groups and forest associations protecting, conserving or managing fish, forest resources, animals and protected areas; training in the production and use of natural fertilizer; tackling deforestation issues; engaging with policy issues; and enhancing the local environment in schools, villages and communities.

With regard to **democracy, governance, accountability and human rights**, survey respondents cited important CSO contributions to awareness raising, information sharing, empowerment, and holding government, donors and self to account. These included raising awareness of universal human rights (including right to assembly, participation, freedom of speech, and information) and the rule of law, as well as their relevance to local situations (trafficking, displacement, land and resources issues, corruption) and particular social groups (women, children, displaced persons and those living with disabilities).

Various CSO respondents referred to their contributions in assisting communities to understand power relations and consider means by which they can empower themselves to claim their rights, or address land issues, including through improving training, research, learning and communication methods, and improved understanding/use of advocacy tools.

Respondents also cited contributions in relation to raising awareness and understanding of elections, along with related rights and processes; communities' and women's engagement in development and democratic process; holding government bodies and other duty bearers to account; enhanced community decision-making, and community mobilization/empowerment across the range of issues relevant to poor, vulnerable and marginalized people and communities.

Taken together, these Tier 1 and 2 categories of reported *CSO contributions* line up, to a substantial degree, with the *reported activities of CSOs* as captured by the research – since the main sectors/thematic areas of activity were identified as: education and training; health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS; community development; child welfare and rights; and then agriculture/rural development/animal health, alongside gender/women's issues.

Tier 3 Sectoral/Thematic Areas of Reported CSO Contribution

Smaller clusters of meaningful CSO contributions were reported in the areas of:

- gender and women's issues
- humanitarian response and disaster relief
- credit & Savings
- disability

The contributions cited in the area of **gender and women's rights** include elements of service delivery, especially for particular vulnerable groups such as sex workers, trafficked women or women affected by violence, but more so, contributions in relation to awareness raising and gender training, and improvement of life skills and choices.

In the first of these areas, respondents cited contributions that helped women access information and opportunities, express their opinions, challenge discrimination, tackle violence in the home and society, participate more fully in communities, and engage in or with politics. In the second category, they reported contributions that helped with upskilling and reskilling (within and beyond traditional work areas), and finding alternative job options or income sources (individually or collectively).

In relation to **humanitarian aid and disaster relief**, respondents cited contributions to direct service delivery (food, medicine or other health services, shelter, other non-food items) and funding relief efforts (raising and distributing funds from inside and outside Cambodia) – often highlighting, again, a focus on targeted poor or vulnerable people. Respondents also cited various supports for post-emergency rehabilitation efforts (distribution of seeds and tools, breeding animals, equipment) for affected people and communities.

A small number of CSOs reported contributions targeting particularly vulnerable people or groups within or beyond a disaster/humanitarian crisis context or locality, such as prisoners, persons with disabilities, and older people.

The small number of reported contributions and the low level of CSO activity, reported in the humanitarian aid and disaster relief sector are somewhat surprising. However, it is recognized that some large NGOs do make significant contributions to disaster relief when and as such events occur, shifting some resources away from development work in order to address areas of need.

It is also possible that that those NGOs who did respond, as the need arises, also routinely work in more developmental work and have reported their contributions more in these areas (See Box 4).

On **credit and savings**, CSOs variously reported provision of small-scale credit (geared toward poor communities, or poor people/groups within other communities); encouragement, facilitation or creation of savings and credit groups and institutions; and capitalization or capacity-building (enhanced structures, practices and beneficiary participation) in such savings and credit structures.

As with many of the other areas of self-reported CSO contributions, those in the area of **disability** can be broadly characterized as service delivery (providing literacy and other education services, shelter, prosthetics, primary rehabilitation); and then also capacity-building (lifestyle support, enhance earning opportunities, continuing rehabilitation) and institutional support (funding CSOs that assist persons with disabilities, addressing inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools).

Box 4: CSOs Central to 2011 Cambodian Flood Response

During the 2011 flooding disaster in Cambodia, which affected almost half a million households and killed 250 people, CSOs played a central role in life-saving and rehabilitation efforts – for which Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed deep gratitude at a reflection exercise on the flood response in February 2012.

CSOs were at the heart of the response that reached 226,000 affected Cambodia households, including almost 50,000 in Prey Veng, more than 43,000 in Kampong Thom, and almost 25,000 households in Siem Reap. As the government was criticised for its slow and often poorly coordinated response, CSOs were at the fore in providing interventions across a variety of areas, including: food security; water and sanitation; health; shelter; non-food items; and emergency education.

A summary of the Cambodian flood relief response cites 145 responding agencies, with local and international NGOs, along with sectoral NGO bodies, accounting for 120 of these. Many NGOs also worked with local, grassroots implementing partners, enhancing local-level knowledge of vulnerable communities and families, and where they might be located.

The biggest civil society response areas, which saved thousands of lives and mitigated the suffering experienced by tens of thousands, included: food security (emergency distribution of food, cash for work); non-food items (buckets, cooking utensils), agriculture (seeds, tools, livestock), drinking water and basic sanitation (hygiene kits, water purification tablets, etc.), shelter (tents, tarpaulins, metal sheeting) and emergency health (medical items, oral rehydration sachets, mosquito nets).

In February 2012, acknowledging civil society's invaluable contribution to the flood response, Prime Minister Hun Sen "called on all relevant institutions to keep good cooperation with NGOs," said Keo Vy of the National Committee for Disaster Management, quoted by the Cambodia Daily newspaper.

Tier 4 Sectoral/Thematic Areas of Reported CSO Contribution

Survey respondents reported a smaller weight of CSO contributions in the following categories:

- advocacy and policy dialogue
- water & Sanitation
- business/organizational development
- providing grants to NGOs/CBOs
- research and consultancy
- tourism, arts and culture

The contributions to **advocacy/policy dialogue** that respondents cited clustered around improved awareness and understanding of law, rights and representation/ advocacy possibilities for selected poor or issue-affected communities – such as people affected by land conflicts or labor disputes. Sub-elements to which surveyed CSOs felt they had contributed meaningfully include: awareness-raising, highlighting issues (such as land rights, corruption), education/empowerment of communities or their leaders, improved research, representation for and advocacy with local or issues-based groups and communities.

This may reflect the fact that this is an area in which relatively few CSOs in Cambodia work (CCC's 2010 review suggested that only around 7 percent of NGOs say their mandate is advocacy), but CSOs' engagement and contributions on policy issues are reflected to a greater degree across sectors (such as education, health) and themes or issues (disability, HIV/AIDS, human rights, environment/natural resources) than being identified as advocacy *per se*.

This viewpoint is supported by a comparison with Marshall et al (2011), who found that 38 percent of NGOs represent community concerns to local government, and nearly 33 percent engage in some form of lobbying.

It may be that CSOs are reluctant to use the word 'advocacy' to discuss these activities for fear of misunderstanding, as the representation of views to government is done with a view to improve other sectoral outcomes through cooperation, and 'advocacy' can be interpreted as confrontational.

Regarding **water and sanitation**, CSOs reported contributions in the area of service delivery (digging wells; supplying water to schools/communities, providing latrines), awareness raising and education (on the importance of sanitation, personal hygiene and community environment), training/capacity building (how to better manage water and waste management for health and sustainability), and addressing 'system issues' (research, health promotion and behavior change, water standards, water supply planning, engagement with government).

A number of CSO respondents also reported contributions in the area of **business and enterprise development**, with an emphasis on training (such as small business start-ups and business management) but some work on legal understanding and institution management. The focus of contributions was on youth in general and young entrepreneurs specifically, in addition to supporting people already in business.

A few respondents also reported CSO contributions in the areas of **research** (undertaking it, building research expertise and standards, promoting findings), offering legal and consultancy services, and evaluation. With regard to providing **funding for fellow CSOs**, a similar number of survey responses cited various contributions to NGOs' and CSOs' start-up and early development, strategic planning, program development and implementation, and partnership/capacity-building.

A small number of respondents reported their CSO contributing meaningfully to supporting and enhancing Cambodia's **artistic and cultural life**. This included contributions at the level of individual artists (training, professional development, financial support), community groups and sector development, as well as to cultural heritage and education, and conservation or eco-tourism.

A very small number of CSO respondents also cited contributions in relation to religion and faith groups (publishing, supporting or helping to build temples/facilities), young people (youth groups, values), and addressing problems of the urban poor.

None of the smaller clusters of reported *CSO contribution* (sometimes individual examples in relation to supporting faith groups or pagodas, for example) contrasts with a significant level of *CSO activity*, as captured in the survey.

In terms of reported *CSO activity*, there was roughly equal emphasis on water and sanitation, and environmental and natural resources (4-5 percent); and then again between humanitarian aid/disaster relief, democracy and human rights, and advocacy and policy dialogue, all rating between 2-3 percent in CSOs' reported areas of activity.

The contributions explored here, as derived from CSOs' own reflections on their support to beneficiaries, are addressed further in the Conclusions section but, in brief, they can be seen to:

- span diversity of sectoral and thematic areas;
- have a clearly stated focus on particular, identified poor and vulnerable groups;
- involve substantial engagement with government (and other) development partners, from local to national levels; and
- involve capacity building, institutional support capacity building, and long-term goals in addition to basic service delivery, which may reflect steps toward the commonly observed evolution of CSOs from partners in development projects to key stakeholders in good governance and participatory democracy.

These CSO contributions are also complemented by some of the economic activity, employment and, of course, funding contributions identified in the next section, which analyses the quantitative outcomes of the research.

Profiling the CSO Sector in Cambodia

In addition to exploring the contributions of CSOs to beneficiaries, and therefore Cambodian development, the research set out to elicit information about the current profile of the civil society sector in the country – including aspects such as CSO number, type, status, governance, funding and focus of activity. Questions that elicited quantitative responses make up the vast bulk of the research questionnaire and the quantitative results are the focus of this section of the report.

Longevity and Registration Status of CSOs

The research results demonstrate that the CSO sector in Cambodia is quite young, which is not a surprising finding, given the national trauma of the Khmer Rouge period left few social, economic or cultural institutions in place. Few of the organizations surveyed are established more than two decades, with a good proportion established in the 1990s often described as the heyday of CSOs in development and a majority of them have been established since the year 2000.

Explored in slightly more detail, the data shows that 180 (or 58 percent) of the respondent organizations have been founded since 2000, with another 112 (36 percent) founded in the 1990s, and only 12 (less than 4 percent) founded in the 1980s or earlier.

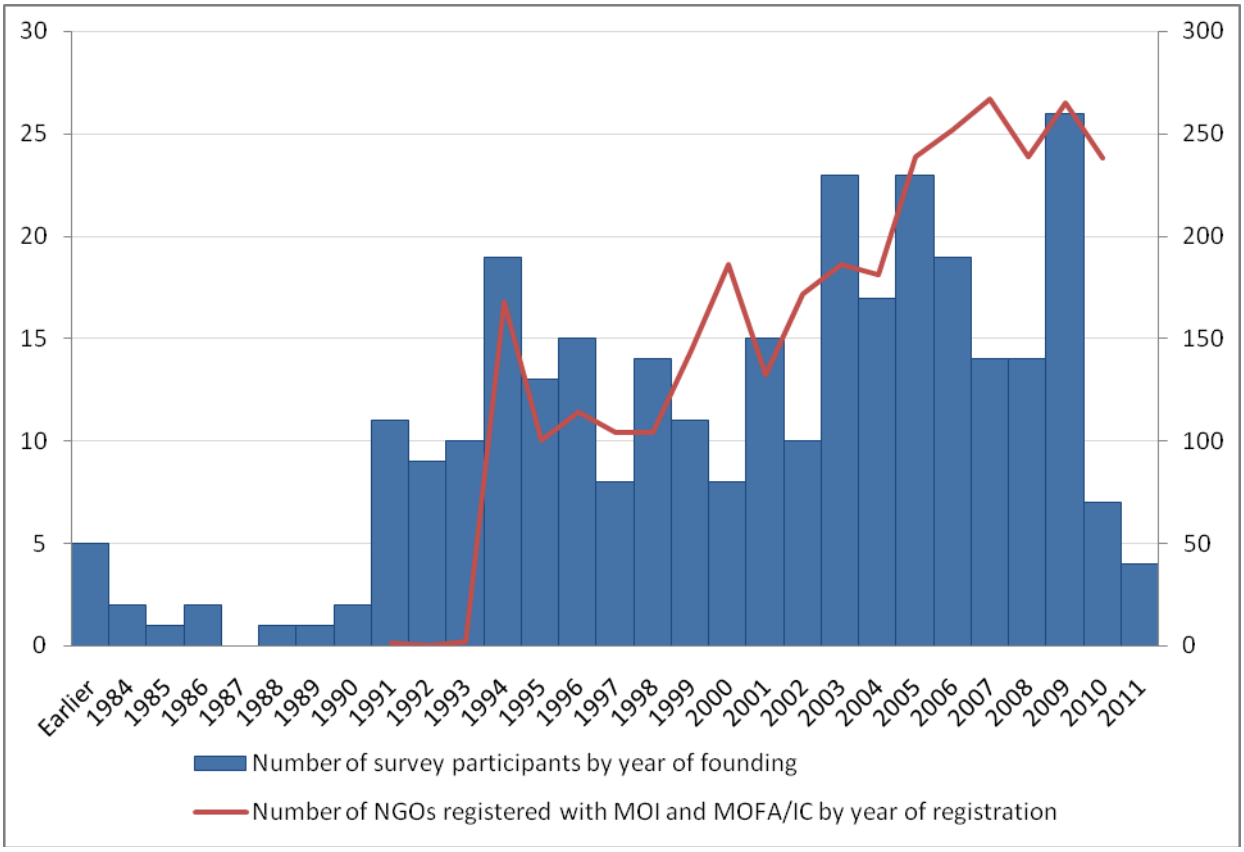

Figure 7 CSO survey respondents by year of founding, with overlay of NGO registration trend with ministries (1991-2010)

Figure 7 shows the number of our survey participants by year of their foundation, and maps this against the trend of NGOs' registration with the MOI, and of MOFA/IC, which both gives an overview of the age/registration profile and shows that the age of our sample is broadly similar to the age of known registered NGOs in Cambodia.

The data revealed that two-thirds of the survey respondent organizations (221) have registered with the MOI. The next highest number of respondent CSOs (87, or 26 percent) reported having registered with the MOFA/IC. This level of registration is perhaps not surprising, since the consolidated list used for the research contains mostly more formally organized NGOs as well as members of or known to network organizations, and NGOs are more likely than other types of CSOs to be registered.

There is also some overlap in the numbers, since some CSOs are registered with multiple ministries (typically the MOI, for local NGOs, or MOFA/IC, for INGOs, and another), and some 8 percent of respondents said their CSOs were registered with other government bodies, including the Council of Ministers (for nine organizations) and a range of other bodies (for 19 CSOs).

The 309 surveyed organizations reported having 374 Memoranda of Understanding or of Association (MoU/MoAs) with different ministries or bodies of the Royal Government of Cambodia. The bulk of these were accounted for by four ministries: Health (67 memoranda); Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (61); Education, Youth and Sport (55); and Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (46), which together accounted for some 61 percent of the total.

The Ministries of the Interior (23 memoranda); Rural Development (20); Women's Affairs (16); and of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (15) represented a second tier of government ministries with which many civil society organizations have MoU/MoAs. As a group, these ministries accounted for another 20 percent of the signed agreements.

Organization Type of CSOs in Cambodia

Because of the difficulty in drawing a clear and definitive objective boundary between the structure and work of different types of CSO (as described broadly in the Glossary of Organization Types), respondents were asked what type of organization they identified as (for those who chose to do so). All subsequent analysis in this research refers to these self-identified organization types rather than how the CSOs are registered or any other measure.

Figure 8 on the next page captures graphically the number and proportional breakdown of organization types recorded in our survey, as self-identified by CSO respondents. For comparison, Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of CSO numbers and organization types from the government's official records of registered organizations.

No 'closed' organizations were included in this study, although nine (or 3 percent) described their organization's current status as 'inactive'. The remaining 300 of the 309 organizations surveyed (97 percent) described their current status as 'active'.

Staff Numbers and Profile of CSOs Operating in Cambodia

The number of full-time and part-time staff among the 308 respondent organizations from the 309 who engaged with the research was reported at 12,813.

From among the 303 respondent organizations who supplied a breakdown by gender, the total number of male staff, full- and part-time, was reported at 7,338. The total reported female staff number, full- and part-time, from among the same response group, stood at 4,750. Respondents did not disaggregate the other 725 staff members by gender.

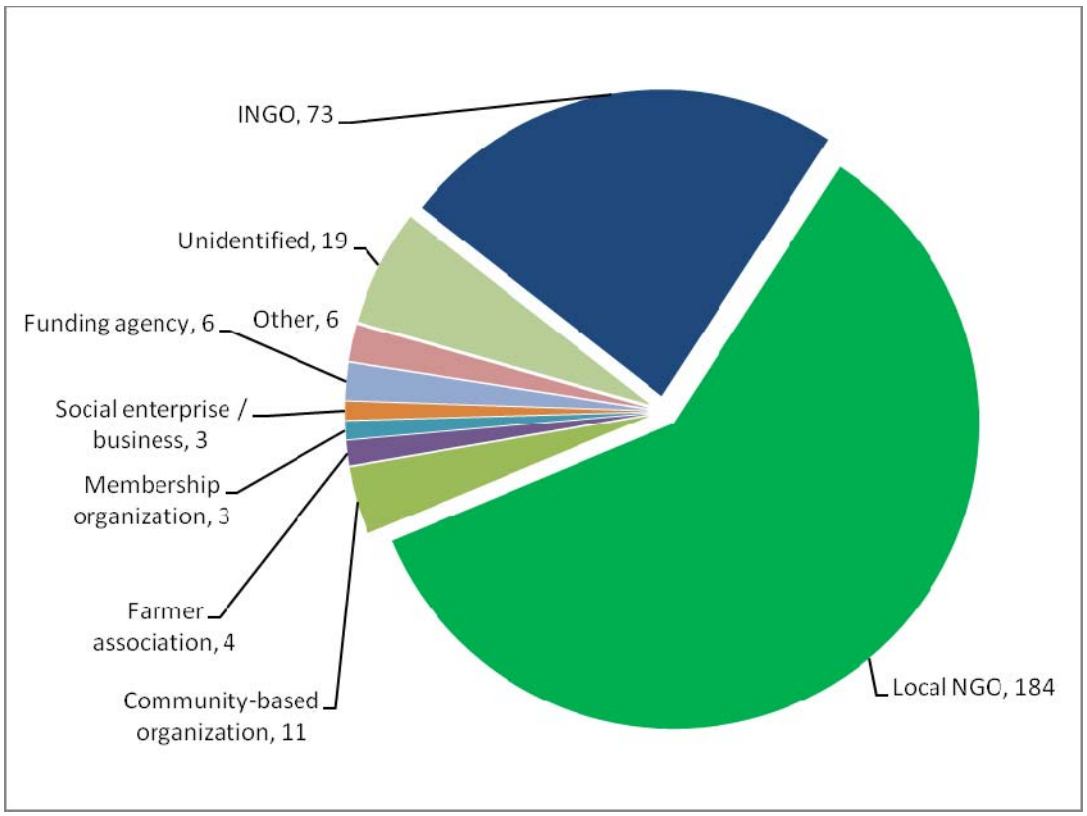

Figure 8 Organization type and number among survey participants (self-identified)

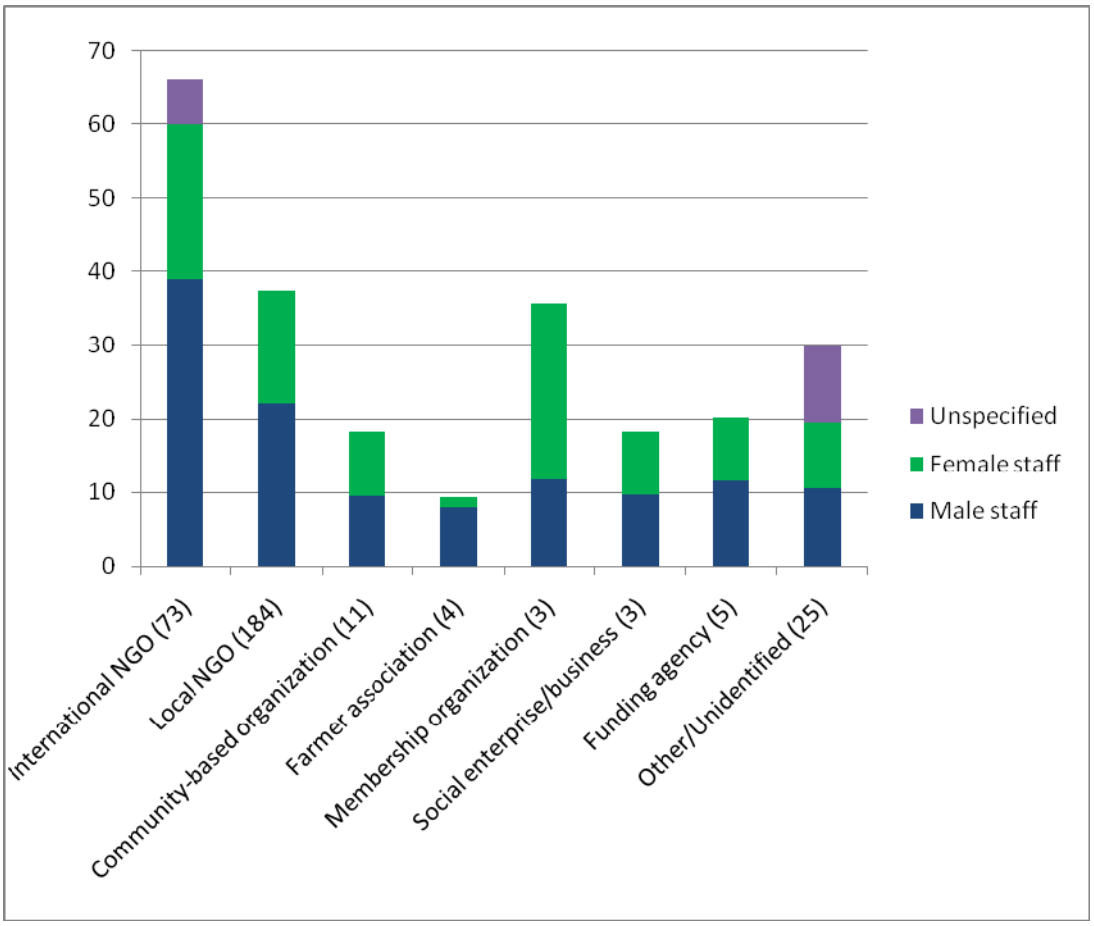

Figure 9 Staff numbers, and gender profile, by organization type from CSO survey sample

A breakdown of the survey data reveals that 81 percent of the male staff reported were full-time and the vast majority Cambodian, with 3.9 percent expatriate staff, consultants or advisers. For the female staff, a total of 3,912, or 77 percent, were reported to be full-time, with 6.4 percent expatriate staff, consultants or advisers – a somewhat higher proportion than pertained for men.

Respondents reported that 1.7 percent of both male and female staff had a disability (the type or extent of which was not further explored), which would seem to compare favorably with the national average of 1.4 percent of the population having a disability (National Institute of Statistics, 2009). However, a 2005 estimate, which is considered more reliable, is an adjusted figure of 4.7 percent from Handicap International France (2009) which suggests more research should be done into how NGOs could improve this participation rate.

The survey revealed the average number of staff in CSOs to be 41 (slightly lower than the average of 47 reported, from a smaller sample, by Marshall et al in November 2011), although half of the respondent CSOs have fewer than 19 staff, with the average significantly increased by the situation of several larger NGO respondents (both local and international). Figure 9 gives the breakdown of staff across different organization types in more detail, illustrating the relative scales of operation and gender composition of each type.

These figures demonstrate that the CSO sector is a significant employer in Cambodia: if we extrapolate our 41 average employees to an estimate of 1,350 NGOs, local and international, that are believed to be active, it suggests that NGOs employ more than 55,350 people in the country. The number of people employed by all CSOs would, of course, be higher than this calculation based on NGOs only.

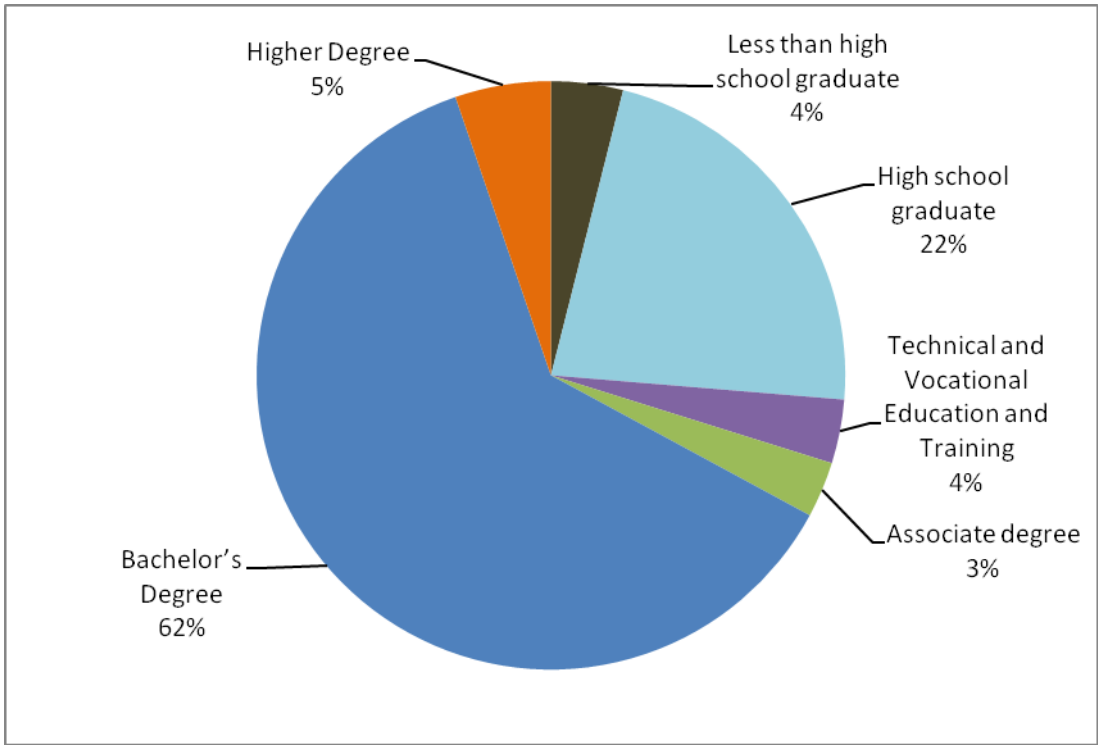

Figure 10 Average level of staff education from 228 respondents

Even if we allow for the average of two expatriates (staff or technical advisers) per organization, the data suggests that more than 52,650 Cambodians are employed by local and international NGOs, in a significant social and economic contribution to national development.

Respondents reported having 775 non-paid, office-based international volunteers; 649 non-paid and office-based local volunteers; and 206 non-paid interns. In addition, they reported having over 7,000 non-paid, local volunteers who assisted in community work.

As seen in Figure 10, approximately 67 percent of survey respondents suggested that the average level of education in their organization was at university degree level or higher. This is higher than the 58 percent average reported by Marshall et al (2011) from their smaller sample (54 percent for local NGOs and 62 percent for INGOs) but, regardless, it is clear that CSOs do not just employ a sizeable number of people in the country but they also employ a good proportion of graduates, for whom finding employment commensurate with their education level is known to be a problem in Cambodia (ILO, 2007).

The Funding Situation of CSOs Operating in Cambodia

The total average annual spending of the 282 NGOs that provided their average annual budget from the past three years was US$146 million. Figure 11 illustrates the trend of that funding, with the biggest number of organizations, for instance, recording that they had an average budget (over three years) in the US$150,001 to US$300,000 category.

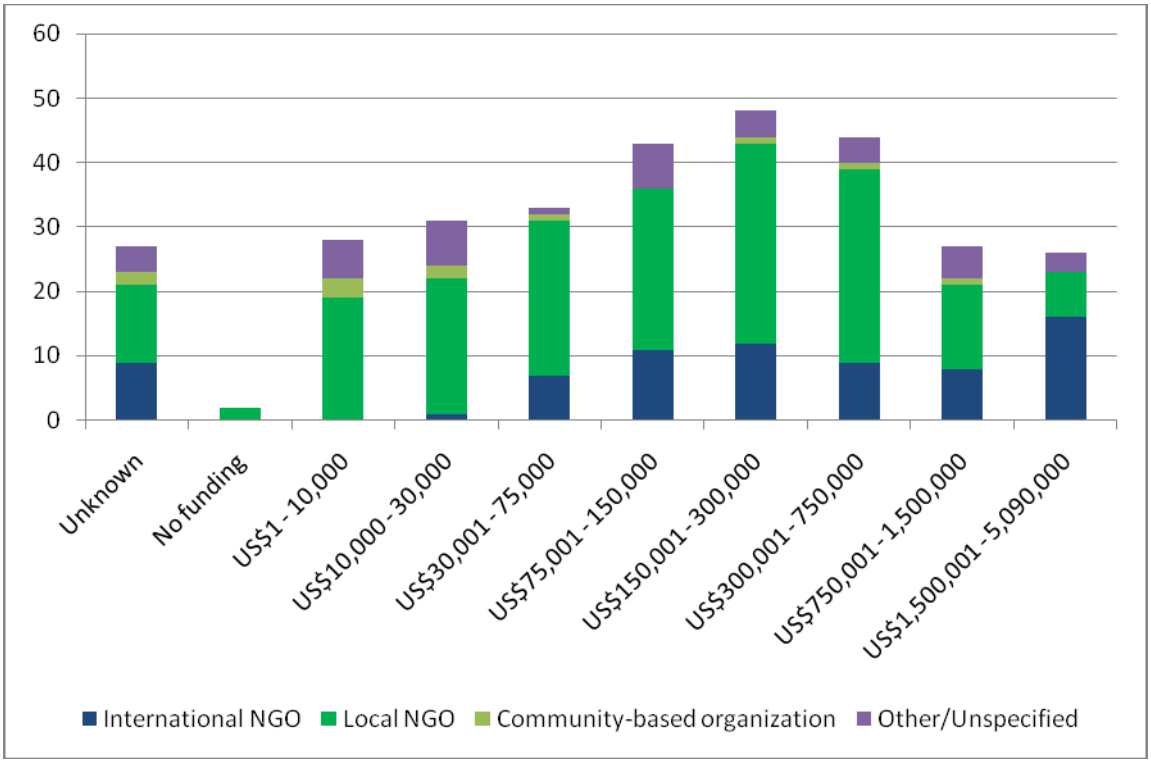

Figure 11 CSO respondents' average annual budget size 2009-2011, by organization type

When the size of an organization's average annual budget over three years is mapped against organization type, the results are also interesting. The data show a wide spread in the scale of funding within the CSO sector, which clearly relates to the spectrum of CSO types, from loosely established groups and associations to community-based organizations (median average annual budget of US$20,000), through smaller and larger local NGOs (median US$150,000), and to large international NGOs (median US$390,000).

Figure 12, below, graphs CSOs' reported share of funding from different sources for the last five years, now, and then their projections of the share from different sources for the next five years. It graphically illustrates that grants and donations are far and away the most significant source of funding for CSOs operating in Cambodia: 73 percent of respondent CSOs cited grants and donations as the most significant form of

funding for the organization, with commercial activities – describing the non-profit CSOs' income from health clinics, restaurants, office rentals, sale of publications, craft shops, etc. – coming next at 20 percent.

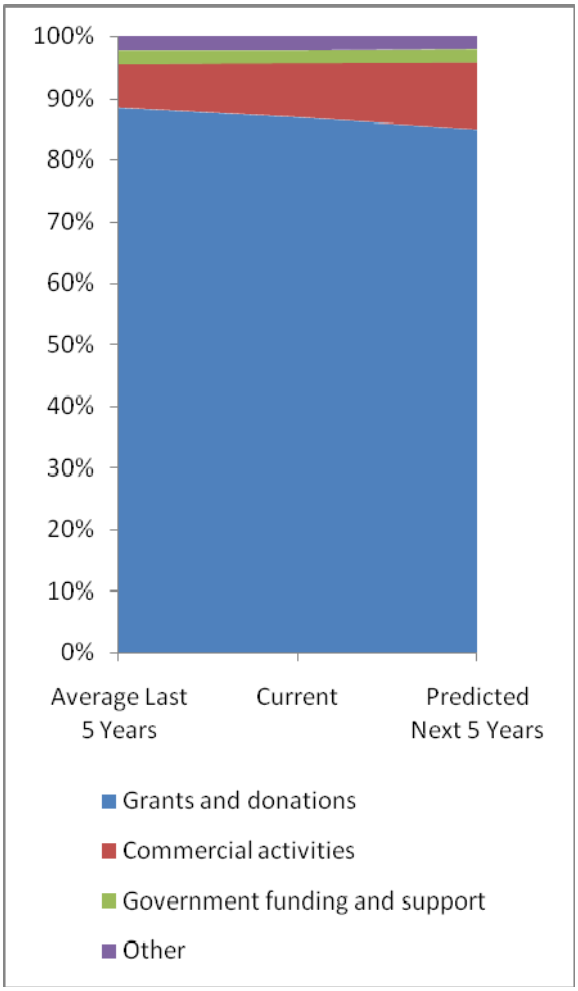

Figure 12 CSO respondents' funding share by source for different time periods

The data are not directly comparable with those from Marshall et al (2011) because the categories used are different, but that research did report that funding from international NGOs and foreign governments (which may be loosely comparable with our grants and donations) was the most important source, followed by individual donations and earned (or program service) revenues.

In our research, Cambodian government funding and supports – in the form of tax exemption, subsidies or partnership in a project – come way below in their significance at 3.8 percent, alongside 'other' sources (unspecified in the questionnaire).

It will be interesting in future research to unpick the specifics of grants from donations, which could accrue from members or supporters as CSOs grow and the Cambodian economy develops, and to establish overseas/domestic baselines for the volume and proportion of all these funding types.

'Trickle-down Funding' from CSOs Operating in Cambodia

When respondent organizations were asked whether they provided funding for other civil society organizations – whether they were local NGOs/associations or community-based organizations (CBOs) – there was a rough two-third to one-third split, with 67 percent saying they did not and 33 percent reporting that they did.

Of that one-third of CSOs who said they *did* provide such funding, 19 percent of respondents said they provided such funding for community-based organizations (CBOs) only; 62 percent that they provided funding to local NGOs/associations only; and 19 percent that they supported both NGOs/associations and CBOs through this type of funding.

No response was sought as to the scale of individual disbursals to CBOs by respondents, but it can be seen in Figure 13 that most organizations disbursed (relatively) small total sums to community-based organizations. Looked at from a different angle, the scale at which these 'trickle down' disbursements happened was quite different for different organization types, as would be expected from the relative funding.

In total, those respondent CSOs who said they did provide funding for CBOs reported doing so to the tune of US$10 million in the previous fiscal year. If we extrapolate from that to an estimate of 1,350 active NGOs, local and international, in Cambodia, it suggests a 'trickle down' to CBOs and local associations – to the very grassroots of the Cambodian economy – of some US$44 million a year.

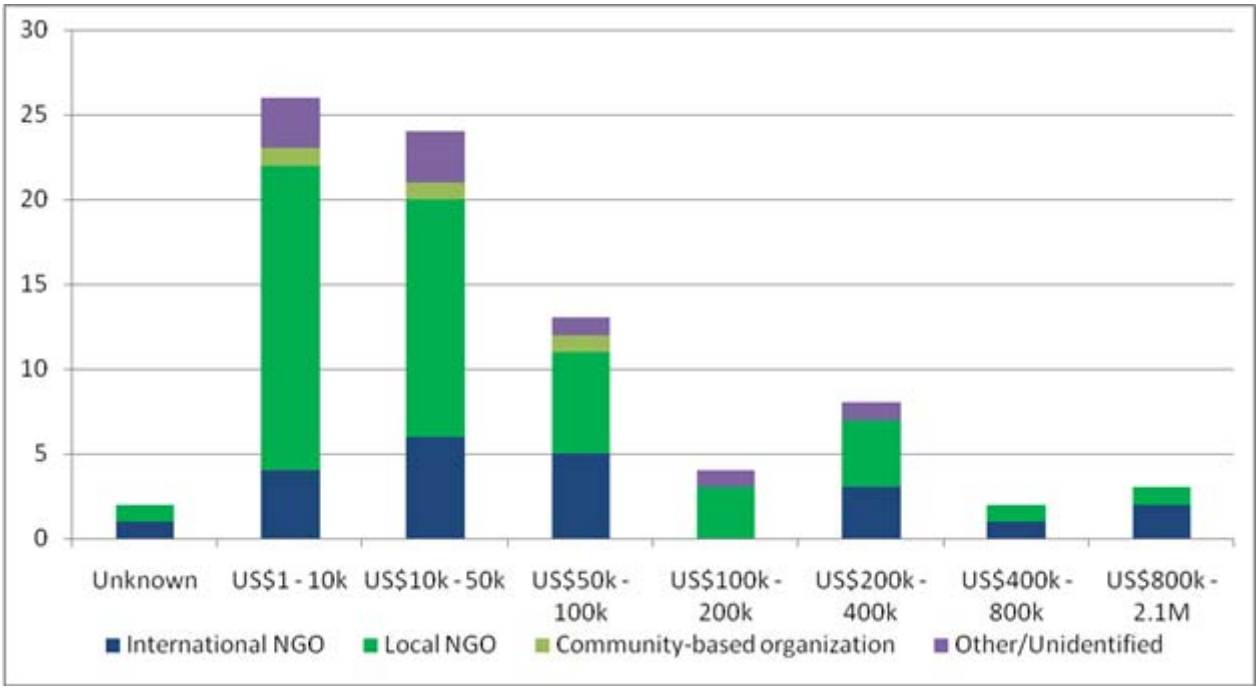

Figure 13 Total disbursal to community-based organizations by organization type

Overall NGO Sector Disbursal

If we take the total average three-year budget of US$146 million for the 282 respondents who shared their financial status, and extrapolate from that to an estimate of 1,350 active NGOs, local and international, in Cambodia, it suggests a total budget of just under US$700 million for the NGO sector. However, one substantial potential confound to this figure is the disbursal of funds from INGOs to both local NGOs and CBOs which may result in funding being counted multiple times. As twice as many NGOs disburse money to local NGOs compared to those that disburse an estimated US$44 million to CBOs, if similar levels of disbursal exist then an additional US$88 million or more of this figure would be counted twice and suggest a total budget closer to US$550 million.

Even such a reduced estimate of NGO sector disbursal would be significantly greater than the funding level of circa US$220 million (US$127 million core funds and US$93 million in managed funds) that the Cambodia Development Effectiveness Report (CRDB/CDC, 2011) reported for *confirmed disbursement* by NGOs in 2010. Closer examination of the figure reported by the CDC shows that only 310 NGOs report funding details, suggesting substantial under-estimation of the true extent of NGO funding. The similar sample size leads to a good comparison with the US$146 million disbursal from 282 NGOs in this survey. The average disbursal per NGO is higher in the CDC data, but this includes 243 INGOs which possess higher average budgets, so the figures are consistent.

Comparison with Government Spending

In order to truly gauge the significance of the estimated US$550 million funding of the CSO sector, it is valuable to compare this with government spending in the social sector as well as the general distribution of the total RGC budget. Of a total planned expenditure of US$2,678 billion, The Cambodian Budget Law 2012 (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2011) indicates that US$594 million is allocated to social sector funding, and US$132 is allocated to economic sector funding.

Closer analysis of the funding by ministry reveals that even with the sample size of this study, there are areas in which the NGO sector contributes more direct funding than the government does - community development and gender issues being two examples. A deeper comparison of these figures is beyond the scope of this report, but more research and future discussion is warranted into both how the priorities of the government and CSOs differ, as well as how they can best complement each other to promote positive development in Cambodia.

Five-Year Funding Trends for CSOs

Asked about the trend in funding contributions over the five years 2006-2010, the current share (for 2011-2012), and the anticipated future share from 2012-2016, respondents mapped the trends seen in Figure 12. This shows declining proportional share from grants and donations (88.5 percent for the previous five years, 87 percent in 2011 and 85 percent expected for the next five years) – although grants and donation remains, and will remain for the foreseeable future, by far the biggest share of CSO funding.

Alongside that, the survey responses trace an almost precisely corresponding increase in income from 'commercial' or social enterprise activities, from an average of 7 percent over the past five years to a 2011 value of almost 9 percent and an expectation of nearly 11 percent in the next five years. This suggests a tentative but welcome trend in the interest of reducing donor dependency (especially when the global, economic crisis is hitting donor funds) and increasing funding diversification and autonomy.

Respondents have seen little change in the proportion of income received from government funding or supports (tax exemptions, subsidies, program supports) in the past five years. CSOs also anticipate little change in the proportion that government supports account for in the next 5 years, but it is a useful figure to track as this component may increase over time as the economy and government-civil society relations develop.

Overall, a majority of CSOs foresee funding trends involving a rise in grants and donations as well as in revenues from commercial (non-profit) activities, with little change or even a slight decrease in the proportion accruing from Cambodian government funding, subsidies or supports, and from 'other' activities, as illustrated in Figure 14, below.

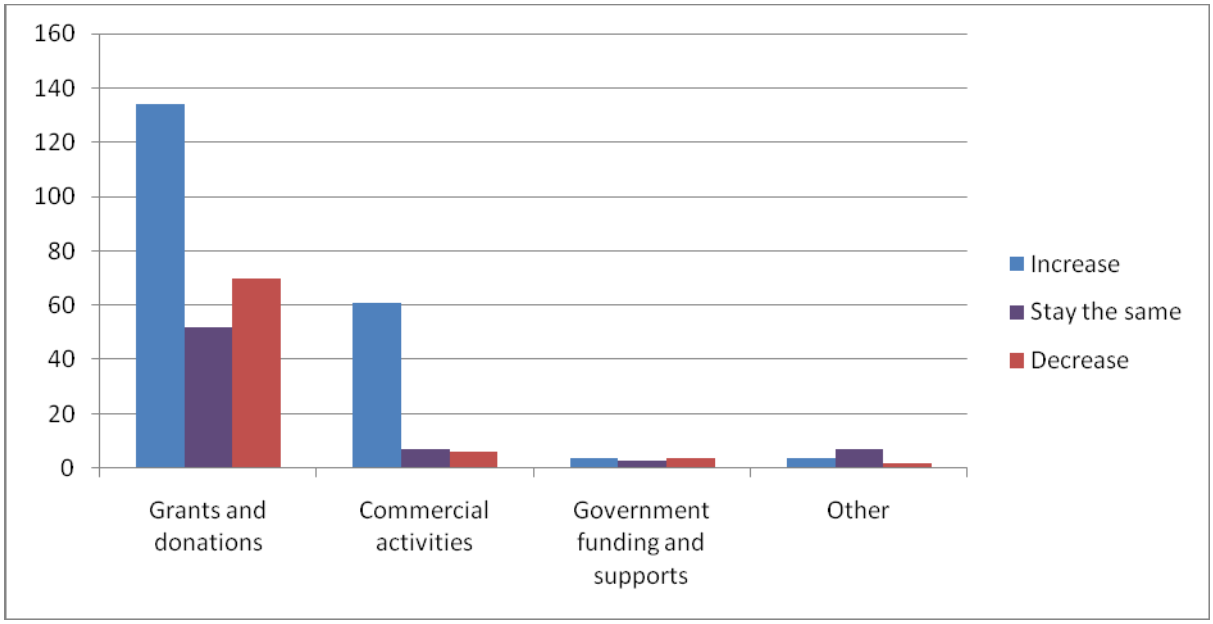

Figure 14 CSOs respondents' anticipated share of funding by funding type in the next 5 years

Key Activity Areas for CSOs Operating in Cambodia

Asked by the researchers what sectors/thematic areas best described their activities, CSO respondent organizations reflected a clear emphasis on: education and training (72 percent); and then health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS (39 percent) in a top tier of activities.

After those, the research indicates that there is a second tier of activity addressing community development (33 percent), and child welfare and rights (33 percent); and then another lower tier, including both agriculture and animal health (25 percent), and gender/women's issues (24 percent). Beyond those, there is no single activity/sector that more than 17 percent of CSOs rate as a main area of activity, with quite a wide spread across different areas.

Figure 15 combines the main activities that CSOs said best described their operations with their average annual budget to give a sense of the overall prioritization of the sector. However, it should be recalled that most CSOs are active in multiple sectors, with the average being 3.3, so the actual allocations of budgets may differ substantially from this. It does give a useful sense of the sectors and activities in which the sampled CSOs report being active.

The most significant difference that can be seen is that while 72 percent of respondents are active in education and training and only 39 percent in health, the relative funding levels for organizations engaged in these fields are substantially different, leading to similar sector-wide funding.

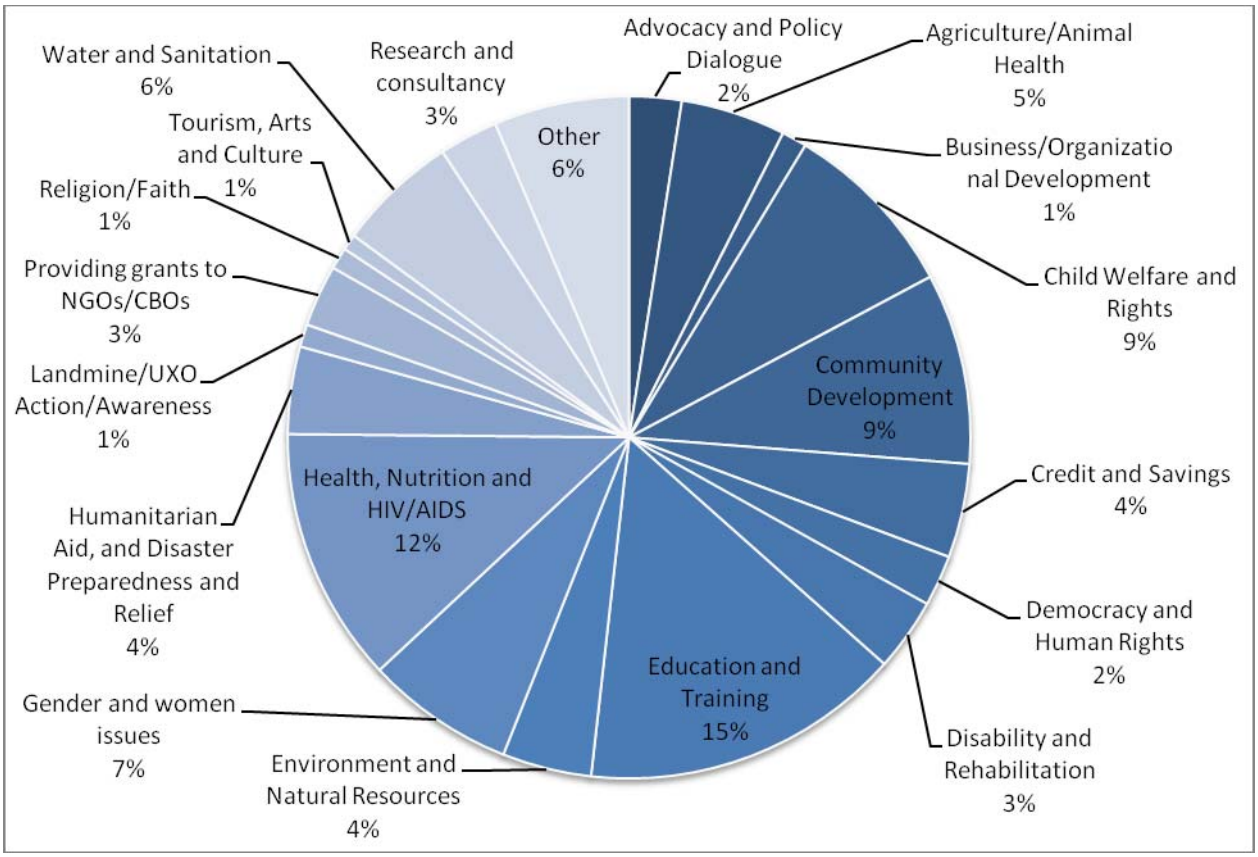

Figure 15 CSOs main areas of estimated spending by sector or theme

By way of comparison, Marshall et al (2011) reported from their research that NGOs reported education, health/ water and community development as the *main* sectors for their work, while the most common sectors for *those in which they were active* included community development, health, education, social services, human rights and environment.

Geographic Distribution of CSO Operations

The main offices of all surveyed CSOs were in Phnom Penh or one of four other cities, but the operations of these CSOs include every province of Cambodia. The respondent CSOs reported operating in an average of 3.7 provinces each.

Figure 16, below, gives an illustration of the number and organization type of CSOs operating in the different provinces of Cambodia, as well as the population of each province for comparison purposes (National Institute of Statistics, 2009) – these values are scaled such that bars of equal height (as in Svay Rieng) indicate a province with the average number of NGOs operating per capita.

The graph illustrates the greater weight of surveyed CSOs operating in Phnom Penh, Battambang and Siem Reap, in that order of importance, followed by Kandal and Kampong Cham. Likewise, the graph illustrates the paucity, at least among the surveyed group, of CSOs operating in Oddar Meanchey, Pailin, Mondulkiri, Preah Vihear, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng where social and economic circumstances would suggest a strong need, as well as those operating outside Cambodia.

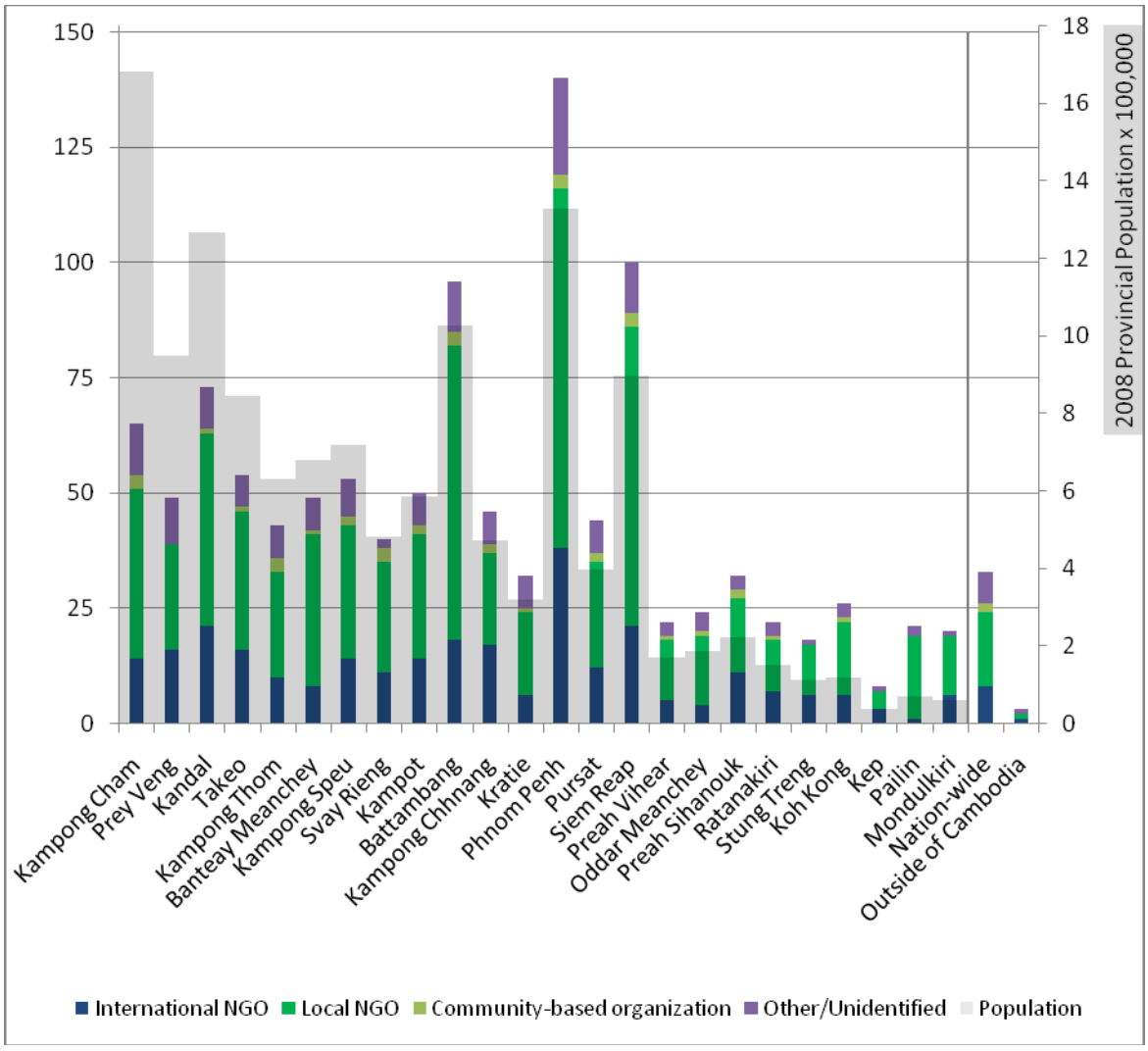

Figure 16 Number of CSOs of different types operating in different provinces (left axis), with a comparison to the 2008 population of those provinces (right axis)

When taken in the context of the relative populations of these provinces however, it seems that those social and economic circumstances are playing a substantial role in CSO operations with those same smaller provinces significantly over-represented in the ratio of NGOs per capita. Amongst the cities, Phnom Penh,

Siem Reap, and Battambang are also over-represented to varying degrees – though without further research it is difficult to draw any conclusion as to whether that is due to their lower socioeconomic status, higher visibility, or more locally based CSOs being involved in the survey[2]. At the other end of the scale, it seems that relatively few NGOs are conducting their main activities in the most populous province of Kampong Cham, while Prey Veng and Kandal are likewise under-represented.

While there are a number of differences, the CRDB/CDC gives a similar pattern of provincial per capita spending from official development assistance in general and via NGOs in particular (Cambodia Development Effectiveness Report, 2011). The most significant difference in the CDC statistics is that after Mondulkiri, Siem Reap and Phnom Penh have the greatest per capita NGO spending, while the survey results show these cities as being average in terms of reported activity. This difference is likely due to a single organization active in both cities which is named in the CDC statistics and has by far the greatest reported disbursal.

Another question was asked to determine the reasons that respondent CSOs chose different geographical areas for their program activities. The most common factors cited by respondents were the goals and mission of the organization (65 percent of organizations), the strategic plan of the organization (52 percent), and community needs (51 percent). Nearly 30 percent of CSOs chose geographical areas based on field research or recommendations, and 24 percent based on the requirements of donors.

Direct Beneficiaries Reported by CSOs Operating in Cambodia

Respondents were asked to give an estimate of the number of direct beneficiaries of their work, with the responses shown in Figure 17. Calculated on a very conservative basis[3], this suggests direct beneficiaries of some 650,000 from our 309 sampled CSOs. If we take a more likely estimate, we estimate the number of direct beneficiaries to be at least circa 1,035,000 across the range of sectors and provinces.

While overall 34 percent of organizations indicated that they had more than 5,000 direct beneficiaries, responses in this matter ranged from a high of 73 percent in Mondulkiri to a low of 31 percent in Battambang. Between provinces, the average percentage of organizations benefiting over 5,000 people was 44 percent, suggesting that CSOs operating in the cities may be more directly targeted at specific groups while those in the provinces provide greater support to communities as a whole – although more research is needed as the sampling method was biased toward NGOs with central offices.

The number of direct beneficiaries each organization indicated can also be compared across the sectors which they identify as their main activity areas. This shows that those involved in advocacy and policy dialogue, democracy and human rights, and humanitarian aid, disaster preparedness and relief have the widest perceived beneficiary reach, with the most conservative estimate (excluding answers of "general population" and "don't know") giving an average number of direct beneficiaries over 4,000 while the more likely estimate is over 6,000. Conversely, those organizations with activities involving tourism, agriculture,

[2] There are no official numbers to confirm this, but it is widely believed that the census-data regarding the population of Phnom Penh is out-dated; with thousands of people seeking work in the capital leading to rapid growth in recent years. Between this and the sampling being biased towards NGOs in Phnom Penh, it may be that, contrary to general opinion, Phnom Penh is not over-represented in NGO activities – simply that most NGOs have head offices in the capital.

[3] The conservative estimate takes the lower end of each range, and discounts the 'don't know' and 'general population' categories entirely. The more likely estimate takes the midpoint of each range, scores the 'more than 5,000' beneficiaries category as 7,500, and scores an answer in the 'general population' category as 5,000 beneficiaries.

education, religion, disability, child welfare, and sanitation, have a relatively focused reach with the average number of beneficiaries being under 3,800 or 2,400 using a conservative estimate.

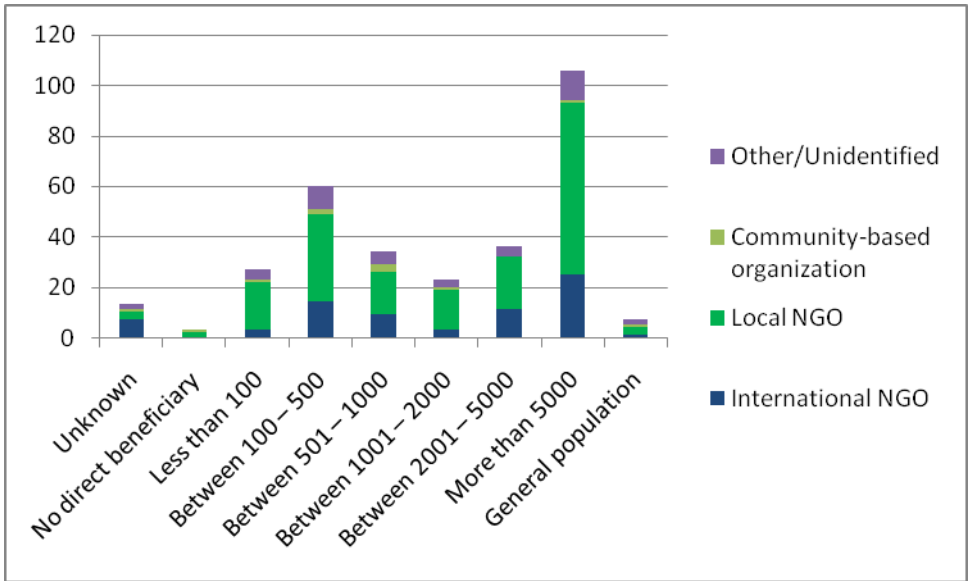

Figure 17 Direct beneficiaries of NGOs

Target Beneficiaries of CSOs Operating in Cambodia

The most important groupings of target beneficiaries identified by respondents were: children (57 percent), women's groups (42 percent) and 'general population' (39 percent), with student and youth groups following closely after that (35 percent).

Figure 18 shows the number of organizations aiming to provide benefit to different sectors of the community, broken down into the types of CSOs (INGO, local NGO, etc). The graphs show that different types of CSOs have different priorities, and support to different sectors is not given equally by different types of organizations. For example, only 13 percent of support given to land conflict communities is from INGOs, while 58 percent of support to religious groups is from INGOs.

Although the research did not seek to identify particular 'gap areas' for CSO interventions, and the data available does not identify them based on any needs or vulnerabilities, this picture of target beneficiaries – particularly in combination with the illustration of CSOs geographical operations in Figure 16 – does offer an interesting snapshot of the areas of focus of CSOs operating in Cambodia, and the areas with considerably less focus.

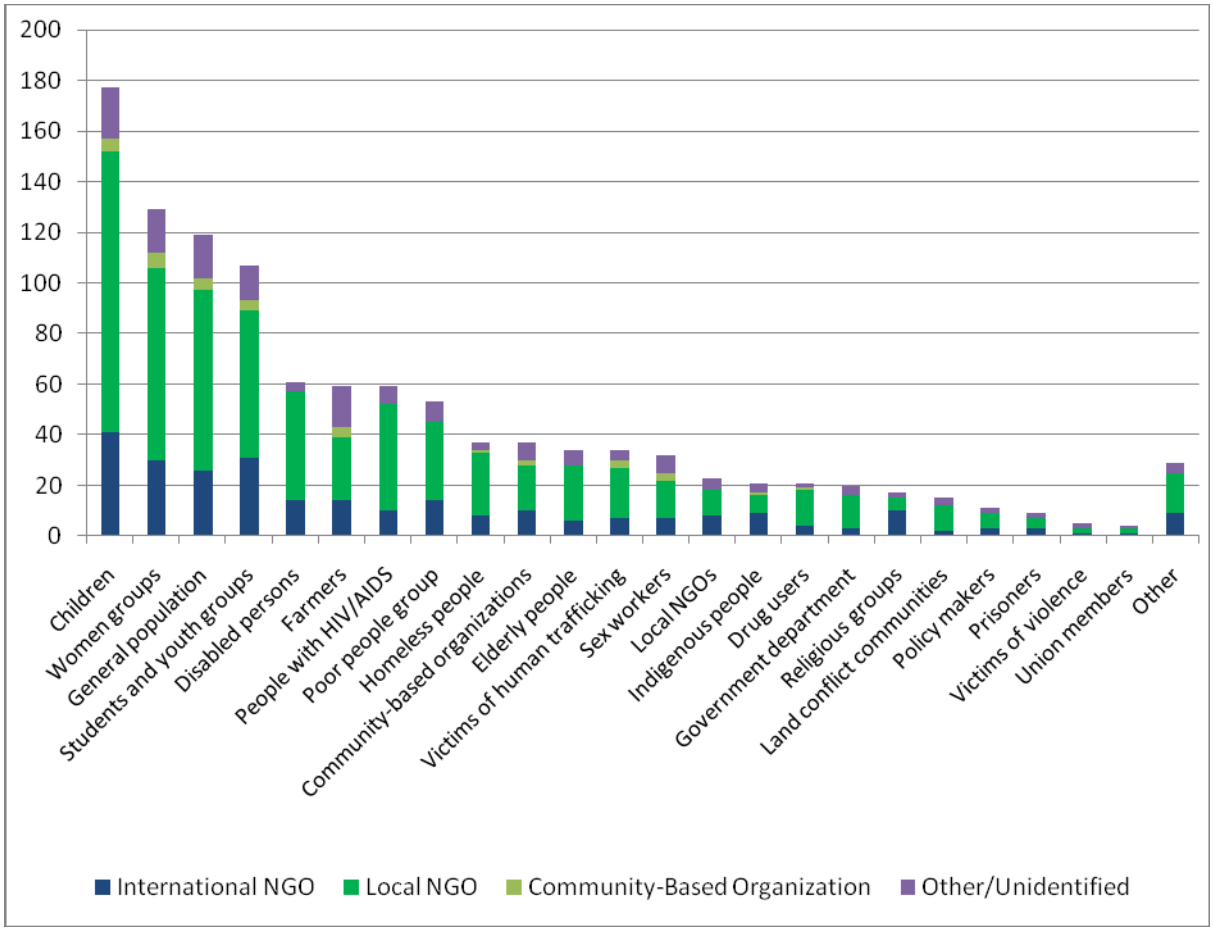

Figure 18 Types of beneficiaries according to organization type

Primary Stakeholders Identified by CSOs

The research question seeking to identify the surveyed CSOs' three main stakeholders (self-identified) elicited that they were donors, beneficiaries and local authorities, in that order, but closer analysis of the responses also offered some interesting detail:

- In the 'tier one' list of main stakeholders identified (the primary stakeholder in a list of 3 main stakeholders), respondents cited donors (38 percent), beneficiaries (17 percent), and local authorities (9 percent) – the latter including chiefs of village, commune or district.
- The main stakeholders identified in 'tier 2' – second most important of the top 3 stakeholders, and clearly by different survey respondents – included donors again (18 percent), beneficiaries (15 percent), and local authorities (15 percent).
- The main stakeholders identified in 'tier 3' – or a responding CSO's third most important stakeholder – included beneficiaries (15 percent), local authorities (also 15 percent) and line ministries (14 percent).

The aggregate survey results identified the primary stakeholders as:

- Donors (65 percent)
- Beneficiaries (48 percent)
- Local authorities (39 percent)

It is clear from the results that the key stakeholders identified by CSOs include stakeholders of different types: donors, on whom they rely for grants, without which it would be hard for them to exist; beneficiaries, to whom they are – or at least should be – accountable for their programs, outcomes and impact; and the local layer of Government, with whom they are often engaged at the program level.

Although 72 percent of CSOs identified at least one level of government as a stakeholder to some degree, it is interesting that CSOs clearly identify local government as a more important stakeholder than central government (such as line ministries), with whom most have registered and/or have MoUs, which may suggest that while CSOs operate autonomously – not aligned with national-level RGC programs and priorities – they nonetheless engage closely with tiers of government closer to the ground on the implementation of programs and their relationship with local plans, contexts and dynamics.

The results of Marshall et al (2011) support this evidence of a strong working relationship with government, with 57 percent of NGOs reporting a positive or very positive relationship with the government, and only 3.5 percent reporting a negative relationship (all local NGOs). While coordination of activities, progress evaluation, and implementation with government was high, about half of the NGOs in that survey also reported experiencing challenges in working with the government, including a lack of trust or communication, restrictive legislation, limited capacity, and lack of interest. Many NGO activities rely on cooperation with local government, so improvements in each of these areas should be sought.

Box 5: Governance & Professional Practice

CCC has implemented the NGO Governance & Professional Practice (NGO GPP) since 2004, aiming at promoting professionalism and good practice with NGOs operating in Cambodia. The Voluntary Certification System (VCS) was developed following examples of NGO accountability and good governance models from around the world. The VCS emphasizes quality, accountability, transparency, good governance, and the practice of self-regulation, in order to build trust and confidence in CSO legitimacy in Cambodia and to promote inclusion of CSOs in the development agenda of the government and development partners.

Network Membership of CSOs

Some 228 of the 309 CSOs surveyed (74 percent) reported being a member of a civil society network, umbrella group or sectoral organization. This is slightly below the proportion of network membership reported by Marshall et al (2011), their research indicating network membership at 80 percent – with 85 percent membership among local NGOs.

A majority of those CSOs who reported belonging to such a civil society grouping cited their membership of CCC (20 percent), followed by the NGO Forum on Cambodia (9 percent), MEDiCAM (11 percent) and the NGO Education Partnership (7 percent). Almost one-quarter reported membership of 'other' networks, umbrella groups or sectoral organizations; while 16 percent responded that the query was 'not applicable' to them.

Governance and Voluntary Certification Status of CSOs

Surveyed on governance matters, almost all of the CSO respondents (97 percent) reported that they have a written constitution or statutes and by-laws, and a little over two-thirds (68 percent) that they produce a strategic plan. Nearly 80 percent of respondents have a governing body (e.g. a board of directors or trustees), most commonly meeting every three months.

A substantial majority (88 percent) said they produce an annual financial report, with the same number producing an annual program report. External auditing of accounting and financial situations is undertaken by 65 percent of respondents, in most cases on an annual basis.

Over 60 percent of respondents said they knew of CCC's Governance & Professional Practice (GPP) Voluntary Certification System, a sector initiative based on the Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia, but then almost 40 percent that they did not know of it, which suggests the need for additional work on outreach and promotion of the certification program before it is fully embedded in the collective consciousness of CSOs operating in Cambodia.

Of those who knew of the GPP, 60 percent said their CSOs desired certification, 9 percent that they did not, and 31 percent that they did not know. This suggests a firm level of support in principle for the GPP, but the need to motivate or incentivize CSOs/NGOs to move forward and engage with the accreditation process.

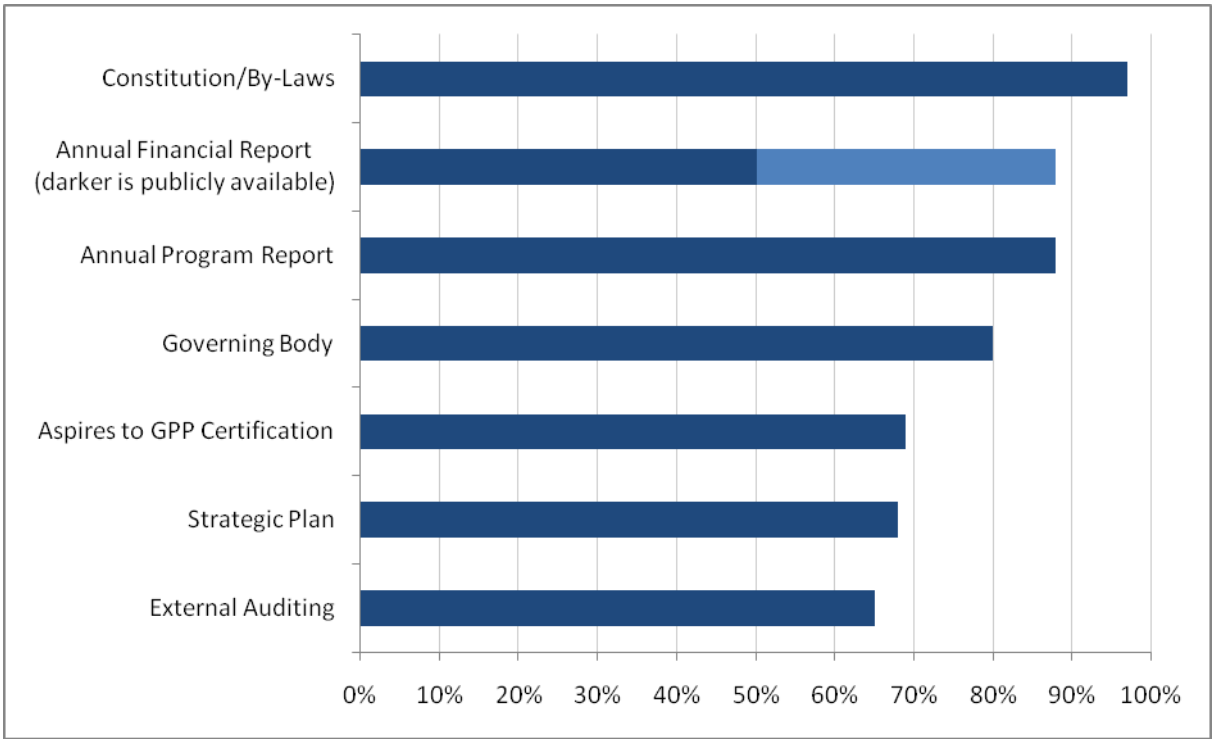

Figure 19 Governance status of Cambodian CSOs

Conclusions

The report first set out the increasingly important place of civil society in development in recent decades, along with growing recognition of the important and diverse roles that CSOs have to play in social, economic and democratic life. It also traced the commitment of civil society, strongly evident in Cambodia, to its own development effectiveness, including the research, learning, transparency and commitment to improve that comes with that.

This research paper follows and builds upon a 2010 paper exploring civil society's contribution to development in Cambodia, along with some consideration of the areas that need to be addressed for enhanced contribution. It does so by bringing more rigor to researching the current situation regarding CSO types and status, funding, activity areas, stakeholder focus and governance elements, as well as further exploring the contributions to development of civil society as a recognized and independent development actor.

Looked at in Terms of CSOs' Contribution, as Revealed in the Quantitative Data:

The respondents reported having 12,813 staff members, with an average staff quotient of 41 (the average skewed by some larger INGOs and local NGOs) and a median figure of 18.5 staff members. If we extrapolate our 41 average employees to the estimate of 1,350 registered CSOs believed to be active, it suggests that NGOs are a significant economic contributor, employing more than 55,000 people in the country. (The number of people employed by all CSOs would, of course, be higher than for this calculation.) Almost 69 percent of survey respondents also suggested that the average level of education in their organization was at university level or higher.

The data from 308 of the 309 CSOs surveyed indicate a total average annual budget (a three-year average) of US$146 million. Extrapolating from that to an estimate of 1,350 active NGOs, local and international, in Cambodia, it suggests a total annual disbursal in the region of US$550 million for the NGO sector even after taking into account grants and disbursals between NGOs.

Respondent CSOs reported that they provided funding for community-based organizations (CBOs) and local associations to the tune of US$10 million in the previous fiscal year. If we extrapolate from that to an estimate of 1,350 active NGOs, local and international, in Cambodia, it suggests a 'trickle down' to CBOs and local associations – to the very grassroots of the Cambodian economy – of some US$44 million a year.

Taking CSOs' responses on direct beneficiaries from a number of ranges outlined in the survey, and extrapolating on a very conservative basis[4], suggests direct beneficiaries of some 650,000 from our survey CSOs. If we take a more likely estimate, we estimate the number of direct beneficiaries from this sample group of 309 CSOs at circa 1,035,000 across the range of sectors and provinces.

To put this number of beneficiaries in greater perspective, with the estimate of 1,350 NGOs in Cambodia, then 2.8 to 4.5 million Cambodians, or approximately 20-30 percent of the population (NIS, 2009), *directly* benefit from the activities of NGOs. Although there is surely some overlap with individuals who benefit

[4] The conservative estimate takes the lower end of each range, and discounts don't knows and 'general population' categories entirely. The more likely estimate takes the midpoint of each range, scores the 'more than 5,000' beneficiaries category as 7,500, and scores an answer in the 'general population' category as 5,000 beneficiaries.

from the activities of multiple NGOs, this figure does not even begin to consider the indirect benefits to other individuals or the country as a whole.

In terms of other aspects of the shape and the profile of the CSO sector, then, the survey data revealed:

- The most important groupings of target beneficiaries identified by respondents are: children, women's groups and general population, followed by student and youth groups. There was significantly less CSO emphasis on communities affected by land conflicts, religious groups, government departments, indigenous people, and drug users; and least emphasis on targeting victims of violence, prisoners and policy makers.
- CSOs report a slight increase in income from 'commercial' or social enterprise activities, from an average of some 7 percent over the past five years to almost 9 percent in 2011, a welcome if still tentative trend.
- The key activity areas that CSOs engage in are: education and training, health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS. Of those activities that were noted, there was a low focus on humanitarian aid/disaster relief; democracy and human rights; and advocacy and policy dialogue.
- Donors, beneficiaries and local authorities, in that order, are CSOs' main stakeholders.
- There is quite a strong emphasis on Phnom Penh, Battambang and Siem Reap, in that order of importance, in CSOs' geographic operations. There is a dearth of CSOs operating in Oddar Meanchey, Pailin, Mondulkiri, Preah Vihear, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng, although relative to the low populations of these areas there are a higher number of NGOs than in the large cities.
- Almost three-quarters of the CSOs surveyed report being members of a civil society network, umbrella group or sectoral organization.
- Regarding governance issues, almost all of the CSO respondents (96.76 percent) say they have a written constitution or statutes and by-laws; two-thirds that their CSOs undertake external auditing of their accounting and financial situation; and a little over one-third that they produce an annual financial report.
- Over 60 percent of respondents said they knew of CCC's NGO Voluntary Certification System. Of those who knew of the NGO Voluntary Certification System, 60.41 percent said their CSOs desired certification.

In relation to **CSOs' contribution to Cambodian society**, and particularly to their target beneficiaries, a number of findings emerge clearly from the qualitative data. There is a real diversity of sectors and thematic areas in which CSOs are contributing to Cambodia – ranging from those in the strong activity areas of education, training, health, nutrition, HIV and child welfare, through to fewer, yet still significant, contributions reported in the areas with significantly less reported CSO activity, such as gender, policy advocacy, water and sanitation, research, organizational development, and arts and culture.

The types of contribution are varied, with a clear pattern across all sectoral and thematic areas that CSOs contribute in delivering frontline services, as is well known, but also in relation to *capacity-building, institutional support and sector development,* and to public policy development and influencing through *engagement with government,* at local and/or national levels.

The research also reveals a strong focus on particular social groups: the poor, marginalized or otherwise vulnerable, within the particular sectoral or thematic contributions of CSOs. For example, many respondents, from areas with a considerable concentration of CSOs contributions across to those with a less weighty contribution, cited their focused contributions to women and particular groups of women, such as pregnant women or mothers; children; youths; orphans; rural and/or indigenous people; people with disabilities; and otherwise vulnerable or 'poor people'.

This focus of CSO contributions made is broadly consistent with the survey findings that CSOs' key target beneficiaries include children, women's groups and youth. A lesser yet important focus is on CSO

contributions to social groupings such as prisoners, sex workers, elderly people, vulnerable communities or 'at risk communities', and community leaders.

Also, while CSOs report strong contributions in the area of service delivery – supporting or supplementing basic social services where the RGC cannot or is not providing them for citizens, or particular groups of citizens – CSOs' contributions, even in this area, reflect a strong emphasis on building capacities, systems and institutions for the country's development.

CSO contributions in areas additional to the delivery of social services – including policy engagement in the different service sectors, as well as community development, environment and natural resources, gender, human rights, policy advocacy – reflect a trend captured in Southeast Asia (Chong, Elies et al, 2011) and characterized by the EU as an evolution from being implementing partners in development programs to being key actors in democratic governance.

The CSO emphasis on supporting and embedding progressive social change, through building capacities, systems and institutions, as well as monitoring public policy and practice – supporting social accountability, or the demand side for good governance, in a role recognized in the government's own National Strategic Development Plan, the Rectangular Strategy – suggests that this evolutionary process may be underway, but this would need to be interrogated further in future research before drawing any firm conclusions.

On a separate matter, although the analysis of civil society contributions in this report does highlight the weight of responses recorded in particular areas it should not be forgotten that important and strategic contributions can also be made through one particular CSO intervention or initiative[5], so that the weight of contributions alone does not capture the richness and importance of civil society's efforts.

This research does not specifically explore the issue of any 'gap areas' for CSOs in Cambodia, whether viewed sectorally, geographically or in terms of particular excluded or vulnerable groups, though this might be a useful area to explore in future research. However, it is hoped that the general picture of *activity areas, geographic focus* and *contribution areas* may be useful as a starting point for CSOs in considering their focus, relevance, and social equity credentials in targeting programs or beneficiaries, as Cambodia and the sector move forward.

For instance, there appears to be a strong emphasis on rural areas and interventions – which has traditionally been a focus of CSOs/NGOs, not just in Cambodia; and which makes sense since most of Cambodia's poor people are still rural – that may need some attention, or refocusing, over time given the current trend of rapid urbanization, and its attendant social problems and opportunities.

The geographic distribution of CSOs' operations, with relatively few operating in Oddar Meanchey, Pailin, Mondulkiri, Preah Vihear, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng, is worth exploring further in future research to better assist the NGO sector in directing activities to meet the socio-economic needs of Cambodia.

The issue of CSOs addressing *contribution* to positive changes, in line with the CSO development effectiveness approach (in contrast with CSOs seeking to track specific attribution to them for a given

[5] For instance, CARE Cambodia piloted an approach to bilingual education for indigenous communities in Ratanakiri 2002. The approach has since been adapted and used by education authorities, and national guidelines for bilingual education adopted in 2010 drew heavily on the successful model. An innovative intervention by Krousar Yoeung has had similar impact on the development of Early Childhood Care and Education guidelines. Handicap International has also been working successfully with several ministries and national institutions on the National Road Safety Committee and its policies.

intervention or program) – and indeed the research addressing *CSOs' reported contributions* (according to their own experience, evaluations and observation) versus objective or impartial assessment of their outcomes and impact – is an important one and needs further development.

The research also shows that many Cambodian CSOs are willing and committed to improving their own accountability, transparency and professional practice, with more than half of those surveyed expressing a desire to apply for voluntary certification. CCC will continue to engage with the CSO community to build not only awareness of the program but to encourage CSOs to build their capacities and improve their practices in order to build trust in the sector as a whole.

Future CSO research, within organizations and at the sector level, will need to become progressively more rigorous, nuanced and sophisticated in accounting for contribution in ways that at least partially address donor and other development partners' demands for measurable results and demonstrated impact. The idea of shaping future research and reporting around CSOs' performance and contributions against the Istanbul Principles and CSO development effectiveness guidelines to which they have committed is worth exploring.

Moving Forward

Just as the civil society sector is committed to maximizing its contribution to Cambodia's social, economic and democratic development, and CSOs have enthusiastically committed to the CSO development effectiveness and accountability agenda of the Istanbul Principles and Siem Reap Consensus, they also require an enabling environment to sustain and maximize their contribution to development.

The Istanbul Principles and International Framework for guiding their implementation set out new challenges for CSOs globally to enhance their results and accountability as they relate to:

1. Respecting human rights and social justice;
2. Promoting women's and girls' rights;
3. Focusing on empowerment, democratic ownership and participation;
4. Promoting environmental sustainability;
5. Practicing transparency and accountability;
6. Pursuing equitable partnerships and solidarity;
7. Creating and sharing knowledge, and mutual learning; and
8. Contributing to sustainable, positive social change.

CSOs increasingly accept, especially with adoption of the Istanbul Principles and International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness, that they have to improve on capturing, reporting upon and accounting for their effectiveness, and this report can be understood as a precursor to the type of CSO development effectiveness report that will emerge over time from civil society's Istanbul and Siem Reap commitments.

In addition to these globally-agreed challenges to civil society on effectiveness and accountability, there are also 'externally posed challenges' that they need to address in some manner and degree.

Recent research on the situation of CSOs in ASEAN countries (Chong, Elies et al, 2011) identified key challenges for CSOs in Southeast Asia: ongoing competition for funds, in a context where international funding may well be reduced by global economic crisis and donors' shifting geo-political priorities; management of government relations, and continued evolution of meaningful, constructive engagement with public processes; attracting more skilled and educated people into their work; transparency and accountability, especially downward accountability to intended beneficiaries, not just for CSOs' activities or outputs but, more and more, for their results.

In a Cambodian context, some of the key challenges identified for CSOs include: the need to deepen ties between CSOs and the communities they serve, with greater popular participation from grassroots up through layers of civil society; improving management and governance capacity; securing more genuine, working partnership with government and its bodies, including access to information and meaningful, structured engagement in dialogue – along with the capacity to take advantage of the opportunities presented; funding dependency and an unpredictable funding environment; and the need for greater strategic focus and coordination among CSOs, together with complementarity with government programs where appropriate and possible (Reality of Aid, CCC, UNDP).

However, an overarching difficulty is that the democratic, civil and development process spaces for civil society to contribute in Cambodia are small, and are continuing to shrink through a range of new laws and measures, including the proposed introduction of the Law on Associations and NGOs (LANGO) appear set to restrict this further (Reality of Aid, 2011).

On the latter front, there is at least now the prospect of further meaningful engagement between government and civil society on the LANGO, as civil society strives to mitigate the dangerous controls and restrictions initially proposed, and rather propose an enabling environment for CSOs to contribute to their maximum potential to sustainable development.

We have seen that, mindful of both internal and external challenges, the changing environment, and increasing demands for continually more demonstration of impact and accountability, Cambodia's CSO sector has committed to the Istanbul Principles and globally agreed Siem Reap Consensus on CSO Development Effectiveness, as well as to progressing important, complementary Cambodian civil society initiatives on governance, standards and self-regulation such as the NGO Voluntary Certification System.

The underlying willingness of CSOs to embrace the self-regulation system identified in this research also augurs well, although the challenge of moving organizations from a positive disposition to a positive engagement remains real.

However, the challenges posed to CSOs in Cambodia do require urgent progress on key issues in the external environment that deliberately hinder, or otherwise limit, their contributions to development. For CSOs, this requires progress on the agreement and implementation of minimum standards for government (and donor) policies, laws, regulations and practices that create an enabling environment for CSOs.

Among other matters, for example, CSOs' development effectiveness requires timely access to relevant information for engagement and decision-making; and legal and institutional frameworks and processes, together with a political and civil culture, that provide for freedom of association, access to information, the right of citizens to organize and participate in national and international decision-making processes.

In addition to clear obligations under international human rights standards and norms, the Royal Government of Cambodia (and other development partners) have made important international pledges to further the Accra Agenda for Action on aid effectiveness – including in relation to fully recognizing CSOs as independent development actors in their own right; better engaging civil society in national development processes; and working with CSOs to create an enabling environment that will allow CSOs contribute to their maximum potential to sustainable human development.

As part of this, it must be acknowledged that tensions and difficulties will arise in government-CSO relations from time to time (as government and CSOs put forward different values, priorities and approaches on different aspects of social, economic and democratic development) but that a meaningful and respectful partnership is important for both parties, who should develop procedures, protocols and mutual accountability mechanisms to keep that partnership on track.

As with other forms of partnership, a genuine and effective partnership for development between government and civil society as an autonomous development actor will require long-term commitments in

negotiating complementary goals, objectives and approaches, facilitated by the emergence of trust and respect in the relationship.

As the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness has stated:

"Given the important roles of CSOs in contributing to development progress and the realization of human rights, all stakeholders – donors, developing country governments, CSO and communities – have a stake in assuring that CSOs realize their full potential."

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Vision:

A strong and capable civil society, cooperating and responsive to Cambodia's development challenges.

Mission:

As a professional association of non-governmental organizations in Cambodia, the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia provides high quality services to civil society and influences Cambodia's development partners with our shared voice.

Values:

- Integrity
- Cooperation
- Responsiveness
- Quality

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