



Case Story

SCOUT MONITORING OF SCHOOL FACILITIES IN CAMBODIA

1. Background

NGOs in Cambodia play a major role in providing and supporting basic social services, often in remote areas and communities. They are present in every province and major sector in Cambodia. They are perceived as independent from government as they were formed when national administration was under UNTAC and after Cambodia's return to democracy in 1991 to 1993.

Local NGOs in Cambodia can be broadly classified into five main categories:

- Democracy and human rights organizations committed to promoting democratic principles and respect for human rights through policy, training, and other advocacy work as well as good governance and anticorruption measures;
- Development organizations involved in education, health, credit, income-generating, and other rural and urban development activities to improve the lives of the poor;
- Support organizations focusing on human resource and organizational development training activities, as well as facilitating networking and related advocacy activities;
- Community-based organizations and associations that take an active role in participating and directly managing their own development processes; and,
- Research and other analytical work and related advocacy activities covering various development issues.

Government attitude toward NGOs is more of suspicion than cooperation. Emerging grassroots-level NGOs are seen as political agencies in disguise. Cambodian NGOs are at the grassroots level. Few



are engaged in training and policy research.

As decentralization takes place in Cambodia, the relationship between the Government and civil society is likely to witness some dramatic changes. The Government is developing and implementing reform initiatives, but is constrained by limited financial resources, human resources, and institutional capacity. It also has to adjust to new demands of external and local stakeholders for greater transparency, accountability, and public participation.

2. CSO Action

The Phnom Penh-based Khmer Institute for National Development (KIND) is a Cambodian nongovernment organization established and registered in 2003. It is neutral, non-profit, non-political, non-religious, and non-racist. KIND's mission is to (a) Build capacity Cambodian people, especially youth group on good governance, advocacy, planning-management, and how to initiate family income generation based on theory and actual implementation; and (b) Study, debate, share information and monitoring on the development process, human rights respect, democracy enforcement and good governance.

Overall, KIND's goal is for Cambodian citizens, especially youth groups, to have the ability and skills in developing themselves and actively participate in social development monitoring. KIND currently has two programs: Civic Alliance for Social Accountability (CASA) and Motivation to Anti-Corruption (MAC).

The Scout Monitoring on School Facility of KIND aims to promote the understanding and participation of Cambodian Scouts in school facility monitoring in Kandal Province and Phnom Penh city. In cooperation with the National Association of Cambodian Scouts (NACS) and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, KIND conducted an orientation on social accountability and taught monitoring skills to 56 Scouts. The focus of the training was on monitoring school facilities.

The monitoring is undertaken in three schools in Kandal Province and three schools in Phnom Penh City. The result of the monitoring will be presented to the potential decision makers in the Ministry



of Education, Youth, and Sports. KIND also plans to transfer this tool to other communities by encouraging and organizing the youth group to monitor public services provide at the commune/Sangkat level.

3. Program Status

Interim reports suggest that trained Scouts have begun requesting their schools to renovate defective facilities or be equipped with new ones. They have also called for improving the school's environmental situation. The Scouts monitor facilities like school windows, doors, libraries, sanitation facilities, tables, chairs, and electricity supplies. If found defective or broken down, the Scouts ask that these be replaced.

4. Constraints and Problems

- Monitoring of state property by students is a sensitive thing for officials in charge of public schools.
- Government has reduced its resource support to KIND.
- Decentralization in Cambodia is slow and cumbersome so that our memorandums of agreement with government ministries often take a long time to process.

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