

WORLD FAITHS DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE



Faith-Inspired Organizations & Development in Cambodia

November 2010



WORLD FAITHS DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE COUNTRY REPORT | 2010



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About this Report

This report reflects the conviction that religious ideas, institutions, and leaders play critical roles in Cambodia's development but these are not well understood. The report represents a broad exploration of the landscape that aims to support Cambodia's development efforts but also to learn some global lessons. It represents a first effort of its kind, for WFDD and to our knowledge more broadly: this in-depth country review is designed to test both methodology and audience, eventually serving as an inspiration and model for other such efforts. The report was led by the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), whose creators were James D. Wolfensohn and Lord Carey of Clifton, and whose Executive Director is Katherine Marshall. The effort has involved partnerships with the Princeton-in-Asia program, the Asian Faiths Development Dialogue (AFDD), the University of Cambodia, and Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. The report benefitted from comments received on an August 2010 draft.

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Cover photo: Venerable Huot Ve Ram teaching students Buddhist chanting at Charay Svay school

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FOREWORD

The Country Vision

This report represents a pioneering effort to “map” the extraordinary array of faith-inspired development work and ideas in one country. The choice of Cambodia for this endeavor reflects the country’s remarkable openness to religion across many dimensions, and the wide range of development challenges that the country now faces. Cambodia is a country at a cross-roads, with a grim immediate past behind it, a deeper history woven from diverse experience and cultures, and the promise of an exciting path lying immediately ahead. WFDD set out to learn how religion is part of this special national challenge, and thus what we might learn by examining, in a detail never attempted before, the perspectives of all the differing faith-inspired actors, individually and as a common community.

WFDD has, from its inception twelve years ago, sought to address the most demanding global challenges, poverty and inequity especially. But we have been determined from the very outset never to stray far from the compelling lessons that come from institutions and people working in communities on day-to-day problems. This country review brings together the two dimensions of WFDD’s challenge. Cambodia confronts the challenges of building peace, reconciliation among its communities, human development (in all its dimensions, especially education and health), assuring good governance, and tracing a path that is environmentally sustainable. These are the leading global development challenges of the 21st century and are well reflected in the inspirational Millennium Declaration proclaimed by the world’s leaders at the United Nations in the year 2000. Yet

these challenges also play out day by day in immensely practical and difficult ways, in communities across Cambodia, demanding approaches that respond to Cambodian norms and culture, and build on the nation’s unique history.

The remarkable insights that emerged from WFDD’s year-long exploration confirmed our expectation that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience to be tapped and a treasure-trove of ideas and insights to learn from Cambodia’s experience. We also stand to learn from the challenges that many of the faith-inspired actors present to conventional development thinking. The task that lies ahead now is to translate these findings into policy wisdom and into practical ideas for future action. WFDD is committed to pursue a path that will seek to learn from the work that faith-inspired organizations do. That is our vision and our mission.

Lord Carey of Clifton
Chair, WFDD Board of Trustees

Preface

WFDD has long wished to explore how we might view and understand development work differently taking full account of the many faith dimensions, through an in-depth exploration of a country. Asking such questions at a global level has opened rich lodes of understanding but, then, translating them into more tangible conclusions has often proved to be quite difficult. Development in itself is immensely complex, and understandings of what development entails can be elusive. Generalizations are often challenged by the diversity of situations. Broad assertions about the significance of religion for development (and vice versa at a global level) are often too broad, their import difficult to discern amidst the diversity of regions, religious structures, and development challenges. The global questions are pertinent and cross-regional linkages and comparisons remain critically important, but we have become increasingly aware that conclusions need to be well grounded in pragmatic local experience.

Cambodia lent itself well to a first exploration. It would be difficult to imagine any development challenge that Cambodia does not face. And, though Cambodia is not itself a nation with widely different religious traditions, at present many different religious traditions are present and, more significant, at work on an extraordinary array of development endeavors. Cambodia's commitment to religious freedom and the considerable latitude for different groups to innovate and build made possible an honest and probing review.

WFDD's review of Cambodia, which we see as a pilot

venture, was led by two fellows assigned to Cambodia for a year through the Princeton-in-Asia fellowship. Augustina Delaney and Michael Scharff lived in Cambodia and travelled widely through the country. They met hundreds of people and pursued their research largely through structured, qualitative interviews.

WFDD's Cambodian partners played critical roles in the project. The University of Cambodia, and especially its President, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, provided critical support. Dr. Kao heads the Asia Faiths Development Dialogue (AFDD), whose mission parallels that of WFDD.

The project also took inspiration from the philanthropic work of Dr. Haruhisa Handa, who is deeply engaged across many sectors in Cambodia, including the University of Cambodia and the Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE. Dr. Handa's work exemplifies a spirit of entrepreneurship and commitment to interfaith dialogue and engagement which points us to important areas for learning and action.

Katherine Marshall
Executive Director, WFDD

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of twelve months of investigation into the links between development and faith in Cambodia. The heart of this study is some 140 in-depth interviews conducted in Cambodia between August 2009 and August 2010 with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, including faith leaders, employees, and volunteers of faith-inspired and secular development organizations, government officials, and bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies. This country review is the *first systematic attempt to fill the information gap about the multifaceted roles that religion plays in development of a country and to explore why and how religious inspiration, organization, and activities matter for fighting poverty*. Cambodia is a country where religious bodies of every imaginable sort are engaged in the broad challenges of development at the local and national levels. The report sheds light on their varied and distinctive perspectives and programs; it explores their similarities and differences, motivations, challenges, and successes. What emerges is richly informative and pertinent for all engaged in the development effort. Apart from the new information it brings to bear, the report highlights contentious topics where dialogue is needed and points to areas that offer particular promise for engagement and partnership.

Cambodia's religious diversity and history: Why religion matters

Cambodia is a Buddhist nation (enshrined in the Constitution), committed to religious freedom

and with important religious minorities, especially Muslims and Christians. Any treatment of Cambodia's development challenges should be mindful of the upheavals of the past few decades, particularly during the Khmer Rouge years, and their effect on the country's cultural, religious, economic, and political fabric. When the Khmer Rouge regime came to power in 1975 after a five-year civil war, it set out to transform at its very roots traditional Cambodian society, and it targeted Buddhist institutions; disrobed and executed monks, destroyed pagodas, and abolished the *Sangha*, the order of monks that oversaw Buddhist practices across the country. While the subsequent Vietnamese-backed PRK government allowed Buddhist practice to resume after 1979, *the revival of the Sangha has been a slow process, and Buddhist institutions, practices, and belief are still in a state of recovery and flux*.

While about 95 percent of Cambodia's population is Buddhist, and much of the country's character and identity is deeply influenced by that heritage, *Cambodia has a small but significant Muslim population* with long historic roots (the Cham and Chvea ethnic groups have lived in Cambodia since the 14th and 15th centuries). Viewed as a unique threat because of their separate language and culture, the Khmer Rouge targeted the Muslim Cham with special ferocity. With the local Muslim society left in shambles after 1979, foreign Muslim groups stepped in to provide aid, supporting mosques and Islamic schools. Their roles have generated some concerns and tensions within the Muslim community and with governments, but generally, interfaith harmony prevails.

The years following the 1979 fall of the Khmer Rouge have also seen a *growing impact of Christian faith-inspired organizations and missionaries*, from many different denominations. Historically, Catholic and Protestant missionaries had difficulty attracting Cambodian converts, but during the turbulent years significant numbers of Cambodians converted to Christianity (largely evangelical Protestant churches), often as a way to make sense of their country's trauma. After the Vietnamese-backed PRK regime ended in 1989, a flood of refugees returned from the border camps, and many Christian aid workers entered the country. While conversion was only part of the agenda of the Christian newcomers, local Christian populations have grown. Today, Christian organizations run an extraordinary variety of programs that reach far beyond Christian communities.

Faith, Development, and Cambodia's Development Challenges

Faith-inspired organizations highlight their deep and long-term *commitment to working with the poorest of the poor. They are present in most communities, including those in the most remote areas.* They are active in virtually all development fields, and, with years of experience in every corner of the country, have accumulated a wealth of experience. Looking through the lens of the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs), faith-inspired work touches every dimension.

The review's first important conclusion is that any notion of an all-encompassing "faith sector" in Cambodia obscures the multi-dimensional and complex nature of faith-inspired organizations and their work. Cambodia hosts *organizations that vary widely in size, mission, and approaches to*

development. They range from large international faith-inspired organizations to regional faith-linked groups, interfaith organizations, national faith-inspired organizations, organizations with mixed or ambiguous faith links, community organizations such as pagodas and churches, and individuals whose work is profoundly inspired by religious faith. The report describes the most salient commonalities and differences among them. Here, diversity is the dominant theme. The review did not seek, nor did it find, any unique or even distinctive "faith" gene or dimension. Simply stated, the review emphasizes that individually or as a group, faith-inspired organizations should not be seen as viewing or working for development goals differently from either public or civil society actors.

A related and important finding is that *the work that faith-inspired organizations do, as a whole but also individually, is generally poorly known*, even within specific faith communities. Barriers of scattered and patchy knowledge and bias in practice have prevented much of the work from being seen as an integral element of development strategies and programs.

While the broad range of faith-inspired organizations defies simple generalizations, the study found many struggling with similar issues and sharing some characteristics and strengths. Three common problems are *poor coordination, fragile financing structures, and inadequate data to measure impact.* Coordination challenges, while not unique to faith-inspired organizations, appear more significant given the wide knowledge gaps about these organizations and the work they do. Financial support for faith-inspired organizations, which comes from widely varying sources, tends to be marked by uncertainty and discontinuity, especially when it relies on contributions from individuals or congregations. This very challenge limits the ability of smaller institutions with

more limited resources to measure their impact on the ground. Assessing impact is further complicated by the tendency of some faith-inspired organizations to measure success in different ways, often implicitly or explicitly seeking to anchor work in intangible, spiritual factors.

The review highlights the rich perspectives about development challenges and experience that emerge from the experience of faith-inspired actors. *Many used a different vocabulary to frame development issues, for example in their tendency to highlight the cultivation of morally and ethically conscious individuals, healing physical and psychological trauma, and promoting the spiritual transformation of individuals as key aspects of truly sustainable development.* Questions about the very purpose of the development enterprise are rarely far from the surface. Yet lacking agreed-upon and convincing ways to measure or account for their often value-rich views of development, faith-inspired organizations can encounter barriers in engaging with potential donors who frame their interest in measurable results.

Despite important similarities, *a larger set of differences characterize the faith-inspired organizations.* Some differences stem from core philosophic and theological approaches that underpin differing perspectives on programmatic methods and desired development outcomes. More differences arise from pragmatic experience of working in communities. This diversity is evident on many specific issues, such as HIV/AIDS work or approaches to children's rights and welfare. It can also define how organizations select the issues that deserve priority, or those issues they eschew or consider taboo. Even so, *a robust conclusion is the pragmatic bent of the majority of institutions and people concerned.* Their work is deeply informed by on-the-ground experience, more than ideology, and they bring powerful voices and experience reflecting the

needs, desires, and concerns of many of Cambodia's poorest citizens.

An issue that surfaced often, with wide differences in approach and practice, is proselytism or evangelism. Among the host of issues that arise when religion and development are considered together, this subject generates particular tension. No clear definition of what constitutes proselytizing and what appropriate behavior is guides day-to-day operations in Cambodia. A significant majority of the faith-inspired organizations interviewed intentionally separate their development operations from religious outreach. They state categorically that they oppose any linking of service and evangelizing work. However, for some faith actors, their very mission defies such distinctions. The motives that draw faith-inspired actors to enter the field of development vary, and this is further evidenced by *an array of hiring practices and organizational requirements.* While some organizations will only hire individuals of the same faith, others do not so discriminate. Some do not take faith identify into account at all, keeping it entirely separate from their day-to-day operations. Others approach common ground on belief as a voluntary practice.

Buddhism and Cambodia's Development

Buddhist values, rituals, and institutions are the cornerstone of Cambodian identity, and as such, would properly underpin the framing and implementation of Cambodia's development strategies. Buddhist institutions historically were deeply intertwined with governance and nation-building in Cambodia, as a result of the tight relationship between the *Sangha* and the monarchy. Today, at the local level, Buddhism is woven throughout the daily lives of ordinary Cambodian citizens. Pagodas, or *wats*, are

a fixture in nearly every town or village throughout the country, a center for community life. However, the level of engagement that each *wat* has with its respective community varies widely. The destruction of the *Sangha* by the Khmer Rouge, the fragmentation of the Buddhist hierarchy, and the temporary discontinuity of Buddhist practice during that period led to a “missing generation” of cultural transmission of Buddhist values. It is evident today in the highly decentralized structure of Buddhist institutions, and thus varying manifestations at the local level as Cambodian Buddhism slowly undergoes rehabilitation. The tension now is between a desire by some to return to old patterns and traditions, namely “spiritual” Buddhism, while others want to forge a new and socially “engaged” path for Buddhism. In either case, Buddhist institutions are a powerful unifying force within Cambodian society, one that offers significant opportunities for partnership and collaboration to achieve development outcomes.

Because they are a trusted resource, *pagodas can offer important support for community development projects*. Their spiritual and practical leadership can promote social cohesion and an ethical, equitable approach, especially in communities that were brought together artificially after the displacements of the long war years. As centers of community life, pagodas traditionally provided education and care for orphans, widows, and the homeless. Pagodas at times provide community safety nets in the form of cash and rice associations, allowing community members to borrow in times of need. Pagoda committees, whose members are elected from the lay community, manage pagoda funds and projects and could be ideal potential partners, as they tend to have higher levels of education and experience and can offer a bridge to the monastic community. Capacity constraints, however, remain a huge barrier to working with Buddhist structures as development partners. While

the study found a general willingness and openness by monks to work on development projects, most lack the training and education necessary for proper implementation of programs. The majority of rural monks are young: in their teens or early twenties, and have had limited education and exposure outside of their communities. Partnership with Buddhist structures at the local level thus calls for extensive skills training and capacity building.

Working with Buddhist structures offers the promise of enhancing the effectiveness, reach, and sustainability of development efforts in many fields. It can also help anchor development in Cambodian culture and values. The practical impediments to engaging Buddhist institutions include the limited number of experienced Buddhist teachers, and a perceived “anemic” understanding of monks’ roles and Buddhist teachings. While there are some 60,000 monks in Cambodia today, it is rarer for young men to enter the monkhood nowadays, and motives for doing so vary. In a country with extraordinarily high unemployment, some mix a spiritual quest that leads them to the monkhood with tangible opportunities it can open, including support for studies. It is acceptable and not uncommon for monks to return to secular life after completing their studies. These real challenges need not, however, deter development partners from exploring partnerships with Buddhist institutions at all levels, given positive experience in some areas and the important benefits that can result. *A first step is to gain a deeper understanding of Cambodian Buddhism.* Regardless of whether the driver of Buddhism is tradition or robust faith, it remains a core element of Cambodian identity.

Faith-Inspired Organizations and the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals

Cambodia faces numerous and varied development challenges—approximately 30 percent of its 14.5 million people live below the national poverty line, human development indicators are low, and weak governance, including corruption, is a serious concern. Today there is far greater social and political stability, after the years of upheaval of war and post-conflict reconstruction. Scores of development-minded organizations, many of which initially focused on peacebuilding and reconstruction, now focus their efforts on poverty reduction and sustainable development. *The eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which Cambodia is striving to attain by the agreed 2015 deadline, are a useful framework for understanding the country’s development challenges given their national and global recognition and their comprehensive treatment of poverty reduction.* Cambodia’s unique situation led its government to adopt a ninth additional goal, “*De-mining, UXO and Victim Assistance*” in recognition of the urgency and priority of those problems. Together the nine goals are the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs).

Faith-inspired organizations are deeply immersed in Cambodia’s development efforts, albeit, at times, with little recognition, through both large and far smaller, targeted programs. Most faith-inspired organizations have at least one program area that falls within the scope of the CMDGs, and while few of them frame their work or their goals specifically in terms of the CMDGs, these provide a useful lens for exploring the range of programs in place and the contributions of faith-inspired actors toward their achievement. *The study reviewed the programs of some 100 faith-inspired organizations and sought to categorize them in accor-*

dance with the CMDGs in an effort to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their work, the variation in their programmatic approaches, scope of work, and size of their programs, and share their overall contributions. Specific examples are explained in greater detail as short vignettes, presented in “boxes” throughout the report.

Our findings suggest that no one sector—education, health, or water and sanitation—attracts more attention than any other, given the significant variation in size, capacity, priorities and resources of faith-inspired organizations operating in Cambodia. *Some focus exclusively on poverty reduction and hunger, fulfilling people’s most basic needs. The review found faith-inspired organizations from all denominations to be deeply involved in education, ranging from support to public schools to the creation of private, religious schools whose curricula do not adhere entirely to government standards. Several Muslim organizations focus their work especially on education and livelihoods. Many organizations, directly or indirectly, promote gender equality and empower women, often through cross-cutting programs. Faith-inspired organizations offer a significant proportion of health services in Cambodia, helping to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. Buddhist organizations have played a major role in HIV/AIDS programs in rural areas. They are playing an equally strong role in ensuring environmental sustainability through the establishment of community forestry and fishery programs, as are other organizations. Faith-inspired organizations in Cambodia also work to address the needs of survivors of landmine or UXO accidents, and advocate for further efforts to clear the remaining hot zones.*

In addition to the CMDGs, the review found other sectors where faith-inspired actors are heavily involved,

which have particular importance in Cambodia, and which are not explicitly mentioned in the CMDGs. These include *human trafficking, caring for orphans, and peace and conflict resolution*, a challenge that has evolved over time but which remains crucially important. A handful of faith-inspired organizations work to address the root causes of trafficking—poverty, a dearth of educational opportunities, and weak law enforcement—while at the same time working with trafficked victims. Many Christian and Buddhist organizations take care of orphans or abandoned children, with approaches to orphan care that differ greatly, even within the same denomination. Peace and conflict resolution work by faith-inspired actors focuses mostly on reconciliation and interfaith dialogue.

Financing

No common and reliable data exists on the amount of financing received by faith-inspired organizations; there is also very limited information about its origins. Many faith-inspired organizations interviewed for this study, especially smaller ones, rely less on international and bilateral donors than do their secular counterparts; instead, many receive donations from other private and public sources, local and foreign alike (i.e. from houses of worship, institutions, and individual worshippers). This may include in-kind donations. US funding sources as well as European and Japanese are significant, but interviewees alluded to a growing Korean influence on the Christian side, and financing from Arab and other Muslim countries for Cambodia's Muslim organizations.

The large bilateral and multilateral donors have limited experience working with faith-inspired organizations. Stereotypes about their methods and capacity are common (notably a robust skepticism and wariness about crossing barriers between secular and

faith institutions, drawing on European and North American norms). Likewise, some faith groups are skeptical about secular development institutions. There is, nonetheless, *growing interest among several development partners in engaging faith-inspired actors more actively, and several faith-inspired programs in Cambodia already receive at least some funding from international donors.* Even as they make efforts to reach out to this “faith sector,” though, this diverse experience and capacity remains largely unknown. Several donors recognize the potential benefit of funding projects by faith-inspired organizations, notably their intensive local knowledge and roots and their commitment to giving true priority to the poorest citizens.

Governance and other reform benchmarks are a central theme in dialogue with the traditional aid community, but it is rare that the experience and assets of faith-inspired organizations are engaged in the debates about what is happening and potential avenues for dialogue and action. The situation is complicated by concerns that China's influence is rising, with an associated lack of transparency. Specific areas of concern center on human rights and the environment. Similar concerns relate to foreign investment; as Chinese and other investors have been welcomed into the country, some large land concessions have uprooted several local communities.

Aid Effectiveness and Coordination

In Cambodia (as is the case elsewhere), weak coordination mechanisms have led to duplication, fragmentation, unpredictability of donor funding, and overlap in programming. Cambodia's development strategy is embodied by the NSDP and its recent update, which outlines strategic priorities

and interventions in the medium-term. High-level coordination mechanisms like the CDCF bring development partners and government together to plan their assistance in response to national priorities and to do so in a collaborative, effective manner. However, NGOs, faith-inspired and secular alike, though they contribute significantly to Cambodia's development, have a limited role to play in Cambodia's coordination mechanisms and policy discussions as they relate to development. One exception is the Technical Working Groups, some 19 sector-specific groups which have one seat each reserved for NGO participation in sector policy, coordination and implementation discussions. The Global Fund's Country Coordination Mechanism is another forum where NGOs are invited to participate; the Global Fund is actively seeking to ensure that faith-inspired organizations can access its funding.

Given the plethora of donor-imposed reporting and M&E requirements, NGOs must perforce dedicate capacity and resources (often a scarce resource) to adapting their programs to different modalities. This problem is particularly acute for faith-inspired organizations, whose often smaller staffs and limited capacity make it difficult to ensure compliance with donor-imposed regulations. With the particularly large number of NGOs operating in Cambodia, and difficult communications, especially in rural areas, it is hardly surprising that many know quite little about what others, and public institutions, are doing. This hampers their ability to coordinate effectively in areas of mutual interest. Many NGOs compete for funding from donor organizations, so collaboration or joint programming can be perceived as potentially a conflict of interest. Among some evangelical and church-linked organizations, hesitation to engage in partnerships is driven by a fear of potentially "watering down" the religious dimension of their work.

Even so, international, national, and local networks work to connect NGOs in Cambodia, with the aim of better and more harmonious aid delivery. Several networks are based within one faith—meetings of Catholic NGOs, of lay missionaries, and of Muslim-inspired NGOs, for example—while other networks are interfaith, or link faith and secular organizations. In large networks like the NGO Forum, which has the largest membership in Cambodia, no distinction is made between faith-inspired and secular NGOs. While there are gulfs between secular-faith and even faith-faith approaches on how to attain key development results, cases of collaboration in Cambodia abound.

Towards Conclusions and Recommendations

Several themes emerge from the review about the nature of faith-inspired development experience, and the significance of faith-inspired organizations' work in the Cambodian context.

Engaging Buddhist institutions: The research points to significant underexplored potential to engage Buddhist structures more actively and more effectively, especially at the local level. Doing so could significantly improve development programs that aim, as so many do, at community engagement and empowerment. More broadly, development partners could better incorporate the perspectives of present-day Cambodian Buddhism in their work, appreciating its distinctive features as well as the ethical perspectives it brings. This could lead to new ways of understanding Cambodia's development challenges, and also to finding more innovative and local solutions. Cambodian Buddhism overall is not notably part of the "engaged Buddhism" trends apparent in some places but more and more examples are surfacing of Buddhist monks

who embrace certain causes and become active development “practitioners,” especially in environmental and HIV/AIDS work. Another critical group of monks and leaders show interest in tackling development challenges, but they are under-resourced. Significant capacity barriers, some the legacy of conflict and war, complicate the picture, as does Cambodia’s geographic fragmentation. The Buddhist *Sangha* currently has a light hierarchy, leading to wide local variations in practice and organization. Many formal Buddhist structures in Cambodia are not actively engaged in promoting equity or alleviating material deprivation. The *Sangha* itself is divided with respect to the appropriate roles that monks and nuns should play, even ideally, in development and governance issues, which usually go hand-in-hand. Still, greater efforts to engage the perspectives of Buddhist leaders at different levels would be well worthwhile, as would further attempts to address the capacity issues associated with current Buddhist efforts.

Coordination: While the entire aid community suffers from coordination issues, *faith-inspired efforts tend to fall on the less harmonized end*. This argues for purposeful efforts to work within existing networks and to bring smaller faith-inspired organizations into the various coordination mechanisms—without making them invest scarce and inordinate time and resources, and without obliging them to compromise their organizations’ foundational values. Networks should focus on defining standards for management and accountability, and even monitoring and evaluation whenever possible. This would help smaller organizations in their efforts to join local and national networks and tap into the mainstream development picture, and would benefit the entire development community, given the rich experience and understanding of local issues that many of these organizations have to offer.

Interfaith work: While interfaith harmony is the norm in Cambodia, there are significant tensions (some centered on proselytism) arising from the country’s shifting religious composition, social change more broadly, and the somewhat bumpy path of the contemporary Buddhist revival. Ethnic and nationality conflicts appear to be on the rise. This suggests that work on interfaith understanding through targeted educational programs and dialogue is needed. “Faith literacy” is an important gap in education and civic knowledge; further, faith and ethnic differences are commonly linked so that conflict resolution and reconciliation work needs to address both dimensions. “Interfaith by praxis,” especially at the local level, involving helping groups to work together on common problems, can yield significant benefits.

Corruption and governance: Given the common emphasis on ethics and integrity among faith-inspired communities, many look to the faith community, at large and individually, for leadership in addressing both short-term and long-term challenges of governance. The close relationship between the government and the Buddhist leadership, including direct links of authority and finance, makes the *Sangha* an unlikely candidate for sustained advocacy efforts against corruption. However, in some, fairly isolated cases monks are speaking out and working for change, especially at the local level. More broadly, monks are looked to from many directions as important leaders in ethics and moral thought. The impetus to reflection and action on education, civic values, and a renewed focus on ethics that many Buddhist leaders demand deserves to be encouraged. They argue that both a renewal of traditional values and development of commonly shared ethics appropriate for a modernizing society are essential, and can and should be tied to Cambodia’s Buddhist heritage. The central importance of communicating with Cambodia’s youth, both through formal education and beyond, is

critical to a commonly argued imperative of restoring a sense of integrity to a country devastated by years of civil war and strife, and to paving the way towards a future society that views honesty and integrity as core values. Experience especially with community level governance programs can be a valuable guide to new participatory approaches to governance reforms.

Peacebuilding and development: Although Cambodia no longer is seen as a nation in “post-conflict” status, the peacebuilding agenda is still fraught with challenges. These include above all the resolution of lingering social and political conflicts (including the ongoing trials of Khmer Rouge leaders), the widespread problem of human trafficking, land disputes, and community reconciliation, to name a few. Current approaches tend to distinguish among peacebuilding and development activities. However, Cambodia’s challenges would be better served by more integrated efforts that address the cross-cutting nature of the problems and their potential solutions.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABE Association of Buddhists for the Environment	CoC Continuum of Care
ACT Alliance for Conflict Transformation	CORDE Cambodian Organization for Research, Development and Education
ADB Asian Development Bank	CPCS Center of Peace and Conflict Studies
ADRA Adventist Development and Relief Agency	CPK Communist Party of Kampuchea
AFSC American Friends Service Committee	CPP Cambodia People's Party
AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	CRS Catholic Relief Services
AJWS American Jewish World Service	CWS Church World Service
ARV Antiretroviral drug	DCA DanChurchAid
ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations	DDP Deaf Development Program
BFD Buddhism for Development	DFID British Overseas Development Agency
BSDA Buddhism and Society Development Association	DK Democratic Kampuchea
CAFOD Catholic Aid Agency for England and Wales	DOTS Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course
CBO Community-based organization	EED Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst
CCC Cooperation Committee for Cambodia	ERW Explosive Remnants of War
CCM Country Coordination Mechanism	FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation
CDC Council for the Development of Cambodia	FBO Faith-Based Organization
CDCF Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum	FUNCINPEC National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia
CDOTS Community DOTS	GDCC Government-Development Partner Coordination Committee
CEDAC Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture	GDI Gender-related Development Index
CHILD Child Health Improvement through Livelihood Development	GDP Gross Domestic Product
CIA Cambodian Islamic Association	GNI Gross National Income
CIDSE International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity	GTZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
CIYA Cambodian Islamic Youth Association	HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
CMAC Cambodian Mine Action Center	HMI Harvest Mission International
CMDF Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation	HRND Human Resource and Natural Development
CMDG Cambodia Millennium Development Goal	

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- ICA** Initiatives of Change Association Cambodia
- ICC** International Cooperation Cambodia
- ICE** Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- ICOC** International Churches of Christ
- IDB** Islamic Development Bank
- IJM** International Justice Mission
- ILDO** Islamic Local Development Organization
- IMF** International Monetary Fund
- JRS** Jesuit Refugee Services
- JS** Jesuit Services (formerly JRS)
- KAPE** Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
- KR** Khmer Rouge
- LDSC** Latter-day Saints Charities
- LWF** Lutheran World Federation
- LWR** Lutheran World Relief
- MCC** Mennonite Central Committee
- MDG** Millennium Development Goal
- MDK** Khmer Mothers' Development
- MDR-TB** Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis
- MEDiCAM** Medical Cambodia
- MSM** Men Having Sex with Other Men
- MMR** Maternal Mortality Rate
- MOCR** Ministry of Cults and Religions
- MOSAVY** Ministry of Social Affairs
- NGO** Non-Governmental Organization
- NSDP** National Strategic Development Plan
- ODA** Official Development Assistance
- OVC** Orphans and Vulnerable Children
- PAGE** Program Advancing Girls Education
- PDV** Peace and Development Volunteer
- PLHA** People Living with HIV/AIDS
- PR** Principle Recipient
- PRK** People's Republic of Kampuchea
- PTEA** Por Thom Elderly Association
- RGC** Royal Government of Cambodia
- RHAC** Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia
- RIHS** Revival of Islamic Heritage Society
- SCC** Salvation Center Cambodia (SCC)
- SR** Sub-Recipient
- TB** Tuberculosis
- TVPA** Trafficking Victims Protection Act
- TWG** Technical Working Group
- UN** United Nations
- UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNICEF** United Nations Children's Fund
- UNIED** University for Education and Development
- UNTAC** United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
- USAID** United States Agency for International Development
- WCC** World Council of Churches
- WFDD** World Faiths Development Dialogue
- WHO** World Health Organization
- WV** World Vision
- YRDP** Youth Resource Development Program

Glossary of Terms

acha Wise man, or lay Buddhist specialist.

bhikkhuni A fully-ordained Buddhist nun.

dāna Generosity or charity designed to achieve religious merit.

deva Spirit, an inhabitant of the heavenly realm.

Dhamma The teachings of the Buddha.

Dhammadayetra Pilgrimage for truth.

donchee Non-ordained nuns, technically devout lay-women who have chosen to reside in the pagoda and follow the eight Buddhist precepts.

khangpleuchitt Suffering from disease of the heart and soul.

Khmer Loeu Literally, Highland Khmer, a term for the indigenous populations of Cambodia.

kilesa Defilements, or the Buddhist term for mental states that cloud the mind (e.g. greed, malevolence, anger).

kot Section of *wat* where monks and novices sleep.

Metta Sutta Loving kindness and forgiveness.

mative Lawyers.

pachar Towerlike structure in a *wat*, used for cremation.

Pali An ancient language close to Sanskrit, used for composition of Theravada canonical texts.

pan-chi Men of learning.

neak tā Buddhist guardian spirits of the land or water.

Sangha The Buddhist community; more specifically, the order of monks and nuns.

sala A structure, typically open on three sides, that provides a space in the *wat* for community meetings; in poorer, rural *wats*, it also serves as the monks' dining room.

sala chan Dining hall within a *wat*.

Satah Confidence or trust.

stupa Decorative structure within a *wat*, designed to house ashes of community members.

tanha Defilement of desire.

Theravada The branch of Buddhism most commonly practiced in Cambodia. Literally, the way of the elders.

veccheakru A doctor/teacher over doctors.

vihear Buddhist place of worship, located in *wat*.

wat Buddhist temple or monastery.

Introduction

The past decade has seen a sharp increase in attention paid to the roles that religion plays in many aspects of global affairs, including the central challenge of fighting poverty and promoting just and sustainable development. While the events of September 11, 2001 brought into sharp focus how potent a motivating force religion can be when channeled for highly destructive purposes, remarkable religious leaders like Desmond Tutu, Gideon Byamugisha, Amr Khaled, and Sulak Sivaraksa illustrate the inspiration and positive force that religion can represent. Diverse debates over the past decade have heightened interest in how religious beliefs and identity interact in an increasingly globalized world and how the often “missing dimension” of religion might affect thinking about a host of global issues and point to new avenues for action. Yet understanding of what religious groups do, and how, remains partial, fractured, and colored by preconceptions. The ideal of full partnership is far from being achieved.

One effort to better understand and bridge critical divides between the faith and development worlds has been the work of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD). Established in 2000, WFDD conducts region and issue-specific research and policy dialogue focused on the questions: how are faith-inspired actors and organizations addressing development challenges, and how can this rich experience contribute more to global development efforts? WFDD anchors its work in experiences and stories shared by development practitioners and faith actors during in-depth interviews, bringing to light the richness of faith experience in its subtlety and

complexity. It also addresses tangible challenges, like tuberculosis, agriculture, or corruption, asking how a better appreciation of religious ideas and roles might enrich and strengthen development programs. A series of meetings between world-respected religious leaders and development actors has been a focus of WFDD’s work; most were organized jointly by the World Bank and WFDD and the most recent was in Accra, Ghana, in July 2009. These encounters have focused on the emerging challenge of involving faith communities more centrally and more effectively in global efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to address the needs of the “bottom billion” of the world’s people.

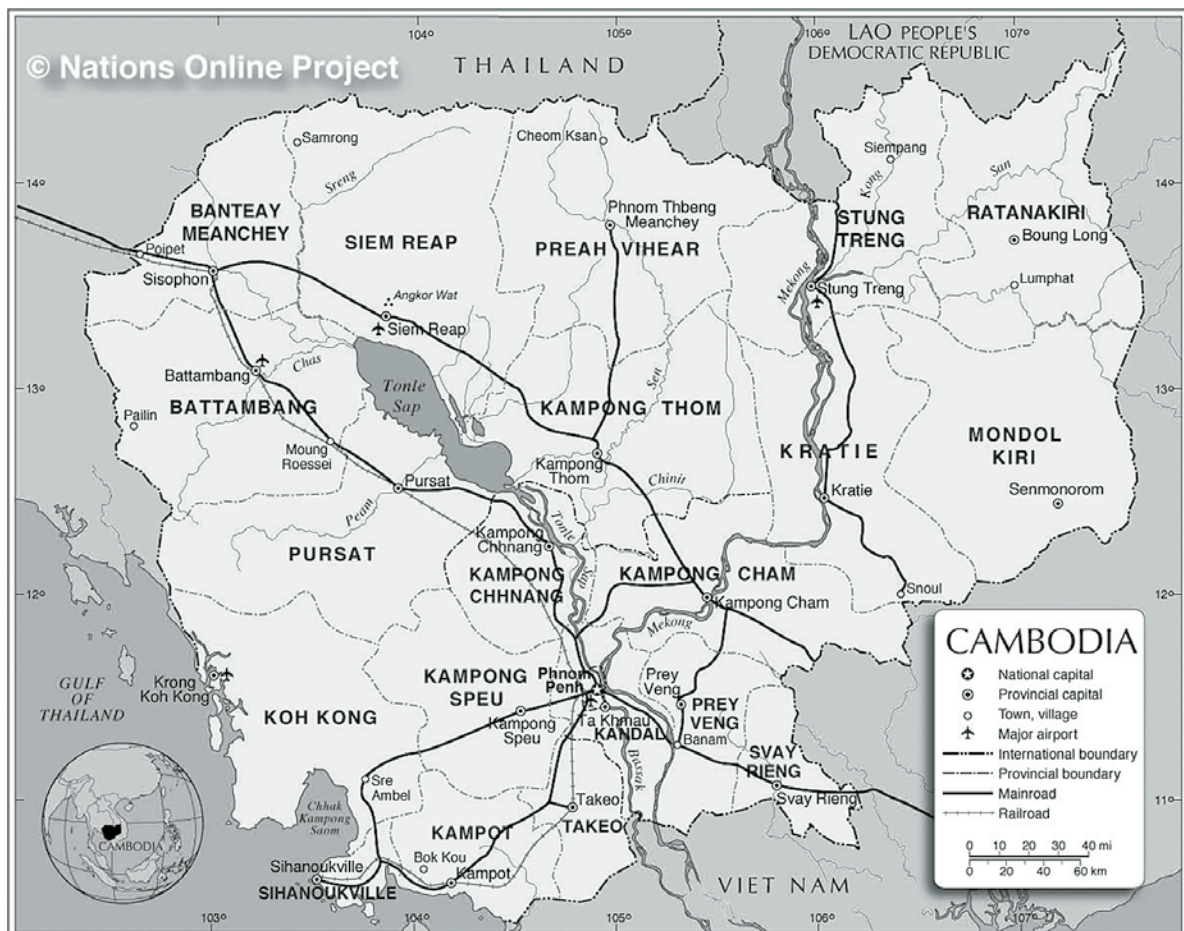
WFDD’s country review of Cambodia was spurred by the demand from leaders of both religious and development institutions for more, and also more specific, information about what faith actors are actually doing to address development challenges at the country level. Knowledge about the work of faith communities, in Cambodia and around the world, is generally poor: what projects they work on, what areas they work in, how effective their work is, how they set priorities, what motivates them, what their sources of funding are, how they are perceived by local communities, and how they coordinate (or do not coordinate) their activities with other faith groups and secular organizations.

The report is first and foremost an exercise in stocktaking: a review of what groups are present and what they do and why. Given the well-known gaps in information associated with the quality, clarity, and impact of faith-

inspired organizations, the review was an opportunity to quantify (in some cases), but above all to qualify this work. WFDD's initial suspicion was that even a basic level of knowledge about what faith-inspired organizations are working in Cambodia and what projects and sectors they are engaged in was lacking; this was reinforced repeatedly during discussions throughout the course of the research. The review's central challenge was to fill that knowledge gap.

In practice many activities that fall within the category of "faith-inspired" development work tend to

fall below the radar screen of development policy, or receive relatively scant attention. This report is motivated by the belief that the activities of faith-inspired actors must be taken into account when development policies are shaped. At its core, this report is an attempt to answer the myriad questions that arise when the words "faith" and "development" are used in the same sentence. It pits those questions against observable realities through a close look at a country, Cambodia, where faith-inspired groups and actors have a significant presence addressing a multitude of development challenges.



Source: Nations Online Project at http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/cambodia_map2.htm

Cambodia's history has been shaped by religion; it is woven through the country's political, social, cultural, and economic life. While overwhelmingly Buddhist, present-day Cambodia prides itself on its openness to different religious traditions, and this has made it possible for a lively multi-religious mosaic to thrive. Religious bodies of every imaginable sort are engaged in the broad challenges of development, from conflict resolution to human rights to trafficking to gender roles to environmental protection to governance. Buddhism, the state religion and the faith of 95 percent of the population, forms a major part of the country's heritage and identity, as do its minority Muslim and indigenous traditions. Yet the legacy of decades of conflict is also strong; both the country's Buddhist institutions and its minority Muslim community are still recovering from the trauma and turmoil of the Khmer Rouge years, when eliminating religion in Cambodia was an explicit state goal. The process of rebuilding Buddhist organizations and Muslim communities is underway, and is inextricably related to Cambodia's development. At the same time, a host of Christian institutions and individuals, representing virtually every strand of Christian faith from different world regions, have been part of humanitarian relief, conflict resolution, and development. As such, Cambodia was a pertinent choice for a country review because of the multitude and magnitude of development challenges facing the country, the varied roles that religious institutions have played, and the international development community's considerable investment in the country's progress.

The research for this report took place between August 2009 and August 2010. The heart of the work

was some 140 in-depth interviews with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, including faith leaders, employees and volunteers of faith-inspired and secular development organizations, government officials, and bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies, as well as many other shorter, informational discussions.¹ The authors visited nine of Cambodia's twenty-four provinces, where they conducted interviews at offices, places of worship, and interviewees' homes. The report draws deeply on the interviews to support claims.

The study was not "commissioned" by any particular group, but several secular organizations and donor agencies in Cambodia expressed interest in understanding better the work of the faith-inspired world. There is interest in deeper and broader partnerships with faith-inspired communities and organizations. This interest is set against growing concern about challenges of strategic focus and coordination, the more so in the present economic climate following the financial crisis in 2008.

1. Several of these interviews are available on the WFDD and Berkley Center websites at <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/practitioners-and-faith-inspired-development>; others, with agreement of interviewees, will be in the future. In some instances, specific organizations or individuals requested anonymity, so their names have been omitted. Among the various reasons for these sensitivities are concerns that operations might be hampered by speaking critically of the government.

BOX 1 CAMBODIAN HISTORY: BRIEF TIME HIGHLIGHTS

600's–1500's The Khmer civilization.

1863 Cambodia becomes a protectorate of France and part of French Indochina (French colonial rule lasts for 90 years).

1941 Prince Norodom Sihanouk becomes king. Cambodia is occupied by Japan during World War II.

1945 The Japanese occupation ends.

1946 France re-imposes its protectorate; new constitution, political parties permitted. Communist guerrillas begin armed campaign against the French.

1953 Cambodia declares independence from France. Under King Sihanouk, it becomes the Kingdom of Cambodia.

1965 Sihanouk breaks off relations with the US; North Vietnamese guerrillas to set up bases in Cambodia to pursue their campaign against the US-backed government in South Vietnam.

1969 The US begins a secret bombing campaign against North Vietnamese forces on Cambodian soil.

1970 Sihanouk is deposed in a coup; General Lon Nol assumes power. Sihanouk exiled to China.

1975 (Cambodia Year Zero) The Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, occupy Phnom Penh; Cambodia is re-named Kampuchea; all urban dwellers forcibly evacuated to the countryside to become agricultural workers. Money becomes worthless, basic freedoms are curtailed and religion is banned. Hundreds of thousands of the educated middle-classes are tortured

and executed in special centers. Others starve, or die from disease or exhaustion. The total death toll during the next three years is estimated to be at least 1.7 million. The Khmer Rouge reset time with “Year Zero”.

1976 The country is re-named Democratic Kampuchea; Khieu Samphan becomes head of state, Pol Pot is prime minister.

1977 Fighting breaks out with Vietnam.

1978 Vietnamese forces invade Cambodia.

1979 The Vietnamese take Phnom Penh; Pol Pot and Khmer Rouge forces flee to the border region with Thailand.

1981 Pro-Vietnamese Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party wins the elections to the National Assembly. The international community refuses to recognize the new government. The government-in-exile, which includes the Khmer Rouge and Sihanouk, retains its seat at the United Nations.

1985 Hun Sen becomes prime minister of the Phnom Penh government. Cambodia is plagued by guerrilla warfare. Hundreds of thousands become refugees.

1989 Vietnamese troops withdraw. Hun Sen tries to attract foreign investment by abandoning socialism. The country is re-named the State of Cambodia. Buddhism is re-established as the state religion.

1991 A peace agreement is signed in Paris. A UN transitional authority shares power temporarily with representatives of the various factions in Cambodia. Sihanouk becomes head of state.

(continued)

BOX 1

CAMBODIAN HISTORY: BRIEF TIME HIGHLIGHTS

1993 General election sees the royalist FUNCINPEC party win the most seats followed by Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP). A three-party coalition is formed with FUNCINPEC's Prince Norodom Ranariddh as prime minister and Hun Sen as deputy prime minister. The monarchy is restored, Sihanouk becomes king again. The country is re-named the Kingdom of Cambodia. The government-in-exile loses its seat at the UN.

1994 Thousands of Khmer Rouge guerrillas surrender in government amnesty.

1997 Hun Sen stages a coup against the Prime Minister, Prince Ranariddh, and replaces him with Ung Huot. The coup attracts international condemnation and Cambodia's membership of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is delayed. The Khmer Rouge puts Pol Pot on trial and sentences him to life imprisonment.

1998 Ranariddh is tried in his absence and found guilty of arms smuggling, but is then pardoned by the king. Pol Pot dies. Elections in July are won by Hun Sen's CPP, amid allegations of harassment. A coalition is formed between the CPP and FUNCINPEC. Hun Sen becomes prime minister; Ranariddh is president of the National Assembly.

2001 Senate approves a law to create a tribunal to bring genocide charges against Khmer Rouge leaders.

2001 International donors, encouraged by Cambodia's reform efforts, pledge \$560 million in aid at a donor conference in Tokyo.

2002 First multi-party local elections; ruling Cambodian People's Party wins in all but 23 out of 1,620 communes.

2003 January: Serious diplomatic upset with Thailand over comments attributed to a Thai TV star that the Angkor Wat temple complex was stolen from Thailand. Angry crowds attack the Thai embassy in Phnom Penh. More than 500 Thai nationals are evacuated by military aircraft.

2003 July: Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party wins general elections but fails to secure sufficient majority to govern alone.

2004 July: After nearly a year of political deadlock, Prime Minister Hun Sen is re-elected after his ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) strikes a deal with the royalist FUNCINPEC party.

2004 August: Parliament ratifies Kingdom's entry into World Trade Organization (WTO).

2004 October: King Sihanouk abdicates and is succeeded by his son Norodom Sihamoni.

2005 February: Opposition leader Sam Rainsy leaves Cambodia after parliament strips him of his immunity from prosecution, leaving him open to defamation charges brought by the ruling coalition.

2005 April: Tribunal to try surviving Khmer Rouge leaders gets green light from UN after years of debate about funding.

2005 October: Prime minister signs a controversial border agreement with Vietnam. Legal action is taken against some critics of the deal, prompting international concern.

2005 December: Opposition leader Sam Rainsy, in exile in France, is convicted by a Cambodian court of defaming PM Hun Sen and is sentenced to nine months in prison.

2006 February: Sam Rainsy receives a royal pardon and comes home after a year in exile.

2006 October: Royalist FUNCINPEC party, a junior partner in the ruling coalition, drops Prince Norodom Ranariddh as its leader.

2007 March: Prince Norodom Ranariddh, who now lives abroad, is sentenced in absentia to 18 months in prison for selling the headquarters of the FUNCINPEC party. He was accused of earning \$3.6 million on the deal but denies the charge.

2007 July: UN-backed court tribunals begin questioning suspects about allegations of genocide by the Khmer Rouge. Former prison chief Khang Khék Ieu, alias Comrade Duch, formally charged with crimes against humanity.

2007 September: Most senior surviving member of Khmer Rouge, Nuon Chea—“Brother Number Two”—is arrested and charged with crimes against humanity.

2008 February: Cambodian court sentences 20 members of small Cambodian Freedom Fighters group to prison for attack on prime minister’s office in November 2000.

2008 July: PM Hun Sen’s ruling Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) claims victory in parliamentary elections. EU monitors say the vote fell short of international standards.

2008 July: Cambodia and Thailand move troops to disputed land near ancient Preah Vihear temple after decision to list it as UN World Heritage Site fans nationalist emotions on both sides. Officials from both states start talks to resolve standoff.

2009 February: Former Khmer Rouge leader Duch goes on trial in Phnom Penh. He is accused of presiding over the murder and torture of thousands of people as head of the notorious Tuol Sleng prison camp.

2009 March: Cambodia accuses a unit of Thai soldiers of briefly crossing the border near the disputed Preah Vihear temple.

2009 November: Parliament strips opposition leader Sam Rainsy of immunity. He is later charged but fails to appear in court. Diplomatic spat with Thailand after Cambodia refuses to extradite ex-Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and appoints him as an economic adviser instead.

2009 December: China increases aid after praising Cambodia for sending 20 Uighur asylum-seekers back to China.

2010 July: UN Cambodia Court sentences Comrade Duch to 35 years in prison.

Cambodia's Religious Diversity and its Historical Setting

Religious composition of modern Cambodian society

Cambodia's rich religious heritage is a central part of its identity, and many, if not most, Cambodians describe Cambodian character, culture, and values as deeply influenced by Buddhism, the faith of the majority (some 95 percent) of the population. At the same time, Cambodia today holds proudly to a commitment to religious tolerance and diversity (reflected also in the Hindu influence in the Angkor Wat temples). Thus Cambodia's credo (on the flag and public documents) is "Nation, Religion, King." Article 43 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief and worship to all citizens (Kingdom of Cambodia 1993). Cambodia has no policy of separation between state and religion.

Religious practice is carefully monitored and at least lightly regulated today, sometimes more in theory than in practice. The Ministry of Cults and Religions (MOCR) has a responsibility to register all religious bodies and endeavors to keep careful records.

Cambodia has no significant interfaith organizations

though some significant interfaith meetings have been held in the past, with government support. The Asian Faiths Development Dialogue (AFDD), linked to the University of Cambodia, has organized two dialogue meetings with national and international religious leaders with the objective of promoting mutual understanding and linking Cambodia to global interfaith movements.

The chart below, based on data from the MOCR, shows the number and percentage of the population identifying with Cambodia's major religious traditions (data is from 2008–2009, the most recent year for which data is available).

MOCR estimates from 2009 report a total of 55,583 monks in 4,307 temples (Kingdom of Cambodia, MOCR). The US report gives slightly different estimates (U.S. Department of State 2009): 13,113,000 followers of the Theravada strand of Buddhism with 4,330 pagodas throughout the country and 31,639 followers of the Mahayana strand of Buddhism with 88 temples. The report's estimate of the Muslim population is between 500,000 and 700,000, with 244 mosques; of the four main branches of Islam

TABLE 1: Religious Affiliation in Cambodia²

RELIGION	FOLLOWERS	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION*
Buddhist	13,691,639	95.81%
Muslim	463,732	3.31%
Catholic	8,755	0.063%
Other Christian**	103,643	0.80%
Bahá'í	6,995	0.05%

* The population is assumed to be 14 million.

** "Other Christians" includes Protestant, Seventh day Adventist, Methodist, and Latter-day Saints. The Ministry of Cults and Religions does not collect figures on the size of each of these individual denominations.

represented in Cambodia—Shafi'i, Salafi, Iman-San, and Kadiani—88 percent of Cham Muslims follow the Malay-influenced Shafi'i branch. The report puts the Christian population at 2 percent of the total.

There are particular uncertainties around the Cambodian Muslim population. Bjorn Blengsli has spent years studying the Cham in Cambodia. A 2005 census administered by Blengsli and his research team gives the same number of mosques as the State Department: 244. But his estimate of the total number of Muslims, 320,854, was significantly below the State Department's count. Blengsli estimates 417 Muslim majority villages in Cambodia (Blengsli 2009b. Email exchange with author). Increasingly dated, but still relevant for development organizations with targeted activities, another survey indicates that the majority of Chams are actually concentrated in 70 rural villages along the banks of the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers in Kampong Cham and Kampong Chhnang provinces (Strubbe).

The State Department report further notes that there

are 1,609 churches, 1,544 Protestant and 65 Roman Catholic ("International Religious Freedom Report"). The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese in Northwestern Cambodia gives a slightly higher figure for the number of Catholic churches in country: 75 churches, although some are "Catholic communities" and not physical church buildings (Figaredo). The Bishop gives the number of Catholic priests nationwide as 60, with only five Cambodian-born. Beginning in 2007, the Ministry of Cults and Religions has tried to enforce a new regulation that required all churches to re-register in order to obtain a new operating license. At the time of publication of the U.S. Department of State's 2009 report, none of the churches had complied ("International Religious Freedom Report"). In short, the true number of churches is unknown.

Cambodia's tortured past: religious threads

Cambodia's tumultuous history shapes its development challenges today, and an understanding of the country's history is critical to appreciating present day issues and development challenges. Religion is

2. An article published in 2000 in the *Phnom Penh Post*, Cambodia's leading daily newspaper, stated that the New Apostolic Church, an international Xian church developed from the Catholic Apostolic Church, had 500 congregations in Cambodia with an estimated 80,000 followers (Phelim and Saroeun). If this figure is accurate, it would suggest that the number of Christians in MOCR's figures is a significant under-estimate.

*"We don't know what will happen in the future.
After the war there are more challenges.
We need water, food, sanitation, health,
and education.
We need the rule of law—what we call
good governance and justice."*



**Venerable Yos Hut, Wat Langka,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia³**

a recurring thread through all Cambodian history; notably, many events of the last century heavily influenced or were influenced by religion, particularly Buddhism. Though Cambodia has not seen “wars of religion” or active religious strife, religious actors and institutions have played prominent roles in the panorama of history.

Cambodia has over the centuries been buffeted by internal and external pressures resulting from wars, foreign control and occupations, and untested political systems. A noted historian of Cambodia summarizes the picture: Cambodia has contended with “expansionist neighbors, European colonial interests, Cold War superpowers, and agendas of ‘globalization’” (Chandler qtd. in Morris 2004 191). It has experienced three different foreign occupations and seven regime changes in the past 65 years alone. This section gives a general overview of Cambodian

history, with an eye to the distinct role of Buddhism in that history. The next section sketches the entry of external religious influences, namely Christianity, into Cambodia, and the rise of Christian, and Islam-inspired organizations. Given Buddhism’s special role, Buddhism in contemporary Cambodia is discussed in Chapter 3. A timeline of events in Box 1 aims to help in navigating both the course of history and the major turning points.

Development during French-colonial rule had two characteristics. The first was an emphasis on the creation of infrastructure such as bridges, roads, and irrigation systems. Second was the creation of a bureaucracy to maintain both the infrastructure and the economic system (McCallum and Nee 10). After French colonial rule ended in 1953, King Sihanouk’s regime enjoyed what many today describe with some nostalgia, “a kind of golden age” (Chandler 7), marked by the rapid expansion of educational opportunities and economic prosperity. Yet by the mid-1960s, Sihanouk, a tacit ally of the communists in North Vietnam despite professed neutrality, saw his power and influence quickly erode as the war in neighboring Vietnam escalated. His increased support of the North Vietnamese was motivated by fear of reprisal in the case of Communist victory over Franco-American forces.

In 1967, Saloth Sar (later known as Pol Pot), and his Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), staged a limited insurgency. Despite Sihanouk’s public neutrality, Sar’s supporters painted Sihanouk as a puppet of the U.S in order to use U.S bombing on Cambodia as

3. Yos Hut underscores the complexities of understanding Cambodia’s violent past: “Individuals who commit evil or violence are influenced by *kilesa*, a pali word meaning, roughly, “defilements”: greed, hatred, and delusion. They should be held accountable for the violence they committed; people who commit crimes must accept their responsibility, even though it is a worldly (as opposed to spiritual) concept. We must try to work to eliminate violence, but what we are really trying to eliminate is *kilesa*. The Khmer Rouge were possessed by *kilesa*. In truth, the defilements are responsible. Everyone is influenced by some degree of *kilesa*—without *kilesa*, all would be saints; they would be the Buddha.” (Yos Hut)

a recruitment tool.⁴ From 1969 to 1973, the United States dropped over half a million tons of bombs on Cambodia's countryside, killing more than 100,000 Cambodians and, many would argue, "driving many survivors into the ranks of the Khmer Rouge" which was operating as a rebel force in rural parts of the country (Kiernan xxiiv). As it became increasingly recognized that Sihanouk was aligning the country with the North Vietnamese, international and local displeasure grew. These events climaxed in the coup d'état of 1970.

In Sihanouk's place, a pro-American regime, led by military officer Lon Nol, took control. In an effort to root out pro-communist Khmer Rouge rebels and to gain access to the North Vietnamese border with Cambodia, South Vietnamese and American forces entered Cambodia, with Nol's permission, in April 1970. The American-led intervention was punctuated by a bombing campaign against Khmer Rouge rebels, which, combined with heavy fighting, caused the deaths of tens of thousands. Destruction of infrastructure and agricultural capacity led to the death of more than 100,000 people, most of them non-combatants, from starvation between 1973 and 1975 (Keyes 1994 54).

On April 17, 1975, the Communist Khmer Rouge rebels, under the guidance of Pol Pot, came to power. This development would radically change Cambodia, including its Buddhist ethos and organization. Pol Pot, through the political institution he declared, Democratic Kampuchea (DK), set out to eradicate the Khmer identity by, among other methods, the extermination of Buddhist practice and institutions. The Khmer Rouge set out to create an ideal agrarian

society, divested of all external influences. Among those influences was religion of all kinds. Monks who did not flee the country or voluntarily disrobe were summarily executed. In an effort to reduce the possibility of an uprising against his rule and to further his plan to create a Marxist-inspired utopian society rooted in agricultural production, Pol Pot emptied Cambodia's main cities, sending citizens to agricultural communes.⁵

Under Pol Pot, society was "to have no antecedents; all institutions of the past were to be destroyed" (Keyes 55). Even traditional historical institutions that formed the very basis of Khmer culture, most notably the *Sangha*, the Buddhist order of monks, were abolished. The *Sangha* had standardized Buddhist practices and teachings across the country, effectively uniting the individual pagodas into one community. The abolition of the *Sangha* was a symbolic move, for it signaled that Buddhist rituals would no longer be recognized. The regime sought a society free of religious preoccupations. Time spent on religious rites was time that could instead be spent working. Says Cambodian historian Charles Keyes: "In no other Communist state was a materialist ideology so radically imposed at the expense of a spiritual tradition" (Keyes 1994 58). When Khmer Rouge forces took over Phnom Penh, a DK spokesperson proclaimed that "over two thousand years of Cambodian history has ended" (Chandler 254). The regime proclaimed that a new era, one focused on achieving utopian goals of brotherly labor, and without the weight of history to detract from these efforts, had dawned.

Nearly one in four Cambodians, or over two million

4. *Pol Pot: Anatomy of Nightmare* by Phillip Short

5. Historian David Chandler describes what the Khmer Rouge hoped to achieve from their massive focus on agricultural production. Large-scale agricultural efforts, says Chandler, were designed to produce a surplus. "By exporting the surplus, it was hoped that the government would earn hard currency with which to pay for imports, and, eventually, to finance industrialization. To achieve such a surplus, the CPK needed all the agricultural workers it could find" (Chandler 257).

people, died as a result of atrocities committed during the Khmer Rouge era, which lasted until the Vietnamese invasion in January 1979. Those targeted for execution included members of the political opposition and anyone with an education. Religious leaders at all levels were particular targets. In 1970, there were an estimated 65,000 monks and 3,369 pagodas in Cambodia. By 1979, more than 25,000 monks had been executed and more than a third of the pagodas had been destroyed (another estimate states that the DK regime was responsible for the deaths of five out of every eight monks) (Keyes 1994 56). During the DK regime, pagodas were occupied and repurposed to serve as storage facilities, prisons, and military offices (Morris 2004 191).

Following the Vietnamese invasion in 1979, the newly established pro-Vietnamese government, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), set out to differentiate itself clearly from the Khmer Rouge.⁶ The PRK's leading officials were former DK military officials who had defected to Vietnam during Pol Pot's reign. Hun Sen, the current Prime Minister, was included in this group. One of the PRK's most dramatic first policies was to allow for the resumption of Buddhist practices. Because Buddhism was such an important aspect of the Cambodian identity, the move was designed to build support for the new regime.⁷ The new law led to "heavy expenditures, especially by émigré Khmers, on Buddhist *wats*, otherwise known as temples or pagodas, throughout the country" (Chandler 285). New *wats*

were constructed and damaged ones repaired. The government also began ordaining monks at this time.

There are conflicting figures on how quickly and in what pattern the *Sangha*⁸ began to recover, but it began slowly and the rebuilding process continues to this day. One report indicates that by 1981, 500 monks had returned to the *Sangha* and 1,500 novices had been ordained. The Great Supreme Patriarch Tep Vong, head of the monks in Cambodia, claimed that 700 pagodas were under construction by then (Harris 194) while another scholar (Michael Richardson) gives the larger number of 3,000 *wats* operating 'with official encouragement' (Keyes 1994). Another report states that in 1982, 2,311 monks had been ordained, 800 of whom were former monks (Keyes 1994 8). The PRK used other religious symbols during this troubled period in an effort to validate its mandate, for example national monuments inspired by Buddhism on the sites of mass graves. Yet the government, fearing that the unchecked spread and growth of the *Sangha* would breed a rival for power, limited its support in key ways, most notably restricting ordinations of monks to men over the age of 50.⁹

Nonetheless, the PRK clearly recognized that Buddhist structures could be leveraged to help the society meet its development needs. The PRK set up management committees consisting of a majority of lay members who represented the secular authorities. From a

6. One of the leading motivations for Vietnam to invade Cambodia was Pol Pot's increasingly cozy relations with China. Pol Pot's state visit to China in 1977 was viewed as a provocation, and particularly angered Vietnam which viewed China as a threat to its sovereignty.

7. The restoration of Buddhism was also a strategic move on the PRK regime's part to gain legitimacy in the absence of a monarch. Catherine Morris has studied peace building in Cambodia and explains that "in traditional Khmer-Buddhist thinking, the nation is held together by the clergy (*Sangha*) and the righteous ruler (*dhammaraja*), the two reciprocally supportive wheels of Buddhist Dhamma (truth, law, and ethical teaching). Historically, the *Sangha* maintained royal support by subordinating itself to the king. The ruler maintained *Sangha* support, popular legitimacy, and social control by observing the dhamma" (Morris 2010).

8. The *Sangha* is used to refer to the entire Buddhist monastic community. In this case, it encompasses all monks in Cambodia.

9. There were exceptions to the rule. In situations when a parent had died, young men were allowed to be ordained in order to "make merit" for that parent (Keyes 1990).

political standpoint, the committees could check the power of “uncooperative senior monks.” But the committees also served another important purpose by ensuring that “a proportion of donations to the monastery were redirected to the building of hospitals, roads, and schools” (Harris 193). Another government declaration, creating eight conditions for the proper regulation of the *Sangha*, had a uniquely developmental tinge. One of the eight standards was to “promote and improve production among the people, so that their living standards may be enhanced.” Another was, “to assist in building social service establishments” (Harris 198). The recognition by the regime of the Buddhist potential to help develop society is not unlike the way secular and faith-inspired organizations today see enormous potential in working with Buddhist structures—namely the monks—towards the achievement of development goals.

After the PRK took power in 1979, Cambodians moved en masse to reconnect with separated family members and return to the cities. But due to the chaos associated with this mass internal migration, that year’s rice crop was neglected, and the country was plunged into famine. The famine led a new wave of refugees, estimated at 600,000, who made their way to the Thai border seeking assistance in refugee camps. The suffering was captured by western TV cameras, which to that point had been shut out of Cambodia. The images broadcast around the world ushered in the first concerted international aid effort within the recognized borders of Cambodia. Up until this point, most aid orchestrated by UN agencies and international aid organizations had been confined to the massive refugee camps that had been established on the Thai-Cambodia border to house Cambodians from all levels of society fleeing the violence.

The Communist government was suspicious of Western motives and the international community hesitated to restore relations with Cambodia; the UN prohibited its agencies from operating in Cambodia because it did not recognize the PRK government. Some of the earliest NGOs to establish operations in the new PRK-controlled Cambodia were American-based faith-inspired agencies. They included Church World Service (CWS), Mennonite Central Committee, and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), which was licensed by the U.S. Department of State to carry out humanitarian activities (Harris 120). Others worked in defiance of the embargo and restrictions (McCallum and Nee 11). But the original influx of humanitarian groups was small because of shared concerns that the PRK regime was siphoning donations of food and medicine to support their military and administrative personnel (Chandler 279). These concerns translated into delayed aid delivery.

The PRK government continued its rule for nearly a decade. By 1988 it was clear that Vietnam was no longer interested in having a heavy hand in Cambodia’s day-to-day management. A result of this shift was an increase in the number of political parties and figures vying for control of the government in anticipation of a power vacuum. The PRK government, in a last ditch effort to broaden its popular appeal prior to the Vietnamese withdrawal, sought to draw on Cambodia’s deep historical and cultural Buddhist identity. With an amendment to the constitution in April 1988, Buddhism was once again designated as the national religion of Cambodia.¹⁰ The government lifted the ban on ordinations of men over 50 years of age, and continued its construction and restoration of pagodas. By 1989, the number of functioning temples was estimated at 2,400—roughly two-thirds

10. The restoration of Buddhism as the official religion was linked to political motivations. The Vietnamese government had recently announced its intention to withdraw forces from Cambodia. The PRK realized it was likely to be competing soon against other parties for power. Making Buddhism the official religion was part of an effort to help broaden the PRK’s appeal.

the number prior to 1970. (Keyes 9). This resurgence of Buddhism was further fueled by the signing in 1991 of the Paris Peace Agreement. The agreement was signed by representatives from the incumbent regime and delegates from the various groups, which had been opposing the PRK since 1981. It established a temporary national government in Phnom Penh and put the UN in charge of organizing and monitoring national elections. The agreement also paved the way for the return of Cambodian refugees living in the border camps, including hundreds of monks and novices who had been ordained while living outside Cambodia.

An important part in Cambodia's history was the series of peace marches, known as the Dhammayietras, which took place from 1992 onwards. The motivating force behind the marches was the Buddhist leader Maha Ghosananda, and monks were prominent in the marches and their inspiration and organization. Box 27 provides further details about Maha Ghosananda's movement. Maha's view was that "wars of the heart always take longer to cool than the barrel of a gun" (Santidhammo p. 44). The first march for Peace and Reconciliation set out in April 1992, just on the eve of implementation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). It was designed to celebrate the return of Cambodia's refugees from the Thai camps. Ghosananda's comment was: "We must find the courage to leave our temples and enter the temples of human experience, temples that are filled with suffering... The refugee camps, the prisons, the ghettos, and the battlefields will then become our temples" (Santidhammo 47). The march, which attracted worldwide attention and is said to have solaced and inspired millions of Cambodians, was followed by

annual marches, with different themes, some calling on great resources of courage due to the violence in their path. Dhammayietra II was in 1993; it was focused on political violence and encouraged people to vote. Dhammayietra III in 1994 again focused on bringing conflict to an end. The fourth Dhammayietra in 1995 focused on landmines; the fifth, in 1996, on the challenges of wild deforestation; and the sixth, in 1997, on the challenges of reconciliation.

The 1993 elections managed by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) produced a delicate coalition between the Cambodia People's Party (CPP), which succeeded the previous communist regime, and the other leading party, FUNCINPEC. The CPP was led by the current Prime Minister, Hun Sen. A power struggle between Hun Sen and his Co-Prime Minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, prompted Hun Sen to launch a coup in 1997, replacing Ranariddh with Ung Huot. Elections in 1998 resulted in the creation of another coalition and Hun Sen was installed as the sole Prime Minister.

Over the past decade, the CPP has continued to consolidate its power. In the most recent general election, in 2008, the CPP won 90 out of 123 seats in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament.

The close relationship of the fortunes of institutional Buddhism to political upheaval and expedience continues to this day. The Great Supreme Patriarch, Venerable Tep Vong, is a close associate of the current Prime Minister Hun Sen and is aligned with the ruling CPP.¹¹ Tep Vong's political connections, some observers say, have tended to discourage the *Sangha* from direct engagement with pressing challenges to

11. Author Sam Yang notes that Tep Vong has a long history of political involvement with Communist-inspired parties and has occupied a number of purely political posts. He was vice president of the Khmer National Assembly and vice president of the Central Committee of the Khmer United Front for National Construction and Defense (KUFNCD). The latter was formed to "represent and control nonparty groups" (qtd. in Harris 197).

the country's economic and political trajectory. It has tended to stay away from controversy. The interplay between politics and Buddhism is a significant factor when analyzing the role monks play more broadly in contributing to Cambodia's development.

The repercussions of the near total destruction of the *Sangha* and the elimination of the traditional lines of exchange among monks, pagodas, and lay people during the 20th century have left a deep legacy on Cambodia's religious and social picture. Many monks are only recently ordained, and many have had limited training and exposure to mentors. While their numbers have increased, their role at all levels, from national to community, is not clearly defined. Many Buddhist leaders have chosen to remain largely on the sidelines of Cambodia's development. Others, however, are emerging as leaders, especially at the local level. A handful of monks working at the grassroots level are addressing critical issues like education, HIV/AIDS, human rights, environment, and good governance. Many others have expressed a willingness to engage communities but simply lack the resources or education to get started. Cambodia's history before 1970 suggests that monks could be highly effective partners in the provision of social services. Chapter 3 explores in more detail the role Buddhist temples and monks are playing in addressing development challenges in Cambodia.

Roles of non-Buddhist faith-inspired actors

While Buddhism is central to Cambodia's past and present, it is not the only religion active within Cambodian society. Islam has long historic roots in the country as well, particularly in the Kampong Cham province. And while Christianity played relatively small roles over most of Cambodia's history for centuries, it has increased notably in presence

and significance over the past two decades.

Christianity

The first significant presence of Christianity in Cambodia came in the early 18th century, in the form of French missionaries. The missionaries arrived a few years before the French protectorate of Cambodia was established. Records from this period suggest that the number of converts was minimal. As French influence expanded in the Kingdom in the late 1800s, one of their key objectives was to ensure the "freedom to move about the country and freedom to proselytize for the Roman Catholic faith" (Chandler 171). The presence of missionaries extending back to colonial times highlights that, as was common in that era, missionary work entailed education and health; that is to say, development-related efforts went hand-in-hand with evangelizing.

There was a significant Roman Catholic community in Cambodia prior to World War II, but the majority of its congregation was French or Vietnamese and missionaries frequently complained that it was difficult to convert ethnic Khmers (Smith-Hefner). Khmer Protestant converts numbered even fewer than Khmer Catholic converts, probably because more Catholic than Protestant missionaries were on the ground. The vast majority of Protestant converts were converted in the 1950s and 1960s by Baptist and Missionary Alliance Churches (Smith-Hefner). Catholic Priest Francois Ponchaud, writing just before the Indochina War, cited "about five thousand [Khmer] Roman Catholics and three thousand [Khmer] Protestants in the country" (qtd. in Smith-Hefner).

Christian churches and their members were also victims of the Khmer Rouge era. An important role was played during the 1975–79 period by courageous witnesses like Father Francois Ponchaud, who broke through the sound barriers that kept Cambodia's

suffering largely unseen by the rest of the world. And the courage of many faith actors and institutions, like World Vision, who returned to Cambodia in uncertain times, has left important memories.

The fall of the Khmer Rouge was a turning point for Christianity in Cambodia.¹² The refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border, to which millions fled throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s to escape conflict and starvation, were the places where many first encountered Christian missionaries and their affiliated humanitarian organizations. The suffering endured during the Khmer Rouge period, and the accompanying questions of why some people survived when so many of their friends and family perished and how such terrible events could occur, are part of a narrative recounted by many survivors; they often assert that this explains why some individuals were particularly receptive to conversion efforts. People were perplexed that the Khmer Rouge, who were raised in the Buddhist tradition, could kill so many people. There was a sense that Buddhism had failed. Thus, “after making it to the border camps and meeting Christian missionaries, these Khmers were exposed to a new religious narrative, one that offered them the possibility of interpreting their difficult experience in redemptive terms, as a sign that a Christian God had deliberately chosen them to be saved from death” (qtd. in Smith-Hefner). The refugees were told that it was God that had provided the protection and strength to make it to the camps and who had a plan for them.

Many converts became members of evangelical Protestant churches or groups, as they were particularly active in the refugee camps and in early humanitarian efforts in post Khmer Rouge Cambodia. For example,

Cambodian-born Pastor Lim Pheng, Mission Secretary of the Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA), fled with his family to a Thai border camp. It was while staying in the camp that Pheng first encountered the Adventists. The second significant expansion in church rosters occurred after the collapse of the socialist PRK regime. Lieke Coenegrachts arrived in Cambodia in 1982 with the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE), an umbrella organization of global Catholic NGOs. Coenegrachts recalls that, during the 1980s, there was limited activity by Christian-inspired development organizations inside the country. Evangelizing occurred, but it was almost always done underground because of government restrictions.

After the end of Communist rule in 1989, the pariah status that Cambodia had endured from many countries during the era of the Vietnamese-backed government largely disappeared. International groups flocked to the country, eager to address the colossal humanitarian crisis that saw families' shelters destroyed and livelihood opportunities gone, a multitude of orphaned children, and social services such as schools and hospitals in shambles. As organizations scrambled to meet the needs of the survivors who had lived through the upheavals in Cambodia itself, huge numbers of refugees started returning from the border camps, exponentially increasing the need for aid and relief services. The refugees were accompanied by a “flood of Christian aid workers” as well as a host of “evangelical and missionary workers,” many of whom had been in the border camps and moved their operations inland (Coenegrachts).

Islam

The Chvea were the first Muslims to arrive in

12. The Cambodian Christian has a detailed narrative of the early years of Christians working and meeting in Cambodia at <http://www.cambodianchristian.com/article/?p=125>

Cambodia, their migration from the Malay Peninsula or the Indonesia archipelago occurring sometime around the fourteenth century. A “second wave” of Islamic followers, called the Cham, who hailed from the former Champa kingdom in present day Vietnam, came to Cambodia around the late fifteenth century (Blengsli 2009a 175). However, not all of the Cham’s ancestors shared their Islamic faith. The gradual conversion of the Cham, from a form of Hinduism mixed with Buddhist and animistic elements, to Islam took place in the mid-1600s. Not more than 200 years following the conversion from Hinduism to Islam, the Champa kingdom saw its demise.

French colonial powers tolerated the Cham peoples, who lived in tightly knit communities largely independent of the majority Buddhist Cambodians. Historically, the Cham and Chvea often did not live in the same villages, a pattern that continues to this day, for they spoke different languages and regarded themselves as ethnically distinct. When French colonial authorities administered a census in 1874, they found 25,599 Chams in Cambodia, which at the time was about three percent of the population (Strubbe). The population grew exponentially over the next century, and by 1975, before the Khmer Rouge came to power, reached an estimated 250,000, making the Chams the country’s largest minority.

Despite their relatively small numbers, Pol Pot viewed the Chams, with their separate language and distinct organizational networks, as posing a unique threat. The greatest peril in his eyes was the danger of the Chams undermining his vision of a homogenous society. In 1975, Pol Pot ordered the deportation of 150,000 Chams living on the east bank of the Mekong River. By 1979, it is estimated that the Khmer Rouge either

“Cambodia’s Muslim minority is arguably the most rapidly changing in Southeast Asia, and one of the fastest changing in the entire Muslim world.”



Bjorn Blengsli, Anthropologist

killed, starved, or worked to death roughly 100,000 of the country’s Cham population (Kiernan 486). Mufti Ysa Osman, however, suggests that the number of Chams who perished under the Khmer Rouge was much higher; approximately 400,000 to 500,000 out of a total Cham population of 700,000 (Blengsli 2009a 182).¹³ Notwithstanding these varying estimates of the number of Chams who died, their suffering equaled or exceeded that of their Buddhist compatriots.

Rebuilding the community after 1979 posed enormous challenges and, as one observer commented, “What is clear is that the Muslim society in Cambodia was in shambles by 1979 and ripe for Muslim proselytizers from abroad” (Blengsli 2009a 183). Like their Christian counterparts, Muslim groups also began providing aid, a pattern that has continued to this day, albeit with different forms of assistance. A handful of Malaysian missionaries began traveling throughout the provinces, but it was not until 1989 that the first organized missionary group, affiliated with the Dakwah movement, arrived in Cambodia. The early 1990s saw the emergence of local Islamic-inspired NGOs. The Cambodian Islamic Association (CIA), founded by Math Ly and now run by Vann Math, currently a Senator in the Cambodian National Parliament, emerged during this time, and provided a range of development assistance.

13. In 2000 Osman was appointed head of the Muslims in Cambodia by Cambodia’s current Prime Minister, Hun Sen. Osman has published a book profiling the lives of thirteen Cham prisoners held in S-21, the Khmer Rouge’s notorious prison in Phnom Penh.

Cambodia's elections in 1993 are regarded as the period in which the floodgates of foreign development assistance were opened. Soon after the elections, Cambodia's Muslim community saw a sizeable increase in donations from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia. The bulk of funding was directed to support the construction of mosques and Islamic schools. A much smaller portion went to support other social services (Thrupkaew). The first documented Islamic school in Cambodia was established in 1948 in Battambang province. However, it was not until decades later, with the support of foreign countries and donors, that Islamic schooling established a firm footing on Cambodian soil.

The period of the mid-1990s was marked by enormous competition among the various Muslim traditions, and nowhere was the competition more fierce "than with regard to Islamic schooling" (Blengsli 2009a 189). One of the competing parties was the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS), a Kuwait-based charity, which established operations in Cambodia in the mid-1990s. Headquartered in Cham Choa commune on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, they set up a network of boarding schools throughout the country mainly targeted at Muslims who follow the Salafi movement (Blengsli 2009a 187).

Foreign donations are also supporting students to study abroad. Cambodian Muslim officials estimate 80 Cham students study in Pakistan every year, while the bulk, or about 400, attend Islamic schools in Malaysia. Others, though the exact number is unclear, are studying in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Egypt. Emma Leslie, director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, an NGO that promotes research on peace-building throughout Asia, says changing practices in Muslim groups can be clearly linked to those going abroad for studies. "For the first time you see women fully covered in black, which

you never saw before," says Leslie. "Those are the guys who have been to study in Saudi Arabia and have come back and told the women they must dress like that. Those who have been to Malaysia are much more liberal about women, but they still come back with a different perspective" (Leslie).

Moreover, as fundamentalist and orthodox strains of Islam influence the younger generation, the ideological chasm between younger and older generations continues to widen. "A large percentage of the younger generation desires an implementation of a Saudi Arabian type of Islam in Cambodia" (Blengsli 2009b).

That so many Muslim students are opting to travel abroad for education has produced a host of domestic organizations, supported in most cases financially by foreign governments and individuals abroad, to support students in their pursuits. Many of the same organizations implement traditional development assistance programs with activities like vocational training, agricultural support, and education about human rights issues. There are approximately 20 local Muslim NGOs in Cambodia, among them the Islamic Local Development Organization (ILDO), the Cambodian Islamic Youth Association (CIYA), and CIA. The Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation (CMDF) acts as a coordinating body and channels donor funds to eight Muslim development organizations. Nearly all of the Muslim-inspired NGOs in Cambodia aim first to provide aid directly to Muslim communities. A number of these same organizations, including CIA and ILDO, stress that while their programming may target heavily Muslim areas, they do not exclude individuals of other faiths from participating in their programs. Moreover, it does not appear that these organizations make a distinction when working with Muslim beneficiaries among followers of particular strands of Islamic thinking, nor do they make a distinction between giving support to Cham or Chvea Muslims.

Foreign-based organizations, on the other hand, tend to provide assistance exclusively to Muslim communities and often have an overriding religious agenda. These organizations hope to convert Muslims to their strand of Islam. Anthropologist William Collins, in a report for the Phnom Penh-based Center for Advanced Study, notes that the Kuwaiti Committee of Association of Development of Islamic Culture in Southeast Asia has a clear religious agenda and has been “particularly zealous in rooting out . . . beliefs and practices which are regarded as non-Islamic” (qtd. in Thrupkaew). According to Collins, the Association “will only give aid to communities which, in its view, have achieved an acceptable level of religious punctiliousness” (qtd. in Thrupkaew).

Other faith traditions

The 2008 Cambodia General Population Census reports 104,081 individuals who do not practice Buddhism, Islam, or Christianity (National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia). Some development actors working in Cambodia are linked to these other faith traditions. Prominent among these are the American Jewish World Service, which has substantial programs in Cambodia. The International Center for Conciliation, a Boston based group, is linked to Jewish organizations, with Elie Wiesel as chair of its Board. The Bahá'í faith has a significant presence (see Box 11).

Indigenous faiths

Traditional, indigenous faith traditions play various and often important roles, especially in the most remote areas. These ancient traditions are also inextricably woven throughout Cambodian Buddhism. Adherents of indigenous faiths reside throughout Cambodia, though they are largely concentrated in the northeastern provinces and the mountains of Koh Kong Province in the southwest. They make up the majority of the populations in Mondulkiri

and Ratanakiri Provinces (Minority Rights Group International). These indigenous populations are descendants of Cambodians whose ethnicities and religious practices predate Khmer Buddhism. Collectively, they are known as the *Khmer Loeu*, or “Highland Khmer” (Swann).

Various sources estimate that the total *Khmer Loeu* population lies between 100,000 and 200,000 (Minority Rights Group International). As noted in Table 2, several distinct ethnicities and religions fall under the category of *Khmer Loeu*.

Despite different ethnic backgrounds, many indigenous populations have largely assimilated into Cambodian Khmer culture. Many of the Kuy, for instance, speak Khmer and identify as Buddhists (Swann 50). Others indigenous groups, such as the various Pearic tribes, generally continue to practice indigenous religions. These practices are characterized by ancestor worship and a belief in the spiritual importance of the natural environment.

From the Angkor Period, when they were regularly enslaved, through the present, Cambodia's indigenous populations have faced persistent exploitation and attempts at coerced assimilation. In the 1960s, the Cambodian government attempted to assimilate the *Khmer Loeu* into mainstream Khmer society by means of education and forced resettlement (Ross). Seizing on anti-government sentiments, the Khmer Rouge recruited *Khmer Loeu* throughout the next several decades.

Cambodia's indigenous populations are often extremely poor and relatively socially isolated from the Khmer Buddhist majority by both culture and language. This isolation amplifies the human rights issues they face. In the words of Shalmali Guttal:

“Indigenous peoples are possibly the most disenfranchised and vulnerable groups in Cambodia... they are marginalized in several ways. Since they are a minority, they are disadvantaged by language, cultural and social barriers. Because they live in relatively remote areas, they have little access to health and education services. ... Perhaps more than other communities, indigenous people are not always aware of the rights, entitlements and protections extended to them by national and international laws. As a result, they are more easily exploited by outsiders who take advantage of their isolation from mainstream society to intimidate, trick or manipulate them” (Guttal, qtd. in Diokno 55).

As Guttal suggests, providing education is a problem because of language and accessibility, though the government has offered a small number of pilot projects that provide bilingual education (Minority Rights Group International).

While the following indigenous groups are not necessarily explicitly faith-affiliated, they are comprised of or work specifically with indigenous populations:

- Indigenous Rights Active Members (IRAM)—Initiated with the assistance of the NGO Forum, IRAM is an informal network of Cambodia’s indigenous community leaders. IRAM hosted the Asia Caucus meeting of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2007, and continues to serve as a coordinating body for and voice of Cambodia’s indigenous communities.
- Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA)—Originally founded in 2005 and registered

as an independent organization in 2008, CIYA is supported by the Heinrich Böll Foundation. It is still in a developmental stage, as, while it is based out of Phnom Penh, it aims to eventually reach out to indigenous populations at the community level throughout Cambodia to assist in advocacy efforts.

- Highlanders Association—Established in 2001 and based in Ratakaniri Province, the Highlanders Association has led community protests against economic land concessions in addition to advising indigenous populations of their land rights.
- Bonlok Khmer—see Box 20 for a description of Bonlok Khmer’s programs.
- World Wildlife Foundation—WWF-Cambodia works to protect biodiversity around the Mekong River and the Lower Mekong Dry Forests and to promote sustainable use of natural resources.¹⁴

14. Environmental conservation efforts generally have the positive effect for indigenous populations of preserving traditional land while allowing them to continue NTFP activities; however, environmental regulations can sometimes have exclusionary effects (Diokno 34).

TABLE 2: Geolinguistic Classification of the Main Indigenous Populations in Cambodia

ETHNIC GROUP*	SUBGROUP	GROUP	FAMILY	NUMBER (APPROX.)	LOCATION
Jarai	Chamic	Austronesian	Austro-Thai	14,000	Ratanakiri
Rhade	Chamic	Austronesian	Austro-Thai	a dozen	Mondulkiri
Kachac	North Bahnaric and Chamic	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	2,200	Ratanakiri
Tampuon	West Bahnaric	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	18,000	Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri
Brao	West Bahnaric	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	5,500	Ratanakiri and Stung Treng
Kreung	West Bahnaric	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	14,000	Ratanakiri
Kravet	West Bahnaric	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	4,000	Ratanakiri (Veunsai) and Stung Treng (Siempang)
Lun	West Bahnaric	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	300	Ratanakiri (Taveng, Veunsai) and Stung Treng
Phnong	South Bahnaric	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	19,000	Mondulkiri, Stung Treng and Ratanakiri
Stieng	South Bahnaric	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	3,300	Kratie (Snuol) and Mondulkiri (Keo Seyma)
Kraol	...	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	1,960	Kratie and Mondulkiri (Koh Nyek)
Mel	...	Bahnaric	Môn-Khmer	2,100	Kratie
Poar	(Eastern Pear, Western Pear)	Pearic	Môn-Khmer	1,440	Kampong Thom and Pursat
Saoch	(Saoch)	Pearic	Môn-Khmer	175	Kampot and Pursat
Suoy	Môn-Khmer	1,200	Kampong Speu (Oral)
Khmer Khe	Khmer	Khmer	Môn-Khmer	1,600	Stung Treng (Siempang)
Kuy	...	Katuic	Môn-Khmer	14,200	Preah Vihear, Kampong Thom, and Stung Treng

* Other groups identified in 1995 for which no other data are available include Robel (1,640), Thmaun (543), Loemoun (280), Kola (31), Kaning (150), Poang (260), and Roong (in Keo Seyma, Mondulkiri).

Note: ... = unknown.

Source: Bourdier (1996), qtd. in Asian Development Bank 2002.

Faith, Development, and Cambodia's Development Challenges

Why focus on faith and development?

Faith-inspired actors bring impressive levels of commitment, compassion, and technical expertise to development efforts, in Cambodia and elsewhere. But the focus of this review invites the question: Is there a “faith sector” in Cambodia? Do those with explicit links to faith view development differently or act in a different way from their secular partners or colleagues?

One simple answer is that there is no “faith sector” in Cambodia, or, for that matter, in any other country. The organizations that we refer to as “faith-inspired” are extraordinarily diverse, ranging from very large to tiny, with wide differences among, for example, Protestant missionaries, community Buddhist associations, and established Catholic development programs. Many (though not all) are considered and may consider themselves part of Cambodia’s emerging civil society. They belong to several NGO coordinating bodies. Simply put, the programs and institutions reviewed do not constitute a self-identified or specific group.

At the same time, some specific issues do emerge when religion is intertwined with development. These include a host of doubts and questions as to what motivates the various actors concerned (is it about truly godly inspiration or a desire to gain followers and even profit? Are secular institutions motivated only by love of market?). Policies on faith-linked topics like evangelizing and on common concerns like care of children at risk and orphans can highlight a range of distinctive views colored by faith perspectives.

And while there are challenges, there is also a wealth of ethical and practical understanding that can come when religion is explicitly considered in relation to development. The very understanding of development may be viewed through a different lens both by service providers and their beneficiaries. The exploration of different readings of fact, understandings of policy measures, performance of institutions, and views of poor communities can add a depth and nuance to the conventional understandings of development.

TABLE 3: Cambodia's Development—Some Indicators

ECONOMY	HEALTH
GDP (in billions of US\$)	Life expectancy at birth, (years)
2008: 10.35	2008: 61
2007: 8.63	2007: 60.4
2006: 7.27	2006: 59.8
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population)	Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)
2007: 30.1	2008: 89.5
2004: 34.7	2007: 91.4
	2006: 93.4
Per capita income (US\$)	Fertility rate, total (births per woman)
2008: 711	2008: 2.913
2007: 603	2007: 2.972
2006: 516	2006: 3.041
	Malnutrition prevalence, weight for age (% of children under 5)
	2008: 28.8
	2006: 28.4
ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION
Forest area (% of land area)	Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)
2007: 56.7	2008: 77
2006: 57.9	2004: 73.6
2005: 59.2	
CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita)	School enrollment, secondary (% net)
2006: 0.289	2007: 34.1
2005: 0.268	2006: 24
2004: 0.256	2005: 24

Source: Data: "Cambodia." World Bank, 2010. Web. 1 August 2010. <http://data.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/countries/en/cambodia_en.xls>.

Rethinking development from a faith perspective

While faith-inspired actors confront the same development challenges as their secular counterparts, their fundamental understandings of development often differ. Box 2 contains a variety of answers that faith actors gave in response to the question: "What does development mean?" Some confirm the central cur-

rents of present development thinking, for example in their emphasis on empowerment and community engagement. Others suggest differences of vocabulary, nuance, or even fundamental values.

The concepts of love, compassion, and forgiveness heavily influence how faith actors approach and deliver services. Many, for example, might highlight the cultivation of morally and ethically conscious

individuals, healing physical and psychological trauma, and promoting the spiritual transformation of individuals as key aspects of truly sustainable development. This is not to say that these concepts are absent in the work of secular organizations or that they universally characterize what faith-inspired actors do; but faith-actors do tend to place special emphasis on these qualities and ends. Where rights are concerned, there is a wider variety of approach and emphasis, with some faith-inspired groups deeply committed to advancing human rights as a central tenet of their development work, while others take a somewhat more skeptical view, preferring to emphasize responsibilities rather than rights.

The report would be derelict if it did not acknowledge

that many in the secular development world look askance at such value-laden approaches (and certainly vice versa, with faith-inspired groups skeptical about the technocratic merits of development theologies). These misgivings reflect a large difference in vocabulary that acts as a deterrent, together with concerns colored, above all, by tensions around religion in the United States and Europe, expectation of separation of “church and state,” a desire for fairness reflected in efforts to avoid benefiting one category of institution over others, and worries about positions that faith-inspired groups take on topics like reproductive health rights and gender equality. These are important and sensitive topics that often shape development partners’ approaches to many, if not all, faith-inspired groups. They also deserve careful hearing and engagement. In Cambodia, a particular area



A mother and her child on the grounds of the Vipassana Dhura Buddhist Meditation Center in Kandal Province.

of concern appears to be the role of non-Buddhist and especially Christian organizations in a highly Buddhist society, and questions about how far the admirable development work they do is colored by efforts to convert Cambodians to their faith. Other issues are concerns about how far faith-inspired organizations support human rights objectives, though to date these topics have tended to be less contentious in Cambodia than in some other countries.

There is real merit in listening and promoting dialogue to explore the implications of these different understandings. Faith-based conceptions of development have much to offer, particularly in a country like Cambodia that is still suffering the aftershocks of war and deep internal rifts, and whose overall development is challenged by poor governance at all levels. But secular organizations and donors today are deeply interested in measurable results, and such measures often sideline topics like humility and compassion. Unless and until faith-inspired organizations figure out how to articulate and measure these aspects of development more effectively, they are likely to meet some reservations and even barriers in engaging with some potential partners.

Challenges of “mapping” Cambodia’s faith-inspired world: development challenges

Cambodia’s complex and tumultuous past has left a formidable agenda of development challenges. In the face of massive gaps in the Cambodian government’s capacity to provide basic services (and questions about their priority), civil society actors have rushed to fill

any gaps they find. No one knows the exact number and shifting categories complicate the picture, but perhaps 3,000 local and international NGOs are on the ground building and staffing health centers, renovating classrooms, training teachers, and teaching citizens about their rights and how to engage the government more effectively.¹⁵ A first question and challenge is how faith-inspired organizations fit within this complex NGO civil society arena. In formal listings, approximately 106 of the total number of groups have evident faith linkages and are actively involved in implementing projects.¹⁶

Simply adding together the results of projects undertaken by faith-inspired organizations does not tell the complete story of work by faith-linked groups in Cambodia. There are also the faith-linked donors, whether global agencies or individuals, whose mission is essentially to provide funding to both faith-inspired and secular organizations. Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), for example, is an association of the Protestant Churches of Germany, which funds development projects globally. There are also smaller church and mosque-based donor groups. Then there are the individuals, like Paul and Aileen Munn, who belong to a church in Australia and whose private donations purchased the land on which the Cambodian office of the Christian-inspired NGO Habitat for Humanity constructed 21 houses in 2009.

It is precisely this tremendous diversity of projects and tasks being undertaken by faith-inspired actors, organizations and donors, that makes exploring their efforts to address these multi-faceted challenges most appealing and challenging.

15. The Ministry of Interior has registered over 2,000 local NGOs and associations, though many of them are believed to be inactive (McCallum and Nee 16). Thomas Parks, writing in a 2008 study, puts the number of local and international NGOs at 600 (qtd. in McCallum and Nee 16).

16. This figure is derived from drawing on various sources including personal interviews, the registration logs of the coordination bodies such as MEDiCAM, and the NGO Forum.

What distinguishes faith-inspired organizations?

The term “faith-inspired organization”¹⁷ encompasses a very broad array of groups, and they differ in both their size and the degree to which religious beliefs and principles factor into their work. A small missionary group which runs a school would fit the definition, as would a global organization undertaking numerous projects such as running health clinics, digging wells, and training teachers. The key link between all faith-inspired organizations is that faith is a chief motivator of their activities.

Three emerging issues: coordination, financing, insufficient information on effectiveness

For the faith-inspired organizations that are the focus of this review, three central and common characteristics emerged: poor coordination among them, with their very diversity a contributing factor; a complex, little understood, and fragile pattern of financing, often outside the government and donor financing channels; and a dearth of quantitative data evaluating the effectiveness of faith groups, both in themselves and compared with secular agencies. The coordination problem is perhaps most salient, with many groups unaware of how government strategies translate into practice and of what other groups, often with similar mandates, actually do. These are central issues for the review, treated in greater detail below.

Commitment to the poor or the poorest of the poor

A common thread which binds the world's major faith communities is their belief in the importance of helping the poor. As one thoughtful person put it: “[f]or believers, to be a Jew or a Muslim or a Christian

implies a duty to respond to the needs of the poor and marginalized” (Ferris 316). While acknowledging the important differences in view on definitions, the terms “faith,” “religion,” and “spirituality” are used interchangeably in this report, with a similar definition in mind: a force which is other-worldly and from which values are derived and motivations rooted.

Faith-inspired organizations in Cambodia differ greatly from one another, but a common linkage is their concern with the most pressing issues of the development agenda: relieving poverty, helping the suffering, and promoting social justice. Nearly all faith-inspired organizations, it can be argued, retain at least one of the following characteristics: “Affiliation with a religious body, a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values, financial support from religious sources, and/or a governance structure where selection of board members of staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation and/or decision-making processes based on religious values” (Ferris 312). Indeed, one reason why religion and development generally work so well together is because they are both “strongly focused on the ideals of the future, in particular a future which is better than [the] present” (Lunn 939).

Emphasis on local communities

In Cambodia, as is the case in many countries, the efforts of these religious groups are often most effective at the local level. This is due to several factors, including organizations' efforts to work in partnership with existing structures such as pagoda associations (groups formed around Buddhist temples) and local government councils. When the Cambodian arm of the global Christian-inspired organization, World Vision (WV), is interested in implementing a new

17. The terms “faith-inspired” and “faith-based” are used interchangeably throughout the report. Whenever possible, the phrases “faith-inspired” or “faith-based” are written in full, but on occasion, when quoting directly, the abbreviation for “faith-based organization,” or FBO, will be written.

BOX 2

WHAT DOES DEVELOPMENT MEAN?

“According to Buddhism, the pali term “bhadana” means development in English. It focuses primarily on four categories: physical development, moral development, mental development, and wisdom development.”

—Venerable Sok Bunthoeun

“We try to look at human development, not human resource development because if you look at a human as a resource then they are like petroleum. Humans are more than petroleum. The human value is in the human capacity and human potential.”

—Heng Monychenda,
Executive Director,
Buddhism for Development

“It’s not just material growth. It has to be more than material growth. It’s individual growth, not just in terms of your wealth, but also in terms of your spiritual qualities, your ability to help your community... whether you are growing or you are stagnant. In terms of material development, it’s not something that creates wealth. It’s the life of the community. It’s not just about giving roads, but allowing options for transportation between regions to enhance market accessibility, abilities for people to go to school, abilities for people to access health facilities. It’s not just about material. It’s more about communities growing together and also having access to services and how that happens; whether there is collective community capital rather than just individual capital.”

—Elyssa Ludher,
Technical Advisor for CORDE



Women in Battambang Province receive training on sewing techniques.

“I believe there is both internal and external development. Internal development means having peaceful minds. Minds that are free of hatred and prejudice. External development is improving the livelihood of people through education and food security.”

—Seang Samnang,
Co-Director for Management,
Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)

“We have to have a road to travel on and a good school and a good community ... We also need to have faith, morality and a good heart. We need both. Sometimes the government uses the word when they want to make a big resort or transform a place. It can be quiet scary; it depends on who uses the word.”

—Sek Sarom,
Dhammayietra Center

“To me it means that ordinary people have more options and better basic living conditions for their lives. So it is opportunities and it’s also the core conditions under which everyone’s lives are decent and improve from generation to generation.”

—Patricia DeBoer, Regional Director,
Asia for American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

“Development is on the outside and on the inside. Outside is to have more. These aspects have to work together. Development means to have infrastructure like schools and irrigation, but also means to the organization of the community and the heart of the community, the heart of the people. The heart is really thinking to the benefit of everybody, not an individual. We work a lot in community development, but in the heart. The heart has to be open to the other. In Cambodia, it is easier than in a developed country where they develop I, I, I. Here, we develop we, we, we. Here in Cambodia, there is one specific aspect of development. That is development of the culture of Cambodia. Cambodia has a beautiful culture. Their music, dancing, instruments, and poetry are incredible.”

—Msgr Figaredo Kike,
Apostolic Prefect of Battambang



A monk in Phnom Penh shares his story with the interview team.

project, its representatives first meet with the provincial governors in the poorest districts of Cambodia, and then ask specifically about the poorest areas within those districts (Ear-Dupuy). Maryknoll, an international NGO registered in Cambodia belonging to a Catholic mission movement, provides food subsidies to the “poorest of the poor” so that they are able to receive AIDS treatment at a Phnom Penh hospital (Montiel). Many of their patients cannot afford to purchase food at the hospital, which would likely discourage them from seeking help.

Working in remote regions

Faith-inspired organizations’ quest to help the “poorest of the poor” elicits another shared characteristic: operating programs in the most remote areas, where few, if any, other organizations have a presence. Nearly all of the faith-inspired organizations interviewed for this report cited “empowerment” as a chief goal of their efforts. Accordingly, the majority of these groups focus their efforts at the grass-roots level, where the least empowered and poorest citizens are most likely to be found. Yet this is not to say the groups themselves are only locally-based. In fact, some of the largest global faith-inspired NGOs, like WV and Caritas, a worldwide federation of NGOs led by Roman Catholic communities, address very local challenges in dozens of countries. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a global relief and development agency affiliated with Anabaptist churches in the United States, seeks to partner on the local level in Cambodia with “organizations [they] think have a lot of capacity, but are limited in their abilities” (Yordy). American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) deliberately works in the most remote, often insecure areas (DeBoer).

Long-term commitment

Expatriate jobs in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are often seen as transient positions, with

staff staying only a few years in a particular country before moving on. There is a perception, which very much resonates with the interview findings of this research, that international volunteers and paid staff of faith-inspired organizations tend to stay involved longer, perhaps inspired by the view widely held by faith actors, that development is an enduring, holistic activity. Examples of the longevity of the work of faith-inspired development workers abound. Sister Leonor Montiel, who is originally from the Philippines, has been in Cambodia with the Maryknoll Sisters since 1997. Her colleague, Father Charlie Dittmeier, who runs the Deaf Development Programe (DDP), a Maryknoll project educating the deaf community, has been in Cambodia for ten years. He is an American citizen and has worked with deaf communities since 1969. Prior to coming to Cambodia, Dittmeier lived in Hong Kong for 13 years where he also worked with deaf communities through Maryknoll. Lieke Coenegrachts, a Catholic lay missionary who runs a preschool for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, first set foot in Cambodia in 1982.

Diversity of theology and its links to development

A common pre-conception is that the “faith link” carries with it certain specific characteristics; in short, that all faith-inspired organizations are pretty much the same. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is certainly true that there are cases where constraints imposed by theology and doctrine can impose limitations on what faith-inspired actors can do in the realm of development (Catholic approaches to condoms in HIV/AIDS programs is the classic example). However, diversity of views is far more the rule than any common “faith perspective”. A consequence of the “lumping together” is that local perceptions and ideas about faith organizations are skewed. For instance, the actions of a few proselytizing missionaries can

cause an entire village to view all Christian-inspired organizations as hidebound evangelizing bodies.¹⁸ The Catholic Diocese of Battambang, which operates in Cambodia's northwest, takes a hard line against proselytizing because of concerns that the proselytizing actions of a few protestant missionary groups hinder the Church's development assistance work (Figaredo). Proselytizing is a thorny issue and suffers from a lack of concrete data, not to mention a widely accepted definition that would clearly identify its proponents, but it appears to be less widespread than some suggest. A shift away from proselytizing activities in recent years may be due to a growing consensus that it is morally wrong to trade services, such as healthcare and education, for accepting Bibles or Qur'ans.

Taboo issues

Faith and theology do affect the way that some agendas and issues are seen. Certain issues may be seen as "off-limits" to faith-inspired organizations, depending on their faith tradition. For instance, there is increasing recognition by the global health community that HIV transmission between men having sex with other men, or MSM, is particularly high in Cambodia. Yet this study did not encounter any faith-inspired organizations addressing the issue, presumably because of sensitivities around sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, in the world's major religions. (As a point of contrast, the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, a secular organization, recently instituted programming to address HIV/AIDS among MSM). However, the fact that the organizations interviewed in this study did not mention specific programs

addressing HIV transmission amongst men, does not necessarily preclude this vulnerable group from inclusion in HIV/AIDS programs run by the same organizations, or others that were not included in the study.

Gaps in knowledge on impact, and measuring "intangibles"

Even when information about a group's activities is readily available, it is often difficult to assess their impact. This fairly straightforward and common challenge for all development work is accentuated by the desire of many faith inspired organizations to reflect a broader range of measures of success, many of them intangibles, related to spiritual factors. This is especially true of the activities of Buddhist organizations, which tend to measure success not, for example, in the number of antiretroviral drugs distributed, but in the number of AIDS patients whose minds are freed from suffering as a result of counseling by monks. For instance, the Thai monk, Sulak Sivaraksa, widely acknowledged to be a torch-bearer of "socially engaged Buddhism,"¹⁹ observes that "spiritual transformation must accompany material transformation in order for progress to occur" (Tyndale 24). Faith-inspired organizations often—though certainly not always—do not have a rubric for "success" to which government and/or secular institutions can relate. Greg Auberry, a senior official with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Cambodia, has initiated partnerships between CRS and Buddhist organizations in the past. He cautions that difficulties abound in this realm: "What's done on behalf of Buddhism is hard to quantify" (Auberry).

18. Another example of one organization complicating operations of others is Indonesia. According to press reports, a handful of Christian groups attempted to mix proselytizing with their humanitarian work in Muslim communities affected by the 2004 tsunami. This led the communities to criticize all Christian-affiliated relief operations (Ferris 323).

19. A relatively new term which stresses monks venturing beyond the pagoda's walls to assist in meeting the social needs of their communities.

Low budget operations and mounting financial pressures

Most faith-inspired organizations have smaller staffs and budgets than their secular counterparts. Because they receive funding from sources outside of the traditionally recognized donor agencies, their bookkeeping and financial dealings may not receive the scrutiny that larger organizations see as par for the course because they interact regularly with mainline international institutions. A further and apparently growing challenge is uncertainties and discontinuities in funding. Many faith-inspired organizations report that these long-standing issues are accentuated by serious financing cuts linked to the 2007 world financial crisis. Limited financial and human resources also contribute to the inability of many faith-inspired organizations, especially smaller ones, to measure the impact of their work.

There are important exceptions, with several large and well-funded organizations. World Vision (WV), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Church World Services

(CWS), and Lutheran World Federation (LWF), are exceptions to this generalization; they have large staffs and are required by their donors to meet a host of requirements including maintaining transparent accounting practices. In fact, WV is the largest faith-inspired organization in Cambodia measured in staff size, amount of territory covered, and operating budget. The agency employs approximately 1,000 people and has projects in 38 areas. In 2009, WV spent US\$17.8 million on programs.

Mounting pressures for greater transparency

The general call for better governance, coupled with growing donor requirements, has forced some organizations with a presence in Cambodia to re-evaluate their operations to meet new stringent reporting requirements. For those organizations unable to keep pace with the changing requirements, especially smaller organizations working exclusively at the local level with limited resources, it could mean less access to critical funding.



A nun at *Wat Sampov Meas* in Phnom Penh discusses her views on Buddhism and her decision to become a nun.



A teacher communicates with students using sign language at Maryknoll's Deaf Development Program in Phnom Penh.

Faith-inspired organizations in modern Cambodian society

While some common threads link most faith-inspired organizations, an equal, if not greater array of features separate or distinguish them. Three significant points of departure include the ways individual faith actors describe the essential motivations that drive and guide their work, their views on how their religious commitments (especially, where relevant, evangelizing) and development work are related, and their staffing and hiring practices. The first two topics were central themes of many interview discussions and the latter emerged from a range of discussions as an increasing preoccupation and characteristic of many institutions.

A proposed categorization of Cambodia's faith-inspired organizations

The table below is a rough effort to “map” the categories of faith-inspired organizations operating in Cambodia today.

Motivations: what drives people and institutions?

When faith actors (both in international studies and in

CATEGORY	MAIN AREAS OF FOCUS	EXAMPLES
International faith-inspired organizations	Full range of development work	World Vision, ADRA, Islamic Relief, AFSC, CRS, EED
International human rights and advocacy groups with faith links	Trafficking, environment and climate change	International Justice Mission Alliance of Religions for Conservation
Regional faith-linked groups	Humanitarian and community focus, wide range of activities	Risho Kosse kei Sokka Gokkai
Interfaith organizations	Interfaith dialogue	WCRP AFDD ACT in Cambodia
National faith-inspired organizations		Buddhism for Development
Mixed or ambiguous organizations with some faith links	Education, health, conflict resolution	Sihanouk Hospital of HOPE Initiatives of Change
Region specific in Cambodia	Capacity building, community interventions	Khmer Ahisma
Community organizations	Locally inspired programs	Pagodas, churches, mosques
Individuals with faith inspiration	Personal commitments to projects or causes	Haruhisa Handa Bernard Krisher Paul and Aileen Munn

interviews in Cambodia) were asked what motivates them to do the work that they do, their responses were strikingly similar. Cross-cutting values of caring for the poor and the sick, charitable and sacrificial giving, respect for fellow humans and other living beings, and compassion and assistance for the poor all featured prominently in the discussion. So many of the teachings, no matter what the source, relate back to the ‘Golden Rule’: ‘Do to others what you would have done to you.’

The Bible is replete with passages in which Jesus urges his followers to care for the less fortunate. Attention is directed most frequently towards the need of the poor, the sick, and the elderly. Many stories and verses figure prominently as the impetus for the work of faith-inspired actors. There is the biblical Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke, Chapter 10, verses 25 through 37) in which Jesus instructs: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Then there is Matthew, Chapter 25, verse 40, where the Lord commands: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Likewise, it is written in the Qur’an that true believers are those who help the less fortunate. Chapter 107, verses one through seven, contains the following admonitions: “Seest thou one who denies the Judgment (to come)? Then such is the (man) who repulses the orphan (with harshness), and encourages not the feeding of the indigent. So woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers, those who (want but) to be seen (of men), but refuse (to supply) (even) neighborly needs.” Asked what motivates his work, Oknha Sos Kamry, the chief mufti, or head spiritual leader of the Muslims in Cambodia, points to the Qur’an: “In the scriptures of the Qur’an, it says that we have to help the poor, the patients, and the orphans” (Sos Kamry).

Cambodia’s monks look to the Buddha’s teachings on the Eightfold Path—eight different lessons for living a prosperous life—as a leading source of motivation for their actions. The fourth tenant of the Eightfold Path, “Right Effort,” is taken as an inspiration that monks, whether in thoughts, words, or deeds, should think, say, and do what benefits them and others in the best way possible. In other words, one should always take care to ensure their actions adhere to the Buddha’s teachings on the importance of good actions and deeds. Buddhists believe that to follow the eight lessons is crucial to getting ever closer to reaching the ultimate goal: freedom from suffering.

Just as passages in the Bible and Qur’an are open to interpretation, the same applies to teachings of the Buddha. From a development perspective, the most significant debate is over what actions are in keeping with the Buddha’s lessons. The debate usually boils down to the question of whether monks need to leave the pagoda compound in order to carry out his teachings, with mostly younger monks, interpreted as those under 50 years of age, tending to see as necessary at least some social action outside of the temple. The Venerable Nhem Kim Teng, well known for his practice of “socially engaged Buddhism,” a trend that sees community engagement on social issues as an important aspect of the Buddha’s teachings, says, “The Buddha sometimes stayed in the temple and sometimes he did not. He went out to help the people, especially the poor people in society and the people who faced problems.” Kim Teng believes monks are compelled to “work for society.” On the opposite end of the spectrum are those who believe “monks should stay in the temple and stay quiet” (Kim Teng). Box 3 gives a sampling of the responses elicited from the question: “What motivates your work?”

Development and evangelizing

While faith actors have varying motivations for the

BOX 3

WHAT MOTIVATES YOUR DEVELOPMENT WORK?

“Perhaps our common denominator as Christians is our belief about justice for the oppressed, which is often what motivates us and our partners to do what we are doing, especially when things get tough.”

—Helen Sworn, Director, Chab Dai Coalition

“I came to Cambodia because I believe God brought me here. I look at it in that I have the opportunity to serve [God] in a country that is undergoing rehabilitation. The reason it is a Christian organization is a prime reason behind my decision.”

—Lim Joo Chong, Human Resources Director,
World Vision Cambodia

“A lot of people like to separate faith and the world. We don’t compartmentalize. It is just a part of who we are, and so it has everything to do with it. In our beliefs in love and God, we love people and we desire to help people, so every program we do is done with the desire to help somebody. Our desire to help is born out of the love we have for them, that is based on the love we have for God.”

—Julie Martinez,
Development Director of Northern Cambodia,
People for Care and Learning

“My faith defines how I see the world that I live in and influences my capacity to continue to love and engage with people. I was in Afghanistan two weeks ago and seeing the difficult situation there, the way young boys and girls are being treated, I just said to God, ‘God, please help me to love these people.’ Much of my faith beliefs are reflected in the mission and vision of Hagar.”

—Talmage Payne,
Chief Executive Officer, Hagar

“If we refer to the motto of Cambodia, it is nation, religion, and king. It means that if we want our nation to be prosperous, religion is under the nation. Religion’s role is to support the nation. That is the reason why we do this. We think that if we try to educate and counsel the people, we will get a good result when we are reborn. We expect that we will have wisdom and good health and wealth. It is what we believe.”

—Tep Monyvotah, Program Director,
Salvation Center Cambodia

“Islam teaches about peace, and we teach people to love the peace. But when I watch TV and the news, we see that Muslims carry bombs [and go to war] and I don’t understand why they do so. Through Islamic teachings, I have learned [we should not] teach to fight with one another. [We must] teach people to be the peace people. Peace can make people live in harmony and in good situations like nowadays. We have to keep it and build more peace. We can help people to clean their minds from suffering—to be good people for the new generation.”

—Nos Sles, Member, Cambodian Muslim
Development Foundation & Under Secretary of
State, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport

“I don’t proselytize. I don’t believe in it. I have a deep belief we are all children of God and made in his image and therefore innately good. Each one of us has the capacity and the right to develop our full potential.”

—Sister Leonor Montiel,
Maryknoll Sisters

(continued)

BOX 3

WHAT MOTIVATES YOUR DEVELOPMENT WORK? (continued)

“I think the Buddha is the first person to initiate development. He thought about how to help the community progress and be well managed. If the Buddha had not reached enlightenment, the people would still suffer, because he may not have been able to help them. When we refer to Buddhism, it is a religion to advise people on morality. The Buddha is a teacher for all human beings, even Dawa or heaven. If we look at the life of

the Buddha, he worked hard. He tried to achieve his three main objectives, to reach enlightenment himself, to help his relatives reach enlightenment, and to help all human beings reach enlightenment. That is why I started my organization. There is a lot of work to be done, but this is a small thing that I can contribute.”

—Ly Khom, Director, Buddhism for Development, Kampong Thom



Early morning at Wat Norkorbachay in Kampong Cham Province, which is home to Buddhism and Society Development Association. Venerable Thorn Vandong, pictured above, is one of the founding members of the organization and currently serves as its Director.

work they do, it is the methods they sometimes choose that often ignite robust debate around the thorny issue of evangelizing (as most faith actors prefer to call it) or proselytizing, the term most frequently used by those concerned about the impact of combining religious teaching with development work. The topic figures most prominently on the agenda of those who view ‘development assistance’ as moving far beyond giving material support (as in the education of girls or the installation of a rainwater catchment tank in a village). Rather, these individuals believe that building one’s ability to adhere—through thought and action—to the teachings of spiritual leaders (i.e. Jesus, Mohammad, Buddha), has equal if not greater importance than tangible gains, especially material wealth.

For instance, spiritual guidance is seen as a means to bring people out of poverty. Buddhists often see one’s spiritual devotion as a measure of that individual’s ‘wealth.’ An individual is not poor if they are free from suffering and wrong doing; “the monk does everything to develop [himself] so as to be a moral person in society through practicing morality, meditation, cultivating the mind, and wisdom,” says Venerable Sok Bunthoeun, head of the Nunda Nuny pagoda. “After they are educated through those principles they should take this wholesomeness and distribute it to the people” (Bunthoeun).

“In the Christian development community, proselytizing is happening. It’s happening probably much more directly through the churches who act first as churches and second as development agencies,” says Mark Schwisow, Adventist Relief and Development Agency’s Country Director (Schwisow). Missionary-oriented and church-based agencies like Harvest Mission International (HMI) seek out opportunities to teach others about the Bible in Cambodia. HMI counts teaching Christian values and ethics as an



A traditional Khmer dance is performed by residents of the Arrupe Center and Student Center at the Battambang Apostolic Prefecture.

important component of their curriculum. “The main goal [of HMI] would be sharing the word of Jesus Christ,” says Nicholas Yu, a missionary with HMI, who teaches English and computer classes (Yu).

HMI runs four schools—an elementary school, a middle school, a high school, and a bible college—all located at a sprawling campus in Cambodia’s Kampong Cham province. The organization’s founder, Dr. Hai Joon Kim, known to many simply as Dr. Kim, is originally from South Korea, and arrived in Cambodia to evangelize in 1996. Yu says that Dr. Kim had always “had a bigger vision of creating an institution here, starting schools, and training Christian missionaries to go out of Cambodia” (Yu). Construction on the first buildings began in 2003. Today, enrollment between all the schools, excluding the Bible college, is capped at 600 students, with plans to add approximately 200

more in the coming years. (The Bible college has about 37 students. A fully stocked clinic on campus cares for students suffering from any number of ailments). HMI follows the government's teaching curriculum, and all students sit for the nationwide exams. But that does not mean its lesson plans do not deviate from the script. "We certainly do promote it," Yu says of making Christianity a central focus of the school. Morning "worship songs" are sung each day before lessons begin and classes occasionally engage in Bible study activities when missionaries visit the campus. Yu believes that because "we are teaching children morals and ethics through the Bible," students receive a superior level of education at HMI than they would if they attended the government-run schools (Yu).

On the other end of the spectrum are many (a significant majority of those interviewed) faith-inspired organizations that purposefully separate their development operations from the church. In practice, this creates two distinct entities: the church, with its missionary-related activities (and where proselytizing may take place) and the development agency, whose work is strictly humanitarian-focused. This is the common thread for all Catholic Church organizations, including CRS and Caritas. Another example is HOPE worldwide. The organization, which manages the Sihanouk Hospital of HOPE in Phnom Penh, is a development arm of the International Churches of Christ (ICOC). Bob Gempel, who along with his wife Pat heads HOPE worldwide, recalls that when the organization was created in 1991, the church "was already working to some degree towards the goal of alleviating poverty." Gempel explains there was a realization amongst the church members that "the church could do a better job working through a separate and independent nongovernmental organization." Fueling interest in establishing a separate entity was recognition that it would "allow people outside the church to support the work" (Gempel). HOPE

worldwide receives about 25 percent of its support from the church. The rest comes from corporations, foundations, governments, and private individuals, totaling over 2,000 donors. The organization has approximately 1,800 employees in 60 countries. Says Bob Gempel in response to the question of what the role of faith is in the work of HOPE worldwide: "We do not proselytize. Ours is compassionate ministry. We leave that to the church (ICOC). It is our policy that we serve all people, whatever their faith, and that in our community work everywhere we do not work in any way to spread the Gospel" (Gempel).

A sub-point to the issue of proselytizing, and one that can add fire to the debate, is the view many take that Buddhism is no longer as important a part of daily life as it once was. The narrative directs attention to Cambodian youth, who are seen as flagging in their observance of Buddhist traditions and practices and thus open to the temptation of competing faith doctrines. "The youth in Cambodia don't want to get into the pagoda," says Dr. Kamsan, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Culture. Kamsan suggests the church, rather than the temple, is gaining a foothold amongst the youth. "The church does many things for the young people," says Kamsan. The causal relationship between declining attention of youth to Buddhist beliefs and individuals converting to Christianity may have a tenuous relationship to their "new" faith. But for a number of Cambodians the growing figures on converts and visible presence of churches and especially missionaries is a source of concern. Some ask whether Christian leaders might even see the decline in Buddhist beliefs as an opportunity to introduce their faith.

Christian leaders like Bud and Shari Yordy, co-administrators of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), indeed describe the shifting attitudes of Cambodians towards the Buddhist faith as opening a window to a

conversation on Christianity. “Most Cambodians are not very critical thinkers and that is just because of the way they grew up,” says Bud Yordy, stressing the role that education can play. “To help them become critical thinkers is very good, and I will say that it is part of leading the step towards looking at what they believe as well” (Yordy).

Sister Luise Ahrens, a Maryknoll Sister, teaches full-time at Cambodia’s largest government-run university. “Cambodians don’t have much notion of church,” argues Ahrens. “People go to church services for the rice, they go for songs, and they go for free English classes.” Ahrens says that what often piques individuals’ curiosity to learn more about the faith is when they first discover that “the values [of Christianity] are similar to Buddhism. Jesus’ example is a good one to follow” (Ahrens).

Cambodia’s Muslim population, despite its near-total destruction during years of war, has lent increased room for proselytizing activities by foreign Muslim groups. Outside organizations (and governments) have significant influence in crafting a Muslim identity in Cambodia, which is much to their own liking. Bjorn Blengsli says of the Muslim population after the war: “They had to start all over again. They had no religious leaders, nothing. They lost almost everything—their script, their rituals, almost all their written material.” He adds, “That’s why today a purification movement is so easy... They are very vulnerable, and a lot of people are coming into Cambodia and telling them how to change” (qtd in Mydans).

It is vital to appreciate the real complexity of the concerns and debates around the definition and impact of proselytizing, which is as important as it is controversial. Unclear definitions around the act of proselytizing make it difficult to identify, especially when the range of actions by faith-inspired actors vary

from providing exposure to different faith traditions (by virtue of being there), to directly teaching a new faith tradition to interested beneficiaries, to making their assistance conditional on “conversion” to a new faith tradition (a practice which has been condemned by many secular and faith-inspired organizations alike). A missionary group that “plants” churches (a common evangelical church phrase) and then invites children to English classes with the explicit goal of converting them is well recognized as proselytizing. But is it proselytizing when a Buddhist-inspired organization like SCC enlists monks to provide spiritual guidance to people suffering from HIV/AIDS? It is not clear whether the Venerable Yon Seng Yeath, Vice-Rector at the Buddhist University in Phnom Penh, is himself promoting proselytism when he says: “Helping the society does not necessarily mean giving money.... We can also give advice and teach Buddhist philosophy to people to help them face the problems they are being challenged by” (Yeath). And is it proselytizing when a development organization like MCC has a policy not to discuss the Bible openly when implementing development projects, but if approached by a beneficiary, is more than ready to engage the subject matter? This inability to pin down a precise definition of what constitutes proselytizing highlights the complex array of opinions amongst faith and secular actors and is yet another indication that no two faith-inspired organizations are the same in beliefs or approaches.

Hiring Practices

Hiring practices differ widely among faith-inspired organizations, owing in many cases to their approach to development and proselytizing. Most organizations fall short of the two extremes. The first encompasses the organizations that demand that staff share the same faith as the organization. On the opposite end of the spectrum are faith-inspired organizations which have no faith affiliation

requirement. More often than not, faith-inspired organizations fall in a murky middle-ground. Potential employees are not required to hold a matching belief set to get a job, but once hired, they may be expected, though not required, to participate in certain activities, such as morning worship services or Bible studies, alongside their colleagues. And promotions within many organizations are quite often faith-linked.

The latter model applies most often to Christian organizations, which typically have documented policies to spell out which hiring practices they adhere to. Because of the indigenous nature of Buddhism and its proliferation in society, most applicants to Buddhist organizations, which are almost all locally based, are Buddhist by birth. These organizations lack explicit hiring policies as they relate to the

applicants' faith. Moreover, these organizations do not have the same expressions of faith, such as morning devotions, incorporated into the daily schedule. Muslim-inspired organizations, on the other hand, are highly self-selecting, and in almost all cases hire from within the Muslim community.

Box 4 provides a sampling of responses to questions around whether individual organizations take their applicants' faith affiliations into account when making hiring decisions.



Monks practice their computer skills at a vocational training center run by the Buddhist NGO, BSDA, in Kampong Cham Province.

BOX 4

HIRING PRACTICES

“Most of our staff are not Christians, although we do try to hire Adventists and Christians where we can. During the recruitment process we would give preference to an Adventist applicant if they are on par with another non-Adventist candidate.”

—Mark Schwisow, Cambodia Country Director,
Adventist Relief and Development Agency

“Our hiring practices make no prerequisites to faith. However, we are very open with applicants in informing them that we are a faith-based organization. Yejj is driven by the core values of compassion, courage, commitment, integrity, and worth, from a Christian perspective. These are incorporated as much as possible into our organizational structure, team ethos and routines. On Monday mornings we have devotions to start the week. They are not mandatory, but many staff show up. We are not overtly evangelical, but we really want biblical values to pervade everything that we do.”

—Trevor Sworn, Executive Director,
Yejj Group

“Here in the office, Habitat’s policy is to hire Christians only in senior management positions and then the others can be non-Christians. But I always also say that we need to hire based on competency rather than Christian beliefs. When I arrived here, most of the senior management were Christians and they were coming from one organization. And I saw that as a weakness because coming from one organization, or coming from one Christian faith, it limits the choice between a Christian and three others who are good at construction management or water and sanitation. We do Friday morning devotions. It’s voluntary. If you want to join, you join.”

—Bernadette Bolo-Duthy, Country Director,
Habitat for Humanity

“Employees have to subscribe to certain Christian principles. You don’t have to be a believer of Jesus Christ, but you have to follow in his teachings. If proselytizing is ‘if you become a Christian we will promote you,’ we don’t do that. We do share openly. We do share Jesus. We have a spiritual retreat we give to everyone. We will never impose our will on them.”

—Lim Joo Chong, Human Resources Director,
World Vision

Buddhism and Development in Cambodia

Buddhism has had a significant presence in the lives of the Khmer people since at least the 14th century. Today, Buddhism is officially the religion of the Cambodian nation, the vast majority of the population is Buddhist, and the ethos and values of Buddhism are inseparable from what is seen as the Cambodian, or Khmer identity. Thus the role of Buddhism in the direction and character of Cambodia's development path and the practical links between development strategies and practice and Buddhist values and organizations have special significance.

Many of those interviewed argued that restoring Buddhism is an essential element in looking to Cambodia's development and to building a peaceful society. They point to Buddhist values, especially, but also Buddhist rituals and organization as a necessary element in restoring social values and civic morality, and in promoting the psychosocial healing of a people still traumatized by years of war. Peter Gyallay-Pap, a self-proclaimed "pro-Buddhist" who has worked extensively with Khmer refugees and the Cambodian *Sangha*, believes "the single most important need is that the standards of the *Sangha* need to be renewed as a basis for renewing the society and to restore

self-esteem. Most Khmer are still traumatized" (Gyallay-Pap). These sentiments are also part of the inspiration Heng Monychenda, a former monk, cites for forming Buddhism for Development:

"I believe that each country has its own value because it has some kind of indigenous spirit, indigenous culture, and indigenous strategy that could help with the rebuilding its nation. Let the nation heal itself. Cambodia should heal itself from its own beliefs not by others...I use the word healing because of the conflict and the war" (Monychenda).

Buddhism from national, local, and international vantage points

There are at least three tales to explore in addressing questions about how Cambodian Buddhism and its development are linked.

The first is the role that Buddhism has played in nation-building and governance. The Buddhist *Sangha*, and tensions and power politics within it,

have helped to shape Cambodia's history. Buddhist leaders were intricately linked to the evolution of the monarchy, to the functioning of the economy and Cambodia's financial basis, and to relations with other nations over the centuries. The *Sangha* and the monarchy were seen as the two pillars of legitimacy and power. Buddhist thought and actors were players in Cambodia's independence movement from the earliest seeds of socialist and Communist movements, and in resistance to political powers over the years. The effort to demolish Buddhist structures and ideas during the Khmer Rouge period has roots deep in the history of Khmer political movements, even as it left a shattered Buddhist organization that has reemerged, slowly at first, over the past three decades. Buddhism is thus part of Cambodia's macro story, of challenges of governance and party politics, of land tenure policies, of approaches to the roles of the state and values in relation to violence, equity, and justice. Buddhist leadership has the potential to be transformative but it also can serve as an obstruction to change. This national, macro tale is important to an understanding of Cambodia, past, present, and future, but is not the central focus of this report.²⁰

The second tale is the role that Buddhism plays in the daily life of Cambodia's people and especially its poorest citizens. The Buddhist pagodas, or *wats*, are omnipresent in Cambodia, and the body of monks (between 60,000 and 70,000) are an ubiquitous presence. Pagodas have long served as community centers throughout the country, with especially important roles in rural areas. They were often the providers of what little education was available, as well as basic health care; they were responsible for caring for orphans, widows, and the disabled. Buddhist teachings

and rituals were and remain central features of daily life, from birth to burial. The values that Buddhism embodies are embedded in Cambodian culture, so that almost any issue can and often is looked at through the lens of Buddhist teachings.

It is this tale, the local, day-to-day impact of Buddhism that is the focus of this section. It is also the most difficult story to tell because Cambodian Buddhism is highly decentralized, with each pagoda (and there are approximately 4,000) shaping its own character and role. The near demolition of Buddhist organizations, including the killing of many, if not most monks, the destruction of records, the disruption of rituals and routines, and calling into question of every assumption during the Khmer Rouge era, have left deep and evident scars. In some respects the revival of Cambodia's local Buddhist structures are characterized by a tension between reverting to comforting, remembered patterns of the past and hopes for new roles in the future.

The "bottom line" is that the pagoda is both a center and a resource, and pagodas and monks offer many opportunities for partnership that would be mutually beneficial for Buddhism and its structures, as well as development partners. The pervasiveness of Buddhism in all aspects of Khmer life suggests that through existing Buddhist structures, development actors have opportunities to reach more communities more effectively, and to find and support truly sustainable development projects, especially in rural areas. By working in partnership with the pagoda and its structures, development organizations would be able to link well to pre-existing grassroots networks, bypassing the need to create inorganic committees that so often fail in the medium- to long-term. How

20. Ian Harris' *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice* (2008, University of Hawaii Press) gives an excellent account and analysis of the macro tale.

to translate this opportunity to ground development in local structures and groups, with pagodas and Buddhism as a focus, is the central challenge. Rich experience in some areas points both to pitfalls and a wide array of opportunities.

In both the macro and local contemporary histories of Cambodian Buddhism, there is a tension between what might be considered a more inward-focused, spiritual approach to Buddhism, and a more engaged, outward-looking, social Buddhism. At the national level, this has played out over the past decades in tensions within the *Sangha* and between the two main currents or schools of Cambodian Buddhism as well as within them: the Mahanikay and Thommayut. The *boran* movement, with its special links to wealth and power, is another thread. With the periodic blessings of the King and despite some unease from the Cambodian government, some leaders, notably Maha Ghosananda and Ven. Yos Hut, have acted to engage Buddhist organizations directly in policy matters, as well as teaching and preaching about what they see as the right path for Cambodia's development. The tensions have played out in overt, direct political matters (how should the monks behave in elections, as part of political parties, and advocacy on emerging issues like land tenure) and on critical topics like approaches to HIV/AIDS and monitoring deforestation. At a macro level, the current picture is of Buddhist leadership generally following a middle way, quite closely allied with state power, but with a wide range from the modernist to traditionalist. There are a few Buddhist leaders who are taking on broader roles that are not directly linked to the official hierarchy, whether through Buddhist organizations or media outlets (especially radio). At the local level the picture is far more mixed and fragmented, with a dominant theme being the slow effort to rebuild human capacity and ethos after years of destruction.

The third tale of Cambodian Buddhism is international. In a general sense, Cambodia's Buddhist leadership has stood quite apart from the rest, distinguishing itself from the Buddhist organizations of the region and especially neighboring countries with which there are special tensions (Vietnam and Thailand). But the links are present and probably increasing. Also important are remaining links with France, and, most important, with Cambodia's large diaspora, which is heavily concentrated in the United States. The influence of these links is an area that deserves further exploration.

What is clear of Cambodian Buddhism today is that the recent history of genocide and years of civil war left the Cambodian *Sangha* with few experienced and respected Buddhist teachers and an anemic understanding of traditional roles and Buddhist teachings. This has inevitably weakened connections between the lay community and the *Sangha* and explains the common lament that young people (especially but not exclusively) do not understand Buddhist values and thus do not follow their precepts, and have had little opportunity to learn about Buddhism. Many argue that this disconnect must be rectified in order for Cambodia to heal and move forward.

Cambodian Buddhism basics

Cambodia's Buddhist teachings and practice, with all their complexity with differing strands and teachings, are distinct and stand rather apart from other forms of Buddhism even in close neighboring countries. Over the centuries, Cambodia was exposed to many foreign influences that shaped its belief system, producing a practice of Buddhism that is uniquely Cambodian. Once a foreign import primarily associated with the peasantry, Buddhism

today is an integral part of the identity of the Khmer majority in Cambodia. One scholar argues, “For the Khmer-Buddhist majority, Buddhism is the only institution that cuts across political and social divisions. Monks have exceptional power to sway people at the grass roots. Their very presence in public activities has a legitimizing effect” (Morris 2004 195).

Theravada Buddhism has been a presence in Cambodian daily life since the 14th century. The basic Buddhist teaching was taken from interpretations of *Pali* texts, which were considered the authoritative sources of Buddhist teaching in the 4th century AD in Sri Lanka. These interpretations became known as Theravada Buddhism or “the way of the elders.” Cambodians are thought to have begun converting from “a loose-

BOX 5 ANIMIST AND HINDU TRADITIONS IN BUDDHISM

Animist traditions play a large role in modern Cambodian Buddhist traditions, as do Hindu traditions (Harris 49). Ian Harris describes these influences in detail. He points to the Indian epic poem “*Rāmāyaṇa*,” which has become the *Reamker* in Khmer literature. The *Reamker* has taken on significance in Buddhist teachings and popular religious customs, including its performance “during the funerals of eminent monks” (Harris 92). Strains of Brahmanical tantrism are present in Cambodian Theravadin ideas and practice, though Harris highlights evidence to suggest that these influences may actually derive from indigenous religious practices (Harris 94).

Additionally, animist traditions, including the prevalence of *neak tā*, or spirits, “though they lack any explicit association with Buddhism from a purely doctrinal perspective, nevertheless have important and complementary functions at the level of popular ritual” (Harris 52). *Neak tā* arise from animist beliefs and Brahmanical mythical gods and heroes (Harris 53). These spirits pervade Cambodian Buddhist practice.

Emma Leslie, director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, voices her understanding of these multiple layers of Cambodian Buddhism:

“[The] culture here ... is very hierarchical, with many levels of bias and complexity. It is useful to recognize that this sense of hierarchy is deeply embedded in Hindu-Brahman history. While they say Cambodia is a Buddhist country, most of the Buddhist practices people follow have strong Hindu traditions interwoven with them. In a wedding ceremony for example, the ceremony you go through is something you would normally see in India. Animism is still very strong; people still believe in spirits and ghosts and make offerings to trees and so on. And on top of these layers, built up over hundreds of years, of animist and Hindu structures, with people still thinking of the King as the God King, you add on a layer of Buddhism.

The Khmer Rouge retaliation against that hierarchical structure created such a high level of violence because people had been trapped inside this Hindu-Brahman framework. The Buddhist layer and other elements were shattered by genocide. You lost all the scholars of Buddhism. So what you are left with is what people remember they used to do when they were kids. In short, Cambodian religion today is a complex and fractured hodge-podge of Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, mixed up together” (Leslie).

fitting form of Shaivistic Hinduism” to Theravada Buddhism beginning around 1220, which continues to influence Cambodian Buddhism (Chandler 4). Box 5 explains in greater detail both animist and Hindu influences that characterize Cambodian Buddhism. Buddhist temples, or pagodas, were well established in Cambodia by the 15th century, and for centuries prior to the Khmer Rouge period in the 1970s, they were central fixtures in community life. Cambodians flocked to pagodas during holidays, eager to gain merit by paying respect to ancestors.

At the heart of Theravada Buddhism is the belief that adherence to a strict set of moral principles is the way to live a fulfilling life. If one lives a life marked by constant attention to high moral actions, as opposed to engaging in “bad deeds,” the individual will earn merit. Earning merit is a chief concern amongst followers of Buddhism. Anthropologist May Ebihara explains that “[t]he concept of achieving merit and avoiding evil is the basic principle underlying the influence of religion on behavior, for living by the ‘law’ involved numerous aspects of daily life” (Ebihara 44). Therefore, the Buddhist view of helping society is heavily influenced by the belief in the imperative of doing good deeds in the quest to earn merit.

The relationship between monks and laypeople has traditionally been one of respect, mutual benefit, and understanding. Community members gave alms to seek merit, and in return, monks assisted communities in meeting their needs (Gyallay-Pap). But by the mid-twentieth century, rumblings of political turmoil that would disrupt and eventually lead to the near total collapse of this cultural symbiosis were stirring.

Special challenges at the community level

Many who were interviewed, especially Cambodian nationals, argued that inattention to some of the deeper issues facing Cambodia explains the shortcomings of many community development projects that are considered today to be a cornerstone of successful development. One such issue is the lack of trust and need for healing of the Cambodian people, many of whom are still deeply affected by recent historic events. The majority of Cambodians were displaced during the Khmer Rouge and civil war years. People fled to refugee camps or were forced to relocate to remote villages by different armed factions. As a result, many of the villages that exist today are not “traditional” communities in the sense of a group of people that knows and trusts each other and works towards common goals. While working with Mlup Baitong,²¹ Katja Pellini found that:

“In some places NGOs promote the notion of community when there is no community. There is no community if you don’t already have a tradition of working together and sharing trust. Sometimes you don’t have the local leaders who can reach out to an entire village or you don’t have some kind of uniting factor... Compounding the difficulty of discovering true “communities” is the realization that in Cambodia so many villages are really groups of displaced people living together. These are not groups of people who traditionally lived together or developed some type of mechanism to work together” (Pellini, K.).

The problems of a fledging community can be compounded by the lack of trust. The absence of trust

21. Mlup Baitong is a national NGO working on environmental conservation, which previously had programs on tree planting and environmental education run in partnership with local monks.

between community members and Cambodians in general is partially the result of Khmer Rouge policies, which not only destroyed the *Sangha*, but also the trust between Cambodians. Father Totet, a Jesuit priest who has lived in Battambang for nine years, says his experiences in Cambodia have made it clear that:

“Trust was broken during the Khmer Rouge. You are not supposed to trust your parents or your brothers and sisters because they might actually be spies. There are so many implications of this, so when you are asked a question you just don’t say anything. So many people do not want to get involved. “I don’t know.” That is what they always respond, so it is still difficult to get people to cooperate. Trust and cooperation, those are the basic values that we still need to work on” (Totet).

In order for community members to join together and work towards common goals, there needs to be a unifying system. In Cambodia, this system can often be the structures of the pagoda, including the pagoda, monks, nuns, and lay committees.

Partnering with Buddhist structures offers a way to contribute to the rebuilding and strengthening of an important cultural and religious institution destroyed by the Khmer Rouge. Providing training on leadership, basic education, and project-related skills to monks, nuns, and lay committees enhances the capacity of these important pagoda elements to bring people together and work towards a common cause. Despite the lack of trust that exists between community members, Buddhism is still a common thread in Khmer culture and has the potential to join people together in a common effort. Arnaldo Pellini, a researcher who spent years working with pagoda structures, found that “the participation of the pagoda in community development is very important

because it is one of the few spaces where you can have a contribution by families and individuals” (Pellini, A.). Through the pagoda structures, development actors can support Khmer communities in rebuilding Buddhist structures and trust, while also working towards development goals.

The Pagoda

To many Cambodians, the pagoda, or *wat*, refers not only to a physical structure, but also to the community—the lay people, pagoda associations, nuns, and monks—who live there. Pagodas can be found in the smallest communities and in the most rural of areas; they are the glue that holds Cambodian Buddhist society together. They are both a sanctuary for the poor and the place where traditions are upheld and knowledge is transferred. Gyallay-Pap notes that even after Cambodian society went through years of genocide and repression, “it was *wat* structures that spontaneously re-emerged to begin the reconstruction process, not state structures or even party structures” (Gyallay-Pap).

Each element of the *wat* has an important role to play and provides its own opportunities for partnership with external development actors. Traditionally the *wat* has been the center of the community, providing a space for community gatherings and worship while also acting as a shelter for the poor and a center of learning. It is typically made up of three basic buildings: the *vihear*, the *sala*, and the *kot*. The *vihear* is the place of worship for Buddhists, where ceremonies are held. The *sala* is a structure, typically open on three sides, that provides a space for community meetings; in poorer, rural pagodas, it also serves as the monks’ dining room. Lastly, the *kot* refers to the dorms or houses where monks and novices sleep. More elaborate pagodas may also include a *pachar*, cremation tower, and *stupas*, decorative towers in

which the ashes of community members are placed. They may also include a *sala chan*, a building where monks take their meals and meetings may occur.

In addition to these functions, the pagoda structure often fulfills social needs within the community relating to education and housing. A long-standing relationship between pagodas and schools has resulted in many pagodas housing public schools—both secular and Buddhist—on their grounds. In addition, rural pagodas often set up informal classrooms in small extra buildings or entirely separate structures inside the *wats*. Recognizing a need within the community, pagodas also provide a safe place to sleep for chronically or temporarily homeless individuals or families. Families who cannot afford to care for all their children will often send their sons to the pagoda to live as “pagoda boys;” they stay there temporarily until their families call them back. Boys from rural areas often become “pagoda boys” at urban pagodas so that they can attend secondary school, high school, or university.

Many NGOs also make use of the community space provided by pagodas. Organizations such as CARE, Khmer Ahimsa, and Santi Sena hold training sessions and/or awareness-raising programs in the pagoda, and most Buddhist NGOs in Cambodia—including Por Thom Elderly Association (PTEA), Association of Buddhists for the Environment (ABE), and BFD—have their main offices on pagoda grounds. Buddhism for Social Development Association, another Buddhist NGO, works in pagodas and is run by a group of monks (see Box 7).

Pagoda Committees and Pagoda Associations

The pagoda committee is an integral part of the pagoda, acting as a bridge between the monastic and lay communities and fulfilling a number of functions necessary to maintain the pagoda. The pagoda com-

mittee is typically made up of five—and sometimes up to ten—elected older individuals from surrounding villages. Members of the pagoda committee are well respected and tend to be better educated than the rest of the lay community; many have spent several years in the monkhood.

Pagoda committee members are responsible for the handling and management of the pagoda funds, which means that they need to be literate. These funds come primarily from donations given by the lay community during ceremonies and holidays. The pagoda committee works in partnership with the abbot of the pagoda to decide how best to spend collected funds. The pagoda funds are primarily used to feed and clothe the monks, novices, and nuns, maintain the pagoda grounds and buildings, and support the building of new structures. The pagoda committee is active in organizing and funding communal projects, such as building schools, health centers and infrastructure around the pagoda. Other projects may include plantings as well as deepening ponds, an important water source for the community during the dry months of March and April.

The pagoda committee is also responsible for overseeing a number of pagoda associations, including cash associations and rice associations, which represent a significant community safety net. Community members are able to borrow rice or money from these associations in times of need and avoid the high interest associated with loans from other sources. In 1997, the German development organization GTZ, in an effort to increase food security and reduce poverty, began working in partnership with pagoda associations in Kampong Thom province. GTZ provided half the start-up capital of rice or cash and provided training in basic management skills. A 2003 assessment found that rice and cash associations continued to grow in size after project support was minimized; additionally,

participants had branched out to start other community development projects, such as road construction, school construction, and purchasing seeds.

Arnaldo Pellini, a researcher who worked on the GTZ project, reflected that, “[w]e learned that the most logical space to promote community development is the pagoda.” Pellini added that, “Community development has been in some cases hijacked by a teacher-student attitude of some NGOs. Their approach is, ‘I go into an area, I am the teacher, I set up a committee, and I do elections.’ There is, in my opinion, limited investigation of the associations.”

Working with pagoda committees and associations is not without limitations, however, as issues of access and capacity often arise. Although the members of the pagoda committee have a relatively high level of education compared with other villagers, it should not be forgotten that their formal education is likely to be limited. This is compounded by the age of pagoda committee members, who are usually between 50 and 60 years old (Aschmoneit 1998 10). It can be difficult to increase the capacity of individuals in this age group; many argue that they typically take longer to learn a new skill set. Further, access to cash associations is limited to those who have assets to contribute; the poorest of the poor are excluded from participating and thus cannot benefit from these services without some form of debt financing.

Nuns

During the Buddha’s life, nuns, known as *bhikkhuni*, were fully ordained women in the monastic order, but the tradition has long since died out. Present day Cambodian nuns, also known as *donchee*, are devout laywomen who have chosen to follow the eight Buddhist precepts, shave their heads and eyebrows, don white robes, and reside in the pagoda. These laywomen are not as common within the pagodas

as monks; a survey of pagodas in Kampong Thom province found that only 5 percent of religious persons in the 39 pagodas were nuns (Aschmoneit 1996 8). The majority of nuns in Cambodia are older women, many widowed, who have chosen to serve the monks to earn merit for the next life. As Ukshi Nuon, a nun at *Wat Sampov Meas* in Pursat Province puts it, “Some nuns [are active in the community] but many are not because most of them are old. They are around 70 to 90 years old. In Cambodia, we become a nun because we are old.” Though their age makes them less likely to be engaged in the community, pockets of more socially active nuns do exist.

Across Cambodia, a number of nuns’ associations provide these women the opportunity to reach out to the community and teach Buddhist morality. Ukshi Nuon was previously a member of a nuns’ association that visited orphans and taught Buddhist morality and chanting because “the role of nuns is to help society by giving advice or educating people about morality” (Nuon). This sentiment is mirrored by Hun Sophy, a nun at *Wat Kasararam* in Siem Reap, who believes that nuns’ strong belief in Buddhism makes them good teachers (Sophy). Nuns’ understanding of Buddhist philosophy and practice, as well as their adherence to Buddhist principles, is generally thought to be better than that of many monks (Aschmoneit 1996 8).

To this point, there has been little discussion of the potential for partnering with nuns, and few programs to date have worked in cooperation with them. One notable exception is the Salvation Centre Cambodia, which partners with nuns to run its HIV/AIDS program in an effort to better address gender issues. The nuns in the program provide HIV/AIDS education, counseling, and facilitate group meetings for people living with HIV/AIDS, known as PLHA (Monyvotah).

Monks

The symbiotic relationship that existed between the monastic and lay communities in the past strongly shaped monks' traditional roles. Monks relied on the laypeople for survival through alms, and in return, provided the lay community with moral counseling and guidance. This close connection had the effect of making monks aware of the hardships experienced by the lay community.

An excellent illustration from the 1960's of the social and religious roles monks can play is found in Malida Kaleb's "Study of a Cambodian Village," which describes the activities of the head monk and his two deputies at *Wat Prakal*. The head monk spent the majority of his time in meditation or in other "intellectual pursuits." One of the deputy head monks split his time between teaching morality at the public school and preserving old Buddhist manuscripts. The second deputy head monk was responsible for organizing novice monks to provide labor for the construction of a medical center in the village (Harris 74).

As spiritual and community leaders, monks often act as inadvertent catalysts for development in their communities. One example is Venerable Tegn Gna, a monk from Kampong Thom province, who in 1952 left his home at Botum pagoda and went to Phnom Penh to enroll in a course on initiating and maintaining cash and rice projects run by a Japanese organization. Upon completing the course, Venerable Tegn Gna returned to his pagoda and established a cash association, using his status as a monk to motivate the community to commit to the project. With the funds from the association, the community was able to restore pagoda buildings and construct a public elementary school (Pellini, A.). Another example is Venerable Sareth Brak, whose educational pursuits for his community are outlined in Box 6.

Monastic traditions were severely disrupted during the Khmer Rouge regime, when senior monks were killed, other monks were forced to disrobe, pagodas were used as killing chambers or animal shelters, and the practice of religion became punishable by death. By the time the Khmer Rouge fell in 1979, an estimated 63 percent of monks were killed or had died (Harris 179). Many who survived fled to the refugee camps along the border. Cambodian Buddhism lost the majority of its teachers and with them much traditional knowledge. Today, pagodas and Buddhist schools are being reconstructed with the help of government aid, community assistance, and foreign aid, but the process of rebuilding the *Sangha* has taken more time. The dearth of knowledgeable Buddhist teachers has resulted in a weak *Sangha*, many of whose members have little understanding of Buddhist philosophy and moral principles. Katja Pellini argues that: "The monks and laypeople do not know much about the teachings of their own religion... [due to] the low levels of education, particularly in the rural areas" (Pellini, K.).

It is clear from the living examples of partnerships between monks and NGOs described throughout this report that there are still monks who follow traditional roles, engaging in community activities but to a fairly limited extent. However, there are often conflicting expectations of modern monks. Some people believe monks should be actively engaged in the community, while others believe a monk's place is within the walls of the pagoda. As Ian Harris describes it:

"In the traditional rural setting, the monk is not regarded as a figure especially withdrawn from the world... The reformers have systematically sought to break the connection between the practice of Buddhism and its agrarian environment. In the process the modernist monk has achieved a greater authenticity and dignity but, paradoxically is also more detached from his social milieu" (Harris 75).

This raises two related questions: How much do traditional monastic roles persist in Cambodia, and to what extent are monks willing to engage in the community projects with the support of NGOs? The answers are varied. According to Venerable Khy Sovanratana, Abbot of *Wat Mongkulvan*, “The younger [monks] are more engaged because the older monks get ordained when they are older, so they don’t have much knowledge and they tend to stay in the pagoda and follow the traditional ways. The young monks have more energy and want to see change.” While he sees the young monks as engaged, others disagree, arguing that the monks who are visibly active are the exceptions and not the rule. In the absence of a full nationwide picture, it is difficult to determine how far monks’ provision of social services is ongoing but simply unrecognized, and how far it could be increased with appropriate resources or training. The sheer number of monks in Cambodia—some 60,000—suggests that the monks could have a sizeable impact on how development activities are interpreted and implemented.

Engagement of Buddhist structures—a survey

The WFDD team conducted a pilot survey of monks in Sre Amble district, Koh Kong province and in Stueng Sen district, Kampong Thom province, in an attempt to understand the degree to which monks are working in communities, the scope of their work, what they view as the most pressing community needs, and, perhaps most important, their openness towards engaging with communities and partnering with NGOs. To this effect, the team chose to conduct the survey in a province with a substantial NGO presence (Kampong Thom, which according to the Cambodian government has one of the largest numbers of NGOs) and one province with

a very limited presence of NGOs (Koh Kong). This would also shed some light on whether the presence of NGOs had any effect on the “engagement” of local monks in development initiatives. In total, 31 monks from 23 pagodas were interviewed. These monks represent every pagoda in the two districts (Sre Amble and Stueng Sen). Whenever possible, the head monk or one of the deputy head monks was interviewed.

The surveys show that the majority of monks in rural areas are teenagers or in their early twenties. Most have completed primary school; in pagodas closer to urban areas, monks were attending secondary school and high school, as well. All the monks said they were from poor farming backgrounds and had become a monk either to gain access to education or because of a love of Buddhism.

In Sre Amble, seven pagodas were already partnering with Khmer Ahimsa, an NGO focused on peace building, and five pagodas were working as partners of the Association of Buddhists for the Environment (ABE). Other pagodas that have no formal partnerships with an NGO may well be running development-related projects independently. Five pagodas held some informal classes that usually included basic education, English, and Buddhist morality. According to one monk, “some children cannot access education, which is why they come to the pagoda; they can’t afford to go to school in town.”

In general, the monks are aware that their surrounding communities’ needs are not being fully met. Most monks recognized that most of the population does not have access to education and proper healthcare. In addition, some monks noted that the lay community lacked knowledge about proper waste management, personal hygiene, and sanitation. Aside from these general issues, however, the

BOX 6

REDUCING BARRIERS TO EDUCATION: SCHOOLS WHERE THERE WERE NONE

About an hour and a half drive from Phnom Penh, the land begins to flatten. Rice fields extend on either side of the two-lane highway for as far as the eyes can see, and ox-carts outnumber cars. The vast majority of inhabitants here in Kampong Speu province are poor farmers. The education system in the district, much like the rest of Cambodia, remains crippled by decades of war and neglect. Today, the government-run schools, beleaguered by small budgets and poorly trained teachers, are ill equipped to handle educational needs. Societal attitudes also hinder education, as some parents discourage their children from attending school, preferring them instead to assist with the families' livelihoods activities.

But in one particular community, the obstacles to getting into the classroom have diminished with the creation, nearly a decade ago, of a school for local children. The school is the brainchild of Venerable Sareth Brak, a Buddhist monk, who saw children in his village of Toul Khpous commuting nearly two hours on foot each way to attend the nearest government-run school. He decided to build the educational center next to the village's pagoda. (His school and his pagoda are inter-connected, with classes held at each).

Through his own hard work and determination, Brak has been able to do a lot with very little. He has convinced the government to help construct a school building, networked with UNICEF to construct a second school building, convinced parents of the importance of sending their children to school, and inspired adult community members to serve as volunteer teachers.

His first venture garnered so much enthusiasm from the community that Brak decided to open two more schools in nearby villages. But at the site of his most

recent additions, the limitations of providing education in rural communities are even more acute than at his first school. Each "school" is little more than an open-air pavilion with a thatched roof. At one school, there are only seats for 30 children. The other 60 or so sit on the wood-planked floor. None of his schools provide lunch and most students go hungry until dinner. The government donates paper for writing—nothing more. Writing utensils are in short supply.

Yet Brak is determined that his students will get an education. Twice a year, he organizes fundraising drives; he visits individual households in local communities to ask for donations. He says he "tries to talk to everyone I meet about the importance of education" because "the vast majority of parents have old ideas and don't think education is important" (Brak). With the donations, he spends weekends scouring markets in Phnom Penh for instructional textbooks. He monitors the government-issued syllabus and tries to structure lesson plans to ensure his students are keeping up with their peers at government-run schools. And he travels between all three sites to teach students about Buddhism.

Brak believes that as a monk, he has a special responsibility to provide for the communities, and that communities "have more respect for the Buddhist monks than others. In the past, children came to the temple to study and Buddhist monks were the teachers. I am working to bring the idea of education here" (Brak).

Brak's passion for educating the community is not a novelty. He says he is simply following the Buddha's instruction that monks should engage with the society. Brak's challenge now is to inspire other monks to follow his example.

monks did not seem to have any well articulated or unique insights into the needs and desires of their surrounding communities. Monks in 12 out of 23 pagodas seemed open to the idea of partnering with an NGO, but were unsure about what specifically they would be able to contribute. The monks said that they believed that it is part of their monastic duties to share knowledge and information with the community, and to teach about Buddhism (a core responsibility), but they have a narrow understanding of the issues and how to help. They recognize that their own knowledge in areas of waste management, agriculture, and health care is limited, and that this affects their ability to provide effective assistance to the lay community.

The survey results underscore both the openness of monks at the rural pagodas and their low educational level. The latter constraint is a major limiting factor in their ability to communicate effectively and demands special attention to the need for building capacity. Further, most monks who come from poor farming families have had limited exposure to other communities around the country; as such they may be unaware of existing solutions to community problems. But despite their lack of skills and exposure, they are willing to partner with organizations to improve the conditions of poverty that they observe. They live in poverty and are keenly aware of what it is to be hungry and sick and to feel helpless in seeking solutions. Some monks have tried to fulfill their societal role as educators and leaders by taking the initiative to start small community projects such as informal classes, with little or no resources. The survey demonstrates that there is potential for further partnership with monks in rural areas, but that partnering organizations may need to provide skills-training and exposure to existing projects to ensure that monks have the necessary tools to achieve success.

Debates about Buddhism and its role in Cambodia's development

In interviews, a narrative emerged of Cambodian Buddhism under challenge. The issue and question is how deeply Buddhism, the official religion of Cambodia and the way most Cambodians identify themselves, influences beliefs and behaviors, and how elements of religion and culture intersect. The concerns of interviewees focus on the perception that today's youth are increasingly less likely to observe traditional teachings and rituals, and, even if they do, their understanding of what lies behind them is shallow. There is little hard evidence to establish a causal link between people's beliefs and patterns of behavior, or on how people's faith and adherence to its teachings have changed over time. However, the sharp discontinuity in Buddhist practice in Cambodia, with a "missing generation" of cultural transmission, underlies part of the concern about the depth and "true understanding" of Cambodian Buddhism today.

The appropriate role of Cambodia's monks is also a topic of debate. Fewer young men are said to be entering the monkhood, and some question how well and deeply the monks take their religious practice. Some young men are said to enter the monkhood less because of firm religious beliefs or convictions, and more because they view the monkhood as an opportunity to gain access to education, and the chance, for instance, to obtain a scholarship to study at the university level. Indeed, many monks attend university and benefit from the community support that they receive as they live in pagodas; the venerable Buddhist leader Yos Hut stressed that, coming from a poor community, he lived at a *wat* while he was a student, and since he had no support from his parents, he would have been unable to continue his studies otherwise (Yos Hut).

Some argue that today's Buddhism "is driven more by tradition than by faith," with individuals partaking in ceremonies and rituals with little understanding of their actual relation to faith teachings (Ear-Dupuy). Nicholas Yu, a missionary with the Christian missionary group Harvest Mission International (HMI), echoed Ear-Dupuy's suggestion that "the majority of Buddhists here are not active believers in the Buddhist religion itself." Said Yu, "They won't be able to tell you why they do certain things. If they make sacrifices they will say it's because our ancestor did it in the past, so they will follow their family's traditions, not so much as the Buddhist faith itself" (Yu). However, others counter this skepticism by noting that in Cambodia, the actual "practice" of Buddhism is traditionally reserved for later stages in life. Older people are viewed as more pious and

spend substantially larger amounts of time studying the *Dhamma*, meditating, and making offerings in preparation for their next life. This understanding is contested, however. Ven. Yos Hut, for example, stresses that people do not realize that Buddhism is a way of life that will enrich their business, economic, or political pursuits (Yos Hut). It most certainly is not just for the elderly, but provides a useful guide in every stage of life.

Perhaps more significant is the narrative, again emerging from many interviews, that Buddhism is a core element of Cambodian identity, regardless of its outward expression. In this narrative, one cannot and does not "give up" Buddhism, even if one adheres to another faith. Thus there may be overlap among different faith identities or a blurring of boundaries.

BOX 7 BUDDHISM AND SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Buddhism and Society Development Association (BSDA) was established in Kampong Cham Province in 2005 by a group of seven monks, including Venerable Vandong, who currently serves as its Executive Director. Ven. Vandong's staff comprises a mix of monks and laypersons totaling roughly 46 individuals, 40 of whom are volunteers.

Vandong's vision to address the needs of the poorest in society is reflected in the diversity of the organization's programming. "I am from a poor family," explains Vandong. "I was lucky enough to become a monk and learn some English, and it's then that I thought back on my life and realized I am a citizen, I have to help the community." Through BSDA, monks provide drug addicts with educational and spiritual guidance and help them design treatment

plans to overcome their addiction. The organization also educates local communities about the prevention of and stigmas associated with HIV/AIDS. Formal education programs put monks and layperson volunteers in the public schools, where they talk with classes about HIV/AIDS, violence prevention, drug abuse, traffic laws, and immigration. Vandong has placed particular emphasis on teaching students practical life skills like farming and fishing, a practice he says encourages parents to send their children to school and helps break the cycle of poverty. "Because people in the rural areas are poor, they think sending their children to school to learn conventional topics like reading and writing is not practical when they could be home supporting the family," says Vandong. "But when they see we are also teaching them livelihood

(continued)

BOX 7

BUDDHISM AND SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (continued)

skills, then they are happy to let their children go and study” (Vandong).

“The chance for any child to get a basic level of education will have a positive impact on society,” says Vandong. “Many bad things can happen when people are not educated. If we look to the Pol Pot regime, we killed together because of lack of education.”

Informal educational programs are based around the operation of a vocational training center where students learn computer skills (the computers were donated by the Church of Latter Day Saints), take foreign languages including English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean, and learn to sew. Roughly 700 children and adults are enrolled in the informal education program.

Some five miles from the training center, 20 orphans and former street children are putting their hospitality training to the test, preparing for the lunch hour at BSDA’s latest project, Café Smile, a restaurant serving up a mix of Khmer and Western dishes.

According to Venerable Vandong the biggest challenge facing Buddhist NGOs in Cambodia

is leadership. He says, “Leaders need to work hard to fundraise and motivate the society to be involved. It’s very important that a leader be able to motivate the society. Donors give us money because they say they trust us.” At one point, three other Buddhist NGOs were operating in the province, but they folded; Ven. Vandong blames their demise on the lack of good leadership by the heads of the organizations.

Buddhism strongly influences the work of BSDA. Ven. Vandong believes that, “Our society needs to change. We are now in the era of the computer. Things are not like they were in the past when people came to the temple to listen to the *Dhamma*. People don’t go to the temple because things there are not important in their lives. That realization that we have to change attitudes, that we have to preserve our culture but still keep up with the developed world, was part of the reason I helped found this organization. I want to connect modern society and Buddhist culture to make them closer than before. If people make Buddhist culture part of their lives, then the modern society will be free of violence, free of killing, free of stealing, free of sexual misconduct, and free of lying. That’s my goal and my vision for the future” (Vandong).

CHAPTER 4

Faith-Inspired Organizations and the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals

Development challenges abound in Cambodia. Cambodia's 2010 population is estimated to be just over 14.5 million, with 6 million, or roughly 41 percent of all Cambodians, aged 18 years or less (UNICEF). Gross national income (GNI) per capita is US\$640. An estimated 30.1 percent of the population, or about four million individuals, lives below the national poverty line of 2,500 riel (\$0.60) per day (un.org.kh/undp). In 2008, the average life expectancy at birth was 61 years. Cambodia's gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to be US\$28.6 billion in 2010 (The Economist Intelligence Unit 7). These indicators, as well as the global comparator reflected in the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), underscore the depth and breadth of Cambodia's poverty, which is especially compelling when access to and quality of education are taken into account. With caveats as to the validity and comparability of data in a notoriously data poor environment, the HDI ranks Cambodia as 136th out of 179 in terms of human development (2009). Poverty and weak capacity spill over into governance, as well; Transparency International ranks Cambodia 158th out of 180 (the 180th being the most corrupt) countries in terms of level of corruption (Transparency International).



International volunteers with Habitat for Humanity construct a row of houses in the ancient capital city of Oudong, in Cambodia's central region.

As Cambodia has begun to move into an era of greater political and social stability, poverty reduction and sustainable development, rather than peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction, are increasingly prominent on the agendas of the international development community and local actors, faith-inspired and secular alike. The diverse work of faith-inspired actors ranges from providing services to supporting victims of trafficking, to provision of basic health, to environmental conservation efforts. It would be difficult to assert that any one sector—education, health, or water and sanitation—attracts more attention than any other, given the significant variation in size, capacity, priorities and resources of faith-inspired organizations operating in Cambodia.

In September 2000, Cambodia joined 192 United Nations member states in signing the UN’s Millennium Declaration. From the eight chapters of the Declaration came the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs spell out concrete poverty reduction targets which all signatory states have agreed to achieve by 2015. In 2003, the Cambodian Government formally adopted the MDGs and added a ninth, “De-mining, UXO and Victim Assistance” out of recognition that the hazards posed by mines and other unexploded ordnance are significantly impeding development progress. These nine goals are referred to as the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs).

Most faith-inspired organizations in Cambodia have at least one program area that relates directly to the achievement of the CMDGs, though few faith actors frame their efforts as specifically motivated by the goals. Some exceptions are the Buddhist-inspired organization Buddhism for Development (BFD) and World Vision (WV). BFD’s Strategic Plan for 2006 through 2010 takes care to point out that their programming is inspired by the MDGs. Thus the

organization attempts to orient their work towards the goals, which also demonstrates the general importance BFD places on working collaboratively with external partners. As its Strategic Plan states, “BFD believes that by harmonizing its priorities, capacities and resources with that of the government and other development agencies [it will] be more productive and cost-effective” (Buddhism for Development). Writing in the introduction to WV’s 2009 Annual Report, Country Director Esther Halim notes: “We aspire to be a part of the global movement that works to contribute and seeks to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through our program activities” (World Vision Cambodia).

This chapter explores the work of faith-inspired organizations in different sectors through the lens of the CMDGs, given their national and global recognition and their comprehensive treatment of poverty reduction as a multi-sectoral challenge.

Goal #1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

The influx of aid, investment, and technology that followed the fall of the Khmer Rouge contributed to the rapid development of a few urban centers, but to date it has failed to produce significant changes in rural areas, where approximately 85 percent of the population lives (Kingdom of Cambodia 2006 18). Poverty has an overwhelmingly rural character in Cambodia, with an estimated 93 percent of the poor concentrated in rural and remote areas (Kingdom of Cambodia, MOP 10). Mark Schwisow, country director of ADRA, observes that, “from a food security and health security standpoint, things are better. But for the bottom 20 percent of the population things have not improved much. The disparity between the rich and poor has become larger.”

Faith-inspired organizations engage in many interventions with a humanitarian focus, aimed primarily at alleviating poverty and hunger, particularly at the rural level. Institutions such as churches, mosques, and especially pagodas, with their presence throughout Cambodia, often serve as a distribution point for goods (i.e. food) and/or services. With a long-standing presence in Cambodia, many faith-inspired organizations reach some of the most remote areas of the country. They are also often able to gain the trust of the communities in which they work, and understand the challenges they face. The core mission of many religious traditions—to respect the integrity and dignity of the individual and to alleviate suffering—inspire and direct their work to achieve food security and to improve agricultural returns, promote income generating activities, and support multi-faceted community development.

Food Security and Agriculture

Several faith-inspired organizations have made food security their first priority among Cambodia's most vulnerable populations. "Some NGOs think only about human rights advocacy, but they forget to consider the livelihoods of the people. According to our experience, [the community members] cannot get knowledge because they are hungry" (Sokha, Y.). Rice is the main staple, and many grow only enough rice to sustain themselves; one bad crop could seriously endanger a household's food supply or income for the year. A UNDP report observes that, "whether or not Cambodia will successfully face up to the challenge ahead will be to a large extent determined by developments in the agricultural and rural sector more generally. Agricultural production will have to increase on a sustained basis" (UNDP 2004 50). However, agricultural production still suffers from numerous bottlenecks that hinder its expansion; Sam Inn, deputy director of the Lutheran World Federation notes: "Agricultural production is quite

limited, as people are not well educated about best farming practices" (Inn).

A wide range of faith-inspired organizations, including the Latter Day Saints Charities, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and Buddhism and Society Development Association (BSDA), direct their agricultural programs towards improving production, and are viewed as successful models. Working in partnership with the Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC), a secular NGO, the development arm of the Church of Latter Day Saints, trains subsistence farmers in Kampong Chhnang province on better cultivation techniques. The program has been so successful that neighboring farmers who have not participated in the trainings have started to copy the trained farmers' techniques (Nelson and Whitesides).

The MCC partnered with Takeo Community Forestry Integrated Development Association, a local community organization, to develop small irrigation systems that serve multiple villages in the province. MCC provides funding and the local organization is responsible for coordinating all other aspects of the project. The project encourages community participation in a water management scheme, and a local committee meets once a month to discuss what to do when there is a problem with the canal and how to put the water to good use (Rath). The project has been so successful that MCC has decided to expand it.

Human Resource and Natural Development (HRND), a local organization in Siem Reap started by a group of Buddhist monks, has a similar irrigation program. Through a partnership with Human Translation, a secular NGO working on local development with a particular focus on empowerment, HRND has been able to create a canal system to provide a constant

source of water to local farmers. “In the past, people who owned land wanted to sell it because there was no water to grow rice in the dry season. Now, with the irrigation and drainage system, people want to keep their land for agriculture,” said Venerable Someth of HRND (Someth).

Religious leaders can be a catalyst for motivating community-driven food security initiatives. One monk, Venerable Kim Teng, formed a rice bank in his community in Svay Rieng province, with the support of the World Food Program; he also organized a rice bank committee and trained its members to keep records and run the bank. At the outset, the community was wary of Ven. Kim Teng’s intentions, but after three years “they understood that I was

working for them and not myself” (Teng). Animal banks are another common method used by some faith-inspired organizations to provide animals to poor families for various purposes, including land preparation, food, and income generation. Por Thom Elderly Association (PTEA) in Svay Rieng province decided to support a cow bank because, noted Bok Man of PTEA, “we understood the condition of the people. Some farmers only have a small amount of land and they need to borrow the cow from others [and] when they are finished cultivating [their land] they have to use the money from the rice to pay for the cow and that is not help[ful] for their li[ving] standards” (Man). Box 9 explains the partnership in greater detail. Church World Service (CWS), Islamic Local Development Organization, American Friends



A farmer’s journey home in Battambang Province after a long day.

Service Committee (AFSC) and Heifer International (HI), a Christian-inspired organization, also run animal banks. AFSC's experience with livelihoods programs are described in greater detail in Box 18. CWS helps form Village Development Committees in its target areas, which then take responsibility for running the animal banks.

Several other programs aim exclusively to improve livestock health. In partnership with the local branch of the Department of Agriculture in Monduliri, International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC), a consortium of six international Christian organizations, trains village livestock agents to help villagers heal sick animals, in addition to organizing vaccination and de-worming campaigns. Heifer International Cambodia also runs programs that focus on training local villagers in the proper care of livestock, as well as training village animal health workers and running livestock vaccination campaigns.

Alternative Livelihoods and Income Generation

Establishing non-farm employment opportunities, primarily in rural areas, is essential if the Cambodian economy is to move forward (UNDP 2004 50). Faith-inspired organizations implement a variety of programs to help Cambodians diversify their livelihoods, thus making households less susceptible to the vagaries of economic and/or climate conditions. Through skills training, microfinance, small business training, and local market development, these organizations help Cambodians develop alternative means of survival. H.E. Sem Sokha, founder of ILDO, highlights how important it is to address individuals' agency: "it's a challenge for Muslims living in remote areas. That's why we saw we had to improve their daily life through vocational training or small business, so that they can profit from small businesses [or new skills]" (Sokha).

A large number of faith-inspired organizations run training centers, where they provide opportunities to learn income-generating skills, ranging from sewing, cooking, and crafts to motorcycle mechanics, information technology (IT), and computers. Partners in Compassion, an organization that started as a Buddhist and Christian collaboration, organizes vocational training in sewing, cosmetology, motorcycle repairs, and TV repairs. It hosts a six-month basic education program for individuals who left school at an early age. ILDO also promotes vocational training to diversify Cambodians' incomes, for example, sewing courses for women in Battambang province. The course teaches young women to sew everyday clothing articles that the organization hopes to market to sustain the program (see Box 14). The Yejj Group,



People living with HIV/AIDS learn how to make jewelry at SCC's office in Battambang Province.

which is inspired by principles of Christian social enterprise, focuses heavily on training in hospitality and IT (see Box 8). These programs share similar goals: to help individuals find and develop income-earning opportunities, thereby promoting financial autonomy and personal dignity.

Access to credit is still limited for many Cambodians. In times of desperation and emergency, the only option for some is to borrow money through local loan committees. One Jesuit priest likened the situation to slavery because the end result can be lifelong bondage: “Once you start loaning it’s a killer; it is like you are holding onto the blade” (Banaynal). By providing Cambodians access to microcredit, faith-inspired organizations hope to offer individuals and families another way out of poverty. Vision Fund, the microfinance arm of World Vision, has been providing microcredit since 2003 and currently works in 13 provinces. Vision Fund utilizes three approaches to provide microcredit: community banks, solidarity groups and individual lending, in addition to savings and micro-insurance opportunities for poor individuals. CREDIT, a microfinance institution established by World Relief US, a Christian organization, employs three similar microcredit approaches, and has helped 40,000 families gain access to credit. Unfortunately, due to their lack of skills and financial knowledge, many Cambodians are unable to spend borrowed money effectively or run a small business well. To address this issue, some organizations, such as Maryknoll Deaf Development Program, provide training in basic business skills in conjunction with microcredit loans. One faith actor noted that, “We found out that they do very well with the technical skills, but they haven’t a clue how to run a business, and they know nothing about organization structuring, dealing with customers, buying stock, giving credits, keeping records, paying taxes—all those things” (Dittmeier).

Multi-faceted Development Approaches

Faith-inspired organizations will frequently argue that a sector specific approach to development is flawed, so many take a multi-faceted approach to poverty reduction through community-level programs. These initiatives tend to address a broad array of factors, including basic health, food security, income generation, water and sanitation, human rights, land rights and capacity at the community level (training and community organizing). These approaches aim to equip communities with the tools they need to lift themselves out of poverty, tackling poverty at its debilitating root: Cambodian’s perceived lack of agency. One study found “a certain resignation among many Cambodians...that there is not much they can do to reduce their own poverty” (ADB 2001 13). Ros Sam An, Deputy Director Santi Sena, observes that:

“In my opinion, there has been an improvement. However, we need to educate the people to change their behaviors. People need to become more self-reliant...and we need to educate [them] towards self-reliance. We need to help develop their skills. Sometimes the support we give our beneficiaries is contingent on them successfully completing certain projects” (An).

Goal #2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Education is widely regarded as the “priority of priorities” for Cambodia’s future prospects, and it is a field in which many faith-inspired organizations are actively engaged. Cambodia is indeed investing in its education systems, but there are many challenges, above all access for the poorest and quality of education provided. The balance between public and private education is a live issue that engages

faith-inspired actors at many levels. The MDGs offer a partial framework for coordinating efforts to address the enormous education issues that the nation faces; but in improving secondary school quality, restoring integrity in the education system, and building quality higher education and research, the needs extend well beyond the MDGs.

Cambodia's education system bears deep scars of the country's recent past. United Nations data report primary school enrollment rates of 80 percent, low by regional standards; yet of those students who enroll in first grade, only 45 percent make it to sixth grade and even fewer, only 38 percent, will enroll in lower secondary school (Kingdom of Cambodia, MOE 2005). The World Bank estimates that nine percent of children aged 12–14 have never attended school (World Bank 2005 16). It takes Cambodian students an average of 10.8 years to complete six years of primary schooling—mostly because of interruptions in their education related to economic, family, or health concerns—and many students are over-aged when they enroll (Kingdom of Cambodia, MOE 2005).

Besides its painful history, Cambodia's progress toward universal education has been hindered by several factors, most of them common to the world's poorest countries. Insufficient facilities contribute to poor enrollment and retention rates, and accentuate gender disparities. It is still extremely difficult for students in rural and remote areas to access secondary schooling; one indicator of poor access is that the poorest students (who tend to live in remote areas) live an average 7.66 km from the nearest lower secondary school.

An array of problems around teacher training, incentives, and numbers are obstacles to educational progress. Poor training and insufficient numbers of teachers, coupled with limited classroom space, bear

much responsibility for high grade repetition and drop-out rates. Many rural teachers, especially, are poorly trained and have little, if any, formal knowledge of pedagogical theory or technique (Knight and MacLeod 7). Teacher and classroom shortages have also resulted in high student-teacher ratios. During the 2007–08 school year, the average student-teacher ratio in urban areas was 35:4, compared with 52:8 and 57.3 in rural and remote areas, respectively (MOEYS). Teachers frequently have minimal access to books and other teaching materials; any extras must come out of their meager salaries or by charging informal fees to the students. Informal fees pay for anything from paper to so-called “soft courses” (courses held outside of school hours) to extra exam fees (Seangly 1). There are cases where, if students do not attend soft courses, they are not permitted to move on to the next grade (Vandong). Low wages deter teachers from moving to the most remote areas because they will have fewer opportunities to earn supplemental income.

History of Education in Cambodia

Education and religion in Cambodia were closely linked through most of Cambodia's history. Chinese diplomats in the thirteenth century described holy men as *pan-chi*, or men of learning, because one of their primary responsibilities was to impart knowledge to novices of their sect (Ayres 12). Literacy was, through the centuries, primarily associated with the monkhood, heightening perceptions that education played an important role in forming moral citizens (Chandler 194). During the French colonial period, education mainly occurred within local *wats*, where monks would teach lay children, primarily boys, Buddhist morality, basic vocational skills, and reading and writing through the use of sacred Buddhist texts (Ayres 13; Hideo 4; Harris 124). French missionary schools first introduced the concepts of the parallel “modern” school system.

BOX 8 YEJJ, CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Trevor Sworn first came to Cambodia with his wife and two children in 1999 as missionaries with a Christian evangelical organization that assisted street children. After he left that organization in 2001, he began to channel his passions for information technology and good food into a new corporation: Yejj Group.

Registered in Cambodia in 2003, Yejj Group initially provided IT services and maintenance. The Yejj Group has grown steadily over the years, adding a new project every year. In 2007 Yejj Training Cambodia was registered as an NGO with the Cambodian government to “clarify [its] charitable work.” Today the Yejj Group consists of a café, a web and software outsourcing venture, a training center that teaches IT and hospitality skills, a solar energy products group, and, coming soon, a land development project.

Yejj Group’s social impact is largely focused on teaching young people practical job skills in hospitality and information technology. The IT training center has a sliding tuition scale because “it is important that money not be a limiting factor for whether people will receive training or not,” explains Sworn. “About half the people who study are from shelters and orphanages, who are referred by partner organizations.” In



An employee at Café Yejj in Phnom Penh processes orders during the busy lunch hour.

addition, “over 50 percent of the café staff are from shelters or disadvantaged backgrounds” (Sworn, T.). The training they receive in class and the chance to put those skills to the test in the restaurant helps pave the way for future employment in the industry.

In addition to encouraging social change, Yejj Group is a good example of how the ideas and energies linked to faith can be channeled into a company’s philosophy and business model. As Trevor Sworn describes it:

“The organizational model has an equal balance of profitability and social impact [referred to as] Christian Social Enterprise ... Yejj is driven by the core values of compassion, courage, commitment, integrity, and worth from a Christian perspective. These values are incorporated as much as possible into our organizational structure, team ethos, and routines” (Sworn, T.).

Time is set aside every Monday morning for devotions, and although they are not mandatory, many staff members attend. “We are not overtly evangelical, but we really want biblical values to pervade everything that we do,” says Sworn. He is quick to point out that Yejj’s hiring practices make no prerequisite of faith—a common criticism of many faith-inspired organizations—but adds that he is “very open with applicants in informing them that we are a faith-based organization.” Equally intriguing are the investors behind the venture, many of whom have their own faith-linkages. “I call them ‘Angel Investors,’” says Sworn of those who have a stake in Yejj’s success. He added, “They are individuals—many of them Christians—that believe in the cause and the aims of what we are doing. They are looking to see a social impact and return, as much as a financial one” (Sworn, T.).

BOX 9 POR THOM ELDERLY ASSOCIATION (PTEA)

Take a forty-minute motorbike ride from the town of Svay Rieng down dusty rural roads, and you will find yourself at *Wat Por Thom*. Located on the grounds of the pagoda in a small two-room building is the PTEA. Formed in 1993, the organization is the result of a joint effort to form a community of elders at the pagoda between the monks of *Wat Por Thom* and Bok Man, former head monk of *Wat Por Thom* and the executive director of PTEA. As Bok Man recalls, “it did not start as an NGO, it was just a small community because 30 years ago there was the war and the monks saw that it was difficult for people to live, so we created a community to help those people. . . . During the new year, people donate rice to the [pagoda] and usually we would sell the rice to build the pagoda, but the community suggested that instead of doing that they should stock the rice and then let the people who have difficulty come and borrow the rice and then they can pay back later” (Man). Thus the community’s first rice bank was formed.

To date, PTEA has helped create 11 community rice banks which hold over 135 tons of rice at a given time. Each rice bank is run by a community-based organization (CBO) that develops its own rules, runs its own meetings, and determines how extra funds will be used. Many of these CBOs have operated with little or no outside help from PTEA since the early 1990’s. The CBOs have invested their earnings in farm equipment for families to borrow and in small shops that help the shop managers to increase their revenue. In addition, CBOs have been able to upgrade the facilities of local primary schools. PTEA provides ideas to these CBOs, but ultimately the decision as to how profits are spent rests entirely in the hands of the community.



A PTEA beneficiary stands in front of the shop that belongs to his CBO in Svay Rieng Province.

PTEA has also expanded into other areas of development and currently has programs focused on community forestry and fisheries, subsistence gardening, animal husbandry, small business training and loans, small educational scholarships for women, adult literacy, and financial support for PLHA. The organization has expanded to work in 65 villages in Svay Rieng and Prey Veng province.

Bok Man cites several reasons for PTEA’s success over the years, foremost of which is community ownership. Community members are responsible for their own rice stock and any other projects they engage in. Bok Man believes that this contrasts with the methods of other NGOs, which are heavily involved in community projects. He said, “We like to struggle *with* the people, to stay isolated from the center of the province. By creating this organization here, we can understand more about people’s living standards than if we had the office in the center of the province” (Man). Being isolated from the main town does have its drawbacks; PTEA staff struggle to find a reliable source of electricity, send and receive mail, and network with other organizations. However, Man said, “It is okay for us to face these difficulties because the poor people face a hundred times more difficulty.”

Secular schooling was introduced during the French colonial era. King Norodom opened the first secular school in 1867, followed by a second in 1873 (Ayres 23). However, the secular school system was small, catering mainly to the children of foreigners, elites, and royalty. Recognizing these initial failures to reach the majority of Cambodians, the French developed a different strategy and in 1906 issued an edict officially recognizing *wat* schools, thus creating the dual education system that persists to the present day (Hideo 4). The Buddhist education system grew over time, and by 1959 there were more than 1,500 *wat* schools (Hideo 4). The number of students enrolled in the public education system increased steadily, from 432,649 students in 1956 to 1,160,456 in 1969 (Ayres 62).

Growth in school enrollment came to an abrupt halt in 1970, as Cambodia erupted into civil war. The next five years saw the closure of both secular and *wat* schools around the country (Ayres 103). After 1975, the Khmer Rouge eviscerated the education system, targeted teachers and closed down schools. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, efforts to rebuild the education system were hampered by the intellectual vacuum left by the Khmer Rouge's targeting of educational and intellectual leaders. It has been estimated that almost three-quarters of Cambodia's educated citizens were either killed, died of starvation or disease, or fled the country during the Khmer Rouge period (qtd. in Dy 1). As PRK President Heng Samrin commented, "[the] infrastructure in the domain of education and teaching is completely shattered" (qtd. in Ayres 126).

Buddhist and secular education systems still function largely as parallel systems to this day. They share a similar structure and curriculum, but come under the jurisdiction of different branches of the government. Secular schools are run or regulated by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, whereas Buddhist

schools are under the control of the Ministry of Cults and Religions. In both systems, schooling is broken down into pre-primary, primary (grades 1–6), lower secondary (grades 7–9), upper secondary (grades 10–12) and higher education. The two systems also share a basic government curriculum, except that Buddhist schools require Pali language and *Dhamma* (which means teachings of the Buddha) classes. The Buddhist school system today is significantly smaller than the secular system, and primarily provides educational opportunities for monks.

Faith-inspired Organizations and Education

Many Islamic, Christian, Buddhist and Bahá'í organizations working in Cambodia focus on education, with a special emphasis on improving quality and accessibility. Their programs are notably diverse, with several different approaches and areas of emphasis.

Several organizations provide direct financial support for construction of public schools and improvements to existing facilities and institutions. For instance, the Cambodian Islamic Association (CIA), Samaritan's Purse, Worldmate (from Japan), and Buddhism for Development (BFD) have worked in conjunction with the government to build public primary and secondary schools across the country. Other organizations provide residential living facilities for students to improve rural students' access to public schooling. The Catholic Apostolic Prefecture in Battambang runs a co-ed student center where approximately 100 boys and girls from the surrounding rural areas, both Christian and Buddhist, live while attending classes. The center is on the same grounds as the church, which provides food and material support for the students.

A substantial group of faith-inspired organizations are working to improve teachers' skills and to improve their incentives for performance. Life and Hope

Association, a Buddhist organization, and Assemblies of God Development and Relief Services, a branch of the Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church, supplement government salaries to motivate teachers to hold class regularly and minimize the amount of informal fees that are collected from students. Details about Life and Hope Association's education programs can be found in Box 10. Organizations make regular school visits, which serve a dual purpose: they allow the organization to hold the teachers and administrators accountable and to identify students who have stopped attending class.

Several organizations focus on the problems presented by economic pressures that keep many students out of school. These programs are not part of a coherent scheme, however, and tend to be developed case by case. An estimated 43 percent of children in Cambodia work and attend school simultaneously (Ray and Lancaster 9). Children's earnings can represent a significant portion of household income at about an extra dollar per day, or about 28 percent of median household income. Families' dependence on their children can make parents reluctant to send them to school, especially if they perceive little or no economic return for time spent on schooling. Another dimension of this problem is the pattern whereby parents send children to orphanages (often giving up contact with their children) because they hope they will get a quality education there. Orphan care falls under the scope of many projects run by faith-inspired organizations, which are described later in this chapter.

To make school more appealing to rural parents, some organizations provide special classes for parents that include training in agriculture, aquaculture, English, and life skills—tangible lessons that can improve the livelihood of the student's entire family. Organizations such as Life and Hope Association offer special incentives linked to schooling, providing

foodstuffs such as rice, fish sauce, soy sauce, and salt to the families. Other organizations provide uniforms, materials, and other school fees. New Humanity, a Catholic NGO, has a child sponsorship program at six schools in Monduliri province. They have received sponsors for 1000 children, but will be able to affect many more by using money from the sponsorship program to provide teacher training and upgrade school facilities, as well as providing basic healthcare training and uniforms for students. Other financial assistance programs reduce the monetary burden on families through direct financial support or provision of essential scholastic materials for children. Some organizations provide a small stipend to poor families to replace the income lost when a child attends school. People for Care and Learning, an international Christian organization, and Assemblies of God, take a different approach, providing free lunch or snacks as motivation to improve student attendance and performance.

Although girls in Cambodia are more likely to complete primary school than their male counterparts, cultural beliefs and practices afford male students better access to secondary school (Catalla and Sothorn 9). Boys enjoy greater freedom of movement and are able to live on their own while attending school in urban areas, something most families are unwilling to let their daughters do. Further, male students have the option of staying in pagodas or joining the monkhood in order to have access to education. The Life and Hope Association has a scholarship program for girls through which young female students who have completed primary school can apply to live in a residential facility until they complete university, with the association covering all educational and accommodation costs (see Box 10).

Private education

As public schools often fail to meet the needs of the

population, private educational institutions have grown in number and importance. Many of these schools are operated for profit, and a number are run by religious groups. Private schools generally follow the government curriculum so that students can easily reintegrate themselves into the public school system, but they have longer hours and provide more instruction in mathematics, English, and computer skills. However, some private schools have had difficulty obtaining recognition from the government, and have had to pay large sums of money so their students may take government exams (Loh; Ahrens). There is no systematic way to assess the quality of these schools but some are clearly of very high quality (for example the Zaman International School, run by the Turkish Gulen movement, is renowned for excellence); it is likely that some of the newer and smaller schools fall below an acceptable quality bar.

Religious schools sometimes run into problems with the government when they have conflicting requirements, schedules, or priorities. For example, the K-12 schools run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Phnom Penh followed the government curriculum without issue until the time came for government exams, which fall on Saturdays, when Adventists are strongly discouraged from performing secular activities. As a result, graduates from the Adventist schools who have not taken the government exam struggle to have their diplomas recognized by Cambodian universities (Pheng).

A number of programs run by faith-inspired organizations target pre-primary aged children and their parents in order to increase a student's chances of success once they enter primary school. Schools that promote basic Khmer literacy are essential for increasing ethnic minorities' chances of success in primary school. Ethnic minorities and indigenous



Students and teachers leave their shoes outside a CORDE center of learning in Battambang Province.

peoples tend to be some of the poorest and most vulnerable populations in Cambodia. Literacy rates are among the lowest in the country because Khmer is not spoken in their homes, leaving these students at a disadvantage when they enter the school system. Their likelihood of dropping out is also higher (ADB 2001 29). Lieke Coenegrachts, a Catholic lay missionary, currently runs three pre-schools in Phnom Penh that cater mainly to Vietnamese children. These schools target children aged three to seven, teaching them basic Khmer language skills to enable them to enter the Khmer public school system. Another program, ADRA's "A New Day for Kids" project, is aimed at the same age group but takes a different approach,

promoting adult literacy and education as well as providing basic training in early childhood development. The goal is to help parents create a supportive learning environment for young children and to stimulate learning at a young age so that children are better prepared upon entering primary school.

Several programs specifically target children with physical and cognitive disabilities. The Arrupe Center at the Battambang Catholic Apostolic Prefecture hosts children with physical disabilities and provides physical therapy and even prosthetics or wheelchairs as necessary. These physical disabilities are usually the result of polio or encounters with landmines. The Center provides additional support to 200 children so that they can attend school. New Humanity, another Catholic organization,

runs five centers for children, youth, and adults with cognitive disabilities. The centers are located in rural areas and are sometimes built on the same grounds as the public schools in order to promote positive interactions between both groups of students. Children receive physical therapy and learn basic literacy and life skills. The Deaf Development Program, run by Maryknoll International, provides basic literacy education to deaf children and adults (see Box 12).

A discussion of faith-inspired organizations and education would not be complete without addressing special views that many faith actors bring to education, a perspective that centers on the roles of values in educational programs and curricula. Traditionally, the main purpose of education in Cambodia was to develop



Children must often travel long distances in less than ideal conditions to attend school.

moral individuals in society, but the secularization of education in Cambodia (as elsewhere) has changed perceptions about its core purpose. Despite a shift away from the traditional role of education as the crucible of moral character, many argue that, in light

of Cambodia's recent history and present situation, moral development remains an urgent priority.

"Basically we believe that education is to transform ourselves, to develop our character and society, so

BOX 10 LIFE AND HOPE ASSOCIATION

The Life and Hope Association was started in 2005 by a group of monks in *Wat Damnak*, Siem Reap. The organization's goal is to provide women and vulnerable children access to formal and informal education. Its largest program is the Children's Development Village, a home for 43 orphans and vulnerable children located in Angkor Thom district. Through the children's home, Life and Hope Association formed a positive relationship with local community leaders that enabled the organization to build a secondary school, Angkor Peak Sneng Junior High, which was completed in 2007 and is the only secondary school in the district. The property on which the school is located was provided by the government and it has dormitories for male and female students who live a long distance from the school. The school also has a large vegetable garden maintained by students. The junior high is an officially recognized government school, but Life and Hope supplements teachers' salaries, and students receive additional instruction in mathematics, Khmer literacy, and English. If students fail to attend classes, the Association, along with the village leader, will meet with the students and their families to encourage their return.

Life and Hope strives to increase female students' access to secondary and higher education through a program called Program Advancing Girls Education (PAGE). PAGE is a scholarship program for girls who do not have the ability to attend high school or university at home. Young women apply to live in a house in Siem Reap town run by the association and

receive financial assistance for school fees.

Life and Hope Association also has an incentive program for students' families. One hundred and forty families receive food provisions, such as rice, canned fish, and fish sauce, in exchange for sending their children to school. Food is distributed once a month, and Life and Hope utilizes these interactions with families to provide short classes on basic health, hygiene and the environment.

The last two programs, the foreign language school and sewing training center, are located on the *wat* grounds. The foreign language school provides English language instruction for 180 students. The sewing training center provides a ten-month course for women, many of whom previously worked in physically demanding manual labor jobs. Upon completing the course, women are able to get jobs at hotels or open their own tailor shops, for which Life and Hope will provide them with a sewing machine.

Throughout their programs, Life and Hope Association stays connected to its Buddhist roots. The monks who run the organization teach weekly classes on Buddhist ethics and the *Dhamma* to the families, children, and women in their programs. This is an inspiring example of a well run and carefully focused faith-inspired program where a clear definition of traditional values combines with very modern understandings of challenges facing Cambodia today, especially for women and girls.

we can contribute something to society,” says Dr. Lee Lee Loh, the Executive Director of the Cambodian Organization for Research, Development and Education (CORDE) (Loh). CORDE, which draws its inspiration from the Bahá’í faith, has educational programs that also focus on morality and character development (see Box 11). Many faith-inspired organizations working on education provide this extra dimension of morality and ethics, feeling it is a necessary component for societal development.

Education for other vulnerable groups: Orphans

The services provided to orphans differ amongst orphanages and other community based programs; many are run by faith-inspired organizations and are described in greater detail later in this chapter. In addition to providing shelter for orphans, several organizations also make a point of educating the children, either through public or private schools, or a mixture of the two. Religious education is often, though not always, provided.

BOX 11 CORDE, TEACHER TRAINING SCHOOL

Upon their return from refugee camps along the Thai border, seven Cambodians started the Cambodian Organization for Research, Development and Education (CORDE) in 1994. Trained as dental aides by the UN, they soon realized that more was needed to help Cambodia heal from years of warfare and trauma. They believed that Cambodian children and youth needed basic education to promote character development. This goal remains a central part of CORDE’s work, motivated by the Bahá’í belief in the nobility of human kind. Through education, CORDE hopes to empower people to believe in their own nobility and potential in order to determine their own path of development. They aim to transform individuals, institutions, and communities.

CORDE’s first program, “Hope for the Heart,” started with two classes and 45 children learning basic reading and writing skills and English. The program slowly grew and today hosts over 150 classes and around 4,000 students. The program today includes science, math, and social science classes. For about 50 percent of the students in the program, this is their only educational resource. Once students complete the program, they have the option to become volunteer teachers in the program. In addition, CORDE has

also built centers of learning in rural communities. These centers provide classes aimed at youth and adults to teach them literacy and other abilities. Courses cover a range of subjects including basic health care, environment, peace, community banking, and organic agriculture.

In 2002, CORDE opened the University for Education and Development (UniED) in Battambang. UniED is recognized by the government as a not-for-profit school, which trains teachers and community development facilitators. Dr. Lee Lee Loh explains that UniED maintains “the dual purpose of education and personal transformation and social transformation” (Loh). UniED students take classes during the first half of the day and teach at the CORDE Centers of Learning in the afternoon. Keeping UniED students connected with their rural roots is an important part of the philosophy. Dr. Loh stresses that, “we place a lot of importance on the curriculum, how we train teachers, and sustainable development through a self-perpetuating system of students becoming teachers and teaching other students who then become teachers” (Loh). CORDE hopes in the future to expand its programs to create community schools in places where no public schools exist.

Children at the Life and Hope Association's Children's Development Village, located in Angkor Thom, live in traditional Cambodian wooden houses with a housemother. The children attend public school with their peers, and receive extra tutoring outside of class from their housemother. Monks from *Wat Damnak* regularly visit the Children's Development Village to provide Buddhist morality classes to the children. At *Wat Opot* Children's community, young children share large rooms and teenage girls are assigned their own rooms to provide them extra privacy. Students all attend public school, but receive extra classes in the afternoon (see Box 16). Asia's Hope International runs a Christian primary school outside of Phnom Penh for the children

residing in its orphanages. Foursquare Children of Promise runs church-orphanages, where children live in churches located in the community. Children living in these facilities attend public school and receive extra tutoring and regular bible study classes outside of class.

Goal #3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

The scope of the third MDG is ambitious: to reduce significantly gender disparities in upper secondary and tertiary education, eliminate gender disparities in wage employment in all economic sectors, eliminate gender disparities in public institutions,

BOX 12 MARYKNOLL DEAF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Maryknoll Deaf Development Program was started in 1997 and is one of only two programs that address the needs of the deaf in Cambodia. Maryknoll, a US-based Catholic mission movement, took over the program in 2002. The number of deaf people living in Cambodia is estimated at around 50,000. The vast majority, perhaps 49,000, live in almost complete isolation. The Khmer word “*go*,” which translates to “can’t speak,” is used to describe deaf people and is indicative of Cambodian attitudes toward deaf people. There is little understanding of what it means to be deaf, and Cambodians rarely seek to educate their deaf population. Most deaf individuals spend their lives in the rice fields or working in the home, and only develop around 20 to 50 signs for basic communication.

Since Maryknoll took over in 2002, it has expanded the program into six different areas. Today the program focuses on informal education, job training, interpreting, deaf community development, sign language development, and social services for deaf

people who have HIV/AIDS or are homeless. The informal education project mainly targets young adults and takes up to 120 students per year. It provides two years of basic reading, writing and sign language skills and has seven specially trained teachers working in three provinces: Phnom Penh, Kampot and Kampong Cham, taking up to 120 students per year.

Upon completion of the basic education program, students have the option of moving on to job training programs where they can learn vocational skills, such as motorcycle repair, hair cutting and styling, sewing, and wood carving. The program also provides entry-level business training, as many students are unfamiliar with basic business concepts. This program is open to any deaf person with basic reading, writing and signing skills.

This is an inspirational program that scratches the surface of the largely unaddressed challenges facing disabled people in Cambodia.

and significantly reduce all forms of violence against women and children. As of February 2010, the UN reported that the goal was “possible to achieve [in Cambodia] if some changes are made” (UNDP 2010b). This cautiously optimistic view is based on progress to date, as the gender gap has narrowed in youth literacy rates, female wages have increased, and more women are seeking elected positions. However, despite the encouraging signs, there remain significant gender disparities in education and workplace opportunities. Cambodia ranks 137th out of 182 countries on the Gender-related Development Index (GDI).²²

As elsewhere, low levels of women’s empowerment in Cambodia appear to be associated with high levels of poverty. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), in a report on poverty in Cambodia published in 2001, found that “there appeared to be a correlation between villages with more active involvement of women in community-based decision-making processes and lower poverty” (ADB 2001 50). Yet nationwide, “women are still seriously underrepresented in top decision-making positions” (UNDP 2010b). Some faith-inspired organizations acknowledge and act on this link, with a range of initiatives to ensure that women are able to assume more influential positions in their communities. An example of an organization with a specifically gender-focused program and approach is Heifer International, a Christian-inspired NGO, which works directly on women’s economic empowerment in rural areas (see Box 13). Commitment to gender equality is common to many faith-inspired organizations, though it is far from universal.

Women in Cambodia have traditionally shouldered greater responsibility than men for performing domes-

tic chores, while also assuming primary responsibility for raising children. Poverty appears to exacerbate these gender disparities. The ADB found that “poverty is an issue that influences the amount of time each day women have to spend on domestic-related activities, something that most men avoid.” The ADB further concluded that “all women in rural Cambodia take on a greater range of domestic and non-domestic roles than men” (ADB 2001 39).

Women’s special roles and greater efforts expended on caring for families do not translate into a greater or even equal voice in family decision-making. The reality is particularly acute when it comes to the handling of finances. One woman who participated in an ADB focus group summed up her frustration with her husband’s spending behavior: “Every riel [women] earn goes back to the family, but not every riel that the man earns goes back to the family. In fact, some of this money is used by the man for drinking. Sometimes he uses it all and has nothing to bring home” (ADB 2001 47).

Many faith-inspired organizations working in Cambodia take up the issues surrounding both the moral and practical concerns of women who face undue burdens and lack a strong voice at home, at the workplace, and in government. Moral concerns focus, for example, on high rates of domestic violence, which tends to involve both verbal and physical abuse. An example of a response to practical concerns might be special programs to support households where the woman is sick, since that can have devastating effects on the household as a whole.

Several other faith-inspired organizations train

22. The GDI is one of five indicators used by the United Nations Development Programme in compiling its annual Human Development Report. The GDI measures the degree of inequality between men and women in length of life and degree of healthiness during life, knowledge, and decent standard of living (UNDP 2009).

women in farming and livestock rearing, and Buddhist and Islamic-inspired organizations have developed similar training and empowerment programs. The Venerable Thorn Vandong, head of Buddhism and Society Development Association (BSDA), helped launch the organization in 2005 in Cambodia's Kampong Cham province. Today, BSDA's 46 staff members have expanded its work to cover also Kratie and Takeo provinces, where it implements a diverse portfolio of programs, from conducting spiritual counseling sessions with drug abusers, to traditional and vocational educational initiatives (see Box 7). In December 2009, BSDA concluded a two-year initiative, dubbed the "Single Women Project," to provide agricultural training to female-headed households, giving priority access to single women with multiple children. Vandong hails the project as a success, saying

it reflected BSDA's primary objective "to improve the lives of Cambodians, especially the poorest" (Vandong). An example of a Muslim organization with similar goals is Islamic Local Development Organization, which works in six provinces across the country and focuses on vocational training for women (see Box 14).

A number of faith-inspired organizations have programs specifically designed to help young women obtain an education. The American Jewish World Service (AJWS), a U.S.-based organization that draws its inspiration from Jewish teachings, provides educational scholarships to girls from poor families. AJWS partners with the local NGO Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE), which operates in Kampong Cham province. KAPE oversees the dis-

BOX 13 HEIFER INTERNATIONAL: PROJECTS FOCUSED ON WOMEN

Heifer Project International Cambodia, a Christian-inspired organization headquartered in Arkansas, USA, and present in more than 50 countries, recognizes that helping families escape poverty empowers women. The organization has been present in Cambodia since 1984, focusing mainly on animal husbandry projects targeting rural poor communities.

A past project entitled "Improving Food Production for Tribal and Women's Groups" targeted 50 female-headed families in remote areas of Kampong Speu and Takeo provinces, where roughly 80 percent of the population are farmers. The project focused on trainings to help families develop technical skills in caring for animals. Assisting Heifer in implementing the project were local partners Khmer Mothers' Development (MDK) in Kampong Speu province and the Women's Rights Development Association in Takeo province. In the past, Heifer has partnered

with other faith-inspired organizations including AFSC and CWS. The end-goal of the project was to improve both livelihood opportunities and family nutrition. Healthy animals could be sold for higher prices or consumed by family members.

Another Heifer project supported women in Banteay Meanchey province, which was selected because 60 percent of families there are female-headed households. These families received vegetable seeds and multi-purpose cattle. The animals are referred to as "living loans" because, as repayment for the animals, a family is expected to pass on at least one of their animals' offspring to another family in need. The process of giving these "living loans," referred to by many familiar with the act as "passing on the gift," is a central component of Heifer's work. The objective is not only to multiply the benefits of the livestock, but to promote a culture of compassion through giving.

tribution of the scholarships to women in secondary school. AJWS also gives financial support to young women who have completed secondary school and wish to enroll in a primary school teacher-training

program, in addition to financial support for vocational training. Thida Yan, AJWS' Country Consultant, noted that the organization's focus on girls' education is based on the recognition that empowering

BOX 14 ISLAMIC LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION AND ITS WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Cambodia's Muslim population is relatively small—less than two percent of the overall population—but several Islamic-inspired NGOs run programs addressing a myriad of development concerns. One such organization is Sem Sokha's Islamic Local Development Organization (ILDO). In addition to holding the title of Executive Director of ILDO, Sokha is also the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Social Affairs, Youth, and Rehabilitation. He created ILDO in 1993 to “improve the daily lives of Muslims.” As a young boy, he was “curious and wanted to know everything” about the history of Muslims in the country. As he grew older he saw “the dire situation of so many in the countryside,” and decided to establish a local NGO as the logical way to help (Sokha).

ILDO originally focused on vocational training and projects to empower individuals by enhancing their livelihoods. Over the years, its programming has adapted to meet the changing needs of the people: it started an HIV/AIDS program in 1997 and a human rights project in 1998.

In 1998, with support from the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh, ILDO's human rights project began to focus on changing attitudes about women's roles in society. Gaining support from the Muslim community for the project was not easy. Sokha credits the program with raising appreciation for human rights-related causes, particularly views on the rights and treatment of women. “I have done advocacy with the Muslim leaders who are old men about [the issue of] human rights,” he says. “They didn't like it

at first. However, we tried to consult with them to [get them] to accept our concept on human rights. Nowadays, they not only accept our concept, but they have become our key persons in the project and they serve as our coaching teachers” (Sokha).

Today, ILDO has operations in six provinces. It has 17 staff members, including women. Faith-inspired organizations like ILDO are conscious that training needs vary by region and by faith affiliation. For example, in a survey about the extent of poverty conducted by the ADB, women in Siem Reap province expressed a strong interest in silk weaving, while women in Monduliri province repeatedly asked for training in crafts manufacturing. Moreover, Khmer women requested help in raising pigs while Cham communities asked for help raising goats (ADB 2001). ILDO designed a sewing program in Battambang province in recognition of their demand for female tailors.

While ILDO targets its work in heavily Muslim-populated areas, they do not give or withhold their support on the basis of religious affiliation. In fact, Sokha claims that only about 20 percent of ILDO's beneficiaries are Muslim.

Sokha participated in a series of interfaith dialogues on HIV/AIDS and peace building in 2007, consistent with his desire to leverage ILDO's activities to assist people regardless of religious background. In the future, Sokha says, ILDO wants to “strengthen and expand interfaith activities between communities.”

young women with education increases their earning potential. Yan suggests that when young women earn money they require fewer family resources, and as a result, their parents are less tempted to encourage their children to take up illegal or dangerous work, such as prostitution (though, of course, there are concerns inherent in this view related to child labor).

Goal #4: Reduce Child Mortality

Worldwide, over 7.7 million children annually are estimated to die before reaching their fifth birthday, and a third of those deaths occur in Asia. The UN global goal is to reduce death rates in children under 5 by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. In Cambodia, the death rate per 1,000 live births is 66 infants and 83 children under five (which translates to 30,000 children a year). The MDG target for Cambodia is to reduce child deaths by three-fourths by 2015. This translates to reducing by 50 percent the rate of infant deaths per 1,000 live births, and cutting back by 65 percent the rate of under-5 deaths per 1,000 live births (Kolab 1).

Cambodia's Ministry of Health reports that the leading causes of death among newborns, infants, and children are diarrhea, neonatal issues, and malnutrition (Kolab 2). More than 60 faith-inspired and secular non-governmental organizations work on maternal and child health in Cambodia, including the Latter-day Saints Charities (LDSC) and ADRA (see Box 15). The strong push by faith-inspired and secular agencies to cut the number of child deaths appears to be having an impact and there are grounds for optimism that progress is being made and targets can be achieved. The UN declared in February 2010 that current efforts are "on track" towards a goal that is "very likely to be achieved" (UNDP 2010b).

A recent report published in the medical journal *The Lancet* suggests that globally, the death rates for children under five have dropped two percent per year between 1990 and 2010. The data covers 187 countries, including Cambodia, and covers the period of 1970–2010. In Cambodia, the report was greeted with a mix of optimism and fear by health professionals: optimism that current efforts are making a difference, and fear that the better-than-expected findings will cause donors to re-direct their funding priorities to causes they see as more pressing. The report suggests that Cambodia has reduced infant and child deaths by about 30 percent in the past five years (Channyda).

Globally, reasons given for recent declines are the proliferation of vaccines, increased access to antiretroviral medicines, education of women (a consequence of which are lower birth-rates), and insecticide-treated bed nets to ward against malaria (Grady). In Cambodia, as in many developing nations, giving birth in a health center greatly increases the chances of survival of both the baby and the mother. It has been estimated that if nine out of ten women were to give birth in a health facility in Cambodia, the newborn death rate could be reduced by 23–50 percent (Loy and Mom). While asphyxia at birth is one of the leading causes of childhood death, precise figures on the number of deaths per year in Cambodia from asphyxia do not exist. However, worldwide, nearly a million babies a year die from asphyxia at birth because of the lack of resuscitation capabilities (Grady).

Even if a child is safely born in a health center, the risks that the child will die from a host of other factors including disease or malnutrition within the first few years of its life are substantial. In recognition of the lethal role anemia has on young children, the Christian-inspired organization Malteser

BOX 15 ADRA AND CHILD HEALTH

ADRA focuses on improving the health of young children with its child-centered programming. Like several other faith-inspired organizations working in Cambodia, ADRA is a separate entity from the church to which it is linked. The agency first began working in Cambodia in 1988, though its development initiatives were carried out directly by the Adventist church until 1993. “There was a recognition among many that the church needed to start doing longer term development work,” says Mark Schwisow, ADRA’s Country Director, “and creating a separate development organization was seen as the natural way to accomplish this” (Schwisow).

Today, ADRA has approximately 100 staff members and provides a comprehensive package of services, including clean water, literacy classes and food security initiatives. Over the past decade, the agency has made improving child health one of its key priorities. In October 2009, ADRA launched its newest child-health initiative. Dubbed the CHILD project—Child Health Improvement through Livelihood Development—it aims to reduce the number of deaths in children under the age of six. Slated to operate for three years, the project is targeting 1,050 pregnant women, parents and caregivers, and children under six in 30 villages and 11 health centers in Kampong Thom province. ADRA estimates the number of indirect beneficiaries, counted as family members of the women and caregivers in the 30 villages, at 28,700. The project has a \$336,920 budget (ADRA Cambodia).

CHILD has three core elements. The first is educating mothers on how to care for their children’s health with an emphasis on promoting good nutrition. ADRA recognizes that in its beneficiary pool, “[the] caretakers’ level of education and knowledge of

appropriate child caring and rearing is limited” (ADRA Cambodia). Most of the mothers and caregivers in the targeted groups are uneducated. This is cause for concern among ADRA staff because “[m] others who are completely illiterate have a higher percentage of malnourished children—43.5 percent—as compared to 25.9 percent and 25.1 percent of those who have attended primary school and secondary school or higher, respectively” (ADRA Cambodia). The second component is to improve livelihood opportunities for parents and caregivers, while the third step is to educate parents on appropriate ways to help with their children’s early development. Driving the project’s focus on these three areas is the recognition that the vast majority of child deaths, whether from malnutrition or disease, are preventable.

ADRA believes that merely preventing deaths is not enough. Rather, one must also pave the way for the child to be able to lead a fulfilling life (ADRA Cambodia). “The country, as much as it has developed, still has its challenges,” says Schwisow, reflecting on the impact that the organization’s programming is having on poor communities. “Every one of us [is] in a development process. And being part of a faith-based organization, I feel I am working for God. It’s worthwhile and it’s rewarding.” ADRA’s work, he says, is about “giving people more choices and more information and allowing them to have access to more opportunities to better their own lives” (Schwisow).

International is helping community members establish vegetable gardens to improve children's and mothers' diets. Malteser is also distributing micro-nutrients which are mixed in with children's food in its target district of Oddar Meanchey in Cambodia's north.

Leaving current optimism aside, the appalling statistics of child deaths and child malnutrition (Cambodia's rates are extraordinarily high²³) are a motivating force for many faith-inspired organizations, which work either directly or indirectly towards the achievement of the fourth MDG. Even faith-inspired organizations which do not focus on preventing early childhood deaths as a core program area, view poverty-reduction programs as having ripple effects in reducing child and maternal deaths. Because the overwhelming majority of faith-inspired organizations in Cambodia give priority to working with very poor communities—where death rates are often highest—the impact of their work on reducing the rate of childhood deaths is significant.

Goal #5: Improve Maternal Health

There is a saying among professionals in the developing world that “a woman who is pregnant has one foot in the grave.” The fifth MDG calls for a three-quarters reduction in the maternal mortality rate (MMR) between 1990 and 2015. The 2008 national census estimates Cambodia's MMR at 461, which translates into roughly 1,800 deaths per year due to pregnancy-related complications. (The national

data could not be independently verified by other sources).²⁴ Cambodia's MDG target is to reduce the rate to 140 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. But Cambodia's MMR does not appear to have improved in the past 15 years, and according to the UN, the country is “off track” in its progress towards the 2015 goals. (UNDP 2010b) Dire warnings that Cambodia is far from reaching its goal were the impetus behind a recent call by health officials to change the target to 240 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

Cambodia's Ministry of Health has made improving reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health their top priority in their strategic plan for 2008–2015. The two are closely linked. For example, a newborn who survives his or her mother's death is extremely vulnerable. Thus, faith-inspired organizations' efforts to reduce maternal mortality are closely connected to their work in reducing child mortality.

Factors that stand in the way of Cambodia reducing its maternal mortality rates include inadequate staffing at public health facilities, a lack of crucial drugs and other medical supplies, and policies which prevent health center staff from carrying out birthing procedures that are considered risky, but potentially life-saving in an emergency situation. Moreover, health facilities can be difficult to access. Many are located far from rural villages, and the roads and transportation infrastructure to reach the centers is often inadequate. In theory, Cambodia has one health center per 10,000 people, but in practice access to health care in many areas is difficult and distant.

23. The Cambodia Anthropometrics Survey in 2008 showed that 39.5 percent of children below the age of five were chronically malnourished, 28.8 percent were underweight and 8.9 percent were acutely malnourished. Some of these statistics indicate stagnation, even reversal, in progress made in recent years. http://www.un.org.kh/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=292:mdg-fund-joint-programme-for-children-food-security-and-nutrition-brings-stakeholders-together&catid=43:latest-press-releases&Itemid=76

24. A study published in April 2010 in *The Lancet* claims there were 266 deaths for every 100,000 live births in Cambodia in 2008 (Loy and Mom), calling into question government estimates related to MMR.

In 2008, an estimated 78 percent of women delivered their babies at home, with 44 percent of those receiving assistance from a skilled birth attendant (Kolab 1). Dr. Var Chivorn, Associate Executive Director of the health NGO Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC), explains that policies at health centers do not allow midwives to use vacuum extractors to assist during difficult deliveries (Kolab 4). Dr. Niklas Danielsson, the maternal and child health team leader at the World Health Organization in Cambodia, says the conditions most responsible for deaths include post-partum hemorrhage, eclampsia, obstructed labor, and infection (Danielsson).

Changing attitudes about health centers and improving mothers' access to the centers are the critical elements for reducing maternal mortality rates. Faith-inspired organizations may have a particular advantage in assisting on these fronts. Repeated studies have shown "that women and their families prefer modern delivery care over traditional unskilled practices when the quality of care is good, when they are treated with respect, and when they can afford the services" (Loy and Mom). Faith-inspired organizations, such as the interfaith Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE in Phnom Penh, make a point to emphasize that their care is rooted in compassion and respect (see Box 30). "We want people who come here to be treated with compassion," says Kevin O'Brien, the hospital's executive director. "We can't heal everyone who comes here, but we can make them feel loved" (O'Brien).

Backing O'Brien's viewpoint were the assertions made by participants at a December 2009 conference in Phnom Penh on faith and development organized by WFDD, Georgetown University, and the University of Cambodia. Participants noted that faith-inspired organizations place an emphasis on the dignity and humanity of individuals and that

a sense of compassion pervades their development work. These are values, participants said, that were sometimes absent in secular approaches to development (Berkley Center 26).

Venerable Yos Hut of *Wat Lanka* in Phnom Penh and one of Cambodia's leading socially-engaged Buddhist monks, helped start a hospital in Cambodia's Prey Veng Province. Ven. Hut is the standing advisor for the Kampong Trabek Referral Hospital, which has 92 beds and sees roughly 172 births a year. Through his connections in France—he spent time in Paris during the Khmer Rouge period—Ven. Hut forged a relationship with the medical missionary group Hospital Marguerite-Marie. The group's primary focus is assisting with birth deliveries. Missionary teams conduct twice-yearly medical and surgical visits to Kampong Trabek, each lasting approximately two to three weeks. There they spend time assisting with deliveries and carrying out various surgeries, among many other medical tasks (including ophthalmology). The program helps to secure medical equipment for the hospital, which it shares with other hospitals in the region.

Venerable Yos Hut draws inspiration for his work with the hospital from the Buddha's teachings on care and compassion. Indeed, the Buddha is identified with healing: "The Buddha is a *veccheakru* (a doctor/teacher over doctors)," notes the preface to a book published by Cambodia's Buddhist Institute, a government-run research center, on the occasion of the 2,500 year anniversary of the Buddha's reaching Nirvana, in 1957. "He has provided [the] remedy: the moral philosophy which christened the humans of the world, suffering from disease of the heart and soul (*khangpleuchitt*), the defilement of desire (*tanha*)—and provided cure, in accordance with his vocation, before entering nirvana" (Harris 108). Ven. Yos Hut cites another inspirational quotation of the

Buddha: “You must help each other, especially when sick, because he who helps the sick helps himself.”

Compassion from faith-inspired organizations will not, by itself, reduce Cambodia’s sky-high maternal mortality rates. Faith-inspired organizations need pragmatic and strategic solutions, which address the root causes of the country’s inability to reach the CMDGs. In the case of maternal mortality, this means devising solutions that lower the death rates. Malteser International recognizes, for example, that if a mother has a firm plan for delivery day, including knowing what hospital she will use and who will take care of her children while she is away, that mother is more likely to give birth at a hospital and is thus more likely to survive labor. To help develop plans, the organization set up pregnant mother support groups in its operational area of Oddar Meanchey province. Teams of volunteers drawn from each of the area’s 260 villages visit the households of pregnant women and assist them in planning for the birth. When they are not meeting with pregnant women, the volunteer teams give presentations at local schools, where entire communities are invited to hear talks about reproductive health issues (Minnik).

Family planning is a topic commonly associated with discussions of maternal and child health, and one that represents a point of departure between secular and faith-inspired organizations: a subgroup of faith-inspired organizations either avoid any talk of family planning, especially discussions on abortion, or “get creative” in the way they broach the topic. WFDD’s research found that faith actors are, to a degree, divided into two camps. The first camp avoids any mention of family planning: individuals on the ground implementing projects are opposed to the idea, as are their supporters, who tend to be individual donors. The second group supports at least some action on the topic, though often their supporters do not.

One approach to family planning that can facilitate dialogue is child spacing, which many faith-inspired organizations can and do support without making specific references to how it is achieved.

“We have some problems with family planning and abortion services,” says Vera Minnik, Malteser International’s Program Coordinator in Cambodia, “We do not speak openly about it. Instead, we re-name it” (Minnik). Minnik’s approach is to “get creative.” Minnik says her staff and volunteers will talk about issues such as spacing between pregnancies and various reproductive health services offered at the hospitals. A common thread in the “get creative” approach emphasizes informal discussions by staff and volunteers with beneficiaries on the topic. These discussions are often not officially condoned by the leadership at the organizations, but neither are they explicitly banned.

Goal #6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases

The sixth MDG aims to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria. While the incidence of these three diseases is at epidemic levels, Cambodia has recently made strides in fighting them. Faith-inspired organizations are or have been involved in addressing all three diseases, often in the context of their broader health care work. The major vertical focal areas have been HIV/AIDS and TB. Malaria programs tend to be integrated into broader health programs and approaches.

Combating HIV/AIDS

HIV prevalence rates in Cambodia, once as high as three percent in the adult population, have steadily dropped in recent years, from an estimated 1.9 percent in 1997 to 0.7 percent in 2008, according to the website of UNDP Cambodia. World Vision International

Director of Infectious Diseases, Dr. Zari Gill, who in the 1990s led World Vision's response to HIV/AIDS in Cambodia, attributes this drop to an early and relatively aggressive response by the government: "The government was attuned to the problem because they had learned from what happened in Thailand, where HIV/AIDS was denied and swept under the rug ... [They] didn't want that to be repeated in Cambodia" (Gill).

Ulrike Gilbert-Nandra, an HIV/AIDS technical specialist for UNICEF Cambodia, highlighted higher incidence rates among high-risk populations—including men who have sex with men (MSM), sex and entertainment workers, and intravenous drug users. High infection rates within those populations pose a central threat to the overall progress Cambodia has made against the disease (Gilbert-Nandra). Statistics bear out Gilbert-Nandra's fears: 14 percent of brothel-based sex workers tested HIV positive in 2006 (though this rate compares very favorably with a 1998 survey that revealed a 45.8 percent incidence rate) (National AIDS Authority 17). Likewise, 37 percent of heroin users tested positive for HIV in 2006.

Education about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment is an important weapon in the battle against the disease. Due to high illiteracy rates, most Cambodians do not have access to information on HIV/AIDS and prevention methods; this leads individuals to put themselves or others unintentionally at risk, and breeds fears and stigma about the disease that are not based in fact.

Faith-inspired organizations have been part of Cambodia's generally encouraging response to HIV/AIDS over the years. Their efforts have focused on care for affected populations, public education to improve individuals' basic understanding of HIV/AIDS and available and effective prevention methods, in addition

to encouraging voluntary testing. Organizations often work in partnership with individual faith leaders to promote fundamental religious principles that encourage positive behaviors (including both responsible sexual behavior and compassion) and to reduce discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

Promoting positive behaviors

A wide variety of approaches characterize the way in which faith-inspired organizations approach the public education dimensions of their HIV/AIDS work.

World Relief, an international Christian organization based in Baltimore, Maryland, is partnering with leaders of local Cambodian churches in rural areas to provide HIV/AIDS training to church members. The organization places particular emphasis on marital fidelity and pre-marital abstinence to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS. After training local volunteers, World Relief supports them in their efforts to inform fellow church and community members about HIV and to promote healthy behaviors.

Karol and Setha (an abbreviation of "Knowledge and Reflection on Life and Sexuality Through a Holistic Approach"), a program run by the Maryknoll Sisters, aims to help adolescents, young adults, couples, and parents better understand their relationships and sexuality, promoting their capacity to make healthier life choices in order to address HIV/AIDS risks as well as other gender-based social issues.

Faith-inspired organizations such as Salvation Center Cambodia (SCC) and Partners in Compassion have recruited Buddhist monks and nuns in Battambang, Takeo, Kampong Cham and Pursat provinces to receive education on the basics of HIV/AIDS. These organizations provide training on community engagement and encourage monks and nuns to reach out to their communities and hold awareness-raising events at

their pagodas. Monks and nuns use the five basic Buddhist precepts to discourage high-risk behaviors. For example, the Venerable Sok Bunthoeun says that, “if we practice monogamy, which relates to the third precept, we can avoid getting infected from HIV/AIDS and avoid domestic violence.” SCC has developed an educational manual that focuses on the five precepts of Buddhism: abstain from lying, abstain from stealing, abstain from killing, abstain from intoxicating substances, and abstain from sexual misconduct. The manual places emphasis on abstaining from sexual misconduct to discourage extramarital sex. However, the local Buddhist religious leaders see limitations on their capacity to intervene in this area. Monks’ inability to understand or discuss certain topics—it is socially unacceptable for monks and nuns to use words related to sex—can limit their effectiveness. Thus, any discussion of condom usage and related topics is restricted to organization staff and lay volunteers.

Reducing stigma

As elsewhere, stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) was intense in Cambodia during the early stages of the epidemic. One faith actor recalled, “Someone would tell me that a family had AIDS and that we couldn’t walk in front of the house” (Sokha, Y.). Concerted efforts to educate communities and reach out to PLHA and their families have resulted in a significant reduction in stigmas associated with HIV/AIDS. Many give credit to the hard work of the Buddhist *Sangha*, especially monks, in positively influencing the opinions of community members. Venerable Emmreak Smey, who has been actively involved in programs to dispel stigmas about HIV/AIDS, says:

“When you have HIV, you have a lot of problems. You would wonder what would happen to you. You want to stay where you live, but the neighbors don’t feel the same about you. People would not interact with you like they did before. If I hear

this is happening, I would go and educate the neighbors. When the neighbors understood, then they would come and visit you more. They would treat you the way they did before you had HIV” (Smey).

Despite Ven. Smey’s impressive efforts, stigma against PLHA does still exist, highlighting the need for continued HIV/AIDS education.

Strengthening the Continuum of Care

In 2003, the Ministry of Health implemented its version of the Continuum of Care, a comprehensive framework meant to ensure both medical and psychosocial support for HIV/AIDS patients at government health outlets and home-based care programs. Cambodia’s Continuum of Care (CoC) addresses a variety of difficulties faced by PLHA and their families through efforts including voluntary counseling and testing; referral to government health centers for antiretroviral therapy; care for opportunistic infections, and prevention of mother-to-child transmission; home-based care; food support; and psychosocial support. Working in partnership with the government, faith-inspired organizations are implementing programs to strengthen the different components of the CoC.

Voluntary counselling and testing

Confidential voluntary testing and counseling is the entry point into the CoC. Caritas Cambodia educates rural communities about HIV/AIDS transmission as the main component of its comprehensive HIV/AIDS program. The organization provides information on voluntary testing and counseling during its public seminars, as well as leaflets on how to contact the organization or a testing center. Yen Sokha, HIV/AIDS Program Manager for Caritas in Siem Reap province, notes that these programs are quite effective, as “sometimes [people] go directly on their own” after

a program, and in some cases so many people come to get tested that the Operational District does not have sufficient testing materials (Sokha, Y.). According to Mr. Heng Bungsieth, Executive Director of Action for Health, Education and Development (AHEAD), a CRS project that formally ended in 2007 but continues to operate through a local NGO, “[Now] many women make their own decision to get tested for HIV/AIDS; they used to have to go home and discuss with their husbands first, but it has changed” (Bungsieth).

Government health centers

Since the introduction of anti-retrovirals (ARVs) into Cambodia in 2002, access to therapy has steadily increased across the country. There are currently 52 government-run sites providing antiretroviral therapy and treatment for opportunistic infections, and 67 percent of Cambodia’s PLHA were receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2007 (NCHADS and UNAIDS / WHO 17).

Faith-inspired organizations are involved in various ways in facilitating referrals of PLHA to government-run clinics which provide ARVs. Programs also train monks and nuns so that they are “able to refer people to the appropriate health services at the referral hospital and provincial AIDS office” (Monyvotah).

A few faith-inspired organizations are working with government health workers to “build their capacity”²⁵ and to create systems of accountability to improve the quality of care that poor Cambodians receive at treatment centers. Given varied interpretations amongst faith-inspired actors and secular actors alike on the meaning of “capacity development,” it is broadly defined herewith, and may encompass activities like training, information workshops, or even some

forms of advocacy on behalf of certain applicants for government medical services. For example, World Vision trains health care workers to better provide counseling and testing for pregnant women as part of its prevention of mother-to-child transmission program. AHEAD provides technical assistance and capacity building workshops for government health workers. Caritas Cambodia amplifies the voices of poor PLHA patients in Siem Reap: if patients do not receive proper treatment, they can speak with a Caritas worker who can advocate on their behalf.

Home-based care

After referral to an ARV clinic, some faith-inspired organizations continue to stay involved with patients through home-based care programs which ensure that patients take their medication on schedule and attend regular doctor visits (Sokha, Y.). Home-based care teams are trained to recognize the symptoms of opportunistic infections and TB. Caritas Cambodia provides PLHA in their program an alarm clock to remind them to take their daily ARVs. Home-based care teams visit patients regularly depending on the needs of the individual. Caritas Cambodia has also begun to train PLHA volunteers in home-care so that the program is sustainable should Caritas end the program at any point. Other organizations, such as Partners in Compassion, have trained monks to be part of home-based care teams. It should be noted that this approach may not be the most sustainable, as monks are constantly entering and leaving the monkhood. WV also has a home-based care program through which WV teams check up on PLHA monthly to ensure that they are receiving the proper government services. As part of the program, WV also covers the cost of laboratory tests, helps with other expenditures related to health care, and provides travel stipends.

25. In numerous interviews, faith actors responded that their programs were aimed at “building capacity” of health care workers or volunteers, but often gave only general descriptions as to what exactly “building capacity” entailed. This is an area that merits further exploration.

Travel in rural Cambodia can be both difficult and expensive due to poor infrastructure and rising fuel costs. PLHA are scattered throughout the countryside, living long distances from ARV centers and other PLHA. To ensure that transportation costs do not present a barrier to receiving proper treatment and psychosocial support, Caritas, AHEAD, BFD and other organizations reimburse PLHA's travel costs to health care facilities.

Referring patients to the proper health facilities can be exceptionally difficult when working with migrant populations. Migrant workers may settle in an area for only two or three months at a time in search of work. During their stay, they may discover that they are HIV positive, begin to receive treatment, and then move on. They often do not inform organizations or health centers of their intention to leave, making it impossible for them to receive a referral to continue treatment once they leave. Even if individuals inform organizations of their plans, they may migrate to areas where there are no treatment centers. AHEAD seeks to address this issue by educating PLHA in their programs about the need to continue treatment and how the referral process works.

Food support

When PLHA are suffering from symptoms of HIV/AIDS or an opportunistic infection, it can be difficult for them to go about their daily activities. For many rural Cambodians, this can severely inhibit their ability to obtain food or earn income at precisely the time they are most in need of proper nutrition. The energy requirements of an adult PLHA can increase by as much as 20 to 30 percent when fighting symptomatic HIV/AIDS or an opportunistic infection; children's energy requirements can increase by as much as 50 to 100 percent (World Health Organization 2003 4). Several organizations including SCC and Caritas Cambodia receive provisions of rice, salt, and oil

from the UN World Food Program to distribute to PLHA who fit specific criteria. These organizations distribute food to individuals whose CD4 counts have dropped below a set level. Programs also distribute food to pregnant women in their third trimester to maintain their strength, as it is difficult for them to earn income during this period. Finally, these organizations distribute food support to women with small children, widows who are unable to work, and to guardians of children affected by HIV/AIDS.

Psychosocial support

Helping PLHA come to terms with being HIV positive and understanding how the disease will affect their lives is key in supporting their efforts to live with dignity. In their role as spiritual counselors and trusted members of the community, religious leaders have a unique ability to provide support to their followers about deeply personal issues, including HIV/AIDS. Venerable Emmreak Smey, who works with SCC, explains that "in the mornings and evenings [I go] out to the community and counsel people." Monks working with SCC use a common Buddhist practice, meditation, to help PLHA deal with psychological stress. The monks conduct regular meditation sessions, as "meditation is very important for the patients because it ... helps to reduce stress inside the body and inside the mind" (Monyvotah). Many faith actors indicate that monks have been able to counsel PLHA in ways NGO workers might not be able to. Highlighting the monks' unique role, Dr. Zari Gill of WV said, "The Buddhist monks were able to help the people understand ... that, yes, your fate is your fate, but there are still things you can do to live with that fate. They wouldn't say that one could change his or her fate. I never heard that. But they were able to teach people how to live positively with their fate" (Gill).

Most Cambodians sustain their livelihoods by cultivating rice, collecting forest products or fishing—all

labor-intensive activities. After contracting HIV, individuals find it difficult to exert themselves in the same manner, and many PLHA are physically unable to do the amount of work necessary to sustain a living. Training in alternative livelihood activities can address these problems by improving PLHA's ability to provide for their households and remain independent. SCC teaches women to create small craft eggs and jewelry and is working in partnership with the Face to Face AIDS Project, a US-based NGO focusing on empowerment of PLHA, to market and sell the products in Cambodia and overseas.

Some faith-inspired NGOs have established self-help groups to assist PLHA in securing livelihoods. Caritas, for instance, encourages self-help group participants to start small savings schemes. In addition, Caritas staff choose a key farmer from each group to receive training from CEDAC in agriculture, gardening, and raising fish and chickens. This key farmer is then responsible for training the other self-help group members. Self-help groups also provide a forum for PLHA to discuss common problems and share their experiences with issues such as treatment and discrimination.

Children affected by HIV/AIDS

Children in Cambodia deal with issues of food security, poor health and poor education every day as a result of poverty. These challenges are exacerbated for children affected by HIV/AIDS. Programs with a more specific focus on children affected by HIV/AIDS provide educational support, orphanages, and family training for foster families, *inter alia*.

World Vision's Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program provides comprehensive support to children and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in Phnom Penh, Kandal, Kampong Speu, and Takeo provinces. Children in the program receive free education support until they are 18 years old. Children's

clubs, analogous to adult self-help groups, provide children with psychological support and the chance to interact with children in similar situations. All of these activities are aimed at reducing the sources of vulnerability of children affected by HIV/AIDS.

Harm Reduction for Drug Users

Intravenous drug users are an emerging high-risk population in Cambodia, and a potential source of increased HIV transmission (Gilbert-Nandra). Few faith-actors currently engage this group directly. An exception is BSDA's program, run through partner pagodas, which encourages harm reduction by providing counseling and treatment to drug addicts. Through peer facilitators, BSDA brings addicts to the pagoda where trained, ordained volunteers provide counseling, education, and meditation classes to help them overcome their addiction. BSDA also provides clean syringes to intravenous drug users to reduce the risk of HIV transmission (Vandong).

Tuberculosis

Every year, approximately 72,000 new cases of TB are identified in Cambodia, which ranks 21st out of the 22 "high-burden countries" as designated by the WHO. The RGC's and NGOs' continued commitment to the Stop TB Strategy, a framework for national TB control established by the WHO's Stop TB Partnership, has resulted in a steady increase in case detection rates and has contributed to sustained high treatment success rates, mainly through adoption of so-called Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course treatment (DOTS).

Few faith-inspired organizations are currently directly addressing TB in Cambodia, but those that do are having a considerable and positive impact in the areas of case detection, stigma reduction through education, treatment of TB, and treatment of HIV/AIDS co-infection.

BOX 16 WAT OPOT CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY

Brought together by chance and common purpose, two unlikely partners joined ranks to tackle the growing issue of HIV/AIDS in Takeo province by forming Partners in Compassion. Vandin San, a Buddhist, and Wayne Matthysee, a former evangelist Christian, met while working for the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees in the 1990s where San was providing HIV/AIDS training to monks and Matthysee was a medic. As Matthysee recalls, San “struck me as the most Christ-like person I had ever met, even though he was Buddhist. It kind of challenged me because I had never been outside of the church before” (Matthysee).

In 1999, they decided that action needed to be taken directly to address the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic by starting a hospice. Matthysee recalls the event that changed everything. “[One] day we went out and we saw this little baby in a box and the family was basically waiting for it to die. Nobody wanted to touch it because it had AIDS” (Matthysee). Shortly thereafter,

Matthysee and San began to mobilize around Partners in Compassion’s first formal project, a hospice for children with HIV/AIDS, at a time when stigma against PLHA was very strong. Initially, Matthysee and San struggled to find a location where the facility would be welcomed, but eventually found a home for it near a friendly *wat*. According to Matthysee, “When nobody wanted us because [the hospice would host patients with] AIDS, this *wat* was the only one that actually accepted us.” Thus, it was on the land donated by the monks of *Wat Opot*, and with the financial support of COERR, that Partners in Compassion put their idea into practice.

To this day, Partners in Compassion’s main office and orphanage remain on the grounds of *Wat Opot*. In recognition of the generosity of the monks, Partners in Compassion maintains a close connection with the *wat*. Every Saturday, children living in the *Wat Opot* children’s community, Partners in Compassion’s orphanage for children with HIV/AIDS, help pick

TB—a background

Cambodia has seen a rise in case detection rates and consistently high treatment rates over the past decade, but both the prevalence and incidence rates of TB remain high. The positive trends in these two measures can be partially attributed to the extensive reach of the DOTS program in Cambodia, which attained 100 percent coverage of the country in 1998 and an average treatment success rate of more than 90 percent over the past ten years (WHO 2009a 36; WHO 2009b 1). While there are few reliable statistics for the case detection rate in Cambodia, some recent surveys cited by UNDP Cambodia have suggested that Cambodia has been able to achieve a detection rate of

at least 70 percent. However, current estimates place Cambodia’s TB prevalence rate around 64 percent, significantly higher than the average of 36 percent for the region (qtd. in WHO 2008a 7).

Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is a growing global concern, but has not yet become a substantial problem in Cambodia. WHO estimates in its *2009 Global TB Report* put the number of cases of MDR-TB in Cambodia around 94 (qtd. in *usaid.gov*). Although the incidence of MDR-TB is extremely low, it is important to address the issue. Dr. Elena McEwan, a Senior Technical Advisor for Health with CRS noted that, “There is some reluctance among governments to even start thinking or planning for

up trash on the *wat* grounds and clean the temple. After cleaning, the head monk holds a forty-five minute service for the children that involves chanting. However, according to Matthysee, “That’s about the only thing we do religious here. We do encourage spirituality. A lot of things have happened here [and] I think the kids have a pretty good concept of life and death” (Matthysee).

Today there are over sixty children living in the *Wat Opot* Community, almost half of whom are HIV-positive. Their only distinctive treatment (in contrast to the other children) is regular trips to the Takeo hospital to get their ARVs. Infected children sleep in the same rooms as non-infected children, eat in the same hall and attend the same school. Matthysee believes that this is one of the things that makes *Wat Opot* unique: because it is a true community and makes no distinction between children who are HIV positive and negative, they all live and learn together.

Matthysee views *Wat Opot* as “a community made up of kids. They make the rules and they do the disciplining if they have to. They are pretty much responsible for themselves. We don’t have that much staff. The older kids take care of the younger kids” (Matthysee). Each child has responsibilities, including assisting with the construction of new buildings, growing vegetables, raising chickens, and preparing meals. All school-aged children attend the government school in the mornings and then receive English classes, art classes and tutoring in the afternoons.

Unlike other orphanages, the *Wat Opot* community is open to visitors from the community and children from the neighboring community are free to come in and play. Children and youth living in the community are also encouraged to go out to visit their relatives in the area during the Khmer New Year celebration. Recently, several children have even been able to rejoin their extended families.

[MDR-TB] because it's an admission that it's there, and expensive, and a somewhat embarrassing problem to have to deal with. The presence of [MDR TB] basically shows there is a problem in the quality of the TB program. Recognizing the TB program includes governments’ political will, health providers’ (public and private) capacity to provide quality and equitable services, community participation to support DOTs, and patients’ commitment to treatment adherence” (McEwan).

TB education

Cambodia’s persistently high TB prevalence rates can be partially attributed to individuals’ inability to identify the symptoms of TB and take proper precau-

tionary measures to avoid transmission. Programs that educate communities serve the dual purpose of increasing general knowledge about TB and reducing societal stigmas associated with the disease.

AHEAD, a direct implementer of CRS’s TB program, has engaged monks to educate communities about TB. Dr. Zari Gill commented on the importance of engaging these leaders in TB control programs: “Getting the [faith] leaders on our side on TB is important—once they understand that TB is, in a sense, a simple disease and can be cured, these understandings will be adopted more broadly, and it becomes easier to get people into the clinic to be tested or treated” (Gill). Working

BOX 17 BUDDHIST LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

A decade ago, with Cambodia's HIV/AIDS prevalence rate at nearly 1.2 percent, UNICEF expanded its Regional Buddhist Leadership Initiative to Cambodia, engaging monks and nuns in the battle against HIV/AIDS. The program engages religious leaders to provide spiritual counseling to PLHA and to refer them to health centers for care. It reimburses the transportation costs of participants and provides them with a small allowance for food and incidentals if they are visiting a home or traveling to a different pagoda.

The Initiative is making a significant impact. According to UNICEF's figures, in just the first six months of 2009, monks and nuns counseled nearly 5,000 individuals and referred another 1,450 persons with HIV/AIDS to health centers for further treatment. Moreover, the program provided food supplies and clothing for 2,700 children who had lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. However, with HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Cambodia falling, Ulrike Gilbert-Nandra, UNICEF's HIV Specialist in Cambodia, sees the Initiative's next challenge as re-focusing its efforts to get monks and nuns talking less about prevention and more about the connections between suffering and the Buddha's

teachings. "Some of the issues in [the Initiative] are a little outdated because at the time the program began, the key emphasis was on primary prevention," explains Gilbert-Nandra.

Complications that have arisen around the proposed changes to the Initiative's implementation in Cambodia highlight some of the larger difficulties in engaging monks and nuns in community development. The Initiative relies on local, on-the-ground actors who are not health care specialists in a field that is constantly evolving. Monks must be re-trained to address these evolving programmatic needs, and the requisite technical knowledge is often difficult for them to absorb. Exacerbating this difficulty is the reality that monks and nuns, because of their faith-affiliation, simply cannot discuss some messages and words. "If women are HIV positive and want to become pregnant, what do the monks say?" asks Gilbert-Nandra. "They need factual information in layperson's language in order to de-medicalize some of the HIV information." Finally, for many of the younger monks, the monkhood is only a temporary position. It is nearly impossible for organizations to train only those who pledge to remain in the monkhood for an extended period of time.

with members of the pagoda, including at least one monk, AHEAD provides training to volunteers so they can identify individuals who are potentially infected and refer suspected cases to health centers for sputum collection and examination (Bunsieth). AHEAD has been able to partner with 57 pagodas in Battambang and Pailin provinces. Through these pagodas, trained monks raise TB awareness during Buddhist holy days, utilizing a regular communal gathering to identify new

cases. This allows AHEAD to reach out to older populations and educate them about TB.

Educating the general public about TB not only helps to reduce transmission of the disease and to increase case detection; it also has led to a reduction in stigmas surrounding TB. In the past, Cambodians had little knowledge about TB and its modes of transmission. They generally believed that TB was a genetic disease because it was so easily transmitted (Pun). Families

Compounding the difficulty of engaging monks and nuns is the highly decentralized network of monks, nuns, and pagodas active in the Initiative. UNICEF provides funding to the Ministry of Cults and Religions at the national level, and the Ministry's provincial offices take the lead in identifying the monks, nuns, and pagodas that are willing to participate. The pagodas then assume full responsibility for the program's planning, monitoring, and funds management. While the Initiative is operational in 12 of Cambodia's 24 provinces, not all of the pagodas and monks in these 12 provinces are participating. It is possible that a person with HIV/AIDS may live near one pagoda, yet the closest pagoda in the Initiative may be miles away and take many hours to reach, even in the dry season when road conditions are most favorable.

Despite these drawbacks, Gilbert-Nandra indicates that the Initiative's positive impact would not have been as meaningful without the participation of the monks and nuns. A background document on the Initiative, published in 2003, cites a number of advantages to partnering with monks and pagodas:

“Buddhist beliefs, Buddhist leaders, and Buddhist places of worship have proved to be a significant and enduring social force, particularly in rural communities ... In some areas, community religious structures are in better shape than government structures. Villages that do not have health centers or social welfare centers often have temples ... While HIV/AIDS is a relatively recent phenomenon, the principles and mechanisms that underpin the Regional Buddhist Leadership Initiative come from the heart of Buddhist tradition and belief. Buddhist ideals like moderation, self-discipline and compassion are also essential to effective HIV prevention and creating enabling environments for people with HIV/AIDS.”

One of the greatest challenges in the future may not be motivating monks and nuns to participate or even training them in technical knowledge, but rather getting the multitude of implementing partners to work together, through a comprehensive strategy, towards a common end-goal. “The question now,” says Gilbert-Nandra, “is how you join all of Cambodia's different religions and various initiatives together so you have one voice” (Gilbert-Nandra).

would continue to isolate sick individuals long after they were no longer contagious, and people made a conscious effort to avoid those who were TB-positive (Bunsieth). These stigmas still exist, but they are no longer the norm.

Treatment: Community DOTS and faith

Faith-inspired organizations provide training to address TB at the community level, bringing a personal approach to combating TB that treats patients with

dignity and respect and encourages other community members to do so as well. AHEAD trains community DOTS workers (CDOTS) in partnership with local health care centers in Pailin, Battambang, and Oddar Meanchey. CDOTS volunteers are responsible for making certain that TB patients take their daily medication. By including government health care workers in the CDOTS training process, AHEAD hopes to “build the capacity of the health center staff to be trainers and to be the first contact for the community

in the future,” and to strengthen the link between the community and healthcare center (Bunsieth). CRS, AHEAD’s partner, has a similar outlook; Dr. Sok Pun, CRS Cambodia’s Health and HIV/AIDS Program Manager, believes that relying “heavily on volunteers and work[ing] through the church supports our aim of providing long-term sustainability to our work” (Pun). Including government health care workers in the CDOTS volunteer training process also gives government health care workers the tools to train CDOTS volunteers independently in the future.

CRS also partners with AHEAD to run a TB prevention project specifically targeting prisons in Battambang province. This work is essential in preventing the development of MDR-TB (Pun). Over-crowding, poor ventilation, sub-standard health facilities, and poor nutrition combine to make prisons a breeding ground for both TB and MDR-TB (who.int/tb). AHEAD staff members work directly with the health staff in the prisons to teach them how to identify new TB cases and how to appropriately collect sputum samples from suspected TB patients. In addition, prison health care workers learn how to treat TB patients properly, so that TB-infected prisoners receive a consistent, full regimen of TB drugs.

Faith-organizations may approach the treatment of patients differently than secular organizations. The treatment that TB patients receive from faith-inspired volunteers has had a considerable impact in reducing discrimination against TB-infected individuals. As Dr. Sok Pun describes it, “the goal of our partners is not just that people are given treatment in the traditional sense of the word, but also that they are shown love.” These faith-actors contribute to stigma reduction through their actions and example. CRS’s partners for their HIV/TB project, Maryknoll and Caritas, both share their roots in Catholicism. Dr. Pun says that these programmatic partners,

“[...]have been very successful in reducing stigmas through the use of local volunteers who demonstrate an exceptional level of love and support to the sick. There is something in the way the Maryknoll Sisters deal with patients with TB, the way they interact with one another. They provide spiritual support and show a certain level of kindness which I cannot describe” (Pun).

TB and HIV/AIDS co-infection

The link between TB and HIV/AIDS is well documented, and programs addressing co-infection are extremely important in reducing the prevalence of TB in Cambodia. Co-infection with HIV considerably increases the chances that latent TB will progress to an active state in an infected individual. Approximately 50 percent of HIV-infected individuals will develop an active form of TB in their lifetime, and yearly HIV-infected persons face a 5 to 15 percent risk of developing active TB (WHO 2008a 7). Additionally, in Cambodia almost 10 percent of new TB-positive individuals are also HIV-positive. This reality highlights the need to increase testing and referral of both TB and HIV patients, as well as to increase coordination between the national HIV/AIDS and TB programs.

The Cambodian Government, recognizing the growing need to confront HIV-TB co-infection, formed the National TB/HIV Subcommittee under the Ministry of Health in 1999. Since then, the Subcommittee has worked to expand access to ARVs for co-infected patients (Eang et al). In addition, the Subcommittee works to increase testing of newly diagnosed HIV-positive and TB-positive patients for co-infection so that co-infected patients can be identified earlier. As discussed in the previous section, home-based care teams are trained to identify possibly TB-infected PLHA, increasing the number of possibly co-infected individuals for testing. The Sihanouk Hospital Center

of HOPE has been providing TB services since the year 2000 and is now an official National Tuberculosis Program site. The hospital opened the TB clinic after hospital staff discovered that more than 50 percent of TB patients, both HIV-positive and -negative, were not completing a full course of therapy (see box 30).

Goal #7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Cambodia is a country rich in forest, aquatic, and other natural resources. Most Cambodians rely heavily on these resources for both income generation and sustenance; they depend on forests for timber, resin, wild meat, medicines and wild fruits, and on aquatic resources like fish as their major source of protein. An estimated 8.5 million Cambodians rely on natural resources as part of their livelihoods (McKenny and Tola 1). With population growth, there is added pressure on these scarce resources, bringing the issue of environmental sustainability to the forefront of development debates. The loss of forest coverage is also linked to an increased demand for land, building materials, and firewood, according to UNDP Cambodia.

In Cambodia, the seventh MDG calls for the reversal of current trends of natural resource depletion by minimizing dependence on wood-fuels and increasing the number of community-managed forests and fisheries. Achievement of the seventh MDG also requires increased access to sustainable and safe water supplies and improved sanitation for rural and urban residents, as well as an increased proportion of citizens with land security.

The Ministry of the Environment has primary responsibility in Cambodia for beginning to address some of these challenges, and the government has enacted

legislation designed to establish a legal framework for natural resource management. Current legislation encompasses several areas, including water and land use, protection and conservation, and impact assessments, all under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Environment. In 2003, new legislation was passed to define the terms for the establishment of community forests and fisheries.

Faith-inspired organizations and the environment

Deforestation has emerged as a central challenge for Cambodia since the fall of the Khmer Rouge. During the 1990's, military factions utilized the available timber as a means of generating income to fund their campaigns, but illegal logging practices continued well after fighting had ceased (Global Witness 2007 12). Limited management capacity and inadequate protection systems have resulted in a net loss of forest coverage. Cambodia's forest coverage is estimated to have declined between 2002 and 2006 from 61.15 percent to 59.09 percent, already below the MDG target of 60 percent (UNDP 2010b).

Environmental protection is a fairly new but growing area of interest for some faith-inspired organizations, the result of recent climate change trends and heightened global concern over natural resource management. In Cambodia, the majority of faith-inspired organizations focused on environmental education have their roots in Buddhism. In the eyes of many Buddhists, there is a strong connection between Buddhism and the environment. They point to multiple examples in the *Dhamma*, the Buddhist holy book, of the Buddha's connection with the environment. Hiek Sopheap, former monk and current executive director of the Association of Buddhists for the Environment (ABE), observes: "the Buddha was born in the forest, reached enlightenment in the forest, and died in the forest...Buddha says that the

root of the tree is our house” (Sopheap). Ly Khom, another former monk, cites the idea of dependent origination, or the idea that all things are connected, as his motivation for preserving the environment. “If people destroy nature or resources or the forest, they destroy the *Dhamma*; it means they destroy themselves” (Khom).

Environmental education

Faith-inspired organizations take many different approaches to preserving and replenishing Cambodia’s natural resources. The most common activities include education, tree planting, and the establishment of community forests and fisheries. Through environmental education, organizations raise awareness in rural communities about issues including water pollution, deforestation, over-hunting, and over-fishing. This allows citizens to understand their potential impact on the environment and its subsequent effect on their livelihoods. Buddhist organizations like ABE often work closely with monks in their target areas. Monks who demonstrate interest in environmental initiatives are selected to receive training on basic environmental issues, and taught to create and maintain tree nurseries. Monks are then expected to return to their local *wats* to disseminate their newly gained knowledge to the lay people and their peers. Their ability to raise awareness varies with the motivation of the individual monks and support of the training organization. Some monks admit that the only time they engage in environmental education is during sermons and Buddhist ceremonies, but many others are much more enthusiastic about the topic and will engage the community through tree planting ceremonies, community talks, and tree ordinations (described in Box 19).

Community forests and fisheries

Environmental education alone will not guarantee future environmental sustainability. The perception

still remains among some Cambodians that environmental education efforts are simply a means to restrict their use of natural resources, especially when they are not coupled with alternative livelihoods activities (Meas and McCallum 64).

As a result of the work of faith-inspired and secular organizations, community forest and fisheries programs are increasing in number. Although the prospects for community forests are also promising, a number of communities are still in the process of applying for stewardship of portions of forests. Unfortunately, many of these communities have been waiting for years to receive approval (Cheatlom). In some cases, communities have had to decide between accepting a smaller portion of forest that is not large enough to sustain them, or holding out in hopes that their original request will be accepted.

Some organizations have chosen to integrate livelihoods activities into their community forestry and fishery projects, such as AFSC (see Box 18). Buddhism for Development Kampong Thom provides classes on how to use rattan, a local plant, to create baskets and furniture so that “people can properly use their resources” (Khom). Another Buddhist organization, Bonlok Khmer, has a mission to expand the market for different products. For example, prior to Bonlok Khmer’s intervention, Preah Vihear province had only two resin wholesalers who colluded to keep prices extremely low. Resin tappers were forced to take whatever price was offered in a very limited market. Bonlok Khmer was able to convince other wholesalers to buy resin in Preah Vihear, and today, resin tappers are earning more income because they are able to negotiate better prices.

Water and sanitation

Cambodia has taken promising strides in the areas of water and sanitation, and is on track to meet its

MDG targets for improved sanitation. UN estimates indicate that by 2015, 100 percent of urban dwellers and 55 percent of rural dwellers will have access to improved sanitation, and 80 percent of Cambodians living in urban areas will have access to clean water. It appears unlikely that Cambodia will be able to reach its goals for access to clean water in rural areas, where, during the dry season, some people are forced to travel kilometers from their homes to collect water.

Faith-inspired organizations such as WV, Muslim Aid, and Samaritan's Purse have contributed to Cambodia's success in increasing access to clean water by distributing thousands of water filters and building thousands of wells throughout the country. Organizations like ADRA are also building latrines to improve sanitation. Initially, ADRA's approach to building wells was unsuccessful because after a well was built in the middle of a village, nobody would maintain it and it would soon fall into disrepair. In an effort to promote stewardship, ADRA now requires families who wish to build a well or latrine to provide the labor and pay a portion of its costs. ADRA trains and contracts community members to build the parts for the wells and latrines, so spare parts are readily available (Schwisow). Church World Service (CWS) also initially faced problems after building public wells and latrines. Individuals in the community would take it upon themselves to charge fees to other villagers for use of public wells and latrines. However, after asking certain community members to not "use community property for personal gain," an understanding was reached and the projects have been much more successful (Dau Valler).

Access to land

Land titling is the third component of MDG seven, and an increasingly sensitive topic for Cambodia's citizens and development partners, including faith-

inspired organizations. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodians returned en masse to resettle areas and former homes that they had been forced to abandon. However, land ownership was abolished by the Khmer Rouge, so there was no legal procedure or instrument to reissue property titles for re-settled land. It was not until 1989 that the government passed the first set of laws allowing limited land ownership; by 2001, private ownership of most types of land was authorized. However, most Cambodians, especially in rural areas, have never registered their land officially, and therefore do not hold legal title to land they may have inhabited for decades. In some cases, individuals may hold a "soft title," meaning the boundaries of their land are registered with a local authority, such as the commune council or village chief. Soft titles are difficult to obtain, however, since individuals have no written proof that the land is theirs.

Land insecurity remains perhaps the biggest challenge facing Cambodia's indigenous populations, as well. Following the cessation of the Khmer Rouge's resistance in the northeastern provinces, the Khmer Loeu lost much of their native lands to migrants moving into the recently secured areas. Indigenous peoples often make their living off of resource-rich lands, yet their connection to the land has spiritual elements, too. In addition to providing fertile ground for Khmer Loeu to cultivate rice and collect NTFPs, agricultural and forest lands represent a deep connection with the spiritual world (The International Development Research Center).

The legal regime protecting indigenous land rights has, until the past year, been incomplete. Of particular relevance in the protection of indigenous lands are the 2001 Land Law and the 2005 Sub-Decree on Economic Land Concessions, which together establish a legal and regulatory framework for economic land

concessions (United Nations OHCHR). Chapter 3 of the Land Law grants indigenous populations the right to collective land ownership, subject to their prior registration as legal entities; however, the Royal Government of Cambodia did not adopt the legal mechanism necessary for indigenous communities to obtain communal title until April of 2009. The registration process is piecemeal, often implemented at the community level, and has only in the past year

resulted in a small number of communities receiving the recognition that is a prerequisite to making communal land claims (United Nations Office at Geneva and Yu).

These legal ambiguities have resulted in indigenous populations being regularly displaced by economic land concessions granted by all levels of government. Even with new land use laws in place, local authorities

BOX 18 AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is an international organization with a peace and social justice mission with roots in the Quaker Church. For the past ten years, the AFSC has been running an integrated rural development program in Sre Ambel District, Koh Kong Province. Sre Ambel encompasses densely forested mountains, the Prek Kampong Saom River, and low-lying plains. It was isolated from the rest of the Cambodia well into 1994 because of continued Khmer Rouge activities. With this in mind, the AFSC has made a particular effort to expose local citizens to the realities in the rest of the country.

The integrated rural development program has been mainly community-driven. Patricia DeBoer, the Regional Director for AFSC recalled that, “with the community fisheries project, we were trying to catch up with the community. Once they heard it was a possibility, they were like, ‘we want to do that.’ We were just trying to keep up as they were trying to get organized” (DeBoer). Initially, the program encompassed many livelihood projects including rice banks, buffalo banks, agriculture work, community fisheries and community forestry, but AFSC soon found that many agriculture-related activities were not successful. This was due in large part to the fact that “even though everyone will say they are a

farmer, they don’t actually pay that much attention to farming because the natural resources are so rich” (DeBoer). Instead, the main achievements have been in the areas of community fisheries and forestry.

Community fisheries “were very successful in our part of the bay to the extent that there were cooperative agreements between the community and the local fishery officials on how they would manage arrests” (DeBoer). Working together, local law enforcement and community fishery members have been able to patrol and reduce the number of trawlers and illegal fishermen, resulting in a rebound of fishery resources. Part of what makes these projects successful is the inclusion of local government officials. “One of the things that AFSC always did from the very beginning is make sure to include government in whatever process was happening. It comes out of the fundamental Quaker principle: No one is the enemy” (DeBoer). “A lot of the work we have had to do around community forestry and community fisheries has had to do with bringing the local officials along. Getting them to see that it actually does fit with Cambodian law, it is happening in other parts of Cambodia, and it is a good thing for your relationship with the community.” In the future, the AFSC hopes to see more sustainable projects as the organization become more localized.

often do not fulfil the requisite legal obligations prior to granting economic land concessions (Diokno 14).²⁶ The ambiguous nature of land ownership has also affected the population at large. Government land concessions to private companies, many of them foreign, have resulted in the forceful eviction of thousands. A report released by the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights in June 2009 stated that at least 133,000 people in Phnom Penh and another 250,000 people in 13 provinces have been evicted since 1990 (qtd. in The Economist Intelligence Unit). Amnesty International claims that approximately 23,000 people were forcefully evicted in 2008 alone (qtd. in The Economist

Intelligence Unit). For many Cambodians, losing their land is tantamount to losing their livelihoods and, in some cases, their lives (O’Keefe 3).

Because it has become such a controversial issue for all parties involved, faith-inspired and secular NGOs tend to avoid direct involvement in land titling issues. Nevertheless, some organizations have integrated land law training into community development programs, in addition to promoting human resources development as a way to empower Cambodians to advocate for their own rights. Box 20 describes the work of one organization, Bonlok Khmer, on forestry and land rights issues.

BOX 19 TREE ORDINATIONS

Tree ordination is an adaptation of a Buddhist tradition that has its origin among the “ecology monks” of Thailand in the 1990’s (Darlington 1). During that time, a small group of monks began to actively raise awareness about environmental degradation, which was a consequence of the human suffering they witnessed. One tool they utilized was tree ordinations. The monks would hold a ceremony where they chanted, gave water blessings and wrapped trees in the distinct orange robes of a monk. This symbolic demonstration holds powerful meaning on multiple levels. By placing the orange robes on the tree the monks try to impress the idea that to cut down a tree is comparable to killing a monk. The ceremony also reinforces the Buddhist idea of dependent origination. Finally, in the Cambodian context the ceremony also plays to traditional animistic beliefs that there are powerful spirits, called *neakta* or *devas*, residing in the trees that would be angered if the tree were killed (Elkin 53).

The practice of tree ordination is slowly spreading to Cambodia as a fair number of Cambodian monks travel to Thailand to visit, study, or live. One Cambodian monk, Venerable Saluth, spent five years living in Thailand where he was exposed to the work of “ecology monks.” Upon Venerable Saluth’s return to his home province of Oddar Meanchey, he was confronted by widespread deforestation. Venerable Saluth and the other monks at his home *wat* now work with local community members to bring a community forest under their protection. Venerable Saluth holds yearly tree ordination ceremonies in the oldest area of the community forest. After the first ordination ceremony, illegal logging in that area of the forest ceased. A few environmental NGOs, such as ABE and Mlup Baitong, encourage monks to perform tree ordinations both to raise awareness about deforestation and to decrease illegal logging activities.

26. See the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights in Cambodia’s 2007 report entitled “Economic Land Concessions in Cambodia: A Human Rights Perspective” for several examples, including descriptions of direct violations of indigenous religious practices.

BOX 20

BONLOK KHMER'S WORK WITH INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

Bonlok Khmer, formerly Buddhism for Progressive Society, works with indigenous communities in Cambodia's provinces, focusing on advocacy and legal support for community forestry issues and indigenous land issues in addition to providing education about the environment. The organization began as an arm of the Southeast Asia Development Program, localizing in 1998 as the result of an initiative to discuss the impact of resource concession with the Royal Government of Cambodia's Forestry Office (Cheatlom).

According to Ang Cheatlom, a former monk and the current Executive Director of Bonlok Khmer:

"There are a lot of concessions, including mineral concessions. These concessions are having a negative impact on the people. For example, the gold in Rovieng has always been extracted by indigenous people using traditional methods. This has been a traditional occupation of indigenous people, but now the government has stopped them and allowed the private companies to take over. Now the people have no jobs. They start to work as laborers for the companies and they get a low salary, around three dollars a day" (Cheatlom).

In its work with the Kuy indigenous people of Preah Vihear Province, Bonlok Khmer partners with the NGO Forum of Cambodia, with funds and technical training from Village Focus International. The project aims to raise awareness among the Kuy of their legal rights as indigenous people and to help them register with the government in order to exercise communal rights.

Another project, entitled 'Support Indigenous Communities on Advocacy,' focuses on networks at the community level in order to promote knowledge among indigenous people about the impact of mineral extraction, land concessions and deforestation. Bonlok Khmer produces materials that can be used as advocacy tools by the indigenous people. The project, launched in March 2010, is funded by Trócaire and Norwegian Aid, and covers the Kulen, Chay Saen, and Rovieng districts.

Since its inception, Bonlok Khmer has used Buddhist philosophies in its approach to promoting community development. Specifically, staff members try to use the eight-fold path in development activities, and focus on the five precepts necessary to the development process (Cheatlom). However, Ang Cheatlom reflects on the difficulty of securing interreligious funding, and the influence this has on Bonlok Khmer's evolving mission:

"In 2008, we decided to change the name from Buddhism for Progressive Society to Bonlok Khmer ... It was difficult to contact some donors who were Christian. Also, when we work with other, non-Buddhist communities, they felt uneasy because we used the name Buddhism. For example, we work with Muslim communities. ... The work here is similar to the past, but some things have changed a little bit. We have kept the same vision, but we have a new mission" (Cheatlom).

While Buddhist principles may influence the attitudes and approach of Bonlok Khmer staffers, in Cheatlom's opinion, "We are present as an NGO here, just a development NGO."

Goal #8: Global Partnerships

This involves the covenant, or pact, between richer and poorer nations that centers around partnership: that poorer countries commit themselves to effective policy action and good governance, while richer nations commit themselves to well managed, sufficient, and reliable development assistance and responsible trade policies. This broad issue of development partnerships is part of the framework for this review, with specific issues like aid coordination which are treated in subsequent chapters.

Goal #9: De-mining, UXO and Victim Assistance

Cambodia's ninth and final MDG, "De-mining, UXO and Victim Assistance," calls for "zero impact from landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) by 2015." The United Nations Development Program's March 2010 progress update comments that this goal is "very likely to be achieved" (UNDP 2010b). The UN outlines three key approaches to accomplishing the goal: clearing contaminated areas, reducing casualties, and providing victim assistance. By June

2009, 500,000 hectares of land, or 1,230 acres, out of a total target of 1,150,000 hectares of formerly mined areas had been cleared by humanitarian de-mining organizations and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces: that is, roughly 44 percent of the total land targeted for clearing. Civilian casualties from mines and other ERWs are also decreasing; 4,320 individuals were reported killed in 1996, while in 2009, the number of deaths was 241 (UNDP 2010b).

The greatest threat posed by landmines today is not that they will be accidentally tripped, but that a desperate search for scrap metal could lead individuals to try to handle UXOs for economic gain. The prevalence of UXO also exacerbates poverty because contaminated land cannot be used for housing, schools, or farming. Moreover, the cost of caring for UXO victims usually falls on the victims' families. Since 1979, there have been over 60,000 landmine casualties (Handicap International). Faith-inspired organizations like the Battambang Catholic Church and its Arrupe Center for Kids attempt to address the needs of ERW survivors, as does Jesuit Services, which leads the Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines (see Boxes 21 and 22).

BOX 21

THE ARRUPE CENTER FOR KIDS

The Arrupe Center for Kids cares for children and teenagers with disabilities. The Center is named after the late Father Pedro Arrupe, who established the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) in Cambodia in 1980. The Center is based at the Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang, the headquarters for the Diocese, which covers nine districts in the northwestern part of the country and has a membership of about 7,000 Catholic followers. Established in 2001 with a roster of five young persons, the Center now provides housing and schooling for dozens of children from

throughout Cambodia who come to the Center with a range of disabilities. Many have been injured by landmines, but polio is also a leading cause of disabilities due to a lack of readily available vaccines. The Center distributes wheelchairs and prosthetics, and provides physical therapy.

The Arrupe Center is overseen by the Bishop of the Battambang Diocese, the Apostolic Prefect Enrique Figaredo, widely known by the Catholic community as Father Kike (pronounced "Kee-kay")

(continued)

BOX 21 THE ARRUPE CENTER FOR KIDS (continued)

and by many of his enthusiastic supporters as the “Bishop of the Wheelchairs.” Born in Spain, Kike first visited Cambodia in 1985 as a volunteer with JRS, which at the time was working with disabled persons in the refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodia border. Although he only spent a brief amount of time with JRS before returning to Spain, Kike returned to Cambodia with the assistance of AFSC. With AFSC, he worked in the border camps with the disabled for two years, from 1988 through 1989. Kike then returned to Spain again where he was ordained as a priest in 1992. He has been serving in his current capacity as the Apostolic Prefect since 2000.

Funding for the Center is heavily reliant on Kike’s personal connections. He estimates that nearly half of the million-dollar yearly budget arrives in the form of donations from friends and local governments in Spain. Roughly 30 percent of the remaining operational costs are covered through donations from Catholic NGOs, including one called Catholic Connection, which supports church development projects. Another 10 percent comes from the Vatican, while the remaining 10 percent is brought in from income generating activities set up at the diocesan headquarters in Battambang, including a rice harvesting operation.

One of the Center’s more recognizable aspects is its dance troupe, which performs throughout Cambodia and in 2008 made its latest trip to Spain, where the youth dancers spent six weeks performing in 12 Spanish cities. Besides offering an enriching outlet for

its young members, the troupe serves as a mechanism to raise critical awareness. “When we want to talk to the people about the landmines problem, we do it through classical Cambodian dance,” says Kike (Figaredo). One of the more popular dances is called “The Dance of Peace to Ban Landmines.” Dancers are divided into two groups, one group representing the forces of peace, the other, the forces of evil. In the dance the forces are fighting, but “the force of peace is stronger” (Figaredo).

Kike says he formed the group because he was searching for a culturally sensitive way to work with the youth. “When we think about development here in Cambodia, we have to think about their culture,” says Kike (Figaredo). Kike’s vision is rooted in the belief that allowing individuals to find their own inner peace and harmony, using the tools they know best, is the most sincere method of channeling God’s love and grace. This vision contrasts with what is in some cases a perception, and sometimes the reality, about faith-inspired development work in Cambodia and elsewhere—that it is associated with attempts to actively reshape the worldviews of beneficiaries.

Kike, like others of this ilk, is tireless in his work at the center. He is also a master networker, drawing in a wide range of partners. In the past, the Center has worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross, Emergency Hospital, Handicap International, Caritas, and JRS in Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey and Phnom Penh.

BOX 22 JESUIT SERVICES: ASSISTING LANDMINE VICTIMS

The Jesuit Services (JS) is another leading force in caring for the disabled, including those injured by landmines or maimed by unexploded ordnances. In writings about its anti-landmines work, JS has noted that its advocacy “originates in the contemplation of God, who is love, and who desires a world where justice and dignity prevail, especially for those most in need. Our stand is with the poorest and most needy, to help reconciliation, peace and justice and the full human development of people” (Reeves 28).

Like so many Christian actors who have been present in Cambodia for decades, Sister Denise Coghlan began by working in the border camps. Coghlan says her motivation to come to the camps was the recognition that “wherever suffering is present in the world, the cross of Christ is mysteriously present” (Coghlan). She and a handful of Jesuits who were also working independently in the camps came together through JRS. In 1994, the organization was re-named Jesuit Services, with JRS remaining a component of the JS umbrella. Today, JS is present in over 50 countries. Coghlan is head of JS’ operation in Cambodia, which employs 120 national and 22 expatriate staff and has operations in Phnom Penh and the provinces of Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap and Battambang.

When the government allowed it, a team including Coghlan moved from the camps and set up operations in Phnom Penh. Their goal was threefold: to continue working with persons with disabilities caused by the war, to start a rural development project in a local village, and to develop peace and reconciliation programs. Jesuit Services’ Phnom Penh headquarters was dubbed *Banteay Prieb*, which in Khmer means “Center of the Dove.” JS transformed the building in which the Center is now housed from a launching pad

for carrier pigeons during the Khmer Rouge regime and a prison during the formative years early in Hun Sen’s rule. In 1991, the Center became a residence and vocational training center for disabled persons. Since then, more than 1,500 young people have stayed and studied at the Center. Banteay Prieb offers two- year vocational training courses in electronics, mechanics, agriculture and sewing, and a one- year vocational course in sculpture. The Center also provides psychosocial support, grouping the youth together in small houses.

Beyond the Dove Center, JS runs a workshop that manufactures wheelchairs, distributing them along with prosthetics to individuals in need. JS also operates six centers for disabled children who have not had access to school. Children are able to stay at the centers, where they are tutored so that they can then enroll in government schools.

JS has also been a leading voice in the Cambodian anti-landmine movement, which itself maintains a strong presence in the global campaign to ban landmines. JS leads the Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines, a sub-set of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Globally, the campaign brings together approximately 1,400 organizations. In Cambodia, the campaign includes a coalition of partners from various groups of individuals including survivors, religious leaders, as well as faith-inspired and secular NGOs (Reeves 31). Yearly peace walks organized by Cambodian monks call attention to the issues of landmines. JS is also involved in clearing landmines and monitoring the clearing process.

JS’ efforts draw direct inspiration from Catholic Social Teaching and broader Christian principles of

(continued)

BOX 22 JESUIT SERVICES: ASSISTING LANDMINE VICTIMS (continued)

social justice. Coghlan suggests that a key underlying component in seeking justice for the poor—an action on which the Christian faith places particular emphasis—is advocacy. Faith-inspired or not, many NGOs find advocacy to be somewhat controversial in Cambodia, as they try to avoid confrontation with a government that has authority over their continued operation in the country. Said Coghlan, “If you are working on an issue such as helping the people that have been injured by landmines, justice demands that you also advocate that the cause of the suffering be stopped; that you ban the landmines and call the producers to account” (Coghlan).

Besides the many organizations with anti-landmine initiatives, influential individuals have joined the campaign, including four former soldiers who, while residents of the Center, penned a letter to the international community, which read:

“Before we were soldiers that laid the mines that blew off the arms, legs, and eyes of one another; now, we work together in the Center of the Dove and we beg the world to stop making mines,

stop laying mines, begin clearing mines, and to work so that our communities and people with disabilities can live a full life once again” (Coghlan).

One of these former soldiers, Tun Channareth, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 on behalf of the campaign, and today works with Coghlan at JS’s office in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Despite the progress JS has made in calling attention to the landmine situation in Cambodia, Coghlan says more faith-inspired NGOs need to make advocacy work a critical component of their programming. “Many faith-inspired organizations probably steer away from advocacy and police work,” says Coghlan. “Perhaps some could pay more attention to advocacy, but they have to know their stuff. If you are going to advocate you have to be knowledgeable.” Whether speaking on landmines, human rights or health issues, advocacy by faith-inspired organizations is key, but the responsibility lies with organizations to be “prepared to work diligently on the subjects they choose” (Coghlan).

Additional Sectors Not Covered by the Millennium Development Goals

Trafficking

Not covered explicitly by the MDGs, but viewed as particularly important to faith-inspired and secular organizations alike, is human trafficking. Trafficking, often in children and women and for purposes of sexual exploitation, is endemic in Cambodia. The excitement felt by faith-inspired organizations follow-

ing news reports in late 2009 that human trafficking rates had declined was quickly tempered by the realization of the enormous challenges ahead. The U.S. Department of State’s “Trafficking in Persons Report 2010,” a global review of the state of human trafficking by country, confirmed the consistently declining rates. The report ranks countries on a scale of “Tier 1” through “Tier 3,” with “Tier 2 Watch List” between Tier 2 and Tier 3 (U.S. Department of State 2010). Cambodia was upgraded in the most recent report,

published in June 2010, from a “Tier 2 Watch List” country, to a “Tier 2” country.²⁷ In issuing its latest ranking for Cambodia, the State Department found that “the Government of Cambodia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so.” The report cited increased “law enforcement efforts” resulting in a “significant increase in convictions over the prior year.” Yet the report cautioned that “impunity, corruption, and related rent-seeking behavior continue to impede progress in combating trafficking in persons.” Furthermore, police and judicial officials are both “directly and indirectly involved in trafficking” (U.S. Department of State 2010).

Causes underlying trafficking are varied, but the leading factor is poverty; the brutal reality is that many parents choose or are forced to sell their children. Other young people leave home of their own accord, many hoping to earn money to support their parents. (Providing financial support to one’s parents is expected of young people in Cambodian culture). Individuals (the majority women and girls) are lured to the region’s cities with a promise of a job, only to fall victim to trafficking rings. High demand for sex-workers is clearly an important contributing factor. Estimates suggest that one in every forty Cambodian girls is sold into sexual slavery (Asian Associated Press). Demand fuels the problem; a significant number of foreigners travel to Cambodia to engage in sex tourism (U.S. Department of State 2010).

But not all trafficked persons end up working in the sex industry. Some wind up as forced laborers. Young

Cambodian men tell harrowing stories of being held captive on Thai fishing boats, forced to work months without pay. Young children are trafficked to Thailand and Vietnam where they work menial jobs as dishwashers and live-in maids, also often without pay. Whether trafficked for sex or manual labor, the underlying conditions which both cause and help sustain the trade are the same: weak government institutions, corruption, cultural norms that place little value on poor women and children, unequal gender relations, and low enforcement levels.

Trafficking is increasingly seen as a cross-cutting issue, with many sectors involved. It is a classic issue that needs and can benefit from having both secular and faith-inspired organizations focusing on both symptoms and the root causes of the phenomenon. It is an example of an issue that crosses boundaries between human rights and development, humanitarian assistance, law and order, and security. Yet a tendency remains among some groups to see trafficking as a human rights issue, which can limit the attention it receives for two primary reasons: there are not nearly as many human-rights focused NGOs as there are groups focused on development in Cambodia; and many NGOs are extremely wary of undertaking aggressive advocacy efforts to protect human rights for fear of government reprisal.

Helen Sworn is the founder and executive director of the Chab Dai Coalition, a Christian coordination body headquartered in Phnom Penh for organizations with anti-trafficking agendas (see Box 29). Sworn suggests that a series of soon-to-open economic corridors, including a number of national highways with links

27. Tier 1 countries fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act’s (TVPA) minimum standards. Tier 2 countries do not fully comply with the TVPA but are making significant efforts to do so. Tier 2 Watch List countries fit the designation of Tier 2 countries but absolute number of victims is increasing, there is a failure by the government to provide evidence of increasing efforts to fight trafficking from the previous year, or the finding that a country was making efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year (U.S. Department of State 2010).

BOX 23

AGAPE RESTORATION CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

Several Christian missionary organizations work with victims of trafficking. One is the Agape Restoration Centers in Phnom Penh, which is supported by Agape International Ministries. These two centers provide free shelter and classes to 58 girls rescued from the sex industry. Agape staff conduct monthly follow up visits with 59 other girls who have since been reintegrated back into their communities. Agape is run by Reverend Don Brewster; he observes, “I believe the key to this problem is the church...The church within the country...has the ability to change this” (Listen Up).

Brewster first arrived in Cambodia in 2004 to assist with leadership training as a missionary with his church in California. Soon after returning to his home in the U.S. he saw a report on human trafficking in Cambodia on a television news show. Brewster says his first reaction was “Oh my goodness, no one [in Cambodia] told us that this is going on” (Brewster). He assembled a team from his church, including a therapist and a videographer, and together they traveled to Cambodia where they spent a month researching the trafficking situation. The team met with staff from the Cambodia office of the International Justice Mission (IJM), a global Christian-inspired rights group, which stressed to them the need for quality “aftercare,” a term used to describe the process of caring for (through education and psycho-social services) young girls who have been rescued from traffickers. Brewster’s faith is his chief motivation. He says Christ is ever-present at the Centers, whether or not the young women recognize it. “I believe that without Christ involved [the girls] will not heal emotionally, not after what they have been through” (Brewster).

Critical to the success of Brewster’s efforts is a healthy working relationship with Cambodia’s Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSAVY), the government agency charged with overseeing Cambodia’s anti-trafficking efforts. When the police, through actions such as raids on brothels, recover young women who have been trafficked, the women are first referred to MOSAVY, which then assigns the women to an NGO for care. The referral process from Ministry to NGO is rather disorganized, so it takes personal relationships with key ministry staff to ensure that young women are properly placed with the NGOs best equipped to care for them. MOSAVY reported that in 2009, the local police referred 535 victims of sex trafficking to its provincial offices, compared with 505 in 2008 (U.S. Department of State 2010).

A common thread that is evident in the work of small faith-inspired organizations like Brewster’s Agape Centers is the hand-to-mouth nature of their finances. With a yearly operating budget of roughly US\$1 million, Brewster says he struggles every month to remain financially viable. “The truth is,” says Brewster, “I am thrilled if we have three months in the bank” (Brewster). Interestingly, it appears that the mission-based organizations like Agape International operate almost exclusively outside of the mainstream donor picture, without funding from international donor agencies or foreign governments. Instead, their funding comes from the directors’ personal connections—family and friends, and church congregations to which their organizations may have links in their home countries. While this arrangement arguably provides greater latitude in designing and implementing programs because of a lack of stringent donor guidelines and requirements, it also makes planning

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BOX 23 AGAPE RESTORATION CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING (continued)

long-term, sustainable projects that much more difficult. This is of particular concern to organizations whose beneficiaries require continued guidance and monitoring, which is sometimes needed for years after they have left the actual day-to-day programs (such as follow up visits).

Rev. Brewster, like so many of the faith-inspired actors interviewed for this report, has no immediate plans to leave Cambodia or to switch the focus of his work. The concept of staying in one place, in one job, for an extended period of time is something of an anomaly in the secular development community.

Yet time and again, this research revealed that faith-inspired actors are more likely to stay in one place for years, if not decades. A leading reason for this fixedness: many say they have been called by God to their work, called by a God whose love is enduring despite the challenges. If God's love is eternal, the narrative goes, then whatever the odds may be, his followers—the staff at these faith-inspired organizations—feel compelled to keep at their work. “God promises us that in the future [the girls] will make good choices,” says Brewster. “So we will keep in contact with them, we will keep loving them, and we will keep praying” (Brewster).

BOX 24 INSIDE THE BROTHELS

Don Brewster, Executive Director of Agape International Missions (described in Box 23), has conducted covert trips inside Cambodian brothels as part of the organization's goal to shed light on the country's sex industry. Here, Brewster gives a first-hand account of a trip to a karaoke club that doubled as a brothel in the Cambodian town of Siem Reap:

“Inside the one place we went to, they had 80 karaoke rooms that were gigantic. You could probably fit forty people into them. They were beautifully decorated. When you walked into the place, the girls had numbers on their chests. The manager walked up to us with no fear and said, ‘Listen, you can do whatever you want to the girls. You can touch her, feel her, kiss her, but you can't have sex with her without negotiating with me.’ In the room, they have an overseer and the waitresses. The overseer isn't there to make sure you don't do something wrong. They

are there to make sure that the girls respond to you to make you want to have sex with them. The karaoke girls were two dollars for an hour and you could get a receipt with that printed on it. If you want, you could charge it on your credit card. This is big, big organized crime and business” (Brewster).

As shocking as it was for Brewster to experience firsthand the horrors inside the club, it is the psychological trauma exacted on the young women of Cambodia unfolding daily in his work that is both disquieting and a source of motivation. Brewster recalls asking a group of young volunteers at his center what their best and worst childhood memories were. The questions were designed as an ice-breaker, to get the volunteers talking, but “95 percent of them could not stop crying talking about their life.” Says Brewster, “they were weeping because of the life they had lived” (Brewster).

to neighboring countries, are virtually guaranteed to increase rates of trafficking. In fact, the Ministry of the Interior's report that trafficking declined in 2009 took into account only internal trafficking rates.

A handful of faith-inspired organizations, mostly Christian, work to address the root causes of traffick-

ing—poverty, a dearth of educational opportunities, and weak law enforcement—while at the same time working with trafficked victims. The Christian evangelical New Hope School in Phnom Penh, part of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, uses the Bible as a basis for the anti-trafficking message which they primarily gear towards parents. “Only with the

BOX 25**HAGAR: HEALING AND REINTEGRATION FOR TRAFFICKED PERSONS**

According to the book of Genesis in the Bible, Hagar—an Egyptian servant given to Abraham to bear children when Abraham's wife Sarah could not—along with her son, are expelled by Abraham into a vast wilderness after Sarah finally gives birth years later. Hagar and her son, with little water and alone in the desert, are rescued by an angel. Hagar, an international NGO with operations in three countries, is trying to prevent similar exploitation from befalling women and children today.

“Our goal is that every woman and child we work with is able to successfully reintegrate into his or her community,” explains Talmage Payne, Hagar's Chief Executive Officer in Cambodia (Payne). Central to Hagar's mission is providing help to women and girls who are victims of sexual exploitation. Help is given with three goals in mind: healing, reintegration, and future economic viability. Success to Hagar is defined as getting girls and women back into the community where they can support themselves independently.

Hagar started work in Cambodia as a local NGO in the mid-1990s. Payne became CEO in 2006, and was previously the Country Director of WV Cambodia. The organization is also active in Vietnam and Afghanistan. Hagar works closely with the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on cases of suspected child abuse. When the US and Cambodian authorities arrest a pedophile, Hagar is entrusted with their victims' care. When a girl first comes to Hagar she is provided with intensive psychotherapy, then partakes in life-skills training and lessons on how to handle finances. In some cases, this may entail helping younger women obtain a formal education, either by paying their way through school or helping them find scholarships. Finally, when the girls are deemed “ready,” Hagar staff oversee all aspects of their reintegration into the community, which may include having them move in with their families or being placed into foster care.

Asked why Cambodia has such a problem with sexual trafficking and abuse, Payne responded that “access to children by sexual predators has always been easier here than in other places. When it comes to sex workers, there is a certain degree of acceptance in the community that this person chose to do what they are doing” (Payne).

Payne says his faith is critical to how he approaches his work. “Much of my faith beliefs are reflected in the mission and vision of Hagar,” he says. “My faith defines how I see the world that I live in and influences my capacity to continue to love and engage with people” (Payne).

Gospel can we change people’s hearts,” says Kim Bui, who fled Vietnam during the war, settled in Canada, and returned to Cambodia in 2001. “Only when they know Christ will they know it’s a sin to sell children” (Listen Up). Despite the fact that trafficking, which can be viewed more generally as human exploitation, is an issue that all faiths have an interest in addressing, it appears that at present few if any Buddhist or Islamic-inspired organizations have programs specifically working on trafficking-related concerns.

While some organizations focus on the root causes of trafficking, others take on the equally important task of working with victims. Agape International Ministries is one example of an organization that provides services to victims of trafficking through its Agape Restoration Centers in Phnom Penh (see Box 23). Hagar, a Christian organization, focuses on healing and reintegration of sexually trafficked women (see Box 25). The Daughters of Charity runs a life-skills and social support center in Phnom Penh for girls rescued from the sex industry. They advertise their program as helping “victims ... to find wholeness and to become all that God created them to be.” The group claims that 100 percent of all girls who come to Daughters stop selling themselves, and that 80 percent, including those of Buddhist faith, rate the church-related programs as helping them “experience the most healing.”

Caring for orphans

Cambodia is one of the world’s countries where the plight of orphaned children looms largest, and over many years orphans have captured international imaginations and compassion. Faith-inspired organizations are particularly active in orphan care, and there is considerable debate around best practice and risks, within faith communities, and with public authorities.

For many faiths, care of vulnerable individuals, and

particularly children, is a central theme. For example, the Bible refers frequently to the responsibility for the well being of vulnerable individuals. The book of James states that “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (New International Version, James 1.27). The Qur’an has a similar message: “Treat not the orphan with harshness” (Qur’an 93:9). In Buddhism, *dana*, or the act of giving is one of the meritorious acts an individual can perform (Monychenda). *Dana* can be fulfilled through a wide range of actions, including providing for the care of orphans.

Specific data on global reach of orphan care and services, including orphanages, skills training and in-community support, is poor. In 2009, UNICEF estimated the number of children living in institutional care facilities worldwide at over two million. Another UNICEF estimate puts the number of orphans in the “developing” world at around 130 million. A 2005 Cambodian Demographic and Health Survey estimated that 8.8 percent of Cambodian children ages 0–18 were orphans, with approximately 553,000 orphans living in households and 6,121 in orphanages (qtd. in National Multi-sectoral 12).

Orphanages are a common form of care for orphaned children provided by faith-inspired organizations in Cambodia. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran, and Youth Rehabilitation is responsible for the creation and enforcement of policies concerning orphanages, and lays out minimum standards for facilities and care. The government has shown a strong commitment to following policies that adhere to the Guidelines of Alternative Care set out by the United Nations (Chhin). However, orphanages are in practice registered with various different government ministries, if they are registered at all, so standards

are not uniformly followed. The dispersion of oversight also hinders accurate counts of orphans and orphanages operating in Cambodia, and makes it nearly impossible for the Cambodian government to enforce standards (Chhin).

Both international and national faith-inspired organizations operate orphanages in Cambodia. Some are individual projects run by international churches, while others are part of larger, localized organizations. For example, People for Care and Learning (PCL), an international Christian organization, runs orphanages in Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, and Takeo provinces. Asia's Hope International, another Christian organization based in Cambodia and Thailand, runs a number of orphanages in Phnom Penh and Battambang. Partners in Compassion, a Christian and Buddhist organization, runs a children's community on the grounds of *Wat Opot* for AIDS orphans and children with HIV/AIDS (see Box 16). Foursquare Children of Promise, a Christian, mission-based organization that works in fellowship with the international organization Warm Blankets, runs another 108 orphanages.

The Buddhist *wats* dotting the country are also a significant source of orphan care. Pagodas have traditionally been the place where children are sent when their families are unable to support them, or when there is no extended family able to provide for them. In some pagodas orphans are lucky enough to receive basic numeracy and literacy lessons from monks, as well as lessons on Buddhist morality. The International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) undertook a survey of monks living in Phnom Penh to learn more about the care they provide and how they perceive their roles. Many of the monks they surveyed acknowledged that by joining the monkhood they involuntarily assumed a parental role. But many felt that they were ill equipped to be caregivers

and unprepared to provide the emotional support that pagoda children need; as a result, they may purposefully avoid children living in the pagoda, leaving them to fend for themselves (Chhin). The ICC, in an attempt to ensure better care for pagoda orphans and children, offers training to monks on parenting skills and basic childcare. There remains a large unmet need to address the issue of the children living in these informal orphanages, as they are not regulated by the government.

Some faith actors that are responsible for running orphanages are shifting their focus to the reintegration of older children and young adults into communities. There are few tested formulas guiding when and how to reintegrate individuals. Julie Martinez, a development director for People for Care and Learning, acknowledges that:

“We are facing that question here because our kids are starting to get older. Right now, we have a 19 year old. The challenge with that is that when we got the kids they had such large gaps in their education, so even though they are 19 they are not even close to completing their education. For us, it's not the age. It is, are you done with school? Because of that, we have a 19 year old who is still in grade 7. We are still not really fully ready to deal with it” (Martinez).

For many orphanages, reintegration is a monumental undertaking because it is rarely addressed early on (Chhin). Many children living in orphanages lack the skills necessary to care for themselves and interact with members of the community. Time spent in orphanages has not eradicated their poverty, but merely delayed it. Project SKY, a project of the ICC, is a comprehensive program that aims to provide orphanage residents with essential life skills (see Box 26).

Because of the known negative effects that orphanages can have on child development, some organizations are moving away from institutional care and focusing on providing support to families to ensure that children are able to remain in their communities. UN Guidelines to Alternative Care suggest that:

“Financial and material poverty, or conditions directly and uniquely imputable to such poverty, should never be the only justification for the removal of a child from parental care, for receiving a child into alternative care, or for preventing his/her reintegration, but should be seen as a signal for the need to provide appropriate support to the family.”

The ICC’s study set out to determine the reasons why children who are not orphans are sent to orphanages. The primary reason that families give is education; poverty was secondary (Chhin). The survey findings demonstrate a continued need to support Cambodian families.

Some faith-inspired organizations support programs explicitly designed to enable orphans and other vulnerable children can remain in their communities. World Vision’s comprehensive Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) project is an example of how proper support and training can reduce the need for families and communities to relinquish the care of children. The HOSEA (Helping Orphanages through Support, Education and Advice) project, recently completed by the ICC, focused on supporting foster families (see Box 26). Initially, the staff working on HOSEA identified 128 foster families in 66 villages to train and support. Foster families were mainly composed

of aunts, uncles, grandparents and other extended family members. The ICC identified two volunteers to act as key people in each village, and trained them to run parenting clubs for foster families and to discourage discrimination against foster children (Chhin). ICC has developed materials for key volunteers to distribute that focus on general health, hygiene, and sexual health, as well as how to address discrimination in their community.

As a Christian organization, faith is the main motivator for ICC’s work. But Project SKY is clear that they do not evangelize in any fashion, though they are willing to answer questions about their faith. This forms part of their agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Project SKY works with Christian partners to ensure that those interacting with the youth share similar values and morals. For example, Project SKY partners with Yejj (see Box 8) to provide youth soft skills necessary for maintaining employment. However, being Christian is not a requirement and the ICC also works with temples and Buddhists in the community.

Peace and conflict resolution

Faith-inspired actors across the globe are working actively to build peace through many approaches and endeavors, among them intra- and inter-faith dialogue, advocacy, education, trauma healing, and mediation.²⁸ Responding to the violence of Cambodia’s recent past, both faith-inspired and secular organizations have made peace promotion, or what is increasingly termed peacebuilding, an integral part of their development-related strategies and work in the country. This work is often rooted in reconciliation efforts, linked to healing the suffering from crimes and divisions of the Khmer Rouge era. However, it

28. The US Institute for Peace (USIP), the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) are all engaged in work to document the nature of this work and emerging lessons. See also Bouta.

BOX 26 REINTEGRATING ORPHANS INTO THE COMMUNITY

The International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) is an umbrella organization comprising international Christian organizations that came together in Cambodia in 1991. Their projects range from education to linguistics to food security. Sarah Chhin, the co-manager of Project SKY, has lived and worked in Cambodia for over 9 years:

“The way we work is to look for gaps in services. If there seems to be a need and no one else seems to be dealing with it, then we do research to find out what the target group would be and what they identify their needs as. We then build the project around what is actually needed, not around the calling or vision of an individual person” (Chhin).

One of the gaps ICC staff members identified was in the area of orphan care. The ICC’s first orphan related project, HOSEA, initially focused on training staff members in orphanages. After interviewing 60 organizations with a total of about 800 staff members, the ICC found that orphanage staff wanted training on parenting skills, caring for children with disabilities, self-awareness and counseling among other things. The ICC worked hard to provide these, but soon came to the realization that orphanages were not the best place for children to receive care (Chhin).

The question began to arise: “Where are these kids going when they grow up?” The ICC posed the question to orphanage directors, who all replied, “We haven’t gotten there yet, they are too young” (Chhin). Three years later the ICC repeated their initial research and it became clear that orphanages needed assistance with orphan reintegration.

In 2007, ICC began investigating, going deeper into the issue of reintegration. Staff members spoke with 38 orphanages and 3 shelters representing 2,398 children, one third of whom were fifteen or older. Some of the orphans were as old as 28 years old and had been unable to reintegrate into their communities. Through a number of interactive workshops, the ICC explored how the children in orphanages viewed their lives and their futures. What they found was troublesome. Sarah Chhin recalls the children’s responses:

“It was pretty tragic....they are so afraid of the future. They know that they will be vulnerable....They [said] they were afraid of being homeless, never being able to have friends, and of discrimination. They were [afraid] that no one will give them their rights, that no one values them, that they are so alienated from their family that they won’t have a place in it

also responds increasingly to new ethnic, religious, and political tensions. This is an area where faith-inspired groups are deeply involved, often working with others, and where interfaith as well as intra-faith and faith-secular engagement is marked. Faith institutions see themselves as having a particular concern and comparative advantage in the area of reconciliation, clearly a central and deep challenge facing Cambodia after its divided and bitter past.

On January 29, 2003, the Cambodian peace-building community received a wake-up call that social tensions were alive and not a past problem. Cambodians stormed the Thai embassy, throwing stones and burning furniture. The incident stemmed from rumors that a Thai actress had claimed that *Angkor Wat* (Cambodia’s most famous temple and perhaps the largest religious structure in the world) should be returned to Thailand (Jagan).

even if they went back....Their life skills are basic, so they know that if they were on their own in the community they would be very easy to cheat. They would be very easy to exploit and abuse because they don't understand the way that adults work. They have no one to learn from" (Chhin).

The ICC's response came in the form of Project SKY, which first began its work with orphanage directors. Directors were invited to attend quarterly meetings to have discussions and presentations related to essential topics including government policies, minimum standards, and reintegration. Through the directors, the ICC gained permission to work directly with the children living in nine orphanages.

In each of the nine orphanages, the ICC formed a youth club to provide a space where young orphanage residents could come together and discuss common issues and learn to better express their opinions. Each club has a spokesman and vice spokesman who are responsible for the maintenance and activities of the club. Club leaders attend a monthly meeting, which they run on their own, where they exchange ideas and discuss problems related to their clubs and orphanages. In an attempt to ensure sustainability

of the program, youth leaders also receive similar training to that of the orphanage directors and are expected to return to the orphanage and train other youth club members. Through the youth clubs, the ICC has been able to provide numerous trainings and information sessions, many of which the youth club members have specifically asked for.

The ICC has also developed a life-skills course that is open to young people from all orphanages. The course contains a number of modules aimed at providing youth with skills and information. Sarah Chhin describes it as:

"[S]tuff that needs to be taught by people who know what they are doing. We do self-awareness: "Who has made me what I am, what has made me what I am and what effect does that have on my life?" If that was not done professionally, it would really do damage, so we have professional counselors and therapists. It's all creative stuff; they don't just sit there and listen. They work it out for themselves. We do community awareness and safety and community. We do relationship building and reproductive health. We also do goal setting and life planning" (Chhin).

Until then, most peacebuilding organizations had focused on the past, addressing the residual harm of Khmer Rouge and civil war atrocities. Emma Leslie, the Director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, recalls her and her peers' reactions, "Oh my God, we didn't see this. We [had] all been talking about the Khmer Rouge and that's the key thing, but we forgot to do our analysis as to what [was] happening right now. ... No one [had]

been talking about these social relations between people." This example brings to light the fact that tensions run high with neighboring countries, but internal tensions between different ethnic and religious groups are also significant.

The incident prompted the Alliance for Conflict Transformation, a secular peacebuilding organization, to do further research into ethnic and religious

interactions and understanding.²⁹ Their study, *Understanding Inter-Ethnic Relations and National Identity*, found that the majority of information Cambodians receive about other ethnic and religious groups is “general and stereotypical” (Sokeo and Miletic 31). Ethnic, economic, and religious dimensions are all in play. For example, when in 2006, a group of Cambodian Buddhists burned down a Protestant church that was under construction in Kandal province, one source claimed that “the villagers were angry with the Christians in the village who they felt mocked their Buddhist beliefs” (qtd. in AP). This incident, while by no means the norm, does emphasize the need to promote greater inter-religious understanding.

Several secular and faith-inspired organizations are involved in interfaith dialogue in various forms. Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP), a secular organization chaired by Venerable Yos Hut, aims to build the capacity of Cambodia’s college students through seminars, discussion groups, and forums on numerous topics, including an entire unit on religion. Students learn the basic tenets of all the world’s religions and visit churches, mosques, and temples. They also participate in discussion groups with students from other faith backgrounds as a means of exposure to different cultures and to break down negative stereotypes. Soun Sovanney, YRDP’s training coordinator, believes that this unit is an important part of the program because “there are tensions between religious groups, which come mainly from prejudices, and will continue to grow if we don’t address this. Belief is linked to behavior so it is important we have harmony between religious groups because that in turn contributes to peace build-

ing” (Sovanney). Initiatives of Change Association Cambodia (ICA), a local secular organization (but with a strong religious heritage), also targets college-aged adults. ICA works in close partnership with MCC and AFSC for its Xchange Program to promote inter-ethnic understanding between Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Thai populations. Every year, ICA takes groups of students to Thailand and Vietnam, where they interact peacefully with young people of different ethnicities. ICA also hosts participants in Cambodia as part of the exchange program.

ACT is working with faith leaders to disseminate Interfaith understanding at the community level. Through community faith leaders, ACT encourages interfaith grassroots peacebuilding activities in rural areas, where stereotypes appear to be strongest. ACT identifies monks, imams, and priests who are active in their communities and invites them to participate in interfaith training sessions. Over the course of their training, community faith leaders learn about different religions and form a team with two other leaders from different faiths. These teams then return to their communities and help increase awareness that can promote dialogue and dispel stereotypes. Seang Samnang, Co-Director for Management at ACT, says he has “seen the change in the attitude of the religious leaders who attend the interfaith training program. They understand each other better. Some are even ashamed of the past prejudices they held” (Samnang).

Many conflicts are not directly related to religious identity. A 2005 survey of commune councils in Cambodia found the most common conflicts in villages were the result of “youth gangs, domestic conflicts (e.g. inheritance, divorce, and violence),

29. Scott Appleby, a professor of history who has done extensive research and writing on the subject, emphasizes that “peacebuilding is precisely that mode of conflict transformation that strives to comprehend the *longue durée* of a conflict— its full temporal, trans-generational range—and forge strategies commensurate to the deep historical rootedness of the inhumane personal, social and political relationships fuelling the deadly violence” (Appleby 2008 6).

small land conflicts (e.g. boundary demarcation), and small neighborhood conflicts (e.g. defamation, destruction of crops)” (Ninh 42). Faced with such conflicts, villagers first turned to their village chief or the commune council to mediate the dispute (Ninh 43). By building the capacity of village and

commune leaders as well as the villagers themselves, organizations like Khmer Ahimsa and Buddhism for Development (BFD) are equipping communities to deal with local and national conflicts. Khmer Ahimsa draws much of its peace philosophy from the teachings of Venerable Maha Ghosananda (see Box 27). Through

BOX 27 MAHA GHOSANANDA AND THE DHAMMAYIETRA

“The suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes great compassion. Great compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful family. A peaceful family makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world. May all beings live in happiness and peace.”

— Venerable Maha Ghosananda

Venerable Maha Ghosananda, the Cambodian “peace monk,” also known as the “Buddha of the Battlefield,” has been an inspiration to a generation of socially engaged Buddhists in Cambodia and throughout the region. Born to poor farmers, Maha Ghosananda’s childhood differed little from that of other Cambodian boys at that time. In 1943, at 14, Maha Ghosananda entered the monastic life. He went on to study Buddhist philosophy in India, remaining there for 15 years. During his time in India, Maha Ghosananda was under the tutelage of Nichidatsu Fujii, a Japanese monk and colleague of Mahatma Gandhi. Nichidatsu ran a number of peace movements in India; Maha Ghosananda participated in some of them, thus beginning his long career as a peacemaker.

After receiving his doctoral degree in 1969, Maha Ghosananda went to Thailand to learn meditation from the monks living in the forest. News of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge reached Maha while he was still meditating in the forest. It was then he

decided it was time to re-engage with the lay community. Maha Ghosananda began working with Cambodian refugees in 1978. His aim was to teach them *Metta Sutta*, or loving-kindness and forgiveness, and he also established a number of temples in the refugee camps. He also began a worldwide campaign to bring peace to Cambodia.

On April 12, 1992, motivated by the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements, Maha Ghosananda led the first *Dhammayietra*, or pilgrimage for truth. As many as 350 monks and refugees walked with Maha Ghosananda from the Thai border back into Cambodia, to Phnom Penh, where they were joined by more than 600 people (Poethig 24). For many who witnessed the walk, the sight of the orange-robed monks was a powerful sign of healing and regeneration. Since then, the *Dhammayietra* has steadily grown each year despite numerous obstacles, and has evolved to bring other issues to the public eye.

Maha Ghosananda’s spirituality and dedication to the people of Cambodia have inspired many across the globe. Bob Maat, a former Jesuit priest, and close friend of Maha Ghosananda, is among them. In 1996, Bob Maat arrived in Battambang town and was faced with a generation scarred by war. None of the Cambodians he encountered shared his belief that peace was possible; all they knew was war. Maat opened the Dhammayietra Center in *Wat Kandal* to continue the work that Maha Ghosananda had started.

workshops on social development, social analysis, leadership, management, conflict resolution, active non-violence, and peaceful heart training, Khmer Ahimsa provides community members and leaders with the necessary tools to advocate for their rights and “transform conflict”. Huot Thavory, the Executive Director of Khmer Ahimsa, says that they have to exercise caution in carrying out their work because in the past, “the local authority considered Khmer

Ahimsa to be an opposition....That is why we don’t do advocacy. We just provide ideas and techniques; people can use their own resources” (Thavory). BFD works to build and maintain peace in local communities through its Peace and Development Volunteers, dubbed PDV (see Box 28). These volunteers act as mediators in community conflicts and try to build trust amongst village members.

BOX 28 PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEERS

Buddhism for Development (BFD) was started by a group of monks in 1990 in one of the camps on the Thai-Cambodian border. Twenty years later, BFD has grown to serve Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Pailin, Oddar Meanchey, Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear, and Siem Reap provinces. In 1999, BFD initiated its Peace and Development Volunteer, or PDV, project, which partially covers the seven provinces. PDVs in each community were elected by a secret ballot. Each elected PDV was then trained in conflict resolution, alternative dispute resolution, basic human rights, and Cambodian law. PDVs were asked to sign a three-year contract, and were given a bicycle in exchange.

Trust slowly began to build up between different communities through the network of PDVs that extended over seven provinces. PDVs provided an open line of communication between Khmer Rouge and other communities that had not previously existed. Heng Monychenda, the Executive Director and Founder of BFD, believes that “the process is based on trust, which is an important concept in Buddhism. Most of the concepts that involve communal or group activity the Buddha taught started with *satah*, which is confidence or trust. If you don’t have trust, how

can you work together?” (Monychenda). When the project was scheduled to end, one PDV member asked, “Can I stop? You may allow me to stop, but the people will not stop coming to my house.” PDVs had gained the trust and respect of their communities and were the individuals who were frequently sought out for advice. Some people in the villages even referred to them as *mative*, or lawyers.

Ten years later, PDVs are still actively working in their communities. The project’s success has not gone unnoticed and some international organizations seek to replicate the project in different provinces, with one small but important difference; PDVs are now nominated by the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of the Interior. This small change has made a world of difference in the outcomes of the project in its current form. Mike Clarke, BFD’s Management and Business Advisor, believes that “it’s not working as successfully as maybe it could be. We think it is because of the top-down, bottom-up difference.” The grassroots aspect of the PDV program had helped to create sustainability. In spite of the new dynamic of the program, even as PDVs are retiring today, villagers are lining up to inherit their positions.

Financing

Funding for faith-inspired development efforts

The financing picture of faith-inspired organizations is piecemeal because there is no common set of data, accentuating the variety of definitional and practical discrepancies. Nonetheless, some common themes emerge in discussions. Many faith-inspired organizations in Cambodia appear to rely less on the international and bilateral donors than do their secular counterparts. The notable exception is the group of larger faith-inspired NGOs like World Vision and Catholic Relief Services, which actively seek and often secure public funding. Further, a significant number of faith-inspired groups do receive some funding from a wide range of international donors, public and private. Many institutions emphasize gathering donations directly from abroad. Funds are provided by houses of worship (churches, mosques, synagogues) and social units, including youth groups, Sunday school classes, and of course, individual worshippers. Some organizations deliberately choose not to accept funds from any government or public body. Local organizations rely heavily on local donations and inputs, in cash and in kind. This takes

place against the backdrop of a mounting interest among many bilateral and multilateral donors in the roles that religion and religious organizations play in development. Several UN specialized agencies (UNFPA notable among them) and several bilateral aid agencies are actively exploring their stance towards and engagement with faith-inspired actors.

Knowledge about this complex faith-inspired world among donors is generally limited and stereotypes are common. Many international development institutions are unsure of the characteristics of faith-inspired organizations and question whether these organizations might have any comparative advantage over their secular counterparts. In well-intentioned attempts to broaden the categories of recipients of their grants, some institutions tend to conflate all faith-inspired organizations, setting aside a portion of funding for a certain sector for faith-inspired organizations, without much recognition or appreciation for the wide diversity of experiences and/or capabilities.

Two widely held perceptions in the donor community are that “religious organizations are strong on vision but weak on practical strategies for attaining the

kind of equality and well-being they dream of; and that their community development work is carried out on such a small scale that it will never make a significant contribution to the fight against poverty” (Tyndale 27). The latter comment about scale echoes the reality that many organizations, especially local, faith-inspired organizations, lack the capacity to implement programs of the size that some donors would look to fund, or simply do not seek financing through these channels. A conversation with Nadia Saracini, the Program Coordinator in Cambodia for the Christian donor agency DanChurchAid (DCA), highlighted this point.

DCA has been funding projects in Cambodia since the late 1970’s, but did not open an office there until the mid-1990s. More recently, in 2008, the organization merged its Cambodia operations with Christian Aid (CA), another donor agency, and launched a DCA/CA joint program with DCA as the lead agency. The organization currently funds projects in three program areas: food security, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS. Asked whether DCA has ever partnered with Buddhist organizations, Saracini responded: “There have been few direct funding relationships. DCA/CA has worked with Buddhist organizations, and recently considered funding one under its HIV program, but was not able to do so” (Saracini). Saracini added that establishing a funding partnership with any organization inspired by a non-Christian faith tradition would be very desirable and is always considered as a possibility. “However, we receive very few proposals from such organizations, and when we do our decision on whether to fund them is based on the contribution they can make to our programs, whether we have funding available, and their ability to plan, monitor and report on projects in a way that meets our organizational requirements” (Saracini).

The conversation with Saracini underscored that

donors like DCA are very much aware of the potential contributions that groups linked to other faith traditions might make. “The pagodas play an important role within their communities. For example, when there is an emergency, they often provide a safe place for people to go, and as Buddhism is the main religion in Cambodia, Buddhist structures are also very influential in promoting social change. So we [DCA] are aware of the role they play in development processes. We do support partner funding organizations that work with Buddhist structures, but it has been a challenge to find Buddhist organizations that we can fund directly within our programs” (Saracini).

The 1993 elections were a turning point in Cambodia’s aid scene. Despite the presence of UNTAC, a number of national governments chose to hold off on their assistance programs until after the 1993 elections (McCallum and Nee 11). After the elections, “there have been at least 35 official donors and hundreds of civil society organizations that have provided development aid to Cambodia in various sectors and development areas.” Between 2003 and 2008, roughly 10 percent of the US \$3.2 billion in aid came from NGOs (Chanboreth 1).

In 2010, international donors pledged US \$1.1 billion in assistance, the largest aid package in Cambodia’s history. This figure includes pledges from UN agencies and multilateral partners such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the ADB, and the Global Fund. The figure also includes aid pledges from European governments such as Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, as well as a number of other bilateral donors such as the United States, Japan, and Australia. The US \$1.1 billion also takes into account funding supplied by NGOs (See Appendix A).

Table 4 represents actual and estimated disbursements and projections for the period from 2004 through

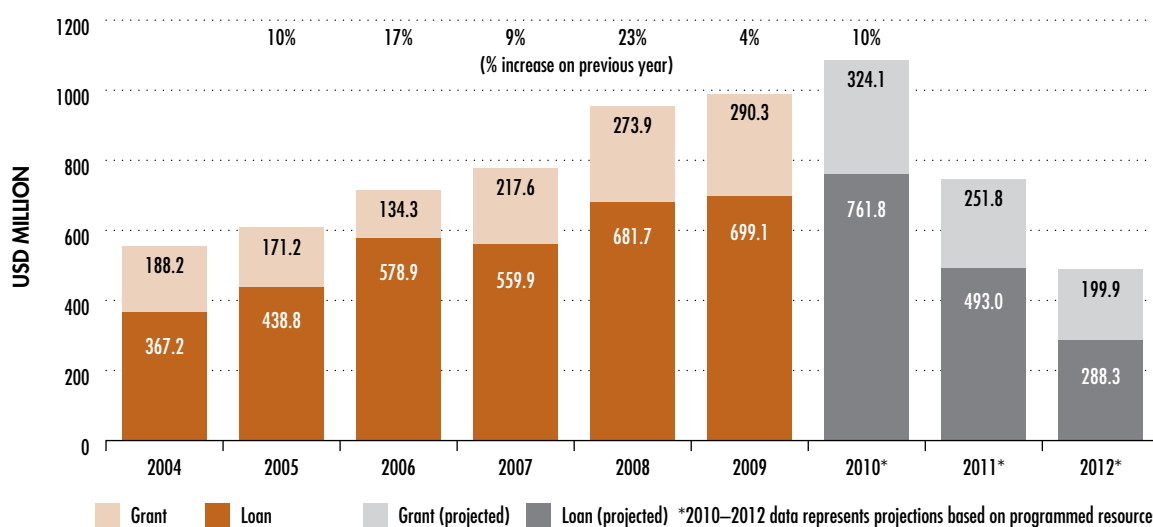
2012. The chart highlights the breakdown between funds given as grants and those as loans. (As with Appendix A, this chart was included in the Aid Effectiveness Report, published by the Cambodian Government in March 2010 for the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum. Donors did not announce their official pledges for 2010 until June of this year.) These figures indicate that since 2004 there was a steady growth in grant-making, and that figure was expected to rise again in 2010. The amount given in loans from year to year also increased every year since 2006. Data for 2011 and 2012 is based on projections for resources committed and thus does not represent actual expected aid flows for those years (Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board 2010a).

Some human rights groups have spoken disapprovingly of the increase in aid. They argue that increases are not justified in light of Cambodia's slow progress in

meeting promises made in 2004 to implement significant changes in five main areas: fighting corruption, increasing accountability, legal and judicial reform, protection of human rights, and public administration reform (Macan-Markar). Groups voicing complaints rely on current data to support their objections. In 2009, Cambodia was ranked the 22nd most corrupt country in the world by the global watchdog, Transparency International. The human rights community lauded US Ambassador Carol Rodley for her 2009 speech stating that Cambodia had lost US \$500 million the previous year due to corruption. A growing chorus of voices is also pressing for donors to use their influence to encourage the government to meet agreed reform benchmarks—known as Joint Monitoring Indicators—that are tied to aid payments.

Despite the large sum pledged in 2010, there is concern that traditional donors such as the World Bank and the IMF are losing influence to a relative

TABLE 4: Disbursements and Projections 2004–2012 (USD Million)



Source: Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board 2010a 7.

newcomer, China, whose voice is noticeably absent among the hodge-podge of foreign governments calling for reforms and changes to the aid picture in Cambodia.

There are substantial uncertainties about how much aid China gives to Cambodia. The accuracy of figures published in official government reports has been called into question, and neither the Chinese nor the Cambodian governments disclose precise figures. Since 2008, the RGC has published figures on the amount of official development assistance (ODA) coming from China—however, whether those numbers are truly representational of the total Chinese aid package is unknown (Chanboreth). Civil society organizations and other development partners express a range of concerns. Their main worry is that the increasingly comfortable relations between the two countries come at the expense of human rights and the environment. For instance, and in contrast to pronouncements from western nations and institutions, China has not once publicly called for improvements in governance or greater respect for human rights.

The Cambodia-China relationship has for decades been rooted in mutual self-interest. In the 1970s, King Sihanouk saw China as an important force to help contain the North Vietnamese from spilling into Cambodia. At the same time, Cambodia was a counter-weight for China, despite being a weaker country, to use against North Vietnamese encroachment on its sovereign territory. China also supported the Khmer Rouge regime, again primarily because of the KR's anti-Vietnamese sentiment. With the 1997 coup, most traditional donors suspended their aid, but China made an immediate pledge of US\$9 million for the purchase of jeeps and cargo trucks and the construction of wells.

One of the first and only reports on Chinese aid to

Cambodia was an April 2006 Chinese government pledge to support a US\$600 million aid package. The amount was significant because it nearly matched the entire aid package announced by western bilateral agencies a few months later (McCallum and Nee 12). The aid China gives is primarily directed toward investment and infrastructure, which has led to claims that China is self-serving, intervening “unfairly on its companies’ behalf, by offering big aid packages to countries that welcome Chinese investment” (The Economist Online). This reflects a concern that China uses aid to curry influence with Cambodian officials to advance its foreign policy and economic interests. Civil society groups point to the December 2009 incident when Cambodia deported 20 asylum seeking Uighur refugees, fleeing ethnic violence in China’s far west, back to China. Despite calls of condemnation from the UN and the United States suggesting that the deportations would go against international refugee law, Cambodia responded to China’s insistence that they be deported. Only weeks after the expulsion, China announced \$1.2 billion in aid and soft loans for Cambodia. Cambodian historian David Chandler observes that, “China has emerged as an increasingly important ally and benefactor of the [Cambodian] regime” (Chandler 2).

Two veterans of Cambodian development suggest that China’s growing influence makes it apparent “that...the need to maintain western donor support, and therefore the official front, has decreased” (qtd. in McCallum and Nee 15). The US government, for example, was scheduled to deliver a shipment of 200 military trucks but canceled the order following the Uighur imbroglio. In June 2010, China did what the US refused to do, delivering 250 military vehicles to the country’s armed forces.

The upshot is that today the “traditional” international donors find themselves walking a difficult path:

continuing to call for reforms from an increasingly non-responsive partner, but not wanting to use the lack of response as leverage to renege on programs and commitments for fear of becoming irrelevant. As the *Asia Times* newspaper reports, “Some analysts admit that Cambodia’s international donors, who include Japan, Australia, the US and the World Bank, fear that if they walk away China will consolidate its control, leaving Western donors with little influence... The donors are willing to stamp on their own benchmarks for reform in order to be in the game in Cambodia” (Macan-Markar).

Though Chinese aid dominates the dialogue in development circles, Japan is currently cited by the Cambodian government as its largest donor. Keat Chhon, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance observed that in 2009, Japan provided \$148.4 million in development assistance (Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board 2010a). As in the case of Chinese aid, the Cambodian government does not officially disclose the total amount of aid it receives from Japan. However, an approximate estimate can be made by summing together the pledges made to different projects and sectors. One significant program is the support Japan has given to de-mining efforts, in line with the ninth CMDG. In 2009, the Japanese Government pledged about US\$1.5 million for clearing of mines and other unexploded munitions. Nearly \$700,000 of that is going to the NGO Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) for mine clearance in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces. The remaining portion, \$829,191 will fund explosive-ordnance disposal in Kampong Cham, Kampong Speu, and Kandal provinces. Japan has pledged support for

mine clearance operations on six previous occasions (Sokha, C).

The Japanese also supported the refurbishment of the Buddhist Institute, a government body and an icon of Cambodian culture. The institute was started by French colonial authorities in partnership with the Cambodian monarch, King Monivong, in 1930, and was originally called the Center for Studying Theravada Buddhism. During the war, the majority of the institute’s library—nearly 30,000 titles and 4,000 documents—was looted. Its reopening in 1982 was made possible with donations provided by the Japanese Rissho Koseikai Fund for Peace (Harris 206). However, in 2009, lack of funding left the Buddhist Institute unable to promote active programming and few research projects were active, the one exception being an ongoing initiative sponsored by the Open Institute, a Cambodian non-profit, to digitize the library collection. The Buddhist Institute’s staff numbers 29 employees, consisting of 20 government employees and nine contract personnel.³⁰

There appear to be two predominant sources of financing directed towards Muslim communities. The first source is international donor agencies such as USAID, which supports Muslim-inspired NGOs like CIYA and ILDO. Both CIYA and ILDO are small faith-inspired organizations, and their programming falls in line with the kinds of activities USAID supports, including vocational education, improving gender relations, and increasing food security. The second wave of financing comes from foreign governments in the Persian Gulf states, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and to a lesser extent, Thailand and Pakistan. Religious charities offer donations that comprise a sizeable portion of the

30. For further information on the Buddhist Institute, consult Dr. Penny Edwards’ book, “The Buddhist Institute: A Short History” which details the creation and work of the Institute. Dr. Edwards is a professor in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

financing to these groups from overseas. Funds from these sources are geared towards two primary avenues: the construction of mosques and the establishment of Islamic schools, which include subsidizing tuitions for students and staffing the schools with teachers from these countries. Some money is also used to sponsor Cambodian Muslim students to study abroad, mostly in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

Foreign financing: fixed-income and trade

Many countries that have large foreign aid programs also have sizeable fixed-asset investments and maintain healthy trade relationships.³¹ Fixed-asset pledges from China in 2008 totaled \$242.2 million and pledges from South Korea reached \$109.2 million (“The Economist Intelligence Unit”). The country’s largest trading partners include China, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States. Despite its growth figures, Cambodia has not been immune to the effects of the worldwide economic crisis. The country’s garment industry has been particularly hard-hit. More than 20,000 of its workers were laid off in 2009, a sizeable number from an industry that provides 80 percent of Cambodia’s foreign exchange earnings and employs an estimated 350,000 people per year.

And while foreign investment in Cambodia is heralded by many as critical to helping the country develop, just as criticism has arisen from the spill-over effects of China’s aid money, so too are flags raised over the pitfalls of foreign financing. Discussion is particularly robust over the issue of land rights, with rights groups helping to amplify voices raising concerns about large land concessions and evictions

made at the behest of foreign commercial interests. The Secretary of State of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, Kit Seng, was quoted in 2009 as saying that foreign investment in the country’s agriculture sector had grown rapidly in the past year, with Vietnamese companies driving the expansion, cultivating “tens of thousands of hectares” across the country. In September 2009, Cambodian officials signed a deal with Vietnamese investors to develop 100,000 hectares of agricultural land. Seng has said he hopes Cambodia will continue to “attract more investment in the agricultural sector” (Sophal). The trouble, say those opposed to the expansion, is that the hectares being sold to foreign companies for development are not vacant—they are inhabited by Cambodians, who may or may not hold formal tenure to their land. With few official land titles recognized, the government is able easily to sell land and force its inhabitants out. Even those who claim to hold titles face great difficulty when bringing the issue before Cambodia’s courts.

31. Fixed-asset investments are any investment in physical assets with low liquidity. These investments cannot be easily converted to cash. Examples include machinery, land, vehicles, technology and other assets to promote day-to-day operations of a business or organization.

Aid Effectiveness and Coordination

Improving aid effectiveness and coordination is a prominent topic of discussion among development partners and governments today. In Cambodia and elsewhere, poor coordination mechanisms have led to duplication, fragmentation, unpredictability of donor funds, and overlap in programming, all of which have high financial and human resource costs and reduce the impact of aid on those who need it most. A chief cause for the confusion is a critical lack of information about who is doing what—a common source of frustration cited by donors and NGOs alike.

Aid fragmentation impedes effective implementation of programs. The result of a highly de-concentrated environment, fragmentation appears both in the aggregate (country level) and in particular sectors, especially health and education (Chanboreth 1). Because of the large number of donors with different reporting requirements, the RGC spends a great deal of time meeting with its numerous development partners (often individually and not as a group) and producing reports for them. The estimated 400 donor missions, studies, and reviews each year are costly in themselves and contribute to duplication in technical cooperation and funding (Chanboreth 1).

Responding to these and many other challenges, and in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (to which Cambodia is a signatory) and more recently, the Accra Agenda for Action, the RGC has taken several steps to improve aid management. The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) Update (2009–2013) articulates the government’s poverty reduction strategy for Cambodia and spells out the guiding framework for development assistance, in addition to development targets (in line with the MDGs) and indicators for monitoring progress. The Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) is the government body in charge of aid coordination and management at the national level. The Harmonization, Alignment and Results (H-A-R) Action Plan provides a framework for evaluation of aid effectiveness-related activities and initiatives.

The challenges associated with aid coordination have been highlighted in multiple versions of the CDC’s Aid Effectiveness Reports published in 2007, 2008, and lastly 2010, ahead of the third Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF) meeting held in June 2010. The CDCF is a high-level forum led by the

RGC that brings together development partners, government and civil society to promote dialogue on Cambodia's development strategy and foster cooperation and coordination amongst all partners. CDCF meetings also serve as a venue for all parties to review progress towards the NSDP. Moreover, the meetings have served as an opportunity to facilitate dialogue on financing, donor commitments, and strategic areas in need of further development assistance. For its part, the government has proposed solutions using more program-based approaches and increasing capacity at the sector level to promote more efficient project implementation (Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board 2010b).

NGOs, and civil society more broadly (including faith-inspired organizations), are a crucial component in Cambodia's aid effectiveness agenda. Although their roles often fall outside some parameters established by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (i.e. national planning and budgeting, etc.), their role as advocates and implementers of development programs reinforce their importance as partners for donors and government. Aid coordination challenges at the national level often trickle down to the NGOs at the local level, and are even exacerbated by the vast numbers of organizations doing work on the ground, most of which have little or no knowledge of the work and resources which their peers could provide. Many NGOs also depend on, and even compete for, donor funds, and must equally dedicate limited capacity and resources to different proposal and reporting requirements for donors. This problem is particularly acute in the offices of faith-inspired organizations, whose often smaller staffs and limited capacity make it difficult to ensure compliance with donor-imposed regulations and to complete multiple reports about the same project. Also, due to their competition for financial resources, these NGOs often do not always perceive that it is in their best interest to cooperate

or partner with each other in order to consolidate or streamline successful programs.

The relationship between government and NGOs adds another layer of complexity to the coordination scene, as many (though not all) of the faith-inspired organizations are part of the broader NGO community. During the turbulent period of the 1980s, large numbers of NGOs started to work in Cambodia and local organizations also formed. Government oversight was necessarily limited. Overall, an estimated 3000 NGOs work in Cambodia today, though there are uncertainties on the overall numbers because many exist largely on paper. Although NGOs must be registered with the government, the regulatory environment that governs this sector has generally been quite permissive. A new "NGO Law" is under review. Some argue that such a law is needed, and would encourage transparency and accountability, as well as fit with national development strategies. Others are concerned that it might curtail creativity and local initiative. A move towards tighter regulations clearly seems to be in the offing, with impact most likely for groups that have advocacy as their primary focus.

NGOs are given limited room for intervention when it comes to aid coordination and determining development priorities at the national level. Even when dialogue and cooperation is their priority, NGOs rarely have a very strong voice; not many avenues exist for them to interact directly with the large donor agencies or the RGC, which set the agenda. There seem to be few spaces that allow NGOs' participation. A partial exception to this rule is the technical working groups, or TWGs, which support conversations between government, donors and civil society actors. But here, too, the voices of NGOs are barely audible. Rather, donor representatives and government officials occupy most of the seats at each of the groups'

meetings, even when the number of NGOs carrying out development work in Cambodia far outnumbers them. Nonetheless, NGOs, including faith-inspired NGOs, retain access to a few formal planning and coordination mechanisms at the national level.

Technical Working Groups

The Technical Working Groups, or TWGs, are the CDC's sector-level outlet to facilitate dialogue as part of its broad framework for aid coordination. Cambodia has a total of 19 TWGs that cover a range of development areas, such as agriculture and water, food security, health, judicial reform, and public administrative reform.³² TWGs' activities are coordinated by the Government-Development Partner Coordination Committee (GDCC).

TWGs involve high-level meetings with government and ministry representatives and donors; NGOs have minimal roles in the process. Each group is co-chaired by an official from the government and a lead donor in that sector. The membership roster of each group typically includes a representative from the sector working group, of which there are 35 in Cambodia. Fourteen of the 19 TWGs have civil society representatives on their membership rosters which tend to be drawn from the larger NGOs. One of the primary contributions of the TWGs is monitoring progress towards the NSDP Update, which sets out the government's goals and strategies for reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs. Each working group devises its own set of indicators to measure the level of advancement (or lack thereof) towards attainment of the goals contained in the NSDP Update.

Generally speaking, NGOs do not play a prominent role in the meetings. Agendas are often not circulated amongst NGOs ahead of time; they are more likely to be able to voice their concerns at informal sector working group meetings, which are held, on average, once a month.

The Global Fund's Country Coordination Mechanism

Established in 2002 as a way to increase expenditures for combating TB, AIDS, and malaria, the Global Fund provided approximately US\$47.9 million in funding to development partners in Cambodia in 2009 (Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board). Each country that receives funding from the Global Fund is required to establish a Country Coordination Mechanism, or CCM. The body is comprised of representatives from the public and private sectors, including governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs, and private businesses. Globally, every CCM has at least one NGO partner as part of its membership, and in some countries, that member is a faith-inspired organization. CCMs are responsible for developing and submitting grant proposals to the Global Fund based on the needs in their particular country. Once a grant is approved, the CCM serves as the principle watchdog to ensure funds are used properly.

Funds are first channeled to organizations the CCM designates as Principle Recipients (PRs). The PRs often enlist the help of additional groups, entitled Sub-Recipients (SRs). In Cambodia, as elsewhere, faith-inspired organizations are present at almost

32. The 19 Technical Working Groups are: Agriculture and Water; Decentralization and Deconcentration; Education; Fisheries; Forestry and Environment; Food Security and Nutrition; Gender; Health; HIV/AIDS; Infrastructure Regional Integration; Land; Legal and Judicial Reform; Mine Action; Partnership and Harmonization; Planning and Poverty Reduction; Private Sector Development; Public Administrative Reform; Public Financial Management; Rural Water & Sanitation.

every level of the Global Fund's organizational chart, from CCM members to SRs. A 2006 report on the involvement of faith-inspired organizations in the Global Fund found that in 2006, nine faith-inspired organizations received funds as PRs, while an additional 488 recipients were SRs.³³ Furthermore, 94 out of 120 CCMs with active Global Fund grants had at least one faith-based representative (The Global Fund).

Cambodia's CCM has 17 members, and, according to Dr. Gerlinda Lucas at the Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE, a faith-inspired organization was likely to be included in its membership roster, though the timing was unknown (Lucas). The Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE, a multi-faith hospital in Phnom Penh which runs HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria programs, has been designated an SR six times since it first began receiving indirect Global Fund support in 2003.

The Global Fund is invested in ensuring that faith-inspired organizations are involved in implementing programs that it funds. As the 2006 report noted, "Faith-based organizations are the critical providers of rural health care and orphan care in many parts of the developing world and could play an expanded role for reaching the hard-to-reach and poorest population groups" (The Global Fund). One of the difficulties faith-inspired organizations have in accessing funding is that they must adhere to a defined set of standards in program design and transparency in financial bookkeeping to be eligible to apply to be a Primary or Sub-Recipient. Many faith-inspired organizations are small and community-based, and have neither the experience nor the technical capacity to implement the accounting and reporting procedures required by the Global Fund. However, it is worth noting

that this generalization also applies to community-level development organizations in Cambodia more broadly; it is not at all apparent that faith-inspired organizations are more or less proficient in this regard. International faith-inspired organizations are another story; WV for example, has been a SR to at least two grants for its HIV/AIDS work. A potential reason for its success in an SR role is that the organization's international office provides technical assistance with writing grant proposals (needed to apply to become a SR) and assists in paying technical consultants to help with project implementation and oversight.

Networks

A number of networks to connect organizations with faith links have emerged in Cambodia, taking the form of both national networking bodies as well as international forums. Meanwhile, at the local level, there are approximately 20 provincial NGO networks. Locally based, national, and international faith-inspired organizations participate in both types of networks. While it is difficult to measure the impact of these networks, an examination of the scope of their missions suggests that their greatest contribution is to coordinate aid delivery, particularly in emergency situations.

One factor which appears to preclude some faith-inspired organizations' participation in networks is the concern by their financial supporters that working with other organizations may negatively impact their work. Perhaps the greatest fear is that the underlying faith component of their work will become 'watered down' or take a backseat when increased time and energy is devoted to networking and addressing issues that the network, but not necessarily the individual

33. 2006 was the first time a comprehensive tabulation of the number of faith-based PRs and SRs to the Global Fund was done. A country-specific listing of PRs and SRs in 2010 can be found on the Global Fund Website: <http://www.theglobalfund.org>

NGO, deems most pertinent. Among faith-inspired organizations, this hesitation to network is more likely to be expressed among the evangelical and church-linked organizations, including church groups with separate development arms. The following lists networks in Cambodia to which faith-inspired organizations belong.

ACT Alliance

At the global level is the ACT Alliance, a network of Christian-affiliated relief and development agencies with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. ACT Alliance is a new body, formed on January 1, 2010 by merging two existing networks, ACT International which was first established in 1995, and ACT Development, set up in 2003. ACT Alliance comprises more than 100 member organizations in 130 countries, of which some work on long-term development projects and others provide emergency humanitarian aid. Donor agencies that do not directly implement projects are also counted as members. Membership in the ACT Alliance also constitutes membership with the World Council of Churches and Lutheran World Federation. Alliance members spend a combined US\$1.5 billion a year on programs—an enormous sum, and yet another indication of the depth of work carried out by faith-inspired organizations.

The Alliance's vision is to promote “a world community where all God's creation lives with dignity, justice, peace and full respect for human rights and the environment” (ACT Alliance). At the core of its work is the motto, ‘strength in numbers,’ indicating a recognition that when it comes to advocating a particular position or coordinating a humanitarian or emergency aid response, the degree to which groups work together usually has an impact on the level of effectiveness of the outputs.

The Alliance's Cambodia membership is comprised

of the following groups: Act for Peace, Australian Lutheran World Service, Bread for the World, Canadian Lutheran World Service, CWS, DCA, EED, FinnChurch Aid, ICCO, Kerk In Actie, and LWF.

Meeting of the Catholic NGOs

While ACT is a global networking group, an example of a local Cambodia-based network is the quarterly meeting for Catholic NGOs. The meetings are an opportunity for organizations to provide updates on their current projects and to seek out formal and informal partnership opportunities. The meeting held on September 7, 2009, was attended by the bulk of the network's membership: the Maryknoll Sisters, Daughters of Charity, Renacer, Caritas Cambodia, New Humanity, CRS, the Diocesan Preschool Coordination/Diocesan Centre, and the Marist Brothers. At the meeting, Keat Sokly of Maryknoll's Deaf Development Programme (DDP), which runs centers for young deaf students to learn sign language and vocational skills, shared information on a Child Rights workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, from which he had recently returned, while Sister Regina Pellicore, head of the Maryknoll program in Cambodia, updated the group on Maryknoll's new Child Protection Policy.

Lay Missionaries

Outside of the Catholic NGO meeting, another networking opportunity is the group of Lay Missionaries. These individuals all work with various faith-inspired organizations, and come together on a frequent basis (the schedule changes, but the gatherings are approximately every month). The gatherings are informal, held at one of the individuals' houses, and they mix fellowship with discussion on the activities of the various organizations represented.

Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation

There are an estimated 20 Muslim-inspired NGOs

BOX 29

CHAB DAI COALITION AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Chab Dai's tagline: "Christians Working Together to End Sexual Abuse and Trafficking," is something of a misnomer. The organization, whose Khmer name in English translates to "hold hands," embraces a group of individuals and organizations not limited to those with Christian affiliations. The Chab Dai Coalition in Cambodia (Chab Dai Coalition also maintains small offices in Sacramento, California and Montreal, Quebec) is first and foremost a networking body for organizations—both faith-inspired and secular—whose programming addresses trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Its chief purpose is to improve the collective efficiency and effectiveness of its member organizations. This is accomplished primarily through training (hosted by Chab Dai) and networking meetings where partners come together to discuss programs and swap ideas.

Chab Dai's UK-born and educated founder, Helen Sworn, sees the essential first step as getting everyone around the table and talking. Such dialogue was absent when Sworn arrived in Cambodia over a decade ago to work with a Christian organization helping street children. It was not long after arriving, recalls Sworn, that she began to see "that many organizations were working in isolation, though on the same or related problems. Thus Chab Dai was created with the idea of bringing knowledge and coordination to bear" (Sworn, H.).

Faith is a leading motivator of Sworn's efforts. "Within the scripture there is something about protecting the vulnerable," she says. "Perhaps our common denominator as Christians is our belief about justice for the oppressed, which is often what motivates us

and our partners to do what we are doing, especially when things get tough" (Sworn, H.).

In working on trafficking and sexual exploitation issues, Chab Dai's staff, all of whom are Christian, are seen by many outside of Cambodia as exceptionally progressive. Sworn insists that the Christian affiliation has not discouraged organizations from joining the coalition. Instead, Christian-inspired groups are often hesitant to join any network, not just Chab Dai, for fear of loosening control over their programming, the perceived end result of which is the 'watering-down' of their faith-inspired efforts.

Today, Chab Dai counts 44 member organizations on its roster and maintains approximately 30 partnership arrangements. (For reasons of confidentiality, and due to the sensitive nature of their work, Chab Dai does not disclose the names of its member organizations). Under its partnership initiatives, Chab Dai has set up ten different groups, what Sworn calls "informational networks," each of which has a special focus. One group, for instance, addresses issues dealing with shelter, and thus brings together organizations working exclusively on this issue. Some organizations choose to join Chab Dai because they are starting programs related to anti-trafficking or sexual abuse issues and seek the expertise offered by the Coalition. Chab Dai works with the "informational network" members to train staff on relevant topic areas and assist in building staff management capacity. Organizations swap stories and program ideas to avoid duplication and overlap, and they coordinate advocacy campaigns. Says Sworn, "If advocacy is truly going to work, it needs to be a partnership."

(continued)

BOX 29 CHAB DAI COALITION AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (continued)

Research is also an important component of Chab Dai's work, lending fresh data and information to inform its advocacy work. At the Coalition's headquarters in Phnom Penh, a library contains over 2,000 titles and offers the public access to the collection, including borrowing privileges.

Sworn is no stranger to the difficulties of gathering

organizations, with different conceptions of how to address an issue, together at the same table and helping them agree on a path forward. Yet looking back on the state of coordination (or lack thereof) not more than a decade ago, Sworn sees progress in just getting groups to sit down, to talk, and to listen. "In general I am optimistic," says Sworn, "that progress is being made and that we can contribute. There are excellent opportunities for partnership" (Sworn, H.).

in Cambodia (Sles). Of these, eight are members of the networking group Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation (CMDf). Established in 1997, the Foundation solicits donations and works with member organizations to implement projects. Says Nos Sles, a member of CMDf and the Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, "Our Foundation has one vision: to build a better development community for Cambodia" (Sles). Member groups in Cambodia include the Cambodia Muslim Student Association, the Cambodia Islamic Medical Association, ILDO, and CIYA. When the Foundation receives a grant for agriculture work, for example, they may enlist the help of ILDO which has programs and expertise in agriculture-related activities.

One of the Foundation's primary objectives is building mosques and schools. They also distribute scholarships to a select number of students to study abroad in Muslim countries. School building initiatives and scholarship distributions are partially financed by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). Islamic foundations in Malaysia provide clothing, books, and materials to the schools in Cambodia. Moreover, the Foundation has selected students to study peacebuilding at the

School of Peace in India. The Mennonite Church's development arm, MCC, has also provided support for the scholarships.

CMDf also runs a center where students learn English and computer skills. The Foundation has received support in the past from the US Embassy to host workshops on peacebuilding. The entire Cambodian community, Muslims included, says Sles, "wants to build peace among people after war. I can say that people during the Pol Pot regime had aggressive attitudes and behaviors and they were traumatized" (Sles). The end goal of the Foundation's peacebuilding work, says Sles, is to "help people to clean their minds from suffering—to be good people for the new generation" (Sles). The focus on ending suffering is a familiar theme, a term most often associated with the work of Buddhist monks, and is indicative of the shared interests between different faith groups.

The NGO Forum

With 83 members, approximately 16 of them faith-inspired, the NGO Forum in Cambodia is one of the country's leading coordination bodies and an audible voice and visible presence in the offices of government ministries and at the table of donor and

joint donor-government meetings.³⁴ Any NGO may apply for membership. Requirements for membership are that the NGO must be legally registered with the government, have operated for more than two years in Cambodia, and have objectives and activities related to the program areas of the Forum.

Those program areas center around three main priorities: development issues, the environment, and land. The first area, development issues, explores development policy and budgets, aid effectiveness, and economic issues. The second, the environment, looks at ways to protect the environment and reduce the use of pesticides in agriculture, and the environmental impact of hydroelectric power projects. Finally, the Forum's land program addresses issues dealing with forestry, resettlement, and indigenous rights.

The Forum's key function is to voice the concerns of its members to government policymakers. "We act as a bridge between the NGOs and the government," says Kham Syngoun, the Forum's Deputy Executive Director. Members have a chance to gather as a collective unit at the Forum's quarterly meetings. The networking body also holds monthly or bimonthly meetings arranged around one or more of its program focus areas. The quarterly, monthly, and bimonthly meetings provide opportunities for organizations to share information on their programs, explore potential partnership opportunities, and direct questions or

concerns to government ministries and officials.

The Forum enables members to have a voice not just within the Cambodian government's corridors of power, but on the international stage as well. When the Catholic aid agency for England and Wales, known by the acronym CAFOD, wanted to ensure that a dialogue on the effects of the financial crisis on worldwide development was part of the G20's meeting agenda, they enlisted the help of the NGO Forum. Staff from the Forum traveled to Stockholm, Sweden in October 2009, where they passed the message to European policymakers at an event on Europe's development assistance entitled "European Development Days."³⁵

The NGO Forum has been a key conduit through which NGOs have voiced feedback on the NSDP (and its recent Update). The other leading networks, MEDiCAM and Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) also channeled NGO feedback to the government. The first five-year plan (NSDP) was published in 2006, and in 2009, the government decided to update and extend the NSDP until 2013. Forum members met and reviewed the proposed changes to the update, and of the forty comments submitted by the Forum on behalf of its members, fifteen were incorporated.³⁶ Forum members also gave collective input on the Government budget, despite only having a limited amount of time in which to make comments.³⁷

34. The figures on the number of faith-inspired organizations and total number of members of the NGO Forum were taken from a review of the Forum's membership list, available online at: <http://www.ngoforum.org.kh/eng/core/sublistmembership.php>

35. The "European Development Days" were partially funded by the British Overseas Development Agency, DFID. The Agency has cited continued issues with government corruption as a key reason for its planned phase-out of support to Cambodia programs in 2011.

36. The NGO Forum has called for the following three improvements to the 2009–2013 NDSP. 1.) A more specific focus on the poorest and most vulnerable groups. 2.) A careful costing of the national plan that can better guide allocation of Cambodia's public resources and foreign aid. 3.) A monitoring framework that includes both a policy matrix and a more balanced set of key indicators with more indicators that measure inputs and outputs.

37. In an interview, Kham Syngoun of the NGO Forum noted that the Government gave the Forum and its members only 12 days to review the entire 2010 budget, a deadline he says which did not allow sufficient time to read, digest, and offer meaningful critique (Syngoun).

A paper later published by the Forum on NGO input to the NSDP Update suggested that much work remains to be done to create an environment where the government values civil society input on operational matters. According to the paper, “Government officials in Cambodia are still not used to accepting civil society input into planning, and are sometimes dismissive of NGO opinion” (The NGO Forum 2009).

Even as one of the leading coordination bodies, the NGO Forum’s membership covers only a fraction of the total number of faith and secular NGOs in the country. Yet few other coordination bodies exist which encompass such a broad array of members working in different sectors.

Another leading coordination body is MEDiCAM. Unlike the NGO Forum, MEDiCAM’s membership is limited to NGOs working in the health sector, and 25 out of 160 organizations listed as members of MEDiCAM are faith-inspired. MEDiCAM helps coordinate responses to various medical needs. One of its strengths is working with government and donor partners to elicit clear commitments and draw up action plans for tackling specific development problems. Dr. Sin Somuny, Executive Director of MEDiCAM, says the Ministry of Health and development partners are keenly aware of the challenges involved in addressing issues like maternal mortality and child health. “But,” says Somuny, “the government and health partners need to discuss and agree on the modality and predictable budget commitment” in order to tackle the challenges (Kolab 5). MEDiCAM is the table around which such discussions take place.

The NGO Forum, CCC and MEDiCAM are by far the largest and most recognized NGO networks in Cambodia by the government and donors. NGO participation in CDCF meetings, where the NSDP and national development policy is discussed, is

limited to one seat, which is filled by an NGO representative who is always chosen by the NGO Forum, MEDiCAM, and CCC.

Interfaith partnerships

The launch of the MDGs was heralded as a chance to promote greater cooperation among aid agencies. However, the reality in Cambodia is that the framework has rarely proved to serve as a practical, operational mechanism that encourages development partners, both secular and faith-inspired, to agree on a national course of action towards attainment of the 2015 goals. Networking and partnerships, vital aspects of development work, are certainly taking place. However, the single largest factor inhibiting greater cooperation between organizations, faith and secular alike, are competing ideas on how to attain key development metrics such as enrolling girls in school and providing clean water to villagers. Competing voices—registering most often from donor communities—are broken down first by religious affiliation and second by denomination.

Journalist, former Christian Aid leader, and former coordinator of WFDD Wendy Tyndale writes that faith organizations often “have a different vision of what development is about from that of mainstream development theorists,” and that “when they share the same goals [with secular organizations], they may have different ideas about how to reach them” (Tyndale 25). Despite these differences, cases of collaboration in Cambodia between faith-inspired organizations and their secular counterparts abound.

HIV/AIDS work is a sector where historically there were large gulfs separating the approaches of most secular and faith-linked organizations. For example, religious groups often were insistent that awareness-

raising and education could alter people's behavior, and that disseminating condoms promoted immorality. Public health experts, on the other hand, called for multiple approaches, and saw condoms as a central weapon in prevention. Today, church groups still sometimes take absolutist positions on issues like condom distribution, complicating dialogue within the HIV/AIDS community, but at the country and local level, there is a great sense of shared commitment, pragmatism in addressing real problems on the ground, and support for multi-dimensional programs that put people at the center. That is what saves lives.

A regional initiative to fight HIV/AIDS, in which UNICEF is partnering with Buddhist monks, is an inspirational example of faith and secular groups working together towards a common purpose (see Box 17). The Regional Buddhist Leadership Initiative, begun in Thailand to address the country's high HIV

prevalence rate, leverages the revered status of monks to provide spiritual counsel and material support to individuals living with HIV. The monks, working in certain areas within 12 of Cambodia's 24 provinces, also refer persons to health centers and educate communities on the disease in order to prevent new infections. A particularly interesting aspect of this initiative is the two organizations' harmonization in approach. UNICEF recognizes the importance of promoting monks' ability to speak out on an issue in a way that is appropriate from a religious and cultural standpoint. To that end, the program crafts the monks' approach to be one that is rooted in Buddhist tradition and belief. Offering spiritual guidance, for instance, is acknowledged as a critical component of the Initiative, fitting well both with decent health care precepts (WHO's leading philosophy) and with the Buddha's teachings on compassion.

Towards Conclusions and Recommendations

The development work of faith-inspired organizations in Cambodia is marked by its variety and scale—in every corner of Cambodia, faith-inspired organizations and individuals are working to improve health, expand educational opportunities, protect the environment, and help build more peaceful societies. They work on virtually every development challenge imaginable. They come from an extraordinary range of faiths, with ties to most regions of the world. Some organizations work on a national scale, with a network of local and regional offices throughout Cambodia; others are led by a sole local individual who is often a volunteer and has no permanent office. Some are part of large global institutions, while others are born and bred in Cambodia. The quality of the services provided by faith-organizations also varies widely, though the specifics are more difficult to judge. Large organizations like WV, CRS, and CWS are among the most highly regarded development NGOs, including those without an explicit faith affiliation, and have high quality programs that are regularly monitored and evaluated by internal and external specialists. Other organizations have neither the will nor the resources to expend on monitoring and evaluation. On the

local level, some faith-inspired NGOs are exemplars of efficiency and effectiveness, while many others, like their secular counterparts, suffer from a lack of organizational capacity.

In short, generalizations about faith-inspired development work in Cambodia are difficult to make. However, several themes emerged again and again during the review. Some are comments on the nature of the organizations, while others suggest policy issues for review by the organizations themselves, by religious leaders, by the Cambodian government, and by their development partners.

Engaging the Buddhist Community

The Buddhist character of Cambodia and the widespread presence of Buddhist practice, especially the omnipresent pagodas and monks, generate special interest in finding better ways to work with Buddhist organizations and leaders, especially at the local level. There is also interest in attuning development understandings and strategies to the core values of

Cambodia's culture, which includes prominently its Buddhist heritage and Buddhist present. The key issue is how to do this in a thoughtful and sensitive way. While there are striking and promising Buddhist organizations and leaders who offer insights into development issues on many fronts, and good examples exist of engagement of pagodas and monks at the local level, the nagging sense is that the potential is far from optimally developed.

The main issue is that Cambodia's Buddhist institutions are still weak after years of war and conflict, which struck at their very heart. Many monks are young and have limited education and training. A second issue is that the Buddhist organizations and Buddhists are rather divided as to the roles they believe the *Sangha* should play in the day to day practicalities of development and governance. Third, Cambodian Buddhism today is characterized by a marked decentralization, so that communities vary widely in approach and capacity. In short, there is no hierarchical leadership chain to connect to parallel structures of government or development community.

The strongest examples of effective and balanced engagement with Buddhist organizations of various sorts are in HIV/AIDS and the environment. There, strong leadership has helped the community at large to address differing views and to coalesce behind pragmatic and meaningful programs and approaches.

For international development partners, a process of education and reflection is called for. Many will find in Cambodia a distinctly different picture from, to take an example, sub-Saharan Africa. While Buddhist culture is visible everywhere in Cambodia, its place in Cambodia society is quite different from roles played by, say, Christianity in Uganda. At least at the moment, much of mainstream Buddhism in Cambodia is not "engaged" with social and humanitarian issues in the

same way as some other faiths. Traditional notions of "development" in Buddhism tend to focus on the individual and their spiritual state, rather than on active efforts to promote equity or alleviate material deprivation. There are notable exceptions, such as Venerable Yos Hut, Venerable Nhem Kim Teng, Heng Monychenda and the BFD organization. But the social service ministries that are so integral to Christian and, to a lesser extent, Islamic congregations, are not commonly associated with Buddhist communities.

Action implications are not clear-cut. Clearly, anything that smacks of an "instrumental" approach, seeking to work with or "use" Buddhist leaders to convey development "messages" or as implementers is to be avoided. But greater efforts to engage and appreciate the perspectives of Buddhist leaders at different levels would be well worthwhile, even as it may entail learning new vocabularies and ways of expressing ideas. They have much knowledge and wisdom about the path that Cambodia is pursuing; their equanimity may conceal concerns that deserve to be heard. Given the urgency of the challenges facing Cambodia, and the extent and depth of the Buddhist presence in the country, failing to engage Buddhist leaders, structures, and communities, is not a good option.

There is work to be done, both to understand better the work that organizations are doing, the way that leaders from different segments of the Buddhist community view development issues, and above all to find effective ways to benefit from the strengths of the Buddhist presence and its links to people's lives and concerns at the local level. Government and development assistance partners can strive to promote examples of positive engagement by Buddhist monks and lay leaders in addressing development challenges, and assess the capacity issues associated with current Buddhist efforts on education and

health. There is a critical mass of Buddhist monks and leaders interested in and engaged with development challenges; these monks and other leaders are generally under-resourced.

Specific areas for further exploration include education (a leading concern of many visionary Buddhist leaders), health, and the environment. Dialogue with Buddhist thinkers and activists on approaches to governance issues, at various levels, could also be productive.

Coordination—Get a Grip

The previous chapter detailed the enormous aid coordination issues that are an international as well as a Cambodian preoccupation. Faith community efforts tend to fall on the worse end of the spectrum, with generally poor coordination and integration with similar efforts. Many efforts are not explicitly or even implicitly part of much labored policies for sector and national development, resulting in a lack of strategic focus and impact (there are exceptions; for example, ICC has played an active role in supporting and helping to shape policies on children at risk, according to Phil Bowden and Sarah Chhin). While there is tremendous energy and goodwill invested in meeting the global development challenge, surely better coordination is both possible and much needed. Again, the question is how. A raft of coordination mechanisms already exists. They could and should be made to work better. For the faith-inspired organizations, the most practical and immediate operational question is how smaller organizations can be part of coordination mechanisms without investing time and resources that will yield little benefit, and without losing the verve and values that their organizations represent.

Networks, whether comprised exclusively by faith-inspired organizations or joint faith-inspired and secular organizations, could also devote more robust efforts to defining and incorporating standards for accountability, and monitoring and evaluation practices. While it is perhaps ambitious to propose and adhere to standards for monitoring and evaluation to measure programmatic impact (since again, there may be limited consensus with regard to the purpose and goals of programs run by faith-inspired organizations, and therefore impact may be perceived differently and in some cases, be impossible to measure), the various operating networks could nonetheless address the issue of standards for management and accountability. The willingness by faith-inspired organizations to adhere to certain standards, especially smaller organizations which are currently sidelined from the mainstream development picture, could be a step in the right direction to encourage dialogue and partnership.

Faith-inspired organizations are particularly vulnerable to the concerns about coordination, due in large part to the fact that many are financially independent of government or traditional development assistance partners. There is clearly a need to “get a grip” on these efforts, and to bring faith-inspired organizations more forthrightly into existing coordinating mechanisms, including the Technical Working Groups.

An additional dimension of coordination and networking challenges is the knowledge that these organizations have gained: a rich and often quite distinctive understanding of local conditions, constraints, and organizations. Bringing this knowledge into national debates and dialogue about development policies should enrich understanding and capacity to translate ideas into action.

Tensions among Faiths—Is Interfaith Work a Solution?

Cambodia's patterns of religious identification are undergoing significant shifts. Christian and Islamic communities are gaining strength and numbers. Buddhism is reviving and inevitably changing in the face of the social and economic upheavals that go with modernization. WFDD's December 2009 consultation in Phnom Penh suggested that, while interreligious tolerance is high and interfaith harmony is the rule, and relationships among faith communities are rarely prone to overt tensions, there are nagging concerns and, still more, gaps in even the most basic knowledge about other faiths that limit communication and partnership. Concerns about the extent (probably overstated) and force of proselytizing generate enough heat to suggest that careful dialogue and monitoring around the topic would be well worthwhile. Work on interfaith understanding, starting with education curricula and encounters at different levels, could pay important dividends.

Interfaith work in Cambodia is limited to a few quite formal events with a regional character that serve important purposes. However, there is no clear impetus for a significant national focus on interfaith organizations or work. That is less true at regional and local levels, where “interfaith by praxis” involving helping groups to work together on common problems could yield important benefits. Attuned to the CMDGs, they could help in bringing fragmented communities together. The Sinhanouk Hospital Center of HOPE is one such venture that has yielded positive results (see Box 30).

Corruption and Governance—Where are the Faith Voices?

In many societies, the clearest voices demanding action against public corruption come from faith communities, though there is also some reticence, for example prompted by worries that faith “houses” may not be entirely in order. One practical challenge is to help ensure that relevant faith actors are familiar with the elements of integrity programs, and are convinced that effective action can work.

The structure of institutional religion in Cambodia—which identifies as a constitutionally Buddhist country, and where the government has direct links of authority and finance to Buddhist leadership—makes it unlikely that Cambodia's Buddhist establishment will openly challenge the government on governance issues or engage actively in the current dialogue. That being said, courageous Buddhist voices calling for change are an element of Cambodia's history and present. One possible area for action would be a simple mapping exercise that would entail learning about who is doing what, and where, to call attention to Cambodian governance issues. This could lead to networking opportunities, and for activists to join together—an important step if the isolated calls for change are to develop into a popular movement demanding better governance.

A common refrain in interviews was the continuing legacies of the Khmer Rouge and internal conflict periods, which have left behind cynicism and distrust in institutions and relationships. This may offer special opportunities for religious leaders, and particularly Buddhist monks, to enter the discussion about the significance of trust and integrity. Buddhist monks play an important role in education in Cambodia, focusing their teaching on values and ethics, related to the Buddha's teachings. Development assistance

BOX 30

A MULTI-FAITH VENTURE: THE SIHANOUK HOSPITAL CENTER OF HOPE

The waiting rooms at the Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE in Phnom Penh are always full of sick people. It's hot; faces are resigned, many show obvious pain, and worried relatives cluster nearby. But the hospital's name is apt: Hope, because this is a well-run facility, bustling with doctors from many countries. A central principle is that care is free of charge, and available to anyone. Cambodian people sell their last bullock to travel for days to get here. They call it the hospital of God or the hospital of angels. Over a million patients have come through its doors and received loving care.

The hospital's story is in many ways unique: it is a facility built because of a deep and faith-inspired determination to care for people. The Sihanouk Hospital Center came about through an alliance between a Jewish journalist and stubborn activist, a remarkable Japanese Shinto leader and philanthropist, an American Christian non-governmental organization, and a Buddhist nation. It is a private hospital that serves Cambodia's poorest citizens, and a referral facility with increasing outreach throughout the country. Providing excellent care and training health personnel are central to its mission. The Hospital is one of Cambodia's leading medical facilities, a leader in addressing epidemic diseases like tuberculosis and malaria, but also in general health care: diabetes, heart disease, and accidents.

The principles of all these faiths can be read in the hospital's operations. The Jewish principle of "healing the world" (*tikkun olam*), plus some dose of *chutzpah* led Bernie Krisher to build it. Dr. Haruhisa Handa is an intuitive and creative leader and philanthropist who guarantees at least half the operating costs (he also financed most buildings) and, drawing on his religious beliefs, presses the philosophy and

policy of generosity (no payments). Bob and Pat Gempel, who head HOPE worldwide, a Christian organization dedicated to responding to the needs and wishes of poor countries across the world, rose to the challenge of providing excellent management of the hospital. For their team, the healing mission of Jesus is their inspiration. Cambodia prides itself on the core Buddhist principles of loving kindness and compassion.

The admirable work of the Sihanouk Hospital Center staff and its founders has not gone unnoticed by the Royal Government of Cambodia. The Gempels believe that "the government is happy to have us here and appreciates what we are able to offer. They appreciate what we can offer to the very poor, with our policy of free of charge care, and with our contributions to the training of Cambodian medical staff—doctors, nurses, and technicians" (Gempel).

The Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE is a shining example of the success that can be achieved through Interfaith partnerships. Through the dedication and commitment of these different actors, each with their own faith motivations, the Sihanouk Hospital "has grown from nothing to both Cambodia's largest hospital, serving poor people, and a major training center that serves the nation" (Gempel). To date, the hospital has seen hundreds of thousands of patients who would not otherwise have received treatment.

partners would be wise to find ways to support these monks as they work to incorporate lessons about civic life and values in a way that comports with the Buddha's teachings; this would be one way to begin to instill ethics and values in Cambodian children that could eventually foster a society in which integrity is a central value. A caveat is a necessary acknowledgment that monks themselves have considerable hurdles to clear in terms of credibility—the deference and respect shown to the *Sangha* in past generations is no longer automatic.

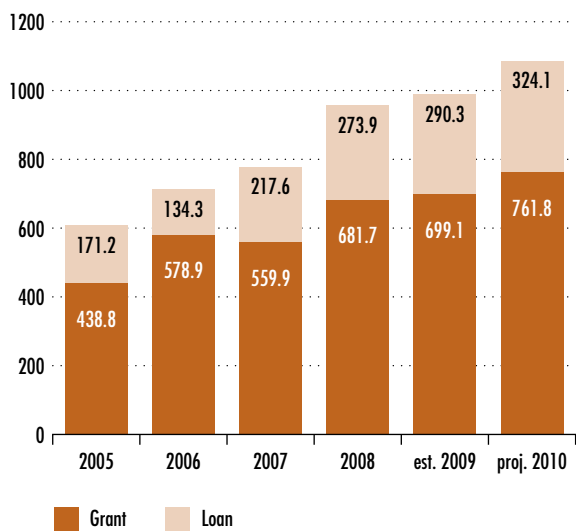
Peacebuilding and Development

Cambodia has been badly shaken by decades during which international conflicts and domestic strife dominated national life. Today it can be considered

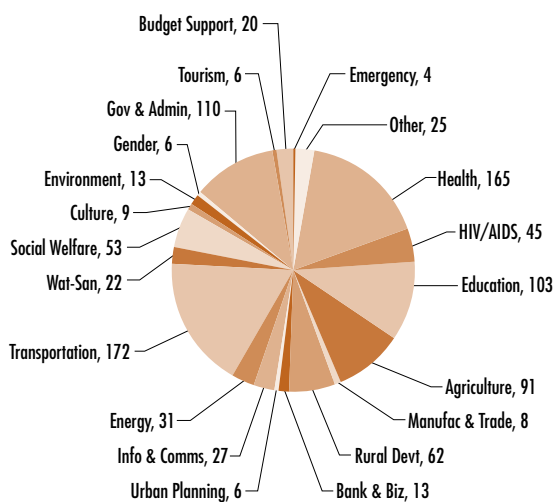
a “post conflict” nation but there is a vast agenda of peacebuilding that lies ahead. The live issues include specific conflict resolution challenges, issues around security, trafficking and domestic violence, an ongoing process of accountability for past crimes against humanity, land disputes, a weak judicial system, and intergroup tensions. Many faith-inspired groups are involved in this broad agenda of peace and reconciliation, as well as conflict prevention. These issues are tightly linked to many dimensions of development work, for example agricultural development, gender relations, natural resource management, and governance. Yet the communities and approaches are not always well integrated and attuned one to the other. Reflections on how these different categories relate to one another would have benefits both for Cambodia and for broader reflections on the topic.

APPENDIX A Trends in Development Assistance

Disbursement Trends (USD million)



2009 Sector Allocations (USD million)



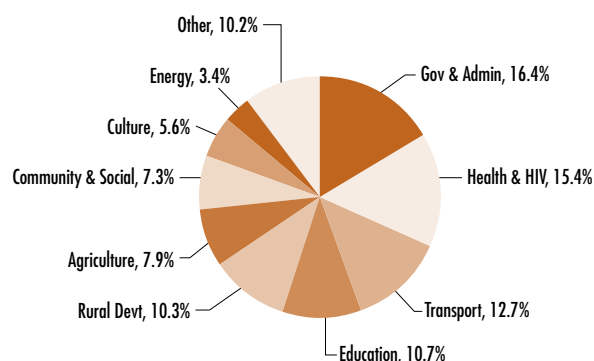
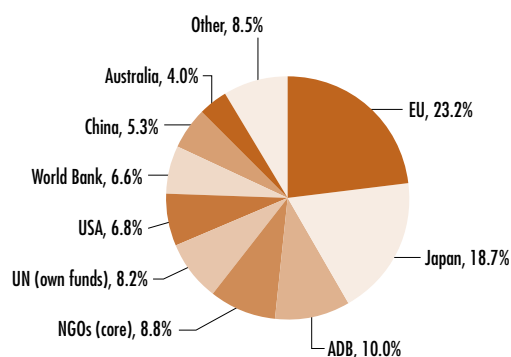
Source: Cambodia ODA Database (March 2010)

Development partner disbursements (USD million)

	2006	2007	2008	2009 (EST)		2010 (PROJ)
				USD	%	
UN (core)	54	58.3	68.3	74.8	7.6	95.8
World Bank	24.5	47.5	44	60.4	6.1	122.7
IMF	83.5	0.9				
ADB	67.5	69.4	145.7	89.5	9	124.5
Global Fund	21.9	21.1	38.6	47.9	4.8	41.2
UN & multilateral	251.2	197.1	296.6	272.6	27.5	384.2
Belgium	7.3	7.2	2.8	3.1	0.3	1.2
Denmark	4.1	9.8	10.1	14.2	1.4	16.4
Finland	4.5	5.2	6.6	6.3	0.6	1.6
France	21.8	21.7	31.3	25.5	2.6	26.7
Germany	32.4	20.7	36.5	32.5	3.3	60.2
Netherlands	0.1	0.1	2.2	0.7	0.1	1.2
Spain	2.8	3.5	6.5	16.8	1.7	22.9
Sweden	16	17.3	15.9	22.9	2.3	26.7
UK	20.7	23.7	29.6	32.5	3.3	31.6
EC	46.5	44	47.2	50.3	5.1	57.8
EU partners	156.1	153.2	188.6	204.8	20.7	246.3
Australia	22.5	29.6	31.2	23.7	2.4	36.3
Canada	7.9	12.6	17.2	13.1	1.3	7.9
China	53.2	92.4	95.4	114.7	11.6	100.2
Japan	103.7	117.2	126.2	148.4	15	104.7
New Zealand	1.7	4.5	2.8	2.7	0.3	3.3
Rep of Korea	13.3	31.3	33	46.5	4.7	26.5
Switzerland	2.4	3.6	3.9	2.8	0.3	2.8
USA	51	58.1	55.7	56.9	5.8	61.2
other bilateral	255.7	349.4	365.5	408.8	41.3	343
NGO (own funds)	50.2	77.7	104.9	103.3	10.4	112.4
TOTAL	713.2	777.5	955.6	989.5	100	1,086

APPENDIX B Breakdown of Official Development Assistance

Total ODA received 1992–2009 amounts to USD 9.79 billion



Source: Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board 2010a 9

APPENDIX C Aid Disbursements by Province

PROVINCE	2007	2008	2009 (EST)	2010 (PROJ)
Phnom Penh	69.1	75.0	71.1	59.9
Siem Reap	43.2	55.4	56.1	58.6
Battambang	21.2	29.9	37.5	36.7
Kandal	53.8	77.9	37.0	45.9
Kampong Thom	16.6	20.6	36.4	43.4
Preah Sihanouk	41.6	25.3	36.3	43.6
Mondulkiri	13.8	18.7	25.4	19.1
Preah Vihear	4.8	8.8	25.1	27.7
Kampong Chhnang	8.8	18.5	22.6	26.6
Banteay Meanchey	15.9	21.6	22.5	27.0
Other provinces	164.7	190.6	214.5	291.9
Nationwide	324.0	413.2	404.9	405.4
TOTAL	777.5	955.6	989.5	1,085.9

Source: Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board 2010a 13

APPENDIX D Aid Disbursements by Sector

SECTOR	2009					
	NGO Core Funds		Development partner funding to NGOs		Total	
	USD	%	USD	%	USD	%
Health	32.4	31.4	21.2	21.2	53.6	26.4
Community & Social Welfare	31.6	30.6	6.2	6.2	37.8	18.6
Education	27.5	26.7	6.9	6.9	34.4	16.9
Environment & Conservation	5.1	4.9	1.9	1.9	7.0	3.4
HIV/AIDS	3.1	3.0	18.5	18.5	21.6	10.6
Rural Development	1.4	1.4	6.9	6.9	8.3	4.1
Agriculture	1.3	1.3	2.6	2.6	3.9	1.9
Gender	0.3	0.3	1.9	1.9	2.2	1.1
Governance & Administration	0.1	0.1	20.0	20.0	20.1	9.9
Manufacturing, Mining Trade	0.0	0.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	4.5
Other	0.3	0.3	5.0	5.0	5.3	2.6
TOTAL	103.1	100	100.2	100	203.3	100

Source: Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board 2010a 14

APPENDIX E

Funding by Organization³⁸

ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT RELIEF AGENCY (ADRA)

AusAID
CIDA
European Commission/
European Union
ICC Australia
Rockefeller Foundation
New Zealand Aid
USAID

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE (AFSC)

Quaker Church
EED
German Quaker Stiftung
ICCO
DIAKONIA
DanchurchAid

ACTION FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT (AHEAD)

CRS
Global Fund
PLAN International
USAID
Private donors

AJWS

Private donors

ASSOCIATION OF BUDDHISTS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (ABE)

Alliance of Religions and
Conservation (ARC)
Conservation International
GEF
IUCN

Mustard Seed Charitable
Trust UK

UNDP
USAID
WildAID
Wildlife Alliance

ATSA

DANIDA (as part of the IPM
Program)
UNDP
Wildlife Conservation Society
(WCS)

BFDKT

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
Church World Service (CWS)
East West Management
Institution (EWMI)
Provincial Rural Development
Committee (PRDC)
World Wildlife Federation
(WWF)

BSDA

ANSA-EAP
Courage e.V Germany
DED
Global Fund
EcoSolidar
KAPE
KHANA
SHYPHASIES
UNODC
USAID
VSO
World Education
Private donors

BUDDHISM FOR DEVELOPMENT (BFD)

ADB
Asia Foundation—Kampong
Thom branch
Asia Children's Education
Fund (ACEF, Japan)
Association of Following
Wind (AFW, Japan)
Australian Volunteer
International (AVI)
Danish International
Development Agency
(DANIDA)
German Development Service
(DED)
German Cooperatives and
Associations Confederation
(DGRV)
Enfants du Mekong (EDM)
Ishikawa YoToyut-kai (IYTK,
Japan)
Japan Foundation—Kampong
Thom branch
Konrad Adenauer Foundation
(KAF)
Kristdemokratiska
Ungdomstörbundet (KDU,
Sweden)
Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO
Alliance (KHANA) (Global
Fund)
Microsoft-PACT (MS-PACT)
PACT-Building Capacity
Worldwide (PACT)
Terres des Hommes (TDHN)
World Bank
World Food Programme
(WFP)

CAMBODIAN MUSLIM DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Islamic Development Bank
(IDB)
Private donors

CIYA

UNAIDS
USAID (through World
Education program)

CORDE

Private donors
Bahá'í World Center

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS)

DANIDA & DFID via TAF
Global Fund 7 (through
AHEAD)
McKnight
UNICEF
USAID
WFP

DHAMMAYIETRA CENTER

Private donors

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

ICCO
TCF
Private donors

HAGAR

ABBA Switzerland
Australian Red Cross
CIDA
Cosecam
Lemon Seed Star Trust Fund,
Singapore

38. List of donors is not comprehensive, but instead reflects information gathered from personal interviews and sourced from the Council for the Development of Cambodia website: <http://cdc.khmer.biz/ngo/index.asp>

Nour Foundation
 Ratanak Foundation
 Reverview Foundation
 Samaritan's Purse
 Stewardship Foundation
 Tear Australia
 World Vision USA

HARVEST MISSION INTERNATIONAL (HMI)

KCCJ & BUMC
 V2R Foundation
 World Education
 Private donors

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR CAMBODIA (ICC)

Erikshjapen
 FELM
 Interact
 Tear Australia
 Tear UK

INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

European Union

ILDO

ICCO
 Swedish Government
 UNAIDS
 USAID (through local NGO Family Health International)
 US Embassy in Phnom Penh

KHMER AHIMSA

Diakonia
 EED
 ICCO
 UNDP

LIFE & HOPE ASSOCIATION

Hotel de la Paix in cooperation with MasterCard Singapore
 Rice for Cambodia
 Private donors

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Church of Sweden
 DanchurchAid
 DANIDA
 ELC Japan
 European Union/European Commission
 Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED)
 FinnChurchAid
 GNC-HA Deutsches Hauptausschus
 IBRD/World Bank
 Lutheran Church (Europe)

MALTESER INTERNATIONAL

AusAID
 European Commission
 German Ministry of Technical Cooperation and Development (GTZ)
 Heinz Foundation
 UNHCR

MARYKNOLL DDP

Caritas Australia
 Finnish Association of the Deaf (with funding from the Foreign Ministry of Finland)
 Nippon Foundation (Japan)

MARYKNOLL SEEDLING OF HOPE

CAFOD
 Caritas Australia
 KHANA
 MISEREOR (upcoming)
 USAID

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (MCC)

Anabaptist Church
 Private donors

PARTNERS IN COMPASSION

Healthnet International
 KHANA (USAID and the Global Fund)
 PSI
 The Smith Foundation
 UNICEF
 USAID
 World Food Programme (WFP)

PEACE BRIDGES

Global Interaction
 Mennonite Central Committee
 Tear Australia

PEOPLE FOR CARE AND LEARNING

Private donors

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE

NGO Catholic Connection
 The Vatican
 Private donors

SANTISENA

The Canada Fund
 Development and Partnership in Action (DPA)
 European Union
 GES
 Japan International Cooperation Agency
 Terres des Hommes
 Terrezone (Germany and the Netherlands)
 UNDP

SALVATION CENTRE CAMBODIA (SCC)

CAFOD
 EED
 Firefly
 KHANA (Global Fund)
 ICCO
 Trocaire
 Private donors

SIENG NAM MOSQUE SCHOOL

Private donors

SIHANOUK HOSPITAL

CDC
 Global Fund 4, 5, 7
 HOPE Worldwide
 WHO

WORLD VISION

AusAID
 Cambodia Government
 DFID
 Global Fund
 USAID
 Private donors

YEJ GROUP

Private donors

APPENDIX F

List of Individual Interviews

The following is a list, in alphabetical order, of all the individual interviews conducted by the research team over the course of this mapping exercise, along with the dates on which they were performed. Where interview transcripts are available online, a direct link is provided. Additional interviews were conducted during a focus group with monks who were University of Cambodia students in August 2009; these are unlisted.

Aan, Venerable Thok: Head Monk, Wat Sen Serei in Kampong Thom. February 2010.

Ahrens, Sister Luise: Maryknoll. August 17, 2009.

Amayun, Milton: Global Health Specialist, World Vision. February 16, 2010. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-milton-amayun-global-health-specialist-usaid-benin>>

An, Ros Sam: Deputy Director, Santi Sena. May 10, 2010.

Aubery, Greg: Catholic Relief Services. August 18, 2009.

Banayna, Father Jose "Totet" Hildy: Battambang Apostolic Prefecture. October 15, 2009.

Bhuth, Venerable Un: Wat Ahn Tenought Don Peng in Sre Ambel. March 2010.

Blenglsi, Bjorn: Researcher & Expert on Cambodian Muslim Community. November 9, 2009.

Bok Man: Executive Director, Por Thom Elderly Association. May 11, 2010.

Bolo-Duthy, Bernadette and Melissa Cronin: Habitat for Humanity. October 2, 2009.

Bowden, Phil: Director, International Cooperation Cambodia. November 18, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-phil-bowden-director-international-cooperation-cambodia>>

Bradley, Amanda: Director of Community Forestry Partnership Program, PACT. February 2, 2010.

Brak, Venerable Sareth: RSP Happy Kids Community School, Kampong Speu. August 2009 and August 2010.

Brewster, Don: Executive Director, Agape International Missions. May 19, 2010.

Bunsieth, Heng: Executive Director, Action for Health Education and Development. October 12, 2009.

Buntha, Nhek: Head, Buddhist Association in Cambodia. November 23, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-he-nhek-buntha-head-buddhist-association-in-cambodia>>

Bunthoeun, Venerable Sok: Abbott, Wat Nunda Nuny. November 16, 2009.

Carter, Rebecca Louise: Aid Effectiveness Specialist, The World Bank. March 31, 2010.

Chanah, Venerable Leh: Provincial Head Monk, Kampong Thom. February 16, 2010.

Chandara: Micah Network. September 29, 2009.

Channareth, Tun: Jesuit Refugee Service. April 26, 2010.

Cheatlom, Ang: Executive Director, Bonlok Khmer. May 1, 2010.

Cheng, Reverend Heng: Director, Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia. August 4, 2010. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-reverend-heng-cheng-evangelical-fellowship-of-cambodia>>

Chheng, Lok Ta: Center for Culture and Vipassana, Takmao. August 2009.

Chet, Venerable Ly Vy: Wat Torbcheang in Sre Ambel. March 2010.

Chhin, Sarah: Co-Manager of Project SKY, International Cooperation Cambodia. August 6, 2010. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-sarah-chhin-project-sky-co-manager-international-cooperation-cambodia>>

Chhoeurn, Venerable Chun: Acting Executive Director, Life and Hope Association. April 30, 2010.

Chirng, Pich: Beneficiary, Por Thom Elderly Association. May 11, 2010.

Chong, Lim Joo: World Vision. August 2009.

Coengrachts, Lieke: Head, Institute for Development Cooperation. September 15, 2009.

- Coghlan, Denise:** Director, Jesuit Refugee Service Cambodia. May 28, 2010. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-denise-coghlan-rsm-director-jesuit-refugee-service-cambodia>>
- Da, Venerable Khim:** Wat Pursat Angkor Phnom Klang in Sre Ambel. March 2010.
- Dau Valler, Agneta:** Country Representative for Cambodia, Church World Service. July 30, 2010. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-agneta-dau-valler-country-representative-for-cambodia-church-world-service>>
- DeBoer, Patricia:** Regional Director Asia, American Friends Service Committee. July 29, 2010. <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-patricia-deboer-regional-director-asia-for-american-friends-service-committee-afsc>
- De Freese, Laurie:** USAID Cambodia. April 1, 2010.
- Dittmeier, Reverend Charlie:** Director, Maryknoll Deaf Development Program. December 2, 2009.
- Ear-Dupuy, Haidy:** Advocacy and Communications Manager, World Vision Cambodia. September 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-haidy-ear-dupuy-advocacy-and-communications-manager-world-vision-cambodia>>
- Engquist, Michael:** Human Rights and Good Governance Advisor, DANIDA. March 30, 2010.
- Figaredo, Father Enrique “Kike”:** Prefect, Battambang Catholic Apostolic Prefecture. October 15, 2009.
- Gempel, Bob and Pat, Gary Jacques, and Kevin O’Brien:** HOPE Worldwide. May 22, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-bob-and-pat-gempel-gary-jacques-and-kevin-obrien-hope-worldwide>>
- Gilbert-Nandra, Ulrike:** HIV Specialist, UNICEF. November 24, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-ulrike-gilbert-nandra-msc-technical-specialist-unicef-cambodia>>
- Gyallay-Pap, Peter:** Executive Director, Khmer-Buddhist Educational Assistance Project. November 1, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-with-peter-gyallay-pap-executive-director-of-khmer-buddhist-educational-assistance-project>>
- Higgins, Barry:** Executive Director, Peace Bridges. September 16, 2009.
- Hock, Gabriella:** Partnership Advisor, UNAIDS. September 23, 2009.
- Hourn Kao, Kim:** President, University of Cambodia. August 21, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-dr-kim-hourn-kao-president-university-of-cambodia-executive-director-asia-faiths-development-dialogue-afdd>>
- Inn, Dr. Sam:** Deputy Representative, Lutheran World Federation. April 7, 2010.
- Kamry, Mufti Oknha Sos:** President, Cambodia Islamic Centre. October 6, 2009.
- Kamsan, Samraing:** Ministry of Culture. August 2009.
- Kannika, Kang and Phan Da:** Caritas Preah Vihear Branch. May 1, 2010.
- Khemacaro, Venerable Yos Hut:** Wat Langka. August 4, 2010. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-venerable-yos-hut-khemacaro>>
- Khin, Min H.E.:** Minister, Ministry of Cults and Religions. Phnom Penh. August 2009.
- Khom, Ly:** Founder and Director, Buddhism for Development Kampong Thom. February 16, 2010.
- Kong, Venerable Heng:** Executive Director, Monks Relief and Khmer Culture Organization. February 20, 2010.
- Kowi, Venerable Sok:** Wat Rolus Meas in Kampong Thom. February 2010.
- Les, His Excellency Nos:** Head of Department of Education and Human Resources, Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation. October 1, 2009.
- Leslie, Emma:** Director, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. September 19, 2009. <berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-emma-leslie-director-center-for-peace-and-conflict-studies>
- Lim, Seng:** Assemblies of God Cambodia. April 27, 2010.
- Loh, Dr. Lee Lee, Hou Sopheap, and Elyssa Ludher:** Cambodian Organization for Research, Development and Education. October 10, 2009.
- Lucas, Dr. Gerlinda:** Senior Officer, Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE. August 21, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-gerlinda-lucas-senior-officer-sihanouk-hospital-center-of-hope>>
- Martinez, Julie:** Development Director for Northern Cambodia, People for Care and Learning. April 29, 2010.
- Matt, Tam:** Teacher, Sieng Nam Mosque School. April 27, 2010.
- Matthysse, Wayne:** Co-founder, Partners in Compassion. April 22, 2010.
- McEwan, Dr. Elena:** Senior Health Technical Advisor, Catholic Relief Services. August 20, 2009.
- McGill, Dr. Zari:** Director of Infectious Diseases, World Vision International. October 14, 2009.
- Minnik, Vera:** Program Coordinator for Cambodia, Malteser International. April 30, 2010.

Mo Le Van, Venerable Nueng: Wat Chulete Kiriwon in Sre Ambel. March 2010.

Mom, Saroeun: Program Manager, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Cambodia. March 26, 2010.

Montiel, Sister Leonor “Len”: Maryknoll. September 2, 2010.

Montiel, Sister Leonor: Maryknoll Seedlings of Hope Project. September 2, 2009.

Mony, Chim: Branch Manager, Buddhism for Development. February 27, 2010.

Monychenda, Heng: Founder and Executive Director, Buddhism for Development. November 11, 2009. <<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-heng-monychenda-director-buddhism-for-development>>

Monyvotah, Tep and Venerable Emmreak Smey: Program Director and Volunteer, Salvation Centre Cambodia. October 14, 2009.

Nareth, Seng and Pa Reaksmay: TB Clinic Physician & CDOTS Program Coordinator, Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE. September 17, 2009.

Noble, Paddy: Cambodian Student Christian Movement. September 26, 2009.

Nuon, Ukshi: Nun, Wat Sampov Meas. November 16, 2009.

O’Brien, Kevin: Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE. August 13, 2009.

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