

Working Group for Partnerships in Decentralization



វិមជ្ឈការតាមរយៈភាពជាដៃគូ
Partnerships in Decentralization

Background

The election of Commune Councils in February 2002 marked the advent of decentralization reform in Cambodia. In response, several development organizations expressed the need to establish strong links between local level civil society with the new Commune Councils. To accomplish this, CIDSE Cambodia proposed a decentralization *Partnership Workshop*, which was held in January 2003. From this workshop developed the Working Group for Partnerships in Decentralization (WGPD), coordinated by Pact Cambodia.

About the Working Group

The WGPD recognizes that the success of decentralization rests on the ability of local level elected government to represent and address the needs of its electorate. In order to fulfill this mandate, local level government must develop relationships with all stakeholders, including civil society. The Working Group defines partnerships as:

A collaborative relationship between and/or among people or organizations that combine their resources to carry out a specific set of activities aimed at achieving common or shared goals.

The goal of the WGPD is to:

Contribute to strengthening decentralization and democratic local governance by promoting partnerships among decentralization stakeholders at all levels, with emphasis on partnerships between Commune Councils and local civil society.

Working Group Activities

The Working Group's activities aim to promote partnerships. This includes collecting and disseminating partnership best practices and lessons learned, organizing collaborative events at the local and national levels, building relationships with decentralization policy makers, and working directly with Commune Councils and local civil society.

In 2003, the Working Group conducted *The Partnership Workshop* that brought together Commune Council members and civil society organizations from communes throughout the country to learn how to develop partnerships. The participants developed joint action plans, the execution of which has provided a variety of partnership examples within the Cambodian context.

WGPD is now in its third year and has spawned two additional working groups, the Decentralization Forum Working Group (DFWG), since 2003, and the Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform Working Group (DDWG), new in 2005. The DFWG is an implementing working group, tasked with designing, coordinating, and executing two National Forums on Decentralization per year. The Khmer language- based DDWG brings together local civil society actors to understand and contribute to the ongoing decentralization reform process.

The Working Group meets on a regular basis and welcomes new participants. WGPD activities are supported by annual block funding provided by member organizations. Presently the Working Group is in the process of developing tools to integrate both citizen and council self-assessments of Commune Council performance. The group continues to identify partnership best practices and lessons learned with the long-term vision to promote national programs that strengthen the relationship between Commune Councils and local level civil society.

Active Organizations: CIDSE, Seila/PLG, GTZ, VBNK, BfD, Oxfam GB, CCSP, ADI/CCC, JICA, KID, Pact Cambodia, UNICEF, USAID, Ockenden International, CDRI, SIDA, DFID and Concern Worldwide.

All interested organizations are welcome to join the Working Group for Partnership in Decentralization. For more information, please contact Mr. Phay Sokhumar, Pact Cambodia at +855 (0)23 217 855.