



**FORUM SYD  
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# **YOUTH IN CAMBODIA**

**ORGANISATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND POLICIES**



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## ABSTRACT

In the absolute majority of the countries in the world, more than 50% of the population is younger than 30 years of age. Cambodia is no exception. Close to 70 % of the Cambodians are 29 years or younger. A combination of severe decimation of the population during the many years of conflict and genocide, a post-war baby boom and an average life expectancy at birth as low as 54 years are reasons behind this remarkably young demographic structure.

This report focuses on youth as a specific group. There is no legal definition for youth (nor for children or adults) in Cambodia, but the responsible Department under Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports defines youth as people between 14 and 30 years old. The aim of the study is to map out youth organisations and activities in Cambodia. It also provides some information regarding the general situation for young Cambodians and youth policy from the Government and the major donor agencies.

In Cambodia, the young generation has grown up after the Khmer Rouge regime, which fundamentally affects their way of interacting with others and their openness to new ideas. Generally higher levels of education, a changing society and external influences also have an impact on the Cambodians that are young today. At the same time, respect to elders are very important in the Cambodian traditional hierarchy, and many young people express that they have little possibility to make an impact on their society. Additionally, most young Cambodians are at risk, facing difficulties and threats like increasing drug abuse, the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the region, gender inequalities, high rates of illiteracy, trafficking and sexual exploitation etc.

Despite this, the Government, as well as donors, lack sector-wide youth policies to target these difficulties, to increase youth involvement and to strengthen youth as a group and as individuals. In many ways, Cambodian youth can be said to be a somewhat forgotten group.

At the same time, increasingly ever since the UNTAC years in the early 1990s, a vast number of youth organisations have been founded by youth themselves. Today, there are approximately 50-60 youth initiated organisations in the country. Almost all of these groups have been founded by students from the universities in Phnom Penh. They work in different fields ranging from human rights and democracy to child rights, environment and scouting. The youth organisations are clear expressions of young people's realisation of the challenges in the Cambodian society, high motivation and a will to change things. Projects are based on youth-to-youth approaches and peer education, and almost all groups emphasize the importance of democratic elections. It seems likely that these are groups that will continue to grow in numbers and importance. Two new network bodies enables combining of experiences and a stronger force in advocacy for youth rights. The organisations differ largely in capacity and activity, but the majority are not very strong. Problems among many of them include low organisational skills, weak strategies, lack of funding, and – for quite a few – unclear political linkages.

Apart for the youth initiated organisations, there are also a number of Cambodian and international organisations targeting youth. Very few however work exclusively with youth, but run one or a few youth programmes. The absolute majority of these programmes focus on reproductive health and vocational training.

Young people are an important group to support in any country. Apart from the role they will have in the future, they make up the majority of the population already today. In Cambodia, improving access to and quality of education is crucial. As for other areas, it is important to stress that youth are not a problem, even if many problems face young Cambodians. Any programmes focusing on these problems need to be based on a youth involvement approach. Additionally, there is a need for initiatives aiming at strengthening the youths' own organisations, supporting youth initiatives and providing alternatives like youth centres and activities.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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*“Kluon teab kom tong, dai klay khley kom chhoung sra va oop Phnom.”*

*“If your hand is short, you should not try to grasp the mountain.”*

– Cambodian proverb –

The majority of the world’s population is under 25 years of age, roughly one billion people are between 15 and 25 years old. Cambodia is no exception. Partly a result of the many years of conflict and genocide, the Cambodian population is exceptionally young. At the same time, not much has been written about Cambodian youth as a specific group, a group that does not equal children, but that is also separate from the adult population.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 AIM OF STUDY

The main aim of this study is to map out youth organisations and youth activities in Cambodia. It will also provide some information regarding the general situation for young people in Cambodia and the governmental bodies responsible for youth policies and issues.

The report is primarily meant as an internal paper for Forum Syd and for Swedish organisations interested in cooperation with Cambodian youth organisations or other NGOs targeting young people. Considering the lack of studies and research focusing on youth in Cambodia, it will however also be available to anyone interested in more information in this field.

The text in this report is based on meetings with a large number of youth and student organisations, contacts with organisations working with youths and youth related issues and discussions with young people about their situation and experiences. Additional information has been gained from reports and evaluations. It is however important to stress that the interpretation of this information is done by the author.

## 1.2 FOCUS

This study does not by far cover all aspects of being young in Cambodia, nor does it mention all the youth organisations present in the country. It is however an attempt to give a broad picture of the situation concerning young people and their organisations. Two things should be said regarding the focus.

### 1.2.1 CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE

In any country in the world, there are major differences between being young in the big cities and growing up on the countryside or in the rural areas. In Cambodia, about 35 % of the population lives below the poverty line, 90 % out of which stays in the rural areas. There are also large disparities within the country when it comes to human development indicators. For instance, the HDI score<sup>2</sup> for urban Cambodia is over 20 percent greater than that for rural Cambodia.

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<sup>1</sup> A number of surveys have been done on young people and sexual health, and there are a couple of documents on the situation for street kids with reference to drugs and HIV/AIDS etc. However, there are no comprehensive studies about youth in a broad sense, looking at the situation for young Cambodians from many different perspectives. Additional research in this field could definitely be called for.

<sup>2</sup> UNDPs Human Development Index, one of several means of measuring the status of human development in a country, is a composite measure of longevity, educational attainment and standard of living.

The foremost objective for this study is to give a broad picture of youth organisations and youth policies in Cambodia. Of course, policies for young people should include the entire young population, and some of the organisations in this study work with projects in one or several of the provinces. At the same time, in Cambodia the vast majority of the existing local youth organisations are found in the capital, just like most of the organisations targeting youths. Formalised youth organisations set up by youth themselves are almost exclusively the initiatives of students or graduates from the universities, all of which are located in Phnom Penh. Much of the information in this study is therefore based on the realities and experiences of this specific group.

### 1.2.2 YOUTH AND CHILDREN

The second point refers to age. This report will not focus on organisations working with children. Of course, there is no clear line between when you are a child and when you are a youth, and some of the organisations mentioned here will most likely fall into the grey zone. However, the organisations that are in focus in this study are primarily youth organisations; that is organisations founded and run by youths themselves, but also other organisations that has special programmes targeting young Cambodians, from teenagers and up.

What can be said, however, is that there is a vast number of organisations supporting children. An inventory focusing on organisations working with children include close to 150 different organisations and institutions active in this field.<sup>3</sup> A very large number of these organisations are working with street kids, orphans or other disadvantaged groups of children. Some organisations also work with primary education and children's rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important instrument for protecting the interests of children. Since it is valid for at least parts of the age group referred to as youths, the status of the Convention in Cambodia and some organisations actively involved in child rights work will be mentioned.

## 1.3 DISPOSITION

This report is divided into eight chapters. Following this first introductory part comes a chapter discussing the concept of youth from various perspectives. Chapter three then brings the concept into the Cambodian context, whereas chapter four aims at providing a broad picture of some aspects of the life of young Cambodians. Chapter five gives an account for the governmental ministries primarily responsible for youth issues, and the interministerial initiatives dealing with issues concerning the young generation. Chapter six focuses on youth policy; partly a description of the process of creating a national youth policy in Cambodia and partly an assessment of youth policy among some of the major donors. The seventh chapter aims at outlining Cambodian youth organisations, networks and cooperation between them and the work of other NGOs targeting the younger population. Appendix 1-3 complements this chapter through providing tables of organisations and activities. The last part of the report summarises some of the major points into conclusions and a discussion on if and why there is a need to support youths and their organisations in Cambodia.

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<sup>3</sup> This "National Inventory of Childhood and Youth Resource in Cambodia" is available in hard copy, on diskette and on CD from Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC).

# 2

## THE CONCEPT OF YOUTH

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This report focuses on youth, a concept that is used often but more seldomly defined. First and foremost perhaps, youths can be defined as people of a certain age. However, it is important to see that youth is more than age; it is also a condition. Some experiences gained during the years when you are young will likely follow you through life, whereas other change as one enters adulthood. These experiences may be divided into experiences specific due to generation or experiences specific due to phase of life.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1 YOUTH AS AN AGE

How often have we not heard expressions like “But I’m young at heart”? Does feeling young then mean that you can be considered a youth even if you are 60 years old? At the UN General Assembly in 1985, “youths” were defined as people being in the age span stretching from 15 to 24. This statement however took into consideration every member states’ right to create their own definition of “youth”. In an international perspective, there are great variations when it comes to the definition; in Israel you should be under 18 to be considered a youth, whereas you can be up to 40 in Malaysia, or 45 in Nepal.

### 2.2 YOUTH AS A GENERATION

Young people have experiences that are unique for their own generation. Growing up in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an experience that radically differs from the experience of growing up in the 1960’s, or even the 1990’s. This personal history can only be gained by growing up during the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and those who are youths then are the only ones who really know what it is like to be young at that specific period of time. These experiences will to a large extent continue to be valid for people, as they grow older.

### 2.3 YOUTH AS A PHASE OF LIFE

During the UN General Assembly it was also stressed that youth is not a homogeneous group, but that there are great differences between young people when it comes to background, culture, life situation etc. “What do youths like?” is a common question among most groups except among young people themselves. There is not one youth experience, one youth view or one youth interest.

At the same time, there are certain experiences and characteristics shared by most young people due to their situation, things that will not follow them through life but disappear with the entrance to the more established life of adulthood. Youth as a group is characterized by the fact that they, in many ways, are in between. To be young is to no longer be a child, but also not considered an adult. Youths have the one thing in common that they are not established in the society and that they do not have access to many of the channels through which it is possible to influence.

In the phase between childhood and adulthood, attitudes and values are more easily questioned and changed than later on in life. Tension is created when hopes and expectations for the future are combined with a lack of influence and control over one’s own situation. Hopefully, this tension can be channelled into a progressive force that makes young people able to change the prevailing situation. In the worst case, the same tension breeds insecurity and alienation that can have very destructive consequences.

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<sup>4</sup> For further discussion on youth as a concept, see the Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer/Forum Syd report “Ungas delaktighet i utvecklingspolitiken”

# 3

## THE CONCEPT OF YOUTH IN CAMBODIA

When thinking about youth in a Cambodian context, it is easy to come to the conclusion that the concept might not be very relevant. With the demographic structure being the way it is, the vast majority of the Cambodian population can be considered young. However, there are reasons to acknowledge youth as a specific group in Cambodia. There are features that distinguish the young generation and, most important, there are young people in Cambodia that defines themselves as youths, that start up youth organisations and work with and for other youths.

### 3.1 YOUTH AS AN AGE

There is no legal definition of the dividing lines between childhood, youth and adulthood in Cambodia. Some of the legal standards however do draw a line between children and adults in certain aspects. Voting is allowed at the age of 18 and marriage at 18 for women and 20 for men. Different youth organisations and other groups in Cambodia define youths differently, based on the age of their active members or perhaps on their target groups. However, the Youth Department of Cambodia, one of the departments under Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the one department responsible for youth policies, defines youth as people between 14 and 30 years of age.

Cambodia today has a population of roughly 11,5 millions. Between 1962 and 1998, the dates of the last two nationwide censuses, the population grew by an average of 2.7 % a year, which means that the demographic structure is characterized by a very high percentage of young Cambodians. Two explanations to this fairly rapid population growth is the severe decimation of the population during the Khmer Rouge regime, and a following post-war baby boom with very high birth rates during the 1980s. The life expectancy at birth in Cambodia is no higher than 54 years, which of course also contributes to the young composition of the population.

According to the population census from 1998, 68,9% of the population are under 30 years of age, 26.1% between 14 and 30.

### 3.2 YOUTH AS A GENERATION

The generation that is young in Cambodia today was born - and/or grew up - after the Khmer Rouge regime. This fundamental difference in personal history in comparison to the older generation can probably not be underestimated. Most scholars who write about the Khmer Rouge years stress that those years not only left Cambodia with the loss of almost two million lives, but that they also had a profound impact on people's minds and hearts. Through systematically encouraging people to betray and inform against each other, the Khmer Rouge soldiers planted seeds of suspicion, distrust and fear among the Cambodian people. Those who are young now have a very different outlook, which most certainly has an impact on their level of trust, their ways of interacting with others and their openness to new perspectives and ideas.

For example, a survey conducted by Centre for Advanced Study/The Asia Foundation in 2001 showed that almost 70 % of the younger people included felt free to express their political opinions in the area where they lived, in comparison to older people, who were adults during the years of the Pol Pot Regime, where only 57 % showed the same confidence.

At the same time, it is also true that many young Cambodians suffer from the legacies of war. Broken families and post-war traumas within the family are realities for the vast majority of the Cambodian youths today.



One manifestation of the social and economic changes in Cambodia is the increased rural to urban migration for economic reasons that young people undertake. Yet another thing that distinguishes the younger population in Cambodia is that the level of education is higher in comparison to older generations. This is partly because a very limited number of educated people survived the Khmer Rouge, but also because there are more people enrolled in the schools today than ever before in Cambodia.

The present generation of young Cambodians additionally differ from their parents because they are more outspoken and less shy. A changing society and external influences from TV and other media contribute to the formation of new conceptions and ideas among those who are young today.

### **3.3 YOUTH AS A PHASE OF LIFE**

In Cambodia, as in most countries, being young means being in between two phases in life. The young generation is in many ways very "adult" in the sense that they often have responsibilities for the household, get married and have their first child early etc<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, the majority of the young people stay with their parents or relatives at least until the day they marry and are therefore considered as minors in the family. Age and respect to the elders are important features in the Cambodian society, so even if their responsibilities in many ways can be considered far-reaching, youths are often not considered adult enough to make decisions that are important to the society.

Many young Cambodians express that they have little access to channels through which they can actually influence and make a difference. Amongst several of them, this causes a feeling of impatience or even frustration. Some of the student groups in Cambodia have been created as a response to this feeling of lack of power, and discontent with the existing government and policies. One of the more radical student movements express that they want to form their own party because they represent a new generation, anybody above 30 years of age is already "ruined" by the old system and has nothing positive to contribute with for Cambodia's future. Even though this kind of view is openly expressed only by a few, it is a feeling that is important to consider. Youth organisations have a crucial role to play in this context. Through being organised, the youths do have access to some areas of influence. At the same time, they are not really a part of the establishment. Youth organisations therefore have the potential of functioning as bridges between non-organised youths and the elite in the society.

Even if stated previously that there is no such thing as a common youth interest and that youths make up a very heterogeneous group, there are sometimes reasons to talk about youth culture, certain interests or trends that are shared by many young people in one country or even globally. At a first glance, there are not many obvious signs of such a youth culture in Cambodia – no major sub groups, not a striking youth fashion or a radical scene for young artists and musicians. The lack of such obvious signs does not however mean that there are no things in Cambodia that young people share. There are TV shows more popular among young people, magazines read and views shared. Popular magazines focus on issues like love, sports, fashion and beauty, similar to young peoples magazines all over the world. This incipient identifiable youth culture in Cambodia attest to the influence of external cultures and to changing behaviour in the young generation.

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<sup>5</sup> The average age to get married among women in Cambodia is 20 years and has not changed during the last decades. There has however been a recent sharp decline in the proportion of women married in their early teens, dropping from an average of 3 % for women that are over 20 years old today, to 1 % for those who are between 15 and 19. By the age of 19, 22 % of the Cambodian women are mothers or are expecting their first child.

# 4

## THE SITUATION FOR YOUTH IN CAMBODIA

Quite obviously it is impossible to give a justifying description of the situation for young people in a specific country in a few pages. The purpose of this chapter is merely to give a general idea of some of the realities, interests and problems facing Cambodia's young generation. It is not meant to go much into detail on any of the areas mentioned, but rather to present a broad picture of some circumstances in Cambodia affecting the young population, as background information for people and organisations that might be interested in working with youth issues in Cambodia.

To some extent, this description is problem-oriented. This is partly due to the fact that many young Cambodians are at risk, facing problems and lack of possibilities to affect their own situations, and partly due to that these are some of the issues highlighted by young Cambodians themselves. It is however important to stress that just because young Cambodians are facing many different problems, the youth themselves are not the problem. Equally important is that there are positive changes and trends and that the young generation in Cambodia today in many ways are more independent and pro-active than previous generations.

### 4.1 EDUCATION

According to the Cambodian constitution, all children are entitled to nine years of basic education. However, the national census conducted in 1998 gives at hand that only 48 % of those over 25 years had completed primary education. Moreover, the constitution states that education should be free to all, which is also not the case. Parents and students are responsible to provide unofficial school fees, uniforms, transportations and tutoring.

Generally, the level of education in Cambodia is quite low. By the end of the Pol Pot era, formal education had ceased, and many educated Cambodians had been killed or had fled abroad. At the same time, it is important to point out that there are more students enrolled in higher education today than ever before in Cambodia's history. As a comparison to the 25 000 present students, there was 650 students in 1980, which indicates a strong increase since the Khmer Rouge regime. The literacy rate is as low as 37 % of the adult population, but 57 % for those between 15 and 24 years of age.<sup>6</sup>

There are nine public and twelve private tertiary institutions in Cambodia. As mentioned above, 25 000 students are enrolled with one of these institutions, which means that there is about one student in higher education per 500 Cambodian citizens (0,2 %). There is a striking imbalance between the different provinces, however. In the remote provinces, the number of students continuing to higher education is only 0.04 %. Close to one of three students get scholarships for their continued education.

The Cambodian education system is often criticised for its lack of interaction with the students and its inability to train the students in critical thinking. Many students witness that teachers tend to repeat the same thing over and over again when asked to explain, or even getting angry when asked questions. Students are given little, if any, opportunity to think independently, to analyse and to use their own initiative. Considering that many trained teachers did not survive the Khmer Rouge years, the lack of pedagogical skills in schools and at universities is not surprising. During the last decade, major efforts have been made to rebuild the education infrastructure and improve the educational standard, but after so

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<sup>6</sup> Usually, official documents show much higher figures for the literacy rate in Cambodia, depending on which study they base their statistics on. The Ministry of Planning conducted a survey in 1993-94 that showed a literacy rate of 65.3 %. In 1996, the same type of survey presented a literacy rate at 65.9 % and in 1998 67.3 %. However, in 1999 the Ministry of Education presented the document "Assessing the Literacy Levels of the Population in Cambodia", this time including three categories instead of two: complete illiterate 36.3 %, semi-literate 26.6 % and literate 37.1 %. As semi-literate basically meant being able to write your own name, this survey gave at hand that the percentage of Cambodians who could actually read and write good enough to be able to take in and present written information was only 37 %.

many years of conflict and destruction and with present difficulties of limited budgets and extremely low teachers' salaries<sup>7</sup>, progress is slow. There are examples of organisations that try to meet this need by providing non-formal alternatives or complements to the formal education.

## 4.2 EMPLOYMENT

Considering the demographic pattern in Cambodia with a very young population, the labour force in the country is rapidly increasing. According to some statistics, the number of people in search of work is increasing with 200 000 every year. Among Southeast and East Asian countries, Cambodia has the largest proportion of children aged 10-14 years who are economically active, and data from the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 1999 indicate that 42 % of youths aged 14-17 years had a job at the time of the survey.

The Cambodian labour market is characterised by generally high rates of participation, 80-90 %. There are however relatively few wage earners, as only 15 % of the work force are paid workers, the rest being self-employed. According to the Cambodia Human Development Report on Children and Employment from the Ministry of Planning, labour force participation rates for women exceed those for men at ages 15-19 years, are approximately equal at ages 20-24 years, but are significantly lower at all older ages.

When speaking to university students, it becomes obvious that many are anxious about their future. A university degree is no guarantee for a job contract. Many of the students aspire to work with NGOs or businesses, but are hesitant on the opportunities they may have.

For youths outside the school system, several organisations, local and international, has set up vocational training programmes to support young people to increase their skills and enhance their possibilities of income-generating work in the future.

## 4.3 LEISURE

To many young Cambodians, the concepts of leisure or spare time are more or less unfamiliar. This is perhaps especially true in the provinces where household chores, work and responsibility for siblings take up most of the time spent outside school (often also the time that should be spent in school). But even in Phnom Penh, many youths are held strictly by their parents and mostly stay at home in the evenings and on weekends. Here are examples of answers received when asking youths what they usually do in their time off.

*"I like to listen to the radio. I don't read books because when I am not studying, I don't want to read anymore. I do work in the household. I have friends, but I see them only in school or at my organisation. I hardly ever visit my friends house or meet them in other places."* [Girl aged 19]

*"In Cambodia we do not have spare time like in Europe and other countries. Mostly we stay at home, work or study. Sometimes maybe we go for a walk. Some young people also like to do sports, like football."* [Boy aged 18]

There are hardly any youth or activity centres for young people in Cambodia. The organisation Mith Samlanh/Friends runs a center for street kids in Phnom Penh, but as Sébastien Marlot, director of the organisation, points out: *"There is probably more to do in Phnom Penh for street children, than for ordinary kids."* Many of the youth organisations seem to fill the function of answering to this need. On holidays and when the universities close, their offices are full of young members that come to hang out.

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<sup>7</sup> A Cambodian teacher earns around 20 dollars per month. Effects of these very low salaries are e.g. absent teachers that need to try to find additional incomes elsewhere and demands on students and their families to pay bribes or illegal school fees in order to pass exams or receive diplomas.

There is also a new - and growing - group of middle class youths, primarily living in Phnom Penh. With more money to spend and less responsibilities for work and household, this group can be seen cruising around town on their motorbikes in the evenings, visiting night clubs etc.

Football and Thai boxing are very popular sports on TV.<sup>8</sup> It is also quite common for young men to play football and volleyball in the streets or parks, whereas it is not traditionally acceptable for girls and women to play in public. For most rural women, the limited leisure time is generally rather spent participating in community events such as weddings, religious activities at the pagoda or with the family. A minority of younger urban women may play badminton or other lighter games. There is very little organised sports activity amongst youths in Cambodia outside the schools; sports clubs is an almost unheard of phenomena. At the same time, organisations that have tried some smaller scale sports activities witness that the response has been very positive.

#### 4.4 DRUGS

In 1995, a survey on drug abuse was conducted in schools in Thailand. The survey was carried out amongst 6.3 million school students and showed that 70 000 school kids were abusing drugs, mostly heroin. Five years later, in 2000, a second survey was carried out in the same schools (including 5.7 million students). At this time, 2.3 million of the students stated that they were using drugs. Heroin was still used, but 2.2 million students were now using Amphetamine-Type Stimulants, ATS. Apart from the enormous increase in number of abusers, it is alarming to see the prevalence of ATS, coming from zero to 2.2 million abusers in five years.

According to the UN Office on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP), the beginning of a similar development can be seen in Cambodia today. Cambodia has been an exception in South-East Asia for its lack of significant drug abuse problem due largely to poverty, political turmoil and isolation. Until mid 1990s cannabis and, to a lesser extent, methamphetamines were used primarily by some affluent Cambodians and foreigners, with a smaller number of heroin and opium users mostly in Phnom Penh.

In other words, a few years back, there was hardly any ATS in Cambodia and what was there was imported from Thailand. However, both the production and the domestic abuse of these drugs are spreading rapidly in Cambodia so that today it is available all over the country. Middle class teenagers and young people in urban areas are amongst the groups where the abuse is increasing fast. Dealers are targeting high school students in the low teen ages. So called yaba pills<sup>9</sup> are readily available and the prices are very low, around one dollar per pill.

UNODCCP is currently carrying out a drug abuse survey among 3 500 high school students<sup>10</sup>, aged 14-17, in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Poipet, Kampong Cham, Battambang and Siem Reap. The data collection and analyses is not yet finalised, but the project coordinator states they have already realised the need for further studies for the age group 11 to 13. University students confirm this: *"Drugs are not a major problem at the universities. It is at high schools and even secondary schools it is used most. In a few years time, those students will bring drugs to the universities."*

Apart from school students, unemployed youth, young people in the sex industry and youths living in the streets are groups of youth at risk. Among street kids, glue sniffing is the most common substance to abuse, but both ATS and injection of heavier drugs are increasing quite sharply. Also the percentage of the girls living in the street that abuse drugs is on the increase.

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<sup>8</sup> Every week, there are TV recordings of Thai boxing in Phnom Penh.

<sup>9</sup> Also called yama pills.

<sup>10</sup> The youth-at-risk survey is the first phase of an intended bigger study, also including surveys amongst six additional high risk groups: entertainment workers, manual labourers, truck/taxi drivers, military conscripts, garment industry workers and fishermen.

#### 4.5 HIV/AIDS

Cambodia is the one country in the region that has the highest percentage of HIV positive, almost 3 % of the adult population. The first official case was reported in 1991. The epidemic was initially powered by the local sex trade, with the vast majority of sexual contacts outside of marriage occurring between sex workers and male clients. A 1998 survey showed that 41 % of commercial sex workers were HIV-positive. It is estimated that there are close to 100 000 commercial sex workers in Cambodia, 30 % of which are under 18 years of age. Statistics from 1998 also showed that close to 60 % of the reported HIV cases were found in the 15-24 age group.

Encouraging is that the World Health Organization estimates the number of Cambodians living with HIV to have fallen steadily since 1997, from 210,000 to 169,000 last year. However, part of the explanation to the declining numbers is increased number of deaths rather than a positive change in trends, and the number of new AIDS cases is continuing to increase.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems as if the epidemic is not exploding as it did a few years back, and that widespread condom use also is largely responsible for the decline in infections. Condom sales have risen from 5 to 16 million in five years and according to the Ministry of Health, it is those under the age of 20 who seem to have embraced condom use the most. Surveys have shown that a majority of young people are aware of HIV/AIDS. Most know that it is incurable, transmittable by sex and preventable through condom use.

Population Service International (PSI)<sup>12</sup>, Family Health International (FHI) and the Ministry of Health have commissioned a survey on condom use amongst sweethearts. The survey shows that it is ok for both young men and young women to initiate the use of condoms, but only due to the risk of being pregnant, not to the risk of catching disease, which is considered shameful in a sweetheart relationship.

Love and sex is also not something that is discussed within the family in Cambodia. Most youths say they do not talk about these issues at all, or they say they talk to their friends. Several of the organisations targeting youth with HIV/AIDS/STD preventive programmes have also realised the potential in using peer-to-peer education methods to reach other young Cambodians with information. Another initiative to encourage youths to talk and learn about sexually transmittable infections is the recently opened Condom Café in central Phnom Penh<sup>13</sup>. The aim of this “Café You & Me” is to create a place primarily for kids living in the streets where they can hang out and receive advice and condoms free of charge.

The Cambodian radio is quite active in broadcasting information on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, there are no specific radio programmes targeting youth. Most of the information is rather general, or specifically targets sex workers, but no shows have strategies to reach the young population.

#### 4.6 JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Cambodian Government signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. In 2001, the Committee on the Rights of the Child sent back recommendations to the Government regarding the situation for children and the implementation of the Convention. A major concern in these recommendations was the lack of juvenile justice. As of today, there is a very weak protection for juveniles in the Cambodian justice system. Children and youth can be arrested and punished for minor infringements and are often not in a position to appeal. Many juvenile offenders still get pre-trial detention exceeding the two months defined in the law, they can be sent to prison without proper court judgement or access to due process of law, there is no rehabilitation programme, etc. According to prison statistics from LICADHO, there were 45 prisoners under the age of 18 detained in the adult

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<sup>11</sup> A 2000 Ministry of Health survey estimated that the number of new AIDS cases would increase from 20 000 in 1999 to 130 000 in 2002.

<sup>12</sup> PSI is marketing Cambodia's number one condom – called Number One!

<sup>13</sup> Run by the organisation Mith Samlanh/Friends.

prisons in Cambodia in 1998. Today the number has risen to close to 250 minors<sup>14</sup>, and the number of relapsed youth offenders is quite high.

Several organisations have acknowledged the special circumstances for minors within the justice system. Special units are working with investigations and consultancy on juvenile cases within Legal Aid of Cambodia (LAC) and the Cambodia Bar Association, and a group is now being founded at Cambodian Defenders Project (CDP) to lobby towards the government to implement a juvenile justice system.<sup>15</sup> These organisations call for the need of a juvenile court and a juvenile law securing the rights of children and youth under the age of 18.

Another problem related to this is the difficulty to rehabilitate the young offenders back into society. One programme to address this problem is run by the youth organisation Khmer Youth Association. They provide Khmer literacy and human rights training to young prisoners.

#### **4.7 CULTURE**

The Cambodian film industry boomed in the 1960s, when King Norodom Sihanouk directed a considerable number of melodramas starring himself, his family and friends. The industry, as many other aspects of Cambodian culture, was destroyed during the Khmer Rouge years, when an estimated 90 % of the country's performing artists were executed as for representing a corrupt Western influence. Out of the at least 30 cinema theatres in Phnom Penh before the war, only one is still in use today<sup>16</sup>. In the last two years, the reviving industry has produced a couple of feature films<sup>17</sup>, and film associations have been set up by Cambodian film producers. The Cambodian films are immensely popular among Cambodians of all ages. Most of the films watched are however foreign films, primarily from countries in the region, but increasingly also movies from the US.

In the provincial areas, Cambodian media is by far the most important source of information, with TV and radio outnumbering newspapers due to distribution and literacy problems. Numerous karaoke videos are being produced every year and are immensely popular in all parts of Cambodia. In the cities, however, international influences are becoming more and more common, not only in the movies, but also in music, dance styles, fashion etc. So much so that Prime Minister Hun Sen has raged that the government needs to act to put an end to these negative influences.<sup>18</sup> Radio channels have been forced to play Khmer music exclusively and last year, a decree was issued ordering the karaoke parlours and discotheques in the country to close, as they were considered havens for prostitution and drug abuse.

Whether it is due to Hun Sen's strategies or not, traditional Khmer culture is, in many ways, still very alive in present day Cambodia, also amongst the younger generation. Visiting a nightclub for young people in Phnom Penh, the sounds of international disco music is altered with traditional Khmer songs and "line dance".

The Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) in Phnom Penh teaches art, dance, circus etc. Even if there are some individual students that experiment and does more modern work, RUFA primarily focuses on traditional arts.

#### **4.8 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Information technology is a fairly new or even unknown phenomenon to the majority of Cambodia's population. Government statistics show that only 7-8 000 of Cambodia's 11.4 million people have Internet connections. However, in Phnom Penh today, there are about 50 Internet shops. Apart from tourists, these shops are mostly visited by young Cambodians, mainly students but also young

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<sup>14</sup> Theft, followed by assaults are the most common types of crimes among youth.

<sup>15</sup> LAC and CDP provide legal services to the poor free of charge.

<sup>16</sup> The movie theatre Vimeantip reopened in 2001.

<sup>17</sup> With intriguing names such as "Child of the Giant Snake".

<sup>18</sup> The critique has been given with a special reference to the too short skirts of young Thai singers.

professionals, young government officials etc. Some of the shops have been started by young college students, and also conduct training and support for new users.

Typical for the younger generation all over the world is that they are growing up in a changing world where globalisation provides new opportunities to meet and to communicate. Even if these new opportunities in Cambodia as of yet are extremely limited and unevenly divided, information technology has the potential of breaking part of the isolation that has had such fundamental impact on the Cambodian society.

There are also a few examples of IT projects in Cambodian schools. In a Japanese supported project called "Village Leap" in Preah Vihear province in northern Cambodia, the students learn to work with computers and internet, and the organisation Future Light Orphanage give the children and youth they work with the ability to go online.<sup>19</sup>

#### **4.9 GENDER**

The 1993 Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia provides for the principle of equality between women and men, guarantees equal rights and especially promotes the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This does not change the fact that women of all ages in Cambodia face difficulties, discrimination and violations of their rights. Domestic violence, abuse, trafficking and sexual exploitation are severe threats to many young women. Lack of political representation and influence adds to the difficulties.

Cambodian girls are taught a set of rules called *chbab srey* (rules for women). Outlining the proper behaviour for girls and women on how to be a good woman and wife praises behaviour that does not promote equality of men and women, such as speaking quietly, walking slowly, restrain one's behaviour etc. A commonly used Cambodian proverb states that "the letter cannot be bigger than the envelope" and is used to control girls and women and ensure that they obey their parents and husbands.

There is also a severe gender gap in the education sector, with a very small proportion of girls attending universities. In primary school grade one, the share of girls is 47 %, whereas only about one third of the total enrolment in secondary school is represented by girls. This figure steadily declines the higher the level of education, falling to 16 % in tertiary education. Naturally, this has a serious effect on the literacy rate, with great differences between men and women.

Poverty is the major general constraint to access higher education. For girls, the most important additional constraints are housework, distance to schools, and minding siblings. Besides that, the parents worry about the danger of losing traditional values, a lack of job opportunities for girls, difficulties in marrying among educated women, and doubts about the usefulness of education for women. Traditionally, there is also a possibility for boys who attend schools far from their homes and are unable to afford housing costs, to live in the Buddhist pagodas. There is no such traditional accommodation open to girls.<sup>20</sup>

When speaking to young Cambodians, many however state that there is a difference regarding equality between the sexes between their generation and previous generations. This dissimilarity is evident in an increasing number of female students, greater possibilities to choose your partner<sup>21</sup> etc. The same youths say that the changes are mainly visible among the urban youths.

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<sup>19</sup> See [www.villageleap.com](http://www.villageleap.com) and [www.futurelight.org](http://www.futurelight.org)

<sup>20</sup> Just recently, however, Prime Minister Hun Sen has proposed that college dormitories for female students should be constructed in order to facilitate young women's access to higher education.

<sup>21</sup> Cambodian tradition gives parents the authority to arrange marriages, sometimes when their children are still very young. A Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey carried out in 2000 also shows that 34 % of married women aged 15-19 say they met their husband for the first time on their wedding day, in comparison to 42 % of the women aged 20-39 and 48 % of women aged 40-49.

The proportion of rural girls enrolled in school is lower than that of urban girls and the rural/urban gap widens as the educational level increases. This constitutes a contributing factor to the few females in professional and decision-making positions and perpetuates the lack of females as role models for girls.

At the same time it is a very positive trend that an increasing number of young articulate women are graduating from the universities in Cambodia. Despite the fact that female students are a definite minority, they are a growing minority that most likely will be very important – as role models and for the future development of the country.



# 5 THE MINISTRIES AND YOUTH

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There are actually two Cambodian ministries that have the concept of “youth” included in their names: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation. Apart from these two, the Ministry of Health and The Ministry of Women’s and Veteran’s Affairs are ministries that seem likely to have special strategies or programmes to reach the young population.

## 5.1 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) is the biggest ministry in Cambodia with 24 different departments. There are four main policies for the MoEYS: universalising 9 years of basic education, improving the quality of education, linking education with the labour market and developing the Youth and Sport sub-sectors. The main priority of the ministry is basic education. Several of the departments work with issues related to youth, such as the Department for Sports and the Department for Higher Education. There are however no overall strategies regarding youth and the task of “developing the youth sub-sector” is referred to the Youth Department.

### 5.1.1 YOUTH DEPARTMENT

The Youth Department is one of the departments at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Between 1979 and 1993, there was a special Ministry of Youth, but in 1993, it was closed and a youth department was founded under the Ministry of Education. The department has a national office with 78 staff members, offices of youth at the provincial level (15 staff members per province) and sectors of youth and children at the district level (2-3 staff members per district).

The Youth Department works with Youth Councils at the high schools and Children’s Councils at the primary school with student leaders appointed by the school’s deputy director. The school leaders are responsible for three movements: Good Child, Good Friend and Good Student. According to the Youth Department these structures are not so active in many of the schools due to lack of budget and time for responsible teachers.

The only activity that the Youth Department has a budget for is camping. During 2002, three provincial camps will be arranged, and one national camp will take place in Pailin in December. The participants at these camps are appointed by the officials of the Ministry of Education in the provinces. One specific office under the Youth Department is responsible for Youth Centres. As of today, there is however only one such centre, in Siem Reap, and because of lack of funding there has been no activities in the youth centre so far. The Department additionally works with radio programmes that broadcast about health, HIV/AIDS, children’s rights, women’s rights etc. There are also ideas about publishing a magazine for youths.

Representatives of the Youth Department say that the interministerial cooperation on youth issues is very limited. For reasons they do not know, they find it difficult to work together with the other relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Health. There is however some cooperation between the Youth Department and the Department of Higher Education (another department under MoEYS), with common visits to universities and contacts with student associations. A SWOT analysis<sup>22</sup> of the department confirms that the department has a weak networking system and poor image among youth NGOs. It also highlights that there is an increasing youth demand for quality programmes and better relationships between the department and youth organisations.

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<sup>22</sup> An analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This specific SWOT-analysis is included in a UNESCO-document on youth policy, which is presented in the next chapter.

## **5.2 MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, LABOUR, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND YOUTH REHABILITATION**

The Second Ministry encapsulating the term “Youth” in its name is the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSALVY). The work of MoSALVY is divided between 15 departments. Responsibility for youths lies with the Department for Youth Management and the Department for Youth Rehabilitation.

### **5.2.1 THE DEPARTMENTS FOR YOUTH MANAGEMENT AND YOUTH REHABILITATION**

The departments present their task as to *“manage children from 7 to 18 years old who are in conflict with the law or participating in delinquent acts and to educate and rehabilitate them to assist them to be good citizens.”*<sup>23</sup>

At the Department of Youth Rehabilitation the main cause of youth delinquency is identified to be poverty. At the same time, they are stressing that many bored, rich kids also get themselves into trouble. Since it is hard to reach the youths from the wealthy families, their work is however focused on poor children and youths.

Strangely enough, the youth rehabilitation department is mainly responsible for prevention strategies. There are two main target groups for these efforts: the juvenile group and the communities. On working with the communities, there are no programmes today. Previously, the department has cooperated with the National Authority on Combating Drugs (see below) on distributing posters and flyers. In reaching the juveniles, they cooperate with Unicef on a project with peer-to-peer education at one high school in Phnom Penh. In addition to this, a couple of seminars are organised annually, for example for the police, representatives from the military, factory workers etc.

The responsibility for rehabilitation lies instead with the department of youth management. One rehabilitation centre has been established in Chom Chao, close to Poochentong Airport in Phnom Penh. At present, 80 boys, most of them being in the age 14-17, are staying at the centre. MoSALVY staff declare that the boys stay there voluntarily and that they are provided counselling, literacy and vocational training. NGO representatives give a different picture, describing the centre as more or less a prison, completely lacking activities and rehabilitation strategies.

Also the Department of Vocational Training works partly with young people. In their work they try to cooperate with the Ministry of Education, especially when it comes to setting up vocational training centres for adults and youths outside the schools.

## **5.3 MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

The Ministry of Health holds the responsibilities of providing good health service and ensuring that the health care is affordable for the Cambodian citizens. The different departments are mostly working with planning and policies whereas the implementation is referred to national programmes, national centres and national institutes, working on e.g tuberculosis and leprosy, mother and child health and public health. There are no overall strategies for youth health. The centre that mostly has acknowledged the need to work with youths is the National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD<sup>24</sup> (NCHADS).

### **5.3.1 THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HIV/AIDS, DERMATOLOGY AND STD (NCHADS)**

Created in 1998, NCHADS is the Ministry of Health institution that implements all activities related to HIV/AIDS and STDs. The centre runs three specific programmes – on prevention, care and support

Youth are described as a most important target group. When it comes to youth programmes, the director of NCHADS say they work closely with Ministry of Education and the Department for School Health. MoEYS is the key institution responsible for reaching the youths in this field. Prioritised areas are STD

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<sup>23</sup> MoSALVY, Policy and Strategy on Social Affairs in Cambodia, 2001

<sup>24</sup> Sexually Transmitted Disease

education and the setting up of STD clinics, and HIV prevention. A 100 % condom use programme should ensure the availability of condoms for young people.

NCHADS sees its main role as coordinating, and cooperate with a number of NGOs that actually carry out programmes and implement the strategies.

#### **5.4 MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

The idea of having a specific ministry responsible for women's issues is fairly new to Cambodia. A specific secretariat for women was first set up in 1993, and it was only in 1996 that this secretariat was changed into the Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs (MoWVA). MoWVA works to support women in primarily five areas:

- Health – with a focus on HIV/AIDS
- Economic empowerment – e.g. effects of globalisation and privatisation on women
- Education - increasing literacy and education for girls/women
- Legal protection – focus on trafficking in women and children and violence against women
- Women in decision-making – increasing the number of female politicians at all levels

The Ministry describes its role as advocate and catalyst, with the aim to mainstream gender awareness and consideration into all ministries. MoWVA is probably the ministry that has the closest cooperation with different NGOs and other actors of the civil society. At times the MoWVA has even faced critique from other ministries that consider them as acting like an NGO rather than like a ministry. No youth organisations have been counterparts in programmes and activities, but representatives have been taking part as speakers at different youth events and ceremonies.

The ministry does not carry out any specific programmes supporting young women, but stress that they want to work with women and men at all ages. However, they consider adolescents as one very important group to prioritise. The sector of work where they give special attention to young girls/women is in education, where the major aim is to prevent girls from dropping out after primary school. MoWVA does not work directly with girls in this area, but works with the Ministry of Education to try to influence their policies and strategies to be more gender sensitive.

#### **5.5 INTERMINISTERIAL WORK ON YOUTH RELATED ISSUES**

A number of interministerial initiatives have been taken in recent years to deal with various issues that demand a sector wide approach. Some of them focus on issues where the young population is especially affected, such as child rights, drugs and HIV/AIDS.

##### **5.5.1 DRUGS**

In 1995, in response to the increasing drug problems in Cambodia, the government established a ministerial level committee, the National Authority for Combating Drugs, NACD, to make decisions on drug control policy and to supervise drug control operations. Due to political instability and impasse during the first coalition government, the NACD did not hold its first meeting until March 2000. That same year, NACD launched a public education and information campaign to inform people of the dangers and consequences of drug use. This has in part been sparked off by Cambodian officials' concern about one of the main groups at risk: teenage middle class students – many of which are the officials' children.

Today, the UN Office on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) work closely with the government. During the traditional Water Festival in 2001, the UNODCCP and NADC launched a big drug education campaign, in which 250 000 drug information packages were distributed to youths attending the festival.

### 5.5.2 HIV-AIDS

With roots in a national AIDS committee existing since 1993, the National AIDS Authority (NAA) was established in 1999, comprising representatives from 15 ministries and all provincial governments. The NAA has developed a multi-sector strategic plan on HIV/AIDS prevention and care 2001 to 2005. The HIV prevention activities focus on sexual transmission. Included in the mission of NAA lies to work out a curriculum for secondary, maybe also primary, schools on HIV/AIDS, and to implement training for teachers.

Before NAA, there was the National Committee on AIDS, with a fairly small office, but today the NAA has grown in activities, staff and budget. Both NGO representatives and government officials witness that the division of responsibilities between NAA and NCHADS (Ministry of Health) is not fully clear. Some add that it is clear on paper and in the structure, but not in practise. The NAA should have a more coordinating function working on policies and overall multi-sector strategies, whereas NCHADS should be more of an implementing body.

### 5.5.3 CHILD RIGHTS

As mentioned earlier, the Royal Government of Cambodia signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. The Cambodian National Committee for Children (CNCC) was formed in 1997. It is an inter-ministerial committee with members from 14 ministries. The CNCC has arranged workshops attended by governors from the provinces on children's rights. Representatives from NGOs have been invited to discuss the UN recommendations for improving the situation on child rights in Cambodia.

The CNCC works quite closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs, something that probably can be partly explained due to the fact that it is chaired by the Minister of MoSALVY. A five-year plan has been adopted for the activities of CNCC.

# 6

## YOUTH POLICY

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A national youth policy can be described as the ambition to try to coordinate official measures that especially concerns young people. To ensure that all different arenas where youths are effected are included, it should be based on a sector wide approach. Some discussions on youth policies also stress the need for a youth perspective, a perspective where the interests of young people are protected and where young people themselves can influence the policy process.

### 6.1 YOUTH POLICY IN CAMBODIA

#### 6.1.1 THE GOVERNMENT AND YOUTH POLICY

There is as of yet no formal youth policy in Cambodia. The political responsibility for creating such a policy lies at the Youth Department under Ministry of Education. Pan Sokhim, director of the Youth Department, says that he has been assigned by the Prime Minister's cabinet to submit a report on the situation for youth in the world, for youth in Cambodia and to formulate a national youth policy. He has also been asked to look into the possibilities of creating a national youth council or a national authority of youth. So far, however, the work has not begun.

In 2001, UNESCO was concerned by the lack of policy for youths. They employed a consultant from Malaysia to work with the Youth Department for two weeks. The resulting document "Policy Change for Youth Department" suggests that the focus group of the department should be youth outside the school system. A SWOT-analysis of the Youth Department proposes a change in organisation and direction of the department's work. It concludes that the department lack policies and plan of action for youth development. However, the strong points in the document is rather making the assessment of the Youth Department than presenting a proposal of a youth policy with a sector wide approach. Nevertheless, the document is now being used as a draft youth policy by the Youth Department; it has been translated into Khmer and is likely to be presented as a youth policy to be officially taken if no other contributions are made.

#### 6.1.2 YOUTH ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH POLICY

Khmer Youth Association is the youth organisation that has been working the most with issues concerning youth policy. KYA and other members of the newly founded Youth Council of Cambodia, a cooperation body consisting of six student associations, consider the UNESCO document too weak, with too much focus on out-of-school youth, and want to advocate for a broader youth policy. KYA defines three main objectives for their own advocacy work:

- Knowledge for youths (education)
- Work opportunities for youth (employment)
- Youth involvement in policy and decision making

KYA regularly arranges roundtable discussions open to students and youth organisation activists on various themes connected to youth policy. The leaders of the different political youth wings have been invited to give their views on how young people in Cambodia can be supported, and representatives from different UN bodies have been asked to talk about youth policy within the UN.

Generally, many of the student associations complain that there is a lack of policy and long-term strategies from the government on how to support youth and youths' organisations in Cambodia, and most ministries seem to agree that such strategies lack.

One positive development is however that the organisation Children's Committee, with members exclusively under 18, just recently has been invited to present their views and ideas to the National Assembly. A first-ever event in Cambodia, this invitation is being considered as something of a breakthrough by Child Rights Organisations.

### 6.1.3 THE DONORS AND YOUTH POLICY

None of the major donors in Cambodia seem to have particular policies or strategies on how to support youth as a specific group. Some provide funding for one or several youth organisations, but usually the motive behind this is that these organisations' activities fit with the donors overall priorities rather than that it is a part of a special strategy to strengthen youth initiatives. The one exception is the German GTZ that is presently looking into the youth sector with the aim of supporting youth projects.

#### 6.1.3.1 JAPAN – JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (JICA)

No specific policies or strategies for youths are formulated by JICA. A specific Japanese Volunteer Overseas Programme are open to Japanese youth, but none of the volunteers in Cambodia are working with youth related programmes. JICA supports the Ministry of Education on primary and secondary education and teacher's training..

#### 6.1.3.2 FRANCE - THE FRENCH EMBASSY

The French Embassy does not have policies or strategies that make the distinction of youth as a particular group, nor does it support any projects in Cambodia specifically targeting young people.

#### 6.1.3.3 USA - THE ASIA FOUNDATION (TAF)

TAF is currently supporting two youth-oriented organisations: the Khmer Youth Association and the Girl Guides Association of Cambodia. TAF as a whole does not have a specific focus on youth, and the concept of "youth" or children has not been articulated in any of their organisational strategies or documents. In Cambodia, TAF has become involved in these issues from a human rights and a gender perspective. The starting point was not a wish to focus on youth, but rather the overarching program strategy through which they came across these organisations.

#### 6.1.3.4 USA - PACT

PACT has funded some youth programs over the past 10 years, including Khmer Students Association, Khmer Students and Intellectual Association, Friends/Mith Samlanh, and Committee for the Development for Friendship of Rural Youth. They have not done any work related to youth policy, but say they might be interested in pursuing this.

#### 6.1.3.5 AUSTRALIA - THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY

The Australian Embassy has no youth policy and does not give any major support to any specific youth programmes in Cambodia. The Embassy administers small grants and there have been a few examples of such support to projects targeting youth. One example is the organisation Servants and their work on HIV/STD/reproductive health education for youth.

#### 6.1.3.6 SWEDEN – SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY (SIDA)

Sida does not have any specific strategies formulated for youths. However, at the head quarters in Sweden, there is a recently initiated discussion about the effect Sida's work in different sectors have on a country's young population, and some kind of assessment might take place in this field. In Cambodia, Sida supports the Ministry of Education, and indirectly the organisation Khmer Youth Association through Forum Syd.

**6.1.3.7 CANADA – CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CIDA)**

There are three CIDA funded programs administered through the Cambodia office including the Canada Fund, the Health and Nutrition Fund and the Civil Society Governance Fund. Neither of these funds specifically target youth as a focus group in the funding provided. However, some youth initiatives are funded in the course of the different programs, for example the Khmer Youth Association and Youth For Peace. CIDA has also supported Save the Children UK and CHED in their work on HIV/AIDS prevention with youth.

**6.1.3.8 GREAT BRITAIN – DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID)**

DFID does not presently have any youth projects. A project on HIV/AIDS support is in the planning and some of it may target youth. DFID does have specific policies orientated to children but do not make the distinction of youth as a specific group.

**6.1.3.9 GERMANY – GERMAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION (GTZ)**

GTZ has a programme for the promotion of youth that until now mainly has focused on Latin America and Africa, primarily with projects on vocational training and HIV/AIDS prevention. This year, the programme has been extended to Asia and GTZ is presently looking into projects and initiatives in Cambodia targeting youths. Specific fields of interest to support are youth and education (with a specific focus on girls), violence in the families, unemployment/vocational training and HIV/AIDS. Youths are being defined as adolescents between 12 and 19 years of age.

**6.1.3.10 EC – YOUTH REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INITIATIVE**

Cambodia is one of the countries that have received a fairly extensive budget from the EC the last four years to support youth at risk. This “Youth Reproductive Health Initiative” coordinated by UNFPA, is probably one of the biggest initiatives for young people in Cambodia. Different organisations<sup>25</sup> and programmes have received parts of the funds to work with middle class youth, young garment factory workers, poor youths etc. During 2002, a large youth camp was arranged in Siem Reap on gender and reproductive health by some of the organisations involved in the programme. 200 youths from all over the country met to learn and discuss about HIV/AIDS, STDs and gender, discuss why youth are important and play games and do other physical activities.

**6.1.3.11 UN - NON-FORMAL BASIC EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL SKILL TRAINING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTHS AT RISK**

The United Nations Human Security Fund has just recently approved a support of 610 000 USD for a 3-year programme on non-formal education in Cambodia. The money has been donated by the Japanese government. The activities are expected to reach more than 3 000 youths above the age of 14 during the three years, including poor and marginalized out of school youth, street and working children and those living in remote areas without access to education. Activities will take place in Battambang, Siem Reap, Kandal, Prey Veng, Kampong Cham, Svay Rieng and Phnom Penh. The programme will have six different implementing partners: the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and five local NGOs<sup>26</sup>. The programme will be coordinated and monitored by the UNESCO office in Cambodia.

Apart from this programme, several of the UN organizations represented in Cambodia coordinate other projects targeting youths, e.g UNESCO, UNICEF and UNAIDS.

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<sup>25</sup> Organisations involved are for example KHANA, CARE International, RACH, Save the Children UK and CHED

<sup>26</sup> Khmer Kampuchea Krom for Human Rights and Development Association (KKKHRDA), Mith Samlanh/Friends, Operations Enfants de Battambang (OEB), Punleu Komar Kampuchea Organisation (PKKO) and Street Children Assistance and Development Programme (SCADP)

# 7

## ORGANISATIONS IN CAMBODIA

Most of the Cambodian NGOs were founded after the peace agreement in 1991. The creation of NGOs was a result of the opening up of the country, the flow of international assistance to Cambodia and the return of many Cambodians who had left the country for the United States during the years of Khmer Rouge and now wanted to rebuild their country. The new NGOs were initially not very proactive and quite limited in number, but grew rapidly so that by today, the number of Cambodian NGOs is reaching one thousand. They have proliferated and consolidated creating a new political actor in society. Additionally, there is an extensive number of International NGOs present in Cambodia.

In the beginning, youth was not so much the target group for the NGOs. The first generation of organisations concentrated mainly on human rights, democracy, elections and relief work, whereas today the issues and problems addressed by NGOs have expanded considerably. Likewise, the number of youth initiated organisations and issues targeted by youth groups have increased quite a lot since the UNTAC years.

### 7.1 YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

In 1992, during the UNTAC period, four student/youth organisations were started up: Khmer Students Association, Khmer Youth Association, Khmer Students and Intellectuals Association and United Neutral Khmer Students. Before this, there is little evidence of youth organisational activities in Cambodia. The Youth Association of Cambodia had been founded in 1978, as a youth wing of the ruling party, and there had been some guiding/scouting activities in the schools already prior to the Khmer Rouge regime, that had been interrupted by the war.

The four student based associations dominated the scene until around 1997-98 when a second group of organisations was founded. Since then, quite a number of organisations have been created by youths, mainly students from the universities in Phnom Penh. The last one or two years have seen something of a boom in this kind of initiatives, with many groups being started, and also many groups disappearing from the scene.

It is difficult to say how many youth and student organisations there are in Cambodia today, since all of them are not registered with the ministries and there is no specific record of youth organisations. The Youth Department under Ministry of Education has a list of 18 youth and students associations. A more realistic estimation would be that there are at least 50-60 organisations, though a number of these are probably not much more than a name.

The vast majority of the Cambodian youth initiated organisations are founded by university students. Many of them work with democracy and human rights issues, education and training and awareness raising on various issues. Even if founded by students, quite a few of these organisations have staff and members that are rather graduates than presently enrolled at the universities.

Many of the youth organisations are not associations in the sense that they are member based, and membership does not necessarily manage the direction of the programs. When asked about members, a common answer is “yes, we have 13 members” (or 7 or 21...), which usually refers to the number of staff or voluntary trainers. Apart from some of the organisations with very strong political links where enrolment of members is seen as a means of recruiting new party members, few of the organisations seem to be working strategically to increase their popular base. However, it is important to remember that this corresponds to the general picture among Cambodian NGOs and furthermore that there are positive exceptions. A number of the organisations do have a fairly large member base, often with a voluntary member fee for those who can afford.

Whether the membership is counted in tens or thousands, a democratic formal structure seems to be essential to most of the youth associations. The majority of the organisations have annual meetings open



to all members and leaders are almost always elected. Positive as this is, it is still the case that out of all the youth organisations included in this study, only one has a female president. In this sense, the youth organisations do not differ so much from other NGOs in Cambodia: the leaders often hold strong positions in their organisations and they are almost exclusively men.

It is important to stress that the youth and student associations in Cambodia differ from each other in many ways. Even if there are common characteristics and patterns, they work under quite varying conditions. There are a few groups that are quite well established, with a wide range of activities, somewhat secured funding and a fairly clear structure. The vast majority of the organisations are however not very strong. They are new organisations, with a lack of capacity and organisational skills. Analytical skills have not so much been transferred to the students in the educational systems and several of the groups find it difficult to set up long-term visions, formulate objectives and build strong, democratic organisations.

Some organisations have focused their activities and objectives to one major sector. Nevertheless, the majority are not very well defined. The ambitions stretch over a wide range of issues, often including human rights and democracy, but also gender, health, peace etc. It seems reasonable to assume, that many of the groups would gain from centring their interest to one area, and develop their capacities within this field.

Part of the reason for the deficient focus is probably to be found in connection to the issue of funding. Most organisations have difficulties in finding funding for their activities and projects, and through including many different sectors they have the possibility of approaching different donor agencies. At the same time, the shattered approach is likely to discourage many potential donors.

None of these explanations are sufficient, however. It is also true that the broad objectives in a way are expressions of enthusiasm, a realisation of needs in many different areas and a will to change conditions in the society. Conflicting interests within the organisations or vaguely defined visions and strategies are other contributing factors to the lack of focus that seem to characterise quite a few of the groups. Likewise, very few donors have given much attention to youth groups in Cambodia, and are probable not to be aware of what their aims and objectives might be.

A vicious circle, not in any way unique to the youth movement but very obvious there, is that lack of capacity and activity makes it difficult to attract the interest of donors, with a resulting lack of funding which render it difficult to carry out activities and build the organisation's capacity. Today, quite a few of the youth clubs and organisations have no or very limited activity.

The general impression is, however, that there is a will to change things and to influence amongst the youth organisations and their members. Even if occasional organisations can be seen as mere career moves of their founders, the absolute majority of them stem from ideas and initiatives to make an impact on the society.<sup>27</sup>

### 7.1.1 HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY ORGANISATIONS

A large number of the youth and student associations say they work primarily or partly with human rights and democracy. This was for example the focus of all the four organisations started during the UNTAC years. These four initially founded student movements still exist today, but over the years since UNTAC, they have shifted in size and capacity.

As of today, the strongest youth organisation in Cambodia is probably Khmer Youth Association (KYA). KYA carries out a specific programme aiming at supporting young women's political participation, and teaches human rights and literacy to young prisoners. Apart from its core activities,

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<sup>27</sup> In the text that follows, some different kinds of youth organisations will be mentioned. It is however important to keep in mind that the organisations mentioned are examples and that there are more organisations not presented in this chapter. For a more extensive list, see annex 1.

KYA has also taken on something of a platform role for students and members of other youth organisations. Regularly, KYA arranges round table discussion and seminars open to anyone who is interested in the issues. KYA is also the one organisation that most clearly has an ambition to work on youth policy and advocacy to increase youth involvement.

Besides KYA, there are a vast number of associations of varying size and capacity stating that they work with democracy and human rights. Student Movement for Democracy (SMD) has for example arranged democracy trainings for students; Khmer Students Association (KSA), Khmer Students and Intellectuals Association (KSIA), Khmer Democratic Youth Association (KDYA), and Democratic Students Federation (DSF) are other examples of organisation focusing on these issues. One very concrete contribution to democratic development in Cambodia was that a couple of youth organisations helped in recruiting election observers to the communal elections in 2002, and also encouraged and/or trained their members to volunteer for this task.

As mentioned earlier, most youth organisations are concerned with formal democracy in their organisations, arranging annual meetings and elections of leaders and board members. One difficulty is however that not many of the organisations have defined what they mean by democracy. Furthermore, even if most of them would state that they are neutral, some of the organisations appear to have linkages to different political parties. A few of them use rhetoric that is quite nationalistic, referring to “border issues” and Cambodian integrity as prioritised issues. If organisations want to “boost democracy”, but at the same time state that they would like all Vietnamese people to leave Cambodia, what definition of democracy is then being used?

One of the more politically radical organisations is the Democratic Front of Khmer Students and Intellectuals (DFKSI). Not yet registered as an organisation, they have plans of forming their own political party to gain legitimacy. DFKSI describe their role as two-fold; first, to educate in democracy and second to function as watchdogs towards the government. Nine executive committees monitor the different ministries and the organisations’ main activities are petition writing and demonstrations. The vice president talks of revolution of intellectuals and patriots to get rid of the present government.

Even if different organisations sympathise with different political parties, many of them appear to be in favour of the political opposition. A common description is that the government wants to control the student and youth organisations; perhaps particularly the ones working with human rights and democracy related activities. Fearing a too strong student movement, members of the ruling party try to “divide and conquer”, for example by paying groups to obstruct anti-government demonstrations.<sup>28</sup>

### 7.1.2 PEACE MOVEMENTS

The most solid youth peace movement in Cambodia is the organisation Youth for Peace (YFP), founded in 1999. After trying to set up a youth programme within an existing peace movement, but receiving no encouragement, former students from the training institute Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP), formed a voluntary group that tried to arrange conferences at the University of Phnom Penh. The aim was to initiate discussions on Cambodian culture related to peace with a focus on the conflict between Thai and Cambodian students and teachers. The group was refused by the university to carry out its activities until they contacted the Ministry of Culture that allowed them to continue their work. The second conference attracted 450 students.

Today, YFP has two main programmes: (1) Peace education with workshops for students based on peer-to-peer methodology, and (2) Leadership education that provides training for trainers to members who have been actively involved in activities and workshops. The Mennonite Central Committee, MCC, has a part time volunteer working with the organisation.

Besides YFP, several smaller clubs address peace building and non-violence in their activities. Amongst these can be mentioned Women Peace Makers, Youth and Children for Peace and Youth Peace Council.

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<sup>28</sup> See also section 7.1.8, Student Representative Bodies

### 7.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA) is not primarily a youth organisation, but one of the main environmental organisations in Cambodia. However, it was founded in 1995 by a group of students from the University, most of its staff are former university students and one of the main activities is an environmentalist activist training programme targeting students. Two training courses are held every year and up until now close to 200 students have taken part. According to CEPA, there is an increasing interest in environmental issues among Cambodian youths and students.

Environmental Beauty (EB) is a small student club that also focuses on environmental issues. They want to raise awareness through workshops and cleaning campaigns in the city. Cleaning campaigns have also been an activity for several other organisations, a very concrete way of showing responsibility for the society.

### 7.1.4 HEALTH ORGANISATIONS

One of the first student-founded organisations in Cambodia was United Neutral Khmer Students (UNKS). Over the years it has shifted its main focus from democracy and human rights to promotion of health and culture. With funding from Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA), they carry out education on reproductive health, HIV and STDs in a number of villages.

Furthermore, the small club Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD) have distributed information to other youths on HIV/AIDS related health issues.

### 7.1.5 CHILD RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

Children's Committee (CC) was started in 1995 as an initiative of NGO-CRC, The NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child. The association consists of 50 children under the age of 18. CC works with promotion on the rights of the child, awareness raising and advocacy on child rights issues. They want to work with other youth and child organisations with the motto: "children helping children". Considering child prostitution and drug abuse among children prioritised areas to work with, CC holds workshops, arranges TV quizzes and song contests on child rights, organises camps etc. The group receives a monthly financial contribution from Prime Minister Hun Sen, and they have just been invited to the National Assembly to talk about child rights from a child perspective. Save the Children<sup>29</sup> and Unicef give funding to the CC.

Since members of CC can only stay with the organisation until they are 18, CC founded the youth group Child Assistance for Mobilization and Participation (CAMP) in 2000. CAMP carries out trainings and workshops targeting children and youths. Members have also been on a study visit to Norway arranged by Save the Children Norway, and has been involved in a programme on war affected children and peace building with youths from Cambodia, Colombia, Angola, Burma, Bosnia and other conflict areas. CAMP is perhaps the only Cambodian youth organisation that has a young woman as president.

### 7.1.6 SCOUT MOVEMENTS

There are three scout movements in Cambodia: the Girl Guides Association of Cambodia, the Scout Association of Cambodia (SAC) and the Cambodia Scouts (CS). The Girl Guides target girls only, while the two others have both boys and girls as members. The Scout Association of Cambodia is however connected to the CPP, whereas the Cambodia Scouts is connected to FUNCINPEC. SAC is by far the largest movement with 20 000 members, since they have lots of activities in the schools and collect many of their members from the schools. However, the organisation has been described as less a regular scout movement and more a political movement, with activities to recruit young members to the ruling party. Chey Chap, Under Secretary of State (CPP), is the chairman of SAC and Prime Minister Hun Sen the honorary chairman. Neither SAC nor CS have been recognised by WOSM, the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, partly due to their political linkages.

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<sup>29</sup> Annually from SC Norway, project support from SC UK and the alliance.

The Girl Guides Association of Cambodia is however a member of WAGGGs, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Already before 1975 there was girl guide activities in some schools, but the work was interrupted by the war. The GGAC was started up again in 1996<sup>30</sup> and today has close to 1 000 members, from seven years and up. The aim of the organisation is to develop girls and young women to be responsible for themselves, their country and the world. The board consists of nine members, four youth representatives, and Her Majesty Norodom Monineath Sihanouk as the organisation's patron.

#### 7.1.7 RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Cambodian Islamic Youth Association (CIYA), the only Islamic youth movement in the country, was formed in 1999 as an initiative from the Cambodian Islamic Association. Today it has 865 members, most of whom are men. CIYA works with children, orphans and students, mostly through supporting schools with material, food and sometimes money. The activities are carried out in the four provinces where the Islamic population is biggest. CIYA is one of a total of four Islamic organisations in Cambodia. The organisation has no employed staff, only volunteers. They receive funds for international activities from AMAN, the Asian Muslim Action Network.

CIYA has carried out peace education in the provinces including both Muslim and non-Muslim teachers and participants. Another aim is to encourage young Muslim women to enrol in higher education and take an active role in politics and the society. However, they conclude this a difficult task, also CIYA have very few female members and no women on the board of the organisation.

Connected to the Youth Commission (which is initiated by the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia, see under international organisations), small youth associations of Christian youths have been created in a couple of provinces. These groups are not independent from YC/EFC, but are still examples of youth initiatives.

#### 7.1.8 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

In a vast number of countries in the world, the student movements have been of vital importance for activism and popular pressure for democratic development. Students advocate for political change and develop their own agendas. In comparison to many other South-East Asian countries, the student movement in Cambodia appears to have had fairly limited political impact.

In one way, almost all the Phnom Penh based youth organisations can be described as student associations in the sense that most have been founded by groups of university students. However, the examples of associations referred to here are student representative bodies at the universities and at the pagodas.

##### 7.1.8.1 *STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITIES*

At the universities, there are associations of students, one for each university. Each class elect three monitors (one ordinary, two deputies). Amongst the monitors, the leader of the student association is then being elected. Strong campaigning, with distribution of fancy letters and information leaflets, usually precedes elections. The candidates often give promises on what they will do in case they are elected, what things they will buy for the school, that they will find money for travelling etc. It seems as if most persons who candidate are strong, well off, not seldom with family links to the government. Many of them are appointed positions in the government after graduation.

The role of these student associations in representing student interests has however been very limited. In the second half of the 1990s, students, primarily from the University of Technology, arranged demonstrations formulating demands that the language of instruction be changed from French to English. This is almost a sole example of student initiatives for student's rights. At the same time, it is

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<sup>30</sup> Initially with Khmer Youth Association (KYA) as an "umbrella" organisation. KYA also let up their office for the Girl Guides in the beginning.

essential to realise that the possibilities for Cambodian students to act is restricted. Students say that if they act against “the establishment” or are openly critical, they risk lowered grades or other reprisals. Generally, the universities are described as being quite political arenas. It seems, however, as if different parties have different universities as their stronghold.

#### 7.1.8.2 STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE PAGODAS

Another kind of student association is the groups set up by students living in the pagodas. 13 or 14 of Phnom Penh’s pagodas are open to poor students in need of a place to stay. The biggest student community is the one at Neakvan Pagoda, with 300 students. They have formed NPSA, the Neakvan Pagoda Student Association, and similar associations are found in several of the other pagodas. NPSA encourages the students to help each other, teaches languages to students and to children living outside the pagoda and organises lectures and activities on HIV/AIDS and environment. Twelve representatives are elected annually by all the students living in the pagoda.

Apart from these elected student associations, there is also the group called the Pagoda Children, Intelligentsia and Student Association (PCISA). It is this group that is sometimes referred to as “the pagoda boys” or “youths in the pagoda” usually in the context of youth criminality and violence. According to PCISA itself, the association is apolitical, but they are widely considered as being pro-government or even strongly linked to CPP, by reporting to and getting funding from high-ranking members of the ruling party. The general description say that poor students from the provinces staying at the pagodas are being paid to violently interrupt anti-government demonstrations.

#### 7.1.9 POLITICAL YOUTH WINGS

All three main political parties have their own youth wings: Youth Association of Cambodia (YAC), the FUNCINPEC Youth and Khmer Nation Youth Movement (Sam Rainsey). The main aim for these organisations is to recruit new young members to the parties, to get them involved in politics and to educate them in the parties’ respective ideology.

The Youth Association of Cambodia is the oldest of the three, started in 1978, with present Prime Minister Hun Sen as founder and the first president. Until 1993, there were very strong links between the YAC and the CPP party, the youth wing being an integrated part of the party body. The youth movement belonged to the state, received generous funding and had committees at national, provincial and district level and in the schools. A special political school was responsible for propaganda and ideological training of active members. According to the YAC themselves, they had 800 000 members at this time, and very close international contacts with youths and students from e.g. Russia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Vietnam.

Today YAC state they are an NGO, disconnected from the ruling party and with very little support. The office and activities are smaller, and membership with YAC does not automatically imply membership with the CPP party. They have cooperated with FUNCINPEC Youth on a number of seminars. The leaders say the CPP party could no longer support them after the elections in 1993, and that the ruling party give little priority to youth activities.

The FUNCINPEC Youth Movement say they have a network with ten youth NGOs connected to them. They call their ideological cornerstone “Cambodian Modern Monarchy” and carry out ideological training as well as management skill training. Like CPP Youth, they say that the links to the party was stronger initially<sup>31</sup>, that they were then “untouchable” and connected directly to the party leader. Today, those links are no longer as strong.

The Khmer Nation Youth Movement is the youth wing that most clearly expresses their links to the mother party. With 19 branches all over the country, it works strategically to integrate students and youths into the Sam Rainsey party. Believing that it is of vital importance to get young people involved in politics, they provide ideological training and visit universities to inform students about the Sam

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<sup>31</sup> The FUNCINPEC Youth was founded in 1994/95.

Rainsey policies. According to the KNYM president, a majority of the student associations support Sam Rainsey, but are afraid of expressing this due to fear of losing jobs, receiving bad grades etc.

The political youth wings have branches all over the country. They are quite numerous in members, ranging from 4-5 000 (FUNCINPEC) to 19 000 (Sam Rainsey) and 100 000 (CPP). It is not uncommon that the active staff and members hold positions in the parties. For example, the leader of CPP Youth is Under Secretary of State with the Ministry of Public Function and the leader of FUNCINPEC's youth wing Secretary of State at the Ministry of Industry.

## **7.2 ORGANISATIONS TARGETING YOUTHS**

Apart from the youth and student associations, there are of course a number of organisations targeting young people in Cambodia. Very few work with youths exclusively, most of the NGOs rather have some project or programme in which youths are the target group. It would be impossible to mention all of them here, but some examples will be presented and a more extensive list will be provided in annex 2 and 3 of this report.

### **7.2.1 CAMBODIAN NGOS**

In comparison to the number of Cambodian NGOs working with children, there are very few organisations with special programmes for youths. Among the Cambodian organisations targeting young people, the majority are working with vocational training programmes and reproductive health with a focus on HIV/aids preventive work. Several of these organisations were founded by expatriates, but have developed into local NGOs, with primarily Cambodian staff.

#### *7.2.1.1 YOUTH RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (YRDP)*

The training institute Youth Resource Development Programme was founded in 1992. The background was a realisation of the weakness of the government in the education sector. YRDP was created to provide student centred non-formal education based on participatory methodologies for groups of students and newly graduates from different universities, faculties and institutions of higher education.

Until 2001, 740 students had been attending the courses and workshops arranged by YRDP. Strengthening of moral values, enrichment of critical thinking and capacity to take responsibility for the development of the society are the cornerstone behind the training. All students initially attend a 42-hour core course in "Personal Development" and can then choose two additional specific courses during the year. The specific courses have been held in e.g. Active Non-violence, Conflict Management, Leadership, Democracy, Environment and Health, Khmer Folk Dance and Love and Marriage.<sup>32</sup>

At the end of each course, the groups conduct field practice at NGOs, in schools or communities to deepen what they have learned. After the training courses, many students have formed clubs and gotten involved in social and developmental activities. Sometimes, YRDP trainers give informal guidance to these groups, especially in the initial stages, but increasingly and partly due to lack of time and a shift in priorities the students are encouraged to find their own way and contacts.<sup>33</sup>

#### *7.2.1.2 LEADERSHIP AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (L-CDI)*

Another training institute, mainly focusing on youths above 16 years of age, is L-CDI, founded in 2000 by Malaysian Mr Singh. The target group is poor youth from all over the country, school dropouts or potential school dropouts. L-CDI runs a Teacher Training Centre in Phnom Penh where they enrol poor students for a comprehensive 24-month training programmes, including training at the centre, practical application of training through teaching in provincial training centres and an internship programme. The education includes for example English, Mathematics, computer training and income generating

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<sup>32</sup> A book on "Love and Marriage" has also been published by YRDP.

<sup>33</sup> For more information about these clubs, see under Networks and Cooperation. Some of the clubs are also presented among the different youth organisations even if they cannot be regarded as fully independent associations.

activities; but also personal development training in motivation, pro-activeness, interpersonal skills, public speaking, ethics, confidence etc.

24 students were enrolled in the programmes the first year; today there are 800 students – 200 in Phnom Penh and 600 divided at training centres in 13 provinces. A quota system is strictly implemented to achieve gender balance. Peer education<sup>34</sup> and learning to give back to society are important features of the programmes, which are run with a very low budget. The province training centres are run with a budget of only 1 USD/student/month!

#### 7.2.1.3 MITH SAMLANH/FRIENDS

The organisation Mith Samlanh/Friends strives to reintegrate street children into their families, their society, their community and the public school system. They work with an extensive comprehensive programme including an outreach team, a transitional home, a boarding house, an educational centre and a skills training centre with eleven vocational training programmes. Also integrated in the work is awareness raising on HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and child rights, as well as a programme for family reunification.

Founded in 1994, Mith Samlanh is today the largest organisation targeting street kids in Cambodia. Totalling 120 staff present in 12 provinces, they come in contact with an average of around 3 000 kids per day. Being the only organisation specialising in teenagers living in the streets, the main target group is 12-21 years of age.

The organisation encourages the youths to take an active role in the activities of Mith Samlanh. They become students and later peer educators. After that, they can become trainers with salary and eventually some of them are employed as members of the staff.

#### 7.2.1.4 THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF CAMBODIA (RHAC)

With a staff of over 150 persons and a network of more than 500 community based volunteers, RHAC wants to make quality reproductive health services available to Cambodians. They are considering youth to be one of the most vulnerable groups to the rapid spread of HIV in the country. To combat this problem, a special Youth Programme has been designed to provide reproductive health information, referral services and counselling to adolescents in the age 12-25. Close to 600 peer group educators have been trained and are providing information to other youths in and out of school.

Another component of the programme are four “youth friendly” health clinics that also function as youth centres in order to attract young people. Apart from clinical services, these youth centres provide libraries, games and karaoke facilities. According to RHAC statistics, the youth centres were visited by close to 60 000 youths between January 2001 and March 2002. Quiz shows organised by the programme are also said to have been very successful.

### 7.2.2 INTERNATIONAL NGOS

The number of international organisations that target youths is higher than the number of national ones. However, also among the international NGOs there are hardly any working exclusively with young people; most of the organisations rather have one or a few programmes involving this specific group. Several work mainly with children, but have projects stretching the age of the target group to involve teenagers and/or students. Similar to the Cambodian NGOs, the primary sectors of work are reproductive health and education/vocational training. Also in this section, only a few examples will be mentioned, with more information and organisations to be found in annex 3.

#### 7.2.2.1 EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CAMBODIA (EFC) – YOUTH COMMISSION (YC)

There are five Christian registrative bodies in Cambodia. The biggest of them is the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia with between 700 and 800 churches all over the country registered. Set up by

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<sup>34</sup> Present and former students work as trainers/teachers at the centers.

EFC is the Youth Commission, a network of individual Christian youths, usually in the age 15-28. The Youth Commission carries out trainings in leadership, teaching on sexual awareness, HIV/AIDS and STD, arranges youth seminars on various issues, has sport activities, produces materials for youths that can be used by the youth group leaders and strives to create unity amongst the youth. The activities have sparked the creativity among participants so that in Kampong Cham and Kampong Chhnang provinces, youths have set up their own associations. The YC has its own board, directors, funding etc, but remains under the by-laws of EFC. The board has a youth representative, and the members of staff are young.

#### 7.2.2.2 *CARE INTERNATIONAL*

The organisation CARE International has three different programmes targeting young people in Cambodia. In their “Youth Development Programme” around 300 teenagers per year are receiving functional literacy training combined with life skills, reproductive health education and vocational training. The project stress the importance of not only learning how to read and write, but also to articulate opinions and needs. Youth committees are working to cultivate young leaders. In the “Garment Factory Worker Project”, training in life skills and reproductive health/family planning are carried out in the factories. Health care service is also provided to the target group, which is young workers, 15-25 years of age.

Vulnerable children and youths (0-25 years old) are provided with life skills and vocational training in the “Community Caring and Prevention Project”. CARE trains peer educators and provides counselling services. Included in the project are also youth club activities and therapeutic plays with youths who have gone through similar difficult experiences.

#### 7.2.2.3 *SAVE THE CHILDREN (SC)*

There are four different Save the Children organisations in Cambodia<sup>35</sup>, plus the SC alliance. Even if the prime focus for these organisations is children, most of them have programmes also targeting teenagers. Save the Children Australia runs a project in Kampong Cham in cooperation with Mith Samlanh/Friends called the Youth Reproductive Health Project. It involves running a drop-in centre for youth - both children and teens - targeting street kids and kids from very poor families. The youth centres provide the opportunity of games and studies, with education on HIV, nutrition, hygiene, affects of drugs and general and sexual health. Included in the YRH project is outreach with peer teams travelling to the villages to conduct education using videos, interactive games, competitions etc to youths and their families.

Save the Children UK also runs a reproductive health project targeting youth living in slum areas of Phnom Penh and Kratie and Prey Veng provinces. The project is carried out by local NGOs. Teams totalling 60 peer educators teach other young people about reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and STD transmission. Life skill training is included in order to enable the youths to make responsible reproductive health decisions. SC UK involves monks in the programme. Due to the influential role of the pagodas, the support from the monks have helped the youths to be respected in their communities.

#### 7.2.2.4 *YOUTH WITH A MISSION (YWAM)*

Operating in the country since the 1960s, the Christian organisation Youth with a Mission works in the province Stung Treng, mainly with primary health education. Despite the name, YWAM does not focus primarily on youth. However, the organisation has an AIDS prevention programme for youth, including education in anatomy, sexuality and relationships, and plans for the future to set up a peer educator program on HIV/AIDS. A Leisure Activity Programme provides activities for young people as alternatives to high-risk behaviour.

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<sup>35</sup> Save the Children Norway, UK, Australia and France



### **7.3 NETWORKS AND COOPERATION**

It is obvious that there is a need for meeting and exchanging ideas between different groups working on related issues. In Cambodia, there has always been informal links between many of the organisations – in some cases organisations started out as working groups within other NGOs, in others, one organisation's president is a representative of another organisation's board etc. Today, also a number of youth networks and networks for youth related issues exist. In addition to this, there are of course many examples of cooperation around specific seminars or activities. For example, a number of the student organisations combined for a mutual arrangement on a so-called Global Youth Service Day in 2002. For further information regarding the members of some of the different networks, see annex 4.

#### **7.3.1 NETWORKS CREATED BY YOUTH ORGANISATIONS**

Until recently, there have not been any formalised network structures for youth groups in Cambodia. During the last months, however, two new network organisations have been formed by two separate groups of associations. The networks are positive expressions of a realisation of the need to work together, to formulate common strategies and to advocate for youth participation. At the same time, the aims of the networks are very broad and not so clear. There is a risk that the two networks will make up just two new organisations with activities in a wide range of sectors. They are still too young to evaluate, but it seems reasonable to believe that if the members manage to define what the role and added value of cooperative bodies are, these groups have great potential.

##### *7.3.1.1 YOUTH COUNCIL OF CAMBODIA (YCC)*

With the aim of acknowledging youths' potential and value, seven student associations formed the Youth Council of Cambodia in December 2001. Four basic principles were decided: Participation and cooperation; Democracy and development; Peace; and Transparency. IRI, the International Republican Institute, have been encouraging several of these student-based organisations to cooperate to create a stronger student force in the Cambodian society. The vision of the YCC is an open acknowledgement and participation of youth in Cambodia. The board members have a three-year mandate and the hope for the future is that provincial branches will be established. Apart for youth organisations, also young individuals (under the age of 35) and monks can become members of YCC.

##### *7.3.1.2 CAMBODIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH ASSEMBLY (CCYA)*

In February 2002, eleven youth groups and organisations formed The Cambodian Children and Youth Assembly. The initiating organisation is Children's Committee (CC). Apart from CC and Youth for Peace, the member groups are young, all of them founded within the last year or two. CCYA wants to increase cooperation between children and young people; they meet twice per month and want to work with advocacy about health, education and human rights in the Cambodian society.

#### **7.3.2 NETWORKS WITHIN OR CONNECTED TO ORGANISATIONS**

There are also a number of organisations that have networks of youth organisations or groups connected to them. These networks are not strictly formalised.

##### *7.3.2.1 YOUTH RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (YRDP)*

YRDP has been mentioned previously, as one of the major Cambodian NGOs targeting youths with non-formal training programmes. Despite that the board and the new management want to prioritise their resources and focus more exclusively on the training and less on the youth initiatives, there are a number of clubs that have been started the last years by students from the programmes. These clubs, today totalling eight in number, are very active in cooperation with other organisations and amongst themselves. The clubs are not fully independent organisations, but can be seen as parts of YRDP. However, they all have elected boards and today work quite independently from the mother organisation. In other networks (such as the Cambodian Children and Youth Assembly, where they make up the majority of the members) they do not represent YRDP, but their own clubs.

### 7.3.2.2 THE IRI NETWORK

The International Republican Institute (IRI) has links to the US Republican Party. IRI supports the political opposition in Cambodia and state that they would like to see an aggressive student movement in Cambodia. They gather student representatives from six different students' organisations on a regular basis, in a consultative forum for sharing of experiences and discussions. The six student organisations can also nominate participants to the IRI Advanced Democracy Education Seminar for Students. In this training course, students meet 13 times to discuss themes such as Students and Democracy, the Rule of Law and Buddhism and Democracy. The course encourages debate among the students that are trained in presenting their arguments. Apart from this, IRI works with five of the student organisations to arrange an annual essay and art competition on high schools and universities on "The Role of Youth in Promoting Democracy in Cambodia".

### 7.3.2.3 CAMBODIAN MEN'S NETWORK (CMN) – THE YOUTH GROUP

The Cambodian Men's Network is connected to the organisation Gender and Development (GAD). The network was founded to stop violence against women and now has nearly 1 000 members all over the country. Within this network, there is also a special focus on youth, including both young men and young women. Representatives from different youth organisations and student groups meet every month for lectures and discussions on gender related issues. The group has also arranged rallies and marches on gender awareness. Additionally, CMN provides trainings to students at the universities.

Separated from the youth network is a newly founded young-female study group, involving 14 young females. The aim of this group is to encourage the next generation of Cambodian women to take on leadership roles and advocate for women's rights. Interested young female have been selected to form a core group with the objectives to analyse gender relations and the impact of social and economic laws on women, and to cooperate with other groups in advocacy towards the government.

## 7.3.3 NETWORKS FOR CHILD RIGHTS

There are two main networks focusing on the situation for and well being of children and the protection of children's rights in Cambodia. Apart from these there are also more specialised networks such as Disability Action Council (DAC) a network for NGOs working with people with disabilities, partly addressing the situation for disabled children.<sup>36</sup>

### 7.3.3.1 NGO-COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (NGO-CRC)

NGO-CRC was formed in 1994. Starting out with nine member organisations, the Committee today consists of 33 NGOs. The main purpose of the network is to promote, advocate and monitor Cambodia's implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. NGO-CRC also cooperates with a network of child rights organisations in Battambang. In 2001, the network produced its first four-year plan. Amongst the activities are workshops (for example with government representatives or for media workers), public awareness events and production of education materials. The youth associations Children's Committee and Child Assistance for Mobilization and Participation are members of NGO-CRC.

### 7.3.3.2 CHILD WELFARE GROUP (CWG)

The Child Welfare Group is another network that meets monthly for information sharing on child welfare issues. It is connected to the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), an umbrella organisation for around 90 NGOs. The CWG network works as an open forum and the organisations are divided into various sub-groups, for example the Street Children Task Group consisting of organisations working with street kids. The Child Welfare group has also produced a directory of child welfare organisations, the National Inventory of Childhood and Youth Resources in Cambodia.

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<sup>36</sup> Other networks more specialised on certain issues not mentioned here include Drug Abuse Forum (DAF), HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee (HACC), Educational NGOs working in Cambodia (EDUCAM) and Medical NGOs working in Cambodia (MEDICAM).

# 8

## CONCLUSIONS

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What are the reasons for supporting youth groups in Cambodia? An expression commonly used is that youths are the future of any country. This is obviously true, but it is likewise true that young people are the present, living in today's society with needs to be considered and experiences to share.

Very often youth are described in terms of problems with reference to youth criminality, youth and drug abuse, youth and HIV/AIDS etc. Also in this report, many of these areas have been mentioned. It is no doubt that several risks and challenges are facing the young generation in today's Cambodia and that youth make up a highly exposed and in many ways vulnerable group. Additionally, it is evident that many lack support from adults, with absent parents and teachers occupied with trying to find extra incomes to top up their low salaries.

It is obviously very important to realise and tackle these problem, but at the same time not to lose the perspective of viewing youth as a resource. The young people in Cambodia are better educated than previous generations. They make up the majority of the population and are born and/or have grown up after the Khmer Rouge years. With the opening up of the Cambodian society, external influences and the incipient access to new means of communicating and receiving information, new perspectives and ideas are brought to the young generation. In general, Cambodian youth show openness to new approaches and methods, and a willingness to change things in their society. As in any country, radical ideas are often found among the youth. Strengthening young people, providing alternatives and supporting youth initiatives are therefore of vital importance.

This study shows that there is a fairly vast number of youth initiated NGOs in Cambodia, with a strong concentration to Phnom Penh. Most of these organisations stem from ambitions to make an impact on the society and to work for Cambodia's future; ideas and initiatives lead to the creation of new organisations. With a few exceptions, however, they are not very strong organisations. Most of them naturally have a limited experience and knowledge of basic organisational structures. Very few have defined the responsibilities of the board and the role of the members. They lack long-term visions and a clear focus for their activities. Some of the organisations even lack activities, due to internal problems, no funding or the absence of strategies. At the same time, some of the bigger youth associations tend to take on too much and start up new activities without questioning whether and how they fit in with the overall strategies and other activities. These weaknesses are not in any way unique to the youth movement, but are challenges facing the majority of the Cambodian NGOs. Being new organisations, it however becomes very obvious with these groups.

Positive features of many of the youth organisations is the high motivation of those who are active, that they present alternatives to the lacking youth centres, and that they are eager to uphold formal democratic structures. Referring to earlier discussions on what definition of democracy is being used, it is still very positive to see that some of the youth organisations played such an important part in recruiting and training observers for the communal elections in 2002. On the whole, the absolute majority of those who volunteered as observers during the elections were young, an expression of interest in and commitment to the democratic process in Cambodia among the young generation.

Generally speaking, youth has been a somewhat forgotten group in development support to Cambodia. There are impressive programmes for youth reproductive health, and quite a number of initiatives focusing on vocational training, but in most other sectors, youth have received little support. This is also obvious when it comes to strategies and policies. The Cambodian government does not have a multi-sectoral policy on youth, and the same could be said for the major donor agencies active in Cambodia. The acknowledgement of youth as a specific group, partly overlapping with and partly distinguished from the groups children and adults, would probably be a necessary first step to strengthen young citizens.

In supporting the young generation of Cambodia, the importance of education cannot be emphasized enough. The low level of education and literacy affects all sectors of the Cambodian society. Equally important are strategies to achieve access to education for all, with a special focus on girls and young women, and efforts to improve the quality of education.

There are numerous of other areas where initiatives targeting young people are necessary. Among these are programmes addressing reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, trafficking and sexual exploitation of youth, drug abuse, domestic violence, juvenile justice and child and youth rights. Important features of any such programmes are youth involvement and peer education. Apart from programmes targeting certain areas or problems, there are also other measures that could be taken in order to support youth initiatives and youth-to-youth activity. These include:

- **Supporting youths' organisations.** As mentioned earlier, a number of the youth-initiated Cambodian organisations show weaknesses in structure and strategies. Support of these groups should focus on capacity building and strengthening of the organisations. Training in and discussions on basic organisational principles, formulation of by-laws, writing proposals, defining role and responsibility of the board, using democratic methods etc would be likely to benefit several of the groups. This kind of support is almost non-existent among these groups today.

Training for trainers, enabling access to advisors and encouraging networking and cooperation could be components in such support. Supporting the incipient youth policy advocacy work would be important considering the weak policies and strategies for youth. Sharing of experiences and knowledge with other youth groups could be achieved through enabling international contacts and youth exchanges.

- **Supporting youth initiated activities.** Part of a learning process is always to be able to explore and try own ideas. One way of encouraging youth initiatives and creativity would be to set up a fund for small projects that combine the possibility to apply for smaller grants with trainings in project planning and management. Aspects to stress and support are long-term visions, clear focus and self-sustainability. Since most youth organisations are located in Phnom Penh, a special emphasis should be given to youth initiatives in the provinces. Also, supporting the student based organisations in Phnom Penh to set up provincial offices and carry out projects in the communities would be one way of ensuring youth-to-youth activity outside the capital.

- **Creating alternatives for young people.** Lastly, in order to encourage youth initiatives, meeting places for young people need to be created. Furthermore, the lack of positive alternatives leaves many young Cambodians as easy targets for gangs, drug pushers etc. There are some NGO initiatives like this, especially included in youth reproductive health programmes, but they reach only a very limited part of the target group. Experience from existing projects indicate however that there is a great need for youth centres with the possibilities to study, play game, take part in trainings, create youth clubs etc. Such centres could also provide counselling, on issues related to family, work, reproductive health, love and relations etc.

The above suggestions result from discussions with young people, youth organisations and people working with youth. Obviously, further surveys and assessments of needs have to be carried out before initiating any projects. It is also important to keep in mind that the openness that many young people possess may have another side to it. With openness comes the risk that new ideas are adopted without critical analysis. Strengthening of youth capacity must have youths' own interests and ideas as the starting-point

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Abbr.</b>	<b>Founded</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Cambodia Islamic Youth Association	CIYA	1999	Education Religion Commune support Gender	Peace education Islamic education Support to young muslim women Wants to open training centre for islamic youth	Mr Abupakar Mohammed Sales (president), 012-865 602, abupakar@yahoo.com
Cambodian Youth Development (YRDP-club)	CYD	2001	Active Non-Violence Peace Meditation Living in Value	Camping Workshops/trainings Open Forum	Mr. Chin Mardi (chairman), 012-989 833
Child Assistance for Mobilization and Participation	CAMP	2000	Child Rights Child and Youth participation	Advocacy Information, booklet Workshops	Ms Sen Jeunsafy (president), 011-977 404 campyouth@yahoo.com
Childrens' Committee	CC	1995	Child Rights	Awareness raising Advocacy National Conference TV Quiz/sports, tape, song book, song contest, film Workshop Study tour	Mr Em Chanmakara (chairperson), 023-218 894, 012-823 848 child.committee@forum.org.kh love_makara@mobitel.com.kh
Culture and Environment Preservation Association	CEPA	1996	Environment Community Based Management	Environment Activist Training Advocacy Workshops	Mr Tep Bunnarith (executive director), 023-369 179, 012-895 624, cepa@forum.org.kh
Democratic Front of Khmer Students Intellectuals (From IRI, kolla med Darom)	DFKSI	2000	Democracy	Demonstrations (on boarder issues, pro-good-governance, anti-corruption etc) Wants to form a political party	Mr Mao Moeung Yat (president), 012-889 200
Environmental Beauty (YRDP-club)	EB	2001	Environment	Workshops Cleaning campaign National & World Environment Day	Mr Cheang Sovannrath (chairman), 016-941 680, eb_group@hotmail.com
FUNCINPEC Youth		1994/95	Political Youth Wing	Ideological training Democracy and management training Community service	H.E. Nhep Bunchin (president) 012-819 679, nhep@camnet.com.kh

Girl Guides Association of Cambodia	GGAC	1996	Scouting	Outdoor activities Camping Education for girls	Mrs Toung Naren (executive director), 023-881 674, 012-789 598 Mrs Maeng Ho (president) ggac@bigpond.com.kh
Khmer Democratic Youth Association	KDYA	1994	Democracy	Little or no activities. Small workshops	Mr Mom Sithol (president), 012-984 683
Khmer Heritage Association	KHA				Mr Neak Youthea (president) 012-889 707
Khmer Students and Intellectuals Association	KSIA	1992	Education Primary school support	Training Haircuts, lunch delivery, story telling	Mr It Sann (president), 023-364 631, 012-883 622, ksia@forum.org.kh
Khmer Students Association	KSA	1992	Human Resource Development Human Rights and Democracy	Training courses in computer, accounting and English Workshop on democracy	Mr Him Monypheak (president), 012-887 515
Khmer Youth and Social Development (YRDP-club)	KYSD	2001	Health – Hiv/Aids Environmnet	Information Excursion	Mr. Chhuon Borith (chairman), 011-970 868
Khmer Youth Association	KYA	1992	Human Rights Women in politics Youth Policy Vocational training	Khmer literacy training for young prisoners Training to encourage young women's political participation Computer training Roundtable discussions on youth policy Monitoring Newsletter Youth Camp Youth Exchange	Mr Yong Kim Eng (president), 016-828 211, 023-884 306 kya@forum.org.kh
Khmer Youth Committee for Culture	KYCC	2001?	Culture	Projects with art and theatre Teaching games in the province	Mr Sambath Bonnary, 011-858 532
Khmer Youth League for Democracy Development Association	KYLDA	1998	Human Rights and Democracy Support of poor students	Plans to build dormitory for poor students	Mr Dagn Sophy, 012-829 148
Neakvan Pagoda Student Association (similar students' associations at several pagodas)	NPSA	1997	Education Environment Democracy	Language training Lectures Community activities like garbage collections	Mr Run To (president)

Organization of Khmer Vision	OKV	1998	Health Education		Mr Kim Nymarind (president), 012-841 159
Scouts Association of Cambodia	SAC	2000	Scouting	Camping Community service AIDS awareness raising activities	H.E. Sok An H.E. Im Sethy Phan Sokim (deputy secretary general), 023-213 751, 011-978 485 012895909@mobitel.com.kh
Socio-Economic Research and Resource Center for Development	SERRC	1999	Research	Training in: - Research methodology - Small enterprise, marketing, computer, accounting - English language	Mr Rien Som Rithy (director),
Student Executive Committee (YRDP-club)	SEC	2001	Weapon Reduction Youth in Politics	Awareness raising	
Student Movement For Democracy	SMD	1998	Human Rights and Democracy Cambodian Integrity Border Area Support	Training Distribution of food and seeds at the border Manifestation and demonstration	Mr Om Sam Aan (president), 012-875 353
The Cambodian Scouts	CS	1999	Scouting	Camping Orientation Training in scout techniques, dance, languages Community service	H.E. Lu Laysreng
United Nations Youth Federation	UNYF				Mr Bou Hoc (president), 012-844 945
United Neutral Khmer Students	UNKS	1993	Health Culture	Peer-education on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS	Mr Near Serei Rothanak (director), 012-891 827
Volunteer Youth Congress for Democracy (NGO directory, mailade)	VYCD	1998	Human Rights and Democracy Vocational training	Secretary training	Mr Ngek Sovannara (director), 011-872 548, 011-871 388 vycd@hotmail.com
Women Peace Makers (YRDP-club)	WPM	2001	Active Non-Violence Love and Family Gender	Workshops	Mr. Luy Sovann (chairman), 016-896 475
Youth and Action Association	YAA				Mao Kolbot (vice president) 015-834 334
Youth and Children for Peace (YRDP-club)	YCP		Peace	Education & Training Awareness raising	Mr. Serey Vuth (chairman), 011- 924 796

Youth Association of Cambodia /“CPP Youth”	YAC	1978	Vocational training (Political Youth Wing)	Computer training Courses in animal breeding Job search training Ideological education	Mr Men Kuon (president), 016-817 974, 023-213 976 yac@camnet.com.kh
Youth for Peace	YfP	1999	Peace Non-Violence Self Development Anti-racism	Peace Education (workshops + practice) Leadership Education (training for trainers) International Youth Camp Mediation Trips Public Education Days	Mr Outh Renne (director), 023-881 346, 012-825 120, youthforpeace@bigpond.com.kh
Youth National Rehabilitation	YNR	2001?	Education	Teaching English and Khmer	Mr Kon Sovity, 012-736 166
Youth Peace Council (YRDP-club)	YoPeC	2002	Youth capacity Love and Marriage Conflict Resolution Active Non-violence Human Rights Democracy Gender	Capacity building Social morality awareness raising	Mr. Chhuon Borith (chairman), 011-970 868
Youth Voluntary Association for Development	YVAD	1997	Poverty Alleviation Democracy Development Prosperity (like in the Angkor era)		Mr Seng Sokhom (director), 012-829 872



<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Abbr.</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Programmes/Projects/ Description of Activities</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cambodian Children Against Starvation and Violence Association	CCASV A	Reproductive health	1. Awareness raising and prevention of HIV/AIDS/STDs amongst youths (15-25 years) in the communities. 2. Education and care for street children up to age 18.	1. Prey Veng 2. Phnom Penh
Cambodian Health Education Development	CHED	Reproductive health	1. Working with youths (12 – 24 years) in focusing on sexual and reproductive health through radio broadcasting and life skill training. 2. Project “Sewing a Healthy Future”: reproductive and sexual health work with young garment factories workers in 5 factories.	1. Battambang 2. Phnom Penh
Centre d’Etude et de Developpement Agricole Cambodgien	CEDAC	Education/ Professional Training Agriculture	Apprenticeship programme for students and young graduates, mainly with agricultural background. Pilot rural education programme for young farmers to help the future generation of farmers to be better than the previous.	1. Phnom Penh 2. Prey Veng
Gender and Development of Cambodia/Cambodian Men’s Network	GAD/C MN	Gender	Monthly meetings with lectures and discussions on gender issues for students and youth organisation members Young-female study group on gender Arranging of rallies and marches	Phnom Penh
Indradevi Association	IDA	Reproductive health	1. HIV/AIDS/STD awareness raising and prevention among out of school youth. Peer education training in the communities. 2. STI clinics in squatter areas partly targeting youths.	1. Kandal 2. Phnom Penh
Leadership and Character Development Institute	L-CDI	Training/education	Training centres with programmes for disadvantaged youth including life skills, personal development, ethics and values, vocational training and practical application through teaching at the centres and through internships	Phnom Penh + 13 provinces
Mith Samlanh/Friends		Vocational training HIV/AIDS Drug prevention	A comprehensive programme for street kids including outreach, boarding, research and awareness raising on HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and child rights, family reunification. Skills training centre with 11 vocational training programmes	Phnom Penh
Poor Teenager Assistance Organization	PTAO	Vocational training	Vocational and English training to poor teenagers (and orphans, widows, street children etc)	Kandal
Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia	RHAC	Reproductive health	1. Adolescent Reproductive Health Programme: information, referral services and counselling to youths (12-25 years). Peer-group education and quiz shows. Youth centres/clinics. 2. Reaching Indirect Sex Workers Programme: information and peer-education on HIV/AIDS to beer girls, karaoke girls, masseuses etc (majority being adolescents)	1. Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Takeo

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Abbr.</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Programmes/Projects/ Description of Activities</b>	<b>Location</b>
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	ADRA	Health	Project: “Youth choosing health” - awareness raising among young people of the danger of tobacco	Phnom Penh
CARE International in Cambodia	CARE	Education Health	1. Youth development initiative: functional literacy, life skills + reproductive health training. Cultivating young leaders (13-18 years) 2. Garment Factory Worker Project: Life skill training in the factories for young workers (15-25 years), including reproductive health and family planning 3. Community Caring and Prevention Project: Life skills and vocational training for vulnerable teenagers and kids (0-25 years). Youth club activities. Peer-to-peer support	1. Koh Kong, Ratanakiri, Kompong Chhnang 2. Phnom Penh 3. Koh Kong, Banteay Meanchey
Caritas Cambodia	Caritas	Vocational training Youth development	Training programmes for youths from poor families and school drop outs (18-25 years). Vocational training combined with value education. Support of youth club.	Boeung Tumpun, Phnom Penh
Cambodian Children’s Fund of Great Britain	CCFGB	Community support Vocational training Non-formal education Formal school integration	1. Special Youth Project (SYP): enabling out-of-school youths to have access to education and skills 2. Community Supporting Youth Programme (CSYP): promote cooperation between local authorities and youth programmes, strengthen youths to work with their communities, supporting creation of self-help youth groups	1. Phnom Penh, Kandal 2. Prey Veng
Don Bosco Federation of Cambodia	DBFC	Vocational training	Vocational school for teenage girls with sewing and secretarial courses. Technical school with courses in mechanics, welding, electricity etc	
Enfants du Mékong	EdM	Vocational training Education	1. Young people centers for teenagers 2. Student centers to prepare for college students	1. Banteay Meanchey 2. Phnom Penh
International Republican Institute	IRI	Democracy Student group support Training	Network of six student associations “IRI Advanced Democracy Education Seminar for Students” – training course for organised students Annual Democracy and Art competition: “The Role of Youth in Promoting Democracy in Cambodia”	Phnom Penh
Maryknoll Cambodia		Health - HIV/AIDS Student support	“Seedling of Hope”: work with young people with HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS education Youth self-awareness and confidence-building programs	Phnom Penh
Mennonite Central Committee	MCC	Partnership Youth support	Volunteers working with for example Youth for Peace, EFC Youth Commission and at Royal University of Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh (EFC work in many provinces)

Pharmaciens sans Frontiers	PSF	Reproductive health	“Reproductive Health Program for Vulnerable Children and Youth” – health education, life skills and basic health care to e.g adolescents (in cooperation with Mith Samlanh/Operation Enfants de Battambang)	Phnom Penh, Battambang
Population Services International	PSI	Reproductive health Marketing of contraceptives	Social marketing of condoms, provincial promotional events Behaviour change through media: health radio drama, call.in shows, advice column in popular magazine, puppet theatre Research	Nationwide
Pour un Sourire d’Enfants	PSE	Vocational training	Vocational training for youths working on Stung Mean Chey rubbish dump – secretarial work, hotel business and beauty industry	Phnom Penh
Save the Children Australia	SCA	Reproductive health	“Youth Reproductive Health Project” in cooperation with Mith Samlanh/Friends. Drop-in centre for youth (children and teens). With reproductive health education and games. Outreach peer education to village youths and their families in.	Kampong Cham
Save the Children UK	SC UK	Reproductive health	“Youth Reproductive Health Programme” in cooperation with local NGOs. Peer-education on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS + life skills	Phnom Penh Kratie Prey Veng
Services for the Health in Asian and African Regions	SHARE	Health – HIV/AIDS	Awareness raising among youths on HIV/AIDS	Kompong Cham
Shanti Volunteer Association	SVA	Vocational training	Skills training for high school students: printing, carpentry, sewing, embroidery, electronics etc	Phnom Penh
Wathnapheap		Education Vocational training	Literacy education Vocational training and access to labour markets for disadvantaged youth	Pursat
World Education – Cambodia	WE/C	Education Health – HIV/AIDS	“HIV/AIDS Education for Youth Project” to reduce high-risk behaviour and transmission of HIV among young Cambodians	
World Vision Cambodia	WVC	Reproductive health	1. Strategic AIDS Reduction along Highway # 1 and 4 2. Project to change high risk of AIDS causative behaviour among young adults	1. Kandal & Kompong Speu 2. Phnom Penh

## ANNEX 4: NETWORKS

### **Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC)**

#### **MEMBERS:**

Culture and Environment Protection Association (CEPA)  
Development for Democratic Culture (DDC) – [YRDP]  
Khmer Democratic Youth Association (KDYA)  
Khmer Students Association (KSA)  
Khmer Youth Association (KYA)  
Student Movement for Democracy (SMD)  
United Neutral Khmer Students (UNKS)

#### **CONTACT:**

Mr Yong Kim Eng (president)  
Khmer Youth Association  
023-884 306  
016-828 211  
[kya@forum.org.kh](mailto:kya@forum.org.kh)

### **Cambodian Children and Youth Assembly (CCYA)**

#### **MEMBERS:**

Cambodian Youth Development (CYD) – [YRDP]  
Child Assistance for Mobilization and Participation (CAMP)  
Children’s Committee (CC)  
Development for Democratic Culture (DDC) – [YRDP]  
Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD) – [YRDP]  
Khmer Youth Committee for Culture (KYCC)  
Rotaract  
Student Executive Committee (SEC) – [YRDP]  
Women Peace Makers (YPM) – [YRDP]  
Youth National Rehabilitation (YNR)  
Youth for Peace (YFP)

#### **CONTACT:**

Mr Em Chanmakara (president)  
Children’s Committee  
023-218 894  
012-823 848  
[child.committee@forum.org.kh](mailto:child.committee@forum.org.kh)

### **Clubs of Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP)**

**MEMBERS:**

Cambodian Youth Development (CYD)  
Development for Democratic Culture (DDC)  
Environmental Beauty (EB)  
Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD)  
Student Executive Committee (SEC)  
Women Peace Makers (YPM)  
Youth and Children for Peace (YCP)  
Youth Peace Council (YoPeC)

**CONTACT:**

Mr Chim Charanay  
Youth Resource Development Program  
023-880 194  
012-934 390  
yrdp@forum.org.kh

### **Network of International Republican Institute (IRI)**

**MEMBERS:**

Democratic Front of Khmer Students and Intellectuals (DFKSI)  
Khmer Democratic Youth Association (KDYA)  
Khmer Students Association (KSA)  
Khmer Youth Association (KYA)  
Student Movement for Democracy (SMD)  
United Neutral Khmer Students (UNKS)

**CONTACT:**

Mr Yin Ben Darom  
International Republican Institute  
012-841 900

## ANNEX 5: POPULATION BY AGE

### Age distribution of population in Cambodia 1998

Age	Percentage of population	Age	Percentage of population
0-4	12,8	0-4	12,8
5-9	15,5	0-9	28,3
10-14	14,5	0-14	42,8
15-19	11,8	0-19	54,6
20-24	6,5	0-24	61,1
25-29	7,8	0-29	68,9

*Source: General Population Census of Cambodia 1998.*

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