

**CANADA FUND FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES - CAMBODIA
STRATEGY PAPER
FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (Canada Fund) - Cambodia is a CIDA-funded program, currently administered from the Canadian Cooperation Office in Phnom Penh. The overall goal of the Canada Fund is to assist with the economic and social development of communities. This is to be achieved by financing small projects involving technical, economic, educational, and/or social development assistance to the local population. Canada restored Official Development Assistance program eligibility for Cambodia in March 1990. Since then, Canada has provided support in rural livelihoods, governance, humanitarian assistance and basic human needs through a variety of mechanisms, primarily bilateral, multilateral and regional programs.

Cambodian Context

After years of immense suffering and virtual isolation from the international community during the period of civil war, genocide and occupation, Cambodia today faces many significant challenges. As a low-income country with 35 percent of its population living on less than \$0.45/day (World Bank: 2004), the population in Cambodia suffers from widespread poverty, particularly in rural areas. There is a critical shortage of trained professionals and technical personnel, extremely limited capital, and very weak governance mechanisms. Despite this reality, the country is developing a market economy, post-conflict rehabilitation, political and economic stability.

The most vulnerable of the poor are women, children and indigenous populations. Cambodia was traditionally a matrilineal society where land ownership was passed down through the women's family and women had significant economic decision making at the household level. While men had a higher status in the public sphere, women were able to exercise significant autonomy and independence. Today, women continue to have a significant role in the management of household finances especially when they are able to contribute to the family income. Although the Constitution of Cambodia prohibits discrimination against women, the rights of women and children in Cambodia are often neglected and many women and children suffer from various forms of abuse. Many indigenous populations, particularly in the northeast, are struggling to maintain their rights to their land as economic land concessions, hydro power plans and resource extraction industries are competing for the land resources of many indigenous communities.

According to local media, Amnesty International and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, reported incidences of violence towards women and children in Cambodia are widespread and increasing. The reasons for this violence are complex. They may include: the history of violence experiences by many citizens; abuse of alcohol and drugs; mental health problems; the lack of support systems, counseling services and protective services; lack of community cohesion; lack of social stigma or punitive consequences, lack of public awareness; women's lack of economic alternatives to prostitution or human trafficking; and access to pornography by all age groups. The National Action Plan to Prevent Violence on Women 2009-2012 provides a number of areas where civil society can protect women's human rights and support the Cambodian Millennium

Development Goal #3 eighth target “reducing all forms of violence against women and children”.

Land tenure security for indigenous people can now be pursued through a legal mechanism of registration for indigenous communities followed by community land registration. The resources for these procedures are, however, limited.

There are a number of civil society organizations in Cambodia who are working on programs to address the socio-economic and political rights of women, children and indigenous communities. The capacity of these organizations to work effectively in addressing these problems often needs to be strengthened. Support is also needed to build the capacity of women to engage more in leadership roles and to maintain the space for civil society to continue to engage in this type of programming.

CIDA in Cambodia

Canada’s current bilateral development program focuses on supporting sustainable economic growth and food security through expanded economic opportunities and improved land management for rural poor in Cambodia. CIDA programming targets strengthened rural land management and administration, mine action and improved agricultural value-chain services in selected provinces in Cambodia.

2.0 SCOPE OF CANADA FUND 2010 - 2011

The Canada Fund is funded by CIDA on a yearly basis. The planned allocation to Cambodia for 2010/2011 Fiscal Year is C\$125,000. Of this amount, 15% is earmarked for administration. This leaves C\$105,000 available for projects. The availability of fund, will enable the Canada Fund to finance at least 4-5 small projects in the fiscal year, which will end in March 31, 2011.

To complement Canada’s bilateral programming in Cambodia, the primary objective of the Canada Fund for fiscal year 2010 -2011 is to promote and protect the rights of women, children and indigenous peoples. The **purpose** is to encourage the participation of civil society in the promotion and protection of these human rights.

Although stable, the political environment remains tense. Much depends on the willingness of the key actors to move away from the politics of confrontation to more constructive and participatory debates on social and economic issues. For the Government, this entails recognizing political dissent and commentary as essential parts of the democratic process, and hence an opportunity rather than a threat. For civil society, it means finding ways to be constructively engaged with Government to find pragmatic and lasting means of resolving issues rather than simply advocating for change.

3.0 OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

The Canada Fund is a responsive mechanism that will support activities aimed at addressing specific issues related to human rights of women, children and indigenous peoples. The Fund's activities will be conducted through activities initiated primarily by target organizations at both the national and local levels. Areas of intervention will concentrate on non-partisan and technical

issues. Preference will be given to proposals which are able to provide positive and measurable results. Proposals will be reviewed to assess their strategy for addressing issues in ways that are constructive, able to garner political support and likely to be more effective. Specific proposals of the Canada Fund for this fiscal year could include:

Women's and Children's Rights

- Strengthened women's and girls' rights as well as fostering greater support for these rights by men and boys
- Greater involvement of women's groups and institutions in policy development and the decision-making process at local, regional or national levels
- Implementation of strategies and programs that address violence against women and children
- Improved access to training in the concepts and techniques of peaceful and equitable conflict resolution
- Prevention in the trafficking of women and children
- Support for the protection of children's rights, including street children and children involved in sex trade
- Provision of economic alternatives to women to make them less vulnerable to abuse.

Indigenous Land Rights

- Greater understanding and recognition of land rights of indigenous people
- Registration of indigenous communities.
- Strengthened capacity in conflict resolution

Expected Results

Increased knowledge and skills of civil society organization to support communities and achieve results

Reduced incidents of abuse, threats, harassment, and domestic violence within target communities.

Increased ability and confidence of local people in resolving conflicts

Enhanced application of land rights of indigenous communities