

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Cambodia Research Group

Workshop “Cooperation for Peace and Prosperity in Cambodia”

16-18 Augustus 2007, Phnom Penh
Pannasastra University Cambodia (PUC), South Campus

Please find List of Participants attached.

Organized by the Cambodia Research Group. Groupmembers:

Prof. Heidi Dahles (Vrije University Amsterdam)
Prof. Gerd Junne (University of Amsterdam)
Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti (RCSD, Chiang Mai University)
John ter Horst M.A.(Vrije University Amsterdam)
Gea Wijers M.A. (Vrije University Amsterdam)
Willemijn Verkoren, M.A. (University of Amsterdam)

Programme

Thursday, August 16

- Introduction of the project
- Presentation 1: “Capacity building for Peace and Development”, Prof. Gerd Junne
- Presentation 2: “Cooperation for Peace and Development: working on Social Capital, Gea Wijers M.A.
- Presentation 3: “The role of Global Diaspora Groups in Capacity Building”, Prof. Heidi Dahles
- Working together on an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the proposed research programme

Friday, August 17

- Presentation 5:”Development and Multi-stakeholder cooperation”, Prof. Gerd Junne
- Presentation 6:” Contributing to Peace and Prosperity in Cambodia. Academic development as a means to strengthen social capital”, Gea Wijers, M.A.
- Case study 1: “Multi-stakeholder cooperation in the Cambodian Silk-Industry”, John ter Horst M.A.
- Case study 2: “Multi-stakeholder cooperation and capacity building in Cambodia, Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti
- Discussion about relevant issues in the research on different models of modernization in Cambodia

Saturday, August 18

- Continuation of the discussion about relevant issues in the research on different models of modernization in Cambodia, as concluded in the SWOT analysis
- Exploration of ways to develop a (virtual) platform for joint capacity building
- Introduction of the short- and long-term planning for the programme
- Conclusions and farewell

All presentations, case-studies, general programme information, planning and photos of the workshop will be made available on the Cambodia Research Group-website, address to be announced in the following weeks.

Opening (Dr. Trond Gilberg)

The aims and approach of this research programme fit very well with the strategy of the PUC. This experiment with a multi-stakeholder approach could be a 'laboratory for peace' and help build the 'more just society' that this university is founded to help establish. Students now realize they are part of a bigger world. We are happy to house this workshop as it might lay the foundations for a model to work together. For the PUC it is an interesting experiment that can confirm our shared mission and vision and enable our further cooperation in the future.

Introduction (Prof. Heidi Dahles)

With many thanks to Dr. Gilberg and the kind reception of our research group at Pannasastra University we would like to introduce some thoughts on what this programme might contribute to peace and prosperity in Cambodia.

The focus of this research programme will be on cooperation between the parties involved in processes of economic development, peace-building and democratization.

The questions to be raised in the research programme, under construction, are:

- What models for development do stakeholders like International NGOs, foreign direct investors, returning Cambodian nationals and local NGOs bring along?
- What are the differences between local and foreign approaches, and between different foreign ones?
- How do organizations working for peace, development and democracy in Cambodia deal with these different perspectives and approaches?
- How can cooperation among the multiple actors – local and international, academic and practitioner – be improved?

The approach is to involve as many groups as possible who have a stake in the development of Cambodia in the initiation of research questions, in the production of relevant data and the implementation of both the research and its findings. We do not aim this research to be an 'ivory tower' activity and our goal is to provide Cambodian with practical and use-able results. This workshop is intended to provide the first step towards this joint research programme.

The workshop aims at:

1. Identifying and analyzing the contribution of international and local actors to political stability and economic growth in Cambodia;
2. Defining the needs for capacity building among Cambodian institutes of higher education and local NGOs
3. Organizing a long-term process of joint learning through exchange of experience and knowledge among all actors involved, building 'networks of knowledge'.

Analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to the proposed Research Programme.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<i>Internal</i>	
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<i>External</i>	<u>MODEL to be completed</u>

Central question:

“What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to a multi-stakeholder approach to research on different development models in Cambodia?”

	STRENGTHS		WEAKNESSES
1	Multiple / many views	1	Language barrier
2	More realistic (3)		Lack of participation and cooperation
3	Different information		Political risk (3)
4	Dissemination		Lack of human resources (experience) (3)
5	Sustainability (4)		Inhibitions of respondents to express opinions (3)
6	More access to resources		No confidence in the government
7	Credibility among participants (3)		Lack of modernization, industrialization and modern technology
8	Support networks (1)		Corruption and Nepotism
9	Strengthen communication with other countries (economics&politics)		Lack of access to information (lack of freedom of information) (2)
10	Promote democracy		Weak social and political context (1)
11	Expertises – skills, professional, experiences (2)		Difficult to define stakeholders (too broad) (1)
12	Linked with local leading professionals in the area (1)		Lack of communication (stakeholders not satisfied) (1)
	OPPORTUNITIES		THREATS
1	Free market / Freedom (1)	1	No trust from stakeholders/respondents so we cannot get accurate information and use it well (1)
2	Cooperation Universities	2	Cannot get access to some stakeholders such as company, ministries
3	Human resources and national assets	3	Political term is very sensitive for

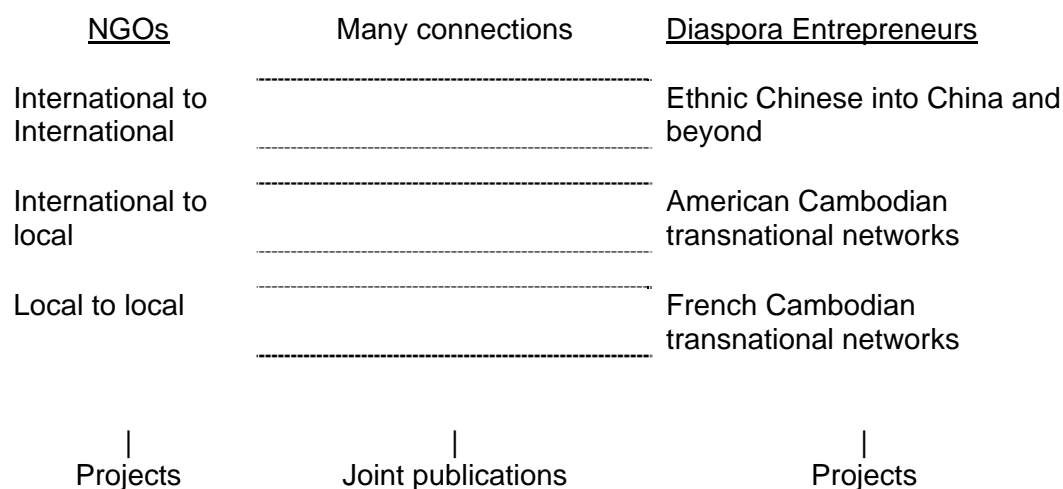
			Cambodian (1)
4	Security (to go from urban to rural) (2)	4	Lack of capacity in respondents (1)
5	Infrastructure (roads and also communication and educational)	5	Having to compete for human and other resources (3)
6	International law	6	Timeschedule and aims to ambitious
7	Foundations of NGO data previously collected on peace & development (3)	7	No trust between stakeholders
8	Look for information from NIS	8	Nepotism, not the best people participate
9	Lessons learned from leading research firms (3)	9	Continuity (2)
10	More trained capacity and volunteers available	10	Aim of programme is outdated when the results are ready for presentation
11	More internal and in-country sources	11	Unforeseen political, international circumstances (4)
12	Further strengthening of research culture in Cambodia	12	Local political situation is not stable (4)
13	Influence on policy	13	Project leader is not serious
14	Application of research findings (4)	14	(Global Warming)

Relevant issues in the research on different models of modernization in Cambodia

DIFFERENT MODELS OF MODERNIZATION

- competing/converging
- affecting development in Cambodia

Who are the agents introducing different/ competing models of modernization?



6 Phd and Postdoc projects
 Additionally> Data-collection by Dutch and Cambodian MA students
 Senior professors for integration

Tentative categorization of agents introducing models of modernization



Discussion (quotes per issue and respondent) – Part 1: Friday 17-08

1. Differences between groups

(French Diaspora member)

“China has the oldest relations to Cambodia, all Cambodians have some Chinese blood”.

“American Relations have a big impact, especially in politics. France has a more administrative link”.

“Diaspora from the States wants more to develop the country in the free market. That's how they succeed. This success they want to apply to Cambodia advocating a more market and “democracy”-oriented approach..”

“American-Cambodians now have more influence than French-Cambodians. They have a good university degree and good access. They now work for an international NGO, or have influence through the UN.”

“The French do not have the capacity to invest on the same foot as the Americans do.”

(Nina You)

“There is a difference in the times of the Diaspora. The French came first and consisted of the elite. They came back for reintegration, became very active in administrative processes and many of them are now active as politicians.”

“The US diaspora is a lot younger and many of them went to school in the US.”

“In both, there are groups who do not want to come back at all, they would only come back with the UN.”

“Consultative Group Process of the Government; they all have their own segment of development in Cambodia. There are clearly distinguishable blocks of ethnicities. So they have different influence on aid in different sectors.”

(GERD)

There is a difference in the quality of the links to Cambodia. Different diaspora groups do not only distinguish themselves by the different experience they have gone through in the host country, they also represent different groups of people coming from different strata of Cambodian society that chose different destinations for emigration, and different generations of migrants.

2. What is role of NGOs?

(Roger Henke)

“Why do we focus on NGOs? We need to look at what is really affecting development. Aid and Big Business are really decisive and not these NGOs. Your entry point is very different. Current interest is on big business from China, the last couple of years these groups investing in Cambodia are seeing it as stable enough. Most investment were in the Garment industry and that is really ‘ in-out’ money, putting it in and taking it out after production. People now believe this place is more secure and are investing in more long-term projects.

"I would be very interested to find out who actually is investing at the moment."

"Investments are always linked to a limited number of Cambodian organizations, it's all about relationships. It's only when you get to really big business that this influence on development really starts to make sense so your focus on diaspora entrepreneurs will not lead to great results."

(Chayan)

"I would like to give the example of the Lao Fisherman in Stung Treng. They are affected on a local level by the bigger trade and the international use of resources."

"There is a lot of competition between the local actors. We can put the US and China on an international scale but we also need to look at the bordercases, cross border migrations and their influence."

(Gerd)

"If you want to outline different competing forces you could forget about the NGOs. But 5 years ago it was very different. We might say that stability has changed the country. Would it be also due to this (inter)national interaction over time? Is there a shift over time? All contributions have underlined that there is a pre-selection, people are coming from different strata which has had an impact on their behaviour. Can we say there is a different level of involvement in different levels of society?"

3. Business and models of development

(Boris)

"The process of urbanization is mainly taking place through garment factories in Phnom Penh. Management systems have a big influence on people's perception of the modern world. Chinese come from the south. Their way of leading production is the first time large groups of people get acquainted with the modern world. Time-study labour, new techniques that will be reapplied in traditional parts of Cambodian society."

(Nina)

There are many things you can look at. Partnerships between Cambodian-Americans with money and Cambodians with influence. And also the young people in their 20s and 30s that have been educated in Australia and the US that have only come back recently and make a small investment. But maybe they have a big influence. Programmes like Youth Star using diaspora influence like a Peace Corps model."

(Boris)

Regional economic policies of neighbouring countries play a very big role as well (example of Kashmir industry). Japan is investing to build up credibility in the region, but still they get 80 cents return on every dollar they invest."

(French Diaspora Member)

"How can we help the country develop?"

"We are fighting with our brain. We must be investing in people. In France we all try to take care of ourselves, try and find a good job in France. But here we have to take care of each other."

Discussion (quotes per issue and respondent) – Part 2: Saturday 18-08

(Gerd)

Different diaspora groups do not only distinguish themselves by the different experience they have gone through in the host country, they also represent different groups of people that chose different destinations for emigration, and different generations of migrants.

For one thing, we can also see from the discussion yesterday that the links to China are at least threefold:

- *the century long cultural and personal ties to China, which played a crucial role in the development of the whole region;*
- *the traditional role of Chinese traders and middlemen, comparable to the role in other Southeast-Asian countries (with the Chinese involved coming first and foremost from the Southern provinces of China);*
- *the recent wave of large-scale investment (especially in the garment industry), in which Chinese from all over China participated, which introduced modern factory management. The investors are not related to the Khmer/Chinese traders and the traditional Chinese way of doing business.*

There are new groups of investors (from South Korea, Russia, Malaysia) who come with large scale investment, but are not related to the other groups.

Are there any additional thoughts that have come up with you after the discussions yesterday?

1. Role of the government

(Michael)

“After the mid-80s a lot of attention was paid to the returnees by the government, but no distinction was made by category. Does it really matter where the returnees come from? “The role of the Cambodian State has to be considered more systematically in the research.”

2. Relation between investment and remigration

(Sarah)

“Why is the research not on the migrants that are going out. Why only focus on refugees or diaspora. You should also consider migration. Cambodia is becoming one of the countries that is both generating flows of labour out migration and labour immigration. The latter is due to Taiwanese and Chinese investments creating a shortage of cheap labour. Moreover, FDI may trigger diaspora remigration because of improving employment conditions.”

(Michael)

“We can wonder how this interaction is related to modernization and democratization.”

3. Role of TNCs

(Boris)

“We have to look at economic impacts also, especially in the border regions. Thai and Vietnam impact has been enormous. What is its relationship to the state? Is the military really an additional actor?”

What/who is the State?

- Council of Ministers
- Ministries (hardly coordinated, all living in their own world)

- Military (is it homogeneous or divided into 'factions' ?)
- Municipalities (Phnom Penh – different power structure than nationwide?)
- Provinces
- Governing Parties

An analysis of the health system revealed that a lot of money budgeted for health did not reach the villages directly. Research on where the money did go (instead) in reality showed that much went into the CPP but reached the villages nevertheless, but then not as State expenditures, but as patron-client related "community contributions" by the CPP, which strengthened the patron-client relationship.

Boris referred to the CARRERE project (for UNIDO) in which the American Scott Leipner played a leading role. It was succeeded by SELA (which built up a parallel structure to State institutions at the community level) which was later integrated into the Ministry of Interior (which had other ideas, so a clash resulted). The integration of SELA into the ministry may provide a good point around which to focus part of the research, because different visions clearly clashed. SELA compiled large databanks about different projects and the organisations which carried out the projects. There were obvious differences between CPP and Funcinpec governed communities that deserve a more intensive statistical analysis. Boris is willing to send the report.

(Gerd)

Example of Philips being the biggest exporter of fish in India...

How about the natural resources? Recently oil has been found, what will be its effect in Cambodia. If anything comes up in discussions about who will be investing in this, we would like to know!! This seems now to be under control of the national control agency. Example of Chad in Cambodia daily – monitoring of oil imports. This would make an interesting example for the Cambodian situation. This Chad case suggests that foreign TNCs may be pressured to behave in a more socially responsible way

{Nobody in the group has ever heard about the Chad case}

4. Looking at the money flows

(Boris)

"If you look at the money flows. Budget of ODA is same budget as a state budget per year. Is there any role for NGOs in the future?"

"In Cambodia NGOs provide 50 per cent of the state budget. Their dominance may represent a barrier to private sector investments in the country. It is striking that the presence of many US NGOs is paralleled by lack of US private investments. China shows the opposite pattern. In the research programme the controversy should be addressed: NGOs as an impediment instead of a facilitator of modernization."

"There is enormous difficulty for Research programme to measure these things. Influence of the direction of development is hard to establish. How can we know what pushes things from one direction to another?"

(John)

“Talking about yesterday’s comments on NGOs. Roger commented to see lots of NGOs from the US but not companies. Instead of seeing these as a modernizer, we could also ask ourselves what capital they are representing.”

“There seems to be a shift in modernizing activities from international to local NGOs.”

Group discussions on the kind of issues that are relevant

Group 1

- Land conflicts: local NGOs have a role in empowering local communities where government and big companies occupy land and dislocate villagers. There is no appeal possible by villagers other than raising their voice through mediation of local NGOs. Government is working to the advantage of big business.

Group 2

- Diaspora and foreign investors are differentiated and play a diverse role in Cambodia:
 - US returnees are involved in NGOs for democracy and human rights
 - Chinese diaspora is in business
 - Koreans: investors in tourism and film industry

Group 3

- Investment and political resources
 - US-UN : main donors
 - China is both an important investor and political actor. There is a Chinese representative of the Chinese embassy present at national assembly meetings and the Chinese Wall is painted on the wall of the national Assembly. The Chinese give money to the National Assembly, but that is not talked about. Agreements are signed but people do not show their agenda.

- Korea/Japan: investors in large-scale infrastructural works
- France provides for culture, arts and history. They helped us pass the Criminal law

Group 4

- How the diaspora is working in Cambodia
 - Returnees look down upon Cambodians.
 - moreover, there is a cleavage between returnees from communist countries like Russia and Vietnam, and Western Countries. These 2 kinds of diaspora are not capable of working together. Like in the way the CPP and the Funcinpec used to be diverging they are now converging in a 3rd mandate by the government.
 - Diaspora from the communist and non-communist groups are now able to work together.

How can we do something that is really useful for specific social actors in Cambodia? Who is going to benefit from the project? Which/whose problems will be “solved” by it? A good mapping of the “power fields” would already be of some help. It is not a question of formulating concrete recommendations, but perhaps of pointing out options, based on experiences from elsewhere. The question is in how far the study of the experiences from outside Cambodia can be part of the different research (sub-) projects, - probably not. The supervisors would have to add this dimension to the research.

It would certainly not be helpful just to conclude from the analysis that “the NGOs did the wrong thing and should have concentrated on something else”. Many NGOs tried first of all to PREVENT specific things from happening (dams, specific land use....) and to protect vulnerable groups of the population, without having themselves a vision of sustainable long-term development of the country.

A starting point for the analysis would also be the Consultative Group (which falls under the Council of Ministers) and its working groups (on Natural Resources, for example, in which DANIDA plays a leading role).

Here, according to Nina, the different “blocks” can clearly be distinguished in the discussion.

Group 5

- There is more and more diaspora
Diaspora improves and refines the living conditions in Cambodia. Many returnees work in NGOs, they are also advisers to the ministers and have established companies. The Cambodian government feels threatened by returnees who are educated people – from the West – who speak out in public. The returnees are often very nationalistic, eager to rebuild Cambodia faster and frustrated with the slow pace. They want to work in a participatory approach from the bottom-up. But the government wants to work from the top-down. As the government prefers to deal with people under patron-client relations, their relation with returnees is strained. Here we find a conflict between deep-rooted political culture in Cambodia and new political ideas imported from the West.

It is like the question if you teach some-one to fish or just give them fish. The government is still giving fish, but we need to really teach people how to fish and take care of themselves.

Exploration of ways to develop a (virtual) platform for joint capacity building (Heidi)

Part of our second proposal will be a communication plan. We will ask for money to be spent on different kinds of activities to stay in touch with you.

- periodic meetings like this workshop
- a conference at the end to present the results
- conferences along the way to present first data and scientific results
- workshops with a mixed agenda: both practical and scientific
- a newsletter (that might go through the website)

But we would like to establish more involvement, would this be possible through a virtual platform?

(Bart)

First of all, there is no broadband connection to really have the quality of connections necessary for this kind of contact.

Next, it is a big challenge to make a community/forum/interactive site work, to get quality content and make people come there. Volume is very important!

An extra question is if this could every work between the West (where people are always online) and the East (where people are rarely online). Then there is the language barrier.

Suggestion of participants is to keep it very short and simple. Khmer people very much value to meet face to face and are not very good in writing things. Although 'blogging' and e-learning seem to have become more popular. Language is really a big barrier.

(Trond)

PUC could have the resources to bring all of this together.

- Member of the Global Campus, possibility to give simultaneous lectures.
- People could then virtually meet 'face-to-face'
- We have a computer lab, with some effort I could try and open that up for the group working with the Research programme at certain times

(Boris)

People get different things out of this Research programme, so it is important to give them the chance to go about it in different ways. We might get some people in and lecture through the internet, help them with doing research and give them a certificate for approval. It is important for the group to find a way to give things back to community.

Additional suggestion: "Top ten" Masterclasses for students from different universities

Creation of different educational online components on crucial aspects of the research (spreading NGO- and diaspora-related research), starting with the research results on the silk industry from John's dissertation and perhaps Willemijn's dissertation.