

# Country strategy of Forum Syd in Cambodia 2013-2018

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## List of abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ELC	Economic Land Concession
EU	European Union
NGO	Non Government Organisation
INGO	International Non Government Organisation
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
UN	United Nations

## Foreword

The Country Strategy of Forum Syd is an internal document with great importance for the work of Forum Syd in the national context and towards external stakeholders. The Country Strategy is our guide in forming partnerships, choosing priorities and maintaining our rights-based approach and focus on Forum Syd's thematic areas.

This Country Strategy of Forum Syd in Cambodia was developed through a process of dialogue internally and with external stakeholders. The dialogue process included six staff workshops, one partner workshop and one presentation with feedback from partner organisations, and interviews with five external stakeholders (one donor, one community women's group, one INGO, one partner CSO and one non-partner CSO). Staff and partner organisations were also invited to give feedback and comments in writing to draft versions of the strategy.

The material for the context analysis was gathered by the whole Forum Syd team, compiled by an external consultant, and edited several times by the Country Manager after input from external stakeholders, review of media and additional documents, the Forum Syd team in Cambodia and Forum Syd head office staff in Stockholm.

Forum Syd would like to express our thanks to everyone who have participated enthusiastically in the strategy process in different capacities. Thank you!

## Executive summary

Forum Syd has worked in Cambodia since 1994, always with a focus on democracy and human rights, and in recent years an increasing focus on rights connected to natural resources and land issues, environment and climate change.

The Cambodian context is characterized by limitations of political rights and civil liberties, high levels of corruption and little independence of the judicial sector and the national parliament from the executive power of government. Contributing to this situation is high indices of social and economic inequality and social and cultural norms that protect the elite and discriminate against

marginalized groups. Gender and ethnic stereotypes and discrimination are strong. A driving force behind economic development in Cambodia is land investments, logging and extractive industries. This has led to land conflicts and environmental degradation.

Forum Syd's country programme will focus on three **thematic areas** in Cambodia 2013-2018:

- Democracy & Human Rights
- Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- Gender equality

### **Desired impact**

Poor and marginalized women and men in Cambodia have increased democratic influence, equal ability and opportunities to exercise their rights and use natural resources sustainably.

### **Expected outcomes**

- 1) *Improved democratic conditions and strengthened legal framework for poor and marginalized women and men to claim their rights, especially rights related to land and natural resources.*
- 2) *More climate resilient, eco-friendly communities and community ownership of sustainable development practices and policies.*
- 3) *A more equitable distribution of responsibilities, resources and influence between women and men.*

Forum Syd's programme will give priority to the following **geographic areas** in Cambodia:

- North-Eastern and Northern regions
- Provinces around the Tonle Sap Lake and Mekong River, and Coastal protected areas.
- Phnom Penh/ Urban areas

**Priority target groups** include marginalized people who organize to claim rights, like:

- Members of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and different types of organized communities for natural resource management
- Members of community- and cross-community networks, sector networks and youth networks
- Members of indigenous communities

**Criteria for selection of partner organizations** in Forum Syd's country programme include:

- Work with a Rights-Based Approach
- Be a member-based organization/ network or have a strong community-led approach
- Effective outreach
- Have experience and expertise on central rights issues:
  - legal, political or ecological aspects of land rights and natural resource management, extractive industries, hydropower, forestry, agriculture and fishery issues
  - civil and political rights, legal and political approaches to defending essential freedoms
  - gender equality and women's rights
  - environment and climate change.
- Have the capacity and systems to manage grant funds and programmes

The **chosen strategies** to achieve the three expected outcomes have common denominators. Forum Syd's strategies for what kind of interventions to support within the country programme can be expressed as: 1) Organizing, 2) Marginalized women's and men's influence over policy making and public stakeholders, 3) Information, research and awareness raising.

## Past experience in country

Forum Syd initiated its work in Cambodia in 1994, shortly after the first free elections of 1993. From early on, Forum Syd's programme had a substantial focus on support to NGOs working on issues of democracy, elections and reform of the legal sector. At first, Forum Syd provided only technical support, but in 1997 Sida and Forum Syd initiated cooperation and since then Forum Syd has provided human rights and democracy funding to civil society organisations.

In recent years there has been a gradual shift in the human rights and democracy work towards increased cooperation with youth organizations and organisations working on rights issues relating to natural resources, the environment, and indigenous rights. Forum Syd has also since 2010 started to directly support community based organizations (CBOs) after analysing the importance of grassroots organization and building the capacity of community groups to claim rights and exercise influence over resources and decision-making processes that affect their lives.

The objective of Forum Syd's programme 2010-2012 is "*poor and marginalized people in Cambodia have increased access to democratic influence, rights and natural resources*". This objective is broken down into two outcomes: (i) "*better participation and influence of poor and marginalized women, men and youth to enjoy their rights and access to natural resources so that they are respected, protected and promoted*" and (ii) "*high levels of partner capacity and participation in national and local processes of governance and decision making for heightened involvement of target group and other stakeholders*".

During 2010 – 2012, Forum Syd has continued with most of its previously established long-term partnerships, adding a few new partners. Support was during 2011 channelled to eleven long-term partners. Forum Syd's total budget for the three years amounts to roughly 38 Million SEK for Human Rights and 12 Million SEK for Climate Change. The climate change part of the programme has been initiated of a consortium of three international organizations (Forum Syd, Cord and DanChurchAid/ Christian Aid). Each international partner has invited a number of its partner organizations to the capacity building process. Seven of Forum Syd's long-term partners plus fifteen additional partners of the other consortium member have participated in the climate change work.

# Country Context Analysis

## Democracy and human rights

### Poverty, vulnerable groups and discriminatory structures

Cambodia has experienced steady economic growth and poverty reduction over the past decade, with some stagnation during the global economic crisis of 2007-2009<sup>1</sup>. However, a third of 15 million Cambodians still live below the national poverty line<sup>2</sup>. Inequality is extreme, between rural and urban areas but also within rural areas. Around 80% of the population is rural, and 92% of all poor people in the country live in rural areas<sup>3</sup>. Cambodia is highly dependent on aid, and donors such as China, the United States and the multilateral institutions play substantial roles in the national development policy arena.

Most rural residents make a living primarily cultivating rice and collecting natural resources from water bodies and forests. Sources of vulnerability of poor rural households include food insecurity, driven by reliance on subsistence agriculture and lack of diversity in production; lack of assets (and inability to replace them after health or environmental emergencies); low productivity; dependence on natural resources (which are frequently used unsustainably and access to common property is ever weaker); dangerous borrowing at high rates of interest; and pulling girls and boys out of school which makes more likely the transmission of poverty to the next generation<sup>4</sup>.

There is a strong geographical bias within Cambodia: the highest poverty rates are generally found in the north/north-east, and the lowest in central and coastal provinces. In the north/north-east, the progress of poverty reduction has been much slower. This reflects other inequalities in the distribution of poverty and access to rights in the country. Discriminated minorities include indigenous peoples, Cham and Malay Muslim minorities, Kampuchea Krom people and others. The north/ north-east provinces are home to many ethnic minorities, who are marginalised in terms of education, health, access to employment and resources. In particular, access to land is a problem: the race to control natural resources by national and multinational companies is threatening the assets and ways of life of indigenous communities.

One major reason behind poverty in Cambodia is the insecure and insufficient access to land. This situation can be traced back to a historical concentration of land to few and large landowners, followed by the 1975–1979 Khmer Rouge regime, which put all of Cambodia's land under state ownership and destroyed all records. Land legislation allows for economic land concessions on certain types of state land, and for social land concessions (a type of land reform) and communal land concessions for indigenous peoples, but progress of the latter two has been slow. Migration for work is common, both internally in Cambodia for rural workers, fishers etc, and to neighbouring countries to seek employment. Migration means risks in terms of physical security, losing land or access to resources, losing access to services, and violations of labour rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Planning (2010) Achieving Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals, Update 2010

<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2009) Poverty Profile and Trend in Cambodia: Findings from the 2007 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> WFP (2012) Livelihoods: Main Activities and Income Sources

The pressure to acquire arable land is high in Cambodia, both from national companies with close ties to the political and financial elite, and from international companies from China, Vietnam, Thailand and other countries. The European business interests in Cambodia are small in comparison, but recent land issues have included some related to the EU “anything but arms” initiative, that is promoting increased sugar exports from Cambodia to the EU, putting more pressure on land for sugar plantations. The resulting land-grabbing, leading to impoverishment and forced evictions has affected as many as 400,000 people over the last decade<sup>5</sup>.

Gender inequality is a poverty issue as well as a human rights issue. Women have less access to education and employment opportunities. The agricultural, non-formal and minimum wage sectors of the economy have high proportions of female labour. Social security tends to be closely linked to marriage, creating dependency of men. Women are also at greater risk of losing their home, land and other resources in the event of a divorce. Female-headed households are particularly at risk, given a lack of labour and the need to shoulder a multiple burden in the face of deep-rooted discrimination. Land insecurity plays out particularly badly for women, as a consequence of a dependence on agriculture and their need to work close to home for reasons of physical and family insecurity.

The inequality trends are reflected in trends of access to human rights. Inequalities and discrimination in access to rights can be seen in sectors such as education, health, economic opportunity and political participation. In the latter case, poor people are far less able to participate in local decision-making processes. They lack education, time, confidence and connections and this means they have little voice in society. When they are included, through a focus on democratic decentralisation, their participation is often tokenistic at best. Discrimination remains at all levels of society, and is directed mainly at the poor, women, young people and children, the elderly, those victim to disease, indigenous groups and ethnic minorities. It is engrained within the structures and norms of society.

### **Good governance, social accountability and corruption**

Cambodia’s National Strategic Development Plan recognizes good governance as the most important precondition for sustainable socioeconomic development with equity, equal opportunity and social justice<sup>6</sup>. The decentralisation process in Cambodia was initiated in 2000, and the first commune-level elections were held in 2002. This reform has been given a lot of priority by the government. Power and funds are being decentralised over time to sub-national administrations, although slowly, and financial autonomy, transparency and efficiency are still an issue for local councils and roles and responsibilities need further definition. The areas of investment by local government tend to stay within their traditional responsibilities, such as local infrastructure. This leads to commune authorities not always being receptive to priorities of for example children, young people and women or other groups with traditionally less voice in local decision making. Some studies indicate an increase in local participation and influence with the decentralization reform<sup>7</sup>. Deconcentration of power of line ministries who provide public services has still not progressed much. Capacity of officials at all levels is varied: political influence and party loyalty are often more important than ability in terms of advancement. There is limited political will to address this in many

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<sup>5</sup> LICADHO (2009): Land Grabbing & Poverty in Cambodia: The Myth of Development, May 2009

<sup>6</sup> RGC (2009) National Strategic Development Plan Update 2009-2013

<sup>7</sup> World Bank (2012)

quarters, given that the status quo often has more benefits for officials than reform has. This has an impact on service delivery and political participation of local communities.

Cambodia is in theory a democratic state, but in practice subject to one-party rule. There is a lack of independence between the three branches of government. The courts are often in the hands of those with more power and money, and those from the vulnerable segments of society are dependent on patron-client relationships if they want a favourable outcome in any dispute. This situation prevails at all levels, from the national to the local. Democratization moves forward very slowly, in part because the ties between economic power and political power are very close. Those in political power need to retain it for economic reasons.

The ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) holds 90 of 123 seats in the National Assembly and effectively controls the country through the sub-national administration. Its two-thirds majority allows it to approve any of its own laws without consulting the opposition<sup>8</sup>. Other parties are excluded or effectively silenced and often cannot carry out their mandate<sup>9</sup>. The opposition is also fragmented and lacks clear political platforms. At national level, debating takes the form mainly of rubberstamping decisions made at the top<sup>10</sup>. The National Assembly has all the formal characteristics of a democratic institution, but a shortage of democratic values and culture mean that very little open debate actually takes place. Sub-national councils are also dominated by the CPP: those not are often unable to achieve their aims and are subject to intimidation. Most political analysts see little potential for change within the next election periods.

Cambodia has a constitution and many laws which are good from a formal democracy and human rights perspective. For example, the legislation on land is fairly advanced in an international comparison, allowing for the registration of communal lands for indigenous peoples, and establishment of community managed protected natural areas. However, the implementation of laws and the integrity of the justice system are extremely substandard. This results in almost any type of issue turning into a human rights issue in Cambodia, since impunity is rampant and people's rights are so frequently violated in the justice system.

Cambodia currently ranks last on the Global Rule of Law Index of 66 countries<sup>11</sup>. Corruption is endemic: laws have been passed to remedy this, but concerns remain as to the independence of the relatively newly created institutions<sup>12</sup>. Corruption exists in most facets of life in Cambodia: schools, work life, health care, justice etc., and severely affects people's trust in society. The prevalence of government officials, especially in the executive and judicial branches of government and in the military and police, who use public office for personal gain, is high.<sup>13</sup>

Governance on land management is disastrous. Land concessions have an alarming impact on rural poor households, who see common property disappear without consultation and are denied traditional rights of access and opportunities to protest<sup>14</sup>. As a strategy for economic growth, the

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<sup>8</sup> COMFREL (2012) Democracy, Election and Reform in Cambodia

<sup>9</sup> UNDP (2008) Election report

<sup>10</sup> COMFREL (2012) Democracy, Election and Reform in Cambodia

<sup>11</sup> The World Justice Project (2011) Rule of Law Index

<sup>12</sup> Phnom Penh Post (2011a) Mixed Reactions to Graft Unit, 9 December

<sup>13</sup> The World Justice Project (2011) Rule of Law Index

<sup>14</sup> ADHOC (2011) Human Rights Report 2010

government has promoted Economic Land Concessions (ELC). Though a legal framework exists, often regulations are not complied with. The enforcement of the law is weak and the lack of transparency in ELCs encourages rent-seeking activities. Land laws have not been properly implemented or monitored; and ELCs to private companies have been granted over forest areas and indigenous land in violation of the law. In this way, ELCs have come to mean forced evictions, threats and violent disputes instead of progress. This has occurred outside a human rights framework, underscoring a weak judiciary and denial of the right to a fair trial<sup>15</sup>. The responsibility of private sector actors for human rights violations is currently rarely debated or followed up on by government or donors.

Election processes have improved over previous elections but still do not fully meet international standards<sup>16</sup>, especially in terms of voter registration<sup>17</sup>. Cambodia also has issues in relation to freedom of the press, association and assembly, with no substantial reforms initiated to overcome these restrictions<sup>18</sup>. The media is subject to political heavy-handedness, with most media effectively controlled by the ruling party. The radio channels who are not government controlled do not reach all areas of the country. There is no community radio, and news information is not available in indigenous languages. Access on information on public spending is scant to none. Freedom of speech and of the press has also been restricted through defamation and disinformation lawsuits<sup>19</sup>.

Civic participation remains limited. In a social context of extreme hierarchy, upward accountability and limited access to information, this means citizens are often unaware of their political rights, their influence on the political process and the role of government institutions<sup>20</sup>. As such, the concerns of the population, particularly the rural population, women, the disabled, indigenous groups and youth, are still not reflected adequately in planning and decision-making processes<sup>21</sup>.

## **Civil society**

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Cambodia include trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), people's networks, etc. Some have been established by the government to further the government agenda. Some have been established by members to defend their own rights and interests. Many are foundation-type NGOs with professional staff that represents ideas and knowledge on development issues. Some of these help promote and facilitate the voices and empowerment of the people in community led activities, and some play the role of direct implementers without much community leadership.

There has been a shift towards empowering the grassroots in recent years, particularly through the development of local associations and CBOs, often supported by donors and in partnership with various arms of government, such as the commune authorities. These CBOs are springing up all over the country and often work to advocate local authorities on issues such as fishing lot boundaries, community forests and domestic violence.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> COMFREL (2012) Democracy, Election and Reform in Cambodia

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> ADHOC (2011) Human Rights Report 2010

<sup>20</sup> COMFREL (2012) Democracy, Election and Reform in Cambodia

<sup>21</sup> UNDP (2011a) Annual Report 2010



The capacity to network effectively remains limited in Cambodia, for a host of deeply engrained reasons. The breaking of trust between communities during the Khmer Rouge era is just one of these. Government officials may in some cases be involved with perpetrators of abuses at community level (such as illegal fishing) and may get in the way of efforts to overcome abuses. CBOs and local associations are dependent on the time and motivation of people who have limited amounts at their disposal, as they need to provide for their families in difficult conditions. Meanwhile, mind-sets in Khmer society as a whole are also often still very conservative with regard to issues such as youth involvement and gender equality in community organising, although the situation here is improving<sup>22</sup>.

Downward accountability of NGOs can be an issue. Few organizations in Cambodian civil society are member-based and represent the people they work for. Some NGOs have too little connection with final beneficiaries; executive directors often dominate decision-making, and grassroots voices fail to be heard. Women are frequently under-represented in decision-making within NGOs. NGOs are thus affected by the same problems related to democratic ownership as Cambodian society as a whole. Continued heavy reliance on donor funding also has an impact on the accountability of NGOs and their sense of who they serve. Donors are also at fault for failing to find effective mechanisms of funding that promote strong alliance building on rights issues, instead of the fragmentation and project orientation caused by many donors' current modalities of funding to civil society.

Cambodia sees a heavy degree of personalisation of politics, and this is also evident in society as a whole, including within CSOs. In some respects, relationships between government and civil society depend on the strength of relationships between individuals in power and individuals in CSOs, not on the capacity of the organisation advocating for change.

Political space for CSO activities is uneven: health care service delivery organisations can engage constructively with the government, but several human rights-oriented CSOs face challenges engaging with government on issues of political and civil liberties.<sup>23</sup> There are also difficulties working with the mainly pro-CPP media. Often when government consults civil society, the latter's recommendations are then ignored<sup>24</sup>. The lack of coalition building and mobilization of different actors within civil society means that civil society has difficulties in generating the strength in numbers necessary to push for policy change.

In fact, human rights-oriented CSOs are often seen as "against" the government, and their positions are frequently aligned with opposition parties. In dialogue processes government has been known to hand-pick civil society participants from CSOs close to the government. Cases of threats against non-government affiliated CSOs and especially human rights NGOs have been many in recent years. The limitations in democratic commitment among politicians mean it can be very difficult for CSOs to advocate for change, as there is little government understanding of the importance of a diversity of voices in the public dialogue. Freedom of assembly is limited<sup>25</sup>, and carrying out activities can be intensely difficult and bureaucratically cumbersome. It is the practice of government

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<sup>22</sup> Forum Syd (2009) Country Context Analysis

<sup>23</sup> <http://cambodia.usaid.gov/node/301>

<sup>24</sup> COMFREL (2008) Final Assessment and report on 2008 National Assembly Elections, and NGO Forum on Cambodia (2009) NGO Statement on the monitoring of CDCF indicators, 29 September

<sup>25</sup> ADHOC (2011) Human Rights Report 2010

authorities both at national and sub-national levels to require civil society organisations to ask permission to organise events. In 2011 and 2012 Cambodian newspapers reported various cases of workshops or meetings having been shut down by police or private guards of politicians, because authorities claimed that the organisers needed permission, even though the events were held in private venues or pagodas and not in a public place. Pressure and threats to owners of private venues about not renting to certain organisations or groups also occurs, as media reported for example during the 2012 ASEAN Grassroots People's Assembly. The current situation is unstable and essential freedoms are limited.

## **Environment and climate change**

Due to environmental degradation, bad human practices such as unsustainable use of natural resources, the impacts of seasonal droughts and floods in Cambodia are a threat to development and the survival of many rural communities and urban areas. Rural communities are the most affected, as they depend on weather- and climate-sensitive resources for their livelihoods. Preparedness and capacity to address risks and understanding on how ecosystems are interconnected is low in many communities, and among local stakeholders. At least 700 communes out of 1,621 have high vulnerability, the most affected groups being the poorest, such as female-headed households, children and indigenous people<sup>26</sup>. Women are particularly affected, given the limited livelihoods opportunities available to them in the event of environmental degradation and less opportunities to migrate safely for work.

Floods and droughts have resulted in casualties and destruction of infrastructure, property, crops, livestock and health. Climate change impacts on agriculture are predicted to affect food production in rural areas severely<sup>27</sup>. Most Cambodians are engaged in rain-fed and subsistence agriculture, which means that reduced production is a major source of vulnerability. Fish stocks are also under threat as a result of environmental degradation and unsustainable human practices. Many Cambodian households also rely on fishing which means threats of increased food insecurity in the future.

Meanwhile, 30-40% of rural households' income comes from forest products<sup>28</sup>, which means the exceedingly fast rate of deforestation in recent years represents a serious threat to livelihoods<sup>29</sup>. This will also have a huge impact in terms of future droughts. Conservation areas are threatened by logging, fuel wood dependency, clearance for agriculture, weak forest sector governance and economic land concessions<sup>30</sup>. Illegal logging and lack of legal enforcement are major contributors to deforestation – not just by large corporations but also by the poor who lack alternative livelihoods.

The government has developed a number of policies to combat these threats, especially to strengthen policy, legislative and regulatory mechanisms on biodiversity conservation; forest management; climate change adaptation and mitigation; and the promotion of clean and renewable sources of energy<sup>31</sup>. The Cambodian government is in a process of mainstreaming climate change

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<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Environment (2010) Climate change vulnerability assessment report

<sup>27</sup> UNDP (2010a) Cambodia's Community Based Adaptation Programme, Country Programme Strategy

<sup>28</sup> CDRI (2006) The value of forest resources to rural livelihoods in Cambodia

<sup>29</sup> UNDP (2011a) Annual Report 2010

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

issues. The National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) was endorsed in 2006. Four priority focus areas are outlined in the NAPA including water resources management and agriculture, forestry, health and coastal zone management. Cambodia is at present working on a Climate Change Strategic Plan which is meant to be implemented starting 2014. Civil society organisations and networks have been invited to comment on the draft and participate in discussions..

Cambodia's high dependence on agriculture is an underlying factor in its high vulnerability to future impacts of climate change. Bad management of natural resources is exacerbating this situation. Weak governance, poor law enforcement, lack of transparency and corruption (particularly in relation to logging and economic land concessions) are major constraints to improving the situation. Through economic land concessions pro-CPP tycoons have accessed land that contains valuable forest, which is then cut down, nominally to make way for plantations, and the timber is sold. Most, if not all, concession holders have failed to meet legal requirements to conduct environmental impact assessments. The clear-cutting operations that characterize plantation development' result in the complete eradication of the forest and the damage is terminal<sup>32</sup>.

Funding is flowing into climate change efforts, but local levels still struggle to find the resources to build community resilience. The Climate Change funding initiatives in Cambodia have until now been fairly donor-driven. However, organisation, awareness, preparedness and knowledge are essential to people overcoming their vulnerability to the impacts of changing conditions of their livelihoods. Limited understanding within government and among communities on the future impacts of climate change and the need for longer-term resilience creates problems in addressing the issues<sup>33</sup>.

The environment, climate change and natural resource management all entail many democracy- and human rights-related issues. Yet again, powerful interests intent on maintaining the status quo for their own benefit effectively silence poor and excluded groups, leaving them without opportunities to raise their voices against the eradication of their livelihoods.

## **Gender**

Cambodia has made strong efforts to incorporate gender into national development planning. Gender has also been incorporated into decentralisation reforms through for example emphasis on gender-based budgeting and the setting up of commune committees for children and women. New laws have taken gender issues in account, in particular the laws on domestic violence and trafficking.

However, Cambodia continues to lag behind other countries on the UN Development Programme Gender Index, at 99th of 187 countries in 2011.<sup>34</sup> Deeply embedded discriminatory norms continue to have a severe long-term impact on gender power relations. Key aspects of Cambodian society today still show consistent patterns of gender inequality and tension: traditional belief systems suggest "proper" roles for men and women and have a strong influence on their daily lives and

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<sup>32</sup> Global Witness (2007) Cambodia's Family Trees: Illegal logging and the stripping of public assets by Cambodia's elite

<sup>33</sup> UNDP (2010a) Cambodia's Community Based Adaptation Programme, Country Programme Strategy

<sup>34</sup> [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR\\_2011\\_EN\\_Table4.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Table4.pdf)

opportunities<sup>35</sup>. A lack of women's involvement in family decision-making and a cultural desire to maintain the family reputation compound these constraints. The workload for women and girls in the home is substantially bigger than that of boys and men. Centuries-old "codes for women" dictate that they take a back seat in the family and society. Fewer women than men are in decision-making positions; fewer girls than boys take part in higher education; more women than men in the workforce are illiterate; and the maternal mortality rate (290 deaths in 100,000 live births<sup>36</sup>) remains high as well as the proportion of women who experience violence<sup>37</sup>.

And as we have seen, women often work in sectors with high risk of poverty such as agriculture and the informal economy<sup>38</sup>. In the large garment industry, a vast majority of workers are young women working for a minimum wage of 61 dollars a month. Some Swedish companies, such as H&M, are large buyers from suppliers in Cambodia. Meanwhile, union leaders and employers both tend to be men. This pattern of organisation is echoed at the community level, where committee leaders tend to be men, but the proportion of community work done by women is increasing. Also in the NGO sector, there is a significant majority of men as directors or managerial staff.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2009 (in a follow-up to a baseline survey carried out in 2005) found that both women and men continued to tolerate some forms of gender-based violence; that protection, prevention and awareness remained weak; that monitoring and data collection were inadequate; and that the legal framework was poorly enforced. The fact that there are far fewer women working in the justice system creates an environment unreceptive to women who intend to file a complaint against their husbands for physical abuse<sup>39</sup>.

There is a legal framework for sexual and reproductive rights in Cambodia, which covers access to counselling on contraceptives and free abortion until the twelfth week of pregnancy (and until the end of the second trimester if certain criteria are met). Even so, there is a lack of knowledge both among women and among health service providers about the legality of abortions. In one survey only 47% of hospitals, 10% of high-level health centres and 5% of low-level health centres reported availability of abortion services. Among the facilities that provide safe abortion services, nearly half refuse services to adolescents. Around 40% of providers from hospitals believe that elective abortion is not permitted by the Ministry of Health<sup>40</sup>. In reality, a very small minority of women have access to safe abortions, safe births and quality family planning advice.

Over the past decade, there have been increases in women's representation in the National Assembly and in commune councils, and women can voice their concerns at community level more<sup>41</sup>. However, women's representation in political office is still nowhere near parity<sup>42</sup>. For example, currently only 21% of Members of Parliament are women<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> USAID (2010) Gender Assessment Cambodia

<sup>36</sup> UNICEF

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs and UNDP (2011) Promoting gender equality towards achievement of the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals

<sup>38</sup> UNDP (2008) Election Report

<sup>39</sup> USAID (2010) Gender Assessment Cambodia

<sup>40</sup> IPAS (2007) "Ready or Not?" A National Needs Assessment of Abortion Services in Cambodia

<sup>41</sup> UNDP (2010b) SDEP lessons learnt and best practices in promoting women participation and representation in Cambodia

<sup>42</sup> USAID (2010) Gender Assessment Cambodia

<sup>43</sup> COMFREL (2012) Democracy, Election and Reform in Cambodia

Despite greater efforts by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in particular, as well as donors and civil society, to involve women in decision-making processes, the way women are viewed in society and continued discriminatory attitudes mean that at community level they still have a limited sense of entitlement and self-worth<sup>44</sup>. The greater number of women in political office does not appear to have translated into greater voice for women on key issues<sup>45</sup>.

There is no strong women's movement in Cambodia, and it is difficult to find organizations that do any progressive work on changing and challenging gender roles.

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<sup>44</sup> UNDP (2010b) SDEP lessons learnt and best practices in promoting women participation and representation in Cambodia

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

# Strategy 2013-2018

## Choice of thematic area

In Cambodia, Forum Syd will focus on all three of its overall thematic areas:

- Democracy & Human Rights
- Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- Gender equality

So far, Forum Syd has worked on the two first thematic issues with gender as a mainstreaming perspective, but through the country strategy process we have identified a need to also focus specifically on the perceptions of gender roles in society, organizations and communities, since the current perceptions of men's and women's roles are such a limitation for Cambodia's democratization and development process. There is a need to move beyond mainstreaming and actually focus on gender equality

## Democracy and Human Rights

Forum Syd has a long history of working with Democracy and Human Rights in Cambodia. Over the years the focus has shifted gradually, from an initial strong emphasis on elections- and justice system reform at national level to a current focus which includes policy reform but has a stronger perspective of grassroots awareness and organizing and accountability of local authorities.

With the ever more serious situation regarding land rights in Cambodia, this has become a major Human Rights issue. This is a focus for Forum Syd today, and we believe that this issue will remain absolutely central to the rights of millions of Cambodian women and men over the coming years, with many hundred thousand suffering direct human rights abuse because of it.

We believe that grassroots empowerment, awareness, voices and mobilization are highly relevant to effect pro-poor change in Cambodia, and make decision makers become more responsive, accountable and transparent.

Sida, Forum Syd's major donor in Cambodia, is working based on a Country Strategy that puts Human Rights at the forefront of all work. Human Rights is both a sector in the Swedish aid budget and a mainstreaming issue. Rights issues that will get special attention by Sida in the coming years include civil and political rights and in particular the freedom of expression and assembly, democratic accountability and public transparency. Many donors and INGOs have Human Rights as a strong focus in their Cambodia programmes. The government of Cambodia tends to regard Human Rights defenders as opposition and the recent year has shown a worrying increase in the use of armed forces, police and violence against human rights protesters or victims of rights violations.

## Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

Environment and Climate Change issues are linked in a high degree both to human rights and to human rights abuses in Cambodia. Land management, deforestation, natural resource management,

extractive industries and other highly topical issues affect both nature and human beings in dramatic ways, and man-made environmental problems aggravate the negative impact of climate change. Since 80% of Cambodia's population lives in rural areas and depend on natural resources, it makes sense to support sustainable management of natural resources and respect for the environment that so many people depend on. Also, Cambodia is looking at a future of even more severe climate change impacts, and women and men in local communities have a better chance of being more resilient to change with stronger capacities and better policies for sustainable use of natural resources.

We believe that Forum Syd can play a role to support communities and civil society organisations in managing natural resources sustainably, protect ecosystems, prepare for climate change challenges, and promote eco-friendly policies at different levels. Human rights and the well-being of nature are mutually dependent, and working on human rights without a perspective of the well-being of future generations would not be sufficient.

Climate Change is a sector in the Swedish support to Cambodia. Also many other donors are increasing support to Climate Change issues. A risk is that a rapid inflow of Climate Change funds will mean too many donor-driven initiatives. Through the Joint Climate Change Initiative, Forum Syd has been among the INGOs in Cambodia that started earliest in developing methodologies, learning about the issues and building capacities on climate change adaptation and mitigation, which positions us well to support Cambodian civil society as it moves forward on this issue. Forum Syd's rights-based approach means that we emphasize community ownership and organising, as well as multi-stakeholder approaches where local authorities and other local stakeholder all are involved and encouraged to learn and commit to the solutions and initiatives of the people in communities. We want to develop environment and climate change initiatives that are meaningful to people in communities and have a broad focus of sustainable development, conservation and community livelihoods. This community level rights-based approach should be combined with policy research and advocacy on national climate change and environmental policies and strategies, and connect to global climate change policy-making.

## **Gender Equality**

As noted in the context analysis, the perceptions of gender roles mean radically different opportunities for men and women in Cambodia. Since the inequality is so deeply rooted in most aspects of life, it is not enough to mainstream a gender perspective, since the commitment to let the gender perspective really influence and take up space in the public, organizational or community arenas is still not high.

Womens rights are human rights and will remain an important issue throughout our programme, but we need to include more interventions in the country programme that challenge and try to change perceptions of gender roles. Forum Syd as an organization has a strong gender equality focus, and it should come out even stronger in the Cambodia programme.

Working more on gender roles fits well with having several youth organization partners, since youth are often more open to questioning pre-conceptions about men's and women's roles.

## Country programme objectives

<p><b>Impact</b>          Poor and marginalized women and men in Cambodia have increased democratic influence, equal ability and opportunities to exercise their rights and use natural resources sustainably.</p>	<p><b>Types of Indicators (1-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in response from decision makers at all levels to people's claims.</li> <li>• Changes in respect for civil and political rights by duty bearers.</li> <li>• Changes in numbers of community managed areas (forestry, fisheries), protected areas and communal lands, where natural resources are managed sustainably.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome no 1</b>          Improved democratic conditions and strengthened legal framework for poor and marginalized women and men to claim their rights, especially rights related to land and natural resources.</p>	<p><b>Types of Indicators (1-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in public policies, procedures and legislation, and the positions and actions of public officials relevant to issues raised by rights holders</li> <li>• Changes in the capacity and legitimacy of civil society organizations and networks in supporting the empowerment and influence of grassroots people</li> <li>• Changes in level of organization and mobilization of poor and marginalized people.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome no 2</b>          More climate resilient, eco-friendly communities and community ownership of sustainable development practices and policies.</p>	<p><b>Types of Indicators (1-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in ecosystem services and community livelihoods</li> <li>• Changes in implementation of climate and environmentally relevant policies and frameworks, level of stakeholder collaboration and level of civil society involvement.</li> <li>• Changes in environmental and climate change awareness demonstrated through eco-friendly practices and increased organization and mobilization of communities for the environment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome no 3</b>          A more equitable distribution of responsibilities, resources and influence between women and men.</p>	<p><b>Types of Indicators (1-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in public policies and their implementation relevant to equal rights of women and men</li> <li>• Changes in representation of women and men in public office, organizations and community organizations, especially number of women in decision making positions</li> <li>• Changes in perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of women and men, in organizations and in society</li> </ul>



# Description of intervention 2013-2018

## Geographic areas

The geographic focus of Forum Syd's programme in Cambodia is broad, because the emphasis is on identifying and supporting organizations and networks with the potential for making change happen that strengthens the influence of marginalized groups and challenges traditional power structures.

In identifying the priority geographic areas, several considerations need to be made, such as:

- Where do active citizens/grassroots groups and networks exist and have the potential to grow stronger?
- Where is discrimination, exclusion and human rights violations most serious?
- Where are the threats to natural resources that people depend on for their livelihood?

In the rural Cambodian context, the strongest motivation for many people to organize as well as the most severe human rights violations tend to circulate around access to and control over natural resources and land tenure. The fact that such a large majority of the population is rural, often excluded from participation and decision-making, and dependent on natural resources, are reasons why Forum Syd's programme should have a geographic emphasis in rural areas. In urban areas, working conditions and evictions are among the issues that motivate people to organize and claim rights.

Cambodia's North-Eastern provinces are given priority in Forum Syd's work, since indigenous peoples who are in majority in this part of the country are severely hindered from claiming rights and influence. As indigenous peoples, their collective rights are guaranteed by international and national law, but these are violated and overlooked, especially as lucrative natural resources are plentiful in indigenous territories.

Overall, the priority target areas are those with vital natural resources such as fishery and forests that people depend on for their livelihoods and where investments and extraction of natural resources are leading to violations of human rights and degradation of the ecosystem.

Forum Syd's programme will give priority to the following geographic areas in Cambodia:

- North-Eastern and Northern regions
- Provinces around the Tonle Sap Lake and Mekong River, and Coastal protected areas.
- Phnom Penh/ Urban areas

This does not mean that Forum Syd will only support interventions in those areas. All support will be based around partner organizations that have strong work in prioritized areas, and may therefore include activities of those organizations in other areas. New partners will be selected giving priority to the above mentioned areas.

## Target groups

The overall purpose of Forum Syd is:

- Strengthening marginalized people around the world who organize to claim their rights.
- Forming public opinion towards change that contributes to a just and sustainable world.

Looking at Cambodia to identify who the marginalized people that organize to claim their rights are, there are several priority target groups that are relevant to support:

- **Members of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and different organized communities for natural resource management** (in Cambodia people organize in different ways to protect natural resources and their livelihoods – forestry community groups, fishery community groups, community land management groups, water management groups, community protected area groups etc).
- **Members of community networks, cross-community networks, sector networks and youth networks** that represent the common interests of people affected by the same issue (such have formed in several eviction cases, or to counter negative effects on human rights and the environment of certain public policies or private investments).
- **Members of indigenous communities** that organize to claim rights to communal land and cultural rights connected with natural resources.

The above target groups are active on issues that are largely either made invisible by people with more power and influence, or that mean conflicts and violations of basic rights where community/sector interests collide with those of the more powerful. This means that although the above target groups often organize to claim social, economic and cultural rights, it is also in the relationship between these groups and the state that the most **frequent violations of civil and political rights** take place. To challenge the current repression of freedom of expression, assembly and association in Cambodia, the above are the groups that need support to make themselves heard and better organized.

Since active participation and leadership in communities and networks (and civil society in general) in Cambodia is currently highly unequally distributed between **men and women**, Forum Syd's programme must compensate for gender inequalities **within** communities and organizations by choosing to support:

- communities and partner organizations that have a high number of women activists and/or leaders.
- partner organizations that have clear goals and methods to work with target groups to change and challenge traditional gender roles and power structures.
- interventions that create increased space for women and strengthens women's leadership through separate women's networks or similar approaches.
- interventions that contribute to increasing women's influence.

A strategic target group to achieve all three expected outcomes is **young people** organized in networks. Young people can be expected to be less set in traditions and established roles, and may therefore be more open to questioning gender or social inequalities. They may also be more likely to reflect on what is harmful to the environment. Finally, young people have more time and energy to be involved on community issues. Just any work with young people is however not strategic. Forum Syd needs to identify organizations and interventions that have innovative approaches and methods to ensure inclusion and ownership of marginalized youth, equal opportunities for participation and leadership of young women, and a more active civil society with broader social impact as a result of targeting youth.

**Local authorities** (or duty bearers at other levels of society) are not a target group of Forum Syd as such, but in work that is intended to change attitudes in society and perceptions of gender roles, citizens' influence, accountability, transparency, ecological sustainability etc, it is often of importance to engage authorities in different ways to attempt to change their behaviour and responsiveness in relation to the target group. Local authorities in their role as duty bearers who are accountable to the rights holders are also important to involve to ensure sustainability and continued commitment to supporting the rights of the people. When local authorities are included in activities financed by Forum Syd, the end purpose is never to just strengthen local authorities; the purpose is always to serve the interests and freedoms of the people who organize for their rights.

## Partner criteria and selection

### Criteria

Forum Syd has some basic types of criteria for partner organizations. Partner organizations should:

- **Work with a Rights-Based Approach**, meaning that the rights or the people in relation to the duty of the state are always a central starting point for all work and that influencing public policies/duty bearers to ensure long-term improvement of access to rights is part of the approach, that people's active role and participation in claiming their rights is essential, and that there is a strict non-discrimination approach to the work.
- **Be a member-based organization/ network or have a strong community-led approach**, meaning that the preferred partner organization is a member-based organization where the members decide and have the power to hold the organization's leaders accountable. In Cambodian civil society, member-based organizations with medium to high institutional capacity are still rare. Therefore Forum Syd will also work with some foundations (organisations without open membership), if they have a clear approach of facilitating democratic organizing and use their expertise to serve the interests of people in the communities.
- **Effective outreach**, meaning that the partner organization has the capacity to facilitate community processes that lead to significant results for the participating groups and individuals and/or has the expertise/ ability to reach out effectively through media, research, international networks and policy advocacy. Some partners may have expertise and mandate in only community organizing or in only research, information and advocacy, but ideally partners will be able to connect the voices and priorities of local people with wider national and/or international outreach.
- **Have experience and expertise on central rights issues**, meaning that the partner organization strives to build knowledge and expertise on the rights issues that they are organizing people around. In Forum Syd's programme during this country strategy period, there are expected to be partners with expertise on:
  - legal, political or ecological aspects of land rights and natural resource management, extractive industries, hydropower, forestry, agriculture and fishery issues
  - civil and political rights, legal and political approaches to defending essential freedoms
  - gender equality and women's rights
  - environment and climate change.
- **Have the capacity and systems to manage grant funds and programmes**, meaning that there are structures in place to ensure that finances, staff, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, auditing and reporting are managed according to national and

international laws and standards. All grant funds must be received by a registered, non-governmental legal entity. If the partner organization or network should not be a registered legal entity, an organization that does fulfil that criteria must be a third party to the agreement and assume full responsibility for compliance with the agreement.

### **Mix of partners**

Ideally the Forum Syd programme would be composed of a mix of partner organizations with experience and expertise in one or more of the issues represented in the three outcomes of the country strategy:

- Democracy and Human Rights
- Gender Equality
- Sustainable use of natural resources and adaptation to climate change

Within a framework of supporting a strong civil society, the partner organizations should be of different types that complement each other:

- CBOs and community networks
- Grassroots networks
- Federations and sector networks
- NGOs with community organizing experience and expertise on rights-based work at local and national level
- Organisations, networks and/or research institutes on national or regional level that monitor or research specific rights issues of relevance to the expected outcomes.

There is a lack of strong people's movements in Cambodia today. In fact they are virtually non-existent or in very initial stages. Forum Syd should support networking efforts that are likely to be the seeds to promote growth of movements in the future, particularly:

- broad people's movements for human rights
- environmentalist movement in Cambodia
- feminist movement in Cambodia

When supporting networking efforts it is important that Forum Syd is a strategic, humble and receptive supporter of networks that are existent or forming by people's own initiative. Forum Syd should never initiate networks from above, and ownership of networks must remain fully with the participants.

### **Changes in the partner portfolio**

Over the coming six-year country strategy period, Forum Syd expects the following trends of changes to the partner portfolio, based on this country strategy and the partner portfolio at the outset of the strategy period:

- Increase from 11 to at least 15 long-term partner organizations in Cambodia.
- Gradually form more partnerships with member-based organizations and grassroots networks, and phase out some non member-based organizations.
- More partner organizations that focus on gender equality as a main issue.

- Introduce one or two partner organizations whose main focus is research and documentation on human rights issues and ecological sustainability respectively, and organizations that can connect research for evidence-based advocacy to the national, regional and international level.
- Introduce a couple of additional partner organizations with legal and political expertise on land rights and eviction cases.
- Increase and develop further the support to CBOs.
- The climate change initiative 2010-2013 has been a pilot project and a consortium, and included many partners from all three international partners. Starting in 2014 we aim to integrate the climate change work into a more long-term programme-based funding modality and support environmental and climate change adaptation efforts of partners that do this as part of their core programmes.

## **Approach**

### **Overall approach to partnerships**

Forum Syd will continue to move towards more core funding and program-based funding gradually and in line with the capacity and organizational/ administrative systems of the partner organizations (and donor conditions). In general Forum Syd will strive to apply aid effectiveness principles, aligning as much as possible with partner organisations' own systems.

Forum Syd will continue to have high demands of follow-up, transparency, internal control and counteracting corruption in all partnerships. During the strategy period, Forum Syd foresees the need of continued technical support to partner organizations to live up to demands on results reporting and financial reporting. This support will as much as possible be aimed to strengthen partners' own systems, and it is likely that different organizations will have different needs in these areas, which will require flexibility of Forum Syd staff.

Forum Syd will strive to adapt to the partner organisation's capacity and character in the design of the agreement of cooperation. For organizations where it is difficult for practical reasons for Forum Syd to have direct cooperation and there is a need for an intermediary partner, for example when working with CBOs or small networks, Forum Syd will still strive to preserve transparency, ownership and influence of the small organizations in the partnership. The CBO Governing Committee model will be developed further during the strategy period, and a clearer model for CBO organizational sustainability and phase-out strategies will be developed.

During 2010-2012 Forum Syd has worked extensively with capacity building to partner organizations on working methods and approaches, improving internal policies and strategies on topics that were identified together with partners before the start of this period. During the implementation of this strategy, the methods and focuses for capacity and methods development will change. In 2013 there will be conclusions drawn from evaluations and reviews finalized in 2012, and a joint planning process with partners for 2014 and forward where the priorities for methods- and capacity development in the coming period will be set.

The main strategic direction of methods- and capacity development includes:

- Resources dedicated to methods development within Forum Syd will be aligned to Forum Syd's profile issues: democracy and human rights, gender equality, and sustainable use of natural resources. Also internal capacity building of Forum Syd staff will be focused around building expertise on the profile issues.
- Training of partner organizations' staff should have a high degree of partner organization ownership and to the extent possible not be separate interventions by Forum Syd but be included in partners' own programmes, plans and budgets. Forum Syd will focus less than in the previous period on training of partners' staff, and more on development of concrete tools that contribute to improved methods for work with communities.
- The cooperation between Forum Syd and partners to improve working methods and capacities should therefore be focused on joint methods development to better serve and offer tools to the people organizing in grassroots groups and networks. Areas for development of methods, tools, materials and documentation of learning will be decided in the planning dialogue with partners.

### **Approach to Forum Syd's profile issues**

Forum Syd applies a Rights-Based Approach to its work in all thematic areas, meaning that the perspectives of active people's participation, non-discrimination and a focus on rights (and the rights holder – duty bearer relationship) are always included.

To achieve long-term sustainable change of a situation where human rights are ignored or violated, in a context such as Cambodia where the judicial system is not independent or impartial and can therefore not guarantee justice for the people, there are three main peaceful ways that people can attempt to solve situations that threaten their rights:

- They can organize to solve a problem themselves, collectively within their own community or group.
- They can approach the state, which holds the duty to guarantee human rights, through officials and authorities at different levels in order to claim rights and promote reforms for change.
- They can create pressure to end rights violations through gathering significant public support (local, national or international) for their issue, or protesting or using civil resistance.

In Cambodia at the time of formulating this strategy, space for the advocacy of civil society is very limited by government, and civil society has very limited strength in terms of creating pressure through massive shows of support from the public. This weakens the bargaining position of civil society in advocating for reforms to benefit human rights and the environment. Therefore there is a special need of supporting steps towards movement building and alliances between different types of civil society actors as a way of championing human rights. A strong civil society combines all three ways of creating change.

Forum Syd's main mandate is to promote organizing, influence and awareness to strengthen human rights, gender equality and protection of the environment. Forum Syd also supports some interventions aimed at improving people's livelihoods, provided that there is a strong rights-based approach where people themselves have participated in the definition of challenges and solutions and take ownership of the implementation. In those cases we also promote multi-stakeholder involvement and strive to get commitment to supporting the community from local and sub-

national authorities. Forum Syd works with livelihoods improvement from a community perspective, not from an individual perspective. We emphasize the role of community organizing and the involvement of duty-bearers and other stakeholders so that learning can be sustained and new options introduced in the community can be maintained beyond the life cycle of a project. Community organizing is also important to guarantee democratic decision making about allocation of resources that are important to community livelihoods. The primary examples of when Forum Syd will support activities for diversification or improvement of household incomes is when these 1) contribute to increasing the resilience of households to climate change or environmental degradation, 2) contribute to sustainable incomes to support important community activities, such as community patrolling of conservation areas, or 3) help to promote environmental conservation while at the same time improving family livelihoods.

The chosen strategies to achieve the three expected outcomes have common denominators. Forum Syd's strategies for what kind of interventions to support within the country programme can be expressed as: 1) Organizing, 2) Marginalized women's and men's influence over policy making and public stakeholders, 3) Information, research and awareness raising.

These strategies are often connected and mutually reinforcing. Also, in reality sometimes the same intervention may result in effects toward all three outcomes. In the Cambodian context and because of the interconnectedness of the three profile areas, many partner organizations are likely to work with for example human rights and natural resource issues in an integrated way and with the same community groups. Below is a description of what the strategies for Organizing, Influence and Access to information can mean within each of Forum Syd's profile areas.

### ***Democracy and Human Rights***

In the approach to strengthening democracy and Human Rights in Cambodia, Forum Syd will focus on three main strategies:

1. Strengthening community empowerment and people's movements for human rights
2. Connecting the claims of marginalized people with public opinion, policy making and legal rights
3. Research, information, monitoring and documentation to strengthen transparency and public accountability

**Examples of types of work that are priorities within this profile area are:** development of basic democratic organizing skills; grassroots cross-community and cross-sector networking; tools and processes for social accountability; increasing space of grassroots groups in media and the public space; providing legal and political expertise to victims of land conflict; monitoring public policies and sharing information to policy makers; research, gathering data and monitoring human rights; spreading public information to broad target groups; making public information more understandable and available to marginalized people; creating exchange and learning between grassroots groups and activists between provinces and countries.

### ***Gender equality***

In the approach to strengthening gender equality in Cambodia, Forum Syd will focus on three main strategies:

1. Strengthening the role and influence of women and girls in organizations at the grassroots and the national level

2. Promoting equivalent access for women and men to public space, decision making, political office, services and resources
3. Creating public awareness and counter-strategies to challenge the obstacles that are keeping women as a group from having the same opportunities, voice and resources as men (such as stereotypes, traditional preconceptions, public safety, men's violence against women, distribution of unpaid household work between men and women etc)

**Examples of types of work that are priorities within this profile area are:** tools and methods for more equivalent treatment of women and girls in organizations, meetings and activities compared to men; local awareness raising to change perceptions of the public towards women's/girl's and men's/boy's roles, responsibilities and opportunities; support to women's networks and other spaces for women to become strong together, support "gendered social accountability" to create responsiveness in duty bearers for women's and girl's needs and priorities in terms of public resources, influence and services; research, gendered statistics and data collection to determine how women and men are treated differently and create awareness about the consequences of this; innovative projects that address injustices and makes it easier for women to control and access influence, resources and services.

### ***Sustainable use of natural resources***

In the approach to strengthening the sustainable use of natural resources in Cambodia, Forum Syd will focus on three main strategies:

1. Community-based conservation of natural resources, sustainable natural resource management and strengthening resilience to the effects of climate change
2. Promoting the joint involvement of community-, non-government- and public stakeholders in creating solutions for environmental sustainability and protection against hazards
3. Creating public awareness and access to information on environment and climate change to strengthen public commitment to policies for sustainable use of natural resources locally, nationally and internationally.

**Examples of types of work that are priorities within this profile area are:** encouraging organizing to protect natural resources and use them sustainably, making community groups for management of natural resources sustainable in the long-term, improving skills in communities on forestry and fishery conservation, sustainable agriculture, water management etc; holistic approaches to climate change adaptation and building resilience of communities; Improving stakeholder coordination and collaboration around sustainable use of natural resources and climate change adaptation; connecting community voices and concerns to environment and climate change policy making; making public information on climate change available to a broader public, research and evidence-based advocacy for sustainable use of natural resources from the local to the global level.

### **Forum Syd's added value**

Forum Syd has a long-term presence in Cambodia, a capable team, well-developed contacts with civil society actors, strong systems for grant management and relationships with existing partners built on trust and straightforward communication. This forms a good base for the work.



Forum Syd's work is based on partnerships, and an added value that we bring to the implementation of the programme is the capacity for assessments and analysis of effectiveness of partnerships and interventions.

Also, Forum Syd can facilitate development of joint tools and methods, systematize learning and arrange exchanges of experience, to enhance partners' work.

Forum Syd on a global level has several added values, which can be used to enhance the work in Cambodia. This includes monitoring of international policies related to climate change, landgrabbing and aid effectiveness. This work can be further connected to the programme work in Cambodia and increase outreach and effectiveness of the Cambodian civil society's work on those issues. Also, Forum Syd has tools and does methods development on democratic organizing/ rights-based approach, social accountability processes, challenging gender power structures, and climate change and environment. Within Forum Syd's membership are also some organizations that have expertise, organizational experience and international networks on the different profile issues. This can be used as a resource for exchange of experience.

## Risk Analysis and Risk Management

### External risks

Risk	Risk management strategy
<p>A main external risk is restrictions of the freedoms of expression, assembly and association by the Cambodian government. This risk to the programme implementation can be expected to increase during the strategy period, both because of the current trends of deterioration of the human rights situation in Cambodia, and because the Forum Syd programme will aim to support more organizations and groups working on controversial issues.</p>	<p>This risk is balanced by the fact that the work on environment and climate change is conceived to be less controversial. Also, most partners have been forced to develop strategies on how to manage and work around some of the restrictions of space, and have the necessary experience. Forum Syd will of course also do continuous monitoring and risk assessments and take calculated risks where necessary.</p>
<p>The widespread corruption and impunity in Cambodia are also a main risk to programme results, since people and companies with enough money and power are able to buy and threaten their way out of almost any situation. This is a risk to the expected results of safeguarding people's right to land, since even after successful results of obtaining legal rights to land, sometimes land is grabbed anyway without any legal consequences to the perpetrator. Or sometimes legal rights can be guaranteed to one community and a conflict solved, but the landgrabber moves on to intrude on another community's land.</p>	<p>This risk will be mitigated by attempting to support more research and evidence-based advocacy addressing the land rights issue as a whole. Networking with other organizations on human rights abuses and corruption issues is also an important strategy.</p>
<p>A difficulty in working with a rights-based perspective in</p>	<p>This risk will be mitigated by involving</p>

<p>Cambodia is that resources, knowledge and skills of local authorities and public officials are generally limited, which makes it difficult for citizens that want to protect their community from hazards, improve management of natural resources or improve public services in their community to get the necessary response and support from their elected officials and state employees. There is a risk that marginalized citizens' claims, however strong, will be unanswered because the authorities are not able to respond. There is also the issue of traditional hierarchal power structures and strong political party allegiances that make many duty bearers unwilling to listen to, support and be accountable to their constituents, limiting the possibility to achieve results.</p>	<p>government stakeholders and including interventions that raise their awareness and responsiveness. To counter the obstacle of traditional power structures Forum Syd will strive to work with partners that aim to build strong, independent community organizations that can put pressure on local authorities to be responsive and accountable, combined with awareness raising and sensitizing activities towards public officials on civil and political rights, environment or gender equality.</p>
<p>A risk in putting greater emphasis on gender equality is that there are relatively few organizations in Cambodia that does gender equality work with an emphasis to change and challenge power structures. This means that it could be hard to find potential partners that both have sufficient organizational capacity and share Forum Syd's approach to gender equality.</p>	<p>Forum Syd will emphasize gender equality in the assessment of new partnerships, and search for flexible ways of supporting the most relevant actors.</p>

### Internal risks

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk management strategy</b>
<p>Corruption within Forum Syd or a partner organization is a possibility that always has to be thoroughly prevented. We consider our systems to be strong and the risk of corruption occurring and affecting the programme implementation to be low. Forum Syd has high ambitions that all work in the programme will be a model of preventing and counteracting corruption.</p>	<p>Routines for monitoring, disbursements, audits, evaluations, action at suspicions of corruption and continuous assessments of financial systems are designed in a way to confidently reduce this risk.</p>
<p>Forum Syd has two donors, with Sida being the biggest donor by far, which is a risk for long-term sustainability of Forum Syd's work in Cambodia.</p>	<p>During the strategy period we will fundraise to ensure that the country programme has at least three donors.</p>
<p>Planning, monitoring, documentation and evaluation is something that many partner organizations feel is hard, thus risking to not being able to gather, analyse and report the necessary information on results.</p>	<p>Clear improvements have been seen in partners' capacity of reporting during previous years, and with additional support in designing PME systems we believe this risk to be fairly low.</p>

## Fundraising

We predict that support from Sida will continue to be very important to the programme of Forum Syd, both for Democracy and Human Rights and for Environment and Climate Change. Some of the work on natural resource management that has been funded through the Human Rights programme will most likely gradually be phased over to the Environment and Climate Change budget line during the strategy period, to create space for more work on civil and political rights and gender equality within the Democracy and Human Rights budget.

Depending on the content of the next official Swedish Country Strategy for Cambodia, there may be opportunities to incorporate part of the gender equality work in the programme supported by Sida. Women's rights have been mentioned by Sida representatives as an issue that is likely to be emphasized also in the next Swedish country strategy. If not, Forum Syd will fundraise within the EU, UN and elsewhere for more support to changing and challenging gender roles.

The three year support from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation 2013-2015 will allow Forum Syd in Cambodia to strengthen the CBO component of the country programme and to get more in-depth skills on environmental conservation

We aim to find at least one additional donor during the strategy period. Another challenge is to gradually increase the proportion of the country programme budget that is funded by donors other than Sida. Please see the Fundraising strategy for more details.