GOOD PRACTICES FOR INTEGRATING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION:

LESSONS FROM LOCAL PARTNERS IN CAMBODIA

Funded by Sida

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This document was enhanced and enriched with the feedback and perspectives of numerous JCCI representatives and partners. Kristen Rasmussen deserves special acknowledgement for her tireless attention to detail. Nop Polin's keen translation, enduring diplomacy and thoughtful responses to questions during the ten days of field visits created a fruitful environment for capturing stories from the field. During site visits, the JCCI partners and communities were exceptional hosts. The local authorities and community members prepared remarks for meetings and provided valuable insights that contributed to the content of this report. Funding for JCCI is provided by Sida.

- Ellen Maling, Documentation Consultant
INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to inspire Cambodian organisations and institutions to address the impacts of climate change in their existing programmes and practices. Its aim is to provide some useful approaches for programme planning and implementation that incorporates climate change responses while also educating people about the impact of climate change in Cambodia.

This document was written after field visits and interviews with selected JCCI partners in December 2012. It summarizes JCCI’s membership and partners, programme goals and process approaches. The report also features stories from selected organisations that integrated techniques to adapt to impacts from climate change and counterbalance the effects of climate change within their existing programmes. Each section in the report concludes with a list of good practices that were observed from the field visits. JCCI and the partner organizations are hopeful that this information will be useful to other organisations and institutions.
Good Practices for Integrating Climate Change Adaptation: Lessons from Local Partners in Cambodia
CLIMATE CHANGE IN CAMBODIA

The weather events that result from the changes in the earth’s temperature caused by global warming have far-reaching impacts on the livelihoods of Cambodians. Women, people who are very poor and indigenous people often suffer the worst effects of severe weather events and unpredictable weather and climate patterns.

The Royal Government of Cambodia’s Ministry of the Environment reported data in October 2011 that showed that Cambodian rainfall levels and temperature have already changed and are expected to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Many local and international organisations operating in Cambodia are concerned with the increasingly stronger flooding and extended dry periods that are affecting rice production and the ability of people to sustain their livelihoods.

Climate change is real, and by all accounts is already being felt in Cambodia. Assessments by scientists (Ministry of Environment 2002, 2005 and 2010) and perceptions of rural people (MoE/BBC Trust 2011) themselves point to significant and recent changes that are compelling people to take action. In turn, these changes have far-reaching implications for rural livelihoods in Cambodia – and for the future of national development.”


Cambodia is primarily an agricultural country. Many people depend on the land, fisheries, and forests to sustain the economy and their families. When the weather systems change — resulting in increased temperatures,
delayed rainfall and severe floods — crops are threatened, forests are at risk, and fish populations suffer. In fact, the floods of 2011 were the reason Germanwatch, a Bonn-based environmental think tank that issued the Global Climate Risk index in December 2012, ranked Cambodia and Thailand as the top two countries in the world affected by climate change.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments around the world are taking steps to help communities adapt to the changing circumstances created from the increase in the earth’s temperature. Strategies to address the impacts of climate change are generally grouped into four areas: 1) raising awareness of climate change, 2) building the community capacity to adapt their current practices to a changing climate, 3) reducing the factors that cause climate change, and; 4) developing tools for community participation and advocacy to deal with climate change on local, national and international levels.

To implement these practices on a local level in communities across Cambodia, the JCCI developed a comprehensive programme that engaged 22 Cambodian organisations in a multi-year process of learning, planning, doing, reflecting, evaluating and sharing information and tools with community members.
Adaptive Capacity

Adaptive capacity is the “ability to design and implement effective adaptation strategies or to react to evolving hazards and stresses so as to reduce the likelihood of the occurrence and/or the magnitude of harmful outcomes resulting from climate-related hazards” (Brooks, Adger, and Kelly, 2005). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change defines climate change adaptation strategies as, “actions taken to help communities and ecosystems cope with changing climate condition.” In Cambodia, Governments, NGOs and INGOs need to assess why the country is vulnerable, coordinate the actors who are responsible for adaptation measures and manage climate-related data. With that information in hand, Cambodia will be able to implement plans that will decrease the negative impacts of climate change and increase the adaptive capacity.

Capacity Development and Capacity Building

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sees capacity development as “the process through which individuals, organisations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time.” INGOs and NGOs bring a “toolbox” of techniques that are often referred to as capacity building, as they are generally delivered to community members as part of a capacity development approach. In general, capacity means that individuals, groups and governments have the information, tools and confidence to plan for their futures and achieve development goals.
Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) looks at awareness of natural hazards and prevention of the factors that can make those natural hazards worse. DRR is a broad subject that covers preparing for emergencies, lessening the potential damage from weather events and managing the environment, land and water to lessen the damage from severe weather events and other natural disasters.

Participatory Rural Appraisal

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a tool used to incorporate the knowledge and opinions of rural people in planning and management of programmes. Different methods are used to help gather information from the community. These include group meetings, interviews, using images or designs to collect information, and analysing or validating existing information. PRA is about empowering people to analyse the problems that affect their daily lives and find solutions that meet the needs that are contained within the problems.

Rights-Based Approaches

Rights-based approaches (RBA) assume that every human being should be able to access services that provide for their human dignity and freedom and other rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Each human is a right holder, who engages and interacts with duty bearers to negotiate access to and secure their rights. Duty bearers are the institutions that are supposed to manage and deliver the services and systems that respect, protect and fulfil each individual’s human rights. Climate change, as it affects livelihoods and makes resources scarce, has the potential to limit realisation of human rights such as the right to food and water.
JCCI Organisational Partners

**Forum Syd** works toward the strengthening of the civil society. Forum Syd’s Democracy and Human Rights Programme aims to strengthen all people in Cambodia, especially poor and marginalised people, to have increased access to democratic influence, rights and natural resources. The programme supports local partners both financially and with capacity building through a team of advisors working with capacity building within the areas of legal rights, advocacy, gender and finance.

**DanChurchAid/ChristianAid (DCA/CA)** works with local partners to respond to natural disasters, political and social changes with a focus on food security, which includes DRR and climate change response, protection of human rights, and gender justice. The work of DCA/CA in Cambodia is guided by the belief that all people have the right to a sustainable livelihood, basic services, safety from conflict and disaster, and an effective voice in decision-making and equal rights.

**Cord** envisions a world where peace, dignity and human rights are fully realized and advances this vision by working in societies affected by violent conflict and developing the capacity of partners to build sustainable peace. Within a partnership-based capacity development model, Cord works across focus areas of natural resource management, human rights, gender and governance through mentoring, coaching, training, and advisory and technical support.

Until recently, much of Cambodian civil society and local communities had little understanding of climate change issues. ForumSyd, DCA/CA, and
Cord recognised that as a cross cutting issue, addressing climate change in organisational programming required a coordinated and systematic response. The organisations formed the Joint Climate Change Initiative (JCCI) in 2009 to combine their resources to build the capacity of locally-based, rural NGOs to integrate climate change actions within their existing projects and programmes. By focusing on enhancing current initiatives and programmes instead of launching separate activities, JCCI demonstrated how to integrate climate change adaptation into a strategic, long term development process for rural communities.

JCCI sought to generate results: raising awareness and understanding about climate change, developing a base of useful methods and tools for building adaptive capacity and designing and piloting local initiatives that expanded current programmes to respond to climate change issues. With a consistent process of coaching, mentoring and providing feedback to partner organizations, JCCI cultivated an environment for learning by doing. Simultaneously, JCCI was also involved in climate change advocacy on a national and international level. The JCCI collaboration resulted in accomplishments greater than what could have been achieved individually.

Good Practices for Building a Consortium:

- Aim for diversity in organisational expertise. Recognise that each organisation brings strengths to the collective effort.
- Plan for working together. Set out goals and develop the agreements for how decisions are made.
- Recognise that working together takes time and can be difficult, but the relationships built are valuable.
JCCITIMELINE

2010
♠ Phase 1 of JCCI is launched with 10 local partner NGOs.
♠ Partners learn about climate change, sustainable development, rights-based approaches, and participatory planning.
♠ Partners transfer knowledge to their communities.
♠ Partners conduct analysis with their communities to develop pilot projects.
♠ JCCI undergoes an evaluation to refine training and organisational development methods.

2011
♠ JCCI launches a newsletter to share information among organizations. Stories that highlight partner successes and key highlights of national and international climate change news are included.
♠ Phase 1 projects move forward into implementation. JCCI provides technical support and advisors to reinforce project implementation.
♠ Phase 1 projects undergo a technical assessment to ensure sound practices are being implemented in the field.
♠ Phase 2 of the project is launched with 12 partners. The training programme is expanded to include both classroom and field-based workshops linking theory and practice.
♠ Phase 2 partners develop pilot projects.

2012
♠ Training workshops for Phase 2 partners continue.
♠ JCCI provides resource experts to support the practices of projects.
♠ Periodic learning forums are initiated to build networking and knowledge sharing among JCCI partners from all phases. Learning forums include presentations by experts and peer-led seminars organized by focus areas.
♠ JCCI provides support for awareness and advocacy in cooperation with national and international networks and media. JCCI also plays a key role...
in coordinating Cambodian CSOs and partners to engage in international adaptation forums and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- Phase 2 members travel to Indonesia and the Philippines to learn about community responses to climate change.
- JCCI publishes a Learning Manual and a summary of good practices. These tools are distributed publicly to build the knowledge network.
- JCCI offsets its carbon emissions from international travel
- Phase 3 is planned. The selected pilot projects will be expanded into model sites as a tool for outreach and education. Small grants will be awarded to remaining JCCI partners. Efforts to raise awareness, strengthen collaboration and promote advocacy continue. All partners will retain access to capacity development and networking opportunities.
Addressing the issues of climate change at the community level is complex. It involves sophisticated science and specific technical terms, new technology, involvement with a wide variety of stakeholders, and changes in people’s behaviours and beliefs. JCCI recognised that their Cambodian partner organisations would need to receive intensive education and capacity building from the Consortium to both understand climate change and to build effective responses to climate change impacts.

JCCI developed and implemented a training curriculum that covered a variety of subjects. Phase 1 partners were exposed to five learning modules that were then expanded by three field practicums in the second phase. The JCCI curriculum incorporated topics such as climate change science, strategies for climate change adaptation, an assessment of the organisations’ internal operations, and how climate change adaptation strategies might be implemented and integrated into their existing programmes. These topics were covered through both lecture and group discussion. Partners then learned how to use planning tools that encouraged meaningful participation of community residents and local authorities. The partners conducted a functional analysis and a situational analysis with these stakeholders. The results from the planning workshops were used to develop and implement pilot projects that addressed the needs of the community on the local level.

As the pilot projects were implemented, JCCI partners came together in periodic learning forums to share their lessons learned and build relationships among each other. In the learning forums, the JCCI partners were exposed to national and international experts in a plenary session and then organized into smaller groups among four focus areas: 1) sustainable agriculture, 2) natural resource management, 3) local governance, and; 4) policy advocacy.
The focus areas provided an opportunity for partners to share ideas and resources on a specific topic. The JCCI partners also visited other JCCI-funded projects in neighbouring communities to share information and tools. Selected partners travelled to the Philippines and Indonesia for exposure visits to other community organisations to learn from their experiences with programming related to climate change.

**Good Practices from the Learning Process**

- Coach and mentor partners to ensure comprehensive understanding and application of new topics.
- Learn theory, apply the theory through practice and refine the practice with coaching and expanded theory.
- Include reflection on what was learned and how it can be improved. This is a key part of a learning process.
- Build structured opportunities for organizations to share knowledge, experiences and techniques with each other.
- Conduct a field-based technical assessment of climate change adaptation techniques that are used by partner organisations. Combine local knowledge and experience with new innovations to address climate change. This will ensure that the methods are implemented properly.
- Start with the basics and expand knowledge as required to meet particular needs.

Avoid using technical terms when speaking with community members; try to use words that community members will understand.
In each phase of the JCCI programme, partners put the knowledge gained from the workshops into practical use within the community. The pilot projects were intended to be short-term efforts that not only allowed partners to apply their new knowledge but also addressed community needs.

JCCI partners completed an organisational self-assessment as an early step toward developing the pilot projects. This process helped to evaluate the organisation’s current ability to put the climate change responses into action and identify the resources needed to achieve success. Capacity Development Advisors from Cord, DCA/CA and Forum Syd supported the learning process each step of the way, supporting the partners to reflect on their actions and improve their skills while they were mobilizing the community to implement climate change responses into programming.
### Overview of JCCI Partners and Pilot Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Implementation Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banteay Srei (BS)</td>
<td>Focused on enabling vulnerable women to develop alternative livelihood strategies and prepare for disasters.</td>
<td>Kralagn district, Siem Reap province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian Centre for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC)</td>
<td>Introduced new agriculture techniques and increased awareness of climate change in local leadership.</td>
<td>Samakay Meanchey district, Kampong Chhnang province</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodian Civil Society Partnership (CCSP)</td>
<td>Worked with local government to integrate climate change adaptation into commune development plans.</td>
<td>Krakor district, Pursat province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian NTFP Development Organisation (CAN-DO)</td>
<td>Built multi-stakeholder relationships and introduced new agricultural practices to indigenous people.</td>
<td>Veunsai district, Ratanakiri province</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)</td>
<td>Educated decision makers about climate change adaptation and mitigation and increased public participation on climate change issues.</td>
<td>Teukphos, Rolear Ph'Ear and Samaky Meanchey district, Kampong Chhnang province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Partnership in Action (DPA)</td>
<td>Worked with local communities to enable them to integrate climate change into Village Development Plans and implement new agricultural techniques.</td>
<td>Lumpat district, Ratanakiri province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT)</td>
<td>Built DRR and climate change adaptation strategies into community based livelihood initiatives through linking environmental management and livelihood improvements.</td>
<td>Kampong Klaing and Kampong Pluk communes in Siem Reap province</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)</td>
<td>Fostered the participation of diverse stakeholders to improve the community’s sustainable development plan.</td>
<td>Samlaut district, Battambang province</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD)</td>
<td>Empowered youth to participate in decision making and action to address climate change.</td>
<td>Phnom Srouch district, Kampong Speu province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer Youth Association (KYA)</td>
<td>Coached and mentored youth to become involved in local decision making on climate change issues.</td>
<td>Svay Antor district, Prey Veng province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life with Dignity (LWD)</td>
<td>Built the voice of women in agriculture and prevented deforestation.</td>
<td>Thpong district in Kampong Speu province and Tuek Phos district in Kampong Chhnang province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP)</td>
<td>Strengthened the organisation and community’s focus on forestry Voluntary Carbon Market options.</td>
<td>Vrensai district, Ratanakiri province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation to Develop our Villages (ODOV)</td>
<td>Created demonstration projects with local farmers to show innovative agriculture techniques.</td>
<td>Kampong Trabaek district, Prey Veng province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK)</td>
<td>Trained community people and the Commune Committee for Disaster Management (CCDM) to include DRR in commune development plans.</td>
<td>Borseth district, Kampong Speu province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Center for Development and Peace (PDP)</td>
<td>Mainstreamed climate change response into the “Better Democracy for Community Development” project.</td>
<td>Pouk district, Siem Reap province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponleu Ney Kdey Samgkhum (PNKS)</td>
<td>Empowered rural vulnerable community members to self-manage DRR activities.</td>
<td>Borseth district, Kampong Speu province</td>
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Good Practices for Integrating Climate Change Adaptation:
Lessons from Local Partners in Cambodia

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<td>Star Kampuchea (SK)</td>
<td>Increased capacity to work with local organisational partners to address climate change in existing projects.</td>
<td>Phnom, Kravanh and Bakan districts, Pursat Province and Romeashek district, Svay Rieng province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Support Group (VSG)</td>
<td>Improved the knowledge of natural DRR mechanisms in people working in local fishery and community protected areas.</td>
<td>Thmor Purk and Mongkulborey districts, Banteay Meanchey province.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Samples of Approaches used by JCCI Partners in Pilot Projects

*Share information about climate change and its impact on Cambodia*

- Develop materials that use pictures to convey information so that people with low literacy levels can understand the message.
- Tell the story as a way of explaining a need, or to illustrate a point.
- Produce a video that gives local people a chance to tell their story. This allows for people who have low literacy levels to see and hear about successful projects in other communities.
- Engage the media with press releases and photos in order to raise awareness about the project.
- Create an agricultural or water management demonstration project in an accessible place so people can visit and observe successful implementation.
- Educate and train community members about the science behind the changes in weather and climate.
- Share experiences and material at national and international events such as the Farmer’s Forum and the Adaptation Forum.
**Build the ability to participate in decision-making**

- Encourage individual and community involvement for thinking about the impacts of climate change and why their community is vulnerable. Engage local knowledge about how to plan for disaster response.
- Use the existing processes within commune and district level planning to bring community concerns to the table.
- Build the skills of the community to advocate for their needs with local authorities.
- Ensure that community members and local officials have a voice in the decisions that are made.
- Identify situations where there is shared interest from multiple stakeholders to address the challenges presented by climate change. Oftentimes, these groups of stakeholders can work together to achieve an outcome that could not be achieved individually.

According to the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization, approximately 80% of Cambodia’s population lives in rural areas and 73% depend primarily on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods. Approaches for adapting agricultural practices are included here to reflect the significance of this activity within the JCCI partners.

*Good Practices for Integrating Climate Change Adaptation: Lessons from Local Partners in Cambodia*
Reduce chemical fertilizer and strengthen the soil around the plants by using compost soil covers to provide nourishment for plants.

Learn about and practise a system of rice intensification planting techniques which use less water than traditional techniques.

Plant short-growing rice that can go through a full growth cycle and be harvested before the flood season.

Avoid burning rice straw. The straw can be collected and used for garden compost or returned to the field for fertiliser.

Use “drip irrigation” systems that deliver water directly to the plant, thereby reducing water loss to evaporation and reducing vulnerability to drought.

Become familiar with the concepts of integrated farming. One technique of integrated farming uses animal waste for fertiliser.

Support small irrigation systems such as ponds and canals.
Strengthening the Voice of Youth

Youth are playing an increased role in the advocacy and problem solving needed to deal with the impact of climate change across the globe. In Cambodia, JCCI worked with three organisations that implement programmes specifically working with youth. The Khmer Youth Association (KYA), People’s Center for Development and Peace (PDP) and Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD) are working individually and collectively to ensure that youth are participating in climate change action and advocacy on community and national levels.

KYSD became a part of JCCI’s Phase 2 cohort in 2011. The pilot project developed by KYSD and their youth members has already had a significant impact on the community. The project focused on raising awareness of youth and the community, planting trees in previously logged areas and working with families to plan community gardens. Said Heng Sokkunthea, who was involved with KYSD as a teenager, is a programme coordinator for the organisation.

“Through JCCI, I learned how to conduct a community assessment. I used to be really shy, but I got more confident about reaching out to others.”
The community assessment she mentions used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), a methodology that’s a key part of the JCCI learning approach. With her confidence in this method, she invited long-time community members to create a map of the conditions and resources in the community and identify areas that could be vulnerable to climate change. The word has spread about KYSD—she’s been invited to present her ideas to donors and the public.

The youth participants in the programme are experiencing their own changes as well. KYSD worked with youth to identify what they could do to deal with the issues of climate change. “My favourite part of this project is doing the physical work. I like planting trees and talking with other youth groups about what they are doing to address climate change. Before, I didn’t think about the problems of cutting down all the trees. Now I know that the forests can be used for the people”, mentioned Sorn Sokahn, a young community member. “Before I saw that the youth did not have a good relationship with each other, did not spend time at home and argued with each other.” said Phim Lida, a Cambodian volunteer who spent six months working with KYSD participants in the village, “Now they know that working in the garden and in the forest helps them reduce their wasted time and produce more income.” The youth have also expanded their skills and capabilities, lending new energy to the issues of climate change in the community.

**Good Practices for working with youth on climate change issues:**

- Involve youth from the beginning in identifying the problems and the solutions.
- Ensure that girls and young women have adequate opportunities to contribute to discussions.
- Enable youth to define their roles and responsibilities in the project.
- Provide locally-based mentoring to encourage youth to participate in community planning and decision-making. Mentoring should be provided by adults that youth can relate to and trust.
- Facilitate connections and networks with other youth organisations.
GOVERNANCE, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY

The problems resulting from climate change are complex. Solving them often requires involvement from multiple stakeholders to reach a collective understanding of the existing conditions. Coordinated action is needed to address the present problems and plan for the future.

The challenge of climate change must to be addressed across all levels of government. Village and commune leadership are critical stakeholders for supporting community initiatives. District and national officials have important perspectives for bringing the issue of climate change to the forefront of a country strategy for Cambodia. The linkages between the community level advocacy and the national level policy changes in Cambodia are being forged. Efforts to link with and educate others about the scope of climate change impacts are happening on a local, regional, national and international level.

For many Cambodian organisations, the collaborative work that occurs at the local level has a significant impact upon building relationships needed to address climate change problems far into the future. “We had the cooperation of the local authorities when we wrote the concept note for partnership in the JCCI project,” said Provincial Team Leader Khieu Sopheak from Development and Partnership in Action (DPA). We worked closely with the village disaster committee to identify the things that needed to be done and put those items into the plan for the community.” DPA has a long history of working with people at the village level, in building their capacity to advocate for their own rights.

JCCI partner Banteay Srei, which aims to empower vulnerable women in Siem Reap, worked with villages to elect community facilitators, who
helped to identify and prioritize needs and activities to reduce disaster risk and address climate change. After the outreach process, the results were included in a small village pilot proposal. The success of that project will be used to seek funding for other community development projects. Through the process of discussing how crop harvests have been impacted by climate change and by working to identify needs in their own villages, local community members have begun to understand how to maintain their quality of life in a changing climate.

With floods becoming more violent and the temperature becoming more unpredictable, education about planning and adapting is an essential message to convey to local authorities.

“We worked to train the Commune Council. Local officials attended our workshops and then included JCCI-funded projects in the Commune Investment Plan. A village chief within the Chey Odom commune agreed to contribute land for a water storage pond. The community dedicated some funding also,” said Kheiu Sopheak from DPA. He added, “because many people were involved in supporting the project, there was a process for selecting who would get the contract to dig the pond and we got a very low price for the work.”

When community members, NGOs, and local authorities are all involved with the decisions about how resources are distributed to the community, the results will often generate less controversy and are more valuable to the community than if one entity does it alone. DPA and community members worked with the local authorities to determine the criteria for selecting who would receive water filters, which farms would dedicate a plot of land for using drip irrigation or covered beds, and which homes would have the installation of a bio-gas “digester,” which uses cow dung to create gas used for cooking and lighting in the home. The relationships developed during the planning activities were valuable and ensured the success of the project.
The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGO Forum) engages in national and international advocacy initiatives on behalf of its members, whom are mostly local NGOs operating in a number of sectors. NGO Forum received funding from JCCI to train their staff and NGO Forum members on the technical aspects of climate change and climate change advocacy strategies. NGO Forum also conducted organising activities with their members such as the Cambodian Civil Society Statement on climate change that was presented to the CoP 18 of the UNFCCC in November-December 2012. NGO Forum uses their contacts and connections from their existing programmes on development, environment, land and livelihoods to conduct advocacy on a national level. JCCI’s local partners are able to access nationwide discussions through the dialog between JCCI staff and the NGO Forum.

The relationships built within the NGO Forum’s membership and with the Ministry of Environment officials are valuable in providing opportunities for sharing information and ideas about initiatives to address climate change.
In speaking about the NGO Forum’s general approach to advocacy, Im Phalley, Environment Programme Manager of the NGO Forum remarked, “we start with learning the policy frameworks for our programme focus areas. Then we can help the government with hearing the voices and concerns of Cambodian people in their technical responses,” She continued, “that helps us build our credibility. We also make sure that we respond to each request or invitation to participate in discussions on the national level.”

**Good Practices for governance, advocacy and public policy to address climate change:**

- Build the relationship with local authorities systematically. Start with tangible projects that have an immediate benefit to the community.

- Introduce the topic of climate change to government through disaster risk reduction and disaster management planning processes.

- Start with a small project that has a high potential for success. Invite authorities on the commune, district and national levels to see the results.

- Be aware of the national efforts and engage in opportunities to influence strategy or policy.

- Understand the policy framework under which each government department operates and adapt responses to meet their objectives.
Other Climate Change Stakeholders and Frameworks

The Cambodia Climate Change Network (CCCN) is made up of private sector organisations, local and international NGOs and individuals that are working on climate change on a national and international level.

NGO Forum works on advocating for pro-poor climate change policies, with a focus on bringing the voices of local communities and community organisations to the national level.

The Climate Change Department in the Kingdom of Cambodia’s Ministry of Environment was established in 1998 to advance the government’s efforts to deal with climate change. The department has held periodic forums to address the nation’s response to climate change.

The Cambodia Climate Change Alliance is a multi-donor trust fund that provides resources for climate change projects at the national and local government level. JCCI issued a statement to ensure the officials were aware of JCCI’s efforts.

Cambodia’s Climate Change Strategic Plan is tracked by organisations to ensure that locally-based NGOs have a voice in the process.

Internationally, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the leading international effort to address climate change. Cambodian NGOs worked together to issue a joint statement to bring Cambodia’s concerns to the attention of policymakers.
Good Practices for Integrating Climate Change Adaptation: Lessons from Local Partners in Cambodia
Agriculture is a critical part of Cambodia’s economy and way of life. For rice farmers, changes in the weather or temperature can have an immediate and negative impact on their ability to sustain their families’ food security. The strategies implemented by JCCI’s partners have started the process of introducing new methods to farmers that will help ease the impacts of climate change. These techniques and ideas are not new or expensive. The practices simply reinforce the whole ecosystem picture of farming, including soil health and water conservation. They also teach farmers how to adapt their agricultural techniques to withstand changing climate patterns, improve the diversity of food sources and expand their sources of income.

The Organisation to Develop Our Villages (ODOV) implemented project activities and developed Village Model Farms in Prey Veng province. The Village Model Farms (VMF) serve as a demonstration site, a centre for practical training for community’s members, and a source of agricultural inputs and technical information. They are also valuable tools for demonstrating how to use techniques to adapt to climate change and build resilience to the food insecurity that can result from climate change impacts.

The VMF are built to produce vegetable seeds, seedlings and fruit tree saplings for distribution to target households on a commercial basis as well as to show people new ways of growing vegetables. ODOV developed criteria for selecting the VMF. The criteria included owning at least 1,000 square meters of land and being able and willing to maintain the VMF year round, in addition to having the location close to a main road so that people could get to them easily. The farmers themselves needed to meet some basic requirements. They had to be willing to contribute their time and income to invest in the model farm, be receptive to try new ideas and provide assistance to other farmers.

In a relatively limited space, the home gardens are filled with activities and livestock. There are different elements to the “Integrated Farm” that all
support a family’s ability to provide food, potentially generate extra income from producing items for market and reduce their dependence on a single crop for income and nutrition. These new practices are a tool to adapt to the variations in weather and water supply that result from climate change.

A brick and cement pen holds the compost, a rich combination of rice husks, manure and other discarded garden waste that is used to build the soil in the garden. Pigs’ waste is used to feed fish in a nearby pond. Pond water, rich in nutrients, is also used to fertilize the garden. A nursery for new plants has a light mesh covering that allows sunlight in but provides some shelter from wind and pests and strengthens the seedlings. Garden plants are grown inside a fenced area with beds that are raised up to 6 inches above the ground. Some beds are covered with a thin layer of plastic with a hole for a single plant and a “drip irrigation” watering system that delivers water directly to the base of the vegetables, thereby conserving water. All of these techniques help to conserve water resources, and help plants withstand severe weather when it occurs.

“The ODOV seeds work.” Said Hamban, a demonstration farmer. “I used to buy vegetables from the market, but now we can grow our own. Farmers have no idea what to do, but they are open to learning new techniques. They trust ODOV. When they see the results, then they believe.”
The demonstration gardens are an important tool for testing new strategies on a small scale and then sharing the lessons learned and successes with other farmers. To promote involvement and plan for the future, ODOV also set up a seed bank. The seeds are collected from the demonstration farm and given to people who are interested in growing their own vegetables. Good Practices for promoting agricultural techniques that adapt to climate change

✔ Understand the local impacts that farmers are experiencing from climate change.

✔ Show people what works and then make it easy for them to try for themselves.

✔ Focus on techniques that are easy and inexpensive to implement and generate increased plant health.

✔ Use local materials and resources to fertilize the soil and promote plant growth.

✔ Start with growing foods that provide nutrition, and then raise products that can be sold at the market to generate income.

✔ Highlight the extent to which these techniques can save money and time.

✔ Share the successes of the methods through farmer to farmer exchanges. Sharing knowledge and experience is a powerful tool for initiating changes in agricultural practice.
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For the people in the villages of Kampong Pluk and Kampong Klaing on Tonle Sap Lake, the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT) is an important partner for a community process to develop strategies to cope with the impacts of climate change. The villagers live in a dynamic environment unlike any other in the world. Local fishermen sustain their families with a variety of fish in Southeast Asia’s largest lake.

Each year, the lake is filled during the rainy season, which increases the water level by up to 4 meters. In the dry season, the waters flow out to the Tonle Sap river. Family houses are built on long stilts just inside a “flooded forest” on the shore of the lake. This forest provides valuable fish habitat, is an attraction for tourists and also protects the communities from the impacts of storms by acting as a buffer against the high winds and waves that occur during weather events. These forests play an important role in dealing with the impacts of climate change.

With support from JCCI, FACT worked closely with the villages to implement several strategies to build the community’s ability to deal with the increasing strength and intensity of weather events, such as high winds and surges in lake height. Residents are also concerned about the declining fish populations and illegal logging activities in the forest. FACT worked closely with community members to develop and implement a forest management plan, which includes reforestation activities.
The forest on the lakeside has five purposes. It provides traditional medicine, creates an ecosystem that supports birds and wildlife, increases fish habitat, protects the community from the strong waves, and is a natural wall against the big storms.” Srie Lee explained. As a commune councillor and local natural resource expert, he’s been integrally involved in the discussions on how to address the growing impacts of climate change. “Our community is now aware of climate change. People are preparing for flood season earlier in the year. They also recognise that the forest is important to protect our long term future.” As a result of the planning process organized by FACT, the commune has approved a majority of projects that have been proposed by the Community-Based Organizations. “The community is working together to defend our forests from illegal logging. There are some trees that we cut to maintain our houses, but we understand how to manage the forest so that the big and strong trees remain in the forest to protect the village from the big waves.”

Good Practices for Forestry Management to mitigate Climate Change

☑ Start implementing activities with people who care deeply about protecting the forest resource. They will be natural leaders for inviting others to participate.

☑ Educate community members about the positive attributes of the forest resource.

☑ Invite a wide variety of people who care about or receive economic benefit from the forest, including local tourism businesses.

☑ Plant trees. Trees provide multiple benefits that include preventing land erosion, assisting with agriculture by providing nitrogen and retaining water and providing a number of products that can be sustainably harvested.
For many projects funded through the JCCI initiative, the issues that have arisen through the community workshops have resulted in a candid discussion about preparing for significant weather events. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is becoming a more common term in the discussions of climate change throughout Cambodia, particularly because of recent flooding events in 2011.

Severe weather affects people who are already poor and struggling to feed their families. For many farmers, the ability to predict the weather has become more difficult in recent years. Many participants in JCCI-funded projects said that the training on climate change issues and natural resource systems provided them with a larger picture to understand the differences that they have observed in recent years.

Like other countries in Southeast Asia, Cambodia is expected to experience higher and more intense rainfall. The effects are likely to include more severe water scarcity and more frequent floods, resulting in crop failures and food shortages. Accelerated loss of biodiversity will cause a decline in ecosystem services. Coastal communities and eco-systems are likely to be affected by rises in sea levels. Higher temperatures and humidity will create conditions for increased incidence of malaria and dengue fever. The poor and marginalized, particularly women and children, will be worst affected.”

~Cambodia Climate Change Alliance Fact Sheet (Project #00073625), United Nations Development Program, July 2010
mentioned a chief in the Community-Based Organisation in Kampong Phuk. In the community planning sessions, participants created a hazard map for the community. The map showed areas where flooding, damage and other disaster-related impacts had occurred in the past. Identifying those areas was the first step to developing the measures needed to alleviate the potential problems caused by natural disasters. The community based planning process set the stage for gaining the support needed from local authorities. Kampong Phuk proposed eight projects to the commune investment plan and six of those were accepted.

Part of the planning process is determining the roles and responsibilities for implementing a disaster response. In communities that are situated near rivers, having a clearly developed exit strategy is critical. A deputy chief in the Chey Odom commune in the Ratanakiri province said,

“When people understood the changes that are occurring, they realized that they have to be prepared first. Trying to deal in the middle of a disaster is too hard.”
~ Village Chief, Kampong Phuk Village

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is an opportunity to introduce techniques that can build the adjustments needed to withstand climate change impacts. Examples of adaptations can include, “preparing risk assessments, protecting ecosystems, improving agricultural methods, managing water

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resources, building settlements in safe zones, developing early warning systems, instituting better building designs, improving insurance coverage and developing social safety nets.” These are good practices that will increase the community’s resilience to natural disasters and other climate change impacts.

Good Practices for Disaster Risk Reduction

- Develop a community-based agreement on the risks and hazards.
- Develop a plan for disaster response. Ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community have extra support during a severe weather event.
- Raise awareness among community members others about the disaster plan.
- Establish a committee to be responsible for the public assets, such as emergency supplies and equipment, which are dedicated to managing natural disasters.
Mainstreaming and Integrating Climate Change into Programming

Across the country, Cambodians who depend on gardens, rice fields and forests are noticing changes in the weather and temperature from the previous years. Life with Dignity (LWD) was aware of the climate change impacts before they were invited to the JCCI partnership. LWD works with local residents through Integrated Rural Development through Empowerment Projects (IRDEPs) that are operating in Battambang, Kampong Chhnang and Kampong Speu provinces.

The impacts of climate change are an external factor that is now an important part of our long-range planning process.” said Chan Vibol, LWD’s Programme Manager. “Through the JCCI programme, LWD increased the staff’s capacity to learn about climate change and exchange information and resources with other Cambodian NGOs.” The methods and materials from the JCCI partnership are now something that the LWD staff can use in all of their programme delivery strategies. The JCCI approach is very complementary to our existing methods.” Vibol continued, “what was valuable was the ability to form stronger relationships with other partners doing similar work in other provinces.”

JCCI’s support facilitated an exposure visit for eight farmers to visit ODOV’s demonstration farms in Prey Veng province and a similar project in Takeo Province.

In Takeo, a farmer from Kampong Chhnang province was intrigued by the use of red worms to metabolize manure into compost and reduce the amount of water and fertiliser needed for his crops. The farmer bought one kilo of worms and set up his own propagation system in Kampong Chhnang as part of the demonstration garden set up with JCCI support. He sells the worms...
to other household farmers in the area in addition to using the material to build the soil for his current crops. The techniques that the farmer learned from LWD are now a part of his normal farming practice.

For LWD, the information and tools that they learned from their partnership with JCCI have been integrated into their programme approach and the services. More importantly, the people in LWD’s target areas have the information and the tools they need to build their flexibility to cope with the fluctuations in the weather that are a result of climate change.

Good Practices for Integrating Climate Change into Programming

- Review the organisation’s long-range plans to determine how the impact of climate change will affect your programme goals and objectives.
- Consider strategies or techniques that will build diversity in food sources, income generation or livelihood activities. These activities will strengthen the ability to withstand change.
- Empower people by providing them with accurate information, practical tools and the confidence to build relationships with the people, organisations and government departments that have resources to share.
With the education, technical assistance and financial support for pilot projects, JCCI and its partners have initiated important first steps to empower Cambodians to address the effects of climate change. JCCI’s multi-pronged strategy shared technical information and group process tools to advance progress on policy initiatives and locally-driven projects. With a focus on learning, reflection, testing and refining these tools, JCCI partners developed locally-driven initiatives that integrated climate change response activities into existing programmes. The pilot projects that were implemented in 2011 and 2012 focused on strategies to build the capacity of communities to adapt to a changing climate and counter-balance the causes of climate change.

In 2013, JCCI will offer networking and learning opportunities for all partners. There will be a small grants program established to provide funding for specific projects to further the knowledge building, community involvement and planning processes in rural villages. Selected partners will be offered larger grants to develop model sites that apply adaptation technologies. JCCI will also continue to strengthen technical capacity of all partners so that they can address climate change by integrating adaptation activities into their programmes.
Climate change is real and happening in Cambodia, and its impacts are unavoidable. The country is considered highly vulnerable due to its high levels of poverty and lack of infrastructure to cope with natural disasters and other longer-term effects of climate change, but by increasing society’s capacity to respond and adapt well, the impacts can be minimised.

However, climate change is not only about impacts and threats – how Cambodia responds to climate change also presents opportunities that lead to healthy economic and social development. Acting on climate change, reducing poverty and pursuing sustainable development can – and must – go hand in hand.”

~UNDP Cambodia, 2012.
Good Practices for Integrating Climate Change Adaptation
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Endnotes


The Joint Climate Change Initiative is a collaborative effort between Forum Syd, DCA/CA and Cord. The JCCI works to enhance the capacity of its 22 Cambodian NGO partners and the communities in which they work in order to reduce their vulnerability to climate change.

The views and opinions expressed in this booklet do not necessarily reflect the views of Sida.