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CAMBODIA

**ActionAid
Strategy
Paper
2013-2018**



We work closely with rural Cambodian women to end gender inequality, Photo: Banteay Meanchey Province

...How can we bring about real and sustained positive change in the lives of urban and rural women, men, young people and children living in poverty?

That's what we asked ourselves, our partners and the citizens groups we work with while we were developing this six-year strategy.

Our previous strategy from 2008-2012, **Justice & equality is possible; Search for alternatives**, positioned us to achieve many successes. Adopting community empowerment processes and community led actions with our local partners has helped ActionAid Cambodia bring positive changes in the lives of thousands of vulnerable and excluded women, men and children across 15 provinces in Cambodia. Securing sustainable access and control over their livelihoods and ending violence in the home are just two. In this new strategy period, we will build on our grounded empowerment work with communities particularly women and children. We will continue to support community organizing and mobilizing work led by the people, for the people, to strengthen food security through promotion of climate resilient sustainable agriculture. We will, continue to empower women and girls so that they too can enjoy their rights to development and enjoy their rights to mobility in cities. And we will increase our focus on ensuring all children in the communities with whom we work enjoy their right to quality public education. We will also ensure that women rights, disaster risk reduction and governance are addressed in all aspects of our work. We reaffirm our commitment to respond to emergencies in the communities where we have a long term presence,

But more change is needed.

ActionAid Cambodia works with tens of thousands of people across the country every year to end poverty and injustice.

In this strategy we make clear how we believe change happens and what our role and approach will be in bringing positive change about. We commit ourselves to three strategic objectives, and ten change promises, on which we will hold ourselves to account.

People living in poverty can lead the struggle to end poverty. We know this because we have been working with passionate, committed Cambodians for the past 13 years. Every day we help people to change their own lives for the better, for good. We take a human rights-based approach to everything we do because basic needs, such as food and education, are basic rights. And when people know their rights, and can act on this knowledge, long-term change is more likely. Together with our partners we work side by side with the most marginalised and poorest women, men, young people and children in both urban and rural areas over the long-term and connect their realities and dreams to bring about local and national change. In other words, we believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action, led by the active agency of people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible rights-based alternatives and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty. This is our **theory of change**. This strategy outlines what we want to achieve by 2018 and gives a roadmap to get there.



The Cambodian context

Cambodia has undergone rapid economic growth in recent years but, despite the accompanying wealth creation for some, the country continues to face numerous challenges. To achieve our goals over the next six years we will need to think about:

- **Poverty** : More than 28 percent of Cambodians live on less than \$1,25 a day, with the poorest at high risk of being left behind as the country moves towards rapid economic development.
- **Children** : Almost 40 percent of children do not finish primary school in Cambodia, while roughly the same percentages of under-5s suffer stunted growth due to malnutrition.
- **Women** : Rural to urban economic migration particularly of young women is increasing their vulnerability to violence, sexual assault/harassment and rape in public spaces.
- **Food security** : Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for most Cambodians, meaning that unsustainable fishing and farming policies and practice, coupled with problems with access to and control over resources, leave many hungry.
- **Disasters** : Cambodia is one of the most disaster prone countries in South East Asia, facing hazards including floods, droughts and insect infestations. The most vulnerable families barely have time to recover from one disaster before the next one strikes.
- **Climate change** : As the planet heats up Cambodia is likely to see more extreme weather events, hitting the poorest hardest.

Photo: ActionAid, Kampong Thom Province



who we are

ActionAid Cambodia is part of a global movement of people working together to achieve greater human rights for all and defeat poverty. We believe people in poverty have the power within them to create change for themselves, their families and communities. ActionAid is a catalyst for that change.

Our Vision is for a world without poverty and injustice, in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity.

Our Mission is to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice.

Our change statement : We want to see Cambodia with a **strong and vibrant civil society, led by empowered and dynamic people's organisations and networks, advocating for changes** in laws, policies and practices to attain justice and equality for all Cambodians.

ActionAid has been working in Cambodia since the year 2000, and the ActionAid Cambodia country office was set up in 2004. Since then we have been working with the poorest and most excluded men, women and children in the country, making long-term commitments to advance their human rights and transform the world in which their children grow up.

ActionAid Cambodia is part of ActionAid International, a global federation of 45 members committed to finding sustainable solutions to poverty and injustice. ActionAid International is collectively governed by all of its members, so everyone has a say on how the organisation works.

How we work

Our approach to securing change puts human rights front and centre, prioritising empowerment, solidarity and campaigning.

- **We help to empower excluded groups** by raising rights awareness, strengthening grassroots organizations and social movements and enabling people to have a say in the formal power structures that affect their lives.
- **We strengthen solidarity by connecting and organizing people committed to a common cause**, building alliances and deepening understanding and public awareness of poverty and justice issues.
- **We campaign** to mobilize people to take action, advocate for change and put local issues on the agenda at the local and national levels.

Our three strategic objectives

From 2013 to 2018 we are committed to advancing three strategic objectives and delivering on ten change promises. Each of our objectives falls under the banner of our overall strategic objective;

The rights of poor and excluded people will be protected, with particular emphasis on food security, quality public education and women's rights with smallholder farmers, artisan fisherfolk, women and children,

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Strategic objective one : By 2018 smallholder farmers, artisan fisherfolk, women and children in 75 communities where we work will have improved food security and control over their livelihoods. Food is a basic right. We all need an adequate and balanced diet to allow us to work, play and see our children grow strong. And yet many people struggle to get enough food to sustain themselves and their families – a problem contributed to in Cambodia by climate change, problems with land access and promotion of unsustainable farming and fishing practices.

Promise 1 : By 2018, 75 communities are practicing climate resilient sustainable agriculture, through reduced dependence on chemical inputs, increased crop diversification and increased soil and water conservation.

Promise 2 : By 2018, there will be increased government support, budget, supportive policies and practices (including financial and extension support) for small holder sustainable agriculture projects and programmes.

Promise 3 : The state protects land and common property resources from privatization and /or resource grabbing.

Working with farmers to end food insecurity through the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices.

Photo: Pursat Province



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Strategic objective two ; By 2018, 90% of girls and boys aged 6 -15 in the communities where we work will equally enjoy their right to quality public education, We all know that our school years are some of the most important of our lives, Access to quality public education allows children to discover what they are good at, harness that potential and develop skills that will improve their life chances and opportunities in the future years,

Promise 4: By 2018 we will have increased citizen participation in education governance and parent led school support committees.

Promise 5 : By 2018, all violations of rights in schools will have been identified and school improvement plans will be widely supported.

Promise 6: By 2018, the state of education is widely debated in the media and is a high domestic priority.

Promise 7: By 2018, there will be a strong national campaign for policy led reforms for quality public education, led by broad and inclusive coalition.



A group of Cambodian children walk to school in Ou Tong village, Oddor MeanChey province.

ActionAid is working toward raising educational standard for thousands of Cambodian children.

3

Strategic objective Three : By 2018, 8,000 women in urban areas and 70% of women in rural communities where we work are organised and challenge gender-based violence and gender inequality in all aspects of their lives, Gender inequality means Cambodian women have less access to land, education, networks, technology, transport, cash and decision-making than men. They face increasing threats of violence, sexual assault and rape in public spaces as the rural to urban migration of young women increases,

Promise 8 : By 2018, there will be an increased agency of women and girls negotiating with and lobbying duty bearers in different public and private spheres at sub national, national and international levels.

Promise 9 : By 2018 we will have supported coalitions and networks against violence against women in urban public spaces.

Promise 10 : By 2018, we will have helped to make women's rights a mainstream issue, supporting women and girls in influencing those responsible for enabling them to exercise their rights in both public and private spheres.



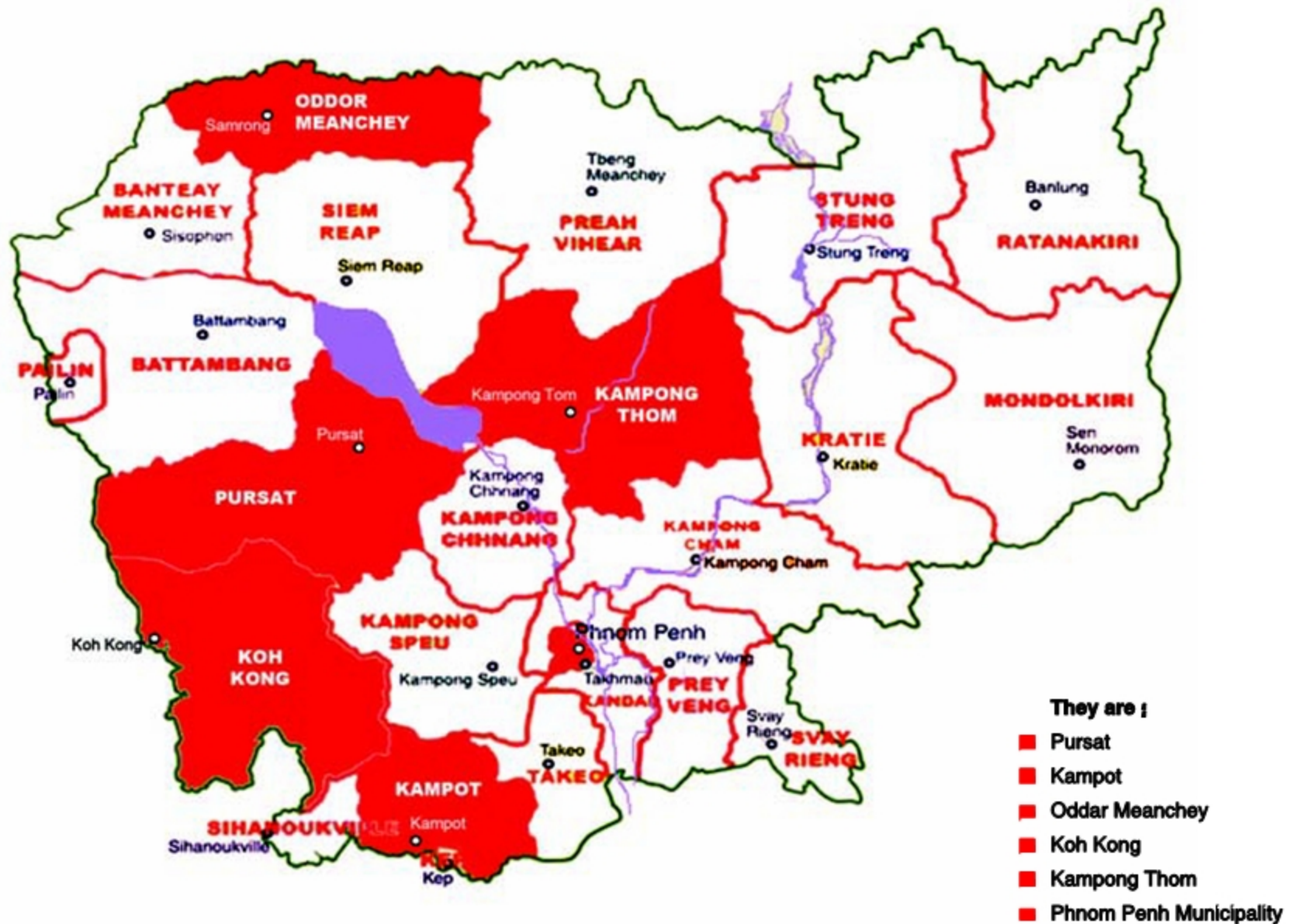
Who we work with

We support the poorest and most excluded groups in Cambodia. Over this strategy period we will work with:

- **Smallholder farmers** : Almost 60 percent of Cambodians rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and supporting small-scale sustainable farming is critical to tackling hunger and poverty. Rural poverty is widespread in Cambodia where farmers are facing problems with reduced access to, and control over, resources. We will invest in helping women and men smallholder farmers increase their incomes and the sustainability of their practices. We will support farmers groups to have their voices heard and responded to in decision making processes.
- **Artisan fisherfolk** : We will support artisan fisherfolk, especially women and children, in dealing with a range of challenges that threaten their livelihoods, including the commercialization of fishing resulting in long term species decline and pollution.
- **Women** ; In Cambodia, as elsewhere, the causes of poverty and injustice are gendered, socially ascribed roles in a patriarchal society mean that women living in poverty have less access to land, education, networks, technology, transport, cash, decision-making and control over their lives. We will put women's rights at the centre of all our work.
- **Children** : The violation of rights impacts on children dramatically, limiting their future potential. This is why we will continue to promote access to quality education and use our successful child sponsorship programme to advance our rights-based approach to poverty.
- **Our humanitarian mandate** means that when a disaster hits we will respond fast, providing support to affected families. Not only this but we help women and children build resilience and adaptive capacity through contingency planning, preparedness and response.

Where we work

ActionAid has identified six priority programme areas for 2013 - 2018



Our organisational priorities

We are confident that we will deliver on this ambitious strategy. In order to do this we will need to develop as an organisation. We have set ourselves five priorities to improve ourselves and ensure we are up to the challenge.

PRIORITY 1 : Continually assess and reassess our work, setting ourselves clear targets at all levels and monitoring whether we are hitting them.

PRIORITY 2 : Diversify our funding sources and increase our overall income to \$ 2,8 million by 2018,

PRIORITY 3 : Increase our own people power, improving the capacity of our staff to achieve positive change for the people we work with,

PRIORITY 4 : Continue to support our partners – in particular those with whom we are parting ways to build the skills they need to operate independently,

PRIORITY 5 : We will work toward becoming an affiliated member of ActionAid International.

Our values

Mutual respect, requiring us to recognise the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.

Equity and justice, requiring us to work to ensure equal opportunity for everyone, irrespective of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location and religion.

Honesty and transparency, being accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and open in our judgements and communications with others.

Solidarity with the poor, powerless and excluded will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty.

Courage of conviction, requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty.

Independence, from any religious or party-political affiliation.

Humility, in our presentation and behaviour, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty.



ActionAid is working with various communities in disaster prone areas in Cambodia to build their understanding on disaster risk reduction,

Photo; Flood in 2012/ Malai district, Banteay Meanchey province

In Conclusion ;

Our work is about directly improving the lives of the women, men, youth and children living in poverty in Cambodia, that is what this strategy will help us achieve.

From 2013-2018 we will deliver on our plans, giving many of the poorest and most excluded people :

- food security and control over their livelihoods
- quality education
- freedom from violence
- gender equality
- resilience to disasters and shocks.

It is an urgent mission, and to achieve it we have committed to change ourselves. We will measure this change and hold ourselves to account against our change promises.





Empowering Cambodians to enjoy their right to justice and equality

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