

**The influence of values on development practice:  
A study of Cambodian development practitioners in  
non-government organisations in Cambodia**

Submitted by  
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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ACFID	Australian Council For International Development
CARERE	Cambodian Resettlement and Reintegration Programme
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CD	Community Development
CDRA	Community Development Resource Association
CDRI	Cambodian Development Resource Institute
CNGO	Cambodian Non-Government Organisation
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
DK	Democratic Kampuchea
FUNCINPEC	National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GTZ	Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report (UNDP)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
KAWP	Krom Akphiwat Phum
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGDO	Non-Government Development Organisation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NNGO	Northern Non-Government Organisation
ODA	official development aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
SEILA	Khmer for "Foundation Stone" (major decentralisation initiative)
SNGO	Southern Non-Government Organisation
SOC	State of Cambodia
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCCD	World Commission on Culture and Development
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WID	Women in Development
WVS	World Values Survey

## SUMMARY

Evaluation reports, along with development studies literature suggest that development practice is often failing to enact espoused participatory, empowering and gender equitable approaches or to achieve these espoused goals. Mainstream development theories are underpinned by values and beliefs about what is good and what “ought to be”.

In this study I explore the influence of values on the development practice of Cambodian practitioners working in non-government organisations in rural Cambodia. Development practitioners are the major conduit of community based development assistance, but little is known about how their values impact their day-to-day practice, and influence their moral and political choices.

In the study I used ethnographic methodology, guided by feminist principles. The research was conducted with individuals and groups of experienced, mostly Cambodian development practitioners. Data were collected in four phases through in-depth and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations of practice.

I examine the (in)congruity between practitioners’ espoused theories and values and those demonstrated by their practice. The findings reveal that the values are not essentially different but are prioritized differently. The espoused values are consistent with those of the international development discourse, all of which are premised on a belief in human equality. Theories and values inferred from actual practice reflect hierarchical underpinnings. In the Cambodian context this is consistent with socio-cultural values and the hierarchical order of society. However, as expatriate research participants and the literature attest, this incongruence is not particular to Cambodian practitioners.

The study reveals practitioners give higher priority to fulfilling the tasks necessary for the achievement of their NGOs’ planned outputs and organisational imperatives than to the facilitation of participatory and empowering processes. At the same time, the enactment of some development values is in tension with certain socio-cultural norms and practices. Practitioners are challenged to make desirable development values explicit and identify how to operationalise them in the lived social, cultural, political and economic context.



## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee (Application No. 03-94).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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