

## **WHAT WORKS?**

**A Case Study of Successful Canadian Governance programming in  
Thailand and Cambodia**

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### ***A note on “What Works?”***

For about 14 years, since this case study was originally produced for Isabel Lloyd, Director of the CIDA-supported Southeast Asia Fund for Institutional and Legal Development, it has been available only in a paper version. I have had many requests, from Thailand, Cambodia and Canada for copies of the document over the past decade or so, but it is only recently that I received a copy from a colleague and I have been able to scan it.

The study itself is dated. The terminology used by CIDA to describe results has changed since this case study was originally completed and, of course, the political processes in both Thailand and Cambodia have proceeded in their own different ways since then. Similarly, conflict resolution programming in the two countries, and for that matter, elsewhere in the world, has also evolved.

Finally, my own approach to conducting such case studies has matured and, I hope, improved over time.

I trust the reader will keep the original publication date, and all of these limitations in mind, when reading the report. It is, with the exception of the addition of this introductory note, unedited – the original version, typos and all, produced in 1998.

For those who have asked for a copy I hope that, despite its obvious faults, it may still prove a useful reminder of what contributions a competent international aid intervention can make to governance professionals working in the field.

Greg Armstrong

***Ottawa: May 4, 2012***

More detail on my current activities in results-based management and international development can be found at [www.rbmtraining.com](http://www.rbmtraining.com) and at the [results-based management websites blog](#).

## Executive Summary

1. Conflict resolution practitioners from the Commission on Resources and Environment, and from the Institute for Dispute Resolution at the University of Victoria ran a successful two-year programme of conflict resolution training in Thailand and Cambodia between 1995 and 1997, with very limited initial funding provided by the Canadian International Development Agency.

2. Indicators of success included:

- The formal creation of two organizations: The Institute for Dispute Resolution at Khon Kaen University in Thailand, and the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution in Phnom Penh;
- The direct training of well over a thousand individuals in the two countries on policy issues related to conflict;
- The strong demand generated by these activities for more training in both countries;
- The successful utilization in the field of conflict resolution skills by participants trained in Cambodia and Thailand;
- The mobilization of significant resources in Thailand and Cambodia for extension of these programmes without Canadian funding.

3. Reasons for the success of the programme:

- Selection of Canadian, Thai and Cambodian partners with existing capacity to deliver programmes;
- Building programmes on genuine and indigenously expressed needs, and working with people with strong problem-solving motivation to participate;
- Decentralization of programme management;
- Flexible field work by Canadians and their partners, adapting concepts, ideas and procedures to local needs.
- Participatory decision-making emphasising the leadership of the Thai and Cambodian partners

The only significant problem in these programmes was unpredictable and limited sources of funding.

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## INTRODUCTION

Governance programming is a priority for many of the world's development donors. With the current crisis of economy and governance in Southeast Asia, programming which supports accountability and transparency of government processes, and reconciliation of competing interests, is perceived to be even more important today than it was a year ago.

But two critical questions arise when programming occurs in an area as fraught with ambiguity and intangibles as this:

1-How can donors, experts, government leaders know when programmes work?

2-If they work, if they achieve results, why? What are the factors which lead to successful programming in this complex and politically sensitive field?

This study attempts to answer these questions, for one programme. While the study of a single programme alone cannot in any sense be considered generalizable, it should be possible to learn a few lessons from a programme which works, and test them in other programmes in other environments.

The Southeast Asia Fund for Institutional and Legal Development, a regional programme of CIDA, commissioned this case history of one successful governance programme by Canadians in Thailand and Cambodia. The primary objective was to identify, in a succinct and easily readable analysis, the factors which led to successful programming in the hopes that other programmes might benefit from a similar approach. The governance activity selected for the study, was conflict resolution programming by a group of Canadians from British Columbia, in Thailand and Cambodia, between 1995-1998.

In 1995, the Commission on Resources and Environment of British Columbia, along with the Institute for Dispute Resolution at the University of Victoria, began work in Thailand on conflict resolution training. Shortly thereafter, work also began in Cambodia. In the three years since this activity began, with initial support from CIDA's formerly named Management for Change programme in Partnerships Branch, the reviews from the field - from Thais and Cambodians - has been that the conflict resolution activities have been a resounding (but not unqualified) success. That is why this programme was selected for analysis.

## FRAMEWORK

The study began with the premise, based on anecdotal evidence from the field, that this was a successful governance programme. But it is necessary to document this premise.

This study is based on documentary review, and a total of 38 interviews, three in Canada, 18 in Thailand (one a Cambodian in exile) and 17 in Cambodia in January and February, 1998. Those interested in a discussion of the methodology can refer to Appendix 2.

To simplify the analysis of what occurred, and how it affected the programming, this report uses two analytical paradigms: First, it uses a simplified variation of results-based management criteria, to assess inputs to the programme, then looks at outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the activities. Second, it borrows some concepts from policy-implementation research, to identify those factors which affected implementation of the project, in both positive and negative terms.<sup>1</sup>

The report is organized this way:

### **1. Context**

What were the economic conditions in Thailand when the programme was established?

What were the causes of conflict in Thailand and Cambodia when the programme was established?.

How did this donor agency (CIDA) fit into the context of these conditions in Thailand prior to the establishment of the conflict resolution programme?

### **2. The Programmes**

What were the inputs, and what did the Canadian, Thais and Cambodians do with them?

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<sup>1</sup> See Armstrong, *Integrating Policy: A Matter of Learning*, Report on the INTESEP Workshop in Ottawa, IDRC, November 1995; Armstrong, *Integrating Policy: Implementing Organizational Change*, IDRC, 1995; and Anne Bernard and Cerstin Sanders, *Concept Paper for Survey and Assessment of Completed Projects*, unpublished paper, IDRC, 1997, for a further discussion of some of the conceptual issues behind these paradigms.

### **3. What were the results?**

Why do people call this programme a success? What were the:

- a) Outputs - immediate, short-term products of the training.
- b) Outcomes - mid-term institutionalization of the process in Thailand and Cambodia, and the effects of the training on individuals, organizations, and specific conflicts.
- c) Reach - how many people were affected directly or indirectly, by the programming.
- d) Impacts - effects on approaches to the long-term processes of conflict resolution in the two countries.

### **4. Why were these programmes successful?**

**5. Where will conflict resolution programming go in the future, and what role is there for donors?**

### **6. Conclusions.**

For those interested in more detailed background, the three appendices include:

- a) A brief discussion on the viability of using video or electronic technology in conflict resolution training
- b) A discussion of methodological issues.
- c) A background paper by Dale Posgate on rural development issues and CIDA's role in Thailand.

## **1. THE CONTEXT<sup>2</sup>**

### ***Inequitable Income Distribution***

These programmes began in Thailand, specifically in the northeastern region known as Isaan, and only later moved to Cambodia. But, what stimulated CIDA's original involvement in Thailand?

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<sup>2</sup> Readers interested in a more detailed discussion of the economic situation, should refer to the background paper by Dale Posgate, commissioned for this study, and included in Appendix 3.

In 1994, when this programme was first being developed, Thailand was in apparently robust economic health. Thirty years of strong economic growth, with minor blips along the way, had many Thais and foreigners convinced that Thailand was leaving the status of a less-developed country requiring foreign assistance, and becoming a sustainably prosperous nation. Between 1962-72, GDP growth averaged 11.3% per year. Between 1972-79 the growth was 7.7%, dipping to 5.5% in the first half of the eighties, but rebounding to a world-leading 10% between 1986-89.<sup>3</sup>

But the problem with this apparently benign economic scenario was the way increased national wealth was distributed. The bulk of Thailand's population has always been employed in the agricultural sector, and when growth occurred, the trickle-down theory notwithstanding, there remained not just huge differences in income between rural and urban areas, but more importantly, a growing perception, a growing realization by the poor, that this income gap existed.

A recent study indicates that Thailand, before the current economic crisis, had the worst record in Asia, and the fifth-worse record in the world on inequitable income distribution. (All of the "top" four, were in Latin America.) The people most seriously affected by these inequities were the people of Isaan, the 17 provinces of northeastern Thailand, ethnically and linguistically Laotian to a large extent, who work with dry, unproductive soil and few exploitable natural resources, and who comprise roughly 35% of the Thai population.

There are interesting nuances in the data on economic growth and income distribution, however. A 1996 study<sup>4</sup> found that the picture was not completely negative. There were substantial improvements in rural income between 1988 - 1996, with the percentage of the population living below the poverty line nationally dropping from 29.9% to 14.3% during that period, and in the Isaan area the percentage of families living below the poverty line dropped from 42% to 23%.

But with economic growth came social mobilization, the growing literacy, mobility, and awareness by the general population about what was occurring around them. As people gain increased access to newspapers, radio and television, as they move from province to province, from rural to urban areas for employment and for education, they learn about the discrepancies between their lives on the farm, and the lives of some of their

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<sup>3</sup>See Posgate, Appendix 3.

<sup>4</sup>Nanak and Mehdi, 1996.



urban counterparts. Migrants from Isaan make up a substantial proportion of the population of Bangkok now, working in factories, on construction sites, in taxis and the sex trade. Some of them send money back to the farm, and some do not. But all of the Isaan migrants can see how the rich live.

What they see is a huge discrepancy, a discrepancy which existed before, but which was not thrust in their faces every day, by the entertainment and news media, and through personal observation. In 1988 the poorest 20% of the Thai population controlled only 4.6% of the national income. The richest 20% received 54%, but few people perceived the differences. By 1996, despite world-leading economic growth, the per centage of income going to the poorest 20% of the population had actually declined slightly, to 4.49%, with the per centage of wealth controlled by the top 20% increasing to 55.38%<sup>5</sup> - but by then almost everybody knew about the difference.

This inequity showed a slight change between 1992 and 1994, when the government of the day<sup>6</sup> followed a specific policy of decentralizing economic development to the regions, but the change was slight, and it did not last.

At the height of Thailand's apparent economic prosperity in 1996, the inequity of income distribution was a greater problem than it had been eight years earlier.

It is important to note that even the apparent improvement in the number of people living below the poverty line may not last. Incomes rose faster than prices between 1988 and 1996, but the recent economic crisis could change that, and if prices rise, and incomes decline, the per centage of people living below the poverty line is bound to increase.

No data was available for this report, concerning income distribution in Cambodia, but while economic growth has increased sharply between 1993 and 1997, political instability and military conflict continue to undermine confidence in the economy. Rural Cambodians are much worse off than rural Thais, with few well-developed facilities for education or health care available, and so far at least, little industrialization in the regions. Cambodia spent 13 years rebuilding its social and governance infrastructure after the Khmer Rouge period, but without foreign aid this was a difficult task.

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<sup>5</sup> Nanak and Mehdi, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Led by Chuan Leekpai

Progress has been made since 1993, with substantial amounts of foreign aid going into infrastructure development. But the future of aid in Cambodia remains in doubt, and with this, is uncertainty about whether ordinary Cambodians can look forward to the brief interlude of recent economic growth continuing.

### **Causes of Conflict**

#### **A) Thailand**

"Look at poor people. They have been taken advantage of in terms of resources. In earlier times, they were born and lived in rural areas. They had the right to develop themselves and to look after the forest, land, and water resources that benefited them. Since the expansion of capitalism, the government took the right to these resources from the people, giving the reasons that the government is the leader. In the centralized government, many organizations were established to look after these resources. The Land Development Department is responsible for land, and the Royal Forest Department is responsible for forests. It is not the villagers' business any more. If one used a strong word, it could be said that the government stole the right to these resources from the people." [Dr. Prawase Wasi, elder statesman, Magsaysay Award Winner, constitutional reform activist]<sup>7</sup>

Income inequity, and public awareness of it, were not the only causes of conflict in Thailand. As Posgate<sup>8</sup> points out, Thailand's impressive economic growth characterised by industrial development even in the regions, resulted in sharply increased competition for natural resources. These included water, forests and land, and most of the violent conflicts in Thailand were focused on these issues, as rural people competed with private enterprise and government agencies (such as the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand and the Royal Forestry Department) for access to, and use of the resources. Government policies on land tenure, on agricultural credit (favouring large farms over small) on electrical power production, all led to

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<sup>7</sup> **Thai Society: The Need for Conflict Resolution, in Dispute Resolution in Thailand: working Together for Peace and Prosperity**, Proceedings of a workshop in Khon Kaen, Thailand, June, 1995. Institute for Dispute Resolution, Khon Kaen University. Edited by Suwit Laohasiriwong, and Wongsa Kongdee.

<sup>8</sup> Appendix 1

increased competition for resources, and weak environmental policies and implementation led to serious conflicts over environmental degradation. At the same time, lack of enforcement of wage and safety laws affecting rural migrants to urban areas, led to labour disputes.

The traditional, hierarchically-organized Thai society is rapidly changing, and with this change, the reticence of the poor to complain or to fight, when confronted with economic or political authority, is being replaced by willingness to use confrontation.

The roughly 200 Thai NGO's working in the rural sector became involved in disputes, supporting the rural poor against the private sector and the government, in disagreements over dam construction and relocation, removal of farmers from protected forest reserves, the right of farmers to market their products, the environmental effects of salt farming, eucalyptus plantations, sugar mills, pulp and paper factories, rock quarries, urban waste disposal, and a number of other high-profile issues.

The NGO's are not disposed to tread lightly, when confronted with the forces of authority. Bamroong Kayotha, a leader of one of Northeastern Thailand's most influential farmers' organizations and a participant in many protests, puts it this way:

*"When some people were talking about small farmers, someone asked, "Can't Mr. Bamroong do anything else but organize protest marches?" I will say we have no alternative....After every demonstration by...farmers in the past, we always came home with satisfactory promises, but later on no action was taken and no problem was solved....Many groups have to use protests as a means to express their opinions. For example, groups with problems of debt, forest, and land all feel they have been cheated. Subsequently they grouped together and the government called them a "mob"....I would like to reiterate...that ordinary citizens never start violence. Only governments do."<sup>9</sup>*

In the single month of May, 1997, the Ministry of the Interior recorded 575 petitions presented to government by protesters, and in 63 of these cases, there was some form of

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<sup>9</sup> From a speech at a workshop on dispute resolution held in Khon Kaen, Thailand, June, 1995. See Suwit and Wongsu, p. 28-29.

serious public disturbance. There was no record available of protests which did not involve the government. A large proportion of the disturbances involved disputes between villagers and local administration officials appointed by the Ministry of Interior.

## B) Cambodia

In Cambodia, the origins of conflict are well-documented. A murderous government was singularly effective in destroying the traditional pillars of civilised social intercourse, the family, schools, organized religion, the arts, and organized health care. Twenty years of rebuilding these institutions has not repaired the damage.

Even the process of national reconciliation has contributed to the proliferation of small-scale disputes, often violent. The most common of these is conflict between the former owners of property, many of whom fled the country between 1975 and 1979, and returned in the past four years to reclaim it, and the people who have been living in and using the property for the past twenty years. But economic development, which has taken off since the Paris Peace Accords, also brought with it many of the problems seen in Thailand - labour disputes, conflicts over water resources and environmental degradation. "The labour and environmental laws are recent", said one environmental professional, "and the laws are not enforced, anyway. So a lot of really bad foreign companies want to locate here, because they know they will not be punished for abusing their workers, or destroying the environment."

The defacto decentralization of the country, a heritage of thirty years of war, has had its impact too.

*"[Local disputes are often more violent than disputes at the national level, where people are watching. The high officials often do not know what is happening at the local and therefore cannot solve local disputes, even if they want to. Our country is very decentralized in terms of how power is exercised.]"* Ky Lum Aung, Chair of the Committee on Economy, Planning, Investment, Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Assembly of Cambodia.

If the decentralization is taken together with a culture built on diminished expectations of personal safety, a social and governmental infrastructure for managing conflict which is still being rebuilt after the ravages of Khmer Rouge rule, and only rudimentary legal structures to define and enforce laws, then the

problems of managing conflict, let alone resolving it, become acute.

### *CIDA-The Donor's Role*<sup>10</sup>

In the mid 1980's the Canadian International Development Agency, (CIDA) was the third-largest foreign donor agency in Thailand. CIDA concentrated its assistance in the first five years of the decade on community and rural development. Between 1985-1995 the focus shifted to human resource development and technology transfer, and after 1995, although a few projects remained, the CIDA programme was essentially phasing itself out of Thailand.

When CIDA changed its focus away from community and rural development, it essentially switched from operating these programmes and projects itself, to developing the capacity of Thai NGO's to do this work. CIDA's community development programme concentrated on the Isaan area of northeastern Thailand, where the bulk of the rural poor lived, and it focused after 1985 on improving the ability of the NGO's and government agencies to promote self-reliance among the rural poor, and to represent the interests of the rural population, when national policy was being formulated.

It was an approach which stressed the development of institutional capacity in rural areas, rather than direct operation of poverty alleviation programmes. Through support to organizations such as NET (Northeastern Thailand Foundation), NGOCCORD (the NGO Coordinating Committee on Rural Development), LDF (The Local Development Foundation), and CBIRD (The Community-Based Integrated Rural Development programme), CIDA experimented with new methods of funding for capacity development of local organizations. To this day, interviews with NGO leaders in the northeast reveal a strong affinity between the NGO's in the northeast and CIDA's funding from this period. The NGO leaders clearly remember CIDA's assistance, and believe that it strengthened civil society in the northeast.

In 1985 CIDA began funding RDI, known in English as the Regional Development Institute, but in Thai as the Research and Development Institute. Whatever its name, located within Khon Kaen University, RDI's function was the same in both languages: to bridge the gap of suspicion, mistrust and self-interest which

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<sup>10</sup>This section is derived in part from Dale Posgate's analysis in Appendix 3.

existed between the NGO's, the government agencies operating in the northeast, and academics, located at Isaan's only university.

Khon Kaen university was then, and is now, a university which focuses primarily on engineering, medicine and agriculture, and its staff pride themselves on their ability to work directly with the rural poor in the language of the region. While Khon Kaen's staff may have been closer to the rural population than any other university, they were still perceived by many NGO's as allies of the governing and economic elite. RDI's purpose was to help academics work more closely with NGO's, and to bring both groups together in collaborative projects with local representatives of government agencies, through action-research and practical training programmes.

The RDI project was clearly aimed at institutional capacity development and RDI in its early years, with a charismatic leader, built strong links with NGO's and through them, with the rural population. In the process, it strengthened NGOs' capacity to conduct research, but also to use the knowledge derived from this research, to develop bargaining power for the rural population when confronted with the challenges of economic and social change. RDI also bridged the gap between what was seen as a largely provincial academic institution, and some of the country's elite research agencies, providing policy input from the northeast through the Thai Regional Research Institute Network.

In Cambodia, CIDA, like most donors, had no effective programme at all until early in this decade, and to this day the programme is focused almost entirely on support to NGO's working on issues of basic human needs.

## 2. THE PROGRAMMES<sup>11</sup>

### **Antecedents:**

In March 1994, Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt, the President of Khon Kaen University, approached a CIDA consultant he knew from work in Khon Kaen, with a request for assistance in solving disputes over water pollution caused by the largest factory in the province. It was one part of a large package of disputes, he said, and the people of northeastern Thailand were turning to the

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<sup>11</sup> Most, but not all of this description of activities, comes from a background paper prepared by Alex Grzybowski, commissioned for this study. The rest of the information comes from interviews.

University to help mediate. At the time, CIDA had no conflict resolution programme.

In November 1994, as part of an emerging exploration of governance issues, including also work on human rights, counter-corruption and administrative reform, CIDA funded a workshop in Thailand on the topic of bureaucratic accountability to Parliament. One of the participants was Stephen Owen, former President of the International Ombudsman Institute, and at the time British Columbia's Commissioner on Resources and Environment, an organization which actively sought to resolve environmental and natural resource conflicts through public participation in the decision-making process. Following that conference, Dr. Vanchai and Stephen Owen discussed the potential of applying the Canadian experience to Khon Kaen's problems.

Dr. Vanchai subsequently made a formal application to CIDA for assistance on conflict resolution. This is where Canadian conflict resolution programming in Thailand, and ultimately, Cambodia, originated.

#### **Inputs:**

In early 1995, three Thai professors from Khon Kaen University, funded by the CIDA bilateral human resource development programme, went to Victoria. At the same time, CIDA's Management for Change Programme approved a proposal for a group of Canadians, led by Stephen Owen and including a team of four other professionals at CORE and the University of Victoria's Institute for Dispute Resolution, to begin providing conflict resolution training in northeastern Thailand, at Khon Kaen University. CIDA's Management for Change Programme was known as a creative source of small amounts of money, for innovative programming experiments.

In total, over the next two years (and the books are still technically not closed on these projects) CIDA MFC provided a total of \$220,000 (\$146,000 for Thai conflict resolution programming, and \$74,000 for Cambodian programming). This was the only Canadian programme money contributed with the direct purpose of establishing a sustainable, institutionally based conflict resolution programme in the two countries, but it does not include the facilitation and linkage services provided by consultants directly under bilateral contract with CIDA.

In the process of the programming, more Canadian money eventually went into conflict resolution activities, but it was not aimed primarily at creating capacity. It was money directed through two conflict resolution programmes which appeared already

to be viable, and which was using this viability to deliver conflict resolution services to specified target audiences. These funds, from CIDA's Southeast Asia Fund for Institutional and Legal Development, the Institute on Governance (with CIDA funding), the CIDA Canada-Thailand Trilateral Environment Project, and through NREM, a CIDA bilateral environmental project, managed by a private Canadian company, totalled roughly \$400,000 and were secondary inputs to the development of conflict resolution programming. For the purposes of this study, this subsequent Canadian funding can be seen both as an input and as a measure of the perceived professional viability of the programme.

When the programmes were under way, agencies from other countries also began funding specific activities. These agencies included the Asia Development Bank, the Bangkok Metropolitan Police Force, the Thai Ministry of the Interior, the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand, The Thailand Environment Institute, Khon Kaen University in Thailand, The Thailand Environment Institute, The Cambodian Development Resource Institute, the Swedish International Development Agency, the Netherlands Organization for Development Cooperation, and the British NGO, Responding to Conflict, among others. Information on the total funding provided by these sources is uneven, because much of it would be hidden in salaries and other contributions, but cash contributions, including fees paid to attend workshops, and direct funding, were probably in excess of \$600,000 total over three years in the two countries.

When the effects of the conflict resolution programme are measured by the original funders, therefore, they may look at the total effects - the outputs, outcomes and impact, as a measure of the leverage the Management for Change programme obtained with initial funding.

### **Activities in Thailand**

So, what did all of the funders, including CIDA MFC, the other agencies using CIDA and IDRC funds, and non-Canadian funders, get for their money?

The Thai leaders of this project made two key decisions early in the evolution of the collaborative process:

- a) To house the activity in an institute, within Khon Kaen University; and
- b) To concentrate their efforts during the first two years of activity, on reaching as many influential people as



possible with short-term training designed to raise awareness about the need for and the potential benefits of conflict resolution programming. The then President of Khon Kaen University, now the director of the Institute for Dispute Resolution said:

*"We had to make a decision. We knew it would take time for us to get enough money and enough staff, and enough competence, to make a difference on conflicts. So, we had to build first, to create an institute, to learn more about this field, and then to communicate with as many people as possible, around the country, showing them what conflict resolution means, what public participation means, and how it can help Thailand."*

That focus is now changing, but the decision affected the way the initial activities were designed.

1. *Training in Canada:* Three Thai staff of Khon Kaen University, including the Vice President, visited the University of Victoria for three weeks of intensive training on dispute resolution theory, and observation of the practical application of the theory to practice, at the Commission on Resources and Environment. The Thai participants first experienced role-play activities and case studies as a method of training.

2. *June 1995: Policy Conference:* The formal Thai programme began with a policy conference in Khon Kaen, a conference which placed the Canadian approach to conflict resolution, round tables and public participation, against the background of Thailand's Buddhist tradition, and in the context of its current growing backlog of unresolved conflicts over environmental, resource and labour issues.

Participants: 120 people, including monks, social critics, constitutional experts, academics, NGO leaders and officials of the Ministry of the Interior and other government agencies met for two days. Seven Cambodians also attended.

Methods: The Canadian-Thai team used lectures (the traditional Thai approach to public policy discussions) role playing exercises and case studies of environmental conflicts in Canada, to illustrate the processes of dispute resolution. This combination of methods was used in all subsequent training activities, but with variations based on formative evaluations during the sessions.

Funded by CIDA MFC

3. November 1995: *5-day Skills Training Session*, in Khon Kaen, focusing on interest-based negotiation skills and processes, and the cultural dimensions of conflict resolution.

Participants: Canadian and Thai team plus 100 people from government agencies, universities (including universities located in central and northern Thailand), and NGO's.

Funded by CIDA MFC.

5. January-June, 1996: Research project on *energy and conflict in Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR*. Terminated with a Mekong regional workshop on the issues in Khon Kaen. Funded by the Canada-Thailand Trilateral Energy Project, the project brought a team of Thai, Canadian, Cambodian and Laotian researchers together to produce case studies on energy-related conflicts, to be used as the basis for project development, and for conflict-resolution training.

5. January-June 1996: Development of a *Conflict Analysis Framework*, by the Thai-Canadian team, working out of the newly-established Institute for Dispute Resolution at Khon Kaen University. The Framework was used to assist in the understanding of different causes of conflicts, and the design of appropriate resolution strategies.

Funded by CIDA MFC.

6. June 1996: *Public Participation Skills training workshop* - Khon Kaen.

Participants: The Thai-Canadian team taught 85 government officials, academics, and NGO workers purposes of public participation in government decision-making on complex resource policy issues, public negotiation processes, interest-based negotiation processes and skills and conflict analysis (using the framework and case studies developed in earlier activities).

Funded by CIDA MFC. This was the last activity funded in Thailand by CIDA MFC.

7. July-October 1996: *Conflict resolution training - Ministry of the Interior*. The first activity funded completely by non-Canadian sources. The Thai Ministry of the Interior had sent a number of officials to earlier workshops in Khon Kaen, and now hired the Khon University Institute for Dispute Resolution team

of three Thais and one Canadian to develop a training manual on conflict resolution, and to provide training.

Participants: Vice-governors of 75 provinces. The training focused on public participation and negotiation processes.

8. October 1996: *One-day training* at the Prince Rajanupap training institute in the Ministry of the Interior, for Chiefs of governors' offices, provided by the same Thai-Canadian team. Materials developed for earlier projects were used. Training focused on communication skills, negotiation processes, and analysis of the causes of conflict, using case studies on salt mining, industrial estates and dam construction.

KKU IDR was funded by the Thai Ministry of the Interior.

9. December 1996-April 1997: *Public participation and environmental management training and materials development.* The National Resources and Environmental Management Project, funded by CIDA and managed by ARA consultants in Thailand, hired one of the Canadian trainers and the KKU Institute for Dispute Resolution to develop a detailed four-volume manual on conflict resolution and conflict resolution training methods, and to provide training for trainers.

Participants: 20 managers from the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) and the Royal Irrigation Department, for planning.

75 Trainers from the same agencies studied conflict resolution training methods.

225 participants from a wide variety of agencies, including a handful of NGO's, representatives of the core agencies in the NREM project, the army's National Security Command, the Police Department of the MOI and the Bangkok Metropolitan Police Special Forces, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand, attended three regional pilot training workshops, held in Chiang Mai in the north, Songkla in the South, and Khon Kaen in the northeast, to test the training materials, and training procedures.

10. June 1997: *Bangkok Police Training.* The same Thai-Canadian team, having worked with six senior officers of the Bangkok Metropolitan Police during one of the pilot training sessions in the NREM project, was hired by the force to train 120 police

chiefs in the Bangkok metropolitan area, on how to prevent public disturbances and negotiate peaceful solutions to them after they occur.

11. October 1997: *Mediation of the Thai-Burma Pipeline Project*. A four-member, all-Thai team led by the core training group from Khon Kaen University's Institute for Dispute Resolution, led three negotiations sessions which attempted to resolve a dispute between the Petroleum Authority of Thailand and a private-sector construction company on the one hand, and NGO's opposed to the construction, on the other. To date, the dispute remains under negotiation, but unresolved.

Funded by the Petroleum Authority of Thailand.

12. July 1997 - March 1998: *Democratic Planning: Civic Assemblies in Thailand*. The Thai team from the Institute for Dispute Resolution is providing support to a new pilot programme aimed at democratizing the planning process in Thailand, with the assistance of the lone Canadian who still works in the Thai programme. A public participation and conflict management strategy is being implemented in Khon Kaen. In March 1998 joint training of the Khon Kaen Civic Assembly members, with NGO's, government agencies and villagers involved in watershed-management in the northeast will focus on Round Table processes and how they can be applied to the management of specific policy issues in the northeast. A group from the Civic Assembly will visit the Philippines.

Participants: 35 members of the Khon Kaen Civic Assembly, and 25 members of the Nam Chern Watershed Core Planning Team from Khon Kaen, Chaiyapoom and Petchaboon provinces.

Funding: Canada's Institute on Governance for the Civic Assembly training; The CIDA NREM project for the watershed participants.

13. December 1997: *Public Participation Training for the Samut Prakan Environmental Management Project*. Training for business leaders, NGO's, factory managers and teachers, funded by the Thailand Environment Institute, and conducted entirely by the staff of the Institute for Dispute Resolution.

14. February 5-6, 1998: *Mediation Service: The Direction and Need in Thai Society*. The Asia Foundation sponsored this meeting of journalists, politicians, academics and mediation practitioners, chaired by the Institute for Dispute Resolution at KKU, to consider the future of mediation in general, and the direction which the Khon Kaen Institute for Dispute Resolution in

particular, should take. Canadians were invited but were unable to attend, because of a lack of funding.

Forthcoming activities by the Khon Kaen University Institute for Dispute Resolution:

Translation into Thai of the book: **The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict**, by Christopher Moore (Jossey-Bass).

Workshop for the Thai news media on public participation and conflict resolution, funded by the Asia Foundation.

Management of the public participation process for a northern gas pipeline.

### **Activities in Cambodia**

While the Thai conflict resolution programme was spreading a broad net, the Cambodian programme took a different direction.

The introduction of many of the founders of the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution to the possibilities of collaboration with the Canadian conflict resolution team, came at the June 1995 opening policy conference at Khon Kaen University. CIDA's Management for Change programme included funding for seven participants from Cambodia to attend the workshop. These participants, identified initially by a CIDA consultant working on governance projects in Cambodia, included Eva Mysliwiec, the Director of the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (the only research organization with a serious institutional base in Cambodia at that time); Kem Sokha, Chairman of the National Assembly Committee on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints; Pol Lim, a senior official of the Ministry of the Interior charged with conflict resolution; Kassie Neou, the director of a human rights institute; and the representatives of several other NGO's. The logistics of that conference were complicated, with simultaneous interpretation between English and Thai for roughly 120 participants who were Thai, and separate simultaneous interpretation between English and Khmer for the Cambodian participants.

"We were interested in what we saw at Khon Kaen," said the Director of CDRI. "We did not want to do what the Thais were doing, because some of it looked pretty academic. But we thought there was something there which we could use, something which we could adapt to the Cambodian situation." CDRI was the natural leader of the programme in Cambodia, because of its strong

institutional base and its training programmes with NGO's and government officials. But the Director pursued a consensual, broad-based consultation process with NGO's, government agencies, and political parties, to determine how Cambodia could best use conflict resolution training. This decision, different from the approach in Thailand, affected the way activities developed.

Here is a very rough chronology of conflict resolution programming in Cambodia:

1. June 1995: *Cambodian assessment trip to Thailand: Khon Kaen University policy conference.*

Funded by CIDA MFC.

2. June 1995: *Canadian assessment trip to Cambodia.* Following the Khon Kaen workshop, the Canadian team and the three Thai core staff in the conflict resolution programme at Khon Kaen, travelled to Cambodia, to determine if there was sufficient interest in collaboration to develop a programme.

Funded by CIDA MFC.

3. November 1995: *Policy conference in Cambodia.* Five Canadians worked with CDRI and the core Cambodia group who attended the Khon Kaen workshop, to organize a conference addressing conflict resolution issues in Cambodia, the relationship of traditional Buddhist approaches to mediation to the Canadian approach to conflict resolution, and to develop recommendations on the directions conflict resolution programmes should take in Cambodia.

Participants: 80 senior government officials, politicians, religious leaders and representatives of NGO's, including Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, and the Supreme Patriarch.

Funded by CIDA MFC.

4. January - November 1996: CDRI, working as coordinator for the newly-formed *multi-sector steering committee on conflict resolution*, recruited a full-time coordinator of conflict resolution training programmes to facilitate the process of consultation with NGO's and government agencies, on the direction of Cambodian conflict resolution programming. Twenty meetings took place over a year, to develop a common vision of how conflict resolution programmes should be organized.

Funder: Cambodia Development Resource Institute.

5. February 1996: *The Cambodian Institute for Human Rights initiated conflict resolution training as part of its human rights education training for government officials in the provinces. There are no Canadians in this activity. The Ministry of the Interior agreed to lend the services of its chief trainer, First Deputy General Pol Lim, to the Institute.*

Funded by: Cambodian Institute for Human Rights and its donors.

4. April 1996: *Public Participation and Negotiation Training for the Cambodian Ministry of the Environment. Three-day training workshop related specifically to environmental dispute resolution, conducted by one Canadian trainer.*

Participants: 40 mid-level government officials working primarily in the Ministry of the Environment, as part of an eight-month Environmental Planning and Impact Assessment course.

Funded by: The International Development Research Centre (Canada) and the Asia Development Bank.

5. January-June 1996: *Cambodian participants in the project on Energy and Conflict in Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR, developed Cambodian case studies on conflict and attended a research workshop in Thailand.*

Funded by the Canada-Thailand Trilateral Environment Project.

6. December 1996: *Development of a strategic plan for the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution. One Canadian worked with the core group of Cambodians at a workshop to help finalize the long process of developing a strategic plan for a Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution.*

Funded by: The Cambodia Development Resource Institute.

7. October 1996 - March 1997: *Ombudsman investigation and dispute resolution training for the Cambodia National Assembly Commission on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints. The Commission (which is a parliamentary committee) had been involved in the extensive consultation process organized by the steering committee working to organize Cambodian conflict resolution programmes, and members had attended the earlier policy*

conferences. Four activities were organized by the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution, the Canadian conflict resolution team, and two of the Khon Kaen staff:

a) 4-day workshop for staff of the Commission and other National Assembly committees, to familiarise them with the quasi-ombudsman functions of such a body, and the organizational and investigative techniques which could serve them;

b) 2-day workshop for Members of the National Assembly, on Ombudsman processes, peaceful approaches to public policy disputes and land tenure dispute resolution.

c) A study-tour on dispute resolution for the First Deputy-General of the Ministry of the Interior, who had been involved in the initial assessment mission to Thailand;

d) Production of a video tape on dispute resolution role-playing exercises.

Funded by: The Southeast Asia Fund for Institutional and Legal Development (CIDA).

At this point, Canadian participation in the Cambodian programme terminated with the end of CIDA funding. But other activities with new funders, continued:

8. 1996-1997: First CDRI and then the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution hired three new staff for conflict resolution research, coordination and training.

Funding: CDRI and donors.

9. January 1997: Approval of vision, mission structure and programme plans and establishment of the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution, and of 12-member multi-sector steering committee. The new CCCR will be housed in the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, which will provide secretariat services, for a five-year period.

10. January-April, 1997: CCCR staff attended a three-month training in conflict resolution in Birmingham, U.K.

Funder: Responding to Conflict.

11. March 1997: "Do No Harm" a three-day workshop for NGO's on avoiding harmful effects of assistance in situations of conflict, organized by CCCR and Responding to Conflict.



12. July-August 1997: *Seminar on the violent political conflict of July-5-6*, organized by the CCCR.

13: May - October, 1997: The CCCR and Responding to Conflict developed materials and a detailed curriculum for an intensive training programme to spread over twelve months, in four two-week segments. The purpose of the training is to provide government and nongovernment field workers a basic understanding of the causes of conflict, and the techniques appropriate to solve them. The objective is to build a network of qualified conflict resolution practitioners. Participants must commit themselves to attend all four segments, and receive written permission from employers to attend.

14. October 6 - 17, 1997: *The Core Training in Conflict Resolution* began with the first of four two-week intensive training sessions conducted by the CCCR, in Sihanoukville. Organized by CCCR and Responding to Conflict, module one focused on conflict analysis.

Participants: 34 people from government and nongovernment agencies.

Funding: Multiple sources. 20 of the 34 participants pay U.S\$1,000 per head to attend the course, almost all of this sponsorship coming from a variety of donor agencies. The others attend free.

15. February 1998: The second module of the Core Training in Conflict Resolution took place in Battambang. Module two focused on application of analytical skills to real-life conflicts.

16. 1997-1998: Translation by CCHR into Khmer of the four-volume book, *Mindful Mediation - the Buddhist Manual for Conflict Resolution*, by John McConnell.

17. 1997-1998: Preparations by CCHR and its partners, for dispute mediation during the Cambodian Elections planned for July 1998.

Forthcoming activities by the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution:

Dispute mediation training for the Elections Commission.

Implementation of modules 3 and 4 of the Core Conflict Resolution Training course.

Policy workshops for senior government officials.

Research to develop case studies on Cambodian conflict.

Publication of a lexicon of Khmer terms on conflict resolution

Publication of **Mindful Mediation, The Buddhist Manual for Conflict Resolution**

### **3. WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?**

There are several ways of looking at results, but for the purposes of this paper, this is what is presented:

a) What were the outputs of the activities? This is the easiest, but least important means of measuring results. For this paper, I define outputs as numbers of workshops, numbers of people trained, materials produced.

b) What were the outcomes? This is more complex, and requires a more qualitative assessment. Some define it as the short-term effects of programming, where the team in the field takes ownership of the process. It can also refer, in the case of an activity like conflict resolution, to whether the people trained in a skill used the skills for something concrete. Did they try to resolve a conflict?

c) What was the impact of the activities? Ultimately, this is what development programming is all about. Impacts can be examined on a personal level: Did the programme change a participant's personal or professional life? It can refer to the organizational and institutional level: Is the activity sustainable; has institutionalization of the new process occurred? It can also be examined at a development level: Once the changes were institutionalized, were the net benefits to the community, in the long-term, positive or negative?

d) How many people were reached by the programming, both directly (outputs) but also indirectly through the achievement of outcomes and impact? With the exception of immediate outputs, this must ultimately be an estimate.

#### **A) Outputs**

I am concerned here only with the outputs which affected people in the field, either Canadian trainers or Thai and

Cambodian participants. Outputs such as work plans and reports for CIDA, or proposals for funding of other projects, are not included.

**Outputs from Canadian-financed activities in Thailand:<sup>12</sup>**

A rough estimate of the direct outputs in both Thailand and Cambodia includes (with funding sources):

3 core staff at Khon Kaen University trained as conflict resolution trainers. [CIDA Management for Change (MFC)].

75 Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Interior, Irrigation Department, Electrical Generating Authority, Ministry of Agriculture staff trained as conflict resolution trainers. [CIDA National Resources and Environment Management Project (NREM)]

240 person-days of short-term policy orientation training in Khon Kaen for NGO's, academics and government officers in Thailand. [CIDA MFC]

500 person-days of short-term negotiation skills training for the same spectrum of participants in Khon Kaen. [CIDA MFC]

225 person-days of short-term policy orientation training in southern, northeastern and northern Thailand. [CIDA NREM]

200 person-days of short-term public participation skills training in Khon Kaen for the Civic Assembly and Nam Chern watershed workers. [CIDA - Institute on Governance (IOG), & NREM]

30 person-days of short-term policy training on energy conflicts for Thais, Cambodians and Laotians. [CIDA - Canada-Thailand Trilateral Environment Project (CTTE)].

**Materials:**

Strategic Plan for the Khon Kaen University Institute for Dispute Resolution. [CIDA MFC]

Thai and English-language conference proceedings, and training materials for policy workshops. (CIDA MFC)

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<sup>12</sup>Because it is difficult to disaggregate the participants from different workshops to find a total number of people trained, in those cases where this is not clear I have estimated the numbers of person-days of training provided. Included in the Canadian-financed programming are activities funded by NREM, CIDA MFC, the Institute on Governance, and SEAFILD. This information is based on interviews, and on the background summary provided by Alex Grzybowski.

Thai language case-studies of resource-based conflicts for use in training. [CIDA MFC]

Thai and English-language Framework for Conflict Analysis. [CIDA MFC]

Report on energy conflicts in the Mekong region. [CIDA CTTE]

4-volume Thai and English-language training manual for environmental conflict resolution and public participation training. [CIDA NREM]

Digital training materials. [CIDA NREM]

Thai-language description of round-table public participation processes. [CIDA NREM; CIDA - IOG]

**Outputs from activities funded by other, non-Canadian agencies, most involving Canadians:**

225 person-days of short-term training on policy perspectives of conflict resolution for 75 vice-governors [Funded by the Thai Ministry of the Interior (MOI)].

70 person-days of short-term policy training for Chiefs of Governors' offices [MOI]

360 person-days of short-term crisis mediation training for Chiefs of Police in Bangkok. [Bangkok Metropolitan Police Force]

40 person-days of public participation training in Samut Prakan province. [Thailand Environment Institute]

**Materials**

Thai-language conflict resolution training materials for the Ministry of the Interior, distributed to all provinces [MOI]

Thai-language case-studies of conflict for MOI officials distributed to all provinces. [MOI]

Thai-language training materials for the police. [Bangkok Metropolitan Police Department]

Bi-monthly publication of a Thai and English-language newsletter by the Khon Kaen University Institute for Dispute Resolution. [The Asia Foundation]

**Outputs from Canadian-financed activities in Cambodia:**

160 person-days of short-term familiarization training on policy issues in conflict resolution for senior government officials, members of the National Assembly, religious leaders and NGO representatives. [CIDA MFC]

2 Cambodian researchers trained in case-study research. [CIDA CTTE]

40 person-days of short-term training on ombudsman investigation techniques for the members and staff of the National Assembly Commission on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints. [CIDA SEAFILD]

140 person-days of short-term training for National Assembly members, NGO representatives and government officials on ombudsman organizations, and conflict resolution. [CIDA-SEAFILD].

**Materials**

Framework for conflict analysis in Cambodia [CIDA MFC]

Case-studies on environmental energy development conflicts in Cambodia [CIDA CTTE]

Khmer-language training manual on conflict resolution and investigation techniques, for the National Assembly Committee on Human Rights and other agencies. [CIDA SEAFILD]

Video training role-play of a conflict in Cambodia. [CIDA SEAFILD].

**Outputs from activities funded by non-Canadian agencies:**

Strategic Plan for the Cambodia Centre for Conflict Resolution. [Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)]

One CDRI staff member trained as a conflict resolution researcher and trainer. [Responding to Conflict]

120 person-days of short-term public participation training for Ministry of the Environment staff. [Asia Development Bank]

680 person-days of long-term core training on conflict resolution analysis and field work. [CDRI, Responding to Conflict, other international donors]

60 person-days of short-term training on conflict resolution for NGO's. [CDRI, Responding to Conflict].

## Materials

Khmer-language case studies, curricula and manuals, for long-term core training in conflict resolution. [CDRI, Responding to Conflict]

## B) Outcomes

### 1. Knowledge outcomes.

The question here is: Did people learn something new - or at least new ways of looking at old ideas?

Without pre and post-tests it is not possible to prove that learning occurred, but we can make reasonable assumptions that it occurred from what participants report.

At the very least, it can be seen that the original funding by CIDA, even if very small, resulted in an awareness among a significant number of influential people in Thailand and in Cambodia, about the utility of training in this field. The critical outcome for Thailand, was the mobilization of a team of three focused and purposeful individuals at Khon Kaen University, interested in the subject matter, and intent on learning enough about it to communicate this effectively to policy makers in their country. This clearly occurred because of their participation in early training activities in Victoria, and in Khon Kaen.

The decisive moment, the first link in the chain of events leading to the outcomes which occurred in Cambodia, was the participation of seven representatives of Cambodian institutions at the Khon Kaen policy conference. What they saw interested them enough to consider adapting the process to the different needs of Cambodia. "We had never thought of working in this area before," said one of the seven, "but it was interesting, and we wanted to pursue it."

The Canadian team deliberately began work in both Thailand and Cambodia, with a policy conference, allowing, as Stephen Owen said, "Buy-in by the people with power." These conferences, while providing superficial overviews of the process, made large numbers of people aware of the practical potential of the ideas presented.

In Cambodia, this knowledge outcome from Canadian training extended very little further than general awareness, because the Canadian money available did not permit many Canadian activities. One important exception to this appears to have been First Deputy-General Pol Lim, of the Ministry of the Interior. By all accounts a talented trainer and an effective practitioner of hard-nosed conflict resolution involving the military, political factions, and border disputes before he met the Canadians, he says now that what he learned about the Canadian approach to conflict resolution gave him an additional and useful tool to use in his work, both as a trainer and as someone who has to work with disputes on a daily basis.

Other donors, however, subsequently financed more detailed long term training which has produced clear outcomes in field workers' knowledge about conflict resolution among NGO workers dealing with squatters rights, domestic violence and land disputes.

In Thailand, where CIDA funding through other projects paid for more activities, the knowledge outcomes of Canadian-financed activities was more extensive. Reports from the people who studied at the training activities funded by CIDA through its many channels, indicate that from their perspective at least they learned something new and interesting. While there was frustration by many of the Thai participants attending short-term training courses, that they had only skimmed the surface of what could be learned, they also clearly thought the training was interesting and applicable, and they wanted more. The demand created by the training is an indication that something of use was communicated. Taken together with the training funded by non-Canadian sources, this demand is clear evidence that a large number of people in Thailand have learned something new as a result of this programme, and they want to learn more.

The leader of the Canadian conflict resolution team, Stephen Owen, says that quite aside from increased information about the cross-cultural experience, he and his team have learned new concepts about dispute resolution from the programmes' emphasis on building new conflict resolution skills on the foundations of traditional structures and processes. At all of the conferences, in Thailand and Cambodia, senior Buddhist religious leaders,

activists and scholars have worked with the Canadian, Thai and Cambodian trainers to explain to them and to the trainees, how Buddhist belief and practice works to resolve disputes.

"This was the most powerful outcome for me personally," said Stephen Owen, "the realization after years of working in this field, that there is a broader foundation to this process than just techniques grounded in Western empiricism." The Buddhist approach, he says, "makes the book *"Getting to Yes"* look like a comic book." As Commissioner on Resources and Environment, and then subsequently as Deputy Attorney-General of British Columbia, and now as a senior professor at the University of Victoria, he applied what he learned from the Buddhist approach to communities and problem solving, to disputes in Canada.

## ***2. Individual capacity outcomes***

Did this training have an effect on individuals, in their personal or professional lives? Did the activities encourage people to change direction, or make their lives easier?

Positive outcomes occurred for three groups of people:

### **a) Canadian trainers:**

Individual capacity outcomes affect both trainers and participants. The Canadian trainers say that their exposure to work in Thailand broadened their understanding of conflict resolution processes. Catherine Morris one of the Canadian trainers, who specialized in intercultural dispute mediation and research in Victoria said: "I learned a lot more from interacting with our Thai and Cambodian colleagues, about how to communicate, how to analyze training for cross-cultural situations. This has helped me in my work with minority cultures in Canada."

Another member of the Canadian team, Alex Grzybowski, who worked previously as a negotiator and facilitator for the Commission on Resources and Environment in British Columbia, had very limited international experience before the beginning of this programming. But he is now in high demand, hired not just by Canadian companies and agencies, but by the Thai Ministry of the Interior, by the Petroleum Authority of Thailand, by the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, to apply his skills in the field, in Asia. His participation in this project had a demonstrable professional outcome.



## b) Thai Trainers

Participation in the Canadian-funded activities may have had its most profound individual impact on Achan Wongsakongdee, one of the three original Thai staff at Khon Kaen University, who was originally invited into the core group on dispute resolution at Khon Kaen, to provide logistical support. A health care professional, Achan Wongsakongdee took the place of a more senior academic who was unable to go to Victoria.

*"That changed my life, you know. I never knew about this before. I always thought that in Thailand, conflict was just a part of life, something you had to accept. I thought there was nothing we could do to solve them peacefully, because of the problems with power, and face. But what I saw in Victoria, what I learned there was exciting. And when I was translating the Canadian material into Thai for the workshops, I learned about many things, many techniques and approaches that could be useful in Thailand. I knew that I wanted to work in this field. This is what I want to do."*

Achan Wongsakongdee subsequently went to Australia to study for a PhD in conflict resolution, and has become one of the three core trainers, researchers and planners at the Khon Kaen University Institute for Dispute Resolution. A significant personal outcome for her from participation in this programme, is the change of her professional career.

## c) Participants in the Training

There have been positive outcomes of the training for participants in the training courses, but in general, few of these have had, to date, much of an effect on their personal or political life. One possible exception to this is Major Sawan Chertchai, who works for the National Security Command in northeastern Thailand. Clearly proud of his role in the military, and in particular in the military's attempts to help the rural poor when confronted with problems from other government agencies, Major Chertchai said, however:

*"[But I was getting very depressed about my work. So many times when I tried to solve the problem, it seemed hopeless....I care about these people ...because I have lived like that, and I know that their lives are difficult....the army has tried for many years to work*

with the people, not to fight them....I know they are suffering, and I feel very bad when I cannot help them. It is not all the time, but often we try to talk to the government agencies or the companies and ask them to help the people, but it does not work. And so I was very depressed about this. But when I learned about the conflict resolution [through the NREM training] in Khon Kaen, I saw that it could work. It was different, and it was something that could help me. So I had new hope about this. I used it many times since then, and it is effective. I am happy to do this work now.]

Dramatic individual outcomes like these are unusual, but gratifying. More commonly, participants at the workshops reported minor changes in their personal or professional lives as a result of meeting other people interested in the field, and developing new professional support networks. Said one engineer from the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand:

"[It would have been better if the training had lasted longer, but I met many people there, and now I work with them whenever I can, because I know they are interested in this [approach]. We try to help each other when we have problems with projects.]"

### **3. Practice Outcomes**

This is the area usually of most interest to programme planners. Did the skills learned in this training affect the way people work? Has anyone used this approach to solve conflicts? Has anyone used the training techniques in the field?

The Thai Institute for Dispute Resolution made a decision early in the evolution of this programme three years ago, to focus in the early stages not on the resolution of specific disputes, but on bringing the message of conflict resolution's potential, and of its techniques to other people, government agents, academics and NGO workers, who might be able to apply the training in the field.

Many of the people who attended the training workshops have not yet had the opportunity to apply the techniques in the field. Some of them want more than a two or three-day training session before they attempt it. But some of the participants have applied the skills to the solution of conflicts.

Examples:

1. The National Security Command's Major Sawan Chertchai works to resolve conflicts in 11 provinces in northeastern Thailand. Many of these conflicts concern irrigation issues, water use, and forestry. Villagers often end up in disputes with agents of the Royal Irrigation Department or the Royal Forestry Department, and many of the disputes over villagers' rights to inhabit forested areas, end violently. Major Sawan has used the approach to conflict resolution in the Thai-Canadian workshops to resolve a dispute over an irrigation project which had been flooding farmers' land.

"[We had to adapt the approach, but it was effective. I asked them to sit down together and talk about what they really needed on both sides, to learn what the real interests of all sides were, and after several days, we were able to solve the dispute.]"

That resolution of that conflict positively affected 500 families, at least in the short run.

Major Sawan ran his own workshop for twenty army officers and NCO's, showing them how to apply the dispute resolution techniques to similar situations. His staff applied this to disputes involving the Royal Forestry Department and alleged illegal encroachment by approximately 70 villages in 15 districts in the northeast on protected forest land. "[In the past,]" he said, "[the Department often would end the dispute by using military force to drive the villagers out.]" This time, however, the dispute resolution procedures led to an agreement for the villagers to manage and take responsibility for the survival of the forests. Approximately 50,000 rai of forest were affected.

A more unusual case involved drug dealers in the northeast. The military's usual approach has been to arrest drug dealers, but others often fill the gap. This time, working on the problem in a small district, Major Sawan and his staff brought the alleged drug dealers together with the villagers, to talk about the impact of heroin and amphetamine use on the community, and to discuss the motivations for drug dealing. The villagers and the military helped several of the dealers to find mainstream employment, "[and some of the dealers were happy, you know, to be respectable again, to be part of the community, instead of facing their hatred.]"

What did he do with the dealers who refused to change?

"[Those ones we arrested. They are in jail now, and they will be there a long time. But the other ones are

free. Now they know the villagers and the villagers know them. I do not think they will sell drugs again.]"

The result of all of this, he says, was a sharp drop in drug dealing in the affected district.

Major Sawan says he has learned a lot of new training skills from the process too. He was particularly impressed with the case-study approach to training demonstrated by the Thai-Canadian team, and he now uses it regularly in all of his training, in conflict resolution and other areas. He documents all of the disputes he encounters, and the files he has will make interesting case studies for other students of the field.

2. The Director-General of the Community Development Department of the Ministry of the Interior, Khun Jadul Apichatbutr, was deputy-governor of Chiang Mai province when he first participated in the NREM-sponsored training by the Thai-Canadian team. He subsequently took more training, through the MOI, and then moved to Samut Sakorn province again as vice-governor. There, he said, "I tried to put in practice the theory of public participation in policy decisions." The issue in question was location with government funding, but private sector management, of a waste disposal site. Villagers were angry and suspicious that a cabal of government and private interests would leave them with a lot of problems and no benefits.

"So, I went to the Governor, and I said 'Let me try this. Let me open this process for discussion in public. I showed him the new Information Act, which says we have to do this anyway, but it has never been implemented, because nobody knows how to open the policy discussion to the public. In Thailand we have traditionally tried to hide information, to use it as a source of power, not to share it. But this process of public participation, roundtables and dispute resolution is open, and it shows us that sharing information can help us solve problems or prevent them, that it may be better for us, easier for us to do this, than to hide the information."

The Governor agreed, the Vice-Governor led the discussions, and the dispute was, at least in the short term, diffused. Budget cutbacks with the current economic crisis may reopen it again soon, however.

Khun Jadul is now Director-General of the Community Development Department of the Ministry of the Interior. The approximately 130 Department Directors-General in the Thai

government have been referred to as the "effective ruling class of Thailand", because of the power they wield over budgets and field operations of departments. In his new job Khun Jadul says he will actively promote the processes of public participation, consultation and dispute resolution.

3. On a less dramatic note, other officials in the Ministry of the Interior, and other government agencies are using the knowledge they acquired at the dispute resolution training workshops organized by NREM and the Ministry of the Interior, in other ways. The Head of the Provincial Development Planning Section in the MOI, who reviews the development plans for all government departments at the provincial level, says she now reviews all plans promoting public participation in project development. As a trainer herself, she now uses case-study methods, and role-playing, first experienced at the Thai-Canadian training sessions, in her own work. As a trainer she has organized four workshops on her own in the provinces, focused on public participation in planning.

4. The Ubol Rat Dam in Khon Kaen faces a problem many dams face: Water destined for irrigation, human consumption and electrical generation is also an attraction for leisure activities. These activities, and the food vendors who surround the huge reservoirs, damage water quality. The Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand, an agency which has its own security force, and has been involved in many violent disputes over the past two decades, usually solves the problem by forcibly removing vendors from the area around the reservoirs. But at Ubol Rat, the vendors had support from an influential local politician. Khun Thassaporn Kupatavanit, an engineer at the dam, had attended the KRU IDR training on dispute resolution in 1995, for a two-day period.

*"[It was not enough. It was too short. But I did get the idea that we could try to solve this problem by discussion. So I sat down with the vendors and we talked about our problems on both sides. I showed them the law, and then they told me why they needed to work there. We talked for a long time. Finally we came to a new agreement, to sign a contract with them, with the vendors, so they will manage the area for us, and ensure that there is no problem for the water, and they can stay there and work, as long as there is no damage.]"*

5. Meanwhile at NREM, the Canadian National Resources and Environmental Management Project which opened the door for the Khon Kaen IDR to work with the Ministry of the Interior, some participants in the northeast started applying public

participation processes to watershed planning. Within the Canadian organization of NREM itself, having observed the role-play and case-study techniques used by the dispute resolution trainers, NREM incorporated similar training approaches in its other programmes.

These examples are all from Thailand. In Cambodia Canadian funding was very limited. Outcomes of practice attributable solely to the Canadian-financed activities are limited. Secondary outcomes of the overall programme, funded by other donors, are becoming evident now, as NGO's use the training provided by CDRI and Responding to Conflict with their clients. More of these outcomes may soon be clear, however, as the core training programme produces practitioners of conflict resolution who have a more detailed training history than any of the people trained in Thailand. But examples of practice outcomes from the Canadian participation are available:

1. Pol Lim, the senior Ministry of the Interior official who is co-director of the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution, a trainer for many years in the MOI, and a man responsible for resolution of minor and major disputes, says that the exposure to the Canadian training techniques and to their ideas in Khon Kaen, Phnom Penh and Victoria, changed the way he approaches both training and practical dispute resolution.

*"[Before I would just lecture when I went to the provinces to provide training. Now I give them case studies, and we talk about the causes of conflict, about how to map conflicts...and how we must look for approaches to solve the conflicts which match the causes and the people involved. I do not use role-play because most people know it is not real, but the case studies are real. Not all of the approaches to solve the problems are the same. It depends on the source of the conflict. So, this was something I learned and it has been helpful. I still use some of the traditional methods, but I try to explain to people how we must integrate our traditional approach using the villager elders or the monks, with the Western approach to conflict resolution.]"*

Pol Lim himself, and Kassie Neou, the Director of the Cambodian Institute for Human Rights, estimate that the Ministry of the Interior official has used the integrated approach for conflict resolution, to solve dozens of disputes at the district and provincial level since 1995. He regards his most successful application of these principles to be negotiation of market relocations in seven provinces. Each of these averted disputes affected four hundred people. "[Before I acted instinctively when

I had to solve a conflict, but now I know how to approach this systematically, to analyze the causes before I try to solve the dispute."]

2. The Governor of Rattanakiri Province, Kep Chutema, says that he regularly uses the basic concepts he learned from the conferences in his work in Rattanakiri, and reports that these have helped him solve many high level disputes.

3. Huy Rumdol, a member of the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution steering committee, and an urban community development advisor to an NGO working on slum eviction disputes, reports that while she received more detailed training after the Canadians left, the initial training did affect her work:

*"I have been working in conflict resolution for years trying to negotiate peaceful settlements on evictions of squatters in Phnom Penh. Many times I failed...But I attended the [Canadian-funded] training workshop in 1995, and I got the ideas from that to help me think about what I was doing. Now I have the theory to support the practice and it helps me to think about my work and to organize it effectively. Now I have a systematic method of gathering information to use to analyze conflicts before I try to solve them, mapping the problems and identifying the participants and the causes before negotiations begin."*

It is difficult to disaggregate the effects of individual elements of the conflict resolution programme which has evolved with different foreign participants since the original conference in 1995. But, says Huy Rumdol, "This project has had significant effect in two and a half years since the Canadians came."

4. Tin Ponlok, a researcher in a project at the Ministry of the Environment participated in the ADB-financed training provided by a Canadian trainer, dealing with public participation in environmental planning, and subsequently did case-study research on conflicts for the CIDA-CTTE financed energy and conflict research project in Khon Kaen. He has applied the new paradigm he acquired in these projects not to action, but to policy development, producing a country report on Cambodia for a Mekong Commission workshop on "Public Participation and Social/Environmental Impact Assessment in the Mekong Basin." "I don't know if I will ever apply this in the field," he said. "I need more training first."

#### 4. Institutional Capacity Outcomes

The question here is whether new programmes find a home in the field, or whether they exist as the temporary manifestations of foreign intervention, whether organizations and institutions internalize the effects of the programme, make it their own and change the way they operate.

It cannot be said that the small amount of Canadian aid to programming in Cambodia was solely responsible for the creation of the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution. A strong host organization (CDRI) and the commitment of a broad cross-section of NGO's, government agencies, individuals and external donor support made it possible after a long consultation process, to establish the new organization and to staff it. But all of the people involved in the establishment of the Centre say that the Canadian intervention was in fact the catalyst which led to widespread interest in conflict resolution, the mobilization of other resources, and the establishment of the Centre.

CDRI was concerned principally with economic and management issues, research and training, when the Director and her colleagues from NGO's and the Cambodian government were invited to the policy conference in Thailand. Today conflict resolution is an important part of CDRI's overall programme, as it provides the secretariat for the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution in its first five years.

Although the uneven funding provided by Canadian agencies limited Canadian participation in Cambodia and frustrated many of the Cambodians and Canadians working together on the programme, the effect of the Canadian intervention was significant, said Eva Mysliwiec, CDRI's director, and one of the co-directors of the CCCR:

*"But even though we really are not working with the Canadians now, even though the Birmingham group [Responding to Conflict] now has more influence on the programme, the Canadian role was absolutely significant. It lit the spark that got conflict resolution programming in Cambodia going. It had not been for the Canadians we would not have started this programming."*

Ok Serei Sopheap, Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister, and a co-director himself of the CCCR, agrees. "The Canadian conference was the first successful foreign intervention in conflict resolution in Cambodia. The first conference led directly to the chain of events which resulted in the establishment of the Centre."



One measure of the value given to the Canadian participation is that despite its limited programme to date, the CCCR wants them back to provide policy training to senior officials and politicians, while the British trainers focus on the practical field-level training provided in the core training programme. Further evidence of this is that Stephen Owen, the leader of the Canadian training group in 1995 has recently been appointed to the Board of CDRI.

If indigenous ownership of the programme is a criteria for assessing institutional capacity outcomes, then the original conflict resolution programme begun in 1995, has had a demonstrably positive outcome in Cambodia. The Cambodian programme proceeded in a quite different fashion from the programme in Thailand.

In Thailand a decision was made very early in the programme, by the Thai core group, led by the then President of Khon Kaen University, to locate the programme in the University, and to provide general policy and procedural training to a wide spectrum of people. Academic institutions play a respected role in Thai policy development, but in Cambodia there are no credible, institutionalized academic organizations with any influence. Experience in establishing CDRI itself showed Eva Mysliwicz and others that only a painstaking and legitimately open process of multiparty consultation would create a solid foundation for a significant new activity. The Cambodian programme evolved more slowly, but it has a secure base now in the consensus of government agencies, political parties and NGO's about how it should proceed. The Cambodian participants (including the CDRI director, who has been in Cambodia for 19 years) took control of the agenda for programme development from the beginning.

The fact that several hundred thousand dollars of non-Canadian money have been invested in conflict resolution training in the period after Canadian funding ceased, is in itself evidence of institutional outcome. Organizations are focusing on this subject, and committing substantial resources of time and money into it.

In Thailand too, although the Canadian role has been more significant, ownership of the programme has been taken firmly into the hands of Thais. The programme originated because of the desire of the President of Khon Kaen University to strengthen the university's ability to meet northeasterners' demands for assistance from the university. It appeared to Canadians early in the process that the natural location for the programme might be RDI, the Institute funded by CIDA to mobilize NGO's in the

northeast for work with the University. But the President wanted it located in a new organization.

*"RDI did a good job at what it was supposed to do, to mobilize the NGO's to help them fight for the villagers. But that means they are often part of the disputes themselves. We know that the mediator has to be seen to be neutral to be effective. So, how can we locate the mediation service in one of the institutions which is part of the disputes, and expect the other parties, like the government or the private sector to participate?" [Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt, Director of the Institute for Dispute Resolution.]*

A new Institute was created for conflict resolution training. The result of this has been, in general, very positive but one area where the Institute has not met with significant success, has been in working with NGO's. NGO participation at most of the large conference and workshops funded by CIDA, by the Ministry of the Interior or EGAT has been minimal, and NGO leaders in the northeast attribute this to a feeling that the training is aimed more at government agencies and academics than at them. NGO's distrust academics in general, and it will be a challenge for the Institute to overcome this.

But the Institute for Dispute Resolution has had a very high profile among government agencies, and attracted significant funding from a large number of agencies. With a core staff of only three people, Dr. Vanchai, Dr. Suwit Laohasiriwong, and Achan Wongsakongdee, all of whom are also on the staff of the heavily funded Institute for Economic and Social Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion, and the active assistance of Alex Grzybowski, the lead Canadian field trainer, they have reached a large number of people. The funding it has attracted is an institutional outcome of this programme itself, as well as being an obvious input to the Institute. The Institute has created significant demand for its services, and is now exploring the direction it will take for the next five years.

Thailand has a very complex policy development infrastructure, and the decision to focus first on broad policy awareness undoubtedly reflects this. Cambodia, on the other hand, has a primitive policy infrastructure, and Cambodian participants wanted to focus on intensive practice-based training, rather than broad policy overviews.

The fact that Thai government agencies including the Ministry of the Interior, the Bangkok Police, the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand and the Petroleum Authority of Thailand have paid hard cash to the Institute for its services is

a measure of how far the Thais have internalized this programme, and made it their own. Downstream internalization of the programme is evidenced by the time allocated to training in the field by MOI staff, and the staff of organizations such as the army's National Security Command.

The Institute for Dispute Resolution has affected the way Khon Kaen University relates to government agencies and to the people of the northeast. And the fact that a credit course in dispute resolution will be offered for the first time in 1998 in the faculty of humanities and social sciences of the university, funded entirely by the university, and taught by IDR staff, is further evidence that ownership of the programme is now firmly in Thai hands.

Networks of new working relationships have been formed in Thailand, as they have in Cambodia, around the subject of conflict resolution, and this is also a positive institutional outcome. Canadian institutions have benefited too, from the process. The University of Victoria following the introduction of these programmes, sent two vice-presidents to Khon Kaen, and in 1996, the two universities established a formal collaborative relationship, the result at least in part, to the joint programme on conflict resolution.

#### C) Reach

How many people were affected both directly by the immediate programme, and by downstream spinoffs of the programme, such as resolution of conflicts by people trained in conflict resolution?

The best that can be done here is to provide rough estimates. In Cambodia direct training has probably reached three hundred people. But subsequent conflict resolution training by the MOI itself and by the Cambodian Institute for Human Rights in the past two years, both using Pol Lim as the primary trainer, may have reached another 3,000 government officials. A thousand more people have probably been affected by resolution of disputes in the field.

In Thailand direct training by the Institute for Dispute Resolution, almost all of it short-term, has reached more than a thousand people. The MOI, EGAT, the National Security Command and other organizations are now incorporating conflict resolution training in their own programmes and my have reached an additional thousand people. The small sample of participants interviewed for this study indicated that another two thousand people had been reached by them in direct resolution of disputes in the field. It is possible that some other participants not interviewed, have also reached a significant number of people.

There can be no doubt that the decision by the CIDA-funded Natural Resources and Environmental Management Project to use the services of the Thai Institute for Dispute Resolution, though the Ministry of the Interior, has significantly extended the reach of this project.

#### D) Impacts

It will be a long time before the impact on economic and social development arising from any individual resolution of disputes can be measured. For example, will the fact that forest conflicts were resolved or averted have a long-term effect which is good or not? Will the forests actually be effectively managed by villagers? Will villagers' well-being be positively affected? Will the contract signed by the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand with vendors at the Ubol Rat Dam, even though it averted a violent conflict, lead to pressure for vendors to move into other reservoir areas? Will this in turn affect water quality positively or negatively? Will the waste disposal plant in Samut Sakorn cause any long-term problems or alternatively, provide any long-term benefits for the area in which it is located?

Will the two organizations created to house conflict resolution activities in Cambodia and Thailand endure? In Cambodia, is there any chance that this kind of training will have a long-term impact in a society where violence is almost a norm for resolution of disputes?

Sustainability is the issue here, in both countries.

Thailand has the intellectual resources to sustain this programme, and to expand it. But in the short term the current economic crisis and massive cut-backs in government spending could endanger the existence of the programme, as government agencies eliminate training budgets. In Cambodia there is no indigenous budget large enough to finance this kind of activity, and without donor support it will not continue.

But ultimately, the closest we can come to assessing impact at this stage, is to go back to the examination of institutional outcomes. If this programme is owned by the Cambodians and Thais, if they see enough value in it to put their own resources (money, time or personnel) into the training, then the programmes have a good chance of being enduring.

It is my opinion, and the opinion of many of the people participating in these programme in Thailand and Cambodia, that the long-term impact of these programmes on the way organizations

behave in the two countries, will be positive. But we will not know that to be a fact, for some time.

To summarize all of this, it is clear that Canadian conflict resolution programming in Cambodia and Thailand has had a number of significant positive outcomes, including the mobilization of significant external and indigenous resources, the establishment of on-going programmes housed in organizations which have a good chance of enduring, and that the effects of these programmes are already being felt at the field level, where conflicts must be solved. It is also true that there is a widespread perception in Thailand and Cambodia, that, whatever incidental problems may have occurred, these programmes were a significant success.

#### **4. WHY WERE THESE PROGRAMMES SUCCESSFUL?**

Having documented why these programmes are good examples of successful governance programming, the next important question is, why did these programmes work, when many do not? What conclusions can we draw from the way this programme proceeded, about how to run a successful governance programme on limited and unstable funding?

##### **A) Programming Partners with a Solid Track Record**

These programmes did not create a capacity to develop and deliver programmes. They built on existing capacity in organizations which had strong leadership and a proven track record in programme development and delivery. And the Canadian team had a varied background, with different individuals filling different roles. One was an obvious leader at the policy level, capable of speaking on equal terms with Ministers and Prime Ministers, mobilizing and fielding a competent team of professionals. Another was a good negotiator and a dynamic trainer. Another was a researcher, and provided a needed conceptual perspective.

It was no accident that these three programming partners, the CORE/University of Victoria group, Khon Kaen University and the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, were brought together. All of them were familiar to CIDA and had credible track records:

- The University of Victoria through its Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives and its Law Faculty had already demonstrated an ability to work effectively in Thailand. The

Law Faculty in particular developed an innovative, self-financing exchange programme with the most prestigious university in Thailand, providing students and professors with an opportunity to become familiar with the Thai legal system, and giving CIDA access through this programme, to important governance contacts.

- The B.C. Commissioner on Resources and Environment was known to the consultants organizing the initial contacts, because he had worked on governance programming in Thailand.
- Khon Kaen University and the staff involved in the original proposal for conflict resolution training, had a strong track record of developing and delivering innovative programmes.
- CDRI had already been identified by CIDA consultants as the most stable and most effective Cambodian research and training organization.

Risks were cut to a minimum by advance field work and identification of organizations and individuals who could deliver the goods.

All parties had experience working cross-culturally, and collaboratively, and this reduced, although it did not eliminate problems in communication.

#### B) Problem-Solving Adoption Motivation<sup>13</sup>

Several hundred studies of the implementation of complex policies or of educational innovations, by education researchers and political scientists, have come to the same conclusion: Why people participate is critical. This is referred to as the "adoption motivation" for participation. When people choose to try a new idea because it fills a felt need, this is a problem-solving adoption motivation, and it is the most likely to lead to sustained implementation. If, however, people participate because they simply want money, or they have been embarrassed into participation, or forced to participate, it is much less likely that the innovation will be successfully integrated into practice, or sustained in any recognizable form. It is more likely to be forgotten, co-opted or ignored.

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<sup>13</sup> For more detailed discussion of this as it affects integrated governance programming, see Greg Armstrong, *Integrating Policy: A Matter of Learning*. Ottawa: IDRC, November, 1995; and *Integrating Policy: Implementing Organizational Change*. Ottawa: IDRC, December 1995.

The origins of a programme are therefore of critical importance to its success. In Thailand, the programme did not originate with CIDA or with the Canadians. The President of Khon Kaen University approached a CIDA advisor he knew, with a request for assistance on this topic. The university was under pressure to play a mediating role in the rapidly growing disputes in the northeast, but its staff were either technical experts in engineering, agriculture or medicine, unfamiliar with these social processes, or they were perceived as being affiliated with parties to the disputes. So when the Canadians visited Khon Kaen, looked at some of the conflicts, and outlined their approach, the Thai partner was enthusiastic and committed to long-term participation, because it served a genuine need. It was not an idea sold to him, it was one he solicited.

The Cambodian case was slightly different. The Cambodians had problems just surviving the influx of foreign advisors between 1993 and 1995, and advisor fatigue was a real problem. As they say themselves, this was not a process that occurred to them as a priority - until they saw it in action in Thailand. While they did not think they needed exactly what the Thais wanted, they found the ideas interesting enough, and with enough obvious potential, given the conflict-ridden nature of Cambodian life, to commit their very limited resources to it. The fact that the Cambodian core group took active control of the process from the beginning meant that it was more likely to suit their needs.

This issue is just as important for the performance of Canadian partners as it is for the people in Thailand or Cambodia. If the partners see this as just another contract, a source of funding, with no intrinsic interest in the process, and nothing substantive to gain from the process, then it is unlikely that they will follow through effectively with programming in the face of the inevitable logistical and communication difficulties inherent in international cross-cultural programming, or in light of competing demands for their attention in Canada. But this programme did serve a need for the Commissioner on Resources and Environment in B.C.

*"My experiences in other countries demonstrated to me that there were common elements of our approach and theirs worth sharing. We had enough in common for our experience to be relevant and enough different for the process to be interesting to the Canadians."*

He also wanted to integrate his interests in development of the Ombudsman office in Thailand, with development of dispute resolution programming in other areas. As it turns out,

Ombudsman programming in Thailand eventually went to another institution, and there was no integration of these two CIDA governance programmes in Thailand, but the interest was there, and it was that interest which motivated his initial participation.

Earlier I mentioned the final motivating factor for him - an interest in traditional approaches to dispute resolution, which could be useful in the Canadian context, especially in cross-cultural situations in British Columbia. In that, he was not disappointed.

But the Canadian team's decision to participate was not made without investigation, through the initial field visits to Khon Kaen and later to Phnom Penh. Catherine Morris, a lawyer working at the Institute for Dispute Resolution at the University of Victoria on cross-cultural mediation projects saw a clear benefit to participation. She was one of the Canadians on the exploratory trips, and she said that the quality of the organizations the Canadians would be working with was a significant factor in her decision to participate, and subsequent to that, in her willingness to put in long hours, often unpaid, on the activities:

*"We were encouraged by the fact that local people, including university leaders, NGO leaders, high ranking civil servants and human rights workers were committed to the idea of experimenting with dispute resolution ideas for public policy and governance issues. They knew their own culture and the possibilities. And they invited us, and CIDA was expressing interest. In fact, Dr. Vanchai said... "Now you will help us fulfil our dream". How could we say no to this?"*

It is not just the principal programming partners whose motivation is important, however. If we look at both the Thai and Cambodian programmes closely, we see that the participants who embraced the process most enthusiastically were the people and organizations confronted with conflict on a daily basis. This included the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand, which faced regular violent disputes over dam construction, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand which has huge problems with gas pipelines, and the Thai and Cambodian Ministries of the Interior.

In both countries MOI participation was of critical importance to the eventual field application of these processes. Interior officials in both countries are the people who deliver government programmes, and feel the brunt of popular discontent with government policies. The MOI in Thailand demonstrated its



genuine interest in the programme by funding substantial activities out of its own budget, and in Cambodia both the Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, and the chief trainer for the Ministry of the Interior were enthusiastic participants in development of the Cambodian programme. Said Kassie Neou, the deputy chair of the Cambodian Elections Commission, and director of the Cambodian Institute for Human Rights:

*"We must find open-minded people in a closed society and work with them. The MOI is particularly important. Without them nothing can be done."*

Once again, partner selection, identifying the best people in all organizations, and building programming links with them, is an important aspect of successful programme development.

The Canadian approach encouraged this. In both countries it began with a "buy-in" policy conference, focusing not on specific local conflicts, but on processes, allowing senior people to determine for themselves the value of the process.

In Cambodia NGO's had a strong role in the programme's development, and in Thailand it was government agencies and academic institutions.

In Thailand the participation of NREM, the Canadian-financed environmental project, opened the door for the Khon Kaen team to work with the Ministry of the Interior. Ministry officials had attended some of the early conferences, but not in large numbers. The NREM project director, Barry Hall, heard about the existence of the conflict resolution programme from CIDA officials, and thought it would play a useful role in his project. His motivation for participation was not altruistic, although it did have a useful result for the Khon Kaen IDR. He participated because he thought the conflict resolution process would fill a gap in his own project.

The bottom line is that people who participate because they have an intrinsic interest in the process are more likely to creatively attend to the process, and to endure the inevitable disappointments which characterise the development of any successful project. In most cases these are the people who self-select for participation. If the programme meets a real need, motivation will not be a problem.

### C) Adaptive Programming

Implementation research tells us that attempts to introduce new concepts into practice will fail unless there is significant

room for adaptation by the user to local requirements. With a constructive, problem-solving motivation for participation and the freedom to adapt the innovation to local circumstances, the users are highly likely to take ownership of the process, to make it their own, and to fight for it.

The Canadian conflict resolution team was open to adapting their ideas to both the Thai and Cambodian contexts because they already had extensive experience in adapting approaches and techniques on a daily basis in conflicts in a wide variety of different situations in British Columbia. They had a healthy worry about their relative ignorance of the cultures of the two countries, and this led them to listen carefully to their programming partners. They call this their "elicitive approach" to programming, drawing on local interests and forming their own training around those interests.

This attitude is reflected in how they think of the people they worked with in Thailand and Cambodia. "This was a revelation to me," said one of the key Thai participants. "They did not treat us like we were students, but like we were colleagues and friends." And the Canadians themselves prefer to call their Thai and Cambodian colleagues not partners, but "principals" who define the agenda, with themselves as the "agents" who help the principals to do what they want, and need to do to solve their own problems.

The same Canadian team worked with both the Thai and Cambodians, yet the two programmes look very different, a vivid demonstration of the leadership provided by the host countries.

The most obvious example of adaptive, elicitive programming was the integration of the Canadian approach to conflict resolution with the Buddhist tradition. This was an important element in both countries. Ok Serei Sopheak, the advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister, who is one of the directors of the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution said:

"We should re-evaluate the role of monks and village elders. Until we have something to replace traditional structures we need to recognise them, honour them and strengthen them, not treat them with arrogance. I think this integrates very well with the Western approach to conflict resolution."

And Khun Jadul Apichatbutr, the Director-General of the Community Development Department in the Thai Ministry of the Interior said:

*"These ideas, the basic concepts of respect and dignity and working together are present in our traditional culture, but we have lost touch with much of this. The Conflict Resolution training was useful because it did not conflict with these principles of traditional Thai problem-solving, but presented the Canadian ideas as a way to take these concepts and make them systematic, to translate them into actions and behaviours of people who have to deal with problems. You know, Thai society is not short of good concepts. But doing something is different. It needs examples of concrete actions you can take to implement the general concepts."*

The room to experiment is essential for successful implementation of innovations. CIDA's Management for Change Programme had very little money to fund activities, and what it had was often eliminated without notice when CIDA's budget was cut, but what it did have, was an orientation to experiment with new ideas, to put capable people together, and give them the freedom to experiment. This decentralized approach to management served this project well. Similarly, the NREM project, funded by the CIDA bilateral programme, had the freedom to import new ideas, and this proved a useful source of funding for the Khon Kaen IDR.

It is ironic that budget limitations may have been one factor promoting innovation. At Khon Kaen, because the budget was so small, said Dr. Suwit, deputy director of the Institute, they had a lot of freedom to experiment.

*"If we had tried to start this with a big project with long-term foreign funding we probably would have spent a lot of time on administration, accounting and politics and not on conflict resolution. But of course then we would have been in a position to develop long-term plans too, which would have been useful."*

Similarly, Achan Wongsas said of the training methods:

*"We had to develop innovative training approaches to get people's attention. There were so many training opportunities in 1995 and 1996 for people to attend. Other groups could pay them to attend. We could not. We had to prepare very thoroughly and try new things."*

This strategy worked. People found the innovative case-study and role-plays interesting, and when the Thai government subsequently cut its budgets for training, people

still remembered the conflict resolution training as something which stood out from the crowd, and began funding it themselves.

When things did not work well, such as the case-studies based on Canadian experience, the Canadians and Thais (and later the Cambodians) reacted quickly, researching and writing case studies based in those two countries.

#### D) Margin for Experimentation

If people are going to take a risk on a new idea, it helps if they have room to experiment, if moving resources, physical, financial and psychological to this experiment is not a complete risk. In other words, they need room to try and fail, without facing disaster.

This has been referred to as a "margin" for experimentation, and it is often crucial in encouraging experimentation. Foreign technical assistance can play its most useful role when it provides that margin, that room for innovation. By providing funds to the Canadians, Thais and Cambodians, this is what the CIDA MFC programme did. It provided just enough support for the three partners to try the ideas of collaboration, to test it. This funding gave them the breathing space they needed to formulate a programme and seek out new sources of support.

The Canadians, and later other donors with experience in this field provided margin to their counterparts in Thailand and Cambodia, providing them with experience-based information on process, and the opportunity to try out new training techniques, with backup support. The training approach used in these programmes, particularly in Thailand, where there was more frequent Canadian participation, required the team members to rotate their training roles, so they would have experience when called upon to fly solo in domestic training activities.

#### E) Consistency between theory and practice

"Means-ends congruence" is the technical term for this. It also comes down to practicing what you preach. It means that people learn what they experience, not what they are told, so training which espouses participatory decision-making should practice it during the training process.

The Canadian conflict resolution initiatives deferred to their Cambodian and Thai counterparts on the timing and direction of their programming. And when the training was the most effective, it was when it was genuinely participatory, when the

role-playing and case-studies were used creatively to complement traditional lectures.

The techniques have been widely adopted now as training approaches by the trainers in the Ministry of the Interior and elsewhere, who have experienced them, because, as one person said: "We saw that it worked for us, so why not use it for others?"

## 5. WHERE WILL THE PROGRAMMES GO NOW?

### Cambodia

The Cambodian programme has moved carefully, and is focusing now on producing small numbers of highly skilled conflict resolution practitioners. At the same time the Cambodian Centre hopes to attract support for policy workshops with senior government officials.

The support for an expanded conflict resolution training programme is not universal, however. Dr. Lao Hmong Hay, the Director of the Khmer Institute for Democracy sees other priorities:

*"We need the basics first. We need a moral base. This was destroyed in Cambodia, as families and religion and social structures were eliminated. So before we work on techniques to solve problems, we need a moral base. We should concentrate on building our laws, then when we have the moral base and the legal infrastructure, we can move on to other things."*

But if we are going to look at the very short term, at the most practical, most immediate and the most concrete application of conflict management to public life, then the most important immediate role for the Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution will be in teaching and providing dispute resolution to the people managing Cambodia's elections, currently scheduled for July 26, 1998. "Our Centre will be tested by the events of the election," said one of its founders. "We cannot solve all the conflicts around the election, but we can build a more consensual process." This role depends to a very great extent on the willingness of foreign donors to provide financial and technical support for the activity.

Everyone recognizes that in the long run, no single event, such as an election, will internalize conflict resolution as a component of the Cambodian social fabric. The Deputy Chair of the Elections Commission, one of the initial core group on

conflict resolution, says of the conflict resolution programme in Cambodia:

*"We should organize our programmes for all levels, because each level is part of a system. If conflict resolution fails at one level it can undermine our efforts at the other levels. But if each level has skills and attitudes appropriate for their work they can support each other. Level one is the Minister, the political leaders and senior officials, who need more awareness of the policy issues and how conflicts can be prevented. At the mid-level are district or commune chiefs, who need mediation skills, and also the members of the National Assembly. Then, we have the grassroots where we need conflict management."*

He wants this conflict resolution training to be incorporated into the curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

*"We must build this into our culture again. It was there before, but it was eliminated with so many other good things. But if we start now the next generation of Cambodians may finally live in peace."*

The Centre has its programme in place for domestic conflict resolution training, and it has the foreign assistance it needs for this. If donors are to have any role now, it will be to provide support for the policy workshops aimed at senior officials, and to provide the critical support needed now, not in the distant future, for resolution of electoral disputes. Integrated programming is possible, but it will take a lot of money.

## Thailand

The Thai programme is now in transition. Having made a decision three years ago to spread the word about dispute resolution as widely as possible in Thailand, and having far exceeded its own goals using this approach, the Institute for Dispute Resolution is now faced with an immense demand for in-depth training of the kind currently being organized in Cambodia. A recent conference in Bangkok, funded by the Asia Foundation, concluded that more in-depth training and curricula must now be developed to produce the large number of conflict resolution professionals who will be needed to defuse the increasingly violent conflicts in Thai society. "The time has come," said one participant at the workshop, "to move this deeper

into Thai culture, too explore the ways that dispute resolution and mediation can integrate with our culture."

A serious issue for the Thais is the distrust of academic institutions. Neutral academics play an important role in providing information which can be used by all parties to a dispute in Canadian conflict management activities.

But, said one speaker at the Asia Foundation workshop:

*"In Thailand, academics are not neutral. They support political parties, or they work for private companies, or they are part of the NGO's. How can people know that the information they provide is neutral?"*

So the question remains for the Khon Kaen University Institute for Dispute Resolution: What should it concentrate on now? The demand, and the opportunities are there for many different approaches:

- Using the University's Mekong Institute as an entrée to providing dispute resolution training in the subregion;
- Doing more field work themselves, to resolve major disputes;
- Providing university-based degree training in dispute resolution, producing certified professionals;
- Providing more intensive training outside of the academic infrastructure, for field-based professionals in the Ministry of the Interior, NGO's, the military or the large number of public enterprises which want more training.

The demand for services which is a measure of the Institute's substantial success in its programme to date, now presents the Institute with its most difficult decision. Resources are limited, and the Institute cannot serve all of these needs.

Foreign assistance now could provide the financial assistance to move this programme to the next level of institutionalization, a stage where it becomes a regular and accepted part of the way people think and behave. At the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand, the manager of the Community Development Section, Khun Manoon Wanyee, remarked about the dilemma of sustainability:

*"[You know, we should pay for these programmes ourselves. This is important. These are good techniques which can help us solve many of our*

*problems. We should use our own money...to prove that this is sustainable....But our problems are just beginning and they will get worse quickly because of the economic crisis. The problem is that this crisis also prevents us from funding this kind of training, because our budgets have been frozen.]"*

Certainly the Thais have more human resources available for this programme than do the Cambodians. But Thailand has a population six times greater than Cambodia, and it is a population which needs these services now.

The new Thai constitution is a genuinely revolutionary document. If it is implemented as many of its drafters intended when it was written, it will change the nature of Thai society, making the political process transparent, encouraging public participation in decisions at every level of government, decentralizing the control of natural resources to the village and the district, and holding political leaders and administrators accountable to the public. If this occurs, the dispute resolution training available from the Khon Kaen Institute, and from other institutions, will be an important element in making the new social system work. But implementation is really the difficult part of the constitutional reform process. Putting the constitution into meaningful, practical effect will be much more difficult than voting it through the Constitution Drafting Assembly or Parliament, or passing organic laws. Practical skills are required for this, and many of the participants in the Khon Kaen programme think that now is the time for the Institute to follow up with a coordinated, comprehensive training and information programme.

["It would be too bad if foreign funding was not available to help us with this now,"] said one provincial official in the Ministry of the Interior, "because the Thai government is in difficult circumstances. It would be a waste to lose the continuity and momentum of this programme, just when it is most needed.]"

#### Canadian participation

This programme was a success. The Canadian funding agency provided money when it was first needed, and decentralized decision-making on the use of resources to the field. The Canadian team was flexible, creative and sensitive to their partners' needs. The right people worked together at the right time.



If there is one element missing from the programme, which would have made it more successful, have provided a more sustained impact, it is continuity of funding. In Thailand, where the Institute for Dispute Resolution was able to obtain funding from other Canadian programmes, and then from Thai government and other sources, this may not appear to be a major problem. But the Thais value their professional and personal collaboration with their Canadian colleagues, and in the past two years have worked closely with only one of them, because of the fitful nature of the financial support provided, in a series of small scale projects through different channels. Long-term planning, one of the hallmarks of sustainability, is difficult without secure funding. At the same time, however, this insecurity made the Thai programme very responsive to the demands of people who wanted their services, and this has led to creative variations in the way the Institute for Dispute Resolution has developed its programmes.

In Cambodia the effect of limited Canadian funding has been more obvious. The Canadians had a dramatic impact on senior policy makers with their first workshop in Cambodia, but as one of them said:

*"What good is one conference? We need followup. We need to exchange ideas, and develop our skills. It is too bad the Canadians could not come back."*

The continuing influence which Canadian experts have had in Thailand, is not present in Cambodia. Other agencies which have access to more stable funding are now providing the collegial mentoring in Cambodia which Canadians could have provided, had the funding been there.

The official in the CIDA Management for Change Programme who provided the first financial support to the Thai and Cambodian conflict resolution programmes says of this:

*"...it's a shame we haven't found a way to continue supporting followup to both of these institutions, due, in Partnership Branch...to our changing organizational eligibility criteria, not a judgment about the quality of the work."*

While the Canadians, Thais and Cambodians were clearly disappointed with this, one of the Canadians said:

*"We thought CIDA was going to give us programme support for this, so we could do more consistent work. But [the MFC CIDA officer] always said to us that they*

would try, but 'you should plan for sustainability as if you only have one chance.'

The termination of funding to these programmes was clearly not a decision made at the desk level in CIDA, where the value of the field activities was well known. These programmes were a casualty of broad-based funding cuts on the one hand, and the lack of bilateral funds allocated to governance programming. There is a lot of talk among donor agencies about "good" governance programmes, but long-term money for what some officials see as risky programmes, is hard to find.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

*What are the measures of the success of this programme?*

1. The creation of two organizations whose sole purpose is to provide conflict resolution training.
2. The substantial reach of the programmes, even after only two years of effective financial support.
3. The mobilization of domestic resources in Cambodia and Thailand, and from foreign agencies, to support these programmes.
4. Very large demand for the services of the two institutions.
5. The use of the skills developed during these programmes to solve real conflicts.

*What are the characteristics of this programme which could be used in others?*

1. Build on your experience in the countries you will be working in. Use people who know the terrain to identify strong partner organizations in Canada and in the field. There is no substitute for good field work, sound institutional and contextual assessment.
2. Choose partner organizations with strong leadership and demonstrated existing capacity to deliver programmes. Build on a sound base of existing capacity, in both Canadian and foreign organizations.
3. Respond to genuine needs. Look for problems which are felt, not perceived only by the donor agency. Work with people who have a genuine interest in the problem, and a strong desire to address it. This includes Canadian as well as foreign partners.

If the Canadians do not have a genuine interest in the subject, if their only motivation is money or prestige, the programme will not take root.

4. Decentralize management of the programme.

5. Adapt the programme to local needs. This means scope, focus, pace and techniques. Make the local partners the leaders, and put the Canadian partners in the support role.

Encourage and provide the intellectual and financial support necessary for experimentation. Not every activity has to be a success, but fear of failure will give you a mediocre programme.

6. Practice what you preach. Ensure that there is congruence between the theory of how democratic, accountable government is supposed to work, and the techniques used to convey specific skills. Participatory, democratic and accountable government requires open, shared decision-making and collaborative programming. Know your limitations. Respect your partners and work with them as colleagues.

7. In a perfect world, provide dependable mid-to-long term funding.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Technology and Conflict Resolution Training

One of the best operational decisions made during these programmes was to develop local case materials. Importing Canadian case studies does not work, but the Canadians realized this early in the process, and with their Cambodian and Thai colleagues, developed local materials.

In Thailand, there is a strong feeling among the people who have studied with the Institute for Dispute resolution, that the time has come to move from theory and policy to practice. An almost universal opinion among the people I interviewed for this case study, was that the Institute should work now on real-life conflict situations, and document the process, for use in training.

The most effective way to do this, from the perspective of the learners, would be with the production of videotapes of the process, which can be used later for the training programmes. This technique will only work, however, where there is a reasonable level of trust in the process, and a belief that people will not be punished for expressing opposition to powerful agencies or individuals. In Thailand to some extent, and in certainly in Cambodia, this trust does not exist.

The implication of this is that if video technology is used, it should be used to document processes in conflict management, or public policy participation activities, such as the Civic Assembly in Khon Kaen, or for roundtables. Audio tapes of interview processes in real disputes might work better, because people will be protected from identification.

The use of other electronic technology in this process is problematic. It is a well documented fact that people learn behaviours by practicing them, not by reading about them. A web site could be established in Thailand, where internet use is more widespread than in Cambodia, but it would be limited to providing basic information - advertising, in effect, the ideas but not delivering the training. On balance, given the effort required for this, the time would be better spent solving conflicts and using the experience as case studies for training.

Ultimately the medium best suited for transmission of ideas and the learning of new behaviours, is person to person contact. There is no substitute in human learning for the work of committed people.

## APPENDIX 2: Research Methods

This case study used documentary review and qualitative field interviews as the basis for its conclusions. Interviews in Cambodia and Thailand were conducted in English where feasible, and in other cases in Thai and Khmer. The Thai interviews were conducted directly between the researcher and informants, and the Khmer interviews used an interpreter.

Quotations from interviews conducted in Thai and Khmer are necessarily paraphrases. I have attempted to represent the sense of the quoted comments accurately, and this was easier for the Thai interviews, which I conducted myself, than with the Khmer. But it is important that the reader be aware of which quotes are direct, from English, and which are from a Thai or Khmer interviews. Those quotations derived from Khmer and Thai are indicated by a square bracket "[" before and after the quotation.

Interviews were focused but open-ended. Below is a list of the individuals interviewed for this study:

### Canada

Stephen Owen, Former Commissioner on Resources and Environment, Government of British Columbia; Currently Lam Professor of Law and Public Policy, and Director of the Institute for Dispute Resolution, University of Victoria.

Catherine Morris, Former Director, Institute for Dispute Resolution, Board of Directors, Pacific Resolutions.

Alex Grzybowski, Former negotiator Commission on Resources and Environment, currently Board of Pacific Resolutions, President, Alex Grzybowski and Associates.

### Thailand

Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt, Former President, Khon Kaen University, Currently Director, Institute for Dispute Resolution, Institute for Economic and Social Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion, Khon Kaen University.

Dr. Suwit Laohasiriwong, Deputy Director, Institute for Dispute Resolution, Deputy Director, Institute for Economic and Social Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Assoc. Prof. Wongsakongdee, Programme, Institute for Dispute Resolution, KKU; Institute for Economic and Social Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Khun Thassaporn Kupatavanit, Engineer, Ubol Rat Dam, Electrical  
Generating Authority of Thailand, Khon Kaen.

Khun Decha Premruedilert, Co-ordinator, NGOCCORD, Khon Kaen.

Khun Bamrung Kayotha, Advisor, Assembly of the Poor, Khon Kaen.

Khun Bapassorn Sathrawaha, Policy Officer, Provincial Office,  
Nakorn Ratchasima Province.

Khun Prapote Potai, Policy and Planning Analyst, Provincial  
Office, Udorn Thani Province.

Major Sawan Chertchai, National Security Command, Northeastern  
Region, Udorn Thani.

Khun Kanchit Salabsang, Planning Division, Khon Kaen Provincial  
Office.

Khun Wichai Sukitmonkonkul, Environmental Policy and Planning  
Division, Khon Kaen Provincial Office.

Khun Manoon Wanyee, Manager, Community Development Section,  
Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand, Nonthaburi.

Khun Montri Suwanmontri, Manager, Social and Economic Environment  
Department, Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand.

Khun Jatraporn Rasdradudi, Head of the Provincial Development  
Planning Section, Development Planning Division, Ministry of  
the Interior.

Khun Jadul Apichatbutr, Director-General Department of Community  
Development, Ministry of the Interior.

Mr. Barry Hall, Director, National Resources and Environmental  
Management Project, Ministry of the Interior.

Mr. Jim Klein, Representative, The Asia Foundation, Bangkok.

#### **Cambodia**

Ms. Eva Mysliwicz, Director, Cambodia Development Resource  
Institute, Phnom Penh, Co-Chair Cambodian Centre for  
Conflict Resolution

H.E. Ok Serei Sopheak, Director of Cabinet, Deputy Prime Minister  
Sar Kheng, Co-Chair Cambodian Centre for Conflict Resolution

H.E. Pol Lim, First Deputy General, Department of Political, Administrative and Police Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Phnom Penh

Mr. Soth Plai Ngarm, Programme Officer, CDRI

Mr. Ngy San, Programme Officer, CDRI

Ms. Heang Nean, Training Officer, CDRI

H.E. Kem Sokha, M.P., Chair, Committee on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints, Cambodia (interviewed in Bangkok)

H.E. Nin Saphon, M.P., Deputy Chair, Committee on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints, National Assembly of Cambodia

H.E. Ky Lum Aung, M.P. Chair, Committee on Economy and Planning, National Assembly of Cambodia

Dr. Lao Hmong Hay, Director, The Khmer Institute of Democracy.

Kassie Neou, Deputy Chair, National Elections Commission; Director, Cambodian Institute of Human Rights

HE Kep Chutema, Governor, Rattanakiri Province

Huy Romduol, Urban Community Development Advisor, Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi, Phnom Penh.

Kim Leng, Co-Manager, Dhammayietra/CPR

Sar Samen, Director, Project Against Domestic Violence

Tum Bunthan, Co-Manager, Krom Akphiwat Phum

Tin Ponlok, Project Director, Ministry of the Environment, Phnom Penh

Bunleng Men, Commercial Advisor, Canadian Embassy, Phnom Penh



## APPENDIX 3

### Rural Development and Conflict in Northeastern Thailand: A Background Paper

Dale Posgate

December 1997

#### 1. RURAL THAILAND IN THE 1980's

This section reviews the context of social and economic change that was affecting rural Thailand at the time CIDA's Thailand programme had a strong orientation towards community development. In general terms we are covering the decade in which the Thailand economy began to experience a remarkable period of economic growth. This startling success story lasted about ten years. Only this past year has the ending to this story been rewritten: instead of foreseeing that everyone would live happily ever after, it now embraces uncertainty, even the possibility of failure.

#### Focus and rationale

Some characteristics of the course of social and economic change affecting rural communities over the last decade can be found at the national level, but most observers emphasize regional rather than national data. This is mainly because, well before the period under review here, the nature of rural society, and especially the level of dependence of rural communities on small subsistence farming, varied a great deal from region to region. Thus the social impact of economic growth varied as well, leading to different - sometimes contradictory - demands for solutions and policies.

If there is one theme that seems to emerge, from all regions, it is that economic growth has resulted in increased competition for, and conflict over, natural resources: their ownership, management, and utilization. This theme resonates because it links drastic changes in community life styles to economic well-being (and at the household level, sheer survival). Concerns for the ethos and traditions of rural communities, always dictated by the natural environment, get mixed in with the more corporeal questions about who benefits economically, by how much. This is a potent, and typical, mix (tradition "versus" modernity) for prompting social - and political - mobilization.

For all the data on incomes, markets, migration, and so on, that accompany descriptions of economic growth, the substratum is always the fundamentals - land, trees, water, - that shape rural society and dictate how it works. This theme penetrates not only this background material but also the more elevated topics of governance and conflict resolution.

A second theme directing the focus of this background material, and again one that relates to the need to think in regional as opposed to national terms, is that much of the information refers to Northeastern Thailand (Isaan). Obviously there are changes and issues - especially those rooted in culture and history - that are distinct to other regions, especially the North and the far South, which have no bearing on Isaan or even rural Thailand as a whole. This background information will make only passing reference to these, and focus on Isaan.

What is the rationale for this focus? First, this is where the links between CIDA's past and current presence are clearest. Isaan was the principal setting for CIDA's programming in rural and community development in Thailand. Of the projects with a regional base, only one was outside Isaan, and those with a Bangkok base and nation-wide programming invariably focused on communities and organizations in Isaan.

Second, it is in this region, among the people of Isaan, that development practitioners identified all the faults, and few of the benefits, emanating from Thailand's recent experience with rapid national economic growth. Thus the issues, and development policy responses (both foreign and national), which are emerging in the late 1990's, are traceable to these problems. In case the focus seems too narrow it should be clear that Isaan's experience had national ramifications, both for policy-making and for other areas of the economy (eg. employment practices in the industrial belts).

No area, even Bangkok, escaped some of the negative effects of that experience but two things distinguished Isaan from the other areas, and attracted a disproportionate share of development interventions: its constant position at the bottom of the scale for all measures of regional well-being; and the fact it was more severely affected in human terms - individuals, families, and communities.

#### Patterns and trends in the Thai economy

The most constant thread in the pattern is long term economic growth and rising incomes. While the rate of growth varied the growth itself has been continuing for over thirty years. The

average annual rate of growth in the GDP from 1961-72 was 11.3%, from 1973-79, 7.7%, from 1980-85, when it slid back, was 5.5%. From 1986-89 it was 10%, giving Thailand the highest GDP growth rate in the world in that period. From 1975 to 1988 Thailand's total income in constant dollars rose 83%; Thailand became wealthier and, in absolute terms, so did its citizens.

But a second constant has been the increasingly uneven distribution of the growth and its benefits. This unevenness goes across several dimensions: regional, sectoral, and incomes. The last is the best known characteristic, especially since Thailand was recently shown to have the fifth worst distribution in the world, after four countries in Latin America. National Statistics Office data show the bottom income quintile's share of total GNP dropped from 6.1% in 1975-76 to 4.5% in 1988 while the top quintile's share rose from 48% to 52%. (In this period the poorest quintile experienced a real income gain of 35%, but the top quintile's gain was 103%).

In sectoral terms, the manufacturing and service sectors drove the gains, while the agricultural sector, which had been the mainstay of the economy, and led the economic expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, languished. Agriculture's share of the GDP dropped from 32% to 12% between 1965 and 1990, while manufacturing's share went from 14% to 26%. The proportion of the labour force employed in the agricultural sector dropped as well, from 78% in 1971 to 62% in 1985, but remains notably high. The statistics still report huge numbers of households ostensibly engaged in farming, but they disguise the reality that most of their income is earned off-farm and many "farmers" only work the land for 2-3 months per year.

In regional terms, it is well known that growth in industry, manufacturing, and services was highly concentrated in Bangkok and the surrounding provinces. As cited above, the growth pattern was least felt in Isaan, at least in terms of direct restructuring of the regional economy. In 1988 the average per capita income in Bangkok was nine times as high as that in Isaan which, with 33% of the population, had only 12% of the GNP. Isaan remained heavily dependent on agriculture, and what industrialization occurred was based on processing commercial crops such as cassava. Isaan's GDP did grow, but always about two percentage points behind the national rate. Only the urbanized provinces, Khon Kaen and Nakorn Ratchasima, had per capita incomes approaching the national level.

A final general theme, which went far to inform CIDA programming, was persistent rural poverty. While the agriculture sector in general did experience growth, albeit slower than that of other sectors, this disguised the fact that small farmers, oriented to

subsistence crops and lower productivity, made few gains and mostly lived below the poverty line. As shown below the "data confirm that absolute poverty in Thailand is principally a rural phenomenon, especially concentrated in the northeast region.". In 1988 the portion of the population living below the poverty line was 21% in the population as a whole, 26% of the population living in villages, and 35% of the population living in Isaan. Thailand's success at eliminating poverty is mooted. Although the incidence of poverty has been falling (from 30% overall in 1975-76 to 21% in 1988), by 1993 it was no better than Indonesia even though per capita income was two and a half times higher.

The poverty of small farmers in Isaan derives from the marginal agricultural environment: poor soil, no irrigation, prone to drought. The issue is not landlessness (although landlessness and especially tenure rights are increasingly problematic) so much as very low productivity, below what is required for subsistence. Small farmers usually own 10-15 rai of land, but the minimum holding to be a surplus farmer is 35 rai. This is what drives the legendary emigration from the Isaan countryside to wage-earning jobs overseas, on the agro-industrial plantations in other regions, and, in the last decade, to the factories, construction sites, and service industries in Bangkok. In 1987-88 the average farming household in Isaan earned (gross) only B6,654 from farming and B11,246 from off-farm employment. Isaan has 46% of Thailand's agricultural land but contributes only 25% to total agricultural production.

## 2. POLICY AND THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT

### Plans

Since the 1960s the framework for government policy to address development issues has been the Five Year Plans, generated by the NESDB. Some argue that the Plans' rhetoric and intentions have little relationship to what actually happens, since the various decision-making institutions that have ruled Thailand are under no compulsion to implement them. Others argue that any authority the plans may have is undermined by the fact RTG decision-making is notoriously slow and ineffective. Regardless, the Plans serve as a weather-vane, indicating the general drift of longer-term policy outcomes. This section identifies some features of recent Plans that are relevant landmarks.

The first plans were heavily oriented to policies to support economic growth, and raising incomes and employment. During the 1970s they focused on increasing the productivity and commercial value of the agricultural sector. By the early 1980s the drive

for growth switched to industry and manufacturing, with a strong link to export promotion.

Beginning in the 1980s the Plans began to take into account some of the negative effects of the pattern of economic growth (at least in the way it emerged, not necessarily as it was planned). The Seventh Plan (1992-1996) marked a departure from past priorities by incorporating measures to improve the distribution of income. The Sixth Plan (1985-1991) was important because it formally recognized the role of NGOs in development, dispelling the aura of association with communist insurrection that had precluded any possibility of collaboration with government programmes. This has evolved even further in the current (Eighth) Plan, with the NESDB involving NGOs in planning for decentralized and participatory governance (eg. LDI has been involved, through NESDB, in training to strengthen the Tambol Administrative Organizations).

## Policies

It is possible to show how some policy directions led to the problems now being confronted by the development community.

For instance, agricultural policy in the seventies favoured large farmers by providing cheap credit against mortgageable land, which marginal farmers did not have. Other policies promoted cash crops (kenaf, then cassava, in the Northeast) by encouraging investment and expansion into uncultivated land, again neglecting the needs of small and marginal farmers.

Land tenure policies were also discriminatory. Through design or simply lack of clarity, they failed to account for the way Isaan villages had informally distributed "common" land. Up until 1932 all land belonged to the monarchy; subsequently, the state abrogated this role, with broad de facto rights in absence of clear tenure procedures. As the potential commercial value of land increased in the 1980s, the gap between the laws and the realities of occupation were a seed bed for numerous conflicts between rural communities and the bureaucracy/business nexus.

The dispute over land tenure was duplicated in other areas, notably forests, but also fishing (policies which allowed or tolerated incursion of large commercial boats into the inshore fisheries of small coastal communities), coastal resources (encroachment of commercial shrimp and prawn complexes on mangrove forests and coastal rice fields, particularly in the South), and rivers (water use policies that encouraged or supported industrial consumption, golf courses, etc., in rural areas). In the mid-1980s, policies to ban teak logging and to

reforest "deteriorated" forests by converting them from natural forests to commercial eucalyptus plantations put tremendous pressure on designated forests which were in fact being utilized for other purposes by villagers.

Other pressures on rural households and communities were spin-offs from the general policy to support rapid industrialization: policies to boost power production, leading to loss of riverine rights and homesteads to dams and their reservoirs, and serious environmental degradation in the region of thermal plants using lignite fuel; weak policies and little implementation of existing policies regulating environmental pollution; lack of, or lack of enforcement of, laws on fair wages and work-place safety, directly affecting the conditions of rural migrant labourers.

It is too simplistic to brand all recent policy-making with a negative mark. Many of the problems experienced by the disadvantaged rural communities during the period of growth can be traced to the capacity of local and national business interests to persuade local government agencies and individuals to act in that interest, regardless of policy or regulations. The government does have agencies such as the CDD which should be able to counter these effects, but they are relatively weak and ineffective compared to agencies (notoriously, the RFD) whose mandates allow them to rent their bureaucratic prerogatives.

Many positive policies, such as those promoting decentralization of investment, are in place, but most government agencies - still centralized and increasingly weak in human resources - do not have the capacity to implement them. This is leading, or forcing, them to consider collaborating with NGOs for service delivery, a form of partnership well-established elsewhere but new to Thailand. (A good example is the regional office of the Department of Industrial Promotion in Buriram engaging Population and Development Association's CBIRD Nang Rong project to study and promote rural-based enterprises).

### Conflicts

It is not difficult to trace, from the above policy environment, the roots of the conflicts that have been pitting small farmers, rural communities, and development NGOs against business and bureaucratic agencies. The level of conflict has escalated from the local to the national, and even international (the Pak Moon Dam construction and resettlement, because of support from the World Bank, an example) arenas. The greater activism and institutional evolution of Thai politics in the last six years means the political dimension of these conflicts is getting increasing play. The capacity of organizers of the Forum for the

Poor to sustain a mass presence in the capital for weeks at a time is an index of this escalation.

Besides the element of political theatre underlying such events, they do put some stress on the engagement, and effectiveness, of policy-makers who are supposedly addressing poverty reduction.

Government policies have affected the orientation of the 150-200 NGOs in the rural development sector. The NGOs initially focused on enhancing grass-roots organization, alternative farming, small-scale savings and cooperatives, etc., but eventually were drawn into the conflicts surrounding policy decisions and outcomes.

At first this meant taking action on behalf of their "clients". For example, many villagers which were part of NET (Surin) programming were affected by the massive resettlement policy of the Suchinda government. NET was inevitably committed to acting on behalf of the households, often from the poorest villages in marginal, recently-settled land, by publicising their situation and mobilizing resistance. Such local, separate, actions have evolved into a more collective ideological expression of what rural development should entail, countering what they see as policies that are large-scale, top-down, and driven by corporate (i.e. business, bureaucracy, army) interests. This is not an isolated case. A few of the other, numerous, specific issues or policies to which local NGOs have mounted a response include: salt mining, golf course development, rock quarries, industrial pollution of local rivers.

The development NGOs have emerged as the principal channel (at least pending a more functional representative political process) by which rural communities can articulate their response to this dominant orientation. They have extended their scope by forming regional and national networks which override diverse programmes and issues by playing an advocacy role. Or, they may be based on sectoral interests such as community forestry, alternative agriculture, or small farmers.

Their response goes beyond local problems to address a host of general concerns: greater equity in distribution of benefits, focus on agriculture rather than industry, social stability, community self-reliance. As such it takes on a definite ideological, pro-democracy, hue, as seen in the following credo of the "People's Forum": to promote development that is "people-centred, with due respect for man and nature... and where human rights and freedom constitute the norm."

### 3. CIDA'S ROLE: RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING IN THAILAND

#### Strategy

CIDA returned to Thailand as a bilateral donor in the early 1980s, and its initial strategy was to assist the Thai government in three areas: acquiring technology and expertise to maximize the benefits of investments in both the private and public sector; managing natural resources; reducing rural poverty. The last of these shaped the programming in the community/rural development sector, building on initiatives by Canadian NGOs that were already in place. By the mid-1980s the total portfolio of forty projects was quite evenly split among four sectors: community development (28%); HRD and institutional linkages (19%); natural resource management (27%) and industrial development (26%).

In 1988, in an update of the CPR, CIDA envisaged its position in Thailand evolving through three phases: an initial phase (1981-85) focusing on community and rural development, in the well-established donor-recipient mode of bilateral and country focus projects; a switch in emphasis (1985-95) to the modern sector, through projects in HRD and technology transfer founded on "partnerships in economic cooperation"; and a phasing out of direct aid (1995-2000) in favour of self-supporting partnerships in the private (both profit and non-profit) sectors. The programme is still in transition from the second to the third phase.

The change in direction in 1988, prompted by Thailand's economic growth, introduced some innovative projects linked to the Thai government agencies concerned with industrial policy and financing (NESDB, DIP, IFCT) and facilitating links with Canadian investors. But it also took note of continuing income disparities, and the need to increase incomes and employment among the rural poor. Combined, these factors were behind the strategy to phase out the grass-roots community development projects, enhance the institutional capacity of the Thai NGOs, and incorporate decentralization into the design of some of the industrial development projects.

#### Programme

The CIDA programme in Thailand, worth US\$28.7 million in 1986-87, was large enough to rank Canada as the country's third largest bilateral donor (albeit a very small one compared to Japan, whose programme was in the \$500 million range).



Within the overall programme, CIDA's community development programme had three goals, according to the sectoral LFA of 1987: foster community-based self-reliance among the poor especially in the Northeast; improve the ability of GOs and NGOs to meet the needs of the rural poor; facilitate communication of local concerns into national policy. A major review of the community development programme in 1988 found a number of results that related to the first two goals, but there was not much achievement, at that point, on the last one. This shortcoming was eventually addressed with some success through the Local Development Foundation project, starting in 1990. (The review also noted the programme's generally unimpressive record on gender issues).

The community development programme was especially distinguished, in contrast to that of the larger donors, by its links with NGOs. These links were the outgrowth of work in Thailand by Canadian NGOs. The Thai NGOs NET and GRID emerged from the CUSO connection, and many of the individual leaders in the Thai NGO community could directly trace their training and careers back to these Canadian roots. The programme was both diverse and flexible. It drew in Canadian organizations (including CUSO, Canadian UNICEF Committee, Coady Institute, the YMCA) but for the most part worked directly with Thai agencies both government and non-government.

The challenge to programming in this sector was to shift from the basic human needs orientation of "traditional" community development activities to the emerging issues of institutional capacity, income and employment generation, and sustainable development. All these issues were complemented by the other sectors in the programme: environment policy, HRD, industrial development.

Thus the definition of community development took on a wider meaning. For instance, in order for projects to link village enterprises and potential entrepreneurs to the non-farm economy they have to consider skill and vocational training, access to credit, product development, access to markets and supplies, production technology, and management training (as seen in the CBIRD Nang Rong Phase II project). Their political, as opposed to economic, frontier is also expanded. Forming village-based organizations and networks capable of resisting external forces in the competition for land and natural resources has ramifications for the polity as a whole. Similarly, the struggle against pollution and degradation of the environment is essentially a political one, requiring mobilization at the local level so that communities have the power to participate in bureaucratic and political decision-making.

All this has to proceed with one eye over the shoulder, to the enduring fact of rural poverty, especially in Isaan. Incomes were climbing, but every village contained households living well below the poverty line. For all the increasing complexity and sophistication called for, as the context of the rural development sector changes, the fundamental goal of poverty reduction defies obsolescence.

## Projects

CIDA supported 13 projects in the community development sector in the 1980s, with a total commitment of about \$50 million. By the 1990s these were mostly phased out, following the CIDA strategy of 1988, and only two new projects emerged: support to the Local Development Foundation, and C-BIRD Nang Rong Phase II.

Some of these projects were quite innovative. NET, PDA, and LDAP broke ground, in CIDA, by being the first to operate with direct funding from CIDA to a local organization. LDAP served as a model that CIDA followed in establishing locally-administered funding mechanisms ("DAPs") in other programmes, including the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Even those projects with Canadian partners relied very little on foreign input for implementation (only the DPO/CDD and RDI projects had full time advisors from Canada).

One set of projects were through NGOs, operating in rural areas (RESDP in Chiang Mai and seven surrounding provinces, NET in Surin, GRID in Roi Et, CBIRD in Buriram) and working directly with local communities. Their programmes included, among a wide diversity of approaches and activities, technical assistance and training to enhance both farm and off-farm income generation, credit and savings, village-level organizations (rice banks, women's groups, etc) and community leadership and management training. These were the true grass-roots projects that put the NGOs on the front line - as mediators, or adversaries, depending on the ethos of their organization and/or the nature of the issue - between the communities and the external economic and political environment. All of them, with varying focus and success, instituted links with local government extension services. NET and GRID were the only ones to be actively involved in the regional NGOCCORD networks, which were, and still are, active in advocacy and other more politically-oriented alignments.

CIDA's LDAP project provided grants to over fifty projects and activities, including community projects run by small NGOs (mostly rural but some urban), training, information, and research. Besides being an effective funding mechanism (like the Canada Fund, based on Embassy authority, but with a Thai

secretariat which identified projects and managed the project), LDAP, by virtue of the Thai individuals involved in running and governing the fund, had a high profile in the Thai NGO community, with networks at both the national and regional level. Many of the key figures from the provinces and in Bangkok who were concerned with community-based development and democratisation were represented on its project review committees. This core group formed the Local Development Foundation, to which CIDA harnessed its long-run institutional commitment to the community development sector. The LDI project was designed to institutionalize NGO support and leadership, by establishing a permanent organization with the capacity to support the development-oriented NGOs through financial support, advocacy, information, and research. (The design also provided for linkages to Canadian partners but this component was not implemented).

There were three projects based on government efforts at rural development, the Development of Peoples' Organizations project with CDD, a UNICEF project (Development of Basic Services for Children), and the North East Fisheries project. The DPO project had a grass-roots orientation but was mainly focused on enhancing the effectiveness of the agency (CDD) at the centre. The UNICEF project was designed to enhance service delivery and integration for all the government extension agencies working in the Northeast. CIDA had little involvement in this project except supporting the financing. The NEF project was implemented by the Dept. of Fisheries with a Canadian commercial partner. It had a very wide scope and aimed at increasing production and incomes derived from small-scale fisheries, as well as strengthening the DOF. It is unlikely any of these projects had any spill-over into strengthening community-based activism. Finally, there was the Rural Literacy Project, a tied-aid intervention supplying Canadian paper to reinforce DNFE's mandate to increase rural literacy. Again, it is unlikely this project had a lasting institutional or grass-roots effect.

The other major project was support to the RDI (Research and Development Institute) at Khon Kaen University. (This university already had links with Canada, especially with the University of Manitoba, through scholarship programmes). This project stood out because it focused on institution-building as opposed to specific development activities. The purpose, besides creating a self-sustaining facility on the campus, was to increase RDI's capacity to promote and coordinate rural development in Isaan. CIDA provided funds for a building, for RDI salaries and programmes, and for a Canadian advisor (but no Canadian partner organization). Because disbursements were far below planned budgets the project schedule lasted for ten years, up to 1995.

The project catalysed academic involvement in rural development issues through action-research projects, teaching, and seminars. Its facilities gave the Isaan development community a physical as well as intellectual resource, and over the years RDI's Board was a good mix of academic, government, and NGO interests. RDI was a good locus for cross-fertilization within the CIDA programme. For instance: there were board members from other CIDA-supported projects (TDRI, LDF); RDI expertise was used to conduct evaluations of GRID and NET in the mid-1980s; in 1992 RDI held a workshop on community forestry which was based on its own research plus research by LDI and regional NGOCORDs, among others; a current manager at LDI did her Master degree in Rural Development at RDI. The RDI staff worked directly with local communities on a variety of development and training projects including those that were linked to growing conflicts over natural resource management (eg. riverine pollution from the Phoenix Pulp Co. mill).

The sustainability of RDI as an institution, although problematic in terms of financing and autonomy, gained considerably from its being positioned within the university. (CIDA's other major institution-building project, LDI, faced the greater obstacles of creating a free-standing organization from scratch). It certainly helped sustain CIDA's presence at the university, and thus was one of the building blocks for the final phase of CIDA's programming in Thailand.

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## ACRONYMS

CBIRD Community Based Integrated Rural Development (PDA) CDD  
Community Development Dept. (RTG)  
CPR Country Programme review  
DNFE Dept. of NonFormal Education (RTG)  
DIP Dept. of Industrial Promotion (RTG)  
DOF Dept. of Fisheries (RTG)  
DPO Development of Peoples' Organizations (project with CDD)  
GRID Grass Roots Integrated Development  
IFCT Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand  
LDAP Local Development Assistance Programme  
LDI Local Development Institute  
LDF Local Development Foundation  
NESDB National Economic and Social Development Board (RTG) NET  
Net East Thailand (Foundation)  
NGOCORD (now NGOCOD) NGO Coordinating Committee on (Rural)  
Development PDA Population and Community Development  
Association  
RDI Research and Development Institute  
RESDP Rural Economic and Social Development Programme  
RFD Royal Forestry Dept. (RTG)  
RTG Royal Thai Government  
TAO Tambon Administrative Organization  
TDRI Thailand Development Research Institute