

**ASSOCIATION COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**



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### **Letter from Ms. Britt Bjorklund, Member of Board of Directors**

Welcome to the 2010 annual report of the Association Cooperation for Economic Development (ACED).

ACED works for social justice in rural areas of Cambodia especially in Bavel, Phnom Prek and Bannorn districts.

Social justice comprises every aspect of our daily life and as 2010 ended ACED has reflected on the challenges faced during the past year and those still to be faced when helping the poor, the marginalized, and the sufferers of injustice, as well as when dealing with commune development issues.

It is with appreciation I certify that in 2010 ACED was able to continue work for social justice in its main program areas: income-generation, sustainable agriculture, health education, human rights and legal aid, education, and environment.

In some of the program areas such as health education there was not much activity due to lacking fund support while in others new endeavors were started such as the bee cultivation and organic agriculture project, child sponsorship ventures, friendship school actions, and a course in IT skills.

All activities even when marginalized have a meaningful interrelationship and contribute to sustainable development in the communities. From a global perspective environmental aspects and influences on climate change have been focused on in all projects.

We at ACED are grateful to every staff member, every donor, every supporter, every network member, and every volunteer who contributed individually and jointly to build up better social conditions in the communities concerned. We are convinced that our commitment to work closely with the communities is the right way and will result in improved knowledge, resources, and better livelihood for all people.

ACED will continue to provide support and strategic strengthening services in accordance with funds available and hence contribute to long-term sustainability and social justice. At the same time ACED assures that all funds are transparent, accountable, and used in accordance with their intended purpose.

Britt Mari Björklund

Member of Board of Directors

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. What is ACED?

Association Cooperation for Economic Development (ACED) is a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established in 1996 in Bavel District, Battambang Province, Cambodia. It has received official recognition by local authorities and the Ministry of the Interior. ACED has received international and national support from donors including Star Kampuchea, CIDSE (Development and Partnership Action), CWS Battambang, the World Bank, Oxfam-Quebec.Ca, and generous individuals.



## 1.2. Areas of Influence

ACED has worked in Battambang province on a wide variety of programs aimed at improving the quality of life for local people including the protection of their rights and the environment they live in. The Integrated Community Development Program has been an integral feature of ACED's activities since 1998 and includes projects such as self-help groups, credit schemes, health education, women's and children's rights, good governance, women's empowerment, the poorest of the poor project, scholarships, sponsorships, friendship schools, advocacy, community forestry, agricultural development, and capacity-building training—always with a focus on educational equality, social justice, and environmental issues.



ACED continuously evaluates its strategy in order to improve its working methods and programs, actively conscious of the interaction between its global program's six areas of influence: Sustainable Agriculture, Income Generation, Health Education, Britt's Learning Centre, Human Rights and Legal Aid, and Environment.

## 1.3. Collaborators and Financial Support

In 2010 ACED received financial support/funds from Star Kampuchea, Asia foundation, Oxfam-Quebec Canada, and individuals. ACED is grateful to all these donors and in return is committed to accountability and transparency. Financial support enabled ACED to continue work in the fields of good governance, advocacy, self-help groups and credit schemes, improving the conditions of the poorest of the poor, formal education, scholarships, friendship-schools, community forestry and land conflict resolution, staff capacity building, and network incorporation. No funds were allocated specifically for the women and children's rights project in 2010 but advocacy work was done.



#### 1.4. Board of Directors and International Volunteers

ACED has a Board of Directors (BOD) consisting of five members that govern and manage the organization. The staff comprises six members and one volunteer.

In addition, three volunteers—two from Finland and one from Ireland—worked together with ACED’s regular staff in 2010. Two stayed for three months each, and the third, who has volunteered with ACED for the past 3 years, has stayed for 4 months each time. Volunteers often continue to collaborate with ACED after finishing their program because they believe ACED is making a positive impact and deserves their continuing support. One of the volunteers—Thorsten from Germany—regularly helps with website maintenance and another is an active board member of ACED.

#### 1.5. New premises



ACED moved to its new headquarters in February 2010. The new two-story building holds three offices, one meeting room, kitchen and toilet, and two fully-equipped rooms for international volunteers. ACED kept the old building for the Britt’s Learning Centre BLC program, which aims to provide children from low-income families with English speaking skills.

This was an important move for ACED in order to improve its working environment and accommodate the

different areas of work and number of staff needed to carry out its activity. It has also provided BLC students with their own permanent space to further develop the English learning program and the planned IT lessons in the future.



## 2. Good governance

Good governance is a cornerstone for building justice in a society. However, lack of participation, accountability, transparency, equity, agreement, effectiveness, feedback, and gender equality are known problems in local society. In 2010 ACED received funds from Asia Foundation for the project “Increasing Citizen Participation to Enhance Good Governance”. The project was implemented in Bavel and Phnom Prek districts.

The objective was to enhance civic engagement and increase citizen participation in development processes, leadership, and management in order to increase good governance and thereby make local government and service-delivery more effective in rural areas in Bavel and Phnom Prek districts. Impacts of the project were an increased communication between authorities and villagers; all participants obtained the knowledge and capacity to strengthen good governance, especially in the form of social accountability. In addition ACED established working relationships with many local and international NGOs, and networked with social accountability organizations such as Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Star Kampuchea.



### 3. Advocacy

Advocacy seeks to address the structural and systemic causes of poverty by trying to change policies, systems, practices, and attitudes that perpetuate inequality by denying justice and human rights. The goal is to end discrimination and poverty, which both hinder community development.

As previously described, in 2010 ACED implemented a good governance project to increase citizen participation in community management. Development work in the communities was also enhanced through seminars about Civil and Criminal Laws. Awareness and understanding of the advocacy strategy was promoted.

#### 3.1. Civil and Criminal Law Seminar

ACED and Star Kampuchea co-arranged a two-day seminar about civil law and criminal law in December in Chakrai commune, Phenom Penh district. Four members of ACED took part in it together with about sixty other individuals from different districts. Lectures were provided by a lawyer from Star Kampuchea.



#### **4. Women's Empowerment**

The Women's Empowerment project started in 2008. In 2010 ACED had no fund support for the project, but it continued of its own accord.

On 8<sup>th</sup> of March ACED participated in the Women's Day events arranged by the district offices of six villages in Bavel commune. The agenda contained background information about Women's Day, advice on women's empowerment, and encouragement.

ACED is aware of the importance of the participation of women in all areas of action and decision-making within their communities and therefore always promotes and encourages gender equality in the different projects it undertakes.



#### **5. Self-help groups and credit scheme**

The Self-Help Group and Credit Scheme Project began in 1998 in Bavel Commune. Villagers form themselves into savings groups, and ACED facilitates in the development of group policies and goals. After six months of combining their savings, the groups are given credit in order to start a business. On average, it takes ten months for a group to pay back the advance. To date, 286 members in 30 groups participate in the project. In March ACED provided credit for the amount of \$20,000.00 (twenty thousand U.S. dollars) for the 30 groups. The credits were repaid in December 2010 and/or January 2011. So far the repayment rate has been nearly 85 %. ACED continuously monitors the activities of the groups ensuring the proper use of the credits. The project has lead to the reduction of borrowing high-interest loans from

traders, and is successful in strengthening relationships amongst villagers, as they stand in solidarity and work to achieve a common goal.

In 2010 no new groups were formed for the credit scheme, however, 4 self-help groups of 60 people were formed for the organic agriculture and bee project, in Along Svay and Ta Ngein villages, in Bannorn district.

## 6. The Poorest of the Poor

The Poorest of the Poor is an on-going network project (CIDSE and CWS,) that was set up in 2003, designed to help the most impoverished people in the area. Besides financial support, training and advice are also provided.

ACED supported 64 families with interest free loans totaling \$2,500.00 (two thousand five hundred U.S. dollars). These families now have the capital needed to start small-scale businesses that provide income for food, health care, and children's education—leading to an overall improvement in their quality of life.

### 6.1. Well Drilling

Three of the most disadvantaged villages of Phnom Prek District lacked water during the dry season; ACED assisted in obtaining a clean water supply by drilling one well in Peam village, Bavel commune, Bavel district, Battambang. It was funded by individual donors from Finland and ACED expects to drill at least two more wells in 2011.



### 6.2. Income Generation

#### Organic Agriculture and Bee Cultivation Project (OABCEP)



Supported by Oxfam Québec and started in August 2010, the Organic Agriculture and Bee Cultivation Project is aimed at helping the poorest of the poor take up income-generating activities. The target area is Along Svay and Ta Ngein villages located in Takream commune, Bannorn district, Battambang province. ACED formed Self-help-



groups (SHGs) and conducted training courses on organic agriculture (natural fertilizers and pesticides) and bee catching and keeping methods. This program will end on March 2011 but ACED expects to have enough funding and support to extend this project, both by supporting the already successful SHGs in income generating activities and creating new ones in other villages.

## 7. Education

### 7.1. Britt's Learning Centre

Britt's Learning Centre is a platform for teaching foreign language and computer skills, providing scholarships and sponsorships, and establishing friendship schools.

Free English lessons are provided for poor children every weekday. There are two groups—elementary and more advanced—with about 30 students in each group.

Volunteers with diverse backgrounds—both native English speakers and those fluent in English as a second language—provide Khmer students with a better understanding of the multi-cultural contexts of the English language while also improving their pronunciation and communication skills.

The computer skills program was developed to reflect the increasing importance of information technology in the workplace and in global society. Classes will teach general computer skills and introduce students to the internet, which will connect students to vast volumes of data from around the world. Courses for youth are planned to start in 2011.



### 7.2. Friendship School Cambodia-Finland

ACED believes that in addition to basics in reading, writing, mathematics, etc., it is important to develop an understanding of different cultures in order to recognize the unique qualities of others. The world is becoming more connected and ACED wants to inform youth about the benefits of cultural awareness and exchange.



A friendship school project between a secondary school in Kirkkonummi commune in Finland and a primary school in Ampil Bram Daeum commune in Cambodia was established in order to foster this multi-cultural awareness. So far there has been an exchange of information about the schools, school systems in each respective country, and pictures of the schools and school environment. Students from Ampil Bram Daeum also sent drawings to the students in Kirkkonummi school.

### 7.3. Scholarship Program

Scholarships provide one time supplementary support to families to meet medical, nutritional, educational, and other needs of their children in order to improve their quality of life. It enables children to remain in school, relieving the economic pressures to drop out or be removed from school and be sent to work.



Scholarships for children from the poorest demographic in the form of food, clothes, shoes, bags, learning materials, and transportation were provided to 20 children. The support amounted to \$1,150.00 (one thousand one hundred and fifty U.S. dollars).

#### 7.4. Sponsorship Program

Continuing with the scholarship program, which was started in 2009, ACED now also operates a Sponsorship program to support children's education and family life for an extended period of time. This program calls for partnership between ACED, a godparent (sponsor) who decides to enter the program, and the parent/guardian of the child. In 2010 there are two godparents from Finland participating in this program with positive results and feedback from both sides (godparents, ACED and children's guardian). ACED expects to expand this program in the following years.



The selection process for the sponsorship program involves the collaboration of ACED, local authorities, and community leaders to identify local families in need. Through data collection and interviews ACED chooses eligible individuals who will benefit most from the sponsorship.

## 8. Community Forestry and Land Conflict Resolution

ACED's goal is to educate villagers about land law and empower them to demand justice and solve their disputes, so they retain full rights to the management and use of their land. ACED organises Community Based Advocacy Networking Groups (CBANGs) that research disputes and analyze resolutions. Advocacy is carried out by publishing and dispensing materials on

land law, providing training courses on human rights and land law, and producing theatrical plays as a means of educating communities about the issues.

In 2010 ACED was able to facilitate 16 meetings of 40 people each for village representatives and commune council members i.e. members of the committees for land-conflict and forestry. ACED also lobbies and advocates for good governance.



## 9. Staff Capacity Building

ACED attended workshops on Social Accountability Tools organized by TAF, The World Bank, and Star Kampuchea. This project aims at improving community development work through training our staff and local people in community development concepts and good governance. Community workers learnt about relevant laws and project management, and consequently understand the importance of working together with local people.



In 2010 ACED focused on capacity building for staff, community workers and leaders through meetings, workshops, training sessions, and visits to ensure that staff development is continuous, effective, and successful.

## 10. Network Incorporation

ACED believes the most efficient way to promote meaningful change in local communities is to foster good relationships with other organizations in order to coordinate projects as well as exchange





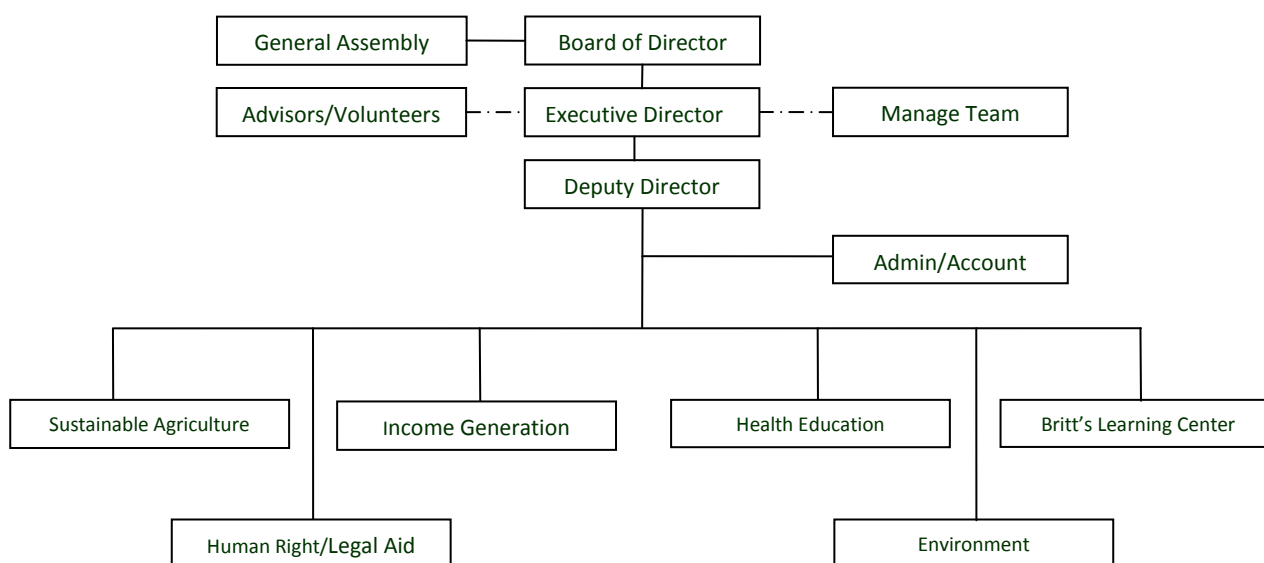
ideas and resources. In 2010 ACED improved relationships with other NGOs, networks and local authorities in Bavel district, including Battambang Network to Support Decentralization and Deconcentration (BNSDD), NGOs Advocacy Network for Development (NAND), and Women and Children’s Rights Protection Committee (WCRPC).

## 11. Personnel

As of 2010 a five member Board of Directors (BOD) governs and manages the organization. Staff changes during the year involved one departure in October, two additions in May, and another addition in September. At the close of the year ACED consisted of six staff members including executive director, deputy director, finance officer, and three program officers. (See attached chart for organizational structure.)

In addition to the aforementioned employees, three volunteers from Europe worked alongside ACED’s local staff, two of which volunteered for three months, and one for four months.

### Organizational Structure of ACED



### 13. Financial Balance Sheet

FUNDING SOURCES	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE
Open Balance( ACED's capital)	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,000.00
Credit scheme capital	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 00.00
Interest rate from Micro Credit	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 200.00
Oxfam Quebec	\$ 19,862.00	\$ 18,265.80	\$ 1,596.20
Generous people from Germany	\$ 695.00	\$ 695.00	\$ 00.00
Generous people from Finland	\$ 3,875.00	\$ 3,138.00	\$ 737.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 48,937.00</b>	<b>\$ 44,598.80</b>	<b>\$ 4,533.00</b>