

CAMBODIA OFFICE

Established in 2007, the Diakonia office in Cambodia builds on a legacy of support for local partners that dates back to the early 1990s.



Who We Are

Located in the capital city of Phnom Penh, our office plays an important role in providing **technical support** to human rights civil society organizations across Cambodia. Despite our small team, our efforts over the past decades have empowered ordinary people, highlighted rights, and encouraged collective action against abuses. We have enhanced our partners' expertise in gender justice, security, and risk assessments, and have strengthened their long-term sustainability by guiding them in diversifying their funding sources.

Acting as **co-creator** and **facilitator**, we promote learning exchanges among partners, enabling them to share and learn from each other. The majority of our funds are directed towards our partners' work on the ground, ensuring that contributions make a significant impact in communities.

Our work has exposed patriarchal structures in Cambodian daily life, fostering discussions on taboo subjects and gender norms. Our partners have played a key role in the decentralization process during the early 2000s, ensuring improved democratic participation and access to social justice and support at the sub-national level.

Currently, we actively collaborate with **19 partner organizations** that are mostly leading in areas of **human rights, democracy and gender equality**.

Supporting People for a Dignified Life (SPDL) 2020- 2024

One of the key programs in Cambodia, the Supporting People for a Dignified Life (SPDL) program, has played a **crucial role in strengthening the country's most sensitive human rights civil society organizations**.

Funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), this initiative empowers civil society with the capabilities to expand democratic spaces and advocate for human rights and gender equality. It aims to ensure that Cambodians can lead peaceful, dignified lives, fully enjoying their fundamental rights and freedoms.

The program focuses on enhancing advocacy for human rights and the rule of law, increasing democratic engagement, empowering individuals for gender equality, and strengthening partner sustainability.



Snapshot of SPDL program achievement in 2022

The program's impacts are shown below, providing a snapshot of the program's achievements in 2022 in three areas: human rights, democracy, and gender equality. This approach ensures a comprehensive assessment of progress and effectiveness across essential societal dimensions.



Human Rights

Capacity of rights holders, grassroots communities, and CSOs enhanced for advocating rule of law and human rights promotion.

- 6- Fold increased support to new cases related to harassment of government critics,
- 25,067 Families and individuals received legal assistance,
- 4,232 Workers were provided with effective legal consultations, representation and support,
- 13,198 Medical consultations,
- 7 Training courses for young human rights defenders,
- 12 Reports published and used to raise community demands,
- 14 Fair trial rights modules published,
- 40 People released from the prison following advocacy campaigns,
- 152 Land titles secured in four communities in Steoung Meanchey,
- USD 200 minimum wage per month for the textile, garment, footwear, and travel goods sectors.



Democracy

Support is provided to rights holders, grassroots communities, and CSOs to enhance their ability to expand democratic space in Cambodia.

- 170,219 views, followers, downloads & subscribers on partner's social media and media platforms,
- Enhanced skills for Citizen Journalists, covering areas like social media literacy, digital security, managing online harassment, visual storytelling, vlogging, ICT and internet skills, content creation, interviews, talk shows, and Facebook live sessions,
- 3,228 Khmer articles were published on the Voice Of Democracy (VOD) Khmer news website,
- 1,206 English articles published on the VOD English news website.
- 1,205 Live episodes aired on online radio stations,
- 60 Village Development Plans developed and integrated into Commune Investment Plans,
- 27 recommendations on challenges of the 2022 commune council election were produced.



Gender Equality

People are empowered to exercise their rights for gender equality, demand government accountability, and help reduce gender-based violence.

- 8,274 direct beneficiaries of programmes,
- 557 men attended training addressing toxic masculinity,
- One Billion Rising campaigns reached 224,157 people, with 170 on-site participants,
- 34 target communes increased Gender Responsive Budgets,
- 85 women hold the leadership roles in 22 CBOs,
- 261 women trained to work with women leaders in sub-national authorities to influence the local development process,
- 125 women from target areas were elected to commune councils,
- 389 sub-national authorities trained to promote women's participation,
- 13 Joint statements by CSOs were signed, to hold duty bearers accountable on women's rights-related issues.



Mid Term Evaluation of SPDL Program

The mid-term evaluation (MtE) covered 33 months of the “Supporting People for a Dignified Life” programme in Cambodia from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2022, with a focus on the design, implementation, management, and results. The MtE was conducted by the Canadian and Cambodian external evaluator team led by Dr. Stephen Van Houten, and its members Dr. Sarah Pugh and Ms. Mouyleng Khan.

RELEVANCE

SPDL programme demonstrates a **high degree of relevance** to the context and the needs of Cambodian rights holders. Issues of media freedom, youth, labour, human rights, land-grabbing/land rights, gender equality, and indigenous people’s rights remain pressing and challenging across Cambodia, with work in all of these areas clearly reflected within Diakonia’s current partner portfolio.

In fieldwork, rights holders across all provinces visited affirmed the continued relevance of the work of the partners, providing concrete examples of the ongoing need for the kind of support they receive, or the kind of programming in which they engage.

Partners also affirmed the ongoing relevance of programme objectives to their own organisational needs and goals, including their work to reach rights holders.

The programme was designed to be conscious of and **responsive to the specific and changing context in Cambodia**, as evidenced, for example, by Diakonia’s regular field visits, its participation in partner activities or events, ongoing discussions with partners, its conflict mainstreaming approach (including its Do No Harm analyses), and its responsiveness to meeting urgent and humanitarian needs during COVID-19.

EFFECTIVENESS

The programme is effective in that it is contributing to the overall objective of a strengthened civil society with the capacity to widen democratic space and promote human rights and gender equality.

Moreover, the programme’s effectiveness is evident in its **contribution to human rights, democracy, gender equality, and partner strengthening and empowerment**. The analyses of the 2020 and 2021 results frameworks showed strong achievement of results against the yearly targets.

In terms of its partnership approach, Diakonia made **strong progress** towards its aims of being a flexible donor who supports civil society partners’ strategies and prioritizes long-term partnerships. The MtE evaluation found that this programme is well designed and implemented, and that the programme management processes are appropriate in supporting the delivery of the programme’s intended results.

Diakonia and partners work also includes monitoring of high-profile cases against human rights defenders, environmental and labor rights activists, and political opponents, providing some oversight on fair trial rights in Cambodia’s judicial system.

IMPACT

Partners highlighted the programme's **impact on various parts** of their organisation, for example, notable organisational development changes, particularly in the areas of policy development (e.g., human resources, recruitment, procurement, and gender), systems strengthening (e.g., governance, access to funding, strategic planning, financial management, and M&E), shared advocacy opportunities, and networking (e.g., linkages to other organisations in the partnership and Swedish and other foreign organisations).

The fieldwork documented many examples of reported project impact by rights holders. The data showed the partners' relevance and large range and depth of impact, particularly at the micro (individual) and meso (couple, family, community, work) levels. The rights holders described **significant and concrete changes** across the themes of human rights, democracy, and gender.

SUSTAINABILITY

There are inherent challenges in planning for and measuring sustainability within a programme of this nature, with its focus on core funding and support. As one of the few organisations providing core funding to Cambodian organisations working in the thematic areas of SPDL, Diakonia's support will continue to be important for partner organisations.

Diakonia's **long-term commitments and long-term relationships** with a diverse portfolio of partners is another important aspect of sustainability, enabling partners to plan and build relationships with Diakonia and other partners. Diakonia's approach to **partner capacity strengthening** is another driver of sustainability, though this support is more relevant for some partners (e.g., newer, smaller, and less established partners) than other longer-term and more established partners.



For more information

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in Cambodia

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