



LICADHO's three year strategic plan January 2003 to December 2005

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The LICADHO Strategic Plan January 2003 to December 2005

Table of Contents

No:	Subject	Page
1	Introduction and a summary of LICADHO 1993-2002	2
2	Problems being addressed, strategic issues	3
3	Strategic development – the first years	4
4	The LICADHO “niche”- national but local in action, leading, considerate	6
5	The LICADHO vision, mission and mandate	7
6	LICADHO and partner organizations	8
7	Over-riding and cross-cutting themes. <i>7.1 Gender</i> <i>7.2 Children’s Rights</i> <i>7.3 Ethics and Values</i>	9
8	LICADHO Organization Structure and Management. <i>8.1 Board of Directors</i> <i>8.2 Senior Management and Programme Leadership</i> <i>8.3 Management Committee</i> <i>8.4 Provincial Network</i>	10
9	LICADHO Common Strategic Objectives <i>9.1 Direct effects on client/beneficiaries.</i> <i>9.2 Changes in ability of clients to self-protect/empower.</i> <i>9.3 Effects on key players that can affect client progress.</i> <i>9.4 Effect on political will, influence, and policy change.</i> <i>9.5 Effect on the situation of human rights.</i> <i>9.6 Effects on development of human rights professionally.</i> <i>9.7 Over-riding or cross cutting issues.</i> <i>9.8 LICADHO organization development.</i>	12
10	Fund-raising, Resources, Expansion	17
11	Staff Capacity-Building Development.	18
12	Membership and Clients	18
13	Audit, Evaluation, and Quality Assurance.	19
14	The 2006-9 Strategic Plan	20
15	Acknowledgements	20

1 Introduction and Synopsis of LICADHO 1993-2002

The immensity of the tragedy that afflicted Cambodia around the third quarter of the twentieth century, led to an equally immense international effort to restore peace, stability, and normality. Countless Cambodians had died in the fighting. Millions had died during the cruel hardship of the Khmer Rouge rule.

The war torn period was to be ended by the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 that heralded in the United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC). It was the largest ever international effort to re-build a country and its government from zero. Suddenly there was hope and optimism in Cambodia, and it was in this new exciting mood of expectation that Cambodia's domestic human rights movement was born. Thun Saray founder of LICADHO's sister NGO, ADHOC, wrote in 1992:

“Our people were forced to bear all forms of suffering – they are now very hungry for peace, safety, freedom and respect for human rights.”

Meanwhile in France, similar thoughts were being shared by Dr. Kek Galabru and Cambodian friends. How best could exiled Cambodians, having escaped the tyranny and with the benefit of experience in the more civilized world, now help to rebuild their country? Those thoughts and the vision of better future for Cambodia led to the formation of the *Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights*.¹ The first priority was the immediate task in hand. UNTAC was to organize elections to establish Cambodia's new democracy. LICADHO conducted voter education prior to the 1993 elections to a population denied any knowledge of what democracy entailed and what were their rights as voters. LICADHO also monitored the pre-election climate.

Most observers would concur that those elections and what immediately followed could be described as no more than the first few tentative steps towards peace and democracy. The situation was still very far from the original vision and expectations. There were widespread election-related violations, even many killings.² Indeed LICADHO learned from people throughout the country how widespread were human rights abuses, and how formidable would be the challenge of translating that hopeful vision into reality. Chapter 6 below sets out how LICADHO's vision, mission, and mandate was created and has evolved.

The vision was always strategic in terms of where LICADHO wanted to go. Strategic elements featured in the various projects and activities during the early years. However, they were not expressed as prominently as the more immediate, more pressing tasks in hand of tackling serious problems causing harm and suffering to vulnerable people. LICADHO soon recognized that it could tackle problems best by strengthening its capacity and skills and working with other like-minded organizations. A more outward and varied strategy evolved. This coincided with the greater peace and stability of the post-1998 election period and the demise of the Khmer Rouge. Yet the absence of factional fighting merely brought into greater focus the more everyday problems affecting citizens.³ Nevertheless LICADHO continued, despite commitments to address these problems, to enhance the professionalism of its services and it began to look at its internal organization and management structures. More emphasis was being placed on recognizing and tackling underlying causes of problems and finding lasting solutions. The time-frame was changing, and with it our longer term strategic vision returned in sharper focus.

Now that LICADHO's first decade is passing, we wish to begin the next one by drawing together our vision and various strategic elements into a single strategic plan. The **“LICADHO Strategic Plan”** will guide the organization in future years. We do not intend it to be cast in “tablets of stone” but for it to be a living document, a rolling programme, in constant use, but subject to periodic review and improvement. This first edition is very much a first edition, and as LICADHO staff and supporters

¹ La Ligue Pour La Promotion et La Defense De Droits De L'Homme

² Over 200 killings

³ King Sihanouk lamented in 1999 “In today's Cambodia, the God of Impunity reigns side by side with the King of Corruption.”

gain familiarity with it, we will evolve and improve it further. All suggestions and comments will be welcome.

2 *Problems being addressed, strategic issues*

The human rights situation in Cambodia is well-documented. Regular authoritative reports are produced, and though opinion varies as to the extent of improvement in recent years, everyone including ministers in the Royal Government agree there is much yet to be done.⁴ Issues of concern include:

- The basic rights enshrined in the Cambodian Constitution are not fully observed nor is there a concerted attempt to do so.
- The democratic process is operating but with serious reservations about the freedom and fairness of elections, thus adversely affecting civic and political rights.
- Although the recent peace and stability is stimulating investment and wealth, this is slow to trickle down to the vast bulk of the population mired in poverty thus impeding better economic, social, and cultural rights.
- Essential public services of health, education, and social services are relatively low government priorities. The consequences include, for example, the high prevalence of preventable afflictions including the HIV/AIDS pandemic; schools unable to give proper education to all children, with girls especially missing out⁵, and no state social security safety net for the most vulnerable citizens.
- Rule of law and legal institutions remain weak, fostering the climate of impunity.
- There has been little tangible progress towards gender equality, child rights, and improvements for other vulnerable groups.
- Corruption is endemic.
- Human trafficking is virtually unchecked with women and children suffering.
- Land grabbing and illegal logging are common.
- Prison conditions are atrocious.
- Civil society, in its wider dimensions, is still under-developed in an climate not conducive to trade unions, professional associations, consumer associations, social clubs, etc.,

Progress has been painfully slow since the promise of 1991. Since then the population of Cambodia has doubled to 12 million with half aged 21 and below. Cambodia and LICADHO is therefore faced with a number of key strategic human rights issues:

- 1 The need to cultivate more political will and consistent attention to human rights.
- 2 The need to engender in the population the notion that better and equal human rights do belong to all thus, overcoming the legacy of the past.
- 3 Citizen efforts can and should be mobilized through civil society and other means to complement and stimulate government actions.
- 4 There are still many vulnerable groups that require direct assistance.
- 5 Vulnerable groups, indeed most of the population, still lack the confidence, knowledge and means to exercise rights and to achieve their potential in life.
- 6 Public officials at national and local levels in every service often lack the confidence, knowledge, inclination or means to carry out their obligations towards citizens.
- 7 The human rights situation has no consistent record of improvement. Gains in one area may not last and may be offset by losses elsewhere.
- 8 Human Rights workers, supporters, and partners require continuing encouragement, guidance, training, and support – professionalism – in order to meet the challenges and risks.

⁴ The most authoritative report remains that of the UN special rapporteur, currently Mr. Peter Lepreucht. Others include the US State Department, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International. LICADHO and ADHOC also publish reports.

⁵ Less than 3% of students go on to tertiary education, more than 50% of girls complete secondary schooling. Over 33 % of the population remains illiterate.

- 9 Women and children in every respect still remain at pronounced disadvantage to men and boys.
- 10 Despite the resurgence of Buddhism since 1993, the breakdown of social order over a prolonged period has left a society without a strong ethical basis and set of human values.
- 11 Khmer Rouge Tribunal should be established using international standards to ensure transparency and accountable trials.

3 *Strategic development – the first years*

LICADHO's development and strategic directions have been typical of other NGOs and the Civil Society movement as a whole. They may be summarized by the words survival, recognition, expansion, consolidation, and professionalism. All of these remain pertinent factors, as does the "push-pull" nature of international donor funding.

When NGOs such as LICADHO and ADHOC first started, they were pioneers. Cambodia had no tradition of NGOs. Leaders, especially those who had belonged to the previous communist government, were deeply suspicious of such bodies. Human Rights organizations met with the most suspicion as they represented the first obstacle to previously unchecked power over citizens. The extensive international community involvement protected NGOs and supported them in many ways. Finance, technical assistance, and partnership/association were the most important.

Everyone was learning in those early years. International people were learning about the Cambodian context. Cambodians were learning about international concepts, values, and approaches. Learning and awareness-raising were the main priorities along with tackling the more immediate pressing problems. NGOs had to establish their arrival on the scene. That was the overwhelming strategic objective. Not only did they have to survive, they had to demonstrate their worth to client groups and donors. Expansion meant survival. LICADHO started with 195 full-time staff, 2 approved projects and a budget of \$445,000 for two years with support from EU and The Asia Foundation.

1993-7 was a period of political uncertainty. The "emergency-relief" post-conflict phase was still in existence. National reconstruction was hesitant due the uneasy alliance of the two governing political parties, the threat of the Khmer Rouge (who still controlled territory) and sporadic activity. When the uneasy alliance broke into armed confrontation in July 1997, Cambodia faced the prospect of slipping back to its violent past. Fortunately that fate was averted as most of the international community and NGOs like LICADHO stayed engaged. Engagement was concluded to be better despite imperfections than abandoning the process. The second strategic development descended on NGOs – they were by now a force, admittedly of indeterminate strength, but a definite force for stability and for continued development. They became fully recognized by government and by each other.

The continuing engagement resulted in the second National Assembly elections of 1998. LICADHO found itself immersed, as in 1993, with voter education and election monitoring, but this time it had much more experience and resources, and there were many others to work with. Expansion continued. LICADHO by this time had with 125 full-time staff, five approved projects and a budget of over \$850,000/year. In addition, its regular human rights work – monitoring of human rights violations went on throughout. Its national coverage had grown to 15 provincial offices. Specialisms had been added relating to Child Rights, Women's Rights, Medical Assistance, HR Education and Monitoring Human Rights Violations.

The 1998 elections, like the 1993 elections, did not result in a two thirds majority in the National Assembly for one political party. Therefore coalition was unavoidable. After a five month period of protracted negotiations, during which post-election demonstrations were violently suppressed, the two main parties once gain formed a coalition government. There was one significant difference. The CPP and not FUNCINPEC were the senior partners. Soon after Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot died and its final forces settled with the Government, surrendered their strongholds and Cambodia was unified. 1999 to the present time has seen a sustained period of peace, stability, and economic growth. Although uncertainty abounds, there is no doubt that Cambodia's improved situation combined with other world priorities means that the country is now seen to be well past the post-conflict/emergency

relief phase. International engagement is reducing and changing. This has meant a more bracing competitive climate for NGOs. This is stimulating the current consolidation in the sector, as well as some contraction, with the more proven and professional NGOs adapting to the new situation.

There is one more factor at play. Stating that NGO consolidation is simply the result of changing donor support would be an over-simplification. Fundamental questions are posed and need to be answered for LICADHO's programme for the next 3 years:

Why are the problems so deep-seated and progress so slow?

Why have the efforts of the last 10 years not been more successful?⁶

Are NGOs sufficiently resourceful to manage flexible responses – to be innovative, and not offer “more of the same”?

How will they cope with further disengagement by the international community (especially if the Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights closes or reduces significantly)?

How will they adapt to increasing engagement on their own with government?⁷

4 The LICADHO “niche” – national but local in action, leading, considerate

LICADHO is one of the two largest local NGOs and is well established in Phnom Penh and the provinces through its 12 field-work offices. LICADHO was one of the first Human Rights Organization (HRO) to step outside of the shadow of the UN Center and international HROs and establish its own credibility in the late 1990s. This was not a planned move, but did mark an important turning point in the human rights movement in Cambodia. A number of prominent cases covered by national and foreign media highlighted LICADHO. One involved the arrest and trial of its human rights workers who were monitoring the health hazards of imported toxic waste on Sihanoukville residents. The other involved the physical abuse of a young girl by an adoptive Cambodian mother. LICADHO's director was charged with illegal confinement despite the fact that LICADHO had lawful custody of the young girl. LICADHO in both cases was alleged to have interfered with due process of law, charges that no doubt arose from the powerful vested interests that were being resisted. The courts ultimately dismissed the charges however the court is still reviewing the charges of illegal confinement at the appeal level. LICADHO is therefore seen as a fearless principled defender of the oppressed and commands respect from authorities.

LICADHO seeks to be the “considerate” human rights organization, aiming to take into consideration the widest perspective in its work, to be more as inclusive as possible, as denoted by the major focuses on women and children. Individual issues are important but not as much as the “big picture”! Existing staff and new staff are committed to taking part in reconstructing the country to be a more democratic and civil society even though many of them would gain higher salaries in gov't or public sector. With higher education and vast experience, the President of LICADHO has consistently refused to work elsewhere because she believes that LICADHO can encourage people to take responsibilities in reconstructing the country in an environment that rewards capacity, commitment, high work ethics and compassion. So far, LICADHO is one of the oldest local NGO continuously working towards advocating for legal and social reforms and providing the best service possible to the general population.

5 The LICADHO vision, mission and mandate

⁶ There is one repost, by way of explanation and with more than a grain of truth - the hypothetical question: “What would things have been like without LICADHO and others these past 10 years?” Certainly much worse, but such a response of course would invite complacency.

⁷ NGOs are increasingly involved in the government reform and legislative consultative processes, as denoted by their recognition. For Human Rights Organisations this means adding to and moderating the traditional adversarial approach of its monitoring work. For LICADHO the issue is addressed in the sections on “Development of human rights professionally” in Section 9 Major Programmes, and in Appendix

LICADHO's vision, as described earlier, has not changed from its inception, given that sufficient progress is yet to be made. Cambodia is no longer one of the world's most troubled countries, but it still falls well short of best or acceptable standards for all its citizens.

The LICADHO Vision

"To achieve in Cambodia a democratic society that is peaceful, stable, and whose government and institutions are committed to human rights and social justice."

LICADHO's mission has changed in emphasis if not in essence over the years to reflect circumstances, cases, and changes in priorities. There are now other NGOs that specialize in democracy and free and fair elections. LICADHO helped form the most recent of the three Election Monitoring Organizations, NICFEC, and remains close to another one, COMFREL. LICADHO is still active on the democracy front, but at policy and strategic levels. Most LICADHO activities are geared towards human rights and social justice. Advocacy based on research is targeted at leaders of government and institutions, adding a second instrument to go with the positive messages we try to instill upwards from the local officials. These officials - police, village, commune and district leaders, and court officials together with their supervisors, are encountered in the course of monitoring and education/training. LICADHO's current mission reflects the present emphasis.

The LICADHO Mission

"To monitor, provide protection and facilitate legal recourse for victims of human rights abuse; to promote and implant concepts and skills that empower clients and bring about positive changes in the attitudes and conduct of gov't institutions. To formulate quality project activities, advocacy strategies and networks - based on field work experience enhanced by research and best practice elsewhere - in order to create a more positive and caring climate where injustice is prevented and no longer tolerated, such that true equality can exist for all citizens before the law, in education and life opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity or social status."

LICADHO has found that while its vision and mission are ambitious and broad, it is helpful especially for field workers, to have guidance on "what LICADHO can and cannot do". There are dangers and practical difficulties of being too broad. Misinterpretation can arise. Some people requesting LICADHO assistance have to be refused and referred elsewhere. Therefore the "LICADHO Mandate" was drafted as a guide for staff and an effective tool to govern what commitments can be taken on. It is a form protection and a means to assure consistency. The mandate is known to supporters, authorities, and partners. It helps to denote LICADHO's "niche". This is a summary:

The LICADHO Mandate

"To be a truly neutral and non-profit Cambodian NGO, with extensive local coverage, responsible with the promotion and protection of human rights for the vulnerable and powerless encountering material harm or serious disadvantage as a result of inappropriate action, negligence, or acquiescence on the part of public officials or other people in positions of responsibility over them."

6 *LICADHO and partner organizations*

LICADHO has always been committed to partnership working in order to achieve its mission. The scale of the task provides scope for many participants, and the inevitable departure of international partners requires local organizations like LICADHO to be able to take over. Partnership working is implicit in LICADHO's strategy but in recent years it has been necessary to be more selective. The numbers and turnover of NGOs and projects, together with the range and variety of reforms, means that LICADHO must select which ones are most compatible with and complement our work, and justify the investment in the time and resources that has to be devoted. Again, such decisions have to be made individually but the following criteria sets out our strategic thinking:

- Child Rights and Women's interest groups – LICADHO aims to be a leading partner in the most respected and renowned groups active in Cambodia and the South East region, i.e. those that have more impact in benefits to clients and that enhance LICADHO's capacity to advance their interest.
- Major and Contentious Human Rights issues. LICADHO will continue to take a leading role in and use the Cambodian Human Rights action Committee.
- Human Rights Professionalism – LICADHO will initiate and participate in education and training programmes that enhance the professional skills of human rights workers in Cambodia, as well as the human rights elements of the education and training of other professions.
- Democracy, elections and good governance. LICADHO will participate with other NGOs at policy levels and on key issues of the day, and will support activities of the Election Monitoring Organizations (NICFEC, COMFREL). In addition relevant key concepts will feature in LICADHO's training, and LICADHO may contribute special activities around important events such as National Assembly or Commune Elections.
- General NGO groupings. Locally LICADHO will continue to subscribe to CCC and NGO Forum in order to receive and share information, to keep in touch with wider development and reforms, and to be in a position to influence important topics such as joint NGO submissions to RGC or international donors.

7 *Over-riding and cross-cutting themes.*

LICADHO has identified three main themes that go to the heart of its work and which are represented in all its work:

7.1 Gender

LICADHO is committed to achieving parity between the sexes in Cambodia, thus reversing the traditional imbalance against girls and women. The reasons for this are well documented.⁸ LICADHO also has internalized gender policies that are being elaborated in the current reviews described in Section 8 below.

7.2 Children.

Childhood in Cambodia is seldom seen as an essential and important preparation for good adulthood. Children are expected to conform to a conventional pattern of upbringing, one that reinforces inferiority and persists even into adulthood especially for girls. Very few parents, teachers, and other leaders involve children in decisions that affect them. Children are expected to make sacrifices "for the good of the family", i.e. to help livelihoods and income. This is one of the main reasons for girls dropping out of school and falling prey to traffickers. The causes extend beyond mere poverty although this is a major driving force. One factor is that the elder generations endured such cruelty at the hands of the Khmer Rouge they believe that today's children lead charmed lives. The comparison

⁸ Reports on impunity, torture, rape, prison issues, adoption issues, 2002 election results, children who stay in prisons with their mothers, situation of HR defenders and torture in police custody are available in English and Khmer.

is invidious. Children may not suffer as much, and they may be better off, but still far too many are deprived of their basic rights. These children then permeate this harm into their parenthood. LICADHO is committed to breaking that cycle as it is a major impediment to Cambodia's development.

7.3 Ethics and Values

LICADHO exists to build a Cambodia that does not return to the inhumanity that characterized its recent history. Religion used to provide a sound spiritual basis for most people but it has never recovered from the decimation of the Khmer Rouge period. Buddhism, like other religions, is no longer the main moral influence in the lives of people. The years of conflict caused a breakdown of social order and normal values that persist. Survival, self-preservation, and personal interest are put ahead of collective need or the responsibility to care for others who are worse off. Globalization and images of the "material world" reinforce a sense of selfishness. While this is a worldwide phenomenon, the effects in Cambodia are more accentuated. We are starting from a much poorer base and the "checks and balances" that counter excess and redress injustice are not effective yet. Endemic corruption is the most obvious symptom of this malaise.

LICADHO, its staff, and its supporters are committed to better ethical standards and values and these are reflected in the design of activities and how our people acquit themselves.

8 *LICADHO Organization Structure and Management.*

The LICADHO organisation has evolved over the years and will continue to do so. Similarly adjustments are being made to the management processes. The original design was quite sound but has needed up-dating due to contemporary developments and higher expectations. The latest up-dating is being conducted as a participative exercise started in early 2002 and will not complete this phase until well into 2003. The strategic plan will then be amended. In the meantime, the current situation and review process is described below. (Please refer also to Organization Chart at Appendix 3)

8.1 Board of Directors

LICADHO has a Board of Directors, and the current bye-laws set out their functions and responsibilities. The Board consists of distinguished people dedicated to Cambodia's improvement. The present composition does not include representation by clients, or persons who are close to or are or have been recently involved in human rights. The current review will lead to these weaknesses being corrected. It will also up-date standing, reserve and delegated powers.

8.2 Senior Management and Programme Leadership

LICADHO has three senior managers; the President, Managing Director, and General Manager. The President concentrates on high level policy and external relations and she leads the advocacy component. The Managing Director fulfills three broad functions; overall management of operations, principal professional officer, and fund-raising. The General Manager is responsible for administration, finance and logistics and also serves as an important link between top management and staff.

The current review could lead to some changes with projects being reorganized into two major operational programmes with two major focus groups that transcend both – Client Services and Promotion of Human Rights.

A. Human Rights Education

LICADHO trainers provide regular three-day training courses on human rights, legal procedures and democratic principles to selected target groups, including police officers, students and monks, using a range of educational media and a participatory learning approach. LICADHO's provincial trainers

also disseminate human rights information to the general public at the village, commune and district level.

B. Monitoring of Human Rights Violations

LICADHO monitors the human rights situation in Cambodia by collecting and analyzing information on rape and sexual exploitation, torture in custody, extra judicial killings, illegal detentions, disappearances, threats and intimidation, land expropriations, and illegal destruction of properties. Monitors in Phnom Penh and the provinces monitor eighteen detention centers and the central office keeps updated records of the conditions of prisoners and human rights violations that occur in detention.

C. Medical Assistance

LICADHO's medical team conducts monthly visits in twelve Phnom Penh and provincial prisons and provides medical services to inmates and prison officials. Nutritional supplements and specialized medical care are given to meet the particular needs of pregnant women in custody, children of female prisoners and other vulnerable groups. In Phnom Penh, the medical team also provides treatment for victims of human rights abuses within the general population.

D. Project Against Torture

Established in January 2000, the Project Against Torture provides a comprehensive range of services for victims to assist them in their recovery and the development of coping mechanisms. The services include physical, psychosocial, and economic rehabilitation for all forms of torture, including torture by the police, prison officials or other government officials and domestic violence and other forms of severe violence committed by civilians.

E. Children's Rights

Specialized trainers in Phnom Penh and selected provinces conduct participatory training sessions for parents, children, local authorities and NGO's in order to promote understanding and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child Protection Networks bring together provincial officials, local authorities, parents and children to conduct grassroots prevention and protection activities emphasizing the participation of children, focused on combating the worst forms of child labour. Children's Rights monitors in Phnom Penh also provide legal, social and referral services to child victims of rape, domestic violence, trafficking and other rights violations.

F. Women's Rights

LICADHO plays an active role in promoting gender awareness and the rights of women through training workshops held in Phnom Penh and selected provinces for NGO workers, community leaders, civil servants, police and military personnel. LICADHO provides referral services including legal representation, counseling, medical care and shelter to female victims of rape, trafficking and domestic violence. LICADHO works with local and international committees to promote and advocate for women's rights.

G. Advocacy

As a corresponding member of Federation Internationale des Droits de L'homme and a member of Forum Asia, LICADHO maintains regular contact with international human rights organizations, providing information to Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and other international organizations.

On a national level, LICADHO is an active member of the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee and several other committees targeting the rights of vulnerable groups, including women,

children and minorities. LICADHO produces, publishes and distributes comprehensive reports and studies on human rights issues in Cambodia. LICADHO regularly organizes events in Phnom Penh and throughout its provincial network to commemorate special days, including International Women's Day, International Children's Day, and International Day for Victims of Torture and International Human Rights Day.

Client services will include:

- Monitoring of Human Rights violations.
- Project Against Torture,
- Prisons Monitoring. (The focus of prison health service is anticipated to shift towards medical examinations for all victims.)

Promotion of Human Rights:

- Education/Training
- Research and Advocacy

These two operational programmes will both be supplemented by "Child Rights" and "Women's Rights" specialists, and other specialists from time to time for new, innovative or research-centered activities.

8.3 The Management Committee

LICADHO's Management Committee meets weekly. The membership consists of the senior management, who are the coordinators of Administration, HE Education, Medical, Monitoring, PAT, Women's Rights Children's Rights and Finance. The Management Committee's tasks have broadened out from corporate sharing of information of progress of activities into helping to address major issues and problems. The members increasingly centre their own internal section management plans around the weekly meetings. The management committee also decides on findings from the fact finding committee who carries out investigations of complaints and ethical problems against staff. The growing participation of all coordinators has added quality to the LICADHO decision-making process. The current review will formalize further the role and functions of the Management Committee, provide for standing committees to devote time to delegated areas of management and ad hoc (for special issues) sub committees, plus an appeals body. The Management Committee structure and the manner in which it meets and deliberates will most likely be amended to incorporate greater provincial or field work representation.

8.4 The LICADHO Provincial Office Network.

LICADHO has offices in all the most populated provinces. At times, staff can also travel to neighbouring provinces so that full national coverage is achieved depending on resources. Location of case-work is monitored and this could lead to new offices or changes.⁹ LICADHO examines such decisions having regard to the representation by major HROs. Logging, land grabbing, cross-border refugee cases may justify opening new offices or joining HRO colleagues to reach ethnic minorities and residents in the most remote areas.

LICADHO considers that in terms of the management span of control, an expansion to all 24 provinces is not viable, and a maximum scale has already been achieved.

9 LICADHO Common Strategic Objectives

Both programmes, all projects, and the support services are designed in a way to demonstrate progress and achievement towards common strategic aims and objectives:

⁹ As stated in 2002, the continuing efforts to adopt more selective, better prioritized, and targeted client case-work will precipitate review of these offices as clearer clusters emerge.

LICADHO has settled, at this stage of its strategic planning, on eight distinct areas to which all activities must contribute in a tangible way¹⁰.

- **Direct effects on client/beneficiaries**

LICADHO exists to provide services to vulnerable clients who would not otherwise be helped and who would continue to be denied their human rights. Usually victims are not the only ones to suffer but also their family members. They are described as beneficiaries once LICADHO has been of assistance to clients.

Recording and reporting have to be conducted carefully and consistently. Service cannot be measured simply in numbers of clients or cases. If that was done it could be misleading, as a lack of assessment of the seriousness and nature of cases could give inaccurate indications of the overall situation of human rights. Importantly LICADHO aims to be more selective in terms of the eligibility of clients and devote greater attention to the most serious cases and ones where underlying causes need to be addressed. LICADHO is making progress towards this re-orientation.

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have given direct assistance to an estimated 3,300 clients who are victims of serious human rights abuse, and 5,000 clients suffering less seriously but still subjected to unacceptable human rights standards. Direct assistance to both categories will affect 8,300 beneficiaries.

- **Changes in ability of clients to self-protect/empower**

LICADHO's primary objective, after removing the human rights problem, is to prevent repetition and if clients and families can be given the means to do this, then that is a successful outcome. Human rights abuses may be the product of a lack of knowledge, or confidence, or some other obstacle or removable cause. They may also occur because individuals and families live in isolation from each other or are constrained by shame or fatalism from expressing their "misfortune". LICADHO field workers seek to identify these factors, dealing with those that can be changed for the client and in their home and community, and documenting others for attention with other colleagues. LICADHO is constantly working on this aspect of its work – it is one that needs repetition, reinforcement, and other efforts described below.

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have been able to achieve amongst 60% of its 8,300 clients of serious human rights abuse a significant change that enables/empowers them. LICADHO will also be able to show a consistent record of measured improvement in the levels of skills and knowledge assimilated by training participants, retained up to six months afterwards, and shown to be acted upon within one year.

- **Effects on key players that can affect client progress**

Human rights problems are invariably the products of human failings, intentional or unintentional. Cambodia's recent history has provided fertile ground for both kinds of failings. Unintentional failings present fewer difficulties for LICADHO than intentional ones, but both must be tackled. The real "culprits" must be discovered, not just the more obvious ones manifesting the harm to clients. The real cause or causes must also be found. Key players are those whose attitudes, behaviour, instructions, and involvement can change to solve the problem. The outcomes of LICADHO's efforts to make that change are then noted. Those that are intractable are fed into planning processes for priority attention in other programmes or for new activities.) Again here LICADHO is constantly working on this aspect of its work, as well as the supervisory and communication arrangements. Progress is incremental.

¹⁰ Other areas featured in discussions but it was felt that they should be deferred and remain top management concerns while sections and staff familiarize themselves with the strategic planning process and those first eight areas.

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have identified and provided suitable attention or given training to a minimum of 21,000 people belonging to its main target groups (key professionals, community leaders, etc.) selected on the basis that they can and do have real impact on the lives of clients. Furthermore, another 45,000 people will have gained some human rights knowledge from dissemination sessions at the village, commune and district level.

- **Effect on political will, influence, and policy change**

When it was said above that *“human rights abuses may be the product of a lack of knowledge, or confidence, or some other obstacle or removable cause”*, it was not just clients we had in mind. Nor is it simply the “key players”. In fact there are often deep-seated problems and their scale have to be tackled on a bigger basis. LICADHO seeks where possible to reach people in power, “holding purse strings” or having other means to influence the situation. The approach can be twofold – firstly from the field projects “up through the ranks” supported by authoritative reports. Secondly by direct advocacy and lobbying with associated indirect efforts such as harnessing media and generating wider support. LICADHO anticipates a substantial improvement towards this strategic objective with its new Advocacy and Research Specialist Unit to open in 2003.

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have made appropriate contact and used the most effective means at its disposal (advocacy, lobbying, collective NGO action, etc) with as many as possible, Government Ministers, senior officials and party leaders, National Assembly and Senate Members, local leaders of provinces, districts, and communes, other community leaders, and international figures concerned with Cambodia on important human rights issues. LICADHO by the end of 2005 will be able to demonstrate the changes in policy and action so brought about.

- **Effect on the situation of human rights**

Making assessments of the human rights situation is inherently difficult. Ultimately judgments are subjective. They can be improved by systematic collection and analysis of data but final interpretation often depends on the political or organizational stance of the writer. Sometimes rushed or slanted assessments produce reaction and counter reaction in Cambodia’s polarized circles. LICADHO wishes to avoid such occurrences and will seek to improve the quality of technical input and interpretation in human rights assessments in 2003-5.¹¹ LICADHO will continue its efforts on its own and with HRO partners, and these will probably need to continue beyond 2005.

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have promoted better understanding of the Cambodian human rights situation by successfully implementing a series of projects that highlight, tackle and provide accurate assessments of serious human rights problems. Key messages and conclusions will have been conveyed with the key players in relation to members of vulnerable groups such as women, members of targeted at risk populations and the wider general public.

- **Effects on development of human rights professionally**

Explains how the professionalism of human rights workers is improving. Also how human rights work is being seen, acted upon, and integrated into other professions, with a particular focus on social workers.

LICADHO should have a finite mission as envisaged by its vision. Programme activities are intended to lead to the day when human rights standards are universally understood and applied. LICADHO’s human rights workers and those of other HROs are the “infantry” at the “battle front of this struggle”. Like the military analogy their success depends on their morale, training, skills, and resources for engagement. In Cambodia prior education and experience are also important determinants. Human rights workers are social workers. The social work profession is still young and developing even in the developed world. It is one of the most demanding and frustrating. It is increasingly proving to be

¹¹ For example through LICADHO research publications such as “Rape” and “Children in Prisons”.

essential even in countries where extended family patterns, not the state, are expected to shoulder the burden of caring for the elderly and sick. Cambodia's nascent social work profession will expand and must achieve a higher status. Human rights workers are social work practitioners and indispensable - they set professional standards of learning and practice. LICADHO and its human rights workers are already advanced with for example social work and counseling training but more needs to be done before 2005. LICADHO has followed the example of leading international HROs by producing country research and case studies that are published and are summarized in "fact sheets". These are in constant demand from human rights colleagues and "Cambodia watchers".

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have in operation a thoroughly tried and tested series of relevant, practical, and effective human rights projects and learning modules. In addition LICADHO will have published a minimum of 12 research papers, maintain at least 12 up-to-date fact sheets on contemporary issues and have organized or participated in 3 or more major national conferences or events. LICADHO will share findings with the 24 NGO members of the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee, and 200 Human Rights and Development NGOs, as well as all UN agencies (ILO, UNICEF etc.) international, organizations and public institutions, and HRO colleagues in the Asia region.

- **Over-riding or cross cutting issues**

Explains how and why LICADHO prioritizes certain primary issues to feature in all programmes (please refer to section 7 above).

LICADHO reinforces its commitment by dedicating these factors as key strategic objectives that the strategic plan for the organization and that all programmes and projects must reflect. LICADHO in these respects is already well advanced. There is a possibility that ethnic issues may be added.

- **Gender**

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have attained or exceeded the set minimum quota targets (generally 50%) for girls and women in its client groups and training programmes and networks.

In addition by December 2005 there will be a minimum of 3 senior female staff in the top 8 salaried positions and a minimum of 20 (33%) female human rights workers or specialists and 2 designated senior Gender Training Specialists.

- **Ethics**

LICADHO by the end of December 2003 will have maintained full internal compliance with LICADHO's ethics policies, in addition will have ensured their input in all activities, and demonstrated them in the course of field activities and contacts with authorities.

- **Child Rights**

The LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have shared with child clients and participants its philosophy and commitment to Child Rights and positive childhood development, and after taking account of their views, disseminate to adult target beneficiaries and supporters.

- **LICADHO organization development**

Explains how LICADHO's evolving organization structure and processes are designed on the basis of key strategic areas and the most effective way of achieving objectives while not compromising values and standards.

Please refer to Section 8 above. This strategic objective is under active examination and will be firmed up by mid 2003.

LICADHO by the end of December 2005 will have a successfully operating organization structure and process with a sound combination of supervision and delegation for its field human rights workers, specialists, and support/logistical staff and which accommodates turnover and introduction of new staff at every level.

10 *Fund-raising, Resources and “Expansion”*

LICADHO has evolved a large portfolio of donors, many of whom have given consistent support over the years. Virtually all funding comes from international donors, and there is heavy dependence on a small number for core support and certain activities. LICADHO plans between 2003 and 2005 to introduce a longer-term more diversified funding strategy that will be less dependent on annual or fixed period projects. Although the potential to generate income locally may be small (and asking can amount to a contradiction given the focus on helping the most vulnerable) options will be explored. LICADHO will also examine the feasibility of establishing a Trust Fund to invite bequests and gifts from private institutions and individuals including Cambodians based overseas. LICADHO is conscious too that no provision is currently set aside for staff retirement pensions.

LICADHO maintains an inventory management scheme that maximizes its stock of vehicles, computers, office equipment and other resources. Project proposals aim to provide for maintenance, upgrading and replacement to maintain standards for efficiency but are in-keeping with a local NGO. This policy is expected to continue 2003-5. Longer-term funding will facilitate more planned depreciation, write-off, and replacement plans.

LICADHO, as stated earlier, considers that it has already approached a logical maximum size in terms of geographical coverage and the span of management control. The expansion of the first decade will not be repeated but there will be modest changes either side of the present size. LICADHO must also retain flexibility to respond to unforeseen events.

11 *Staff Development and Capacity-Building*

The commitment to enhancing the skills and professionalism of human rights workers, as a recurring theme, will have been noted. Staff of all levels in every occupation benefit from personal advancement and almost all show appreciation of opportunities. Project funding with its priority on direct client services usually gives little scope for capacity-building allocations. Therefore in-service development is the main method available.¹² Some external training is possible through allocation within “core” funding, some through occasional scholarships. Donors such as the Asia Foundation have provided modules such as “participatory learner-centered methodology in human rights education”. Many members of staff pursue studies privately and LICADHO is flexible to permit that.

LICADHO’s human resource development is therefore proceeding but could benefit from being brought together in a coherent plan, with more systematic elements from needs analysis to design of personal career development and sectional succession plans. Some of the basic elements are advanced. Job descriptions are being refined and are becoming active working tools for staff and managers. Semi annual staff performance appraisals will be conducted. The management committee process described in 8.3 above, with the appeals element, provides for disciplinary, capability, and grievance procedures to be founded on a “constructive” not “punitive” basis.

LICADHO will aim within its strategic planning and fund-raising proposals to secure funding and the means to develop an integrated staff development plan during 2003-5. An Organizational Development specialist is planned to further this process. Progress will add or modify the first eight strategic objectives.

12 *Membership and Clients*

¹² Quarterly and six monthly reviews include learning topics.

LICADHO is founded on the principle of being a service organization to clients and intends to remain firmly as such. Co-operation with other NGOs and public authorities will be the means to that end. The problem is how clients and client interests can be best represented and reflected? The priority towards the vulnerable and disempowered means per se they are less able to articulate opinions.

When LICADHO first started, it was a membership organization, and on the face of things, this is an obvious answer. However as with many things in Cambodia, it is not so simple. Membership has been used by political parties to coerce loyalty. LICADHO membership cards were used by some individuals to give credence to distinctly non-LICADHO approved activities such as obtaining credit. LICADHO is therefore examining ways in which the membership system can be improved or alternative ways of incorporating direct client input can be devised.

Again some progress is being made, but largely at the experimental stages, too early to be accepted for strategic planning. Firstly LICADHO staff who are in constant contact with clients are being more adept and impartial in being sensitive to client perspectives as a result of greater professionalism. Secondly, activities are being designed with greater client involvement at follow stages, in order to assess and re-assess impact. We are therefore conducting more follow-up activities, refresher training, and post-activity surveys. Thirdly, client-based institutions are being created, such as the child and adult networks that feature in our child rights programme.

Therefore this aspect of strategic planning too will evolve in the period 2002-5.

13 Audit, Evaluation, and Quality Assurance.

LICADHO has annual organization-wide financial audits conducted by international auditors. (So far Price Waterhouse Coopers.) We are committed to accountability and transparency and act on all recommendations of auditors or donors. This policy will continue over the next three years.

LICADHO is firmly committed to continuous evaluation for two reasons. (1) to maximize its potential to convey human rights messages to beneficiaries. (2) to develop and succeed in our emphasis to maximize advocacy as the best way to achieve long term improvements in human rights, and for this LICADHO requires sound information that addresses the real issues and needs of clients. All staff are aware and committed to the process. Participants are invited wherever possible to give feedback, as are respected observers.

LICADHO has an integrated evaluation plan to assess performance before, during, and after activities. We hope to develop "client satisfaction" methods to gauge impact. Quantitative data will continue to be collected on a systematic basis but much more effort is being devoted to quantitative results. Absorption and retention of human rights messages as with resultant change will be measured as much as possible. Most importantly a system to follow up is being installed, utilizing all the resources of LICADHO. This represents a determined effort to deduce "impact" to see what differences are made in the lives and livelihoods of beneficiaries.

External and/or participatory evaluations will be welcomed. External evaluations as well as LICADHO's longstanding practice of bringing in external consultants to infuse fresh thinking will continue to feature in project proposals.

Quality assurance is increasingly featuring in LICADHO work even if not expressed as such. Efforts to gauge true client opinions are examples. LICADHO is keen to develop a formal quality assurance system but this is likely to be a future commitment to follow the more immediate strategic objectives.

14 The 2006-9 Strategic Plan

Although the "**LICADHO Strategic Plan**" intended to be a rolling programme for continuous review, advance planning will set aside key dates and events in mid 2005 for the next plan to undergo a full participatory process. LICADHO will arrange the schedule to provide donors with the next plan in time to fit in with their review and approval plans.

15 Acknowledgements

LICADHO wishes to express its appreciation of the many partners and colleagues who have contributed to the development of human rights in Cambodia. Special credit is given to the many consultants and advisors who have contributed to the professionalism of LICADHO. Finally LICADHO pays tribute to its Cambodian staff whose efforts over the years have produced the LICADHO we know. It is they who have carried the most onerous responsibility of putting “human rights” into practice, encountering all the risks and challenges, to provide the LICADHO service to clients.

Appendices:

- 1 Log-frames of activities, indicators, and means of verification.
- 2 LICADHO Organization Chart 2002-3.
- 3 Provisional Global Budget