

A Learning focused evaluation of the Cambodia Initiative for Disability Inclusion (CIDI) implemented by the Australian Red Cross

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The analysis and conclusions in the evaluation are the responsibility of the lead evaluator however.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This learning focused evaluation seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the 'influencing' strategies used by the Australian Red Cross in the Cambodia Initiative for Disability Inclusion. This initiative aimed to promote more effective relationships among civil society stakeholders in the Cambodian disability sector and to build their institutional capacity to better address the causes and consequences of disability.

Using a mixed method and participatory evaluation approach and drawing on a Realistic evaluation framework, the evaluation sought to deepen understanding and provide illustrative examples of the CIDI program theory of change. The evaluation outlines learning that can usefully be adapted in future work that seeks to build partnerships and organisational capacity as intermediate steps towards higher level development outcomes in disability programing and beyond.

In the area of *brokering relationships*, the evaluation found that the CIDI has been able to facilitate increased interaction and co-ordination among stakeholders and some durable and substantive working relationships among a core group of CIDI partners. A collaborative atmosphere generated among CIDI partners led to the effective sharing of learning in a range of areas of the partners' disability inclusion work, such as around the setting up and support to management of Self-Help Groups for people with disability, advocacy and communication with local stakeholders, and alternative income generation.

The CIDI program showed signs of creating a space for innovation, with a number of new ideas developed by partners being shared among others, such as the development of a child protection policy appropriate to media organisations and work with support groups for parents of children with disability. The program was also able to provide the distinctive contribution of some organisations with an increasingly receptive audience among other partners in the CIDI, in areas such as sporting activities of PWD and the provision of psychosocial support. More systematic attention and resources addressed to the challenge of effectively working simultaneously in Khmer and English, may have further increased the impact of the participatory methods employed to facilitate networking and learning

In the area of *strengthening institutional capacity*, the CIDI was able to provide effective capacity development support through a range of specific trainings, support and mentoring tailored to individual organisations sustained over time, and encouragement of peer-to-peer skills exchange among partners. Capacity was strengthened in a number of areas of core organisational functioning, such as financial management, reporting and fundraising, and led to the adoption or review of policies for child protection and to the mainstreaming of disability in the strategic plans and project activities of a number of mainstream organisations. The CIDI deepened many partner organisation's understandings of disability, led to disability being talked about and conceptualised in terms of rights and social exclusion rather than charity, and strengthened their disability inclusive practice.

For some partners, CIDI appears to have supported improvements in what is sometimes referred to as 'general capacity' by strengthening the ability of the organisation to reflect, learn and adapt its own practice, an important contribution to longer-term sustainability. In some areas, such as monitoring and evaluation, CIDI supported improvements in capacity and increased motivation for sustained engagement and learning, even while the technical capacity of partners was uneven and remained in need of continued support. A more systematic approach to assessment of organisational capacity would have complemented the range of support mechanism used and may have helped track and evaluate the changing needs of partner organisations.

The CIDI program was challenged by uncertainties over funding and duration throughout its relatively short 2 and a half-year time-span. This caused planning difficulties for some partners and limited the programs ability to consolidate some of the gains made, particularly in some

areas of technical capacity. It may also have led to some unexpected benefits (in part due to the pragmatic orientation of the CIDI team and many of its partners), such as in the case of short term funding for projects around sports, arts and research, which brought distinctive learning and new partners to the network. Given a longer and more predictable time frame, the program may have more effectively been able to build technical capacities, with more systematic review of learning and repeated inputs for cumulative effect.

The significant achievements of the CIDI program were in part the result of the strong communication skills and particular style of the CIDI Program Coordinator and Program Support Coordinator, who also had a long-standing engagement with and reputation in the disability sector in Cambodia. They were also due to a strong if small CIDI team who all became significantly involved in working closely with and supporting partners while fulfilling their core organisational roles. The distinctive skills of these key staff and the commitment of the CIDI team were widely recognised across informants consulted for the evaluation. Importantly however, the achievements of the CIDI were equally due to application of proven participatory methods in networking, organisational reflection and learning and communication for development, as the evaluation highlights.

As the CIDI program draws to a close and support to disability inclusion funded by AusAID is expected to be reconfigured with the involvement of UN partners, there is much to be learned from the networking and capacity development approaches employed by the program which could usefully be factored into any new program. The structured participatory process and the creative flexible methods deployed by the CIDI team have a lot to offer any subsequent networking and capacity development process, even if the momentum developed by the program and the trust and credibility of the CIDI process is perhaps less easily replicated. The close engagement of the CIDI team in support tailored to individual, sometimes small organisations, was an important factor in CIDI success that may also be key to sustaining progress. Much of this learning may also be relevant beyond the Cambodian context and it is hoped will contribute to disability inclusion program and more effective partnership working in the ARC and Red Cross movement more widely.

INTRODUCTION

Below I briefly introduce the background to the CIDI, its principal areas of programing and the way it sought to work towards desired high-level outcomes through a range of intermediate outcomes and influencing strategies. The learning focus of the evaluation is outlined, along with the evaluation framework and key components. Following sections then outline the main evaluation findings, addressing the strategies to strengthen relationships and coordination in the disability sector, and to develop the institutional capacity of CIDI partners, in turn. I then look at the way these influencing strategies have contributed to improved disability inclusive practice and review a number of challenges faced by the program including tackling gender and culture as they affect disability inclusion in Cambodia. There is a brief review of the program management employed by the CIDI and the ARC to consider aspects that affected the potential of the program to be flexible and adapt to emerging learning from its work. The report concludes by reiterating some of the key learning from the CIDI program and distils key aspects of the strategies used to support CIDI partners and the mechanisms that underlie them to create change – their theories of change.

Background to the CIDI program

The Cambodia Initiative for Disability Inclusion CIDI is an initiative of the Australian Red Cross (ARC) funded by AusAID that between July 2010 and December 2012/early 2013 sought to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities (PWD) in Cambodia by supporting national efforts towards addressing the risks, causes and consequences of disability.

High level outcomes which the program aimed to contribute to were that:

- People with disabilities have increased self-confidence and respect and are able to more fully participate in society
- People with disabilities have improved livelihoods through sustainable income generation activities
- Communities have the necessary knowledge and skills to reduce their risk of disability or death from weapon contamination related incidents and road crashes

The program sought to contribute to these outcomes through a series of intermediate outcomes and influencing strategies that were conceived as providing pathways to impact in the program's theory of change¹.

One intermediate outcome sought by the program was: *Strengthened civil society capacity to provide rehabilitation and support services to people with disabilities (PWD)*, which was expected to contribute to the overall program outcome of: An inclusive and effective response to the needs and rights of people with disabilities

A second intermediate outcome aimed for by the CIDI was: *Strengthened capacity of the Red Cross to provide improved community based mine risk reduction and road safety programs*. This was expected to contribute to the program outcome of: An improved response to those at risk of disability or death due to weapon contamination and road crashes.

A primary vehicle for strengthening the capacity of civil society to provide rehabilitation and support services was the provision of small grants for a range of disability related projects through the Disability Inclusion Assistance Fund (DIAF). The DIAF provided a set of two, one, and half year grants to organisations involved in a wide range of disability related initiatives. These totalled 55 grants across 38 different organisations over the duration of the program with

¹ An additional intermediate outcome that was part of the predecessor program to CIDI - the Landmine Survivors Assistance Program LSAP - was dropped when the program was redesigned to become the CIDI. This intermediate outcome aimed to see: *Royal Government of Cambodia ownership and implementation of a legal disability inclusion framework*. This was expected to contribute to the program outcome of: A supportive policy context that recognises, respects and promotes the rights of people with disabilities.

three of the organisations sub-contracting grants to a further 20 organisations. Work supported included disability awareness, physical rehabilitation, inclusive education, psychosocial support, accessibility/infrastructure support, livelihood security including Self-Help and Savings groups, mine risk reduction, community-based health - including water, sanitation and hygiene, and disability inclusion in road safety. Over the course of the program additional grants were added to give targeted support to women with disability, capacity development of DPOs and organisations working in remote locations, and to support mainstream organisations partnering with disability specific organisations. In May 2012 another round of short term grants focused on disability related arts and sports initiatives and 9 research grants exploring a range of aspects of disability in Cambodia.

Program activities related to the outcome on reducing the risk of disability focused on building the capacity of the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), to strengthen its existing work on: Community Based Mine Action - which integrated mine risk education with livelihood support and direct emergency assistance; its work on Road Safety; and its work on Community based health, water and sanitation. The CRC was supported on particular projects to enhance disability inclusion through involvement in the CIDI partner support initiatives outlined below, and through a direct relationship with the ARC and dedicated funding outside of the CIDI grant mechanism.

In addition to project support funded through the DIAF, the CIDI sought to work towards the intermediate outcomes above by using a number of 'influencing strategies' focused on increasing coordination and collaboration between disability stakeholders, and to strengthening of their institutional capacity. Specifically, the influencing strategies sought to²:

Coordinate and broker relationships between civil society, the Red Cross and the Royal Government of Cambodia to strengthen the effectiveness of the national disability sector

Provide **institutional capacity strengthening** to civil society, the Red Cross and the Royal Government of Cambodia

The CIDI provided dedicated support to broker relationships and coordination among disability stakeholders (primarily those funded by the DIAF), through a variety of on-line and face- to-face communication platforms, and a range of exchange and peer support mechanisms among partners. CIDI also provided institutional capacity strengthening of disability stakeholders with training and tailored mentoring and ongoing support. An additional small grant – the Supplementary Capacity Development Assistance SCDA grant provided extra funding to strengthen the capacity of organisations in particular areas that were linked to their project work and to complement existing grants.

A Learning focused Evaluation

The current evaluation looks at what can be learned about the influencing strategies outlined above and tries to understand where and how the capacity development of organisations, and the facilitation of relationships between CIDI partners and stakeholders worked to enhance disability inclusion.

More specifically the evaluation seeks to examine the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the influencing strategies used:

- How effective and appropriate was the project model and management approach, were the relevant actors targeted and what might have been done differently?

² A third influencing strategy was focused on supporting the government to influence the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities, but this was linked to the outcome focused on a supportive policy context, which was withdrawn when the previous LSAP was redesigned to be the CIDI.

- What impact did the enabling environment created by CIDI support have on organisational development and disability inclusion practices? (including unexpected outcomes)
- What aspects of the influencing strategies encourage sustainability of disability inclusion practices within the CIDI and how replicable are these processes and approaches?

It is hoped that learning from the evaluation will provide insights to guide future initiatives for disability inclusion in Cambodia, for the Australian Red Cross domestically and internationally, and in the wider Red Cross movement in the region and internationally. The evaluation will also contribute to the international evidence base on networking and partnerships, and capacity development of development organisations.

Evaluation team

The evaluation team was constructed to facilitate the institutional learning focus of the evaluation, as well as strike a balance between internal CIDI and ARC insights and a more external perspective as is further discussed under the evaluation framework below. The evaluation team of four people was made up of an external independent consultant leading the evaluation overall, a staff member from the quality team of the ARC in Melbourne, Kalene Caffarella and the Program Co-ordinator, David Curtis and Support Co-ordinator Mao Meas from the CIDI program in Phnom Penh. The majority of key informant interviews were conducted by the lead evaluator, with a handful conducted by the ARC Melbourne colleague, who also helped with documentation of group discussions and a number of reflections exercises at the 7th partner roundtable workshop, accompanied the team on several field visits to partners and partner projects, and gave ongoing input into discussions of emerging issues and evaluation process.

Interviews were conducted mainly at the partner organisations offices, principally in Battambang, Pursat, Kampot and Phnom Penh, with a handful conducted during a partner roundtable workshop and a few via skype. The CIDI staff on the team led evaluation exercises using Most Significant Changes stories of impact and peer 'Partner to Partner' (P2P) evaluation exercises involving 20 partners ahead of the full evaluation team travelling to Cambodia in February 2013. CIDI team members on the evaluation team also helped facilitate group reflection exercises at the 7th Roundtable partner workshop, were present at a group discussion of with partners at the KNKS offices in Battambang, and with project beneficiaries of a DDSP livelihoods project in Pursat, and travelled with the team to a number of interviews conducted at partner organisations (though they were not present at the interviews). In addition a critical review group of advisors identified by the ARC team in Melbourne reviewed and gave input on the evaluation design and methodology and drafts of the evaluation report.

Complementary evaluation activities

The emphasis on institutional learning for ARC in the present evaluation complements an independent evaluation of CIDI carried out by AusAID in December 2012. Additional CIDI evaluation activities supported by the ARC included a review of DIAF projects focused on documenting their outputs, emerging issues and lessons learned conducted by Celia Cosgriff from the University of Melbourne in November 2012, and a short piece of research on exploring partnerships as catalysts for change in Disability Inclusion among the CIDI partners, conducted by external consultants Enable in January 2013. The findings and insights from both these studies are drawn on in the current evaluation.

CIDI 'theory of change'

The focus in the CIDI program logic on 'influencing' of key stakeholders as a way of working towards its desired higher level outcomes reflects the influence of 'people centred program logic' in the redesign of the program that was to become the CIDI in July of 2010. Such people centred logic is rooted in a recognition of the importance of networks and the value of assessing changes in relationships and the attitudes and behaviours among development partners as inherently more easy to understand, rather than more abstract outputs and outcomes of traditional planning frameworks. It also draws influence from the increasingly influential concern in evaluation to

identify and make explicit the 'Theory of Change' – assumptions about 'how change happens' - for any intervention.³

While the **CIDI program design focuses on the influencing strategies of brokering relationships and strengthening the institutional capacity of stakeholders** the theory of change is quite general and underdeveloped in the program design documents and evaluation framework. The theory of change behind capacity strengthening may appear to be self evident, in that strengthening specific organisational capacities can be expected to lead to more effective organisations in the disability sector, however the detail of what kinds of capacity are best developed by which approaches, and at what level they are expected to have an impact is not elaborated in the program design documents. Detail of the way brokering and facilitation of relationships is expected to work in practice is also not specified in the program design and evaluation framework, beyond a general statement about networking and coordination. In addition, much of the existing reporting of networking, relationship building and learning forums in program documentation is more output focused, rather than making explicit the pathways to changes - in relationships, and ways of working - brought about by CIDs and ARCs approach.

Given the evaluation draws on a Realist approach (see below), it aims to draw out, make visible and further specify some of the key elements of support and influence provided by the CIDI and how these operated in practice to enhance the effectiveness of partner organisations. Methodologically, this meant that a more detailed theory of change needed to be distilled from program documentation, staff perceptions and existing literature on networking and capacity development, so that this could be used to focus data gathering, and be 'tested' and further honed in interviews with key informants. Key elements of the theories of change around relationship strengthening and capacity development carried into the interview can be seen in the core interview schedule in Appendix 1.

Evaluation framework and components

The evaluation of CIDI sought to combine a participatory approach that could draw on the insights of CIDI partners and project practitioners and an external perspective that could attend to overall patterns of effectiveness and outcomes across what is a complex and multifaceted program. The CIDI has worked with partners to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation capacities over the duration of the program, and built an understanding of the range of evaluation approaches, from external to participatory self-assessment. Against this background, many partners were keen to play a role in the evaluation and take part in participatory reflection and evaluation exercises to contribute to the evaluation overall.

Evaluation components

The evaluation drew on a variety of methods and triangulated a range of sources of data.

Components of the CIDI evaluation included:

- Key informant interviews with CIDI partner organisations, CIDI and ARC staff and disability stakeholders external to the program
- Group discussions with CIDI partners and project beneficiaries
- A questionnaire on types of support provided by CIDI and perceived impact on organisations capacity
- Participatory reflection and evaluation exercises with CIDI partners at a 3 day partner workshop on the perceived benefits of networking, concrete examples of CIDI support, organisational capacity, stories of impact, and drawings of 'project journeys'
- Peer 'P2P' evaluation exercise among 20 CIDI partners
- Most Significant Change Stories evaluation exercise among partners at the 6th and 7th partner roundtable workshops

³ The people centered logic developed by Tracey Delaney which informed the redesign of CIDI draws heavily on Rick Davies network perspectives in evaluation, and shows some similarities with Outcome Mapping – whose 'boundary partners' are conceived in a similar way to her 'direct targets'.

- Video diaries of how CIDI had supported partner projects gathered at the 6th partner workshop and used to frame discussion of networks in the 7th partner workshop
- Review of CIDI program documentation and partner meeting reports
- A review of DIAF funded projects
- Research into the catalysing of relationships to support disability inclusion
- Review of wider literature and evaluations of networking, partnership working and capacity development

Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework is adapted from 'Realistic evaluation' (Pawson and Tilly, 2009) and focuses data gathering around specifying and refining the 'theories of change' underlying the CIDI influencing strategies. Key to the Realistic evaluation approach is to make the theory/s of change explicit and 'test' them with concrete examples and experiences of stakeholders involved in the program. The aim is to iteratively refine and clarify the theory/s of change to produce a clearer and more nuanced understanding of 'what works for who, in what circumstances' (Pawson 2006) rather than provide a single verdict on success or failure.

Realist evaluation recognises the value in drawing on a wide range of evidence, including qualitative research, grey literature and the insights of program staff. In each case it seeks to attend to the relative rigour of the data gathered, and looks for insights that will illuminate the theory of change, and as with other evaluation methods, triangulation across different kinds of evidence is vital for drawing relatively robust conclusions.

The lead evaluator brings many years of expertise and experience in the evaluation of networks, organisational learning and capacity development and the mechanisms commonly understood to underlie successful practice. Interpretation of the evaluation data gathered thus remains faithful to the empirical evaluation data gathered from CIDI projects and informants, and combines this with sensitivity to how change is usually understood to happen in these areas of programing.

Realist interviews

Realist evaluation influenced the approach to semi-structured key informant interviews conducted with 24 staff from 19 of the 38 CIDI partner organisations, 5 CIDI staff, 3 ARC managers, 3 from organisations and consultants involved in the disability sector in Cambodia and a government representative. Key informant interviews following a Realist design attended to the differential knowledge of people depending on their relationship to the program. Senior managers, program coordinators, project practitioners and beneficiaries all contribute different insights ranging from the detail of what was effective in project implementation and context, to overall patterns of outcomes across projects, and aspects of program intentional design. Interviews with different stakeholders followed this emphasis, adapting a core interview schedule focused on testing the theory of change – the ways in which networking and capacity development worked to support partners working more effectively – against partner experience and perceptions, while looking for concrete examples to validate or further refine this understanding of what works. The core interview schedule used to guide interviews is in Appendix 1.

The organisations selected for interview were chosen to contribute perspectives and experiences across the range of disability programing supported by the CIDI. In this way the interviews sought to explore any differential experience of organisations were involved in disability targeted or mainstream programing, those with a specific focus on supporting women with disability, larger disability organisations and smaller younger organisations, those active in a range of different geographical settings, and those focusing on different aspects of disability and different types of services.

In addition, the Realist approach informed development of a questionnaire designed to validate the emerging picture of the CIDI theory/s of change that was returned by 19 of the 38

CIDI partners, and was also used to identify specific examples of support in an exercise with 32 of the 38 partners present at a workshop in Cambodia.

Evaluation data from all the exercises outlined above was combined and triangulated to elaborate and refine the theory/s of change underpinning CIDI support, and to better understand how and where CIDI support was effective and contributed to impact and likely sustainability.

Limitations of the evaluation

The complexity, diversity and scale of the CIDI program with its 55 projects across 38 organisations throughout most districts in Cambodia made an exhaustive comparison of the work being supported not possible. In keeping with the Realist evaluation framework, the evaluation hoped to illustrate 'what works for who in what circumstances' and illustrate how different aspects of support worked differently for different partners in different work contexts. However, rather than one intervention being implemented in a range of different contexts, the CIDI encompassed a wide range of different interventions, sometimes in combination and sometimes more stand alone, in a wide range of different settings. It was also a challenge within the time frame to gather a detailed picture of the program social context that may have influenced project implementation in each case, something that is important in Realist analysis. Rather than a systematic picture of this variation across the wide number of partners and contexts, the evaluation ended up taking a more humble focus on deepening the core theory of change and understanding of how the influencing strategies worked for the majority of CIDI partners.

Language was a challenge for the evaluation. Interviews were conducted in English and translators were present where the informant was not comfortable talking in English, however a small number of interviews that were conducted in English were difficult to follow for the interviewers, with some details being lost or misunderstood. In addition, language difficulties may have led to some interviews being overly general, with the interaction not moving much past general comments, rather than specifics of experience and practice that are more illuminating for evaluation purposes. At a three day workshop with partners where a range of reflection and evaluation exercises were carried out, the time taken for translation between English and Khmer meant that some of the exercises were pushed for time. In the case of a drawing exercise that charted partners' 'project journey' as a road with symbols for significant events and relationships, time pressures meant that these pictures remained largely unanalysed by the group⁴.

Volume of material relevant to the evaluation was also a challenge, which meant that some of it remained unanalysed. It was not possible to review the traffic on the CIDI forum in any depth, which may have revealed patterns of differential contribution over time and link to the analysis of partnership below. The video diary footage, which amounted to 7 hours of video was also not analysed in depth, but a short film was distilled from the footage around the key questions addressed to participants that was then used to frame discussion at the 7th partners workshop.

Some evaluation exercises were not as useful as anticipated. Information gathered in a Most Significant Change evaluation exercise and peer 'P2P evaluation exercise among 20 CIDI partners had initially been expected to contribute to the overall evaluation but were of less use than expected. This was because these participatory exercises were developed with partners before the overall evaluation design was consolidated, so the evaluation questions they explore were not focused on the needs of the overall evaluation and they were thus less useful than was initially hoped. CIDI has developed laudable habits of participatory process and in keeping with this had introduced partners to a range of monitoring and evaluation methods so that they could decide whether to adopt or adapt them in their own project work. Exercises to introduce approaches were usually linked to concrete experience of the partners to help reinforce and embed the learning by giving it a practical focus. In the case of the MSC stories and the P2P

⁴ Due to the large number of organisations present, the exercise planned to review 6 or so pictures, but instead reviewed only two with the group.

exercises, partners were introduced to and given a 'taster' of the potential of such evaluation tools, but it was also hoped that they would generate data for the CIDI evaluation.

In the case of the MSC stories, as stories of impact they gathered examples of perceived impacts of project work supported by CIDI rather than on changes brought about by CIDI support mechanisms on partners' ways of working on effectiveness. In addition the stories were generated as an illustrative exercise and introduction to the method, rather than gathered in a systematic way as an evaluation method. As such the MSC stories could not be used to make a substantial input to the evaluation, although they did provide one source of insight into understandings of disability inclusion among partners. In the case of the P2P evaluation exchanges among partners, they were also more focused on learning from project activities and though clearly a very rich learning experience for the partners, their variability and uneven level of documentation did not contribute much content for the evaluation – even while it provided some important insights about the M and E capacity of partners that are outlined in the report.

A focus on what worked

The learning focus of the evaluation meant that the questions of 'what worked and how it worked' was at the forefront of the evaluation. The evaluation also sought to get a clearer picture of where CIDI support was less effective and a number of areas are identified and discussed in the evaluation. It was difficult to find examples of where CIDI support had not worked in interviews despite consistent questioning in interviews, even while informants were quite forthcoming about shortcomings in the duration and funding uncertainties of the program, and quite critical about the practices of other donors and some networks and organisations in the wider disability sector. From the range of evaluation data drawn on it appears that this may be because the program was generally experienced as valuable and useful to partner organisations, but it is hard not to be cautious about such an overwhelmingly positive picture.

Key informant interviews and limited consultation of project beneficiaries

The evaluation made use of key informant interviews which rely on informants own self-reports of events and outcomes and but also allow the opportunity to probe further and ask questions in a semi-structured dialogue. An important contextual factor is that the CIDI program was drawing to a close, and it appeared to be common knowledge that CIDI would no longer be funded to continue in its present role. In this sense, informants may have been less prone to desirability bias than if they were being interviewed in a context where they might be applying for funding. Given that CIDI was finishing it was also notable how engaged partners were in the final three-day roundtable workshop, and their sustained attendance and participation.

The evaluation did not systematically gather the views and perspectives of project 'beneficiaries', since it was focused on the intermediate outcomes of building partner capacity and coordination. The team did visit a number of partner projects and field sites, and engaged in some discussion with project beneficiaries during these visits. These visits were valuable for gaining insights into project contexts and constraints, particularly in more remote rural areas of Cambodia. As noted by the Enable team however, this meant that the ultimate impact of disability inclusion initiatives at the beneficiary outcome level was beyond the scope of the evaluation.

These caveats aside, the wide range of data gathered, variety of evaluation exercise, and extensive project documentation provided the opportunity to triangulate across a rich range of data sources and allows us to be confident about some of the insights emerging from the evaluation overall.

LEARNING FROM THE CIDI

In this section we review learning from the CIDI strategies to facilitate stronger relationships among partners and disability stakeholders. We examine the contribution of a number of approaches that CIDI used to support the brokering of relationships and draw on some insights from network evaluation methods to help understand how these tools and approaches were effective and where they encountered challenges. In the following section we review learning related to the CIDI approach to capacity building of organisations and some challenges in this area. Key to both relationships strengthening and capacity building was the use of participatory method, and we consider the way such methods helped contribute to success in both areas.

Brokering relationships and Coordination

CIDI dedicated resources and made conscious efforts to create platforms that facilitated connections among partners and made spaces for reflection, analysis and potential collaboration. CIDI specifically resourced partner forums and coordination meetings, and its budget for monitoring and evaluation was set up with room to support M&E visits both from the CIDI team and between partners. The CIDI used a number of approaches and mechanisms to facilitate relationship building among CIDI funded partners that contributed to increased collaboration and co-ordination of the work of partners over time:

- The CIDI forum was an email list where partners could share information, request advice and feedback and promote discussion of issues and forthcoming events.
- The CIDI partners meetings - 3 day, face-to-face workshops including all partners for sharing experience and to conduct training and capacity development.
- Joint projects that linked mainstream organisations with disability specific organisations
- Introduction and referral of organisations who were working in the same geographical area or who had complementary skills
- Structured exchange visits among partners focused on learning from the specific project experiences of partners, including a peer 'P2P' evaluation process involving 20 partners
- Informal gatherings such as the 'third Friday club' which brought partners together on a voluntary basis for informal socialising
- Joint participation in activities, such as a CBR on-line learning course and attendance at the Asian CBR Congress

CIDI Forum: The CIDI electronic forum was used by partners to share information on disability. It averaged posts 52 per month over the two years and two months it has run⁵, ranging from a low of 13 to a high of a 100 but with fairly consistent use overall. Uses of the list ranged from sharing key national and international reports and studies, information about funding proposals and training opportunities, and as a discussion forum to share concerns, seek advice and discuss particular issues raised by CIDI partners. The CIDI forum was also used by the CIDI team as a means of general information sharing and notification of events and trainings with the partners as a whole.

CIDI Partner meetings: The CIDI partner meetings, of which there were 7 over the two and a half years of the project were three-day workshops involving all partners who could attend and held in Phnom Penh. Attendance at the meetings averaged at 60 people, and usually included more than one participant from the organisations attending. The meetings had a general format that included: program updates and sharing of information on upcoming events or significant reports or sources of information on disability nationally and internationally; 'Spotlight' session where the work of several partners – usually 3 or 4 - was presented, with time for discussion and reflection on their work; and training exercises – which took up at least two of the three days - focused on key areas of capacity (identified in extensive consultation with partners at the first partners meeting and on an ongoing basis during the program). These workshops were participatory in style and mixed plenary discussion and intensive group work.

⁵ Excluding the first month when the list was launched with one post at the end of the month.

Introductions and exchanges between organisations and joint projects: A number of CIDI grants focused on mainstreaming disability explicitly linked a mainstream organisation and disability specific organisation so that they could develop joint activities and the disability specific organisation could provide ongoing mentoring and advisory input. The CIDI team also introduced organisations to each other when they were working in the same geographical area or where it became apparent that they had complementary or similar skills and would benefit from exchanging ideas and skills. A number of more structured exchange or study visits were encouraged by the CIDI team and funded and supported as part of projects, sometimes as part of the SCDA grants or through core CIDI and partner budget lines on evaluation and learning. One particular incarnation of the exchange visit was the P2P evaluation exercise conducted at the beginning of 2013 and involving 20 partners who evaluated each others' work in pairs as a monitoring and evaluation learning exercise and to contribute to the overall CIDI learning evaluation. These exchanges were supported by the core CIDI budget on the basis of a budget and clear rationale provided by the partner. The 'third Friday club' was an informal social gathering that met approximately monthly, from about 6 months into the project, over the last two years of the program. This was usually in a local restaurant to reduce the exclusion of cost, and was predominantly Khmer event, in contrast to some of the other informal networking events among disability stakeholders.

The Benefits of CIDI support for networking

Although not explicitly set up as a network, the CIDI support mechanisms all encouraged networking, primarily between CIDI partners, but also with broader disability stakeholders. It is instructive to view some of its efforts to broker relationships through the lens of network evaluation approaches and their presentation of how change is facilitated in networks. The literature on networks in development contexts highlights the importance of building trust between members of a network, as a foundation for increased volume and richness of interactions among network members over time, the emergence of common priorities, actions and a vision over time, and the facilitation of increased contribution from diverse members of the network (Karl et al 1998, Church et al 2003, Davies 2003)

Below, we review some of the key benefits of CIDI supported networking that CIDI partners identified in some participatory reflection exercises at the 7th CIDI partner workshop, drawing on the concrete examples they identified, and highlight the contribution of particular CIDI support mechanisms, triangulating this with data and examples from across the evaluation. We also review the contribution of particular CIDI support mechanisms in the light of network evaluation frameworks to help understand how they made their contribution to strengthening relationships among partners.

Participants at the 7th and final CIDI partners meeting carried out an exercise to provide a tangible picture of how they perceived networking to have helped them in their work on disability. Following the viewing of the short video diary compilation that highlighted key aspects of CIDI support in which networking was identified as an important benefit of the program, a group exercise sought to identify key concrete benefits of networking. Group discussion work was used to identify the concrete benefits of networking supported by CIDI, and the feedback from all groups was distilled into a priority list of benefits derived from networking. Based on this list of benefits, each organisation then proceeded to list concrete examples of where such benefits had been realised in their own organisation.

Key areas of benefit from networking identified in the initial group discussions were as follows:

- Information on the disability sector
- A feeling of a common voice
- Sharing concerns with others
- Sharing future plans with others
- Linking mainstream organisations with Disabled People's Organisations
- A shared vision of disability inclusion

- Sharing problems and solutions to those problems
- Joint working with partners
- A feeling of empowerment of partners
- Motivation and support
- New policies – for eg Child Protection Policy and finance policies and review of strategic plans⁶
- Improvement of activities
- Changed attitudes about disability among organisations

We look at some of these areas in turn below, grouping them together where appropriate, and recognising that there is a good deal of overlap in the areas identified.

Sharing information

Partners felt that the CIDI forum was a valued and concise source of key disability information and research and it was one of the CIDI support mechanisms which was rated as the most useful in the CIDI partner questionnaire and in interviews. For some it helped them keep up with latest developments national and internationally in a distilled and accessible form. Aside from some issues with email etiquette (where out of politeness many individuals would respond with an acknowledgement of information shared causing a large number of emails) the substantive content and focus of the list was felt to be relevant to partners and not overload them with information.

“they get the balance just about right – I always read it because I know there will be useful information in it” Key informant from CIDI partner organisation.

Another important source of information mentioned by informants was the CIDI partner meetings themselves, where a lot of information on the disability sector nationally and internationally was shared through a CIDI update as well as sharing among partners, and more detailed information on partner organisations was shared and discussed in detail. Information was also shared between partners locally who in a number of cases had been put in touch with each other by members of the CIDI team. In network terms, access to and receipt of information is perhaps the minimum level of valued relationship it can provide, and all the CIDI partner interviewed were clear about its importance to them.

Joint working, sharing problems and solutions and improvement of activities

CIDI support mechanisms helped organisations to:

- build relationships with other partners
- share challenges and possible solutions
- learn from others work to adapt what they had learned practically in their own projects
- forge new collaborations and durable working relationships among a core group of partners.

Relationships and joint working

Key informant interviews with 19 CIDI partners showed that they had all made links, had conversations with or shared information with other partners in CIDI. More significantly, 17 out of the 19 organisations had developed practical joint working relationships with other CIDI partners of varying kinds, ranging from collaboration in organising events, joint proposals, contracting each other for training, participation on the board of another partner, or ongoing communication and advisory input. 7 of the nineteen organisations had developed such links with 3 or more other partners and 3 of them with 5 or more partners. The additional exercise at the 7th partner Roundtable with 32 of the 38 organisations involved in CIDI showed that among the additional 13

⁶ Improvement of policies and development of strategic plans is dealt with separately in the section on capacity development, even while some of the related training came from partner organisations, and as such it is understandable that partners included it in the list of networking benefits above.

organisations who profiled their networking 9 of them had worked with other partners with 5 of them working with two or more others.

CIDI Partner meetings played a key role in supporting joint working and learning among partner organisations, and were the CIDI mechanism which was rated as most important in the partner questionnaire and in interviews.

Learning and innovation

Sharing of project experience was facilitated by 'spotlight' sessions at each partner meeting that featured presentations on the work of 3 or 4 CIDI partners each time, with space for discussion and reflection on their work. This dedicated time and explicit attention to the practical work and learning of other partners was a key mechanism for creating an enabling environment where each partners' work was taken seriously, and reflection and analysis of their own work and the work of others was supported. This sharing of experience was greatly valued by partners who were keen to explore whether they could adapt the learning shared in their own work.

Key areas of work where there was a common interest in learning from practice were the setting up and management of Self-Help Groups, and methods for effectively involving PWD in consultations around services or in the development or implementation of projects. The latter was of particular interest for disability mainstreaming organisations but also for some DPOs who wanted to strengthen their needs assessments. Another area that generated interest among partners was means for alternative income generation to help fund project work, such as the development of handicrafts businesses, or restaurants. One common challenge for some partners was the need to dealing with speech, language and communication issues. The CIDI supported reflection and learning in this area by supporting a specific workshop to address these issues. In addition to sharing experiences at the CIDI partner meetings, a number of partners made these topics the focus of 'exchange' and 'study' visits to other partners.

The combination of CIDI mechanisms for supporting sharing and collaboration among partners appears to have created a milieu in which ideas could be shared and innovations could spread. It is notable that several innovations developed by one partner generated interest and in several cases activities to adapt them by other partners including: the development of self-help support groups of parents of children with disability, the development of children's clubs, the development of sports teams, around volleyball and basketball in particular, the setting up of a mobile library, and the development of a café or restaurant both as an income generation method and as a way to raise the profile of the organisation within the community. In another example the training on child protection delivered by CIDI had led a partner to develop their own 'child friendly media policy' appropriate to organisations working with media production. This policy had generated interest among other CIDI partners but also media organisations such as ABC radio.

Drawing on partner skills

Partner skills and experience was also shared through the more formalised mechanism of providing specific training based on the particular expertise of the partner. The CIDI team encouraged partners to provide training within the framework of CIDI partner meetings and sponsored training events, and also encouraged partners to avail themselves of each other's skills and services. CIDI partners provided a range of training to others, including training on counselling, child protection, management of Self Help Groups and Cerebral Palsy. They also provided either training or advisory input on a one to one basis between organisations on disability awareness and mainstreaming, effective consultation with PWD and local communities, psychosocial support and social work, special education, marketing of handicrafts, and construction of ramps.

The analysis outlined above highlights that the facilitation of relationships between CIDI partners had **produced quite a dense set of interconnections between partners, where much more substantial and reciprocal exchanges were taking place.** In network terms, expanding this core of more intensely interconnected and interacting partners is a sign of

network maturity and added value, particularly as members are enabled to initiate activities themselves (Creech and Willard, 2004). Assessment of the relationships and interactions built over the relatively short lifetime of the CIDI program suggest that a core 'community' of organisations has been generated by the program with a substantial number motivated to initiate joint activities based on the relationships and knowledge they have gained or brought to the network.

An additional characteristic of an effective network is the ability to enable organisations to contribute their own distinctive set of skills or perspectives to the network (Church et al 2003). We have already noted above that partners were able to bring a range of skills to provide training and advisory input to other partners within CIDI where there were common concerns and interests. It is interesting to note a couple of additional examples where organisations that were more 'outliers' in terms of the focus of their work were able to bring particular contributions to the network and find a receptive atmosphere among other partners. In the case of SCC, their distinctive focus on psychosocial support is something that they felt is often neglected by disability organisations, but they found CIDI partners ready to take on many of the issues and challenges they raised. In SCCs case this led to them providing training on child protection and counselling at CIDI partner meetings but also on a one to one basis for 6 CIDI partner organisations. In the case of Epic Arts, its focus on using artistic practice for the empowerment and expressive development of individual children with disabilities is something they felt is often difficult to convey and raise funds for. They felt CIDI understood and 'got' the value of what they were doing and they felt they were increasingly able to raise the profile and understanding of the value of arts and disabilities projects, among CIDI partners. Staff from Action IEC supported this perception, suggesting that within the CIDI there was an emerging understanding of the value of art and media, growing from the work of some key partners who were engaged with the media and the arts.

Linking mainstream organisations, DPOs and existing disability networks

CIDI sought to deliberately link the work of some mainstream organisations and DPOs among its partner organisations, and made links with key existing networks of NGOs working on disability, Government bodies and representatives. In addition, many CIDI partner organisations were supported to make significant links with local authorities and commune councils

Linking mainstream organisations and DPOs

CIDI support facilitated joint working between 7 pairs of mainstream organisations and DPOs through dedicated funding for specific partnerships as well as through collaborative space of the partner meetings and other mechanisms as outlined above. The mainstream organisations interviewed were very clear that they had been supported to work more confidently and effectively on disability after CIDI support, and they felt able to be honest about their lack of experience and seek support from the DPOs among the CIDI partners. We look in a little more depth at the influence of these relationships in the section on disability inclusion below.

Linking with existing networks

While CIDI attempts to strengthen relationships and capacity were focused on CIDI partner organisations, there was also a strategic effort to involve organisations that were key to the Cambodian disability sector or who led existing networks, with varying degrees of success. CIDI supported Action Disability Development (ADD) who had an existing network of small DPOs who they were working with to develop their capacity by providing resources with which ADD could sub-grant to a number of organisations and federations of self-help groups that it had already begun to work with. This support was a way of involving existing networks, but also increasing the ability of the program to support greater numbers of small organisations whilst keeping management input and overheads manageable. CIDI also supported Handicap International (HI) through funding for physical rehabilitation and CBR projects of HI-B and HI-F, and made links with a number of partners in their network. An informant from HI-B felt that CIDI's distinctive contribution was its funding and support for small organisations that other donors saw as too small to manage. It had also managed to encourage networking among civil society organisations at the provincial level – for concrete collaboration, in contrast to character of

networking at the national and policy level, where it was suggested discussions were often controlled by the larger international NGOs and the government. The same informant acknowledged the spirit of collaboration and not competition that the CIDI network had been able to promote and important links and working arrangement had been facilitated between a number of partners in the CIDI and HI.

CIDI forged good working links with the Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation CDPO, an umbrella organisation for DPOs with national reach, providing a small amount of funding or work with DPOs in more remote communities, and involving them in an advisory role for the program. CIDI partners tended to see the work of the networks as complementary, and saw CIDI as bringing strengths around training and capacity development and the promotion of organisational learning and stronger internal systems. The CDPO was seen more as a network that had the potential to represent PWD⁷, and the director of CDPO positioned CIDI as being predominantly focused on linking mainstream organisations and DPOs.

CIDI also developed links to the Disability Action Council, a semi-autonomous body that was tasked with combining government and civil society input to co-ordinate the national work on disability in Cambodia. The CIDI support coordinator was asked to be part of the DAC committee on CBR, and CIDI collaborated on initial steps to develop a self-help manual on CBR. The evaluation did not investigate perception of the DAC in any systematic way, but comments and insights from a small number of informants suggested that the DAC focused energies on policy committees and papers, but there was some ambiguity about its role. The DAC had also not become a venue for networking and exchange, despite the hopes for the body. Several informants used the language of 'unrealised potential' in their characterisation of the DAC. The perceived closeness to government of the DAC, despite its being set up to straddle different constituencies, also made CSOs and DPOs feel unable to be honest and critical in their input.

Linking with local authorities

Although CIDI relinquished a focus on brokering relationships with the government with its redesign from the LSAP in 2010, and the development of more direct relationship between AusAID and the MoSVY and other government ministries as part of this re-orientation, it retained links with the government through His Excellency Sem Sokha, Secretary of State, MoSVY, who strongly endorsed the value of the program, and who continued to invite CIDI advisory input. Many of the partners were working with the provincial arms of government ministries including PoSVY and the ministry of Education at the local level. The CIDI had also lead to better collaboration with local authorities and commune councils - in part a result of capacity building around advocacy (see page 28), with 10 out of 19 organisations consulted reporting more effective working with local authorities and 6 of them securing explicit attention to disability within the commune investment plans.

Multi-stakeholder consultation

Another mechanism that brought representatives from the different networks and constituencies together was the panel which presided over the selection of DIAF grants, which included representatives from MoSVY, the DAC, representation of PWD from the University of Phnom Penh, AusAID and the CIDI/ARC. This panel modelled good practice in terms of multi-stakeholder representation and transparency of selection, but it also forged collaborative and constructive relationships among key disability stakeholders consistent with the program's strategic aims.

In summary, the CIDI seems to have **made useful links with key existing disability networks and constituencies in Cambodia**, and been moderately successful at building collaborative rather than competitive relations with these networks. CIDI did not have an exhaustive reach across all the DPOs and CSOs working in disability, and notable weaknesses in this regard were links to networks of people with hearing and vision impairments. Despite

⁷ A small number of CIDI partners in interviews suggested that tended to operate more as a personalised network rather than build on the initiative of some of the DPOs it claimed to represent

some attempts at reaching out to these networks, CIDI staff felt they had not been able to secure their greater involvement. From a network perspective, it seems that over the duration of the program the CIDI has managed to build its core network, while beginning to make useful and constructive links with many of the key networks and organisations around a common purpose, even while this was still work in progress.

A shared vision and voice

Many CIDI partners suggested they shared a common set of concerns and to an extent a common voice and vision around disability inclusion. This vision was expressed as a commitment to furthering disability inclusion and for just over half the organisations interviewed was couched explicitly in the language of disability rights. Some informants suggested that CIDI had created a recognition of the diversity of disability, recognising the different experiences of those with different impairments, highlighting the particular challenges of those with intellectual disability, of multiple and severe disabilities, and the often neglected experiences of women and children with disability.

Not being a formal network the CIDI was not expected to develop common positions on issues that might be represented to external audiences. One example where CIDI partners did develop a common view however was in preparation for submissions to a regional symposium on disability in Sydney in 2011. Discussion of the World Report on Disability at a previous meeting had left partners keen to better highlight Cambodian experiences. Subsequently, at the 3rd partners meeting in Nov 2011, a consensus was developed on key issues relevant to disability in the Cambodian context that was then presented at the symposium. The assertion by the partners at the 7th partner forum that CIDI networking had helped them to develop a common voice may have drawn on this particular experience, but it not clear how else this common voice was articulated.

Partners noted in interviews that in addition to its informational role, the CIDI forum contributed to reducing feelings of isolation around work on disability and went some way towards building a feeling of a common vision of working towards disability inclusion. Partner meetings also played a crucial part in this and provided opportunities for more dialogue and discussion of projects and broader disability issues, although it is difficult to separate out the influence of these key opportunities for on-line and face to face dialogue.

In network terms, the development of common positions and the gradual alignment of partner concerns over time is often used as a measure of the effectiveness of the network. In this case, given the fact that CIDI was not constituted as a network, the evaluation did not explore the presence or absence of such a shared voice or vision in any systematic way. We return below to understandings of disability inclusion among the partners and changed attitudes to disability (another perceived contribution of networking above) when we explore the contributions of the CIDI program to disability inclusive practice and the range of understandings of disability within the CIDI partners.

Motivation, support and empowerment

As noted above, many CIDI partners commented on how being part of CIDI had reduced their feelings of isolation working on disability. Being made aware of other organisations working in this field, and in some cases being introduced to other organisations working in their own provinces that they were previously unaware of had given them a sense of support, recognition and working to a common purpose. Around half of the partners interviewed commented specifically on what a motivational and inspiring forum the CIDI partners meetings were, and contrasted this with other forums they were part of which were seen as overly procedural, bureaucratic and 'dull' by comparison. A number of partners commented on how CIDI managed to take issues forward and develop them into tangible outcomes, and that there was a sense of making practical progress in the meetings rather than the 'going through the motions' that too often blighted other forums. The open atmosphere was also conducive to sharing and taking on new ideas. This tangible sense of being able to raise issues and see them practically addressed was a motivating factor for many.

“It is hard for organisations to do new things without a safety net, they are fearful to do new things without certainty – CIDI allowed organisations to go beyond what they usually do” Key informant Action IEC

This sense of achievable progress is an important component of sustainability, which is often narrowly judged in terms of funding for project work in development discourse. In a national context where corruption and the influence of nepotistic networks is substantial, there may be a tendency to have low expectations of seeing progress in projects and initiatives. The sense of possibility and potential nurtured by CIDI and its realisation among a core group of partners who were working effectively together provides an important counter example to the logic of ‘going through the motions’ and limiting expectation to the financial benefits of project funding.

Supporting collaborative working

The CIDI also managed to create a supportive and collaborative environment that transcended the sense of competition that is often present when bringing together organisations who are often competing for the same funds. A number of informants noted how unusual this was in work among civil society in Cambodia

“It is wonderful, it’s great, amazing for me also the way CIDI facilitates the meeting in a simple, friendly way that brings all CIDI members to become like friends, like one network for cooperation, no competition but cooperation.” Key informant COCD

A significant episode early on in the CIDI program may have set the tone for this collaborative atmosphere among CIDI partners. There was an opportunity to attend a CBR conference in the Philippines. Instead of 6 people being funded to go in the usual fashion, the CIDI staff suggested that partners could work together to minimise costs, find cheaper air fares and hotels. In the end 18 people attended the conference, which was not only a great learning opportunity that increased partners knowledge of CBR, but it was also a bonding experience which promoted an ethic of mutual responsibility and the maximising opportunities for as many people as possible.

“CIDI has managed to create an atmosphere where everyone gets a share and is willing to exchange” Key informant HI-B

Another approach that contributed to the sense of collaboration was the ‘Third Friday Club’ informal gathering that brought partners together in a voluntary social event, usually at a modest local restaurant so as to minimise exclusion. Informal socialising always raises challenges around participation structured by differential access to public space and differential household commitments and this was not explored in any detail. Among the range of different mechanisms used for building relationships among partner organisations however, it was mentioned by a number of partners, both women and men, as giving them space to talk and get to know other organisations in a way that is not always possible in the usual space of work.

Developing trust

The keywords ‘equality’, ‘openness’ and ‘exchange’ came up consistently in interviews in describing the relationships and atmosphere that was achieved in CIDI interactions, and these are important components of Trust. Trust is something which although elusive is recognised as key to developing networks, and is both a foundation and product of effective working relationships. In network terms, the CIDI has been able to support the development of trust among CIDI partners, which is both a precondition and likely promoter of future collaboration

“Friendly relationships are important since they set the stage for future collaboration. We knew about some of the bigger organisations but didn’t know the actual work or know them really” Key informant CIDI partner organisation

In using some concepts from network evaluation in the analysis above, it is important to remember that CIDI was not constituted formally as a network the evaluation was not carried out as a systematic exploration of all the partners connected through the CIDI program as a network. But network evaluation concepts do provide a useful framework for focusing on learning about where and how the networking process supported by CIDI were able to contribute to stronger relationships and coordination among the organisations involved in its disability work in Cambodia. We return to this in the review of CIDI support below.

The contribution of participatory process

The CIDI consciously created an enabling environment for open-ness and collaboration among CIDI partners through the use of recognised participatory techniques. The friendly and approachable style of the CIDI team also contributed to the open and non-judgemental atmosphere in meetings, something that was consistently commented on by CIDI partner organisations and clearly made a difference to peoples confidence to contribute in what were quite large public meetings. This ease of communication and affable style of the CIDI team however, should not obscure the fact that they brought a set of deliberate participatory methods of proven effectiveness.

Enabling participation

Participatory approaches have a long pedigree in social development practice, which we will not rehearse here, but relevant to the current evaluation is the dual benefit of participation. Firstly, participatory approaches make visible and acknowledge the insights and experiences of participants – in this case, practical experiences of living with disability, and working to promote disability inclusion so that disability programming can be informed by a grass-roots reality, and the experience of disabled people themselves. Secondly, participatory approaches support reflection on practice and learning from experience, such that future work can be informed by lessons from implementation. This action-learning cycle is recognised as key to effective learning and improvement, and implies the need to create space for development actors at a range of different levels to reflect on their own practice, and not just those managing programs or in senior management roles (Brittain 2005). It is this emphasis on learning which has also underpinned the focus on working in partnerships in social development practice (Bond/Exchange 2004, Vincent and Byrne 2006).

The CIDI partner meetings made consistent use of participatory approaches. The group exercises used at many of the meetings worked to value the experience and perspectives of partners and encouraged sharing, reflection and analysis of partners' own experiences. Participatory exercises are designed to promote mutual respect and equality among participants and also structured to create space for diverse perspectives to be brought to the table, something which is important for increasing the input of groups who are often marginalised in more traditional meeting formats. The mix of plenary, small group and paired working, for example, supports less confident participants to articulate and express their experiences and priorities. Such methods as applied in the CIDI partner meetings supported diverse organisations with varying degrees of expertise and confidence to contribute their experience and insights. Several informants suggested that the participatory nature of the CIDI meetings had enabled greater participation by women. It was notable how often the keywords 'openness' and 'equality among partners' came up in the evaluation as was noted above, and the participatory processes used at partner meetings would seem to have made a significant contribution in this regard.

Sharing and comparing experiences in a structured way helped partners' reflection on their own work, but also introduced organisations to the work of others. The spotlight sessions gave partners dedicated space to present their work and share particular innovations or challenges. As we have noted above, in the CIDI case, this encourage partners to draw learning from each others' work, and in a number of cases to adapt activities and approaches within their own work.

Multiple forms of sense-making

Another important aspect of participatory process is the different kind of engagement that it promotes. Participants are encouraged to use creative approaches such as drawing or role-play

as ways to articulate and reflect on their experience, moving away from predominantly written and linear forms of expression. This allows participants to employ a richer set of ways of making sense of their experience and can encourage a different approach to familiar issues that encourages new insights (Burns 2007). The CIDI made good use of this participatory toolbox and creative exercises and many partners commented on the distinctive value they found in participatory approaches which were a new way of working for many. Several partners had adopted particular participatory exercises in their own work after encountering them within CIDI. OEC, for example, had found the use of role-play particularly useful in working with families to reflect on the impact of the way they punished children.

“role-play was really useful for us... it helps you to know with the heart and not just the head”
Key informant OEC

The use of participatory process also made the CIDI meetings fun, something that many participants contrasted with their usual experience of meetings. This meant people wanted to attend the CIDI forums and they were motivated to contribute.

“CIDI did things that were fun, so people want to show up and they want to engage” Key informant AusAID

The challenge of Language

One area that was a challenge in CIDI communication and dialogue processes was that of language. CIDI partner meetings were facilitated in both English and Khmer, and CIDI employed an experienced bilingual facilitator at some of the partner meetings and related training sessions (as well as for some of the more tailored mentoring support). Discussion at the meeting was conducted in both English and Khmer, with group work more often proceeding in Khmer and plenary sessions translating Khmer feedback into English. Lead facilitation at the partner meetings was predominantly in English with Khmer translation however. This meant that exercises and feedback from them took longer to give feedback on, and some of the key conceptual consolidation of group work and analysis was conducted in English. The issue of language was raised consistently in the evaluation of partner meetings, and in response attempts were made to translate key documents and the directions for key exercises into Khmer. There was not always time and the advanced preparation needed to translate all the materials and exercises into Khmer for meetings however, and this was perhaps exacerbated by the process of responsive facilitation in sessions where the process built on emerging discussions and findings, and it was therefore impossible to predict completely in advance.

Given the nature of participatory exercises and the importance of the capturing and distilling of experiences, which are then put back into play in reflection and analysis, working in a second language is a real hindrance and may slow down the process and inhibit some conceptual connections and learning. It may also lead to misunderstanding of the nuances of some group exercises. Working with the support of a bilingual experienced facilitator, the close rapport between the CIDI team who lead workshop exercises together and an atmosphere that enabled participants to seek clarification and ask questions of the process all worked to minimise the impact of working with English. But it seems likely that the participatory process that clearly served the CIDI program well in producing substantial collaborative outcomes, could have been even more effective if language could have been dealt with more systematically.

Support for working with language

Language was also a challenge acknowledged by CIDI program support staff who were sometimes drawn into translation of materials between English and Khmer in the context of a workload which found them ‘at capacity’ if slightly overstretched at times. One way to tackle the language issue more proactively and systematically as part of good participatory process in future would be to dedicate more resources for translation in combination with more time for preparation of workshop materials. Thorough briefing around the aim and process for participatory exercises among the team leading the workshop would also ensure the maximum

was drawn from them and that the process was less dependent on an English speaking lead facilitator. An alternative would be to make greater use in future of experienced facilitators used to working in Khmer, something CIDI had already done to an extent in some of its meetings.

It is also important to recognise however, that the effectiveness of the participatory process within CIDI was in no small part due to the considerable skill and experience of the CIDI program co-ordinator, his particular style and humour, and the open direct style of the program support co-ordinator and her reputation and long-standing engagement with the disability sector in Cambodia. Key informants often attributed what they perceived as successful about CIDI to the personality and character of the program co-ordinator and support co-ordinator and the distinctive friendly, supportive and open atmosphere they created at CIDI meetings. It is important to recognise these particular personal qualities and their contribution to the success of the CIDI forum. An effective participatory process demands particular approaches and mechanisms that are designed to support engagement and participation as noted above, but it also crucially depends on the style and personality of the facilitator and their ability to create a relaxed, open and supportive space (Estrella 2000). Recommendations around language and facilitation thus need to be taken in the light of the difficulties in achieving this balance.

A final observation on language is the fact that substantial parts of CIDI partner meetings were conducted in Khmer was itself significant: as one informant with experience of the wider disability in sector remarked, it prevented the meetings from being dominated by the bigger international NGOs.

Reviewing CIDI support

Reviewing CIDI efforts to broker relationships and coordination among organisations working on disability in Cambodia, we can see that the CIDI made contributions to effectiveness, impact and sustainable working in the sector.

Effectiveness: CIDI used a range of effective platforms to promote strengthened relationships among CIDI partners and recognised participatory mechanisms for promoting effective collaboration and learning among partners. It was able to promote effective collaboration among a wide range of important stakeholders in the disability sector as well as promote the mainstreaming of disability in a range of civil society organisations that were relatively new to the sector. CIDI was also able to make useful links with a number of existing networks and disability related bodies and support more joined up working with local authorities at the provincial level, with a significant number of partners developing effective working relationships with commune councils and securing input into commune investment plans. An area where CIDI could perhaps have been more effective was in relation to working with language in a more systematic way as part of the participatory processes at CIDI partner forums.

Impact: the impact of this work can be seen in the development in a relatively short time of a considerable number of links and more substantive and durable working relationships among CIDI partners. This included sustained joint working among a core group of CIDI partners, between mainstream and disability focused organisations, between larger and smaller civil society organisations, and across organisations with a range of different focus areas of work. CIDI was also able to support the spread of innovations and new ideas among partners and an increased sense of partnership and motivation in working for disability inclusion.

Sustainability: CIDI also led to some encouraging signs of sustainability as the result of the support to relationships and networking. The links made with commune councils and input into commune investment plans is an important contribution to sustained attention to disability inclusion at the local level. A number of the partners have built horizontal relationships among themselves where they have drawn on each other for training and advisory input. More broadly, there was an apparent knowledge of and readiness to draw on the complementary skills of partner organisations. In a telling exchange at the 7th CIDI partners meeting in a discussion of the findings of research projects, a question from the floor about the lack of available data and research on disability was met by an animated discussion in Khmer among CIDI partners,

followed by an English translation suggesting that “we know where to go if we want to know more about disability”. This comment expressed the sense among CIDI partners that at least the beginnings of attending to this research and knowledge gap was underway. In relation to a variety of different skills and areas of expertise relating to disability, CIDI partners had felt able to go to other partners for support and input. The joint working arrangements developed between a core group partners documented above also appear to indicate that some relationships that have been forged will succeed the end of the CIDI program.

The literatures on organisational learning and networking in development contexts both highlight the need for conscious attempts and deliberate mechanisms to encourage the ‘means, motive and opportunity’ for learning (Brittan 2005) and for nurturing networks and collaboration in networks (Church et al 2003). In both cases, the desire is to find relatively ‘light touch’ mechanisms that are not resource intensive, but there is still a need to consciously attend to and drive some of the supporting processes. Resources, energy, and effective approaches are needed for networking processes and organisational learning to flourish, and in this sense, they will not happen without sustained input.

The question of sustainability then, in relation to the benefits of brokering relationships and co-ordination, becomes one of how such facilitation mechanisms can be supported and sustained, but also of the opportunity cost of not investing in them, with the potential result that the development sector, in this case of work on disability, may remain fragmented and sub-optimally effective. Certainly, **if a program sets out with an explicit emphasis on facilitate relationships and co-ordination and build capacity, then it needs to invest in mechanisms that are effective in realising these outcomes, over a prolonged period.**

CIDI as a network

The research conducted by the Enable team led them to raise the question of whether some of the networking facilitation functions of the CIDI team could have been passed on to other organisations in the CIDI partner network. The review of DIAF projects also recommended that CIDI could be more effective if formally constituted as a network. The analysis of CIDI networking facilitation above, drawing as it does on concepts from network evaluation, illustrates that **CIDI networking was beginning to realise some of the recognised attributes of a successful network**. Given the context of the Cambodian disability sector, and the perceived roles of CDPO as the representative network of DPOs and the DAC as national co-ordinator of the disability sector, it seems that this would have been a difficult option to sustain both politically and pragmatically for the CIDI program.

But it is also questionable whether any of the partners would have been able to take on the network coordination and facilitation role that the CIDI team was set up and resourced to lead, even if after the program, this possibility seems more likely. The Enable team also reported that many partners were concerned for the future maintenance of the CIDI networking platforms that they valued so much and noted that partners felt it was ‘virtually impossible’ to continue with these processes outside of continued CIDI funding and support. Individual organisations funds were already stretched in the delivery of their projects, and there were likely few extra resources for supporting the kinds of meetings and exchanges that CIDI had facilitated. This perhaps underlies the **need for continued investment in support mechanisms over time** and that even while the good habits of effective networking and learning can be expected to become stronger in organisations over time as a result of support, it may be unrealistic to expect them to be sustainable in the short term. All that said however, in any successor to CIDI, it may be useful to systematically build on some of the strengths of the networking processes outlined above.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The second major focus of CIDI support was to strengthen the institutional capacity of disability stakeholders, with a primary focus on civil society organisations, including DPOs⁸. In this section we review CIDI approaches to capacity development.

The CIDI sought to build organisational capacity through a number of mechanisms:

- Training in specific areas, such as financial management
- Training that emphasised practical application for organisations
- Tailored support and mentoring to individual organisations
- Monitoring and evaluation visits and structured feedback from the CIDI team
- Exchange and 'study' visits among partners
- Provision of technical information on disability issues and other training opportunities and relevant events and meetings
- Encouraging participation at partners meetings, presentations of experience, attendance at events, to build confidence

Core training

The priority areas for core training provided drew on the expressed needs and priorities of partner organisations identified in extensive consultation at the 1st partner meeting and included training on financial management, project design, program logic, advocacy and communication, the management of self-help groups, counselling, developing child protection policies⁹. The trainings usually had a practice component, so that partners could apply the training in their own organisational context and return with reflections for discussion or seek further support. In the case of the Communication for Advocacy training for example, partners were encouraged to develop a concrete advocacy plan for their own organisation relevant to their immediate needs, which was reviewed and revisited at the following CIDI meeting. Trainings also made use of participatory action-learning techniques in keeping with the general approach adopted in partner meetings described in more detail above. Joint agreement on a code of collaboration and a consensus approach to challenges in the sector, also fostered a sense of learning as a team against objectives that were set as a group.

Many CIDI partners interviewed commented on the relevance and usefulness of the trainings provided by CIDI. The financial management training was mentioned as very useful by over half of the organisations interviewed. Several partners had adopted the particular 'Quickbook' package and systems introduced in the training to renew or consolidate previously disparate financial system and reporting, and in one case the training was explicitly mentioned as leading to the securing of new funding from another donor on the basis that their financial capacity was now sufficiently improved. In another example, the training on child protection, led to 14 out of 33 organisations consulted developing a new policy or strengthening their existing policy on child protection. Many of those interviewed also mentioned the friendly and non-judgemental way in which training was delivered and how the CIDI support was focused on helping partners to achieve their potential in a quite pragmatic way.

Tailored one-to-one support and mentoring

The supportive approach of the CIDI team and the capacity development officer¹⁰ was also something that was mentioned by many as key to the individual mentoring and support provided. One to one support and mentoring was provided to individual organisations depending on their

⁸ The focus on the capacity of the RGOC which was part of the design of CIDI's predecessor program the LSAP was dropped during the re-design and with the adoption of the National Plan of Action for People With Disability, even while the CIDI continued to work with government and local government stakeholders

⁹ Strategic planning and resource mobilisation were areas that were identified in the initial consultation, but not carried out before the end of the program.

¹⁰ The capacity development officer was recruited for a period of time and then subsequently replaced with an ongoing relationships with a consultant in a similar role who provided a range of facilitation, advocacy and capacity strengthening skills.

particular needs. Much of this support was provided by the CIDI Support Coordinator and Coordinator, with financial support provided by Senior Admin and Finance Officer and the Admin and Finance Support Officer. Support was provided through visits to organisations, organisations spending one or two days of concerted time at the CIDI office¹¹, and through phone calls and emails to CIDI staff when support was needed. As the program developed, the finance officer and office manager were drawn further into support work with partners and a consultant was retained to provide some of the mentoring and ongoing support. The support provided by the CIDI was thus delivered flexibly in a range of different ways. Its focus ranged from core organisational capacities of finances administration and reporting, to proposal and report writing, workshop and event organising, through to more technical inputs around advocacy, evaluation, participatory methods, and aspects of disability programming.

The flexibility of the team and their willingness to accommodate the partners' needs was almost universally commented on in interviews with partners. This included phone-calls at weekends and during evenings and considerable efforts to travel to meet partners and engage in understanding their particular situation and needs. Several informants commented that their relationship with a donor usually entailed receiving funding and being required to provide a final report, but they rarely saw them, and they certainly didn't come to visit their projects 'unless they wanted photographs for fundraising' to borrow the words of one informant in a group discussion whose comments should perhaps be taken figuratively.

The value of meaningful feedback from the CIDI team

The CIDI team conducted monitoring and evaluation visits to each partner, ranging from between 2 to 6 visits over the lifetime of the program. These visits were also greatly appreciated by partners as demonstrating both recognition of their work and a valuable input to help them solve challenges or improve implementation. In a number of instances partners noted that the CIDI team had been able to make useful suggestions for developing or adapting projects, as well as introducing them to partners who either worked in their geographical area or could provide complementary skills or advisory input. Structured feedback from the visits was provided in a way that was described as non-judgmental, supportive and constructively critical by partners. The feedback was also explicitly mentioned as a source of motivation for improvement by a handful of partners. Such monitoring and evaluation visits appeared to contribute both to what has been called 'technical capacity building' – specific skills that help the organisation in its particular technical area of work and 'generally capacity building' which strengthens more fundamental and general capacities of an organisations to critically reflect on its overall practice and learn (Intrac 2010).

Combinations of support

In a number of areas CIDI combined its two main areas of support - relationship brokering and capacity development - in ways that helped partners provide each other with mutual support. CIDI sponsored 'exchange' visits between partners to share learning on particular project activities and promoted ongoing advisory input from one organisation to another - particularly DPOs advising mainstream organisations as a structured part of CIDI disability mainstreaming grants. Particular partner organisations were funded to provide training as part of CIDI meetings, but also, as noted above, some organisations drew on others on a one to one funded basis to provide them training in particular areas. Interaction at partners meeting also served to build the confidence and capacity of some organisations, where for some it was the first time they had presented their organisation's work publicly or spoken at a large meeting. In all these ways CIDI drew on the existing skills of the network to strengthen the capacity of partners overall and blended the CIDI influencing approaches of facilitating networking and capacity development

Challenges for capacity building

Challenges encountered by the CIDI in its capacity strengthening efforts included a lack of systematic assessment of partner capacity, and limitations on its ability to consolidate and build on some areas of training. We review these areas briefly below and then explore the example of

¹¹ With one mentoring visit lasting a week of time observing in the CIDI office.

a peer-to-peer evaluation exercise conducted in early 2013 to illustrate some of the practical tensions involved in these areas.

Assessing partner capacity

One area identified by the CIDI team where things might have been done differently was in the area of systematic assessment of partner organisations capacity. CIDI capacity development support was provided in a way that responded to expressed partner needs and also drew on the extensive knowledge of many of the partners that had been developed by the CIDI Support Coordinator developed over many years of work in the disability sector in Cambodia. In addition, the mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation visits and individualised support meant that the CIDI team were able to make a nuanced assessment of the individual partners needs in an ongoing way. It is possible that a more systematic assessment of partner capacity at the start of the project may have enabled them to identify further areas where support could have been strengthened. Such an assessment would also have facilitated evaluation of the impact of the support provided by CIDI program, and in the words of the CIDI support coordinator would have meant that there was an external record of capacities that did not rely on her individual knowledge.

Review of the record of M & E visits to partners does not reveal a systematic pattern of differential investment of time across the range of partners. In some cases smaller organisations were given more intensive support, but this was not universally the case. Some of the recipients of larger grants received more visits and input, while others did not. CIDI staff suggested on a number of occasions that they tended to 'go where there energy is' rather than provide a standard level of support, and this was something that was reflected in the attempt to provide tailored support for different partners.

It is possible that some partners felt more confident or more able to request support than others, although the almost universally acknowledged openness and approachability of the team would have appeared to work against this. It is interesting to note that one organisation that had provided support and training to many other CIDI partners felt that on reflection they did not get the management strengthening that might have been useful to them – suggesting that this was partly because they didn't ask, and partly because it was wrongly assumed that they were already strong in that area. It may be important to recognise that organisations are not always fully aware of their needs; and as such some form of assessment tool could have been used for regular assessment to allow tracking of the strengths and needs of individual organisation and provide opportunities to identify emerging needs and facilitate requests for support.

It is equally the case that organisational assessments are often sensitive, and can sometimes undermine the development of trust, particularly if they are introduced early on in a program before relationships have had time to develop. Given the intensity of support and attention given by the team to each organisation such an assessment may not have told them much that they did not already know. But, caveats aside, it is difficult not to conclude that some form of organisational capacity assessment may have been useful, and as with an exercise on organisational self-assessment conducted at the 7th partner meeting, it is clear that the CIDI team were more than capable of finding creative and non-threatening ways of carrying out such an assessment.

Consolidation of training

Another area where the CIDI may have benefitted from a more systematic approach was with the follow-up and consolidation of training and support. While the emphasis on practical application of skills learned and the one to one support of partners facilitated engagement over time and sense of cumulative capacity development with individual partners, in some areas of capacity it may have been useful to return them repeatedly to consolidate learning and identify further areas of training needed. Returning to previous trainings to encourage reflection on what had been learned and what still needed further improvement was something that the CIDI encouraged as a structured part of partner meetings. And this may have had increasing effect if

the CIDI program were sustained over a longer term. But in some cases there perhaps was a need for more sustained input over time

An example of this is in the area of monitoring and evaluation. In this case a number of exercises introduced tools, such as Most Significant Change stories in what amounted to ‘taster’ sessions, rather than providing a thorough and systematic training in the approach. CIDI played a catalytic role in this instance and introduced methods to partners so that they could decide for themselves if they wanted to develop them further rather than be prescriptive about any one M&E approach. Training in M&E was framed using a ‘monitoring and evaluation continuum’ which illustrated the spectrum of approaches from those designed and carried out by external evaluators to participatory self-assessment, so that CIDI partners could themselves critically appraise evaluation approaches. This was welcomed by some partners, as in the example of Aide Et Action AeA, who had adapted and developed evaluation methods they had been introduced to by CIDI across all of their future projects and stressed the value of CIDI M&E training for their work. But in other cases it seemed that some of the approaches introduced had been adopted in an unsystematic way and in ways that betrayed an incomplete understanding of the method and its appropriate use.

One informant suggested that the CIDI team had attempted to support too many organisations and spread themselves too thinly, asking how it was possible that they could sustain quality across that many partners with such a small team. The meaningful engagement with individual partners and sustained interaction and investment of time from the CIDI team to many partners however, would appear to contradict this picture.

In the box below we explore the example of the ‘P2P’ peer evaluations conducted by 20 CIDI partners, as an illustrative examples of the range of issues at stake, and the balance CIDI appeared to strike between introducing new ideas, supporting partners to ‘learn by doing’, and to strengthen partners capacity over time.

Partner to partner evaluation process ‘P2P’

The partner-to-partner peer evaluation process initiated at the 6th CIDI partner forum was an opportunity for partners to develop their own experience of evaluation, as well as to improve their knowledge of particular partners and their activities. As with many of the exercises CIDI has facilitated, the process combined a learning by doing element - in this case learning from planning and conducting an evaluation – and a focus on content relevant to the partners conducting the evaluation – in this case aspects of disability inclusion work that the partner conducting the evaluation hoped to learn more about. In the latter case, this complemented a habit that was developed within the CIDI forum and networking process, of reviewing and reflecting on concrete partner experiences as a way of analysing practice and drawing out elements of good practice which could be adapted to their own work.

The CIDI evaluation team had some initial discussions and developed a set of core questions for the partner-to-partner evaluations, which were introduced to partners as a set of questions and concerns they could draw on or adapt in their own evaluation. It was made clear that they should develop their own evaluation approach, and innovation and creativity was encouraged.

In fact the evaluation questions developed by the CIDI team as a guide reflected the focus of the overall evaluation on CIDI's effectiveness and impact as a facilitating vehicle – with questions around the value of particular aspects of CIDI support. The CIDI partners however, were more focused on understanding the specific project activities of the partners they were visiting and evaluating, something that was made quite explicit in the preparation for the process – and the specific matching of partners to evaluate each other around common areas of interest or concern in their disability programming. Some also made their learning objectives clear in the partner-to-partner evaluations – such things as learning about the effective management of self-help

groups, registration of federations of disabled people, or how to develop effective support groups for parents of children with disability or children's clubs.

As a contribution to the overall evaluation then, the specific content of the evaluation reports was more focused on project activities and outcomes, and less on the intermediary outcomes and influencing strategies that are the focus of the CIDI evaluation overall. The process however, did highlight some important things about the developing capacity for monitoring and evaluation of the CIDI partners, some information on the value of CIDI support (where partners did include the evaluation questions suggested by the CIDI evaluation team), and a range of interesting insights and details for the evaluation overall, not least some feedback from beneficiary people with disabilities, which none of the overarching evaluation activities had thus far tapped into.

Evaluation capacity

Given the short time frame for the partner-to-partner evaluations and the varying capacity of CIDI partners in evaluation, the reports produced demonstrated an impressive commitment to the evaluation process, and investment of staff time. Many of the reports demonstrate a genuine sense of inquiry and drive to learn lessons from the partners work and provide an objective outside opinion, combined with respect and engagement with the work of the partner organisation being evaluated. In a number of examples the findings and recommendations raised challenging questions about the effectiveness of the partners activities, while providing insights into some of the power dynamics within savings groups for example, and practical suggestions to address the issues raised. Such challenges were delivered in the context of evaluations that were supportive and respectful overall. For some partners such learning may be all the more powerful coming from a partner (whilst it can be argued that for others, it is easier to ignore since not coming from a donor).

A range of different evaluation methods were used, including questionnaires and review of secondary data and project reports and documentation. In the majority of P2P processes several staff members were involved in key informant interviews, focus groups discussions and field visits to partner projects. The different approach of partners also reflected different levels of capacity and understanding of evaluation. In some cases data was gathered and presented without there being a clear link to any analysis or the questions the evaluation sought to answer, while in others, issues of sampling and representativeness were raised and not really addressed. In a small proportion of the evaluation reports, the suggested CIDI questions were included, even though they seemed at odds with the general direction of the evaluation as conducted by the partner, perhaps illustrating a lack of understanding of the process, or some sense of obligation to address these questions. In other cases the MSC process was partially applied in a way that suggested it was not fully understood.

What is clear however is the commitment to evaluation and interest in learning from objective assessment. The partner to partner evaluation process was clearly a very rich one for those involved, with many commenting on how much they had learned about evaluation, and many reflections on the inadequacies of their own evaluation process, questionnaire design and choice of informants. The importance placed on the exchange, the way it built relationships with other partners and helped them gain concrete knowledge of disability activities is something that is not clearly captured in many of the reports. Interviews with some of the organisations revealed how much they got from the process, although review of the reports, shows that this was not always clearly documented.

This rich practical learning holds the potential for strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacity of partners over time – practical experience and reflection on it is a proven effective learning process, compared to learning that is more abstract. The readiness to get involved in evaluation despite only partial knowledge and experience is in contrast to the more common problem of people not conducting evaluation for the fear of not doing it correctly, something which still seems to plague the field of international development where evaluation can be shrouded in a technical mystique. That said, to consolidate learning on evaluation would need a more focused and concerted follow up and reflection on the process with CIDI staff and the

capacity development officer to identify misunderstandings and misapplications of evaluation logic and tools, of which there were quite a few.

One other challenge for capacity building raised in the DIAF review was that of 'person dependent organisations' whose overreliance on key individuals threatened the delivery and continuity of projects if these individuals were not present. The evaluation did not explore this issue in depth, but data from the questionnaire and key informant interviews did show that CIDI capacity development tended to benefit several members of organisations and across a range of different skills, so it had consciously tried to build organisational rather than individual capacity, and it was at least not exacerbating this issue.

Review of CIDI support to capacity development

Effectiveness: the relevance of the training and support offered by CIDI and the practical use to which it was put in a substantial proportion of the partner organisations suggests that **CIDI support was very effective in building organisational capacity**. The action-learning orientation of the training with its focus on practical application in organisations own context also used proven participatory and active learning principles. The improvement of financial systems and adoption of explicit policies and procedures would appear to suggest that organisations were paying more systematic attention to key areas of functioning.

CIDI support also appears to have been cost effective¹² in providing a wide range of support to a large number of partners delivered by a small team (and while acknowledging the caveats about impact below). By involving all of the team in providing different elements of capacity support, tailored to the needs of specific organisations, the CIDI program seems to have maximised the support available. Partners meetings combined aspects of networking and training to make the most of bringing people together and training made good use of existing skills among partners. The CIDI forum was also an economical way of supporting communication among a large group of partner organisations. A perhaps unanticipated effect of this involvement of the team rather than only relying on external expertise also created a strong sense of mutual commitment between partner organisations and the CIDI team and a supportive atmosphere and trust, which appeared to have promoted an honest and pragmatic attitude to the needs for strengthened capacity and may have increased the relevance and effectiveness of the support given. The importance of trust was noted above as key to supporting strengthened relationships but it is also recognised as a significant foundation for capacity development and learning within the context of development partnerships, and specifically those that links Northern and Southern NGOs and CSOs (Intrac 2004, Vincent and Byrne 2006).

Impact: The majority of 19 Partners who responded to a questionnaire on CIDI support felt that their organisational capacity had improved, that they were better able to be flexible and respond to emerging challenges and were more able to be honest about their weaknesses and reflect on them for improvement of their work, giving all these elements high positive scores. Without an independent assessment of organisational capacity before and after the CIDI program it is difficult to say definitively how much this support was able to impact on organisational effectiveness. Both CIDI partners and the CIDI team suggested that the financial and reporting capacity of partners was much improved. It was also noted that in the case of some small organisations, they had really taken great strides and improved in both capacity and confidence, and the considerable improvements witnessed in a number of organisations over the duration of their support, was a source of great satisfaction and pride for the CIDI team. At the 7th CIDI partner meeting attended by 32 of the CIDI partners an exercise on organisational self-assessment sought to identify where CIDI had helped organisations improve in areas such as learning and development, internal processes, strategy, governance and management, style and culture. This exercise identified many of the aspects of support outlined above as having contributed to improvements over the life of the program, providing a measure of validation of what were key valued mechanisms of support. Although as noted, this does not provide us with an independent assessment of the impact of the support. A number of CIDI partners did conduct baseline assessments of organisations they were working with, in particular a number of DPOs and assessed the capacity of self-help groups to determine the needs to be addressed in their projects, but this was not something that the CIDI partner organisations did themselves.

One area where CIDI capacity development appears to have had a **significant impact is in the area of advocacy**. The Communicating for Advocacy training CFA provided by CIDI was mentioned as valuable by many of the partners had helped many to better engage with a range of local stakeholders in their work. This had led to more effective consultation with local communities, teachers, parents and people with disabilities around projects and services. It has also led to **better collaboration with local authorities and commune councils** in some cases,

¹² The AusAID evaluation of CIDI also highlighted its cost-effectiveness, see Bailey and Vanna (2013)

with 10 out of 19 organisations consulted reporting more effective working with local authorities and 6 of them securing explicit attention to disability within the commune investment plans. In another example the Khmer Youth Association KYA had been able to use CFA to support a group of young women peer advocates to organise shadow reporting on the NPA-PWD and monitoring of its implementation. It is worth noting that this case the organisation had had some previous experience of training in CFA through the CIDI Program Coordinator in a previous role before his employment by ARC, so it is not clear how much the CIDI sponsored training had been the sole impetus behind this initiative. But the advocacy training had clearly made an important contribution to the ability of organisations to make more strategic engagement with stakeholders in their own contexts¹³.

Sustainability: there are a number of concrete examples outlined above of where training has been put into policies or into practice and where core organisational functions appear to have been strengthened outlined above. The commitment to self reflection and improvement which the CIDI process appears to have engendered in some partners, suggests there has also been a broader 'general capacity' development for some, which as noted above tends to bring with it a greater general capacity for learning, responsiveness and resilience in the face of changes in context. Both types of capacity are important, for organisations to function effectively, but also to adapt to changing circumstances and innovate. In this way, **CIDI has contributed to the sustainability of many of the organisations it has worked with**. It is also clear however, that organisational capacity is something that needs consistent support over the long term, and in certain areas such as monitoring and evaluation there is a need to continuously build and refine over time. Even if the levels of capacity increase, and the type of capacity in need of strengthening may change over time, capacity development demands a commitment of resources over the long term. CIDI appears to have made significant progress in its relatively short duration, but the kind of support it has given is something that needs to be sustained if some of the improvements in capacity it has supported are to be consolidated.

¹³ It is also worth noting that HI-B has made greater collaboration with local authorities a focus of their work for some years, although this doesn't undermine the conclusion that CIDI CFA training had supported some partners to do make such connections themselves.

ROUTES TO DISABILITY INCLUSION

While the evaluation overall did not focus on the impact of the project on the beneficiary outcome level, given the complementary AusAID evaluation and review of DIAF projects undertaken for ARC¹⁴, it did seek to explore how the influencing strategies employed by the CIDI affected understandings and approaches to disability inclusion. We turn to examples of this below.

Mainstreaming disability

A number of the mainstream organisations had included disability in new strategic plans after their engagement with CIDI, something that may not be surprising given that CIDI support was provided to help them mainstream disability in their work. But for the 5 out of 7 mainstream organisations interviewed, who demonstrated this policy commitment meant that the focus on disability was likely to outlive the duration of CIDI funding and represents a contribution to sustainability. Many of the mainstream partners also reported a greater confidence in working with people with disabilities and integrating a disability focus within their current work. In the case of three of the partners, it also meant integrating disability across all of their current projects. The success with mainstreaming disability was considered to be one of the most significant unexpected achievements of the CIDI for the AusAID informant consulted.

A number of organisations had employed more disabled staff as a result of their involvement in CIDI. A more systematic assessment of this was unfortunately foiled by the misunderstanding of the relevant item on a questionnaire sent to CIDI partners, but a handful of cases organisations had clearly employed PWD after involvement in the program. Some of these partners talked of the positive example and inspiration provided by the presence of staff with disabilities in their organisations. The skills of these staff went some way towards challenging stereotypes about PWD not being able to contribute, and in this way employing staff with disabilities was both consistent with a rights based and non-discriminatory approach but also an example of advocacy in the effect it had on staff and community attitudes.

Employment of PWD and barriers and challenges to this was also the subject of one of the short term DIAF Research grants that looked specifically at employment of people with intellectual disabilities. This was just one area where the program had sought to generate a more firm evidence base around disability in Cambodia. More broadly the new research generated in a number of areas had the potential to inform the work of the CIDI partners by providing greater understanding of a number of aspects disability inclusion programming. In the case of the research project conducted on perceptions of intellectual disability within employers, the study had also created a practical engagement with employers and resulted in four AeA volunteers being taken on as staff after the project.

Other impacts on the work of CIDI partners included a number of disability mainstreaming organisations improving accessibility of their own offices as well as buildings linked to project activities and a greater number of organisations disaggregating data on disability in their work.

Improving collaboration

¹⁴ The review of DIAF project reports highlighted a range of different aspects of CIDI partner work on disability inclusion, developed through activities targeted at the individual, organisational and community levels. For individuals CIDI partners reported improved access to education, health services, psychological support, water and sanitation and hygiene, vocational education and livelihood training. At the organisational level CIDI had built the capacity of self-help groups and DPOs, facilitated networks and partnerships between CIDI partner organisation and supported mainstreaming of disability into other sectors. CIDI had also improved prevention activities at the community level around the explosive remnants of war and landmines, and road traffic crashes. It had raised awareness around disability and advocated for the rights of PWD, reduced discrimination in communities and put disability issues on the agenda of commune councils. The DIAF review noted challenges with gauging the extent of project impacts on disability inclusion, given the acknowledged bias of self-reporting and given only a few of the partners conducting independent evaluations. The Enable team also noted in their research study that without a more systematic research into the perceptions and experiences of project beneficiaries, it is difficult to assess the true extent of change and its likely sustainability.

We have already noted how the CIDI partners meetings and platforms had created a collaborative, open and friendly atmosphere and a number of mainstream partners commented on how they felt very welcomed and easily accepted by the disability specific organisations and DPOs involved in the program. This accepting atmosphere made organisations feel able to admit a lack of knowledge and approach partner organisations for advice and support. It had also created a space where organisations could readily learn from one another. One key informant from a mainstream organisation noted that the CIDI had a seriousness, commitment and drive around disability issues and yet there was no 'possessiveness' of the disability issue, and organisations were welcomed whatever their level of experience.

The Enable research reported that DPOs were less forthcoming about what they got from their exchange with mainstreaming organisations. Interviews by the CIDI evaluation team with DPOs suggested that they, in common with other partners, valued improvements in their own organisational capacity and learning from the activities and projects of other partners. Where the relationship with mainstream organisations was mentioned specifically it was to acknowledge the practical links made and the greater involvement of PWD in the work of mainstream organisations, but in a number of interviews where the evaluator attempted to probe further, informants would not be drawn on this and it is not something that the evaluation explored in any detail.

Deeper understandings of disability

Several organisations noted how their engagement with CIDI has shifted their perceptions of disability as an issue that is one of realising rights for PWD rather than providing charity. The emphasis on rights for PWD was something that appears to have been strengthened across the majority of the CIDI partners who were interviewed. A number of CIDI DPO partners had provided disability awareness or mainstreaming training to mainstreaming organisations, but DPOs themselves also reported being more aware of legal and policy frameworks and better equipped to advocate around the rights of PWD in communities as a result. The organisational slogan of DPO AAD – “We don’t beg, we want to work” illustrates the shift for some of their members in their case from begging in tourist locations, to organising for income generation and livelihoods in their subsequent project work.

In some cases the advocacy training, by introducing partners to more systematic approaches to consulting stakeholders and needs assessment, had also encouraged partners – both mainstream and disability specific organisations - to more deliberately consult and assess the needs of people with disability. CIDI partners gave a number of examples of where PWD were more effectively consulted or included in the design of services or projects.

In a couple of cases CIDI partners suggested that they involved PWD throughout the stages of identification of need, design, implementation and evaluation of project after CIDI, displaying a commitment in practice to fully realise disability inclusion, but these were the minority. CIDI partners demonstrated a range of degrees of disability inclusive practice, but the examples outlined above do show a significant shift in the direction of more consistent disability inclusive practice over time, and a trajectory of moving from greater awareness to addressing barriers to encouraging meaningful participation and pursuing equal rights for PWD.

A number of people interviewed also suggested that CIDI had changed their perception of disability to include a wider range of impairments and issues than they had understood previously. Intellectual disability was identified as an area that was neglected in CIDI projects in the review of DIAF funded initiatives. This was an area that appeared to be of growing interest for some of the partners however, as in the example of the CIDI research mentioned above. Although only a small number of CIDI partners work included some specific focus on intellectual impairments, it appeared that they had increasing recognition from other partners of this specific area of expertise.

Disability inclusion and the crc

The CIDI supported its sister organisations the CRC to enhance disability inclusion within project work and in the attitudes and motivation and engagement with disability inclusion among key senior staff. Senior staff from the CRC's CBMAP, CBHD and Road Safety projects in interviews highlighted how involvement of PWD and their sense of 'ownership' of initiatives was greater after support from CIDI. In the case of the Road Safety initiative, involvement of young people with Disability had increased dramatically to involve over 100 young people with disabilities by 2011 after support from CIDI had helped them identify opportunities and approaches to draw young PWD into the Youth Road Safety clubs that were an existing part of the project. Staff also felt the profile of the CRC with other civil society organisations outside of the humanitarian sector had also been significantly raised by the program.

The ARC through its work in the CIDI has been labeled a 'model partner' by the head of the CRC. This was because the CIDI worked closely with the CRC and maintained good communication and collaboration with CRC staff, rather than work more autonomously without consultation in the provinces. Staff from the CIDI supported the CRC with facilitation support and advisory input around workshops, and in one instance supported the 3 different CRC projects to come together to reflect and share some of their own learning. CRC staff also valued the CIDI partners meetings for introducing them to new ideas and methods, as well as a broad range of civil society organisations. Senior ARC staff also suggested that CIDI had had a real impact on the perceptions and assumptions about the capabilities of PWD within the CRC, recognising this has also been the case in the ARC.

Tackling Gender and Culture

Evaluation interviews sought to explore how differences between women and girls and men and boys were understood and addressed by CIDI partners¹⁵. They also sought to explore how cultural attitudes to disability rooted in Buddhist notions of Karma were addressed. Both were challenges identified in the DIAF review of projects.

Women and girls with disability face greater discrimination and barriers to access to services and in participation in social life (AusAID 2013). CIDI sought to expand its focus on gender primarily by funding activities targeted at WWD with a strong focus on rights education and developing support structures for women including self-help groups and counselling and psychological support. This explicit focus on women in project grants helped to raise the profile of the challenges faced by WWD within CIDI and the DIAF review mentions a range of areas where women's capacity, confidence and leadership skills were improved. Women and girls were still underrepresented in partner reporting overall, even if this had changed over the duration of the program.

A majority of those consulted suggested that women were subject to greater discrimination than men, and that girls tended to be more isolated in the home and have fewer options for social and livelihood opportunities than boys. Informants suggested that men with disability may have had a greater chance of marriage than women, particularly where their disability was a result of war, where there was thus sometimes an element of 'rewarding a war hero' and self-sacrifice of women in marriage. Women with disability however were virtually excluded from marriage, and therefore from a social position and support in later life.

A number of CIDI partners suggested that the program had helped them to address gender differences. DDSP were one example of an organisation that had recognised women's greater challenges around lack of confidence and social isolation, which they had been able to address with targeted provision of counselling and psychosocial support. Others felt that the specific grants for WWD had put women more 'on the map' for CIDI partners. One example of the way that CIDI partners had increased their attention to gender was in the disaggregation of statistics. In the P2P peer evaluation process, it was notable that out of 20 P2P reports 12 of the 16 that presented data on membership of self-help groups, attendance at trainings, or attendance at

¹⁵ Interviews tended to avoid using the word gender unless it was a term that the partner used themselves, but tried to get at examples of practical differences and responses to these

village meetings disaggregated these data by gender. One other way that CIDI had addressed gender was, as noted above, was with the participatory methods used in CIDI partner meetings – several informants suggesting that they had created an enabling environment for women involved in CIDI projects to participate and make a greater contribution in meetings.

Discussions with the CIDI team suggested that they felt CIDI had made small practical steps to begin to address gender in the program, but that it was an issue that would need consistent attention within an engagement of the Cambodian cultural context. The cultural institution of *ChbabSrei* which it was suggested had a moral force that was stronger than most formal legislation among many Cambodians, exhorted women to follow a number of rules and details of feminine conduct which included obedience and loyalty to men (complemented by a notably smaller number of prescriptions for men around limits to gambling, alcohol and infidelity). This institution was not always recognised in gender programming, the team suggested, but underlined the need for long-term efforts as part of a real engagement with people's everyday realities, in development programming.

Addressing culture

If we turn to another aspect of culture, a number of informants noted that they had encountered Buddhist informed cultural beliefs around Karma linking disability with bad conduct in a previous life in community perceptions of disability. Some suggested that this was much more of an issue in rural areas, and some suggested that it was an issue that was becoming less important. Several partners working in rural areas noted that although this belief was present, it was also linked to perceptions of disabled people as not being able to make a productive contribution or make an income. Where projects were able to help disabled people gain employment or skills, or in the case of CWD where they could help around the house and show progress in educational activities, the cultural beliefs lost their hold over parents and communities. Some partners involved in projects that promoted sport and artistic practice (and broadcast media to an extent) among PWD felt they were making inroads into perceptions of PWD by directing people's attention more to the abilities of PWD in the present, rather than their disabilities, and shifting the balance away from cultural beliefs around Karma. The reductions in discrimination against PWD at community level reported by a number of partners were also often linked to their strengthened livelihood options, employment and leadership roles which tends to support the suggestion of a shifting of balance between more deep-seated cultural beliefs a recognition of current capabilities.

Management approach in the CIDI and ARC

A number of aspects of the management approach and style within ARC and CIDI are notable for their impact on the ability of the CIDI program to pursue its focus on influencing strategies. The CIDI team, from the perspective of partner organisations as we have already seen, was characterised as very open, flexible and 'friendly' and supportive and it is interesting to consider how the management of the CIDI contributed to these valued characteristics.

Learning within the CIDI team

Within the CIDI team a number of practices fostered a learning environment and feelings of mutual commitment as a team. CIDI staff commented in interviews that they had an open atmosphere of communication in the office, that they didn't leave everything to emails, and would often shout across the office. Over time the team had developed a strong team spirit and a willingness to look at the priorities of the whole team for accomplishing particular outputs, rather than internal tasks that any particular staff member was responsible for. The team worked flexibly and sometimes worked outside normal work hours and at weekends when preparation for key events was needed. Such time would usually be recognised with an offer of compensatory time off, even if workload meant that this was not often taken.

The involvement of all the team in capacity building and support of partners had contributed to a sense of responsibility and recognition of the partners over time, although this took some time to establish, and the style of interaction of some team members needed to be 'worked at' to achieve a consistent partner support orientation over time. In addition to regular one to one

meetings with staff the CIDI co-ordinator initiated a 'learning zone' space where relevant issues or documents would be reviewed and discussed by the team. In busy periods, the team found alternative ways of keeping updated through team lunches and brief 'stand up' meetings. Contribution of different team members was recognised openly and reflected where appropriate in job descriptions and remuneration). One illustration of this was the way Mr Hem, the CIDI team driver, was able to contribute his own impressions and insights when attending CIDI partner M and E visits, and this input was acknowledged within his work. The wider range of involvement of the CIDI staff meant that they performed the core skills of their respective positions, but also worked together as a team and sometimes outside their initial roles in taking on increasing work around capacity building of partners

Funding uncertainties

One challenge in the management of the program was funding uncertainty and changes in the expected duration of the program. The CIDI was already an extension of a previous program when it began an expected 2 years in July 2010. The program was then extended in 2011 as one year grants were made available, and then AusAID approved a further 6 month extension. This meant that some grants were funded for a year and then extended for six months, some were for two years, and another round of grants for 6 months only. The short duration of some grants, and the changing configuration of support over the program was tantamount to 'development bad practice' by the admission of the CIDI program coordinator. It meant that for some small organisations they spent significant amount of time adjusting to changes or pursuing alternative funding.

An unintended positive result of these constraints in the case of the 6-month grants, is that the CIDI team had been forced to think differently about the kinds of project that could be delivered in such a short time frame, and this resulted in the grants for sports, arts and research. These grants were all perceived to have brought something different to the CIDI partners network. In the case of the grants for sports and arts, these allowed support for events and activities that made a distinctive contribution to changing public perception of PWD and for building the confidence of PWD themselves. In the case of the research grants, these allowed more systematic documentation of some of the areas of work being developed by partners and generated new evidence and situation analysis on disability that was lacking in the Cambodian context. With the different grants also came a different mix of partners, and this was seen to usefully bring different experiences and perspectives into circulation among the CIDI partners, even while it had not been the original intention to work with so many partners. This approach to the shifting mix of grants that CIDI was able to make available is also perhaps another example of the pragmatic and creative orientation of the CIDI program.

A people centred program

The CIDI design documents emphasised the importance of learning from the previous experience of the project in its incarnation as LSAP and attributed the shift to focus on capacity development and networking among disability stakeholders in the new program to lessons from a mid term review and evaluations of the LSAP. There was also a stress on 'people centred program logic', which emphasised the importance of looking at influence of CIDI on the stakeholders it came into contact with. The emphasis was an attempt to get away from what were perceived as the constraints of the use of logical framework analysis that is predominant within the Red Cross movement and contributed to the focus on brokering relationships among Cambodian disability stakeholders in the CIDI. Interviews with senior ARC staff and an AusAid advisor presented a different picture of a necessarily more hurried redesign which pragmatically reflected the priorities emphasised in AusAid's new 'Development for All' strategy. Senior ARC staff were also open about there not being a well-developed emphasis on organisational learning with the ARC more generally.

Interestingly, although the people centred program logic draws on network perspectives to focus on changes in relationships among stakeholders. And although this is seen as a more useful way of conceptualising program pathways to impact than the more abstract outcomes of traditional logic planning, this was not really fully reflected in a clear set of tangible expected

changes in the evaluation framework for the program. In addition, it appears that the CIDI team pursued their particular approach to the support of networking and relationship building in the program independently of the people centred logic in the program design. There may have been an alignment of the practical approaches used by CIDI staff and the program as it was articulated on paper in intentional design – and in reviews of the program, it was noted that the activities did fit with the general emphasis in the design documents. But it was the practical experience of facilitation of networking and working in partnership, on the part of the CIDI Coordinator and Support Coordinator that guided program strategy in practice.

Interviews also made it clear that the management from the ARC in Australia were open and receptive to the skills and approaches that were developed by the CIDI team, and also happy to see the program develop in novel and unexpected directions. CIDI was unusual for a Red Cross initiative in the extent to which it work with civil society actors and with partners outside of the movement itself. The ability of the senior managers not to ‘micromanage’ the CIDI project but to support the CIDI staff as the direction of the program developed, rather than be constrained by the program design and the more common Red Cross mandate, played an important role in allowing some of the innovative approaches within the CIDI to flourish. This receptiveness of senior managers also led to a recognition of the importance of CIDI as a source of learning and emerging good practice for disability inclusion within the ARC and wider Red Cross movement. This in turn has given some impetus to a growing interest and focus on disability within the ARC and moves by several national Red Cross societies in the region to advocate for disability to be recognised as a core concern for the Red Cross Movement.

KEY LEARNING FROM THE CIDI

In this section we review some of the key learning from the CIDI and indicate where further detail and examples can be found in the body of the report. The evaluation sought to get a clearer picture of how CIDI support mechanisms and 'influencing strategies' worked to strengthen relationships and capacity development of CIDI partner organisations. The summary below highlights key elements of the way the program brought about change – its theory of change – in these two principle areas, as is illuminated by the findings of the evaluation. The implications for future programing are then briefly considered.

Brokering relationships and coordination

- A combination of platforms for sharing information and knowledge among CIDI partners – including face-to-face and on-line forums mutually reinforced each other to build communication and relationships among CIDI partners. (pages 14-18,27)
- Horizontal connections between partners were encouraged through face to face meetings, sponsoring of 'exchange' visits, joint working in projects and provision of advisory input and training between CIDI partners. (14-18, 19)
- Layering of multiple partner facilitation mechanisms meant that partners had multiple opportunities for exchange, increasing both the range of opportunities for relationship building and the intensity of contact among partners (14-24, 29)
- Quality and intensity of interactions facilitated the establishment of trust among CIDI partners provided a foundation for more substantive relationships, joint working and mutual learning among a core of CIDI partner organisations. (14-18, 19-24)
- Consistent use of participatory process supported acknowledgment and valuing of diverse partner experience and created an open, collaborative and supportive atmosphere among CIDI partners (in contrast to the more common competitive relationships among NGOs in Cambodia) and facilitated the development of trust. (24-26, 34)
- Space was deliberately created in meetings to share and reflect on the experience of partner organisations and led to transfer of learning, adaptation of innovations in partner work and a 'learning environment' among partners. (17-18, 24-25)
- The CIDI team led by example with commitment, motivation and creativity, and this was reinforced by participatory processes which were creative, fun and made use of a variety of forms of sense-making (23-25)
- Detailed knowledge and long-standing engagement in the disability sector of the CIDI Support Coordinator was an important source of knowledge about partner organisations, which helped facilitate relationships and refer organisations to each other and brought legitimacy to the program. (19, 26, 29-31)

Building Institutional capacity

- Training in core areas of organisational functioning and technical areas of disability inclusion programing responded to the identified needs of partners and increased its perceived relevance and uptake. (pages 29-30, 36-38)

- Training was delivered using participatory and practice oriented approaches so that it could be applied to the immediate needs of organisations to embed the learning. (29, 34-36)
- Specific training was complemented by on-going capacity development support, tailored to individual organisations, provided by members of the CIDI team through engagement and mentoring over time. (29-30)
- CIDI sponsored training was provided by CIDI partner organisations where appropriate and complemented by organisations providing advisory input and training on a paid basis for other partners. This reinforced relationships and respect among partners and made efficient use of partner skills. (18, 30)
- Regular monitoring and evaluation visits from the CIDI team provided constructive 'friendly' and structured feedback and recommendations to partners which was greatly valued and led to improvements to project work and strengthened capacities for reflection and learning among partners. (30)
- The layering of a number of mechanisms for training, practice and reflection increased both the range of opportunities for capacity strengthening and the intensity of inputs for each partner, reinforcing learning and consolidating capacity improvements. (29-30, 36-38)
- The involvement of all of the CIDI staff in providing different aspects of capacity development and engagement with partners enabled them to support partners in a wide range of areas and built a solid knowledge of partner strengths and needs. (29, 39)
- Close involvement of CIDI staff with partners and flexible and respectful interactions led to the development of trust, and increasing partner openness about support needs and responsibility for change. (30, 38)

Ways of working

A number of broader characteristic 'ways of working' of the CIDI team appear to have contributed to the success of strategies for relationship and capacity building.

- The CIDI team were flexible with partners around project time-lines affected by external circumstances, reporting formats and deadlines, and readily engaged in dialogue to help partners find appropriate solutions, which also served to build respect and trust. (pages 29-30)
- The CIDI team were perceived to have a pragmatic orientation focused on 'helping organisations to improve their own outcomes', and being ready to build on partner insights rather than privileging their own perceptions in project work. (29-30)
- CIDI budgets had built in room for flexibility so that core activities could be complemented by the ability to respond to emerging ideas and opportunities. (14-15)
- CIDI support mechanisms often combined elements of relationship building and capacity strengthening producing the layered and reinforcement effects noted above. (30)
- ARC senior management were receptive to and encouraged innovations of the CIDI team and supported their attempts to be flexible with partners. (40-41)
- The creativity, humour and motivational style of the CIDI Program Coordinator was important for creating the distinctive open and supportive atmosphere within CIDI, and

reinforced the effectiveness of participatory learning and communication approaches. (24-26)

Challenges

A number of challenges encountered by the CIDI program were identified in the evaluation that would benefit from further attention in any similar initiative in future

- Working in Khmer and English simultaneously may demand resources for translation of documents and workshop materials and greater use of experienced facilitators used to working in both languages. (pages 25-26)
- Tools that allow for baseline and regular subsequent assessment of capacity of partner organisations would support cumulative improvement and systematic identification of areas for further attention. (30-31)
- Both relationship strengthening and capacity development require consistent attention over time, which is best delivered with consistent funding over a clear time frame, with core areas of capacity being addressed repeatedly over a number of years. (27-28, 31-33, 35)

Program model and approach

The key learning outlined above highlights a number of areas worthy of attention in design and implementation of similar programs in future. In line with the Realist orientation of the evaluation, the relevant mechanisms in key areas that have worked well or not so well have been specified as far as possible in the present evaluation, so that they can be taken into account in comparable interventions in different contexts.

The CIDI benefited from a commitment to put energy and resources into building relationships and capacity in its program design, and flexibility when putting this into practice. We return to the question of intentional design below, but **flexibility in implementation appears to be an important aspect of the program's success**. The CIDI used a range of overlapping mechanisms for relationships brokering, and did the same for its capacity strengthening and training. In both cases, there were a number of reinforcing processes that enabled partners to make progress through different combinations of support in each case. Providing this range of support mechanisms, but also flexibility in their combination, appears to be a useful strategy for addressing the diversity of partner circumstances, strengths and weaknesses. Given the likely range of partners in any such similar program, such an approach would seem to be of general relevance. **Flexibility was also important in budgeting** terms, where a number of lines, such as those for evaluation and learning were clearly in place, but allowed room for the detail of the related activities to be worked out in practice and in response to changing needs. In both cases this suggests that programme design should balance identifying key areas of support with some flexibility in implementation.

Still another aspect of flexibility may be the need for it to stretch consistently across the layers of program management. In the CIDI case, there was flexibility around the negotiations of implementation **between CIDI staff and partners, but also between CIDI staff and ARC managers**. In the case of a program that emphasises changes in relationships and learning for improvement, it may be important to 'model' this flexibility and responsiveness consistently at a number of management levels. This is something that has been noted by evaluators who are influenced by complex systems approaches and complexity science and who focus on encouraging innovation and adaptive programming (see Stacey 2001, Patton 2011).

The **layering and combination of different approaches** noted above is also important in its own right. The CIDI used a range of mechanisms for relationship strengthening and for capacity development, but it also managed to combine both at times, so that ways of building capacity also enhanced networking and vice versa. In a similar fashion, participation in program activities was approached generally as an opportunity to build confidence and skills and promote learning,

and seems to have cultivated this attitude in many partners. In practice, this layering of approaches may be as much art as design, but it highlights the value of attending to the way aspects of a program can be mutually reinforcing, and leave room for responsiveness to such opportunities in program planning, in keeping with the flexible approach outlined above.

The **importance of robust participatory process** is also highlighted by the evaluation. The focus on people and relationships and ‘influencing’ strategies was vitally complemented in the CIDI case by participatory approaches. Important elements of participatory process, such as the emphasis on valuing diverse experiences and perspectives, engaging with people’s existing skills and experience, and taking an action-learning practice-based orientation all worked to make the focus on relationships and capacity effective. In this sense, the **‘People Centred Program Logic’ of the intentional design is perhaps incomplete if it does not include this participatory emphasis.**

Linked to this observation is the important role of **respectful engagement and the development of trust in working relationships with partners.** In part, this was achieved in the CIDI through recognised aspects of participatory approach, but as much work on participation testifies, ‘technique’ is rarely enough on its own. It needs to be accompanied by a genuinely open and respectful facilitation style. This was clearly in evidence in the CIDI. It is important to recognise then, that a purely ‘technical’ emphasis on identifying key stakeholders and specific technical inputs to improve their capacity may not be effective if it is not complemented by responsive and respectful engagement on the part of staff implementing and managing the program. The trust developed between CIDI staff and partners was an important enabling factor that supported the frank and constructive feedback that drove improvement, and meant that many partners took ownership and responsibility for their own learning.

Also noteworthy is the **importance of staff with a long-standing engagement with the development issue** that a program seeks to address, who know the local context, and to an extent are known for their commitment to the issue. Some experienced development commentators highlight the importance of working with ‘local champions’ who understand local circumstances through long-standing engagement with an issue (Ramirez and Quarry 2009). In the CIDI case, the Program Support Coordinator brought important legitimacy and commitment to the issues at the heart of the program. Similar programs in other contexts might do well to identify staff with such long-term engagement and ensure there is room to build on their knowledge and experience in the unfolding of the program.

In both the areas of brokering relationships and capacity development it is clear that **interventions to strengthen them benefit from long term sustained investment, and clarity about this** for participants. In the CIDI case, a pragmatic approach from staff and partners helped navigate an uncertain program time-line, but more certainty in planning and the ability for consistent work over the longer term would likely have seen greater cumulative benefits.

Use of ‘People Centred Program Logic’

The evaluation has identified a variety of ways in which a focus on ‘influencing’ key actors in the disability sector has been constructive. The program design documents emphasised strengthening relationships between disability sector stakeholders and building their institutional capacity, even if the theory of change in each case was general and unspecified. The CIDI has been able to show significant progress in both areas in practice, and a number of mechanisms and routes towards positive change are outlined in the evaluation.

The overarching emphasis of the CIDI program design on working through these two main ‘influencing strategies’ towards intermediary outcomes seems to have been valuable for the way it provided legitimacy for the focus on relationships and capacity in the program, aspects of development practice that are often poorly understood and undervalued. This is certainly part of the rationale of working with ‘People Centred Program Logic’ for senior managers with the ARC. In the CIDI case, however, it is also clear that program staff and management clearly developed their own particular practical approaches to capacity and relationship strengthening, and found

ways to be responsive and make these approaches workable in a Cambodian context. The influencing strategies outlined in program documents may have provided some supportive background framing, but the difficulties of working with stakeholder relationships and capacity in practice were largely addressed by the skills, experience and creativity of the CIDI staff.

In this way, the CIDI and what the present evaluation captures of its approach, provides useful learning on how 'People Centred Program Logic' can be realised in practice. In using people centred program design in future it would be useful to include a more a concrete articulation of process and intermediary outcomes for 'influence', so that all concerned can be oriented along paths to progress that are often uneven and decidedly 'messy'. At the same time, this needs to be balanced with flexibility and room to manoeuvre, so that the aims of the program can be addressed to the realities of the context in each case. Such flexibility could be manifest in budgeting and providing scope for selection and mixing of approaches informed by intimate knowledge of context. Equally, it should be expressed in a commitment to building trusting and responsive engagement with partners as a foundation for progress across all areas of programing.

Final observations

While the evaluation was being conducted it became clear that the CIDI was not expected to be funded after its current duration and that AusAID support was to be reconfigured in a way that engaged bilateral and multilateral organisations and UN partners in particular in a larger program to promote disability inclusion, although the exact shape of this support is yet to be determined. The current evaluation illustrates a number of areas where learning on strategies to support greater coordination and capacity in the disability sector could be incorporated. If there is a concern to maintain some of the energy and promise of the constructive relationships that have developed under CIDI it will be important that the vehicle for taking forward disability inclusion that is subsequently funded by AusAID pays deliberate attention to the relationships and co-ordination of stakeholders in the disability sector in Cambodia. This will demand resources dedicated to the processes of networking, learning and collaboration that CIDI has demonstrated can be pursued with some consistency and vigour and which has enabled a distinctive collaborative atmosphere and sense of potential to develop.

The CIDI has also demonstrated the potential of civil society actors to adapt and improve services, and to begin to work together for mutual support and learning and towards more effective disability inclusive practice. Given the importance of strengthen civil society actors along such lines in AusAID's own theory of change (AusAID 2010), it may be important to find effective ways to continue to support these developments in any subsequent programing.

While the CIDI grant mechanism of the DIAF is perceived to have been successful and something to retain in the new configuration of AusAID support, it is important to recognise the contribution to its success of the sustained participatory processes employed by the CIDI, and the mechanisms of support which have been an important complement to the funding of particular stand-alone projects. Equally, the close engagement of the CIDI team in providing tailored input with small organisations and meaningful interaction and feedback has been key to effective capacity building and may not so easily be substituted for with stand alone training one-off trainings.

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APPENDIX 1 CORE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The core interview schedule below provides a master list of questions that were not asked of every informant, but as many of the questions as possible were used, while following the direction of the informants responses. It also outlines the elements of the theories of change around strengthening relationships and capacity development – these were used to elicit examples from informants of where CIDI support had concretely supported their work. A different schedule was used for senior managers within ARC, AusAID and CIDI staff.

Overall interview schedule

Introduction:

- (introduce role) I am an independent consultant leading an evaluation of CIDI for the Australian Red Cross to understand what has worked well and what could have been better for future work
- Input from range of partners in participatory evaluation exercise and staff of CIDI too.
- Interviews and questionnaire to gather more information
- Will draw on information overall for a report that will be shared (?), do you mind information gathered in this interview/meeting being used, perhaps some examples or quotes? (for group) Anyone who would like me to request specific permission to use quotes or stories please let me know.

Can you briefly tell me about your involvement with CIDI? What project is funded – brief outline, for how long? (just briefly)

Capacity development

Introduce presumed theory of change: CIDI has aimed to build the capacity of organisations so that they are better able to plan, fundraise, manage their organisation and finances, design and manage projects, deliver services and advocate for rights of PWD, work in ways that are disability inclusive, and evaluate their own work for improvement. It is also hoped to build their confidence and their ability to link with other stakeholders

- Has your engagement with CIDI built the capacity of your organisation? If so how?
- Can you give particular examples of support given, how it strengthened your organisational capacity.
- How has this helped you to address the needs and rights of pwd in Cambodia?
- Do you think the CIDI has been able to support capacity development of organisations that most need it?

Brokering and co-ordination

Introduce presumed theory of change: CIDI has tried to help organisations to build relationships and partnerships to improve their work (through partnership meetings, exchanges, the CIDI forum) – with the aim of increasing understanding of mainstream organisations about the needs and rights of pwd (including building practical links between disabled people's and mainstream organisations), supporting partners to share skills and train each other, supporting organisations to work with self-help groups for pwd, supporting co-ordination and collaboration between service providers and greater access and coverage of services for pwd, reducing duplication and encouraging better use of resources, encouraging innovation and sharing of ideas and experiences for improving support to pwd, improving links with local authorities, encouraging solidarity and recognition of disability issues.

- Has CIDI helped you to work better with other organisations to address the needs and rights of people with disability in Cambodia. If so, how?
- Can you give examples of collaboration, new projects, specific things learned/adopted, any joint funding proposals, invitations to events or meetings, provision of your skills to other partners?
- What has your organisation been able to contribute to CIDI and its partners?
- What makes for a good partnership? How do you keep it good/maintain it, what do you need to do?
- Are there organisations that should have been involved in CIDI that were not?

Disability inclusion and sustainability

- *CIDI aimed to increase the participation of pwd in a range of forums and representative bodies and in employment*
- Do you understand or work differently towards disability inclusion after your experience of the CIDI? If so, how?
- Are there ways of working and things you have learned that you would like to carry on with after CIDI?

Ways of working

- What support mechanisms from CIDI have been most useful for your work and why?
- What additional support would have been most helpful?
- Has CIDI supported you to be flexible and address changing context and emerging issues in your work?
- Do you feel CIDI has responded to your particular needs and listened to your concerns?
- What is different about the way CIDI works compared to your previous project experiences?
- Are the needs of women and girls with disability and boys and men with disability different? How did CIDI help you address this?

Contextual factors

- Are there cultural, social or environmental/geographical factors that have affected your disability inclusion work?
- Are there challenges related to the specific focus of your work (on children, women with disabilities, the particular type of disability you are working with) that CIDI has been able to help you with OR you would have liked more help with?

APPENDIX 2 QUESTIONNAIRE

Below is the Questionnaire which was completed by 19 CIDI partners (after four days of it being sent out). The average score is provided on the right hand side in the score box (note 1 response was received after the analysis was completed but does not change the analytical categories drawn from the questionnaire analysis).

Evaluation questionnaire for organisations who have received a DIAF Grant under the CIDI program of ARC

Dear Partners, we would very much appreciate if those of you have received a DIAF grant can find a few minutes to complete this questionnaire by the end of Tuesday 26th February

Apologies for the short notice.

This will help us to prioritise issues for further discussion at the Roundtable

Please return your completed questionnaire to me, Dr Robin Vincent:
robvconsult@gmail.com

Please say whether the following statements apply to your organisation:

To a considerable extent	[score 4]
To a moderate extent	[score 3]
To a slight extent	[score 2]
Not at all	[score 1]

Please put a score of 1-4 for each question

The CIDI has strengthened the capacity of my organisation to better address the needs and rights of people with disability [3.8]

The CIDI has understood my organisations needs and given support to help us build our capacity where most needed [3.5]

The CIDI has built the capacity of an individual but not the organisation [1.9]

The distinctive thing about the CIDI compared to other programs is that it provides both financial and technical support and training [3.8]

CIDI has been able to identify and support the organisations that most need it [3.5]

The CIDI has helped me to build relationships and partnerships with other organisations working for disability inclusion [3.8]

The CIDI has helped reduce feelings of isolation in our work on disability [3.8]

The CIDI has given us more confidence in our work on disability [3.8]

The CIDI has helped us work better with local authorities [2.9]

The CIDI has enabled us to improve collaboration between service-providers [3.3]

Engaging with other organisations through the CIDI has helped my organisation work in a more disability inclusive way [3.7]

[For mainstream organisations] As a mainstream organisation, after the experience of CIDI my organisation now involves people with disability in all aspects of our work from designing to delivering and evaluating projects [3.4]

[For mainstream organisations] As a mainstream organisation, after the CIDI my organisation now better understands the needs and rights of people with disability [3.6]

After CIDI my organisation can more effectively advocate for the rights and priorities of people with disabilities [3.6]

Since working with the CIDI my organisation now employs more people with disability (please say how many more after CIDI and the total number of staff)
How many more [] VOID Total number of staff VOID []

The CIDI has led to my organisation developing new projects and funding proposals [3]

Through the CIDI my organisation has been invited to new networks, partnerships and meetings [3.6]

My organisation has been able to offer skills, knowledge and services to other organisations in the CIDI network [2.9]

I feel that my organisation is listened to and respected in the CIDI [3.4]

The approach of the CIDI has allowed us to be honest about our weaknesses and strengths and helped us to reflect on and improve our work [3.6]

Through participation in the CIDI my organisation has been able to better access information and knowledge on disability in Cambodia [3.6]

Through CIDI my organisation has adopted new ways of working that it will continue in future [3.6]

The support from CIDI has enabled my organisation to be flexible and respond to emerging challenges as we have gone along in the project [3.6]

CIDI has helped my organisation to better address the different needs of women/girls and men/boys in its work for disability inclusion [3.2]

Please rate the different kinds of support the CIDI has offered from 1-5 (with 5 being the best rating):

Mentoring and one to one support	score [3.6]
Training	score [4.2]
Guidance on proposals and report writing	score [3.8]
CIDI forum	score [4.3]
Partners meetings	score [4.1]
Monitoring visits and feedback	score [3.9]
Exchanges with partners	score [3.6]
Support attend conferences/seminars/external training	score [3.7]

THANK YOU!

LIST OF INFORMANTS

CIDI partners

Interviews

Cedric Jancloes, Deputy Director, Action IEC
Alma Abraham, Program Manager, Action IEC
Mr Pich Saroeun, Executive Director, Battambang Disabled People's Organization BDPO
Mr Pov Chhean, Program Manager, BDPO
Heang Sarim, Executive Director, CANDO: Cambodian NTFP (Non Timber Forest Product) Development Organization
Mr Ngin Saorath, Executive Director CDPO: Cambodia Disabled People's Organization
Mr Ung Pola, Executive Director COCD: Cambodian Organisation for Children and Development
Loretta Bellato, Organisational Capacity Development Officer, AVID/COCD volunteer
Ms Sieng Sokchan, Team leader of basketball, CNVLD
Mr Mom Phireak, Program Coordinator Community Based Mine Action Program CMAP, CRC : Cambodian Red Cross
Mr Khem Sophal, Road Safety Project Manager, CRC
Ms Mom Chanty, Head of Community Based Health Development (CBHD) Sub-Department, CRC
Mr Pheng Samnag, Executive Director DDSP: Disability Development Services Program
Hallam Goad, General Advisor and Onn Sokny, Program Manager Epic Arts : Every Person Counts Arts
Jereone Stol, Country Director HI-B: Handicap International-Belgium
Ms Toeur Sros, Deputy Director, ILDO: Islamic Local Development Organization
Ms El Srey Mom, Administration Manager, ILDO
Ms Sok Sothavy, Executive Director KNKS
Mr Khun Bunlee, Program Manager KNKS
Mr Kong Vicetra, Executive Director, KPF: Komar Pikar Foundation
Mr Mak Chamroeun, President, KYA Khmer Youth Association
Ms Tith Davy, Executive Director, OEC: Operation Enfants du Cambodge
Mr Chab Chanda, Project Manager, OEC
Ellen Minotti, General Advisor, SSC: Social Services of Cambodia
Mr Keo Rithy, Country Representative, VI-C: Veterans International- Cambodi

Reflection exercises at Roundtable (in addition to above organisations)

AAD : Angkor Association for the Disabled
AAR-WCD : Association for Aid and Relief, Wheelchair for Development
ADD International: Action Disability Development – International
AeA : Aide Et Action
CABDICO : Capacity Building of People with Disability in the Community Organization
CHRD : Cambodia Human Resource Development
CHEMS : Cambodia Health Education Media Service
CT : Cambodia Trust
DPOS : Disabled People's Organization Representative Kampong Speu
Hagar : Hagar International
MAC/LMDS : Muslim Aid Cambodia/Landmine Disability Support
MODE : Minority Organization for Development of Economy
RCRC : Rose Cambodia Rehabilitation Centre
RSDOB : Representative Self-Help Disabilities Organization Batheay District (RSDOB)

CIDI program staff

David Curtis, Program Coordinator
Mao Meas, Program Support Coordinator
Navy Chhour, Senior Admin & Finance Officer

Lyda Sok, Admin & Finance Support Officer

CIDI/Independent Consultant

Dr Sok Sovannarith

ARC

David Brown, Asia Program Manager

Emily Wilson, Program Coordinator Cambodia

Anna Rasalingham, Previously Program Coordinator, Cambodia

AusAID

Megan McCoy, Regional Specialist, Disability Inclusive Development (Asia)

Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation

Excellency, Sem Sokhar, Secretary of State

ACRONYMS

AAD	: Angkor Association for the Disabled
Action IEC	: Action Information, Education Communication
ADD International:	Action Disability Development – International
AeA	: Aide Et Action
CBMAP	: Community Based Mine Action Program
CBHD	: Community Based Health Development Program
CBR	: Community Based Rehabilitation
CIDI	: Cambodia Initiative for Disability Inclusion
CFA	: Communication for Advocacy
CRC	: Cambodian Red Cross
CSO	: Civil Society Organisation
CWD	: Children with Disabilities
DAC	: Disability Action Council
DDSP	: Disability Development Services Program
DIAF	: Disability Inclusion Assistance Fund
DPOs	: Disabled People Organizations
HI	: Handicap International
HI-B	: Handicap International Belgium
HI-F	: Handicap International France
KNKS	: Kumar Ney Kdey Sangkheum: Children of Hope
KYA	: Khmer Youth Association
LSAP	: Landmine Survivor Assistance Program
M&E	: monitoring and evaluation
NGOs	: Non Government Organizations
MSC	: Most Significant Change (stories of impact evaluation)
NPA-PWD	: National Plan of Action for People With Disabilities including

Landmine and ERW Survivors 2009-2011

P2P	: Partner to Partner evaluation
PWD	: People with Disabilities
RGoC	: Royal Government of Cambodia
SCDA	: Supplementary Capacity Development Assistance
SHG	: Self Help Group
WWD	: Women with Disabilities
CDPO	: Cambodia Disabled People's Organization
COCD	: Cambodian Organisation for Children and Development
Epic Arts	: Every Person Counts Arts
MoSVY	: Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
PoSVY	: Provincial Office of Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
OEC	: Operation Enfants du Cambodge
SSC	: Social Services of Cambodia