Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a process that empowers people in poor communities to ultimately help themselves.

Sustainable development is an empowering process that places those being affected at the centre of their own development.

Sustainable development mobilises people to act and solve their identified issues/problems. It has proven itself to be an effective method of resolving problems or issues such as the lack of basic public services, land rights, lack of basic necessities (food, clean water, shelter, clothes) and so on.

Sustainable development equips people with the necessary knowledge, skills and appropriate values and attitudes to act and manage their own development.

Sustainable development catalyses the emergence of alternative structures and systems (cooperatives, people’s organisations) which become instruments of the people to effectively and collectively assert, protect and contend for their own interests.

Sustainable development is a holistic approach that considers:
- Human Rights and the Rights of Children
- Gender Equity Promotion
- Environment, and
- Effective Communication

All sustainable development projects must be planned, monitored and evaluated, based on a defined and structured system. The system includes country strategy outlines, cooperation agreements, programmatic action plans, field monitoring functions, evaluations and impact assessments.

Sustainable development includes:
- Men and women of the community
- Long-term planning
- Infrastructure building (with local products and people-power)
  - Roads
  - Housing
  - Dams
- Buildings—schools and medical posts
- Water and food availability and security—building water posts or wells, growing and rotating crops, growing different vegetables for variety
- Income generation—teaching practical ways for families to become self-sufficient financially
- Health education—eating a variety of foods, washing hands, safe toileting, brushing teeth, visiting a medical post when ill, etc.
- Primary School Education, and where viable, Secondary School Education
- HIV/AIDS Education
- Birth Education
- Peace and Reconciliation Education
- Conservation of non-renewable resources and finding alternatives sources
- Disaster preparedness, disaster mitigation and disaster management
- Advocacy
- A knowledge of how to network with local and all levels of government and also with other development groups in the area.

A big part of development in Cambodia is about teaching and training locals so that they are more empowered to live improved lives. Building people and helping them develop their God-given potential, is just as and no more important than building infrastructure.

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Australian Lutheran World Service
Changing lives through development
Country Focus: Cambodia
Development in Cambodia

The works of ALWS in Cambodia centres around *Integrated Rural Development and Empowerment Programs* in the Kampong Speu Province. Here the different development approaches of the program are outlined.

The **EMPOWERMENT APPROACH** builds capacity and competence, in both individuals and communities, to achieve results for themselves. Equipping people and groups with knowledge, skills, and attitudes builds confidence and empowers villagers to take control of their lives. Actively involved in all aspects of their development, villagers assess their needs and then develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate village plans. Community Empowerment Facilitators motivate villagers to contribute as much and in as many ways as possible—ideas and leadership, time, labour, materials, and money.

Members of the Veal Village in the Kampong Speu Province celebrating their achievements. There are 216 households in the village, all working with the Lutheran team to improve their lives.

Mrs Lin and her granddaughters are empowered now to think about their future and what they would like to see developed for their family. Being illiterate, Mrs Lin draws what she would like—a house, garden, chickens and coup, pigs, a cow, toilet and a fence! What a wonderful plan!

Soum Kean: Village Development Committee Chief

“We feel very happy and excited about all our achievements. We are especially proud of the Farmer Field School, and now we can make proper compost. What I would like to say to Australia, through the Lutheran Team, that we have improved our agricultural techniques, and can protect our crops from insects. We can sell our crop to outside and make better income.

Our people still live very traditional and it is only now that we understand about health and hygiene. Many people now ask for help for latrine construction.

We show our commitment by working hard to construct a meeting hall. You provide the nails and roof, but we bring the wood and the local workers, and the construction is finished on time.

We will also build a Rice bank. We have collected the wood already and will build it so it will be ready for your rice so we can look after the poor households.”

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Development in Cambodia cont.

The **INTEGRATED APPROACH** considers that various lines of action interlink with and affect other areas. Environmental issues, HIV and AIDS, gender and many other thematic areas are integral parts of all lines of action taken in any community. As a result, village development committees tailor initiatives for positive impact on multiple aspects of community life.

The Lutheran Team in Cambodia emphasizes that emergency relief, rehabilitation, development, and disaster preparedness efforts are linked. Bridging the gap between emergency response and development is one of our key competences.

The **RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH** primarily involves building up rights awareness on all levels, both among the powerless and the powerful. Development objectives are also human rights objectives. An emphasis on human rights in the development context helps focus attention on structural inequities that cause and maintain poverty and exclusion.

The **COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH** undertakes development work for the good of the community as a whole. Peace, reconciliation, stability and solidarity are promoted as community members are encouraged to build on their own assets, structures and resources, enabling them to address development challenges and fulfil their development plans. Community-based also means staff are based in the community to gain deep understanding of structure, cultures, and issues and to build trusting relationships with the people. This enables a close and constant supportive relationship conducive to transformative interventions.

When all members of a community work together, more can be achieved. Community-based approaches to development are essential if all members of the community are to benefit.

Water for all members of the community is so important. Here a new water point at a school means water for students and improved health through improved hygiene.

All members of the community, including school children, learn about HIV and AIDS and the rights of people who have contracted the disease. It is only through education that the health of the people can improve.

Educating all children is a big part of the integrated and rights-based approaches to education. Traditionally, girls were not given as many educational opportunities, but now many girls are receiving a primary school education.

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Changing Lives through Development
Country Focus: Cambodia
Eight Development Priorities in Communities

The Lutheran Team has been working in rural Cambodia, with the poorest people, since 1979. Using an integrated approach, the Lutheran Team focus on empowering the people to be self-reliant. The staff train people in rights advocacy, income generation, gender equity, household planning, and more. Eight self-identified development priorities provide entry points through which communities organise, plan, and develop over time via a facilitated empowerment process.

Basic health and HIV and AIDS
The AIDS epidemic poses a serious threat to the rural population of Cambodia in particular. The Lutheran Team in Cambodia works on HIV and AIDS prevention and awareness and also trains local volunteers to do home-based care of the people living with the disease. Patients receive medicine, income support, and training in income generation, and their children get school grants.

Disaster preparedness
Natural disasters, such as flooding or drought, are commonplace in Cambodia's rural areas and can ruin livelihoods of entire villages. The Lutheran Teams train communities in at-risk areas on disaster preparedness and risk reduction, and forms a community disaster management committee that will make a disaster plan for the village.

Environment
The preservation of Cambodia's natural environment often suffers in favour of the preservation of the livelihood of the poorest, who may exhaust the natural resources in their habitat. The Lutheran Team trains communities and partner households in environmentally friendly practices in farming and, further, the community forms an environment committee to spread environmental awareness and increase activities such as communal forestry, eco-tourism, or use of fuel-conserving stoves.

Community development
The organization of civil society is weak all over Cambodia. The Lutheran Team focuses on community development to raise the capability of citizens to handle their own development. Communities learn to manage their own cultural, economic, and social development. The Team assists in establishing and training a Village Development Committee in organisation, management, and leadership. The Committee prepares development plans for their villages and mobilise villagers to fulfil them. Also, the Committee has the responsibility to monitor and evaluate the development process and suggest improvement and change.

Human rights awareness and advocacy
Many people in Cambodia are unaware of their human rights, which raises the risk of exploitation and conflict. The Lutheran Team organises training for the communities and village councils in democratic concepts, human rights, and active nonviolent conflict resolution. They also learn how to advocate for their rights with authorities and duty-bearers in Cambodian society.

Food security
For poor farmers in rural Cambodia, food insecurity is high. The Lutheran Team trains villagers through its Farmer Field Schools, where they can learn from each other and apply new methods and systems in order to increase their food security. The farmers learn about growing alternate crops, raising chickens and pigs, digging and maintaining fishing ponds, thus integrating agricultural training with broader concerns like nutrition, income generation, and disaster preparedness. The Team provides the training and start-up help such as seeds, tools, and ongoing advice and support.

Income generation
For the rural poor, income from their land is rarely enough to sustain their families. The Lutheran Team in Cambodia supports the poorest households to start micro-enterprises. The people receive training in weaving, mechanics, or other skills, are taught business planning and management, and receive start-up credit. The people are taught about regular savings, to use micro-credit, and organise their own village banks to support their developing projects.

Primary education and non-formal education
Illiteracy rates are as high as 60% in the rural areas and many farmers have never had any form of education, formal or non-formal. The Lutheran Team supports the communities to network for and build their own primary school in order that the children get a better education. Children from the poorest families are provided scholarships. Village councils can also negotiate for non-formal education teachers for illiterate adults in the communities, women in particular.