

# WESTERN FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN BUDDHIST CAMBODIA

'RELIGIOUS' AND 'SECULAR' FRAMES IN AID AND DEVELOPMENT



DEWI ESHUIS

**Western Faith-Based Organizations in Buddhist Cambodia:  
'Religious' and 'Secular' Frames in Aid and Development**

Master Thesis

By Dewi Eshuis

(S2611791)

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Supervisor: dr. Erin Wilson

2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisor: dr. Kim Knibbe

Examiners: Dr. Joram Tarusarira & Dr. Renée Wagenvoorde

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## 1. Introduction

At present, interests on the role of religion in development has flourished due to various intertwined aspects including the enduring presence and power of religion (Barnett & Stein 2012, 3) and the perceived failing of existing development approaches (Jones & Peterson 2011, 1291). Renewed assumptions of the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’ discuss how rather than being fixed entities, the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’ have a multiplicity of meanings. They are continuously reconsidered, determined and re-imagined throughout time and historical contexts (Barnett & Stein 2012, 8; Casanova 2011, 54). These assumptions offer new insights and approaches for research on development. However, it remains that these assumptions have been developed from a Western perspective, whereas development work often occurs to non-Western countries. This raises the question whether assumptions regarding tensions between the religious and the secular also apply in non-Western contexts in post-colonial development work. Most development theories focus on the work of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in which they utilize religious and secular frames in order to understand the role of religion in development work. In addition, such theories often assume that the religious framing of FBOs are motivated by Christianity.

In order to explore assumptions of religious and secular frames in development work and the significance of Western perspectives in understanding the role of religion in such work, the thesis focuses on development in Cambodia. Cambodian history is characterized by conflict, colonialism and an extreme inflow of organizations aiming to contribute to the development of the country and its people. It has one of the highest numbers of NGOs, including FBOs, in any given country (Frewer 2013, 98). As such, the thesis is centred on the following research question: *Whether and how do ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ frames of local and international actors influence the activities and orientations of faith-based organizations in post-conflict, post-colonial Cambodia?* By exploring the discourse of various Christian FBOs in Cambodia this thesis aims to investigate how religious and secular frames influence the activities and direction of FBOs with regard to development and examine their assumptions of Cambodian culture. Furthermore, this study will explore how locals perceive the presence of foreign FBOs in their country and development.

This will allow for a discussion on whether the existing literature related to aid and development, fully captures underlying local dynamics with regard to religious and secular frames in non-Western development work.

Literature discussing development work in Cambodia often assumes that attempts made by international development organisations were unsuccessful due to their universalist approaches concerned with democracy, human rights and Western neoliberal agendas framed by political and economic objectives. It has also been argued that such development agendas fail to acknowledge local cultures and understand how aid is perceived and received. In addition, measures to achieve justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of atrocities left the country to face complex challenges and instability across nearly all aspects of society, and for this reason it can be challenged whether peacebuilding has been successful.

Until recently, development studies have been relatively uninterested in religion due to dominant discourses of modernization and secularization theories. These theories have shaped social sciences, particularly during the post-war era (Jones & Peterson 2011, 1291). Within such discourses, religion has been framed as a conservative force that would ‘eventually disappear from public life as part of societal progress towards an increasingly modern society’ (Jones & Peterson 2011, 1292). Secularization theory claimed that modern rational values would replace ‘traditional’ beliefs and a shift of authority would take place from clergy and sacred transcendental commands towards people and human laws (Lunn 2009, 940; Barnett and Stein 2012, 2). These strong discourses assumed that religion would disappear and contributed to the assumption that religion was unnecessary. Furthermore, this counter-developmental perception of religion made reconciling religion with development ideas, including economic progress and bureaucratic rationalisation, problematic. This has led to religion being perceived as irrelevant for development studies and work (Barnett and Stein 2012, 2).

*Post-secularism, post-colonialism* and *post-conflict* theories aim to destabilise dominant secular discourse within development studies and offer a valuable contribution with new approaches opening up new fields of research (Barnett & Stein 2012; Lynch 2011; Said 1978; Shore 2009; Appleby & Little 2004; Lunn 2009). However, as Jones and Petersen (2011, 1292) have argued, much of this literature

upholds a narrow understanding of religion and as such fails to capture underlying dynamics of prevailing secular and religious frames. Renewed interests in religion with regard to development often aim to explore the added value of religion, emphasising its practical and positive aspects while failing to notice other more complicating features of the relation between religion and development (Jones & Peterson 2011, 1297). Since religion is perceived as separate from mainstream development, it is also assumed that religion can provide alternative and challenging perceptions on development. The above-mentioned critiques illustrate that religion is seen as instrumental and as a specific category. This way of looking at religion according to Asad (1993, 28-55), has been developed through modern Western normative assumptions that have conceptualized religion as being separate from other structures in society. However, as Asad (1993, 27-54) argues religion should be seen as entangled in its context. This claim will also be explored in this thesis with regard to non-Western cultures such as Cambodia. Another limitation of these theories is the absence of the perception of locals and their reception of development work. The next sections offer definitions on religion and FBOs.

### ***1.1 Defining Religion***

For decades, scholars have argued about the various ways that religion can be defined and some even question whether it should be defined at all (Asad 1993, 27-54; Kippenberg 2010, 104; McCutcheon 1997, 1-26). This study does not attempt to add to this particular discussion. Nevertheless, it is important to make explicit how religion is understood as any chosen definition has implications on the course and findings of the study. The definition used in this study is framed by its focus on development work.

Definitions of religion are often categorized as either substantive or functional. Substantive approaches try to theorize and define what religion actually is, while functional approaches focus on what religion does. This thesis does not question whether certain features are religious or not, and therefore it upholds a functional definition. A scholar that has influenced many others with his functional approach is the sociologist Émile Durkheim. In his work, the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, he states that society is the foundation of religion. Durkheim claimed that religion encapsulates the highest ideals and goals, which transcend a group of individuals.

These so-called social facts transcend individuals (their individual consciousness) when they interact with each other. Further, they are external, coercive to the individual and *sui generis* (Durkheim 1995, 17). Therefore, social facts express and represent the society, making religion a collective entity.

According to Durkheim all religions can be considered real or true when understood as representations of society (Durkheim 1995, 35). He defines religion as ‘a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and surrounded by prohibitions—beliefs and practices that unite its adherents in a single moral community called a church’ (Durkheim 1995, 46). According to his theory, people separate *sacred* religious symbols, objects, and rituals perceived as divine from the daily symbols, objects, and routines, which he defines as the *profane*. For this reason, the *sacred* is a product of social activity, thus religion does not necessarily require a belief in a ‘transcendental super-power’ rather it depends on the existence of the categories of the *sacred* and the *profane* (Barnett & Stein 2012, 15).

Peter Berger, a scholar influenced by Durkheim, established a definition of religion in line with this functional tradition. Berger argues that religion is an ‘establishment, through human activity, of an all-embracing sacred order, that is, of a sacred cosmos that will be capable of maintaining itself in the ever-present face of chaos’ (Berger 1967, 26). A significant difference between both scholars is that Berger stresses the importance of the function of the sacred in relation to chaos. In this regard, religion involves the search for meaning, whereby it aims to help humans avoid a sense of existential suffering (Barnett and Stein 2012, 15). Given that this thesis wants to explore the relation between religion and activities of aid organizations in a development context, Berger’s emphasis on the sacred and chaos is particularly useful. Religion, according to Berger, helps humans escape the terror, which is comparable to the function of humanitarianism (Barnett and Stein 2012, 15). Religion and the sacred allow individuals to become more morally and community-minded than they otherwise might be (Barnett and Stein 2012, 15). The functional definition as established by Berger is especially helpful for the analysis of this study, which intends to explore how religious organizations support development processes in Cambodia given its history of conflict and need for reconciliation.

In addition, by embracing a definition of religion that does not depend on a belief in a transcendental deity but rather focuses on the sacred, Barnett and Stein (2012, 15) emphasize the blurred boundaries between the secular and the religious. Their approach allows for comparison between ‘organized beliefs that are conventionally defined as religious and those that are typically dismissed as having nothing to do with religion’ (Barnett & Stein 2012, 15). Barnett and Stein (2012) note that the sacred should not be reduced to religion; both the religious and the secular have a sense of the sacred and that the secular world also includes faith elements. As such, the authors argue that religious faith is not the only faith that exists. According to the authors, humanitarianism embodies the values of the sacred in terms of both religious and secular faith (Barnett & Stein 2012, 22). Within the development context, both the secular and the religious are motivated according to ‘transcendental’ value orientations and specific understandings of what is central to human life. These involve humanitarian ethics and moral obligations towards others across borders and beyond politics (Barnett & Stein 2012, 24). A distinction is made within humanitarianism between the profane, consumed by power and politics, and the sacred, concerned with saving lives (Barnett & Stein 2012, 24). Both NGOs and FBOs in development work share humanitarian concerns of the profane and the sacred. This widespread definition of religion and notions of profane and sacred is based on Christian perspectives and therefore, the sacred/profane dichotomy needs to be acknowledged for its limited applicability with regards to Buddhism (Lester 1973, 3), the dominant tradition in Cambodia. Thus, it can be assumed that the implementation of such an understanding of religion in humanitarian work could be incompatible with local perceptions in Cambodia.

### ***1.2 Faith-Based Organizations***

Definitions of faith-based organizations are not straightforward. Ferris identified that FBOs have at least one of the following features; ‘affiliation with a religious body; a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values; financial support from religious sources; and/or a governance structure where selection of board members or staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation and/or decision-making processes based on religious values’ (Ferris 2005, 312). Whilst they engage in similar work, faith-based organizations differ from NGOs in that they are motivated by their



faith and have a frame of reference that is larger than humanitarian concerns only (Ferris 2005, 316-317). A definition which encompasses these key features of FBOs, is from Clarke and Jennings:

‘We use the term faith-based organizations in reference to any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith’ (Clarke & Jennings 2008, 6).

This definition of FBOs has been adopted for the research, but there is acknowledgement for the diversity of FBOs. Wilson (2014, 221) explains that FBOs differ very much in their nature and identity. To illustrate FBOs vary from:

‘small-scale local-level religious congregations, to national inter-denominational coalitions and networks, to international humanitarian agencies associated with a particular religion; equally, they have highly diverse histories, underlying motivations, fund-raising mechanisms, and modes of operation’ (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011: 431).

Given that, FBOs are so diverse, interpreting their motives, objectives, capacities and interests are important aspects of understanding the role of religion in the context of FBOs and development.

A useful framework developed by Clarke and Jennings (2008, 32) identifies four different ways in which faith can influence and play a role in the activities of FBOs namely: *passive*, *active*, *persuasive* and *exclusive*. Firstly, the *passive* way in which faith can be employed by FBOs involves that faith motivates staff and supporters, but is secondary to broader humanitarian principles. In such cases, faith is subsidiary to humanitarian considerations when identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners. Secondly, faith can have an *active* role and this means that faith is central and explicit in the motivation of an FBO. Although non-believers are not openly discriminated and cooperation with other religious communities is supported, faith does determine the beneficiaries and partners. Thirdly, similar to *active* faith employment, faith is also the dominant basis for engagement when there is a *persuasive* role of faith. However, it goes further as the objective is to convert others to the faith. Given this, it chooses the interests of the faith at the cost of others. Lastly, *exclusive* employment of faith means that faith is fundamental to the motivation of staff and supporters. Faith ‘provides the principal or sole consideration in identifying beneficiaries. Social and political engagement is rooted in the faith, or a branch of the faith, and is often militant or violent and/or directed against one or more rival faiths’

(Clarke & Jennings 2008, 32). This framework illustrates how faith can be employed in various ways by FBOs.

The next chapter discusses the relevant historical events that have shaped the current context in which FBOs in Cambodia operate. This is done in order to better understand the significance of religion in development work in Cambodia. The chapter following that is the theoretical chapter, which explores the main arguments of post-secularism, post-colonialism and post-conflict theories with regard to development, secularism and religion. The methodology chapter discusses the research philosophy, empirical research methods and frameworks used to conduct the analysis. The analysis of the fieldwork will then be used to critically reflect on the assumptions of the chosen theories with regard to development work in non-Western context. Lastly, the thesis concludes with insights into the need for development theory to rethink the need to investigate non-Western contexts and perspectives of locals in aid and development.

## **2. Contextualising Cambodia's Development Challenges:**

### **A Historical Overview**

Cambodia's historical context offers a better understanding of the place of religious and secular framing in development work. Cambodia's history, which is characterized by its complex violent past, has had a significant impact on the country's current situation. In order to analyse religion in specific contexts this chapter provides an in depth description of Cambodia's history. The following describes significant historical events that have shaped and influenced Cambodian culture and illustrates how development therefore takes place in a post-conflict, post-colonial setting.

#### ***2.1 The Khmer Empire***

During the first till sixth century, Cambodia was mainly part of a thriving South-Asian empire named Funan, which had great influence on the political and cultural structures of the country (Tully 2005, 10-14). It was during the following Angkorian era in the eighth until thirteenth century that Cambodia developed into a powerful kingdom (Keller 2005, 130). During the Angkorian era, Cambodia developed rich cultural, economic and political structures and was driven by an agrarian society. Economic surpluses were invested in rituals, ceremonies and the building of grand temples (Tully 2005, p.34). The Angkor empire was founded 'on three pillars: Hindu/Sivaism and Mahayana Buddhism, administrative organisation and a highly efficient irrigation system' (Esterlines 1986 cited in Chum 2010, 53). In the thirteenth century Theravada Buddhism became Cambodia's leading faith (Kent 2008, 83). Buddhism till this day has been intrinsic to Cambodian society and life and has shaped the mentality and culture of Khmer<sup>1</sup> people (Marston & Guthrie 2004, 40). The nation's thousands of monks formed the Buddhist order of monks (*sangha*), which had great societal power and authority (Keyes et al. 1994, 55). Besides being in charge of religious rituals, the Buddhist monks were also responsible for a great deal of the Cambodian education system (Haynes 2009, 68). *Wats* (Buddhist monasteries)

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<sup>1</sup> The word Khmer used as a noun or adjective can refer to the people, language and/or culture of Cambodia.

could be found in nearly every community throughout the country.

The collapse of the Angkor Empire was due to various combined political, economical, social and ecological factors, which resulted in multiple invasions by neighbouring countries Vietnam and Thailand. Since then, kings were appointed by Thailand or Vietnam to rule the country and were a dominant part of Cambodian history. In order to sustain the stability, sovereignty and survival of the country, these kings often required military support and switched sides between the two powers, making Cambodia subordinate to both countries. There was a shift from prosperity during the Angkor Empire to a period characterized by external dominance, conflict and subordination.

## ***2.2 The French Protectorate***

The instability and vulnerability of Cambodia led the Khmer King Norodom to request a French protectorate over the country, based on advice of French Christian missionaries that had proselytised since the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Tully 2005, 81-86; Mehmet 1997, 677). The French protectorate of Cambodia was part of the French colonial empire in Southeast Asia (Tully 2005, 55-60) and lasted from 1863 until 1953 (Corfield 2009, 24). The treaty entailed that the French were allowed to station their military resources and personnel on Cambodian soil, as well as, trade freely throughout Cambodia. Further, the Catholic Church was granted unique privileges and the King would be advised by a French government official, who would be housed in the kingdom (Tully 2005, 55-60). Although the monarchy remained, power was mainly vested in a French resident-general. Simultaneously, the Cambodians were also allowed to trade freely with the French, were represented in Saigon (where the French were based) and Buddhism was ensured as state religion (Tully 2005, 83).

Determined by their *mission civilisatrice*, the French forced Cambodians to take on their education, language, and values (Mehmet 1997, 677). Further, reform plans of the French involved establishing private property in land to generate fixed taxes, end slavery, legal and administrative restructure, and restraints on royal spending and sinecures (Tully 2005, 85). Implementing these measures however was difficult, as what the French wanted to change had been part of Cambodian culture for centuries. Slavery, for example was perceived as repellent by the 'modern' French, nevertheless it had been a huge part of life in Cambodia since prior to the Angkorean era; in

addition Cambodians including slaves perceived slavery as a natural part of life, no such thing as a local emancipation movement existed (Tully 2005, 86).

During the French protectorate, a few important monks schooled by French critical approaches towards the study of Buddhism, started a process of modernizing Buddhism and opposing the traditional *sangha* (Kent 2008, 84-85). Their movement received support from the French, aristocratic families and royalty, which enabled their modernist 'mission of cleansing Buddhism of popular rituals and 'superstitious' practices' (Kent 2008, 85). The French used Buddhism as an instrument for oppression and reform. However, in the early twentieth century after various incidents in which the French defied the sacredness and authority of the *sangha*, Buddhism began to unite Khmer people against the colonial power (Kent 2008, 84-85). In response, harsh oppression and reforms were implemented by the French, which further radicalized the monkhood (Kent 2008, 84-85). Also, although King Norodom was not strong enough to actively oppose the French, the King and his followers applied passive resistance to sabotage the objectives of the reform plans. The cost of administering Cambodia was a constant financial drain for the French. Frustrated with the passivity and reluctance of the King they forced Norodom to sign a new treaty. This treaty entailed that the French would be able to push through any of their reform measures that they believed to be valuable (Tully 2005, 88). Their wish to 'civilize' Cambodia led to huge conflict as Cambodians united and rebelled against the French by attacking various military bases. Many on both sides perished and the French came to realize that they had to undo the treaty and were in need of the King's support to end the conflict (Tully 2005, 88).

The French eagerly waited till King Norodom passed away. After the King's death the French appointed his half-brother Sisowath as the new king, who had for years expressed his support for the French reforms. At this point the reform accelerated, slavery was eradicated, the legal system was restructured, and a structure of competitive entry to the civil service introduced (Tully 2005, 92). An institution of private property in land was put into place, measures to annihilate corruption were taken and infrastructural and organizational investments were made. Furthermore, the French restrained royal expenditures and abolished the system of apanage, which entailed that district administration and authority were given to those of the royal

family and high bureaucrats. Most significantly, the French introduced a three-tier scheme of local government bodies that were supervised by the French Résidents (Tully 2005, 92).

Although economic and industrial growth increased, discrimination by the French towards Cambodians (through favouring foreign personnel such as the Vietnamese), the high taxes and poor working conditions led to intense protests among the population. In addition, among educated Cambodian elites, Western values such as democracy and independence, as well as, the restoration of monuments such as Angkor Wat developed a sense of pride and awareness of Cambodia's strength and authority before foreign take-overs. In addition, in 1936, Son Ngoc Than and Pach Choeun began publishing *Nagaravatta (Notre cité)* a French language anti-colonial newspaper. Also small independence movements started to develop in 1940 by Cambodians living abroad (who were in fear of retaliation from the government in their homeland) (Tully 2005, 106). Buddhism played a crucial role in the emerging sense of nationhood and anti-colonial sentiment. Buddhist activists for example organized and led significant anti-colonial demonstrations (Harris 2005, 228).

The French appointed the young and inexperienced Norodom Sihanouk as the new king with the assumption that he would submit to their will. Throughout the Second World War, the Japanese allowed France to preserve colonial control, however they did encourage nationalist ideas. The Second World War had worn out the French and Cambodia experienced a short lapse of French rule. In contrast to the French assumptions, Sihanouk proved to be a smart leader and made ties with other countries to gain more control over Cambodia. During the last years of their colonial rule the French encountered many challenges, both from internal revolts, often helped by those living in neighbouring Vietnam and Thailand, and from major constitutional opposition from Cambodian socialists, often supported by French socialists (Corfield 2009, 59-71). The French colonial rule brought 'Western' ideologies, such as democracy, free trade, land ownership, taxation, etc. which led to economic growth and more 'civilized' societies even as discrimination remained rampant. However, resistance to these changes were present throughout this era reflecting the disjoint between the French ideology and that of the subjugated locals. Understanding this time of French colonial rule is necessary to frame development in modern day

Cambodia, as colonialism impacts and shapes a colonized country on political, economical, social and cultural levels.

## ***2.2 From independence to the Khmer Rouge regime***

With King Sihanouk as its ruler and through the insistence of various nationalist movements, which used Buddhist rhetoric, Cambodia became independent from France in 1954 (Thompson 2006, 136). Sihanouk gave up his position as king in 1955, in order to play a more prominent role in politics. His political party adopted 'Buddhist Socialism' in order to establish a national identity and social equality in Cambodia (Haynes 1998, 205). Unlike other forms of socialism, Sihanouk's socialism was based on Buddhist morality and the religious traditions of Cambodian life (Haynes 1998, 205). Over the next 15 years, Sihanouk's Buddhist Socialism and various political roles dominated Cambodian politics (Chandler 1996, 169-206) and managed to navigate between the rising communism in neighbouring Vietnam and American capitalism in Thailand (Thompson 2006, 136). However, towards the end of the 1960s, Cambodia was torn by civil war due to various domestic ideological conflicts. In addition, U.S. bombings on Vietnam extended into Cambodia, as part of the American 'Secret War' and severely damaged the country (Curtis, 1998, 4). Taken together, the civil war and American bombings killed over 700,000 people and millions had to take refuge in urban areas (Curtis, 1998: 4). In the meantime, Pol Pot the leader of the Communist movement known as the Khmer Rouge, gained more popularity. While Sihanouk was out of the country, in 1970, the Prime Minister, Lieutenant General Lon Nol convinced the National Assembly to remove Sihanouk as head of state. Lon Nol was given emergency powers and with support of the United States, the Khmer Republic was established (Gellman 2010, 88). Sihanouk fled to China where he supported his previous enemies the Khmer Rouge, to overthrow the Lon Nol government. Many Cambodians, horrified by the suffering and damage caused by the U.S. bombings, likewise refused to support the pro-American government and joined the Khmer Rouge (Chandler 1996, 169-206).

As a result of a long civil war, the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975 and employed a radical agenda based on a mixed Marxist and Leninist ideology that transformed society (Mehmet 1997, 678). When in power, the Khmer Rouge abolished markets, private property, currency and the postal system. Furthermore,

schools, shops, monasteries, government offices, courts, media stations, and embassies were shut down. In addition, the regime had a strong aspiration to revenge against the population living in urban areas. Those living in cities were forced by threat of execution, to move to rural areas as 'the new people' and work on collective farms for the regime (Morris 2004, 193). Pol Pot, the leader of the movement was obsessed with secrecy and security. He began his rule of terror towards the 'new people' by punishing them with immediate mass eviction to symbolise the beginning of the 'Total Revolution' for the construction of a Kampuchean utopia (Mehmet 1997, 678). Besides punishment, the eviction also served as a strategic move as the 'new people' would provide the labour for the regime's agricultural scheme in which rice cultivation was to be the focus of a classless and entirely autarkic, self-reliant society (Mehmet 1997, 678). The 'new people' became the slaves of the new Angkor Wat, who under strict control would have to meet impossible production targets (Mehmet 1997, 678). Pol Pot's ideology was a driven exercise in utopian agrarian socialism centred on rice production, as during the Angkorian era.

While aiming to establish an egalitarian and agrarian society, the Khmer Rouge organized the killing of professionals and educated individuals, such as doctors, teachers, and former government officials (Morris, 2004, 193). At that time, wearing glasses or being able to speak a foreign language were reasons to be killed. Furthermore, as Buddhism has been greatly intertwined with Cambodian politics and was a crucial source of Cambodia's culture, which the Khmer Rouge wanted to exterminate. This can be explained by the fact that Buddhism for the majority of Cambodians is not an add-on, rather it is entirely intrinsic to their life and identity at an individual, social and cultural levels (Coghlan n.d.; Lester 1973, 1-3; Thompson 2006, 139-142). The Khmer Rouge regime implemented a systematic plan to exterminate any remaining signs of religion; religious symbols such as places of worship and books were destroyed. It is estimated that at least 25,000 monks were executed, and many more perished or fled the country during the regime (Keyes et al. 1994, 43). Under the rule of the Khmer Rouge, the country was characterized by mass killings, forced labour, forced marriages, rapes, deportations, separations from loved ones, torture, and starvation. At least 1.7 million people died during the regime (about 25% of the entire Cambodian population), as a result of starvation, sickness and



execution (Morris 2004, 193). This turbulent history has had a major impact on existing structures of Cambodia's society, culture, governance and administrative organization.

### ***2.3 Towards Democracy***

The rule of the Khmer Rouge ended in 1978 when the Vietnamese invaded the country and consequently established the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) (Harris 2005, 190). After decades of violence little was left of the country. The regime of the Khmer Rouge had nearly destroyed Cambodia's entire economy, education system, infrastructures and institutions (Verkoren 2004, 290). The shocking actions of the Khmer Rouge, discovery of the Killing Fields<sup>2</sup> and of survivors' despair, trauma and widespread famine, resulted in short-lived international attention and humanitarian aid. However, the realities of the Cold War prevalent at that time were soon re-established and resulted in another decade of international isolation for Cambodia (Curtis, 1998: 5). In addition, since the Khmer Rouge maintained control over parts of the country near the border of Thailand armed conflicts lasted until the late 1990s.

When in power, the Vietnamese-backed PRK government and their socialist ideology emphasised rationality, science and dignity of work and a continued suppression of religion. Given the government's ideology and the fact that many educated monks perished during the Khmer rouge regime, the re-emergence of organized Buddhism was slow (Harris 2005, 229). However, due to their decreased popularity the faction turned to Buddhism for support in order to gain legitimacy (Harris 2005, 74). A few monks that survived the regime were placed in positions of authority and Buddhism was made state religion (Keyes et al. 1994: 43). Nevertheless, the government remained suspicious of monks who were part of the *sangha* and had fled to Vietnam's enemy nations of America and Thailand. Thus, to some extent, hostility towards Buddhist monks continued, albeit mainly on an administrative level.

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<sup>2</sup> Killing Fields are numerous places in Cambodia where more than a million people were killed and buried by the Khmer Rouge regime.

The Vietnamese occupation ended in 1989, and was followed by negotiations for constitutional economic and social changes (Lilja 2010, 292). These negotiations eventually led to the 1991 Paris Agreements, which were signed by all factions that represented parts of ruling regimes since the country's independence. These factions were: the royalist non-communist opposition party founded and led by Sihanouk FUNCINPEC; the BLDP, a republican remnant of the Lon Nol era; the PDK, representing the Khmer Rouge; and the CPP, which was previously the PRK. Despite the fact that their roles during the peace negotiations resulting in the Paris Peace Agreements were significant, the factions never established a collective vision of Cambodia. Each faction had their own vision and sought to protect and promote their power while refusing to acknowledge the opponents (Morris 2004, 201). The PDK faction that represented the Khmer Rouge withdrew from the peace treaty and continued warfare, but eventually collapsed in 1998 (Morris 2004, 201).

Among the peace agreements were planned UN-sponsored democratic (i.e. free and fair) elections in 1993. Furthermore, the UN's Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was established to oversee the elections, truce and the rebuild of Cambodia (Lilja 2010, 292-293). After the UNTAC was put in place, exiled monks started to return to Cambodia (Haynes 2009, 69). Gradually the state started to recognize 'the continued cultural, social and religious salience of Buddhism to millions of Cambodians, recognizing its popular appeal and allowing Buddhism a renewed national voice' (Haynes 2009, 69). UNTAC was unique as it was the largest, most ambitious and expensive peace operation of its time. In addition, the organization had an exceptional degree of authority over Cambodian governance, as it 'took over' responsibility for the country, organized elections and led the process of establishing the new constitution (Öjendal 1996, 194).

In 1993 Cambodia re-emerged as a nation with the constitutionalized motto: 'Nation, Religion, King', and Buddhism was established as state religion (Harris 2005, 205). UNTAC's scope of operations entailed: military; electoral; civil administration; human rights; civilian police; repatriation; and rehabilitation aspects (Whalan 2012, 228). Although the elections and the UNTAC intervention were praised as democratic triumphs, many academics specialized on Cambodia, as well as many Cambodians themselves, were less optimistic (Lilja 2010, 292).

Ever since the elections, the Cambodian People's Party, which was the PRK, has remained the dominant party in the country. The CPP's rule is considered controversial, due to the fact that on the one hand, democratic aspects such as constitutionalism, an increase of protected civil liberties and human rights have been enforced, whilst, on the other hand, their activities are also linked to widespread exploitation, corruption and political violence (Lilja 2010, 292). To give an example of the controversy surrounding CPP, in 1997 a year before scheduled elections the CPP initiated a *coup d'état*, which deposed the Prime Minister from power. This act of political violence reflects how violence can easily erupt when parties are politically defeated (Lilja & Öjendal 2009). According to Lilja and Öjendal (2009), this is because of the lack of institutionalized or peaceful experiences in dealing with such defeats. Hence, although Cambodia officially might be considered a democracy, it is one that lacks deeper democratic traditions (Lilja 2010, 239). Thus, even though UN interventions altered the nature of conflict within Cambodia, its violent past as illustrated above, continues to affect the country today.

#### ***2.4 Development Challenges in Cambodia***

During the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge regime Cambodia suffered major instability across nearly all aspects of society. The suffering and dread that people experienced during the regime continues, as the majority of survivors still endure forms of psychological or emotional problems. While the atrocities have mostly remained unaccounted for, the leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime have enjoyed impunity for nearly 30 years (Lambourne 2001, 321). Furthermore, Cambodia had become one of the poorest countries in the world with hardly any physical infrastructure or bureaucratic and legal system in place (Hill & Menon 2014, 6). Since the Paris Agreements of 1991, Cambodia's borders have opened up to the outside world and Cambodia has become a major focus of concentrated peacebuilding activities (Haynes 2009, 69). Also, ever since the collapse of the regime the country has experienced economic growth, increasing levels of foreign investment, and regular elections. However, although the UN interventions increased political stability and improved life for many Cambodians, it continues to face various challenges. The following discusses several developmental issues that have resulted from Cambodia's violent past and attracted many NGOs and FBOs to provide aid.

One of the significant changes as a result of the UN interventions has been the shift from centrally planned policies to neoliberal free market systems (Morris 2004, 193-194). Nevertheless, Cambodia remains one of the poorest countries in the world (Morris 2004, 193), with many of the population living from less than 2,30 USD a day and 40% of the children suffering from malnutrition (World Bank 2014). It is argued that this change has increased the gap between the rich and poor (Nathan 2014). In addition, since approximately 25% of the entire population perished during the regime, the country is presently experiencing a significant absence of skilled and educated workers, which has major developmental and economic impacts (Benveniste et al. 2008, iii). It has been estimated by the Cambodian government that 75% of teachers, 96% of university students and 67 % of all primary and secondary school pupils were killed during Khmer Rouge regime (Benveniste et al. 2008, iii). After the war limited learning resources were available, as well as qualified teachers. Thus, another important aspect of development has been the re-establishment of the education system, since this was nearly vanquished during the Khmer Rouge regime (Sophoan 1997). Besides education and economic development issues, Cambodia faces many other problems such as (child) prostitution, gender disparity and violence, illegal logging and security issues since remnants of the civil wars, such as landmines, which still kill civilians till this day (UNDP 2014). An overarching major issue is that of corruption, which plays a role across nearly all sectors and segments of Cambodian society (Transparency International 2014). As well as having great economical effects, USAID states their main concern ‘is the comprehensiveness and direct impacts [of corruption] on citizens and institutions across the country. The ‘costs’ in misdirected human resources and crippled socio-political institutions are more difficult to quantify than financial transactions, but are equally bad for Cambodia’ (USAID 2014, 12).

### ***2.5 International and Governmental Development Goals***

The challenges mentioned above have been addressed by the UN and translated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for Cambodia. The MDG were goals set out for developing countries to improve human needs and basic rights (e.g. eradicate poverty and hunger, reduce child mortality, promote gender equality etc.), by the end of 2015 (UNDP 2014). In September 2015 the global Sustainable Development Goals

(SDG's) were adopted, which build on the MDG's. These goals are broader than the MDG's and aim to tackle poverty, inequality and injustice and climate change by 2030 (UNDP 2015).

In order to reach these goals and to tackle the pressing issues the country faces, the Cambodian government established the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) that served as a blueprint for implementing the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Equity and Efficiency. These strategies capture the political commitments for planned socioeconomic development processes. 'It puts forth the principal aim of maintaining peace, political stability, security and social order to promote rule of law and protect human rights and dignity, sustainable long-term equitable economic growth and increased outreach, effectiveness, quality and credibility of public services' (Ministry of Planning 2014).

Cambodia has experienced an exponential economic growth since 1993, due to state policies, increased security, macro-economic and political stability and as a result of entering regional and global forums such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Chum 2010, 70). However, economic crisis and natural disasters illustrate the fragility of Cambodia's economic growth (UNRISD 2010, 48). Moreover, the country's progress in achieving their different goals is varied. For example, improving gender inequalities, providing universal primary education, maternal health, ensuring environmental sustainability, and removing landmines and providing support for landmine victims are all development challenges that are proven difficult to achieve (UNDP 2014). However, poverty has been reduced from 50% in 1992, to 19,8% in 2014 (UNDP 2014). In addition, Cambodia is on course in realizing their goals to reduce child mortality and combating diseases such as AIDS and Malaria (Royal Government of Cambodia 2005).

Yet behind this success, Cambodia is one of the most aid dependent countries in the world and the Official Development Assistance (ODA) is a vital source for financing development programs and achieving the objectives of the MDG and NSDP (OECD 2012, 112). The total aid Cambodia received between 2006-2010 is approximately 711 million USD annually (OECD 2012, 112). According to OECD (2012: 113) the biggest donors are Japan, Asian Development Bank, the United

States, the Global Fund, China and Australia and together they account for more than half of Cambodia's aid (OECD 2012, 113). The government acknowledges the importance of external development organizations and funding, however wishes to have greater control over Cambodian development processes.

Many NGOs, including FBOs, aim to help achieve these goals. According to interviews with government officials conducted by Chum (2010, 76), since 1991 these organizations contributed financially to rehabilitating and developing Cambodia, as well as, significantly build capacity, institutional arrangements and skilled human resources internal and external to the government structure (CDC/CRDB, 2004). Several NGOs have been involved with advocacy work and have helped and insisted the government reform policies and attitudes. Their contribution to Cambodia's reconstruction and development and their pivotal roles have been acknowledged by both government and donors. However, human rights and advocacy NGOs are accused by the government of using foreign views and exaggerating the reality for financial gains from donors (Ledgerwood & Uh 2010, 536-516). Although working relationships between the NGOs and the Cambodian government have been enhanced, a distance still exists between the government and advocacy and human rights NGOs. This is illustrated in the following quote:

'The Royal Government gratefully acknowledges that our progress since 1993 has been made possible largely by generous financial and technical support from our external development partners. We are very thankful to them. However, much of the external resources in the past had been used directly by the providers on programmes and activities of their choice, outside government purview or scrutiny. A large share has also been spent on intangible items like technical assistance. In the future however, the Royal Government will take full charge of the entire process and ensure that all resources, government and external development partners', are clearly directed to priorities and sectors chosen by the government. It will further pursue to ensure that the highest proportion of external funds is used as 'resource transfers' for development' (Royal Government of Cambodia 2005, ii).

Efforts made by the government to gain control over the development sector in Cambodia have been met with fierce criticism and have been framed as an attack on civil society, which is a central notion within development discourse to justify NGO work in Cambodia (Frewer 2013, 99). The objective of the Cambodian government to regulate NGOs has been partly implemented by a law that recently passed. The Law

on Associations and NGOs (LANGO) passed in August 2015, despite strong opposition of local civil society groups, the boycott of opposition lawmakers, and fierce international lobby (Palatino in the Diplomat, July 2015). The law requires that all associations register with the Ministry of the Interior and declare their financial reports. Reason for implementing the law according to the government is to prevent international terrorist groups from operating in Cambodia (Suy in the Khmer Times, October 2015). However, critics state that the legislative reform enables the government to criminalize those that refuse or fail to register, as well as, those that are perceived to ‘jeopardize peace, stability and public order’ (Palatino in the Diplomat, July 2015). Opponents argue that the bill undermines constitutional rights of political participation of NGOs, local groups, community associations, and grassroots organizations in Cambodia (Palatino 2015). Parallel to this development, Cambodia is expected to face another shift in its development context. Due to Cambodia’s economic progress the UN expects to change the country’s status from a ‘least-developed country’ to a ‘lower middle-income country’ (UNDP 2014) in the coming years. Although this would be a significant milestone for Cambodia, it may have implications for current external financial support including losing privileges in aid and trade programs.

## **Conclusion**

To summarize, this chapter discussed the historical background of Cambodia highlighting important and complex events such as the Angkorean era, Thai and Vietnamese takeovers, the French protectorate, Khmer Rouge regime and the UN intervention. Throughout Cambodian history Buddhism has played a significant role, despite its near extinction during the Khmer Rouge regime. Theravada Buddhism has been central to Cambodian society since the 13<sup>th</sup> century on a social, cultural and political level. For Cambodians Buddhism is a part of life and their identity, there is a profound sense in which to be Cambodian means to be Buddhist.

In addition, this chapter has illustrated that Cambodia is a post-colonial and post-conflict country and although decades have passed these events have significantly influenced the current context in which development work today takes place. The various external takeovers by neighbouring countries, the French mission to ‘civilize’

Cambodia, as well as, the Khmer Rouge regime have altered and destroyed cultural, political and social structures in Cambodia. Since the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement many NGOs, including FBOs, have aimed to contribute to the development of the country. Although these organizations have contributed to the rehabilitation of Cambodia, the decades of war and social upheaval have immensely impacted the country on all levels of society. Cambodia therefore faces various complex challenges up to the present time. The UN has translated these challenges into Millennium Development Goals and the Cambodian government have their National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). The influx of NGOs has helped realise some of these development targets even as complex challenges prevail.

This chapter described the historical background of the country contextualizing the complex and vast development landscape of Cambodia. The purpose of this is to gain an understanding of the influence of religious and secular frames on Christian development work in Cambodia. The following chapter is the theoretical chapter in which post-secularism, post-colonialism and post-conflict theories are discussed.



### **3. Shifting Perspectives on Development Discourse**

In this chapter, three theories that acknowledge the need to include religion in development work will be explored. The discussion of these theories aims to understand their relevance on the roles of religious and secular frames in development work. The three theories are post-secularism, post-conflict and post-colonialism. The chapter ends with a discussion of the implications of these theories for the research.

#### ***3.1 Post-secularism and Religion***

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) have taken an important role in the growing tendency of non-state agencies in decision-making of significant global political and economic issues within and between countries (Haynes 2009, 200). FBOs have not always been ascribed such an important role in public decision-making in modern times. As a result of dominant secularist and enlightenment ideas, religion was ascribed to private realms (Barnett & Stein 2012, 4), and was framed as being counter-developmental by liberal democracies (Clarke & Jennings 2008, 1). These ideas have been derived from the assumption that ‘Modernization necessarily leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals’ (Berger 1999, 2). Modernization theory, with its unambiguous objective of economic growth, along with the rise of science, liberalism and democracy was believed to be parallel to secularisation theory, whereby rational values would replace ‘traditional’ beliefs, and a shift of authority would take place from clergy and sacred transcendental commands towards people and human laws (Lunn 2009, 940; Barnett and Stein 2012, 2).

Many scholars over the last two decades have scrutinized and contested this normative hypothesis since, although modernity has had some secularizing effects, it fails to notice the ‘enduring presence and power of religion’ (Barnett and Stein 2012, 3). Rather than disappearing, religion has been increasingly sharing the stage with secularism, while at the same time remaining at the forefront (Barnett and Stein 2012, 3). Lunn (2009, 948) explains that one of the reasons that religion has been marginalised is due to the fact that it has frequently been misconceptualised. Religion has often been merely defined as an institution of society. This perception however fails to acknowledge that religion also involves personal beliefs and practices, spirituality and faith. In addition, the role of religion and its influence vary

significantly depending on the specific context and thus making it highly complex and multifaceted (Lunn 2009, 948).

Moreover, 'the religious' and 'the secular' have often been understood as dichotomous static categories. However, as Casanova (2011, 54) argues, they are mutually constitutive constructs that build upon each other. Therefore, when discussing one of the terms, the other cannot be excluded. In line with this theory, Barnett and Stein (2012, 6) argue that a dynamic relationship exists between secularization and what they define as sanctification<sup>3</sup>. When these concepts are acknowledged as being 'multilayered, multidimensional, and nonlinear' processes and strategies, it becomes apparent that they shape one another (Barnett and Stein 2012, 7). Furthermore, similar to Asad (1993, 28-35), Barnett and Stein (2012, 8) state that rather than being fixed entities, both secularization and sanctification have a multiplicity of meanings and are continuously reconsidered, determined and re-imagined throughout time and historical contexts. Lynch's chapter in *Rethinking Secularism* adds to this discussion by illustrating how the religion/secular divide is disturbed and how these assumed boundaries are partially being redefined, and thus evolving, specifically through the dynamic interactions between religious humanitarianism and global discourses (Lynch 2011, 221).

Current post-secular studies recognize and describe the willingness of political and social actors to include religious perspectives and values to combat moral and ethical practices in International Relations (Haynes 2014, 199), particularly within the field of humanitarianism (Barnett & Stein 2012). Various historical events highlighting the position of religion within politics, economics and social change are a reason for the rising interest in religion and development. Examples of these incidents include: 'the Iranian Revolution of 1979; the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new identities; solidarity movements in Latin America; the emergence of the Christian Right in the USA; and the incidents of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent 'war on terror'' (Lunn 2009, 942). A better understanding of the role of religion is required. The realization of religion's 'enduring relevance and importance of faith in modern

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<sup>3</sup> 'Sanctification of humanitarianism refers to those processes that create a sense of the sacred separate from the profane' (Barnnet & Stein 2012, 24).

life' (Mavelli & Petito 2014, 2) requires rethinking the dominant mind-set on the place of religion in social structures.

Another key incentive that has led to this shifting landscape in aid and development has been globalization motivated by neoliberal ideologies. According to this market-driven tradition, states have increasingly privatized essential social-welfare services over the last decades making them inaccessible for many (Wilson 2014, 220). Wilson (2014) argues that this shifting landscape in aid and development due to neoliberal economic policies has created space for an enhanced role of FBOs in the global aid context to provide services to those in need in the absence of state provision. The increasing renewed significance of religion raises questions that evolve around the possible influence of religious ideas and values on societies and politics and the blurring and blending of the secular and religious. A feature of post-secularism is a plea for new models for politics that embraces religious views.

In addition, post-secularism poses critical questioning of secular values such as democracy, freedom, equality, etc. as exclusive to their worldview (Mavelli & Petito 2012, 931). Rather than necessarily being the best pursued option, secularism has the potential to isolate, dominate and instigate violence and exclusion (Mavelli & Petito 2012, 931). In addition, this reflects the need to address power dimensions, often neglected in mainstream discourse. Post-secular scholars addressed the 'centrality of the secular as a modern epistemic category' and 'secularism as a tool of power of the modern state; on the Eurocentric matrix of secularism and its powerful working in the potential world' (Mavelli & Petito 2012, 932). These discussions advance the need to go beyond secular framing. Post-secular scholars therefore plead for reconsidering 'secular and religious sources of authority, legitimacy and power' and that there is a need for 'new forms of post-secular identities [...] drawing on both secular and religious imaginaries' (Mavelli & Petito 2014, 7).

To conclude, post-secularism refers to a change of mind-set, in which the realization of religion's relevance to modern society has become apparent, whereby additional power dimensions are implied. This explains new understandings of the blurred and overlapping arenas of secular and religious influences and the need for rethinking dominant epistemic models.

### ***3.2 A Post-Colonial Perspective on Development***

Acts of humanitarianism whether in religious or secular forms have been around for centuries. Throughout the European missions as part of the colonial era, the religious and secular were closely intertwined with imperialism and mission-work (Lunn 2009, 943). In this period conversion worked side-by-side with colonizing efforts, and aimed to institutionalize their ‘modern’ policies on various aspects of society (Lynch 2011, 207). Those (particularly religious agents) acting from a humanitarian perspective believed their ‘civilizing’ efforts would improve the lives of local peoples, while at the same time secular agents used religion to legitimize their invasion (Lynch 2011, 207). This belief of improving the living conditions of the local peoples has been the cornerstone of civilising missions and consequently underpins today’s development discourse (Omar 2012, 44). Not surprisingly then ‘most conventional theories and practices of development are still framed within the ambit of the same logic of the civilising mission that synthesises the idea of the supremacy of the West and its dominating relation with the ‘rest’ (Omar 2012, 44).

Contemporary development discourse has further been influenced by Enlightenment ideals and is fundamental to Western modernity. This includes the idea that ‘rationality is capable of improving the world’ (Omar 2012, 43). Since the Cold War, development has been a driving principle central to economic, social, cultural and political policies of most nations worldwide. During this post-war era development mainly entailed achieving economic growth and it was believed that underdeveloped countries could only attain this through support and/or interventions from developed nations (McEwan 2009, 27). This was also the case when the UN ‘took over’ governance responsibility of Cambodia as described earlier. Although this kind of development thinking has been contested and questioned over the last three decades, this idea continues to underpin development discourse till this day (Omar 2012, 42).

Nederveen-Pieterse (2010, 7) points out that development discourse is a historically constructed concept and evolves along with societal transformations. He argues that development discourse has shifted from a focus on economic growth and industrialisation in 1940 towards liberalisation and structural reform in 1980; followed by the current trend that emerged in 2000, namely structural reform as

mirrored in the Millennium Development Goals (Nederveen-Pieterse 2010, 7). The rise of post-structuralism led to undermining this understanding of development as its critiques cast development as being ‘a pervasive cultural discourse with profound consequences for the production of social reality in the Third World’ (Nederveen-Pieterse 2010, 7). In addition, due to the fact that development continuously engages with (post) colonial and (post) conflict countries, post-colonialism scholars have also added significantly to these critiques of development.

Post-colonial studies focus on the persistence of colonial forms of power in contemporary world politics (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2001, 288). Post-colonialism is a very broad and continually changing movement, which in general entails the economical, political, cultural and philosophical reactions to colonialism, its implications and consequences up to the present day (Braeunlein 2014, 1; Hiddleston 2009, 1). Their approaches aim to reveal, criticise and offer resistance to the interests behind knowledge production (Braeunlein 2014, 1; Hiddleston 2009, 1), as well as shift emphasis to the wide range of illegitimate, disqualified or in Foucault’s terms ‘subjugated knowledge’ of decolonized individuals (Omar 2012, 45). Through this, post-colonialism aims to explore and identify how socially constructed categories (e.g. gender, class, race) preserve relations of power and subordination ‘that are expressed, manifested, constituted and legitimized in and by discourses’ (Omar 2012, 45). Thus, a key feature of post-colonialism is that it aims to dismantle ‘the discursive construction of ‘the other’ and strives for the recovery of subjugated and occluded ways of knowledge by focusing on the agency of marginalized societies, ethnic minorities and subaltern subjects’ (Braeunlein 2014, 1). Both the French and Khmer rule albeit in different ways dismantled the subjugated other as discussed in the history chapter.

The book *Orientalism* by Edward W. Said is an example of post-colonial criticism and is considered fundamental to post-colonial theory. In his work, influenced by post-structuralist thinkers, such as Foucault, Said argues that knowledge and power cannot be understood as individual concepts. His work illustrates that Western culture (ranging from art and novels to academic work) and thus knowledge and language is deeply intertwined with European imperialism. Orientalism according to Said is a discourse based on systems of knowledge and political power that mutually enforced

on another in subjugating 'the Other'. This depiction of the 'Other' as inferior to the 'West' serves as a justification for Western domination (Said 1978). Many post-colonial scholars have been inspired by Said's work and have 'linked their analysis of the Western modern project to the history and practice of colonialism' (Omar 2012, 46). Development discourse as a product of Western modernity has often been central to these studies and linked to colonial practices. Post-colonialism is critical and suspicious towards development agendas, as these are often perceived as the dominant, universalizing and arrogant discourses of the West, which propagates its modern values (McEwan 2009, 27) often in post-colonial and post-conflict countries. A major critique is that these development projects seem to suppose that only those that are 'developed' can define and solve development 'issues' (McEwan 2009, 27).

Given its origins and dominant position in e.g. politics and the academic world, development discourse is a representation of a system of ideas, which influences, shapes and maintains certain kinds of conduct relating to social and economic practices (Omar 2012, 47). With regard to Said's work, development is a discourse with 'supporting institutions, vocabularies, scholarships imaginaries and doctrines' (Said 1978, 2) that constructed the underdeveloped 'Other' in opposition to the developed 'West'. Omar states that 'operating in the service of hegemonic powers, the apparatuses of knowledge production (development agencies, professionals, scholarships and so forth) established a totalising discourse that delimited the conditions under which the objects, concepts and strategies were incorporated in its discursive dominion' (Omar 2012, 47). For this reason, resembling orientalist discourse, development is perceived as a type of Western knowledge established with the intention to dominate, reform and have power over the underdeveloped world (Omar 2012, 47).

As described in the above, post-colonialism aims to explore, question and criticize how cultural forms and systems of knowledge justify and support unbalanced power relations and subsequent practices of exclusion and domination over the contrasted 'Other'. Regarding development it seeks to critically reflect on established concepts, interpretations and practices, which inform the development discourse and its processes. This approach provides a framework for analyzing and reflecting on power relations between development organizations such as Western FBOs and those of the

local peoples. In addition, often post-colonial contexts include a history of conflicts and social upheaval that demand development to include post-conflict challenges. These challenges will be explored in the next section.

### ***3.3 Post-Conflict Theory, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation***

Countries that are emerging out of conflict face various challenges on all levels of society (Gellman 2010, 86). Post-conflict refers to countries that have recently put an end to warfare and violent conflict for example by signing a peace-treaty, military triumph or external interventions (IDEA 2003, 12). Such countries often require that former enemies are forced to live together and frequently it is the case that violence continues despite attempts in line with peace settlements (IDEA 2003, 12), as seen in Cambodia.

Post-conflict theories focus on the process of peacebuilding, which has been defined as ‘strategies designed to promote a secure and stable lasting peace in which the basic human needs of the population are met and violent conflicts do not recur’ (Lambourne 2004, 3). This understanding of peacebuilding has a long-term objective, while encompassing the aims of negative peace (absence of physical violence), as well as positive peace (absence of structural violence) (Lambourne 2004, 3). A crucial feature of peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts is reconciliation (IDEA 2003, 11), which has a strong affinity to religion (Bockers et al. 2011, 72). Reconciliation is a complex term and process, which can be interpreted in various ways. A common accepted definition of reconciliation, which fits the purpose of this thesis is: ‘a process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future’, it is a practice that involves seeking for truth, justice, forgiveness and healing in order to overcome developed enmities (IDEA 2003, 12).

As a backward-looking operation, reconciliation brings about the personal healing of survivors, the reparation of past injustices, the building or rebuilding of non-violent relationships between individuals and communities, and the acceptance by the former parties to a conflict of a common vision and understanding of the past. In its forward-looking dimension, reconciliation means enabling victims and perpetrators to get on with life and, at the level of society, the establishment of a civilized political dialogue and an adequate sharing of power. (IDEA 2003, 19)

Furthermore, in order to establish reconciliation, fear needs to be replaced by non-violent coexistence, individuals need to regain confidence and trust and a willingness

to listen and empathy for opposing parties needs to be established (IDEA 2003, 21). However, when structural injustices in the public domain continue to undermine peaceful coexistence, trust and empathy cannot flourish in a sustainable way (IDEA 2003, 21).

Truth and justice<sup>4</sup> are central to reconciliation processes, since reconciliation involves four interdependent mechanisms ‘healing the wounds of the survivors; some form of retributive or restorative justice; historical accounting via truth-telling; and reparation of the material and psychological damage inflicted on the victims’ (IDEA 2003, 23). Stimulating healing, truth seeking, justice and reparation can provide a basis for the different outcomes of the reconciliation process, and they can establish positive circumstances and produce opportunities. It is important to note that processes of reconciliation are subject to cultural and religious beliefs (Lambourne 2004, 3). Given this, methods to attain reconciliation require that they be rooted within the cultural structures concerned (Ciorciari 2009, 303).

### **3.3.1 Potential Role of Religion in Peacebuilding**

Despite claims made by secularist theorists, religion has not declined in either society or in the minds of individuals. Rather within the public domain of various (secular) states, politics and civil society discourse often hold some form of religious influences and for many individuals religion has remained a significant aspect of their life (Shore 2009, 22). Given this, religious peacebuilding advocates state that secularist models for peacebuilding fail, due to their flawed belief that religion is irrelevant for ‘modern’, ‘civilized’ and ‘enlightened’ societies. It is argued that this belief could result in uninformed foreign policies and mediators unqualified to work in contexts where religion is very much prominent and intertwined in daily life (Shore 2009, 22). This belief links to Kippenberg’s concept of framing, which illustrates that actors are guided by religion just as they are by culture. He explains that actions must be understood not as an individual’s motive but as a result of religious ‘framing’ (Kippenberg 2010, 104). He explains how actors have ‘a variety of transmitted beliefs

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Retributive justice entails settlement of one’s accounts involving punishment or revenge. Restitutive justice (or restitution) is the recovery of losses, reparations or compensation to rectify harms. Restorative justice focuses on restoring or healing relationships between conflicting parties’ (Lambourne 2004, 22).



and practical models' from which they select appropriate actions depending on the situation (Kippenberg 2010, 104). For this reason, peacebuilding initiatives should aim to understand the religious beliefs and practices of those they aim to help. One way to stimulate social action is to include religious actors even though attempts may be needed to bridge differences.

Shore has identified the main recurring arguments that advocate the potential of religion in peacebuilding, within the academic field of religious conflict resolution. She uses Appleby's argument to illustrate that religious actors are able to understand the 'ambivalence of the sacred'. This is understood as 'the ability of religion to promote what might be called militancy on behalf of the other, as well as militancy aimed against the other'. This means that religion promotes intolerance and hatred, as well as tolerance of the strongest type—the willingness to live with, explore, and honour differences (Appleby & Little 2004, 2). Given this, religion can fuel conflict as well as inspire peace.

Furthermore, religious actors are able to communicate comprehensible messages as they resonate with their followers and can for this reason constructively contribute to peacebuilding by influencing the behaviour of their followers. This is due to the fact that they have access to strong ethical norms (including their social and moral dimensions) that are part of their religious traditions (Shore 2009, 25). Generally, religious values include some form of 'charitable and sacrificial giving; respect for fellow humans and other living beings; compassion and assistance for the poor and needy in society; the pursuit of equity and justice; and care for the natural environment' (Lunn 2009, 945). As described in the previous paragraph, religious values can be used in a way that is beneficial or harmful for development.

Religious actors and institutions also have other assets, namely, communication infrastructure and their role in civil society. Such assets enable reaching and connecting to many and various peoples ranging from locally situated populations to national and global organizations. Religious actors operate on all levels of society and are situated in every community, including those that have unrivalled rural reach and are located in extremely troubled areas (Lunn 2009, 944). Their representation on the ground can provide legitimacy and be used for effective distribution systems,

particularly during or in the aftermath of conflict (Shore 2009, 24). In addition, religious peacebuilding activities have been specifically acknowledged for providing:

- (1) 'emotional and spiritual support to war-affected communities'; (2) effective mobilisation for 'their communities and others for peace'; (3) mediation 'between conflicting parties'; and (4) a conduit in pursuit of 'reconciliation, dialogue, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration' (Bouta et al., 2005: ix).

The perceptions of religion discussed in this section, illustrate that religion is seen as instrumental and separate from mainstream peacebuilding and development efforts.

### ***3.4 Implications of the Theories for the Research***

Post-secularism, Post-colonialism and Post-conflict theories as discussed above have all shown the need for religious framing in development work by FBOs. Religion is regaining significance and influence on political and social domains particularly in the fields of International Relations and Humanitarianism. This has led to a more inclusive religious/secular discourse, but nevertheless, the concepts of religion and religious/secular framing are complex. Often what is categorized as 'religion' actually refers to that which is 'not secular'. In practice however religious and secular frames are not clear-cut, particularly in non-Western contexts. Buddhism in Cambodia for example is entwined in many aspects of life, whereas in Western countries religion is considered to be more separate. The meaning of religion and secular depend highly on the perspective, as they can mean different things for different people. Another implication of the fact that these theories have been developed from a Western perspective is that they tend to equate religion with Christianity, resulting into Christianity being privileged over other religions such as Buddhism. Furthermore, the diverse strands of faith that exist within religion often remain unacknowledged. There is a need for more research on the implications of religious framing in post-secular development discourse, whilst taking into account possible asymmetrical power relations of peacebuilding and development practices. In addition, exploring religion and religious/secular framing requires an approach that acknowledges a more nuanced reality of the concepts and its implication in non-Western contexts. Considering Cambodia's violent and colonial histories, as well as its infinite experience with aid and development work by NGOs including FBOs, the above theories serve firstly to contextualise this research. Furthermore, this thesis

aims to critically review these theories in the light of the empirical findings. The next chapter explains the research philosophy and strategies adopted in this research.

## **4. A Critical Social Constructivist Approach**

This chapter illustrates approaches and choices made for realizing the objective of the study, namely understanding how religious and secular frames influence the activities of FBOs that work on development in Cambodia and the shortcomings of such assumptions. The research is a qualitative study based on three theoretical methods. These are social constructivism, critical theory and framing. This chapter discusses how these theories of method focus on intersubjective constructions of meaning, which aim to destabilize power structures. As such, the three theories of method are aligned with and support the theoretical theories; post-secularism, post-colonialism and post-conflict theory discussed in the previous chapter. The three theories of method combined form the framework that has been used for this study. Lastly, this chapter addresses the empirical approaches and issues related to the field study (sampling, interviews, ethics, etc.).

### ***4.1 A Qualitative Study***

‘Qualitative research’ as a term captures a wide variety of approaches and methods for research concerned with natural social life. It is of specific relevance to the study of social relations as it aims to describe and sometimes explain social phenomena ‘from the inside’ (Flick 2006, 11; Kvale 2007, xi). Qualitative research demonstrates a variety of perspectives on a topic and starts from the subjective and social meanings related to it. Thus, the focus of qualitative research is on the knowledge and practices of participants (Flick 2006, 11; Kvale 2007, xi). Given this, qualitative studies take into account that various findings might not correlate with one another, since participants have their own subjective perspectives as well as differing social backgrounds (Flick 2006, 16). This study focuses on social actors within the context of post-conflict Cambodia and therefore a qualitative approach is appropriate. The inductive and flexible nature of qualitative data collection methods offers the ability to probe into responses or observations as needed and obtain more detailed descriptions and explanations of experiences, values, behaviours, and beliefs. Through qualitative research methods, one can more directly document why certain specific individuals behave in a certain way, and there is room for participants to make causal connections explicit. Qualitative research approaches also seek to

explore how individuals construct the world around them, what they are doing or what is happening to them in terms that are meaningful and that offer rich insights (Kvale 2007, 10-15). Participant perspectives play a central role in qualitative research and therefore lend itself to the framing study at hand as well as to explore how participants in development work respond to the aid offered by Western faith-based organizations in Cambodia.

The next sections demonstrate how a social constructivist framework combined with critical approach theory and framing theory could contribute to understanding the role of Western faith-based organizations in post-conflict development in Cambodia.

#### **4.1.1 Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism upholds that things come to being because they are historically and socially constructed, through ongoing processes of social practice and interaction, and it emphasizes the social construction of reality and claims that knowledge is constructed rather than created (Jackson & Sorensen 2006, 162). Fundamental to constructivism is that it opposes positivistic, neo-liberalist and neo-realist assumptions as the philosophy argues that, the social world is not a given, does not comply to natural laws that can be discovered, and it is not something that exists independent of the thoughts and ideas of people involved. Constructivists perceive the social world to be an intersubjective consciousness that is constituted by ideas shared among people, 'it is a set of ideas, a body of thought, a system of norms, which has been arranged by certain people at a particular time and place' (Jackson & Sorensen 2006, 163). As such, the social world as an intersubjective domain is meaningful and comprehensible to those that have constructed it. Further, although physical aspects are present and play a role, their significance depends on meanings assigned to them since without meaning they are mere things in themselves (Jackson & Sorensen 2006, 165).

To summarize, social constructivism focuses on the awareness or consciousness of people and how this constructs their social world. The international system is constituted by ideas, not by material forces. Although social constructivism is a very useful philosophy, one of the critiques is that it does not account for power relations among those involved in the construction of social reality and thus presumes equal

power relations (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009, 36). To compensate for this gap a critical theory perspective has been included in the methodology. The following section introduces and elaborates critical theory and its main features.

#### **4.1.2 Critical Theory**

Critical theory is a reflective interpretive method. In social science, a critical theory perspective is mainly concerned with providing phenomena with content and meaning that go beyond the surface. Interpretations include both understanding and explaining (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009, 167), and is also concerned with the theory is concerned with critically questioning social realities (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009, 145). Critical theory demands that when studying social phenomena there has to be a thorough understanding of the historical context of which it is part. (Lunn 2009, 938) This study examines the broader developments within International Relations and the historical context of Cambodia to critically question these social realities. This broader understanding of the context will help ground the empirical findings. When conducting interviews, it is essential to not only gain an understanding of what participants ‘mean, and how we can understand their conception of the world and their way of imparting meaning to themselves and their situation, but also the totality of which they are part and how in combination with subconscious processes, this represents constraints and ‘noise’ in the way meaning is developed and existence is constructed’ (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009, 166). Given this, critical theorists consistently maintain that the dialectical process is necessary to critically reflect on contemporary society and this in turn is an attempt to make explicit underlying structures and asymmetries of power and special interests, and the possibility to initiate change for a different better future (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2009, 145; Lunn 2009, 947).

#### **4.1.3 Framing Analysis**

One way of understanding social constructs is through framing analysis. Scholars from different academic fields have used the concept of framing and frames in various ways (Ensink & Sauer 2003, 3). The widespread usage of the terms could explain why a precise and consistent definition does not exist. In the social sciences, framing refers to sets of theories that investigate how groups and individuals organize,

perceive, conceptualize and communicate about a certain issue (Chong & Druckman 2007, 104). Erving Goffman's (1974) *Frame Analysis* puts forward that individuals actively conceptualize, organize, and interpret experiences in order to make sense of them. What he defines as 'schemata of interpretation', are defined as 'frames' that enable individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' (Goffman 1974, 21) situations or information. Gamson added to this by stating that a frame is a 'central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning' (Gamson & Modigliani 1987, 143) to events regarding an issue.

Druckman (2001, 227) identified that within theoretical literature, 'frames' and 'framing' often refer to two aspects. On the one hand, they 'refer to the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker uses when relaying information to another' (Druckman 2001, 227). The terms then refer to the individual's understanding of a certain context. In the sense that a chosen frame by the speaker may reveal what the speaker sees as relevant to the topic at hand (Druckman 2001, 228). On the other hand, the terms frame and framing can also refer to 'an individual's (cognitive) understanding of a given situation' (Druckman 2001, 228). In this case, a frame is not a property of a communication but describes an individual's perception of a situation; the frame reveals what an individual sees as relevant to understanding a situation. (Druckman 2001, 228) Thus, the concept of framing is used to describe and explain the coherence in knowledge as used for the representation and understanding of reality (Ensink & Sauer 2003, 10-19). Framing analysis complements the proposed framework of social constructivism and critical theory in this study in its attempt to understand how development work by FBOs is constructed, delivered and received by those involved.

## ***4.2 Empirical Research Strategies***

Besides research based on literature, a crucial part of this thesis is centred on fieldwork in Cambodia. The following section discusses the empirical research strategies and certain limitations of the fieldwork.

### **4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method for the study, as the method allows the researcher to set up key themes that function as

guidelines for the interviews (Kvale 2007, 11-22). Subsequently, these key themes are expressed through a number of interview questions, which may vary depending on the interviewee. Along these lines, the researcher can incorporate flexibility in the empirical data collection method while at the same time maintain a clear structure to answer the main research question. Moreover, by using semi-structured interviews probe questions can be used when an answer needs further explanation or to gain insights in specific relationships (Kvale 2007, 65). Using semi-structured interviews allows for rich descriptive data on personal experiences of participants, which is relevant for this research because of its aim to describe whether and how religion is utilized by FBOs in Cambodia. Furthermore, it is also useful to grasp how the local population perceives FBO development work in their country.

#### **4.2.2 Snowball Method**

Interviewees for this study have been selected based on the snowball method. This method is a non-probability sampling technique, where future interviewees are recruited through existing contacts; it is a useful method to reflect on relationships among specific groups. Further reason for choosing this method is that it was difficult to contact people prior to entering the field. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit people that are not easily accessible to researchers, as the method facilitates new and relevant contacts for the researcher (Bryman 2012, 117-203).

While in the Netherlands, initial contact with possible participants in Cambodia was sought through social media. Specifically, by posting a request on a Facebook page for locals and expats living in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Through this several contacts were established. However, it was not until arriving in Cambodia that concrete meetings were planned for interviews. The initial contact was with a Christian Pastor who focuses on the English Christian speaking community in Cambodia. This was a very valuable contact, as his community included many people working in Christian NGOs. After meeting the pastor, valuable interview contacts were established for the research sample of FBOs. Similarly, local interviewees were recruited through established contacts as well.



### 4.2.3 Interviewees

In total, 16 semi-structured interviews were held with 17 participants. These interviewees can be divided in the following groups: those working for Christian FBOs (6 interviewees), locals that have converted to Christianity (3 interviewees), local Buddhist people (8 interviewees), which include a monk and a local interviewee that has adopted both Christianity and Buddhism as his religion. The interviewees range from differing professions and backgrounds. The tables below illustrate the interviewees that have participated in this study. Interview summaries can be found in the appendix (pages 73-122).

Table 1 FBO Interviewees

<b>FBO</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>File Nr.</b>
Refuge for those in need	Dennis	1
Leadership training	Wim Prins	2
ICF Cambodia (sports, hygiene, education)	Sophal Strupler	3
Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL)	Roeung Dara	4
Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL)	Patrick Fung	5
Hannah's Hope Orphanage and Bible School	Phanat Ouch	6

Table 2 Local interviewees

<b>Local Interviewee</b>	<b>Male/Female</b>	<b>File Nr</b>
Yim Sockom	Female Retired Teacher	7
Channaa	Female Waitress	8
Hun Srey Nung	Female Administration	9
Anonymous	Female Restaurant manager	10
Anonymous	Female Administration	11
Sna	Male Tourguide	12
Rambo	Male Taxi Driver	13
Vandett & Dang	Male/Male Waiters	14
Anonymous Monk Wat Damnak	Male	15
Bunthoeng Chhaa	Male Waiter	16

#### **4.2.4 Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is often used to analyze issues within the field of social sciences (Alvesson & Skölberg 2009, 230). The theoretical background of the method is social constructivism. As such, discourse analysis focuses on understanding the construction of social reality and how it can be studied in discourses that include certain objects or processes (Flick 2006, 326). The analysis is concerned with the context, inconsistencies and constructions of the discourse (Flick 2006, 326), in which language is seen as social interaction used to construct the social world (Alvesson & Skölberg 2009, 230). Discourse analysis is a useful method for understanding the relation with the discourse and its context. The method assumes that people actively communicate through language that is readily available to them. Further, people actively and continuously select words and meaning constructions, while rejecting others. Lastly, the construction that is chosen has its consequences (e.g. it produces or influences ideas and responses) (Alvesson & Skölberg 2009, 232).

This research employs discourse analysis and its assumptions to analyze the interviews and interpret these while taking into account the context in which the discourse is embedded. The collected data from the fieldwork will be analyzed by looking at religious and secular frames that have been identified by using various indicators. These indicators have been based on the theories and the collected interview data. Examples of indicators used to identify secular frames refer to *reason*, *efficiency*, *progress* etc. For religious frames indicators were used such as *transcendental truth claims*, *religious experiences*, *separation of the sacred and profane* etc. A more elaborate description about the indicators and how they have been established can be found in the section (4.3) Analysing Development Frames. The religious and secular frames provide a framework to analyse the findings of the fieldwork in order to establish whether and how these frames of local and international actors influence the activities and orientations of FBOs in Cambodia.

#### **4.2.5 Research Limitations**

The research limitations required travelling from the Netherlands to Cambodia, which restricted data collection to a short span of time as well as the financial constraints. This implied that the sample was 17 interviewees that limited representation of FBOs and the capture of perceptions of locals. The empirical

findings, although limited in scope, provided sufficient insights into FBOs in non-Western contexts to engage with existing post-colonial, post-conflict and post-secular theories.

In addition, the interviewees came from various parts of the country and for the FBOs from different parts of the world and were currently all living in Siem Reap. This is especially relevant considering that Siem Reap's economy is primarily focused on tourism. The majority of the local interviewees earned a living in the tourism sector. This should be taken into consideration, as interviewees were well aware of the fact that the interviewer was a foreigner. When asked about challenges in Cambodia, the interviewees might have had their reservations in exploring these issues. Tourism for many is a primary source of income and therefore discussing negative aspects of the country might be perceived as unfavourable for their businesses' or careers.

Furthermore, every researcher has limitations that are unavoidable as was the case in this study. Challenges in this research related to being a non-native researcher, language and being of a different culture played a role, especially while conducting interviews with locals. A way of dealing with these issues was to include input from a local in the construction of the interview questions and practice the interviews. In addition, a translator was asked to assist with two interviews, which involved additional difficulties such as the interpretation of the translator. Furthermore, a female university-level researcher practically fluent in English could come across as intimidating. While many of the local interviewees had some form of education, this was often limited to a high-school level education.

#### ***4.3 Analysing Development Frames***

The next sections discuss the various frames in discourse with regard to development. These frames provide a framework, which will be used to analyse the findings of the fieldwork. The first two sections discuss how secular and religious frames in development discourse can be identified as explained in the literature. This will be followed by the secular and religious frames identified in the fieldwork, in order to establish whether and how these frames of local and international actors influence the activities and orientations of FBOs in Cambodia.

### 4.3.1 Secular Frames

Ager & Ager (2011, 460) state that secular frames appeal to ‘protocols of universal reason’. They argue that the secular model, which has expanded to various social contexts, regulates the public domain by reason. Given this, those who adhere to more than reason as truth are essentially excluded. In addition, the scholars state that by putting reason forward as universal, secularism exhibits materialist features in the sense that ‘only that which is materially verifiable is deemed reasonable’ (Ager & Ager 2011, 459). As such, materialism, specifically liberal materialism, becomes the constitutive ideology of secularism (Ager & Ager 2011, 459). Secular frames reduce the value of religion to materialist terms such as *social capital*, *community cohesion*, *mobilization* and *social construction* (Ager & Ager 2011, 460). Besides reason secular principles are associated with liberal, enlightenment values of freedom and self-determination (Ager & Ager 2011, 466).

Furthermore, like post-colonial theories, as described in the theoretical chapter, Ager & Ager illustrate that humanitarian discourse shares similarities with colonialism. Both impose a linear narrative that requires human progress. Colonial rulers focused on ‘civilizing’ people, whereas similarly today’s humanitarian discourse involves ‘developing’ the ‘underdeveloped’ (Ager & Ager 2011, 463). As implied in the word ‘development’, the term involves progress. This progress however is defined by the inferior party and is often perceived as a process of emulation. Ager & Ager add to post-colonial theories, by stating that religion often is perceived as a sign of underdevelopment, unsuccessful progress to reason, or serves as a hindrance to progress towards reason (Ager & Ager 2011, 463). These features of secular discourse are also identified in Lynch’s work.

Lynch (2011, 214) states that humanitarian NGOs, which include FBOs, are influenced by liberal market practices. Lynch explains that NGOs must continuously prove their mandate according to ‘Approved models of action’, which ‘include result-oriented market discourses that value and prioritize accountability, efficiency, results, and ‘sustainability’ (Lynch 2011, 214). These discourses are evident in NGOs their programming, marketing approaches and annual reports. Lynch argues that within the field of humanitarianism a globalized discourse has been established, with signifying words such as *training*, *capacity building* and *partnerships* that categorize the work of

NGOs (Lynch 2011, 21). These words, which are used by almost every NGO, 'are intimately tied to metrics of progress and achievement' (Lynch 2011, 214) and secular values of efficiency and professionalization (Barnett & Stein 2012, 29).

#### **4.3.2 Religious Frames**

As discussed in earlier literature, religion and religious frames are social products that represent the group or society, as they involve the highest ideals and goals that transcend a group of individuals. Furthermore, central to religion is that there are rules and practices that separate the sacred from the profane. According to Peter Berger's (Berger 1967, 26) definition of religion, as described in the introductory chapter, religious frames include the importance of the function of the sacred in relation to chaos. Therefore, religious frames include the search for meaning, which help people avoid a sense of existential sufferings.

Since FBOs are inspired and motivated by their faith, their frame of reference is larger than just humanitarian concerns (Ferris 2005, 316-317). In the literature on humanitarianism and faith, a Christian/Protestant perspective on religion includes characteristics such as 'an appeal to supernatural entities, conversion experiences, doctrines, rituals, understandings of the meaning of suffering, distinctions between the sacred and profane, and so on' (Barnett & Stein 2012, 15), bearing in mind that not all of these aspects need to be present to be considered a religion. Within the field of humanitarianism, religious frames are influenced by these characteristics. Given this, religious frames are often concerned with meaning, religious experiences, truth claims beyond science and falsifiable reason, acts of compassion and charity (Barnett & Stein 2012, 25), and values such as obedience, sacrifice and communitarianism (Ager & Ager 2011, 460-466). Although religious frames have varied depending on time and contexts, Lynch states that *human dignity*, or in Charles Taylor's terms *human flourishing*, has been a 'common conceptual thread' (Lynch 2011, 206). These concepts refer to 'the ability of people to fulfil meaningful aspirations beyond mere subsistence' (Lynch 2012). Hence, *references to meaning, transcendental truth claims, religious experiences, the separation of the sacred and profane and values* that have been mentioned this section will be considered 'religious' frames.

### 4.3.3 Inductive Secular and Religious frames

This section will focus on secular and religious frames, as they were induced from the collected data, these could point to more specific differences on the individual and religious level and therefore also the specific manifestations of religious and cultural framings within humanitarianism in Cambodia.

The interviewees that represented some of the FBOs in Cambodia used both religious and secular frames in their discourse. The following phrases are considered religious as they refer to something transcendental, sacred, or a truth other than that which can be scientifically proven. These include: *miraculous healings, religious experiences, a relationship with God and/or Christ, the gospel, being blessed or cursed, faith and the bible*. The next terms are identified as religious frames that relate to principal values and spiritual development, according to the interviewees. These involve the growth and maturity of an individual namely; *to be honest, control your temper, forgiveness, repenting bad habits, salvation, be tender hearted, accountable and encourage, serve and love others*. Other values that were mentioned during the interviews were *discipline, justice and righteousness*. These can be framed in both secular and religious terms, however in this case the context in which these terms were used, namely to teach the people these values by bringing the gospel, they have been religiously framed.

In addition, as discussed earlier secular frames refer to reason, effectiveness, growth and achievement. The interviewees working for FBOs used certain secular frames in their discourse which were identified through their use of terms like; *social action, social mobility, employment, empowerment, the law and government, training leaders and connecting those people with the outside world (out of their village)*. Other secular frames used by the interviewees, referred to practical forms of development such as: *provide to basic needs (e.g. water), education and literacy, sports activities, health/hygiene education, income generation, financial support, teach vocational skills and English*. The frames that have been identified in this chapter will be used for the analysis of the fieldwork in the following chapter.

## Conclusion

To summarize, this qualitative research combines the research approaches social constructivism, critical theory and framing analysis in order to understand how FBO work in Cambodia is constructed, delivered, received by those involved. As such the focus is on understanding and explaining how people construct their social world based on a thorough understanding of the historical context and power structures. The empirical section discussed the fieldwork with regard to the features of the interviews, and the overall limitations of the study such as time, financial and interviewer restrictions.

In order to understand the relation between the collected data from interviews and the context in which it is embedded, this research employs discourse analysis. The collected data from the fieldwork will be analyzed in the next chapter by looking at how the religious and secular frames have been used and influence the work of the Christian FBOs that have participated in this research. The frames have been established through indicators induced from the discussed theories and the conducted interviews. This section illustrated that secular frames refer to *reason, effectiveness, growth and achievement*, and religious frames refer to *something transcendental, sacred, or a truth other than that which can be scientifically proven*. These religious and secular frames provide a framework to analyse the findings of the fieldwork in order to establish whether and how these frames of local and international actors influence the activities and orientations of FBOs in Cambodia.

## **5. Religious and Secular Frames in Development Discourse**

This chapter analyses the empirical findings using the religious and secular frames as discussed in the previous chapter. It explores to what extent FBOs in Cambodia are influenced by religious and secular frames and if there is any sensitivity to the local context. It will do so by firstly discussing the responses by the FBO participants, this is followed by the responses of the local interviewees whilst reflecting on the post-colonial, post-conflict and post-secular theories.

### ***5.1 Faith-Based Organisations' Perceptions***

When discussing the challenges Cambodia is facing, all of the interviewees stated that poverty, a lack of knowledge, education and opportunities are key issues in the country. These challenges according to the FBO respondents are to some extent linked to the country's history of violence (as described in the historical chapter), governance, established culture of dependency linked to the influx of NGOs, and mentality of the population focusing on short-term survival, as described by many of the participants. During the interviews it became clear that all the FBOs are inspired and motivated by their faith, even as each FBO differs in its approach towards these challenges. The role of religion was also shown to vary in their activities. Similarities and differences of secular and religious frames were also evident in their discourse and will be discussed and interpreted in this next section.

#### **5.1.1 Religious Discourse**

To better understand how FBOs frame their activities, the interviewees were asked about their perceptions of development and how this linked to their faith. Answers that were given to these questions were for example that development to them included living according to the Bible, obeying the gospel and serving those in need. Their discourse therefore showed that their motivation and inspiration are framed in religious terms. At the same time however, they indicated that their perception of development also involved secular terms. There was one exception whereby one of the interviewees insisted that development did not have any secular notion.

‘My belief is by bringing the gospel to the people [...] is to get not only people saved but through this they will know the real values that is pleasing to God and apply the justice of God into their live and into their family life



and in their working places and by doing that they will be more and more pleasing to God and if something is pleasing to God, in the old testament it says that God will bless us' (Interview Dennis, June 13, 2015).

His religious motivation dominates his perception of development and the activities of his organization. However, the prevalent perceptions of development among the FBO interviewees were more secular in their framing, for example by focusing on aspects of capacity building. For most of the interviewees, education and creating job opportunities were top priorities, as they believed that the lack of knowledge and education are major issues that are hindering development of Cambodia. The root of these issues are related to the elimination of the highly educated elite, as was described in the historical chapter. In addition, the interviewees explained that it is often difficult for locals to prioritize education over financial considerations. Poverty levels are often so low that everyone in the family has to contribute; this also reinforces the short-term survival mentality of the population as described by the interviewees. Furthermore, according to the respondents there is a lot of corruption on many levels of society including in politics and government. An interviewee explained that Cambodian people often get into contact with corruption at a young age. For example, it is not uncommon for children to have to pay their teacher to pass a class (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015). This perpetuates throughout a lifetime and subsequently can have serious consequences for the character, integrity and morality of the population (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015). These observations by the participants correlate with the assumptions made by post-conflict theorists. Such assumptions discuss how post-conflict countries can develop a culture of impunity. This will be further elaborated on in the discussion of this analysis. An interviewee stated he faces difficulties in trusting locals, especially because of the prevalent temptation of money (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015). Similarly, the interviewee of ICF described that she also faced difficulties with trusting her local staff.

'We have an employee a local, and she lied to us and we didn't get why she lied. [...] We found out they [locals] had to survive, they had to survive during the war so lying was not an issue [...] lying in Switzerland is a no-go. You don't lie to your boss, but here it is more accepted because they have to survive' (Interview Strupler, June 14, 2015).

The interviewees perceive corruption, bribery and dishonesty as big issues in Cambodia and feel that part of their work involves addressing these issues. Also, all

interviewees described how there is a culture of dependency in Cambodia due to the influx of NGOs. There is a strong sense among the FBO respondents of wanting to avoid creating dependency. Interviewee Prins addresses this in the following quote.

‘We are a bit careful with financial gifts because it tends to create long-term dependency. You need to know in Cambodia, they have what they call a patron-client relationship. So often friendships are made with the understanding that one of them is the patron and the other is the client. So the patron provides certain privileges and the client has certain obligations but also enjoys protection of a sort. That can be social protection or financial protection or whatever, and foreigners they have to play that game as well, whether they want to or not. So if you extend a loan once, you are considered a patron. So whenever they have another financial problem you will be looked to in order to help them solve the problem’ (Interview Prins, June 15, 2015).

Prins links the culture of dependency to the patron-client feature he believes is part of the Cambodian culture as a result of the Khmer Rouge atrocities and consequent influx of NGO’s. He states that financial aid requires careful consideration, as it can create expectations and dependency. These assumptions made by Prins on patron-client relationships as part of Cambodian culture will be discussed further in the next chapter, which will provide an elaborate analysis of the findings presented here. Other FBO respondents also mentioned that financial aid is not a preferred approach for development. A phrase that often came up during various interviews is that the aim is to: ‘teach them how to fish, rather than give them a fish’, as evident in this following quote:

‘It is more like if you give somebody a fish they can feed themselves for one day and we want to train him how to fish so they can feed himself and eat everyday that is more our perspective. So we help financially in some part, [...], but we don’t give endless money, but more in values or be part of the family or in character issues we help, but not financially’ (Interview Strupler, June 14, 2015).

As depicted in the above quote, financial aid is not central to the activities of FBOs, rather their aim is to empower locals and focus on psychological needs, such as belonging, character traits and values. In the discourse of FBOs the source of values and moral principles were connected to the gospel and the word of God. When describing character building and or changing mind-sets as part of development work, notions such as what is right and wrong, taking responsibility, to be accountable and learning values were used. These notions come from the personal

and religious framings of the interviewees based on Christian beliefs. Religious frames therefore define and motivate their perceptions of development discourse. FBO interviewees perceived their work as going beyond that of NGOs. The following is an example of development from a Christian perspective:

‘From a biblical perspective, and to use a medical image, if a person suffers from appendicitis, we feel called to do more than just alleviate the pain. We need to address root causes, not just external symptoms’ (Interview Prins, June 15, 2015).

This quote shows how mere social action is not seen as being sufficient. It was advocated that development should be a combination of social action and spiritual development, which was defined as holistic development (Interview Prins, June 15, 2015). This illustrates that the interviewee makes a clear distinction between social action and spiritual aid. As such, a separation is made between aid that is ‘secular’ and aid that transcends this form of development, which is regarded as a ‘religious’ development approach. Religious development according to the interviewee addresses root causes and thus goes beyond the needs that secular social action can address.

The emphasis on spiritual development among FBOs framed as explicitly Christian offers some insight into the relation between FBOs and mainly Buddhist environment in Cambodia. When spiritual development is mentioned by interviewees there is no indication of Buddhist development, rather the Christian framing of development is implied. None of the FBOs so far has had a relationship with the Buddhist community, except for the missionary Prins. Different reasons were given for this. Most FBOs stated that they were willing to interact with the Buddhist community, however Christianity according to interviewees Prins and Ouch is regarded by locals as a ‘white men’s religion’, something foreign, which is not necessarily bad, but just not what works for them. Ouch stated that Buddhist people might be scared, as he has experienced locals avoiding entering the church:

‘For example, the church building they are scared or something, they don’t even want to come into the building, they [the local postmen] give the electricity bill, they always leave it at the neighbours’ (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015).

Prins, who has visited monks in the pagoda, goes there to listen and learn about Buddhism. He stated that these visits were not a dialog and he felt limited when

talking about Christianity. He observed monks would often react uncomfortably when Christianity was introduced in the conversation.

The interviewees brought up some of their perceptions of Buddhism in relation to Christianity. With the exception of Fung who sees common values like love, service and faith in both Christianity and Buddhism, the FBO interviewees stress there are deep differences (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015). One difference mentioned is that Christianity means you subscribed to the word of God and that it is not based on intrinsic enlightenment as practiced in Buddhism (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015).

‘Buddhism teaches that you don’t need God you don’t need anybody you can depend on yourself your reasons, you are enlightened meditate, find out. Whereas Christianity is different, it is the opposite it is not in men, God is the source of our wisdom and he will show you the way’ (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015).

Another interviewee stated that the relationship with God in Christianity, in terms of salvation through Christ only, was not to be compared to Buddhism (Interview Prins, June 15, 2015). In addition, due to the cultural past the Buddhist religion in Cambodia is a mixture of Buddhism, Hinduism and local practices, implying no purity or consistency in religious practice and as such development is obstructed (Interview Dennis, June 13, 2015). This statement shows that the issue of purity reflects a definition of religion specific to the interviewee, which reinforces the lack of consensus on defining religion. By stating there is a form of ‘pure’ Buddhism the interviewee makes a power claim, as he decides what is a ‘pure’ religion. As the interviewee states that Buddhism in Cambodia is not ‘pure’, the interviewee devaluates Buddhism in Cambodia. There is both implicit and explicit judgement of Buddhist locals, as a result of the religious framing of development by interviewees in this study.

### **5.1.2 Secular discourse**

There are also some examples where not religious, but secular frames were more dominant in the activities of the FBOs. ICF for example, keeps the NGO separate from the church. The NGO organizes huge sport events (e.g. bike races), accessible to anyone who is willing to participate. Another example is CHL, a school that provides English classes. In this school they do not preach or discuss Christianity, even though their themes are centred on love and hope. They also mentioned that, although

Christianity is not central to their activities, bibles can be found in the back of the classroom. A volunteer working for the school stated that faith is certainly motivating, but not the focus. Having a clear picture of what obstacles locals face is more important than Christian faith (Interview Fung, June 17, 2015). CHL's main activity, teaching English comes from a development perspective in line with secular ideas, which supports employment opportunities. This becomes clear with the following statement made by the director of the school:

'The only way for my NGO is focus on education, I focus on English, computer and vocational skills. In Cambodia you have English and computer skills it is easy to get a job. Without it, it is difficult. University is not important to get a job, because when you finish university government does not provide a job for you, but if you have English and computer skills then it is easy to work in a hotel or as businessman or in a company. It is easy then to get a job' (Interview Dara, June 22, 2015).

This respondent's perspective matches with the perceptions of the locals who were interviewed, as they repeatedly emphasized the importance of learning English. This need for English classes among locals can be explained, as tourism is a driving force of the economy. The director of CHL wishes to expand the FBO's activities with 6 more programs of which only 1 will be explicitly religious. This project, named Happy Family Healthy Home, will teach family members various Christian values to strengthen relations and mend broken marriages (Interview Dara, June 22, 2015). The other programmes will vary from computer skills to agriculture programmes, thus similarly based on developing employment opportunities.

With regard to secular frames in development work, administrative issues were a dominant concern to these FBOs. Fines, harassment, legal liability, or even closure of an organization is not uncommon when operating as an unregistered NGO. The director of CHL stated; registering at the Ministry of Interior was very important, it means the government approves of the activities of the NGO. Furthermore, it allows for travelling abroad for fundraising, which is crucial for the NGO according to the interviewee (Interview Dara, June 22, 2015). Every 5 years the government audits the organization to see if improvements have been made, after which they can decide to close down the NGO. The interviewee stressed that his organization is in great need of finding new sponsors in order to continue and realize the new programmes. In addition, the director also wishes to get foreign experts from various fields to connect

with students and staff to teach and inspire them. Moreover, background checks were another administrative aspect emphasized by the respondents of the FBOs Hannah's Hope and CHL. The director of CHL explained that all students have to fill in registration forms; 'it is important to know their background, to know what they believe, how they live with the family, if they are poor or orphan' (Interview Dara, June 22, 2015). The emphasis on registration procedures illustrates the influence of secular frames in the work of FBOs.

To give another example, the interviewee of FBO Hannah's Hope stated that besides having an orphanage and a bible school, they also have projects where they install purifiers to provide free drinking water around villages in the countryside. The interviewee described that villagers are often suspicious towards their staff in the beginning. Once they see that their efforts are changing people's life for the better, like when they realize they can drink water without getting sick, they start to warm up to them (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015). Besides getting into contact with locals, providing drinking water also helps in terms of getting sponsorships. This water project according to the interviewee is well liked by sponsor organizations and helped to get recommendations for new sponsorships (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015). This shows that secular framing and activities carried out are also linked to demands of sponsorships and donors.

## ***5.2 Perceptions of Locals***

Part of this study aimed to gain an understanding of how locals perceive the work and activities of Western Christian FBOs in their country. The majority of locals that were interviewed were Buddhist; other interviewees were those who converted to Christianity, except for one interviewee who embraced both religions. This section discusses the discourse of these locals with regard to their perceptions of development work and the role of Christian FBOs in Cambodia.

When asked about challenges Cambodia is facing, interviewees gave various answers. Albeit not always explicit, the themes of poverty and lack of education were mentioned in all of the interviews as important issues in Cambodia. Interviewees linked the issues of poverty and lack of education as illustrated in this next quote.

'There are still many poor people and some of the children they don't go to school cause their family hasn't got any possibility to help them to go to school. Although the school is free for the children, but they have to help the

family to work. And when the children start working since they were so young, they feel most of them don't feel like wanting to learn more and just try to earn money to save themselves and family. They feel money is more important than studying' (Interview Sna, June 25, 2015).

The interviewees shared the belief described above and gave similar examples that illustrate how poverty is a factor that contributes to the lack of education. The majority of interviewees also discussed that drugs, alcohol abuse and as a consequence fights that can lead to killings were problems they perceived. One of the interviewees explained that violence is an issue in her village because; 'If people are bored they party and drink too much beer. Sometimes it is violence in families and sometimes in general' (Interview Yim Sockom, June 23, 2015). A monk that was interviewed also stated that alcohol and drugs are a problem in Cambodia.

'A lot of people go and work in Thailand and Vietnam there they will get drugs and spread it over Cambodia. This is very difficult to control and because of the drugs and alcohol there are a lot of fights, and even killings' (Interview Monk Wat Damnak, June 23, 2015).

Different interviewees (Rambo, Vandett, Radang and Channaa) also addressed violence, but particularly mentioned violence in terms of marital conflicts. Their thoughts on violence share similarities and is captured in the following quote by one of the interviewees:

'There are some problems between men and women. For example, some have problems like that the husband has another girlfriend and also the other way around then with the wife. Sometimes there are beatings and sometimes they even kill one another' (Interview Channaa, June 24, 2015).

Marital conflicts that lead to violent outburst or even killings are a major problem in Cambodia according to these interviewees. They feel that these marital issues also have a negative effect on the youth of Cambodia. Parents are not setting a good example and they are often also absent in the lives of their children. The interviewees stated that without parents, the children are forced to focus on making money, which can lead to criminal behaviour (Interviewee Vandett, 24 June, 2015). One of the interviewees felt that speaking freely against the government is a problem in Cambodia, she stated:

'Sometimes it is easy to live in Cambodia, but sometimes it is not, because the government sometimes does not do the right things for the people. There are big problems in Phnom Penh. Like when there are protests against the government, they [protestors] end up in the hospital. You cannot speak against the government' (Interview Channaa, June 24, 2015).

The other local interviewees did not mention the government when discussing challenges in Cambodia. They put forward that the main issues the country faces are a lack of water, low employment and income (especially during the raining season), theft, land disputes, traffic accidents, illegal logging and fishing. When asked what has been done to address these issues, an interviewee stated that the measures taken are mere short-term solutions: ‘The government thinks about these problems but they only have little resources to solve it, there is a need for more long-term solutions to solve such problems’ (Interviewee anonymous, June 11, 2015). Another interviewee stated: ‘NGOs try to solve problems in Cambodia, but they do work related to human rights. I am not sure if this is a problem, but it could be a problem’ (Interviewee Hun Srey Nung, June 23, 2015). Local interviewees seem to stress basic needs relating to safety, economic and social well being that could eradicate poverty and accelerate development.

Every interviewee was aware of international and local NGOs working on development in Cambodia. All of them had acquaintances, either a relative or someone from their village, who received help or was connected to an NGO in some way. They perceived that NGOs help the poor or orphaned people in Cambodia by providing them with food, clothing and education. This is very much appreciated as evidenced by the following quotes:

‘I think it [help from NGOs] is very important because we are thankful to these organization that spend all valuable time to help Cambodia. Especially on the education system, this is very important. [...] If no education country cannot get better and peaceful. But now it is developing, now Cambodia is one of the developing country’ (Interview Sna, June 24, 2015).

‘NGO is good that they help, they provide a good chance for her [referring to her relative]. I think if she goes live with them [the NGO] she will get an education and get more opportunities. Because she is poor she should try to get a chance to study cause education can change her life’ (Interview Hun Srey Nang, June 23, 2015).

Besides the appreciation for the work of NGOs, these quotes also illustrate that education is perceived as highly important for the development of the country, a factor that can lead to positive change on a individual, as well as, societal level.

Despite the fact that all interviewees were familiar with NGOs, it was not the case for Christian FBOs. Those that were aware of Christian FBOs, described that these



organizations help people in need. For example Yim Sockom a retired teacher stated that in her village Christian organizations help people that have HIV, are orphaned or poor by providing rice and education (Interview Yim Sockom, June 23, 2015). Similarly, an anonymous interviewee observed in her village that Christian organizations have helped a lot of people by giving things and building houses. However, she believed that the people that had received help had to become Christian, of which she disapproved (Interview anonymous, June 16, 2015). The interviewee who defines himself as both Buddhist and Christian described how Christian FBOs have helped people by giving rice, teaching about hygiene and building houses for the poor. His older brother joined a Japanese Christian Church and NGO; because of this his brother was able to get an education, which has helped him to become a tour guide (Interview Rambo, June 26, 2015). The following quote captures how these interviewees perceive Christian FBOs: ‘It is good that they [Christian FBOs] come, but when they pass on their religion this is a little bad because they ask to choose Catholic’ (Interview Rambo, June 26, 2015). The interviewees do not mind help provided by Christian FBOs, however it does become a problem when people are forced to take on Christianity or give up their Buddhist beliefs. This view was also observed among the large expatriate NGO community present in Cambodia. When bringing up the topic of Christian FBOs, most Western expats had a strong dislike towards FBOs. FBOs were often associated with ‘conversion through coercion’ and exploiting the vulnerability of the locals. The perceptions of the local respondents however, indicate that there is a need for development work, but are not concerned about the religious and secular identities of the aid organizations. Rather than a focus on religious or secular frames in development work, locals are more concerned with the autonomy of self-determination in religious choices. This once more raises the question whether the religious/secular lens in development theories makes sense in non-Western contexts.

The local interviewees that have embraced Christianity however, were fully supportive of the activities of Christian FBOs. They have seen and experienced how these FBOs have changed lives for the better. The interviewees described how FBO development work has helped by providing material objects such as food, clothes and books for education, while also providing for spiritual needs. An interviewee

explained that the first time he came to the church everyone was singing, but he did not understand what was happening. After a conversation with the pastor he came to understand that ‘music washes away the bad things in life’ (Interview Vandett, June 24, 2015). The interviewee stated he had gone through some difficult times and was troubled, he felt this was the reason why he could not sing. There were different roads he could take, but he was afraid he would choose the wrong way. The pastor helped him to choose the right path and as such enabled him to sing. The following quote from the interviewee illustrates how the FBO, which is a school and a church, works on development in terms of social action and spiritual development:

‘The Freedom School [Christian FBO] give them the stuff for study or they can tell the mother why it is important to go to school. I like the Freedom School. They are like a family so they have an attitude that we are like a family and you have a friend many friends like a family. [...] He [child that attends FBO] looks different and friendly than other kids that do not go to church, because they sing and the attitude change. They know how to talk to a friend and contact to a friend. They have a better attitude’ (Interview Vandett, June 24, 2015).

This interviewee refers to the Freedom School FBO as being like a family. The notion of family clearly indicates that the school is perceived in terms of social belonging. The emphasis on singing and a change of attitude for the better after joining the church illustrates the interviewees’ perceptions of the spiritual development the FBO enables. According to the interviewee, the church teaches people how to grow up with God and learn about making the right choices in life. Development offered by FBOs meets the need of locals in terms of social belonging next to material concerns. This example shows effective forms of development do not necessarily need to be secular.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter illustrated how both religious and secular frames played a role in the activities and orientations of the Christian FBOs that participated in this study. Interviewees (both from FBOs and locals) stated that poverty and lack of education are the major challenges Cambodia is facing. Even though education is usually free, poverty levels are often so low that everyone in the family has to contribute. The interviewees representing FBOs were all motivated and inspired by their faith. In their activities, faith manifested itself in various ways. For one FBO religious frames were

very dominant in its activities and orientations<sup>5</sup>. This FBO strongly focused on the spiritual development, with the intention to change the minds of Cambodian people to teach them ‘real’ values determined by the Gospel, other values are not considered true values (Interview Dennis, June 13, 2015). The other FBO respondents described how both religious and secular frames have a role in their activities. Given this, although FBO respondents used explicit religious discourse and frames, it was not exclusive as secular frames were also evident. Central to the role of the FBOs, apart from CHL, was character building and teaching values. In the discourse of FBOs the source of values and moral principles were connected to the gospel and the word of God. When discussing their relations with the local Buddhist communities there seem to be hardly any interactions or dialog. The interviewees put forward that locals appear to be uncomfortable or even scared. A difference between Buddhism and Christianity mentioned by FBOs is that Christianity means subscribing to the word of God rather than based on intrinsic enlightenment, as practiced in Buddhism.

The perceptions of Buddhist locals showed that they are appreciative towards foreign organizations aiming to help people in need. Local respondents stress on basic needs relating to safety, economic, social well being and education that could eradicate poverty and accelerate development, reflecting that for local people development in terms of material concerns are key. Respondents indicated that religious or secular motivations for aid organizations were not important, instead of a focus on religious or secular frames in development work locals are more concerned with the autonomy of self-determination in religious choices. However, those that have converted are fully supportive of the activities of the FBOs, even though it meant choosing Christianity over Buddhism. The respondent felt that the FBO provided for development needs, which include material concerns. This illustrated that the most effective forms of development do not necessarily need to be secular. Whether aid is provided by religious or secular organizations is of inferior importance to addressing basic needs.

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<sup>5</sup> In this instance the statement of the interviewee equates the FBOs position, since the interviewee was the only one in charge of running the FBO.

## **6. FBOs and Development in Cambodia**

The previous chapter illustrated how both religious and secular frames play a role in the activities and orientations of FBOs in Cambodia. The following chapter will explore how the theories of post-secularism, post-colonialism and post-conflict link to the empirical findings of the research within the historical context of Cambodia.

### ***6.1 Post-secularist assumptions and development practice***

Post-secular literature discussed how globalization motivated by neoliberal ideologies has led to shifting landscapes in the field of humanitarianism. As a consequence essential social welfare services have been privatized and as a result become inaccessible to many (Wilson 2014, 223). This has enhanced the role of FBOs in the global aid context according to Wilson (2014, 221). Nevertheless, their enhanced role does not necessarily mean that these organizations can work independently, as they are required to continuously prove their merit towards governments and donors (Lynch 2011, 214). The worthiness of such NGOs and FBOs are measured according to approved models of action framed in secular terms (Lynch 2011, 214). However, due to the historical events in Cambodia NGOs have played an important role in providing social welfare services since the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime and the Paris Agreements of 1991. NGOs including FBOs, have significantly contributed to rehabilitating and developing Cambodia. The broad scope of their activities touches upon nearly all sectors of development, as well as, every level of society. NGOs have been relatively free from government scrutiny in determining their aims and objectives. However, the Cambodian government has indicated that they wish to be more involved and gain control in terms of determining the focus of development activities. This differs from the described process in the literature, stating that FBOs are gaining an enhanced role due to the withdrawal of governments in terms of providing social welfare services. However, in both cases the FBOs are becoming increasingly subject to government demands albeit in different forms. As illustrated the reasons for this difference is the contexts in which these processes take place. Furthermore, these theories based their findings on Western perspectives and even societies, where state and religion have been separated. Unlike Western societies, Cambodia does not spiritually or institutionally separate religion

and state. Although the Khmer Rouge aimed to exterminate Buddhism in Cambodia, Theravada Buddhism has prevailed as the national religion, with a following of more than 90% of its population. Like many other societies where humanitarians operate, the distinction between state and religion or between secular and religious has no meaning (Barnett & Stein 2012, 22) in Cambodia. This has been shown in the discussion of the local respondents perception of FBOs and development work.

Moreover, as discussed in the theoretical chapter a dynamic relationship exists between the secular and religious and that both shape one another (Barnett & Stein 2012, 8; Casanova 2011, 54). Secularizing trends were evident in the work of two FBOs, namely CHL and Hannah's Hope. CHL described that the government requires NGOs to register at the Ministry of Interior. Although CHL needs this registration, in order to gain funding, the bureaucratized measures influence their activities as the NGO has to prove its mandate every 5 years. In addition, both CHL and Hannah's Hope identified the importance of registering those they provide with help. Reasons for emphasizing registration procedures could be to show donors the efficiency and relevance of their work. It can be argued that the focus on these bureaucratic procedures come at a cost of reduced religious activities including offering help to those in need. The need for sponsorship reduces the sacred as everyday practices increasingly interfere in their activities (Barnett & Stein 2012, 23). Also, projects such as providing water purifiers in villages helps with getting sponsorships, this illustrated that secular framing and activities carried out are linked to demands of sponsorships and donors. According to Lynch (2012), neoliberalization of development landscapes has led to drastic alterations of how FBOs describe and carry out their activities. FBOs struggle with balancing their 'faith-based commitments to human dignity with donor demands for 'success' and 'accountability', increasingly measured in neoliberal terms such as efficiency and growth' (Lynch 2011, 214). However, although FBOs in Cambodia have adopted secular frames in their discourse, religious frames remained very much apparent.

An example of this is that the Christian FBOs included character building and changing mind-sets in their frame of development. All of the participating FBOs aimed to teach specific values in line with Christian beliefs. In their discourse the source of values and moral principles were connected to the gospel and the word of

God. Rather than emphasizing aspects of growth in secular terms, FBOs discussed growth in maturity with regard to learning religious values. As such, it is evident that religious frames define and motivate their perceptions of development, as well as influence their activities. The phrase holistic development was advocated by an FBO as an approach, which includes both social action and spiritual development (Interview Prins, June 15, 2015). Moreover, it is in line with Ferris's (2005, 316-317) claim that FBOs perceive their work as going beyond that of NGOs. As such, secular frames are present and embraced as part of their activities and description of their problems and goals, but there is always a strong religious framing in their discourse.

Post-secularism theory critiques the neoliberal standards that frame development work. However, post-secular theory has been developed from a Western perspective and as discussed the state and the religious divide and the secular and religious divide has no meaning in Cambodia. This illustrates that post-secularism theory is unable to explain specific dynamics of development in Non Western contexts. One aspect missing in post-secularism theory is the perceptions of the locals in understanding local contextual challenges. The need to include power relations is an important element that post-colonial theory professes to address.

## ***6.2 A post-colonialism perspective on FBO development work***

As described in the theoretical chapter, post-colonialism seeks to explore, question and criticize how cultural forms and systems of knowledge justify and support unbalanced power relations and subsequent practices of exclusion and domination over the contrasted 'Other'. With regard to development, post-colonialism aims to critically reflect on established concepts, interpretations and practices, which inform the development discourse and its processes. Post-colonial scholars claim that development discourse and practices are still framed in terms of civilising missions (Omar 2012, 44). A major critique is that development activities seem to assume that only those that are 'developed' can define and solve development 'issues' (Omar 2012, 44). In addition, post-colonialism is critical and suspicious towards development agendas, as these are often perceived as the dominant, universalizing and arrogant discourses of the West, which propagates its modern values (McEwan 2009, 27). This section discusses the assumptions of post-colonial theory in relation to

the literature and empirical data of the fieldwork in Cambodia, in order to analyse the dynamics of the religious and secular frames in development work.

During the French Protectorate, the French initiated their *mission civilisatrice*, which forced Cambodia to take on French education, language and values (Mehmet 1997, 677). These objectives to ‘civilize’ the Cambodian population were motivated, to an extent, by the belief that the living conditions of locals would improve. Such beliefs also underpin current development discourse. During the interviews, the FBOs illustrated that their activities are vital for the development of Cambodia. FBO work is deemed necessary due to the low-poverty levels in Cambodia, the survival mentality of the population as a legacy of the war, and consequent corruption and dishonesty on different levels of society. A way of addressing these issues for FBOs is to work on character building and changing mind-sets of the local people, to overcome the culture of dependency even as they provided basic needs.

The ‘local’ or rather the contrasted ‘Other’, was generally described by the FBO interviewees as coming from an uneducated (often illiterate), poor and Buddhist background who prioritizes earning money over education, due to a mind-set which focuses on short-term solutions. The prevalence of patron-client relationships as perceived by the FBOs interviewees determines the approach in which development work takes place. In their discourse, FBO work can be seen as ‘civilising’ the ‘Other’, since their aim is to teach local people what is right from wrong, taking responsibility, being accountable and having values based on Christian beliefs. Implicit in their discourse, FBO respondents assume that locals required their help in determining their needs and also offer solutions for these, and thus justify their actions. Inline with the critique of post-colonial theories, this shows that FBOs determine the issues and the course of development for Cambodians. One of the major issues identified by the FBO respondents was the severe lack of knowledge in Cambodia, which according to the interviewees hinders the development of the country. Education in various forms is central to FBO activities. According to post-colonial theories knowledge, and as such education, is used to support unbalanced power relations and so, dominate the ‘Other’. Moreover, FBO interviewees indicated that there was little dialog or interaction on discourses of development with the locals, again underlining the lack of acknowledgement of the subjugated other. Some FBO respondents were extreme in

their judgement of Buddhism, stating that it does not contribute to any development including moral and spiritual development.

Post-colonial theories assume that development is strongly influenced by neoliberal economic and rational Enlightenment ideas. However, as this research illustrates development can be framed in both secular and religious terms. Since secular and religious frames influence the activities of FBOs, their work goes beyond the scope of post-colonial theories. Rather than focusing on mere aspects such as economic or political development, the FBOs aim to develop Cambodia through changing the mind-sets of the people. Whilst post-colonial theories emphasize the need for more power balance, there is very little discussion of local perceptions of development. Post-colonial theories do not explain how the subjugated other in post-colonial processes need to be included in dialog, in particular where there are different religious frames as is the case in Cambodia, with the Christian FBOs and the local Buddhist other. Post-colonial theory would be enhanced by including local perceptions on development and giving them a voice; therefore acknowledging their agency.

Although it could be argued that FBO activities share similarities with civilizing missions, it remains that locals also clearly perceive that Cambodia faces a lack of knowledge and education. Furthermore, local interviewees have stated that they appreciate the help given by NGOs. Nevertheless, since countless NGOs have been active in the country, the question remains whether their perceptions have been influenced by development discourse, even as there is a the lack of knowledge in the country due to the historical context of Cambodia involving the eradication of the educated elite and educational system.

### ***6.3 Post-conflict Processes in Cambodia***

Post-conflict theories focus on the process of peacebuilding, which has been defined as ‘strategies designed to promote a secure and stable lasting peace in which the basic human needs of the population are met and violent conflicts do not recur’ (Lambourne 2004, 3). Central to peacebuilding processes is reconciliation, which requires justice and truth (Lambourne 2004, 3). This section discusses the peacebuilding initiatives in Cambodia and reflects on post-conflict theories through the findings of the fieldwork.



Major challenges in Cambodia emphasized by both FBOs and locals, were the lack of knowledge and education. Many FBOs focused their activities on education albeit in different forms (e.g. English classes, health and medical education, leadership training etc.). The FBO respondents stated that the complex and violent history of Cambodia diminished many of the country's resources. As described in the historical chapter, Pol Pot's ideology aimed to develop an egalitarian and agrarian society, a utopian agrarian socialism centred on rice production, as during the Angkorian era. Given this, the Khmer Rouge regime organized the killing of professionals and educated individuals, such as doctors, teachers, and former government officials (Morris, 2004: 193). In addition, as a result of the atrocities, the educational system was also demolished in Cambodia (Hill & Menon 2014, 6). Even though the regime ended more than three decades ago, FBOs and local respondents still perceive that there is a great need to reduce the knowledge divide of the local population.

During the aftermath of the regime, there was a significant absence of any noteworthy or successful official public processes of acknowledgement, apology or legal justice, neither were there any official international acts of condemnation or prosecution (Lambourne 2008, 4). One of the central aspects of these peace agreements was planned UN-sponsored democratic (i.e. free and fair) elections in 1993, despite the fact that a peaceful relinquishment of power or democratic elections had never taken place before in Cambodian history (Öjendal 1996, 193). The peace agreement formally documented the extent of the conflict and the preservation of respect for human rights (Öjendal 1996, 193). Nevertheless, the central concerns were political such as, ending hostilities, the provision for national elections and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia (IDEA 2003, 50). Peacebuilding was framed in terms of political and economic terms, reflecting a Western secular framing of peacebuilding and reconciliation. It seemed that 'reconciliation' was equated with the participation of *all* factions in free and fair elections (moving towards a shared future). Whereas, in the direct aftermath of the conflict, the people of Cambodia were more concerned with regaining security through ending violence, and the repatriation of refugees (IDEA 2003, 50). Despite the fact that the roles of the factions during the peace negotiations were significant, the factions never established a collective vision for Cambodia. Through emphasizing elections as the answer for Cambodia's conflict,

reconciliation became a process that was tied to the political competition among the factions. Each faction had their own vision and sought to protect and promote their power while refusing to acknowledge the opponents (Morris 2004, 201). This could be explained by the fact that Cambodia lacked experience of peaceful power transition or sharing, and in addition, had no tradition of democracy. Eventually, the Khmer Rouge withdrew from the peace treaty and continued warfare until 1998 (Morris 2004, 201) and for this reason the elections provided a limited solution at best (IDEA 2003, 50).

Although the UN contributed to the rebuilding of Cambodia, the agreements failed to address the matter of justice and reconciliation according to Lambourne (2008). For example, while aiming to achieve ‘national reconciliation’ the Khmer Rouge was not excluded from governmental elections and some leaders were offered immunity from prosecution (Lambourne 2004, 5-9). According to Lambourne (2004, 5-9) during processes of peacebuilding, justice and reconciliation have frequently been perceived as opposing goals. While upholding an objective of realizing an agreement, perpetrators that have abused human rights in some cases have been included in the negotiations, and even in the formation of new governments, as was the case with Cambodia (Bockers et al 2011, 75). According to Lambourne (2004) by including perpetrators in this process in such a manner it perpetuates a culture of impunity incapable of preventing potential war crimes, and therefore does not provide a ‘just peace’. Also, when structural injustices in the public domain continue to undermine peaceful coexistence, trust and empathy cannot flourish in a sustainable way (IDEA 2003, 21).

This could explain the corruption and dishonesty on all levels of society, as perceived by the FBOs. The respondents from FBOs observed that Cambodian people are often exposed to corruption. Interviewee Ouch explained that it is not uncommon that children have to pay their teachers to pass a class, when this perpetuates throughout a lifetime it can have serious consequences for the character, integrity and morality of the population (Interview Ouch, June 25, 2015). The FBO respondents however, did not link this to the failing of peacebuilding efforts or reconciliation, rather they identified it as a legacy of the war, in which the locals had to survive and thus dishonesty was accepted (Interview Strupler, June 14, 2015). The ‘survival’

mentality among the population as a result of war is not taken into account in post-conflict theories, rather such theories focus on stimulating healing, truth seeking, justice and reparations as a basis for reconciliation processes. These efforts are on a macro-societal level and furthermore the theories do not discuss implications of a culture of impunity where peacebuilding and reconciliation have not successfully been achieved, as is the case in Cambodia. The question also arises whether peacebuilding and reconciliation are absolute objectives rather than processes that can be achieved to different degrees. Furthermore, in contrast to FBO respondents, interactions and interviews with locals reflect that the war is not addressed explicitly nor did they connect reconciliation or peacebuilding as an inherent part of development work. Rather, the local respondents pointed to material needs. This questions whether development theories and actors such as FBOs, share the same lens with non-Western populations on post-conflict development ideologies and whether the process of peacebuilding has failed as discussed by Lambourne (2004).

Within the context of post-conflict Cambodia despite peacebuilding efforts of the UN, corruption and dishonesty prevail in modern day Cambodia. Unlike post-conflict theories, FBOs attempt to tackle this through implementing change on grass-root levels. Corruption, bribery and dishonesty were perceived as big issues in Cambodia and FBOs feel that part of their work involves addressing these issues. The FBOs stated that besides providing for physical needs, their aim is to empower locals and focus on psychological needs, such as belonging, character traits, values and moral principles linked to the gospel and the word of God. Character building and changing mind-sets, as part of their development work, involved teaching locals what is right and wrong, taking responsibility and to be accountable. Their approaches go beyond focusing solely on material concerns and are sensitive to spiritual, emotional and psychological issues, which are significant in post-conflict settings. Although further research is needed on such FBO activities, the grass-roots approach of FBOs could be beneficial and contribute to reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts as discussed in post-conflict theories.

The previous section illustrated that justice needs were not central to the peacebuilding process of Cambodia and neither was truth according to the literature. During the interviews with Cambodians and FBOs these issues were not addressed as

key development agendas. Peacebuilding perceptions seem to be less straightforward than the literature suggests. In the process of peacebuilding there seem to be various degrees of success and failure and different priorities for development and peacebuilding seem to prevail. In Cambodia both locals and FBOs were resigned to the fact that corruption was rampant and that no immediate change was expected. As such, a focus on personal development and material well-being are centred in their development discourse. This reflects the complexity of development work in the face of corruption and widespread dishonesty as shown in Cambodia. This raises the question if reconciliation is a necessary feature for development as determined in the literature.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, this chapter discussed how the assumptions made by post-secularism, post-conflict and post-colonialism theories on religious and secular frames and development work link to the findings of the fieldwork of the research within the historical context of Cambodia. Although all three theories provide a more inclusive approach to religion, the analysis of these theories revealed that all three theories lack the ability to fully capture underlying dynamics with regard to religious and secular frames in non-Western development work. This chapter illustrated that each of these theories can be enhanced, by taking local perceptions on development and contextual challenges into account. The particular flaws of each of the theories will be further discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

## **7. Enhancing Aid and Development Discourse**

This thesis set out to explore whether analyzing the work of Faith-based organisations in development contexts through the lens of the secular/religious dichotomy is appropriate, as these categories have been developed from a Western perspective whilst development often takes place in non-Western contexts. Post-secularism, post-colonialism and post-conflict theories profess they destabilise the normative secular discourse and have all shown the need for religious framing in development work by FBOs. Their assumptions of the religious and the secular have offered new insights and approaches for research on development. However, religion

continues to be regarded as instrumental and seen as a specific category separate from mainstream development (Jones & Peterson 2011, 1302). Perceiving religion as a separate category is a particularly Western perception influenced by modern Enlightenment beliefs. Especially in non-Western cultures, religion is embedded in its context; religion is not categorized by institutional boundaries (Asad 1993, 28). In order to explore assumptions on religious and secular frames and thus divide in development work and the significance of Western perspectives in understanding the role of religion in such work, this thesis focused on the development context of Cambodia. Considering Cambodia's violent and colonial histories, as well as its extensive experience with aid and development, the three theories served to contextualise this research within current development thinking. Further, it enabled a critical review of the religious and secular frames as used in development studies in the light of the empirical findings. The research took on a social constructivist and critical approach in order to understand and explore religious and secular frames in development work. As such, the historical chapter discussed significant events that have shaped the current context in which development takes place, whilst helping to understand the non-Western context. This thesis connected the assumptions made by post-secularism, post-conflict and post-colonialism theories on religious and secular frames and development to the findings of the fieldwork of the research within the historical context of Cambodia. The analysis of these theories revealed that all three theories lack the ability to fully capture underlying dynamics with regard to religious and secular frames in non-Western development work. Some post-secular theories for example, critique the neoliberal standards that frame development work. However, post-secular assumptions have been developed from a Western perspective and as discussed the secular and religious divide has little meaning in many non-Western countries. Furthermore, an aspect missing in post-secular theory is the perceptions of locals in understanding local contextual challenges. The need to include power relations is an important element that post-colonial theory professes to address. However, similarly post-colonial theories do not explain how the subjugated 'Other' in post-colonial processes need to be included in dialog, in particular where there are different religious frames, as is the case in Cambodia. It has been argued that post-colonial theory would be enhanced by including local perceptions on development

and giving them a voice; therefore acknowledging their agency. Furthermore, post-conflict theories focus on reconciliation processes on a macro societal-level in the aftermath of war, however issues such as the direct effects on the population are not taken into account. Additionally, implications of the absence of reconciliation efforts and success are not addressed by the post-conflict theories for development. The grass-roots approach of FBOs could be beneficial and contribute to reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts. FBOs often provide help that goes beyond physical needs and focus on aspects sensitive to spiritual, emotional and psychological issues significant to post-conflict settings as in Cambodia. Further research is needed on the effects and implications of such FBO activities in peacebuilding in relation to development.

In contrast to FBO respondents, interactions and interviews with locals reflected that the war is not addressed explicitly nor did they connect reconciliation or peacebuilding as an inherent part of development work. It could be that locals have accepted the legacy of the war and that the challenges they put forward; corruption, poverty, lack of education and violence are deemed part of life. However, further research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions on the violent history of Cambodia and its implications on the current societal context. Instead of framing development in terms of reconciliation and peacebuilding, local respondents pointed to material needs. A better understanding of local perceptions on justice and peacebuilding could point to different frames.

In addition, local respondents indicated that whether aid is provided by religious or secular organizations is of less importance than addressing basic needs. This questions whether development theories and actors such as FBOs, share the same lens with non-Western populations on post-conflict development ideologies. Local perceptions on Cambodian society and its development and the presence of religious and secular frames in the discourse of FBOs, illustrate that the assumed religious and secular binary in development by these theories does not do justice to the complexities of non-Western development contexts. To bridge the gap between development theory and practice, a case-by-case approach is needed, which is context-bound and incorporates local perceptions of development challenges and needs. Instead of focusing on the religious and secular dichotomy, development

theories should pursue approaches aligned with local perceptions on development and contextual challenges.

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# Appendix

## Content:

### Interview Guides

- FBO Interviewees
- Local Interviewees

### Interview Summaries

FBO	Interviewee	File Nr.
Refuge for those in need	Dennis	1
Leadership training	Wim Prins	2
ICF Cambodia (sports, hygiene, education)	Sophal Strupler	3
Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL)	Roeung Dara	4
Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL)	Patrick Fung	5
Hannah's Hope Orphanage and Bible School	Phanat Ouch	6

Local Interviewee	Male/Female	File Nr
Yim Sockom	Female Retired Teacher	7
Channaa	Female Waitress	8
Hun Srey Nung	Female Administration	9
Anonymous	Female Restaurant manager	10
Anonymous	Female Administration	11
Sna	Male Tourguide	12
Rambo	Male Taxi Driver	13
Vandett & Dang	Male/Male Waiters	14
Anonymous Monk Wat Damnak	Male	15
Bunthoeng Chhaa	Male Waiter	16

## **Interview guide for interviews with local people**

### **Opening questions**

- Could you tell me about yourself? And about your community/village/family?
  - (What do you do in daily life? Were you born here?)
- (How) does religion play a role in your life?
  - (Do you attend church/temple?)
- What challenges does your community face?
- What challenges are the main problems Cambodia is facing?

### **Perceptions of FBOs**

- What has been done to address these issues?
- Do you know any organizations that address these issues?
  - Are these foreign organizations or local?
  - Do you know if any of these are religious?
  - What do these organizations do?
- Do you receive any support or have you received any support from Christian NGOs? (why or why not)
  - \*If interviewee receives or received help:
    - Could you give examples of this support?
  - \* If interviewee does not receive help from Christian NGO: do you know anyone who receives help from Christian NGOs?
  - Why this organization?
  - How do you/or your acquaintance experience help from these organizations?
  - Does this meet your expectations? Has it helped you? (why yes or no?)
  - Is the fact that they are a Christian organization an issue? Why is that the case?
- How did you come into their programme? Did you initiate contact with the organization or did they contact you? How did this proceed?
- What were the issues? Why was it necessary to get help from an FBO? Which goals did/does the Christian NGO help you achieve? What does the Christian NGO have to offer?
- How does it meet your actual needs?
  - Do you need more or different help to meet your future goals? Is this available to you?
- Do you think that you will need help from the Christian NGO in the future?
  - Why or why not?
- Did you do anything for the Christian NGO e.g. partake in their activities?
  - (Maybe ask: Did the Christian NGO expect anything from you after providing help?) Why did you join their activities?

### **Questions on Gender**

- Could you describe the roles of men and women in your community?
  - Are there any challenges?
- Has this changed over the last few years? What has contributed to this change?
- How important are religious leaders in your community? Are they influential?
- Should they do something about gender inequalities?



## **Interview guide for representatives of FBO**

### **Opening questions**

- Could you tell me about your organization?
  - What is the ambition/goal of the organization?
- Could you briefly describe what your tasks and responsibilities are within the organisation?
- Can you tell me what the organization does in Cambodia? What are the issues and why focus on these?

### **Religious & cultural framing**

- What does development mean to you/your organization? What do you want to achieve with it?
  - Specifically for Cambodia? Is it different in different countries?
- What role does religion play in your organization? (activities)
- How does religion guide your work? Do you think faith helps achieve the goals of your organisation? Why or why not?
  - Is there a Christian perception/ideal of development?
- How does development work fit into your religious beliefs?

### **Experiences in Cambodia**

- Tell me how it has come about that your organization first started working here?
  - Why do you think your work is relevant for Cambodia?
  - How long has your organization been active in Cambodia?
  - How do you contribute to Cambodian society?
  - How long have you been here? Have you perceived changes during the time you have been here? What is contributing to these changes (government)?

### **Local Culture**

- What is your experience in Cambodia? Have you faced any difficulties (e.g. related to communication)?
  - Could you give examples?
- How is your relationship with other religious communities? In relationship to development work?
  - (Have you faced difficulties with helping those that have a different belief system (e.g. such as Buddhism))
  - Could you give examples?
  - How do you deal with that?
- How do you think your organization is perceived by the local population?
- What are cultural differences and similarities in development work with the local population?
  - Could you give examples?
  - How do you deal with differences?
- What happens when someone comes to the FBO for help? What is the procedure? (bureaucracies, forms?)
  - How do you perceive these procedures? Why are these procedures important?

- Have you experienced any language issues/sensitivities in your work?  
How do you deal with that?
- Do the people you help give anything back after they receive help e.g. engage in activities?
- How is the aid perceived and communicated by the local population?
  - Do you feel you live up to these expectations?
  - What are challenges you face?

### **Questions on Gender**

- Could you describe the relationships between men and women in Cambodia?  
Has this changed?
- Which aspects of gender roles and relations do you address and how? Do you believe women are in need of more/different help? If so, why is that the case?
  - Are there different or special programmes for women? How are they different? Examples?
- What is the role of the religious community?
- Is religion or religious actors influential in the community?

## Interview Summaries FBOs

FBO	Interviewee	File Nr.
Refuge for those in need	Dennis	1
Leadership training	Wim Prins	2
ICF Cambodia (sports, hygiene, education)	Sopha Strupler	3
Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL)	Roeung Dara	4
Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL)	Patrick Fung	5
Hannah's Hope Orphanage and Bible School	Phanat Ouch	6

Interview File nr. 1	Faith Based Organization
<b>Interviewee</b>	Dennis, founder and director
<b>Short description FBO</b>	Train Disciples, take in out-casted people e.g. mentally ill or widows, provide food and materials in slumps
<b>Location</b>	6 km outside of Siem Reap (Off highway 6)
<b>Date</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	10:00-11:45

## Interview Summary

### Description of FBO

Dennis a French man, and his Singaporean wife came to Cambodia 7 years ago. They have some property outside of Siem Reap where they take in people that have been out casted by their community. They try to help these people in need, often including those that are mentally ill or widows for example that do not have a place to go. They work together with the local churches in the area and train disciples to send them off to remote villages. They often provide food and hygiene materials to people living in the slumps. For the near future, they plan to build a centre in the slumps where children can come for food, education and hygiene. This centre will also serve as a church. Faith plays a very dominant role in this FBO.

Could you describe the main challenges that Cambodia is facing?

Cambodia's history is +20 years after the war and there are still more than 2000 NGOs working here. Main problem is the NGOs- they create a culture of that want to be helped the people have no ambition no nothing.

Not blaming the Cambodian people – they had 60 years of war never peace. Now 20 years there is peace, which is new. The people have been living in war and nobody told them to have some ambition and so on. They were living day to day even today and even the young people. They don't care about tomorrow or the future – everything was destroyed in this country also Buddhist religion– They restarted to rebuild in the late 80's and try to rebuild something but the mentality of the people hasn't changed and cannot change because the greatest hindrance to develop the country are the NGOs – We are not an NGO in that sense because we are not even recognized – we are just here to help some people in need – because there are plenty people in need and the consequence of the cultural past – even the Buddhist religion – we say it is a Buddhist country but they don't follow exactly the teaching of Buddha – it is a mixture of Buddhism – Hinduism and some local things. What they basically believe is that you can do anything that makes you happy – This means you can do anything if you have a family but you don't like your wife you can leave your wife and because of that there is no true foundation of anything.

Could you describe the activities of the FBO:

Working with local churches here. Don't like to use the word helping anymore – we serve with them. Big problem with foreigners when you say we help somebody puts you higher then them. The bible say we have to serve one another – serve the people that have less. We

are here to serve them and to build them up so that they can start something and have another understanding and believe the gospel of Jesus and the things we are supposed to do can help this country to become prosper. It is not about religion or whatsoever, but this country is a real mess and I don't want to talk about politics and all this things but at every level of society and even on the family level it's a real mess.

The woman is considered for nothing basically especially in villages, I have a case of a young lady, who was here for 2 years, now she went back to her village, she was completely mad – she was 24 years old about 6 years ago the son of her neighbour raped her and not to lose face the guy was arrested and put in prison – for the girl cause even when you are raped you lose face because you are not a virgin anymore – they arranged to get married and discuss things actually the two like each other anyway – and at the last moment they have pay money for the bride the dowry – they didn't agree to the dowry and finally the guy came out of prison his family stopped it and say no we don't marry anymore. She was carrying all the shame of being raped and not being a virgin anymore, people laugh at you and she was very desperate and then she moved to a pagoda like many people do when they feel depressed. When she moved there one week later her father died and then she became completely crazy – she stayed there for 4 weeks or 8 weeks and she came out completely mad. So the people heard of us and the people brought her here ask us to do something's, so she stayed here for 1 year and slowly, slowly she.. you know it's all a spiritual thing ok. Because she had hatred for men, she had hatred for this men – she close down completely and wrong spirits come into her so she become sometimes very violent. So the bible say that Jesus told us to cast out demons. So we cast out demons and in the name of God we get the spirits out of her. But then because she was basically mad for 4 years she is like an adult but her mind was like a new baby born. We kept her here for a long time, until she started to understand her life again and gain some self-confidence till she can be dependent on herself. We brought her back to her village about 3 months ago and went to see her again 1 month ago she was ok, last week I got a phone call that again she started to have a little bit of problem. We cannot cast out demons unless we do it with the power of God. And when God intervene in your life then you as a person have to make a choice and what do you want to do – this is very individual. If you make the choice to really follow Christ you won't have any problem – but if you don't do it they can come back and make it worse. At the end of the day, every situation of every individual even in Cambodia there comes a time that they have to decide what to do.

I am not a fan of Buddhist or Hinduism and all those things, because it is just religion. And Religion is like Karl Marx said one day that religion is the opium of the people the people need it, it is just a little part of life, it is like an umbrella that you open sometimes to hide behind it but to be Christian, I am not talking about being Catholic or whatever because it is still a religion also. We are Christian we believe that we have the holy spirit in us and that Christ is in us because the bible said so if you follow Christ. And he gave us one commandment which is very simple which is that we have to love him and love one another, that is basic Christianity and when you do that and when you are right with the people and right with God we can lay hands on people and save them.

There was a case and woman that was basically dying and the we lay hands on her and she comes back – examples of miracles: walk/blind/deaf and these miracles help us to preach the gospel. When we go to village and start to pray for the sick you see you the people healed the people will ask what happened and then you tell them and then they will believe. The goal is not to have them believe Cambodian people believe a lot of things, it is to build them up afterwards. That is why we have our disciple schools and plant churches in villagers that is our main focus that is the most difficult because it is always up to the people. Often human being human money is a big part. That is basically what we try to achieve here. So we have 2/3 guys still here, another 15 that will join us in August for here so we will be with 35 people

here 8 weeks from different regions even from Phnom Penh from the school, which is free so they stay here for a while and after the purpose is we teach about the bible and is to get a change, to renew in their mind and believe in God and see God move into their live and get what they never received before trust in God and believe that God is a living God it is not a thing.

Is that what development means to you?

For me it is, because this country is cursed. It is cursed because everything in this country is against the will of God. They have idols, if you read the bible you see that idols they do bribing, sexual immorality with children on every level, they don't obey to authorities there is no law – so as long as it is a circus like this of course God cannot bless this country and I believe that when the people with authority will change and it is not about religion but do what is pleasing to God do the right thing, with the right motive and the right purpose then God will bless this country. So NGOs today, I am here for 7 years I have studied the pattern of the people here at the end of the day the mentality even for Christians the White men is here, we try to get from him as much as we can. And this mentality fits the NGO very well, cause as long as like this they stay here they can receive money and the people and the country will never come out.

So there are 2 things there is the spiritual aspect of things and 14:28?? And this two make it that this country is cursed. And there is a lot of witchcraft here, a lot.

A friend in Thailand missionary – Siem Reap never been to is one of the most darkest city of this part of south-east Asia, cause Thai, Cambodians, Vietnamese Myanmar people come here to get empowered by evil forces. Nothing will come out of it – it is pride it is power even they don't think about the future of their children they think nothing – they sell everything even Angkor Wat sold to Vietnamese – They don't think further then their nose – it is not to blame them because this mentality – what is happening in this country is that the people are happy the way they are – as long as they are at peace it's ok. It is not an easy country, because you have all these evil forces especially around Siem Reap. You can feel it. When I stand in front of a Chinese temple in Singapore I feel the oppression inside, so we have to be very watchful. My belief is by bringing the gospel to the people like all the Christian organizations here is to get not only people saved but trough this they will know the real values that is pleasing to God and apply the justice of God into their live and into their family life and in their working places and by doing that they will be more and more pleasing to God and if something is pleasing to God in the old testament God will bless us so we can do all the work that we want it won't work, if you look at America, initially it was a Christian country, today it is I don't know what it is, but all the prosperity and power they had they have no authority they have nothing anymore. It can collapse anytime. Like France and many other countries.

When you look at Malaysia even as a Muslim country though it is for me not the right God there is still a certain justice there, people complain but I say there is not too much prostitution you don't have pornography it is controlled it is against the law – but Malaysia is a very blessed country. I think the most difficult thing is we bring this justice this righteousness to the country and the country will prosper It does not work why because of bribery, they have petrol they have gas but they won't do it.

How did it come about that you started working in Cambodia?

Was working in Malaysia before in 2001 for 8 years – Lord told us to our heart to go to Malaysia. Saw huge colonial house 20 rooms talked to the owners – can't pay rent owner let stay for cheap price for 4 years – problemed people staying with them and helping

organizations. Then Lord tell him to stop business – called land lady (Muslim) let them stay for free – there is a church in their.

Go back Singapore one year – then to Indonesia but couldn't stay visa – then Cambodia Phnom Penh – didn't like then went to village and was the misery of the people then knew we had to come back. First Phnom Penh for 2 years then we sense that God wants us to come here to Siem Reap. Now 6 years in Siem Reap. Still don't speak Khmer.

How do you contribute to Cambodian society?

Basically to change the mind of the people. Set them free and give them the joy of God in their life.

Have you perceived changes any changes?

Seen many people change but only a few remained changed.

What is contributing to change?

I think we try to tell them to change their mind, not their lifestyle but to fight for their life and families. To be a good father/mother and love their children and take them away from all this wrong things that we have everywhere. Treasure their family and their wife even sometimes it is not easy but when you marry that's it and do not run after bad things. there are some lust, I know people that don't earn money but when they get \$50 the husband take the money to get drunk and go to prostitutes and then there is no more money. This is very common here so seeing have people that have changed in some places it helps them to see, it is like some light in darkness so my hope is always there.

We are very small here, there are still some places where people have changed. Friend of mine in South-Africa, we went to a village and the whole village converted, they are very serious about Christianity. One year later they collected 40 times more rice than usual.

Here or there is too much water or too little nothing grows. Too hot than too dry and when it rains it rains like crazy.

Have you faced any difficulties in Cambodia?

Face difficulties, in the beginning go a lot in the villages now we go less because we have people that go for us local people. But sometimes very challenging. We have prayed for a lot of people and sometimes people make fun of you and when you go back few weeks later and when you see the people healed or set free then they start to wonder. But Cambodian has a typical Asian problem, don't want to loose face. If some start to believe but because there neighbour doesn't believe it won't work he is worried to loose face. Very proud people, it doesn't lool like proud because they are poor but poor people can be very proud ..

Even here we have some rules in the beginning we did not have rules now we put some rules so if you want breakfast 7:30 till 8:00 after 8 there is no breakfast except for some of the people that are a little bit.. if you miss it eat at lunch time. When you give them they don't bother, this is sometimes everybody believes more or less in God except you and they all believe in a blessing God, God is love and he bless people, so when they start to be blessed they don't appreciate, not about me. No appreciation and as long as you are like this you won't grow stronger you need to have discipline in your life.

Do you have any contact with other religious communities? E.g. Buddhist community?

No relationship with others, only one time went to mountain with my sons, very high mountain didn't have anything went to the temple there. Ask to get some water. Then talk to the people how many monks are there they said only one very sick and very old can't walk. We pray for the monk and monk start to walk, so I have good relationship with Buddhist, so we tell him the gospel and bring him a bible. Don't have a problem with people, because they have their own false religion and it is not about religion even it is not about being Christian as being a real thing, there are many people that call themselves Christian but it is false. It is about having a true relationship with God, few people have it. They cannot understand it, I couldn't understand it many years ago when you talk to me about spirits, we don't have this kind of thing in France, Europeans don't understand. It is bullshit we don't care. All the religions here in Asia are based on ghosts and spirits and basically only bad spirits. Hinduism is not good spirits, Buddhist looks good but it is not, it makes yourself happy but others suffer so it's not right. It is not about religion it is about a simple belief that God gave us the son who died for us as a perfect sacrifice for all our sins and if we follow him and his teaching and apply it in believing we are not only saved, we do the same thing as he does, it is not even about church it is something completely different. And we are not a sect.

Do you face difficulties when helping Buddhist people?

I would say every Buddhist needs help, everyone. No people with great needs come to our place because a lot of people know about us especially in the villages. So people with big needs come so even when they are Buddhist they believe Christian after they remain it is up to them you know. But they leave with a very strong belief and very often God has done things in their life, they know they know they have changed and if they want to keep it they have to remain faithful to God.

Do you see any cultural difference or similarities with the local people?

Not real similarities, those who are Christian, there is no persecution. Those at a government level there is no persecution as long as we stay

But at personal level/family level if they have a few young kids, if they become Christian they tell their parents. There is a problem. We are very careful. Basically We know who to share the gospel with somebody, I know who is ready, to receive it, if no I don't bother. So there are many people that become Christian because they can gain something out of it. I am not interested in this kind of people. There are a lot of Christian organizations that look at numbers and image, people happy, I am not interested in that. We do a deep thing because, we just we believe God sends us the people, because we don't look for them and we just give them what we can, but at the end of the day to keep is up to them, because we give them everything for them to remain strong but you know temptation or other things is always there. So especially in a country like this, especially when as a young Christian always fasting and praying when you fast there are always people inviting you for the best restaurant and so it is if you try to be yourself always temptations and a lot of attacks there was a storm here a few months ago we were in the middle of the storm a lot of houses destroyed .. a big fire stopped here there are attacks but also protections.

What happens when people come in for help?

We welcome everyone some of the people like Daniel he is completely mad we saw him very thin my wife saw him and brought him here, because we want to help him. We have seen some wonderful things, in Malaysia we met a guy begging with one leg, we can give you to eat, he came and told me you can stay here. He told us he is a drug addict so ok we say we kept him and he was free from addiction when he is ok he left and then restarting and then he stopped and working as a cook for an organization. We see thins happening. Same with the



mad people, there is a point, when they are mad they are mad, but there is a point where in their life maybe some healing coming in, when they make their own decisions. Why are people having so many problems it is because of unforgiveness and hatred and jealousy bad things which is against what God wants us to do. So it is very simple and why are we like this it is because we are proud people we are born proud and as long as you are proud by yourself then all this things will come. So you have to deny yourself to carry the cross and so you can love other and love the unlovable and then when somebody hurt you it doesn't hurt anymore it takes a lot of testing as well. You can tell me anything today I don't bother, maybe because I am old and I don't have unforgiveness for people and I know people speak bad about me but I am still alive so I am not affected anymore but I see some they don't have joy in their life they don't have nothing and they have all this things, the reason people are sick today is all because of these symptoms anger, unforgiveness all this things .. it takes a long time. People become alcoholic why o because it hurts the world becomes crazy why because they are hurt and all these things they try to kill it inside, it wont help.

Are there any procedures when people come for help?

No everyone can walk in, we observe them. We do documentation because the police watching. We take a picture and give it to the police and tell them this guys is staying with us. This is something they ask us because the police is protecting is they want to be sure that nothing strange is happening.

Have you perceived any language issues?

Know many languages but cannot speak Khmer, little bit for market will try to learn again but Khmer for some reason. All the people don't speak English that come here, we adopted a girl 26 years old she speaks perfect English. We have one and two guys that translate. Sometimes very difficult. Wife speaks Khmer.

Do the people give anything back to the NGO?

Depending on the people, we have people that take on jobs like a cook or gardener, when people leave her, well the disciples ok we don't have to worry about that, when they leave there is reconciliation with the family first some of them start to work a little bit it takes a lot of time. And we don't have a lot of relationships with NGOs we are in a village.

Do you know how your organization is perceived by the locals?

It is appreciated, because sometimes when we have money we buy rice and give to the poor and so on. So we are starting a centre in the slumps, we started very small, and have 50 kids everyday. The idea is to force the parents to put the kids to school, when they come back, school is in the morning or in the afternoon, so we take 25 kids in in the afternoon or 25 kids in the morning that go to school in the afternoon, So they will have a place to bath and brush teeth and teach them about hygiene en little English and let them play and make homework teach them about Christian songs, between 5 and 12 years old. We started small because we do everything with our own resources so if it works well it will grow.

I don't have money but I have someone that will give money to give 50 meals a day to the poor in the slumps for ten years, this is a foundation we will start by the end of the year. Especially it is for the older people or those that cannot walk so they can get something. Some of them which are really poor and have no ideas and alone people so we will feed them, we will have some people living there in the centre and start a church there on Sunday so we will select the right people to whom to give, because we have done some people from Singapore want to give some rice and noodles 3 trucks and thousands of people came for the distribution even from other places came. So people even Christians came that we know are not from the

slump. This so revolted me because you are basically trying to get something which is not for you, which is basically stealing. This is terrible they don't think. So we want to help as little as we can these people, keep it small with me and my wife.

Gender roles

Could you describe the relationships between men and women in Cambodia?

Not sure, I think young people today in general is like everywhere in the world, they come very young. City aspect and Village aspect, the City is full of lust, Village a bit more protected, it is must to marry as a virgin for a girl. I think all this things are almost disappearing. Spirit of lust is so strong in this country, effects everybody, it attacks the foreigners when they come, I mean most of the foreigners people my age and single come for that anyway, Thailand everybody knows but Cambodia is worse but nobody speaks about it .. there is human trafficking there is 1 million Vietnamese people staying here that don't even have proper documentation and they send the kids to prostitution it is terrible they need the light. So the situation between younger generation and older generation I think is like everywhere it is not good.

Could you describe the roles of the genders?

In the villages women are working and husband are drinking, I am exaggerating but most times it is like this, drinking gambling and then going to karaoke. Everywhere even in small places.

Do not address these issues so much, sometimes when we go out and we see this we talk about it. E.g. went to a meeting I was only foreigner the chief of the village ask me to speak, I speak about my God and sin and that they not have a good life, in the beginning everyone was laughing at the end everyone was crying. I think they need to realise, because of the spiritual atmosphere and because it is not easy people have to become strong and believe in righteousness and be righteous and so you can be an example for others, it wont be easy but it is the only way out. I think Cambodians are short-minded, if they can get something they get it and don't think about the consequences. Survival instinct still, but they do nothing, even the new generation I mean people that have not known the war, they see some that have that have this concept like I can do something here like make some money do something, there are some they are smart guys they work hard and they make money, even the ex monk a good friend of mine, if you work hard you can get it, but if you don't you won't get it, with this mentality. I love to help the people, but if you help yourself God will help you, but I don't believe it these people don't even realize it they are lazy people, they don't work. You find it yourself, young people here you want to eat you must do some work otherwise you become lazy, very bad.

Do you know if the Buddhist community addresses these issues?

They don't bother about anything. When I see people they realize the problem but lazy address issues/problem. Everything is ok.

Give 1000 dollar to Cambodian – 2 types of people 1st will start a business, the 2nd will eat a bit and then wait for the next 1000 dollar to come. 95% of the people are like the second type.

Go to village help widow rebuild her house then few weeks later come back all these holes, they don't repair it is just she could repair with bamboo, so then I give up.

Interview File nr. 2	Faith Based Organization
<b>Interviewee</b>	Wim Prins, Missionary
<b>Short description</b>	Send by an Australian Anglican missionary organization: Church Missionary Society, trains leaders, provides theological education, discipling,
<b>Location</b>	Common Grounds Café, Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	11:00-12:30

Wim Prins and his wife are connected to an Australian Anglican missionary organization called Church Missionary Society. In Cambodia Wim Prins is seconded to TEEC, Theological Education by Extension Association Cambodia. This organization has small groups around the country and their goal is to teach leaders, whether pastors, elders or lay leaders in the churches. Their work takes place on two levels, one is discipling and the other is leadership training. The overall aim is to equip them so that they can lead their churches well. His wife works mainly with women who are located in rural areas. She teaches them how to make certain product such as baby clothing, quilts or jewellery. She then picks up these products and brings them to places to be sold, which can be either in Cambodia or involves sending them to churches or stores in Australia.

The problems in Cambodia according to Wim Prins are mainly the lack of education. He believes that a contribution should be made to address literacy and help people in their work. He wants to help people to try and read the bible through courses. Especially in the rural areas, he feels people should become more literate and aware of the world outside of their village. NGOs in Cambodia fill the gap that the government cannot provide to, so for example now building of roads but also providing proper education is done by the NGOs. Things are changing now according to the interviewee a lot is being built and a lot of money is being made off of tourism. He has observed that lately Khmer people have more money to spend and also the literacy rate has risen. Khmer culture is not a reading culture according to Prins, also many were killed during the war. However, more people are reading and because of the internet people getting more and more connected and have better opportunities to learn English and also parents can invest more.

His perception of development was “As a Christian I think it is important to have an approach that does not only encompass the spiritual aspect, but also includes social action in its various ways. I am focused on what they call bible based ministry, but my wife has been doing a lot of work in areas like beading working with beads to the local people to provide them a means to generate income, empowering them. With simple means, they are still a bit dependent on my wife marketing the product even at the Common Grounds, I don’t know if they still have this they sell the beading stuff and also exported to Australia so the marketing aspect is not a big problem although sometimes you have to slow them down, because they get so enthusiastic they can produce a lot and there is only so much we can handle. But it is good, sometime we engage in giving out loans or just financial gifts, but we are a bit careful with financial gifts because it tends to create long-term dependency. You need to know in Cambodia they have what they call a patron-client relationship. So often friendships are made with the understanding that one of them is the patron and the other is the client, so the patron provides certain privileges and the client has certain obligations but also enjoys protection of

a sort. That can be social protection or financial protection or whatever, and foreigners they have to play that game a well, whether they want to or not. So if you extend a loan once you are considered patron, so whenever they have another financial problem you will be looked to in order to help them solve the problem. So we are careful with loans and donations, but it is one way to help people, sometimes they just need a little starting capital and they have enough to get up and go and start something. So that is very satisfying if you can help them, empowering them. In the forefront of our mind is always teach them to fish rather than give them a fish, but the natural in comunation here amongst many Cambodians is to hold up their hand and they want hand outs, which is long-term of course not the best thing for them. But for instance we have helped leaders to set up a chicken farm, they did that behind their house, so that they could by the materials and that is still functioning. We have a few of these projects mainly among the contacts that we have already, we know them and we can sort of gage whether they would pay back or not and I think they also feel more compelled to pay back the loan when we know them. My wife has been involved in other projects as well one is making baby clothes and bedding like quilts and she set that up in Phnom Penh and that has functioned for many years and provided income for seamstresses. So sometimes the tasks are more separated so my wife is focused more on the social action part and I have focused more discipling and leadership training but I have also established a lot of contacts for her, so provided a network for her to work with, particularly for the beading and crocheting. And she goes to those villages to pick up what they produce, and put them in places to be sold or send them to Australia to churches or stores”.

What role does religion have in your work?

My wife works with the same motivation as I have, both think that to help people physically or socially only goes so far, because often their problems have to do with life patterns where the Christian faith can have a lot of influence. A simple example is, it is hard for a man to get away from drunkenness or a wife from beating or other social problems, but if they become a Christian they seem to have different source of power to break certain habits. And we find it is important to help people in both areas the social action area and the spiritual area so that people also have the power to break with un-healthy habits. Cause otherwise you can help them materially or physically but they don't get out of this rut. It can be a family rut but it can also be a village rut so we think it is important to help the whole person and in our view that includes proclaiming Christ, telling them about the gospel of Christ.

Is there a Christian ideal of development?

There are many theories among Christians, when you say Christians that includes the whole spectrum from liberal to very conservative. Liberals tend to put emphasis on the social action part and see the bible as a book that has human examples and models but is not necessary God's word to men but more like men's word to men, so they tend to take examples and role models from the bible and they easily mix with people from other faiths and or non-Christians in the advancement of social action and development. So yeah, my ideal would be a combination of what they normally call development and social action and the spiritual aspect so helping them spiritually so obey the gospel and embrace the promises that Christ offers, because long-term and even short-term that is more effective and it is not that I am pragmatist that it has to be effective that its good. Bit if you wanna help them at a deeper level, it is I think important to also touch upon the spiritual aspect. Sometimes you see people driving here and you think is there a spiritual background for the way they drive so recklessly, maybe they just brought their sacrifice and feel quite confident. Everything is related. So although I advocate a combination of social action and spiritual development, which I call holistic development, it is not necessarily that one person has to do all, like I am more specialized I focus on mentoring, discipling and leadership, but I do quite enjoy that my wife is focusing more on the social action part and I think it is more in harmony that way and I

think it is more holistic, but sometimes it is one the scale of an organization or a team that works in a city like Siem Reap and they have better harmony better more complete approach than any of the individuals on their own. For instance one of my friends also a Christian is into sports ministry, but he helps Khmer children/youth to learn to play tennis so he set that up with the approval of the government and he works closely with the department of sport and education and his wife has a different focus.

Have you faced any challenges with helping people?

In the beginning the interviewee faced language issues, because he could not understand Khmer. Now he has been slowly learning the language and can even write in Khmer. Also the lack of literacy of some of the locals is challenging to work with. Many of his pupils also lack the means and commitment to education, often due to poverty.

When asked if the interviewee had any relations with religious communities he stated that there is no dialog with the Buddhist community. He explained that Christianity proclaims salvation to Christ only, but Buddhism is not on the same level. He is interested in contacts with locals and Buddhist leaders to have a voice in the various strata of Buddhism namely, Theravada, Brahmanism and Animism. He has visited pagodas to learn about Buddhist religion from the monks there. However he felt limited when he started about Christianity. There was no real dialog, the monks could tell him about Buddhism and he would listen, but when he started about Christianity he felt that the monks did not feel comfortable. He stated that it could be because they were in the pagoda, maybe outside they would be more open and willing to ask questions about Buddhism.

The monks when outside of the pagoda would ask what are the rules, but according to Prins Christianity is not so much about rules but rather about the relationship you have with God. The eastern mind keeps together what the west separates. With his profession he does not work with Buddhist people, his work involves working with Christians. It does not work when he discusses Christianity, he therefore does not evangelize people. The locals do that, this is much more effective.

The interviewee stated that in Cambodia there is religious freedom which is fairly free. However, for Christians workers it is harder, because the governor cannot allow more churches. For Khmer Christians is it a bit less difficult.

When asked how they are perceived by the local people, the interviewee stated that Buddhist people would say that Christ is from a foreign religion, it is good for the West but not for us. Interestingly, Jesus was Asian and international and is growing fast in Africa, Asia and South America.

In the Cambodian villages people are more conservative, culture and religion are strongly intertwined. In the villages people find it important to continue Buddhism and their kids are important for their merit because of their spiritual ancestors, the parents are afraid. Some are more lenient and let their kids choose, but in the towns people are definitely less strict. However, they still see Christianity as a foreign religion for white people.

Cambodian people according to Prins are used to a hand out mentality, which creates pervasive long-term dependency. Generally speaking there is a short-term perspective, maybe because of their fears. So for example, often locals focus on building more and using materials that look nice and are impressive to attract people. They also want more and big buildings however churches that are built now are often too big. Challenges in his work include that a pastor needs about 20-40 people. A Western view of development is to make

small-scale differences. There is a strategy, some focus on centre for youth, others on hygiene etc. However, locals want to make it big and copy a Western lifestyle.

#### Gender roles

According to the interviewee there is a male dominated culture in Cambodia. Men have the formal authority and are head of the family. However, women have more responsibilities by taking care of the household. 20 years ago the relationship between men and women was more equal. Now because of the internet in the towns there are more Western influences, however you do not see this yet in the country side. Even 20 minutes outside of Siem Reap you will see that there are still the traditional settings. His wife works with women from the villages, she hears a lot about domestic violence. She is not too involved, but tries to empower them by giving them access to work. Within the interviewees field of work women are welcome to join seminars and this is accepted in the villages this is encouraged as they provide them with opportunities.

*After the interview I received an email from the interviewee with some additional information.*

It was a privilege to talk to you today and I hope the interview was useful for your research. I am pleasantly surprised that research in this area is being done!

One difficulty I failed to mention is that Christian development work is often facing a false dilemma, imposed upon them by non- Christians:

- if Christians are only involved in Word-based ministry, they face the charge of neglecting the physical/material needs of the people they seek to help;
- if they do help them physically/materially, while at the same time obeying the Bible in that they seek to help them at a spiritual level, then they face the charge of creating rice Christians (people who are converted because of the material benefits).

From a biblical perspective, and to use a medical image, if a person suffers from appendicitis, we feel called to do more than just alleviate the pain. We need to address root causes, not just external symptoms. Dealing with spiritual issues and offering freedom in Christ is a way of addressing root causes. We have witnessed that attitudes change, sometimes overnight, when someone becomes a Christian. I know an ex-Khmer Rouge leader & wife batterer who when he received Christ became a caring husband & respected pastor, for example. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and moral or hygiene lessons only go so far. The power of the Holy Spirit has radically changed lives in Cambodia, and spiritual change opens the way for lasting material change. So, while there is a danger that people become rice Christians, we are still under obligation to help mankind holistically.

As it says in James 2: 15-17 (ESV): If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

But, conversely, material need is not man's deepest need (Luk 9:25, ESV): "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" So, we're under this double obligation, despite facing this (false) dilemma. I am not defending all methods that Christian workers use in the area of social action, and I am not defending others who use certain methods of spreading the gospel. In addition, both Christian and non- Christian

workers have wrestled for ages with questions such as, What is good development? How can we make a long-term difference? What will happen when we leave?

These were just some musings. Please use them as you see fit. I do hope and pray that you'll be open to receiving the light of the gospel. "The truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

You talked about post-secularism, and putting faith back in the public arena. I haven't even told you anything about answers to prayer that most people in the scientific world think belong in the private sphere. A pastor I know, when he was little, saw when his younger brother was born that the latter's skin turned black and was dying. However, thanks to the persistent prayer of Christians who gathered around him, he lived, and now he is a healthy young man. Incidentally, he was my checking assistant for the two books that showed you. I am not expecting you to put this in your thesis, but just to indicate there are many possible answers to the question, What do missionaries contribute to Cambodian society? One answer is literacy & teaching, another is income generation, yet another is miraculous physical healings. Some make it into a Master's thesis -- others don't...

May God bless you, and don't hesitate to ask more questions or send phrases you want translated.

Interview File nr. 3	Faith Based Organization
<b>Interviewee</b>	Sophal Strupler Founder/Human Resource Manager
<b>Short description</b>	International Church Fellowship Cambodia – Separate NGO: Elevate Campus
<b>Websites</b>	www.elevate-campus.com www.icf-cambodia.com
<b>Location</b>	Krong Siem Reap, Cambodia
<b>Date</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	10:00-12:30

### Short Description FBO:

The interviewee Sophal was born in Cambodia, while she was a baby she was abandoned by her parents. A Red Cross nurse found her and took her with back to Switzerland during the invasion of the Khmer Rouge. She lived in Switzerland for 40 years and returned to Cambodia in 2011. The ICF Church founded in 2013 *'is a church with biblical foundation that arose from the vision of creating a dynamic, real-life church, right at the heartbeat of time'*, as stated on their website. Besides a church the founders also wanted to help the people of Cambodia with practical issues. For this reason they established the NGO named Elevate Campus. Elevate Campus aims to help people through sports, health and education in order to give the young a better future. Elevate is an NGO, the NGO started with the idea to elevate the children to help them. The interviewee indicated that they want to do more than provide a church, the also want to help practically. The NGO Elevate has the idea to help them with sports and health education. The objective is to give the young children a better future.

The main issue according to Strupler is that the education is poor. Also there is no sports in schools, the whole knowledge is very poor. This was taken during the war and there is nothing to do for the children. That is why they focus on the children and the young adults. Development means that they can help different children out of their circumstances and that they can believe in themselves again that their character gets stronger and stronger when they do sports then they win something and then their confidence gets stronger and stronger. The interviewee believes that God has a plan for every child and loves every person, and so they love every person as well. Out of love they want to change the circumstances or the needs of the people. A Christian ideal according to Strupler is "We don't ignore the undeveloped countries, we give what we have and want to change the country". The contribution to society is that it starts small, to help the children to go to school and classes so that they can read. Also they need to have good teeth and health and clean water. By helping families it is possible to change a whole village and eventually change a whole country. But they start with one child. During their time in Cambodia they have perceived many changes, almost every week something changes. Children or people are changing a lot, one girl was not talking to anyone but now she is happy and outgoing. They have many example of people change like that.

In the beginning the organization did not face a lot of difficulties. It was only after a year that not everything was so easy anymore. They started to understand the cultural. People really started to get jealous because of their success, these included both other Christian and local organizations. Also they encountered cultural differences, because they did not understand the Cambodian culture. An example of this was given: "Like we have an employee a local and she lied to us and we didn't get why she lied, it was no problem till we found out, lying we found out they had to survive, they had to survive during the war so lying was not an issue only when they found out, we had that many times where lying in Switzerland is a no-go. You don't lie to your boss, here it is more excepted because they have to survive".



The organization has a network of other Christians, NGOs and Churches. But we they do not know people from the Buddhist community. They are open to meet them, Strupler stated, it is not because they do not want to, but because we have not had the time to meet them yet. When helping those from a Buddhist background they explained that difficulties are not because of this background, but rather it is the lack of knowledge. An example of this is “like we do learn how to brush their teeth and give them toothbrushes but then after a while they don’t use it anymore, but it is not because they don’t know but it is because their parents don’t teach them or tell them to brush their teeth it is something small but it is in general but this is lack of knowledge because they don’t know it is healthy. We have to be stubborn and learn and tell them over again – don’t give up don’t think that after one time they know how to – they learn it after many times and don’t give up”.

According to the interviewee the local population really loves their organization. The activities they organize are huge and unknown to Siem Reap. They feel it is also because the NGO is not Christian only. ICF is Christian, is the church, but with the NGO Elevate we really focus on sports and they do not discuss faith or God a lot. The local people really like that they do elevate for the youth of Siem Reap. The kids that participate in the NGO activities think it is fun and just come to the church. Some stay and some maybe do not like it so. They enjoy that they have both a church and an NGO. Also according to the interviewee the people really love both as well, they think finally somebody does something for youth as well.

Most people they help are those joining the church, they observe the people and see if they make improvements. They have to be a part of the whole community and then they can help them. They do not have to fill in anything but the organization does have to talk to the parents of the kids. The NGO rather does not provide financial help Strupler stated “It is more like if you give somebody a fish they can feed themselves for one day and we want to train him how to fish so they can feed himself and eat everyday that is more our perspective, so we help financially in some part but not we don’t give endless money but more in values or be part of the family or in character issues we help but not financially”. People do not have to do anything in return. For the NGO it is enough to see smile is enough and to be grateful.

Gender roles in Cambodia:

Women are not so much worth here in Cambodia, nobody tells them they are worth they are loved, they are beautiful many don’t believe in themselves. I think it has a lot to do with parents and also the husbands. They don’t live like a marriage like man and women in Europe, it is more the man is the head and the wife is beneath. But I think the young it is going to change a bit, but still they really have to learn how to get along together it is a big topic. I have heard women hit man but I have also heard men raped women so I don’t know.

Do you address any of these issues?

We address these issues, we just started but if we have interns here that are really professionals in families or adult training or social workers I will definitely address the problems. With the kids we want to learn them about being a young couple and treat each other, love and marriage etc how to get along. How to have self confidence on both sides. I have seen many children been beaten up by the parents when they don’t do what the parents do so it starts with the parents, because they don’t have a good childhood, so they act like they learn.

Interview File nr. 4	Faith Based Organization
<b>Interviewee</b>	Roeung Dara, Founder/Principle
<b>Short description</b>	Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL) is a school which currently teaches extra curriculum English courses
<b>Location</b>	Tropeang Veng Village, SangKat Krabeyriel, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia. 12km outside of Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	22th of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	13:30-15:30
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.chlchanginglives.org/index.php/about-us/who-we-are.html">http://www.chlchanginglives.org/index.php/about-us/who-we-are.html</a>

The principle and founder of the school Roeung Dara of Changing & Hoping for Lives CHL it is a grass-roots, non- political, non- profit, Christian based, NGO, Khmer run organization that is currently sponsored by a Christian couple from Australia. Their current main focus is teaching extra English curriculum courses.

Could you describe your organization?

Yes my NGO we call Changing and Hoping for Lifes CHL, we are focused on helping our Cambodian people through education, this is my focus my dream, because you know only education that can change people life. Today I am currently looking for people that connect in working together with my organization in order to change the people form generation to generation, because Cambodia its people living in ignorant, living with jobless, living without skill, living with poverty, living under the power of the government. And also the only way to provide change and hope is through education. We focus on children and adults and also CHL we have 7 projects.

1 project we call general English project: we provide English lessons from beginner to advance this project we are looking for all schools around the world that can to provide volunteer teachers that can help us in teaching English and also we wish to exchange students to go abroad.

2<sup>nd</sup> project Computer Skills Training: to provide computer training to adults, because it is important to get a job. So with English and Computer skills they can find a job.

3<sup>rd</sup> project Vocational Training: we focus to help adult and people that are jobless we wish to help them to have a chance. To provide them with beauty salon, sewing etc. teach them practical skills.

4<sup>th</sup> project Orphan Project: we wish to have people living near Khmer/Thai border in four Cambodian provinces living next to border. People living there don't have skills and jobless and no education and the parents are working illegally in Thailand. I wish to raise all the people to learn and grow in the orphanage, I wish to open the orphanage here to situate it here in this city. Not in Siem Reap, because the people in Siem Reap have enough schools, jobs etc. but in all these provinces they living next to border during civil war, there is no school and no chance and from the beginning until today all the provinces work illegal in Thailand to work as construction worker or as a helper in the house or to work all kind of work, because they make more money there than in Cambodia, in Cambodia there is no chance for them. So that is my wish to collect all the adult and children to live in this orphanage to learn and grow.

5<sup>th</sup> project Agriculture: In Cambodia, around the whole country Cambodian people the field is empty nothing is growing because there is no water, because deforest in Cambodia, cutting all trees and government is selling the trees. So there is nothing growing anything only rice. But some of them they sold the land, so nothing to grow. So the project focus to train them to use the property to grow crops and raising animals and also we would like to invite people around the world to train the people, cause in Cambodia there is no idea, ask people from abroad to inspire them.

6<sup>th</sup> project Happy Family Healthy Home: This is a Christian project, this means teaching family to be husband and wife and teaching children to obey their parent. Teaching children what the bible say and how to use in their life. This is through seminar we are looking for pastor that has skills in teaching, and do workshop for Cambodian people. Our orphanage also we want to have a children so our children can worship God in the church.

7<sup>th</sup> project Rural Medical Help: we wish to have a health care centre here, we are also looking for hospital and clinic around the world that can send their dokter or nurse to come to bring the right medication to treat people and train people. Also we would like to help people that have a serious need and problem in order to help with the better care. For example, we want to send our patient to get treatment outside Cambodia e.g. Thailand, USA like that, if they cannot help in Cambodia. So I am looking for people to provide money to pay to send them, because medical here not for treatment just small things, also we don't focus on Siem Reap but in the provinces near the border because when we have the doctor from abroad to bring medication to them.

It is only me working for this organization, I have no partner no supporting so I am looking for people to work together to provide change and hope for Cambodia. Now I have Khmer local teachers to teach English, they help me because I don't have volunteer to help because it is too far from the city. We would like people to come and help us volunteer and we are looking for people that can provide uniform, materials books etc. clothes for people and also we need school from abroad to visit our student. Also we wish to have school abroad to see our teacher.

Organization started in June 2011. But we just register with the ministry of interior in 2013 but we started before we got the permission. In 2013 we register it means from the province from the government. Register mean government accept our project and activities to run the NGO, but they don't support to NGO, they allow to help Cambodian people but find funding abroad. This register is important if there is problem you can complain to the government or if corruption etc. NGO government focus you work for charity or for the party, if you work for charity no problem but if you work for the party then it will be problem with the government. Also if you have financial problem government won't support, they only allow you to run. The register is also important if you want to go abroad, then you need it for the embassy to show them and check need to go abroad for fundraising that is important for NGO.

I am founder and director of the school and sometime teach. One family is supporting the school from Australia Mr John and Sue More. They support the building, materials and the local teachers salary. Other than that no support, need more support to set up the other projects.

How can Cambodia get better?

The only way for my NGO is focus on education, I focus on English, computer and vocational skills. In Cambodia you have English and computer it is easy to get a job. Without it is difficult. University is not important to get a job, because when you finish university

government does not provide a job for you but if you have English and computer than it is easy to work in a hotel or business man or company. It is easy then to get a job.

Wish for Cambodia:

Until today between 2000 and now, too many people knew about Cambodia and the government. The government control only focus on their own power not focus on Cambodian poverty, not focus on how to save help Cambodian people. Only control and care about when people know better and start to be against the government. So only way that I know that when people learn English and computer then everyday they see on Facebook that .. and when they good and bad and see what is right and wrong so the only way for me is to focus on education. That is why I am looking for people form abroad to come and connect with my people and school to exchange idea and students and teachers and see oversees and open ideas.

Role of religion: In this school I don't talk about religion in my school, looking for people to teach and share the gospel to our students, but today I am alone too difficult to do. I did bible training for pastor, and I was also in the Jezus Film team where I travel through whole Cambodia very rural areas to share the gospel and show the film. Before 2000 too hard to receive Christ, when you show a film like this they will throw a rock to you and now many people here about this and accept you can do anything no problem. Our mission was to send us two months to go to village and share the gospel and stay with the people there, there were no good roads or anything.

I believe and trust God and pray that he send me the Christian to help me.

Project number 6 Happy Marriage is because in Cambodia too many problem between husband and wife, you know they fight and jealousy and the husband don't know the rule to serve and have a family and also the family is jobless without skills. So we want them to come and help us teach them.

Changes in Cambodia with the school:

Until today my school provide jobs for the children, in 2013 some of the adult have a job some of them and some of them became the local teacher helping me, they used to be my student. My strategy, I teach myself and then looking and then train them to teach them. My students I build them train them, trust them and use them to teach. Today many children have knowledge of my school so have more confidence in my school now. But the biggest problem for me is not enough resources, and running without support. For 4 local teacher we get 200 dollar per month – very small budget and support, not enough too operate the other projects. The government allow you to run 5 years but if you don't have any improvement they close you down, and then if you can continue after 5 years you have to show the improvement otherwise they can close it again.

The children here are from around the village. Doesn't matter if they are Buddhist kids or Christian. They are from around village, they cannot go study in the city as it is too far and they are living in poverty it is not the same as in Siem Reap. Everyone can learn English in Siem Reap, but here they have to pay and they don't have the money, that is why I focus on the village.

Until now the people really appreciate our activities and hope we grow more to help the people. Children here only come for the English class, it is after their public school in the morning. So if they want to learn extra English they come here to the school. In the government school English is just a small programme. Only the teacher have a book, so the kids have to copy from the teacher we don't have a uniform.

All the students have to fill in a registration form, it is important to know their background to know what they believe, how they live with the family, if they are poor or orphan.

### Gender Roles

Could you describe the relationship between men and women in Cambodia?

In Cambodia too many problems between the marriages. Because some people don't know about love in the relationship, when they like a girl they just marry. In the bible teaching people when to marry not just looking at outside but inside for the girl and the men. Not just come and see and love have to also love inside. Then you know when to be together. When they marry the husband and wife are living with jobless and skill and so it become problem because no income for the family and the husband will fight together and will fight and be jealous too many problem with ignorance. Today I haven't seen any changes still have these problems, jealousy, killing each other fighting because of jealousy and also it become a big problem. I am looking for life-skill teacher to teach the people.

I focus on both men and women, both need to know and learn in order to get better. This project will also help them to be a better parent and also that child teaching them to obey the parent.

There is all kind of problems start from poverty and ignorance in the family. Cambodian family don't learn enough skill to get a job and how to live in the community in society they live in ignorance. So when they marry they are living in poverty without job and money to support family. So it become problem in the family, and when one starts to get a job they are jealousy and become fighting and become killing. We will use the bible to know Christ and teach them how to love their own family.

There is no connection to Buddhism or Buddhist, I focus on Christianity.

Interview File nr. 5	Faith Based Organization
<b>Interviewee</b>	Patrick Fung, volunteer English teacher
<b>Short description</b>	Changing and Hoping for Life (CHL) is a school which currently teaches extra curriculum English courses
<b>Location</b>	Tropeang Veng Village, SangKat Krabeyriel, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia. 12km outside of Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	18:00-18:45
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.chlchanginglives.org/index.php/about-us/who-we-are.html">http://www.chlchanginglives.org/index.php/about-us/who-we-are.html</a>

Interviewee Patrick Fung is a volunteer from Canada working for the Changing & Hoping for Lives school also known as CHL.

Could you describe organization you work for?

It is a school, it also reaches out to the community with for broken families, to strengthen marriages and relations, it tries to mend marriages, haven't seen how. Also it seek out professionals from foreign countries to help people in the community with serious medical conditions. It provides education to rural, it is in the countryside so people in town have a really big interest but the people in the countryside are really put into, where they they don't want to go anymore. They don't want to leave the village.

What is the ambition of the organization?

Overall it is to empower the rural village children to become leaders for tomorrow in their village and in Siem Reap. It is 12km outside of Siem Reap.

What is your role in the organization?

I am teaching an extra curriculum English class, I am teaching grade 10 students age 16 to 19. I am 26 years old. The organization is local: Khmer person started it. Focused on education for children, also medical outreach, agriculture, family life as its peripheral. It is not a church, it employs 4 local teachers it is very small in a very small village. Teach only English classes at this point, want to do more but lack resources.

How would you describe development?

Would be opening up opportunities for those other lives, otherwise underprivileged, to access jobs and careers through education.

English classes is important for this region as the tourist industry is big and also to network with foreign people organizations.

Wat is the role of religion in your organization?

As a Christian based school, the themes of love and service is permeated through the activities. Throughout the programme. Indirectly. We don't actually teach them Christian.. we don't actually teach them doctrine, I mean there is bibles if they want to go through them. It is because of the faith of .. We have this vision to serve the broken families or families with little means, but we don't tell them explicitly that it is because of God or Jezus that we are here no we just serve.

Do you think there is a Christian ideal of development?

The purpose of Christianity is to know God and have a relationship with God, and to serve .. I think like Maslov, basic needs are hardly being met, it is developing right .. So in terms of the basic needs, so the more higher up – social mobility so is there a job for a high school kid when they go out , is there an opportunity for them, what are they going to do. There are so many children, they are under educated what is going to happen to them? As opposed to coming from the spiritual need, you need to have fulfilment in your life by knowing Jezus Christ. So it is going from the bottom up as opposed to teaching them religious ideas. It is not the focus of the organization. There are organizations that do preach the gospel and they do other things also, so they into the community and .. but for CHL is currently focused on the program.

Do you think your faith helps you?

It is certainly motivating. But that is not the concentration. Being with the culture, learning how to interact, speaking the language even knowing the customs, having a clear picture of what the obstacles what they face, those are all more important, than Christian faith.

I started working here 7 months ago – organization started – building donated by a family from Australia. Organization is relevant for Cambodia. It has a big.. with reaching out to children with needs, with the future ahead of them, and it is uncertain what they will be doing in the future. Especially for the high school students where are they going to be in a few years time. There are so many children in the village. Having a school is one of the main institutions that society relies on to provide basic education, network, people.

Do you also work together with other organizations?

I also teach at a school in the morning and in the afternoon at this school.

Have you perceived any changes?

Not yet seen changes. You can ask the principle.

What have your experiences been in Cambodia? Have you faced any difficulties?

Language barrier, that is the biggest struggle to teaching. It doesn't matter how qualified or how many years, language puts everything together. You don't have to rely on somebody translating and you can capture the students tensions .. actually communicating with them. They learn the language by translating their own lines from Khmer to English first. So having the words to use for the English words, makes it so much easier even with the little words I know.

Organization relationship with other religious community:

It is not so out there that it is Christian that it would have an affect, so it is not explicit and we don't ask if people are Buddhist or anything. It doesn't create barriers.

How is the organization perceived by the locals in the community?

As a school it is perceived highly by the local community, it is a place of authority for the community. As one of the institutions that provides education and educational services. The community looks at it as a pillar of positivity and gravitates towards it. I think the communities gravitates to a school to gain access to resources.

Do you see any similarities and differences with the Buddhist local culture?

Christianity and Buddhism share a lot of common ground. I think Buddhism can fit into the main ideas of Christianity. Somebody that is Buddhist can fit into what Christianity calls for in a person. These are my personal ideas. Because it is so vague the bible with a lot of concepts. I think it is really similar in just the main ideas like love, faith, service. Although what is missing is that with Christianity the belief that Jesus Christ was resurrected and by having and believing in him that forgiveness is possible for humanity, which is broken, and with Buddhism that is not the idea. That is the main difference. Not exactly the need for forgiveness but the state of humanity to begin with. But certainly reaching for an ideal is common within both and that perception of what is ideal is quite similar although it has its differences.

I know they put .. they have strong feelings towards a Pagoda, I know they will go when something is wrong that would be like the place to if they wanted to sort something out in there life. For some of the people.

Does the school live up to the expectations?

The expectations are high in my standards, because the international schools in Siem Reap are quite good in delivering English education so the expectations, also coming from the West, they think they have resources. I don't think that many schools meet those expectations in the countryside, in terms of resources and in general. Not just funding but everything also teachers.

### **Gender Roles**

Could you describe the relationship of men and women in Cambodia:

The men in Cambodia have a greater potential to be wealthy. Women are perceived to be having the ideals of gentleness and servile. And the males are mainly dominant in the relationship, but however with modernity the gender roles are changing. Women are gaining greater mobility and voice. As education is progressing this is providing them with more voice and mobility. And the ability to see the issues that have faced women in the past in Cambodia. Traditional values are changing or not upheld as strongly, are not always upheld with the influx of foreign influence. Not so much in the village, in Siem Reap.

Do you address issues of gender in the school? Not specifically but gender is respected and women are equal.

What is the role of religious community in terms of gender? As a Christian school gender is respected and women rights are valued. We teach that each person should be treated with dignity and respect. God loves everyone.

The village is a Buddhist community, I do not know if monks address these issues but I think they should.



Interview File nr. 6	Faith Based Organization
<b>Interviewee</b>	Phanat Ouch
<b>Short description</b>	Hannah's Hope Children's Home. Provides a safe environment to orphaned and abandoned children in Cambodia. The purpose is to promote the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of abandoned and orphaned children.
<b>Location</b>	Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	19:00-20:30
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hannahshopechildrenhome.org">http://www.hannahshopechildrenhome.org</a>

My name is Phanat Ouch and I am a missionary here in Siem Reap for about 8 years now. I started an orphanage by the name of Hannah's Hope Children's Home with a few friends from Texas back in July 2010. We currently have 40 children total with 15 staff to care for them. Our youngest is 2 years and our eldest is 16 years. The majority is aged from 5-10 years old. The name Hannah's Hope is derived from the story in 1 Samuel 1:1-28. We want to care for orphans and abandoned children and teach them the ways of God so that they too can one day serve and care for others who are less fortunate and bring glory to God. We try to teach them principles like the importance of being honest, being able to control your temper and not hold grudges, repenting of bad habits and replacing them with more profitable ones (if they stole, don't steal anymore, instead use their hands to work in order to help those who are in need), teaching them how to encourage and lifting others up instead of tearing them down, being kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave them. I try to teach these children the same things I teach mine.

I came to Cambodia 2007 as a missionary wasn't planning to staying this long. I went to bible school in the states, I was raised in the states, I was born in Thailand in a refugee camp after the Pol Pot regime and 6 months later my whole family came to the states. My background my family is Buddhist they still are, I am the only one that is Christian in my family.

Is that a problem?

No not really because they are traditional religious they are not that devout it is more like whenever they feel a need they go, so it is more like traditional family than devout worshippers so I one day I was just searching for truth you know, I asked some questions and I had some friends that were Christians and I stumbled upon a church and a bible school, and every question that I had they answered with the bible and I thought that that was different from other religions, they would just tell me what their thoughts were, so this one was different cause they said this is your question lets look at what the bible says about that. For me it was a different experience. So I wanted to learn more, and became a Christian and went to the bible school two years later graduated and now coming to Cambodia as a missionary. So it happened that they wanted to start a bible school here and asked me to come and help cause I am Cambodian and speak the language, I can't read and write yet but I can understand and everything. We started since 2008 this is our 3<sup>rd</sup> year this is the bible school, we train people to become leaders and good citizens, from there in 2010 we started the orphanage Hannah's Hope, now we have 40 kids and the graduates of the bible school are in charge of the orphanage. So we are training leaders put them to work so they can grow, and instead of having a foreigner watching over everything. Cause every other NGO is always a foreigner, we are trying to break that cycle where we try to grow the leaders here and let them and trust them enough to put them in charge and to put their faith into practice instead of always depending upon foreign support. So that is another project, another project is the water

filtration project, it is in floating village and basically it is a raft and they have tanks or a purifier so they will pump the water from the lake and clean it turn it into safe water and you can drink the water free of charge. Since we have been there we have been there for a year now, the people at first are sceptical, as they started to drink the water they weren't getting sick like they used to.. We are actually making a difference so basic needs and this is also run by the graduates from the school so we combine it.

What is the ambition of your organization?

Our goal is to build them so that they don't have to depend on foreign support, where they can see the need for themselves and sacrifice themselves through our teaching. If you are country men this is your people you see them need and you have the opportunity, we want them to think instead of the traditional way where you get support from America or another country and then everything you you can just ask them for e.g. for help or money we don't want to do that, we want to develop a mindset that you have been here you are here it is your people just help them and put your faith in Christ. It is ok to take help but not be dependent on help, how the mentality were you can support yourself and you can sacrifice sometimes that is what faith is about. That's is my goal to have that mentality here.

What are the issues in Cambodia:

Biggest issues in Cambodia is corruption, dishonesty especially when it comes to money. That's the only hump we have to get over right now so this is the only reason why I am here, cause everything has to go through me money wise, we cannot trust the locals here yet, because when it is a certain or large amount of money it is very to see whether it really goes to the right place. So I am the middleman, but we want to get to a point where we can find disciple leaders that we can trust and give the money to, I hope to support that. The temptation of money especially in a poor third world country they can be persuade even in America it happens, but just the character build and the content with what they have, the people have low integrity, especially what is going on in society right now in the political and government, the people learn corruption ever since in school, kids go to school they have to pay the teacher to pass and they learn it ever since they go to grade school from the teachers and how can you teach them to be honest and do their best when all they have to do is pay money. And the only way we can change that is not through politics.

My brother is in politics here, I told him even if you guys are in power or whatever there is no perfect system, it is an issue that is inside a person more a character issue, there is no system that can dictate correct and it is about the individual how they believe and it's their choice and I think the only way to get them to is through religion personal faith, connubiality to God or some faith that they have where they are going to be honest and do what is right. That is how I see religion play a role in society.

How does it play role in your activities?

Plays a major role not religion per se but just faith in God, it's a difference religion and your faith. It is more understanding the faith, the teachings against the doctrine and applying it and trusting that it is the way ...that the guide, I think that is the main difference between Buddhism and Christianity, is Buddhism states that you know the way is inside you the way is enlightened, they come with a way to live whereas with Christianity it is your are relying on God and faith and it is not within yourself, to find out.. so that's the two main differences. Buddhism teaches that you don't need God you don't need anybody you can depend on yourself your reasons, you are enlightened meditate, find out . Whereas Christianity is

different it is the opposite, it is not in men God is the source of our wisdom and he will show you the way.

Is there a Christian ideal of development?

Here in Cambodia right now as I am Christian I will say yes, more so because I believe that the bible is the word of God so some people don't that's ok but if we actually live like the bible teaches, instead of just picking and choosing I think you can see the difference. Some people say there is a lot of criticism of the bible, about how the bible came about, is it written by men or how did it survive, you know the background you know they don't take the time to go into, if they have doubt it's fine but, if you really have doubt find out, do your own research ..how .. I mean if it is just a regular book how come it has changed so many people life's. So once you get to the point that you believe that it is the word of God and first of all that there is a God and God that he did create us and he doesn't want us to live without knowing anything and show us the way. In my personal view I think because people don't choose to do their own worries and not the way God that has, that's why there is so many confusions.

What does development mean to you and your organization?

It is growth and maturity. Not just the physical, buildings and economy and all that but their character their ability to know what is right and wrong to take responsibility when something is wrong, to be accountable.

Why is your work relevant for Cambodia:

I can see the fruit of labour and I can see how peoples life's are changing. I can see that they graduated and it is their own testimony and they are changing their own life's. You can see it, even though it is small orphanage, it is one individual life changed and how they grow, how they become a man and a women, how to take responsibility. So if they can also take care of their kids and pass this to the next generation and give a good example.

What have your experiences been like?

Because I am Cambodian, they say how come you teaching the White man's religion, changing the tradition and culture in Cambodia. So they really don't like that, they call me a traitor and not just me but anybody from Cambodian background, just the main thing we face as Cambodians who have converted to Christians but then once they see our life's change for the better all that goes away, but it takes some time. In the beginning it was always have that kind of pressure, what are you doing you are changing get talk you forget about your own ancestors and .. it's bad but as soon as they see your lifestyle changing, you are actually living what you preaching, and learning and they see it changing for the better and then they are ok with it and then they start encouraging it. So that is difficult, only in the beginning.

Do you work or engage with other religious communities?

Yeah we do, we don't turn anybody away, so it is not, we are not going to avoid them or anything like that. They might have a different view, when they see Christianity they might, for example the church building they are scared or something, they don't even want to come into the building, they give the electricity bill they always leave at the neighbour. We always tell them it is ok. So it is just a misunderstanding/miscommunication.

Language in the beginning was an issue especially since I can't read and write, but I can understand so that helps a lot. So I tell my students all the time they are learning English with

me so they are better than me cause they can speak, read and write in both Khmer and English.

Only with the deeper words, vocabulary, but I am extending my grammar and vocabulary. Sometimes things are opposite words in English.

How is your organization perceived by locals?

I think it is good. Especially in our community, we get a lot of compliments and reviews. I don't know if you heard about IBHQ it is a sponsor group they recommend our orphanage to come, cause they see how we do things, the church has a good reputation and we help, the water place they really like that.

What happens when someone comes to your organization for help? Procedures:

Well it depends, is it for the kids or help in general. For the kids there is no forms at all. There was this one guys, he came he said he lost his passport and needs some money for the bus, we helped him out. Couple of months later we moved location and the same guy and the same story, and we said we helped you last time and .. usually we help them, the second time he didn't know what to say, but that is just help in general, people want to when they have a kid that they know is an orphan, we make sure that they are really an orphan do a background check, then we can decide to take them in.

### **Gender roles**

Could you described the relationship between men and women?

Generally men is the head of the household but the women also have a role as far as, usually the women will keep all the money finance. The men bring the money and the women take care of it, that is the typical. Recently it's been that men have ..? Which is fine I mean that is what development is of course they submit to one another. But there has to be someone that is the head of the household. The mother is in charge of the kids and the home and the dad brings in support. So everybody has their own roles.

Have there been any changes in recent years in these roles?

Not that I know of.

Do address any gender role relations?

In the church, it is talked about in the bible, that the head in the household is the man, the woman submit to the husband but the women also submit to the wife as well. So it is a mutual submission and under /to God so, they are both submitted to one another, so it is more, so it is not a ranking. It won't have different ... Some people don't. In general though Christians that follow the bible respect the wife and the wife honor the husband. And this is what the bible says and what we preach in church.

In the orphanage, we have some teenagers around so we talk about sex and sex before marriage, it is within boundaries you gonna get to an age where you feel the urge which is normal but you have to control it within the boundary. Everything has a boundary.

Do you believe that women need different help here in Cambodia than men?

I think they are stronger here, the women here are very strong. Not only mentally and physically but they are emotionally strong as well. When you look around you see most of them are women doing the hard labour, I was surprised to see that.

## Interview Summaries of Local Interviewees

Local Interviewee	Male/Female	File Nr
Yim Sockom	Female Retired Teacher	7
Channaa	Female Waitress	8
Hun Srey Nung	Female Administration	9
Anonymous	Female Restaurant manager	10
Anonymous	Female Administration	11
Sna	Male Tourguide	12
Rambo	Male Taxi Driver	13
Vandett & Dang	Male/Male Waiters	14
Anonymous Monk Wat Damnak	Male	15
Bunthoeng Chhaa	Male Waiter	16

<b>Interview File nr. 7</b>	<b>Local Interviewee</b>
<b>Interviewee</b>	Yim Sockom
<b>Location</b>	Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	23th of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	12:00-13:00

Yim Sockom is 69 years old from a village in Kampong Cham province. The village she lives in is a rice village there are a lot of farmers to produce rice. Before she retired she was a schoolteacher. Buddhism plays a major role in her life. She goes to the Pagoda a lot and gives to the monks. She prays a lot too.

The challenges she perceived in her village are that there is violence in families sometimes. If people are bored they party and drink too much beer. This happens almost 3 or 4 days a week. Sometimes it is violence in families and sometimes in general. In the family there are also problems between wife and husband. The main problems in Cambodia are traffic accidents and drug trafficking. She believes not much is being done to address these problems.

Yim Sockom knew about an NGOs, however because they are international and the signs were in English she could not read the names of the organizations. She did explain that they have an education system and some organization provide equipment for construction, like for a toilet. The NGOs help poor family, give food and make a waterpomp for the village. Some of these are Christian. If people have HIV they provide rice to them and often also provide rice to orphans. In her village there was a girl that received help from Christian NGO. The organization connects to the village leader asks through this person who needs help. The girl is poor and does not have parents and live with her grandmother. She did not do anything for the organization, she just study Khmer.

#### Gender roles

When discussing gender roles Yim Sockom stated that men mostly do the rice and the wife stay at home and take care of the children, but sometime they go to work in a factory in the city. Or both husband and wife go to work in factory. Women have a harder time than men. Women control everything in the family and take care of the children and do the housework. The men work outside and then come back home, but sometimes men help their family too. The situation has changed. Before people tried to work, but now men like to drink. They do work but in their free time they drink. Nowadays people think more about beer, think about happiness and about drinking. Most things are modern, which is changing the situation in society. People think about happiness about party and free time, because when they have some money they have just party.

The Buddhist leader help people that have problem, they give rice to people and sometimes they build roads and buildings around pagoda. The teach people to build and provide advice to people to do good and teach children and old people. Sometimes they teach people in the village. Some people listen and some do not. The monks they teach about these problems but only in the pagoda. In Khmer culture monks only teach in pagoda not outside. They teach about the program not about the problems, if you want help have to talk to monks in the pagoda.

<b>Interview File nr. 8</b>	<b>Local Interviewee</b>
<b>Interviewee</b>	Channaa
<b>Location</b>	Charlie's Bar Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	

The interviewee is Channaa 28 years old, waitress from Phnom Penh. Her family has moved with her from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap. She is a Buddhist and sometimes goes to pagoda and pray, but she is quite busy. According to Channaa the main problem in Cambodia is the Hun Sen government. Sometimes it is easy to live in Cambodia, but sometimes it is not, because the government sometimes does not do the right things for the people. There are big problems in Phnom Penh. Like when there are protests against the government, they end up in the hospital. You cannot speak against the government.

According to Channaa problems in Cambodia are sometimes addressed by monks, they help the poor people and children. Her uncle works for an NGO they help children. It is a Thai Buddhist organization. They give books and education to the children. She believes it is good that they help these people.

#### **Gender roles:**

In Siem Reap all the people, the women have to do everything in the house and the husband needs to do the work outside and make money for the family. There are some problems between men and women. For example, some have problems like that the husband has another girlfriend and also the other way around then with the wife. Sometimes there are beatings and sometimes they even kill one another. Now it is getting worse, before it was better. Before like 10 years ago the women stay at home. Women studied a little bit before, but now a lot study, so also make a bit more money. They study to get a better life. When they study a lot they make more money and that makes everything good. However, sometimes some people study a lot make them crazy. Monks are very important for her and her family, they can help the village. Sometime they collect the money and help the children in the pagoda and sometimes the orphaned children stay in the pagoda and the monk get money and food for them. They also teach.

Interview File nr. 9	Local Interviewee
<b>Interviewee</b>	Hun Srey Nung
<b>Location</b>	Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	13:00-14:00

Hun Srey Nang is 20 years old. She does administrative work for a company. She is saving so she can continue to study business later. She was born in Siem Reap, her family is also living in town. She is a Buddhist, she learned from her parents about Buddhism and later on also learned by going to the pagoda. With every festival she is in the pagoda, she also listens to advice from monks by listening to the radio. She goes often to the pagoda, but sometimes she is too busy. She prays but not everyday.

When asked about problems in Cambodia, she explained that the main problem in Cambodia is that there are a lot of traffic accidents. Furthermore, in Cambodia there are a lot of land disputes and illegal logging. She learned this from the radio and newspapers. She was not sure if anyone is addressing these issues. NGOs try to solve problems in Cambodia, but they do work related to human rights. She is not sure if this is a problem, but it could be a problem. Maybe Cambodia has a problem with human rights like the government worker discusses bribery sometimes between the police official and the local and how they get into conflict with each other.

Don't know any Christian NGO

Her aunt she is younger than her, but she is my aunty sister of her mother she receives help from NGO. It is a local NGO. When she was young, her family is very poor. The NGO wanted her to study and to live in the organization, so they pay her uniform and rice every month. Now she stopped studying, she is not sure if they still provide for her aunt. Before they wanted her aunt to live in the NGO, but she want to stay with her siblings. Without the NGO she has more problems, because she cannot study, there is no ability to support her to study. The interviewees brother worked for the NGO, he asked their mother if she knows who is poor, because the NGO needs children to study. As her aunt did not have any parents her mom told my brother to register her name.

The interviewee feels it is good that NGOs, because of the NGO her aunt gets a chance. She felt that if she goes live with them she will get an education and get more opportunities, because she is poor she should try to get a chance to study cause education can change her life. This a major problem in Cambodia, there are many people here that are poor and cannot get an education.

### **Gender roles**

According to the interviewee everything is changing. Now women can go to work outside like men, sometimes men are "housewives" and staying at home more taking care of the children. Mostly, the men work outside, but when women work outside when they come back home they will still take care of the house.

Issues with regard to gender in Cambodia:

According to the interviewee, live for women is more difficult. She stated that for example her mother does everything in house as well as control the income of her family. Also she support her with her studies and everything. Her mother knows about everything that goes on in the family, her father does not know at all. This is because her father goes outside to work, but her mom is a housewife so she spends the whole day there and thus knows everything.



From 2010 on it has changed. It started in 2000 until 2005 the culture in Cambodia has changed. Now women get higher education, gain more knowledge about rights between men and women. Women have the same ability as men and sometimes the government even urge the women to do same as men.

Religious leaders they are always with people to build home or pagoda, and sometime they build pagoda in foreign countries. Also they give good advice about life and now most of the monks volunteer to teach English to children in the school. The interviewee is close with a monk, in the pagoda they have a programme to teach students in high school to give advice about their life. Motivate and tell them to study and to become a good person. People listen but not 100% some people yes and some people no. The monks talk about political problems, not with the people but discuss amongst each other. Not with the villagers, because it is difficult. People only go to pagoda when there is a festival. Monks don't talk about the problems in Cambodia just about the Buddha's advice.

Interview File nr. 10	Local Interviewee
<b>Interviewee</b>	Anonymous
<b>Location</b>	Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	10:30-11:15

Interviewee wishes to remain anonymous and there is no recording

Could you tell me about yourself?

I left school at a very young age to do part-time work to help support my family. This was in 1995. My godsister so to say, offered me a job in the capital Pnom Phen. In worked there in a bar, but I had to do the cleaning there since I could not speak English. I really wanted to learn English so I could do other work than cleaning, but I never got the chance to learn. I was 21 years old then. After working there 1,5 year I got angry with my boss and resigned. It was very difficult to find a job and I also had to take care of my sick brother at the same time. After he passed away I started working in a restaurant in 2001 this restaurant was owned by my current husband. He is an Indian Singaporean. Still while working in the restaurant there was no opportunity to learn English, they only let me bring the water or the papadam, because they were afraid I would make a mistake. Then I was sent to work a restaurant in Siem Reap in 2007, here I was allowed to work with customers and I finally had the opportunity to learn English. I really wanted to learn English so I could work in the restaurant. Nobody in my family spoke English and no one in the village did, so it can be hard because people become jealous of you. So I asked my staff here to teach me English and I bought books to study. I studied all the time and learned how to write and type on the computer. Any free time I had I was studying, instead of eating I would be studying. Then I was sent back to Pnom Phen and I brought my sister with me because I wanted them to learn English. I saved my money to put them in school so they can learn, so they have a better life.

Could you tell me about your village?

The village I am from is quite big. At that time [before 1995] there was no water and no electricity. We come from a very poor family so I did not have a bike, I had to walk to the elementary school 4 times a day 2km in the heat. Only in grade 12 my parents got me a bike like the others. My family like the rest of the village are rice farmers. When it was dry season my mother had to go to Pnom Phen to sell noodles in order to make enough money. I did not see her for a long time then, we stayed with my father in the village. We had very little money, I knew then that I wanted a better life and didn't want a life as a farmer. And now my dream has come true.

How does religion play a role in your village and life?

Before all the people in the village were Buddhist, now it is less. I guess about 80% and the other 20% in Christian. I myself was a Buddhist but I am married to a Hindu now. I realized there are so many similarities, the same way of praying so I am mixed now. I go to temples and pray, but because I am so busy with the restaurant I cannot go to often. I pray for the old people and my family.

What challenges does your community/Cambodia face?

I am not sure, I do not get involved too much. I do not want to know about other people their issues. I had a very difficult life, I went through it. I don't want to listen to other people their problems, there is too much gossip. In the village there is electricity now, but there is still no water. Especially in the dry season April till July people then have to buy water, but the

people are very poor. Only about 20% have a well. The people are very poor there. Some parents take the salary from the kids immediately from the boss. They need it very much. But some people are lazy and they blame others but they do not do anything themselves.

I focus on my business and my family not bothered with other people's issues. I cannot do anything for them and if I talk bad it might come back, you can get into trouble for that. I don't know what it is like in other countries but here people can get hurt or shot even. So I just stay out of trouble and focus on my family and business.

Do you know anything about Christian NGOs?

The Christians they help the people, but they have to become Christian. They give a lot of things and they build houses. They also have schools and churches to pray.

Do you or anyone you know receive any support or have you received any support from Christian NGOs?

Someone who lives near me her brother, but he moved to another village. This village is like 90% Christian. I don't know him that well so I do not know exactly how it happened that he became Christian and how he is now etc. But I think he needed to support his family because they are very poor and need the money. When they are given things for free they will take it, they do not think about the future.

### **Gender roles**

Could you describe the roles of men and women in your community?

The village and the city are quite the same now. Now they get to know each other before they get married, before it was the parents who choose who you marry and you met that person only a bit before the wedding. Their roles when married I think the women work harder than the men. Women will work in rice fields after that take care of the children and the family and the house. The men will work in the rice fields but after that they do not do so much, in general. So women work really hard.

Are there any challenges between men and women?

Not sure.

Have there been changes?

Now many people go to city to work, there they fall in love. This is because they follow new cultures now. In the village are only very old people that cannot work and very young children, babies. The rest is all working in the city.

How important are religious leaders in your community?

The monks are very important in the villages especially for the old people, because they still have the respect for the monks. They go to the pagoda 4 times a day and give their food and money, even if they are very poor.

Do the monks address issues in the village?

No they are not involved with issues in the village they keep to themselves. I support my family and the old people in the village that do not have any children to support them. I rather give to them than the monks, because the monks are often still young and can take care.

Should they do something about problems in the villages? Not sure

Interview File nr. 11	Local Interviewee
<b>Interviewee</b>	Anonymous
<b>Location</b>	Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	17:00-17:45

The interviewee goes to Church every Sunday and prays three times a day. Her hometown village is in Kampong Thom it takes about takes 1.5 hours to get there. The interviewee described that the village she is from faces many difficulties. Her hometown is near a lake, most of the villagers are fishers. When there is a drought there is not enough fish. Furthermore, there is also no market, so you cannot buy things. Some people have a small business, but many only fish this means that many do not have money and food. She explained that her mother has not been able to catch fish for over 2 months and so she just stays at home now. In Siem Reap is it different, she is not sure about any difficulties in the city, because there are jobs, work, and companies and there is enough to sell.

The main problems in Cambodia according to the interviewee include traffic accidents, illegal logging, illegal fishing, low-employment. When asked what has been done to address these issues, the interviewee stated that, all these problems are only offered short-term solutions. They are not solved, after a while it is the same issue again. It is difficult to ban all these problems, because for example illegal logging it is often some rich organization behind it so they will do again and again. The interviewee believes it is not getting better. The government thinks about these problems but they only have little resources to solve it, the interviewee feels there is a need more long-term solution to solve such problem.

When asked about any organizations that helping to solve issues in Cambodia the interviewee explained that NGOs are helping by providing to poor people. She does not get any support, however the church helps her study the bible. One of the organizations she was familiar with was Hannah's Hope an organization that helps children. It is near her church and every Sunday morning they bring them to church and pray together and sing. The organization is a good thing according to the interviewee. Hannah's Hope help poor children by bringing them to church, help them study and provide food and clothing.

<b>Interview File nr. 12</b>	<b>Local Interviewee</b>
<b>Interviewee</b>	Sna
<b>Location</b>	Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	11:00-12:00

Sna is 35 years, is married and has two children. He works as a tour guide at Angkor Wat, his wife works at the airport. He was born in Siem Reap and his family lives here. His mother is 58 and she works for the government as a fishery official, his father died 1995. His whole family is Buddhist and for Cambodia he mentioned Buddhism is the national religion. His mother goes to pagoda often and to festival a lot.

The problems in Siem Reap occur especially in raining season. There is little work, in this period, as it is a low season. For him as tour guide this means that there is little tourism and little work for a few months. In Cambodia in general he feels there are still many poor people and some of the children they do not go to school, because their family does not have the ability to help them to go to school. Although the school is free for the children, they have to help the family to work. And when the children start working at a young age most of them feel most of them don't feel like wanting to learn more and just try to earn money to save themselves and family. Money is more important than studying.

When asked about NGOs, he stated he was familiar with an organization forgot the name. His teacher is the brandmanager of the organization that provides education to the poor children in the village. It is a Khmer organization but supported by foreign countries. His teacher always goes to Phnom Penh, because his office is there and often abroad to Australia, USA and France maybe to find funding. The interviewee was asked to teach the children at this organization, but he does not have time to teach them.

When asked about Western Christian NGO's the interviewee was not sure about the name of the organization, but knew one that has been working in Cambodia for a long time. He believes it is very important that they are here. Cambodians are thankful to these organizations that spend their valuable time to help Cambodia. Especially when they focus on the education system, this is very important. With their work they force higher standards for the educational system. Education is essential, if there is no education the country cannot get better and peaceful. The interviewee feels that Cambodia is now developing. He sees things are changing although it is slowly, but it is better than before. This is because there are so many new different organizations. It is not only NGOs there are some other organization from Khmer people now, but most of them are still sponsored by other countries. These sponsors spend money to the people so they can start their own business.

**Gender roles:**

Could you describe the roles of men and women in Cambodia?

Before the man work for supporting family and the women always look after the children at home and take care of the house and before always take many children so the family not enough budget and the things getting expensive but now they change both man and women work together to support family and can save some budget for the children to go to school. And the school program right now is very increasing people involved, more and more people.

According to Sna people in Cambodia still follow the original culture from thousands of years ago from ancient times and culture. With marriage the men have to marry or engage the woman before they get married and they still believe in fortune-teller, to find a good wife, for example based on a good year they were born. Sometimes this is a problem, some people still

try to marry even if they know if it is not good. Because it is just his or her that know themselves, but stay together, they have to know how to forgive each other. But now there are fewer problems than before. Before women always follow the parents, they choose for them, now they are making choices themselves because they are provided with education.

To be a monk is very good, they adjust their life. Sometimes the monks in the rural area/countryside they help with problems with food especially and education. They try to help the people. The monks are male and nuns are female in Buddhist religion how they pray is the same the goal is to learn about Buddha. In the monastery they are separated, the nuns stay in the convent separate from the monks but it in the same monastery area. Especially in the rural area some families they send the children to be a monk to study in the monastery about the religion and they can study at the primary school after they get the general knowledge in the monastery. When he was young he studied in the primary school in the temple area. He has studied in different temples. He also studied in a Buddhist school to learn English in Wat Bo. On Saturday and Sunday half days, he studied the Buddhist language but now he forgot everything.

Interview File nr. 13	Local Interviewee
Interviewee	Rambo
Location	Siem Reap
Date	26 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
Time	12:00-13:00

### Interview Rambo

Rambo is 34 years old, married and has 3 kids. He is a tuk-tuk and taxi driver. Comes from a village in Kratie 385 km from Siem Reap, it is a small village near the Mekong river, but there is nothing to do, there is not work. Now he is living in Siem Reap. The village he is has a lot of rice fields so people work there. Some cross the cross-border to work in foreign countries. He is both Buddhist and Christian. He explained that every weekend Japanese Christians come to his house and talk about the bible. The challenges in Cambodia he felt are that the people are poor. Young people especially are smoking and doing drugs. This is a problem as to buy the drugs they need money. The junkies steal everything and sell it to buy their drugs. It is happening everywhere in Cambodia, but especially in Phnom Penh. According to Rambo education is very important. There are Catholics in the village, these are Christians that come to help. He feels this is not a bad thing, they come to help Cambodian people and the sponsors spend money. Both Buddhist and Christians are good, but many people do not follow all by heart or do things to help. NGOs both Christian and Buddhist in Siem Reap help the people, for example in an orphanage they give rice, or teach about hygiene in the village and build houses for the poor. His older brother joined Japanese Christian Church NGO they provided him with education and now he is a tour guide Rambo thinks it is good that they come, but when they try to pass their religion it is a little bad, because they ask to choose catholic religion. However, he feels they need support from foreigners in Cambodia, because Khmer do not share their riches so they are dependent on tourist.

### Gender Roles:

Rambo described that men have some problems with their wife's. Khmer people marry at a young age, around 16 or 17, but after 2 years they get a divorce. Within a marriage the husband 70% of the power wife 30%, she is more dependent, there is no balance. It is changing now and becoming a bit less. In the future both will want equality. But now girls cannot get a high education, because they get married and take care of the kids and the cooking etc. so they do not let the girl study and the husband gets all the money. Recently there is more Western influences, it would be better if people live together first for a while learn about each other's religion culture first and then get married. Girls are working now but they have no power over their boss, they are often scared to say something. Also the girl needs to provide for the whole family, not just her own, but those living in the village as well. Boys are not so concerned with the family.

Monks are very important, but they do not talk about problems in Cambodia. Khmer learn from the old people around them. Monks can help but they are always in the pagoda, they do not mingle with the normal people. They also have their own language. A language that is different than those of the normal people. Therefore, people are shy and scared to talk to the monk. So there are many different words for eating which depends on the context so you can easily offend somebody by saying eating like a dog etc.

### After the interview

Rambo told me his father had past away at the age of 31 he is 3 years old at that time. His mother started a business to sell vegetables and fruit from Vietnam on the market. Then she

started selling them to market stalls as a distributor – all her brothers and sisters were separated during the Khmer Rouge didn't know if they were alive. His mother could not read or write – only can write numbers her books were full of numbers but she did not know who owed her money etc. So she partnered with someone who could do the administration for her. These people cheated her and stole all her money – She owed the Vietnamese money so they came after her – she had to run away and leave the kids on their own. 4 kids the oldest sister was 12. She had to stop school to support the kids. No one in the village helped them. Then the Red cross came and gave them food etc helped them. After 5 years his mother came back. She then started a small stall selling noodles and can support them again – Rambo was sent back to school.

Went to university (study ICT) for 2 years but then ran out of money – Work for an Agricultural NGO to give back to Cambodia – teach the people about agriculture – but didn't have the right papers so the NGO had to kick him out.

Professor asked him if he wants to continue his studies but still not enough money. And 3 kids Professor asked told him he can sell his university records for \$250,- to someone who wanted to start in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. First year costs \$350 second year \$450 but need the money and after a few years the records will disappear so he sold the records.

His wife used to work in a hotel on all sorts of positions but when the grandmother past away there was no one to take care of the kids so she stopped working this is 2 years ago.



<b>Interview File nr. 14</b>	<b>Local Interviewee</b>
<b>Interviewee</b>	Vandett & Radang
<b>Location</b>	Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	17:00-18:00

Vandett and Van Radang are brothers in their twenties; both live and work in a restaurant in Siem Reap. Their family lives outside Krabai area Kampog village about 70 km outside of town. The villagers are rice farmers but they also make baskets and sell these. Vandett and Radang were raised as Buddhists, their entire family follows the Buddhist tradition. Vandett and Dang however, moved to Siem Reap 3 years ago and came into contact with the Freedom Church through a friend. Their family accepts that they are Christians now, but out of respect for their family they will participate with certain Buddhist rituals when they visit relatives. Both go to church and pray, however Radang is sometimes too busy to go. Vandett goes to church every Sunday and also helps with the activities organized there. At the church you can pray receive clothes and books but there is also a lot of entertainment and opportunities to play. “They play and learn and teach them how to pray to God and teach them to play with some games and dancing and have some baseball and teach English. We play with the kids. Freedom School we give like a bicycle, clothes and books. So we give like stuff for studying” (Vandett).

The brothers stated that in Cambodia there are many poor families, they children cannot go to school. Making money is more important than studying. There are also a lot of family troubles. Fathers go out mother go out and the kids are at home alone without food. Freedom church helps these kids and families teaches them. The attitude of the church was described as a family that gives warmth. After joining the church the children change they can communicate and get a better attitude.

The Freedom School gives children materials to study or they can talk to the mother why it is important to go to school. For Vandett the Freedom School is like a family “so they have a attitude that we are like a family and you have a friend many friends like a family”. The important thing is that the child after joining the church can sing a lot. He looks different and friendly than other kids that do not go to church. Because of the singing their attitude changes. They know now how to talk to a friend and have a better attitude. Vandett is part of the Kids Club, helps and play with the kids. In the church he is in the host team. It is like a warm family.

Vandett explains that for some kids it is difficult to come to church, because they come from a Buddhist family and then become Christian. So they follow their parents with Buddhism. The first time they come they do not sing, however they will come again and again and after a while he will know God. Sometimes the family will tell the kids that that they cannot go. The child is told not to follow Christian religion it is not for them they should follow their parents with Buddhism. Sometimes the children just want to go to the church but do not sing. They will just go to make friends and be happy, but still when children come one time again and again they will become different. The work of the church is important. It is not about the money but about themselves and singing and help people to grow up with God.

Like when the church has a big event or something they will give free breakfast, then everyone in the church invites a new friend and take them to the Freedom School. So this is how the church grows, keep on bringing more and more friends and make a warm family. Vandett hopes that in the future the children will still need help from the Freedom Church, because when they learn they start off as a child and then they grow up and learn how to life with God. He believes that through this they can teach the next generation.

The church makes sure that there is a lot of change and make sure that the children become the teachers. You can grow in the church, by taking on different positions in various teams. Vandett started of as a member of the host team but he will go to the next level soon.

In the following excerpt Vandett describes his first encounter with the Freedom Church:

“Freedom Church, the first time I was with my cousin brother and they invite me again and again at Angkor Hotel. He tell me you can go with me, but he don’t tell me where we go. Just on the bike he take me to the church. I didn’t know what is it, I think what is this place? Like a hotel, but what is inside? We have a church he tell me, but I don’t know what church means. What is church? He said the place where you learn about God. Before I always think about that. The first time I am in the room and I just saw three boys and girl and they play and sing, and I don’t know what that means. It is in English and the first time I am not so good in English so I just think what are they doing. But the first time I don’t know everything, but the second time I go to learn with Jan, Mr. Jan he is a ..he talk, we can ..some music can wash shoulders like the things in my life, so when I cannot sing about that so like he show me how to solve it. And the next week I go again, and learn a new song and again a new song. How to grow up and teach me a lot. And then they ask me if I have the free time for the host team and then .. I was very excited because I every week to change, and when someone ask me to do something and then I say yes I can do it. So the host team I did for 2 or 3 months. I learned about .. I have some difficult story in my life, that I meet everyday like the family and the boring friend so sometime we cannot sing, I was troubled so I cannot sing, so I have like an example you have 2 or 3 ways to go, this way, this way and this way and when you stay in the middle, you cannot say which way I go, but when I go there they show me when I go this way it’s good. So they show me to go a good way.

Vandett stated that the church provides breakfast like bread, with Khmer cake and after that they go inside the church and learn.

Gender Questions:

Family like a lot have problems, sometime the boy have 2 wives, so then the family is not good, they are always angry and always fighting. And some people like the mother follow with the other boy, and for the kid there is no mother so the mother is important for the kid they have to always stay with the kid but when the family’s mother, when the mother go away so we are just with father but the father have to go the work, so in the house. But maybe on the 15 of 16 they think about the money and think about how to act gangster in the village, this thing he can be a gangster in the village. This is not good.

For the lady they always stay in the house and take care of the food and when they have free time they make the basket. For the women they make these baskets and sell. All the ladies in Cambodia know how to do it. They take care of the kids and the men outside working. When the men drink beer and go back home and fighting with the mother. Some men go to the farm or work in the city. Some women working like my sister she working and then she break with the family and follow another guy, and my brother in law is taking care of the kids, very difficult for him. He has four children all girls. The men when they come go home and there is no food no anything then they man will get angry and fight with the family. And some women play card, like gambling, when she has free time they do like that.

Gender roles:

Vandett and Radang stated that a lot has changed. Nowadays, it is better than before, because a lot of girls get to study. Now the girl is more clever than the boys, most of the girls always pass and then most of the boys they fail. This is because when Khmer boys get like 18 or 17

and they are from a poor family have to work and have a family. They do not have to study. Others that come from a rich family become gangsters and go away with friends and do drugs and then they fail their study, and start stealing money. But it is getting better, for the women. Men think they are better than the women, but they only think that, it is not true.

How important is the monk or priest for Cambodian people?

For the men not sure, because the monk stay in the pagoda always stay there but sometime for the village they invite the monk to make peace and happiness for the family. We think like that the monk can chase away the ghost and sometime spirit is in the house and the monk can take the spirit away and there is more peace. Sometimes the photo of the monk in carving in wood or in rock, respect this carving or pray to this carving, like let me have a good day or let my family have a good day like that. Different from the Christian, Christian try to read the book and then pray it is important. But for the Buddhist they take some food to offer and pray. You know they respect the rock, because they have this from a long time ago, they do this ritual again and again, it is part of the culture.

The monk always talk, they say the truth/real they show how to do a good, but the monk always talk no fighting with other, try to live with other people, but Cambodian just listen and do the other thing. Doesn't help what the monk does. Sometimes same for Christians, like no fighting with other don't talk bad all the time, but I think for the monk no people follow, just some old people follow, but the young people they don't listen. When they have a party at the pagoda, for the lady and boy always go there for dancing or just to have a look at the concert but for the old people they go to listen to the monk in the pagoda. They go there to learn and know that when we die we know how to be born again; this is for the old people. They learn from the monk that when they are born again have a better life.

Interview File nr. 15	Local Interviewee
<b>Interviewee</b>	Anonymous Monk
<b>Location</b>	Wat Damnak Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	18:00-19:00
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lifeandhopeangkor.org">http://www.lifeandhopeangkor.org</a>

One of the local temples in Siem Reap called Wat Damnak runs an NGO called Life and Hope Association (LHA), which focuses on education. It was established in 2005 and run by the monks.

According to the interviewee the problems in Cambodia include that about 70 to 80 % of the people in Cambodia do not have proper education, especially in the countryside. For girls, it is specifically a problem, because to get higher education they have to move to the city. Parents are often afraid to send their daughters to the city, because they fear their daughters might become influenced by bad things. Also many girls after ninth grade (around 17 or 18 years old) will get married or drop out of school. This is a big problem. Also drugs and alcohol is a problem in Cambodia. A lot of people go and work in Thailand and Vietnam there they will get drugs and spread it over Cambodia. This is very difficult to control and because of the drugs and alcohol there are a lot of fights, and even killings.

At the pagoda, the NGO teaches sowing and also provides English education. There are also a lot of scholarships provided, such as the Peace and Hope scholarship. With this scholarship girls and also boys from poor families in the countryside can study at a high school and even university and they are provided with clothes and food to them. The monks will talk to the family and interview the potential student first. There are currently have 5 girls that just finished university and 1 is still in university. The girls can stay near the pagoda area together so the parents do not have to worry. There is also a child development orphanage in poor villages, here the poor children are taken in and educated. There are no relations with Christian NGOs and the pagoda

#### Perceptions on Gender Issues

Before women were not allowed study. Parents were often worried that their daughters will not be committed to the family and that they cannot control them. For men it is fine they can get a higher education. Now it is changing women can get more education and are also working. There is more balance between husband and wife. Before it was the woman's duty to look after the house and the kids and serve the husband, almost like a slave. This has changed now because of education and influence from global culture. Also the political situation has changed and the government is supporting that woman get education.

Monks are very important in the communities, because we have the role to encourage people to be good and have a good family. Monks motivate people to be good and have a good education. When we see a poor family we motivate them to send their children to school and if they are too poor to do that we will help the family and provide to them. For example, by giving food and clothing to the family. This is what we call 'first aid'. We do this in order for the parents to send their children to school.

Interview File nr. 16	Local Interviewee
<b>Interviewee</b>	Bunthoeng Chhaa
<b>Location</b>	Dashkins Siem Reap
<b>Date</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> of June 2015
<b>Time</b>	15:30-16:15

The interviewees name is Mr. Bunthoeng Chhaa a 29 year old man working in a restaurant. He has one brother and a sister. He is married and has 3 children. He was born in Siem Reap, but his family comes from a village just outside of Siem Reap they call it Sosasow (?) maybe about 35km. He lives in Siem Reap, even though his family lives there, he does not get to there often, because it is far and costs a lot of money. The village is a farmer village, which produces rice. It is very nice have a lot of fresh air. He has been living in Siem Reap for 10 years now. He has studied English a little in school, and then only for 3 months after that he learned from his experiences at work. He had to learn quickly because after completing high school in 2005 he was send to train in a hotel and here he could practice everyday with foreigners.

His whole family including himself are Buddhist. They go 4 times a month to pagoda for praying. When asked about problems in his village, he stated that the only thing is that there is not a lot of money. However, they are living farmer life-style so people are self-sustainable, they make their own food. So there is little income but they also spend very little.

The interviewee does not have any problems, but he has heard that other people in Cambodia face difficulties with regard to land, food, or because some people they cannot make money and some have their own land but somebody is stealing from them. However it was emphasized that these problems do not occur in the city, as there a lot of jobs in the city, normally it is the countryside only. Cambodia does not have a lot cities though, there are mainly villages.

Education is also a problem in the countryside because there are not enough schools. Some people spend about 30 minutes to go to school, they have to travel far for school. For the interviewee it was not a problem at all, he could study full time. When asked about NGOs he stated that there are many organizations that help, but only in the city, in the countryside there is not much. He knows New Hope Organization a local Buddhist organization. Also, the interviewee mentioned one foreign organization, their activities give food and provide to the schools. He believed that they are a good organization because they want to help Cambodia, because Cambodia has many poor people.

#### Gender Roles:

According to the interviewee in Cambodia the men works, while women stays at home and they do the chores at home. There are some problems, for example some people a small income and spend a lot. Especially now, there are high prices because economy is up but the income is still low, so this is a problem. Most of the people in this town they come from the village and they need to rent a room and pay for the food pay for the motorbike so they have very high expenses, but a low salary. For the women it is ok to live in Cambodia cause gender is equal. What the men can do, the women also can do. In the city you see a lot of women working, but when they get married sometimes they have to stay home to take care of the kids. However, when they are single they are the same as the men. Once they marry they take care of the child and stay at home. This is the same and will be the same. In Cambodia men and women are equal. In the village they have the village leader he is an important man, he is a strong and rich guy, because they have to have full power to control the village. This guy is

very important because everything is reported to him. He is like the king of the village. Every village has a pagoda, now monks do not need to teach the people because they go to school. The monks teach the holy words, they focus on the teachings of Buddha. Before the interviewee heard that monks will teach children if they cannot go to school and give them education.