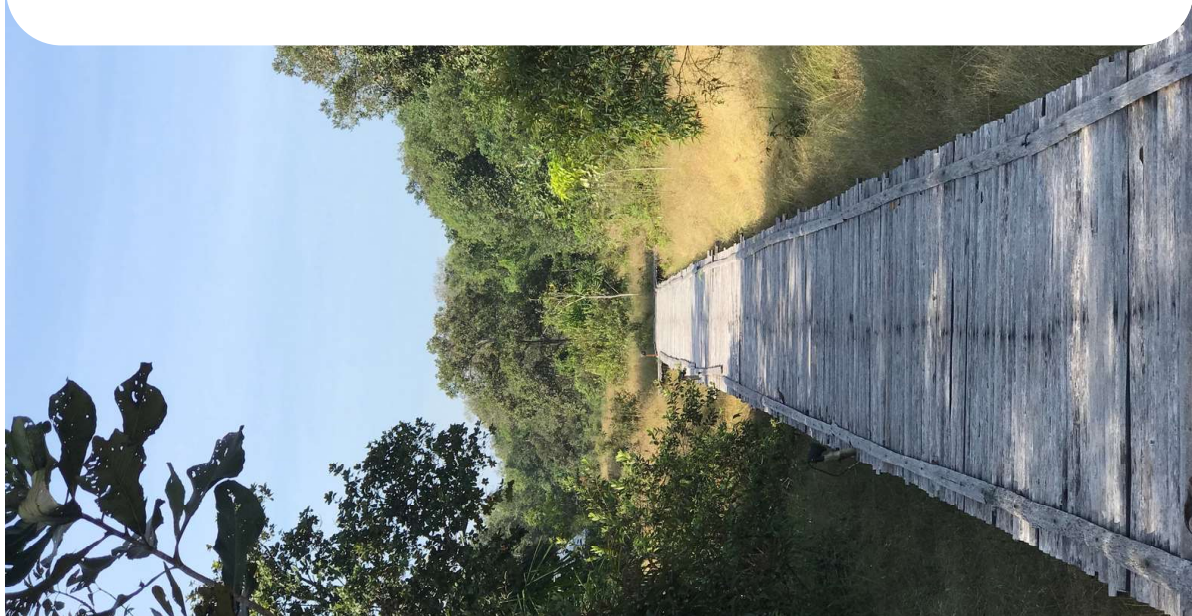




Cambodia's Gender Context

In the past two decades, Cambodia has demonstrated impressive economic growth and has steadily worked towards achieving its national development goals. Yet prevailing poverty and insufficient social services in the rural areas hamper Cambodia's otherwise positive progress. Disadvantage men and women have very little opportunities to earn a living wage and usually work under poor working conditions.

Socially, fewer girls are attending and completing secondary education and tertiary school (15 percent of adult women complete secondary education and only 8.5 percent of post-secondary students were women). Women traditionally take care of the family and the burden of housework which consequently leads to girls leaving school earlier than boys and young women often working in factories to financially support their families. In line with these facts, the Gender Gap Index (GGI) 2021 reflects these gender realities in Cambodia and scores the country low, ranking it 103rd out of 156 countries. While there is good progress in strengthening the legal and institutional framework and pushing for enhanced gender equality and awareness for women's rights, women in Cambodia still face many constraints in all aspects of social, economic and political life.

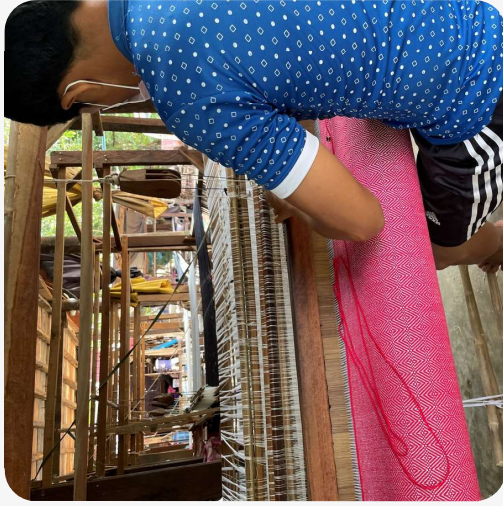
GIZ Regional Economic Development IV Program



The GIZ Regional Economic Development Program IV (RED IV) promotes local economic development, supporting employment generation and access to labor markets for women, disabled people and persons from otherwise disadvantaged households. To ensure that gender aspects are incorporated into all program activities, RED IV established a cross cutting staff position for “Special Measures and Gender Promotion”. This position establishes mechanisms and mainstreaming strategies to ensure that gender issues are included into the workplans of all program components. It also provides team members and project partners with advice on gender mainstreaming, gender sensitive activities and the promotion of a gender-diverse working environment.

Promoting equal opportunities is a common goal, shared by GIZ and the Cambodian government. However, gender equality cannot be achieved by an individual, but by the engagement and cooperation of multiple actors. Working together not only as a household or a community, but with foundations, companies and international organizations is vital in order to produce change.





Gender diversity 2.0 – Integrating Disadvantaged Men into Weaving Communities

For people from rural areas, the traditional handicraft sector provides an extremely important source of income and employment. More importantly, because of its locality and informality it allows marginalized groups such as elderly or disabled persons who can hardly leave their homes to generate an income by themselves and participate actively in the life of their families and communities.

Although the local arts and handicraft sector is traditionally and almost exclusively employing women, it does provide an excellent opportunity for disadvantaged men to find income and employment. This is especially the case for disabled men, who often made their living with farming but lost limbs from land mine explosions.

RED IV designed training and capacity development measures for weaving and handicraft communities, that specifically promote the inclusion of disabled men. To that end, in a first step women participating in RED IV trainings are encouraged to pass on their newly gained expertise to those men. Since they are usually the husbands or other close family members the men are less intimidated and there is less fear of failure. In a second step and to further enhance the skills of those men, the RED program then directly reaches out to those persons and invites them to directly participate in technical trainings.



Gender revisited – Breaking up stereotypes

By strengthening the capacities of disabled men to join women dominated sectors such as handicraft production is within the Cambodian cultural context a big leap. However, the willingness of families and community-based producer groups to include this special target group significantly increased over time.

Currently, in cooperation with GIZ RED and largely funded by German private donations the weaving community is constructing a new building in Poy Char village. It will serve more than twenty households as communal workspace providing the weavers with a place to set up their looms, store their raw materials and conduct trainings. At the same time, it provides space for joint learning. There are certainly many practical advantages to that workspace: increasing the productivity of the group, keeping finished products all in one place, and improving the workflow of the weavers. And yet, the most important aspect is that it provides men and women with the opportunity to share their skills and learn from each other's strengths. This includes disabled men who may find through their fair and equal inclusion a new path towards self-determined livelihood.

