



SUCCESS STORY

Crowdfunding Platform Boosts Shrinking Budgets for Civic Projects



Phan Vuthy, TOSFund's Project Manager, shows off a selection of the projects currently using the platform to campaign and raise funds.

Check out the platform and give to your favorite project now!

www.tosfund.com

Find out more about Development Innovations' activities and services:

www.development-innovations.org

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Telling Our Story

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Groundbreaking ideas often lack both monetary and popular support at the beginning. Whether it is small project that provides a lunch to street kids and the homeless or a larger project seeking to promote a more efficient coal by selling its product at reduced prices to build a customer base, the web can offer so many ways to reach a larger audience of potential investors. That is exactly why young, socially engaged entrepreneurs, creative individuals and local civil society organizations (CSOs) contact [TOSFund](#) to help them connect to funding.

The Khmer word “tos” means to come together, and is fused with the English word, “fund,” to encourage users to donate to the platform, which builds campaigning capacity and helps Cambodian projects raise funds online. Taking advantage of its major and strategic partners, mobile network operator [Cellcard](#) and bank [ACLEDA](#), TOSFund became the first crowdfunding platform built for Cambodia, in Cambodia. The website allows both Cambodians and individuals outside of the country to donate and support innovative projects with a simple click, and has generated more than \$17,788 in donations to date.

Crowd-funded by local development actors, IT experts and film makers (NGO [Action IEC](#), tech companies [AI Solution](#) and [Rotati](#), and social enterprise [ComeTogether](#)), the TosFUND project aims to be ‘owned’ by all Cambodians. With a grant from [Development Innovations](#), Action IEC and its partners developed and refined the platform through a series of regular but informal Friday night innovation sessions with members of the tech community. At its last stage of development, they said they made the platform “rock solid” with local tech service provider, Rotati.

Funding is a chronic problem for CSOs in Cambodia as Cambodia grows economically and development aid decreases. Prior to TOSFund, international crowdfunding platforms did not offer viable options for local payments since less than 4% of Cambodians have access to an international credit card. Previously, there were no local online fundraising tools that Cambodians could use to support local causes. TOSFund addresses these issues with the development of its crowdfunding tech, adapted to local needs that can increase access to both local and international funding through Cambodia-based payment systems. Its partnership with ACLEDA bank, which developed its Cambodian and international payment transfer gateway, helped to make this happen. The tool is not limited to fundraising, but can also foster campaigning capacities for development initiatives, a key need in Cambodia. It offers a platform for non-traditional ideas that can solve social problems. Action IEC notes the generosity of Cambodian culture and describes TOSFund as a way of activating it digitally.

“It doesn’t matter what background you are from, as long as you have a bright idea for solving problems in the society, you can introduce it to the public through TOSFund,” describes Phuoy Lyeng, who is using TOSFund to generate funding for his idea of a more fluid and ergonomic Khmer keyboard. He strongly believes that TOSFund “would play a major role to help Cambodians contribute to the development of their own country.”

To date, TOSFund has raised more than \$17,000 and the amount continues to grow. TOSFund now has 20 different organizations using its platform to raise funds, and has secured funds from over 1,100 donors. They even took home the third prize at the [Cambodia ICT Awards](#) this year, an award given by the Royal Government of [Cambodia's Ministry of Telecommunications and Posts](#) to inspire more Cambodians to solve problems with tech.

While online payments in Cambodia are still in development, TOSFund hopes to partner with more telecommunications and e-money providers to reach more people in Cambodia, and get more Cambodians to use the platform for fundraising.