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Cooperation Committee
for Cambodia
Comité de Coopération
Pour le Cambodge

Local Engagement Action for Emerging Issues

November 2013

A Case Summary from the
Community Participatory Action Research
(CPAR) Course

Promoting NGO Solidarity and Cooperation Since 1990



Local Engagement

Action for

Community Issues

A Case Summary from the

Community Participatory Action Research

(CPAR) Course

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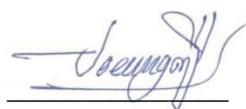
Foreword

Cambodia has made significant progress in development in the last few decades. Civil society Organizations (CSOs) have been acknowledged for their critical contribution and participation in development process. The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) has played a unique role since 1990 in strengthening the cooperation, coordination, and networking through working together with members, and other development actors to address development challenges in Cambodia. To develop the capacity of CSOs to more effectively meet these challenges, CCC has provided learning events for technical managements, operation, and both policy and action research for complementary development approaches at organizational and both national and local level.

Under this approach and since 2004, CCC specifically established the capacity development for community field workers through the former Community Course, and continuously modified contents of the course to respond to the need of NGOs community. Outcomes of the trainings were effectively achieved since participants have learnt, and shared their development practices, approaches, and were able to explore and address the research problems in their respective communities by engaging with local stakeholders to address the issues. Moreover, the result could also help them to obtain better programming and practices in both the organization and the communities.

This research summary entitled as Local Engagement Action for Emerging Issues is extracted key information from the detail research reports which were produced by 15 NGOs who participated in the Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) course in 2013. From the research process, diverse local emerging issues related to social, economic and environmental issues were reflected and taken into account from the programming areas of the participants NGOs, and the participatory action research process was conducted in seven communes of the four provinces.

Thanks to these action researches, many impacts and action learning have been appreciated for having greatly contributed to sustainability of the community. We, CCC, hope that this research summary will help to express the important achievements of participatory action research in dealing with community issues through engagement and empowerment of local people.



Soeung Saroeun

Executive Director

Cooperation Committee for Cambodia

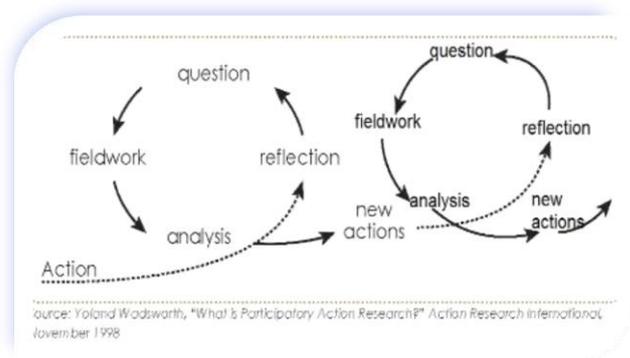
Introduction

The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) is the longest established membership organization in Cambodia which has played a unique role since 1990 in strengthening the cooperation, governance, professionalism, accountability, and enabling environment of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). These areas of working, and long history has well received coordination and capacity development with members, and other CSO partners that are extremely positive and significant contributions to Cambodia's development through support given to programming activities, organization, and model of working with community people.

Under Governance Hub Program (GHP), the Capacity Development and Learning, a component II of GHP had carried out the **Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR)** training course which formerly known as Community Course provided by CCC since 2004. It has been re-designed to have better fit for community field officers working directly with local people to learnt and deal with their problems. This course aims to strengthen capacity in action research and analytical skills on emerging issues, and influence the thinking and practices of participants for the empowerment of local communities and in response to Cambodia's rapidly changing society.

In 2013 the course period started in late March, and ended in August, which divided into three steps: 1) key concepts and theories concerning to research skill, development practice and social changes, rights-based approach to development, and son on, and along with practical learning, 2) conducting field practice in NGO participants' areas by carrying out Participatory Action Research (PAR), which attempt to deal with local emerging issues. A technical support through mentoring and coaching are supported by CCC team, and 3) final report writing, presentation, and reflection from the course.

The course context applies heavily a PAR approach, which adapted from Wadsworth model¹. It is a cyclical process that starts with: i) reflection the current situation by discussion and observation with community stakeholders and other key local people, ii) identification of the problem or brought up to specific question or issue, iii) doing field work, and iv) analysis for leading to take action to bring learning for change with the situation.



The course participants have coordinated the process and bring about the learning and change to make sure that community stakeholders, and especially local villagers engaging in the process. The participating organizations work on any concern issue relating to their programming area for more securing their work, and keep continue with process after the formally course period ended. They have stayed in their target village to collect information with focal villagers. The collected information is reflected and discussed to get in-depth analyze to identify the root cause

¹ Yoland W. (1998), *What is Participatory Action Research?*, Action Research International.



and impacts, and to try to find out the better way dealing with the issues through clear setting up action plans. As it is a cyclical process, the course participants reflect with community stakeholders on conclusion of the actions, discuss key lesson learnt, what further support they need and what problems may need further attention, and then come up with the next action plan (s) to deal with such development issue.

This is the summary of research result from the 15 NGO participants (see annex) conducting these researches in 2013. The topic is more likely selected to any area where having more concern and relatively able to dealt with about five month period of the course. It covers various emerging social issues relating to the environment, health and sanitation (which more relatively happening in the rural area), education and other community issues. These research topics were conducted in Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, and Kampong Cham provinces.

Community Mobilization to Promote Safe Migration

HelpAge
International

age helps

Research Coordinated by: Klot Phally, Men Samphoan and Mao Kongkea

Migration (both legal and illegal) has become an emerging issue almost everywhere in Cambodia. The case is much more common in the provinces bordered to Thailand and Vietnam where mostly over 15 years old population emigrate to earn extra source of income aside from their core farming activities. Bad experiences have been reported and heard quite often through which the migrants were exploited by the *Mekyol*², the constructors and their employers.

As a result from the training course conducted by the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) on Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) conducted in March 2013, an action research study has been conducted by three course participants from Help Age International (HAI) in Tuol Thnong and Svay Bei Daeum Villages to inspire community people to identify emerging issues happening in their communities, understanding their root causes and take action together to fight against the issue.

Tuol Thnung and Svay Bei Daeum are the neighbouring villages located in Kantueu Muoy Commune, Banan District, Battambang Province. They are about 30 km away from Battambang Town. Even though most of the population are rice and cash crop farmers, their main income source from farming has been declining year to year due to irrigation shortage, high cost on agricultural inputs, uncompetitive market etc. Life is no longer easy in both villages and some villages decided to migrate with their house, properties or even their children left behind with the grandparents or their neighbours.



From the study, there are three main drivers inspiring people to migrate, either legally or illegally, to Thailand and other nearby countries to mainly work as the workers.

- **Economic factor:** the need for agricultural mechanization, landless or small land holding, insufficient economic return from farming activities as well as poor market for agricultural produces have made the villagers income become less and unstable and as the consequence, they need to rely on debt and need to find alternative ways for repayment.
- **Social factor:** materialism, persuasion from their neighbours and *Mekyol*, ambition to earn more money and commitment to build/renovate their houses to be as good as other

² *Mekyol* "head of the wind" The person who help to coordinate the trip and work for the migrants, sometimes, they could be a broker.

houses have driven most villagers to migrate although very often, even though they have heard about cheating from the dealers, arresting by the police and over exploiting by the employers etc, but they do it anyway.

- **Family factor:** illness of family member(s), education fee for children, repairing of the house and other family livelihood supplies have been considered as another main factors inspiring people to migrate with the hope to earn more money and send some back home in a regular basis without paying so much attention on the negative cases.

From a series of meeting, community people have been aware of the above root causes and have produced some action points to act together as means to promote safe migration for their own villages.



- **Nominating focal points and conducting house visit/meeting:** to arrange for focal points by destination countries of migration that can provide useful and referral information. Those focal points also organize regular meetings with the villagers especially those who are interested in migration to provide updated information.
- **Training course on safe migration:** through collaboration among the three staffs of HAI, local authorities, community representatives and other relevant ministerial agencies (Battambang Provincial Labour Center) to provide training courses to the community in the area of safe migration.
- **Mainstreaming safe migration into the community functions:** in which key resource persons such as local authorities, community representatives and HAI staff can use some times of the community functions to promote the awareness of community people on the migration issue.
- **Parents advising their children on migration:** is the continuous process especially when the parents who have been involved in the migration related meetings can update/share the information/advise their children on how to migrate with safety.

The application of CPAR as an approach to study the hot issues of the community and identify the appropriate solutions in a participatory way has been considered as a very powerful tool to educate people to change their mindset and start acting together to combat the common issue. And since this is a cyclic process, it also inspires the villagers to use their ownership and partnership in sustainable development of their own community.

"This approach is very easy, the village people can accept it, and also I have learned so far that before we are the one that are going to do, not the community. Through this approach the community identifies their issues and also they prioritize and resolve by themselves instead of the NGO taking the lead for every single step" Sophan, Help Age International-Cambodia (HAI).

Promote Primary Health Care and Sanitation in Phnum Kravanh District of Pursat Province



Research Coordinated by: Ngeth Rithy and Ley Hoeup

Following community reflection to identify the emerging issues with community stakeholders, and along with the working experience of Disability Development Services Program (DDSP) field officers in Preaek Pir village, Samraong commune, Phnum Kravanh district of Pursat, they have found some major emerging issues including livelihood issue, education, and other natural resources. This village has many dependent people with disabilities (79 of the 1150 total population) and children amongst 237 families living in sub-groups close to the forestry area. They consume the water by the Pursat stream and some water wells provided by NGOs working in the area, but have not considered to daily practices for their sanitation and environment, whilst the health agent rarely visited the area.

DDSP officers engaged with key community stakeholders such as village authorities, CBO representatives, and other key villagers, especially focal point of disability groups reflected this problem and engage through applying of Participatory Action Research in attempt to learn the real cause of the problem, its affect to health, and explore proper solution for setting up into action plan to deal with it. The study rigorously investigated for four days in early May 2013 with 15 small group discussions, and 25 in-depth interviews with respected villagers.

In mobilizing people for village meeting to discuss, analyze, and preparing plan for taking action lead to dealing with the problem. Many poor practices of villagers had been identifies such as only very few families have the latrines or toilets, and even those who had been partly supported by NGO projects did not regularly use their installed facilities. Nearly all villagers use direct water from the stream, and although the majority of families are supplied with water filters they did not properly use them. Daily cares related to food cooking, cleaning and keep food that affect from their livestock, and pay little attention to the daily environment around their home or take care for their children such as cleaning hand, washing, and so on. The villagers had reflected all these poor practices, and identified the causes to health problem such as diarrhea, typhoid, stomach problem, and other fevers, etc. They also link the problem to the cost of time, and money to cure with it. The 46 family participants, 3 representatives of disability committee in the village and village authority identified about their poor understanding and lead to their poor primary health. Further discussion has conducted about the roots cause that able to minimize with the problem. Then finally, they come up the plan for preparing dry-latrine³ for their household, and ask for further education on primary health care.



³ Several villagers requested partial support from NGOs to prepare a toilet, but this project did not include available funds.

During the follow up of the research with the coordinators and reflection with village participants and authorities in the next two months, we have expressed that villagers pay better attention to take care of their primary health care after they implemented and learnt their action plan. There are 14 families had build their dry latrine, and many others having their plan to develop it, whilst others thought of developing toilet. Most families thought of how to properly manage their defecation to minimize the pollution of the consumed water from the stream. In contrast, new causes of water pollution are reported to be caused by a private company from upper stream level, then the issue is brought by village authorities for further investigation, and will further discuss at commune level.



... many villagers have changed as they start to clean their hand before eating, they prepare the boil water for drinking, and families ignore with using the filter water returned to properly use it. While they also better clean and care their children and environment [around and inside home]. Reflection with a CPAR course participant in the village.

DDSP and focal points in the village were also able to arrange the master trainer from health commune to provide some education to the villagers in the area. The 21 families from various sub-groups in the village participants not only learnt about primary health care and sanitation, but also learnt about other relevant health preventions that have been integrated such as malaria, maternity health care, and birth spacing. Various posters had been shared and tested after the training to make sure the villagers understood, and could take those materials away for further insight and education to other neighbors.



Having reflection and discussion with participants on the causes of pollution and sickness in their community, they learnt that it is the community problem that needs action and participation as a whole. At the same time they are limited to be active in their role to mobilize and share what they understood to other people; therefore, further ongoing external support is still critical to push the process forward.

We can conclude that the poor understanding of local villagers lead to poor daily practices to prevent themselves from sickness, and take care of their children, but they were able to decide on changes for themselves after learning about their primary health care, and other prevention techniques. They appreciated learning from the process, and have requested further support and coordination, and are considering external support to deal with other issues, while they feel not strong enough to influence their local community as well as concentrate on their families' livelihood. A further connection between representatives of local community to other authorities beyond village level is also importance to activate this engagement role, and empower them for a sustainable process to deal with the problem.

System of Rice Farming for Local Farmers in Phnum Kravanh District of Pursat Province



អង្គការកុមារ ANAKOT KUMAR

សហគមន៍សាងសង់សហគមន៍ COMMUNITY BUILD CAMBODIA

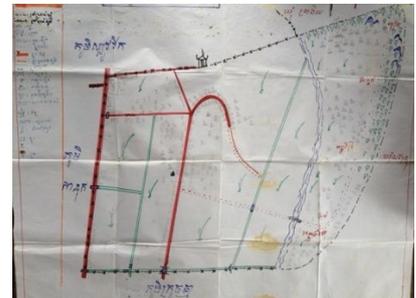
Research Coordinated by: Kay Sophea and Soeun Ravy, Supported by Chea Sreyneang

I learnt a lot from the course, and implement it with community. Especially in write research report as I rarely have chance to training, and never joint such course before, we learn and we do together.

Sophea, a CPAR course participant.

Rice farming is the major subsistence livelihood in nearly all the local villagers in Leach commune, Phnum Kravanh district in Pursat province. All of the farmers are used to cultivating traditional wet season rice close by their village residences. The cultivated rice farm land in Pen village is 157.99 hectares with an average size of about half hectare for each of the 307 families. The low availability of farming land and the traditional farming system brings a limit of rice consumption for the whole year, and increases individual costs of farming for villagers. This lead to a few NGOs projects in the area introducing a new way of rice cultivation in 2010 which is intended to intensify the produce through System of Rice Intensification (SRI), keep attention to rice farming, and minimize the cost of production.

This study applied Participatory Action Research (PAR), coordinated by Anakot Kumar, a local NGO working in the area with engagement from local community people, and other related development stakeholders including local authorities, key SRI-test implementers, model farmers in area, and other project implementers in the community. They have been engaged in the process since reflection for this emerging problem, including data collection process, set up and implementation of action, reflection for lesson learnt, and moving forward from this process of engagement to improve the situation in the area. This research looked into the current practice of rice cultivation, explored the reasons and favorable condition for possible new practices, and found out better ways to promote effective rice cultivation in the area.



Villagers learnt the new way of rice farming system

The result from Pen village revealed that the farmers were accustomed and comfortable with their traditional way of wet rice farming as they know the process very well, of preparing the land, seeds, cultivation, and only taking a small amount of time to care for the rice. Whilst about 32 families had already experienced growing using SRI techniques following they had learnt this method from agricultural agents and NGO projects in the area, and tested with their small plot of farming land. They appreciated the gaining of production and minimized the cost with seeds, but were concerned about the labor to prepare the land, transplanting, water management, and

taking care of the rice. Moreover, they still have limited knowledge to apply SRI method. Last year model SRI farming is coincided with destruction by the rats. It lead to their hesitation in extending their SRI farming system, though their rice field is not large, and close by the village which has extremely favorable conditions for applying this new system.

At the village meeting for discussion of how to improve the rice farming system as well as to increase the production, the villagers and other stakeholders reflected on their past experiences of traditional farming and compared it to the new system of farming. They tried to explore possible ways that they could enhance their rice farming. Finally, they all decided to use SRI, and they would grow with this in their appropriate plots as they learnt that this



kind of method need appropriate labor for transplanting, and they could not hire extra labor who more familiar with the new technical work. If they share labor amongst experienced SRI will concern of other rice's age need to do at the same time. Then they have proposed additional training on SRI techniques, and dissemination to other villagers who were not familiar or interested with this system. They also proposed an exposure visit to get practical experience from other areas which successfully implement SRI. The first two suggestions were developed into the clear action plan, while the third is waiting until they could find a way to support this activity.

During the time for wet season rice, the SRI interested villagers had identified since the village meeting they need to start following techniques such as preparing their land and seedlings in June. As a result, fourteen villagers continued SRI techniques, and then additional training on SRI was conducted by an expert from Anakot Kumar, whilst they cannot approach agricultural expert to come in the right time. The participant villagers had learnt more about the technique and were able to clarify some points that they did not have clearly in mind such as appropriate kinds of seed, water management, and so on. They also discussed and shared their own experience for better cultivate their SRI in the area.

I think the technique from the training is really helpful for us, we can use it in our plot, but it is new [way of farming], and we don't have enough labor with small family, we grow on our small plot. [Experience] Last year production, it really high compare to traditional wet season rice. One of village participants applied SRI in Leach village.

After completing a cycle of PAR process, the participants' reflection was able to identify several lessons learnt for their understanding and practices. They appreciated a new technique for rice cultivation, and could have some level of adaption to improve their traditional technique, whilst they had been just starting SRI on their small plot. Moreover, the leading participants coordinated in the process had learnt PAR a useful tool for exploring the issues, and mobilize community people involve in the process to deal and learnt with their issues. But it needed time to understand the benefits of a new system, coordination from external supporters to bring experts to get involved, and a willingness to learn from the process, while villagers normally concerned more about their individual family and livelihood.

Mobilizing for Community Welfare in Ou Reang Ov District, Kampong Cham Province



Research Coordinated by: **Hoeng Sodavin and Phan Sothea**

Thmei village is located in Tuol Sophi commune, Ou Reang Ov district, Kampong Cham province. The population is 384 people, of which 240 are female (92 families). Approximately 90% of villagers are farmers with small size of rice field, and earn low income from selling their rice. In the past, most villagers have defecated without using a latrine, and their knowledge on primary health care is limited. The study here will seek to understand the behavior of community people related to latrine or toilet usage, try to understand its impacts, and mobilize community to promote health care to dealing with the problem. The study applies Participatory Action Research (PAR) coordinated by BSDA a local NGO working in the area with engagement from local community people, and other related development actors including chief of village and key focal persons. They have been engaged in the process since the earliest stage of reflection for identify the problem, field data collection and analyze, setting up and implementation of action, and reflection for lesson learnt, and way moving forward to improve the situation in the area.

Causes of affecting health care

This emerging issue has affected family health in the whole village, in particular adult women having difficult to defecate without having the latrine. Moreover, if the old age or getting sick will make more difficult, specially attending night time, or during the raining season, due to their defecate elsewhere in their community. When one family organizes the wedding party or ceremony, there is no bathroom or toilet for the relatives or guests who are familiar with only using the latrine or toilet.

For the community, the bad smell has diffused around their home village, and sometimes it can become a conflict amongst their neighbors due to their defecating on other's land. Reflecting and observing with the issue, and long with the village is one of target areas of Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA), their staff have developed the proposal for conducting the research as part of participating course to deal with the problem.

The behavioral change of villagers

After the collection of the data, the village meeting was organized to share the research finding, further discuss the problems and causes, and then came up with plan to improve the situation. There were 36 families attended in the meeting including villagers, chief of village, and focal persons. The most interesting research finding by using PAR tool, and active participation from villagers were that the villagers have been familiar with defecating without using the latrine, while having geographical condition tolerant for it. Moreover, people's attitude wishes only for modern materials for building toilet, but tend to wait for external support that causing the problem happening in the area. Therefore, villagers came up with the proposed action plan to build either the latrine or toilet if possible. In this plan, the key persons and village chief needed to negotiate/discuss with the businessman who sells the materials of toilet for an agreement of

paying step by step and then reported to villagers about result. After negotiation, the businessman agreed but the price is higher than to pay at once in cash. In response, villagers thought about their available resources to prepare for their own toilet. In addition, the villagers suggested BSDA staff organize the training course on “Latrine and hygiene”.

“I always help the villagers, who have problem. I am a partner of the village chief to help villagers to contact businessman for latrine materials. Related to toilet, I have two toilets in my house, I like sharing my toilets with the neighbors who needed it. In addition, I always share my knowledge, experiences about the primary family health care ...PAR is very useful for people in this community in understanding about sanitation and trying to use their local resources to build latrine or toilet for their family health care.” Ven, one of villagers.



Local Resources and Latrine

Three months later, after implementing this action plan, the villagers have changed their view. In the previous time, the villagers thought that using the latrine is not good because it is still having bad smell, and also spend much money to build it. However, they have eliminated this idea in their mindset and a few families already built the latrine with spending small amount of money as they used the local resources. After follow up by coordination team, there were many families committed to continually use the existing local resources to build the latrine or toilet.

“I really appreciate to attend CPAR course, which is organized by CCC. I am very interested in lessons that I studied in the classroom. In connection to the practice of the course, it is very helpful for the community, especially for the villagers at Thmei village. It can help them understanding about health care by defecating in latrine or toilet and change their behaviors. In addition, it is important for BSDA organization to use this report for writing the [NGO project] proposal.” Sodavin, BSDA.

Community Participation for Promotion Primary Health Care and Hygiene in Prey Chhor District, Kampong Cham Province



Research Coordinated by: Yin Samey and Seng Sopthearith

“On behalf of NAS, I would like to thank CCC so much, which selected me to attend CPAR course. I got good knowledge from PAR research method, and I will use it in my project. CCC staff had best collaboration and prepared best location for participant. Therefore, I hope I will have chance again for participation with other trainings which prepared by CCC.” Samey, participant from NAS.

Primary health care and hygiene have been become a serious issue in Tangkok Village, Lavea commune, Prey Chhor district, Kampong Cham province. There are approximately 157 families with a total population of 547 people of which 291 are female living in the area. In the previous time, most villagers have not cared for primary health and hygiene such as defecation without using the latrine, not washing hands correctly after defecating or before eating, and not paying attention to have clean or safe drinking water.



As consequences, these issues have affected to villagers' health, family, and community also. More specifically, they get sick, spend a lot of money for treatment that caused to decrease child's wisdom, loss of business time to earn a livelihood, and then running into debt. NAK APHIVATH SAHAKUM (NAS) started a project “Community Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement” in early 2013, but it was not very successful because some remaining issues still appear in the village which included: some villagers still get sick with diarrhea, vomit, and fever.

In this regards, the study here will seek the root cause of issue, understand the experiences and the affects, and seek the collaboration for solving the issue. The study applies Participatory Action Research (PAR) coordinated by NAS, with engagement from local community people, and other related development stakeholders including village chief, commune council, NAS community workers, and other key persons. All key stakeholders are encouraged to take part in the process of reflection, data collection, setting up an action plan, and implementation of the action plan.



A village meeting with 35 total participants was organized to share and discuss the research finding, further discussion about the problem and causes, and then come up action plan to improve the situation. The meeting revealed that this village does not have clean water for using in their daily life. The people do not practice good hygiene which includes: drink unclean or unsafe water, eat fresh vegetable without properly cleaning, people ignore to wash hand after defecating or before eating food. After the meeting, representatives and the formed committee decided to set up the action which included: form the cleaning day to alert local villagers to pay attention to this issue, drink clean or safe water, having daily hygiene food, and wash hand correctly. In addition, the committee for monitoring the safe water and hand washing was set up to oversight for better practices in the community.

Being living with healthy

Three months later in the reflection with NAS staff and some villagers, they have seen the people are familiar with improved hygiene practices after they have engaged to act and learnt from this participatory process. Moreover, the moniting list coordinated by the village authorities and the formed committee showed many villagers use boiled water. The villagers themselves also noticed the difference in becoming sick less occur. Engaging in this action process, community participants have better changed their behaviors, and moreover staff from NAS also express their high commitment to follow up the existing action plans, and continue coordinating to improve villagers' understanding for practicing good hygiene.

“I would like to thank NAS organization which selected my village for target area for finding emerging issue of villagers and solve it together about primary health, after this action I had practice sanitation and hygiene such as , drinking safe water, wash hand with soap after defecate and before eating and defecate in latrine” Chreup, one of villagers.

Promoting Education Sector at the Rural Primary School



Research Coordinated by: Sum Phanny and Sroy Vansy

Paoy Rumchey village in Rung Chrey commune, Thma Koul district, Battambang province, is very rural and far from the main road, which makes it not easy for the teachers to travel for daily work during the raining season and many teachers are unwilling to go to work in these conditions. For students, dropping out of school has always seemed to make sense with less concern. Most students are farm kids whose parents must travel long distances way each morning to get to the fields and have a little time to support their kids in the evening. Very few parents have any formal education; there are no trained teachers inside the village, and only one which is appreciated external teacher to conduct two classes in the small two room school.



In this regard, the study will explore the root cause of dropping school, mobilize and motivate the community people to solve the problem. The study applies Participatory Action Research (PAR) coordinated by Rural Development Association (RDA), a local NGO working in the area with engagement from local community people, and other related development stakeholders including village authorities, teachers, deputy school director, and key persons. They have been engaged in the process since reflection for this emerging problem, data collection process, set up and implementation of action, and reflection for lesson learnt, and way moving forward for their learning from this process of engagement to improve the education in the area.

The result from Paoy Rumchey village reveals that the root causes of dropping school related to four stakeholders. One is parents who don't have much time to teach children at home, migrate to Thailand, cannot read and write, have never followed up children study, and have no communication with parents. Second one is teacher who doesn't have much time to teach children especially in the raining season during which the road is very difficult to travel. Due to the difficulties of travel in and around the village during the rainy season, it was previously common for either the teacher to arrive at school and find no students, or the students to arrive and find no teacher, and thus giving up and going home again.



The third one is students. They don't have high commitment, some impacts from domestic violence in the family, and poor family, and often skip school. The fourth one is social safety and environment as having long traveling to school, and don't see any model student benefit from education to motivate them to active participation in education. Based on these findings, RDA organized a village meeting to share and discuss the results and consider ways to increase awareness among parents and other villagers about the importance of education.



Parents, local authorities and concerned residents came together to discuss and develop a detailed action plan. It proposed meetings between parents and teachers every two months to follow up on children's progress. Every absent of teacher would be informed to parents as villagers, whilst parents were encouraged, and some were committed to help with their children's studies at home.

Parents and school teacher get attention for their responsibilities

Participatory action research has helped to create a new respect for the value of education in the village of Paoy Rumchey. One outcome has been widespread recognition of the dropout problem. Follow-up research shows parents taking time in the evening to encourage study instead of television. Some parents are able to help their kids with their homework. Parents who used to feel school stole time away from having their children to help in the field now admit the need for a balance between the two. Parents and village leaders have become aware that they have a responsibility to ensure that children are encouraged to stay in school to develop the knowledge and skills they will need in adult life. In all this, the participatory approach contributes to the fourth side of rectangular strategy government plan to strengthening quality education sector as well as contribution to National Development Plan.

One of the parents at Paoy Rumchey, "I used to blame the teacher while my child is not doing well in his study. Yet through the meeting with parents and teacher that organized by RDA, it help me to understand how important of my role by helping my children study at home instead of blaming to teacher. It's part of my responsibility"

"I think using PAR approach it is very important that we have changed the stereotype of community that they used to think development actor enter to the field to give gifts for them, now they understand the NGO came to help them to understand their own problem and how to resolve their problem by themselves." Phanny, participant from RDA.

Strengthening Forest Protection and the Community

Research Coordinated by: Lok Keansorn and Phan Raksmeay

The forestry community formation is intended to gathering villagers in the area for their protection and conservation for sustainable use as well as for the national property. Though there have been formed forestry community in Peam commune, Sameakki Mean Chey district in Kampong Chhnang province, which about 98 km. from the town. Chrak Kov is one of the 12 villages within the commune still having remarkable deforestation. It has been increased cases of forest destruction for sell, clearing for land use, and the existed communities are not well activated, cooperated amongst the committee to patrol the area. Moreover, the committee also loss esteem to manage the resources in the areas that affects to the natural resources of the community.

The population in Chrak Kov village in 2013 are 1 604 people with 790 are females with 64 widows of the 292 families⁴. The local people primary works on their rice field, and have other complementary activities such as husbandry, vegetables, and workers for sugar cane company. Moreover, they spend their times for getting the forest products such as mushroom, potatoes, bamboo shoots, and so on. During a pre-visit, villagers reflected on many issues including sick animals, irrigation, health, village road, and migration,



but their most important concern is forest destruction and their community. Under this study, it will seek the problems for deforestation, impacts on livelihood related to forest resources, and find ways to strengthen the forestry community by applying participatory action research. It has engaged with committee for forestry community, local authorities, elders, and other involved community to prepare mapping, and build better connection with local people. The research coordination team consists of two from CCD organization, and one technical support from CCC. They have stayed in the village, and separated the team to conduct group discussions which sometimes reach to 15-20 people. In-depth interview also applied based on the key research questions.

⁴ Peam commune statistic in 2013

Destruction of natural resources increase, while less activate by forestry community

The finding revealed that since before the commune election in 2012, the weakness of cooperation and management of the forestry community give opportunity to illegal cutting and clearing of the forest, and affect to the whole community people. Recently there has been a significant increase in destroying the forest resources, coming both from community members in Peam itself as well as neighboring communes such as Svay Chuk and Krang Lvea. The major causes are detailed as below:



- **Lack of cooperation from 6 villagers and forestry community:** there was once good cooperation between the seven villages cover by the forest area such as Chrak Kov, Serei Vong, Chrak Sdech, Krang Kantoul, Krang Beng, Svay Kambet and Chrak Kantuot, but since the commune/sangkat election in 2012 only Chrak Kov villagers have patrolled the area. Lately, they have also lost motivation as they are unable to control the entire area. Moreover, the community director also passed away, whilst the new director are not well supported. During the farming season, villagers concern more on their rice, leading to increased cases of deforestation.
- **Threatening by illegal actors, while less supported by local authorities:** There have been many experiences of threatening by illegal actors during patrol, and meet the case of destruction of the natural resources, and commune authorities or police have not been willing to cooperate in taking action to intervene. Sometimes, the patrollers have been chased and threatened to death. These lead to de-motivation in their effort to conserve the resources.
- **The forest communities have limited rights and authority to deal with the case:** The forest committee less motivation, while they stay beyond dealing with the case. If the patrollers meet illegal cases, they will be arrested for the competency authorities, but they have experienced many cases just charged by these competent authorities and released the wrong actors.
- **The six communities are not familiar with new community committee.** The new community committee was selected by the commune to replace the dead member in committee, but the process was not widely informed to the forest community in the six villages, except Chrak Kov, so even the Forestry Administration do not yet recognize the new candidate.
- **Lack of finances for patrol:** The patrols need to travel into the forest, but there is no budget to pay for fuel, which was previously supported by some organizations such as JICA, LWD, GF, and CCD as well. Since they have received less support, they have less regular patrol activity in the area.

Communities come together for better natural forest protection

After the village meeting, plans and actions for improving the situation were raised as below:

- Organize the meeting with participation from all seven village communities to formally introduce the new community committee and discuss working together to strengthen forest protection. This meeting was then conducted in June 2013 under the coordination of commune council with representation from all communities, and an agreement was reached with roles and responsibilities defined for more effective control of the area.
- Mobilize a contribution fund to support the forestry community. This process was coordinated by the village authorities, and many families have contributed their money into the community box to serve for patrol of illegal cases.
- Capacity development on forestry and other related environmental laws are discussed and set in the action plan, but not yet successfully conducted prior to August 2013 due to overlapping with other work while several try to communicate with the expert from Forestry Administration. However, the NGOs working in the area will try to coordinate to have the meeting happen.

The protection of forest in Phnom Presh Teat is more beneficiary to villagers in this area, and the commune such as poor people could access this resources [bamboo shoots, potatoes, rattan] provide wood for house, fence, the place for wildlife, better raining and erosion or storm. It also the place for cattle, and attract tourists. Sarem, Chrak Kov villager.



Following these result, we have learnt that PAR bring them to engage with local community, and help them to deal with their common problem to empower them for effective and sustainable development. Moreover, some lesson learnt could be draw from the process as well such as consideration to the scope of issue in selection the topic to make sure possibility of engagement, and most affected for community's concern. PAR also makes the coordination process easier, although mobilizing community people during their farming work or near to the national or commune/sangkat election will encounter many difficulties.



Annex 1: Name of Participant NGOs

No	Name	Sex	Position	Organization	Province
1	Men Samphoan	F	Field Worker	Help Age International-Cambodia (HAI-C)	Battambang
2	Klot Phally	F	Field Worker		
3	Mao Kongkea	F	Volunteer Staff		
4	Sum Phanny	M	Head of Project	Rural Development Association (RDA)	Battambang
5	Sroy Vansy	F	Head of Project		
6	Yin Samay	M	Project Coordinator	Nak Aphiwat Sahakom (NAS)	Kampong Cham
7	Seng Sophearith	M	Project Coordinator		
8	Hoeng Sodavin	F	Project Coordinator	Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA)	Kampong Cham
9	Phan Sothea	M	Project Coordinator		
10	Phan Raksmeay	M	Program Officer	Community Capacity Development (CCD)	Kampong Chhnang
11	Lok Keansorn	F	Program Officer		
12	Nget Rithy	M	Project Assistant	Disability Development Services Program (DDSP)	Pursat
13	Ley Hoeub	F	Project Assistant		
14	Kay Sophea	F	Staff	Anakot Kumar (AK)	Pursat
15	Chea Sreyneang	F	Staff		

Annex 2: Name of CCC Team

No	Name	Sex	Position	Organization	Area
1	Chen Sochoeun	M	Applied Research Specialist	CCC	Phnom Penh
2	Chhom Chakriya	F	Applied Research Officer	CCC	Phnom Penh
3	Hor Sokunthea	F	Development and Outreach Specialist	CCC	Phnom Penh
4	Chea Vibol	M	Development and Outreach Officer	CCC	Phnom Penh
5	Lim Sokly	M	Learning Specialist	CCC	Phnom Penh
6	El Sotheary	F	Head of Program	CCC	Phnom Penh
7	Soeung Typo	M	Component Manager	CCC	Phnom Penh

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