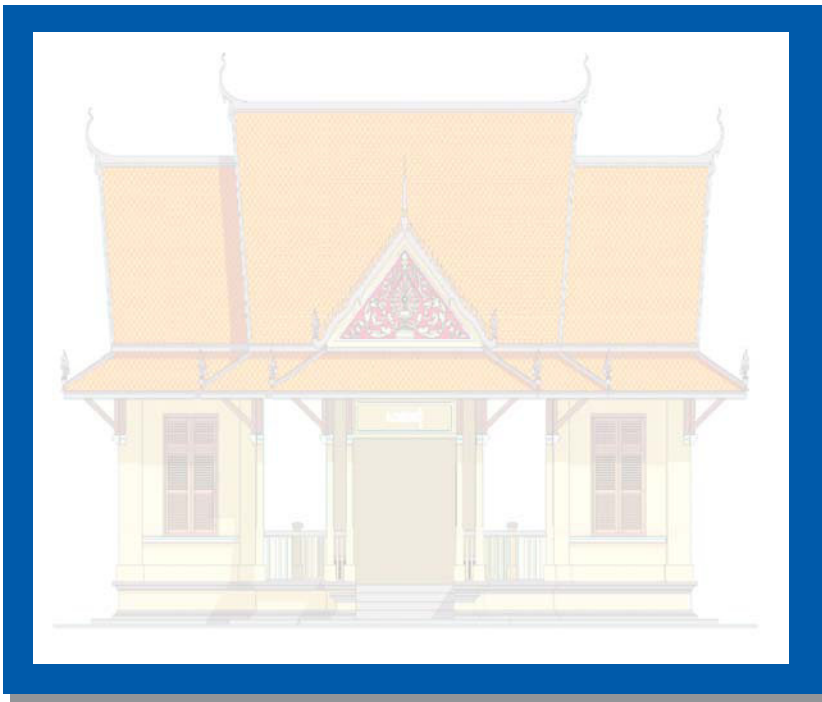


CASE STUDIES OF COMMUNE COUNCILS

DOCUMENTATION OF UNIQUE PRACTICES



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A successful mission shall be achievable if there is support, participation and cooperation from colleagues and all stakeholders. Likewise, this documentation on case studies of commune councils could be successful only the writer gained support and efforts from:

1. Commune councils in Taches and Rolea Pha Ear communes of Kampong Chhnang province, and Khna Por and Lvea communes of Siem Reap province shared their valuable time to arrange meetings at commune offices, and interviews, and other arrangements such as field visit to project site and supplying relevant documents.
2. Provincial Local Administration Units for Kampong Chhnang and Siem Reap provided us documents and good ideas regarding service project implementation, updates on commune councils, the selection of target communes, and interview meetings at commune offices, feedbacking on case studies and dissemination workshop on CC case studies.
3. The writer, in this occasion, would like to express his profound gratitude to CCSP's partner NGOs, namely Phnom Neang Kangrei Association (PNKA), Kampong Chhnang and Friend's Association of Pioneer (FAP), Siem Reap, helped coordinate works for CC documentation. The two associations also played crucial roles as what the PLAU did in supporting to the documentation mission.
4. District Facilitator Team to Taches commune, Rolea Pha Ear commune, Khna Por commune, and Lvea commune arranged interview meetings with commune chiefs, deputy commune chiefs, members of Planning and Budgeting Committee, village leaders and local citizens. The most important contribution they made for the case study documentation process is their information and good ideas in relations to works of commune councils.
5. Commune Council Support Project facilitated the whole process of CC documentation, particularly important to Mr. Murari Aprdayadh and Mr. Chhim Sopheark.

Forward

Following the establishment of first democratically elected local governments [commune/sangkat councils] in 2002 until to date there have been numerous initiatives taken by commune/sangkats either unilaterally or in partnership with local civil society organizations for overall development of commune/sangkat citizens. During this period a vast wealth of positive experiences and lessons learned has been created by commune councils and civil society organizations all over the country that can be benefited by others as well. These experiences could be valuable input in redesigning and upgrading local governance reform processes.

However, except a noticeable effort of Department of Local Administration of Ministry of interior and a very scant by others, there are only few initiatives undertaken to document good practices of commune councils and civil society organizations in local governance. Realizing the need to preserve the hard gained but rich experiences, CCSP in 2005 documented four commune council case studies which were presented and discussed in a national dissemination workshop. The case study documentation project was warmly received by the national government and civil society community. Encouraged by this success, CCSP decided to continue documentation of good practices case studies every year on average of four case studies in order to stimulate healthy discussion and debate on local governance practices in Cambodia and promote their replication through wider dissemination program.

Accordingly CCSP in 2007 documented four case studies on key areas of interest on D&D [decentralization and deconcentration] reforms. Two case studies one each from Siem Reap and Kampong Chhnang are on the benefit of implementing non-infrastructure projects, and the others are on making a model commune and commune leadership from Kampong Chhnang and Siem Reap respectively. Mr. Im Sokthy, an expert in decentralization and local governance reforms was contracted to conduct the field studies and write the report. Mr. Chhim Sopheark, CCSP Information Officer assisted him during the entire project period.

The case studies were then presented and discussed in provincial workshops and sessions bringing together key D&D players, both in the policy and implementation levels from other provinces as well as from Phnom Penh. This document in your hand has been published in Khmer and English languages in single folder in order to disseminate for the benefit of broader stakeholder community.

I would like to congratulate and thank Mr. Sokthy and Mr. Sopheark for successful production of this case study series. I would also like to thank CCODP of Canada for its invaluable resource support to this important work.

Numerous people- officials of DOLA-MOI and PLAU, NGO representatives and commune councilors of Kampong Chhnang and Siem Reap provinces greatly contributed in enriching the contents of the case studies and identification of prospective places for the field work. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all.

Last but not the least; I thank all CCSP staff members for their logistic assistance in successfully completing this project

Murari Upadhyay
Executive Director

Phnom Penh, December 2007

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I. Introduction

Currently, the Department of Local Administration (DoLA) of Ministry of Interior, Commune Council Support Project (CCSP) and other civil society organizations (CSOs) have had documented numerous case studies on CC performance and other local initiatives, but limited. Thus, there is still strong needs to document more and more case studies on CC related issues both bad and good things to disseminate and replicate among CCs, government and CSOs for them to learn, and initiate other innovative project and activities to further support the decentralized CCs in the process of local governance reforms.

CCSP has had initiated to document lessons learnt and experiences on CCs since 2005, the year it produced and disseminated four case studies on CCs regarding management and leadership in Takeo and Siem Reap and budgeting and planning in Battambang and Kampong Cham. The case studies were then disseminated in a two day workshop in Phnom Penh with around 100 participants from CSOs, CCs, and Provincial Local Administration Units (PLAU).

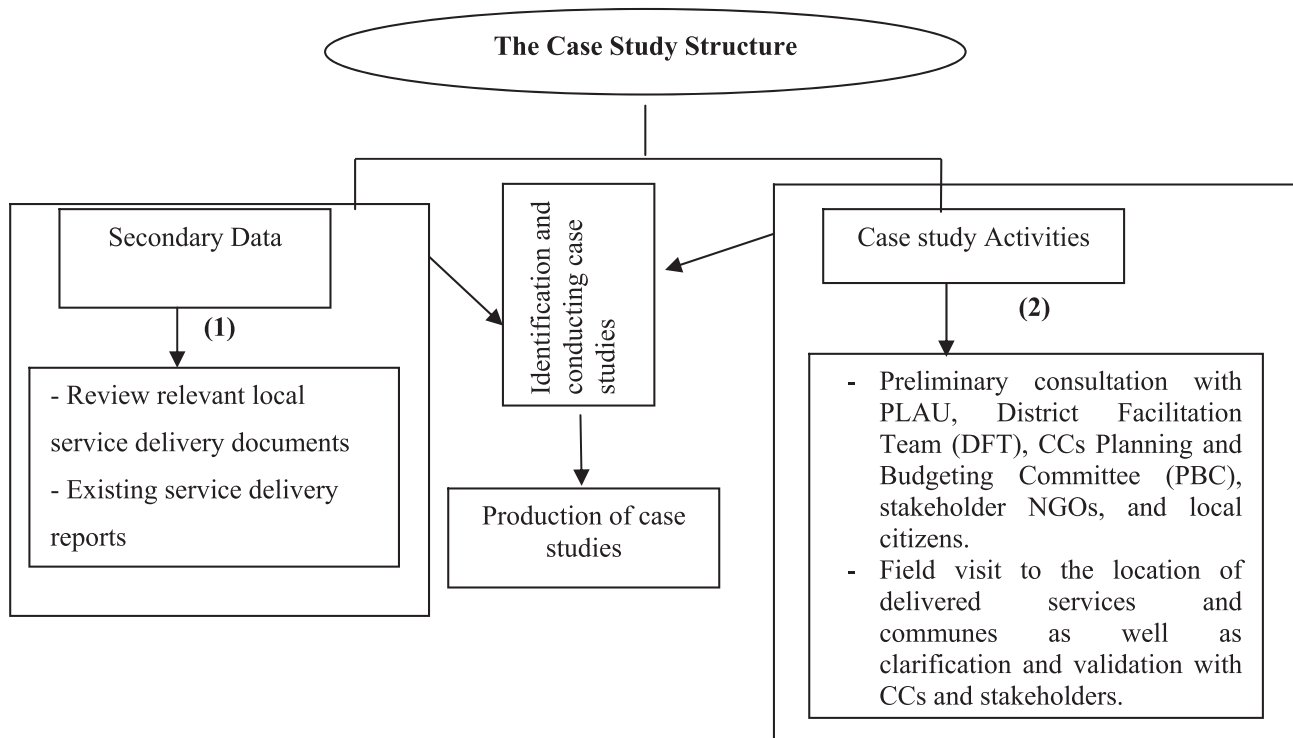
Considering this, the CCSP continues documenting case studies on CCs in this 2007. The overall goal is to document four experiment case studies of CCs' functions and other local initiatives of CCs in delivering public services with regard to planning, budgeting, project implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The case study focuses on service projects using the commune council's own budget, even if this is supported by NGOs or the commune fund.

It was conducted in four communes of two provinces; Taches and Rolea Pha Ear communes of Kampon Chhnang province and Khna Por and Lvea commune of Siem Reap provinces, where CCSP had piloted its Citizen's Rating Report program, had conducted numerous district forums on the implementation of decentralization at commune levels, and has established Non-governmental Organization (NGO) Network on Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D). The mission tried to identify communes with successful or good experiences and communes with normal practice or unsuccessful cases. And the location of communes for case studies were chosen based on geographical areas, big and small and rich and poor.

The methods used in this case study were as follows:

- a. Desk review of secondary data such as laws, regulations, reports, finding results, and case studies from National Committee to the Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reforms Program (NCDD), Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD), NGOs, and CCs.
- b. Preliminary consultation with PLAU, District Facilitation Team (DFT), CCs Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC), stakeholder NGOs, and local citizens.
- c. Field visit to the location of delivered services and communes as well as clarification and validation with CCs and stakeholders.

The case studies did not cover on issues or other initiatives under the District Initiative Project (DIP) and Inter-commune Cooperation (ICC). It covered on things which were initiated and implemented by CCs and/or in cooperation with NGOs.



NGO Non-Infrastructure Project Creates Demand Case Study of Taches Commune – Kampong Chhnang province¹

Overview of Taches commune

Taches commune is located around 30 minutes drive from Kampong Chhnang provincial town. After traveling away from the national road for about 15 minutes on a laterite road (approximately 5km), it can be observed that living standards start to change the further you go. Living standards are better in the upper part of the commune, closer to the urban area and the national road; those of the people living far from the urban area and the national road are worse. This latter area is where the very old Taches commune office is located.

Taches commune is located 3km from Kampong Tralach district office and approximately 35km from Kampong Chhnang provincial town. By 2006, the population of Taches commune had increased to 2,375 families, equal to 12,654 people; of these, 2,231 families are rice farmers, covering 2,650ha of rice cultivation land, and 102 families have jobs (such as in business, skilled labor, transportation, service and others). Taches commune has only 20,000m of laterite, sand and white soil roads. Local citizens must travel an average of 4.95km from their home to the commune office. The commune has markets in two villages, Kampong Taches village and Svay Kraum village, serving the people in all 15 villages.

The land area of Taches can be divided into two types: 60% flat plain land and 35% low-lying land. A large part of the land is unfertile white sand and lacks water sources. Another part of the land (in Trapaing Preal, Wat Thmey, Thlokyul, Sampor, Svay Bakav, Taches and Svay Kraum villages) is fertilized alluvial soil, flooded in the rainy season. Land in this area is favorable for dry rice and lotus cultivation. On average, citizens can harvest a rice yield of slightly more than one ton per hectare.

Taches commune council

Commune council elections in February 2002 and April 2007 provided for decentralized participatory democracy in the local administration, bringing public services closer to the people. As in all other communes/sangkats, the law requires all officials directly elected by the people of the commune to carry out relevant roles and functions relating to public services provision, promotion of local socioeconomic development, protection of natural resources and response to common needs of constituents.

¹ This case study was written by Mr. Im Sokthy for the Commune Council Support Project (CCSP) to disseminate experiences and lessons in planning, budgeting, project implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The case study focuses on service projects using the commune council's own budget, even if this is supported by NGOs or the commune fund. It illustrates real situation and the writer takes full responsibility for the content of this case study. Research Assistant was Mr. Chhim Sopheark, CCSP's Information and Documentation Officer. This case study remains the property of CCSP and cannot be copied, in part or in entirety, without permission. Copyright © CCSP December 2007.

The CC of the first mandate had nine councilors, from the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP). The nine councilors came from Thlokyul, Samroung, Taches, Sampor and Snay villages; the other 10 villages did not have representatives in the council. However, one councilor clarified that it was not difficult to communicate with the villages with no representatives, and the council could easily send invitation letters or make phone calls to them.

Biography of the commune chief

"I want to solve the problem of water and irrigation, such as through dams and channels, to help promote people's livelihoods and make positive changes in the new mandate."

Mr. Dy Doeurn, Commune Chief of Taches commune, Kampong Tralach district, was born in 1959 and is married with three children. He upholds democratic principles to lead his village and commune, making a clear distinction between commune work and political party work. The first deputy, from the SRP, describes him as having good moral conduct. The commune chief himself admits that he has the lowest education of all the commune councilors, and suffers occasional non-serious illnesses. He has finished Grade 10 (referring to the education system before the 1980s). After 1979, he served in the military until 1985, when he was promoted to be chief of the village military. From 1989 to 2002, he was chief of the commune military. In 2002, he stood for the CPP in the first mandate elections, and was elected chief of the council of nine members. In the second mandate, he was again elected commune council chief.

Infrastructure as primary commune achievement

When asked about the achievements of Taches commune, councilors immediately describe infrastructure projects. In the first mandate (2002-2007), Taches commune built rural roads, bridges, culverts, schools, water sluices, dams and channels, etc., using the commune budget or funding from provincial line departments, NGOs and other sources. Rehabilitation and repair, particularly of irrigation systems, were firm commune priorities. For example, in 2005, the commune used the commune fund to dig a channel of 2,700m for citizens in five villages. This channel provided many advantages to farmers, such as: 1) the need to spend less time irrigating because of the channel's proximity; 2) decreased vulnerability to drought; 3) less money spent on diesel for motor pumps; and 4) availability of water all year long.

In general, the commune budget is used mostly for infrastructure projects, which absorb a huge amount of money, are big and are also able to serve people's needs. These achievements are easier to count and remember as compared with non-infrastructure achievements, which are mostly not implemented by the CC. However, this did not mean that the council has forgotten or passed over service delivery projects. The CC has many service delivery projects in its three-year rolling commune investment program (CIP), seeking support from provincial line departments, NGOs, institutions and charitable persons in the annual district integration workshop (DIW) between August and November. The CC is clear that it will not use the commune budget to implement such projects.

Prioritizing one project assists with others

Priorities in second mandate are not much different. Taches CC still considers irrigation systems and rural roads to be priority. The commune chief clarifies that the commune wants to build more channels, dams and rural roads, connecting all 15 villages of Taches commune. He hesitates to prioritize

service delivery projects. Both the commune chief and councilors feel that most non-infrastructure projects implemented by NGOs within the commune are not very successful, because citizens do not pay back grants provided by NGOs. As such, the commune wants to keep the commune budget to implement infrastructure projects and leave non-infrastructure projects to be implemented directly by NGOs. The commune plays a role of coordination and collaboration with NGOs in implementing non-infrastructure projects.

As we have seen, non-infrastructure projects are often raised by the commune in its CIP and presented at the DIW as equally important in promoting people's livelihoods as infrastructure projects. However, the council has no plans to implement non-infrastructure projects using its own budget and manpower. The CC recognizes that it lacks knowledge and experience and has no deep understanding of service delivery concepts and methods of implementation; CCs feel that NGOs have better capacity, policy and memory.

The CC feels that infrastructure projects achieved so far have helped with non-infrastructure projects in the commune. For example, the commune now has roads, water channels and it dams. These can help with service delivery projects, such as cow credit, producing compost, small business (chicken, pig raising), etc. Water is used for farming and roads are used to transport rice and other goods to market. As such, infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects can complement each other towards achieving a common goal: local economic development and poverty reduction. One councilor said a focus on irrigation improves people's living conditions. Service delivery projects, such as producing compost to improve the quality of land, then also promote people's livelihoods.

Supply of projects creates demand

Infrastructure is still a significant need of the people. Even after brainstorming on service delivery, people participating in commune planning tended to cite the need for infrastructure projects. Participation in village meetings did not focus mainly on poor families, and in general did not lead to the adding or removal of any project from the agenda of Stage 1 of the CIP. Citizens participate in planning every year, but the projects raised are not much different from one year to another. The CC has many projects underway to meet the needs of the people, whether they need them or not: supply is creating demand.

As with other communes in Cambodia, the CC raises many projects at the DIW for support, knowing that it does not have enough money to implement them itself. In the workshop, line departments and NGOs support service delivery projects more than infrastructure projects; money is transferred from the commune/sangkat fund¹. There are many service delivery projects that the CC can raise in the CIP for external support. An NGO's ability to supply can lead the council to believe in a commune demand; the CC then raises such a project for the CIP. In 2006, when the council learned that Phnom Neang Kangrey Association (PNKA) had conducted a feasibility study to implement a cow credit project in Taches commune, it integrated this into its CIP. Later, the commune submitted a proposal on cow credit to PNKA. One councilor revealed that, if the CC knows that an organization can implement a service delivery project, it will dare to raise it in the CIP. In general, NGOs are willing to implement their programs through CCs to increase local incomes and improve production.

¹ The commune/sangkat fund is a mechanism channeling funds from the government, donors and other sources to finance commune expenses.

Commune planning and budgeting process still needs assistance

The CIP is a rolling process: the 11 stages are repeated each year. In this second mandate, the CIP process has been shortened to five steps; each step has a few sub-steps. If it is examined in detail, however, it is clear that the new process is not much different from the previous one, meaning that the CC does not need to learn new procedures from scratch. However, the CC still feels that it needs advice from the district facilitators team (DFT) and technical staff on preparing the CIP. The DFT for Taches commune explained that the CC does not have high knowledge and does not clearly understand the process and procedures of the CIP. In addition, the CC is afraid of not complying with the guidelines. The CC may feel dependent, waiting for encouragement and instructions. The DFT added that the commune chief may have limited management capacity: he is scared of making mistakes and hesitates to make decisions. In contrast, the other councilors have higher capacity. This limited capacity could result in negative impacts on the commune planning and budgeting process.

The planning process is complex for CCs with limited capacity. Citizens, line departments and NGOs, not directly involved in the process, may also have difficulties understanding it. The process needs attention from and facilitation by the Provincial Local Administration Unit (PLAU), the provincial facilitators team (PFT), the DFT, technical staff, the provincial planning department and other stakeholders. It requires both time and finance, together with the willingness and participation of relevant actors. If not, citizens' expectations may be dashed: having participated in the planning process, raising many projects, on average at least 30 per commune, people may lose confidence in the CC if these are not supported. This is the case even though people know that the commune fund is limited and that there is a big gap between resources available and proposals in the CIP.

Planning and budgeting process shall be under supervision of a committee which assists the council chief. The commune planning and budgeting committee (PBC) coordinates and represents the interests of villagers, assists in prioritizing commune development policies and programs, and advises on the management of scarce resources.

Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat: Articles 60 and 62

Article 60:

The commune/sangkat shall prepare, adopt and implement the commune/sangkat development plan in order to determine the development vision, program and affairs of the commune.

Article 62:

The commune/sangkat development plan shall be approved by the commune/sangkat council within the first year of the commune/sangkat council mandate and shall be reviewed for updating every year by the commune/sangkat council.

The Taches commune PBC is composed of 35 members, chaired by the commune chief. It has three councilors as members and includes all village leaders (chiefs, vice chiefs and members). Normally, the PBC does not have much advisory roles because it does not function after preparation of the development plan.

The PBC has the following roles and responsibilities:

- Assist the commune chief in preparing the commune development plan (CDP), CIP and annual budget
- Implement participatory strategies to develop the CDP, CIP and annual budget with stakeholders
- Assist the commune chief in preparing the commune annual report

Source: Decision on Establishment of Taches Commune Planning and Budgeting Committee, dated August 31, 2007.

Cooperation with NGOs will lead to development

World Vision worked in Taches commune from 1990, but has now finished many of its activities. Only one project remains, in protection of vulnerable children. Beside this, PNKA and Community Health Education (CHE) program have come to work in the commune in recent years.

Normally, the commune seeks development partners only during the DIW. The CC seems to have no specific plans or strategies in place with regard to attracting NGOs or other institutions to work in its constituency. In most cases, NGOs or institutions select their own target areas. Nevertheless, Taches CC expressed an intention to cooperate and work with NGOs. In particular, through its CONCERN program, PNKA has had good cooperation with Taches CC in terms of its livelihood (service delivery) projects. In 2006, PNKA funded Taches CC with US\$4,000 for a five-month project promoting living conditions in the community (from August to December 2006). Funding was provided after the CC submitted a project proposal to PNKA.³

The CC gained a great deal of experience from this project. The commune can now prepare project proposals, is able to implement projects in a way that responds to the needs of villagers, can manage a budget (following the PNKA budget system and based on a CC/PNKA Memorandum of Understanding – MoU) and can write reports under PNKA instruction. Moreover, the CC did not previously know how to carry out property ranking in order to identify target groups for interventions; cooperation with PNKA has meant that the council now has an understanding of such activities. One councilor, given responsibility for implementing the cow credit project, said that, after the property ranking, the CC could identify poorest beneficiaries in full agreement. “If the commune dares to cooperate with NGOs, the commune will become developed.”

Project implementation faced some difficulties. Two councilors were given the responsibility of implementing the project; one acted as project officer and the other as cashier. They received training from PNKA so that they had the capacity to implement the project. However, they were busy as councilors, so quite often did not monitor the project.⁴ Budget flow for the cow credit project also faced problems. After a CONCERN audit, the cashier position was passed to the commune clerk (as commune cashier). The clerk was then in charge of the budget after disbursement by PNKA. When the project officer needed money to spend on project activities, he had to request this from the commune chief. After the CC submitted a progress and financial report to PNKA to confirm each step, PNKA would issue a check to the commune for cashing at ACLEDA bank located in Kampong Chhnang provincial town. CONCERN advised that the CC have a bank account so that money could be withdrawn from a branch in Kampong Tralach district, closer to Taches commune. The original process made the process time consuming and expensive in terms of transportation.

Monitoring and evaluation: budget or capacity problem?

The CC assigned two people to act as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points for all projects in the commune; one was a councilor and one a villager (who later died and has not been replaced). Selection was based on capacity and willingness. The two focal points received only one DFT training on commune/sangkat M&E of local development work, at the beginning of the first mandate.

³ The project proposal covered agriculture, small business, CC capacity building, establishment of communities, gender mainstreaming, advocacy and disaster prevention. The project was implemented in two villages (O’roung and Lorpeang villages). Project activities written into the proposal, such as cow credit, compost, HIV/AIDS awareness raising, etc. have been included in the Taches three-year plan for 2006-2008.

⁴ Some reports say that they received little incentive and also wanted to spend time with their families.

Beside this, they learnt by doing. M&E needs not only capable and skilled people, but also financial support. However, the DFT is not keen to confirm that more money will make for better and more effective M&E. “If budget increases, they still cannot monitor all work because they need time for their daily tasks”.

Questions remain here. Are only the two focal points able to monitor and evaluate commune projects? Could the commune establish a M&E committee? With no instruction from national or provincial authorities, the idea of establishing such a committee has never been mooted, even though the Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat allows CCs to establish any committees they need. Otherwise, the CC could consider other alternatives to monitoring project implementation, such as user or beneficiary committees.

Article 27 of the Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat

The commune/sangkat chief is entitled to establish any committee to advice on and assist with works as needed.

The above committee can select one of the councilors to be its chair or select one of the eligible citizens of the commune/sangkat to be its chair, beside the councilors.

Effort leads to achievements in commune management

The commune chief’s recognition that he has lower capacity than other councilors underlines the need for strong support from the two deputies, from councilors and from the DFT. Councilors may have more significant input than the chief. Comments from different party councilors are often not in line, and may drown out the chief’s comments during discussions or decision making. In addition to the commune chief’s limited management capacity, discussions or debates on commune work are often more about talk than action. However, such discussions are the good points of decentralization, as upheld by the chief.

The first deputy said: “Taches councilors are lucky, as the commune chief gives us the opportunity to provide comments. He does not discriminate. But there is a lack of transparency.” The commune chief said: “We cannot supervise everything. There is always a gap and we can fill this by listening to others. Chiefs cannot know everything. Gaps arise when we sometimes do not pay attention or if sometimes we have some small family issues.”

In such aspects, instruction and orientation from the PLAU, especially the DFT, can help improve leadership and management, particularly for the commune chief. A few months ago, after the second mandate elections, the DFT had difficulties determining a schedule with the commune chief for a meeting for the CDP and CIP. Meetings rarely mobilize the participation of all councilors. In many cases, councilors do not attend. The new DFT, recently transferred to Taches commune, tried to come more often to the commune office to discuss the 2007-2011 CDP and the 2008 CIP with the commune chief. Afterwards, the commune chief convened councilors and PBC members for meetings.

Council management requires effort. One councilor said: “If there is effort by the council, everything will be achieved”. Leadership capacity and transparency are also needed. This is not limited to the commune chief and deputies. Also necessary is the willingness of councilors and the internal solidarity of the CC.

“I think that the commune councilors can work as a team through monthly council meetings, raising problems and challenges to discuss and solve, and through clear division of roles. I will participate in council meetings and provide comments to commune councilors.”

Source: Excerpt from interview with DFT dated November 12, 2007, Kampong Chhnang provincial town.



Model Commune?

Case Study in Rolea Pha Ear Commune/District, Kampong Chhnang Province ⁵

Overview of Rolea Pha Ear Commune

Rolea Pha Ear commune, in the district of the same name, lies within Kampong Chhnang province, located around 13km from the provincial center. The commune holds a total of 7,884 residents, equal to 1,759 households; there are 4,223 residents between 18 and 60 years old (Commune Profile 2006). Part of the land in Rolea Pha Ear is low-lying, including five villages; this land has an irrigation system but is not very fertile. One village is on a plateau. Most of the people in the commune work in farming (1,708 households); generally, they are not poor. Besides farming, people carry out other small business activities, such as basket weaving and sugar palm tree-made products. The houses in the commune are often roofed in zinc or cement, or are tiled. People often have electricity and possess televisions, motorbikes, bicycles or remorques (a three-wheeled passenger-carrying vehicle).

The people in the six villages make use of the only market, located in An Dong Snay village on National Road 5. Traveling and transportation of goods from one village to another and to market is not difficult because the commune possesses a red-laterite road in good condition. Commune infrastructure is also relatively developed. Infrastructure projects in Rolea Pha Ear commune is less than irrigation projects. This made a situation where Rolea Pha Ear commune is different from other communes where there are more infrastructure projects such as the construction of white-dirt trail, red-laterite road, pipes constructed across roads, and schools.

Because Rolea Pha Ear was affected by drought which impacted farming in the 2004 rainy season until 2006, a big effort has been made by the provincial Department of Water Resources, Royal Government and by the council to construct and repair irrigation facilities, such as water gate, spillways, excavate canals and dams construction. These facilities are still not sufficient, and lie mainly in the north of the commune.

Composition and management of commune council

Rolea Pha Ear is one of the 69 communes of Kampong Chhnang, with seven commune councilors (among 419 across the province). Three are from Kruos village, three from Prey Khmer village and one from An Dong Chros village. The other three villages do not have their own representatives at commune level. CC members come from three parties, including the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) and the Norodom Rannariddh Party (NRP), the latter newly established in 2006, taking over the CC seat held by FUNCINPEC in the first mandate. Unusually, the commune chief of the first mandate has become a councilor in the second mandate, while the first deputy of the first mandate has gone on to become the chief in the second mandate. Both are from the same party.

⁵ This case study was written by Mr. Im Sokthy for the Commune Council Support Project (CCSP) to disseminate experiences and lessons in planning, budgeting, project implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The case study focuses on service projects using the commune council's own budget, even if this is supported by NGOs or the commune fund. It illustrates real situation and the writer takes full responsibility for the content of this case study. Research Assistant was Mr. Chhim Sopheark, CCSP's Information and Documentation Officer. This case study remains the property of CCSP and cannot be copied, in part or in entirety, without permission. Copyright © CCSP December 2007.

The commune clerk has always been present and on hand in the commune office, which was not the case for the commune chief and commune councilors during the first mandate. Now, though, the commune chief is always at the office of his own volition, also encouraged to do so by other stakeholders. The commune chief prepares specific assignments for members, including giving them the responsibility to implement projects along with Phnom Neang Kangrey Association (PNKA). The chief believes that the CC can benefit from experiences acquired through co-implementation with PNKA, and go on later to work on projects in other villages to help alleviate poverty. However, he is not clear on the methodology and processes of property ranking. He prefers councilor, who is responsible for project implementation with PNKA, to say because he does not know all about the project.

An open commune chief working for the common good

“I decided to stand for the CC election because I wanted to serve democratically and to improve citizens’ livelihoods.” These were the words of Mr. Saom Hong, Commune Chief of Rolea Pha Ear. His own life has met with difficulties, but he has nevertheless had success as a citizen and in the military. Mr. Saom Hong is 45 years old, educated as a monk for one year. He is a citizen of Kruos village. He completed Grade 6 of school in 1974, one year before the Khmer Rouge regime came in. After the overthrow in 1979, for five years, he was the head of the local solidarity group. He was in the army at commune level between 1984 and 1986. Leaving the army, he took back his civil citizenship as a commune staff in charge of commerce, carrying rice bags on his shoulder. From 1989 until 1993, he was vice-chief in charge of commune agriculture. From 1993 until the commune council elections in 2002, he was second deputy, moving up to first deputy after the elections, holding the position until 2007. He saw further success in 2007 when he took the position of commune chief for the period 2007-2011. What factors have brought such success? Mr. Saom Hong felt that his frankness and openness were critical in his rise, and that he had focused on the common good rather than on his own needs. He also felt that he was friendly and kind towards others.

Irrigation first and then service

The commune chief hopes to see development in all five sectors listed in the five-year commune development plan (CDP) and the three-year commune investment plan (CIP). These five sectors are: economy; social affairs; administration and security; natural resources and environment; and gender. Despite the need for achievements in these areas, for him it is still infrastructure that should be the major focus, as it is vital to the commune economy. This feeling is in evidence across the nation: the Cambodian government has announced itself as the government of roads and irrigation. The commune chief affirms that the Rolea Pha Ear council also prioritizes infrastructure, including road and irrigation construction: “I think about irrigation first and then service.” Service is the second priority, with support from PNKA. Our example here is that PNKA has funded Rolea Pha Ear CC to the amount of US\$1,000 to implement a project titled “Income Generation for Poor Families in the Community.”

In the view of the district facilitator for Rolea Pha Ear commune, service projects were prioritized at third. Priorities of the CC in the second mandate should be (1) construction of bridges; then construction of schools and classrooms; then trainings and awareness raising on natural compost fertilizer, HIV/AIDS, vaccinations of cattle and pigs and environmental protection. Referring to compost fertilizer, she added that natural compost would improve soil quality as it would replace the chemical fertilizers used in recent years by farmers for their crops. Farmers really need compost fertilizers because there were a lot of irrigation constructions already.

As such, major priorities of the commune chief and the district facilitator lie with infrastructure. However, NGO officers tend to focus more on services related to the livelihoods of local people. The director of PNKA said that, during CIP discussions, the CC suggested few projects related directly to the livelihoods of community people, for instance anything dealing with shortages of agricultural land, agricultural techniques, lack of water sources for usages, etc. On the contrary, the CC was more interested in projects related to road and school construction. He felt that this was a result of lack of capacity of the facilitator group, which thought only about infrastructure, and lack of knowledge in terms of collecting data and analyzing priorities and responses. Related to data collection, he said that the commune lacked information to use for planning, and capacity (among councilors and other relevant stakeholders) to analyze data thoroughly and clearly. Participation at village level is also limited, because villagers lack trust in the commune council. This is generally the case in many villages in Kampong Chhnang province.

Nevertheless, the CC should not overlook services and could implement many types of service projects in the villages. For instance, Tany Sar village, where soil for farming is losing quality because of usage of chemicals, could benefit from the CC building compost holds and providing training to villagers in this area.

CCs have a small budget and many areas of focus, so must know how to manage limited funds according to real circumstances and the on-the-ground situation. The DFT comments that if there is no support from NGOs or provincial line departments, the CC can still use its fund left over from infrastructure project bidding for spending on services which are high priorities. Moreover, the CC can use its carried forward budget from previous years for service projects. However, even if such a process begins, project design work should not be limited to securing a budget, as the CC is likely to face many difficulties during project implementation. Methods of project implementation are very new for CCs and technical skills and a monitoring system are necessary for all projects.

Process of cooperative and participatory planning

The CC knew that Trapeang Trach village was the poorest of the six villages in the commune and hoped for budgetary support from PNKA to help poor families there, as it only had a small budget itself. The CC and PNKA then went directly to Trapeang Trach to conduct a wealth ranking of the 114 poor families in the village. This was a participatory process. The village chief was responsible for facilitating the work after receiving authorization from the CC and PNKA, which gave him methodological instruction. Surveying criteria included family possession of rice fields, rice crops, cattle and other assets, including motorbikes, bicycles, radios, etc. Among the poor families surveyed, only the 12 poorest were selected through final interview to receive credit support from PNKA through the CC to help with income generation to improve standards of living. Allowing for different needs and circumstances in terms of job creation and income generation, the CC and PNKA held discussions with these families and let them make decisions as to what they wanted to do with the credit support, for example raising pigs, hens or cows, selling groceries, etc. Some families decided to raise chickens and pigs.

Although the CC knew that it had only US\$1,000, it tried to use this money package to the greatest advantage, by allocating budget left over after providing credits to 12 poor families to other two poor families.

The study activities on project planning above had participation from poor people and collaboration with PNKA, and as result the CC could identify specific target groups. This was a different kind of planning process to the CDP, which also involved public participation but saw less sharing of ideas. The CDP process saw the participation of many poor people sharing less idea and only a few rich people.

The director of PNKA noted that representatives of the poor had rarely participated in previous village development planning, village meetings and commune planning and budgeting committee meetings organized by the CC.

After participatory project planning, the CC designed a project for a three-year rolling CIP (2006-2008), then submitting it to PNKA.

Complicated budgeting system

Unlike other communes, Rolea Pha Ear is the first commune got PNKA funding which the CC had received and deposited to the commune account at the provincial treasury. Another different point, it was only a budget for the project services and will be implemented by the commune council.⁶ Can Rolea Pha Ear be taken as a model commune in the province?

Rolea Pha Ear is acting as a kind of pilot commune, receiving NGO funding and using the commune financial system. It could also be described as the first commune to implement a service project using its own budget. In 2006, Rolea Pha Ear CC submitted a proposal “Income Generation for Poor Families in the Community for September to December 2006” to PNKA describing spending in detail in US dollars. When the CC and PNKA agreed to deposit US\$1,000 in the commune account at the provincial treasury, there were many complicated problems related to preparation and withdrawal. This complication required CC to make budget adjustment many times. Until August 2007, the CC could make final budget adjustment (the third adjustment).

The budget adjustment also had to amend the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the CC and PNKA, and was made because there were differences between the CC and PNKA financial systems. Firstly, the budget proposal was in US dollars and the budget for the commune account was in Khmer riel. Secondly, budget codes and amount items in the proposal were also different, or in some case had no description in the budget codes and in the commune financial system. There was a need for discussion and facilitation between PNKA, the CC, Finance Unit (FU) and Local Administration Unit (LAU) of the provincial Executive Committee in order to review budget codes and expenditure in the proposal to match these to the commune financial system. The process of discussion and facilitation took a long time. As such, the service project could not be implemented as planned. It was planned to finish by the end of 2006, but until November 2007 it was implemented only 50% compared to activities planned in the project proposal. Therefore, the CC decided to take its unused 2006 budget to carry forward for spending in 2007 for the service project implementation.

⁶ Previously, most of the commune budget from the provincial treasury was for infrastructure development. Generally, infrastructure projects saw the official signing of a contract between the CC and the responsible constructor; the CC acted only as a project management committee for project implementation and a procurement committee for the bidding process. The Executive Committee of the Provincial Rural Development Committee is responsible for setting up bidding criteria and organizing the bidding at district level.



In any event, problems were not completely solved by the final budget adjustment. The procedure for withdrawal was also causing difficulties. Many attached documents were needed and enough to withdraw money from the provincial treasury otherwise the money withdrawer shall have to come provincial town many times to attach all required attachment for the provincial treasury. This transport to the provincial town was expensive and time consuming, which could delay project implementation. For instance, claiming expenses for a meeting required the minutes, receipt and attendance sheet which number of participants shall be parallel to the amount expensed. A PNKA staff member felt that this was too inflexible, because all expenses must follow items as stated in the detail budget plan. Even though, he showed his view that the attached documents were seemingly not transparent and believable because attached documents (which do not fully reflect to the real budget expenses) can be completed and made it parallel to commune financial system. In addition, the procurement process also caused problems because it was difficult to do price quotation (for cattle or other items with a price from 200,000 riel up) before making a purchase. The district facilitator felt that the procurement procedures were a constraint to implementation, and that implementation of the commune budget system was easier. Transferring the budget from the NGO system to the commune financial system, as a result, was a real obstacle to project activities, indirectly impacting the effectiveness of the project.

High focusing on monitoring in the future

As with infrastructure projects, the CC selected focal points to follow up on and monitor the service project, also allocating a budget line for this in the proposal. A CC member in the monitoring group felt that the amounts allocated were insufficient: *“Traveling to the project area on our own motorbikes took a liter of gasoline. Sometimes, I paid out of my own pocket.”* He said that the effectiveness of monitoring was linked to personal willingness rather than to financial support.

Focal points in Rolea Pha Ear commune had to follow up on and monitor both infrastructure and service projects. The commune has many projects and intends to hold many others in the future. As such, the focal points need to understand procedures clearly. There are currently not enough focal points (usually two people in a commune). If a monitoring committee is established, things will be easier, with more people who can help in the work. Such a committee should include members from outside the council.⁷ On the contrary, having many members will cause problems. Sometimes, members might feel that other members are responsible and therefore not take responsibility for the work; as in the Khmer saying: “Too many apathetic cooks spoil the broth”.⁸

Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat: Article 67

The CC is still responsible for monitoring and evaluating, planning, programs, and projects even if these tasks are to be implemented by any selected focal points or persons.

⁷ Interview with district facilitator for Rolea Pha Ear commune on November 13, 2007.

⁸ National Committee for Support of Commune (2007) ‘Manual for Monitoring and Evaluation on the Local Development of the Commune/Sang Kat’, November, page 21.



Project Beneficiaries

“I am very happy to have a young pig credit”

Ms. Pen Samphors, villager in Trapeang Trach village

The poor in Trapeang Trach village are the target group of the cooperative effort between Rolear Pha Ear CC and PNKA. The two implementers conducted a wealth ranking to select beneficiaries for an income generation project in the community. The CC has limited resources of US\$10.00.00 for poor families, allocated based on their different needs and basic skills. Thus, families receive different credits to earn an income, such as young pigs, hens or cows, or inputs to sell groceries, or bicycles.

Ms. Pen Samphors smiled and said that she was very glad to have a young pig credit. She learned of the project from her husband, who heard about it from the village chief. They discussed the situation together and decided that receiving a pig credit was the best option. Her family was one of the additional two families brought in by the CC, having not been selected in the first screening.

Her family received 124,800 riel to buy a young pig but the money was so late and the price had gone up to 160,000 riel. She had to add her own money to buy the baby pig. She wanted two pigs. She, therefore, borrowed from her neighbor to buy another young pig, in order to reduce payments on pig food: she said that if she raised only one pig she would not get a good net income because the price of pig food keeps increasing. She added that the CC had come to her house a couple of times since she had received the credit but they did not talk much.

Need for a Strong Leader and a Strong System Case Study of Khnar Po Commune, Siem Reap Province ⁹

Context

To reach Khnar Po commune, a small car needs first to pass through Angkrang Market, located on NR#6, then turn onto a red dirt road. Before arriving at the Khnar Po commune office, the condition of the road is good, but after this it becomes worse. It takes about one hour to reach Khnar Po commune office, which is quiet and peaceful, with few people around. A written notice attached to the board on the wall of the commune office says: *“On November 15, 2007, guests of the Friends Association Pioneer will come to visit Khnar Po commune”*. On the other side of the board is written *“On November 15, 2007, the commune chief will attend a workshop at Wat Samlaong”*. Guests from FAP were therefore not able to meet the commune chief.

Khnar Po commune was separated from Chan Sar commune in 1986. It lies about 24km from the center of Sotr Nikum district, located about 8km north of Angkrang Market. Khnar Po commune consists of eight villages: Chhouk, Bos, Damrei Chhlang, Sambat, Samroang, Bos Thom, Romdeng and Chub. The land area of the commune is 54km², most of which is covered by rice fields and belongs to the community. Land is also used for plantations and for residence. The population is 5,245 persons in 846 families. About 85% works in farming or in vegetable gardening and animal feeding to earn a living. The commune has an irrigation system and a water source for use in five villages, and each family has more than one cow. The population frequently faces a lack of food, caused by drought and by people's limited knowledge of agricultural techniques and methods of selection of rice seeds. This situation causes hardship for the people.

However, the real situation of the commune has seen a change. For example, most people live in better conditions and have more assets and property than in the past. Some people sell land, and there is currently a great deal of land conflict. The second deputy commune chief affirms that at least five claims a month are submitted to the commune office, most of them concerned with land delimitations, mortgages and disputes over inherited farmland.

Organizations working in Khnar Po commune are the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Ecosorn, Angkor Handicrafts, and Friends Association Pioneer (FAP). Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) support infrastructure projects and others support service projects. The FAP strategy has changed from working on service to working on infrastructure. Provincial line departments are also planning to implement projects at commune level through the Provincial Investment Fund (PIF). Therefore, if not now then soon, the commune council (CC) and NGOs will both be able to run both infrastructure and service projects. It is key to ask how the CC, NGOs and other institutions will be able to implement such projects.

⁹This case study was written by Mr. Im Sokthy for the Commune Council Support Project (CCSP) to disseminate experiences and lessons in planning, budgeting, project implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The case study focuses on service projects using the commune council's own budget, even if this is supported by NGOs or the commune fund. It illustrates real situation and the writer takes full responsibility for the content of this case study. Research Assistant was Mr. Chhim Sopheark, CCSP's Information and Documentation Officer. This case study remains the property of CCSP and cannot be copied, in part or in entirety, without permission. Copyright © CCSP December 2007.

New mandate but still same commune chief

The commune chief held this position after the first mandate of CC elections. In the second mandate, he was listed second on the electoral list of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and was elected first deputy commune chief. Two or three months after the second mandate CC was declared valid, the newly appointed commune chief passed away. The first deputy commune chief, who had already been the commune chief in the first mandate, came into the same position again for the second mandate. The commune chief has better living conditions compared with other CC members. Poorer commune councilors show willingness to work and are often in the commune office.

This is not so much the case for the commune chief, apparently, although this means that he also does not cause conflict or controversy with people in the community. Some other council members also do not come to work often, and thus there is not much controversy in the CC. Commune councilors who have been in place longer are not as good at their work as the commune chief. Two newly elected council members are currently in training. The commune clerk and the district facilitator team (DFT) member are also recent additions to the team.

A quick look at the CC suggests that the team has few problems, but in fact commune members do not seem to work together as a team, as they do not often meet with each other. CC members who have been in place longer do not frequently meet or hold discussions with the commune chief, which can lead to other members of the council feeling isolated and unclear as to their role.

Commune councilors come from different parties, and their activities tend towards their political backgrounds. Some reports suggest that CC members, including the commune chief, are influenced by their political party. Political work and private business are also mixed together with work for the council. According to the Executive Director of Friends Association Pioneer, an NGO which has been working in Khnar Po commune for a long time, the commune chief prioritizes party work. Some working activities of the CC are used to attract votes or to gain popularity for the political party.

The Executive Director states that, in some communes, he has found that “In the preparation of the commune investment program (CIP), the commune bases its work on political parties more than on the demand of the people in the community. For example, projects are implemented in places where most people support the relevant party. They will push for roads to be constructed quickly in locations where they win in elections.” During the district integration workshop (DIW), NGOs worried that their projects of support would provide benefit for political parties more than the local community.

The abilities and management activities of the commune members are important for community development. Commune councilors know that their duties include serving the people and developing the community, but do not know clearly what to do and how to do it. As a result, division of responsibilities is also not clear. This hesitancy in decision making demonstrates a need for further support in this area.

Moreover, staff management is also not good. People working at the commune office, the DFT and NGO staff members all felt similarly, that there is a lack of staff management and respect of working hours in the commune office. Follow-up on and evaluation of the working process is also lacking. Human resources are still limited; when there is a lot of work on, things may go very slowly.

In recent times, the monthly meeting of the CC has not been held regularly. The agenda for the meeting does not include new issues for discussion, for example, cooperation with NGOs, monitoring and evaluation, etc. A member of the CC admitted that local people do not frequently attend the council meetings because they are not informed of them.

For project monitoring, the CC has appointed two persons, one a CC member and the other is a local citizen. These two persons often do not attend the CC meeting. This point has also not been raised on the meeting agenda.

Article 13: Law on the Administration and Management of Communs/Sangkats

The commune council must consist of one chief, called the commune council chief, who has the following duties:

- Act as chairperson for commune council meetings,
- Ensure regular commune council meetings, at least once a month,
- Ensure well held commune council meetings by following the rules and regulations found in the internal rules of the commune council and Article 23 of this law,
- Maintain a good manner and good arrangements during the meeting.

Planning process

“There were more infrastructure projects than service projects. ...When service projects were raised, the CC never thought to use the commune budget for these” said the DFT to Khnar Po commune. In the past, there was no support for service projects, but the CC has just begun to incorporate these into its planning.

In the first step of the CIP, the CC raised a great deal of service projects for discussion. In the second step, village meetings, the local community did not raise any more service projects for discussion. Even though they did not offer their opinions, many people attended the village meetings. For example, in Chhouk village, 80% of the 115 families attended. A few elders and educated people were present, but also many men who had been drinking.

Additional reporting suggests that members of the CC not only do not understand clearly the process of project planning but also do not participate in meetings for planning. How can NGOs, associations and institutions participate in project planning when commune councilors themselves do not? Since NGOs do not obtain information or schedules regarding project planning, those that want to participate face difficulties. It seems that the CC does not pay great attention to organizations when they start the planning process but, during the DIW, members try hard to explain themselves and find support from organizations and other institutions.

Such activities do not show a marked difference from those in other provinces. However, issues surrounding service projects in Khnar Po commune are different, as many service projects were raised for discussion during the 2006 CIP. The Director of FAP explained that this might have arisen as a result of the past implementation of different service projects in the commune, which the community feels have helped improve living conditions and reduce social problems such as migration, etc. In addition, district and commune authorities seem to have accepted that the problems or demands of communities are directly concerned with their daily lives.

As a result, NGO projects can be absorbed into the CIP, by joining up activities with the CC in terms of choosing target beneficiaries. To be sure that the poor community can really benefit from projects, FAP provides both advice and support to the CC. The first deputy commune chief actively participates in this. However, there has been no attention paid to sustainability of these activities after FAP finishes its work in the future, in terms of training or capacity building for the first deputy commune chief.

The first deputy commune chief has learnt how to analyze geographical areas and how to carry out seasonal analysis and property ranking. He can use such strategies to build a project plan and to find a target group for commune development. However, because NGOs and CCs face different situations, he may have problems with implementation. NGOs know that there is a budget for implementing the project, but the CC does not know whether it has such a budget or not. If the CC can earn an income by itself and can estimate a budget, it can implement its strategy. This issue concerns the capability of the CC to finance service projects.

Non-financial support to the CC

The Law on the Administration and Management of Communes/Sangkats describes their structure, duty, responsibility and power. Moreover, a national, provincial and district structure has also been set up to support local governance reforms. At the same time, commune clerks have been appointed by the government to help with commune administration work, guarantee legality and serve as a focal point in relationships with higher levels of authority. As such, the CC receives much non-financial support in terms of carrying out smooth and effective democratic development. But Khnar Po CC is similar to other CCs in that it does not yet have strong leadership. Who can help carry out the commune's work effectively?

Excluding deputy commune chiefs, councilors and commune clerks, the DFT of the Provincial Local Administration Unit (PLAU) and NGOs are considered outside actors who can help provide ideas and techniques to the commune office based on their work. It is also reported that district authorities have more power over the commune chief than PLAU but, at present, district duties in supporting communes are still limited. NGOs can support CCs within the framework with which they work. For example, in 2006, FAP suggested to the CC that the first deputy commune chief could hold on to cash after the clerk withdrew it from the government provincial treasury. This idea was raised when the CC lost confidence in the clerk, who did not hand over all moneys to the council. The FAP saw that the signature of the commune chief had been faked in this case to withdraw money from the provincial treasury. In another case, the NGO learnt to understand the commune financial system and cooperate with PLAU to find ways forward for the CC, for example, how the clerk can withdraw money quickly from the provincial treasury.



Commune clerks also have an important role. The FAP Executive Director said (November 15, 2007) *“This new Khnar Po commune clerk is intelligent, has enough capacity, has earned enough to live and concentrates on work”*. The new clerk replaced the former one without notice or explanation after the former clerk stopped working.

The new commune clerk was trained by FAP, which wants to strengthen the capacity of the commune clerk to work on service projects and other relevant activities.

In addition, the association wants to strengthen the capacity of the first deputy commune chief in a similar way. This man has not been educated to the same level as the commune chief but he has the will to work and comes often to the commune office. According to the Law on the Administration and Management of Communes/Sangkats, the deputy chief must implement his duties as appointed by the chief.

Article 12: Declaration on position, duties and rights of commune clerk

In the case that decisions, rules and documents of the commune council are passed or approval is requested for them from the CC, and such items are wrong or not in accordance with legislative procedures and the law, the commune clerk shall write a notice indicating this and ask the commune council to redo them.

All notices or requests of the commune clerk must be in writing.

In case the commune council or its legal representative rejects this request, the commune clerk must immediately send a report to the Ministry of Interior and one copy to the commune chief.

Article 40: Law on the Administration and Management of Communes/Sangkats

The deputy commune/sangkat chief must implement the work appointed for him by the commune/sangkat chief or can replace him/her when s/he is absent.

The deputy commune/sangkat chief shall share duties as follows:

The first deputy commune/sangkat chief helps the commune/sangkat chief on economic and financial work.

The second deputy commune/sangkat chief helps the commune/sangkat chief on administration, social work, public services and public order.

The commune/sangkat chief can provide additional work on top of the above work to his/her deputies.

Both in legal aspects and in reality, the CC has a great deal of non-financial support. However, there is not much dependence on this support. The commune chief in this area is a key and important person, in that he leads the CC and development. Since he has already worked as a commune chief for one mandate, he has at least some experience in leading the people. Leading must be linked with implementation, and take into account the theory of good performance. In general, the main theoretical point is that a leader must actively work to be a good example and to present positive results.

Leadership:

- **Not position, but production**
- **Not preaching, but examples**
- **Not popularity, but results**

Lvea CC Takes Steps in the Right Direction: Implementing a Service Project ¹⁰

*“I thought this project was just to distribute rice seed to the community but when I implemented it,
I realized the challenges”*

Mr. Nhok Chhuor, Commune Chief.

Overview of Lvea Commune

Lvea commune is located in Pouk district on National Road #6 in Siem Reap province, on the way from the provincial center to Krolagn district. Lvea commune is 4km from Pouk district center, where there is a market (there is no market in the commune). Lvea commune is one among 16 communes in the district. It is also the first commune in Siem Reap province to have used its budget to implement a service project (rice seed distribution and training on technical skills in farming and compost production).

Lvea commune consists of 12 villages, with a population of 9,499 persons, equal to 1,788 families. The commune is engaged mainly in agriculture. Some people farm during the dry season, using the water basin. Seven villages can farm during both the dry and the rainy season (Lvea, Daun Tro, Komrou, Stung Preahsrok, Kok Srormor, Tuol Roveang and Prohout villages). Other people farm by relying on the rain (five villages). The average rice yield is three tons per hectare. Besides farming, people are occupied in small jobs such as fishing, making mats, preparing ambok (a kind of plant with medicinal roots), etc.

During the first mandate, the CC completed many infrastructure projects. The CC felt that the results of these projects were mostly satisfactory, meaning that they could then turn their attention to implementing service projects. However, they have continued to implement infrastructure projects too. In 2007, they used the commune budget, to the amount of 19,969,400 Riel, to install a drainage system in 10 places. They used 22,275,000 Riel to construct a 1,150 meter-long red soil road. Roads in each village have subsided. Some drainage systems and wooden bridges need to be repaired to allow the community to travel and transport goods.

In Lvea commune, many NGOs and INGOs work on health, education and agriculture activities, among others. These organizations include Srer Khmer, RACHA, Khmer Akphiwat Khmer Organization (KAKO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Buddhism for Development (BFD) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Reports suggest that both the commune chief and commune councilors work hard and cooperate well with these organizations.

Commune Chief's Background

The commune leader, Mr. Nhok Chhuor, is respected in Lvea commune. He was born in Lvea village, Lvea commune. He is 68 years old and has six children. He stopped studying in 1957 in Grade 8 (Grade 4 of the present day education system).

¹⁰ This case study was written by Mr. Im Sokthy for the Commune Council Support Project (CCSP) to disseminate experiences and lessons in planning, budgeting, project implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The case study focuses on service projects using the commune council's own budget, even if this is supported by NGOs or the commune fund. It illustrates real situation and the writer takes full responsibility for the content of this case study. Research Assistant was Mr. Chhim Sopheark, CCSP's Information and Documentation Officer. This case study remains the property of CCSP and cannot be copied, in part or in entirety, without permission. Copyright © CCSP December 2007.

He was First Deputy Commune Chief in 1963, under the Sangkum Reast Niyom regime. After 1979, he returned to live in his home town. From 1979 to 1992, he was a permanent member of Lvea commune. After seven years working in farming, he became head of Lvea village (2001 to 2002). In the first mandate commune council elections, he became First Deputy Commune Chief again. After the commune chief of the first mandate passed away, Mr. Nhok Chhuor took the position. In the second mandate, he was elected to be the leader of Lvea CC. The council has seven members, all of them from the CPP. He decided to stand as a candidate for election not because he was nominated by the party but because of his leadership experience and his popularity. He thinks that he has experience in leading, has good relationships and is known for his friendliness with people in the community. In the past, he has been appointed to work for a religious committee as a money collector for road construction. This shows that he is trusted generally: he was able to carry out the job and he has good will and conscience. He says frankly: “Actually, I should not be a commune chief because I’m old now ... but I want Lvea commune to be well known and developed”.

As noted, all seven CC members come from the CPP. They have interior solidarity and have good relationships with each other. The CC is felt not to be arrogant; all of its members share opinions freely and help with the commune office’s work.

Commune Need for Human Resources

The commune chief focuses on sustainable development. He wants to see Lvea commune as an area full of literate people in the future (he emphasizes human resources training). He stresses that he needs good human resources to help in the development of the local community. As a result, he wants all children in the villages to go to school. Currently, not all of them go and some of them drop out midway (often at Grade 2 or 3 level). The average distance from each village to its local school is 10km.

The number of schools is greater than in the past. There are nine primary schools in the 12 villages, but this is not enough. One secondary school has recently been opened, so that the children in Lvea commune have a chance to continue their studies. In the three-year rolling commune investment program (CIP) 2007-2009, a project to support poor students was raised as first priority for the district integration workshop (DIW). The CC did not stop at raising the project for consideration, but also decided to establish institutions to support the educational sector. These included the Education for All (EFA) committee and a school support committee, among others.

The commune chief and the CC members seem to have a long outlook with regard to community development. However, the commune’s duties and responsibilities are still not clear in terms of legal, financial and capacity aspects.

In particular, the duty of the CC in the education sector is to support through assessment and coordination, pushing the education sector towards human resources development. This means that the CC does not directly develop the education sector in the local community. At present, the CC is trying its best to push the education sector forward by including projects in the CIP and finding support in the DIW.

Resource Mobilization for the Commune

The CC is responsible for a great deal of work concerned with the management, development and improvement of the livelihoods of the people in the community. This work covers security, public order, natural resource and environmental protection, social and economic development, general work in the commune and other necessary issues.

The limited resources available cannot stretch to such amounts of works or satisfy all the needs of the people in the community. Every year, the CC cooperates with provincial line departments and organizations during the DIW to help with this situation.

As well as seeking support in the DIW, Lvea CC makes all efforts to find and mobilize resources from outside to help with community development. It has built good relationships and cooperation with provincial line departments, NGOs and civil society in order to mobilize external resources. Its attractive geographical and security situation have also been useful in building these relationships.

It is of note that some organizations have direct contacts with the CC regarding their activities in the commune. The commune chief welcomes them and always attends their meetings if invited, sometimes nominating a replacement if he cannot attend. He makes a note of the ongoing development agenda and of ways that this can help his community. Whenever he meets with NGO actors, he always remembers to ask them to help his community as much as possible. For example, in 2007, when KAKO discussed with him the selection of three villages in Lvea commune for an illiteracy project, he insisted the NGO choose four instead. According to KAKO's director, the commune chief said that if communities are literate, it is easy to lead them.

Initiative and Courage in Implementing Service Projects

In 2007, Lvea commune was the first commune in Siem Reap to implement a service project using the commune budget. This service project was suggested every year during the first mandate but was not implemented, as there were no clear rules or staff to implement it. After receiving advice and encouragement from the Provincial Local Administration Unit (PLAU), Lvea CC in 2006 again put this service project (providing rice seeds and fruit trees) in the CIP for implementation. However, it could not obtain support from provincial line departments, organizations or individuals through the DIW.

Normally, after the workshop, the planning and budgeting committee (PBC) must grade the project to be put in the commune budget plan, first according to priority and second according to government budget allocations. According to the rules, the PBC can learn about government budget allocations for the next year between September and November of the preceding year, when the government announces this through the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

In the 9th stage of the CIP process, despite lack of support at the DIW, the PBC decided to opt for the project dealing with rice seed distribution, training on technical skills in farming and compost production, and fruit tree distribution for the commune budget plan. What reasons were there for this decision?

The main reasons for Lvea CC deciding to implement this service project were as follows. First, there were judged to be enough infrastructure projects in the commune. Second, the CC had enough budget to implement the project if it used the previous year's commune budget surplus. Third, the CC understood clearly the community's need for such a project. Fourth, the community had land for this project. And fifth, the CC had itself had already considered ways to implement this project.

¹¹ The PBC has a role supporting and providing ideas to the commune council in commune planning and budgeting. It is set up every year. In general, the PBC is led by the commune chief and CC members. CC, sometimes, is referred to PBC once people are talking about CIP.

Other contributory factors included the encouragement and ideas of PLAU through the PFT/DFT (provincial and district facilitation teams) and the understanding of the CC itself. The CC wanted good results and achievements to impact the next generation. When people see or eat rice or fruit, they will be able to remember the first mandate of Lvea CC.

However, the reality was more difficult. The commune chief himself says: “If I had known that this project was so big, I would not have raised it. I thought this project was just to distribute rice seeds to the community ... but when I implemented it myself, I realized the challenges”. Work did not end with rice seed distribution. There was a need to deal with documentation, plan for seed type selection and organize voluntary farmers, technical training, follow-up and money withdrawal for expenses.

In other cases, the CC is able to implement activities directly, such as road maintenance or control of sanitation in markets or public spaces, because such tasks are simple and straightforward. This service delivery project was a different matter.

Planning with Voluntary Farmers

The PBC continued raising this service project during commune planning processes as it felt the project could satisfy the needs of the community. Villagers continued to be enthused by the project, even before it was accepted and implemented. One villager happily said before the project was taken up: “Next year, we’ll raise this project again, we’re not disappointed”.

In 2006, even though the rice seed and fruit tree distribution project had not received support during the DIW, the CC decided to implement the service project anyway, by channeling the previous year’s surplus in the commune budget towards project implementation.

When the plan was taken up for the first time, the PBC did not think clearly about types of seed for distribution. On studying the project in detail, the CC reduced the amount of seed from 2,500kg, equal to 10,000,000 Riel, to 1,400kg, equal to 4,201,000 Riel. The CC thought that the project should not be too big during the first phase, agreeing that it would be good to have funds remaining. This leftover budget has still not been allocated.

In the next step, the CC asked village chiefs to locate voluntary farmers from all villages to attend a meeting at the commune office. In June, a meeting was held on rice seed choice. After a technical officer from the district agricultural office presented and explained the project, farmers attending the meeting decided to choose two types of seed, Senpidao and Romduol. There were many reasons behind this decision. Senpidao and Romduol rice are sold in Siem Reap. Both types can be farmed easily and take a short time to grow. The seeds can be farmed every season and offer a high yield, maximum six and minimum three tons per hectare.

After this, the CC organized another meeting at the commune office, discussing the details of the training plan for 70 families in seven villages. The voluntary farmers, commune chief, village chiefs and technical officer discussed training subjects, number of sessions, number of participants and location. At the end of the meeting, they agreed a detailed plan for the training.

Afterwards, the CC bought rice seeds and brought these to the commune office. A ceremony for seed distribution was held, with the participation of provincial officers.

In brief, the planning process in Lvea commune was not only part of the CIP, but also benefited the community by given residents the chance to share ideas and make decisions on project implementation.

Project Implementation

A Deika, dated June 5, 2007, was sent from provincial headquarters to the director of the provincial agriculture department. On the basis of this, the director of the agriculture department confirmed on the next day that, having studied documents submitted (service project information form of the commune sent to PLAU), the department agreed to project implementation, as the fruit tree and rice seed distribution project for poor families did not affect the technical and policy section. Lvea CC was therefore free to implement the project.

This kind of project was new in the commune, a kind of pilot, and there was no advice available as with infrastructure projects.¹² As a result, the CC and provincial decentralization and de-concentration supporting officers considered the project very seriously and tried to pay great attention to the guidelines and other documents. They wanted to implement the project successfully so that it could be used as good experience in the future, with lessons learnt to be passed on to other communes in Cambodia. Many difficulties and issues arose during the service project implementation, covering clear responsibilities of the CC, bidding, budget implementation and monitoring, for example.

Responsibilities of the CC

The responsibilities of the CC in terms of service management are still not clear. Until now, the involvement of the commune in community development activities has only been in investment in small-scale infrastructure, with the commune signing a contract with the private sector to provide construction work or the service.

Most constructors or service providers are based at the district or province level, and must register with the provincial authority, which then confirms the constructor/service provider's ability to implement the project. The contractor is selected based on a bidding process. The winner must sign a contract directly with the CC, which is also responsible for project monitoring. Normally, provincial technical support staff help the CC monitor project implementation and manage the contract.

If we turn to service projects, in general, provincial line departments are in charge of implementing these in the commune, through the provincial investment fund (PIF). Service projects using the commune budget are very rare. Thus, at the beginning, the first and immediate thought was that the CC could ask the agriculture department to implement the rice seed and fruit tree distribution project, using a contract between the department and the CC. The district agriculture office, located near the commune office, would be the provider of the training. Moreover, the district agriculture officer would serve as technical officer, helping provide ideas and monitor the project with the CC.

Bidding

The ideal situation would be if the service supply could be secured through bidding and a supplier could be found in the community. However, in Lvea commune, it was difficult to find a supplier or a farm that could supply enough rice seeds and fruit trees to distribute to the farmers. Therefore, Lvea commune office sent a letter to the provincial office on May 30, 2007 to ask for a procurement exemption.¹³

¹² The Commune/Sangkat Project Implementation Manual mostly explains implementation of infrastructure projects, although there is some information on service projects.

¹³ Normally, if the CC cannot find a supplier after two announcements, it will make a request to the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC) to find a supplier. This request for a procurement exemption was a special case in Siem Reap province.

One day later, on May 31, 2007, the provincial office wrote a letter back to Lvea CC to agree to the CC's request, asking the CC to make a clear contract on supply with farmers in the commune. This was a good way to avoid obstructions to project implementation. It did raise issues surrounding purchase price and quality of supply (rice seeds and fruit tree bought for farmers), however.

Before submitting the request to the provincial office, the CC had already decided on type of rice seed to be bought. The commune's procurement committee had discussed and decided to buy rice seeds from an agricultural development community producing rice seeds, located 13km from Lvea commune office. The CC then also needed to think about the transportation of the rice seeds.

Budgeting

Two points concerning the budget of Lvea commune must be taken into consideration. First of all, the CC originally planned for 10,000,000 Riel's worth of rice seed distribution. After a detailed project study, the project decided on 4,201,000 Riel's worth, leaving 5,799,000 Riel over. The CC has not yet considered how to use this remainder. In contrast with rice seed distribution, fruit tree distribution spent over the estimated budget line. The original estimated budget was 3,000,000 Riel; after detailed project study, this rose to 6,342,000 Riel. It will be interesting to see how the CC will manage the two budget discrepancies?

Budget planning is an important task, as is actual use of budget during project implementation. Permission to be exempt from procurement facilitated the withdrawing of money to buy rice seeds and fruit trees, and Lvea commune spent the budget for this line. But other budget expense lines were not withdrawn because of late disbursement, including trainer's salary, equipment fee, copying fee, and allowance for monitoring activities.

In fact, both the CC and CC supporting units anticipated that project implementation would be difficult. As such, provincial and national-level authorities, including the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, and Ministry of Economy and Finance, came to visit the commune office many times, to learn from the project as well as to find other ways to improve service delivery project, as there was no standard or clear advice available concerning such projects. With input and intervention from provincial authorities, the CC has been given more authority and more incentive to make great efforts to implement the project.

Monitoring

Is the monitoring of infrastructure projects the same as that of service projects? Farmers already have some agricultural techniques, but their understanding is still limited. As a result, support is still necessary, especially during project implementation. Besides field site monitoring and advice, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points also need to know whether the rice seeds and fruit trees are really being distributed according to the project's objectives and satisfying the farmers' needs. Despite this being a service project, the CC has taken on project monitoring, along with the PLAU, which has made trips to visit the commune office, held meetings with the CC and directly checked farms.

The CC appointed three M&E focal points for seven villages. These three focal points are: the first deputy commune chief, one councilor and the district agriculture officer. From the end of May to November 2007, they monitored the villages 32 times. Three villages were often visited by the M&E; Tuol Roveang six times, Stung Preahsrok five times and Komrou five times. On average, they monitored four times for each village.



Some Project Implementation Results

Service project implementation was difficult but the CC did not hesitate or abandon the project. On the contrary, the CC continued to make a strong effort and to try to find good ways to improve project quality through M&E, which provided the CC with much important information on project results.

Project implementation for the last seven months (May to November, 2007) revealed that the project's objectives could not be completely achieved. For example, the rice seed distribution project aimed to provide villagers with farming techniques and good seeds. Results showed that some families did not follow planting techniques, while some others still used cow dung as a fertilizer. In Stung Preahsrok village, none of the 10 families used compost fertilizer: they all used cow dung. In some villages, the expected good yield did not occur because flooding damaged the seedlings. Some other families were trained to produce compost fertilizer but could not because of a lack of raw materials.

In conclusion, the farmers and the CC could not obtain the good result they were expecting. At the beginning of the project, they should have considered flooding and the need for raw materials for the production of compost fertilizer. They should also have checked if the families could practice what they learnt.

Farmers, focal points and other concerned persons reported the following problems:

- The seed is not pure, for example, Senpidao seed is only 60% pure and Romduol is only 80% pure.
- The seed is not of good quality.
- Seed distribution occurred late.
- Drought occurred when sowing the rice, and flooding when the rice was growing, so all the seedlings died.
- Not everyone followed the planting technique.
- Most people did not produce compost fertilizer as they were supposed to.

However, families who followed the technique obtained a high yield. For example, one clump of rice seedlings can yield 15 to 20 units of seedlings, all of a similar height and heavy with grains.

Summary

For the purely CPP CC, (previously six seats and now seven), winning the election has not reduced its effectiveness, and councilors are still focusing on community development. The CC is considering not only infrastructure projects but also service projects. It also has a vision for long-term development, especially in the field of human resources development. The continuous raising of this service delivery project for the commune development plan (CDP) has not disappointed the people in Lvea commune. They were able to experience something that is rarely seen in communes: a service project implemented by the CC (distributing rice seeds and fruit trees to poor farmers). There have been some difficulties in project implementation but, overall, the CC has been able to gain experience which it will be able to use in the future, and which it can share with other communes and stakeholders.

Summary of Project Information

70 families of villagers from seven villages, Kok Sormor, Prohout, Tuol Roveang, Stung Preahsrok, Komrou, Snao and Lvea villages, received 1,400kg of rice seed. In each village, 10 families obtained 20kg of rice seed. Some chose Senpidao seed and others chose Romduol seed. Through the project, the CC wanted the villagers to learn technical skills in farming and compost fertilizer production, to help them obtain results from their farming. Of the amount of 4,201,000 Riel, the CC planned to spend most on purchasing the rice seed, training and M&E.

Resource: Service Project Information Form, dated May 30, 2007.



ឧបសម្ព័ន្ធៈ ឯកសារយោង

ANNEX: REFERENCE

ឯកសារជាភាសាខ្មែរ

Khmer Documents

- គណៈកម្មាធិការជាតិគាំទ្រឃុំ សង្កាត់៖ សៀវភៅណែនាំស្តីពីការតាមដានត្រួតពិនិត្យ និង វាយតម្លៃរបស់ ឃុំ សង្កាត់ លើការងារ អភិវឌ្ឍន៍មូលដ្ឋាន ខេត្តកែប ឆ្នាំ ២០០៤ ។
- គណៈកម្មាធិការជាតិគាំទ្រឃុំ សង្កាត់៖ ការសិក្សាវាយតម្លៃបូកសរុបកំណែទម្រង់វិមជ្ឈការ នៅកម្ពុជា៖ គោលនយោបាយ និង ការអនុវត្តន៍ ភ្នំពេញ ២០០៤ ។
- គណៈកម្មាធិការកសាងផែនការ និង ថវិកា៖ កម្មវិធីវិនិយោគពាណិជ្ជកម្ម ២០០៧-២០០៩ ឃុំខ្នាពោធិ៍ ស្រុក សូត្រនិគម ខេត្តសៀមរាប ២០០៧ ។
- គណៈកម្មាធិការកសាងផែនការ និង ថវិកា៖ កម្មវិធីវិនិយោគពាណិជ្ជកម្ម ២០០៧-២០០៩ ឃុំល្វា ស្រុកពួក ខេត្ត សៀមរាប ២០០៧ ។
- គណៈកម្មាធិការកសាងផែនការ និង ថវិកា៖ កម្មវិធីវិនិយោគពាណិជ្ជកម្ម ២០០៦-២០០៨ ឃុំតាជេស ស្រុក កំពង់ត្រឡាច ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៦ ។
- គណៈកម្មាធិការកសាងផែនការ និង ថវិកា៖ កម្មវិធីវិនិយោគពាណិជ្ជកម្ម ២០០៦-២០០៨ ឃុំរលាប្ប្រ ស្រុក រលាប្ប្រ ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៦ ។
- គណៈកម្មការវាយតម្លៃផ្ទៃក្នុងឃុំល្វា៖ របាយការណ៍វាយតម្លៃផ្ទៃក្នុងលើកកិច្ចការឃុំ សង្កាត់អាណត្តិទី១ ឆ្នាំ ២០០២ - ២០០៧ ឃុំល្វា ស្រុកពួក ខេត្តសៀមរាប វិច្ឆិការ ២០០៦ ។
- គណៈកម្មការវាយតម្លៃផ្ទៃក្នុងឃុំរលាប្ប្រ៖ របាយការណ៍វាយតម្លៃផ្ទៃក្នុងលើកកិច្ចការឃុំ សង្កាត់អាណត្តិទី១ ឆ្នាំ ២០០២ - ២០០៧ ឃុំរលាប្ប្រ ស្រុករលាប្ប្រ ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៦ ។
- គណៈកម្មការវាយតម្លៃផ្ទៃក្នុងឃុំតាជេស៖ របាយការណ៍វាយតម្លៃផ្ទៃក្នុងលើកកិច្ចការឃុំ សង្កាត់អាណត្តិទី១ ឆ្នាំ ២០០២ - ២០០៧ ឃុំតាជេស ស្រុកកំពង់ត្រឡាច ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៦ ។
- កំណត់ហេតុការប្រជុំត្រួតពិនិត្យស្តីពីការអនុវត្តគម្រោងថែកបាយពូជស្រូវ ឃុំល្វា ស្រុកពួក ខេត្តសៀមរាប ចុះថ្ងៃទី ១៣ វិច្ឆិការ ២០០៧ ។
- របាយការណ៍ប្រចាំឆ្នាំ ២០០៦ របស់ក្រុមប្រឹក្សាឃុំរលាប្ប្រ ស្រុករលាប្ប្រ ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៧ ។



- របាយការណ៍ប្រចាំឆ្នាំ ២០០៦ របស់ក្រុមប្រឹក្សាឃុំតាជេស ស្រុកកំពង់ត្រឡាច ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៦ ។
- កំណត់ហេតុស្តីពីការប្រជុំបង្កើតគណៈកម្មាធិការកសាងផែនការ និង ថវិកាឃុំ ឃុំរលាប្បៀរ ស្រុករលាប្បៀរ ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង កក្កដា ២០០៧ ។
- ឯកសារព័ត៌មានស្តីពីស្ថានភាពឃុំ ឆ្នាំ ២០០៦ សម្រាប់ការគ្រប់គ្រងនិងអភិវឌ្ឍន៍មូលដ្ឋាន ឃុំតាជេស
- ឯកសារព័ត៌មានស្តីពីស្ថានភាពឃុំ ឆ្នាំ ២០០៦ សម្រាប់ការគ្រប់គ្រងនិងអភិវឌ្ឍន៍មូលដ្ឋាន ឃុំរលាប្បៀរ
- ច្បាប់ស្តីពីការគ្រប់គ្រងរដ្ឋបាលឃុំ សង្កាត់ ដែលរដ្ឋសភាបានអនុម័តកាលពីថ្ងៃទី១២ ខែមករា ឆ្នាំ២០០១
- ប្រកាសស្តីពីតួនាទី ភារកិច្ច និង សិទ្ធិរបស់ស្មៅនៃឃុំ សង្កាត់
- អនុក្រឹត្យស្តីពីមូលនិធិឃុំ សង្កាត់
- អនុក្រឹត្យស្តីពីប្រព័ន្ធគ្រប់គ្រងហិរញ្ញវត្ថុឃុំ សង្កាត់
- គំរោងសំណើ : អភិវឌ្ឍន៍សេដ្ឋកិច្ចគ្រួសារក្រីក្រក្នុងសហគមន៍ ឃុំខ្នាពោធិ៍ ស្រុកសូទ្រនិគម ខេត្តសៀមរាប ២០០៥ ។
- សំណើគម្រោង: លើកស្ទួយជីវភាពសហគមន៍ ឃុំតាជេស ស្រុកកំពង់ត្រឡាច ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៦ ។
- សំណើគម្រោង: បង្កើនប្រាក់ចំណូលដល់គ្រួសារក្រីក្រក្នុងសហគមន៍ ឃុំរលាប្បៀរ ស្រុករលាប្បៀរ ខេត្តកំពង់ឆ្នាំង ២០០៦ ។

ឯកសារជាភាសាអង់គ្លេស

English Documents

- Rustin C, et all, *The Challenges of Decentralization Design in Cambodia, Phnom Penh*, CDRI, 2004.
- Leonardo G. Romeo, Luc Spyckerelle, *Decentralization Reforms and Commune-Level Services Delivery in Cambodia*, December 2003
- Inter-Ministrial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning, Phnom Penh, Updated 28 January 2002
- Leny, *The Route to Development: Experiences of Vihear Loung Commune in Development Planning and Budgeting*, Phnom Penh, The Asia Foundation, 2005
- Leny, *“Number One Commune”: Commune Development Planning and Budgeting in Tuol Ta Ek, Battambang*, Phnom Penh, The Asia Foundation, 2005
- Carolina Gutiérrez de Taliercio, *In Search of Public Order —From Mandate to Practice: The Case of Sra Ngae Commune in Takeo Province*, Phnom Penh, The Asia Foundation, 2005.
- Carolina Gutiérrez de Taliercio, *Discerning Priorities: The Case of a Road Construction in Run-Ta-Ek, Siem Reap Province*, Phnom Penh, The Asia Foundation, 2005



Participants are waiting for meeting at Taches commune, 12 Nov. 2007



An interview with Taches commune councilors and Planning and Budget Committee members at Taches commune office, 12 Nov. 2007



Mr. Chhim Sopheark is reading announcements posted at information board, Rolea Pha Ear commune, 13 Nov. 2007



Councilors, Planning and Budget Committee members, Clerk and DFT in a focus group discussion at Rolea Pha Ear commune office, 13 Nov. 2007



DFT (first from left) to Rolea Pha Ear commune and Commune Chief (second from left)



Two pigs of Ms. Pen Sophors, Trapeang Trach villager, Rolea Pha Ear commune, 13 Nov. 2007



Khna Por commune office, 15 Nov. 2007



An interview with commune deputy chiefs, DFT, clerk, and local resident, Khna Por commune office, 15 Nov. 2007.



Lvea commune office 16 Nov. 2007



Lvea Commune Chief, Mr. Nhok Chhuor (second from right)



Focus Group Discussion with Planning and Budget Committee members, village leaders, and local residents.



Participants attended focus group discussion.