



Civil Society and Pro-Poor Markets Case Study

The CBO and Community Shop

Background

Samakum Samaki Akpiwat Rich Cham Reun is a Community-Based Organization (CBO) located in Pong Teuk Village of Kampot Province. The CBO was founded on January 10, 2009 with an original membership of 65 people – 40 of whom are women. There are five groups that fall under CBO's umbrella who share a joint savings fund of 31,352,700 Riel. The main activities of the CBO include:

- Consolidation of small groups under the CBO umbrella to increase community saving funds for assistance in the community
- Improvement and promotion of agricultural techniques to increase food security in the village
- Promotion and application of good community business practices

Challenges

The communities face three major challenges to alleviating their poverty: (1) lack of engagement between the CBO and the commune councils (CC) has led to a misunderstanding between the two groups as to the need for increased citizen participation in council activities beyond to commune planning; (2) the natural resources that most of the farmers in the area depend on are being reduced dramatically; and (3) significant market constraints exist. Farmers face daily market challenges that include:

- Lack of market to purchase materials
- Buying at higher prices
- Weighing of products is faulty
- Cash flows out of the village to outsiders

Rural roads are well maintained and in relatively good condition. However, farmers still have little choice as to where or to whom they would buy and sell products. Many farmers produce products for buying and selling on an individual basis reducing supply, and many of them lack the information needed to understand

market demands for their products or to make accurate estimates for the cost of taking products to the market, severely limiting their effectiveness and capacity for income growth.

Working Together with CSPPM

The CBO began cooperating with CSPPM in January 2009, when the CBO was founded. CSPPM began by supporting the CBO by training on project concepts related to voicing issues, increasing natural resource management and business development. The CBO then pursued supporting monthly trainings and ongoing follow-ups on the following subjects:

- Proposal writing and small grant management
- CBO management
- How to communicate and cooperate with Commune Council (CC) members
- Community business concepts

In addition, the CEDAC marketing office supported technical assistance on community shop businesses.

Small Grants

With technical support from CEDAC staff members, the CBO developed and submitted a small grant to CRS in June 2009. The grant proposed to (1) train CBO executives and sub-committees on the CIP development; and (2) organize a public forum. The small grant was approved in August 2009 for a total budget of 273.25 USD to benefit 73 people (58 women). The small grant enabled increased communication and cooperation between the CCs and CBO, as well as awareness of the CIP development process.

After completing the first small grant implementation, the CBO executives developed and submitted other small grant proposal to CRS in September 2009, which was used for training local people on Land Laws and promoting the CBO members. The small grant was approved in November 2009 for a total budget of 497.25 USD and would benefit a total of 95 people (70 women). Currently, the CBO is implementing this small grant. It is expected to be completed at the end of November 2009.

Role of CRS

Collaboration between CRS and CEDAC for the CSPPM has allowed CEDAC to improve the capacity of the CBO by:

- Providing direction on small grant proposal writing and management
- Providing technical assistance
- Coordinating actions, analyzing experiences and diffusing lessons learned
- Provide capacity building
- Joint field visits to monitor and provide feedback

Achieving Results

Through its cooperation with the CSPPM, the CBO has increased the knowledge and understanding of its members on community businesses by starting a community shop business to collect community funds and share income together. The community shop was formed to reduce the daily expenditures of farmer families and to increase the income of farmer families by expanding daily income.

Achievements in Business

According to the CSPPM, a “business” has two dimensions: (1) Business Awareness and (2) Business Action. Collaboration with the CSPPM has allowed the CBO business to increase significantly.

A major achievement between CEDAC staff (field staff and marketing officers) and the CBO was the establishment of a community shop in April 2009. To date, the community shop has generated a total capital of 15,000,000 Riel. On average, monthly income earned represented 10% to 15% of the total capital; approximately 100,000 Riel to 250,000 Riel per month.



“Opening the community shop has created interest in the community to participate as members and contribute to the funds of the community shop. Membership has been increasing. To me – I am very happy as seller in the community shop. It can help me earn more salary for my family’s income – an average of 240,000 Riel. Additionally, I think that the community shop really assists the community by increasing the family income.” Mrs. Thong Or, 45 year old widow, seller at the Pong Teuk community shop.



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Moving Forward

The CBO created a planning book, which focuses on the following main activities for the future:

- Training small businesses for the community and conducting exchange visits
- Participating in the District Investment Workshop (DIW is step 3 of CIP development process)
- Training and promoting natural resource management in the community
- Forming a Natural Resource Management (NRM) group for conservation of the community's natural resources
- Attending the CC meeting and providing feedback to CC members when necessary
- Collecting vital information and providing it to members
- Conducting the collective buying and/or selling of local products

Lessons Learned

- CEDAC's support of the Samakum Samaki Akpiwat Rich Cham Reun CBO has provided some excellent lessons for future reference:
 - Let the community think of the community business and encouraging them to join in the community business are the best methods for creating a good community impression and starting the business successfully
 - Exchange visits are important events to encourage the community to start conducting a community business