

International Students Attend Workshop on “NGOs’ Fieldwork - Skills for Enabling People-centered Community Development”

November 12-17, 2009,

A group of eleven students from The Foundation for Advanced Studies in International Development (FASID) attended a training workshop that was organized and facilitated by CEDAC’s Institute for Local Development (CILD). FASID is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 in Tokyo, Japan, for the purpose of supporting development practitioners engaged in social and economic issues in Japan and internationally. FASID students are pursuing a NGO diploma course, which is composed of 3 terms, in which participants will be exposed to both theoretical concepts and practical methods relevant to NGO issues and management. This course is funded by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The 2nd term of this course focuses on “NGOs’ Fieldwork – skills for enabling people-centered community development,” with a short-term fieldwork course located in Cambodia. The main purpose of the fieldwork course is to learn appropriate approaches and perspectives for NGO fieldworkers, to practice fieldwork skills that support people-centered community development, and to reconsider the role of NGOs. Participants will be exposed to the reality of community development and will have opportunities to share their experiences and opinions with local and international NGO workers, villagers, and key persons in the communities.

During the course, Dr. Yang Saing Koma, CEDAC's President, Mr. Sam Vitou, CILD program director, and Mr. Yi Kimthan, CEDAC Field Program Director, presented the general background of agriculture and rural development in Cambodia and the overview of CEDAC agricultural development program. The achievements and challenges were also presented and accompanied by field examples.

The participants were split into two groups in order to do focus group discussions and individual interviews. The students stayed in Trapang Svay and Peak Bang Oung village, Trapang Thom Khang Tboung commune, Tramkok district, Takeo Province. The focus of the field work was to learn how farmer associations mobilize farmers to work together on saving, producer groups, community shops, etc. In addition, on the way to Phnom Da in Angkor Borei district, the participants had a chance to visit the women’s weaving group and two farmer saving groups in Ta Ei village, Ba Sre commune. At the end of the training workshop, all participants worked as a group to sum up the results from the village presentation and prepared feedback from the field visit.

All of the participants were very happy with the training workshop because they had a chance to learn from local farmers and from CEDAC’s approaches on agriculture and rural development.

