

Workshop with Journalists on Rural Youth and Local Development

CEDAC, with funding support from the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation for Liberty (FNF), organized a workshop with Cambodian journalists on **Rural Youth and Local Development** on July 3-4, 2010 at Golden Sand Hotel, Sihanouk Ville. Forty journalists (14 women) representing TV, radio, newspapers and magazines participated in the workshop. The objective of the workshop was to share the experiences related to the situation of Cambodia's rural youth and CEDAC initiatives to improve the situation of rural youth as well as to promote community development.

CEDAC President, Dr. Yang Saing Koma and Mr. Khim Sophanna, FNF's Program Manager, facilitated the workshop.

During the two-day workshop, four rural youth representatives from CEDAC's Young Agri-Entrepreneurs (YAE) program shared their perspectives regarding the situation of rural youth and their own experiences in learning with the YAE program, particularly their progress related to self-development and the process of local development after having joined the program.

Dr. Yang Saing Koma presented possible solutions for rural youth in agriculture-related careers. He said that the country's young people, 80% of whom live in rural areas, represent a human resource that can play a very important role in rural development and in society. In Cambodia, there are every year an additional 250,000 to 300,000 young people leaving school or seeking jobs. According to a survey, 25% of high school students need to have learned specific agriculture techniques for their future career, he added. Dr. Yang Saing Koma said that CEDAC is going to prepare a study curriculum on Agriculture for high school students by first testing this with some interested high schools.

As a result of the meeting, all participants, particularly the journalists came away with a better understanding of the real challenges of rural youth and expressed their strong commitment in helping rural youth to succeed in their own development as well as in contributing to local community development.

It is important to note that this is the third workshop with journalists supported by FNF to promote improved awareness among Cambodian journalists about important issues related to agriculture and rural development in order to advance development work more effectively.

Since 2006, CEDAC has provided opportunities to rural youth (those who passed or failed Bac II) to learn from CEDAC's projects and created a program called Young Agri-Entrepreneurs (YAE) in 2008. To date, 217 YAE students (84 women) from seven provinces including Kampot, Takeo, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Cham, Svay Reing and Prey Veng province have been supported and trained by CEDAC.

