

Introductory Workshop: Supporting the Engagement of Citizens with Local Government Project

With funding support from the World Bank's Program to Enhance Capacity in Social Accountability (PECSA) through The Asian Foundation, CEDAC began implementing a project titled "Supporting the Engagement of Citizens with Local Government in the Kampong Tralach and Samky Meanchey districts of Kampong Chhnang Province (SECIL)" which will run from September 2009 through December 2009. This project will be implemented in six communes of Kampong Tralach and Samakii Meanchey District of Kampong Chhnang Province. The project targets commune councils and local leaders of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The direct beneficiaries of the project include 34 commune councilors, 120 CBO leaders, and 360 citizens.

The project objectives are as follows:

1. Increased transparency and accountability at the local government level by strengthening the ability of the community-based organization (CBO) networks to monitor the commune councils
2. Increased active participation by the citizens and CBOs in the commune development process to ensure their concerns are addressed in the Commune Development Plan (CDP) and the Commune Investment Plan (CIP)
3. Empower the citizens ability to engage with commune council by enhancing the public forum at commune level

The project will introduce principles of good governance and decentralization to the CBOs and local authorities as well as developing the social accountability tools used in the communes. With improved knowledge and skills, representatives of the CBOs will be able to take a more proactive role when engaging with their commune councils and government agencies on developing responsible and appropriate development programs and services. The commune council will also be more aware of the role of farmers associations and CBOs in local development.

On September 16, 2009, CEDAC organized an introductory workshop to on the SECIL project at CEDAC's office in Kampong Tralach district of Kampong Chhnang Province. There were 65 participants including the District Governor, representatives from village-based farmers associations, health center representatives, schoolteachers, the district facilitator team and several commune council members.

During the workshop, Mr. Yi Kimthan, CEDAC Field Project Director, made a presentation on the project's strategies and activities that will be implemented in the communes. The workshop emphasized the need for strong cooperation between the stakeholders to ensure that all the project objectives and goals are met. All of the participants agreed that this project is very important for their commune as it will help to strengthen the cooperation between the community and the commune councils on social accountability and local governance, and it will contribute to the improvement of the quality of service provided by local government officials, particularly between the commune councils, public schools and health centers.

