Community Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction

Environmental projection has become a worldwide issue of concern to every country. It is believed that thousands of people have been and will be suffering from climate change and disasters if there is no master plan to minimise this problem. Cambodia is one of those affected countries.

In response to this issue, Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) is starting to focus more on capacity development and learning from experiences of climate change adaptation and is also beginning to participate in discussions on policies regarding climate change at all levels.

As a first step, DPA tested the project in three villages (Dey Lo, Lum Phat and Kok Lav) in Ratanakiri province. The main purpose of the project was to build communities’ capacity on climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) concepts and to analyse HVC (Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity) through the use of PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) tools as well as meeting with communities to organise a community action plan on climate change through using PRA tools.

Dey Lo village was seen to have a well organised plan to deal with disaster risk reduction (DRR) since the villagers cleared a safe place where they could deal with floods, and they mapped a nearby water source which would help in dealing with drought. (continued on page 3)

Discussion Meeting on Process on Communal Land Titling for Indigenous Communities

Northeast Cambodia is an area rich in natural resources and there has been an increased interest inland, timber and mineral resources which has led to the proliferation of land grabbing, land encroachment, illegal logging and mineral exploration. The majority of people living in the desirable areas are Indigenous People (IP) who are among the most vulnerable people in Cambodia. They are more easily exploited by outsiders and are therefore systematically alienated from their lands, homes and livelihoods.

In dealing with this issue, Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) has a programme entitled Integrated Community Development (ICD) which is designed to help communities address these problems by raising awareness about land rights and establishment of communal land titling (CLT). (continued on page 4)
Declining forest resources is a problem which negatively impacts the livelihood of people, particularly community stakeholders who live close to the forest. Therefore, the establishment of community forestry (CF) is a key strategy to prevent deforestation, forest land grabbing and the over-exploitation of forest resources. For instance, through an initiative from the communities of four villages (Kamphun, Ban Mai, Seasan and Katot), a CF region called O’Chap was established and provided with financial support from DPA ICDST and technical support from the Provincial Forestry Administration Cantonment (PFAC) and local authorities. O’Chap CF was established in 2006 and covers 2,572 hectares and it is on step seven of the eight PFAC principals.

“With support and facilitation from ICDST, I am able to help the team become involved in natural resource management, particularly focusing on such activities as monthly meetings, CF patrolling planning, and other activities at the community level.” said Mr. Deang Seang, a community member in Kamphun village. “These activities include spreading the message about the importance of establishing a CF, structuring and identifying CF demarcation, preparing maps, by-laws, regulations and agreements, and setting up poles along the CF boundary.”

Mr. Deang Seang, aged 60, lives in Kamphun village, Kamphun commune, Seasan district, Stung Treng province and works in farming, animal raising, and vegetable growing in order to support his daily consumption. He is also involved in community activities as a member of O’Chap Community Forestry Management Committee (CFMC) and was elected as a CF leader in 2007, through recognition from local authorities.

In 2011, through close collaboration with PFAC and local authorities, the ICDST endorsed the CFMC and CF group leaders to conduct a CF inventory in order to identify potential resources in O’Chap CF. This process would clearly identify resources in the forest such as mushrooms, bamboo, bamboo shoots, honey, wild fruit, firewood and other non-timber forest products that help support community livelihood.

“On behalf of CFMC, I commit to continue to manage the CF in order to increase community livelihood and to ensure the sustainable management of CF,” said Mr. Deang Seang. “I would also like to thank DPA ICDST, PFAC and the local authorities who have always supported my community from the beginning of CF establishment until the present time”.

The community forestry management committee members conducted the O’cham community forestry inventory.
Both projects were integrated into their commune plan.

“With regard to our annual plan, our community successfully implemented a number of arrangements, such as strengthening our community’s participation and knowledge, increasing rice production, identifying and clearing a safe place, and building good relationships with the DRR commune committee by integrating the DRR annual plan into the commune committee’s plan,” said Mrs. Van ChanKhern, DRR committee member. “However, we also faced challenges of our own, such as lack of funds and equipment. In the case of lack of funds, we were helped by DPA which assisted us in forming a saving group.”

Mr. Geoff O’Donoghue, Director of CAFOD’s International Division, expressed approval for the planning done by Dey Lo during his study trip to the village. “I appreciate that Dey Lo has a well-organised plan to respond to disasters caused by floods and drought,” he said.

DPA will continue to collaborate with the National Committee for Disaster Management and Agricultural Department in DPA’s target areas as well as collaborate with relevant institutions to promote working on disaster management in local areas through improving and strengthening the capacity of communities and commune/village committee for disaster management to prepare and respond to natural disasters within their target areas.

Training on Gender in Decentralisation and Deconcentration

Presently, the Royal Government of Cambodia, as well as funding partners, are paying more attention to gender issues and putting them into the poverty reducing strategy and national development policy in order to promote sustainable development for women and all populations.

With regard to the government’s policies and to help contribute to the promotion of gender equality, Development, Education and Advocacy (DEA) programme of Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) organised a training entitled “Gender in Decentralisation and Deconcentration (D&D)”. This training was conducted over three days from 22nd – 24th May 2012 at the Ratanak Hotel in Battambang province for 26 participants (17 women). The objectives of this training included the following:

1- Improve knowledge on gender concept and perception of D&D reforming
2- Improve knowledge on policies and strategies of the government related to gender and law-frame to support D&D reforming programme
3- Improve knowledge on representative and participation by equally of women and men in local politics
4- Improve capacity to identify gender needed especially at community level
5- and Provide tools and principals to mainstream gender, especially in services provided by commune councils.

(continued on page 4)
Discussion Meeting on Process .... (from page 1)

With the assistance of DPA’s staff, particularly in Ratanakiri, the Tompoun indigenous community in La In village, Teun commune, Koun Mom district, Ratanakiri province, received a collective communal land titling certificate from the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. Through this recognition, they will have the legal right to protect their land and forest resources as well as use sustainable resources to avoid land conflict and prevent land grabbing.

Through lessons learnt from this achievement, the Development Education and Advocacy Programme (DEAP) supported the ICD-RTK programme in organising a discussion meeting on communal land titling for indigenous communities with the participation of the Ministry of Interior, Provincial Department of Rural Development and Provincial Department of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction in Ratanakiri province.

The main purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for all participants to discuss their concerns, challenges and solutions to address the problems through lesson learnt from the process of communal land titling in La In village and to provide a better understanding of the importance of the CLT and its registration process for the target communities.

"Collective land registration refers to a situation in which a group holds secure and exclusive collective rights to own, manage and/or use land and natural resources," said Mr. Tim Sinath, Chief of Department of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction in Ratanakiri province. "These common pool resources include agricultural land, grazing land, forests, trees, fisheries, wetland and irrigation water."

As a result, the communities gained a better understanding about the steps and procedures for indigenous community (IC) identification as well as IC registration as legal entity and indigenous communal land registration. The meeting also improved the collaboration between communities and DPA as well as collaboration with institutions such as the Ministry of Interior, Provincial Department of Rural Development and Provincial Department of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction in Ratanakiri province.

DPA has been expanding its work related to communal land titling for indigenous community in the five villages of Ta Ang I, Loam, Ta Huy, Teun and Khmerng in Ratanakiri province as well as the four villages of Gati, O’ Chra, Pou Kong and Sre Ambip in Mondulkiri province.

Training on Gender in .... (from page 3)

Miss. Chrea Sandan, Gender and Development Officer and facilitator of the training said, “Through this training, all participants will be able to increase their understanding on key gender concepts and to learn more skills about gender analyzing in the D&D reforming programme as well as how to resolve gender issues through their works on behalf of developers.”

Based on the training evaluation, 31% of the participants gained very good level of understanding and 69% were good level of understanding.