

Bridging authorities and civil society



Every child is born with their right to education, and this right applies to each individual child without any form of discrimination toward their own ethnicity or social group. However, in rural indigenous communities in Ratanakiri, it is very hard for school children to gain access to basic education, because they have to walk a long distance from their home to another village in order to receive education. In the case of Chang Veal village (Krung indigenous community) children from this village need to walk for 44 km to Ochum district centre in order to gain access to the only public school in their district.

To fulfil a child's right to education, ICC-iBCDE Ratanakiri (identity Based Community Development and Education) is mobilising Chang Veal village together onto a platform, where they can discuss and reflect on their community issues and to set a priority. As a result, the community set their top priority on education and having their own school. To achieve their goal, Chang Village needs to collaborate closely with their local authority as well as the civil society.

During Chang Veal village's annual meeting with representatives from the District Office, Commune Council, Village Development Committee (VDC), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and iBCDE team, the villagers raised their wish of building a school, as their top priority, because they believe in the importance of education for the future of the children in Chang Veal village. During this annual meeting the Chang Veal village representative also shared about their action plan, and their need for permission to use the communal land for the school, as well as their request for public teachers to teach at their village. As a result, the district and commune representatives promised that they would provide the school with contract teachers to teach formal education at their village. The school was constructed using the available resources inside the community such as timber and other building materials. The construction of the school has been completed, and the school opened in April 2018, and started to receive school children from then.

Currently, besides formal education in Chang Veal village, ICC-iBCDE Ratanakiri project is providing the village with a mother tongue literacy class to school children with the use of volunteer teachers. ICC-iBCDE Ratanakiri has equipped the volunteer teachers with all the necessary skills training and tools in order to build their own teaching capacity. These volunteer teachers can also continue their own education from grade 9 at public school, if they have taught children for at least 3 years in ICC's literacy class, as a requirement from the Provincial Department of Education. ICC wants to see that the volunteer teachers themselves are able to pursue higher education after working with ICC. Also, ICC is hoping that the teachers that ICC-iBCDE Ratanakiri have trained would come back in the future as qualified government teachers, in order to provide children in rural communities with the needed education that they have a right to receive.

This is an example of how the local authority, civil society, and community people are bridging the gaps together in order to achieve a common goal, which is providing education to the next generation. One of the main strategic focuses of ICC is Pro-Active Civil Society, and ICC is pleased to see that the local stakeholders in Chang Veal village are pro-active, and that each one of them take pride and ownership of their own action in improving their community. Such action and effort is community development, and is benefiting children to become literate, which is then contributing towards poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood in their own village.