

Empowering target-group



Some of the most vulnerable people in Cambodia are the poor, the disabled, and women, just to mention a few. NGOs working at grassroots level are best suited to deal with the vulnerable groups. This includes ICC, as we target the least-served people of Cambodia, who are not getting the needed help, assistance or attention. ICC seeks to empower vulnerable groups by giving them knowledge and capacity in order to help themselves and each other, and to equip them to speak up about their problems and concerns.

An example of how this is done is from ICC's development project, VIDP (Village Intergraded Development Project). VIDP is empowering local churches by facilitating them to develop their own vision for their church and community, and to utilise the resources they have near at hand. This vision is further embraced by the rest of the non-Christian community, and the community is united in taking initiatives and concrete actions in helping themselves to an improved livelihood.

VIDP utilises the hopes and beliefs of the church in making a difference in their community. VIDP believes that the church, as a civil society organisation, holds an important obligation to serve others by taking an active role in community development through words and deeds.

So far, VIDP notices that target communities are changing their way of thinking, and that they are starting to see and understand the possibility of making their own choices and taking control of their own lives. An example is a woman from Takeo province called Sambath, who is 50 years old. She has more knowledge than most other average women, but she never shared her ideas or opinions. She kept to herself, taking care of her farm and attending church on Sundays. However, after inviting her to join VIDP's discussion and reflection sessions, she felt a responsibility and duty to care about the needs of others in her community. She began to develop her own vision, wanting to see her community improve by using their existing resources. One initiative taken by Sambath is teaching villagers how to grow various crops on tiny plots to support their own food-supply and for selling at the market. Also, Sambath uses her knowledge to teach children at home after work, as her wish is that all children can read and write.

Sambath is a brave woman, who talks and discusses with the local authorities in order to raise concerns and problem in the community, and to obtain their support to start various local-owned development initiatives. Nowadays, Sambath and other villagers keep studying, discussing and reflecting about more initiatives that will improve their community.

Improved livelihood for vulnerable people in Cambodia is not a task only for the authorities to solve, but a joint effort and collaboration between the civil society and the authorities. It takes time, but with the right mindset and commitment, long-lasting changes are happening.