

## Empowering target-group



*It is a common mistake to think of voluntary work as just something nice to do, which makes people feel good about helping others. Much more than that, voluntary work can have a huge impact on target people's livelihood. In ICC we intentionally seek to mobilise local people to do voluntary work for the betterment of lives and civil society, and one woman from ICC's project: Voice Of The Children (VOTC) stands out in promoting child rights and good parenting skills. She is a volunteer, who dreams and wishes to see that children in her community grow up in a safe and protected environment.*

The work of VOTC project was started with church leaders in their own communities, as their religious values are motivating them to get involved in local development work. This woman is one of the church leaders trained by VOTC, who spends her personal time to teach and transfer her knowledge to parents and children further out in her community. She believes that citizens need to involve themselves, and not just wait for help from outsiders or from the government. This kind of mind-set helps to eliminate people's self-pity and their negative attitude of: no money, no job, nothing to do....

Without waiting to see the involvement from other people and local authorities, she is always ready to move to the next step, when it comes to building up safe places for children and for increased welfare of her community. During 2016, VOTC has supported target groups in starting up a new type of group formation called Child Protection Committees (CPC). This woman has already volunteered herself to be a member of the CPC in her village, as she believes that the united voice of the CPC will be strong, and that the CPC will be effective when people join and work together.

Recently, the achievements of VOTC and the volunteer church leaders were celebrated with target groups, community people, and local authorities, aiming to inspire and motivate all relevant people and sectors. This helps to increase their involvement concerning community issues, especially related to children. One representative from the Child Welfare Group from the Provincial Department of Social Affairs expressed his impression of the successful work of mobilising the communities to get involved. Also he expressed that the work of the volunteer church leaders is directly supporting the government's strategy concerning the safeguard of children, e.g. the new policy on "Child Protection in Schools", which was just passed in September 2016.

ICC believes that empowerment of target groups is a key strategy to attain the future which they wish for and rightfully can claim. Hence, ICC's aim is to explore the best means to increase target groups' contribution, participation, and ownership. This must be done with inclusion of children and youth, so that the voice of the next generation is heard and acted upon.