



*The ICC slogan is "Empowering Communities, Empowered Nation", which means that when local communities are empowered, mobilised and equipped to take care of themselves and their villagers, then Cambodia as a nation is empowered too. This is not just an ICC slogan, but also a core belief of ICC, which affects the organisation's work approaches and engagement with the Cambodian people.*

ICC's project VIDP (Village Integrated Development Project) is operating based on the principle of this slogan. The project is doing community development work, taking a starting point in local churches and with their members. VIDP trains and inspires them to take actions within their church and families to make improvements with the resources they have from nature, ability, heritage, relationships, etc. Afterwards the VIDP team empowers the church to take their development work to the next level, which is the church inviting their whole community to be involved. The success of community development then becomes a responsibility of the whole community - a joint effort between all. Small initiatives are created by villagers, which improve their financial situation, security in the village, fosters children's education and protection, and care for the very poor people, etc. This is the essence of "empowering communities".

In order to ensure that this fruitful community development work can continue and spread naturally to neighbouring villages, VIDP has created a Steering Committee. VIDP has been training and coaching the Steering Committee since 2014, with the aim that the Steering Committee takes over VIDP's role in networking with the local practitioners. The Steering Committee will be fully responsible for conducting Community of Practice events (CoP) in the future, and, already in November 2016, they were involved in the practical tasks of the yearly international CoP. In the future the Steering Committee plans to register as a local civil society organisation, which will give the Steering Committee significant opportunities to network and advocate at a national level, on behalf of the local communities. Hence, the Steering Committee will contribute to Cambodia being empowered as a nation.

In order to manage such important roles and responsibilities the five Steering Committee members are now seeking to learn from various training opportunities, exposure trips, international networking, etc. They have started to take on tasks, and ownership and commitment is being built.

But as the ICC slogan says, it begins with empowering the communities, and the picture above shows a local village leader, who has actively engaged with the church in his village to improve his community. He says: "Working together is really important for the community. This habit has sadly been lost for a long time, hence it is really hard to trust and work with each other. I am so happy to see the community working together now. The more they work together, the closer they are. They have started to have a good relationship and they love one another. Love enables them to be humble and learn from each other. I hope to see my community changed for the better in the future. I wish to see that we will work hard together - both Christians and Buddhists. Together we will make a secure community for all our villagers".