



Working with the least-served people

Children are the vital foundation for the development of society. Yet, when children are not able to go to school or are being abused and neglected as well as deprived of their rights it will then create a negative impact to human resources. Due to this circumstance, ICC Voice of the Children (VOTC) project's main focus is to serve and protect children, most importantly children at the community level, where they are among the least served people. With the assistance from Interact as a learning partner and donor for VOTC, conditions for the children in the communities have changed drastically due to the expertise and knowledge in child rights and child protection that the VOTC team has acquired through skills training and knowledge shared from various trainings, both domestically and internationally, about child rights and child protection.

What VOTC project has significantly achieved during the project cycle is the formulation of 17 Child Protection Committees (CPCs) at Takeo and Pursat provinces. The CPCs are created in order to facilitate collaboration among the villagers through awareness raising about child rights and child protection, and also to encourage them to take part in safeguarding children in their own villages. So far, these 17 CPCs were approved (see picture above) by the local authorities to officially operate as Community Based Organisations in their own villages. One of the great examples from CPCs was during the annual International Children's Day conducted by provincial governors at Takeo: all children representatives from CPCs were invited to attend by the Department of Social Affairs, and one particular CPC children's representative was invited to speak during the event, and he did very well with his speech in front of a huge audience. It was very significant for the CPCs as they were given the opportunity to give a speech on this special national day. With these achievements, CPCs are gaining more respect and value from the villagers and local authorities, and this has also inspired other church leaders to start five more CPCs in 2018.

What the VOTC team desires after the end of the project is to see their work is sustainable in the project areas. This includes the CPCs as they are the civil society group who are permanently based in their own villages and the villagers know and understand their roles and responsibilities. VOTC project also believes that other actors such as the church leaders, the government school teachers, and local authorities, whom VOTC team has been working with, will automatically sustain their child protection program as they will still play the important role when VOTC project ends. VOTC project expects that the KAP method "Knowledge, Attitude and Practices" on child rights and protection among these actors will help them to perform their roles and responsibilities more effectively during their day to day work.

When VOTC project finishes at the end of 2018, ICC will aim to maintain the relationship with local stakeholders, and to further provide encouragement. By doing this, ICC believes that the local stakeholders will become more transparent and accountable for child protection work in their local areas. ICC also wants to see the work create a further very positive impact after the VOTC project ends and also to see the work get duplicated into other villages and communes.