

# Our Voice



# Children and Youth Engage with World Vision's Workshop to be Agents of Advocacy and Democracy



August 25th 2009, At the Cozyna Angkor Hotel of Siem Reap Province, World Vision's Children at High at Risk Prevention Project (CHRPP) open a workshop for children and youth from four provinces. The workshop aims to enable the children and youth to learn how to be an agent of advocacy and democracy, to understand about general overview of the democratic society and to promote children and youth's role and responsibility to engage in local governance.

Funds to support the workshop come from New Zealand Agency for International Development and three World Vision's Area Development Programs. The workshop lasted from Tuesday August 25th to Thursday August 27th.

All the participants are below age 19 and come from peer educators, club leaders and also leading young people in the community. There are a total of 97 people from eight districts from the four provinces of Battambang, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, and

Kampong Speu.

Som Savoeun, Director of Youth Department from the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport of Siem Reap, in his opening speech on the first day of the workshop said "Learning is not to be done at school only, but reading in your spare time and participating in various workshops are also a big part to develop your knowledge. We admit that building human resource requires long term and resources. Therefore, this year, the government increases national budget specifically for education sector in order to provide for children to finish at least secondary grade. Although, without your participation [children and youth], your hard working and your willing to fulfill good governance, advocacy towards development and being agents of changes, then the sustainability of development could not be taken place."

Ket Chanto, WVC's Education Program Manager said the workshop would give individuals an opportunity to learn and share experiences they have done so far, and to explore more what their roles are in today local governance and democratic society.

"Children and youths are the key persons to make better changes in the democratic society. We want them to know that they are not left behind. They have they rights to voice their concern/ideas freely. If they are not happy with policy or decision made by any persons, they can work together to give suggestions to ensure they get benefits from the set policy or decision as decreed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child," said Ket Chanto.

17 year-old Narak, Peer Educator from Banan District said, "The three topics of this year theme are so important. I've never learnt such things before even



at my school. As learning I have a plan in my head that I will develop a sharing program as soon as I go back to my home. My first participants will be village chief, commune council, and my school director because they are the key persons in leading the whole community towards sustainable development. Therefore, they have to understand the basic of advocacy, good governance and a general overview of democratic society. My next group will be children, youth and the rest community members. Before getting to advocate or contribute in good governance activities, they have to first understand their boundary of rights, specific role and responsibility.

Narak also suggested to the workshop's facilitators to provide for her all of the document in a relevance to the three topics. She believes that the document will become an important tool for her own research and to proof to her future participants that her sharing isn't a fiction.

Today we have about 110 clubs throughout the country that are in locations where WVC work. All the clubs have over 1,760 club leaders; members are 12,100 integrated last year by CHRPP into 9 Area Development Programs. Additionally, we have created 234 members who belong to peer educator.

So far all the children and youth have conducted various activities within their communities such as marching and educational role-play against domestic violence, drug addicted, gambling, child rights and child sexual abuse, which are found out to be challenging issues in their communities. Furthermore, they have engaged with commune council to learn the local development and to discuss what they can do to be part of the development.

The workshop is conducted annually with different themes to respond to the current need of children and youth. This is the sixth times that WVC's CHRPP have put together this event.



# Questions and Answers on Advocacy and Democracy



**Q: How do you define the word “advocacy”?**

**A: Prasath Ballang District:** Advocacy is a term to express willingness to demand, to struggle, and to seek for united opinion to solve problems and to get just.

**A: Kampong Leng District:** Advocacy is the organizing of consecutive activities to lobby and to influence important persons working in the government and in economic sector to enable to carry out public policy in order to help people who have no political power and have little resources.

We also reckon that advocacy is a catalyst to make changes from being not good to a better one, and from being improper to a proper one.

**Q: In the name of agent of transformation, what is your contribution to help your community? Why?**

**A: Prasath Ballang District:** Our contribution to help the community is to jointly resolve problems and disseminate information related to:

- Domestic violence: to enable them to compromise, to understand, to forgive, and to learn its consequences
- Child rights: to enable them to clearly understand

child rights, no discrimination, support, uphold, and respect each other

- Drug: to enable them (and community) to learn the prevention measures, and to eliminate drug use and its effect
- Child sexual trafficking and exploitation: to enable to understand and to participate in curbing the issue in the communities

**Q: For your own perspective, what are the images of democratic development?**

**A: Prasath Ballang District:** The images of democratic community development are:

- Domestic violence is decreased
- Communities support, encourage, and value children to take part in community development
- There is close relationship between children and community



**Q: What is good governance? Why is good governance needed?**

**A: Prasath Sambor District:** Good governance is defined as means a nation uses to manage social work, economy, and to ensure security, benefits and as the representation for the people. 8 important principles are needed to carry out:

1. Participation
2. Law
3. Transparency
4. Compromise
5. Effectiveness and efficiency
6. Equity
7. Accountability
8. Responsiveness

Good governance is need due to the facts that

- To have good governance we must carry out a means in compliance with rule, status, and norm as the set framework.
- Its development is transparent amongst all people, especially those impacted by any decision or implementation; it is simple and legal.



**A: Banan District:** Good governance is a process to ensure freedom and to liberate from abuse and corruption in order to have the rule of law, child rights respect, openness of politics, accountability, and participation, justice, transparency, and effectiveness, patience, freedom of gathering, freedom of expression, voice of people, and capable of managing public resources in order to solve problems and to make decision based on necessary requirement, and the whole benefits for every individual, particularly the nation.



**Q: Why are children and youth required to participate in good governance?**

**A: Kampong Leng District:** Children and youth are required to participate in good governance because

- Children want to be well educated
- They want new experiences, and creativities to develop their communities
- They want to know what good governance is
- They want to become good leaders in the society



**A: Banan District:** Children and youth need to take part in good governance because:

- Children and youth have direct impact on public decision-making.
- They are the successors to develop economy and society and they are the potential resources to accomplish social and economic development goal.

**Q: If World Vision is phased out, what is your plan to continue developing?**

**A: Banan District:** I will share what I have learned to my friends, relatives, and people living in my communities.

**Q: Since joining children club, what have you transformed?**

**A: Sambor District:** Since joining the children club, I have obtained knowledge, good experiences, creativities, confidence to speak out, good relationship with children and more courage.

**A: Prasath Ballang District:** We have transformations such as

- Courage
- Knowledge, and working experiences
- Self confidence
- Understanding of rights, especially child rights
- Better behavior, attitude, and characteristic including virtue and morality.



**Topic:** Developing Democratic Society Is a Sustainable Development. Is it correct? Why? Give detailed explanation including examples reflecting community or society you experience.

## Description

Currently, all countries around the world possess divergent styles of leadership. Some countries practice communism, and the others carry out democracy and other leadership styles. Following any leadership styles does not really prove which one is better. It depends on a leader. If the leader practices good governance, the development will be improved. If each country carries out democracy, there will be sustainable development. Thus a topic “Developing democratic society is a sustainable development” is raised to discuss. What does the theme mean?

Democratic society is referred to a society where people’s opinions are very important, unanimous, and sustainability means lasting forever. The theme focuses on the social development in which people’s opinion is highly considered, unanimous, and the development is sustainable. Obviously, Cambodia is carrying out constitutional democracy. Thus its development is better from time to time. It deferred from the past in which people had no right to select their leaders. To exemplify, my community’s members and I voted to select commune council in order to develop the community. Then, the commune council has enabled the community to have better understanding. It has cooperated with other NGOs to provide community’s members with literacy course and other training courses. In this regard, developing democratic society is an everlasting development and the people have rights to survival and to justice, and right to choose their partners, yet they must abide by the law. Also there is democratic election with no threat, and cheating,



but with secret, transparency, individual, equality and regularity. Exactly, in the democracy, people are the owners of the territory. They have the responsibility for the future of their country. However, all the people cannot oversee the state’s work so that they have to elect candidates known lawmakers they satisfy with to represent and to work for them. The selection of lawmakers is undertaken through election. Therefore, developing democratic society is the people’s voices based development. To simplify, people are the ones to elect their leaders to develop the society.

In conclusion, it is correct to say that developing democratic society is a sustainable development because people have right to speak out, to choose their leaders who are supported by people to develop the society, who do not suppress people, have no bias, but have justice.

As descendants, we should study hard to earn knowledge in order that we can utilize it to develop our country so that it becomes prosperous.

# Impression of Youth on Advocacy and Democracy

## Impression of Youth from Ballang District

We are Peer Educators Group (PEG) and Club of Ballang District, Kampong Thom Province. We were very happy to participate in the workshop on Children and Youth as the Agents of Advocacy and Democracy, hosted in prestigious Angkor territory. We had left home by convenient bus, and arrived at the target destination safely. The three-day workshop was very essential and priceless for us, and other participants from various provinces. It provides us with knowledge, and good experiences shared by World Vision Cambodia's staff, and friends. It was a very good time because we have acquired clearly what advocacy, governance, and democracy is. During the workshop, we advocated toughly. Accommodation and meals were convenient and healthy. In addition, we have built

close relationship and friendship. Also, we visited our elegant temples.

Lastly we commit that we will disseminate what we have learned to our communities, and we will strive to study in order that we can take part in building a prosperous nation like other developed countries. We also would like to appeal to WVC to continue this workshop annually. May God bless success for every WVC's projects and programs in order to develop our society so that transformation would last forever.

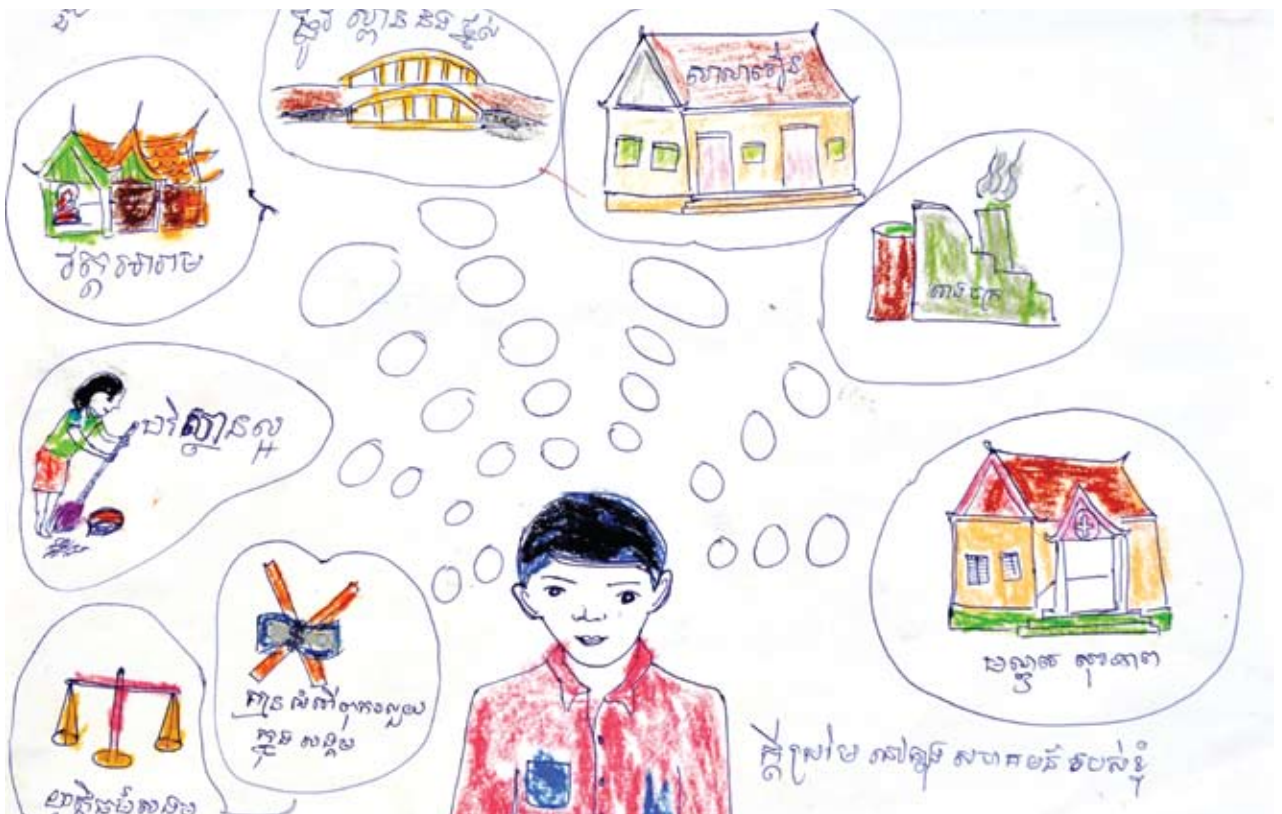






Samrong Tong

Community Empowerment



The Drem of My Community

Samlot





Angkor Wat Temple

Prasath Sambo



Banan

My Community



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Siem Reap 2009



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