

Synthesis Report on Engagement Mechanisms



Workshop led on Oct 10th to 12th 2017 in Phnom Penh

Table of Contents

Acronyms	ii
Acknowledgement	ii
Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction	1
Community Engagement	1
Objective	2
Methodology.....	3
Key stakeholders' interviews	3
Literature review.....	3
Methods for successful community involvement.....	3
Planning and Stakeholders Identification	4
Community Resources Mapping.....	5
Methodology.....	5
Public Meetings.....	6
Workshops / Focus Groups.....	7
Discussion topics	7
Participant selection	7
Small group discussion.....	7
Facilitation process, materials, and data collection method.....	7
CFI.....	8
Local Authorities	8
Community Surveys	8
Methodology.....	9
Games and Creativity	10
Methodology.....	10
Challenges	10
Evaluating Community Engagement.....	11
Recommendations	11
Engaging all stakeholders' representatives	11
Manage community dependency from engagement approaches	12

Acronyms

AIC – Appreciation, Influence, Control

CFI – Community Fisheries

CI – Conservation International

FACT – Fisheries Action Coalition Team

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

FCA – Fish Conservation Area

FiAC – Fisheries Administration Cantonment

IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature

MAFF – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery

MNRM – Mainstreaming Natural Resources Management

MoE – Ministry of Environment

NGO – Non-Government Organization

NRM – Natural Resources Management

PDoE – Provincial Department of Environment

SALT – Stimulate, Appreciate, Learn, Transfer

SciCap – Scientific Capacity Development Initiative

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Acknowledgement

This report was prepared by the Scientific Capacity Development Initiative team: Chea Seila, Nut Savat, Tam Sreykol, Gnim Sodavy, Ly Po, Chhuoy Kalyan, Vanessa Herranz Muñoz, Coline Ganz and Vittoria Elliott. And funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

Citation

Conservation International (SciCap) (2019) Synthesis Report on Engagement Mechanisms. Report prepared by Conservation International as a part of the Scientific Capacity Building Initiative. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Executive Summary

Engaging communities is a crucial initiative when conserving natural resources. Local fisher communities in Cambodia are a key stakeholder group for the protection of freshwater and fisheries. Local and international civil society have each their own methods in engaging these communities.

We evaluated six engagement methods: planning, resources mapping, public meetings, workshops, community surveys, and games. We extracted key elements to successful involvement of communities in NRM, sustainable fisheries, basin development planning and biodiversity mainstreaming, based on both a review of reports and direct communication with civil society targets.

This report highlights the importance of the use of a participatory approach to ensure collaboration with and empowerment of communities. Initiatives should follow the Community Fisheries (CFI) needs and issues faced, rather than the priorities driven by NGOs.

This report also compiles ways to evaluate the level and success of communities' engagement connected to its intended result, from information dissemination to behavior change.

Introduction

The Scientific Capacity Development Initiative (SciCap) has been implementing the Mainstreaming Natural Resources Management project since December 2015. The aim of the project is to improve awareness of Natural Resources Management (NRM) with a focus on fisheries, through workshops and training interventions at the community-level. The expected project outputs were:

1. Improved community-based Natural Resources Management and successful mainstreaming of sustainable fisheries management practices.
2. Development of context and needs assessment checklists, to enable communities to perform self-evaluation, and identify further needs.

As part of this project, SciCap has led three collaborative workshops focusing on Cambodian fisheries stakeholder cooperation and support to CFI. These workshops have also allowed for closer collaboration with key stakeholders in the fishery sector and exchanges on different actors' approaches to natural resources conservation. A key aspect to this work is the engagement of CFI members.

Community Engagement

Community engagement lacks a common definition, as the engagement is often being carried out in a way that is neither systematic nor consistent. Therefore, it is important to clarify the meaning of community engagement in a particular circumstance, and to plan and implement engagement processes carefully. Despite widespread agreement that the participation of members of society in decision-making processes is vital, civil society institutions and community leaders often struggle to meaningfully engage.

Through engagement, communities become more informed and are more likely to assume responsibility for the implementation of a plan if they have had a say in its development. Through this process, each

community is able to arrive at a solution that is right for them. Community members should collaborate and take part in identifying issues and their potential solutions¹.

There are four ways of engaging communities²:

- i. **Inform:** Providing balanced and objective information;
- ii. **Consult:** Obtaining input and feedback from community members to help identify needs and assets, set priorities or make decisions;
- iii. **Collaborate:** Partnering with community members in an ongoing, interactional process of planning and decision making; community provide advice, innovation and recommendations that are reflected in the final outcomes; and
- iv. **Empower:** Providing support to enable community members to define issues and create solutions. Community members lead and control the process.

Objective

Local Community Fisheries (CFI) in Cambodia are a key stakeholder for the protection of freshwater and inland fishery resources. Based on the Fishery Law (2006), CFI take part in the sustainable management, conservation, development and use of fishery resources in their own areas. CFI are based in the fishery domain that consists of freshwater and coastal areas. Yet, they often live in very remote locations with access to only local subsistence resources. Therefore, a majority of CFI are very poor, surviving on irregular and minimal daily income.

The protection of the freshwater and fisheries natural resources is controlled by the Fisheries Administration of Cambodia. This Government agency generally lacks funding to properly implement its plans and often fails to prevent illegal fishing and natural resources depletion. The Fisheries Administration (FiA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (MAFF), is responsible for the management of fisheries and fishery resources based on the national fishery policies and law on fisheries. The state provides the management rights of natural protected areas to the Ministry of Environment (MoE) under regulations of the law on the establishment and delimitation of natural protected areas, and the law on environmental protection and natural resources management, and other legislative norms. MAFF has rights to cooperate in law enforcement of all illegal fishing activities which occur in natural protected areas, by coordinating with the MoE according to the regulation stipulated in chapter 14 (Legal Procedures for Fishery offence solving) of the law on Fisheries. These activities will not affect the management competency of the MoE as stipulated in the law on environment protection and NRM.

Civil society organizations support CFI development and work to lift communities out of extreme poverty. In doing this they motivate a change in mindsets and behavior, helping communities to increase and expand their knowledge on fisheries and natural resources so that they can actively manage, use and protect them sustainably.

In the fishery sector, key stakeholders such as Conservation International (CI) and SciCap, Worldfish, and the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), use various methods to engage local communities. They are

¹ *Developing innovative approaches for community engagement*, Memorial University (2012)
http://www.open.gov.nl.ca/collaboration/pdf/community_engagement.pdf

² *Developing innovative approaches for community engagement*, Memorial University (2012)
http://www.open.gov.nl.ca/collaboration/pdf/community_engagement.pdf

detailed and analyzed below. This report aims at highlighting the most successful methods used in Cambodia to engage CFI, as well as their evaluation tools. When disseminated, this writing will help others in Cambodia or elsewhere to replicate these initiatives.

Methodology

We obtained information from two main sources: key stakeholders' interviews and literature review.

Key stakeholders' interviews

A range of NGOs including CI, Worldfish and FACT through their extensive and long-term involvement with CFI members clearly understood the importance of effective engagement methods. Thus, a wealth of knowledge could be obtained from these organizations. Interviews were organized with each key stakeholder, asking the following survey questions:

1. How do you define engagement?
2. What approaches and techniques for community engagement have been used with local communities in the past?
3. What type of engagement did you focus on (inform, consult, collaborate, empower) and do you have different approaches for different types of engagement?
4. What techniques or aspects of these techniques have worked well? What have been the limitations of these techniques?
5. What factors other than the techniques themselves have affected the success of the engagement processes?
6. What type of audience did they focus on? Whose voices are not being heard?
7. Were the approaches used different according to the type of audience (e.g. commune council, CFI members, Tonle Sap versus Mekong, etc.)?
8. What new skills, knowledge or perspectives do participants gain using these techniques?
9. What changes were witnessed in communities after the use of the engagement techniques?
10. How do you evaluate your method/technique is proving successful? How do you assess/measure change?

Literature review

The information collected from interviews was compiled and analyzed, along with existing reports on community engagement from partner organizations, and online resources.

Methods for successful community involvement

In the Cambodian fishery sector partner NGOs identified six successful engagement methods: planning, resources mapping, public meetings, workshops, community surveys, and games.

All NGOs interviewed stressed the importance of participatory approaches. If plenary meetings – unilateral communication from the NGO to villagers - can be conducted in specific situations, such as a project launch, they all favored techniques where villagers find themselves at the center of the action and decision making. The techniques listed below were then used in a participatory approach and contribute to collaborating with and empowering communities.

Communities require facilitation, to organize knowledge and coordinate among each other. It is the NGO's task to know how to facilitate and to efficiently interact with communities. Physical presence is

important for regular interaction. One has to understand or translate what the communities would like to convey, linking what they say with what they have done.

Planning and Stakeholders Identification

Community engagement works best where it is an ongoing process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time. It is important to be clear about the scope and purpose of the engagement process³.

Participation leads to increased benefit sharing and decision-making power. It allows people or groups of people access skills to analyze their living conditions, to plan for themselves and enable them to act. Participation allows social processes to take place within certain groups or collaboration networks and beyond them. Yet it is not an end in itself, and should not be seen in isolation. Most often, the increase of participation is a powerful catalyst towards achieving other objectives, such as improved management of natural resources⁴.

Communities have knowledge about NRM and their failures. We wish to facilitate them through the practical work (planning, implementation, monitoring). But we as NGOs can bring new ideas and new skills that they can learn from. Learning how to communicate with each other, the NGO can facilitate synthesis, stimulating them to have more ideas to be put in context.

Stakeholders highlighted that the participatory approach is a long process, but which will be more effective over the long run (e.g. research, documenting the process). For SciCap, one should conduct house visits without any specific agenda to learn about people and gather data, then organize people in a group and help create the village vision - what is their dream for the village - then they commit together to achieving the dream, they might even use their own money, as they have the motivation. Then work together to make the action plan. NGO community facilitators will organize, every three to six months, review the action plan and update on progress. NGOs are not necessarily there to implement the CFI's vision, they provide support and document the process.

CI starts by focusing on the status of each CFI and they need to build capacity. They first conduct a stakeholder consultation, where local authorities, CFI, FiA etc. discuss the community's issues. The second step is a consultation workshop, analyzing the institutional context using tools like SWOT analysis and questionnaires about the general community situation. Priorities in terms of capacity building, resources (station, boat, equipment, etc.) are then determined. CI attempts to engage all the members of the community, define what each persons' role is (driver, watching/monitoring), where they intervene on the Tonle Sap Lake.

At Worldfish, a participatory approach is iterative - planning and implementing activities with community members - followed by a period of reflection to assess changes, document lessons learnt, and incorporate what has been learnt into the planning process. One is looking for a *snowball effect* – as stakeholders continually encourage other stakeholders to engage. There is a high turnover in community members taking part in activities so always having new members to compose the group is

³ *Community Planning Toolkit, Community Engagement, Community Places (2014),* <https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Engagement.pdf>

⁴ *Introducing participatory approaches, methods and tools, FAO,* <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/ad424e/ad424e03.htm>

crucial. This is all reflected in the SALT process⁵: Stimulate, Appreciate, Learn, and Transfer. The approach means building relationships with the households, trying to understand them, using their formal and informal knowledge, working with them to stimulate their activities, and incorporating learnings along the way.

Another tool used by Worldfish, is the Appreciation, Influence, Control (AIC) tool. It accounts for everyone's ideas, creates a safe environment to share and welcome all ideas, provides guidance, and develops a strategy to address the issue. These series of tools allow for CFIs to take ownership of the process.

Community Resources Mapping

Community resources mapping is a process that assesses a community's assets. It is a participatory tool that engages community representatives, both men and women, when discussing and drawing a spatial map. The process seeks information on the natural resources people are relying on, an understanding of physical geography, and potentially important habitat (including for spawning, nesting and feeding etc.). The resulting map can then be used to establish a zonation system for management, conservation, protection of fisheries and natural resources.

Participatory community resources mapping has allowed community members to discuss and learn from each other on the location of resources used by local communities or exploited by external users. Community resources mapping helps to identify environmental issues and actions to manage and preserve natural resources within a community. Furthermore, people can also learn of challenges faced by others in their daily livelihood activities and find areas for improvement.

Methodology

The facilitation team conducts a plenary discussion with knowledgeable people, elders, men and women in the CFI. Participants are encouraged to draw a basic community map by using stones, colored paper or colored pencils to indicate the community boundary, infrastructure, rice fields, etc. Next, facilitators ask participants to draw the community's natural resources including rivers, lakes and flooded forests. During the drawing, facilitators can ask for details of each location-- for example how people use it and discuss which areas that required improved management.

Community resources mapping tool can be applied CFI, the local authority, and technical agencies. For CFI, this method is used to interact and learn about the resources they rely on based on their local experiences, which resources are available and which resources are limited, and how to maintain the resources in future. For local authorities and technical agencies, community resources mapping can be used to prepare the Commune Investment Plan or apply for advanced resource management and zoning for sustainable management, conservation, development and use of fishery resources and natural resources under their authority.

As part of the Mainstreaming Natural Resources Management project, participatory resources mapping was implemented in 22 CFIs to address their issues/concerns and find ways to improve their fishery.

⁵ *Impact assessment of the SALT (Stimulate, Appreciate, Learn, and Transfer) approach of community engagement to increase immunisation coverage through ownership - a mixed methods study in Assam, India, (2014),*
<http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evidence/impact-evaluations/details/3399/>

Chrouy Snor CFI in Kandal Province

After abolishing the nearby fishing lot, Chrouy Snor CFI was established to allow the local community to manage and protect their fisheries resources and sustainably use them. The granting of a specific community fishing area has benefited livelihoods as villages now have larger fishing grounds and more freedom to fish.

The local community is concerned about the destruction of the flooded forest. Wealthy and powerful people from Laek Dek district in Kandal province clear the flooded forest to grow corn and sesame. This disastrous activity seems to be increasing every dry season. This issue is too big to be resolved by the CFI committee and CFI members. Because of the significant decline of flooded forest in the community, the Chrouy Snor CFI committee and CFI members are interested in replanting flooded forest around the community FCAs to improve fish habitats and protect brood stock. Local villagers are concerned about the loss of some fish species and declining fish catch.

Local villagers want NGOs and relevant stakeholders to support their CFI activities particularly in protecting and sustainably managing their fisheries and natural resources. Villagers would like all stakeholders to work to eliminate illegal fishing and help to resolve challenges in their community. They would also like help to:

- demarcate and signpost community boundaries and the FCA;
- provide technical support and material to establish an artificial fish habitat (installing ring culverts) in the fish conservation area for safer fish habitats;
- support for the CFI preparing their management plan and updating their internal laws;
- provide technical training on recording fish catch and monitor their annual catch; and
- provide capacity building on leadership, financial management and management skills.

Once implemented these activities will help the CFI provide a good example for other CFIs along the Cambodia-Vietnam border.

Participatory Resource Mapping should not be used as an isolated tool. It should be used in conjunction with other actions such as the development of a conservation area or zoning scheme action plan. The preparation of a CFI/FCA zoning scheme requires facilitation to engage all stakeholders in the discussion and development of a collective fishing management plan. Furthermore, a safeguard strategy should be established to avoid negative impacts to the poor and vulnerable groups in CFI.

Public Meetings

Public meetings provide an opportunity to consult large numbers of people, explain processes, give information and gather feedback. They demonstrate openness and transparency. Yet attendance is often low unless people feel deeply concerned, and many people may feel shy speaking to such a large group⁶.

SciCap observed that public meetings are often a one-way communication tool. Here the meeting is driven by the organization and the topic has already been selected. This provide less opportunity to interact with community members. People may attend only to obtain something to eat, their per diem, or simply because they had free time. They may even have been forced to join by the village chief or others. Hence interactions remain limited.

⁶ *Community Planning Toolkit, Community Engagement, Community Places (2014), <https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Engagement.pdf>*

Workshops / Focus Groups

Workshops and focus groups allow people to discuss their ideas in a more open and relaxed atmosphere. Workshops can take a variety of formats. They can be designed to exchange information, to discuss the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of an idea or project, to obtain ideas and innovative thinking for a way forward for a project, or they can be specifically geared towards prioritization and the production of an action plan. Focus groups by contrast are designed to specifically concentrate on a single issue or a programme of topics⁷.

Workshops or focus groups should be led by experienced facilitators, as these events can easily become dominated by a few, more articulate or domineering, individuals. One also needs to ensure that all stakeholders or interests are represented.

SciCap has conducted a series of workshops and offers the following insights about this approach⁸.

Discussion topics

Discussion topics should be thoroughly determined beforehand, they should focus on the issue at stake and be interesting for participants. The number of discussion topics should fit the time available, as too many topics result in loose discussions on each topic, leading to only minimal insight.

Participant selection

Participant selection is a key aspect of a workshop preparation, with representations from each target group. Attention should be paid to identifying the right participants from the targeted NGOs. It is important to make sure that workshop participants can actively contribute to the discussions and debates. The number of participants could vary in accordance with the agenda and the participants' relevant experience.

Small group discussion

Participants should be placed in smaller groups based on their experience or work in relation with the specific discussion topic. This will help to make the discussion in each group more interactive and members of each group feel confident in talking as it is in their area of expertise. This will help the workshop to collect good and useful information from each group.

Facilitation process, materials, and data collection method

It is best to have one or two main facilitator(s), knowledgeable on the topic, assigned to each discussion session. With more focused (fewer) discussion topics, there is more time for presenting, discussing and clarifying information from each small group. The discussion should be divided in three sections: first the plenary discussion, second the small group discussion, and third a plenary discussion that each group is provided time to present their discussion result and open to question and discussion. Each discussion session should be led by a skilled main facilitator, who is knowledgeable about the discussion topics. The main facilitator should be involved in designing and developing the discussion session. For the small group discussions, one member should be chosen as a facilitator, and another member as a notetaker. The facilitation materials should be designed to help both the small group facilitator and the notetaker.

⁷ *Community Planning Toolkit, Community Engagement*, Community Places (2014), <https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Engagement.pdf>

⁸ *Review on the Mainstreaming NRM Workshop Series #2: Coordination and Collaboration for Community Fisheries Towards a Unified Approach*, 16 -17 January 2017, Un Borin (2017)

At the end of the discussion session, one or two members of each small group present the discussion result. Then it is followed by a short plenary session where each group reports back. This provides others the opportunity to ask questions of clarification or extension.

CFI

CI uses different tools and activities to engage people. Thanks to the creation of savings groups and a trust fund, people see the direct benefits of working with an NGO (increase in savings), and they link their actions to the need for natural resource protection. In the first year of implementing a savings group, CI focuses on the Committee members and building their capacity. They want to ensure that they are doing good work and bringing results to the FCA, which will be seen by other CFI members and lead to their engagement. Since 2014 CI has been assisting the Akol village, where villagers had not been maintaining their natural resources. Now they recognize the importance of the FCA, especially in the dry season, thanks to its protection by the committee. For the first time last year, some members offered to contribute a total of \$100 of their own money. They also want to be a part of the committee and offer to recruit more members. They are also willing raise their concerns at the local authority level to combat illegal activities.

Local Authorities

Worldfish highlighted the crucial need for close and personal relationships with local authorities and Government representatives. Recently, with the transfer of responsibilities from MAFF to MoE, PDoE find themselves with more power. There is also a struggle for influence between PDoE and FiAC which can impact NGOs' work in the communities. Personal engagement with both agencies is vital to ensure successful activities.

Community Surveys

Questionnaire surveys can identify the needs and views of a large number of people in a standard format. It is often best to use a short and concise questionnaire where people's views on an issue are being sought. These surveys should be well designed to get useful answers. However, surveys do not necessarily offer any real sense of community engagement or provide an opportunity for people to exchange views⁹.

The SciCap team has developed a community context and needs assessment checklist which can be used for community self-assessment and to guide NRM interventions. The community checklists were based on the results of key informant interviews from 31 communities along Tonle Sap, Mekong basin and Sesan, Srepok and Sekong Rivers in Cambodia. The community checklists follow two frameworks, the DFID Sustainable livelihoods framework developed by the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Advisory Committee and the Community Capitals Framework (CCF) developed by Cornelia and Jan Flora (1990).

The CCF¹⁰ approach analyses communities and community development efforts from a system perspective. CCF focuses mainly on the assets of a community rather than on community needs and deficits. A community capitals approach allows us to view the various elements, resources and

⁹ *Community Planning Toolkit, Community Engagement, Community Places* (2014), <https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Engagement.pdf>

¹⁰ Cornhusker Economics September 2, 2015. *Community Capitals Framework*. Agricultural Economics. University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. agecon.unl.edu/cornhusker-economics/2015/community-capitals-framework

relationships within a community and their contribution to the overall functioning of the community. Once the community assets are identified, they can be used as a tool for planning for the future.

The objectives of context and needs assessment checklists are:

- To understand community strengths, needs, gaps and challenges and their impacts upon the community's members (families, individuals, youths, other institutions in the community); and,
- To provide a detailed analysis of community assets or resources.

Methodology

The main stages involved are:

- defining the sample size and the type of information required;
- deciding on the type of survey to be used;
- survey design;
- piloting the survey;
- undertaking the survey and post-completion analysis of the results.

The checklists provide a series of questions and other prompts for gathering information from respondents or through field observation. Initially this is a passive task where the NRM facilitation team evaluates the context and needs via their own observations. The checklists are then used to interview key respondents.

The perceived level of satisfaction (from 0 to 10) is rated by the facilitator. The rating is based on both the facilitator's field observations and comments from respondent(s). A score close to 0 indicates a community with no diversified livelihoods strategies, no useful resources and many challenges. A score of 10 indicates a community with very diverse livelihoods and very useful resources. The checklists can be used by other organizations (LNGOs, CBOs, Govt, etc.) and the community itself to do self-assessments of their community context and prioritize their needs.

The context and needs assessment checklists were applied to 25 fishing communities within 12 provinces. The level of satisfaction of local livelihood strategies showed that, for instance, Peam Khnang/Phlov Touk community rated 7 out of 10 as villagers have access to very diverse livelihood activities, including high fish catch due to the management of their fishery resources and protection of their natural resources. Furthermore, in the dry season they have access to backyard gardens where they grow sesame and green beans for sale. This is compared to Koh Tapov, Kaom Samnor and Kampong Samnanh communities, which scored 4, due to less diversified livelihoods.

Interviews with key respondents indicated that most community members and some CFI committees do not understand CFI by-laws and regulations; and cannot identify FCA boundaries. Some community members know the FCA boundaries but ignore them and fish in the FCA.

To complete the checklists, facilitators need to interview key informants who often hold an official position and were knowledgeable about the community context. Therefore, these answers in combination with field observations provide a representation of the entire community context.

The checklists can be used to inform strategic planning, priority setting, program outcomes and program improvements. One of the goals for the community checklists, is to evaluate the strengths and

weaknesses of each community and to understand the communities' needs, which can later guide the project interventions in the target communities.

Games and Creativity

The "Go Fishing" board game was designed by the SciCap team, to imitate everyday life within fishing communities. The aim of the game is to understand community behavior and their perceptions of natural resource management. Players take turns to roll the dice and have opportunities to catch fish, sell fish, improve their fishing gear and contribute to community stocks, conservation stocks, savings groups and buy flooded forest. When the game is completed, the money earned by the players is added to the communal stocks accumulated to demonstrate that all players benefit from contributing to shared resources.

Methodology

1. Introduce the rules of the game and process to playing the game;
2. Divide into 2, 3 or 4 groups depending on the number of participants (less than ten people per group);
3. Choose volunteers in each group to be players (3 players in each group are recommended);
4. Share the cards and material to the players (1 fishing gear card (type 2=40,000 KHR), 1 community stock card, 1-kilo of fish card, cards valued 80,000 KHR, and colored tokens representing each player);
5. Start the game with Player 1 setting the dice, continue to Player 2, Player 3 or Player 4
6. Encourage an audience including CFI members, fishers, students, local authority, traders;
7. When playing the game, the facilitator observes and asks questions to understand the participants' perceptions and behaviors towards the game;
8. Then the facilitator makes an evaluation based on the participants' perceptions and their interactions during the game

The board game represents the participants' everyday life, especially their dependency on fisheries.

Challenges

The level of participation and understanding from communities can be limited. For example, wealthy people on the Tonle Sap are kept occupied by their business, and do not engage with NGO activities. Poor people generally take part in the activities. At the beginning, people show high commitment and attendance, but then as the project targets selected people, others tend to drop off.

There can be a sense of insecurity from community members. By joining NGO activities, people show support for combatting illegal fishing, which can make powerful enemies. It is also important for NGOs to work with local authorities and cultivate close relationships. People may also suffer NGO fatigue, as fishermen often take part in NGO activities for little benefit.

For many years, CI provided direct salaries to community rangers. People would remain engaged as long as salaries were paid but stop when the money stopped. This practice did not provide a foundation for engagement or ownership. And has stopped.

Other challenges raised were:

- People are often late to meetings and trainings, or send different representatives to workshops, which creates discontinuity;
- Very poor households live from day to day and it is very hard to engage them. They often are very motivated, but have less capital and time to inject in the activity;
- NGOs must meet their own deadlines, and it can be difficult to work with the poorest groups if it takes more energy and time than a project allows.

Evaluating Community Engagement

NGO staff spend considerable time within the communities. This leads them to develop an acute sense of the situation and people's change in behavior. They will then measure change according to their own perceptions.

Many NGOs use meetings to assess changes in communities: monthly meetings with the patrol team (success, changes, lessons), quarterly meetings at local level, semi-annual meetings (patrol team, community within the site, acknowledge progress seen, what learnings made).

They will also use tools such as:

- Mood meter: Showing three faces pictures (happy, neutral, sad) and asking participants to note their mood; and
- After Action Review: Team evaluation on the process, result, adaptive management, changes for the next meeting, discussion about staff perceptions on the meeting flow, documenting results, recommendations for improvement; and
- Community Action Reflection: FACT uses pre/post-tests for training and capacity building events. Every month, staff fill in a monthly activity report which is placed online; every quarter monitoring and evaluation staff go into the field with output assessment questionnaires; six-month outcomes result from project implementation (knowledge/attitude change, fish catch increase). For their annual report, their monitoring and evaluation staff visit a randomly selected area every six months to conduct the assessment.

Recommendations

This report has highlighted six major engagement methods used to collaborate with and empower Community Fisheries in Cambodia. We have derived two major recommendations to further support community engagement by civil society actors

Engaging all stakeholders' representatives

One should engage people from all strata of the community to collaboratively discuss and prioritize plans. It is important to engage and empower vulnerable groups and the poor so that they share the benefits from development. Conservation or development must include a safeguard strategy to ensure that the poor and vulnerable or not negatively impacted by any interventions. For example, a safeguard strategy may require quarterly meetings with vulnerable groups, to gather information and evaluate ongoing impacts to these groups

Manage community dependency from engagement approaches

Community members should engage with civil society initiatives and feel empowered by them. However, they should not be paid from their involvement. It is the NGOs duty to avoid communities ending up depending on them and clearly stating that engagement (through training, knowledge gained, etc.) is to benefit the community.