RESULTS SUMMARY

Enhancing Grassroot Networks on Natural Resources Rights

Author: Insert organisation (Year) **Find project on OpenAid**

PROJECT

Title:	Enhancing Grassroot Networks on Natural Resources Rights
Partner:	Ponlok Khmer
Country:	Cambodia
Period:	2022

CHANGE

The Monk Community Forest (MCF) has, for the first time ever, carried out a tree planting and tree ordination ceremony in partnership with faith-based actors, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, youth, civil society organisations, and local authorities, contributing to increased awareness on the interconnectedness between people and planet, enhanced cooperation between a diverse group of actors and strengthened engagement in forest protection.

CONTEXT

Cambodia faces widespread deforestation and illegal logging, affecting people's and nature's well-being. In a country where more than 90 percent of the population is Buddhist, monks play a vital role in fostering values and ethics, including care for nature. MCF has been protecting a forest for two decades, but despite its active role in forest protection, the monks rarely take the lead in organising ceremonies and collaborating with other faith-based actors to protect the country's forests.

CONTRIBUTION

Since 2017, Danmission has, in partnership with its local partner Ponlok Khmer, supported MCF in i) strengthening forest protection activities, ii) building partnerships with civil society organisations, Indigenous Peoples and other faith-based actors, and iii) enhancing technical, administrative and managerial competencies. Danmission has also provided technical equipment, e.g. cameras, enabling MCF to generate awareness and interest on social media on its forest protection work.

IMAGES

Insert photo credit

Insert photo credit

See next page for more details →

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

MCF's idea of organising the ceremony was born from the desire to engage a wide range of actors in forest protection. The monks subsequently reached out to local authorities and partners, including Ponlok Khmer and Danmission, to seek technical and financial support. MCF and partners held several meetings to prepare the ceremony, including the participation of various stakeholders. The ceremony had three elements: i) a march and convoy with 57 cars, 8 buses, and 12 trucks from a Buddhist pagoda in the provincial town to the forest, ii) an interfaith dialogue on the interconnectedness between people and the planet, and iii) tree planting and tree ordination. The successful ceremony has contributed to strengthening the profile of MCF, encouraged faith-based actors to engage more in forest protection activities and established new partnerships.

LESSONS

A number of lessons learned have emerged: i) local leadership is essential in initiating the initiative and ensuring local ownership. MCF has been the key actor from day one; the monks developed the idea, engaged relevant stakeholders and organised the ceremony; ii) dialogue with and involvement of provincial and local authorities from the beginning to ensure support from relevant government actors. In a context with shrinking civic space, the involvement of authorities is vital for the success of the initiative; and iii) collaboration with local partners, including Ponlok Khmer and Danmission, to provide technical and financial support and linkages with relevant stakeholders, e.g. other faith-based actors. MCF had no prior experience in organising such a ceremony, and it relied, therefore, on support from partners.

EVIDENCE

The number of monks, faith-based actors, NGOs, local authorities and forest communities attending the tree planting and ordination ceremony speaks to the success of the ceremony and MCF's work. The ceremony was held with the theme "Plant trees together for life and the planet", with 1,517 participants in attendance planting 6,500 hardwood and fruit tree saplings on the degraded land of the Sangrukhavorn Wildlife Sanctuary in Northwestern Cambodia. It rarely happens that tree planting and ordination ceremonies attract so many participants, especially other faith-based actors. The provincial authorities and various civil society actors commended the work of MCF and its efforts in strengthening forest protection, and the ceremony received considerable media coverage.

DOMAINS

Development strategy priorities:	Insert strategy priority
Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability	-
Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights	-
Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights	X
Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights	X
Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability	-
Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work	X