

Supporting Document 1: Supplementary Explanation to Application Form

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Voices from our communities

Here are some voices we hear often from our communities: “I want to learn how to do farming right and effectively”; “I hope to know basic knowledge and skills to prevent myself and my family from getting sick”; “I wish not to work away from home as migrant worker”; and “There is no place and little occasion for recreation in my village.”

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[Focal Target and Reason Behind] Cambodian adults dealing with their harrowing past

The focal target of our activities is adults, by the intention of spreading their learning opportunities in the country. In Cambodia, most adults, approximately in forties to fifties at present, missed education opportunities in the civil conflict and turmoil since 1970s. Consequently, many of them have trouble in literacy and numeracy, followed by various difficulties in their daily life, which eventually trap them in poverty. According to our random sampling survey last year, 81% of the villagers over 15 years old in our targets didn't finish Grade 6 (primary education) and 85% of them confess their difficulty in daily life due to lack or low level of literacy.

[Project Measures] 4 activities in synergy

For this reason, we tackle the issue of literacy in the project as a prerequisite for lifelong learning and ESD. Beyond simply organizing literacy class in our CLCs, we have developed an integrated program of functional literacy, in which literacy education is incorporated into 3 other major CLC activities. In other words, we operate self-sustainable CLCs with library, literacy program and post-literacy program interrelated and functioning in synergy. Not to mention, reading in our library, literacy learners can train their reading skill while learning new knowledge from books. In the workshops for livelihood improvement on agriculture and health/sanitation, literacy learners can put into practice some knowledge they learned from literacy class or books from our library. This is how we practice the concept we esteem in the project, “learning by doing.” Furthermore, literacy learners become motivated every time they enjoy *Karaoke Literacy*, one of CLC cultural events combining literacy promotion with recreation.

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Our premises behind our approach

In the process of project formation, we reviewed the hopes and dreams of our communities over and over and we finally identified their key needs:

1. Our communities don't want to work away from their village; they like living with their family in the village.
2. Our communities have pride in being farmers and producing their food themselves.
3. Despite their pride, they confess their difficulty making a living by farming due to lack of basic knowledge and skills in farming. They are eager to improve their livelihood by learning proper knowledge and skills in agriculture, let alone health/sanitation, enough to make a stable, secure living by farming. Currently, they buy pesticides from debt and overuse them, only to destroy their farmlands eventually.

Situation of CLCs in Cambodia

In general, CLCs in Cambodia concentrate on vocational training, often in tailoring, as a measure of poverty reduction, but end up unfunctional and unsuccessful. The problem is that such skill training doesn't lead to income generation due to some reasons, including lower qualified skills than market standards; lack of capital budget for starting a new business; and lack of marketing strategy. That is, they do things beyond their capacity, with their success too much relying on external factors.

3 simple principles: Fun, Comfortable and Practical

In the course of project formation, we first carried out in-depth research into villagers' interests and needs and then developed our activities based on them; in other words, we suited our project to users' conveniences and preferences by bottom-up approach.

In the process, we started to be skeptical about the effectiveness of current mainstream approaches and methods in Non-formal Education (NFE), or more broadly, poverty reduction. We thus started to design a project from scratch, free from common senses in the fields. There are so many projects offering "useful" programs, but how "practical" they are for their target users? If a program is not "practical" or "relevant" enough to adapt to the real situation of the users, it is of little or no value.

Also, how about the significance of "pleasure" and "ease of mind" in the program? All over the world, there is a common problem in NFE: People don't come. In NFE or real society, people are busy with their daily life. It is no wonder they don't come because NFE is not compulsory education. If people don't like it, or if activities are not based on their interests and conveniences, they don't simply come.

Then, what does it take to get people to participate in NFE programs? Considering the fact that targets in NFE tend to be less familiar to education, we need a more casual approach to education. We believe what is lacking in NFE around the world is "joy" and "comfort." Not only being practical, the programs need to be "fun" and "comfortable." Who said the poor should not have a time for recreation? Is it luxurious to ask for "enjoyment" and "rest" in our life? We believe they are part of life in dignity. Actually, we believe, because they are at risk of losing hope trapped in poverty, all the more they need a time for recreation, or something in their life to help keep them encouraged and motivated to take positive action against poverty.

Platform for cross-cutting collaboration

Poverty reduction requires not only a cross-cutting approach but also integrated one. Poverty alleviation is not so effective if we only tackle the issue from one sector, nor if different players across sectors work independently without coordination. We need a cross-sectoral approach in a holistic system. We believe CLCs are the best platform for this kind of aid coordination in communities.

In the case of our project, although we are in charge of managing the whole system in consultation with each community, we can demonstrate our own expertise most in library management. We assist our communities in organizing literacy class and workshops for livelihood improvement in utilization of different expertise from other partners. We arrange ASAC, a Japanese NGO with 20 years' experience in literacy class, to train our literacy teachers while arranging CEDAC to train around 25 "key farmers" in each community who take a central role spreading the advanced knowledge and skills to the entire community afterward. For other topics, including health and sanitation, we arrange World Vision to conduct such workshops, incorporating their activities into our program of livelihood improvement.

This is the idea of "CLC platform" we have devised in Cambodia, an integrated framework for cross-sectoral collaboration. Our CLCs are a catalyst and platform for collaboration where multi-players with different areas of expertise cooperate for a common goal.

Learning by doing

We understand learning new knowledge from books and class doesn't necessarily mean we can do this in practice. To learn "real" knowledge and skills that actually contribute to livelihood improvement, we need to practice over and over with our body moving until it becomes automatic. For this reason, our workshops for livelihood improvement are designed to provide this kind of practical opportunities.