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Newsletter

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UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

New multimedia campaign promotes youth voices

Phnom Penh – A multimedia campaign geared towards the young people of Cambodia is now in full swing with the aim to inspire them to play more active role in their communities and contribute to country's development.

Targeting people between 15 and 24 years of age, the campaign known as *Loy9* uses a television drama and magazine show, radio talk show and online interaction to provide information and create space for young Cambodians to make their voices heard. It is also hoping to alter the long-held view that young Cambodians are too young and not yet ready for taking on greater social responsibilities.

"We want to see a change in the perception of youth and show that young people can take responsibility in helping their communities," said Colin Spurway, *Loy9* project director at the BBC Media Action.

He added that the involvement of young people "is vital" to drive the development of their country in the future.

The BBC Media Action is producing the campaign based on a 2010 survey which found that the level young people's participation in civic life is low. For example, just 8 percent of young people had voiced their opinions to

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Pipe water system gives villagers a fresh start



Photo: Mlup Baitong/Om Sophana

Cambodian farmer Kri Ven waters the vegetables he grows in his backyard. The water comes from a waterfall through a pipe system a UNDP's project has installed for 600 families in Chambak commune, Kampong Speu province.

Kampong Speu – There is virtually no free space left in the backyard of Kri Ven's house. Rows of water convolvulus, cabbage, radish and sugar cane are crowding his 300-square meter land after his home got connected to a pipe water system.

"I am quite happy to have my own farm to grow vegetables for a living," said Kri Ven, 28-year-old of Chambak commune in Kampong Speu province.

In this commune, about 120 kilometers west of the capital Phnom Penh, days of water shortage are now over. A pipe water system – which is so far available to only city residents – has finally come to the rural homes of some 600 families here. And thanks to the new utility, the villagers are now wasting no time to turn their backyards into vegetable gardens to feed themselves and sell for money to support their families.

The pipe system has been brought to them by a project that tries to assist rural communities in Cambodia to adapt to climate change. The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme through the Small Grants Programme.

In fact, Chambak commune is famous for a natural waterfall that serves as a tourist attraction. But it had appeared out of reach to the local residents who simply could not afford to have a pipe system installed to channel water into their homes. In dry season, clean water was a rare commodity and the villagers spent an average two hours a day to fetch water from streams or wells for use. Some had to pay 2,500 riel (US\$0.65) for container of 200 liters to last a few days. The price seems insignificant but for many rural poor, it's a burdensome amount.

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New multimedia campaign promotes youth voices

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Photo: UNDP/Moeun Morn

Young Cambodians watch live screening of a Loy9 show in a village in Kampong Thom province.

public officials, such as government officials or staff of non-governmental organizations. According to the survey, young people also find it difficult to explain the role of important democratic institutions, particularly of representative bodies such as the parliament and commune councils. Around three quarters of respondents had heard of 'parliament', but two-thirds of these could not describe what parliament does.

The campaign and the research have received financial support from UNDP in Cambodia which considers the focus on youth as important priority.



Photo: UNDP/Moeun Morn

A Loy9 presenter, in red shirt, chats with young men during a recent visit to Battambang province.

With some 32 percent of the population being between 15 and 30 years of age, Cambodia has the youngest population among countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Country Director Elena Tischenko emphasized UNDP's focus on youth in her remarks to the launch of the campaign on Jan. 11.

"Through collaborative programmes with partners like BBC Media Action and other government and non-government organisations, we try to help young people to become more competent, empowered and inspired participants in Cambodia's development," Ms. Tischenko said.

"We hope that this campaign will help inspire young Cambodians to be more active in civic life – be it through engaging with local government authorities or volunteering to help vulnerable people in their communities or protecting environment," she added.

The campaign will last in 18 months. During this period, the campaign staff, using a Loy9

minivan, will also travel across the country to spread the messages about the importance of civic participation among youngsters in rural areas. UNDP and BBC Media Action will conduct on-going assessments of the campaign throughout the year.

Spurway, of the BBC Media Action, said he hoped that the campaign would produce a positive impact to inspire young people to get more engaged in community life as well as to improve their understanding about the democratic process and institutions of their country.

"A year from now I hope a large number of people – young people – will come away with a more accurate understanding about what the commune council is and what the National Assembly does," Spurway said.

Ms. Tischenko, UNDP Country Director, said she hoped to see more young people motivated by young role models in Cambodia and examples of positive contributions they make in the society.

To the launch's audience packed with young people, she said: "You are young, energetic and have great potential. You have a lot to contribute when you participate actively and are able to realize your potential to a fuller extent."

Pipe water system gives villagers a fresh start

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Photo: MLup Baitong/Om Sophana

A Cambodian woman releases water from a tap into a reservoir at her home in Chambak commune, Kampong Speu province. The water comes from a waterfall through a pipe system a UNDP's projects has installed for 600 families in Chambak commune, Kampong Speu province.

"It was indescribable when talking about difficulty getting water before. My husband had no free time because he had to collect water from the well for cooking, drinking and washing," said Ros Heng, a 29-year-old mother of three children.

In November last year, work was completed on a 20-kilometer pipe network to siphon water from the waterfall. Each of the 600 families in the commune is now hooked to the main system via smaller pipes. Household that uses one tap pays a monthly utility fee of 500 riel (US\$0.12). Those having multiple taps pay more fees, which are collected by a local committee to maintain the pipe system.

Built on the positive results from a similar work in 2007, the new pipe system provides the villagers with water all year round to increase crop cultivation to improve their livelihoods and resilience against impacts of climate change.

Helping to reduce the villager's reliance on rainfall for farming is also an objective of the pipe system, a component of the SIDA-funded Cambodia Community Based Adaptation Programme.

Nuon Sareun, 47, recalled that she was forced to abandon her vegetable gardening several years ago simply because of the water shortage. But since November last year, she has been busy tending to water convolvulus, heading mustard and green mustard in her 180-square-meter backyard.

"I am so glad now to have water to grow vegetables again and to use for all purposes," she said, adding that she also hopes to make saving from selling the vegetables for rainy days.

Touch Morn, the head of the Chambak Eco-Tourism Community, said benefits brought by the pipe water have been much greater than just helping families to earn extra income. He said children can now spend

more time on studies since they no longer need to care about fetching water for their families. The water system has also enabled the villagers to improve their hygiene. The number of family toilets has increased. The villagers can bathe more often, raise more livestock and grow vegetables in dry season to earn money.

"We can see a lot of changes in people's habits. In my village alone, the number of family toilets has increased to 20 now from only two before," said Touch Morn.

Kri Ven recalled that, due to lack of water in previous dry seasons, he simply left the land in his backyard to be taken over by weeds while he went to drive a farm tractor for a local businessman to make a living. But soon after his home got hooked to the pipe water network, he quit the job to be self-employed instead.

He said: "Working on my own farm is not as stressful as working for others. I'm my own boss now."

Cambodian officials learn cassava cultivation techniques in China

Phnom Penh – As a follow-up to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, witnessed by UNDP Administrator Helen Clark and PRC Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, the pilot initiative between Cambodia and China was off to a good start.

Thirty Cambodian officials have completed a training programme in China in cassava cultivation techniques that aimed to help Cambodia diversify its export base to boost economic growth.

The Cambodian officials were sent by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. They participated in the training with the support from United Nations Development Programme and China's Ministry of Commerce.

The Chinese Academy for Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) in Hainan province provided the training, from 27 December 2011 to 16 January 2012, which was appreciated by the Cambodian participants as a valuable experience.

"I found this training very useful for Cambodia where cassava research and development still lag behind many other countries in Southeast Asia," said Mr. You Tainghy, Chief of Agro-Industry Office of Provincial Department of Agriculture of Kampong Cham.

Other Cambodian trainees came from the General Directorate of Agriculture, provincial Departments of Agriculture, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute and Prek Leap and Kampong Cham National Schools of Agriculture.

The training marked the practical implementation of the Memorandum



Photo: UNDP/Ratha Chan

Cambodian, Chinese and UNDP officials pose for picture on the opening day of a cassava cultivation techniques training in China.

of Understanding for Strengthened Cooperation between the Government of the People's Republic of China and UNDP to operationalize China-Cambodia pilot initiative on South-South cooperation. It was done with the support of UNDP offices in Cambodia and China.

A training needs assessment was carried out prior to the training. Findings and recommendations from the assessment fed into the adjusting of the training module to this specific group of trainees.

UNDP in Cambodia arranged for a Chinese-speaking colleague from the Environment Unit to accompany government participants to Hainan to facilitate learning process and assist with translation.

Throughout the 21-day training, the participants said they have gained extensive knowledge and experience on cassava cultivation. This included knowledge about soil preparation and planting techniques, variety selection, breeding and genetic transformation, disease and pest control, fertilizer application and weeding, harvesting and processing. The training combined classroom lectures, laboratory experiments and field and factory visits to provide the trainees opportunities to interact with farmers, Chinese government officials, businessmen, and cassava experts.

"The creative method of teaching helps bridge the gap between theoretical, technical and practical aspects of cassava cultivation and provide us a better understanding of cassava related knowledge," Mr. Poeung Serey Houch, a technical officer of the Department of Industrial Crops of the General Directorate of Agriculture, said.

Mr. You Tainghy, of the Department of Agriculture in Kampong Cham province, added: "From the training, I have learned many new techniques of cassava cultivation and advanced technologies such as cassava tissue culture, genetic transformation and breeding which I have never learned before in Cambodia."

"Returning to Cambodia, I will share the knowledge and experience I have learned from China to my colleagues and Cambodian farmers," he said.

The completion of the training course on 16 January has been officiated by Mr. Christophe Bahuet, UNDP Country Director in China, and Mr. Zhu Hong, Deputy Director General of Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce.

Mr. Bahuet and Mr. Zhu, responding to the request from the Cambodian officials, expressed commitment to deepen the trilateral cooperation pilot and to continue the support with follow up actions after the training.



Photo: UNDP/Ratha Chan

Cambodian officials attend a lab session during their training in China.

Indigenous people radio - an experience from Laos

Ratanakiri – Since 2007, Cambodia's Jarai indigenous people have been enjoying a radio programme in their own language, which helps to inform them about news concerning their community and beyond. But the problem is it is too short. Its daily broadcast hours should be extended.

This was the message a group of indigenous people conveyed to visitors, including a delegation from Laos, who paid a visit to Ratanakiri province recently.

"The programme is too short," someone shouted in the Jarai language when a visitor asked how they liked the radio programme.

The encounter was among several activities of a Laos delegation's trip to Cambodia organized and supported by UNDP Cambodia. The purpose of their trip was to share successful lessons of indigenous radio programme in Laos with the Cambodian national and provincial governments as well as community media practitioners through a workshop and field trip to Ratanakiri province.

Located in Cambodia's northeast, the province broadcasts the country's only indigenous language radio programme.

Currently, UNESCO supports the production of four 15-minute programmes per day, broadcast from Monday to Friday through

state radio in Ratanakiri in four different indigenous languages – Kreung, Jarai, Brao and Tampuan. It aims at improving indigenous people's access to information and to improve their understandings about crucial issues such as health, agriculture, culture, laws and other educational issues.

"How many steps did it take to make your radio programme a success?" Pors Gnorch, a 27-year-old Jarai man asked the Laos delegation during their visit on Dec. 15.

The knowledge exchange revealed that the success of the radio programme in Laos starts from choosing the right topics. Before deciding on the topic for broadcasting, radio teams talk to community members to find out about problems they are facing and what they would like to hear from their community radio. Topics are decided, information collected and the radio report produced. It is then played back to communities to seek their approval before broadcast.

Mr. Vongsone Oudomsouk, Programme Coordinator of Khoun and Thateng Radio Stations in Laos, said such a process is a very important part of a successful radio programme, which can also be applied in Cambodia.

"Go and talk to people before making a programme," he said. "When the programme is about problems [the communities] are

facing and about solutions to the problems, they will look forward to listening to it".

Nearly 80 per cent of the indigenous villagers in the Khoun community in northern Laos listen to the radio. Programmes have led to positive behavior changes and improved understanding in the areas of gender, domestic violence, girls' educations, maternal health and nutrition.

The success of the programme led to the construction of another radio station in Thateng district in the Southern Laos in 2010 and several others have since followed.

Mr. Nguon Krek, the indigenous radio programme coordinator in Ratanakiri, couldn't agree more with Mr. Vongsone's advice.

"It's a great idea to talk to people in the community about a topic of broadcast. When they know that we are broadcasting about their needs, they will wait to listen. I will suggest and discuss this idea to my team members," said Mr. Nguon Krek.

Local volunteerism is another contributor to the success of the radio programmes in Laos, which was a valuable insight for the Cambodian indigenous people radio team. In Laos' Khoun and Thateng communities, some 80 local volunteers help produce programmes, covering jobs from looking for topics to producing the radio reports.

Admitting that it is hard for her to earn the trust and get information from indigenous people, Thin Sao Un, a 20-year-old reporter from the Brao indigenous group, said she found the exchange very useful.

"I am interested most in their idea of involving the local volunteers to produce the programme. When people from the community do the job, it is easy to get information and people also want to listen to the voices of their relatives or friends in the programme," she said after talking to the Laos team.

UNDP Cambodia will continue to work to promote similar opportunities for knowledge exchange between Cambodia and other countries in the region, while working with government and civil society to generate more opportunities for indigenous voices in the media as part of their participation in the development process.



Photo: UNDP

Cambodian indigenous people in Ratanakiri province meet with an official from Laos to exchange experiences about indigenous radio programme.

Mainstreaming climate change adaptation in local governance planning

Phnom Penh – To reduce the costs of negative impacts of climate change, Cambodia needs to focus on community-based adaptation and linking adaptation initiatives with local governance planning, said United Nations Development Programme Country Director Elena Tischenko.

“Much of Cambodia’s response to climate change will depend on the effective management of land, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and water resources. These sectors will need to become part of an integrated approach through sub-national planning and development,” Ms. Tischenko said.

She was speaking at the national workshop on mainstreaming community based adaptation into sub-national level planning on 22-23 December. UNDP organized the event which received support from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and AusAID and was attended by 200 participants including representatives of local administration from 19 provinces.

The gathering helped to raise awareness of climate change issues and its impacts on community livelihood and development investment. A number of local non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations shared their experiences and lessons learned about local adaptation practices to better

link knowledge to adaptation actions. Participants also had the opportunity to comment on a draft proposal to mainstream climate change adaptation measures into Commune Development Plans/Commune Investment Plans.

“Adaptation approaches to climate change need to become part of the programmes and projects within a cohesive national effort aimed at transforming Cambodia into a climate resilient society,” Ms. Tischenko added.

H.E. Leng Vy, Director General for the Local Administration, Ministry of Interior, acknowledged that mainstreaming climate change adaptation into the sub-national planning needs to be given more focus.

“Previously, we took into account mainly the impacts on infrastructure and capacity building. But the new thinking is that linking participation to practice as we are doing now is equally important to sustainable development,” he said.

Cambodia is deemed vulnerable to climate change because of its low adaptive capacity. The poor who are living in the rural areas are deemed most vulnerable to climate change impacts as witnessed during the 2011 floods. The natural disaster highlighted the extreme dependence of rural livelihoods

on the regularity of seasons, controlled by the climate, and the availability of natural resources like water. The floods caused at least 250 deaths and inundated approximately 430,000 hectares of rice paddies, of which 280,000 hectares were completely destroyed. Some 350,000 families, or 1.5 million people, were adversely affected by the floods which were considered the worst in a decade.

UNDP is working closely with the Royal Government of Cambodia and development partners to support community-based projects aiming to improve livelihoods of villagers and strengthen institutional and policy coordination at various levels. Of such projects is the Cambodia Community-Based Adaptation Programme, a two-year programme funded by SIDA, with co-funding from AusAID, and implemented by UNDP. To date the project has provided funding to 45 projects, which are implemented in 96 communes, 49 districts and 18 provinces, to demonstrate climate-resilient techniques at both community and household levels in the priority geographical areas.

Ms. Tischenko added that there is a significant role to be played by sub-national administrations “in taking to scale the effective practices of climate change adaptation and resilient local development.”

UNDP programme areas

UNDP in Cambodia assists Cambodians to find their own solutions to the challenges of development. UNDP in Cambodia focuses on three thematic areas: Poverty Reduction, Energy and Environment, and Democratic Governance.

Poverty Reduction

UNDP is working with government, outside donors and the civil sector to reduce poverty country-wide by supporting poverty reduction efforts. These efforts strengthen government leadership capacity, give better access to information for effective pro-poor policy making, bolster trade and private sector development to help the poor, and focus on effective aid coordination so that each dollar spent has a greater impact.

Environment and Energy

There is a great sense of urgency for actions to address Cambodia’s environment and energy challenges. The poor are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and lack of access to clean affordable energy services. UNDP is helping to instill a long-term perspective in the management of Cambodia’s natural resources in some of the country’s most sensitive geographical regions.

Democratic Governance

Cambodia’s challenge in building democratic governance is to develop institutions and processes that are more responsive to the need of ordinary citizens, including the poor, and that promote development. UNDP helps to build a more robust democracy through providing long-term support to institutions, civil society organizations and civic education initiatives through strategic partnership with development partners and the government.



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