

# Sharing the advocacy experience of the Boeung Kak community



Compiled November 5th 2013

Compiled by the Boeung Kak Community

## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....  | 1  |
| Factors that make your community strong .....                                   | 2  |
| Essential information a community should know .....                             | 5  |
| Strategy to collect the information.....  | 7  |
| Advocacy strategies and activities (strategy for demanding<br>a solution) ..... | 8  |
| Obstacles a community should know about and the solutions....                   | 12 |
| Achievements of the Boeung Kak community.....                                   | 15 |
| Contact people.....   | 17 |

# Introduction

We are residents of the Boeung Kak Lake area located in the centre of the capital city Phnom Penh. Since 2007 the people have suffered the threat of forced eviction and as a result we have been struggling to stay on our land and in our homes, under fear of the land being taken for development.

We are writing this booklet so that we can share our experiences with other communities who are also facing forced eviction or land grabbing or loss of natural resources. We hope that our experiences will help other communities to become strong and help communities prevent eviction and land grabbing. We also want other communities to know about human rights and law.



## Factors that make your community strong

- ④ Discuss together and decide on one goal that all the community agrees on. The community should have one goal and one voice.
- ④ Select community representatives who can speak on behalf of your community and lead the community work. Elect the representatives through a community vote for the purpose of implementing a community plan. Select representatives who are active, brave and honest and who know how to speak and to communicate and share information within the community.
- ④ Community representatives need to listen to the opinions raised by the community in order to prevent the community representatives making decisions on their own without consultation from the community members.
- ④ Community representatives should be dedicated to community work and think of the common interest of the community.
- ④ Community representatives should be highly committed in performing their function.
- ④ Select more than one representative so that they can work together. Have clear roles for the representatives so that each person knows what they are responsible for.
- ④ The community should have a clear plan before implementation.
- ④ Discuss and consult with everyone in your community regularly and in case of an emergency to find a solution.



- Encourage the active participation from the community members to implement the community plan.
- Find out the information about the development project and company and who is involved.
- Know how to organize the community network from one community to another community so the community network could work together and strengthen each other effectively.
- Develop good relationships with NGOs and the media, national and international media, so that they can support and disseminate community information to people in Cambodia and internationally.
- Seek support from the local authorities. This was difficult for the Boeung Kak community, but we did try to talk to the police so they understood our problem and didn't use violence against us.



- ⦿ If community representatives join training, they need to disseminate the information and knowledge to other members of the community afterwards.
- ⦿ Develop innovative activities that can attract public attention and support.
- ⦿ Set up a savings group for the community members to put savings and to use for community activities, such as copying documents and transport costs.



## Essential information a community should know

- Find out as much information as possible about the project impacting your community:
  - Name of the company(s) responsible for the development project.
  - The duration of the lease for the company to implement the development project.
  - The project plan and duration for implementation, for example the different phases of implementing the project.
  - Full details of the options of resettlement and compensation that the company provides to affected people and if it is reasonable.
  - Who is responsible for the resettlement and eviction notifications.
- Know the function and responsibilities of the government authorities in relation to the project development.
- Know about relevant stakeholders and institutions that may be involved in the project, for example, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and private companies.
- Know the demands and needs of your community in relation to the development project.



- Know about the rights of the citizens and the Cambodian law.
- Know that Cambodian people have the right to participate in decision-making and to demonstrate peacefully under the Cambodia Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as agreed by the Cambodian government.
- Know about the positive and negative impacts of doing advocacy (demanding), for example if there are risks to the safety of community members.
- Know which other institutions can help the community, such as embassies, media, national institutions, national NGOs and international NGOs and the international community.
- Know which media is independent and which media supports the government and company.
- Know which documents prove your legal land ownership and other relevant documents about your land in order to support your case.
- Know when it is an appropriate time and circumstance to do any activity.
- Seek legal advice from NGOs.



## Strategy to collect the information

- Seek information in your own language. Seek translation assistance from NGOs if information is not in your own language.
- Communicate with NGOs in order to get the information that you need.
- Collect information from the media (radio, newspaper, TV), political parties, and from the local authorities.
- Find out information from the company, the project donors or development partners and relevant stakeholders involved with the project development.
- Attend meetings and ask questions! If you know about the purpose of the meeting in advance, prepare the questions your community wants to ask the NGOs, authorities and companies.
- Make sure you analyze and consider all the information you get from the public.
- Make sure the whole community shares all information among each other through community meetings, and ask for feedback from community members.



## Advocacy strategies and activities (strategy for demanding a solution)

- Make sure you protest in a non-violent and peaceful way, for example, sit or stand during protests without using violence, conduct peaceful campaigns and religious ceremonies.
- Have a plan for the advocacy and make sure all community members know about the plan in advance.
- Gather community members and other community networks to support and participate in protest activities. The more people, the stronger your community will be.
- Before conducting any activities, give out information to the media and NGOs. Ask for support and legal advice from NGOs.
- If you know the media, contact them directly. If you do not know the media, ask NGOs to help you to contact the media.
- The community can provide information to the media. The community should also provide the information to the NGOs who can help to clarify the information with national and international media.



- Give information and notice to all human rights NGOs to monitor the community security when doing any protest or other activity.
- Use creative advocacy that could attract the interest of people, local communities and the international community. The Boeung Kak community has used creative strategies to protest to show our feelings and the impact on our community, for example, making pictures of houses and land to show the loss of our house and land, prayers, burning effigies, shaving our hair, using birds' nests as hats, blocking the road, making model prisons, using pictures of the Buddha holding the lotus to represent the peaceful way, and covering our faces. These strategies have helped us to put pressure and provide our message to the public and the media.
- Plan where and when it is appropriate to do advocacy. You need to think about who you need to target with your message, for example, submitting petitions to the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, companies and government institutions which have some responsibility for the project.



- Prepare protest activities on national days and international days, such as women's day, human rights day and international children's day in order to attract public attention to the issue.
- Prepare equipment to support the advocacy activities, such as banners, slogans, loud speakers, flags and others.
- Look for the time or situation or strategy that can put pressure on the company, development partners and government institutions supporting the development.
- File petitions and complaints to embassies and other institutions that may have some influence over the government or company. Therefore they will know about the community problem and request them to raise the issue with the government and other institutions responsible for the development and help find a solution.
- Hold a press conference (local and international media) in order to spread the information and get the attention of the public within the country and internationally around the world.



- ⦿ Talk about the issue on radio to seek support nationally and internationally.
- ⦿ Make sure any information you give to the media is true and not exaggerated.
- ⦿ Women can lead the advocacy activities. In our Boeung Kak community mainly women led the advocacy effectively by conducting non-violent activities.



## Obstacles a community should know about and the solutions

- ◎ Not everyone in the community will be honest including the community representatives and members. If you find that members or community representatives are not honest, hold a vote to elect new leaders, and for the dishonest members try to explain to them not to betray and to be honest with the community.
- ◎ Jealousy between community members can lead to a community becoming divided. If you face this problem be honest and responsible to share all information and explain that every activity has been conducted for the benefit of the community and not for individual benefit.
- ◎ Having a poor livelihood makes it difficult for members to participate in advocacy. If you face this problem try creating a community savings fund or alternative livelihood activities to generate money for the community, or seek funds from outside to support the community.
- ◎ Authorities or company representatives may use money to try to “buy” community representatives or members to split the community. If you face this problem try to have more than one community representative so that it is more difficult to “buy” them. If they buy one, you still have one more.



- Community members may be easily discouraged if they don't see results from their advocacy and activities. If you face this problem, have regular meetings to disseminate new information and progress and to motivate members to participate.
- Getting access to information can be difficult. Be aware that you may not be able to get all the information you need. Seek support from NGOs and relevant stakeholders to help you.
- Your family may discourage and prevent you from being involved in advocacy activities. If you face this problem you should encourage and explain to your family the importance of those activities for the community interest.



- Community members can easily be influenced by rumours, causing confusion between representatives and members. If you face this problem, try to clarify this rumour or information with the community in order to prevent the rumour being spread further.
- Communities often lack knowledge in planning, communication and advocacy. If you face this problem, try and gain experience from other communities or NGOs. Community representatives who gain knowledge through training should share the knowledge to other community members. Let other community members, both men and women, join the training in order to increase their knowledge.



## Achievements of the Boeung Kak community

- The World Bank Inspection Panel found that the complaints of the Boeung Kak community were correct and the World Bank was partly responsible for the Boeung Kak community problem.
- As a result, the World Bank started to support the Boeung Kak community and froze funding to the Cambodian government until the government of Cambodia found a solution to the Boeung Kak case.
- Fifteen of our activists were released from prison.
- We have received 12.44 hectares of land from the government.
- We received land titles for 631 households out of a total of 794 households.
- We were awarded the Global Leadership Award for women leaders from Vital Voices, a US Organization.



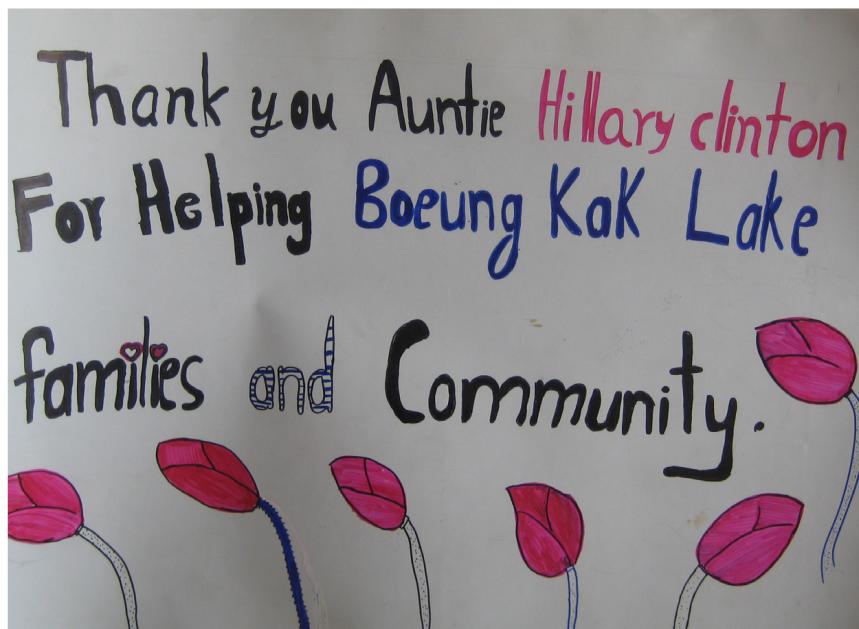
|     |     |    |             |              |                 |                 |
|-----|-----|----|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 175 | 177 | ៩៦ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 176 | 178 | ៩៧ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 177 | 179 | ៩៨ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 178 | 180 | ៩៩ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 179 |     |    |             |              |                 |                 |
| 180 | 181 | ១០ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 181 | 182 | ១១ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 182 | 183 | ១២ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 183 | 184 | ១៣ | សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| 184 |     |    |             |              |                 |                 |

|             |              |                 |                 |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |
| សេវាប្រជាជន | ខេត្តព្រៃទេស | ប៉ែង សាស្ត្ររោង | ប្រព័ន្ធប្រជាជន |



Sharing the advocacy experience of the Boeung Kak community

- We received the Golden Butterfly Award from Amnesty International for the film documentary, “Even a Bird needs a Nest”, about the Boeung Kak community.
- We are known and supported by both the local community and the international community.
- Many of our representatives have attended meetings and shared our experience and information within the country and abroad.
- The international community knows about the human rights violations in Cambodia concerning land.
- Our community now understands that the Royal Government has the obligation to serve the people and not to be the master of us.
- The Boeung Kak community representatives and members know about our rights and the law better than before.



## Contact people

Boeung Kak community representatives and telephone numbers:

1. Ms. Tep Vanny – 012 604 648
2. Mr. Chan Puthisak – 012 910 023
3. Mrs. Kong Chantha - 092 76 96 45
4. Ms. Bov Sophea – 085 462 222
5. Ms. Khek Chanrasmei – 078 787 906
6. Mr. Sou Sophal – 012 808 528
7. Mrs. Bo Chorvy - 017 35 55 75
8. Mrs. Phan Chhunreth - 097 686 9890
9. Ms. Song Sreyaleap – 012 811 093
10. Ms. Nget Khun - 017 360 251

