

Advocacy case studies

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CAMBODIA

COUNTRY:	Cambodia
THEMES:	Land and property; water, sanitation and hygiene
ADVOCACY APPROACHES:	Building relationships; church and community mobilisation

Aim Chantha lives in Ro Vieng village in Svay Rieng province, Cambodia, where he grows rice. He is also the pastor of a local church. The community has experienced problems for many years, but nobody was ever willing to do anything to tackle them, apart from Mr Chantha. However, he had no experience of running community development programmes, had no way to lobby the local authority, and was unable to contribute his own resources because he had very little himself. At one point, he approached the village leader with a proposal to build much-needed local infrastructure using financial and in-kind donations from community members, but it was rejected due to lack of support from the community.

“I was so sad while my desire and plan to help my community was failing,” he says. “My desire was always to mobilise our own resources and do something good for the community.”

Tearfund partner Holistic Development Organisation offered Church and Community Mobilisation training to Mr Chantha and his congregation. This, in turn, led to opportunities to build relationships with the local authority and other agencies to plan and implement community development activities. Mr Chantha now has a very constructive relationship with the village leader, and they meet frequently to discuss the village issues and needs.

Because of Mr Chantha’s honesty, commitment and willingness, the local authority is now collaborating with him, and as a result, numerous development projects have been implemented, such as repairing roads, and installing toilets and water filters. He says that community members, the village leader and church members are now working together, and he has high hopes for the future of his community.