

## Trapang Plang Forestry Community

Svaycheck commune, Angkor Thom district is a forestry community of a total of 232 hectares that benefit 1434 families. The total population is 6932, including 3584 women. These commune residents make a living thorough harvesting in the forest for small rattan, mushrooms, herbs, vegetables, honey, within others. Most of the women are crafts-workers, whose income depend on the resources obtain from the forest. If these areas are cleared, their livelihood would be in danger. Prior to PDP-Center's NRM project, this forestry community experienced conflicts with the military and others in positions of power, who wanted to clear this forest for business. The military tried to intimate residents by showing their weapons, booms, and bringing tanks to the part. They proceeded to threaten to kill anyone who attempted to drive them away from the forest. Community residents and local authorities took action to advocate against the group of soldiers, although they knew they would be taking great risks. After the groups (community residents, leaders and local authorities) worked together to advocate with the Forestry Administration, the military decided to leave the forest.

Even the military left the forest, Trapang Plang forestry community faced complicated issues such as illegal logging, bird trapping, dead trees, and forestry burn etc...The root causes of the issue are lack of knowledge and awareness of community people, poverty, lack of network and cooperation, and no contribution from community people and local authority. However, those problems had been solved when PDP-Center started their activities through Natural Resource Management Project in 2014. PDP-Center conducted various trainings, workshops, forums, and campaigns to community people, old people, youth, teachers, and local authority in aiming to increase knowledge, awareness, and contribution. According to these activities, Trapang Plang forestry community has dramatically transformed on community knowledge, attitude, and contribution especially forestry protection and community development. To illustrate the change of forestry community, Mr. Kmoa Nhanh's story of change is the good evidence.

Mr. Kmoa Nhanh is a committee of forestry community and he is the most active one in protecting the forest and supporting the community development activities. Before, he had never cared how bad his community because he thought it was none of his business and duty to protect forest was local authority and government. But he has changed when PDP-Center started its activities with NRM project in 2014. His knowledge, attitude, contribution, and living condition were rapidly improved from time to time when he had participated in training, workshop, and other NRM activities.



He said "I feel so appreciated with my community now because I see much progress related to forestry protection. If we still keep good protecting and preserving the forest, the living condition of community people will be existed because they can earn much money from collecting small rattans, mushrooms, herbs, vegetables, and honey. For example, my wife can earn at least 20,000 Riel to 30,000 Riel from handicraft. Due to the important of forest and knowledge I got from PDP-Center, I have strong commitment in protecting the forest through actively patrolling with forestry group both daytime and night time."

He added that even my neighbor stopped migrating to Thailand because he had earned much money from digging potato in community forest.