



Success Story Monks Have the Right to Vote



Monks shown their identification doc

Six monks reside at Sopheak Mongkol pagoda in Sangkat O. Ambel, Serey Sophorn municipality, Banteay Mean Chey province could not register their names to vote, due to the Sangkat Chief refusal to issue the identification document required to register as a voter. **Mr. Chhum Pich, Sangkat Chief** informed the following to the monk: “monks do not have the right to vote; monks have to be neutral in all political affairs.”

After obtaining this information on September 9, 2016, focal youth in Sangkat O. Ambel that received advocacy training from PDP-Center accompanying by PDP-Center’s trainer went to meet Mr. Chhum Pich, the Sangkat Chief, to discuss this issue and explain the law in regards to the rights of all citizens to participate in voting, including monks. Even though our local youth group and trainer tried to explain Mr. Chhum Pich again and again he still denied to the issuance of identification document to monks.

According to decision-maker mapping during the advocacy training; focal youth and PDP-Center’s trainer found that the hierarchy that is higher than Sangkat Council is Provincial Election Committee (PEC), so focal youth and PDP-Center trainer personally called PEC with a request to intervene in this incident. PEC proceeded to call the Sangkat Chief and requested the registration of the monks to vote, as protected by the law. After the intervention from PEC, **Mr. Chhum Pich** agreed to issue the identification document for six monks, who were able to register as voters on September 15, 2016 in Sangkat O. Ambel.

The six monks are happy after they received identification documents from Sangkat Council to register their names. One of six monks said “even we are monks we still a citizen of this country and the political decision-making is also affected us, so our rights to vote is important.”

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