Action Planning of Boeung Chunlen Reservoir Community Fishery

A Case Study
Boeung Chunlen Village, Russey Chroy Commune,
Mokampool District, Kandal Province, Cambodia

Research and Written by:
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Heng Ponley
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Boeung Chunlen reservoir is located in Boeung Chunlen Village, Russey Chroy Commune, Mokampool District of Kandal Province. There are five villages around the reservoir forming the community fisheries. Community fisheries in Boeung Chunlen was established with the facilitation of the Management of Reservoir and River Fisheries Project (MRRF) and support from the Provincial Reservoir and Fisheries Project of the Department of Fisheries. A Fisheries Committee was elected in each village, and these were officially recognized in 2001. The Community Committee of the five villages is implementing a joint plan to manage fisheries resources within the Boeung Chunlen Reservoir in a sustainable manner. The case study presents the importance of participation from all stakeholders in the successful implementation of the project.

Sustainable natural resources management cannot be achieved if there is not active involvement of all relevant institutions, local authorities and especially the local community. Participation from all stakeholders has significantly contributed to the implementation of the community fisheries in Boeung Chunlen. Community members, local authorities and other stakeholders, such as the Fisheries Department and MRRF, were involved in the establishment of the conservation area, development of the work plan, patrol team formation and capacity building.

Capacity building through training courses and study tours to other places allowed the Management Committee to learn new experiences about fisheries resource management that they can apply in Boeung Chunlen. It also enable them to share their own expertise with others.

With all the relevant stakeholders actively participating in the project there is increased chances of long-term sustainable natural resource management in the area. Additionally, the participatory implementation of the work plan has reduced the negative impacts of participation, namely the loss of time from income generating activities.

With this success, local people are very enthusiastic and happily surprised that fisheries have been conserved abundantly for them.
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Preface

The Case Study Process

The CBNRM Initiative plays an important role in providing basic skills for PRA research, analysis of information, writing and documentation, to a growing group of Cambodian professionals. In response to an increasing demand from various partners to document their experiences and lessons learned in relation to natural resource management, the CBNRM Initiative has conducted a series of training courses on case study writing.

The first major training workshop on case study writing was in Siem Reap in July 2001. This event brought numerous stakeholders, some who had not come together for a decade, to discuss natural resource management experiences, analyse CBNRM concepts, and learn how to write a case study using a 10 step case study writing tool kit. A proceedings report called “Stories from the Tonlé Sap” and a revised Case Study Writing Tool Kit were produced that, together with the positive learning experience, generated demand for another training workshop in Ratanakiri in November 2001. This workshop produced the “Stories from the Uplands of Ratanakiri” Case Study Training report and an updated version of the Case Study Writing Tool Kit.

In May 2002, the CBNRM Initiative co-facilitated a Synthesis and Reflection Workshop in Koh Kong to review the draft case studies with the local partners and related stakeholders. In November 2002, a national CBNRM workshop was held in Phnom Penh to present the case studies and lessons learned and to start thinking about next steps for action on CBNRM in Cambodia. In October 2003, CBNRM, in cooperation with PMMR and CFRP projects, organised the third training workshop on case study writing in Phnom Penh. Hot topics around Cambodia were brought together by participants from different organizations to be discussed and documented. At the regional level, Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC) organised two trainings on ‘Pen to Paper’. After the second training course, a case study on land concession issues was developed. The training manual on case study writing has been adopted by RECOFTC and published for use at the regional level.

The training courses and process of data collection, analysis and documentation provided an opportunity for the participants to learn from each other’s experiences and, equally significant, it provided a forum for them to build a network to strengthen natural resource management in Cambodia. More importantly, the result of the case studies will be used as major references for researchers and CBNRM practitioners to learn from experiences and the lessons learned. Together, these case studies create a body of information so that others can replicate the lessons learned and continue to improve various models of natural resource management.

The views expressed in the following case study are those of the authors and are not necessarily reflective of the CBNRM Initiative or supporting partners.
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ACTION PLANNING OF BOEUNG CHUNLEN COMMUNITY FISHERY

Village community planning is successful due to the active involvement of the community

1. Introduction

Boeung Chunlen reservoir is located in Boeung Chunlen Village, Russey Chroy Commune, Mokampool District of Kandal Province. It is approximately 30 km from Phnom Penh, along National Route No. 6. The reservoir is 300 ha in size and is 2 to 6 meters in depth. The reservoir was dug between 1975 and 1979 during the Pol Pot time. Five villages surround the reservoir forming the community fisheries:

- Boeung Chunlen,
- Chroy Metrey Krom,
- Chroy Metrey Leur,
- Russey Chroy, and
- Cheur.

According to the Boeung Chunlen Village Chief, in 2001 the five villages in the commune consisted of 1,343 families with the total population of 6,936 out of which 3,562 were women. In Boue ng Chunlen Village there were 447 community members, of which 197 were women.

The main business activity of people in the area is agriculture. Fishing is the secondary activity. Chroy Metrey Leur village is an exception as it depends mainly on fishing as the primary income-generating activity. The Community Fisheries was formed with support from the Provincial Reservoir and Fisheries Project of the Department of Fisheries. A Fisheries Committee was elected from each village. The Community Committee of the five villages is implementing a joint plan to manage fisheries resources within the Boeung Chunlen reservoir in a sustainable manner.

Background of Boeung Chunlen

According to Mr. So Heang, aged 54 years old, Chief of Boeung Chunlen Village, there was a holy man named Ta Boas, around 30 years old. His homeland was unknown. He always dressed in white (Kansil 10). He had stopped his journey and was meditating in the Tuol Korki forest to the west of the boeung (lake).

During that time the Tuol Korki forest was abundant with Korki trees where one tree measured 10-arm-stretches in size, equal to 5 stretches of a monk’s robe connecting one another to surround the tree trunk.

Time after time, the villagers found the holy man staying in the forest area (Tuol Prey Korki), and people began calling the area a Prey Tanen or Tanen village. Until 1978 villagers called the area Tanen Lake. After this date people from Boeung Tanen village started going to Koh Rarka village to collect earth worms (called chunlen in Khmer) to use as bait for fishing in Boeung Tanen. These people began calling the area Boeung Chulen. Since then the village has been known as Boeung Chunlen.

What is required to ensure the smooth implementation of the Boeung Chunlen Community Fisheries plan?

The implementation of community plan can be successful only with the active participation of local people, local authority, relevant technical institutions and support of NGOs. All of these groups actively participated in developing the community regulations, workplan, formation of the patrol team form, protecting the conservation area, capacity building, participating in office construction, estimating fish cost and participation in research. This case study will present the importance of participation from all stakeholders in the implementation of the project.
2. Main Activities Implemented by Boeung Chunlen Community

2.1. Community Regulations Developed in Participation with all Stakeholders
In 2001, the fisheries reform policy was implemented by declaration of Samdech Prime Minister, and some fishing plots were immediately taken and handed over to villagers for family fishing. At present, the Royal Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as well as local authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders are working together with great effort to implement a new concept of community fisheries or co-management.

To further the goal of the fisheries reform policy, Community Fisheries (in Boeung Chunlen) was established by the Management of Reservoir and River Fisheries Project (MRRF). The initiative was officially recognized in 2001. The local community and village chief participated in the development of the community fisheries by-laws. Since their promulgation, the statutes and regulations have been disseminated to villagers, outsiders and relevant institutions working within Ang Teuk area. Two signboards were constructed and erected in the community for displaying documents, photos, community fisheries statutes, regulations, announcements and guidelines related to the community fisheries. Widespread participation has significantly contributed to the implementation of a community fisheries management plan in this area. Illegal activities have been reduced after dissemination of the community fisheries by-laws because local communities now understand how to the benefits of conserving fisheries resources.

2.2. Developing a Work Plan
With the facilitation of project staff, the committee members developed a work plan. The work plan was further discussed with community members in order to add some missing points.

2.3. Forming a Patrol team
In order to deal with fisheries crimes occurring within the community lake, the committee formed a special patrol team. The members were selected from the village patrol team. The team regularly patrols to prevent fishing crimes such as use of illegal fishing methods like bamboo or wooden barricade (Samras), electric shock, cylindrical drum trap (Lop Sbey Moun), small mesh gill net (Mong Krarla Touch), scooping basket (Cheang), and fishing in the conservation area.

All actions taken by the committee and members to prevent fishing crimes within the reservoir have been supported with the full cooperation of local authorities, and competent and relevant institutions. In this regard, the provincial fisheries office provided two boats for the community for patrolling. Establishing a patrol team is a strategy that has contributed to the reduction of illegal fishing activities within the area.
"Preventing the use of illegal fishing gear resulted in an increase in the number of fish" Mr. Pha Chak, chief of Cheur Teal Community Fisheries.

"I am satisfied with the establishment of community fisheries and I am willing to be involved in preventing the fisheries crimes", Uncle Soy Sim, a fisherman, living in Boeung Chunlen village, and Russey Chroy commune.

"Preventing the use of illegal fishing gear resulted in an increase in the number of fish" Mr. Pha Chak, chief of Cheur Teal Community Fisheries.

2003

2.4. Creating a Conservation Area

The community has one conservation area located in front of Tuol Korki, where the water is deep enough to be used for fish habitat. The conservation area was created as the result of discussions amongst the committee, local authorities, the reservoir management committee and fisheries experts. First, the location, size and situation of the reservoir were identified. Then, ideas and information about the area were disseminated to people in order that they could become involved in the conservation activity.

The Reservoir Management Committee is responsible for conserving water and opening and closing the water gate to irrigate people’s agricultural crops. In terms of capital for the conservation work, the community has contributed labor. The Management of Reservoir and River Fisheries project (MRRF) provides financial support.

The community committee has produced signs to warn people not to pass through the area or fish in the conservation area. They also produced a large signboard encouraging people to actively help conserve fisheries resources with support from project staff. When the conservation area was established, people wondered if the community fisheries committee would use Samras (barricade) to catch fish for their own benefit. On the contrary, people found that there were more fish abundant in the conservation area, and people respected the new regulation and did not seek private benefits. The community committee worked closely with the patrol team to protect fisheries resources in the reservoir and local people are very enthusiastic and happily surprised that fisheries have been conserved abundantly for them.

In addition, the committee and members of the community fisheries cooperated with the local authorities to organize a fish fingerling releasing ceremony with a total of approximately 30,000 fingerlings released. Species included:
- Striped catfish or Trey Pra (*Pangasius micronensus*)
- Common silver barb or Tery Chpin (*Puntius goni-notus*)
- Krom (*Osteochilus*)
- Chrar Keang
- Greater black shark or Trey Kaek (*Horulius chrysophekadion*)
- Yellow mystus or Trey Chlaing (*Mystus nemurus*)
- Tinfoil barb or Trey Kra Her (*Puntius altus*)
- Marbled sleepy goby or Trey Damrey (*Oycleotris marmoratus*)

The fingerlings were provided by the Provincial Fisheries Office and MRRF. The joint effort has a goal of conserving fish species in the reservoir and increasing fish catch. Fisheries resources in the conservation area cannot be maintained if there is no participation from the local community to use and manage these resources sustainably.
2.5. Capacity Building

Capacity building for the local community is a priority as it enables the community to have the ability to manage their own resources in the area. After a community fishery was established in Boeung Chunlen, committee members attended a training course and participated in study tours that were organized and sponsored by MRRF. In addition to their traditional knowledge, they gained more understanding by sharing experiences between facilitators and other community members while they attended the training course and study tours. This is the main contribution to improve the implementation of the work plan effectively and sustainably. The community committee has been involved in:

- Training course on facilitation skills on fisheries law and legal procedures in suppressing fishing crimes. The Community Fisheries Committee of Phay Village, Kampong Chhnang Province, was also invited to participate in the training to discuss and share experiences.
- Study tour to community fisheries in Phay Village, Kampong Chhnang Province and organized a reception for national and international visitors visiting Beoung Chunlen reservoir.
- The Chief of Boeung Chunlen Community Fisheries participated in a conference for fishing people within the Mekong River, conducted at the Continental Restaurant in Prek Leap.
- The Deputy Chief of Boeung Chunlen Community Fisheries participated in a training course on peace building and conflict resolution at CDRI, Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh.

2.6. Constructing an Office

The construction of an office was very helpful. The office functions as a meeting room and working space for committee members as well as a visiting center for students, national and international visitors who come to visit this area. The office was built with the active support of the local community. The local pagoda contributed space and materials. Some financial support came from MRRF. Some visitors also contributed funds. The office is 7m x 4m and has cement columns, a wooden floor and a corrugated iron roof. There are still no walls but construction will resume once there are more funds. Despite the fact that the office has not yet been totally completed, it still provides a useful meeting space for the community committee.
2.7. Estimating the Fish Catch

The objective of estimating the number of fish caught in the fishing area was to develop a fisheries management plan in a sustainable manner. Every year, the community committee meets to estimate the quantity of fish caught from the reservoir according to each type of fishing gear. The exercise is facilitated by MRRF’s staff. Results of the meetings show that the productivity of fish in the reservoir has increased annually. Before fisheries conservation they could catch 0.7 kg/day (100 m net). Now they can catch up to 0.8 kg/day.

Within the conservation area of the reservoir, we can see schools of fish swimming such as white lady carp or Trey Lign (*Thynnichthys thynnoides*), Jullien’s mud carp or Trey Riel (*Cirrhinus jullieni*), Kanlang and other kinds of fish.

2.8. Research to Prevent Environmental Pollution, which Impacts on Fish Resources in the Dry Season

Prior to this project the flow of waste and chemical pollutants draining into the reservoir had significantly increased, and the environment in the area was polluted. Consequently, some fish species died. In order to stop the contamination, the community fisheries committee, local authorities and fisher people collaborated to prevent environmental pollution. All cooperated in carrying out a survey to identify the sources of the pollution. In particular the group looked at the drainage of polluting liquids from a nearby Arabic school, lotus planting and as well as other plantations within the community boundary where pesticide use is common. These cases have been recorded and sent to the fisheries institution to resolve according to legal procedures.

3. Encouragement for Participation

In order to encourage the participation of the local community, particularly of committee members, MRRF provided funds to the fisheries management committee to form a fishing net selling team. The income from net selling is used for village development, for meeting expenses, and provided to committee members during traditional ceremonies.

The income generated from this business activity of the Boeung Chunlen Reservoir Committee is one way to encourage the participation of community members. The activity generates income for the community. The fishing nets are paid in installments over 1-2 months by poor people, widows and any community members who cannot afford to pay immediately. So far, the fishing net selling is going well.
because 90% of people in the village are involved in fishing. The fish net selling was started with capital of US$100. The community members regularly contribute 10,000 riels per month into the community account. The rest of the money is shared among the fishing net selling team. The capital in creating this business was supported by MRRF and the community committee.

4. Constraints Faced by the Community

- The workshop was too short and was conducted during paddy harvesting season when people are very busy
- Lack of funds for constructing a water-gate to keep water in the reservoir for long-term use
- Irregular patrol by the community fisheries committee and the patrol team
- Lack of means and financial support for patrolling and implementing the plan
- Community people have ideas to set up new business activities to generate income, but lack financial support.

Strengths

- The committee has no salary or bonus but they try hard to enable community work to move forward
- Some funds have been obtained from charitable visitors - both nationals and foreigners
- Committee members are not involved in fishing crimes
- Illegal fishing activities within the reservoir have declined
- A conservation area and special patrol team have been set up
- The patrol team and community committee are involved in regular patrolling.

Weakness

- The community fisheries committee do not have enough capacity to prevent illegal fishing activities
- Committee and patrol members must look after their own livelihoods and may not have time for patrolling
- Community members are afraid to report illegal fishing due to intimidation
- The community is located far from the provincial town and communication is difficult
- Many community member have poor living conditions, and the use of destructive fishing methods has impacted negatively in the short term.
- Poor communication
- Some people do not follow the community rules and regulations

Opportunities

- Local authority is supportive and satisfied in collaborating with the community
- The community is supported by MRRF
- The provincial fisheries office supports the community
- The community is often visited by national and international visitors

Constraints

- The sub-decree on community fisheries is not yet in place
- The new fisheries law has not yet been approved
- Offenders still ignore the fishing regulations
- Offenders are protected by armed people
5. Conclusions
Sustainable natural resources management cannot be achieved without the active involvement of all relevant institutions, local authorities, and especially the local community. Participation from all stakeholders has significantly contributed to the implementation of the community fisheries in Boeung Chunlen. Community members, local authority and other stakeholders such as the fisheries department and MRRF were involved in the establishment of the conservation area, development of the work plan, forming the patrol team and capacity building.

Capacity building through training courses and study tours to other places enabled the management committee to learn new experiences about fisheries resource management that they can apply in Boeung Chunlen. It also enabled them to share their own expertise with others.

With all the relevant stakeholders actively participating in the project there is increased chances of long-term sustainable natural resource management in the area. Additionally, the participatory implementation of the work plan has reduced the negative impacts of participation, namely the loss of time from income generating activities.

6. Recommendations
1. Local authority should closely collaborate with the community to suppress illegal fishing (Note: Mr. Lim Saing Heng, District Agricultural Official, commented during the meeting for community members that the suppression and prevention of illegal fishing will be successful if all members of the community collaborate to report to the local authority about those involved in illegal fishing activities. This enables the local authority (district level) to take appropriate measures to deal with them).
2. Find out means to enable the community to make its own income which can be used for development purposes.
3. There should be an incentive for the community committee and members for their active involvement and smooth operation.
4. The facilitator should build trust and closeness with villagers and community to share experiences about different types of work.
Appendix 1: Map of Boeung Chunlen Location
Appendix 2:

Boeung Chunlen Reservoir Plan for 2002
November 19, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Resolution or Activity</th>
<th>Immediate work</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Person in charge</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of fish species and quantity of fish caught decreased</td>
<td>Catching Sdoar fingerlings and using illegal fishing tools</td>
<td>Fisher people help promoting the law</td>
<td>- Developing fisheries by-law for the reservoir; - Meeting with villagers - Setting up patrol team for the reservoir; - Installing signs post; and - Guarding</td>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Phoung Sopheap</td>
<td>17/06/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish died</td>
<td>Polluted water drained out from the market and Arabic school. Fish died and sick due to hot water in the dry season. Duck farming is increasing with abundant grass and alluvium soil. Planting lotus by using pesticides.</td>
<td>Conduct training course on environment in the reservoir Research on fish mortality</td>
<td>- Selecting participants; - Selecting experienced people; - Preparing and arranging training space; - Facilitating the training; - Cooperating with the experts to study the cause of dead fish; and - Preparing documents and reports.</td>
<td>Labor Place</td>
<td>Teav Kimhong</td>
<td>23/12/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish escape through the</td>
<td>No cast net or Samras to</td>
<td>Using cast net and Samras</td>
<td>- Field trip - Writing proposal</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Phean Sok</td>
<td>22/04/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Description</td>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>Responsible party</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water gate when open in the rainy season</td>
<td>To prevent fish to escape when the water gate is opened.</td>
<td>- Meeting with the technical staff and experts from the Dept. - Implementing plan</td>
<td>Paper, pen, budget provided during implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No habitat for breeding</td>
<td>People cutting flooded forest in the breeding season. Fish have no habitat to breed in this will result in no fish stock. Establishing artificial habitat or regular conservation area in the reservoir.</td>
<td>- Specify the location; - Meeting with Fisheries Dept. - Planning; - Installing sign post; - Disseminating information; - Guarding</td>
<td>Labor Contribution from villagers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People stole fishing tools</td>
<td>Poor people have no income. Promoting the law against robbers. Change of livelihood.</td>
<td>- Collaborating with police; - Identify poor people; - Meeting to prepare main activity; - Study the activity that can be achieved; - Writing proposal; - Implementing activity.</td>
<td>Labor, Police, Food, Materials, Technical staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low price of fish</td>
<td>Fisher people sell fish at low price in the village due to lack of money for traveling and buying more fish at Thom market. Providing and advancing money.</td>
<td>- Studying the activity that can be done; - Meeting with women and organizing loaning; - Writing proposal; - Implementing activity.</td>
<td>Labor, Material, Technical staff, Budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Phuong Sophea 17/02/02
Phan Sok 01/05/02 10/10/02
Tan Meng 02/08/02
Appendix 3: Community Fisheries Development Office (CFDO)

The CFDO of the Department of Fisheries envisages the establishment of strong, self-reliant Community Fisheries throughout Cambodia who have equitable access to and manage in a sustainable manner, fishery resources in partnership with capable and service-oriented staff from the CFDO and provincial fishery offices, thereby improving fisheries dependent livelihoods.

The main future plans and strategies of CFDO as well as potential areas for collaboration include the following:

- **General:**
  - Improvement of communication and cooperation with provincial offices and Community Fisheries.
  - Build up support within the DoF and other government agencies on Community Fisheries management
  - Strengthen coordination with NGOs and IOs working in Community Fisheries management
  - Improve coordination and complementation of activities implemented by various projects and donors

- **Legal and Accreditation**
  - Approval of the sub-decree on Community Fisheries
  - Formulation of implementing guidelines and policies on the various aspects of the sub-decree on Community Fisheries such as by-laws, rules, regulation, election of committee etc.
  - Community Fisheries Sub-decree dissemination and extension activities

- **Research and Development**
  - Community Fisheries Establishment:
    - Formulation of CF management planning and implementation guidelines
    - Identify alternative livelihood activities that Community Fisheries can undertake in order to be sustainable (poverty alleviation)
  - Capacity building in CFDO, provincial offices, CFDU’s and Community Fisheries

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**
  - Set up of monitoring system on projects and activities on Community Fisheries
  - Set up of a database on Community Fisheries in coordination with other NGO’s and institutions
  - Work with the legal and accreditation section on formulating mechanisms for appropriate dispute/conflict resolution.
Appendix 2

Community Based Natural Resource Management Initiative (CBNRM Initiative) Organizational Profile

OVERALL GOAL
The overall goal of the CBNRM Initiative is to analyze and improve CBNRM as an integral component of the poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods and resource management, conservation, and decentralization policies and strategies of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

OBJECTIVES
1. Human Resources Development - To build conceptual, analytical, research, and documentation skills of facilitators, researchers and practitioners within relevant NGO and Government partners at national, provincial and local levels.

2. Knowledge Building and Sharing - To identify, analyze, and share lessons and experiences of various approaches to community based natural resource management across the country.

3. Partnership Building - To build networking linkages among organizations and institutions supporting community based resource management strategies at local, national and regional levels.

4. Institutional Arrangements and Policy Support - To improve institutional capacity and understanding of the policy context which influences community based natural resource management practices at the field level.

CBNRM Learning Initiative Program focuses on:
- Community Forestry
- Co-Management of Fisheries
- Participatory Land Use Planning
- Community-based Protected Area Management
- Participatory Water Resources Management.

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