

Project Update: February 2009

Objectives:

To organize stakeholders' consultations on the creation of fish sanctuary in Trapeang Thma reservoir

- Fully achieved - Seventy one participants including (i) local authorities (Poy Char commune head, village heads, commune councils, communal police); (ii) local communities (Trapeang Thma fishery community management committee, village elders, villagers-fishers); and (iii) non-governmental organization (wildlife conservation society-Cambodia program) attended the meeting which was held on 25 August 2008 at Paoy Char pagoda in Phnum Srok district, Banteay Meanchey province. At the meeting, they discussed, then agreed and endorsed creation of a fish sanctuary in Lou Suong in the reservoir covering a total size of 150ha. Although the provincial fisheries office was absent, but it said it supported the project.

Disseminate information and raise public awareness on community fishery management to the public in surrounding communities of Trapeang Thma reservoir

- Fully achieved - To have the public's attention on the newly established fish sanctuary and the existing local community fishery rules and regulations which prohibit fishing practices which are incompatible with sustainability. A total number of 17village-level meetings were conducted. A total number of 1,235 (608 female) villagers-fishers in 25 villages of three communes namely Paoy Char, Ponley and Nam Taov in Phnum Srok district, Banteay Mean Chey province had attended the public campaigns. Financial support from Rufford small grant to enable the campaigns were highlighted and acknowledged at all the meetings. Grant logo was also displayed.

No of participants	Date	Place of meeting
64 (14F)	1Sept2008	Pongro
66 (28F)	2Sept2008	Sambour
55 (22F)	4Sept2008	Ta Ong
66 (19F)	22Sept2008	Paoy Snuol
62 (37F)	23Sept2008	Paoy Char
98 (45F)	24Sept2008	Wat Trapeang Thma
58 (37F)	25Sept2008	Boeung Reang
20 (4F)	26Sept2008	Trapeang Pheas
157 (100F)	26Sept2008	Wat Sovankiri Konkhlaeng
62 (19F)	3Oct2008	Kok Ta Sok
85 (9F)	3Oct2008	Po Ram Bon
74 (48F)	4Oct2008	Svay Khmaov
82 (50F)	4Oct2008	Ta Vaung
100 (67F)	5Oct2008	Ponley
28 (15F)	5Oct2008	Chhuk Ang
51 (24F)	12Oct2008	Yeang Odom
107 (70F)	12Oct2008	Yeang Odom
1,235 (608Female)		

Few weeks after the campaigns, Trapeang Thma community fishery in cooperation with local authorities including communal police and commune councils confiscated a total number of 13 electrocution devices.

The meetings had provided good opportunities for the local communities to interact and to voice their concerns and to discuss solutions altogether.

Demarcate physical boundaries of sanctuary

- Fully achieved - A total number of 90 wooden poles, (diameter of 10-13cm, and height of 2-4m) are put on ground (distance from each pole is around 50m) to mark physical boundaries of a newly created fish sanctuary in total size of 150ha. Wood is believed to be lasted at least ten years while standing in the water.

Prepare and put sign boards on ground

- Partially achieved - A total number of 11 sign boards: 1 big board with the size of 80cm x 100cm, and 10 small boards (30cm x 60cm) are under preparation. Message on the big board reads as follows:
 - Help protect and conserve Lou Suong fish sanctuary for our next generations
 - by Trapeang Thma community fishery in cooperation with Fisheries Administration and local authority
 - Funded by Rufford small grant (logo)
 - The board is to be displayed nearby the sanctuary along the main dyke of the reservoir where it is visible by the public.
 - Small boards with the message of "fishing in this area is prohibited" will be put on wooden poles around the sanctuary.

Produce administrative map of sanctuary

- Partially achieved - An administrative map of the reservoir indicating fish sanctuaries will be produced after GPS exercises on ground to generate coordinates are completed.

Conduct local study visits for Trapeang Thma community fishery management committee to exchange experience.

- Partially achieved - Place and date of visit are to be determined and finalized. Delivery methods are to be discussed.

Difficulties to date:

Affected communities from Paoy Char and Ponley communes at first disagreed on the location and boundaries of a new fish sanctuary to be created since they have lost their fishing ground.

Local authorities including commune heads and community fishery management committee had organized meetings, and explained about the project objective and negotiated with affected people. And, they agreed to make some adjustment as per request by fisher folks.

The final agreement between affected fishing communities and Trapeang Thma Community Fishery has been finally reached after negotiations and wooden poles were removed and boundaries were re-determined. Participation of representatives of those affected communities on ground to mark physical boundaries of a sanctuary was solicited.

Fisher folks are now happy with creation of the fish sanctuary since they see future benefits for their livelihoods.

Fluctuation of currency e.g., Pound sterling against US dollars affects project execution (see budget item 8).

Community benefits:

According with the head of Paoy Char commune who represents local authorities, there is around 80% of total population in the surrounding communities of the reservoir who depend on wild aquatics to earn livings have supported the management activities of Trapeang Thma community fishery and follow local rules and regulations in term of resources use and access. They support the creation of sanctuary and feel happy to see future benefits for their next generations. Local people have participated in dissemination of information to other fisher folks to protect and conserve the resources through an effective mean of mouth-to-mouth or daily face-to-face communication. Another 20% are among those who still commit illegal fishing activities such as electrocution, catching brood fish and exploitation of fish fries and fingerlings due to local poverty and lack of alternatives to earn livings.

The project supports creation of fish sanctuaries and raise public awareness. The support contributes to sustainable use and management of fisheries resources for local benefits. It contribute to reduce migration out of villages (fishing and collecting other wild aquatic products provides local employment and sources of income and food consumption for local people). The local society can also be safe (e.g., reduction in social violation which can be caused by unemployment and shortage of food).

Sharing your work:

The lessons learned from and results of the project can be shared with other local community-based fisheries management through the organization and conduct of study visit for Trapeang Thma community fishery management committee. The committee can explain and share experience to the neighbouring communities who wish to learn and establish community-based management of their communal resources (there have been requests from three commune heads of Nam Taov, Phnum Dey and Spean Sraeng to the committee).

The results can also be presented at local or national workshops or seminars.

Next steps:

- Continue to raise public awareness
- Continue to implement local management rules and regulations to reduce illegal fishing activities including electrocution, exploitation of fries and fingerlings through giving rewards or incentives to local cooperative partners such as communal police, commune councils and local network (fishers in the surrounding villages of the reservoir who report and communicate with the Trapeang Thma community fishery on any illegal fishing practices).
- Provide training and support of aquaculture techniques to local communities
- Continue to improve capacity of management committee and sub-committee in undertaking community fisheries