



MISSIONS IMPACT

TRAINING IN MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION FOR AN ECOTOURISM PROJECT – CAMBODIA

In 2013, not so many tourists were interested in community ecotourism business in Cambodia and CWDC staff had limited skills in marketing and communication. Therefore, it was decided to organize a mission with Planète Urgence volunteers to support CWDC staff members to improve their knowledge on those issues. The objective was “to gain more confidence to promote the ecotourism project, in order to transfer the knowledge to community members”. The community could get more income from tourism service to improve their living conditions and preserve the mangrove forest.

ORGANIZATION AND BENEFICIARIES

Children and Women Development Center in Cambodia is a local NGO, created in 2005 by a group of former Cambodian staff of UNESCO. It is working in two districts in Southern Cambodia. The NGO aims to improve the quality of life for vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

In the coastal areas, the current development introduced through land concession for economic development and other investment activities related to natural resources, has generated more concerns over the loss of families lands, decrease in community natural resources, non-timber forest products as well as fishery resources. These problems have been further exacerbated by the current climate change, which could impact directly on the level of production and income of the vulnerable farmers and fishermen.



Fisherman from the community

Hence, CWDC has started a project to implement the creation of an eco-tourism project (the Cambo-Ecotour project), aimed to support financially the community and make their income more sustainable.

KEY DATAS

14
missions between
2013 and 2016

80%
of direct project
management by the
community

10
times more tourists
in 3 years

2
short video reports
from local media

5000 \$
from the benefits given
back to the community
in 2016

Planète Urgence supports this component by organizing some missions which tend to build with the CWGCC's team a marketing/communication strategy for the Cambo-Ecotour project. Between 2013 and 2016, 14 volunteers came to Trapaing Sangke village to support the NGO's staff as well as the community members in their ecotourism project communication strategy and overall project management.

THE MISSIONS PROCESS

Between 2013 and 2016, the mission evolved through different phases : assessment of the marketing & communication needs, training in basic marketing and external communication theory, creation of project management and communication tools, good service and costumers retaining, improvement of the community involvement as well as project monitoring from CWGCC. As time was passing and CWGCC team was renewing, some updates in the different topics covered were necessary.

The conceptualization

The first missions were the opportunity for the volunteers to make an assessment about the project situation, which showed that the ecotourism project was still at its early stage. Marketing theory and external communication basic knowledge were then presented to the CWGCC's team and the community, first to define a clear marketing strategic positioning, secondly to widen the project visibility.

It finally allows to introduce a pricing tool which would enable the beneficiaries to calculate their expenditures and benefits, also 4 distinct tours were defined based on communities resources.

The promotion

As the offer was clearly defined, the following missions focused on training in creation and update of external communication tools, such as leaflets for tourists which could be distributed to hotels and restaurants previously identified, and creation of social media accounts (Facebook, Youtube, ...). Promotion over international travel books to attract more foreign costumers was also encouraged.

The capacity building

The Cambo-ecotour which was launched by CWGCC, aims to support the mangrove protection project as well as provide more sustainable income to the community.

To that end, it is aimed to be totally managed by the community. Therefore, starting from the end of 2015, as CWGCC wanted to be less involved in the Cambo-ecotour project, interventions of volunteers were organized to strengthen the involvement and participation of the Trapaing Sangke community members. At the same time, CWGCC's team was trained in project monitoring in order to follow-up the ecotourism project management by the community.

Finally, the very last missions focused on training the community in maintaining a good service and and on "how to make a regular analysis of costumers feedbacks as well as techniques of hospitality and welcoming". In addition, work has been made with CWGCC's team and the Trapaing Sangke overall community on how to think and apply waste management and environment protection awareness to the project.

Mangrove nursery



THE IMPACTS RESULTS

All the participants could testify of significant improvements related to PU volunteers interventions.

Concerning Trapaing Sangke community, the members involved in the project identified 3 main areas in which they acquired or improved their expertise :

- how to manage in a practical way a tourism project : Human Resources organization and involvement, use of a pricing tool, booking and welcoming techniques.

- how to construct an overall external communication strategy to support the project and widen its visibility, especially : how to define a clear offer, the importance to diversify communication tools, to always be aware of the competitors offers, as well as to identify strategic partners.

- creation and update of communication tools : leaflets and social media networks.

From the community leader point of view, *“leaflets and social media were the most interesting outcomes, as the community has all the information but can’t communicate about them. It shows tourists what is interesting to do in Trapaing Sangke if they come”*, as Mr HIM, the community leader, explains.

Above all communication tools, they thought Facebook worked the most efficiently to attract tourists, then leaflets and word of mouth. After a while and as the communication around the project grew, even the Kampot district department of tourism supported them and communicated about the project. 2 short video reports from local media were also produced.

Today, the community stopped the leaflets distribution, as a lot of local and foreign tours companies know the project. However, the Facebook and Youtube accounts are still managed by Mr HIM.

The CWGCC team on the other hand appreciated the training of volunteers in project management and monitoring, as it supported their efforts in withdrawing from the ecotourism project direct management.

Today, apart from a little bit of financial or technical support from CWGCC (for construction or transport (boat for example)), the project is mostly run by the Trapaing Sangke community (up to 80%), who gets a direct income from it.

For Mr LENG, project manager for CWGCC, *“the*

partnership with Planète Urgence on this project was important, as it enabled to have an external and expert point of view, to develop the community together. Volunteers came with ideas and knowledge which worked, and CWGCC supported their implementation or, if needed, worked as an intermediary to ask for funds.”

The community was also interested about the methodology adopted by the volunteers, which was the opportunity of personal exchanges and team work : *“The community thought PU volunteers overall had a good technical expertise. But the Solidarity Leave model is not just funds or ideas, there are interactions. Volunteers came to visit the site, discussed with the community about the situation, exposed their ideas and validated with the community. If this one was ok, they showed us how to do.”*, says Mr HIM.

From a broader perspective, the project outcomes are significant. It increased the community’s income as well as participated to the protection of the mangrove forest and its fishery resources. 20% of the benefits is given back to the 700 Trapaing Sangke community members to cover the common electricity, repair work, and supporting the community vulnerable families. In 2016 , the benefits involved back to the community amounted to 5 000\$/ year.

As the project grew bigger, CWGCC and Planète Urgence decided to stop organizing support missions in Trapaing Sangke community in mid-2016.



Ecolodge in Trapaing Sangke

Project Form 1710 – Capacity building for adults

A mission of Solidarity Leave is part of a project implemented by a local partner and established on the basis of previously identified needs. The indicators and monitoring criteria are defined with the local partner. This form presents the impacts of Planète urgence on the field.