



Thesis Abstract

People's Extent of Empowerment in Two Communes Under the Decentralized Seila Program in Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia

by Pheak Sothea, University of the Philippines Los Baños

The study was conducted to determine the extent of people's empowerment in two communes under the decentralized Seila Program carried out in Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia. Data were collected using personal interviews, observation, and secondary data analysis. A total of 174 councilors and farmers served as respondents. Descriptive statistics, Spearman rank correlation, uncertainty coefficient were used in data analysis.

Results showed that the majority of respondents were male with average age of 43 years and had attained primary education. Only a few respondents had attended the decentralization training. Councilors' skills in terms of facilitating, teamwork, leadership, management and network in the two communes were good and were very well understood. However, these were little understood by the farmers. On the other hand, councilors had a moderately favorable attitude towards the change agent. Both councilors' and farmers' attitude towards the commune council and participation in planning were highly favorable. The councilors' and farmers' belief motivated them to participate in the Seila Program and they mildly favored decentralization. More than half of the councilors were satisfied with the assistance from the Seila Program. In fact, the Program's leadership was active, had initiative and self-reliance, and was independent from external support.

The extent of people's empowerment in the communes was manifested in their high involvement in decision-making. However, the influence of councilors was high, while that of farmers was low. The councilors and farmers were highly empowered in terms of decision-making in planning. On the other hand, councilors were moderately empowered in decision-making in terms of financing, management, monitoring, evaluation, and information. The problems encountered by the councilors were political party discrimination, lack of budget, and limited time in their work.