

A Man of Faithfulness



Life is not easy, but God uses difficulties to transform a simple man to be a person who has a heart for his community.

Mr. Chhem Sopheak, is 30 years old. He lives in Pres Kram Village, Takeo Province with his wife and two sons. Since Mr. Sopheak received Christ as his savior, he is passionate to serve and work hard in the church.

Four years ago, Mr. Sopheak was encouraged to join Umoja-CCM program at his church. Umoja Umoja (Umoja is one of Church and Community Mobilization (CCM) approach) is a program which educates people and empowers them to rely on themselves rather than just expecting others to help them. Mr. Sopheak is trained and is inspired by Bible study with his Umoja Church group. Mr. Sopheak always regularly attends the meetings and is involved with every activity of the group such as Bible study, chicken raising and saving and credit project. These projects are initiated by his Umoja group.

According to his faithfulness and his activity, the church and community members voted him to be a member of the Local Coordination Group (LCG). The LCG is a group of three people who assist the Umoja facilitator to help mobilize the community and prepare for community meetings. He is the LCG leader and he plays his role as a good leader. He understands his community's situation and he has good communication with each member of the community too. Every week they have a community meeting to learn together about Umoja approach and how to identify their resources so that they know how they can use them to start a local project.

One meeting day, they found out together that the community needs to form up a group for chicken raising who are strong and able to help the whole community to raise chickens without losing any profit. The issue is the dealer from outside the village always comes to buy their chickens from each house with different prices and according to how much they want to buy. So it didn't help his community earn much profit from their chicken raising. Mr. Sopheak and the group members planned to find other dealers so that the prices of selling the chicken may not low because they more option. So, Mr. Sopheak came up with an idea to raise some money from each member to hire an expert who would be able to provide his group with the skills of chicken raising. He collected all his member's names and 2.50 USD each to pay for a trainer. He had an inspirational word for his group "We will be a strong group who will help our community to have a good livelihood." Consequently his community members agreed with this idea and set up the date to train together about chicken raising.

Furthermore, Umoja approach has also changed Mr. Sopheak's personal life. He always pays attention to what his Pastor encourages him to do. One day, his Pastor visited his house and encouraged him to arrange the distribution of land into a part for chicken raising, fish raising, crop planting and farming. This is a good opinion, and the Pastor showed good motivation by not only advising, but also by taking real action by helping Mr. Sopheak to dig a pond to raise cat fish. A few months later, Mr. Sopheak has many chickens at home, fish in the pond, Morning glory next to his house and a farm behind his house too. Even though he has not sold any morning glory or fish to the market, he is able to support his family without buying food from the market. Thus he would save some money too. Additionally, he has more time for his children, as he used to work as a Tuk Tuk driver in Phnom Penh before joining with Umoja.

Now, we can celebrate what an exceptional thing he has done for his family and community. We believe that he continues to be an agent of change for the whole community so that they could see the light of God is shining through his life.