A sunset scene over a road with cars and a person on a motorcycle. The sky is a deep orange and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon. In the foreground, a road is visible with several cars and a person on a motorcycle. The background shows a hazy landscape with trees and utility poles.

# Rapidly changing circumstances and educational needs of the Bending Bamboo villages in Ratanakiri, Cambodia.

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Rotterdam, 26 June 2010

## Preface

This Thesis is the result of field research conducted between February and October 2007 in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia. The research is done for and facilitated by CARE International, who provided as much as assistance as they could for the research. I would like to say special thanks to, first, the great Bending Bamboo team for your endless energy, humour, friendship and work for your people, the Indigenous<sup>1</sup> People of Ratanakiri, Jan Noorlander, Lisa Albion and Monika Sok for the knowledge sharing, trust, responsibility, friendship and long nightly discussions, which I really enjoyed.

Without the help of the villagers of the seven Bending Bamboo villages, this research would not have been possible. Thank you for trusting the research team and hopefully the research results will contribute to a useful, culturally contextualised and sustainable curriculum for your children. Being a guest in yours world has been an unforgettable experience and hopefully it has been (or will be) of the same educational value for your communities as it has been for me. Next, I would like to thank all the ‘experts’ in Ratanakiri who contributed to this research, they passionately shared their knowledge and perceptions.

In the period I was writing this thesis I would like to thank Jan Willem Boezelman and Ton de Kraay who gave me advice about structure and grammar and spelling. Guus van Westen and Cora van Oosten, my supervisors of the Utrecht University.

Foremost, thanks to my parents who kept supporting me and my friends, especially those who came to share my experience in Ratanakiri.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous with a capital I, because they say: “I am an Indigenous person”, not “I am a person”. Writing it with a capital I is then a proper noun.

# Table of Content

Preface .....	2
Table of Content .....	3
Summary .....	5
List of figures, Maps and tables .....	10
List of Abbreviations .....	11
Introduction.....	12
<b>1. Theoretical Outline.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Introduction.....	14
1.1 Indigenous People .....	15
1.2 Changing environment and land-use .....	18
1.3 Sustainable development vs. Indigenous People.....	19
1.4 Cambodia .....	20
1.4.1 History of Cambodia in a Nutshell.....	22
1.4.2 Ratanakiri .....	23
1.4.3 Indigenous People of Ratanakiri .....	24
1.4.4 Natural Resources of Ratanakiri.....	27
1.5 Education .....	29
1.5.1 Bilingual education .....	30
1.6 Bending Bamboo villages .....	31
<b>2. Conceptual model and research questions .....</b>	<b>34</b>
Introduction.....	34
2.1 Conceptual Framework .....	35
2.2 Research questions .....	37
2.3 Activities & Methodology .....	38
2.3.1 Methods used per research question.....	40

2.3.2 Training .....	43
2.3.3 Challenges encountered.....	44
<b>3. Analysis .....</b>	<b>46</b>
3.1 (Natural) Resources and geographical differences of the Bending Bamboo villages	46
3.2 (Natural) Resources and Education- and Natural Resource Management Organisations.....	53
3.2.1 Cash crops .....	54
3.2.2 Logging and mining .....	57
3.2.3 Infrastructure.....	57
3.2.4 Changing traditions.....	59
3.3 Education .....	62
3.3.2 The 'Experts' vs. The Villagers.....	66
<b>4. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>68</b>
Bibliography .....	74
Appendix .....	77

## Summary

The impact of human beings on the natural environment underpins discussion in this thesis. The natural environment of the world is very much influenced or affected by human presence and often organized by them. Quite a number of groups of people are still very dependent on their natural environment because they live from gathering and hunting, pastoralism and some basic agricultural activities. Should their natural environment change or disappear in a relatively short period, they have a bigger problem than the urbanized and modern agricultural practicing people would. The people that live so close and in balance with their natural environment are often referred to as Indigenous.<sup>2</sup>

Some Indigenous Nations experience subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination.<sup>3</sup> This is also the current situation for the Indigenous Peoples of Ratanakiri, Cambodia. They endure many rapid changes, especially regarding their natural environment. In many places of the world, the changes in land use are largely the result of policies and actions that originate from the process of modernisation. The relationship between society, environment and development are in the process of modernisation largely based on economic values of growth. As a reaction to the outward appearances arising from the interactions between land use change and the faces of modernization, new interrelationships are sought among society, environment and development. These interrelationships are now seen under the appearance of sustainable development.<sup>4</sup> As a result of all this interest in the environment, sustainable development has become an important development paradigm since the 1990s. This paradigm could be very important for the protection of the lives of Indigenous People around the world. There are two approaches. Try to preserve or regain the Indigenous lifestyle or try to find ways for the Indigenous people to adapt to the changes they are facing by modernisation and the unstoppable globalisation process it brings, without losing their identity. When an Indigenous group chooses (or is forced) to adapt to change, enhanced by the modernising, globalising and capitalist society, education, formal or non-formal, is one of the answers to help in this process. However, the form of education available to the Indigenous People should be adapted to their needs.<sup>5</sup> This is not an easy task. Most probably there will be a national curriculum that has to be followed and how do you find out what the educational needs of the

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2006) United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/FAQsindigenousdeclaration.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations (1996), Internet: <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/96-12980.txt>. sited 2 February 2009

<sup>4</sup> Olive, C.A. (1998), *Land use change and sustainable Development, Interactions among society, environment and development*. Department of Geography Publication Series, University of Waterloo. P.58/59

<sup>5</sup> United nations human rights (2009) <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/QualityEducationForIndigenousPeoples.aspx>

Indigenous People are? The case of the Indigenous People in Ratanakiri, Cambodia is an example of how to answer this question.

The Indigenous People of Ratanakiri are marginalized and separated from mainstream society by their isolated geographic location and language barriers.<sup>6</sup> The area is mostly covered by tropical rainforest; the timber it produces is the first attraction. The soil is very suitable for growing rubber, cashew and soybeans and in the soil gems, gold and bauxite is found. These vast natural resources are being more and more exploited. Especially now the infrastructural disclosure of Ratanakiri is proceeding, the area becomes more accessible for investors and settlers.<sup>7</sup> The Indigenous communities asked for outside help several times to prevent land grabbing and protecting their land, rights and livelihoods, but also to prevent their loss of identity and social structure.<sup>8</sup> One way of helping them with their concerns for the future, is to improve the education of the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri. Currently they have the lowest enrolment and retention rates of Cambodia and the highest illiteracy rate. In this light, CARE Cambodia started the Bending Bamboo project in seven villages. The purpose of the Bending Bamboo project is to increase access to relevant, culturally appropriate and quality education opportunities for children from marginalized Indigenous ethnic minority communities.

The aim of this research is to find out what knowledge and skills in relation to their (natural) resources are needed by Indigenous People in the Bending Bamboo villages in Ratanakiri to equip them to cope with their rapidly changing circumstances. The research is a qualitative research, concerned with meanings and not so much with numbers. Besides interviews, several Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methods are used to get an answer to the research question. Several PLA sessions with the seven Bending Bamboo villages are held to find out how the natural resources have changed and how they perceive these changes. Different PLA's gave an answer to the question what knowledge and skills Indigenous People need to cope with the changes in available resources. Next, the perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts with respect to the changes in natural resources and the needed knowledge and skills by Indigenous People is researched.

Although Ratanakiri is a very remote area, it has to deal with the presence of people trying to organize their natural environment in such a way that it suits their needs. According to the literature and the research results, this was a lot more in balance before the province received closer attention from 'outsiders'. The relationship

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<sup>6</sup> Middelborg, J. (2005)

<sup>7</sup> Oosten, C. van (2006),

<sup>8</sup> Oosten, C. van (2006)

between the society, environment and development seems to be largely based on economic values of growth, especially in the sense of expansion of agricultural land use activities and extraction of other natural resources like gems and bauxite. The challenges for the Indigenous People that live in Ratanakiri are likely to increase. Neither the literature nor the research results mentioned any sustainable practices.

The interviewed people of the education- and natural resource management organizations do see the loss of the forest as the root of all problems the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri face. An overall topic for the use of the land or natural resources is the way land is obtained. Land often seems to be obtained by methods, which is not allowed by law. The forest is cleared for different reasons: cash crops, logging, road construction and mining. This clearing and building of roads has different effects on the communities. The cash crops create money, because the Indigenous People doing this can earn money with it on the markets of Ratanakiri. A bigger concern is the logging, which often happens illegally. The government seems to be involved and villages are relocated for this practice, without any compensation. The logging can also create environmental problems, like soil degradation and increased vulnerability to different weather circumstances.

The accessibility has increased considerably in the last couple of years. Cars have access to many villages over roads that were trails before. These roads allow the villagers easier access to the markets to sell their crops and to get medical help. Trade people, but also NGOs can come into the village to do their business. Nonetheless, many concerns are mentioned as well. The better roads lead to more speeding, consequently more accidents happen. Secondly, there is a fear that this road will substantially increase the export potential, which is also seen as a positive point. This increased export potential, however, will enlarge the demand for cash crops, timber and other available resources, which consequently will result in the need to clear more of the forest.

All these changes is causing, and will cause, a cultural change for the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri. The speed of change differs from village to village. When the village is situated near Ban Lung and/or the road, the changes will be more rapid. The concern is that the loss of the forest will change the whole culture. Khmer is replacing the traditional languages because of increased contacts between the Khmer people and the Indigenous People at the markets and the inability to read land sale contracts (voluntarily or involuntarily signed).

The perceptions of the seven Bending Bamboo villages researched are significantly more positive than the 'experts' about their lives at present and in the future. Nevertheless, they do mention some concerns for the future, which have to do with the loss of the forest. On the other hand, they do think that the improved accessibility will enhance a better future. Finding other ways to provide and improve their income is already a

reality for most of the villages and they think this will increase into the near future, when schooling becomes better. The biggest difference in the perception about the changes is that the villagers see the changes as coming out of their own community and not because of the practices of outsiders. In other words, they feel completely in charge of what is happening. The education- and natural resource management organizations are a lot more concerned about the future of the Indigenous People. The land alienation, logging, mining, road building and cash crops will make it more difficult to keep their traditional agricultural societies intact and increased contact with the Khmer culture can enhance the loss of their own identity. They see mainly solutions in the improvement of their agricultural skills, something the people from the village did not mention. They want to move on and become part of the world around them. They do realize that good education becomes more important for their communities to be able to move on and be part of the modern world. Luckily, they share this idea with the education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri.

When the education offered to them is not based on real, identified needs, the Indigenous People do not see the use of it and the learners will ultimately consider it unsuitable. Consequently, what are the educational needs for the Indigenous People of the Bending Bamboo villages in Ratanakiri? The villagers emphasized the need for children to be able to acquire vocational skills that bridge their culture with other cultures. The villagers raised their concerns for their children as well as the need to balance change in the future with respect for and maintenance of their specific cultures and their children's heritage. Important to note is that all group members said of their children: 'they learn all these things by their parents and grand parents'.

The perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri of what the Indigenous People should receive in education was very different from one to another. Although, learning to read and write is seen as a very important matter by all of them. Most of them think it should be bilingual. The importance to learn to write and read Khmer will help to get office jobs, but also enable them to read Khmer documents, this might help them not to fall into land alienation traps. To teach the Indigenous People life skills and especially modern agricultural skills also appears to be seen as important by the education- and natural resource management organizations/experts. This is in their opinion where the future lies. In addition, some areas in Ratanakiri are still battling with a food shortage; better farming skills could therefore help to favour the existing People in this battle. The villagers mentioned many vocational skills, although not very often agricultural skills. They see a future for their children in all types of occupation besides the agricultural sector. The people of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts, on the other hand, mainly talked about agricultural jobs. It is interesting to find that the villagers see their children in all those non-agricultural jobs while the people from the different organizations see them mostly in agriculture.

The Indigenous People are not as reluctant to deal with the changes they are facing as the literature and the education- and natural resource management organisations/experts are. Of course, they would like to see their forest and cultural identity remain intact, even though they want to move into the future with all its modernities and seem not to be kept stuck in the way they once were living.

## List of figures, Maps and tables

Table 1 Ta Ong Pok & Ta Ong Kate Resources

Table 2 Tus Chrech Resources

Table 3 Tus Resources

Table 4 La In Chamkar Resources

Table 5 la In Srei Resources

Table 6 Sik Resources

Map 1 Cambodia

Map 2 Ban Lung Village, Ratanakiri

Figure 1 Dreamtree

## List of Abbreviations

BB	Bending Bamboo
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EFA	Education For All
HCEP	Highland Community Education Program
ICC	International Cooperation Cambodia
ICSO	Indigenous Community Support Organisation
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
IYDP	Indigenous Youth Development Program
LS	Life Skills
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth & Sport
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PCTFI	Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative
PLA	Participatory Learning in Action
POE	Provincial Office of Education
PSDD	Project Support in Decentralisation and Deconcentration
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programs
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
WHO	World Health Organisation
WGIP	Working Group on Indigenous Populations

## Introduction

*“The biggest problem and the root to all the changes is the lost of the forest that we witness at the moment. Not only the organisation of our livelihood changes, but it changes the whole culture of the Indigenous People”.*<sup>9</sup> This quote comes from a Tampuen man who lives in Ratanakiri, Cambodia. He is very concerned about the impact of human beings on the natural environment and that is what underpins discussion in this thesis. The natural environment and human beings are two notions that can be in balance or in conflict. The natural environment of the world is very much influenced or affected by the presence of humans and is often reorganized by them. Even the most remote areas in the world have to deal with the presence of people that try to adapt their natural environment in such a way that it suits their needs. This is not necessarily a problem, as said before, if the human beings try to find a balance. Preferably to have their natural environment give them what they need without divesting it. Many people in the world lost direct contact with their natural environment. On the other hand, still quite a number of groups of people are still very dependent on their natural environment because they live from gathering and hunting, pastoralism and some basic agricultural activities. Should their natural environment change or disappear in a relatively short period, they have a bigger problem than the urbanized and modern agricultural practicing people would. The people that live so close and in balance with their natural environment are often referred to as Indigenous.<sup>10</sup>

The Indigenous People are subjected to an increased influence of their surrounding world. These new contacts can cause rapid changes, especially regarding their natural environment, which is the main reason for outsiders to seek contact with Indigenous People.<sup>11</sup> Cambodia is an example of this tension between Indigenous People and their surrounding world.

Cambodia is a country dominated by the Khmer People, who are by far the largest ethnic group. Nevertheless, Cambodia habitats large groups of Indigenous People too, especially in the remote northeastern province Ratanakiri. Ratanakiri is an area rich of natural resources. The area is predominantly covered by tropical rainforest; this timber is the first attraction. The soil is very suitable for growing rubber, cashew and soybeans and in the soil gems, gold and bauxite is found. These vast natural resources are being more and more exploited. Especially when the infrastructural disclosure of Ratanakiri advances, the area becomes more

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with four employees of the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) at 13 September 2007. The four employees do not want to be mentioned by name in this Thesis. They belong to four different Indigenous communities in Ratanakiri; Kreung, Borov, Kavet and Tampuen.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations (2006) United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/FAQsindigenousdeclaration.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> United Nations (1996), Internet: <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/96-12980.txt>. sited 2 February 2009

accessible for Khmer investors and settlers, as well as overseas investors like from Vietnam and China, who more and more start to find Ratanakiri.<sup>12</sup>

How can the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri preserve their livelihoods and identity in relation with this growing dominance of outsiders? An appropriate and adjusted educational system, which meets up to the needs of the People of Ratanakiri, is a way to answer to this question. “Deprivation of access to quality education is a major factor contributing to social marginalization, poverty and dispossession of indigenous peoples.”<sup>13</sup> Ratanakiri has the lowest school enrolment rates of Cambodia. This has to do with the language barrier. The official language of Cambodia, Khmer, is hardly spoken or understood by most of the ethnic minority groups. The language of instruction in the schools is Khmer and most teachers do not speak the languages of the minority groups.<sup>14</sup> Due to the remoteness of most of the villages, accessibility is a problem and there is a lack of school materials relevant to their culture, in terms of language and content.<sup>15</sup>

CARE Cambodia started up an educational program, which aims to improve these barriers for education. They started with setting up bilingual schools to overcome the language barrier. Secondly, they want to contextualise the curriculum of the schools. Their biggest challenge is to find out which knowledge and skills the Indigenous People need, to cope better with their rapidly changing environment. This thesis tries to answer this question for CARE Cambodia. Chapter 1 will give an overview of the background and theoretical framework. Chapter 2 will present the conceptual model and research questions followed by chapter 3, the methods used. Chapter 4 is empirical research finalised with chapter 5 the conclusions and recommendations.

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<sup>12</sup> Oosten, C. van (2006),

<sup>13</sup> Wilson, D. (2002) p.6 Minority Rights in Education, Elanders Novum AB

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, A. (2004)

<sup>15</sup> Middelborg, J. (2005)

# 1. Theoretical Outline

## Introduction

There are many sources which emphasise that Indigenous People have been able to exist in balance with their natural environments. Some believe that other societies can benefit from the ecological wisdom of these people, and that they have much to contribute to current debates about the possibility of balance between man and nature.<sup>16</sup>

The impact of human beings on the natural environment underpins discussion in this thesis. The natural environment and human beings are two notions that can be in balance or in conflict. The natural environment of the world is very much influenced or affected by human presence and often organized by them. Even the most remote areas in the world have to deal with the presence of people who try to organize their natural environment in such a way that it suits their needs. This is not necessarily a problem, as said before, as long as human beings try to find a balance, to have their natural environment give them what they need without divesting it. Many people in the world mostly lost direct contact with their natural environment. On the other hand still quite a number of groups of people are still very dependent on their natural environment because they live from gathering and hunting, pastoralism and some basic agricultural activities. Should their natural environment change or disappear in a relatively short period, they have a bigger problem than the urbanized and modern agricultural practicing people would. The people that life so close and in balance with their natural environment are often referred to as Indigenous.<sup>17</sup> This chapter will present an elaboration on Indigenous People, the natural changing environment and some global views.

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<sup>16</sup> The World Bank Group *Participation and Indigenous People*. Internet: <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sba212.htm>. sited 4 June 2009.

UNPO (2009) Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. *UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Discusses Natural Resources*. <http://www.unpo.org/content/view/full/9644/83/>. Sited: 28 May 2009

<sup>17</sup> United Nations (2006) United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/FAQsindigenousdeclaration.pdf>

## 1.1 Indigenous People

There is often reference to fourth world or Indigenous people. These can be Indigenous communities, peoples and nations.<sup>18</sup> Indigenous nations exist on all continents on earth. They are recognized as “Naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place”<sup>19</sup> This would mean that everybody that is born in a country and probably their parents as well, could be considered as Indigenous. According to the United Nations, the common number of Indigenous People worldwide is 370 million<sup>20</sup>. This number is not possible according to the definition of the dictionary. So when do you belong to that group, or what is the definition for Indigenous? Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities José R. Martínez Cobo did a study on the problem of discrimination faced by indigenous people. The reaction of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was to establish the Working group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) to protect Indigenous people with developing human right standards. In 1985, WGIP made a draft declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.<sup>21</sup> Another recommendation from the study of Cobo was to make a clear definition of Indigenous People. Great importance for this definition laid in objective elements like ancestry, culture and language. Also subjective elements like self-identification and acceptance gained ground as important criteria for definition.<sup>22</sup>

In 1993, The Dutch Minister for Foreign affairs, Mr. P.H. Kooijmans, and the Dutch Minister for Development cooperation, Mr. J.P. Pronk, sent a memorandum to inform the Dutch parliament about the Dutch policy with respect to the issue of Indigenous people. In this memorandum a definition of Mr. Cobo that refers to indigenous communities, peoples and nations:

*"Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity,*

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<sup>18</sup> Internet: Cobo, J. M. (1986), *Who are the Indigenous People?* <http://www.iwgia.org/sw310.asp>

<sup>19</sup> Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom

<sup>20</sup> Internet: United Nations (2006)

<sup>21</sup> Internet: United Nations (2006)

<sup>22</sup> Internet: United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1996), <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/96-12980.txt>

*as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems."*<sup>23</sup>

This was not the end of the discussion. At the fourteenth session in 1996, the working group at length discussed the definition of Indigenous, using the work of Mr Cobo as starting point. The Indigenous People that participated in these discussions pointed out the need for something flexible. The working party had to respect the right and desire that each Indigenous person should have the opportunity to define it self. The cooperation with Indigenous People in the discussion helped in the understanding of the concept 'Indigenous' and showed a gradual evolution. In the end the purpose of defining 'Indigenous' was to create a method of screening claims of groups whose legal character may be challenged. A universal or standard definition was not created, the factors considered relevant to the understanding of the concept 'Indigenous' have however been agreed upon. These include:

- Priority in time, with respect to the occupation and use of a specific territory;
- The voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness, which may include the aspects of language, social organization, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions;
- Self-identification, as well as recognition by other groups, or by State authorities, as a distinct collectivity; and
- An experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist.<sup>24</sup>

When these factors are not identified, which still is the case in many countries, Indigenous Nationals remain unrecognised and could therefore be described as stateless within the borders of other Nation State.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2007, the General Assembly of the UN adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This Declaration is an elaboration on the above-mentioned points.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, not all countries at the assembly voted in favour of this declaration; Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia voted against the declaration.<sup>26</sup> This makes the declaration non-binding. "Twenty years

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<sup>23</sup> Internet: Center for world Indigenous studies (1999), Indigenous peoples in the Netherlands foreign policy and development cooperation. <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/nethrlnd.txt>

<sup>24</sup> Internet: United Nations (1996), <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/96-12980.txt>. Sited 2 February 2009

<sup>25</sup> Internet: United Nations (2007), United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html>. Sited 1 May 2009

<sup>26</sup> Internet: Jay, D. O. (2007), The Dominion, news from the grassroots <http://www.dominionpaper.ca/weblogs/dru/1371>. Sited 2 May 2009

of debate to produce this document, and we end up with a document that does not force governments to do anything: this is a disgrace".<sup>27</sup>

Some Indigenous Nations continue to experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination<sup>28</sup>. This is also the current situation for the Indigenous Peoples of Ratanakiri, Cambodia, with whom I worked and lived. They endure many rapid changes, especially regarding their natural environment. Indigenous People are often closely related to their natural environment and quite some Indigenous groups in the world live or would like to live from their natural environment. However, when borders are drawn, they are not the only contestants that want to use the land available. The next paragraph will give a short insight in how the development paradigms of the last decade reacted on the use of land and its natural resources.

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<sup>27</sup> Catro, M. spokesman for the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) on the internet: <http://www.dominionpaper.ca/weblogs/dru/1371>. Sited 2 May 2009

<sup>28</sup> United Nations (1996), Internet: <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/96-12980.txt>. sited 2 February 2009

## 1.2 Changing environment and land-use

Land use is a complex process of human adaptation that aims to fulfil needs and wants. It is so complex because human actions are driven by the interaction between society, environment and development. In many places of the world, the changes in land use are largely the result of policies and actions that originate from the process of modernisation. The relationship between society, environment and development are in the process of modernisation largely based on economic values of growth. Looking at this relationship between society, environment and development in the process of modernisation, the natural resources are viewed as a simple production unit that can be used without restraint for economic expansion. The economic growth derived from modernisation resulted in intensified land use activities, such as the expansion of urban, industrial and agricultural land use activities. The changes in land use have often been associated with increased vulnerability of physical systems and humans on all scale levels, from global to local levels. As a reaction to the outward appearances arising from the interactions between land use change and the faces of modernization, new interrelationships are sought among society, environment and development. These interrelationships are now seen under the appearance of sustainable development.<sup>29</sup>

This emergence of environmental consciousness is possibly the most important development in the world of development thinking since the 1970s. Development was based on the extraction and use of the material resources. In the early 1970s, a growing number of people realised fast pending exhaustion.<sup>30</sup> To this evolving concern, the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development of 1987<sup>31</sup> was very important. They published the report "Our Common Future" in 1987. This suggests that development is sustainable where it "*meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*"<sup>32</sup> Maybe even more important was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of 1992. This earth summit was held in Rio de Janeiro and brought about 180 nations together. From that time on principles of environmental sustainability became a political issue in the development debate. In 2002 a Rio plus 10 (years) was held on sustainable development in Johannesburg, South Africa. As a result of all this interest in the environment, sustainable development has become an important development

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<sup>29</sup> Olive, C.A. (1998), *Land use change and sustainable Development, Interactions among society, environment and development*. Department of Geography Publication Series, University of Waterloo. P.58/59

<sup>30</sup> Meadows D.H et all (1972) , *Limits to growth*, Universe Books, New York

<sup>31</sup> Potter R.B. e.a. *Geographies of Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, England.

<sup>32</sup> Internet: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), (2007), *Sustainable Development and Indigenous Peoples*. <http://www.iwgia.org/sw219.asp>

paradigm since the 1990s. This paradigm could be very important for the protection of the lives of Indigenous People around the world.

### **1.3 Sustainable development vs. Indigenous People**

The way of operating of the government and businesses of a country is determined for the Indigenous People that live in that country. If it is only about short-term economic growth and not about sustainability, the challenges for the Indigenous People will increase. The natural resources, often their most important source of living could be less in danger if those who want to benefit from these resources have an eye for the sustainability of the situation. There are two approaches. Try to preserve or regain the Indigenous lifestyle or try to find ways for the Indigenous people to adapt to the changes they are facing by modernisation and the unstoppable globalisation process it brings, without losing their identity. Which of these is most beneficial for the Indigenous people depends on their own opinion. In my opinion, globalisation will win at all times. This does not necessarily mean that preserving or regaining a traditional way of living is not a good solution. Although it could be perceived as a lack of progression and falling short of adapting to new circumstances, this, again, could not be a problem, as long as the people who have to make this decision (aware or unaware that they have to make this choice) are able to lead an acceptable life.

Globalisation is not only about extracting and transporting goods from all over the world, but also about transporting people and cultures around the world. Due to globalisation, it could occur that tourists are attracted to the way Indigenous People live.<sup>33</sup> If Indigenous People appreciate this attention, it could be rather beneficial. Tourists mainly like to see the traditional way of living, tourism could therefore even encourage people to regain or preserve their traditions. When tourists visit The Netherlands, they often like to go to Volendam, which is a small fishing village above Amsterdam where the little old green painted fisherman houses still exist and the inhabitants of the village walk around in traditional costume. You could doubt whether this would be the case if no tourists were coming there, because these tourists are financially very beneficial for the area. This artificial way of keeping traditions alive can be called Volendamism. The same possible artificial way of cultural preservation could for example count for the Masai People in Kenya, who perform their traditional dances for tourists every day. If no tourists were interested in their dances, would they still do them?

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<sup>33</sup> Potter R.B. e.a. (2004), *Geographies of Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, England.

When an Indigenous group chooses (or is forced) to adapt to change, enhanced by the modernising, globalising and capitalist society, the question rises, how? I think education, in whatever form, is the answer to that question. This could be formal education or non-formal, like Early Childhood Development (ECD), Life Skill (LS) classes, and literacy classes.<sup>34</sup> However, the form of education available to the Indigenous people should be adapted to their needs.<sup>35</sup> I realise that this is not an easy task. Most probably there will be a national curriculum that has to be followed and how do you find out what the educational needs of the Indigenous People are? The case of the Indigenous People in Ratanakiri, Cambodia is an example of how to answer these questions. The next paragraph will give a geographical overview of Cambodia and explicitly Ratanakiri and the following paragraph will go deeper into the way education could possibly help the Indigenous population of Ratanakiri in Cambodia to cope better with the rapidly changing situations.

## 1.4 Cambodia

The Kingdom of Cambodia or Preahreachanacha Kampuchea, as the Cambodians call it, is located between Thailand to the northwest, Vietnam to the east and Laos to the north, bordering the Gulf of Thailand in South-eastern Asia. Cambodia's capital city is Phnom Penh and the country is divided in 20 provinces and 4 municipalities. The total area is 181.040 sq kilometres, which is about five times the size of The Netherlands. With a tropical climate, Cambodia has two seasons: a rainy, monsoon season from May to November and a dry season from December to April. Cambodia is considered one of the poorer countries in the world with a Human Development Index of 0.598, which is number 131 of 177; about the same as Laos, but low compared to Thailand and Vietnam (compared to number 105 (Vietnam) with 0.733 and number 78 (Thailand) with 0.781).<sup>36</sup>

The population of Cambodia is around 14.250.000 people. About 90% is Khmer, 5% Vietnamese, 1% Chinese and 4% other ethnic groups. Theravada Buddhism is the biggest religion, about 95%. Remarkable detail is that more than 50% of the population is less than 21 years old.

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<sup>34</sup> It is arguable if literacy is not also a Life Skill. Literature is very diverse on this matter. In my opinion, literacy and numeracy are, in the case of Ratanakiri, definitely a Life Skill. The illiteracy and innumeracy have caused quite some disturbance so far in the light of land 'selling'. See the chapter about Land alienation in the geographical context.

<sup>35</sup> United nations human rights (2009)  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/QualityEducationForIndigenousPeoples.aspx>

<sup>36</sup> UNDP (2008) Internet: [http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_KHM.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_KHM.html)

The official language of Cambodia is Khmer, however French and English is also spoken. The Gross National Product per capita is US\$ 1.800 and the growth rate of the economy is 9.6%. In 1997 and 1998, Cambodia was suffering from the regional economic crisis, political internal strife and civil violence, foreign investment and tourism decreased, and the economy slowed significantly. From 2001 the economy started to grow steadily, driven mainly by the garment- and tourist-industry and. The garment industry employs more than 350.000 people and is good for more than 70% of Cambodia's exports. Beneath Cambodia's territorial waters, exploitable oil and natural gas deposits were found in 2005. Together with the gem, gold, iron and bauxite mining, especially in the northeast<sup>37</sup> this will create a new revenue stream for the government. The currency is Riel and the currency rate is, at the moment of writing, 4200 riel for one US dollar.<sup>38</sup>

Map 1: Cambodia



Source: SCW (2007), The atlas of Cambodia: National Poverty and Environment Maps.

<sup>37</sup> Cia-Factbook (2008), Internet: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>

<sup>38</sup> Internet: <http://www.bloomberg.com/invest/calculators/currency.html> sited 2 May 2009

Cambodia is considered one of the most culturally homogenous countries in Southeast Asia. Statistics on the country's ethnic demography are however very incomplete due to the recent history of massive migration, war, genocide and forced resettlement.<sup>39</sup> It is estimated that about 10 percent of the total population of Cambodia belongs to one of the forty different cultural minorities.<sup>40</sup> There is a distinction to make between ethnic groups that migrated into Cambodia and national minorities. Vietnamese, Muslim Cham and Chinese are ethnic groups and the hill tribes or Indigenous People qualify as national minorities. The ethnic groups more or less chose to come to Cambodia, the people of the hill tribes did not. They are involuntary incorporated into the Cambodian nation-state. They even had their own self-governing societies and did not, until recently, take part of the process of state formation.<sup>41</sup>

### **1.4.1 History of Cambodia in a Nutshell**

Between the 10th and 13th centuries, the Angkor Empire reached its zenith, the descendants of the empire extended over much of Southeast Asia. After the 13th century, the empire was stepped into a long period of decline **because of** attacks by the Thai (from Thailand) and Cham (from present-day Vietnam). From 1863, the country was placed under French protection by the King and became part of French Indochina in 1887. During World War II Cambodia suffered Japanese occupation, but after the war, in 1953, they gained full independence from France.<sup>42</sup> Prince Shihanouk became the head of state until General Lon Nol staged a coup in 1970. The regime of Lon Nol took control in Cambodia; this was, however, also the start of a civil war between this general, who was materially and financially supported by the US, and the communist guerrilla, called the Red Khmer (better known as the Khmer Rouge). When the US left South Vietnam in 1975, the government of Cambodia fell as well.<sup>43</sup> On 17 April 1975 the Communist Khmer rouge forces captured Phnom Penh.<sup>44</sup> The country was renamed in Democratic Kampuchea and the people that lived in the cities were deported to the rural areas to do forced labour. Private property, religion and money were discarded. The so far unknown Pol Pot, a former teacher who studied in Paris and whose real name was Solath Sar, was the silent force behind this and his goal was to turn Cambodia into an ideal farmer state based on the thoughts of

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<sup>39</sup> Ehrenraut (2004) *The Theory of multiculturalism and cultural diversity in Cambodia*. Universität Potsdam. p.44

<sup>40</sup> Pen in Ehrenraut (2004), p.44

<sup>41</sup> Ehrenraut (2004).

<sup>42</sup> Cia-Factbook (2008) Internet: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>

<sup>43</sup> Fröberg Idling, P. (2006), *Pol Pots leende*. Bokförlaget Atlas, Sweden.

<sup>44</sup> Cia-Factbook (2008)

Mao Tse Tung of China. In the three and a half-year Khmer Rouge regime under Pol Pot at least 1.7 million Cambodians died from execution, forced hardships, or starvation.<sup>45</sup> In December 1978, a Vietnamese invasion drove the Khmer Rouge into the countryside and began a 10-year Vietnamese occupation. After almost 13 years of civil war, the 1991 Paris Peace accords mandated democratic elections and a ceasefire, which was not fully respected by the Khmer Rouge. The United Nations sponsored elections in 1993 and some semblance of normalcy was restored under a coalition government. Factional fighting in 1997 ended the first coalition government, but a new round of elections renewed political stability. In 1999, the remaining elements of the Khmer Rouge surrendered and some of the remaining leaders are awaiting trial by an UN-sponsored tribunal for crimes against humanity. The elections in 2003 were relatively peaceful, but the negotiations to form a coalition took a year.<sup>46</sup>

### **1.4.2 Ratanakiri**

In the North east of Cambodia the mountainous Ratanakiri province is situated. The Province borders with Vietnam in the east and Laos in the north.<sup>47</sup> The province is about 600 kilometres away from Phnom Penh and although roads are improving day by day, it is still a backbreaking trip. The province is divided in nine districts, forty-nine communes and two hundred and forty officially recognized villages.<sup>48</sup> It is a sparsely populated province with a population of around 110.000 people. Ten percent of the inhabitants live in Ban Lung town, which is the provincial capital. The inhabitants of Ban Lung are mainly ethnic Khmer who are recent migrants from the lowlands.<sup>49</sup> This number is rapidly increasing. Since the 1950's the Cambodian government started to encourage Cambodians from the lowlands to move to the north-eastern provinces. The government did also send soldiers, together with their families, to put the resettlement policies for the Indigenous villages into effect. After the soldiers, pioneers, again appealed by the government, started to come to the northeast. The voluntary migration came to an end during the Khmer Rouge period, but continued at a rather more rapid pace after 1979.<sup>50</sup> Khmers mainly live in the larger towns and are prominent in trading,

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<sup>45</sup> Fröberg Idling, P. (2006)

<sup>46</sup> Cia-Factbook (2008)

<sup>47</sup> Middelborg, J, (2005), *Highland Children's Education Project: A pilot project on bilingual education in Cambodia*. Bangkok: UNESCO, Bangkok

<sup>48</sup> CARE (2007), *Land issues and HCEP*, Ratanakiri Cambodia

<sup>49</sup> Middelborg, J, (2005)

<sup>50</sup> IDRC/UNDP CARERE-Ratanakiri (2001), *Immigration and its consequences for Highland Communities in Ratanakiri*. A paper prepared for a conference on strengthening partnership in community natural resource management, 6-8 March 2001 in Ratanakiri province, Cambodia

business and government services. This presence of government departments in Ratanakiri Province is something from the past fifteen years. Highland indigenous groups inhabit the Ratanakiri Province in the remote areas. Most of them live in small and remote villages with a size of approximately 70 to 500 people per village.<sup>51</sup> Ban Lung, the provincial capital has the most inhabitants, around 13.000. This is one of the fastest growing towns in Cambodia.

The province is rich in its resources. It contains areas of dense tropical rainforest, especially Virachey National park that covers the whole north of the province. It has more than enough water sources, very fertile red soil and gems. It is a relatively secure area with no land mines and a lot less banditry than the neighbouring provinces Stung Treng and Monduliri.<sup>52</sup> The next paragraph will give an outline of who the native inhabitants of Ratanakiri are.

### **1.4.3 Indigenous People of Ratanakiri**

In many countries Indigenous nationals remain unrecognized and could therefore be described as stateless within the borders of other Nation States. Some Indigenous nationals continue to experience subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination.<sup>53</sup> This is the situation for the Indigenous peoples, or Khmer Loeu – the Highlanders, of Ratanakiri.<sup>54</sup> This chapter will present an overview of the Indigenous people of Ratanakiri, the people who I have worked with.

Ratanakiri is the most north-eastern province of Cambodia and home to ethnic minority communities that speak nine different languages, also referred to as Highlanders.<sup>55</sup> Historical records about these Highlanders date as far back as the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Trade relations between highlanders of present-day northeast Cambodia and the coastal towns as well as reciprocated exchanges between the highlanders and following Khmer Kingdoms are mentioned. Trading goods were often slaves that largely came from highland areas of southern Laos, northeastern Cambodia and central Vietnam. These people fed the markets of the Khmer, Lao and Thai Kingdoms and had a destructive impact on the highlanders. Reports of this slave trade go as far back as the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

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<sup>51</sup> Escott, J. (2000), *Minority education in Cambodia: the case of the Khmer Loeu*. Intercultural Education, Vol. 11, no. 3

<sup>52</sup> CARE (2007)

<sup>53</sup> Internet: <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/96-12980.txt>

<sup>54</sup> Escott, J. (2000)

<sup>55</sup> Oosten, C. van (2006), *'Through the looking glass', Understanding regional integration from below*. In 'Development matters' Utrecht University, The Netherlands.

Cambodia became a protectorate of France in 1863, after King Norodom was being forced to do so. After a short war between the French and the Siamese in 1893, the establishment of Indochina possession by the French became a fact. The Highlanders actively resisted their new rulers, although slave trading was replaced by colonial rule.<sup>56</sup>

The French colonial administration ended in 1953 and a few years later the constitutional monarchy with a national assembly was formed under the leadership of Sihanouk.<sup>57</sup> He formed new provinces and the Province of Ratanakiri was established in 1959. The new development plans of the government forced some of the highlanders to move to the lowlands where they could learn about the Khmer language and culture. These Khmerisation efforts were not popular and fighting broke out, especially when the government attempted to establish rubber plantations using forced labour. The Khmer Rouge used this resistance for their effort and formed a “marriage of convenience” with the highlanders.<sup>58</sup> The highlanders also had ideological significance to the Khmer Rouge. The fact that they had no access to money, markets, or the state gave them a deeply rooted tradition of autonomy, solidarity, and mutual aid. The Khmer Rouge saw this as ‘primitive communism’.<sup>59</sup> In 1970, Lon Nol came to power.<sup>60</sup> He tried to get the north-eastern territory back. In this attempt, several villages of highlanders were destroyed and inhabitants killed.<sup>61</sup> Not long after, he pulled back the 9000 troops based in the province. This abandonment meant that the Khmer Rouge got to power in Ratanakiri. This was initially not really a harsh rule, but as time passed, it became stricter. A lot of the Indigenous fled to Vietnam and southern Laos. In the early 1980s, the refugees began to return to Ratanakiri or again to the lowlands, after some governmental influence. We have to keep in mind that the Khmer Rouge security threat lasted until 1998.<sup>62</sup>

The Indigenous people of Ratanakiri are marginalized and separated from mainstream society by their isolated geographic location and language barriers.<sup>63</sup> Six main ethnic minority groups are present: Jarai, Kachok, Brou, Krueng, Kavet and Tampuen. At present the biggest ethnic group is Tampuen, comprising an estimated 24%

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<sup>56</sup> Ironside, J. & Baird, I.G. (2003)

<sup>57</sup> Kleinen, J & Mar, T. (2004), *Landenreeks Cambodja*. KIT Publishers, Amsterdam

<sup>58</sup> Ironside, J. & Baird, I.G. (2003) p.8

<sup>59</sup> Ehrenraut (2004)

<sup>60</sup> Kleinen, J & Mar, T. (2004)

<sup>61</sup> Ehrenraut (2004)

<sup>62</sup> Ironside, J. & Baird, I.G. (2003)

<sup>63</sup> Middelborg, J. (2005)

of the total population of Ratanakiri. The Jarai and Kreung with respectively around 19% and 17% of the total population are the biggest groups after the Tampuen. From the main ethnic groups they belong to the Mon-Khmer language group, except for the Jarai, who belong to the Austronesian (malayo-Poynesian) group.<sup>64</sup>

The Indigenous People live in small villages of between 70 to 500 people. An Indigenous village is normally built in a circular pattern with the houses facing towards the village meetinghouse or a central communal area. This is the place where they hold their village meetings, ceremonies and where they welcome visitors.<sup>65</sup> The village meetinghouse can also function as a classroom if a school building is not present.<sup>66</sup> The style of the houses is different per ethnic group, but on an average, the houses are on poles and made from a bamboo frame. The wall and roof covered with bamboo leaves. Underneath the house is a pig shed and storage place for tools. traditional houses are often rebuilt, yearly or once every two years, although more and more Khmer style houses, which are made from wood and last a lot longer, are built in the village. Before they did not build wooden houses, because they moved regularly; a normal period of staying in one place being about two years. In certain Indigenous groups a reason for moving was when the chief of the village had a dream that the good days were over in their current village. Often, they have another house at the 'chamka', the farm. They spend a lot of time at the chamka during planting and the harvest season.<sup>67</sup>

The Indigenous people are animists. The supernatural world with their spirits is considered as very powerful and these can and will influence the health and well-being of people. They emphasise three kinds of spirits:

1. The spirits that dwell in the forests and in the earth. They have to be kept happy, because they can be dangerous, are very impulsive and very hard to predict.
2. The spirits of the dead.
3. The house spirits. When they are made angry, they can cause misfortune and make you ill.

The 'Arak', who is a spirit medium, is the one who can find out why the spirit is angry and what to do about it. Animal sacrifice is the most common way to soothe a spirit.

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<sup>64</sup> CARE (2003) in Middelborg, J. (2005)

<sup>65</sup> Escott, J. (2000)

<sup>66</sup> This was the case in two of the seven villages the research was conducted in. These two villages were the smallest villages.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with four employees of the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) at 13 September 2007. The four employees do not want to be mentioned by name in the Thesis. They belong to four different Indigenous communities in Ratanakiri; Kreung, Borov, Kavet and Tampuen.

The boys and girls that reach marrying age generally choose their own partner, although they must obtain the approval of their parents. The girls on average marry when they are 15 or 16 years old and boys when they are around 20.

The Indigenous People live from rice, other plants and vegetables they grow and flowers, roots and fruit they pick. Pigs, oxen and buffalos are their domestic animals; other animals are obtained by fishing and hunting. In the forests, they collect dry resin, wood oil, rattan, turtles, snakes and lizards. These items are sold so they can buy tobacco, modern medicines, soap powder, salt, clothes etc. Some farmers start to grow modern products like oranges, custard apples, jackfruit and cashew nuts. Which part of the forest you use as an Indigenous does not matter. There is no formal system of land ownership. They believe that the forest belongs to everyone. Shifting cultivation or 'slash and burn' farming is the normal practice. This means that a piece of forest is cleared for cultivation and they use this for a few years until the fertility drops. New plots are cleared and the former plot is left alone to rest for about 20 to 30 years, this to enable the land to become fertile again.<sup>68</sup>

#### **1.4.4 Natural Resources of Ratanakiri**

Ratanakiri means literally 'mountains of Jewel'.<sup>69</sup> This name refers probably to the rich natural resources of Ratanakiri. The area is mostly covered by tropical rainforest; the timber it produces is the first attraction. The soil is very suitable for growing rubber, cashew and soybeans and in the soil gems, gold and bauxite is found. These vast natural resources are being more and more exploited. Especially now the infrastructural disclosure of Ratanakiri is proceeding, the area becomes more accessible for investors and settlers.<sup>70</sup> The road from Phnom Penh all the way up to the border of Laos in the north of Cambodia was completely paved in the summer of 2008.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the dirt road that leads from the junction just before Stung Treng to Ban Lung is renovated tremendously and will be paved in the near future. Simultaneously, the road from Ban Lung to the Vietnamese border in the east is being reconstructed.<sup>72</sup> The construction of this road was the talk of the town when I lived in Ban Lung. The Khmer and Chinese businesspeople were very happy with this road. However, the Indigenous People, who live along that road and were replaced because of the construction of it,

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<sup>68</sup> Escott, J. (2000)

<sup>69</sup> Thomas, A. (2004), Designing and launching bilingual community-based non-formal education and extension initiatives in the Cambodian Highlands. Ratanakiri, Cambodia

<sup>70</sup> Oosten, C. van (2006),

<sup>71</sup> This is the ASEAN highway AHII crossing and is part of the Socio economic Development Master Plan, financed by China.

<sup>72</sup> Road no. 78, financed by Vietnam.

showed there concerns. The biggest concern was that the Vietnamese would have direct access (at the time of writing the border with Vietnam was closed on the side of Cambodia) to Ratanakiri, which means more trade, although the trade was a smaller concern than the social results of the appearance of Vietnamese People. The people were afraid that Ban Lung would need more brothels.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, rumours were spread that big casino's would be build on the Cambodian side of the border for Vietnamese people (because the gamble laws in Vietnam are stricter), the concern about this, especially by NGOs, was over the sex- and drugs trafficking this could enhance.<sup>74</sup> The investments made in Ratanakiri by the Cambodian, Vietnames and Chinese government are done to make the province an agro-industrial production region. These economically understandable plans have instigated a rapid migration to Ratanakiri, and with that sometimes enormous land speculation activities. From inside and outside Ratanakiri, businessmen, investors and politicians are very interested to get involved. The price of the land doubled many times in a few years, but a lot of land is bought through illegal transactions. The NGO forum on Cambodia in 2004, local NGOs raised their concerns about these illegal transactions. They see and increased problem in land alienation practices. The victims will be the Indigenous People and their livelihood.<sup>75</sup> A research done by CARE Cambodia and the NGO forum on Cambodia showed that from 2003 to 2005 at least 10.000 hectares of land has been alienated from mainly Indigenous People. The Indigenous People are very poor and this has driven them to sell their land, which enhanced more problems, because some villages found themselves very critically short of land. The regional and national authorities do not enough to prevent these sales. When the land is sold, it is used for logging, rubber-, cashew-, of soy beans plantation or for speculation.<sup>76</sup> Land issues most probably have the most negative effect on the province's Indigenous groups. There is a lot of interest in the land, although land cannot be bought anymore since the 2001 Cambodian Land Law. The interim Strategy of the Land Policy Framework of 2002 says that the Indigenous communities will get collective ownership rights to their land and recognition of traditional land management systems like shifting cultivation practices. At the time of writing, not a single Indigenous community received ownership title to its collective property.<sup>77</sup> The Indigenous communities asked

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<sup>73</sup> An unauthorized research wrote that Ban Lung had already more than 50 brothels on a population of approximately 13.000 people.

<sup>74</sup> A result of many conversations about this subject with staff members of CARE, at the market, during meetings with NGOs and ministries.

<sup>75</sup> NGO Forum on Cambodia (2004), *Land alienation form Indigenous minority communities in Ratanakiri*, held in Ban Lung, Cambodia.

<sup>76</sup> NGO Forum on Cambodia and CARE Cambodia (2005), *Workshop to seek strategies to prevent Indigenous Land alienation*, held in Ban Lung, Cambodia.

<sup>77</sup> CARE (2007)

for outside help several times to prevent land grabbing and protecting their land, rights and livelihoods, but also to prevent their loss of identity and social structure.<sup>78</sup>

One way of helping them with their concerns for the future, is to improve the education of the Indigenous People of Cambodia. The next chapter will give a short insight in the educational situation of Ratanakiri.

## 1.5 Education

“Deprivation of access to quality education is a major factor contributing to social marginalization, poverty and dispossession of indigenous peoples”.<sup>79</sup> This quote was written to the Council on right of Indigenous People in a report from the Expert mechanism, a group of five independent specialists who provide expertise on the rights of Indigenous People to the Human Rights Council.<sup>80</sup> In the publications of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education, it says that education to minorities should contain four elements: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability (4-A scheme). This four-A scheme makes clear that education must adapt to the individual, and the individual is required to adapt to whatever education happens to be available. It is important that people have the ability to benefit from an education that is appropriate to his or her culture, religion and language.<sup>81</sup> The first step for a country is laying out the fundamentals so all children have access to formal education.

In Thailand 1990, the World Conference on Education for All took place and the participants agreed upon the universalisation of primary education and the enormous reduction of illiteracy before the year 2000. At the beginning of the new millennium, the Dakar Framework for Action was held and reaffirmed the goals of Education For All (EFA).<sup>82</sup>

The constitution of Cambodia promulgates free compulsory education for nine years, guaranteeing the universal right to basic quality education.<sup>83</sup> In practice this does not seem to have been realised. Education is

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<sup>78</sup> Oosten, C. van (2006)

<sup>79</sup> Wilson, D. (2002) p.6 Minority Rights in Education, Elanders Novum AB

<sup>80</sup> Wilson, D. (2002)

<sup>81</sup>United nations human rights (2009)  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/QualityEducationForIndigenousPeoples.aspx>

<sup>82</sup> Cornelissen, S. (2007), *Boys' rights, girls' wrongs? Constraints and opportunities for Indigenous girls' participation in education*. Utrecht University, Faculty of Geosciences.

<sup>83</sup> Visiting Arts (2006), *Cambodia Cultural Profile – Education*.

not free, there are unofficial fees charged by the teacher and if the children complete primary school, they often do not enrol in lower secondary school. The net enrolment rate in primary education is high. However, there are great disparities between urban and rural areas behind this high enrolment rate. The number of dropouts is quite high in rural areas especially in remote areas. Some figures of dropout rates; urban 9%; rural 15%; and remote areas 26.2%. A second problem in rural and remote areas is the lack of teachers and teachers being under qualified. There are no effective incentives to attract teachers from the urban areas to work in rural/remote areas. Therefore, there is no willingness to work in these areas.<sup>84</sup> In Ratanakiri Province, they face some other problems in the light of education. The official language of Cambodia, Khmer, is hardly spoken or understood by most of the ethnic minority groups.<sup>85</sup> In addition to the fact that the majority of government schools are not attractive to minority groups, because the language of instruction in the schools is Khmer and most teachers also don not speak the languages of the minority groups. As a consequence, the enrolment and retention rates of the Indigenous population of Ratanakiri are amongst the lowest in Cambodia. In numbers, 54.3% was the total net enrolment rate 2003/2004 in primary education for the Ratanakiri province.<sup>86</sup> With respect to their illiteracy, they are the highest,<sup>87</sup> the percentage of the total population that is ‘functionally’ literate in Ratanakiri is 7.4.<sup>88</sup>

### **1.5.1 Bilingual education**

Bilingual education is seen as the only solution to get the attendance rate up and to make the education more functional.<sup>89</sup> However, there are a number of barriers. First for all the government at the various scale levels were or are reserved in their opinion towards bilingual education for Indigenous people. Secondly, the remoteness of the Indigenous People is the biggest reason for the maintenance of their culture and language. They remain remote compared with the rest of the country, so the infrastructure is not very developed and therefore school buildings, administrative infrastructure and transport, needed for education, are often lacking. Another barrier is the shortage of trained teachers fluent in Khmer and an Indigenous language. Relevant educational materials for their culture in terms of language and content are not available. The villagers do not

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<sup>84</sup> Cornelissen (2006), *lecture Cambodia 16 November 2006*, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

<sup>85</sup> Thomas, A. (2004)

<sup>86</sup> MoEYS (2004) in Middelborg, J. (2005)

<sup>87</sup> Noorlander, J. (2003), Highland Children’s Education project (HCEP). CARE International Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia

<sup>88</sup> MoEYS/UNESCO/UNDP (2000) in Middelborg, J. (2005)

<sup>89</sup> Wilson, D. (2002)

always have a supportive view of schooling. This has probably got to do with the fact that formal schooling, made available by the government, does not meet the needs of the community. Sometimes it is even conflictive with their socio-cultural norms or the timetable and/or methodology are not suitable. If the Indigenous people do not see the use of it and the education offered is not based on real, identified needs, the learners will consider it unsuitable.<sup>90</sup>

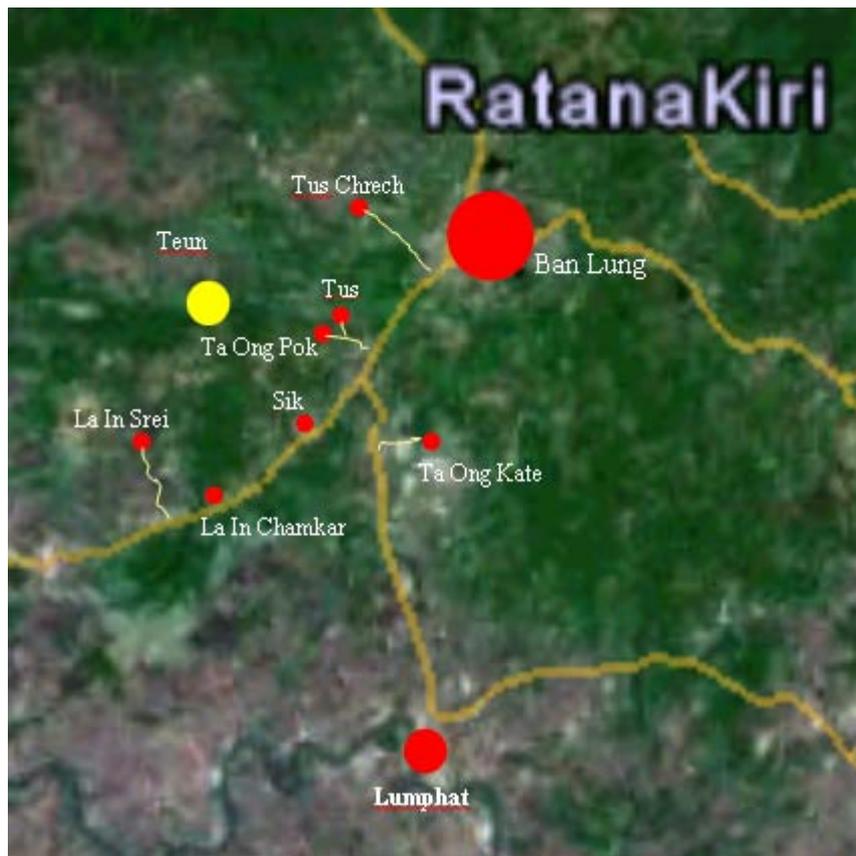
## 1.6 Bending Bamboo villages

Chapter one gave an overview of the theoretical background of this thesis and a short outline of the geographical and historical situation of Cambodia and Ratanakiri. This chapter finishes with a paragraph on the seven target Villages in which the research took place. They are called the Bending Bamboo villages. This name is given to these villages by CARE Cambodia and it means that the people who live in the villages are able to bend, but will, like bamboo, not break easily. The overall goal of the Bending Bamboo project is to contribute to the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport's (MoEYS) Education For All National Plan 2003-2015 by providing replicable and sustainable models for bilingual education. The purpose of the Bending Bamboo project is to increase access to relevant, culturally appropriate and quality education opportunities for children from marginalized Indigenous ethnic minority communities, with a particular focus on girls. CARE Cambodia could choose from a few areas with villages in Ratanakiri, selected by the Provincial Office of Education (POE), to work with. The chosen area is relatively close to Ban Lung and the main road between Stung Treng and Ban Lung. Five of the seven villages have the Kreung ethnicity and the other two villages are Tampuan. The Kreung villages [all](#) belong to the Ta Ong Commune and are Sik, Tus, Tus Chrech, Ta Ong Pok and Ta Ong Kate. La In Srei and La In Chamkar are the two Tampuan villages from the Teun Commune.

Map 2: Ban Lung Village, Ratanakiri

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<sup>90</sup> Middelborg, J. (2005)



Ban Lung, V. Bax 25 march 2007

Initially the Bending Bamboo initiative will target a group of girls from Indigenous ethnic minority communities in the highlands of northeast Cambodia. CARE Cambodia and other NGOs have done research on the educational situation of especially girls. They found out that the girls of most of the Indigenous ethnic minority communities are marginalized from almost all educational opportunities. Despite living near government schools, they do not participate in the education offered because of a number of constraints and barriers, among others the need to assist their mothers with child-minding tasks. The Bending Bamboo project is to identify and work with these constraints by turning them into resources that inform educational programs and practice. The introduction of an early childhood development program will be central to this innovation. The collective experience and lessons learned from CARE Cambodia's Girls and Basic Education program, particularly those of the Highland Children's Education Project (HCEP) – and, as CARE describes it, its successful community development and participation mechanisms - will inform this initiative. While HCEP has developed a model of bilingual and bicultural community school education in remote highland villages, Bending Bamboo will take the first step towards mainstreaming the HCEP model of education into government schools in ethnic minority areas. Bending Bamboo: Working with the Constraints to Education

for Marginalized Girls is a cross-sectoral project, designed to work with the constraints, rather than against them.<sup>91</sup>

The analysis describes first of all what the situation is in these seven villages with respect to their (natural) resources and how they perceive the current changes. The perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri is discussed next.

The second part of the research will discuss what knowledge and skills the people from the seven villages need to cope better with the changes, especially with respect to their natural resources. Again, the perception on the educational needs of Indigenous People is discussed with education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri.

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<sup>91</sup> CARE Cambodia (2006), *Situational Analysis*. Ratanakiri, Cambodia

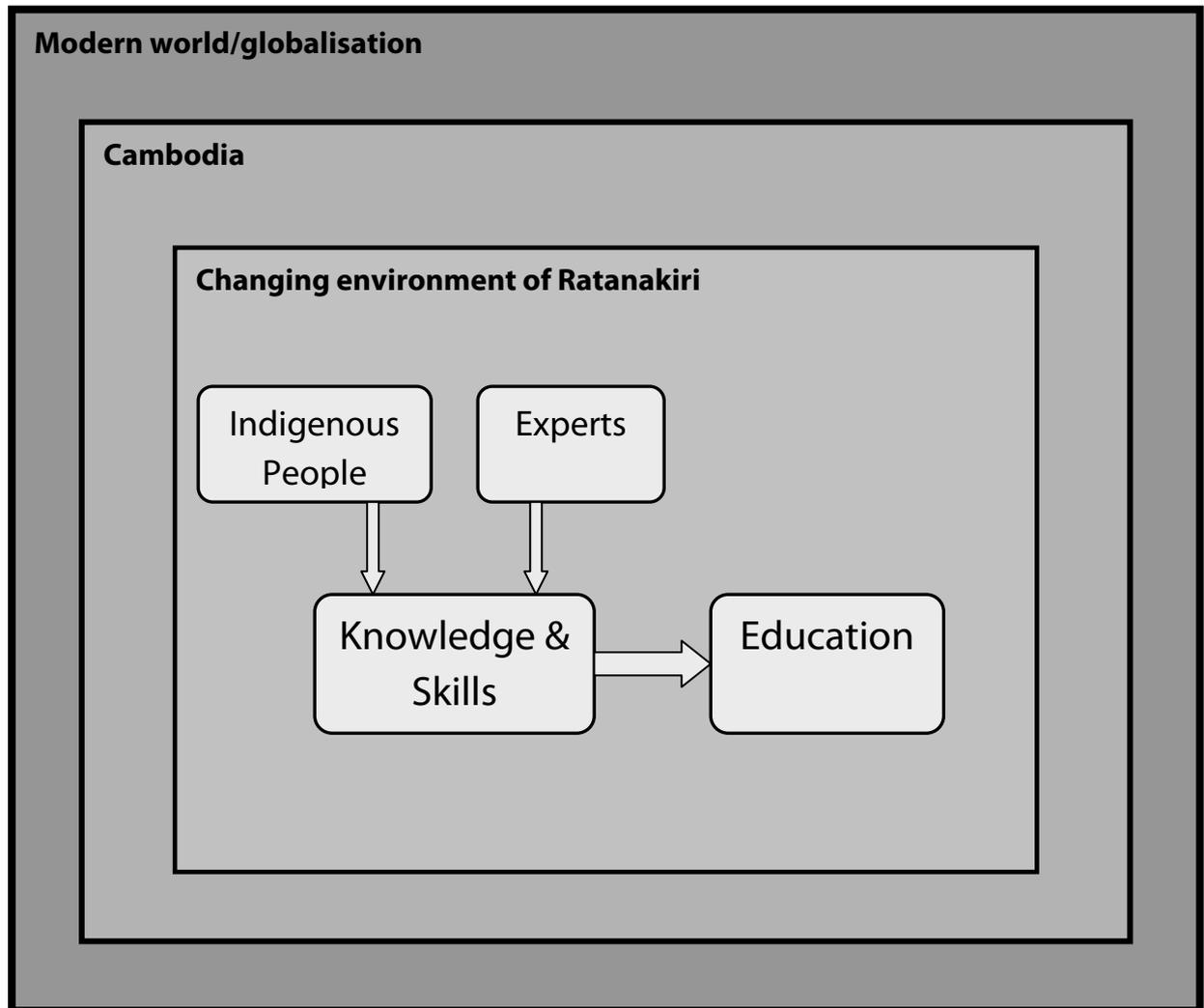
## **2. Conceptual model and research questions**

### **Introduction**

This research is done in and with the seven Bending Bamboo project villages of the Highland Children Education Program of CARE Cambodia. It aims to get an in-depth view about the situation of the seven target villages concerning the possible changes they are currently facing, especially focused on the changes in their (natural) resources. Secondly, the perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri is discussed.

The second part of the research will discuss what knowledge and skills the people from the seven villages need to cope better with the changes, especially with respect to their natural resources. Again, the perception on the educational needs of Indigenous People is discussed with education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri.

## 2.1 Conceptual Framework



The conceptual model gives an overview on the concepts of the research. The big dark grey square is the modern world. Globalisation processes have this modern world completely interconnected.<sup>92</sup> Cambodia connects to that world as well. The country went through a long period of political unrest with devastating results. This resulted in an isolated position in Southeast Asia. The last decennium it settled down and started to get more connected to the outside world, partly because of the presence of oil and tourist attractions.<sup>93</sup> The Cambodians and other investors are increasingly aware of other sources of richness within the country. The

<sup>92</sup> Potter R.B. e.a. (2004), *Geographies of Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, England.

<sup>93</sup> Cia-Factbook (2008)

country is mainly covered by rice fields, which have the task to feed the population. Nevertheless, it also contains tropical rainforests, large fields of bauxite, gems and fertile soil for soya, cashew and rubber.<sup>94</sup>

The remote north-eastern province of Ratanakiri is one of those places that contain all these features. Originally, ten ethnic minority groups inhabit this province.<sup>95</sup> These Indigenous People live mainly in the forest and are animist hunter-gatherers with traditional farming practices. The forest is directly connected to their identity. This forest is subjected to the interest of outsiders from within and outside Cambodia.<sup>96</sup> The result is that their natural environment is changing rapidly. Forests are cleared, rubber, soya and cashew plantations emerge and a growing administrative centre arises. The livelihoods of the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri are under pressure and they have to find other means of living. In taking up this challenge they face a few barriers. They, for instance, do not speak Khmer, the formal language of Cambodia.<sup>97</sup> Education is a way of learning to adapt quicker to the changing society. When this is organised in an appropriate contextualised way, the youngest generation can be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to face the future.<sup>98</sup> The main question is: “what knowledge and skills are needed to cope better with the changing environment?” To give an answer to this question you have to know what the changes are and how they are perceived by the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri, but also how they are viewed by experts who work in this environment. These two together should give a proper overview of knowledge and skills to adopt into the curriculum.

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<sup>94</sup> CARE (2007)

<sup>95</sup> Middelborg, J, (2005)

<sup>96</sup> Escott, J. (2000)

<sup>97</sup> Oosten, C. van (2006),

<sup>98</sup>United nations human rights (2009)

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/QualityEducationForIndigenousPeoples.aspx>

## 2.2 Research questions

Key research questions:

*What knowledge and skills in relation to their (natural) resources are needed by Indigenous People in the Bending Bamboo villages in Ratanakiri to equip them to cope with their rapidly changing circumstances?*

In order to answer the key research questions several sub-questions have been formulated:

1. How are the natural resources changed for the Indigenous villages in Ratanakiri?
  - a. What is the situation now in the seven Bending Bamboo villages and how do the Indigenous people of these villages perceive the changes with respect to their natural resources?
  - b. Is there a difference between the seven Bending Bamboo villages with respect to their ethnicity and location?
  - c. What is the perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri with respect to the changes in natural resources?
  
2. What knowledge and skills do Indigenous People need to cope with the changes in available resources?
  - a. What is the perception of the Indigenous people with respect to the knowledge and skills they need?
  - b. What is the perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri, with respect to the knowledge and skills the Indigenous People need?

## 2.3 Activities & Methodology

This chapter gives an overview and explanation of the used methods per research question. The research is a qualitative research, concerned with meanings and not so much with numbers. It looks at what people think and feel, and why.<sup>99</sup>

Besides the interviews, the research is a participatory research. Participatory research is nowadays seen as a very useful tool for development workers. It aims to give voice to the people who are traditionally merely the 'subjects' of research. The Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an approach to needs assessments and feasibility studies. It places the community's participation at the core of the process and therefore is more than a list of methods, which is often the case<sup>100</sup>.

In this thesis, participatory research methods are chosen for a couple of reasons. First, because the research aims to find out the perceptions of the people. Secondly, because the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri are not only subject to a research, but also participate in the development of their own education. CARE Cambodia wants them to be deeply involved in the development of a suitable curriculum; participatory methods do have the benefit that it aims to enhance more understanding and involvement in a project. There is a dual commitment in participatory research. It is to study the community, but also to collaborate with the members of the community in, if necessary, changing it in a desirable direction which is decided together.<sup>101</sup> The research had to fit in the baseline survey CARE Cambodia is doing and they will do a quantitative research later on. In addition, most of the Indigenous People cannot write and/or read and assumed is that they are rather reluctant to do interviews, especially with women only. The last reason is that CARE wants to conduct the research in all seven Bending Bamboo villages.

The Bending Bamboo villages are:

- Ta Ong Pok
- Ta Ong Kate
- Tus
- Tus Chrech

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<sup>99</sup> Laws, S e.a.(2006), *research for development*, Sage publications Inc. California

<sup>100</sup> Chambers, R. (1992), *Rural appraisal: rapid, relaxed and participatory*, Brighton, Institute for development studies discussion paper 311.

<sup>101</sup> O'Brien, R (2005), *An Overview of the Methodological Approaches of Action Research*. Cited on the World Wide Web January 2008: <http://www.web.net/~robrien/papers/artifinal.html>

- Sik
- La In Srei
- La In Chamkar

See chapter 1.6 for a description of these villages.

Per village, several PLA's are conducted with a group of people that consisted out of the Chief, an Elder and the VWC (Village Women Committee, consisting of five women). This group of participants is chosen by CARE Cambodia. In their point of view, this gives the best research results at this point. It is the start of the relationship with the villagers. Later on, they want to do a big household questionnaire with all villagers.

The PLA's are:

- Dreamtree
- Vote count (with all the representatives of the villages together)
- Circles of importance of resources
- Resource map

All these methods will be conducted in Kreung and Tampuen and every PLA activity is followed up with a Focus Groups discussion.

Focus group is a research technique similar to interview. In this case however, a group of people is brought together to interact with each other. Moreover, while discussing an issue it aims to get additional information than a one-to-one interview would give.<sup>102</sup>

The methods are designed in such a way they are also directly usable for the Bending Bamboo baseline survey. This because it did not seem right to use the team for just this research, on top of that the project was in the first contact phase with the target villages. It will be the first time that the people of the village do PLA's and FGD's. CARE puts a lot of energy into understanding the practical challenges for the villagers in the BB-project. If this research had to be done next to the baseline survey it might have made the whole situation even more confusing for them. Therefore, the methods are adapted to the Baseline survey. As a result, they fit into the extensive explanations, given that the PLA's we do are for direct input of the ECD & LS curriculum CARE Cambodia wants to develop. In practice, it means that not every question of the PLA's and FGD's is useful for this thesis. Sometimes whole sections like the health matrix will not be used as data for this research.

For the interviews, all educational- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri are contacted by a letter. Six organisations reacted positively. Therefore, interviews are conducted with a

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<sup>102</sup> Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A., (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

representative of the Provincial Office of Education (POE), the Ministry of land Management & Project Support in Decentralisation and Deconcentration (PSDD), and the Build Bright University (BBU). Next to that, some interviews and FGD were conducted with several NGO's who are active in Ratanakiri: Indigenous Community Support Organisation (ICSO), International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC), and CARE Cambodia. The interviews and FGD's were done alone, when I could do them in English. When Khmer was required, Mean Sopheak did the translations or facilitated the interview. I never needed to bring translators for Kreung, Tampuan, Jarai or Kavet, because the level of Khmer of the interviewed was good enough to do them in Khmer.

The Following paragraph gives a detailed overview of used methods per research question.

### **2.3.1 Methods used per research question**

The first sub question: "How are the natural resources changed for the Indigenous villages in Ratanakiri?" is divided into three research questions. The first is: "What is the situation now in the seven Bending Bamboo villages and how do the Indigenous People of these villages perceive the changes with respect to their natural resources?"

To answer this question the PLA's, resource mapping and circles of importance are used. The seven target villages for the research are new to CARE Cambodia, so not a lot is known about them. Therefore, it was important to find out what sort of (natural) resources are in and around the villages and to clarify the most important similarities, differences and changes between them.

To answer the question what the (natural) resources are, in and around their villages, and how they are used in the seven villages the method circles of importance or Venn diagram is used. Venn diagrams are designed by John Venn in 1881 and are illustrations used in mathematics. The circles show the possible logical relationship between different groups of things. When one thing is more important, the circle is drawn larger than less important things. Advantage of this diagram is that it is a simple way of representing complicated things.<sup>103</sup>

Several sessions will be held with some representatives of the different villages. In these sessions, a flipchart is used with in the middle the word 'resources'. The villagers name the resources in and around the village and

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<sup>103</sup> Edwards, A.W.F., (2004). *Cogwheels of the Mind: The story of the Venn Diagrams*, Baltimore and London: Josh Hopkins University Press.

the answers are written around the word resources on the flipchart.<sup>104</sup> When it is an important resource, a big circle is drawn around the word, when not so important the circle is smaller. The uses of the resource are written, with another colour, into the circles.

The resources listed in the circles of importance function as input for the resource map of the village and surroundings. The resource mapping method is used to discover the dynamics of access and control over resources from the perspective of the Indigenous People. The resource map helps to refine the transect walk of the villages as well. It is not a map drawn to scale, or representing real situation. The map reflects the perception of the participants about where they get the resources from they need to live, thrive or survive. To begin the process the participants are encouraged to begin the map by putting the meetinghouse of the village in the middle of the flip chart. In practice, the facilitator will do the drawing and writing. All the resources mentioned in the circles of importance will be placed on the map. First, the resources available in the village are drawn followed by the resources the villagers obtain from around their village.

Every PLA method is followed by a Focus Group discussion. Focus group is a research technique similar to interview. In this case, a group of people is brought together for a discussion with the aim to obtain additional information, more than would be the case in a one-to-one interview.<sup>105</sup> These Focus group discussions are necessary to answer the second part of the question; what their perceptions are of the possible changes they encounter. Another method would have been interviews. This method is not chosen because of time constrains and CARE would like to have insight into the perceptions of all seven different villages. Another reason was that a discussion could offer interesting additional information. The groups for the discussions have a heterogeneous population consisting of the Chief, an Elder and the VWC (Village Women Committee, consisting of five women) and are conducted per village.

The second research question that belongs to sub question one is: “Is there a difference between the seven Bending Bamboo villages with respect to their ethnicity and location?” This question is answered by putting the villages on the map of Ratanakiri, because most of them are not to be found on available maps. The ethnicity will be discussed during the Focus groups discussions. During the analysis of the collected data, possible conclusions will be made about their different location and ethnicity with respect to the possible changes they are facing.

The last research question that belongs to sub question one is: “What is the perception of educational- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri with respect to the changes

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<sup>104</sup> IADAP, 2006 [http://www.iapad.org/resource\\_mapping.htm](http://www.iapad.org/resource_mapping.htm)

<sup>105</sup> Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A., (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

in natural resources? The Indigenous People who live in Ratanakiri are very much dependent on what is decided and organized by the ministries and the organizations in Ban Lung and in the main offices of those ministries and organizations (often based in Phnom Penh). Therefore, it is important to know what their opinion is of the changing circumstances. To answer this question two methods will be used; Interviews and Focus group discussions. The choice of which depends on the sort of organisation. The directors of organisations will be interviewed and focus groups discussions are organised with the staff of the organisations. The questions for the interviews and the Focus Groups discussion are the same (annex 1 & 2).

Sub question two is: “What knowledge and skills do Indigenous People need to cope with the changes in available resources?” This sub questions is divided into two research questions. The first is: “What is the perception of the Indigenous People with respect to the knowledge and skills they need?” To find out what there perceptions are the PLA Dreamtree is used. The purpose of this method (see annex 3 for the method and FGD questions) is to find out what visions/dreams parents, Elders and the VWC have for the children in their community. In addition, what the children have to learn to achieve those dreams. Another aim was to find out what parents, Elders, and VWC think would be required in an ECD and Life Skills curriculum in order to achieve that vision/dream. This did not directly fit into this research; it however made the method more valuable for the Bending Bamboo project curriculum development. To apply the method, a big tree is drawn on a flipchart. This tree has no leaves, only empty branches. On green cut out paper leaves, the participants are asked to draw or write down their dreams for the future of their children. The facilitator helps out, especially when the participants are illiterate, which most of them will be (see chapter 1.5). The leaves are placed on the empty branches. On red pieces of paper, the participants are asked to write down what the children need to learn to achieve those dreams/visions. These are placed on the trunk of the tree. This PLA is followed by a Focus Group Discussion. The aim of this discussion is to find out if they have learned the same things the children have to, or should learn now, and what is different, and how they learned this. For the baseline survey and the curriculum development of the BB-project more will be asked about what specifically for girls should go into the ECD and LS curriculum.

To find out what the core learning areas are for their children a ranking and scoring activity will be implemented. All things written on the trunk of the tree during the Dreamtree activity (the red papers) are collected and placed under the subjects that can be formulated after rounding off the Dreamtree activity. The villagers will choose under which subject they think the text on the red paper belong too, because they think these are the things the children have to learn to achieve the dreams or professions.

At the end, every village will get five votes and they can cast their votes on what they perceive as most important. They could place all five votes on one subject or divide those over two to five subjects. This activity is needed to give CARE a starting point for the curriculum development and to know what the Indigenous People in the village perceive as priorities.

The second research question that belongs to sub question two is: “What is the perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri, with respect to the knowledge and skills the Indigenous People need?” To answer this question two methods will be used. Interviews and Focus group discussions. It will depend on the sort of organisation. The directors of organisations will be interviewed and with the staff of organisations focus groups discussions will be organised. The questions used are the same (annex 1 & 2)

The research will be done together with the Bending Bamboo team of CARE Cambodia, consisting of Chanda, Samnang, Sopheak, Rathana, Noeuk, Sopheap and Varina. Wain Churk from the Resource and Production Unit and Lak Sophip of the Community Support Unit of CARE Cambodia.

The results will be in Khmer and after they have been entered in the computer by the facilitators; Mean Sopheak and Chanda, (staff members of CARE Cambodia) which are the research officers of the BB-team (Bending Bamboo team) will translate them.

### **2.3.2 Training**

The BB-team, Wain Churk of CARE’S resource and production unit and Lak Sophin from CARE’S community support unit have been intensely trained in conducting the PLA’s and FGD’s. One Tampuan and two Kreung speakers are available in the BB-team. This is not enough to do more than three PLA’s at the same time. Therefore, we have help from other teams working for CARE Cambodia. To get help was a challenge. Not because of unwillingness, but the other teams were extremely busy. Every method used is explained to the team and practiced afterwards. Especially the FGD is perceived as very difficult. Therefore, we role-played the FGD, which was at first a lot of fun, especially when a man had to play a VWC member. Secondly, it showed many difficulties. Probing questions is the biggest constraint. To ask the questions is no problem; however, when an

answer is minimal or when there is no answer, the participants tend to go to the next question and skip the former.

### **2.3.3 Challenges encountered**

Working in a cross-cultural environment, translations are often a challenge. The villages the research took place in, and for, are mostly Kreung and Tampuen speakers; some of the village chiefs could speak Khmer. Therefore Kreung and Tampuen translators were necessary. Unfortunately, the BB-team does not have Kreung or Tampuen speakers that also speak English well enough to translate it directly from English to their language. This meant that Chanda, Samnang or Sopheak had to be around to translate it from English to Khmer and Noeuk, Sopheap or Varina respectively translated it into Kreung or Tampuen. Naturally, in the translations information got lost or is interpreted differently. Especially in the FGD discussions, this was a difficulty, mainly because it slowed down the discussion and a lot of time was used to explain the meaning of a question. Therefore, I chose to train the team to do the FGD's without me asking the questions and taking for granted that the probing questions would be a difficulty. I believe that the FGD's were more successful without all the translations. In addition, the team had to become very skilled in FGD's anyway, because they have to do a lot of them for the coming base line survey, so the training in itself was worthwhile. After they did a PLA and/or FGD, the facilitating team member made a report, which was translated by Chanda or Sopheak into English. I had the opportunity to ask additional questions to the facilitator to make sure all the needed information was present. It took months before the translations were finished; this mainly had to do with an overload of tasks that were more important at that time. After a couple of weeks I received very nice summaries from, for example, the dream tree FGD's with all the data of the seven villages together. They thought that that would be enough, unfortunately it was not. For this research, but also for the BB base line research, the information was needed per village.

In relation to this, difficult questions often remained unanswered. The cause of this could either be the translations, or moreover the difficulty of the question itself. Another reason why I most of the time did not facilitate was because CARE wanted me to do all seven villages and consequently needed the team to do the PLA's and FGD. Therefore, the results are not always completely useable. I overestimated some abilities of people (as I also sometimes underestimated them) and put them in a position they were not very comfortable in. This came out during the sessions and afterwards. To get more results I jumped in to help if I noticed on time, as did the research officers of the BB-team quite a number of times. The latter solution was significantly better, because when I jumped in I needed a translator from English to Khmer and then from Khmer to Tampuen/Kreung. This slowed down the process a lot and negatively influenced the research. Therefore I

think the best solution was to have a Khmer native speaker help out with a good deal of understanding of the PLA's and FGD's.

I planned all my methods for data collection in such a way it was both useful for this research as well as the BB base line survey. The good thing was I could do research within all the seven BB villages, without putting extra pressure on the BB team. The lesser part in this was that many questions were not useful for this research and as a result, it did not always delve deep enough into the matter.

### **3. Analysis**

To give an answer to the main question; What knowledge and skills about their (natural) resources are needed by Indigenous People in the Bending Bamboo villages in Ratanakiri to equip them to cope with their rapidly changing circumstances, a few sub questions are formulated. For the readability of the document, these questions are answered one by one. The first topic of sub questions one is about the changes in the natural resources of the seven villages. The outcome of the PLA's about (natural) resources are presented and discussed per village. This is followed by the geographical differences and perceptions of the Indigenous people on the future with respect to their (natural) resources. After the perceptions of the Indigenous People, the perceptions of the education and natural resource management organisations are presented. The second part concerns the educational needs related to the changes in the natural resources. First, the outcomes of the PLA's with the Indigenous People and their perception on this topic. This is continued by the perception of the education and natural resource management organisations versus the perception of the Indigenous People.

#### **3.1 (Natural) Resources and geographical differences of the Bending Bamboo villages**

This paragraph tries to give an answer to the sub question: "How are the natural resources changed for the indigenous villages in Ratanakiri?" To give a proper answer to this question, the current situation in the seven Bending Bamboo villages has to be described and how they perceive the changes with respect to their (natural) resources. Is there a link between their perceptions in relation with their ethnicity and location? Finally, the perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri is discussed with respect to the changes in natural resources and what the similarities and differences are as opposed to the perception of the Indigenous People of the Bending Bamboo villages?

The seven target villages for the research are new to CARE Cambodia, so not a lot is known about them. As a consequence it was important to find out what sort of (natural) resources are to be found in and around the villages and to clarify the most important similarities, differences and changes between them. To answer the question, what the (natural) resources are in and around their villages and how they are used in the seven villages, the method 'circles of importance' will be used (annex 4). Several sessions will be held with a number of representatives of the different villages. In these sessions, a flipchart is used with in the middle the word 'resources'. The villagers name the resources in and around the village and the answers are written around the

word resources on the flipchart. When it is an important resource, a big circle is drawn around the word, when not so important the circle is smaller. The uses of the resource are written, with another colour, into the circles.

The resources listed in the circles of importance will function as input for the map of the village and surroundings (annex 4). It is not a map drawn to scale or representing real situation. The map reflects the perception of the participants about where they get the resources from they need to live, thrive or survive. To begin the process the participants are encouraged to begin the map by putting the meetinghouse of the village in the middle of the flip chart. In practice, the facilitator will do the drawing and writing. All the resources mentioned in the circles of importance will be placed on the map. First, the resources available in the village are drawn followed by the resources the villagers obtain from around their village.

The situation per village is described and illustrated with pictures of the translated outcomes of the methods (annex 5 - 15). The results are discussed, as described before, after the overviews per village.

### **Ta Ong Pok & Ta Ong Kate**

Ta Ong Kate and Ta Ong Pok are together with Sik the biggest villages of the seven villages with around 500 inhabitants per village. Ta Ong Pok and Ta Ong Kate, both Kreung ethnicities, are close to Ban lung and have a good road. For Ta Ong Pok & Ta Ong Kate a combined circle of importance is made. This was necessary because of the lack of translators. The results from the two methods are presented in table 1 and the pictures of the translated drawings are presented in annex 5 and 6.

Table 1: Ta Ong Pok & Ta Ong Kate Resources

<b>Important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Important Resources outside the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources outside the village</b>
Animals (pig, chicken, cow)	Rice mill	Rice field/farm	Forest animals
Houses	Machine/generator	Forest	Dam/catching fish
Water/well	Small road		Stream
School/meeting house			Wild forest vegetables
Bamboo forest			
farm			

## Tus Chrech

Tus Chrech is a Kreung village, the annex village of Tus. Tus Chrech is very close to Ban Lung. The village is not so big. Together with the main village Tus, it has around 450 inhabitants. Before, the Chamka of Tus was where Tus Chrech, the annex village, arose. A group of people decided to live permanently at the Chamka. The results from the two methods are presented in table 2 and the pictures of the translated drawings are presented in annex 7 and 8.

Table 2: Tus Chrech Resources

<b>Important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Important Resources outside the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources outside the village</b>
Land for houses	toilet	Land for farm/chamka	
fire	Domestic animals	Rice field	
water			
air			

V.Bax, Ban Lung 2007

## Tus

Tus is a Kreung village situated at a 5 minutes drive on a proper road from the main road to Ban Lung. The village, together with the annex village Tus Chrech, has around 450 inhabitants. The village is next to Ta Ong Pok. It is even hard to see the difference between the two villages because they start to merge. The results from the two methods are presented in table 2 and the pictures of the translated drawings are presented in annex 9 and 10.

Table 3: Tus Resources

<b>Important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Important Resources outside the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources outside the village</b>
school	Domestic animals	forest	Small stream
Well/water		Land (cultivated and wild)	Wild animal
fire		Rice field	
Materials for farming,			

other tools.			
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V.Bax, Ban Lung 2007

## La In Chamkar

La In Chamkar is a Tampuen village situated on the main road to Ban Lung (around 40 minutes drive by motorbike from Ban Lung). La In Chamkar has, together with the annex village La In Srei, around 500 inhabitants. La In Srei, however, has only 25 houses, so most people live in La In Chamkar. The pictures of the two methods are presented in annex 11 & 12; table 4 gives an overview of the results.

Table 4: La In Chamkar Resources

<b>Important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Important Resources outside the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources outside the village</b>
Human resources	rice mill	Rice field	diamond
Animals to sell and for work	Land for building school, House, hospital	Protection areas (forest)	mountain
	Tourists		stream

V.Bax, Ban Lung 2007

## La In Srei

La In Srei is a very small Tampuen village. It is the most remote village of all seven Bending Bamboo villages. The road to the village from the main road is inaccessible most of the time during the wet season. The village itself has to deal with floods during this period. La In Srei has, together with the main village La In Chamkar, around 500 inhabitants. La In Srei, however, has only 25 houses, so most people live in La In Chamkar. The pictures of the two methods are presented in annex 13 & 14; table 5 gives an overview of the results.

Table 5: la In Srei Resources

<b>Important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Important Resources outside the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources outside the village</b>
Human resources		Ricefield/chamka	Bamboo
Tools		firewood	
Domestic animals		Stone	
house			

clothes			
school			
water			
Traditional & modern medicine			

V.Bax Ban Lung 2007

note: *Forest is drawn in to the resource map, but not in the circles of importance.*

## Sik

Sik is a Kreung village next to the main road to Ban Lung. It is, together with Ta Ong Pok, the biggest village with around 600 inhabitants. The picture of the combined drawing of both methods is presented in annex 15. Table 6 gives an overview of the results.

Table 6: Sik Resources

<b>Important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources in the village</b>	<b>Important Resources outside the village</b>	<b>Less important Resources outside the village</b>
Domestic animals	Fruit tree	Chamka/rice field	pond
well	Rice mill	forest	
Transport (car, motor, small tractor)		Stream	
		cemetery	
		Wild vegetable	
		Ban Lung Market	
		Bamboo forest	

V.Bax, Ban Lung 2007

The circles of importance and the resource mapping are followed up by a FGD. Again, this FGD was a mix of questions for both the research and the BB baseline survey as well as questions suitable only for the BB Baseline survey.

There are a lot of similarities and differences between the villages that are relatively close to each other. All the villages sell non-monetary resources like forest and farm products for monetary income. In Sik, Ta Ong Kate and Ta Ong Pok they mentioned other sources for monetary income like being a labourer on cashew nut farms, being a motor dub (motor taxi driver) or renting out machines. These three villages are the biggest villages, all Kreung and less isolated than La In Srei and Tus Chrech.

The land is divided by the village chief and/or the families, although all villages, except La In Srei and La In Chamkar, mentioned that it is more difficult nowadays because people sell their land. This answer is often formulated in the past tense, implying they divided land this way before they lost it in land alienation practices or when the village was smaller and did not need the amount of land they need nowadays. It is not possible to start a farm in their community as an outsider. Only Tus and Tus Chrech would accept two or three outside families if they were, as they said, good people. The two villages that said it is not more difficult than before are both Tampuen villages, La In Chamkar and La In Srei. These are the most remote villages as well as cut off from the rest of the world half of the year due to floods. All other villages are Kreung. So the five Kreung village indicate more difficulties in land use, the two remote Tampuen village do not confirm this land issue.

To the question, if they would have drawn the resource map different from now, five years ago, they all responded positively. The main differences in La In Srei and La In Chamkar, is that the rice fields are better than before because the farmers do not spend so much time on growing soya beans. A similar answer was given by Tus and Tus Chrech; their farming activities improved and are better protected against, for example, wild pigs. Sik saw the access to and use of the Ban Lung market as the big difference, together with technologies like a rice mill instead of pounding rice by hand (mentioned in Ta Ong Pok and Ta Ong Kate as well). Both Sik and Ta Ong Kate see a big change in the use of the forest.

The situation was perceived as being better than before in all villages except La In Srei and La In Chamkar. This had to do with the bad soya bean yields of the previous years. All the villages, except the two Tampuen villages La In Srei and La In Chamkar, see a big advantage in the better transportation opportunities they have. As a consequence they have access to the Ban Lung Market and better technologies, like the well, generator and rice mill, which saves them a lot of time. La In Chamkar already has this access, La In Srei, however, does not. They do know the advantages of these technologies because it is the annex village of La In Chamkar. Sik mentioned that they have substantially more money because of the cashew plantations. Nevertheless, they lost a lot of forest and other resources with it.

Their predictions on what the map will look like in five years' time are, although mostly positive, very different per village. La In Srei and La In Chamkar think they will get access to all the newer technologies and will have cash crops like cashew. A big difference will be that their children will go to school. In Tus and Tus Chrech, they think that their children will get better jobs than working outside on the farm, like doctor, police officers etc. Ta Ong Pok and Ta Ong Kate predict a big difference in the way the village will look. People will move or build bigger houses. The changes will mainly come from the village itself; La In Srei and La In Chamkar think that allowing the NGO's in their village will enhance changes. They see the interventions done by NGO's have a positive impact on their lives. Another positive change will be that their children will have better schooling. If they do not, the lack of education combined with the disappearing of the forest will have a negative impact on their village.

Overall can be said that the better accessible villages have more modern resources and cash crops, but are also more dependent of these resources. This counts for all five Kreung villages. The Tampuen villages, which are further away and less accessible from Ban Lung than the Kreung villages, live more traditional. La In Srei is very remote and does not make use of the newer resources like rice mills, motorbikes, and does not have cash crops. The inhabitants see these changes as positive and want them as well. Although they have their concerns about the future, especially when it comes to schooling and the lost of the forest. Nonetheless, they predict that schooling will improve and therefore other than agricultural jobs will be done by villagers. They will also have access to newer technology, cash crops and the Ban Lung market will increase in size and importance, and the look of the village will change. Interesting is that they all mentioned that these changes are coming out of their own community. Nobody mentioned the Khmer, Chinese or Vietnamese, that are currently so active in this region, as initiator of these changes.

## 3.2 (Natural) Resources and Education- and Natural Resource Management Organisations

“The Indigenous People from Ratanakiri are different from other regions in Cambodia. They have been more isolated and therefore the changes are more recent”, said Mr. Phalla<sup>106</sup>, who works at the ministry of land management. The natural environment of Ratanakiri has attracted a lot of business in the last decades: land brokers, logging, cash crops, wildlife (animals and plants) and Tourism. Rich Khmer people from especially Phnom Penh come up north to do this business. The business has positive and negative sides for the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri.<sup>107</sup> The following paragraphs present the results of the interviews and FGD’s with the Education- and Natural Resource Management organisations.

The Indigenous People that live in Ratanakiri are very much dependent on what is decided and organized by the ministries and organisations in Ban Lung, the capital of Ratanakiri, as well as in the main offices of those ministries and organizations (often based in Phnom Penh). It is therefore important to know what their opinion is about the changing circumstances and the educational needs related to those changes. In addition, it is important to compare the similarities and differences between their opinion and that of the Indigenous People in Ratanakiri. Persons from different organisations will be interviewed.<sup>108</sup> They all work in the field of either natural environment management or education in Ratanakiri and sometimes both.

The interviewed:

- Mr Yieng , a representative of the Provincial Office of Education (POE).
- The program manager, Mr Long Serey and Mr Bang Ngan, one of the indigenous staff members of Indigenous Indigenous Community Support Organisation (ICSO)
- Four Indigenous staff members of different tribes that work for International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC).
- Mr Phally , the manager of Build Bright University (BBU), Ratanakiri Campus
- Mr Phalla, a representative of Ministry of land Management & Project Support in Decentralisation and Deconcentration (PSDD), formerly called Partners for Local Governance.

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<sup>106</sup> Mr Phalla (interviewed 26 March 2007) has 10 years experience in Natural Resource management (NRM) and policy advocacy. Now the ministry of land management supervises him, before he was supervised by Project support in Decentralisation and Deconcentration (PSDD) sponsored by UNDP.

<sup>107</sup> Mr Phally (interviewed 6 September 2007) is the manager of the Build Bright University, Ratanakiri Campus

<sup>108</sup> See annex 1 & 2 for the list of questions used for all of the interviews.

- Four Indigenous staff members of CARE

For the readability of the thesis, the research results are divided in topics. The topics are; cash crops, logging and mining, infrastructure and changing traditions. The perceptions of the Education- and Natural Resource Management organisations are discussed and compared with the perceptions of the Indigenous People of the Bending Bamboo villages.

### **3.2.1 Cash crops**

The traditional way of agricultural practices is shifting cultivation, also called slash and burn activities. A small plot of forest is cleared and prepared for agricultural practices. After about two years, the soil will have lost most of its fertility and a new plot in the forest is cleared. This is mostly done in a circle around the village. In about 25 to 30 years, the circle is completed and they are back at the plot where they started about 30 years ago. This plot has been overgrown by the forest again and will have regained its fertility. These sort of agricultural practices are very preservative for the forest; it does not cause long lasting damage because the forest has time to recover completely. This way of agriculture is changing quickly because of the introduction of cash crops. Cash crops, in Ratanakiri especially cashew nuts and rubber plants, are substantially bigger plots of land than the Indigenous People use for their traditional agricultural practices in the forest and do not change position like in shifting cultivation. The introduction of cash crops has a few advantages and disadvantages for the Indigenous People. An advantage is that they do not have to clear land every 2/3 years, which is a time consuming practice. Their farming skills have improved, which was according to Mr Yieng, a representative of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS)<sup>109</sup>, very necessary. The reason that this had to improve was a food shortage, which seems to have lessened now because of the cash crops, according to Mr. Yieng. The villagers can earn some money by selling these products on the markets in the bigger towns of Ratanakiri. Next to the cash crops like cabbage (which is not a product that is traditionally used in the Indigenous communities), forest products can be sold. Their encounter with the Khmer people, who are nowadays the dominant population in the villages with the biggest markets like Ban Lung, when the Indigenous People come to the market, is seen as a very positive side effect by Mr Yieng. In that way, the Indigenous people can learn different things from other cultures, like the Khmer language and use of other products like cabbage. But also fertilizers and other modern agricultural products that are sold on the markets. A last positive side effect of the cash crops mentioned by Mr. Yieng, is that better roads are needed to access

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<sup>109</sup> Mr Yieng (interviewed 13 September 2007) is a Khmer man that works for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS) and is placed Provincial Office of education (POE) in Ratanakiri.

these areas. Because the government increases the accessibility of the villages and their surrounding forests they can reach the markets a lot easier, while other people like sellers on motorbike or small trucks can reach the villages. At the time of writing there was even a motorbike travelling around with a computer on it so you could send e-mails. This motorbike comes around on a regular base so you can check if they had an answer (an internet access point had to be reached en route to be connected to the World Wide Web).

Not all the 'experts' see the arrival of cash crops as positive as Mr. Yieng. Villages still practicing shifting cultivation, because they do not have their own cash crops plantations, face the challenge that they cannot finish the cycle of 25/30 years; this is due to the fact that the forest area they need to apply this traditional agricultural practice is rather large; it is an enormous circle around their village. People foreign to Ratanakiri do not see the forest, that is regaining fertility, as part of the shifting cultivation practice, but just as unused forest which can be used. The forest is cleared and used for cash crops, which breaks the circle of the shifting cultivation. Less land is available for that agricultural practice, so the land available for the circle is enough for 15/20 years, and that is not long enough for the forest to regain fertility, this means less production and in the end increasing food shortage. The question arises how it is possible that people can walk into the forest and start a plantation.<sup>110</sup> Officially, this is not possible anymore since the new Cambodian land laws of 2001. Before these land laws people bought plots of land from the Indigenous communities (see the chapter about natural resources in Ratanakiri). Some of the interviewed confirm the problems that have occurred because of the land alienation and the arrival of cash crops. Mr Long Serey and Bang Ngan of the Indigenous Community Support Organisation (ICSO)<sup>111</sup> see many disadvantages in the arrival of cash crops. Traditional seeds are being lost by clearing the forest but also by using chemicals. The Indigenous People have better access to the markets where they get in contact with new products like chemicals or insecticide. The problem is that nobody tells them how to use the chemicals properly. During the interview with four Indigenous employees of the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC)<sup>112</sup> they explained the practices concerning the chemicals that happen in the field. "Often the farmers mix the insecticide with the rice, so birds die and the earthworms are gone too. Nonetheless, on short terms it safes the farmers a lot of time. Before the insecticide, the farmer had to stay on the field to protect the crops for birds and alike, that time can be used for something else now. The birds that die of the insecticide are eaten and gloves are never used, so farmers often get sick after planting. Conclusion is that they will loose their environment". The loss of the forest is the biggest

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<sup>110</sup> Mr Long Serey (Khmer) is the Coordinator and Mr Bang Ngan (Kreung) a field officer at ICSO (interviewed 30 august 2007).

<sup>111</sup> Mr Long Serey & Mr Bang Ngan

<sup>112</sup> Interview with four employees of the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) at 13 September 2007. The four employees do not want to be mentioned by name in the Thesis. They belong to four different Indigenous communities in Ratanakiri; Kreung, Borov, Kavet and Tampuen.

problem to them and the root of all the changes that happen at the moment. Not only how their livelihood is organized changes, but it also changes the whole culture of the Indigenous People in many ways. The four Indigenous employees of ICC summed up one possible ‘downfall’ situation. “The forest is taken, often by wealthy Khmer people out of other provinces or Vietnamese. Although it is not allowed to buy land anymore, they just change the date to a day before the Cambodian land law of 2001. On a day, a group of foreign people come into the village with a lot of rice wine. They make fun and drink with the elders, when drunk they let them thumbprint a contract in Khmer, which they cannot read, what seems to be a selling contract for land (or an empty paper). Most Indigenous do not even know that they can sell their ‘community grounds’, it has been used by them and other tribes for centuries already, it is not part of our customs to own the forest. The men leave and nothing happens, until all the sudden a fence is being built in the forest and big bulldozers clear the trees. The Indigenous People cannot trespass this land anymore and if they do, they sometimes risk to be shot. The balance, with respect to the farming practices, is gone all the sudden. This counts also for the hunting, gathering of wild forest products and sometimes even the fishing. This is not all, it did happen that the sacred grounds, where the ancestors live, are also within the borders of the alienated land. The village is not able to gather enough food anymore and the shifting cultivation circle is broken. Result is that the Indigenous People have to find another way to fulfil their daily needs. The shortages of food have to add by buying food at the market or from merchants, which cost money. Therefore a lot of Indigenous men work on the cashew or rubber plantation for very little money”.

So far, the story is about how the livelihoods of the Indigenous People are changing and not about changes in their culture. As a result of these livelihood changes there are, however, a few cultural changes to mention. First of all the language; the Khmer language is getting more important and is in some cases even slowly replacing the Indigenous languages, according to the interviewed Indigenous staff of ICC. The urge for money and food pushes them to the market, which is one of the places where they learn the Khmer language. Another strong reason for the need of the villagers to learn Khmer is to make sure they can read the contracts when people try to buy or sell their land.<sup>113</sup>

The selling of land is not always a case of deception. Quite some Indigenous people sold their land with full consciousness. This for different reasons; the need for money to buy missing basic needs like food, but also for motorbikes or other luxury goods they get into contact with now the world is widening around them. During the sessions with the staff of ICC, they were telling that owning a motorbike is a big thing in many villages. It is possible to buy one when you sell some land. According to the interviewed, the result is often that when the

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<sup>113</sup> Interview with four employees of the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) at 13 September 2007. The four employees do not want to be mentioned by name in the Thesis. They belong to four different Indigenous communities in Ratanakiri; Kreung, Borov, Kavet and Tampuen.

motorbike breaks down the money they have earned with the land is already spent on other utilities. Therefore, they cannot repair the motorbike. The motorbike earns them no or too little money. Result is that in the end they own a broken motorbike and have less or no land anymore to live from.

### **3.2.2 Logging and mining**

“Logging is a very political topic. Mining, especially gold mining will give a bad change. It destroys the land and infrastructure, it creates pollution and relocation of people” according to Mr Phalla (PSDD).<sup>114</sup>

Logging appeared to be a very sensitive topic. It is illegal by law, but all of the interviewed confirmed that it still happens on a big scale. Most of them said the government is involved in this business. Even the ministry of land management did not speak out against this rumour. The logging is done for different reasons. For the construction of new roads, wide lanes of trees are stripped. This often goes together with the relocation of a lot of people and sometimes complete villages. This seems to be a big frustration because all of the Indigenous People that were interviewed talked about it, especially the fact there is nothing you can do against it and there is no money to be had for compensation. Another reason for the logging is the high market price of tropical timber. Finally, logging is needed to create cashew and rubber plantations or to allow gem, bauxite and gold mining. Mr Phalla was especially very concerned about the mining business. He said mining destroys the land on a big scale and pollutes it, big roads are needed to get the trucks in and out of the mines and it can enhance robbery.

Mr. Ban Ngan (ICSO) was very clear about the risk he sees in logging. He said that logging is done in such a way it causes many problems to flora and fauna. When there is no forest and the deforested area is not used for cash crops, the land will dry out soon. These bare grounds will increase the storms and are very vulnerable to floods. It is also a big problem to the Indigenous People that live in that forest. They need the forest to hunt, find plants and to sacrifice to the spirits. If there is not enough forest, the Indigenous People lose a part of their livelihood although they have not received education needed to get alternate jobs.

### **3.2.3 Infrastructure**

A big change of the last decade is the accessibility of the villages of the Indigenous People in Ratanakiri. Mainly dirt roads have been built in the province and they connect a lot of villages with each other. Before,

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<sup>114</sup> Mr Phalla (interviewed 26 March 2007) has 10 years experience in Natural Resource management (NRM) and policy advocacy. Now the ministry of land management supervises him, before he was supervised by Project support in Decentralisation and Deconcentration (PSDD) sponsored by UNDP.

there were only walkways through the forest which you could cross on foot or by motorbike, only if you were a very skilled driver. More and more of these walkways have been widened and made passable for cars. All of the interviewed mentioned this change and different sides of it were discussed. Mr. Phalla and Mr. Yieng of the different ministries both saw it as a positive change. “The people have easier access to the markets, trades people can come into the village to do business and NGO’s can help them think about the future”<sup>115</sup>. Mr. Phalla adds to the positive side of the improving infrastructure that the roads give them better access to health services. Although he thinks that, the increase of robberies has got everything to do with the improved accessibility of the villages. The houses of the Indigenous People have no locks and the animals walk around freely. Furthermore, he is concerned about traffic accidents. The motorbikes used can speed up a lot on better roads, although holes will always be there, helmets are hardly worn and when the road is wet it is tremendously slippery (which I can endorse due to my many village visits done on a motorbike over very slippery roads).

A big concern to everyone interviewed who mentioned this, is the road to Vietnam, the government is building. A widely paved road of around 65 kilometres from Ban Lung to the east is being constructed, which will give access to Vietnam. This road is being built to increase the export potential with Vietnam, although a lot of people that live in Ratanakiri seem to be concerned about this. According to Mr. Long Serey and Mr. Bang Ngan<sup>116</sup> the building process alone is already a threat to the Indigenous People, because a lot of land is needed to build the road, on top of which there’s the possibility the access to Vietnam can increase the land alienation by Vietnamese businessman. Cambodian businesspersons might need more land, as the need for timber and cash crops will rise. Another big concern is that social problems will increase, like drugs and sex trafficking. Apparently, a big Vietnamese company just bought a lot of land in Ratanakiri<sup>117</sup>. This rumour led to a lot of unrest under the inhabitants of Ratanakiri. Which company, and where they bought land, was unclear; nobody seemed to know this. Another rumour that cause a lot of unrest is the seemingly planned casinos at the Vietnamese border. Listening to the many people who talked about this, it will encourage drugs and sex trafficking. Because of this, ICSO, for example, made a movie about this. In this movie, they act out a possible situation, of how young men and girls can be ‘robbed’ from the village to work in the many brothels in mainly Ban Lung or at the orchards. The movies are shown in the villages around Ratanakiri.

Mr. Phally can also see the positive side of the better roads, especially the road to Vietnam. This road can create a lot of work when the need for cash crops rises. Next to the production of goods, other businesses will rise, like transportation companies and the like. Mr Phally is very concerned about the actual involvement of

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<sup>115</sup> Mr Phalla, Ministry of land management & Project support in Decentralisation and

<sup>116</sup> Mr Logn Serey (Khmer) is the Coordinator and Mr Bang Ngan (Kreung) a field officer at ICSO (interviewed 30 august 2007).

<sup>117</sup> Interview with four employees of the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) at 13 September 2007.

the Indigenous People. He thinks that the Khmer people will be in charge of this and the Indigenous People will at the most become workers in the orchards.

“On one way they need the infrastructure, but it should not impact their traditional lifestyle. For example, some villages have ceremonies and at that moment, nobody is allowed to come in. But what if the road goes through their village? The solution could be that the village makes a public display about the ceremony, so everybody knows. Otherwise, they have to change their traditional practice. Another solution could be that they let people go through, without stopping. So, the salesmen cannot do business in that village, that day.”

Quote by Mr Phalla.

### **3.2.4 Changing traditions**

All the interviewed, from ministry officials to Indigenous Staff members of NGO's, mentioned their concerns about the loss of the traditional lifestyle for the Indigenous People. In the last decade, a lot of their traditional lifestyle has changed already. As mentioned in the paragraph about cash crops, the Indigenous People do go to the Khmer markets on a much bigger scale than before; they have to, because of the loss of the forest and the broken cycle of shifting cultivation. This enhances a change in income raising. If they have to buy food and goods at the market, they need money, therefore they partly replace their traditional crops by 'new Khmer' crops. This will also change their eating pattern<sup>118</sup>. The way to the markets is, according to all the interviewed, changing the Khmer language skills of the Indigenous People visiting these markets. The Interviewed of the ministry of Education and Land Management<sup>119</sup> see this as a good change and in their opinion it is a wish of the Indigenous themselves. This wish is, according to Mr Phalla, also stimulated by the fact that Indigenous People cannot read official documents, which are all in Khmer. In the light of land alienation because of unreadable contracts, this is a sensitive topic. When CARE reached an informed consent with the seven Bending Bamboo villages, the signing ceremony was a very difficult event. There was a lot of reluctance in the air, the informed consent needed to be translated in Kreung and Tampuen as well, and the Khmer version was a big step to be signed. This carefulness had everything to do with bad experiences of signing Khmer contracts that had caused land lost.

The Indigenous staff members of ICC spoke out their concern, specifically for the young Indigenous People who especially lose their language. They start to mix Khmer with their traditional language. They also see a loss of traditional stories told by the elders of the villages, as well as the way of clothing. The traditional dress

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<sup>118</sup> Mentioned by Interview with four employees of ICC, Mr Phalla, Ministry of land management & Project support in Decentralisation and Mr. Logn Serey and Mr Bang Ngan of ICSO.

<sup>119</sup> Mr Phalla, Ministry of land management & Project support in Decentralisation and Mr. Yieng of MOEYS.

for men is just a sort of shorts that they tie around and for the female only a woven dress. These are being less worn and t-shirts (often from NGO's) bra's and jeans gain popularity.

These changes are, when mentioned in the interviews, all seen as negative changes. The Indigenous staff members of ICC did mention a positive change in a very typical tradition for this region. It was a custom for a village to change its place regularly, the government does not allow this anymore. One of the ICC staff members said the following: "Positive is, that we don't change place all the time, not that we could if we wanted, because of the restrictions and lack of place. But especially because it saves a lot of work. When the chief had a bad dream about the future, they moved the whole village. This happened every 2 to 3 year. This is not allowed by law anymore, so young people are not used to change village, old people do not mind this. In the end, it saves a lot of money, because when we built a new village a ceremony was needed and that meant we had to slaughter a buffalo, that is expensive." In the village this also leads to a different building style. The houses are slowly being build to last longer. Some of the interviewed did, however, not like the style of the houses in typical Khmer style. To them it is another example of loss of identity.<sup>120</sup> The positive result of these more sustainable houses is that they last about 10 years instead of 1 year, like traditional Bamboo houses do<sup>121</sup>.

To summarise the opinion on the changes of the (natural) resources of the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri and its causes: An overall topic on the use of the land or natural resources is the way land is obtained. Like the people of ICC said, "Loss of the forest is the root to all problems". Land seems often to be obtained by illegal methods. It is not allowed to buy land since 2001, but the government does not apply this rule to strictly. Especially when it comes to land that can be used for logging. Indigenous People, however, also voluntarily sell land to raise their income and to be able to buy food or modern utilities like motorbikes.

Forest clearing happens for different reasons; cash crops, logging, road construction and mining. This clearing and building of roads has different effects on the communities. The cash crops create money, because the Indigenous People who grow them can earn money with it on the markets of Ratanakiri. Better farming skills are introduced and that is beneficial for increased production, especially to battle the food shortage in some areas in Ratanakiri. Although, the cash crops can cause loss of traditional seeds because of clearing. A big concern is the use of insecticides, because many Indigenous People do not use them properly. This can result in health problems, loss of necessary wildlife and degradation of the soil.

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<sup>120</sup> Mentioned by Interview with four employees of ICC and Mr. Logn Serey and Mr Bang Ngan of ICSO.

<sup>121</sup> Staff member of ICC

Concerning the logging, no positive points are mentioned. Often this happens illegally. The government seems to be involved and villages have to relocate for this practice, without any compensation. The logging can also create environmental problems, like soil degradation and increased vulnerability for different weather circumstances.

The accessibility has increased significantly in the last couple of years. Cars have access to many villages over roads that were footpaths before. These roads give the villagers easier access to the markets, to sell their crops and to get medical help. Trades people, but also NGOs can come into the village to do their business. Nonetheless, many concerns are mentioned too. Better roads cause more speeding, because of which there are more accidents, as well as an apparent increase of robberies. Especially the road being built to Vietnam seems to be a big concern. First of all the construction causes relocation of Indigenous villages along the old small road. The fear is this road will increase the export potential a lot, and although this is also seen as a positive side, this will increase the demand for cash crops, timber and other available resources. This means more clearing of the forest. Next to that, there is a lot of talk about the Casino at the border, which is a concern with respect to sex and drugs trafficking.

All these changes will cause cultural change for the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri. The concern is that the loss of the forest will change the whole culture. First of all the traditional languages are in danger, because it is replaced by Khmer. The main causes of this replacement mentioned are, extended contact with the Khmer people at the markets and not being able to read the land sale contracts. Contact of the Indigenous People with the markets will not only influence their language but also their way of clothing, eating habits, and Khmer style buildings. Money has become an increasingly important factor for Indigenous People, because they need money to buy additional food or luxury good. Because the Indigenous People are not allowed by law to move their village, and the sight of Khmer villages will change their building style. More and more Khmer style houses are built in the villages. This is a more sustainable way of building than the traditional bamboo houses.

The perception of the villagers is a lot more positive than those of the education- and natural resource management organizations. They do mention some concerns for the future that have to do with the loss of the forest, but they do think that the improved accessibility will enhance a better future. Other ways of income raising is occurring for most of the villages already and they think this will increase into the near future, especially when schooling becomes better. The biggest difference in their perception about the changes is that the villagers see the changes as coming out of their own community. The education- and natural resource management organisations are more concerned about the future of the Indigenous People. Land alienation,

logging, mining, road building and cash crops will make it more difficult to keep their agricultural societies intact and increased contact with the Khmer culture can enhance the loss of their own identity. They mainly see solutions in the improvement of their agricultural skills; something the people from the village did not mention. They want to move on and become part of the world around them.

### **3.3 Education**

The first two paragraphs of the analysis focused on giving an answer to the current situation of the villages with respect to their (natural) resources and their perception about the changes they are going through. The perception of the villages is discussed like the perception of education and natural resource management organisations/experts. This information was needed to find an answer to the question: What knowledge and skills do Indigenous People need to cope with the changes in the available resources. This, to give an answer to the main question: What knowledge and skills in relation to their (natural) resources are needed by Indigenous People in the Bending Bamboo villages in Ratanakiri to equip them to cope with their rapidly changing circumstances? Again, the perception of the Indigenous People of the seven Bending Bamboo villages and the education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri is discussed.

To find out the perceptions of the villagers of the Bending Bamboo villages two participatory methods; Education Dreamtree and Ranking and scoring, next to individual interviews as well as focus group discussions have been used to gather information.

#### **3.3.1 Dreamtree**

This section aims to summarize both the aspirations that emerged for the children, and to clarify the most important learning areas that the different villages perceive children need to be supported in to move towards the future.

The purpose of this method (see Annex 3 for the method and FGD questions) is to find out what visions/dreams parents, Elders and the VWC have for the children in their community, and what their children have to learn to realise those dreams. Another purpose was to find out what parents, Elders, and VWC think is required in an ECD and Life Skills curriculum, in order to realise that vision/dream. This did not directly fit into this research but made the method more valuable for the Bending Bamboo project

curriculum development. To do the method, a big tree was drawn on a flipchart. This tree has no leaves, only empty branches. On green cut out paper leaves, the participants were asked to draw or write down their dreams for the future of their children. The facilitator helped with this, especially when the participants were illiterate, which most of them were. The leaves were placed on the empty branches. On red pieces of paper, the participants were asked to write down what the children needed to learn to achieve those dreams/visions. These were placed on the trunk of the tree (see picture 1).

Figure 1: Dreamtree



Ban Lung, V. Bax 25 march 2007

This PLA was followed by a Focus Group Discussion. The aim of this discussion was to find out if they learned the same things the children have, or should learn now, what is different, and how they learned this. For the baseline survey and the curriculum development of the BB-project we also asked more about this specifically for girls and what should go into the ECD and LS curriculum.

The results of the villages are discussed together, not per village, because the similarities were so visible that a separation between villages and/or ethnicity did not make sense. It is interesting to find the outcomes are so similar on this matter. Especially after the discussion about the changes they are going through and their perception on that, which are not the same within every village.

In all the villages, specific aspirations related to vocations for children were put forward. They related to a very wide range of professions and vocations, including weaver, translator, doctor, midwife, teacher, journalist, entrepreneur, working in NGOs, dressmaker, machine and motor mechanic, house builders, artist, musician

or singer/performer, make up person for weddings, and a range of possible official government positions as well as public servant including police and soldier. Group members emphasized the need for children to be able to have vocational skills that bridged their culture with others’.

For example:

*To be a doctor in our village, the commune or the whole district*

or

*Be a builder who can build both traditional and modern Khmer style*

and

*Become musician with modern and traditional instruments*

Aspirations for local leaderships and representation skills were also noted: 'They need to be the village and commune chief' and 'have the skills of being able to be a member in any committee, PM, police, village and commune'. One group noted their children could become 'the commune clerk' or even 'the provincial governor'.

Villagers currently do not identify themselves as being members of these vocations or professions but they emphasized the need for children to be able to 'communicate with outsiders' and have 'strong learning'. Group members also listed their understanding of the specific technical skills that children may need to be taught to move toward these aspirations, for example literacy, numeracy and computing. It is important to note that discussions also enabled group members to raise their concerns for children and for the need to balance change in the future with respect for and maintenance of their specific cultures and their children's' heritage. Children need to know how to respect parents and elders, know how to take care of family members. Girls need to learn how to undertake housewife tasks, caring for themselves and others, including babies and children, care of the house, and property. Especially important are cultural/spiritual obligations and the ability to undertake ceremonial roles and tasks. Children need to learn, for example, about how to respect and fulfil ceremonial obligations through spirit offerings, associated ceremonies, and therefore can take good care of the spirits. Traditional cycles and practices in agriculture, food preparation, animal care and handicrafts (weaving blankets, baskets and mats, carving gourds, making and learning to use and play musical instruments and weapons) need to be learned and maintained. Some skills girls previously learned, for example fabric weaving, are not currently practiced, but were named as aspirations. Importantly all groups members said of their

children: 'they learn all these things by their parents and grand parents'. Therefore, when it comes to traditional practices, the villagers do not find it necessary to implement this into a formal education curriculum.

A voting process was implemented to clarify the core learning areas needed by children. All the things written down on the trunk of the tree (the red papers) were collected and placed under the following subject headings: using the environment, health, hygiene, music & arts (culture), Learning letters and numbers, nutrition and others. The villagers chose under which subject they thought the text on the red paper, which are the things they think the children have to learn to realise the dreams or professions, belonged too. This sometimes led to small discussions, but in the end, it was not hard on them to agree on this. This gave a good idea of what should be put into the school curriculum.

After this, every village got five votes and they were asked to put their votes to what they perceived as most important. They could place all five votes on one subject or divide them over two to five subjects.

The result was:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Votes (total 35 votes)</u>
1. Learning letters & numbers	11
2. Using the environment	7
3. Health	7
4. Nutrition	5
5. Hygiene	3
6. Music & arts	1
7. Other	1

If you look at the things written on the red papers, more subjects could be listed, like learning a profession, vocational skills or village traditions.

The outcome of the list of topics under the subjects was easy to fill in without the participatory process of letting them decide where the topics should be placed, but is important to give an idea to the villagers what can be done at school. The benefit was that they really gave input to the curriculum that has to be created. Later on in the process, example lessons were made out of these outcomes to give them an idea how this could

work in practice. The villagers were very positive about what was developed and it showed it was not just an assignment on paper, but really input that was used directly.

### **3.3.2 The 'Experts' vs. The Villagers**

During the interviews of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri, were posed the same questions about education as the villagers. Although they did not do the dreamtree and ranking and scoring methods. Their perception of what the Indigenous People should receive in education was very different from one to another. Mr. Phalla said: "In my perception, they need capacity to cope with the changes and to change from traditional to modern practices. However, the government must recognize some of the traditions."<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, his solution to learn this best is to send them to Japan for an internship with a family that works in agriculture. Later on in the interview, it became clear that he had experienced this. I have my doubts if this is the simplest solution for the Indigenous People to make the shift from traditional to modern practices.

The staff members of ICC, who are all Indigenous, also believe modern practices and other new, modern utilities are good, but the Indigenous People should not forget their backgrounds. The elders have a task in this knowledge sharing, as well as the schools in the village. These have the shared responsibility to tell the children about how it was and what the changes are, together with the good things and the threats of these changes. The villagers said this already happens; the children learn these things from the parents and grandparents and this should not be done at the schools. With an exception to the advantages and threats of the changes mentioned by the ICC members. The villagers did not mention those.

All of the interviewed see literacy and numeracy as a very important matter. Although Mr Phalla sees it as unnecessary to learn the Indigenous language, only Khmer is useful in his perspective. The others, especially the Indigenous People interviewed, think education should be bilingual. To the question, why it is so important to learn to read and write, they all mentioned it will help them to get office jobs, as well as protect them from land sale contracts. When they can read Khmer documents, it might help them not to fall into land alienation traps.

Tus and Tus Chrech did not see it as important for their children to learn about the changes in their village, because they will never know what was there before. The other villages do think it is important. It is part of

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<sup>122</sup> Mr Phalla (interviewed 26 March 2007) of the Ministry of land management & Project support in Decentralisation

their culture and what their culture is partly based on. Learning about what is changed will improve their future, especially when you talk about health issues. The 'experts' agreed with the villagers on this matter.

The persons interviewed, that work for the ministries, both said it is very important to teach them life skills, especially modern agricultural skills. This is in their opinion where the future lies. The villagers mentioned many vocational skills, although not always agricultural skills. They see their children into all different sorts of jobs besides the agricultural sector. The people interviewed mainly talked about agricultural jobs. It is interesting to find that the villagers see their children in all those non-agricultural jobs and the people from the different organisations see them mostly in agriculture. In addition, the Indigenous People who work for the education- and natural resource management organisations shared this opinion. They managed to include non-agricultural jobs as well, why should the children that live in the villages not get similar jobs in the future?

## 4. Conclusions

Although Ratanakiri is a very remote area, it has to deal with the presence of people trying to organize their natural environment in such a way that it suits their needs. According to the literature and the research results, this was a lot more in balance before the province received closer attention from 'outsiders'. The relationship between the society, environment and development seems to be largely based on economic values of growth, especially in the sense of expansion of agricultural land use activities and extraction of other natural resources like gems and bauxite. The challenges for the Indigenous People that live in Ratanakiri are likely to increase. Neither the literature nor the research results mentioned any sustainable practices. The natural resources are simple production units to be used without restraint for economic expansion. According to the literature and research results, no actions are undertaken to preserve nature or the Indigenous People by the people who benefit from Ratanakiri's resources. Strong statements are made, 'The Indigenous People of Ratanakiri are marginalized and separated from mainstream society'. A cause of this separation is their isolated geographical location and language barriers. The marginalization has to do with the way the land is alienated from them. The investments made in Ratanakiri by the Cambodian, Vietnamese and Chinese government are done to turn the province into an agro-industrial production region. These economically understandable plans have instigated a rapid migration to Ratanakiri, including, sometimes, enormous land speculation. From inside and outside Cambodia, Businessmen, investors and politicians are very interested to get involved. The price of the land has doubled many times in a few years, but a lot of land is bought through illegal transactions. The victim of these activities will be the livelihoods of the Indigenous People. Especially the NGOs based in Ratanakiri are concerned about these illegal transactions.

The Indigenous People are one of the poorest of Cambodia and this has driven them to sell their land, which enhanced more problems, because some villages became very critically short of land to feed themselves. The regional and national authorities do not do enough to prevent these land sales. When the land is sold, it is used for logging, rubber-, cashew-, and soya bean plantations or for speculation. Land issues most probably have the most negative effect on the provinces Indigenous groups. The forest the Indigenous People use for hunting, gathering and their 'slash and burn' farming is done without a formal system of land ownership. They believe that the forest belongs to everyone. Nevertheless, it appears they can sell that forest without formal ownership. Although some Indigenous Communities try to receive ownership over its collective properties, no community succeeded yet. Although the land Law of 2001 prohibited land sales, illegal selling practices appear to go on and the government seems to not yet take this rule too strictly. Another major topic is the increased accessibility of the province. The main road from Stung Treng to Ban Lung has been tremendously improved

and a road to Vietnam is under construction. To build this road, a lot of forest has to be cleared, but a bigger concern on top of that are the consequences for the region after the road is finished. It opens up the trade route with Vietnam and there is a fear this will also bring other activities, like casinos and brothels on the Cambodian side of the border, which are prohibited in Vietnam.

The interviewed people of the education- and natural resource management organizations do see the loss of the forest as the root of all problems the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri face. An overall topic for the use of the land or natural resources is the way land is obtained. Land often seems to be obtained by methods, which is not allowed by law. They also recognize that the government does not take this rule too strictly. Especially when it comes to land that can be used for logging. However, Indigenous People also sell land voluntarily to enhance their income and to enable them to buy food or modern utilities like motorbikes.

The forest is cleared for different reasons: cash crops, logging, road construction and mining. This clearing and building of roads has different effects on the communities. The cash crops create money, because the Indigenous People doing this can earn money with it on the markets of Ratanakiri. Better farming skills are introduced and that is beneficial for more production, especially to battle the food shortage of some areas in Ratanakiri. Although, the expansion of cash crops can result in the loss of traditional seeds because of the clearing of the forest. A big concern is the use of insecticides, because many Indigenous People do not use them properly. This increased use can result in health problems, loss of necessary wildlife and degradation of the soil.

Concerning the logging, no positive points are mentioned. Often this happens illegally. The government seems to be involved and villages are relocated for this practice, without any compensation. The logging can also create environmental problems, like soil degradation and increased vulnerability to different weather circumstances.

The accessibility has increased considerably in the last couple of years. Cars have access to many villages over roads that were trails before. These roads allow the villagers easier access to the markets to sell their crops and to get medical help. Trade people, but also NGOs can come into the village to do their business. Nonetheless, many concerns are mentioned as well. The better roads lead to more speeding, consequently more accidents happen. Apart from the traffic hazards, robberies also appear to be on the increase because of the better accessibility. Especially the road to Vietnam that is being constructed, seems to be quite a concern. First of all, the construction causes relocation of Indigenous villages situated along the old small road to Vietnam. Secondly, there is a fear that this road will substantially increase the export potential, which is also seen as a positive point. This increased export potential, however, will enlarge the demand for cash crops, timber and

other available resources, which consequently will result in the need to clear more of the forest. Finally, there is a lot of talk about a possible Casino at the border, which is a concern with respect to the sex and drugs trafficking.

All these changes is causing, and will cause, a cultural change for the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri. The speed of change differs from village to village. When the village is situated near Ban Lung and/or the road, the changes will be more rapid. The concern is that the loss of the forest will change the whole culture. First of all the traditional languages are in danger, because Khmer is replacing it. The main causes mentioned are the increased contacts between the Khmer people and the Indigenous People at the markets and the inability to read land sale contracts (voluntarily or involuntarily signed). The contact of the Indigenous People with the markets will not only influence their language but also their way of clothing, eating habits, Khmer style buildings etc. Money has become a more important factor for Indigenous People, since they need money to buy additional food or luxury goods. Because by law the Indigenous People are not allowed to move their village anymore and they are exposed to Khmer villages, their building style is changing. More and more Khmer style houses are built in the villages, being a more sustainable way of building than the traditional bamboo houses.

Up to this point, these are only conclusions of what the literature and education- and natural resource management organizations/experts state about Ratanakiri and its Indigenous People. The perceptions of the seven Bending Bamboo villages researched are significantly more positive about their lives at present and in the future. Nevertheless, they do mention some concerns for the future, which have to do with the loss of the forest. On the other hand, they do think that the improved accessibility will enhance a better future. Finding other ways to provide and improve their income is already a reality for most of the villages and they think this will increase into the near future, when schooling becomes better. The biggest difference in the perception about the changes is that the villagers see the changes as coming out of their own community and not because of the practices of outsiders. In other words, they feel completely in charge of what is happening. The education- and natural resource management organizations are a lot more concerned about the future of the Indigenous People. The land alienation, logging, mining, road building and cash crops will make it more difficult to keep their traditional agricultural societies intact and increased contact with the Khmer culture can enhance the loss of their own identity. They see mainly solutions in the improvement of their agricultural skills, something the people from the village did not mention. They want to move on and become part of the world around them. They do realize that good education becomes more important for their communities to be able to move on and be part of the modern world. Luckily, they share this idea with the education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri. They try to stimulate keeping their

traditional way of living alive; although most of them believe that improving education is the best way of helping them with 'their' concerns for the future.

The constitution of Cambodia promulgates free compulsory education for nine years, guaranteeing the universal right to basic quality education. In practice, they do not seem to live up to that promise. Education is not free, teachers charge unofficial fees and if the children complete primary school, they often do not enrol in lower secondary school. The net enrolment rate in primary education is high, although you will find great disparities in the figures between urban and rural areas behind this high enrolment rate. In rural areas and especially in remote areas the number of dropouts is quite high. Some figures of dropout rates; urban 9%; rural 15%; and remote areas around 26%. A second problem in rural and remote areas is the lack of teachers and under qualified teachers. There are no effective incentives to attract teachers from the urban areas to work in rural/remote areas. The willingness to work in these areas is consequently minimal. The official language of Cambodia, Khmer, is hardly spoken or understood by most of the ethnic minority groups. The additional threshold is the fact that the majority of government schools are not accessible for minority groups, due to the language of instruction in the schools being Khmer and the inability of most teachers to speak the languages of the minority groups. As a consequence, the enrolment and retention rates of the Indigenous population of Ratanakiri are amongst the lowest in Cambodia, while the rates of illiteracy are the highest. There is a language barrier and only a few trained teachers able to speak fluent Khmer and an Indigenous language are available in Ratanakiri. Bilingual schooling has started, but this is a very slow process. There is also a lack of materials relevant for their culture in terms of language and content. The villages are also not always very supportive of schooling. This probably has to do with the fact that the formal schooling made available by the government does not meet the needs of the community. Sometimes it is conflictive with their socio-cultural norms or the timetable and/or methodology were not suitable. When the education offered to them is not based on real, identified needs, the Indigenous People do not see the use of it and the learners will ultimately consider it unsuitable.

Consequently, what are the educational needs for the Indigenous People of the Bending Bamboo villages in Ratanakiri? The villagers emphasized the need for children to be able to acquire vocational skills that bridge their culture with other cultures. They listed vocations like weaver, translator, doctor, midwife, teacher, journalist, entrepreneur, positions with NGOs, dressmaker, machine and motor mechanic, house builder, artist, musician or singer/performers. Villagers currently do not identify themselves as being members of these vocations or professions but they emphasized the need for children to be able to 'communicate with outsiders' and have 'strong learning'. The villagers also listed their understanding of the specific technical skills children may need to be taught to move toward these aspirations, for example literacy, numeracy and computing. The

villagers raised their concerns for their children as well as the need to balance change in the future with respect for and maintenance of their specific cultures and their children's heritage. Important to note is that all group members said of their children: 'they learn all these things by their parents and grand parents'. Therefore, when it comes to traditional practices, the villagers do not find it necessary to implement this into a formal education curriculum.

The perception of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts based in Ratanakiri of what the Indigenous People should receive in education was very different from one to another. Mr. Phalla said: "In my perception, they need capacity to cope with the changes and to change from traditional to modern practices. However, the government must recognize some of the traditions." The staff members of ICC, who are all Indigenous, also believe that modern practices and other new, modern utilities are good, but they should not forget their backgrounds. The elders have a task in this knowledge sharing, but as well as the schools in the village. These have the shared responsibility to tell the children about how it was and what the changes are, together with the positive sides and the treats of these changes. The villagers said that this is already happening; the children learn this from their parents and grandparents and these things should not be taught at the schools. With an exception to the advantages and treats of the changes mentioned by the ICC members; the villagers did not mention those.

Learning to read and write is seen as a very important matter. Most of them think it should be bilingual. The importance to learn to write and read Khmer will help to get office jobs, but also enable them to read Khmer documents, this might help them not to fall into land alienation traps. They prefer bilingual education because it is easier for the children to receive education in their own language on top of the desire of the Indigenous People to preserve their languages.

To teach the Indigenous People life skills and especially modern agricultural skills also appears to be seen as important by the education- and natural resource management organizations/experts. This is in their opinion where the future lies. In addition, some areas in Ratanakiri are still battling with a food shortage; better farming skills could therefore help to favour the existing People in this battle. The villagers mentioned many vocational skills, although not very often agricultural skills. They see a future for their children in all types of occupation besides the agricultural sector. The people of education- and natural resource management organisations/experts, on the other hand, mainly talked about agricultural jobs. It is interesting to find that the villagers see their children in all those non-agricultural jobs while the people from the different organizations see them mostly in agriculture. In addition, the Indigenous People who work for the education- and natural resource management organisations shared this opinion with the 'experts'. They managed to get non-

agricultural jobs as well, why should the children that live in the villages not be able to acquire similar jobs in the future?

The literature and the education- and natural resource management organisations/experts are more negative and concerned about the future of the Indigenous People of Ratanakiri than the People of the Bending Bamboo villages. This could be because of ignorance of the Indigenous People and/or different ideas about the future. The Indigenous People are not as reluctant to deal with the changes they are facing as the literature and the education- and natural resource management organisations/experts are. Of course, they would like to see their forest and cultural identity remain intact, even though they want to move into the future with all its modernities and seem not to be kept stuck in the way they once were living.

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## **Interviews**

Mr Phalla (interviewed 26 March 2007) has 10 years experience in Natural Resource management (NRM) and policy advocacy. Now the ministry of land management supervises him, before he was supervised by Project support in Decentralisation and Deconcentration (PSDD) sponsored by UNDP.

Mr Phally (interviewed 6 September 2007) is the manager of the Build Bright University, Ratanakiri Campus

Mr Yieng (interviewed 13 September 2007) is a Khmer man that works for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS) and is placed Provincial Office of education (POE) in Ratanakiri.

Mr Long Serey (interviewed 30 august 2007) is the Coordinator at ICSO.

Mr Bang Ngan(interviewed 30 august 2007) field officer at ICSO.

Four employees (interviewed 13 September 2007) of the International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC). The four employees do not want to be mentioned by name in the Thesis. They belong to four different Indigenous communities in Ratanakiri; Kreung, Borov, Kavet and Tampuen.

Four Indigenous staff members of CARE (interviewed 16 September 2007).

## Appendix

### Annex 1:

#### **Individual interview – Natural resource organizations in Ratanakiri, Ban lung (NTFP, DPA, ICC, ICSSO)**

##### Introduction

The interview will be about the research question: What are the changing circumstances in Ratanakiri currently being experienced by the indigenous people and how to translate those into a Life Skills Curriculum. Part of the research is that we like to know the perspectives, approaches and ideas that exist about this in Natural Resource Management organizations based in Ratanakiri. This will be followed by a discussion about Life Skills Curriculum and how this and other information could be included

Are there any questions?

##### Starting question

What do you see as current changes in and around the province of Ratanakiri?

##### Topic list:

1. What important changes have taken place in Ratanakiri in the last 5 years?
2. Has the situation overall become better or more difficult?
3. And which of the changes did become better or more difficult?
4. How do you feel about these changes?
5. What do you expect to change in the near future? (External and internal, which means; what do they think will change with and without the influence of the villagers)

##### *Impact on natural resources*

6. Looking back over the last 5 years, what changes have taken place concerning the (pressure on) natural resources?
7. Has the situation overall become better or more difficult? (find out which natural resources became better and what not) (pollution)
8. And which of the changes did become better or more difficult?
9. How do you feel about these changes?

10. What do you expect to change in the near future? (External and internal, which means; what do they think will change with and without the influence of the villagers)

*Knowledge and skills to enable children to cope with current and potential changes*

11. Is it important for children to learn about these changes?

*Explain ECD & LSC*

12. Is what boys/young men have to learn different from girls/young women?
13. Do you think the knowledge and skills related to the changes should go into the ECD & LSC?
14. What other knowledge and skills do you think is important to include into a ECD & LSC?

Finish

Summarize (also done during the interview) and ask if there are anymore questions.

## Annex 2:

### **Individual interview – Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports (MoEYS)**

#### Introduction

I will introduce myself and explain that you I would like to ask some questions about the current changing circumstances in Ratanakiri to learn about the ideas that exist about it in the Ministry of education, Youth & Sports. I will start with a broad perspective and later on I will focus into a few subjects. I am doing this for my master thesis research and more important for CARE Cambodia, specifically the Bending Bamboo project. The information given can benefit the Life Skills Curriculum that is been made.

Are there any questions?

#### Starting question

What do you see as current changes in and around the province of Ratanakiri?

#### Topic list:

15. What important changes have taken place in Ratanakiri in the last 5 years?
16. Has the situation overall become better or more difficult?
17. And which of the changes did become better or more difficult?
18. How do you feel about these changes?
19. What do you expect to change in the near future? (External and internal, which means; what do they think will change with and without the influence of the villagers)

#### *Impact of increased accessibility*

20. Looking back over the last 5 years, what changes have taken place concerning the accessibility?
21. Has the situation overall become better or more difficult?
22. And which of the changes did become better or more difficult?
23. How do you feel about these changes?

24. What do you expect to change in the near future? (External and internal, which means; what do they think will change with and without the influence of the villagers)

*Impact of increased pressure on natural resources*

25. Looking back over the last 5 years, what changes have taken place concerning the (pressure on) natural resources?
26. Has the situation overall become better or more difficult? (find out which natural resources became better and what not) (pollution)
27. And which of the changes did become better or more difficult?
28. How do you feel about these changes?
29. What do you expect to change in the near future? (External and internal, which means; what do they think will change with and without the influence of the villagers)

*Knowledge and skills to enable children to cope with current and potential changes*

30. Is it important for children to learn about these changes?

*Knowledge and skills to enable girls and young women to cope with increased accessibility and pressure on natural resources*

31. Is it important for girls and young women to learn about these changes?
32. What knowledge and skills are important for girls and young women to cope with the increased accessibility and pressure on natural resources?
33. Are these different for boys and young men?

Finish

Summarize (also done during the interview) and ask if there are anymore questions.

## Annex 3:

### Education Dream tree – VWC, Elders & Parents

*Purpose: To find out the vision/dream parents, elders, VWC have for the children in their community.*

*To find out what parents, elders, VWC think is required in an ECD and Life Skills curriculum in order to achieve that vision/dream*

#### Introduction to the participants:

Explain that you are going to create a tree together which is a symbol for the future of the children.

#### Activity:

1. Explain that we have an empty tree with no leaves. Ask them to discuss their vision of dream what they want for the future of the children in the community.
2. Ask the participants to write down on each of the leaves words that describe that vision/dream.
3. Ask the participants to discuss what the children need to learn in the ECD & Life Skills Curriculum to achieve those visions/dreams.
4. Once they have discussed it they can write what the children need to learn on the trunk of the tree.

#### Further discussion:

1. When you were a child, what did the children in the village learn?
2. How did they learn this?
3. Do the children in the village today still learn the same things?
4. If yes, do they learn them on the same way as you did?
5. If no, what is the reason?
6. What things do children need to learn now, that they did not need to learn when you were a child?
7. What do children and young adults in your village learn from the parents, elders and other community members?
8. What should young children learn in the Early Childhood program?
9. What should girls and young mothers learn in the Life Skills program?
10. What is the best way of learning this?

#### Finish:

Summarize

What do you think of your tree?

How did you feel doing it?

Do you have questions for us?

## Annex 4:

### Circle of Importance & Resource mapping with Chief, Elder and VWC

*Purpose: To find out the sources and providers of non-monetary income;*

*To find out about the resources in the villages, where they go to, to get what they need to survive;*

*To find out if there has been any changes in the last 5 years concerning the natural resources.*

#### Circle of importance

##### Activity:

- The facilitator starts the activity by explaining that they are going to make a circle of importance of the resources in and around the village and how they are used.
- The facilitator has a flipchart with in the middle a circle with the word; resources. He or she asks the participants to name the resources in the village and write each one down in a circle around the main 'resource' circle.
- If it is an important resource the circle around the word will be big, when not so important the circle will be smaller.
- Write with another colour the uses of the resource in the circle.

#### Resource Mapping

##### Activity:

- The facilitator starts the activity by explaining, using the resources of the above activity, they are going to make a map of the village and surroundings. There is already a map of the real situation, so this map is going to reflect the perception of the participants.
- We want to find out about resources (i.e. what you need to survive: food, water, shelter, money...) in the village.
- Explain that we already have a map of the real situation of the village with houses etc but this is something different. Now we need to make a map of where you go to get what you need to survive.
- Begin the process by encouraging the group to begin making the map, putting the meeting house in the middle.
- Encourage the participants to draw all the resources they need. Guide the group by asking where they get their water, food, firewood, housing supplies, money (**only if they seem stuck**)

To be included are sources and locations that are important in:

obtaining food and water for different purposes

obtaining products otherwise used in households

obtaining other sources of income

other main aspects of people's lives, as defined by participants

where they deposit their waste

who is responsible for this resource: specify whether men/boys or women/girls

When the map has been completed encourage the group to discuss their map using questions like:

- Can you give me a reason you drew this here
- What is the reason that this is bigger/smaller than this
- What is the reason this is in the centre?
- Can you tell me about this here?

Of the different resources that you have drawn, which are most important to you?

Follow up questions:

1. Do you sell any of the non-monetary resources for monetary income? If so, what?
2. Do you have other sources of monetary income? What? Who earns it? What is the reason?
3. What arrangements are there to organise who uses the resources?
4. When children have grown up, how do they obtain land?
5. Is it possible for an outsider to start farming here?
6. Do you think girls and young mothers need to learn about resources in the ECD & LSC? If yes, what do they need to learn? If no, what is the reason?
7. If you would have drawn this map 5 years ago, what would be the most important differences in it?
8. Has the situation overall become better or more difficult?
9. What will change in the map in the next 5 years?
10. What changes do you think will be created by your community and what changes will be created by other causes?

11. Which of these changes do you think will have a positive impact and which a negative?
12. Is it important for girls and young mothers to learn about these changes? If yes, what do they need to learn? If no, what is the reason?
13. What about very young children?

Finish:

What do you think of your map?

How did you feel doing it?

Do you have questions for us?

**Annex 5:**

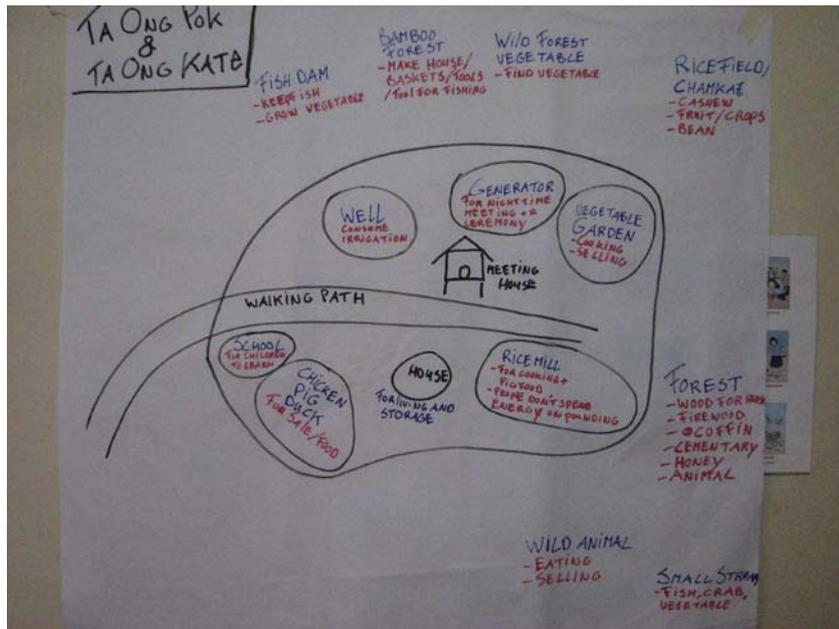
Circles of Importance Ta Ong Pok & Ta Ong Kate



V.Bax Ban Lung 2007

**Annex 6:**

Resource Map Ta Ong Pok & Ta Ong Kate



V.Bax Ban Lung 2007



**Annex 9:**

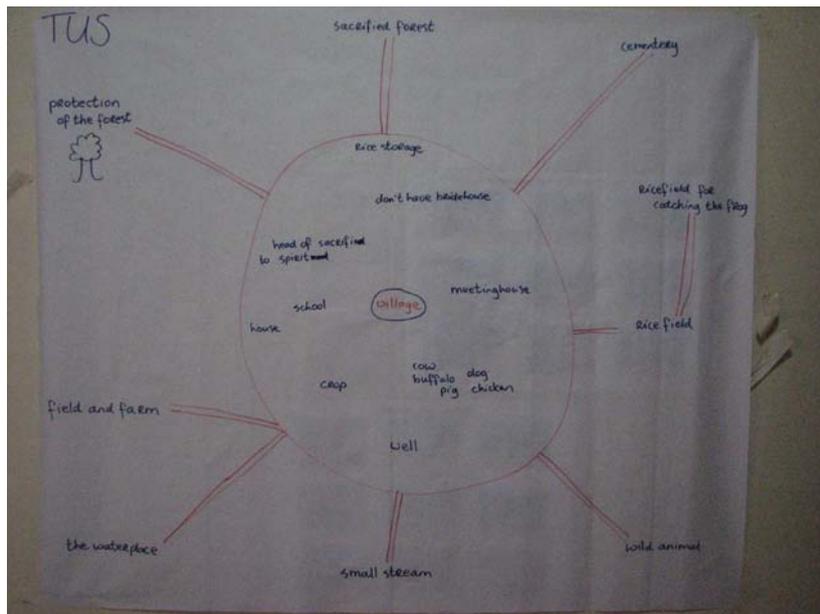
Circles of importance Tus



V.Bax Ban Lung 2007

**Annex 10:**

Resource map Tus



V.Bax Ban Lung 2007



**Annex 13:**

Circles of Importance La In Srei



V. Bax Ban Lung 2007

**Annex 14:**

Resource map La In Srei



### Annex 15:

Circles of Importance and Resource map Sik

