

Income generation through home gardening – a success story

The beneficiaries of the FAO European Union Food Facility Project can generate income by selling vegetables, grown from quality declared vegetable seed, at the market. According to Mr Kouy Kara, the Vice Chief of Monourom Commune, Monourom District in Svay Rieng province: *“what they grow as surplus to their daily meals is being sold at the market”*.

The project has distributed improved varieties of vegetable seed to 20,010 farmers in the nine targeted provinces. These seed were bought internationally from Thailand through a local distributor, as there is no quality supplier in country capable of producing the quantities of seed required. The seeds were part of a package composed of 10 varieties of vegetable seeds, two watering cans, one hoe and 10 kg of fertilizer.

Mr Kouy Sara noticed that villagers in Monourom Commune no longer buy vegetables. *“Usually Vietnamese traders do business selling vegetables in the commune. But, now these traders do not make money because most of the villagers are growing their own*



Mr Sek Samon taking care of his vegetables in his home garden

vegetables.”

Mr Sek Samon, 63, one of the farmers in Monourom Commune is gardening vegetables in front of his house: *“I have generated one hundred thousand Riels (100,000 Riels are equivalent to US\$25) already and I can make two to three times more money using the inputs provided”* said Mr Sek Samon, when interviewed in early October.

Mr Sek Samon revealed that he used to grow only Morning Glory for over 20 years and although he wished to add more varieties of vegetable, but he could not do so successfully. Since being included as a project beneficiary according to the selection criteria, he has received 10 varieties of vegetable seed including yard long bean, egg plant, cucumber, amaranth, water convulvulus, Chinese kale, tomato, mustard green, green petiole, and Chinese radish. *“I am very happy to have these vegetable variety seeds. Next year, I will extend my home vegetable garden and keep some*

money from selling these vegetables to buy seeds in the future,” Mr Sek Samon said.

Mr Pech Romnea, FAO EU Food Facility Project's Regional Coordinator for the South and Agronomist Specialist, advises that the project has distributed good vegetable seeds to encourage farmers to grow vegetables when they are not busy with rice cultivation. *“The Project wishes farmers to have diversified food resources by growing vegetables using the high quality vegetable seeds and fertilizers, assisted by training on home vegetable gardening techniques that has been provided by Provincial Departments of Agriculture,”* Mr Pech Romnea added.

Dr Ilean Russell, Project Development Advisor, encourages farmers to grow the vegetables to supply their home consumption, to trade with neighbors and to generate income through market sales.

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Improved Complementary Feeding recipes diversify infants and young children's diet

When asked whether they would continue preparing improved complementary foods, virtually all mothers indicated that they would. This was reported by the evaluation workshop that was following the rainy season trials, conducted from August to October 2010. The most common motivating factors of these changes were that the child looks healthier and “my child is not often sick anymore”; the child is more alert and more active; the child eats more of the enriched rice porridge (borbor) compared to the plain borbor; the child plays happily and sleeps well without disturbing the mother; and, where they have weighing scales, mothers indicated that the children

gain weight. Some of these mothers are voluntarily encouraging friends, neighbours and relatives with children aged 6-24 months to adopt improved complementary feeding practices.

Dietary diversity using readily available food resources in most rural household was possible (i.e. increasing food items in the diet of small children from 2–3 food items to 10 or more food items). With the significant result from the trials, the nutrition component of the project schedules a wider promotion of the rainy season adopted complementary feeding recipes through the Community Nutrition Promoters

(commune women focal points, village women focal points, village health support groups and health center staff) in all the 130 target villages of the nine provinces during November– December 2010, along with home visits for counseling and to follow up the outcome of dissemination.

improvements. Soon after the training, community mobilizations and food cooking demonstrations were conducted by TIPs facilitators in order to select 10 households per village (4 villages in each province) to participate in the wet season TIPs, starting with the initial home visit to mothers to assess household food availability and current child feeding practice.

As an outcome from the rainy season TIPs conducted in mid-October 2010, improvement of infant and young child feeding practices have been made by most of the TIPs households, particularly in dietary diversity, using locally available food in complementary feeding recipes. Preliminary results showed

that around 90% of TIPs households included cooking oil into the borbor; and a similar percentage introduced leafy vegetables (morning glory, ivy gourd, amaranth etc) into the complementary feed. This has not been common practice for most households before the TIPs activity, particularly for those with children from 6-8 months. Moreover, over 80% of TIPs households included protein-rich foods (fish, eggs, meat or peanut) into the recipes. Flesh foods (fish, meat, pork) were included in the recipes by most mothers at least 3 times per week.



Ms. Pot Sokunthea, A TIPs household, feeding her 14 months old daughter with fully support from her mother, Thna village, Kruos commune, Svay Chrum district, Svay Rieng

Trial of Improved feeding Practice (TIPs), which is the formative research, was conducted in 360 households in the nine provinces. 99 district and provincial TIPs facilitators were selected and trained on basic concept of nutrition, seasonal food availability calendar, gender based activity calendar, facilitation and counselling and the TIPs methodology to assess infant and young child feeding practice, classify them into good and bad practice, identify potential for improvement using foods which are readily and locally available to households and, suggest options for trials and get feedback from mothers before wider dissemination of recommended



A farmer in Prey Veng Province harvesting her rice

In Svay Rieng, demonstration plots encourage farmers to adopt SRI

One of the project beneficiaries cultivated rice to achieve a yield of almost five tons per hectare, in a demonstration plot, after having received quality rice seed and fertilizers and being trained.

Mr Kong Voeun, 45, a farmer of Prich Village, Doung Commune, Romeas Haek District in Svay Rieng Province, who has received rice seed, fertilizers and training from the

project, transplanted the rice seed based on the Systematic Rice Intensification method. *"I am really happy to see my field producing such high yields. I have never grown such an amount before,"* says Mr Kong Voeun.

Seeing the high yield, Mr Kong Voeun is determined to apply SRI method and save seed of the same varieties for next cultivation seasons.

Raising fish: a knowledge shared with the needy farmers

Family fish and prawn pond culture courses were given by the project to selected farmers to increase their knowledge of fish production.

Mostly farmers raise fish without being aware of improved fish raising techniques, according to Ms Sok Sorya, farmer in Sangkae Village, Chheu Teal Commune, Svay Chrum District, Svay Rieng Province. She is one of the project beneficiaries who have received the project training course and supply of fingerlings and fertilizers for pond preparation.

"In the past, I just went to a local hatchery and bought fingerlings to be released in my pond directly without preparing it. That is why I only had half the amount of fish or less when I harvested," said Ms Sok Sorya.

"Before receiving the training, I have never prepared my pond, nor did I prevent the wild fish from coming into the pond." added Ms Sok Sorya while

feeding her new crop of fish supplied by the Project.

Preparing the pond before releasing fish is very important to ensure water quality, to increase plankton and to clean wild fish from the pond, according to the Project's Aquaculture Specialist, Mr San Thy.

"Before this, we did not understand fish raising techniques properly. From now on, we will practice the skills we have acquired from the project's training," said Mr Yem Aeoun, a farmer in Thnoang Khang Lech Village, Smaong Kang Cheung Commune, Kamchay Mear District, Prey Veng

"I will prepare these varieties and practice the SRI technique," Mr. Kong Voeun confirmed. Other farmers in the same village are also committed to applying SRI and using high quality rice seeds in future.

In a different district, however, farmers have yet to make their decision: *"I have to wait the results of the SRI practice demonstration first. If the yield is higher than the traditional transplanting, then I will apply SRI method. But first, I have noticed that SRI technique uses less seed than the traditional ones and I am not used to this,"* says Ms Heng Samoeun, 58, a farmer in Traok Village, Chheu Teal Commune, Svay Chrum District, Svay Rieng Province.

Mr Srun Sokhom, Deputy Director General of the General Directorate of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, said that "despite a short project timeframe, the knowledge and skills given by the project to government officials and farmers are very important and adequate".

Follow up surveys of rice production during November and December have been used to collect data on rice production and will provide information on the impact of the project activities for the wet season of 2010.

Province.

Mr Chan Samnang, Vice Director of the Fishery Cantonment in Prey Veng Province has urged the trainees in a training course in Smaong Kang Cheung Commune to share their skills received from the training with other villagers.



Selected farmers attending a fish and prawn pond culture training in Prey Veng Province

From August 2010, the project extends its activities to Battambang Province

Following the Project Steering Committee held in June 2010, it was decided to expand the activities of the project to a tenth province, Battambang. The project has accepted to rehabilitate the Putrea 1 and 2 irrigation schemes in the District of Bovel.

Historically, this irrigation scheme was built by the French in the 1950s. Neglected for many years, the scheme needs further works to perform at its best.

In order to ensure adequate implementation of the rehabilitation, the Project signed Letters of Agreement with the Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA) as well as the Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology (PDOWRAM) on 6 October 2010.

The aim of the agreement with PDA is to select the most vulnerable

beneficiaries around the irrigation scheme to receive quality seed of improved varieties of vegetables, fertilizer, watering cans and hoes and access to technical advice and training. The PDA will be also in charge of training the selected

Battambang, to assist with beneficiary selection and in the distribution of the different inputs.

The agreement signed with PDOWRAM is to ensure the establishment of one, or more, farmer water user groups, with sound technical training. PDOWRAM is also in charge of monitoring the feasibility studies and the engineering design, as well as the rehabilitation process of the irrigation scheme.

“The project will make highly effective use of the funds from the FAO European Union Food Facility Project, so the farming families will benefit from the irrigation scheme as well as from other activities of the project to increase their farming production,” said Tim K. Ekin, Project Manager.



Signature event of the Letters of Agreement in Battambang Province

households in vegetable production and will develop field demonstration plots. The project has finalized the selection of Agri-Cam, a Non-Government Organization based in

Summary of Exit and Sustainability Workshop

During the period 13-17 December the Project team and implementing partners met for a Sustainability and Exit Workshop in Siem Reap. The objectives of the Workshop were to formulate detailed plans for project completion and for sustaining project results; promote team identity and group capabilities; and to build relationships with partners.

During a very busy schedule of planning sessions for project components and provincial locations, the project activities were reviewed, the lessons learned documented and plans for completion of the remaining tasks were fine tuned. Above all, the focus of this work was to identify the **actions required to sustain the project results**. A wide range of activities are identified as contributing to sustainability, including investments in capacity building and organizational development, the promotion of technologies

for saving seed of improved varieties, generation of income for farm families, profitable operations for agribusinesses and hatcheries, the conservation of wild fish stocks, and policy recommendations to stimulate seed industry development. The involvement of women and children in many activities is in itself an element of the sustainability plan, as are the linkages to provincial governments, NGOs and service providers for implementation. Participants contributed to lively discussions and presented their work to a senior management panel to conclude the activity. Support from H.E. Ith Nody (Under Secretary of State, MAFF), H.E. So Khan Rithykun (Director General GDA), Mr Ajay Markanday FAOR, Ms Hilde Niggemann FAO Rome and Ms Lea Jenin of the European Union Delegation to Cambodia was much valued at the final presentation sessions.