

CEDAC Farmer Promoters Lifting Up Their Communities

Case Study: IFS-PV project

Mr. Nou Kom

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Mr. Nou grows long beans in the dry season

CEDAC's strategy for helping small-hold farmers in vulnerable areas of Cambodia is to leverage the ingenuity and leadership of the farmers themselves. For the European Union-funded project: 'Improving Food Security in Prey Veng (IFS-PV),' CEDAC sought out farmers who would adapt techniques introduced by the project to new crops, experiment with new ideas and share this knowledge with the community. Since first working with CEDAC in 2005, Mr. Nou Kom demonstrated these abilities, and was selected as a farmer promoter for the IFS-PV project.

Mr. Nou lives in Cheung Tuk village, Rong Domrey commune, Baphnom district of Prey Veng province. He is 49 years old, and has 5 children who live in his homestead. He has 1.2 hectares of land, in which he grows rice in the wet season and long beans and other vegetables in the dry season. He also raises fish in a small pond, as well as chickens, ducks and cows. He started implementing the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in 2007 on 0.22 hectares of land. He has since expanded his SRI land to 0.7 hectares, the rest of which he sows the seeds directly into the soil (no transplanting), the traditional method to accommodate flooding for which the region is vulnerable. Despite unpredictable conditions, however, he has had success with SRI, averaging 3.7 tons per hectare vs. 1.5 tons per hectare with direct sowing, and vows to use SRI on all his land in 2013. While his animal raising and vegetables are used primarily for home consumption, he makes a profit selling them in a small shop he operates out of his home, where other farmers in the village can also sell their wares. He also generates 60kg a year of juice from sugar palms on his property, climbing self-made ladders to access it.

Mr. Nou is implementing Climate Change adaptations to produce strong rice seedlings and, later in the season, long beans. He uses raised containers made from motorbike tires to cultivate strong seedlings. After transplanting, these containers keep soil moist long into the dry season, and so he uses them to plant long beans, a system he devised through his own experimentation.

As a member of the farmer promoter association, he has attended refresher courses in SRI, Home Gardening (HG), fish raising, Ecological Chicken Raising (ECR) and pig raising. He has also learned about nutrition, family sanitation and clean water, displaying the educational posters on each subject in his shop. By implementing these techniques, he had success fighting the rice and chicken diseases due to flooding and insect infestations that plague crops in the community.

There is much work still to be done. Mr. Nou sees that many farmers in the area who use chemical pesticides don't understand how to use them, and he worries about their health and the effect on the local environment.

Additionally, some farmers pump water from the ground to grow rice during the dry season, which is impacting the local water resources. His own pump at his homestead is producing less and less water. He would like to see a community pond built for more responsible management and access to water. He would also like to see more engagement from the local commune authorities on extension efforts, beyond simple endorsements.

As a farmer promoter, he is committed to finding ways to continue progress. He sees cooperation and dialogue between community members as vital to increasing livelihoods and incomes in the area. He started a group of 17 farmers in his community who meet regularly to discuss agricultural techniques and ways to improve productivity. This group has also started a savings program, with 2 million riel in capital so far. Through assisting another CEDAC projects in Prey Veng, he hopes to strengthen his skills and stay in contact with IFS-PV beneficiaries.



Tire-containers keep soil moist



Mr. Nou in his SRI rice field