

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH FARMING: THE STORY OF NHEAN CHANNY

FFP-AFOSP Impact Story (Cambodia)

Empowering women through agriculture

The story is more and more becoming familiar in areas where developmental agricultural interventions are being introduced. Husband and wife join local farmers organization. Husband does not want to attend meetings and trainings and instead sends wife. Wife acquire new knowledge, gets to interact and share learnings with other members of community. Wife becomes better farmer and confident advocate.

This narrative is the same with Nhean Channy of Cambodia – a 32-year old wife, mother of two, a small-scale farmer and a member of Aphivat Srok Yeung Agriculture Cooperative (AC).

Channy grows paddy rice and vegetables, and also raises cows and chickens in her 300-square-meter farm.

She has also been a member of AC and a local savings group since 2015. As a member of AC, she has attended several trainings on sustainable farm production (i.e. organic rice and vegetable farming), fruit trees planting, poultry production, animal husbandry, marketing, financial literacy, and climate change impact on farming. The trainings were part of the Farmers Fighting Poverty-ASEAN Project, which is being implemented since 2016 by AgriCord and AsiaDHRRA in partnership with Farmer and Nature Net (FNN), a national federation of village-based farmers associations, of which AC is a member.

More productive

With the new farming knowledge she has acquired from trainings attended, she was able to improve the productivity of her farm. She used to produce paddy rice just enough for her family's consumption. But by 2019, her farm was already producing 3.5 tons of paddy rice per hectare annually.

In 2020, she was also already producing 195 kilos of chicken annually compared to only 96 kilos in 2015. In terms of vegetable production, she has tripled her production in 2015 of 1,000 kilos.

She has seen her farm income rise from 3.7 million Khmer Riel to 9.6 million per year (1,992 Euros).

She also credited the increase in her farm income due to the contract farming arrangement that AC were able to negotiate with Amru-Rice (a private enterprise engaged in rice trading) wherein they were able to command better prices for their farm products. They were able to sell their rice to Amru-Rice at a premium price of 50 Khmer Riel (0.01 Euro) per kilo and 500 Khmer Riel (0.10 Euro) per kilo of chicken.

Savings and access to loans

Her joining a local savings group also allowed her generate 2.2 million Khmer Riel (456 Euros) in saving capital. This, she says, has given her access to loans from their savings group and cooperative which she uses to finance farm production and improvements.

She added that she was able to generate additional savings from the cheaper farm inputs that their cooperative supplied them. These allowed them to save 5% from the usual cost of fertilizers. She also generates additional savings from using less chemical inputs as she has slowly adopted organic farming techniques she has learned from the trainings she has attended. As a member of AC, she also receives 1,000 Khmer Riel (0.21 Euro) discount for every kilo of rice seed she purchases from the cooperative. Regular price for rice seeds is at 2,500 Khmer Riel (0.52 Euro) per kilo.

She plans to upgrade her chicken cages so that it can accommodate up to 500 heads. Commercially produce organic vegetables.

Empowerment and improved family relationships

However, Channy sees the development of her self-confidence, learning to speak out and communicate her thoughts were the biggest impacts that she got from the trainings she had attended.

As her communication skills improved, she was able to share here learnings with the other members of her community.

This, she added, also led to better communication and relationship with her husband. She says that her husband now listens and respects more to her suggestions and ideas not only in farming but also in family and relational matters. With the success of her farm activities she intends to ask her husband to help her manage their farm full-time. Her husband is currently a construction worker in the city.

