

AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE BUSINESS FORUM REPORT

PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE BUSINESSES

September 06-07, 2022

Organized by: **CamboDHRRA**

www.cambodhrra.org

info@cambodhrra.org



In collaboration with



AKNOWLEDGMENT

The Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum on “Promoting Youth participation in Leadership and Management of Agricultural Cooperative Business” is not possible without the initiation of CamboDHRRA’s members and partners as well as funding support from donors. We would like to express our thankfulness to the following organizations.

First of all, we would like sincere thanks to FCA, DCA, EU, IFAD, AgriCord, AsiaDHRRA and AFA for funding support this crucial forum.

We deeply thank to our members and partners including FNN, FCFD, FWN, DCA, FCA, WVI-C, CACA, CPSA, AFD, DPA, NGO-F, HEIFER International Cambodia, LWD, IIRR, WorldRenew, OREDA, DKT, AMRU RICE, KOC, CACC, SOA, MCC, KPY, and BAC for ongoing support the whole process of the forum in terms of setting schedule, theme of the forum, flow and methodologies of the forum, budget allocation, logistic arrangement and so forth. With all of these supports, we would be able to organize forum successfully as planned with fruitful results.

Our thankfulness also to our honorary guest speakers, moderators and participants from the government line agencies, NGOs, FOs, CACA, private sector and agricultural cooperative including MAFF, MISTI, RUA, CMP, ACLEDA Bank, ILO, DCA, LWD, FNN, Heifer international Cambodia, DKT, CACA and agricultural cooperatives for dedicating their valued time and contributing meaningful inputs to the forum.

Last but not least, we would like to thank to all participants and honorary guests for active participation and exchange their experience and knowledge to each other.

ACRONYMS

AC	Agricultural Cooperative
AFA	Asian Farmer Association for Sustainable Development
AFD	Action for the Development
AMRU RICE	AMRU Rice Company Co., Ltd
AsiaDHRRA	Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resource in Rural Areas
BAC	
CamboDHRRA	Cambodian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Area Association
CACA	Cambodian Agricultural Cooperative Alliance
CACC	Cambodian Agricultural Cooperative Corporation
CMP	Chamroeun Microfinance PLC
CPSA	Cambodia Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture
DCA	Dan Church Aid
DPA	Development Partnership in Action
EU	European Union
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FCFD	Federation of Cambodian Farmer Organizations for Development
FO	Farmer Organization
FNN	Farmer and Nature Net Association
FWN	Farmer and Water Net
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
KDT	Khmer Drone Technology
KOC	Khmer Organic Cooperative Company Co.,Ltd
KPY	Koampia Phum Yoeung
LWD	Life With Dignity
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MCC	Methodist Church in Cambodia
MISTI	Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation
NGO-F	NGO Forum on Cambodia
OREDA	Occupation of Rural Economic Development and Agriculture
PMSD	Participatory Market System Development
RUA	Royal University of Agriculture
SOA	Signatures of Asia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WVI-C	World Vision International Cambodia

CONTENTS

Contents	
AKNOWLEDGMENT	ii
ACRONYMS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PROCESSES AND RESULTS OF THE FORUM	2
DAY 1: 06 SEPTEMBER 2022	2
2.1 OPENING SESSION	2
2.2 THE STATUS OF YOUTH IN AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT AND LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE AND SHORT VALUE CHAIN AND LOCAL MARKET SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT	4
2.3 PANEL DISCUSSION ON BEST PRACTICES, CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS AND SUCCESSION PLANNING IN PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF AC BUSINESSES	5
2.4 CONCLUSION DAY 1 OF THE FORUM	6
DAY 2: OCTOBER 07, 2022	7
2.5 WRAP UP DAY 1 OF THE FORUM	7
2.6 PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE SUPPORT AND INITIATIVES OF THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT AND ACADEMIA TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE	7
2.7 PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE SUPPORT AND INITIATIVES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE	9
2.8 GROUP DISCUSSION ON SPECIFIC MECHANISMS AND ACTIVITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OF AGRIBUSINESS COOPERATIVE	11
2.9 CLOSING REMARK	13
3. CONCLUSION	14
ANNEX	15
ANNEX 1: PHOTO OF THE FORUM	15

1. INTRODUCTION

Cambodia's agricultural sector contributed about 24.4% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021, of which crop production accounted for 57.4%, fisheries 24.4%, livestock and poultry 11.4%, forestry 7.4% and rubber 5.7% (Ministry of Agriculture 2021). The agricultural sector absorbs about 35.5% of the labor force. About 61% of the population lives in rural areas and 77% of rural households depend on agriculture, fisheries and forestry for their livelihood (USAID 2022). Observations show that agricultural labor is declining significantly. The agricultural labor force in 2013 was 48.7% and 37% in 2017 (data from the National Institute of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning), and the flow of migration from rural to urban and overseas is increasing. On the other hand, 33% of the total population are young people (15-30 years old) and 83% of those population are living in rural areas, most of whom are involved in agriculture.

Strengthening farmers' organizations has contributed to the improvement and organization of production and marketing systems. The agricultural community is a private legal entity, an agro-economic enterprise formed by a group of individuals voluntarily, jointly creating capital, jointly owning and jointly managing democratically to expand agricultural production capacity, agro-industry, agribusiness or services related to agricultural production refers to the economic, social and cultural upliftment of members (Law on Agricultural Cooperative, 2023). Agricultural cooperative development is an important part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' strategy and an important means for contract farming. By 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has established 1,200 ACs with a total of 144,306 members, 131,606 farming families and a total capital of 99,489,485,000 Riels or similar. US \$ 25 million and there are 11 Union of ACs and 1 Agricultural Cooperative Alliance in the Nationwide (Annual Report 2020, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries).

So far, some ACs have shown good signs for their development in terms of helping their members to increase production capacity and ensure market access, but many other ACs still face many problems, such as inability to supply regular agricultural products (based on quantity and quality required by the market (therefore unable to establish agricultural contracts), lack of focus for some products based on the potential of their area (multiple products but in small quantities), lack of proper business plan, limited ability to run professional institutions (leadership Management, business development, ability to use technology ...) and among many other factors. We believe that these issues can be better addressed if more young people are involved in leading and managing businesses of AC, as young people are a potential human resource, energy and innovative ideas. In addition, planning for successor training is an important strategy to ensure the development of a well-developed and sustainable ACs.

The Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum on **Promoting Youth Participation in Leadership & Management of Agricultural Cooperative Businesses** was held in Phnom Penh on 06 – 07 September 2022. The forum was organized by CamboDHRRA with partnership of partner organisations that are supporting agricultural sector such as FNN, FCFD, FWN, DCA, FCA, WVI-C, CACA, CPSA, AFD, DPA, NGO-F, HEIFER International Cambodia, LWD, IIRR, WorldRenew, OREDA, DKT, AMRU RICE, KOC, CACC, SOA, MCC, KPY, and BAC.

The Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum aims to:

- To learn and share best practices and challenges of youth participation in leading and managing agricultural cooperative business.
- To learn and share about strengthening short value chain and local market systems
- To identify key initiatives and find mechanisms and means to promote youth participation in leading and managing agricultural cooperative businesses.

The forum brought together key stakeholders over **180 participants** from government representatives, cooperative business leaders, youth leaders, development partners, civil society, NGOs, and the private sector. The objective of the forum was to discuss ways to promote youth participation in leadership and management positions in agricultural cooperatives.

The forum highlighted the importance of young people's participation in the country's agricultural development. It also emphasized the need for policies and programs that support youth involvement in cooperatives. In addition, the forum called for greater investments in capacity-building and training for young cooperative leaders and managers.

2. PROCESSES AND RESULTS OF THE FORUM

DAY 1: 06 SEPTEMBER 2022

2.1 OPENING SESSION

The forum started with the observation of National Anthem, and open remarks by **Mr. Him Noeun**, Secretary General for the Cambodian Partnership for the Development of Human Resource in Rural Areas (CamboDHRRA); **Mr. Pan Sopheap**, Chairman of CamboDHRRA and Executive Director of the Farmer and Nature Net; **Orknhha. Hang Sokun**, Chairman of Cambodian Agricultural Cooperative Alliance (CACA); **Mrs. Thai Bone**, country director of Finn Church Aid (FCA); and, **Mrs. Kelly Tsanova**, Head of program of Dan Church Aid (DCA).

Highlights

In the open remarks, **Mr. Him Noeun**, Secretary General of CamboDHRRA, informed the participants about the function of agricultural cooperatives and their benefits to members in markets and the challenges on supply of variety of products but low quantity. He emphasized the importance of youth to response to the challenges and sustainable development. He also informed the participants about the expected outcome of the forum which is gaining experience, improving decision making, management skills, and sustainable development in agriculture through the participation of youth. Mr. Noeun also mentioned the ongoing project of CamboDHRRA and FAO supporting project related to digital integration in agriculture. In his thank you speech, Mr. Noeun expressed his appreciation to the participants for their valued time and effort. He hoped that the forum would be beneficial to all attendees.



In the following remarks, **Mr. Pan Sopheap**, Chairman of CamboDHRRA and Executive Director of the Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN) appreciated all partners and donors for their support to strengthen youth in the agricultural sector. Mr. Sopheap emphasized the importance of the labour force of our youth and the challenges of high number of youth migration. He also appreciated and encouraged support from government on the people migrated back from foreign countries for purpose of national development. He stressed the importance of Agricultural cooperative: HR, IP, Production research are still limited. He also emphasized the need for adaptation to innovation and changes in attitude for the development of individuals, community and nation.



In his opening remarks, **Orknha. Hang Sokun** informed participants about the challenges faced by agricultural cooperative businesses in Cambodia, but appreciated the work of the CamboDHRRA in promoting youth engagement and development. He stressed the importance of local economy and agricultural cooperatives in supporting the national interest, and highlighted the need for capacity building in leadership and management for young people. He also raised a question on how to enable youth to live properly with their communities, and stressed the importance of addressing the weaknesses in leadership in order to create prosperous agricultural cooperatives.



During her opening remarks, **Mrs. Thai Bone**, country director of Finn Church Aid (FCA) stressed the need to better involve youth in the agricultural sector, noting that they make up a significant portion of the population and have a lot to contribute to the development of the sector. She also noted that capacity building initiatives are mostly focused in Phnom Penh and called for more efforts to be made to reach young people in rural areas. She also informed the works of FCA support partners to engage youth in agriculture and agricultural cooperatives.



Mrs. Kelly Tsanova, Head of program of Dan Church Aid (DCA), opened the forum by highlighting DCA's active engagement in management, agricultural cooperative business, and financial affairs. She went on to emphasize the evaluation results that showed agricultural cooperatives were composed mostly of retired members, and therefore needed new members. Mrs. Tsanova then spoke about DCA's commitment to support partners with a fruitful discussion on how best to foster youth involvement in leading agricultural communities and other programs. She closed her remarks by thanking all participants and announcing the official opening of the forum.



2.2 THE STATUS OF YOUTH IN AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT AND LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE AND SHORT VALUE CHAIN AND LOCAL MARKET SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

This session facilitated by **Mrs. Kean Socheat**, Agriculture and value chain Specialist of Life with Dignity (LWD) with contributing inputs from honorary speakers: **Mr. Akira Kawasaki**, a representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO), **Mr. Kenneth Wood**, a DCA representative and **Mr. Sot Sarorn**, a representative of ACLEDA Bank. The discussion is highlighted as below:

The status of youth in agricultural investment and leadership and management of agricultural cooperative

Mr. Akira Kawasaki, a representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO), highlighted three main points on how youth can contribute to the investment of agriculture, leadership, and the management of agricultural cooperative in Cambodia. He first emphasized the benefits that both youth and agriculture can reap from increased youth participation in the sector. He noted that Cambodia's GDP is 24.4% agriculture, and that the sector plays an important role in both export earnings and domestic consumption. The ILO has been supporting youth in agriculture through its "Our Coop" program, which helps young people set up and manage their own cooperative businesses. Over 600 youths and cooperative members have benefited from the program so far.



Mr. Kawasaki ended by expressing his vision for youth and agriculture cooperatives in Cambodia. He said that the country's young people are full of energy, agility, and creativity and that he expects them to be leaders in the agricultural sector in the future.

Short value chain and local market system development

On the development of the market system and the local supply chain **Mr. Kenneth Wood**, a DCA representative, stated that Practical Action designs and implements inclusive market programs through Participatory Market System Development (PMSD).



The approach is founded on participation, systems thinking, and facilitation. PMSD identifies and engages key market players who can aid in the reduction of poverty on a large scale. He added that PMSD entails mapping the market system and researching each market actor and connection. Partners act as change agents by bringing together key public and private market players. Mr. Kenneth Wood explained that the availability of the PMSD Roadmap set of tools and guidance is to assist

partners in their work. Finally, he advocated for increased youth participation in agricultural cooperative business leadership and management in Cambodia.

In addition, **Mr. Sot Sarorn**, Senior Executive Director of Credit Service of ACLEDA Bank, delivered a speech in which he discussed the bank's support for agricultural loan services. By facilitating an increase in the amount of money that can be lent to members of agricultural cooperative (AC is not qualified yet to access loan from the bank), this assistance helps to ensure that the



economies of Cambodia's rural areas will continue to grow steadily. This will contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 5 (Gender equality), and 8 (Climate action) (Decent work and economic growth). Mr. Sarorn then explained that ACLEDA is committed to assisting young people to assume leadership and management positions within agricultural cooperatives. This commitment is a significant step toward achieving ACLEDA's larger goal of fostering youth empowerment and assisting Cambodia's next generation of leaders.

2.3 PANEL DISCUSSION ON BEST PRACTICES, CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS AND SUCCESSION PLANNING IN PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF AC BUSINESSES

This session moderated by **Mr. Som Sopheak**, Executive Director of Action for Development (AFD) with honorary panelists, including **Mr. Dok Luon**, vice president of CACA, **Mr. Meach Sarou**, chairperson of Apiwath Srok Yerng agricultural cooperative, **Mrs. Chea Hing**, chairperson of Ampel Pram Derm agricultural cooperative and **Ms. Lao Eanghun**, Internship for Enterprise Agricultural Cooperative Incubation Program (EACIP). The discussion is highlighted as below:

Mr. Dok Luon presented the works and mandate of CACA including structure, roles and responsibilities, membership, activities, achievement and challenges. He highlighted the contribution of CACA to empower youth in leadership and management, for example, CACA facilitated youth participate in financial management system. In addition, he discussed the challenges of youth in leadership and management of ACs including lack of in-depth population about the importance of ACs and agriculture sector, young people do not know about opportunities in agriculture, having substitution of job or occupation (garment, microfinance, banking, tourism and other businesses), limited understanding of agriculture techniques and marketing systems, and competitive market of agricultural products. To address these raised challenges, he proposed suggestion solutions such as promoting and modeling of youth in AC leadership and agriculture investment, creating entrepreneurship (farmer entrepreneur) and enabling environment (laws, policies and programs).



The agricultural cooperatives (**Mrs. Chea Hing** and **Mr. Meach Sarou**) and the youth representative (**Ms. Lao Eanghun**) talked about the successes that their organizations have had in terms of leadership and the management of cooperative businesses. They also identified some challenges that they face, such as a lack of financial support and a lack of knowledge about cooperatives among young people. Among other things, this was one of the challenges they identified. In conclusion, they discussed some potential solutions and plans for increasing the amount of youth participation in leadership and the management of cooperative businesses. One of the suggestions was to increase the amount of education and training that is offered regarding cooperatives, as well as the number of opportunities that are available for younger people to become involved in cooperative businesses.



2.4 CONCLUSION DAY 1 OF THE FORUM

Mr. Mom Chantha, Program Officer of CamboDHRRA concluded the result of the forum in day 1 as following: The forum starts with objectives, national anthem, and delivered opening remarks, then taking group photo and visit exhibition stand in the forum hall. Then followed by the topic of youth's leadership and management for agricultural cooperatives to engage in the responsible agricultural investment in Cambodia that facilitated by Mrs. Kean Socheat, LWD with the video record of Mr.

Akira Kawasaki, representative of ILO and the next topic on local value chain and marketing system development by Mr. Kenneth Wood, DCA and the last presentation did by Mr. Soth Sarorn, ACLEDA bank PLC on how the special loan for the agricultural sector to contribute agricultural cooperative and small and medium enterprise. The session ended by question-and-answer forum.

In the evening session focused on sharing of agricultural cooperative and youth leaders on successes, problem faced, solution and plan to improving youth to engage in leadership and management for agricultural cooperative businesses under facilitation by Mr. Som Sopheak, Executive Director of AFD and followed by question and answer forum.

DAY 2: OCTOBER 07, 2022

2.5 WRAP UP DAY 1 OF THE FORUM

Mr. Seu Rany, Chairperson of Sdok Sdom Agricultural Cooperative wrapped up the flow, discussion and results of the forum in day 1. He briefed that the forum was started by opening remark session and followed by visiting agri-product fair, presentation on the status of youth in agricultural investment and leadership and management of agricultural cooperative by ILO representative, presentation on short value chain and local market system development by DCA



representative and the morning session closed by presentation on agriculture loan by representative of ACLEDA Bank. The Afternoon session continued by panel discussion best practices, challenges, solutions and succession planning in promoting youth participation in leadership and management of AC business. The session moderated by Mr. Som Sopheak, Executive Director of AFD with honorary panelists, including representative of CACA, chairperson of Apiwath Srok Yerng agricultural cooperative, chairperson of Ampel Pram Derm agricultural cooperative and youth from Enterprise Agricultural Cooperative Incubation Program (EACIP). The afternoon, session closed by summarized results of day 1 by Mr. Mom Chantha, Program Officer of CamboDHRRA.

In general, the forum was a valuable opportunity for the various stakeholders to share their experiences and ideas on how to strengthen youth participation in agricultural cooperatives. This was accomplished through the exchange of information.

2.6 PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE SUPPORT AND INITIATIVES OF THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT AND ACADEMIA TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

This session moderated by **Mr. Pan Sopheap**, Chairperson of CamboDHRRA and Executive Director of FNN with honorary panelists, including **Mr. Vann Lyviriya**, Deputy Director of the Department of Agricultural Cooperative Promotion (DACP) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), **Dr. Ly Sokny**, Director of Department of Science, Technology and Innovation collaboration

of the General Directorate of Science, Technology and innovation of the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation (MISTI), and **Dr. Sok Kimchhin**, Dean of Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development at the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA). The discussion is highlighted as below:

Mr. Vann Lyviriya presented the government support and initiatives for promoting youth participation in leadership and management of agricultural cooperative (ACs). He emphasized that the Royal Decree on the establishment and functioning of ACs was formulated in 2001 and the law on ACs was endorsed in 2013 to promote ACs in Cambodia. DACP plays a critical role in promoting ACs in the Kingdom of Cambodia, based on the AC law. DACP collaborates with German Cooperative Raiffeisen and Confederation (DGRV) to implement a 3-year project. He highlighted that this forum provided an opportunity for young people who are interested in leadership and management of AC businesses to network with each other and learn from successful young entrepreneurs who have started and grown their AC businesses.



Dr. Ly Sokny stated that science, technology, and innovation (STI) will be essential for Cambodia to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, become an innovation-driven economy, and recover rapidly from the COVID19 pandemic. She also highlighted the National Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy 2020–2030 was adopted in 2019 with the intent of enhancing national STI

capabilities and innovation capacity. In 2020, MISTI was established to lead and coordinate STI initiatives that develop national capacities, support key stakeholders, and create favorable framework conditions. The integration of technology and innovations in agriculture production and market systems will attract youth to occupy agriculture investment and leadership and management of ACs.

Dr. Sok Kimchin delivered a speech highlighting the university's contributions to promote youth participation in leadership and business management of agricultural cooperatives. Dr. Kimchin emphasized that the RUA offers programs that are responsive to issues of national and international development and labor market needs. Moreover, he stated that the RUA's programs have encouraged younger generations to participate in the leadership and business management of agricultural cooperatives. In addition, he emphasized that the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) has contributed to the growth of agriculture and related industries, as well as the responsible use of natural resources, by offering programs of higher education, research, and extension that are aligned with national and international development issues and labor market needs. More young people are assuming leadership roles and managing businesses in agricultural cooperative as a result of the RUA's programs.



2.7 PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE SUPPORT AND INITIATIVES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

This session moderated by **Dr. Nhem Sareth**, Country Director of Heifer International Cambodia with honorary panelists, including **Mr. Sam Ly**, SME Coordinator of Chamroeun Microfinance PLC, **Ms. Heng Sopheakdey**, a representative of Khmer Drone Technology (KDT), **Mr. Sang Kimhun**, Project Manager of the Cambodia Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (CPSA) and **Mrs. Kong Sokchhoin**, Program Officer of Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN). The discussion is highlighted as below:

Mr. Sam Ly gave a presentation highlighting the institution's active engagement in promoting youth participation in agricultural cooperative leadership and business management. He described Chamroeun Microfinance's advantageous terms for the use of working capital for the purchase of agricultural land and other assets, financial solutions for small and medium enterprises in the field of agricultural production with the agricultural cooperative, and Revolving capital for small and medium enterprises for business operations. Mr. Sam Ly highlighted Chamroeun's helpful loan service in the agricultural production supply chain.



Ms. Heng Sopheakdey presented KDT's commitment to youth agricultural cooperative business participation. She stated that drone technology has helped small-scale farmers increase yields while reducing farm input costs; drones can be transported easily and deployed in the field with greater ease. In addition to efficiency, she noted that drones help farmers reduce overall planting costs, thereby closing the yield gap and protecting them from chemical exposure. In addition, she emphasized that drones have demonstrated numerous benefits for farm management, such as increasing crop yield, reducing pesticide use, protecting the health of rural workers, and, most importantly, encouraging youth participation in the agricultural sector.



Mr. Sang Kimhun emphasized that CPSA is working closely with companies, government agencies, civil society organizations, farmer groups and financial institutions to link producers to the market. The organization is also promoting youth participation, fostering leadership and management in youth, and supporting agricultural cooperatives through Enterprise Agricultural Cooperative Incubation Program (EACIP). CPSA's activities in promoting innovation, technology adaptation, production solutions, business skills development, academia-industry linkages, and entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector are helping to build a supportive mechanism for the sector. The organization is also exchanging information and data related to the sector with the purpose to build a supporting mechanism. The CPSA is playing an important role in promoting sustainable agriculture in Cambodia. The organization's activities are helping to improve the livelihoods of farmers and contribute to the development of the agriculture sector in Cambodia.



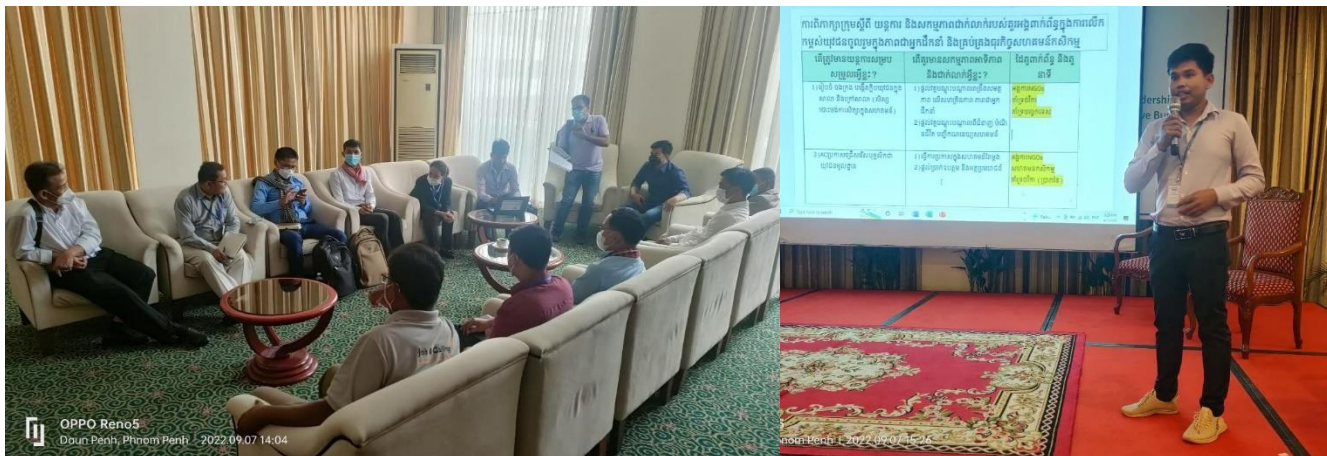
Mrs. Kong Sokchhoin, Program Officer of Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN) emphasized FNN's dedication to bolstering farmer organizations by promoting innovation in ecological agriculture, community business markets, saving-credit, and fostering greater social cooperation. She also emphasized FNN's active participation in strengthening local and domestic market systems and identifying key initiatives, mechanisms, and



metrics for promoting youth participation in agricultural leadership and management. She concluded his remarks by emphasizing the significance of youth involvement in agricultural development and calling for increased investment in this area.

2.8 GROUP DISCUSSION ON SPECIFIC MECHANISMS AND ACTIVITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OF AGRIBUSINESS COOPERATIVE

The forum was then divided into two groups including agricultural cooperative group and government, civil society, development partners, private sector and stakeholder group to discuss ways to increase youth involvement in agribusiness leadership and management. The groups discussed particular mechanisms and activities as well as key stakeholders that could be used to encourage youth participation.



The suggestions included the following:

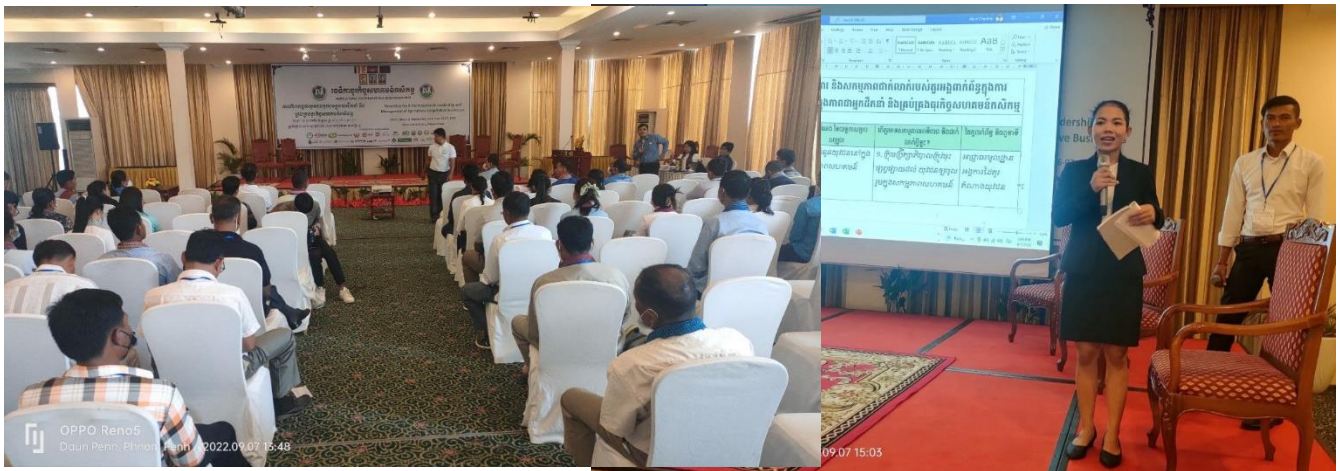
- The board of directors of the agricultural cooperative shall have a mechanism for coordinating the promotion of youth participation in the cooperative. On possible priority of practical activities, the Board of Directors of the agricultural cooperative shall advocate for the youth's active participation in cooperative activities by promoting active participation in cooperative activities. Partners and associated partners include the local government, the partner organization, and the youth representative.
- To ensure the long-term viability of agricultural cooperatives, it is essential to engage and attract youth in cooperative activities. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, including: providing training and education on the benefits of cooperatives and how they operate; encouraging young people to participate in cooperative activities through internships, mentorship programs, and other initiatives; creating opportunities for young people to assume leadership roles within cooperatives; and supporting existing cooperatives to become more youth-friendly and inclusive. Increasing the appeal of agricultural cooperatives to young people is crucial for ensuring their long-term viability and

success. By taking measures to engage young people in cooperative activities, we can ensure that future generations enjoy the benefits of these vital organizations.

- The board of directors of the agricultural cooperative should evaluate the conditions and plan for integrating youth in any position, as well as the opportunity for youth to participate in cooperative activities, to ensure a satisfactory outcome. Priority and practical activities must include regular evaluation meetings on conditions and planning, which should be led by a young adult and incorporate women into positions of advocacy within the cooperative. Partners include members of the agricultural cooperative's board of directors and evaluation committee.
- It is crucial to implement specific mechanisms that encourage youth participation in leadership and business management in agribusiness cooperatives. This will ensure that the youth have skills and knowledge necessary to effectively assume these responsibilities. Establishing a mechanism for petty cash advances is one way to achieve this. This will enable youth to implement business activities and produce informative content for cooperative, youth capacity development, and educational field trips. Providing training and support to young people who are interested in assuming leadership roles is another crucial strategy for increasing youth participation in agribusiness communities. This will ensure that they possess the necessary abilities and self-assurance to succeed in these positions. In addition, it is essential to provide opportunities for youth to network with one another and with members of the agribusiness community. This will enable them to exchange ideas and gain knowledge from one another's experiences. By implementing these particular mechanisms, youth will be better equipped to assume leadership and business management roles.
- The discussion also resulted in the following Recommendation possibilities, which are listed below:
 - Regarding coordination mechanisms, there should be an initiative to form a youth club in educational institutions and elsewhere, including among former students. Practical priority activities are to provide training to support the development of entrepreneurial and leadership skills, for which the NGOs may receive substantial financial support.
 - The staff of an agricultural cooperative should be comprised of local youth. The recruitment will take place in the community, with NGO-supported monthly wages and incentives.
 - Utilize social media platforms for advertising on the Facebook page, radio, and television, and to create a website for providing insightful information on agricultural cooperative NGO-supported employment opportunities.
 - Create a business forum for agricultural cooperatives with participation from agricultural cooperatives and NGOs. Make the network meeting a regular occurrence with participation from government institutions, the private sector, and/or an agricultural cooperative.
 - With the assistance of agricultural cooperative NGOs, government institutions, and private sectors, create an open internship opportunity in agricultural cooperatives for youth and students as a favorable environment for enhancing youth capacity.
 - Create incentives for community participation in the management and distribution of the business's profits. First, this could be accomplished by revising the memorandum's evaluations condition to permit youth participation. Second, create loans for agricultural

entrepreneurs to support the successful implementation of their businesses, with the participation of NGOs, banks, microfinance institutions, and the agricultural community.

- Promote the benefits of youth participation and the incorporation of an understanding of agricultural work into the curriculum, while ensuring youth representation on the agricultural cooperative's committee. This will ensure the economic and employment stability of the income market.



2.9 CLOSING REMARK

Mr. Pan Sopheap, chairperson of CamboDHRRA concluded the results of two-day forum. The forum was successfully organized. The participants were provided with the best practices, experiences, and a practical solution that effectively addresses the challenges of bolstering the agricultural production of the local market system and the national level, as well as the management and leadership of agricultural cooperative businesses. On the behalf of the organizing committee, he expressed sincere thanks to members of CamboDHRRA, partners, donors and all honorary speakers for contributing their valued time and resources to make this event happened.

Mr. Kong Pheach, Director of Department of Agro-Industry of MAFF, appreciated and strongly support the initiative of CamboDHRRA, its members and partners for organizing this important event. It's in time responsive initiative. Young people are a potential human resource, labor force and the future of agriculture and food systems. The development of human resource is the key strategy to meet the socio-economic trend in the context of digitalization. He mentioned that the Agricultural



Cooperative Business Forum was a valuable opportunity to discuss how to make Cambodia's agricultural sector more inclusive and responsive to the needs of young people. Such discussions are essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the country's agricultural sector and its ability to contribute to rural development. He closed his remarks by thanking all participants, speakers, supporters and announcing the official closing of the forum.

3. CONCLUSION

The Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum on “**Promoting Youth participation in Leadership and Management of Agricultural Cooperative Business**” was a resounding success. The participants were provided with the best practices, experiences, and a practical solution that effectively addresses the challenges of bolstering the agricultural production of the local market system and the national level, as well as the management and leadership of agricultural cooperative businesses. This includes how to increase young engagement in leadership and management, as well as the initiative of the successor generation training program for the development of thriving agricultural cooperative businesses. The forum was very well-received by all who attended, and it is clear that this type of event is essential in order to promote youth involvement in the agriculture industry. We hope that this event will be the first of many, and that it will continue to promote youth engagement in the agricultural sector.

ANNEX

ANNEX 1: PHOTO OF THE FORUM



