

Farmer Success Story
Meng Pav Adopts SRI and Integrated Farming

Ms. Meng Pav is a 50-year old farmer living in Srey Krong Reach village, Krangleav commune, Bati district of Takeo province. She has been cooperating with CEDAC since 2005. She is the head of a family comprised of six members (herself, her husband, three sons and a daughter). Ms. Meng Pav has primary responsibility for her family’s well-being as her husband is 66 years old and has vision problems due to injuries he received as a soldier in 1995.

Although Ms. Meng Pav completed grade 7 (primary school) in the Lon Nol regime and learned to read, she has since been so preoccupied with earning money to support her family and send her own children to school that she has almost forgotten the alphabet. Rice farming is the main source of the family’s livelihood.

Before the project began to operate in the area in 2004, she was cultivating about 0.84 hectares (ha), which produced only one rice crop a year with a yield of 950 kg of rice. There was no second crop before or after harvesting. She also raised some chicken and fish but could not produce enough to feed the family, so they experienced a food shortage during 3-4 months every year. To solve this problem, she was forced to earn money working on farms in her village and other villages uprooting and transplanting seedlings and harvesting rice.

For these reasons she was motivated to cooperate with CEDAC from 2005 until today, starting when activities in her village were organized through the project, entitled " Sustainable Rice-base Livelihood System for Small farmers in Takeo and Kampong Speu (SRL)", which was funded by Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) from 2003 to 2007. Since January 2008 she is cooperating with the new phase of the project called "Poverty Reduction among Subsistence Rice Farmers through the Promotion of Sustainable Livelihood System (PRS-EU)".

During the time she has cooperated with CEDAC, Ms. Meng Pav implemented numerous new activities with positive results:

- *In 2006, she began to apply SRI techniques on an area of 0.05 ha with a result of 250 kg (equal to 5t/ha) using only natural compost fertilizer and without hiring outside labourers as she did before. In comparing SRI techniques with conventional practices she observed that with SRI she could reduce her time, labour, rice seed, hiring labour fee, and get more yield. Therefore, in 2007 she expanded SRI practices to her entire rice field. As noted in Table 1, she has seen her rice yield increasing every year:*

Table 1: Rice yield improvements since cooperating with CEDAC

Description	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total rice field (ha)	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84
SRI area (ha)	0	0.05	0.84	0.84	0.84
Total rice yield (kg)	2100	2520	3136	3620	4238
Total SRI yield (kg)	0	250	3136	3630	4238
SRI yield in ton per ha	0	5	3.73	4.32	5.05



Picture 1: View of first purified rice seed.

- On 21 April 2008, a national workshop on SRI was held. Farmers who had made outstanding achievements related to SRI over the past year were invited to attend the workshop. Ms. Meng Pav attended and received a prize of 180,000.00 riels for the top award.
- In 2008, she started to work on rice seed purification, selection and storage to see if she could further improve her yield using purified/selected seed. Based on the results of her tests in 2009, she observed that purified/selected seed got a higher yield than normal seed by around 20.4 percent (see Table 2).

Table 2: Yield comparison of plots of purified/selected seed and normal seed

Description	Purified/selected seed		Normal seed	
	Before cutting (humidity)	After cutting (humidity)	Before cutting (humidity)	After cutting (humidity)
Total sample area (m ²)	12	12	12	12
Total rice yield (Kg)	9.8	7.84	7.8	6.24
Yield in ton per ha	8.17	6.53	6.50	5.20

Note: 20 % of humidity reduction

- Over the five years she has cooperated with CEDAC, Ms. Meng Pav observes that her soil fertility, especially humus and good insects, has increased every year. She stopped using both chemical fertilizer and pesticides in 2007, substituting instead natural fertilizer, waste from a biogas digester, green manure, and botanical pesticide. In her rice fields are plenty of earthworms, frogs, small fishes, and shrimps.
- In addition to adopting SRI practices, Ms. Meng Pav has introduced other ecological techniques like ecological chicken-raising, raising fish in ponds and plastic holders, earthworm raising, home gardening improvements and compost-making. These activities have contributed to increasing her family's income significantly (see Table 3).

Table 3: Improvements to family income (per annum)

Source of income	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Chicken-raising (riel)	80,000	200,000	2,500,000	2,200,000	2,750,000
Raising fish in ponds (riel)	0	250,000	110,000	1,150,000	750,000
Raising fish in plastic containers (riel)	0	0	262,500	52,500	60,000
Earthworm-raising (riel)	0	0	50,000	56,000	80,000
Rice product (riel)	0	0	968000	1300000	1600000
Gross annual income	80,000	450,000	3,890,500	4,758,500	5,240,000

Ms. Meng Pav observes that since she has cooperated with CEDAC:

- Her family's living conditions have improved dramatically. Besides more income, she produces enough of her own vegetables, fish, meat and rice to feed the family all year around without purchasing from the market as before.
- She can support two children to go to school. One is taking classes at a private university and another child is in high school. She never dreamed or imagined this could be possible years ago when there was not enough rice for 3-4 months.
- She is deeply grateful to CEDAC for the opportunity to cooperate with the project, which, she says, "helped and guided me to achieve a high yield and better the living condition for my family."