

Vuth: “I found a partner who is doing the exact right things for the PLHAs in the Community – CEDAC.”

Vuth lives with his wife and one son, who are both free of HIV/AIDS, in Svay village, Prey Chho commune of the Kampong Trabek district.

Vuth hesitated to share his experience of suffering that began the first time he was diagnosed as carrying HIV/AIDS in 2005. Vuth fell critically ill and was forced to sell most of his properties - including part of an ancestral land - to cover the medical cost. Vuth was very skinny and dehydrated for more than 5 months and weighed only 25 kg. His CD4 count was only 17. Vuth began taking ARV medicines in 2005. At one point, Vuth decided to quit the medicines because he did not see his life improving. At home, the vegetables he planted had no marketing because of social discrimination in community against PLHAs. Vuth and his wife would get up at 4 am when it was still dark to sell vegetables. By doing this, the villagers would not be able to recognize and he would be able to sell all his vegetables. With the small amount of money earned from selling the vegetables, Vuth bought rice and food to support his family.

When his health improved, Vuth decided to leave his wife and son at home and find employment in Phnom Penh. In the city, Vuth worked as a home construction worker during 2006 until he became sick again. He returned home to receive medical treatment in Svay Rieng Province. Vuth lost the struggle to overcome the suffering caused by the disease he had. He again decided to suspend all efforts supporting his survival such as vegetable growing and animal raising and to quit taking the ARV medicines. There was one local-based organization who organized a meeting for HIV/AIDS awareness and the social discrimination in community was improved. However, the life of Vuth was not improved.

As of 2007, Vuth has found that his mind has changed and that his livelihood has improved since joining with CEDAC. Vuth was able to present himself with other PLHAs to form a saving group and later he was chosen to become the group leader to make loans of at least 3.1 millions Riel to 13 members who have used the loans to make different businesses to support their basic livelihoods.

Vuth generates income through vegetable growing and other labors. The income from selling vegetables is 3,000 – 5,000 Riel every day. He also sells fish twice a year, which earns 30,000 Riel. Selling chickens and ducks earns Vuth 75,000 Riel a year. Vuth and his wife earn an annual income from their labor of approximately 50,000 Riel.

Vuth told us that he was fortunate to find the right partner that is doing exactly the right things for the PLHAs. He respects this partner for their commitment and methods that respond to the issues of PLHAs in community. This partner is CEDAC.



Vuth with his family and an integrated farming system.