



Experiences of CEDAC in Implementing “Agriculture Livelihood Project for the Sok San Indigenous Community”

4 villages in Sok San Commune,
Koh Ngiek District, Mundulkiri Province



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I. INTRODUCTION

With funding support from WWF, CEDAC had been implementing a pilot project titled “Agriculture Livelihood Project for the Sok San Indigenous Community” in 4 villages, Sok San Commune, Koh Ngiek District, Mundulkiri Province. It was a two-year project started in March 2008 and finished in February 2010. All 4 villages in Sok San commune were selected by the project - Klang Lei, Anchor, Chi Klob and Sre Thom.

The project seeks to address the issues affecting the livelihoods of indigenous communities in Sok San commune and to assist them in developing more sustainable livelihoods. The main approach and activities of the project focused on building the capacity of indigenous human resources such as farmer experimenters, key farmers with expertise in specific theme areas of agriculture, and indigenous youth so that they can address the issues by themselves. The fields of project intervention were capacity building support in ecological agriculture, community finance (saving, credit and mutual help fund), community leadership and management.

The overall objective of the project was to improve livelihoods of indigenous people through ecological agriculture dissemination and local human resources development. In order to achieve this overall objective, the specific objectives were as following:

- Improving food production of farmers through dissemination of ecologically sensitive agriculture innovation such as system of rice intensification, improving upland rice production, diversification of crops, ecological chicken raising, and fish and frog raising.
- Capacity building of indigenous local people to be key farmers on specific thematic issues for disseminating agriculture innovations as well as to facilitate social group mobilization.
- Building capacity of indigenous youth and women so that they could become community leaders or facilitators for development projects in Mundulkiri province.

The project expected to produce the following outputs:

- 100 families will have increased food production by 50% through improvement in yields and diversity (not through increase in land use)
- 20 key farmers will have improved capacity in agricultural production and have increased production
- 8 savings groups will be mobilized with an average of 15 families as members per group
- 4 village-based farmer associations will be set up and linked together as a cluster-based farmer association network
- 2 indigenous youth will be trained to provide training to the community on agriculture innovations
- Agriculture innovations will be documented as training material for other organizations to use in their respective target areas in Mundulkiri province

II. STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

2.1. Baseline Survey of the Project

A baseline survey was conducted at the beginning of project implementation. General living situation, agricultural activities, problems faced, and needs of the communities were studied and identified in the baseline survey. Furthermore, results of the baseline survey were used for measuring the progress, changes, and impact of the project after its intervention. It is of note that the project conducted an end line survey at the end of project implementation in order to measure the changes and impact of community farmers under the project's intervention.

The following are the methods of conducting baseline surveys that were applied:

- The project staff met and discussed with commune authority to present the project ALP and also asked for relevant information from the commune authority such as commune statistical data, on-farm and off-farm activities of the indigenous people, needs and constraints of the commune, etc. Through the discussion, the commune chief could understand what the project is and the project staff also could collect some important information from the commune chief.
- In order to know more detail about each target village, a checklist was then developed to be used for data collection by interviewing with the village chief of the project's target villages. The checklist mainly focused on information relating to the village such as number of families, number of population, arable land, etc.
- To conduct the household baseline survey, the project staff conducted individual interviews with farmers in each target village. 20 farmers were interviewed in each village and in total the project staff interviewed 80 farmers. The questionnaire for individual interview was also developed for respondent input.
- After the individual interview and focus group discussions had been carried out, data installation and processing was conducted in order to write up the baseline report.

During the individual interviews, it was a bit difficult for the project staff to interview women because the women were reluctant to be interviewed by project staff that they didn't already know. However, trust and cooperation had improved as they became more familiar with each other over time. There are many groups¹ within a village so it was time-consuming for the project staff to find the people for the interview. The following are some lessons-learned from conducting the baseline survey:

- It is beneficial for the project to organize a project introduction workshop at the beginning of project implementation, composed of the community people, local authorities and other local stakeholders. By doing so, it makes it easier for the project staff to conduct the baseline survey because the community people and local authorities would pay more attention to cooperate with the project staff. Through organizing the project introduction workshop, the community farmers, local authorities and other local stakeholders understood more about the project and they showed their intention to cooperate closely with the project staff.

¹ Generally, there are about 4-5 groups divided in a village depending on the location of the settlement of the people

- During the process of conducting individual interviews with the farmers in the target villages, there should be someone from the community to accompany the project staff to conduct individual interviews with the villagers. This is because the community people know well the location of the other farmers in the village thus reducing the amount of time needed to find the farmers' houses.

2.2. Organizing Village General Meeting

2.2.1. Organizing Village General Meeting to Select Interested Farmers

The village general meeting was organized to present the project's concept including the objectives, expected outputs, strategies and activities to be implemented. It was also an opportunity to provide further explanation on who will be the project's beneficiaries and to select the people who would be interested to cooperate with the project in applying innovations. It is of note that the interested farmers were identified and selected during the village general meeting and then some of the potentially interested farmers were invited by the project staff to participate in the study tour to visit and learn from experienced farmers in other provinces such as Takeo, Kompot and Ratanakiri Provinces. The first village general meeting was organized to present the project's concept and to select the interested farmers, but the following village general meeting was organized to share knowledge and experiences among farmers.

The methodology used to organize the village general meeting is mentioned as follows:

- The project staff met and discussed with village chief and commune chief to make appointment with them, community people, local authorities and other stakeholders for the meeting. During the meeting with village chief, the project staff also discussed to select an appropriate meeting venue that would be easy to access for most of the participants.
- The general meeting was conducted with the following agendas:
 - Introduction to know each other and presentation on the objective of the meeting
 - Brief presentation on CEDAC (historical background of CEDAC, what does CEDAC do?, etc.)
 - Presentation on the ALP project that would be implemented in their village; it included information about the rationale and background of implementing this project, the specific objectives, expected outputs, and strategic activities, etc.
 - Presentation on the result of the baseline survey (key findings from the household baseline survey were presented to the villagers during the village general meeting)
 - Question and answer forum related to the project
 - Presentation of some interesting agricultural innovations to the participants, including the system of rice intensification (SRI), vegetable growing techniques, ecological chicken raising, etc. However, it was made clear that the actual training on agricultural innovations would be done appropriately to the cropping calendar in the target villages
 - Selection of interested farmers: after the presentation on the project, the villagers understood better about the project so that they could decide whether to become involved in the project or not. Those who are interested in the project would be identified and selected as beneficiary farmers

- Summing up and impressions
- After the presentation on the project, including the activities and innovations to be implemented and disseminated by the project, the project staff identified and selected the interested farmers among the participants of the general meeting. The interested farmers were then invited to participate in the study tour organized by the project to visit and learn from other experienced farmers in other provinces. It does not mean that all of the interested farmers who were selected in the village general meeting participated in the study tour; the project staff invited only the potential interested farmers in accordance with the project budget. Through the participation in the study tour, the interested farmers gained more knowledge and confidence to apply innovations. After returning from the visit, they applied innovations that they have learned so that they started to demonstrate to other farmers in their village these new practices.
- Criteria for selection of the interested farmers was developed. The project staff selected those who have more knowledge; are literate; are willing to be a volunteer in their community; have willingness to apply innovations promoted by the project; have good potential to apply agricultural innovations in the village; etc. The project staff also selected women to be the key farmers to ensure that women and men were equitably selected to participate and benefit. The project staff selected 5 interested farmers per village based on the criteria abovementioned.

In relation to the organization of the village general meeting, the project staff faced some difficulties due to the people living in separate places in the village - places located far from the meeting venue. Furthermore, farmers forgot the date of the meeting that reduced the number of participants in the meeting so that it was difficult to select the interested farmers. The project staff noticed that the majority of the farmers in the project's target villages were poorly educated (illiterate - especially the women) so that they had difficulty in understanding project concepts. At the beginning, the project staff could not organize general meetings in some villages due to farmers being busy with another meeting where they discussed land conflict. Therefore, the general meeting was postponed and they were organized at a later date.

Lessons-learned from organization of village general meetings:

- The project staff should give a reminder about the date and time of the meeting to the participants one day before the meeting in order to make sure that the participants remember well the meeting date and time;
- The project should organize more than one village general meeting in one village depending on the number of villager groups in the village. This makes it easier for villagers to participate in the meetings and thus the number of farmers participating would also be increased;
- The project should develop a project leaflet² to be distributed so that the community farmers, local authorities and other local stakeholders could know more detail about the project. The understanding of the project would increase their participation and cooperation with the project.

² The leaflet that presents about the project's objectives, expected outputs, strategies and activities, etc.

2.2.2. Village General Meeting to Share Innovations

To ensure that the majority of the villagers in the project's target villages understand well about the project implementation and level of adoption and adaptation of agricultural innovations promoted and disseminated by the project, the project staff organized "*village general meeting to share innovations*". Farmers who participated in the study tour to other provinces, farmers who applied agricultural innovations, key farmers and other farmers in the villages who have not yet applied agricultural innovations were invited to participate in the meeting.

The village general meeting to share innovations was conducted with the purpose of sharing knowledge and practical experiences and conducting a reflection on the agricultural practices. It also aimed to convince other farmers who have not yet applied innovations to consider what sort of experimentation they want to try in the next season. The village general meeting to share innovations was conducted every 3 months – that is, four times per annum. It is recommended to invite as many villagers as possible to participate in the meeting since the more villagers that attend the more that will apply innovations.

2.2.3. Village General Meeting to Select Key Farmers

To select key farmers, the project staff conducted a village general meeting with the participation of village chief, cooperating farmers and other farmers in the village. Generally, key farmers were selected from the cooperating farmers who have applied very well the agricultural innovations promoted and disseminated by the project. However, the project staff also observed and identified which cooperating farmers who are potential to be key farmers; for example, they tried to apply innovations and also have a high level of willingness to share their knowledge and experiences with the other farmers in the villages. The key farmers play a very important role to promote and disseminate successful agricultural innovations to other farmers in their respective communities. The village general meeting to select key farmers was conducted in each target village in the first year of project implementation.

The following is the methodology to select key farmers:

- The project staff went to meet and discuss with the village chief or deputy village chief in order to make appointment for the village general meeting;
- The village general meeting to select key farmers was conducted through the following agenda:
 - Self introduction and presentation of the objective of the meeting;
 - Sharing knowledge and experiences among cooperating farmers who have applied agricultural innovations introduced by the project;
 - Question and answer forum
 - Discussion with the participants on the criteria to select key farmers, reasons to select key farmers, roles and responsibilities of key farmers, etc.
 - Key farmer election (farmer participants voted to select key farmers in accordance with the criteria)
 - Impression of selected key farmers

- During the general meeting to select key farmers, the project staff facilitated a discussion with the following results:
 - The purpose of selection of key farmers is to increase the promotion and dissemination of agricultural innovations in the communities. The key farmers will be the first people to conduct experimentation on agricultural innovations;
 - The criteria for selection of key farmers include literacy (can read and write), willingness to volunteer, they are interested to experiment with agricultural innovations, and they have agricultural inputs such as land, agricultural equipment for farming activities, etc.)

- During the meeting, the project staff facilitated a discussion with the following results:
 - Key farmers were selected to ensure good promotion and dissemination of agricultural innovations in the communities. The key farmers were the first farmers to experiment with agricultural innovations introduced by the project.
 - The criteria for selection of key farmers were developed through the discussion among the participants. The criteria included literacy, farmers who are interested in agriculture, and farmers who have some agricultural inputs (such as land, agricultural equipment, etc.) to apply innovations.
 - Roles and responsibilities of key farmers: firstly to apply agricultural innovations introduced by the project, to help promote and disseminate agricultural innovations to other farmers, make appointments with the other farmers in the village for meetings or trainings, participate in training events organized by the project, etc.
 - Advantages of being key farmers: the key farmers would be able to receive more training support from the project, learning materials (farmer magazine, technical booklets, etc.), and some incentives (vegetable seeds, etc.), as well as have more opportunities to attend training and study tours organized by the project.
- 5 key farmers were selected per village in accordance with the criteria abovementioned.

2.3. Recruitment of Indigenous Community Youths (Project's Field Assistants)

The project staff of ALP selected 2 indigenous youths to fulfill the role of project's field assistant. The project's field assistants worked closely with project staff to ensure that the project was operated smoothly and effectively. It was expected that the indigenous youths would help to work closely with the villagers as they are also the people who live in the target villages so they know well how to communicate with the villagers effectively.

The following are the criteria for selection of project's field assistant:

- Studied at least at grade 7;
- Gentle and honest;
- High commitment to work for the development of their communities;
- Indigenous youths who live in the target villages of the project;
- Have own means for transportation (motorcycle) to work in the village.

Roles and responsibilities of the project's field assistant:

- Help the project's staff to conduct individual follow up advice to farmers;
- Conduct data collection about the agricultural practices in the target villages;
- Write up case studies of the farmers who have applied agricultural innovations promoted and disseminated by the project;
- Work closely with the project's staff to write up the project's monthly progress report;
- Prepare logistics and materials for meetings, trainings and workshops.

The project staff cooperated closely with the village chief to announce for interested candidates. The announcement to select indigenous youths/project's field assistants was conducted 2 times at many places in the target villages. The project staff conducted an exam for the interested candidates. The exam included 2 parts (general knowledge and simple calculation method). Then, after the writing test, oral test was also conducted and finally 2 candidates were selected.

However, the project staff also faced some difficulties due to majority of the indigenous youths didn't study up to grade 7. On the other hand, the majority of indigenous youths were likely not interested to be the project's field assistants. Furthermore, one project's field assistant resigned and the project needed to recruit again.

Lessons learned from selection of indigenous youths/project's field assistant:

- The project should reduce some criteria for the selection of the indigenous youths/project's field assistants in order to attract more youths;
- The project should extend the time for the candidates to apply;
- The project should select indigenous youths/project's field assistants even if they live outside the project's target villages.

2.4. Provision of Field Assignment for Indigenous Youths

The assignment was given to the indigenous youths in order to strengthen their knowledge and capacity through the tangible practices and provision of training support from the project staff. The indigenous youths/project's field assistants are good at providing training support to the communities after they had already received technical training from the project.

The assignments included: practices of agricultural innovations (system of rice intensification, ecological chicken raising, vegetable growing, fish culture, and collective saving, etc. The project staff also asked the indigenous youths to summarize the agricultural technical booklets and prepared activity plans to be carried out every month.

2.5. Organizing Study Tours for Farmers

2.5.1. Organizing Study Tours for Interested Farmers, Key Farmers and Indigenous Youths

The study tour for the interested farmers was conducted with the purpose of enabling the interested farmers to learn more about agricultural innovations and to give opportunities to learn and exchange knowledge and experiences with other farmers in other provinces. At the same

time, they could apply innovations that they had learned from the visit and also share their understanding with the other farmers in their villages.

In total, 3 study tours were organized during the project implementation. 2 study tours were organized in the first year and another study tour was organized in the second year of the project implementation. The first study tour was conducted for the interested farmers, the second and the third study tours were conducted for key farmers and indigenous youths.

The following is the method for organizing the study tour:

- Generally, the study tours were conducted within the other target provinces of CEDAC. Therefore, during the preparation phase, the project staff discussed with other staff of CEDAC to determine where to visit, topics for the visit, duration of the visit, etc.
- Budgeting for organizing the study tour included travel allowance, food allowance, accommodation and other expenses.
- Determine and select farmers who will be invited to participate in the study tour.
- Farmers who are going to attend the study tour need to come early or one day in advance if farmers live far from the office. For example, the farmers in Sre Thom village came and stayed one night at the project's office before departure for the visit.
- While arriving at the host farm (host province), the expectation of the visit was conducted under the facilitation of the project staff. By doing so, the farmer participants were clear about their expectation and objective of the visit.
- After the visit, the project staff facilitated a reflection meeting on what they had learned from the visit. Several questions were raised for the discussion such as what did you learn from the visit? Did the visit respond to your expectation? What are you going to apply after the visit?

In addition to the organization of the study tour, the project staff confronted some difficulties such as: some local authorities did not cooperate well with the project. They seemed not to want farmers to be invited for the visit. However, the project staff communicated and explained to the local authorities about the visit and the permission was given at that time. An additional challenge was that some farmers forgot the date of the study tour.

Lessons-learned from organization of the study tour:

- Before organizing the study tour, the project staff should ask for permission from the local authorities;
- The project staff should remind the farmers before study tour takes place.

2.5.2. Organizing Exchange Visits within the Target Villages

To increase cooperation and mutual-learning between farmers in applying agricultural innovations, the project staff facilitated an exchange visit within the target villages of the project. Through the organization of exchange visits, the farmers could learn from each other and also helped to increase the number of farmers who apply innovations in the villages.

The exchange visits were organized every 4 months; that is, 3 times per year. The following is the method of organizing exchange visits:

- The project staff made appointments with farmers to invite them for the exchange visit. Those farmers included cooperating farmers³ and non-cooperating farmers. The exchange visit took place at the farmer's farm. Generally, good farms were selected for the visit.
- The agenda of the visit was conducted as follows:
 - Self introduction and presentation on the objective of the visit
 - Sharing knowledge and experiences from the experienced farmers in applying agricultural innovations
 - Visit and interview the host farmers/farm owners (system of rice intensification, ecological chicken raising, vegetable growing, etc.)
 - Reflection on and impression of the result of the visit
 - Prepare activity plan: what needs to be done after the visit

The project staff also confronted some difficulties relating to the organization of the exchange visit. Some farmers did not attend the visit due to being busy with their work. For example, farmers were busy to transplant rice during the rainy season and they preferred to transplant rice rather than to participate in the exchange visit.

Lessons-learned from organizing the exchange visit: The project should organize more exchange visits including having a rice transplanting day and rice harvesting day so that the farmers could learn more and share their experiences with other farmers.

2.6. Capacity Building for Farmers

2.6.1. Organizing Training on Agricultural Innovations for Farmers

The training on agricultural innovations for farmers is very useful for farmers because the farmers could improve their knowledge and understanding on more effective agricultural technologies. The training sessions were conducted on a monthly basis by the project staff and the project's field assistants. The training topics mainly focused on system of rice intensification (SRI), vegetable growing technique, ecological chicken raising (ECR), compost making techniques, fish raising in the plastic film, multi-purpose farm (MPF), and collective saving for self-reliance.

It is of note that the majority of the indigenous people are illiterate so it is a bit difficult for the project staff to facilitate the training with them. Some villages are located far from the meeting venue so that the farmers had difficulty to travel to the training venue.

Lessons-learned from organizing training on agricultural innovations for farmers:

- The visual tools should be used in the training for farmers; for example, the project staff can display videos on technical innovations so that the participants can more easily understand;

³ Cooperating farmer is a farmer who has applied innovations introduced by the project.

Non-cooperating farmer is a farmer who has not applied innovations

- Real practice or demonstration should be organized so that the participants can learn with their own eyes and experience;
- The number of training sessions should be increased in order to enable the other farmers who live in the village to learn.

2.6.2. Organizing Training for Key Farmers and Farmer Leaders

The training for key farmers and farmer leaders were conducted on a monthly basis. The farmer leaders are management committee members of village based farmer associations, management committee members of collective saving groups, etc. The training was facilitated by the project staff. The training mainly focused on agricultural innovations and practical management and leadership, which mainly concentrated on the management of village based farmer associations and collective saving groups.

The project staff found that there were some farmers who are not key farmers, but also participated in the monthly training. The knowledge and capacity of the new farmers are not good enough to understand the lessons. Therefore, the project staff need to make sure that the key farmers come and learn regularly. Based on this experience, the project staff should determine clearly the key farmers to be invited for the training.

2.6.3. Organizing Training for Indigenous Youths/Project's Field Assistants

To strengthen the knowledge and capacity of the indigenous youths/project's field assistants, the project staff had facilitated monthly training for the indigenous youths. In total, 2 training sessions were organized each month. The topics of the training focused on agricultural innovations, data collection methods, community organizing, record keeping system, etc.

To link between theory and real practice, the project staff facilitated them to conduct what they have learned in the field; for example, the indigenous youths can conduct follow-up advice or facilitate the group training for farmers, etc. The monthly activity plan of the indigenous youths was prepared each month under the facilitation of the project staff. On the other hand, the project staff also provided some assignments for the indigenous youths such as reading the technical booklets on agricultural innovations and asking them to summarize what they have learned from the booklets.

2.7. Establishment of Village Based Farmer Association

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of community development activities, the project staff facilitated to set up village based farmer associations in each target village. The village based farmer association plays a very important role to contribute to development of their communities. In total, 4 village based farmer associations were established under the facilitation of the project staff. The following are the process of establishing village based farmer associations:

Step 1: The project staff organized village general meeting with the participation of farmers, villagers, local authorities and other local stakeholders. There are different kinds of farmers participating in the meeting such as key farmers, management committee members of collective saving group, and other cooperating farmers in the village. The agenda of the meeting was conducted as follows:

- Self introduction and presentation on the objectives of the meeting
- Discussion on the reasons and pros and cons of setting up village based farmer associations
- Question and answer forum related to village based farmer associations
- Identification and selection of interested farmers who would like to set up a farmer association in their village; interested farmers were invited to participate in an exposure visit to enable them to learn from experienced farmers
- Sum up and impression of the meeting

Step 2: The project organizes an exposure visit for the interested farmers who want to set up a village based farmer association in their village. The exposure visit enabled those interested farmers to learn from the experienced farmers so that they gained knowledge and confidence in establishing the village based farmer association.

Step 3: The project staff organizes a village general meeting in order to select the temporary management committee members of the village based farmer association. 3 meetings in total were organized by the project staff.

The first meeting was organized to reflect on the exposure visit. After the visit, farmers will have understood more about the advantages of village based farmer associations, so they convinced other farmers to become the members of the farmer association. The second meeting was conducted to select management committee members of the village based farmer association. It is of note that the management committee members were selected by the election from the members. Generally, 5-6 management committee members were selected with the composition of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and members. The criteria for selection of management committee members of the village based farmer association were developed by the members. The third meeting was conducted to prepare the internal rules and regulations of the association.

2.8. Organizing Workshop to Share Experiences among Farmers

The workshop was organized in order to share the practical experiences of farmers and capacity building on agricultural innovations conducted by the project staff. The workshops to share innovations among farmers were conducted every month from the second year of project implementation. The experienced farmers who have applied agricultural innovations such as system of rice intensification (SRI), ecological chicken raising (ECR), vegetable growing, etc. were invited to join the workshop.

The following are the methods to be carried out for the preparation of the workshop:

- The project staff communicated and discussed with school principal and commune chief in order to ask permission to use the meeting hall;
- The project staff made appointment with farmers including key farmers, other farmers who have experiences in applying agricultural innovations, villagers, etc.
- Agenda of the workshop is shown as follows:
 - Self introduction and presentation of the objective of the workshop;
 - Sharing interesting information among the participants;

- Presentation on the practices of agricultural innovations by the experienced farmers;
- Question and answer forum;
- Reflection and economic analysis facilitated by the project staff;
- Preparation of activity plan for the next implementation step;
- Sum up and closing remarks

2.9. Individual Follow up Advice

The individual follow-up advice was conducted in order to encourage the farmers to apply agricultural innovations promoted and disseminated by the project. Some farmers who had applied agricultural innovations continued to improve their practices after the follow-up visit conducted by the project staff. At the same time, the individual follow-up advice is also helpful to solve the technical problem that the farmers faced in practicing the agricultural innovations. The project staff as well as the project's field assistants/indigenous youths consulted with farmers on how to deal with the problems. Therefore, the individual follow-up advice was conducted by the project staff and the project's field assistants each month. The project staff directly met and discussed with farmers at their house or their farm.

Lessons-learned of conducting the individual follow-up advice is mentioned in the following:

- During the individual follow-up advice, the project staff should conduct economic analysis of the target family. By doing so, the project staff as well as the target farmers could know clearly about their family's economic situation, and that may lead to increased effort to generate more incomes for the family.
- The individual follow-up advice is important to ensure good success of the project. It is of note that some farmers live in separate places within the villages which makes it difficult to travel for the meetings or trainings, and may be why some didn't participate in these meetings or trainings. In place of group training, the project staff often conducted individual follow-up advice to help farmers in applying innovations.

2.10. Project Evaluation Workshop

The end of project evaluation workshop was organized in order to present the activities and results achieved by the project as well as to prepare the next operational plan of the target groups and the project. Each end of project evaluation workshop was conducted annually and in total there were 2 workshops organized.

The commune chief, village chief, cooperating farmers, and local stakeholders such as representatives from WWF, etc. were invited to participate in the workshop.

The following are the steps for organizing, and the agenda of, the workshop:

- The project staff met and discussed with the commune chief to ask for permission to organize the meeting;
- The project staff made an appointment with the local authorities, cooperating farmers, key farmers, leaders of collective saving groups, and management committee members of village based farmer associations, to participate in the workshop;

- Agenda of the workshop was conducted as follows:
 - Self introduction and presentation of the objectives of the workshop;
 - Opening remarks by the commune chief or members of commune council;
 - The project staff conducted presentations on the activities and results of the project ;
 - Farmers conducted a presentation on the livelihood improvements, behavior changes, and adoption of agricultural innovations after involvement in the project;
 - Question and answer forum: The participants could raise questions and discuss in plenary;
 - Group discussion to prepare activity plan and presentation in plenary; the participants were divided into small groups for discussion on their future plan;
 - The project staff synthesizes the activity plan that was prepared by the participants;
 - Sum up the results of the workshop;
 - Distribution of agricultural equipments to farmers;
 - Solidarity meal

III. ANALYSIS OF LESSONS-LEARNED

3.1. Strengths of the Project

- Majority of the indigenous farmers are illiterate, therefore the project staff used visual training tools or films shown during the training so that its easier to understand introduced practices. Furthermore, the real practice and demonstration or directly visiting the field are appropriate training methods for the indigenous people.
- Organizing village general meetings to share innovations is very helpful for the farmers because they could learn from each other. In terms of yield and economic analysis, they could distinguish the differences between the traditional method and the agricultural innovations promoted by the project. Farmers mentioned that they could produce more agricultural products for family consumption and increased income generation capacity after the involvement with the project.
- The project staff provided training support to the majority of the inhabitants in the village. Sometimes the project staff conducted individual follow-up advice/one-to-one conversation with the target families. The individual follow-up advice/one-to-one conversation is a good tool to help farmers in analyzing their family's situation, weaknesses and strengths, and planning for the family improvement. Through the provision of individual follow-up advice, the trust and cooperation among the indigenous people and the project staff increased which led to an increased number of farmers who applied agricultural innovations and other social innovations such as collective saving groups and village based farmer associations.
- A positive aspect of the project is the support to collective saving groups. The indigenous farmers are interested to become the members of a collective saving group because they could access saving and credit services. The establishment of a saving group is a good way to attract farmers to attend the meetings regularly.

3.2. Weaknesses of the Project

- The skills of indigenous youths are still low in terms of ability to provide support to the community farmers. They have gained more knowledge on agriculture and rural development, but the facilitation skills need to be strengthened.
- Establishment of village based farmer associations is delayed and some village based farmer associations have not yet asked for official recognition from the commune council.
- The project staff did not conduct data management very well in terms of developing computer database management system. However, the data sheet was developed for data collection by the project staff and the community field assistants/indigenous youths.

3.3. Keys to Improvement and Plans for Follow-Up

3.3.1. Keys to Improvement

The project staff should not distribute agricultural materials and equipments to farmers who have not applied agricultural innovations.

3.3.2. Plans for Follow-Up

- The project staff should provide more training sessions for the farmers who live in widely dispersed places in the target villages in order to make sure the majority of the farmers in the village receive training support from the project. Moreover, the project staff should also conduct one-to-one conversation with the target farmers in order to encourage them to apply more innovations.
- Based on the experiences of project implementation, rice saving/rice bank is an interesting theme to be promoted in the target villages. The project staff observed that the majority of the farmers are interested to establish rice banks in their villages to mitigate food insecurity. On the other hand, the formation of collective saving groups is a good means to ensure the sustainability of the project. The farmers come for the meeting regularly since they could make a profit from saving groups. At the same time, they have also improved cooperation among each other.
- Capacity building for the indigenous youths/project's field assistants on agricultural innovations and community development is very important to help them to work effectively for their communities in the future. The project staff should train them on facilitation skills, training of trainers, convincing and lobbying skills, etc. The reflection meetings among the indigenous youths should be organized regularly and more often to ensure that they could learn additional practical and improved practices.
- The project staff and project's field assistants should conduct regularly individual follow-up advice to the target farmers. At least 30 farmers should be followed-up and advised each month. The individual follow-up advice is important to encourage farmers in applying agricultural innovations introduced by the project.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on this documentation, it can be concluded that the project collected much experience from its implementation. Those experiences are useful to be used for the next implementation or the implementation of a similar project by other development agencies.

Based on the project implementation, the project staff discovered some appropriate tools on how to work with the indigenous people more effectively. Generally, the visual training tool and one-to-one conversation/individual follow-up advice is strongly important to work with the indigenous people because the majority of the indigenous people are illiterate and they settle their houses in widely scattered places in the village. On the other hand, it can also be concluded that the building of trust and confidence between the indigenous people and the project staff is necessary to increase the adoption of agricultural innovations promoted by the project.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations for improving the implementation of similar projects:

- During the provision of individual follow-up advice, the project staff should discuss with farmers the family's economic analysis so that the farmers could understand very well about the economic situation of their families. In terms of agricultural practices, the project staff should demonstrate real practices to farmers so that its easier to understand how to practice it successfully. Based on the experiences of implementing this project, individual follow-up advice/one-to-one conversation is a very important tool to ensure a success of the project. It is of note that the majority of the farmers in the target villages live in widely separated places so that its often difficult for them to attend the meetings, and is why the individual follow-up advice is helpful;
- Relating to the invitation of farmers to participate in meetings or trainings, the project staff need to specify farmers' names clearly and also the date and venue of the meeting;
- Visible tools should be developed and used for providing training to the indigenous people as the majority of the indigenous people are illiterate. Videos/films are also appropriate tools to be used for providing training to the indigenous people. Furthermore, the trainer/project staff should demonstrate the real practices that can be observed directly in the farms;
- The number of training sessions for farmers at the village level should be increased in order to provide more training support to different groups of farmers in the village;
- Farmer field days should be organized frequently to enable farmers to learn from each other. For example, SRI transplanting day and rice harvesting day should be organized so that the farmers could learn and share their knowledge and experiences to each other more readily;
- The project staff should pay more attention to cooperate closely with the commune authorities and district authorities through the organization of the district workshop. By doing so, the local authorities could understand the project better and makes it easier for them to collaborate with the project;
- The project staff should more quickly establish village based farmer organizations with official recognition by the village chief and the commune chief. In addition, the project staff should strengthen the knowledge and capacity of management committee members of village based

farmer associations to enable them to play very important roles in community development beyond the life of a project;

- Encourage farmers to join collective saving groups (community-led saving groups) and especially encourage them to conduct voluntary saving in order to increase the amount of saving capital for providing credit service so that farmers can borrow for agricultural investment and other small business activities. The establishment of collective saving groups enabled farmers to access better saving and credit services with a low interest rate and improved self-reliance and ownership.