

IFWP-MP Organizes Thematic Workshop on System of Rice Intensification (SRI)

Since October 2009, CEDAC has been implementing a food security project titled "Improving Food Security for Women and Rural Poor in Mondulkiri Province (IFWP-MP)," with funding support from the European Union (EU). As the rainy season is approaching, IFWP-MP organized three district-level thematic workshops on the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), 18-22 May 2010. The workshops aimed to strengthen the knowledge, capacity and skills of farmers, local authorities and other local stakeholders related to the principles of SRI, so that they are equipped with more technical information to improve their rice cultivation methods.

The workshops were attended by 125 participants (38 women), with about 40 participants per workshop on average. Participants included district councilors, commune councilors, village chiefs, indigenous farmers, rural women and rural youth, and relevant government officials such as representatives from the District Agricultural Office, District Office of Women's Affairs, District Office of Education, Youth and Sports, and others. Mr. Bao Vuthy, CEDAC Technical Support Officer, accompanied by Mr. Yim Sok Sophors, IFWP-MP Project Coordinator, facilitated the workshops in Koh Ngiek and Pechrda districts, Mondulkiri Province.

Each workshop was conducted the same process. At the beginning, the workshop was opened with remarks by the district councilor. To ensure that the participants understand the nature of the project, IFWP-MP District Coordinators Mr. Mak Samath and Mr. Pheung Kosal presented the activities and results of the project. Then, the facilitator encouraged farmers to share with each other their knowledge and practical experiences related to rice cultivation. Mrs. Phok La, a farmer from Prohout Village, Kraing Leav Commune, Bati District, Takeo Province, shared her practical experiences in applying SRI, which she learned about from CEDAC training programs. She explained and compared the traditional practices and SRI practices to participants so that they understood well the differences between the two different sets of practices. Mrs. Phok La also encouraged the participants to pay more attention to good rice seed selection and improving top soil fertility as part of their efforts to improve rice cultivation techniques along with SRI principles. Mr. Bao Vuthy also provided a detailed explanation of SRI principles and techniques (including optional techniques). Smaller question and answer forums were then conducted to ensure participants had ample opportunities to ask questions and to make sure that they fully understood the concepts. At the end of the workshops, majority of farmers were selected to experiment with SRI in the upcoming rainy season. The majority of the participants intended to apply and experiment SRI in this rainy season. Their hope is to increase their rice productivity to have adequate rice for family consumption and extra supplies to sell on the market and generate additional income.

