

Young Agri-Entrepreneurs Meet to Strengthen their Professional Producers to Supply the Market

From December 13-14, 2011, 30 Young Agri-Entrepreneur (YAE) representatives from six different provinces including Kampot, Takeo, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng, met at CEDAC's head office in Phnom Penh to share their success experiences and to improve themselves to be professional producers to supply the market. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Refresh the training program and to make sure it is beneficial to the rural youth
- Provide new ideas on how to become the professional producers to supply the market
- Discuss future plans of the program including program continuation for the next generations and YAE networking.

During the meeting, the rural youths shared their success experiences and reflected on their progress by comparing their conditions before and after joining the program. It was an exciting and proud moment - those rural young people shared their success stories after having collaborated with CEDAC and have developed themselves from being dependent, hopeless youths to be more responsible and free persons in the family and society.

Most of the YAEs said similarly that the program is very useful and helpful for them as they gained agricultural technical skills and knowledge, and have improved both financially and mentally. Starting almost empty handed, most of the YAE now can become young experts in various kinds of agricultural techniques such as chicken raising, fish raising, frog raising, pig raising, mushroom and vegetable growing and organic farm management etc. and could potentially earn approximately 2 million riel per month (around 500 U.S dollar). YAEs suggested CEDAC to continue this program for the other rural youths' benefits. In the evening, they visited some markets including traditional ones and supermarkets to see and learn how products are packaged and sold and how markets serve the customer.

CEDAC's President, Dr. Yang Saing Koma said that in the next ten years CEDAC plans to expand this YAE program to reach 10,000 other rural youths so that they will become a very dynamic catalyst in agricultural and rural development.

It is important to note that this YAE program was designed by CEDAC to provide capacity building for rural youth who have finished the 12th grade already but could not afford to get higher education. They were jobless and eager to do something in agriculture on their own. Since 2007, 313 rural youths (including 117 women) have received vocational training from CEDAC through the YAE course.

