

Field Notes on Field Study on **the effectiveness of Village-Based Farmer Association**

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Kak Thom village is located in Mohareussey commune, Kong Pisey district, Kanpong Speu province. CEDAC started its activities in this village in 2006. Most farmers were very interested in innovations, especially ecological system of rice intensification (SRI) after it was introduced to them by CEDAC's staff. At the same time, farmers agreed together to establish the village-based farmer association (VBA) on June 14, 2006 with 37 members (20 women) with from 37 families. The start up fund for this farmer association was 570,000.00 riels. Recently, their farmer association is named *Samakum Kaksekor Rikchamreun Asaray Douykaloun Eng* (Self-reliant Improvement Farmer Association) which has 126 members (72 women) from 92 families. Now, the capital of this association has reached 80,000,0000 riels or 2000 U.S dollars which are from shares of members who invest every 6-months and from the monthly savings of young farmers. Along with progress of the capital, the association also established the community shop in January 2008.

The activities and achievements of the association can be summarized as follows:

- Established new groups under their umbrella, including youth groups, an organic rice producer group, a community shop, and a savings group. Moreover, they also established the normal and organic rice association at the commune level
- Developed human resources such as the farmer promoter group and farmer leaders.
- Contributed financial resources to the village development activities.
- Reduced expenses for outside resources such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides products for members' benefits. Most of the farmers are using ecological farming methods, and there are farmers who specialize in producing local seeds for other farmers.
- Improved the environment because of their reduced use of chemical fertilizers, and increased production of ecological fertilizer or botanical fertilizer. In particular, they are aware of the effects of using chemical products and plastics.
- Enabled villagers to access a loan with a low interest rate. Before setting up the association, the interest rate charged by private money lender was 10 %, while now the association charges only 3 percent. Besides, the interest rate charged by the association is in the hands of the members of the association.
- Created job opportunities for community members.

According to the above-mentioned advantages, they plan to increase their capital to 150,000,000 riels by December 2008. They want their association to be self-reliant. Moreover, they will expand their community shop by increasing the number of members and volume of sales.