



STRENGTHENING RURAL COMMUNITIES HIT BY COVID-19 IN CAMBODIA

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the livelihoods of poor and near-poor households in rural communities in Cambodia as a result of disruptions in economic activities and lost employment opportunities. Rural women and girls have been disproportionately affected both in their productive roles - as producers, processors and traders - and in their reproductive role and care functions, owing to their limited access to productive resources, services and information. The aim of the project was thus to restore livelihoods and enhance the resilience of the vulnerable populations most affected by COVID-19 in Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces through inclusive COVID-19 recovery interventions, with an emphasis on fostering a more nutrition-sensitive, climate-resilient and food-safety agriculture.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Project interventions focused on building community short- and medium-term productive capacity and agriculture-based livelihoods. Support was provided to 1 027 households (335 women) in the form of agricultural inputs, tools and materials, and to 60 households (17 women) as cash, along with training and technical advice to initiate and increase short-cycle agricultural production, including vegetable production, native chicken production, and fish and frog raising. The project completed nine cash-for-work schemes, enabling 573 local labourers (235 women) to generate immediate cash income. Eleven community infrastructure and environmental assets were also rehabilitated or established, benefiting around 2 700 households. The needs of women, and of women's economic empowerment, were met through the establishment or capacity-building of 12 women savings groups. The provision of seed capital allowed 415 households (319 women) to have sustained access to financial services within their groups, while 53 women selected from the groups were supported to develop livelihood improvement plans and acquire the tools and materials needed to implement them. Finally, six agricultural cooperatives were supported through capacity development and the provision of seed capital to expand their business operations.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget
USD 990 099

Duration
December 2020 – July 2022

Resource Partners
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Partners
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Beneficiaries
Over 2 500 rural households affected by COVID-19 pandemic

IMPACT

The CASH+ approach adopted by the project, by providing complementary interventions (productive assets, inputs, technical training, and extension services) to the government cash transfer programme, contributes to protecting the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable households during the pandemic. The support provided has improved farmers' livelihoods and access to nutritious foods during the pandemic through the practice of safe, nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient agriculture, improved incomes through the sale of surplus production and enhanced rural women's empowerment through the implementation of gender transformative approaches and community engagement. Ot Saven, a 38-year-old woman from Romdeng village, Siem Reap province, received USD 330 from the project, which she used to start vegetable production on approximately 450 m2 behind her home. "My family consumes half of the vegetables I produce, and I sell the surplus to a local middleman. I am very content that I can generate a small income daily." Saven earned KHR 430 000 (USD 107.5) from her first cycle of vegetable production. This has motivated her to grow vegetables as a business. She said: "The support from the project allowed me to install a water system that saves me time and labour. I applied the techniques I learned from the training, such as preparing land and intercropping, which allow me to receive a double yield."



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



ACTIVITIES

- 1 027 households (335 women) supported with agricultural inputs, tools and materials, and 60 households (17 women) with cash (total value of inputs/materials/tools plus cash totalling USD 161 545), training and technical advice in short-cycle agricultural production: vegetable production (481 households), native chicken production (406), and fish and frog raising in plastic tanks (200).
- 60 households (17 women) supported to set up and run demonstration farms on short-cycle agricultural production; 372 training sessions in short-cycle agricultural production organized for 2 229 farmers (895 women); 9 cash-for-work schemes completed for 573 local labourers (235 women and 101 migrant workers); USD 37 258 disbursed.
- 11 community infrastructure and environmental assets rehabilitated or established, benefiting around 2 700 households; 6 women savings groups established and the capacity of 12 women savings groups strengthened; USD 33 100 of seed capital (USD 12 100 from previous FAO projects) provided to 12 groups, providing 415 households (319 women) sustained access to credit.
- 53 women cohorts selected from the women savings groups to develop and implement livelihood improvement plans; USD 16 800 transferred to women cohorts to acquire the tools and materials required to implement the plans.
- Capacity strengthened in six agricultural cooperatives (ACs) in development of business plans, financial management and bookkeeping, and seed capital of USD 9 000 provided to expand business operations, benefiting 564 AC members (243 women); trainings and dialogue organized to strengthen institutional and policy environment with regard to food safety issues.



Project Title

Strengthening livelihood recovery of COVID-19 most affected rural communities in Cambodia

Project Code

FAO: GCP/CMB/047/SWI

Contact

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