



Cambodia

Summary of the Food Security Intervention

Improving Food Security and Market Linkages for Smallholders (MALIS)

Italy, July 2015

Introduction: The FAO nutrition-sensitive agriculture project “*Improving Food Security and Market Linkages for Smallholders in Oddar Meanchey and Preah Vihear (MALIS)*”, was implemented in Cambodia from 2013–2015. The objective of the MALIS project was to improve the rural livelihoods, food security and nutrition of smallholder farmers through agricultural production, marketing and small enterprise development, with a focus on child nutrition and complementary feeding. The project supported evidence-based policy and programme improvements with the General Directorate of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries¹ with funding from the European Union.

Target population and project area: The project beneficiaries were approximately 7 500 vulnerable rural households (over 37 500 persons) in the nine target districts of Oddar Meanchey (OMC) and Preah Vihear (PVR) Provinces. The population was approximately 50/50 male and female, although the project actively sought out families with female headed households, targeted females for enterprise development and provided nutrition education for mothers and caregivers of young children. The project worked through 49 community-based organizations of varying sizes to reach beneficiary families through farmer field schools (FFS), farmer business schools (FBS), nutrition education sessions, strengthening of farmer groups and disaster risk reduction activities.

Farmer Field Schools: Approximately 2 900 smallholder farmers (of whom 77 percent were female) were given training in farming, enterprise development and improved family feeding through 174 ‘Save and Grow’ FFS in cassava, chickens, rice and vegetables reaching about 3 700 households. Sessions also included disaster risk reduction, business, gender mainstreaming and nutrition education. The three nutrition modules integrated into FFS were: (1) importance of dietary diversification; (2) benefits of home gardens; and (3) selection of nutritious crops for home gardens. The FFS ensured diversity of production and increased availability of nutritious food sources from the farm and homestead garden to improve own consumption of locally available foods.

Farmer Business Schools: The 20 FBS provided training for the management of 20 agricultural cooperatives and farmer groups with a total of 320 participants and an outreach benefit for their membership of 2 500 households through the FBS activities. The FBS made a significant contribution to capacity building for smallholder farmers and farmer groups, improved market linkages for smallholders, and increased yields and profitability of farming enterprises. The FBS also organized cross-province study tours to observe new ideas in action and learn from their peers, meet machinery suppliers, seed producers, traders and processors, and expanded their supply chain networks. In addition, FBS groups negotiated discounted purchases of farm inputs for members using their own funds and through funds negotiated with credit providers.

¹ Government partners included the District Office of Agriculture, Provincial Department of Agriculture and Provincial Department of Women’s Affairs. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) partners were: Buddhism for Development, Community Integrated Development Organization, Khmer Buddhist Association and Rural Community Environment Development Organization for agricultural activities, and Farmer Livelihood Development and Malteser International for nutrition education activities.

Agricultural input fairs and farmer field days: Conducted in all nine target districts of OMC and PVR, nutrition education on improved complementary feeding practices was integrated into seven of the nine agricultural fairs and many farmer field days. The aim of the fairs was to provide a range of key quality inputs to smallholder farmers when most needed during the seasonal agricultural calendar, which could be purchased with vouchers and input credit. Farmers could apply for credit up to a set limit per household (generally US\$150), with 60 percent of the amount borrowed plus interest being repaid after the harvest. Participants issued with vouchers purchased goods from the range of more than 100 items on display. In total, about 3 800 smallholder households (over 7 200 visitors) participated and borrowed an average of US\$142 per household, with a total cash value of US\$543 000 traded during the nine fairs.



Diversified agriculture: Diversified agriculture production with sustainable farming techniques was supported by an emphasis on good practices for soil fertility management (including organic farming), improved crop varieties, promotion of livestock raising (chickens), farmed fish and diversified homestead vegetable production. Rice production increased on average by 26 percent and yields by 16 percent. Also, postharvest systems improved through the supply of agricultural machinery and equipment for harvest, threshing, drying, cleaning and storage of rice, soybeans and cassava.

Improving water access and use: About 250 rainwater collection and storage tanks were combined with small-scale drip irrigation systems in target districts to promote home gardening, extend the growing season and increase productivity of homestead gardens, provide an additional supply of water to combat short periods of drought, promote more efficient water use and ensure clean drinking water. The water tanks and drip-irrigation systems were specifically targeted at mothers and caregivers who had participated in nutrition training.

Supply of inputs: Project beneficiaries had access to over US\$1 million in inputs and equipment. Input credit was provided for approximately US\$700 000 of the total investment in inputs and equipment in three rounds of credit, and farmer groups recovered over US\$400 000 for re-investment in credit schemes after project closure.

Capacity building: The training of trainers served as an avenue for capacity building, including FFS and FBS. Also, networks were created for 49 farmer groups with a total membership of over 4 000 households and these links extended to traders, input suppliers, processors, NGOs and government agencies. In addition, the leadership of the 49 farmer groups was strengthened and over 7 500 members improved their access to markets for inputs or produce, including contracts for the sale of organic rice for export.

Diverse crop production



Dietary diversification



Animal source food production



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www.fao.org/nutrition/education/infant-and-young-child-feeding/en/

MALIS was implemented by FAO Cambodia in collaboration with the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) with funding from the European Union under Project.