

Fish on Farms Case Study: Gender and Nutrition



Empowering women through Fish on Farms project

The Fish on Farms project aims to empower women through extensive technical training and knowledge sharing. This is a crucial aspect of the project because greater women's autonomy has been linked to positive maternal and child health, nutrition, and food security outcomes. The project not only targets women farmers as the target population, but also incorporates intensive gender training sessions for all program participants.



Ms. Sophear with her husband and daughters

Ms. Sophear lives with her husband Mr. Khet Sokha, their two daughters, her mother, younger sister and nephew in Doun You Village, Chhea Clang Commune, Svay Antor District. They have been involved in the program since July 2012, and their fish pond was constructed in October 2012. When asked about the program in general, Ms. Sophear stated that they were very happy to be involved and that they are starting to get many benefits such as having increased income and that they now grow a larger variety of vegetables. When asked specifically about how the program has affected gender relations within the household she responded it was "very useful." According to Ms. **Sophear, her roles in the household mostly revolve around childcare—cooking, feeding the children, bathing the children, washing the children's clothes—while her husband's role is primarily outside of**

the house—harvesting rice, collecting water, feeding the livestock. While the two genders have quite distinct roles within the household, Mr. Sokha often helps with the children, especially if Ms. Sophear is busy. Ms. Sophear explained that the largest change in gender relations since starting the program is that her husband now does more work around the household than before. In the past Mr. Sokha had lots of free time, unlike his wife, but now he helps with more of the housework, the home garden and the fish pond. Although there remain distinct gender roles, the work is much more equitably divided now.

Ms. Sophear explained that the crucial thing that she took away from the gender training sessions is that it is important that she and her husband make decisions together as a team. Currently, when the couple has to make an important decision such as buying a mato or a buffalo, they discuss the options and try to reach a decision together. If they cannot come to an agreement, Mr. Sokha still has the final say, but Ms. Sophear said that this rarely happens. Since the gender trainings these discussions have become an even more important part of the family's decision-making process. Although she and her husband make big financial decisions together, Ms. Sophear has quite a lot of financial autonomy. She is responsible for purchasing the food, clothing, medicine and everyday items for the household, and she can make these purchasing decisions without input from her husband. These decisions have become even easier since the household joined the Fish on Farms project because they now generate more income and so Ms. Sophear can make these purchases more easily. It is clear that both Ms. Sophear and Mr. Sokha recognize the numerous ways that Fish on Farms have benefitted their family!



Ms. Sophear with her husband and daughter in their garden

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