

# Fish on Farms Case Study: the Village Model Farm



## Providing guidance and support to the community...



Ms. Sroeu and her husband in the VMF garden

The Village Model Farm (VMF) plays a vital role in the *Fish on Farms* project. The VMF not only serves as the site for aquaculture and horticulture demonstrations and training, but is also a resource for technical assistance and a source of agricultural and aquacultural inputs such as seedlings and saplings. The VMF owners like Ms. Sroeu provide program households with essential support and guidance, in addition to agriculture and aquaculture inputs.

Ms. Eng Sroeu is 58 years old and is the owner of one of the VMFs in Chhke Kound Village, Chea Klang Commune, Svay Antor District. She has four children—two are married, one is at university in Phnom Penh and one runs a local mobile phone repair shop. Ms. Sroeu has been a part of the *Fish on Farms* project since April 2013. In her role as the owner of the VMF she has many responsibilities: she grows fruits and vegetables, raises fish, produces seedlings and fruit tree saplings, holds training sessions and demonstrations for local households, and provides technical assistance as needed.

Before the project began Ms. Sroeu was growing eggplant very successfully for four months a year. Now, she grows a large variety of fruits and vegetables all year round, as well as producing both large and small species of fish. This increase in production has led to a dramatic increase in income. In September Ms. Sroeu made \$16USD selling her vegetables, and in more productive months such as November and December she expects to make substantially more. She uses this income to support her son's education, to buy additional food and clothing, and to attend traditional ceremonies. Ms. Sroeu uses a variety of methods to sell her fish and produce. Some villagers come to the VMF to buy directly from her. Ms. Sroeu also goes house-to-house taking orders for her fish and produce. She also sells her produce to local vendors or outside vendors who then sell her goods at the market. With this variety of methods, she is almost never left with surplus she cannot sell. *Fish on Farms* has also improved her family's consumption patterns. Now, they are able to eat a variety of vegetables year-round, and they eat fish every day. Ms. Sroeu states that the fish are "delicious, and taste much better than the wild fish." In addition she has witnessed how much the children enjoy eating the small fish.

Ms. Sroeu takes her role as owner of the VMF very seriously. She visits each of the ten households in her village two to three times a month to observe their gardens and give them specific advice. The households also come to the VMF to observe Ms. Sroeu's garden and pond, and the techniques that she uses. Ms. Sroeu used to hold training sessions regularly to educate the households about agricultural and aquacultural techniques, but now the trainings are less frequent as the households have a solid understanding of how to maintain their gardens and ponds. Now, Ms. Sroeu primarily provides technical assistance when the households face some sort of problem such as pests destroying their crops. She also occasionally visits the households to distribute the seedlings and saplings, although most households come to the VMF to collect these inputs. Ms. Sroeu is "very happy" being a VMF because she can help herself, her family and her community.



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