The project in short

In Cambodia, agriculture employs 50% of the working population and accounts for 21% of GDP. Yet, food and nutrition security in the country is far from being a reality: Cambodia depends largely on imported agricultural products, which create competition for local produce, and malnutrition is persisting. 32% of children under the age of 5 have stunted growth, 10% suffer from emaciation and 24% are underweight.

In Siem Reap, the country’s main tourism region, farmers are struggling to meet growing demand from consumers for safe, healthy products all year round. In this context, the Apici project focuses on three areas:

> training farmers in agroecology and encouraging dissemination of techniques via a farmers’ network;
> developing the quality of local products and increasing production in local value chains through agroecology;
> promoting and strengthening social and professional organisations in rural areas, in order to ensure long-term support services for farms.

Prospects

The project, conducted for the last 10 years by GRET and Cambodian NGO CIRD, with support from the Hauts-de-Seine Departmental Council in France, enabled structuring of a producers’ network and made it possible to implement a value chain for marketing of local quality products (see boxed text to the right).

The challenge now is to ensure that producers’ organisations can function autonomously, in particular their capacity to deliver training to farmers on agroecological techniques, thanks to a network of pilot farmers. An innovative method to promote agroecology was initiated: the production of video tutorials, made by farmers and posted on social media (some videos have totalled 1 million views).

As consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of safe, quality food, the project also aims to raise awareness among stakeholders in the value chain on food security and to link its agricultural activities with basic knowledge of nutrition.
Project actions

Developing agroecological techniques

> Strengthening of farmers’ agroecological capacities (rice growing, vegetable growing, livestock production, water resource management).
> Support for producers to invest in agricultural inputs and equipment.

Improving nutrition

> Raising farmers’ awareness on the basics of nutrition and food diversification.
> Organisation of awareness-raising days for consumers on healthy, diversified agroecological products.

Structuring a local quality produce value chain

> Strengthening the capacities of vegetable growers’ and livestock producers’ groups for marketing and promotion of products.
> Implementation of a participative guarantee system certifying the quality of agricultural products.
> Organisation of an annual agricultural trade show.
> Supporting investment for the Siem Reap producers’ market.
> Strengthening the capacities of management committees in savings groups and cooperatives, and support for their legalisation.
> Training and support for agricultural cooperatives.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Family farms develop a more sustainable, resilient and autonomous agricultural model via agroecology.
- Farmers share their know-how and experiences with peers through videos and social media.
- Producers and consumers are aware of health and nutrition issues and of food diversification.
- Consumers in Siem Reap have access to quality local produce marketed by producers’ groups and certified by a participative quality guarantee system.
- New agricultural cooperatives’ coordination, management and communication capacities are strengthened.
- Savings groups and cooperatives are legally recognised and autonomous.

THE PROJECT’S FINANCIAL PARTNER:

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