



SUCCESS STORY

Community Agriculture Development Project In Koh Kong



In Somann's words "*CADP has given me land and a home, helped to teach me how to do my work in the field and how to be happy*".



Mohammed and his family. After joining CADP he decided to stop cutting tree for his business.



Before CADP, Biets family and children had to walk 2 hours to the nearest village market and other facilities.

In 2004 WildAid, with funding from USAID, began the first phase of a Community Agriculture Development Project (CADP) as a component of the protection program for the *South West Elephant Corridor (SWEC)* implemented in the Southern Cardamoms since April 2002. The objective of CADP is to help slash and burn farmers and wildlife poachers develop alternative livelihoods so they no longer need to destroy the forests for survival.

The beneficiaries of CADP are the poorest farmers from Chi Phat commune that for the past 25 years have been conducting unsustainable agriculture causing the permanent destruction of tropical forest and are living below Cambodia's poverty line of 1USD/day. Following years of civil war these farmers have lost land and the means of cultivating rice paddies and are barely able to secure a basic food supply.

The CADP aims to give back what these farmers have lost; land, equipment, knowledge and security. To date approximately 200 families have joined the project and are learning to practice permanent agriculture, manage their money and have the opportunity to send their children to school, it is hoped to extend the project to 400 families.

Family experiences:

Somann

Somann is a 40 year old widower. He has no wife, children, land or home and was struggling to survive by living in the forest. He spent his time doing slash and burn (chamka) activities and cutting trees for timber for other people. When work was not available, Somann, as with many people in desperate situations, would spend his time drinking.

Now living in the CADP, Somann has stopped drinking, has a home and land, his neighbours help and support him and he's looking for a new wife.

Mohammed

Mohammed cut timber in the forest for rich businessmen that would come from the capital city of Phnom Penh once a month. Isolated for so long and without a home, Mohammed was separated from his wife and children who were living in Koh Kong so they could go to school.

The move to CADP reunited Mohammed with his family. Whilst building their home, Mohammed showed his expertise as a carpenter and he is now being hired by people who need his skills. Mohammed made the decision to stop cutting trees for the businessmen and taking part in illegal activity because "*if I keep cutting wood there will be no forest left for my children*".

Biets

Trying to survive by growing vegetables on chamka ground, the Biet family lived 2 hours walk from the nearest village market. Invited to join the CADP, the Biets found they had a home and their own land. Two months after joining the CADP, they found something even more important. 37 years after being separated by the Khmer Rouge, Biet found his sister also living in the CADP. Both families are now reunited and their youngest children started in the CADP school last October. For the Biets there is even more to celebrate as one of their elder sons is now engaged to a young lady from Pursat, who was hired to teach Kromah (Cambodian scarf) weaving in the CADP.

For many in the CADP, they say they are happy because they have their own land, the agriculture association helps to teach them agricultural techniques, sell their crops and helps stops people drinking, they are not doing illegal activity, they have access to a school and health centre, and people help each other and they are part of a community.