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CASE STORY OF MR. MORN SAMEAN

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MR. MORN SAMEAN PLAYS THE ROLE OF A MIDDLEMAN, CONNECTING VEGETABLE FARMERS TO LOCAL MARKETS.

Mr. Morn Samean, 36 years old, lives with his wife, Ms. Sin Sotheary, 34 years old, and their 3 children (2 boys and 1 girl) in A Buon Leu village, Abuon Commune, Koh Nhaek District, Mondulkiri province. He is an active and patient farmer who has gained significant encouragement and appreciation from relevant stakeholders. He plays multiple roles by implementing CamGAP practices, promoting sustainable production, and transforming the market.

Reflecting on his past, Mr. Samean recalls that he was a farmer struggling to generate a stable income to support his family. For over ten years, he worked as a collector of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), engaged in illegal logging, and participated in illegal forest-dependent activities, unsure of any alternative occupations.





A few years later, he became involved with WWF activities focused on enhancing livelihoods. This involvement led him to start farming vegetables for sale both at his farm and within his local community. In early 2023, the Sustainable Consumption and Production Project selected Koh Nhaek District in Mondulkiri province for project implementation. Mr. Samean was invited to participate and consulted about his situation as a local key farmer. The project team met with him and others several times to discuss market transformation for their vegetable products in the community.



The project team provided him with valuable concepts aimed at generating benefits from the market through local production and supply, particularly targeting Saen Monorom town in Mondulkiri province and Banlung town in Ratanakiri province, with Mr. Samean's location being ideally situated between both towns. Since then, he has embraced these project concepts and techniques, becoming an effective middleman without facing competition.

As a result, Mr. Samean has learned various techniques, including ecological agricultural innovations, plastic waste management on farms, farm waste management, safe chemical management, ecological domestic pig raising, composting, vegetable cultivation and business concepts. Most importantly, he has become an active and proactive middleman, collecting local products for market supply. He stated, "I am a farmer like everyone else, but I also serve as a middleman responsible for gathering local products from other farmers to deliver to the target market." He added, "I have been playing the role of a middleman for three years now."

Mr. Samean noted that he has participated in numerous capacity-building initiatives organized by the WWF Cambodia Team, particularly through the SCP Project, which has provided him with innovative ideas and concepts that strengthen his role as a middleman.

“ I have received many opportunities for training, workshops, and consultation meetings both at the local provincial level and in Phnom Penh, where I’ve interacted with various stakeholders. I find it exciting to take on the role of a middleman. ”



Mr. Samean is a committed vegetable middleman who has been active in this role since early 2023. In this three-years period, he has established a unique position for himself in the vibrant fresh vegetable market, generating net profits between 37.50 USD and 75 USD (150,000 to 300,000 Riel) per transaction (8 transactions a month) or approximately 350 USD a month, while actively building connections with vegetable farmers, retailers, and wholesalers.

With ambitions to expand his operations, Mr. Samean aims to purchase between 600 to 1,000 kg of vegetables every day from his network of eight existing members and to add more members in the future. To ensure he can meet demand, he plans to invest in a small truck if his tuk-tuk (tricycle) is unable to handle the delivery needs.

Transporting fresh vegetables to the market is a significant challenge for Mr. Samean. He collects vegetables from his eight members twice weekly, accumulating roughly 600 to 700 kg of mixed fresh vegetables with each collection.



Communication is key in his operations; Mr. Samean uses a group on the Telegram social mobile application to communicate, share information (pictures), and direct phone calls to coordinate with his eight members, who deliver fresh vegetables directly to his house and then he transports the fresh vegetables to market by his own Tuk Tuk early in the morning. However, like any business, he faces challenges regarding the remaining fresh vegetables, which forces him to offer a 50% discount on them to sellers. Often, leftover vegetables are given to the domestic pigs he is raising at home.

Despite these challenges, Mr. Samean remains focused on his customers, which include 30 to 50 vegetable stalls in Koh Nheak, Puchrey, and Busra, as well as 2 wholesalers in Ratanakiri province and one in Mondulkiri province. His hard work and determination make him a vital link in the supply chain of fresh vegetables in his community.

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