



W+ Verification Report

CAPFISH/FOSTER PROGRAMME OF SMP CAMBODIA

Women's livelihoods and adaptability to climate change.



VERIFICATION REPORT

CAPFISH/FOSTER PROGRAMME OF SMP CAMBODIA

Women's livelihoods and adaptability to climate change.

Document prepared by Marie Banu Rodriguez - Social Audit Network

Project Title	SMP CapFish/Foster programme on women's livelihoods and adaptability to climate change.
Project Start Date	March 2022
Project End Date	December 2024
Verification Report number	Report 1.0
Project ID	12-2022
Project Developer	Sansom Mlup Prey Organization (SMP) Cambodia

Report Title	SMP CapFish/Foster programme on women's livelihoods and adaptability to climate change. W+ Verification Report
Client	Oxfam Cambodia
Units Generated	1400
Pages	29
Date of Issue	July 2024
Prepared By	Marie Banu Rodriguez - Social Audit Network
Contact	Social Audit Network 54 St James Street, Liverpool, UK. L1 0AB info@socialauditnetwork.org.uk
Approved By	Liz Allen – Social Audit Network
Work Carried Out By	Marie Banu Rodriguez, Social Audit Network
Verifier Accreditation Status	Confirmed June 2024



Table of Contents

1. Introduction..... 7

1.1 Objective7

1.2 Scope and Criteria7

1.3 Level of Assurance8

1.4 Project Monitoring & Evaluation Report Summary8

2 Verification Process.....9

2.1 Method and Criteria9

2.2 Document Review9

2.3 Interviews & Consultation.....10

2.4 Site Inspections.....11

2.5 Resolution of Findings.....11

2.6 Forward Action Requests11

3 Validation Findings.....12

3.1 Project Description Deviations12

3.2 Project eligibility of any new activities initiated during monitoring period.12

3.3 Method Deviations12

4 Verification Findings13

4.1 Project Implementation Status.....13

4.2 Accuracy of Calculations of Women’s Empowerment Benefits13

4.3 Quality of Evidence to Determine Women’s Empowerment Benefits14

5 W+ Results15

5.1 W+ Domains15

5.2 Direct Payment Mechanism17

6 Analysis of W+ Results18

6.1 Current Performance18

6.2 Non-Permanence Risk Analysis18

7 Verification (Audit) Conclusion.....19

W+ Verification – Statement of Assurance.....20

Appendix A: Consultation Schedule21

Appendix B: Summary of Stakeholder feedback.....22

Summary

WOCAN was commissioned by OXFAM Cambodia to apply the W+ Standard to measure the impacts of the SMP CapFish/Foster programme on women's livelihoods and adaptability to climate change in the Tonle Sap Biosphere, Cambodia.

The SMP CapFish/Foster programme is an initiative designed to empower women within agricultural communities in Cambodia by enhancing their agricultural skills, financial literacy, and overall socio-economic status. The CapFish project spans two years and targets various aspects of rural life, focusing particularly on rice cultivation, livestock management, and the establishment of group savings. By providing both training and resources, the project aims to create a lasting impact on the lives of 219 farmers in the area, of which 200 are women.

The verification activities informing this report took place in July 2024. Two site visits to conduct focus group discussion with participants was undertaken by Marie Banu Rodriguez who met with the project lead, and with 45 women participating in SMP CapFish/Foster programme in Cambodia.

The purpose of the verification activity was to establish if the CapFish project has led to an improvement in the position and condition of women in the community as measured against the W+ Standard **Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets**.

The verification also sought to validate the W+ units created by this activity. A combination of methods was adopted in undertaking verification activities including:

- Face to face focus group discussions with groups of women participants
- Interviews and discussions with Project Coordinator and Operations Manager

In addition, the verification team reviewed the following supporting documents:

- a) W+ Project Idea Note (PIN)
- b) W+ Project Design Document (PDD)
- c) W+ Monitoring Report, 28th May 2023 including evidence and appendices.

Focus group discussion was conducted by Marie Banu Rodriguez from the W+ verification team with participant groups:

- Sangkae commune with 26 women on 24th of July and
- Dan Run commune with 19 women on 25th of July 2024

Individual interviews took place with:

- d) Mr. Theng Thara Project Coordinator-Kampong Thom
- e) Dr. Chan Sambath, Operations Manager and Women's Economic Empowerment Specialist

Participants attended different trainings including:

1. Methods to eliminate insects that damage crops.
2. Techniques for the proper use of fertilizers.
3. Use of repellents to protect crops.
4. Techniques for levelling land to improve cultivation efficiency.
5. Training on growing vegetables.
6. Training on managing dairy, piggery and poultry farm
7. Introduction to new farming methods and practices.

From the information and evidence presented, the verifier is confident that 200 women have benefitted from the CapFish project during the verification period and felt that significant improvements had been made in the lives of the women participants in terms of Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets.

All participants consulted, reported improvements across a range of indicators including increased knowledge and skills on agricultural methods, improved income potential, community cooperation, economic empowerment, and sustainable practices and livelihood development. Their testimony (Appendix B) evidences positive change from the way the women were living previously and as such the verifier certifies these activities as having made meaningful change to the position and condition of women in these communities, with a reasonable level of assurance and recommend their continuation.

A total of 1400 W+ units have been generated by the project:

Domain	Number of Units Generated
Education & Knowledge	260
Income & Assets	1140

1. Introduction

1.1 Objective

The intention of the audit process was to verify the outcomes derived from the implementation of the W+ Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets methods through CapFish project delivered by SMP CapFish/Foster programme in Cambodia from March 2022 to December 2024. The verification consultation activity included in this report took place over two days in July 2024.

1.2 Scope and Criteria

The scope of the audit included the W+ Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets and considered the following indicators as evidence of successful implementation:

- Training in Climate-Smart Agriculture
- Access to Resources and Services
- Application of Skills and Knowledge
- Increase in Household Income
- Alternative livelihood activities established
- Ability to negotiate and decision making
- Influencing decisions at household level
- Formation and Participation of farmer groups
- Increase in Household Assets
- Change in Income from Vegetable Production and alternative livelihoods
- Number of women mobilized (immediate)
- Overall Satisfaction with the CapFish Project

Additionally, Do No Harm indicators were sought to evidence that:

- Participation in the CapFish project had not led to any physical or emotional abuse, social sanctions, violence, or marital problems for the women farmers.

1.3 Level of Assurance

The stakeholder engagement and verification consultation process evidenced the descriptors outlined below:

W+ Domain	Desired Outcome
<i>Education & Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge gain • Skill application • Community training and participation • Knowledge sharing activities • Women empowerment
<i>Income & Assets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased income • Conversion of income into assets • Right to own land • Access to resources and control of earned assets by women in project communities.

This is coupled with statistical analysis of numeric data gathered from surveys undertaken by the CapFish project monitoring team that also evidence increases across the domain.

The level of assurance gained considers the project duration to date, access to knowledge leading to improved productivity, improvement from the baseline level of income and demonstrable progression in confidence and leadership abilities.

These improvements justify a reasonable level.

1.4 Project Monitoring & Evaluation Report Summary

Two domains of the W+ Standard: Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets were employed to measure impacts from the CapFish project’s investments that yield benefits to women and their communities through increased incomes and improved agricultural skills.

The following summarizes the impacts in the Education & Knowledge domain and the Income & Asset domain, and the number of W+ credits generated.

Education & Knowledge Domain

The Education and Knowledge W+ Domain was applied to measure the ability of women beneficiaries to recall and apply knowledge/skills. The following is a summary of findings in the Education and Knowledge domain.

- The total change in Education and Knowledge for CapFish project's beneficiaries from baseline conditions is 13%
- The total number of women beneficiaries is 200
- The total number of W+ Education/Knowledge credits is 260

Income and Assets Domain

The Income and Assets Domain was applied to measure the increase in income and assets because of the CapFish project's intervention. The following is a summary of the findings in the Income and Assets domain:

- The total change in Income and Assets for project's beneficiaries from baseline conditions is 57%
- The total number of women beneficiaries is 200
- The total number of W+ Income and Asset credits is 1140

2 Verification Process

2.1 Method and Criteria

This verification report has considered two W+ domains: Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets. Monitoring data has been gathered from field research and this data has been verified using these approaches.

- Examination of the data gathered and presented in the Monitoring Report and consideration of its accuracy and consideration of the domain methods.
- Face to face interviews and group discussions to:
 - Verify the presence of the CapFish project and their activities.
 - Gain an understanding of the level and nature of the impact on women who have participated in the CapFish project.
 - Appreciate the Project Developer's view of the purpose and processes of implementing the activities.

2.2 Document Review

The following method documents were reviewed to complete the verification of Education & Knowledge domain results:

- W+ Project Idea Note (PIN)
- W+ Project Design Document (PDD)
- Monitoring Report, 28th May 2023, including:

- Formula calculation for the statistical analysis of surveys undertaken.
- Detailed findings

Each document was crosschecked against the others and with the findings from the interviews and stakeholder consultation to ensure consistency and accuracy. The review of documentation adequately reinforced the findings presented.

2.3 Interviews & Consultation

The focus group discussions were facilitated by Marie Banu Rodriguez, an experienced community facilitator and W+ Verifier, with interpretation support from a translator and the Project Coordinator. The discussions were structured around a series of questions devised by the verification team to elicit responses that could prove/disprove the details of the Monitoring Report. The questions listed below were arranged as higher level and supplementary questions and acted as a guide rather than being prescriptive, to ensure flexibility and for the verifier to gain insights into the reported experiences of the women.

Higher Level Questions

- **Skills and Knowledge Application:** Reflect on the skills and knowledge you gained from the CapFish project. How have these new skills changed your approach to agriculture, or other areas relevant to your work? In what ways have you applied the knowledge acquired from the training sessions in your daily life or business practices? How confident do you feel in teaching others in your community the skills and knowledge you have acquired?
- **Knowledge-Sharing and Community Evolution:** How has the knowledge-sharing network within your community evolved as a result of the CapFish project? What role do you see yourself and other women playing in this network moving forward?
- **Economic Impact:** How has the training influenced your economic activities and income generation? Have you noticed any measurable impacts on your household income or business growth? What new business opportunities or ventures have you pursued as a result of enhanced knowledge and skills? How successful have these ventures been?

Supplementary Questions

- **Personal and Societal Transformation:** Reflecting on your personal journey, how has your participation in the CapFish project changed your outlook on education and skill development? How do you think the increased knowledge and skills among women in your community will influence future generations?
- **Community Economic Change:** How has the overall economic situation in your community changed since the introduction of the CapFish project? What role do you think your

increased knowledge and skills, along with those of other women, have played in this change?

- **Long-Term Community Impact:** How do you envision the long-term impact of the CapFish project on your community's development and sustainability? What key factors do you think will contribute to this long-term impact?

2.4 Site Inspections

To ensure transparency and to mitigate any opportunities for any undue influence of the women and their responses, a site visit was undertaken on the 24th and 25th of July 2024 by Marie Banu Rodriguez, an experienced community facilitator who facilitated a focus group session with a group of 45 women participants.

This focus group addressed each of the indicators identified as evidence of change, and the summary responses are attached in Appendix B.

From this discussion it was clear that each indicator of change had been achieved, successfully supporting the delivery of the project outcomes.

2.5 Resolution of Findings

There were no corrective actions or significant clarifications required during the verification process.

2.6 Forward Action Requests

Ongoing delivery of the programme will enable more women to improve their condition and position in terms of Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets.

However, it is requested that future reporting ensures the recommendations contained in the Monitoring Report are implemented and that:

- The 'do no harm' questions are reviewed to ensure they adequately enable women participants to report any harm without fear. Any 'do no harm' question must be sufficiently curious to ensure women have a freedom to speak up about their experiences.
- The Women's Empowerment Plan and Statement of intent is reviewed and updated over time.

3 Validation Findings

3.1 Project Description Deviations

There are no deviations from the CapFish project description.

3.2 Project eligibility of any new activities initiated during monitoring period.

The CapFish project meets the eligibility criteria for consideration under the W+ Standard. The verification team has explored the methods (Education & Knowledge and Income & Assets) and after checking the method documents to this data and wider consultation, can confidently state that the activities and methods implemented meet the stated purpose of the project described, and that they have been effectively applied and verified.

3.3 Method Deviations

There have been no method deviations applied to this programme.

4 Verification Findings

4.1 Project Implementation Status

The CapFish project has been implemented in line with the project description. The project has been monitored effectively using appropriate sampling techniques, group and individual interviews. There are no material discrepancies between the actual monitoring system and the monitoring plan set out in the project description and the applied W+ methods. The verification team can confidently confirm that the CapFish project has been implemented as described in the project description.

4.2 Accuracy of Calculations of Women's Empowerment Benefits

Process for calculating the number of W+ units:

1) Measurement of results: The formula of each domain is applied two times: at the time of the baseline survey, and again at the time of the monitoring survey (determined by the schedule established in the CapFish Project Design Document (PDD)). The difference between the two numbers is the quantified result that is used to determine the number of W+ units generated.

2) Calculation of the percentage of change = $\frac{\text{Result} - \text{Baseline}}{\text{Baseline}} \times 100$

3) Calculation of the number of W+ units

1 unit = 10 % improvement in one woman's life, in relation to one domain over the monitoring period.

Total number of units = percentage of change x number of woman beneficiaries

As described in the Monitoring Report, 28th May 2023, data has been checked, no manual transposition errors have been identified and all calculations are good.

The calculation of the units has been completed using the original arithmetic methods identifying change from the baseline and the percentage change of the participant group against a control group.

The values applied are real values taken from the survey data and the verification team is confident that the women's empowerment benefits have been quantified correctly in accordance with the CapFish project description and applied W+ methods.

W+ Units Generated:

A total number of 1400 W+ units were generated by the programme of activity.

Domain	Number of Units generated
Education and Knowledge	260
Income & Assets	1140
Total	1400

4.3 Quality of Evidence to Determine Women’s Empowerment Benefits

The evidence used to determine the women’s empowerment benefits are:

- The Monitoring Report, 28th May 2023, including the explanation of data flows from data generation to data aggregation and unit calculation.
- Interviews and discussions with women participating in CapFish Programme.
- Interviews with the Project Developer.
- The information deduced from the raw data sets is comprehensive and reliable.
- The information gathered from the discussions and interviews is excellent in its reliability and rigour as it is source data from the women beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Conversations were facilitated by experts with considerable experience in ethnographic research techniques.

Overall, the quality and quantity of evidence is appropriate and comprehensive, ensuring the voice of the person served is heard and that the data set gained during monitoring activity reflects the findings from stakeholders.

5 W+ Results

5.1 W+ Domains

Method (W+ Domain)	<i>Education & Knowledge</i>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge gain • Skill application • Community training participation • Knowledge sharing activities • Women empowerment
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants demonstrating understanding of new agricultural and financial management techniques during practical applications. • Percentage of participants implementing modern farming techniques and practices on their land. • Frequency of correct responses in knowledge checks and quizzes during training sessions. • Number of participants maintaining accurate financial records and applying financial management skills as taught in training. • Feedback from participants on the relevance and quality of training sessions, collected through surveys or interviews. • Number of women participating in community decision-making bodies or leadership roles. • Self-reported increases in confidence and leadership skills among women participants, collected through surveys or interviews. • Changes in household dynamics with men contributing more to household chores, as reported by participants. • Number of women initiating or leading community projects or activities.
Situation	<p>A significant increase in income and assets has been observed among women participating in the programme activities. Women are effectively applying their newly acquired skills in their households, demonstrating improved cultivation techniques, enhanced land and crop management, and a better understanding of bio-fertilizers and pesticides. This knowledge has led to increased crop productivity and reduced utilisation of chemical fertilizers. The boost in productivity has subsequently increased household income and opened opportunities for creating new enterprises. As a result, the circumstances of the women have greatly improved.</p>

<p>Justification</p>	<p>The significant increase in income and assets among women reflects the successful application of their knowledge and skills. Improved cultivation techniques and better land and crop management have directly contributed to enhanced productivity and income. Knowledge-sharing activities and community training participation have created a supportive environment for continuous learning and collective growth. Emphasizing women's empowerment is essential for fostering confidence, independent decision-making, and economic autonomy. These outcomes indicate that the programme has substantially bettered the participants' circumstances, meriting a high positive score.</p>
<p>Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring report • Interviews and discussions with participants from across the CapFish project delivery locations • Interviews and discussions with Project Developer team

<p>Method (W+ Domain)</p>	<p><i>Income & Assets</i></p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased income • Conversion of income into assets • Right to own land • Access to resources and control of earned assets by women in CapFish project communities.
<p>Indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage increase in average monthly income of women over the programme period. Number of women reporting an increase in earnings from agricultural activities and other enterprises. • Number of women who have invested in productive assets such as livestock, agricultural equipment, or other business-related tools. • Percentage of participants who report savings or have invested in new business ventures. • Increase in the value of household assets, including home improvements and purchases of durable goods among participants. • Number of women who have obtained legal ownership or joint ownership of land due to the programme. Percentage of women who have secured formal land titles or certificates. • Number of women who have gained access to financial services such as loans, savings accounts, or insurance through the programme. • Percentage of women who report having control over their earnings and the ability to make independent financial decisions.

<p>Situation</p>	<p>There has been a significant increase in income and assets for women participating in the programme activities. Women are applying their skills within their households through improved cultivation techniques, land and crop management, and a better understanding of bio-fertilizers and pesticides. This has led to increased crop productivity and reduced damage from chemical alternatives. Consequently, increased productivity has resulted in higher household incomes and opportunities to establish new enterprises.</p>
<p>Justification</p>	<p>The programme's outcomes are evidenced by the significant improvements in the economic status of women participants. The application of improved agricultural skills has directly contributed to increased incomes and asset conversion, enhancing overall household well-being. Legal land ownership and access to resources have empowered women, giving them greater control over their assets and financial decisions. The programme's emphasis on financial services and resource management has further solidified women's economic empowerment and participation in community development.</p>
<p>Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring report • Interviews and discussions with participants from across the CapFish project delivery locations • Interviews and discussions with Project Developer team

5.2 Direct Payment Mechanism

There are savings groups in each village that are accessible to all of the participants of the Capfish programme and 85% of the membership of these group are women. Given that these groups are led and managed by elected individuals from each community, these groups could act as the recipient of direct payments and each local membership groups can then decide how to distribute the funds in each locality, either as direct payments to participants or by adding to the value of the savings fund available for future loans.

6 Analysis of W+ Results

6.1 Current Performance

This verification focused upon the Income & Assets and Leadership domains.

Overall project score: +3

The score reflects consideration of all the evidence provided to the verification team coupled with findings from the interviews and feedback. The CapFish project is performing well, with clear evidence supporting the achievement of immediate, intermediate and end outcomes (+3).

W+ Domain	Desired Outcome	Very Much Worse (-3)	Much Worse (-2)	Some-what Worse (-1)	No Change (0)	Somewhat Better (+1)	Much Better (+2)	Very Much Better (+3)
Education and Knowledge	Knowledge gain						x	
	Skill application							x
	Community training participation							x
	Knowledge sharing activities						x	
	Women empowerment						x	
Income & Assets	Increased income							x
	Conversion of income into assets						x	
	Access to resources and control of earned assets by women in CapFish project communities.							x

6.2 Non-Permanence Risk Analysis

The verification team do not see any non-continuity risks currently. The range of courses offered by the programme are meeting the needs of the women participating in the activity and benefitting the wider community. It is the view of the verification team that continuation and development of this activity can only be positive for the women and their communities, and we note that the expected end date of the CapFish project activities extends to December 2024.

7 Verification (Audit) Conclusion

The CapFish project complies with the verification criteria for projects and their women’s empowerment benefits as set out in W+ Standard and Programme Guide. The verification team can confirm that the project has been implemented in accordance with the project description.

The total number of W+ units achieved by the CapFish project during the verification period is ...

Net women’s empowerment benefits	W+ Units generated Verification Period 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved agricultural and business knowledge among women. • Enhanced practical application of skills, including better crop management and use of bio fertilizers and pesticides. • High participation in community training sessions, fostering skill dissemination. • Increased peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. • Many women conducting training sessions and sharing knowledge with community members. • Enhanced decision-making capacity, leadership skills, confidence, and problem-solving abilities. 	<p>Education and Knowledge 260</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher earnings from agricultural activities and diversified income sources. • Notable percentage increase in average monthly income. • Increase in the number of women reporting higher earnings. • Effective conversion of income into productive assets, such as livestock and agricultural equipment. • Investments in new business ventures. • Strengthened women's rights to land ownership, with legal or joint ownership and formal land titles secured. • Improved access to financial services, including loans, savings accounts, and insurance. • Demonstrated control over earnings and participation in resource management groups. 	<p>Income and Assets 1140</p>

Total	1400
-------	------

W+ Verification – Statement of Assurance

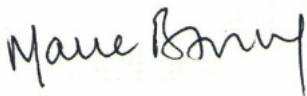
When undertaking a verification of a W+ project our verification team have sought evidence of material change in the position and condition of the women participating in the project.

The change that the CapFish project is seeking to make in the lives of the women participants was explicit in the project documentation and referenced in the Monitoring Document – these stated changes were then the focus of the verification activity.

Specifically, the team looked for positive and negative change in:

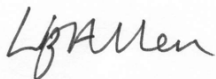
- Skills and knowledge
- Economic activities and income generation
- Confidence and empowerment
- Knowledge-sharing and community support

The extent of the change identified, and its likely permanence has determined the assurance level given. The SMP CapFish/Foster programme on women’s livelihoods and adaptability to climate change is given reasonable assurance.



Signed, 28th July 2024

Marie Banu Rodriguez, SAN



Reviewed, 4th August 2024

Liz Allen, SAN

Appendix A: Consultation Schedule

Date	Subgroups	Proposed consultation activity	Virtual / In person
24 th July 2024	Sangkae commune	In-person group interview with 26 women	In-person
25 th July 2024	Dan Run commune	In-person group interview with 19 women	In-person
		Total: 45 individuals consulted	

Appendix B: Summary of Stakeholder feedback

Reflection on Skills and Knowledge Gained: Through the CapFish project, participants have gained valuable skills in modern agricultural techniques, including advanced crop management, soil health improvement, and efficient water usage. These skills have transformed their approach to agriculture, moving from traditional methods to more data-driven practices that enhance productivity and sustainability.

Application in Daily Life and Business Practices: In their daily life, participants apply these techniques to optimize farm output. They use precise irrigation methods and improved pest management strategies learned from the training, resulting in healthier crops and increased yields. In their business practices, the adoption of better financial planning and management techniques, informed by the CapFish project's training, has improved operational efficiency and profitability.

Confidence in Teaching Others: Participants feel confident in teaching others in their community the skills and knowledge they have acquired. The comprehensive training provided by the CapFish project has prepared them well. They have already begun sharing insights with fellow farmers through informal groups, and the positive feedback has reinforced their confidence in effectively passing on these skills and fostering community-wide improvement.

Evolution of the Knowledge-Sharing Network: Since the CapFish project, the knowledge-sharing network within the community has evolved significantly. Farmers actively use digital platforms like Telegram to share best practices and market information. This has created a more connected community where knowledge and resources are exchanged freely, leading to better-informed agricultural decisions and market strategies.

Role of Women and Community Moving Forward: Women have played a crucial role in this network. They have been instrumental in knowledge dissemination and community support. Moving forward, women are expected to continue leading training sessions, mentoring newcomers, and advocating for more comprehensive agricultural education. Their involvement is essential for sustaining and expanding the benefits of this knowledge-sharing network.

Influence on Economic Activities and Income Generation: The training has had a profound impact on their economic activities. By adopting improved agricultural practices and financial management techniques, they have seen a noticeable increase in household income. Enhanced crop yields and reduced costs have contributed to better profitability and business growth.

New Ventures and Success: The knowledge gained from the CapFish project has opened new business opportunities, such as vegetable farming, dairy, piggery, and poultry. These ventures have been successful, with one example being a small-scale organic vegetable business that has

built a steady customer base. The success of these ventures highlights the effectiveness of the skills and knowledge acquired through the project.

Integration of Technology: Participants have embraced technology by using smartphones and social media platforms for market information sharing. Participation in Telegram groups has become an integral part of their market strategies, improving access to and sharing of vital information.

Access to Credit and Financial Management: The CapFish project has highlighted the challenges they face in accessing loans, particularly the high interest rates from traditional banks. Community-based lending groups have provided more accessible credit options with lower interest rates and flexible terms. These groups have helped them manage financial challenges and support their agricultural needs more effectively.

Aspirations Beyond Agriculture: While agriculture remains central to their lives, they have expressed a desire for their children to pursue higher education, including studies in agriculture. This aspiration reflects a broader vision of diversifying opportunities and enhancing their family's future prospects beyond traditional farming roles.

Addressing Challenges: Farmers have demonstrated resilience in overcoming challenges such as fluctuating market prices and climate variability. By collaborating with their community and applying new knowledge and technology, they have effectively navigated these obstacles. Continued support and innovation are essential for addressing future challenges and sustaining agricultural success.

Sustainability and Continued Practices: The CapFish project has positively impacted their farming practices by improving techniques and facilitating knowledge sharing. They, along with other farmers, are committed to continuing these practices independently and passing on the skills to future generations. This focus on sustainability ensures that the benefits of the project will have a lasting impact.

Long-Term Impact and Future Needs: Farmers envision a promising long-term impact of the CapFish project on their community's development and sustainability. The project has fostered a culture of continuous learning and collaboration, which will be crucial for future growth. Key factors contributing to this impact include ongoing training and support, effective knowledge-sharing networks, and access to resources and technology. A strong sense of community and collective action will help navigate future challenges and leverage opportunities for development.

Personal and Societal Transformation: Participation in the CapFish project has profoundly changed participants' outlook on education and skill development. They have come to value continuous learning and the importance of acquiring new skills to adapt to changing circumstances. The project has empowered them, giving them the confidence to take on

leadership roles and drive positive change. The increased knowledge and skills among women will have a lasting impact on future generations, providing improved educational opportunities and a more stable economic environment. Participants foresee a more resilient and self-sufficient community, with enhanced agricultural practices, better financial management, and a strong support network ensuring long-term prosperity.

The CapFish project has significantly impacted participants by providing valuable skills and knowledge, fostering a robust knowledge-sharing network, improving economic activities, and promoting long-term community development and sustainability. Continued support and training are essential to build on these gains and ensure lasting positive outcomes for the community.

FGD at Sangkae commune with 26 women on 24th of July 2024

The women are part of a saving group, with many invested in small business activities and committed to savings. It's One participant confirmed being part of the CapFish project for the last two years. The feedback from participants were overall positive, with many feeling happy and more knowledgeable, especially about savings and modern farming techniques.

The discussion highlighted various livelihood activities. While all the women participants focused on agriculture, few stated that their spouse were involved in fishing. It was noted that seasonal changes impact fishing activities, and some men seek alternative jobs during off-seasons. Women's involvement in agriculture was predominant, with some owning more than one hectare of land. Few women were engaged in vegetable cultivation, and some were raising chickens, pigs, and cows.

The CapFish training has led to significant knowledge gains, particularly in modern farming techniques. Participants reported saving seeds and increasing yields due to the use of machinery. There were concerns about whether the introduction of machines affected labour income, but it was clarified that the machines allowed for faster cultivation and higher yields without negatively impacting labour opportunities. Additionally, the project partner had organised field visits to demonstrate new farming techniques, involving both men and women.

The CapFish project's focus on economic empowerment was evident, with training provided on managing produce sales and negotiating with middlemen. This training has enabled participants to sell their rice at better prices, and some have even started cultivating seed rice, which fetches a higher price than regular rice. The cooperative structure under which they operate helps in price fixation and distribution, contributing to their economic stability.

Significant social changes were noted as a result of the project. Women reported increased decision-making power and problem-solving skills. The training has also influenced household dynamics, with men contributing more to household chores, a notable shift from traditional

roles. Participants expressed satisfaction with these changes, highlighting improvements in personal and family leadership.

While the CapFish project primarily focused on agriculture, it also included elements of climate-smart practices. Although other areas like water sanitation and solar energy were not part of this specific project, the agricultural focus has brought substantial benefits. The participants have seen improvements in income, agricultural productivity, and overall quality of life, reflecting the project's positive impact on the community.

FGD at Dan Run commune with 19 women on 25th of July 2024

Despite the rain reducing attendance to 19 participants, the session continued with the moderator confirming all present were farmers.

The CapFish project underscores the importance of record-keeping for sustainable farming practices, offering training on documenting details related to rice production, including land parcel information, crop varieties, and work plans. Techniques like seed broadcasting and tiller usage are also covered, with meticulous documentation required. One participant admitted she had never recorded her income before joining, as she did not keep records. The program has trained farmers in record-keeping, helping them calculate total inputs, expenditures, and profit. All participants now possess a record-keeping book and have been trained in its use.

Farmers are also trained to manage their equipment and materials, tracking all inputs. This is divided into two parts: for those using their own resources and for those renting equipment. Farmers have observed a rise in net profits, partly due to higher market prices despite a global price surge caused by export restrictions. The program educates them on pricing strategies and exporting possibilities, preparing them to meet international standards.

Regarding loans, some farmers have taken out loans with varying interest rates. While some have successfully repaid their loans, others are still in the process. Interest rates on these loans remain a concern for some. The farmers also reported improvements in soil quality and water management. They feel more equipped to apply the techniques learned, though they noted the training period was too short for comprehensive learning. They have expressed a desire for longer training periods, feeling two years is insufficient.

Training includes practical aspects such as pest management, water management, and soil quality. Techniques for managing water resources, like constructing channels and dams, are taught to handle excessive rainfall. While the training was deemed effective, some farmers felt it was too brief and expressed a need for continued support to further their knowledge and skills. Despite these challenges, they are now more confident and knowledgeable about farming practices.



Looking ahead, all farmers expressed aspirations to continue in agriculture, with some aiming to become commercial or demonstration farmers. They highlighted the importance of ongoing training and support to sustain and expand their farming operations. Before the program, many farmers had limited experience with record-keeping and financial management, reporting an average annual income of 200,000 riels. The training provided has been instrumental in teaching them the importance of meticulous record-keeping and effective resource management. Each participant now keeps detailed records of their agricultural activities, enhancing operational efficiency and leading to a notable increase in net profits.

The program introduced farmers to advanced techniques such as seed broadcasting, tiller usage, and pest management. Practical training on water management, including constructing channels and dams, empowered them to handle excessive rainfall more effectively. As a result, farmers have seen improvements in soil quality and resource management. Feedback from participants indicates strong appreciation for the program, though many have expressed a desire for more extended training periods. They believe additional time would further enhance their understanding and application of the techniques learned.

Overall, the program has significantly increased the farmers' confidence and knowledge. They now feel better equipped to pursue their agricultural goals, with some aspiring to become commercial or demonstration farmers. The support and training received have been crucial in their journey toward achieving sustainable and profitable farming practices.

Interview with Mr. Theng Thara, Project Coordinator

As a project coordinator with seven years of experience at SMP, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of our community's women farmers.

Initially focused on agricultural support for rice production, I quickly saw the significance of empowering women in farming. Historically overlooked, many women lacked knowledge, resources, and confidence to take on decision-making roles. Before our programme, women farmers struggled with limited access to information and hesitated to assert themselves, hindering their potential.

We provided essential training and resources, enabling women to engage more actively in their work. They learned new agricultural techniques and financial literacy, which boosted their confidence. The programme encouraged them to voice their opinions and share ideas, shifting household dynamics and enhancing their roles in family decisions.

A standout example is a group of women who attended a training session on seed production and sustainable farming practices. Initially reserved, they gradually began sharing ideas and advocating for themselves within their families and communities. Their newfound confidence and knowledge led to better negotiations and improved family dynamics, with husbands acknowledging the value of their wives' insights.

These empowered women became role models, implementing their learnings and benefiting the entire community. They negotiated better prices for their produce and collaborated effectively, showcasing the programme's broader impact.

The programme also fostered collaboration between men and women by involving both genders in training sessions. This inclusive approach broke down traditional barriers, creating a respectful and cooperative environment that benefits the community's agricultural efforts.

Reflecting on my work, I am proud of the lasting changes the programme has brought. Education and a supportive network have empowered women, creating a ripple effect that positively impacts the entire community. The programme has been a catalyst for change, paving the way for a more balanced and prosperous future. Witnessing this transformation has been incredibly fulfilling, and I am hopeful as more women continue to step into their power and contribute to our agricultural landscape.

**Interview with Dr. Chan Sambath, operations manager and Women's Economic Empowerment Specialist**

I have been with the SMP for five years and involved in this project for two years. Additionally, I teach Women's Economic Empowerment at the University of Wisconsin, bringing my passion for gender equality to both Cambodia and the US. I believe in transcending gender, location, and age, focusing on our shared humanity to lift up our community.

Before the WEE Program was introduced, our community faced significant challenges. Men and women were always separated, rarely coming together to learn. Engaging both genders in shared activities was nearly impossible. This isolation made it hard for us to develop a cohesive approach to our problems, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022.

However, the WEE Program, introduced by Oxfam, brought a revolutionary change. With a strong focus on conservation, the program encouraged villagers to protect natural resources, which are vital to our community. Alongside this, the Sustainable Rice Platform and Women Empowerment Economics (WEE) were integrated into the program to build capacity and influence within families, particularly among women.

As a trainer, I have witnessed incredible transformations. Before the training, women were often undervalued and their roles confined to traditional tasks. Now, they are empowered with the knowledge and skills to influence their families and communities. They have learned to share household responsibilities equally with men, respect each other's contributions, and work together towards common goals.

In agriculture, women and men are now trained together, emphasizing the importance of economic empowerment and smart agricultural practices. This has not only increased our household incomes but also eliminated domestic violence. By focusing on economic empowerment and equitable task-sharing, we have created a more harmonious and prosperous community.

Our work here is about more than just economic gains; it's about creating a safe and collaborative environment where everyone benefits. No more domestic abuse, just mutual respect and empowerment.

Testimonials

"Thanks to the Saving Group and the training provided by the project, I've gained invaluable knowledge on modern farming techniques. Now, I can efficiently cultivate rice using less seed and increase my yield. This has not only boosted my income but also empowered me as a woman in my community." – **Ki Koum, Farmer, Sangkae**

"The CapFish project didn't just teach us about agriculture; it transformed our entire approach to farming. With new methods like using machine planters and proper seed management, I've seen my rice production double. This extra income has allowed me to improve my home and ensure a better future for my family." – **Khat Khipor, Farmer, Dan Run**

"Before joining the project, I struggled with outdated farming practices. Now, I'm equipped with the skills to grow crops more sustainably and profitably. The CapFish project's support has not only increased my agricultural productivity but also empowered me to make informed decisions for my household." - **Farmer**

"The training provided under the CapFish project has been a game-changer for me. I've learned how to diversify my farming activities beyond rice, including vegetable cultivation and raising livestock. This has significantly boosted our household's food security and income." - **Farmer**

"Being part of the Saving Group has been a blessing. Through their support and training, I've gained the confidence to actively participate in decision-making for our farm. Now, I can negotiate fair prices for my produce and contribute more effectively to my family's welfare." - **Farmer**

"Thanks to the Saving Group and the training provided by the project, I've gained invaluable knowledge on modern farming techniques. Now, I can efficiently cultivate rice using less seed and increase my yield. This has not only boosted my income but also empowered me as a woman in my community." - **Farmer**

