Double the Harvest and Hope: Saroeun's Climate-resilient Farming with the Nurture Project

The Nurture project in collaboration with East-West Seed – Knowledge Transfer is implementing the Nurture Veg initiative, which aims to support 2,600 smallholder farmers to improve their vegetable cultivation. The initiative will empower 100 key farmers, half of whom are women, with agroecological and climate-resilient techniques like effective water management, land preparation, safe and efficient use of pesticides, composting, and natural pesticides, enabling them to reduce their chemical use. By applying these new methods, farmers can produce safer vegetables and double their vegetable yields, leading to increased family income and improved food security. In addition to gaining knowledge of agricultural techniques, farmers will learn how to assess and meet the market's specific needs.

"This hot weather has made growing vegetables incredibly difficult. Thanks to the Nurture Project, I learned proper methods and received all the necessary agricultural supplies. This support has enabled me to overcome this challenge and double my yield – something I never thought possible!"

Ron Saroeun, a 29-year- old farmer in Battambang.

Under the scorching sun, Saroeun was cleaning the water filter and inspecting the water drip system in his farm, situated adjacent to his home. He was preparing to water his cucumbers and wax gourds. Since August 2023, Saroeun has been an active key farmer who is currently being supported by project partner East-West Seed's Knowledge Transfer. He underwent a significant transformation in both his agricultural practices and beliefs regarding his vegetable farm. Previously experiencing low and inconsistent yields due to the hot weather and reliance on luck rather than proper techniques, Saroeun had been hesitant to invest significant effort into his farming endeavors, doubting its potential as a reliable source of income.

“I used to apply chemical fertilizers and pesticides randomly on my vegetables.” he added, “This approach not only failed to benefit my crops but also led to various issues. Sometimes my vegetables didn’t grow well, other times they died prematurely, and often they didn’t yield a satisfactory harvest.”

Limited knowledge of vegetable cultivation techniques, coupled with the recent extreme heat caused by climate change, made it increasingly difficult for Saroeun to earn enough income to support his family, including his elderly mother, wife, and six-month-old baby. They were already facing financial hardship as an economically disadvantaged household (ID poor).

Through engaging in the Nurture Project, Saroeun is more hopeful about the future as he benefits from regular training and support with vegetable cultivation and climate resilient agricultural techniques that have allowed him to overcome his previous challenges and achieve great results. Within just one month of harvesting, Saroeun achieved an impressive harvest of 1,000 kg each of cucumbers and wax gourds – marking a 100% increase compared to the produce yielded through conventional practices.

"I'm impressed with the new approaches, techniques, and support I've received from the project. It has not only helped me overcome my previous challenges and achieve higher yields, significantly increasing my income, but it has also made my vegetables safer by reducing my reliance on chemicals."

Unlike before, when he relied heavily on chemicals, Saroeun now regularly consults with EWS-KT technical trainer whenever he encounters a problem with his vegetables. For example, instead of spraying chemical pesticides to control insects, he now uses yellow traps. This solution is not only inexpensive and safe, but also highly effective. Encouraged by his success, Saroeun plans to expand his farm to cultivate a wider variety of vegetables and further increase his income.

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