

Fish on Farms Case Study: Village Health Volunteers



Helping ensure healthy outcomes

The *Fish on Farms* project relies on the help of village health volunteers (VHVs) to help educate the project beneficiaries about important issues such as nutrition, and proper infant and young child feeding practices.



Ms. Rin

Ms. Mol Rin, age 48, is one of these VHVs in Pou Plok Village, Theay Commune, Pa Pnom District. She was appointed by the health center and has been working as a VHV for three years. In her role as VHV, Ms. Rin has a number of responsibilities: she educates women about topics such as optimal vegetable consumption, and child feeding; she mobilizes the village children for vaccinations; she sells birth control pills and educates women about the importance of birth spacing; and she monitors the consumption patterns of *Fish on Farms* participants on a bi-weekly basis.

Ms. Rin has attended nutrition training sessions with the HKI and Fish on Farms staff to learn how to conduct the *Fish on Farms* nutrition sessions for households. During these training sessions, she learned about the importance of eating the small fish, and is now working to share this knowledge with her community. Much of her work consists of collecting the bi-weekly consumption data from the households. During these visits she records the households' consumption of vegetables, fruits, eggs, fish, snacks etc. These records are vital for understanding what families are eating, and how their participation in the project affects these consumption patterns.

Despite the fact that Ms. Rin receives no monetary remuneration for her work as a VHV, she plans to continue in the position. Ms. Rin says that she became a VHV because she wants to help people in her village, and as a VHV she can “educate people to consume more vegetables so they will be more healthy.” She particularly enjoys working as a VHV because it allows her to work within her community and to talk to her neighbors about important issues. She loves talking with her neighbors and has formed close friendships through her work as a VHV.

Like Ms. Rin, Mr. Khorn Sun was also appointed to be a VHV by the health center in Tropaing Pring Village, Damrie Poun Commune, Svay Antor District. He has been a VHV since 2006. Mr. Sun attended nutrition training sessions by HKI's local NGO partner, ODOV, and now he teaches nutrition training sessions every 3 months. In addition to these training sessions, Mr. Sun mobilizes the community for vaccination programs, and for child growth monitoring. He also keeps records about the number of pregnant women in the community, and tracks the weight of infants. Mr. Sun explained that he was motivated to become a VHV because most villagers have very limited knowledge of health, disease and nutrition, and he wanted to help educate his community. As a VHV he helps provide awareness and education so that “now people understand more how to be healthy.”



Mr. Sun with nutrition training materials

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