



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Rural Cambodians Learn Importance of Dietary Diversity



Fintrac Inc.

Ream Nheb prepares a stew packed with nutritious ingredients. Feed the Future has trained tens of thousands of Cambodian women to incorporate nutritious foods into both their agricultural activities and diets.

Many rural Cambodians subsist on meals of rice plus a small amount of protein, with vegetables and fruits being an unaffordable luxury. This poor dietary diversity can lead to chronic undernutrition, which can have devastating effects on overall health.

Fortunately, new training and educational campaigns led by Feed the Future are changing the way Cambodians – and particularly Cambodian women – view their diets.

One recent evening in Battambang province, Ream Nheb and her daughter, Chhong Kemhuan, put into action the nutrition lessons learned from Feed the Future. Together, they prepared a stew called samlor kakow that includes pork, leafy greens, papaya and eggplant.

“I know that everything in this dish is healthy for my family,” says Ream.

Chhong, who buys ingredients for the family’s meals at the market, agrees. “I think about using as many food groups as possible when I plan meals,” she explains.

Ream and Chhong are just two of nearly 180,000 people trained to date as part of Feed the Future efforts to offer on-farm instruction, field day events, [mobile kitchens](#) and other services for rural families. Nutrition is also integrated across agricultural production activities in rice and horticulture, as well as aquaculture programming.

The mother-daughter duo improved their nutritional knowledge by participating in several different Feed the Future activities. As clients in a household vegetable cultivation project, they received nutrition instruction as well as technical assistance from agronomists to learn how to grow nutrient-dense produce on their own household plots, which cuts down on the cost of purchasing food. In addition, their village received a visit from a mobile kitchen, a specially modified food cart that takes nutrition messages to particularly inaccessible rural areas.

Feed the Future is also demonstrating how to prepare nutrient-rich meals with affordable and readily available local ingredients. Training participants take part in live cooking demonstrations and trainers underscore the importance of integrating a variety of vitamins and minerals into daily meals. The change thus far has been positive: on average, women of reproductive age who have taken part in Feed the Future nutrition activities eat from 5.7 of nine essential food groups, a 24

percent increase over the baseline number of 4.6 and only five percent away from the minimum goal of 6.0.

“We’re confident we’re eating enough different types of food to be healthy,” Ream says.

Nutritious meals and increased dietary diversity also help combat stunting and anemia among young children, women and other vulnerable groups.