

Improvement of Indigenous Communities' Income Makes Their Better Livelihoods

Ratanakiri province is in the northeast of Cambodia with the rich soil which is potential for the cashew tree crops to be grown widely by the indigenous peoples in warm and humid climatic regions. However, they also live to depend on selling cashew nuts for their livelihoods. But they have not much been aware of technical knowledge of cashew nuts yet and they mostly grow local cashew trees with no technical knowledge of cashew trees. They, therefore, get low yields of cashew nut products. Seeing that the indigenous communities are in the requirements of the technical knowledge of cashew trees, ICCO donor in partnership with NTFPs has launched **Land and Economic Security for Indigenous Peoples (LESIP)** project in 30 villages, 7 communes, two districts (Ochum & Veurnsai) of Ratanakiri province to implement its activities by providing training workshops on technical knowledge of cashew nut production to the indigenous peoples so that they receive the high yield of cashew nut products.

The LESIPs project under fund support of ICCO-Netherlands granted to **Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) organization** that plays the important role to achieve three objectives of this project included: **1. Strengthen IP legal entities for effective use of community land, 2. Improve productivity of cashew for IP communities and 3. Support cashew market for securing the production.** In addition, NTFPs is also in collaboration with other two partners for the respective three objectives implementation which **Cambodian Indigenous Peoples Organization (CIPO)** is responsible for implementing the first objective, LESIP project staffs of **NTFP** for the second objective implementation and **ACTIS firm** for the third objective implementation. **Land and Economic Security for Indigenous Peoples (LESIP)** project officially contracted agreement for three year period (2016-219) of project implementation between ICCO donor and NTFPs in November 2016. But there is a little bit tardiness of technical process; the activities of LESIP project have fully been implemented by the project staffs from January 01, 2017 so far.

In Dec 2018, the LESIP project conducted for 2 weeks internal evaluation at 20 target villages to identify any changes of cashew nut farmers' livelihood as result of 2 years project intervention. The first phase 197 farmers with 40 females were interviewed by using Individual interview and Focal Group Discussion (FGD). 2nd phase, the project staff used In-depth Interview (IDI) tool to collect the result of change as part of the evidence to proof progress of project's outcomes and goal. They had interviewed farmers own land to grow cashew nut from 5 to 12 hectares. We selected 18 cashew nut farmers out of the trained 100 key farmers of the project to detail the extent of technical knowledge growth of cashew trees, maintenance of their land without exploitation and the extent of income growth from selling cashew nuts for their livelihoods and the best of the best 18 cashew nut farmers are also focused on the size of land for increasing cashew trees growing, increasing incomes from selling cashew nuts. On the other hand, key farmers who have well controlled and extended their land for growing cashew nut trees (M23) are a must for project's achievement and the following are the best of the best 16 cashew nut farmers who are the benchmarks for the most significant change of project to be selected for writing.



STORY 1: Mr. Bun Lorn, 25, a cashew nut farmer, a son of Tampuon indigenous family. He is married but no children yet. He lives in La Urnkangmis village, Ochum commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province. He completed high school, his contact phone number at 060 742 212. "My

parents' main sources of annual income earned \$16000 from cashew nut products selling and earned \$1000 from rice product harvest starting from November-June of the harvest season per year. My parents have in total 17 hectares of cashew farm land, 4 hectares of cashew variety (M23) farm, 13 hectares of the traditional cashew farm and three hectare of rice farm.



STORY 2: Mr. Lek Sout, 58, a chief of CLT committee, a Tumpuon indigenous family head, and a cashew nut farmer who has 9 children, 4 daughters and 5 sons. He lives in La Urnchorng village, Ochum commune, Ochum district, Ratanakkiri province, his contact phone number is 071 495 6449. *“My main source of income earned \$7,000 from cashew nuts sale and earned \$1,500 from cassavas selling. The annual output is 70% of cashew nuts and 30% of cassavas crops. I grew 1 hectare of cashew nut variety (M23) in 2017, in total of 8 hectares of cashew nut farm land.. I have participated in the dissemination of LESIP project of NTFP under fund support of ICCO-Netherland on the technical knowledge of cashew nut, thanks to I grasped that cashew nut variety (M23). “I owed the community savings group in amount of \$ 500 in my village for 1 year repayment.*



STORY 3: Mr. Pan Klim, 42, a Kroeng indigenous family head, a cashew nut farmer who has a middle-class family with three children, two daughters and one son. He lives in Kam village, La Ork commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province. *“I earned \$ 7,000 per year from the major income source of cashew nuts product. I have total 11 hectares of the cashew nuts farm, grew 9 hectares of the traditional cashew nut in 2005, and then extended more 2 hectares of cashew nuts variety (M23) farm in 2017. I got \$5,000 loans from PRASAC Microfinance Institute to expand growing the cashew nuts variety (M23).*

STORY 4: Mr. Chim Seang Hai, 28, a Khmer family head, and a key model farmer. He has a medium-class family and has two daughters. He lives in La Ork village, La Ork commune, Ochum district, contact phone number at: 097 52 75 523. *“The main sources of income I earned are groceries and cashew nuts selling. Each income source I earned \$ 7,000 of (M23) cashew nuts selling per year and \$2000 from grocery vender. I got loan \$ 1,500 of private Microfinance Institute to buy the agricultural equipment for caring cashew trees I am much aware of the technical knowledge of cashew plants, because I participated in many training workshops with the LESIP project. “I started growing cashew trees variety (M23) from June 6, 2016 as LESIP project of NTFP which funded by ICCO-Netherlands. I initially grew 6 hectares of land for cashew nuts M23, the revenue from selling cashew nuts I bought the one more hectare of land.*



STORY 5: Mr. Mou Thin, 37, a Kroeng indigenous man, a key model farmer, and a family head has a middle-class family living in Khuon village, Koh Peak commune, Veurnsai district, Ratanakiri province. He has five children with three daughters and 2 sons. Contact Telephone number is 0889090714. *“ My main sources of income are 100% from selling cashew nuts, I received the revenues of \$ 5,000 per year. It is sort of sources of income which is easy to earn and easy to care it as well. I grew cashew tree variety (M23) and tended them for 2-3 years only.*



STORY 6: Mrs. Chong Ean, 47, a cashew nut farmer, a Tampuan indigenous family head who has a good-living family with three children, one daughter and one son. She lives in La Urnkangmis Thom village, Ochum commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province. Her contact phone number is 088 88 13 064. *“The major sources of income I earned are from cashew nut product and cassava product harvest. Today, I earned \$ 6000 from selling cashew nuts product and earned \$ 1,000 from selling cassavas product, I have 9 hectares of total land, including 2 hectares of cassava farm and 7 hectares of cashew nuts farm. “I had bought another one hectare of land because I know that having more land the better.*

STORY 7: Mr. Pan Pen, 59, a Tampuan indigenous family head, and a cashew nut farmer who has 5 children, 3 daughters and 2 sons. He lives in La Urnchorng village, Ochum commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province. *“My main sources of annual income earned \$ 5,000 from selling cashew nuts, earned \$2,000 from selling cassavas and earned \$1500 from selling cows, 50% income of cashew nuts, 30% income of cassavas and 20% income of cows. “I grew the local cashew nut trees in 2002-2003 by inheriting land from my parents-in-law. I bought five more hectare of land for growing the cashew nut variety (M23). As I am aware of the techniques of cashew nut variety (M23) which I have participated in training workshops on the technical knowledge of cashew nut offered by LESIP project staffs of NTFP under fund support of ICCO-Netherlands. Totally, I have ten hectares of the cashew farm included the local cashew trees. So far, my family’s livelihood is better than landless villagers.*



STORY 8: Mr. Blek Louy, 35, a Tampuan indigenous, a cashew nut farmer who has five children, two daughters and three sons. He lives in La Urnkangmis Thom village, Ochum Commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri Province. His contact phone number is 097 28 30 042. *“Major sources of income I earned \$ 5,000 from cashew nuts, \$150 of cassavas, \$250 of rice, \$1000 of soybeans. Income earned 50% from selling cashew nuts, 20% from rice and cassavas, 30% from soybeans a year. “I planted cashew nuts in 2002, initially 5 hectares of cashew farm, later one more hectare till I have a total cashew nut farm of 6 hectares now,” “All land I obtained is the ancestral forest land of our indigenous peoples which before we used to do the shifting cultivation. Now, no long have shifting cultivation practice thanks to land become small as result of ELCs and powerful elite people grabbed it. Actually, I do need extra land, but it's all gone. As I have received the dissemination on the technical knowledge of cashew nut of key farmer here in my village. I am also in debt of \$ 3000 loans to buy more land for one year period from the MFI.*



STORY 9: Mr. John Lit, 28, Kroeng indigenous family head, and a cashew nut farmer. He has a middle-class family with 1 daughter. He lives in Kam village, La Ork commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province, his contact phone number is 097 23 22 923. *“The cashew nut product is my major sources of income which I earned \$ 5,000, per year and \$ 1,000 from selling groceries a year. And the*



income from cashew nuts is 90% and 10% of groceries sale. I started to grow 4 hectares of the traditional cashews from 2012 to 2016 and 2 hectares of the M23 variety in 2018, total 6 hectares of cashew nut farm land. However, I am indebted \$ 6,000 from the microfinance institute to build house.



STORY 10: Mr. Hub Luom, 44, a family head, a cashew nut farmer, Kroeng indigenous man. He has a middle-class family, and has five children, two daughters, 3 sons. He is a cashew farmer living in Phaknam village, Koh Peak commune, Veurnsai district. *“My main sources of income is 100% from selling cashew nuts earned which I earned \$ 4000 per year. Most of the cashew nuts can be harvested for long term, we just grew them once for 3-5 years of the local specie cashew trees, including tending it by the season every year until the tree reached the year of fruiting. “I grew the normal cashew nuts for two hectares of land in 1994. Then, I extended 5 hectares from 2010 to 2018 in total 7 hectares of land. I was interested in dissemination of LESIP project staff on the techniques of cashew nut knowledge. So, I decided to expand my orchard to grow the cashew trees variety (M23).*

STORY 11: Mr. Pou Leang, 58, a Khmer family head, He is a cashew nut farmer who has a middle-class family with four children, three daughters and one son. He lives in Kam village, La Ork commune, Ochum



district, Ratanakiri province. Contact Phone number is 071 20 55 239. *“My main source of income obtained from selling cashew nuts, cassavas, pig raising and make local indigenous wine. The resources of each income earned \$ 4,000 from selling cashew nuts per year and earned \$ 1500 selling cassavas per year, \$ 700 from selling wine per year and earned \$500 selling pigs per year in total of \$ 6700 per year, 60% of cashew nut income of the annual total revenues. “I decided to grow the cashew tree variety (M23) because I am aware of the technical knowledge of the cashew tree variety (M23) that have received from the training workshops on the techniques of cashew nut with LESIP project of NTFPs funded by ICCO donor. Today, I have 6 hectares of cashew nut trees (M23) farm land. I have three more hectares of land to expand growing the cashew nut variety (M23) in 2019. Today, I have owed \$ 3,000 in debt of Vision Fund Cambodia for supporting the family living and bought the additional land for farming. In reality, my family has better livelihood than less land owners.*



STORY 12: Mr. Pav Sek, 50 years old, a cashew nut farmer, a Tumpuon indigenous family head who has 4 children, 1 daughter and 3 sons. He lives in La Urnkangmisthom village, Ochum Commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri Province. His contact phone number is 097 274 5533. *“My main sources of income generated \$ 4,000 per year from selling cashew nuts and \$ 2,000 per year from selling cassava, compared with other cash crops, 60% of cashew nut production and 40% of cassava production. “I am indebted to MFI with \$ 2,000 for two year period that I used this money for tending the cashew nut orchard. “Firstly, I started to grow the normal cashew nut trees in 2000 for 3 hectares of land, and then expanded 5 hectares of land for the same species in 2007 after I have participated in the training workshops on the technical knowledge of cashew nuts of LESIP project of NTFP funded by ICCO-Netherlands,*



STORY 13: Mr. Vang Kuch, 49, a family head, a cashew nut farmer, Kroeng indigenous man who has one son. He has a middle-class family living in Phaknam village, Koh Peak commune, Veurnsai district. *“My main sources of income earned \$ 2,500 from 100% cashew nuts selling compared to other income, most readily available cashew nuts, because of easy care, planting and long-term harvest for income to support the daily living. I buy a new motorbike but most living expenses. Firstly, I grew the normal cashew variety in 2004 and grew rice, because there is the prone market for selling easily cashew nuts. Then I grew 2 more hectares of land.*

STORY 14: Mr. Kaing Vuthy, 31, a family head, a cashew nut farmer, Kroeng indigenous man who has a medium class family with one daughter. He lives in Svay village, Poy commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province. *“My main sources of income from a grocery seller, state work and selling cashew nuts, earned 1,000 dollars from the owned enterprise, 550 dollars from the state work and 1,000 dollars from selling cashew nuts per year. I get loan from FMI 5,000 dollars to expand my cultivation land and expand my family business. Firstly, I grew 1 hectare of the natural cashew variety farm provided by parents-in-law in 2012, then I expanded 2 more hectares of land that is bequest by my parents. With the dissemination of LESIP project staffs on the techniques of cashew nut knowledge, I have bought two more hectares of land for growing cashew nut variety (M23). Currently, I have five hectares of cashew nut farm in total.*



STORY 15: Mrs. Yon Lida, 29, a cashew nut farmer, a state school teacher and Kroeng indigenous family head. She has a middle class family with 1 daughter, lives in Svay village, Poy commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province. *“My main income sources earned state teacher's salary of \$ 3500 per year, but got only 500 dollars from selling cashew nuts per year thanks to my cashew nut trees are just two year old. Currently, I owed the private bank \$ 500 to extend the grocery-owned business. I grew 1 hectare of the local cashew variety in 2014 and expanded 2 more hectares of cashew variety (M23) 2017. Actually, I have 5 hectares of total land for plantation the cashew trees next year. I hope my family's livelihood gets better and better because of income from cashew nut.*



STORY 16: Mr. Toul Ampoeng, 34, a cashew nut farmer, and a Kroeng indigenous family head. He has a middle-class family with six children, 2 daughters and six sons. He lives in Krolong village, Ochum commune, Ochum district, Ratanakiri province. His contact phone number is 071 62 91 322. *“Major sources of income I earned are from cashew nuts and cassava products in a year, earning \$1,000 for cashew nuts for the first year and \$ 1,000 for cassavas. “ I began to grow 1.5 hectare of the normal cashew farm in 1991, then I extended 2 hectares of the traditional cashew farm in 2014. Since I received the technical knowledge of cashew nut with LESIP project of NTFP, I grew 6 hectares more of cashew nut variety (M23) farm in 2018,”*

COMMON CONCLUSION OF ALL INTERVIEWED FARMERS

Most farmers said identically that the income earned is much from cashew nut product harvest every year, as it sort of easy fruit tree to grow. We don't have to spend much time caring for it and easy to sell

in the local market, as well," They mostly said that since they received the technical knowledge of cashew nut with LESIP project of NTFP, they began to change their mindset by try to expand their land to grow the M23 variety.

The moneys, which all the farmers had earned from cashew nut, has been used to support daily living, sending their children to school, building new house, paying labor cost to do farm and buying the agricultural gears.

All farmers said alike that the indigenous people who have more land, didn't sell it to outsiders, they have more money and income than landless families or those who sold the land. However, around 60-70% of villagers got loan from Micro-Finance Institute, from 500\$ to 5,000 USD. They repay their loan during the cashew nut harvest season.

While having asked all of them if any companies or people with powerful authorities come to grab their land. Individual family will do in all means to protect the land. He/She will suit the complaint to the relevant authorities. He /shew will mobilize other villagers to do the protest against those offenders.

They all said that " When someone wants to change my cashew nut farm land and get me to live in town, though there is an apartment for selling grocery. No, of course not, I cannot change, I have never lived in town because we don't habituate living in town as such".

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the indigenous community (IC)'s livelihood is better off, because of cashew nut income. The cashew nut is a major source of income of indigenous people in light of their land and natural resources are shrinking. Therefore, the indigenous peoples who have participated in the dissemination of the LESIP project of NTFP funded by ICCO donor from Netherlands, currently, they are more aware of the technical knowledge of cashew nut variety (M23), they will expand their orchard by growing the variety of M 23. The assessment also found that apart from increased income for their family, it is sort of factor to push them to protect their land as well, given it is sort of their heritage's redoubt. Those farmers who have much land, well protected that land and work on their land effectively, they got much income than those landless people.

It could be concluded ahead that for the next 5 to 10 years, the IP will change to grow the cashew nut variety 23 and their livelihood will be more prosperous.

However, the above finding also has limitation. It is not showed the progress of all 197 farmers. The project selected only 16 farmers who have land around 5 to 10 hectares to assess to write story of change.

Stories collected by the LESIP Project Staff

Consolidated by Mr. Sreng Daravuthy, the LESIP Project Manager,

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