

Harvesting the Power of Partnerships in Cambodia



Sous Saret harvesting and selling her eggplants to her neighbors. | Photo © iDE Bangladesh

In rural Cambodia, 38-year-old Sous Saret and her husband, Luch Nop, faced ongoing challenges to earning a stable income. Climate change and limited agricultural knowledge made farming unpredictable, while Nop's work in construction kept him away from home for long stretches. But in 2024, a joint initiative under the Transforming Lives consortium began to shift the course of their lives. Through the combined expertise of its partners, the consortium delivered integrated support that could not have been achieved alone.

Helen Keller provided Saret with practical agricultural training and high-quality vegetable seeds, helping her shift from seasonal farming to year-round production. With regular support from field officers, her yields increased significantly. This agricultural success laid the foundation for her next leap, which was joining iDE's SHE business training program—a gender-smart entrepreneurship initiative designed to help women like Saret transform their farms into sustainable businesses.

Saret not only gained agricultural skills but also business acumen. Through iDE's training, she learned how to track income and expenses, conduct financial planning, and engage with customers. Through this new knowledge and co-financing, she expanded her farm, added poultry, and

hired staff. She ultimately doubled her land and raised her monthly income to over \$600. Her husband was even able to leave his construction job to join the growing family business full-time.

"The business training program helped me see my farm as a business," Saret said. "Before, I sold vegetables every day but didn't know where the money went. I never tracked my expenses or income."

Beyond the business benefits, the training also gave Saret valuable nutrition knowledge, delivered by a local expert from the Provincial Department of Health. She now prepares more balanced meals for her family, incorporating a greater variety of vegetables, meat, and fish, and actively shares her knowledge with neighbors and customers.

Today, Saret is cultivating a thriving business, a healthier household, and a stronger community. Her story is a powerful example of what is possible when organizations work together, blending technical expertise, community-based delivery, and entrepreneurial support to achieve more than any one partner could alone. Together, the Transforming Lives consortium is helping build resilient and self-sustaining communities.