



IFOAM Asia 3rd Organic Asia Congress 2018

# Women's Role in Svay Rieng Agro-Products Cooperative to Supply Organic Vegetable in Cambodia

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IVY (International Volunteers of Yamagata)



# Background of Cambodia

- During Khmer Rouge Period (1975-1979) social structure and agriculture production were destroyed as forced laborer under the name of “cooperative”
- Civil war until 1991
- Following more than two decades of strong economic growth, Cambodia has attained the lower middle-income status as of 2015





# Women in Cambodia

- Women are highly active in the economy but they are concentrated in informal employment, which means that they are less likely to be protected from exploitation, abuse, trafficking and low pay.
- Many women are self-employed, but they lack access to capital and other assets, including land, and their enterprises remain small.
- Cambodian women make up 60 percent of the agricultural workforce,

Phnom Penh Post "Tough times for working women" 21 March 1997

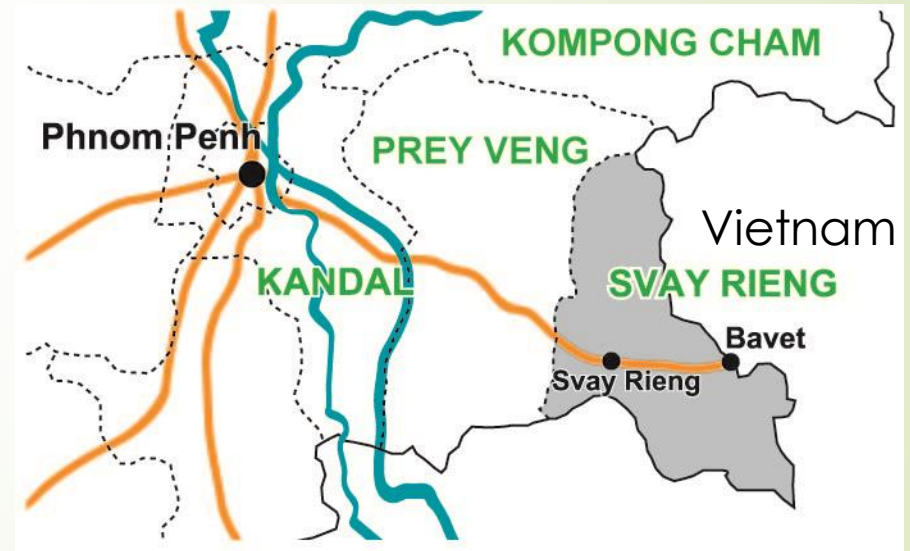
Phnom Penh Post "Getting women working" 08 March 2017

# About IVY

- A Japan-based NGO which launched its activities in Cambodia in 1993.
- IVY aims to materialize society in which all Cambodian people, getting out of poverty, can live a humanitarian life.

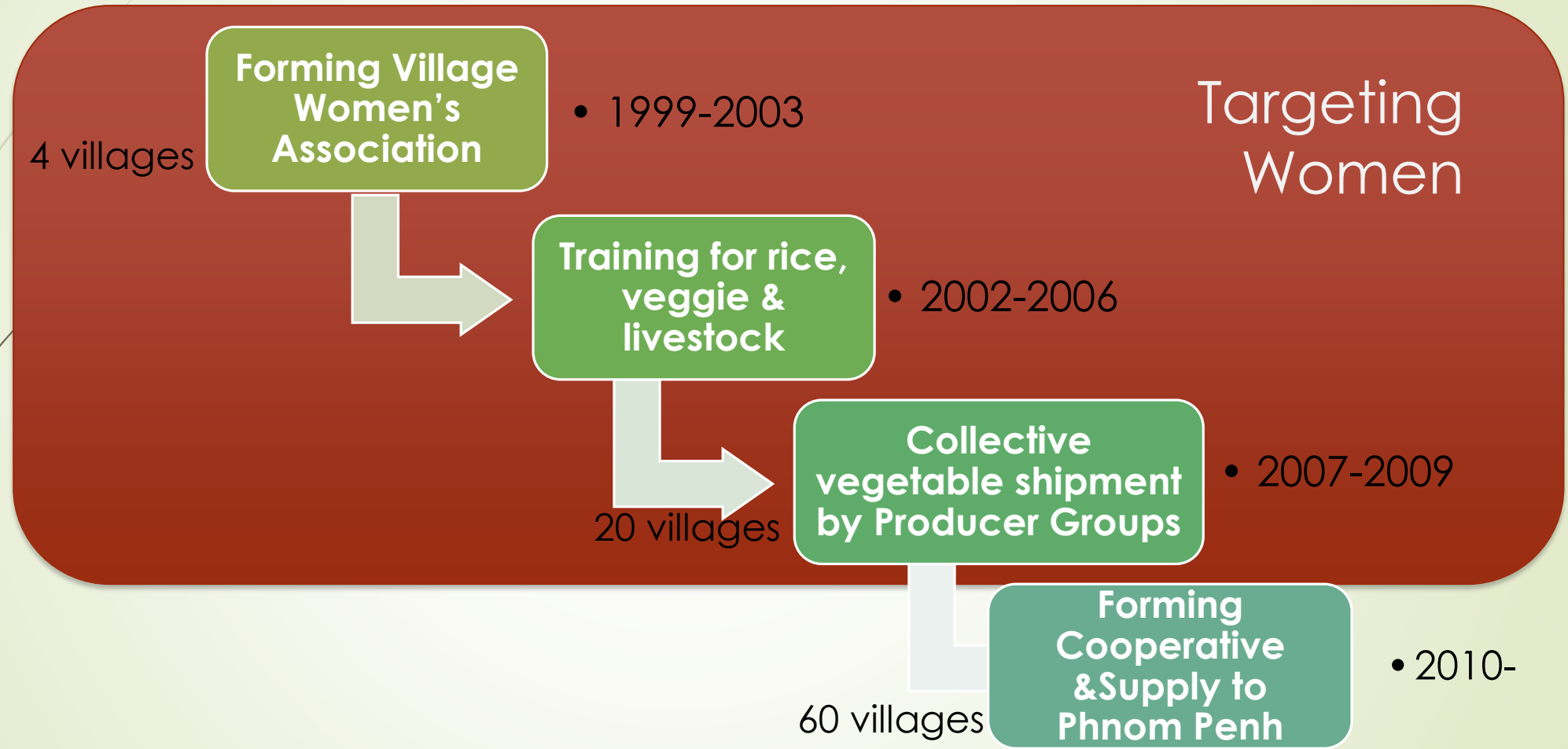


# Target Area



120 km south of Phnom Penh

# History



• 2002-2006



➤ Organic Agriculture (rice, vegetable, livestock) training for women

• 2007-2009



➤ Collective sales at the local markets by groups.



- Supply to a hotel by VWA (Village Women's Association) with 20 Producer Groups

• 2010-2012



➤ Lack of supply led to establishment of **Svay Reing Agriculture Cooperatives (SAC)** (60 villages, 300 members) in 2011



➔ SAC started regular shipment to the retail shops in Phnom Penh.



## Cambodian Organic Agriculture Association

- 72 members were certified at first as Chemical-Free and then organic by Cambodian Organic Agriculture Association (COrAA)



➤ Shipment to a super market by AC truck in 2014



➡ In 2017, SAC supplied 100,000 Kg of vegetable and had sales of \$131,000\* . including chicken sales



## Our focus and approach

- Empowerment of women to take leadership
- Promote participatory and democratic management
- Relationship building with business partners
- Accountability and transparency both for finance and product flow

We believe that women have more traits of leaders who work in team and care accountability.

# Impact

- ➔ Strong solidarity due to working together



Based on Review Study of Completed JICA Partnership projects (2013)

# Impact

- Become active member of the society
- Enable to form a cooperative and sustain the impact of the project.



# Impact

- Take more responsibility
- Take accountability seriously
- Strong sense of ownership



## Impact – Social Change

- Women are not afraid to be in leadership
- Reduction of domestic violence
- Husbands have less time for alcohol.



Based on Review Study of Completed JICA Partnership projects

# Impact – Social Change

- Relationships are improved in the villages and women are valued in the community
- Girls get education
- Daughters see their mothers as a role model



## Mao Sitha (Chairperson of the Cooperative)

*"I was just a farmer but all in the sudden, I became a leader. I had no experience and skill in management and business. Through IVY's trainings, I gained knowledge and confidence. Now I feel honored to be the leader. People respect me. I want to share my experience so that other women can be leaders too."*



## Reach Sarey (Treasure of the Cooperative)

*“Before, I was even afraid to come to the provincial town by the motor bike by myself. I was too shy to talk to people, but now I can talk to people. I am respected in my village. We are not paid any salary, but we are able to help other farmers.”*





Thank you