



ក្រសួងកសិកម្ម រុក្ខាប្រមាញ់ និងនេសាទ
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CAMBODIA

Empowering Youth for Food Systems Improvement and Healthy Diets



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



Helen Keller INTERNATIONAL



World Food Programme

unicef for every child



World Health Organization



Civil Society Alliance Cambodia



Save the Children



European Union





This report has been prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Cambodia and Helen Keller International (HKI) in Cambodia. The mention of specific companies does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO nor HKI in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

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Foreword

The Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) recognizes the importance of the Youth as a critical group in eradicating hunger and ending malnutrition. This is reflected in the 2nd National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019 – 2023, where Gender and Youth are mainstreamed as cross-cutting issues. As part of these efforts, CARD and its partners have sought to implement new approaches to empower youth through a series of activities and events during 2019-2020.

This report is not intended to provide guidelines on youth engagement. Rather, it presents a series of examples and experiences on how youth can be successfully engaged on food systems and healthy diets. We acknowledge these examples are limited in scope, as they mainly targeted tertiary students as target beneficiaries. This deliberate decision for working with tertiary students was chosen to test approaches for successful application in Cambodia.

In that sense, it is crucial to further expand future youth activities to reach the rural youth, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable youth populations, by adapting the activities to their specific needs and ensuring *no one is left behind*.

The successful implementation of these activities is the result of the excellent collaboration existing in Cambodia between CARD, the different United Nations agencies and civil society organizations.

It is crucial that we adapt our approaches to work with youth to influence their behaviours and also to capitalize on the untapped potential that the new generations of Cambodians can bring towards achieving sustainable food systems and healthy diets. We hope this experience will seed fresh ideas for other development partners and line ministries on youth empowerment to secure a better future for the country.

On behalf of CARD, I would like to thank FAO, WFP, WHO, UNICEF and the SUN-CSA led by Helen Keller International (HKI) for their support in the youth initiatives. I would like to extend my gratitude to the academia and particularly the Royal University of Agriculture, Prek Leap National Institute of Agriculture, Kampong Cham National Institute of Agriculture, Western University, amongst others, for supporting the organization the Youth Forums on Food Security and Nutrition.

Phnom Penh, 20 June 2020



H.E. SOK Silo
Secretary General of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development
Office of the Council of Ministers

Acknowledgements

The *Empowering Youth for food Systems Improvement and Healthy Diets* initiative is a joint effort from several organizations, including UN agencies, civil society and government counterparts and reflects the critical importance of food systems and healthy diets in Cambodia and the need to engage the youth through innovative approaches.

First, we would to thank the contributions and cooperation from the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD), the EU-FAO FIRST Programme, Helen Kellen International (HKI), the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), Save the children (SC) and the Department of Agro-Industry (DAI) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) to make this project possible. Each organization provided young staff to serve as Advisors for the youth activities and these advisors were crucial to the success of every event. Special thanks to HE Sok Silo for his enthusiasm and support and to Mr Hou Kroeun of HKI and Dr. Ilean Russell from the EU-FAO FIRST Programme, for their leadership and technical contributions during the development of the activities and learning materials. We are grateful to Ms Selamawit Negash and Mr Samoeurn Un from UNICEF for their involvement in the Youth Nutrition Camp as well as WHO, particularly Dr. Nargiza Khodjaeva, and Ms. Vong Lenin, for supporting the Youth Forums on Food Security and Nutrition.

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Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to Robert Caron, owner of The Vine Retreat, for his support and help during the Training of Facilitators and for letting us make use of all the venue's facilities to conduct the event as well as to Chon Hourn Dried Shrimp processing enterprise, to the Kampot Salt Museum and the organic vegetable farming community in Kampong Nong Village Kampot Province.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
CARD	Council for Agricultural and Rural Development
CSA	Civil Society Alliance
DAI	Department of Agro-Industry
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIRST	Food and nutrition security, Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts
HKI	Helen Keller International
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoWA	Ministry of Women’s Affairs
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NSFSN	National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
Q&A	Questions and Answers
SAAN	School Agents for Adolescent Nutrition
SC	Save the Children
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
YNC	Youth Nutrition Champions
YSRH	Young Sexual Reproductive Health

1. Introduction

Food systems improvement and healthy diets are priority actions for multi-sectoral cooperation under the Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023. This report covers a series of activities designed for Empowering Youth on Food Systems Improvement and Healthy Diets. The activities commenced in 2017 and extended until 2019 with a series of Youth Forums conducted by the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD), the Ministry of Health (MoH), Helen Keller International (HKI) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the topic of healthy diets and other nutrition issues. This successful series of youth forums generated fresh enthusiasm and a new approach for the partners involved in food security and nutrition in Cambodia and extended into further efforts to support the engagement of youth in 2020. Youth's concerns and feedback from these forums were documented and presented to CARD for consideration to be included in the 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023. As a result, CARD mainstreamed 'Gender and Youth' as a cross-cutting issue in the strategy to ensure that all priority actions reflect explicit objectives for gender responsiveness, gender equality and the engagement of youth. CARD keenly supports youth engagement in food security and nutrition.

In 2017, the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance (SUN CSA) Cambodia, led by HKI, established the Youth Nutrition Champions (YNC) group to promote youth engagement in nutrition. HKI's Youth Nutrition Advocate, Ms. Chhun Bormey, was selected as part of the Global Youth Leaders for Nutrition initiative, and since then she has been leading the Youth Nutrition Champions group. This group has been involved in raising the profile of nutrition among youth and their communities, and promoting youth engagement with the government to contribute to ending all forms of malnutrition in Cambodia.

At the same time, Save the Children's (SC) Adolescent Nutrition project in Kampong Cham Province was designed and conducted to build on existing efforts and initiatives that have been developed in Cambodia to support adolescents, and develop and pilot new approaches with the aim of advocating for the importance of adolescent nutrition and supporting policy development based on evidence and experience generated from the project.

In line with those activities and to address the general lack of understanding of food systems and to promote healthy diets amongst young people, the EU-FAO FIRST Programme in Cambodia reached out to key partners to conduct a Youth Nutrition Camp in 2020 to empower and engage youth around sustainable food systems and healthy diets. This event was a partnership between the EU - FAO FIRST Programme, Helen Keller International (HKI), World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and CARD. This activity is aligned with the Joint Priorities for **Healthy Diets** and **Food Value Chains and Food Safety** of the 2nd NSFSN 2019 – 2023 in Cambodia and the mainstreaming of the cross-cutting issue **Gender and Youth**.

The objective of the **Youth Nutrition Camp** was to engage with a group of Cambodian students in activities related to improving food security and nutrition, raising awareness of

food systems and healthy diets and giving the keys to the young generation, as future agents of change, to have a real impact on their food environment.

The engagement of youth in food systems improvement and healthy diets in Cambodia is a means for sharing information and increasing awareness of youth, linking youth to policy processes and creating awareness of the importance of youth for other stakeholders. FAO has found in other countries that youth engagement in agriculture and food systems is constrained by various factors, which also appear to be relevant in Cambodia¹. These include the limited awareness of youth of benefits of participation in policy making and coordination mechanisms; the limited awareness among other actors and policy makers about the importance of youth inclusion; and the lack of priority accorded to youth. Limited information and outreach also negatively affected youth engagement. By including Gender and Youth as a cross cutting issue for the 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023, the Royal Government of Cambodia seeks to counter these challenges, ensuring that youth are actively engaged in the effort to reach the Cambodia SDG 2 for ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

1.1. Aims of Promoting Sustainable Healthy Diets

Sustainable healthy diets are dietary patterns that: promote all dimensions of an individual's health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable. The aims of sustainable healthy diets are to:

- achieve optimal growth and development of all individuals and support functioning and physical, mental, and social wellbeing at all life stages for present and future generations;
- contribute to preventing all forms of malnutrition (i.e. undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight and obesity);
- reduce the risk of diet-related NCDs; and
- support the preservation of biodiversity and planetary health.

Sustainable healthy diets must combine all the dimensions of sustainability to avoid unintended consequences.

Dietary changes towards healthier diets can reduce the environmental impacts of the food system. The evidence compiled so far points to the combined health and environmental benefits of shifting towards a more plant-based diet, including vegetables and fruits, nuts, pulses and whole grains. As a shift towards more plant-based diets may also lead to higher exposures to chemicals present in these foods, an evaluation of food safety implications of such transitions is now imperative².

¹ FAO. 2019. Empowering youth to engage in responsible investment in agriculture and food systems: challenges, opportunities and lessons learned from six African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda). Rome, FAO.

² FAO and WHO. 2019. *Sustainable healthy diets – Guiding principles*. Rome.

1.2. Why Take a Food Systems Approach?

A sustainable food system lies at the heart of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To realize the SDGs, the global food system needs to be reshaped to be more productive, more inclusive of poor and marginalized populations, environmentally sustainable and resilient, and able to deliver healthy and nutritious diets to all. Food Systems must be considered in the context of rapid population growth, urbanization, growing wealth, changing consumption patterns, and globalization as well as climate change and the depletion of natural resources.

The associated rapid structural transformations have also resulted in increasing and significant challenges, with potentially wide-reaching consequences for the state of food security and nutrition. These include the many highly processed, high-calorie and low nutritional value food items that are now widely available and consumed; limited access of small-scale producers and agri-enterprises to viable markets; high levels of food loss and waste; increased incidences of food safety, and animal and human health issues; and an increased energy-intensity and ecological footprint associated with the lengthening and industrialization of food supply chains³.

1.3. National Context

Although Cambodia has been classified as food secure for many years, the diet of the average Cambodian is largely made up of rice and therefore lacks essential protein, fat, vitamins and other key nutrients. The lack of diversity among consumable crops has led to many health problems across Cambodia, including malnutrition that presents as both undernutrition and overweight and obesity. The role of the agriculture sector is to develop efficient and sustainable technologies that ensure diverse, safe and nutritious foods are affordable and attainable for the public, and that they meet the nutritional needs of people of all ages. Due to rapid demographic and socio-economic changes, Cambodia is changing lifestyle and eating habits, facing the Double Burden of Malnutrition. Dietary patterns are shifting towards increased consumption of processed foods that are often energy-dense, high in saturated fats, sugars and salt, and low in fibre, resulting in increasing rates of overweight and obesity and diet-related non-communicable chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. This risk is particularly relevant for the youth in Cambodia, who may turn to junk and ultra-processed food due to time and budget constraints and are influenced by aggressive marketing campaigns run by fast food retailers.

1.4. Investing in Youth Future Leaders

The Youth of Cambodia are a critical group for nutrition intervention, both in their own right and as key actors in breaking the cycle of malnutrition. Healthy diets are essential for ensuring that the demographic dividend promised by Cambodia's youthful population is not wasted due to malnutrition, lower educational outcomes and increasing health costs. Addressing youth needs is a key element of SDG 2: Zero Hunger, which identifies addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls as one of the key steps towards ending malnutrition by

³ FAO. 2018. *Sustainable Food Systems Concept and Framework*.

2030. This priority is also reflected in Cambodia’s nutrition-related policies, including the 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023.

Investing in the education and training of young students is becoming ever more important as the challenges associated with adopting sustainable, climate-smart consumption and **linking up with diversity of supply in modern value chains are growing**. The increasing engagement of multinational and national companies in food systems – along with increased consumer sensitivity to global issues of sustainability and poverty reduction – means that opportunities for young people to take responsibilities in food systems today and in the future are arguably greater than was the case for their parents⁴.

1.5. Target Audience

The Youth Nutrition Camp targets tertiary students studying or having an interest on topics such as food security and nutrition, agriculture, food systems, etc. Targeting only well-educated youth is a deliberate decision in order to test this innovative approach in Cambodia and evaluate whether it could be a successful means to engage and raise awareness amongst the youth. In addition, it can be expected that tertiary students may become more influential in the future to have a greater impact on Sustainable Food Systems. After the evaluation of the outcomes of the Youth Nutrition Camp, new strategies will need to be developed to ensure other segments of the youth can be reached and engaged in food systems and healthy diets.

2. YOUTH FORUMS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION, OCTOBER 2019

The series of Youth Forums for Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) conducted from 14-17 October 2019 followed on from the work of CARD, HKI and the Scaling Up Nutrition SUN CSA Cambodia, to engage with youth between 2017 and 2019. These events were successful and provided a good basis of experience.

In September 2019, WHO and HKI provided further funding to continue to develop this thrust to engage youth as a critical action under the forthcoming 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023. The Royal Government of Cambodia is grateful to the WHO and to HKI for their support for this critical initiative.

2.1. Objectives

The results of the forums and the involvement of youth and academia were designed to provide momentum for the launch of the 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023. The specific objectives of the forums were to:

- To ensure that participating students are aware of the basic issues and have an understanding of how FSN affects their lives and the social and economic development of the country.

⁴ FAO, IFAD and WFP. 2015. *Developing the Knowledge, Skills and Talent of Youth to Further Food Security and Nutrition*.

- To provide a platform for discussion between tertiary students enrolled in different areas of study and professionals working in FSN, on the importance of improving food systems and promoting healthy diets in Cambodia;
- To provide an opportunity for students to express opinions, share ideas and ask questions for better understanding on issues related to food systems and healthy diets; and
- To explore the potential role of young people in supporting the effective dissemination of messages related to food systems and healthy diets amongst youth and the general public.

2.2. Participation

Between 2017 and 2018, four youth nutrition forums were conducted in Phnom Penh at Pannasastra University of Cambodia, Puthasastra University, Prek Leap College of Agriculture and Chamkar Dong University. Whereas in 2019, the three universities selected and agreeing to participate were Western University, Prek Leap National College of Agriculture and the Royal University of Agriculture. There were approximately 300 participants for each event, giving a total of 900 participants. Students from all years were invited to join the events at Western University and Royal University of Agriculture and from the Foundation Year at the Prek Leap National College of Agriculture. Staff from the universities participated in the opening and closing remarks and also made valuable contributions during the event.

2.3. Organization of the Events

The organization of the events was coordinated by CARD and involved a small team of young staff from CARD, HKI and WHO, with support from other agencies including FAO through the EU-FAO FIRST Programme and the Universities involved. Once the initial plans were decided, the younger team of facilitators worked on designing the activities and allocating responsibilities for the panel and the facilitation of the sessions. This organization was very effective and conducted in the minimum time frame available to plan the event.

2.4. Activities

The venues and numbers of participants did not permit any group work. However, the Youth Champion Ms. Chhun Bormey hosted a Question and Answer session to involve students providing very good audience interactions. This session was followed by a panel discussion on healthy diets for young adults, with the panel reflecting back on the answers given by individual students and providing some more personal insights as well as sound technical advice. It was also the opportunity for the students to ask questions to the panel.

The use of new software programmes that allow for instantaneous large group interactions was discussed but was deemed too difficult to manage with limited Wi-Fi availability in the venues. However, these tools can be very useful, and it was evident that students were well equipped with smart phones.

2.5. Topics of Interest for Youth

The students showed close connection to family and understanding of the issues faced by families. They also thought about the wider issues of food safety and about alternative food sources. The questions revolved around general topics such as: dietary intake, breastfeeding,

food security, food safety, overweight and obesity and the relationship between food security, nutrition and economic development.

2.6. Visibility

Use of social media was deliberately planned into the events and encouraged by the facilitating team. The impact of different tactics for promotion were assessed using the statistics for views available on the sites. Video and still photography were both used and video footage appears to have been most popular in the views.

LinkedIn and Facebook postings secure varying levels of interest. There is a need for coordinating the systems of posting and linking to ensure the activities result in a surge of postings. All the team involved can help to do this by liking and reposting to get the widest possible coverage. Students can be encouraged to go to the nominated sites to find pictures and videos of themselves in the forums and this will increase their interest in reposting and the potential for them to revisit the sites and increase awareness.



Posts on LinkedIn and Helen Keller International Cambodia on the Youth Forums for food security and nutrition

Importance of video in social media: the following clip of the national anthem at RUA had secured 646 views on the SUN CSA website at the time of writing⁵.

⁵ As of 14 May, 2020



Clip of the National Anthem of Cambodia during the celebration of one of the Youth Forum posted on the SUN CSA Cambodia Facebook page

3. SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION: ADOLESCENT NUTRITION PROJECT

To design an effective SBCC strategy for the Adolescent Nutrition project, SC reviewed the landscape for adolescent nutrition programming in Cambodia through examining available surveys and literature. SC identified central communication channels for adolescents as schools⁶, social media, health centres, and key SBCC approaches are interpersonal communication, community mobilisation, social media and advocacy. In schools, key activities are peer-led adolescent groups and nutrition skills sessions in school assemblies⁷ facilitated by project-trained School Agents for Adolescent Nutrition (SAANs) and reminders to attend class visits to health facilities to meet with health centre staff led by UNFPA. School fairs also generate community discussion and collective action around nutrition. A social media campaign developed together with adolescents raises awareness of key behaviours and services. Health centre staff trained by the project on adolescent nutrition counsel adolescents on nutrition during adolescent health visits. Advocacy activities include informing sub-national and national technical working groups about outcomes of the project and advocating for adolescent nutrition to be reflected in policies and guidelines.

⁶ 70% of adolescents in the project baseline were in school.

⁷ "School assemblies is refer to students gathering to salute the national anthem every week.

Most important nutrition behaviours for adolescents in schools

SC developed behavioural recommendations by shortlisting key dietary, youth sexual and reproductive health (YSRH) and hygiene behaviours and identifying specific, feasible actions that participant groups would be willing and able to do. The main sources for these behaviours were the *'Food Based Dietary Guidelines for School Aged Children for Cambodia'*, the *'UNFPA Youth Friendly Sexual and Reproductive Health Services Cambodia'* and the *'Cambodian National MIYCN SBC Strategy priority behaviours'*. Behaviours were then prioritised based on quantitative and qualitative data on what would most likely reduce malnutrition rates among adolescents in Cambodia and those that fit within the scope and scale of this project. For each key behaviour, specific feasible behaviours ("small, doable actions") were identified as those that would be possible and resonate with adolescents. Rapid, small-scale pre-testing of the small doable actions was carried out in one of the project's schools to understand what adolescents might be willing to try. Annex 1 shows the key behaviours and small, doable actions based on key insights from the project's literature review, baseline survey and formative research described below.

Dietary diversity was found to be quite high among adolescents in project areas (83% for girls and 78% for boys⁸) and affordability or availability were not considered barriers to food access. Adolescents mainly eat family foods for lunch and dinner, purchased and prepared by parents. Rice is the main part of family meals, other foods are only in small amounts. Skipping breakfast is common and if eaten is at food stalls on the way to school; often adolescents are not hungry before they leave home. Adolescents have some pocket money to spend on foods, purchasing unhealthy snacks and sugary drinks after school meaning often they are not hungry for dinner at home. Some adolescents (especially girls) skip dinner because they are concerned about body size. Adolescents are willing to try bringing food from home for breakfast and to replace unhealthy snacks with healthy bought options or food from home. Adolescents are willing to talk to their parents about increasing the amount of foods other than rice at family meals.

4. YOUTH NUTRITION CAMP

The Youth Nutrition Camp was scheduled from 7-9 April 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, it had to be postponed indefinitely. The training of facilitators, materials developed and social media engagement strategy will be the basis to run the event in the future. Meanwhile, the organizers of the Youth Nutrition Camp and facilitators will make use of social media and materials prepared for the event to continue engaging and interacting with the youth in Cambodia and promote healthy diets and healthy lifestyles during the pandemic.

4.1. Partnerships

The Youth Nutrition Camp exemplifies the excellent collaboration between EU-FAO FIRST Programme, HKI and the Civil Society, WFP, UNICEF and government counterparts in

⁸ Project Baseline.

Cambodia. Initiated by the EU - FAO FIRST Programme following the success of the forums, the Youth Nutrition Camp was initially planned together with HKI, thanks to its young active team. In late November 2019, the first meeting between FAO and HKI was organized to present the project to the Youth Nutrition Champion, Ms Chhun Bormey and her team. EU-FAO FIRST Programme and HKI reached out to other UN agencies - WFP and UNICEF - and main government partners - CARD and MAFF - which quickly were on board in this innovative project. This resulted in a multi partnership with various contributions, from expertise to financial contributions. Since January 2020, the organization board composed of EU - FAO FIRST Programme, HKI, WFP, UNICEF, MAFF and CARD (hereafter the organizers) met weekly, inviting various parties to assist, including the Facilitators, in order to lead the process smoothly and collect numerous contributions.

4.2. Selection of Advisors and Facilitators

A group of young staff of each organization involved in the Youth Nutrition Camp was assigned as Advisors. The idea was to have a group of young staff working together on this project, bringing fresh ideas with deep understanding of Youth needs. Both CARD and MAFF designated two young women to be part of the Advisory team. At the end, 10 young Advisors with different nationalities and backgrounds worked together to design the activities and guide the Facilitators during the Training of Facilitators.

In discussion with HKI, it was agreed that the project should engage with the 10 Youth YNCs previously selected by HKI to become the Facilitators of the event. In August of 2019, Ms. Chhun Bormey (Youth Nutrition Leader) announced on a newly created YNC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/YNCCambodia/>) that HKI in partnership with the SUN CSA Cambodia would be recruiting 10 YNCs to engage in advocacy and promote the eradication of malnutrition in Cambodia. This initiative was promoted through social media and during the 'future engagement' sessions of the Youth Forums, encouraging young people to apply by sending a short biography describing themselves and explaining their interest in becoming a YNC. The best ten applications were selected and the YNCs held their first meeting at HKI's office in late 2019. HKI's existing relationship with the YNCs and their interest in nutrition made them ideal candidates for the role of Facilitators, and all 10 were ready to take on this responsibility when the opportunity was presented. Six of them attended the Training of Facilitators and the entire group was committed to attend the Youth Nutrition Camp.

4.3. Key Messages

In promoting participation in the Youth Nutrition Camp to youth, the following benefits were suggested for use in promotional materials.

1. Three days of study tour and discussions with experienced staff and peers involved with food systems.
2. Increased knowledge of healthy diets and food systems
3. New challenges and experiences from the field to the kitchen
4. Expand your network and make new friends working directly with government, NGO and UN staff

5. Get yourself oriented for employment. What are you really looking for in your career?
6. Certificates of completion from the organising agencies.
7. Learn new tools for analysis and problem solving both as an individual and in a team.

The Youth Nutrition Camp aimed at delivering the following key messages to the youth:

- **The role of Food Systems in Nutrition and Healthy Diets**

Agriculture and food systems impact nutrition by influencing the quantity, quality and diversity of food produced, prices and purchasing power of producers, as well as consumer habits and diets.

In order to help young people to understand how the food system serves healthy diets, we have to unpack the linkages between nutrition and food system:

- Stakeholders of the food system: food producers (farmers and fisherfolk); food processing and storage; food traders (cooperatives, shops and markets); consumers, their habits and food preparation (cooking activities).
- Consider the food system from the perspective of the consumer's nutritional needs for healthy diets.

- **The importance of a Sustainable Food System**

Agriculture and food systems also have an impact on water, health, environment and caring practices, which are important drivers of nutrition. In addition, natural resource base (water, soil, air, climate, biodiversity) affects livelihoods, farmers and sustainable food security and nutrition for all. Consumers need to be aware of different aspects of food systems such as food resources, agro-ecology, seasonality of production and income, access to productive resources, market opportunities and infrastructure, health and care environment.

- **The importance of gender equity in Food Systems**

Women play a key role in household care and nutrition. Many nutritional challenges are also linked to gender issues. We have to teach them that agriculture and food systems can significantly affect women's time use, decision-making power, income, inequity. Women are the cornerstone of household care and nutrition and by privileging food produced by women they can be supported.

- **The power as Youth to have a real impact on food environment**

Incorporate education around healthy diets and sustainable food systems aims to increasing awareness of urban youths on the nutritional value of foods, how to read labels and why it is important to limit salts, sugar and fats in the diet will help to make informed consumption choices and support little producers for a sustainable food system.

4.4. Activities

The Youth Nutrition Camp event was designed around a series of field visits and learning activities to allow participants to get a holistic picture of what the different components of

food systems are, how they interact in a dynamic equilibrium and the role that consumers can play in promoting sustainable and healthy food systems.

4.4.1. Field Visits

The field visits were planned to cover the four major elements of a food system; Production, Processing, Marketing/Trade and Consumers demand and food preparation and included visits to an organic farmers' community, pepper plantations, salt marshes, community based processing enterprise and a seafood market amongst others. Besides the field visits, the event also included a cooking competition to promote healthy diets.

4.4.2. Learning Activities

A series of materials combining theory and practical exercises were developed to be tested in the Training of Facilitators. These materials aimed at supporting the field visits by providing a theoretical basis to complement participants' observations.

4.4.2.1. *An introduction to Food Systems and Healthy Diets*

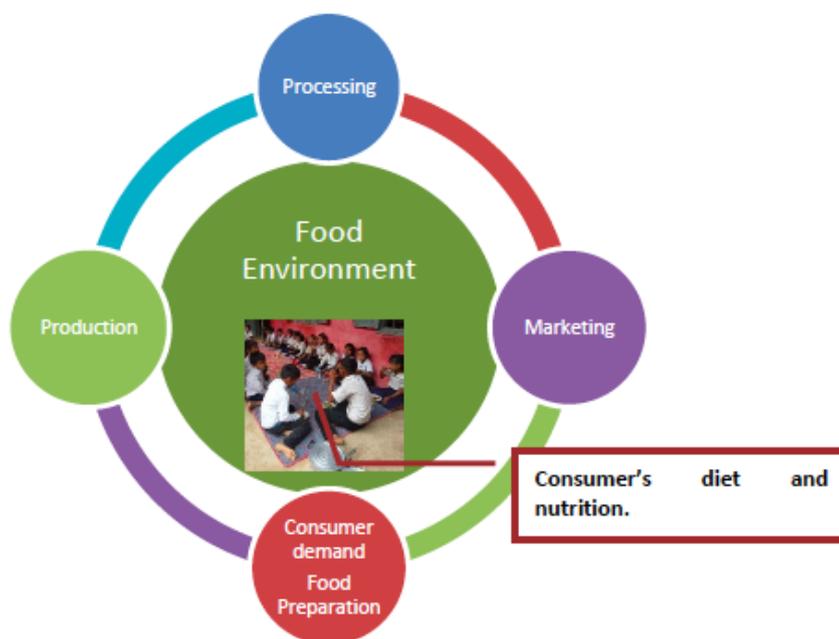
The concept of a food system encompasses **all of the processes and the people involved in taking food from agricultural production through to consumption**. This means all the activities involved in the production, processing, marketing, consumption and disposal of goods that come from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, including the inputs needed and the outputs generated at each of the steps. The food system also includes all of the people and the institutions (the rules) that initiate or inhibit change in the systems and the socio-political, economic and technical environment surrounding the activities.

In order to understand this, we need to understand what we mean by a 'system' – the system is our 'mental model' of a complex arrangement, where all of the components work together and are in a dynamic relationship with each other. Changing one part of the system can have impacts on other parts of the system. Our food system has many components. If we want to move people towards healthy diets, we need to ensure that the different components of the system are providing healthy food and that people are educated and aware of healthy choices and that they have the means to make those choices.

Modelling the Food System

The diagram below is a simplified conceptual model of a food system. Different organizations sometimes use different models and we need to understand that there are many possible ways to represent a complex system. The model below suits our purpose because it highlights the interactions between the **consumer** and other **elements of the food system** (production; handling and processing; marketing and trade; and consumer demand, food preferences and food preparation) through the **food environment**. For the purpose of the Youth Nutrition Camp, the food systems conceptual model was simplified as shown below.

Simple Conceptual Model of the Food System



This model helped piece together all the different elements of the food system observed during the Youth Nutrition Camp. In the discussions which followed the different field visits, we referred back to this model and asked the participants to relate their experiences and insights back to the model.

4.4.2.2. Practical Exercises

A series of practical exercises were developed to help the facilitators to get a better understanding of the food system in an interactive approach. The exercises covered different aspects of the food systems and facilitators had to provide solutions and devise strategies to solve simulated cases studies. Examples of the exercises can be found in Annex 2.

4.5. Dissemination

Besides national dissemination of the Youth Nutrition Camp through the youth nutrition Champions and Facebook, two articles were submitted to the FAO High Level Panel of Experts (HPLE) on Food Security and Nutrition to share experiences on youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems. Both submissions can be found in Annex 3.

5. TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Seen as the Youth Nutrition Camp rehearsal, this smaller event took place in Kep Province during three days in the exact same conditions to familiarize Advisors and Facilitators with the activities and the agenda and to make adjustments to the programme. The participants had the opportunity to evaluate the programme and the suitability of the activities and venues and to suggest improvements.

5.1. Learning Activities

In order to give the facilitators an understanding of how food systems work, we unpacked the linkages between nutrition and food systems by giving the participants opportunities to meet with the stakeholders of the food system: food production (farmers, fisher folk); food processing and storage; food trade (market); consumer habits and food preparation (cooking activities).

For the food production part, facilitators went to visit an Organic Farm in Kampong Nong Village. The 15 participants learned about the production system, benefits of growing vegetables in greenhouses and drip irrigation systems. Farmers of the organic community provided an overview of their daily work, why they transitioned from traditional to organic practices, the main challenges they faced and the ones they are still facing, the process of organic certification producers, challenges in accessing the market as well as environmental and health benefits of their production systems. The training was based in Kep and Facilitators supervised by the Advisors stayed at The Vine Retreat guesthouse that is self-sufficient for fruits and vegetables production with its own pepper plantation. Participants were introduced to the garden, by the owner Robert Caron, where more than 100 varieties of food plants are produced.

For the food processing aspects, a visit was made to a local dried shrimp enterprise: the owner explained her daily work, the challenges of the shrimp market and showed her facilities. She did not have any shrimps at the time of the visit, so it lacked concrete examples and highlighted the need to visit a larger facility with constant activity. After this first introduction to processing, Facilitators were introduced to the work in the Salt Fields of Kampot, to see how the salt is formed, collected, stored, transformed and packed and the importance of salt iodization. The students visited the Kampot Salt Museum, as well as the salt marshes.

The visit of the famous Crab Market in Kep province was an introduction to the food trade and consumers' demand and food preparation. Facilitators had one hour to observe the different sellers and cooking stalls. This visit was the occasion to have a follow-up conversation with them about the provenance of food and seafood conservation.

The field visits were complemented by a series of learning exercises to consolidate facilitators' understanding of the different components of the food system. Those practical exercises were designed to promote team work, critical thinking and presentation skills.



Two Facilitators giving a presentation after designing a new strategy to improve the processing standards of an imaginary company using a food systems framework.

Finally, the Healthy Diet aspect was covered through discussions about the different meals that were served: composed of local, organic and plant based ingredients, prepared with care at Vine Retreat. It was the occasion to sensitize the participants to Healthy Diets with very tasty dishes; showing them that healthy meals do not mean boring. During the second day, a cooking competition was organized and the Facilitators were divided in two teams with Advisors in each team to help them. They had to create and cook a complete and healthy dish with the ingredients available. They had to follow some guidelines like using at least two kinds of vegetables (from the Vine Retreat garden), one protein source (eggs, beef or chicken) and one carbohydrate source (rice or noodles). At the end of the competition, their dish was evaluated upon three criteria: healthiness, taste and presentation. The jury was composed of three Advisors, lean Russell, FIRST Policy Advisor, Khim Sreypov (CARD), Chhun Bormey (HKI) and Robert Caron, owner of Vine Retreat. Both teams did really well and received congratulations from the judges.



One of the teams discussing which dish they would prepare for the cooking competition

5.2. Facilitation skills

As well as familiarising the Advisors and YNCs with the content and structure of the Nutrition Camp, the purpose of the Training of Facilitators was to build the facilitation skills of the YNCs in preparation for the main event, when they would be facilitating the learning of a group of around 40 other young people. The young Advisors guided the six YNCs in attendance over the three-day event, helping them to understand the principles of facilitation and to distinguish facilitation from training or teaching. For many of the activities, the Advisors acted as facilitators for the YNCs' learning in order to demonstrate the role that the YNCs would adopt for the Nutrition Camp. The YNCs learned and consolidated skills such as public speaking and stimulating discussion, interaction, and critical thinking amongst the larger group and allowing them to guide their own learning.

5.3. Outcome

Over the three-day Training of Facilitators, the Advisors and Facilitators became familiar with the content, materials, and structure of the Youth Nutrition Camp and refined the agenda, adding to and adjusting sessions where needed and excising sections that were deemed too time consuming, overly complicated, or impractical. The organisers therefore agreed to cut some activities for the main event. To make the camp more manageable, allowing more time to be allocated to each session and more attention to each participant, the organisers further decided to lower the number of participants from 50 to 40.

The site visits, discussions, and group learning exercises were all highly successful, allowing the Facilitators to develop their ability to solve problems creatively, work in teams, and guide their own learning. By the end of the three days, they fully understood the roles and responsibilities of Facilitators and generally displayed confidence and enthusiasm when taking the initiative on the tasks assigned to them.

The Facilitators also quickly grasped and were able to explain the different elements of the food system. This was most evident in the learning exercises, which allowed the Facilitators to showcase the knowledge and skills they had built over the previous three days.

5.4. Evaluation of the Training of Facilitators

After the Training of Facilitator, the Advisors created an evaluation online survey through Survey Monkey platform. Facilitators were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the activities and learning materials, usefulness and relevance of the training and suggest improvement for the Youth Nutrition Camp. Overall, the facilitators rated the experience from Very Good to Excellent. The learning activities, the cooking competition and the visit to the organic farmers' community were found the most relevant activities to help gain better understanding the Food Systems. On the other hand, the visit to the shrimp processing enterprise was not rated so highly, mainly because of the absence of produce at the time of the visit.

In addition, the facilitators also identified the most important takeaways from the training. These included team working and collaboration, deep understanding of the food systems and the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle, confidence in public speaking, and improved communication and facilitation skills.

6. Youth Nutrition Camp: online application and social media campaign

In February of 2020, after the organization of the Training of Facilitators, the organisers created an event for the Nutrition Camp through the YNC Facebook page. The event page (<https://www.facebook.com/events/183033023105841/>) provided information in Khmer presenting the event and what participants could expect from the Camp with regard to activities, skills and knowledge acquisition, and selection criteria.



Screenshot of the Youth Nutrition Camp event posted on Facebook

An online application form was created using Google Forms and applications opened on the 2nd of March. Young people were encouraged to register their interest and to share the event on their Facebook page. Applicants were required to fill in a Google Form and include a brief bio detailing their interest in FSN. Applicants were given the option to write a short statement or record a short clip about their interest on FSN. The idea was to create an interactive advertisement and application; using tools they are familiar with. Facebook appeared to be the most practical; for sharing content from one person to another and spreading information quickly. Moreover, Facebook allows tracking how many views a video had and provides an idea of how far key messages can reach through this platform. Google Forms was used as a simple and easy application tool that needs no more than an email address.

6.1. Selection Criteria

In order to be eligible to participate in the Nutrition Camp, applicants had to:

- Be between 18 and 25 years of age;
- Hold Cambodian citizenship;
- Have an interest in food security and nutrition, food systems, agriculture or agribusiness;
- Have an active social media presence (active Facebook account preferred).

The selection criteria were kept minimal in an effort to make the event as inclusive as possible and encourage applications from youth from minority or marginalised groups, such as those with disabilities or from ethnic minorities. While the search for participants targeted those universities with which the organisers had already been in contact through the Youth Forums, enrolment in university was by no means a prerequisite, and efforts were made to reach out to those outside of the universities through other networks but with similar level of education. At the time of writing, Khmer Community Development has expressed a clear interest in supporting the Camp by seeking participants among the ethnic minority communities whom they serve.

6.2. Selection Results

Due to social distancing measures imposed by the COVID-19 outbreak, the Youth Nutrition Camp had to be indefinitely postponed and applications closed until such time as a new date is able to be set. At the time of postponement, the Youth Nutrition Camp event page had received 46 applications (34 female and 12 male) from 13 different provinces, and 258 Facebook users had registered their interest. A notice was posted on the event page advising of this decision and all completed applications have been kept on file for future processing.

7. CAMBODIAN YOUTH DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

To continue with the momentum gained on youth engagement, efforts were redirected towards supporting the youth in Cambodia in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cambodian youth have had to make drastic changes to their lifestyle, most notably the need to maintain social distancing, which requires them to stay at home as much as possible and to work, study, and socialise remotely. In order to ascertain how this was affecting youth, the event organisers asked each of the ten Facilitators to specify five ways in which their lives had been changed by the crisis. In their five feedback points, virtually all of the Facilitators mentioned the increased difficulty of maintaining a diet rich in nutrients and variety, relying instead on foods with a long shelf-life that could be bought in bulk. They stated that this was due to the growing cost and shrinking availability of foods such as organic vegetables, and also to restrictions on movement making those foods harder to access. From these responses, the organisers drew 10 key points as shown in Box 1.

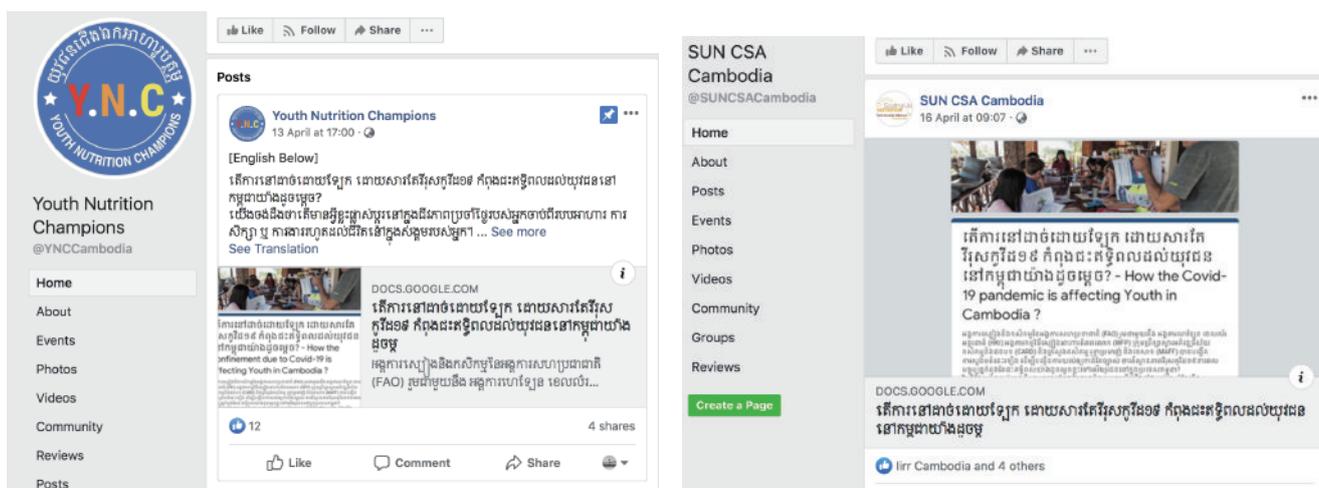
COVID-19 AND YOUTH

1. Lack of access to healthy food;
2. Lack of exercise (feeling unhealthy and stressed);
3. Isolated from friends and family (stress);
4. Difficult to maintain motivation and work ethic;
5. Disillusioned about behaviour of the community (people acting selfishly; not taking care of each other; exacerbates rich/poor divide);
6. Worried about economic decline (stress);
7. Change has been sudden, no time to adapt;
8. Increasing cost of food and essential goods;
9. Fear of catching the virus;
10. Uncertainty; how long will this last? What will be the short- and long-term ramifications?

At that stage, food supplies had not been drastically affected, and most of the foods that were available before the crisis could still be readily found at many shops and markets. It was therefore still possible to maintain a healthy diet, albeit with a greater degree of planning and prioritisation, and the Advisors and Facilitators would take on the role of advising youth on how to adjust to this. However, the situation was almost certain to change as the pandemic continues over the following weeks and months and food supply and processing facilities are affected. The Advisory team will follow developments closely and tailor their key messages to the changing circumstances.

7.1. Online Survey for impacts of COVID-19 for youth

From the feedback provided by the facilitators, the organizers developed a short survey for the youth through Google forms, which was posted on the SUN CSA Cambodia and Youth Nutrition Champions Facebook pages to identify how the pandemic is affecting them. This would help to design multimedia products with key messages to facilitate youth to follow healthy diet and lifestyle in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey targeted the youth who are defined in Cambodia as “people aged between 15 and 30years”⁹ and it was open from 13 April 2020 to 01 May 2020.



Screenshots of the Youth Nutrition Champions and SUN CSA Cambodia Facebook pages hosting the link to the survey.

7.1.1. Results of the Survey for the Youth

A total of 91 Cambodians participated in the survey. However, six respondents were not included in the analysis as they were not either living in Cambodia at the time of the survey or were out of the youth age range. The remaining 85 participants consisted of 53 females

⁹ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS). 2011. National Policy on Youth Development. Accessed 23 April 2020. https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Cambodia_2011_Policy_Youth_Development.pdf

and 32 males from 12 different provinces, even though the majority – 60 percent – were living in Phnom Penh.

According to the results, 41 percent found it was hard to adapt to this situation. However, from those, 60 percent are female and 40 percent are male. This could be explained because data showed that females limited more strictly than males the number of times that they went out over a week compared to the pre-pandemic situation (Figure 1).

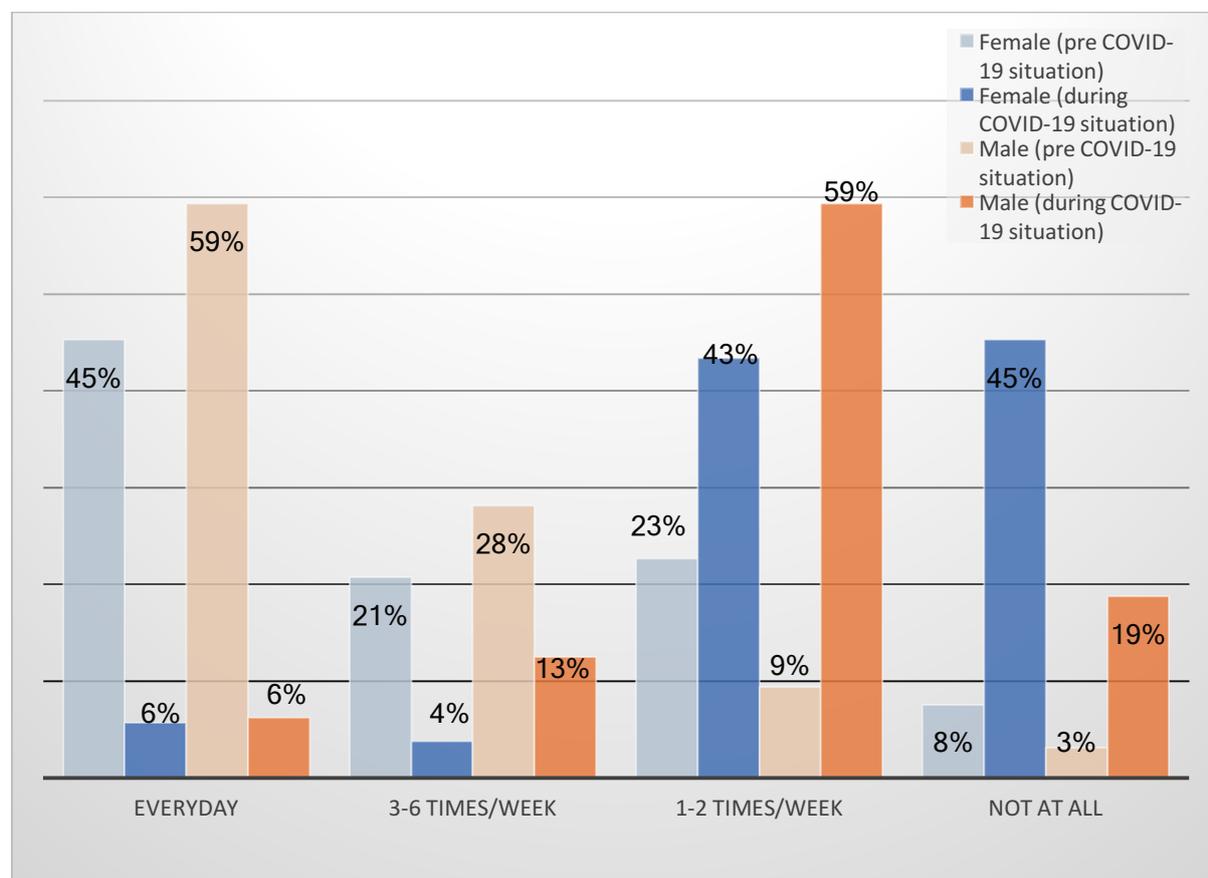


Figure 1. Comparison between pre-pandemic and pandemic situation of number of times a week the youth go out by sex-disaggregated data.

The official announcements from the Royal Government of Cambodia and the World Health Organization (WHO) were the most trusted source of information related to COVID-19, followed by a lesser extent, health units / centres. In addition, the youth used Facebook as a main channel to get information related to COVID-19 over other channels such as TV or radio.

Overall, the youth in Cambodia showed a good understanding about the main preventative measures for COVID-19. Almost all respondents (98 percent) reported washing their hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand gel on a regular basis and 75 percent stated the importance of staying home. Masks were used by 79 percent of females but only by 63 percent of young men. When it came to cooking meat and eggs thoroughly, 75 percent of female were aware of its importance but this figure dropped to 59 percent for male respondents. Other practices such as covering the mouth when sneezing and coughing were also practiced by 75 percent of the respondents but social distancing and avoiding close contact with people showing flu like symptoms were practiced at lower levels (Figure 2).

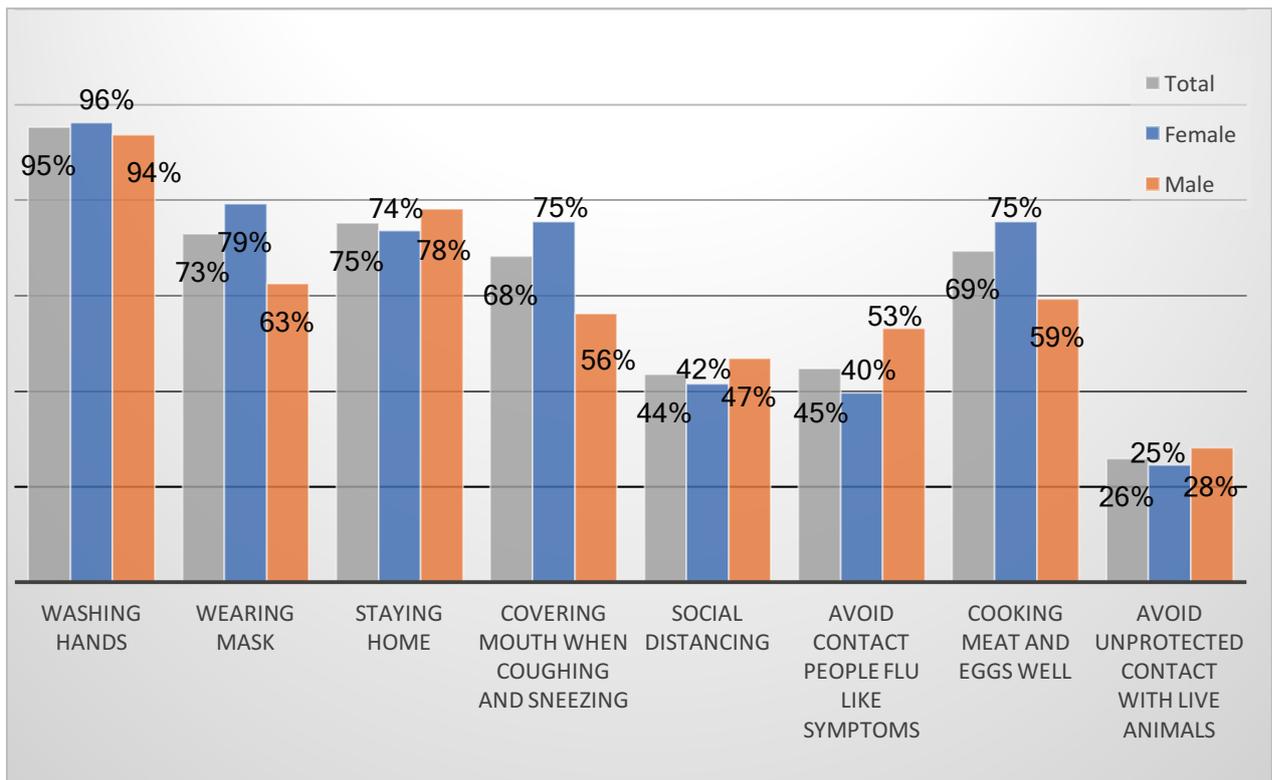


Figure 2. COVID – 19 preventative measures practiced by the Cambodian youth according to the survey

7.1.1.1. Impacts on diets

All respondents stated that due to the COVID-19 situation, they cooked at home, none of them went to restaurants or had street food and only a very small percentage ordered food for delivery. The survey showed an increase of consumption of frozen food and processed convenience foods (i.e. instant noodles) by 35 percent and 27 percent of the respondents respectively. However, the increase in consumption of frozen food is higher for females, while the increase in processed convenience foods (referred to as fast foods) is higher for males as shown in Figure 3. In terms of availability and access, 20 percent of the respondents reported that there is lower availability of fresh product such as vegetables and fruits and 23 percent said that the prices went up limiting their food choices.

One of the positive impacts on diets due to the pandemic, was that 48 percent of the respondents stated that they have more time to cook healthy meals. However, this figure varied when comparing female (53 percent) and male (41 percent). This variation was likely to be due to gender roles in Cambodia (Figure 3).

Finally, overconsumption of food due to being at home all day was reported by 28 percent of the respondents. This pattern was more common amongst males (38 percent) than females (23 percent) (Figure 3).

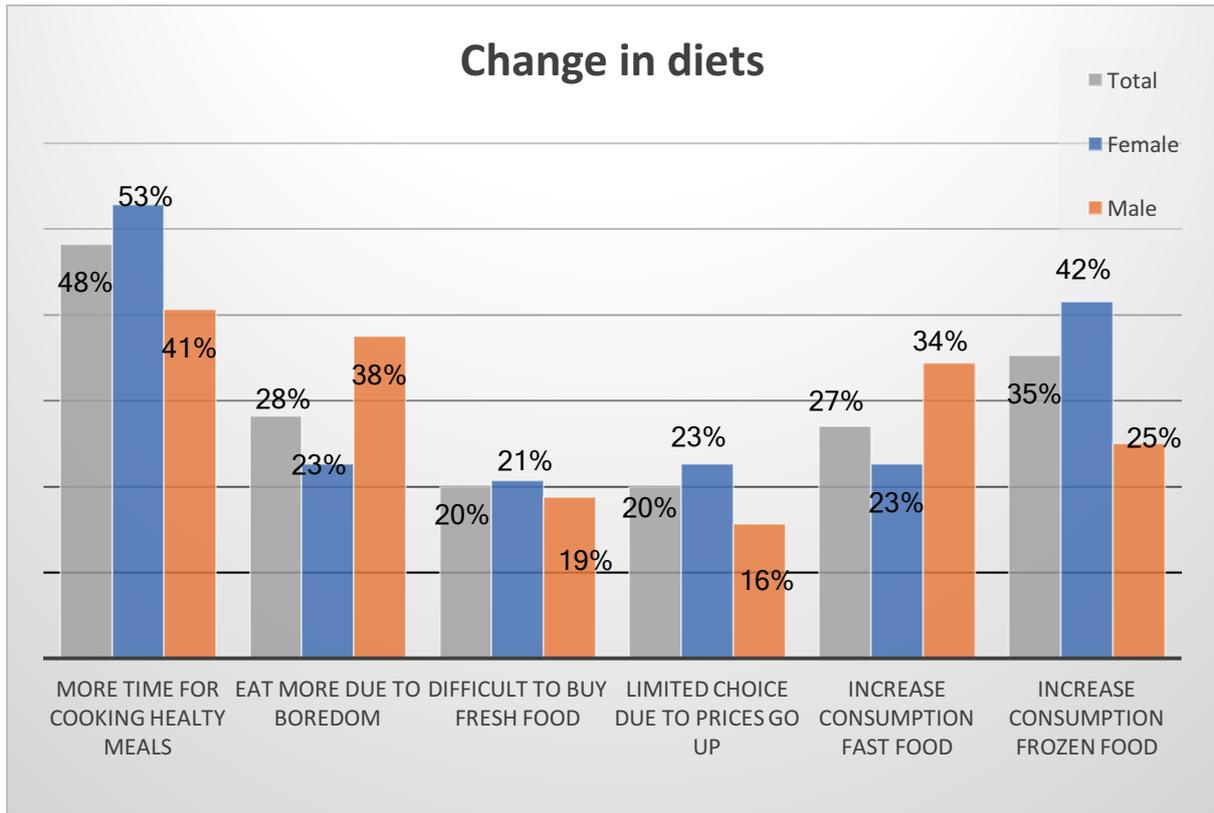


Figure 3. Change in diets by the youth due to the COVID-19 pandemic according to the survey.

7.1.1.2. Keeping social interactions

Most of the youth in Cambodia - 88 percent according to the survey - use Facebook or similar social media platforms to keep social interaction with friends and families, while 51 percent also reported the use of Telegram and WhatsApp and 36 percent the use of phone calls. Only 11 percent responded they were still meeting with their friends, and this behaviour was more common amongst males than females (Figure 4).

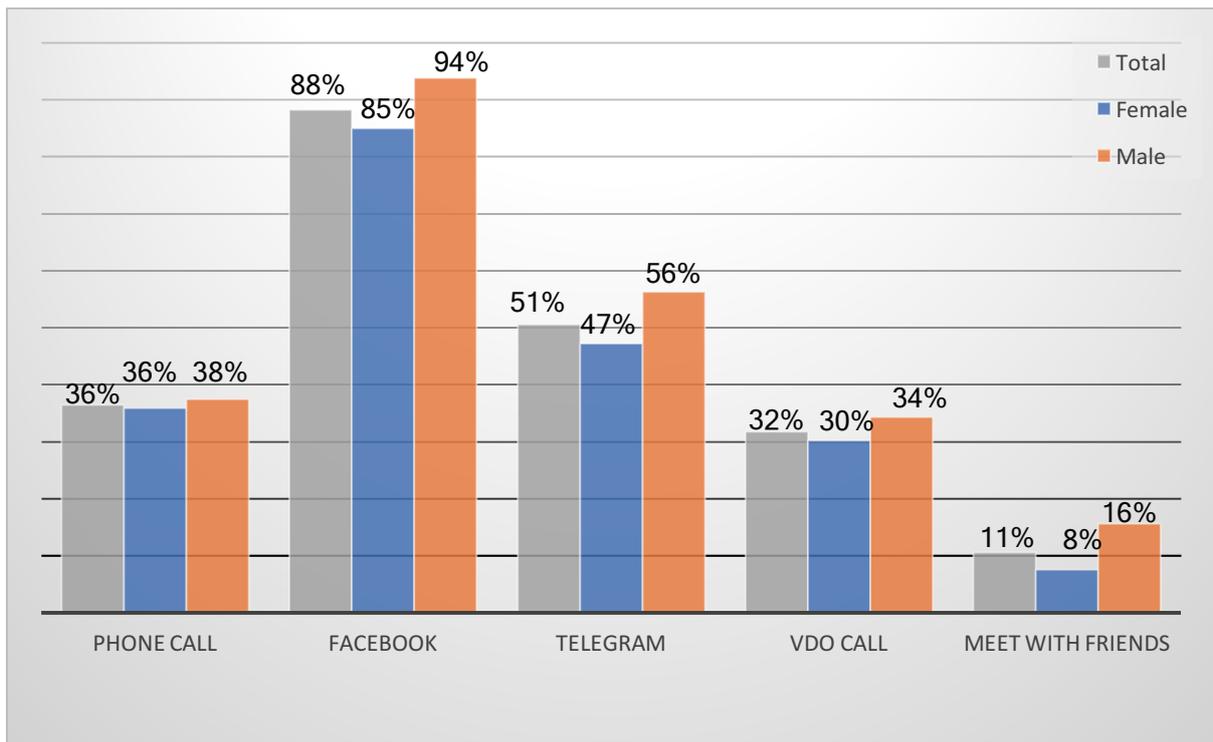


Figure 4. Preferred ways to keep social interaction with family and friends during the pandemic by the Cambodian youth.

7.1.1.3. People's behaviour in times of a pandemic.

Overall, the youth observed that people in their surroundings practiced better hygiene and were aware of its importance due to COVID - 19. People were paying much more attention to their health and followed advice from authorities. They also noted that people were trying to eat more often at home and eat healthy and nutritious foods. However, they were concerned for those who did not care about the pandemic or believed in rumours and misinformation as well as possible forms of discrimination among people or even communities which might arise as consequence of COVID-19. In addition, they reported that some opportunistic people were taking advantage of the situation by increasing the prices to make more profits. Stress, anxiety and being bored/lazy and spending more time on their smartphones were also reported by the youth as a consequence of the situation.

7.1.1.4. Youth's strategies for healthy lifestyle during the COVID-19 outbreak

The survey asked for the strategies the youth adopted to keep healthy and stay focused on their studies during the pandemic. Overall, all were aware of the importance eating home cooked meals that included healthy, diversified and nutritious foods. As important as having healthy diets, doing physical exercise while staying at home was also reported by a great number of respondents. While some opted to do yoga, others preferred to workout at home or go for early morning walking around their homes. It was also widely mentioned the need to keep a daily routine by scheduling time to study, to do exercise and to rest and sleep. However, it was highlighted that studying from home through online lessons is more

challenging. Some respondents stated that since they spent more time at home they read more books.

7.2. How to Keep Engaging Youth during the COVID-19 pandemic

In order to keep the audience interested and engaged during this period, the organizers, including the ten young facilitators, are maintaining an active social media presence by posting regularly on the YNC Facebook page and encouraging interaction with followers.

The objectives of social media engagement on the YNC Facebook page during the COVID-19 crisis are:

1. Maintain interest amongst youth in the Youth Nutrition Camp and nutrition issues generally;
2. Get feedback from young people on how the pandemic is affecting them;
3. Offer guidance to youth on how to combat the negative effects of COVID-19 such as stress, lack of access to a diverse range of foods, disruption to routine, and lack of exercise;
4. Emphasise the importance of maintaining a healthy diet during the pandemic;
5. Offer clear and accurate information from reliable sources and combat false information;
6. Provide a platform for youths interested in nutrition and food systems to continue to socialise with like-minded young people, learn about important issues, and develop new skills.

Organizers are posting regularly on the YNC page using feedback provided by the facilitators and audience and adhering to messaging from trusted sources such as WHO and MoH. Posts maintain a positive tone and avoid alarmist language while also recognising the seriousness of the situation. The posts include the **“A Day in the Life”** video series. In this series, organizers helped facilitators to create a series of short videos to post on the YNC Facebook page Nutrition Camp event page explaining how the current COVID-19 situation is affecting them and exploring ways to deal with the various restrictions and stressors. Videos are posted weekly and facilitators and organizers engage the audience by asking for suggestions in the comments section. In a second step, videos will also include challenges and main issues identified through the youth survey. Videos from facilitators are compiled and edited by the organizers. Other posts on the YNC Facebook page may include tips for staying fit during isolation; tips on healthy, accessible, and affordable foods healthy meals prepared by YNCs along with a list of ingredients; shared links and news from trusted sources (in Khmer or with a Khmer translation or introduction).

Examples of “A Day in the Life” video series can be found in the following links:

- <https://www.facebook.com/YNCCambodia/videos/3094854677239025/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/YNCCambodia/videos/756527801419098/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/YNCCambodia/videos/256321928852038/>

8. Recommendations

- **Give voice to youth.** Youth, defined as the age group between 15 and 30 years old¹⁰, represents the 31.7 percent of the total population in Cambodia¹¹, have been increasingly recognized as a critical group to promote sustainable food systems and healthy diets. It is vital that their needs, interests and heterogeneity are heard and integrated into the decision-making and policy processes.
- **Design innovative approaches to reach the youth.** For the Youth Nutrition Camp, social media was key to reach the youth. The youth survey also showed that almost all used Facebook or similar platforms for social interaction or even to get informed. This channel proved to be very effective, particularly in urban areas.
- **Adapt the engagement strategies to ensure no one is left behind.** Particularly in rural areas with limited access to the internet and social media, local NGOs and community based organizations are a great vehicle to reach the rural and poor youth as well as ethnic minorities.
- **Having a young team of Advisers brings fresh and innovative ideas.** When planning event for the youth, make sure to involve young members in the team. Promote them to design activities and consult them along the process. They are the ones who know much better how to capture the interest of the youth and what it is relevant to them. In addition, the youth interact more easily among them and they may find more confident to ask and discuss ideas with people with similar age.
- **Targeting tertiary students** may lead to higher impacts. It is more likely that this target group can become more influential and transfer their knowledge to other members of their communities.
- **Promote discovery learning** and avoid lecturing the youth. It is unlikely to keep the youth engaged in long theoretical explanations. Instead, facilitate the activities by fostering observation, group discussion, team work, critical thinking and hands-on activities.
- Designing a **simplified conceptual food systems** model where participants were placed at the centre – as consumers – has proved to be a successful approach. It helped participants to better understand how the different subsystems interact amongst each other, how these can affect consumers’ diets and how consumers can play a key role in rent parts food systems.
- To ensure **inclusiveness** and that **gender aspects of food systems** are fully covered, it is recommended to have on board a gender expert in the design and conduct of the activities. Involving a young staff from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) would not only bring their expertise to an activity, but also would promote new way of doing things to the Ministry.
- **Youth leaders.** Conducting activities for the youth facilitated by the youth create strong opportunities to build their leadership and facilitation skills. These skills are critical for

¹⁰ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS). 2011. National Policy on Youth Development. Accessed 23 April 2020. https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Cambodia_2011_Policy_Youth_Development.pdf

¹¹ OECD Development Centre. 2017., “Youth Well-being Policy Review of Cambodia”, EU-OECD Youth Inclusion Project, Paris. Accessed 23 April 2020. <https://www.oecd.org/development/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Youth-well-being-policy-review-Cambodia.pdf>

the future youth leaders to become agents of changes and disseminate and influence their communities about the importance of transitioning towards sustainable food systems and healthy diets.

- **Involving young staff from Government** can help to facilitate links with faculties and technical staff networks.
- Youth do not perceive agriculture as an attractive career. Engaging them with the different elements of food systems, such as agro-industry or agribusiness, may help to **retain the youth capital in the agricultural sector**.
- **Engage the private sector**. The private sector proved very receptive to sharing knowledge and explaining their enterprises. This gives young people a chance to see interesting avenues for employment.

9. Looking ahead

The Youth Nutrition Camp was a fresh and innovative approach that yielded very successful results and reinforced a strong cooperation amongst a wide range of stakeholders. To keep momentum on youth engagement which is also explicitly recognized in the 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023, the Organizers will develop a series of materials based on the experience from the Youth Nutrition Camp.

All materials developed for the Youth Nutrition Camp should be translated in Khmer and make them available online for other organizations and projects which can take advantage of them. The learning activities, exercises and the food system conceptual module can be used as a basis and adapted to the context of other activities focusing on food systems and related topics and targeting the youth.

Besides the products already developed for the Youth Nutrition Camp, the Organizers will also develop guidelines and strategies on youth engagement. These guidelines will have a general scope to ensure they are applicable in a wide range of contexts, capture youth from all age ranges and are adaptable when targeting different youth groups, from tertiary students in urban settings to rural youth, ethnic minorities or disabled people.

Further work will be oriented towards developing a youth module which can be added on existing programmes and project to ensure they reach the youth. The module will include a guide for facilitators on how to run the activities by ensuring “facilitation” instead of teaching or lecturing and include tips and ideas to promote observation, discovery learning and team work for the participants. This facilitation guidelines will be complemented by a brief curriculum covering all elements and topics of food systems, from production to marketing and food consumption. The principle of this curriculum will be similar to those developed for Farmer Field Schools, *learning by doing*. It will include a series of suggested activities and identify the type of facilities that can be visited by the youth to conduct their observations and learn about people’s daily work.

The learning activities designed for the Youth Nutrition Camp can be conducted separately in a series of linked activities using small study trips and discussion sessions instead of an intensive three-day camp. Projects could select materials and activities to suit their own purposes and achieve the general goal of involving youth in their activities. For example, a project may only want to cover the topic of processing or the topic of marketing through a one day activity. This will help to reduce budget and time constraints.

It is expected that the development of this youth module will help development partners, civil society and the government to strengthen their engagement with youth and ensure they can also benefit from development projects.

Annexes

Annex 1. Objectives, project behaviours and doable actions for adolescents¹².

Behavioural Objective	Key Behaviours	Small Doable Actions
Healthy diet for adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat food from all food types • Eat three meals a day • Eat enough food each day • Reduce food high in salt, sugar and fat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat three meals a day and healthy snacks • Eat healthy breakfast at home or pack food from home to eat at school • Talk to parents about increasing the amount of 'variety' dishes (foods other than rice) at lunch and dinner • Buy healthy snacks after school or bring them from home like banana grilled or boiled, ripe mango, ripe papaya • Attend health centres to discuss nutrition with health centre staff
Preventing adolescent pregnancy and poor reproductive health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent boys and girls use youth-friendly adolescent sexual reproductive health services at health facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend class visits to health facilities • Ask health centre staff for follow up to discuss ASRH issues
Hygiene at home and at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwashing with soap before eating and making food and after using the toilet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands with soap before eating and after using toilet at home and at school • Advocate to school for soap to be supplied

Annex 2. Practical exercises prepared for the Training of Facilitators and the Youth Nutrition Camp.

a) **Food Production**

How does an organic production system fit into the broader food system? Use your systems analysis as a basis to model organic vegetable production in Cambodia. Focus your thinking downstream to the final consumer. How can we influence food policy, legislation and regulations, marketing, investments or education to increase the domestic demand for organic vegetables and stimulate domestic production? One big issue for Cambodia has been a lack of trust in the market. You are asked to think very carefully about the role of government in certification of organic produce. What is the

¹² Save the Children's Adolescent Nutrition Project's Experience.

role of the government and what is the role for the market? Who should be responsible for labelling and for testing of produce?

You are staff members for the Department of Vegetable Production of the General Directorate of Agriculture and the Department of Agro-Industry of the MAFF. Work together in groups to discuss the problem. You have an expert on market development from the World Bank to assist (Advisor). She/he has agreed to answer some questions for you and then to help to make a recommendation for system improvement for the MAFF.

You have 40 minutes to develop the analysis and then to identify the points where policy, legislation, market development, investment or education can bring about significant system improvement. Pick the one area of improvement you think will work best and prepare a five-minute pitch for the Minister (Advisors to role play). Each team has to deliver a 5-minute pitch.

b) Food Processing

Taking into account all you have previously learned and what you have seen in the field, you are to work together in small groups on the food processing aspects of the following situation.

You are employed by a local company Pik Pak Processing, which is entering into a partnership with Matchless Foods (a very large foreign company). You are responsible for Quality Assurance for a new product line of premium, organic, rice-based baby foods suitable for ages 6 months and above. The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Industry and Handicraft and Ministry of Commerce are watching very closely. Your boss tells you to make sure you don't make any mistakes. She wants you to get back to her with some planning points in the next 30 minutes. Although she tells you it can be some rough points for discussion, you know that your future with the company depends on the quality of your ideas.

Use your food system analysis to consider the following:

- What are the elements of the system that will be under the control of your company?
- How do you plan to manage food quality?
- How can the other elements of the system outside your control be managed to ensure the product will succeed in the market?
- Are there any partnerships with upstream or downstream companies or organizations that can help you?

Use your small team to brainstorm the problem and prepare a five-minute presentation for your boss and the representative of Matchless Foods who is visiting today (Advisors). Keep in mind her final advice to you...don't mess this up. Each team will be judged according to the ability to use the food system framework to analyze the problem and present a plan to improve the existing processing operations to meet modern standards. Use your imagination to fill in any details that you need to complete the task. Divide the tasks of leading, recording and reporting amongst the group. You have 40 minutes to get the job done and to be ready to report back in Khmer.

c) **Markets and Trade**

You have been sent to the Marketing Division of Pik Pak Processing as a result of your success in the Quality Assurance Role and your recent nomination as Employee of the Month. After your month-long training at Matchless Foods in the UK, you are ready for a new challenge in marketing.

You have been formed into tight teams of young professionals in the recent reshuffle of the Marketing Division. Two teams have been tasked with taking opposing positions in a debate to expose any weaknesses in the design of the campaign to launch.

The marketing proposal for the new **6+ (Six Months Plus) Baby Food** is for an export product. The conception is that Cambodia can produce the perfect rice and other ingredients and export markets. China is very interested. Matchless Foods think they can build the processing plant and the workforce to produce the new product in Cambodia and combine this with their international supply chain to market the product around the World.

Market Proposal 6+ Baby Food

Market Proposal The marketing proposal is designed around the usual elements:

- **Product:** the product must be premium quality, completely safe and appealing both to children over 6 months and their caregivers.
- **Price:** the pricing policy is to aim for the higher end of the market. Basically, we don't cut corners when it comes to our children's health.
- **Packaging:** the focus is on food safety, glass jars, hermetically sealed and fully labelled including ingredients and nutrition information, compliance with trusted certification, to meet ASEAN, EU, Japan and USA requirements for organic certification.
- **Promotion:** through Matchless Foods branding and world standing. Campaigns developed for both western and China markets.
- **Placement:** Products to be placed through existing contracts for supply of Matchless Foods to supermarket chains in over 60 countries.

Depending on the specific role allocated to your team, you must either defend or argue against the marketing plan for the premium organic **6+ Baby Food**. You must use a Food System Analysis to accomplish your task. After 20 minutes, each team will present a basic argument for 3- 5 minutes. There will be a further 10 minutes for developing the argument and then each team will have a final chance to present their case. You must use different team members for each part of your presentation. A panel from Pik Pak Processing and Matchless Foods will evaluate the presentations and give feedback (Advisors).

Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems

As an example of a project based on Youth engagement, I would like to introduce the activity that we have been working on currently underway in Cambodia.

Empowering Youth for Food Systems Improvement and Healthy Diets

The activity is an initiative of the EU-FAO FIRST Programme in Cambodia and builds upon work by the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development, Hellen Keller International and WHO, to conduct a series of Youth Forums in 2019 on the topic of healthy diets. The topic of healthy diets was chosen as one of the priority actions for multi-sectoral cooperation under the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023. This successful series of youth forums generated a fresh enthusiasm and a new approach for the agencies involved in food security and nutrition in Cambodia, extending into further efforts to support the engagement of youth in 2020.

To address the general lack of understanding of food systems and to promote healthy diets amongst young people, the EU-FAO First Programme has reached out to key partners to conduct an Adventure Camp event for 2020 to empower and engage youth around sustainable food systems and healthy diets. The objectives of this camp are aligned with the Joint Priorities for Healthy Diets and Food Value Chains and Food Safety of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019 – 2023 in Cambodia and the mainstreaming of the cross-cutting issue Gender and Youth.

The objective of the Adventure Camp is to engage a group of Cambodian students in activities related to improving food security and nutrition. Fifty university students from different backgrounds will participate in a three-day event in Kep Province, which will combine field visits with exploratory learning activities centred on food systems and healthy diets. Other activities in the field are designed to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The students are selected through a social media campaign designed to foster wider interest and awareness of the issues amongst their peers. The training of facilitators for the Adventure Camp is a preliminary activity and the Youth Champions developed by Hellen Keller International provide the nucleus for the event facilitators. These Youth Champions are all young persons who have demonstrated interest and commitment to working in the field of food security and nutrition.

This initiative is about giving the keys to the young generation to have a real impact on their food environment by raising their awareness and giving them voice. The training is focused on the potential of the young generation as future leaders contributing to national objectives for food security and nutrition and the achievement of SDG2. The event has also

designed in recognition of the changing nature of nutritional problems in Cambodia and the need for double duty actions to combat malnutrition in all forms. Overweight and obesity are increasingly evident in Cambodia, particularly for women of reproductive age. Knowing that young people are increasingly independent in making food choices, it is vital that the education system takes account of this independence and that young people are recognized as decision makers. The Adventure Camp is designed to recognize that independence and support healthy choices based upon a more comprehensive understanding of the food system.

It is to ensure that the participating students, who are future leaders and agents of change, are aware of the basic issues and have an understanding of how food systems affects their lives and the social and economic development of the country. This could lead to increase their effectiveness in professional roles, now and in the future and to provide insights into prospective avenues for employment.

Our key messages are:

Food systems have a critical role in influencing nutrition and healthy diets

Agriculture and food systems affect nutrition by influencing the quantity, quality and diversity of food produced, prices and purchasing power of producers, as well as consumer habits and diets.

In order to for young people to understand how the food system serves healthy diets, we have to unpack the linkages between nutrition and food system.

We need to introduce all the stakeholders of the food system: food production (farmers, fisher-folks); food processing and storage; food trade (cooperative, retail shops and markets); consumer habits and food preparation (cooking activities).

Participants should also consider the food system from the perspective of the consumer's nutritional needs for healthy diets and to learn how the elements of the food system can directly affect their health.

A sustainable food system depends on a productive farming systems and stewardship of the natural resource base

Agriculture and food systems also have an impact on water, health environment and caring practices, which are important drivers of nutrition. They have to understand the environment stakes of supporting small farmers/producers instead of big productions. They should have an overview of the natural resource base (water, soil, air, climate, biodiversity) and which impact it could have on livelihoods, farmers and sustainable food security and nutrition for all. We will give them a comprehensive context about food resources, agro-ecology, seasonality of production and income, access to productive resources, market opportunities and infrastructure, health and care environment.

Gender affects the roles in food systems and on the impacts of the food system

Women play a key role in household care and nutrition. Many nutritional challenges are also linked to gender issues. We have to teach them that agriculture and food systems can significantly affect women's time use, decision-making power, income, inequity. They have to understand that women are the cornerstone of household care and nutrition and by privileging food produced by women they support them.

Young people have the power to have a real impact on food environments

Education around healthy diets and sustainable food systems aims to increase the awareness of urban youth on the nutritional value of foods, how to read labels and why it is important to limit salts, sugar and fats in the diet. This information will help them to make informed consumption choices and to support smaller producers for a sustainable food system.

The Adventure Camp was launched in partnership with Helen Keller International and involved the Council of Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) and other line ministries as well as World Food Program and UNICEF. It is also the opportunity to reinforce cooperation between UN organizations and civil society in supporting the achievement of the objectives of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition hand in hand with the government.

Available at: http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/cfs-hlpe/discussions/youth_engagement_employment

Camille Rameau, FAO Cambodia.

Submitted 23.01.2020

The engagement of youth in sustainable agriculture and food systems in Cambodia

I would like to offer some brief comments concerning the opportunities for, and constraining factors affecting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, particularly regarding youth access to training, education and mentorship programmes and to policy making processes in Cambodia. These comments are based on experience with agricultural education and policy matters in Cambodia and other countries. I am currently employed in Cambodia as an EU-FAO Policy Officer for the FIRST Programme supporting transformation to support sustainable food systems.

Cambodia has a youthful population, with tremendous enthusiasm to secure rewarding employment, pursue opportunities for enterprise and to innovate. Cambodia has the potential to secure a once only **demographic dividend** in coming decades. This potential

arises as the youthful population surges forward; dependency ratios for the workforce are falling; health is improving; and knowledge, skills and technology are all fuelling economic and social development. The dividend is by no means guaranteed. The right investments and policies are required to capitalise on the opportunity. Handled skilfully, this is the opportunity for Cambodia to score on its sustainable development goals and to move rapidly onwards from Lower Middle Income Status. For the agricultural sector, the returns to labour and capital are lower than for other sectors. Agricultural growth lags behind other sectors and agriculture is less and less attractive to youth as a source of employment or a course of study.

My key observations regarding the constraints and opportunities for youth in terms of access to training, education and mentorship are:

1. Such opportunities are limited for the general population, but improving quite rapidly in the face of demand.
2. For agriculture, it likely the demand for access to these services in their current format will continue to decline. The skills provided to support employment in agriculture need regular review and in most cases, the skills on offer are not very relevant or attractive for youth. The opportunities for youth living in rural and remote communities are much less than for urban settings.
3. Particular care is needed to promote equity in access to these services and to examine the profound impacts of youth migration accompanying profound structural change.
4. Mentorship for rural youth considering employment in agriculture is particularly lacking. There are few role models, practical examples or clear paths to follow.
5. There is a lack of resourcing for the research, innovation and enterprise that drives a successful agricultural industry and this is reflected in the educational offerings and the vocational training associated with the sector. These areas have been neglected in favour of development projects aimed at the aging population of farmers with little evidence of successful engagement of youth in productive and profitable activity in the sector.
6. There is no lack of enthusiasm for ideas and opportunities on the part of youth. Yet there is insufficient attention to nurturing that enthusiasm for the purposes of promoting sustainable agriculture.

In terms of **access to policy processes**, youth have had little chance for access to those processes or voice in the policy dialogue. This situation is changing rapidly. Respect for elders and for tradition is embedded in Cambodian society. Whilst that respect is preserved, there is also recognition that youth are increasingly steering the way forward. Opportunities for increasing youth engagement and voice in Cambodia relate to:

1. Increased access to **quality education and freedom from child labour**.
2. Availability of **youth platforms and networks** giving youth an opportunity to see their needs and interests addressed.

3. **Social media**, which gives a youthful population with a phenomenal level of smart phone ownership a voice, albeit with all the possibilities for distortion of opinions and manipulation that have accompanied the rise of such media.
4. A rising **popular culture** accompanying increases in wealth, urbanisation and the freedoms enjoyed by youth, which amplifies certain aspects of youth opinion and aspirations. However, it seems that more effort is expended in promoting a mythical notion of a romantic rural existence, than in providing the any practical vision for employment and enterprise in agriculture.
5. An **active movement** on the part of government, development agencies and civil society **to engage with youth and to give them voice**. Considering the potential, this movement is in a nascent state.
6. **Generational changes** in the leadership of society.

Overall, the key elements to support transformation for Cambodia lie in creating and sharing a vision, providing the leadership for strategic processes to support the vision **and public** resources to set the wave in motion. The momentum will be sustained by youthful enthusiasm rewarded by profits.

In the consultations and drafting of the **National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023** in Cambodia, we have recognised the importance of gender and youth as cross-cutting issues and set each working group supporting the strategy with the task of implementing specific actions to address gender concerns and youth.

Ian Russell, FAO Cambodia
24.01.2020

Annex 4. List of people who made the youth initiatives possible.

CARD

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HE Dr Say Ung
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Mr Vanna Meas
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Mr Jack Martin

Youth Nutrition Champions

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Ms Leng Socheata
Mr Noeun Chetra
Ms Morm Chan Mary
Mr Satt Bonarith
Ms Heang Kimleang
Ms Soun Monykeo
Ms May Sokunlanita
Mr Thong Chinda
Ms Nguon Sokmean



First meeting held between CARD, HKI and FAO to discuss strategies on youth engagement for food security and nutrition

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR **Food Security** AND **Nutrition** IN CAMBODIA



European Union

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JOINT PRIORITY SECOND NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR Food Security AND Nutrition 2019-2023 in Cambodia



Healthy Diets

Strengthen the food environment and consumer behaviours.

Food Value Chains, Food Safety and Fortification

Promote diversified nutritious food production and strengthen value chains for nutritious foods, including food safety and quality.

Nutrition-Sensitive WASH

Increased availability, access and utilization of quality WASH and health services.

Governance and partnerships

Ensure effective governance arrangements for FSN.

Community-Led Nutrition

Coordination and implementation of all stakeholders for nutrition programmes at community level.

Social Assistance and FSN linkages

Promote equity in access to sufficient, nutritious and diverse foods and good nutrition.

FSN for Disaster Management and Climate Change

Protect food security, nutrition and health from shocks and stresses and natural disasters, including climate change.



Gender and Youth



Environment



Equity