

Leading the way to farming prosperity.



The Birthplace of FBAs

Cambodian farmers can make good money by growing and selling vegetables. But many are missing out on this opportunity because they lack good quality inputs, irrigation, farming know-how, and market information. To address this situation, iDE began establishing a network of Farm Business Advisors (FBAs) in 2005.

FBAs are independent entrepreneurs that sell high-quality agricultural inputs bundled with sound technical advice and a strong focus on customer service. Over time, the FBA program has transformed into a social enterprise called Lors Thmey, meaning “New Growth” in the Khmer language. Lors Thmey recruits and trains FBAs, while supporting them with a range of services, including bulk purchasing of products and expert agronomy trouble-shooting. The FBAs earn income from a small mark-up on the agricultural products that they sell—like drip irrigation kits, seeds, and fertilizers—and from their own vegetable crops, which double as demonstration plots that attract and convince customers.

There is plenty of room for Lors Thmey and its network of FBAs to grow. Agriculture in Cambodia is basic, with some of the lowest yields in Asia. From this disadvantaged starting point, a little technology and know-how can lead to big improvements in a short time. Lors Thmey is successfully addressing this opportunity, providing products, information, and market linkages to more than 4,000 farmers every year, helping them to reduce risks, improve production, and increase incomes. By taking a business approach and treating farmers as valued customers, Lors Thmey is on track to become a sustainable, self-financed enterprise.

Photo Caption

Puth Saroeun (right), discussing farming techniques with her client, Yan Reach. After training from iDE, FBAs like Saroeun visit their clients' farms and share their knowledge about crop management and how to get the best price at market.



The Cambodia Context

Out of Cambodia's population of 15 million people, nearly 3 million are classified as poor and as many as 8 million others teeter just above the poverty line. One bad crop or one expensive illness can pull them back under. About 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas where farming is difficult because of increasingly unreliable rainfall, water scarcity, poor infrastructure, weak institutions, and poor market linkages. More than half the rural population is still without a toilet.

Cambodia FBAs By the Numbers

79% of marketing tasks are done by women

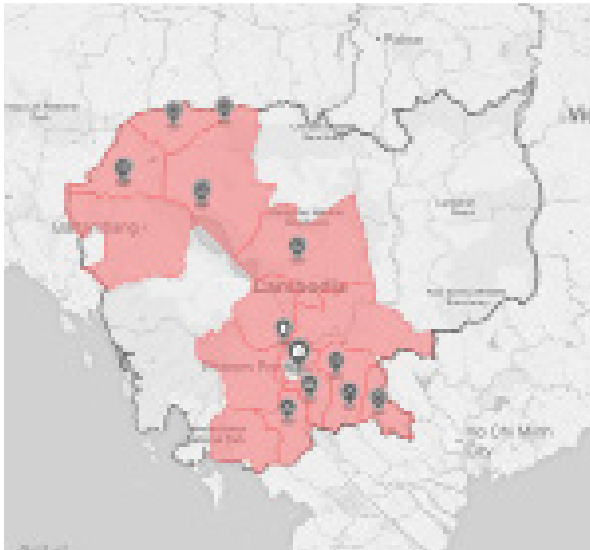
40 clients per 1 FBA

10,000 clients served to date

Average annual income:

\$150 input sales, \$860 from crops

Each FBA travels an average of 6km per day



iDE

iDE creates income and livelihood opportunities for poor rural households across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. iDE builds markets in a range of sectors, including agriculture, water, sanitation, hygiene, and access to finance.

Contact Us

Phone: (+855) 23 223 541

E-mail: Cambodia@ideglobal.org

Michael Roberts

Country Director, iDE Cambodia

ideglobal.org