

The Cambodian IPM programme has taken steps to target woman and increase their involvement in the FFSs and as trainers.

Handicapped Farmers: The war and a poor health system has resulted in a large number of farmers who suffer disabilities. The IPM program with assistance from the NGO, Handicap International, has taken steps to include farmers marginalised by injury or disability in the IPM training. Some of them have gone on to become farmer trainers.



Refugees/Displaced people: Almost the whole population was displaced during the civil war as people were sent out of cities to the collectivised farms in the hope of forming a classless, agrarian society. This has left many farmers and families without land and few land rights. Under these circumstances, IPM field schools can play a role in assisting farming communities to organise the use of available agricultural resources.

IPM in Schools: In light of the extremely young population in Cambodia, and the importance of rice, World Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education runs IPM for school children. IPM is now in the schoolbooks and curriculum of rural schools. (See Fact Sheet: Ecological Literacy in Rural Schools)

From rice field ecology to human ecology and HIV/AIDS

As 100% of the population rely on rice for survival, farmers' skills become crucial for the survival of the country, its people and its culture. Cambodians have lived through many hardships, including wars and natural calamities. Now they face a new threat to their way of life: HIV/AIDS.

Up until 1991, Cambodia's isolation as a result of war had left it untouched by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Route 5, linking Thailand, through Cambodia, to Vietnam, is opening Cambodia to the outside world. By 1999 there were 250,000 reported cases and an estimated growth of nearly 4% annually among the 15-49 year old age group. Route 5 forms the perfect conduit for the spread of HIV into poor communities. The IPM training approach prepares the ground for the farmers to take



an active role in HIV prevention. IPM brings new ways to spread knowledge about HIV in rural areas; ways that respect existing knowledge, local networks and the strengths of the farmers' own life experiences. (See Fact Sheet: Community IPM)

The innovative pilot project uses 'Farmer Life Schools' (FLS) to assist farmers in recognising and analysing the inter-related elements in their lives, in much the same way as they apply their mastery of ecological concepts to their fields. They examine problems that threaten their livelihoods, weigh available options and make decisions about what actions they should take. Issues addressed in FLSs range from poverty, loss of land, occupational health associated with pesticide use, family planning, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, school attendance, to specific health problems concerned with diseases such as malaria, dengue and HIV/AIDS. It creates opportunities for farmers to take charge of their futures, rather than waiting passively for help from outsiders once a threat has arrived.



The core process within FLSs is the linking of ecology, group organization and student centered learning applied through what is termed *Human Ecosystem Analysis (HESA)*. The HESA involves groups of farmers investigating various threats to their lives, in the same way that pests are looked at in their fields.

FLSs are being organised and run, not by outsiders, but by IPM farmers themselves.

Further Information

Web Sites

- Website of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS: www.unaids.org/
- UNDP South East Asia HIV and Development Project www.hivundp.apdip.net/old/sea.htm

Video Tape

- 'Local Heroes' *Farmers and IPM in Cambodia*, produced by the FAO IPM Rice and Vegetable Programme, Cambodia. Available on request in DVD and VHS format.

Sample Documents

- Murphy, H, Nugent, R, Sitha, M, and Sodavy, P, *Farmers' Awareness and Perceptions of the Effect of Pesticides on their Health (in Cambodia)*, Field Document, April 2000
- Country Summary, Mid Term Review, October 2001

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