

Beneficiary Story No. 1 (MIH Project)

## The Story of Chour Chheng – Shaping a Climate-Smarter Business



Chour Chheng, 64 years old, is the owner of Ky Siv Chheng Protein Food Enterprise. He runs the company since more than 19 years. For a long time, he also worked as a lecturer for biology and food engineering, while now he has retired from his lecturer position and solely focuses on his business.

Chheng benefitted from technical advice provided by the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts as well as a subsidy, helping him to shift his business from using coal to gas as a source of energy to process the dry foods products – dried foods such as dried mangos, bananas, beef products - that he sells.

Interviewer: Chheng, how many people live off your business?

Chheng: There is my wife and my two children. They are all benefitting, but also helping in the production and processing. The income made from my business, has enabled me to send my children to university, so that they can acquire master's degrees and have a good future.

But there are more people who I support through my business. By buying their products, such as coconut, mango, banana, papaya, pig and cow meat, I also support the farmers. I buy, for instance, more than 20 tons of mangos per year from farmers.

In addition, of course, my staff. I have 4 people working for me on a permanent basis. During high season, I employ two additional workers.

I: What was your motivation to get involved in the project?

C: There were several reasons. I saw this project as an opportunity to improve the technical quality and efficiency of our production processes. Through the new drying and roasting equipment and the two boilers, I am able to expand the business. That was always a dream of mine. With the previous equipment we could only process 50kg of fruits per day, now we can do 500kg per day.

Another motivation is to improve the conditions for my workers. Before, when we used coal, the production was much healthier for my workers. There was smoke everywhere, and even the products sometimes had black stains. And the heat from coal burning, we could not adjust well. The heat by gas, we can adjust very well now with a valve. As a result, my workers do not have to stand next to the dryers to adjust the heat, with gas is easier to adjust.

Furthermore, the project helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is good for the environment, which I learnt through the project.

I: Why does this matter to you?

C: I am part of society and we have to take care of our climate. I also want to motivate others to change their businesses towards cleaner and greener technologies. I regularly talk to other owners of SMEs and tell them that it is not only about profit.

I: What kind of change to the daily routine of your workers do you see?

C: Before, they needed to stand next to the frying pans where we dried the fruits, which required a lot of manual work - moving the pans, adding coal to the ovens etc. -, it was hot and there was quite a bit of smoke. They got tired and complained. Now, they only have to operate the new equipment, which is physically much less demanding. I employ mostly women, so that is better for them. I may even be able to increase the salary as a motivation for them. I do regard my workers as an extension of my family.

I: What are your future plans for your business?

C: I would like to sell at overseas markets. Currently, we produce mostly for the Cambodian market. I used to export small amounts to South Korea, but we stopped it, as it was not profitable. Through the new opportunities, we may be able to revive contacts to South Korea and currently, we are negotiating orders from buyers in Canada.



Chheng has designed and purchased drying equipment (left) powered by gas, as an improvement to the previous drying technique in frying pans (middle) powered by coal ovens (right)

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