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Ms. Sim: Now I have Land. It is a Great Asset

Sim Naren and her children are busy clearing grass off her land to plant more crops. A small patch of her two hectares is already cleared, with rice and corn and fruit trees growing on it. But there is a lot more work to do. Naren, a 45-year-old widow, puts down her hoe and walks toward her visitors, pressing the palms of her hands together in the traditional Khmer greeting.

Asked how she likes her new farm, Naren smiles and says, "I am so happy to be here. Now I have land. This is a great asset for me and my children."

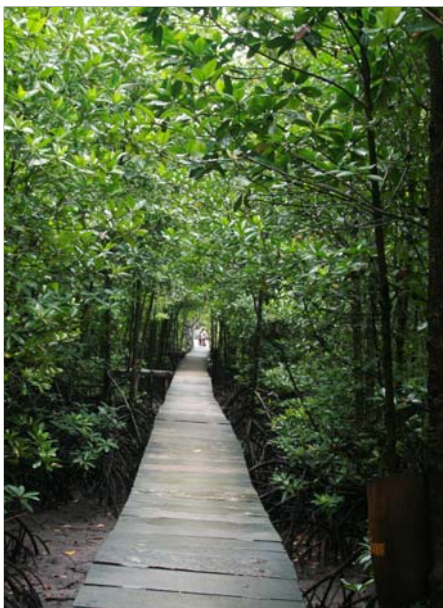
Naren is one of 549 poor and land-poor families in Sambok and Kor Sang communes in Kratie province, the first group to have moved to a new area along National Road 7, about 20 km from Kratie provincial town. She and the others were chosen to receive two hectares of agricultural land and residential land under the

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Sim Naren points towards the boundary of her new farm land allocated under the Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED) in Kratie province.

Koh Kong Village Eco-Site Saves Mangroves



The path that takes visitors through the mangroves at Boeung Kayak eco-site.

A 1000-meter-long concrete path brings us to the Boeung Kayak mangrove eco-tourism site, where we see many birds and monkeys, and during low tide baby crabs and sea-fish. At the end of the path a swing bridge connects us to a 15-meter tall viewing platform from where we can see the magnificent scenery of the mangrove forest and its canals. Dozens of rest huts are built along the path, so that visitors can relax and breathe the fresh air and watch the wildlife.

The community started Boeung Kayak in 2004 after they witnessed great destruction of the mangroves over the previous decade, with consequent decline in fish, crabs, shellfish and wildlife generally. After getting support from the provincial governor, provincial departments, Peap Krosop wildlife sanctuary and international organizations,

as well as the commune fund, the Boeung Kayak site became fully operational in 2007. Since then, the site has welcomed around 60 to 70 visitors a day, with double that number at weekends. During festivals, especially Khmer New Year, it welcomes around two thousand visitors. Each domestic visitor must buy a 3,000 riel (US\$0.75) ticket, and international visitors 5,000 riel (US\$1.20).

In a wooden hut just a few meters from the bridge and viewing platform, Lang Man, second deputy commune chief of Peam Krosop and a member of the eco-tourism site committee, with a confident smile told World Bank Country Manager Qimiao Fan and the team that the site is completely run by the community and the income is also used for community development.

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Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED) program supported by the World Bank and the German technical development organization GTZ.

Because Naren had no land before, survival for her and her children depended on selling rice cakes and second-hand clothes in her community. But Naren said those enterprises were too small and couldn't help her family to have a better life like other families who had land for cultivating. Because of that, all her children dropped out of school to help her make a living.

When she moved to her new land Naren was given initial assistance to get started in her farming life: a knife, ax, hoe, seed, and \$50 cash.

Another project beneficiary, Nam Saleav, one of the poorest villagers from Kor Sang village, Changkrong commune, Kratie province, opens his plastic bag carefully and pulls out his valuable 'land receipt'. He smiles and says "I have a receipt now and I am looking for my residential plot." He pauses, then continues: "I found my farmland plot, but I haven't had much time to work on it yet, because I have to work for others to get money to buy food for my family."



Nam Saleav (center) and his wife look for their new plot of residential land along National Road 7 in Kratie province.

LASED is a four-year project being implemented in Kratie, Kampong Cham and Kampong Thom provinces. It is intended to help the Government to implement its social land concession program and to provide support to landless and

land-poor (less than half hecter of land) families.

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Koh Kong Village Eco-Site Saves Mangroves



Looking down at the swing bridge and mangrove forest from the viewing platform at Boeung Kayak in Koh Kong province.

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"The initiative came from our concern at the destruction of our natural resources; we saw the potential of our area to be an eco-tourism site, so we decided to do it," Mr. Lang said. "Now our mangrove forest is preserved and replanted. Crab, fish, shellfish and wildlife have increased. Our community's

income is more secure."

According to Mr. Lang, the site generated around 40 million riel (US\$9,600) in the first six months of 2009 just from selling tickets. Moreover, he added, the community can earn other income through providing their services to tourists such as boat renting, and from monitored sustainable fishing.

Each tourist boat can earn 20,000 to 25,000 riel (US\$4.80 – US\$6.00) as their net income per day. A similar amount can be earned by a family fishing for prawns, crabs, shellfish, and fish.

Boeung Kayak eco-tourism site covers 5,200 hectares, and provides direct benefits to 301 families in this community.

World Bank Country Manager Learns from Cambodians

World Bank Country Manager Qimiao Fan made his fourth visit to the Cambodian countryside from May 8–11, 2009. He and Bank colleagues went to Kratie, Stung Treng and Ratanakkiri provinces to meet people, provincial officials and civil society groups to learn about progress and challenges, and the potential to help poor people in the north-east have a better life.

Mr Fan's first stop was in Kratie province where, as well as meeting commune councils, he met poor people who are beneficiaries of Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED), a project supported by the World Bank and GTZ, and provincial project directors, development partner, and NGOs working on the project. [See accompanying story].

In Stung Treng province, Mr Fan and the team met with the representatives from five local non-government organizations – the Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA), Prom Vihear Thor, Development Partnership in Action (DPA), Oxfam GB and Adhoc – to hear their perspectives on provincial development progress, people's living conditions, and the challenges people are facing. Mr Fan was told about the continuing delay in recognition of a forestry community whose proposal was submitted several years ago.

Later the team met council members of O'Svay commune, near the border with Laos, to learn about the commune development process.

Commune Chief Man Ly Hor reported that his people depend on agriculture for their livelihood, by growing rice and fishing, and on the area's natural resources, by collecting products such as natural fibres and wild fruits.

The community is concerned for the sustainable future of the area's natural resources, and with the support of commune authorities they have submitted a request to establish a community forestry reserve which covers around 4,000 ha. They are waiting approval.

Under the World-Bank-supported project Rural Investment and Local Governance, O'Svay commune receives around \$9,000 a year towards commune development. So far, most of the money has been spent on building rural roads. The challenge is to find enough bidders for the projects.

The next day in Ratnakiri province, Mr Fan and the team met Tompuon ethnic minority group who live in La In village to



Mr. Fan with commune members and fisheries and forestry community representatives at O'Svay commune building in Stung Treng province.

understand their request for communal land titling, which is being facilitated by the DPA.

La In was chosen as one of three pilot areas because it is near a national road and the community has completed its provincial land use plan. The communal land is 7,250 ha for 101 families in four villages. It includes forest, spirit forest, burial grounds, residential land, reserve land, and agricultural land. The process to apply for land titling started in 2004. The community has now completed seven out of the 12 steps, with the rest still under discussion.

One challenge is registering the size of the spirit forest. In the Government sub-decree provides up to seven hectares for spirit forest, whereas La In says it would like to have 37 ha. The spirit forest is important to the community because they believe that every seven years the spirit comes to the forest and blesses them with good luck.

Visit to the Southwest

From June 19 to 22, 2009, Mr. Fan visited southwest provinces of Cambodia – Kampong Speu, Koh Kong and Preah Sihanouk.

Mr Fan's first stop was at the Kirirom I hydropower station. He met with the site manager and engineers to learn about the operation, and visited the power station's reservoir in the middle of the mountain top. Power from Kirirom I is sold to Electricité du Cambodge, and contributes to Phnom Penh's power supply, except in the dry season when there is not enough water.

In Koh Kong province, the World Bank group visited the Peam Krosop eco-tour-

ism site. Mr. Fan learned about site management, including the protection of natural resources, environmental awareness and community management of income and expenditures. [See Boeung Kayak ecotourism story.]

Mr. Fan also met with six NGOs representatives and the Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD) to listen to their views on progress and the key challenges they face. They see improvements in health and education service deliveries as well as in sustainable rural and environmental development. However, funding to support those activities is a key challenge. They also said good collaboration with the government both at the provincial and local level is essential.

The next day, Mr. Fan met people representing the community in Tropang Rong commune, Koh Kong province, to learn about their plan to establish an ecotourism site which they believe could generate more income for them and help to manage their natural resources. This community is being helped by the Wildlife Alliance.

To conclude his trip to the Southwest, Mr. Fan joined a signing ceremony in Preah Sihanouk province to open a World Bank Public Information Center-Corner (PIC-Corner), in collaboration with the University of Management and Economics (UME). [See PIC-Corner story]

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6th Public Information Center-Corner Opens



World Bank Country Manager Qimiao Fan cuts the ribbon to open the Public Information Center Corner in Preah Sihanouk Province.

The University of Management and Economics (UME) in Preah Sihanouk Province and the World Bank Cambodia Country Office signed an agreement to open a World Bank Public Information Center-Corner on June 22, 2009.

More than 70 representatives from NGOs, provincial authorities, other universities and students of the UME attended the signing ceremony. UME Vice

province,” he said.

World Bank Country Manager Qimiao Fan said that opening the PIC-Corner is an important way to bring knowledge and up-to-date information to the sub-national and even local level.

“Through this PIC-Corner, I hope you will get more information; and as you know, information is power,” Qimiao said. “This information can help you to make decisions about your community’s and

Corner is a very important tool to search for new information, and it is not only for the UME’s teachers and students, but also for the public of Preah Sihanouk province.

There are now six World Bank Public Information Center-Corners (PIC-Corners) in Cambodia. They are all open to the public. Each has many publications, including research and development documents on Cambodia, World-Bank-supported projects, and global development issues. Visitors can also access the World Bank’s E-library, where thousands of documents are stored on-line. Two PIC-Corners are in Phnom Penh – the main PIC at 70 Norodom Blvd and another at the Royal University of Agriculture; one at Western University in Kampong Cham, one at the University of Southeast Asia in Siem Reap, one at Paññasastra University in Battambang, and the newest one at UME in Preah Sihanouk province.

“This information can help you to make decisions about your community’s and your country’s development. The future of the country’s development is in your hands.”

Qimiao Fan

President Chum Lay welcomed the collaboration between the UME and the World Bank in opening the PIC-Corner.

“This opening is a great support to strengthen the knowledge of our university and to the people in Preah Sihanouk

your country’s development. The future of the country’s development is in your hands.”

Preah Sihanouk province Chief of Cabinet Mr. Sam Samath, who was guest of honour at the opening, said the PIC-

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