Trip Report: Cambodia
May 30 – June 9 2013

Maria Elisa Christie, PI for the SANREM CRSP Gender CCRA
Daniel Sumner, Gender CCRA Graduate Research Assistant, Virginia Tech

Purpose of trip:
1. Conduct household interviews with women who will be targeted to work with the project sites in rural villages of Siem Reap province.
2. Prepare for student fieldwork for June 11th – July 18th and test the survey instrument and participatory research methods through household interviews with farmers working with SANREM in the village of Pichangva, Battambang province.
3. Train selected University of Battambang students in qualitative research methods, survey enumeration, and translation.

Sites visited:
Tra Beak village, Siem Reap province
PADAC/SANREM project house in Sdao, Sdao commune
Pichangva village, Reasmey Sengha commune, Rattanakmondol District, Battambang province.

Description of Activities
Daniel Sumner and Gender CCRA PI Maria Elisa Christie met with members of the SANREM team in Siem Reap to begin to understand the project that SANREM and Horticulture CRSPs have developed to build the scientific and technical capacity of vegetable production for women in the rural regions of Siem Reap province through drip irrigation and conservation agriculture techniques. Four women from one of the ‘Self Help Groups’ were interviewed. The interviews followed a survey instrument focused on assessing gender roles and gender relations in agricultural decision-making. These four interviews also served to test and revise the survey instrument (and its translation). Further pre-testing with farmers in Pichangva village identified components that needed to be rephrased or restructured so that ambiguous questions could be removed and clarifying detail could be added. Four women were interviewed in Siem Reap. In Pichangva we interviewed both the husband and wife (separately) in five households and just the...
husband in an additional household. A formal relationship between the Gender CCRA/Virginia Tech was established with the University of Battambang. As a follow up to our visit and presentation at UBB in our earlier trip in January, and follow-up Skype interviews, two students from the University of Battambang had been selected to work with the project for the duration of Daniel’s field research. The students were trained in social science research methods, including quantitative and qualitative techniques. We secured lodging and supplies for fieldwork, including a room in separate house that will allow a woman student to work with the project (for the first time). Addressing another gender-based constraint, we also changed team responsibilities to allow the woman student to be in the field where she wanted to be, taking detailed notes, as opposed to staying in the city transcribing the recordings of the semi-structured interviews. The fieldwork would not have been possible without the translation (written and oral) support of Lyda Hok and San Sona.

**Itinerary**

**Thurs, May 30:** Depart Roanoke

**Fri, May 31:** Arrive in Siem Reap; check into Ta Prohm Hotel

**Sat, June 1:** Meeting with project chief technician San Sona and NC A &T doctoral student Don Immanuel Edralin to discuss SANREM’s new relationship with Agricultural Development Denmark Asia (ADDA)’s Integrated Women Empowerment Project (IWEP) and finalize the interview schedule for the Siem Reap portion of the Cambodia mission. Had dinner with Sona, Don, and Ms. Soklay and Ms. Ren Chhaivann—both working with ADDA—and continued the discussion for the next day’s interviews with women members from one of ADDA’s Self-Help Groups (SHG) operating in Siem Reap province.

**Sun, June 2:** Conducted household interviews with four women from one of the ADDA self-help groups that SANREM CRSP is working with in Siem Reap. Household interviews included three married women and one widow. The household interviews served to test the intra-household decision-making survey instrument that will be applied in SANREM sites in Rattanakmondol district, Battambang province, Cambodia.

**Mon, June 3:** Traveled from Siem Reap to Battambang by car. Checked into the Seng Hout Hotel. Conducted meetings with Rector Touch and two students from University of Battambang students that will be assisting with Daniel’s research. Confirmed with the students their availability for working with the project and provided them with an introduction to SANREM and the work of the Gender CCRA, as well as social science research quantitative and qualitative approaches and tools, sampling methods, and ethics/informed consent. Continued translation of research tools.

**Tues, June 4:** Meet with SANREM monitors and technicians at the SANREM project house in Sdao. The meeting introduced the University of Battambang students to the work that PADAC/SANREM has been conducting in four villages in Rattanakmondol
village. The students were also introduced to the principles of Conservation agriculture, specifically Direct Seeding Mulch Based Cropping Systems (DMC). In the afternoon we met with the Vice-Chief of Pichangva village and received his permission to interview other farmers in the community and discussed land usage within the village. We collected GPS points for key places in Pichangva (small shops, middle man’s corn drying shed, etc.) and important places in neighboring villages.

Wed, Jun 5: Tested the survey instrument with two households and trained University of Battambang students in survey enumeration techniques. Revisions and rewording to English and Khmer versions. Met with Rada Kong at the sector house and discussed the scheduling of farmer interviews.

Thurs, June 6: Tested the participatory research activities with two households and trained University of Battambang students in participatory research methods data collection. Dined with Stephane Boulakia and discussed research plans and the current state of the project in Rattanakmondol.

Friday, June 7: Conducted the survey with one household and tested the viability of combining the participatory activities and the survey instrument with the husband from another household. MEC met with the Dean of Agriculture at UBB, Mr. Soley, to request support and thank him for student collaboration with SANREM. Daniel and MEC write letter with formal description of collaboration. This is particularly important as the students will be missing the final month of their third year to work in the field with Daniel, and the Dean has made special provision for them to take class and exams on weekends.

Saturday, June 8: Conducted a miniature workshop and training with the University of Battambang students. MEC met with Dr. Touch, Rector and President of UBB, and to thank him for supporting the student collaboration with SANREM.

Sunday, June 9: Write reports.

Monday, June 10: Daniel moves to the team house in Sdao to resume fieldwork; MEC stays in Cambodia for interviews at UBB and at the Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh for InnovATE.

Preliminary Findings: Ta Beak village, Siem Reap

- Vegetable production is integral to the income for households in this region of Siem Reap; however, rice production is also an important cash crop.
- Of the women surveyed, agricultural activities (vegetable sales, rice sales, livestock sales) are the important sources of income.
- One of the women indicated that there is a group in the community that pools their resources to purchase agricultural inputs.
Only one of the women indicated that she was engaged in wage or salary employment. That women indicated that she hires herself out for labor in rice cultivation, including harvesting and transplanting.

None of the women interviewed noted that they owned a small business.

All the women noted that they made most or all of the decisions regarding activities involved in vegetable production (household consumption and for sale). However, the women interviewed also noted that men make most or all of the decisions in rice cash crop production.

Women are key agents in vegetable production, thus if CAPS is focused on vegetable production, it needs to be aware of the labor demands placed on women.

It seems that animal traction is still the primary mode of power for land preparation in the region. Three out of four noted that they do not rent a tractor, hand tractor, or any other mechanized equipment.

The plot sizes ranged from .6 – 1.5 ha and it appeared that the vegetable fields were close to the household. Their location could be linked to women’s influence over decisions in vegetable production.

All of the women indicated that someone in the household owned at least one cellphone. It would be interesting to study further the relationship between cell phones and their role in agricultural production and marketing, as well as sharing information about conservation agriculture (and drip irrigation).

It is clear that there is a diversity of groups and organizations in the community. It was interesting that the women working with ADDA stressed that the self-help groups are not women’s groups, but have 80% women, and that ADDA has a gender quota of over 75% women participation. Regarding possible backlash for a women’s empowerment project, they said that at first, men were not happy that women joined, but then they saw the benefit to the household and were happy of their wives’ participation; also, they saw the need for women to be in the groups as men often leave the communities for work elsewhere.

None of the women indicated that they had a leadership position in any of the groups in the community.

**Initial Findings: Rattanakmondol district, Battambang province, Cambodia**

- Reduction of labor costs and production costs are the reasons given by all farmers for implementing CAPS.

- As opposed to the Claveria site in the Philippines where farmers told us that farming is their only option, farmers here are purchasing more land and are incredulous when we ask “who decides when to sell the land” because they have no intention of selling their land but rather intensifying and expanding their land holdings. Some men and women farmers act as middlemen for access to land. In recent years land prices have skyrocketed in the area so it is difficult in general to purchase in upland areas for cash crop production. Farmers have to rent or purchase it in the neighboring province of Pailin.

- Direct Mulch Based Cropping System (DMC) implementation has impacted the gendered division of labor. Male farmers’ time spent in land preparation has decreased as well as women’s time spent in sowing. In three household interviews, men and women reported men are helping bring fuel wood for cooking to the house and are cooking the rice
sometimes, neither of which they did before. In one case, the man now helped taking the
animals to pasture, which had been his wife’s responsibility before.

- Levels of education seem to not be a barrier to farmers for beginning to implement
CAPS; however, farmers with little or no education cannot hold a formal position within
a community group (as reported by several farmers, including one illiterate farmer).
- Family networks are important vectors for transmitting information about CAPS. Several
farmers noted a family member has been an important source of information of DMC and
has had an impact on their decision to participate in the experiment.
- Women are using the time saved from no-till technology to attend meetings and
agricultural trainings provided by SANREM and other organizations operating in
Rattanakmondol.
- Women make all the decisions regarding vegetable growing (near the home), even if the
man contributes by plowing the land before sowing.
- Several women “controlled” the use of all household income, though the husband could
decide over how to use the income for parts and fuel for farm equipment.
- A reduction of women and children’s roles in sowing could also have positive health
benefits as the seeds are chemically coated and are planted by hand in conventional
farming in this site.
- Fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides imported from Thailand are not labeled in Khmer or
English but Thai, so the project staff has difficulty in explaining the proper application
and safety issues; even literate farmers have difficulty. Most agrochemicals in the region
come from Thailand or Vietnam, the latter of which are labeled in English. The Ministry
of Agriculture is drafting legislation that will require that pesticides and herbicides sold
in Cambodia to be labeled in Khmer.
- Farmers are innovators and are adapting their existing equipment based on their
experiences with the project. A farmer in Pichangva village indicated that he has
constructed his own sprayer modeled on SANREM’s sprayer. Farmers working with
project have combined their back-pack sprayers with their hand tractors to construct an
improvised mechanized sprayer that saves labor.
- Large livestock (cattle) seem to have become somewhat of a nuisance to the farmers we
interviewed and who were seeking to put all their land under production; during one
interview we had to stop to chase the cows out of the cornfield. Several people mentioned
having “loaned” their cow for someone else to take care of; the arrangement is that the
caretaker could have the cow’s calf one year and the owner kept the calf the other year.

Suggestions and recommendations:

- **WEAI – Women’s in Agriculture Empowerment Index**
The intra-household decision-making survey instrument used in this research is adapted from
USAID’s new Women in Agriculture Empowerment Index (WEAI) and was revised throughout
the trip based on field-testing. WEAI is a powerful tool that can be used to document the
complexity of gendered power relations in intra-household decision-making. It can be used to
tease out the levels of access and control. Field-testing identified issues with the structure of the
questions in the survey and the ambiguity of WEAI response indicators. It is hard to understand
and communicate the difference between the response options for G2, *input into decisions*, and
*extent of participation in decision-making* in G5. The response options for each of these are also
difficult for the farmers to understand, and require more specifics to reduce inconsistencies that are accentuated by translation from English to Khmer.

In addition, it is hard to distinguish between the gradations between survey responses. For example, in Module G5, for the question “To what extend do you feel you participate in decisions regarding land preparation?” survey respondents can answer: not at all, small extent, medium extent, and to a high extent. USAID does not offer substantial explanation for how to distinguish between these categories. In this case the survey responses were operationalized so that no input equals you are not interested in the decisions or you are not asked for your opinion, small extent equals you can give your opinion but it is not considered in the final decision, medium extent equals you can discuss and come to an agreement about a decision, to a high extent equals you can make the decision even if your spouse disagrees. In another example, we operationalized the responses for Module G2 as follows: for the question, “How much input did you have in making decisions about food crop farming?” no input equals not involved in any decisions, input into some decisions equals involved in less than half of the decisions, input into most decisions equals involved in more than half of the decisions, and input into all decisions equals involved in all of the decisions.

The index requires qualitative data to give context to the answers that are recorded in the survey instrument. We ended up using the survey instrument as a semi-structured interview guide with both quantitative responses and extensive notes, and developing a guide to ensure our key questions are discussed in the process.

The index does not work for hypothetical situations that farmers cannot imagine doing, for example for farmers who have never sold their land and never plan on selling their land, the question “Who would you say can decide whether to sell the land?” is not applicable and causes the farmer to question the rationality of the activity and discredit the surveyor.

- Gender CCRA Summer Research

The schedule of household interviews will need to be flexible and reflect gendered time use. We will aim to work with the women in the early morning (around 8 am) when they are available and men are working in the fields and before she is preparing lunch. Interviews with men can be conducted later mid-morning (around 9:30) after they have returned from the field and before their lunch (around 11:00 am). Interviews in the afternoon can be scheduled for early afternoon when farmers are available.

Following up on the findings mentioned above about changes in the gendered division of labor, we added the following question to further address how DMC has changed the gender roles in the reproductive and productive spheres, “After implementing DMC, do you help your spouse with tasks that you did not do before?”

CAPS implementation has reduced women’s roles in the field, where they no longer have to be involved with sowing. Women have more “extra” time to devote to household activities and community organizations. However, has minimal tillage delegated women to agricultural support activities or do they also spend more time in perennial crop production, like longan tree production?
• **LTRA 12:**

With ADDA working with 142 Self Help Groups across five districts in Siem Reap province, this partnership holds tremendous potential for scaling-up and providing a sustainable mode of production that will improve the livelihoods of a large number of impoverished women.

Target middlemen who collect farmers’ crops at their fields and provide them with information about and encourage them to experiment with DMC. We interviewed one farmer/middleman in the community just about to start implementing this growing season; he referred to the land he has seen under production as he drives his tractor around collecting people’s harvest. He is in a good position both to note increases in production and disseminate information about what he sees.

Pursue initial findings on SANREM’s impacts on changes in the gendered division of labor and systematically document changes in productive and reproductive spheres.

### Training Activities Conducted:

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<th>Program type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Training Provider</th>
<th>Training Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Visits</td>
<td>6/2/13</td>
<td>SANREM CRSP graduate students and ADDA professionals</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>SANREM Gender CCRA</td>
<td>Training on the use of the Women in Agriculture Empowerment Index (WEAI)</td>
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<td>Applied short course</td>
<td>6/3/13</td>
<td>University of Battambang agriculture students</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>SANREM Gender CCRA</td>
<td>Orientation to social research methods, including qualitative and quantitative approaches. Introduction to conservation agriculture and the WEAI.</td>
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### List of Contacts:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Organization</th>
<th>Contact Info (address, phone, email)</th>
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<tbody>
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