

Sharing the Good News

from the pen of the Mission Interpreter



August 15, 2021, Volume 15

ELCA World Hunger – Life with Dignity Program

Trapeang Angkrong, Cambodia. Not a place that makes the news, but where families who struggle with food insecurity are benefiting from an ELCA program that provides hope for the future.

Nhem Ra from the village of Trapeang Angkrong worked for years in the jungles of Cambodia making charcoal to earn a small income, barely enough to feed his family. He was away from home for weeks at a time. It seemed inevitable that his sons would have to leave school to go to work to supplement the family income. But a new reality started to seem possible when Nhem joined the agricultural cooperative program of **Life with Dignity**, an ELCA World Hunger partner. Attending several meetings, he learned about plans for growing vegetables in his village and soon had opportunity to go to training sessions on climate-change-resilient vegetable growing. He also learned some sales and marketing techniques.

At first, Nhem had to be convinced that certain growing techniques, such as drip irrigation, would work. Traditionally, rainwater was caught, but during the dry season he'd had to spend hard-earned money to buy water. Thanks to on-going training from the agricultural cooperative staff, he learned that it would work. Within a year, Nhem was growing various types of vegetables with techniques and materials that required less water. He has worked on technique and skills and now grows enough to sell. "I enjoy my income from pumpkin, eggplant, greens, peppers, melons and cucumbers, and I enjoy my role as a small business group leader," he says.

And another important result is that Nhem now gets to spend a great deal of time with his family, since he is no longer working in the jungle. He works an average of four hours a day tending his fields and other time is spent gathering and preparing crops for market. His children are now able to remain in school, and while he still must work hard, there is adequate food for his family.

Thanks to the training provided by **Life with Dignity**, Nhem is a model farmer in his community, working within a co-op and providing training and support on climate-change-resilient growing methods to other farmers. It's a win-win.

Gifts to ELCA World Hunger help support our siblings in Christ around the world. By supporting programs like **Life with Dignity** which provides for mentors, training and knowledge-sharing, we champion sustainable solutions to poverty and recognize the inherent worth and dignity of every child of God.

Adapted from newsletter by Daniel Rift, Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Fund, July 2021

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