



UNEDUCATED BUT *Exemplary*

MRS. VANHSOM
ENHUP II BENEFICIARY

“I want to be an example to my community,” said Mrs. Vanhsom of Langchong Village. “I don’t have health knowledge, but I can give advice.”

“My family is now very healthy and has foods all year round. My child is strong and exemplary among other children his age. We receive a lot of kind words from our neighbors. They really desire how I am caring for my baby,” continued Vanhsom.

Vanhsom, 32, is among many mothers who enroll in the Positive Deviance Hearth program, clean home garden, and livestock support from ENHUP II Project. Raised as a poor girl in a remote Khmur family, Vanhsom is now married, with one boy who was born with extremely malnourished of 2.4 kg, a weak and poor child. However, she still has a husband, a grandma, and a son to care for.

Illiterate and poor, Vanhsom delighted when hearing about ENHUP from a village meeting. She immediately shared the story with her husband, and both decided to join the project when they knew that their child is severely underweight and wasting. Undiscouraged, however, she and her

husband believe the project will be able to improve the child weight gains, healthcare, and increase their household’s food security.

Attending PD Hearth program is a new concept for Vanhsom and her community.

Aspiring to become an example to her neighbors, she has found that the program is meaningful, healthful, and motivated to change. She is really excited to see all malnourished children are fed a nutrient-dense meal during the session that is provided and cooked by the mothers and caregivers, using low-cost and local ingredients. Generous support with technics, coaches, and mentors from health workers and ENHUP will rehabilitate malnourished children like his son in Langchong village. Particularly, the Hearth sessions are led by health workers and project health officers in the first 3-4 days, for coaching and mentoring the village health volunteers (VHVs) and malnourished mothers and then follow-up visits for 12 days to assist overcome barriers caregivers may face in practicing the new positive behaviors at the program and at home.

Unhealthy and malnourished child to care, Vanhsom recalled her family did not have enough health treatment plans. Often, when the child got sick related to malnutrition; poor, and uneducated, traditional belief treatment practices were the option. Without seeking advice and hospitalizing accesses, the child's health was getting weak and tasteless appetizes. The Hearth sessions allow them to double visions whenever they want and educate better healthcare for the entire families esp. a child under 5 years.

Vanhsom's actively involved with the Hearth sessions and project activities, so she's been selected as a village health volunteer for her community and received many health and nutrition sessions training. Vanhsom learned how to prepare Hearth meal technics by identifying foods per child and their value that a child will receive per day, and how to mix a variety of foods—vegetables, eggs, herbs, roots, etc.



She also studied a method of children feeding—slowly, softly, and gently. The Hearth meals are more delicious compared to what they usually eat at home and mothers should spend time feeding their child more than 3-4 meals/day.

She particularly remembers that serving only one or two dishes on the table is not the best way to help her child overcome malnourishment. She found that new techniques taught by the project health officer better results. Excited, Vanhsom shared her knowledge with family members and neighbors, hoping they, too, can use the Hearth session technics by using the local foods and ingredients to rehabilitate the community as well as children under 5 years.

Langchong has the highest malnutrition rates compared to other villages. Vanhsom learns that it is quite challenging to promote the behavior changes due to the traditional cultural belief, illiterates, and language barriers, particularly when the project and health workers promote behavior changes. She hopes there is more support for community-wide nutrition and disease prevention sessions conducted in the community.

Now that her family has healthier life, and her son is 36 months with a weight of 12.8 kg; she feels she has more time for income generation activities. She wants to increase more home garden sizes and buy more pigs so she can further take advantage of the free knowledge provided by ENHUP. She is especially interested in learning about pest and disease control techniques.

Vanhsom appreciates the fact that ADRA/project donors give her an opportunity to improve her family's well-being and livelihood and that the project staff is caring, diligent, and patient with her and the community.