

# PROJECT UPDATE

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE NEXT GENERATION  
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PROJECT



## Census Data Collection

FROM BRIAN COOK  
PHOTOS: SOPHEA YOUS

Hello/Chom Reap Sour (ជំរាបសួរ) from the research team of the *Next Generation Agricultural Extension Project: Social relations for practice change*. This quarter our research officers have been busy collecting household census data in Cambodia. Other team members have been interviewing international experts on agricultural extension and agrarian change in Southeast Asia. We also held our annual project meeting at Macquarie University in Sydney and hosted a panel as part of Social Sciences Week on how to apply well for postdoctoral positions.

## Project Overview

FROM CAITLIN FINLAYSON

This project aims to produce an innovative model of agricultural extension founded on expanding enabling social relations, which will complement and/or replace existing models of extension based on the provision of technology, capital and information.

Duration: January 2021 to December 2026

Target Areas: Cambodia

Budget: AUD\$4.5million

Project Leader: Dr Brian Cook, University of Melbourne

# Household Census Data Collection

FROM: ARIANE UTOMO AND VAN TOUCH  
PHOTOS: SOM BUNNARATH AND SONG PHEROM

Activity 2 is underway with almost 20% of the 3158 household census data collected. In preparation pilot testing took place with approximately 151 households, the learnings from which were used to improve the census questionnaire and ways in which we ask the questions.

The four district sites in Battambang and Pailin cover upland and lowland farming, irrigated and rain-fed farms, proximity to a city centre that is neither too far nor too close, the presence or absence of farmer groups and a variety of rural livelihood activities which include, as the photos from our research officers show, include crops and animals.

Insights from the data collection process include:

- Collective living situations
- Diverse livelihood practices
- The difficulties of accessing land to farm and resources such as electricity and clean water
- Prevalence of money lenders increasing in villages
- The use of remittances to support the farm

This data will enable us to:

- provide a broader understanding of the socio-geographical and economic contexts of agriculture extension and rural livelihoods in Northwest Cambodia
- identify the variation of production and farming systems across diverse landscapes
- understand the shifting importance of agriculture in the context of diversifying household livelihood strategies
- provide baseline data and an effective sampling frame for subsequent activities





## July Field Visit

FROM: ARIANE UTOMO

PHOTOS: ARIANE UTOMO

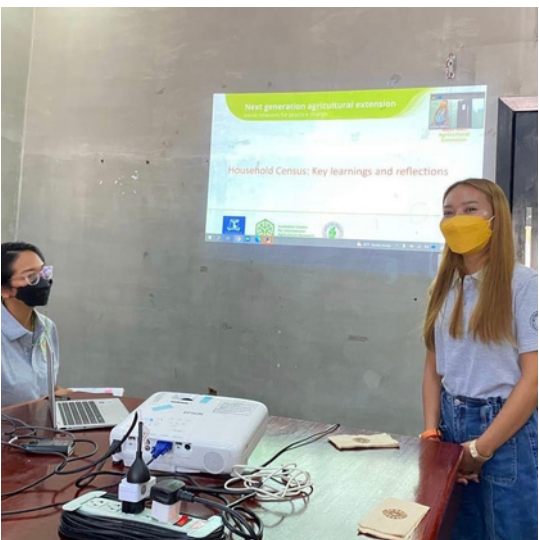
Dr Ariane Utomo from the University of Melbourne visited our Cambodian team in Pailin, Samlout and Battambang in July. The purpose of her visit was to build team rapport, accompany research officers during household census interviews, visit partners (including the National University of Battambang and Partners for Rural Development) and conduct a Census Reflection Workshop.

The top image shows Dr Ariane Utomo and Dr Van Touch visiting the food lab at the Faculty of Agriculture of the National University of Battambang.



Ariane visited three villages in Battambang, Pailin and Samlout during the trip. Whilst on these visits the team shared lunch most days and used this time to reflect on the methodology and data collection process. The middle image shows Saroeut, Pherom, Chariya and Sophea on one such occasion.

The visit concluded with a Census Reflection Workshop where each of the research officers presented on key learnings and observations from the first phases of data collection. Here we see Saroeut Yong presenting her insights highlighting the challenges of crop storage, transport, and processing for farmers' livelihoods.



The workshop and visit strengthened the research skills of our in-country team, encouraged critical reflexive practice in the field and fostered collaboration between our Australian and Cambodia team.

# Social Sciences Week

FROM CAITLIN FINLAYSON

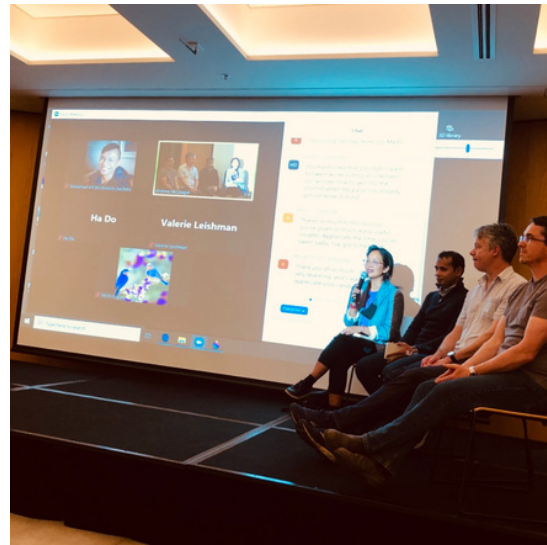
In September, four of our research team (Dr Brian Cook, Dr Ariane Utomo, Dr Van Touch and Dr Andrew McGregor) hosted a panel at Macquarie University's Social Science Week: Applying well for postdoctoral positions in the social sciences.

In the session the team reflected upon our experience of recruiting a postdoctoral researcher for the project. There are fewer opportunities for social science postdocs than in the natural sciences, and the competition for positions can be fierce.

We shared insights about two key stages of the recruitment process: writing applications and interviewing. For both of these stages each panel member reflected on what they looked for and what made a candidate stand out.

Some of the tips and advice shared by the panel included:

- Research the project and field of study → use keywords to show this research
- Think about what your value add is → apply your ideas and training to the project
- Condense your CV → tailor the roles and responsibilities to the project
- Instead of listing methodological approaches → show how you have used the methodology
- Be concise with your written application → 1-2 paragraphs for selection criteria
- Communicate ideas and arguments clearly in the interview → use the STAR technique
- Publications are key as they show that you can work to outputs → think about ones that are in progress and well as completed



**Applying well for postdoctoral positions in the social sciences: Reflections from a recent appointment process**

In this session we reflect upon our experience of recruiting a postdoctoral researcher for the Next Generation Agricultural Extension project funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. We share insights from panel members about two key stages of the recruitment process: writing applications that stand out and impressing in an interview. We reflect on what worked and didn't work, tips to bolster your application and things to avoid. Participants will have the chance to ask questions and will come out of the session with a strengthened understanding of how to apply well for postdoctoral positions in the social sciences.

**8 SEPTEMBER 2022**  
4.30 pm

**LIVE**

ZOOM LINK TO ADD

For more information  
[www.farmerdecisionmaking.com/project-2/](http://www.farmerdecisionmaking.com/project-2/)

**Next-Gen Agricultural Extension**

- Brian Cook**  
Associate Professor, University of Melbourne
- Ariane Utomo**  
Senior Lecturer, University of Melbourne
- Andrew McGregor**  
Associate Professor, Macquarie University
- Van Touch**  
Research Fellow, University of Melbourne
- Katharine McKinnon**  
Professor, University of Canberra

## Project Partners



Australian Centre  
for International  
Agricultural Research



UNIVERSITY OF  
**CANBERRA**

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE  
COMMUNITIES



មន្ទីរកសិកម្ម រុក្ខាប្រមាញ់ និងនេសាទ ខេត្តប៉ៃលិន  
ដើម្បីសង្គមស្រូវ និងការអភិវឌ្ឍកសិកម្មរបស់ប្រជាជន



MACQUARIE  
University  
SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

## Resources

Check out the latest articles, blogs and research outputs which are shaping the project

### State land relations in Cambodia

Jean-Christophe Diepart, Chanrith Ngin and Il Oeur explore how opportunities for smallholder farmers in contemporary Cambodia can be created to protect their land resources.

[Read more.](#)

### Communal land and gender transformations in Cambodia

Using a feminist political ecology perspective, Alice Beban and Joanna Bourke Martignoni explore how gender relations are changing in contemporary Cambodia as a result of land privatisation.

[Read more.](#)

