



Quarterly Bulletin Programs in Vietnam & Cambodia Period February - April 2012 Phuong



Phuong is very close to the peasants. Here she holds a handful of cow dung to show how the earthworms develop. They will be given as feed for the chicken.



20 km of Brussels!
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Phuong is a villager from Tánh Linh (Vietnam) whom Mekong Plus has trained on the spot. Phuong is in charge of the agriculture program. She also assists very poor families.

Phuong takes me to visit a few families that she has followed for a few years. Their income was just 3-4 €/month and they have trebled since. Still not much. These are people in extremely precarious condition, who often live from the charity of neighbors.

Suddenly we are caught in a violent rain storm, surprise in the dry season! We take a shelter and chat. Phuong got married 2 years ago. "Married in the spring, but disputes before the end of the year! We had discussed it before, and were in agreement with my husband. But later, he and the whole family turned against me. They all insisted I should stop working at Mekong Plus. The tension became unbearable. They wanted me to take care of a piece of land, stay at home. I really did not want to stop; this social work had been a revelation for me. It has transformed my life. Sure enough, at the beginning it was just a job and I needed a salary. But little by little, by working with the poor in the villages, my vision has been completely transformed.

You know, I am from a family of 8, immigrants from the North. My parents would often come back late from the fields. We, the children, were holding each other and to forget the hunger we tried hard to sleep early. When our parents would be back before dark, then I would go to the fields to collect wasted grains of paddy. There was never enough food at home.»

Phuong is definitely a strong woman, very motivated by the social work. This is her revenge after the hardships endured during her youth. Always on the small roads, she visits 106 poor households all alone. Her education is modest, as agriculture technician but she has a great heart. I want to comfort her: «You have been very right not to give in. A woman must always to get good training, to have a work and a salary of her own. If your husband could not accept this, I think you were right to be firm. -Oh, you think so? Yes really, I believe I did well with a deep smile. Of course many do not like me now. »

Bernard KERVYN, 28 April 2012

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