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FARMER BASKET – LAO PDR'S AGRICULTURE MARKETING APPROACH

As reported by FAO in 2016, agricultural areas occupy 10, 2% of total land areas in Lao PDR. With Lao PDR being a landlocked country, agricultural products are the primary source of income for its civilians. However, Lao Farmer Network (LFN) research suggests that youths in Lao PDR tend to depend on their family's farm rather than innovating to produce better income. Hence, LFN has initiated several new alternative forms of agricultural marketing approaches. One of these is the “farmer basket” program, which is known to be successful.



“Farmer Basket” is an approach where sellers use Facebook to offer their goods in the form of organic vegetables combined together in a basket. Facebook as its platform is used to advertise, promote, and communicate with customers. The system was first introduced by the Thongmang organic vegetable group which delegates 20 youths from the same village to purchase their products and sell them through the “Farmer Basket” program.

Thongmang organic vegetables goods are guaranteed as Grade-A organic products and are valued at \$7 per box (includes six kinds of vegetables and one fruit). These goods are said to be carefully picked and hence,

customers will receive the best products on every purchase. The Farmer Basket approach has impacted farmers in the area and opened job opportunities for numerous youths in the village. Farmers will receive \$2 for every box sold, while 70% of the sales



are allocated to the marketing team, and the rest to the savings fund.

Despite the successfulness of this approach, Thongmang group also faces several challenges with marketing their products, such as the limited product capacity, inconsistency of quality control, packaging issues, and transportation costs. These challenges occur as the Thongmang group lacks the technology to support this approach. Hence, the Thongmang group needs to innovate to tackle these challenges and to fulfil the high demand of goods from the market in the future. Despite the hardships and considering the globalization era, Farmer Basket approach is still recommended for farmers, especially small farmers who struggle with marketing their goods.

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