



ASEAN Young Agripreneur Story Series

MEET SUCCESSFUL MILLENNIAL FARMER FROM LAO: NOY

Almost 80% of the population in Lao PDR work in agriculture sector, while approximately 50% of rural youths are also engaged in this sector (FAO). One of them is Phoutthasone Phaengvilay (Noy), a twenty-four year old who has been involved in agribusiness since 2008.



Agriculture is traditionally passed on from generation to generation, which is also the case for Noy. She spent her childhood in a farming area in Hoy village, Khoun District, Xiengkhuang province and has been helping her parents since she was nine years old. She became so passionate about agriculture and now aspires to become an agripreneur.

Due to their hard work in farming, her parents were able to send Noy and her siblings to universities where they obtained bachelor's degree. She has never doubted her passion for agriculture, and after graduating from Souphanouong University, she decided to go back and manage her own farm to grow vegetables such as broccoli, eggplant, cucumber, and chili. Her decision to return to her village is deemed unusual as most of the students who study at agricultural colleges prefer to work for the government, rather than to return to their village.

Youth participation in agriculture has decreased and it's not only in Laos but also occurs in other ASEAN countries. I also learned that income is important to make young people interested in agriculture work

Noy was one of participants in the ASEAN-EU youth forum for engagement in food production and value chains, which was organized by AFOSP implemented by ASEAN Foundation on 25 October 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Through this forum, she became aware that other ASEAN member states also experienced the issue of aging farmer populations which had been occurring in her village.

Noy believes that income can be one of the ways to attract youth participation in agriculture. As an agripreneur, she makes around \$1,000 per month, which is relatively high compared with the basic salary of a civil servant in Lao which is between \$190 to \$290 per month. She makes almost six times more than a civil servant and has flexibility to manage her own working hours.

"Being my own boss, not being under pressure at work, and being able to choose my own time" were some of her favourite aspects of being an agripreneur. At the moment, she also helps as Marketing Officer at Hoi Vegetable Cooperatives. She urges youth agripreneurs to have "good knowledge and right attitude." Noy also emphasized on the importance of having a business plan as an important milestone in agribusiness.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/ag106e/AG106E07.htm>
² Barlett, Andrew. (Aug 9, 2017). Presentation at Mekong Extension Learning Alliance, Yangon. Retrieved from: <https://www.slideshare.net/APBarlett/the-next-generation-of-farmers-in-laos>



If you have a good business plan to guide you, then your business can be successful.