



Small Fish Powder Entrepreneur

How a mother of seven grew her own business to help the children in her community

Save the Children

Small Fish Powder: a Local, Sustainable Solution for Optimal Child Growth in Cambodia

BACKGROUND

- 32% children under five are too short for their age (stunted)
- Children from the poorest families and those residing in the rural areas are more likely to be stunted
- Stunting undermines children's health, impacts children's cognitive development, and reduces lifetime earnings
- Factors contributing to stunting:



Inadequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation



Poor infant and young child feeding practices



Infections due to poor drinking water, hygiene & sanitation



Poverty

Stunting is preventable during **FIRST 1000 DAYS** — a golden window of opportunity from pregnancy until the child turn two.

OPPORTUNITY



Pregnant, lactating women, and children 6-23 months need an adequate diet daily with optimal quantity and quality of food, especially food of animal origin

- **Only 1 in 2** children 6-23 months from poor rural areas eat fish daily
- **Barriers** include fears of children choking on the bones and the time it takes rural caregivers to prepare separate dishes for children



Small fish, especially the head and bones, contain macro and micro-nutrients needed for optimal child growth and development



Small fish are available from lakes, rivers, canals, rice fields and local markets **year-around at no or low cost**

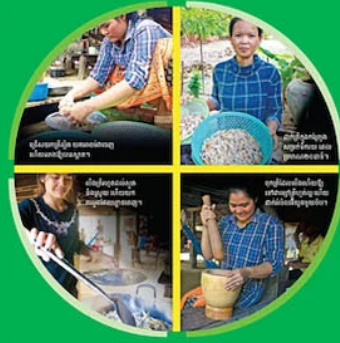


SOLUTION: SMALL FISH POWDER

Easy to make in four steps: washing, draining excess water; roasting & pounding

One tablespoon (15 g) contain:

- 10g of protein—94% of the RDI for a child 6-11 months and 79% of the RDI for a child 12-23 months—important for healthy growth
- Omega-3 fatty acid for brain development;
- Half (53%) of the daily needs of Zinc for children 6-23 months for children's brain and body development, and illness prevention
- The full daily requirement of Vitamin B₁₂ for the development of the nervous system
- The full daily requirement of Calcium, a core building block for teeth and bones



Tasty

Small Fish powder is easy to add to existing recipes for whole family, including pregnant women and children starting at 6 month. It can be mashed up with pumpkin or sweet potato, mixed into the family soup, or included in an omelet with vegetables. All these recipes are easy and quick to make. Children and adult always enjoy the taste of food with Small Fish Powder



Ms. Pichet: Community Leader to Burgeoning Entrepreneur

Ms. Phum Pichet is a busy woman balancing many priorities each day, such as being a mother of seven children, as well as a volunteer kindergarten teacher and a community health volunteer. Now, she is making an even bigger difference by supporting mothers and caretakers to help their children grow well by selling small fish powder (SFP) to families with young children; supporting improved nutrition for children older than six months.

Small fish, sorted by type of fish, washed and ready to be made into Small Fish Powder



Ms. Pichet's entrepreneurial journey started when she began working with the NOURISH project in her role as a community health volunteer, to mobilize community members to engage in NOURISH sponsored integrated nutrition events and activities, such as village fairs and community dialogues, in the small village of Samraong. The NOURISH events promoted integrated nutrition, WASH and agriculture interventions as a way to prevent stunting in small children. This approach piqued her interest since she observed, as a kindergarten teacher, that many children in her community were not growing well due to a lack of nutritious foods. She recalled, *"the people in this village have faced a lot of health problems including poor health ... [the families] spend a lot of their income for health services ... so I wondered how can I earn more money to support the kids in terms of training materials, clothes, and other sanitation or hygiene products?"*

After observing her valuable skills as a teacher and dedication to supporting her community, NOURISH approached Ms. Pichet for support in advocating the benefits of SFP and its nutritional benefits for pregnant women and small children. Ms. Pichet learned that SFP is ideal for the healthy growth and development of children six months and older. She also learned how to make SFP and soon began to prepare it for her own family's meals, improving her children's health even with limited financial resources.



Ms. Pichet with a batch of home made small fish powder in jars, ready for sale.

Since Ms. Pichet's family liked the taste of food with SFP, she started to make it for her neighbors with technical guidance from NOURISH. NOURISH also began supporting her with business skills training, supply chain and quality control, coaching and mentoring; this improved the consistency and quality of her SFP and helped to increase her sales. With NOURISH's support, she soon began her SFP business. This opportunity allowed her to build her skills and capacity to promote NOURISH integrated nutrition interventions and further support NOURISH activities geared toward helping the members of the community she was so concerned about.

She also sold SFP at monthly community meetings, using her skills as a teacher and community health volunteer to coach others about the importance of nutritious diets for young children, especially after watching the health of her own children improve. News about her new business

began to spread quickly by word of mouth as her customers enjoyed the taste and health benefits of the SFP.

The additional income for her business helped her family get out of poverty and her children to have a better future.



A Community Agent working with a community member to cook a large meal with small fish powder.



Jars of small fish powder, with labels that were specially designed by NOURISH staff using warm and inviting colors.

"My life got much better after I started to make small fish powder. My own children have enough food to eat, new clothes and a bicycle to go to school. I want to make sure my youngest children graduate from high school and have a better future." - Ms. Pichet

Ms. Phum Pichet holding a certificate of recognition for being a top seller in the Business Accelerator challenge.



Her business was growing fast and she used many strategies to sell her product, including marketing her SFP on Facebook and having SFP booths at food safety product trade fairs organized by the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. She also participated in NOURISH's nine-month Business Accelerator Program to further develop her marketing, entrepreneurial and business networking skills to ensure she could sustain her business after the NOURISH project closed in June 2020.

Ms. Pichet during the graduation of business training from the USAID-funded SHE Investments project.



Today, Ms. Pichet employs three members of her family and installed two baking ovens to help her meet growing demands for the small fish powder. Each oven has the capacity of roasting over 15kg of fresh small fish, producing 3.2 kg of dried fish in just 3 hours. Since she has started her SFP business in July 2017 with only twenty jars of small fish powder, she gradually increased her sales and network, and as of March 2020 has sold 17,012 jars. Galvanized by her success, more women-entrepreneurs are following her footsteps and setting up SFP businesses that will help Cambodian children grow up healthy and strong.

Below are the locations of SFP suppliers across NOURISH's target area. If you'd like to order SFP through them, visit their [Facebook page](#).



| *Locations of all SPF suppliers in NOURISH's target area.*

Related Documents

1. [NOURISH Small Fish Powder Market Analysis 2016](#)
2. [NOURISH Small Fish Powder Factsheet](#)
3. [Small Fish Powder Recipe: Omelet](#)
4. [Small Fish Powder Recipe: Khmer Soup](#)