Making of a New Tradition

In April 2018, the SNV team visited stove customers in Cambodia to see what they had to say about their new stoves. Read more about their interesting stories.

Part 1
Ms. Ry Na (32)
Grocery shop owner
Pursat Province
Sompo Meas District
Ms. Ry Na has been owning her Mimi Moto stoves since December 2017. She bought two stoves from a sales agent when they visited her house, and paid them in full right away. She uses one Mimi Moto stove for her own cooking, and keeps the other one for reselling. Ry Na and her husband were well trained by the sales agent on how to use the stove. They started using the stove and fell in love with it.
Ry Na runs a grocery shop in O’Tkov village in Pursat province. In 2013, Ry Na married her husband Chetra, together they have one child. Her husband is a photographer. He also prints wedding invitations as a business. Ry Na has no land for farming. Her family’s economic situation depends on her husband’s job and her grocery shop. Ry Na is hard working woman. When she has downtime, she cooks food for her family and does housework.
Before owning her Mimi Moto stove, Ry Na cooked with the ‘Traditional Lao Stove’. She uses two stoves per meal, one for cooking rice and one for boiling soup. Ry Na never uses the small LPG stoves because she thinks they are not safe and are very expensive to use. Ry Na still cooks on 2 stoves, but she uses the Mimi Moto for around 70% of her cooking, and for the rest she keeps using the ‘Traditional Lao Stove’. She cooks rice and food, and boils water with the Mimi Moto. For her daily cooking she uses only the Mimi Moto stove. She only adds the ‘Traditional Lao Stove’ when guests come to visit, or when she needs to grill meat.
Ry Na really loves the Mimi Moto stove. The stove is easy to light, and the build-in fan helps to get the fire started quickly. The stove is very efficient and allows to make food quickly. She experienced eye irritations and coughing in the past when cooking with the ‘Traditional Lao Stove’, but since using the new stove she feels better because the stove produces very little smoke. With less smoke, she also feels more comfortable in her kitchen.
The Mimi Moto has a control knob to manage the fire in the stove’s combustion chamber, and she feels it’s quite easy to adjust the flame that way. She also likes that the stoves have handles and are not too heavy, so she can easily move it around. She says the Mimi Moto stove is “beautiful and durable”.
Before owning the Mimi Moto stove, Ry Na cooked with wood and charcoal, but now she cooks with a combination of coconut shell chips and wood, and uses charcoal only for grilling on the ‘Traditional Lao Stove’. She buys coconut shell chips from the local market and collects wood at a farm on the mountain near her house. Ry Na says she would prefer to cook with coconut shell chips more, but they are more difficult to find.
When cooking with coconut shell chips, the stove produces almost no smoke and the flame is very strong. She says that the shell of one coconut is enough to cook rice and a soup completely. She thinks the stove saves at least 50% of fuel compared to her ‘Traditional Lao Stove’. Since Ry Na is a shop owner, she can’t leave her shop too often to go collect fuel. So she’s quite happy with the fuel savings!
Ms. Phat Saroth (33)
Housewife and Sedge Weaver

Kandal Province
Lvea Aem District
Ms. Phat Saroth is 33 years old. Saroth is a housewife and a sedge weaver. She says the ACE-1 stove is a great innovation. She was convinced to buy the stove when a salesperson from distributor AES told her that the stove produces less smoke and uses less fuel, and also comes with a solar panel to re-charge the stove’s battery. Adding to this, the monthly payment plan provided by the company helped with her final decision to buy the stove. She can afford the monthly instalment of USD 9$, and uses a mobile payment service (‘Wing’) to send the monthly payment to the company.
Saroth weaves sedge in the mornings with her mother. After finishing weaving, she cooks food for the family. Next to her mother, Saroth lives with her husband, and they have one child. Her husband is a driver. He drives for a construction company in Peam Oknha Ong commune. Saroth say she can earn 4$ per day from weaving in the morning.
After getting the ACE-1 stove five months ago, Saroth stopped using her big LPG stove. Big LPG canisters are expensive and there is no LPG station in her village, so she had to go to the market which is quite far from her house (about 20km) to refill it. She also never felt very safe when she travelled with a big tank of LPG on the back of her motorbike. Since owning the ACE-1 stoves, she uses this stove exclusively for all of her cooking, but still uses the traditional ‘New Lao’ stove occasionally for grilling.
Saroth has gained a lot of experience with her ACE-1 stove over the past 5 months. She uses it every day to cook for her family. According to her, the ACE-1 stove is very good compared to the traditional ‘New Lao’ stove. She says the ACE-1 is easy to light, saves fuel, produces less smoke, and cooks fast. And her kitchen looks more inviting and modern.
Saroth collects the fuel around her house. She asks her husband to cut it to a shorter length. She can then easily chop it in smaller pieces when she needs it for cooking. She says with the ACE-1 she needs 50% less fuel. Comparing the stove to her big LPG canister, she feels the ACE-1 is better – the ACE-1 cooks just as fast, and she doesn’t need to pay for and travel far to get LPG.
Ms. Sok Reth (68)
Housewife, Retired Sedge Weaver

Kandal Province
Lvea Aem District
Ms. Sok Reth is 68 years old, and a retired sedge weaver who lives in Kandal province. She lives with her daughter who owns a village grocery shop. Ms. Sok does housework and helps selling groceries when her daughter is away. Ms. Sok is also in charge of cooking for her family every day.
Ms. Sok bought the ACE-1 stove in November 2017, almost 5 months ago. She participated in a stove demonstration by distributor AES at her neighbor’s house. Convinced by the stove’s performance, and because of the availability of a monthly payment plan offered by the company, she asked her son to buy the stove for her.
Before owning the ACE-1 stove, Ms. Sok cooked with the traditional ‘New Lao’ stove. She owns two traditional ‘New Lao’ stoves and uses both at the same time when cooking. She uses a small LPG stove for re-heating food. Since owning the ACE-1, she stopped using one of her ‘New Lao’ stoves, while continuing to use the other one for boiling water and for grilling. Her primary fuel is wood, which she collects by herself around the house.
With the ACE-1 stoves, she needs less wood and feels she saves time on collecting wood – time which she uses to take care of her grandchildren. She also has more time for her housework. Ms. Sok feels it’s not difficult to use the ACE-1 stove as according to her, it’s quite similar to the traditional ‘New Lao’ stove she is used to. And she feels safer using that stove than the LPG stove.
Ms. Sok is very happy with the ACE-1 stove. She says the stove uses less fuel, has a strong flame, and produces less smoke. The stove has a fan, so she doesn’t need to blow into the combustion chamber. Black soot on her pots is easy to remove, and there is no more smoke in the kitchen area. She now uses the ACE-1 stove for 90% of her daily cooking.
Mr. Leng Kea (45)
Photographer and Restaurant owner
Kandal Province
Lvea Aem District
Mr. Leng Kea has owned his ACE-1 stove for 6 months. He lives near a market in Arey Ksat village (20km from Phnom Penh). He bought the stove when the distribution company (AES) came to do a product demonstration at his house. He felt that the stove seemed very fuel efficient and decided to buy it for his restaurant business. He pays for the stove in monthly instalments.
Mr. Leng Kea works together with his wife to run two businesses. Mr. Leng Kea is the owner of a small breakfast restaurant. His wife is a bridal make-up artist and Mr. Leng Kea also works as a part-time photographer for the wedding events.
For his restaurant, Mr. Leng Kea uses several stoves. He now uses the ACE-1 for boiling water and for simmering soup, while he uses two traditional ‘New Lao’ stoves for grilling meat. Sometime he uses the ACE-1 stove for re-heating food. Mr. Leng Kea buys woodfuel from the market in front of his house.
The benefits of the ACE-1 stove he was most interested in were: fuel savings and fast cooking. He decided to buy the ACE-1 stove when he saw the benefits demonstrated at the stove demonstration at his house.
Mr. Leng Kea is very satisfied with his ACE-1 stove. The stove is very efficient - soup and water boil very fast. He uses wood for boiling and charcoal for simmering. He said he reduced his fuel use for both wood and charcoal with this stove. He also said that besides saving fuel, the stove produces less smoke and his pots do not get black as much as with the traditional ‘New Lao’ stove.