

## ***Success Story of SEC Client, White Garlic***

In Cambodian communities, a number of challenges are currently getting in the way of safe and nutritious food consumption. The founders of White Garlic saw themselves confronted with harmful chemical substances in produce, packaging of substandard quality, and a lack of education and awareness related to hygiene in food production and storage. With a vision to create a healthier community, they decided to start providing safe food with a great taste while also informing people about the importance of clean food for good health.

White Garlic operations are currently divided into three teams:

- 1. Kitchen team:** mostly low-educated women and widows, and women with special needs (deaf-mute) women. Training is provided to the women working in the kitchen.
- 2. Delivery team:**
  - a) undergraduate students who just finished general education and plan to start university. White Garlic sponsors 50% of their school fees and offers flexible working hours based on their study schedule.
  - b) unskilled youth. White Garlic sponsors vocational training for them and provides them opportunities to gain better life skills.
- 3. Management team:** all women, including the founder Ms. Pen Minear.

With a commitment to provide opportunities to low-skilled workers and with the desire to grow and offer new services such as catering for big events, White Garlic invests in training of its staff. However, it lacked capacity to train its staff on knowledge related to food hygiene and safety, western dish recipes, kitchen set-up, and kitchen operations.

Through an email from EuroCham<sup>1</sup>, the management at White Garlic learned about the Senior Expert Corps (SEC) – just what we needed! There we found Expert Peter Wyss. Mr. Wyss has worked the last 40 years as a master chef in one of the most famous hotels in Switzerland, Gstaad Palace. He arrived in Cambodia in November 2017 for an assignment with us. He spent 4 weeks with White Garlic and introduced the staff to international standards of food hygiene and safety, taught them about basic ingredients of western food and related recipes, helped to transform kitchen operations and drafting a concept for the new catering service.

White Garlic is very satisfied with the results of the assignment: “We are now putting his recommendations into practice. We now follow a high standard of hygiene and food safety, have better kitchen operations, and an increase in sales. We also are able to serve some western dishes with confidence and pride, and our customers like the new creations!”, says Ms. Pen Minear.

White Garlic was selected as a top 16 finalist for the Cambodian Youth Entrepreneurs Award in 2018, and the management says they owe it all to Mr. Wyss: “Without him, we could not have gone this far”.

Besides all the technical support, we the staff at White Garlic also valued the personal exchange: “He shared with us a different culture and way of living, while he tried to understand and learn about our

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<sup>1</sup> European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia

Cambodian culture. The exchange is such an unforgettable memory for the whole team. Our cooks have gained more experience and are more confident in themselves. They are proud to have learned from a seasoned expert”. Lastly, the team at White Garlic have also improved their English skills by communicating with Mr. Wyss every day.

The long-lasting impact of Mr. Peter Wyss’ presence at White Garlic can be felt. There are pictures of the team with Mr. Wyss on their wall of fame. The team speaks to Mr. Wyss in video calls from time to time, and they hope he will return again with his wife when the restaurant moves to a new location soon – hopefully for longer this time. “During his stay with us, we called him Daddy. In addition to the knowledge related to food, he brought smiles, laughter and hope to the team”, says Ms. Pen Minear.

White Garlic is very confident that their business can help to reduce poverty by creating more jobs, providing more skills training to staff, and enabling them to send their children to school and universities with their incomes and the company’s sponsorship scheme – one family at a time.

