



# STRENGTHENING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In the Mekong sub-region





## CONTEXT

For an estimated 60 million people along the lower Mekong River Basin, water is the lifeblood of their existence.

Communities in Thailand, Laos PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam rely heavily on the nearby rivers for drinking water, food, irrigation, transport and commerce. Climate change poses a significant threat to people's lives and livelihoods.

Climate change is causing extreme and unpredictable weather events resulting in flash flooding, extended droughts and changing river water flows— that devastate agricultural production, fisheries and use of local forests that these communities have depended on for generations for their livelihoods, food security, cultural heritage and their very existence.

The risks are even greater for women, people with disability and ethnic groups living in remote areas, because they have less capacity to cope with, adapt to, and recover from disasters and the impacts of climate change. They face social, economic, and political barriers that reduce their access to services and opportunities which means they have less knowledge and resources to prepare for and recover when disasters strike and to adapt their livelihoods in response to the changing weather patterns and river flows.

Women in these regions tend to work informally without the security of regular pay and standard working conditions; often receive lower pay compared to men for similar work; and tend to work in sectors such as agriculture that are vulnerable to climate hazards. In addition, they often have the double burden of unpaid care in their homes and families which means they work harder for less. They are both vulnerable to the impact of climate change but marginalised from available services such as education, training and business opportunities as they are often de-prioritised for schooling and less mobile due to child care responsibilities.

Communities and local authorities lack information that can inform disaster and climate risk management – this includes advice on storm and rainfall events, river flow

data and practical advice on managing their irrigation systems or cropping and income plans.

Community leaders, local authorities and government often lack the time and resources to undertake planning processes inclusive of women and other social groups and have low technical capacity to support disaster risk management strategies, vulnerability assessment and the increasing linkages to climate change. National policies and plans on disaster risk management and climate change tend to focus on high level scientific data and are implemented through complex bureaucratic structures making it harder to translate the analysis into practical measures that local communities and authorities can understand and act upon. National policies and strategies and the processes to develop and implement them should be improved to be inclusive of different social groups and useable to the communities and women and men most vulnerable to disaster and climate risk.

Oxfam is working with local partner organisations including sub-national government and authorities, universities, civil society organisations and community groups to support vulnerable riverine communities to close the gap between policies and science; and to develop practical actions women and men and local authorities can take to reduce their vulnerability to disaster and climate risk and to increase their resilience.

Field sites are chosen to reflect the diversity of riverine communities in the Lower Mekong Sub-region including Mekong tributaries in Thailand and Cambodia; the mainstream Mekong River in Laos PDR and Cambodia; the Great Lake in Cambodia; and the Mekong Delta in Vietnam – each with a unique socio-ecological profile and exposure to climate and disaster risk.

## WHAT WE WANT TO SEE IN THE MEKONG SUB-REGION

Riverine communities in the Mekong Subregion experience reduced vulnerability to the impact of disasters and climate risks.

## WHAT'S NEEDED?

Riverine communities and local authorities in the Lower Mekong sub-region require support to increase their understanding of climate and disaster risks and the practical steps they can take to reduce vulnerability. This project aims to improve the capacity of these communities and local government authorities to minimise the impact of disasters and climate risks by working together to develop locally appropriate climate change adaptation and disaster risk management plans. These plans will be owned by the communities, inclusive of women and men community members and informed by the available science and national and regional policies.

## HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS? Resilient riverine communities achieved through:

1

### Through community members

Increased capacity of riverine communities to implement inclusive disaster risk and climate change adaptation plans.



education and awareness raising on disaster and climate risks



training on managing disaster and climate risk and adapting to climate change



training and piloting of climate resilient livelihoods



providing inputs into disaster and climate policies



support for disaster risk management committees



addressing practical and social barriers to the participation of women and people living with disability



supporting women in leadership roles

2

### Through government and local authorities

Local authorities supporting communities to manage disaster and climate related hazards.



awareness raising on disaster and climate risks in their locations



training and awareness on socially inclusive planning processes



training on climate adaptation strategies and promotion of resilient livelihoods



increasing their understanding of their role in implementing national policies and strategies for disaster and climate risk management

3

### With improved access to information and data

Improved access and usability of hydro-meteorological data by riverine communities and local authorities.



identifying data and information needs at all levels



interpretation of technical data for practical use in planning



mapping available data sources and delivery platforms at the country and regional levels



testing data platforms and delivery technology

## WHO WILL MAKE THE CHANGE?

This project is implemented by Oxfam and partners as part of the Mekong Regional Water Governance Program. It is a three-and-a-half-year project, supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Oxfam and our partners (including non-government organisations, the private sector, universities and government departments) work with the communities of the Mekong River Basin at a national and regional level to make these changes happen.

## HOW TO COLLABORATE WITH US

We are pleased to work with you, sharing our knowledge, resources and networks.

### PLEASE CONTACT US:

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### AND VISIT US AT:

<https://asia.oxfam.org/what-we-do/mekong-water-governance>



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