

# IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

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OXFAM

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## A WORD FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR



### Greetings!

In this 7th edition of Impact Spotlight, we celebrate the resilience, agency, and innovation driving transformative change across Cambodia. From the forests of Rattanakiri to the floating communities of the Tonle Sap, our work, powered by partners and everyday changemakers, reflects a collective commitment to inclusive, equitable development.

This issue proudly marks Cambodia's Domestic Workers Day, shining a light on a community that has long fought not only for visibility, but for dignity and legal protection. Youth voices echo throughout these pages as we explore digital rights and civic engagement, underscoring the importance of digital literacy and the fight against misinformation.

In the Northeastern provinces, we've seen how movable solar pumping stations have improved water security for households, relieving a significant burden on women and girls who previously collected water for household use. Moreover, these solar water pumps not only revolutionize rural livelihoods but also uplift the educational journeys of boys and girls whose futures now flow with power and possibility.

To advance sustainability, transparency, and justice in supply chains, we facilitated the Cambodia–Vietnam Learning Exchange. This initiative highlighted Oxfam's strategic commitment to promoting inclusive, sustainable practices in agricultural production and regional trade, particularly through cross-border investment in rubber linked to the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

At the community level, we spotlight how harnessing non-timber forest products is unlocking pathways to food sovereignty and economic independence while protecting biodiversity. Gender equality is interwoven throughout every chapter. We amplify stories of women's leadership in forest conservation, where nurturing nature and advocating for rights go hand in hand. On the Tonle Sap Lake, circular economy models are rebuilding lives, proving that ecological restoration can also serve as a catalyst for social recovery and inclusion.

We close June with PRIDE. Oxfam stands in solidarity with Cambodia's LGBTQIA+ communities, honoring identity, love, and rights in all their vibrant forms.

Included in this edition are two landmark publications: a bilingual (English and Khmer) booklet on the Role of Clean Energy in Cambodia's Development, and a Practical Guideline for Resolving Conflicts in Agricultural Contract Implementation.

Impact Spotlight remains a mirror of our shared action, a reflection of what's possible when solidarity meets strategy. We invite you to read, share, and be inspired.  
In solidarity!

**Sophoan Phean**

National Director, Oxfam in Cambodia



A performance by representative of domestic workers depicting the realities of domestic labor. It highlighted two contrasting situations: one where homeowners understand and uphold the rights of domestic workers, and another where landlords fail to provide the essential rights and benefits that domestic workers deserve, like any other workers. Photo: Oxfam

## RECOGNITION FOR CAMBODIA’S DOMESTIC WORKERS

Text by Naratevy Kek

Every morning before dawn, thousands of Cambodia’s domestic workers quietly begin their day cooking, cleaning, caring, and holding together the households of others. Though essential to society, their labor has too often gone unseen, undervalued, and unprotected.

On June 15th, approximately 300 participants, including domestic workers, unpaid caregivers, street vendors, informal economy representatives, and government officials, gathered to mark the *International Domestic Workers Day* in Phnom Penh. Under them “*Social Protection and Decent Work for Domestic Workers*,” the event was co-hosted by the Independent Democratic Association of the Informal Economy (IDEA) and Oxfam, offering an important platform for domestic workers to share their voices, their struggles, and their hopes.

Domestic workers are vital to Cambodia’s economy. Yet they remain one of the most overlooked labor forces. This day reminds policymakers that domestic workers deserve full rights, social protection, and investment in their future—just like any other workers. The forum sparked candid dialogue around domestic

workers’ realities—long hours, low wages, lack of employment contracts, and exposure to abuse. These challenges persist in the absence of legal recognition and comprehensive protection. Despite their contribution to households across the country, most domestic workers, primarily women, remain excluded from national social protection schemes.

Their work is labor-intensive and multifaceted: from childcare to elder care, from cooking to maintaining homes and gardens. And yet, many are deprived of even the most basic rights—such as rest days, occupational safety, or access to health services. Research by the International Labor Organization (ILO) highlights this vulnerability, showing that 76% of domestic workers worldwide are women, a majority of whom remain part of the informal economy.

ILO data highlights that 76% of domestic workers globally are women, most working informally. In Cambodia, 2019 research by the ILO revealed that domestic workers are among the most vulnerable labor groups—often facing poor working conditions, excessive

workloads, and heightened risks of violence and exploitation.

Yet Cambodia has not ratified ILO Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. While Prakas No. 235, issued in 2018, adopts some of its provisions, it lacks coverage for cross-border workers, omits capacity building, and offers no enforceable mechanisms or standardized employment contracts.

“Domestic workers deserve more than gratitude. They deserve dignity, legal protection, and the freedom to organize. They must not be left behind,” said Mr. Pov Vorn, IDEA’s President.

The event was not just a commemoration but a call to action. Oxfam and our partner urge the Royal Government of Cambodia to ratify ILO Convention No. 189 on decent work for domestic workers, develop clear employment contracts and protection, ensure access to social protection including healthcare, pensions and accident coverage and to recognize the skills and value domestic worker bring to society.

# YOUTH'S DIGITAL RIGHTS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Oxfam convened a learning and dialogue session in Phnom Penh that brought together 37 socially engaged youth from local civil society organizations (CSOs) and universities to explore the evolving landscape of digital rights, and civic participation in Cambodia.

Using Oxfam's Rights in a Digital Age (RIADA) framework and the Civic Space Monitoring Tool, participants accessed key aspects of digital and civic engagement such as access, security, responsible technology use, and governance. The session provided valuable space for young people to reflect on both the opportunities and challenges presented by the digital era.

Participants shared thoughtful perspectives on how digital spaces are shaping civic life, highlighting the importance of maintaining safe, inclusive platforms for dialogue and information sharing.

As Cambodia's digital infrastructure expands, the group emphasized the value of ensuring people are equipped with tools and knowledge to navigate

the online world confidently and responsibly.

Discussions also touched on the role of legal and regulatory frameworks in supporting civic engagement, with participants noting both areas of progress and opportunities for further collaboration. Positive examples of youth-led digital initiatives were celebrated, especially those promoting digital literacy and informed participation in public life.

One key outcome of the session was the identification of media and information literacy (MIL) as a top priority—particularly for youth and other influential groups such as Buddhist monks. Empowering individuals to analyze digital content critically, recognize misinformation, and contribute meaningfully to online conversations was seen as vital for strengthening civic space.

The dialogue concluded with several actionable ideas, including potential partnerships with universities and CSOs to deliver training, awareness campaigns, and digital safety programs. Participants expressed

optimism about continuing this momentum and contributing to a digital environment that supports inclusive, informed, and constructive engagement.

This initiative is part of Recentering Civic Internet through Partner Engagement (ReCIPE) project led by Oxfam Ireland and co-funded by the European Union with the aim of cultivating a rights-respecting digital ecosystem. ReCIPE is implemented with partners in 10 countries: Bolivia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Kenya, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Senegal, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda and Vietnam.

*Photo caption: Youth from CSOs and universities gathered for learning and dialogue session—exploring digital rights and civic participation in Cambodia. Using the RIADA framework and Civic Space Monitoring Tool, they exchanged thoughtful insights on access, security, and inclusive governance in the digital age. Photo: Ritthy Ou/Oxfam*



# HOW CIRCULAR ECONOMY REBUILDING LIVES ON CAMBODIA'S TONLE SAP

Once known only for its abundant fish and floating villages, the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve is now becoming a beacon of environmental resilience and community-driven innovation. After three and a half years of hands-on collaboration, the EU-funded CAPFISH/FOSTER Lot 1 project—“Fisher Folks Making Circular Economy Work for the Western Tonle Sap Lake”—wrapped up with a celebration that marked not just the end of a project, but a bold step toward climate resilience, inclusive growth, and local empowerment.

At a closing ceremony in June attended by over 100 participants, including government ministries, the European Union, civil society organizations, and local communities came together to celebrate the tangible impact and collective accomplishment of the project.

Ms. Sophoan Phean, Oxfam National Director, emphasized the resilience and innovation of Tonle Sap fishing communities. “Through integration of circular economy models with education and sustainable practices, we’ve strengthened livelihoods while protecting our natural resources. She also called for ongoing investment in community-driven solutions that empower communities and preserve the environment,” she said.

Mr. Koen Everaert, Deputy Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Cambodia, added that this project reflects the EU’s commitment to sustainable development. By improving essential services and creating economic opportunities, EU-CAPFISH/FOSTER has laid a strong foundation for more resilient and empowered fishing communities in Cambodia. It also showcases our strong collaboration with the Government as part of our Global Gateway efforts, supporting resilient livelihoods and positioning the country for successful graduation



*Delegation members engaging with local community at their booth, exploring a vibrant showcase of recycle handcrafted products, and other stuff. Photo: Oxfam*

from Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

Through strong partnerships and grassroots action, the project sparked transformative changes across communities surrounding Tonle Sap Lake. Over 2,000 residents and an additional 3,200 students gained access to clean, safe drinking water—an essential step toward better health. Sanitation upgrades reached more than 20,000 students, enhancing hygiene and school environments.

At the same time, the Eco-Brick initiative successfully recycled 4 tons of plastic waste, transforming environmental challenges into income-generating opportunities.

Over 10,000 students benefited from school meals, scholarships, and improved learning spaces, fueling their educational journeys. Meanwhile, new sustainable livelihood opportunities took root, from honey farming and eco-tourism to solar-powered energy access and expanded market links for women-led producer groups—strengthening economic resilience, enhancing entrepreneurial skills development and empowering future growth.

This wasn’t just development—it was transformation, rooted in people’s needs and strengthened by their own leadership.

H.E. Srun Limsong, Deputy Director General (DDG) of the Fisheries Administration (FiA) and Deputy Director of the EU-CAPFISH-Capture Programme, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, said, “EU-CAPFISH/FOSTER project is a testament to what can be achieved through strong partnerships and shared vision. The Fisheries Administration is proud to work alongside with the EU and our partners to uplift communities and promote sustainable fisheries management.”

The EU-CAPFISH/FOSTER Lot1 project was implemented in collaboration with 13 partner organizations, including Aide et Action, Cambodian Agriculture Cooperative Corporation, Cambodian Disabled People’s Organisation, Culture and Environment Preservation Association, Fisheries Action Coalition Team, Kampuchea Action to Promote Education, Okra Solar, Operation Enfants du Cambodge, PAVILION, Sansom Mlup Prey, Teuk Saat 1001, Wetlands Work, and Wildlife Conservation Society.

*A total of 164 environmentally friendly floating toilets were installed in floating schools and homes for villagers living in the flooded areas of Tonle Sap Lake. These systems treat waste onsite and capture bacteria, helping to reduce direct pollution in the lake. ©Wetlands Work*





Students at Prasat Primary School show the vegetable crops they have cultivated in net houses on school campus—part of the life skills curriculum integrated into their education. ©PPS



A library boat was launched in September 2023 on Tonle Sap Lake, Battambang province, to promote literacy and foster a reading culture among children and adults. ©Sopheak Srey/AEA



We established an eco-brick enterprise within the ABC Agriculture Cooperative in Sangkat Chreav, Siem Reap province. The ABC-AC committee manages operations efficiently, with technical support from partner and the franchiser. ©Oxfam



“Previously, the community harvested just 5 to 10 liters of honey annually. With the project’s support, production has soared to 500 to 1,000 liters per month, though markets access remains a challenge,” said Samnang who manages the bee operation. ©Oxfam



A water hyacinth group was established in Koh Chivang Commune, Ek Phnom District, Battambang province. The initiative provided comprehensive support including business planning, technical and marketing training, market access facilitation, and assistant in setting up a community shop branded with group’s identity. Members can earn between \$100 to \$120 per month. ©Oxfam



The Women Plastic Waste Recycling Group in Sangkat Chreav, Siem Reap province, transforms waste into opportunity. Supported by FACT through the EU-CAPFISH/FOSTER project, the initiative champions sustainability and economic empowerment for women. Sitha Mut in this picture is proud to share the souvenir items made from plastic waste in her showroom center. ©FACT



Three community-owned water kiosks were established, providing safe drinking water to 1,930 people and generating \$250 per month for local operators. Additionally, free drinking water was supplied to 3,200 students across 10 schools. ©TS1001



The floating fish feeding hut in Phneath village, Banteay Meanchey province, was renovated to make it easier for visitors to see fish species in the conservation pool along the Serey Sophorn River. Community members said the project boosts local resource mobilization and supports sustainable fisheries. ©CEPA



The Tonle Sap Eco-tourism Network was launched with support from key ministries to promote sustainable tourism and livelihood of local communities. ©Oxfam



As part of the project's support, solar systems were installed for 52 households in an off-grid floating community, enhancing energy access and improving living conditions in remote areas. ©Oxfam



Through conservation efforts with communities and stakeholders, Bengal Florican, one of the world's rarest and most endangered species, continues to inhabit areas around Tonle Sap Lake. Its presence enhances ecotourism appeal and contributes to community development. ©Phearun Sum/WCS



Mr. Chhin Suy, a trainer of SRP sustainable rice production standards in Siem Reap, has been actively promoting eco-friendly farming techniques learned through the project. By sharing these practices with local farmers, he has helped grow his group from just 5 to 35 members. ©SMP

# CELEBRATING LGBTQIA+ PRIDE IN CAMBODIA

At our Last Friday of the Month session on 27 June 2025, we closed the month-long LGBTQIA+ pride celebration with learning, self-reflection, and art!

Last year, on International LGBT Pride Day, we had learned about the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in the United States which marked a watershed movement for LGBT rights not only in the country but across the world in the following decades, how Pride came to be in Cambodia, and what the various Pride flags mean for people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

This year, we focused our conversations and learning on allyship and how both as an organization and individuals we can be allies to the LGBTQIA+ community in Cambodia and beyond. We tested our knowledge about LGBTQIA+ historical facts, and we debunked myths and misconceptions with an interactive quiz. We took some time to reflect on why LGBTQIA+ inclusion matters in our workplace, and what being a genuine ally to marginalized communities means.



*Closing Pride Month with heart and creativity! This is one of the collaborative art by Oxfam colleagues illustrating a message of unity, pride and inclusivity.*





Indigenous community making their daily trek down the hillside to collect water for their daily consumption. Photo: Soknak Por/Oxfam

# IMPROVING WATER SECURITY FOR DAL PHNOM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY, RATANAKIRI

*Text & photo: Soknak Por*

Dal Phnom is a village in the green hills of Andoung Meas district, Ratanakiri province. It is home to 243 indigenous Krueng peoples, an indigenous community, with 125 women, 86 children under 18 years old and 8 people with disabilities.

Isolated and remote, the village lies roughly 80 kilometers from Banlung, the provincial town, Dal Phnom is accessible only by rugged two to two and a half hours by car or motorbike. During the rainy season, travel becomes even more challenging, with slippery, hilly roads often turning treacherous.

The Krueng villagers of Dal Phnom were displaced years ago from their homes along the Sesan River, after upstream flooding from the Yali Dam in Central Vietnam submerged their home. Resettled but still facing hardship, the community struggled with water access—especially during the long dry season.

Water collection fell mostly on the shoulder of women and girls, who would make the trip two to three times a day to fetch enough for drinking, cooking, washing, and bathing. While some men contributed, traditional gender roles placed this burden squarely on women—placing extra burdens on the elderly and young girls.

In response to a request from the Deputy Provincial Governor and the Village Disaster Management Group, Oxfam in partnership with the 3S River Protection Network, stepped in with a transformative solution, the installation of a solar-powered water pump station. The impact has been immediate and profound for all the 66 Krueng households—243 residents, including 107 women and 2 people with disabilities.

“This project truly responds to our needs, especially during the dry season,”



*Members of the local community proudly gather in front of the newly installed solar-powered water pump, made possible through the project's dedication to clean energy and safe water access.*

**“ THE SOLAR PUMP MEANS I NO LONGER NEED TO WALK FAR FOR WATER. IT'S EASIER NOW FOR EVERYONE—WOMEN, MEN, ELDERS, CHILDREN, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ”**

**- Sal Neab, a resident at Dal Phnom**

added Village Chief Roman Mhael.

This initiative is part of Oxfam's project, Strengthening Climate Resilience in the Mekong Subregion project funded by the Australian Aid and was officially launched under the patronage of H.E. Vichet Mar, Deputy Provincial Governor of Ratanakiri province, who commended its far-reaching impact.

“This initiative plays a crucial role in strengthening water security for marginalized communities—especially women, children, and persons with disabilities,” he said. “We extend our heartfelt thanks to Oxfam and 3SPN for their meaningful contribution to improving lives in Dal Phnom.” With clean water now closer than ever, Dal Phnom village is no longer just quenching thirst, but nurturing dignity, health, and resilience.

# HOW THEORY AND LOT TRANSFORMED THEIR LIVES IN SEDA

*Text & photo: Soknak Por*

Further downstream, nestled along the Srepok River, Seda commune, Lumphat district, Kaeng Sann village sits about 60 kilometers from Ratanakiri's provincial town. Life here hasn't always been easy, particularly for smallholder farmers like 38-year-old Theory Chuon and her husband, who have long relied on traditional farming to support their family of four, including two school-age children.

Just next door, 33-year-old Lot Pov juggled caregiving for two children and an aging mother while managing her modest plot of land. Both families had long struggled with poor crop yields—a challenge made worse by the shifting seasons and increasingly unpredictable weather brought on by climate change.

In October 2023, through Oxfam's *Strengthening Climate Resilience in the Mekong Subregion* project—part of Oxfam's *Mekong Water Governance Program* and implemented by the 3S Rivers Protection Network—Theory and Lot were selected as model farmers for their commitment and openness to innovation. With support from the project, they received hands-on training in climate-smart agriculture techniques, including composting, drip irrigation, recordkeeping, and the use of solar-powered water systems.

As part of the initiative, the project provided a movable solar water pump, valued at \$2,300, along with a water-saving drip irrigation system. After receiving their first batch of seeds, the two families quickly got to work. Today, their flourishing gardens produce vibrant harvests of cucumbers, string beans, chilies, eggplants, and morning glory grown from seeds they sourced on their own.

This transformation hasn't just nourished their crops—it has fortified their livelihoods. Each farmer

now earns an average of 2 million Riels (around \$500) per month by wholesaling vegetables at the local commune market. Their stable income covers daily household expenses and provides financial breathing room for emergencies.

## **FOR THEORY, THE IMPACT GOES BEYOND ECONOMICS.**

"Before, I couldn't afford to send my elder daughter to school regularly. Now, I can support both of my

children's education—including \$20 a week for my daughter's dormitory expenses," said Theory.

Empowered by their progress, both Theory and Lot are now sharing their knowledge and experiences with other farmers, sowing the seeds of resilience throughout their community. Their story is a testament that climate-smart agriculture is more than adaptation strategy—it's a pathway to lasting opportunity, stability and hope for the next generation.



*Theory's garden, a symbol of sustainable agriculture and the power of women's leadership in shaping resilient livelihood.*



*Theory and Lot (far right) in front of the movable solar-powered water pump.*

# CAMBODIA–VIETNAM LEARNING EXCHANGE ON EUDR-COMPLIANT RUBBER PRODUCTION

*Text by Asisah Man*

Oxfam, in collaboration with Forest Trends and the Vietnam Rubber Association, organized a strategic learning exchange in mid-June focused on the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) compliance and sustainable rubber production in Binh Phuoc and Binh Duong provinces, Vietnam.

Over three days, a delegation of 20 representatives from Cambodia—including officials from the General Directorate of Rubber under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, private sector companies, local communities, and civil society organizations—engaged in a series of site visits and discussions aimed at strengthening understanding of the EUDR and promoting sustainable rubber production practices.

EUDR is a landmark policy aimed at ensuring that products consumed in the EU do not contribute to global deforestation or forest degradation, promoting sustainability and reducing environmental impact.

This exchange formed part of Oxfam’s broader efforts to support an equitable and environmentally responsible transition in agricultural supply chains. The program addressed growing international demand for deforestation-free products and demonstrated how stakeholders in Vietnam are adapting production systems to align with the new EUDR requirements.

Delegates visited Dong Phu Rubber Joint Stock Company (Doruco), a member of the Vietnam Rubber Group—a state-owned industry, to observe how corporations are segmenting and managing production lines to distinguish between EUDR-compliant and non-compliant outputs. Insights

from this visit helped Cambodian stakeholders visualize the operational and logistical shifts required to meet EU standard, including traceability, geolocation mapping and differentiated processing. During the discussion, delegates were briefed by an official from the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment on how Vietnam government facilitate EUDR compliance through targeted supports and regulatory interventions. A subsequent tour of Dong Phu Rubber

practices, improving traceability and working with larger enterprises to access EU markets. This demonstrated viable pathways for Cambodia’s rubber smallholders to be integrated into formal value chains without facing exclusion from high-value export opportunities.

To conclude the exchange, Cambodian delegates participated in a structured reflection session where they identified actionable steps to strengthen domestic readiness for EUDR. Recommendations focused on strengthening collaboration among stakeholders particularly between companies and small-scale producer groups, mobilizing and organizing smallholder network, enhancing support for small-scale producers,



*Group tour at latex mattress and pillow showroom, Dong Phu Rubber Technical Joint Stock Company. Photo: Forest Trends*

Technical Joint Stock Company highlighted final consumer products derived from natural rubber latex, such as latex pillows and mattresses. This segment emphasized the economic potential of value-added manufacturing and its role in boosting the market profile of sustainably produced rubber.

A key learning opportunity for small holders emerged during the visit to Mai Vinh Rubber Processing Factory, where participants engaged with small-scale rubber farmers and local processing staff, gaining insight into collaborative models that promote inclusion in EUDR compliance. Farmers shared experiences adapting agricultural

establishing robust data and traceability systems, and promoting public-private partnership to foster a sustainable and responsible rubber sector.

This learning exchange reflects Oxfam’s strategic commitment to promoting inclusive, sustainable practices in agricultural production and trade in the region. Through cross-country dialogue, practical exposure, and stakeholder engagement, Oxfam is facilitating vital knowledge-sharing that strengthen environmental compliance, market readiness, and stakeholder engagement in Cambodia’s rubber industry.

# HARNESSING NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Text by Phanith Yip & Ratha Ra

In the remote reaches of Cambodia’s Oddar Meanchey province, the Sang Rukhavorn Community-Protected Area is paving a hopeful path toward sustainability, economic resilience, and environmental stewardship.

Spanning over 18,261 hectares of forest, this community-led conservation effort demonstrates how grassroots governance and inclusive forest management can empower local livelihoods while safeguarding biodiversity.

The community is home to more than 1,200 active members, 60% of them are women, who play a vital role in decision-making and daily forest activities. Their work focuses on non-timber forest products (NTFPs), which are seasonally abundant and critical to survival, particularly in times of agricultural uncertainty. These include bamboo and bamboo shoots, wild mushrooms like the sour and peacock varieties, wild fruits and vegetables, firewood sourced from deadwood, and traditional medicinal plants used in local remedies.

For households in Sang Rukhavorn, the forest is more than a source of cultural identity—it’s an economic safety net. During the rainy season, mushroom harvesting alone can generate up to 100,000 riels daily for community members, providing essential supplemental income and improving food security. Many families have come to rely on these natural products to stabilize their earnings, especially in the face of unpredictable weather patterns and agricultural risks.

To protect and enhance these resources, the community—supported by the Village Support Group and Oxfam’s Climate Resilience for All project funded by the Government of Ireland—has implemented a series of environmental and governance

initiatives. Tree-planting campaigns promote afforestation and restore degraded areas, while systematic patrols help curb illegal logging and poaching. Structured harvesting plans ensure that forest products are collected sustainably without compromising long-term availability, and community education fosters shared responsibility for forest health.

The effects are not only ecological but deeply personal. “Patrolling has helped us protect our forest from

illegal activities and keep resources available for everyone,” said Mr. Vong Soung, the dedicated head of the forest patrol team. His work is echoed by other community members like Ms. Sina Bin, who emphasized how NTFPs have especially benefited women.

“Women now have reliable income. This helps reduce migration and boosts our resilience to climate change,” Sina said, noting the sense of pride and security among female forest users.



*Sang Rukhavorn is a striking example of what happens when communities are empowered to manage their own natural resources: livelihoods improve, ecosystems recover, and inclusive development flourishes. By weaving together traditional knowledge, environmental safeguards, and equitable governance, this protected area offers a replicable model for forest-dependent communities across Cambodia—and far beyond.*

*In this picture, Ms. Sina Bin showing the mushroom she just collected from the forest. Photo: Kongden Phoek/VSG*

# ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN FOREST CONSERVATION

Text by Ratha Ra

In rural Cambodia, forests are more than ecosystems—they're vital sources of livelihood, culture, and resilience. But for many years, women's voices were missing from the decisions that shaped these landscapes. Through Oxfam's Climate Resilience for All (CREFA) project, generously supported by the Government of Ireland, that is beginning to change.

CREFA doesn't just focus on environmental sustainability, it confronts the gender inequalities that have long hindered women's participation in forest governance. Across communities, women have traditionally contributed significantly to forest conservation—but cultural norms, unequal access to resources, and low representation in leadership have kept them on the margins.

To challenge these barriers, CREFA introduced a transformative tool: Oxfam's Gender Action Learning System (GALS). This participatory approach empowers individuals and communities to reflect on gender roles, dismantle stereotypes, and build gender-responsive forest governance. Since its rollout in February 2024, GALS has reached 21 communities, helping integrate inclusive practices into the management of Community Forests (CFs) and Community Protected Areas (CPAs).

The change is already visible. In a recent reflection workshop, community members shared how the trainings have opened new pathways for women to lead. "Since we began using the GALS tool last year, more women in our community have stepped up—joining activities and even taking leadership roles on the committee," said Mr. Lann Roth, a committee member of Torteng Thngai Community Forestry.



A representative from Por Maen Boun Community Forestry presents their newly developed four-year forest management plan—now infused with gender equity principles using the GALS Tool. The plan, shaped during the three-day training, reflects a stronger commitment to inclusive governance and sustainable stewardship. Photo: Botom Mune/Oxfam



Participants from across 14 communities come together in a GALS training to reflect on gender roles, challenging stereotypes, and laying the foundation for more equitable forest governance. Photo: Botom Mune/Oxfam

Women are not only participating—they're driving change. Leadership roles once dominated by men are now being shared. Forest planning is more inclusive. Stereotypes are being questioned. In the words of one participant, the forest has become a space "where all voices matter."

To ensure these gains are lasting, CREFA partners continue to offer mentorship, follow-up, and support.

It's more than a training—it's a movement toward inclusive governance, equitable access, and resilient communities where both women and men are stewards of the land.

Spearheading gender equity through forest conservation, the CREFA project is helping communities grow—not just trees, but leaders.

# PUBLICATIONS

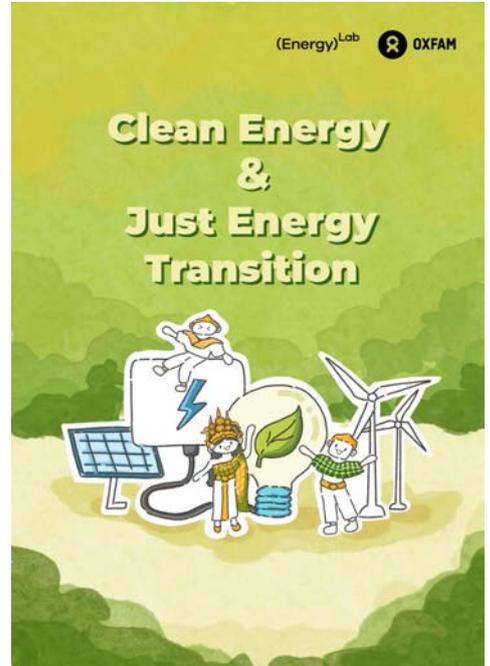
## CLEAN ENERGY & JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

Cambodia is undergoing a major energy shift, moving away from fossil fuels toward renewables. In the early 2000s, most of the country’s electricity came from heavy fuel oil. By 2023, however, 57% was generated from renewable sources like solar, hydro, and biomass. The government now aims to raise that share to 70% by 2030—highlighting a strong commitment to sustainability and climate resilience.

A just energy transition is vital to ensure everyone—whether in rural villages or urban centers—has equal access to clean, affordable, and reliable power. As Cambodia moves forward, inclusivity must be at the heart of this transformation so that no community is left behind.

Raising awareness and deepening understanding of clean energy and just transition principles is key. By equipping individuals, policymakers, and businesses with the right knowledge, Cambodia can align sustainability with social equity to secure a prosperous, resilient future for all.

To support these efforts, Oxfam and EnergyLab Asia have launched a bilingual (Khmer and English) booklet highlighting the role of clean energy in Cambodia’s development. It outlines core principles for a just energy transition and offers practical ways people can help shape a greener tomorrow.



## GUIDELINE ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTRACT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN CAMBODIA

This document introduces the procedures and mechanisms for addressing and resolving disputes related to the implementation of contract-based agricultural production in Cambodia. It also highlights key factors in preparing and executing agricultural production contracts that can help minimize conflicts and foster more effective outcomes.

Alongside dispute resolution processes, it outlines key elements for designing and implementing contracts—such as clear

responsibilities, transparency, fairness, and legal compliance—to help prevent misunderstandings and improve outcomes.

It targets all stakeholders in the contract agricultural production chain, including farmers, communities, unions, associations, producers, private enterprises, and buyers. The document encourages ethical conduct and mutual respect, urging all parties to act with integrity, uphold shared interests, and comply with relevant laws and regulations.



**We appreciate the long-standing support and relationship we have with our partners and donors. Thank you for being the primary change agents of Oxfam's endeavours to reduce poverty and empower communities. We have come a long way on the road to harnessing peace and ensuring social justice. We are extremely grateful for the continued support, cooperation and collaboration we have had over the years and we hope to continue this journey for years to come.**



Oxfam has supported Cambodia's development since 1979.

We continue with a strong commitment to Cambodians, especially women, youth and other marginalized groups facing inequality, discrimination, exploitation, abuse, and violence. Our goal is to empower the people of Cambodia enabling them to exercise their rights and actively contribute to building a resilient society that is free from poverty and injustice.

## OXFAM IN CAMBODIA

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