

# IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

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OXFAM

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## A WORD FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR



### Welcome to the 8th edition of our Impact Spotlight!

This edition is a testament to a powerful truth: that amidst complex challenges, from climate crises to governance issues, the most profound changes are driven by people. Across Cambodia and the wider ASEAN region, we are witnessing a remarkable surge of local leadership and innovation.

In these pages, you will meet the true architects of change. You will read about Sinath, who is harnessing the sun's power, and the women in Preah Vihear leading their communities in climate action. You will see how Cambodian youth are boldly claiming their right to decent work, and how village champions in Battambang are engineering a sanitation breakthrough.

From the multi-purpose cash assistance to 200 internally displaced families in Oddar Meanchey province to the strategic partnerships empowering citizens and strengthening governance, this report showcases a multifaceted approach to building a more just and resilient future. It is a future where a girl can find her voice, and where communities from the Mekong to primary schools like Sakda's are forging their own paths from vulnerability to resilience.

These stories are interconnected, each one a vital thread in the larger tapestry of our mission. They are proof that when we invest in people's agency, the impact is transformative. We hope, through our investment in building staff and partners' capacity in visual and storytelling, we can bring more stories to light not just to share our results, but to inform decisions that matter to the vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your continued partnership and belief in the power of people to create lasting change.

In solidarity!

**Sophoan Phean**

National Director, Oxfam in Cambodia





*Oxfam and our partner Village Support Group (VSG), with support from the Government of Ireland, provided cash aid to 200 vulnerable families affected by the Cambodia-Thailand border dispute to meet urgent needs and restore livelihoods. ©Naratevy Kek/Oxfam*

## OXFAM LAUNCHES EMERGENCY CASH ASSISTANCE FOR 200 VULNERABLE DISPLACED FAMILIES IN ODDAR MEANCHEY

Oxfam and our partner Village Support Group have launched an emergency cash transfer program in early October to support 200 vulnerable families in Oddar Meanchey province. This initiative responds to the urgent humanitarian needs of communities affected by the ongoing Cambodia-Thailand border conflict, including natural forest communities in Anlong Veng and Banteay Ampil districts, Samrong town and surrounding protected areas in Oddar Meanchey.

A joint assessment was carried out by Village Support Group in 19 villages across 4 communes and 3 districts in Oddar Meanchey province from August 26–30, 2025. The team surveyed 499 households through interviews, home visits, and field observations, identifying 415 families in urgent need of assistance. Priority was given to those most-at-risk families with equity cards (ID Poor, Disability, Elderly individuals) single-headed households, and families facing

extreme vulnerability such as those with war-damaged homes, unusable farmland due to Thai military threats, loss of income, lack of transportation, poor access to public services, and HIV-positive members.

The assessment revealed widespread destruction of property and farmland, severe livelihood disruptions, limited access to essential services, and poor sanitation among affected households. Of the 499 families interviewed, 138 had lost their jobs, most of whom were previously employed as laborers. Meanwhile, 361 families reported having unstable or irregular employment.

On October 2 and 3, 2025, Oxfam and Village Support Group teams distributed emergency cash assistance directly to 200 families in need. The remaining identified families were supported by other organizations.

Among the 200 families, there are 49%

women, 68% children, 14% elderly, and 10% people with disabilities— many of whom face compounded challenges due to mobility limitation, lack of access to healthcare, and inadequate infrastructure.

Each household received US\$50 in cash to help cover daily expenses, stabilize their living conditions and begin rebuilding their lives. Many expressed interests in using the money to rebuild lives though concerns remain about ongoing instability.

Ms. Sophoan Phean, Oxfam National Director said, “This cash assistance is a lifeline for families who have lost everything from shelter to livelihoods. The cash transfer here is not much but we hope it helps them to meet urgent needs while preserving dignity and choice. We believe that humanitarian assistance must go hand in hand with peace. The recent ceasefire offers a critical opportunity not just to stop



the violence, but to restore dignity, livelihood, and hope.”

“We call on all parties to uphold the ceasefire and prioritize the rights and safety of civilians. Our commitment is clear: to support inclusive recovery, protect vulnerable groups, and ensure that no one is left behind,” Sophoan added.

Ms. Chhorvivorn Ros, Executive Director of Village Support Group, said, “This response is built on the voices of the communities themselves. We worked closely with local leaders to ensure the most vulnerable families are supported not just with cash but with clean water and sanitation.”

This cash transfer program is part of a broader ongoing initiative. In July 2025, following the ceasefire agreement, Oxfam and Village Support Group installed 13 mobile toilets in evacuation centers and two water

filtration systems at the Phnom Thmar Kambor pagoda and Bat Thkao pagoda in Oddar Meanchey province. These facilities collectively served 7,431 households benefiting a total of 25,281 displaced individuals.

These efforts are made possible through generous financial support from the Government of Ireland and Oxfam’s own emergency funds.

Oxfam and our partners continue to call for additional support to rehabilitate livelihoods through vocational training and improved market access, and to ensure clean drinking water through both short-term distribution and long-term infrastructure solutions. This response reflects Oxfam’s broader commitment to economic justice, rights protection, and inclusive humanitarian action throughout Cambodia.

“I thank Oxfam and the Village Support Group for the cash assistance and clean water support. Before, we had no choice but to collect water from a nearby pond. It was dirty and filled with garbage. Now, with a proper clean water tank equipped with a purification system and toilet, our community feels safer and more at ease,” said Mr. Phally Ros, President of the Rolous Thom Community Forestry.

// I’m keeping this money for my children in case they get sick. I don’t dare to go home. The situation isn’t like before. I’m afraid of bullets. When we came here, we had to leave everything behind, including our chickens, pigs, and coops were all gone. Now, I don’t even know how to restart our small business. //

- Ms. Ratana Sal

*Right photo: Ms. Ratana Sal, a widow of three children from Sen Monorom 2 village, Kork Khpos commune, Banteay Ampil district, returned to the Phnom Thmor Kambor displacement camp again on October 25, 2025, following renewed instability along the border. ©Naratevy Kek/Oxfam*

*Left photo: Mr. Phally Ros, President of the Rolous Thom Community Forestry. ©Oxfam*





EU and partners launched SCOPE-PFM initiative in Cambodia supported by €3.5M in EU funding, the three-year project (2025–2028) aims to boost transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in public financial management. ©Oxfam

# LAUNCHING EU’S FUNDED INITIATIVE TO EMPOWER CITIZENS AND STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE IN CAMBODIA

By Naratevy Kek

A continuous journey toward transparency and accountable governance began with the official launch of the European Union funded SCOPE-PFM initiative. The three-year project running from June 2025 to May 2028 with a total EU-funded budget of €3.5 million aims to enhance civic engagement and financial oversight across the country.

Led by Oxfam in partnership with Advocacy and Policy Institute, NGO Forum on Cambodia and SILAKA, the *Strengthening Civic Engagement and Oversight in Public Financial Management (SCOPE-PFM)* initiative is more than a policy intervention, it is to empower citizens and amplify their voices in how public resources are managed.

At the launch event, H.E. Soksensan Meas, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Economic and Finance, and the Deputy Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Steering Committee of the Public Financial Management Reform celebrated Cambodia’s progress in budget transparency, citing notable rise in the country’s Open Budget Survey score from 33 in 2021 to 43 in 2023. He acknowledged the European Union and civil society partners for their vital support in this achievement.

Mr. Bryan Fornari, Head of Cooperation at the European Union, emphasized the transformative potential of the initiative. The EU-funded SCOPE-PFM project reinforces the shared commitment between the EU and the Royal Government of Cambodia

to strengthen fiscal transparency, accountability, along with citizen participation. He noted that by enhancing oversight mechanisms and creating more space for public engagement, the initiative contributes to more inclusive and responsive governance. “Empowering citizens to take part in the management of public resources is essential to building public trust and improving the quality of public services,” he said.

Ms. Sophoan Phean, Oxfam National Director, said, “Democratic governance begins with the power of informed and engaged citizens. Through the SCOPE-PFM, we are proud to join hands with our consortium partners to strengthen civic oversight and make public financial systems more transparent and accountable



through the dialogues among relevant stakeholders. This project is not just about reforming processes, it's about amplifying the voices of Cambodians and ensuring that public resources truly serve the public good."

SCOPE-PFM builds on the Royal Government of Cambodia's Public Financial Management Reform Program (PFMRP) launched in 2004. Over the years, PFMRP has significantly improved budget systems, particularly at the central level. Key achievement include the modernization and digitalization of tax and customs administration, which have strengthened revenue collection, broadened the tax base, improved taxpayer services and boosted compliance.

A major milestone in this reform journey is the rollout of the Financial Management Information System (FMIS). By automating core functions such as treasury operations, financial reporting, public procurement, and overall business process management. FMIS has significantly enhanced transparency, accountability and operational efficiency across public financial institutions.

Despite notable progress, Cambodia continues to grapple with challenges in budget transparency and public scrutiny. The launch of the SCOPE-PFM directly address these gaps through a strategic approach, including strengthening civic participation, enhancing budgetary oversight, and fostering collaboration among government institutions, civil society, development partners and the broader public to build a shared vision for inclusive governance and responsible financial stewardship.

The launch event marked a critical step forward, serving as a platform for stakeholder coordination, role clarification, and the identification of opportunities for meaningful engagement. It also invited feedback ensuring that the project remain responsive to local contexts and aligned with the priorities of Cambodian citizens.



*Ms. Sophoan Phean, Oxfam National Director, highlighted SCOPE-PFM's role in empowering citizens and promoting transparency in public finance for the public good. ©Oxfam*

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ACTIVISTS, CSOs, AND NETWORKS FROM ACROSS ASEAN COME TOGETHER ONLINE? ENERGY, IDEAS, AND ACTION!

*By Mariana Anton*

On 29–30 July 2025, Oxfam CLV together with four regional partners convened an online event titled From the Ground Up: Mobilizing Civil Society to Strengthen Social Protection in ASEAN. The online gathering brought together 69 participants from 15 countries to explore collective strategies for universal, rights-based social protection.

Participants reimaged what a society with universal social protection could look like and developed a series of recommendations that will be carried forward into our ASEAN advocacy work.

A post-event survey showed 100% positive feedback, with 65% rating the event 5 stars and 35% rating it 4 stars. As one participant shared: *"I like the whole event. Presentations from resource persons gave us a comprehensive background of Social Protection in ASEAN; group discussions gave me a sense of belonging and collective action."*

**Missed it? Scan the QR code to watch the full recording!**

Zoom-Record Day 1



Zoom-Record Day 2





*Sreypich Yan (second right) portrays an agri-food worker without NSSF benefits echoing her own experience and highlighting a wide-spread labor issue. Photo: Oxfam*

## CAMBODIAN YOUTH CALL FOR ACTION ON DECENT WORK AT NATIONAL FORUM

*By Naratevy Kek*

In a country where nearly two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30, Cambodian youth face persistent challenges in securing decent employment. With 88% of the national workforce engaged in informal labor, many young people lack access to fair wages, social protection, and safe working conditions. These barriers not only limit their economic potential but also hinder their ability to contribute meaningfully to Cambodia's development.

In response to these pressing issues, the Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP) and Oxfam jointly convened a **National Forum on Youth and Decent Work** in Phnom Penh on 14 September 2025. The event gathered over 200 participants, including youth leaders from the agri-food sector, community-based organizations, civil society actors, and key stakeholders from both public and private sectors.

The forum served as a platform to raise awareness of global employment

frameworks, explored mechanisms for labor market expansion, and fostered inclusive dialogue aimed at addressing the structural challenges young people face in accessing decent jobs. It also emphasized the importance of youth participation in shaping labor policies and recovery strategies in the post-COVID era.

Ms. Sreypich Yan, a volunteer in a performance on **"What is decent work?"** during the event, said, "I played a role of a worker in the agri-food sector whose workplace doesn't provide NSSF benefits. That wasn't just acting, it reflected my real-life experience. This personal challenge is a broader issue affecting workers."

Sreypich is currently a fourth-year student majoring in Social Affairs at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. After graduation from high school, she left her hometown in rural Tboung Khmum province to pursue higher education in Phnom Penh. To support herself and cover her living

expenses, she began searching for a job while studying. She has been working for four years and recently works at a restaurant, but like many young workers in the informal sector, she receives no benefits under the National Social Security Fund (NSSF).

"On behalf of young people, I urge the Ministry of Labor [and Vocational Training] and NSSF to strengthen education and outreach on labor rights in rural and remote areas. Let's ensure all workers, especially those in food and agriculture are protected," Sreypich said.

She also emphasized the importance of education and labor rights. "I hope the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport will integrate labor rights and NSSF benefits into school curricula, so students grow up fully aware of their rights."

Having engaged with YRDP's training program as a youth volunteer, Sreypich said, "I have learned about labor rights,



the Constitution, and social security benefits. This opened my eyes to how employers sometimes exploit workers.”

Discussions at the forum on Youth and Decent Work centered on the four pillars of decent work: job creation and productivity, rights at work, expansion of social protection, and promotion of social dialogue. These were examined in alignment with Cambodia’s national development goals and Sustainable Development Goal 8, which advocates for inclusive economic growth and full employment.

The event also highlighted emerging opportunities in green and renewable energy sectors, calling for increased investment in digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and vocational training to prepare youth for future-ready jobs. Participants urged the establishment of an integrated national policy framework and stronger public-private partnerships to create sustainable employment pathways.

“We are not just preparing for the future, we are shaping it. Decent work means having the power to choose, to grow, and to lead with dignity,” said a youth group representative during the presentation.

Recurring message throughout the forum was the need to amplify youth voices in decision-making processes that influence labor market dynamics. Stakeholders called on the Royal Government of Cambodia to prioritize youth employment in national recovery plans and urged international organizations to support data collection and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

“Talking about Youth and Decent Work feels incomplete when many young workers, including myself, are still excluded from NSSF protection,” Sreyepich added.

Currently, 2.6 million workers are covered by social security schemes, and 2.8 million people benefit from cash transfer programs, including vulnerable youth and informal workers.

“We urge all stakeholders to commit to a national youth employment strategy that reflects the realities of Cambodia’s labor market and empowers young people to lead,” said Mr. Roem Hourm, another youth participant.

As part of its broader commitment, Oxfam alongside partner organizations is implementing programs to strengthen labor rights and social protection. These include improving conditions for women in agriculture, integrating social protection with public financial systems, and addressing the environmental and

social needs of garment workers. All efforts aim to promote fair labor practices and expand support for vulnerable workers, contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Insights from the forum will be compiled into a policy brief to be shared with the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, development partners, and other stakeholders. The goal is to inform future strategies and reinforce youth-centered labor reforms that ensure every young Cambodian has the opportunity to thrive through decent work.



The group takes the stage with a presentation on labor rights highlighting workers’ voices and the push for fair treatment. ©Oxfam



Group photo featuring distinguished guests and keynote speakers at the Youth and Decent Work event. ©Oxfam

# OXFAM SHAPING CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH NDC 3.0

By Naratevy Kek



Ms. Sophoan Phean delivered her remarks at the official launch of Cambodia's Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) organized by the Ministry of Environment. ©MoE



Guests and participants at the launch of NDC 3.0 including government officials, development partners and civil society leaders, while participants represented a broader spectrum of stakeholders actively engaged in climate action and policy dialogues.

In 2025, Cambodia marked an important moment in their climate journey with the official launch of Cambodia's Third Nationally Determined Contribution known as NDC 3.0 on September 18, 2025. This milestone coincides with the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement, a global turning point in the fight against climate change. As signatories prepare

to submit their updated national climate action plans ahead of COP30, Cambodia's bold commitment and timely initiative stand out as a beacon of ambition, leadership and inclusive collaboration.

Oxfam, together with civil society organizations, is honored to have played an active role in this process.

We commend the Royal Government of Cambodia, particularly the Ministry of Environment, for its leadership in developing an ambitious and inclusive NDC 3.0. This plan aligns with key national strategies, including the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2024–2033, the Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality 2050, and the National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, with the generous funding support from the Government of Ireland, Oxfam provided direct budget and technical support to the Ministry of Environment and their partners. Our contributions included facilitating national and sub-national consultations, supporting youth and grassroots engagement, and offering policy input to ensure the climate strategy reflects the voices of those most affected. From the initial workshop in January 2025 to consultations held across provinces like Kep, Battambang, Siem Reap, and Monduliri, Oxfam helped bring together diverse stakeholders from government institutions and development partners to NGOs and educational bodies.

As part of the global Oxfam confederation, we remain deeply committed to supporting Cambodia's climate resilience. Our work spans sustainable livelihoods, disaster preparedness, governance, and inclusive development. For over four decades, Oxfam has stood alongside the Cambodian people and government, and during the launch of NDC 3.0, Oxfam reaffirmed our dedication to building carbon-neutral, climate-resilient communities by 2050.

The road ahead requires continued collaboration, increased financial resources, technology transfer, and full stakeholder participation. Oxfam calls on all partners to accelerate the implementation of NDC 3.0 and close the gap between ambition and action.



# WOMEN LEADING CLIMATE ACTION IN PREAH VIHEAR

By Otdom Svay/DPA

In the northern reaches of Cambodia, Preah Vihear province faces unpredictable weather patterns, frequent droughts, and flooding have made farming increasingly difficult, leaving communities like Chey Sen district particularly vulnerable. For years, local forest areas such as Phnom Preah Inthrong Community Forestry (CF) remained unsupported, despite their critical role in environmental protection and community resilience.

Managed by a Community Forestry Management Committee (CFMC) of 11 members including five women, the Phnom Preah Inthrong Community Forestry struggled with limited capacity. While the women were officially part of the committee, they lacked the confidence, knowledge, and tools to actively participate in decision-making or lead conservation efforts.

That began to change with the arrival of the Climate Resilience for All Year 2 project, implemented by Development and Partnership in Action (DPA).

Through targeted support, DPA helped the CFMC strengthen its forest management practices and climate resilience. Training sessions covered a wide range of topics: updating forest management plans, conducting forest patrols, planting trees, adopting climate-smart farming techniques, and measuring carbon capture to support environmental goals. These efforts also aimed at improving food security and generating income through sustainable agriculture.

The transformation went beyond technical skills. To promote gender equality in forest governance, DPA introduced the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), a participatory tool that empowers communities to understand and apply gender equity principles. CFMC members, including women, were trained as GALS facilitators, enabling



*Phnom Preah Inthrong Community Forestry team, including Ms. Khit Sao (second left), during a forest patrol. ©Otdam Svay/DPA*

them to lead change within their own communities.

One of the most inspiring outcomes is the story of Ms. Khit Sao, a CFMC member who emerged as a leader through the program. Initially hesitant to speak up, she gained confidence through the GALS training and began engaging with local authorities on forest-related issues. Today, she leads women in forest patrols, teaches climate-smart farming techniques, and serves as the deputy leader of the CFMC.

Khit's journey from vulnerability to leadership reflects the broader impact of inclusive climate action. Her story demonstrates how targeted support and gender-responsive approaches can unlock the potential of women to lead change, protect natural resources, and build resilient communities. She expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Embassy of Ireland, Oxfam, and DPA for their continued support, and called for ongoing assistance to ensure that more women across Preah Vihear can step into leadership roles in forest

conservation.

As Chey Sen district moves toward a more sustainable and equitable future, women like Khit are proving that climate action is not just about protecting the environment, it's about empowering people to shape it.

“ Before, not many women joined Community Forestry activities. Now, more women are involved. I'm proud of my role and want to encourage more women to take part

– Khit Sao



# SINATH'S JOURNEY TO EMPOWER HIS COMMUNITY THROUGH SOLAR INNOVATION

*By Ouksa Chhory/SOGE*

Mr. Sinath Chea, a 43-year-old farmer from Kampong Chlong village in Battambang province, is a husband and father of four. Three of his children are still in school, and one works locally as an electrical laborer. His biggest dream is to give his family a better life, help his children go to university and be able to support his community.

In 2010, Sinath left his village to work in Thailand, taking a job as a cleaner. Life abroad was touch and isolating, and after nine years, he returned home in 2019 to resume rice farming, and work at the village water station. Yet farming proved increasingly difficult. Climate change brought unpredictable weather, water shortages, and rising costs to irrigate his crops.

Determined to find new solutions, Sinath pursued his growing interest in electrical work and completed a short course in electricity in 2024. That same year, his life has changed when the Climate Resilience for All project (CREFA) led by Oxfam was introduced in his village. After attending several community meetings, Sinath joined the Wattamim Water User Cooperative and took on the role of managing the Solar Water Pump System.

Between June 2024 and January 2025, Sinath received hands-on training from Oxfam's partner, SOGE, learning how to operate and maintain the solar panels and troubleshoot issues with system. Today, he earns \$100 a month as a technical support workers helping ensure reliable water access for farming in his village.

Thanks to his new role, Sinath can grow rice more efficiently, continue pursuing his dream of becoming an electrician, and support other farmers in building resilience. His children are thriving in school, his wife feels more secure about household expenses, and the family is flourishing in their village.



*Mr. Sinath Chea received hands-on training from a SOGE technical expert on system operation and maintenance. ©Ouksa Chhory/SOGE*



*Sinath is able to repair some issues on the solar sun tracker board, restoring it to normal operation. "I'm happy. Even though the income is small, I'm proud to help my community have water for farming, and my family is happy," said Sinath. ©Ouksa Chhory/SOGE*



# THE GIRL WHO FOUND HER VOICE

By Seedeth Chum/LLC



Seav attending capacity building training delivered by Live & Learn Cambodia in Siem Reap province. ©Chum Seedeth/LLC

Ms. Seav Neak, 23, from Pak Pan Village, has always dream of becoming an entrepreneur and serving her community as a clerk. As the second youngest of eleven siblings, she grew up in a modest household of five, helping her family grow rice while quietly holding onto her aspirations.

But her journey was not easy. Naturally shy and reserved, she struggled to express herself, connect with others, and work in teams. Her limited social

circle made it difficult to pursue opportunities, and after finishing high school, she couldn't find a job. Staying close to home, she felt stuck—her dreams sidelined by self-doubt and circumstance.

Everything began to change when the village chief introduced her to a leadership and teamwork course offered by Live & Learn Cambodia under Oxfam's Climate Resilience for All (CREFA) project funded by the

Government of Ireland. Curious and determined to grow, Seav joined the program. It was a turning point. The course helped her find her voice, she began speaking up, sharing ideas, and engaging with her peers. She reflected on her personal challenges and set goals to overcome them.

With each session, Seav grew more confident and creative. She started participating actively in her community and supporting her family with renewed energy.

Today, Seav continues her journey with courage and purpose. Her story reminds us that when young people are empowered to lead, they don't just change their own lives but they help shape the future of their communities.

// I feel more confident than before. Youth play a vital role in society and must embrace self-leadership and community understanding to reach their full potential. //

- Seav Neak

Seav's transformation is a powerful example of how inclusive learning and leadership opportunities can unlock hidden potential. Through communication, teamwork, and self-belief, she discovered new ways to contribute to her community and pursue her dreams.

# FROM VULNERABILITY TO LEADERSHIP: COMMUNITIES FORGE CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN THE MEKONG

By Soknak Por

A three-year project concludes, leaving a legacy of empowered local leadership, innovative solutions, and a scalable blueprint for climate adaptation.

For communities along the Mekong River, climate change is not a future threat, it is a daily reality. From unpredictable floods to prolonged droughts, riverine families have long been on the frontlines. But a powerful shift is underway. After 42 months of dedicated implementation, the “Strengthening Climate Change Resilience (SCR) in the Mekong Sub-region” project is concluding, having successfully transformed the role of local communities from vulnerable recipients to active leaders of their own climate-smart future.

Funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and implemented by Oxfam, the project hosted its Wrap-Up and Learning Workshop on August 26, 2025, to consolidate and share the valuable lessons learned with a wider audience of practitioners, policymakers, and development partners.

The project’s most significant achievement is its demonstrable, community-led model for building resilience. Operating across 11 villages in Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, and Kratie provinces, the project directly engaged 4,322 individuals, placing a strong emphasis on the strengthening leadership of 90 Village Disaster Management Group (VDMG) members 23% of whom are women and 19% from indigenous communities to lead local DRM planning and response.

“The real success story here is one of ownership,” said Ms. Sophoan Phean, Oxfam National Director. “We didn’t bring in outside solutions. We empowered the people who know their land and rivers best, the local communities, to design and drive



*Theary’s garden, a symbol of sustainable agriculture and the power of women’s leadership in shaping resilient livelihood. ©Soknak Por/Oxfam*

**// THE SOLAR PUMP  
SUPPORTED BY THE  
PROJECT MEANS I  
NO LONGER NEED TO  
WALK FAR FOR WATER.  
IT’S EASIER NOW FOR  
EVERYONE. //**

**– Neab, 18-Year-Old Water  
Committee Member**

their own strategies. This ensures sustainability long after the project ends.”

“We have witnessed the power of partnership in building community resilience to disaster risks and climate change throughout the entire Mekong region,” said H.E. Hong Kim, Deputy Secretary, General, National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM).

“The project has brought about meaningful and life-changing achievements for our people, especially for the communities in the remote areas who are vulnerable to disasters,” said H.E. Mar Vichet, Deputy Governor of Ratanakiri Province.



This empowerment was channeled through the strengthening of 11 Village Disaster Management Groups (VDMGs) and 4 Commune Committees for Disaster Management (CCDMs). These groups, inclusive of women, youth, and marginalized community members, became the engine rooms for developing and executing practical Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) plans.

The project facilitated tangible, on-the-ground innovations that are already improving lives in several meaningful ways. Community access to critical hydro-meteorological data was expanded through the Early Warning System 1294 and community-based water level monitoring. This data was translated into information boards and broadcasted via mobile loudspeakers, transforming it into life-saving tools that help disseminate hazards and disaster risks to vulnerable group.

In the realm of climate-smart agriculture, 28 households piloted solar-powered irrigation systems and adopted resilient farming techniques. These innovations have significantly boosted household income and food security while helping communities

adapt to climate-related risks. To promote inclusive water security, a new solar-powered water supply system was installed, providing reliable access to clean water for 66 indigenous Kroeung community members, including 8 people with disabilities.

Chuong Theary, a 38-year-old smallholder farmer from Kaeng San village in Ratanakiri province, spent years relying on traditional farming methods alongside her husband. They faced income instability and uncertainty making it difficult for them to support their family of four, including two school-aged children.

"Before, I couldn't afford to send my elder daughter to school regularly. Now, I can support both of my children's education," said Ms. Chuong Theary.

The Dal Phnom village, also in Ratanakiri province, 243 indigenous Krueng people faced chronic water insecurity after being displaced by flooding caused by a dam. Women and girls bore the heaviest burden, spending hours each day walking long distance to collect water.

Beyond the community level

intervention, the project adopted an evidence-based approach that contribute meaningfully to national policy development contributing to the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2024–2033, the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0, and the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2026–2030.

The Wrap-Up and Learning Workshop of the project was held to harvest the rich insights from this journey. The event provided a platform for community representatives, local authorities, and national partners to reflect on accomplishments, co-create solutions for future interventions, and solidify a common framework for climate resilience that can be scaled across the Mekong and other beyond.

The project stands as a testament to the power of inclusive partnership between communities, civil society (FACT, MVI, NRD, 3SPN), academic institution like the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) and government bodies like the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) and its sub-national structures. This proved that with the right support, those most affected by climate change can become their most effective architects.



First photo: Water Level Monitoring is a Community-Based Early Warning initiative that provides real time data for community to manage flood disaster. Last two photos: Local communities embracing climate-smart agriculture, building resilience and securing sustainable livelihoods in the context of climate change. ©Soknak Por/Oxfam

# HEALTH STARTS HERE: SAKDA PRIMARY'S WASH JOURNEY

By Soknea Oun | Data collection and interviews: Vuochkeang Phon, Chong Ear, Hojin Shin

At Sakda Primary School in Siem Reap province, change begins with clean hands, healthy routines, and a renewed sense of hope. Leading this transformation is Ms. Pheap Sorn, a passionate 3rd-grade teacher and the school's WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and health focal point.

Since 2024, Pheap has led a school-wide hygiene and sanitation practices, supported by HURREDO training and resources, an implementing partner, boosting student health, attendance, and learning.



Left: Ms. Pheap Sorn holding cups provided by the project at Sakda Primary School.



Right: Ms. Eu Mey Yang shows her hygiene kit next to handwashing facility, Sakda Primary School. ©Hojin Shin/Oxfam

## FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Students Adopt Lifelong Healthy Habits Before the intervention, many students lacked access to hygiene supplies and proper sanitation facilities. Today, the change is visible and impactful.

"We've seen about 35% improvement in students' behavior," Pheap said. "They now wash their hands after playing and before entering class, and brush their teeth after meals." These habits were reinforced through the installation of handwashing stations near classrooms and the distribution of WASH kits, including cups, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and soap to marginalized students.

Ms. Eu Mey Yang, 11, said, "I knew handwashing was important but I didn't know when to do it. After the campaign, I learned the key times—before eating, after using the toilet, playing outside, and before going home. Now, I do it daily. I also joined school handwashing activities and use hygiene supplies like toothpaste, a toothbrush, and bins. This program really changed my habits."

The benefits extend beyond hygiene. "When students are healthy, they participate more, attend school regularly, and are less likely to drop out," Pheap said. Common illness like

stomachaches and toothaches, once leading causes of absenteeism, have significantly declined.

## A HEALTHIER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR BETTER LEARNING

The school itself has undergone a remarkable change. Inspired by HURREDO's guidance, Sakda Primary School introduced a plastic reduction and waste segregation initiative. Food vendors were encouraged to replace plastic packaging with banana leaves, and trash bins were strategically placed across the campus. "A clean school is a better place to learn," Pheap says. "When students see their surroundings well-maintained, they take pride in keeping it that way."

## A TEACHER'S PASSION FOR CHANGE

For Pheap, this mission is deeply personal. "Health education is critical," she said. "Without good health, students cannot focus on their studies." Her dedication goes beyond her role. It stems from a firm belief in equipping children with lifelong skills. Participating in the Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion (GEDI) in WASH training in Siem Reap further fueled her commitment. "It was an opportunity to learn and share experiences with others who care about these issues," she says. Now, with national policies

requiring weekly health education, Pheap ensures every teacher at Sakda Primary School integrates hygiene lessons into their teaching.

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

While NGO support has been crucial, Pheap and the school are determined to sustain these improvements. "We prioritize marginalized students, but we also encourage parents to provide basic hygiene materials," she explains. Additionally, the school has started allocating part of its budget to restocking supplies, ensuring no child misses out on essential hygiene tools. The success at Sakda Primary School highlights how targeted WASH interventions, combined with dedicated leadership, can create lasting change. Students are healthier, more engaged, and equipped with knowledge they will carry into adulthood.

For Pheap, the work continues. "Every small step matters," she says. "When we invest in children's health today, we invest in their future." And at Sakda Primary, that future is now cleaner, healthier, and full of promise.

*This story is from WASH activities in Fostering Inclusive and Sustainable WASH in the Tonle Sap. The project is a public-private partnership with KOICA.*



# VILLAGE CHAMPIONS LEAD SANITATION BREAKTHROUGH IN BATTAMBANG

By Soknea Oun | Data collection and interviews: Vuochkeang Phon, Chong Ear, Hojin Shin

A grassroots sanitation initiative is reshaping life in this remote Steung Chak village of Battambang province, where open defecation once posed serious health risks. Today, thanks to the tireless efforts of two local leaders, the community is embracing safer and more dignified hygiene practices.

Horm Nang, 43, and Phan Thet, 50, serve as Village Focal Persons (VFPs) trained by HURREDO, Oxfam's local implementing partner focused on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) initiatives. Their mission is to eliminate open defecation in Steung Chak by promoting awareness, linking families to financial support, and encouraging behavioral change.

For decades, open defecation was the norm in Steung Chak, contributing to contaminated water sources, frequent outbreaks of diarrhea, and increased risks of cholera and dysentery particularly during floods.

According to WHO/UNICEF (2023), poor sanitation remains a leading cause of

child mortality in Cambodia, with nearly 10,000 deaths annually. A 2022 report from the Ministry of Health indicated that over 30% of rural Cambodians still practice open defecation, exacerbating malnutrition and stunting among children.

Women and girls faced additional vulnerabilities, often forced to wait until nightfall for privacy, exposing them to harassment and snake bites. Financial constraints and limited awareness further hindered the adoption of household toilets.

Undeterred, Nang and Thet began conducting weekly household visits, five to six homes at a time, offering guidance, encouragement, and practical solutions. Their persistence paid off. After four months of consistent outreach, one family constructed their first private toilet, marking a significant milestone in the village's sanitation journey.

"Changing behavior is never easy," said Nang. "But when we saw that family's pride in their new toilet, their safety,

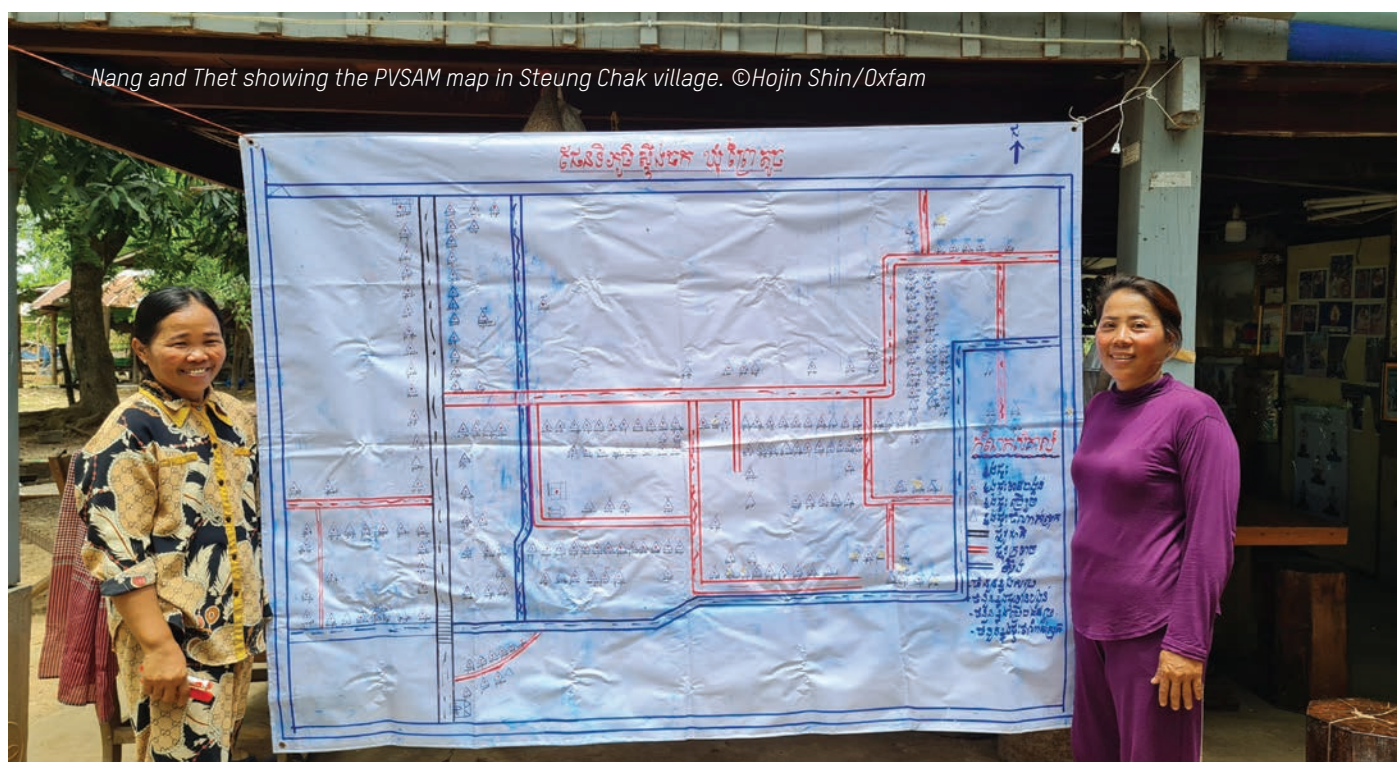
their comfort, we knew our work mattered."

The VFPs now envision a future where every household in Steung Chak has access to a toilet. "We won't rest until Steung Chak becomes a sanitation role model," Thet affirmed. "Even one family adopting this change fuels our hope and drive."

The impact is already visible. Women no longer hide in bushes at dawn. Children are healthier and more focused in school. Farmers are stronger, no longer burdened by preventable infections.

As Steung Chak moves closer to becoming an open defecation-free village, Nang and Thet's story stands as a testament to the power of grassroots leadership, community engagement, and the life-changing potential of sanitation awareness.

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Nang and Thet showing the PVSAM map in Steung Chak village. ©Hojin Shin/Oxfam

# OXFAM AND PARTNERS BUILD NEW SKILLS IN VISUAL AND WRITTEN STORYTELLING

By Naratevy Kek

Oxfam organized two training sessions aimed at strengthening the storytelling capacity of our staff and partners in August and September 2025. Held at Oxfam office, each session brought together 40 participants, equipping them with practical tools to amplify community voices and communicate impact more effectively.

The first training, held in August, focused on mobile photography and videography recognizing the growing importance of visual content in advocacy, reporting, and social media outreach. Led by a professional media trainer, the session covered key techniques including composition, lighting, framing, and ethical storytelling. Participants also explored video interview skills, the use of A-roll and B-roll, editing technique and mobile apps for post-production. Through simulated exercises, participants practiced capturing compelling images and short videos using their smartphones.

One of the partner participants, Mr. Huch Leng, Program Coordinator at Farmers and Nature Net Association, said, "I'm proud of the first video I created on my smartphone. This training sparked my interest in filming techniques, equipment, and framing. I learned about A-roll, B-roll, and how to make videos more engaging."

The second session, held in early September, centered on narrative development and story writing. Facilitated by a media specialist, the training guided participants through the process of identifying strong story angles, catchy headlines and lead, structuring human-interest pieces, transformation stories with clarity and emotional depth. The session also emphasized ethical considerations, such as informed consent and avoiding stereotypes, while encouraging participants to elevate



*Ms. Sreyneath Chhun stepped out from her usual role from Oxfam's Receptionist and Admin Assistant and shined as an interviewer during the Story Writing Training session.*

the voices of marginalized groups. Participants drafted story lead and received feedback from peers and facilitators. The session concluded with a showcase of selected stories, and practical interview exercise, reinforcing the importance of authenticity and empathy in storytelling.

"These trainings are more than skill-building, they're about shifting how we communicate," said Mr. Ratha Ra, an Oxfam program staff member. "We're learning to tell true stories that resonate, that move people, and that reflect the dignity of those we work with."

Both sessions were designed to be highly interactive, blending theory with practice. Participants appreciated the opportunity to learn in a collaborative environment, share experiences across organizations, and build confidence in their creative abilities.

The training sessions also welcomed participants from the support teams, including staff from the finance and administration departments, approximately 30% of the total participants. This inclusive approach aimed to broaden skill development beyond program teams, giving

support staff the opportunity to engage creatively and strengthen their communication capacity. This also encourage cross-functional collaboration and creative engagement.

Ms. Chamroeun Pang, Admin and Logistics Coordinator, said, "This was my first time attending trainings like these. It was eye-opening to learn how storytelling and visual content can enhance our work and help us connect more deeply with the communities we serve."

These training sessions are part of Oxfam's broader commitment to strengthening communications and visibility across its programs. By investing in the storytelling skills of staff and partners, Oxfam aims to ensure that the voices of communities are heard, valued, and represented with authenticity.

One key takeaway from both sessions was the reminder that while data and results are essential, it's the stories behind them that truly resonate. Each statistic reflects a person, a journey, and a voice worth sharing, and storytelling remains one of the most powerful tools to bring impact to life.



**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.**



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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  
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