



PROMOTING BETTER LIVES IN RURAL CAMBODIA

Interim Report | January to June 2019

SUMMARY

Promoting Better Lives helps poor rural (most vulnerable) Cambodians in 54 villages in three districts in northern and northwest Cambodia improve their lives and livelihoods.

With support from Week of Compassion, Church World Service and our local partners, the Rural Development Association and the Association for Development and Our Villagers' Rights have prioritized partnership with village and local government leaders to work with 'poor' and 'poorest' households to help families improve their lives and livelihoods.

During the six-month reporting period, January to June 2019, *Promoting Better Lives* helped 105 volunteer Community WASH Change Agents improve their abilities to educate their neighbors about better water, sanitation and hygiene. In their WASH Change Agent roles, village volunteers have improved their knowledge, skills and confidence to share messages with families and students through awareness raising sessions about the importance and impact of safe water sources and use and good environmental sanitation (hygiene). Through their outreach activities, these volunteers gained respect in their villages and were further motivated to continue their work.

From upgraded and new wells, latrines, hand-washing stations and water filters, 3,838 people – children and adults – have better water and sanitation access than they did before. Another 7,156 people benefited from health promotion and home/school environmental sanitation education. Statistics show that girls' / women's awareness and learning is high.

Finally, those benefiting most from *Promoting Better Lives* livelihood support are women. During the first half of 2019, 75% of women who joined project activities showed knowledge/skills gains for climate-adapted gardening and chicken raising. Now, many women are improving their families' income selling vegetables, eggs and chickens. Like the Community Change Agents who have been motivated to continue their work because of others' respect, these women now see themselves as community assets, which is a change for them.

BACKGROUND

In a 2015 review of ongoing CWS and partner-donor investments in Preah Vihear and Battambang provinces, significant positive impact from joint efforts showed that many families, including those with whom CWS partners, still need external support to attain basic human rights to food, water, sanitation and health and to address their daily livelihoods challenges. This is the case even though impressive economic and social growth have occurred in some parts Cambodia, mostly cities. But even those gains are fragile while development in rural areas has slowed or stalled. Many people who have worked their way out of poverty are at high risk of losing ground. For example, the loss of only 30¢ (US) in daily income would put an about three million Cambodians back into poverty, doubling the poverty rate to 40%.¹

Because of these facts, CWS and partners continue to help poor rural Cambodians improve their lives and livelihoods by continued focus on grassroots integrated community development.

¹ World Bank Poverty Assessment Report

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Promoting Better Lives is designed to help Cambodia's most vulnerable people in 54 villages – and focus on villages where about one-third of families are at the lowest levels of subsistence living² – to improve their lives and livelihoods by continue to focus on grassroots integrated community development with increased focus on (i) community-based disaster risk reduction and management alongside ongoing focus on (ii) WASH, (iii) nutrition improvement plus (iv) livelihood diversification in both home-based climate-resilient agriculture and other micro enterprises. All initiatives share the goal of helping families and communities improve their living conditions.

Cambodian non-government and local government groups will be helped to improve their ability to implement integrated development activities together with families and communities, and with some material inputs. All activities are designed to help people, especially women, improve their lives and livelihoods with a focus on the grassroots components of integrated community development. One key focus is on community-based natural disaster risk reduction and management alongside an ongoing focus on food security and nutrition and livelihood diversification in both home-based climate-resilient agriculture and other micro enterprises.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Local duty-bearers, key persons and community members increased knowledge and improved capacity to minimize / mitigate natural disaster risks. NOTE: Cambodia SDG 13, Target: 13.1³
2. The “poor” and “poorest” people, including school children in partner villages, change their behavior related to water, sanitation and hygiene. NOTE: Cambodia SDG 6, Targets: 6.1⁴ and 6.2⁵
3. The “poor” and “poorest” people in partner villages are more food secure then in the past, and they have information and knowledge for improved nutrition. NOTE: Cambodia SDG 2, Target: 2.3⁶ and 2.4⁷

² *Op Cit. Identification of Poor Households Program* a scheme of the Ministry of Planning (footnote #9)

³ Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.

⁴ By 2030, achieve universal equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all;

⁵ By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

⁶ By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment;

⁷ By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that helped maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

PROJECT LOCATIONS & PARTICIPANTS

	# Direct			# Indirect		
	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total
Children ages 5+ to 18	1,741	1,425	3,166			
Adults	2,726	1,469	4,195	2,044	1,102	3,146

PROJECT RESULTS

Objective 1: Local duty-bearers, key persons and community members increase knowledge and improve capacity to minimize/mitigate natural disaster risks.

With WOC funding, CWS supported community disaster risk mitigation/reduction in these ways:

- Community irrigation: restoration of two irrigation canals (2,000 meters), building two roadside culverts; digging one community pond and 73 household ponds
 - Impact: 781 farm families (3,203 people) have water for rice and vegetable growing to help reduce food insecurity. Additionally, 73 families (319 people) who were supported dig individual ponds have water year-round for home gardening and household use during the dry season.

Objective 2: The “poor” and “poorest” people, including school children in partner villages, change their behavior related to water, sanitation and hygiene.

With WOC funding, CWS supported WASH activities to achieve these outputs and results:

Community Change Agent activities:

- 105 Change Agents and Commune Council members joined semi-annual reflection meetings to share WASH achievements and discuss ongoing/additional community needs. They also identified key challenges, discussed solutions and developed six-month action plans.
- 28 Change Agents and Commune Council members joined a one-day learning exchange in a successful Open Defecation Free village.
 - IMPACT: Noticeably higher motivation for Change Agents and local authorities to support villages to be *Open Defecation Free*, for example, 309 new sanitary latrines built in the past six months and in use. Significantly, *there has been a rapid increase of latrine construction.*
- 3,990 adults benefited with new and refresher information during Community Health Promotion activities
 - IMPACT: Better health and wellbeing and behavior change for other children to emulate
- 3,166 school children learned about disease transmission and prevention and how to treat water to make is safe. They received information about the reasons to use sanitary latrines and could demonstrate proper handwashing.
 - IMPACT: Better health and wellbeing and behavior change for other children to emulate

- 150 families (661 people) receive water filters
 - IMPACT: sustainable safe drinking water access because families learn to maintain the filters
- Four water tanks, pipes to carry water to hand-washing stations, which are added in four schools
 - IMPACT: 805 students and 23 teachers can wash their hands after using the toilet (and before eating) to maintain good hygiene.
- 148 families (609 people) plus 354 students and seven teachers benefited from eight new deep tube wells with hand-pumps and 12 new ring wells
 - RESULT: More people have access to improved water sources for drinking, domestic use and watering their vegetable gardens and to maintain sanitation and hygiene
 - IMPACT: Better health and wellbeing and role model families for others to emulate

Objective 3: The “poor” and “poorest” people in partner villages are more food secure than in the past, and they have information and knowledge for improved nutrition.

- 65 members of five producer groups joined teaching-learning activities about basic financial management and marketing
 - RESULT: Groups understand key financial management points, basic financial analysis for micro-business start-up, client needs and simple marketing.
 - IMPACT: People can have better businesses and more income
- 224 vegetable producer group members met quarterly to share good practices, discuss challenges/obstacles to success and ideate solutions and innovations
 - RESULT: Intra-group knowledge, lessons learned and ideas for success shared
- 518 people learned best practice chicken raising techniques then received chickens to raise
 - IMPACT: improved family diets (more and better-quality food), especially for vulnerable families with young children; and, improved livelihoods
- 20 farmers gained (tested) knowledge about climate adapted home gardening and have seeds and tools to start gardens
 - IMPACT: improved diets and livelihoods (wellbeing)
- 158 people joined information sharing and training about growing oyster mushrooms for home meals and sales
 - RESULT: People can eat and sell mushrooms, which are a high value (for sale) food in Cambodia and important ingredients in improving diets
- 64 members of four producer groups received electric egg hatcheries
 - RESULT: groups can accelerate chicken productivity for improved family diets and sales of surplus eggs, chicks and chickens
- 16 producer group members planned a shared vegetable garden and received material support (PVC tubing for watering, plastic covering for soil retention and nets for sun/heat screening) to start it
 - RESULT: water-saving, more productive garden for collective benefit.

STORIES OF CHANGE

Partnership for Improve Hygiene and Sanitation

Recently, CWS Cambodia staff worked with administrators, teachers and parents of Rumdoah Srae primary school students in northern Cambodia to improve water access and build hand-washing stations in support of better hygiene at the school. As always, CWS included teaching-learning opportunities for the students and staff while the material improvements were being made. Students joined awareness-raising activities about basic sanitation and hygiene. So, once they had their hand washing stations, they could change their habits and started proper, regular handwashing after going to the toilet and before eating.

After the improvements were done, Principal, In Len, told CWS colleagues how it was difficult to get students to practice good hygiene – because it's just impossible without water! So, he added, *“since CWS supported the material improvements and help us organize sanitation and hygiene education, the students now wash their hands properly and regularly. Now students have better hygiene and sanitation in the school compound is much better.”* Besides the latrines, since the school had improved water access, CWS partnered with teachers to support students to make a vegetable garden at the school. This, the Principle said, bring the students together in their free time and builds a kind of *“solidarity among them. Their parents and teachers are grateful and thank CWS for supporting – and inspiring – them. He continued, “Seeing the results from CWS help, they have raised money to add to the school's maintenance budget to pay for four more hand-washing stands for the children.”*

In another successful water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) initiative, CWS partner, the Association for Development and Our Villager's Rights (ADOVIR), teamed up with Boeng Popul primary school in western Cambodia to address assessed needs. Together, ADOVIR staff and the school director and teachers worked to build a two-room sanitary latrine with two handwashing stands. As a result, 66 girls, 72 boys and six teachers have better sanitation.

Once the latrines were finished, and the students had joined the basic sanitation and hygiene lesson, the school director Slonh Oeun was happy to tell ADOVIR staff how his students now understand the importance of using a sanitary latrine and washing their hand properly afterwards. Oeun added, *“I am especially happy for the girl students because the new latrines give them privacy. Before, when everyone used the open space around the school, it was especially difficult for the girls”.*

Oeun also noted the dangerous poor sanitation situation that the school used to have. And, of course, he is grateful that such a serious and embarrassing situation is now change. Echoing the director's comments, village leader Vorn Thouk, said simply, *“The parents and I are happy and grateful for the support and for our children's better school conditions.”*



Students wash their hand after using the bathroom.



Twin sanitary latrine installed in primary school.



Kimlean feeding her chickens with termites.

Enough for All

Len Kimlean is 49 and her husband Saing Phally is 55. With their two sons, who are 30 and 14, they live in a northern Cambodian village in Preah Vihear province. When CWS first met this family just two years ago, they were extremely poor farmers. Sometimes, they did not have enough food to eat, and the younger son could not attend school because the family could not pay the fees or afford his uniform. Because of her family's poverty, Kimlean was invited to join others in Promoting Better Lives activities and to receive five hens and a rooster to jump start her efforts to overcome the family's poverty.

Importantly, Kimlean learned how to raise the chickens properly so they would survive and thrive. And, she has been quite successful in using her new knowledge and her initiative to expand her brood to more than 200! Now, after two-plus years of gradual change and understanding of her own success, Kimlean says she is confident to contract another local merchant to sell between 33 and 44 pounds of chicken weekly for about \$1.80 per pound. These days, since Kimlean first partnered with CWS by, she works at poultry raising so her young son can go to school and her older son, who has the challenge of being mute, has a way to add to the family's wellbeing.

In 2018, Kimlean earned about 2.8 million Riel – so just under \$2 a day – by selling her chickens. What a difference compared to days not so long ago when the family didn't have enough to eat! Besides investing money back into her business and buying a few pigs, Kimlean's son is now on track to complete high school and she has paid off a loan from the past.

With WOC and other support, CWS is proud to partner with Kimlean and thousands of poor but proud and hardworking farmers, both women and men, across Cambodia and southeast Asia as we work together to live into our shared vision: *"Enough for all."*

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	Budget FY'19	Expenditures (30 JUNE'19)
Objective 1: Local duty-bearers, key persons and community members increased their knowledge and improved capacity to minimize / mitigate natural disaster risks.	\$2,175.80	\$994.30
Objective 2: The “poor” and “poorest” people, including school children in partner villages, change their behavior related to water, sanitation and hygiene.	\$9,491.40	\$5,404.36
Objective 3: The “poor” and “poorest” people in partner villages are more food secure than in the past, and they have information and knowledge for improved nutrition	\$10,751.65	\$4,506.79
Personnel	\$11,168.83	\$5,547.41
Support Costs	\$650.00	\$260.86
Admin Charge	\$3,423.77	\$1,621.37
Total	\$34,237.68	\$18,335.09