



Communities participate in household mapping © UN-Habitat/Cambodia

Impact Story | 9

The people's process promotes community ownership in Cambodia

Cambodia's ecological landscape has altered dramatically in the last 30 years causing changes to local weather patterns. Already one of the world's most vulnerable countries to natural disasters, Cambodia has suffered from repeated floods, storms and strong winds that have caused death and destroyed livelihoods.

In 2018, tropical storm Son-Tinh caused flooding that affected 62,317 households with 16 deaths and 5,398 households' evacuations. Many families had to move to temporary shelters with insufficient food and access to clean water and sanitation.

UN-Habitat and the Government of Japan helped people affected by the floods through a Project for Improving Living Environment

and Disaster Prevention Capacity in Cambodia. The recovery and resilience-building project supported reconstruction and rehabilitation of 202 homes housing 1,098 people and helped close to 10,000 people in seven target communities through disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities.

People's process promotes community ownership

The project followed an innovative people's process approach involving a five-step methodology to promote community ownership. This involved community and social mobilization, community action planning, community contracting, funds disbursement and implementation, participatory monitoring and communication.



A community representative explains workshop findings to donors, provincial and district officers © UN-Habitat/Cambodia



Stilt houses, Tboung Khmum © UN-Habitat/Cambodia

The villagers elected 50 representatives (28 women) to be part of a Community Development Committee (CDC) making decisions such as choosing housing designs from three resilient and affordable options, and to participate in training sessions for improving water, sanitation and hygiene. Alongside the newly constructed houses, 216 latrines were built to replace open defecation.

Trained local workers and carpenters built the houses using resilient construction methods and locally available and low-cost materials. The team also organized training workshops for local authorities on the integration of DRR elements into local planning to improve prevention and management capacity.

Building resilience: A critical response to climate change

Women play an important role in post disaster recovery and in community mobilization for advancing housing construction.

The project empowered women by giving them leading roles as CDC members and unlocked the potential of youth to be part of the decision-making process and DRR activities in the community. Strengthened communities are more resilient to natural disasters.

Integrating a participatory planning approach to build resilience is sustainable as it empowers the community including women and youth, uses locally available low-cost materials and builds stronger structures.

Country: **Cambodia**
 City: **Tboung Khmum Province**
 Donor: **Government of Japan**
 Implementing Partners: **General Department of Housing of the Ministry of Land Management, Governor of Tboung Khmum Province, Urban Planning and Construction, UN-Habitat**
 Duration: **April 2019–March 2020**

“When we are in solidarity with others in the community, we can gain a lot of benefits. Together, we'll try to be well prepared for future disasters.”

Duth Chhundy, a beneficiary of the project

“This resilient housing project in Tboung Khmum is the first-ever project in Cambodia to recover from the disaster and improve the livelihood at the same time through the Build Back Better approach.”

H.E. Dr. Beng Hong Socheat Khmero, Director General of Cambodia's General Department of Housing

Close to **10,000** people have received assistance from UN-Habitat and the Government of Japan through a Project for Improving Living Environment and Disaster Prevention Capacity in Cambodia.