

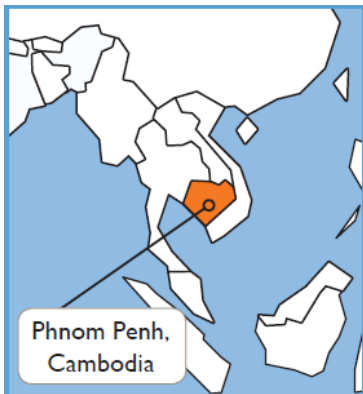
CASE STUDY: CAMBODIA

PHNOM PENH URBAN PILOT PROJECT

Urbanisation is a global megatrend that is changing the aid and development landscape. The world's population is already over half 'urban', with more than one billion people living in slums today.

World Vision (WV) has established a Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming that is leading urban pilot projects in six countries. The pilots are testing innovative, locally driven urban poverty solutions such as securing urban land rights, creating livelihood opportunities through community led infrastructure projects, and influencing municipal policy implementation – with children and youth leading change in their communities.

The Cambodia Urban Pilot Project promotes community awareness about land tenure security and Cambodian housing rights, mobilising vulnerable communities to drive their own development.



Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Project name: Urban Discovery Project

First Phase Start Date: July 2009

First Phase End Date: September 2013

Direct project participants: 10,219 people or 2,817 families

Phnom Penh city population: 1,501,725 (2012)

Proportion of national urban population in slums: 78.9% (2005 est.)

Annual national slum population growth rate: 6% (2001 est.)

Projected national urban population by 2030: 7,678,100

PROJECT CONTEXT

The history of land rights in Cambodia is linked to the nation's experiences of colonisation and conflict. In 1975, when Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, a radical collectivisation regime was imposed. All housing and land became state property, and records were systematically destroyed. Today, huge gaps between Cambodian land policies and practice still persist, despite reforms such as land distribution stretching back to the late 1980s.



While the 2001 Land Law provides a legal platform for land management, NGOs estimate that up to 100,000 people have faced forced eviction since its introduction. Land titling and registration processes continue to exclude the most vulnerable communities from accessing secure land tenure.

Without security of tenure, neither communities nor government agencies can be expected to invest in substantial infrastructure that addresses the key elements of individual and child well-being and livelihoods including access to safe drinking water and sanitation, electricity, health, education and transport services.

PROJECT GOAL	Empowered urban poor communities have land rights officially recognised.
PROJECT OUTCOMES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowered target community leads development and advocacy activities for increased land tenure security and better living environment. 2. Improved partnership with key NGOs and relevant government agencies for effective community dialogue on land issues and inclusion of the urban poor. 3. Learning of urban programming promoted among internal and external stakeholders including World Vision Cambodia and the Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming.



PROJECT APPROACH

Increase community access to information and understanding of land rights

The project aims to improve community knowledge of housing and land rights under Cambodian law in response to eviction and relocations claims. It works with communities facing issues with land tenure as well as those currently under threat of eviction.



Strengthen local civil society networks to engage and influence the Government

World Vision works closely with other civil society organisations to map housing arrangements and key infrastructure, facilitate community organisation and local level advocacy initiatives, as well as strengthen access between community representatives and various levels of government.

Link vulnerable communities with decision-making processes on tenure security

World Vision seeks to develop avenues for constructive dialogue between communities and the Government to link community planning to city level plans. The project encourages community groups and the Government to re-open channels of dialogue and explore solutions for land tenure security, locally driven infrastructure planning and livelihood security. World Vision works with these stakeholders to explore the possibility of improved government policy and its effective implementation.

KEY OUTCOMES

Empowered communities with information to improve land tenure security

- Over 50% of communities that World Vision has targeted have progressed secure land tenure in their current location. Other communities that have not progressed towards formal land recognition have still been able to prevent eviction, while improving their case for just compensation or resettlement terms should evictions proceed.
- In January 2012, an entire community was served with an eviction notice by the Municipality of Phnom Penh. A combination of protests at the community level, NGO advocacy facilitated by World Vision, and top-down pressure from in-country donor agencies forced the Government to overturn the eviction decision.
- Communities feel greater confidence to speak out about their rights, negotiate with the Government and use soft-advocacy approaches aiming to prevent community eviction.
- Young people have been invited to speak to Khan authorities and play a lead role in their community development activities.

Improved partnerships enabling effective community dialogue on land issues and improved infrastructure

- A strong community-driven network has been developed including representatives from across 15 target communities. This has improved community cohesion through fundraising events, educational activities, and joint advocacy campaigns.
- Communities have developed plans and mobilised resources for various projects, including road and drainage improvements, land title registration applications, planning and consultation with local authorities, and establishment of a savings fund.

- Due to local advocacy efforts, and improved relationships with vulnerable communities, the Phnom Penh Government has contributed 90% of the costs for road and services improvements in three communities.
- Community members have been connected with key stakeholders and organisations, especially local legal services, to progress the land titling issue for the marginalised communities.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Significant investment of time and resources is required to establish relationships with the Government, and to maintain engagement on the sensitive issue of land.
- It is critical to engage with other organisations already active in addressing the land tenure security issue to establish a collective voice and collaboratively identify a way forward.
- It is useful to explore 'soft advocacy' approaches with the Cambodian Government, including developing the communities' capacity to articulate the issues in a clear and non-confrontational manner and actively seek collaborative solutions.
- Mapping of formal and informal housing arrangements and key infrastructure is vital when undertaking land and housing programmes and improvement of overall environment in informal settlements.
- Projects such as this can act as a galvanising force for community development, promoting a degree of confidence, solidarity and awareness that did not exist previously.
- World Vision's presence - almost irrespective of its effectiveness - provides an important counterweight to the strong commercial and political interests invested in land issues.

For more information, please contact:

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities world-wide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.