

Country profile

CAMBODIA



Habitat for Humanity in Cambodia

In Cambodia, over a quarter of the 15 million people live below the poverty line. Habitat for Humanity seeks to break the cycle of poverty through durable, affordable housing solutions. Habitat also works with partners to help families gain access to livelihood opportunities, clean water and sanitation, housing finance services, and secure land tenure. Since 2003, HFH Cambodia has served more than 10,000 families. Find out more at habitatcambodia.org.

The housing need in Cambodia

Marked by decades of war, Cambodia has seen the level of poverty decline but inequalities persist. The food and economic crises in 2008 and 2009 led to an exodus from rural areas to the cities, predominantly the capital Phnom Penh. The migrants faced the risk of eviction from rental housing, and struggled to find employment and could not afford to provide their children with basic education. Unsanitary and unhealthy living conditions also affect health. One in five people in Phnom Penh lives in an informal settlement or a slum and lacks access to basic services and secure tenure. The urban poor would settle in every conceivable empty space, from courtyards to rooftops, by the side of railway tracks, and near riverbanks and swamps.

How Habitat addresses the need in Cambodia

Habitat for Humanity Cambodia takes a holistic approach to housing that includes securing land tenure and developing thriving communities with access to clean and affordable water and electricity. Working in six major provinces, Habitat and its partners train families in financial literacy and livelihood development, help vulnerable groups living with HIV/AIDS, and enable informal settlers in Battambang province to have secure land tenure. HFH Cambodia also provides micro loans and construction technical assistance to enable families to build wells and latrines, among others. Habitat programs feature the use of environmentally friendly soil blocks, solar-powered lights and rainwater catchment systems.



Vorn Nhor, who lives in Trapiang Anchang Village I, Phnom Penh, received a new Habitat house with a toilet, livelihood training, and HIV/AIDS care from Habitat's partner organization. Photo: Habitat for Humanity/Jason Asteros.

COUNTRY FACTS*

Capital	Phnom Penh
Population	15.5 million (July 2014 est.)
Urbanization	20 percent live in cities (2011)
Life expectancy	64 years (2014 est.)
Unemployment rate	3.4 percent (2008)
Population living below poverty line	20 percent (2012 est.)
Access to improved water sources	71.3 percent (2012 est.)
Access to improved sanitation facilities	36.8 percent (2012 est.)

*Sources: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Cambodia
2003

Families served*
More than 10,000

Volunteers hosted**
More than 7,300

Housing solutions

- Core house construction, repairs and renovations
- Housing microfinance loans
- Construction technical assistance
- Eco-friendly housing

* Cumulative figure since 2003

** Total number of international and local volunteers hosted since 2003



Housing and resettlement

In Phnom Penh, HFH Cambodia works with relocated families to build core houses or repair or rehabilitate their houses and toilet facilities. Small loans enable families to gain access to clean water and electricity connection. Through partnerships with local non-government organizations focused on people living with HIV/AIDS, HFH Cambodia provides adequate housing solutions while partners assist with health and livelihood aspects.

Water and sanitation

HFH Cambodia began working in Siem Reap province in 2007 with the support of Australia-based donor The Charitable Foundation. The three-year housing and community development project paved the way for Habitat to expand its program to improve families' access to clean water and safe sanitation. Taking a community-led total sanitation approach, Habitat encourages behavioral changes through local leadership while providing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) training, and water and sanitation facilities.

Land rights and housing advocacy

The Battambang project is unique in making centrally located, urban land available for housing the poor. Through this project, Habitat supports families and local authorities in applying for the government's social land concession scheme. The work involves converting state-owned land in urban areas in Battambang into privately owned plots with secure tenure granted to families who were informal settlers. Habitat also works with partner MFIs to provide affordable loans to families to build decent homes.

Housing finance

Since its housing finance program began in 2012, HFH Cambodia has formed partnerships with major microfinance institutions such as CBIRD, Theneaka Phum, and Hattha Kakseakar Limited. Institutional loans are provided to the MFIs, which are then disbursed to families for housing and home improvement loans. HFH Cambodia also gives loans to build sanitation facilities in rural areas through its partner Vision Fund Cambodia. In addition, MFIs are provided with grants that were initially funded through the Swiss Capacity Development Fund to build their capacity and develop their products.

Meet a Habitat family

Loem Makara and Van Nary are young parents of a four-year-old girl. Loem has a small business at the local market in Kandal province, repairing and selling used electrical goods. Van stays home to care for their daughter Bicheka.

Loem lost one of his legs due to an accident when he was young. After completing his ninth grade education, he took up vocational training courses to learn how to repair television and radio sets, and other electronics.

After the couple got married in 2010, they lived in a rented storeroom in the capital Phnom Penh. They spent up to half of their monthly income of US\$200 to US\$300 on rent.

During a visit to Loem's father in Tra Pang Anchanh village, Kandal province, the couple saw new houses being built by Habitat for Humanity Cambodia. After a meeting with Habitat's staff and putting in their application, Loem and Van were accepted as Habitat home partners. While their house was being built, Loem and Van attended training sessions in healthcare, livelihood and small business management conducted by HFH Cambodia.

Loem said: "I used to pay US\$100 rent for a small room in Phnom Penh. Now, I pay only US\$32 a month on my loan with Habitat for Humanity Cambodia, and we have our own house."

Loem and Van are able to save between US\$150 and US\$200 a month. Their daughter has also started attending a kindergarten nearby. Loem said: "My new house is my new hope and my new future. My family is more secure today because we have our own house."



With a permanent home, Loem and Van now can focus on bringing up their daughter.

What you can do

DONATE, VOLUNTEER or TITHE to help families break the poverty cycle through decent homes. To learn more about Habitat projects in Cambodia, please contact us.

Habitat for Humanity Cambodia

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