

STORIES FROM A CLIMATE CHANGE HERO

Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia

As a gender champion, Ms. Samrith Mao plays an important part in hearing the voice of women in her community and empowering them to take part in Disaster Risk Reduction.



As the deputy village chief in Kampong Bay Tbong village, Ms. Samrith Mao is passionate about the empowerment of women in her community. "We want to have more leadership roles for women in government and non-government positions to show society that women can do it and that we are not just a vulnerable group. When we have women in leadership roles, others can see that women can do it which means that they can do it as well! We start to see potential in the community."

Ms. Mao has been a gender champion since 2017, when she was a participant in [ActionAid Cambodia's](#) Enhancing Gender Equality in Disaster Risk Reduction training. Now, under a partnership between [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP) and ActionAid, Ms. Mao is supporting more women in improving their community's disaster management capacity.



Ms. Mao with other gender champions; taking part in training of new gender champions

Photo credit: UNDP Cambodia/ActionAid Cambodia

Through her participation in roles such as the Cambodian Red Cross and community health volunteer, Ms. Mao understands the relationship between disaster management, gender equality and health issues. "Disasters and women's health issues are actually relevant to each other. Health issues are important, and we need to know about them based on the context – for example, in the last few months we have seen an outbreak of dengue, so we need to focus on this. We need to think – what are my community's issues? What does my community need to focus on for awareness raising?"

Ms. Mao is happy to see her investments result in tangible outcomes. Community members now know ways to prepare before a disaster such as flooding, as well as having a noticeable decrease in women's health issues and increase in female community participation. She also noticed an improved ability for intra-personal communication and conflict management, as well as tackling other community issues such as gambling and drinking.

Working together to build the country's forecasting capacities

Project Brief

Duration: 2016-2020

Project Budget: USD \$4,910,285

Implementing Partner:

Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology

Funding: GEF-Least Developed Country Fund

Location: Cambodia, nation-wide

Population to Benefit: Over 15 million (est.)

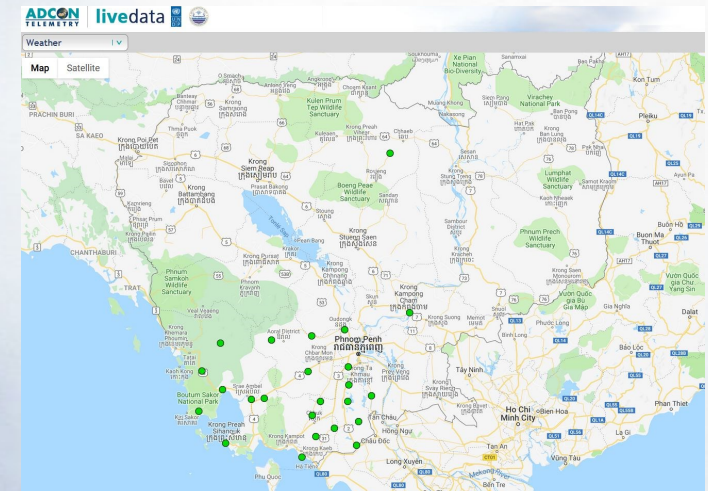
Cambodia's geographical exposure and the lack of adaptive capacity make it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. With over 80% of the population dependent on subsistence farming, rural populations are particularly exposed.

Floods in 2013 affected 1.7 million people, with an estimated loss of US\$ 356 million. In 2016, floods affected 2.5 million people. These events are precursors of the impacts of the changing climate. Climate information is essential to prepare farmers.

With support from UNDP and funding from the GEF-Least Developed Countries Fund, the project '[Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems](#)' is supporting the [Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology \(MoWRAM\)](#) to increase Cambodia's institutional capacity, to assimilate and forecast weather, hydrological and climate information, and to improve communities' access to reliable information and early warning systems.

Under the project, 24 automatic weather stations and 29 hydrological stations for surface and ground water have been installed across the country, integrating technology and placing communities at the heart of a people-centred early warning system.

Information from the stations will be key to generating early warning messages, both for planning and for disaster preparedness and emergency response.



Globally, 45 countries are developing and strengthening early warning systems, with 189 new end-to-end early warning systems established in 26 countries. With UNDP support, nearly 21 million people have improved access to reliable climate information and early warning systems.

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