

## Country profile

# CAMBODIA



### Habitat for Humanity in Cambodia

While poverty has decreased significantly, many Cambodian families are hovering only just above the poverty line. Nearly three quarters of Cambodia's population still live on less than US\$3 a day in 2011, according to the World Bank. Poverty is largely concentrated in the rural areas though urban poverty may be rising. Habitat for Humanity Cambodia seeks to break the cycle of poverty through durable, affordable housing solutions. Since 2003, HFH Cambodia has enabled more than 18,000 families to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter.

### The housing need in Cambodia

With an expected increase in the country's total population to 18 million by 2030, the Cambodian government has said that an additional 1.1 million houses will be required. Research has shown that about two million houses in Cambodia do not meet minimum quality standards for design, durability, access to water/sanitation as well as land tenure. Out of the two million residents in the capital Phnom Penh, about 140,000 people are living in over 500 slum communities that lack access to basic services and secure tenure.

### How Habitat addresses the need in Cambodia

Habitat for Humanity Cambodia takes a holistic approach to housing that includes empowering marginalized communities in improving their own housing conditions and working with partner organizations to address the needs of vulnerable groups of people. As Cambodia is also prone to floods and droughts, Habitat aims to build resilient communities through disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction training. Through institutional lending, microfinance institution partners are able to disburse loans to families for housing and home improvement.



Cambodian supporters signing a pledge for Habitat Young Leaders Build 2016

### COUNTRY FACTS

<b>Capital</b>	Phnom Penh
<b>Population</b>	15.7 million (July 2015 est.)
<b>Urbanization</b>	20.7 percent lives in cities (2015)
<b>Life expectancy</b>	64 years (2015 est.)
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	0.3 percent (2013 est.)
<b>Population living below poverty line</b>	17.7 percent (2012 est.)
<b>Access to improved water sources</b>	75.5 percent (2015 est.)
<b>Access to improved sanitation facilities</b>	42.4 percent (2015 est.)

Source: World Factbook

### HABITAT FACTS

**When Habitat started in Cambodia**  
2003

**Families served\***  
More than 18,000

**Volunteers hosted\***  
About 7,200

*\*Cumulative figure since 2003*

### Housing solutions

- Decent housing including watsan facilities
- Market development
- Disaster risk reduction and response
- Advocacy and volunteer engagement



## Decent housing including watsan facilities

In Battambang, Habitat worked with the local government to facilitate secure land tenure to families who have lived on public state land for many years. After each family receives a land certificate, Habitat then assists with the on-site development of homes and infrastructure projects such as roads and drainage systems.

## Advocacy and volunteer engagement

HFH Cambodia raises awareness of the great need for decent housing through advocacy as well as rallying volunteers. The National Housing Policy was enacted by the Cambodian government in 2014 but it has yet to reach low- and middle-income families. Under Habitat's Solid Ground campaign, HFH Cambodia is advocating for the effective implementation of the National Housing Policy to facilitate access to improved housing for the growing number of urban residents. While Cambodia is a popular destination for international volunteers under Habitat's Global Village program, local volunteers have shown their mettle since 2012. The annual Habitat Young Leaders Build campaign is an important platform for youth volunteers to advocate, fundraise and speak out for the need for decent homes.

## Disaster risk reduction and response

Through collaborating with the Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction, HFH Cambodia aims to promote disaster-resilient house construction in the building sector. Communities will be trained in the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) to better prepare for disasters. HFH Cambodia will also respond to disasters through the distribution of emergency shelter kits and reconstruction through the "Build Back Better" approach.

## Market development

HFH Cambodia's housing finance program began in 2012 with the creation of partnerships with major microfinance institutions such as KREDIT, Theneaka Phum and Hattha Kakseakar Limited. In 2014, about 6,000 families were supported in gaining access to housing finance loans. HFH Cambodia's MFI partners are also 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

The story of Arn Sokhai, a 35-year-old widow, is a familiar one among Cambodia's rural poor. For 20 years, she had to live along disused railway tracks and canals. She earned about US\$3 a day as a construction laborer or gathering cassava near the Thai border. She had just enough money to pay for the school fees for her sons, aged 9 and 13, and utilities.

Things looked up for her in 2012 when she was selected to receive a small plot of land in O-Kchheay village, Battambang province in the west under a social land concession project supported by Habitat for Humanity Cambodia. After she was given the plot of land in 2015, HFH Cambodia's partner organization KREDIT Microfinance Institution offered her a US\$600 loan to start building her house.

HFH Cambodia helped her with clearing the land and installing a proper drainage system. Habitat volunteers from Canada worked together with Sokhai and local skilled workers to build a house made of compressed earth blocks.

Unlike some of her neighbors who were doubtful, Sokhai was confident about the strength of the blocks. She was proud to be the first among many in her village to have such a house. During the build, whenever she was asked about the house, she would beam and say "sa art, sa art" (beautiful, beautiful). With a secure, permanent home, Sokhai and her sons could finally have stability in their lives. When work is available, she can earn US\$120 a month as a skilled construction worker. Otherwise, she goes around the village to sell tropical fruit from a mobile cart.



Having their own permanent home means that Sokhai and her sons can finally have stability in their lives.

## What you can do

**DONATE, VOLUNTEER** or **TITHE** to help families break the poverty cycle through decent homes. To learn more about HFH Cambodia's work, please contact us.

## Habitat for Humanity Cambodia

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