

OUR CAMBODIAN LEGACY



OXFAM
Australia

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Thank you



OXFAM
Australia

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WORKING FOR A FAIR LIFE

BY OXFAM AUSTRALIA CAMBODIA COUNTRY DIRECTOR SAM SOVANNA

Oxfam Australia has been working for more than 30 years in Cambodia and we are in the process of transferring our work to our other Oxfam affiliates from around the world. Our work over this time has been a complex process of interactions between communities, government, Oxfam affiliates, staff and other stakeholders, as we aim to sustain the achievements of the past decades and continue our support into the future.

Over three decades, the context in Cambodia has continually changed and Oxfam Australia has grown up during this time, adapting to these changes. We have always had a strong focus on creating change at the grassroots level by working together with communities. All staff highlight our open communication and relationships with communities as a hallmark of Oxfam Australia's way of creating change. Our programs have delivered both hardware and software to support communities to create a better future. Tangible infrastructure and animal projects are matched with community organising and behaviour change activities, bringing communities together to improve their lives. As the context has changed, we have increasingly engaged with national and international issues, such as governance of water, to complement and enhance the changes at the grassroots level.

This book captures a snapshot of the impacts of Oxfam Australia's work so that communities can remember and be happy about what they have achieved. Oxfam Australia's way of working in Cambodia is one of many non-government organisation (NGO) models that exist throughout the world for different contexts and cultures. We have adopted a "one program" approach combining integrated community development, disaster preparedness and supporting communities to have a voice. This approach has been pivotal to Oxfam Australia's success in supporting the poorest and most marginalised communities in rural Cambodia to improve their livelihoods, in the face of many diverse challenges.

As the second Cambodian to be Oxfam Australia's Country Director in Cambodia, I am very proud to share with every reader the impacts of Oxfam Australia's work. These impacts have been achieved by a highly-collaborative effort between communities, government counterparts, NGO partners and Oxfam Australia staff. Donors have been central in enabling our work to happen, but our programs have always been driven by the communities' needs, not donors. We thank donors for supporting this approach as it has ensured we meet the real needs of communities. Aside from the hardware and software, we have created change by prioritising working together, helping each other, learning by doing and valuing different cultures. As we have transitioned our program over the past two years, it is the beliefs and commitments of all people involved in Oxfam Australia's work that have ensured a sustained impact into the future.

Oxfam Australia leaves Cambodia as the Oxfam confederation moves towards an aid effective global single management structure that will enable Oxfam to mobilise more resources to contribute to positive changes in diverse contexts by working in different ways. It is important that this process enables Oxfam to deliver greater and more effective assistance to the many marginalised communities that need support in Cambodia and globally.

In Cambodia, there is still a long way to go towards improving people's rights and livelihoods and we will continue to do so through Oxfam in Cambodia. We need strong commitments and contributions of all stakeholders to support communities to realise their rights in a peaceful way. As a Khmer spending most of my life living in war, I see this as vital for the future prosperity of all Khmer.

Ultimately, I believe many of the changes captured in this book will continue into the future, further improving communities' lives in Cambodia. I hope this book can be enjoyed, as people learn and share the work and achievements of communities, Oxfam Australia staff and the many stakeholders involved in our three decades of work in Cambodia. I give my deepest

thanks and best wishes to everyone who has contributed to making these achievements possible.

Sam Sovanna



TIMELINE OF OXFAM AUSTRALIA'S WORK

FOREWORD

From immediate post-conflict emergency relief, following the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, to long-term community development and an increasing focus on advocacy, Oxfam Australia's work has been an evolving process to meet the priority needs of the Khmer (Cambodian people).

After more than 30 years' work in Cambodia, Oxfam Australia leaves a country that has achieved substantial improvements in livelihoods and continues to undergo rapid change. It is a proud history, driven by the passion and commitment of communities, partners, government counterparts and staff. This book is a tribute to these people to share the legacy of their achievements.

As Oxfam's experience shows, development for social justice is a fluid, dynamic process, with new opportunities and challenges consistently surfacing. The following pages explore the narrative of Oxfam's work over three decades in Cambodia, outlining key achievements, ways of working, lessons learned and the perspectives of many people who have been involved. These perspectives are the key focus of this book, as they are the drivers of Oxfam's work and the creators of a rich history.

1979

Oxfam is one of the first organisations to deliver aid to Cambodia, beginning with a chartered plane carrying emergency food supplies into Phnom Penh. Oxfam Australia funded this work.

1979

A consortium of NGOs, led by Oxfam, is established to boost aid delivery to Cambodia and ensure effective coordination.

1980

The consortium distributes 10,000 tonnes of rice seed throughout Cambodia, to avert a potentially devastating famine. Basic water infrastructure is set up in Phnom Penh. An industrial program is implemented, such as setting up truck workshops and providing equipment essential for maintaining consistent aid delivery.

1981

The consortium disbands, as the need for emergency relief reduces and agencies start to create their own programs to deliver long-term rehabilitation of Cambodia.

1980S

Oxfam and Oxfam Australia campaign globally for the Western World to lift embargoes on Cambodia that stifle relief efforts and aid delivery.

1981-1982

Oxfam conducts health training in Takeo province and provides health workers with bicycles. Health clinic building begins. A well-digging program delivers clean, reliable water supplies for rural communities and health clinics.

1990

Oxfam Australia lobbies the Australian Government to resume bilateral aid to Cambodia and to increase efforts to stop outside parties providing military support to the warring factions in Cambodia.

1992

Oxfam begins water and agriculture projects in Takeo to sustain increased agricultural productivity and income in rural households.

1985-1986

Oxfam Australia establishes an office in Cambodia.

1982

Oxfam establishes vocational training in Phnom Penh.

1995

Oxfam Australia begins a school rehabilitation and building program in Kratie, as an entry point for the ICD program.

1996-1997

Oxfam Australia is one of the first international NGOs to hire a Cambodian national as country representative.

1993

Oxfam Australia begins a long-term integrated community development (ICD) program in Takeo, beginning with water infrastructure and expanding to areas such as health and livelihoods.

1994

Oxfam Australia rehabilitates irrigation systems in Banteay Meanchey and supports internally-displaced people to resettle with livelihoods projects.

1998

The security situation deteriorates in Cambodia, with Khmer Rouge forces in Kratie posing serious threats to Oxfam's work.

1997

Oxfam Australia expands the school building and ICD programs to Stung Treng.

2005

Oxfam Australia introduces a community-based disaster management program in Takeo, which is later integrated across all ICD programs to address emerging climatic challenges.

2012

Oxfam Australia transitions our direct work in Cambodia to other Oxfam global affiliates.

2009

Oxfam Australia expands the ICD program to Mondulkiri.

OXFAM AUSTRALIA

Oxfam Australia formed out of the merger of two international aid organisations — Community Aid Abroad which began in 1956 and the Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign which started in 1961. These previous organisations funded Oxfam Great Britain's work in Cambodia from 1979, before directly implementing programs from 1985. After the merger in 1992, the organisation operated as Community Aid Abroad. It became a founding member of Oxfam International in 2001 and changed its name to Oxfam Australia in 2005. This book uses the term Oxfam Australia to refer to Oxfam Australia, Community Aid Abroad and the Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign. Other Oxfam affiliates are referred to as Oxfam.

1979: OXFAM'S EMERGENCY RELIEF TO CAMBODIA ...

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

When the Khmer Rouge fell in early 1979, Cambodia was in a state of devastation; the population was traumatised, infrastructure lay in tatters and the country remained at war — the Khmer Rouge still occupied a third of the country. In 1979, it was estimated that only 5%–20% of rice fields had been planted and up to 3 million Khmer faced starvation, if no food aid was delivered. In addition, only 50 of 500 Khmer doctors had survived the Khmer Rouge. Emergency relief was urgently needed.

Relief efforts were stymied due to:

- United States-led embargoes aimed at Cambodia's Vietnamese "occupiers";
- the United Nation's (UN) non-recognition of the Samrin-led Cambodian Government; and
- the Khmer Rouge maintaining a seat at the UN.

Despite the challenges, on 24–26 August 1979, the arrival of Oxfam's Jim Howard by chartered plane, marked the first international NGO assistance to Cambodia, as Jim describes in his diary written at the time:

"Sunday 26th (August)

Arrive at Phnom Penh 09.00hrs. no beacon or landing aids given by airport but safe

landing. Airport has no fork lift or other unloading facilities. However, within one hour Ministry of Health arranged first ten trucks and sixty labourers and the 34 tons of medical and relief supplies unloaded item by item by hand down staircases. Journey into Phnom Penh rather eerie as the city has been deserted for several years and tremendous wanton destruction by the Pol Pot forces has taken place.

Monday 27th

Terrible needs faced by the 4 or 5 million Kampuchean people — 25 to 50% who are starving. Only 50 doctors have survived the Pol Pot regime."

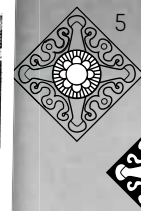
[Community Aid Abroad Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 5, 11/10/1979]

Following initial airlifts of relief supplies, Oxfam cleared sea links to expand delivery of aid, including barges to the seaport of Sihanoukville. By the end of 1979, Oxfam had delivered more than 10,000 tonnes of aid to Cambodia, including medical supplies, food, seeds and agricultural supplies. These early relief efforts, amid immense safety and logistical challenges, were vital for staving off widespread famine and creating a foundation for the long-term rehabilitation of Cambodia.



Phnom Penh in October 1979. People were gradually returning to the devastated city, deserted for years following its enforced evacuation by the Pol Pot regime.

The streets of Phnom Penh in 1979. Photo: Marcus Thompson/Oxfam.



5

1979-1980: OXFAM LEADS CONSORTIUM EMERGENCY RELIEF



In October 1979, an NGO consortium was established to improve the coordination and oversight of aid delivery, with Oxfam as the lead agency. To meet the needs of the dispersed population, the consortium organised the delivery of 50 seven-tonne Leyland trucks to be flown into Cambodia, enabling aid to reach remote parts of the country. Barges continued to deliver increasing amounts of aid, gradually being able to make their way up the Mekong River directly to Phnom Penh. By April 1980, 17,000 tonnes of aid had been delivered, diversifying beyond basic food and health needs, to water pumps, further agricultural products and reconstruction materials.

An Oxfam report details the context of the relief efforts:

"Once a source of relief supplies had been off-loaded, it still had to be got to its final destination over broken roads that often resembled obstacle courses — and there had to be checks on whether it arrived

where it was intended, how quickly it got there, and whether, indeed, it was what was needed.

"Field workers (were) perpetually frustrated by the Government's erratic restrictions of their movements, although this was often the result of guerrilla forays by the forces of Pol Pot and his sympathisers.

[A Short Narrative of the NGO Consortium Relief Programme in Cambodia/Kampuchea – August 1979 – December 1980 (Internal Oxfam document)]

As 1980 came to a close, widespread famine had been averted and the rice crop of that year created a fragile state of food security for Cambodia. As emergency relief began to slow, attention shifted towards reconstruction work. The consortium, having fulfilled its

mandate, disbanded to enable individual agencies to deliver their own programs for the long-term rehabilitation of Cambodia. This was an important shift, as Cambodia's future required longer-term programs to complement international governments' bilateral aid that prioritised relief aid.

Another Biafra

Photo DE ZIEGLER/ICRC

Thailand
Kampuchea
Phnom Penh
Vietnam

30th August, 1979 THE AGE
"The Country is a virtual desert."

1st September, 1979 OXFAM REPORT
"Visited hospital. Terrible conditions - children in beds in filthy rags, dying with starvation - no drugs - no food."

Must they die before Christmas?

Help OXFAM in CAMBODIA

**OXFAM
FUNDRAISING
EFFORTS**

EARLY 1980s: RELIEF TO REHABILITATION



As humanitarian relief subsided and Oxfam worked independently, focus shifted to advocating the international community to support Cambodia and long-term rehabilitation projects to meet the country's emerging needs.

Examples of Oxfam's projects exemplifying this shift include:

- spare parts and equipment for the only sack factory in the country; essential for storing and transporting Cambodia's emerging agricultural production, particularly rice;
- machinery and tools for an electrical workshop to enable repairs of damaged equipment;
- an orphanage in Kampong Thom and teacher training;
- equipment and repairs for health clinics, plus medical training; and
- the rehabilitation of cotton gins (in 1979 only two to three industrial factories out of 90 still operated).

"In commenting on the latest aid shipment, CAA Projects Director, Neil O'Sullivan said that "A new waiting phase has begun in

Kampuchea. The extraordinary efforts made by Oxfam and others in recent months to rush high yielding rice seed Kampuchea, have been largely successful. That seed has now been distributed widely through the countryside, just in time to meet the June planting deadline.

"For the next four months the Kampuchean people will depend very much on the continued supply of grain shipments from donor countries like Australia.

"Even whilst waiting for the new harvest," continued Mr O'Sullivan, "other important initiatives can be taken. By the end of the current monsoon season, the fish hooks and nylon twine that we are about to deliver will be being used to regenerate the nation's traditionally important fishing industry. Similarly, current programmes to rehabilitate small industries such as textile mills and rubber factories were considered an important priority if Kampuchea was to regain its self reliance."

[Oxfam Press Release June 1980, War Declared on Kampuchean Rats]

Rienze Rupasinghe's report on his December 1979 visit to Kampuchea makes a pertinent comment about aid to Kampuchea:

"It seems very clear to me that the only and quickest way for the Kampuchean people to 'become' themselves again is through a return to normal life and occupations through which they could also restore family, community, village, self-reliance and participate in the rebuilding of their country, culture and administration.

"In this perspective, it is vital that overseas aid agencies neither flood the country with relief goods nor substitute in any way the participation or contribution of the people themselves, however small or feeble these may be."

[Featured in Internal Oxfam report 1979, Aid from Australian Aid Agencies]

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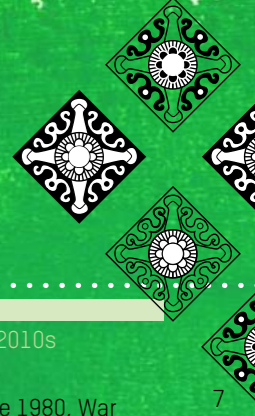
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**OXFAM
CAMBODIA
APPEAL**

SURVIVORS OF A HOLOCAUST

LET THESE CHILDREN LIVE!



1983: REHABILITATION BEGINS

By 1983, many nations considered the “emergency stage” in Cambodia to be over, yet the shift to rehabilitation was fraught with difficulties.

The Khmer Rouge continued to occupy a seat at the UN, while most UN donor governments imposed an embargo on “development aid” to Cambodia, dramatically reducing funds for organisations like Oxfam, and hampering Cambodia’s progress towards achieving self-sufficiency.

Infrastructure still lay in ruins and Khmer human resources — particularly medical and education professionals — were scarce. The Cambodian Government’s limited resources were preoccupied with military spending, as the Khmer Rouge continued to wage war throughout the countryside.

Oxfam’s transition to long-term rehabilitation was a carefully negotiated process, as the following outlines.

“This does not mean that we have always seen eye to eye with other agencies, especially those of the U.N. Oxfam’s customary emphasis on work with and for the very poorest sections of the community, though often hard

to put into practice in Kampuchea, gives us a different perspective from those of the bigger agencies, with their continued emphasis on large-scale material inputs. Oxfam team members have also sometimes had trouble trying to explain to government personnel, through whom much of Oxfam’s work is still done, that Oxfam is not solely a provider of trucks and rice seed, however vital these may be for the rehabilitation of the economy. To put it another way, the transition from an emergency programme to a more standard type of Oxfam operation has been hard — though not entirely impossible — to bring about. The Ministry

of Foreign Affairs, in particular, still tends to judge Oxfam entirely on how much it spends, not on the kind of programme it is trying to carry out. Since the Foreign Ministry is the only official channel for contacts between aid agencies and other bodies in Kampuchea, this creates a big problem. Fortunately, other officials with whom we have built up working relations — in the Ministries of Health and Industry, for example, and their provincial departments — are sometimes ready to be more flexible.”

[OXFAM in Kampuchea: a Brief Survey, January 1982]

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“It seems very clear to me that the only and quickest way for the Kampuchean people to ‘become’ themselves again is through a return to normal life and occupations through which they could also restore family, community, village, self-reliance and participate in the rebuilding of their country, culture and administration.

In this perspective, it is vital that overseas aid agencies neither flood the country with relief goods nor substitute in any way the participation or contribution of the people themselves, however small or feeble these may be.”

Who CARES ABOUT POLITICS IN KAMPUCHEA AT A TIME LIKE THIS?

ONLY THOSE WITH ENOUGH TO EAT



cartoon courtesy of “The Australian”

THE 1980s: BOOSTING REHABILITATION



During the 1980s, the Cambodian Government rarely allowed Western NGO staff to travel outside of Phnom Penh and visas to enter the country were scarce. An absence of Cambodian NGOs meant Oxfam worked directly with the government to implement programs. This contrasted with the usual modus operandi of Oxfam working through national NGO partners.

As embargoes continued, the Australian Government delivered “back door” aid to Cambodia through Australian NGOs, particularly Oxfam Australia. Establishing a Cambodian office in 1985–1986, Oxfam Australia also became the country representative for the Joint Australian NGO Office, which acted as an unofficial Australian embassy at the time.

Oxfam Australia’s programs focused primarily on rebuilding irrigation and water supplies, agricultural production and improving health systems. Strong relationships with the central Cambodian Government enabled Oxfam Australia to work with village and district authorities, and directly involve communities. The irrigation

and agricultural work focused primarily on Takeo, Kandal and Kampong Speu provinces, while the health work targeted Takeo.

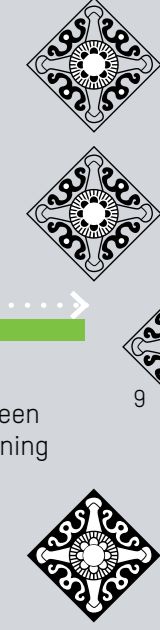
Oxfam Australia’s hand pumps and wells program was one of the most successful projects in this period, delivering reliable, clean water to remote villages and supporting farmers to grow dry season rice. In a country severely lacking technical expertise, Oxfam Australia prioritised operation and maintenance training throughout the project, leading to sustainable outcomes. Yields in some areas increased from 1–1.5 tonnes per hectare to 3–4 tonnes per hectare and from 3.5 tonnes per hectare to 7 tonnes per hectare in other areas. Increased food security and self-reliance provided a basis for improving health and education to further enhance Cambodia’s rehabilitation.

The Takeo health program, while generally a success, had mixed results, as Oxfam staff member Tim Lusty reports:

“The training side ... has not been followed up sufficiently ... Training remains a very important area and one in which I hope we will become more involved in the next phase of our work.

“The clinic building has been a success although more expensive than originally envisaged. Traditionally, the pagoda, the school and the clinic were the main focus of village life. By encouraging the reconstruction of clinics we have, perhaps inadvertently, released a lot of dormant creativity and community spirit.”

[Visit to Kampuchea, September 25th to October 3rd – Tim Lusty, (Oxfam internal report)]



EARLY 1990s: INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY FOR PEACE

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

As the 1990s arrived, Cambodia was still gripped in civil war and the international community was failing to bring about a lasting peace agreement.

Oxfam Australia continued invaluable on-the-ground work, but what the country needed most was peace. Oxfam Australia mounted increasing pressure on the Australian Government to renounce

recognition of the Pol Pot regime and take further action to initiate a lasting peace agreement. Eventually, the Australian Government played an important, albeit belated, role in advocating the international community to negotiate a peace agreement, with Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans' 1989 peace proposal. The international community eventually developed the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement

and the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, which facilitated the 1993 Cambodian elections.

Conflict and instability continued late into the 1990s, but these pivotal steps towards peace enabled Oxfam Australia to broaden its development work in Cambodia. Following are some snap shots of Oxfam Australia's advocacy.

Cambodia

how long must they suffer



THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
has taken a positive role in the Cambodia dispute
but

MUST DO MORE

- * the spectre of the Khmer Rouge has returned
- * a peace settlement in Cambodia is a long way off
- * the people, isolated, abandoned, continue to suffer
- * a devastated country is being denied aid
- * we must work for an immediate, permanent ceasefire
- * all arms supplies to warring factions must stop
- * the Government must resume direct bilateral aid
- * the Australian Government should establish a liaison office in Phnom Penh

The Peace Process is grinding to a halt

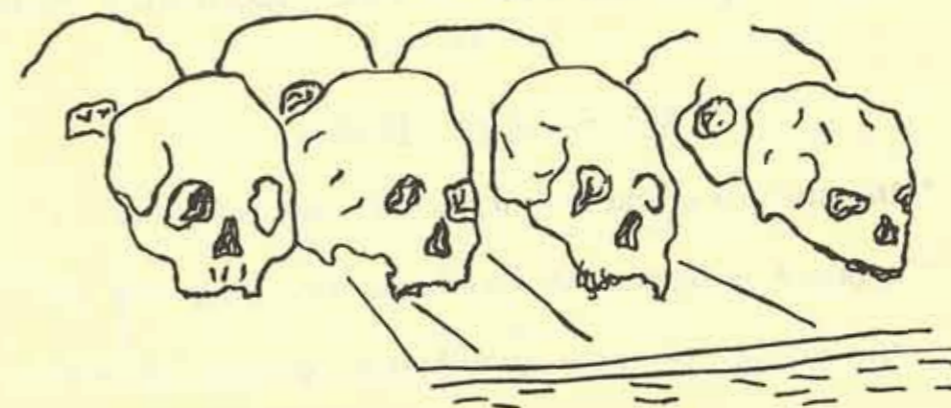
The Peace Plan put forward by Australia's Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, has been a positive contribution towards finding a settlement of the Cambodian dispute. However, the peace process is stalling because of mistrust between the factions involved and some major flaws in the plan itself.

The Plan provides no effective way of ensuring the disarming of the Khmer Rouge guerillas prior to the proposed UN supervised elections.

How can free and fair elections take place when the Khmer Rouge are still in a position to intimidate people?

At present the four Cambodian factions cannot even agree on the composition of a Supreme National Council which is supposed to represent them internationally during the lead up to the elections. They have even less chance of agreeing on more substantial issues.

A comprehensive peace settlement is a long way off, most likely years.



"The greatest irony in the peace discussions is that the four factions are all being armed by the very powers sitting around the UN table discussing peace. The same irony was obvious in the Gulf War."

Rev. Alan Nichols,
Chairman, Archbishop of Melbourne's
International Relief & Development Fund.
Sunday Age, 28 April 1991.

"The latest UN plan seeks to give Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge 'the same opportunities to take part in the electoral process' as any other Cambodian. The UN is condoning what its own Special Rapporteur described as 'genocide....even under the most restricted definition...' a view shared by the US Department of State."

Ben Kiernan,
Associate Professor of History,
Yale University.
Guardian Weekly, 28 April 1991

A Devastated Country Refused Aid

In the meantime people continue to suffer and die. Cambodia has never been given the chance to recover from two decades of violence, war and destruction.

Since the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces supporting the Phnom Penh Government in 1989, the Khmer Rouge have returned. Their terrorising attacks and the consequent renewed fighting have displaced some 150,000 people inside the country while others have fled into Thailand.

The rural areas are sewn with unexploded shells, bombs and mines. Between 600 and 1000 people each month are becoming amputees because of mines.

Assistance from the Eastern Bloc, previously 80% of Cambodia's annual budget, is being withdrawn. Inflation has soared.

Government services are running down despite the best efforts of the Cambodian people.

- * health, agriculture and education are in chaos
- * few people have access to clean water
- * one child in five is dying before the age of 5

Since the Khmer Rouge were pushed out by the Vietnamese troops in 1979, the West (including Australia) and the UN have isolated Cambodia economically, cut off trade and refused it any official aid.

Why does this small devastated country which threatens no one, continue to be punished in this way ?

"The debate over the political future of Cambodia has taken place in hearing rooms, luxury hotels and elegant chanceries - settings completely divorced from the current realities of the Cambodian people.

In Siem Reap in February 1991 I again came face-to-face with the reality of the Cambodian people. I came face-to-face with poor peasants caught in the crossfire of a war they are trying to avoid.

I met Touch Tha, a 46 year old woman with four children under the age of thirteen whose husband was killed when he stepped on a mine while looking for wood in the forest.

I met Yuth Yim, a 47 year old man who lost his left leg in a mine injury in 1986 and who later had to abandon four of his five children and flee for his life in January when a Khmer Rouge soldier killed his wife for refusing to sell him a chicken.

These are among the displaced people of Cambodia, survivors of the last 21 years of war and civil strife but still at risk."

Joel Charney, Acting Overseas Director, Oxfam America.
Testimony before US Congress Subcommittee,
10 April 1991

A Renewed Role for Australia

The Australian Government should more actively press for an immediate permanent ceasefire in Cambodia.

The on-going fighting is a major obstacle to rehabilitation and reconstruction. The UN plan calls for a ceasefire only when the political settlement has been concluded. This could be a long way off.

The warring factions have shown an interest in a temporary ceasefire during the periods of the negotiations. The Australian Government should urge all parties to accept an immediate permanent ceasefire.



The Australian Government should call for the immediate cessation of all military support to all the Cambodian factions by outside parties.

While the Eastern Bloc has ceased military assistance to the Phnom Penh government, China is still arming the Khmer Rouge and the US is giving military assistance to its non-communist allies on the Thailand border. If these external patrons are committed to the peace process they should withdraw military assistance to their client factions.

Thailand and Vietnam should be urged to immediately stop the use of their territory for the transport of arms to any of the factions.

The Australian Government must immediately resume substantial and appropriate direct bilateral assistance to the Cambodian people

Currently the only aid the Australian Government gives to Cambodia is relatively small amounts channelled via non-government and multilateral agencies. The Australian Government has said that it will resume bilateral aid to the government that results after the UN supervised elections.

But the people cannot wait that long. The need is urgent.

The resumption of direct bilateral aid would not jeopardise Australia's neutral stance in the Cambodian dispute. It would not involve the official recognition of the current Phnom Penh Government as Australia recognises nations, not governments, but would involve the establishment of an office in Phnom Penh to facilitate aid, as well as trade and immigration matters and cultural and information exchange..

The aid would be for the people of Cambodia, the amputees, the refugees, the children, not the government.

OXFAM AUSTRALIA ADAPTS TO A TENUOUS PEACE

Despite the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991, vast numbers of refugees languished in Thailand and there were internally-displaced people (IDPs) throughout Cambodia.

Oxfam Australia was the lead agency in Banteay Meanchey during this time (1995 especially), supporting the gradual resettlement of IDPs and refugees. In the camps, Oxfam Australia delivered water well construction, basic health services and agricultural assistance. As security improved in Cambodia, Oxfam Australia supported the resettlement of families with basic materials to start a new life. Families were required to contribute \$15 per hectare for ploughing of fields, as a step to break dependency patterns often established during displacement. Initially regarded as a tough imposition on poor families, the results were positive, as one example from an Oxfam Australia report in 1996 highlights;

“A widow returnee with two children and no capital gathered charcoal and bamboo shoots in the forest to raise money for the ploughing charge. She also raised enough

money to plant more rice and a plot of sugar cane on temporarily vacant land. She accrued enough capital through this to buy one pig and raise a litter, and progressively built up capital to the point where she now has three pigs, and a partly wooden house. Not all resettled IDPs have this level of entrepreneurial skill, but it demonstrates what is possible in even this very difficult environment.”

[Notes for Project Completion Report – Banteay Meanchay IDP Project – from discussions with (Oxfam staff) Privan Limpanboom (Maew) and Lee Forsythe, Phnom Penh 22/11/’96]

As the resettlement of refugees and IDPs hastened throughout the country, Oxfam Australia’s work shifted to meet the emerging needs of rural Cambodia. Most rural areas were lacking basic health services, livelihood opportunities and many other necessities.

Amid the creation of new communities, Oxfam Australia took up a primary focus on integrated community development (ICD). ICD became the stalwart of Oxfam Australia’s work from its inception in 1993 in Takeo to Oxfam Australia’s transition out of Cambodia in 2012.

DESIGNING THE INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Decades of civil war and the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge had not just destroyed physical and human resources, it had broken down much of the social fabric of Cambodia. Aside from rebuilding livelihoods, Oxfam Australia’s ICD program aimed to rebuild communities — bringing people together to generate further development.

These are some of the concepts driving the ICD program and its achievements over the years in different provinces.

WHY THE INTEGRATED APPROACH?

Starting from scratch, communities wanted the basic foundations to rebuild their lives. The integrated approach is designed to create simultaneous changes in communities that reinforce each other, to encourage self-sustaining development. For example, improvements in food production are supported by access to clean water, which is strengthened by activities to enhance gender equity. The alternative is standalone projects, but these can often fail. Food growing techniques may be beneficial, but if people are too sick then they often struggle to implement these techniques. Essentially, the integrated approach aims to meet the diverse needs of communities to achieve maximum impact.

TRIPARTITE SYSTEM OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

When the ICD program began in Takeo in 1993, civil society in Cambodia was weak and national NGOs were scarce. The national NGOs that existed were quickly swamped by international NGOs and foreign donors pushing vast resources into the country.

Instead of working with NGO partners, Oxfam Australia opted for a different approach, believed to be more context-appropriate. Oxfam Australia designed a tripartite system, with ICD implemented by communities, government counterparts and Oxfam Australia. Some of the key benefits to this approach are:

- Government counterparts have valuable skills and local knowledge.
- Building counterpart and community relationships strengthens communities’ access to government services and decision-makers, and local government’s understanding of community needs. Once Oxfam Australia leaves, these relationships provide a strong foundation for ongoing development.
- Oxfam Australia can influence local government through promoting and modelling “best practice” for development, such as transparency and accountability.

WHERE TO WORK?

Oxfam Australia prioritised working in remote, rural areas that tended to have the least access to government services, NGOs and livelihood opportunities, while having the lowest levels of education, health and other “social indicators”. The program started in Takeo (close to Phnom Penh) due to security and travel issues; but as remote access improved, Oxfam Australia quickly expanded to remote areas in north-east Cambodia.

Former Oxfam Australia staff Mark Deasey recounts details of the initial work in Takeo:

“A hallmark of our program was reaching the hardest places and not going for the low-hanging fruit. Takeo was close to Phnom Penh, but travelling 40 kilometres would take half a day. In Takeo, our initial irrigation rehabilitation projects focused on flat areas that were difficult to irrigate and other organisations ignored. Our government counterparts were essential for success, building up trust with communities and promoting a participatory approach to build the irrigation systems.”

[Discussion with Mark Deasey, December 2011]

This approach has seen Oxfam Australia supporting some of the most vulnerable communities in the farthest reaches of Cambodia; building schools in villages with no road access; transporting livestock through dense jungles; and connecting many communities with local government for the first time.

POOREST OF THE POOR

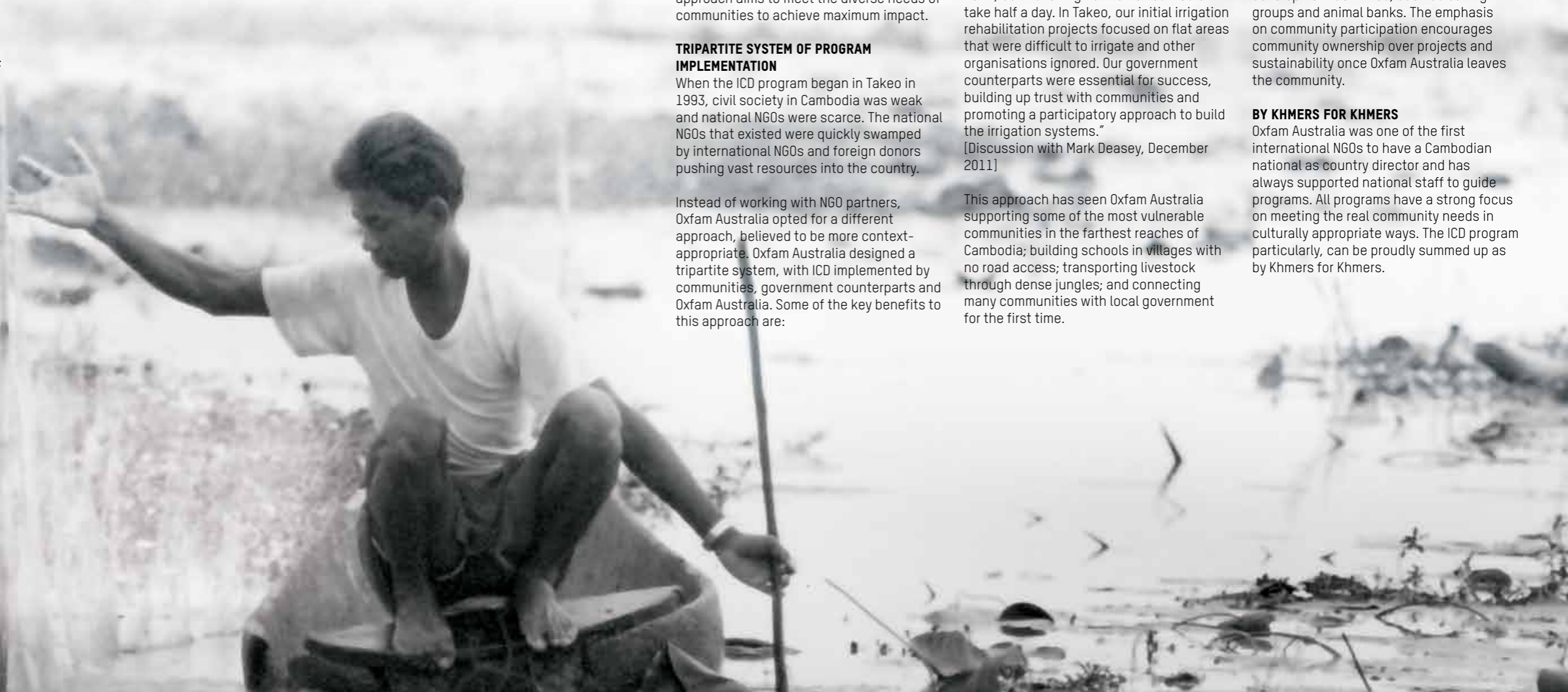
Hand-in-hand with working in remote areas, Oxfam Australia prioritised working with the poorest of the poor in communities. Oxfam Australia facilitates communities to conduct their own wealth rankings to identify those most in need of support. As the community makes the decisions, it reduces the potential for conflict or jealousy over who receives support. It is a challenging approach, as the poorest community members often have low skills and face the toughest challenges in daily living. Despite the challenges, this focus is extremely important and rewarding, as it ensures development reaches those who need it most.

THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Underpinning Oxfam Australia’s ICD program is a strong focus on a “bottom-up” approach, involving communities throughout every stage of the program. Before activities are designed, a participatory rural appraisal is conducted, encouraging communities to identify and explain their specific needs to Oxfam Australia. This enables Oxfam Australia to tailor activities to the distinct needs of each community. Throughout implementation, Oxfam Australia facilitates the establishment of community committees, mandated with running development activities, such as saving groups and animal banks. The emphasis on community participation encourages community ownership over projects and sustainability once Oxfam Australia leaves the community.

BY KHMERS FOR KHMERS

Oxfam Australia was one of the first international NGOs to have a Cambodian national as country director and has always supported national staff to guide programs. All programs have a strong focus on meeting the real community needs in culturally appropriate ways. The ICD program particularly, can be proudly summed up as by Khmers for Khmers.



IRRIGATION AND FISHERIES IN TAKEO

Oxfam Australia has always had a strong focus on water in Cambodia. The rehabilitation of irrigation systems in Takeo played a pivotal role as an entry point for the ICD program, starting in 1993. Designing and then hand-digging canals and water reservoirs brought communities together, boosting the potential for future projects. The negotiation skills of counterparts were paramount to these projects' success, providing a foundation to implement broader ICD activities, such as fisheries.

THE POND THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Souy Hoy lives with his brother's family in Puntong village Takeo. He decided to not get married because of a disabling bullet wound he suffered during army service — he didn't want to be a burden for a wife, even though he was not short of marriage requests.

Yet, Hoy is far from a burden. He received training and support from Oxfam Australia to set up his own fish pond, and now he provides food for his brother's family and teaches other villagers about raising fish. Hoy explains the technique he now shares with others in his village:

"(After digging the pond) I had to scatter 10 kilograms of lime for 100 metres square of land. Then when the water is clear, we have to put fertiliser such as cow dung and some tree leaf to make the pond attract insects for fish to eat. Then we put the baby fish in the pond ... we have to feed them properly and we should also put some coconut in the pond for fish to eat. We also have to think about the type of fish for raising. For the type of fish that I raise, I don't have to spend a lot for feed because all the things I need I can find around my house, such as the tree leaves, bran and rice that is

leftover. Now that I have learned these skills, I am teaching other villagers how to set up a fish pond so they can have fish too."

Without any rivers or lakes nearby, the pond is an easy and sustainable source of protein-rich food for Hoy's family.

Hoy says: "I can sell some small fish to my neighbour and now I have 100,000 riel (USD \$25) saved. I can also use fish for cooking when before I had to spend 5,000 riel per day (AUD \$1.251). I now save that money. The income is not only for me but for my family too. In the future, I will dig another pond for raising fish. Because of the fishery project, my family's living is much better than before and I hope the extra fishery will give me even more fish than before."

ANIMAL BANKS

Animal banks are like a "store" of cows or buffaloes that people can borrow to help them work their fields or use for breeding. The (simplified) steps for creating an animal bank are:

1. A rural community sets up an animal bank committee and selects families that most need an animal. Oxfam Australia facilitates the process.
2. Oxfam Australia buys some cows or buffaloes, which are given to the animal bank.
3. The animals are lent out to families for work or breeding until the female animal has offspring. Once calves are old enough, the original animal is passed onto another family in need.

MULTI-PURPOSE COWS AND BUFFALOES

In Roka village, Takeo, female cows aren't used for ploughing, but their manure is sold as fertiliser and used on home-grown vegetables. Aside from manure, the cows are a valuable asset for rural families, particularly landless families, as Long Sokha explains:

"Before the cow I could not get a loan. After I got the cow I used it as collateral and I got a loan. With the loan I bought a sewing machine (non-electric) and now make clothes to sell."

With her increasing income Sokha is now able to send two of her six children to school.

In Stung Treng, buffaloes are the preferred animal and used for ploughing fields. Having a buffalo means families don't have to give up valuable rice for renting a buffalo, can plant rice at the right time, which increases yields and can even rent out their own buffalo to earn some income.

COWS, BUFFALOES, CHICKENS OR PIGS?

Aside from collateral, manure isn't the highest-value product around, so at first glance cows don't seem the best option for improving livelihoods.

Oxfam Australia Cambodia Program Officer Techkung explains the logic behind cows (and buffaloes):

"Chickens and pigs produce income quicker, but many families we work with face long food shortages. If we provide pigs or chickens, they are often eaten during a food shortage which means no long-term benefit. Cows won't be eaten because they are more valuable and durable, while cow bank members can easily check up on the cows. As the cows reproduce, families have an exponentially growing income."

In addition, cows and buffaloes can be important for improving the status of poor families, enabling them to gain more respect in the village, as Yuh Met in Kande village, Stung Treng explains:

"Sometimes, I think the food shortages affected our relationships with other villagers. They wouldn't communicate with us because we were poor. Two years ago, nobody communicated with us, but since getting the buffalo, other villagers are friendlier and now communicate with us."



EXPANDING TO KRATIE AND STUNG TRENG: SCHOOL BUILDING

In 1995, Oxfam Australia expanded to Kratie in northern Cambodia, accessible primarily by a day-long boat trip along the Mekong River, with staff recalling the occasional ringing of gun shots on the trip.

In 1997, Oxfam Australia expanded further north into Stung Treng, which although close to Kratie, was challenging to access. A previous staff member recalls driving in a jeep packed with 12 people for 14 hours to travel less than 100 kilometres to reach Stung Treng from Kratie. Passing through army checkpoints every five kilometres and with the Khmer Rouge still active in the area, cars had to be off the roads at night. In both provinces, villages were remotely dispersed, initially accessible only by boat or motorbike.

In isolated villages with no established outside relationships and where community spirit is minimal, starting ICD programming can be extremely difficult. Communities can be wary of outsiders and reluctant to invest in new unproven activities. Negotiating these challenges, Oxfam Australia began with school building programs in Kratie and Stung Treng, as a community entry point for longer-term ICD programs.

From the outset, communities are involved in the design and construction of the schools, encouraging a sense of ownership, achievement and potential for the future. Communities contribute labour, planning skills and construction materials, such as timber and rocks. This process requires extensive staff monitoring and is often challenging, as it poses a burden for communities. Even so, the resulting enthusiasm of communities to work together and the relationships this creates within the community and with Oxfam Australia are invaluable for future community development.

As an entry point for the ICD program, the building of a school shows Oxfam Australia's commitment to villages and gives communities a sense of what can be achieved if they work together. It can be inspiring, with many communities creating further projects after the school, such

as communal fish ponds and vegetable gardens. The school is also a focal point for community meetings and other events. All together, the schools create a strong foundation for the introduction of broader ICD activities, which soon followed in villages throughout Kratie and Stung Treng.

Aside from a precursor to ICD programming, the school building programs have been very successful in bringing education to some of the most disadvantaged communities in Cambodia. Many villages either had no school or students studied for limited hours exposed to the elements, such as under a tree. The importance of primary education cannot be underestimated, creating opportunities well into the future for communities.

Heng Heap personifies the potential of education. Following primary school, Heap was one of two female students to go to secondary school from Sambor village, Kratie. Many years later, Heap is now the principal of a cluster of schools, including some that Oxfam Australia rebuilt. Attracting female teachers to remote areas is challenging, with local graduates like Heap, one of the best pathways to get female teachers into remote areas. This is vital for improving gender equity in future generations, as Heap explains:

"I think it is better for girls to have female teachers because they understand girls' issues better."

REMOTE SCHOOLS, PROFOUND IMPACTS

Presiding over a remote village deep in the Stung Treng jungle, Paov village chief Ok Danh typifies the determination of rural Cambodian communities. Isolated from the outside world, Danh's village only had a skeleton of a school for years — no roof, scant materials and disenfranchised students.

Danh recalls: "I lobbied UNICEF for a new school, I lobbied the Government, but it wasn't possible. Everyone worked with less remote villages. We desperately needed a new school."

After years of lobbying, Danh finally met with Oxfam Australia and devised a plan for a new school.

"My village cleared the land, provided timber, sand and rocks, and labour," explains Danh. Oxfam Australia provided

other materials, builders and technical assistance. There were many difficulties along the way for Danh's village, which had no road access and where people struggled to etch out subsistence livelihoods, but Danh persevered. The school is now the pride of the community, with some recent graduates going on to secondary school — a first for the village and creating exciting opportunities.

As part of the program, Oxfam Australia built teachers' houses to attract and retain good teachers to remote areas, which is always a challenge. In Paov village, teacher Pann Sotheary moved in and is now a driving force of the school and community, having built a fish pond for students and successfully lobbied the government for scholarships for students to attend secondary school.

Sotheary explains his plans for the future:

"I will make a fence for the school, plant trees in the compound and prepare a sporting area. I am very happy teaching and I want to live here forever."

Following Oxfam Australia's initial involvement in school construction, every school is now supported by the government and managed by the community. Paov village is part of more than 20 schools Oxfam Australia has built throughout Kratie and Stung Treng, kick-starting community-led development. As Cambodia has attracted more external support for education and government education resources have increased, Oxfam Australia gradually scaled down the program, which finished in 2011.



ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE: THE RICE REVOLUTION

"We don't really call it climate change, but wet season is shorter and the weather more variable. It's very difficult for rice farmers." explain Khmer Oxfam Australia staff members.

These words are echoed by farmers throughout Cambodia explaining the challenges of growing enough rice. Without irrigation, most Khmer farmers rely entirely on rainfall to grow rice and other crops. Less rain amounts to lower rice yields. This means not enough food. Climate change is no longer just about long-term projections; it's not some abstract thing that might happen in the future. It's a very tangible issue that's causing problems right now. Cambodia is oscillating between devastating floods, experienced in 2009 and 2011, and droughts. These major fluctuations are devastating for rice crops and subsistence livelihoods; years of livelihood improvements can be wiped out instantly.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

In Cambodia, Oxfam Australia has increasingly delivered training on the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). SRI requires no chemicals, grows quicker than traditional rice varieties and uses a fraction of the water. These last two features are vital for increasingly short wet seasons and volatile

weather. SRI is not just good for adaptation; it also increases yields dramatically, as farmer Phit Nary from Omarass village, Stung Treng, explains:

"For rice farming, we used traditional techniques and seed selection, but now we use SRI ... In the same plot of land we now get 3000kg of rice in one season, instead of 1000kg. I have sold about 600kg of excess rice. From this income, I have spent it on a water pump, clothes, books and pens for my daughter's study. I have also used the money to send my daughter to school from 2003 because we now have enough money and enough food for the whole family to eat."

Adaptation, such as SRI, is not for everyone because SRI cannot handle deep flooding that occurs naturally in many parts of Cambodia. Thus, the integrated element of the ICD program delivers appropriate agricultural techniques for the geography, such as vegetable-growing and an increasing focus on other climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

After an earlier pilot project, Oxfam Australia started a disaster risk reduction (DRR) program in 2005, which was eventually integrated into all of the ICD programs.

The DRR program also included the implementation of emergency response systems to enable quick, effective responses.

As the changing climate is leading to more volatile weather — particularly in Cambodia with devastating floods in 2009 and 2011 — DRR is an increasingly important step to safeguard years of improvements in livelihoods. During the 2009 floods caused by Typhoon Ketsana, Oxfam Australia was able to provide a rapid relief effort to communities, saving lives and reducing the impact of the disaster. In 2011, communities were effective in mitigating the floods' impacts and an emergency response was not required in Oxfam Australia's target areas.

Oxfam Australia's DRR program focuses on practical solutions for rural communities — being proactive instead of reactive. A community-based disaster management committee is established to guide DRR activities in the village, developing context appropriate solutions, such as:

- disaster mapping to identify risky and safe areas in the village in the event of an emergency;
- canal rehabilitation and digging to control water flows, reduce flooding and store water;
- tree-planting to reduce erosion, protect houses from strong winds and provide food; and

- SRI training to adapt to more variable climate patterns.

In Tomadar village, Takeo, Kou Nou was part of the DRR program and explains the benefits:

"I joined the training on disaster reduction awareness and we talked about the different hazards, such as storms and droughts. I was also involved in the repairing the canals. The canals benefit my village by storing water for rice nurseries and also for irrigating during the drought period. It has helped me a lot; not only me, but also the other villagers.

"I received mango and lemon seedlings. When the mango trees fruit, I can eat without having to buy from other people. If I have a big supply I can make dried mango. The trees also reduce the wind speed to protect my house. I can get around 100,000 riel (AUD \$254) from selling my mango fruit. When I sell my mangoes, I use the money to buy meat. After our meal, we eat mangoes. My mangoes have no chemical inputs, so my health is very good."



SAVING GROUPS IN STUNG TRENG

Saving groups provide an important diversification from agricultural techniques and create important opportunities, particularly for women and people who don't have land. Oxfam Australia facilitates the establishment of community-run saving groups that pool their collective savings to create what is essentially a community bank. The key benefits of the savings groups are:

- Members are usually women; creating invaluable opportunities for women's leadership and economic empowerment, while regular meetings provide a forum to discuss women's issues and take action. Improving gender equity is central to saving groups.
- Saving groups are flexible, giving people opportunities to create their own solutions to poverty, such as starting context-appropriate small businesses.
- By avoiding external money lenders that charge high interest, saving groups reduce the risk of people getting caught in debt traps, while all the profits from the groups stay in the community.

Kan Kimvoy, who is involved in a saving group in Sre Kresaing village, Stung Treng, explains:

"Before the year 2005, my family's condition was one of the poorest in the village. I had never participated in community development activities and never participated in training and did not understand about saving groups. I did not dare to speak out in meetings. I also never had an influence in community decision making. I would never communicate with any organization ... It was very difficult to live because we did not have enough money for establishing any additional occupation such as pig-raising as a small business.

"I was elected to be the cashier of the saving group. I have borrowed money from our saving group for pig-raising. Nowadays, I raise two pigs and maybe in five to six months I will sell them for additional income. The money I earn I will use to buy gasoline for the machine to plough my paddy, to hire people to plant rice, everyday spending, to support my old mother and, finally, for my niece to study. I will buy items, such as clothes and materials for school. Other saving group members have borrowed money for repairing their house, pig-raising, buying seeds, rice paddy and establishing small businesses.

"I was elected to the Sre Kresaing commune council in 2007 and the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) appointed me to be a facilitator for establishing other saving groups in Stung Treng province. UPDF also proposed that I establish a saving group in Stung Treng town and help them to get

a loan from UPDF too. The Oxfam Australia training and projects have helped make these opportunities possible. I hope my saving group continues to borrow money from UPDF with an increase to 10,000,000 riel (USD \$2,500 per year for establishing a women's trade group and to establish a food processing business."

COMMUNITY ORGANISING AND LAND RIGHTS IN MONDULKIRI

Starting in 2009, Oxfam Australia expanded the ICD program to Mondulkiri in north-east Cambodia. Inhabited by a high percentage of ethnic minority communities and remotely located, Mondulkiri is one of the least developed parts of Cambodia. Now, it is undergoing rapid change, as mining and logging expand, putting pressure on ethnic minority ways of life, such as shifting agriculture. In this context, Oxfam Australia's ICD program in Mondulkiri has had a strong focus on land rights and community organising, as well as the other elements of ICD, such as livelihoods and gender justice.

Chin Nath is a member of the Village Development Committee in Krang Test village, Mondulkiri, and gives her perspective on Oxfam Australia's work over the past few years:

"Before Oxfam, I didn't really get involved in the community. Now, I am happy to be involved — I oversee the rice bank. Other villagers now get involved and start to know each other well. We have learnt about human rights, which for us mean greater equality between rich, poor, women, men, children and so on. We try to help each other out to improve human rights.

"In 2006, our community had problems with companies taking land, so everyone thought Khmer people were bad and didn't trust them. After Oxfam started here, people started to have more trust in Khmer and would judge people on actions, not ethnicity. The community used to complain about meetings, but now they are more confident in sharing their ideas and explaining their needs.

"I think Oxfam has a good system because they offer training, provide useful things, work closely with us and teach us to work together in the community. Other organisations have come and they provide things, but they don't follow up and work closely with the community. People might get seeds, but then never use them. Oxfam follows up and people will use the seeds.

"Now, because people have more understanding, I think in the future, they will continue projects, such as saving groups and the rice bank. People see the development and they are committed. Before, when someone had a food shortage, they try to borrow rice from a neighbour,

but only get one can. They would get sick because of not having enough food and people would die. Now, the community uses the rice bank to borrow rice and it's much better. It's good because the community works together. In our heart we want to see everything continue, like the cow bank — we want everyone to have a cow."

Krang Test village is one of four communities that Oxfam Australia leaves in Mondulkiri to continue their own development and advocating for their needs. Many communities identify land disputes as the biggest issue they continue to face. Companies are increasingly encroaching on community land and access to traditional forest products and food is becoming more challenging. In addition, changing climate patterns in the hills of Mondulkiri are making farming increasingly difficult, particularly during the dry season. However, strong leaders, such as Nath, are a cause for optimism, playing pivotal roles in community-organising and advancing human rights.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects have been a major part of Oxfam Australia's work in Cambodia from the early 1980s water pumps and irrigation up to 2012.

The water element focuses on the provision of clean water for rural communities, including water sources and ensuring the water is safe to drink. Depending on the context, Oxfam Australia works with communities to install water pumps, rainwater-harvesting and gravity-fed water systems. Water filters or training on storing and boiling water are the primary techniques for ensuring clean water. Water user groups are established to maintain equipment into the future. Sanitation focuses on developing systems for waste collection and treatment, which is primarily delivered through toilet construction and community-led waste management. Hygiene is achieved through hygiene training that explains how to reduce the spread of disease and promote simple preventative actions, such as hand washing. Like ICD, WASH is delivered through an integrated approach, with each activity reinforcing changes in each other.

WASH burdens usually fall to women and children — collecting water, gathering firewood, boiling water, caring for sick family members and a lack of privacy, are just some of the issues they face daily. A well-targeted WASH program can make simple, crucial interventions that make a world of difference. A \$10 water filter epitomises this potential for change, explains Chit Boll from Samphin village, Kratie.

"The water filter reduced diarrhoea in my family. We no longer need to boil water, which reduces need for firewood. The filter saves time because before I spent a lot of time to collect the water from the river and boil it. Now, I also have water for kids to take to school ... My kids go to school more and it reduced family expenses in relation to buying medicine and firewood. My kids have better health than before."

Srun Phalla from Roka village, Takeo, explains the opportunities created by a bit of extra time:

"With this free time, I can do other business. I have a small business sewing and selling gloves. I earn about 6000–7000 riel (AUD \$1.60) per day. Now I no longer need to use this money to buy medicine. So now I can save some money to buy other things the family needs and to support my family. The filter makes our lives better than before."



HANDING OVER: LITERACY AND HEALTH SERVICES

Throughout the years, the ICD program has adopted a holistic approach to meet the diverse needs of remote communities, while also adapting to a continually changing context. This adaptation can be a difficult process — negotiating community and government expectations, ensuring communities get the support they need and avoiding aid dependency.

In the early stages of Oxfam Australia's work in Cambodia, providing health services was a priority, as the government lacked the capacity to provide even basic health services to remote, rural communities. Literacy classes were also important to rebuild skills lost during the Khmer Rouge's destruction of education. Health and literacy fulfilled foundational needs for the ICD program, supporting communities with the basics to engage with other activities. However, as Cambodia stabilised and government capacity increased, services such as health and literacy, became increasingly accessible, although remote areas still had limited access.

Oxfam Australia's literacy classes, which used local teachers and practical teaching methods, have been a model of success. As government resources increased, Oxfam Australia wound down the program and shared its literacy techniques with government. Now, provincial departments are providing literacy classes independently and reaching increasingly remote areas. Similarly with health service provision, Oxfam Australia has reduced health activities, as government capacity has increased and services are extending to remote areas. Oxfam Australia now has minimal involvement in basic health services, with previous trainees, such as traditional birth attendants, continuing to provide community health services.

Throughout Cambodia, government capacity still has limitations, but the gradual handover of activities is vital for Cambodia's long-term prosperity. Although this handover can be challenging, strong relationships and mutual decision-making between communities, government and Oxfam Australia paved the way for a successful transition. Oxfam Australia's model of working closely with government counterparts has also provided a strong foundation for sustainable change.

ENSURING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Oxfam Australia started work in the area around Chumrun village, Takeo in 1997, when there were no other organisations working in the area. It was challenging work — travel was arduous, sporadic fighting was still happening and many displaced communities were only just starting to rebuild. In Chumrun, the local irrigation system was destroyed and farmers could only grow one meagre rice crop per year with minimal water management. Most people faced food shortages of six to nine months per year.

"The road was bad, houses were made of leaves, we had no electricity and no motorbikes. We could only travel to Phnom Penh by bicycle. It took one day and one night — it was not safe" describes Chumrun villagers.

Oxfam Australia started working in Chumrun and nearby villages with extensive consultations so that the community could express what they needed and how it could be done. Eleven villages were involved, bringing together previously isolated communities, which started to improve their collective solidarity to create change. The communities indicated that repairing the dam and irrigation system was an urgent priority. This would allow them to improve their current rice yields through better water management and grow two crops per year. All the villages and Oxfam Australia agreed to make it happen — no easy feat at the time.

Rehabilitating a dam and irrigation system is one thing, but making it sustainable is the real challenge. To enhance sustainability Oxfam Australia set up a water user group. Group member, Heng Koap, explains:

"We manage the dam and canals. If there are any problems, we call a meeting with all people benefiting from the irrigation system. Villagers then help according to their capacity. We can also write to the district council (local government) for support ... The project is successful because everyone shares responsibility and contributes time and rice (that can be sold) to maintain the system. The skills and knowledge we gained from Oxfam Australia are shared with the rest of the village. There's strong community spirit and everyone works together."

Many years on since Oxfam Australia finished working in Chumrun village, the irrigation system and group are still strong. Many people are growing two rice crops per year, which has either reduced or eliminated food shortages and generated income to improve people's lives in other areas, such as education. The sustained development in Chumrun is inspiring. The community is strong, some students are going on to university and living standards continue to improve.

Water user group members Heng Koap, Sayk Oeun and Toyc Srim provide some insight into the success: "Oxfam Australia should take the experience here and apply to other villages. Here, the committees and villagers work closely together. If NGOs offer support, but villagers don't work together, it will not be successful. Leaders need to be a good role model to show the benefits to others. We learnt from other villages many years ago. Now, other NGOs come to our village to learn from our experience and apply elsewhere. We will continue to develop our community, as we lobby to the government for our priority needs."

Chumrun epitomises Oxfam Australia's ICD model at its best. Oxfam Australia's ICD program often begins with time-intensive projects, then scaling down to monitoring and evaluation, before finally phasing out. Activities target priority community needs, effective community management systems are established and, ultimately, communities continue their own development. Not all villages are as successful as Chumrun, but Chumrun highlights the long-term potential of ICD.



Photo: Timothy Herbert/OxfamAUS



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY RIGHTS

Advocacy in many forms is an integral component of ICD and Oxfam Australia's broader development agenda. As Cambodia's development gathers pace, competition for resources intensifies, the government has greater capacity to provide services, and communities often face new challenges to their livelihoods.

Potential loss of livelihoods and forced resettlement are increasingly prominent issues in Cambodia, as companies gain land concessions and large infrastructure projects are developed. These changes present opportunities for Cambodia, but also threaten decades of improvement in livelihoods. It is also important that Oxfam Australia doesn't undermine government responsibilities, such as in the provision of essential services, which demands advocacy throughout all programming.

Oxfam Australia's advocacy is rooted in multiple, complementary approaches. At

the community level, training about human rights, accountability and community-organising skills are just some of the advocacy activities. Communities are then encouraged to independently advocate for their rights and needs, such as land access and the provision of essential services. Oxfam Australia values that communities know their needs best and are in unique positions to advocate for these needs.

As competition for land increases, land rights have become a stronger focus of Oxfam Australia's work. In 2010–2011, Oxfam Australia developed a guide called *Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)*, detailing techniques for communities to deal with intrusions on community land, with a focus on community decision-making and understanding of community rights. As FPIC has been distributed throughout Cambodia, it has been utilised by communities dealing with various land issues, such as mining and rubber plantations. Adapted to the local context, it has proven a valuable resource for community-led advocacy.

Beyond community-level advocacy, Oxfam Australia has a substantial focus on water governance advocacy, particularly around proposed hydropower dams in the Mekong region. Home to the Tonle Sap Lake and with the Mekong River running through the country, Cambodia is heavily reliant on fishery resources from its river systems. Fisheries provide livelihoods and food security for millions of Khmer, but are under threat from planned large-scale dams in Cambodia and the Mekong region. The proposed dams have the potential for devastating impacts on some of the poorest communities in the region. The dam reservoirs will lead to mass forced resettlement, which without proper compensation, could undo more than 15 years of Oxfam Australia's work, while communities in Stung Treng are also under threat from proposed dams. Beyond resettlement, the dams are likely to disrupt water flows and fish migration that makes the Mekong a food bowl for millions of people. This would devastate communities throughout the Mekong region.

To advocate internationally for a halt in dams that may cause irreversible environmental and social damage, Oxfam Australia draws on two things—having close relationships with potentially affected communities and developing comprehensive research. Oxfam Australia is not anti-dam, as dams can play an important role in producing electricity, alleviating poverty and reducing emissions. However, Oxfam Australia is against inequitable development that benefits only a few, while many people, especially the poorest, pay the costs. Oxfam Australia, along with national and international partners, calls on governments, the private sector and decision-makers to critically assess all the potential impacts of dams and avoid any construction that may have substantial negative impacts.

Gauging the impact of advocacy work is always difficult, but there have been some positive developments recently. Construction has been suspended on the Xayabouri dam on the Mekong mainstream in Laos, as further environmental and social impact studies are completed. This

is extremely important because if Xayabouri proceeds, it is expected many mainstream Mekong dams will follow. Beyond the halt to Xayabouri, Oxfam Australia's advocacy has precipitated an increased awareness of the negative impacts of dams and, strengthened community and even governments' opposition to potentially destructive damming. It is an ongoing process, but as awareness increases and more people speak out, the protection of livelihoods and the Mekong is more likely. Oxfam Australia will continue to advocate on water governance issues into the future, as it remains vital for ensuring a more equitable Cambodia and Mekong region.



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE: TONSONG TLEAK VILLAGE, KRATIE PROVINCE

This participatory photography project in Tonsong Tleak village, Kratie, shows the community's perspective of Oxfam Australia's work. Cameras in hand, students and villagers set out documenting their lives and the changes resulting from Oxfam Australia's work. All photos and captions are by students and villagers.

We're cleaning each other's hands. It's good for hygiene.

Before, we didn't have a bridge, but now it's easy and safe to travel.



It's my friend taking care of their house. She takes care of the house because she doesn't want her family to get sick. If the house is dirty, it's easy to get sick.



This is my friend reading the words on the whiteboard in our classroom.



Before, my family didn't have pigs, but now we raise them. It's a big achievement. We make money from selling the pigs.

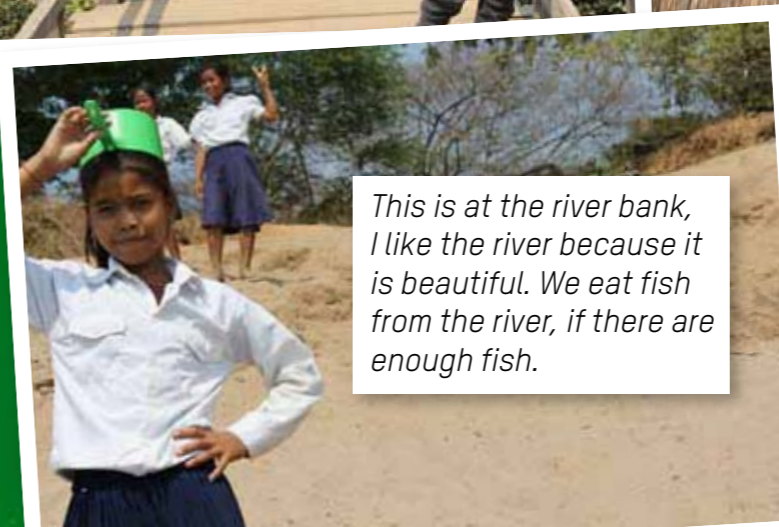


This is a poor villager's house. Before, most people lived in small houses, but now people live in bigger houses because of Oxfam's development.

Before there was no toilet at school, but Oxfam built one recently. It makes it clean and hygienic for all students. All students like it.

Before, we had no school building. We studied under the mango tree. It was very difficult; lots of rain, wind and noise. The school is easy and beautiful.

This is at the river bank, I like the river because it is beautiful. We eat fish from the river, if there are enough fish.





This is where we build the materials for toilets with Oxfam's support. We are building the last toilets now.



We want to record what life is like in the village for our memories.



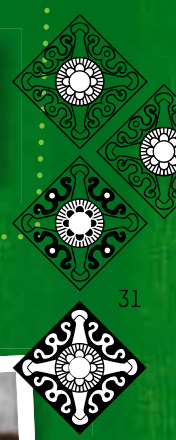
Before, it was very hard to ride a bike, but now with the bigger road, it's easy.



This photo shows the creativity of the village using a petrol rice mill that also charges a battery.



This is a water tank from Oxfam. It's easy for us because before we had to go to the river, but now we have water at the school.





GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVES

"The counterparts get knowledge from working with Oxfam. They learn from the community and know how to build community ownership. Counterparts get the experience and share it with other people in the department. For other departments not working with Oxfam, they just work in the department and don't understand about community needs."

"The best thing about the counterpart system is that our staff work in villages, get positive results and report back to the department. The department can then report to provincial authorities about what has changed and the community needs. This goes up to the national level."

Kroyc Vantah, Deputy Director of Women's Affairs in Takeo

"We plan to take over Oxfam's work to keep it sustainable, but we still need resources for training and fish conservation. We will follow up with existing fishery communities, but not as often."

"Before we worked with Oxfam, we only worked on punishing illegal fishing. Now, we use education to prevent illegal fishing and get people to share knowledge. It is a more effective method than just catching people with illegal equipment."

Sao Kotsan, Deputy Director of Fishery Cantonment in Takeo

COUNTERPART PERSPECTIVES

"Now, there is much more unity in the community. Before, women were shy and not respected. Now, we can see villages have ownership in projects; women and men are much more equal in the village. Women can now share ideas and men accept them."

"Now, women have more control over when to have babies. They talk with men to make plans, instead of just having babies when men want. Birth spacing makes the family healthier because they have enough time to raise children and do business to improve their living standard. It also helps get children to school."

"After working with Oxfam, I have knowledge in coordination, understanding community needs, monitoring and evaluation. I know how to analyse situations. It is good, as I can influence different stakeholders and other departments. I share ideas, experiences and information with others."

"I believe communities will keep Oxfam's achievements going, but it will be difficult to do new activities because the communities and government have limited resources."

Rou Sotheary, Takeo health counterpart since 2002

"It was very difficult to work with Oxfam

"There used to be many difficulties in Stung Treng. People did not work together, families didn't have skills, like animal-raising, and health was bad. Oxfam's way of working encouraged people to help each other. For example, the saving group builds community and people want to come together, grow and work together."

"I think it is good that counterparts work with Oxfam because they get good skills and experience. We see counterparts leading planning and facilitation in the department."

Prum Pik, Deputy Director of Rural Development in Stung Treng

"After working with Oxfam, the director assigned me to oversee the communes because I had experiences working with communities. When I go to a village, I give them my phone number, so they can call me if they ever have a problem. It is easy for the community."

Kay Sirabor, Chief of Fishery District in Siem Bouk, Stung Treng

"We can talk like brothers because Oxfam has worked with the department for a long time, even without a formal agreement."

"A pregnant lady came to the health centre with bad health, but she left because she felt she had to do her housework. Blood tests showed she had malaria and if she stayed in the village, she would

before. The villages had food shortages, no infrastructure and low knowledge. We had to use palm trees for bridges because the roads were very bad ... People did not trust each other and it was difficult to get them to work together."

"There have been remarkable changes in livelihoods. For example, the poorest think they'll never have a cow. Then they get a cow through Oxfam's cow bank and have hope for the future."

"The counterpart system is good because it builds government's respect for Oxfam's work and Oxfam can have counterparts with specialist knowledge. I share my ideas through meetings and advising others."

Bun Rithy, Takeo agriculture counterpart since 1997

"Counterparts are the eyes and ears of the department. We can get intimate information about villages and their needs to share with the department."

"We can educate directly to the village's benefit because we are close to the villagers. We work closely together and solve issues, such as domestic violence, through meetings and dealing with situations. For example, a family had domestic violence and the [Oxfam trained] gender promoter intervened by involving the local police. The family created an agreement to stop the

have died. She still felt her livelihood was more important than her health. We need experienced, skilful people to change behaviour. Oxfam's health promoters in the villages have been very effective at changing behaviour, but it's still difficult."

Heng Neuv, Director of Health Department in Stung Treng

"The Government has some money, but cannot build schools (remotely) because it is too difficult and expensive ... No other NGOs try to build remotely, only Oxfam. If it wasn't for Oxfam, there would not be a school."

Noy Sokhan, Director of Department of Education, Youth and Sports in Stung Treng

"Navy (counterpart) has good discipline. She is on time, does her work and goes to the village even if it's difficult, such as during wet season. She has done a good job at the village and other department officers learn from her. Some people say 'you should work like Navy'. She is a good role model and influences others."

Charoy Chanree, Deputy Director of Women's Affairs in Monduliri

"The thing I appreciate best is that Oxfam works in the ethnic areas. It is very difficult to communicate, but Oxfam has helped villages from having nothing to having a livelihood."

Bou Sovuth, Director of Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Monduliri.

violence and if there was a second incident, the husband would face the law."

"I really enjoy working with the villagers; talking to women and men. I've seen equality grow and more sharing between women and men. I really like sitting under the shade of a tree and working through different issues."

Kao Vannara, Stung Treng gender counterpart since 2007

"I have learnt many skills. Before, I just had agricultural technical skills, but now I have good community facilitation and organising skills. For example, I didn't know how to set up a rice bank, but now I do."

"I think the tangible things like rice banks and cow banks will continue, but it will be more difficult for intangible things to continue, like hygiene awareness-raising."

Seng Sao, Monduliri agriculture counterpart since 2009

"We have created a lot of improvement, but because of the villagers' limited knowledge, it will be difficult to sustain changes. After Oxfam finishes, the department has a plan to provide some technical support to villages. For me, I will keep using all my skills and experience; sharing it with younger people."

Chay Navy, Monduliri gender counterpart since 2009

STAFF PERSPECTIVES

"Oxfam's work is like making a flower bloom. We put in all the essential ingredients for community development, like WASH, gender, agriculture and many other things. You need everything to make the flower bloom."

"I can see changes in the community. Before, they just came to meetings and listened. Now, they advocate and share their ideas. Counterparts then hear those ideas and feed them back to other people."

Ear Techkung, Program Officer in Takeo

"I'm proud that we work directly with the community and with the poorest. It is challenging, but it means the poorest people get benefits."

"Capacity building and planning are very important. The community should do it by themselves, so they know all activities are for them. They will then implement the activities and it is more likely to be sustainable."

"By working with government, we are able to influence the departments and can discuss community issues with directors ... government sees and learns from our transparent processes, such as bidding for materials."

Neav Chantha, Program Coordinator in Takeo

"Oxfam Australia is good because it respects local knowledge and programs are driven

by community needs, not donors. This has led to strong community ownership over change. The changes in the community have created hope for the future."

"I'm proud to have worked with Oxfam Australia because we reach the real needs of Cambodian communities. Programs are managed by Cambodians and we prioritise acting, not talking."

Chhuon La, Senior Program Advisor in Phnom Penh

"Through working with Oxfam, my behavior has changed. In my old government job, I just tried to catch people doing illegal things, but now I work to help develop communities to meet their needs."

"Eating is the basic need and communities needed food. After we could ensure enough food for people, we could then think about other things. The ICD program meets the many different needs of communities."

"I saw a development program that built toilets for all families in a village, but they didn't use them. Oxfam teaches about the importance of toilets and sanitation, so that people want them and will use them."

"Oxfam works closely with communities to know their real needs. Sometimes, if NGOs don't work close, they are just guessing about community needs and make assumptions, which can be wrong."

"For remote villages, it can be difficult to trust outsiders. They want us to show them some kind of commitment before they will trust us, like building a bridge or canal. Then trust starts and the community will contribute to activities. We work closely to build up trust."

Sak Sivin, Program Officer in Stung Treng

"I'm most proud of Oxfam's direct work with the community using a participatory approach; getting the community ideas and then putting them into action. I'm also proud of the communities, Oxfam and counterparts' strong communication and clear understanding of each other."

"The best things about Oxfam have been our working as a team at the grassroots level with the poorest of the poor and marginalised people."

Hul Chin Chumratha, Program Coordinator in Monduliri



Photo: John Sones/OxfamAUS



Photo: Maureen Bathgate/OxfamAUS



OXFAM AUSTRALIA'S LEGACY

Cambodia is casting away a narrative of civil war, devastation and poverty to become a dynamic country of people driving change. Committed, passionate people throughout the country are pushing for a new deal — the elimination of poverty, greater equality and justice, to name a few. As the country develops, these people define the new narrative for Cambodia — one of action, change and hope.

Communities, activists and NGOs are continually improving the security of human rights, creating innovative solutions to everyday challenges and tackling many root causes of poverty. It is no easy task. About 30% of the population lives in poverty, 80% live rurally — usually as subsistence farmers —, and access to essential services is still limited. Inequality is growing, with land security particularly problematic, while climate change is devastating subsistence

livelihoods. The task is challenging, but targeted interventions are generating vast benefits.

Diverse issues must be addressed by government and civil society to make Cambodia a more equitable country. Improving equality, freedom of expression and security of land access are all vital for the future. Current projects that exacerbate these problems must be rectified to ensure a fairer future for all Khmer. It can and should be an exciting time for Cambodia; opportunities beckon and change is happening.

After more than 30 years' work in Cambodia, Oxfam Australia has created vast improvements in livelihoods, human rights and many other areas. Communities have come together, women's leadership has increased and community creativity is

thriving. However, the greatest legacy of Oxfam Australia's work is in each person involved throughout the years. Oxfam Australia leaves behind a legacy of people throughout the country dedicated to advancing social justice; communities, government counterparts and staff will continue to create inspiring change into the future. It is these people that will maintain the legacy of Oxfam Australia, as they continue to push for a more equitable Cambodia.

OXFAM AUSTRALIA EXPENDITURE IN CAMBODIA FROM 98/99 UNTIL 2012 (EXPENSES - AUD)

Year	Total	AusAid Component	%
98/99	357,757	70,233	19.63
99/00	294,830	108,725	36.88
00/01	668,697	271,619	40.62
01/02	466,805	84,905	18.19
02/03	568,562	802	0.14
03/04	416,140	0	0.00
04/05	607,184	75,559	12.44
05/06	667,254	141,125	21.15
06/07	796,432	44,951	5.64
07/08	620,768	0	0.00
08/09	1,235,272	0	0.00
09/10	1,235,272	120,984	9.79
10/11	1,675,132	882,819	52.70
	9,436,204	1,801,722	19.09
11/12 to March '12	835,454	353,438	42.30
	10,271,658	2,155,160	20.98





OXFAM
Australia

THANK YOU

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Communities
Government counterparts
Cambodian Government departments
The Royal Cambodian Government
International governments and aid agencies
The Australian Government and AusAID
All donors
Key supporters
Oxfam affiliates
All Oxfam Australia staff and volunteers, past and present

