

**March 2021**

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**ActionAid Cambodia in the news**

# 1 BUILDING YOUTH'S CAPACITY FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY



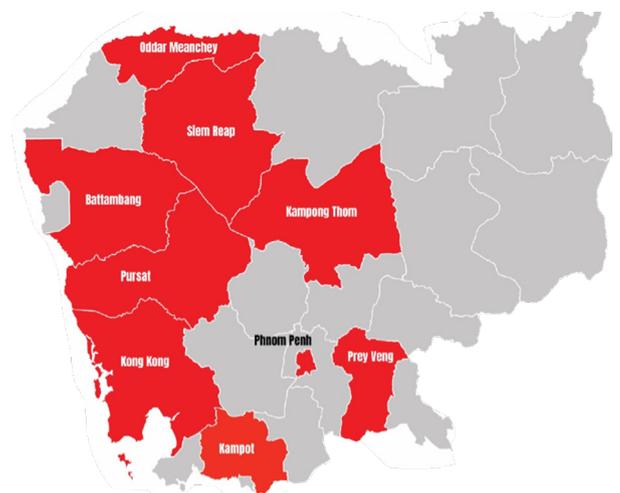
A group of young women were discussing during the training in Kampot Province

Youths play a key role in working with local authorities and relevant stakeholders to enhance accountable and gender-responsive public services. We believe that when media and CSOs will take lead in building youth's capacity and enhancing their participation, we will see the significance in contributing to public service delivery.

Since the late of 2020, ActionAid Cambodia and our partner Transparency International Cambodia, in collaboration with other local NGO partners, organized series of a training on "Online News Writing and Mobile Video Production" and "Youth participation in promoting Gender Responsive Public Service" to numbers of youth from different backgrounds in five target areas in Cambodia (see the attached map).

These two main activities are part of the Greater Young Women Empowerment in Decision Making and Accountable Public Service Delivery Project with financial support from the European Union in Cambodia and the Embassy of Sweden in

Phnom Penh (SIDA). The project aims at creating an enabling environment and empowering youth, particularly young women, in Cambodia to effectively participate in decision-making processes to improve public service delivery, particularly gender-responsiveness, through innovative technology platforms and to engage in policy dialogue with key decision-makers and service delivery entities at local and national levels.



(The red spots highlight where the project target areas)

Attending the training course, Miss Heang Mina, a trainee from Kampong Thom province, said, “I am very interested because it is my first time to join this training. I gain more knowledge and understanding after the course.”

She added, “In the future, I will introduce [this knowledge and understanding] to others to understand these as I do.”

Although the training was short, Mr Rem Veasna, a trainee from Oddar Meanchey province, believed that it taught and shared a lot of knowledge.

He stated that he gained knowledge about the press, identifying true or false information, understanding journalists’ values or ethics, and knowledge of video producing and editing.

Please see selected articles and videos produced by youth groups, at Thmey Thmey’s website.



Youth was practicing what she has learned during the training

## 2 NEW SCHOOL BUILDING BRINGS THE SMILE ON COMMUNITIES’ FACE

ActionAid Cambodia and Partnership for Development in Action, funded by Guy’s Trust, have built a five-room school at Ta Meak Primary School in Koh Kong province.

The construction aims to support 105 students to access proper school building and basic hygienic facilities, and playground.

Seng Sothy, Deputy Director of the Department of Education, Youth and Sports, is happy to see a new school for Ta Meak Primary School students.

He emphasized, “Before it was just an annexed school, but now it has become a complete school, meaning that it is a fully independent primary, which makes our students here feel warm and [study] in a clean atmosphere.”



A new school building loates in Ta Meak School. It was taken during the school inauguration.



Students are content with the new school building.

Ta Meak primary school lacked classrooms and facilities. Moreover, the school had inadequate walls and floors, making the building unsafe. The school also lacked adequate handwashing facilities, a recreational area, and basic classroom equipment.



Tep Sok Luy, a fifth-grade student at Ta Meak Primary School, said: “I am thrilled that I have a big school, a big yard, a garden, a vegetable garden, a nice handwashing facility, a clean toilet, many swings, and many books to read.”

## 3 WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINES OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS - WHY DO WE NEED WOMEN TO LEAD THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE?

In Cambodia, climate change-related disasters are very real and palpable menace. Unpredictable rain, severe floods and violent storms are already here — they are happening right now — and they are washing away our way of life.

Eng Samphy, a Programme Officer at ActionAid Cambodia, works closely with local women to help them fight the catastrophes caused by climate change and support them to survive the worst of its effects. She works in local neighbourhoods to identify what women need most. She trains them to be leaders of their communities and help them shift to a more sustainable way of finding food and making a living.



### HOW THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS AFFECTING CAMBODIA

Cambodia is considered one of the more vulnerable countries to climate change's worst impacts. Much of Cambodia is a floodplain, with 85% of its land within the lower Mekong basin. The Tonle Sap Lake is the heart that pumps life into the local ecosystem and, along with the Mekong River, provides sustenance for millions of people.

The heartland of plains, mangrove forests and paddy fields surrounding the lake and rivers are intricately woven into our everyday existence. Over a hundred fish species migrate here and provide the primary source of protein and profits for the rural population, and rice - the most critical field crop in Cambodia is sown and harvested here annually.

In recent years, climate change has brought intense and erratic rainfall. Now, frequent low storm clouds whip up heavy rains and generate flash floods so large that they slosh at the doorsteps of homes, even those standing on unscalable stilts.

For rice farmers, torrential rains, wind and excess water is anathema. Their rice seedlings are drowned, and winds threaten to flatten any crops. Many have to replant several times a year when their rice paddies are submerged.

During the monsoon period or wet season, we experience the annual swelling of the rivers and lake, which brim over into the basin and breathe life into the local environment. This is when we grow our rice; when forests animate with plant and bird life, and fish start to breed and thrive in the wetlands.

But in recent years, climate change has brought intense and erratic rainfall. Now, frequent low storm clouds whip up heavy rains and generate flash floods so large that they slosh at the doorsteps of homes, even those standing on unscalable stilts. For rice farmers, torrential rains, wind and excess water is anathema. Their rice seedlings are drowned, and winds threaten to flatten any crops. Many have to replant several times a year when their rice paddies are submerged.

The dry season has also brought strong unseasonable winds to the lake, and with natural wind barriers like mangrove forests being destroyed, fishing is becoming a hazardous activity.

### WHY WOMEN AND GIRLS - HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT THEM?

Women are more likely to experience greater poverty than men. They tend to have less decision-making power; they rarely own the resources and tools they rely on and have less access to money or capital. Information on how to predict and prepare for disasters is often not shared with women,

which affects their chances of adapting to and surviving a crisis.

Even though women are more likely than men to be affected by climate change, they are also part of the solution. Rural Cambodian women are positive agents of change. They are developing solutions and building their resilience to the crisis.

**HOW ACTIONAID CAMBODIA SUPPORTS THEM?**

For the past five years, ActionAid has led pioneering solutions in Cambodia to help women cope with climate change vagaries.

We are encouraging multi-generational families - grandmothers and mothers - fisherwomen who have only known fishing all their life to pivot to new ways of making a living as climate change

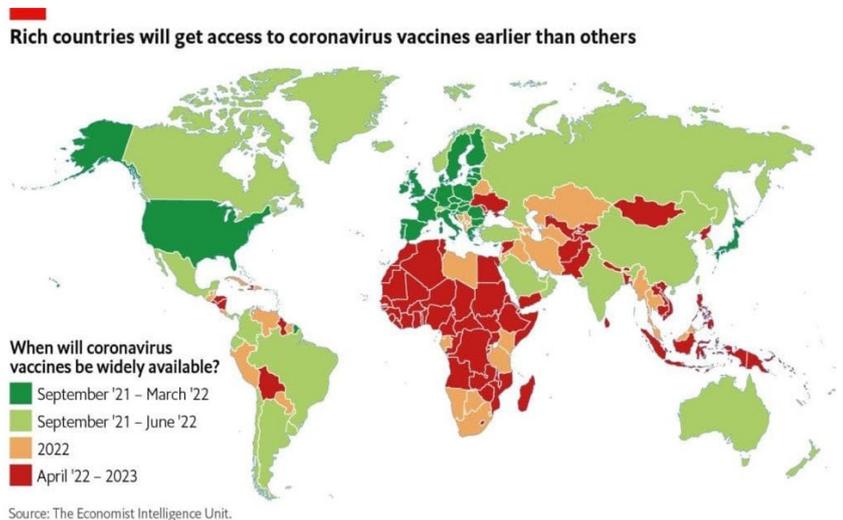
slowly alters their surroundings. We provide women with seeds, tools, capital and training so they can turn their boats into floating gardens and greenhouses to grow climate-resilient vegetables to feed their families and still keep a part of their heritage - through their boats - alive.



Women and girls spend more time out on their boats to find enough fish to eat and sell

**4 A PEOPLE'S VACCINE - MAKE COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYBODY FREE OF CHARGE**

Our best chance of ending this pandemic is to ensure that everyone and everywhere has access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests and treatments. But pharmaceutical monopolies could leave countries in the global south waiting up to 2023 for widespread vaccination. This threatens everyone as no-one is safe until everyone is safe. On 11 March, one year since the WHO declared a COVID-19 pandemic, people from around the world will be calling for a People's Vaccine – freely available to everyone, everywhere. We demand:



1. Pharmaceutical companies openly share vaccines know-how. They can do this through joining the World Health Organisation Covid-19 Technology and Access Pool (C-TAP).
2. Governments suspend patent rules at the World Trade Organisation on Covid-19 vaccines, treatments and testing during the pandemic. This will help break Big Pharma monopolies and increase supplies so there are enough doses for everyone, everywhere.

**#endvaccinemonopolies**  
**#peoplesvaccinenotaprofitvaccine**

5

**ACTIONAID WORKS WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO PROMOTE ETHICAL REPORTING ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND BUILD WOMEN CHAMPION'S NETWORK CAPACITY**

Globally, women endure violence and discrimination in every sphere of life simply because they are female. They are underrepresented in political decision-making, excluded from economic opportunity, and their labour devalued within the family. This systemic inequality dramatically impacts women's rights and makes them more vulnerable to violence, particularly for women affected by additional types of oppression, such as LGBT, women, sex workers, migrants, indigenous women, and women with disability.



A Representative from Ministry of Women's Affair presented the overview of violence against women in Cambodia

ActionAid Cambodia supports young women to strengthen their agency and to challenge harmful norms and practices. We support the local and global political recognition of disadvantaged women and their social movements and collect robust evidence to support local and global campaign to end gender-based violence. We believe that to end the violence and discrimination against women, it takes efforts from every concerning stakeholder, including the media.

We have taken part to provide technical support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Information to issue a joint Prakas on Code of Conduct for Media Reporting on Violence Against Women in 2017. Following the joint Prakas, we have lobbied the ministries to establish the technical working group to monitor the implementation of the code. ActionAid Cambodia became one of the members of the working group among others including the Cambodia Club of Journalists, the

Department of Media and Communication of the Royal University of Phnom Penh, Women Media Centre, Gender and Development in Cambodia, Radio Pka Chhouk (lotus), and Women Peace Maker.

ActionAid Cambodia has since then conducted media monitoring on the implementation of the Code of Conduct among media reporters on social media and informed the findings to the working group. The report found that media reporters and presenters have badly reported cases of violence against women on social media.

With the support from French Embassy in Cambodia, ActionAid Cambodia and the Ministry of Women's Affairs co-organized a workshop with media reporters and presenters from ten media outlets (online media and radio) to raise their awareness on root causes of violence against women and the Code of Conduct on Media Reporting on Violence Against Women.

Women's Affairs Ministry Undersecretary of State H.E. Bun Puthy said Cambodia acknowledged that there is more need to be done to promote gender equality and combat violence against women and girls.

"The news plays a very important role in preventing violence on women, especially providing news that helps victims who suffer from injustice to not become victims again. It should encourage society to support victims without discrimination," she said.



Participants from different media institutions joined the training on media code of conduct in November 2020.

Besides, ActionAid Cambodia and our local partner Mlup Promviheathor, with the French Embassy and UN Women’s support, provide training on Building Functionality and Sustainability Plan for our Woman Champion’s Network in Disaster Risk and Reduction and Climate Change in Koh Kong Province. We know that when women are empowered to make decisions in emergency response, their whole community recovers faster.



A group photo during the training on building functionality and sustainability plan for Woman Champion’s Network.



## 6 INCREASING ACCESS TO WATER FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS THROUGH SOLAR WATER PUMP IN CAMBODIA “SOLAR WATER PUMPS PROJECT, CAMBODIA”

With funding support from Electric Aid, ActionAid has implemented a project named “Increasing access to water for smallholder farmers through solar water pump in Cambodia”. The implementation period from October 2020 – March 2021. The project aims at promoting access to water for resilient livelihoods of 80 smallholder farmers especially women in Kampong Thom and Pursat province. Below are the highlighted results:

- 10 mobile solar water pumps were provided to 10 farmer production groups.
- 80 farmers (58 women) benefits from the mobile solar water pump.
- Each farmer could save USD 26.4 per months for gasoline/electric fees.
- Each farmer could save 52 minutes per day on watering vegetables (by reducing time from watering vegetables and collecting water for domestic uses).
- Each farmer increases their income by about 22.95\$ per month.
- Each farmer can produce 51.8 kg of safe vegetables per month to contribute to the local market.
- 25% of farmers extended the vegetable gardening size.
- 40% of farmers have the plan to extend their gardening size in the future.
- Solar water pump helps reducing the heavy workload of women in collecting water for vegetables and domestic uses.

### THE BOARD OF MEMBERS OF ALISEA IN CAMBODIA

ActionAid Cambodia has joined the ALiSEA network in promoting and supporting the movement of agroecology since 2018. In 2021, ActionAid Cambodia has been selected as one of the members of the Board of Member of ALiSEA in Cambodia in charge of the Small Grant Facility. With our commitment as a board member, AAC tries the best to work in promoting agroecology in terms of agroecological approaches, sharing the best practice of agroecology implementation, support the agroecology movement, and policy change.



(source: farmer survey, March 2021)



# ACTIONAID CAMBODIA IN THE NEWS

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### Women faced 'tough' 2020

Lay Samean  
Phnom Penh  
Publication date 09 March 2021 | 21:55 ICT

The Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGO-CEDAW) which works on gender and women's rights in Cambodia, identified challenges women face during the Covid-19 epidemic such as those related to health, rights, and education, especially the economic hardships in families at risk.

According to the 18-page report on the implementation of the 2020 CEDAW Convention for Cambodia, released on March 9, by 2020 Cambodia will face many challenges for women's rights. Meanwhile, there will also be an improvement in the dialogue between government and civil society to find solutions to those challenges as ...

In March, ActionAid Cambodia also endorsed a few joint statements to call on the Royal Government of Cambodia to take concrete measures to call on the Royal Government of Cambodia to take concrete measures to implement further the CEDAW Committee's recommendations” and another Joint Statement to call for the Royal Government of Cambodia to improve women’s right in the workplace.

### NGOs call on gov't to eliminate gender discrimination

Human rights organizations are calling for the government to take concrete action to improve Cambodian women's rights in honour of the 100th International Women's Day celebrated on Monday.

The Cambodian NGO Committee on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women released a monitoring report on Monday, assessing the government's actions for the year 2020 and making recommendations for improvement.

The joint statement from 21 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that published the report gave several recommendations. One is to amend and enforce laws aimed at the elimination of intimate partner violence, sexual violence against girls and all other forms of gender-based violence, particularly by providing responsive services that focus on the physical and mental well-being of survivors and ensure access to justice for survivors.

The group also recommended that the government train all security personnel hired by national or municipal administrations, including their managers and supervisors, on how to interact with women in a non-violent and gender-sensitive manner.

The government was urged in the report to increasingly monitor social media and gatherings in order to prosecute or detain women human rights defenders.

During International Women's Day on Monday, Prime Minister Hun Sen said the government has always paid attention to the promotion of women's rights and roles as clearly shown in the slogan "Women are the backbone of the national economy" since the January 7 liberation day.

He also highlighted the important role of women in society, especially in the current fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 'Essential leaders': why empowering women is key to tackling the climate crisis

Women are more likely to be impacted by the climate emergency than men - and they may also be our best hope in solving it, suggests a leading study on International Women's Day.

Empowering women and girls is among the best hopes for tackling climate change, an international study has found.

On International Women's Day, ActionAid - which works with the poorest women and girls in the world - highlighted its report in Cambodia that shows climate action is key to communities deal with flooding and other issues caused by rising temperatures.

The charity's Women's Challenge initiative helps villages and towns protect themselves by setting up early warning systems, building disaster and climate protection response centres.

Research shows that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Figures from the UN show that on per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty are women and that 80 per cent of people displaced by climate change are women.

Women in developing countries tend to work in industries that are vulnerable to extreme weather, such as farming and fishing. They also have less access to education than their male counterparts, as well as fewer access to basic human rights such as being able to own land or their own bank account.

### Women are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis, but I'm helping them fight back

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CRUSH SEE ALL

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