



WHY KHEN NEEDS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE IN ITS WORK.

WHY CHILDREN?

The Climate Crisis is a Child's Right Crisis (Unicef)

In 2021 32.2% of the Cambodian population was under 15 years.

In a ranking of children's vulnerability to climate change, Cambodian children are number 46 out of 163 countries and regions. This means that the problem is bad but there is still time to educate children so they become more environmentally aware as adults.

We know that teaching children good habits and behavior (education and awareness) not only has a positive impact on their lives and opportunities but also children go home from school and tell their families and communities about good practices. If children learn how to look after their environment they will influence others now and in the future.

The Government of Cambodia has made a number of commitments (Nationally Determined Commitments: NDC) to the international community to contribute to reducing the impacts of climate change. This plan was presented by the RGC at the COP (World Conference in 2021). It includes specific measures to be taken by MoEYS to include climate change education in the curriculum and to focus on youth. For example:

- School buildings: should be
 - a) Energy saving
 - b) Low carbon building
 - c) Strengthen school capacity to accommodate more students
- Upgrading curriculum to include climate change in formal and informal education and libraries so students understand and teachers are trained in:
 - a) climate change mitigation
 - b) Pollution
 - c) Biodiversity

d) Environment conservation

e) 5Rs

If KHEN can help teachers and Provincial Education officials meet these commitments through environmental projects it will have a positive outcome for children.

What do we already know about climate change in Battambang Province?

Different social groups experience climate vulnerability differently, and women, children, the disabled, the elderly and other socially marginalised groups are often hit harder.

Challenges for Cambodia and Battambang in particular as a result of climate change are:

➤ **water availability (drought or flood)**

The problem is that there is less water and it comes in different patterns. Rainfall is decreasing in the northwest provinces of Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Oddar Meanchey, and Siem Reap , where most of the population is reliant on traditional rice agriculture, which is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Previously water could be channeled from the Tonle Sap but each year levels drop (due to climate change and dams on the Mekong River)

➤ **Economic impact and migration**

We know that households that have experienced crop loss, drought, and poor rainfall are more likely to have a family member migrate the following year (once Covid restrictions are lifted). This leads to breakdown in families and has a negative impact on children.

➤ **Plastic use in Cambodia:**

The Mekong is one of the most polluted rivers in the world, transporting an estimated 40 thousand tonnes of plastic into the world's oceans each year.

An average Cambodian uses at least 2,000 plastic bags every year.

Nearly half of all plastic products are discarded after a single use and take up to 1000 years to disintegrate. Larger items, such as plastic bags and straws, can choke and starve marine life, while smaller fragments (microplastics) can cause liver, reproductive, and gastrointestinal damage in animals.

According to the UN Development Program (UNDP), 80 per cent of the rubbish found on Cambodia's coast consists of plastic waste.

What is the Government of Cambodia intending to do?

The RGC plan covers many sectors and includes:

➤ Promote low-carbon planning and technologies to support sustainable development. For example a project by NCDD National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development "Towards an Agroecological transition in the **uplands of Battambang**" aims to:

- a) Climate Change mitigation as the project considering of low-carbon agricultural technology
- b) Improved new management approach in agroecosystem

- c) NCDD will also implement ESS, Gender, M&E along with climate actions according to GCF standards
- d) Introduce urban youth green project in Battambang city
 - Improve capacities and knowledge for climate change response (include in curriculum: see above) and promote adaptive social protection and participatory approaches in reducing loss and damage due to climate change. Children and youth play a critical role in the development, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of climate actions across sectors – they need to be engaged at the national and local levels to participate meaningfully in the development of climate policies, including the NDC and NAP. They need to be empowered to be able to act as leaders of the next generation, educated on their Cambodia’s Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)

➤ **Identify New ways of waste management**

Bio-degradable solutions and requirements on the private sector to reduce waste and re-cycle as much as possible.

What can KHEN do about climate change?

As trees grow, they help stop climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon in the trees and soil, and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. Trees provide many benefits. Planting trees is a good way to start talking about the environment and climate change.

Tree projects will help children to understand the water problems and find local solutions e.g. rainwater harvesting

Ensuring schools and communities are cleared of plastic waste and children and adults understand the cycle of a plastic.