



BETTER SERVICES FOR PHNOM PENH'S URBAN POOR

Phnom Penh, Cambodia's rapidly growing capital, faces unique challenges as rural-urban migration accelerates. As of 2023, approximately 26 per cent of Cambodia's population resides in urban areas, and this figure is expected to double by 2050. Migration to Phnom Penh has been particularly rapid.

This migration from rural regions has fueled economic growth and contributed to national poverty reduction. Yet, significant gaps remain in the quality of life for Phnom Penh's urban poor, particularly in informal settlements.

The project Enhancing Public Services In Phnom Penh's Informal Settlements and Facilitating Access to Decent Work Opportunities for Residents marks a milestone in empowering local communities to address urban challenges.

This project aims to:



Provide essential public services to vulnerable urban residents.



Deliver health services and counseling for vulnerable migrant families.



Strengthen local governance through enhanced Commune Investment Plans (CIPs).



Provide after-school education for children.

Implementing Partners:

Samatapheapkhmom Organization (SKO), Secretariat of Associations of Sub-national Administration Councils (ASAC), Cambodia Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC), Taramana (Children and Youth NGO)

Location:

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Duration:

December 2024 – October 2026



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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Cities Alliance
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RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

Many migrants in Phnom Penh lack adequate housing, access to essential services, and legal documentation such as birth certificates and IDPoor registration, which restricts their access to formal employment and social protection, particularly for those with disabilities.

The situation is especially critical in Phnom Penh's urban slums, where limited infrastructure and social protection leave communities vulnerable to natural disasters, land tenure conflicts, and rapid urban development pressures.

The consequences of this vulnerability are compounded by climate change; frequent flooding exacerbates health risks and disrupts access to services, particularly for women and children.

Gender disparities further impact women's ability to secure decent work and protection

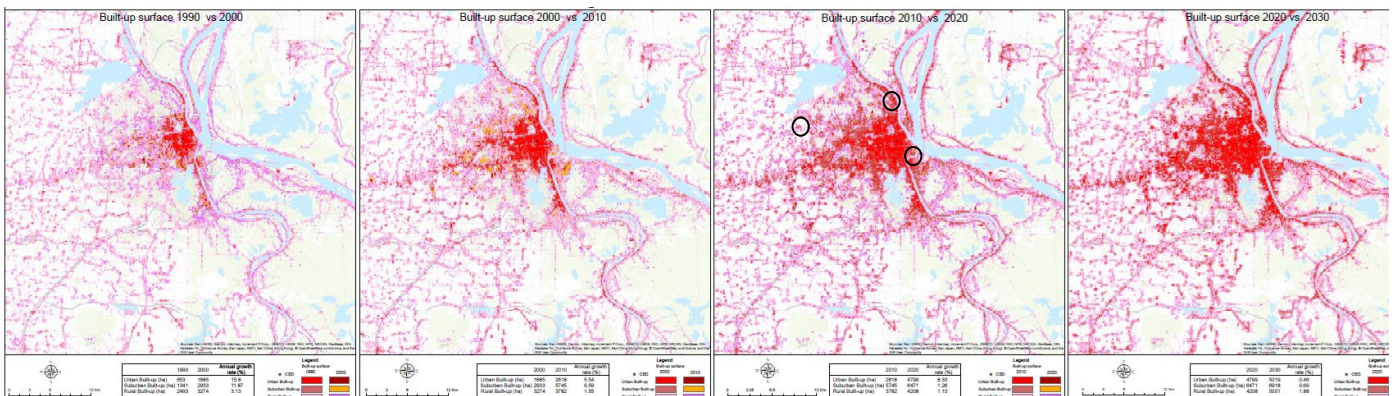


from violence, while a lack of childcare options forces children into unsafe environments or precarious jobs alongside their parents, particularly waste picking.

This pilot project, led by local city stakeholders in an innovative consortium, seeks to strengthen the resilience and inclusion of Phnom Penh's urban poor. It focuses on rural migrants from Cambodia's provinces and supporting the overwhelmed host communities

and local administration struggling with the rapid influx.

By involving both local government and community partners, the project aims to build a sustainable framework that improves access to services, enhances labour market integration, and promotes inclusive development within Phnom Penh's urban slums.



The growth of Phnom Penh, Cambodia with project sites circled. From left: Prek Pnov, Russey Keo, and Chabar Ampov.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS



Through sustainable urban planning and the creation of inclusive public spaces, the project aims to improve social cohesion and ensure gender-responsive solutions that address the needs of women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups.

Activities focus on providing essential public services, health services, and counseling for vulnerable urban residents, after-school education for children; and strengthening local governance through enhanced Commune Investment Plans.



Result 1: Improved Access to Essential Public Services for Migrants and Vulnerable Populations.

This project will enhance public service accessibility for vulnerable communities in the informal settlements of Phnom Penh, addressing core needs in health, education, and legal documentation.

Key activities in this area will include:

One-on-One Counseling:

Providing 2,700 counseling sessions for 150 vulnerable migrant and host community families, addressing immediate health, legal, and social needs.

Critical Health Services:

Delivering essential health services to 1,160 individuals, with a focus on maternal health, family planning, and nutrition.

Child Protection Awareness:

Conducting protection and awareness sessions for 990 children, educating them on personal safety and rights.

AI-Based Education for Youth:

Ensuring 200 children receive AI-supported educational programmes, offering alternative learning pathways for at-risk youth.



Result 2: Gender-Responsive Labour Market Integration for Migrants and Host Communities

This project will support local urban stakeholders to enhance gender-responsive labour market integration for migrants and vulnerable host communities in Phnom Penh.

Approximately 765 individuals, including rural-urban migrants and vulnerable host community members, will benefit from pilot services that enable them

to access new or improved work opportunities.

Key activities include:

Legal and Financial Services:

Providing access to legal advisory services, financial literacy training, and job counseling to facilitate safe and formal migration processes.

Community Engagement for Safe Migration:

Conducting awareness sessions on migration laws and policies for individuals across three vulnerable urban communities, facilitated by trained local authorities and civil society staff.

Childcare and After-School Programmes:

Expanding community-based childcare and after-school programmes to support working mothers, keeping children safe and providing opportunities for continued education and proper nutrition.



Result 3: Strengthened Governance and Local Partnerships for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Development

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the project’s outcomes, SKO, in partnership with ASAC, will focus on:

Enhanced Local Governance:

Supporting the integration of project activities into Commune Investment Plans (CIPs) to reflect the needs of over 30,000 vulnerable residents in the three project districts of Phnom Penh.

Community-Led Development:

SKO and ASAC will foster collaboration between civil society and local authorities, establishing a model for inclusive governance that aligns with Phnom Penh’s rapid urbanisation.

Strengthening Women’s Engagement:

CWCC will lead capacity-building initiatives that enable women’s participation in city planning and governance, fostering a gender-inclusive urban environment.



THE RESILIENT SYSTEMS OF SECONDARY CITIES AND MIGRATION DYNAMICS PROGRAMME

This project is part of the [Resilient Systems of Secondary Cities and Migration Dynamics](#) Programme supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The programme supports initiatives designed by secondary city stakeholders to provide migrants, forcibly displaced people, and host communities with equal access to quality public services, labour market integration, and economic opportunities.

It seeks to advance global thinking on how secondary cities in developing countries can manage and seize the opportunities arising from migration and displacement.

The programme operates in Asia, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, working with systems of secondary cities in Cambodia, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Tunisia, Somalia, Uganda, and Vietnam that are experiencing substantive migration and forced displacement.

It facilitates regional collaboration on urban planning and advocacy and fosters local partnerships among diverse city stakeholders and national and international actors to implement approaches that are locally relevant and work for all residents.