



Lives Changed
Communities
Transformed

Kirivong, Cambodia

Background

Kirivong is a mountainous district area in Takeo Province, south of Phnom Penh City, Cambodia, close to the Vietnam border to the east.

Agriculture and animal husbandry accounted for most of the population's income. Yet, food shortage was high due to poor agricultural techniques, climate change and a prevalence of pests. Children, especially girls, were forced to leave school to contribute to the family's income.

Education was also not prioritised, leading to low literacy rates. Children would drop out of school due to poverty, poor learning amenities and a lack of resources.

The community also did not have access to safe drinking water or proper sanitation. Open defecation was a widespread practice—encouraging the spread of diseases, occurrences of diarrhoea, typhoid, and other related illnesses.

KIRIVONG

Area Programme



Project start:
October 2009

Project end:
September 2024

27,476
Total Population

6,214
No. of Families

4,683
Girls

5,701
Boys

8,464
Women

8,628
Men

How the Journey Began

World Vision's work in Kirivong started in 2009 to improve the well-being of the most vulnerable children and families through community empowerment and transformational development approaches.

After detailed assessments on the key needs of the community, World Vision implemented key development interventions targeted at food security, education, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as child well-being and economic development.

The objective of Kirivong's intervention is to bring about sustainable development fully undertaken by the local communities working in tandem with national agencies and officials.

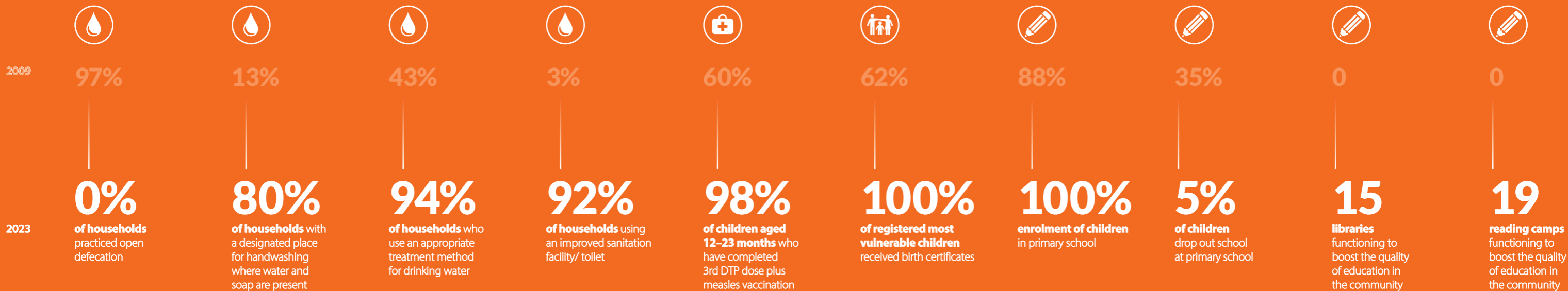


Living conditions of one of the most vulnerable families when World Vision started its work in Kirivong.



Chet, 9 years old, enjoys access to purified water produced by the community group.

BEFORE



AFTER



Nisa, 8 years old, enjoys access to clean water from the Piped Water Connection System.



Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

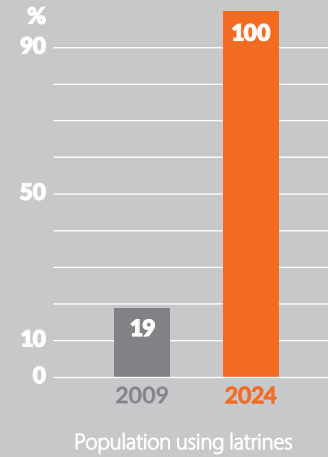
Safe drinking water sources were not easily available. Existing water pumps and wells in the community dried up easily and were unable to meet the locals' needs. This forced them to travel long distances to collect water. The lack of sanitation facilities, like latrines, and the lack of knowledge and awareness of proper hygiene practices have made open defecation a common practice.

World Vision stepped in to provide giant water storage tanks and water filters in primary schools, enabling students to have access to clean water. In collaboration with the Provincial Department of Rural Development, sanitation facilities were built for households.



Sien, 72 years old, is one of the Agricultural Cooperative leaders assisting in the connection of tubes to the Piped Water Connection System to improve households' access to clean and safe water.

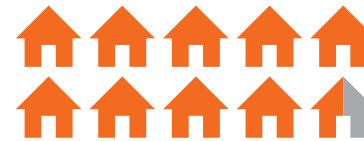
Now, every village is certified as open defecation-free.



Pheakna, 11 years old, in Grade 6, was very excited to try out the new hand washing station provided by World Vision at her school.

Key Highlights of Progress Made in WASH Facilities:

HOUSEHOLDS



94% of the households use an appropriate treatment method for **drinking water**



80% of the households have a designated place for handwashing where there is **access to clean water and soap**

EDUCATION FACILITIES



93% of the education facilities have access to basic **clean water source**





Vita, 15 years old, a youth leader with other youth group members at a life skills training activity.



Child Protection

Domestic violence, child labour, early marriage, and exploitation were commonplace. Children were left unsupervised, their rights disregarded. They were vulnerable to vices such as gambling, alcohol consumption, and drug activities.

In 2018, World Vision implemented “Celebrating Families”, to address the community’s child protection challenges, change attitudes towards domestic violence and raise awareness of the importance of creating a safe, healthy and loving environment for children. It was aimed to transform children and adolescents into agents for positive change.

Celebrating Families engages and educates families who are prone to violence, and teaches children and adolescents the necessary skills to protect themselves.

Through Community Service-Learning, World Vision also trained and empowered youth leaders to implement activities geared towards ending violence against children. Parents and local authorities were given resources to mobilise the community in response to children’s plights.



Sokneng, 42 years old, a community volunteer facilitating advocacy in order to improve the service of Commune Committee for Women and Children in child protection.



“I am very delighted to receive this knowledge on how to protect myself, the negative effects of using drugs, how to reduce domestic violence and COVID-19 prevention and protection.”

- Thavy, 19

71%

of girls and boys (aged 12-18) reports living in a **safe and protective environment** with their families and communities

84%

of adolescents are aware of the presence of **services and mechanisms to seek help** in cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence against children

77%

of the **parents** now feel that **their community is safer for their children**

87%

of adolescents now have a **stronger connection with their parent or caregiver**



Bopha, 29-year-old mother with her 11-month-old child was visited by a community health volunteer from the Village Health Support Group (VHSG) to teach her postnatal health care and the provision of nutritious food for the child after 6 months of age.



Health & Nutrition

To improve the nutritional status of children in these communities, World Vision worked with the Village Health Support Group (VHSG) to raise awareness for child nutrition, childcare, breastfeeding, pregnancy care, and immunisation practices. The group conducted regular home visits to monitor pregnant women, and coach young mothers on proper nutrition and vaccinations for their children.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) partnered mothers of children under 24 months to impart knowledge on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for their newborn babies. **64% of mothers are now breastfeeding their children due to greater awareness.**

When it came to safe child delivery, community members revealed that Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) training was not passed on to new generations of mothers and there was a lack of information and resources on how to properly conduct child delivery. World Vision implemented awareness trainings and healthcare programmes resulting in an improvement in the level of knowledge. The practice of safe deliveries continues to improve and **100% of births are now attended by skilled birth attendants.**

With the help of key community stakeholders, World Vision also established the practice of vaccinating children. The proportion of children from 12 to 23 months old that completed their **vaccinations (DPT3 and Measles) increased from 83% to 98%**. We supported the VHSG and contributed to their ability to expand their yearly engagement of children who required vaccinations to sustain the high rate of participation.



VHSG provided educational awareness on maternal child health to mothers, as well as nutritional supplementary food for baby and health care.



Borin, 38-year-old pregnant mother who was visited by a community volunteer from VHSG to be coached on antenatal care and be advised on the necessity for regular check-ups at the Health Centre.



81% of mothers had 4 or more antenatal visits while pregnant

92%

of children (0–23 months old) received at least 2 postnatal visits from a trained healthcare worker



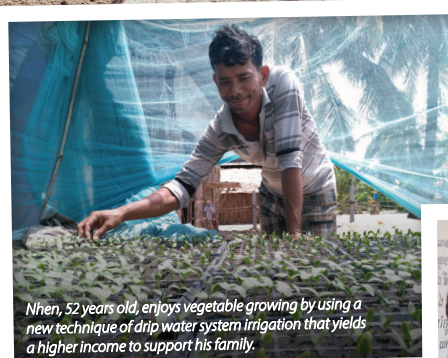
80% of children under 2 years received early initiation to breastfeeding

79%

of children (6–23 months old) received minimum acceptable diet



Farmers practised mushroom planting with training provided by Provincial Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery officer.



Nhem, 52 years old, enjoys vegetable growing by using a new technique of drip water system irrigation that yields a higher income to support his family.



Livelihood

Food shortage was one of the key challenges for Kirivong Area Programme due to improper use of both natural resources and overuse of chemical fertilisers and insecticides. These contributed to unstable rice production and therefore fluctuating prices. To save costs, the quality and quantity of food consumed were compromised, leading to malnutrition in children. Other causes of food shortage included poor agricultural techniques, climate change, and high prevalence of insects which also adversely affected agricultural productivity.

Farmers with only small rice fields were the most vulnerable. They often relied on loans and had to pay it back immediately after harvest. When rice production was low, as they often were, sales volume dropped. This led to a net loss when they had to repay their loans. In addition, rice cultivation was frequently affected by heavy rainfall, flood or drought which contributed to their livelihood difficulties.

World Vision collaborated with the District of Water Resource Office (DoWRO), and Water Management Committee (WMC) to monitor and maintain small irrigation systems as well as construct water reservoirs which are used for irrigating rice fields, home gardens, and animal raising. As a result, **398 households now enjoy more diverse food source** by growing their own vegetables and raising fish for daily food

consumption, and selling it for extra income. Additionally, **37% of poor households increased their rice yields*** from 5 to 6 tons per hectare over the period. **217 families also applied System of Rice Intensification (SRI) techniques** that taught them how to improve rice field cultivations through using seed selection and natural fertiliser.

The project involved forming the Agriculture Cooperative (AC) that was eventually registered officially by the Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDoA), and District of Agriculture Office (DoAO). This meant the AC had legal license, support and cooperation with the market to aid in selling vegetable and animal products.



"I am thankful to World Vision for strengthening the capacity of my committee. Through their support, my AC can manage and run activities smoothly, our members have been able to improve their livelihoods, and we are able to allocate budget to support more vulnerable children."

- Nhem, 67, Agricultural Cooperative (AC) Leader



87% of the poor and poorest households have **meals at least 2 times a day** all year round

97%

of children are able to eat **meat, vegetables, and fruits at least 3 times a week**

51%

of the poor and poorest households were able to **increase their household assets**



94% of households consumed more **nutritious foods**

*As part of our goal to achieve sustainable impact, a strong and stable agricultural cooperative (AC) has been established in Kirivong AP. The AC will continue to play an important role in equipping households to enhance their rice yields and strengthen their economic livelihoods over the long term.



School children enjoy reading books in the library that Word Vision supported to improve learning outcomes.



Education

Before World Vision started its intervention programmes in Kirivong, the literacy rate was at 41%. Only 60% of school-aged children were enrolled in school. In addition, there was a 20% dropout rate before Grade 9 due to poverty, poor school facilities, and the lack of teachers. Some of these children ended up in manual labour or construction work such as making charcoal, or breaking rocks among others, to help contribute to the income of their families.

The “Unlock Literacy” project that comprises the training of 5 core reading skills and remedial classes was implemented in the target schools and communities with the aim of improving the literacy rates of school students. At the end of this project module, **60 teachers successfully completed the teaching methodology which benefitted 1,381 children. 1,931 students in 135 classes also attended the remedial classes and showed improvement.**

World Vision collaborated with the Department of Education (DoE) to provide training to the School Support Committee (SSC) on how to mobilise the community resources and engage the parents/caregivers to participate in the school activities. Training was provided to the Student Council to shape their roles and responsibilities, enabling them to assist school educators to improve literacy rates.



Ya, 23 years old, former sponsored child, teaching children to read Khmer.

This intervention led to improvement of students’ literacy rates even during the COVID-19 pandemic when schools were closed. Parents understood the value of education and its positive effect on their children’s behaviour. Students involved were observed to have achieved better reading abilities after regularly attending reading camps. The current **enrolment rate of school-aged children is now at 100%.**

Under the “Unlock Literacy” project, the Community Reading Facilitators (CRFs) taught parents/caregivers how to encourage their children to read at home through the Reading Awareness Promotion (RAP) programme.

“I am very happy because my studies have improved. My mother teaches me when I am back from school, and I have a reading corner for reading at home.”

- Sreyleap, 6, studying in Grade 1



12 of 15 school libraries now meet the minimum quality standards



35 Community Reading Facilitators are equipped to facilitate literacy activities with children in Reading Camps

97%

of the trained teachers under the Unlock Literacy programme utilised the skills acquired to **teach reading**

75%

of the students reported their **school teachers are able to help** struggling students learn better

81%

of parents and caregivers have **increased knowledge on how to promote learning** for children (aged 6–11)

Impact Story: Somaly's Dream Comes True



Somaly, 21 years old, who was once a sponsored child grew up to fulfil her dream as a primary school teacher in Kirivong District.



I joined World Vision's sponsorship programme when I was in primary school. I participated in many activities where I learnt about proper hygiene and sanitation. I also participated in the children's club, and attended child rights meetings where I learnt more about my rights as a child, and gained knowledge on how to protect myself from any forms of abuse. I understood more about the sponsorship project and was able to share that with my friends and family.

I have also written letters to my sponsor. I was very happy to receive letters and gifts from my sponsor. My sponsor encouraged me to continue working hard in my studies.

I recognised that the relationship of the sponsored child with their sponsor can encourage the child to become a good child, a good student, and a good friend. **This is one of the reasons why I kept on working hard in my studies until I reached my dream to become a teacher** as I wanted to educate the next generation.

I still work closely with World Vision to help promote child rights, proper hand washing and sanitation, and personal hygiene. I also help in monitoring and reporting the health and education status of the children in my community.



I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my sponsor for always writing letters to me and their contribution to my community.

Thank you very much!

Impact Story:

May's Journey of Transformation



My family used to live in poverty. My father migrated to work as a construction worker in Phnom Penh while my mother sold her labour and worked full days, so she had no time to take care of me. Without my parents around often, I went to school irregularly because I was afraid of the teacher. I would go for walks or waste my time away instead. I was also shy to face other children because my family was very poor.



May (in blue) facilitating youth life skill sessions for other youth club members. 535 children and adolescents participated in youth life skill sessions through youth clubs in Kirivong Area Programme.



May, 16 years old, often helps his parents with household chores such as chopping firewood when his family was struggling with poverty.

In 2018, my mother heard that I was a slow learner because I attended class irregularly. She was very angry with me and scolded me. Since then, my mother advised me and accompanied me to school to meet the teacher whenever my father was back home to harvest rice from a small plot of land. Around the same time, I met a friend, Reaksmeay, who is a Christian. He was with World Vision, and invited me to learn English at a local church near my home. Reaksmeay also supported me with donated learning materials through World Vision. I enjoy going to church every Sunday to worship and study the Bible.



Since 2022, I was encouraged and motivated to participate in World Vision's work and programmes such as youth life skills and facilitation skills training so that I can work as a team with other youth club members to do social work and develop our community.



May enjoying a meal with his parents in their new house. Life has changed for the better.



Through my engagement and involvement with activities of World Vision and church, I became braver.

I also became a good communicator through working with the youth club and church members. I am now competent in facilitating and leading members to participate in sports activities and carry out our community development work. I have worked with my team of youth club members to organise Community Service Learning Projects to promote sanitation, safety, and child protection in my community. For example, the Village Cleaning, Sanitation and Hygiene awareness Campaign; the Protection Against Domestic Violence Campaign; Anti-Drug Use Campaign; as well as Gambling Awareness Campaign in collaboration with the Commune Administrative Police.



May (centre) also visited Singapore in December 2023 for World Vision Singapore's Night of Hope event, accompanied by Sopharan Ny, Operations Director from World Vision Cambodia. Both May and Sopharan's personal sharings left the audience deeply moved.

I believe and trust that God has and is transforming me with the support from Word Vision, and I especially depend on God in everything I do.

Right now, I am studying in Grade 9. I am very delighted to be involved in community development activities with World Vision. I have lovely friends to learn and share experiences with and play sports with as well. Most importantly, with the support I have gotten from my family and especially God, I am committed to completing high school and going on to university.

To all our supporters of Kirivong Area Programme:
Thank you for giving so many children like May the opportunity to dream bigger and experience life in all its fullness.



For Children. For Change. For Life.

Thank you!

**We couldn't have done it
without you!**

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