Human-Centered Impact Story at Da Commune



Mr. Houn, a fisherman from a flood-prone village in Da Commune, Cambodia, lives with his wife, children, and grandchildren. For many years, he struggled to support his family amid poverty, poor housing, and limited access to essential services. Every rainy season brought new hardship — water often rose as high as three meters, soaking their old wooden house and threatening their safety.

The family had no latrine, no clean place to relieve themselves, and no steady income. Without proper fishing equipment, Mr. Houn's income was inconsistent. They could barely afford food, let alone medicine or school fees. One of his grandchildren dropped out of school because the nearest one was too far to walk. Health problems were common; the children frequently suffered from diarrhea and stomach illnesses due to unsafe water and poor sanitation. *"Life was full of worry," he said. "I didn't know how to keep my family safe."*



In early 2024, the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), together with the village chief, assessed his family and identified them as one of the most vulnerable. Through the project, he received zinc sheets to repair the roof and build a latrine, a bicycle for his grandchild, and a small boat with fishing gear to improve his livelihood. He also participated in training sessions on personal hygiene, handwashing, water sanitation, gender-based violence, and flood preparedness.



These sessions changed more than his understanding of safety — they shifted the way he saw his role as a husband, father, and grandfather. *"We now talk about respect at home,"* he said. *"I've started teaching my children and grandchildren not just how to live, but how to live well."*

Since receiving support, Mr. Houn's daily income has increased to 20,000–30,000 riel. With a more stable livelihood, his family can now afford food, medicine, and education. Their new latrine has improved hygiene and safety. The children are healthier, and their stomach issues have greatly decreased. He actively shares what he's learned, reinforcing good health practices across generations.

Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Houn no longer feels helpless. *"I'm proud that I can provide for my family," he said. "I can see a better future for my grandchildren."*

Key Learnings and Implications for Future Programs:

- Targeted support to vulnerable households can lead to rapid and sustainable improvements in well-being.
- Simple tools like bicycles or boats can unlock opportunity when matched to household needs.
- Health and hygiene education reduces preventable disease and improves quality of life.
- Engaging local leaders ensures support reaches those most in need.