Phnom Penh
Battambang
Siem Reap
Sihanoukville
Kampot

May 04 – 19. 2019





AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CAMBODIA: THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN HOUSING POST-1980

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Anna Lazenby

HOMES | SERVICES | POLICY | TENURE | GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
COMMUNITY | IDENTITY | OPPORTUNITY

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0/ INTRODUCTION

0.1 Abstract

This research project was made possible through an independent research grant provided by the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture. The research's purpose was to understand the role and contributions of non-governmental organizations* in providing housing and services in Cambodia.

To understand NGOs' roles, the study was designed to incorporate two weeks in Cambodia asking NGOs firsthand. Supplemental to interviews, the study examined national housing trends and statistics as well as documentation and academic studies relating to other NGOs' contributions.

As a result, the study explained the major role NGOs play in building housing and providing services, influencing national housing policy, influencing national and local land policy, responding to community and identity, and providing opportunity for Khmer people. The study found Cambodia's political climate and restructuring post-civil war in the 1980s to be integral to issues of housing, leading NGOs to step up in order to fill a gap in housing provision for low-income Khmer people.

The study found that foreign investment and private development tended to dominate market rate housing, serving both foreigners and higher income Khmer people. With minimal government-provided or subsidized housing, NGOs predominantly occupied the low-income housing sphere, addressing the gaps in national and private housing investment and providing shelter and services for those living below the globally recognized poverty line. All NGOs interviewed agreed that their role was to be both long-term and necessary for the current and future Cambodian housing conditions.

*Some persons and organizations names have been changed to remain anonymous.

0.2 Entry to the Research Problem

Natalie Boverman and Anna Lazenby have both worked at non-governmental housing organizations and became interested in affordable housing in Cambodia. In the Spring of 2019, Lazenby worked in government relations at Habitat for Humanity International in Washington, D.C., which supports various branches, including HFH Cambodia. This prompted interests in land tenure and housing affordability, and influenced her decision to choose Cambodia for a research grant application at the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture. HFH provided an important pathway into a baseline knowledge of statistics and housing conditions in Cambodia. Having previously spent two months in Battambang, Cambodia working for a non-profit architecture studio and being similarly passionate about housing policy, Boverman joined Lazenby in the project.

Leveraging their experiences in architecture, interior design, housing advocacy, government relations, and international work, Lazenby and Boverman were eager to enter the research problem of affordable housing in Cambodia. Cambodia has a unique housing crisis and is home to some of the most active NGOs focused on housing and policy. In honing in on the guiding question, it became clear that understanding the role government and non-governmental agencies play in housing post-civil war is key to understanding the state of housing affordability. Preliminary research revealed many personal accounts of families receiving homes and the joy it brought them. This type of testimony is invaluable, but it does not explain much about the current situation.

The available research and publications on affordable housing in Cambodia lacked personal accounts of Khmer people critically analyzing their own situations. The existing research lacked explanations from grassroots NGOs regarding the depth of their need and the extent of their work in people's lives. Certain questions arose— who is building those homes, and why, and what is behind those life changing stories? While the research was funded by the research grant, the grant was open-ended and unsupervised, providing the opportunity to create a loose framework under which to operate, and the flexibility to adapt the research as it unfolded. The research is not meant to be conclusive. Rather, it serves as a platform and a jumping off point for those working in Cambodia, in housing, or at NGOs.

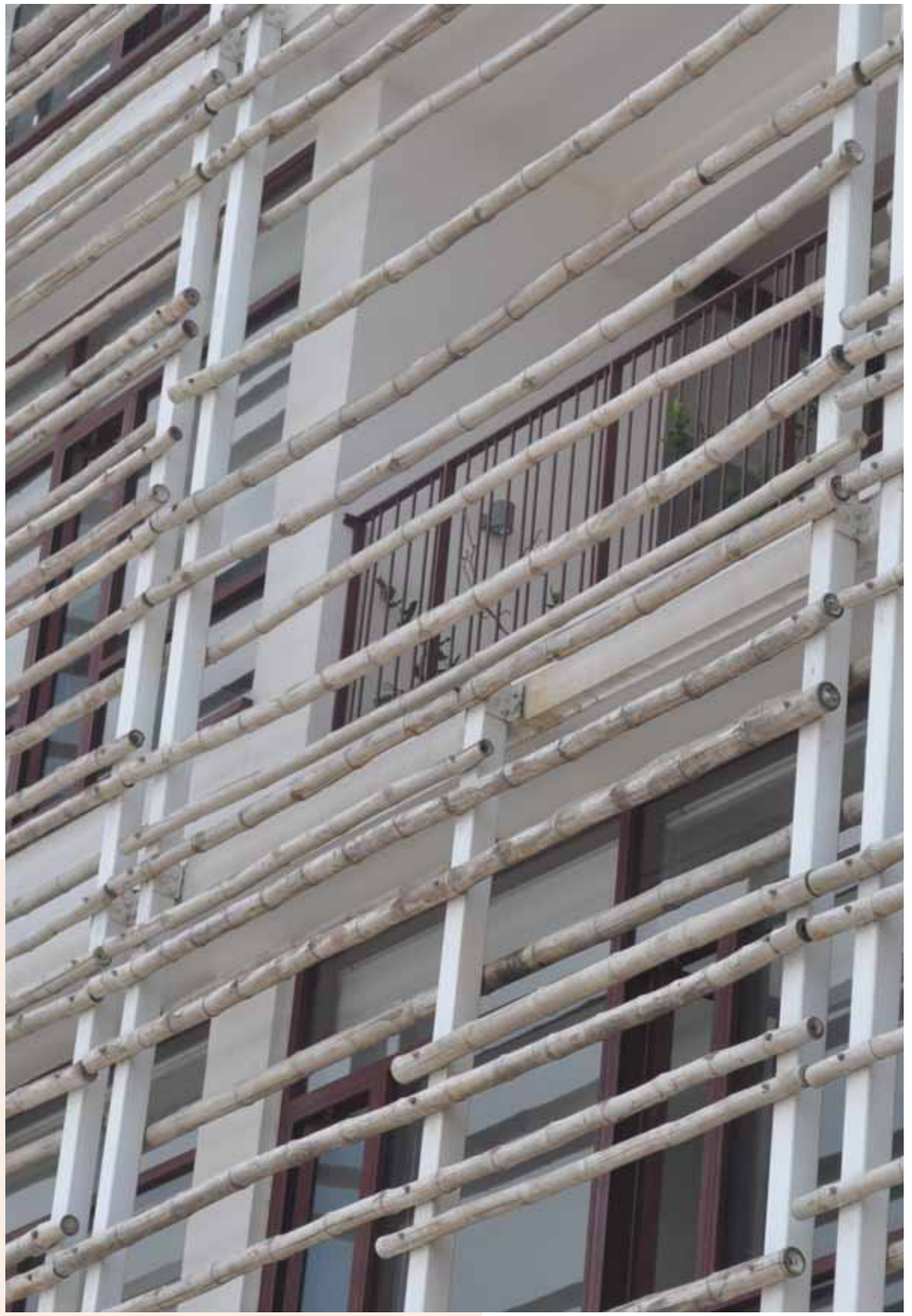
The results are formatted into the following four chapters:

1 / Affordable Housing + Services
Understanding the Built Environment

2 / Housing, Land Tenure, and Government Relations
Understanding Policy

3/ Community + Identity
Understanding Culture

4 / Opportunity
Looking at the Future



Bamboo Screen on the facade of the Neeson Cripps Academy by Cookfox Architects.
Neeson Cripps Academy is run by Cambodia Children's Fund, an NGO based in Phnom Penh.

0.3 Guiding Question

In circumstances that a government cannot or does not provide adequate housing, other entities can take up the responsibility to provide housing and related services, especially to lower-income populations lacking access to it. In Cambodia's case, **what role have non-governmental organizations adopted as housing providers?**

0.4 Existing Conditions

Brief History of Cambodia

Originating from Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms through the 8th century, and through the famous age of Angkor from the 9th to 15th century, the Khmer empire at one point held power over large territories in Southeast Asia. Following centuries of declining power, Cambodia became a French colony in 1863. Throughout the 20th century Cambodia struggled for independence, including Japanese occupation during World War II. Cambodia eventually gained independence from France in 1953 with Prince Norodom Sihanouk as King, but following numerous political coups the country soon entered into years of unrest steeped in US Vietnamese conflict, leading to civil war and guerrilla warfare.

Lasting Impact of the Khmer Rouge

Warring Cambodian parties, siding differently with Vietnamese factions in the 1970s, entered the Vietnam War, a proxy war of the global Cold War of the US and Soviet Union. In the midst of this conflict, the communist and guerrilla Khmer Rouge gained power and in April of 1975 established a government overthrowing the previous government.

In short, the Khmer Rouge and the United States both opposed the Viet Cong, and the common enemy led the United States to back the Khmer Rouge, which was an enabling factor in the power the coup exerted over the country. The Khmer Rouge forcibly evacuated Khmer cities and sent residents to the countryside to participate in collective farming- a violent attempt to restructure social classes -until 1979. A conservative estimate of 1.5 million Khmer people were brutally murdered, somewhere between 13-30% of the country's population at the time (Sullivan, M., 2015), with a specific target of the educated and professional class (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). To memorialize this recent tragedy, former sites controlled by the Khmer Rouge have been converted to educational tools for both Cambodians and foreigners. The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, a former Khmer Rouge detention and torture facility known as S-21, is pictured on the following page. The prison operated from the evacuation of Phnom Penh in 1975 to the end of the regime in 1979, when Vietnamese forces took over governance of the country.

On a global stage, the destruction Cambodia experienced internally from the Khmer Rouge reign was given little media coverage, recovery funding from the international community, or justice through conviction of the Khmer Rouge officials responsible for killing between 13-30% of the population (Morris, B. S., 2015). The US-Vietnam conflict presented the conditions which afforded the Khmer Rouge the opportunity to seize control and ultimately led to the Cambodian genocide. In terms of housing, Cambodia still suffers from the lasting impacts: mass displacement, land tenure insecurity, damage to the housing sector, and lack of government-supported housing for low-income populations.

Image of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, formerly a Khmer Rouge detention center (S-21) controlled by Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

Post-War, Pre-Peace

When the Vietnamese took control of Phnom Penh in 1979, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge fled to the border region adjacent to Thailand and the People's Republic of Kampuchea was established. While many elements of Cambodian society returned, peace did not settle. The pro-Vietnamese Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party won parliamentary elections, and the international community refused to recognize the new government. Hun Sen became prime minister under the People's Republic of Kampuchea in 1985 and the country remained ridden with guerrilla warfare, with thousands becoming refugees.

In 1989, Vietnamese troops withdrew and Hun Sen renamed the country the State of Cambodia and re-established Buddhism as the state religion. In 1991, a peace agreement was signed in Paris and the UN began transitional authority in Cambodia, and Norodum Sihanouk became head of state. In the following years amidst dispute between Sihanouk and Hun Sen, the monarchy was restored with Sihanouk returning as King and the country renamed Kingdom of Cambodia. Hun Sen staged a coup to regain government control in 1997, and in 1998 Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party won elections and Hun Sen regained title as prime minister. The Cambodian People's Party, amidst much pressure and opposition from the Cambodia National Rescue Party, remains the ruling party (BBC, 2018, July 20).

Personal Account:
The Lasting Impacts of Conflict

Ponleak Makara, Project Manager for a missional organization and university, explained the impact of war in the country, in housing, and in his own life.

Makara was able to share about and identify with the impact the genocide had on the country as his own family members experienced the regime. His words were poignant in describing the return from war, "...when we got back from war, what people were longing for was...To rebuild their life. [We] came back empty handed." In some situations, people lost all possessions and contact with family members.

After the genocide ended, Makara suggested that most people attempted to "go back to where they were before." With the lack of communication, returning home was some families' only hope for reunion. However, returning to one's home did not always ensure reunion with family nor a reclamation of property, land, or a family's home. While Makara shared that many people were honest with one another, "some people [would] go back and someone already took over the place." Regardless, returning home was often the only hope, especially if family members remained missing, "[Families] made the assumption they would go back to where they stay, waiting and waiting."

Makara suggested a decline in the desire for the craft of architecture. Instead, people needed immediate shelter, "It's not about the beauty, as long as they have shelter. No more educated architecture people, unless they fled. They don't think about beauty and function, but cost." As the violence of the late 1970s was directed towards educated people in Cambodia, the 1980s saw a lack of educated architects whether they were killed or had fled to safety. The desire for and profession of design was seen as superfluous and nearly lost.

As the housing market develops, Makara described higher inequality in housing, reflecting a global trend (Schneider, B., Florida , R., & CityLab, 2018). There is a "big gap between rich and poor [with] very few middle class." The rate of change tends to be too quick for those without opportunity to move up to even stay in Cambodia. "The income stays the same; the cost of living is higher. [Some are] forced to leave their homeland."

Despite efforts, "There is no justice here. When I grow up, I see nothing change." However, Makara thought change could happen at a human scale. In Battambang, he sees the result of indifference. He hopes, at this scale, he can be a small part of a big change. But the human scale can be equally as disheartening for someone like Makara. He's traveled abroad and even worked in the US and admits that it is hard for Cambodians to get the opportunities they desire, "Rejection is so painful; being Cambodian is really hard."

"SOME PEOPLE [WOULD] GO BACK AND SOMEONE ALREADY TOOK OVER THE PLACE... [FAMILIES] MADE THE ASSUMPTION THEY WOULD GO BACK TO WHERE THEY STAY, WAITING AND WAITING.

Ponleak Makara

Ponleak Makara takes Lazenby and Boverman to rural Battambang where he grew up.

“THERE IS NO JUSTICE HERE.
WHEN I GROW UP, I SEE NOTHING CHANGE.

REJECTION IS PAINFUL.
BEING CAMBODIAN IS REALLY HARD.”

Ponleak Makara
Missional Organization, Project Manager

0.5 Literature Review

Architecture in Development.
“Critical Design Practice: Reshape Cambodia’s Urban Design in Development.”
- Contains helpful diagrams for modeling research.

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights.
“Community Finance Systems in Cambodia.”
- Describes Cambodia’s history of providing financial assistance to low-income communities.

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights.
“Land Tenure Security, Housing Rights and Evictions.”
- Resource for how Asian Coalition for Housing Rights has dealt with slum-upgrading and evictions.
- Inspirational video: The way to end slums.

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights.
“Understanding Asian Cities: A Synthesis on the Findings from Eight Case Study Cities”.
- Describes Asian urban centers, using Phnom Penh as an example.

Brookings Institution.*
“Economic history of industrialization in Cambodia.”
- Documents the evolution of Cambodia’s economy post-civil war.

Habitat for Humanity. 2018 Annual Report.
- High-level strategy and categorization of existing work.

Habitat for Humanity. Solid Ground Campaign.
- High-level strategy for land rights in Cambodia.

International Institute for Environment and Development.
“The role of community architects in upgrading; reflecting on the experience in Asia”.
- Discusses the importance of community mapping. Suggests reasons why architects can claim a horizontal relationship in community building.

International Institute for Environment and Development.
“Seeing a disaster as an opportunity – harnessing the energy of disaster survivors for change.”
- Discusses relief for tragic disasters, which can be applied to Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge.

Open Development Cambodia.
- High level statistics.

UNICEF.
Information by Country.
- High level statistics.

University College of London.
“Housing in Cambodia: By the People for the People.”
- Suggests a transition from the Khmer Rouge to NGOs involved in providing a right to housing.

University College of London.
“Transformation in a Time of Transition: Engaging with People-driven Upgrading Strategies in Cambodia.”
- 15 day trip in collaboration with: Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Community Development Fund, and the Community Architects Network.

World Bank.
“Social Land Concession [SLC]: Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development [LASED].”
- Brief PowerPoint presentation explaining land development activities.

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Within Report

Brookings Institution.
“Nine Rules for Better Housing Policy.”

Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights.
“On Stony Ground: A Look into Social Land Concessions.”

CityLab.
“The Global Housing Crisis.”

Encyclopedia Britannica.
“Khmer Rouge.”

Habitat for Humanity.
“Solid Ground Campaign.”

Khmer Times.
“Land titles granted to nearly 800 families.”

Kingdom of Cambodia.
“National Strategic Development Plan.”

Open Development Cambodia.
Special Economic Zones.

Phnom Penh Post.
“Scepticism over social land grants.”

Refworld.
“Cambodia: Land Law of 1992.”

UCLA Newsroom.
“UCLA demographer produces best estimate yet of Cambodia’s death toll under Pol Pot.”

United Nations: Office of the High Commissioner, Cambodia.
National Housing Policy Creation.

World Bank.
“Land Law Translation.”

World Bank.
“Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity.”

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0.6 The Methodology

Interviewing NGOs in Cambodia

After identifying the local NGOs' perspectives as a crucial aspect of understanding housing's context, the study moved forward using an interpretive approach. This highlights human connection in problem solving and invites emotion into the research. Most interviews were organized prior to the trip to Cambodia. Interviews contained a similar set of questions to compare the work of the NGOs. Additional questions examined the strengths of each NGO in more detail.

The interview outline included a personal biography of the staff member(s) interviewed and standardized intro questions about the NGO. These gauged the connections, funding, demographics, and engagement with the government of the NGO. Questions also gauged each interviewee's personal perspective on the role of NGOs.

The specific questions for each NGO focused on project details, specific partnerships, problems, and goals of that NGO.

The questions and responses were then sorted into the following topical categories: affordable homes and services, policy and government relations, community and identity, and opportunity.

List of Non-Governmental Organizations

1/ Habitat for Humanity Cambodia (HFH)
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

2/ Anonymous Cafe
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

3/ Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF)
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

4/ Habitat for Humanity Cambodia (HFH)
Battambang, Cambodia

5/ Anonymous Mission-oriented Organization
Battambang, Cambodia

6/ Anonymous University
Battambang, Cambodia

7/ The Starfish Project
Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Map of non-governmental organizations visited.

Interviewees*

*Some interviewees' names and organizations have been changed for anonymity.

Chhaya (Khean)
Habitat for Humanity Cambodia
National Program Manager

Arunny (Kravann)
Starfish Cafe
Employee

Hoy Leanghoin (Hoin)
Cambodian Children's Fund
Community Outreach Manager

Ponleak (Makara)
Missional Organization and University
Project Manager

Samay (Bona)
Habitat for Humanity Cambodia
Construction Supervisor

Vanna (Narith)
Habitat for Humanity Cambodia
Construction Assistant

Chan (Sopath)
Habitat for Humanity Cambodia
Volunteer Engagement Manager

Nhean (Vanna)
Cafe outside of Phnom Penh
Owner

Sous Vannoeun
Habitat for Humanity Cambodia
Battambang Area Manager

Anticipated Limitations

One limitation of researching the role of NGOs in housing through interviewing is the sample size. The study took place from May 4 - May 19, 2019, a total of 15 days.

In just over two weeks, only a handful of organizations working in housing were interviewed. Due to time constraints only a select number of cities were visited in Cambodia, and not every organization aiding in the housing affordability crisis was identified.

Further, because the research method involved traveling to Cambodia for a short amount of time for in-person interviews, the model of research is not the most easily replicated. However, the sample size serves to highlight people and stories at a personal level in a qualitative way that connects faces to existing numbers and statistics.

Another limitation of the research method was the difficulty in isolating housing from intersectional issues, and the study recognizes the difficulty in studying housing as its own entity.

View from a tuk tuk.

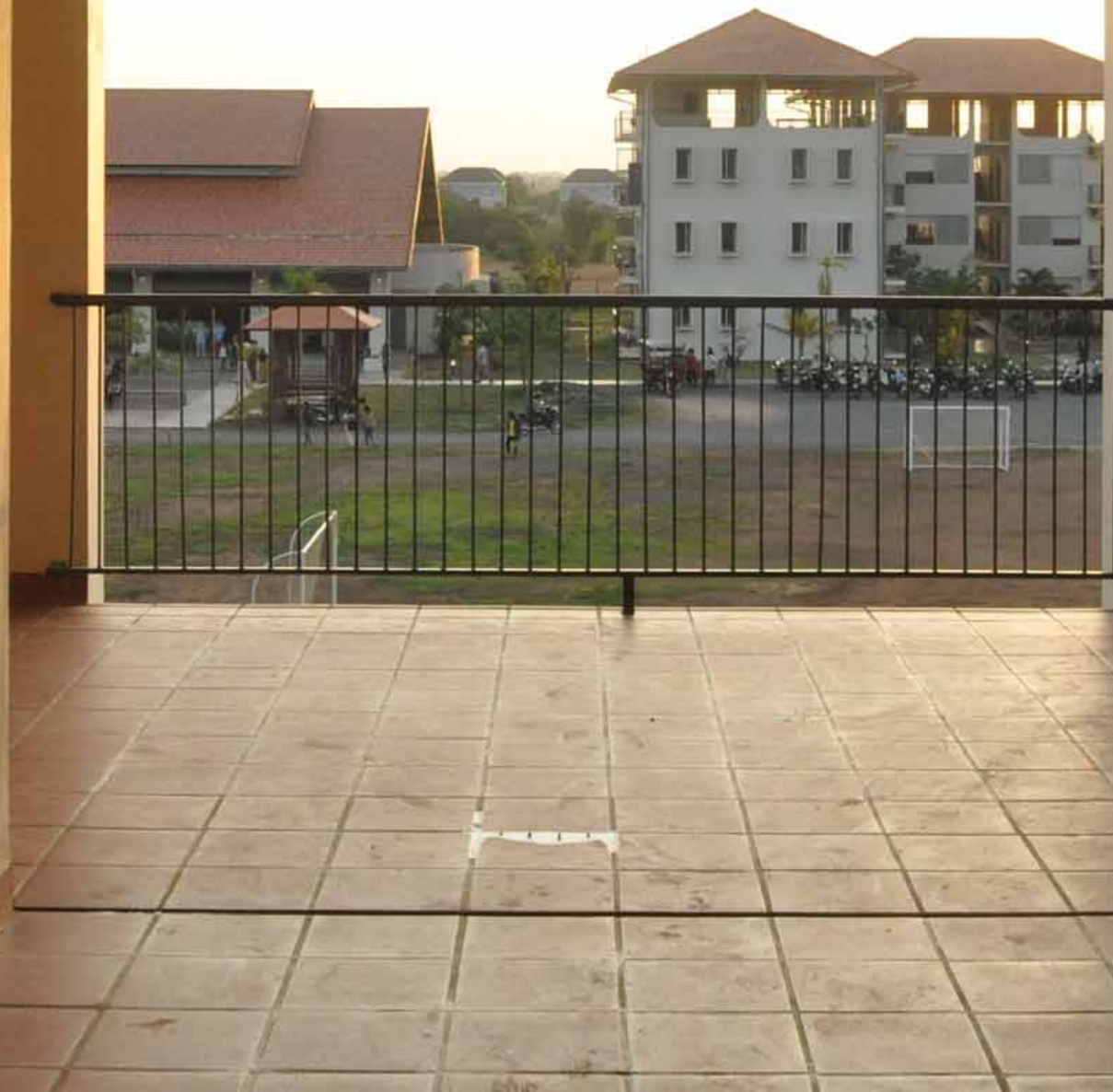
0.7 Results

In the two weeks of visiting Cambodia, interviews were conducted in three cities: Phnom Penh, Battambang, and Sihanoukville. Other observations and information were gathered in three additional cities: Siem Reap, Koh Rong Samloem, and Kampot. These included visiting eco-tourism destinations, many of which were tied to organizations that work in community development. The results are reconstructed in the following categories: affordable homes and services, policy and government relations, community and identity, and opportunity.

The study highlights the leading role NGOs take in low-income housing development in Cambodia. The complexity of providing housing is highlighted, as many low-income housing providers offer homes as a means to other goals, such as family stability, higher levels of education, and job security. Therefore, while the study aims to highlight the efforts in housing affordability, it is understood that the provision of adequate housing alone does not complete the goals of non-governmental organizations nor does it fully capture their roles.

In addition to policy and homes, NGOs recognize the need for more than a roof over someone's head. NGOs play a role in cultivating an identity that is uniquely Cambodian and understanding what brings people together. Finally, they supplement living conditions with opportunities for growth— from personal growth to growing food and supporting entrepreneurship to communal maintenance.

The results are a story; they offer qualitative supplement to other publications involved in researching the intersection of post-war crises and low-income housing access in Cambodia. The story offers personal connections that highlight the importance of qualitative research by sharing the people and projects that represent the tremendous burden that non-governmental organizations in housing face every day in Cambodia. In addition to these qualitative results, this report includes quantitative information on policy and the built environment, as is necessary to put the stories in context. Finally, the results provide avenues to further study entities from housing in Cambodia to global issues and trends; this scope reaches far beyond housing.



The university campus.

1/ AFFORDABLE HOMES + SERVICES

“Most of the people that I experience with them, they want to have a safe place to stay. Safe home, safe place to stay, safe community”

Hoy Leanghoin Cambodian Children’s Fund, Community Outreach Manager

A tangible part of housing affordability and the role of NGOs in Cambodia is the housing itself. This chapter reviews the housing typologies as a background for understanding housing in Cambodia and discusses the strategies and services that NGOs are implementing to provide physical spaces for Cambodians to call home.

While NGOs are rigorously working towards the provision of adequate affordable housing, it is important to take into account the reasons homes are becoming unaffordable. In addition, Cambodia has distinct housing typologies through which one can analyze the growth and change of the population. The design and materiality of these housing typologies also serve as a tool to understand which resources are becoming (un)available, which styles are changing in the market, and what new innovative technologies are able to help the housing market develop.

While the following chapters discuss various aspects of housing affordability, this chapter is focused on the available physical housing stock.

1.1 The Housing Dilemma

The housing market in Cambodia observed in this report is the product of a layered history, national development, and foreign investment. In order to consider the work that NGOs are doing to better the affordability of housing, it is imperative to further evaluate the factors of unaffordability.

War + Genocide

As Cambodians attempted to return to what civilization, culture, and life was left after years of war, they came back home to empty spaces with basic priorities for shelter and safety. Problems arose from the devastation, such as damaged homes, a deficit of professional practitioners in the building industry, and massive amounts of forced displacement. In addition, as almost all records of land titles were destroyed in the war, people were lacked ability to prove ownership over the land they formally occupied and owned. Please refer to Section 0.4 for more information on the lasting impact and a personal account of rebuilding after war and genocide.

Rapid Development + Displacement

With the incredible growth Cambodia is seeing in the expansion of its tourism, garment, and construction industries, the rate of development, too, is rapidly increasing. Both national and global investment in those industries led to rapid displacement and poor development practices.

Amidst rapid development, some level of displacement is to be expected under a market rate economy. Two main types of displacement that were observed in the research of this report: forced displacement and incentive displacement. While forced displacement most often occurs from international developers that have made deals with local or federal authorities, there is a growing precedent for incentive displacement where developers offer incentives to families living on or adjacent to their site to move to a new location. While forced displacement can leave families homeless, incentive displacement can leave families with a sum to build or transfer their homes to new plots.

Forced displacement is often seen by land grabbing, which can be the seizure of agricultural land by larger entities, often illegally in Cambodia, according to Makara.

Ponleak Makara, Project Manager for a missional organization and university, pointed out current problems with land grabbing, “You don’t have any proof, any paper. Again, it’s all about people in power. It’s so wrong. In Sihanoukville, 70 families cleared out their houses. They protest. They arrested those people.” In a country like Cambodia where land titles are not common, most families are left incredibly vulnerable to forced displacement.

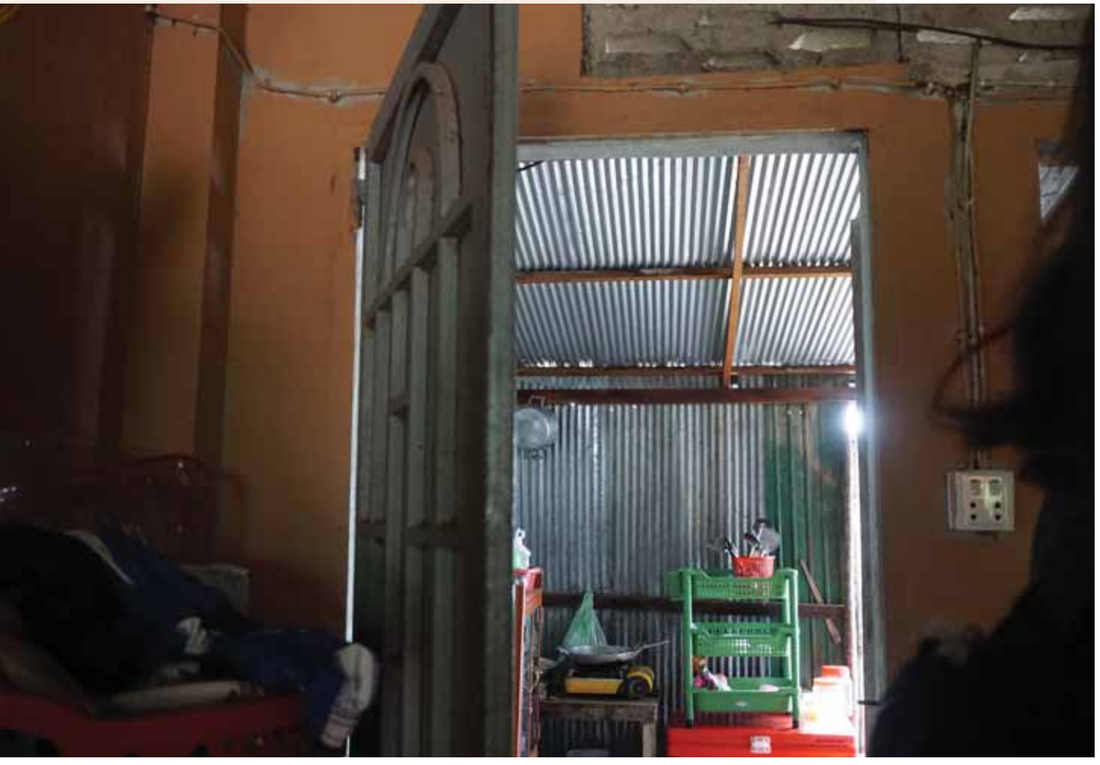
Incentive displacement is also an increasingly prevalent issue in Cambodia. Chan Sopath, Volunteer and Youth Engagement Manager with Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia, explained that many residents of informal settlements adjacent to the city are being offered incentives to move. One such community is settled on top of the old railroad yards on the western edge of Battambang. “A Khmer private project bought property and don’t want slums next to their property so they are negotiating, around $10,000 USD, to move families to a different location.

A few members of a family and one woman negotiated and took it [the deal] so she moved two weeks ago and the new home was going to cost her $10,000 so the private company paid her for it. She was really happy.” These situations are handled on a case-by-case basis, as families decide if they would like to negotiate with or dispute the developers. One suggestion that HFH makes to these communities is to band together in order to negotiate for a large plot of land so that they can all move together. This supports HFH’s belief that successful housing includes community development, and that dispersion of communities is a large issue of displacement.

The majority of the displacement is occurring due to gentrification cause by rapid development on the outskirts of major Khmer cities. Outside of Phnom Penh in the Kandal area, Nhean Vanna, owner of A cafe outside Phnom Penh and journalism professor at Pannasastra University Cambodia and Royal University of Phnom Penh, talked about the property he purchased: "[It's] not the outskirts anymore; prices are doubled since I bought this property one year and a half ago." Across from Vanna's cafe on both streets are new apartment developments, some still under construction and many completed but vacant.Makara talked about similar growth in Battambang. Growing up in a village outside of Battambang, he noted that since he has moved into the city he has watched development grow swiftly: "As I came to town 13-15 yrs ago, living in town, I noticed the construction started slowly. The last 5-7 years it's growing rapidly... most are apartments." It is crucial to understand the different types of development happening in the different regions of the country.Makara notes that while in Battambang the majority of development is driven by Khmer people as the local economy grows, development in the capital and Special Economic Zones is often foreign with a majority being Chinese investments.

Ly also commented on the construction and quality of many apartment developments, and on the development of building codes in Cambodia,

A home outside of Phnom Penh built by Habitat for Humanity.



They make it affordable for more people in order to build a house. You have to have a permit, but when you have approval, there is no inspection. Not good regulation of the code. Right now, we're not there yet." When asked about the impact of implementing a rigorous building code and inspection process, he feared that it would cause expenses to rise, "I would say its very more expensive. Labor costs rise up with expenses. With this scale, they build from experience, not code." The lack of code allows developments to be built fast and cheap, making it affordable for the developer but rarely affordable or safe for tenants.

In addition to rapid development and displacement, there are very few resources available to those in need of extra assistance. according to Habitat for Humanity Cambodia interviews. Samay Bona, Construction Supervisor from HFH Cambodia, shared that there are "no shelters or anything, people with absolutely no home can seek refuge on other homes, or seek refuge with monks," stating that there are "more NGOs with shelters for children, but not so much for adults."

Construction site in Sihanoukville.

Climate Change + Unsustainable Practices

As Cambodia continues to develop and the climate continues to change, the country faces significant challenges in access to and management of clean water. Vanna Narith, a trained architectural designer and Construction Assistant at HFH, shared that "this year the Ministry of Water declared a drought; even the city is running out of water." One thing climate change has caused is drastically unpredictable and unusual weather patterns, so while Cambodia remains in drought, there are large concerns for water management in terms of the infrastructure that the government is changing. As with Boeung Kak lake, discussed in a case study at the end of this chapter, 15 of the 25 largest lakes and canals in the country's capital have been filled in with sand or mud to make way for developments since 1997 (Yon, S., & Hoekstra, A., 2019) causing major issues with flooding and affecting natural habitats. During Cambodia's rainy season the country is often hit with daily torrential downpours; with the loss of these lakes, there is a huge increase in the risk of severe flooding.

In addition to changes in infrastructure and climate, the shifts in housing typologies are also creating unsustainable practices. Narith discussed the new shophouse developments being built on the outskirts of Phnom Penh: "Row houses are very popular. They are cheaper construction, but bad for environment because poor ventilation so tons of energy, and also poor lighting so more electricity." Narith's comment on poor natural lighting also creates poor interior environments that drastically impact mental health. "The builders, they don't think about ventilation, or saving power and stuff like that, they just care how much they get with that space." Section 1.3 discusses how NGOs have used specific materials to address sustainability in Cambodia.

Utilities + Access to Resources

For both individuals and organizations, there is a strong lack of access to basic utilities. Makara stated that just three and a half years ago there was no water or electricity yet accessible for the the university campus, just 1.5 miles away from the city center of Battambang. There was, however, one small pipe, just large enough to tap in order to get construction going on the campus. "The process is we had to request from the water development department, but they say no... Gave us a quote for the pipes, and whatever

the price, we have no choice... Costs about 8,000 dollars," saysMakara. Chhaya Khean, National Program Manager for HFH Cambodia, stressed the same point, that the water supply is extremely limited across the country, even in seemingly more developed cities such as Siem Reap: "Siem Reap is city for tourists, the water is not enough... Each big hotel has their own big pump, the [city's] running water is very little, 20%. Very little running water." It is common for larger companies to be able to afford proper water infrastructure while the public is provided very little access.

The electrical utilities proved to be similarly difficult for the campus; Ly explained that there was one small line running, but not enough for the campus. They requested a quote from the authorities, and again there was no way to get a second opinion or cost validation, so they were forced to pay whatever was quoted. The whole country is short on electricity. Occasionally, the lights go out during work-day meetings, and this is typical; the city shuts off different parts of the electrical grid for up to 6+ hours due to a lack of electricity. Meetings are often moved to nearby coffee shops that run on generators, if the organization is able to afford it. Sous Vannoeun, Battambang Area Manager for HFH Cambodia, explained that "Most electricity in Cambodia is borrowed from neighboring countries [Vietnam, Laos, Thailand] though there are hydraulics and the government is building more dams in the Mekong but a lot of environmentalists and people are concerned about the fish and what the dams will do to the ecological life."

The World Bank reported in 2018 that while 97.6% of Cambodians have access to at least one source of electricity, 71.5% on the grid and 26.1% from solar home systems and rechargeable batteries, the electricity is highly unreliable. Unpredictable power shortages affect 69.3% of grid-connected households, and only 13% Cambodians have access to 23 hours a day of adequate, quality, affordable, and safe electricity (Dave, R., Keller, S. Koo, B., Fleurantin, G., Portale, E. Rysankova, D., 2018). Please refer to Section 1.3 for information on how NGOs like HFH offer alternative energy sources, like solar power, in their construction projects.

"CLOSE TO THREE AND A HALF YEARS AGO, THERE WAS NO WATER OR ELECTRICITY [2.5 KM FROM THE CITY CENTER] YET... BUT THERE WAS A SMALL ONE [PIPE], BIG ENOUGH TO GET CONSTRUCTION GOING"

Ponleak Makara Project Manager, missional organization

1.2 Cambodian Typologies

While undergoing vast transformation, distinct housing typologies can be identified in the Cambodian housing market. There are numerous adaptations of each, but nine main typologies were discovered and investigated in this report: villas, inner-city shophouses, shophouse developments, apartment developments, apartment buildings, small scale townhomes, traditional Khmer homes, village settlements, and inner-city informal settlements. NGOs currently work most often in on a few of these typologies, such as small scale townhomes and variations of traditional Khmer homes. This chapter concludes with three case studies that give examples of these typologies being built by NGOs. While NGOs build mainly smaller scaled homes, Khmer and foreign investors continue to develop the more dense typologies of shophouse and apartment developments. This section briefly outlines each typology. Each typology varies greatly and all statements made per typology are generalizations, and are therefore not conclusive.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

villas

1–4 story

inner-city
outskirts
private
detached
often gated
air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity
parking

inner-city shophouses

1–4 story

inner-city
air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity
(+) parking

shophouse developments

1–4 story

outskirts
groundfloor shop/
  parking
air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity

apartment developments

1–6 story

outskirts
(+) gated
(+) parking
air con
full plumbing
full electricity

apartment buildings

1–20 story

inner-city
(+) air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

small scale townhomes

1–2 story

outskirts
basic plumbing
basic electricity

traditional Khmer homes

1–2 story

outskirts
village
traditional construction
(+) basic electricity
(+) basic plumbing
parking

village settlements

1 story

village
traditional construction
handmade + scrap
  materials
(+) basic electricity
(+) basic plumbing

inner-city informal settlements

1 story

inner-city
outskirts
makeshift
scrap material

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

1

villas

1–4 story

inner-city
outskirts
private
detached
often gated
air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity
parking

Seen most often in and right outside larger cities, villas are a common housing typology for the upper class in Cambodia. These homes are seen as luxurious and private. While many of these villas are situated within quiet neighborhoods of the city, such as the image to the left, villas are also often seen in smaller towns on the outskirts of the city where property is more available.

Most villas are gated on the front side, with a fully enclosed fence around the property. While yard and property are very limited for villas in the city, those situated on the outskirts often have more generous land plots.

"PEOPLE WITH MONEY BUY THEIR OWN HOUSE, PRIVATE HOUSE.... MIDDLE CLASS IN TOWN WITH A COURTYARD. THEY DON'T LIKE TO LIVE IN APARTMENT. THEY TELL THE BUILDERS WHAT THEY WANT.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF RICH PEOPLE, THE BIGGER IS TO SHOW OFF. SHOW OFF WEALTH, NOT EFFICIENCY,"

Ponleak Makara Project Manager, missional organization

Within Khmer cities, the shophouse is a major housing typology that includes housing on the top floors and commercial shops on the ground floor. A Khmer-style shophouse is generally four meters wide by sixteen meters long. While original shophouses in Phnom Penh were often isolated houses, during the 1930s shophouses began to share walls, shifting the typology to shared walls and courtyards. This was due to the development of concrete structures, cultural influences, and massive increases in urban populations, (Yam, S., & Ryeung Ju, S. 2016).

The entrance is typically in the front or back of the apartment and the walls on either side often have no windows. However, one side, most often the rear side, of each unit typically opens to a shared courtyard, often containing a shared staircase.

2

inner-city shophouses

2–5 story

inner-city
air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity
(+) parking

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

3

shophouse developments

Shophouse developments are relatively new to Cambodia. While inner-city shophouses have long been an integral part of Khmer society, shophouse developments were developed as a new typology and are typically found on the expanding outskirts of the city.

While inner-city shophouses typically have some differentiation from their neighboring units in color or architectural details, shophouse developments that house hundreds of families are often largely homogeneous in design.

"ROW HOUSES ARE VERY POPULAR. THEY ARE CHEAPER CONSTRUCTION, BUT BAD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT BECAUSE POOR VENTILATION SO TONS OF ENERGY ALSO POOR LIGHTING SO MORE ELECTRICITY"

Vanna Narith Construction Assistant, Habitat for Humanity

1–4 story

outskirts
groundfloor shop/parking
air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

1–6 story

outskirts
(+) gated
(+) parking
air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity

4

apartment developments

Apartment developments are less common than shophouse developments as Khmer culture still values having personal businesses attached to one's living space. However, as Cambodia's economy develops and more people are working in the city, individual ground floor commercial spaces are becoming less prevalent. Therefore, apartment developments are increasing in popularity.

These developments still have commercial spaces on the first floor, but may have separate ownership. The interior spaces are typically divorced from the living quarters, unlike shophouses where they are often connected on the interior.

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

"THE APARTMENT IS BEING BUILT NOT GOOD QUALITY. THEY MAKE IT AFFORDABLE FOR MORE PEOPLE. BATTAMBANG PEOPLE ARE TENDING TO BUY APARTMENTS."

Ponleak Makara Project Manager, missional organization

5 *apartment buildings*

1–20 story

inner-city
(+) air conditioning
full plumbing
full electricity

One-off apartment buildings typically live closer to the city center of dense urban areas in Cambodia, such as Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville.

Phnom Penh is home to many of these apartment buildings, many of which were constructed in the 1960s as Khmer architecture and construction grew in cultural relevance. While many of these apartment buildings still house the working class in the city, new apartment buildings are constantly under construction to house the burgeoning middle and upper class, as well as foreigners.

"THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE BUILDERS, THEY DON'T THINK ABOUT VENTILATION (OR) SAVING POWER AND STUFF LIKE THAT. HOW MUCH THEY GET WITH THAT SPACE"

Ponleak Makara Project Manager, missional organization

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

6 *small scale townhomes*

1–2 story

outskirts
basic plumbing
basic electricity

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

Seen typically in small groups or single strips, small scale townhomes are small family units that share side walls. When a lower height is maintained, natural ventilation is made possible through openings in the roof structure and front and back walls. By sharing side walls, these small units are able to conserve energy and also save construction materials.

Typically, each unit has slight variation in finish or color. Because these small scale townhomes allow for material and energy conservation and also individuality, NGOs like Habitat for Humanity have used this typology to construct a large number of homes at a time, such as the ones shown to the left in Battambang.

7

traditional Khmer homes

1–2 story

outskirts
village
traditional construction
(+) basic electricity
(+) basic plumbing
parking

Traditional Khmer homes pepper the countryside, and occasionally the outskirts of the city. These homes are conventionally constructed from timber frames and usually consist of one main room that is raised above ground due to common flooding. Most often the main room is raised high enough to occupy the ground space as a main living or work area. The one room above is subdivided into smaller spaces to separate storage and sleeping spaces for parents and kids. Maintaining the original spatial design, some of the newer homes of this typology have replaced much of the timber with concrete and metal structures, as seen above.

Typically, adjacent to the main home are smaller structures containing supporting spaces such as a kitchen area and or bathroom.

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

Village settlements are located outside of the city and typically occupied by multi-generational families. Village homes are constructed with a simple wood frame and consist of a variety of found and made materials. Some of these materials include: corrugated sheet metal, handmade sheathing and screens from fibrous vegetation, scrap construction material, and reusable products such as rice packaging.

These homes are often built upon over time as families expand, and are typically adjacent to the means of living such as farming or raising livestock. Most families use motor bikes to get to the next village or into the city. The structures are simple, with one or two spaces that are shared by the family. Even if not lofted like a traditional Khmer home, most homes are raised off of the ground to prevent flooding. As heavy rains are common during the rainy season, most homes also have a metal roof.

8

village settlements

1 story

village
traditional construction
handmade + scrap materials
(+) basic electricity
(+) basic plumbing

(+) indicates an amenity sometimes offered

9

inner-city informal settlements

1 story

inner-city
outskirts
makeshift
scrap material

Inner-city informal settlements are constructed with a variety of materials, not that different from homes in the village. However, unlike most homes in the village, they often lack formal structure or bracing and occupy unclaimed or private land owned by others. These homes are often constructed under the necessity of shelter, not under long-term habitation goals.

Though within city limits, these informal settlements typically lack access to proper utilities and resources, such as water, sanitation, and electricity. NGOs often work with the communities to apply for proper access to utilities from local municipalities. In some cases the government will agree to provide access with grants from the NGOs.

1.3 Materials + Design

The materials and design of a home are a large part of the discussion and investigation for NGOs working in housing. Materials chosen for construction affect crucial parts of housing including cost, human health, and sustainability.

Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia is concerned with the sustainability of both the building industry and the country as a whole, realizing that NGOs have a flexible reach when it comes to solving multiple issues. HFH is looking into recycled materials, such as recycled plastic, and material alternatives. Chhaya Khean, National Program Manager for HFH Cambodia, shared that, “Too much plastic is being used. This is a major concern right now. The government is also trying to advocate and provide awareness for this but it is not enough.” Khean also thinks there is a future in partnering with companies that are recycling and reusing waste to produce building materials, “[We] want to work with [a] Japanese company that has two locations in Cambodia that is collecting plastic to create solid surface, table, construction material, roof tile.” While Khean admitted that recycled plastic materials are “a bit far off” for HFH right now, and that they are foremost a housing NGO, he shared that, “[recycled] plastic can be used to create housing. That is the hope.” This is one of the reasons that NGOs remain a relevant players in long-term change— operating as independent organizations they are able to quickly adapt to the current needs of their environment and experiment with new technologies, by-passing time-consuming politics and procedures that governmental agencies face.

HFH has also been experimenting with a new type of brick. Khean shared about this “ecotechnology” of compressed earth blocks:,“Normal earth blocks are too heavy and too big, the compressed is cement, earth, and sand— manually compressed, and dried under the sun. Better than Khmer fire brick, which is a clay brick. The Khmer brick is not [made] with electricity because it is so expensive, instead it is burned, which is very bad for the environment.” In addition to traditional Khmer brick substitutions that are better for the environment, construction managers at HFH are working with material alternatives that are better for human health, such as cedar board for siding, which is free from asbestos.

Compressed earth blocks manufactured by HFH Cambodia used to construct HFH homes in Battambang.

HFH is also looking into energy supply alternatives for the homes they are building. When working with the families during the design and construction phase, they give families the option to choose either solar panels or conventional electricity. If the family chooses to have a solar panel installed, HFH covers the one time cost of unit price and install. The solar panel comes with no additional cost to the owner and is better for the environment, but often does not perform to the level of conventional electricity. If the family chooses standard electricity, HFH will pay for the city electrical tap with the owner then responsible for the associated monthly bill. Even though solar panels offer no ongoing fees from the owner and are better for the environment, Sous Vannoeun, Battambang Area Manager for HFH Cambodia, shared that most families still go for conventional electricity because they do not trust newer, less-conventional alternatives.

In terms of the cost effects of material choice, homes in different parts of the country respond to their location in materiality. Often times different materials, such as sheathing or flooring, will vary based on what is local and affordable in that region. For example, toilet units in Siem Reap are most often constructed out of brick because it is more affordable in that region; however, in Battambang and Phnom Penh, tin is often used.

1.4 Property Services

One of the reasons that NGOs are able to make such a difference in the housing market is because they understand that to make a home livable and affordable, families and individuals must be provided with proper infrastructure and property services. A truly affordable home includes access to utilities, and must also be sustainable in terms of upkeep and resources. Specifically, additional housing services provided by many NGOs include water access, electrical connection, maintenance instruction, and or agricultural and land management trainings.

For Habitat for Humanity (HFH), the basic utilities associated with a home are a necessity. Chhaya Khean, National Program Manager for HFH Cambodia, shared that they "provide water for wash and [for] sanitation we provide toilet, all for free."

Other NGOs like Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF) work with developers and the government to provide the necessary infrastructure and utilities. Hoy Leanghoin, Community Outreach Manager for CCF, explained that for some housing projects the concrete roads are built by their partner developers, but CCF works directly with the local municipality to gain access to electricity and water, stating that "sometimes it is easy process, sometimes not."

The university also talks about access to utilities extending beyond their own building projects and the capability of sharing the added infrastructure. Ponleak Makara, Project Manager for a missional organization and university, shared that because the utility lines they extended for the campus are private, neighbors have to ask permission in order to tap into them.Makara talks about the difficulty of wanting to use the added utility lines for the community, "we don't want to be selfish. But if we are just generous, it will affect us. It's a balance. We want to help the community. Now there is an extra line for the village. For the power, we can share the pole, and meter on the point where we split off." The ability to not only bring proper utilities to the building site, but to be able to share that with the rest of the community is one of the strongest aspects of building that the university is doing.

Family Homes —

Habitat for Humanity, Kandal Phnom Penh

Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia is responsible for providing homes to hundreds of families who are in need of a stable and safe house. Often these families are in need of a new home due to displacement.

An Sokchan, a woman living 24 km outside of Phnom Penh in a home provided by HFH, was a victim of forced displacement when Boeung Kak Lake, which thousands of families lived on or near, was filled in. One estimate suggests that 4,250 families, or 20,000 residents were living around or near the lake, many of whom settled there after returning from Thai refugee camps in 1993 (Baliga, A., & Chakrya, K. S., 2017). While some these families were offered a choice of two compensation packages, many were forced to leave without any choice. In many cases, homes began to flood due to the sand filling before families were given the opportunity to accept the compensation and or leave. Even though Phnom Penh City Hall held a design competition in 2004 for the development of the area that retained 90 percent of the lake, in 2006 the selected "Pearl Plan" which envisioned accessible green space for the public was thrown out. The government announced it would now only retain 10 percent of the lake, and in 2007 announced that it would be developed by Shukaku Inc., which is owned by a senator of the ruling Cambodian People's Party. It is believed that the 99-year lease was signed by the governor without any consultation to the public (Baliga, A., & Chakrya, K. S., 2017).

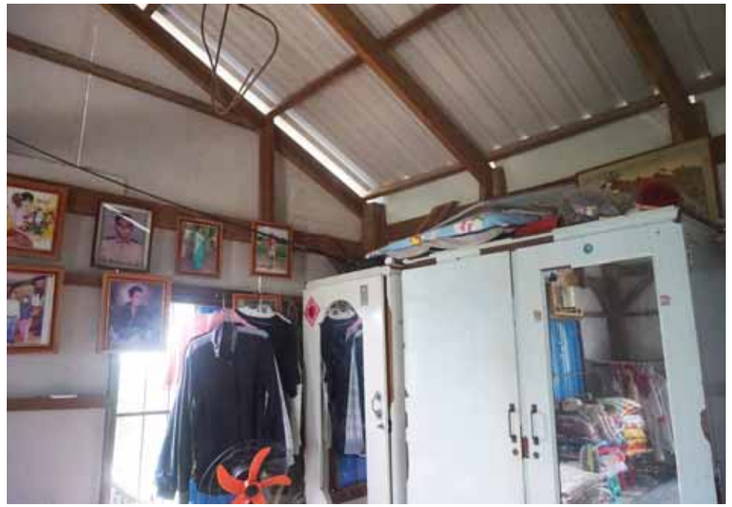
CASE STUDY

(Environmental Justice Atlas, 2015)

Sokchan was one of the families living along a canal adjacent to Boeung Kak, where she ran a small stall and lived with her husband. Luckily she was interviewed by an NGO that connected her to HFH. Sokchan had never had a house before. Now she, her husband, and four children live in the home provided by HFH. Two of her children currently live in the city while they attend school.

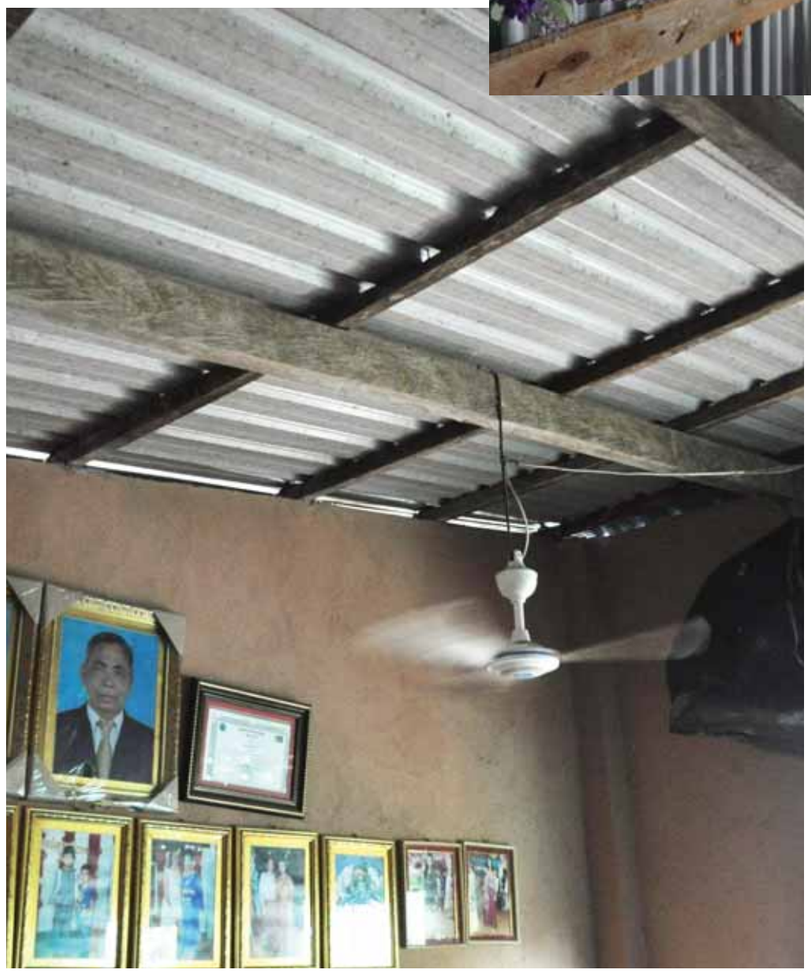
Samay Bona, Construction Supervisor from HFH Cambodia, translated what Sokchan had to say about her new home: "Before the house she was hopeless, but now she is grateful, now she is very happy. She has meaning in her life." Sokchan plans to extend the concrete floor into the ground level and extend the roofing to protect the stair from weathering. Sokchan's family is not the only one on the street. HFH purchased several adjacent plots for around $2,000 each in 2016. Each home, slightly different depending on the needs of the family, was constructed with a budget between $2,500–2,700, including water and electricity hook-ups. Three years later these plots of land are worth $8,000 each.

Across from Sokchan's home is another family home that has a different design. While Sokchan's is lofted with an open main living space on the ground floor in Khmer tradition, her neighbor's home is only elevated a few feet off of the ground, with a ramp, allowing the resident the access he needed. In addition, Sokchan's home has detached cooking and toilet units while her neighbor's cooking and toilet units are attached to the house, allowing for easier access and shared materials. While very different homes and lives, Bona shared that the families are happy because of the "location, electricity, and proximity to [the] city. Habitat gives them at least two options of location so that they have choice, and Habitat follows the families wishes to stay or move." This element of choice is believed by HFH to be crucial for lasting success in housing, particularly displacement and relocation.



To the left, an image of the upper floor of Sokchan's home displays both the framing structure and the personal belongings that make it a home.

Below a home on the same street shows a similar construction .



The above image shows the cooking area of one of Sokchan's neighbors.

The image to the left shows the living space of the same home, filled with family photos.

Land Plot 82 —

Habitat for Humanity + Province of Battambang, Battambang

One of Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia's housing projects and one of the country's best examples of Social Land Concessions at work is what is referred to as Land Plot 82 in Battambang Province, where approximately two-hundred volunteers built over 15 safe, quality, and affordable houses for families over the course of one week. Initially owned by the state and intended for a city park that never came to fruition, HFH worked with the city to turn the land into private state property in order to be granted to poor families in need of property.

Chhaya Khean, National Program Manager for HFH Cambodia, explained that though the land had been set aside for public gardens, due to the civil war the plans never came to fruition. After the war ended, people came back to Battambang province to rebuild their lives and began to live on the land. Sous Vannoeun, Battambang Area Manager for HFH Cambodia, explained that when families started settling on the land around 1993 the government did not intervene because they assumed it to be temporary. Over 25 years later, more than 300 families were believed to be living on the land. The government agreed to work with HFH Cambodia to split the land in to much smaller plots.

CASE STUDY

Around 150 families accepted the small plots, but some did not agree because the plots were too small. After filling the land, HFH invited all the families to a consultant meeting. Vannoeun explained that they conducted a lottery in order to have families select the lots in a fair way. In the end, there ended up being 82 plots, and at that meeting all 82 families signed an agreement with the government, agreeing to live on the land for a minimum of 10 years in order to receive their title. These 82 families were selected by the community group run by the government. Of the 82 plots, HFH was able to provide a home for 34 families, which were selected through site visits and further consultation. Vannoeun shared that the homes were built with subsidies, "some built through a 30% subsidy, some 50%, some 80%. They [owners] give Habitat the rest of the money and Habitat purchases the materials and builds. Habitat works with the government to ensure that the water and electricity comes in a timely manner." Vannoeun continued to explain that each family was taught about the process and about the social land concession so that they are able to educate others and advocate for themselves and others in the future. Vannoeun shared that through this process, "the community becomes braver."

The homes built at Land Plot 82 fall under the typology of Small Scale Town homes, briefly explained in Section 1.2.

Stung Meanchey Housing —

Cambodian Children's Fund + World Housing, Phnom Penh

Stung Meanchey is globally recognized as an infamous landfill site and neighborhood. Covering nearly 100 acres the landfill was surrounded by informal settlements where families lived in order to work the site. It is believed that during the site's most dense period roughly 2,000 people, around 600 of which were children, lived and worked on the site (Dakowicz, M., 2004). Families would make a living by picking through the garbage and selling items for recycling at numerous purchasing locations.

CASE STUDY

Though the city formally closed the site in 2009, relocating the active landfill to the outskirts of the city, today Stung Meanchey remains a poor neighborhood with large open acres of garbage. It is believed that the closing of the landfill was intended to end the unsanitary working of the landfill and stop families from moving to the site. While the Stung Meanchey neighborhood remains strewn with garbage and informal settlements, there has been a great change to the neighborhood thanks to Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF). Hoy Leanghoin, Community Outreach Manager for CCF, stated that when he first started at CCF in 2012, "most families did not have homes, they would use rice packing but now this is much more rare, much fewer scavengers."

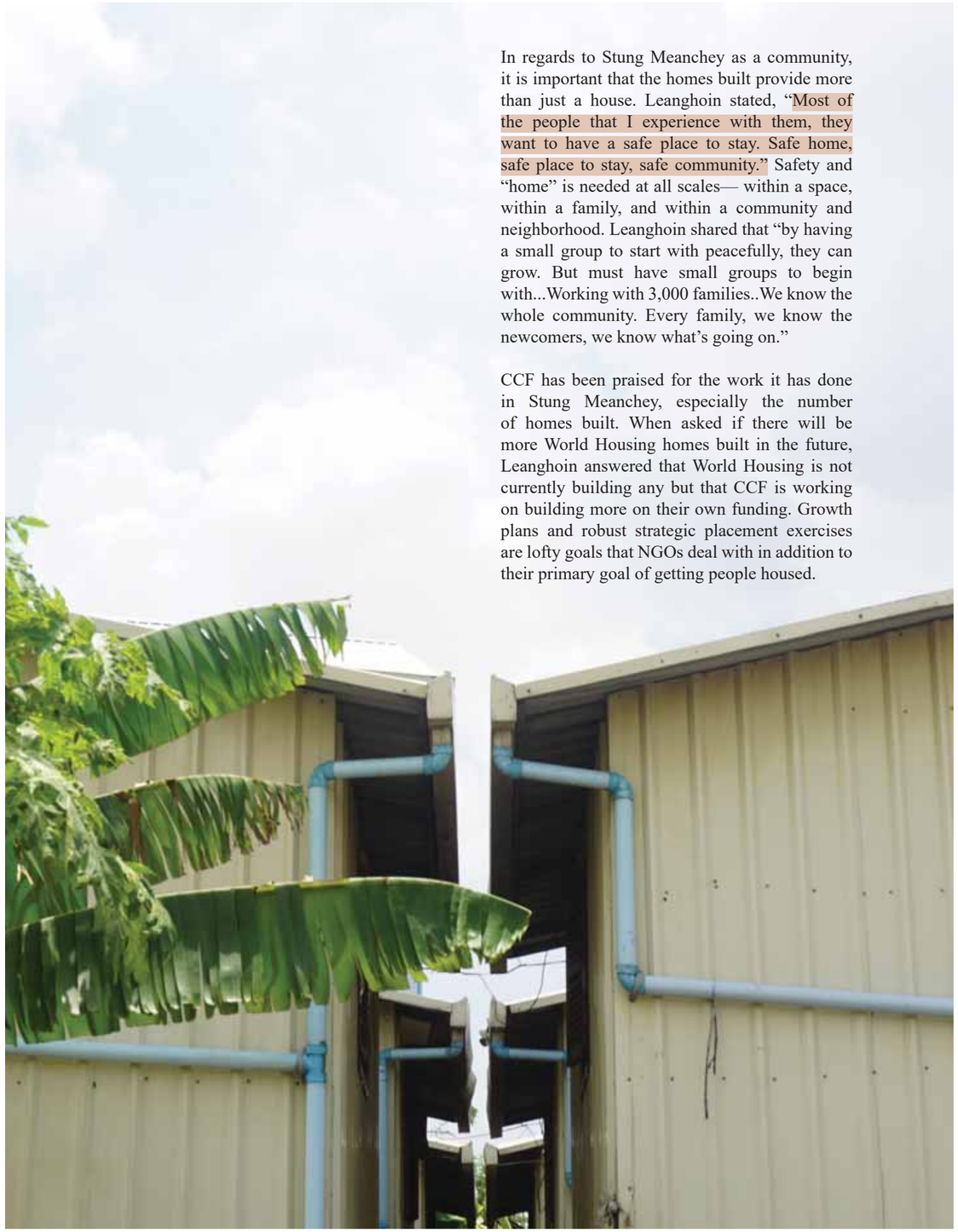
Since its founding in 2004, CCF has built a highly regarded primary school and over 450 homes in the neighborhood. In 2014, World Housing, a social real estate venture based out of Vancouver, Canada, contacted CCF. World Housing works with market-rate real estate developers to build homes in some of the world's most impoverished neighborhoods in a one-to-one model. Within 18 months of beginning their partnership, 360 homes were built, and according to Leanghoin a total of 461 homes have been completed as of May 2019.

The homes are built and settled in small groups with social areas, playgrounds, clean water and toilets. According to CCF, the individual units are built in two and a half days in a factory in the Stung Meanchey neighborhood, and are made with galvanized steel, hand-made window shutters, and other supplies sourced within the local communities. These units are then brought to site, land either owned or leased by CCF, and erected. The design was inspired by a traditional Khmer home, elevated on stilts with a shaded, comfortable area on the ground floor to relax and cook in (Cambodian Children's Fund, 2019).

When asked if his work as Community Outreach Manager is more proactive or reactive, Leanghoin shared that his work is both— designing programs based off of current and projected needs, and also dealing with families that come to CCF with pressing issues. The goal would be to work proactively to better help families out of structural poverty but often unexpected events, such as a recent fire in the neighborhood, prompt CCF to work reactively. "The fire that lost 32 families, we are responding to that!" The flexibility of a position like Leanghoin's allows him to be on the front lines of community work in Stung Meanchey.

In regards to Stung Meanchey as a community, it is important that the homes built provide more than just a house. Leanghoin stated, "Most of the people that I experience with them, they want to have a safe place to stay. Safe home, safe place to stay, safe community." Safety and "home" is needed at all scales— within a space, within a family, and within a community and neighborhood. Leanghoin shared that "by having a small group to start with peacefully, they can grow. But must have small groups to begin with...Working with 3,000 families..We know the whole community. Every family, we know the newcomers, we know what's going on."

CCF has been praised for the work it has done in Stung Meanchey, especially the number of homes built. When asked if there will be more World Housing homes built in the future, Leanghoin answered that World Housing is not currently building any but that CCF is working on building more on their own funding. Growth plans and robust strategic placement exercises are lofty goals that NGOs deal with in addition to their primary goal of getting people housed.



2/ HOUSING POLICY, LAND TENURE + GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

“Nobody knows what the housing affordability policy is, there must be more advocacy about it.”

Chhaya Khean Habitat for Humanity Cambodia, National Program Manager

The relevance of policy, legislation, and organized tenure in the security and well-being of a society under transformation has been proven throughout history. Jenny Schuetz, a fellow of the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program, outlines imperative reasons for housing policy, three of which are to (1) provide safety and health standards, (2) produce clear information for housing transactions, and (3) let housing supply sustainably grow and meet demand (Schuetz, 2018). In any country that is dealing with rapid economic development all other parts of society will inevitably struggle to keep up. With adequate policy in place, citizens are able to justly appropriate resources. Without policy, legislation, and governance, issues like exploitation, eviction, lack of education, and corruption can become the norm. Throughout this research on housing affordability it was evident that the legal relationship Cambodians have to their housing is inseparable from its security and affordability.

The term tenure is used to describe the relationship a person or group of people have to housing, land, or property; the ownership of land is one of those relationships. Other types of tenure include rental and leasing rights, use rights, usufruct rights, and access rights. The security of tenure describes the strength of protection given to this relationship, which can be protected by law and by custom to varying degrees. While customary tenure rights can be sufficient under certain circumstances, statutory housing, land, and property rights provide the most secure form of tenure. Specifically in countries that are undergoing rapid transformation and global developmental pressures, having legal rights to land, and having governmental authorities working to ensure housing adequacy, is imperative. Where there

is a gap in government legislation protecting the security of tenure and the dissemination of such security measures, NGOs often step in. This chapter discusses relevant Cambodian policy, NGOs that have a relationship with local and national authorities, and their work in securing land tenure.

NGOs relation to policy is crucial— both in disseminating information to the masses and implementing housing goals. In terms of implementing policy, NGOs play a large role in facilitating tenure, specifically land ownership. While secure tenure depends heavily on governmental institutional capacity— such as legislative frameworks, local enforcement mechanisms, and protected and reliable land information systems— grassroots efforts, often facilitated by NGOs, have made progress. On a neighborhood scale the path to secure, statutory tenure depends heavily on land witnesses, property line definition, and interpretation of the policy.

In addition to disseminating policy and aiding in its implementation, NGOs like Habitat for Humanity believe that working directly with the government to help influence policy and legislation is one of the key ways to affect housing affordability. This is because though NGOs play a critical role in supporting the affordable housing stock, it is understood that a country’s government bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring its citizens have adequate, and therefore affordable, housing. There are many ways in which an NGO may choose to engage with the government, affecting not only their strategies in housing affordability but also changes in policy moving forward.

2.1 Housing Policy

In order to begin a conversation around both NGOs' and the government's role in housing, this chapter will outline an elementary understanding of some of Cambodia's most relevant policies and legislation to housing and it's affordability post war. While war in Cambodia subsided in the 1980s, it was not until the early 1990s with the 1991 United Nations Peace Agreement that the Cambodian government began to enact legislation that impacted housing affordability and land rights.

Land Law of 1992

One of the major pieces of legislation to begin governing Cambodia's land and property post war is the Land Law of 1992. This law provided for the redistribution of land in the country and established the importance of legal rights to property. The most prominent articles of the Land Law declared previous land property rights as unrecognized and provided a foundation for property to be handled in Khmer government. While Article 1 states that the State government does not recognize land property rights existing prior to 1979, Article 2 states that Cambodians have the full right to possess and use the land. Articles 3 and 20 state the rights of Cambodians in regards to violation of private property and forced transfer of ownership, and state that neither are permitted unless under the necessity of public interest. Article 3 also outlines that under the case of a violation of private property, the owner has the right to receive just and proper compensation in advance (Royal Government of Cambodia, 1992).

The language of the 1992 Land Law remained vague, leaving significant room for broad interpretation of "public interest" giving the government substantial discretionary expropriatory power. Articles 3 and 20 attempted to require advance and proper compensation for forced transfer of land, but this was rarely upheld. While the Land Law of 1992 established the framework around property rights for modern Cambodia, it failed to outline the process in which individuals may acquire proper land tenure and left many holes in the path to proper property ownership for individuals and businesses. In addition, the framework was riddled with vague language that severely limited Cambodian housing, land, and property rights.

Land Law of 2001

In 1998 the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction was established, leading to the drafting of an amendment to the Land Law that would aid in the development of property ownership. The Land Law of 2001 still outlined that the land remained the property of the state unless or until it has been legally privatized, but it included the necessary steps to tenure. As compared to 1992, it began to establish a modern system of land registration that guarantees the rights of people to own land.

Habitat for Humanity's Solid Ground campaign outlines that the law set up a system to improve tenure and land accessibility through a "market-based land reform including land-titling, cadastral administration and a liberalized land market." (Regino-Borja, B., Ochong, R., Bolo-Duthy, B., & Kanika, K., 2019). Article 30 of the 2001 Land Law states that "Any person who, for no less than five years prior to the promulgation of this law, enjoyed peaceful, uncontested possession of immovable property that can lawfully be privately possessed, has the right to request a definitive title of ownership" (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2014) and has become the basis for land tenure application.

The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction is responsible for issuing all titles related to land rights and governs the processes outlined in the 2001 Land Law. Article 38 states the conditions under which land tenure is available: "In order to transform into ownership of immovable property, the possession shall be unambiguous, non-violent, notorious to the public, continuous and in good faith," (Regino-Borja, B. et al., 2019) stating that one needs communal support in order to prove their eligibility for a title.

The 2001 Land Law also differentiates between five different categories of properties in order to ease the transfer and titling of land:

1. Private land: Land with full legal private ownership.

2. State private land: State land that is not public and can be legally privatized.

3. State public land which cannot be privatized: State land with a public interest such as roads, military bases, public buildings and services, land with forest, water bodies, river beds.

4. Monastery land: Buddhist monasteries through collective ownership.

5. Indigenous community land in collective ownership: Established residence areas of indigenous communities and lands involving traditional swidden agriculture.

(Regino-Borja, B. et al., 2019)

Social Land Concessions (SLC)

Birthed out of the 2001 Land Law, Social Land Concessions (SLCs) were established to aid the transfer of state private land to private individuals, with the intent to provide land to the poor on which to establish residence and/or generate income through agriculture. The 2001 Land Law's sub-decree No.19 states that SLCs are provided in order for recipients to "build residential constructions and/or to cultivate lands belonging to the State for their subsistence" (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2003). While under concession, the rights of the recipient are similar to those of an owner, but there are a number of regulations within the beginning months of the concession.

At the beginning of the concession each recipient must sign an agreement with the granting authority and agree to, if absent of an existing residence, build a permanent shelter within the first three months of the concession with at least one family member residing permanently on the lands for at least six months of the year. If receiving the land for agricultural purposes, the recipient must begin to cultivate the land within the first twelve months and continue to use the property in that manner. After five years of continuous occupation or use, the recipient has the right to request a title to the land.

SLCs proved difficult to execute, and to track. In 2007, the government partnered with the World Bank and others to create a program that better implemented SLCs by having communities work directly with NGOs. Out of this partnership, the Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED) project was conceived. In 2008 LASED began to aid the government in distributing SLCs aiming to "improve the process for identification and use of state lands transferred to the land-poor"; Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia was one of the NGOs selected to implement the project (Regino-Borja, B. et al., 2019). The initial goal for SLCs was to provide residential and agricultural concessions to a minimum of 10,000 landless households by 2010, yet in June of 2010 there had only been 2,595 SLCs granted (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2008). There has been recent jumps in concessions, such as in March of 2018 when a total of 1,351 titles were given to 776 families–each receiving a 30 x 40 meter plot for housing and 1.5–3 hectares for farming in Santuk district of Kampong Thom province (Sotheary, P., 2018).

In addition to a slow start, the initiative has been criticized by land rights activists and communities for generating more land disputes and also increased deforestation in the country. Different NGOs, including the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) have reported numerous land conflicts. While there is disagreement on exact numbers, ADHOC notes that in 2012 the government granted 38 SLCs, covering 100,790 hectares. Out of these 38 SLCs, ADHOC reported that 13 resulted in land conflicts (Titthara, M., 2014).

SLCs in more urban areas have often involved developers and have created several cases of extreme land dispute, forced eviction, and poor government ruling ("On Stony Ground: A Look Into Social Land Concessions," 2015). In many cases, the government attempted to provide land through SLCs that should have already been considered privately owned per the 2001 Land Law.

One example of a successfully executed SLC by an NGO is the Land Plot 82 project in Battambang, where a plot of land that was intended to be public garden space was turned into private state land in order to be granted to poor families needing land. Information on this project can be found in the case studies at the end of Chapter 1.

National Housing Policy 2014

In early May of 2014, the Council of Ministers approved a National Housing Policy (NHP). The policy focused on providing low and medium income families with adequate housing and increasing mechanisms for tenure security (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014). HFH Cambodia outlined four main goals of the National Housing Policy:

1. Provision of means for the population to have access to decent housing

2. Promotion of development of cities, and urban and rural areas

3. Addressing the issues of temporary settlements

4. Building partnerships among stakeholders to address the housing needs.

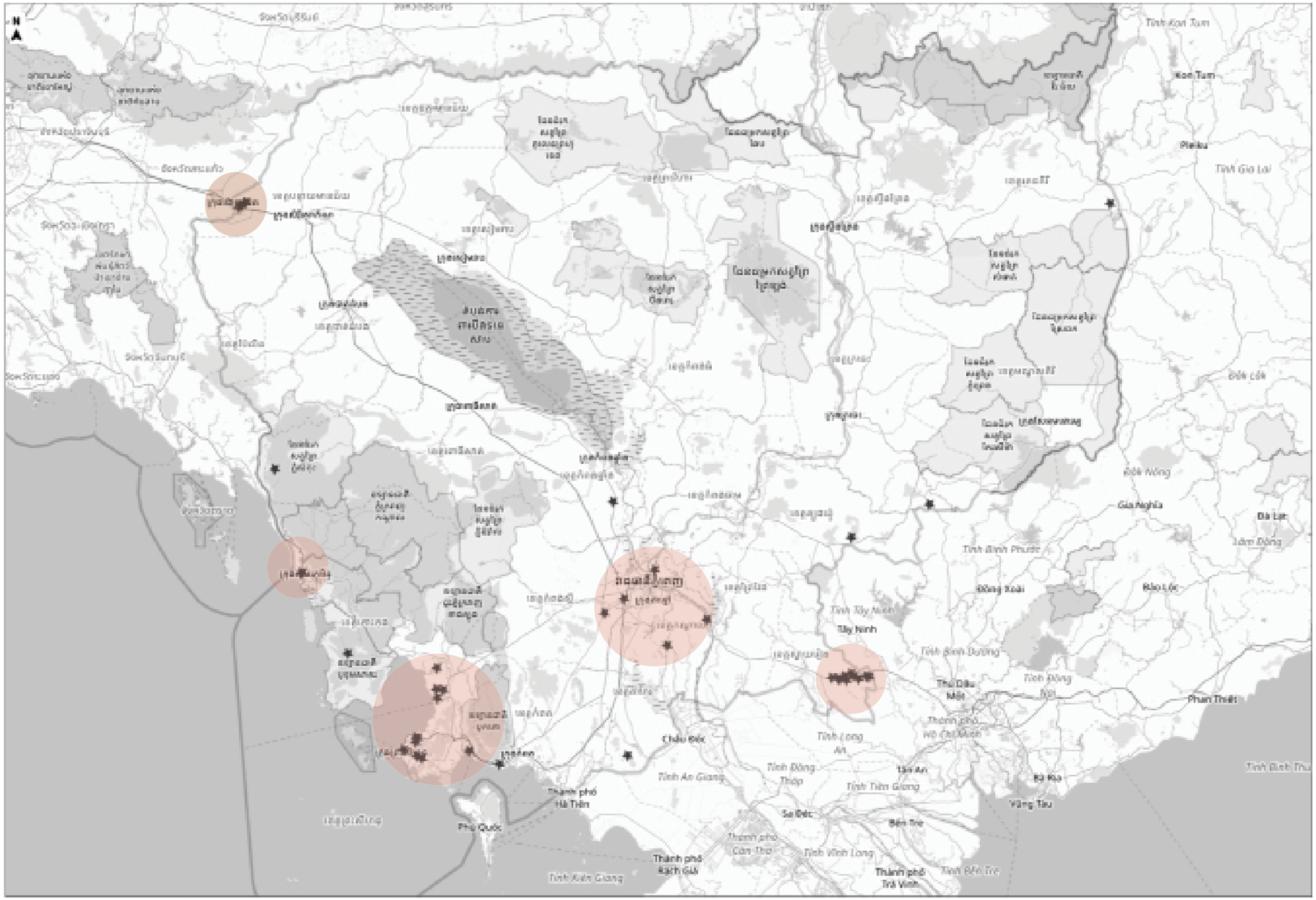
(Habitat for Humanity Cambodia, Habitat for Humanity Wake County, 2019)

While the NHP of 2014 was a large step for the government, many NGOs argue that the government has done little to implement the goals stated and that the policy has yet to reach truly low- and middle-income families.

Special Economic Zones

A special economic zone (SEZ) is a defined area within a country that is subject to different laws and regulations from those pertaining to other areas of the country. SEZs are intended to not only offer incentive and competition to the foreign market, but to jumpstart local economies and development. According to Open Development Cambodia (ODC), the creation of SEZs "entails significant infrastructure development" as they are designed to "attract foreign investment, enhance global competitiveness and promote economic development" (Open Development Cambodia, 2015).

SEZs were formally established in Cambodia in 2005 and are governed by the Law of Investment,



The above map (Open Development Cambodia, 2015) shows the placement and concentration of Special Economic Zones in Cambodia in 2015.

Left: Temporary worker housing units are shown erected on site for major developments in Sihanoukville.

Opposite page: Signs that greet visitors as they await their luggage at Sihanouk International Airport and drive into town on major roads and transit corridors.

Sub-decree No.148, the Establishment and Management of the Special Economic Zone. According to the sub-decree, zone developers are responsible for the construction of all infrastructure, which must include management office buildings, zone administration offices, a road network, clean water and sewerage, waste disposal, electricity supply, telecommunications network, fire protection and a security system (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2005).

According to a data set collected by ODC, there were as many as 34 SEZs in Cambodia as of 2015, concentrated mainly on the coast, around the capitol, and at the borders. In Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018, the government outlined its plan to establish new industries as a path toward national development. This includes a first phase of establishing and strengthening industrial corridors and SEZs in the hope of increased foreign investment, transfer of technology, and broader export markets (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2014).

Also according to ODC, "SEZ developers and investors receive preferential incentives including profit tax exemption for nine years, import duty exemption for equipment to construct the zone, value added tax exemption, unrestricted foreign exchange, and guarantees against nationalization and price fixing," and while this overlaps some benefits of other similar financial incentives, SEZs provide a consolidated and streamlined import-export process (Open Development Cambodia, 2015).

Cambodia is eager to advertise the welcoming of development. While the government is proud to display the wealth that is coming into the country, those working towards sustainable affordable housing are leery of the development and its effect on the local economy. The concern of those who work in housing is that the development and influx of capital that occurs in a region that is declared an SEZ out-paces the local ability to create and maintain affordable housing stock. Often the housing market is unable to accommodate for both the influx of job migrants and the current residences in both availability and cost. Most of the wealth being brought in by foreign investment is staying in either the hands of the investors or in the Cambodian government, with very little trickling down into the local economy.

Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone

The largest SEZ in Cambodia, the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, was established in 2008 and covers 1,100 hectares along Cambodia's southern coast, encompassing the country's only deep sea port. With 525 hectares being included in its first phase of development, as of 2017 the Sihanoukville SEZ housed around 110 new businesses, the majority of which were Chinese. In 2017 there were 93 factories in operation employing 16,000 people (McGrath, C., 2017).

This rapid development was under the direction of the SEZ's joint developers, Jiangsu Taihu Cambodia International Economic Cooperation Investment Co Ltd and the Cambodia International Investment Development Group Co Ltd. The Sihanoukville SEZ has been termed an "industrial estate" and has become a token of perceived cooperation between China and Cambodia under Beijing's One Belt, One Road initiative. In 2017 the developers claimed that they were working to develop the SEZ's remaining 600 hectares of available land. It was aiming to house 300 additional businesses with a total of at least 70,000 employees within five years (McGrath, C., 2017).

In addition to increased construction and business, Sihanoukville has seen an increase in safety concerns. Reporters have chronicled countless stories of abuse, violence, and disorderly and intoxicated conduct in Sihanoukville. Sihanoukville used to be a quaint and sleepy seaside town frequented by Western backpackers, known for its quiet beaches and easy going local experience. Now one has to venture out to the smaller islands to enjoy a quiet beach and clear water. As Sihanoukville has been swallowed by casinos, soiled beaches, and rampant construction, these smaller islands, such as Koh Rong and Koh Rong Sanloem are where you now catch any Western tourists.

The creation of a tax-exempt destination not only seems to correlate with unruly business and unsafe streets in Cambodia, but appears to have shifted the country's tourism industry in mass. The Cambodian coast had long remained a quiet base for backpackers and Khmer to vacation. While these visitors were interested in the local and cheap food, happy to walk quiet beaches, and eager to experience Khmer culture, the new wave of Chinese tourists are not as interested in

CASE STUDY

the local culture. Though the tourism industry always comes with its effects on a place, some negative, it often has many benefits such as a larger flow of economy, the creation of jobs, and a boost to many local adjacent industries such as construction and hospitality. However, the rapid foreign development in Sihanoukville has not only spurred the negative effects of tourism such as a dependent economy, a loss of city identity, and increased cost of living, but does not seem to offer many positives to those who call it home. The new wave of tourists tend to stay at new resorts and casinos built by workers under little regulation, are transported by personal drivers employed by foreign-owned tourist businesses, and eat at foreign restaurants. Locals previously sustained by the tourist industry, such as restaurant owners and tuk-tuk drivers, are now being pushed out from two sides—increased cost of living and decreased business.

2.2 Land Tenure + Ownership

It is crucial to understand that the housing crisis in Cambodia is largely two part— the affordability of a home and the security of land ownership. Chan Sopath, Volunteer and Youth Engagement Manager with Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia, shared that, "Some have land but no house, some have house but no land." As previously mentioned, the issue of land titling and statutory tenure was largely magnified post 1980 as Cambodians began to return to their homes and property after being displaced in civil war and terror. Not only did the mass displacement cause problems in squatting and ownership, but nearly all land titles and documents were destroyed under the ruling authority from 1975 to 1979. As seen in Section 2.1, the Cambodian government is attempting to prioritize land tenure and ownership in its growth and modernization. The 2001 Land Law did outline the process of obtaining a proper title, but the process is not easy and is difficult to do alone. Therefore, the difficult task of providing, facilitating, and maintaining proper titles is carried largely by NGOs who understand the importance of ownership and are eager to see Cambodians in secure housing. The process of obtaining a proper title has been most successful when communities work together to plot out the land, understand the process, and go through the process together.

One of the largest problems with families living on property without a proper title is eviction. Chhaya Khean, National Program Manager for HFH Cambodia shared that a family may "occupy [the land] ten years but they have no letter or document, and then someone else buys the land and says this is my land but then squatters have to evacuate" even though "typically if you have lived there more than 10 yrs you are considered the owners except if it is government or local land." This is part of the reason that NGOs are pushing for land titles so aggressively; they understand that it is only a matter of time before the next family or community is evicted.

Another common problem for Khmer citizens as they attempt to apply for tenure is that of dual claims to the land. Khean continued to explain that there is a "poor management of titles so sometimes one person buys the land, and then someone else buys the land because it's not clear. So now you have two owners." These types of disputes often lead to deliberate vandalism or destruction from one party in order to move the other off of the land. Khean shares that "Often people will burn down [the property] or a fire 'will happen'.. because if it's burned the government does not allow a rebuild" by the family currently living there.

While the need for shelter and for property is high, there are NGOs that are able to provide

Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.

both. Many families who are being displaced due to a series of reasons outlined in Section 1.1 are in need of a new home, and a place to build it. This is where the flexibility and program diversity of NGOs like HFH are able to directly meet the needs of different families. As Sopath shared, HFH is able to provide both a home and a plot of land with a pending title in relevant cases. The property is selected with input from the family, purchased by HFH, and the home is built for the family depending on their needs. HFH holds the land title for 3-5 yrs in order to ensure that the family maintains residence there. Sopath shared that by that time the families have usually built good community and continue to want to stay, at which time HFH hands over the land title.

2.3 Government Relations

In addition to working with Khmer people to bridge the gap between the public and policy, the way in which an NGO directly engages with the government shapes their housing programs and their approach to long term change. Although, and because, the government has often neglected low-income housing aid, a partnership between the municipality and grass-roots organizations is beneficial. While some NGOs operate more independently, other organizations more focused on policy and long-term impact choose to work closely with officials to create change, understanding that the most durable and sustainable solution to problems in housing affordability and adequacy is government reform.

The NGOs interviewed unanimously agreed that their work is long-term. NGOs working more independently from the government often work in parallel to the government, both entities operating with interaction only when necessary. In this case, the NGOs' work will continue to be supplemental, benefiting the public where the government lacks. This in theory is long-term in the truest sense: The two may always exist in parallel. A benefit of working in parallel is that often NGOs are able to side-step time-consuming official processes that governmental programs spend time developing. While the government continues to adjust policy, NGOs, by using private funding and grassroot programs, are able to get homes built, quickly. Other NGOs, in contrast, are working towards intersection with the government. In this case, the organizations believe that the two cannot operate separately, at least not to see holistic change. Both models of parallel and intersecting operations prove to be beneficial, perhaps at different scales. In terms of influencing policy rather than supplementing it, the latter appears to be more effective.

Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia's work frequently intersects with local and national agencies. Though HFH currently works with the government to make Cambodian policies more effective, Sous Vannoeun, Battambang Area Manager for HFH Cambodia, shared that it is about relationships as much as it is information: "[When] working with the government the relationship building is very important.

"WHEN WE MEET AT THE OFFICE WE JUST TELL THEM WHAT WE'RE DOING, BUT WHEN WE INVITE THEM IT CHANGES THEIR EXPERIENCE. THIS IS THE WAY WE WANT THEM TO ENGAGE."

Sous Vannoeun Habitat for Humanity Cambodia, Battambang Area Manager

They should understand what we are doing." However, HFH does not stop there. It is one thing to inform the local municipalities on the work that an organization is doing for transparency and teaching, but it is another to invite them to be a part of it. Vannoeun shared HFH's perspective: "When we meet at the office we just tell them what we're doing, but when we invite them it changes their experience. This is the way we want them to engage."

HFH exercised this belief by inviting the governor of Battambang and a team of his staff to be a part of a build they were doing. While in Battambang at this time, Lazenby and Boverman attended the HFH governor's build, during which they helped build a bamboo floor for the family. Chan Sopath, Volunteer and Youth Engagement Manager with HFH Cambodia, shared that this governor's build was the first build of this type, where the governor actively took part in the construction process and came out to the property to meet and serve the family. While this meant picking up the government staff at the governor's office, transporting them to the site, providing meals throughout the day, and other expenses beyond a typical build, the opportunity to have government staff directly engaged with housing those who are most in need is invaluable. Sopath stated "We spent a lot of money.. But learned so much. The governor staff volunteers— it was their first time, and I think they saw so much."

When engaging the government Chhaya Khean, National Program Manager for HFH Cambodia, described two types of advocacy—confrontational advocacy and soft advocacy. Khean shares that confrontational NGOs are often blacklisted, stating that these organizations are often so confrontational that their offices are forced to close at times of government elections due to heightened tensions between groups. HFH instead works mainly with soft advocacy. Soft advocacy includes not only inviting the authorities to join them in builds, but hosting events like housing forums. Events like HFH's housing forum allow for advocacy through communication, where NGOs are able to sit and work with the government.

Vannoeun shared that HFH engages with local authorities through housing forums, HFH leader builds, HFH authority builds, and other programs that engage with Solid Ground, HFH's global advocacy campaign to improve access to land for shelter. Vannoeun shared more about soft advocacy when he says that HFH "works alongside the government, hand in hand together. With the government we advocate, but the government doesn't know that's what we're doing."

HFH also directly engages with the government by committing to build homes if the government is willing to provide land and or infrastructure in a certain area. In one case, a community organized so that they could petition for a social land concession process. The group, known as the Community Development Program Team worked with the local authorities and HFH for the SLC, which the government agreed to grant. The land was divided into 53 plots. Among the 53, HFH built 19 homes free of charge with connections for water and electricity. The government agreed to construct a road and drainage system. The government was not going to build a road but when HFH said they would build the houses, the government agreed to build the road. In another case, as outlined a case study in Chapter 1, HFH worked with the local government in Battambang to turn previously public state owned land into 82 plots. HFH proceeded to construct 34 homes for that project.

"SOKHOM, WHO HAD NEVER MET THE GOVERNOR OF BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, PAINTED A WALL ALONGSIDE HIM... GOVERNOR NGUON RATANAK WHO LED SEVERAL STAFF TO THE BUILD WITH HABITAT CAMBODIA, SAID: 'IT'S NOT JUST FOR TODAY, WE NEED TO KEEP CONTINUE DOING THIS.'"

Photo and quote from Habitat for Humanity Asia Pacific (Habitat for Humanity, 2019)

Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF) sees their relationship to the government as being the "feet on the ground." As Hoy Leanghoin, Community Outreach Manager for CCF, continued to explain, "NGO is big deal for government even for the long term, they [NGOs] know exactly the issues of the people and community." When asked if CCF works with the local government, Leanghoin responded "Of course.. Sankat [authorities of district subdivisions], police, and Phnom Penh governor" and went on to list some of the ministries they work with most often such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, and the Ministry of Health. When it comes to working with the national government, Leanghoin stated that they sometimes work together, depending on the needs of certain projects.

In Battambang, the missional organization and university are less engaged with local and national government. Their work is much more socially engaged and community oriented, with less tangible ties to government or policy. In terms of relationship with the local government, Ponleak Makara, Project Manager for the missional organization and university, shared that they have a good relationship with the governor and explains that in general there has been positive feedback from the local government because the organizations bring business to the community and education to its citizens. In regards to relationship with the national government, there is little engagement, with the exception of the necessary business interface for MOUs, visas, and utilities.

2.4 Policy Moving Forward

This chapter has provided a backdrop to the analysis of housing affordability in Cambodia today, but the hope is that there is more change soon to come. While NGOs continue to push the agenda of housing affordability forward, the government does claim to understand the problem. Chea Sophara, Minister of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, said in June 2017 that 800,000 low-cost urban homes must be built and in order to meet demand projected 2030 population of 19 million (Sokha, T., & Amaro, Y., 2017). Sophara explained that the government was working to establish affordable housing prices, as well as tax and regulatory incentives that would encourage the private sector to join the efforts. While Sophara's initiative requires the construction of nearly 55,000 new homes a year, the response from private developers has been limited, with less than 10,000 units announced a year after the announcement. As of April 2018, only three affordable housing projects had been approved by the government, qualifying them for tax incentives, regulatory support, and state assistance in the form of infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water networks (Vin, V., 2018).

Another part of policy with potential to advance in the coming years is land use zoning and building codes. As far as most developers and designers are concerned, Phnom Penh has no proper land use or masterplan. According to Vanna Narith, a trained architectural designer and Construction Assistant for Habitat for Humanity (HFH), "you can do whatever if you have money." He explained that while conducting research during his studies, he had asked the municipalities about the master plan maps he had found online from the government website. They asked him where he had found them, "they didn't know what it was." Narith explained that there is some small amount of existing zoning, "like around the royal palace, no buildings taller than five stories. The government says development over the cons," sharing that at the time "the government just approved a one-hundred and thirty-three story building of mixed use, homes, condos, supermarket, it will cause massive traffic problems." As Cambodia continues to grow, especially with foreign development, it is crucial that cities begin to develop and implement proper city planning including but not limited to height restrictions, program-based zoning, and transit oriented planning. In addition to land use policy, it is critical that Cambodia regulate construction through building code. Samay Bona, Construction Supervisor from HFH Cambodia, stated that though minimal building code exists, "the government does not put it into play." Narith agrees, and admits that though implementing building code would make construction much more expensive, it would "actually be much more sustainable."

3/ COMMUNITY + IDENTITY

“[It’s] important to build small community, not a separate one.”

Hoy Leanghoin Cambodian Children’s Fund, Community Outreach Manager

Community and identity are integral to the housing conversation. In addition to the intimate home-making of a structure, housing crises deal with large scale place making— the identity of a neighborhood, a street, or a park for example. Identity is also a concern in situations where groups of people are displaced from their neighborhood. The United Nations includes adequate housing as a global human right. Further, the UN states that adequate housing is “more than four walls and a roof” (United Nations Habitat, 2014). The following categories must be met: secure tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and finally, cultural adequacy. This chapter begins to unpack the importance of maintaining that cultural adequacy in communities under transformation and housing pressures.

NGOs are working to craft communities in the midst of housing shortages and transitioning socioeconomic scenes, each with their own strategies and partners to engage culture and strengthen its identity. One way organizations are doing that is by pushing a larger involvement from the community, encouraging young and old populations to engage in both volunteering and advocacy. Many aspects of Khmer culture have been under pressure from years of internal conflict, and are now at risk from staggering growth. Because the country is developing so rapidly, largely from foreign investment, it is crucial that its cultural identities continue to flourish.

NGOs are at the forefront of celebrating this culture and protecting its communal influence amidst the housing crisis. Community and identity will be considered through the demographics of NGOs, the ways different organizations build for identity, how they are considering growth and sustainability, and the transparency of the work they are doing.

A family enjoys dinner on top of a small cruiser boat in Kampot.

3.1 Demographics

By studying the housing crisis through the lens of NGOs, the study sought to understand the concept of cultural adequacy in housing affordability, and the role of NGOs in providing it. With less than adequate funds, NGOs sometimes turn to foreign funds and initiatives. With many NGOs founded and funded by non-Cambodians, the study asks how NGOs work to serve their people in a way that respects and emulates Khmer culture while maximizing support from whatever means possible. When considering the number of homes that need to be built to offset the projected 2030 1.1 million affordable home deficit published in Cambodia's National Housing Policy (Habitat for Humanity, 2019), it is important to consider the makeup of the organizations building them.

With around 78 staff members across their three locations, Habitat for Humanity (HFH) Cambodia balances global investment and local involvement with separate volunteer programs for Khmer and global volunteers. HFH leverages international volunteers through the Global Village program. Published as "Towards Resilience through Volunteerism" in HFH's 2019 Annual Report, HFH Cambodia mobilized 1,363 volunteers from 11 countries to build 118 houses in Cambodia. However, local staff and volunteers are a long-term corner stone and investment for HFH Cambodia and in 2019, HFH gave 556 households access to better, safer and stronger homes, the bulk of this work being done by Khmer staff and volunteers (Habitat for Humanity Cambodia, 2019). HFH prioritizes the importance of Khmer people understanding housing policy and needs, and engaging people in their own communities to get involved.

Nearly all of HFH Cambodia's staff are Khmer, which is crucial to properly understanding the culture. Staff have professional backgrounds and unique skill sets, and often joined as staff after becoming aware of the work that HFH was doing. Chan Sopath, Volunteer and Youth Engagement Manager with HFH Cambodia, shared why he works for HFH and believes in the work they are doing: "[This is] the right way to support my people, I don't have money but I have this skill set that I can use to help work with stakeholders."

At Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF), there are 500 staff members, from maintenance up to management. Hoy Leanghoin, Community Outreach Manager for CCF, explained that most staff are Khmer. Leanghoin also shares that NGOs are particularly crucial to the government because they know exactly the issues of the people and community; they understand the problems, norms, and culture. Understanding and protecting culture is not only a priority for most NGOs, it is often the precise reason they are so successful and respected.

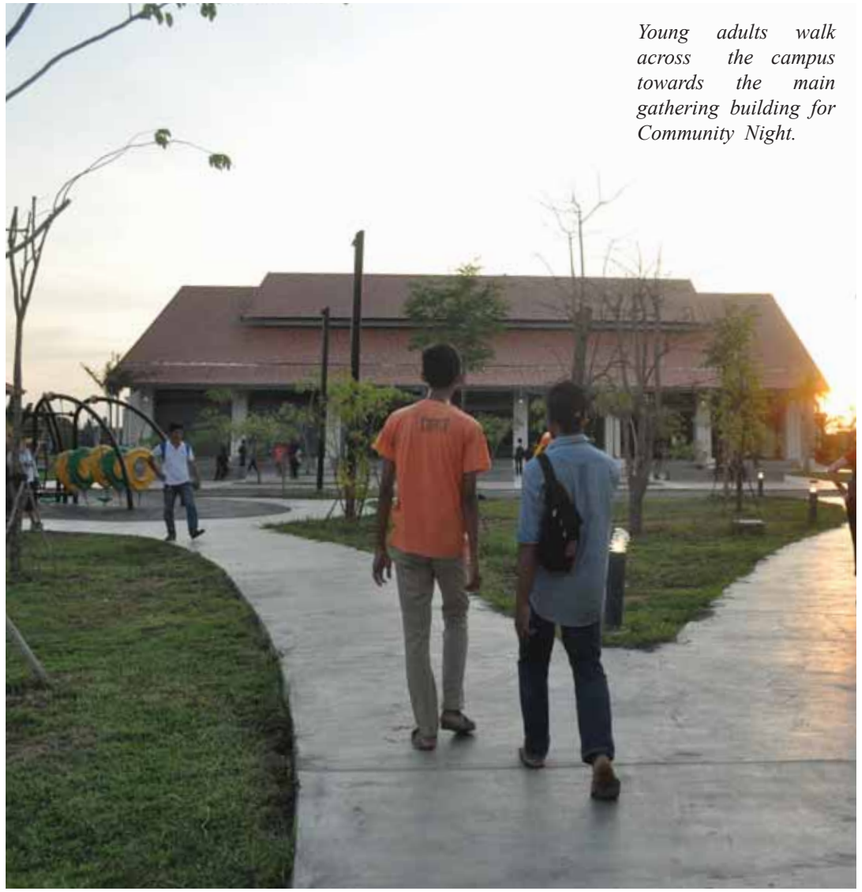
In Battambang, the missional organization and university staff have more varied demographics. Out of about 100 staff members, 45 of those members are non-Cambodian. These foreign staff members come from Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Samoa, and the United States, among others. Despite such diversity, the staff make an effort to deeply understand the country in which they serve, and follow a rigorous set of staffing rules. It is mandatory that all full-time staff speak fluent Khmer and live on the property or in adjacent neighborhoods. Staff members are also strongly encouraged to participate in different events in the community in addition to their specific roles, such as attending weekly community nights hosted on campus, playing in offered sports games, or being a part of communal small groups.

3.2 Building for Identity

The United Nations states that "housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity" (United Nations Habitat, 2014). In addition to understanding the demographics of NGOs working in the Cambodian housing crisis, it is important to consider the actual design

"THE (ARCHITECTS') EXPERTISE, THE CREATIVITY... IN THE COMMUNITY, WE HAVE EVALUATIONS OR SURVEYS ABOUT OUR OPINIONS. WE LEARN AS WE GO, AND SEE THE NEED FOR THE COMMUNITY. THE ARCHITECTS LISTEN TO US. THEY'RE OPEN TO CHANGE. THEY HEAR WHAT WE NEED."

Ponleak Makara Project Manager, Missional organization



Young adults walk across the campus towards the main gathering building for Community Night.

and construction of the buildings they are creating and the ways they are building for communities at large.

A missional organization and university designs and builds for the whole community of Battambang, not just the students it serves. They do this in two ways: working with designers and contractors to build in best practice, and using their property as a community asset. Ponleak Makara, Project Manager for the missional organization and university, shared about the architecture firm that worked on the design of the campus, 100 Fold Studio. 100 Fold Studio is based out of the United States, but works largely in developing nations under the belief that design is not just aesthetic, but necessary to both build with efficiency and dignify the human experience. 100 Fold Studio designers spend months at a time on-site in Battambang while designing and overseeing construction, allowing them to understand the community and address construction questions on-site.Makara has been working directly with 100 Fold Studio as the project manager for several years now. He shared that "100 Fold is gifted and talented with skills… they don't just give the products, they inspect [their work]," showing the skill and care that the design of the campus has undertaken. The designers work with local contractors and designers to account for local micro-climates, construction techniques, local skill-sets, and mindful material selections. Makara also shared about the design process, "They listen to one another. In the community,

we have evaluations or surveys about our opinions. We learn as we go, and see the need for the community. The architects listen to us. They're open to change. They hear what we need." The master plan of the campus was designed for phases of construction to allow for future accommodations and needs, and is grounded in the desire and plan for an open community campus. This is an excellent example of how the skills of an architecture firm, led by the local community, can celebrate and dignify Khmer culture not in spite of but as part of development. The campus sees their development of the campus as a community asset, and uses it as such. Their desire is for all to come and feel safe and welcome. One example of how they share the campus' resources with the community is the weekly community night. The focus of these nights is to invite all of those in the area to gather and grow together, not just those directly involved with the campus. Other examples of leveraging their property for the community are the soccer field or the crossfit gym, which are open to anyone to participate, not just students.

In Phnom Penh, Nhean Vanna, owner of an educational cafe, stressed the importance of creating communal space to foster the identity of Khmer people. As owner of the cafe and professor of journalism in Phnom Penh, Vanna understands the importance of place and identity for the youth. Vanna opened his coffee shop to provide a space for students to read and to study, but now also operates an adjacent photo center that educates people on the history of Cambodian politics and culture. The cafe provides a space for students to come and be together, and to learn about Khmer identity.

Habitat for Humanity (HFH) garners community investment by cultivating a sense of ownership in the community. HFH's youth volunteers are required to pay a small amount, equivalent to five dollars, to contribute volunteer work. Community and identity is not just about being Cambodian, but having a personal connection and a sense of ownership over the projects. It's a small personal investment for the volunteers that strengthens the community pride.

Similar to HFH's method of cultivating community ownership through small personal investments, Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF) requires the families they serve to contribute back

Above: An educational cafe.

Right: Campus soccer field.

to the community. Hoy Leanghoin, Community Outreach Manager for CCF, shares that "Families have to contribute, a very small amount.. [It] gives them a sense of ownership, a contribution. If [a] family cannot make [a] contribution, they can do labor instead— fixing garden, taking care of elderly, etc. prepare food." This type of contribution not only builds a personal investment for the families, but also works to build up and benefit the greater community.

Building identity is as much about constructing informative and welcoming spaces, such as with the campus and the cafe outside Phnom Penh, as it is about encouraging personal investment in community such as with HFH and CCF.

3.3 Growth and Sustainability

Section 1.1 discusses the pressures of rapid development in terms of housing availability. In addition to increasing housing stock pressures, rapid development also strains community identity. Cities like Sihanoukville, undergoing massive transformation largely funded by foreign money, are at risk of losing vernacular identity. In an interview with the Starfish Project, which aims to serve those who most need assistance due to physical disabilities, an employee noted the vertical building growth and non-Cambodian influence in the past 5-7 years, "It's like a new Chinese city." As the city and beaches become overrun by foreign developers, it becomes increasingly difficult for locals to stay in their existing communities and forces organizations like the Starfish Project to build houses further out from the city, straining their ability to foster community for local residents. There is only one other NGO left in Sihanoukville doing similar work to Starfish Project, Futures Center, according to employees.

Amidst domestic growth and foreign investment in cities, it is crucial to monitor the sustainability and growth of the NGOs working in them. Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF) has undergone rapid growth as an organization, and is aware of how important it is to manage. Sustainable growth is about management and size, and most of the NGOs interviewed stressed the importance of being able to keep relationships personal. Hoy Leanghoin, Community Outreach Manager for CCF, shared that it is "Important to build small community, not a separate one," emphasizing that while you don't want communities to feel disconnected, it is crucial to maintain housing communities that are at a reasonable scale in order for families to foster strong relationships. Leanghoin also stated that "size is based off of management," explaining that smaller communities are not only beneficial to their residents but much easier to support. The proximity of an NGO to the communities they support is also important, as Leanghoin shared it is easier to manage a large number of homes when they are in the same general area. As explained in a case study in Chapter 1, CCF works with over 3,000 families, and stressed that they know the whole community. Because they know the community on a personal level, residents often go to CCF before the local government agencies for resources like public transit aid. CCF sees this holistic and personal connection to the communities as key to sustaining the work they do. Both the proactive and reactive strategies of CCF, also further explained in Chapter 1, allow for flexible models in community outreach and care. This flexibility of programs based off of the needs of specific families and situations allows CCF's work to be sustainable moving forward. For CCF, flexibility is key to sustainability.

Habitat for Humanity (HFH) highly prioritizes self-sufficiency and education for the recipients of their homes and resources, as explained in Chapter 4. This type of rigorous resident education and self-sufficiency in recipients managing their homes is what makes the work they do so sustainable. HFH sees itself, and many NGOs, as a part of a long term solution to housing because their work is not short-sighted— they are going for long-range impact. HFH teaches communities how to save their money and create stability, and educates them on various topics, so that when something goes wrong they are able to change or fix it themselves. For HFH, education is key to sustainability.

One aspect of sustainable growth that NGOs have not yet seemed to address is that of forward thinking property investment. Though they are unable to funnel funds currently, HFH expressed interest in property investment. As property prices continue to rise, they could hinder the scope of work for NGOs in the future, decreasing the number of properties they can purchase and build for families. When looking for strong growth and sustaining communities, place matters. The hope is that NGOs are able to maintain community identity as property value continues to climb. If NGOs are unable to sustain their work amidst rising property values, they will struggle in being able to foster strong communities.

Homes built by Cambodian Children's Fund and World Housing.

Starfish Project in Sihanoukville

"...HOUSING IS NOT ADEQUATE IF IT DOES NOT RESPECT AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY."

United Nations Habitat, 2014

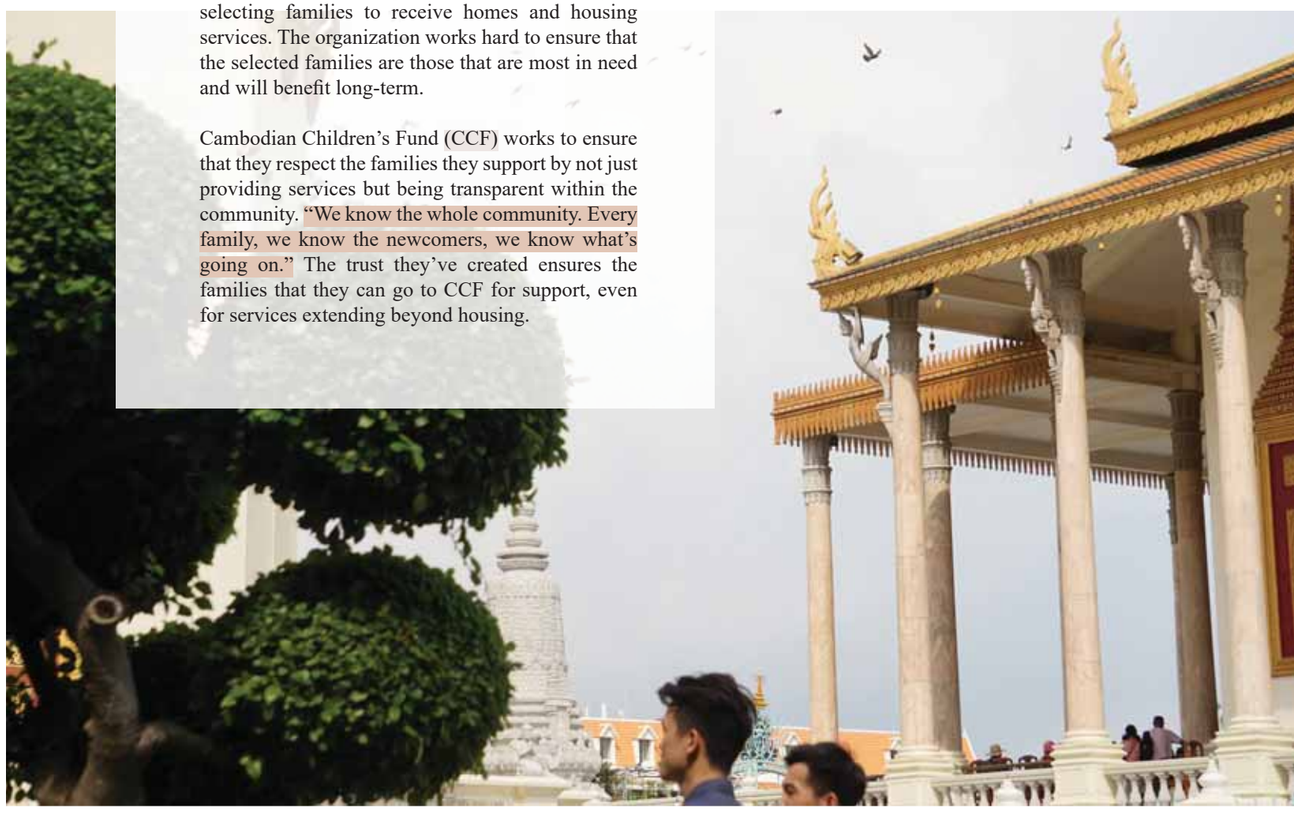
Nhean Vanna in his photo center, where he walks visitors through modern Cambodia history.

3.4 Transparency

NGOs play a role in clarifying the state of housing in Cambodia. As the government releases plans for zoning, local redevelopment, and its intended plans for housing, it is often difficult to understand if and how these changes will be implemented.

NGOs aim to provide clear information on housing that the government does not cover. Habitat for Humanity (HFH) emphasizes the importance of talking about local challenges, and creating awareness for students. HFH advocates for transparency at a local level, especially for the younger generation, in hopes that their generation will see the value of transparent goals as they take jobs and potentially positions of power in Cambodia. In this way, HFH's work for providing transparency to the younger generations could impact the future of the political climate. Chan Sopath, Volunteer and Youth Engagement Manager with HFH Cambodia, also described the importance of transparency in selecting families to receive homes and housing services. The organization works hard to ensure that the selected families are those that are most in need and will benefit long-term.

Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF) works to ensure that they respect the families they support by not just providing services but being transparent within the community. "We know the whole community. Every family, we know the newcomers, we know what's going on." The trust they've created ensures the families that they can go to CCF for support, even for services extending beyond housing.



4/ OPPORTUNITY

“The house is not just a house... This will change a kids life. People say that it gives them a second life.”

Chan Sopath Habitat for Humanity, Volunteer and Youth Engagement Manager

NGOs in Cambodia provide material spaces for people to live, but they also provide the stability to develop other areas of their lives. The ethos of providing housing to low-income communities is about providing that baseline of stability. Housing can be a necessary starting point for social and financial mobility, providing greater opportunity than is accessible without adequate shelter.

While some Cambodians may have access to four walls and a roof, they may not have the baseline of stability, which includes safety, tenure, financial security, and utilities, that NGOs seek to encapsulate in an adequate home. For example, a family living in an informal settlement may not feel comfortable leaving home in fear that their possessions or land could be at risk without a title. This could hinder members of a family from working or going to school, and in turn missing opportunity to build the wealth necessary to find a formal home. In this case, an NGO provided home would not only lift that family out of an insecure house, but provide them with the freedom to work or attend school.

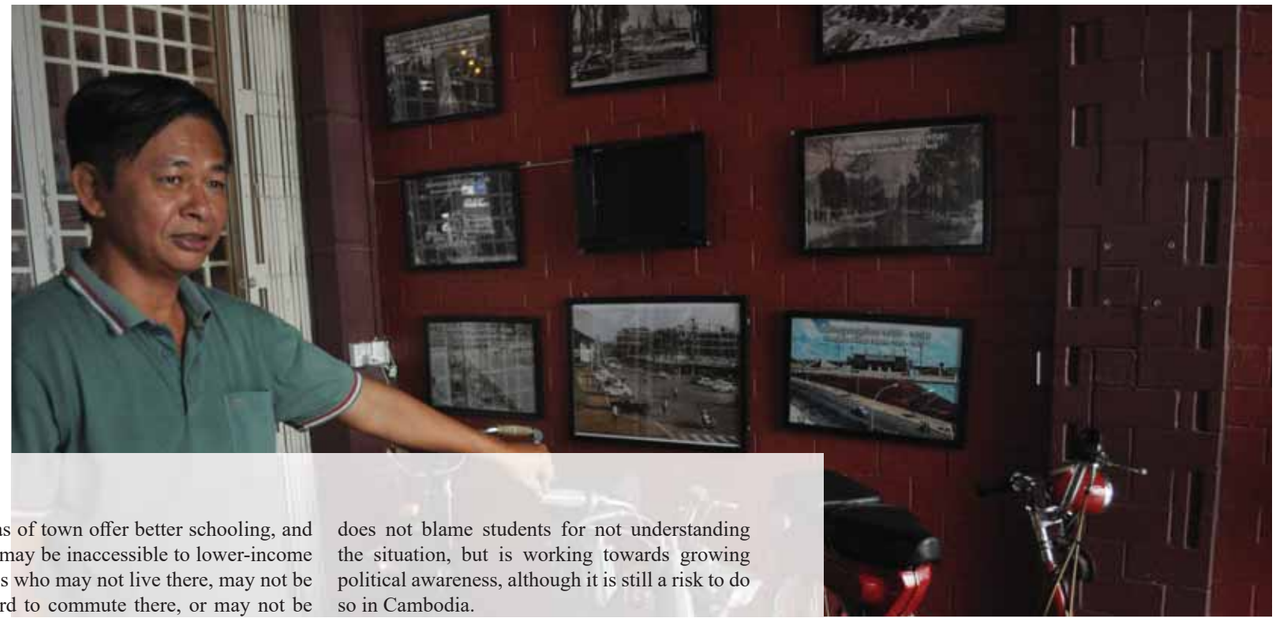
In this way, NGOs provide adequate shelter and a baseline of stability that allows people to use their resources in other aspects of their lives. A home can provide the opportunity to invest in other necessary life expenses, such as healthcare, home improvement, education, skills, leisure, or even peace of mind. In this way, housing is a stepping stone on a path to greater opportunity. NGOs in Cambodia assist in providing this path, whether in conjunction with housing services or focusing entirely on an area of opportunity. This section outlines five areas of opportunity: education, professional opportunity and job preparedness, skilled labor, self-sufficiency, and social mobility.

The Neeson Cripps Academy in the Stung Meanchey neighborhood in Phnom Penh, built by Cambodian Children’s Fund.

4.1 Education

The study found two different ways NGOs interviewed support the advancement of education through housing or otherwise. The first is by providing a house, so that funds otherwise spent on housing will go towards sending children to school. In an interview with Habitat for Humanity Phnom Penh, Chan Sopath, Volunteer and Youth Engagement Manager, explained “The house is not just a house, but allows the family to not send funds for homes, but send funds to send their kids to school, so that the kids don’t have to work.”

The second method of education support is for those already attending school to further their studies. As with many other places, the caliber of education often can vary with geographic factors.



Nhean Vanna in his photo center, where he walks visitors through modern Cambodia history.

Certain areas of town offer better schooling, and those areas may be inaccessible to lower-income communities who may not live there, may not be able to afford to commute there, or may not be able to afford the cost of books and supplies.

In an interview at an educational cafe, a coffee shop near Phnom Penh, the founder, Nhean Vanna explains that the outskirts of Phnom Penh are growing, and that the coffee shop was meant for students who could not reach the city. The cafe is equipped with big meeting spaces free for students to use, study in groups, or "share a guide and share a tutor." Vanna so deeply cares about education that students do not need to pay anything; "They don't even have to buy coffee. [They get the] space with no obligation." Vanna explains he is not a businessman, but runs the shop to promote knowledge to the young, carrying books on business, politics, law, religion, technology, and more.

As a professor at Pannasastra University Cambodia and Royal University of Phnom Penh, the founder has a heart for explaining to the younger generations the history of the "Cambodian political situation." In addition to the cafe, library, and tutoring spaces, he opened what he calls a Cambodian photo center, which "tells the story of Cambodia's history; students or Cambodian citizens or even foreigners can spend one hour and be aware of the whole Cambodian political situation since the 1970s." He says he does not blame students for not understanding the situation, but is working towards growing political awareness, although it is still a risk to do so in Cambodia.

Vanna was very concerned with generational change in Cambodia. He shared his concern with the younger generation's preoccupation with smartphones, which was part of his motivation in founding the cafe as an NGO to promote reading physical books. His concern is "If Cambodian young students don't read, their decision making is not right, their analyzing is not as deep. If you don't read you won't have a wide knowledge, critical thinking, [or] reason making."

As an organization, HFH hosts many educational programs. Sopath shares that they invite local volunteers to help with one-day programs, such as housing and school painting and neighborhood cleanup. They discuss local challenges and the students can apply for funds to further improve their community. If HFH does not have adequate funds available, they will send the students' applications to other NGOs. While they get work done that benefits the community, a large part of inviting youth to participate and volunteer in programs is to help them understand the housing crisis. "[We] really want to educate the youths, because of the 2030 [need for an additional] 1.1 million homes, the youth need to understand the housing crisis because this is when they will have a family."

4.2 Professional Opportunity + Job Preparedness

NGOs provide job opportunities that are built on a family's ability to maintain a stable home and a future for their children. For Habitat for Humanity (HFH) this applies in two ways. The first is that HFH offers entrepreneurship grants to families that want to create businesses in their communities, both benefiting the community and providing income opportunities. The second way HFH provides professional opportunity and job preparedness is through its own employees.

HFH provides opportunities for architects and engineers, among others, to use their skills to benefit the community. Samay Bona, Construction Supervisor, and Vanna Narith, Construction Assistant, with HFH shared their accounts of how HFH has provided opportunities for them to give back and advance their careers. Narith was interested in social work since working on social housing projects in school. In school he took a field trip to Thailand to study informal settlements, which greatly impacted him. He worked with other students and local authorities to study regulations, and since that time he has wanted to work for an NGO. Narith applied to an architectural position at a different NGO but the opportunity did not work out, so he worked in the private sector until he found HFH.

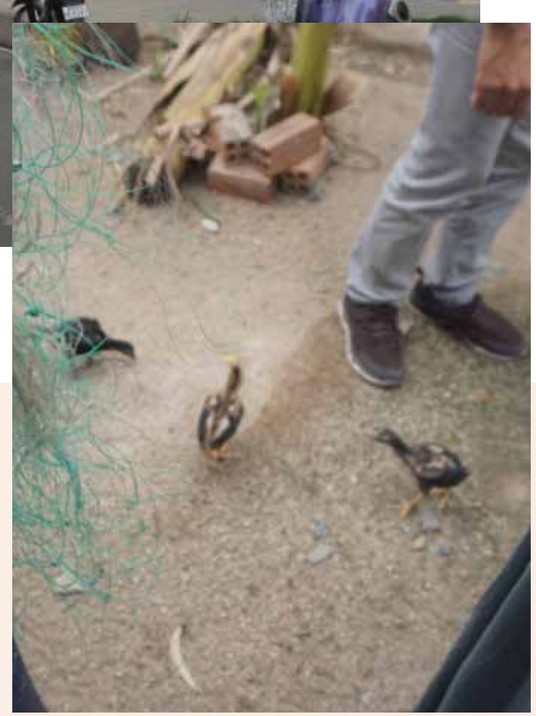
Bona also described how HFH has allowed him career growth as a civil engineer. His first paid job was constructing wells, and he worked with poor communities. It was difficult for him to find NGOs doing that work, and if he kept working with only wells, he could not grow as an engineer. He then saw an open HFH position that would allow him to expand his career beyond well construction. He enjoys the opportunity to visit the projects, consult with families, and allow families to contribute to the construction of their own homes.

HFH Cambodia has trained 4,748 youths in leadership; 2,632 youth in community development; and 1,492 students in housing policy and land tenure, according to Habitat's FY 2019 Annual Report (Habitat for Humanity, 2019).

4.3 Skilled Labor

NGOs often employ basic and skilled laborers in construction to build homes. Habitat for Humanity (HFH) trains workers in construction, and educates them about housing issues."[It's] not just about price but about value," says Sous Vannoeun, Battambang Area Manager for HFH Cambodia. HFH has trained 100 vocational students to be able to enter the workforce (Habitat for Humanity, 2019).

Ponleak Makara, Project Manager for a missional organization and university, said that he is able to "be a part of the building process" through the missional organization as they didn't require formal qualifications and teach people to be a part of the building process.Makara had a goal to be an architect growing up and felt a spiritual calling to work on construction development projects. Although he did not have the opportunity to go to architecture school, he has been able to develop his skills as a construction project manager at a missional organization over the past 6 years. Through his work on the campus he has not only become an expert in the construction industry but has been able to meet different types of people and even travel to many countries beyond Cambodia. He says that skilled labor opportunities from NGOs provide substantial wage growth, from $5-7 a day for labor to $10-15 a day for skilled



Chicks roam around An Sockchan's property and home that Habitat for Humanity helped provide.

4.4 Self-Sufficiency

NGOs provide numerous benefits to families, and make an effort to prioritize self-sufficiency, providing skills and education so that families can maintain their own lives and build upon the homes that they've been given. Habitat for Humanity (HFH) works to provide additional support to a home. For example, HFH trains families in how to raise chickens, protect the wood in their homes from weather, and build additions to their existing homes. Chhaya Khean, National Program Manager for HFH Cambodia, says "They save their money and funds and are educated so when something goes wrong they can change and fix it themselves."

Families can also receive grants for entrepreneurial ideas or community development projects. "We train people who identify the problem and address the community issue, and they are given a small grant $1000 to make these changes, this is what makes it more sustainable," says Khean. These projects can then become community assets, such as a water source, so it creates safe water and business.

HFH teaches families and communities how to develop healthy practices. They offer training in community sanitation, allowing families to practice using and maintaining water facilities. Programs like these help communities and neighborhoods operate independently from NGOs, and help to form community groups. Khean explained how these community groups work: "If something needs repair, they need to raise the funds… We learned from other NGOs. We have to form the group to keep them independent, the user group."

HFH offers preventative home maintenance training, teaching proper cleaning, sanitation of wet areas to prevent decay, and sealant maintenance on wood bracing, ensuring their homes are able to withstand Cambodia's wet climate and empowering recipients to claim ownership over the well-being of their homes.

Inside a HFH home with new additions built by the family.

4.5 Social Mobility

NGOs in housing are dedicated to providing shelter for Khmer people as a means of building up communities. A stable home is key in lifting people out of the cycle of poverty. Particularly after extreme conditions like civil war or genocide, such as with the Khmer Rouge, families are stuck looking for a stable home. NGOs are able to step in and build on the country's recovery, and continue their work as the years present their own challenges such as rapid growth. As the country continues to develop, it is crucial that basic needs are met to ensure development and social mobility for all, not just the wealthy. "The house is not just a house" says Makara, but allows the family to conserve funds that would otherwise be spent on attempting to find, rent, or maintain housing. Those funds then can be redirected to other services, such as sending their kids to school so the kids don't have to work. "This will change a kids life. People say that it gives them a second life."

Nhean Vanna's cafe is full of books and artifacts to help students learn.

CONCLUSION

The right to housing is emerging as a global topic, in both developing and developed countries. With that discussion, the question of adequate, sufficient housing standards arises. As stated, according to the UN, the following categories must be met: secure tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and finally, cultural adequacy. After speaking with non-governmental organizations in Cambodia, clear categories of the work they do emerged. The category that might be the most obvious is affordable housing production. However, a key finding in the role of NGOs in housing is the amount of work needed to be done in addition to housing production to effectively create and maintain housing affordability.

The categories documented are:

1 / Affordable Housing + Services

Understanding the Built Environment

2 / Housing, Land Tenure, and Government Relations

Understanding Policy

3/ Community + Identity

Understanding Culture

4 / Opportunity

Looking at the Future

Housing on the university campus.

Filling a Gap in Research

Due to a critical need and lack of government aid, the study found that NGOs are often the experts in affordable housing. Our study differs from others describing the housing crisis in Cambodia because it communicates the interpersonal experiences of experts in the field. They describe their passion, their work's importance, their struggles, and hopes.

This gave experts an opportunity to express setbacks in their work. A second key finding in this study is the inability to separate housing from interconnected issues when describing Cambodians' work in this field. Two key issues brought up were the lasting impacts of the Khmer Rouge and the impact of current foreign investment that negatively affect Cambodians' housing conditions.

The Intersectional Nature of Housing

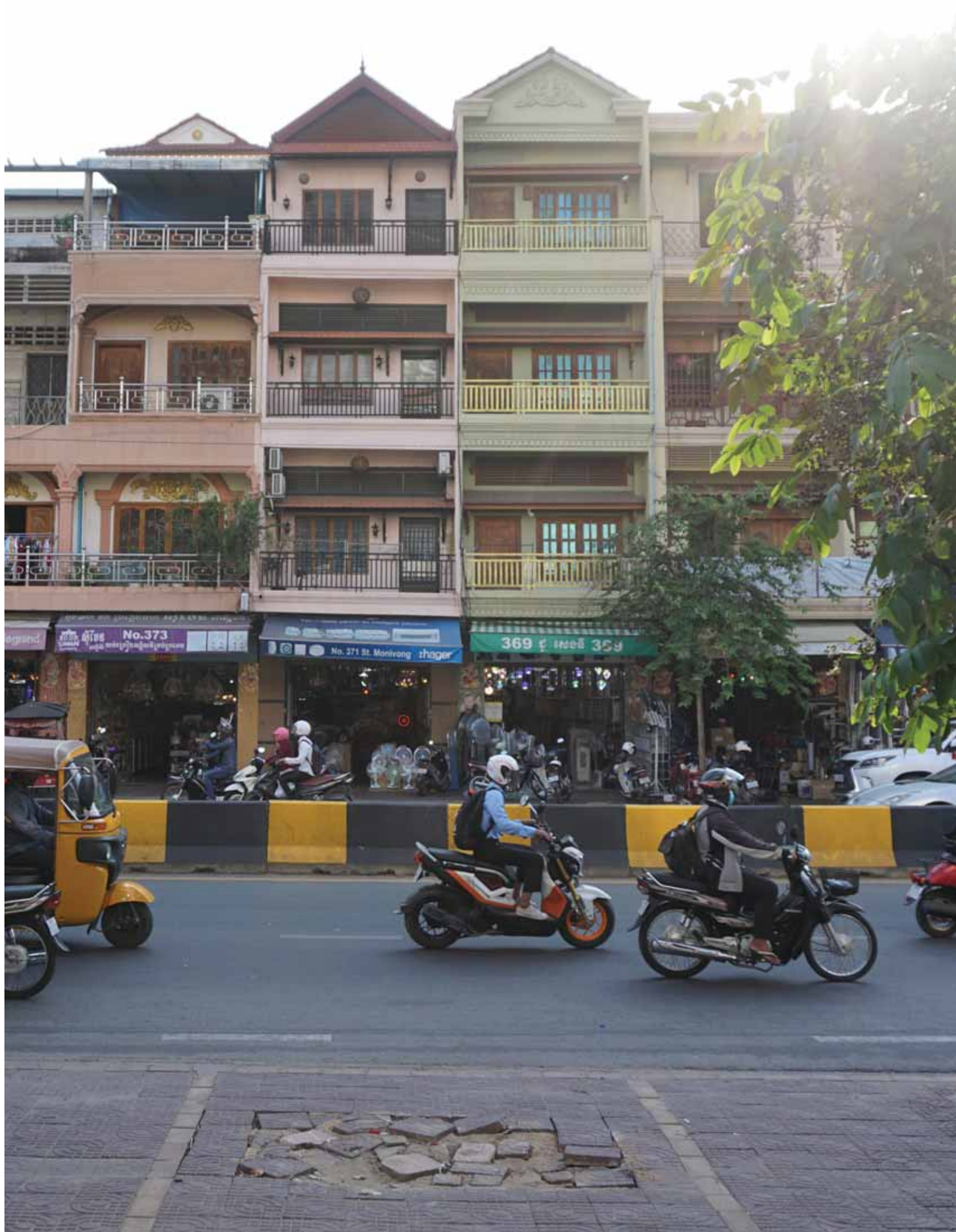
To reiterate, the research problem was to explore the extent to which NGOs provide adequate affordable housing in Cambodia, and to document their experiences in doing so. An unexpected addition to the study was the amount of quantitative analyses on housing policy and qualitative commentary on the political climate necessary to describe the results of the research problem. The intersectional nature of the results provides opportunities for further research.

Further research could dive deeper into issues described in this paper, such as the impact of foreign investment in Cambodian housing, the impact of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodian housing, how Cambodian housing policy affects affordable housing, and how the political climate in Cambodia affects affordable housing. This study, however, describes the general work of NGOs and the difficulty of providing that work when external issues intersect housing in Cambodia.

Housing as a Baseline for Progress

In addition to exploring the importance of growing the housing stock, addressing past trauma and current foreign investment, and providing a platform for the experts in NGOs to share their stories, this report concludes with the paradoxical perspectives of both an individual and society in the ability of housing to provide social mobility. The hope is that with basic housing needs met, education and transparency can bolster Cambodia's path as a country. The provision of adequate housing provides the ability for children to have a better life and more opportunity. This aspect of housing, this baseline of stability that can then be transferred to wealth, knowledge, and power, is limitless in how it can transform Cambodia and its future. Under tremendous internal and external pressures, NGOs provide shelter, but also contribute to Cambodia's recovery from a violent era and help to build a better, holistic future.

Affordable housing built by Habitat for Humanity.



Biographies

Natalie Boverman

Boverman currently works as an interior designer at an architecture firm in Seattle, Washington. Prior to moving to Seattle, Natalie graduated from the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture in May of 2018. While completing her degree Natalie spent two summers working for a non-profit architecture firm, 100 Fold Studio, which provides affordable and innovative design services to charitable organizations. After spending one summer in Montana, where the studio is based, Boverman spent the following summer working on site for one of the studio's largest projects— a campus for the University of the Nations, an NGO based out of Battambang, Cambodia. Her time in Battambang provided a new lens through which to see the topics of construction, community development, urban growth, and housing. Since practicing in Seattle, Boverman has delved into the housing and policy side of architecture through policy advocacy, community outreach, and involvement in the American Institute of Architects' Committee on Homelessness. Being trained in both architecture and interior design, Boverman is interested in the issues of community development and housing at scale, both from the human and the urban perspective. Based on her experience in Cambodia, her passion for housing, and her belief that architecture should be held accountable to socio-economic issues, the opportunity to return to Cambodia to study non-governmental organizations' approaches to the housing crisis appeared to be both coming full circle and diving deeper into these issues.

Anna Lazenby

Lazenby is currently an architectural designer in New York City. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in December of 2019 and completed the City Planning Summer Institute at the University of California, Berkeley in the summer of 2019. Lazenby was a 5th year architecture student when she was awarded the independent research grant from UT's School of Architecture. At that time, Lazenby resided in Washington, D.C. as a UT System Archer Fellow. She took policy and advocacy classes with other fellows and interned at Habitat for Humanity International. Her time at HFHI led her to select housing in Cambodia as the area of research for the scholarship. HFHI's Solid Ground campaign works to provide affordable housing, land rights, and advocacy efforts in Cambodia; speaking with coworkers involved in the campaign led to the research proposal highlighting the work of non-governmental organizations in Cambodia, including HFH Cambodia. She then reached out to Boverman, a former classmate, who had previously worked in Cambodia, to join the team. Lazenby's goal for the writing was to include an individual's narrative in the research process, providing insight on what life is like for an employee working towards equitable housing in Cambodia, the issues they face, and their goals for the future of Cambodia. Lazenby now works in multifamily housing in NYC and hopes to continue to understand the factors that contribute to housing affordability both in the United States and abroad.

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