# ASSESSMENT OF THE STUENG MEAN CHEY CANAL COMMUNITY

Final report

02/01/2020





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The consultants deeply thank all community leaders, inhabitants, government officers and the project team for their active collaboration all through the assessment.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

This assessment was realized by the NGO Planète Enfants & Développement (PE&D), after the call for applications launched for the recruitment of a consultant, within the scope of the project entitled "Improve the capacity of the Cambodian SNAs in participatory, integrated and sustainable urban planning and land management in order to upgrade the urban poor settlements (UPS) and ensure access to basic services for vulnerable communities."

The objective of the assessment was to deliver the following outputs:

- Assess the number of residents, the number of houses, the size and evolution of settlement, the types of households, the access to toilet, waste management, sewage system, etc.;
- Identify the priority needs of the community members, including challenges they encounter
- Pay special attention to the most vulnerable families

This report presents the results of the assessment, as well as the methodology that was set up by PE&D.

#### About Planète Enfants & Développement

PE&D is an apolitical and non-profit international organization, headquartered in Paris, France. It was founded in 1984 in Cambodia, first under the name of "SOS Children of Cambodia", following the Cambodian genocide. It was the first French organization to be established in the country at the time. Later known as "Enfants & Développement", it further expanded its activities to Vietnam in 1993, Nepal in 1997 and Burkina Faso in 2004. In 2016, after the merge with another organization, it became Planète Enfants & Développement.

The organization primarily aims at ensuring a safe and positive environment for children in its countries of intervention. It strives to administer a wide range of services such as protection, healthcare and education to children, from conception through adolescence, and their families. With the ambition to make significant and sustainable impact, the organization promotes a comprehensive approach, which takes into consideration the overall living conditions of families and communities.

PE&D is working with urban poor communities in Phnom Penh since 2004, conducting different projects aiming to improve the autonomy and living environment of the communities. PE&D is leading its projects following several principles:

- A participatory-based approach to always make sure the projects meet the needs, and to get the involvement and participation of communities.
- A willingness to involve all stakeholders. In Phnom Penh, this translates into close relations with the local authorities, the urban poor communities, and service providers like other NGOs supporting social actions.
- A deep understanding of the field. Before starting any actions in the urban poor communities, several meetings are undertaken to understand the history of the village and its dwellers, the challenges they faces, and to conduct participatory mapping of the intervention areas. To deepen some analyses, PE&D conducts quantitative and qualitative surveys.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronyms and Abbreviations	Details
AIMF	International Association of Francophones Mayors
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EDC	Electricité du Cambodge
MFI	Micro-Finance Institution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PE&D	Planète Enfants & Développement
PPCH	Phnom Penh City Hall
PPWSA	Phnom Penh Water Supply authority
SMCC	Stueng Mean Chey canal
SNA	Sub-National Administrations
UPS	Urban Poor Settlement

## Summary

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Stueng Mean Chey Canal (SMCC)<sup>1</sup> community describes around 560 families living in the area of the canal of the same name, located in four villages in the Stueng Meanchey Commune Muoy, Stueng Meanchey Khan, Phnom Penh (see figure 1)



FIGURE 1: STUENG MEAN CHEY CANAL MAP

The canal is a drainage canal, evacuating the wastewater in Boeung Tumpun Lake, located around 3 kilometers in the south.

These families settled in this area mostly in the nineties, and have been living there since this period in precarious conditions. Close to the canal, this area is considered as a public land by the authorities. Therefore, no land titles have ever been distributed to the families before the upgrading project was initiated.

The Phnom Penh City Hall (PPCH) decided to renovate this section of the canal, which used to be no more than a trench. When redesigning completely the area, the PPCH decided to keep a part of the land for the families living there. The works on the canal started in 2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In this report, the spellings used for the Khmer transcriptions of places are those from the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (https://ncdd.gov.kh)

To make this operation possible, around 150 temporary rooms were built under the Stueng Mean Chey sky bridges (see figure 2). The construction project was phased and the area divided into 4 zones (see figure 1). Thus, when the works started in zone 1, families of this zones could live in the temporary rooms, equipped with toilets and water for free. When the works in zone 1 were over, the families need to settle back on their land so the families living in zone 2 could take their place in the temporary rooms, and so on with the progress of the works.



Parallel to this, the PPCH, the National Association of FIGURE 2: TEMPORARY ROOMS Capital and Provincial Councils, the National League of

Local Councils, the City of Paris (France) and the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF) have decided to combine their respective competencies and experiences to implement a project to improve the capacity of the Cambodian Sub-national Administrations (SNAs) in participatory, integrated and sustainable urban planning and land management in order to upgrade the UPS and ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for vulnerable communities.

To do so, the action decided to upgrade the SMCC Community through the coordinated action between the different administrative levels and the enhanced capacities of the PPCH in urban planning and land management.

The PPCH, the City of Paris and AIMF launched a call of tender in August 2019 for finding consultants to conduct an assessment of the SMCC Community. During the briefing meeting, the consultant's team has been requested to realize the assessment specifically on the families living in zone 1. This represents 153 families, mainly organized among 2 communities.

First, the report describes the methodology used in this assessment. Secondly, the report depicts the situation of the families who used to live in zone 1. Thirdly, the report analyzes the current impacts of the project on the families. Finally, a focus is made on the community's requests and recommendations are made, from the inhabitants and the consultants.

#### I. **METHODOLOGY**

#### EXPLANATION OF THE METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE ASSESSMENT.

PE&D has been working for years with different communities in the Mean Chey district, as well as other districts, but had never been involved with this specific one around the canal. Before starting it had to get familiar with the community leaders and the inhabitants.

To realise the assessment, PE&D aimed at getting qualitative and quantitative information.

PE&D usually collects qualitative information through focus-group discussions, individual discussions, and through field visits and observations. Quantitative information is collected mainly via individual survey, and using existing data, i.e. secondary data.

In this study, the assessment was realised in three distinct steps:

#### - First step: meeting with leaders

Prior meetings with community leaders are essential not only in order to collect information, but also to facilitate future exchanges with the community, as the recognition of influencers impacts the way the community will welcome the organization.

Community leaders can provide very useful general information on the community profile and the different previous or ongoing projects. PE&D may address with the community leaders topics that need specific knowledge we can expect from them or some sensitive questions that we would rather not raise in public, for instance regarding ethnic minorities.

The village leader can be also met for this kind of assessment. However, in this specific situation, the team did not need to get in touch with the village leaders as the community leaders provided to the team all necessary information.

#### Second step: public meetings

All the inhabitants were invited to join public meetings. PE&D planned to organise three public meetings: one with the Stueng Brak Meanchey community, one with the Samaki MeanChey Thmey community and a last one with the remaining families who are not part of any community.

Meetings were managed by a facilitator. Using participatory approaches and methodologies, for instance drawing or games, the facilitator managed to get the participation of everyone to foster debate and then understand deeply the answers that will be provided to the topics raised.

Precisely, the first questions aimed to measure the satisfaction of the community about the project, but also their current living conditions. Then, the questions were oriented on the remaining challenges to be faced and the necessary solutions. These solutions appears finally to be the different requests that the community have.

After this a game was organised to prioritise the requests. All the requests were drawn on envelopes. Each participant was given four papers which they had to put secretly inside the envelope corresponding to his/her most important request. Opening the envelopes together, the count of little papers showed the main requests of the community.

The latest activity prepared and conducted during the public meeting was a collective mapping. Participants had to point out all the places of interest. Ideally, they should do the mapping from scratch, but here, to fasten the process, the map was already printed (*Open Street Map* of the area) on an A0 scale. This exercise helped the team to understand how the people live, where they can find the services, and how the area is connected with the rest of the city.

Qualitative information that is essential to the assessment is expected from the public meetings.

Public meetings have to be conducted after the meeting with leaders, to get a formal approval and introduction to the community.

#### Third step: Individual survey

PE&D wanted to conduct the individual survey with all of the 153 families who could be reached (usually with the family chief). The tool used is an online form<sup>2</sup>. The surveyors go directly door-to door to meet with the families, and ask the questions orally in Khmer. The fact of conducting these individual surveys after the public meetings facilitates the task of the surveyor as the inhabitants are already informed about the survey.

Each answer is filled on the online platform by the surveyor, using a tablet, and directly in English. There is no need for people to be literate to answer the survey.

This process automatically consolidates a database that was analysed for the survey.

The purpose of the individual survey is to get a clear picture of the situation of the families involved in phase 1 of the project:

- ✓ The current situation regarding their land
- ✓ The background (origin of the inhabitants, date of immigration...)
- ✓ The economic situation (income, debts, goods ownerships)
- ✓ Other vulnerabilities
- ✓ The evolution between before the canal construction and now, in terms of housing
- ✓ The individual satisfaction regarding the land title acquisition and the process

The methodology, topics and questionnaires were presented and discussed with the project team before their implementation, so all inputs and ideas from the project team could be taken into account on time.

Field observation was also necessary as well to get more qualitative information. For example, it is through both observation and questions that PE&D could really get information about land trades.

#### 2. IMPLEMENTATION

During the first meetings with the community leaders, PE&D noticed that leaders and inhabitants were not comfortable with sharing some information.

The first observations on the field were not welcomed as well, and some leaders warned us later that they would not allow the team to come out on the field again.

To overcome those barriers and in order to facilitate our work, PE&D required a meeting with all stakeholders during which the PPCH could take the opportunity to introduce officially the consultants to the inhabitants and to explain their role.

This meeting was organised on Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> of October with the participation of all the project's main stakeholders. The goal of the meeting was reached, with an important impact on the attitudes of leaders and inhabitants, who changed totally and accepted to share all the information and documents after this meeting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Kobo Humanitarian Response: KoBoToolbox is a free toolkit collecting and managing data in challenging environments and is the most widely-used tool in humanitarian emergencies.

This experience highlights the importance of the official presentation of any non-governmental actors when they are involved in such a project. Meetings with community leaders were held smoothly afterwards. The leaders that could be met included leaders of Samaki Mean Chey Thmey Community, Stueng Brak Mean Chey, as well as leaders from other communities who took up specific roles during the SMCC upgrading project.

Following the meeting with community leaders, PE&D let the community decide the dates that suited the most the inhabitants to organise the public meetings and the date of Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 was suggested by the leaders. A meeting with the Stueng Brak Mean Chey community was held in the morning and another with Samaki Meanchey Thmey in the afternoon. To encourage participation and compensate the time taken on a holiday, a meal was provided to every person attending.



FIGURE 3: MEETING WITH STUENG BRAK MEAN CHEY COMMUNITY

These public meetings were very satisfying. Many community members joined (33 participants in the morning and 25 in the afternoon). They expressed easily their opinions and debated.



FIGURE 4: MEETING WITH SAMAKI MEANCHEY THMEY COMMUNITY

Initially, a third meeting was planned with the families who are not part of communities. Community leaders expressed that it would be difficult to organise this meeting due to the fact that they did not know how to get in touch with these families as well as that many of them do not live in Stueng Mean Chey canal area anymore.

However, PE&D tried to meet them on-site and to decide whether organising this meeting made sense. Only 8 families were identified (out of 37 who are not part of communities in zone 1), which confirmed the feeling of the community leaders. For these few families, only individual interviews were held. This format allowed them to express any concern freely.

The field implementation of the individual survey was not easy, as it was hard to reach the families. One "zone 1 family" was still living in a temporary room under the bridge. Most of the families living in their new house could easily be interviewed, but many other families could not been reached, especially those who sold their land and those who kept the land but don't live anymore in the area.

This point already raises the topic of the monitoring, that will be described more in details in part IV. Having a database with contacts of the families would be useful for the assessment and the implementation of the project.

PE&D tried to get phone numbers for these families, but apart few exceptions, neither leaders nor neighbours had them.

Anyway surveyors went several times on the field, including the weekend, to find as many as families as possible. In total, 50 families were reached and took the individual survey. 45 of them were living in a new house that they had built (i.e. 90% of the sample vs 37% for the total population). This means the sample presents a specific characteristic which will have impact for the results of some questions. In this report, reminders will be made for the results that could be biased by the characteristics of the sample.

Quantitatively however, the sample (33% of the families of zone 1 were surveyed) is large enough for a correct analysis of some questions replies, like the status of housing before the project.

On the field, the survey was easy to conduct as families were very collaborative.

Even though 103 families could not have been met with, PE&D could get through the inhabitants' information regarding land trades. Often, neighbours and community leaders knew whether the land, even vacant, still belonged to the family who received the plot or had been purchased.

#### II. STUENG MEAN CHEY CANAL'S COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

#### 1. BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY

The first inhabitants settled in the area in 1979, immediately after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime. At that time, it is said there were around twenty families over there. There used to be a lake as well (called the Stueng Mean Chey lake) from which the villagers took the water not only for the domestic use but also to drink. This lake has been obviously landfilled since.

After the 1991 Paris Peace agreements, the population of the community increased as many families, living before that in Thai refugees' camps, came back to Cambodia. They settled in this area as well.

Quickly, there was certainly no more free land and newcomers had to buy the land or the house from the previous owners, even though the area was an informal settlement.

Ownership was however defined with informal criteria, as the owner was the first one to take the land. During the individual survey, many families, which arrived in the nineties, explained that they had to buy the land or a house when they arrived. The affordable price was one of the main reasons for choosing to settle. According to the individual survey, 68% of the inhabitants settling before 1995 came from the province.

Living conditions were certainly not as difficult as ten years later, as Phnom Penh was much less dense. After the mid-nineties, it seems that the population continued to grow slowly. If some migration is still explained by the rural migration to Phnom Penh, most of the arrivals were already living in Phnom Penh. According to the data of the individual survey, 78% of the families who arrived after 1995 were indeed coming from another part of the city.

This chart from the data of the individual survey shows the trend of occupation of the land:

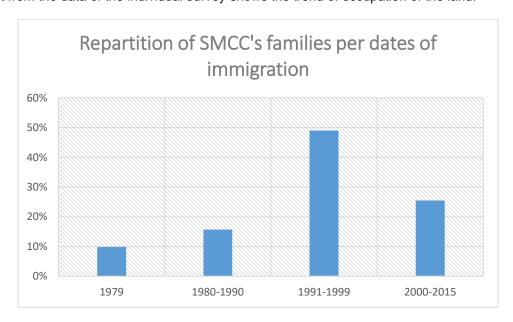


FIGURE 5: IMMIGRATION DATES

#### 2. SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

This section of the report might be biased by the characteristic of the sample and not representative of the whole community.

70% of the families count between 3 and 6 members. The most common answer is 4 family members, while the median is 5.

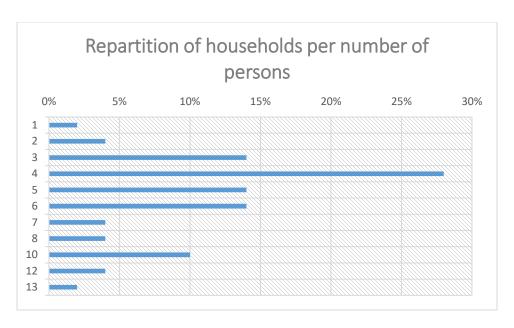


FIGURE 6: FAMILY MEMBERS

Regarding the weekly income, 37% of households have a weekly income of less than US\$100 (i.e. less than US\$430 per month), 51% additional have a weekly income between US\$100 to US\$249, which means 88% in total earn less than US\$250 (i.e. US\$1075 per month).

The median is 120\$ per week.

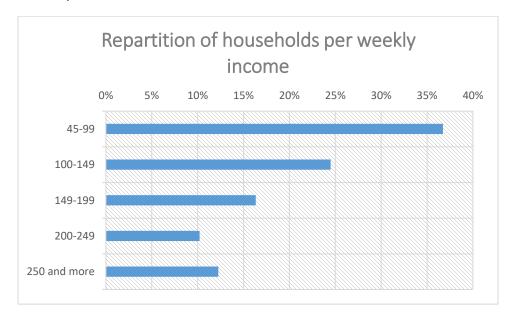


FIGURE 7: INCOMES

Dividing the median income per day per median family members (5), the median daily income per family member of **US\$3.4.** 

This figure reveals that the sample is not among the poorest population of Phnom Penh. Indeed, in other urban poor communities where PE&D intervenes, the daily income per family member is around \$1.6, below than the absolute poverty line (which is of \$1.9). Here, the income is much above the poverty line. However,

even though the interviewed families are not among the poorest ones, their income remains low, considering the current cost of living in Phnom Penh and reveals certain difficulties to make the ends meet. 24% of the families said that they had to skip a meal because there wasn't enough money for food in the previous month.

Related to ownerships, there is an average of 2 motorbikes (exactly 1.9) per household. Only 4% of the sample owns a car. This is coherent and in line with a picture of low/middle-class families.

One can assume that the families who could not be interviewed, especially those who sold quickly the land, or could not afford to build a house, have a lower income than the interviewed families.

<u>In terms of jobs</u>, there are very various occupations reported by the respondents. Here is the list of jobs with occurrences:

Occupation	Occurrences
Baby-sitter	1
Bank employee	1
Businessman	1
Carpenter	1
Chef/Cook	8
Chinese translator	1
CINTRI employee	1
Civil officer/Government officer	2
Cleaner	4
Company (real-estate)	1
Company worker	8
Construction worker	1
Deliveryman	3
Designer	1
Doctor	1
Driver	2
Engineer	1
Factory worker	2
Footballer	1
Garment worker	3
Hairdresser	3
Housekeeper	1
Money lender	1
Motodop taxi	8
Motor mechanic	1
Non-governmental organization (NGO) staff	5
No job, supported by children	1
Phone technician	1
Policeman	3
Raising chicken	1
Security guard	2

Seller	12
Seller (fruits/vegetables)	5
Seller (groceries)	2
Singer	1
Tailor	2
Teacher	3
Teacher assistant	1
Trash collector	1
Tuk-tuk driver	2
Working in a casino	1
Working in a coffee shop	1
Working in a nightclub	1

The variety of answers is interesting to point out. In the same community are living teachers and doctors, many sellers, trash collectors or cleaners. There is a mix between formal and informal, qualified and non-qualified jobs.

#### 3. VULNERABILITIES

The individual surveyed aimed also to evaluate the specific vulnerabilities in the community.

14% of the families reported having at least 1 member with disabilities. This number shall not be neglected. Disabled persons certainly suffer from the lack of specific care in Phnom Penh, but also impact the situation of the families for whom the cost of supporting a disabled person is often challenging.

36% of families have at least one member with serious health issues. Looking into the details, people suffer for example from tuberculosis, diabetes, blood pressure disorder. Serious diseases also constitute an economic problem as treatments are expensive. Health centers and hospitals are not far away from the community (see figure 9), but families complain about the cost of healthcare. Poorest families can theoretically benefit from the ID Poor card, but those who live over the poverty line are not within the scope of the IP Poor card framework.

During the survey, only 2 children in the 50 families were reported as not attending school. For one the reason was he was sick and for the other one that he was working with his parents and they could not take time to register him to school. This confirms that most of children in Cambodia are now attending school, however specific attention must still be provided in order that all of the children are enrolled.

#### 4. SITUATION OF HOUSING BEFORE THE CANAL RENOVATION AND CHALLENGES

As the assessment was done after the community moved out from their old houses, it was not possible to see anymore the houses, but the situation could be examined thanks to the results of the survey.

Only 4% of the houses were built with bricks or concrete. It means all the other houses were built with "temporary materials", mainly wood or corrugated metal sheets.

88% of the families had already undertaken a form of improvement before the housing renovation. It is something frequently seen with precarious housing as they generate high needs for maintenance and improvement. There were families who used to spend important sums for the improvement already, up to 8000\$. The median answer for this question was 300\$.

80% of the houses had 1 room only. 14% had 2 rooms and 6% had 3 rooms. Space was scarce. For houses with 1 room only, it meant the room was also the place for cooking.

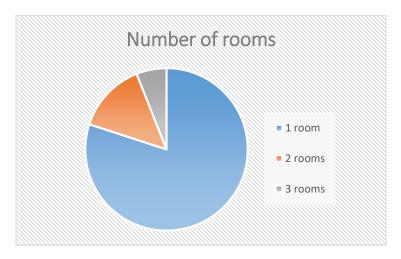


FIGURE 8: NUMBER OF ROOMS

Almost all of the households were connected to the electrical network, but 46% only to the Electricité du Cambodge (EDC). The other were purchasing the electricity to private suppliers, with a cost around 1500 riels / kWh.

The situation is similar regarding the water connection situation: all households were connected to a water supply, but the majority to a private provider with a cost between 1500 to 2500 riels per meter cube. 22% only of the households were connected to the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA).

Many challenges were affecting the community. One of the main problems reported was the fire. In 1994, a fire destroyed one house. Again in 1996, 24 houses were destroyed. Last one was in 2007 with 1 house destroyed again. The housing materials and the density was facilitating the fire spreading.

Another main problem reported is flooding. During every rainy season, the community was flooded. Reasons are of course the proximity of the canal which could overflow, and the absence of an adequate drainage system. Flooding causes diseases and a risk for children. A child eventually died by drowning in 2016.

Inhabitants complained as well about the waste management. There was no formal waste management system, and no truck could access the community because of the impossible access. There used to be trash everywhere and consequences on health. Inhabitants used to be regularly sick.

The lack of infrastructure in general was affecting the community. Road were large of 1 or 2 meters only, which meant cars and trucks could not enter in the area. There was no standard sanitation system. Being close to the canal, inhabitants were connecting directly a pipe to the canal to evacuate the wastewater.

#### 5. INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Many families are grouped in so called "communities", constituting 8 communities. The fact already to have clear and distinct communities is a sign of a good organization of the group. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have been working in this area in the previous years, a fact that could explain this cohesion. A further example is that 4 communities manage saving groups.

Among the 153 families of the zone 1:

- 75 were part of Stueng Brak Meanchey community
- 42 were part of Samaki Meanchey Thmey community
- 37 were living in the administrative Phum3 village and not part of any community

The community is celebrating some events together, such as Bon Phum, or solidarity events. Leaders mentioned for instance events where everybody gathers and cleans the community, or shared solidarity meals.

There are no ethnic minority groups: only 2 Chinese families, 2 Vietnamese families, and 1 Cham family. According to the leaders, they are well-integrated.

Still, some families are not part of the 8 communities. According to the community leaders, these families have a better economic situation and don't take interest in the urban poor communities. However, PE&D could not meet with all of these families to confirm this point. PE&D could not also check that all families listed in the communities were taken into consideration from the beginning.

It is very possible that some families are also marginalized, as it is seen in other UPS. An example is the almost-systematic exclusion of drug users. Frequently, short-term renters are also not integrated in the groups and the life of the community. Local authorities as well as CSOs should be cautious about the exclusion process (which can be made consciously or not by the community) when working with community groups, to ensure the inclusion of everyone.

#### 6. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OUTSIDE

During the public meeting, many inhabitants said that they have a sense of discrimination from the outside. They feel ashamed, pointed out and laughed at with derogatory nicknames. Living in these conditions is not only difficult for materials reasons (housing, hygiene) but also emotionally, as their dignity is harmed.

PE&D also questioned the integration of the neighborhood within the rest of the city, in terms of connection to services.

The inhabitants were asked during the public meeting to map directly their places of interest (see figure 9).

All common services are close from the community: a health center, a market, the primary school, a pagoda, the Sangkat office, the police station. The health center is the place for small problems or mundane diseases, as inhabitants would opt for the Khmer-Soviet hospital in case of serious situations.

To purchase their groceries or supplies, the inhabitants go to the local markets.

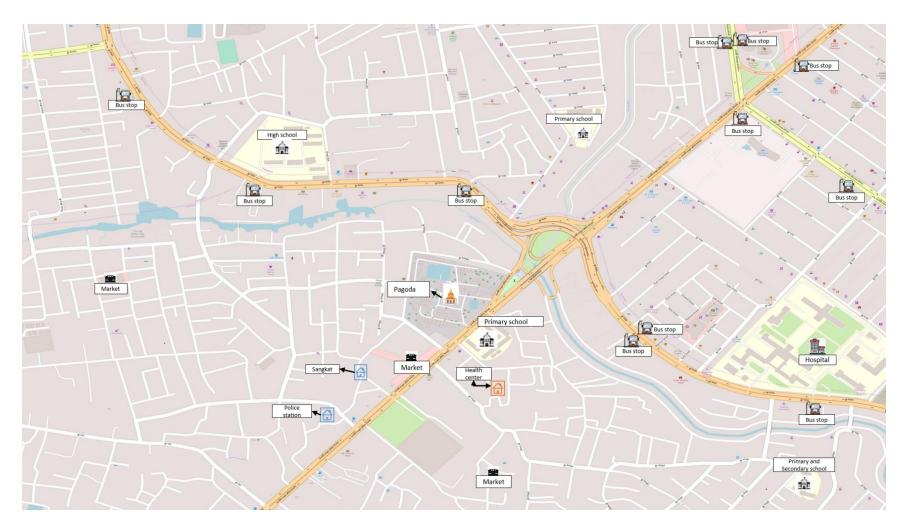


FIGURE 9: PARTICIPATORY MAP OF SERVICES

No one mentioned the bus lines when asking about transportation. We can notice however that bus stops (line 7) can be easily accessed walking from the area. Obviously, the habit is still to use the motorbike to travel around the city, despite the bus network's development.

#### III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT AND CONSEQUENCES

#### 1. LAND TRADE

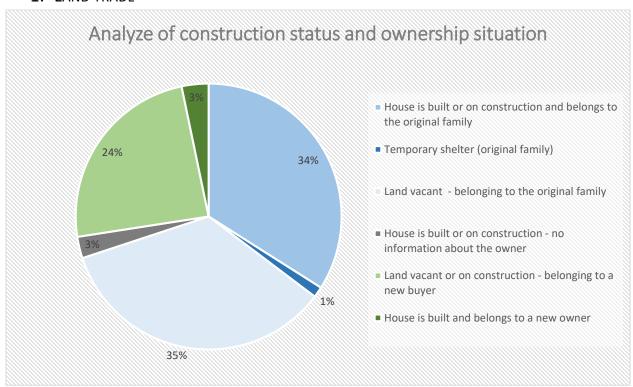


FIGURE 10: CONSTRUCTION STATUS AND OWNERSHIP SITUATION

As of the 01st of December 2019, 70% of the land plots still belonged to the SMCC family, as 27% were sold. The owner could not be identified for 3% of the plots, but as the houses were built already on these plots, statistically there are many chances that it still belongs to the family who received the plot. This would mean 73% of the plots were not sold yet.

• 34% to 37% (including the uncertain 3%) of SMCC families kept the land and managed to build a house (See more details about the constructions in the following section).

• 36% of the plots still belong to the SMCC families and did not start to build (as of 01st of December 2019). The intention of these families is not clear. Two families (the 1% represented in dark blue on the chart) live on-site in temporary and very precarious shelters (see figure 11). Others don't live in the area, and as explained already in this report, they could not be interviewed.

Among them, some want to sell the land. This was said by inhabitants and it can be verified on the field with the notice of cardboards indicating "land for sale". It is assumed that those willing to sell the land is constrained by their economic situation: they certainly lack funds to build a house and expect the grant of the sale can help



FIGURE 11: PRECARIOUS SHELTER

them to get a better situation, or pay back debts. On the contrary, some inhabitants said that there are as well families who have another property in Phnom Penh and prefer to sell the land for money, but it was not possible to evaluate how many are in this situation. It was reported as well that some families received several plots, using the names of different family members, which could also explain why they are fast to sell. This could not be checked using the lists of 153 families or through the meetings.

Other families certainly wait to get enough funds, or a loan, before building a house. Meanwhile, it is said that they live with their relatives.

• Last, 27% of the plots have been purchased (i.e. 42 plots). Most of the time, the land is sold empty. Only one case reported where a building was built and sold. According to what was heard, the land prices range is between 18.000\$ and 20.000\$. This could not be confirmed with the buyers, but is seems realistic as it corresponds to a price per meter square between 750\$ to 833 \$. A curious fact is that a buyer managed to buy 23 adjacent plots (plots 1.112 to 1.134). This represents 15% of the total plots of SMCC Zone 1. Apparently, community leaders helped to put the buyer in touch with the families. It would be relevant to identify the buyer or the sellers and understand what the conditions of the trade were. Obviously, the offer was very attractive. Did the buyer propose a price higher than the market price or provide a material compensation, maybe by trading the land with a housing? Worst case scenario, pressure could have been put on the families in order for them to sell their plots. There are rumors among the community about the identity of the buyer but nothing could be confirmed. Now, the buyer is building a big building which raises questions on the regulations (see more details about the constructions in the following section).

#### 2. ADVANCEMENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION

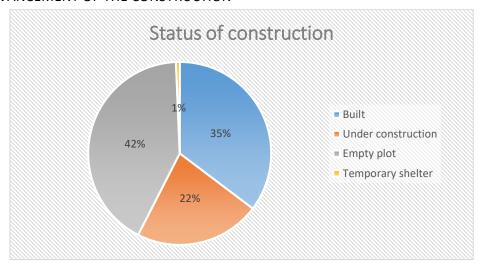


FIGURE 12: STATUS OF CONSTRUCTION

The site is upgrading fast. In early December, there were 42% empty plots without any construction versus 57% at the end of September. At this pace, most of the site will be built around May 2020.

35% of the houses construction are finished already. Almost all of these construction are 2-story buildings built on the 4x6 land surface (see figure 13). Frequently, the owners of adjacent plots find common solution to build a single building with internal separations (see figure 14). This architectural style is the "Chinese compartment" and is very common in Phnom Penh.

This was not surveyed, but the estimate price of this construction is from 15.000\$ to 20.000\$, depending on the company (formal or informal), the quality and the option of a collective or an individual building.



FIGURE 13: 2-STOREY INDIVIDUAL BUILDING



FIGURE 14: 2-STOREY COLLECTIVE BUILDING



FIGURE 15: 2-STOREY UNFINISHED BUILDING

To spare costs, one family built only the first floor of the building, certainly waiting to get more funds before starting the second floor construction (see figure 15). This staggered option could be a good idea for other families lacking funds, with precautions to be taken regarding the insulation.

Few constructions differ than the 2-storey "Chinese compartment". Some Chinese compartments present only 1 storey, as others have 3 storeys.

Some houses differently respect a more traditional architecture. A house for instance is built with wood and on stilts, following the design of the Cambodian rural house (see figure 16). A couple of others mix the construction materials, with the ground floor walls entirely built with bricks, a first floor with wooden walls, and metal sheets for the roof (see figure 17). For this type of houses, the price is estimated around 5.000\$.



FIGURE 16: STILT HOUSE



FIGURE 17: MIXED MATERIALS CONSTRUCTION

As mentioned previously, one single buyer purchased 23 plots (see below on figure 18).

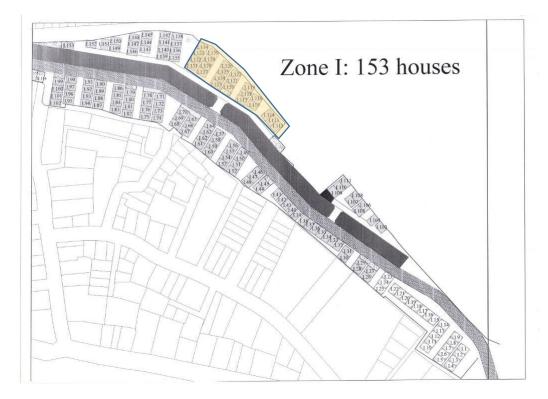


FIGURE 18: MAP OF PLOTS IN ZONE 1

There is currently one big construction where used to be the 23 plots, encompassing the public land supposed to be between or near the plots (see figures 19 and 20). It is not known whether the buyer managed to buy this land as well, or obtained an agreement to build on the whole area.





FIGURE 19: CONSTRUCTION SITE (1)

FIGURE 20: CONSTRUCTION SITE (2)

Regarding the map designed by the project, the lack of respect of the master plan raises question on the responsibilities of different entities, between the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction and SNAs, and calls attention to the lack of monitoring of the situation by the government.

Another question that appears is whether this building on construction will be a residential building or not. PE&D could not get precise information about this construction. Neighbors say that noticing the building of the foundations, it might be a tall condominium building.

There are complaints from the inhabitants towards some house owners who would not respect the cadastral plan. Apparently, some build balconies that extend on the neighboring plots (see figure 21). There would be also some owners, not from SMCC community but living on a land adjacent to the site, who take the opportunity of the canal renovation to extend their houses on the public land (see figure 22). The inhabitants say that even though the complaints have been made to the village leader, nothing had changed since. There was no intervention to check, stop and eventually prevent the supposedly irregular constructions.



FIGURE 21: BALCONIES EXTENSIONS



FIGURE 22: HOUSE EXTENSION

#### 3. Working contribution

Among families who built a house (49 interviews), 28% of them personally contributed to the works.

This represents 14 families out of 49. On these 14 families, 6 said that they built the whole house, or almost. In these families there is at least one skilled worker. In the 8 other answers, the families contributed for part of the works only, like the walls or the electrical installation.

Families who manage to build themselves saved costs. It is interesting to notice the skills existing within the community, on which other families could rely.

The families who did not contribute personally to the works justified usually that they did not have the skills required.

#### 4. Funding of the construction

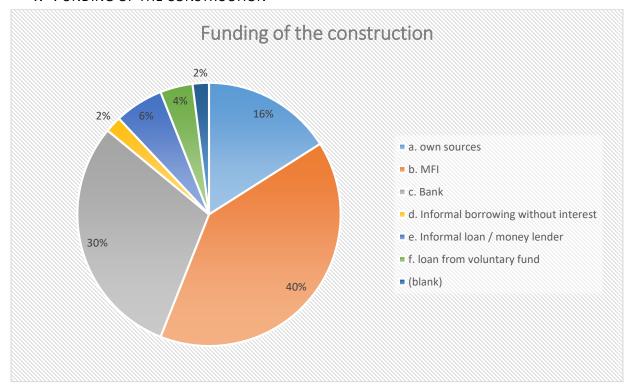


FIGURE 23: FUNDING OF THE CONSTRUCTION

16% of the families could fund the construction with their own sources as 84% had to take a loan. The most common option for the loans is to go through a Micro-Finance Institution (MFI) or a bank. Banks and MFIs represent 83% of the loan options. Contracting a loan with an MFI is easier as there are less documents to provide, or justifications about the solvability to bring, but may imply higher interest rates.

Below is a table of comparison of the different loans conditions taken by the families. Comparing the amounts of the loans and the monthly reimbursements, there are no significant differences between the banks and the MFIs:

Loan details observed during the survey	MFI	Bank
Minimum amount in \$	3 000	5 000
Maximum amount in \$	23 000	20 000
Average amount in \$	9 400	11 250
Minimum monthly reimbursement in \$	50	150
Maximum monthly reimbursement in \$	650	452
Average monthly reimbursement in \$	283	289
Minimum term (estimated) in months	14	28
Maximum term (estimated) in months	69	69
Average term (estimated) in months	40	46

The monthly reimbursement represents on average 55% of the monthly income. This shows the important effort of the families.

23% of the families eventually take a loan that represents more than 70% of their incomes, which is worrying about their ability to clear their accounts.

#### 5. SATISFACTION

This section of the report might be biased by the characteristic of the sample and not representative of the whole community.

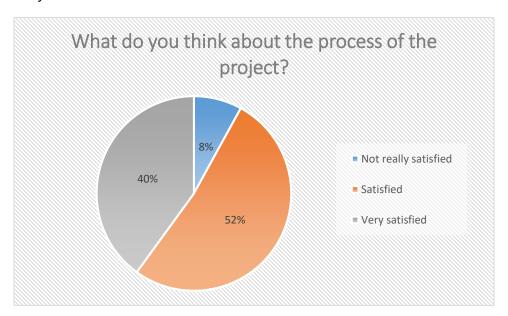


FIGURE 24: SATISFACTION (PROCESS)

The first question focused on the process of the project.

40% of the respondents were very satisfied, 52% were satisfied, 8% are not really satisfied, and no one declared not to be satisfied at all.

The explanations for the mixed answers are mainly the length of time on the overall project. Reading the explanations, we can see a lot of satisfactions among the community regarding the authorities, and the solution that was adopted. Some expressed their initial fear for eviction, and the satisfaction to see that the authorities respected its engagements.

Below is an extract of explanations representative of the answers:

- « The authorities paid attention to the informal settlement. The process was good. »
- « It was good to have the temporary house that provided free of charge water and electricity but the process was too long as it took almost a year. »
- « I very appreciated the process and the City Hall has fulfilled its promises. »

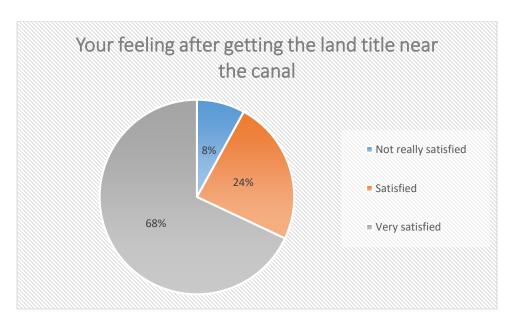


FIGURE 25: SATISFACTION (FEELING)

The second question regarding the satisfaction was about the feeling after getting the land title near the canal. 68% were very satisfied, 24% are satisfied, 8% not really satisfied, and no one declared not to be satisfied at all.

The respondents who are not really satisfied justified their answer by the fact that their new house is smaller than it used to be. They lost surface after the project.

The justifications for those who are satisfied are really rewarding. Below are some quotes representative of the answers:

- « Before my family was poor and it was difficult to support my family, now after receiving the land I could build a house and I feel more secure, I can support my family well  $\gt$
- « Before I used to live on stink water, it was difficult to live and I always got sick, but now after I have the land title and the land, I can live in a better condition »
- « I am happy now because there was no forced eviction, I am not more afraid of fire, I have a land title and the canal was improved »

Again, we have to keep in mind that results regarding the satisfaction could have been slightly different if the sample included more families who did not build a house yet, or sold their land.

## IV. COMMUNITY'S REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. COMMUNITY'S REQUESTS

The community expressed their requests during the public meetings. The requests have been reviewed with them after the first brainstorming and listed by priority. They are presented below, without any rewriting or moderation of the consultants' team.

We preferred not to merge the results of the two communities as their requests or priorities are different

### **Stueng Brak Mean Chey community**

Priority	Request
1	Speed up the road construction and take action on the families who extend their house on the road  Explanation: The inhabitants are eager to get the concrete road. Besides that, they are concerned about the families who do not respect the cadastral plan and, hence, are building on land that should be public land. They are afraid that the houses construction could affect the construction of roads and paths. The inhabitants said that the problem had been reported to the village leader already, but no action has been taken by the authorities since.
2	Modify the routes of the garbage trucks so they go through the community  Explanation: As a reminder, the trucks did not access the community before the canal renovation. Following with the road construction that will run alongside the canal, the inhabitants hope that the garbage truck's itineraries will pass through the new road.
3	Access to loans with a low interest and a long reimbursement term to build or renovate the house Explanation: Loans from the private sector, mainly banks and MFIs, present high interest rates and do not allow very long-reimbursement terms. Consequently, the monthly reimbursement amount is too high. Inhabitants would like the government on non-governmental stakeholders to help in order for them to access loans with better conditions.
4	Provide equity cards to access health services free of charge Explanation: As the inhabitants always face problem with the cost of health care, they would like to receive health services for free. This could be done through "equity cards" for the poor. Apparently some projects in the rural areas of Cambodia used to provide this type of cards for the vulnerable persons. The ID Poor card can be considered as one kind of equity card, but does not provide all health services for free and is restricted to specific targets with criteria that do not match with all the SMCC community.
5	Build the electric poles to 25 families  Explanation: the construction of the electric poles has been realized already. Nonetheless, an area is not been covered yet. It would concern 25 households.
6	Support to the elderlies in the community for free health services and allocations to support their living conditions  Explanation: Elders are a charge for families as they can't contribute anymore to the income of the household and cost more in terms of healthcare. The community requires specific subsidies for the elders. The situation is even worse, of course, for elders who don't receive support from their families.
7	Take action on the drug issue and provide awareness in the community  Explanation: Drug is a scourge for the urban poor communities. Appealing the most vulnerable ones, drug users are quickly sent off to live on the fringe of society. They are the source of drama in their families and cause fear to the people living next to them (family members and

	neighbours). The inhabitants are asking the authorities to treat this matter more seriously by, in instance, raising awareness on this issue.
8	Support life skills to poor families  Explanation: The inhabitants would like the poor families to be able to access life skills and vocational skill trainings. They would like being provided with these trainings so that they could improve their income, for instance, by starting new jobs. The support to life skills could be either by enrolling into existing trainings or providing a specific offer to the community.
9	Strengthen the security in the community  Explanation: As often in the UPS, the people are regularly victims of aggressions and thefts.  They require the security to be strengthened. Civil security officers could be for example recruited and assigned in this area.
10	Set up the community centre Explanation: The community centre could be a room, or a house, to be used by the community for many purposes. The community centre could for instance serve as day-care, school, training centre, meeting room, etc. It requires a dedicated land and entails costs for the construction and maintenance.

## Samaki Meanchey Thmey community

Priority	Request
1	Access to loans with a low interest and a long reimbursement term to build or renovate the house  Explanation: see the identical point in Stueng Brak Mean Chey community's requests (nr 3)
2	Find a solution to remove the 13 families who are still living on the canal Explanation: In Zone 4, 13 families did not move out yet. It seems that these families have a good situation now, with large houses, built with bricks and run small businesses. The destruction of their houses, and relocation on a smaller place where they might not be able to run their business, will deteriorate their situation. They might be waiting for a better proposition from the PPCH before leaving their houses or simply refuse the proposed solution. The community views this situation badly. They assume that by staying there, the 13 families prevent the works of the canal renovation. They see notably the impact it might have on the road construction that they are eager to get.
3	Speed up the project to provide land plots to the other zones  Explanation: The community knows that they are lucky to have received their plot already.  During the individual survey, some respondents complained about the duration of the process.  They are requiring the project to fasten so the families living in the other zones could receive their plots as well.
4	Support the community with building the main concrete road (width 4m)  Explanation: see the identical point in Stueng Brak Mean Chey community's requests (nr 1)
5	Support the community by connecting the pipes from households to the sewer system Explanation: As the neighbourhood will be equipped with a sewer system, the community ask their household's wastewater outlets to be connected directly to the sewer system.
6	Strengthen the security in the community Explanation: see the identical point in Stueng Brak Mean Chey community's requests (nr 9)
7	Modify the routes of the garbage trucks so they go through the community  Explanation: see the identical point in Stueng Brak Mean Chey community's requests (nr 2)
8	<u>Take action on the drug issue and provide awareness in the community</u> Explanation: see the identical point in Stueng Brak Mean Chey community's requests (nr 7)

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

After realising the assessment, the consultants thought about recommendations to address to the project stakeholders.

In the framework of the project conducted by PPCH, the activity 1.4 is *Conduct awareness raising and training for local communities* and the activity 1.5 is *Support to housing and provide public infrastructures*.

The consultants took into consideration these activities for their recommendations, but opted not to restrict the recommendations to these topics only.

The first recommendation is to listen as much as possible to the request of the communities, and provide solutions according to the feasibility and means. Comparing the results of the 2 public meetings, 5 requests were expressed in both communities. They are:

- ✓ Access to loans with a low interest and a long reimbursement term to build or renovate the house
- ✓ Support the community with building the main concrete road (width 4m)
- ✓ Strengthen the security in the community
- √ Modify the routes of the garbage trucks so they go through the community.
- √ Take action on the drug issue and provide awareness in the community

Below is a list of additional recommendations from the consultants. These recommendations are not listed by order of importance.

<u>Recommendation 1</u>: For the other phases of the SMCC project, or similar projects, conduct the assessment of the community before the beginning of the community upgrading project.

Recommendation 2: Draft and follow-up clear guidelines for the compensations or land attribution solutions that could take for example into account the existing socio-economic situation of the families, and the loss of economic activities that can be a direct consequence of the project.

<u>Recommendation 3:</u> Ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders all along the project, from the inhabitants to the different levels of administration, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, and all potential stakeholders. This could be done through the creation of a steering group gathering representatives of all stakeholders.

<u>Recommendation 4:</u> Limit the risk of exclusion of marginalised people. Community work is always facilitated by the emergence of leaders or groups, but should not prevail over an individual consultation with all inhabitants.

<u>Recommendation 5:</u> Anticipate and budget all the public infrastructure works (electricity, roads, sanitation system...) in the framework of the project and communicate the planning to the inhabitants.

<u>Recommendation 6:</u> Ensure an accurate monitoring of the families including most important data, such as names of all family members, and contact numbers. There should be a responsible focal point or service in charge of the monitoring, ideally at the local authorities level.

Recommendation 7: Provide a support, like counselling by social workers, to the families who need to sell the land plot for economic reasons and end up without land to live.

<u>Recommendation 8:</u> Provide individual assistance to each family depending on their needs, such as recommendations on the house construction or assistance to sell the plot about the market price, and to avoid pressure from brokers.

<u>Recommendation 9:</u> Monitor carefully the construction on-site to avoid irregularities and non-respect to the basic cadastral plan.

Recommendation 10: Forbid a use of the land that would entail the vision of the city hall to transform the canal site into a middle-class residential area. The question of letting or not the purchase of adjacent plots to build bigger houses should be studied. With this in mind, communes (or districts) should design master plans and have the legitimacy to enforce the master plans. This raises another point about the current lack of urbanism skills at the LA level.

Recommendation 11: Low-cost temporary houses could be provided after the canal renovation, built on the land plots, to provide to the families a place to live as they have to move out from the temporary shelter under the bridge, and might not have enough means to build their dream house. This gives the families more time to spare or look for the best building option.

<u>Recommendation 12:</u> Regarding the temporary rooms under the bridge, the size of the families should be taken into consideration for the attribution of the rooms.

Recommendation 13: Provide trainings and documentation to the inhabitants about the house construction. This would give the opportunity to the inhabitants to share their good ideas. In the documentation it could be indicated how to access to local and affordable materials, and the lists of local companies or craftsmen. Several designs of houses could be proposed, with different options to match with different financial situations and desires, starting from low-cost housing.

Recommendation 14: Raise awareness about loans, as well as about the banking and MFI sector.

Recommendation 15: Provide alongside trainings about budget and loan management.

Recommendation 16: Establish directly a partnership between the government, or government partners (AIMF, UE) and a particular bank to enable the inhabitants to access housing loans with better conditions. The partnership could consist in a financial contribution to the loans, for example providing provisions or supporting part of the interest fees. It could also consist in the payments of provisions in case of default loans, in order to mitigate the risk from the bank side. Last, the partnership should prevent the bank from setting the land as collateral to avoid the risk of families losing their land.

Recommendation 17: Raise awareness about waste management, hygiene and sanitation.

<u>Recommendation 18:</u> Provide trainings to the inhabitants about "living in Phnom Penh city" where would be explained the roles of the different administrative structures, the existing services, and basic procedures such as enrolling children to school or getting administrative documents.

Recommendation 19: Strengthen the solidarity within the community by encouraging the development, participation and engagement of inhabitants in local groups. The objective here is to avoid the disintegration of the community links once the project is all over. Community groups should not be seen as groups created to serve the purpose of a project, but as dynamic and perennial structures that should exist before and after projects. Even after the upgrading of the community, having a strong solidarity within the neighbourhood will prevent social issues and conflicts, foster a good citizenship and improve the integration of the inhabitants in the city.

<u>Recommendation 20:</u> Use the available free land to build public spaces, such as playgrounds and green areas. Benches could be put along the canal. In case of a lack of space, consider the option of covering the canal to create more space.

## **CONCLUSION**

The assessment confirmed that the settlement started to exist right after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, and that the population grew in the nineties. Most of the families living in that area settled there a long time ago.

The assessment highlighted the many difficulties that the inhabitants used to face. The poor quality of the housing affected severely the living conditions of the population, prone to diseases and more vulnerable to disasters. Being out of the city development plan, the area did not have roads, nor a sewer system. The majority of families had to buy their electricity and water from private providers, generating high costs that added to the already precarious financial situations of the families.

A good solidarity was observed in the communities in zone 1, which is one factor explaining the smooth implementation of the project. It seems that there were no complaints about the final list of the 153 families, nor regarding the upgrading solution, which is already a success.

The project conducted by the PPCH to upgrade the site, and the promise made and respected to provide to each of the families a land plot with a hard title, was very welcomed. Today, the families who managed to keep their plot and build a house are very enthusiastic. They report that this drastic change impacts already positively their life. A big question mark remains about the families who sold their plots, and those who still keep it but did not build anything on it yet. As most of these families could not be found during the assessment, only hypothesis can be made at this stage. Consequently, PE&D advises earlier assessments and a closer monitoring for the families living in zones 2 to 4.

The inhabitants showed during the public meeting a very good understanding of their problems and expressed clear and relevant requests. One of the main requests addressed was the support to build a house. Regarding the willingness of the PPCH and its partners not only to upgrade the area but also to support the poor communities, PE&D would advise to support this type of requests in order for the families to stay on-site and not to be constraints to sell their land plots. There is a range of possibilities to support access to housing, from technical advice to partnerships with banks for subsidized loans.

Last, few issues already come up regarding irregularities of some constructions and non-respect to the cadastral plan. To ensure that the city development will be coherent with its master plan, the consultants advise a better monitoring of the urban development by the local authorities, which could be improved by the ongoing project supported by the UE aiming to improve the capacities of the Cambodian SNAs in participatory, integrated and sustainable urban planning and land management.

#### **APPENDIX**

## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMUNITY LEADERS

#### **History and facts**

Community's historical (date of first settlements, reasons of immigrations...)

Hazards and main past events in the community

Past development of infrastructures, waste management system, water connection...

Previous access to the community: could the cars or motorbikes access the houses, were the access frequently flooded...

#### Overall economic situation

Economic activities, main occupations of the people, general employment situation (get the trends)

#### **Evolution**

Evolution of the individual situation in terms of wealth, people moving in and out

Evolution of the collective situation, infrastructure, integration with the city

#### Internal relationships

Community bonds and relationships

Solidarity events and arguments

Discriminations if any

#### **External relationships**

How many NGOs are working here? List and activities/projects

Relationships with the local authorities

#### APPENDIX 2: TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### About satisfaction and challenges

What are their sources of satisfaction?

What are the challenges they face?

Are there any environmental issues in the community?

What are the safety issues in the community?

What are the satisfactions specifically regarding the infrastructures in the community?

What are the challenges specifically regarding the infrastructures in the community?

#### About the future development

What are they requests to improve the community or their individual situation?

Precise the requests especially in terms of infrastructure, public spaces, services...

How much time, efforts do they want to involve in the development in the community (volunteering, member of local association...)

#### Mapping of the area

The community will do a collective mapping of the area (points of interests, public services, access)

## APPENDIX 3: INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Individua	al Survey in Stueng Mean Chey Canal
1. House/plot number	
2. GPS Location latitude (x.y °)	
longitude (x.y°)	
altitude (m)	
accuracy (m)	
Ownership situation	
Where are you living now?     a. On the land you received with a	a new house
b. On the land you received with a	
C. In the temporary house	
d. With relatives	
e. Rental room/house	
f. Other	

If other, can you specify ?
4. What did you do with the land?
a. Sold already
b. Built a house and live inside (or on construction)
c. Built the house for rent (or on construction)
d. Built a building, live inside and rent part of it (or on construction)
e. Rent the land only
f. Kept the land, not build nor rent
5. If there is a house or construction, How did you finance the construction?
a. own sources
b. MFI
○ c_ Bank
d. Informal borrowing without interest
e. Informal loan / money lender
f. loan from voluntary fund
6. Did one person of your family personnally contribute in the construction? (work)
a. Yes
○ b. No
If yes, which part ?

If no, why?	
7. How much was the amount of the loan ?	
8. What is the amount of the monthly reimbursement ?	
9. If sold, How much did you sell the land?	
10. What did you do with the money? (open question)	
11. Where do you live now?	
12. What kind of housing do you have now?  a. I am owner of a formal house  b. I am owner on informal settlement (public land)  c. I am renter in a formal house  d. I am renter in an informal settlement (public land)	

13. If kept the land, what are you planning to do with the land?
a. Sell it
b. Build a house and live inside
c. Build a house for rent
d. Build a building and rent part of it
e. Rent the land only
f. Keep the land, nor build ,or rent because of lack of money
14. If plan to build, how much are you planning to invest?
15. How do you plan to get the finances?
a. own sources
b. MFI
C. Bank
d. Informal borrowing without interest
e. Informal loan / money lender
f. loan from voluntary fund
16. Do you think you have ability to construct the house in case of lacking personal financial resources?
a. Yes
b. No
If yes, Which area/part of the settlement that you possibly do

If no, rely on constructor or not. Why?
17. How much would be the amount of the loan ?
18. What is the amount of the future monthly reimbursement ?
Economic situation  19. How many family members ?
20. How many family members earn an income?
21. What are the occupations of income earners?
22. What is the total weekly income of the family?
23. How many cars do you own?

29. Where did your family come from? (before SMC canal)	
a. Another settlement/area in the city	
b. rural area /village	
C. another province	
O d. others	
If other, can you specify ?	
30. Why did you move to this place?	
a. availability of land	
b. closer to work place	
c. evicted from previous place	
d. sold the previous place	
e. other	
If other, can you specify ?	
Previous housing	
31. How many rooms did you have?	
32. How did the members use the spaces?	

33. Did the previous house undertake any form of housing improvement/upadte before the relocation?  a. Yes
b. No  34. if yes, how much did you spend on improvement?
35. How did you finance the acquisition of construction of the previous house?  a. own sources
b. Informal borrowing without interest
C. Informal loan / money lender
d. loan from voluntary fund
e. other
If other, can you specify ?
36. What was the kind of housing quality?
a. Brick or concrete house
b. Wooden house / Zinc walls and wooden structure
c. Zinc walls and wooden structure or other temporary materials
37. Did you have Toilets connected to sewage or canal?
O a. Yes
O b. No

38. Did you have Electricity from EDC?
O a. Yes
O b. No
39. Did you have Water from PPWSA?
a. Yes
O b. No
Family vulnerabilities and schooling situation
40. How many disable persons are there in your family?
41. How many persons in your family do have serious health issues?
The state of the s
42. What are these issues?
43. Are the children in the household (from 7 to 14) going to school?
O a. Yes
O b. No
If yes, please list below

If no, what are the main reasons why children are not attending school ?							
a. Cannot afford the fees							
b. Too far							
c. Children are ill							
d. Children are not interested							
e. Parents are not interested							
f. Children needed to work							
g. Others							
If others, can you specify?							
Individual satisfaction regarding the proje 44. What is your feeling after getting the land title near the canal?  Your feeling after getting the land title near the canal  45. Please explain your answer	ot Not satisfied at all	Not really satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied			
46. What do you think about the process (temporary shelter, attribution of the land)?	Not satisfied at all	Not really satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied			
What do you think about the process (temporary shelter, attribution of the land) ?	0	0	0	0			
47. Please explain your answer							