

EASY READ CLIMATE CHANGE & DISABILITY IN CAMBODIA

A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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ABOUT THIS EASY READ DOCUMENT

This is an Easy Read version of our full research report.

Easy Read uses simple words and short sentences.

It is written for people with disabilities and anyone who finds plain language helpful.

The full report has more detail. You can ask someone to help you find it.



1. WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change means the weather on Earth is changing.

The Earth is getting hotter. This is called global warming.

It is mostly caused by people burning oil, gas, and coal.

These fuels release gases that trap heat around the Earth.

This is called the greenhouse effect.



Climate change causes:

- Hotter temperatures
- Changes in rain – too much or too little
- Rising sea levels
- More floods, droughts, and storms



CAMBODIA AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Cambodia is one of the countries most affected by climate change.

- Cambodia is ranked 14th most at-risk country in the world
- 80% of Cambodians depend on farming and fishing for their income
- Flooding risk is rated 9.5 out of 10
- Climate change could reduce Cambodia's economy by 3–9% by 2050
- Major floods happen about every 5 years – and are getting more frequent



In Cambodia you may already notice:

- Hotter days and nights
- Rains coming later than before
- Longer dry seasons
- Bigger floods that last longer
- Less fish in rivers and the sea
- Crops failing
- Saltwater moving into farming land near the coast



2. HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

People with disabilities are affected more than others by climate change. This is because they often face extra barriers and have fewer resources.

FLOODS

- In 2020, floods affected 175,872 households across 18 provinces
- In Kampot, 30% of the land in Kraing Ampil floods regularly
- Floods last several days to a week
- Many farmers in Kampot have stopped farming because of floods

HEAT AND DROUGHT

- Temperatures are rising every year
- The dry season is getting longer
- In Kampot, rice planting has moved from May to June–July because of the long dry season
- More crop diseases and pests are appearing



LESS FISH

- Fish provides over 80% of protein eaten by Cambodians
- Fish stocks are getting smaller across Cambodia
- In Kampot, fishing is getting harder because of rising temperatures and loss of mangrove forests
- Many people with disabilities earn money by mending fishing nets – this work is disappearing

SALTWATER IN FARMING LAND

- In coastal areas like Kampot, seawater is moving into rice fields
- This damages the soil and destroys crops
- Farmers must wait for the seawater to leave before they can farm again





3. WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DURING CLIMATE DISASTERS?

Climate disasters make life harder for people with disabilities in many ways.

SAFETY AND SHELTER

- It is difficult or impossible to evacuate quickly
- Emergency shelters often have no ramps, handrails, or accessible toilets
- Some people with disabilities stay home during floods because shelters do not meet their needs
- Wheelchairs, walking sticks, hearing aids and other devices can be lost or damaged in floods
- Homes are damaged and people cannot afford to make them stronger

FOOD AND WATER

- Crop failures mean there is less food
- People with disabilities cannot work during disasters and depend on food aid
- Water wells are often built on high ground – this makes them inaccessible
- Women with disabilities need more water for hygiene and caring for others



WORK AND MONEY

- People with disabilities often have limited work options
- Common work includes mending nets, cleaning, small businesses, and vegetable growing
- Climate change is destroying these jobs – fewer fish, less farming, more extreme heat
- During disasters, all work stops and income is lost completely
- Some people must take loans just to survive, creating debt





HEALTH

- Disabilities can get worse during climate stress
- Extreme heat causes headaches, tiredness, difficulty sleeping, and seizures
- It is hard to reach health clinics during disasters
- Medicines may run out
- Mental health problems like stress, anxiety, and depression increase



INFORMATION

- Warning systems are not accessible – no sign language, braille, or large print
- Information is passed through family members, not directly to people with disabilities
- Many people with disabilities received NO disaster warning information
- Meetings about disaster planning are held in places that are hard to access



BEING LEFT OUT

- People with disabilities are often not included in planning for climate action
- Women with disabilities have even less power in decisions
- Very few people with disabilities are leaders at local or national level



4. What Makes It Harder for People with Disabilities?

There are five main barriers that make climate change harder for people with disabilities.

1. Physical Barriers

- Emergency shelters do not have ramps, accessible toilets, or handrails
- Water points are often built on high ground and are hard to reach
- Flood damage blocks the paths people use to move around

2. Information Barriers

- No sign language, braille, or large print warnings
- Information is often given verbally only
- Disaster meetings are in places that are hard to get to

3. Money Barriers

- Cannot afford to make homes stronger or prepare for disasters
- All income stops during disasters
- Must borrow money to survive

4. Attitude Barriers

- Some people and authorities do not respect the rights of people with disabilities
- People with disabilities are sometimes treated as less important
- Authorities often do not know about disability rights

5. Social Barriers

- People with disabilities are excluded from community planning meetings
- Their voices are not heard in decisions about climate action
- They are isolated from the networks that share important information

5. What Can We Do About Climate Change?

Everyone can do small things to help.

Things you can do:

- Save energy – turn off lights when you don't need them
- Save water – do not waste it
- ✓ Plant trees – trees absorb harmful gases
- Reduce plastic and waste
- Walk or use a bicycle when/if you can

Things communities can do:

- Share information about climate change with others
- Demand that climate solutions include people with disabilities
- Join community groups that work on climate action
- Protect forests and water sources



6. HOW CAN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PREPARE FOR DISASTERS?



✓ BEFORE DISASTER

Prepare emergency supplies:

- Store food and water for at least 3 days
- Keep medicines in a waterproof bag
- Charge your phone and power banks
- Keep important documents somewhere safe

Know your evacuation plan:

- Find out where the nearest safe place is – and check if it is accessible
- Decide who will help you get there
- Tell your neighbors and local authorities what help you might need
- Keep your assistive devices protected from water

Build connections:

- Talk to neighbours who can help you
- Join a disability organisation (DPO)
- Share phone numbers with people you trust

DURING A DISASTER

- Follow evacuation orders if help is available
- Stay inside during storms
- Do not walk in floodwater – it is dangerous and can make you sick
- Ask for help – do not try to manage alone
- Tell authorities about your specific needs
- Ask for an accessible shelter

AFTER A DISASTER

- Access food aid and support services
- Replace any assistive devices that were lost or broken
- Seek medical help if you need it
- Only return home when it is safe
- Get involved in rebuilding your community



7. YOUR RIGHTS AND YOUR POWER

You have the RIGHT to:

- Be included in all decisions about climate change
- Access the same information as everyone else
- Have your voice heard by authorities
- Receive support that meets your specific needs
- Be safe before, during, and after disasters

You can:

- Speak up about your experiences
- Join or form disability organisations
- Demand accessible climate solutions
- Support other people with disabilities in your community
- Take part in decision-making
- Be a leader and role model



Authorities **MUST:**

- **Make ALL climate information accessible – sign language, braille, large print, easy language**
- **Include people with disabilities in community disaster planning**
- **Build accessible shelters with ramps, handrails, and accessible toilets**
- **Provide early warning systems that work for all types of disability**
- **Make sure food aid reaches the most vulnerable people first**
- **Include disability in their climate plans and budgets**
- **Train their staff about disability rights and inclusion**
- **Appoint people with disabilities to leadership roles**



8. KEY FACTS

KAMPOT PROVINCE



- 22,771 people with disabilities
- 59% are women
- 100 families live in flood-prone areas
- 30% of Kraing Ampil land floods regularly
- Fishing crisis: rated 5/5
(most severe impact)
- Flash flooding: rated 4/5
(extreme impact)

ALL OF CAMBODIA



- 689,532 people live with disabilities (5% of population)
- 58% are women
- Ranked 14th most vulnerable to climate change worldwide
- 9.5/10 flood risk
- GDP could drop 3-9% by 2050
- 53% of PWD received NO disaster warning information

9. WHAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SAY

In January 2026, Epic Arts held a workshop at their centre in Kampot. 28 people with disabilities took part.

Here is what they shared:

Most people had heard the words 'climate change' and knew it meant extreme weather.

People shared experiences of:

- Floods destroying rice crops and damaging homes
- Strong winds breaking roofs, doors and windows
- Extreme heat making family members sick
- Not being able to evacuate because of their disability
- Never receiving early warning information



People felt angry, scared, confused, worried, and sad about what is happening.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS:



- ✔ “I have experienced heavy rain and strong wind that blew the roof of my house, doors and windows.”
- ✔ “I cannot evacuate on my own because I am a person with disability. I stayed inside the house.”
- ✔ “I have never known about the emergency in advance.”
- ✔ “I cannot evacuate on my own. I face difficulty finding a safe place, finding help, finding food, and getting emergency equipment like a boat or life jacket.”
- ✔ “A boy with a physical disability said his family lost their job and small business because of flooding. He could not travel to safety and had never received any information about climate change from local authorities.”

Participants called on local organisations and NGOs to share information with people with disabilities and to help them before and during natural disasters.



10. CONCLUSION

Climate change is happening now in Cambodia.
People with disabilities are hit harder than others.
They face barriers that make it harder to prepare, respond, and recover.

But people with disabilities are not helpless.
They have rights, knowledge, and the power to take part in solutions.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN:

- Projects that include and inform people with disabilities
- Information in accessible formats – sign language, braille, large print, easy language
- Disaster planning that includes the needs of people with disabilities
- Accessible shelters with ramps, handrails, and accessible toilets
- Information given directly to people with disabilities, not just through families
- People with disabilities in leadership and decision-making roles



THANK YOU

This Easy Read document is based on:
**Climate Change & Disability in
Cambodia**

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