

The Uncertain Future of Samaki Rongroeurng, Village 4, and Boeung Trabek Communities



For generations, many Cambodian families have called the Boeung Trabek Canal home, residing in the Boeung Trabek Community, Village 4, and Samaki Rongroeurng Community in Chamkarmon District, south of Phnom Penh. Despite the challenges of inadequate infrastructure, these communities have thrived, raising families and contributing to the vibrancy of Phnom Penh.

However, [government](#) redevelopment plans threaten to uproot the lives of these residents. The proposed rebuilding of the Boeung Trabek canal would displace the 131 families of the Boeung Trabek neighborhood, according to [Phnom Penh Capital Hall](#). While [compensation payments](#) were finalized in August 2024, residents interviewed by [Cambodian News](#) deemed the amounts unfair and insufficient.

The Royal Government must not ignore the impacts of such developments on the population, even if modernizing Phnom Penh's infrastructure is necessary. This study will shed light on the eviction process caused by this project and on the effects of urban growth in Phnom Penh through firsthand accounts of residents from the two affected neighborhoods.

Livelihood and community

Ms. Sokha, a pseudonym for a house vendor in Boeung Trabek Community's Village 4, has lived there with her family since 1982. She shared with STT: "It's really hard to live like this today. My kids are young, and Boeung Trabek's water has been flooding since 1982." Over time, her aunt's store has become a vital source of income for her family. The sense of solidarity in Boeung Trabek Village 4 is a testament to the community's strength. Ms. Sokha attested: "We depend on the community to construct roads. Together, let's build bridges and highways. We used to cross by boat; there were no bridges. We still have some money saved up for road construction today."

Ms. Mom, 58, a local vendor and longtime resident of Samaki Rongroeurng, shared her community life with STT: "I sell small cakes to kids at my home. Just earning enough every day, that is my business. I was afraid when they [the authorities] told us to leave." These accounts demonstrate how deeply ingrained the community of Boeung Trabek, Village 4, and Samaki Rongroeurng has been.



Livelihood and compensation

[The Ministry of Information](#) claims the development initiatives in the two villages are part of 50 additional sewer system projects across Phnom Penh to combat flooding. [Phnom Penh Capital Hall](#) inspected the Samaki Rongroeurng community's homes in April 2024 and held a meeting to determine whether the community should accept compensation and leave the area to be developed. The Capital Hall provided cash compensation based on the house's cost to the impacted residents. The Samaki Rongroeurng community, [there since 1988](#), reports compensation for large houses range from \$3,000 to \$6,000, and for small houses, between \$1,000 to \$3,000.

The communities of Boeung Trabek, Village 4, and Samaki Rongroeurng do not oppose the development, aware of the community's existing vulnerability to flooding and waste issues. Ms. Sokha explained to STT: "I neither oppose nor say yes... We can leave the development site after they take it. I agree, but I only wanted to make sure the compensation is fair so we can afford to live elsewhere." Ms. Sokha and Ms. Mom are among the many who have lived there for decades, but the compensation is insufficient to secure comparable housing elsewhere in the city. Real estate and land costs have skyrocketed. Ms. Mom also voiced her concerns: "They [the government] came to take measurements and provide pricing for large and small houses. They gave me too little, though. I disagreed because my house was costed between \$2,000 and \$3,000, which is not appropriate."

Even the construction of new homes cannot be considered compensation for families like Ms. Sokha's and Ms. Mom's.

Livelihood and effects of evictions

Ms. Sokha and Ms. Mom are deeply concerned about their future and that of their families due to the prospect of eviction without fair market value compensation or community consultation. Their businesses are more than just a livelihood; they are also their families and their kitchens. They must start anew in a different location, with no guarantee their new businesses will succeed. Ms. Sokha noted the challenges faced by those who accepted compensation: "Some of them have jobs here, but when they leave, they don't have enough money to pay for their housing. They also to pay off their land."

As an elderly woman, Ms. Mom, 58, voiced her concerns about eviction without fair compensation. "I'll go live elsewhere if you give me an adequate price. I am too old to accept being so far away from the doctor. Therefore, I would like to request fair compensation and immediate development." Ms. Sokha and Ms. Mom have expressed fears about their future due to the lack of compensation agreements and community consultation. Hence, communities like Ms. Sokha and Ms. Mom are waiting in the hopes that their collective voices will result in improved compensation. They only want fair compensation and equitable development; they do not oppose development.



In conclusion

The situation in Samaki Rongroeurng, Boeung Trabek, and Village 4 are representative of other impoverished Phnom Penh neighborhoods impacted by urban development. Longtime residents of these urban poor neighborhoods have been forced to leave without consideration for how their futures would be affected. While enhancing sewage and other infrastructure is undoubtedly crucial for the city's health and appeal, the

government should consider one thing: How can we build a city that respects and upholds the rights of its citizens while still fostering progress? Ms. Mom and Ms. Sokha, along with other communities, will continue fighting for just compensation that would allow them to move without concerns. Thus, their suggestion is straightforward: Please properly assess compensation options so we can start anew elsewhere.

Through the community's perseverance and dedication, they believe the government will ensure a successful future, and people will be able to coexist peacefully.



This short research article presents the viewpoints of young researchers on the aspect of development under the theme:

“The Uncertain Future of Samaki Rongroeurng, Village 4, and Boeung Trabek Communities”

***Please note that this is not an in-depth researched article and does not reflect the point of view of the Samhakum Teang Thaut Organization (STT).**