



Vision of a Healthy Village

Program Results — Svay Leu, Cambodia

A study evaluating the impact of Lifewater International's
Vision of a Healthy Village Program

February 2021

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“

The Lord protects and defends me; I trust in him. He gives me help and makes me glad; I praise Him with joyful songs.

– Psalm 27:8

From the President

Dear Faithful Partners—

In 2018, our team began a 26-month long program in Svay Leu, Cambodia.

Lifewater's Vision of a Healthy Village (VHV) approach to solving the global water and sanitation crisis is based on the lessons we learned from 35+ years of experience, best practices in community development, and the wisdom of our program leaders. It's a grassroots, data-driven effort to reach every family in every village with safe water and improved health.

VHV takes a Christ-centered approach to bringing water to the thirsty. It is a community-focused effort to reach rural, remote places in great need of safe water, hygiene, and sanitation.

We are now at the end of the first program in Svay Leu, and we have completed a baseline and endline survey to measure changes for statistical significance; these are measurements of life before and life after Lifewater programs.

Before we can understand the impact of Lifewater's Svay Leu program, we have to know the devastating number of children who die each year due to diarrheal diseases.

According to UNICEF, that number is 480,000 children under the age of five. The vast majority of diarrheal diseases are caused by unsafe drinking water.

That's nearly 1,300 children who die each day from something as preventable as drinking unclean water and practicing poor sanitation and hygiene. It is currently the second leading cause of death for children under five years old.

For children who survive constant bouts of diarrheal diseases, many experience stunted growth, underdeveloped brains, and overall malnutrition.

In our baseline survey, prior to the program in Svay Leu, 63 percent of children under five had diarrhea in the week prior. After the Lifewater program, that number had reduced to just seven percent, **an 89 percent decrease in the prevalence of childhood diarrheal disease—a near elimination of this deadly illness.**

There's much more to share. In this report you'll find the top results from the final evaluation of Lifewater's Svay Leu program and quotes from individuals in the program.

And finally, thank you! None of this happens without your dedication and support.

Grace and Peace,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David LeVan".

David LeVan

Chief Executive Officer
Lifewater International

Svay Leu, Cambodia

In Cambodia, 21 percent of the population does not have basic access to safe drinking water. In the Svay Leu region, the situation is worse. During baseline, staff discovered that 87 percent of the population did not have access to safe water.

For young children, this reality is especially dangerous, as they're the more likely to face life-threatening illnesses from contaminated water.

Staff also found the following information regarding health and wellbeing.

- 63 percent of children younger than five years old had diarrhea within the previous seven days.
- Less than 1 percent of households had a hand washing facility with water and soap located close to a latrine.
- Only 22 percent of households used a latrine that had a slab, walls, roof, and a door to property separate people from feces.

Between July 2018 to August 2020, Lifewater staff carried out the Vision of a Healthy Village approach in three rural communes and served 12,601 people with safe water, sanitation, and hygiene.

The Lifewater team constructed 42 water points in villages and in schools.

Following program completion, staff conducted household surveys and focus group discussions to measure WASH progress in the area.



12,601
People Served



Key Results

Preventing the death of children is perhaps the world's most urgent and united mission. Diarrheal diseases, caused primarily by unsafe water and poor sanitation, are responsible for more deaths of children under five years old than malaria, AIDS, and measles combined.

Safe water and sanitation practices can virtually eliminate diarrheal disease and save countless lives in the process.

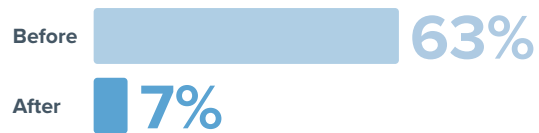
Under-5 Diarrhea

In 2018, Lifewater staff trained community health promoters in Svay Leu, Cambodia to walk alongside their neighbors and help them adopt healthy habits. These habits include hand washing, using a drying rack to keep dishes off the ground, and constructing a toilet to keep feces separate from children.

These simple practices and increased access to safe water resulted in an 89 percent reduction in prevalence of childhood diarrhea in the area.

Before the Lifewater program, more than half of the population had a child ill from diarrhea; after, only seven percent reported the same.

Prevalence of Childhood Diarrhea*



* Children with diarrhea in seven days prior to survey. Comparison before and after VHV.



“These days, diarrhea and rashes among children have decreased. Many people have increased their knowledge and understanding on WASH. For instance, they drink clean water, filtered water, wash, and clean more often.”

– Community member



“My children wash their hands with soap before eating and after playing and using a latrine. My children are not often sick now, unlike before.”

– Community member



Improved Sanitation

In Cambodia, 32 percent of the population defecates in the open, a practice that leads to poor health and safety for families in the area.

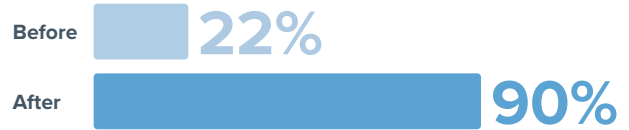
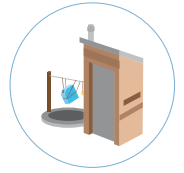
For families drinking from surface water sources, this is especially harmful, as heavy Cambodian rains often wash feces into drinking water sources.

Building and using a pour-flush latrine separates people from feces, drastically decreasing waterborne diseases. It also provides improved safety and dignity for those who use it.

In Svay Leu, just 22 percent of families had a latrine “improved with dignity,” meaning it had a slab, walls, a roof, and a door. After the Lifewater program, that number increased to 90 percent. Today, almost every person in the target area has a safe, dignified place to use the bathroom.



Homes Using Latrines that are Improved with Dignity*



* “Improved with Dignity” meaning the latrine has a slab, walls, roof, and a door. Comparison before and after VHV.

“ Before the program started in our village, the environment in our village was badly polluted and had worms, a bad smell, and flies. But, now it is all clean and no more smell and no human feces in public or in our household compound.”



– Community member

“ Before, my house surroundings... trash was all over the place. We defecated in the open field and bush. We buried our feces...There is a significant change in health and hygiene in my household. Now trash goes into the trash pit and I burn it. We have a latrine now.”



– Community member

Loving Like Jesus

When people know they are loved by God and are equipped for success, it transforms an entire community in a deep, lasting way.

Lifewater operates from a God-given call to love the vulnerable and care for others as Jesus would. When we entered communities in Svay Leu, our Christian staff empowered families to care for the most vulnerable families in their neighborhood—the orphans, widows, the elderly, and more.

Families understood God’s mandate to serve those in need and rose up to help their neighbors adopt life-saving hygiene and sanitation habits. We’re seeing the love of Jesus in these communities.

In Cambodia, only 3.4 percent of the country is Christian, and there is a great need for the hope of Jesus.

In 2021, Lifewater is piloting a new program to serve communities in Svay Leu that utilizes the support and partnership of local churches in the area. This revised approach will continue the work of spiritual reconciliation while also meeting critical WASH needs in rural communities.

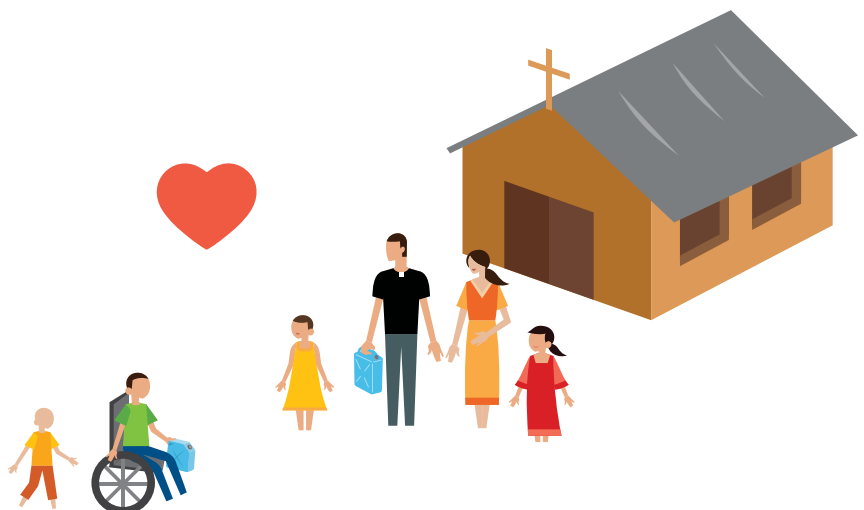
“Community members have increased their attention to help the vulnerable households become Happy Homes.”

– Community member



“Churches provided medicine, kitchenware, and educated the communities on the basic health and eternal love of the son of God.”

– Community member



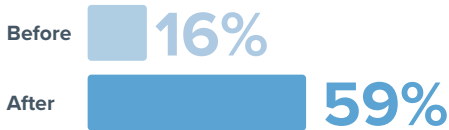
House by House Data

By surveying households before the program begin and monitoring their progress, we track important data about village transformation.

Sanitation and Hygiene

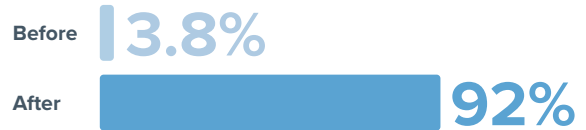
Washing hands with soap and clean water, using a drying rack, storing water safely, drinking clean water, using a latrine with dignity, and keeping the home free of garbage are all components of Lifewater's Healthy Home criteria.

Homes Washing with Soap or Ash*



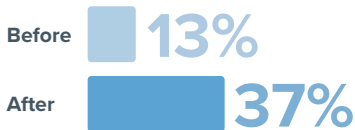
* Respondents who washed hands in the past 24 hours at the most critical times. Comparison before and after VHV.

Homes Using a Drying Rack*



* A drying rack is a homemade device to keep dishes off the ground. Comparison before and after VHV.

Safe Drinking Water Source*



* Households using safe drinking water from all sources in the rainy and dry season. Comparison before and after VHV.

“ My children know how to wash their hands and they wash regularly. They use a latrine at home. We also have a drying rack and hand washing device.”



– Community member

Safe Water in Cambodia

In Cambodia, a main source of water is the heavy rainfall. That water is stored in large ceramic pots or gathered directly from ponds.

This is a cultural preference, with many families preferring the taste of rain water over ground water. To meet this cultural preference while providing safe water, the Lifewater team teaches water treatment through boiling the water before drinking it or putting it through a ceramic filter (a high-quality, affordable way of providing safe drinking water).

Before the Lifewater program, 58.4 percent of the population in Svay Leu treated their water before drinking it. **Afterwards, 98.2 percent treated their water, meaning almost every person had access to safe water.**

Percent of Population Treating their Water*



* During the “Dry Season”.
Comparison before and after VHV.



“ This brings health and improvements to my family. I am happy when my family members are not sick. In general, we would say we have a lot of knowledge on WASH now and really believe our community is practicing it and it will last through generation after generation.”

– Community member



Community Characteristics

Before Lifewater programs begin, staff ask participants about their greatest resources and problems. These perspectives help our staff understand the region’s greatest needs and resources.

People in Svay Leu said that “water scarcity/quality” was one of the biggest problems facing their communities. This was followed by “money/poverty.”

After the Lifewater program, walks for water were cut by 28 percent and 42 water points were constructed. In addition, 69 percent of households reported that child health had improved in the past year, reducing expensive visits to health centers.

Parents saw their children grow up healthy, no longer plagued by waterborne illness. Their long walks for water were reduced, giving them hours back in their day to work, save, and pave the way for a brighter future.

Parents Claiming Improved Child Health*



* Percentage of people reporting child health has improved in the past year. Comparison before and after VHV.

Minutes Fetching Water*



* Average total journey time to/from fetching water from primary source during dry season (minutes). Comparison before and after VHV.

“ [Because of shortened walks for water], most of the women’s lives became bright with healthiness, happiness, and good relationships between their husbands and their children. Women feel much more valued in their family.”



– Community member



**We are Christians committed to
ending the global water crisis,
one village at a time.**

Learn more about Vision of a Healthy Village
at lifewater.org/our-process, and join in
lasting change today.