



CASE STUDY

IMPROVING ACCESS TO DIABETES AND HYPERTENSION CARE THROUGH RESIST-NCD IN KAMPONG CHHNANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

Focus: Commune Council

December 2025



SUMMARY

Mrs Pen Sophea, a 45-year-old Commune Chief in Svay Chuk commune, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia shares how her perspective on diabetes and hypertension changed after engaging with the RESist-NCD program. Previously unfamiliar with the scale and risks of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in her community, she gained new clarity on how local leaders can influence early screening, support Village Health Support Groups (VHSGs) and encourage men and women to use nearby health services. Her experience demonstrates how empowering commune authorities strengthens community mobilisation and contributes to earlier detection and follow-up for adults at risk of NCDs.

OVERVIEW

The RESist-NCD program in Svay Chuk commune, Kampong Chhnang province, has strengthened community health through improved awareness, outreach, and access to services for diabetes and hypertension. Under the leadership of Mrs Pen Sophea, a strong female Commune Chief since 2012, the Commune Council has prioritized education, health, and infrastructure. The program has promoted comprehensive health services, gender-sensitive approaches, and active coordination with Village Health Support Groups (VHSGs), demonstrating a sustainable model for integrating public health into local governance.



Svay Chuk Commune Chief visits a Health Center

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Improved Access and Services

Since the introduction of the RESist-NCD program in Svay Chuk commune, patients with diabetes and hypertension have shifted from private clinics to the health center. Based on the NCD electronic medical record (EMR) data from September to November 2025, RESist-NCD recorded a total of 199 new cases of diabetes and hypertension. Of these, 176 cases had never been screened before, 19 cases transitioned from private facilities to the health center, and 4 cases were referred from other public health facilities. The health center now offers comprehensive care packages instead of single-service visits, providing more effective and reliable care. This change has also encouraged family members and neighbors to utilize health center services.

Gender-Sensitive Engagement

RESist-NCD has addressed the gender gap in service utilization, as fewer men previously attended screenings due to work commitments. Through small village group meetings and regular monitoring of sex-disaggregated data, male participation has improved, ensuring more equitable access to preventive services for the whole community. The VHSG conducted small-group community meetings and household visits to provide NCD education and referred targeted individuals aged ≥ 40 years old to the health center for NCD screening. From September to October 2025, a total of 261 people were reached, including 161 women.

Strengthened Leadership and Coordination

Commune authorities have strengthened their role in health promotion by integrating NCD-related activities into the Commune Investment Plan and improving the functionality of the Health Center Management Committee (HCMC). Frequent household visits and enhanced coordination with VHSGs have improved the planning and delivery of community health services. During the HCMC meeting at the commune hall and the monthly review of VHSG reports, the Commune Chief consistently provided recommendations to VHSGs to strengthen community engagement and increase referrals from each village to the health center for NCD screening.

Sustainability and Awareness

Community leaders and residents now recognize the importance of regular screening, and individuals with Health Equity Fund (a social security scheme that covers costs for public health services for Cambodians with very low incomes) and National Social Security Fund coverage can access services free of charge. Ongoing support from partner organizations, government funding, and active participation from community stakeholders, including religious leaders, will help ensure that these health improvements are maintained in the long term.

HOW HAS RESIST-NCD CONTRIBUTED TO THE CHANGE?

Shift from Private Services to the Health Center

The RESist-NCD program motivated patients with diabetes and hypertension to seek care at the health center instead of relying on private providers. This shift was supported by improved community awareness and the availability of a more comprehensive service package at the health center.

Targeted Outreach to Increase Male Participation

The program observed low participation of men in screening activities. In response, the commune authorities, health center staff, and VHSGs organized targeted small-group discussions and brought screening services directly to places where men commonly gather – such as pagodas, Muslim churches, and coffee shops. The team also regularly reviewed sex-disaggregated data to ensure men were not left behind.

Strengthened Role of Commune Authorities

RESist-NCD helped integrate NCD activities into the Commune Investment Plan and improved the functionality of the Health Center Management Committee (HCMC). This led to stronger local governance and better prioritization of NCD services.

Improved Coordination with VHSGs and the Health Center

RESist-NCD strengthened collaboration between VHSGs, health center staff, and commune authorities, resulting in more effective referrals, follow-up, and community-based health education.

Significant Increase in Community Understanding of NCDs

Awareness of diabetes and hypertension has improved substantially. Previously, only about 30% of commune leaders had a good understanding of these conditions, but now she clearly recognizes their chronic nature. Communities also have a stronger understanding of the importance of regular screening, early detection, and continuous management. For example, on 10 October 2025 the Commune Chief distributed Health Equity Fund cards and explained their benefits to poor households at the commune hall. She advised and encouraged everyone to access diabetes and hypertension screened at the health center.



CONCLUSION

RESist-NCD has strengthened community health in Svay Chuk commune by shifting patients from private clinics to the health center, improving awareness of chronic diseases, and providing comprehensive, accessible services for all, including Health Equity Fund and National Social Security Fund beneficiaries. It has also enhanced the role of commune authorities and VHSGs, promoted gender-responsive strategies, and improved coordination and health education in the community. Continued support from partner organizations, government funding, and active community participation will be key to sustaining these health improvements over the long term.



RESIST-NCD CAMBODIA PARTNERS

Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)

Ministry of Interior, Cambodia

Svay Chuk Commune Council, Kampong Chhnang province, Cambodia

RESist-NCD is supported by the Australian Government through the Partnerships for a Healthy Region initiative

