



HUN CHEOUN



“I hope that there will be more support for people living with hypertension and diabetes in the future.”

Hun Cheoun is a firewood trader, and business was going well.

“I used to spend a lot – go and get coffee, enjoy a bowl of Chinese noodle soup.”

But things have changed. Sitting under a corrugated iron shelter is the key to his livelihood – a large green truck used for transporting logs. Now it gathers only dust.

Cheoun lives in Kampong Cham, in a district called Chamkar Leu, with his wife and extended family.

He was diagnosed with hypertension in 2017 and has been managing the condition with medication. Hypertension makes him more vulnerable to COVID-19 and its complications. Thankfully, cases in Cambodia have been low.

But his finances have also been hit badly. Demand for firewood has drastically declined, resulting in a major drop in his income.

The economic impact has gone hand-in-hand with worries about catching the disease. Earlier in the year he was very afraid of going anywhere where he could come meet with others.

“Selling firewood is hard when people are afraid of getting close to each other. It also affects communication (with clients).”

The pandemic has resulted in a lot of stress and anxiety for Cheoun. With limited income and no clarity about when the economy will rebound, Cheoun and his family are spending much less on food and a priority is having enough money for his medicines so that he can manage his condition. Cheoun is fortunate to have the support of MoPoTsyo, an NGO in Cambodia who provide low-cost medicines and peer support for people in eight provinces in the country.

But for many living with chronic **noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)**, access to support and treatment is limited.

The cost of managing **NCDs** was already a significant financial burden for many Cambodian families.

But now, **COVID-19**, **NCDs**, and economic inequality are intersecting to create a major burden to many Cambodians. For informal sector workers like Cheoun, who doesn't yet qualify for national social health protection, this is major source of concern.

For Hun Cheoun, he hopes the economy will bounce back soon, so he can get back on his truck.

Through this project, the Cambodian NCD Alliance hopes to draw attention to the impacts of COVID-19 on people living with non-communicable diseases.

