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LUTHERAN HOPE CAMBODIA ORGANIZATION

Capacity Statement

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Organization overview

Lutheran Hope Cambodia Organization (LHCO), formerly known as Life With Dignity (LWD), is a Cambodian NGO with service roots dating to 1979. LHCO evolved from a humanitarian initiative under the Lutheran World Federation into a fully localized entity in 2010 and rebranded in 2024. Rural communities widely recognize LHCO as Angkar “L”, reflecting trust and long-term commitment.

Vision, mission, and values

Vision: People Living With Dignity.

Mission: To work alongside vulnerable people and communities to transform their personal and socio-economic situations toward self-reliance through holistic development approaches.

Core values: Partnership, Respect, Compassion, Equality, Accountability.

Core programmatic themes (2021–2026)

- **Sustainable livelihoods and agriculture:** diversified on-farm and off-farm activities; improved rice, livestock, and horticulture productivity; stronger Agriculture Cooperatives (ACs) via business planning, financial management, and market linkages.
- **DRR and climate change adaptation:** climate-resilient infrastructure (ponds, irrigation) and capacity building for Disaster Management Committees.
- **WASH, nutrition, and health:** safe water and sanitation (CLTS guidelines); nutrition education; child growth monitoring; multi-ingredient porridge preparation.
- **Education:** pre-school and primary education aligned with Child-Friendly School Policy; improved infrastructure, teacher capacity, and inclusive learning outcomes.
- **Social community engagement:** strengthened governance and social accountability through ISAF engagement between citizens (rights holders) and authorities (duty bearers).

Geographic and beneficiary reach

Operating areas: Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Prey Veng, Kampot, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Urban.

People reached: 239,000+ individuals.

Priority groups:

- Poor farmers and landless families
- Female-headed households and women’s groups
- Children, youth, and persons with disabilities
- Migrants and victims of human trafficking

Technical expertise and innovation

- **Digitalization:** co-developed the AC Digit App for member database and cooperative financial management; advanced IT and internet literacy training for farmers.
- **Entrepreneurship:** 4Ps approach (People, Public, and Private Partnership) supporting women’s entrepreneurship and value chain development.
- **Humanitarian response:** Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP); rapid needs assessments; Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA).

Governance, standards, and partners

- Independent Board of Directors providing strategic oversight
- NGO-GPP Certificate awarded three times (most recently 2022)
- Active member of ACT Alliance; founding member of AZEECON

Key partners and donors:

ACT Alliance, ALISEA, CZECH AID, Diaconia Czech, BAIDE, Bread for the World (BfdW), DPA, ELCA, EU, FELM, JELA, Heifer International, Japan Embassy, LWF, PANASONIC, Mission Alliance, USAID, WACC/APMM and the Amity Foundation.

Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods

LHCO's work in Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture is a core programmatic theme dedicated to ensuring that smallholder and interested farmers increase their income and achieve self-reliance through diversified on-farm and off-farm livelihood activities

Core Expertise and Strategies

LHCO utilizes an integrated holistic and inclusive approach to transition subsistence farmers into market-oriented producers. The organization's primary strategies include:

- **Agricultural Resilient Techniques:** LHCO builds the capacity of farmers in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and agro-ecology. This includes training in Good Agricultural Practices (CamGAP), organic pesticide production, crop mulching, and soil preservation techniques.
- **Producer Group (PG) Formation:** LHCO organizes smallholders into Producer Groups specialized in horticulture, livestock (poultry and pigs), aquaculture, and rice production. These groups facilitate collective production and peer-to-peer learning.
- **Agriculture Cooperative (AC) Strengthening:** LHCO prioritizes the institutional capacity of ACs, providing intensive coaching in governance, strategic business planning, financial management (bookkeeping), and resource mobilization.
- **Infrastructure and Technology Support:** To mitigate climate risks, LHCO provides matching grants and technical assistance for climate-resilient infrastructure, such as net houses (greenhouses), solar water pumps, drip irrigation systems, and community ponds.

Market Systems and Value Chain Development

LHCO facilitates the integration of smallholder farmers into sustainable market systems through the 4Ps (People, Public, and Private Partnership) approach. Key interventions include:

- **Market Intermediation:** LHCO establishes Product Market Agents (PMAs) and Model Market Agents (MMAs) who act as crucial links between farmers and buyers to promote agricultural goods.
- **Farming Contracts:** The organization brokers farming contracts between ACs and private sector buyers to ensure stable pricing and guaranteed markets for local produce.
- **Collective Centers:** LHCO supports the establishment of collective agricultural production centers and AC stores to manage the aggregation, processing, and resale of products like animal feed, vegetable seeds, and rice.

Innovation and Digitalization

LHCO is a leader in modernizing rural agriculture through digital solutions:

- **AC Digit App:** In partnership with agencies like Diaconia and Kokopon, LHCO has transitioned ACs from manual to digital database management for tracking member profiles, financial records, and market information.
- **Digital and ICT Literacy:** LHCO provides advanced training in IT and internet literacy, empowering farmers and youth to research market prices and promote their products online via social media and e-commerce platforms.

Impact and Proven Results

LHCO's Holistic Rural Development Program (HRDP) has consistently delivered measurable socio-economic changes:

- **Income Growth:** Between 2020 and 2023, participating smallholder farmers experienced an average annual income increase of 23.84%.
- **Targeted Reach:** In recent reporting periods, LHCO has established 53 PMAs, trained over 913 smallholder farmers in resilient techniques, and supported the development of 138 smallholder business plans.
- **Women's Empowerment:** LHCO prioritizes female-headed households and women entrepreneurs, ensuring they take on leadership roles within AC committees and producer groups.
- **Counter-Trafficking:** By providing sustainable local livelihoods, LHCO has successfully reduced the risk of unsafe migration and human trafficking for thousands of community members.

LHCO maintains high standards of professional practice, holding the NGO Governance and Professional Practice (NGO-GPP) Certificate, and works in close coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and other technical government departments.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)

LHCO's DRR/CCA program is built on an integrated holistic and inclusive approach, ensuring that community members are equipped for long-term sustainability through proactive preparedness and resilience-building.

Core Expertise and Strategies

LHCO utilizes a participatory rights-based approach to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders and government structures. Key strategies include:

- **Capacity Building and Planning:** LHCO provides intensive training on Hazard Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (HVCA) and the development of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRP). This includes educating community members and schoolchildren on danger signals, early warning signs, and safe behaviors during floods or storms.
- **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:** The organization facilitates the construction and rehabilitation of small-scale infrastructure designed to mitigate climate risks. Examples include community ponds, irrigation systems, water spill dams, solar water pumps, and climate-resilient rural roads.
- **Mainstreaming into Local Governance:** LHCO ensures long-term sustainability by facilitating the integration of DRR and CCA priorities into Commune Development Plans (CDPs) and Commune Investment Plans (CIPs). This enables communes to mobilize resources from the government and development partners for adaptive practices.
- **Eco-Friendly Innovations:** LHCO promotes smart agriculture techniques, such as drip irrigation, drought-resistant crop varieties, and the use of net houses to protect produce from extreme weather.

Youth as Agents of Change

LHCO prioritizes youth engagement, training them as community leaders to facilitate awareness and action.

- **Waste Management:** Youth lead initiatives in the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and waste management, helping to improve the local environment and reduce climate-related stressors.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Youth and school committees are trained in proposal writing and fundraising to independently address DRR/CCA issues within their communities.

Impact and Proven Results (2024 Data)

LHCO's interventions have led to measurable improvements in safety, response time, and resilience:

- **Community Reach:** In 2024 alone, LHCO trained 1,863 community members, 2,388 schoolchildren, and 460 youths on DRR/CCA.
- **Plan Development:** LHCO supported the creation and implementation of 41 school-based DRR/CCA plans and 3 to 25 commune-level plans.
- **Government Engagement:** 77 government representatives from Provincial, District, and Commune Committees for Disaster Management (PCDM/DCDM/CCDM) received specialized capacity building.

Humanitarian Track Record and Partnerships

LHCO maintains a robust humanitarian track record, responding to major emergencies across Cambodia, including:

- Multi-province floods (2013, 2018, 2020).
- Nationwide droughts (2016).
- Cross-border conflict and displacement (2011, 2025).

As an active member of the ACT Alliance and a founding member of AZEECON (Asian Zone Emergency & Environment Co-operation Network), LHCO collaborates regionally to improve relief, recovery, and resilience-based programming. LHCO is also a signatory to the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), ensuring high standards of quality and accountability in all disaster response efforts.

WASH, Nutrition, and Health

LHCO utilizes an integrated holistic and inclusive approach to ensure that vulnerable households—particularly women and children—attain better health outcomes through increased access to clean water, sustainable sanitation, and enhanced nutritional practices.

Community-Based Nutrition and Maternal Health

LHCO empowers caregivers and local health structures to address the root causes of malnutrition and childhood disease.

- **Nutrition and Parenting Capacity:** The organization builds the skills of parents, pregnant women, and Village Health Support Groups (VHSG) in parenting, balanced diets, and child growth monitoring.
- **Multi-Ingredient Porridge:** LHCO promotes the preparation of multi-ingredient porridge ("Bobor Khap Krop Kroeung") using locally available ingredients to improve the nutritional status of children under five.
- **Maternal Health Support:** Working alongside District Referral Hospitals and Health Centers, LHCO facilitates prenatal care, vaccination tracking, and breastfeeding education (both exclusive and first-hour) to ensure a healthy start for newborns.
- **Nutrient-Rich Innovation:** In Kampong Speu, LHCO facilitated the successful production of nutrient-rich powder through Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs), training members in hygiene standards and marketing to improve community food security.

Sanitation, Hygiene, and Environment

LHCO drives behavioral change to eliminate waterborne diseases and improve community sanitation.

- **Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS):** By implementing CLTS guidelines, LHCO has successfully guided numerous target villages to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) status.
- **Inclusive Infrastructure:** The organization constructs gender-segregated school toilets and handwashing stations, often incorporating ramps to ensure accessibility for children with disabilities.
- **Hygiene Promotion:** Regular awareness campaigns focus on critical behaviors, such as handwashing with soap after using the toilet and before preparing food, significantly reducing the prevalence of diarrhea and typhoid.
- **Waste Management:** LHCO trains youth and school committees in the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and provides garbage bins to promote a clean and healthy environment.

Sustainable Water Supply Solutions

LHCO focuses on developing long-term, climate-resilient water resources to alleviate the seasonal shortages that affect rural health.

- **Water and Sanitation User Groups (WSUG):** The organization coordinates with local governments to establish and train WSUGs/Water User Groups in water management, maintenance, and safe storage techniques.
- **Safe Water Infrastructure:** LHCO supports the installation of water filter systems (for both household and school use), solar water pumps, community ponds, and rainwater tanks.
- **Case Highlight:** Through the Living Water Project, LHCO collaborated with the Amity Foundation to install solar-powered water filtration systems in primary schools, ensuring students have access to drinking water even during the dry season.

Proven Impact and Results (2024 Data)

LHCO's interventions have led to measurable health improvements across its target areas:

- **Caregiver Reach:** 2,191 mothers were trained on nutrition and parenting, leading to a 25% increase in the adoption of balanced diets for young children.
- **Nutrition Outcomes:** Caregiver participation in porridge preparation resulted in a 30% increase in the consumption of nutritious meals by children under five.
- **Water Access:** 902 families were provided with improved water points or systems, contributing to a 35% reduction in waterborne diseases in participating communities.
- **Sanitation Knowledge:** 925 households received hygiene training, resulting in a 40% increase in knowledge and a 30% improvement in actual sanitation practices.
- **Behavioral Change:** Approximately 90% of beneficiaries in core program areas now consistently practice safe water habits, such as boiling or filtering water before drinking.

LHCO maintains professional standards as a member of the ACT Alliance and AZEECON, ensuring its health and WASH programs align with the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) and the Child-Friendly School Policy.

Education (Pre-school, Primary, and TVET)

LHCO's education program is built around the Strategic Outcome to improve the quality of education at pre-schools and primary schools in target areas in strict alignment with the Child-Friendly School Policy. By focusing on holistic child development, the organization aims to break the cycle of poverty and empower future generations toward self-reliance.

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and Primary Education

LHCO prioritizes foundational learning through systematic support for both community-based and state-run schools.

- **Teacher Capacity Building:** The organization provides intensive training for pre-school and primary teachers in modern methodologies, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA).
- **Strengthening Support Structures:** LHCO builds the leadership and school management capacities of School Support Committees (SSCs), Commune Committees for Women and Children (CCWC), and Children's Councils.
- **Enrollment and Retention:** Through annual school enrollment campaigns, LHCO works with local authorities to ensure children enter school at age six, leading to a measurable 10% increase in enrollment rates in targeted areas.
- **Reading Performance:** Specialized support for "slow learners" and the establishment of peer-to-peer tutoring has resulted in 90% of participating Grade 3 students meeting or exceeding national reading standards.

School Infrastructure and Healthy Learning Environments

LHCO recognizes that a safe, well-equipped physical environment is essential for effective learning.

- **Construction and Rehabilitation:** LHCO manages the construction of child-friendly preschool buildings, primary school classrooms, and community libraries to promote reading habits.
- **WASH in Schools:** To reduce absenteeism caused by illness, LHCO installs WASH facilities, including gender-segregated latrines with ramps for students with disabilities, handwashing stations, and safe water filtration systems.
- **Clean Energy Solutions:** Collaborating with partners like the Amity Foundation and JELA, LHCO provides solar power systems and fans to remote schools, significantly improving the classroom environment and allowing children to study comfortably.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

LHCO empowers secondary school students and out-of-school youth with market-relevant skills to enhance employability and local entrepreneurship.

- **Practical Life Skills:** High school students receive specialized training in food processing (e.g., meat, fish, and fruit drying) using innovative solar drying technologies.
- **Student Entrepreneurship:** The organization supports school-based enterprises, teaching students about business development, financial literacy, and marketing strategies through School Trade Fairs.
- **Vocational Training:** At-risk youth are supported to access professional trades such as ICT, automotive repair, and hospitality skills to reduce unsafe migration.

Inclusive Education and Parental Engagement

- **Disability Inclusion:** LHCO ensures that children with disabilities are not left behind by constructing accessible infrastructure and providing targeted support to improve their reading and social skills.
- **Positive Parenting:** LHCO builds the capacity of parents and caregivers in positive parenting skills, encouraging them to monitor their children's growth and academic progress at home.

Proven Impact and Results (2024 Data)

- **Academic Excellence:** 182 Grade 3 students met national reading standards, and there was a 20% average improvement in students' assessment scores for math and reading.
- **Graduation Success:** Primary school completion rates in LHCO target areas reached 86%, surpassing initial targets.
- **Teacher Innovation:** 80% of trained teachers reported using innovative teaching methods and hands-on activities in their classrooms.
- **Infrastructure Reach:** LHCO successfully developed and implemented 13 School Operation Plans (SOPs) and supported 41 school-based DRR/CCA plans to ensure long-term sustainability.

LHCO maintains professional standards in education through its membership in the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) and works in close coordination with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) at all levels.

Social Community Engagement (Good Governance and Social Accountability)

LHCO utilizes a participatory rights-based approach to act as a bridge builder, facilitating meaningful engagement between citizens (rights holders) and local authorities (duty bearers) within the government's local democratic development processes.

Strengthening Local Governance and Accountability

LHCO empowers local administrations to be more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable households by providing comprehensive capacity building to Commune Council members and clerks.

- **Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D):**

Training focuses on social responsibility, good governance, and administrative service standards. In 2024 alone, 185 commune officials enhanced their effectiveness, resulting in a 20% improvement in the efficiency of local government processes.

- **Service Delivery Improvement:** By building the capacity of duty bearers to plan and manage public services, LHCO has facilitated observable improvements in education, healthcare, and infrastructure programs.

Civic Empowerment and the Social Accountability Framework

LHCO is a leader in implementing the Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) to promote transparency and citizen monitoring of local services.

- **Information for Citizens (I4C):** The organization disseminates critical information regarding standard service fees and citizen rights through billboards, leaflets, and accountability boxes, ensuring that poor households are not burdened by unauthorized costs.

- **Community Advocacy:** Training on social accountability has empowered community members to initiate and successfully advocate for community-led projects, such as those addressing access to clean water and sanitation.

- **Youth as Agents of Change:** LHCO trains youth to serve as Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs) who facilitate community scorecards and help develop Joint Accountability Action Plans (JAAP) for integration into local government investment plans.

LHCO maintains professional excellence as a member of the ACT Alliance and AZEECON, and holds the NGO Governance and Professional Practice (NGO-GPP) Certificate, signifying the highest standards of transparency and integrity in the sector

Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

A core component of LHCO's engagement strategy is promoting community harmonization through peaceful conflict resolution.

- **Local Alternative Dispute Resolution (LADR):**

LHCO builds the capacity of Commune Dispute Resolution Committees (CDRC) and educates the public on LADR mechanisms, as well as land, marriage, and family laws.

- **Safety and Inclusion:** In 2024, 915 community members increased their awareness of LADR mechanisms. Furthermore, LHCO mainstreams Do No Harm (DNH) principles among village development committees and youth to ensure conflict-sensitive community development.

Advocacy and Resource Mobilization

LHCO facilitates platforms where the concerns of marginalized groups—such as female-headed households, smallholder farmers, and persons with disabilities—are integrated into local policy.

- **Integration into CIP/CDP:** LHCO has a proven track record of helping communities advocate for the inclusion of their priorities into Commune Investment Programs (CIP) and Commune Development Plans (CDP), ensuring long-term sustainability and government funding for local initiatives.

- **Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues:** The organization regularly convenes national and sub-national workshops between Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs), government ministries (e.g., MAFF, MoWA), and the private sector to discuss policy reforms and market linkages.

Proven Impact and Satisfaction

- **Citizen Satisfaction:** In LHCO target areas, 69.6% of citizens rated local public service delivery as “good”, reflecting high levels of satisfaction and increased government responsiveness.

- **Community Awareness:** Trained community members have reported a 30% increase in their understanding of transparency and accountability, leading to more effective local resource allocation.

- **Counter-Trafficking:** LHCO has trained over 3,191 community members on safe migration, reducing the risk of human trafficking and exploitation.