



VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
2009 FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cambodia 2009 - **Final Study Report**

Violence Against Women: 2009 Follow-Up Survey

Executive Summary

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FOREWORD

In 2005, a nation-wide baseline survey was conducted to gain insight into the attitudes towards, as well as occurrence of, domestic violence in Cambodia. This survey revealed that no less than 64% of the population knew a man who abused his wife, confirming that domestic violence is a serious problem affecting the majority of the country.

The impact of domestic violence extends far beyond the individual pain of each victim. Abuse severely affects victims' physical and emotional wellbeing, in turn affecting their ability to function and contribute to the household, which causes harm to the entire family. The social impact and ensuing economic loss has a negative effect on the prosperity and wellbeing of the entire Kingdom of Cambodia as well.

As this follow-up survey shows, important progress is being made. After four years of educational and awareness-raising efforts by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, local NGOs, and international organizations, this follow-up survey was created with the intent of documenting attitudinal and behavioural changes in Cambodian society. As the following pages will illuminate, there have been many encouraging results.

For example, the percentage of the population who know an abusive husband has significantly decreased to 53% (11% fewer than in 2005). This number remains, however, at over half of the population, suggesting that there is still much work to be done.

In particular, the results of this survey reveal that the belief about the rights of husbands to maintain unquestioned authority within their households persists until today. This also shows that the concept of gender equality is not yet widely understood or accepted as a necessary part of our society's development. The Ministry of Women's Affairs therefore will continue to advocate for and provide support to further initiatives aiming for substantial and foremost sustainable behavioural change in Cambodian society.

This follow-up survey would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals and the commitment of our development partners. I would especially like to thank the organizations that funded and implemented this important follow-up study. Deep thanks are thus extended to the Promoting Women's Rights Project of GTZ, UNFPA, the Partnership for Gender Equity under UNDP, and UNIFEM, as well as to the Australian Government that supported the publication of this survey together with the above organizations.

Phnom Penh, April 2010




Her Excellency
Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi
Minister of Women's Affairs

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Funding for this research study was provided by the following international organizations:

German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

The Promotion of Women's Rights Project is a bilateral programme implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The programme aims to build capacity within the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other relevant actors in order to implement the *Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims* effectively, namely through awareness raising, supporting counselling services for victims and improving the respective legal framework.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) under the Partnership for Gender Equity (UNDP/MoWA/PGE)

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) supports the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) through the UNDP/MOWA *Partnership for Gender Equity, Phase II* (2006-2010) project. The project supports strengthening of staff capacity and organizational development of MOWA to fulfil its mandate of advocating for, coordinating and monitoring gender mainstreaming in national policies, sector strategies and national reform programs, as well as for aid management. The project also works on developing sustainable institutional models for women's economic empowerment and supports research and strategies to address societal gender values through communication and advocacy.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The United Nations Development fund for women (UNIFEM) is dedicated to advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality. UNIFEM works on several fronts towards ending violence against women and girls including tracking its root cause of gender inequality. Initiatives range from the development of legal frameworks and specific national actions, to supporting prevention at the grassroots level, including in conflict and post-conflict situations. UNIFEM also supports data collection on violence against women, facilitating new learning on the issue. UNIFEM manages the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and has supported innovative projects to prevent and respond to violence against women in Cambodia. UNIFEM has a longstanding relationship of cooperation and support with the Ministry of Woman's Affairs.

Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

The Australian Government has zero tolerance to violence against women and recognises that reducing violence against women is crucial to achieving the global gender equality and delivering good development outcomes. The Australian Aid Program, AusAID works in Cambodia through the Cambodia Criminal Justice Assistance Project (CCJAP 3). CCJAP 3 aims to strengthen the criminal justice system in Cambodia with a focus on youth and women. The project supports the Cambodian Ministries of Interior, Justice and provincial authorities to improve police and court responses to women experiencing violence. AusAID also supports services provided by NGOs targeted at women in the justice system, including legal aid, counselling, health and housing services.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ADHOC	Cambodian Human Rights & Development Association
BC	British Columbia
BMZ	German Federal Ministry For Economic Co-operation & Development
CAMBOW	Cambodian Committee Of Women
CDHS	Cambodian Demographic & Health Survey
CEDAW	Convention OnThe Elimination OfAll Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGA	Cambodian Gender Assessment
CIM	Centre For International Migration & Development
CMDG	Cambodian Millennium Development Goal
COMBI	Communications For Behavioural Impact
DFID	Department For International Development
DoP	Department Of Planning
DV-Law	Law On The Prevention Of Domestic Violence & The Protection Of the Victims
DV	Domestic Violence
EWMI	East West Management Institute
GAD	Gender & Development
GAD/C	Gender & Development For Cambodia
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Co-operation)
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRL	Indochina Research Cambodia Limited
LA	Local Authority
LICADHO	Cambodian League For The Promotion & Defence Of Human Rights
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports
MoH	Ministry Of Health
MoI	Ministry Of Interior
MoJ	Ministry Of Justice
MoP	Ministry Of Planning
MoWA	Ministry Of Women's Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NIS	National Institute Of Statistics

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PADV	Project Against Domestic Violence
PGE	Partnership For Gender Equity
PLG	Partnership For Local Governance
PPS	Probability Proportional To Size
PSP	Promotion of the Private Sector in Rural Areas
PWR	Promotion Of Women’s Rights
RGC	Royal Government Of Cambodia
SEILA	A Khmer Language Word Meaning “Foundation Stone” The Decentralised Planning, Financing & Management Of The Rural Development Programme Of The Royal Government Of Cambodia
SPSS	Statistical Product & Service Solutions
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TG	Target Group
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Fund For Children
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund For Women
UQAM	University Of Quebec In Montreal
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency For International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

Violence against women has a serious impact not only on those who experience it, but on the country’s social and economic situation as well. To address the serious toll that domestic violence takes on Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has made reducing domestic violence a priority. In particular, the RGC is focused on addressing the Cambodian Millennium Development Goal (CMDG) 3, which aims to “promote gender equality and empower women”; and the overall Target 8 within this goal, which is to “reduce significantly all forms of violence against women and children.” The final report contributes evidence in support of the RGC’s strategy to reduce domestic violence.

The East West Management Institute (EWMI), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the Promotion of Women’s Rights Project of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), in cooperation with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), initiated a baseline study in 2005 to gather a broad spectrum of data to help assess the situation and formulate effective solutions. The final study report contains the analysis of the findings of the 2009 follow-up.

Additional support for the 2009 follow-up survey was given, with the expectation that new comparative data would enable partners to assess the impact of interventions on survey sites, identify the type and scope of further interventions needed and their target groups, and formulate evidence based, measurable indicators from an existing benchmark.

Domestic violence in Cambodia takes place within a complex web of attitudes and values about gender roles, social relations and violence in general. Violence against women in Cambodia has been the subject of several studies in the course of the past ten years, but this two-part study is the first systematic national survey that assesses attitudes towards domestic violence. The follow-up study thus contributes to understanding of the current domestic violence climate by examining current levels of domestic violence, as well as the attitudes and impacts linked to this problem. The study also explores deeper elements of this situation, including women’s acceptance of violence, views of domestic violence as a private family matter, and the disproportionate impact of violence reported by the poor.

2. Follow-up Study Background

The 2009 follow-up survey has been conducted to assess progress in the eradication of domestic violence in Cambodia.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has included the fight against domestic violence into its national development targets, the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs):

Overall target 8: Reduce significantly all forms of violence against women and children

- *Target 3.16: Developing and implementing laws against all forms of violence against women and children according to international requirements and standards by 2005*
- *Target 3.17: Collecting annual statistics to monitor violence against women by 2005*
- *Target 3.18: Increasing the population percentage aware that violence against women is wrongful behaviour and a criminal act to 100 by 2015*
- *Target 3.19: Developing and Implementing a Prevention Plan by 2005*
- *Target 3.20: Increasing the proportion of cases of domestic violence counselled by qualified personal to 100 by 2015*

In 2010 the Royal Government of Cambodia will have to report again on its progress in implementing the CMDGs. The survey report aims to assist the RGC in assessing the degree of progress towards meeting the CMDGS related to violence against women and children.

3. Follow-Up Study Objectives

Indochina Research (Cambodia) Ltd. (IRL) was commissioned to conduct the follow-up survey to the baseline survey of 2005 “Violence against Women in Cambodia”, also conducted by IRL. The results of the follow-up survey reflect the progress on the commitment of the Cambodian Government to the above-mentioned Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (as compared against the 2005 Baseline).

Thus, the baseline and follow-up surveys have been conducted in such a manner as to inform discussions and decisions on domestic violence and other social programs among key stakeholders, including the RGC, donors, the judiciary and police, legal professionals, various institutions, researchers, and civil society at large. In keeping with these aims, the follow-up survey’s design, research methodology, questionnaires, fieldwork planning, fieldwork quality control, data processing, and data analysis have been replicated from the baseline survey as exactly as possible (see *Violence against Women – A Baseline Survey*, Phnom Penh 2005).

The overall methodology and structure of the survey were designed to provide continuity, as much as possible, with the Project Against Domestic Violence (PADV) survey conducted in 1996 and the baseline survey, *Violence Against Women*, conducted in 2005, in order to allow for comparison. Specifically, this survey measures the same categories of verbal and physical violence measured by the 1996 and the 2005 baseline surveys.

Violence involves complex interactions of cultural, social and economic factors. In a country with gender-hierarchic traditions and a unique history like that of Cambodia, such interactions

can be particularly difficult to identify and unravel. Therefore, the baseline and the follow-up survey approach the problem from several perspectives, in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To create two data points for measuring awareness, attitudes, and practices regarding violence against women. These data points can contribute to ongoing monitoring of domestic violence trends in Cambodia in the foreseeable future, as well as evaluate the responses of the government and other agencies to such issues.
- To create an up-to-date knowledge base, describing the extent of violence, which can be used by agencies, donors, and governments to assess the situation as it stands, in support of achieving the CMDGs.
- To provide insight into Cambodian culture and social perceptions, and derive strategies to influence persistent behavioural and cultural patterns which serve as obstacles to the development of Cambodian women.

In particular, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive perspective of the following factors:

- Precise numerical data regarding the interviewees' direct and indirect awareness and experience of violence against women.
- Data on violence experienced outside the family, such as violence at the hands of friends, strangers, police and military.
- Detailed knowledge of the sampled population's attitudes and opinions regarding a list of behaviours, both verbal and physical, including rape and marital rape, including attitudes about whether violent acts are considered socially unacceptable or criminal, and attitudes about causes of violence.
- The social impacts of violence, particularly in terms of indirect costs (lost time/ earnings/ opportunities etc), and direct costs (medical, police, judiciary etc).
- An assessment of the existing services for victims of violence, their perceived quality, and public awareness of them.
- An examination of the interviewees' expectations regarding the future evolution of the phenomenon.
- Precise profiles of all respondents' backgrounds, which will aid in efforts to develop typologies of attitudes toward violence in the future.

4. The Legal Framework for Domestic Violence in Cambodia

Constitution

The following provisions included in the Constitution lay the foundation for protecting women and children from domestic violence:

- The right to life, personal freedom and security (Article 32).
- The law shall guarantee there shall be no physical abuse against any individual (Article 38).

- The right to equality of men and women before the law (Article 31).
- Protection from discrimination based on gender (Article 45).
- Protection of the rights of children (Article 48).
- The health of the people shall be guaranteed (Article 72) (Royal Government of Cambodia, Constitution, 1993).

The Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims (2005)

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs, other government institutions and civil society organisations cooperate to implement the *Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims (DV-Law)*, passed in 2005. The law aims to ensure institutional infrastructure that enables victims of domestic violence to protect their rights but also to prevent domestic violence in the future.

The 2005 DV-law was passed to promote a culture of non-violent behaviour. The law defines violence as including acts affecting life, physical integrity, tortures or cruel acts as well as sexual aggression. Domestic violence is referred to as violence that happens and could happen towards a husband or wife, dependent children, or any other person living under the roof of the house who is a dependent of the household.

Passing the law provided the basis for building relevant capacities at individual and institutional levels, but at the same time offered a new legal framework which may contribute to a change in social norms. Backgrounds, concepts and guidelines for the interpretation of the law have been published in the *Explanatory Notes on the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims* in 2007.

Correlations between the Penal Law and the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims

The Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims (DV-Law) does not focus on punitive measures, but on prevention. It must be noted that the DV-Law is neither a general nor a special penal law, as the law does not contain any substantial penal provisions which define crimes or which set out particular punishments.

Thus, in the case of domestic violence, a criminal investigation, prosecution and conviction is possible, but not on the basis of the DV-Law but instead pursuant to the *Penal Code*, especially as many kinds of actions of domestic violence are criminalized by the *Penal Code*.

Consequently, the principle of mandatory prosecution is applicable (see Articles 42, 43, 44 and 45 of the *Penal Procedure Code*). The principle of mandatory prosecution obliges the prosecuting authority to take action if there is the slightest suspicion a crime has been committed. Thus, in general, the prosecuting authority has to open a judicial investigation, no matter if there is a request by the victim or somebody else, and regardless of the affected persons’ will. This principle might create a ‘barrier’ for reporting domestic violence. Often,

a victim will not report an incident and seek legal protection, as the victim wants to prevent the perpetrator – often a family member – from being prosecuted or convicted.

Although the DV-Law primarily aims to prevent violence and to protect the victim, it cannot privilege perpetrators of domestic violence by hindering prosecution though, especially as the DV-Law shall not create any conflicts with other laws such as the Penal Code. However, the legislator of DV-Law was aware of this ‘dilemma’. Thus, Article 36 of the DV-law states that criminal prosecution shall not be possible if there is a request from a victim who is an adult, due to the fact that the offences are minor misdemeanors or petty crimes. Through this, victims of domestic violence shall be encouraged to make use of the legal protection provided by the DV-Law.

Reporting Procedures for Domestic Violence

Reporting of domestic violence under the DV-Law can take place in several ways:

- If officials intervene they are required to make a clear record about the incident and report it immediately to the prosecutors in charge.
- If officials who have already earned the legal qualification as the judicial police are absent – the local police, police agents, Royal Gendarmerie, local authorities in commune/sangkat, officials of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), as well as village chiefs who have intervened, can make a record to the court. The record has the same value as the record made by judicial police officials.
- Authorities who have the role to serve the interests and protect the welfare of the children have an obligation to report domestic violence against children. In severe cases, the authorities in charge shall file the case to the court. Any responsible person assigned by the court, including the prosecutors, shall take charge of conducting a follow up of the situation of the children and make a report about this situation to the court.

Implementation

As demonstrated above, according to the DV-Law, many acts of domestic violence will also constitute a criminal liability according to the Penal Code. This can deter some women and children from reporting violence, thus forming a serious barrier for seeking help under the DV-Law, particularly if the perpetrator contributes the sole income of the household. Most women do not want to see their husbands in jail and children do not want to lose their father, even if there is violence in the home. In numerous focus group discussions, village and commune authorities reported that even in serious cases of violence women asked that their husbands shall not be prosecuted, and the authorities obliged.

As well, some key informants interviewed for the baseline study reported that the specific manner for children and women to report domestic violence is not spelled out in this law, nor has the law’s definition of violence and scope been communicated to all stakeholders. According to the *LICADHO Report on Violence against Women (2006)*, the domestic violence

law had not yet been widely implemented at the time of their report publication in 2006 in Cambodia. Not at least a lack of enforcement as well as “engrained attitudes” amongst members of the authorities, that still see domestic violence as a private matter that should not be interfered with by the public, were named as obstacles.

5. The Current Policy Framework for Domestic Violence in Cambodia

In 1992, Cambodia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW). Thus, Cambodia is required to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. In the Constitution of 1993, the state has committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

In April 2004 the Government supplemented the Millennium Development Goals with a national objective on the issue of violence against women. It calls for a significant reduction of every form of violence against women and children by 2015. Cambodia is thus the first country in the world to make reducing violence against women an indicator of its national development (Woods 2008).

In the Rectangular Strategy and in the National Strategic Development Plan of the Royal Government of Cambodia (NSDP), gender equality is a prominent target. The government's strategy to promote gender equality is laid out in MoWA's strategic plan, the *Neary Rattanak*. This plan is subject to constant revision and further elaboration to fulfil these targets effectively. The adoption of the *Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims in 2005* as well as the *Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in 2008* are only examples for tangible results. Not least “The fair share for women”, a comprehensive gender assessment conducted in 2008 by MoWA, provided the basis for more analysis and policy adjustment.

Consequently, in October 2009 the *National Action Plan to Prevent Violence on Women (NAPVW)* was launched. The Action Plan is a four-year-plan (2009-2012). Its core objective is to encourage the participation of relevant institutions, different competences in the government and to encourage the enforcement of the law to prevent and to reduce all forms of violence on women. Strategies and activities that are mentioned in this plan are the results of the government and relevant stakeholders efforts at all levels.

In particular, the strategic areas for future programming are:

- Raising public awareness and the distribution of laws to the public.
- Creating and improving social, health and legal services.
- Developing and improving policies and related laws.
- Strengthen the capacity of competent officials and relevant services.

Last but not least, the NAPVW stresses the need for a standardized system for data collection from different sources to monitor the frequency and extent of violence against women and children.

6. Key Findings

The key challenges related to domestic violence in Cambodia that are highlighted by the follow-up survey findings include:

- Some forms of Violence Against Women are still widely accepted, justified and tolerated by women and men and this is reinforced by a culture of impunity.
- Prevention and protection efforts are still weak and social services are limited and mainly found in Phnom Penh, limiting support, options, and redress for victims of violence against women.
- Women need to have greater awareness about their rights and the means to make claims and access remedies.
- Monitoring and data collection are inadequate and inconsistent.
- The policy framework has been strengthened but implementation is uneven and poorly monitored, largely due to ineffective institutional arrangements at all levels and structural barriers to the effective application of VAW principles and norms.

IN DETAIL, KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2005 BASELINE SURVEY WERE:

Attitudes about Domestic Violence

The study found significant acceptance for domestic violence in certain cases, especially by husbands against wives, and a strong belief that men are entitled to more rights than women.

There was broad agreement that a wife challenging her husband's dominance or right to do as he pleases can justify even the most severe violence. More than half the respondents said this type of behaviour by a wife justifies even extreme violent acts that can cause death.

Women were more accepting of violence than men.

Attitudes are static: they are not changing, even among young people.

Lack of law enforcement was cited as a major influence on men's attitudes toward women. Another significant influence is male peer pressure.

Experience of Domestic Violence

Around 64% of the sample knew a husband who acted violently toward his wife, and 22.5% of the female respondents had suffered violence at the hands of their husbands. This

means that the prevalence of violence against women was largely unchanged since the survey by PADV in 1996 and the CDHS 2000.

Despite biases against women using violence, 12% of men said that their wives had acted violently toward them.

The survey showed a strong correlation between violence and alcohol use, and between violence and witnessing violence between parents.

Impact of Physical Violence

Domestic violence causes significant economic, physical and mental impacts on those who experience it.

Just under one-fifth of the respondents who experienced violence by their spouse reported that they missed work. Violence contributed to 16% of the sample losing around one month's income each year. This had an even more dramatic impact on the poor, who said they had lost almost twice their monthly income in the past year.

Just under a fifth of those who experienced violence by a spouse reported that their children missed school between 5 and 20 times in the last twelve months. Seven percent of women who experienced violence by a spouse said their children missed school 20 times or more during this period because of violence in the family.

These respondents also reported negative effects on their health and well-being, ranging from anxiety and physical problems to extreme fear.

Emotional Abuse

Many respondents knew of husbands who became angry when their wives did not perform their gender roles,¹ by neglecting their children or their housework, or spending money without telling their husbands.

Similarly, a significant percentage of the sample knew of a husband who tried to control his wife by controlling what she wore, where she went, or whom she saw. More than half of the male respondents said that this behaviour is justified.

Rape

Rape was clearly viewed differently than other types of abuse. More than a quarter of the respondents knew someone who had been raped, and this figure was even higher - 42% - among the poor. Many of the perpetrators were identified by respondents as family members.

¹ These gender roles include taking care of the children and the family's home, deferring to their husbands in all decisions, and staying at home.

Rape is the only situation of domestic violence where a woman is likely to seek help and retribution. There is strong support for prison terms for rapists, but less support for prison terms when the perpetrators are boyfriends or men with mistresses. The most common outcome of rape cases was compensation paid by the perpetrator. However, 30% of rape cases were resolved with a warning or no official outcome.

Rape in Marriage

Although most people do not think a husband has the right to force his wife to have sex, rape in marriage is not viewed the same way as rape by other perpetrators. About 14% of respondents knew a woman who was forced to have sex against her will by husband, and this figure jumped to 23% among the poor.

There is a broad consensus on reasons why a wife may be justified in refusing her husband. More than three-quarters of the sample said a woman is justified in refusing her husband when she has just given birth. But only about half said that a husband's HIV/AIDS infection is a justifiable reason.

Rape in marriage was the most sensitive subject addressed in the survey, which was reflected in the low numbers of people who sought help. Of those who reported knowing a woman in this situation, more than half said the woman had kept quiet and done nothing.

The Role of Alcohol in Domestic Violence

The survey showed a strong link between alcohol and violence. As the use of alcohol increased, the level of violence increased. Based on answers about the use of alcohol by other people, the survey showed that 80% of men drink alcohol at least occasionally.

Respondents' answers about their own drinking habits and those of their spouses appear to be in conflict. This raises questions both about the prevalence of drinking and about truthfulness in disclosing drinking habits, in light of social values that discourage drinking. This may in turn affect research about the link between alcohol and violence.

Seeking Help

Only 11% of the entire sample said they sought help for domestic violence or rape. A significant number of women said their recourse is to keep quiet and do nothing. Many respondents who did seek help (54% of the men and 62% of the women) also cited commune and village authorities as an avenue of help. These officials are the most widely accessible resources for most people. In most cases, the outcome was "reconciliation." Only a quarter of those who sought a divorce were successful in getting a divorce. Very few people said they turned to the courts, lawyers or NGOs.

Local Authorities and Police

This group shared many of the same attitudes as others about justifications for violence.

These authorities rated the domestic violence and rape situation as “somewhat unsatisfactory,” on a scale ranging from “very unsatisfactory” to “very satisfactory.” But domestic violence and rape ranked behind drugs, other violent crime, corruption, and youth gangs as a law and order priority.

Key findings from the 2009 survey, as well as positive and negative changes between 2005 and 2009, are summarized below.

KEY CHANGES BETWEEN 2005 AND 2009 DATA

NOTE: Bullet points with + signs indicate a change in direction of response categories which indicate possible DV policy and educational successes, while - bullet points indicate concerning trends in respondent categories.

Attitudes about Domestic Violence

- + For both genders, fewer respondents perceive violent acts as acceptable than in 2005, while recognition of violent acts as illegal is on the rise for all categories.
- + Since 2005, all respondents, especially women, are generally expressing a much lower tolerance for all categories of violence.
- + There have been precipitous drops in the acceptance of all categories of the most extreme types of physical violence since 2005. However, respondents continue to show higher levels of tolerance for violence in contrast to their acknowledgement that it is illegal.
- + There is some indication that awareness raising efforts have increased knowledge of forms of violence, issues of legality, and changes in attitude towards women’s mobility.

Experience of Domestic Violence

- + Comparisons between the 2005 baseline and 2009 follow-up surveys found that in all categories of reports where respondents said they knew a husband who abused his wife, all reports of violence were lower.
- + In 2009, individual reports of violence by self-identified victims were much higher than general respondents’ but there is an overall decrease in reporting of some forms of lesser abuse.
- + In all categories reported by victims of abuse, levels of abuse by partners have decreased from 2005 levels.

Impacts of Physical Violence by a Spouse: Economic, Health, and Well-Being

- + Reports of all categories of fear associated with DV dropped between 2005 and 2009 in all categories except female respondents and high income earners.

The Role of Alcohol in Domestic Violence

- + When violent behaviours were matched against reports of alcohol consumption, results are mixed with no clear correlation between the two, however, the most violent behaviours are on the decrease.

Controlling Behaviour

- + Compared to 2005, 12% more men in 2009 indicated accusations of unfaithfulness towards their wives were rather unjustified, compared to 2005. 35% more women felt a man accusing his wife of unfaithfulness was rather or very unjustified. 32% more women reported it was rather unjustified or very unjustified to not allow wives to see their girlfriends.
- + Between 2005 and 2009, 13% more women felt not giving a wife money was rather unjustified and 14% more women felt not allowing a woman to see her family was similarly unjust, while 15% more women felt it was rather unjustified to not allow a wife to leave the house.

Rape (General) and Rape in Marriage

- + The vast majority of respondents said that rape should be punished by jail for more than three years, unless it was committed by a boyfriend or a married man against his mistress. This is in keeping with 2005 findings, where 73-92% of respondents preferred prison terms of over 3 years for all rapists except boyfriends or friends. More than half the sample preferred lower penalties for boyfriends. In the case of boyfriend rape, 47% of 2005 respondents preferred jail terms of 3 or more years, 14% preferred jail terms of up to 3 years, and 21% preferred compensation.
- + A total of 97% of respondents preferred prison terms of more than three years for gang rape participants, and 91% preferred such prison terms for fathers who raped their daughters. In 2005, 92% of respondents preferred jail terms of 3 or more years for gang rape, and 91% preferred similar jail terms for fathers that raped.
- + 33% of the sample said a woman may justifiably refuse sex with her husband in case he has HIV/AIDS, compared with 49% of respondents in 2005. 33% of respondents in 2009 reported a husband having a sexually transmitted disease was a justifiable reason, while 56% of respondents in 2005 said it was. 26% percent of the sample in 2009 said a woman is justified in refusing sex when her husband has sex with other women, compared to 35% in 2005.
- + There was a 21% increase in women between 2005 and 2009 who felt a wife being tired or ill was a justifiable excuse to refuse sex and a 15% increase in women who felt women not being in the mood justified a refusal for sex.
- + There was also a 14% increase in these same respondents indicating a wife's menstruation period was an acceptable excuse to refuse sex.

Available Options for Seeking Help for Rape

- + Over 97% of respondents identify communal authorities or the police as readily available resources in cases of crisis, similar to the 2005 survey.
- + Rape is the only form of abuse where women actively seek help and retribution from the perpetrator. In stark contrast with other cases of violence, only 6% said that the woman they knew who had been raped kept quiet and did nothing. This percentage of respondents is down 5% from the 2005 survey.
- + 64-65% of men and 55-56% of women reported women going to police or courts or communal authorities in such cases, compared to 69% of men and 47% of women in 2005.
- + 57% of men and 60% of women reported such victims sought help from friends and relatives, compared to 69% of men and 57% of women in 2005.
- + Around one-quarter of respondents said that the woman had gone to a hospital or medical provider, and a slightly smaller number said the woman sought compensation from the rapist (17% for male respondents reporting and 27% for female respondents). These percentages are similar to 2005, where 22% of men and 25% of women reported rape victims seeking medical help.
- + Men reported a 7% increase in women they knew contacting communal authorities in such situations and that 4% more women went to hospitals or doctors than in 2005.
- + Women, however, reported a drop of 9% of reports to communal authorities and a decrease of 3% in visits to health care facilities or practitioners. Male respondents also reported that 7% less women they knew accepted compensation to keep quiet about a rape incident.
- + There was a 9% increase in victims approaching the family of the perpetrator for compensation (men only reported a 2% increase).

Local Authorities and Police Attitudes about Domestic Violence

- + In comparison to 2005 responses, the greatest shifts in perception have occurred regarding what local authorities feel is acceptable behaviour in response to women arguing, not obeying, or showing disrespect to their husbands.
- + Local authorities' perception that cursing or insulting a wife was an acceptable response to such wife behaviours dropped by 17%, while respondents' selection of "throwing something at the other or pushing" as an acceptable response dropped by 32%.
- + 32% less local authorities selected knocking on the head, slapping or spanking, or kicking as acceptable responses to wives disrespecting their husbands
- + Threatening with a knife or a gun (axe or machete) was selected 25% less than in 2005, while throwing acid, stabbing or shooting was selected 26% less than in 2005.
- + 20% less local authorities felt throwing something at the other or pushing was an acceptable response to wives questioning husbands about girlfriends/going to sex workers, while 18% less of LA's selected threatening with a knife or a gun (axe or machete) as an acceptable response.

- + 24% less local authorities felt tying up and hit, hitting or trying to hit with an object was an acceptable response.
- + 17% more responses were recorded in the “don’t know/not sure” category for appropriate behaviours responding to wife questioning a husband about girlfriends/going to sex workers.
- + 15% more LA’s selected “don’t know/not sure” for the acid throwing category as a response to a wife’s refusal to have sex than in 2005.
- + Selection of “throwing acid, stabbing or shooting” as an acceptable response fell by 26% in the “wife argues with him, does not obey or show respect” category, by 14% in the “wife neglects the children” category, by 16% in the “wife questions him about spending money” category, and by 15% in the “wife questions him about girlfriends/going to sex workers” category.

Local Authorities and Police Views on Seeking Help

- + 52-84% of local authorities and police proposed that a person could turn to the police to seek support in times of domestic crisis.
- + 90% to 100% of all authorities selected “seeking help from communal or village authorities” as the best response in times of crisis.

Local Authorities and Police Views of Legal Status of Domestic Violence

- + More than 50% of the local authorities and police indicated they knew that physical violence is illegal, in contrast to 80% of the general population.
- + 96-100% of the general sample knew that the most extreme forms of violence are illegal, compared to 70-100% of different categories of local officials.

Local Authorities and Police Views on Cultural Influences on Men

- + 63% of local officials were inclined to cite the lack of law enforcement as influencing men’s attitudes towards women, as compared to 58% of the general population, which represents a rise in this category of 6% since 2005.
- + Local officials were also more likely to cite the influence of family (32%) and Khmer tradition (22%) over the general population (14 and 15% in these categories). However, there has been a 13% drop in local officials citing Khmer tradition, a 9% drop in citing parents and grandparents, a 10% drop for male relatives, and a 6% drop in citing education as influential factors on male behaviour.
- + 61% of local officials were just as likely to cite male friends (peer pressure) as influential, similar to the general sample but a drop of 10% since 2005.
- + Local officials and police were less likely to cite media (41%) than the general sample (44-51%), which represents a 20% drop from 2005.

Local Authorities and Police Views on Crime in General

- + Since 2005, there has been a 38% increase in local authorities (LA's) reporting that there are "very rarely/never" cases where a woman was raped and no complain is made.
- + LA's report that in 20% more cases than in 2005, "very rarely or never" are rapes reported where only a warning is issued.
- + In 2009, 9% more local authority respondents indicated that in the case of a rape where no complaint is filed, this is a nearly always unfair outcome. 9% more respondents than 2005 indicated they felt this was nearly always a fair outcome.
- + In 29% more cases, rapists very rarely or never pay compensation. However, these same respondents indicate that in 10% more cases, rapists are very rarely or never jailed.
- + In the case of a rapist getting a warning, 17% more respondents indicated this was nearly always an unfair outcome (while 12% more felt this was nearly always fair).
- + In the case of a rapist being required to pay compensation, 20% more LA's felt this was nearly always unfair, while 9% felt it was nearly always fair.
- + In the case of rapists being jailed, only 1% more LA's than 2005 felt this was nearly always unfair, while 19% more respondents indicated this was nearly always fair.
- + District authorities have increased their ranking of divorce/separation as an important issue by 15%, while commune authorities increased their ranking by 7% and both police groups increased their ranking by 10-11%.
- + District authorities have improved their ranking of domestic violence by 10%, while police have increased their ranking 6% (Commune authorities only increased their ranking by 3%).
- + District authorities did not improve their ranking of rape, but commune authorities increased it by 4% and police from 5-7%.
- + Since 2005, 11% more police lieutenants and above rank divorce/separation/child abandonment as a very important problem, while 15% more district authorities responded similarly. Ten percent more district authorities rank domestic violence as an important problem, with all police ranking it as 6% more important than as reported in 2005.

Experience of Local Authorities and Police with Domestic Violence

- + Between 2005 and 2009, reports of wives being beaten by their husbands decreased in all reporting categories (between 3-9%). 50% of local authorities said they received 1-4 complaints from women whose husbands beat them in the preceding year. 20% of the officials said they received from between 5-10 complaints during this period and 7% reported receiving 10-20 complaints.
- + Complaints about beatings from other family members were somewhat less frequent, with 35% of LA's receiving 1-4 complaints of such beatings in the previous year. 16% of LA respondents reported receiving 1 to 4 complaints of forced sex by husbands in the preceding year, while 34% received 1-4 complaints of rape. Reports that wives have been beaten by other family members, been forced to have sex against her will, or been raped, also decreased in all categories.

Rights Identified as Important to Cambodian Citizens, Knowledge of Domestic Violence Rights

- + 96% of male respondents consider the domestic violence law very helpful/helpful, while 98% of women agree. For respondents earning under \$20 monthly, this figure drops to 95% while 99% of higher earners (over \$200 monthly) report it as very helpful/helpful. 3% of poor respondents rank it as ineffective and 3% rank it as harmful. *NOTE: This question was not asked in 2005.*
- + There was also an increase of 9% since 2005 of respondents selecting “freedom of speech/right to speech” and another 8% selected “right to do business/freedom of work” as most important.

Perceptions about Inequality

- + 35% of men and 40% of women identified travel as a common right, which represents a 7% increase over 2005 responses for this category for both genders.
- + 25% of men and 19% of women identified being head of the family as key rights. Combining men’s and women’s responses, the “head of family” figure represent a 28% drop in this category from the 2005 survey.
- + 95% of men and 91% of women indicated knowledge of a Cambodian law against domestic violence. Worth noting in the 2009 findings is the fact that only 76% for poorer respondents (under \$20 monthly income) were aware of this law, in contrast to 96% of higher earners (over \$200 monthly income). *NOTE: This question was not asked in 2005.*

Seeking Help to Protect Rights

- + 19% more high income earners identified communal authorities as helpful.

Local Authorities and Police Views on Individual Rights

- + Local authorities’ propensity to cite certain rights are consistently higher than the general population in the following categories: the right to free speech (67% compared to 53% of general population), the right to live and survive (75% of officials compared to 47% of general population), the right to vote (10% of officials compared to 6% of general population).

PATICULARLY CONCERNING FINDINGS, 2009 SURVEY DATA

Attitudes about Domestic Violence

- Over 50% of all respondents felt that a wife behaving in an argumentative, disrespectful or disobedient manner warranted a violent response by her husband, even of the life-threatening type. Wives questioning husbands about spending money

or visiting girlfriends or sex workers elicited the highest percentage of responses that extreme violence was justified by husbands (ranging from 16-22%).

- The comparative analysis indicates a clear, though marginal shift in the level of acceptance by women of various forms of violence. The analysis also indicates a continued higher degree of acceptance of violence by women than men.
- Most of the findings confirm that deeply entrenched, unequal gender relations, underpinned by male domination and control, continue to drive attitudes of most men and women towards the use of violence.
- Continued condoning of extreme violence when the traditional gender division of labour or male sexual mobility is questioned by wives continues to be a problem, indicting the lack of bargaining power and empowerment of women within the household persists as a constant factor.
- As in 2005, people from urban areas were more likely to see severe violence as acceptable when a wife questions her husband about going to sex workers or girlfriends than those in rural areas.
- Both men and women report that women's attitudes are greatly influenced by the lack of law enforcement (55% and 52% for men and women, respectively).

Experience of Domestic Violence

- A significant difference exists between reports of circumstances which lead to violence from "all respondents" (highlighted in section 3.1.1), when compared to reports from victims only. There is a marked rise in reported instances of less abusive interactions (e.g. yelling, cursing, throwing) for women who are perceived by their spouses as failing in their assumed gender roles (e.g. child rearing, house cleaning, food preparation, etc.)
- Specifically, perceptions of such chores not being managed well resulted in more reported instances of extreme abuse, with 8-10% of victims reporting acid throwing as punishment.
- Questioning husbands about sex workers or how money spent were also categories where observed abusive behaviours increased significantly. In particular, reports of acid throwing rose to 31% for questions regarding involvement with other women and 18% regarding how money spent.
- There is a clear correlation between prevalence of domestic violence in households where members had parents who engaged in domestic violence. Reports of own behaviour tend to generally follow reports of parental behaviours in all categories except yelling.

Impacts of Physical Violence by a Spouse: Economic, Health, and Well-Being

- More than half the sample reported emotional distress in some form.
- Women, the poor and young people's physical health and sense of well-being were most affected.
- Women were more likely to suffer from long-term anger than men.

- Four times as many men as women said they drank alcohol as a result of violence.
- Women tended to suffer from more negative effects on their health in every category of the survey except alcohol consumption.
- Women and the poor experienced the highest degrees of anxiety (66% and 69% respectively), with 54% of men reporting anxiety symptoms. Higher income earners (over \$200 monthly) reported anxiety at a rate of 59%.
- Men reported sleeplessness 52% of the time while women reported sleeplessness 68% of the time.
- Only 14% of men reported physical illness or weight loss as a result of domestic conflicts, while 25% of women did.

The Role of Alcohol in Domestic Violence

- 8-10% more women in the sample are drinking occasionally compared to 2005, while men are drinking at about the same rate, with only a 3-4% reported increase in occasional drinking.
- When questions related to frequency of abusive behaviours were matched across reports of spousal drinking, 88-93% of spouses reported yelling occurring at least once a week, while 47-59% respondents reported cursing occurring at least once a week. Twelve to eighteen percent of respondents reported throwing occurring at least once a week (an increase of 6-12% from 2005 data), while tying up and beating occurred once a week for 4-5% of respondents (this represents a 3-4% increase from 2005). Eight to eleven percent of respondents reported being threatened with a knife at least once in a week period (a 7-10% increase from 2005). For individuals living with more frequent drinkers, all types of lesser abuses appear to be a frequent and consistent experience for spouses.

Male Anger

- A higher percentage of women than men felt anger was justified in all behavioural scenarios presented.
- In particular, a woman's neglect of the children, spending money without telling her husband, and neglecting housework received higher response rates than non-household gender-based activities.
- Women and low-income respondents showed a greater acceptance of male anger in the selected situations.
- Women seem to be self-monitoring much more than men, which is most likely the main reason for continued strong feelings about women's gender roles.
- It is clear that women hold much stronger attitudes about the appropriateness of their behaviour as wives than their male partners, so future educational campaigns should be sure to consider how to best dialogue about differences in male and female expectations related to gender-based household roles.

Controlling Behaviour

- Women were more likely than men to say it is justified for a man to forbid his wife to wear certain clothes, or to insist on knowing where his wife is at all times.
- In most cases, people with the lowest incomes were more likely to see controlling behaviour as justified.
- 47% of women reported feeling men’s efforts to keep a wife from seeing her family was justified, compared to 45% of men.
- There was a 10% drop in men agreeing that the forbidding of wives to wear such clothes was very unjustified, while there was an 11% increase in those reporting it was rather unjustified and a 10% increase in those who feel it is rather justified.
- There was a 17% increase in men feeling it was rather justified to know where their wife was at all times and a 7% drop in those feeling it was rather unjustified demonstrating men feel knowing their wife’s whereabouts at all time is an increasingly justifiable activity.
- There was a 10% increase in women who agreed that a man insisting on knowing where his wife is at all times is rather justified.

Rape (General) and Rape in Marriage

- Family members were reported as committing rape 28% of the time for total cases reported. Fathers and step-fathers accounted for 9% of this total. Friends or acquaintances accounted for 47% of the total number of perpetrators. These findings support the need for enhanced “acquaintance rape” and “date rape” education for children, teenagers, and young men and women. Education should be directed at both genders.
- There have been almost no changes (all less than 3%) in any categories related to punishment for rape between 2005 and 2009.
- Where percentages differed dramatically was between income categories. For poorer respondents (under \$20 monthly income), acceptable justifications dropped significantly, especially compared to higher income respondents (over \$200 monthly income). For instance, 74% of poorer respondents felt a woman being tired or ill was a justifiable excuse, while 92% of higher income earners agreed (compared to 90% aggregate total). Only 48% of poorer respondents felt having just given birth was an acceptable excuse to refuse sex, while 69% of higher income respondents felt this was justifiable.
- A husband carrying a sexually transmitted disease (STD) was only accepted by 19% of poor respondents as a legitimate excuse to avoid sex, compared to 45% of higher income earners (and 38% of aggregate total).
- Only 10% of poorer respondents accepted having HIV as a justifiable excuse to refuse sex, compared to 39% of higher income earners (vs. 33% aggregate total).
- Husbands having sex with other women was considered a justifiable excuse by only 12% of lower income respondents while 33% of higher income earners agreed (compared to 26% of the aggregate total).

- 21% less men feel that an STD is a justifiable excuse to refuse sex (compared to a 16% drop in women in the same category), while 20% less men feel a husband having HIV is a reason to refuse sex (compared to a 13% drop in women in the same category).
- 7% less men feel a husband having sex with another woman is a justifiable excuse to refuse sex (compared to a 10% drop in women in the same category).
- 20% less men believe a wife having just given birth is a legitimate excuse to refuse sex (compared to an 11% drop in women in the same category).
- For poorer respondents, there has been a 46% drop in respondents (both male and female) who report feeling that a sexually transmitted disease is a justifiable excuse to refuse sex, while 37% less respondents feel having HIV is a legitimate excuse for a wife to refuse.
- 32% less poor respondents feel husband having sex with another woman is a justifiable excuse to refuse sex while 36% less poor respondents believe a wife having just given birth is a legitimate excuse to refuse sex.

Available Options for Seeking Help for Domestic Violence and Rape

- Only 8% cited the courts, which are often located far away from their place of residence, while 15% of respondents reported NGOs and agencies offering counselling and support as the third most available source of services.
- Legal aid was cited as available by 14% of respondents as well, while lawyers were identified as available by 7% of respondents.
- In 2009, 87% of all respondents reporting direct involvement in a rape incident reported seeking no help (95% of men and 91% of women reported never seeking help for such problems.)

Seeking Help in Other Cases of Abuse

- 83% of men and 81% of women reported doing nothing when they knew about abuse while 9% of men and 14% of women disclosed they had reported abuse to communal authorities or village elders. 8% of men and 11% of women shared incidents with relatives or friends. Only 2% of men and 4% of women went to police or courts.
- In 2009, men reported doing nothing 23% more often than in 2005, while women reported doing nothing 29% more often. Reports of men talking to friends or relatives about the incident dropped 27%, while women dropped 22%. Men report a drop of 13% in reports to communal authorities or village elders, while women's reporting only dropped 2%.
- In the case of rape within marriage, 52% of female and 60% of male respondents reported women telling relatives or friends, while 54% of men and 32% of women reported such victims sought help from communal authorities or village elders. 14% of men and 8% of women reported women approaching the police or the courts. Still, 20% of men and 36% of women reported victims kept quiet in such

cases. Three to six percent of respondents said that a woman had sought help from an NGO offering counselling or support.

The Respondents' Own Experience in Seeking Help

- Women were more likely to go to communal authorities or village elders (14% of women compared to 9% of men responding to this question), followed by telling friends or relatives (11% of women compared to 8% of men). Only 2% of men and 4% of women reported going to courts or police.
- Keeping quiet and doing nothing was by far the most common response to physical abuse by a spouse.
- 66% of poorer respondents reported keeping quiet, while 21% went to village elders, 17% went to relatives, and 3% went to police or courts.
- 82% of higher income respondents reported keeping quiet/doing nothing, while 12% went to village elders and 10% reported the behaviour to relatives. Only 3% went to police/courts.

Local Authorities and Police Attitudes about Domestic Violence

- In 2009, 35-45% of local authorities (LA's) felt that a husband was justified in engaging in the most extreme types of violence (tying up and hitting, threatening with knife or machete, burning or choking, or throwing acid, stabbing, or shooting) if wives argue with husbands, do not obey him, or do not show respect.
- In 2009, in the case of a wife questioning a husband about visiting girlfriends or sex workers, 21% of officials indicated burning or choking was an acceptable response, while 28% indicated that acid throwing/threatening with a gun was acceptable.
- In 2009, in the case of a wife questioning a husband about spending money, 15% of officials stated burning/choking was a justified response.
- Two categories increased marginally since 2005: 6% of LA's felt that a wife refusing to have sex with a husband was justified with acid throwing/stabbing/shooting and 5% thought a wife using a means of family planning without telling her husband justified the same response.

Rights Identified as Important to Cambodian Citizens, Knowledge of Domestic Violence Rights

- The “right to equity” was named as an important right by only 11% of men and 19% of women.
- The “right to learn and educate” was cited as important by 20% of men and 13% of women.
- The “right to marry or choose a spouse” was cited as important by 9% of men and 7% of women.
- Since 2005, there has been an increase of 22% in respondents selecting the “right to live and to survive” as the most important freedom.

- There was also an increase of 9% of respondents selecting “freedom of speech/ right to speech” and another 8% selected “right to do business/freedom of work” as most important.

Perceptions about Inequality

- 18% of respondents report that men have more rights than others. When asked whether men are entitled to different rights than women, 15% of men said yes, while 20% of women said yes.
- 20% of the higher income earners (over \$200) also indicated they felt men were entitled to different rights.
- Compared to 2005, 9% more of the poorer respondents felt men had more rights than women.
- Both men and women believe men have more right to be the main decision makers in their family and participate in ideas in the family than women. These similar response percentages differ greatly from response categories in 2005, where nearly three times as many women as men gave men more rights than women.
- 40% of men and 27% of women indicated that men were entitled to be the main decision maker in a family, which represents a 4% increase over 2005 responses for this category.

Seeking Help to Protect Rights

- Since 2005, men’s selection of media as a helpful conduit for accessing rights has dropped by 16%, while women’s selection dropped 7%. There was an 18% drop in poorest respondents selecting media.
- Since 2005, there was a 25% decrease in male respondents selecting education, while 12% fewer women selected this category in 2009. There was a 40% drop in poorest respondents selecting education.
- Men’s ranking of communal authorities dropped by 8% while women’s ranking increased by 5%. Eleven percent less of the poorest respondents selected communal authorities as helpful, the same percentage drop for the poor selecting the police as helpful.

7. Key Policy Actions Recommended

The study’s findings represent a significant step forward in understandings of patterns of attitudes and behaviours in Cambodia which contribute to domestic violence. In particular, the survey examines current levels of domestic violence, as well as the attitudes and impacts linked to this problem. It also explores deeper elements of this situation, including women’s acceptance of violence, views of domestic violence as a private family matter, and the disproportionate impact of violence reported by the poor.

However, it is important to note that such data is only as useful as far as it is integrated into national policy debates and implemented into actionable agenda items at the sub-national and local community levels.

Key recommendations are as follows:

1) *Develop a long-term strategy for investing in primary prevention:*

The comparative analysis clearly indicates the need for a priority focus on behaviour change and investing in socialization processes of boys, men, whole family units, and local officials and police. Most of the current actions are more focused on the *response* to domestic violence and less on primary prevention.

2) *Prioritize behaviour patterns that need to be targeted:*

Enhancing knowledge and skills in effective behaviour and attitudinal change interventions based on the priority issues identified in the survey. These include:

- Broad scale dissemination of the costs of violence to individuals, families, communities, and society at large.
- Analysis of harmful practices from socio-cultural perspectives, as well as consideration of the consequences of these practices from a rights and equity perspective.
- Women's empowerment programmes to inform on structural inequity, rights, information on services and support networks.
- Men's accountability on violent behaviour, information on women's and girls' rights, consequences of violence on them and families.
- Sensitization of young boys and youth on respect for women and girls, gender equity and rights, consequences of violence.
- Targeted education for rural and urban residents, rich and poor

3) *Focus on Rights-Based Education:*

Rights-based education and deeper qualitative research to understand basic socio-cultural values underlying understandings of domestic violence are critical components of future policy intervention activities. As well, more preventative education programmes are needed which develop out of these enhanced understandings. Innovative programming should be developed to make better use of a range of media outlets. Community-based services, especially crisis-oriented services, preventative educational materials, and dialogues to enhance community member's understanding of their responsibility to report domestic violence and support victims should be the focus of local programming efforts.

4) *Target Women's Acceptance of Violence as a Significant Attitude to Shape with Future Policy Interventions:*

Women's continued acceptance of violence is also a critical area where significant policy interventions should be directed. Acceptance, toleration, and rationalization of such abuse is deeply embedded in traditional Cambodian socio-cultural value systems which must be further explored in such a manner as to develop educational programs which leave positive traditional values in place while allowing both women and men alike to re-evaluate beliefs which might perpetuate cycles of abuse within Cambodian households.

5) *Focus on Strengthening the Legal System:*

Much more attention to strengthening the legal system is also a critical component of enhancing the package of services available to victims of domestic violence in Cambodia. As long as victims feel that reporting such instances is a waste of time, a critical link in support and service provision is lost. Other studies have documented the “environment of impunity” surrounding acquaintance rape (*Cambodian Gender Assessment 2004*), even in the case of gang rape of those who are perceived as “modern women”, a disturbing and rising national trend.

6) *Improve Local Access to Victim Services:*

Better access for victims to local and district services should be made available. Local and district-level programs to provide specific services for domestic violence sufferers need to be addressed. Partner and stakeholder consultations to agree on interventions and to strengthen an integrated response (public awareness, social, medical and legal services, policies and related laws, training and capacity building). Courts should be provided with educational and crisis-related material for walk-in victims seeking support. Education for local authorities and police should be greatly enhanced, both in terms of understandings of the legality of certain acts, as well as rights-based education to address the socio-cultural norms police and local authorities hold about women’s and men’s rights in general.

7) *Increase use of media outlets, expansion to more creative programming and conduits for education:*

The survey indicates that over 70% of men and women believe that media can inform them about their rights. Education on the concept and the prevention of domestic violence should even more be streamlined into popular shows, highlighted on social networking sites and made a focus of public service announcements.

8) *COMBI:*

Build capacity through the introduction of a *Communications for Behavioural Impact* (COMBI) strategy for selected stakeholders, including cascade training and development of strategies, enhancing knowledge and skills in effective behaviour and attitudinal change interventions. Such interventions should include training for 1) stakeholders in the design and use of the COMBI strategy and 2) selected stakeholders as COMBI trainers. A third suggestion would be for stakeholders and partners working on DV in Cambodia to design their own COMBI Strategy.

9) *Strengthen men’s involvement in domestic violence prevention efforts:*

Setting up men’s groups at the community level as an added dimension in promoting positive values for men in general and the youth. Men’s involvement with GBV programmatically should be complementing women’s groups’ efforts. Consultative mechanisms on what women need and want for men to do is an essential area of designing and planning men’s interventions.

10) *Scaling-up* :

A shift towards programme based approaches can support the scaling up of interventions in terms of activities, location and duration. In particular MoWA as the leading ministry engaging in the issue of VAW prevention, to further increase participation and contribution of line institutions and service providers should be considered.

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