

Wednesday, 1 June 2011

MSM SAID CAMBODIAN DOCTORS SHOULD UNDERSTAND ABOUT MSM'S SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Men who have sex with men (MSM) and LGBT people said they feel discriminated by medical doctors who provides sexual health services to most-at-risk population such as MSM and LGBT.

"Several of my men are scared to see a doctor, or give up their second visit as they first met a doctor. There are several reasons behind that such as misunderstanding of MSM's needs and behaviors, non-MSM health providers, untrained health providers about MSM's needs or about sexual rights, use of discriminatory words and non-respecting of medical ethics," said Sou Sotheavy, a director of CNMWD.

"Everyone has the sexual rights and the right to health. These rights shall be promoted and respected by government of Cambodia," said a lawyer. "I read about the Alliance-organized workshop hosted by KHANA through previous KHANA weekly highlight. It is good if participants could share their learning to others, especially medical personnel or health providers in the health centers."

Two separate workshops on HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health Integration have been organized by the Alliance and hosted by KHANA for personnel of KHANA, implementing partners and the Alliance members. The workshops also raised human rights issues/concerns around sexual and reproductive health.

"I think that there should have a series of training workshops on sexual rights and strengthen medical ethics among medical doctors who are working with MSM. That helps health providers from government health centers and NGOs to learn and understand how to provide health services to MSM and LGBT, and listen to their needs," said Yarith.

While interviewing with a number of participants in the workshop on HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health Integration and all interviewees said they enjoyed the workshop on HIV and SRH. "Frankly I learn a lot around sexuality and rights from the workshop, but I personally still do not know how to integrate SRH into our HIV program." Phal Sophath said. "Within two days I learned about sex, gender, sexual health, sexual rights and reproductive health."

"We want not only to have or change the laws in order to promote and protect our right to equality. A man and women have a right to marriage and family, we, MSM and LGBT need the same right," said Yarith. "In addition, we also want health providers to learn how to provide sexual health services to MSM and GLBT as well. Please bring them and sit with MSM in the workshop to discuss MSM issues, their sexual health and rights."

Upcoming Events

Learning Exchange on Sexual Reproductive Health on 1 and 2 June

By Meas Kimsan

KHANA organizes the Training on Sexual Reproductive Health for other groups of KHANA staff and IPs from 1 to 2 June 2011, aiming to inform what HIV and SRH integration is, what has been done and some gaps in levels of Alliance, KHANA and IP's.

The Training is held in KHANA Conference Room, at 33, Street 71, Tonle Bassac, Chamkar Mon Phnom Penh, P.O. Box 2311, Phnom Penh 3.

Meeting on Communication and Advocacy Planning and Strategy

KHANA will hold its meeting at 2:00 p.m. on 1 June to review policy issues/concerns of PLHIV, OVC, and MARP. The meeting will look into possibility to construct common communication and advocacy agenda and strategy for the following years.

The meeting is held at the Baitong Restaurant, House 7, Street 360 Boeng Keng Korn, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

LAW IS STILL AN OBSTACLE FOR MSM AND LGBT TO MARRIAGE AND TO FOUND A FAMILY

Cambodian Law on Marriage and Family prohibits the same sex marriage. The law also allows someone including parents who know about such a marriage to file a complaint to stop the marriage. Under this law, the local authorities are not authorized to issue any marriage certificate to illegally married persons.

“I am not sure there is discrimination against MSM on marriage and family in Cambodia. There were couples of MSM being married and the authorities also attended their wedding parties,” said Sok Yarith from Men Health Cambodia. However, Yarith said “The only problem we found was to get an official certificate from a marriage registration officer. They do not make it for MSM or LGBT couples.”

In fact, no law in Cambodia guarantees marriage of the same sex. Article 6 of the 1989 Law on Marriage and Family adopted by the State of Cambodia said, “A marriage shall be prohibited as to a person whose sex is the same sex as the other; a person whose penis is impotent; a person who has leprosy, tuberculosis, cancer or venereal diseases which are not completely cured; a person who is insane, and a person who has mental defect; a person who was bound by prior marriage which is not yet dissolved.”

Besides prohibiting the same sex marriage, the law also allows someone including parents who know about such a marriage to file a complaint to the authority to stop that marriage. Under this law, the local authorities are not authorized to issue any permission or any marriage certificate to a person.

“I think that it is direct discrimination against MSM or GLBT while a state passes a law or a policy providing prejudicial treatment of an individual based on their membership in a certain group or category such as MSM or LGBT,” said a human rights activist. “This law must be reviewed and amended to ensure their right to marriage and family is respected. This includes their rights to information, education, voluntary sexual relationships, and voluntary and accessible sexual and reproductive health services.”

The family is recognized as the most natural and fundamental unit of society and therefore the right of all to marry and found a family is protected in human rights law. Human rights law does not dictate the types of family unit that are deemed acceptable and in the world today there are many diverse forms of families and marriages.

Whether these rights apply to same-sex couples has become a matter of discussion in recent times. Although human rights law does not make explicit reference to this, a number of its provisions concerning the right to marry and have a family, right to equality and non-discrimination etc. can be interpreted to mean that MSM, gay and lesbian couples should enjoy the protection of human rights law.



Horizontal Learning Exchange on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) in May

By Meas Kimsan

KHANA and Alliance Secretariat conducted the Horizontal Learning Exchange on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) commissioned by USAID and EC. Alliance members and selected KHANA staff and implementing partners (IPs) participated in this SRH training from 30 to 31 May.

Twenty-one participants are coming from six countries including two people from Alliance secretariat in UK. They are all experts working on health projects in China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Burma, and India.

Attached to the Horizontal Learning Exchange, the team will visit KHANA, IPs and KHANA demo centers to learn about KHANA's focused prevention program and other relevant programs such as 100% condom use, SRH and HIV program, and capacity building for IPs. Also, the team will learn about KHANA's experience regarding onward granting, internal budget management, and technical support for partners, especially for USAID-funded programs.

For further information, please contact Mr. Mey Sovannara, Senior Communication Officer
E-mail: msovannara@khana.org.kh Phone: +855-23-211 505 Ext: 126
Fax: +855-23-214 049 Mailing: #33, Street 71, Tonle Bassac, Chamkar Mon
Phnom Penh, P.O. Box 2311, Phnom Penh 3, Kingdom of Cambodia