



UNAIDS
JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

UNHCR
UNICEF
WFP
UNDP
UNFPA
UNODC
ILO
UNESCO
WHO
WORLD BANK

Gender and Gender Based Violence in Cambodia

Key Findings

The evidence provided in this fact sheet was collated from the following studies; Ministry of Education, youth and sport, "Most at Risk Young People Survey Cambodia 2010", Ministry of Women's Affairs 2009, "The Violence Against Women 2009 Follow Up Survey", UNDP 2010 Human Index Report, PSI 2009 TRaC studies, CARE "A report on the Situation of Beer Promotion Women, in the Workplace, Cambodia: Results of a Harassment and Abuse Survey" and Carol Jenkins 2006, "Violence and Exposure to HIV Among Sex Workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia".

Gender inequalities are ubiquitous in Cambodian culture; Cambodia ranks 95 out of 138 countries on the Gender Inequality Index¹. Far fewer girls continue onto higher education, 70.9 % of adult females are literate, compared to 85.1 % of males¹. A significant percentage of women are engaged in unpaid domestic work or unstable employment, with little or no access to organised markets, credits and training institutions, and to other public services (83 % female are self employed)². Domestic violence is of major concern; over 20% of women aged 15-49 years who were ever married reported experiencing physical violence since the age of 15³.

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

GBV remains a significant issue in Cambodia and is a product of the gender inequality and traditional gender norms existing within Cambodia's societal structure.

Reaction to Domestic Violence⁴

- **53%** of females know of a husband in their community who has acted violently towards his wife.
 - **83%** of men and **81%** of women reported doing nothing when they knew about abuse.
 - **9%** of men and **14%** of women disclosed they had reported abuse to the commune authorities or village elders.
 - **8%** of men and **11%** of women did not share incidents with relatives or friends.
 - Only **2%** of men and **4%** of women went to the police or the courts.

Attitude & Perceptions of Local Authorities and Police Towards GBV⁴

- **35-45%** of local authorities felt a husband was justified in engaging in extreme types of violence if wives argued with husbands, did not obey him, or did not show respect.
- **21%** of officials felt burning or choking were acceptable responses.
- **28%** felt acid throwing/threatening with a gun was acceptable if a wife questions a husband about visiting girlfriends or sex workers.

GBV Against Sex Workers/Entertainment Workers.

- **38.3%** freelance transgender sex workers were beaten by clients in the past year⁵.
- **48.5%** freelance transgender sex workers were raped by a single client in the past year⁵.
- **43.9%** freelance female sex workers were beaten by clients in the past year⁵.
- **57.1%** freelance female sex workers were raped by a single client in the past year⁵.
- **54%** female beer promotion workers, "indirect" sex workers reported physical abuse⁶.
- **38%** female beer promotion workers reported coercion into sexual acts in the workplace⁶.

Attitudes Towards Gender Equality⁴

- **18%** of respondents reported that men have more rights than others.
- **20%** of women agreed that men are entitled to different rights than women.
- Both men and women believe men have the right to be the main decision-makers in their family.



UNAIDS
JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

UNHCR
UNICEF
WFP
UNDP
UNFPA
UNODC
ILO
UNESCO
WHO
WORLD BANK

Sexual and Reproductive Health⁷

Gender inequalities are reflected in sexual relationships, where females are not given equal opportunities in decision making processes. Women have few choices in negotiating condom use, therefore making unsafe choices about their well being and health.

- **52%** of entertainment workers in Phnom Penh did not report consistent and correct use of condoms with their sweethearts.
- Some reasons for women not using condoms with sweethearts:
 - The men did not want to use condoms and they wanted to keep their sweethearts happy.
 - Inability to convince their sweethearts to use condoms.
- **43.8 %** of young women (<29 years) working as sex workers in Phnom Penh reported “ever” using amphetamine type stimulants, and was associated with incident STI due to the associated risky sexual and drug-related behaviours¹⁰.

Most at risk young people 10-24 Years old (MARYP)⁸

- Condom use with sweethearts was very low: females **31%** v males **58%**.
- **33%** of the females, who became pregnant, had experienced induced abortion.
- **43%** of females, who reported having STI in the past year, did not seek any treatment.

Women Living with HIV⁹

- **79%** of respondents reported that they had been advised by health staff not to have any children.
- **19%** of WLHIV reported having been strongly advised by health staff to use permanent sterilization.
- **14.3%** of female respondents who were pregnant reported to have been strongly advised by health staff to terminate their pregnancy in the previous 12 months.

References:

1. UNDP, 2010 Human Development Report.
2. UNDP, Key facts about gender Equality in Cambodia, <http://www.un.org.kh/undp/what-we-do/gender-equality>
3. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2005, National Institute of Public Health, National Institute of Statistics (Cambodia) and ORC Marco.
4. Ministry of Women’s Affairs 2009, “The Violence Against Women 2009 Follow Up Survey”, retrieved March 15, 2011, from United Nations website: <http://www.un.org.kh/undp/knowledge/publications/violence-against-women-2009-follow-up-survey>.
5. Jenkins, Carol 2006, “Violence and Exposure to HIV Among Sex Workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia”. Washington DC: Policy Project/USAID.
6. CARE Cambodia 2005, “A Report on the Situation of Beer Promotion Women, in the Workplace, Cambodia: Results of a Harassment and Abuse Survey”, Cambodia.
7. PSI, 2009 “Sex, Condoms and Reproductive Health, Tracking results continuously and qualitative study amongst entertainment workers (EWs) in Phnom Penh”.
8. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2010). Most-at-risk Young People Survey, Cambodia
9. Cambodia People Living with HIV Network (2010). People Living with HIV Stigma Index.
10. Claude et al 2011, “Young Women Engaged in Sex Work in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Have High Incidence of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Amphetamine-Type Stimulant Use: New Challenges to HIV Prevention and Risk”, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, Vol. 38, No. 1.