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# VIOLENCE AND EXPOSURE TO HIV AMONG SEX WORKERS IN PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA



March 2006

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Photo: Researchers in Training. Credit: Dr. Carol Jenkins



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THE AUTHOR'S VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF USAID OR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

ATS	amphetamine-type substances
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)
CI	confidence interval
CPU	Cambodian Prostitutes Union
DGH	Directorate General for Health
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
FHI	Family Health International
GHB	gamma hydroxybutyrate
LICADHO	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights
NCHADS	National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology, and STD
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NIS	National Institute of Statistics (DGH)
OXFAM	Oxford Community for Famine Relief
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PSI	Population Services International
RAINN	Rape Abuse and Incest National Network
RDS	respondent-driven sampling
STD	sexually transmitted disease
STI	sexually transmitted infection
UNAIDS	United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WDA	Women's Development Association
WNU	Women's Network for Unity

# INTRODUCTION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

A recent analysis of HIV epidemiology in Cambodia indicated that national prevalence dropped from 2.2 percent in 2002 to 1.9 percent in 2003 (National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology, and Sexually Transmitted Disease; NCHADS, 2004; UNAIDS, 2005a). As one of the few nations that have managed to check the spread of HIV, Cambodia is widely praised as a success story. This success is often attributed to the 100% Condom Program. However, the evidence in this report reveals that the national HIV/AIDS program has failed to protect the rights of sex workers as women and as citizens. The recent U.S. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (Department of State, 2006) stated that “Local and international NGOs reported that violence against women, including domestic violence and rape, was common. A local NGO study conducted on women working in the beer promotion industry reported widespread harassment: 83 percent experienced derogatory behavior, 80 percent faced unwanted sexual touching, 54 percent were physically abused, and 60 percent had been threatened, sometimes at gun point.” The report goes on to list impunity of security forces, a weak judiciary and denial of the right to a fair trial in addition to other problems. As governments and donors increasingly move toward HIV care and treatment while coverage of vulnerable groups with appropriate prevention programs remains low, minimum packages that only promote condom use and the treatment of sexually transmitted infections but ignore the barriers

created by stigma and discrimination are likely to fail. UNAIDS (2005b) highlights this problem in its recent policy paper emphasizing the protection of human rights and combating stigma and discrimination, not only for those already living with HIV, but also for those vulnerable or at risk of acquiring an HIV infection.

According to the results of this study, conducted among a probability sample of 1,000 female and transgender sex workers in Phnom Penh, during the past year approximately half of those surveyed reported being beaten by police; about a third were gang-raped by police; slightly more than one-third were gang-raped by gangsters and about three-quarters were gang-raped by clients (who are often also gangsters and out-of-uniform police). Most of these rapes occurred at gunpoint or with knives or other weapons, and more than half of those raped bled during the last event. In brothels, managers often colluded with police and favored clients to force the women into unprotected sex. In parks, police often encouraged gangsters to rape the sex workers. Both sex workers and the policemen themselves reported that these events were frequent and that victims were without any recourse to justice. Over 90 percent of the sex workers surveyed in this sample were raped at least once last year. These rapes, most of which were gang rapes, are not likely to be counted in behavioral surveillance data reporting the proportion of sex workers using condoms with clients. Public health programs that do not protect the human

rights of sex workers and others at high risk of acquiring HIV create serious barriers to comprehensive prevention and care.

Although new legal instruments protect the rights of infected persons these same persons are very often without any social safety nets, other support mechanisms, or recourse to a rule of law prior to becoming infected. In Cambodia, traditional social control and support systems have been decimated by decades of war, natural disasters, and other destructive forces. It is well recognized that the Cambodian HIV epidemic has been driven by an active commercial sex trade, and that those who sell sex are at high risk of both acquiring an infection and passing it on. Condom use has greatly increased in commercial sex since 1997, but many gaps in prevention remain. As the epidemic shifts, increasing numbers of wives are acquiring HIV from their husbands and passing it on to infants. Men are gradually buying sex less often (Sopheab et al., 2001) and turning to casual partners, many of whom are redefined as “safer women” because they are providing services out of discos, karaoke bars, or massage parlors rather than brothels or the streets. Condom use has yet to rise substantially in these settings. Further, although the 100% Condom Program appears to have reached brothel women, those working in other venues are far less extensively supported with any prevention services. Regulatory approaches such as the 100% Condom Program may be associated with rapid reductions in HIV levels but seldom create conditions in which sex workers themselves are more than passive recipients of preventive activities (Loff et al., 2003; Lowe, 2003). Police continue to harass HIV outreach workers, as reported by nearly 40 percent of the sample of female sex workers and 15 percent of the *srey sraos* (transgender sex workers). Under the pressure of police scrutiny, the commercial sex trade continues to morph, shifting its form to accommodate pressures from state authorities, social activists, donors of HIV prevention projects, and others, while still trying to maintain access to clients and profitability.

The scenario has become more complicated in the last few years with rising levels of drug use, especially methamphetamine, ATS (amphetamine-type substances), glue-sniffing, ketamine, ecstasy, and heroin (Bearup, 2003; Mith Samlanh-Friends, 2002; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2005). These drugs have entered numerous social networks, including those of students, gangs, and sex workers and their boyfriends. Despite a concerted effort to remove weapons from the general population, handguns are still widely available to those who want them (Snyder, 2004). The growth of gangs (usually 5–20 young people between 15 and 25 years old, mostly men, with up to a third young women, under the rule of a leader) among slum dwellers and street kids has been especially alarming. Middle- and upper-class young people are often gang members as well, and are seen riding around town on expensive motorbikes. Many gang members are armed, sell and use drugs, and publicly attempt to demonstrate their power by bullying younger people; demanding protection money from sex workers or others; raping, stealing, beating, and even killing; and generally raising havoc wherever they go.

Hence, the total environment in which the sex trade takes place is unsafe, suggesting that the remaining gaps in prevention may be great enough to undermine the sustainability of the existing reductions in the transmission of HIV through commercial sex.

This report focuses on rape and violence perpetrated against sex workers in Phnom Penh. Cambodia has the classic features of a rape-prone society—high levels of general violence, male dominance, and the silencing of female sexuality (Sanday, 1986). Females who appear to be more sexually open are subject to punishment. In some societies, including parts of the United States, South Africa, and Papua New Guinea (PNG), rape is so widespread and so nearly normative (considered “good fun” and “ok” by most men) that it can be considered a male-operated system of social control over women (Anderssen et al., 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2005; Rape Abuse and Incest National Network [RAINN], 2003). The



situation in Cambodia differs only in that rape appears to be targeted most often at sex workers or women whom men consider to be “loose”. However, Bearup (2003) documented an instance of the deliberate rape of a virgin, and the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO, 2004) reported an increasing number of rapes of children, often by family members. Among the sex workers surveyed in this study, several describe how they were raped by family members or others when still virgins. Some suspect that, as in South Asia, rape functions as a way to prime young women for the sex industry, in that they are then considered (and consider themselves) “damaged goods” and thus suitable only for sex work. Shame and blaming the victim instead of the perpetrator are strong factors in the under-reporting of rape to authorities. It is likely that the true level of rape among all women (and males, including transgenders) is unknown in Cambodia and should be a high priority for population-based research with proper random sampling.

This report has multiple implications for policy review and action. Other, previous reports have made some of the same conclusions and recommendations, but to date little has changed. Based on the findings, we recommend the following:

## **GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA**

- Institute rigorous and regular training of police on gender issues, including gender-based violence, human rights, and how the law is supposed to uphold these rights for all citizens.
  - Penalize police and justice system employees who do not follow the laws and obstruct the registration of rape complaints and the persecution of perpetrators.
  - Penalize police profiteering from the sex trade.
  - Review and reform laws to bring them in line with the need for protection of young people, including males and transgenders, and to clarify associated issues such as what constitutes consensual vs. non-consensual sex.
- Ensure that the legal facts about rape and the age of consent are made clear to youth through school-based gender and life skills curricula.
  - Establish a sex workers’ ombudsperson position, to be filled by a single officer with whom sex workers can negotiate to diminish violence and harassment in each city in the country.
  - Establish an independent citizen’s committee to monitor and investigate police misbehavior, including brothel raiding; accept complaints from the public; and refer individuals for possible criminal proceedings.
  - Develop a counseling service within the police force for policemen needing help with drugs, domestic and gender-based violence, and other forms of personal violence.

## **RESEARCH COMMUNITY**

- Conduct a national survey to determine the proportion of persons (females, males, transgenders) raped by men, disaggregated by type/relationship to victim.
- Include questions on rape and violence, as well as the use of harm-producing condoms in future HIV behavioral surveillance surveys.

## **DONOR COMMUNITY AND NGOS**

- Support the reform of the police and justice system with the aim of ensuring rape, violence, and sexual abuse are properly managed according to the law for all citizens of Cambodia, as declared in the national constitution.
- Develop a rape counseling and clinical service in Phnom Penh for all victims of rape—open 24 hours a day and run by specially trained sex workers and health workers.
- Support sex workers to develop better strategies to avoid being raped, including training in self-defense.

- Work with brothel managers to encourage them to play a greater role in providing better options for protection to sex workers, particularly helping them negotiate with violent and intimidating clients.
- Educate policemen's wives on HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and the realities of the sex trade.
- Develop a full range of HIV-related services for drug users, particularly for brothel sex workers and their partners, with the full involvement of brothel managers.
- Incorporate drug and alcohol self-control training into HIV/AIDS interventions for sex workers, policemen, and youth.
- Redesign HIV prevention programs for sex workers to ensure that they are rights-based, meet actual social and economic needs, and are not narrowly focused on condom use alone.
- Make reasonable vocational training, small business training, and micro credit schemes for small businesses available to sex workers.

# BACKGROUND

Numerous studies have been published on HIV and sex workers in Cambodia (Prybylski and Alto, 1999; Greenwood, 2000b; Ohshige et al., 2000a, 2000b; Busza and Schunter, 2001; Wong et al., 2003, Sopheab et al., 2001; Busza and Baker, 2004), but few attempt to measure factors that threaten their safety other than condom use. Studies of domestic violence<sup>1</sup> have been conducted and, more recently, the phenomenon of *bauk* (gang rape) has received attention, particularly in the extensive “grey literature” (i.e., unpublished and non-peer-reviewed studies). Few of these studies ever reach an audience beyond government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) within Cambodia, unless posted on the Internet.

Although many factors mitigate against the reporting of rape in Cambodia, rising rates of reported cases reached the international press around 2002 (Mydan, 2002; Hoenig, 2003). Around the same time, Population Services International (PSI) undertook a qualitative study aimed at understanding HIV risk behaviors of youth, particularly university students, and uncovered what appeared to be a common phenomenon (*bauk*, or gang-rape) (Wilkinson and Fletcher, 2002). Literally, *bauk* means “plus” in a mathematical sense, but is used to refer to situations in which one or possibly two men secure a sex worker and take her to a place where many more are waiting. She is then gang-raped and often beaten and threatened with weapons. The frequency and ease with which

young men spoke of this appeared to show acceptance of the practice, with little sense of guilt or notion that it was in any way wrong. Female peer interviewers also confirmed the commonness of *bauk* through interviews with sex workers.<sup>2</sup> This study was followed by others, including some that attempted to obtain quantitative information on the practice. Bearup (2003) conducted a qualitative study interviewing male gang members in Phnom Penh, many of whom gave explicit descriptions of their involvement in *bauk*, describing it as a kind of sport or male group endeavor like hunting. They also mentioned they raped not only sex workers but other young women as well, both virgins and those seen as sexually available. Bearup also conducted a quantitative study with convenience sampling of 580 young people (13–28 years old) living in Phnom Penh and found that 60 percent of male university students knew others who had been involved with *bauk*. The figures were somewhat lower for unemployed out-of-school youth (49%) and high school males (34%), but were later contested by key gang informants as being under-reported. Few thought of the act as dangerous or wrong, other than as a possible source of an STI. CARE International, Cambodia (Soprach, 2004) also tried to obtain quantitative information through interviewing *moto-dup* (motorbike-taxi) drivers in 20 urban centers and 4 cities (excluding Phnom Penh) throughout the country, and found that 87

1. Early studies of domestic violence in Cambodia were conducted in 1994 and 1996. The first one, conceived as a needs assessment for legal reform, was qualitative and quite thorough (Zimmerman, 1994). This was followed up by a representative household survey on domestic violence (Nelson and Zimmerman, 1996). The study found that 16 percent of women reported having been abused by their spouses, and that half of these sustained injuries, mostly of the head. Additionally, about 10 percent of men admitted to physically abusing their wives. In the 2000 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), a representative sub-sample of ever-married women was queried on domestic violence and the same proportion (16.4%) reported ever experiencing physical violence, with 14.5 percent in the last year. Adding sexual violence to the total increased the proportions by a few percent (17.1 and 15.2 percent respectively [NIS/DGH, and ORC Macro, 2001]).

2. In the current study, sex workers often used another term translated as “bombing,” as in “They bombed me” (*boak krab beak*), meaning that they were forced to have sex without pay and with many men lined up for several rounds of sex.

percent of 192 interviewed reported hearing about *bauk* from either victims or perpetrators. In this study, only 2 percent of drivers admitted to being involved. Most drivers thought the perpetrators were between 24 and 30 years old and of average wealth.

Two small qualitative studies were conducted with sex workers in which rape and violence were discussed, mainly in the context of human rights abuses perpetrated at the hands of police during the periodic crackdowns on prostitution in Phnom Penh. One, carried out by CARE International and OXFAM, interviewed 22

women in 2001 (Grant, 2004) and another, conducted in 2002 in Tuol Kork and Russey Keo by the Cambodian Prostitutes Union (CPU) and the Cambodian Women's Development Association (WDA), interviewed 50 sex workers (Phal, 2002). Results from both studies confirmed that many sex workers are beaten, raped, threatened with guns, and forced to pay police bribes in the course of brothel raids or at other times when sex workers are threatened with arrest.

# STUDY AIMS

This study aimed to build the skills of sex workers to voice their concerns by carrying out research and conducting advocacy on their own behalf. Recognizing that structural factors are at least as important as personal ones in determining risk in the sex industry (Alexander, 2001), this research aimed at improving the safety of sex workers in Phnom Penh by helping them articulate their needs for both policy reform and interventions through research. Developing such policies or projects cannot be effective without the input of sex workers themselves. However, they need knowledge and skills in order to participate more fully in any such effort. Learning these skills can be an integral part of becoming part of the solution to the problem of HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, sex workers in two organizations in Phnom Penh, the CPU and the Women's Network for Unity (WNU), were approached in September 2003 and asked to identify the single most important issue that interfered with their capacity to use condoms consistently. They identified violence, often from police, gangsters, and, especially among the brothel women, personal partners or sweethearts as their greatest concern. The research was then designed to quantify these phenomena and to explain the context and meaning of such events.

# METHODOLOGY

The study was designed with the full participation of 33 sex workers (16 brothel-based and 17 freelance) who were trained in February 2004 to conduct the research themselves. The sex worker organizations selected these 33 female and transgender sex workers based on their commitment, intelligence, and interest. Negotiations were carried out with brothel managers to allow the brothel-based women time away from the brothel. Training took place over two weeks and covered concepts of advocacy and empowerment, research ethics and informed consent, the Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) method, interviewing skills, and the development of questionnaires and interview guides. Each team (freelance and brothel) developed its questionnaires together and pre-tested them on each other. The brothel-based women had slightly different questions that they considered pertinent. The research protocol was approved by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Cambodian Ministry of Health's Medical Ethics Committee, and the Cambodian HIV/AIDS Research Advisor. Data collection took place between mid-March and mid-May 2004. Data entry (double entry), management, translation, and analysis were carried out subsequently.

The method considered most appropriate for this type of research is RDS (also known as chain-referral sampling). Tested in the United States and under development by Doug Heckathorn of Cornell University and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the RDS method is excellent for both reaching hidden populations and for utilizing members of the community under study as full participants in the research. Developed originally as a way of reaching such populations as part of an intervention, RDS has been demonstrated to provide probability samples that accurately reflect the proportion of any behavior or event among

the selected population, providing equilibrium is reached after 5–6 waves of recruitment (Heckathorn, 1997, 2002; Heckathorn et al., 2002). RDS requires the use of its own statistical software to establish population estimates and weights.

The RDS method depends on the selection of a set of persons referred to as “seeds,” who represent as much as possible the variety of key statuses (e.g., sex, ethnicity, and gender) among the selected population. Each seed recruits several others to the sample, using printed coupons that are handed in to a coordinator. Duplication can be checked in a variety of ways at that time and most can be avoided. The seed (and the recruiter of each subsequent wave) was required to bring in two other persons and given a small reward (in this study, \$2, an amount decided upon by the sex workers themselves).<sup>3</sup> This recruitment continues for at least 5–6 waves until equilibrium is reached (i.e., the proportions by status of persons in the sample are essentially the same as that in the actual population). The criteria for recruitment in the present study were: a) that the person recruited was known by name and that she knew the name of the recruiter as well, b) that she was currently living and working in Phnom Penh, and c) that she was a self-identified sex worker. At the beginning of each questionnaire, each person's network size was recorded, along with her relationship to the recruiter. Refusal rates were quite low (3% for non-brothel-based sex workers, referred to in this study as freelance sex workers, and 6% for brothel/mobile sex workers). A basic assumption of the method—that recruitment is not systematically biased—is difficult to ensure. In this study, it was made clear to each recruiter that we wanted sex workers who had and had not been raped, in order to analyze what might be different between them and to perhaps gain some understanding of protective factors.

Following the study, a workshop was held with about 60 sex workers to discuss the findings and to transfer skills that had been successfully used to prevent violence and rape.

Among the freelance sex workers, srey sraos were also sampled, largely because they associate themselves with women, work in the same areas, and are members of the WNU. The sample size needed was determined by comparisons of the documented proportions of sex workers in other Asian countries who experience rape and violence. Because many sex workers had shallow networks (often due to their friends dying of AIDS), some extra seeds were added during the study (though they were not productive) of new recruits. Beginning with 16 brothel/mobile seeds and expanding from 17 to 24 seeds for the freelancers, the required sample size was reached when about one-third of seeds reached 5 waves and one-sixth reached 6 waves.

Because brothel sex workers and those operating in more public places ordinarily experience very different levels of violence, two samples were determined of 500 each. The final samples obtained were: 503 freelance and 500 brothel-based workers. The original seeds (17 freelance, 16 brothel-based) served as interviewers but were not themselves interviewed. After recruitment began, it became clear that a minority of the women coming in as brothel workers in fact were more accurately described as mobile sex workers, as they worked in brothels at times, on the streets at times, and, even if contracted to a brothel, might secure clients outside of the brothel setting should the opportunity arise. It was also clear that sex workers who were debt-bonded to brothels were not allowed out of the brothel to participate in the survey. Therefore, while the freelance sample is in fact all truly freelance sex workers (not contracted to any agency or person), the brothel sample is better labeled as mixed brothel/mobile sex workers, minus those under tight debt-bonding.

In addition, because quantitative surveys cannot yield adequate information on the meaning and context of the behaviors measured, in-depth

interviews were requested from every fifth person recruited with the aim of gaining greater understanding of the experience of violence and the contexts in which violence does and does not take place.<sup>4</sup> It was hoped that we could determine how some women were more protected from violence than others. Because brothel workers were more time-constrained than freelance workers, fewer were able to give in-depth interviews. This qualitative analysis is derived from a total of 96 in-depth interviews with freelance workers and 48 interviews with brothel sex workers—some of whom opted to give only the in-depth interview. Further, in-depth interviews were obtained through a convenience sample of 58 policemen and 2 gangsters, conducted by three ex-policemen who attended a shortened version of the research training. The three ex-policemen were all selected by the sex workers as men they knew and trusted who understood the issues at hand. All in-depth interviews were taped, transcribed, and translated from Khmer to English for analysis.

All persons were interviewed in strictly private settings (i.e., in one of 12 rented, air-conditioned rooms at a guesthouse) and were guaranteed total anonymity. No names or other identifying information were recorded for anyone. Verbal informed consent was required after a short description of the purpose of the study was read to the participant. Participants were informed that they would be asked about violence, including sexual violence, and that if any issue was too difficult to discuss, they could skip it or discontinue the interview as they chose.

Within the first week, it became clear that a few last-minute alterations were required to the questionnaires due to mistranslation. A meeting was held with all interviewers, and instructions were given on how to handle the mistranslated questions. In one case only, an item on the brothel/mobile questionnaire was not translated at all on the freelance questionnaire (number of penetrative acts vs. number of men during last gang rape).

3. Transport costs were paid throughout the study; all interviewers were paid alike for both the training and interviewing period. Some of the brothel women were obliged to share some of their payment with their managers. In addition, two young men were hired to manage the data collection process on site at the guesthouse, the site of all the interviewing.

4. Because the original "seeds" were also the interviewers, and some were illiterate, an interview guide was designed with pictures for each question and these women became the qualitative interviewers after special training.



# RESULTS

The study produced a rich body of texts and statistical estimates that cover many issues.

Where appropriate, results will be presented in tandem (i.e., quotes from the in-depth interviews will be utilized to clarify or illustrate statistical findings). The statistics are summarized in tables in which proportions are shown with their weighted 95 percent confidence intervals (CIs). This section has four components: 1) results from the freelance sex workers; 2) results from the brothel/mobile sex workers; 3) results from the police; and 4) a review of protective techniques used by sex workers to diminish violence and the harm done by rape.

## PART I. FREELANCE SEX WORKERS

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS

The sample of freelance sex workers included both female (86%) and srey sraos (14%) because they work from many of the same areas and felt they were at equal risk. Demographically (see Table 1), however, they are quite distinct, with srey sraos being, on average, younger, having far more education, a longer duration of time in Phnom Penh, and may be less often homeless.

Table 2 lists the results of questions relating to sex work. Srey sraos significantly more often found clients at clubs, other entertainment venues, hotels, the railway station, and massage parlors, and less often on the streets or in parks than did female freelancers. A much higher percentage of srey sraos had an additional source of income besides sex work. The data analyzed on sources of clients represent 75 percent of the freelance sex workers; the other 25 percent worked from two or more of the venues in the past six months.

Table 1

#### FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: DEMOGRAPHICS (N=503)

Freelance	Female % (95% CI)	Srey Sraos % (95% CI)
Gender	86.0 (81.4–90.3)	14.0 (9.8–18.6)*
Mean age	27.9 (27.3–28.6)	23.9 (22.2–25.7)*
No education	33.5 (29.1–38.2)	13.7 (7.5–23.7)*
1 to <6 years education	48.2 (43.5–53.0)	23.3 (15.0–34.4)*
6+ years education	18.3 (14.9–22.3)	63.0 (51.4–73.3)*
Mean years in Phnom Penh	7.6 (6.9–8.3)	12.3 (10.2–14.3)*
Homeless	18.7 (15.2–22.8)	8.8 (4.0–18.3)

\* significantly different



Table 2

**FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: ECONOMIC ASPECTS**

<b>Freelance</b>	<b>Female % (95% CI)</b>	<b>Srey Sraos % (95% CI)</b>
Mean years in sex work	3.5 (3.1–3.8)	3.9 (2.9–4.9)
Mean income last week (Cambodian riel 4,132=US\$1)	48,214 (\$11.67) (43,592–52,835) (\$10.54–\$12.79)	44,522 (\$10.77) (35,168–53,875) (\$8.51–\$13.04)
Mean number of persons being supported	4.1 (3.9–4.3)	3.8 (3.2–4.5)
Percent with another source of income	23.1 (19.3–27.3)	37.5 (27.1–49.2)
Main source of clients in last 6 months:		
Parks/streets	65.2 (60.0–70.0)	44.0 (40.0–57.9)*
Clubs	23.1 (18.9–27.9)	28.0 (17.3–42.0)
Railway/massage/hotel/ other entertainment venues	11.7 (8.7–15.6)	28.0 (17.3–42.0)*
Percent experiencing HIV prevention outreach	82 (78.0–85.3)	87 (77.3–93.3)

\* significantly different

**SREY SRAOS, 20 YEARS OLD, 10 YEARS OF EDUCATION, SPENT WHOLE LIFE IN PHNOM PENH**

I am srey sraos (transgender). I am single and live with my family. I do this work for 3–4 years because my family discriminates against me. My family members don't like me to be half man and half woman like this. I do this work in the park, road, and in the nightclub. I have been abused by policemen working in the park and by male clients, such as hitting and rape without condom and without pay. Gangsters are the most dangerous for my work. They asked for money from me and they raped me when I did not have money to pay them. They used a knife and big stick to threaten me, and one man raped me while another held my hands and legs. I went to NGOs for help when I was bleeding and painful inside the rectum. Some of the men raped me through my anus, and mouth and between my legs. Sometimes I kept a condom in my mouth and had oral sex without letting the men know. *FILE NO. 0140322, 20 APRIL 2004*

**UNEDUCATED, HOMELESS WITH CHILDREN (ON THE STREET), 35 YEARS OLD, 5 YEARS IN PHNOM PENH**

My hometown is in Kampong Cham Province. I never went to school, because I grew up when the country was in the middle of the war (Pol Pot). All schools were destroyed and teachers were killed. I had been living with a man as husband and wife without marriage for 4 years. I have two children. All the children are living with me. I don't have money to rent a house. Every day I sleep on the street and in the parks. I came to Phnom Penh in 1999 and started sex work in 2000. I get a better income from sex work than from begging on the streets or at the markets. I don't have money to pay for a house rental fee. Every day I work in the parks and streets and stay under the tree. When it is raining, I stay in front of the shop. All the children are with me. They go out to beg. Sometimes they come back to me with some money or food they got from the restaurant. We live like dogs. *FILE NO. 0740454, 4 MAY 2004*

Table 3

**FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: EXPERIENCE WITH POLICE**

<b>Freelance</b>	<b>Female % ( 95% CI)</b>	<b>Srey Sraos % (95% CI)</b>	<b>Total % (95% CI)</b>
Percent who have observed police harassing HIV outreach workers	38.6 (34.1—43.4)	15.9 (9.0—26.6)*	34.2 (29.4—39.2)
Percent beaten by police in past year	50.0 (44.9—55.1)	29.9 (20.1—41.9)*	42.2 (35.9—48.9)
Percent whose money was taken by police in past year	67.7 (62.7—72.3)	41.0 (29.4—53.7)*	57.5 (50.6—64.8)
Percent raped by a single policeman in past year	34.9 (30.2—40.0)	23.9 (15.2—35.5)	29.0 (23.7—34.6)
Percent gang raped by policemen in past year	30.4 (26.0—35.2)	18.2 (10.6—29.4)	27.0 (21.4—32.9)

\* significantly different

**TWO JOBS, FOUR DEPENDENTS**

I am married and have with two children. Now I live in my own home in Wat Neak Vorn area. My average income is 15 dollars per week. My husband and children are living from my income. My husband let me do this sex work. I came to Phnom Penh since 1985 when my husband was working at the railway station. He is a government official but now he cannot work due to his high blood pressure. He is paralyzed now. I started sex work in 1999 working from 7 pm until 12. My mother wanted me to come back home so that I could take care of her and the children. I still have good relations with my family members although they know that I am a sex worker. I have been working for a public works private company as a street sweeper. Sorry, I don't want to tell you about the name of my company but there is only one company in Phnom Penh. I got 78,000 riel a month. I needed more money to pay for things such as food and medicine and to send to my mother at home. I used to borrow some money from my friends. I did not pay any interest. We helped one another.

*FILE NO. 1140554, 10 MAY 2004*

**SREY SRAOS, FREELANCE**

The policemen abused me three times when I refused to give them free sex. One police put a flashlight inside my anus. They laughed when I was crying. There was bleeding in my anus. *FILE NO. 161305, 5 MAY 2004*

**FEMALE, 22 YEARS OLD, SOLD TO A BROTHEL AT 18**

Violence from police is more serious than from gangsters. Police arrested me and forced me to have sex with them on the stone bench in the parks. Police used their gun (long gun) to point at my face. Police used a baton to beat me when I refused to suck their penises. Generally, I could suck the client's penis after clients clean it first. But those police did not clean their penis at all. One policeman used a belt to tie my hands and forced me to stand like in a lion position and he f\*\*ed me from behind. That position hurt very much and I urinated unintentionally. One thing that I can never forget in my life: when police used a bottle with some wine in it and inserted it into my vagina strongly. It hurt me very much and I cried for their mercy. The wine burned my vagina and my stomach was swollen. I fell unconscious and they left me on the bench. No one helped me to stop the police. One police used condom but other did not use condom at all. I went to a police station (I sorry I can't tell you the name of that police station, it is too dangerous for me) to report about my case. Three policemen staying in the office pretended to hear nothing. Finally, they asked me to come to see them again in the afternoon. I went again in the afternoon and I saw those police who raped me on the bench in the park. They harassed me to leave the station or they would arrest me. I was so afraid that I left the station. I cried for justice in my case but no one could help me. I wanted to report to NGOs for help but I am afraid that it would trouble me more. *FILE NO. 1130226, 6 MAY 2004*

## EXPERIENCE WITH POLICE

Police represent the sex worker's greatest threat, not only because many harass, beat, rape, and steal from them, but also because they do not protect them from attacks perpetrated by others (Table 3). There is evidence in the interviews that sometimes police encourage gangsters to rape sex workers and steal their money as well. Police use their power to indulge in sadistic acts as individuals and in groups, in uniform and out of uniform. Some sex workers seek redress by reporting these rapes to a police station, but their complaints are often not heard. All informants agreed that only by bribing police, court recorders, judges, or anyone in the justice system was it possible for a complaint against a policeman to be made by a sex worker.

## EXPERIENCE WITH GANGSTERS

Cambodia experiences frequent acts of murder, robbery, mayhem, political violence, and banditry, which present a serious threat to social and economic development. Murder rates nearly a decade ago were higher than any country in the region except the Philippines (Broadhurst, 2002). Efforts to reduce gun ownership are ongoing, but an extremely weak justice system continues to encourage violent crime, including extra-judicial killings arising from police or mob actions, accounting for high rates of suspect/offender death. Gangsters are often sons of the wealthy who commit these acts with impunity, though many are poor men as well. Some gangs owe allegiance to specific local politicians or other power brokers. These gangs have become a serious problem on the streets of Phnom Penh (see Table 4)—a problem made worse by the recent increasing flow of yama (ATS [amphetamine-type substances]) into the country.

Table 4

### FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: EXPERIENCE WITH GANGSTERS

Freelance	Female % (95% CI)	Srey Sraos % (95% CI)	Total % (95% CI)
Percent beaten by gangsters in past year	55.3 (50.1–60.3)	57.6 (45.4–68.9)	60.6 (54.6–66.1)
Percent whose money was taken by gangsters in past year	68.3 (63.4–72.8)	66.7 (54.5–77.0)	67.2 (60.9–73.3)
Percent raped by a single gangster in past year	46.3 (41.3–51.4)	51.5 (39.6–63.3)	43.7 (37.6–50.2)
Percent gang raped by gangster in past year	48.7 (43.7–53.7)	52.3 (40.2–64.1)	42.7 (36.9–48.8)

#### FEMALE, UNEDUCATED, 3 CHILDREN

Last year, I was invited to join a party at my friend's house. I had some alcohol and I was drunk. As I remember it was 12 pm when my friend drove me home with her motorbike. At the entrance to my house, there was a small canal and the motorbike could not cross it. I got off the motorbike said good bye to my friend. I was just walking a few steps when four gangsters appeared from a dark place behind me and pulled me to a park. My mouth was closed with a gangster's hand and they pulled me down on the ground. Four gangsters raped me without condom. One gangster used a bicycle chain to put around my neck and forced me to stop crying. He could kill me with that chain if I did not follow them. All gangsters played with my breasts and vagina before and after raping me. A gangster urinated on my face and then freed me. The rape took about one hour to finish. No police in the area at that time and I did not report my case to any person for help. Normally, no one helps a raped sex worker, even when they saw the rape. What people could do is chase the rapist away. I don't know whether those gangster used drugs or not, but I was told that all gangsters in that park used either yama or glue. They rob sex workers and other people at nighttime and they rape sex workers when they found good occasion to rape. FILE NO. 0350734, 11 MAY 2004

## EXPERIENCE WITH CLIENTS

While the level of violence reported here from clients (see Table 5) seems high compared to the limited data available from elsewhere in Asia (Jenkins et al., 2002), the interviews reveal that many of the men referred to as clients are in fact gangsters and out-of-uniform police. Sex workers often are not certain of a man's identity when they agree to have sex with him, but if they are taken to another area, the trickery becomes obvious. However, in one of the few sexually explicit pieces of research done in Cambodia by Tarr (1996), she documents a high level of rough sex among students and young men in general. In addition, the "live sex show" aspect of gang rapes is an obvious erotic component of the act.

Altogether, 86.8 percent (95% CI, 83.0–90.0) of female freelance sex workers and 90.8 percent (95% CI, 81.0–95.8) of srey sraos had been raped in the past year. The percent raped by police last year was 41.8 (95% CI, 34.8–49.0), and the percent raped by gangsters last year 62.0 (95% CI, 55.8–68.1), whereas the percent raped by clients last year was 73.8 (95% CI, 68.1–79.5). In total, the percent of freelance sex workers raped by anyone last year was 85.3 (95% CI, 79.8–90.3).

### FEMALE, 26 YEARS OLD, PARENTS KILLED BY KHMER ROUGE

It was about 11 pm; I was sitting with another sex worker and chatting about life and how to make our living become better. That night I got three clients with total money of 15,000 riel. Those clients were very nice to me. They paid me more than I expected. Normally, I charged 4,000 riel from a client for a time of sex on the park. While chatting, I saw one policeman came by and asked me if I could have sex with him and he promised to pay me as any other client. At first, I hesitated because in my experience police never paid me for sex. He asked me again and I agreed to sleep with him because I knew that he would abuse me when I refused. He put me down on the grass of the park and played with my vagina. He put his fingers in my vagina and pushed it deeply inside. It hurt me very much. Then he started to put his penis inside my vagina. I told him to use condom because I was afraid of HIV, STDs, and pregnancy. He did not listen to me and tried to push his penis in my vagina. I absolutely refused him to f\*\*\* me without a condom and tried to get up. He pulled me down on the grass and raped me without a condom. I cried for help. There were some local tourists in the park. A few men ran to see me. The policeman got up and ran away without finishing the rape. I thought he was afraid of those local tourists. I walked away from that place and wanted to come back to my place. On my way, three gangsters stopped me and pushed me down on the ground. They threatened to kill me if I refused to let them rape me. One gangster undressed me in front of another woman. He threatened my co-worker, making her run away. I saw him using a knife to threaten her. All gangsters raped me one time each without condom. I was afraid to refuse or cry for help because they put a knife beneath my neck. It cut my neck skin slightly and I bled. Before the last gangster raped me, I heard them talking about police asking them to rape me. When they finished the rape I asked them politely and promised to give them some money next day if they could tell about who told them to rape me. All the gangsters told me that a policeman in the park told them to rape me. They even told me his name and his friend's name. They said that that policeman asked them to rape me because he could not rape me and they would be arrested if they did not follow his order.

FILE NO. I262378, 13 MAY 2004

## ANAL INTERCOURSE

I have faced many violent men on the parks and in the guesthouse. Many clients did not want to use condom with me although I lied to them that I had HIV. Many men beat me up when I refused sex without a condom or asked them to pay for the sex with amount that they promised to pay me. Drunken men were the most stubborn who refused sex with condom. They always forced me to suck their penis and do sex like animal. I noticed that more than half of my clients preferred sex through anus because they believed that sex through anus could make their sexual feeling extremely higher and stronger. Some men believed that anal sex could prevent HIV and STDs infection. They said HIV and STDs stay in vagina, not in the anus. *FILE No. 1151121, 12 MAY 2004*

Table 5

## FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: EXPERIENCE WITH CLIENTS

Freelance	Female % (95% CI)	Srey Sraos % (95% CI)	Total % (95% CI)
Percent beaten by clients in past year	43.9 (38.9–49.0)	38.3 (27.5–50.3)	44.5 (39.0–52.2)
Percent whose money was taken by clients in past year	45.2 (40.2–50.4)	18.2 (10.6–29.4)*	35.8 (29.8–42.5)
Percent raped by a single client in past year	57.1 (52.0–62.0)	48.5 (36.7–64.0)	56.9 (50.8–62.2)
Percent gang raped by clients in past year	54.8 (49.7–59.8)	37.5 (26.5–50.0)	54.3 (48.2–60.3)

\* significantly different

## POLICEMEN AS CLIENTS

It was 10 pm on one dark night in the park in front of the Ministry of Defense. I was walking alone on the street. Two young men came to me on a motorbike and told me a policeman wanted to see me in the park. At first, I hesitated because I never have any relationship with police in the park. The young men asked me again and I went to see him. In the park, I saw two other men in civilian clothes were chatting with him. The policeman asked me to sit down on the grass of the park beside him. He asked me to drink a beer. A few minutes later, the policeman asked me if I wanted something else to eat. I told him nothing and thanked him. I wanted to leave him to look for clients in the park. The policeman held my hand to continue sitting with him. While I was talking to him, the other men left us. He asked for sex in the hotel. First, I was afraid he might arrest me for doing sex work. I was told that sex work in the park was illegal. He asked me again and promised to pay me \$10 for sleeping with him throughout the night. I agreed with him and went to the hotel on his motorbike. Inside the hotel room, I saw the two men who had been sitting and drinking beer with him, waiting inside before I arrived. I asked the policeman about what they were doing in the room. He told me that they would leave soon because they came to book the room in advance. I was not smart enough to understand his trick. Both civilian men left the room after they said a few words to the policeman. I could not hear what they said because I was in the bathroom. I came out and the policeman started his first sex. He sexed me with a condom. He took about 20 minutes the first time. He started a second time of sex and I saw the same two men coming in the room. They watched the policeman f\*\*king me on the bed under a bright light. I asked the policeman to tell them to get out of the room but he refused and forced me to have sex with them when he finished. Both men raped me with condoms. One man used special condoms. It hurt me very much. He did not stop although I pleaded them to stop because I could not stand it with that condom. I cried for his mercy. These men raped me twice each until they were tired. I was freed about 3 am. The policeman paid me only 5 dollars and threatened me to keep quiet or they would not give the money to me. I was afraid of those men. They put three short guns on a small table near a television. I thought that the two other men were secret police. I was afraid of telling about the rape to other people. I did not want those men to trace me for further abuse. I got a vaginal discharge a few days after the rape. *FILE No. 0740458, 4 MAY 2004*

## CONDITIONS DURING LAST GANG RAPE

The research sought to determine the number of men, frequency of weapon use, drug use, and other aspects of the most recent gang rape (see Table 6). Although the actual conditions are better understood through the in-depth interviews, the reported frequency of these factors is revealing.

Condoms were sometimes used by rapists of their own accord or when the sex worker pleaded for them to be used. Sometimes dirty pieces of plastic found in the parks or on the street were used instead. It should be noted, however, that the number of times each man penetrated a sex worker was not asked, so these are very rough figures. In addition to multiple

simultaneous entry (vagina and anus, vagina, anus and mouth), fisting of the vagina was also described in the interviews. Biting of nipples, urinating on the face, and other acts of defilement and torture were frequently mentioned. The use of “tiger fur” and other special condoms (e.g., those coated with sand) as well as the insertion of objects, including eggplants, wine bottles (filled with wine), and flashlights into the vaginas or rectums of sex workers during rapes were also often reported.

While alcohol is still the major drug affecting violent and risky behaviors, yama is rapidly becoming common (see Table 7), especially as street prices continue to drop. Yama is usually smoked, but it can also be snorted or taken as a tablet. Less often, it is injected. Glue-sniffing has also spread widely among certain groups of people. Other drugs are also available, such as ketamine, ecstasy, and heroin. Pharmaceuticals such as rohypnol, diazepam, and other central nervous system depressants, as well as the opioid buprenorphine, are available over the counter at many pharmacies.

The use of both alcohol and stimulants, while priming aggressive behavior, often contribute to erectile dysfunction among men. Interview texts repeatedly mention that rapists were using drugs but had difficulty getting enough of an erection to put a condom on, keep an erection during the rape, or ejaculate a second or third time. It appears that some men took their performance embarrassment and frustration out on the sex worker with increased violence, particularly when other men were watching.

A minority of respondents reported anyone helping at the time of the rape (see Table 8, page 22). Sometimes the police actually stopped gangsters from raping a sex worker, and sometimes immediately afterward, a passing elder couple, a motorbike driver, a maid in a boarding house, or other person nearby took pity on the woman and helped her in some way. Usually they did not report the assault to anyone except among the srey sraos, who commonly went to one of several NGOs and sought help, both medical and legal. No legal redress was ever reported to have been successful.

Table 6

### FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: CONDITIONS AT LAST GANG RAPE

Freelance	Female % (95% CI)	Srey Sraos % (95% CI)
Mean number of men	5.7 (5.3–6.2)	6.1 (4.9–7.3)
Mean percent of men using condoms (or plastic)	66.1 (62.0–70.3)	52.4 (42.0–62.7)
Percent bound or held down	74.1 (69.7–78.0)	76.7 (65.7–85.0)
Percent on whom weapons were used	70.7 (66.2–74.9)	71.2 (59.8–80.5)
Percent on whom guns were used	37.8 (33.3–42.5)	15.3 (8.7–25.6)*
Percent on whom knives were held	46.4 (41.7–51.1)	62.5 (50.8–72.9)
Percent forced anal sex	21.2 (17.6–25.4)	100*
Percent forced oral sex	21.0 (17.4–25.2)	69.4 (57.9–79.0)*
Percent forced vaginal sex	93.2 (90.3–95.2)	–
Percent who bled as a result of the rape	53.7 (48.9–58.4)	65.3 (53.6–75.4)

\* significantly different



## BEER PROMOTER, 22 YEARS OLD, APPARENT VICTIM OF DATE-RAPE TYPE DRUG

One night two months ago, after working hours, I waited for my transportation van in front of a restaurant. Five young men with three motorbikes came to me and forced me to get on a motorbike. I was put in between the driver and another man behind me, and they drove me to Kien Svay resort outside Phnom Penh. I cried for help but no one came out to help me. A man behind me used his handkerchief to close my mouth.<sup>1</sup> I felt dizzy and unmovable. When I woke up I was in a guesthouse room and a man was on top of me. He was f\*\*king me. My body was naked and the room light was very bright. I could not move my hands and body. I was like a half dead person on the bed. The man finished and another man walked in the room to take his turn. Every one finished their desire and left me in the room alone. I was in the room until I felt that I could move my body. I tried to stand up and walked out of the room. I saw a woman cleaner and I asked her for help. That woman helped me. She gave me a glass of hot water with lemon and sugar.

When I was able to control myself completely, I went inside the room and looked around. I saw two condoms on the wooden floor, my bra and panty under the bed. I did not know how they raped me or how many times each man f\*\*ked me. But my vagina was swollen and painful. There was blood mixed with white thick water (semen) that poured out from my vagina. The cleaner lady told me that she saw those men but she did not know what was going on in the room. I thought that the guesthouse owner could recognize the men but he did not want to be eyewitness in that story. I came back home with suffering. *FILE NO. 0350748, 29 APRIL 2004*

1. While this woman mentions a handkerchief over her mouth, most solvents have strong smells that she probably would have noticed. It seems more likely that this rape was planned and someone dropped a drug such as rohypnol or gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) into a drink at the beer hall she was working in, in preparation for the following abduction. Date-rape drugs are available and used in Cambodia, although this is seldom discussed.

Table 7

### FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: SUBSTANCE USE AT LAST GANG RAPE

<b>Freelance</b>	<b>Female % (95% CI)</b>	<b>Srey Sraos % (95% CI)</b>
Percent who had been drinking alcohol	64.1 (59.4–68.6)	65.3 (53.6–75.4)
Percent using drugs	20.9 (17.3–25.1)	8.3 (3.8–17.4)
Percent stating men had been using alcohol	86.0 (82.3–89.0)	87.5 (77.6–93.4)
Percent stating men had been using drugs	61.9 (57.1–66.4)	71.2 (59.8–80.5)

## RISING DRUG USE AMONG GANGSTERS, SEX WORKERS, AND OTHERS

I think drugs are now a very big problem to the sex workers who are working on the park. I saw many sex workers using drugs called yama. It is not difficult to buy. I saw yama sellers and buyers every night in the park. It is cheap now. Last month, I went to work on the park near Wat Phnom. I had sex with three men and got 10,000 riel. It was about 12 pm so I decided to come back home with two other women. On my way, I met four gangsters sitting on a stone bench. Before I reached them, I already hid my money inside my panty. They stopped us and asked for some money to buy yama. No one gave them money. I thought the other women did not have money to give them. I was afraid they would rape and beat me when I did not give money. So I took out some money and gave it to them. Those gangsters did not say anything. They started to rape the two women on the ground of the park. They did not rape me and asked me to watch the area for them. I was so afraid to leave. I saw everything. Those gangsters beat up the two women and raped them through the vagina and anus without condoms. I couldn't stand and watch them raping so I ran away. I reported the rape to two police who were riding a big motorbike on the main street. The police came to help. The police were able to arrest only two gangsters, but they freed us. *FILE NO. 1162241, 14 MAY 2004*

Table 8

### FREELANCE SEX WORKERS: ASSISTANCE DURING/AFTER LAST GANG RAPE

Freelance	Female % (95% CI)	Srey Sraos % (95% CI)
Percent stating someone tried to stop the men	22.2 (18.5–26.5)	18.1 (10.8–28.7)
Percent stating they sought help afterward	25.8 (21.9–30.2)	25.0 (16.3–36.3)
Percent stating they tried to report to police	35.0 (30.6–39.7)	31.5 (21.9–43.0)
Percent stating they tried to report to NGOs	38.5 (34.0–43.3)	61.4 (50.0–72.1)*
Percent stating they tried to report to local authorities	20.3 (16.8–24.5)	8.2 (3.7–17.2)
Percent considering HIV exposure high due to rape	90.3 (87.1–92.7)	94.5 (86.3–97.9)

\* significantly different



## PART 2. BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS

There are few demographic differences between the women working in and out of the brothels. At least 10 percent of these women did not live at the brothel at the time of the survey, although they went there to work. Most are taken by clients from the brothels to guesthouses or hotels for sex, with permission of the managers. Brothel work is far more problematic than freelance work in a number of ways. Although the women often count on the fact that other people are nearby for protection, they are not well protected. The textual material that follows illustrates that many women in brothels began as chattel (sold to the brothel, indebted, and therefore subject to the will of others). Some remain both indebted and submissive to the brothel structures for years as a result of accepting loans. Power brokers include brothel owners, managers, and police, who have great influence over whether the brothel remains open or not. (Sex workers claim that some brothels are owned by policemen and managed by their relatives.) Many brothels are periodically raided and closed, during which time most women work in the parks and other venues. Hence, while most identify with the brothel as their place of work, many actually spend several months a year as freelancers.

### MANAGING INDEBTEDNESS

I don't have any problem with the brothel owner and recently I borrowed US\$100 from the brothel too. I shared half of my income with the brothel, but this month I took only a portion of my income (less than half) for my food and the rest I repaid to the brothel. Saturday and Sunday are my good days, and I could earn more (up to \$6–7 per day). An average income is 15,000 riel per day. *FILE NO. 0530133, 19 APRIL 2004*

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS

One large difference between freelance and brothel sex workers is their incomes, which is higher in the brothel (see Table 9). The average price of a single act of sex is about US\$1.00–\$1.25. Some work on contracts that are set at \$30–50 per month, no matter how many clients they see. This range is at least double what a strictly freelance sex worker earns. In the brothel, however, they see far more clients. Others work on a 50-percent basis with the brothel owner. In most brothels, they must also rent their rooms and pay out a great deal to the police (on a regular basis and whenever there is a raid). Yet all sex workers agree that, even though they are cheated in a brothel, they can earn more there than simply working the streets and clubs. The net income, however, is not stable; there are many unexpected expenses and saving is a rarity.

Table 9

### BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS: DEMOGRAPHICS

(N=500)

Brothel/Mobile	Female % (95% CI)
Mean Age	27.2 (26.6–27.8)
No Education	37.2 (31.9–42.2)
1 to <6 years education	47.3 (42.8–52.3)
6+ years education	15.5 (12.1–18.9)
Mean years in Phnom Penh	8.5 (7.8–9.2)
Percent living in brothel	91.4 (88.0–93.8)
Mean years in sex work	3.1 (2.8–3.3)
Mean income yesterday (Cambodian riel, U.S. dollars)	15,017 (\$3.63) (13,870–16,164)(\$3.36–\$3.9)
Mean number of persons living from income	3.9 (3.7–4.1)
Percent with another source of income	29.3 (25.4–33.6)
Percent experiencing HIV prevention outreach	92.2 (89.4–94.3)

Table 10

## BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS AND THEIR SWEETHEARTS

Brothel/Mobile	Female % (95% CI)
Percent with sweetheart	81.3 (74.8–87.5)
Percent whose sweetheart injects drugs*	30.7 (24.0–37.4)
Percent whose sweetheart uses heroin*	18.1 (12.3–24.5)
Percent whose sweetheart uses ganja*	25.8 (19.4–32.2)
Percent whose sweetheart uses yama*	63.4 (57.3–69.8)
Percent whose sweetheart sniffs glue*	53.0 (43.4–62.6)
Last week use condom with sweetheart: *	
All times	35.3 (29.7–41.7)
Some times	28.3 (23.0–33.9)
None	36.4 (30.3–41.8)
Last year beaten by sweetheart*	83.5 (78.5–88.0)
Last year raped by sweetheart*	87.5 (79.5–94.7)
Used condom last time raped by sweetheart*	29.5 (24.7–34.5)

\* among those with sweethearts

## SREY SRAOS AND NGO HELP

Another story happened to me in one night when a man came to me and asked for sex. Because he promised to pay me, I followed him to a guesthouse. On my way to the guesthouse, about nine other young men came out of a corner to stop me. First, they forced me to undress. I refused. One man slapped my face with his hand and threatened me to kneel down. I saw they had small knives and they pointed a knife at my neck. One man f\*\*\*ed my anus and another forced me to eat his ice cream (si karem or suck the penis). I had bleeding from my anus. Half of them did not use condom and they were using drugs too. I could tell those who used drugs had a longer time to have sex than non-drug user. They pulled my hair if I could not eat their penis comfortably. I tried to plead with them to use condom but they said they don't need condom and I had a few condom with me only. All the men looked like the sons of rich families because I could see their dress and equipment like motorbikes and jewelry they wore, but still they stole my little money. They raped me until they were tired and left me alone. No one could help me because the place was quiet and far away from the people's homes.

Next day morning, I went to an NGO called Khemara for help. I reported about the violence and the staff gave me some medication for my rectal treatment. Later on, nothing happened. I did not see any rapist arrested at all. I am so worried now about whether I have HIV or not as I have been raped several times. I can't report to police for help because I don't trust them at all. I have a lot of experience of violence from police such as beating, stealing money, and bribery for doing sex work. If police can help protect us then we would be able to use condoms and clients would not dare to do violence to sex workers. I think because most police abuse the sex workers, sex workers are afraid to cooperate with police when they face violence. I think HIV/AIDS can be prevented from spreading when the rights of sex workers respected, particularly, if the police helped victimized sex workers. Police should not allow gangsters to abuse the sex workers. I know that some gangsters are friends with police. *FILE NO. 1030217, 27 APRIL 2004*

## WORKING AT BROTHEL, LIVING WITH CHILDREN AND MAN

It was my first time to come to Phnom Penh. My friend told me that I could work as housemaid or waitress in the restaurant but it was too late to know that I was sold to a brothel in Phnom Penh. My first day on job was hosting the clients visiting the brothel. My brothel owner forced me to accommodate the men and I was beaten when refused. I worked in the brothel for a few months and escaped. I met my sweetheart and he had been using drugs for a long time. He abused me every day and he forced me to make money from sex work. He needs money from me for buying drugs. I never visited my family because I am afraid of my parents; they do not know that I am doing sex work. I have two children and I rent a house for my sweetheart and the children to stay. I go to work in the brothel every day and I came back home late at night. I have been doing this sex work for three years. My sweetheart hasn't worked for two years since he is addicted to drugs (yama and glue) and forces me to work to feed him and the children. Now I don't sleep in the brothel but just go there for work. *FILE NO. 0240285, 20 APRIL 2004*

## EXPERIENCE WITH SWEETHEARTS

The brothel/mobile research team wanted to document the violence in relationships with their sweethearts (see Table 10). Many of the men who attach themselves to sex workers do so in order to support a drug or alcohol habit. Sometimes the women also acquire a drug habit, but surprisingly many sex workers do not know what drugs they or their sweethearts are taking. When asked if their sweethearts injected, they mimicked what happened after the injection (i.e., “nodding out,” which was strongly suggestive of heroin or other opiate-like drugs) but in many cases, they knew no names for the drugs themselves. Condom use in these relationships is much lower than in their commercial sex work.

## EXPERIENCE WITH POLICE

Over the last year, this sample of women experienced significantly more beating, more theft of money, and more rape from individual police and groups of police (see Table 11, page 26) than the freelance workers did. When this research was completed and the results were reviewed, the freelance sex workers found this hard to believe and insisted that the brothel women were also often on the streets (hence the revision of the study category to brothel/mobile). The textual material makes it clear that although rape is not uncommon in the brothel, the worst gang rapes take place when the brothel-based women are out of the brothel. These women are made significantly more vulnerable by the de facto arrangement between brothel managers and the police, allowing the latter full access to brothel women whenever they want, in any way they want. Further, when the pressures rise for brothel closure, the police have full power to torture, rape, and even kill sex workers with impunity.

## INJECTING DRUGS AND SWEETHEARTS

My parents died during the Khmer Rouge regime. My husband was very violent and abused me very much when he got drunk. I got sick due to his abuse. I ran away from him to live in Phnom Penh and have been working as sex worker in Tuol Kork area. Now I have a sweetheart. He is also a violent man. He abused me several times when I could not find money for him. He is on drugs and drinking alcohol. I saw him injecting drugs but I did not know the type of drug he used. He used to force me to inject drugs with him. He beat me with his hands when I tried to stop using the drug. My life is very bad living with him but I don't know what to do. *FILE No. 0630145, 4 MAY 2004*

## BROTHEL RAIDING: RAPE, MAYHEM, AND MURDER

One thing I never forget in my life was a friend of mine who died by police torture during the brothel raid. Police arrested five sex workers from my brothel including me and took us to a place outside the city (as I remember, to Kien Svay resort). On the way, police threatened us not to escape or they would shoot behind into the truck with their guns. We reached a rice field beyond Kien Svay and the truck stopped. Police pulled me out of the truck to a rice field near the road. A policeman raped me between the bushes, as well as other sex workers. My friend did not let the police rape her and tried to escape. Police chased her and seized her. Police hit her with a long gun (AK47) behind the neck. She fell down on the ground and the police raped her. I heard her crying for help but police closed her mouth with something. I couldn't hear her crying any more but I could not help her because a policeman was on top of me. All women were raped on the rice field like a f\*\*king dogs' season. The police finished raping me and I was able to run to see her. She had died a few minutes before I reached her. Seeing that, the police threatened us not to say anything or they would kill all of us. Police drove the truck away and left us in the field. I went to a village near the scene and told the villagers about the violence. Many people came to see and helped with carrying her to the village. A local policeman visited the scene but nothing was done to find justice for my friend. My friend died like an animal. As I remembered, there were six policemen on that truck including the driver. But the driver did not join the rape and he stayed away from the raping scene. My friend was buried in a pagoda in Kien Svay and I came back to the brothel. The brothel owner was so afraid about such a thing happening again if police come to the brothel again. Police raped me without a condom. I did not know if police raped the other sex worker with condoms. *FILE No. 1140503, 30 APRIL 2004*

Table 11

**BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS: EXPERIENCE WITH POLICE**

<b>Brothel/Mobile</b>	<b>Female % (95% CI)</b>
Percent who have observed police harassing HIV outreach workers	37.9 (33.6–42.3)
Percent beaten by police in past year	74.6 (69.5–79.4)
Percent whose money was taken by police in past year	91.3 (88.0–94.2)
Percent raped by a single policeman in past year	57.1 (51.9–62.2)
Percent gang raped by policemen in past year	49.4 (44.3–54.5)

**A ROUGH AND COSTLY POLICEMAN**

One night, because I needed money for my family, I went out with a man to the hotel. Normally I charge 4,000–5000 riel per sex. The man promised to pay me \$20 per night. I served him the first sex and he went out. He let me stay alone in the room with his car keys and gun. A few minutes later he came back and he had another sex. That second sex took a long time and I pleaded for him to stop. He did not listen to me and continued. Due to his strange style of sex, I had bleeding from my vagina. He asked me to wash off the blood and he continued. Again, he used special condom. I did not know the name of that condom but I could see it was like tortoise skin and scratchy. I had more bleeding. I refused sex with him because I was afraid that my vagina would have a serious wound. The man hit me on my face with his fist. He pulled my hair and kicked me several times to force me to give him further sex. I still refused and tried to escape but he caught me and tied both my hands and one of my legs to the bed. He raped me for quite a long time with his special condom. The blood poured out and wet the mattress. The man raped me for several times until the morning. He paid me \$20 and left. I thought that this policeman used drugs to prolong the sex. So, \$20 he gave me was not enough for my wound treatment. I have spent more than three times that amount for treatment. A month later, I saw that policeman again in my brothel. I told my brothel owner but he just kept quiet because he did not want to cause trouble with the police. *FILE NO. 0140248, 26 APRIL 2004*

**ON THE HUNT**

Another story was when I joined a ceremony of my friend in Phnom Penh. I came back to the brothel late at night on a motorbike-taxi. On the way, the motorbike had a flat tire and the rain was falling heavily. I went under an old hut in the park to get out of the rain. Four policemen walked to me and came out of the rain too. A man asked me about my family and job. Suddenly, one police said to his friends, “This is a Khdann” (“deer surrounded by tigers”), and pulled me down and raped me. Each of them raped me three times. One policeman used a condom for the first time and the others did not. They raped me on the ground. The rain was stopping and police stopped raping me too. Before they left me those police stole all my money and my watch. *FILE NO. 0240277, 29 APRIL 2004*

## EXPERIENCE WITH GANGSTERS

Physical and sexual violence perpetrated by gangsters is higher among the brothel/mobile workers (see Table 12) than among freelance workers. Gangsters not only rape sex workers when they find them walking home from a job or at other times when they are out of the brothel, but go to the brothels and take them out to be raped.

Table 12

### BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS: EXPERIENCE WITH GANGSTERS

Brothel/Mobile	Female % (95% CI)
Percent beaten by gangsters in past year	77.5 (72.6–81.8)
Percent whose money was taken by gangsters in past year	82.2 (77.8–86.5)
Percent raped by a single gangster in past year	69.1 (63.4–73.2)
Percent gang raped by gangsters in past year	66.4 (61.6–71.3)

### MULTIPLE USES OF GANGSTERS

Gangsters abused me much more than others [did]. They are used as “zone protectors”<sup>1</sup> where I work and they force sex workers to have sex for free and rob the sex workers’ money. Some clients use gangsters to abuse sex workers as revenge after the sex worker refused sex without a condom or there was quarrel between them. *FILE NO. 1420011, 22 APRIL 2004*

1. The expression “zone protectors” refers to the way in which the police and businessmen use gangsters to control access and security to different sections of town at different times of the day and night.

### BORN IN PHNOM PENH, WORKED IN MULTIPLE BROTHELS

I ran away from my house because my stepfather raped me; that hurt me very much (crying harder) and I don’t want my mother to know about that. I don’t want her to despair about me. I had a lot of blood pouring out from my vagina after he raped me. He did not use a condom. My uncle suspected this but I never told him the truth. I went to stay at my uncle’s home but his family members hated me too. I could not put myself in such situation and I decided to leave them all. I lived with a woman who appeared to be trustworthy and promised to find me a job so that I could feed myself. At that time I was 13 years old and I did not have any boyfriend. I stayed with her for a few weeks; she treated me as special guest and I felt relaxed.

Finally, I entered into a brothel unintentionally. The woman whom I trusted to find me a job cheated me and sold me to a brothel in Phnom Penh for a few hundred dollars. I realized that I was sold but I did not know what to do to free myself. The brothel owner hit me with electric wire to force me to do sex with clients and some clients wanted to sex me without a condom. I was so scared of drunken clients who beat me like an animal. I could hardly find help. The brothel owner told me that I had to work at least for a year to pay off the debt. I did not see the money at all and the woman took all the money. Sometimes I asked a client I felt I could trust to free me but they were afraid. I was sold from one brothel to another many times and I never received any money. I worked again and again to pay off the debt. *FILE NO. 0830176, 28 APRIL 2004*

## GANGSTERS POSING AS CLIENTS IN BROTHELS

Because I wanted to have more money from the client, one day I went out with a man who looked younger than me by about five years. He put me on a taxi motorbike to sleep in a guesthouse. We did not go to a guesthouse, but the man took me to a quiet place near a garment factory. The motorbike stopped and the man pulled my hands to sit down. First, he asked if I agree to sleep with 6 other men and he would agree to pay me more. I refused and said I wanted to go back to the brothel. The man ordered the motorbike to drive away and I was there with him. Because I did not know his trick, the man asked me to undress and lay down on a plastic on the ground. He sexed me twice. I wondered why he brought me here so I asked him. He said he was waiting for his friend because his friend has a car. About half an hour later, he had another sex. While he was f\*\*king me 10 other young men arrived. I was so afraid and tried to run away. The man stopped me and tied my hands and the other men held my legs. Every one raped me. Most of them used condom but they had sex for long times. One man who was the last, sexed me with his thumb. He did not use his penis but his thumb. He pumped my vagina very strong until I bled. I asked him to stop but he said I deserved this. I scolded them for doing such a bloody thing to me and they slapped me on my face and kicked me in my stomach. They hurt me very much and I almost died that night. Luckily, there was a car passing the area. The car light flashed straight on the spot and the men ran away. The car driver saw me and ran to help. He rescued me from the gangsters and sent me home. *FILE NO. 0330111, 23 APRIL 2004*

## CLIENTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE BROTHELS

In the brothel, women often do not know if a client is a gangster or a policeman, but apparently many are one or the other. This might explain why the percent raped by so-called clients is markedly higher than the percent of women raped by police or gangsters (see Table 13). Many report that they try to hide when they sense the client is a policeman or gangster. Brothel workers also complain a great deal about friends of the brothel owners, some of who are police as well but who always get the right to have sex without a condom if they want. They can be violent and rough or bring several men into the room without worrying about the brothel owner or local guard. The brothel worker has no way to stop these events.

Altogether, among the brothel/mobile women, the percent raped in the past year was 66.6 (95% CI, 59.5–73.3) by police, 77.1 (95% CI, 69.9–89.3) by gangsters, and 94.3 (95% CI, 89.9–97.4) by clients. In total, the percent of brothel women raped by anyone in the past year was 96.0 (95% CI, 93.1–98.6).

As these results indicate (see Table 14), most of these reported rapes took place outside the brothel, which is why the women feel that working inside the brothel was safer. From the interviews it was apparent that in a number of cases the women did not know or could not remember how many times they were penetrated due to fear, trauma, confusion, a drugged state, etc. Therefore, these figures are quite rough.

It is clear that the women are very concerned whether their rapists use condoms or not and do try to remember this clearly; nonetheless, these figures must be considered to be an approximation of actual use levels. The questionnaire did not ask about the frequency of objects being inserted into the vagina or of fisting, or the Cambodian equivalent, multiple fingers shoved into the vagina and swirled around. It may be noteworthy that Tarr (1996) found the same acts reported by young men in her study. These acts and the use of objects were reported frequently in the interviews.

Table 13  
**BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS:  
CLIENTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE  
THE BROTHELS**

Brothel/Mobile	Female % (95% CI)
Percent beaten by clients in the past year	74.6 (69.9–79.5)
Percent whose money was taken by clients in the past year	68.2 (62.8–73.5)
Percent raped by a single client in past year	87.0 (83.1–89.9)
Percent gang raped by clients in the past year	79.8 (75.9–83.3)



Although sex workers are sometimes tricked or forced into taking a drug when being raped, a considerable proportion of women use drugs of various types more generally (see Table 15, page 30). The interview question specifically asked about sex workers' own drug use at the time of last rape; had it asked about drug use in the past six months, the numbers would likely be higher. The main issue is that, when using drugs, it is less likely that the woman can maintain clearheaded alertness and control of a situation. Those women who decide to go with men from the brothel at midnight, after a night of drinking, yama, or heroin, are likely to be highly compromised. According to the women, most of the men who rape them have been drinking and/or taking drugs also. That 16.5 percent of the brothel/mobile sex workers admit to having injected drugs is especially of concern. Coupled with the finding that about one-third of their sweethearts are injecting drugs, it is apparent that injecting heroin and other drugs is increasing among sex workers and their partners.

The social stigma associated with being a brothel sex worker in Cambodia is very strong. Although some women have internalized that stigma, others find their way to a degree of self-confidence and strength. NGO workers, health workers, and others to whom they turn for help (see Table 16, page 30), however, are often diffident and reluctant to exert any energy on their behalf. These stigmatizing attitudes extend to HIV project personnel as well and compromise the quality of badly needed public health interventions. Eventually, a large proportion of sex workers no longer bother to seek help from anyone other than a small network of friends.

Table 14

### **BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS: CONDITIONS AT LAST GANG RAPE**

<b>Brothel/Mobile</b>	<b>Female % (95% CI)</b>
Percent took place inside of brothel	19.1 (15.2–23.3)
Mean number of men	5.1 (4.0–6.2)
Percent bound or held down	91.6 (89.4–93.9)
Percent on whom weapons were used	86.9 (83.4–90.1)
Percent on whom guns were used	45.0 (40.1–49.8)
Percent on whom knives were held	44.5 (39.9–49.2)
Mean number of times penetrated	8.7 (6.62–10.9)
Mean percent of sexual acts with condoms (or plastic)	49.8 (31.5–68.2)
Percent forced anal sex	31.0 (26.5–35.6)
Percent forced oral sex	36.4 (31.1–41.1)
Percent forced vaginal sex	97.7 (96.2–99.0)
Percent who bled as a result of the rape	68.6 (64.1–73.3)

#### **WHEN POLICE ARE CLIENTS**

One day two men dressed in civilian clothes came into my brothel. They liked me and asked my brothel owner to take me outside with them. They promised to pay \$15 for overnight sleep in the guesthouse. With permission from my brothel owner, I followed them by taking their motorbike. At the guesthouse room, after first-time sex, the man told me to sleep with his friend and he left. I refused because he broke his promise. Negotiation took place for a few minutes. Suddenly, the man point his pistol at me and threatened to kill me if I dared to run away. There I realized that those men were police. I cried and that police hit me with his gun on my head. I was bleeding. The man went out and let another man rape me. When he finished, four other policemen came in the room. I thought they were staying in the rooms close to mine. That time I did not dare to refuse. I was so afraid of their violent faces and the rape. Six men altogether raped me twice each. One of them used a special condom and I hurt very much. They were laughing when I cried. When all men finished, they spread my legs widely and put the pistol in my vagina. They threatened to shoot if I dared to cry for help or got them in trouble. I was so tired, I could hardly move my body to drink water. Five of them did not use condoms. I saw three men were smoking drugs in the bathroom. They left me in the early morning without pay. I came downstairs to see the guesthouse owner. She helped me find a motor taxi to drive me home. I was almost dead and very scared. I did not want to report the case to local police because I was afraid that I would meet them again. *FILE NO. 0920054, 23 APRIL 2004*

## OBJECTS

Once a policeman tied my hands to the bed in my room. He used a big artificial penis made of plastic to insert into my vagina. He put it in and out many times to hurt me. He laughed when I was crying and he had sex afterward. Because his style of sex was painful, I kicked him in the face. That policeman was so angry, he slapped my face several times and kicked me too. He burned my vagina with his lit cigarette. I cried for help and the brothel owner came in the room. He saw everything but he was afraid to confront the policeman. My brothel owner pretended to blame me just to soften police anger, and freed me. I knew that policeman used drugs before he sexed with me. He did to me like a crazy boar. Before he untied me and left the room, he spit his saliva into my vagina and cursed me badly as a bitch or mother f\*\*\*. He left the brothel without paying. Next day, my brothel owner reported to local police and the NGOs who were working in the area. I do not think that police was arrested, but since that time my brothel seemed safer and I could do my sex work smoothly. *FILE NO. 0330112, 23 APRIL 2004*

## SEX AND INJECTING DRUGS

Last year, a man took me out for sex in the hotel room. He had sex with me several times and he still wanted more. I saw he injected a drug between his fingers. He forced me to inject the drug too. He tied me up to the bed and injected me. I felt excited and happy and wanted more sex. I think that drug was powerful, and it made me brave. But I felt tired afterward. *FILE NO. 0250588, 24 APRIL 2004*

## ALWAYS WRONG

Sometimes I asked for help from the neighbors, but they told me to be patient and keep quiet or I would not earn a living. Some neighbors ignored me, because sex workers like me deserve to be abused. One common saying that people used to say to the sex worker when sex workers looked for help was “Be a pig, don’t be afraid of the hot water.” When I reported to the local authority like a policemen I was also told to be patient and be quiet like the brothel owner, or I would be abused more. Sometimes they blamed me for being polite with the client. As I told you earlier that I was always wrong and nowhere could I find help at all. I must challenge it by myself. Even the policemen raped me and abused me when I could not satisfy them with free sex. *FILE NO. 1430062, 28 APRIL 2004*

Table 15

### **BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS: SUBSTANCE USE AT LAST GANG RAPE**

<b>Brothel/Mobile</b>	<b>Female % (95% CI)</b>
Percent who had been drinking alcohol	78.3 (74.1–82.2)
Percent using yama	48.2 (43.2–53.2)
Percent injecting drugs	16.5 (12.4–20.4)
Percent using ganja	21.6 (17.3–26.5)
Percent sniffing glue	13.0 (8.9–17.2)
Percent stating men had been using alcohol	97.7 (96.3–99.1)
Percent stating men had been using drugs	88.5 (84.9–91.8)

Table 16

### **BROTHEL/MOBILE SEX WORKERS: ASSISTANCE DURING/AFTER LAST GANG RAPE**

<b>Brothel/Mobile</b>	<b>Female % (95% CI)</b>
Percent stating someone tried to stop the men	47.4 (42.7–51.9)
Percent stating they sought help afterward	49.0 (44.1–53.7)
Percent stating they tried to report to police	56.6 (51.9–61.0)
Percent stating they tried to report to NGOs	58.2 (53.6–62.5)
Percent stating they tried to report to local authorities	41.2 (36.3–46.0)
Percent considering HIV exposure high due to rape	99.3 (98.5–99.7)



## PART 3. POLICEMEN AND GANGSTERS

This section summarizes the texts of 58 interviews with active police and a few gangsters. These men were approached by ex-policemen and asked to come to the guesthouse for an interview on their off-duty hours.

The following is a set of comments and statements made repeatedly in the texts that reflect the attitudes and understanding of most of the police who were interviewed. The selected items listed below are followed by illustrative examples from interview transcripts.

### POLICE, LIKE ANY OTHER MEN, SPEND A LOT OF TIME TALKING AND JOKING ABOUT SEX AND SEX WORKERS.

I like joking about sex and telling sexual stories. It helps me to release stress when I laugh. Men and police tease each other when they know their colleagues or friends had sex with sex workers. Sometimes they imitate the sex worker. Men tell many jokes about sex workers during drinking. (44 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 6 CHILDREN, PRIVATE, ON THE FORCE SINCE 2000)

### NEARLY ALL MEN CONSIDER GOING TO SEX WORKERS AT TIMES (E.G., WHEN A WIFE IS PREGNANT OR AWAY) AS ACCEPTABLE AND NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR.

I saw a few policemen f\*\*\* the sex workers in the parks at night. I think it was normal for men. Many men went to see the sex workers when their wives were pregnant. My friends are very naughty when they had sex with the prostitute. They had sex with prostitutes through vagina and anus. I used to ask women to do oral sex for me but I never had anal sex. (24 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, NO CHILDREN, LIEUTENANT SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1999)

I visited the brothel and I used to have sex with sex workers in the parks. I used condoms. There were a few sex workers as srey sraos working with female sex workers in the parks and streets. Most of them were meeting together in a park in front of Wat Botum Vatey. They served sex with men. There were some men who have sex with me too. They have short hair and they could f\*\*\* both men and women. (38 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, TWO CHILDREN, CAPTAIN, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1993)

### POLICE HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF POWER IN THE BROTHELS AND PARKS.

I used to visit the brothel alone or with my friends but I used condom. Some sex workers were nice to me and served me very good sex. I want to say that some women were very active in making me satisfied and I paid them more for good work. For such women I never abused them at all. I understand that because women have no job to do for living is why they become sex workers. Not all sex workers are bad. However, there were some ugly women who were lazy in the brothel. I used to f\*\*\* them in the room and they slept like dead women. Their bodies were not moving at all. I did not have a good feeling in f\*\*\*ing them further and I wanted to stop or I paid less money to them. Some women tried to push me to pay more for sex but I refused. Then something happened, such as a beating. (30 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, NO CHILDREN, 2ND LIEUTENANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1998)

There were many cases reported by sex workers about abuse every year to my station, but I am not responsible for those cases. I did not know how to help them. I would be in trouble if I dare to take action without orders from my superior. I heard my colleagues joke about sex workers. I observed that some police are using drugs too. Police become violent when they get drunk. My friends asked me many times to visit the brothel with them after working hours. They told me that I don't need to pay for sex if I want to f\*\*\* the sex workers both inside and outside the brothel. (36 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, TWO CHILDREN, 2ND SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1997)

**POLICE HAVE LESS POWER OVER GANGSTERS, PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY ARE ARMED OR RICH. GANGSTERS ON YAMA SEEM TO FRIGHTEN MANY POLICE.**

I can't remember the month but it happened recently, I saw two gangsters raping a woman on the ground. She cried for help. I saw a man holding a knife. I ran to help by throwing a stone at them. One man was able to escape and I could arrest one man. That gangster was using yama. I found a few tablets of yama in his shirt pocket. I released him because I did not know what to do with him. As you know, gangsters who are using drugs are very dangerous. They would revenge me any time if I treat them badly. They are living and working as a group and they stay in the parks and under the trees. (30 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 4 CHILDREN, 2ND SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1998)

One day, during the Water Festival. I was assigned to carry out my duty at a park in front of Cambodiana Hotel. As you know, there are always many young men and women sitting on the parks from 4 pm to 12 pm. Some of those young people are students and children of rich families as well because I noticed that they have nice motorbikes and cars. At that night, around 11 pm, I heard the crying of a woman from the park. A colleague of mine and I went to see the place. I saw three young men were raping a young woman between the plants in the park. I stopped them. One young man pointed a gun at me and forced me to go away. I stepped back and drove away. I did not want to confront them or at least one of us would get hurt. I called on other police from another place to help. A few minutes later seven policemen arrived and surrounded them. It was a bit late as one man was able to finish his rape and another man was taking his turn. I shot into the air to frighten them. One man ran to hide behind the tree and shot at us. Finally, we arrested them. We sent them to the police station. About one hour later, there was a man with a nice car and bodyguard entering the police station and he freed those young men. I do not know what was happening with my boss. The woman was hospitalized and no man held responsible for

the rape. There is no justice in this society. The poor become poorer and abused but the rich become aggressive and violent. (42 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, 2ND SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1990)

On drugs, gangsters were very dangerous to me. Sometimes I avoided having trouble with them when I saw them having guns or with a big group in the park. I wanted to help the women too, but I could not protect myself. Sometimes I called other police to help me in dispersing those gangsters. Yama is now very problematic to youth. Some police use drugs too. (24 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, LIEUTENANT SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1999)

**MANY POLICE GO TO SEX WORKERS IN THE BROTHELS AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES AS CLIENTS.**

I heard some police gossip about sex workers after they raped or had sex with them. Some women also told me that police abuse them and force them to pay money. Some women said police raped them in the police station when they were arrested. I found out that some sex workers were very afraid of police. Some ran away when they saw me or other police in the parks. I used to visit the brothel with my friends at night. Some women in the brothel ran to hide when they saw me. I never put on my uniform when I visited the brothel but those women could recognize me because they saw my gun. I asked them about their hiding from me. They told me that they have been abused by police when police came in the brothel and sexed with them. Police did not pay for sex. A woman showed me the scar on her forehead. She said that a policeman hit her forehead with a bottle of beer when she refused to serve sex at the drinking table. (24 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, LIEUTENANT SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1999)

**MANY POLICE DRINK TOO MUCH AND SOME TAKE DRUGS, LEADING TO ROUGH BEHAVIOR IN THESE VENUES WITH WOMEN.**

I want to tell you one case that I witnessed recently a few months ago in the beer

restaurant. My friends invited me to a party. There were many different types of beer and wine sellers. We got Angkor Beer. One woman was serving us beer. I did not drink much but I like listening to the music and watching the female singers. My friend invited one singer to accommodate us at the table. He asked her to drink with us too. The party took place for about two hours. I asked my friend to come back home because I had something to do at home. The singer said goodbye and paid the bill. There were four young men [who] came in and sat at a table near mine. My friend was drunk already. One young man asked a beer seller to call the singer who was sitting with my table to meet him. She could not come because it was time for her to sing. The man pulled out a gun and pointed it at her face. Seeing that, I pulled my friend out from the table and walked outside quickly. I saw the man slap her on her face and tear her bra in front of the guests. He forced her to sit near him. That man was very drunk from outside but maybe he was jealous of her when he saw her sitting at our table. I saw blood pouring from her mouth. We did not do anything, because that man was a policeman. So from that case I felt that policemen were very powerful in the brothel, nightclub, and restaurant. I was told that that singer used to go out with him and he paid her for sex. (30 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, NO CHILDREN, 2ND LIEUTENANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1998)

Maybe I can tell you one case that I saw last month in karaoke shop in Phnom Penh. I left a wedding party of my friend at 9 pm. Two friends of mine asked me to go for singing at a karaoke shop for a few hours. In the karaoke room there were many pretty women [who] came to persuade us to get something to drink. I did not drink much, but I like singing. One of my friends got so drunk and fell asleep on the saloon chair. I asked a woman to give him a massage so that he could wake up and we come back home. At the same time, the van of her beer company arrived to pick her up. I think it was 10 pm. She said goodbye to me and was walking out. My drunken friend got up and held her hands and forced her to sit down. She asked for permission to leave or

she would have to spend her pocket money for transportation to go home. He forced her to sit near him. He undressed her and she refused. I tried to stop him but he did not listen to me. He beat her without reason and pointed a gun at her head. I tried to take the gun from him because I saw his gun was ready for firing. I got the gun but he still tore her skirt and panties to rape her. I and another friend tried to stop him. Finally, she was freed. I apologized to her on behalf of my drunken friend and I gave her some money for buying a new dress. I dropped her at her home. I thought that if I was not with him that night, the woman would have been raped or shot dead. (37 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, LIEUTENANT, CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1992)

#### MANY POLICE DEMAND MONEY FROM SEX WORKERS FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, OTHERS ACTUALLY ROB THEM OR MAKE THE GANGSTERS ROB THEM AND SHARE THE SPOILS.

I saw a policeman beating up a woman in the parks near Phsar Chas Market. I did not know the cause of the beating for sure. I went to see and tried to stop the beating. That policeman told me that she stole something from a man who had sex with her in the park. That policeman wanted to beat her again because she did not return what she had stolen from the man. I talked to her in a friendly manner, saying I would not abuse her if she returned what she took from the man. First, she did not talk because she wanted the abusive policeman out of her sight. I asked that policeman to stay away so that I could be with her alone. She told me that she stole a wallet of a man who had sex with her because that man forced her to do sex without a condom. The man beat her up and raped her on the ground. The policeman saw the rape but he did not help her. The man refused to pay her for sex. So she stole the wallet when the man was trying to walk away. The policeman saw the stealing and came to get it from her. He took all the money. She said, "I saw him putting the money in his pocket and he put blame on me alone." She said she did not have money to return to

the wallet owner because the money was taken by the policeman. What I could do in that situation was to ask the policeman to free her. It was the best solution. I knew the name of that policeman. He was my colleague. (30 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, NO CHILDREN, SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1997)

### MANY POLICE DEMAND FREE SEX FROM SEX WORKERS.

One day, I saw one policeman rape a sex worker on a stone bench at a park near Wat Phnom at night. I did not do anything. I watched from a distance. I saw everything. The policeman beat her buttocks and f\*\*ed her like a dog (laughing). I asked the woman to come to me when the policeman freed her. She told me that he forced her to offer him free sex but she refused until later. She wanted to give free sex after 12pm but that police did not agree and started to rape her. Police always asked for free sex from pretty and new women. (43 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 3 CHILDREN, 2ND LIEUTENANT, IN SINCE 1985)

### SOME POLICE ENCOURAGE GANGSTERS TO ROB, BEAT, AND RAPE SEX WORKERS.

Police always look for money from the sex workers in this area when they have no money for drinking. They force sex workers to pay them some money and many sex workers have been beaten up when they had no money to pay police. Some police raped sex workers on the bench under the trees. I do not know if they used condoms or not but most women said those police did not use condoms when they were drunk. Gangsters always took turns after police finished. I could chase away the gangsters when police were not involved. I thought that police wanted to put blame on gangsters for the rape. As you know, police are very powerful over sex workers. You told me that you were police too and I think you can imagine about police harassing someone for something. As you can see, police in the parks have no guns but they have wooden batons. (30 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 4 CHILDREN, 2ND SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1998)

I don't have any relationship with those gangsters in the parks but I noticed that some police used gangsters for abusing the sex workers as well. I think you have met all this before when you were a policeman. A woman refused to give free sex to a policeman in the park. I was in the same park with that policeman. He asked three gangsters to follow the woman and steal her money. (30 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, NO CHILDREN, 2ND LIEUTENANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1998)

### POLICE HAVE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT HIV/AIDS FROM NGOS.

I have studied two courses about HIV/AIDS and STDs at my department. I learned one more time at the Ministry of Interior. There were trainers from NGOs. The courses were so useful to me. I know how to prevent HIV and understand about HIV transmission from one person to another person. This could help in preventing me from having HIV and giving it to my family. But I cannot say that I am a solid trainer on this matter, but I could share my knowledge to my friends. (35 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, TEAM LEADER, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1989)

### ALMOST ALL POLICE HAVE WITNESSED BEATINGS, ROBBERY, AND RAPE OF SEX WORKERS BY GANGSTERS AND BY OTHER POLICE.

Police are the most dangerous to sex workers. They rape sex workers and asked other men to join the rape. They raped sex worker in the parks and under the trees. I couldn't do anything although it was obviously happening in front of me. They were police and I am police too. I don't think that those police would listen to me when I ask them to stop abusing the sex workers because I am the youngest in the team. (37 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 3 CHILDREN, 1ST SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1993)

One night before Khmer New Years day, another colleague and I were on a motorbike patrolling along the park in front of the Royal Palace. I saw two men standing behind a big tamarind tree. I thought they were robbers and I drove around the park but kept my eyes watching them. There was a car passing the

area and I could see them very clear. One man was standing and raping a sex worker. She cried for help and I drove closer. One man was a policeman and I knew him very well. I did not disturb them. The woman was freed when they finished. She walked to me and told me about the rape. I could not do anything against that policeman. (35 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 3 CHILDREN, CAPTAIN, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1993)

Frankly speaking, I did not like sex workers in the past. I have recently abused many hardheaded women who were working in the parks at nighttime. I beat them when they refused sex with me. I beat them many times. I can't remember the number of beatings. Because I thought that sex workers needed extreme sex from men [laughs]. People in my area called sex workers Pradap (meaning "equipment that people can use for doing something," [i.e.] a public vagina for men). Sometimes I asked for some money from them to buy beer or wine. Some women joined my drinking party and had sex with me afterwards in the park. Sometimes I f\*\*ed them on the stone bench. I never paid them for sex. Police in here have done the same thing. There were many policemen who used to work in this park and they did the same. I did not need to spend a dollar for sex in the brothel. I could get free sex from the park. Now I realized that women become sex workers because they have no job and no money to do business. I know that sex workers have suffered a lot from men, especially men who have guns and power like policemen. I am so sorry for what I have done to those sex workers. Maybe at that time I was too young to know everything in this society. About five years ago, I arrested one woman who was walking on the street late at night. I threatened her to give me some money. I needed money for buying beer and cigarettes. That woman told me that she had no money. I beat and forced her to find money for me. She took off her earring and sold it for money to buy wine for me. I raped her on the ground near Wat Phnom. I used a condom and I raped her three times. I beat her when she was crying for my mercy. [Respondent silent for a while]. I will never do it again. I did many wrong things in my life.

I want POLICY to train police about women's rights. I had STDs (syphilis) many times because I did not use a condom when I was so drunk. I treated my syphilis with medication I bought from the pharmacies. I don't know yet if I have HIV or not. I haven't the courage to have my blood tested for HIV. Actually, I stopped having sex with sex workers since early 2002. I want to be a good man and take care of my family. (39 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 5 CHILDREN, 1ST SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1990)

### **MOST POLICE KNOW SEX WORKERS ARE WORKING WOMEN TRYING TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES, AND SOME FEEL SORRY FOR THEM.**

There was one violent case I encountered during a brothel raid in 2002 in Tuol Kork area. Police and local authorities went to raid four brothels and arrested more than 20 sex workers. There was fighting between police and the brothel protectors. One policeman was injured. A brothel protector cut him with a big knife and the police shot at his leg. I was one of the raiding members. One policeman beat two or three sex workers when they tried to escape during the raid. I asked him to stop. He should not beat them for that. That policeman looked at me with big eyes and told me to leave him alone. The team leader ordered me to wait at the truck and keep the women from escaping. Two women tried to bribe me for release but I did not accept their money. They asked me many times and I could not ignore them. I sympathized with them and let them run away. I let them run away when I heard that they had many children to take care of at home and their children would be starving when they could not return home on time at that night. I saw some police beating the women when they refused to come out of the brothel or get in the police truck. Some were crying and asking for release. It was so grieving to me. Women were transported to my police station. I don't want to tell you the name of my police station. Some women were detained for two days or longer when they had no one as insurer to release them. Some women who had money bribed police and gave them sex in the station in order to be free



from the detention. It was so bad to see police abusing women like that but I did not know what to do to help them out. I could be blamed or punished if other police knew that I helped the women. (32 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2ND SERGEANT, IN SINCE 1998)

I know that women do sex work because they have no job to do. Since police raided the brothel, I noticed that the number of sex workers in the park is increasing. Drugs are very problematic among the youth. Most cases that happened in the parks where I am working are related to drugs. People don't like sex workers and they discriminate against them. (44 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 6 CHILDREN, 1ST SERGEANT, IN SINCE 2001)

#### SOME POLICE RECOGNIZE THAT SEX WORKERS SUFFER FROM SOCIAL OPPROBRIUM IN KHMER SOCIETY AND DO NOT WISH TO ADD TO THEIR SUFFERING.

I think that sex workers are also human beings and they have a right to live as I do. When I was young I heard people, especially my older brother, joking about prostitutes and sometimes he teased his friends about having sex with prostitutes. People at that time considered prostitutes as bad people or women who were eager for sex with different men. But for me now I think that because women have no job to do and no money for doing business, then they start to do sex work. I don't think women like sex work or want other people to call them sex workers or prostitutes. These words are very bad in our society. I talked to sex workers in the parks or streets normally. I never discriminate against them due to their being sex workers. Sometimes I ate something with them in the parks. It doesn't matter to me. But I heard some police gossip about sex workers after they raped them or visited the brothel. Some women told me that police chased them from the park when they were f\*\*\*ing with clients or arrested them from the brothel. Some women said police raped them in the police station when they were arrested. I observed that some women were very afraid of police.

They ran away when they saw police in the parks. I knew and saw some police f\*\*\* the sex workers in the parks and in the brothel. I used to visit the brothel too. I think it is normal for men. As you know, many men in Cambodia have second wife or mistress beside their wives. I don't have a second wife but I went to see the sex workers when my wife was pregnant or I wanted to have sex when my wife was not at home. I used condoms. Sometimes I used two condoms at one time because I did not trust condoms or worried that the condom could be broken during f\*\*\*ing. Some policemen are very naughty and violent toward sex workers both inside and outside the brothel. But as you know I could not do anything when police did so. But I used to arrest some gangsters from the parks when they abused or robbed sex workers' money. (28 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, 2ND SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1997)

AMONG THOSE WHO FEEL THEY SHOULD BE PROTECTING SEX WORKERS FROM BEING RAPED AND ROBBED THERE IS A SENSE OF HELPLESSNESS DUE TO FEAR OF REVENGE FROM OTHER POLICE, ATTACKS FROM ARMED GANGSTERS, AND THE RAMPANT USE OF BRIBERY TO MANIPULATE THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. I don't think police take action in the case of sex workers. I think you know about police attitudes in Cambodia. Sex workers have no money to bribe police to take action on their cases and in general sex workers' cases fail or are ignored at court. For example, last month, three men raped a woman in the park. Police arrested those rapists and sent them to court for prosecution. Finally, the court dropped the case because there was not enough evidence. I don't think Cambodia has a place to examine the sperm inside women's vaginas as in developed countries. Bribing police for release of sex workers who were arrested during the raid is very common. Police always take advantage of sex workers. (44 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 6 CHILDREN, 1ST SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 2001)

I saw many gangsters and violent clients abusing sex workers in the parks. I stopped them and arrested them. But the problem was that those arrested were released by other police. Police have no money to support those criminals in the station for a longer time. If I sent them to the court, I did not have enough evidence to prosecute those criminals. Again, those gangsters came back to the parks and started abusing the sex workers. Now what I could do was to chase those gangsters and violent clients away from the park. I don't want to arrest them again. (37 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 3 CHILDREN, 1ST SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1993)

I saw many cases where gangsters who used drugs abused the sex workers in the parks and on the streets at nighttime. I ran to help when I knew that the violent men were civilians. In general, a few sex workers reported their cases to police and local authorities for help. Sometimes her case was at the court but the court official dropped or ignored it because they realized that sex workers had no money to bribe them for hearing the case. I helped a woman who was raped by 8 men in the park. I supported her case at court. The court prosecutor dismissed the case because there was not enough evidence to prove the case. I was so disappointed to see the injustice of the court system in Cambodia. It is not my responsibility to change this bad system but I feel sick to see it happening every day. That woman committed suicide afterwards. (32 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 1 CHILD, 2ND LIEUTENANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1991)

I saw a number of powerful men force a sex worker, rape or beat her when she refused sex without a condom. In general, women come to report their cases to police and local authorities. For example, last month a woman was raped by three men, one policeman, and two local commune authorities. The woman reported her case to another policeman for help. But finally her case was dropped, as the policeman she reported to was a friend of the rapists. I witnessed the case but I was afraid to intervene. You know this society. I have to think about my security and my job as well. (35 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, NO CHILDREN, 2ND LIEUTENANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1996)

For example, I arrested three gangsters from the parks. It was in Khmer New Years this year. They raped a pregnant woman in the park in front of Wat Botum. Those gangsters were very cruel and raped the woman without a condom. I heard that woman crying and I ran to help. I saw one man was f\*\*\*ing her on the ground and two other men holding her hands and legs. I chased them but one man tried to fight me back. I used my gun to point at him and ordered him to drop the knife. Two other men tried to escape and my colleagues chased and seized them. Those gangsters were using drugs. They told me during the interrogation that they used yama. They bought those drugs from a man who was selling it in the park. I confiscated about 8 tablets of yama. I released them after four days in detention. There are no services for them when they were so sick and I did not want them to die in my station. (36 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, 2ND SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1997)

In general, police could not solve all cases of the sex workers. I can say that only 3 percent of cases have been solved by police. You know that already, that when you were a policeman, police will take action on cases of the poor only after a long time has passed and sometimes they drop the case. But for cases of rich people, police will take action immediately, because police expect something in return from the case owner. I want to say that police need money to survive and they could earn extra money aside from their salary when people asked them to do something. I will do like that too when someone asks me to help. Corruption is everywhere. I think you know that. For example, last year, I was ordered to raid a brothel in Tuol Kork area. There were six policemen in the raid. Police arrested more than 10 sex workers from two brothels. Police sent them to detention in the police station. Those women were forced to bribe at least \$10 each for release. I was given \$15 and I had to take it, otherwise the money will be taken by another policeman. I did not want to take it or be part of it, but I had no choice. However, I must balance myself to the situation. I sympathized with those women but I did not know how to help them. I am really sorry to

see my colleagues abuse sex workers, but I could not arrest them. What I could do was close my eyes and walk away. I don't accuse police of doing criminal things but I don't know how to stop them. I have no power at all. (30 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, NO CHILDREN, 1ST SERGEANT, IN SINCE 1998)

#### MOST POLICE HAVE VERY SHY WIVES WITH WHOM THEY CANNOT DISCUSS SEX, HIV/STIS, CONDOMS, OR SEX WORKERS.

My wife never listened to me when I talked about sex, HIV, and condoms with her. She is very shy. I noticed that my wife now is reading some materials about HIV and STDs. I used condoms with my wife to prevent pregnancy. I think that having sex beside the wife is not safe. I could get HIV when I don't use condoms or my condom breaks during f\*\*\*ing. I always keep condoms in my pocket. Sometimes I can't control myself when I go out with my friends. I do not trust condoms given by sex workers. But I want to stop having sex with sex workers. (36 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, 2ND SERGEANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1997)

#### HIV TRAINING FOR POLICE HAS MADE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES WITH THEIR WIVES, AND IN SOME CASES, REDUCE THEIR OWN RELATIONS WITH SEX WORKERS.

I used to discuss about sex and HIV with my wife. She did not want me to talk about sex the first time. She was so shy. But now she seems improved and listens to my telling her

about sex and HIV. I used condoms when we did not want to have another child. Sometimes I used it when my wife had menstruation and I wanted sex with her. I have many children already. I don't have a sweetheart aside from my wife but it doesn't mean that I did not have sex outside. Sometimes I had sex outside but I used a condom every time. I don't want to have HIV and I have many children to feed and take care of. I know that what I have done with sex workers was very dangerous and I could have HIV if I do not use condoms or my condom breaks during sex. It is risky to me and I am willing to stop my outside sex. It is so dangerous to me if I continue f\*\*\*ing sex workers. (49 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 4 CHILDREN, 2ND LIEUTENANT, ON THE FORCE SINCE 1993)

I used to discuss about sex and HIV with my wife. My wife was very shy at first time. Our culture, women are not allowed to talk about sex. Although I am her husband, she is still so shy to discuss it with me. But now she seems improved and has started to talk about sex and HIV. I used condoms to prevent pregnancy. I use a condom every time I had sex with my sweetheart. I don't want to have HIV. My wife is innocent and I don't want her get HIV from me. No one will take care of my children when we die. AIDS can't be cured with present medicine. (32 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, 1 CHILD, 2ND LIEUTENANT, IN SINCE 2001)



Policemen in Phnom Penh have received a considerable amount of training on HIV/AIDS and this is reflected in their interviews. What is not reflected is any training in human rights or women's rights. It seems that many police take a righteous stand on condom use, as if it is acceptable for them to rape sex workers, as long as they use condoms. This misconception is fostered by intensive HIV training without any rights training. When discussing going to sex workers as clients, police narratives often reflect little distinction between coercive and consensual sex. Few men revealed the kind of abusive sexual actions the sex workers complained about, such as the non-consensual use of objects and fisting. Only one man out of 58 spoke very openly about his earlier abuse of sex workers and expressed regret that he had assaulted, raped, and robbed sex workers. While many police spoke of the widespread corruption among police and in the justice system with disgust or disappointment, only the one man who admitted to his prior abuse called for rights training.

As everywhere, the relationships between sex workers and police are complex. Wherever sex work is illegal, police become the real regulators of the conditions of the sex trade (Blankenship et al., 2002), although police often remain in control even where sex work is legal. If they are corrupt and free to abuse sex workers with impunity, they will. Where attempts have been made to monitor police abuse by the police departments themselves, some control seems possible. In New York City, where sex work remains illegal, a recent study shows that police harass sex workers but do not rape, beat, and rob them as in Cambodia (Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center, 2003). In Cambodia, sex workers frequently appear to be very disappointed that police are as abusive as gangsters, as they feel they should be able to look toward police for protection. Even when sex workers take police as boyfriends, they sometimes report abusive relationships. There is, nonetheless, evidence in this study that a

substantial number of police are ready to see their roles in a different light, if the environment were structured differently and they were more protected. Turning another policeman in for rape can only occur where such safeguards are set up. The corrupt justice system is yet another major problem that discourages police from prosecuting anyone, even drug-taking gangsters. Under these conditions, a police force is little more than an ineffectual public guard or a state-sponsored group of gangsters.

Gangsters were not well covered in this study. The two gangsters who were interviewed (one 21 years old and the other 26) were both poor and 5th grade dropouts. They were, however, frank about how much they abused sex workers. They also made it clear that police were as likely to rob people as were they but manipulated the situation to make it seem as if the gangster was fully responsible. Both gangsters were fairly well educated about HIV. The second fellow, however (see below), seemed to think he was already infected with HIV.

People called me a lazy and crazy boy. Police arrested me many times. Police are bad boys too. They forced me to abuse sex workers when sex workers did not give them free sex or money. For example, I got 3,000 riel from the sex worker, and police took 2,000 riel from me. Most police did like this. I hate police. I used to fight with police in the park. I fought with police many times last year. Last week, a policeman arrested me from the park in front of Wat Botum and beat me up because he saw me stealing a wallet from a woman in the park. There was some money and cards in the wallet. Police took all the money and returned the wallet to the owner. Police beat me up in front of the wallet owner and freed me. (GANGSTER INTERVIEWEE #1)

I have f\*\*\*ed many sex workers in the parks at night. Sometimes I used condoms and sometimes I did not use condoms when I did not have a condom to use. I never used condoms for f\*\*\*ing through the anus. I f\*\*\*ed both male (srey sraos) and female sex workers. I think I have HIV. You can see my skin disease. I have this skin problem since last year. I get fever at least three times a month. I never took any medicine. I did not have money to buy medicine. I drank wine to cure my fever. I will go stealing when I am hungry. No one helps me to find a job. (GANGSTER INTERVIEWEE #2)

## PART 4. AVOIDING ROBBERY, BEATINGS, AND RAPE

Several sex workers told of ways by which they were able to avoid being robbed. Some hid their money in a small pocket in their panties, whereas another spoke of running away from men and hiding the money before the men could catch up with her (after being raped by them, she was able to retrieve her money). Some sex workers have started to work in teams for protection—a common strategy used by street sex workers in many countries. Among brothel workers, some stated they never left the brothel with clients anymore and implied the frequency of abuse was lessened that way.

### WORKING IN TEAMS

Since I had several rape cases, I never went out of the park to sex with clients. I knew that every time I went out alone, clients took advantage of me and they raped me. But now I work as a team. I have friends who are sex workers in the parks and we help each other in case there is a violent client. I mean that when I get a client and am sexing in the park, another woman is watching me from a distance in order to help or ask for help from police. Two of my friends had problems with clients and I reported to police in the park for help quickly. However, doing this technique can lose our income and time but it helped my friends and me very much. But I had to bribe the police as well. *FILE No. 0340361, 6 MAY 2004*

Performance anxiety seems high among many men and they fear they will not maintain erections with condoms on. Some become violent as a result. Some experienced sex workers described ways of calming over-excited men and convincing them to use condoms nonetheless. This strategy is most likely to work with a single man. In gang rapes, sometimes a woman can bargain with the men to let her go, but usually she is overwhelmed by their numbers and weapons. One woman, however, described being able to fight her attackers off.

After these data were first analyzed, a meeting was held with about 60 sex workers (females and srey sraos, brothel/mobile and freelance). They were asked to split into small working groups and come up with methods to avoid or at least minimize the harm of rape and other abuse from clients, gangsters, and police. These included some tactics that seem sensible and others that seem doubtful, but all were dependent upon the specific situation at hand. Repeatedly, however, women and srey sraos claimed that, at times, they were able to reason with at least one person in a gang, or the motodup driver taking them to a gang rape scene, and that by doing so, they reduced the number

### FIGHTING THEM OFF

Recently, in January this year, I fought with three gangsters in the park. Gangsters stopped and threatened me. They wanted my money and free sex. I refused and walked away. One gangster held my hand and tried to pull me down on the ground. I tried to get free from them and kicked them. I kicked one gangster in his genital area. He fell down on the ground. Another gangster tried to slap me on my face with his hand. I bowed down and kicked his genital area too. Two gangsters were lying on the ground full of pain. Another gangster beat me from the back. It hit me below my neck and I knelt down on the ground. He jumped to rape me. He tried to undress me and slapped me several times on my face. I did not cry for help because I knew that I could defeat him easily. I fought him until he ran away. During the fighting, I lost all my money and a golden earring. A policeman ran to help me when the gangsters ran away. The policeman laughed at me when he saw me fighting with those gangsters. I was tired at the end but I was happy because I could defeat all those bad gangsters.

One week later, I met them again in another park. There were five gangsters at that time that wanted to abuse me. I was afraid that those gangsters might have a knife or weapon to overcome me. So I ran to a policeman who was standing in the park for help. The policeman agreed to help me. Those gangsters walked away without touching me. But I had to give free sex to the policeman for his help. He used a condom. That policeman now has become my sweetheart. I love him too. For me now I don't have a serious problem since my sweetheart is a policeman in the park. He would know when and where the gangsters are. *FILE No. 1251203, 12 MAY 2004*

of men raping them. Tactics suggested by respondents for avoiding or escaping violence included the following:

### **TACTICS SUGGESTED BY RESPONDENTS FOR AVOIDING OR ESCAPING VIOLENCE INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:**

- Try to please the client.
- Know how to comfort the clients.
- Claim you have a stomachache or headache (with gangsters).
- Maintain telephone contact with each other.
- Ask (reason with) the clients clearly.
- Find some excuses to make the clients agree to use condoms.
- Find a safe place.
- Pretend to want to take a bath or go and get a condom, and then run away.
- Jump off the car or motorbike.
- When taken by clients, try to lock the motorbike sneakily (furtively) and run away.
- Jump off the motorbike (when clients drive slowly).
- Carry a small knife to stab the clients in order to stop the motorbike.
- When other women are taken by clients, record the license number of the motorbike.
- When many gangsters take us, tell them we are HIV positive (especially srey sraos).
- Pull the men's shirts or choke their necks.
- Carry hair spray along to spray bad client's eyes.
- When they are ready for gang rape, say you have to urinate, and run.
- Swallow the medicine that causes diarrhea to cause loss of control of your bowels and disgust the rapists (stinky smell)
- Know how to help each other.
- Look at the clients before going with them.
- Tell the clients we are HIV positive.
- Switch on the telephone.
- Know how to struggle against the men (clients) [when sex workers have no alternative].
- Be brave.
- Know how to try to please the gangsters or police.

### **THE SEXUAL TECHNIQUE APPROACH**

For example, last year I encountered a case of violence from a man. He was about 35 years old. He promised to pay me \$10 for overnight sex with him at the hotel. He forced me to sex without a condom and tried to put me down on the bed and rape me. I refused and he beat me up with his hand. I did not cry and tried to explain in the room. I did not want to lose my money since I agreed to come to the hotel. I knew that the man would abuse me harder when I opposed him. The way I could overcome him was to be nice and persuade him again and again. I said to him that HIV/AIDS could kill him. I was a sex worker and I had slept with many men. I did not know yet if I had HIV/AIDS or STDs. Another thing was that I was afraid of having pregnancy and I was not able to feed the children. When I died, no one would look after my children. I could make him happy with a condom with my different types of techniques. I asked him to take a shower and lay down on the bed. I kissed him and sucked his penis. I did not suck the cock but I licked around his genital area. When his penis stood up I put the condom on and rode on top of him. He was so happy and had sex three times with me with condoms. He paid me more and we were happy through the night. I got \$15 that night from him. So I think that it is depending on the skill of women to make men calm down. Women should be friendly and patient to the clients. I know that sometimes my patience was limited but I tried because I did not want men to abuse me in the guesthouse or hotel room. *FILE NO. 0161322, 4 MAY 2004*

- Pretend you are menstruating or HIV positive.
- Pretend to call friends.
- Pretend to see your relative.
- Call "thief" aloud.
- Tell a lie that you must go have something to eat or to go to the bathroom.
- Pretend to fall down when you see the police.
- Pretend to be sick and get off the motorbike to buy medicine.
- Report to police.
- Ask to go wash up, or run and hide.
- Hire a moto-dup man to help.
- Ask to urinate and hide oneself under bed to escape.

Further work needs to be done on these issues, but a collection of actual cases of success would make a good start.

# DISCUSSION

While the Cambodian constitution of 1993 recognizes the theoretical rights of the individual and the equality of all citizens, these premises have little organic relationship to traditional Khmer values. The imperative to preserve social “face” (the reputation of family and community) stand in stark juxtaposition to individual rights. Patron–client relationships, once the most widespread structure of social interaction, remain strong, though transformed in an era of market economy-driven wealth accumulation. Great disparities in the social value of men, women, and children permit involuntary trafficking of women and children, despite a constitutional prohibition against it. Violence, including sexual violence, with the common use of weapons, is widely observed in fear and silence although it is fully prohibited by law (Watchirs and Ward, 2003). Sexual violence perpetrated by police represents a very serious human rights abuse wherever it takes place, and in Cambodia, its frequency is extremely high. Numerous agencies have documented in a qualitative manner how common these abuses are, but this is the first study to use a probability sample to obtain an actual estimate of its frequency among sex workers. Police are implicated, not only as perpetrators, but also as barriers to the pursuit of basic rights to the criminal justice system whenever a woman is raped.

## **POLICE, GANGSTERS, AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

The in-depth interviews with sex workers and police do not contradict each other at all. Police readily tell stories of the countless rapes they have witnessed and, in a few cases, admit to participating in. Many policemen express fear of

both gangsters and their fellow policemen. As a way to diminish their fear of gangsters, some police develop relationships with gangs in their areas and rob and rape sex workers together. Both sex workers and police state that the justice system does not work because bribes determine whether a case is taken, followed-up, or ignored, and also contribute to the ready dismissal of cases against any clients or gangsters brought to the police station. Bribery plays a major role in diminishing the possible recourse to justice that sex workers should have. Police themselves can rape, rob, and assault sex workers with impunity. The murder of sex workers by their torturers (including the police and military) has occurred on several known occasions, and possibly in many other occasions that have never been exposed.

A recent report by LICADHO (2006) confirms the same findings, including corruption among the police, in the courts, lack of a national policy on rape, poor performance of judges, and the cultural belief that “bad” women deserve what they get. Inasmuch as any raped woman is then considered “bad”, rape becomes a means by which additional women are recruited into the sex trade.

## **DRUG USE BY GANGSTERS**

The in-depth interviews also clearly explain the role of drugs, particularly yama, in gang rapes. Aggressive and in groups, these men often cannot maintain erections due to the drug and to alcohol. Anger and embarrassment are taken out violently on the women. While condoms are used, maybe about half the time, many very rough sexual acts are unprotected. These men risk getting HIV not only from the women but also from each other, as the vagina (or anus) holds the semen of all previous men. The

women are at very high risk of acquiring HIV due to the extreme roughness and subsequent bleeding, which also adds to the men's risk of acquiring HIV. The causal connection between rape and both HIV and STIs has been demonstrated in several countries (Donovan, 2002; Kalichman and Simbayi, 2004; Smith, 2003).

## **GENDER, MASCULINITY, AND SEXUALITY**

The social construction of masculine sexuality as performance, penetration, and conquest paves the way for sexual coercion as an erotic style.

This eroticism is premised on proving masculinity and is fostered by peer pressure, as well described in numerous studies of men in Cambodia (Greenwood, 2000a; Nelson, 2002; Ramage, 2002; Tarr and Aggleton, 1999). Even the members of the justice system do not seem to comprehend the difference between consensual and non-consensual sex, despite the fact that rape is clearly defined by Cambodian criminal law as any forced act of penetration or attempt at penetration (LICADHO, 2004).

While many young men are participants, particularly as gang members, this study makes it clear that there are also many older men involved. Unfortunately, the ages of rapists were not recorded, so we cannot estimate the proportion of younger vs. elder. The stories from police, however, show that many men, including those older than their mid-20s, considered the right to force a sex worker into sex (either alone or in groups) their entitlement as policemen. Therefore, while gang members may be among the younger cohort that frequently rape sex workers, the police who rape certainly include those who are older than their mid-20s.

Peer approval has been shown experimentally to increase the likelihood of forced sex (Mitchell et al., 2002). As in PNG line-ups, joining in on a bauk may be an important way to prove one is suitable for membership in the gang—a kind of initiation. When police rape, the situation may be somewhat different, although this is not

exactly clear. It can be assumed that the majority of police in most countries are not rapists. There is little research on this but, in PNG, one study showed that 10 percent of the police in Port Moresby had gang-raped sex workers (an average of 4 men) in the previous week (Jenkins, 2000). Without a quantitative survey among police in Phnom Penh, the proportion that ever raped a sex worker or did so within the past month or year, remains unknown.

It is noteworthy that the transgender sex workers (srey sraos) are beaten and robbed by police and robbed by clients less often than female freelancers, although there is no significant difference in the occurrence of rape. Violence from clients and gangsters does not differ significantly by gender. When raped, srey sraos seek help from NGOs significantly more often than the female sex workers (although it does not seem, from their testimonies, that they receive any real legal aid). At the session to discuss ways to avoid being raped, they exhibited a great deal more willingness to be actively defensive than the female sex workers.

Men's use of weapons facilitates rape, and Cambodian women have been the victims of the widespread possession of weapons for several decades (Meddings and O'Conner, 1999; Broadhurst, 2002). It is reported that in the mid-90s, in one study, 75 percent of women experienced domestic violence, mainly at the hands of men who kept the small arms they had used during the war (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002).

In addition, the psychosocial impact of the stark brutality of the Pol Pot years cannot be underestimated. Many of the sex workers and police interviewed lived through some of those years, lost many or all family members, and saw or were forced to participate in atrocities.

Without doubt, all the others have repeatedly heard first-hand stories of those years. Although rape of sex workers, as well as brutality and murder, occur in other countries as well (Church et al., 2001; Kinnell, 2002; Pyett and Warr, 1997; Valera et al., 2001; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 1993, 1995; Ward et al., 1999), Cambodia's profile seems extreme.<sup>5</sup> Without a

5. By comparison, in Bangladesh in 2000, probability samples of sex workers showed the following: national sample of brothel sex workers: 7% raped by police and 18% raped by gangsters; street sex workers (Dhaka): 60% raped by police, and 51% raped by gangsters; transgenders (Dhaka): 48% raped by police and 59% raped by gangsters (Government of Bangladesh, 2000).



rule of law, or a widely held sense of what constitutes human rights, women in general, and sex workers in particular, are seen as fair game, all of which is fostered by the background level of current and historical violence.

## **DRUG USE BY SEX WORKERS**

A significant proportion of sex workers in Cambodia and elsewhere have problems with drug use (Deren et al., 1997; El-Bassel et al., 2001; Hansen et al., 2002). In this study, brothel sex workers were more often using drugs (including injecting drugs at last gang rape) than the others. Being alert to the probability of violence, as well as reacting in a protective way, is likely to be seriously compromised if too much alcohol or other drugs are taken. A social development project for sex workers in Rio de Janeiro showed conclusively that working to improve the social cohesion and sense of social inclusion among street-based sex workers was successful at improving consistent condom use, through the mediation of several factors, one of which was improving the sex worker's control over alcohol and drug use. Simultaneously, after 18 months of the intervention, the number of violent events in the past three months due to refusal to have sex without a condom was significantly reduced (Telles, 2002).

Early physical and sexual abuse have been shown to be associated with intimate partner violence among sex workers elsewhere (El-Bassel et al., 2001). While few studies have specifically shown what could reduce the incidence of violence among personal partners or sweethearts of sex workers, it is likely that similar factors are in operation as found among non-sex-worker women. The scope of violence against women is global and sex workers represent one of the more extremely affected subgroups (Watts and Zimmerman, 2002).

## **POLICY ISSUES**

### **AVOIDING RAPE AND VIOLENCE**

Effective rape avoidance was also examined in this study, and several successful events were described. In the 1980s in the United States, researchers found what many did not believe—that ordinary women could fight back when being raped, and when they did, they more often got away than those who were passive. Prior to those studies, police told women not to fight back, as they would get hurt. But continued investigations showed that the more strategies the woman used, the more likely she was to escape with minimal injuries (Groves, 1995). Many of the successful strategies reported by non-sex-worker women are the same as those reported by Cambodian sex workers.

In the sex industry, several different approaches have been used to reduce rape or abusive sex from violent clients. The famous Ugly Mug Lists that were circulated among street-based sex workers in Australia, Britain, and elsewhere were conceived as a service to alert workers to known abusive clients. Working in pairs or teams is widely used as a means of protection. In Namibia, street-based sex workers often work with their boyfriends, who write down the license plate number of the car that she gets into. If she does not reappear in a reasonable amount of time, the boyfriend can call the police to try to locate the car. In properly run brothels, whether legal or not, investments in security can provide bouncers who are rapidly accessible and can be called to remove a violent client. Although projects aimed at reducing rape among sex workers by police are rare, one conducted in PNG and funded by UNAIDS reported success at reducing gang rape by about 50 percent through intensive targeted programs for policemen, their wives, and policewomen (Anang and Jenkins, 1997; Jenkins, 2000).

### **RIGHTS-BASED HIV PREVENTION VS. REGULATORY APPROACHES**

This study reveals that women working in and from brothels are significantly more often raped than those working in the freelance trade, although both levels are very high. The percent of freelance sex workers raped by anyone last



year was 85.3 (95% CI, 79.8–90.3), whereas the percent of brothel women raped by anyone in the past year was 96.0 (95% CI, 93.1–98.6). The 100% Condom Program (which has been mainly focused on brothels) and other HIV prevention interventions with police and sex workers may have succeeded in raising condom use, but at an unacceptable cost. Both sex workers and police in our interviews make the use of condoms during rape a priority for attention. Policemen appear positively righteous about condom use when they state, repeatedly, that gangsters do not use condoms when they rape, whereas police do (except, some add, when drunk). Using condoms that have sand glued to them, “tiger’s mustache” or “fur” condoms with external objects attached, or any of the many “special condoms” available in Cambodia appears to count as condom use, as they protect the male (or inserter) but do severe damage to the female (or anyone who is on the receptive end). Even some of the women appear to consider rape without condoms somehow much worse than rape with condoms.

This study demonstrates that the prevalence of rape without condoms of sex workers in Cambodia is extensive enough to maintain some level of HIV transmission. Yet, it is shocking that United Nations agencies, government AIDS departments, and some NGOs involved in HIV prevention work with these groups are willing to accept the observed reduction in HIV prevalence as adequate evidence of success, when it is well-known that they have had no impact on the practice of rape. In fact, according to the UNAIDS/WHO review of the 100% Condom Program (O’Reilly et al., 2003), by engaging police and brothel owners, violence inside the brothel may have been reduced, but no effect

was noted outside the brothel. The review noted that condoms were not well monitored by program implementers and sex workers claimed that men brought condoms that produced pain. The review recommended the following: “Development of a code of conduct on behaviour and practices of program implementers is urgently required which will include the issues of respect and confidentiality... There should be a system with requisite tools to monitor ethical aspects of the program implementation. All institutions/organizations engaged in prevention, care, or similar other activities, irrespective of their involvement in testing and counseling, should come under the purview of ethical screening. Constituting a high-level national ethical committee with branches at the provincial level could be a solution.” Unless such oversight is in place and programs for men directly address the issues around rape and non-consensual sex, there is the danger that such interventions can foster impunity and a sense of entitlement with regard to rape—as long as it is done with condoms of any sort (Loff et al., 2003).<sup>6</sup>

Approaches to HIV prevention among sex workers that reduce their risk of being raped are far more likely to enable sex workers to sustain safety over time and in a wider variety of circumstances, even where sex work is illegal and government is involved. Evidence from numerous studies supports this view (Basu et al., 2004; Kerrigan et al., 2004). This study makes it clear that while Cambodia’s “successful” HIV programs have been able to help sex workers demand condom use, they still cannot demand their legal rights as citizens.

6. It is of interest to note that the 100% Condom Use Program, when it was in effect in Thailand, did not appear to lead to greater police harassment of sex workers. In fact, even today, although police demand bribes from sex workers for protection, rape is rarely reported.

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# APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRES & INTERVIEW GUIDES



# FREELANCE SEX WORKER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Interviewer no. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Srey \_\_\_\_\_ Srey sraos \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many sex workers (srey or sreysras) in Phnom Penh do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you know each other's name? \_\_\_\_\_  
Size of network \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is the person asked you to come to interview your  
 close friend     normal friend  
 just know each other  
 never know each other
7. Finished study at grade \_\_\_\_\_
8. Duration of doing sex work \_\_\_\_\_ years  
\_\_\_\_\_ months (if less than a year)
9. Are you now without a residence, sleeping in the parks or streets? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Stay in Phnom Penh since when? \_\_\_\_\_ years  
\_\_\_\_\_ months (if less than a year)
11. In the past six months, where did you find most of your clients?  
 in the parks; along the street  
 karaoke/night clubs/restaurants  
 at the railway stations/car stations  
 massage/hair or dress shops  
 entertainment places     hotels
12. How much money did you earn last week? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you have other sources of income?  
 Yes     No
14. How many people are living on your income? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Has the staff of NGOs come to visit you and talk about AIDS?     Yes     No
16. Have you ever seen policemen threaten the NGO staff who come to visit?     Yes     No
17. Last year, how many times did you encounter the following experiences? (If none, put 0.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Policemen beat you  
\_\_\_\_\_ Policemen demand money  
\_\_\_\_\_ Gangsters beat you  
\_\_\_\_\_ Gangsters take money  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clients beat (or cut or burn) you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clients took money  
\_\_\_\_\_ One policeman rape  
\_\_\_\_\_ A group of policemen rape  
\_\_\_\_\_ One gangster rapes  
\_\_\_\_\_ A group of gangsters rape  
\_\_\_\_\_ One client rapes  
\_\_\_\_\_ A group of clients rapes
18. The last time you were gang-raped, how many men were there? \_\_\_\_\_
19. How many of them used  
\_\_\_\_\_ a condom?  
\_\_\_\_\_ plastic bags?  
\_\_\_\_\_ nothing
20. Was the rape through the anus?     Yes     No  
mouth?     Yes     No  
vagina (of women)?     Yes     No
21. Was there bleeding?     Yes     No
22. Were you pushed down or tied up?     Yes     No
23. Did someone use something to threaten you?  
 Yes     No  
If yes, was that a gun?     Yes     No  
knife?     Yes     No  
stick?     Yes     No
24. At that time, were you using drugs?  
 Yes     No
25. Had you been drinking alcohol?     Yes     No
26. Had any of those men used drugs?     Yes     No  
alcohol?     Yes     No
27. Did anyone try to stop them?     Yes     No  
Who was that? \_\_\_\_\_
28. Afterward, did someone help you?     Yes     No  
Who was that? \_\_\_\_\_
29. Have you tried to report this matter to  
policemen?     Yes     No  
NGOs?     Yes     No  
local authorities?     Yes     No  
others?     Yes     No
30. Do you believe that this violence makes you more vulnerable to the transmission of HIV?  
 Yes     No     Don't know

# BROTHEL-BASED SEX WORKER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Interviewer no. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Srey \_\_\_\_\_ Katoey \_\_\_\_\_
  5. How many sex workers do you know in Phnom Penh? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you knowing them by name? \_\_\_\_\_  
size of network \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Is the person who asked you to come to this interview
    - a close friend?
    - a normal friend?
    - someone you just know?
    - someone you don't know at all?
  7. Have you finished grade school? \_\_\_\_\_
  8. How long have you done sex work? \_\_\_\_\_ years  
\_\_\_\_\_ months (if less than a year)
  9. How long have you stayed in Phnom Penh?  
\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months (if less than a year)
  10. Do you stay in the brothel, where you work?  
 Yes  No
  11. How much money did you earn yesterday? \_\_\_\_\_
  12. Do you have other sources of income?  
 Yes  No
  13. How many people are living on your income? \_\_\_\_\_
  14. Does NGO staff come to visit you to talk about AIDS?  Yes  No
  15. Have you ever seen policemen threaten the NGO staff who come to visit?  Yes  No
  16. Do you have a Sangsa (sweetheart)?  
 Yes  No
  17. Does your Sangsa use
    - yama?  Yes  No
    - heroin?  Yes  No
    - ganja?  Yes  No
    - inject drugs?  Yes  No
    - sniff glue very often?  Yes  No
  18. During the last week, did you use condom with your Sangsa?  
 Always use  Sometimes use  Never use
  19. Last year, how many times did your Sangsa  
Σ beat you? \_\_\_\_\_ rape you? \_\_\_\_\_
  20. The last time your Sangsa raped you, did he use condom?  Yes  No
- During the past year, how many times did you encounter the following experiences?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Policemen beat you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Policemen demanded money from you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Gangster beat you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Gangster took money from you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Clients beat you (or cut or burned you)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Clients took money from you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ One policeman raped you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Group of policemen raped you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ One gangster raped you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Group of gangsters raped you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ One client raped you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Group of clients raped you
21. The last time you were raped in a group, were you inside or outside the brothel?  
 Inside  Outside  
How many men were there? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many times did they rape you? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Of these [insert response above] times, how many times did they use a condom? \_\_\_\_\_
23. Was the rape through the  
vagina?  Yes  No  
anus?  Yes  No  
mouth?  Yes  No
24. Was there bleeding?  Yes  No
25. Were you pushed down or tied up?  
 Yes  No
26. Did someone use something to threaten you?  
 Yes  No
27. If yes, was it a gun?  Yes  No  
knife?  Yes  No  
piece of wood?  Yes  No
28. At that time were you:  
using yama?  Yes  No  
smoking ganja?  Yes  No  
drinking alcohol?  Yes  No  
sniffing glue?  Yes  No  
injecting drugs?  Yes  No
29. Were any of the men using drugs?  
 Yes  No  Don't know
30. Had you been drinking alcohol?  
 Yes  No  Don't know
31. Did anyone try to stop them?  
 Yes  No Who was that? \_\_\_\_\_
32. Afterward, did you ask anyone for help?  
 Yes  No Who was that? \_\_\_\_\_
33. Have you tried to report this matter to  
policemen?  Yes  No  
NGOs?  Yes  No  
local authorities?  Yes  No  
others?  Yes  No
34. Do you believe this violence makes you more  
vulnerable to the transmission of HIV?  
 Yes  No  Don't know

# SEX WORKER INTERVIEW GUIDE (QUALITATIVE)

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. We are all working for the POLICY Project and plan to use the information to improve the safety of sex workers in Cambodia. Please do not worry about giving this information, because this interview is strictly confidential. No names or addresses will be written down, and the tapes will be destroyed after they are translated, so no one can ever find them and possibly recognize your voice. All tapes will be locked up until that time. This study will not cooperate with any possible future prosecution. You can refuse to answer any question if you want or even stop the interview. We hope you will be as truthful with us as possible. Is it all right for me to begin?

Very briefly, we would like to know something about your background.  
[Complete the first 6 sections in 15–20 minutes or less.]



1. Background: What is your home district?  
Family relations, education.



2. Married? Explain. Children? Live where?



3. Housing: Living situation, how long there?



4. How started sex work?



5. Current sex work: How long in Phnom Penh?  
Where and how gets customers?  
Money made? Good week vs. bad week?  
Last week?



6. Have you experienced violence from police or other men? How many times altogether in your life? In the past year?



7. Can you describe the most serious time this happened?  
Where were you working?  
Number of men (police? clients? gangsters?)  
Beating? Rape? Money stolen?  
If rape, how did it happen? Were weapons used?  
How many men? What kind of intercourse? Bloody?  
Drugs? Were condoms used at all?  
Did anyone try to stop the men? Who? How?  
Did you find someone to help you afterward? Who? Explain.



8. Many sex workers say that the constant harassment and violence from police and other men reduces their ability to practice safer sex to avoid HIV and other STDs (for example, their ability to use condoms). Can you explain if/how that happens with examples from your own life?



For sex workers who say they have NOT experienced violence, ask how they avoid this or how they protect themselves.

# POLICEMEN INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. I am working for the POLICY Project. Our aim is to improve the situation in Cambodia to help people avoid getting HIV/AIDS. The information you give me is strictly confidential. No names or addresses will be written down and the tapes will be destroyed after they are translated, so no one can ever find them and possibly recognize your voice. All tapes will be locked up until that time. This study will not cooperate with any possible future prosecution. You can refuse to answer any question if you want or even stop the interview. We hope you are willing to be truthful with us so that we can improve the situation for the police themselves and everyone they deal with. Is it all right for me to begin?

1. Background: Age, education, married or single, children?
2. Work: How long in police department, rank, usual work; monthly pay?
3. What do you do when you are off-duty? Do you have a sweetheart?
4. Have you been trained about HIV and AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)? Was this through the police department?
5. When policemen encounter sex workers, what usually happens?  
  
(probe for slang terms used to refer to sex workers of different kinds, to the actions taken against sex workers [e.g., extortion of money]; find out if the sex worker is female or katoey)
6. Have you seen policemen force sex workers to have sex? What happened?  
  
(probe for terms; use of weapons and other forms of force; beatings; money taken; blood, types of sex, condoms or plastic used, etc.)
7. Can you describe a time when you too were involved?
8. What happened to the sex worker afterward?
9. Have you seen other men also force these sex workers to have sex without paying them? Describe.
10. What happens if sex workers try to complain about this treatment?
11. Do you ever discuss HIV/AIDS with your wife or sweetheart?
12. Do you use condoms with your wife? With your sweetheart? Why or why not?
13. Have you ever had an STD? What were the symptoms? What did you do?
14. Do you think you are at-risk for getting HIV? Why or why not?



