



SAFE WORKPLACES, SAFE COMMUNITIES:
CARE's work with marginalised women in Cambodia
to reduce gender-based violence



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CARE would like to thank the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and the Australian Government for their support of the organisation's work to end violence against women. Their funds have helped women gain skills to stand up to harassment, encouraged businesses to take action to protect their workers, and raised awareness of women's right to live free from all forms of violence and discrimination.

CARE would also like to thank the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, along with their line departments and other local authorities, for their collaboration in support of this program.

The creation of this multi-sector report was made possible through the generous support of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.

Information for this report was compiled by Jenny Conrad & Virorth Duong with the support of the CARE Cambodia team.



Addressing gender-based violence is one of CARE’s key priorities in Cambodia as part of its focus on working with women and girls to bring sustainable changes to their communities. CARE’s activities have continued to expand and have positively impacted the lives of thousands of women.

Violence against women in Cambodia, both domestic and in the workplace, is commonplace. Tolerance of this is still unacceptably high, with 80 per cent of both men and women reportedly failing to respond when they hear of cases of abuse.¹ Since 2003 CARE has been working to address gender-based violence and has spent many years working with beer promoters, women who are highly vulnerable to sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Successes in the beer promotion industry have included reducing harassment, improving women’s confidence in their abilities, and contributing to improved occupational health and safety by supporting the creation of industry standards.

CARE is expanding the scope of this work to include other vulnerable groups including entertainment workers and garment factory workers, as well as engaging with the communities in which women live. Improving the situation for women in Cambodia is complex and involves many layers—empowering women to protect themselves, changing attitudes in their communities, and engaging with government or private sector partners to advocate for improved policies and procedures which protect women.

CARE’s efforts focus on two main projects: *Safe Workplaces, Safe Communities*, funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and *Protections for Marginalised Urban Women*, which is funded by the Australian government. *Safe Workplaces, Safe Communities* aims to reduce GBV and sexual harassment in Cambodian workplaces and communities and provides a wide reach across many industries in Phnom Penh. CARE’s *Protections for Marginalised Urban Women* complements this by undertaking additional research and analysis as well as engaging with key stakeholders to improve the protections available to women.



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“CARE’s long history working to address gender-based violence in Cambodia has resulted in many successes and we have learned a lot along the way. We realise that changing behaviours takes time and requires involvement from actors at many levels—from women themselves right up to decision makers in government. Our successes have resulted from collaboration and commitment from our ministry and private sector partners. This is why CARE works across a whole spectrum of different sectors to bring about significant change that will continue to improve women’s safety for years to come.”

Stav Zotalis, CARE Cambodia Country Director

¹ MoWA: *Follow Up Survey, Violence Against Women*. Phnom Penh, (2009).

PROGRAM DETAILS

CARE aims to reduce gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in Cambodian workplaces and communities.

To support this CARE aims to ensure marginalised urban women are benefitting from improved protections from gender-based violence both in the workplace and at community level.

CARE takes a multi-sector approach to addressing gender-based violence in Cambodia. CARE's work includes:

- Engaging with **women**
- Engaging with **community members**
- Engaging with the **private sector**
- Engaging with **communes**
- Engaging with **government ministries**

CARE works in six communes in Phnom Penh, focusing on areas that have large populations of women that have migrated and women that are working as garment factory workers or in the tourism and hospitality sectors. In two of these communes CARE takes an in-depth approach to do further research and pilot new models.

“CARE is a long-term partner working on ending violence against women. This work in both workplaces and communities where women are particularly vulnerable will help to promote better working conditions and living situations for women. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is happy to cooperate with CARE to achieve these common goals.”

H.E. Ing Kuntha Phavy, Minister for Women's Affairs

Key facts & stats

- **227 peer leaders** from hospitality, entertainment and garment industries trained on gender, sexual harassment and related workplace laws.
- **57 factory managers** talking about sexual harassment policies with CARE through the SAFE working group, with more joining training and having in-depth discussions about the application of improved policies.
- **210 hospitality and entertainment outlet owners** reducing harassment through the Non-Violent Workplace Initiative (NVWI).
- **Students from 6 high schools and 6 universities** engaged in campaigns to change attitudes and behaviours towards women.
- **Police and local authorities from 6 communes** engaged in improving their response to gender-based violence
- **3 government ministries** actively collaborating with CARE to protect women from gender-based violence and improve how they respond to it.
- **3 major international events** celebrated: International Labor Day; International Women's Day; and the 16 Days Campaign to End Violence Against Women.



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Project activities

- **Training women** who work promoting beer, serving in restaurants and acting as hostesses in karaoke bars so they know their rights and have the confidence to protect themselves from harassment at work
- **Raising awareness** about gender-based violence among workers in garment factories
- Supporting the **Solidarity Association of Beer Promoters in Cambodia (SABC)** to have their voice heard by policymakers
- Conducting **media campaigns** to change attitudes about gender-based violence
- **Engaging with youth** in schools and universities to change perceptions about women
- Supporting **private sector partners** such as industry associations, business owners and HR managers to develop comprehensive sexual harassment policies and reporting mechanisms
- **Training frontline police** in appropriate gender-based violence and sexual harassment responses
- Supporting commune councils to develop and implement **standard operating procedures** for recording and referring cases of gender-based violence
- Providing **technical support** to the Ministry of Women's Affairs
- Coordinating opportunities for **interactions** between ministries, police, local authorities and the private sector

Key achievements

During 2014, CARE has seen a number of achievements both in terms of the number of people reached by its work and progress at policy level.

Reach

- Over 6,000 female workers gained increased knowledge of sexual harassment and gender-based violence
- Over 3,000 female workers actively engaged in peer support networks
- Over 50% increase in signatories to the Non-Violent Workplace Initiative
- Around 2,000 customers in beer gardens reached with messages about female workers' rights
- Over 4,000 students reached via school and university campaigns
- Over 11,000 community members reached via social media

Policy & guideline progress

- Standard sexual harassment guidelines for garment factories finalised by the SAFE working group
- Endorsement of sub-decree 194 which includes an article stating that no individual can commit violence or sexual assault on entertainment workers
- Approval of the 2nd National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women which includes CARE inputs such as recognising beer promoters as formal workers and expanding awareness of violence towards women beyond the domestic situation to the workplace and community



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BACKGROUND

In Cambodia, the prevalence of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in workplaces and communities remains high. Studies have shown alarmingly high rates of harassment in the workplace for women working in the garment factory sector and as beer promoters; CARE's recent baseline study indicated that women working in hospitality, entertainment, and garment industries perceive a regular and daily risk for sexual harassment in and around the workplace. Women workers both experience and fear all types of sexual harassment, including verbal, physical, coercion and showing sexually suggestive materials. Perpetrators are usually men, in particular those perceived as being in positions of power.²

Gender-based violence in Cambodia takes place in the context of deeply entrenched cultural norms that disadvantage women and girls. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has identified that there is no one single cause of gender-based violence in Cambodia; it is rooted in social and cultural attitudes and norms that privilege men over women and boys over girls. Traditional attitudes that treat women and children as having lesser status and rights than men — which prize women's chastity, obedience and respects for their husbands and punish women who appear to be more sexually open — reinforce and support violence against women. Socially, the higher levels of violence against women in Cambodia tend to be correlated with high levels of general violence and with significant gender inequality. Following three decades of civil war, violence has been normalised as a way to dealing with and resolving any conflicts.³



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The garment factory and hospitality industries, which make a significant contribution to the country's economic growth, attract large numbers of the labour force particularly from rural areas. These are often young rural female migrant workers, who generally have low levels of literacy, limited job opportunities, and may end up living and working in unsafe conditions. They are at high risk of exploitation by others because they have limited access to information and forms of protection.

Lack of a clear definition of sexual harassment, lack of understanding of the law and low law enforcement perpetuates sexual harassment and gender-based violence both in workplaces and communities. CARE's legal analysis of sexual harassment in Cambodia identified that almost all relevant Cambodian laws on violence and crime do not clearly define sexual harassment or describe the behaviours that constitute sexual harassment.

Women represent 51% of the formal labour force in Cambodia, predominantly in the garment, hospitality & tourism industries

Approximately 40,000 women are employed in the entertainment industry, working as beer promoters, hostesses & karaoke girls.

Approximately 475,000 people are employed by garment factories in Cambodia. 90% of them are women.

Although the legal framework to punish perpetrators of gender-based violence is in place, implementation of laws and policies are limited. CARE's research has identified that this is constrained by limited understanding of legal aspects by duty bearers, lack of resources and incentives to implement the interventions and lack of proper reporting and referral mechanisms. This has a significant impact, as studies have shown that women's attitudes towards gender-based violence are greatly influenced by the lack of law enforcement.³

Local authorities including commune councils and the Cambodia National Police are key duty bearers in responding to gender-based violence. Commune councils hold responsibility for preventing and responding to crime in their communes, while the police also hold responsibility for responding to crimes at commune level — through the Police Post — and at both district and provincial levels — through the Anti-Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Units. However, CARE's study of perceptions revealed that most women are unlikely to report sexual harassment to police and commune leaders due to negative attitudes, lack of willingness to help and fear of lack of confidentiality. Other research in Cambodia has also validated these challenges, citing traditional attitudes and the need for local authorities to have additional skills and training to respond effectively to violence against women.⁴

While some standardised record keeping systems are in place for police and authorities to respond to incidents, research has indicated that these are often not followed.⁵ As a result, formal reporting is limited. Local authorities keep records based on their own preferences and police do not record all reports. There are currently no clear standard operating procedures or referral systems for local authorities or police when receiving reports of sexual harassment. Most cases are resolved by local authorities by telling the perpetrator to stop or an informal agreement, often involving payments. As a result, women who do seek help may be met with an inadequate response, discouraging them from seeking further assistance.

Cambodian laws relating to gender-based violence

Penal Code

Rape: punishable by 5-10 years imprisonment

Indecent assault: punishable by 1-3 years imprisonment & 2-6 million riels fine

Indecent exposure or sexual harassment (only loosely defined): punishable by 6 days-3 months imprisonment & 1-500,000 riels fine

Labor Law

Article 172: "All employers and managers of establishments in which [...] women work, must watch over their good behaviour and maintain their decency before the public. All forms of sexual abuse is strictly forbidden."

Prakas [sub-decree] on Occupational Health & Safety: Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training

Article 8: "Any individual person cannot commit violence or indecent acts against entertainment workers."



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² CARE: *Safe Workplaces, Safe Communities Baseline: Perceptions of sexual harassment in and around the workplace*, (2014).

³ MoWA: *Follow Up Survey, Violence Against Women*, (2009).

⁴ Brickell, K., Prak, B., & Poch, B.: *Domestic Violence Law: The Gap Between Legislation and Practice in Cambodia and What Can Be Done About It*, (2014).

⁵ CARE: *Protections for Marginalised Urban Women: Duty Bearers and Gender-Based Violence*, (2015).



Engaging with WOMEN

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CARE works to empower women so they have the knowledge and confidence to protect themselves.

Women living in urban areas who work in vulnerable jobs such as within the entertainment industry and in garment factories are particularly at risk of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Workers often have low levels of education, with limited understanding of their rights and what help may be available to them. In addition, these roles are often looked down upon by much of society so people place little value on those working in such jobs. CARE is working with women in these industries to ensure they feel valued, respected and able to take action if gender-based violence or sexual harassment occurs.

Female workers in garment factories and the tourism & hospitality industries perceive a regular & daily risk of sexual harassment

Beer promoters such as Sovanna (pictured opposite) work at night in restaurants and beer gardens serving beer to customers — usually men — who often become drunk and act inappropriately. CARE works with the Solidarity Association of Beer promoters in Cambodia (SABC) to provide training and awareness to women working in environments like this. Training sessions include life skills to build women's confidence and improve their knowledge of their rights so they can stand up to customers and take appropriate action if sexual harassment occurs. Women learn of sources of support for responding to gender-based violence and develop links with other workers so they can work together to protect themselves.

Women working in garment factories can be at risk of sexual harassment both in the workplace and in the surrounding areas, such as when walking home or living in unsecure accommodation. In 2014 CARE took the first

steps to engage with women in the garment industry on sexual harassment. Building upon CARE's existing networks within a number of factories, garment worker peer educators have started to learn more of gender-based violence and their rights.

CARE's work with these groups doesn't happen in isolation. Training is linked with other projects where possible and the impact of CARE's involvement can encompass more than just women's ability to stand up to sexual harassment. For example, a number of the peer educators trained by SABC and CARE have now risen to be supervisors and leaders within their jobs, which contributes to improved career prospects and economic situation, and the ability to influence more women in the sector.

CARE is also helping SABC's management team to have their voices heard by providing them with opportunities to speak of the issues they face. In 2014 women have spoken on radio talk shows, joined ministry level network meetings, and joined a meeting with police focal points to talk to them frankly about women's experiences when reporting to the police. SABC received advocacy training to improve their ability to present reasoned arguments to high-level representatives and gather evidence to support claims.



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SOVANNA

Sovanna*, 27, has been working as a beer promoter for six years. She started working with CARE three years ago, when she trained to be a peer educator. This helped her understand her rights as a woman and how to avoid confrontation with customers, as well as providing skills so she can share this information with other beer promoters.

“ When I started working six years ago, I was harassed almost every day but in the last year I have not experienced any harassment. I only know of one example of a colleague being harassed; a customer tried to touch her inappropriately. She reacted with confidence, immediately calling security and contacting the outlet owner, who confronted the customer. ”



* Name has been changed

KEY PROGRESS

Women's confidence in their ability to stand up to sexual harassment

- Beer promoters report they now have the **skills to negotiate with clients** effectively and know how to avoid putting themselves in difficult situations.
- Beer promoters report they have an **increased sense of dignity and respect**.
- Beer promoters who work for companies that adhere to the Beer Selling Industry of Cambodia (BSIC) Code of Conduct report that having an **official policy** makes it easier to negotiate with customers.

Women's ability to report sexual harassment and gender-based violence

- Over **95%** of beer promoters who participated in trainings are familiar with reporting mechanisms such as the free gender-based violence hotline. Many beer promoters also report that they have the direct contact details of police in their district.
- Following peer education sessions, over **90%** of participants say they are willing to report sexual harassment.
- Beer promoters report that outlet owners are much more **supportive** in taking action when cases of harassment occur.
- Entertainment workers will now **report cases of abuse** via less formal structures such as relaying this to peer educators, who will report and record these during monthly meetings.

Women experiencing less harassment

- Beer promoters who are actively engaged with SABC report **significant decreases in the amount of sexual harassment** they experience while at work.

Women's voice in advocating for changes to improve their lives

- Women have **spoken** on radio talk shows, **joined** ministry level network meetings, and **regularly meet** with police gender focal points to report cases

Partner profile: SABC

CARE helped to set up the Solidarity Association of Beer promoters in Cambodia (SABC), which gained official recognition from the Ministry of Interior in 2009. SABC is an independent membership organisation run entirely by women working in the beer promotion industry. The organisation aims to foster an environment of solidarity rather than competition and supports women to work together to protect each other.



CARE supports SABC peer educators to conduct education sessions with beer promoters and share key information with their colleagues. SABC peer educators act as focal points for women to contact if they need advice or support with resolving issues. The organisation then provides support to women who wish to make reports to the police or pursue further action.

The SABC management team are recognised as spokespeople for women working in the entertainment industry. CARE continues to provide opportunities for SABC to be heard at the national level and provides ongoing support to develop their advocacy abilities.

Positive changes reported by entertainment workers involved with SABC

- Joining peer education sessions has given women more **confidence** and customers are now listening to what they say.
- Knowing how to speak calmly and **explain clear reasons** for not sitting with customers means men are much less likely to bother women.
- Being able to **avoid sexual harassment** without being disruptive or confrontational means women have less risk of losing their tips without having to “put up with” sexual harassment.
- Knowing that they have **support** from organisations such as SABC and CARE helps women **speak without fear** to request that customers respect their rights.
- Gaining confidence as peer educators has had positive impacts on women’s ability to **advance** in their jobs.
- Police used to look down on beer promoters and not value their job, but now they will take **action** when harassment is reported to them.



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“ Before receiving training from CARE, I did not know what sexual harassment was. People touching me when I’m in public places like at the market was something I thought just happened. Now I understand that I should not have to put up with this and I know how to protect myself. ”

Peer educator, GDM garment factory

ONGOING CHALLENGES

- While women’s understanding of their rights and knowledge of where to report abuse has increased among those in the entertainment industry, this has not yet led to a corresponding increase in the number of reports to authorities. This is partly due to the stigma of working in the entertainment industry.
- While outlet owners may be more supportive in taking action when cases of harassment occur, this usually equates to negotiation and compensation rather than any formal reports to authorities.
- Lack of appropriate reporting procedures and uncertainty about how such reports will be received by management means women are unlikely to report sexual harassment which occurs within factories
- Women who work for BSIC companies report that they experience less harassment and are more able to prevent this; however they say that those who are paid by commission (non BSIC members) are still vulnerable as they do not have a code of conduct to support them and they need to sit with customers if they wish to receive good tips.
- Women who work in karaoke bars often believe that sexual harassment is part of their work, meaning changing attitudes and increasing confidence is challenging.



Engaging with **COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

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CARE works to ensure communities, particularly men, are aware of laws regarding violence against women and to change attitudes so all women are treated with respect.

Engaging with community members is key to changing cultural attitudes about women. CARE engages with the public in a variety of ways including training university students, a media campaign to promote social and behavioural changes, advertising of laws and hotlines, and participation in national awareness campaigns.

Information about gender-based violence is not covered by the traditional school curriculum and so it is not a subject about which communities have much knowledge. CARE and their local partner, People Health Development Association (PHD), work with young people such as Sakseth (pictured opposite) in schools and universities to improve their understanding of this and provide them with skills so they can share this information widely with their peers. These students then act as champions who help to change attitudes about women as part of CARE's efforts to engage men and the community.

The awareness sessions these peer educators organise cover basic topics such as gender and the role of men and women in society. Rather than traditional classroom education, attendees join interactive activities to brainstorm ideas or work in groups using poster materials to represent their thoughts. They also conduct informal one-on-one sessions and act as advisors for those wishing to find more information—not just for problems among friends but also within the wider community.

PHD takes this a step further to advocate with teachers about gender-based violence at school, especially sexual harassment among students. They also advocate with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport about including gender-based violence topics in school curricula.

Partner profile: PHD

In 2005, CARE helped to set up People Health Development Association (PHD). Run by a vibrant team of young men who started as peer educators themselves, they are educating students — particularly men and boys – on topics which are not usually covered by the traditional school curriculum.

PHD started out sharing knowledge of sexual and reproductive health before progressing to the more complex topic of gender relations in 2009. CARE supports PHD to train peer educators to share information with other students as well as conduct larger events and campaigns in schools and universities.

PHD has gained influence at national level; they represent the views of men and youth on the national gender-based violence working group under the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. PHD’s director is also a member of the UN Youth Advisory Panel Country Team in Cambodia.



SAKSETH

Sakseth, 15, has been a peer educator at Russey Keo High School since April 2014. He has conducted two large education sessions with around 20-25 attendees at each. He also conducts informal one-on-one sessions with friends, family and neighbours 2-3 times each month. Becoming a peer educator has not only helped Sakseth share information with others; it has also changed his own actions and attitudes.

“ I am the class president responsible for keeping the classroom in order. I used to order the girls to clean up the room while I relaxed. Now I make sure everyone including the boys, share the work equally... My friends say ‘Who are you? What happened to your old self?’ Before I did not think, but then I realised my mum is also female and that she is a great role model. This helped me to think differently about women and see we all are equal.”



Campaigns

In 2014 CARE supported national participation in three international campaigns.

16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women:

- Joined 1,200 people for group dance in Phnom Penh
- Shared messages with nearly 2,000 customers at 80 beer outlets and restaurants
- Shared messages with employees at two major beer companies
- Raised awareness with workers at 3 garment factories
- Shared messages with over 3,000 students at 6 schools and universities
- Raised awareness with staff at 5 government Ministries
- Reached over 11,000 members of the public via social media

International Women's Day:

- Raised awareness with 250 workers in beer outlets and restaurants

International Labour Day:

- Raised awareness with workers at 3 garment factories
- Raised awareness with 250 workers in beer outlets and restaurants



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COMMUNITY AWARENESS-RAISING

As well as engaging with youth directly, CARE is engaged in a wide variety of awareness-raising activities to reach a broad range of community members. These include:

- Displaying information posters at beer outlets
- Advertising the free hotline on tuk tuk signs
- Broadcast advertising
- Radio talk shows
- Social media
- Televised round table discussions and policy dialogue debates
- Nationwide events such as the 16 Days Campaign

Facebook is very popular in Cambodia, particularly among youth. The Safe Community Forum facebook page uses social media to change perspectives via information sharing, provocative questions and participation in campaigns. Social media plays an increasingly important role in changing attitudes among the wider community, with 11,000 people being reached via the Safe Community Forum during the first week of the 16 Days Campaign in 2014.

Radio is also a popular medium. Talk shows on topics such as gender issues and gender-based violence are broadcast by Women's Media Centre once a month on a Saturday to listeners in Phnom Penh and surrounding provinces. In 2014 almost 300 individuals called into the show with questions or comments.

As well as the wider community, CARE is targeting those likely to be in areas where women are especially vulnerable. This includes displaying posters aimed at customers in beer gardens and working with tuk tuk drivers to display signs on their vehicles advertising the free gender-based violence hotline.

CARE's work across many sectors, from improving official responses to gender-based violence to gaining the support of private businesses, all has the ultimate aim of improving attitudes towards women.

ONGOING CHALLENGES

- Traditional attitudes place blame for sexual harassment on women, excusing this because of their dress or occupation. These attitudes have led men to say that women working in karaoke businesses are ‘ok to touch’ and for men to view these women as sex workers.
- General perceptions among community members often view that women working in some occupations just have to ‘deal’ with sexual harassment as a normal part of their job,⁶ making it challenging to change people’s behaviours.
- Social hierarchy can play an important role in perceptions of women with those in jobs viewed as low skilled, such as garment factory workers, being looked down on and men expecting them to be easy to have sex with.
- Power relations continue to impact women’s safety, with those in positions of authority or ‘rich people’ believing they are better and they ‘have the right’ to have sex with women if they wish.
- Perceptions among both men and women that gender is about women and girls can mean that often it is only women who join gender events, meaning it can be more challenging to engage men in these conversations.
- Gaining the confidence to publicly advocate for women’s rights can be challenging and take time, particularly for student peers who are working to improve attitudes towards women.

Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia states that all forms of discrimination against women shall be abolished

“ Before I used to see people around me behave badly toward women and girls. They talked about girls without respect, mocking them or making sexy jokes which I don’t think the girls appreciated at all. But after I discussed with these people and explained the importance of respecting each other, now they do not dare to behave badly in front of me anymore. ”

High school student



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⁶ CARE: *Safe Workplaces, Safe Communities Baseline: Perceptions of sexual harassment in and around the workplace*, (2014).



Engaging with THE PRIVATE SECTOR

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CARE works with employers and businesses to ensure women are protected in the workplace.

Reducing sexual harassment in the workplace cannot be achieved without the support of business owners and managers. A clear stance from management has noticeable impacts on the safety of women at work; CARE's research identified that in a factory where sexual harassment was not tolerated by owners and managers, women did not experience harassment in their workplace.

Managers such as Doun (pictured opposite) are responsible for outlets including beer gardens and karaoke bars where women are employed as hostesses, waitresses or beer promoters. As business managers they have the ability to influence the working conditions of the women they employ. Through the Non-Violent Workplace Initiative, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, CARE is encouraging these outlets to take positive action to prevent harassment from occurring.

Those who sign up to the Non-Violent Workplace Initiative are provided with materials to display which detail Cambodian laws regarding harassment of women. As well as posters detailing laws and numbers to report abuse, managers like Doun find that tissue boxes with messages about respecting women are the most effective tool for them to prevent harassment. As something that is always placed on tables, it is easy to make customers aware of these so they know that harassment of staff will not be tolerated.

“ Before, [outlet owners] would worry about losing customers but now they are not afraid to call the police if there is a problem. Instead of being angry if a woman wishes to report harassment, they are now most likely to be annoyed that they were not told of any problems first. ”

Beer promoter

“ Before my company had to pay for materials destroyed by fights among customers; since engaging with SABC we pay less for this—I assume this is because of less conflict as a result of beer promoters being better at negotiating with customers. Beer companies have asked managers to pay more attention to workers as now difficult to find good workers. Beer companies say that when they have confidence women are better at selling beer.”

Beer Promotion Coordinator, Cheer Beer Company

Successes from CARE’s previous work to engage the private sector have included supporting the industry association for beer companies, BSIC, to develop a standard code of conduct for its workers. The adoption of this by a number of major beer companies – including Carlsberg, Guinness and Heineken International – has had a demonstrable impact on the safety of women working as beer promoters. The code of conduct gives women clear guidance on how to interact with customers and provides a reasoned explanation for why they will not sit and drink—people understand when beer promoters say they will lose their job if they drink with customers and so stop their harassment.

Part of CARE’s work with women through SABC is also to support workers to be their own advocates. Beer promoters working as peer educators have increased confidence to discuss their needs with outlet owners and engage their support for conducting awareness-raising with workers on their premises. As a result of this increased engagement women have noticed a positive change in how managers respond when cases of sexual harassment in the workplace are reported.

DOEUN DOUN

Doeun Doun signed the Non-Violent Workplace Initiative soon after he became the General Manager of a restaurant on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. Previously, men would regularly verbally harass



staff and attempt to touch the women working there—almost every day there were up to three cases of harassment. However, within 3-4 months of displaying materials with messages about respecting women and highlighting laws against gender-based violence, Doun says customers’ attitudes started to change. He says harassment of his staff has noticeably reduced: this has dropped from three cases a day to three in the last year. Positively, Doun has not experienced a drop in business.

“ Around 60% of my customers are regulars and all of these have changed their behaviour. Even though they complained, they still come. I say to them ‘Cambodia is becoming a more developed country and so we need to show women respect’.”

At the same time, this has had a very positive impact on staff attitude. Before Doun made changes, morale was low and approximately 10 out of 70 workers would leave each month; now that staff feel protected the staff turnover is almost zero.

“ They are happy to see the restaurant take steps to make customers reduce harassment. Staff now stay working here a long time as they feel safe and know they are supported.”

DEVELOPING WORKPLACE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Within garment factories, CARE is also engaging with managers such as Sopheak Un (pictured opposite with Sportex factory manager Peter Wei) to improve their policies. While concrete numbers are difficult to obtain, it is estimated that many of the approximately 500 factories in Cambodia do not have comprehensive, stand-alone policies on sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace. If cases are brought to management, responses can range from informal mediation to one factory reportedly dismissing both the woman who complained and the perpetrator.

In this new sector CARE is engaging with the Strengthening Activity for Factory Education (SAFE) working group. With CARE's input and knowledge from working with other businesses, the group has developed a template for sexual harassment guidelines appropriate to the factory environment. The SAFE group brings together HR managers from its 57 members, who now have this standardised template as a resource available to roll out across factories.

However, CARE recognises that while recognised guidelines are a good starting point for reducing harassment in the workplace, the impact of this can be taken further. Factory HR managers like Sopheak are working with CARE to adapt this to the specific context of their workplaces. She will sit with technical advisors from CARE to review things like how workers are able to report sexual harassment and how to standardise responses from management. CARE aims to support managers to develop a code of conduct so that factories such as Sportex can create a workplace culture where discrimination against women is not acceptable.

However, working on such a complex and sensitive subject takes time. Initial training with factory managers showed that ideas such as gender equality and gender-based violence are new to many businesses. Before they delve deeper into their policies CARE is providing support to help businesses understand how discrimination can affect women and the positive impact this may have on their workforce.

“ The code of conduct will help us to work very effectively and promote staff standards within the factory. The code of conduct is to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in our workplace in order to increase productivity. ”

HR manager, Quality Textile Co. Ltd.

“ Factory managers reflected on an example of a case of harassment being resolved by the woman being paid money and both continuing to work at the factory. During the discussion they recognised that dealing with harassment like this was not the best way to stop it happening again; they acknowledged that they needed to make changes. ”

CARE trainer



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SPORTEX FACTORY

Peter Wei is the manager of Sportex factory and is a member of the SAFE working group. Sportex is working with CARE to review how the factory responds to sexual harassment and develop a comprehensive approach to addressing this.



“ Our cooperation with CARE Cambodia allows us to understand about violence and harassment of women ... They are providing strong help to stop this and to develop a society without violence. ”



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ONGOING CHALLENGES

- Cambodia’s Labor Law specifies that sexual harassment is against the law, but it does not define sexual harassment, making this open to interpretation by private sector businesses and therefore a more complex and challenging subject to approach.⁷
- Measuring the business benefits of reduced harassment in the workplace can be challenging; anecdotal evidence illustrates the positive impact of this on workforce turnover and performance but there is little research which quantifies this for employers.
- Business managers can have busy schedules and so if they are not required by law to join activities or do not understand the benefits of doing so, they may be reluctant to engage with CARE.
- Recent strikes combined with highly-publicised changes to the minimum wage for the garment industry has meant many garment factories view this issue as more of a priority to address than sexual harassment in the workplace; as a result many group discussions and individual meetings on this topic have been delayed.
- Owners and managers of outlets such as beer gardens and karaoke bars can be concerned that attempting to change the behaviour of their customers could affect their business and so are reluctant to take action.
- The influence of powerful people in Cambodia, many of whom operate outlets such as karaoke bars, can affect businesses’ motivation to engage with CARE.

⁷ CARE: *Legal analysis: Sexual Harassment in Cambodia*, (2015).

Private sector partners

- **57 factories** developing a standardised sexual harassment policy with CARE through the SAFE working group
- **6 factories** conducting in-depth reviews of policies and response procedures with CARE
- **210 restaurants, beer gardens and karaoke bars** displaying anti-harassment materials in through the Non-Violent Workplace Initiative
- **60 restaurants, beer gardens and karaoke bars** actively discussing how to effect changed behaviour among clients through the outlet working group



Engaging with LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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CARE works with local authorities and the police to improve their response to reports of gender based violence.

Ensuring those who commit acts of gender-based violence and sexual harassment face the consequences of their actions is key to protecting women from perpetrators and preventing this from occurring in the future. In order for this to happen, police and local authorities need to be equipped with the skills, knowledge and proper procedures to accurately report issues and ensure offenders are brought to justice. In Cambodian culture, where blame is often placed on the woman, this includes changing attitudes and ensuring women receive adequate support.

Police focal points at district level such as Tan Ravuth (pictured opposite) are responsible for recording crimes, conducting investigations and pursuing arrests for complaints lodge to the court. However, they often have limited knowledge of the challenges women face and attitudes can be clouded by cultural perceptions. CARE is working with commune councils

Unclear procedures: the effects

- Confusion over who should deal with reports means issues are not addressed in a timely manner
- Lack of understanding of gender-based violence among duty bearers means women may not be taken seriously
- Lack of guidelines for how to deal with reports can make it challenging for women to make reports
- Lack of record keeping means the extent of abuses cannot be known
- Lack of clear processes when dealing with reports means women may not be provided with all the services they need
- Confusion over who is responsible for responding means women may feel let down by the authorities
- Lack of follow up mechanisms mean issues may remain unresolved

through the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) and with police at both commune and district levels. CARE trains key focal points with improved understanding on gender-based violence as a starting point for improving reporting and response. Better procedures cannot be set up without the engagement of those who will be implementing them and behaviours will not change without understanding of why this is necessary, so the support of police such as Ravuth is key.

CARE’s research has identified that other than diversion to an informal mediation there is no standardised protocol for receiving and responding to sexual harassment. This has many knock-on effects for whether women are able to report incidences of violence and how these are dealt with. Confusion over the division of responsibilities between commune councils — who are the local authorities — and local police — who report to the district via a different chain of command — also has an impact.

TAN RAVUTH

Tan Ravuth, chief of the Serious Crime Office for Toul Kork district, is a strong advocate for effective responses to end violence against women. He received training organised by the Ministry of Interior on topics such as gender, understanding laws on gender-based violence and ways to respond appropriately when violence happens. He has now become a key focal person in the district for security and helps share information with people in his district to reduce violence against women.



“ The concept of gender is new for me but I realised that as an intervener I need to understand this. Learning more about gender-based violence and sexual harassment in workplaces and in communities is very relevant and important for me, as well as for my communities. I think this has not only helped me intervene but also to become an effective advisor for people in my district. ”



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In his role as second deputy commune chief, women normally come to Kroy Khemerith (pictured opposite) for intervention in cases of violence. When he wishes to refer cases to the police, coordinating with police posts can be challenging as commune councils and front line police have different chains of command. This means that cases can go back and forth between people before any action is taken, leading to delays in response.

Even when cases are brought to the police or local authorities, both community members and duty bearers can be reluctant to formally pursue these. CARE's research has shown that there are many barriers to processing formal reports, including reluctance of community members, lack of incentives for duty bearers and external pressure.

CARE has started to lay the foundational knowledge needed for building recognised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for responding to gender-based violence. This has included an orientation on SOPs for duty bearers such as Khemerith so communes understand how these would be useful for them—key for these to be effective. Communes and police focal points are being supported with technical guidance — including a number of in-depth studies — to develop SOPs which will improve the actions taken by duty bearers when they hear of cases of gender-based violence.

These SOPs will include consideration of factors like whether a woman requires medical care or psychological counselling and what legal services may be required. They will provide guidance to local authorities and police for how to maintain an orderly record keeping system or database which allows for analysis and effective follow up. Where issues cannot be solved at commune level, SOPs will guide referrals to a higher level or other service providers where needed, so that women can access health services, legal assistance or other relevant support. They will also assess what financial support is available from other partners.

Having these standard procedures in place will encourage better communication between those involved in reporting such cases and aims to have a positive impact on relations between duty bearers and the community. This is needed in order to change behaviours to promote reporting of gender-based violence to the authorities so it can be dealt with via the proper channels.

Barriers to processing formal reports

- Cultural attitudes regarding concern for a woman's reputation
- Cultural attitudes placing blame on women
- Fear of lack of confidentiality
- Lack of financial support for survivors to file reports (such as transportation, medical expenses, food and accommodation if reporting involves longer distances, or access to safe spaces to shelter from violence)
- Lack of incentives for duty bearers to process
- Time-consuming investigations
- Complicated legal procedures
- Lack of protection for those filing reports
- Pressure to drop cases when powerful figures are involved (causing both duty bearers and victims to be reluctant to pursue cases)
- Lack of coordination from all actors involved at local level

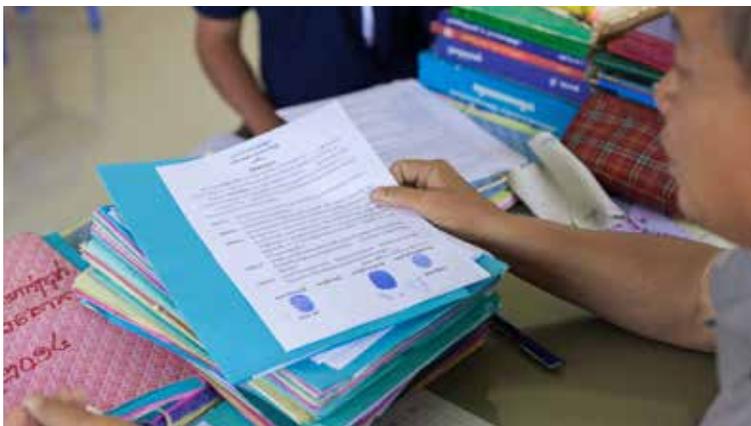


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KROY KHEMERITH

Kroy Khemerith is the second deputy chief for Toul Sangke commune. He has faced challenges when women have come to him to report cases of gender-based violence as the procedures for who this should be referred to are unclear. He thinks it is important for improved standard processes to be developed and expanded to support the women in his commune.

“ Training has enabled me to appropriately and effectively respond to cases of violence [such as recording for referrals and seeking support from other service providers where this is needed]. Focusing on intervention and response [through SOPs] is important for improving coordination between the commune and the police post, and so there is clear understanding among duty bearers and the community people without discrimination. ”



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ONGOING CHALLENGES

- Lack of a clear definition of sexual harassment in the Penal Code makes it challenging for duty bearers to respond in a consistent manner.⁸
- A range of barriers to processing formal reports (detailed above) make it challenging both for women to report incidents to the authorities and for duty bearers to respond to these appropriately.
- While structure and policy may have improved in the last decade, corresponding progress in enforcement has not necessarily followed.⁹
- Lack of clear procedures and confusion over the responsibilities of those involved have many impacts on how cases are handled (detailed above).
- The prevailing culture in Cambodia is that people will not take action unless told to, so without detailed direction from above duty bearers are unlikely to act.⁹

⁸ CARE: *Legal analysis: Sexual Harassment in Cambodia*, (2015).

⁹ CARE: *Protections for Marginalised Urban Women: Duty Bearers and Gender-Based Violence*, (2015).



Engaging with GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES

The Royal Government of Cambodia has a dedicated Ministry of Woman's Affairs which is mandated to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women & children.

CARE works to ensure laws are implemented effectively and that appropriate mechanisms are in place to protect women.

A number of government ministries have oversight of key areas which impact the safety of women at work and in their communities. CARE works closely with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, as well as the Ministry of Women's Affairs, to ensure they have up-to-date, accurate technical knowledge on gender-based violence and sexual harassment. This aims to ensure that the needs of women are considered in policy decisions.

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS (MOWA)

CARE advocates for women's rights to government ministries. To support this approach, CARE is encouraging community representatives, such as beer promoters from SABC, to forge links with ministry groups and have their own voice at policy level. Working closely with MoWA, CARE's support includes strengthening government and private networks where this is possible. As a result, the needs of those working in entertainment establishments are now represented regularly within the ministry.

A key element of this is providing technical training and ongoing advice so that MoWA staff and those they work with have adequate understanding of gender-based violence to incorporate this into their work effectively. Within the Non Violent Workplace Initiative, CARE's expertise has supported the ministry in the development of display materials such as posters deterring sexual harassment that are shared with outlets which join the initiative.

A key focus of CARE’s support to the Non-Violent Workplace Initiative is encouraging MOWA to engage with the private sector and build lasting links. CARE creates opportunities for ministry representatives to interact with businesses to both share information and to learn of the challenges they face when protecting the women in their workplace. These increased interactions will ensure the impact of MoWA’s actions are maximised and are sustainable into the future.



CARE sits on MOWA’s sub-working-group for prevention of the gender-based violence, which has allowed staff to give input into the second National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women. As a result of regular engagement in policy discussion CARE was able to integrate sexual harassment into this key document so that it is also addressed as a serious issue within Cambodia.

“ We need to have a shared commitment, effort and strategies to reduce violence against women ... Since our tradition dictates, we normally value men who are financial supporters as more important than women which makes it difficult for women to decide freely and independently. Social norms are biased towards men and expect women to be submissive and obedient.” ”

H.E. Madame Chea Saroeurn, Ministry of Women’s Affairs



MINISTRY OF LABOR AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING (MOLVT)

As private businesses are an important sector to engage with in order to reduce gender-based violence, collaboration with MoLTV is key. Working with the Occupational Health and Safety department, CARE is supporting MoLVT on training for private sector partners to make them aware of the law and their responsibilities. This is helping instil a greater understanding of Cambodian laws related to gender-based violence among employers such as the factory managers CARE works with.

MoLVT is encountering a number of challenges when engaging with the private sector, such as lack of interest from employers, particularly in the entertainment industry. CARE continues to form relationships with private sector businesses and managers, including supporting MoLVT to conduct training on gender-based violence in these workplaces.

Ongoing relationships at policy level allowed CARE to provide input to the new ministerial sub-decree on *Working Conditions, Occupational Safety and Health Rules of Entertainment Service Enterprises, Establishments and Companies*. CARE’s involvement raised issues specific to beer promoters including the prevalence of sexual harassment. Sub-decree 194 states: “Any individual person cannot commit violence or indecent acts against entertainment workers”. While further detail in relation to penalties for sexual harassment in the workplace would make this even stronger, it does nevertheless represent good progress in recognising the rights of women working in this industry.

“ The Prakas [sub-decree] No194 offers us a good channel to promote better working conditions, especially related to health and freedom from gender-based violence in the entertainment sector ... This is the first ever policy on this in Cambodia as well as in the region. Other countries are interested in this policy and want to learn more from us. ”

Chea Sokny, Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training



MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (MOI)

As MoI is responsible for the police and enforcement of laws, gaining support at ministry level is key for ensuring laws are implemented properly and responses to cases of gender-based violence are effective.

An important resource impacting women's ability to report incidences of violence is the free hotline, which is managed by the ministry. This national hotline connects callers with the relevant district police post to send a swift response if needed. CARE supports the management of this and widely shares the number within communities and with those in workplaces such as entertainment establishments.

Enforcement of laws can often require a top-down approach for duty bearers to carry this out effectively. CARE's training and engagement with senior officials ensures those at policy level have a sound grasp of gender and gender-based violence. Prior to working with local authorities and police to develop Standard Operating Procedures for responding to gender-based violence, CARE also reviewed these with MoI. Involvement at ministry level is crucial for gaining approval to improve these and ensure they will be effectively implemented.



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“ Since there is the hotline for 1288, which is a number that is easy to remember, it is easy for people to contact us directly. This makes it easier for us to refer to the respective location where the incident occurs so that they can respond on time and in an appropriate manner. More importantly, the service is free for callers and we noted that there has been an increased number of calls reported. ”

Hotline officer from MoI's Department of Anti Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection.



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COLLABORATION

CARE aims to strengthen the policy response to sexual harassment through supporting greater cooperation between key government agencies. To achieve this, CARE provides opportunities for relevant departments to share knowledge on gender-based violence and sexual harassment so they can learn from other ministries and their examples.

“ The government is mandated by law to prevent violence against women thus we need multiple players to implement successfully.”

Senior official, Ministry of Women’s Affairs

During workshops which brought together representatives from a number of ministries, all accepted that preventing gender-based violence should be a major concern for everyone and it is therefore necessary to address this collectively. However, collaboration between ministries can prove challenging and time consuming.

Within each ministry there are a number of individual departments that have responsibility for specific areas related to gender-based violence and sexual harassment. CARE is aiming to bridge these gaps and link relevant departments from different ministries to work together towards these common goals. For example, CARE has helped to link MoWA’s Non-Violent Workplace Initiative more strongly with MoLVT’s Occupational Health and Safety Department which conducts inspections on hospitality and entertainment premises and increased coordination between MoWA’s women’s focal points in communes and the MoI’s Commune Committees for Women and Children. As CARE develops new relationships within the hospitality and tourism industries, increased engagement and collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism will also be sought.

An important step is that government representatives recognise that women can be placed at an unfair disadvantage as a result of social and cultural norms; open acknowledgement of this allows discussion of next steps to protect women to be more frank and open.

ONGOING CHALLENGES

- The political situation in Cambodia following the 2013 election led to some delays and challenges in engagement from ministries.
- Collaboration with ministries was impacted by staff changeover at MoI and MoWA following the election, with institutional knowledge being lost when focal points were reassigned; as a result additional time and effort was required to develop the understanding of new ministry counterparts and build these relationships.
- Lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities currently constrains inter-ministerial coordination to address gender-based violence.
- Gaps in communication between ministries can hinder their ability to implement shared goals.



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LESSONS LEARNED IN 2014

Changing attitudes and behaviours takes time, especially in countries like Cambodia where traditional perceptions of women are deeply entrenched. As CARE's work progresses, the ways in which it engages with each sector have developed and adapted to ensure its efforts are as effective as possible. As a result, CARE has been able to gather specific learning about the best ways to improve its specific work in this field.

Selecting student peers to be advocates for change

Many of the student peer educators sharing information on gender-based violence in their schools and universities were nominated for the role by teachers and school leadership. This can lead to variation in students' motivations and availability—for example they may feel this places pressure on their time to study or they may prioritise other responsibilities if they have not actively volunteered to become a peer educator. Selection by teachers can also limit the pool of candidates and so CARE may miss the opportunity to recruit any students who are particularly passionate about these topics. As a result CARE plans to share information about the benefits of becoming a peer educator more widely within these education establishments to gain more voluntary engagement from students.

Introducing proven models to new audiences

CARE's work to empower beer promoters has been successful; however it was found that when expanding this approach to work with women in karaoke bars, adaptations were needed. The women have different working hours; while beer promoters can gather 20 people at once, those in karaoke bars don't have time to join a 2 hour session. With a maximum awareness session time of 40 minutes, messages had to be adapted and materials changed to meet the needs of workers in this sector.

Engaging with the private sector

CARE has learned that it is necessary to be more business focused when engaging with business managers about addressing sexual harassment in their workplace. CARE's focus is on improving worker's rights but there is a need to convince employers and managers that this will not have a negative impact on productivity; rather, this will lead to positive outcomes such as improved worker retention. CARE plans to capture more evidence on the business benefits of improving worker well-being and incorporate this into a comprehensive package with business-focused messaging to encourage other businesses to become engaged.



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Expanding reach within the private sector

As well as variations between sectors, the longer CARE works with private sector partners the more it becomes apparent that all businesses, even within the same sector, are unique. CARE is therefore focusing on building good, long-term relationships with individual business owners to ensure that cooperation with them is as effective and successful as possible. CARE has also learned that in some cases private businesses are reluctant to engage with NGOs. Experience within the garment industry has shown that interest in the topic from global buyers and positive encouragement from industry bodies may positively impact this. As a result CARE continues to build relationships with key influencers and stakeholders in the private sector to gain influence and change attitudes.

Conducting interactive, engaging training with private sector managers

During 2014 CARE trialed a number of different curricula with managers and supervisors from garment factories. It was found that while straightforward training with key messages on gender discrimination was useful as an introductory activity, this was not enough for participants to start thinking about behaviour change within their businesses. However, the use of material adapted from CARE’s Inner Spaces, Outward Faces Initiative (ISOFI) allowed for greater discussion among participants. As a result, the factory managers who joined this actively considered their own situation and attitudes, which led to frank discussion both of their own behaviour as well as how this new knowledge could be applied in the workplace. CARE aims to make greater use of this training in the future as it is more effective in addressing commonly-held perceptions about gender.

Raising awareness through practical application

CARE has found that guidelines and tools are more useful than simple awareness-raising for engaging with police and local authorities as they need to see the practical use of what they are learning. This learning has informed CARE’s plans for developing Standard Operating Procedures for responding to cases of gender-based violence, which incorporates practical development of these tools into training and capacity building.

Improving motivation to respond through high-level interest

CARE’s research has demonstrated that there are many factors affecting the motivation of front-line police and local authorities to respond when gender-based violence is reported. The absence of interest from above may negatively impact whether action is taken, therefore CARE recognises the need to continue to engage with high-level representatives to gain their support for improved response and ensure this is communicated to those at commune level.

Improving coordination between ministries

Despite commitments from ministries to engage with CARE to work towards the common goal of addressing gender-based violence, collaboration between departments can be slow due to competing demands. CARE learned that greater investment in gaining a clear definition of individual roles and improved coordination between departments would help to improve this partnership and make each ministry’s efforts more effective within the wider scope of their common goals.

FURTHER READING

During the course of this program CARE has invested in research to understand the situation, perceptions and motivations which impact those involved. This provides valuable insight which ensures that activities are appropriate to the Cambodian context.

Safe Workplace, Safe Communities Baseline: Perceptions of sexual harassment in and around the workplace

Robin MAUNEY

Legal analysis: Sexual Harassment in Cambodia

Lo LEANG & Vibol OP

Protections for Marginalised Urban Women: Duty Bearers and Gender-Based Violence

Kimchoeun PAK, Sopheap HOEUNG & Vandoeun CHHIV

These studies are available at www.care-cambodia.org/research.





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www.care-cambodia.org