

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN PROGRAMME

Improving the Response to End Violence against Women

In Cambodia, Violence Against Women persists to hamper progress within society, despite government efforts to put an end to this serious human rights violation. The response to Violence Against Women continues being a challenge.

Since 2002, GIZ has supported the Cambodian government put policies and strategies in place in order to address and reduce Violence Against Women. One of the government's main achievements was the development of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, passed by parliament in 2005 and the implementation of public awareness raising campaigns.

The GIZ programme "Access to Justice for Women II" (ATJW II) supports the Cambodian Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), other government actors as well as civil society organizations to provide a more effective response to Violence Against Women by enhancing the coordination, availability, accessibility and quality of services for women survivors of gender-based violence and their children in the target provinces of Siem Reap and Kampong Thom.

Although human rights and gender equity are guaranteed according to the Cambodian Constitution and legislation, women and their children still receive limited protection and inadequate support services when they are confronted with violence. ATJW II aims to strengthen the response to violence by establishing adequate services and ensuring that social attitudes towards women in general and survivors in particular are changed.

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Project region	Cambodia
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Towards a Client-Centered and Gender-Responsive Approach

When a woman is subjected to gender-based violence, the aftermath persists in her daily life: her mental health may lack stability, confidence may be lost, and her community may stigmatize her, an experience that makes reintegration or finding work difficult. Adding to these challenges, legal protection and services to survivors in the past have been rather few and difficult to access.

The ATJW II programme assists the Royal Government of Cambodia in enhancing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to service delivery for women survivors of gender-based violence and their children, consisting of legal advice and representation as well as psycho-social services, medical care and vocational training. Additionally, ATJW II supports a fund led by MoWA and implemented by NGOs in the two target provinces with the goal of providing specialized services to women survivors of gender-based violence and their children.

Local authorities, the police, the courts, NGOs and the public health



Photo left: Regional Training on the Penal Code undertaken in Kampong Chhnang for MoWA Judicial Police officials from five provinces

Photo right: Kick-off workshop of Data Collection and Monitoring of Violence Against Women in Cambodia



Graduation of Judicial Police officials of MoWA



Police woman participating at a workshop on improving services for survivors of gender-based violence

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system are supported in the development and implementation of minimum standards to make services and referrals more rights-based and gender-responsive. ATJW II also aims to address the needs of women who are at increased risk of violence, such as those with disabilities.

Improving the Judicial Response

Although some statistics show an increasing public perception that Violence Against Women is wrong, prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual violence still remain unacceptable: Every fifth Cambodian men aged from 18 to 49 years old has raped a woman once, either within or outside a relationship [Partners for Prevention 2013]. At the same time 38.4 percent of men admitting rape had not faced any consequence [ibid.]. Subsequently ATJW II is working to further enhance legal protection for women survivors through a gender-responsive approach in the Cambodian judicial system and to make perpetrators accountable for their acts and crimes.

In cooperation with MoWA and the Ministry of Justice, ATJW II is working towards an improved and more sensitive investigation of cases of violence against women and girls. Training curricula for Judicial Police Agents of MoWA, judges and prosecutors are developed and implemented to better address the needs of survivors.

In order to ensure that women are treated fairly by police and the courts, ATJW II conducts training for judicial police officers of the Ministry of Women's Affairs on relevant laws on gender-based violence, coordination of services and counseling to survivors. These officers, whose role was established by the Law on Domestic

Violence, have the mandate to support women survivors in filing complaints and reporting to competent authorities.

Enhancing Inter-Ministerial Coordination and Mobilizing Citizens

In Cambodia today, women are often unaware of their fundamental rights and lack the means to assert them. Families of women survivors and their communities are frequently unresponsive to safeguard those rights. Stakeholders are not sufficiently coordinated to respond adequately to violence while important gaps in implementation of related policies and laws still remain.

That is why a high level working group led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs was established and supported by ATJW II in order to develop, implement and monitor the Second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and to improve coordination between line-ministries and other actors.

ATJW II also provides policy advice to MoWA for strengthening its communication and institutional advocacy role for women's rights and empowerment throughout the country and abroad. With the goal of mobilizing citizens to stop Violence Against Women, the ATJW II supports MoWA to target key groups such as young professionals, men and boys, through its external communications and social media.

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