

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN (ATJW)

Reducing Violence against women, a national priority

The Royal Government of Cambodia recognizes that violence against women is a serious obstacle for the sustainable development of society. Since 2002, GIZ has supported the government with putting policies and strategies in place in order to substantially reduce gender-based violence. One of the main achievements was the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence that was passed by the Parliament in 2005 and subsequently made known to the public.

The GIZ project on “Access to Justice for Women” (ATJW) supports the Cambodian Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), other state actors as well as civil society organizations, to provide effective legal protection and various social services to women and girls who are experiencing gender-based violence.

Although human rights and gender equity are guaranteed according to the Cambodian Constitution and legislation, women and girls still face limited protection and inadequate support services when suffering violence. ATJW aims to strengthen the response to gender-based violence and services in place, and to ensure that social attitudes towards women survivors are changed.

Advocating for the Rights of Women and Girls

In Cambodia today, women and girls 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 safeguarding those rights.

Project name	Access to Justice for Women (ATJW)
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And often when survivors understand their rights, they lack the know-how to access the existing judicial system. To reach even the most remote communities, ATJW advocates for the rights of women and girls through nation-wide campaigns in cooperation with state and non-state actors. When communities throughout Cambodia turn on the TV, read the newspaper or listen to the radio, there is a good chance they will receive messages on ways they can challenge harmful gender norms and display equitable behaviors.

In addition, ATJW works with six ministries, the courts and the police for the establishment of a national system to collect and monitor the data on various types of gender-based violence, such as intimate partner violence, rape and trafficking.

ATJW also provides quality policy advice to MoWA for strengthening of its communications and institutional advocacy for women’s rights, inside and outside the government, as well as for formulation and implementation of national policies on gender-based violence, like the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women.



Pg. 1 Photo left: Regional Training on the Penal Code undertaken in Kampong Chhnang for MOWA Judicial Police Officials from five provinces

Pg. 1 Photo right: Kick-off workshop of Data Collection and Monitoring of Violence Against Women in Cambodia

Pg. 2 Photo left: Graduation of Judicial Police Officials

Pg. 2 Photo right: Policewoman participating in Community of Practice meeting of the NGO Fund for survivors of gender-based violence



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Supporting Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

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 project assists the Cambodian government in enhancing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to service delivery for women survivors. Local authorities, the police, the courts and the public health system will be supported in developing protocols and minimum standards in dealing with gender-based violence and for referrals to other agencies.

In addition to that, ATJW supports MoWA in establishing a fund for NGOs that provide specialized services to survivors of GBV in a high quality: free legal aid, psychosocial counseling, rehabilitation and vocational training.

Improving the Judicial Response

Although some statistics show a decrease on intimate partner violence in Cambodia, all kinds of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, still remain unacceptable. ATJW is working to further enhance legal protection for women survivors through a gender-responsive approach in the Cambodian judicial system.

In cooperation with MoWA and the Ministry of Justice, ATJW is working towards an improved and more sensitive investigation of cases of violence against women and girls. Training curricula for 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 conducts training for judicial police officers of MoWA on relevant laws on gender-based violence, coordination of services and counseling to survivors. These officers have been created with the law on domestic violence. They have the mandate to support survivors in filing complaints with other authorities.

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