GENDER

1-Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

Definition:

- Gender is about the roles of men and women as defined by their culture and society.
- Gender equality is about ensuring equal rights, opportunities and benefits for both women and men.
- Gender equity means fair treatment of women and men.

Gender mainstreaming is the integration of gender issues into all policies, activities, and initiatives to promote equal access to resources, opportunities, decision-making, benefits and authority[1].

The Cambodian Constitution of 1993 gives equal chances and equal benefits to all Khmer women and men as its main concept to promote equality. The law gives equal rights to women and girls, but often they cannot obtain these rights due to their situations and traditional cultural beliefs and practices. Establishing equal rights and opportunities for women and men through social, legal, and economic institutions is critical element in promoting gender equality.

Gender inequalities lie within cultural and traditional customs, as well as within social contexts. In Cambodia, women are considered to be at a lower status then men. Especially, women who are living in rural areas think that their status is still lower than men and that men are the leader, although women and men are recognized as equal by the Cambodian Constitution. Inequality is a part to concern[2] . The moral related to the expected behaviors of women and men is learned in the primary school[3]. In school, students are encouraged to explain and analyze the meaning of moral articles to find out advantages and disadvantages of the cultural and traditional customs according to given circumstances and current situation.

Efforts of gender mainstreaming at the local level have had a great influence in community development and women's participation in commune councils. The member of the commune council members i13,853 persons, of which1,802 persons are women[4]. In general, women have not been ranked high on the political party lists; therefore, they are less likely to get the position of commune chief or deputy chief[5]. Village women are increasingly expressing themselves in commune planning; this reflects their joint effort in empowering women in all social development programs of both the government and the partner agencies.

2- Number of Gender Priority

[1] Mahidol University: A Glossary of Terms in Gender and Sexuality. Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health 2005, Thailand.
[2] Gorman 1999 qtd in Fair Share
[3] Ledgerwood 1996 qtd in Fair Share
[4] Ministry of Interiors: Department of Local Administration on February 26, 2010
[5] Ledgerwood 1996 qtd in Fair Share

The number of gender priority has been increased in the commune planning over the past five years. However, funding has been focused on gender *issues* rather than other *services*[6].

Some constraints to women in decision-making are the beliefs that "women have less capacity than their male counterparts," "women are shy", women are less experienced," and "women lack confidence". These beliefs are often accepted as a given rather than questioned. The reality is that the difficulties for women are directly related to the organization of society. Cambodia is still hierarchical, and ideas of power and status affect social and gender customs. In this order, women are considered to be of lower status relative to men.

What can we do?

- Ensure women councilors have the same opportunities as do men for training and capacity building.
- Support women candidates and support their election/appointment participations.
- Support networks, such as the Women Councilors Forums.
- Disseminate the achievements of women councilors to combat the idea that men make better leaders than women.
- Conduct information, education and communication campaigns to raise awareness of men and women about gender issues and to change traditional perceptions on gender roles and responsibilities.
- Support training programs at local levels on gender issues and women leadership.
- Empower women in the village to educate themselves on gender issues and women leadership.

3-Gender and Education

Since 1979 to present, Cambodia's education system has become better and better in all levels. However, some problems are not yet solved, such as enrollment, teacher salaries, school materials, classrooms that are not by the educational standard if compared to those in neighboring countries. Generally, parents would like to educate both their boys and girls; but if forced to choose, they choose to educate boys. This is one reason for why more boys than girls attend school.

The educational achievement has been increased at all levels in the last ten years: 84.02 percent of the population aged 7-24 years were literate in 2008, compared to 62.34 percent in 1998[7]. However, gender disparity in education remains at all levels - primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and tertiary levels. The proportion of population aged 25 and over who did not complete primary education was lower in 2008 than in 1998. The number of literate persons increased from 1.58 million in 1998 to 2.02 million in 2008 due to population growth. The increase was 17.35 percent among men and 36.89 percent among women)[8].

[6] Gender Mainstreaming, p1
[7] Ministry of Planning: General Population Census of Cambodia 2008
[8] Ministry of Planning: General Population Census of Cambodia 2008

Girls who did no have education accounted for 16.28 percent of girls, while this proportion was only 14.82 percent among boys. Among literate women aged 25 and over in 2008, 59.18 percent did not have schooling or have primary education degree, compared to 42.40 percent among literate men. These figures decreased from 68.27 percent among literate women and 51.01 percent among literate men in 1998[9]. Literate women and men aged 25 and above who attended higher education accounted for only 0.99 percent and 2.62 percent, respectively. The percentage distribution of educational levels for literate girls aged 7-24 years old in 2008 showed that 31.24 percent of girls had primary education, 14.05 percent had lower secondary education, and 1 percent had upper secondary education. In short, the figure decreases as the educational level increases.[10]. Common reasons of declining proportion of girls as educational level increases is that girls' parents keep them to work at home, to take care their younger siblings[11] and to work for income generation. On the other hand, some of young women are not allowed by their parents to continue their education by living far away from their families due to lack of transportation or accommodation.

The literacy rate for men is on average 14.22 percent higher than that for women. Adult literacy rate for the population aged 15 and over is 70.86 percent for female and 85.08 percent for male[12].

What can we do?

- Support students from poor families through subsidized transportation and scholarships, for girls in particular.
- Promote greater community and parent involvement in managing educational services through parent-teacher associations, including women.
- Support the training of more teachers and provide incentives for teachers to stay in rural and remote postings.
- Promote greater understanding of the relationship between education and work among children of all statuses.
- Establish girls associations and build dormitories girls to stay near the schools.
- Support and extend informal education system in the whole country.
- Promote other services for the poor families have opportunities to improve their living standard and, as a consequence, they can afford sending their children to school.

4- Gender and Health

Provision of effective health services is a key for development. Utilization rates and family spending on health care are about the same for both men and women, but women and men have different health needs. Women have specific health needs due to their reproductive role.

More than 95 percent of women have some problems in accessing health care, due to user fees, transportation costs, and distance to health facilities.[13] Maternal mortality ratio is

[9] Ministry of Planning: General Population Census of Cambodia 1998 and 2008
[10] Ministry of Planning: General Population Census of Cambodia 2008
[11] Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports: Report 2005
[12] Ministry of Planning: General Population Census of Cambodia 2008
[13] Fair Share for Women 2004 p90.

437 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000, 473 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005[14] and 461 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008. This is one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the region[15]. This high level of maternal mortality and morbidity is indicative of a situation where the status and education of women are low, infrastructure is weak, and the health system is not working well. More support is required in all these areas to decrease the number of maternal deaths.

The difficulty in accessing health services has to do with gender roles in Cambodia and the secondary status of women in the household.

What can we do?

- Improve access to health services at the health center for all members of the family, young and old, female and male and especially the poor.
- Provide information to families and encourage them to send any family member for medical treatment in case of accident, injury or illness.
- Expand knowledge on the importance of reproductive health care and safe deliveries to reduce maternal mortality.
- Increase support for local midwives and encourage them to stay in remote and rural areas.

[14] CDHS 2000 and 2005
[15] Ministry of Planning: General Population Census of Cambodia 1998 and 2008

5-Violence against Women

Unequal power relations between men and women in Cambodia are clearly demonstrated through the amount of violence against women. This is an issue of concern for both government and civil society. Among the causes are power relations, the concept of masculinity and femininity, and ideals for behavior among men and women.[16] People may know well about violence, but not necessarily see it as inappropriate. Often, they do not understand the causes and effects of violence and this is shown through the environment of acceptance.

6-Domestic Violence (DV)

Violence against women remains a major problem in Cambodia and is a sign of the low status of women in society. Around 64 percent of women knows at least one husband who had been physically violent toward his wife and 22.5 percent of women have suffered violence from their husbands. About 18.5 percent of married women suffered from mental violence, 12.8 percent from physical violence, and 2.7 percent from sexual violence[17]. Around one fifth of respondents who experienced violence said violence caused them to miss work and often their children to miss days at school.[18] In addition to cultural beliefs about the traditional role and status of women, alcohol, poverty, gambling, family squabbles, lack of education, political and social unrest are often linked with domestic violence.[19]

The Royal Government enacted the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (LPDVPV) in October 2005. The Cambodian Constitution also guarantees no physical abuse against anyone, and that the law protects life, honour and dignity of all citizens. The LPDVPV protects the husbands, wives, children and others living at the same home from violence. The law prevents various forms of violence, including acts affecting life, acts affecting physical integrity, tortures or cruel acts, and sexual aggression. If there is DV, then authorities are to make a record of the incident and report it for resolution. Reconciliation between partners is a valid option only if both parties are of equal strength. Restraining orders against the perpetrators, removal of the perpetrator from the household and/or protection of the victim may be issued by the court.

7-Rape

Victims of rape find it difficult to report to authorities or to seek help. There is a lack of information about rape, and official figures and clear data are likely to be underestimates. The report on the violence issued by NGOs and media networks were increased from 66 cases in 2005 to 86 cases in 2006. A Fair Share for Women 2008 reported that sexual assault had raised from 380 cases in 2005 to 478 cases in 2006[20].

Incidents of reported rape in 12 provinces increased from 182 in 2001 to 270 in 2002. A report of NGOs shows that 65 percent of rape victims were younger than 18 years old and

[16] Fair Share for Women 2004.
[17] CDHS 2005
[18] Oct 2005. Achieving the Cambodia Millennium Devleopment Goals 2005 Update. Poverty Monitoring and Analysis, Ministry of Planning. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
[19] Fair share, p 114.
[20] Fair Share for Women 2008

12 percent of the perpetrators were related to the victims by blood or by marriage. The law says rape is a crime with a penalty of 5 to 10 years imprisonment for committing a rape or trying to rape another person, whether she is a child, woman or even a sex worker[21].

8-Trafficking

In Cambodia, trafficking often results from hasty and ill-prepared migration, stemming from extreme poverty, lack of access to education and training, limited employment opportunities at home, and socio-economic imbalance between rural and urban areas. Trafficking of women and children both cross border and within the country is widespread. Cambodia is a sending, receiving and transit country for trafficking. An NGO estimated that about 100,000 women and children are being trafficked in Cambodia at any given time. This figure includes women trafficked within Cambodia and those from neighboring countries, particularly from Vietnam. An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Vietnamese women are currently in Cambodia as sex workers.[22] There was an increase in reported cases of trafficking from 96 in 2001 to 158 in 2002.[23] Trafficking is also a crime punishable by law. Eighty-two percent of sex workers are tricked into prostitution with offers of a high-paid job.[24]

What can we do?

- Work with stakeholders in the communities to prevent gender based violence. If it is *happening*, support the victims to seek appropriate care and treatment.
- Assist in transfer to health facilities
- Provide social services in terms of legal, medical and psychological support to victims of violence.
- Find out all means possible to care for and protect the victims.
- Encourage the sharing of knowledge and information of gender issues throughout the village. Support public awareness campaigns to promote gender equity and equality through all forms of the media.
- Implement and support programs on the above through educational sessions and advocacy.
- Ensure that authorities are trained and supported to investigate domestic violence and rape and trafficking cases.
- Sub-national councils and policemen have a legal obligation to protect victims and to intervene.
- Update the village and commune data books, and commune profiles accurately with cases of domestic conflicts.
- Discourage screening of pornography in the coffee shops in the village and communes.
- Develop database system to store domestic violence, rape and trafficking cases.

[21] Fair Share, p115.
[22] Cambodia Women's Crisis Center
[23] Organization Gahuk qtd in Fair Share
[24] Population Matters p21.

9-Women in Politics and Decision Making

While the situation for women has improved in some areas, the status of women in politics and decision-making has not much improved. There are still few women in political and administrative decision making positions. The proportion of women senators was 14.8 percent in 2007[25]. At the National Assembly, women hold 21 percent of seats (26 seats out of 123)[26]. Only 2 female are Ministers, 11 female Secretaries of State (7.7 percent) and 14 female Under Secretaries of State (14.6 percent) in the year 2008[27]. Only 9 percent of women was high rank officers[28]. The total number of civil servants in Cambodia was 167,220, among which women were 51,046 (31 percent) in 2008 and reached 34 percent in the mid 2009[29]. The proportion of women who were municipal or provincial council members was 10.1 percent, while the proportion of women who were members of city or district councils were 12.65percent[30]. In January 2008, Samdach Akkak Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, the Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia announced his decision to appoint one female deputy provincial governor and deputy district governor for every province and district[31]. To implement this announcement, the Ministry of Interior had appointed 24 women as deputy provincial governors and 197 women as deputy district governors[32].

Although a quota of 30 percent of seats for women priority was proposed prior to the 2002 commune council elections, as of 2009, only 13 percent of commune councilors were women (1,802 persons out of 13,853 persons).[33], Nevertheless, this means Cambodia has succeeded the Millennium Development Goal regarding gender issues targeted for 15 percent of women participation in the year 2010[34]. Women account for 30 percent of the village administration members. In Cambodia, 453 out of 13,890 village chiefs are women and 9,450 village committee members are women[35].

In Cambodia, 239 judges and prosecutors were currently appointed, of which 30 or 12.55 percent were women (29 judges and 1 prosecutor). Among the 36 prosecutors and general prosecutors, only 2 are women (one woman is a general prosecutor in the Supreme Court and the other is a prosecutor in the provincial court of Kratie province). There are only 2 judge women in the Supreme Court out of 16 members. There is no woman prosecutor in the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeal. Among 578 lawyers officially registered, 103 lawyers are women, which is equal to 17.8 percent of all lawyers[36].

Even those women that have government positions feel like they are not treated the same way as their males colleagues, in terms of their daily work, support, respect, options for promotions, training and travel.

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[25] Strategies and Development Plans updated 2009-2013
[26] National Assembly: National Assembly Secretarial 2008.
[27] Strategies and Development Plans updated 2009-2013
[28] Strategies and Development Plans updated 2009-2013
[29] Fair Share for Women 2008
[30] Strategies and Development Plans updated 2009-2013
[31] Fair Share for Women 2008
[32] Strategies and Development Plans updated 2009-2013
[33] Ministry of Interiors: Department of Local Administration on February 26, 2010
[34] Fair Share for Women 2008
[35] Fair Share for Women 2008
[36] Ministry of Justice: Report 2010

What can we do?

- Conduct information, education and communication campaigns to raise awareness of men and women about gender issues and to change traditional perceptions on gender roles and responsibilities.
- Support training programs at the local level on women leadership.
- Ensure women councilors have the same opportunities as men for training.
- Support women candidates and support their election/appointment.
- Support networks, such as the Women Councilors Forums.
- Disseminate the achievements of women councilors to combat the idea that men make better leaders than women.
- Ensure the quota for recruiting and promoting women in the commune is achieved.

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