

IMPACT EVALUATION

Project on Assistance for Women in Crisis in Banteay Meanchey

July 2003 – December 2005

Cambodia Women's Crisis Center (CWCC)

By

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Phnom Penh

**"Never mind if I am dirt poor and
have to scavenge to survive,
as long as I am rid of my abusive
and violent husband"**

From a survivor of domestic violence who was granted a divorce by the court from a husband who used to beat her violently, Battambang Province.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This impact evaluation of the Assistance for Women in Crisis Project in Banteay Meanchey of the Cambodia Women's Crisis Center was conducted in preparation for a third phase. It was commissioned by its donors, Dan Church Aid and Oxfam Hong Kong. The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- Document the results of project activities based on its objectives and targets based on the perceptions of its beneficiaries;
- Determine the extent organizational / management structures and processes affected the delivery of services and achievement of its goals;
- Determine the project's impact on the problem of VAW in the target communities and elsewhere, with focus on awareness-raising, capacity building and reduced vulnerability to different forms of violence;
- Assess the sustainability of programmes initiated by the project;
- Provide direction for similar future initiatives by identifying gaps and priority needs in addressing the problem on violence against women (VAW).

The fieldwork in Banteay Meanchey was conducted in seventeen days and made use of a combination of qualitative methods: focus group discussions, key informant interviews, case process documentation, art work / interview and secondary literature review. A total sample of 138 previous and present clients (47), project volunteers (23), village-based training participants (30), government staff (15), NGO partners (7) and non-target community residents (16) were identified based on a semi-purposive scheme. The factors considered in sample selection were year, services availed / programme type, type of case (form of violence) and conclusion of legal case. The research was conducted primarily in Banteay Meanchey but also included a few respondents in Battambang and Siem reap.

RESULTS. The results of the evaluation indicate that the project on Assistance to Women in Crisis has not just achieved its quantitative targets but also provided invaluable service to women survivors of violence against women and their families. Target groups reported a high degree of satisfaction and appreciation for its different programmes in responding to needs at different stages of their crises that otherwise would have been ignored if not for CWCC. The monitoring programme was able to provide attention that was immediate, accepting and informative to women who sought help outside and to those who needed help in their communities. The programme further helped clients decided on the best option to take in relation to their case. Legal services provided professional advice and legal representation for complaints filed in court; the shelter offered a safe place for clients and their families to wait out their cases and learn new skills and avail of counseling and other important services; the reintegration programme helped them get back on their feet and adjust to their new environment. The work of the CO programme also resulted in increased involvement of communities, the police, line agencies and volunteers in monitoring and providing a first line of assistance for victims of violence.

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES. Staff recruitment, decision making arrangements, planning, monitoring, coordination and other management processes continuously sought to respond to the internal needs of the organization as well as to the growing need for intervention on the ground. Funds permitting, the organization has been responsive to recommendations made by a past evaluation as well as to issues identified internally.

IMPACT. Project impact was evident in terms of increased reporting due to improved awareness on violence against women. Impact on incidence however would need to be better measured with different statistics coming from different sources. In addition, CWCC and its staff have come to be recognized as a reliable and credible provider of its services, especially of its legal services and safe shelter facility, and as an influential advocate of women's rights by government and other local and international NGOs.

SUSTAINABILITY. The project's thrust on advocacy and capacity building helped ensure the sustainability of its impact in the field. CWCC implemented activities that responded to both the immediate needs of survivors and to the more long-term causes of VAW. Its advocacy on the anti-domestic violence law helped put in place the legal framework for part of its work on the national and provincial level. Capacity building has also targeted law enforcers and local decision makers making them more responsive to the problem of rape, domestic violence and trafficking in the communities. Training activities, information dissemination and identification of volunteers from local authorities, the police, teachers and villagers also helped develop an awareness that questions the cultural acceptability of violence right where it happens. One clear effect of this new awareness was the many referrals made by these people to CWCC of cases that they encountered as part of their work or in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS. The evaluation found that although there were several areas that could be improved, these were of an operational nature and should only be responded to once the more strategic issues are addressed. The first recommendation was for CWCC to undergo a proper strategic planning exercise that takes into account trends, opportunities and threats on the national level. CWCC first needs to decide that within the broader context of the country's socio-political and economic and human rights situation, where it wants to take the project Assistance to Women in Crisis – whether it wants to continue expanding it, replicate it in other areas; alter it totally to suit a changing need, etc. The outcome of this task should inform the process of addressing the more specific recommendations for the different programmes.

Monitoring and Legal Services

- Work more closely with CO in providing more follow up of clients who opt for reconciliation and in developing a more comprehensive assistance package for them that provides information on a support network of providers of training programs, credit services and other relevant resources found in the community;
- Develop a more comprehensive package of assistance for clients who are not referred to the shelter
- Identify ways to support out-clients who need intervention for on-going violence; assistance in finding a livelihood; counseling for stress related to pending court cases;
- Review and improve efficiency of methods to address emergency cases
- Work more closely with the CO programme on disseminating information of laws and raising awareness on issues involving violence;
- Coordinate more closely with the monitoring team on following up clients who withdrew their cases.

Shelter

- Find funding for the proposed construction of a new well, toilets and a closed bathing area nearer to the water supply, covered play area, etc. and to ask donors to consider these needs for the next fiscal period;
- Strengthen and further develop counseling in the shelter by building an appropriate counseling room; build the capacity of the two counselors; provide counseling to clients' children; formulate and implement a counseling scheme for staff as a measure to help manage stress proactively;
- Run sessions or courses on gender sensitivity, VAW, sexuality, reproductive rights and other topics that help develop residents' attitude and sensitivity to gender issues and to foster mutual understanding and appreciation between clients and GAE beneficiaries;
- Review and assess skills taught by the training component by coordinating more closely with CO and reintegration on what is feasible in the field;
- Develop and implement training modules on basic carpentry, plumbing, electrical work and other basic survival skills for clients and staff in order to promote self-reliance in the maintenance of the shelter
- Encourage clients to give more feedback on the operation of the shelter and other related matters by complementing weekly plenary meetings with smaller group discussions

Reintegration

- Put may therefore be necessary to put all programme guidelines and policies in writing for better implementation, to aid in monitoring and to ensure continuity in case of staff turn over;
- Pursue further negotiations and capacity building efforts of the government agencies whose mandates encompasses the services that the AWC project currently provides;
- In coordination with the CO programme, further develop and encourage community-based volunteers or organize an informal support network of residents to help monitor reintegrated clients. This informal support network can also help identify additional local resources that the reintegrated client may be able to use so she can readjust to normal community life faster;
- The reintegration programme should examine more closely the results of its small lending programme, no matter how small it was. This task is especially important because among the reintegrated clients interviewed, AWC was only able to provide livelihood support to very few of them. The reintegration programme therefore needs to study further how it can be proactive in supporting women's livelihood upon reintegration.

CO

- The CO Programme should be refocused in ensure sustainability of the project and its impact based on the principles of unity, self-reliance and learning from mistakes. This refocusing will be characterized by the recommendations that follow.
- Complement the current volunteers with the organizing of village support groups composed of former clients, families of clients, and other fully self-motivated individual. They will also help with info dissemination, monitor and provide support to VAW victims, make referrals, support to reintegrates; documentation of village cases, etc. Eventually

these support groups can be federated and provide the mass base for public campaigns on specific issues involving VAW;

- Targeting of areas should be rationalized based on clear process of needs analysis which the programme can do or adapt from other NGOs, like IOM;
- Given limited human resources, the programme needs to build on existing activities and initiatives in doing their work – from nomination of volunteers, selection of villages, to conduct of trainings, etc.;
- Try out more creative and engaging methods of disseminating information such as cultural presentations, open forum, sports competitions during Khmer new year, Pchumben, Kathen, where the theme can be connected to the issue of VAW;
- Field visits clearly demonstrated how men and women can become victims of trafficking, child battering. While CWCC needs to be consistent with its mandate to help women, the project can still be more inclusive in its approach by preparing a list of NGOs and other agencies that are ready to help male victims and to whom they can refer the relevant cases;
- A very important point made many times by different respondents in the field is how men, who are often the abusers, are expected to change after a few minutes of mediation or after going through a legal process of divorce. There is a need to change men's attitudes and behavior first in addition to teaching women not to accept abuse;
- The methods used for training should be carefully chosen to cater to different learning needs for men and women. Another possibility is to explore having separate trainings for men and women so that both method and content can be customized to the needs of the participants.

Management

- Appoint a provincial management committee composed of the provincial office coordinator; the administrative officer and the programme supervisors; One of the roles of this MC is take on the role of monitoring the AWC project regularly to encourage ownership, responsibility and accountability for the project. The Phnom Penh office can continue to monitor but based on a more realistic schedule (not quarterly);
- Supplement quantitative indicators with qualitative indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes;
- Review further the need for a project coordinator for the AWC project;
- Formulate policies and implementation guidelines for a smooth, systematic and well-documented turn over of duties and responsibilities from one person to the other in case of change of to ensure smooth transition and project continuity;
- Foster inter-programme involvement in planning and reporting to improve integration especially of CO with the other programmes;

Capacity building

- Conduct a training needs analysis (TNA) based on the organization's core messages or vision, project objectives and targets and use this as a basis for formulating a capacity building plan;
- Devise way of measuring effectivity and efficiency of activities that will ultimately impact on staff performance;

- Improve the documentation of these activities by ensuring that the same information is included for all the activities;
- Recruit a full-time staff who will be responsible for human resource development entirely.

ACRONYMS

AWC	Assistance for Women in Crisis Project
CWCC	Cambodia Women's Crisis Center
Unicef	
AC	Action Committee (refers to Provincial HR Action Committee)
ADHOC	Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
CBO	Community-based organization
CC	Commune Council
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRAC	Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee
DCA	Dan Church Aid
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAE	Project on Girls' Access to Education
GST	Gender Sensitivity Training
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LNGO	Local non-government organization
MC	Management Committee
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
OD	Operational District
POSALVY	Provincial Office for Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
POWA	Provincial Office for Women's Affairs
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OHK	Oxfam Hong Kong
PTC	Poipet Transit Center
SEILA	RGC Programme for decentralisation, socio-economic improvement and local administration; Khmer term for "foundation stone"
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAW	Violence against women

INTRODUCTION

The Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC) is a local non-governmental organization founded in early 1997 by a group of women with a vision of a Cambodian society living in peace, harmony and development by eliminating different forms of violence against women (VAW). CWCC provides crisis intervention services to survivors of domestic violence (DV) rape and trafficking while simultaneously conducting training, media campaigns, community organization and legal advocacy on issues related to VAW. Initially operated in Phnom Penh, the organization expanded its reach to Banteay Meanchey in 1999 and Siem Reap in 2001 to respond to the overwhelming needs in these areas. The overall goals of CWCC are:

- to provide direct services to women and their children who are survivors of physical, sexual and/or psychological violence, including battering, rape, incest, sexual exploitation and sexual harassment
- to monitor, investigate and report on all forms of violence against women occurring in the family, community or perpetrated or condoned by the state
- to raise awareness about issues related to violence against women in Cambodia
- to encourage governmental bodies to undertake all appropriate measures (legal, policy, social, economic) to eliminate violence against women
- to promote respect for women's rights and recognition of violence against women as a violation of women's most fundamental human rights, including the right to life, liberty, security of person, equality in marriage, equal employment opportunities and equal protection under the law

CWCC first pilot the project "Assistance for Women in Crisis in Banteay Meanchey" in 1999 and was later developed into a full blown project in 2000 until 2002. A second phase soon followed and was implemented for thirty months, commencing on 1 July 2003 and ending on 31 December 2005. The objectives of the project were:

- To provide women and girls (and their children) in Banteay Meanchey province in situations of violence and crisis with appropriate intervention and support services;
- To raise awareness of gender-based violence in Banteay Meanchey province in an effort to reduce both the cases of violence and the acceptance of violence against women and girls;
- To organize communities and providers to eliminate gender-based violence;
- To improve the reintegration of women and girls leaving the shelter back into communities;
- To increase the capacity of staff to carry out their assigned tasks.

Purpose

CWCC intends to continue this project in Banteay Meanchey but its donors, Oxfam Hong Kong (OHK) and Dan Church Aid (DCA) wanted to assess the impact of the previous phase before proceeding with a next phase. This evaluation was therefore commissioned by its donors in order to:

- Document the results of project activities in respect to the objectives and targets stated in the project proposal and assess in what way the target groups have benefited through the perspective of a selection of the primary target groups;

- Determine the extent organizational / management structures and processes affected the delivery of services and achievement of its goals;
- Determine the project's impact on the problem of VAW in the target communities and elsewhere, with focus on awareness-raising, capacity building and reduced vulnerability to different forms of violence;
- Assess the sustainability of programmes initiated by the project;
- Provide direction for similar future initiatives by identifying gaps and priority needs in addressing the problem on violence against women (VAW).

This evaluation only covers the second phase, July 2003 – December 2005.

In March 2005, one of the donors for the AWC project, Oxfam Hong Kong (OHK) commissioned an evaluation¹ that aimed to consolidate its experiences of working through partners in Cambodia; to describe the program impact of each of the partners; and define the lessons from the past nine years. CWCC was one of the six OHK partners chosen for the sample in this exercise, and was therefore able to benefit from the recommendations made by the exercise. It has made subsequent changes as of late last year to respond to some of the recommendations, notably the construction of a wall around the shelter; the recruitment of a full-time counselor for the shelter; start a nursery school for the children of clients in the shelter, etc. Plans for the development of a database for its cases are also underway, as was recommended by the OHK evaluation.²

Methodology

To fulfill the objectives, the evaluation used a combination of qualitative data gathering methods that also tried to provide as much learning opportunity as the timeframe allowed for the project staff. The staff participated in the following evaluation activities: evaluation design consultation (Phnom Peng); identification of sample (Poipet); fieldwork debriefing (Sisophon) and; report validation (Poipet).

The research methods used were: key informant interviews (KII) for program officers/supervisors, NGO partners, former clients, government staff; focus group discussions (FGD) for program staff, community and police participants to CO trainings, volunteers, NGO partners, shelter clients; art work/interview for young clients at the shelter; secondary literature review and; case process documentation. Individual and group interviews were conducted without the project staff so as to give respondents as much freedom to share their ideas and opinions. Each programme however gave evaluators a briefing of their work before

¹ Oxfam Hong Kong, Cambodian Women's Crisis Center Banteay Meanchey Violence Against Women Evaluation Report, by Curran, Patty, March 2005

² 1. Continue to resist doling out generous stipend for participation in trainings while looking for innovative ways to make attendance more feasible for the poorest members of the community; 2. Continue to monitor closely the advantages and disadvantages of MoU with DSALVY; 3. Indicators to measure impact rather than just number of clients in plans and reporting formats; 4. Database to be developed, disseminated and staff trained; 5. Strengthen second liners with staff involvement; 6. Encourage staff to focus on client empowerment and giving them adequate info to make informed ; decisions; 7. Hire full time counselor for the shelter; 8. Build a proper fence; 9. Nursery school program for children; 10. Budget for parent visits to minors and vice versa; 11. Reintegration staff be trained in counseling and coached; 12. Reintegration staff engage clients' families in support of clients; 13. Reintegration staff work more closely with organizations to which clients are referred.

and during the field work. Case histories of the chosen clients were also reviewed before the interviews to give the researchers a background on each of their cases. Importantly, the staff accompanied us to the field in order to introduce us to the target communities and former clients, provide logistical support and give ready answers to whatever additional queries we had on their activities even during weekends.

The translation services of a female staff³ were also utilized during the interview with survivors of rape in an effort to be sensitive to the needs of the clients. We wanted to provide the same courtesy to the survivors of trafficking but the lone female staff who could speak English was not available.

Sampling

An initial sample for each program was drawn up in Phnom Penh mainly taking into account the years covered by the evaluation (2003, 2004 and 2005); and a year during the previous phase for ready comparison / cross referencing. This sampling design was further refined in the field to include specific forms of VAW, e.g. rape, DV and trafficking; types of conclusion in legal cases, e.g. cases won, lost/appealed or withdrawn. Non-beneficiary communities were also interviewed for comparison.⁴ The research was conducted primarily in Banteay Meanchey but also included a few respondents in Battambang and Siem reap.

In total, 18 clients were interviewed in the communities; 29 clients and children in the shelter; 17 women and 13 men in the target villages; 13 women and 3 men in non-target villages; 10 female and 11 male volunteers (teachers, police, villagers, village chief, military police); 5 commune council members, all male; 9 members of the provincial and district police, 1 female; 3 judges, all male; one female line agency staff and the hospital director, male. The provincial vice-governor also granted an audience for forty-five minutes. In addition, seven international organizations / NGOs were also interviewed⁵

All the programme officers / supervisors and staff under the AWC and some from the GAE participated in the group meetings, small group discussions or individual interviews.

Pupils from public schools were also initially included in the sample for the CO program but were later dropped in the field because the last trainings for students were given in 2003 and the original participants had either stopped schooling or had gone on to study at different grade level and therefore impossible to trace.

Respondents

	Total	Female	Male
Clients in the Shelter	29	25	4 children
Clients in the Communities	18	18	0
Beneficiary villagers	30	17	13
Non target-villagers	16	13	3

³ The official research assistant cum interpreter for the evaluation was male.

⁴ See annex __ for details

⁵ Adhoc Poipet, World Vision Thailand, Poipet Transit Center, Goutte d'eau, Kroasa Tmei, IOM and Unicef.

Volunteers	23	10	13
IOs/NGOs	7	3	4
Government			
PoWA	1	1	0
OD Referral hospital	1	0	1
Provincial government	1	0	1
Police	9	1	8
Judges	3	0	3
TOTAL	138	88	50

Limitations

The field work was scheduled at a time that coincided with the Chinese New Year on the last week of January. Although the evaluators knew this beforehand, this was not foreseen as a serious problem during the planning process with CWCC management. As it turned out however, many government offices were practically closed on the day before and three days after the first day of the lunar year. This affected the quality of information we got from the respondent of the Provincial Office of Women's Affairs (PoWA) who opened their office just for the interview and agreed to be interviewed with clear time limitations. It was also not possible to get additional files for 2003 because the person-in-charge had already taken a leave before and after the holiday.

Another limitation encountered by the team was the difficulty in interviewing a key government stakeholder, the Provincial Office for Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (Posalvy). We were earlier informed by the project office that he did not entertain guests from CWCC but when the evaluators tried to arrange for an interview with a ready fabricated line as to where we were from, the entire staff was not available because of a general emergency meeting. On another occasion, when the evaluators finally succeeded in contacting them by telephone to try to make an appointment, they were required to first submit a formal written request which at that time was already impossible because they were already out interviewing.

The evaluation was also affected by the project's poor state of case documentation. Often, the files did not give a complete picture of all the services provided to the clients interviewed which only came to be known by the evaluators during the interviews themselves. In addition, some of the files were disorganized and in other occasions, information was inaccurate or was different from the first hand account of the respondents.

BACKGROUND / PROJECT CONTEXT

Cambodia today continues to suffer from the aftermath of over thirty years of civil war, violence and political instability. Foreign donors have contributed large sums of money and resources since 1993 to improve the situation characterized by poverty, massive destruction of property, displacement of people, and the overall breakdown of socio-economic and political support structures to bring peace and foster development for the country. Achievements have been gained but many of the challenges however remain to be addressed. One of these is the need to stop the violence directed at women and girls, especially victims of domestic violence, rape and sex trafficking. The problem of violence against women or VAW has been increasingly acknowledged as a serious hindrance to

women's well-being. It is a form of subordination that robs women of their dignity, self-confidence and respect that keeps them outside the public realm of change and development. A national survey conducted in 2000 by the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Health indicated that 18% of all married women interviewed suffered spousal abuse, 15% of whom had been abused in the past twelve months. Although there are no reliable figures for the incidence of rape, newspapers contain reports of rape almost everyday. As a way of coping with high unemployment and poverty, people constantly move around within and outside Cambodia in order to seek jobs. However this also exposes women's vulnerability to sexual and other forms of exploitation because of their relatively low level of education and lack of access to information on laws.

The province of BMC is located on the northwest of Cambodia and is the older and busier of two ports of official entry by land from Thailand. Internally, it is bounded by similarly underdeveloped provinces on the south by Pailin and Battambang, on the east by Siem Reap and on the north by Oddar Meanchey. With unequal levels of development between it and Thailand and between it and the other Cambodian provinces around it, BMC is characterized by a highly mobile population seeking employment on whichever side such opportunities can be found.

The population of Banteay Meanchey jumped by 8.6% from 621,538 in 1999 to 675,137 in 2004.⁶ This population increase is partly due to people coming to the province to explore employment possibilities offered by its proximity to the border and the businesses associated with it. Five years prior to 2004, 32.2% of the women and 29.8% of the men who were not originally from their current residence had moved from other provinces. 26.1% of these moves cited 'search for employment' as their reason for moving to BMC.

Although women comprise 51% of the province's population in 2004, they have unequal access to crucial resources, as shown in the following selected indicators. Adult literacy (15 years old and above) for BMC women is lower at 56.5% for women compared to men's at 77.9%.⁷ Furthermore, only 14.3% of BMC females 25 years old and above have completed at least primary school, a far cry from the men's 38.8%.

BMC is mainly an agricultural province with 83% of its population living in the rural areas. With low productivity, lack of water supply and inadequate support services for agriculture, many people have sold their land to seek daily wages from farm labor on the other side of the border. A common scene that can be witnessed every morning is hoards of Cambodians walking towards the Thai border carrying pots of food they bring for lunch while they work on the Thai plantations for 40 to 70 baht a day.

The anti-trafficking police of the province believes this highly mobile population contributes to a complex and unusual situation conducive for crimes to be committed with relative ease. In addition, they consider modern technology and influences by foreign cultures as negative influences on Cambodian culture, tradition, dignity, social order and law enforcement and lead

⁶ Comparable to the national figure of a jump of 10.34% between 1999 and 2005. No figure was available for BMC population for 2005. Summary Report for the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2004, National Institute of Statistics Cambodia in Cooperation with Statistics Sweden, June 2005

⁷ Overall BMC adult literacy rate is 66.7% compared to the national figure of 69.6%

to offences / crimes such as rape, especially of minors, domestic violence, sex trafficking, labor exploitation of women and children, pornography and debauchery.⁸

The increase in the incidence of VAW in Banteay Meanchey is indeed alarming. For example, CWCC figures indicate an increase in the reporting of rape from 100 cases in 2001 to 230 cases the following year.⁹ The prevalence of domestic violence has been documented by a study done in two villages in Poipet last year, where 40% of the married women interviewed experienced domestic violence, 29% of whom are currently at risk of violence (experienced violence in the past year).¹⁰

Such is the context CWCC's project on Assistance for Women in Crisis in Banteay Meanchey Province.

RESULTS

General (from reports)

From July 2003 to December 2005, AWC-CWCC handled 508 cases, involving 522 direct victims and 380 relatives or a total of 902 clients. These clients came from seventeen different provinces but mainly Banteay Meanchey (85%) while the rest are spread out to the following provinces

8%	Battambang
2%	Siem Reap
1%	Phnom Penh
4%	K Cham, Chhnang, , Som, Speu, Thom, Kandal, Udor Meancheay, Preah Vihear, Prey Veng, Pailin, Pursat, Savy rieng, Takeo
less than 1%	Vietnam

Majority of the cases were on domestic violence (DV), 66%, on trafficking, 18%, and on rape, 16%.