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# Cambodian Women's Crisis Center Volunteer Handbook

Helping Women *Help Themselves*

**Phnom Penh · Banteay Meanchey · Siem Reap**

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# Welcome to CWCC!

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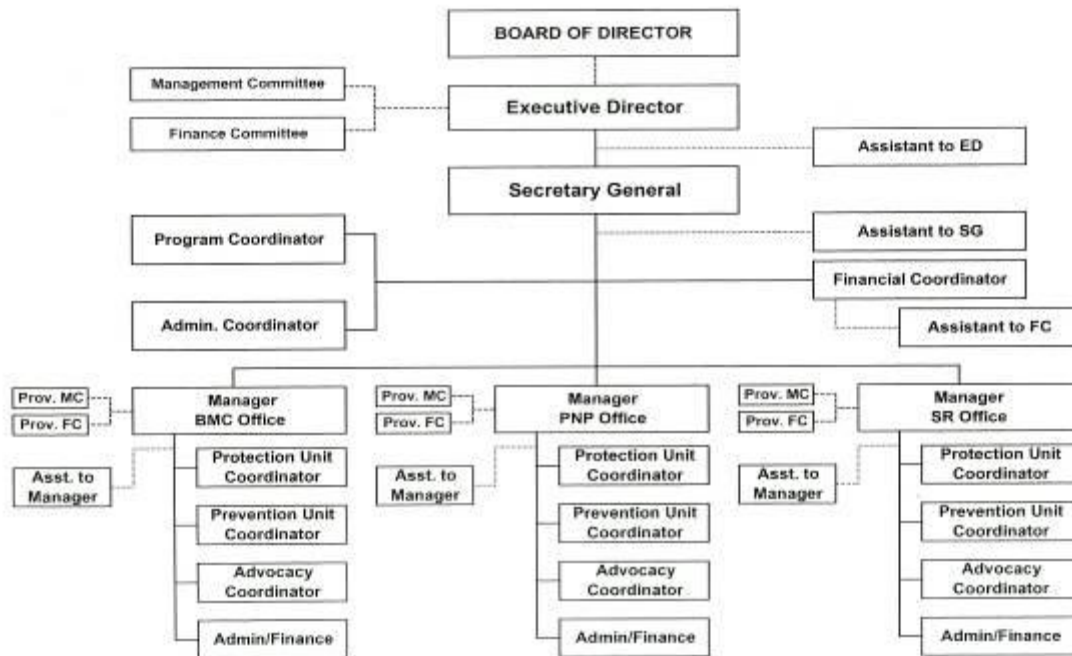
L: Children of Clients in Sisophon and R: the Sewing Classroom

The Cambodian Women’s Crisis Center is a well-established NGO with three provincial offices: Phnom Penh, Banteay Meanchey, and Siem Reap. Founded in 1997 by a group of women who saw victims of violence in need of shelter, the CWCC provides a wide and comprehensive range of services. As a volunteer, you’ll have the opportunity to learn a wealth of information and contribute to this organization’s mission. Please use this handbook to familiarize yourself with CWCC and feel free to add and expand upon the information presented.

**Best of luck!**

Lucy Sung, Intern (Summer 2009)

## CWCC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



- + Protection: Drop-in center, Shelter, Counseling, Literacy, Medical care, Skill and job placement, Reintegration Monitoring, Documentation, Legal representation, Prosecution
- + Prevention: Community awareness raising, Anti-Child Trafficking, Mobile Outreach: Safe Migration and Reduction of Trafficking (SMART), Scholarships, Youth clubs, Women’s Self-help Groups, Anger Management for Men (AMM)
- + Advocacy: Research, Media campaign, public campaign, National & International Networks and Alliances,

## Mission Statement

To eliminate all forms of violence against women and to realize their equality, peace, development, and happiness. The CWCC assists women and children in their struggle to gain freedom from violence as well as supports them in achieving a future that will enable them to live in harmony and security.

1. To **empower women** to make their own decisions and take control of their lives by providing service options to them and their children who are survivors of physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence, including battery, rape, incest, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment.
2. To **monitor, investigate, and report** on all forms of violence against women occurring in the family or perpetrated or condoned by the state.
3. To **raise awareness** about issues related to violence against women in Cambodia.
4. To **encourage government bodies** to hold perpetrators accountable and to undertake all appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women.
5. To **promote gender equality, respect for women's rights, and recognition** that violence against women is a violation of women's most fundamental **human rights**, including the right to life.

## Services

### *Drop-in Center*

Centrally located, it is the first point of contact for women who have been victims of violence, a safe place for citizens and government officials to report cases. The drop-in center is the central point for the provision of most of the services listed below.

### *Confidential Crisis Shelter*

Supplying women and their children with shelter and support including: 24-hour security, counseling, clothing, toiletries, tutoring, exercise classes, access to vocational training programs, arts and drama activities, cooking and sewing lessons, group educational sessions (eg. Hygiene, HIV/AIDS etc.), and follow-up services.

### *Counseling Program*

Conducting both individual and support group sessions for clients in the shelter with the aim of exploring options, reducing painful feelings of shame, isolation and fear, and improving self-sufficiency and self-esteem.

### *Vocational Training*

Providing CWCC's clients based at the shelter with vocational training programs or arranging for clients to attend external vocational training programs.

### *Services for Children and Youth*

Providing counseling, recreational activities, and educational opportunities for the children of clients who may have themselves been traumatized by abuse or by witnessing violence.

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### ***Health Care***

Meeting health care needs of clients through an in-house medical assistant and by referral to numerous hospitals and clinics.

### ***Legal Representation***

Informing women of their rights and legal options, representing clients at court, or assisting women to obtain legal representation from elsewhere.

### ***Reintegration Program***

Assisting women who wish to return to their communities and families after being sexually trafficked or exploited, and helping clients to locate employment opportunities.

### ***Monitoring Violence Against Women (VAW)***

Monitoring, investigating, documenting, and reporting on abuses against women; advocating for appropriate actions, laws, and policies to ensure equal protection under the law for women,, and seeking justice for women.

### ***Community Organizing***

Facilitating community discussions and organizing among villagers, local authorities, and local police to sensitize them about the issues relating to VAW, inform them of the laws against VAW, and enhance their abilities to tackle the problems in their communities themselves.



L: Scholarship girls and R: one of CWCC's three shelters

### ***Advocacy***

Producing nationwide television and radio spots on issues like sex trafficking and sexual harassment; organizing public forums; producing publications; participating in international awareness-raising efforts; leading women's coalitions; working with ministries, officials, and Members of Parliament; releasing press statements; conducting education sessions about sex trafficking in affected communities; organizing special events; creating media campaigns to advocate for women's rights and creating programs for the victims of VAW.

### ***Community Networking***

Organizing a referral system for women to access CWCC's services, and networking with partner NGOs and Ministries to provide services such as legal assistance, health care, and

vocational training to victims.

***Anger Management for Men***

Providing counseling and alternative solutions to domestic violence for abusive men and prospected abuser. This program also aims to help abusive men or prospected abuser by building their capacity to help other men to stop violent behavior.

***Mobile Outreach***

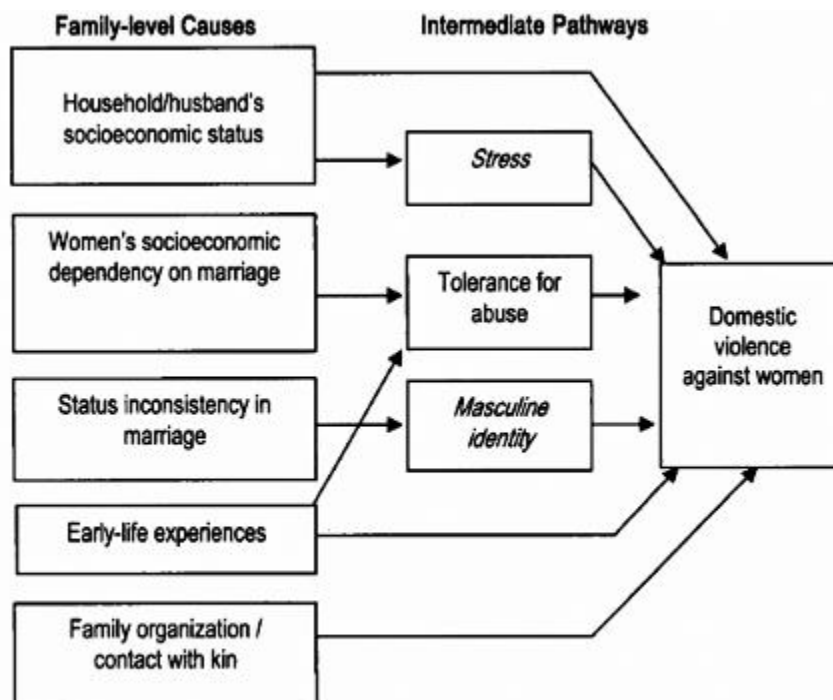
Providing child labor victims, based at their border-passing areas, with the opportunity to literacy classes, free medical assistance, information on safe migration and trafficking and health care. The program provides opportunities for child lab victims to return to their education by either skill training or formal education through CWCC's scholarship program or referral services to children based on their needs.

***Non-formal Education***

Providing literacy and skill training to at-risk girls, to help them develop their own capacities and self-confidence; offering business skills counseling and job employment workshops for those who successfully complete the program, to ensure that they make the most of their new opportunities; advocating in local communities through youth groups and media for increased awareness of the importance of education for girls.

**Domestic Violence: Definition and Causes**

Domestic violence refers to “assaultive and coercive behaviors that adults use against their intimate partners” (Holden 2003). The causes of domestic violence against women have been highly theorized; however, difficulty in analysis inhibits finding empirical determinants. Roughly, the causes of domestic violence can be viewed in the following categories: household/husband's economic status, women's socioeconomic dependency on marriage, status inconsistency in marriage, early-life experiences, and family organization/contact with kin. William Goode (1971) argues that people will rely on overt force when they lack other resources, or when other resources have failed to help them achieve their goals. Inability to find resources may induce stress-related violence. Other scholars have posited that women's socioeconomic dependence may lead to more tolerance of spousal abuse (Blumberg 1984, Dobash and Dobash 1979, Kalmuss and Straus 1982, Yount and Carrera 2006).



Note. This is a conceptual model. Items in italics are not available for analysis.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of the Causes of Domestic Violence Against Women (Yount and Carrera 2006)

Domestic violence against women may be contributed by a combination of economic and cultural factors. If the resources of a woman exceed those of her husband or of the culturally acceptable level, the husband may be motivated to assert dominance and strengthen his masculine identity with violence (Connell 1995, Thoits 1992). The family and kin may affect the risk of domestic violence against women through the type and frequency of contact. Couples who live with the husband's family may experience a reduction of the wife's power because her husband's authority extended to his kin in the household. Traditionally, new couples live with the wife's natal kin, which indirectly leads to a reduction of domestic violence. However, this practice is gradually dissolving. Another determinant of domestic violence against women is the early-life experiences of the partners. Witnessing family violence or experiencing maltreatment may increase the risk of domestic violence in adulthood because such experiences teach children to view violence as normal (Yount and Carrera 2006). Other causes of domestic violence may include: substance abuse, religious affiliations, age, location of residence, and previous child's death.

## Violence Against Women (from CWCC Global Report 2006\*)

Violent conflict that began in 1968, and continued until the civil war that followed the coup of Prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1970, as well as the genocide regime of the Khmer Rouge, crushed the physical and human capital that Cambodia had been building. At least 1.7 million were killed between 1975 and 1979, and it is estimated that another 1 million fled during the 1970s. Those most likely to be killed or flee were the most educated citizens, including teachers,

\* <http://cwcc.org.kh/downloads/CWCC%20Global%20Report%202006.pdf>

lecturers, doctors, researchers, and business elites. To this date, the legacy of this time remains. Trust has been broken, resulting in the lack of social cohesion and morality, while the education system, and other capacity building institutions, are trying to weave together a basket that due to the scarcity of human, financial and physical resources, seems to be lacking so many pieces.

Cambodian women and girls are facing all forms of discrimination and absolute poverty; wherein they have not had proper access to education, health care, nutrition, employment options, protection, and a voice in decision-making. Young Cambodian women and girls are the most vulnerable group of the population to experience gender-related violence. Violence against women in Cambodia takes at least three general forms: domestic violence, rape, and trafficking. Lack of education and information, lack of voice in decision-making, limited employment options, and the culture of impunity and its resulting poverty are the major contributing factors. There are also significant social and cultural variables that contribute to the widespread lack of respect towards women and girls, which manifest itself most clearly in physical violence and economic exploitation.

Young women and girls are at risk of gender-based violence, specifically trafficking, since they are illiterate or have received little education. For Cambodian girls in remote and rural areas, the attraction of working in city centers and other countries lies in the perceived prospect of earning money easily. Those who choose to work in these places usually do so based on their families or financial situations. However, many women and girls are tricked into being sold into prostitution and forced labor. Traffickers and pimps prey on women's and girls' low self-esteem, limited employment options, and poverty. They entice women and girls to work in the city centers and other countries. They are promised a respectable job, but are instead offered forced labor jobs and jobs of sexual servitude in karaoke parlors and brothels.

Cambodia has a traditional moral code of behavior for women, *Chbab Srey*. This code is used to educate Cambodian citizens in the public education system, specifically at primary schools. One of the codes suggests that women serve and respect their husbands at all times. As a consequence of educating according to this code of behavior, Cambodian women and girls believe that domestic violence is an internal and private issue of the family. Male hierarchy is evident and dominant in the family structure, as well as in the general society. Men are usually viewed as the final decision makers; other family members are expected to give them deference, respect, and obedience. In 2005, a survey by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 13 provinces, with 3000 respondents, revealed that one-fourth of Cambodian women said that their husbands had been physically violent towards them.

Rape has become increasingly more violent, with more victims being murdered after being raped. The Cambodian women behavior code is a value system that deems men to be much more valuable than women in terms of sexuality. Undoubtedly, this code pressures women and girls to remain virgins until after marriage. Sexual harassment and abuse is often considered a failure of the victim to protect her reputation; therefore, many rape victims remain silent, or they may even blame themselves for the assault. Needless to say, this code seems to refute the existence of marital rape, as one of the codes suggests that women shall assent to their husband's desires. It is extremely difficult to get reporting on marital rapes in Cambodia, as the culture of silence among Cambodian spouses has a long way to go, and remains abstract inside this neo-globalization society.

## Tips and Advice

- Be open to ask questions and make mistakes.
- Learn from CWCC and this country through your lens and the lens of the people here.
- Internships in Cambodia are very independently driven. Take the initiative and keep driving forward.
- The language barrier is not a great barrier. Ideas and stories exchanged are equally innovative and creative in any language. Skills in body language are a plus.
- Be careful of burn out and overwhelming yourself. Focus on the task and moment. Remember to take care of yourself.



L: Chemistry experiment at the Phnom Penh Shelter and R: Interviewing a local woman

## Office Contact Information

### Phnom Penh Headquarters

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## **Reflections Log**

At the end of your internship period, please provide your supervisor a written reflections essay on your experiences, observations, and your input. There is no minimum or maximum length. You may free write or use the guiding questions below.

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### **Guiding Questions**

- What were your duties, accomplishments, and unfinished tasks?
- How has this experience influence your perspectives on:
  - Violence against women
  - Women's rights
  - Cambodia
  - NGO work
  - your home country
  - etc.
- What were some celebrations or challenges encountered?
- Any constructive criticism and recommendations for the improvement of CWCC activities?

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