

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PROJECT - CAMBODIA

EVALUATION PURPOSE

In March 2017, IWDA conducted an evaluation of Banteay Srei's gender based violence project. Its purpose was to (1) identify how the specific shelter service components are being implemented; (2) identify Banteay Srei's current technical support needs in relation to its elimination of violence against women (EVAW) work; and (3) determine other opportunities for the adaptation of approaches determined as effective into new locations and contexts. Additionally, this evaluation, together with two other evaluations, was to provide insights that will support future program designs for IWDA's ANCP funded Women's Safety and Security Program.

METHODOLOGY

A range of key stakeholders participated (including 11 clients), with data being collected through semi-structured individual interviews (43), focus group discussions (4), a survey (38 respondents), and a desk review. The UN *Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*¹ was chosen to benchmark Banteay Srei's services against global recommended service delivery standards. The package provides delivery guidelines (principles, common characteristics, and foundational elements) for the core elements of each essential ending violence against women service to ensure the delivery of high quality services, particularly for low and middle-income countries for women and girls experiencing violence.

KEY FINDINGS

The evaluation found several **key areas of strength**. The combination of complementary services through the shelters has ensured that clients have access to an extensive set of services. Additionally, an effective referral network and close collaboration with partner NGO's has been established. Small amounts of financial assistance are provided to assist clients access services such as legal aid, and medical support. The counselling is perceived to be of good quality with high levels of satisfaction reported by clients, which includes counselling services for male perpetrators. Community-based awareness raising activities, implemented in conjunction with the

¹ [UN Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence: Core elements and quality guidelines](#), United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (the "Programme"), a partnership by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC.

PARTNER AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2000, IWDA Cambodia became Banteay Srei, a locally registered NGO in Cambodia. Since then, IWDA and Banteay Srei have shared 17 years of partnership in supporting the rights of women in Cambodia.

The project 'Community Action Against Gender Based Violence' has been implemented from 2013-2017 with IWDA financial support of 575,000 AUD over the five years. The funding is provided through the Australian Government's Australian NGO Cooperation program (ANCP).

The primary target groups are women survivors of violence, children at risk of domestic violence, witnesses of violence, and male perpetrators.

The original project goal was to reduce violence against women in Battambang and Siem Reap provinces, while strengthening Banteay Srei as an organisation. The current goal is that women and girl survivors of gender based violence are safe and empowered to be independent members of the community.

There are two specific outcomes; to ensure that women and girl survivors of violence are supported by Banteay Srei's shelter services, and see changes in attitudes and behaviours of male perpetrators. Secondly, to ensure the long-term sustainability of Banteay Srei's shelter services through increased resource mobilisation.

Specific Activities are:

- Provision of safe accommodation for survivors of rape, gender based violence, and trafficking
- Counselling for survivors and male perpetrators
- Couples' counselling
- Referral for legal aid services, and health support
- Participation in bi-monthly network meetings and coordination for safe reintegration with partner organisations
- Support to Women and Children Consultative Committees
- Organisational development including increased staff capacity
- Development of a sustainability strategy

Ministry of Women's Affairs and trained community volunteers, has improved advocacy for women's rights. The inclusion of male volunteers in awareness raising activities provides positive role models on EVAW.

Key challenges identified through the evaluation include limited availability of free legal services and lack of immediate safe accommodation at the community level (but also limited access to long-term accommodation and alternative housing schemes). A previous evaluation shows mixed results of the livelihood activities, as women have difficulty to apply skills learned from training activities. Social rehabilitation and reintegration in the community remains a challenge, and counselling staff bias towards reconciliation may not put clients' needs first. Staff need to learn to identify clients with mental health issues, and to engage more clients in self-help groups organised by referral partner Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), an NGO specialising in psychological support. Due to staff turnover, continuous and on-going training for volunteers and less experienced shelter staff is important. Finally, specific training needs were identified in counselling for children, including effective assessment of children's needs and the provision of child-friendly services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The shelter services as implemented by Banteay Srei are in line with current international standards and should therefore be advocated as a model across Cambodia and in the region. However, security measures in the shelters need improvement, for example by ensuring the 24-hour presence of at least one guard and female counsellors overnight. Establishing some form of emergency accommodation in the community and/or an emergency transport system would improve access for vulnerable women in the community. Banteay Srei could also develop long-term accommodation solutions, such as volunteer safe homes, as well as more independent accommodation.

Banteay Srei is advised to develop a long-term strategy for its shelters and to increase fundraising efforts to broaden donor support (potentially including government). IWDA could support Banteay Srei in the development of a fundraising plan and a core proposal for submission to donors. Banteay Srei should consider applying for funding in collaboration with its legal and psychosocial partners - potentially an effective way to secure more large-scale and long-term funding.

To further strengthen provision of crisis information and counselling, Banteay Srei could extend its network of volunteers and/or train local stakeholders such as commune counsellors, staff of community-based organisations, health centre staff, village leaders and the police. Alternatively, Banteay Srei could engage staff with psychosocial and legal expertise or solicit volunteer lawyers and psychologists who are willing to provide free services for clients and/or training for Banteay Srei staff.

Additional attention is needed to support men with alcohol related disorders and drug abuse. Banteay Srei could refer male clients to TPO's self-help groups. To further engage more men in preventing and addressing gender-based violence, Banteay Srei could establish men-centred discussion groups, as demonstrated by the Commune Committees for Women and Children (CWCC) and TPO. Such group discussions could address men's and women's sexual and reproductive rights, emotional and livelihood problems that lead to drinking disorders, gender-based violence, and gender norms.

To improve the level of community-based psychosocial services, Banteay Srei could aim for the wider inclusion of its clients in TPO's self-help groups. To empower women and establish networks of mutual support, Banteay Srei could equally establish self-help groups. Such groups are effective for overcoming emotional suffering and can be a powerful force in awareness raising and advocacy.

Banteay Srei could further enhance its referral mechanism through increased collaboration with other services such as Lawyers Without Borders, and medical NGOs. The organisation could provide written and pictorial information about its services, including what to expect from its partner organisations and details of where women can get support. It could consult its partner organisations to include more information on reproductive and mental health needs. Banteay Srei could also consider conducting collaborative awareness raising activities with partner organisations and sharing outreach material.

To respond to staff development and trainings needs, Banteay Srei could conduct an in-house assessment to review all training needs. Training could also include 'on the job' trainings through experienced former colleagues. Identified training needs are to increase mental health assessment skills of shelter staff (including risk assessments) and training on children's needs and child support. To provide Banteay Srei staff with emotional and practical support, the organisation could introduce a monthly team meeting to discuss stress experienced by its staff.