

NEWSLETTER

June, 2018



Cambodian Women's Crisis Center *Helping women help themselves*

Cambodian Women's Crisis Center is a local non-profit and non-governmental organization founded and registered to the Ministry of Interior in 1998 with a simple goal; help women help themselves. For over two decades of operation, CWCC has been recognized by government, civil society and international agencies as a leading women's organization that advocate for the human rights of women and children, gender justice and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children.

Our services provided to women and girl survivors of violence:

- Basic counseling
- Legal counseling and lawyer
- Drop-in crisis and safe shelter
- Vocational Training Skills
- Reintegration



WOMEN'S RIGHTS IS HUMAN RIGHTS

Twelve Women Support Groups (WSGs) in the 3 targeted Districts established and actively working together to raise issues impacting their lives at household and community levels.

CWCC has been implementing a project named 'Women's Empowerment for Social Transformation (WEST)'. The project works closely with three target groups: vulnerable women and women and girl survivors of GBV (sexual abuse, trafficking/exploitation and domestic violence), elderly women whose children migrate to work in Thailand thus they are left at home to look after their grandchildren, and finally, disabled women and girls.

Women and girls living in CWCC's target areas Banteay Mean Chey, are often vulnerable to human rights abuses, particularly sexual assault/rape, labour exploitation/trafficking and domestic violence, because the areas are very remote and isolated. The issues of abuse, violence and neglect aggravate lives of women and girls. The WEST project is designed to address the above problems with the goal of "the target groups in target areas becoming agents for change by engaging in the activities to influence duty bearers/policy makers to address their problems and needs".

The proposed WEST project is implemented in 3 districts of Banteay Mean Chey province (2 communes each district): Mongkul Borei, O' chrov and Malay. The project focuses on building capacity and confidence of the target groups to form themselves as Women Support Groups, Provincial Women Network and Social Ambassadors to report violence and discrimination cases, as well as expressing their needs to influence duty bearers for services.

Furthermore, they will also become community advocates to raise awareness on women's human right and gender equality. At the same time, the project built capacity of duty bearers on women human right and gender equality (complimentary by other CWCC's donors) so that they would be able to provide space for women to speak out/express their problems and needs.



QUOTE:

“Your attitude is my disability”

MEANING:

Disability lays in society. Society should be reformed or changed to include those whom live with lack or weakness of fitness, so that they are able to become involved.

Mr. Srey Vanthou, Country Director, ADD International Cambodia

On 20 November, 2017, Cambodian Women’s Crisis Center and Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation signed on an agreement to strengthen the cooperation in project implementation and evaluation alligned with the National Action Plan. The agreement consists of 4 chapters and 36 articles and is due from the signature ceremony to 20th of November 2020. Mainly, the Cambodian Women’s Crisis Center will accomplish the project implementation through 1). protecting survivors by providing legal assistance and facilitating physical and psychological healing leading to economic and social reintegration; 2). preventing violence against women and girls through engaging the community, local authorities and law enforcement in establishing a safe, involved and supportive community; 3). advocating directly and through alliances for legislative and policy reform which uphold the human rights of women through rigorous enforcement of the laws. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation will facilitate project implemenation and other problem solving through building strong relationship between CWCC and government department under MoSAVY.

RENOVATING SORYA THMEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

The project aims to provide all students and teachers especially girls in Sorya Thmey primary school with access to safe school buildings, leading to a better quality of education for children and the next young generation.

- Proposed project site:** Sorya Thmey village, Kob commune, Ochrov district, Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia.
- Date of activity:** The proposed duration of the project is from 15 March to 31 May 2018. The “handing on activity” by SEACO team will be on 21 to 25 May 2018.
- Direct beneficiaries:** Currently (academic year 2017-2018), there are 165 students (64 girls) in the Sorya Thmey primary school. These students are the direct beneficiaries of the project. Total teachers in this primary school are 7 teachers.
- Achievements:** Two school buildings (Building B and D) have been renovated. The renovation includes installation of new zinc roof, concrete pavement, replacement and fixing of doors and windows, and replacement/re-painting of building walls, 3 toilets and 40 student tables and chairs.
- Supported by:** SEACO through Action on Poverty
- Implemented by:** Cambodian Women’s Crisis Center



A Case Story about a Woman Fighting for a Better Life for her Son

Despite the abuse and unfaithfulness of her husband, Phalla has stayed strong to support herself and her family. After she married at 18, Phalla and her husband went on to work in Thailand as construction workers earning 220 and 280 Baht per day. She eventually managed to save up enough money to move back to Cambodia and purchase a motorbike to help support the family. After only three years of marriage, Phalla began having serious arguments with her husband, as he always go out late at night drinking with friends and spending money that their family didn't have. Although Phalla has admitted to being very direct and sometimes harsh, it didn't give her husband the right to beat her. Phalla considered telling someone about the abuse but decided against it, because at the time she believed these sort of arguments were normal in every family and that women have to tolerate violence.

In April 2018, Phalla began to notice that her husband was spending a lot of time talking on the phone and when she asked her husband who this woman was, he told her it was his uncle. Eventually, the truth came out and when Phalla confronted her husband about his mistress, they argued and then he decided to leave taking 300,000 riels (\$75), 5000 baht and the motorbike, almost everything they had. Her husband left the house for ten days and returned with nothing. Phalla had lost everything her family had, when she went to the village chief and she explained her story to him, he told her that she should wait three days until she was absolutely sure that divorce was really what she wanted. Phalla felt everything was hopeless, other villagers spoke ill of her behind her back, and her husband had broken their marital vows for a woman her barely knew. She even said that, "I would commit suicide if I didn't have my son to take care of." Now she lives with her son, her mother who is blind from tuberculosis, her niece whose parents are working in Thailand and her younger brother.

Phalla first encountered CWCC in May of 2018 by attending the training offered in her village and she ended up returning to that training 3 times at the invitation of a self-help group in her village. Since becoming a member Phalla has enjoyed learning about human rights and safe migration to other countries, in addition to learning about how to avoid violence and ask for help from social services. When other villagers need help with clearing grass or harvesting they'd ask Phalla if she could help and pay her 20,000 riels at the end of the day. Since she's helping take care of her elderly mother, she doesn't have the option to work in Thailand but her husband is currently working there and he is set to come back later in July with the money he has earned.

After joining the CWCC support group in her village Phalla was able to share her story with other women in similar situations, and she helps educate others on the violence against gender which she enjoys doing. She enjoys learning about others stories, as well as learning to control her temper in order to keep a cooler head during discussion. In the future, she hopes to earn her own income so she can support her family independently. She also wishes to purchase a motorbike for her son so that he can travel to his school more easily; because one of Phalla's greatest regrets is not having the skill or education to support her family on her own, she wants her son to have every opportunity a mother can offer.



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Kampong Thom Office:

Domrei Chankla, Steung Sen, Kampong Thom
Tel: 062 210 515

For emergency of child abuse reporting,

call: 1280

For human trafficking reporting,

call: 1288

Learn more about CWCC at:

www.cwcc.org.kh

facebook.com/CambodianWomenCrisisCentercwcc



Being female with disabilities, discriminated by own parents, and married to violent husbands is a real life of a woman in Banteay Meanchey Province.

Mother of three, Hom Pouch is from Banteay Meanchey and despite being disabled, she has learned skills in order to support her family. During the Pol Pot Regime, around the time she was just eight years old, Hom Pouch accidentally fell into a hole and badly injured her ankle. With no doctor being available to correct her ankle, the bone never healed correctly, which prevented her from being able to walk properly, work in the rice fields or carry heavy loads.



Case Story: A Woman Who Overcame Her Disability to Provide for Her Family

Her parents thought she was useless because of her movement difficulty and prevented her from going to school. She felt responsible for her uselessness and lack of education which led to Hom Pouch's attempted suicide in her age of 20. Her sister did manage to get Hom Pouch to the hospital which saved her life and made Hom Pouch appreciate the second chance she had been given.

She realized that she wanted to live a better life for herself, so she moved to live with her uncle in Thailand where she married a Thai man and found a job working as an interpreter at a rubber factory. With the money she saved up from working in Thailand, Hom Pouch purchased a plot of land in her hometown back in Cambodia. Despite her success, Pouch's husband spent their saved money on pursuing alcohol drugs and gambling which resulted in his death over 16 years ago. Pouch had two sons with her late husband and wanted to give them a better life than she had growing up, so she remarried a few years later and they had another child together. Sadly, Pouch's second husband wasn't all that kinder and just like her last marriage, her second husband started spending more money on alcohol than the family could afford. When Hom Pouch confronted her husband about his drinking habits he started verbally abusing her, telling Pouch how useless

she is and complaining that she could never do any hard work because of her disability.

Feeling like her husband was a burden to her family, Pouch divorced the man and now works to support her three children. In between her first and second marriage, Hom Pouch taught herself how to make and sell ice cream with help from her uncle who lived in Preh Vihear. In April of this year, Pouch learned about CWCC from a group of women in her village and shortly after applying to join, she was also accepted into the group. She had learnt that CWCC helps women to help themselves and she enjoys learning new skills that are relevant to her daily life. After participating in the training on three occasions, she feels more confident and hopeful about her future. She is happy to know that she has rights and that there are other women in similar situations who understand her pain and truly want to help her.

Hom Pouch, in tears, said, "I have bared all the suffering and there was only me who helped myself since I was young until I have three children." After participating in the training, Hom Pouch added that she not only stopped pitying herself but in contrary felt proud of herself that she though being disabled has managed to support herself and raised three children well.

Looking to the future, Pouch, 48, hopes to sell her farmland one day to level up her ice cream business of her own next to a school so that she could afford to send her youngest son to learn. Despite being discriminated because of her disability, Hom Pouch overcame the abuse because she knew her children needed her. She said, "I am poor not because I am disabled, but because I am illiterate; therefore, I have always pushed my children to go to school even though I don't have much money."

Hom Pouch understand the value of education, she possessed the money when she was younger she would've love to have gone to school. Now she only wishes that her children can go to school to live a better life than she had.

