



Violence is preventable
UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women & UNV
Asia-Pacific regional joint programme
for gender-based violence prevention

Exploring the Implementation of Policies to Address Violence against Women in Cambodia

*A study of perceptions and observations of national and subnational
implementation actors*

Working Paper

Partners for Prevention is a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV Asia-Pacific regional joint programme for gender-based violence prevention.

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Abbreviations

BTB	Battambang province
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CCs	Commune Councils
CoM	Council of Ministers
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
D&D	Decentralization and Deconcentration
DV Law	The Law on Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims
GADC	Gender and Development for Cambodia
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GMAG	Gender Mainstreaming Action Group
MoEYS	The Ministry of Education Youth and Sports
MoI	The Ministry of Interior
MoH	The Ministry of Health
MoJ	The Ministry of Justice
MoSA	The Ministry of Social Affairs
MoWA	The Ministry of Women Affairs
NAPVAW	National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women
NCW	The National Councils for Women
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
RGC	The Royal Government of Cambodia
P4P	Partners for Prevention
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against Women
WCC	Women and Children Committee

Executive summary

This report presents the key findings from research conducted with stakeholders in 2011, on the implementation of violence against women (VAW) public policy in Cambodia. It explores the knowledge and perceptions of key implementing actors toward VAW policy and legislation, and aims to develop a deeper understanding of how to promote more effective implementation of these policies.

Over the past decade, Cambodia has developed a substantial body of policy and legal frameworks to address VAW. Yet, implementation of these policies remains limited. For the purposes of this report, VAW public policy is defined as government efforts to end gender inequality and address VAW through legislation, regulations and policy action plans. Policies which will be referenced through this report include:

- The 2005 Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (Domestic Violence Law);
- The 2009-2012 National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (NAPVAW);
- The 2010 Village-Commune Safety Policy; and
- Policy papers initiated by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) including Neary Rattanak I, II & III. (These papers serve as strategic planning guides for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, to promote gender empowerment and equity)¹.

Interviews conducted as part of the research for the report, helped to develop an in-depth, comprehensive picture of VAW policy implementation in Cambodia. Interviews were held with key national policymaking actors involved in the development and design of VAW policies as well as policy-implementing officials at the provincial, district and commune levels of local governance.

A brief summary of findings from the interviews is as follows:

Awareness of public policies that address VAW

- Awareness of public policies related to gender inequality and violence was found to be higher at the national level and less prevalent at the local level.
- Many officials at the district level were not aware of the NAPVAW, although they were aware of and used national policies more broadly to respond to violence.
- Actors at the commune level and below had little or no knowledge about the national level policies concerning VAW, although they were actively involved in violence response activities through local mechanisms.

Understanding of the causes of VAW

- Government actors working directly on women's issues, or otherwise identified with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), highlighted several root causes of VAW, and in

¹ For a comprehensive list of policies related to VAW and gender equality in Cambodia, see Annex I.

² There is a need for further research on the prevalence of VAW in Cambodia, to improve understanding of women's

particular, linked violence with unequal power between women and men (for example, economic and decision-making power within the family).

- Other national-level respondents linked VAW with alcoholism, gambling and extra-marital relationships.
- At the commune and village level, VAW also tended to be linked to women's behaviour and failure to act according to gender roles (for example, a woman's failure to do housework).

Knowledge of the primary prevention of VAW

- Knowledge of prevention approaches to VAW, or stopping violence before it starts, varied greatly among respondents.
- Overall, few respondents at the national level were clear on what the prevention of VAW – stopping violence before it occurs – looks like in practice.

Allocating responsibility for implementation activities

- MoWA is perceived to be the lead ministry for advocacy and implementation of VAW legislation and public policy in Cambodia.
- Respondents from other ministries recognized the importance of VAW public policy, but were unclear of their institutional roles and responsibilities. Some officials suggested that VAW was outside of their domain of responsibilities.
- Within ministries, vertical chains of command are more clear, but the effectiveness of these roles and responsibilities is limited due to lack of resources.

Opportunities for improved implementation

- There is a consensus among policymakers and implementers that VAW is a problem that needs to be seriously addressed.
- Comprehensive policy structures to address VAW are in place, and gaps in implementation can be improved to make these structures work more efficiently at national and subnational levels.
- Local governance structures, within which gender has been mainstreamed, have the potential to effectively address VAW in their communities if the knowledge and resources are available.

The findings demonstrate that although there are significant challenges to implementation, there are also great opportunities to strengthen public policy in Cambodia to prevent VAW.

Findings from this report were presented to Cambodian ministry officials in early 2012, to help inform the development of phase two of NAPVAW. The findings were also presented to United Nations (UN) agencies, international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and donors to foster discussion on how to drive forward the violence prevention policy agenda in Cambodia. They will continue to be made available during on-going development of national public policy on VAW in Cambodia.

1. Introduction

Violence against women (VAW), in its many forms and manifestations, and across all settings, is a violation of human rights and fundamental freedom. VAW takes place regardless of age, class, race and ethnicity, and impacts women across the world. There are economic and social costs associated with VAW, and global evidence shows that violence consistently undermines development efforts at various levels, driving the depreciation of physical, human and social capital (WHO, 2005).

In Cambodia, the current state of research on gender equality, women's empowerment and VAW points toward widespread experiences of violence among women across the country. While there is currently no prevalence data for Cambodia², a 2009 survey conducted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) found that approximately 64 percent of the sample knew a husband who acted violently towards his wife and 23 percent of female respondents had experienced violence by their husbands (MoWA, 2009a). A wider body of qualitative research and literature shows that VAW is rooted in inequitable norms, practices and attitudes that depreciate women's roles and contributions in Cambodian society (Ledgerwood, 1990; Santry, 2005; MoWA, 2005; MoWA, 2009).

There is widespread recognition among Cambodian government leaders that violence against women is a critical issue, and there is commitment among government stakeholders to address this issue through legislation and public policy. In the last decade, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has taken a number of steps forward to address this issue. In 2005, the RGC passed the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims³ and in 2009, the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (NAPVAW) was implemented (MoWA, 2009b).

This report explores the knowledge and perceptions of key implementing actors toward policy and legislation regarding VAW. The action-oriented research involved in developing the report aims to better understand the implementation processes of VAW public policies in Cambodia, in order to improve mechanisms and processes for more effective VAW prevention public policies in Cambodia.

Key findings from this report were presented to ministry officials in early 2012 to help inform the development of phase two of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women. The findings were also presented to UN agencies, international NGOs and donors to foster discussion on how to drive forward the violence prevention policy agenda in Cambodia.

² *There is a need for further research on the prevalence of VAW in Cambodia, to improve understanding of women's experiences of violence, and how violence impacts their lives individually, as well as their families, communities and the society at large. There is forthcoming research on violence against women prevalence, including data on risk and protective factors associated with men's perpetration of violence in Cambodia. This research is coordinated by Partners for Prevention and is expected to become available by the mid 2013. For more information, please contact partners4prevention@one.un.org. In addition, planning is underway for the WHO Multi-Country Survey to be conducted in 2013. This is currently the most rigorous, globally-recognized measure of prevalence and consequences of women's experiences of intimate partner and sexual violence.*

³ *Kingdom of Cambodia Government Document 1005/3.*

2. Background

The last fifty years have seen a number of dramatic regional and national events that have impacted Cambodia's economic, social and government structures and systems. The spillover effect of the Vietnam War in the 1960s and United States carpet bombing of Cambodia, government power struggles that led to the reign of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s, and the protracted civil wars in the 1980s all contributed to severe experiences of hardship for Cambodian women and men. During the nearly four year reign of the Khmer Rouge, it was estimated that between 1 and 3 million people out of a total 1975 population of 7.3 million died due to murder, starvation, and disease (USAID, 2006). The majority of those killed were men, largely due to the prosecution of professional employees (positions that were largely male-dominated) and the greater percentage of men at the front line who were killed in combat. By the 1980s, Cambodia's male-to-female population ratio was approximately 40:60 (USAID, 2006).

The large proportion of men who were either killed by the Khmer Rouge or actively mobilized by the military left a vacuum in the economic infrastructure of the country. Women subsequently took on a greater role in economic development at the national level. Many women living in Cambodia-Thai border refugee camps actively engaged in income generation and skills-building activities with support from international agencies and NGOs which administered the camps (USAID, 2006). However, experiences of violence during the Khmer Rouge were arguably universal, and women also experienced frequent, and often severe, incidents of violence (Kasumi, 2006; Alldèn, 2009; Natale, 2011).

2.1 Emergence of gender issues in public policies

The peace settlement of 1991 and the subsequent democratization processes opened up space for women's empowerment and engagement in government. With support from the international community, civil society organizations began to emerge. Among these were women's organizations (often led by western-educated Cambodians, women from refugee camps, women working for international NGOs, and former members of the PKK women's association). These women's organizations, in partnership with the international community, played a crucial role in advocating for the codification of women's rights and gender equality in Cambodian government policy (Alldèn, 2009).

At present, Cambodia has a number of policy mechanisms in place to aim to address VAW and promote gender equality. These include the Domestic Violence Law, Neary Rattanak polices, NAPVAW and a range of other national level policies with sections that are specifically targeted towards women's empowerment. Furthermore, gender has been mainstreamed into different government line ministries and subnational levels of government, through the Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs). At the subnational levels of governance, Women and Children's Committees (WCCs) have been established at provincial, district, and commune levels. Further down at the grassroots level, focal points have been designated responsible for gender issues in their communities.

In addition to the public policy mechanisms that directly address VAW, women's government participation and representation in Cambodia has grown over the past decades. The representation of women in commune councils for example, increased from 8.5 percent in 2002, to 15 percent in 2007. Out of all village management positions, women served in approximately 30 percent of the positions (Hun, 2010). Moreover, women constituted 11 percent of provincial, municipal, district and khan council representatives elected in 2009 (Hun, 2010). The Cambodian Government has also encouraged increased representation of women in government leadership positions. H.E Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime

Minister and Minister of the Interior, during the ‘Forum to Enhance Women’s Participation in the Subnational Government Level,’ iterated that, “in the upcoming elections the government should increase women in the political candidacy list,” including appointments such as chief or deputy of offices and departments, as well as governor and deputy governor (NCDD, 2010).

However, gender disparities remain highly visible in governmental and leadership positions, particularly at the grassroots level. The representation of women in local governance is influenced by a number of factors. In particular, gender norms that place women in charge of family responsibilities, limit women’s opportunities for professional development, and ultimately restrict women from representing the interests of women in governance and social leadership spaces (Öjendal and Kim, 2006, 2011; Cheng and Foster, 2010). The precedence given to men in the public sphere also results in a devaluation of the opinions of female government officials by many of their male counterparts (Rusten et al., 2004; Öjendal and Kim, 2006). This problem is further exacerbated by the low financial remuneration of the Cambodian state system. Female councillors are frequently assigned to governance spaces related to women’s and children’s affairs (such as health, education, domestic violence, etc.). While these areas are critical for social and economic development, they often lack funding, and further reduce women’s decision-making abilities by not being involved in highly-funded areas of political decision-making (Rusten et al., 2004). Although Cambodia has made strides to increase women’s active participation in government, gender disparities remain within the systems of governance. These differences between women’s and men’s role in government are sustained by a wider social environment of unequal gender power relations (Kim and Öjendal, 2006), and place a high level of constraint on the implementation of gender equitable policy designed to empower women and to end VAW.

2.2 Public policy on violence against women

Cambodian public policy on VAW is framed within a rights-based approach toward ending VAW. Seminal Cambodia public policy concerning gender equality and violence against women include the Cambodia national constitution, the Law on Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims and NAPVAW (see Box 1 for more details).

In addition to national level public policy, subnational level administrations (province, district, and commune levels) have undergone a substantial structural transformation through Cambodia’s decentralization and deconcentration (D&D) reforms. D&D reform was implemented as part of a democratic development programme geared toward improving local service delivery. Within this reform, significant functions, authority and resources were delegated from the national centre to the municipality or district and province under a unified administration. This reform aimed to enhance horizontal coordination among key actors in specialized departments of the various line ministries, and consequently improve service delivery, including those services for women who experience violence. Gender-mainstreaming processes have also been implemented within subnational administrations, resulting in the establishment of Women and Children Committees (WCC) at the provincial, district, and commune levels.

Box 1: Seminal Cambodia policies on gender equality and prevention of VAW

<p>Constitution of the Royal Government of Cambodia</p>	<p>Article 31 (rights and freedoms): Every Khmer citizen shall be equal before the law, enjoying the same rights, freedom and fulfilling the same obligations regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religious belief, political tendency, birth origin, social status, wealth or other status.</p> <p>Article 35 (political equality): Khmer citizens of either sex shall be given the right to participate actively in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation.</p> <p>Article 45 (discrimination against women): All forms of discrimination against woman shall be abolished...and the exploitation of women in employment shall be prohibited in marriages and matters of the family.⁴</p>
<p>Law on Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (2005)</p>	<p>Jurisdiction: Within the household, and includes any form of domestic violence against husband, wife, children or the elderly.⁵</p> <p>Definition of violence: (1) an act that could affect life (including premeditated, intentional or unintentional homicide) (2) an act that affects physical integrity (including physical violence that may or may not result in visible wounds) (3) any torturous or cruel act (including harassment that causes mental/psychological, emotional or intellectual harm to persons within the household) or (4) sexual aggression (including violent rape, sexual harassment or indecent exposure).⁶</p>
<p>National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (2009)</p>	<p>Four strategies of the NAPVAW⁷:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Raising public awareness and disseminating information on existing laws; (2) Enhancing social, medical, and legal services to ensure quality care for women who experience violence; (3) Developing and improving policies and laws to enhance the criminal justice response to violence against women; and (4) Strengthening capacity of government officials.

3. Methodology

In order to explore the processes of policy implementation on VAW in Cambodia, it is necessary to first establish the conceptual framework on which the following discussions are based.

3.1 VAW in Cambodia

This research understands VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion

⁴ Kingdom of Cambodia, *Constitution and Amendments*, 2006.

⁵ Article 2 of the law refers to domestic violence that happens and could happen towards: a husband, or a wife, dependent children or a person living under the roof of the house.

⁶ Domestic Violence Law, Articles 4 through 7.

⁷ In addition to these four strategies, gender has been mainstreamed into various government ministries to ensure that there is a fair share for women in specific sector development.

or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (UN, 1995). As a term, VAW incorporates women’s emotional, economic, physical or sexual experiences of violence. VAW is a cross-cutting issue that impacts all levels of society, from individuals, to families, communities and countries. According to the ‘UN Fourth World Conference on Women,’ (1995), “VAW is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace” which is a “matter of concern to all States” in order to protect and promote the rights and freedoms of all their citizens. There is no single cause of women’s experiences of violence. Rather, violence occurs within a socio-cultural environment made up of interconnected factors that increase or decrease women’s risk of experiencing violence. These factors range from individual experiences (such as childhood trauma) to social level factors that create unequal power relations between women and men (such as social norms that assign certain roles and behaviors to women and men, and attribute women with a lower status in society) (Heise, 2011; Goetz, 2005).

VAW has been widely discussed and researched in Cambodia, predominantly within a framework of relational gender norms associated with masculinity and femininity. This research frequently references codified normative gender ideologies Chbap Proh and Chbap Srey (codes for the ideal masculinity and femininity, respectively). A number of scholars explore male dominance within society, as well as the symbolic constructs that are assigned to gender identities of men and women (Ebihara, 1968; Martin, 1994; Ledgerwood, 1990). Cambodian women are often portrayed as shy, honest, gentle, active, hard-working, humble, and unenlightened (Ledgerwood, 1992). In the political realm, women are frequently seen as publicly submissive to the male hierarchy rather than active and participatory (Frieson, 2001), as men are considered political actors while women are seen as non-political (Lilja, 2007). Much of the research links these notions of submission and obedience to women’s experiences of violence. Women are often expected to accept and tolerate men’s behavior, including their perpetration of violence (GADC, 2010; Surtee, 2007, 2003). A 2010 study on domestic violence in Cambodia found that both physical and emotional VAW were related to a husband’s level of control in the family (Eng et al., 2010).

However, gender relations in Cambodia are not static, and gender norms are constantly negotiated by individuals throughout their lives. There is an increasing recognition among violence researchers in Cambodia that inflexible representations of gendered identities are not sufficient to understand the complexities of why VAW occurs (Wong, 2010). Rather, it is necessary to challenge these stereotypes, and explore the ways in which Cambodian women (and men) negotiate and challenge prescriptions of gendered behaviours. While the oft-cited Chbap laws locate women’s gendered identity within the family, there is increasingly a shift to locate women within a space of agency and move beyond the “fatalistic analysis of the Chbap” replacing it instead with “greater sensitivity to the diversity of ideological influences that women—as vocal subjects—are negotiating in their everyday lives, daily social interactions, and movements within and beyond the home” (Brickell, 2011). For example, Derks (2008) shows how female migrants negotiate feminine gender norms that tie women to the household and the community, and find spaces of agency and empowerment as they challenge gender stereotypes through their integral role in the labour force. Other researchers contest these overarching categorical representations of men and women, identifying instead, more complicated factors that influence gendered decision-making and behaviour (Wong, 2010). Finally, while men’s perspectives have often been left out of research on VAW (see GAD/C, 2010; P4P, 2010), it is increasingly recognized that boys and men – in synergetic partnership with girls and women - must be involved in efforts to prevent violence and reduce overall prevalence (Green, 2010).

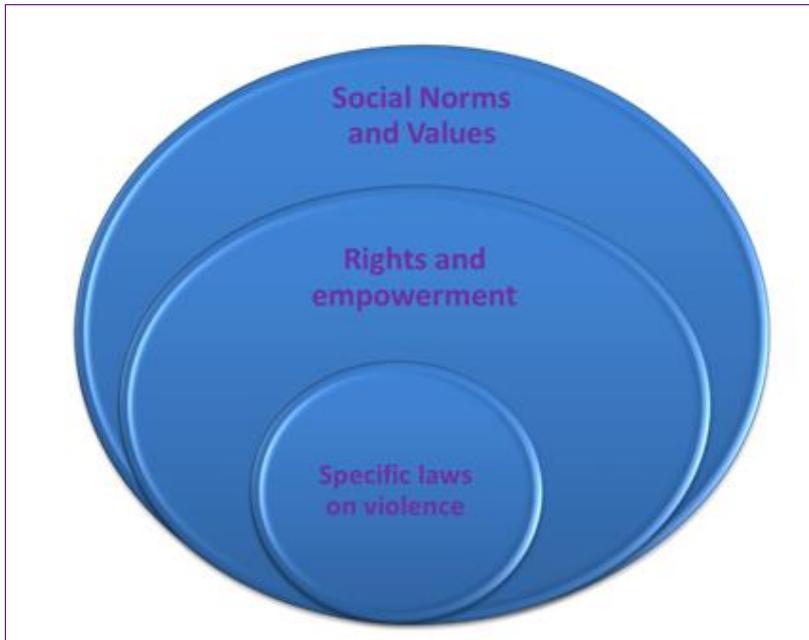
3.2 Public policy and VAW prevention policy

Public policies that aim to address VAW predominantly take the form of specific laws around this issue, such as criminal justice laws that protect women from experiences of violence. These include laws and acts that criminalize domestic violence, intimate partner violence or other acts of violence against women. This legislation is critical to build a criminal justice system that responds effectively and efficiently to incidents of violence. In some cases, the existence of legislation may serve as a deterrent to violent practices. However, a comprehensive approach to public policy includes two further levels of public policy: rights and empowerment policy and policies that target social norms and values (see Figure 1). Policies at this level can help to prevent VAW by building a society in which women and men have access to equal rights and opportunities. Examples of the former include laws that protect women's inheritance rights, or policies to promote women's economic and political participation. Policies targeting social norms and values include education policies that prioritize equal opportunities in education and labour policies that provide equal employment benefits to women and men.

To some extent, public policy related to VAW in Cambodia includes components of all three tiers of comprehensive public policy. The nod toward prevention in Cambodia's Domestic Violence Law, together with gender mainstreaming policies that promote women's equal representation and participation in various sectors of social, economic and political development are a step toward a strong policy framework to promote gender equality and VAW prevention. However, as this report will discuss, there are significant limitations to the implementation processes of these policies.

In Cambodia, research on the implementation of policy related to VAW provides a context in which to explore the gendered nature of government institutions and structures. This study uses an analytical approach that explores the relationships and interactions between actors and institutions involved in making and implementing the legislation and policies. This includes analysis of the development and use of language around VAW and gender equality, relationships between government officials and institutions, and perceptions of roles and responsibilities of the various involved agencies to uncover the 'interpretative processes' of policymaking and identify limitations and gaps of implementation (Schofield and Goodwin, 2005; Mukhopadhyay, Hunter and Milward, 2011). Literature on public policy often understands these 'gaps' as "rational and linear schisms" between policymaking and programme outcomes. However, a critical approach to gender-related public policy recognizes that the process is dynamic and cyclical, and implementation 'gaps' are situated within a broader context of relative and dynamic interactions between policy and practice (Wong, 2005). This study uses this approach to unpack public policy on VAW in Cambodia from the perspective of policy-makers, giving key insight into the ways in which the interaction between policymakers, policies and implementation practices occur on the ground, and the implications for VAW policy in Cambodia.

Figure 1: Comprehensive policy response for the prevention of VAW



3.3 Research objectives

The research objective of this study is to explore public policy on violence against women in Cambodia through a mapping of national level policy activities to:

- Understand perceptions of VAW public policy as related by actors involved in the implementation of policies – from high-level ministerial staff to community-based leaders and decision-makers – with particular focus on observations regarding the effectiveness of VAW public policy, existence of implementation gaps, and the delineation of roles and responsibilities;
- Develop recommendations for enhancing the implementation of legislation and public policies to prevent VAW in Cambodia.

3.4 Research methods

The study used the following research methods:

- Desk review: A desk review of existing global and national literature on VAW policymaking and policy documents was undertaken to develop the research conceptual framework in order to better understand how women and men contribute to the development of gender-related public policy, particularly concerning decision-making and implementation responsibilities. National level literature, including existing violence against women policy documents and gender equality policies, were reviewed to situate the research within the context of existing Cambodian government actions to end VAW. The research team also developed a timeline of key national policies that address VAW, which can be found in Annex 1.
- In-depth guided interviews: In-depth guided interviews (between one to two hours) were conducted with key policymakers/implementers at both national and subnational (commune/district) level and staff members of NGOs. An interview question guide was developed by the research team, with technical support from P4P and UN Women. The

guide contained a core set of questions for all participants, and included additional questions specifically designed for either interviews with national-level officials, or interviews with subnational implementation actors. The guide was piloted in June 2011, with a key policymaker from MoWA, and was refined based on testing results, by the research team, with technical input from P4P. All interviews were conducted in Khmer, by the Cambodian national research team.

3.5 Study population and sample

A total of 31 participants were interviewed over the course of four weeks (July to August 2011), in three sites across Cambodia: the capital city, Phnom Penh, and two provinces: Kompong Cham and Battambang. Research participants were selected purposively, based on their roles and responsibilities with regards to violence against women public policy in Cambodia. The list of selected participants was developed in partnership with Gender and Development Cambodia, a well-established Cambodian women’s rights NGO, that is integral to the development and advocacy around women’s rights policies in Cambodia. Invitations to participate in the research were sent out, on behalf of the research team, by GADC and UN Women. In cases where invited participants declined to be interviewed, other participants at similar levels of governance, and implementation responsibilities, were identified and invited to participate. The final 31 interviewees were categorized into two groups:

- 1) National level policymakers and government representatives; and
- 2) Subnational policy implementers; key members of local government structures, local and national NGO leaders, and local and national gender activists.

All participants signed a consent form, and all interviews were held in private locations. Given political sensitivities around VAW policy in Cambodia, all interviews remain confidential and participants remain anonymous in the following report.

4. Study findings

4.1 General perceptions and understanding of VAW public policy

Engagement in the development of VAW public policy

Overall, the respondents demonstrated general support toward addressing the issue of violence against women in Cambodia. They recognized violence against women as an issue which affects the social and economic development across the country (see Box 1). Much of this support was traced to high-level government advocacy toward eliminating violence against women. In his letter to endorse the NAPVAW, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen noted that the “elimination of violence against women is a prerequisite for building a prosperous country and for improving the living standard of its people” (RCG, 2009b).

Box 2 Respondent’s opinions on addressing VAW in Cambodia

Although there is general support for public policy to address VAW in Cambodia, respondents remembered the contentious debates during the drafting of the Domestic Violence Law around what acts and practices should be legislated against. They noted that discussions and negotiations around the inclusion of marital rape, acid attacks within the families and temporary verdicts that limit perpetrators proximity to the

“They [policymakers - both males and females] have real concern [about domestic violence issues]...Violence not only occurs in poor families but also rich ones. But if the poverty condition is bad it creates further pressure for violence.” (Member of Parliament, female, interviewed 17 October 2011).

“We don’t underestimate the problem of violence against women and children and this leads to a sustained commitment to address the issue....we have development partners and civil society [organizations] to help us. Each year, we hold a white ribbon campaign with the goal of combating violence against women and children.” (District-level Official, male, interviewed 2 September 2011).

“Violence can impact the family’s finances but also the whole national

victims, as well as implications for divorce in Cambodian society, contributed to the delayed adoption of the law.⁸ Some respondents suggested that objections originated from male stakeholders concerned about the potential for increased divorce rates,⁹ while others suggested that:

“the objections were from both men and women in almost equal number. This is our cultural issue. Some men understood better than women on the issues ...and they [male members of parliament] openly supported and praised the leadership in drafting that law.”¹⁰

The respondents’ reflections on these challenges foreshadowed a number of constraints on the implementation of public policy, due to the political sensitivities around VAW.

Awareness and knowledge of VAW public policy among respondents

Awareness of public policies related to gender inequality and violence against women was found to be higher at the national level, and less prevalent at the local level. Many officials at the district level were not aware of the NAPVAW, however they were aware of and used national policies more broadly to respond to violence. Actors at the commune level and below, however, had little or no knowledge of any national policies concerning VAW, although they were actively involved in violence response activities through local mechanisms (see Figure 2).

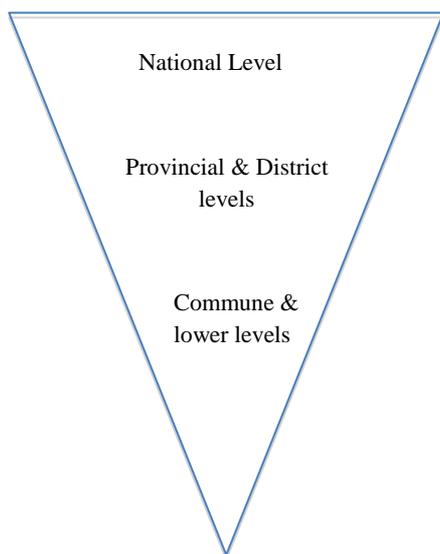
National level actors were able to converse readily on national level policies; however this knowledge was not efficiently transmitted to mid and lower levels of governance. Although mid-level implementation actors (at the district and provincial levels) displayed moderate knowledge of national level policies, officials at the commune and lower levers generally had very little knowledge of policies dictated from national government.

⁸ Member of Parliament, Female

⁹ Senior Official, MOI

¹⁰ Member of Parliament, Female

Figure 2: Awareness of VAW policies among study participants



This highly asymmetrical knowledge among different levels of actors suggests a bottleneck in the way that information of national policies is being transferred to the grassroots level. Many study respondents linked this bottleneck of information with the methods used to share information, notably the limitations of trainings and workshops geared toward awareness raising on national level VAW policies. The practice of training of trainers who are then responsible for spreading knowledge of policies down the line of governance is limited by the ability of these trained trainers to absorb large amounts of information during the course of a short workshop, and then share this learning with officials further down the chain of governance. One respondent used numerical ranking to explain the dispersion of knowledge:

“Assuming awareness of the central government is 10, we [the provincial department] may absorb only 8 [of knowledge on VAW policies passed on through trainings]. At the district level, the absorption rate is 7, at the commune level, it is only 4. What happens when these messages are conveyed further [to the people at the grassroots level]?”¹¹

An NGO respondent voiced a similar concern:

“I don’t think that the national level policy is understood well. The trainings are for a limited number of people, and these people may not have a clear understanding [of the issue] when they further spread their knowledge”¹²

In addition to the dispersion of knowledge along the chain of governance, respondents suggested that the duration and frequency of trainings, and limited access to other information (such as documentation of policy and policy updates), also contributed to the bottleneck of information. One respondent, who serves as the district level women’s affairs official had never received comprehensive training for her position. She notes that “all my knowledge [of women’s issues] is from a one-day training workshop.” If she wishes to share information on VAW policies within her area of influence, she has to initiate contact with the Provincial Department of Women’s Affairs for documents and new policies.¹³

NGOs have played an important role in filling the gap of knowledge by sharing simplified information in leaflets during their awareness raising campaign. One respondent from the commune level – where knowledge of national level policies is limited – said that he gained knowledge of national level policies from multiple sources, including NGO campaigns:

“Sometimes, we attend one or two day workshops and then share [our knowledge] with the rest of the community. Sometimes, there are NGO campaigns (by LDICHAO) to

¹¹ Provincial Official, Female

¹² Provincial NGO employee

¹³ District Women Affairs, Female

promote awareness of VAW. Frequently, veterans from social affairs come to promote awareness-raising through questions and answer sessions. If you answer correctly, you receive a prize.”¹⁴

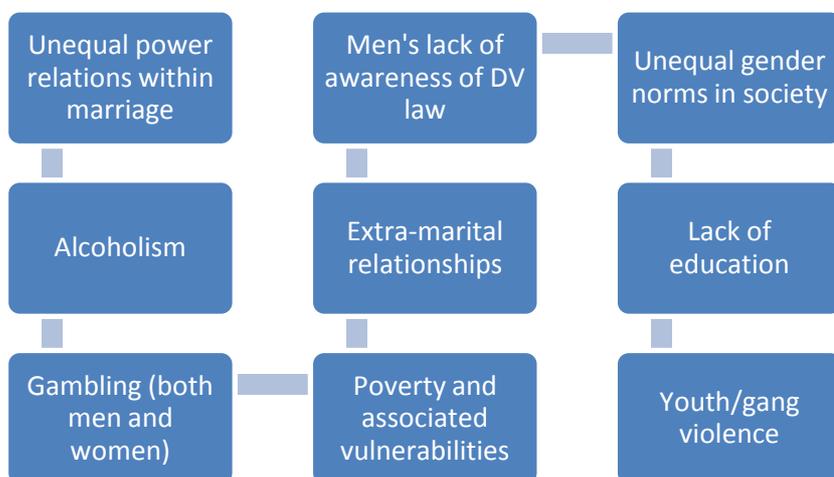
Perceptions of the root causes of VAW

The research findings show two noticeable patterns of how respondents perceive the root causes of VAW. First, the perceptions of root causes of violence differed among respondents serving at different specialized institutions. A general observation of this data suggests that those respondents working directly on women’s issues, or who work closely with MoWA, often associated VAW with unequal power relations between women and men. This included unequal gender norms and power imbalances between women and men, such as economic and decision-making power within the family. This observation seemed to be consistent across different tiers of governance. A respondent at the district level noted how power imbalances between women and men result in women’s lack of agency within the household.

“As usual, women are victimized by men and women have to bear this...Men prefer to have power. They are more powerful than anyone in the house. It seems as though there are only [men] in the house.”¹⁵

While respondents who work on women’s issues linked VAW with unequal gender relations, other respondents, not affiliated with MoWA or not working on women’s issues, commonly associated VAW with single factor causes, including alcoholism, gambling, and extra-marital relationships.

Figure 3: Interviewees perceived root causes of VAW



The second discernible pattern was that respondents from the commune level and below tended to minimize the significance of violence, and often linked violence with women’s behavior. For example, respondents suggested that the magnitude of violence against women was limited, and that violence only occurred within a few families. One village chief in Battambang explained that violence within his village occurred repeatedly within two families, but that the problem was solved and “violence in this village seems to have decreased because the family experiencing violence migrated to another place.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Commune Council Chief

¹⁵ District Official, Female

¹⁶ Village Chief, Male

Respondents also suggested that violence could be caused by women's own behavior, such as her failure to complete housework work, or her engagement in gambling activities. One village chief in Kampong Cham explained that

*"I want the police to abolish gambling activities because these activities lead to violence; particularly card games. Women like to play so much that they do not do any housework. When husbands come back from work tired and find no food to eat, they cannot hold their tempers....I think if we can abolish gambling, then violence can be minimized."*¹⁷

Knowledge of prevention approaches to VAW

The findings show a high level of variation in knowledge of prevention approaches to VAW among respondents across the spectrum of governance. Some national level respondents, who had extensive experience working on VAW issues, were knowledgeable on violence prevention approaches, and recognized the need to stop violence before it occurred. However, most other national and subnational level respondents had little or no knowledge on primary prevention, and focused solely on response approaches to VAW.

The national level respondents tended to associate primary prevention of violence with behavioral change approach strategies and formal law enforcement mechanisms, such as those outlined in national VAW policies. One ministry respondent linked prevention with "education and publicity to promote behavior change," noting the need for "capacity building for males and females in family management, and promoting gender equitable attitude of good citizens."¹⁸ However, even among those respondents with a relatively higher awareness of prevention approaches, there was a tendency to conflate prevention and response approaches to VAW.

At the provincial and district level, information on violence prevention is transferred from the national level through workshops or vertical communication through specialized line agencies. Consequently, the content of violence prevention approaches does not differ greatly from the national level policy environment. At the commune level and lower, information on violence prevention is often transferred through workshops held by various line agencies, and NGO activities and operations in the local context. When asked about prevention approaches to VAW, the majority of respondents replied with examples of response approaches, demonstrating limited to no understanding of what violence prevention looks like in practice.

However, the research did find that stakeholders at the local level – disassociated from national level policy mechanisms – have generated a number of innovative prevention activities. One commune level respondent in Kampong Cham, described how he raises awareness of violence through prevention campaigns at the local Buddhist temple:

*"At Wat [Buddhist Temple], there are Acha [Buddhist clergymen] who help to educate people. Since we meet during Tngay Bon Tngay Tean [festivities], we ask the Acha to publicize the issue of violence against women. The Acha knows more than us about the Thor Preah [Buddha's virtue]. Here, on Pchum Ben or the New Year, we organize a committee (including the village chief, one commune councilor and two police officers) that go down to each Wat [temple], to publicize the issue."*¹⁹

¹⁷ Village Chief, Male .

¹⁸ MoI Senior Official MoI, Female

¹⁹ Commune Council Chief, Male

4.2 Stakeholder relations and chains of responsibility

Scope of stakeholders and responsibilities

To better understand the processes of implementing VAW public policy in Cambodia, this research study asked participants about their perceptions of roles and responsibilities of the various actors tasked with implementation. Respondents identified various national level institutions that are involved in the development and implementation of VAW public policy (see Box 3).

At the national level, respondents identified MoWA as the lead agency for advocacy and implementation of VAW legislation and public policy in Cambodia.²⁰ The other line ministries also play important roles to promote gender equality and address VAW. The respondents identified different approaches and focus areas on violence against women issues, based on the specific sector of the ministry. For example, the MoI links closely with processes related to gender mainstreaming, particularly into subnational governance structures. The MoH focuses on programmes and policies associated with the health-related consequences of VAW. The MoEYS works to introduce gender issues and VAW into school curriculums to raise awareness among youth. The MoSA provides specific training and support to women and children impacted by violence. The MoJ takes the lead on development of a legal justice system for victims of VAW. Gender mainstreaming activities have been implemented by Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) which sit within each ministry, and operate under the coordination of the National Council for Women (NCW), whose members comprise of: the Minister of Women's Affairs, and secretary of states from each of the line ministries. Respondents from some of these other ministries recognized the importance of VAW public policy within their domain. However, they remained unclear of their specific institutional roles and responsibilities, and the overlap between agencies. Some officials suggested that VAW was outside of their domain of responsibilities altogether.

Box 2: National level ministries identified as involved in VAW public policy

- The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)
- The Ministry of Interior (MoI)
- The Ministry of Health (MoH)
- The Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS)
- The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA)
- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- The National Council for Women (NCW)
- Gender Mainstreaming Action Group (GMAG)

Beyond government institutions, respondents recognized the role of bilateral and multilateral agencies (e.g., UNDP, UNFPA, and GIZ) and international and national NGOs. These organizations were considered by the respondents to be well placed to provide input and advice on gender policymaking at the national level.

At the subnational level, respondents identified territorial authorities (different tiers of subnational government), the police and military police, different line ministries at the provincial and district levels,

²⁰ To-date MoWA has initiated and implemented the DV law and a number of other key policies related to the promotion of gender equality, including Neary Ratanak I (1999-2003), Neary Ratanak II (2004-2008), Neary Ratanak III (2009-2013), and the NAPVAW (2009-2012).

and various NGOs, all of which form the bulk of policy implementers at the subnational levels. The authorities and different line ministries fulfill their specific roles based on their domain of responsibilities. However, they are confined to different constraints including human resources and budgetary issues. The NGOs help to fill in the implementation gap left by the authorities.

Respondents also pointed out institutional mechanisms in place to help safeguard women and children's well-being. Women and Children Committees (WCCs) have also been established at the provincial, district, and commune levels with the mandate to promote awareness raising and prevention of VAW. The WCCs at the commune level have been established for a longer period of time, and consequently are generally more functional at this stage than the district and provincial level WCCs. Among the first communes to develop the WCCs were those in six target provinces of UNICEF's Children's Right Programme, including Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Thom, Kampong Speu, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, and Stung Treng.²¹ Other communes began to establish their WCCs in 2008.²² Under the current legal requirement, the chair of the WCCs must be a female commune councilor. If there are no female commune councilors, the commune must recruit a woman to serve as a permanent member.

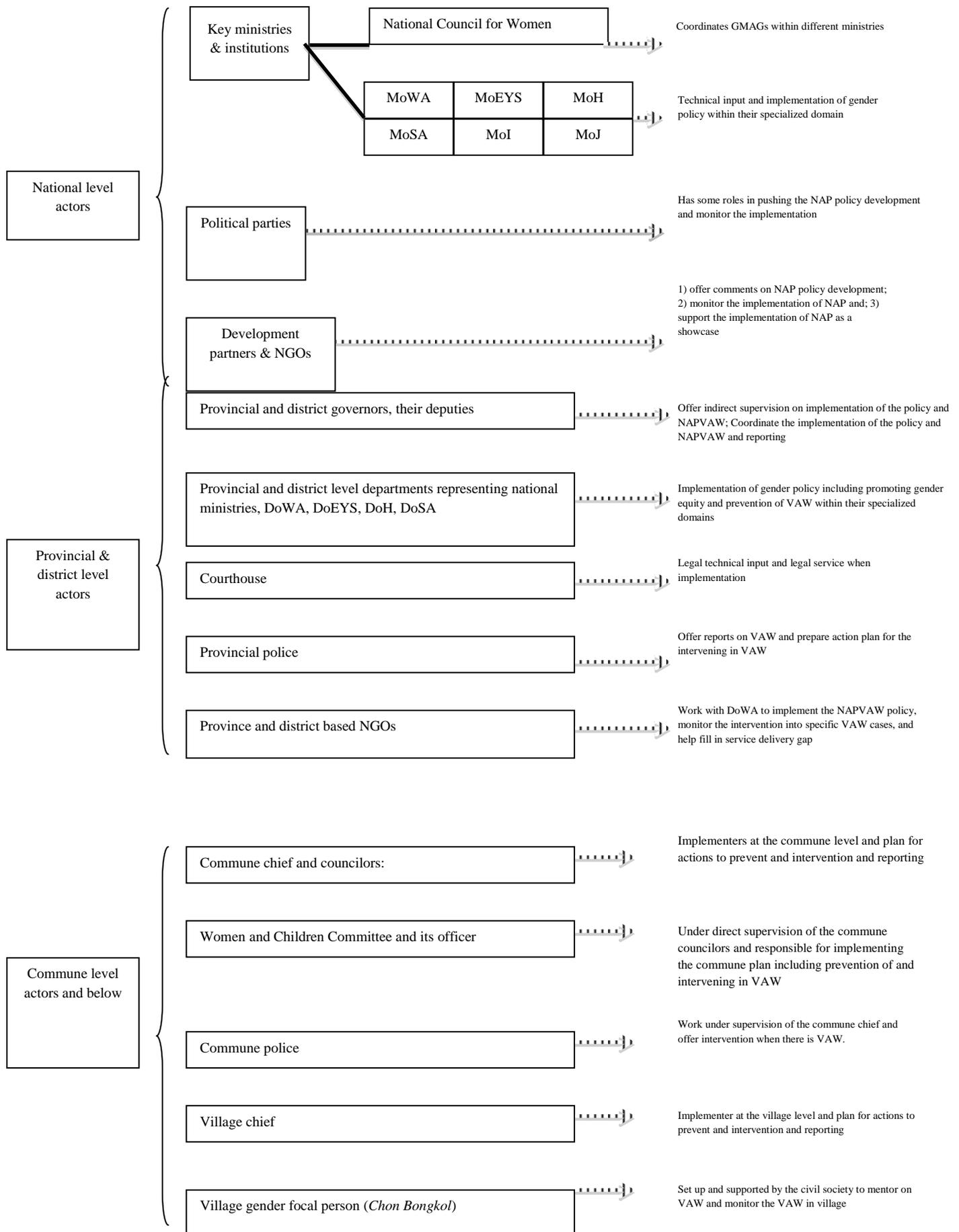
Respondents commonly agreed that the commune is the key implementer of national level policies due to its proximity to the local community. The commune implements national policies within its locality with support from different specialized line ministries. It is a decentralized governance unit of Cambodia; commune councilors are directly elected by the people.

Finally, it is commonly understood among national level officials that at the village level, there is a *Chun Bongkol* [gender focal person] who is the first point of contact at the grassroots level when VAW takes place. However, it is not quite clear if such a *Chun Bongkol* is present at every village.

²¹ At the time was named as *Kanak Kamamka Kechka Neary Khum* [Commune Women's Affairs Committee].

²² MoI Official

Figure 4: Stakeholders in Cambodia’s VAW policies



Relationships and networks among key policy stakeholders

To better understand perceptions of VAW public policy as related by actors involved in the implementation process, questions were asked around roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. Much of this discussion centred around the relationships between the actors involved in the implementation of VAW public policy at the national and subnational level. As mentioned above, it is generally recognized that addressing VAW is a priority area for policymaking. However respondents highlighted the difficulties associated with horizontal coordination across governance structures (both national and subnational), versus the more structured system of roles and responsibilities that is implemented vertically within specific agencies.

Horizontal relationships across ministries at the national level

Based on respondent interviews, the horizontal relationships among stakeholders involved in violence against women public policy in Cambodia are complex, and occasionally contested. The respondents proposed a number of causes for this policy environment, and discussed the implications of relationships on policy implementation.

First, the involvement of many actors and the potential for overlapping responsibilities creates a number of coordination issues, which have been difficult to overcome. One respondent suggested that agencies should not only identify their strengths, but also recognize their weaknesses, in order to better coordinate and build on the strengths of others.²³ The confusion surrounding overlapping roles and responsibilities of the various horizontal actors has the potential to limit the effective implementation of public policy on VAW.

Second, there is misunderstanding, or lack of awareness, of the varied approaches of the different line agencies, which can lead to perceptions of inaccessibility, particularly at the subnational level. One national level respondent noted that the legal technicalities required to sentence a perpetrator of violence are difficult to reconcile with expectations from social justice actors, noting that “we always hear complaints...’why does the judge always release the perpetrator?’ but we do not have enough evidence, some girls are afraid to answer.”²⁴

Third, the technical process of policymaking requires input from different specialized ministries, which can contribute to delays in policy adoption.²⁵ Key informants commonly agreed that addressing VAW is widely regarded as an important issue within Cambodia policy circles. However, a number of respondents noted that violence against women is a sensitive issue, and that cultural sensitivities over certain aspects of violence against women policy, such as divorce, require continuous negotiation among stakeholders. One respondent proposed that court procedures serve as a last recourse, when “people can no longer live together...but in the end, there is only divorce and the breakup of families.”²⁶ The constant negotiation of social issues among the various agencies contributes to the difficult horizontal relationships among key stakeholders in VAW policy in Cambodia.

Horizontal relationships across ministries at the subnational level

Similar difficulties among horizontal relationships between key implementing actors were reported at the provincial and district level, particularly related to coordination between different institutions, and delineation of roles and responsibilities of the various actors. One respondent suggested that not all institutions work directly with one another, noting that “only a number of institutions are active

²³ *Official, unnamed institution*

²⁴ *Official at MoJ*

²⁵ *MoI Official*

²⁶ *Senior Official*

working with [the provincial level MoWA] directly.” Among those institutions which she identified as relevant to addressing VAW at the provincial level “only the Social Welfare Department is active and easy to work with.”²⁷ Another provincial level respondent, in a separate province, shared similar concerns, and proposed “better collaboration from the court, and more importantly from justice police...The court is independent and thus it is difficult to access them.”²⁸

At the commune level, respondents said they had a degree of detachment from the difficult horizontal working relationships found at the national, provincial, and district levels. However, the commune is the lowest tier of subnational government, and no line ministries are present at this level.²⁹ Consequently, commune-level implementation actors rely on services provided by specialized departments of line ministries from upper levels of governance.³⁰ The primary difficulty in implementation processes at the commune level, according to respondents, is the relationship between the police and the local officials who work to address violence against women. One respondent noted that:

“The police force is troublesome. The Phum Khum Mean Sovathepheap (Safe Commune and Village Policy) address five targets and one of them is gambling...The village chief tried very hard to address this but the police allow gambling to occur by charging 200,000 riels in rent from the gambling host per month. I think if we can abolish gambling violence can be minimized.”³¹

The respondents did note that there exist a number of productive relationships among different actors horizontally across various agencies. One respondent at the national level reported that “cooperation between MoWA and the MoJ is good. If we are asked for help, we offer help.”³² Similarly, a district-level respondent claimed that:

“Violence cases are reported to us by commune councilors responsible for women and children’s affairs. When problems are reported, if it is serious, we intervene with armed force including military police and the commissioners. We have good relations with them.”³³

Vertical relationships within line ministries – from national to subnational levels

Respondents reported that vertical working relationships within specific line ministries tended to function more smoothly, and this was often attributed to the orderly delegation of roles and responsibilities from top to bottom, as well as clarity of function of the specific line ministry. While vertical chains of command underwent some structural changes as a result of D&D reforms, systems of hierarchy remain embedded within the day to day functioning of the subnational levels of governance. As one MoWA respondent noted, “our job is to follow the policy and vision of MoWA... to ensure that women receive legal protection [and] to ensure that adoption of law and policies meet needs of women and to help women and men to understand on the issue.”³⁴

²⁷ Provincial Women Affairs Officer

²⁸ Provincial Women Affairs Officer 2

²⁹ Except the police force which is a part of the Ministry of Interior.

³⁰ The lowest tier of government where the line ministries are present is the district level.

³¹ Village Chief

³² Official, MoJ

³³ District Official, Female

³⁴ Official, MoWA

While the D&D reforms gave a substantial level of autonomy in decision-making to subnational level administrations (province, district, and commune), standard practice, as described by the respondents, still shows patterns of hierarchical relations. One provincial-level respondent from Battambang explained the system of hierarchy as “mutual respect between top level (*Thnak Leu*) and lower level (*Thnak Krom*). When the top level issues an order or request for the lower level to implement, the lower level must implement.”³⁵ Many commune councilors as well as those serving at the village levels commonly see their roles as carrying out order assigned by higher level authorities (Heng, Kim and So, 2011). When asked why they have made such strong commitment to address VAW, respondents from the commune level and below frequently replied that they were merely carrying out orders. “Local level officials receive instructions and obey the instructions...thus we understand the hierarchy” noted one respondent from the commune level in Battambang.³⁶ A number of other respondents said that they respected their duty within the working hierarchy of the governance system, and perceived it as a personal commitment.

“I carried out order from Thnak Leu [the top]... Also, in my mind if our nation is like this and if we don’t help, it will sink further. Thus, I just tried my best, even I receive or not receive salary, to help at least some part.”³⁷

As demonstrated, vertical relationships among VAW policy implementation actors were usually reported to be less contested than the horizontal relationships discussed previously. Yet, the respondents raised a number of concerns with regards to limitations of implementation due to difficulties arising from the expectations surrounding vertical chains of command.

Within line ministries, respondents discussed how the discrepancy between scope of work assigned and available resources, limits the ability and incentives of committed officials to respond to VAW cases, and results in intra-institutional limitations to implementation of national VAW policies. In the case of district level women’s affairs officials, a network of focal points exists across the villages, yet due to budget constraints, focal points and district-level partners are unable to conduct awareness raising activities or implement programmes to reduce violence. Even “when there are violence cases, we have to pay our own gas to intervene, inquire, and resolve the problem,” a district-level respondent noted.³⁸

Intra-institutional difficulties also have the potential to emerge from the existence of *Kse* (a system of informal personal relationships). This form of personal networking exists at both national and subnational levels. There are a number of opportunities to strengthen implementation of VAW public policy using *Kse* networks, for example, to commit resources for community implementation of policies, or to push effective implementation strategies forward, despite opposition. However, respondents also noted that the presence of *Kse* can reinforce unequal gender power relations, particularly with regards to provision of justice for victims of VAW. This use of personal power networks can raise strong barriers to effective implementation of VAW policies. One respondent at the district described her personal experience with the opportunities, as well as limitations, of *Kse*.

“In a court case, the male counterpart was so strong and I dared not go alone (to intervene). I needed to consider my own safety and requested the police chief, commune councilor, and local police to accompany me. I needed to utilize some of my personal resources (Kse) to get the work done well... But he [the perpetrator] said why

³⁵ Provincial Official, BTB

³⁶ Commune Chief, BTB

³⁷ Village Focal Person

³⁸ District Women Affair Officer

do you help that person? It was said in a way that conveyed disrespect for women's capacity. He was not even afraid of the police authority and bragged about his Kse. Thus I need to watch out my personal safety accordingly."³⁹

Finally, respondents discussed how the implementation of D&D reforms has led to contradicting chains of influence and accountability at the localized levels of governance, which consequently limits the implementation processes of VAW policies. D&D reforms have given the commune a substantial level of self-governance. However, commune-level decision-makers continue to hold strong commitment and accountability to former leaders which often overrides the autonomy granted by the reform (see Heng, Kim and So, 2011). A national-level respondent explained that

*"we have tried to promote decentralization and deconcentration reform and established commune, district/khan, and provincial councils.... But there are many problems: selected officials do not have sufficient capacity, misunderstand [their roles], and use power in undemocratic ways. They assume that anything ordered by the Thnak Leur needs to be implemented 100 percent."*⁴⁰

This tension creates difficulties for local level officials, as they are expected to be accountable to local people, and yet still feel accountable to pre-existing vertical command directives.

4.3 Implementing VAW policy in Cambodia

Progress to-date on implementation of VAW policies

Respondents recognized that some overall progress has been made to date to address VAW. Across the spectrum of respondents, the progress outputs mentioned most frequently were: (1) **the development and existence of policy, networks, and focal points to address VAW**; and (2) **improved awareness among the citizens** that VAW is a serious social concern.

Since the early 1990s, Cambodia has "implemented a lot [of policies to support gender equality and address VAW in the society]" explained one senior official at MoI. "We don't only implement one specific system...but have agents or mechanisms for resolving problems across different institutions."⁴¹

At all levels of the governance structure (national, provincial, district and commune), respondents reported seeing improved awareness among citizens that VAW is a serious issue. National-level respondents noted that both urban and rural communities were exposed to and understood issues around domestic violence and women's rights. A respondent at the provincial level linked this greater awareness and understanding with an increase in citizen's willingness to report VAW cases. As one respondent explained

*"[Incidents] are reported to me even if they are only minor disputes. This [tendency to report] shows that people now understand this issue of VAW better, and that the existing network for providing them [women] support are working. In the past, if fighting occurred, it took up to a month to report, and by then, the bleeding head wound would already have been healed."*⁴²

³⁹ District Women Affair

⁴⁰ Senior Official, Social Work Ministry

⁴¹ Senior Official, MOI, Female

⁴² Provincial Women Affair Officer

Policy mechanisms were often credited with this increased awareness of VAW. One respondent noted

“This problem [VAW] seems to have been slightly eased now that we have law and they [perpetrators] cannot use reckless behavior as we witnessed before the law was adopted. Before the passage of the law, some men tortured their wives in a harsh way by removing their clothes. Now this kind of problem seems to have decreased.”⁴³

Respondents referenced other policies, such as the Safe Village and Commune Policy, which they credited with contributing to greater awareness of VAW among communities.

Perceived obstacles to implementation of VAW policies

Despite recognition of progress made to address VAW in Cambodia, respondents were quick to point out constraints for effective implementation of VAW policy. These perceived obstacles for effective implementation of gender policies were closely related to a number of the issues raised above, revealing that respondents are highly aware of the limitations of their implementation roles within the political environment of Cambodia.

Budget-related challenges were highlighted by nearly all respondents, particularly those at the subnational levels. These included limited budget allocation and mismatch between budgets and expected activities, delayed disbursement of funds and human resource-related difficulties, such as staff turn-over. A common cause - identified by many of the respondents at the national level - was the politics of resource allocation, which prioritizes physical infrastructure development over social services. In light of an over-stretched government budget, heavily supported by international donors, this low level of prioritization for gender-related public services is reflected in the budget details of various line ministries.

One MoWA official explained:

“We have very little government budget, which mainly covers administrative cost. Most of the activities depend on donor’s funding.”⁴⁴

The budgetary constraint issue is faced by all national level institutions. As one senior social work official explains:

“[The] important resource is finance. All ministries claim priority from the government, the parliament. As you know our royal government today seeks aid for doing this and doing that from China, Japan, and other allies; from UNDP and World Bank; from everywhere to develop common [resources] such as physical infrastructure (road, bridge) and agriculture, which is badly needed.”⁴⁵

With limited resources to carry out necessary public service activities, the result is many proposed activities and a thinly spread budget that is widely dispersed and results in limited substantive outcomes.⁴⁶

⁴³ Provincial Women Affair Officer

⁴⁴ Official, MoWA

⁴⁵ Senior Official, Social Work Ministry

⁴⁶ Official, unnamed ministry

Political leveraging compounds the budget problems, and the high level of influence wielded by party politics means that public service budgets are developed in order to curry political advantage. Consequently, physical infrastructure is prioritized over social services, to build voter support and present tangible outcomes. This is recognized at the provincial and district levels as well. As a district official explained:

*"[The] budget raised by the Khum [commune] is usually for the development of physical infrastructure because it is highly visible. If a road is built, we see a road. If we use fund for education and awareness raising, we don't see immediate impact."*⁴⁷

The limited budget is further exacerbated by the inability of the implementers to access the fund and respond to specific case of VAW. A provincial women's affairs officer explained:

*"There is a policy for providing 10,000 riels to victims engaging in lawsuit. Frankly speaking, we pay first and seek reimbursement later, but the reimbursement takes so long. I would like to see this budget package made available to us directly. Each province is provided 1 million riels for this package and it would be convenient and timely if we are given this funding at once. As you know budget for our line department cannot be spent outside the prescribed spending...if we wait until we establish complete document [to the center], it will be too late."*⁴⁸

Coordination among ministries and stakeholders

At the national, provincial and district levels, coordination among implementing actors across line ministries was a significant challenge to effective implementation. As previously noted, across ministries, MoWA was widely perceived to be the leader for advocacy and implementation of VAW legislation. Given the contested nature of VAW policies, however, this can result in different perspectives and limited support. As a national-level MoWA official pointed out:

*"What [MoWA] wishes to see happen cannot be achieved by ourselves alone. [We] need to explain and find support from different institutions so that what [we] think can be achieved. The [other institutions] do not yet support completely what we plan."*⁴⁹

Respondents from other ministries recognized the importance of VAW public policy, but institutional roles and responsibilities were unclear. A few of respondents from institutions other than MoWA sometimes suggested that addressing VAW is not within the domain of their responsibility and thus they could not say much. Coordination is thus hindered by limited understanding of roles and responsibilities.

While the D&D reform established a unified administration at the province and district level to improve coordination in service delivery among different government's line ministries, it is still at an early stage and horizontal coordination remains a key challenge. At the provincial and district level in particular, some respondents reported corruption among the police and the court, leading to a sense of distrust of authorities that limits reporting or requests for help from women who experience violence. The presence of Kse can further hold back effective enforcement of law particularly in rape case.

⁴⁷ District Official, BTB, Male

⁴⁸ Provincial Women Affairs Officer

⁴⁹ Official, MoWA

Perpetrators can use their Kse to facilitate their own release, both inside and outside of the legal system.”⁵⁰

Coordination was perceived as less of a problem at the commune level, where the MoI - through the police force - is the only represented line ministry at this level of governance. Although tense relations with the police were commonly cited as a challenge to effective implementation at the subnational level.

Gender regimes and the environment of policy implementation

The final key challenge cited by respondents across all levels of governance were those associated with ingrained gendered norms, attitudes and behaviours in the communities in which VAW occurs. Respondents recognized the challenges of implementing VAW policies in this context (although it was not always articulated thus), and a few respondents noted the limitations of communications campaigns for changing the prevailing gender regimes of the communities.

A senior official at MoI elaborated:

“Why is VAW still a problem? Millions of people don’t share the same view and those who commit crimes have different views from us. Even if we conduct education campaigns, it won’t reach or be accepted by all people... This is a real problem. How can we change the behaviors of such a person?”⁵¹

Respondents affirm the general view that gender roles often place Cambodian women in the home, and economically dependent on their husbands, which limits their access to services and ability to support themselves in case of divorce. Respondents often note that violence (particularly emotional and sexual violence) goes unreported due to gendered expectations of women and men, which are deeply ingrained in practices and beliefs in communities. This includes beliefs that VAW is a private affair, frequent victim blame, and the low status of divorce in Khmer society. As one provincial official said,

“The key challenge is traditional culture. Although we live in a modern age, this modernity is only among the younger generation. Older people supervising these youngsters are not modern yet. They still think that women should be modest and gentle, in order to be loved by others. [They still believe that] after marriage, women should be subordinate to their husbands or even be a servant of their own partners. Older people think this the way and their children have been socialized in such a way.”⁵²

In some cases, respondents recognized the need to address drivers of violence (such as economic insecurity) by focusing on the family and community, as well as the individual.

“Generally, I noticed that [women don’t lodge a complaint against their husband because they are dependent on their husband’s income to support the family]. Talking about awareness raising, we pushed for parents to help ensure that their daughters have an [economic] base to support themselves before marriage.”⁵³

Yet, respondents recognized the limitations of awareness-raising activities. It was commonly pointed out that it is difficult to get people to attend meetings, including those on VAW awareness-raising.

⁵⁰ District official

⁵¹ Senior Official MoI, Female

⁵² Provincial Official, Female

⁵³ District Women Affairs Officer

Others noted that people prefer watching movies to domestic violence media campaigns on TV. These perspectives are underscored by recent research that shows that despite wide-spread exposure to mass media campaigns on violence, gender inequitable attitudes and beliefs remain wide-spread among youth in Cambodia (PyD 2011).

5. Discussion of findings

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The findings outlined above have painted a picture of VAW policy implementation in Cambodia from the perspective of key implementing actors. While further analysis can be conducted to unpack policy processes and limitations in Cambodia, three primary topic areas emerge for discussion: (1) knowledge and understanding of VAW; (2) the political nature of relationships within the context of Cambodia public policy implementation; and (3) local innovation and the on-going commitment to social justice among implementing actors.

5.1 Knowledge and awareness

The language used by respondents to speak about VAW policies signals limited understanding of the complex nature of VAW. Combined with the difficulties of accessing information on VAW policies, and untenable systems of learning and knowledge sharing, this results in shallow stakeholder engagement, particularly at the lower levels of governance, with on-going policy work to end VAW.

Respondents highlighted two main areas of progress: the presence of policy, networks, and focal points to address VAW, and some improved awareness among the general population that VAW is a serious social issue. Yet within their responses, respondents frequently point to single-factor causes of VAW. Particularly at the local level, implementing actors were generally unable to conceptualize the underlying social and gender inequalities that contribute to men’s use of violence. While it is not necessary for all implementing actors to become gender experts, a minimum level of understanding around gender inequalities and the multi-dimensional causes of violence is imperative to more nuanced and effective policy implementation. Furthermore, if implementing stakeholders have a better understanding of why violence occurs, they will also be able to understand more fully what it needed to stop violence before it takes place.

Although violence prevention is codified to some extent in existing policies, there is little to no awareness among the respondents of what primary prevention of VAW entails. Respondents across levels of governance have difficulty identifying what prevention policies and programmes look like, and how policies can contribute to stopping violence before it occurs. The most commonly mentioned activity related to violence prevention was awareness-raising campaigns. Yet, among global violence prevention experts, it is recognized that the communications approaches to most effectively impact awareness (and some attitudes) integrate participatory approaches with the more wide-spread mass media campaigns.⁵⁴ There are more connections that need to be made between on-the-ground activities and global emerging evidence on what works for primary prevention of VAW.

Furthermore, awareness and understanding of the VAW policies themselves varied among the stakeholders involved. As the findings demonstrate, the awareness of VAW policy among national level

⁵⁴ For more on advocacy and communications approaches to prevent VAW, please see *Partner for Prevention’s How to Guide on Evidence-based Advocacy and Communications Strategies for Gender-based Violence Prevention* (available online by 2013 or contact partners4prevention@one.un.org).

actors was higher than their subnational counterparts. This was determined based on their ability to accurately discuss VAW policy matters. Some national-level study participants had been directly engaged in the drafting and adoption processes of a number of the VAW policies. National level officials also sit at the national capital and have access to policy discussions and debates that occur within government circles of influence. Although knowledge among participants from various ministries was not uniform, their relatively higher awareness of VAW policies, compared to subnational level officials, could be attributed to their central position within governmental decision-making and discussion-generating circles.

Awareness of national level VAW public policy tended to decrease as the research interviews moved down the chain of governance at the subnational level. Provincial level participants appeared to be more knowledgeable on VAW policies than district actors. Many district officials in selected sites of study were not aware of the NAPVAW, although they knew about broader national level policies – such as the DV law – and used these policies to respond to violence within their districts. Respondents from the commune and lower levels had little knowledge of national level policies. This knowledge vacuum shows that even if policy documents were more clear and systematic, the transfer of knowledge is such that officials in lower levels of governance would still not have knowledge of the policies.

Two factors seem to contribute to this limited knowledge and awareness of the multidimensional nature of VAW, and the importance of primary prevention, alongside response approaches. First, limited funding availability reduces the scope and frequency of critical information dissemination on VAW policies. Second, existing systems of knowledge sharing – training of trainers and a trickle down of information to lower levels of governance – are not conducive to wide-spread comprehension and ownership of the policies. These two factors have implications for recommendations to improve VAW policy implementation, which will be presented in the capacity building recommendations section.

5.2 Political relationships in the context of VAW public policy

The second group of findings explored how key implementing actors situate their activities and responsibilities in relation to other actors. The findings demonstrate how relationships between implementing actors reflect a political environment characterized by hierarchy and minimal prioritization of social justice issues that consequently limit the effectiveness of implementation of VAW policies.

The findings underline the comparative ease of vertical chains of command, compared to horizontal coordination across line ministries. This reflects the overall nature of Cambodia's political system, which remains heavily structured by hierarchies of political leadership. While the D&D reforms have given substantial levels of self-governance to lower political systems, the continued presence of former leaders, and strong party discipline, curtails the autonomy granted by the reform, and creates contradictions in decentralized government systems. This tension creates a dilemma for local level officials who need to be accountable to local people on the one hand but must also respect the political hierarchy within the party. This means that party political interests need to be looked after and that orders from above (either within the government or party) need to be implemented. With the ruling party's support of gender policy, this represents an opportunity for effective implementation of gender equitable policy. However, the high level of influence of party politics and the needs to show voters immediate result in the face of budget limitations has left social service provision, including gender awareness-raising and prevention of VAW, lower on the priority list than physical infrastructure development.

The low prioritization of social justice issues is mirrored among the horizontal relationships and power structures among implementing actors at the national level. Limited by budget and capacity, line ministries readily give MoWA ownership over gender-related policy concerns, to the extent that other ministries undermine their own engagement with and responsibility for VAW policy implementation. Although the debate during the development phase of Cambodia’s VAW legislation suggests greater involvement of ministries and political actors beyond MoWA, the implementation challenges noted by the respondents suggest that involvement in VAW policy trickled off after the completion of the legislation. This suggests the need for improved coordination and ownership among line ministries’, recognizing their role to play in efforts to end violence. Better understanding and awareness of the complexities of VAW – as discussed above – can help to contribute to better understanding of roles and responsibilities. In addition, given the structure of Cambodia’s political systems, there is a strong argument for top political championship of VAW.

5.3 Commitment to preventing and responding to VAW despite challenges

Finally, respondent’s place heavy emphasis on the obstacles to effective implementation, which signals a high level of awareness of the limitations under which they operate. Yet despite these road-blocks, implementing actors continue to take initiative and ownership of VAW policy implementation, particularly at the grassroots level, signaling an overall commitment to social and gender justice among these actors. The innovative work noted among religious leaders and village chiefs at the commune level points to a growing body of violence prevention activities that are not captured within official development initiatives in Cambodia. For example, the widespread local approaches to VAW – predominantly based on local mediation – are detached from formalized conflict resolution mechanisms through the court systems. Some of this is related to court access and resulting expenses. Some of this engagement is a result of tasks that were assigned to them as a part of the D&D reform, in which the WCC was established in each commune to address women and children’s issues. Yet, there are opportunities to build on these existing mechanisms and local leadership, to produce more effective responses to incidents of violence. Finally, respondents repeatedly discussed the obstacles to implementation within a problem-solving framework. Respondents frequently noted how they individually worked around policy implementation challenges, from gaining access to victims, to handling budget shortfalls, and dealing with personal threats. These narratives suggest a substantial groundswell of individual and community commitment to ending VAW that must be fostered and promoted.

6. Recommendations

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The following recommendations have been developed based on the findings described above, to continue to promote and foster more effective implementation of VAW policies across all levels of governance in Cambodia.

	Finding	Recommendation
Resourcing	Resources are needed to ensure smooth functioning of all coordination and communications bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold VAW budgeting training for key implementing actors – at national and subnational levels - during the development of the new NAPVAW to help them costing the interventions they will be responsible for in the new NAPVAW. The training will promote as well more effective use and dissemination of funds. • Advocate for stronger budget allocation at the national level through high-level prioritization of the new NAPVAW through inter-ministerial coordination body (see below) and in partnership with UN and donors, with strong top political leadership and ownership. • Allocate funding to local level implementation bodies, and build processes whereby local development actors prioritize funding.
	Gaps in budget allocation and management, delayed disbursement of funds responding to specific cases of intervention, and human resource related obstacles limit effective implementation at the subnational level.	
Coordination	MOWA is perceived to be the leader for advocacy and implementation of VAW legislation. Respondents from other ministries recognized the importance of VAW public policy, but institutional roles and responsibilities remained unclear.	Recommendation
		National-level coordination
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-ministerial NAPVAW coordination body, chaired by high-level government official and comprised of secretaries of state of relevant line ministries, to bring together representatives from key ministries to coordinate and codify implementation roles and responsibilities of each ministry, and champion VAW policies across government.
		Provincial, district and commune-level coordination
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of inter-ministerial GBV coordination into existing coordination bodies at the provincial, district and commune level, such as WCCCs and CCWCs. • Participation of these coordination bodies in the formulation process of the new NAPVAW and in the planning and strategizing on implementation of VAW related policies at the provincial, district and commune levels. This coordination body can also function as a vehicle through which ministry implementation actors at the subnational levels can report back to national level counterparts on implementation activities. It can also serve as a vertical transfer of knowledge. • Involvement of CSOs in GBV coordination at provincial, district and commune levels.
	Finding	Recommendation

<h1 style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Communication & Public Participation</h1>	<p>Awareness of national VAW policies is concentrated at the national level.</p>	<p>Cross-ministerial communications and participation at national and provincial levels</p>
	<p>Many officials at the district level were not specifically aware of the NAPVAW, although they were aware of and used national policies more broadly to respond to violence, such as the Village and Commune Safety Policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate regular information bulletins among inter-ministerial NAPVAW coordination bodies at national and provincial levels to better communicate and strategize on implementation activities, commitments and achievements. • Create and maintain a knowledge hub of policy documents related to the NAPVAW that are accessible to implementing actors at all levels of policy implementation, particularly commune level leaders and NGOs.
		<p>Vertical communication between coordination bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster communication between commune-level coordination mechanism and provincial/district inter-ministerial coordination body to promote cyclical information flow and communicate good practices at the local level to higher levels of government. • Promote the involvement of subnational coordination bodies in the NAPVAW development process so there is more ownership of the policy. • Sub- working group on GBV under the TWGG to incorporate the design on a vertical communications strategy as part of the NAPVAW development process.

	Finding	Recommendation
Capacity development	<p>Many implementation actors across all levels of governance have limited understanding of the multifaceted nature of violence against women. This results in limited awareness of the multiple actions that are needed to respond to and prevent VAW in the future.</p>	<p>A more holistic understanding of VAW is needed among all actors involved in VAW policymaking and implementation. At all levels of governance, education and training should cover (1) prevention and response approaches to violence, (2) information-sharing on the existing laws and policies, (3) identification of what each actor can achieve through their sphere of influence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At national and provincial/district level: Hold trainings and workshops that serve as learning opportunities for relevant line ministry officials, particularly those who serve on inter-ministerial coordinating bodies, to expand their knowledge on VAW, and prevention and response to VAW. Trainings should be closely linked with forthcoming findings of national level research on prevalence of VAW, to develop a more up-to-date picture of what VAW looks like in Cambodia. <p>At commune level: In pilot communes, hold capacity development trainings with NGO implementation partners and local leaders promote more multi-dimensional understanding of VAW among those actors at the local level who are directly involved in VAW work.</p>

7. Conclusions

This study on the implementation of national VAW public policy in Cambodia provides an initial in-depth look at the successes and limits of implementation processes related to the response and prevention of VAW across all levels of national political governance. The analysis reveals a complex and interactive array of actors, structures, institutions, who come together at the national, provincial, district and commune levels – sometimes with more success, sometimes with less – to implement policies on gender and violence that exist in Cambodia today. The complexity and sensitivity of VAW, in the context of differing political agendas, and limited financial resources, makes this a challenging task. There is a consensus among stakeholders that VAW is a social problem and there is broad based support from the ruling party to promote gender equity and women in leadership. To date, a wide array of policy mechanisms are in place to respond to VAW and some that can help to support violence prevention in Cambodia. Effective implementation and efficient operation of these mechanisms are challenges that remain. While the study outlines these multiple challenges faced by key stakeholders who implement policies on VAW, it also highlights the opportunities to strengthen VAW public policy in Cambodia to prevent VAW. The lessons learned from this study can be applied across the Asia-Pacific region, to build more effective public policy approaches to responding and preventing VAW.

8. Coda

In the period since this field research was conducted, some progress has been made on policies and programmes to respond to and prevent violence against women in Cambodia. In particular, Cambodia is moving forward to integrate more effective, evidence-based prevention components into government policies to address violence against women.

In March 2012, the findings of this study were validated with respondents who participated in the research, and shared more widely among policymakers from various line ministries on Cambodia. The findings have contributed to on-going planning to build the next phase of the NAPVAW. UN Women and international violence prevention experts are working with MoWA and other key stakeholders to effectively build violence prevention approaches – alongside response and service provision – into the next phase of the NAPVAW.

New evidence is also emerging from Cambodia, on prevalence rates of men’s perpetration of violence. From 2011 – 2012, P4P conducted a quantitative household survey with men on perpetration of GBV. This research was part of the quantitative arm of the three-part Change Project methodology.⁵⁵ The research gives prevalence rates of men’s perpetration of different types of violence against women, as well as findings around men’s own experiences of violence. The study is currently planned to be launched in 2013.⁵⁶

Further building on existing momentum, in October 2012, P4P, in partnership with GADC and MoWA hosted a three-day workshop with government officials on violence prevention. Participants included line ministry representatives engaged in violence against women work in Cambodia from eight line ministries, the Cambodia National Women’s Council and the WG Secretariat. The workshop helped participants to articulate how they planned to integrate prevention components of the forthcoming NAP.

To date, efforts are on-going, to address VAW in Cambodia, led by committed policymakers, UN agencies and civil society, who strive to more effectively prevent and respond to VAW in Cambodia.

⁵⁵ As described in the Forward, *The Change Project* was a multi-country study on GBV and masculinities, coordinated in seven countries in Asia and the Pacific by Partners for Prevention. The study used multiple research methods – (1) randomized household surveys, (2) qualitative life history research, and (3) gender politics of policy research – to build a comprehensive picture of men’s perpetration of gender-based violence across Asia and the Pacific. For more on *The Change Project*, please see http://partners4prevention.org/sites/default/files/documents/the_change_project_overview_fin_3_may.pdf. *The Change Project* methodology and research tools will be available for replication in 2013.

⁵⁶ Planning is also underway to conduct the WHO Multi-country Study in Cambodia, to gather rigorous evidence on women’s experiences of violence and the health consequences associated with violence.

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Annex I: Cambodia’s public policies related to VAW and gender equality

Year	Policy introduced	Components related to VAW and gender equality	Policy details
1989	Marriage and Family Law	<p>This law outlines the rights and responsibilities of marriage, divorce and support of children. The law provides provisions on forced marriage, as well as women’s rights for equal participation in political, culture and social activities.</p>	<p>Article 2: The marriage of an underage couple and marriage by force shall absolutely be prohibited.</p> <p>Article 4: A man and woman reaching legal age have the right to self-determine the marriage. One party may not force another party to marriage against his/her will.</p> <p>Article 5: A marriage may be allowed for a man whose age is 20 years or more and a woman whose age is 18 years or more.</p> <p>Article 20: When it is known that a man or woman is incompetent or otherwise provided in Article 16, the registrar has the right to object to the marriage by making a report of the objection to the marriage and send it to the People's Court within at most 2 days for the court to make a decision.</p> <p>Article 22: A marriage between a man under 20 years and a woman under 18 years shall be voidable. The voidable marriage may become valid when the man and woman reaches the age allowed by law.</p> <p>Article 23: Where any one of the spouses claims that he or she has been forced to marry, such marriage shall be void.</p> <p>Article 30: A husband and wife have the duties to love, respect for, take care and help each other in order to promote prosperity as well as to build up one family with cooperation and happiness.</p> <p>Article 31: A husband and wife have the rights to freely choose a job and participate in political, cultural and social activities.</p>

<p>1992</p>	<p>UNTAC provisions relating to the judiciary and criminal law and procedure applicable in Cambodia during the transitional period</p>	<p>The provisions cover rape (of either sex), battery with injury and indecent assault, as part of the transitional policy framework between UNTAC and Cambodia.</p>	<p>Article 33: On rape: Anyone who rapes or attempts to rape another person of either sex is guilty of rape and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of five to ten years. Rape is any sexual act involving penetration carried out through violence, coercion or surprise. If rape is accompanied by threats with a weapon, or if it is committed on a pregnant woman or a person suffering from illness or mental or physical infirmity, or by two or more offenders or accomplices, or if it is committed by anyone in a position of authority over the victim, the punishment shall be a term of imprisonment of 10-15 years.</p> <p>Article 41: On battery with injury: Anyone who voluntarily strikes another resulting in injury leading to permanent disability or temporary disability lasting more than six months is guilty of battery and shall be liable to a punishment of one to five years in prison. If the disability lasts less than six months, the offense shall be punished by a term of imprisonment of six months to two years. If there is no disability, the punishment shall be a term of imprisonment of two months to one year. If any weapon is used to strike the blows, the period of imprisonment shall be doubled.</p> <p>Article 42: On indecent assault: Any person who sexually assaults another person of either sex by touching, caressing or any other sexual act not involving penetration, is guilty of the misdemeanor of indecent assault and shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of one to three years. If the indecent assault is accompanied by fraud, violence or threat, or if it is committed by any person with authority over the victim, or if the victim is under 16 years of age, the duration of these sentences shall be doubled. Any person, who procures, entices or leads away, for purposes of prostitution, or sexually exploits a minor, even with the consent of that minor, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of two to six years.</p>
<p>1992</p>	<p>Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women</p>	<p>The convention outlines all major measures for government to promote women in all sectors and to prevent VAW and children.</p>	<p>For full text of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), visit http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/</p>

	(CEDAW) (ratified)		
1993	Kingdom of Cambodia National Constitution	Constitutional guarantees of equal rights, liberty and duty without any discrimination based on ethnic, colour, sex, languages, belief, political affiliation, class, and resources.	<p>Article 31: The Kingdom of Cambodia shall recognize and respect human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the covenants and conventions related to human rights, women’s and children’s rights.</p> <p>Every Khmer citizen shall be equal before the law, enjoying the same rights, freedom and fulfilling the same obligations regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religious belief, political tendency, birth origin, social status, wealth or other status. The exercise of personal rights and freedom by any individual shall not adversely affect the rights and freedom of others. The exercise of such rights and freedom shall be in accordance with the law.</p> <p>Article 45: All forms of discrimination against women shall be abolished. The exploitation of women in employment shall be prohibited. Men and women are equal in all fields especially with respect to marriage and family matters. Marriage shall be conducted according to conditions determined by law based on the principle of mutual consent between one husband and one wife.</p> <p>Article 46: The commerce of human beings, exploitation by prostitution and obscenity which affect the reputation of women shall be prohibited. A woman shall not lose her job because of pregnancy. Woman shall have the right to take maternity leave with full pay and with no loss of seniority or other social benefits. The state and society shall provide opportunities to women, especially to those living in rural areas without adequate social support, so they can get employment, medical care, and send their children to school, and to have decent living conditions.</p>
1995	United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for	Global agenda for promoting women’s empowerment through economic, social and political rights and development.	For full text of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, visit http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/

	Action		
1997	Cambodia National Labor Law	This law addresses women’s equal right to work, pay, maternity leave with job security, and post-maternity leave workplace facilities	<p>Article 103: Wage includes, in particular amount of money paid by the employer to the workers during disability and maternity leave.</p> <p>Article 184: For one year from the date of child delivery, mothers who breastfeed their children are entitled to one hour per day during working hours to breastfeed their children. This hour may be divided into two periods of thirty minutes each, one during the morning shift and the other during the afternoon shift. The exact time of breastfeeding is to be agreed between the mother and the employer. If there is no agreement, the periods shall be at the midpoint of each work shift.</p> <p>Article 185: Breaks for breastfeeding are separate from and shall not be deducted from normal breaks provided for in the labor law, in internal regulations of the establishment, in collective labor agreements, or in local custom for which other workers in the same category enjoy them.</p> <p>Article 186: Managers of enterprises employing a minimum of 100 women or girls shall set up, within their establishments or nearby, a nursing room and a crèche (day-care center). If the company is not able to set up a crèche on its premises for children over 18 months of age, female workers can place their children in any crèche and the charges shall be paid by the employer.</p>
1999 to 2013	Neary Rattanak I (‘99 – ‘03) Neary Rattanak II (‘04 – ‘08) Neary Rattanak III (‘09 – ‘13)	The Neary Rattanak documents serve as strategic planning guides for the MoWA, to promote gender empowerment and equity. They outline major measures to promote women’s comprehensive involvement in governance.	<p>Neary Rattanak I, recognized that “women are the backbone of the economy and society,” and provided general language around women’s empowerment strategies.</p> <p>Neary Rattanak II, contributes to gender mainstreaming in key government reform programmes such as Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform, Public Administration Reform, Public Financial Management Reform, Legal and Judicial Reform, and Land Reform. It also reflects the contributions and linkages to the implementation of national plans and policies including the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals; the National Strategic</p>

			<p>Development Plan; the Education for All policy; the National Action Plan to Combat Violence Against Women; the National Programme on the Promotion of Social Morality and Women’s Value; the National Action Plan on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation; the Social Security Policy; the Strategic Plan on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS; and the sectoral Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans.</p> <p>The Neary Rattanak III, focuses on five strategic areas, along with a gender mainstreaming programme for national policies, reform programmes and sectors. It also includes a crosscutting area.</p>
2000	Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs)	CMDG-3 promotes gender equality and women empowerment.	GOAL 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. Goal 3 aims at eliminating gender disparities in social, political and economic sphere of life.
2001	Establishment of the CNCW by royal decree	Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW) was created to help coordinate and provide opinion to Royal Government of Cambodia on matters related to upgrading the status and rolls of women and social welfare of Cambodian women aiming at reducing VAW and stepping up elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.	Key task of CNCW was to disseminate information on and monitor the implementation of CEDAW.
2005	Cambodia Rectangular Strategy	The Rectangular Strategy is the Cambodian government’s socioeconomic policy agenda to promote growth, employment, equity, and efficiency.	The strategy includes four angles of good governance comprising the rectangle: (1) enhancement of agriculture, (2) further rehabilitation and construction of physical infrastructure, (3) private sector development and employment generation, and (4) capacity building and human resource development.

			Angle 4 (Capacity Building and Human Resources Development) includes Side 3: Implementation of Gender Policy: “Women are the backbone of our economy and society and the Royal Government has exerted its utmost efforts to improve the status of women through implementation of the strategic plan of Neary Rattanak aimed at providing Cambodian Women with value and hope in life.”
2005	Laws on prevention of domestic violence against women and children	Codifies the prevention and intervention on issues pertaining to VAW and children at the household level.	For a full summary of Cambodia’s Domestic Violence Law, visit http://afppd-populationpolicies.org/Violence Against Women/cambodia/Cambodia Law on Prevention of DV and Protection of Victims.html .
2007	Cambodia joint monitoring indicators on: JMI 3- Education JMI 4- Health JMI 5- HIV/AIDS JMI 6- FSN Food Security and Nutrition	These indicators aim to increase the proportion of deliveries attended by skilled health personnel; enhance response to HIV/AIDs pandemic; and build food security and nutrition components into sector strategies.	The action plan for gender mainstreaming in the finance sector 2008-2012, has set the following strategies: Strategy 1: Promote understanding and support for work on gender equality in national economic policy and financial management among MEF management and staff. Strategy 2: Mainstream gender into the public financial management reform programme. Strategy 3: Advocate for gender mainstreaming into Programmes and projects supported or implemented by international and national organizations. Strategy 4: Increase access to financial services for women entrepreneurs on terms and conditions appropriate to the needs of their businesses. Strategy 5: Increase the role of women in MEF operations and leadership.
2007- (2010)	Access to justice and community conversation by UNDP, MoI, MoJ and MoWA	The programme designed to prevent violence and inform the communities on how to respond/where to seek support when violence happens. The project	The programme is supported by UNDP, MoI, MoJ and MoWA that aims to prevent VAW and children through ‘community conversation’. This includes provision of trainings and awareness raising on domestic violence and how to report/go for help when there is violence in a family.

		was implemented in only 56 communes, 20 districts and 6 provinces.	
2008	The Law on Administrative Management of Municipality, Provincial, Krung, District, and Khan (also known as Cambodia's Organic Law).	The law ensures women representation in the council, its' committees, and political positions.	<p>Article 127: The members of the WCAC shall be selected from female councilors or from among women and men under jurisdiction of the council.</p> <p>Article 128: The WCAC shall have the authority and duty to provide suggestions and recommendations to the council, board of governors, governor, and other committees of the council on issues related to gender equity, women and children issues within the authority, function, and duties of the council.</p> <p>Article 129: The WCAC is entitled to participate in any meeting of the council, committees, and board of governors.</p>
2009	Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation	The purpose of this law is to suppress the kidnapping of human persons for trafficking, and the exploitation of human persons in order to rehabilitate and to enhance the good tradition of the nation, the protection of human value and the protection of health and well-being of the people.	<p>Relevant articles are as follows:</p> <p>Article 10: Unlawful removal with purpose: A person who unlawfully removes another for the purpose of profit making, sexual aggression, production of pornography, marriage against will of the victim, adoption or any form of exploitation shall be punished with imprisonment for 7-15 years.</p> <p>Article 14: The act of selling, buying or exchanging of human being: A person who sells, buys or exchanges another person shall be punished with imprisonment for 2-5 years.</p> <p>Article 17: Transportation with purpose: A person who transports another person knowing that he or she has been unlawfully removed, recruited, sold, bought, exchanged or transported for the purpose of profit making, sexual aggression, production of pornography, marriage against will of the victim, adoption, or any form of exploitation shall be punished with imprisonment for 7-15 years.</p> <p>Article 26: Procurement of Prostitution: A person who commits procurement of prostitution shall be punished with imprisonment for 2-5</p>

			years. Article 27: Aggravated procurement of prostitution: A person who commits procurement of prostitution shall be punished with imprisonment for 5 -10 years:
2006-2010 2009-2013	National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)	A core indicator of the NSDP is to mainstream gender at all levels of the government and in all sectors.	Key strategies and actions include: (1) Gender equity issues permeate all activities, and are being addressed in all sectors, particularly in agriculture, health, education; (2) the NCW would continue to address the myriad aspects of gender mainstreaming in all aspects of governance and society; and (3) capacity building and human resource development around gender equity. A major concern is to bring about an equitable and stable gender balance (between men and women, boys and girls) in access to goods and services and in participation in, and receiving benefits from, the development process at all levels and on all sides.
2009	National Action Plan to Prevent Violent Against Women (NAPVAW)	The NAPAW outlines the necessary and coordinated measures to prevent VAW.	The Royal Government of Cambodia has set the elimination of GBV as a core development target; the CMDGs include a goal on promoting gender equity and women’s empowerment. The eight sub-targets are aimed at reducing all forms of VAW and children. To effectively implement the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims, relevant agencies need to develop further regulations. Local authorities need clear instructions for intervention and protection at commune and village levels. NAP has four strategies: 1) public awareness raising or dissemination (information campaign); 2) enhance social, medical, and legal services (by mapping existing services and promoting use of the service); 3) develop and improve policy to encourage participation; and 4) strengthen the capacity of competent officials.
May 2010	Royal Government of Cambodia	Implementation of the basis provision of the convention	For full text of the report, visit http://cncw.gov.kh/userfiles/FINAL_FINAL_edited_Eng_4th_and_5th_National_report_RGC_Final_Edit.pdf .

	release fourth and fifth 'National Report On Implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Cambodia,' in conformity with Article 18 of CEDAW.		
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Annex II: Guiding questionnaire

The following question guide was developed as part of The Change Project's 'gender politics of policy,' component for a national level analysis of implementation of gender public policies in Cambodia. Interviews were conducted with 31 key stakeholders who were involved in the development and implementation of the NAPVAW in Cambodia, as well as other public policy mechanisms and processes. The questionnaire was originally developed in Khmer, and translated into English.

I. General issues about GBV in Cambodia

1. Please tell me about the issue of violence against women in Cambodia? Do you think it is very prevalent? What are the most common forms of violence?
2. What do you think are the underlying causes of VAW in Cambodia?
3. What are your concerns over the presence of VAW?

II. Identify the main actors involved in NAP formulation and implementation, their understanding, and attitude towards gender policy

1. What are your roles and responsibilities, specifically, in (1) formulating and/or (2) implementing NAPVAW?
2. Who else are the main actors in (1) drafting and/or (2) implementing the policy, and what are their roles and responsibilities? (probe further the actors they mentioned: what are they doing?)
3. What is the chain of responsibility for implementation of the NAP? How do the actors involved in decisionmaking interact with one another (forums, roundtables, informal networks, etc)? Are there any coordination bodies to address the implementation of NAP? If any, how effective is the coordination?
4. Were women involved in (1) drafting and/or (2) implementation of the NAPVAW? Please explain the role women played.
5. Can you explain the rationale behind the development and implementation of the NAP and/or other related gender policies?

III. Analyze gap of policy formulation and implementation and its constraints

1. Do you think the current RGC's response is sufficient to address the VAW in Cambodia? To what extent do you think the RGC's policy responses and the NAP address the root causes of VAW and address the *prevention* of violence that you mentioned earlier? (Probe further the informal mechanism if there are)
2. Were there any challenges during the (1) policy formulation and adoption phase? and/or (2) implementation phase? If yes, please identify challenges during the adoption and/or implementation phase at a personal level? departmental level? ministerial level? and in general? (probe further to see if the respondents are complaining about technical capacity, lack of women participation, resources, other institutional issues including institutional battling, or other political factors)?
3. How do you deal with the difficulty? What are your strategies to push for (1) adoption of NAP and relevant gender related policies and/or (2) effective implementation of gender policies? (coherent or separated/what linkages or informal networks may exist between non-related institutions)? Any example of effective implementation at sector levels?

4. What competing interests or concerns can hinder policymakers and /or implementers' attempts to champion addressing VAW? (part of this question may be answered, but explore in further detail.)
5. How is the budget planned for implementation of the NAP?

IV. Recommendations for effective prevention of VAW

1. What has been achieved to date? What are some of the remaining challenges that need to be addressed to effectively reduce/abolish VAW?
2. What role do you think boys and men could play in addressing VAW? Has the RGC adopted any specific policies that aim to engage boys and men specifically for violence prevention?
3. What resources/support would you find useful for effectively implementing already existing policies on GBV? What resources/support would you find useful for promoting new policies to address GBV?
4. What are possible strategic entry points at national and local levels to move forward with prevention?