



Strengthening Civil Society Engagement Against Gender-Based Violence

OVERVIEW

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) IS A COMPLEX ISSUE STEMMING FROM UNEQUAL POWER DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN, COMPOUNDED BY THE LACK OF STRUCTURAL SUPPORT REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO AND PROTECT AGAINST IT. WOMEN IN LAO ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO VIOLENCE AT HOME, IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

Rural societal attitudes tend to accept violence as a family matter and generally shame those who report it. Of those who report, they are often encouraged to tolerate violence to maintain their family's reputation or their jobs. The situation is made even more challenging by limited knowledge in the community about laws regarding GBV and a lack of resources and formal support systems for survivors².

To dig into deeply rooted social attitudes surrounding GBV in Laos, CARE has been working to strengthen and mobilize civil society organizations (CSOs). Civil society engagement is essential in promoting active change at the community level by assisting survivors, ensuring poor and vulnerable voices are heard, and facilitating effective law implementation. The Strengthening Civil Society Engagement Against Gender-Based Violence project, funded by the European Union, facilitates the strengthening of local civil society to engage, act and facilitate the empowerment of communities and dutybearers to respond to and prevent gender-based violence in rural and urban settings.

CARE is partnering with the CSO Lao Positive Health Association (LaoPHA) which has been working with highly marginalized and vulnerable populations for nearly two decades to reduce stigma and to deliver culturally sensitive health messages. In strengthening LaoPHA and other CSOs' technical and organizational capabilities, they will be able to better support and mobilize women through increasing access to information, elevating their voices, and enabling action.

Location

2 districts in Phongsaly Province,
1 district in Sekong Province, and
Vientiane Capital



Timeframe

September 2016 - February 2020

Beneficiaries

- Remote ethnic minority women in Mai, Samphan, and Dak Cheung Districts
- Marginalized urban women working in garment factories and the entertainment industry in Vientiane Capital

Project Partners

- » Lao Positive Health Association (LaoPHA)
- » Lao Women's Union

¹ CARE baseline study for PACMUW in 2014. Interviews with 314 Garment Factory Workers and 114 Entertainment Workers.

² Preliminary Findings from the Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences (2014). National Commission for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with the Lao Statistics Bureau sample of 2,997 women





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OBJECTIVE

To increase the technical and organizational capacity of Lao civil society organisations to mobilise communities and duty bearers to take action to end violence against marginalised and vulnerable women.

KEY OUTCOME

Actions to end GBV and to empower women are strengthened through increased capacity and the involvement from CSOs to collaborate with authorities on strategies and planning on the support and protection of women

LaoPHA has increased operational and technical capacity to mobilize and support REW and MUW to have increased access to information, voice and actions, through community-led dialogues on GBV.

CSOs have increased capacity to collaborate and engage in effective policy dialogue related to GBV at the local and national levels

Duty Bearers have increased capacity to realise their responsibilities in preventing and responding to GBV



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