

THE GOOD MEN CAMPAIGN TRANSFORMS GENDER NORMS AND PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, gender norms remain heavily rooted in society, creating inequality between men and women and depriving women of their basic rights.

While violence against women is considered immoral and unacceptable in Cambodian culture, domestic violence is considered to be justifiable in this society. Nearly 60 per cent of men believe that women should tolerate domestic violence to keep her family together and 28 per cent believe that there are occasions where a woman deserves to be beaten.

Domestic violence has negative health consequences for victims, particularly in regard to the reproductive health of women and the physical, emotional, and mental health of their children. One in five women aged 15-49 has experienced physical violence at least once since the age of 15 and 6 per cent reported having experienced sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

The “Good Men Campaign” is a 5-year national social behavioural change campaign that was launched in 2011. It was led by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, coordinated by Paz y Desarrollo (PyD) and funded by UNFPA, AECID, P4P and GIZ. Its primary goal was to challenge gender norms and encourage the 3.5 million men and boys aged 15 to 49 to change their attitudes and behavior towards women.

There were four major strategies to the Good Men Campaign, all of which aimed to promote understanding on what it means to **“be a good man”**. It helped Cambodians to question perceptions about masculinity and challenge gender norms that have been limiting women’s rights to social participation and economic development.



A man attending the public event “Good Men Campaign” in Kandal province made a pledge to NOT commit violence against women.

Photo: Paz y Desarrollo (PyD)

KEY FACTS:

- Domestic violence is illegal. However, many still believe that it is justified for a man to hit his wife under certain circumstances
- 1 in 5 women aged 15-49 has experienced physical violence at least once since the age of 15
- 67% of women versus 59.8% of men believe that it is a woman’s role to tolerate violence
- 32.8% of women and 27.8% of men believe that there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten
- 29% of ever-married women aged 15-49 reported having experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from a spouse
- Among ever-married women who have ever experienced spousal violence (physical or sexual), 48 per cent reported experiencing physical injuries
- Only about 4 in 10 women have sought assistance to stop the violence they have experienced

Sources: CDHS 2010, CDHS 2014, 2013 Gender-Based Violence Assessment, UNFPA & other UN partners