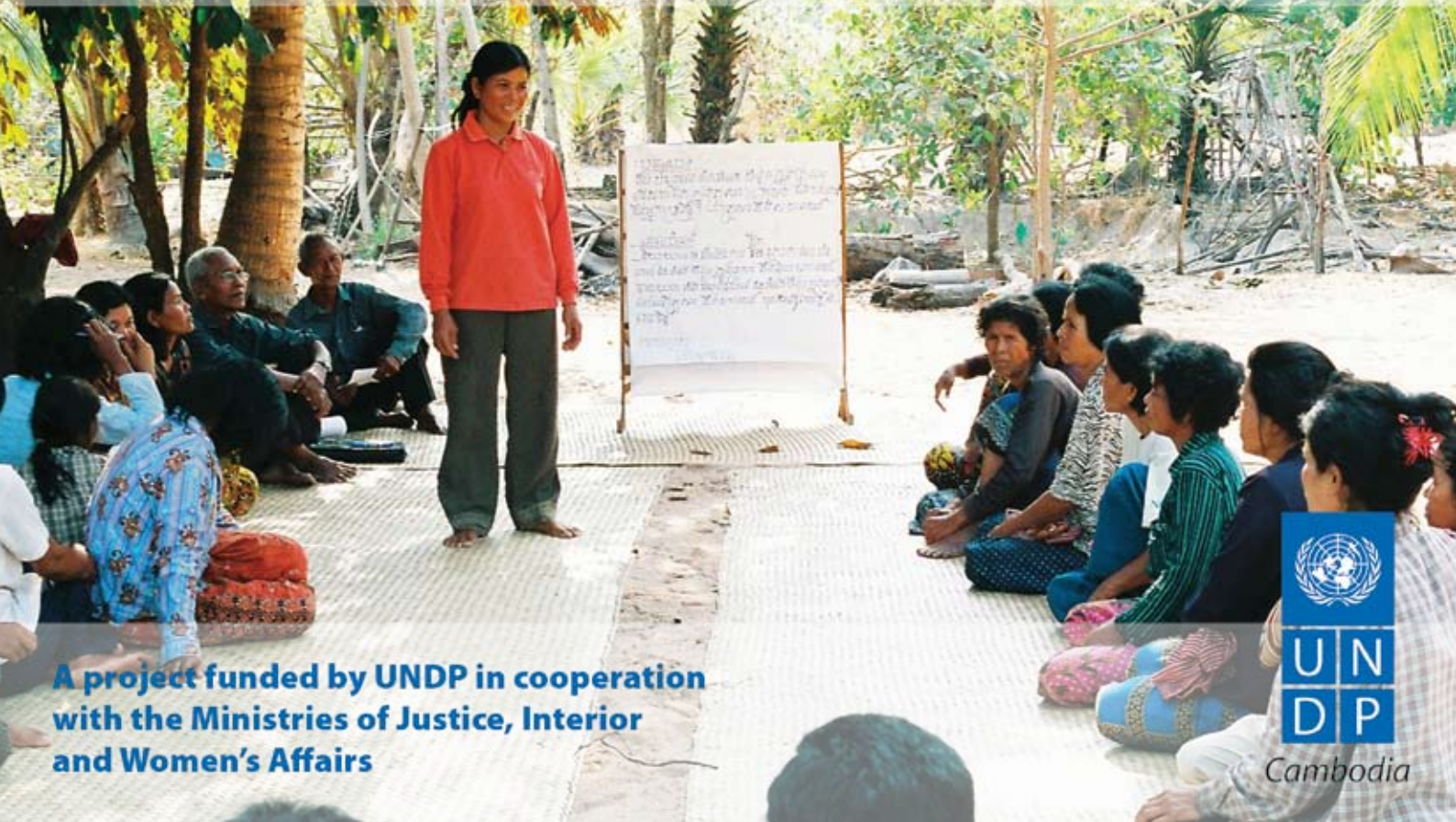


# Access to Justice

Community Capacity Enhancement  
Through Community Conversations to Support Women



**A project funded by UNDP in cooperation  
with the Ministries of Justice, Interior  
and Women's Affairs**



Cambodia

## Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is believed by many Cambodians to be an internal family matter and a taboo subject. Victims do not communicate their grief to the outside world which, in return, is not supposed to interfere in incidents. According to the *Cambodian Demographic and Health Survey 2000*, it is estimated that around 20 percent of Cambodian women have been abused by their spouses with injuries occurring in about ten percent of the cases. By introducing the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims in 2005, the Royal Government of Cambodia has officially made domestic violence a public social issue that concerns all affected families and communities. Through education, promotion of gender balance in society, and law enforcement, domestic violence can be eliminated and prevented.



Domestic violence occurs in different forms (physical, psychological, economic and sexual). It has a devastating impact on the community and the family and violates human rights, especially those of women and children. Caused by a number of interlinked factors including drinking, poverty, gambling, jealousy, lack of understanding and affection between spouses as well as high levels of frustration, it is a vicious cycle that needs to be broken.

## Community Capacity Enhancement Through Community Conversations

Community Capacity Enhancement through an interactive dialogue known as Community Conversations constitutes a package of participatory techniques whereby community members gather to discuss certain issues that affect their lives with the help of facilitators. The Conversations are a forum for community concerns, helping to raise awareness and understanding of the causes and impacts of certain phenomena by involving everyone in the affected communities.

This methodology was first successfully implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and has now been adopted as a strategy to address the problem of domestic violence prevailing in many Cambodian families. It is a part of UNDP's work in Cambodia in the field of Access to Justice with special support to women, and was implemented in six villages of three communes in Toek Phos district of Kampong Chhnang province in December 2006.

The project is realized in close collaboration with UNDP Cambodia's Programme on HIV/

AIDS and the Provincial Department of Women's Affairs. It engages the HIV/AIDS programme's trainers, who have far-reaching experience and skill in conducting community conversations, to train selected volunteer village facilitators.

The project would not be possible without the dedication of the facilitators, three respected members of the respective villages who are trained to lead the community through the conversations by applying tools from the CCE methodology such as community mapping, story-telling, analyzing





problems through diagrams, etc. The support of the Toek Phos district government as well as its women's affairs officer and the commune focal women is equally critical to the success and progress of the project. Their commitment constitutes the pathway to self-sustainability, the main requirement for the project's longevity.

Community Conversations encourage and provide an opportunity for:

- victims to speak out about their concerns and to ask the community for help,
- perpetrators to realize the impact of their violent behaviour on family and community, providing them with the knowledge needed to change values and behaviours,
- the community to ascribe to common values and take action from within.

The ultimate goal of the Community Conversations methodology is to ban community concerns such as domestic violence, trafficking, and HIV/AIDS by providing a forum to discuss and address the underlying causes of those issues, thus creating a harmonious living space, improving access to health, education, information, and justice for women and children, and empowering the communities to take action and decisions from within.

Our vision is to extend the Community Conversations methodology to other districts and provinces as an entry point to address community concerns regarding not only domestic violence but also trafficking, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS as well as any other issue that requires a communal solution.



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Ministry of Justice



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