



CARE Cambodia: Sexual & reproductive health & rights

CARE believes that access to quality sexual and reproductive health is both a fundamental human right and a critical development issue.

A woman's social, economic, and physical well-being is inextricably linked to her **ability to exercise her reproductive rights**: unwanted pregnancies can reduce opportunities for girls and women to access education, expose them to health risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth, and strain a family's resources.

Maternal and child mortality has decreased significantly in Cambodia in recent years, but rates remain higher in underserved areas such as the **remote north-east**, which has a high proportion of ethnic minority groups. Women who are **marginalised by occupation**, such as those employed in factories, can also lack access to quality information and services.

CARE works to reduce maternal and newborn mortality and promote gender equality. CARE does this by **empowering women to make informed choices** about their bodies, and increasing the **quality, responsiveness and equity** of health services.

CARE's work to promote women's sexual and reproductive health rights in Cambodia contributes to CARE's global goals:



CARE'S FOCUS IN CAMBODIA



Health system strengthening

To provide quality services, health staff require ongoing skills development. Health facilities should be accountable and responsive to the communities they serve. CARE improves service quality by strengthening midwives' clinical skills and knowledge, while working with Provincial Health Departments to establish effective quality improvement systems for reproductive, maternal and newborn health. CARE aims to improve the performance and governance of health systems by ensuring there are functioning and effective feedback mechanisms between women and the services they use.



Addressing barriers & increasing demand

While many clinical services have improved, distances, social barriers—including those specific to ethnic minorities—and even language can still hinder a woman's ability or motivation to access the health services she needs. With a particular focus on engaging men, CARE aims to strengthen community engagement with health providers and ensure women can access quality services without discrimination.



Access to modern contraceptives & safe abortion

Prevalent myths can affect women's use of modern contraception and safe abortion, while social norms can make access to information and services particularly challenging for unmarried women. CARE aims to ensure women can make informed decisions about how to plan their families, negotiate this with partners with confidence, and access services that meet their needs.



Reproductive health in emergencies

Sexual and reproductive health is critical to address in emergencies; women still get pregnant, have sex, and give birth, plus they are at elevated risk of gender-based violence. CARE is garnering critical cross-sector commitment among national government, provincial authorities, and development partners to addressing sexual and reproductive health in emergency preparedness and response plans. CARE engages stakeholders at national level and provides capacity building at the subnational level.

CARE'S IMPACT

↑ 59%



The % increase in ethnic minority women delivering their baby in a health facility with a skilled provider.¹

500+



The number of midwives and clinical staff in remote ethnic minority areas coached on improved clinical skills.²

2x increase



In trained female garment factory workers of reproductive age using modern methods of family planning.³

5x increase



In % of female garment factory workers who feel empowered to discuss and use modern family planning.⁴



Photo: CARE/GMB Films

SreyLeak is a garment factory worker in Phnom Penh who wants to save money before she has another child.

Chat! Contraception is CARE Cambodia's innovative package of activities to empower women to take control of their lives and make healthier choices. Women like SreyLeak learn about their options via interactive sessions, drama videos and a fun app which allows her to test her knowledge at home with her family.

CARE is working with corporate partners to bring Chat! Contraception to more garment factories.

“If I'd known about this contraceptive method before, I could have used it before falling pregnant...Now I use contraception and I have greater understanding.”

Sina's friend delivered her baby at home with a traditional birth attendant but died from complications, leaving the baby without a mother. By going to the health centre for delivery, she kept herself and her baby healthy.

CARE engages with ethnic minority communities through local volunteers. Radio listening groups for women and men in local languages to encourage women to access quality health care throughout pregnancy and when delivering their babies.

“My family members thought I would die because after delivering the baby, I bled for three days...because I was at the Health Centre, the midwives saved my life.”



Photo: CARE/Sok Vichheka



Photo: CARE/Sok Vichheka

Socheata, 23, is a young midwife at a health centre in Cambodia's remote north-east.

CARE has worked with the Cambodian Ministry of Health to improve the skills of midwives so they are confident they can handle any delivery. In areas where there are a high proportion of ethnic minority communities, CARE has also provided soft skills training to ensure staff like Socheata provide health services to all people equally without discrimination.

“I have clearer understanding now of how to take care of mothers and help save the lives of babies. I love my job.”

¹ Partnering to Save Lives, Endline Survey 2018. ² Under Partnering to Save Lives, 2013-8. ³ Chat! Contraception, mini-evaluation, 2016. ⁴ Partnering to Save Lives, Endline Survey 2018.



CARE Cambodia has received funding for its work on sexual, reproductive & maternal health & rights from a wide range of donors:



LEVI STRAUSS
FOUNDATION