Citizens’ Hearings: Cambodia

Citizens’ Hearings in Cambodia were organised by the Reproductive and Child Health Alliance Cambodia (RACHA). On 20 March 2015, RACHA conducted a hearing involving 33 representatives from 28 local and international health NGOs in the capital, Phnom Penh. This was followed by two consultations on 29 and 30 April 2015 in Pursat Province; one in Boeung Bath Kandal Health Center in Bakan Operational District (OD); and one in Sampov Meas OD of Pursat Province. RACHA involved citizens from diverse contexts in order to gather a representative sample of perspectives.

Participants included members of the National Parliament Assembly for Pursat Province, the Department Director for the Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Department director, the Bakan District Governor, the Deputy Director of Provincial Education, Youth and Sports Department, representatives from various provincial government departments, the Bakan Operational District (OD) Chief, the Sampov Meas OD Chief, community and town leaders and village chiefs, members of the Commune Council for Women and Children (CCWC), Achars (clergy/Buddhist Pagoda Manager), Village Health Support Groups (VHSGs), teachers, citizens, students and youth groups, and representatives from lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) groups.

Students at the Pursat Province Citizens’ Hearing

There is a need for multi-sectorial collaboration among public, private and civil society to work together to support the health of women and adolescents by improving working conditions, regulations, and compliance to national and international standards in export garment factories and in other workplaces. Access to health information and services among the workers must be looked into and child labour must not be allowed.

Representative from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation

RecommendaTions

- Commune Councils should allocate funds for maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health within annual commune investment plans. They should include members of the community to implement priority areas and monitor progress.
- Functioning health facilities are needed with an adequate number of trained staff, waiting rooms, rooms for post-delivery patients and food for family members. Modern equipment and materials are needed to encourage women to come to health facilities and diagnose and check for non-communicable diseases such as cancer so that patients will no longer be required to go to multiple facilities.
- More transport vehicles are needed to get pregnant women and other emergency cases from the village to the health centre or referral hospitals.
- Health care should be: available, acceptable, and affordable to the majority of people, and of good quality. Quality healthcare should include: positive interpersonal aspects such as attitude of care providers toward the patients; comfortable, clean, and private amenities; appropriate technical aspects of care including effective counselling and a sufficient number of health staff; and an adequate supply of clean water. This should be supported by the provision of health information to communities. To improve the services of public health facilities, the government must increase the salaries of health staff to motivate them to work efficiently and stop them from engaging in private practice during working hours.
- Information on clients’ and providers’ rights should be disseminated to everyone in Cambodia - health providers must respect clients’ rights and people must respect providers’ rights.
- Health-care providers in the private sector need to be regulated by the government to reduce medical malpractice that causes harm to patients.
- User fee rates at public health facilities must be posted and made visible to the clients, their families and the community to avoid staff overcharging patients.
- Public health facilities must be managed like private ones: with shorter waiting times, welcoming and cheerful staff, and quality health services.
- Information about maternal, child, and adolescent health must be integrated into school activities to improve students’ awareness and understanding of general health and health issues. People (both men and women) need more information about health to improve their health-seeking behaviour.
- Poor patients should be able to access health services without discrimination, especially among those living in remote areas. A Health Equity Fund is needed for the poor with outreach on how to access financial support.
- People must be educated on environmental cleanliness and sanitation. Food vendors and other companies must observe good-hygiene practices and sell only safe foods. Organic farming should be promoted and people should be informed about the harmful effects of using insecticides on consumers’ health.
- More must be done to strengthen the implementation of traffic laws, drug-related laws, and to prosecute perpetrators of sexual abuse.

Youth groups identified the following priorities:

- More information is needed on women’s and adolescents’ health, especially about physical changes among girls going through puberty as well as information on how to access services when confronted with reproductive health problems.
- Health centres should provide youth-friendly counselling services in private rooms with confidentiality procedures in place. Services should be available for girl survivors of rape or sexual violence, such as therapy, confidential counselling, and advice on the use of emergency contraceptives as well as accessing legal assistance.