



REGIONAL REFLECTION:

Enhancing Women's Voice to STOP Sexual Harassment (STOP) Project

IMPACTS & LESSONS



"STOP's influence reaches beyond the issue of sexual harassment to also contribute to empowering workers and building respect and understanding within the workplace, which makes the project appealing to brands and factories."

H&M Cambodia

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report compiles, summarises and provides additional reflections on the findings of the following reports prepared by Jan Breckenridge, Pichamon Yeophantong, Mailin Suchting, Georgia Lyons and Melanie Burton of the Gendered Violence Research Network based in Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales (UNSW):

- A Social Impact Analysis of CARE's 'Enhancing Women's Voice to STOP Sexual Harassment' Project.
- Enhancing Women's Voice to STOP Sexual Harassment Final Evaluation – Laos.
- Enhancing Women's Voice to STOP Sexual Harassment Final Evaluation – Myanmar.
- Enhancing Women's Voice to STOP Sexual Harassment Final Evaluation – Vietnam.

This report highlights the work of the STOP Country Offices in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam whose dedication and commitment to making workplaces safer for women garment workers is central to the project success.

CARE gratefully acknowledges the funding support to the *Enhancing Women's Voice to Stop Sexual Harassment* project from the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Gender Action Platform and the Australian NGO Cooperation Program.

We also thank the garment factories who participated in STOP including their managers and workers whose openness to share with us made this report and its learning possible.



The views in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent those of the CARE or its programs, or the Australian Government or any other partners.

Cover photo: An HR manager at a factory in Phnom Penh. Credit CARE Cambodia.



BACKGROUND

Sexual Harassment in the Garment Sector

By the end of 2015, there were approximately 60-75 million people employed in the garment and textiles industry worldwide, 75% of whom were women.

Female garment workers experience sexual harassment in their workplace, generally have limited legal protections, lack job security and work in an environment where there is often impunity for the harassment they experience.

Studies from across the Asia-Pacific region demonstrate:

- ⚠️ Sexual harassment in the workplace **increases workplace tension and absenteeism**.¹
- ⚠️ Sexual harassment has **high productivity costs**, estimated at up to **US\$89 million per year** in the Cambodian garment industry including turnover, absenteeism and presenteeism costs.²
- ✅ **Worker satisfaction, retention, and overall performance can increase** when violence and harassment are reduced.
- ✅ Factories were **more productive and profitable** when they had **better working conditions** and **higher compliance** relating to sexual harassment prevention.

Women working in the garment industry tend to have less value and fewer rights than men, have less access to resources and opportunities and be more vulnerable to experiencing sexual harassment.³

STOP'S DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Any **unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature** which could be expected to make a person feel **humiliated, intimidated or offended**.

"QUID PRO QUO" SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This includes when an employer, supervisor, manager or co-worker undertakes or attempts to **influence the process of recruitment, promotion, training, discipline, dismissal, salary increment or other benefit** of an employee **in exchange for sexual favours** including where the rejection of a sexual advance results in loss of a job benefit or a detriment to the worker.

"HOSTILE WORKING ENVIRONMENT" SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This involves conduct that creates an **intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment** for an individual or a group.

The STOP Project

The *Enhancing Women's Voice to Stop Sexual Harassment (STOP)* project has worked to prevent and address sexual harassment in the garment sector in four Mekong countries since 2017. It is an initiative of CARE Australia funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Australian Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Cooperation Program (ANCP) and the Gender Action Platform (GAP). STOP forms part of CARE's *Made by Women* strategy.

GOAL

Women workers in garment factories experience less sexual harassment in targeted workplaces.

END OF PROGRAM OUTCOME

Garment factories implement effective and appropriate models to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

COUNTRY CONTEXTS

STOP works with factories in four countries in the Mekong region: Cambodia, Lao PDR*, Myanmar and Vietnam.

MYANMAR

The garment industry contributes significantly to the economy.

There are currently 400 garment factories with almost 1.2 million people, 86% of whom are women, are employed in the garment and textile industry.⁴

STOP HAS WORKED WITH 7 FACTORIES IN MYANMAR

LAOS

In 2016, garment exports were estimated to total approximately US\$174 million.

In late 2018, 78 factories remained in the sector.⁵

Of the estimated 26,000 people employed in the sector, 90% are women.⁶

STOP HAS WORKED WITH 10 FACTORIES IN LAOS

VIETNAM

Vietnam is the fourth largest textile and garment exporter in the world, following China, India and Bangladesh.

The textile and garment industry employs more than 1.6 million people, which is more than 12% of the industrial workforce and nearly 5% of the country's total labour force.⁷ Women make up 80% of the workforce in the garment sector.⁸

STOP HAS WORKED WITH 6 FACTORIES IN VIETNAM

CAMBODIA

The garment industry is the country's largest sector, accounting for 40% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

In 2017, the sector was responsible for employing approximately 600,000 workers, of which 85% were women.⁹

STOP HAS WORKED WITH 19 FACTORIES IN CAMBODIA



* Referred to hereafter as Laos.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION PACKAGE

STOP works with participating garment factories to implement STOP's workplace sexual harassment prevention package (referred to hereafter as STOP workplace package), originally developed and implemented in Cambodia under the *Safe Workplaces, Safe Communities* project, and further refined for implementation in Cambodia and adapted for implementation in Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam under the STOP project.

STOP'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION PACKAGE

The STOP workplace package includes the following resources in each country:

- A model sexual harassment policy.
- An implementation guide for the model sexual harassment policy.
- Training for Sexual Harassment Prevention Committees and human resource management in:
 - Gender, sexual harassment and the sexual harassment policy.
 - Sexual harassment complaints handling.
- Training for workers on the sexual harassment policy (including a film).
- Communication and campaign materials.
- Monitoring tools.

CARE also provides coaching and support to human resources managers and Sexual Harassment Prevention Committees implementing the STOP workplace package.

The process of ensuring the resources, particularly the workplace policy and implementation guide which form the basis of the STOP workplace package, responded to the legal frameworks and social context in each country was time and resource intensive. This involved legislative reviews and extensive consultation with the garment sector. The result is a country specific package that aligns to global best practice.

"They [CARE] are obviously experts in the field or at least that's what we feel. They've been doing this sort of work for a long time. So, when we were looking for a partner to engage with, to help us out how do we roll out the sexual harassment project in our countries, for us it was a bit obvious from the start that we should do that with CARE."

Vietnam, Anonymous



FINAL EVALUATION & SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

In 2018, CARE Australia commissioned a consortium of researchers from UNSW Sydney and UNSW Canberra to undertake an independent evaluation of the STOP project and provide a separate Social Impact Analysis with Cambodia as a case study. Cambodia was chosen for the Social Impact Analysis because the STOP workplace package was developed in Cambodia and has been implemented for the longest period in Cambodia through *Safe Workplaces, Safe Communities* (2013-2016) and the STOP project (2017-2020).

This report provides a consolidated summary of the key findings from the four reports produced, with some additional analysis of what these findings mean for the STOP project moving forward.

"The results of the STOP evaluation suggest promising, longer-term implications for a factory's reputation, productivity as well as profitability in an uncertain, post-COVID-19 world."

STOP Final Evaluation

FINAL EVALUATIONS: LAOS, MYANMAR AND VIETNAM

The final evaluation asked two key questions:

1. How effective has the adaptation and implementation of the STOP workplace package been in each country?
2. How is STOP and its workplace package perceived by target and other external key stakeholders?

SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: CAMBODIA

The Social Impact Analysis aimed to contribute to building a business case for acting on sexual harassment by:

- Measuring the key outcomes of the STOP project.
- Identifying positive and negative impacts of the STOP workplace package across the five levels of the adapted socio-ecological model.*
- Promoting better development outcomes in future delivery of the STOP project through lessons learned.

* The five levels of the socio-ecological model are: intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, community and public policy.

Methods

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework Tools used by STOP Country Offices varied depending on the country context, resources available and status of implementation. Generally, data collection involved:



FINAL EVALUATIONS: LAOS, MYANMAR AND VIETNAM

UNSW researchers drew upon a range of evaluative sources, methods and strategies to conduct the evaluations.

Data was collected in early 2019 and again in early 2020, with Country Offices also conducting ongoing monitoring.



Final evaluation data collection was impacted by COVID-19, which was declared a global pandemic on the 11th of March 2020, in the following ways:

- Evaluation data could not be collected in some factories.*
- UNSW's planned in-country field visits were conducted remotely.

SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS – CAMBODIA

The Social Impact Analysis also adopted an interdisciplinary, mixed-methods approach.

Quantitative and **qualitative** data was collected by the STOP country office including at baseline (2019) and evaluation (2020) and during project monitoring (ongoing).

Qualitative data was collected during in-depth, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions conducted by UNSW in March 2019 and February 2020 with three factories (one in 2019 and two in 2020), primary stakeholders and STOP country offices using a guided open-question format.

* Laos – two factories; Myanmar – one factory; Vietnam – all factories.



IMPACTS

While project implementation varied across the four countries due to differences in when the STOP project was introduced and the size of the garment sector, STOP demonstrated positive impact on the participating garment factories' awareness of sexual harassment in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and to a lesser extent in Laos.

In Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, the STOP project:

- Assisted factory management to set up **clearer guidelines and mechanisms** for dealing with and preventing sexual harassment.
- Empowered female workers to be **confident to report sexual harassment** incidents and become **more aware of their rights**.

The STOP project has been consistently described by its NGO, government and factory partners as valuable.



Key Impacts



1. All factories had strengthened workplace mechanisms to respond to sexual harassment.



2. Management's knowledge of and attitudes towards sexual harassment improved.



3. Female workers' knowledge of sexual harassment policies increased.



4. Workers' knowledge of what sexual harassment is increased.



5. Female workers reported *observing* less sexual harassment.



6. Female workers reported *experiencing* less sexual harassment.



7. Workers' confidence to report sexual harassment increased.



8. Female workers have increased platforms to voice concerns about sexual harassment.



9. STOP contributed to legislative reform in all four countries.

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT: Garment Factories Have Effective Workplace Mechanisms to Respond to Sexual Harassment in Target Factories.



1. ALL FACTORIES HAD STRENGTHENED WORKPLACE MECHANISMS TO RESPOND TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

A number of workplace mechanisms were established and implemented in factories to prevent and respond to sexual harassment including: reviewing or developing a sexual harassment policy; appointing a group of staff or committee with oversight for implementing the policy; training workers on sexual harassment; training those responsible to respond to complaints of sexual harassment; displaying information on the sexual harassment policy; conducting awareness and campaign events on sexual harassment in the factory; and establishing procedures to monitor the implementation of the policy.

In total **STOP supported 42 factories** to strengthen their workplace mechanisms to respond to sexual harassment.

	CAMBODIA	LAOS	MYANMAR	VIETNAM
NUMBER OF FACTORIES				
Adopted a sexual harassment policy.	19	3	6	6
Established a sexual harassment prevention committee.	19	10	5	6
Commenced training for the sexual harassment prevention committee and human resource managers.	18	9	7	6
Commenced training their workers on their sexual harassment policy.	15	4	5	6



2. MANAGEMENT’S KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXUAL HARASSMENT IMPROVED.

Managers showed improved attitudes towards sexual harassment when asked about common misperceptions such as that sexual harassment is only ever physical, that verbal sexual harassment is mostly joking and not serious, that if someone did not complain about the sexual harassment immediately then it is not sexual harassment and that victims / survivors are partly responsible for the sexual harassment directed towards them.

For example, in Myanmar, from the baseline to the evaluation the proportion of factory managers who believe it isn’t sexual harassment if the worker did not immediately complain about the behaviour **halved**.



"Before cooperating with the STOP project, the factory had only a discrimination and harassment policy....We did not have worker training. Now we have a clear policy and the training manual so that we can train our workers here...factory managers allow workers to join training during working hours."

Cambodia, Compliance Supervisor

"Our workers now are more confident to report sexual harassment behaviour... One worker reported that she was verbally harassed by her colleague. Our committee took action immediately and the case was solved peacefully. We will continue training workers on sexual harassment prevention as in our plan."

Cambodia, Compliance Supervisor



3. FEMALE WORKERS' KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICIES INCREASED.

Female workers were asked about sexual harassment policies and procedures in the factory such as if there is a sexual harassment policy, who they can go to in the factory if they experience sexual harassment, if complaints of sexual harassment are investigated, if there are penalties against those who use sexual harassment and if leaders enforce the sexual harassment policy.

For example, in Myanmar, the proportion of female workers who say their factory has 'policies to protect workers from sexual harassment' more than **doubled**.

In addition, prior to STOP one in three female workers in Myanmar said they would not know who to go to in the factory if they experienced sexual harassment; the evaluation found almost all now know this.

45% → **99%**

Percentage of female workers who say their factory has 'policies to protect workers from sexual harassment' (Myanmar).

 → 
2 in 3 → **3 in 3**

Proportion of female workers knew who they would go to in the factory if they experienced sexual harassment (Myanmar).

"For factories, I think there are changes, especially for managers and workers; for managers, lots of changes—more understanding on sexual harassment and different viewpoints; previously when we asked they would say there are no cases of sexual harassment, but now they understand more; and now workers, especially young workers, have improved awareness and can receive information through different channels including social media and ask to follow up and share more info with us."

Vietnam, Gender Based Violence Network*

* Collected during the STOP Mid-Term Review.

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT: Female Garment Factory Workers Feel Safe to Report Sexual Harassment Free from Negative Consequences.

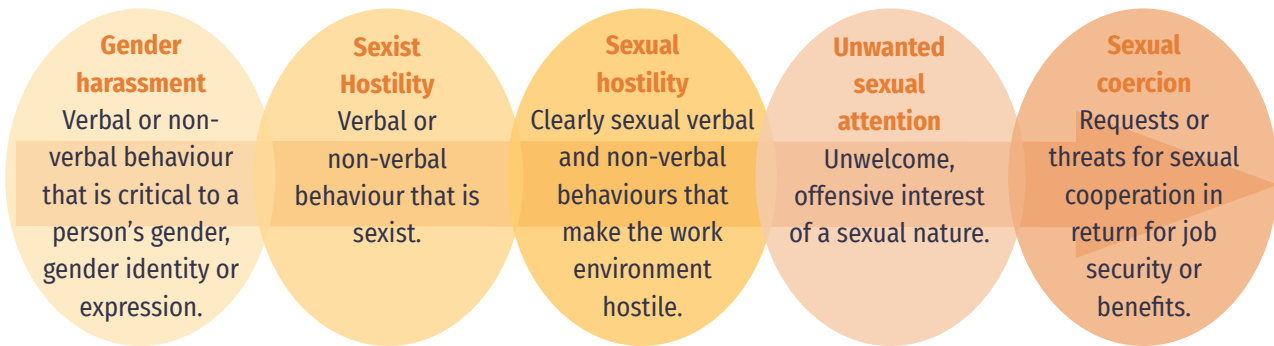
"So, I told you from the beginning that here, Laos people especially if a woman worker working in the garment factory, they do not know about harassment. Sexual harassment. They do know about the physical violence."

Laos, ILO



4. WORKERS' KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS INCREASED.

Factory workers were asked about a range of sexually harassing behaviours to identify if they agree that these behaviours are sexual harassment. This included examples across the continuum of sexual harassment behaviours:



Following training in Vietnam, the proportion of workers identifying specific behaviours as are sexual harassment increased.

KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT BEFORE AND AFTER TRAINING (VIETNAM).

52% → 80%

Agree unwanted touching of the body by a co-worker or manager is sexual harassment.

48% → 80%

Agree unwanted staring is sexual harassment.

52% → 70%

Agree a demand for sexual favours, such as sex to keep your job, is sexual harassment.

While all countries have shown improvement in knowledge of sexual harassment in the factories, it is important to note that in some country contexts, for example in Laos, there was less existing knowledge on sexual harassment which meant STOP faced increased challenges when trying to increase knowledge and change attitudes.

"Before we started, no one talked about sexual harassment in our factory, but after we did the training, we now remind each other of behaviour. We can discuss, learn, and avoid. Such discussion consciously strengthens our awareness of sexual harassment. I think the biggest achievement is the awareness in our factory."

Myanmar, Anonymous



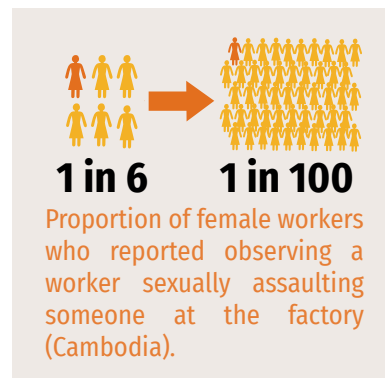
5. FEMALE WORKERS REPORTED OBSERVING LESS SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

Workers were asked about whether they had *observed* a range of sexual harassment behaviours in the factory in the past 12 months. Workers were asked about observing examples of behaviours that included:

- Gender harassment.
- Sexist hostility.
- Sexual hostility.
- Unwanted sexual attention.
- Sexual coercion.

During the evaluation, the percentage of women who reported *observing* sexual harassment behaviours **decreased**. For example, in Cambodia 1 in 6 women reported observing that someone has been sexually assaulted at the factory. During the evaluation only 1 in 100 women reported observing this.

Similarly, the baseline found 1 in 5 women had observed inappropriate touching embracing or kissing a co-worker without their consent, whereas during the evaluation only 6% reported this.



6. FEMALE WORKERS REPORTED EXPERIENCING LESS SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

Workers were also asked about whether they had *experienced* a range of sexual harassment behaviours in the factory in the past 12 months.

During the evaluation, the percentage of women who reported *experiencing* sexual harassment behaviours also **decreased**. For example, in Laos, the baseline found 1 in 6 women had experienced unwanted and persistent requests to go out on dates or being touched inappropriately, embraced or kissed without consent. The evaluation found this had reduced to 1 in 20 women.



"The situation at the factory has changed a lot. From my observation, incidents of verbal harassment are reduced and inappropriate behaviour like men touching women's butts are not happening much anymore. When the factory started to work on a solution, there were fewer cases of sexual harassment happening."

Cambodia, female factory worker



7. WORKERS' CONFIDENCE TO REPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT INCREASED.

Workers were asked about their confidence to stop sexual harassment, to tell their immediate supervisor, human resources or a manager if they experienced sexual harassment, to know where to report sexual harassment and that the factory will be effective in reducing sexual harassment.

In Myanmar, the baseline found only 3 in 4 female workers felt confident that they knew the correct channels to report sexual harassment, whereas this had **increased** to almost all by the evaluation.

However the evaluation also found 1 in 4 female workers still agreed that it is risky to take action about sexual harassment in the factory.

Social norms change, including those relating to reporting sexual harassment, takes time. Change requires sustained interventions over long periods of time.

Also, to see a shift in female workers' belief that it is safe to report sexual harassment, factory workers will need to experience and observe how the factory responds to cases of sexual harassment over a longer period of time.



3 in 4 → **4 in 4**

Proportion of female workers who felt confident that they knew the correct channels to report sexual harassment (Myanmar).



1 in 4

Proportion of female workers who still agreed that it is risky to take action about sexual harassment in the factory (Myanmar).



8. FEMALE WORKERS HAVE INCREASED PLATFORMS TO VOICE CONCERNS ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

In all factories, where evaluation data was collected in Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, there were groups or platforms where female workers were able to represent the voice of female workers.

In Laos the percentage of representation of women on committees was 13% or higher*; in Myanmar and Vietnam this was higher, with committees showing a significant proportion of female representation.

Myanmar: >50%

Vietnam: >67%

Percentage of representation of women on committees.

After participating in the awareness session by CARE Myanmar in 2018 and 2019, a participant from a workers' rights organisation, along with fellow group members, organised a collective demand for labour rights at a factory. The workers requested for a review and revision of unfair labour rights and to take action immediately when sexual harassment occurs in the factory. As a result, the factory senior management team took action against three employees who were perpetrating sexual harassment, dismissing all three.

A woman in a leadership position in the Confederation of Trade Unions (CTUM), and group members who participated in awareness sessions on sexual harassment conducted by CARE Myanmar supported three women who experienced sexual harassment, in three different factories. After receiving information that male supervisors frequently sexually harassed their female workers, the women investigated those issues. As a result, the perpetrators of sexual harassment were fired from the factory after CTUM raised the issue with the factories and shared the outcome of their investigation.

* In seven factories

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT: National Regulatory Environment of Factories is Strengthened to Promote Mechanisms to Address Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.



9. STOP CONTRIBUTED TO LEGISLATIVE REFORM IN ALL FOUR COUNTRIES.

LABOUR CODE (VIETNAM)

STOP supported the Labour Code revision to incorporate more provisions on sexual harassment and to include a definition of sexual harassment.

"All provisions regarding the female workers in the 2012 Labor Code have been reviewed and revised very significantly, to ensure better gender equality in employment area, and to promote gender equality in employment and labour areas. Now, actually, at this moment, we are looking at implementation, to provide detailed implementation guidelines for the new labor court on gender equality promotion to female workers."

Vietnam, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (OSH) (MYANMAR)

STOP and its partners advocated for the inclusion of a broader definition of psychological incidents, which would also encompass sexual harassment incidents in the workplace. Despite pressures of several parties hoping to see the amendments passed quickly, and with the advocacy groups involved in the later stages of the process, ultimately, STOP's collective advocacy efforts proved successful: the OSH Law approved by the Union Parliament incorporated changes such as the expansion of the scope of the provisions, the participation of women in OSH committee, and inclusion of the need to provide training of OSH to the committee members.

"...it's one of the first labour laws that require employers to consider the needs of female workers when establishing workplace OSH committee."

Myanmar, Fair Wear Myanmar

The STOP team also advocated through the tripartite mechanism for an amendment to the Settlement of Labour Dispute Law, as well as to the Myanmar International Labour Conference (ILC) delegates in support of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. All four voting delegates from Myanmar voted in favour of the ILO Convention, paving the way for further advocacy with respect to the Convention's ratification.

Social Impact Analysis

BEFORE STOP

56% of surveyed workers reporting experiencing at least one form of sexual harassment.

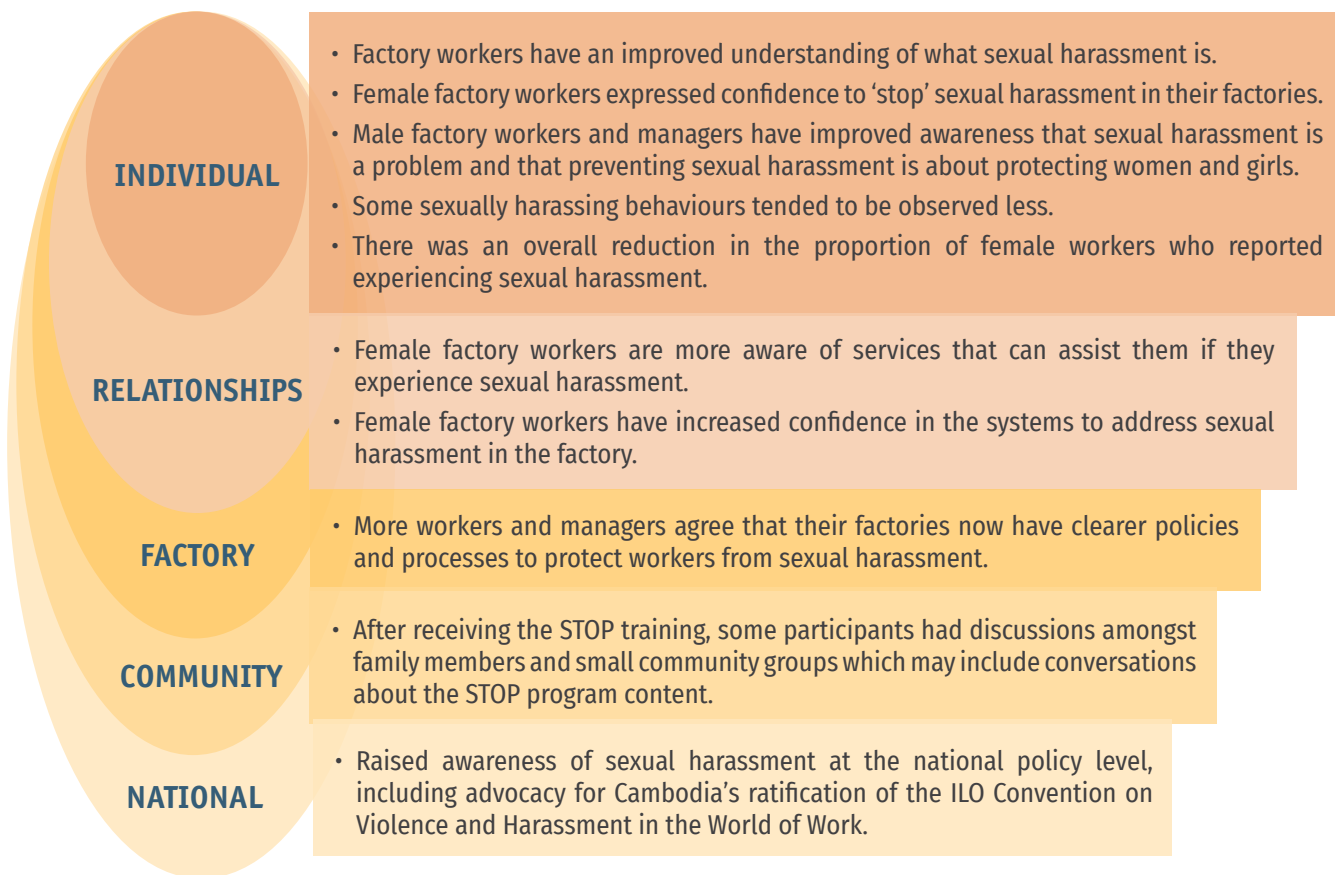
Of the workers interviewed, most perceived sexual harassment to be ‘private business’ and that sexual harassment happens because of inappropriate behaviour on the survivor / victim’s part.

There was very limited understanding of what behaviours may constitute sexual harassment. When asked about specific behaviours female workers mainly identified ‘attempts at rape’ and ‘coercion for sexual favours (specifically sexual intercourse)’.

AFTER STOP*

The Social Impact Analysis shows change across the five levels of the adapted socio-ecological model which indicate positive shifts towards more sustained social norms change.

However, measuring sustainable change to social norms requires more time to pass to assess long-term impact on social norms.



Despite this, some male factory workers still view sexual harassment as often times ‘unintentional’ highlighting the need for ongoing and long-term training and awareness on sexual harassment.

Some results appear unclear and conflicting. For example, during the Social Impact Analysis while individual sexually harassing behaviours tended to be observed less, the proportion of workers who reported observing sexually harassing behaviours in the factory in general increased. This increase in observing sexually harassment behaviours may relate to increased understanding and awareness of sexual harassment in the factories which then lead to increased recognition and observation of the behaviours.

* Unfortunately, while the Social Impact Analysis shows change across the five levels of the adapted socio-ecological model relating to STOP, the report does not directly compare the baseline and evaluation data.



Photo: CARE Cambodia

KEY FINDING

STOP is evidence-based and interdisciplinary to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

KEY FINDING

STOP's multi-country design allows for context-sensitivity and the 'bottom-up' development of project content and resources.

Stakeholders were positive about the effectiveness of STOP package, including the training approach, material, and model sexual harassment policy. The high quality of the content was identified as important for engaging the factories and bringing about higher-level social change.

"We have received similar training from other industries before but from CARE Myanmar, it was more precise and detailed and provided terms of gender ... after series of training, some women come to understand that this is not the right thing."

Myanmar, Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar*

Stakeholders reported their satisfaction with the tailored end-product and the support provided by STOP.

"CARE Myanmar – in my impression, I think they are working hard to practice this project, listen to our feedback patiently, and find ways to solve problems we report. When I report any difficulties that we meet, they also share experience from other factories to us so we can try to learn from others to solve the problem."

Myanmar, Gainway

Collaboration and partnership with stakeholders was a key aspect of project implementation. STOP successfully leveraged the influence of brands and other partners, such as government and trade unions, in order to engage with the factories. In some cases, CARE also developed the knowledge and capacity of their partners.

Being able to learn from the experiences of other countries was also a key strength of the project.

* Collected during the STOP Mid-Term Review.



Photo: Vilasack Souvanna/CARE Laos

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

Broader cultural and social norms regarding sexual harassment affected factories willingness to engage with the project, as sexual harassment was not necessarily prioritised or seen as an issue.

"...there's this cultural understanding [sexual harassment] is really not an issue...or problem of making jokes about women...there are some regulations on that, and the labor law has some elements of this, but for lots of people this is a bit of a joke and part of what you would call their way of doing it."

Vietnam, Anonymous

Stakeholders noted that there were challenges around factory engagement due to concerns about how their involvement might affect their productivity and increase their workloads. Despite interest in purchasing the STOP package, most organisations sought shorter-term solutions and shorter training, rather than investing in the full STOP package, which recommends that all worker complete 5-6 hours of training on sexual harassment over 5-6 sessions resulting in high costs to the factory.

Some countries faced a more difficult contextual environment. For example in Laos there was not pressure from government and unions on factories to respond to the sexual harassment and a lack of awareness among factories about the benefits of engaging with the project.

The garment sector has been unexpectedly and adversely affected by COVID-19 which may influence the sustainability of STOP. Project activities have been impacted with restricted access in factories and stakeholders have reported that sexual harassment appears to be less of a priority.

Opportunities

Brand and factory stakeholders indicated a desire to engage further with STOP to develop shorter modules and alternative content delivery for the STOP package to mitigate concerns about the productivity implications of the package's time and resource requirements.

Some stakeholders suggested that the project could be expanded to other sectors. A specific opportunity for this is in Vietnam where changes to the Labor Code puts increased requirements on factories to address sexual harassment and this provides an opportunity to expand STOP into similar apparel sectors such as footwear.

Similarly, the adoption of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, which will come into force on 25 June 2021, provides an opportunity for national level advocacy on addressing sexual harassment in the workplace.

ENDNOTES

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