



NGO Coalition to Address (Sexual)
Exploitation of Children in Cambodia
(COSECAM)

STORIES FROM THE HEARTS

Girls Speak Out - Three Years On



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1. INTRODUCTION

COSECAM's Child Victim Empowerment "Girls Speak Out" Project (GSO) was piloted in 2003. Its primary aim was to provide a group of girls who had been victims of child trafficking with a forum to share their experiences and voice their opinions on how best to address child trafficking in Cambodia. The girls were selected from COSECAM's member shelters or were involved in its vocational training programme (See Appendix 1 for list of participating shelters).

A number of these girls wanted to become activists and lobby decision makers demanding policy change in relation to child trafficking and exploitation. Fortunately COSECAM was able to secure further ongoing funding for the GSO. Subsequently in order to help realize the goal expressed by these girls, COSECAM has been facilitating regular workshops designed to create an enabling environment for these girls to engage in peer support, build up their advocacy capacities and boost their self-confidence and speak out against child trafficking.

As the project has evolved so too has the nature of the GSO members. The participants have now extended to include not only victims of child trafficking but as well girls considered to be at risk.

a. CHILD PARTICIPATION

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

O'Kane has described participation as:

*"an ongoing process of children's active involvement in decision-making (at different levels) in matters that concern them. It requires information sharing and dialogue between children and adults, which is based on mutual respect and power sharing. Genuine participation gives children the power to shape both the process and outcome."*¹

Kabeer extending on O'Kane's definition places participation within a framework of empowering marginalised groups, defining it as:

*"the processes of change through which those who have been denied the ability to articulate their needs, exercise those rights and influence the decision-making processes which shape their lives, are enabled to do so."*²

¹ See O'Malley Kate, *From Children and Young People Participating in PRSP Processes: Lessons from Save the Children's experiences* (2004) 8 <

<http://www.crin.org/hrbap/index.asp?action=theme.themeItem&subtheme=14&item=4696>> at 6 July 2007

² *Ibid*, 8.

Since the adoption of the UNCRC there has been a greater awareness of child participation as key element of child rights. In terms of child trafficking, policy-makers in Cambodia have realized it is a growing problem and introduced a range of policy initiatives/actions however child participation in this process has thus far proved minimal. Many Non Government Organisations (NGOs) working on child issues in Cambodia have also recognized children as active agents in the process however there is still a long way to go. Given that child trafficking and exploitation are such complex and sensitive issues it is all the more important that the children affected, are heard.

The GSO Project is an example of '*self-advocacy child participation*'. This type of child participation involves a process of empowering children and young people themselves to take action on issues they identify with. The process is controlled by children and young people. The role of the adults is to facilitate young people's leadership and provide support, perhaps as advisers, mentors or fundraisers.³

b. NATURE OF THE GSO PROJECT

The number of participants has ranged from 12 to 14 at each workshop and the age between 12 to 20 years old. The workshops have adopted the necessary dual approach of addressing issues of self esteem as well advocacy capacity building. During the workshops the girls are encouraged to share their experiences, their future career plans, debrief on their living situations in the shelters. There have been sessions on life skills, anger management and dealing with trauma, grief and loss. Knowledge and capacity building has taken place in areas of child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, the rights of the child-basic and in context of trafficking, protecting these rights and basic advocacy skills. At present, the workshops have focused on providing practical advocacy training through different mediums such as role-play, drawing and group work so that these girls can feel confident advocate against about child trafficking and exploitation. Most importantly the GSO workshops have sought to broaden the girl's world view by exposing them to other Cambodian youth activists and those from around the world in similar if not related circumstances.

As part of this process of empowerment, program staff recently asked some of the girls whether they would like to share their stories and their experiences being involved in GSO.

Here is what they shared...

2. STORIES FROM THE HEART

Srey Vita's Story

Age: 16

Occupation: student in grade 7 at public school

³ *Ibid.* The other categories of participation identified by O'Malley were participative initiatives and consultative processes. She emphasized that these categories are not mutually exclusive.

Background

Following the death of Srey Vita's parents, she and her sister went to live with their aunt and uncle. They were so cruel and did not love them at all. Her aunty forced her to smuggle cigarettes, clothes, and toddy across the Cambodian-Thai border. Eventually she was arrested by Thai police for working as a smuggler.

Even when she was living with her aunty she was forced to work hard. Under difficult circumstances she had to collect the leftover fish that the fishing boats had failed to collect from the river. She only received 2 meals per day; her aunty put too much pressure to work hard that is why she had to drop out of school.

Srey Vita's aunt and uncle ended up selling her older sister into labour exploitation in Thailand. Her sister was also forced to work the same as her but her aunty transferred her to work in a restaurant in Thailand. Later on, she got news that her sister was sold to a brothel there.

The same fate would have befallen Srey Vita had she not had the good fortune of encountering an NGO working in the area, CARE International, who intervened on her behalf. Care International successfully managed to persuade Srey Vita's aunt and Uncle not to send her to Thailand. The Ministry of Women Affairs in Koh Kong subsequently removed her aunt's right of guardianship. After that, she was transferred temporarily to a shelter in the area. After completing a family assessment and determining that she could not return to live with her aunt she was transferred to a more permanent shelter in a different province where she was also able to resume her studies.

"When I think of my past I feel suffering, upset and I regret what happened to my sister. I didn't know how to help my sister while she was sold because I didn't know the NGO at that time, and I was so silly as well."

Why she joined the Girls Speak Out Group

Srey Vita came to know about GSO through the shelter. She decided to join because she had not been aware previously of social issues such as child rights and child trafficking and wanted to learn more. She identified participation as most important in raising her awareness of the issues. She said that by raising her levels of awareness she not only could build her own capacity but as well would enable her to develop the capacity to train other persons in her village, school and shelter on these issues. For example, we could provide the training, she said, in the form of a story book.

Her experience since joining

Being a part of GSO, Srey Vita has observed positive changes in her behaviour. She has stopped feeling angry and started feeling more courageous. She has also been able to help her friends when they have been experiencing problems or feeling sad. She says that she has struggled hard in life, tried hard to learn and tell herself '*not to disappoint herself*'. In her shelter she has assisted in training others about child trafficking and hygiene. She also trained the children in the shelter about plans for future children. She also said that if she had the opportunity to meet with her uncle, she would help him to stop the family violence.

Importance of Girls Speak Out for her Community

Srey Vita can see the importance of her involvement in the GSO project to her community when the outreach worker in the village brings information of children's issues to share amongst all the villagers. She tells for example how they all share information about trafficking in persons and family violence. Srey Vita said that she has been able to support and encourage other victim girls to try hard to learn and to struggle for their life.

Since being a part of GSO she has felt the courage to inform other girls about the logo on the COSECAM GSO T-Shirt and explain to the children and the teachers in the school and the shelter about its meaning and substance. She has also tried to lobby other interested girls to join this group. She tells them that *"... if we have the capacity, we could have a good opportunity to make change for the better in the shelter and in other environments."*

Future Plans

Her dream now is to work in a NGO and then train the community about children's issues. She also wants to look for her sister in Thailand. She has been separated from her sister for too long.



* Srey Vita's self-reflection before GSO and now

Srey Neary's Story

Age: 21

Occupation: Tailor

Background

Srey Neary bravely tells the story about how she was lured into prostitution in Malaysia by traffickers. She had to endure this ordeal for three months. She hesitates about her mother's involvement in the situation. It's never easy to admit that your own mother may have been the reason you were caused so much pain and suffering.....

Following a police-raid, the brothel was closed and she remained in Malaysia for a short while after that. Srey Neary ended up being arrested however by Malaysian immigration police because she did not have a passport. Her mother did eventually become aware of the situation and complained to a shelter in Cambodia who then intervened and facilitated her return home.

Why she joined the Girls Speak Out Group

She did not really know what to expect when she first joined the GSO group. Her interest however quickly peaked due to the varied topics being discussed during the workshops. In particular she was interested in the topics such as anger-management, developing work ethic and discussing her future plans.

Her experience since joining

Srey Neary says "*...my behaviour has changed so much for the better since joining the Girls Speak Out group.*" When asked how, she tells me how she has gained the confidence to think for herself and not to follow her mother's wishes blindly if she considers there to be potential for her rights to be violated. For instance she dared to not follow her mother's proposal when she wanted her to work in a karaoke bar. She is learning to make her own decisions. It has not been an easy road however. She continues to face problems with her mother. When she decided to not obey her mother's demands, they ended up arguing and her mother told her that Srey Neary did not respect her. Her mother accused her of "not being *...a good daughter* because she now dares to argue against her mother" because previously she never did so. Nevertheless, she is adamant that she will continue to try explaining to her mother so that she could clearly understand that Srey Neary has rights in society including the right not to be exploited.

The impact on her role in the community

It is very important that the community know about human rights especially child rights. The community now does not understand about human rights. Some parents hesitate to send their children to school and do not encourage them, so they do not enrol in class.

Indeed she has been able to notice small ways in which she has been able to assist her community since she joined the GSO group. She observed her neighbours beating their children and tried to convince them against this behaviour telling them that by ill-treating their children they were abusing the rights of the child. She has also highlighted to villagers the need to seriously consider their decision before they send their children to work in unknown place so far away from home. 'They should know clearly about where they are sending their children to work'.

Srey Neary had to learn the hard way the importance of identifying and investigating future places of employment to see whether it really fits our children's jobs.

Future Plan

In the future she wants to continue to gather more information on prevention and protection of child trafficking and then extend this information to the community because “...*In the community, child trafficking often happens because the people do not understand this matter clearly.*”

Srey Roth's Story

Age: 12 Years old

Occupation: Student

Background

Srey Roth family was very poor and lived in a province near the Thailand border before she was born. Her father was a jungle traveller for finding the heart of sandal wood. A robber killed him during a fight to get the heart of the sandal wood. At that time, her mother was pregnant with her and near to her delivery.

Her mother was so poor she did not even have money for the birth. She was so desperate that she decided to promise her neighbour, a lady without children that if she had a girl she would sell her baby to that neighbour for a price of \$200 USD and also along with a condition that her family had to move out from the province where they were living. Everything happened as promised when Srey Roth was born. She moved with her foster mother to Phnom Penh

Srey Roth describes how her foster mother treated her like a slave. Her foster mother had her own coffee shop and forced Srey Roth to work there; she had no chance to go to school like other children in the village. Instead she had to work like an adult.

10 years later, Srey Roth's birth mother found out the news about the whereabouts of her baby. She often tried to meet up with Srey Roth when she went to the market. She managed to give her contact details which Srey Roth kept in touch with her.

One day, her foster mother forced her to drink a kettle of old tea including the left-over muck at the bottom because she played with other children instead of going to the market. She was also warned that she would burn her thigh with a hot coal if she made a new mistake again. After that she called her birth mother and arranged to come and live with her in Phnom Penh.

In Phnom Penh, Srey Roth was sent to live in a shelter in Phnom and was sent to school when their community development project agent found out about her story. She is now an outstanding student on Khmer literature and history. Srey Roth is smaller than the other 9 children in the shelter. “*Staying in the shelter is better than staying at home because now I have a chance to go to school and learn many skills*”, said Srey Roth.

Why she joined the Girls Speak Out group

She was sent by the shelter manager to participate in the group activities.

What has been her experience?

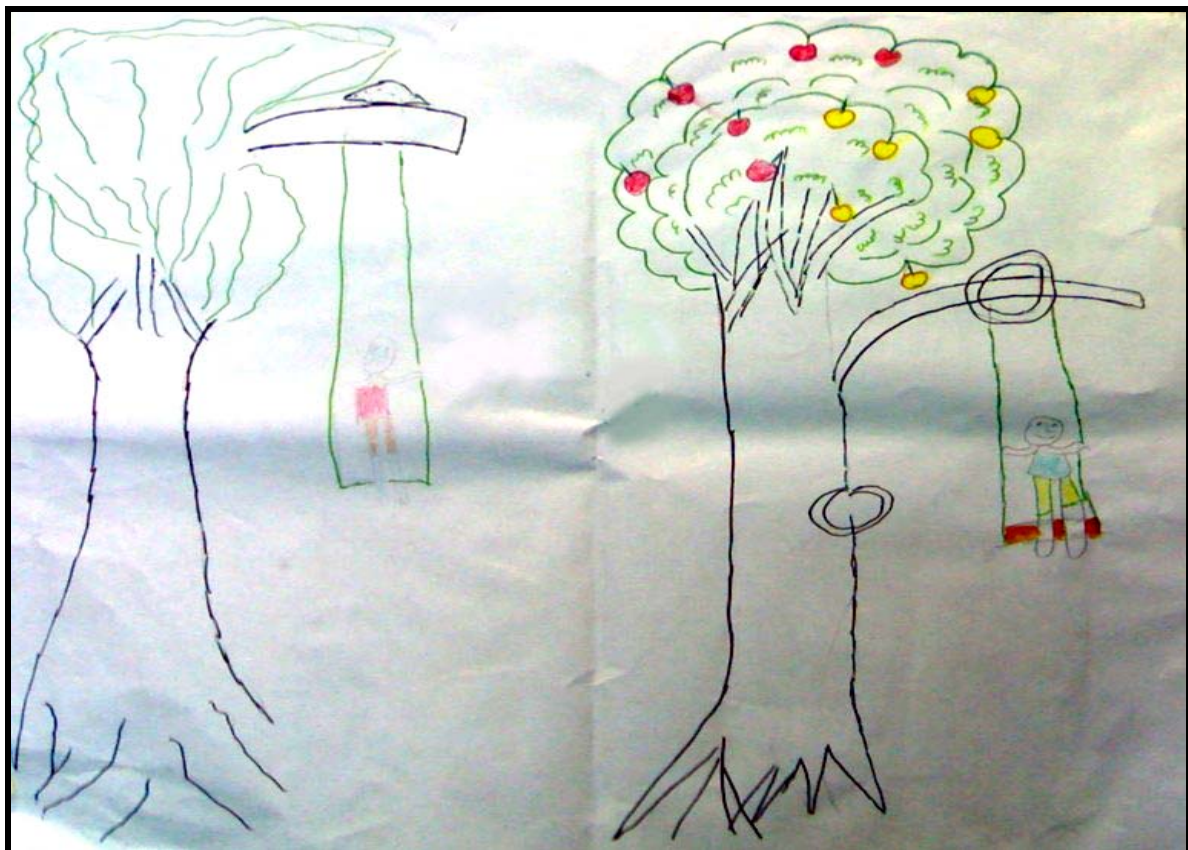
Srey Roth is the youngest of all the members of the GSO group. She can not yet articulate well what benefits she got from the group, but she explains that she learned about human trafficking, child right, and child exploitation. Before joining the GSO group Srey Roth reflects that she was “...very vicious and impolite.” She now believes that her behaviour has changed. She has become calmer and shows more tolerance towards others.

The impact on her role in the community

She wants to become a peer educator among her group and in the shelter as well. Nowadays, when she returns in the evenings after school she helps to clean the room in the shelter, washing dishes or helping the elder children to spin silk. Every time now when she goes to visit her mother, she helps her to cook and to sell vegetable in front of her house.

Future plan

Srey Roth’s plan for the future is to learn as much as she can because she wants to be a video star. She believes that her ability to perform will be improved if she receives as much knowledge as possible both from her school and GSO.



* A picture drawn by Srey Roth at a recent GSO workshop reflecting on how she felt before GSO and since becoming a member.

Srey Oun's Story

Age: 20

Occupation: Garment Factory worker

Background

Srey Oun remembers living with her mother before she died...that was about 7 years ago. Her father died when she was very little. Her mother became very sick and she asked her older brother, the uncle of Srey Oun to come and take Srey Oun after she died. It was hard in those days. Her mother was very ill. She had to look after her younger brother and sister. The rest of the family had left home already. They were so poor. Her mother and the children had to collect shells and tamarinds to make money to feed everyone. Even though it was such a struggle Srey Oun still remembers how much her mother loved her and her younger brother and sister.

After her mother died instead of going to live with her uncle she was exploited as a child domestic worker by her elder brothers and sisters. They would hire her out to neighbouring families in the village for an amount. They would make arrangements with her employers and take her salary leaving her with nothing.

She remembers one time when her second eldest brother took her to work as a domestic worker for a foreigner. She recounts how she had only been working a few days when the foreigner started to act strangely, and touching her inappropriately. She felt scared and uncomfortable. She left quickly after that. She told her sister-in-law who told her not to tell her brother because otherwise he would beat her, reflecting quite a common negative attitude towards victims of sexual exploitation amongst many people in Cambodia. The foreigner came to her brother's house looking for her. He wanted her to return. But she felt afraid and refused to go. She was to find out later through an newspaper article that the foreigner had opened a restaurant and that he had been arrested for allegedly raping one of his staff.

It is ironic that only after the tragic rape of her younger sister Srey Oun was able to break the cycle of domestic exploitation. She and her sister made a complaint to the police with the help of a legal service and they arranged for her and her sister to go living in a shelter.

Why she joined the Girls Speak Out group

It was at this time that she came in contact with the NGO coalition COSECAM. She felt lucky because she was able to attend a vocational training. After her graduation, Srey Oun went to work at a garment factory where she is still employed. Her sister is working there as well. It has been a difficult road for the both of them. But now she and her sister stop focusing about the past and look to the future. She attributes her own resilience to being a member of GSO. She joined because she knew it would provide a forum to share her experiences with others and gain awareness on important issues affecting children and young people. She feels happy and comfortable when telling her friends in the GSO workshops about her problems. She speaks emphatically asking that the GSO workshops will go on forever.

She wants her sister to join as well. She always goes home and explains to her sister what she has learnt and discussed at the workshops. Since Srey Oun joined the GSO group she has

become more aware of the dangers of trafficking and knows to tell the signs and be able to protect herself. Before she used to believe everything that people told her. She also tries to tell her friends at the factory about what she learnt during the GSO sessions but unfortunately they are not interested. They think it is a waste of time. However, she continues to tell them about it: “...*hopefully they will learn one day*”.

Future Plans

Srey Oun wants to go back to the province where she was born and have a simple house. She knows how to make clothes and wants to start a small-business. She would love nothing more than all of her brothers and sisters to move back to the province as well. Remarkably, she bears no grudge against her older brother and sisters for what happened and how they treated her. All she wants is to be able to live together as one family.

Srey Bopha's Story

Age: 19 years old

Occupation: Chef's Assistant

Background

Srey Bopha lived at a shelter for 4 years. Before that she was living with her step-father, mother and sister in a very poor province.. Her real father is alive but doesn't know that she is his daughter. Her parents divorced when she was very young. Her step-father used to hit her badly; her sister as well. Her sister left home a year before she did. She feels so sad because she doesn't know where she is and wants to find her.

Her step-father used to drink a lot and hit her mother as well. “*I saw everything when I was younger.*” She was not close to her mother. She could not understand why her mother always used to take her step-fathers side.

Srey Bopha continues on with her story about how she came to stay at the shelter. One day her aunt, who was living in Siem Reap, asked her to come and work in Siem Reap at a restaurant. Her aunt said that she would earn \$20 per month. Seeing this as an opportunity to climb out of the impoverished and abusive situation she was living in, she decided to move to Siem Reap. Three other girls travelled with her also. However she knew as soon as she arrived that things were not what they should be. She just didn't know what to do about it. When she arrived in Siem Reap her aunt took her to a house and said that she had to stay there because all of a sudden she had to return to the province for work. There was no restaurant. Instead Srey Bopha and the other 3 girls had to stay in the house all day and then at night time have to wear make-up. There was no escape; the owner used to threaten them with electric shocks if they did not listen to her. She shows with her hands something the size of a police baton. Srey Bopha's reality was that at the tender age of 15 years old she was forced to work every-night to try and seduce and sleep with men.

She tells in tears how the girls used to comfort each other, huddling close together in their room and crying softly.

One day however Srey Bopha mustered enough courage to escape. Unfortunately her attempt was foiled when the owner came chasing after her and ironically they both ended up running into a policeman.

The police then arrested both and took them to jail. This story was reported in all the local newspapers. The other girls working in the brothel were also rescued and returned back to their villages. However, Srey Bopha after her release did not want to go back to the village because she felt so ashamed that the story had been in the newspaper and that they would have seen it in her village. She opted to go to a shelter instead.

When she first arrived in the shelter she was so scared because of what she had just experienced. She cried and cried. The shelter manager explained to her that if she stayed there she would have a future. She comforted her by saying that she was not the only one in her situation. She felt less discriminated in the shelter than in the village because there she knew that they would look down on her. When she called to her mother to tell her what happened, her mother told her not to come back to the village because her family would look down upon her. They think that if she really had been trafficked she would have returned home. They thought that she is working as a prostitute.

Why she joined the Girls Speak Out group

She remembers feeling so happy at the first GSO workshop. She made so many friends and participated in activities and energiser games and felt good. She remembers listening to the other girls telling their stories and feeling so much sadness and pity.

Her experience since joining

Since joining the GSO group she feels stronger and braver. But it hasn't been easy. She has struggled to recover from her ordeal- incredible loneliness and working so hard yet not having even 100 riel to your name! There have been times when she has not wanted to live and tried to take her own life. The last time she tried to jump from a bridge thinking that it would be easy. She remembers the day so clearly in her mind. But it wasn't easy and luckily she survived. She remembers waking up and all these people were around her. She realized at that point that her life was valuable and she wanted to go on living.

The impact on her role in the community

Since being a part of the GSO group and having had time to heal from the trauma of the past she now understands clearly that what happened to her was not her fault. She would like to go back to the village someday with one of the shelter staff and get them to explain to the villagers that they should not discriminate against people who have been trafficked. It is not their fault. *"We are the ones who have suffered! We need their support not their blame."*

Before when Srey Bopha lived in the village she didn't know anything. She didn't know whom to trust and not to trust. Only after what happened and she went to live at the shelter and joined the GSO group did she get knowledge about trafficking and its dangers. She now tells people in her neighbourhood to be careful and warns them against the dangers of being lured or tricked into trafficking.

Future Plans

So what does Srey Bopha plan in the future? She says proudly about what a good cook she has become and all the recipes she can make since working in a local restaurant. She now hopes that she can continue to learn and become a chef.



* Srey Bopha's photo is difficult to make out however it shows a faint outline of a flower on the left representing how she felt before she joined GSO and the flower on the right, bright and full of colour represents how she feels now.

3. LESSONS LEARNT

a. TARGET GROUP

While the capacity building continues the GSO project has encountered problems relating to the turnover of participants. This has resulted in the altering of its target group.

Initially the project was aimed at supporting and engaging girls who had been trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Currently the members of the girls speak out workshop comprise mainly girls at risk of trafficking for sexual purposes as a result of child labour, sexual abuse, poverty, domestic violence and or neglect. Hence, in terms of programming, there needs to be a formal adjustment of the target group.

Expanding the target group to include child labour trafficking is also a reflection of the changing nature of trafficking in Cambodia. Indeed while the exact prevalence of trafficking for the purposes of child labour exploitation is unknown in Cambodia, some disturbing

statistics have been revealed.⁴ The overall lack of information on child labour trafficking and exploitation has been attributed to the over-emphasis on child-sex trafficking on the part of NGO's working in anti-trafficking in Cambodia.⁵

Another one of the impacts of the turnover of the participants has been the varying levels of ability and motivation to advocate for change.

b. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Initially participants were selected through interview process; the only criteria being that it was voluntary and had direct experience with child trafficking.

However problems were encountered once the participants were reintegrated back into the community or had gained full-time employment. Whilst still being encouraged to participate in GSO, attendance often proved too difficult for them due to other priorities. There were some obstacles posed by shelters saying that some of the girls were busy with other activities and/or were sufficiently strong and had gained employment with the shelters where they had been staying. COSECAM then sought to find appropriate replacements. However they were selected by shelter staff as opposed to self-selection.

c. EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF PARTICIPANTS

In an effort to understand the varying levels of enthusiasm amongst the Girls Speak Out an external counsellor was engaged to provide a general assessment of the participants' emotional well-being. The assessment was intended to allow the facilitators and project coordinators to gauge whether the girls were in fact ready to be part of such a project or whether they were still too traumatised, therefore impacting on their levels of motivation and ability to effectively participate in GSO.

A study conducted by ECPAT into young people's right participation showed that developing their capacity to participate involves:

- Building self-esteem (social and emotional growth through love support, encouragement, freedom of choice)
- Provide insight into perspective of others

Depending on the extent of the trauma resulting from their experience, it may be possible for the child-victim to participate as a parallel process to their rehabilitation. In this context, the child-victim's rehabilitation becomes a part of the process of developing her capacity to participate.⁶

⁴ See research conducted by Elenor Brown for IOM 'Out of Sight out of Mind? Child Domestic Workers and Patterns of Trafficking in Cambodia' (January 2007) 9. Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) included in research sample ranged in age from 7-17 years old. 73.8% of CDW's received no monthly salary.

⁵ United Nations Joint Framework for Addressing Trafficking in Cambodia 2007 <http://www.un.org.kh/resourceslibrary/publications/joint_framework_human_trafficking.pdf at 6 July 2007

⁶ ECPAT International (International Young People's Action Against Sexual Exploitation of Children), *Standing Up For Ourselves: A Study on the Concepts and Practices of Young People's Rights to Participation* (September 1999) 48

Children benefit from participation by acquiring and expanding their skills, by meeting other children and understanding that others share the same or similar experiences – that they are not alone. Participation gives children a sense of purpose and competence in their own lives and a belief that they can make a positive impact on their own lives and influence and change the lives of others – their peers, family and community. Children who have been able to participate in school panels, village committees or youth clubs have used these opportunities to proactively seek ways to voice, prevent and stop violence against themselves, their peer group and the wider community.

From: Supporting children’s meaningful and ethical participation: A toolkit produced for the UN Study on Violence against Children Foreword and Introduction to the toolkit, Save the Children, p.5

The counsellor observed to her surprise the girls are very strong and brave and well on the way to recovery. She asked the girls to express how they were feeling during the workshop. “Most of them expressed their enjoyment and told us about their good mood rather than bad mood.” Then she asked them to close their eyes and try to think back to their recent past and an event which made them sad.

“At this time about two third were affected and their tears rolled down, and others could not speak.”

From the counsellors perspective she was able to observe that the girls were able to process and deal with these emotions quite well. *”...although their tears were not dry if they were not in process of recovery they could not take part in these activities at all.”*

What the external counsellor did however note was that many of the girls are actually craving the love and attention of their parents, many of whom have passed away or living away from their children or whose whereabouts are unknown. She recommended try to recreate a supportive and nurturing home environment perhaps by investigating the possibilities of adoption here in Cambodia or abroad.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE CARE-TAKERS

The care-takers from the shelters are regularly approached to gain feedback on GSO and their opinions on the impact of the girls’ participation.

During the May 2007 workshop one care-taker said that she had noticed that the girls from her shelter have a better understanding both of their knowledge and their rights. They are more self-confident, patient and she can notice positive changes in their behaviour.

http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/Publication/Other/English/Pdf_page/ecpat_standing_up.pdf at 6 July 2007

Another caretaker said the girls could understand clearly some points from the workshop training but on other points they struggled. For example, when the shelter manager requested them to mention something about what is advocacy they still hesitated in speaking about this even though they have learnt about it. From the writers perspective this actually may be due to shyness or the fact that they need a chance to process the information. Also reflects the need on the part of COSECAM to raise awareness of the objectives of GSO to the shelters. The point of the workshops is not to be a forum where children learn information which they will later be tested on.

5. RESULTS OF THE PARTICIPATORY MONITORING EXERCISE

In an effort to give participants more ownership of GSO agenda and project planning and design we conducted a participatory monitoring and evaluation session to gauge their opinions/impression of the workshops, goals, objectives, likes, dislikes, identify advocacy activities that they would like to do.

In general the feedback was overwhelmingly positive and despite concerns by workshop facilitators that the girls were lacking in motivation all respondents expressed a desire to continue to be a part of GS and to gain more knowledge about child trafficking and disseminate such information amongst their peers and wider community. Another key benefit derived from being involved in GSO has been the increase in self-esteem and confidence.

6. CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GIRLS SPEAK OUT

Whilst there have been a few constraints it is clear that the GSO has made definite positive impacts on the lives of the girls involved. It is an important endeavour which much further potential. The following is a list of recommendations which may assist in enabling the project to continue, expand and flourish:

- Discuss and confirm objectives with GSO group and facilitators
- Update target group
- Draft and decide upon minimum set of criteria for participants (with the girls if possible and shelters) -
- Re-establish connection with former participants (create network, maybe they want to be facilitators) and facilitate their participation if still interested
- Continue to identify and expose the GSO group to unique and creative youth advocacy initiatives
- Increase the levels of understanding and awareness amongst the sending organisations regarding the GSO project, its goals and objectives and target group so shelters themselves are able to
 - commit to project
 - Understand goals and objectives and identify appropriate participants as well as potential participants
- Create a second Girls Speak Out group attracting victims and those at risk who are enthusiastic about speaking out against child trafficking and exploitation or encourage sub-groups

- All material covered during workshops should be printed in Khmai and handed out to girls so that they have a chance to absorb the information and develop a folder of resources where desired
- It is good practice to make ensure that problems that any problems being experienced by the girls unrelated to COSECAM such as personal, health, financial are followed up to the best of the organisations ability and/or referred to another agency that can assist where possible.
- Training for staff in child participation, facilitation and related areas
 - The comment was made an assessment of the first National Plan of Action that for NGOs working on child issue to recognize children as active agents in the process they need to understand the definition of child participation themselves
 - Need to make sure that child participation is authentic and that young people are involved in the areas in which that can best make a contribution.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: GSO Participating Shelters

ល.រ N°	ឈ្មោះអង្គការសមាជិក Name of NGOs	អាសយដ្ឋាន Address	ទូរស័ព្ទ និង អ៊ីម៉ែល Telephone & Email
1	មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលថែទាំសុខភាពកុមារ Health Care Center for Children (HCC)	# 132D, St. 135, Sangkat Psar Doeum Tkov, Khan Chamcar Morn, P.P	023 212133 hcc@sccf-hcc.org terrily@sccf-hcc.org
2	ភ្នាក់ងារអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ស្ត្រីកម្ពុជា Cambodia Woman's Development Agency (CWDA)	#19, st.242, Boeung Pralit, 7 Makar P.P	023 210449 cwda@online.com.kh
3	មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលកម្ពុជាដើម្បីការពារសិទ្ធិកុមារ Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children Right (CCPCR)	#22, St E, Phum Poug Peay, Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey, Khan Russey Keo, PP	012 967 385 ccpcr@forum.org.kh
4	មណ្ឌលសមាគមកុមារវិភាយ Komar Rik Reay (KMR)	Group 27, Chamka Samrong 1 village, Chamka Samrong Commune, Battambang District, Battambang Province, Cambodia,	012 732 307 012 610 490 kmrcambodia@yahoo.com
5	អង្គការកុមាភតត្រាំដែន Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi (KnK)	#409, Group 6, Romchek 4 Village, Rattanak Commune, Battambang	053 952 759 012 731 793 knknetworkcambodia@online.com.kh
6	មណ្ឌលជីវិតថ្មី New Life Center	Khan Prey Nop, Sihanouk Ville	012 752 373
7	អង្គការ ហាការ Hagar	#31BEo, St. 330, Sangkat Boeung Keng Kang, Khan Chamcar Morn, PP	023 213 634

Appendix 2

Suggested selection criteria for new participants

Mandatory

1. **Age:** 14-21 years old
2. **Sex:** female
3. **Nationality:** Cambodian
4. **Target Groups:** victims of trafficking, exploitation and abuse; children and youth at risk of trafficking, exploitation and abuse
5. Have accessed and substantially completed (effective) psycho-social counselling
6. Have the courage or want to develop the courage to share their experiences with other children in the group and the wider community including government and speak out against child trafficking, exploitation and abuse
7. Applicants must be interested, enthusiastic and motivated to learn about child trafficking and exploitation and related areas in Cambodia and want to build up their capacity to create positive change

Desirable

8. Ability to read and write

Nb: please note that this criteria should only be used as a guide