

Frank Conversations On Good Parenting, Gender-Based Violence

Nai Moeun still remembers how her parents dealt with her as a child. Small transgressions would result in an angry or violent reaction and she would repeatedly be told about so-called mistakes she made. These interactions were normally antagonistic.

These experiences with her parents became embedded in her interactions with her two sons, aged 14 and 7 years old, perpetuating a cycle of violence in the community and its families. “In the past, when my children did not listen to me I used to shout at them and use bad words,” says Moeun, who runs a small grocery store in Siem Reap town.

This was until she joined a workshop organized by Women’s Resource Center (WRC), which discussed family dynamics, positive parenting techniques, gender-based violence, drug use, and other issues families face in Cambodian communities. The NGO uses the learnings from these engagements with communities to advocate for social justice programs and strategies in the country and the region.

The NGO runs half a dozen programs with local communities to prevent and address domestic violence, which is widespread in Cambodian society. Other programs focus on working with schools and teachers to support students on issues like gender inequality and sexual harassment. The organization’s “Coffee Talk” initiative invites men and fathers to meet and discuss their attitude and behavior with their families and learn from the positive experiences of other participants.

Moeun, who was attending a WRC workshop last month in Siem Reap province, says she has recalibrated her behavior with her children and now does not only have a positive and respectful relationship with them, but they are also more inclined to help her or do more household work.



A participant photographed at an anger management workshop conducted by Women’s Resource Center. The organization also uses meditation and yoga to reinforce positive parenting skills.

These change in her home have spurred her to share these learnings with her community. She is eager to share parenting techniques that have helped her, such

as taking a few deep breaths when she gets angry with her children and tries to not react immediately. She discovered that she tended to communicate better and understand her children better when she spoke to them once her anger had subsided.

“If I had kept using aggressive communication with my kids, they would probably do the same when they grow up,” Moeun says. “The lessons made me realize how my actions are wrong and now I have the opportunity to share my knowledge and experiences in taking care of my children.”



Yoem Sreng (woman on the top right) attended a WRC workshop catering to edjai workers on personal hygiene. “Before we did not pay so much attention to hygiene and cleanliness at home. But now we want to improve our health and for our grandchildren to grow well. So, we now clean the water tank, pay more attention to our laundry and wash the bathroom to teach our nine-year-old grandson the importance of hygiene,” Sreng says.