



## **Mid Term Review of Legal Awareness & Life Skills for Women Project**

**Implemented by CARE Laos**



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Report Prepared by  
Laura Taylor, Quality & Impact Unit, CARE Australia  
Nguyen Ngoc Thuy, Independent Consultant  
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## Table of contents

Table of contents.....	2
Acronyms .....	2
1. Executive summary .....	3
2. Background and Introduction .....	5
2.1 Project background .....	5
2.2 Review objectives and composition .....	5
2.3 Project description.....	6
3. Methodology .....	7
4. Findings and Discussion .....	8
4.1 Outreach .....	8
4.2 Context of target group .....	10
4.3 Stakeholders .....	11
4.4 Power and violence.....	13
4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation System.....	14
4.6 Sustainability .....	15
4.7 Advocacy .....	17
5. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	18
5.1 Target group, gender, power and violence.....	18
5.2 Monitoring and evaluation system.....	19
5.3 Sustainability .....	19
5.4 Advocacy .....	20
5.5 Village-level engagement .....	20
5.6 Critical Reflection .....	21
Annex A – TOR .....	22
Annex B – Groups consulted.....	24
Annex C – Key documents reviewed.....	24
Annex D – Project logframe .....	25

## Acronyms

ACD	Assistant Country Director
ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Program
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
GDG	Gender and Development Group
GoL	Government of Laos
IEC	Information Education and Communication
LLO	Legal Literacy Officer (volunteers of the Lao Women’s Union)
LWU	Lao Women’s Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PEER	Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research
PPG	Peer Protection Group (volunteers conducting outreach to target group)
TOR	Terms of Reference
VMU	Village Mediation Unit

## 1. Executive summary

The Legal Awareness and Life Skills for Women Project commenced with limited activities in July 2008 until formal approval by the Government of Laos in September 2009. The project has been extended by 12 months and will now finish in June 2012. The project is funded under AusAID's Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) with a contribution from CARE Australia and operates in two districts in Vientiane.

The project seeks to promote the social and legal empowerment of vulnerable working women by reducing their vulnerability to rights abuses, with a focus on exploitation and violence. Using a twin approach, the project supports the empowerment of target women and builds the capacity and commitment of government duty bearers (police, prosecutors, justice and court officials) to achieve this goal.

A mid term review was commissioned by CARE Laos to evaluate progress towards improving the rights of the target group. This learning is meant to assist in strengthening the quality of design and implementation over the remaining period of the project. CARE Laos also envisages that this review will feed into the conceptual work being undertaken to develop a long-term Women's Empowerment Program.

The review team sees the main successes of the project as:

- The outreach model used – of using Peer Protection Group and Legal Literacy Officer volunteers – appears to be an appropriate model for the Lao context. The outreach has enabled connections with a marginalised target group, encouraged self-help, linked target women to existing services and built trust.
- The strong engagement of partners has been a clear achievement of the project. The project has local ownership and is viewed by partners as a LWU project (with technical input by a range of organisations) which provides potential to promote continuation of benefits after project end. The project links stakeholders in new or different ways yet is not replicating or building new structures. Diversity of stakeholder focus/mandates has aided the responsiveness to the diverse needs of target women.
- There have been examples of the project team influencing and feeding into national level policy deliberations and this is to be commended. (The project and the wider CARE team could however benefit from a deliberate, formal advocacy strategy with an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and gaps.)

There are or have been a number of challenges including:

- Setbacks in obtaining Government of Laos project approval led to implementation delays. This has been somewhat ameliorated by approval of an additional 12 months.
- There appears to be confusion around some of the Peer Protection Group (PPG) outreach activities and how they are understood and recorded in the M&E system.
- How and when to engage with men to address some of the underlying causes of violence against women. The project was primarily designed to address the after-effects of violence and rights abuses (besides building target women's negotiating capacity), rather than some of the causes.
- Given the operating context it is unclear how major elements of the project will be sustained at end of project, particularly around outreach activities. However, as there is significant goodwill and local ownership, there is potential to develop a clear exit strategy and work towards strengthening sustainable outcomes over the next two years. Forging ongoing collaboration amongst duty bearers and other partners is certainly possible, *if* deliberate strategies are in place.

Based on the findings of the review team, a number of recommendations have been made and a summary is included here:

<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>There needs to be clarity and agreement on target group composition and engagement strategies.</p> <p>The project could benefit from increased understanding of gender dynamics, vulnerability and power.</p>	<p>1. Project staff and partners should re-examine and confirm the definition of target group and engagement strategies for each of the sub-groups within target group.</p>
<p>The project should engage men as allies in preventing violence directed at the target group.</p>	<p>2. Pilot activities to reduce violence from clients.</p>
<p>There is some confusion around collection and interpretation of indicators pertaining to PPG strategies and target group actions and capacity.</p>	<p>3. CARE Laos to undertake participatory monitoring review, training and planning with PPG and partners over next three months.</p> <p>4. CARE Laos to review the project M&amp;E system and report to CARE Australia on its ability/capacity to report against indicators and make recommendations for any identified modifications by 30 August 2010.</p>
<p>The project needs to develop concrete strategies that support continuation of key activities after assistance has been withdrawn.</p>	<p>5. Develop a sustainable exit plan incorporating strategies to promote continuation of outreach using the PPG model and LLO model and continuation of duty bearer network.</p>
<p>A vision around 'solidarity' group formation and development will be needed to feed into a longer-term Women's Empowerment Program.</p>	<p>6. Determine an appropriate organising model for the Lao context when developing the CARE Laos Women's Empowerment Program.</p>
<p>It is unclear if an advocacy strategy has been developed, articulated and tracked.</p>	<p>7. Undertake a review of the project's approach to advocacy and develop a formal advocacy strategy and implementation plan which is reflected in the M&amp;E plan.</p>
<p>Timing is now right to engage at village level in ongoing sensitization to the rights of the target group.</p>	<p>8. Invite village chiefs to participate in regular coordination meetings to build their awareness of the rights of service women.</p> <p>9. Carry out training in gender and rights focused on village chiefs and Village Mediation Units.</p>
<p>The project should continue to create space for reflection to support champions and leaders to emerge and build ownership and sustainability.</p>	<p>10. Ensure that reflection and learning continue to be incorporated into years three and four planning and budgeting.</p>

## 2. Background and Introduction

### 2.1 Project background

CARE Laos has been implementing the Legal Awareness and Life Skills for Women Project<sup>1</sup> since July 2008. Initially scheduled to finish in June 2011, CARE Australia recently advised that funding will be extended to June 2012. There were delays in receiving Government of Laos approval with the MOU finally approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 2009. An MOU was then signed between CARE and the Lao Women's Union in October. Activities were disrupted by GoL preparations for South East Asian Games during October to December 2009 and there was some shifting attitudes away from the core values of the project by the Women's Union volunteers (LLO). During these disruptions, the project team moved ahead with some aspects of the project including conducting the baseline, selection and sensitisation of PPGs and LLOs and preparation of training materials and monitoring tools. Duty bearers have been engaged with the project since early 2010.

This project is funded under AusAID's Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) with a contribution from CARE Australia.

As the project team and partners are about to finalise planning for the third and fourth year of activities, the review comes at an important time. The project has been operating for two years (not including the delays around MOU approval cited above) and is now at mid point – an ideal time to take stock of achievements to date and to identify what adjustments might be required over the next two years.

### 2.2 Review objectives and composition

There are five **objective** of the mid term review, the first is the primary objective and the remaining are sub-objectives. Refer to Annex A for the TOR.

- i. Assess the successes and challenges of the project in achieving its objectives
- ii. Provide an opportunity for the project staff to develop their reflection and critical thinking skills.
- iii. Establish some key learnings that can be shared with other Country Offices and with CARE Australia.
- iv. To strengthen the ability of the project team to identify the priorities and issues for the development of project activities in year three, including provide input for the Women's Empowerment Program.
- v. Integrate the PEER Evaluation (a focused evaluation of the PEER methodology) into this mid-term review.

The review team consisted of two people – an independent Vietnamese female consultant with expertise in participatory processes, reflective action and evaluations. Bringing in perspectives from Vietnam, with somewhat similar socio-political systems, made for valuable contributions and interactions. The second reviewer, also female, brought in an organisational perspective from CARE Australia and CARE International, particularly around knowledge generated from woman's empowerment research (a four year global research titled the Strategic Impact Inquiry into Women's Empowerment) and other CARE learnings.

The successes and challenges – Objective 1 above – identified during this review have been incorporated into Section 4 Findings and Discussion of this report. Objective 2 was

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<sup>1</sup> The project title changed from Legal Rights for Vulnerable Working Women to Legal Awareness and Life Skills for Women which was more palatable to the Government of Laos, negotiated during the MOU approval phase.

addressed through a participatory Staff Reflection Workshop where the review team facilitated reflective learning for project staff. Objective 3 will be developed by Quality & Impact Team in CARE Australia drawing out wider lessons from this review. Objective 4 is addressed through the recommendations provided in Section 5 Conclusions and Recommendations.

At around the same time as the mid term review, an evaluation of the PEER approach in Objective 5 was scheduled to take place. The PEER process (Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research) was an important element of the project which sought to use participatory action research to engage with the target group and build their capacity for self-help and demand for rights and legal services. It was deemed desirable and logical that the PEER evaluation and the mid term review be aligned and feed into one another. The review team therefore worked as closely as timing and resources allowed with the PEER Consultant and vice versa. Information and findings were cross-checked for deeper insight providing the review team with a fuller understanding of context, achievements and challenges.

### **2.3 Project description**

The overall aim of the project is to contribute to greater social inclusion and legal empowerment for vulnerable working women in Vientiane. The objectives of the project are to:

- i. Contribute to improved participation and legal empowerment of vulnerable women
- ii. Increase understanding of legal issues and violence experienced by targeted working women and improve their capacity to take action
- iii. Strengthen responsiveness of key duty bearers to violence against vulnerable working women and action taken by women

In a nutshell, the project seeks to promote the social and legal empowerment of target women by reducing their vulnerability to rights abuses, with a focus on exploitation and violence. Using a twin approach, the project supports the empowerment of women and builds the capacity and commitment of government duty bearers to achieve this goal. The project model uses outreach to increase information and awareness of rights, legal issues and life skills of vulnerable working women. Outreach is provided by two groups: the first are volunteers recruited to reach out to their networks of young women (who may or may not be engaged in transactional sex) and the second are volunteers recruited by the Lao Women's Union (usually older women associated with the WU).

The project operates in Vientiane capital, in the two districts of Sekhotabong and Chanthabouly where there are large numbers of women working in entertainment venues, beer shops,



factories and living in rental accommodation<sup>2</sup>. Some, but not all, of these women find themselves in transactional sex, either as a primary source of income or as a supplement to other work. When engaged in commercial sex work, which is illegal in Laos, they are particularly vulnerable to rights abuses and violence.

The primary project partner is the Lao Women's Union both at Provincial and District levels. Other partners include Police, Prosecutors Office, Justice Office and Courts Office which are collectively known in the project as duty bearers so this term has been used throughout this document. In addition, the project engages with a wider network of non-government, civil society and international organisations.

On the issue of terminology, aside from duty bearers explained above, the project also uses the term service women to denote those who may engage in commercial sex either as a primary or secondary source of income. The project team feels this is a more appropriate term to use as some women involved in commercial sex do not view themselves as sex workers. Vulnerable working women is used for a wider group who may (or may not) be drawn into transactional sex.

### **3. Methodology**

CARE Laos specified that an open and strengths-based approach should be used in this review to ensure that participants had the space to tell stories and anecdotes that describe successes, achievements and strengths. Such an approach was also encouraged in respect of engagement with project staff in order to identify good practices and find ways to build on current achievements.

The review team developed a framework to guide the review process and identify the information that needed to be collected. A range of appropriate approaches and tools were used to collect the data identified in the framework via: focus group discussions, semi-structured individual interviews, project staff reflection workshop and a partner verification workshop to triangulate and test initial findings.

The review team engaged with Peer Protection Group (PPG) members, a limited number of entertainment workers outside of project districts, Legal Literacy Officers (LLO), Lao Women's Union officials, duty bearers, Laos non-governmental and civil society organisations, project staff, ACD Program and the PEER evaluation consultant. For a listing of groups consulted, please refer to Annex B. The PPG and LLO participants in focus group discussions were selected by CARE Laos staff based on exposure to project activities and availability. Participants in semi structured interviews were also selected by CARE Laos staff based on availability and representative of the geographic spread of the project focus.

Cross-checking initial findings and recommendations with the Project Manager and ACD Program as well as with project participants via a verification workshop were important ways to validate and confirm preliminary findings. Subsequent consultations with the PEER Evaluation Consultant and ACD Program provided additional insights and unearthed a number of challenges of the project.

Key documents referred to in this review are included in Annex C.

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<sup>2</sup> During the design phase, district authorities consulted stated that approximately 2,000 women in Chanthabouly and 1,500- 3,000 women in Sikhottabong are 'vulnerable'. Government consultation meeting, 22 September 2008.

There are a number of limitations of this review that the reader is asked to keep in mind including:

- Lack of access to quantitative information around the risks and protection approaches for commercial sex workers.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it was felt that qualitative findings would help to better understand what changes might be taking place with duty bearers and service women.
- Findings are limited to the participants interviewed. The reader would need to be wary of drawing conclusions at a broader scale.
- The perspectives from the target group themselves were largely unavailable. (The project team has not yet engaged directly with women engaged in commercial sex<sup>4</sup>, other than PPG some of whom are involved in sex work.) There was however some input from the target group: from PPG (who have received a different level of project inputs) and the review team also had the opportunity to talk to two young women engaged in sex work who had been encouraged by a PPG member to talk to us. Their engagement with project activities had been limited to brief discussions with that PPG member and they have had no other contact with project activities.
- Language barriers between the review team and project participants meant that a number of translators were used with varying degrees of capacity. Whilst the review team attempted to verify key insights, this was not always possible as this tended to destroy the flow of conversations. Written notes were transcribed without the aid of voice recordings.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Outreach

The outreach model used – of using Peer Protection Group and Legal Literacy Officer volunteers – appears to be an appropriate model for this context from a number of perspectives. First, this outreach has enabled connections with a difficult-to-access target group.

*“We would like to use this model to reach specific groups (in other areas of our work) as the current methods of legal dissemination are more mass-focused.” And “volunteers have done a really great job at reaching out”. (IDI04)*

*“This project is very relevant to our target population and justice for all, they need protection so this has helped us really target service women, before we focused on the general population.” (IDI09)*

Second, the outreach approach is encouraging self-help of service women. There are a number of examples where PPG members and/or service women are using their new knowledge to protect themselves in different ways and to problem solve. For example:

*“...we now tell clients about the law and this reduces violence as clients don’t want to get in trouble. (We also) explain to clients about STI protection and have seen some positive changes there” (FGD01)*

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<sup>3</sup> As the baseline report states: “...there is very little specific information on the types and levels of violence or other rights abuses experienced by (target) women. Protection and legal support services are in their infancy in Lao PDR and there are significant barriers to accessing these services for commercial sex workers and other vulnerable women.” ( p.8.)

<sup>4</sup> The reasons provided for this lack of direct engagement with target group are around building trust and relationships to overcome the significant barriers of fear and stigma of the target group involved in illegal activity. The review team notes that there are plans to provide direct training to the target group in the coming year focused on violence against women, legal awareness and like skills.



“The women feel that they have gained confidence in terms of protecting themselves and (are) finding solutions and seeking support” (FGD03)

“Service women are more careful when going out and learn how to observe potentially violent, troublesome men and make more informed choices.” (FGD02)

“(The project) has increased (service women’s) confidence to approach authorities so in that respect we are achieving our goals, service women previously afraid they would be arrested but now more confident to take action” (IDI02)

“I have more confidence to talk to police as now I know about the law and have the right to talk to police” (FDG01)

It is relevant to present the results from a participatory exercise during the PPG focus group discussion which attempted to find out what qualities participants had before the project started, what they have now and what an ‘empowered’ woman looks like.

What qualities I had before project	What qualities I have now	What qualities an empowered woman has
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience/determination to reach goals</li> <li>• Honest to oneself &amp; others in society</li> <li>• Friendly</li> <li>• Some levels of confidence</li> <li>• Be respected by society</li> </ul>	Previous box plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased confidence</li> <li>• Good communication/listening skills</li> <li>• Have someone to provide good advice, wide networks/relationships</li> <li>• Contribute to society if there’s a chance</li> </ul>	Previous boxes plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Money</li> <li>• Good health and strength</li> <li>• Warm and sustained family life</li> </ul>

It is also pertinent to include a quote here from CARE Australia’s evaluation of CARE HIV/AIDS programming<sup>5</sup> conducted in 2008 to indicate just how much this project has achieved in respect of promoting rights awareness of the target group:

“The Laos entertainment workers’ grievances were not grounded in universal rights, but rather through appeals of sensitivity to those who were in positions of power, namely the venue owners and government.” (p.5)

Third, the outreach approach is serving to link target women to existing services. For example, the Lao Women’s Union has a number of services available that are very relevant to the target group including a telephone counseling service, free health clinics and vocational training. A number of project partners stated that the outreach has enabled the target group to hear about their services.

“Service women didn’t know or had very little information about (Lao Women’s Union) services until this project” (FGD01)

“We have already received 10 calls from service women for legal advice in the last few months as a result of (project) activities” (IDI04)

Lastly, there is a strong commitment to reach out to vulnerable groups. This is helping to build relationships and trust which in turn helps to address discrimination and stigma. It also sends a signal to village authorities as well as venue owners that women involved in the entertainment industry are not invisible and have worth. It sends the message that organizations like the Lao Women’s Union, have an interest in these women and that is an important signal.

<sup>5</sup> Empowerment, Advocacy and Behaviour Change in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam conducted by CARE Australia in November 2008. CARE Australia funds an ex-post evaluation program that seeks to assess the impact of selected CARE projects at least 18 months after completion.

*“We were nervous to talk to LWU at first but now we can talk easily as we know they are interested and want to help.” (FGD01)*

*“... building rapport with service women and sensitizing them on legal environment has seen (them) building confidence and they are now approaching LLOs and requesting information and assistance” (ID101)*

## **4.2 Context of target group**

The project proposal defines the target group as ‘vulnerable women’ working in the entertainment sector (beer shops, nightclubs) as well as women who work in factories and women who live in low cost rental accommodation. These groups of women have been identified by CARE and the Women’s Union of being at risk of rights abuses and violence through participation in commercial sex either as their principle job or as a supplement to other work or those who may be drawn into commercial sex work.



LLO data indicates that 20-30% of service women they are in contact with are under 18 years of age. According to Lao law, this is classed as trafficking. It is believed that the factory owners and managers are much more careful than entertainment venue owners in ensuring that their workers are over 18.

A number of respondents in the review spoke about increasing levels of empathy towards the target group. This was reported by a number of groups including LLO, the Women’s Union, duty bearers, CARE project staff and a wider network.

*“LLO (are) mostly older women but despite that they have shown empathy and sensitivity towards service women” (ID102)*

*“Before the project, (we) had no sympathy for sex workers...now feel empathy and want to help sex workers to stop sex work and to protect them” (FDG04)*

*“Before I didn’t care about service women, now I would like to help them. I have a daughter so I can sympathise more” (ID111).*

So whilst empathy appears to be improving at least from some individuals, there was also quite a bit of discussion around the different motivations of women engaged in commercial sex. Respondents talked about the range of reasons why women might be engaged in sex work including the rapid escalation of consumerism in Laos. This is backed up by the baseline survey which states that “the most commonly recurring theme from all peer researchers is the desire to obtain and maintain a lifestyle or being able to buy consumer goods and have a disposable income which goes beyond the realms of subsistence” (p.56). Other reasons cited as driving commercial sex work includes poverty and/or a lack of understanding of choices. For some, commercial sex provides their entire income, for some it supplements other sources and for others the mix changes over time. This will clearly result in some segments of the target group being in a more vulnerable position than others. In fact, some might view themselves as empowered, while others feel totally disempowered. There are two key observations about this. A woman’s background and motivation in engaging in commercial sex can have a direct bearing on how duty bearers and other stakeholders help or hinder her. Additionally, the engagement strategies that the project uses will clearly need to be adapted to different groups of women. The project team and

partners will need to remain sensitive to these complexities and be clear on why, how and who the project is targeting (the layers within the target group).

Two respondents talked about needing to understand the background of a service woman to determine how to respond to acts of violence against her.

*"In a rape case theoretically speaking, we would liaise with Prosecutors Office on charging the client and try to understand why she's involved in sex work and look for ways not to prosecute her. If she's from the countryside, she has few options but if she's from the city, she's not a victim". (IDI08)*

*"...target women from poor backgrounds are easier 'to turn around' but not all are poor, some (are) from wealthier backgrounds and they are more difficult to work with". (IDI02)*

The project team state they have tried to encourage the Women's Union and duty bearers that, irrespective of the reasons why women might be engaged in commercial sex or their background, their inalienable human rights and their right to access legal services should be upheld.

Some respondents talked about the changing nature of commercial sex in Vientiane. Whereas women engaging in commercial sex tend to operate out of entertainment venues, beer shops and other like establishments, respondents shared evidence that there are other places that women operate out of and come from groups that wouldn't traditionally be viewed as sex workers. Nor would the women even consider themselves sex workers. These emerging locations include beauty salons and hairdressers where women might take calls from men in their networks who set up a time and place to meet for transactional sex. There also appears to be anecdotal evidence that university students are engaging in commercial sex who would also not necessarily consider themselves as sex workers. This then presents new challenges if the project is to reach out to these women. This emerging theme illustrates the need for the project to be flexible, adaptable and remain open to learning about the context within which commercial sex operates in the project location.

Such changes point to the need for project staff and partners to understand the vulnerabilities, capacities and entry points of different sub-groups of vulnerable working women. For example, university students may have higher capacities to navigate the legal system on the one hand but may face higher levels of distaste from duty bearers, as was observed on a number of occasions by the review team, due to their perceived range of options. Engagement strategies will also need to be targeted to the particular needs of each group, if CARE is to reach those most at risk of rights abuses.

### **4.3 Stakeholders**

One of the clear achievements of the project is the strong engagement of the various stakeholders including the Women's Union and duty bearers in particular. The review team came to the conclusion that this is likely due to a clear alignment to the organisational mandates and current priorities of some of the stakeholders involved. For example:

*"LWU's main role is to represent and address the interests of women and children. An important aspect is to work on violence against women as we have our constitutional, legal and international obligations". (IDI01)*

*"LWU has a clear interest in women and children. CARE has recognised this mandate and therefore chosen (us) as key partner". (IDI02)*

*"(My) organisation's mandate is to disseminate the law and enforce court decisions. This project is about raising awareness of laws". (IDI04)*

*"This project is very relevant to our target population and justice for all". (IDI09).*

As a result, the project is not replicating or building new structures. Instead, it is serving to link stakeholders in new or different ways. This has resulted in building a good level of ownership, particularly of the Women's Union, but of other stakeholders as well. The project is not seen as a CARE project, rather respondents view it as a Women's Union initiative with technical support provided by various organisations including CARE. The engagement and involvement of different stakeholders is evident in shared trainings (facilitated by some of the stakeholders), coordination of meetings and informal networking taking place. For example, one respondent talked about how the monthly coordination meetings in her district have a rotating chair so that the various stakeholders have a role in developing the meeting agenda etc. This level of integration with current mandates, structures and programs is likely to support some level of sustainability of at least some of the activities after the project ends.

It is clear that the project is encouraging stakeholders to respond to specific individual problems. A number of duty bearers expressed an interest and commitment to finding solutions to individual cases that were discussed during monthly coordination meetings. For example:

*"Coordination meetings (are) very useful because all key actors (are) there and we look at specific cases which gives us ideas on broader support and available options". (IDI08)*

*"At monthly district meeting, (we) discuss how to address specific cases". (IDI04)*

*"We attend monthly coordination meeting with other actors where we discuss cases and agree on a solution" (IDI05)*

*"At coordination meetings LLOs, Lao Women's Union and other actors look at case studies (coming from LLOs), results and discuss and find solutions to particular issues including finding linkages to wider support services". (IDI01)*

There appears to be evidence of some change in attitudes of LLO, Women's Union and duty bearers towards the target population.

*"(I've) changed 90% since the project started" (male respondent, alluding to a change in behaviour). (IDI08)*

*"Contributions on change probably about 70% due to project because of individual contact. Other influences (are) coming from local authorities etc but these are more based around mass approaches which aren't as effective." (IDI02)*

*"Prior to project, if service women approached police they wouldn't help them, they would say you're doing illegal work but now police in this district have changed their attitudes due to increased understanding on SW rights. Now actors take issues much more seriously. Target group now more clear about their rights to solve their own problems. Legal sector has much greater understanding of issues". (IDI03)*

However, another respondent (duty bearer) when asked if she had experienced any changes at a personal level since being engaged with the project, replied:

*"...no, my stand has always been the same in applying the law". (IDI07)*

The inclusion of a diverse group of stakeholders aids the responsiveness of the diverse needs of the target women. The primary stakeholders represent legal assistance, law enforcement and women-focused service provision, among others. This ensures that a range of options are considered when project stakeholders discuss the specific needs of individual women. Some of the services that women are linked to include: telephone counseling, legal services including legal aid, free health clinic, vocational training centre and of course law enforcement. There was a clear interest from a number of respondents to 'retrain' women into legal forms of employment. The following quote is therefore representative of comments on that issue:

*"We would attempt to link (a sex worker) to other services especially retraining with the Women's Union Vocational Training Centre". (IDI07)*

The dissemination of information within stakeholder organisations was touched upon in discussions. Currently the project links up with specific individuals, for example, two members of the Criminal Investigation Unit represent Chanthaboury District Police and two members represent Chanthaboury Prosecutors Office. The latter, in fact, underwent a restructure when the zone was reconfigured six months ago, and at that time the focal points for this project changed. One of the two Women's Union District level coordinators also changed in June 2009. The review team can only speculate about how engagement and knowledge is cascaded within stakeholder organisations and about how information is shared more widely at an organisational level. One respondent did mention, however, that the Women's Union has been able to respond to turnover of focal points to date through the provision of orientation briefings to new focal points.

It would be incorrect to surmise that the interaction between different actors was only a result of the project. One respondent talked about the close interaction between the police and prosecutors prior to this project but said that the project had enhanced that collaboration in a more regular and effective way and with a wider group of relevant agencies. This has provided an expanded set of options to the coordination committees as they try to identify appropriate approaches and responses. Another respondent stated:

*"...interaction of actors (was) already happening before project so just the knowledge has increased" (IDI07)*

Another expanded on this adding that:

*"(The project) brings more specialised understanding to many in (the) legal sector". (IDI09)*

#### **4.4 Power and violence**

The project proposal states that many groups have an influence on the levels of exploitation and rights abuse of vulnerable working women. However, an explicit decision was made to focus on government duty bearers "who share the objective of enforcing legal protections and have a direct role to play in related activities" (p.4). As with any project design, decisions have to be made around effective targeting and funds, timeframe and capacities help shape such decision-making. Given what CARE International has learned through the Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment in the last few years, and with a one year extension of project activities approved, it is timely to consider how the project should engage with men in particular (male clients) in addressing some of the supply-side of the violence equation as well as those driving the demand for or have some influence over the provision of commercial sex.

The baseline report indicates that clients are the primary perpetrators of physical, verbal and emotional abuse (pg 63). Abuse also happens outside the workplace but to a lesser extent, with the highest risk coming from bar owners, boyfriends and clients' wives. The baseline found that the "general trend is that clients in the higher class, more expensive establishments are better educated and are more polite and less likely to physically abuse sex workers. Clients such as construction workers attending smaller establishments have a reputation for being more abusive" (pg. 66). The project therefore has an opportunity to pilot activities focused on reducing violence against women with specific group/s of clients. This could involve the preparation and testing of IEC materials, perhaps for low literacy settings, to be displayed in appropriate outlets. Such materials may enhance the negotiating position of sex workers with their clients wherever the messages are aligned and consistent.

It should be remembered, however, that men are not the only aggressors in terms of violent reaction to women engaged in commercial sex. The baseline data clearly highlighted that clients' wives were also inflicting violence on service women and this was reiterated with PPG respondents during this review:

*"There seems to be a genuine fear that either the woman herself will attack the sex worker or that the wife will hire somebody to carry out the attack. The abuse suffered can be anything from hitting and beating, to verbal threats or even trying to damage the sex worker with substances such as acid or hot water". (Baseline, p. 69).*

There was rich discussion with participants in the Partner Verification workshop around engaging with men. One participant talked about needing to ensure more service women understood that sex work is illegal when another participant challenged those present to question why the clients, who usually know that what they're doing is illegal, continue with their behavior. This moved the discussion away from 'blaming the sex worker' to look at some of the groups driving the demand for commercial sex and those who hold power over or have influence over sex workers more generally.

Participants in the PPG discussions also identified the various relationships they had and tried to measure the level of positive and negative influence various groups held with them including friends, family, boyfriends, clients, police, Women's Union, CARE, etc. See mapping expressing this below.



From this exercise, it is clear that there are opportunities for engagement with stakeholders who have influence with and/or power over sex workers. The focus group discussions showed that PPGs now had greater confidence to discuss issues with WU staff like the LLOs and in some cases report rights abuses to police and negotiate safely with clients but saw less positive changes with some other stakeholders. Building negotiation and communication skills of the PPGs and sex workers more broadly is an important consideration in any training and capacity building activities.

#### **4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation System**

This review team and the PEER Evaluation Consultant identified some level of confusion around the M&E system, in particular around what monitoring data PPG should be collecting and how to collect this data. There also appears to be some level of confusion from project staff around the meaning of some of the indicators leading to challenges around data collection and analysis. There appear to be three indicators of most concern:

1. Number and types of actions taken by target groups in response to rights abuses
2. % of target group demonstrating increased knowledge and capacity to take action to protect rights through self analysis and action plans
3. Number and effectiveness of PPG strategies operating in response to needs

If there is uncertainty around indicator meaning and collection, then it will be difficult to track and monitor what changes are occurring and therefore determine contribution and

attribution. The evidence to suggest uncertainty and confusion includes responses from a focus group discussion with PPG and the PEER Consultant and staff discussions with both the PEER Consultant and the review team. The project team has received a number of trainings on participatory monitoring and a range of tools have been developed/adapted including Force Field forms and Red Amber Green tools. However, both project staff and PPG members have identified difficulties implementing these tools in the Lao context.

#### **4.6 Sustainability**

In the context of donor-funded development programs and projects, AusAID defines sustainability as the continuation of benefits after major assistance from the project has been completed<sup>6</sup>. This should be an ongoing process that is reviewed and updated as required, to take account of changing contexts and lessons learned. The review team identified three main elements for the project to consider in regard to planning for sustainable flow of benefits: building the group capacity of PPG, sustaining the LLO outreach and building a strong network of duty bearers. Contextual information about the target group needs to flow from outreach activities to the duty bearers in order to challenge discrimination and to lobby for changes in laws and policies and their application (see below for the link to advocacy).

The project team and partners need to consider how to sustain PPG momentum as change agents and to understand how the project could sow seeds for collective thought and action. One respondent suggested that outreach activities were not likely to continue but believed that some of the outreach could be transferred to others:

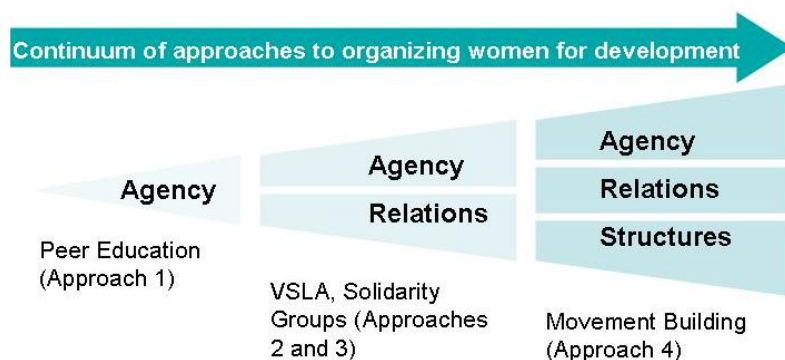
*“Even at project end would still be a good model if there are no volunteers as still very relevant and aligned to mandate and perhaps Community Police could ask for support from LWU”. (IDI04)*

CARE’s experience in other projects, including in Laos, highlights the challenges of sustaining the peer model. Looking at lessons learned from CARE Australia’s evaluation of HIV/AIDS programming in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam cited previously, all three countries used peer educators who were central to the implementation of behavior change strategies. The ex-post evaluation found that most of the peer educators were no longer engaged in peer education activities to the extent that they once were. While they continue to provide behavior change messages when new and older peers ask questions, once the support from CARE and governments end, the impetus among peers to engage in outreach activities diminished. The evaluation therefore recommended building group capacities so that communities can take full advantage of solidarity-group potential. This finding also corresponds with learning coming from CARE’s Strategic Impact Inquiry into Women’s Empowerment which identified CARE’s common approaches to women’s organising<sup>7</sup> (see graphic below).

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<sup>6</sup> “Promoting practical sustainability”, Chapter 18, AUSGUIDE, AusAID, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> CARE’s Strategic Impact Inquiry into Women’s Empowerment has done in-depth analysis on women’s empowerment and organising which would also be relevant. See <http://pqdl.care.org/sii/SIILibrary/SII%20Women%27s%20Empowerment%20%20and%20Organizing%20Brief%202009.pdf>. Also see a more detailed CARE report on women and organizing with a focus on HIV and sex workers in “Standing Together, Reducing Risk: The Power of Groups” available at <http://pqdl.care.org/sii/SIILibrary/SII%20Women%27s%20Empowerment%20Global%20Summary%20Report%20-%20Standing%20Together.%20Reducing%20Risk%202009.pdf>.



These approaches range from:

- Approach 1: Organising women as recipients of knowledge, goods and services;
- Approach 2: Working with women in groups to promote economic development;
- Approach 3: Leveraging groups to raise demands for gender equity; and
- Approach 4: Supporting women’s groups to mobilise for women’s rights.

The emergence of civil society in Laos is at an embryonic stage and there is no women’s movement to attach to. While it might be possible to learn from Vietnam’s Empathy Club experience which has formal government registration through the Women’s Union, it is beyond the scope of this project to replicate that in a two or three year timeframe. The question then becomes, what could CARE and partners identify that could promote continuation of some form of peer outreach (moving from Approach 1 to 3 in the graphic above)? CARE Vietnam’s work on social mobilisation and organisational development capacity of self-help groups could provide ideas around possible approaches and lessons learned. Participatory planning with stakeholders is crucial in discussing and agreeing on an appropriate approach.

The second level of sustainability is building the momentum of LLO outreach to continue. One project staff said it was conceivable that LLO outreach could be maintained at project end because the LLO members were actually paid staffers of the Women’s Union who operate at district and village level. Most of them have a role to play as Women’s Union representatives in the Village Mediation Unit, a body that is usually the first contact point for acts of violence or theft at village level. Another respondent expressed the view that the LLO outreach could not be sustained:

*“After incentives end, unlikely this can continue as volunteers need small expenses covered. Best thing to do then would be to do mass events but the individual contact wouldn’t be possible. Model for LWU will work at zone (subdistrict) level but not at peer level because this is the LWU structure so fits in with that.” (ID102)*

The third level of sustainability is on building a strong network of duty bearers. The review team identified a number of examples where this appeared to be happening effectively, outlined in Section 3 on Stakeholders. This is the area of most potential to continue after project end and should be discussed with project partners and planned for in a way that promotes sustainable interaction. Suggestions would be around strengthening coordination meetings and better utilising baseline data as well as monitoring data to send a message to duty bearers about different vulnerabilities that service women face (right now, baseline data is mainly used to discuss different solutions for specific cases of violence). More constructive attitudes and behaviors of the target duty bearers towards service women can serve as a strong internal driving force for them to network for the sake of vulnerable women.



## 4.7 Advocacy

This project provides a useful platform to draw attention to issues of vulnerability and violence towards those engaged in the service industry amongst policy makers. A diverse stakeholder group allows space for messages advocating by and on behalf of service women to be heard more broadly. The review team came across a number of examples where this is already being done. For example:

*“...data on target group from baseline has been very useful as it’s a really sensitive area in Lao and difficult information for (us) to obtain...This is useful for information collected around CEDAW” (IDI10).*

*“CARE brings this issue to wider attention, (there was) absolutely no focus before project on service women”. (IDI09)*

Some specific examples where the project has been influencing, and at the very least feeding into, national level policy discussions include input into the Lao National Strategic Plan for Women’s Advancement 2010-2015 (focused on violence against women generally) and the Lao National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDs. Project staff have also taken the opportunity to share baseline information with Lao academics which has generated some useful discussion on developing a national strategic plan around violence against women. CARE project staff and the Lao Bar Association have established a Legal Coordination Group to bring together various actors involved in legal issues in Vientiane and this group meets quarterly. Lastly, the Project Manager for this project has been invited to sit on the Board of a Lao NGO Gender and Development Group (GDG) which partners with the project and CARE generally. GDG is doing some interesting preliminary work on CEDAW reporting, for possible future work, and CARE has been encouraging a wider network to engage in this initiative.

Building on the advocacy work that has already been done, and in recognition of the long-term impact of positive policy change, it would be timely to determine how the project can use its influence in a focused way to change specific practices related to target women. How can advocacy messages be more explicitly identified, stated and pursued? Are there specific changes the stakeholders as a group would like to see? If so, how might such changes be supported and measured? There are clearly complexities and contextual parameters around this that need to be examined in an appropriately sensitive way. CARE Laos has indicated a competing range of priorities, capacities and structural issues that will need to be considered when determining if and when and in what ways advocacy approaches can be used in an effective and appropriate manner.



## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Target group, gender, power and violence

The project team, Women's Union and stakeholders need to continue to build a holistic view of target women. As previously described, there is anecdotal evidence of a range of different reasons why women are engaging in transactional sex. These drivers indicate the need for a number of both targeting strategies (how to access service women including in non-traditional locations) and programmatic approaches (as different groups would likely have different priorities and therefore needs). One approach to build knowledge around the target group is to train up PPG members to use the PEER research approach used in the baseline. This would generate rich stories and information which could feed into discussions with stakeholders and a wider network to build understanding of the diversity of women's experiences, backgrounds, capacities, vulnerabilities and realities.

Increasing the understanding of the target group could also aid project participants in re-examining and confirming the strategies around targeting particular groups of women and how the project engages with them. Issues for the project include:

- The definition of vulnerability of the target group and whether to continue to target factory workers, dormitory dwellers and entertainment venue workers who are *not* a homogenous group
- Whether the project should focus both on more 'vulnerable' sex workers who are coming from a background of marginalization and narrower options as well as those who may be making choices for a different set of reasons
- Whether the project should focus on harm minimisation (of those already engaged in commercial sex) or risk reduction (to prevent women moving into transactional sex).

The review team concludes that the project should engage men as allies in preventing and addressing violence directed at the target group. Finding ways to reduce violence, in addition to building women's negotiating skills and addressing the after-effects of violence, should be a critical component of this project. For the project to positively impact levels of violence against service women and sex workers in particular, a range of behaviour change methodologies will need to be developed, tested and assessed. Without such a component, the review team feels that the project will be addressing the symptoms of abuse and not the causes. In addition, strategies around addressing gender-based violence can provide valuable learning opportunities across CARE Lao programming and the design of the Women's Empowerment program in particular.

Engaging in conversations with target women, the Women's Union and duty bearers around power – especially visible, hidden and invisible power – could start to draw out ideas and meaning around power in the Lao context.<sup>8</sup> The discussion from the Partner Verification workshop mentioned in Section 4.4 on Power and Violence indicates that these discussions are already starting to occur.

#### Recommendations:

- 1. Project staff and partners should re-examine and confirm the definition of target group and the focus of engagement that will be used for each of the sub-groups**

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<sup>8</sup> "CARE International Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment: Understanding Women's Empowerment" which also provides further resources on power. Can be accessed at: <http://pqdl.care.org/sii/SIILibrary/Women%27s%20Empowerment%20Overview%20Brief%202009.pdf>

**within target group.** Continue to identify ways to build staff and partner understanding about the target group and encourage reflective learning on gender and power dynamics. Options include using the PEER methodology to collect more stories, using a power and gender training workshop for duty bearers or guided discussions/case studies with duty bearers in a reflection workshop - note also links to Section 5.6 on Critical Reflection. (Refer to Sections 4.2 and 4.4)

- 2. Pilot activities to reduce violence from clients.** This could be done for example through preparation of IEC materials on prevention of violence against women (refer to Section 4.4).

## **5.2 Monitoring and evaluation system**

As previously noted, there is some level of confusion and uncertainty around the understanding, collection and interpretation of a number of indicators. This is creating challenges for the project team and PPG in understanding what changes might be occurring and how these could be best captured and disseminated with project stakeholders and for advocacy purposes. The review team therefore recommends that the project undertake participatory monitoring training and planning with PPG and relevant partners over the next three months. This group should identify what changes, if any, are recommended to ensure that project indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. The group will also need to develop or adapt current tools to meet the specific circumstances of the project and Lao context. After three months, if this process does not result in a greater level of clarity and accountability in the M&E system, CARE Laos should flag this with CARE Australia to discuss and agree on an appropriate response which might include redesigning some of the activities seeking more concrete benefits for the target group. Initial discussion with ACD Program indicates that this could potentially include literacy and numeracy skills for the target group.

### **Recommendations:**

- 3. CARE Laos to undertake participatory monitoring review, training and planning with PPG and partners over next three months** (refer to Section 4.5).
- 4. CARE Laos to review the project M&E system and report to CARE Australia on its ability/capacity to report against indicators and make recommendations for any identified modifications by 30 August 2010** (refer to Section 4.5).

## **5.3 Sustainability**

The review team identified three main elements to consider in regard to planning for sustainable flow of benefits:

- building the group capacity of PPG<sup>9</sup>
- building the momentum of LLO outreach
- building a strong network of duty bearers.

It is important that CARE Laos, the project team and partners examine and develop strategies that support the continuation of key activities after assistance has been withdrawn (see Section 4.6 on sustainability for more details). The review team believes there is potential for sustainability, particularly around the network of duty bearers, some of whom

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<sup>9</sup> The indicator at goal level is: "PPGs have capacity to continue after project end" so this is in fact a critical element.

had informal links before this project. What came out clearly from the review is that there are some positive changes happening with the duty bearers in the way they look at service women's issues using a human rights and gender equity lens. However, it is hard to conclude that their attitude towards service women has considerably improved. A critical factor in promoting sustainability of stakeholders is to encourage active participation, ownership and commitment. To enable greater stakeholder participation, project staff have a role to play in ensuring that sufficient time and resources for participatory analysis and demand-led approaches are incorporated. Another important factor in promoting sustainability is in having these discussions with stakeholders and planning around joint decisions at an early stage. With two years of implementation remaining, the review team recommends that planning around sustainability starts happening now to enable appropriate levels of support of areas identified jointly by the stakeholders.

A policy environment that is compatible with and supportive of the aim of the project is also a key factor in promoting sustainability. (See Section 5.4).

#### **Recommendations:**

- 5. Develop a sustainable exit plan incorporating strategies to promote continuation of:**
  - **outreach using the PPG model (if possible in the Lao context)**
  - **outreach using the LLO model**
  - **duty bearer network** (refer to Section 4.6).
- 6. Determine what organising model is appropriate for the Lao context when developing the CARE Laos Women's Empowerment Program** (refer to Section 4.6).

#### **5.4 Advocacy**

The review team believes that this project could continue to make a very useful contribution at a national policy level and recommends that CARE Laos, the project team and partners develop an advocacy strategy (see Section 4.7 on Advocacy for more details).

It is understood that the project team believes a successful advocacy model or approach has been developed. While there are a number of examples to show where the project has helped shape government agendas, the review team saw no evidence of a clearly articulated advocacy plan with agreed strategies and milestones. The review team can only assume that the advocacy plan is not written down, is in Lao or was not shared. There are indications that the project team has a body of knowledge around developing and pursuing advocacy messages in the Lao context and such knowledge would be useful to those both inside and outside of this project. In particular, such a strategy would be a critical component of CARE Laos' embryonic Women's Empowerment program.

#### **Recommendation:**

- 7. Undertake a review of the project's approach to advocacy (assess achievements, value-adding, gaps) and develop a formal advocacy strategy and implementation plan which is reflected in the M&E plan** (refer to Section 4.7).

#### **5.5 Village-level engagement**

To date, the project has focused appropriately on the duty bearer level. This was a deliberate strategy to ensure that the wider enabling environment was sensitized to the rights of the target group. Several respondents confirmed that the time is now right to start focusing on the village level, in particular on village chiefs and the Village Mediation Unit.

*“(We) need to engage the village chiefs in monthly meeting”. (IDI04)*

The Village Mediation Unit (VMU) is responsible for dispute resolution but has no authority to enforce any laws (Baseline, p.10). The VMU consists of approximately six members including the head of the village and representatives from mass organisations including the Women’s Union and Youth Union and the Public Security Office.

There is already collaboration between the Women’s Union and village chiefs as the former send notification of upcoming LLO outreach to ensure that their approval is granted in advance. This has apparently worked well to date, helping allay any fears village chiefs might have of police raids on entertainment establishments.

The project team is planning on conducting training on gender and rights for the Village Mediation Units in the coming year.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 8. Invite village chiefs to participate in regular coordination meetings to build their awareness of the rights of service women.**
- 9. Carry out training in gender and rights focused on village chiefs and Village Mediation Units.**

#### **5.6 Critical Reflection**

One of the four objectives of this project is capture results and lessons learned to share both inside and outside the project. In order to build strong, aware and committed change agents amongst project participants, it is important that sufficient time is incorporating for ongoing reflective learning using participatory and action research approaches. The space for



reflection is critical for leaders to emerge and to build ownership and sustainability of benefits. Promoting a respect of human rights for the target group is a new area for CARE Laos so encouraging and reflecting on issues of social inequity, exclusion and power differentials for both project team and stakeholders is a key aspect of this work.

#### **Recommendation:**

- 10. Ensure that reflection and learning continue to be incorporated into years three and four planning and budgeting** (note links to Section 5.1). This should focus on duty bearers, PPGs and service women through annual or biannual reflection workshops and/or using the monthly coordination meetings as a space for discussion/reflection on wider or emerging themes.

## Annex A – TOR

### Terms of Reference for the “Legal Awareness and Life Skills for Women” Project Review

#### **Background**

The “Legal Awareness and Life Skills for Women” Project, funded by ANCP, commenced in July 2008 with an initial phase of project design, the project will be completed in June 2010. This project is soon to enter its third year of activities, and CARE International in Lao PDR has a commitment to undertake an internal review of the project to date. The project works in partnership with Lao Women’s Union, Vientiane Capital with collaboration among key duty bearers from legal sector and local NGOs networking such as Lao Bar Association and the Gender Development Group. The target population is peer groups of sex workers and garment factory workers, and aims to improve the rights of vulnerable women by working with the women and Lao Women’s Union as well as duty bearers.

#### **Objectives**

1. To undertake a review with the project team to assess the success and challenges, to date, of the project in achieving its objectives.

In addition to this main objective, there are four additional objectives:

2. Provide an opportunity for the project staff to develop their reflection and critical thinking skills.
3. Establish some key learnings that can be shared with other Country Offices and with CARE Australia.
4. To strengthen the ability of the project team to identify the priorities and issues for the development of project activities in year three, including provide input for the Women’s Empowerment Program .
5. Integrate the PEER Evaluation (a focussed evaluation of the PEER methodology) into this mid-term review (refer to attached concept paper).

#### **Methodology**

An **appreciative inquiry** approach will be used. This approach seeks to have participants tell stories and anecdotes that describe successes, achievements and strengths.

In order to develop the Project teams reflective practice skills and personal development in relation to women’s empowerment, **Promising Practices Inquiry** may be used. This will contribute to objectives two and four above, and development critical thinking skills and stimulate discussion in the project team that will contribute to objective one.

The first activity of the lead reviewer will be to design a detailed method for the review, based on these three frameworks. It is expected that the tools used will include one on one interviews with key stakeholders, participatory workshops (eg with the project team) and focus group discussions.

The methodology may be based on the CARE Australia **Project Implementation and Reflection Quality Tool** (3 December 2009). This tool provides key indicators as a basis for project review (note, it is not intended for this tool to be used in the discussions or distributed to participants). Four key indicators have been selected from this tool to form the basis of the review:

- Indicator 1: Promote empowerment (promote a more equitable distribution of power).
- Indicator 2: Work with partners.
- Indicator 7: Promote sustainability.
- Indicator 9: Promote organizational learning.

All interviews with target women will respect their dignity, privacy and confidentiality. The interviews and other discussions with stakeholders will be discussed with the project team prior to commencement of the review in-country.

### **review team**

Laura Taylor, CARE Australia  
Nguyen Ngoc Thuy, Consultant

#### *Responsibilities of the review team members*

##### Lead Reviewer:

1. Design methods, in consultation with second reviewer. This will be done via email and phone, with both consultants in their home base.
2. Ensure a list of meetings required is provided to the Women's Empowerment Project Manager at least 2 weeks before the consultants are in Laos, to ensure meetings are scheduled with all staff and partners. The list of meetings should include the target group.
3. Lead the review team in-country, ensuring data is collected and recorded in order to achieve the objectives.
4. Delegate components of report writing to the second reviewer, as negotiated between the two reviewers and recruiting manager (ACD Programs), and finalization of the final written report.

##### Second Reviewer:

1. Provide 0.5 day of time to contribute to method design prior to traveling to Laos.
2. Undertake interviews and facilitate meetings with stakeholders in Laos, including government partners, ensuring cultural sensitivity in consultation with the Project Manager.
3. Facilitate the interviews and focus group discussion with the Women's Empowerment Team.
4. Contribute to data recording and analysis with the Lead Reviewer.
5. Contribute to the written report as negotiated with the Lead Reviewer and recruiting manager (ACD Programs).

### **Review Activities (total 9.5 days)**

It is anticipated the review will commence on approximately the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

- Introductory briefing with the ACD Programs and Women's Empowerment Project Manager to review this TOR (0.5 day)
- Design review tools and specific method, based on the methodology above (2 days).
- Undertake interviews, meetings, focus groups, workshops etc with project team and key stakeholders (4 days)
- Write report for project team feedback (2 days).
- Finalise report based on feedback (1 day, in Canberra).

### **Outputs**

The report should be no more than 10 pages in length, and include the following sections:

- a. Executive Summary
- b. Background and Introduction
- c. Methodology
- d. Findings
- e. Discussion
- f. Conclusions and Recommendations

This format will be further discussed during method development and as the review evolves, and notes of these discussion attached to this TOR.

## **Annex B – Groups consulted**

- Peer Protection Group (PPG) members in Chanthaboury and Sekhotabong
- Entertainment workers outside of project districts
- Legal Literacy Officers (LLO) members in Chanthaboury and Sekhotabong
- Lao Women's Union officials at Provincial and District levels
- Duty bearers (police, prosecutors, justice and court officials) in Chanthaboury and Sekhotabong
- Laos non-governmental and civil society organisations
- Project staff
- ACD Program
- Consultant for PEER evaluation

## **Annex C – Key documents reviewed**

- Project proposal, original logframe, original M&E plan
- Memorandum of Understanding between Government of Lao PDR (represented by Lao Women's Union) and CARE International in Lao PDR
- “Just Beginning: A qualitative baseline analysis of the risk of abuse and exploitation of sex workers in Vientiane capital and subsequent access to legal services”, CARE Lao, October 2009
- “Evaluation summary prepared by Quality & Impact Unit, CARE Australia, of CARE Australia's ex-post evaluation on Empowerment, Advocacy and Behaviour Change in HIV/AIDS programming, Lesson from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam”, CARE Australia, March 2009
- A Metaevaluation of NGO Evaluations conducted under the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program, AusAID, November 2006
- Strategic Impact Inquiry into Women's Empowerment by CARE International, various lessons learned documents



## Annex D – Project logframe<sup>10</sup>

Hierarchy of Objectives	Objectivity Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification (MOV)	Important Assumptions/ Risks
<b>Goal: To contribute to greater social inclusion and legal empowerment of vulnerable working women in Vientiane, Laos</b>	PPGs have capacity to continue after project end	Tests/ interviews baseline and evaluation; ongoing monitoring assesses qualitative change	
	Social, legal and political environment allows PPGs to continue after project end	Tests/ interviews baseline and evaluation; ongoing monitoring assesses qualitative change	
<b>Purpose: To increase understanding of legal rights issues experienced by targeted women, improve their capacity to take action and strengthen responsiveness of key duty bearers.</b>	Evaluation of social and legal support services available at start and end of project.	Final evaluation	
	# and types of actions taken by target group in response to rights abuses	Data sought and captured in monthly monitoring forms; evaluation	
	# reported independent actions by duty bearers to prevent abuse or promote recognition of rights	Data sought and captured in monthly monitoring forms; evaluation	
<b>Output 1. Target population demonstrates increased capacity to identify their priority legal concerns, increased understanding of their rights and increased capacity to take action</b>	% increase in knowledge of legal framework (laws and systems) among target group over baseline	Baseline, mid-term review and evaluation	That the high mobility of the target population of working women will inhibit continuity. Strategies to address this risk may include: the identification of key advocates within the target population who are in a relatively stable situation; developing networks that enable emerging leaders among the target population to maintain contact with one another – for example, a neutral meeting point; and the identification of advocates or ‘champions’ among stakeholders who can assist with continuity,

<sup>10</sup> NB. Logframe has not been updated since MOU approval which made some changes to wording.

			and will draw from international experience of effective practice. Further to this, the project will publish, produce and distribute quality teaching materials (IEC, visual, manuals) to facilitate retention and transfer of knowledge gained throughout the life of the project.
	% sampled target group demonstrating increased knowledge and capacity to take action to protect rights through self-analysis and action plans	Data sought and captured in monthly monitoring forms; evaluation	
<b>Output 2: Key duty bearers demonstrate increasing knowledge of and ongoing commitment to progressing legal rights and protections for vulnerable women.</b>	% increase in knowledge of legal rights of target population among key duty bearers	Baseline, mid-term review and evaluation	That it is possible to engage key dutybearers on the issue of strengthening legal protection and reducing violence for women who are socially and legally marginalized. This risk will be addressed by partnering with an institution that has an official mandate for promoting women's issues and rights, engaging with multiple stakeholders to enable peer influence to increase support for the project, by engaging with key dutybearers from the outset to ensure that the project and related dialogue is targeted appropriately and moves at an appropriate pace.
	# actions taken by sampled key dutybearers to progress recognition and respect for target group rights	Data sought and captured in monthly monitoring forms	
	# gov't duty-bearers take opportunities to engage in active dialogue with target group;	Data sought and captured in monthly monitoring forms	
<b>Output 3: Informal and formal protections to support rights of target populations are improved.</b>	# and effectiveness of PPG strategies operating in response to identified needs	Baseline, mid-term review and evaluation	
	% increase in accessible and appropriate support services	Baseline, mid-term review and evaluation; Project	

	over baseline	records (including partner and stakeholder reports, training records, reports from participatory monitoring activities); village and police records	
<b>Output 4. Project lessons learned and results are captured, used and distributed</b>	# lessons identified in documents	Baseline, mid-term review and evaluation; Project records (including partner and stakeholder reports, training records, reports from participatory monitoring activities); village and police records	
	% recommendations from monitoring and evaluation are reflected in workplans and activities of all stakeholders	Baseline, mid-term review and evaluation; Project records (including partner and stakeholder reports, training records, reports from participatory monitoring activities); village and police records	
	All project staff demonstrate increase in capacity	Annual performance reviews	