

CAMBODIA – Country Profile

Overview

Cambodia is an agricultural country located in Southeast Asia. It borders with Thailand to the west, Laos and Thailand to the north, the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest, and Vietnam to the east and the south. It has a total land area of 181,035 square kilometers. Cambodia has a tropical climate with two distinct seasons that set the rhythm of rural life. From November to February, the cool, dry northeastern monsoon brings little rain, whereas from May to October the southwestern monsoon carries strong winds, high humidity, and heavy rains. The mean annual temperature for Phnom Penh, the capital city, is 27°C.

The proportion of the population living in rural areas is 80.5 percent; only 19.5 percent of the country's residents live in urban areas. The population density in the country as a whole is 75 per square kilometer, with approximately 1.3 million inhabitants living in Phnom Penh. The average size of the Cambodian household is 4.7. The total male to female sex ratio is 94.7. The literacy rate among adult males is 84 percent, considerably higher than the rate among females (76 percent). Currently, it is estimated that the percentage of the total population living below the poverty line fell to 21.1 percent in 2010 and decreased further to 19.8 percent in 2011.

Source: *extracted from Cambodia Demographic & Health Survey (CDHS) 2014*

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Key findings from the 2014 CDHS on the situation of SRHR in Cambodia are as follows:

Maternal Health:

- Maternal deaths account for 9 percent of all deaths to women age 15-49. The maternal mortality rate for the seven-year period preceding the survey was 0.15 maternal deaths per 1,000 woman-years of exposure.
- The maternal mortality ratio was 170 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births for the seven-year period preceding the survey. This ratio is lower than the ratio reported in the 2010 CDHS but is not significantly different.
- More than 9 in 10 (95 percent) mothers received antenatal care from a skilled provider.
- The median duration of pregnancy at the first antenatal visit is 2.5 months.
- Eighty-nine percent of mothers with a birth in the five years preceding the survey were protected against neonatal tetanus.
- Nine in 10 (89 percent) births in the five years preceding the survey were assisted by a skilled provider, and 83 percent of births were delivered in a health facility.
- In the two years before the survey, 90 percent of women received postnatal care for their last birth in the first two days after delivery.

Contraception:

- The total fertility rate in Cambodia for the three years preceding the survey is 2.7 children per woman. Rural women have almost one child more than urban women.
- Fertility declined by 0.4 children per woman between 2005 and 2010, from 3.4 children to 3.0 children per woman, and slightly decreased further to 2.7 children in 2014.

- One-tenth of women age 25-49 gave birth by age 18 and 28 percent by age 20. The median age at first birth is 22.4 years.
- Thirty-seven percent of births occur within three years of a previous birth; 13 percent occur within 24 months.
- Twelve percent of young women age 15-19 are already mothers or pregnant with their first child.
- Awareness of at least one method of contraception is universal in Cambodia.
- More than half (56 percent) of currently married women are using a method of contraception, with most women using a modern method (39 percent).
- The daily pill remains the most commonly used method of contraception among currently married women (18 percent).
- Use of modern methods of family planning has consistently increased over the past decade, from 19 percent of currently married women in 2000 to 39 percent in 2014.
- The government sector remains the major provider of contraceptive methods for nearly half of the users of modern methods (47 percent).
- Nearly 9 in 10 women (88 percent) who use the rhythm method know correctly when the fertile period occurs.

Abortion:

- Twelve percent of women have had at least one abortion in their lifetime, and 7 percent have had an abortion in the past five years.
- Among those who have had an abortion in the past five years, 53 percent have had it within the first two months of pregnancy.
- Forty-four percent of abortions take place in a private health facility and 40 percent occur in the respondent's or someone else's home.
- Sixty-one percent of abortions were assisted by a health care professional. However, 30 percent of women did not receive any assistance.
- According to the UN Abortion Policies and Reproductive Health around the World (2014), abortion is permitted on all grounds in Cambodia.

HIV & AIDS:

- Knowledge of HIV/AIDS in Cambodia is universal; almost all women and men age 15-49 have heard of AIDS.
- Overall, 39 percent of women and 48 percent of men age 15-49 have comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS.
- Women are more aware than men that HIV can be transmitted through breastfeeding and that this risk can be reduced by taking special drugs (60 percent versus 51 percent).
- Women age 15-49 are less likely to have multiple sexual partners than their male counterparts (less than 1 percent versus 3 percent).
- Eighteen percent of women and 5 percent of men age 18-24 reported having sexual intercourse before age 18.
- Among never-married youth age 15-24, only 1 percent of young women and 7 percent of young men reported that they had sexual intercourse in the past 12 months.
- Only two-thirds (66 percent) of young men age 15-24 who had sexual intercourse in the past 12 months reported using a condom during their last sexual encounter.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Child Early & Forced Marriage (CEFM):

- One in four women age 25-49 are married by age 18.
- Overall, 12% of young women age 15-19 have begun childbearing.
- 7% are already mothers and 5% are pregnant with their first child.
- Teenage childbearing is most common among women with no education (37%).

Violence Against Women (VAW):

- Half of women and 27% of men age 15-49 agree that a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of the following reasons: if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, refuses to have sex with him, or asks him to wear a condom.
- Women and men are most likely to agree that wife beating is justified if the wife neglects the children.
- Thirty-one percent of ever-married women age 15-49 have experienced spousal violence, which is defined as emotional, physical, sexual, and/or economic abuse committed by their husband or partner.
- Spousal violence is highest in Siem Reap (59%) and lowest in Prey Veng (14%).
- Two in ten women age 15-49 have ever experienced physical violence since age 15.
- Overall, 6% of Cambodian women age 15-49 have ever experienced sexual violence.
- More than 4 in 10 women age 15-49 who ever experienced physical or sexual violence sought help to stop the violence.
- Women who ever experienced physical or sexual violence and sought help to stop violence were most likely to seek help from their own family or from a neighbor.

Current initiatives in Cambodia

- ARROW works with partners like Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC) in the **Claiming the right to safe abortion: Strategic partnerships in Asia** project that addresses stigma on abortion across Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal and the Philippines. The initiative focuses on capacity strengthening, accountability, and advocacy on the right to safe and legal abortion. The focus of the Cambodia national level work is on the key intervention areas of access to quality abortion services, refusal of service by service providers, awareness among women and service providers on the legal grounds for abortion and stigma attached to abortion.
- ARROW and Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC) continue to work towards **ICPD+25: Revitalising and implementing the Sexual and Reproductive Rights Agenda in the Asia Pacific Region**. This ICPD+25 monitoring and advocacy initiative aims to show the progress gaps and challenges towards ICPD implementation in Cambodia. In-depth monitoring is currently underway on sexual and gender-based violence.