

August
2015



Final Project Evaluation

**MAKING LEGAL AID WORK IN CAMBODIA &
ACHIEVING A COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL AID SYSTEM IN
CAMBODIA**

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES TO JUSTICE



Acknowledgements

The external evaluator and International Bridges to Justice (IBJ) would like to express their gratitude to the justice stakeholders including the judges, prosecutors, police and prison officers, local authorities, civil society partners and beneficiaries of IBJ's services, for their willingness to participate to the evaluation, to share information and experience, and to have made themselves available during the whole exercise. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Australian Embassy, for the extensive support of its representatives and their advice on this evaluation.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of IBJ. They do not represent those of DFAT or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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Acronyms

ADHOC	Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
BAKC	Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia
CLA	Community Legal Awareness
CDF	Community Development Fund
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRC	Defender Resource Center
IBJ	International Bridges to Justice
LICADHO	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PLA	Prison Legal Awareness
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia

I. Executive Summary

(i) **Background**

This report contains the evaluation of the projects *Making Legal Aid Work in Cambodia* and *Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia* implemented by International Bridges to Justice (IBJ). *Making Legal Aid Work in Cambodia* was supported by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Community Development Fund (DFAT CDF) for three years from February 2012 to May 2015, with a total budget of 208,174.60 USD. The project *Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia*, also supported by DFAT, started in December 2012 until November 2015 with a three-year budget of 900,000 USD. Given their common principles and their synergy, the two projects evaluated are referred to hereinafter as "the project".

The project targeted poor accused and justice stakeholders in Phnom Penh and eight provinces including Takeo, Pursat, Prey Veng, Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Kampong Thom provinces. The geographical coverage of IBJ's provincial offices also included a neighboring province.

The project's **overall objective** was to enhance delivery of justice and rule of law, particularly at the local level, by building and strengthening key foundations of an effective justice sector: trained and accountable justice officials, effective legal aid providers, and citizens who are knowledgeable of their rights and responsibilities. It sought to achieve this by:

- Provide high quality legal aid services to the poorest of the poor and providing access to legal counsel for the accused as soon as possible upon arrest, working to eliminate instances of torture or other inhumane treatment and excessive pre-trial detention.
- Building capacity and developing collaborative and trusting relationships with key justice sector stakeholders: the local authorities and national officials in the best position to ensure that the human rights of the accused are properly upheld, and the criminal defence lawyers whose role is to provide early and competent legal counsel to the accused.
- Informing average individuals of their rights and empowering them to exert their rights in the context of any interactions with the Cambodian justice system.

(ii) **Evaluation findings**

The project was **relevant** to the current social and political context in Cambodia, and to the strategies of the Royal Government of Cambodia and of the Australian Embassy. The activities deployed adequately addressed the needs of the target groups and stakeholders, and were suited to achieve the project's objectives.

The delivery of the project's outputs and outcomes to the concerned beneficiaries and stakeholders was **effective**. Overall, IBJ reached its expected outcomes despite few discrepancies caused by a lack of complementary funds from other sources. The project's effectiveness lies in IBJ's approach, striving to develop its anchorage in the community while continuing to build strong relationships with justice stakeholder at the local level.

Several aspects of IBJ's project reflected a cost-effective approach, in particular the project design which focuses on the local level, and some project activities such as the legal aid hotline and the radio rights awareness which have a larger reach at a minimum cost. **Efficiency** could be deepened in few aspects of the project's arrangements, including with regard to the operation costs of the provincial offices.

The project made several important **impacts** towards better functioning legal aid and criminal justice systems. The local presence of legal aid lawyers has brought changes in behaviour, including a better compliance from justice stakeholders with the legal procedure, and an increased understanding of legal matters within the community. The project also had some systemic impacts through the acceleration of court processes and the contribution to decreasing prison overcrowding.

Sustainability was included in the design of the project's activities. The program design aimed at supporting its general goal and also transmitting knowledge to the target groups and to the stakeholders involved in the project to maintain activities after the program completion. Project's beneficiaries and stakeholders have been empowered with knowledge and skills that they have passed on to other during the project and that they are likely to retain after its completion.

(iii) Conclusions

The project offered a highly relevant response to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, both in its approach and in its achievements. Through this project, IBJ achieved major changes in justice stakeholders' behavior and established its presence at the local level along with its anchorage within the community. This encourages better compliance with criminal procedure and the rights of the accused are upheld.

The project involves all relevant stakeholders including community people, law enforcement officers, court officials, local authorities, lawyers, and civil society organizations. The project was designed to empower stakeholders and beneficiaries in order to aim for sustainability after the project completion.

(iv) Recommendations

The provision of legal aid services in provinces should be maintained, and expanded to reach out to all provinces in Cambodia and with more legal aid lawyers in order to answer to the demand of target groups and beneficiaries. Ideally, IBJ should operate one office staffed with a legal team in each province. In the meantime, and in front of the limited funding opportunities, IBJ should prioritize the reduction of its operation costs by establishing its DRCs within each provincial court.

Overall, IBJ should be able to continue its core activities as they can have a larger impact over time, including more legal dissemination within the community, more roundtable discussions to strengthen skills and cooperation with justice stakeholders, and more legal training to maintain the quality of the legal aid services provided.

IBJ should continue to involve and advocate to governmental decision-makers in order to secure progress towards a state-sponsored legal aid system and a better functioning criminal justice system.

II. Introduction

2.1. Evaluation Context

This report contains the evaluation of the projects entitled *Making Legal Aid Work in Cambodia* and *Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia* supported by the Australian Embassy.

IBJ's project *Making Legal Aid Work in Cambodia* was supported by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Community Development Fund (DFAT CDF) for three years from February 2012 to May 2015, with a total budget of 208,174.60 USD. The project *Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia*, also supported by DFAT, started in December 2012 until November 2015 with a three-year budget of 900,000 USD.

As the two projects pursued the same objectives and consisted of the same activities, they will be hereafter referred to as the "project".

2.2. Development Context of the Project

The **overall objective** pursued by IBJ through its project was to enhance delivery of justice and rule of law, particularly at the local level, by building and strengthening key foundations of an effective justice sector: trained and accountable justice officials, effective legal aid providers, and citizens who are knowledgeable of their rights and responsibilities.

As a matter of fact, to date, there is still no comprehensive national legal aid system in Cambodia. Poor people in both urban and rural areas face many challenges: there are not enough lawyers in the provinces, people don't know where lawyers are available, and they don't know their legal rights nor the legal procedure in court. Within these groups, illiteracy is prevalent and people are sometimes not aware they commit offenses. Permanent legal aid services are not offered in all the provinces and are mostly provided by non-governmental actors. Due to the lack of legal representation, accused people see many of their fair trial rights violated and they are denied access to justice. Most of the time, people are not informed of their right to be represented and to remain silent upon arrest. Even though the number of incidents is slightly decreasing, investigative torture is still used to extract confessions, which are often used by courts as the sole basis for conviction. Disadvantaged accused people who cannot afford the services of a lawyer often languish in prison for years awaiting trial.

Furthermore, local government officers have a limited legal education and knowledge, which impairs the correct implementation of their professional duties. Justice stakeholders lack the necessary training to properly apply the laws and the criminal procedure in order to protect the rights of the accused. Local authorities, such as village or commune chiefs do not possess sufficient legal knowledge to provide legal advice to people or to resolve disputes through conciliation.

IBJ works to guarantee all citizens the right to competent legal representation, the right to be protected from cruel and unusual punishment, and the right to a fair trial. Over the past ten years, IBJ has developed a robust program in Cambodia, providing legal services to poor and marginalized people living in rural areas in 20 of the country's 25 provinces.

With support of the Australian DFAT and CDF, IBJ has been able to maintain eight provincial Defender Resource Centers (DRCs) which act as model, local legal aid offices. Based in Takeo, Pursat, Prey Veng, Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Kampong Thom provinces, IBJ's eight DRCs also cover their neighbouring province (respectively Kampot, Kampong Chhnang, Svay

Rieng, Steung Treng, Kratie, Pailin, Odder Meanchey and Stung Treng). The project also supported IBJ's administrative and legal staff working at the headquarters in Phnom Penh, with legal aid lawyers covering the adjacent provinces of Kandal and Kampong Speu, and the Court of Appeal.

With support of DFAT and CDF, IBJ pursued the following specific objectives:

Objective 1: To provide high quality legal aid services to the poorest of the poor and provide access to legal counsel for the accused as soon as possible upon arrest, working to eliminate instances of torture or other inhumane treatment and excessive pre-trial detention.

Objective 2: To build capacity and develop collaborative and trusting relationships with key justice sector stakeholders: the local authorities and national officials in the best position to ensure that the human rights of the accused are properly upheld, and the criminal defence lawyers whose role is to provide early and competent legal counsel to the accused.

Objective 3: To inform average individuals of their rights and empower them to exert their rights in the context of any interactions with the Cambodian justice system.

III. Objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the Final Evaluation were to: (i) make an overall independent assessment about the past performance of the project, with particular emphasis on the delivery of the objectives and impact of the project; (ii) identify key lessons and propose practical recommendations for follow-up actions; and (iii) adjust and improve the project for further implementation in the future.

The Final Evaluation was developed to consider the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and gender inclusion of the projects implemented by IBJ. The Final Evaluation also identifies lessons learned and recommendations (see Annex 1 – Terms of Reference).

IV. Methodology of the Evaluation

4.1. Field visits and data collection

The field visits were conducted over a nine-day mission between the 4th and 12th of June 2015 in three provinces selected by IBJ: Takeo, Ratanakiri and Banteay Meanchey (see Annex 2 – Schedule of the field visits), where DRCs 1, 4 and 7 are based respectively. All the findings presented in this report were collected during the field visits through key informant interviews. Complementary information on the project's overall outputs are drawn from the narrative reports submitted by IBJ to DFAT and CDF.

The questionnaires were developed by the external evaluator based on IBJ's existing monitoring and evaluation tools. The questions reflected what the evaluation intended to assess about IBJ project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and inclusion of gender issues. IBJ and the external evaluator developed six different questionnaires fitted to provide information covering each of IBJ's activities, according to the aforementioned evaluation criteria. One questionnaire was produced for each of the target groups and stakeholders involved in the evaluation. The following table show the breakdown of the different categories of respondents, how they were selected, and which IBJ's activity they mainly provided information on.

Categories	Total Number of respondents	Selection process	Scope of the questionnaires
Justice Stakeholders			
Court	3 judges 2 prosecutors 3 court clerks	The respondents selected were those who knew about IBJ and were already familiar with its work.	Questionnaire on legal aid services
Police	3 police officers		Questionnaire on legal aid services and roundtable discussions
Prison	3 prison officers		Questionnaire on legal aid services, roundtable discussions, and Prison Legal Awareness (PLA) sessions
Beneficiaries			
Community	9 local authorities 1 community member	The selected local authorities participated either to a Roundtable discussion or to a Community Legal Awareness (CLA) session. The selected community members participated to a CLA session.	Questionnaire on legal aid services, CLA and/or roundtable discussions
IBJ Clients	3 IBJ clients outside of prison 3 IBJ clients in prison	IBJ endeavoured to select clients whose cases were received by the IBJ lawyer at the earliest stages of the criminal proceedings (police, prosecution or investigation stages).	Questionnaire on the legal aid services
Partners			
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)	3 NGO representatives	The NGOs selected were working in a related field, i.e. human rights, legal aid, or justice sector; and had a close relationship with IBJ in the province.	Questionnaire on legal aid services and on roundtable discussions
Project Implementers			
IBJ Provincial staff	3 lawyers 3 lawyer assistants (3 office assistants)	The IBJ teams working in each province were selected. The office assistants working in each province are not counted as a respondent because only one question was in relation with aspects of their work.	Questionnaire on legal aid services and defender training
TOTAL	39 respondents		

The list of respondents and the breakdown per province covered by the Evaluation are provided in Annex 2. Contrary to the initial plan, IBJ was not able to schedule an interview with the prosecutor in Takeo. The latter declined IBJ's invitation to participate to the evaluation and so the evaluator decided to meet one more CLA participant instead. Overall, all respondents provided information related to IBJ's legal aid services, eight respondents provided information on the roundtable discussion, ten on the CLA sessions, two on the PLA sessions, and six on the legal training.

The schedule of the field visits and interviews was prepared by IBJ. All the interviews were conducted by the evaluator, assisted by two IBJ staff members for the note-taking. IBJ was responsible to gather and present the data collected from the field visits for the external evaluator to analyse it and draw conclusions for the Evaluation Findings. The evaluator was in charge of drafting this Final Evaluation Report, with methodological and editing support from IBJ.

4.2. Potential Limits of the Evaluation

While every effort was made to eliminate bias in the selection of the respondents, in conducting the interviews, and in checking the factual basis for the findings and conclusions, it was not possible to use more rigorous data collection methods such as systematic surveys or other quantitative data-collection methods. In the analysis of the information collected, the external consultant attempted to identify and isolate the observed impacts and changes which are solely attributable to IBJ's project. Conclusions are drawn and attributed to IBJ's project when similar feedback is recurrent amongst respondents and across different groups of respondents.

The field visits had to be scheduled over a short period and covered a wide geographical area. As a result, the time imparted for each interview was limited.

Finally, regarding information collected on the CLA sessions, the external evaluator and IBJ wanted to select more members of the community to answer to the questionnaire on CLA sessions. However, it proved difficult to reach out to former CLA participants to organize an interview as the great majority of them is working during the day. Therefore, IBJ contacted the local authorities who had attended a CLA session. Consequently, 90% of the respondents who provided information on the CLA sessions were local authorities against 10% of community members while, usually, most of the CLA participants are community members. Nonetheless, it does not impair the relevance and accuracy of the information provided by the local authorities for the purpose of this evaluation.

V. Evaluation Findings

The evaluation findings are presented per activity, preceded by introductory background information on the context of the project and by findings on the management and design of the project.

5.1. Findings on the context of the activities

Through the evaluation questions, the external consultant was able to gather information on the general context in which IBJ's project was implemented. The conclusions drawn below highlight important aspects in relation with the project, thus underlying its relevance in the current social and political context in Cambodia and to the needs of the project's target groups and stakeholders.

- According to the respondents, the main legal issues in each province are the following (from the most mentioned to the least mentioned):
Takeo: domestic violence/violence, gambling and money lending, rape, drug, theft.
Ratanakiri: theft, domestic violence/violence, land issues, murder, rape, drug, youth gangsters, robbery, breach of trust.
Banteay Meanchey: domestic violence/violence, drug, rape, land disputes, human trafficking and cross-border issues, theft, gambling.
- The overwhelming majority of people living in the areas covered by IBJ's project are poor and illiterate. People don't know the law and, as a consequence, they often do not know some acts that can constitute criminal offenses. More particularly, justice stakeholders and local authorities based in Ratanakiri mentioned that poor suspects/accused do not only face problems with legal knowledge and understanding, but also with general communication as most of them are from minority groups which possess their own language. On the other side, local authorities also have a limited legal education which does not enable them to properly fulfil the roles and obligations attached to their duties. Many problems are brought to them by the community as

they are the first ones people turn to in case of a dispute. Local authorities try to find solutions to the problems, but they are not able to systematically provide legal advice or consultation to the community members when needed. They tend either to reconcile the opposed parties by getting them to agree to their suggestions to end the dispute, or to refer the cases, even those which could be solved at the local level, to other authorities. Mostly, they still cannot distinguish between criminal and civil cases.

- There is a conspicuous lack of lawyers based at the provincial level. This is even more true for legal aid lawyers. Altogether, 46% of all respondents said there are not enough lawyers in general, while 26% consider there are enough (and 28% did not know). Regarding legal aid lawyers, 56% of all respondents consider there are not enough professionals based in province, against 21% who consider there are enough (23% did not know).

The breakdown of the abovementioned information by category of respondents reveals that the lack of lawyers and legal aid lawyers is mostly expressed by legal professionals and justice stakeholders, while the project's beneficiaries most often do not have an opinion on the question. As a matter of fact, 64% of the justice stakeholders interviewed answer there are not enough lawyers, and 71% agree there are not enough legal aid lawyers. 78% of partner NGO and IBJ staff deemed that there are not enough lawyers and 100% of them assessed that there are not enough legal aid lawyers. Regarding the beneficiaries of the project (community members and IBJ clients), 19% thought there are enough lawyers while 12% thought not; and 25% considered there are enough legal aid lawyers against 19% not. 69% did not know how to answer to the first question on the number of lawyers, and 56% to the second question regarding legal aid lawyers.

Amongst the court officers interviewed, 75% affirmed that the majority of cases they handle are not represented by a lawyer. In the three provinces selected for the Evaluation, the IBJ lawyer is the only legal aid lawyer based on a permanent basis in the concerned province, and representing accused people. The other human rights NGOs working in these areas have lawyers based in Phnom Penh (Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association - ADHOC - and Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights - Licadho). In Banteay Meanchey, respondents answered that the NGO, Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC) also has a legal aid lawyer but only represents victims. Regarding private lawyers, there is one private lawyer in Ratanakiri, two in Takeo and more than three in Banteay Meanchey.

- Most of the respondents see dysfunctions within the justice system. Amongst the reasons mentioned, respondents said that the justice system is slow and that the judicial processes should be accelerated. There is still the perception amongst members of the community that the justice system favours people who have money. Respondents also emphasized the lack of independence of the judiciary.
Yet, 30% of the respondents recognized that the justice system was getting better compared to before. They referenced to their perception that there are more laws and that judicial professionals are better trained. Several respondents mentioned the creation of the Anti-Corruption Unit as a step towards the improvement of the justice system. Nonetheless, even though acknowledging the progress made, some of these respondents remarked that there is still room for improvement.
- There are important challenges in the functioning of the judicial system which impair correct implementation of the procedure and compliance with the law. Three of the court officers and

four of the IBJ legal staff interviewed strongly underline investigation as a challenging aspect of their work. Justice stakeholders face difficulties to investigate as they do not have funds to do so. They also lack the means to gather forensic evidence and cannot access to DNA expertise. The IBJ legal staff mentioned the difficulties to investigate in remote places, to find witnesses and to obtain forensic evidence as well. Regarding the implementation of the procedure, justice stakeholders highlighted the difficulty to send summons and ensure they are properly delivered to the concerned persons. Lawyers sometimes meet challenges to obtain a copy of the cases.

- To assess their perception of legal aid and justice, all categories of respondents were asked the same questions, as showed in the following tables.

Question: What benefits do people receive by obtaining legal aid services? (Respondents could choose multiple answers)

	CLA	Clients	NGOs	Court	Police/Prison	IBJ staff	TOTAL	% of total respondents
Get legal knowledge	10	5	3	7	4	6	35	90%
Get their case solved for free	10	6	3	7	4	6	36	92%
Reduce legal costs	10	5	3	7	4	6	35	90%
Reduce fear	10	5	3	7	0	6	31	79%
Reduce abuses of human rights	5	5	3	4	0	6	23	59%
Reduce illegal actions	7	5	3	4	0	6	25	64%
Reduce violence	8	3	2	3	0	6	22	56%
Others	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	5%
Not answered	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	5%

Question: To what extent do you agree with this statement: “Being assisted by legal aid will help people to obtain justice”?

	CLA	Clients	NGOs	Court	Police/Prison	IBJ staff	TOTAL	% of total respondents
Strongly Agree	2	3	0	1	1	3	10	26%
Agree	6	3	1	5	4	0	19	49%
Somewhat agree	1	0	1	0	1	3	6	15%
Neither agree or disagree	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	5%
Somewhat disagree	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3%
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Not answered	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3%

5.2. Findings on Project Management and Design

The design of the activities clearly supported the objectives pursued by IBJ through its project. The program activities were designed in a way to support and complement each other. For instance, the legal aid hotline supplemented the legal defence services by providing to people an easy access to legal consultations or information provided by law professionals. CLA sessions disseminated legal information on legal rights and responsibilities relevant to the people and their daily lives, and empowered people

with the knowledge on the means to exercise their rights and where to go if they need a defence lawyer. CLA sessions also provided local authorities and enforcement officials at the local level with legal knowledge, equipping them with skills to better implement their duties. With a better knowledge of the law, they were better able to inform people or referring them to IBJ. IBJ's Radio rights awareness programs supplemented the CLA sessions as it enabled IBJ to reach a larger number of persons with basic knowledge on their legal rights and legal services available. All legal awareness activities were building the demand side for legal aid services. To ameliorate the supply side, roundtable discussions came to encourage justice stakeholders to build good relationships and communicate over the course of exercise of their professional work. Discussions also contributed to build their legal knowledge and deepen their relationships with IBJ for an optimal delivery of legal aid services at the local level. PLA sessions had the same effect as CLA ones for the beneficiaries, and as the roundtable discussions for prison officers.

The following points indicate how the activities supported the objectives throughout the design of the project.

Relevance

- Firstly, IBJ's project proves to be relevant to the current social and political context in Cambodia and particularly to the Australian Embassy's and the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) strategies in the justice sector.

Regarding the Australian Embassy, the strategic approach to aid for Cambodia from 2010-2015¹ identified both law and justice as capacities that would be critical for Australian aid to be dedicated towards. Specifically, the strategy was focused on "increasing emphasis on work with local authorities, communities, and civil society to prevent crime and improve community safety", "reduc[ing] prison overcrowding", and "expanding access to legal services and consider[ing] alternative ways to resolve disputes.

IBJ's project fits soundly within the goals of this strategy. On the first part of the strategy, roundtable discussions and CLA sessions were definitively effective in this regard. The roundtable discussions encouraged improved collaboration through all of the primary justice stakeholders which is likely to create the environment for crime reduction and increased safety. Furthermore, legal awareness sessions have the effect of reducing conflicts and disputes within the community.

Prison overcrowding has been alleviated as a result of the legal aid services provided by IBJ lawyers through release on bail, obtaining acquittals, dismissals or reduced sentences and by avoiding excessive pretrial detention. Equally, the roundtable discussions are improving communication between prisons and courts which is having the positive effect of decreasing the probability of final judgments not being sent to the prison or delayed. This can alleviate prisoners being in prison when they do not need to be.

Legal defence services are being expanded considerably by the addition of DRCs so there are eight centers, as well as the office in Phnom Penh. Additionally, radio programs and community

¹ Australian Government – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Development Assistance in Cambodia, *Cambodia Justice Sector Delivery Strategy*, April 2012, page 2. Accessed on 21 July 2015 at <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/cambodia-law-justice-sector-delivery-strategy-2012-16.pdf>

legal awareness programs are expanding access to legal awareness by making people more aware of their basic rights and of the aid available to them.

The RGC has also developed a strategy for legal and judicial reform for the period 2009-2013, reiterated for 2014-2018². IBJ's work again fits smoothly within this framework. As part of the national strategic development plan, it explained their first commitment accelerating legal and justice reform through the following seven strategic objectives: "strengthening protection of fundamental rights and freedom, modernization of the legislative framework, providing better access to legal and judicial information, enhancement of the quality of legal process and related service, strengthening judicial services, including judicial power and prosecutorial services, enlargement of [Alternative Dispute Resolution] mechanisms, and the strengthening of legal and judicial sector institutions to fulfil their mandates".

IBJ clearly works towards the protection of fundamental rights and freedom through the work of DRCs which give citizens the opportunity to have legal support if they are treated unfairly, as well as the CLA campaigns which enable citizens to empower themselves by improving their knowledge of their legal rights. Essentially, the main point that the rest of these objectives are centered on is improved cohesiveness between all the moving parties of the legal and judicial sector. IBJ has addressed this problem through the creation of roundtable forums where relevant justice stakeholders are able to come together and make progress on working together towards furthering legal and judicial reform. These objectives clearly have a level of ambiguity to them and IBJ's three focused objectives of high quality legal aid services to the poorest of the poor and providing access to legal counsel for accused as soon as possible upon arrest, collaborative relationships with justice stakeholders to ensure that the human rights of accused are upheld, and informing individuals of rights and empowering them to exert rights in context of Cambodian justice system, are important for creating the reform that is desired.

- The objectives and expected outcomes fell under three prongs, which complemented each other. The first one was to strengthen and improve government officials' and justice stakeholders' skills to provide services and perform their tasks in a professional manner and in accordance with the legal requirements. The second one was to provide effective legal defence services to support the overall improvement of the justice system. Finally, the project reinforced the community at the local level and empowered them to claim respect for their rights and demand legal aid services. The project's design and management was relevant because its outcome was not only to provide services to the target groups, but also to build good relationships with relevant stakeholders (judges, prosecutors, police, prison officers and NGOs) in the justice community.
- The evaluator found that all interviewees expressed IBJ's activities were good and responded to the needs of the target groups. They appear helpful and useful to all stakeholders, by both providing them services and building their capacities and skills. All respondents said that IBJ's project is unique in the area and that there are no other organization or institution providing such services. The project received strong support and cooperation from all stakeholders and partners in the covered areas.
- The program activities were implemented near the target groups through IBJ's DRCs in order to enable them to have better access to the services at the earliest stages and in time. All IBJ's

² Kingdom of Cambodia, Royal Government of Cambodia, *National Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018*, July 2014, page 108. Accessed on 21 July 2015 at <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/cambodia/drive/NSDP2014-2018.pdf>

activities are driven by a local-level approach. This strategy is an adequate answer to the lack of lawyers in the provinces. The large majority of respondents have highlighted that without IBJ, they would have no one to refer the case to, which would thwart the right to be represented by a lawyer and impact the course of the criminal proceedings and the length of pretrial detention. All justice stakeholders agreed that lawyers sent from Phnom Penh to the provinces on a case-by-case basis do not have the same effectiveness and efficiency, which proves a contrario the relevance of IBJ's local approach. The other NGOs working in the justice sector do not have lawyers permanently based in province, but mobilize their lawyers from Phnom Penh when necessary. The full-time presence of IBJ enables them to provide legal consultation and then to transfer the case to the IBJ lawyer for legal representation in court. IBJ's local approach is answering the needs of both stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Effectiveness

- IBJ's project, as implemented, was able to achieve its expected outputs. Below is a summary of the outputs reported for each of the projects supported by DFAT and CDF. Please note that the project *Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia* covers a total of eight provinces, including the five ones covered by the project *Making Legal Aid Work in Cambodia*.

Making Legal Aid Work in Cambodia:

During the three year project, IBJ lawyers handled 2,265 cases involving 2,938 clients (11% were women) through five DRCs and the Phnom Penh office. Throughout all the cases closed during this time period, 159 clients were successfully release on bail, 131 were acquitted, 59 saw their cases dropped or dismissed, and 1103 received a reduced sentence.

IBJ conducted 100 CLA sessions directly informing 5,500 participants (51% were women) on their legal rights, and indirectly reaching out to 27,500 people. Additionally, 977 prisoners (10% were women and 17% were prison officers) received information on their legal rights and the criminal procedures.

IBJ conducted 17 roundtable discussions with 423 justice stakeholders (including 10% of women).

Five training sessions were held where the 23 IBJ lawyers and lawyer assistants participated each time, along with two dozens of legal aid lawyers from other organizations, private, or from the BAKC.

Sometimes, IBJ was not able to reach its yearly expected targets as specified in the proposal because of a lack of funding from other donors to complement the activities' cost-share. However, IBJ always exceeded the number of cases it expected to receive.

For Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia:

From December 2012 to June 2015 (the project will end in November 2015), IBJ lawyers received 3,436 cases involving 4,405 clients through IBJ's eight DRCs, the Phnom Penh and the Appeal court offices. Throughout all the 2,235 cases closed, IBJ lawyers obtained a positive outcome in 55% of the cases in terms of acquittals, cases dropped or dismissed and reduced sentences. 103 clients were released on bail.

IBJ conducted 109 CLA sessions directly informing 5,965 participants (49% women) on their legal rights, and indirectly reaching out to 29,825 people. Additionally, 1,436 prisoners (including 13% of women and 11% of prison officers) received information on their legal rights

and the criminal procedures. IBJ conducted 19 roundtable discussions with 520 justice stakeholders (including 8% of women).

Five training sessions were held where the 23 IBJ lawyers and lawyer assistants participated each time. 113 lawyers from partner organization, the BAKC or the private sector attended one of these five trainings.

Efficiency

- Several aspects of IBJ's project reflected a cost-effective approach, based on the information shown in the table below.

1 year period - USD		Current configuration of IBJ's project
	For one DRC outside of the court	For five DRCs outside of the courts
Staff	16 479,00	82 395,00
Operations	5 040,00	25 200,00
Travel to 2 provinces	9 990,00	49 950,00
Sub Total	31 509,00	157 545,00
	For one DRC inside the court	For three provincial offices inside the courts
Staff	16 479,00	49 437,00
Operations	2 040,00	6 120,00
Travel to 2 provinces	9 990,00	29 970,00
Sub Total	28 509,00	85 527,00
TOTAL	60 018,00	243 072,00

In the current configuration of the project where one DRC covers two provinces, IBJ ensured a large geographical coverage for its activities with the operation costs of only one office. The budget expenditures related to the travels to two different provinces are obviously lesser than the costs of operating a second office with another legal team in the neighbouring province of each DRC. With limited funding, IBJ chose the best arrangement to be able to reach out more evenly to different Cambodian provinces.

Within the project's configuration, IBJ was operating five DRCs outside of the court buildings, and three DRCs located inside the provincial courts. These three DRCs (DRCs 6 to 8 in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, and Kampong Thom) were a pilot experimentation under the project supported by DFAT. After having been operating for three years, these three DRCs became well established in the justice system landscape in each province. Cooperation with court officers has improved over the years and they now see many advantages, in terms of communication for instance, to have IBJ located very close by. In particular, when IBJ's DRCs are located in the courts, only small funding is needed to support these offices and the lawyers' work. If all IBJ DRCs had been located in court, IBJ would have saved 15,000 USD per year compared to the level of operations expenses of the project in its current configuration. Per DRC, IBJ would save 60% of the current operations costs per year with offices established in court buildings.

- Ensuring a local presence saves travel expenses, as opposed to the system where lawyers are sent from Phnom Penh to the provinces. As a matter of fact, IBJ budgets local travels within one province, which enable the lawyer to perform at a lesser cost many tasks in relation to the case

(meeting the client several times, investigating, attending court hearings, etc.). For the same amount of tasks performed for one case, it would be less efficient to cover expenses of lawyers from Phnom Penh travelling to the concerned province. The local presence of IBJ DRCs makes the project implementers close to the target groups. From a qualitative point of view, they are able to react quickly to requests and to intervene in cases from the earliest stages of the proceedings, which makes the resources mobilized the most appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes. It also strongly enhances the project's overall effectiveness.

- The project is cost-effective its use of human resources. At the local level, lawyers serve both as primordial project implementers and as heads and managers of the provincial DRCs. Furthermore, IBJ lawyers do not only ensure legal representation but are also responsible to implement a wide range of related activities. With support of the lawyer assistants, they are in charge of conducting CLA and PLA sessions, they intervene as speakers in radio programs, facilitating the organization of roundtable discussions, and any other tasks as required by the Program Management Team in Phnom Penh. The design of the provincial lawyers' position as dual-hatted enables IBJ to maximize its human resources and enhance their capacity to be multi-tasked, for a better efficiency of the project.
- On-site legal aid service delivery was complemented by cost-effective activities able to reach a larger number of project's beneficiaries. Accordingly, activities such as the legal aid hotline and the radio rights awareness programs are intrinsically cost-effective. The hotline enables people living far from the main provincial city to obtain legal information and advice on a diverse arrange of issues (not only on criminal law issues), while saving them the cost to travel and reducing IBJ's expenses in local travels as well. The radio right awareness program enables IBJ to reach out to a large number of people and disseminate legal information to them. The Radio programs were broadcasted in both urban and rural areas. For a lesser cost, IBJ can broadcast its programs on local radio stations and reach out to inform a larger number of people on their legal rights and the existence of legal aid services.

Impact

- The core impact of IBJ's project is to fill in a large gap regarding legal aid service provision and delivery in Cambodia, which has many repercussions on the overall criminal justice system. The project's activities have made an impact as intended in the planned objectives as IBJ lawyers had the capacity to absorb a substantial part of the criminal cases provincial courts deal with, and particularly those cases where legal representation is mandated by the law (see below – Findings on legal aid services). IBJ lawyers' work has contributed to decongest the provincial courts. Due to the multi-layered design of IBJ's project, one of the main impact achieved is to have increased the demand for legal aid services from the project's beneficiaries and justice stakeholders.
- As it is illustrated in the findings below, the project's activities have triggered several changes in justice stakeholders' behaviour. Justice stakeholders' motivation to change their behaviour was not always anticipated by IBJ. For instance, the willingness of a number of stakeholders to cooperate with IBJ lies in how they perceive IBJ as helping them in their own work. IBJ considers these primary incentives as an open door to further and deepen the cooperation with justice stakeholders, towards more and better compliance with fair trial standards and respect of the rights of the accused.

Another change in behaviour lies in the fact that, thanks to IBJ's physical presence in provinces through its DRCs and thanks to IBJ's activities, IBJ reinforced justice stakeholders' compliance with the law. The design of IBJ's project and the complementary impact of its activities has strengthened the authority of the law in the eyes of justice stakeholders. The establishment and proximity of IBJ's office and daily work with the IBJ lawyer have driven justice stakeholders to shift from implementing their duties according to their superior's instructions to implementing them according to the law and with a legal basis legitimating their actions.

Sustainability

- Sustainability was included in the design of the project's activities. The program was designed to build the capacities of the project's stakeholders and implementers through roundtable discussion and legal trainings, and to transmit knowledge to the project beneficiaries through CLA and PLA sessions and radio programs. In this manner, the information shared with people is a lasting component of the project which will preserve the knowledge and the impact of the project after its completion. Project's beneficiaries have been empowered with knowledge on their legal rights and they know where to turn to if confronted with legal issues. Justice stakeholders and project implementers have gained an increased knowledge and practical skills to better implement their profession and can continue to practice them after completion of the project. The design of these activities has also a multiplier effect when project's beneficiaries and stakeholders share their knowledge with others (see the findings on legal awareness and roundtable discussion below).

Lessons learned

- The design of IBJ's project with DRCs covering two provinces is a functioning model when there are sufficient funding resources. If the funding support decreases, there can be an impact on the activities implemented in the neighbouring province covered by each DRCs. This is of particular importance for case investigation and follow-up which are key elements guaranteeing the quality of the legal aid services provided. If IBJ's funding basis shrinks, the travels to the second province covered will be reduced. The current arrangement of IBJ's model has an effect on the volume of activities IBJ is able to deliver depending on the funds available to support the project.

Recommendations

- Given the current needs, the number of legal aid lawyers, and most particularly those based in provinces, should be increased. To answer to the demand of beneficiaries and stakeholders, at least one lawyer should be based in the covered province. Ideally, IBJ should operate one office staffed with a legal team in each province. Compared to what IBJ spent during the project per year for one DRC located outside the court and covering two provinces, it would only need an additional 17,769 USD per year per current DRC to open a new office in the neighbouring province. As a result, IBJ would operate instead two DRCs located in provincial courts and covering each one province. In the meantime, and in front of the limited funding opportunities, IBJ should prioritize the reduction of its operation costs by establishing its DRCs within each provincial court.
- At the Ministry's and Governmental levels, designing justice facilities should include fitting out a room for legal aid lawyers, which they could use as their office within each provincial courts in order to facilitate access to legal aid services for the clients and communication between the

lawyer and the court officers. In this way, IBJ's project appears as likely to be used as a model for the provision of legal aid services throughout the country.

- Ensuring the quality of the service delivery over a large geographical area could prove challenging. The lawyer assistant could be used to reach out to rural areas. Lawyer assistants would do this more easily than the lawyer since he/she has no schedule constraints with the courts, hence more flexible. This could assist in legal defence service support when accused are detained by judicial police in rural areas as well as for diversion from the formal justice system when required. This will assist IBJ to expand or duplicate the same activities in the DRC to the neighbouring province such as its CLA, PLA, roundtable discussion, hotline, and radio legal awareness.

5.3. Findings on Legal Defence Services

The activity of legal defence services was evaluated through the point of view of the beneficiaries (IBJ clients) and the stakeholders (local justice sector officials and NGO partners).

Six clients (three in prison and three outside prison) were interviewed in the three provinces covered by the evaluation. Out of the six clients interviewed, one had no education, three had attended primary school (including one who completed primary school), one client had attended university and one had completed university. Two clients earned less than 40 USD a month, one between 41 USD and 100 USD a month and two between 101 USD and 200 USD a month³.

Each of the six clients was referred to IBJ by a different stakeholder including NGO partner, police officer, prosecutor, judge, family members, and acquaintance. Three clients obtained a lawyer at the police stage, one at the prosecutor stage, one just before the trial hearing and one during the appeal process. The two clients in Ratanakiri province had been informed by the police of their right to a lawyer (the respondents in the other provinces did not answer the question or did not provide relevant answers). Before meeting the IBJ lawyer, half of the respondents knew what a lawyer was, and half did not know. When interviewed, five out of six respondents said they understand what a lawyer is, and four were able to explain. Four respondents know how to contact a lawyer and provided relevant examples: two of them said they would go to the office or call the lawyer, and two said that they would ask one of their relative to contact the lawyer.

To support its efforts to provide legal aid defence services, DRCs have endeavoured to build a tight network with the other NGOs working in their area in order to support each other in their attempt to improve the justice system and respect of people's rights. IBJ worked with several NGOs acting in related fields, including ADHOC and Licadho. For the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluator met with three ADHOC representatives in Takeo, Ratanakiri and Banteay Meanchey. ADHOC has a good cooperation with IBJ staff members and recognizes IBJ's work as very helpful for the implementation of their own project. With the permanent, local presence of the IBJ lawyer in the province, they have someone to refer cases to. ADHOC recognizes the usefulness of IBJ's legal defence services for the poor accused in order to improve the legal procedure.

Finally, the evaluator interviewed two prosecutors, three judges, court clerks, police and prison officers on the legal services provided by IBJ. Overall, justice stakeholders are very supportive of IBJ's program and maintain good relationships with the IBJ lawyer and lawyer assistant working in their province, as detailed below.

³ One respondent did not answer this question.

Relevance

- The relevance of the legal aid defence services provided by IBJ is strongly related to the absence of legal aid lawyers at the local level otherwise. The majority of the people living in provincial, rural, and remote areas do not have the means to afford a private lawyer and, except for the IBJ lawyer, there is no other organization or institution to turn to in order to quickly obtain legal representation for poor accused people. This is of particular importance when the criminal case involves a felony or a juvenile as Cambodian law makes legal representation mandatory in these instances. When there is no lawyer available, the court cannot proceed the cases.

Three out of the eight court officers interviewed recognized the need for more legal aid services as a necessary condition to improve the legal aid system and people's access to justice. Most judges, prosecutors and clerks said that, if IBJ closes its offices, there will be no lawyer available for poor accused people (composing the majority of the population), the court process in felony/juvenile cases will be stuck/slowed down, and it will impact the length of pretrial detention. More generally, 31% of all the respondents to the evaluation identify the need for more legal aid services available as a solution to improve the overall legal aid system.

- All clients said they trust IBJ and were satisfied with the results of legal representation. They felt less threatened and more confident thanks to the presence of a lawyer. All six respondents said they have a good relationship with the IBJ lawyer, who came to meet them several times, updated them on the case and showed a friendly attitude. Respondents referred to the lawyer's professionalism and to his commitment. IBJ's clients' high level of satisfaction with the legal aid services provided by IBJ indicates that this activity is implemented in response to the needs of the target groups constituted by poor accused people.

Effectiveness

- The project was able to reach beyond its expected outputs in terms of number of cases received. Furthermore, the findings below show that legal aid services were effectively delivered to key stakeholders and target groups.
- All the clients interviewed were referred to IBJ by various sources, including justice stakeholders, community and partner NGOs. This shows that IBJ was able to develop its anchorage in the community while continuing to build strong relationships with justice stakeholders at the local level. Both project's beneficiaries and stakeholders are aware of IBJ's services and refer cases to the organization. All respondents have expressed concerns if IBJ were to stop its activities because they would have no one to refer cases to.
- IBJ's legal aid services were effectively delivered to accused people and particularly to people held in pretrial detention. The majority of IBJ's clients are held in pretrial detention and, in some provinces, the IBJ lawyer represents a large percentage of pretrial detainees, as showed in the table below for 2014.

2014						
Provincial Prison	IBJ DRC	Total pretrial detention (international definition)	IBJ clients in pretrial detention	% of pretrial detainees represented by IBJ	Total IBJ clients per province	% of IBJ clients in pretrial detention
Kandal	Phnom Penh	536	67	13%	98	68%
Kg Speu	Phnom Penh	205	67	33%	117	57%
Kampot	DRC 1	156	11	7%	22	50%
Kg Chhnang	DRC 2	264	17	6%	32	53%
Kg Thom	DRC 8	236	88	37%	156	56%
Pursat	DRC 2	108	68	63%	98	69%
Battambang	DRC 6	611	96	16%	120	80%
Banteay Meanchey	DRC 7	675	97	14%	126	77%
Svay Rieng	DRC 3	74	16	22%	20	80%
	TOTAL	2865	527	18%	789	67%

The statistics on the number of pretrial detainees presented here are the only ones available to IBJ and were obtained from Licadho. They do not show data for all the provinces where IBJ provides legal aid services. In Kampot, Kampong Chhnang and Svay Rieng, there is no IBJ lawyers permanently based. Legal aid services are provided in these areas from the neighbouring province, which explains the smaller number of cases received in 2014. Most of the cases received by one DRC are from the province where it is located. The proportions vary according to the provinces due to external factors (less criminality, better travelling facilities, etc.). Kandal and Kampong Speu provinces are covered by the two IBJ lawyers based in Phnom Penh.

First of all, it is important to notice that IBJ lawyers working in each DRC have the capacity to receive around 120 cases per year. Among these, more than an average 65% of the clients are held in pretrial detention. The proportion it represents amongst pretrial detainees held in one province depends on the total pre-detainee prison population. As recalled, IBJ lawyers do not have an unlimited capacity to take on all criminal cases in one province. These figures can also give indication on the required number of lawyers there should be in each province. For instance in Pursat, the IBJ lawyer in DRC 2 is able to represent 63% of the people held in pretrial detention, equivalent to 68 persons. The IBJ lawyer in Phnom Penh is able to represent the same number of pretrial detainees in Kandal but it represent only 13% of the total prison population, suggesting that more lawyers are needed in this province.

- The effectiveness of the delivery of legal aid services is strengthened by the hotline system which makes possible early referral of cases as target groups and stakeholders have a better access to legal aid services through a convenient and widespread means of communication. When there is an early referral, the lawyer can better ensure that the rights of the accused are respected throughout each stage of the criminal procedure. The lawyer has also enough time to take protective measures for the defendant's fair trial rights (such as applying for bail or dismissal of the case, or challenging the validity of police records, etc.), and to investigate in order to gather exculpatory evidence. The capacity to easily and quickly access to legal aid enhances the delivery of the services to the target groups and for the justice stakeholders. These aspects make this activity effective to reach the project's objectives.

- In order to be able to effectively deliver legal aid services, IBJ lawyers endeavoured to build close relationships with justice stakeholders. The existence of these collaborative relationships is a key condition for the effectiveness of the legal aid services activity. Lawyers said that their relationship with court officers is better and they noticed a change in their behaviour. According to the lawyers, justice officers were not cooperative in the past and rejected some of the lawyers' requests based on the criminal procedure. For instance, one lawyer states he can now obtain releases on bail for accused people and police officers are calling him to discuss the legal procedure and follow-up on cases. This suggests that without a defence lawyer, release on bail of people held in pretrial detention would be difficult. Another lawyer does not need to send officials letters for some aspects of his work process, and another lawyer said the court refers cases to IBJ and allows the lawyer to participate in the debate on bail requests. These examples illustrate the trust IBJ lawyers have built with justice stakeholders who are, in turn, facilitating some aspects of the procedure and administrative work for the lawyers.

The existence of a good relationship between IBJ lawyers and local justice stakeholders is also corroborated by the latter. All eight court officers, six prison and police officers, and three NGO representatives interviewed in the three provinces responded that they have good relationship with IBJ lawyers. Three of them illustrated their answer by specifying that the lawyer was easy to contact and responded quickly. 80% of the court, prison and police officers have the perception that the IBJ lawyers get actively involved in the cases and never reject a case.

Finally, the good cooperation between IBJ and justice stakeholders is prevalent regarding access to prison. IBJ lawyers have no difficulty to access their clients in prison. Prison chiefs understand the lawyers' work and ease their work by granting them this access. On the contrary, the other NGO representatives mentioned their difficulties to access to prisons and their relationships with prison officers are not smooth.

Efficiency

- The difference in operation costs between DRCs located outside or within provincial courts have also an impact on the value for money of the legal services provided, as shown in the table below.

	DRC outside of the provincial court	DRC within the provincial court
Legal team salaries*	11,194.5	11,194.5
Operations costs	5,040	2,040
Travels to two provinces	9,990	9,990
Legal Copy and Stamp	1,080	1,080
TOTAL	27,304.5	24,304.5
Average expense for 120 cases received per DRC	227.5 USD per case	202.5 USD per case

* Includes 85% of the salaries of the lawyer and the lawyer assistant, IBJ considering that it is the corresponding time they spend on legal representation amongst their other tasks.

This data confirms that it is better value for money to have IBJ's DRCs located within court buildings.

- All the three IBJ lawyers interviewed regard their caseload as currently manageable, but it would not be possible for them to absorb more cases. One lawyer noticed that it is sometimes complicated because there are two provinces to cover. Sometimes, lawyers mentioned having spent their own money to meet with the clients. The finding is closely in relation with the lack of legal aid lawyers and the most efficient way to ensure a large geographical coverage to enable

more people to access to legal aid services. In the present configuration of the project, the decision to cover two provinces with one DRC puts a strain on the lawyers' workload.

- All the three IBJ office assistants interviewed said that the budget was insufficient for case investigation, copying cases and stamps, rent and supplies, and equipment and phone. Expenses for investigations comprise several travels to the other province covered by the DRC. Limitations on the funding resources available for investigation is likely to impact the quality of the services provided by IBJ. Regarding IBJ's project, the amounts for investigation and case preparation have been estimated smaller than the actual expenses. This is mainly due to the fact that each DRC covers two provinces, and receives a number of cases higher than expected. Lawyers need to travel several times for one case, in order to investigate, meet the clients and follow-up on the cases in court. Sometimes more visits are needed than were originally planned.
- In a complementary manner, the hotline enhances the efficiency of IBJ's provision of legal aid services. The hotline is established to facilitate accused or family members to reach IBJ as soon as possible after an arrest, allowing IBJ to provide the fastest possible legal services to suspects. Through the hotline, the families of the suspects/accused are also able to get legal consultation, and case-related clarifications and updates when they already are IBJ clients. The service is helpful and effective to people who live in remote areas as it saves them the cost of travelling to the city where the lawyer is based. The hotline is very helpful for making people understand their legal rights and enabling them to get legal consultations when needed. The hotline is an effective and cheap complement to support the main legal defence service activity.

Impact

- The legal defence activity made a positive impact as intended in the project's specific objectives, notably on the development of a better understanding from justice stakeholders on the necessity to uphold the rights of the accused, of a better compliance with the criminal procedure, and on increasing the quality of the legal aid services provided. The findings below illustrate the multiple impacts of the project.
- Justice stakeholders highly emphasized that IBJ's project had a positive impact on their own work. According to the large majority of court officers and NGO representatives interviewed, IBJ helps the court's work and accelerates the court's processes. Especially when legal representation is mandatory for felony and juvenile cases, they see IBJ as an entity enabling them to obtain a legal aid defence lawyer on time and preventing excessive pretrial detention. Court officers welcome IBJ's project and accept the presence of the organization in the court building or in proximity with the court. Prison officers mentioned that the IBJ lawyer helps them to obtain the final verdicts from the court for the prisoners.
As a result, one of IBJ's main impact on the justice system as a whole is the acceleration of judicial proceedings, which has also far-reaching effect on the length of pretrial and post-trial detention.

To this regard, prison officers and IBJ DRC teams share the view that the cessation of IBJ's legal aid defence services would cause excessive pretrial detention and increase the prison population, resulting in a more serious prison overcrowding. The length of pretrial detention has a tremendous impact on accused people's lives and their families. The success stories in Annex 3 show the different aspects of how IBJ impacts people's existence.

- All six IBJ's clients said that being assisted by legal aid services help people to obtain justice because a lawyer protects them, gathers clearer evidence to present to the judge, argues cases in court based on relevant laws and assists clients to respond to court's questions. Clients have the perception that a lawyer is an impartial element in the court proceedings. With the presence of a lawyer, the clients said that they felt more confident and less threatened. Without a lawyer, they would feel hopeless and worried, they would be charged with more offenses, and would not know the legal process. Some said that they would face pressure from justice stakeholders and local authorities. Similarly, IBJ lawyers recognized that clients are mostly satisfied with the court's decision – regardless of the outcome - when they have a lawyer. Furthermore, people have the perception that IBJ lawyers are honest because they do not charge a fee for their services.
- One of the strongest impact of the project in terms of behaviour change lies in the fact that local justice stakeholders understand the role of a legal aid defence lawyer and prefer when there is a lawyer to represent the cases. Out of the eight court officer interviewed, only one court clerk mentioned that there were no great differences between cases with a lawyer and without a lawyer. As a matter of fact, all other justice stakeholders interviewed equally put forward the following reasons of their preference for the presence of a lawyer (from the most mentioned to the least mentioned):
 - In the view of court officers, a lawyer facilitates the communication with accused people by explaining the procedure and enabling them to understand their rights. As a result, people feel more confident to speak in court and it gives the impression to court officers that they can more easily work with accused people. Five law enforcement officers underlined that lawyers can better argue in court and are very helpful for accused people who have no legal knowledge.
 - The presence of a lawyer impacts the compliance of the court with the legal procedure. When there is a lawyer, the court better follows the criminal procedure and pays more attention to the case. This impact is also noticed by NGO representatives. They observed that when there is a lawyer, the court doesn't misuse its powers, performs better, and judges are more careful to the case. Justice stakeholders also referred to better compliance with the criminal procedure in terms of shorter delays in the cases and faster implementation of the court processes. The same view was also expressed by the police officers interviewed. In particular, they see the presence of a lawyer during the suspect's interrogation as a bulwark against allegations of torture. In their view, the role of the lawyer pertains to that of a neutral third party which is likely to prevent false allegations against them. Without a lawyer, there would be no proof that the police did not torture the suspect to obtain a confession. One prison officer also stressed that the presence of a lawyer helps compliance with the law.
 - When there is a lawyer to defend the case, there is an impact on the outcome of the case. Justice stakeholders have the feeling that the presence of a lawyer makes their decision fairer and more balanced (as opposed to cases where solely the prosecution's side is engaged in the legal debates in absence of legal representation on the defence's side). One respondent also mentioned that a lawyer can request reduced sentences. Only two respondents shared the perception that the presence of a lawyer does not impact the outcome of the case, with one saying that the outcomes depends on the facts and evidence presented in court and one saying that it depends on the judge's discretion.

- Finally, justice stakeholders acknowledged that the being represented by a lawyer helps to collect evidence, and to find information and witnesses for the case.

It is worth noting that the majority of stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed assess that IBJ legal aid defence lawyers bring more impartiality, transparency and fairness in the criminal proceedings.

- Through IBJ's project, it is possible to observe a change in people's view on legal aid services and on the overall justice system. According to the beneficiaries and stakeholders interviewed, people have a better knowledge of what a lawyer is, and they turn to lawyers to request their services. It reveals that people have more trust in the criminal justice system. While before mistrust was predominant, people are now progressively seeing the importance of having lawyers and seek legal aid services and legal consultations. As a matter of fact, more and more cases are referred to IBJ, including a growing number of cases referred by the community. Similarly, court officers, police and local authorities increasingly refer cases to IBJ lawyers and cooperate with IBJ staff members. As a result, IBJ's existence and services are known to more and more people.

Sustainability

- The physical presence of IBJ's DRCs at the local level durably builds a legal aid culture. By representing cases, IBJ makes local justice stakeholders and people from the community aware of the availability and of the importance of legal aid defence services. It creates a high demand for legal aid services, which has the potential to create more momentum at the national level to develop legal aid services after completion of the project.
- On the other hand, and contrary to activity building knowledge and capacities of beneficiaries and stakeholders, providing legal aid services is an activity which bears the risk to leave many cases pending if funding comes to an end. If the funding support comes to an end for concerned NGOs, service providers could not be maintained in provinces under the current state of the legal aid system in Cambodia. To date, the maintenance of legal aid services at the local level and the sustainability of NGO-led efforts rely on external funding sources.

Lessons learned

- All interviewees recognized in a common voice that the local presence of lawyer is very important for poor people. Several justice stakeholders see an improvement in the legal aid system compared to few years ago because of the presence of IBJ legal aid defence lawyer in their province, while before there were no legal defenders. The presence of legal aid defence services benefits to all sides involved by the project: accused people, the community, NGO partners, local authorities, and court and law enforcement officers in the areas covered by IBJ.
- If IBJ closes, indigent accused people, court and law enforcement officers, local authorities, and NGOs will have no place to refer cases, obtain legal advice, and get more legal knowledge. There will be an increasing caseload in the court, and many cases will be stuck when legal representation is mandatory in absence of a lawyer permanently based in the province. The shortage of legal aid lawyers will also impact the length of pretrial detention and negatively impact prisons' overcrowding.

- The presence of legal aid defence lawyers proves to strengthen justice stakeholders' compliance with the law and the criminal procedure. It has a dissuasive effect on justice stakeholders: court and police officers are more careful when there is a lawyer to represent the case. Furthermore, the presence of legal aid defence lawyers enhance community people's trust in the formal justice system. IBJ lawyers assist poor people in court by avoiding serious punishment being imposed on them, by requesting reduced sentences, by guaranteeing the equal application of the law and bringing justice and confidence for the people. Without a legal aid defence lawyer, people would be disenfranchised of their rights and would have nowhere to turn to for help.

Recommendations

- All respondents have expressed their wish to see IBJ continuing to provide legal aid services. Due to the current lack of lawyers, and particularly legal aid lawyers, it is of utmost importance to maintain the availability of legal aid services at the local level in order to guarantee that accused people's rights are upheld and to progress towards a better functioning of the justice system. As presented in the findings above, the presence of a legal aid lawyer has a positive impact on justice stakeholders' compliance with the criminal procedure.
- The hotline is really important to support the legal defence services and it is a strong element supporting this activity. The existing legal aid hotline is to be better supported in order to achieve national coverage at a lower cost. Possible Corporate Social Responsibility programs could be accessed to support legal aid activities including legal aid hotline.
- In front of the increasing demand for legal aid services and the increasing number of cases received by IBJ lawyers, providing one legal aid lawyer per province would be more in appropriateness with the current needs expressed by stakeholders and target groups. It is very clear that the IBJ legal aid defence services are needed and should be expanded. Donors should consider to continue funding legal aid services for indigent people, especially in rural areas; while the RGC should involve with IBJ to maintain its services.
- The evaluator assessed respondents' views on how legal aid services should be provided and maintained:
 - 72% of the respondents are of the view that legal aid services should be maintained by the Government. When asked how legal aid services should be provided, 15 respondents from all the categories interviewed expressed their preference for the Government to directly support lawyers to provide legal aid services. Two prison and police officers did not specify but affirmed that the Government should allocate money to support legal aid services.
 - On the other hand, some respondents agree that it is a governmental responsibility to be implemented through the BAKC. Nevertheless, only 14 respondents agree that the BAKC should be responsible to maintain legal aid services. It is very important to note that none of the community members (IBJ clients and CLA participants) were familiar with what the BAKC was. The view that the BAKC should be responsible for legal aid in Cambodia is predominantly shared by justice stakeholders⁴. Nine respondents emphasized that currently, the BAKC is far from the provinces and the process to request and obtain a legal

⁴ Amongst the respondents who think the BAKC is responsible for legal aid: three police and prison officers, one NGO representative, six court officers and four IBJ legal staff.

aid lawyer takes time. Respondents showed their preference for having legal aid lawyers based at the local level and suggested that the BAKC follows this model. They also raised that the BAKC could set up a requirement for each of its members to represent a determined number of cases per year for indigent people in all provinces. One law enforcement officer said that lawyers should be introduced in prison, police stations, and courts in order to be easily referred cases.

- Overall, it is clear that respondents wish legal aid services to be provided with support of the Government in order to ensure the establishment of a more systematic and sustainable national legal aid system.

5.4. Findings on Legal Awareness activities: CLA & PLA

The legal awareness activities were evaluated through interviews with CLA participants and prison officials who knew about IBJ's PLA sessions.

Ten participants to the CLA sessions were interviewed. One was between 35 and 45 year-old, two between 46 and 55 year-old, five between 56 and 65 year-old, and two were more than 65 year-old. Nine respondents were local authorities and one was a community member. 70% of the respondents were earning less than 40 USD per month and 30% between 41 USD and 100 USD. Most of them had received low education, 40% had attended primary school, 20% had completed primary school, 20% had attended secondary school and 20% had completed secondary school. Two of the three prison officials interviewed had attended a PLA session conducted by IBJ. Amongst all the other respondents, 26% knew about IBJ's CLA program⁵.

Relevance

- The need for legal dissemination was underlying in most respondents' answers. Even though some of the respondents assessed there has been an improvement in people's knowledge over the past years, they still see a general lack of legal knowledge and recognize room for improvement.

When asked what would be necessary to improve the current legal aid system, 54% of the respondents have identified the need for more legal dissemination⁶.

- The legal awareness participants interviewed requested IBJ to conduct more legal awareness sessions. One local authority said that he would also need a summary of the offenses for the community. The police officers and local authorities interviewed draw attention to the need for more legal dissemination in remote and rural areas.
- The legal awareness sessions are of particular importance for local authorities who are the primary points of contact for people when a problem happens in the community. They also acknowledge their lack of legal knowledge and skills to properly advice people on legal issues and they find that the legal awareness program is relevant for their work and tasks. This view is also shared by prison authorities. They acknowledge the relevance of PLA sessions to build the skills of prison officers to understand the law and apply this increased knowledge in their

⁵ Three prison and police officers, two NGO representatives, and two court officers.

⁶ 13% were CLA participants, 13% were court officers, 10% were IBJ staff, 8% were police and prison officers, 8% were IBJ clients, and 2% were NGO representatives.

professional duties. Prison chiefs support IBJ's activity and ease IBJ lawyers' access to the prisoners in order to organize the PLA sessions.

Effectiveness

- In order to ensure that CLA's planned output are delivered to the target groups, the IBJ DRC teams choose the location depending on where most criminal offenses occur and where no CLA session has been conducted yet. Sometimes, they also consider requests from partner NGOs to conduct legal awareness sessions in a given location where they assess a need from the community.
- As indicated in the Pre-CLA tests that IBJ runs to evaluate people's legal knowledge before a CLA session, people do not have legal knowledge and do not know what courts, lawyers, or prosecutors are. For example, only 20% of the CLA participants interviewed knew what a lawyer was before the CLA sessions, 10% had heard and knew vaguely, 40% had never heard about what a lawyer was (30% did not answer to this question). After having attended a CLA session, 80% of the respondents can explain what a lawyer is. Also, after having attended a CLA session, all respondents were able to explain how to contact a lawyer if they need one. Most of them answered that they would go to IBJ's office or call the hotline number. This shows that, after a CLA session, people effectively have the understanding of how legal services would help them and know where to go to seek them.
- CLA sessions have proved effective in raising people's knowledge. After having attended a CLA session, people retain the knowledge shared during the session. Indeed, 80% of the participants were able to mention three points they remembered from the CLA session. One respondent could mention two points, and one only one point. For all ten, their answers were relevant to the contents of the CLA session. Respondents mentioned the following points:
 - Six remembered aspects relevant to IBJ's mission, namely that IBJ provides legal aid services to poor accused people, their right to have a lawyer, and how to contact IBJ.
 - Five participants referred to the reduction of offenses, as people in the community understand what offenses are thanks to the explanations of the lawyer.
 - Four mentioned specific offenses (one referred to conflict/legal issues in families, one referred to domestic violence, drug, theft, robbery and trafficking, one referred to marriage law and domestic violence law, and one respondent referred to insult).
 - Three participants mentioned aspects relevant to the criminal procedure (one referred to the possibility of negotiations before going to court, one referred to the right to complaint against any person, and one referred to the prohibition of the use of force during interrogation).
 - Two participants mentioned aspects relevant to the role of a lawyer (one said that a lawyer can argue for justice in court and one said that a lawyer can request a reduced sentence to the judge).
- As the majority of respondents were local authorities, it appears that the CLA activity has empowered them with legal knowledge and built their skills to better advice people on legal issues. Similar feedback was provided by prison authorities regarding prisoners.

Efficiency

- The CLA sessions were designed in an efficient way as the IBJ legal teams go directly to local communities and organize the sessions in a place accessible to community members who do not have the means to travel to distant places.
- The CLA sessions also bring about an important multiplier effect which enables IBJ to reach a number of beneficiaries larger than the actual number of participants while it spends the costs of one activity only. As a matter of fact, IBJ shares leaflets on legal rights with the participants that they can distribute to other members of the community. As IBJ reinforces people's knowledge and skills, community members themselves are made better able to refer their acquaintance to IBJ if they encounter a legal problem.
- CLA sessions are also supplemented by two activities duplicating its effects at a lesser cost, namely the radio rights awareness program and the legal hotline. The radio program ensures IBJ a large coverage when disseminating information. Advertised through the CLA sessions and the radio programs, the hotline also enables IBJ to directly provide legal information to people at the lowest cost.
- In terms of scheduling of the CLA sessions on time with regards to the project's work plan, IBJ never met any difficulty. IBJ lawyers have good relationships with Commune and Village Chiefs who welcome the activity and never object to having a session conducted within their jurisdiction. At the local level, IBJ teams never met substantial delays to implement the CLA sessions outside of those caused by external factors such as during the rainy season where it is difficult to reach remote communities.

Impact

- 41% of all respondents consider there has been an improvement in people's understanding of legal aid services and legal rights in comparison to few years ago. In general, respondents just mentioned that people understand more the laws but did not backed their assessment with specific examples. Yet, two police officers noticed that people who are arrested ask more questions than before, which they see as a sign showing they are more aware of their rights and of the legal procedure.
- One of the most direct impact of IBJ's CLA and PLA sessions lies in the fact that more cases are referred to IBJ from both the community, the accused people/prisoners themselves, local authorities and prison officials. In particular, the impact is distinguishable on the relationships between IBJ and prison authorities. One prison chief said that PLA sessions enable the IBJ lawyer and himself to know each other. The two prison chiefs interviewed affirmed that they know where to refer cases thanks to the PLA session. As a matter of fact, PLA sessions enable IBJ lawyers and prison officers to build closer relationships and work together.
- It stems from the answers of participants to awareness sessions that legal dissemination reduces violence and conflicts.
90% of the respondents noticed a change in the community as a result of the CLA session. Five referred to a decrease of violence in the community and of the number of offenses. For three respondents, the change resides in people's increased legal knowledge.
A similar impact was observed by prison chiefs after a PLA was conducted: they noticed that, as prisoners and prison guards understand more about the law, it makes it easier for the prison

officials to manage and control the prisoners because the lawyers explain what prisoners and prison guards can do or cannot do. Prison officers have the perception that, thanks to the PLA session, they acquired a better understanding of the law which, in turns, make them feel that the actions or decisions they take through the exercise of their duty are more legitimately grounded in the law. As a result, they feel that the prison performs better. For instance, one prison chief mentioned that he often puts in practice the points discussed during the PLA sessions by explaining wrong conducts to prisoners and informing them they would receive warnings and be brought to the court to consider additional punishment. One mentioned that PLA sessions reduce problems and violence in the prison.

- It seems that CLA sessions tightened the links between the local authorities and the citizens. Local authorities are the primo-advisers people turn to if they have a problem. This is what confirmed the member of the community interviewed on the impact of the CLA. The respondent from the community answered that she would go to the village or sangkat chief and ask them to call a lawyer if she, one relative or one friend would be arrested by the police. She would refer to the same local authorities if she needs information on justice or on her rights.
- On the same line, CLA sessions have positively strengthened the capacities of local authorities to deal with disputes. When asked what they would do if members of the community were arrested by the police and would ask them help, 44% of the local authorities interviewed answered they would advise people to contact a lawyer, with 22% specifying that they would contact the IBJ lawyer themselves and the same percentage affirming that they would give the number of the IBJ lawyer to the people. 33% said they would discuss with the police, and 11% said that they would help people to fill some documents. These answers show that local authorities know what the actions they can take to properly advise people are. Similarly, when asked what they would do if people ask them information on their rights, 33% answered that they would provide themselves legal information and the same percentage said that, in case people want to know more, they would refer them to a lawyer. 22% said that they would try to facilitate the case themselves, 11% would refer people to the sangkat level and 11% would call the IBJ lawyer for advice and then let people decide which action they want to take next. Out of the nine local authorities interviewed, one answered that he would refer people to the Ministry of Justice's Justice Service Centre.

Sustainability

- The program is sustainable since the participants continue to disseminate the information and legal knowledge to other people, which duplicates the effects of the legal awareness activities. When building the skills and knowledge of the people, IBJ ensures that they can use those skills and exercise their rights in daily situations so as to support the objective of the project. At the end of legal awareness sessions, IBJ lawyers distribute to community members leaflets on their legal rights. They can share these with their relatives or acquaintances. Two local authorities spontaneously mentioned that they continued to disseminate legal knowledge within the community.

The CLA activity enables community members to continue to disseminate legal knowledge by themselves. Furthermore, IBJ's strategy to invite local authorities turns them into a reliable chain in the efforts to increase legal awareness since they are the first ones people from the community will turn to when seeking legal advice.

- The PLA sessions are particularly sustainable to the extent that IBJ is able to include prison officials in its program⁷. By increasing prison officials' legal knowledge, IBJ dually focuses on the persons holding the responsibilities and who have a permanent presence in the prison. As a result, the prospect that they will better perform their duties in the future and in compliance with the law is going to benefit to all prisoners. As it was declared by one respondent, PLA sessions also enable prison chiefs to continue to disseminate information to their personnel.

Lessons learned

- IBJ's work benefits to the local authorities by providing them with legal knowledge and enabling them to refer cases to a lawyer or to settle minor cases themselves. As a matter of fact, if an arrest would occur in the concerned area, most participants said that they would first go to the Village or Sangkat Chiefs, and then call lawyers or go to police to find out what the problem is. This reinforces the benefits of the CLA program for the community as their local authorities are better able to inform and advise them when they face a dispute or a legal issue.

Recommendations

- More legal dissemination sessions should be provided in remote areas. One IBJ lawyer suggested to hold refreshment sessions three months after a CLA was conducted in order to enable people to reinforce their knowledge and to better spread information to others. The diversification of the means to provide legal dissemination could also be deepened. For instance, IBJ could expand its radio awareness programs to reach a larger audience (at a lesser cost), or distribute posters in rural areas.
- IBJ should continue to be mindful to provide legal information which can be understood by the people, who are mostly illiterate and who may have difficulties to understand the messages provided during the sessions, especially when CLA sessions target ethnic minority people. Lawyers should continue to use simple vocabulary and illustrate their purpose with examples drawn from people's daily lives. This is also the case for prisoners.

5.5. Findings on Roundtable discussions

Four out of the six prison and police officers interviewed attended a roundtable discussion. Two NGO partners and one local authority have also participated to a discussion and provided feedback on the event.

Relevance

- All respondents recognize that roundtable discussions respond well to their actual work and to their need to improve the skills they have to apply over the course of their professional duties. Roundtable participants appreciate the presence of a guest speaker from the national level to share legal information with them.

⁷ Initially, the activity was targeting prisoners only. However, after the first sessions were conducted from July 2014, the prison officials requested IBJ to extend them to prison guards. IBJ obtained an authorization letter from the GDP to do so and conducted a first set of sessions for prison officials in November and December 2014.

- They are able to take the opportunity to discuss obstacles to access to justice and steps to improve the justice system by providing recommendations to improve the justice system and have a properly functioning legal aid system at the local level.
- One of the main objectives of IBJ's roundtable discussions is to build trusting relationships with key justice sector stakeholders, which is recognized as relevant by the stakeholders. The prison and police officers, the NGO representatives and the local authority said that roundtable discussions help in their work. The local authority specified that roundtables also help in the relationship between justice stakeholders and the community. He was able to give examples (as detailed below).
- Justice stakeholders often asked IBJ to conduct more roundtable events in their area, which shows the relevance of this activity.

Effectiveness

- Roundtable discussions have also been an effective way for IBJ to share information on the organization's work and to indicate to justice stakeholders that they can refer cases to the IBJ lawyer working in their area.
- Roundtable discussions enabled IBJ to strengthen the capacities of local justice stakeholders by increasing their legal knowledge on criminal law and fair trial standards. As a matter of fact, respondents to the evaluation were able to mention relevant information they obtained during the roundtable discussion. 71% of the respondents who attended a roundtable discussion were able to detail at least three points they found interesting and/or relevant to their daily practice. 29% were able to mention two points. All respondents were able to provide examples of how the roundtable discussion had helped them with their work.
- On the whole, respondents underlined that, as a result of the roundtable discussion, they know where to refer cases of indigent accused persons who need a lawyer.
- Four respondents referred to aspects related to fair trial standards and rights of the accused (right to meet a lawyer for 30 minutes, conditions in prison, arrest, search and interrogation).
- Three respondents affirmed they gained more knowledge on the law, which they understand better as a result of the roundtable discussion. Unclear points in the laws are clarified by IBJ and by the guest speaker and, as a result, participants feel more legitimate to apply the laws without imposing pressure or committing torture on the accused people. The two NGO workers reported that the roundtable discussion had clarified for them the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement officers.
- Three respondents explained that roundtable discussions enhance the cooperation between each other.
- Roundtable discussions have proved effective as 57% respondents said that they put in practice some points which were discussed during the roundtable, and 43% other said they disseminated information to their colleagues on legal aid lawyers and on proper implementation of the law.

- Several respondents noticed that there was more collaboration between the different categories of stakeholders as a result of a roundtable discussion, which is an important component of the specific objective pursued by the project. They gave the following examples:
 - Two respondents said that the relationship with other justice stakeholders got better after the roundtable discussion. Two respondents specifically referred to the strengthening of their relationship with the IBJ lawyer and explained that they now have a place to refer the cases to, after having informed the accused about the availability of legal aid services. The prison authorities have underlined that the roundtable discussion had enabled them and the IBJ lawyer to get to know each other and had strengthened their relationship. From IBJ lawyers' perspective, one has also underlined that roundtable discussions enable the police to understand the role of lawyers.
 - The local authority who attended one roundtable said that there is was a change in the relationship with other justice stakeholders as a result of the discussion. The police and the court understand the roles of the police and commune council members as justice officers. The respondent observed that, after the roundtable discussion, commune council members and police officers are more cooperative.
 - The NGO workers noticed that their relationship with court officers got better in the aftermath of the roundtable discussion. They said they cooperate better.

Efficiency

- In line with the other findings on IBJ's local approach, the roundtable discussions' efficiency lies in the fact that they are organized at the local level, bringing together key justice stakeholders within the area where they work on a daily basis.
- The efficiency of the roundtable discussions lies also in the mobilization of key resource persons from the national level. IBJ covers the travel expenses of the latter to the province, hence enabling 20 to 25 justice stakeholders at the local level to benefit from their intervention. It is also noticeable that the presence of a national speaker draws participants' attention and make them more attentive during the roundtable discussions. This shows that IBJ endeavours to maximize the results obtained from this activity, by using the most appropriate resources in qualitative terms.

Impact

- In the aftermath of a roundtable discussion, instances of better compliance with criminal procedure and upholding of the rights of the accused have been observed. For instance, one IBJ lawyer assistant acknowledged that when police officers have attended roundtable discussions, they inform people of their rights. This information was confirmed by one respondent from the police. One IBJ lawyer also referred to the fact that the police can better prepare cases for the court and write the police records.
- One impact of the roundtable discussion is to enable IBJ to strengthen its relationships with the police. Police officers are a key chain in the criminal proceedings and have a crucial role to play to ensure that the fundamental legal rights of the suspect are upheld and that people have an early access to legal counsel. However, they are the stakeholders with whom IBJ have more difficulties to cooperate with. Through roundtable discussions, police officers are able to meet

the IBJ lawyer and to understand his role. It creates a primary connection with the legal aid organization. During roundtable discussions, they are also offered an opportunity to see how lawyers can help them in their work, which constitutes an incentive for them to cooperate with IBJ.

Sustainability

- The police said they very often apply the learnings from the roundtable discussion in their daily work, using IBJ posters in police stations and disseminating information to the community.
- In the same line with legal awareness sessions, roundtable discussions are sustainable to the extent that they consist in a transfer of knowledge to the concerned stakeholders. After completion of the project, stakeholders are likely to retain the knowledge and skills shared with them during the roundtable session. The organization of roundtable discussions at the local level, where IBJ's DRCs are also based, reinforces the sustainability of the activity as justice stakeholders can then contact the IBJ lawyer based in their province for further discussion. On the other hand, the physical and permanent presence of the IBJ lawyer through the establishment of DRCs reminds them of the contents of the roundtable.

Lessons learned

- One or two roundtables per province within a year might not be enough to provide information to cover various topics in relation to legal rights and criminal procedure. Law enforcement officers and justice stakeholders request to have more roundtable sessions as they assess that they need to deepen and strengthen their knowledge and skills.

Recommendations

- Roundtable discussions gathering police officers, court officers, prison officers, and other governmental agencies in order to raise and resolve issues related to the local administration of justice should be held more regularly and frequently.
- Roundtable meetings should also continue to be used as a way to maintain a close cooperation amongst justice stakeholders and IBJ through case referrals and better compliance with the law.

5.6. Legal training

The six IBJ staff interviewed (three lawyers and three lawyer assistants) provided information on the legal training activity. It was also assessed through the feedback justice stakeholders and target groups provided on the IBJ lawyers.

Relevance

- Legal trainings are an important element of IBJ's project in order to ensure the quality of the legal aid services provided, make the organization gain a good reputation and appear as trustworthy in the eyes of the target groups and of the justice stakeholders. To this regard, this activity is designed and implemented in a way which is relevant for the project's larger target groups and stakeholders, not only for the training participants.

- Moreover, all the training participants interviewed said that IBJ's training program is directly helpful in their work: they gain more practical skills, knowledge and experience to provide high quality legal aid services.

Effectiveness

- All IBJ staff underlined that the training contents were applicable to their work. However, one respondent nuanced this assertion by distinguishing between Cambodian and international trainers. When the trainer is Cambodian, the concerned IBJ lawyer relates more to the training and considers the training to be more effective. Some information shared by foreign trainers are not always applicable to her work in the Cambodia context. Overall, it stems from the respondents' answers that, for substantive law issues, they prefer to have a Cambodian trainer. Otherwise, for training on techniques and skills buildings, they are of the view that having a foreign trainer is more effective.
- The skills of IBJ lawyers were also recognized by the local court officers who consider that they have strong skills and personal competencies. 87% of the court officers interviewed said that there was an improvement in the availability and in the quality of the legal aid services compared to a couple of years ago. They mentioned that the quality and the skills of the legal aid lawyers were better. Some referred to the IBJ lawyers' skills in working with their clients and in gathering information and evidence to present in court, thus enabling judges to make a fair decision. In addition, all the clients interviewed were satisfied with the work of IBJ lawyers. The quality of the legal services provided by IBJ is corroborated by the fact that, for the whole IBJ programme, lawyers are able to obtain positive outcomes⁸ in an average 60% of the closed cases. It appears that IBJ legal teams' skills are strongly acknowledged by justice stakeholders and project beneficiaries who consider IBJ staff has a strong commitment and is responsible in the implementation of their tasks.

Efficiency

- The efficiency of the legal training activity lies in the human resources mobilized to conduct the training sessions. Most part of the time, IBJ looks for a foreigner having a recognized experience in related fields to train its legal personnel. Thanks to its network with partner organizations and eminent legal professionals working in Cambodia, IBJ is not required to provide a compensation to benefit from the involvement of experienced trainers, which enhances the efficiency of the legal training activity. As a result, IBJ is able to benefit from valuable human resources to train its lawyers (international lawyers and experts, including some working at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia). For domestic trainers, IBJ provides a small stipend covering per diems.
- As IBJ relies on voluntary contributions from experienced legal professionals to hold its training sessions, the organization is dependent on their own schedule. It caused delays for one training event over the life-span of the project, which compelled IBJ to request a no-cost extension for the second year of the grant supported by CDF.

⁸ IBJ defines positive outcomes as acquittals, dismissals or cases dropped, and reduced sentences.

Impact

- IBJ lawyers also see the legal training sessions as an opportunity to discuss amongst themselves, share their own knowledge and experience, and learn from each other. This is a positive impact of the training sessions, which also reinforce their bond with, and their sense of belonging to, the organization.
- Legal trainings reinforce IBJ legal teams' capacities to apply Cambodian and international law fair trial standards for a better protection of the rights of the accused.
- Legal trainings ensure the quality of the legal aid services provided by IBJ. The better the lawyers' quality is, the more the project's beneficiaries will trust the organization. The impact is that more people turn to IBJ as the latter has a strong reputation.

Sustainability

- The training program is sustainable after the program completion and positively impacts the justice system as it builds the skills and knowledge of legal practitioners. They will retain these skills as long as they continue to exercise a legal profession, even if it is outside of a legal aid context. The legal training activity has sustainable effects on the performance of the judicial system as a whole, with the development of a group of well-trained defence lawyers capable of driving change in the justice system.

Lessons learned

- The choice of the human resources which are the most appropriate to conduct the legal training activity can have a positive or negative effect on the efficiency of this activity. One lawyer has nuanced the efficiency of the training when the trainers were foreigner, in terms of actual possibility for the lawyers to implement the learnings in the context of the judicial system in Cambodia. On the contrary, when trainers are Khmer, participants see the training as helpful to discuss the substantive laws to apply through their work. But overall, the IBJ staff interviewed asserted that it was good to share knowledge and experience from other countries. The expert selected to be the trainer needs to know the legal and judicial system of Cambodia, as well as the current state of the justice system. Otherwise, lawyers might not relate to the training or feel that they cannot use the contents of the training session.
- Both lawyers and lawyer assistants would prefer to have more training sessions. They expressed the importance of maintain training sessions and gaining practical skills to apply in their daily work for the benefits of the clients.

Recommendations

- The legal training improves legal professionals' knowledge in providing services to their clients. Lawyers with good skills and experiences can build gain trust from their clients. The training should be expanded for enhancing the impact of the legal training sessions on the overall performance of the judicial system since the trainees can use their knowledge and skills after the program ended. IBJ's training activities should be more integrated with those of the BAKC.
- IBJ lawyers and lawyer assistants need more targeted training on advocacy skills, other related skills and legal knowledge of the new codes or laws passed.

5.7. Gender Issues

- IBJ develops its program with consideration of gender-related issues. IBJ has 39 staff members in nine offices, 11 lawyers (four females), 11 lawyer assistants (no female), nine program staff (six females), and eight office assistants (seven females). In total, 17 of the 39 IBJ personnel (44%) are women. More particularly, the project reaches a good ratio man-woman since, firstly, it is difficult to recruit female lawyers and, secondly, female staff in the provinces.
- Furthermore, IBJ implements its program activities with attention given to gender-balance issues. In average, half of the CLA participants are women which reflects the gender-balance in the overall population⁹. Regarding the other activities, an average of 10% of women participated in PLA or roundtable discussions, or were IBJ clients. As a matter of fact, there are less women exercising a profession in the legal or judicial sector and female accused persons represent about 8% of the total prison population¹⁰.
- Regarding beneficiaries of legal aid services, IBJ and other NGOs cooperate to prioritize the cases of women. This is the case with Licadho, under their Adopt a Prison project for which IBJ represents women defendants upon referral from Licadho.

⁹ According to Word Bank's data between 2010 and 2014, 51.2% of the total population are women. Accessed on 22 July 2015 at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS>

¹⁰ According to the General Department of Prisons data on the total number of detainees as of July 15, 2015. Accessed at <http://prison.interior.gov.kh/en/about-prisons/statistics-of-detainees>

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

CONSULTANCY FOR PROJECT FINAL EVALUATION IBJ CAMBODIA

Consultancy Assignment: End of Project External Evaluation

Name of Projects: Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia

Location/s: Cambodia (Phnom Penh, Takeo, Pursat, Prey Veng, Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Kampong Thom provinces)

Duration of the Project to Evaluate: Three-year projects (February 2012 to May 2015)

Duration of the Evaluation Assignment: The evaluation will take place over a period of 5 to 6 weeks (May-June 2015)

I. Evaluation context

1.1. Background of the Project

To date, there is still no comprehensive national legal aid system in Cambodia. Permanent legal aid services are not offered in all the provinces and are mostly provided by non-governmental actors. Due to the lack of legal representation, accused people see many of their legal, fair trial rights violated and they are denied access to justice. Disadvantaged accused people who cannot afford the services of a lawyer often languish in prison for years awaiting trial. Even though the number of incidents is slightly decreasing, investigative torture still occurs to extract confessions from accused people. Those confessions are often used by courts as the basis for conviction. Furthermore, most people do not know their rights. When confronted with criminal proceedings, people are unaware of available resources and how to contact a legal aid lawyer who is able to protect their rights.

IBJ works to guarantee all citizens the right to competent legal representation, the right to be protected from cruel and unusual punishment, and the right to a fair trial. Over the past ten years, IBJ has developed a robust program in Cambodia, providing legal services to poor and marginalized people living in rural areas in 20 of the country's 25 provinces.

With support of the Australian Embassy Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), IBJ has been able to maintain eight provincial Defender Resource Centers (DRCs) which act as model, local legal aid offices. Based in Takeo, Pursat, Prey Veng, Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Kampong Thom provinces, IBJ's eight DRCs also cover their neighboring province (respectively Kampot, Kampong Chhnang, Svay Rieng, Steung Treng, Kratie, Pailin, Oddear Meanchey and Stung Treng). The project also supported IBJ's administrative and legal staff working at the headquarters in Phnom Penh, with legal aid lawyers covering also the adjacent provinces of Kandal and Kampong Speu.

IBJ's project *Making Legal Aid Work in Cambodia* was supported by DFAT for three years from February 2012 to May 2015, with a total budget of 207,200 USD. The project *Achieving Comprehensive Legal Aid in Cambodia* started in December 2012 to complement and extend the previous one with a three-year budget of 900,000 USD. Both projects aim to achieve the following objectives:

IBJ's **overall objective** is to ensure enhanced delivery of justice and rule of law, particularly at the local level, by building and strengthening key foundations of an effective justice sector: trained and

accountable justice officials, effective legal aid providers, and citizens who are knowledgeable of their rights and responsibilities.

Specific objectives:

Objective 1: To provide high quality legal aid services to the poorest of the poor, and provide access to legal counsel for the accused as soon as possible upon arrest, working to eliminate instances of torture or other inhumane treatment and excessive pre-trial detention.

Objective 2: To build capacity and develop collaborative and trusting relationships with key justice sector stakeholders: the local authorities and national officials in the best position to ensure that the human rights of the accused are properly upheld, and the criminal defense lawyers whose role is to provide early and competent legal counsel to the accused.

Objective 3: To inform average individuals of their rights and empower them to exert their rights in the context of any interactions with the Cambodian justice system.

Expected outcomes of the project:

Outcome 1: High quality legal services provided to poor accused people at the earliest stage possible

Outcome 2: Enhanced capacity and improved collaboration and trusting relationships among IBJ lawyers and key justice sector stakeholders

Outcome 3: Improved citizens' awareness about their legal rights

1.2. Motivation of the Evaluation

The final project evaluation will provide IBJ's management team with key information in order to:

- (i) make an overall independent assessment about the past performance of the project, with particular emphasis on the delivery of the objectives and impact of the project;
- (ii) identify key lessons and propose practical recommendations for follow-up actions; and
- (iii) adjust and improve the project for further implementation in the future.

II. Scope of the Evaluation

The External Evaluation of the project will assess the following key evaluation questions.

1) RELEVANCE

- Are the objectives and expected outcomes appropriate for the current social and political context in Cambodia?
- Are the activities of the project designed and implemented in a way that is relevant to the needs of the project's target groups and partners?

2) EFFECTIVENESS

- To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve its expected outcomes?
- To what extent were the project's planned outputs delivered and received by all key stakeholders and target groups?

3) EFFICIENCY

- Have synergies between the project activities been appropriately identified and exploited?
- Is the project cost effective in its overall design?

- Were the resources mobilized (activities and means) the most appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes?

4) IMPACT

- To what extent the project activities have made an impact as intended in the planned objectives?
- What are the positive and/or negative changes (directly or not, intendedly or not) produced by the project?

5) SUSTAINABILITY

- Which processes and system put in place by the project are likely to ensure the sustainability of the expected outcomes of the project after its completion?
- Do the stakeholders/beneficiaries have increased knowledge and skills to continue the activities on their own?

6) ANALYSIS OF GENDER INCLUSION

- How have gender-related issues been considered in project development phase?
- How have gender-related issues been considered in project implementation phase?
- Was it relevant for the project?

III. Methodology desired

The evaluation approach should be developed and implemented as described below. Once the external evaluation consultant has been recruited, the evaluation process will continue through three phases.

3.1. Inception Stage

In the first phase, the evaluator will review and analyze the relevant programming documents, as well as documents shaping the wider strategy & policy framework, including project's interim and annual narrative and financial reports, quantitative and qualitative information gathered through IBJ's Monitoring and Evaluation systems over the course of the project, and relevant information concerning IBJ's strategy in Cambodia.

With the assistance of the IBJ's project team, the evaluator will develop an evaluation plan in order to design the methodology for assessing the project given the time and resources provided.

The evaluator will lead the development of the evaluation's questions and methodologies with support from IBJ. Particularly, the evaluator will need to develop:

- the sub-questions which need to be answered from the key evaluation questions
- the indicators and data which are necessary to answer the questions
- the sources of information and methods of data collection

3.2. Field Phase

The field phase should start once the evaluator and IBJ have finalized the evaluation plan.

IBJ will arrange the meetings for the field visits, according to the selection methodologies and sample decided by the evaluator.

The field work will cover three provinces: Takeo, Rattanakiri and Banteay Meanchey.

3.3. Synthesis phase

This phase is mainly devoted to the preparation of the draft final report.

IBJ will be responsible for the presentation of the statistical information collected during the field visit. The evaluator will be responsible to draft the final report. IBJ will review the final report and answer to potential questions.

The report must match quality standards. The consultants will make sure that their assessment are objective and balanced, affirmations accurate and verifiable, and recommendations realistic.

The Evaluation Report shall include:

- Executive Summary
- Background of the Evaluation
- Objective of the Evaluation
- Methodology of the Evaluation
- Potential limits of the Evaluation
- Evaluation Findings, which include presentation, interpretation and analysis of the evaluation results
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations for project enhancement
- Relevant annexes (Terms of Reference, Calendar of the field visits, List of person interviewed, etc.)

The Evaluation Report will be drafted in English.

IV. Expect Timetable of the Consultancy

The timeframe below represents indicative deadlines for the key steps of the evaluation. Actual schedule may vary and a final mission plan will be developed following the selection of the consultant evaluator.

The evaluation is expected to span over 5 to 6 weeks, from mid-May 2015 to end of June 2015 (excluding national Cambodian public holidays).

Phase 1: Inception of the evaluation:

- Desk Review: 3 days
- Completion of the Evaluation Plan and preparation of the field visits: 1 week

Phase 2: Field visits: 8 to 10 days

Phase 3: Synthesis phase and Report drafting

- Preparation of the statistical findings (IBJ): 3 days
- Initial draft of the evaluation report: 10 days
- Debriefing session to share evaluation's findings with representatives from the Australian Embassy: half a day
- Finalization of the Evaluation Report and submission: 1 week

V. Payment Schedule

The total payment (2,000 USD) will be installed upon delivery of the Final Evaluation Report. This amount does not comprise taxes.

The costs associated to the field visit (travel, per diem and accommodation) will be covered by IBJ.

VI. Application

The qualified candidate will have significant experience in programme evaluation. His/her background and/or areas of expertise will include criminal legal aid, possibly previous work experience as a public defender, and legal rights awareness. The following additional qualifications will be considered as highly desirable:

- Strong understanding of the criminal justice system in Cambodia
- Experience in projects implemented in Cambodia and South-East Asia
- Previous experience in capacity building of legal professionals and management of criminal legal aid offices
- Full working knowledge of English. Knowledge of Khmer is highly desirable.

Annex 2 – Schedule of the field visits

Wednesday 3rd June 2015 – Takeo

6.00	Departure from Phnom Penh to Takeo	
9.00 - 9.45	Meeting with Judge	1 pers.
9.45 - 10.30	Meeting with Court Clerk	1 pers.
10.30 - 11.15	Meeting with IBJ staff	3 pers.
11.15 - 12.00	Meeting with NGO - ADHOC	1 pers.
2.00 – 2.45	Meeting with client in prison	1 pers.
2.45 – 3.30	Meeting with prison chief	1 pers.
3.30 – 4.15	Meeting with the police	1 pers.
4.15 – 5.00	Meeting with IBJ client outside of prison	1 pers.

Thursday 4th June 2015 – Takeo

8.30 - 10.30	Meeting with Commune Chief	4 pers.
10.30	Travel back to Phnom Penh	

Sunday 7th June 2015 – Travel from Phnom Penh to Ratanakiri

5.00 -7.00	Meeting with IBJ staff in the province	3 pers.
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Monday 8th June 2015 – Ratanakiri

8.00 - 9.00	Meeting with NGO - ADHOC	1 pers.
9.00 - 10.00	Meeting with Judge	1 pers.
10.00 - 11.00	Meeting with Prosecutor	1 pers.
11.00 - 12.00	Meeting with Court Clerk	1 pers.
2.00 – 3.00	Meeting with prison chief	1 pers.
3.00 – 4.00	Meeting with client in prison	1 pers.
4.00 – 5.00	Meeting with the police	1 pers.
5.00 – 6.00	Meeting with IBJ client outside of prison	1 pers.

Tuesday 9th June 2015 – Ratanakiri

7.00- 9.30	Meeting with participants to CLA sessions	3 pers.
9.30	Travel from Ratanakiri to Banteay Meanchey	

Wednesday 10th June 2015 – Banteay Meanchey

8.00 - 9.00	Meeting with NGO - ADHOC or LICADHO	1 pers.
9.00 - 10.00	Meeting with Judge	1 pers.
10.00 - 11.00	Meeting with Prosecutor	1 pers.
11.00 - 12.00	Meeting with Court Clerk	1 pers.
2.00 – 3.00	Meeting with prison chief	1 pers.
3.00 – 4.00	Meeting with client in prison	1 pers.

Annex 2 – Schedule of the field visits

4.00 – 5.00	Meeting with the police	1 pers.
5.00 – 6.00	Meeting with IBJ client outside of prison	1 pers.
6.00- 8.00	Meeting with IBJ staff in the province	3 pers.

Thursday 11th June 2015 – Banteay Meanchey

7.00- 9.30	Meeting with participants to CLA sessions	3 pers.
9.30	Travel to PP	

Annex 3 – Success Stories

In order to show its impact, IBJ drew from its caseload emblematic stories where the rights of the accused persons were protected and the cases achieved positive outcomes thanks to the involvement of one of the IBJ lawyers. Success stories provide a clear look in the realities of what IBJ does, and the changes that its work is able to bring to real systems and real people's lives. The following are illustrations of the impact of IBJ's project.

Success Story 1: Released on bail, a father-of-five is enabled to try to support his family in need

June 2014

Mr. Pagna¹¹ lives in a small village, 30 minutes away from Banteay Meanchey city in the north-west corner of Cambodia. His house made of metal sheets stands close to rice fields and small water streams. A father-of-5, he and his wife already had difficulties supporting their family and their daily living. A while ago, Pagna walked on a mine and lost his ability to perform all kinds of work. He mainly relies on fishing and other small jobs to make a living. The land he occupies with his family was lent to them by an owner, understanding their dire situation. But ultimately, they need to pay him back. In these difficult circumstances, Pagna's wife suggested him last February to go up the stream close to their house and try to catch some fish there. Pagna went and used electronic



Mr Pagna and his family in their home in Banteay Meanchey

equipment to provoke an electric shock and get more fish. He knew that such fishing methods were forbidden, but he was ready to take the risk and get a chance to bring back a little bit more money for his family. However, one day, as he was sailing up the stream to go back home, he saw the police waiting for him, probably alerted by some people in the neighborhood.

The police officers arrested Pagna and seized his fishing equipment, boat and motorbike to use them as evidence in the case. One day after his arrest, Pagna was taken to the court and then to the prison to wait for his trial. The court officers informed IBJ about his case. Nop Kunthol, the IBJ lawyer in Banteay Meanchey province, met

with Pagna in prison. Considering the circumstances of the case and her client's

personal situation, Nop Kunthol applied for bail. The first bail application was not successful because of administrative issues within the court. The judge agreed on the first bail application but did not properly fill in the document to transfer to the prosecutor. The latter, noticing the missing parts in the document, did not process the release on bail to avoid mistakes in procedure. Quickly, Nop Kunthol filled a second bail request which was successful.

In total, Pagna spent 4 months in pretrial detention. Those 4 months were very difficult for him. He was really worried about his family, especially given the fact that his wife was about to deliver their fifth child. His wife tried to find support from other organizations. When she heard about IBJ, she was skeptical about whether or not the lawyer's services were free of charge. Now she trusts IBJ and spreads the word about the organization. Unfortunately to date, Pagna has not been able to resume his work, as the court seized his equipment and his vehicle and did not allow him to get new ones. He will try to find a solution to earn some money. He and the IBJ

¹¹ The names were changed to keep the confidentiality on IBJ client's identity. The client and his family consented for their story to be shared.

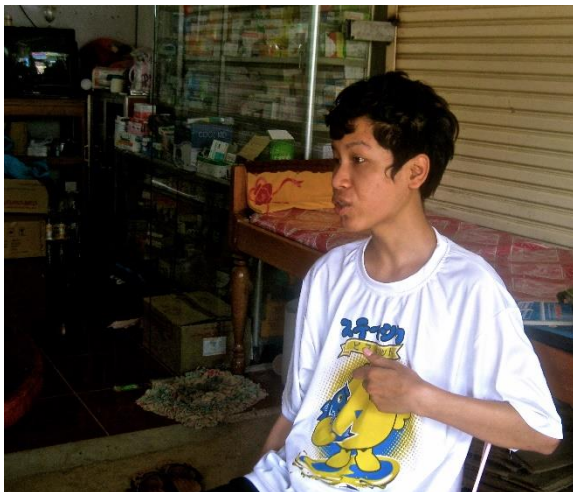
lawyer are now waiting for the trial date, and will do their best to come with a solid defense strategy and avoid him being sentenced to imprisonment and being away from his family again.

Success Story 2: Combatting a coerced confession: Vannak's story

June 2014

At 16 years old, Vannak¹² found himself being interrogated by two police officers – in fear that if he did not provide a confession for crimes he knew nothing about, he would be subjected to violence. The officers did not inform him of his right to a lawyer, and he feared the “large officer” would “punish him by hit[ting] him” if he did not provide the answers they sought. Vannak “was afraid, so [he] did what they said” and ‘confessed’ to serving as an accomplice to intentional damage to property and intentional violence – crimes which, given these particular circumstances, would warrant up to 15 years in prison and over 10 million riel (\$2,000 USD) in fines¹³.

Vannak's friend had been in a fight a few days before police stopped Vannak in an internet shop and arrested him last November. Vannak had heard about the fight, but had no idea that since then his friend had attacked his foe with a knife, injuring the victim and damaging the victim's house, where the attack took place. When police questioned a friend of the perpetrator, he lied and implicated Vannak in the crime. However, the day the attack took place, Vannak had been hanging out with a friend, playing volleyball amongst other thing – so when the police questioned Vannak, he was forced to give a coerced confession for a crime he was unaware even happened.



Vannak sharing his story with us at his home

After six hours in the police post, which is almost two hours from the Battambang/Thailand border-town where Vannak lives with his mother, Vannak was allowed to call his mother, and then was taken to the prison; however, because necessary prison admission forms had not been signed, and it was too late at night to find a judge to do so, Vannak was brought back to the police post where he slept for one night. It was not until his hearing the next morning that the judge informed him he should have a lawyer. The court clerk referred Vannak's mother to IBJ when she arrived at the courthouse, after frantically rushing from their town to the Battambang court – a costly journey that she had to take multiple times during this ordeal.

After meeting with Vannak's mother just a few days after Vannak's arrest, Sothea (the IBJ provincial lawyer in DRC 6) took on Vannak's case in its earliest stages. The investigating judge dismissed the case against Vannak after Sothea presented Vannak's friend who had spent the day with him on the date of the incident as a witness. Sothea further pointed out that there was no evidence indicating Vannak's involvement in this crime.

Although the investigating judge dismissed the charges, the dismissal did not occur until after Vannak spent 15 days inside the prison. He spent his days in a five by five meter cell with 20 other inmates, finding both sleep and food scarce, but able to use his mornings for exercise. Vannak felt he was lucky, as he said new prisoners were often made to stay in the bathrooms until space opened up in the cells; however, because the prison guards took a liking to him, he instead stayed in the overcrowded cell.

Upon his release, Vannak says he was “absolutely happy.” As was his mother, who had spent each day crying because she “knew it was a mistake” and kept wondering “why they [were doing this] to her son.” As a single

¹² The names were changed to keep the confidentiality on IBJ client's identity. The client and his family consented for their story to be shared.

¹³ Article 29, 218, and 414, *Cambodia Criminal Code* (2009).

mother who makes only \$100 per month as the owner of a pharmacy, she was unable to visit him because the prison was too far and she had already spent much of her income traveling to the IBJ office. Her sister attempted to visit but the guards refused to let her in because Vannak had only been in prison for a few days and their policy only allows for visits every 15 days. Needless to say, Vannak's mother was "very happy" upon her young son's release. Now 17, Vannak is in the process of completing 12th grade with hopes of becoming a doctor. Thankfully, false accusations and a coerced confession will no longer hold him back as he completes his education.

