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Gay Pride Week Tackles Stigma and Discrimination

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
May 12, 2009



Participants take part in a role-playing exercise during the launch of Gay Pride Week on May 12, 2009.

USAID helped organize activities for Cambodia's fifth, and so far largest, annual Gay Pride Week on May 12-17.

Coinciding with International Day against Homophobia, Cambodia's Gay Pride Week was designed to raise awareness about health and social issues within the country's gay and lesbian community and reduce stigma and discrimination among the broader population.

At the launch event in Phnom Penh on May 12, USAID Mission Director Erin Soto highlighted USAID's HIV/AIDS and sexual health work with men who have sex with men, a key risk population in Cambodia's HIV epidemic.

"Eliminating stigma is necessary. It requires all of us to examine our own prejudices and fears," said USAID Mission Director Erin Soto. "All Cambodians, regardless of their sexual preferences or orientation, are entitled to quality health care services – it's a matter of human rights and public health."

The week also featured parties, a film and art festival, and a drag show.

USAID partners PSI, FHI and KHANA have collaborated with members of high-risk populations to develop innovative programs to protect them from HIV/AIDS and other sexual-health problems.