

Improving livelihoods of young Cambodians in difficult circumstances through prevention and sustainable reintegration in Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham



Photos: Mith Samlanh

The capital Phnom Penh is an urban hub of local residents, foreigners and investors, as well as attracting young people and children from the countryside that come here to find work to support themselves and maybe also their families. However, the chances of finding a proper job are low, as most of those searching are uneducated and unskilled. As a consequence, many of them end up on the streets, without money, protection or family. Approximately 20,000 homeless children are reported to be living on the streets of Phnom Penh. Kampong Cham, which lies northeast of Phnom Penh on the Mekong River, is not only an intersection for migrants on their way to Phnom Penh, but also a city where many migrants and potential migrants live, as proved in a 2004 and 2007 survey. Life on the streets is extremely hard and dangerous. HIV and other diseases are widespread; drug addiction and sexual abuse are just two of the problems these children face every day.

Main Objectives

The main objective is to improve the reintegration of young people - living under difficult circumstances such as extreme poverty with or without families on the streets or under poor housings conditions - into the society, their culture, their family, public school, vocational training and/or employment.

Main Activities

The current funding has allowed previous Mith Samlanh activities to continue, expand and improve. In Phnom Penh outreach workers meet the children every day providing recreational activities, life skills and non – formal education, trying to encourage them to



leave living and/or working on the streets. For those who decide to leave, Mith Samlanh offers a place to live in its Transitional Home or a safe space in one of its Drop – in – Centres. It also provides young people with the opportunity to participate and graduate in one of the eleven vocational trainings. Mith Samlanh staff assist job and family placement. In Kampong Cham the focus is on the prevention of unsafe migration. In cooperation with the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation, the Youth Centre and outreach workers offer recreational activities, life skills and non – formal education. As in Phnom Penh, the social workers work on family placement, school reintegration, vocational trainings and job placement.

In both cities a home – based production project has been established to improve the income of families, preventing children from working in the streets. The products, such as necklaces, bags, packaging and belts are sold in the Mith Samlanh shops.

Partner

Mith Samlanh is a NGO that has been working with street children since 1994. Their aim is, first of all, to satisfy the basic needs of these children and youngsters and, secondly step, to reintegrate these children into society, the public school system, their culture and their families. Since 2003, DWHH/GAA has been cooperating with Mith Samlanh. As this cooperation has always been unobstructed and successful, both sides have agreed to continue.

Target Group

Children – working or living on the street or of street living families – and their families and communities should be the primary beneficiaries.

Project Period

The current funding started in January 2006 and comes to an end in December 2010. All together the project period totals 60months.

Funding and Budget

The total cost of 1,683,752 Euros is covered by the Commission of the European Union (1,262,814 Euros), Mith Samlanh/Friends International (215,506 Euros) and DWHH/GAA's funding (205,432 Euros).