



DOMESTIC WORKER GROUPS

“ SOCIAL PROTECTION
FOR THE MOST MARGINALISED
INFORMAL WORKERS ”

WHO ARE DOMESTIC WORKERS (DWS)?

Domestic workers are persons who work within an employer’s household. They perform a variety of household services for an individual or a family, from providing care for children and elderly dependents to housekeeping, including cleaning and household maintenance. DWs are currently ineligible for NSSF schemes because they are not yet covered in the Cambodia Labour Law of 1997.



MS VON KIMSRY

**“I AM GOOD BUT I NEED TO
SUPPORT OTHERS WHO NEED TO
SUPPORT AS ME IN THE PAST!”**

says Ms Von Kimsry, 38 years old, a domestic worker taking care of children in a private house. She started working as a DW when she was 18 years old with monthly earnings of only \$25 in 1998. In 2000, she was selected to migrate to work in Malaysia through a labour company. She had many different work experiences as a DW in Malaysia with two different house owners. During her time in Malaysia when she worked with the first family, she faced a number of problems – her passport and legal documents were taken away from her, she did not have enough food to eat, and an inappropriate room for sleeping, and she had a workload with less sleeping time and rest. Her monthly salary was only \$100. After four months she decided to quit her job. She sought help from the company and the Cambodian Embassy to find her another job/employer. With support from company, Kimsry moved to work with the second family. She worked with better conditions with monthly earnings of \$120

for two years. After her contract ended, she decided to come back to Cambodia.

In Cambodia, she worked as a private tailor and house keeper and took care of children. For the first two years she got only \$120 per month, based on gaining experience and job improvement with different employers, and later on she could earn up to between \$250 and \$280. She is now working as a DW with a foreign family with better earnings of up to \$380 per month with a good working conditions and other benefits.

In early 2018, Kimsry met with her friend, also a DW, and her friend told her about IDEA's activity on DWs that aim to support DMs to help each other during difficult times, problems and abuse from house owners. First, she hesitated to participate with this group as her job was already good. She believed that only she can help herself, and solve her problems by herself, and only working hard can help her. But later on she decided to attend one DW meeting. She was excited to meet with other DW friends. She changed her mind and she applied to be a DW member of IDEA. She is now very active to help other DWs. She said she is proud of her work and happy to help society and help other DWs to have a better understanding of the rights of DWs, understand the freedom of participation with associations and unions, and be confident in participating in advocacy work for DWs for

better work conditions and access to social services.

IDEA was established on 30 April May 2005 as an informal workers association to protect and promote the rights and interests of marginalised informal workers in Cambodia. Since being established, IDEA has become the first workers' association actively improving working conditions, livelihoods, and awareness of thousands of informal workers in Cambodia. IDEA has approximately 14,000 members from Phnom Penh and five provinces in Cambodia including tuk-tuk drivers, taxi drivers, street vendors, cart pullers, and domestic workers.

IDEA started its work with domestic workers in November 2012. Currently, IDEA is coordinating a Cambodian Domestic Workers Network (CDWN) which consists of 20 domestic worker groups. So far, 550 female members and 10% of men who work as private drivers, gardeners, and security guards have joined. These 20 groups of DWs in Cambodia have been organized, mobilised, strengthened and empowered to dialogue and negotiate with house owners and government for better access to social protection and decent living conditions. Their local leaders and activists are actively participating in organising, planning, conducting outreach and awareness, and engaging in advocacy and policy influencing.

AS A MEMBER OF IDEA, DWS HAVE BEEN RECEIVING SUPPORT ON:



- Legal services when faced with sexual harassment and abuse by employers



- Access to NSSF's Health Equity Fund (HEF) card for free health care and work-related accidents



- Promoting increased access to social protection benefits



- Capacity building and empowerment to be able to support each other in dealing with both labour and life-related issues



- Support in seeking decent employment



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