Ms. Chheng Danou

Ms. Chheng Danou, 44 years old, has been a Labor Activist for almost 9 years. She is currently the Vice President of the National Independent Federation Textile Union of Cambodia (NIFTUC). She used to be a garment worker for 13 years (1998-2011). She never thought she would become an activist since she was not knowledgeable in advocacy. However, in 2013, she established a union at Yong Sin factory and later became the President of the union. Having seen factory workers face many hardships, she decided to participate in activities to promote and protect labor rights through advocating for support from the government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. As a result of her hard work, the factory working conditions were improved and included securing seniority payment, final salary, indemnity payment, and priority note payment amongst others.

Despite her successes, she has been restricted and harassed by local authorities, powerful people, and her community during her work. Her ability to exercise her rights and achieve her goals as a woman and an activist were constrained by the local authorities and her local community. Moreover, she was prohibited from implementing her activities as a result of individuals telling her that her mission is impossible, bribes, and receiving threats to her personal security.

Garment workers fear losing their jobs, are continuously subjected to restrictions on their freedoms to freely communicate with their colleagues and unionize, prevented from attending meetings without legitimate invitations, and have limited knowledge of their human rights, labor rights, and the law in these areas. These vulnerabilities and fears have steered garment workers to remain silent and endure the hardships. Therefore, she wants to promote and protect the rights of garment workers to obtain the benefits and freedoms they are entitled to as human beings and employees.

She is decisive and committed to protecting and promoting gender equality, especially empowering vulnerable female workers to obtain equal benefits and treatment from their employers.

To her, gender equality means the equality between men and women in labor sectors. Meaning, men and women are entitled to the same job opportunities, the same payment, the same benefits, and the same treatment from the employers.

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