Mrs. Yim Sothy

“Women must encourage their children to get a higher education so that society can develop in the right direction.”

Mrs. Yim Sothy is the President of the Association of Domestic Workers in Cambodia. She grew up in poverty and had to leave education after obtaining her high school degree.

From 2004 until 2007, she was a domestic worker in Thailand. From 2008 until 2012, she worked at a hygiene company. During this time, she was a workers’ representative at the company. In 2013, she started working for the Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA). In 2016, she resigned from IDEA in order to establish a new association of domestic workers.

She was motivated by her own experience as a domestic worker to become a labor rights defender. She first became a domestic worker when she was 14 years old. She experienced terrible working conditions, suffered violence, and was insulted and harassed by her employer. She is determined to encourage workers to join the association so that they can learn about their rights and how best to protect them. She believes it is also important to teach leadership skills so that workers can mobilize locally on issues affecting them.

The association has achieved great victories on behalf of domestic workers, such as getting workers a day off, increased wages and bonus. In addition, the association has assisted domestic workers that work abroad and face difficulties returning home. The association also provides training on gender equality in the workplace and at home.

Mrs. Yim Sothy has faced many challenges as a result of setting up the association. For example, she has been followed and monitored by the authorities when conducting training programs and been spoken to harshly by the authorities. Furthermore, employers often forbid domestic workers from participating in activities organized by the association. To overcome these challenges, she tries to mediate with the authorities and use legal avenues.

As the President of the Association, Mrs. Yim Sothy hopes to recruit more members and representatives to advocate on behalf of domestic workers in negotiations on a national level in order to strengthen workers’ rights. She also plans to urge the government to ratify Convention No. 189 concerning legal protections for domestic workers. She believes that gender equality must be promoted in order to create a fairer society. She thinks that because of society’s mindset, that daughters learn less than sons, this has led to the overwhelming majority of workers in society being female.

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