Ms. Keth Leng

"As women, we must not choose weaknesses, we need to be joyful. If we find ourselves being weak, we must fix it and commit to fixing it."

Ms. Keth Leng, 35 years old, is currently working as an administrative assistant at a factory in Phnom Penh. She finished her schooling at grade 8 in Krang Yov commune, Saang district, Kandal province. She initially joined the factory as a regular worker who did not know about labor rights. In 2002, she joined the union and then became a labor rights activist.

She has since been actively involved in various activities to promote labor rights. She was motivated to continue with her activism because she wanted to solve social problems as well as to help the poor. She has participated in advocacy, raising awareness at factories and relevant ministries, speaking on radio talk shows, negotiating with factories or companies, and coordinating labor cases. There have been many positive outcomes resulting from her efforts, such as improved working conditions, more respect for labor laws, better benefits for female workers and other workers, greater union participation and greater understanding by workers of their rights.

Despite such success, she has also suffered discrimination and feels her efforts have not been valued because she is a woman. Nonetheless, these issues or obstacles have not discouraged or stopped her work as a labor rights activist.

In relation to gender equality, she highlights that, whilst there has been much talking and writing, there remains, in practice, much inequality between men and women in terms of social development and leadership in this country. She emphasizes that it is more important to promote and give women more opportunities. If men and women work together, then conflicts can be reduced.