Ms. Nith Vanyu, 31 years old, is a makeup artist. She has been an LGBTIQ activist in Siem Reap province since 2006. She has been realizing her sexual orientation since she was 12 years old, which became a challenge for her as she was discriminated against and excluded from her family and by society.

She has witnessed the LGBTIQ community be subjected to many challenges such as discrimination from their own families and society and limits placed on their ability to freely advocate. As such, she has always raised the challenges faced by LGBTIQ individuals in relevant events or trainings organized by NGOs. Furthermore, she has built an LGBTIQ network within her community, which currently includes 33 members. She has also been working with her community to raise awareness about health and advocate for the other related rights in addition to LGBTIQ rights such as the rights of people living with HIV, older people, children, men, and women.

Interestingly, she organized an “LGBTIQ Advocacy Forum” in 2016 in Banteay Srey District with the purpose of eliminating discrimination against LGBTIQ individuals in Siem Reap province, which the honorable Banteay Srey District Chief attended. The District Chief wanted to encourage and show support for eliminating discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ individuals in the community, and to bring positive changes to the community.

Being an LGBTIQ activist is difficult because her rights and freedom have been restricted by her family and society. Moreover, she has been stigmatized by her community because of her sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. Importantly, she has not been welcomed by local authorities to advocate for LGBTIQ rights in her community.

She defines gender equality as the equality of all genders, regardless of their sex, gender, skin color, religious belief, social status, or wealth. She has noticed that the law does not yet include rights for LGBTIQ people. Additionally, she believes that gender-based violence may have negative consequences for society such as an increase in migration, an increase in the rate of suicide, and a decline in the human resources of the country. She is positive about the future and will persist in working to eliminate discrimination against LGBTIQ individuals, to help to promote the rights of LGBTIQ individuals, and to transfer knowledge to others through effective advocacy.