



# PINH SOKHOM

## Drug Project Coordinator, Cambodia

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### Overview

Pinh Sokhom is a drug project coordinator with Mith Samlanh in Phnom Penh. Mith Samlanh—which means “friends” in English—started as a program with Friends International in 1994 and later localized as a Cambodian nongovernmental organization in 2002. Sokhom was inspired to become a social service worker in 1998 when he saw the work that the organization was doing with street kids in Phnom Penh.

### Typical tasks and responsibilities

Sokhom is in charge of the Mith Samlanh drug program, which works with street youth and other drug users. The Mith Samlanh drug program provides a continuum of care for drug users. First, it implements a harm reduction program, including the only government-licensed needle and syringe program in the country. It then encourages individuals to voluntarily participate in a detox and rehab program. When participants have completed that program, they can choose from a number of vocational training options that will lead to employment on graduation.

Sokhom still spends much of his time in the field with his outreach team, visiting areas in the city where drug users congregate. He also coordinates all training and staff support for drug program staff.

### Why he loves his job

Sokhom emphasizes that for him, one of the most important things to do is to build trust and ensure confidentiality between social workers

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and the young people they work with, particularly those who are very vulnerable, such as drug users. He says, "I am very proud that I am a part of the Mith Samlanh program... because our mission is to save lives first, to build up their futures, and to help them become productive people in Cambodian society."

*The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance would like to thank Mith Samlanh and Friends International for contributing this profile to the "I am a Social Service Worker" series.*



## **"Improving the workforce. Improving lives."**

### **Who is the social service workforce?**

While capturing any one definition of the social service workforce is challenging, it can be broadly defined to describe a variety of workers – paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental – who staff the social service system and contribute to the care of vulnerable populations. The social service system is comprised of a set of interventions, programs and benefits that are provided by governmental, civil society and community actors to ensure the welfare and protection of socially or economically disadvantaged individuals and families.

### **What is Social Service Workforce Week?**

During this week, advocates will bring attention to and build support for the social service workforce as well as raise awareness about promising workforce strengthening efforts supported by stakeholders around the world. Organized around daily themes focused on areas of practice, the week will allow Alliance members and the public to engage in a dynamic platform of information exchange and advocacy through various forms of social media.

### **What is Mith Samlanh?**

Mith Samlanh was established in August 1994 and is a non-religious, non-political organization working with marginalized children/youth, their families and their communities in Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham. Working with marginalized children/youth, their families and their communities, Mith Samlanh's projects are designed to assist the children's social reintegration (reintegration into their families, the public school system, employment, and their culture). Mith Samlanh was the first project established by Friends-International and became a local Cambodian NGO in 1999.

### **Learn More:**

Learn more about Sokhom and other social service workers! Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SSWWeek and online at [www.socialserviceworkforce.org/SSWWeek](http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/SSWWeek).