



Sorn Sokchea

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Why Social Work?

Growing up in the midst of a civil war, Sokchea observed from a young age some of the darkest aspects of that time: trauma, abuse, neglect, poverty and hunger. A sick child himself, he knew he wanted to be a key person in working toward societal transformation and to fulfill the promise in his name. "Sokchea" was a gift from his mother, a blessing to "be well." Working with children who experience hunger, abuse or neglect, he feels a sense of fulfillment and purpose that refills him despite the challenges inherent in this work. Sokchea has discovered that in feeding others, he has satisfied his own hunger.

Types of support or services and their impact

The social work team at Angkor Hospital for Children works to provide holistic, wrap-around support to the nearly 100 patients in their care at any given time. They not only provide psychological services in the form of counseling and play therapy but they also advocate for child protection and child rights among patients, family and hospital staff. If a family has limited resources, they are able to provide financial support including purchasing food and supplies and assisting with burial and cremation services. They also act as a liaison to community organizations that offer other types of services like legal support, psychiatric-specific counseling, vocational training and home renovations. If they do make a referral, the social work team will assist with transportation. They also help the family understand the medical care necessary for keeping the child well after they are discharged from the hospital and offering follow up support at home as needed.

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In addition to his caseload of 10-20 patients, Sokchea offers technical support to his colleagues; develops, monitors and evaluates programs; and builds and maintains relationships with partner organizations. Of the myriad of tasks and support services for which Sokchea is responsible, he is most passionate about child protection and child rights advocacy because of the tangible impact of intervention in cases involving abuse, neglect, sexual assault and abandonment.

Motivated by the challenge

Sokchea has realized his childhood dreams through social work, a field that cultivates his sense of purpose, passion and achievement and is well-aligned to his talents. He feels a deep sense of pride and accomplishment working with children experiencing hunger, mental illnesses or trauma and the accompanying discrimination facing these populations. Through his work, Sokchea has uncovered and discovered a deep spiritual connection to his patients and his own journey from childhood trauma to recovery.

What helps him succeed as a social worker

Sokchea has drawn heavily on his background in psychology throughout his career. In addition to years of experience in the field upon earning his Bachelor's in Psychology, he has participated in community trainings in social work and mental health services, worked with private social workers, and has now been a medical social worker for over six years.

Sokchea has found that his personal experience has facilitated connection with his patients and emphasizes the importance of grounding social work practice in the introspective processes of self-awareness and healing. To be successful, social workers must know themselves, their own strengths and weaknesses, and work to heal from their own hardships and traumas.



**“Improving the workforce.
Improving lives.”**

Who is the social service workforce?

The social service workforce is defined as being comprised the variety of workers – government and non-government, paid and unpaid – who contribute to the care, support, promotion of rights and empowerment of vulnerable populations served by the social service system.

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, the week is an **opportunity** for Alliance members and the public to engage in discussions and exchange ideas. Daily blogs, worker profiles and resources provide tools and innovative approaches for strengthening the workforce.

What is the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance?

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance works toward a world where a well-planned, well-trained and well-supported social service workforce effectively delivers promising practices that improve the lives of vulnerable populations. Launched in June 2013, the mission of the Alliance is to promote the knowledge and evidence, resources and tools and political will and action needed to address key social service workforce challenges, especially within low- to middle-income countries.

The Alliance is funded by PEPFAR/USAID and the GHR Foundation. **The Tides Center** acts as host and fiscal sponsor of the Alliance.

Learn More

Learn more about Sokchea and other social service workers! Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SSWWeek, on our Facebook page and on the discussion boards on our website at www.socialserviceworkforce.org.