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CAMBODIAN MINE ACTION CENTRE

Women in humanitarian demining activities to the strengthening of Women Peace and Security (WPS) to the people and society of Cambodia.















Woman with Disability in CMAC – Ms. Kuon Sophal Story

Kuon Sophal was born on October 8, 1986, and grew up in a poor farming family in Sraecheng Village, Sraecheng Commune, Chumkiri District, Kampot Province. Tragically, her mother passed away, leaving her 74-year-old father, elderly grandmother, and her other seven siblings for Kuon Sophal to take care of.



Kuon Sophal appreciating King's handshake in June 2024



Kuon Sophal awarded a medal by the Cambodian Prime Minister, Hun Manet

Due to these circumstances, she decided to give up her education in grade 5 in 2003 to find work and support her family. Facing severe hardship, her family relocated to O Anluok Village, Tasen Commune, Kamrieng District, Battambang Province in 2004.



Kuon Sophal at a demining site

In 2006, CMAC announced the recruitment of Community Based Demining (CBD) teams. The concept of CBD stemmed from the idea that communities could address the landmine issue themselves. To foster ownership and support in target villages, team members were selected from (1) mine victims in poor families, (2) widows or widowers from poor families, and (3) members of landless households. Kuon Sophal applied and successfully passed the exams. Since then, she has been a CMAC CBD member working in Tasen Commune, Kamrieng District of Battambang Province. Shortly after securing her job, Kuon Sophal married in 2007 and gave birth to a baby girl in 2008.



Kuon Sophal resting at a demining site

As demining operations relocated from one place to another, she was transferred from DU2 (Demining Unit) to DU1 and DU4, which made her married life troublesome. Subsequently, she got divorced and became a widow with one daughter. Despite facing such difficult circumstances, Kuon Sophal remained highly committed to her demining job and made significant efforts for CMAC.

With her excellent performance in demining, she received two certificates of commendation in two different years: 2010 and 2013.



Kuon Sophal laying on the bed in a hospital

On March 2, 2016, her platoon #102 was on a mission to Preah Vihear Province to conduct demining operations for the Royal Government Demining Project in Kantout Commune, Choamksan District. While driving on the road toward the target location, her CMAC truck was involved in a severe traffic accident at Preah Prolay Commune, resulting in the loss of her left hand, while other colleagues in the same truck sustained serious injuries.

After the accident, she was changed her role as a deminer. Moreover, CMAC has continued to employ her as a receptionist at CMAC Phnom Penh Headquarters, where she has been.

Ms. SUN LYDA- A Woman with family member affected by war/landmine/ERW:

Ms. Sun Lyda was born in February 10, 1987, and grew up in a poor farmer family residing in Ou Anlok Village, Tasen Commune, Komrieng District, Battambang Province. Her mother passed away in 1991 and left her disabled father, Mr. Sin Samol, who lost his right leg to a landmine during the Pol Pot regime. She is the older sister, with two siblings in the family.



Miss Sun Lina, 19, CBD at Komrieng District, Battambang, photo with her father at home

Because her family was not well-off and it was very hard to make a living, Lyda decided to quit her education in grade 6 in 2001 and became a farmworker since then. She spent a few years working on farms so as to grow corn and beans to make ends meet.

While CMAC announced to recruit Community-Based Demining (CBD) teams in 2004, Sun Lyda applied and successfully passed the recruitment. She was trained for one month and a half at the CMAC Training Center, located in Kompong Chhnang Province. She became a CMAC-CBD member working in Tasen Commune, Kamrieng District of Battambang Province.



Sun Lyda, ID 934001, had been working in her community, Tasen Commune, Komrieng District, Battambang Province, for 3 years (2004–2006) in the position of community deminer. After that, she was promoted to be a UXO Dog Handler, and it required her to work in other provinces such as Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kompong Chhnang, etc.



Miss Sun Lina was in operations in the real minefield at Kamrieng District, Battambang

Although Sun Lyda was a female deminer and worked mostly in the field, she was still highly committed to her demining job and made a great effort for CMAC. During her work performance, she found and neutralized a lot of landmines. Four years later, after working with CMAC, Sun Lyda got married in 2008. However, a few months later in the same year, she decided to stop working for CMAC since she needed to take care of her disabled father, staying alone with her two little sisters, and herself as a mother-to-be.

Ms. Moch Sokheang: EOD Specialist Woman



Ms. Moch Sokheang was born on May 25, 1988, and grew up in a family residing in Susasdei Village, Trapeanglavea Commune, Oudong District, Kampong Speu Province. Her mother passed away in 1991 and left her living with her old father.

Due to hard family conditions, Moch Sokheang decided to quit her education in grade 10 and started working as a factory worker from 2006 to 2007. Then, in 2008, while CMAC announced to recruit Community-Based Demining (CBD) teams, Moch Sokheang applied and successfully passed the recruitment. She was well trained at the CMAC Training Center and sent for a field trial before becoming a CMAC-CBD member working in Tasen Commune, Kamrieng District of Battambang Province.

Moch Sokheang, ID 934436married her husband, Chea Sovannimol, and resides in O Chamlong Village, Tasen Commune, Komrieng District, Battambang Province, where she was working as CBD member from 2008 to 2012. After that, she was reappointed to be a Battle Area



Clearance by Village Team member from 2012 to 2015 and as Technical Survey for Clearance Team member from 2015 to 2018 after she received a series of training skills provided by CMAC. Then she became a Dog Handler from 2018 to 2020. With her continuing efforts and commitment, as well as multi-skills training provided by CMAC she was promoted as an EOD expert member from 2020 to 2021. Moch Sokheang, now a senior EOD member in her career within CMAC



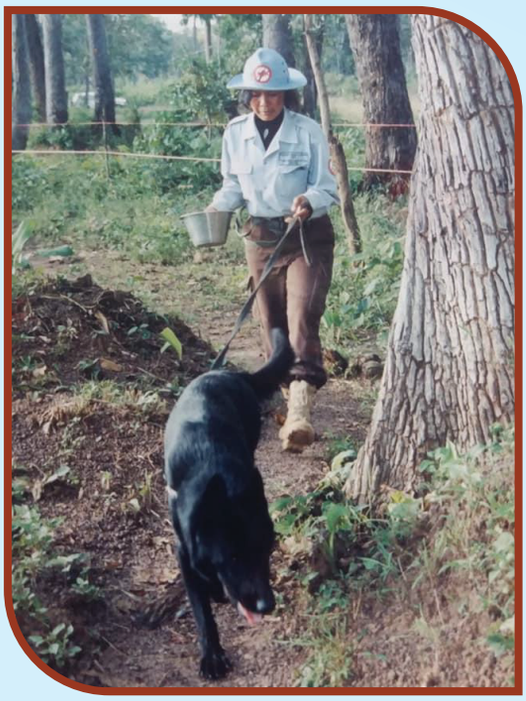
Resilience and Dedication: The Journey of Ms. Cheum Srey Mao with CMAC

Ms. Cheum Srey Mao, now 49 years old, was born on November 9, 1974, in Ochar Village, Chrey Commune, Battambang District, Battambang Province. Her early life was marked by hardship; her father, Chim Nhach, passed away when she was young, leaving the family in a precarious situation. Her elderly mother, Ouk Sen, now 84, originally from Khla Romeas Village, Rong Chrey Commune, Battambang District/Province, struggled to provide for the family.

Despite her academic potential, Cheum Srey Mao's educational journey was cut short in 1992 after completing Grade 9 at Preah Monivong Junior High School. The dire circumstances of her family forced her to leave school and seek employment. Determined to contribute to her community and provide for her family, she joined the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) on March 18, 1996, as a deminer in Demining Unit 2 (DU2).

Her dedication and hard work were quickly recognized, leading to her being assigned to various critical roles over the years. By October 15, 2001, she transitioned to DU1 as a Mine Detection Dog (MDD) handler, a position defining much of her career. Over the next decade, Srey Mao advanced through the ranks, becoming an MDD Commander in May 2005, a role she maintained across multiple units, including DU2, DU3, and DU1. Her exemplary leadership and commitment to her work earned her the respect of her peers and supervisors alike.

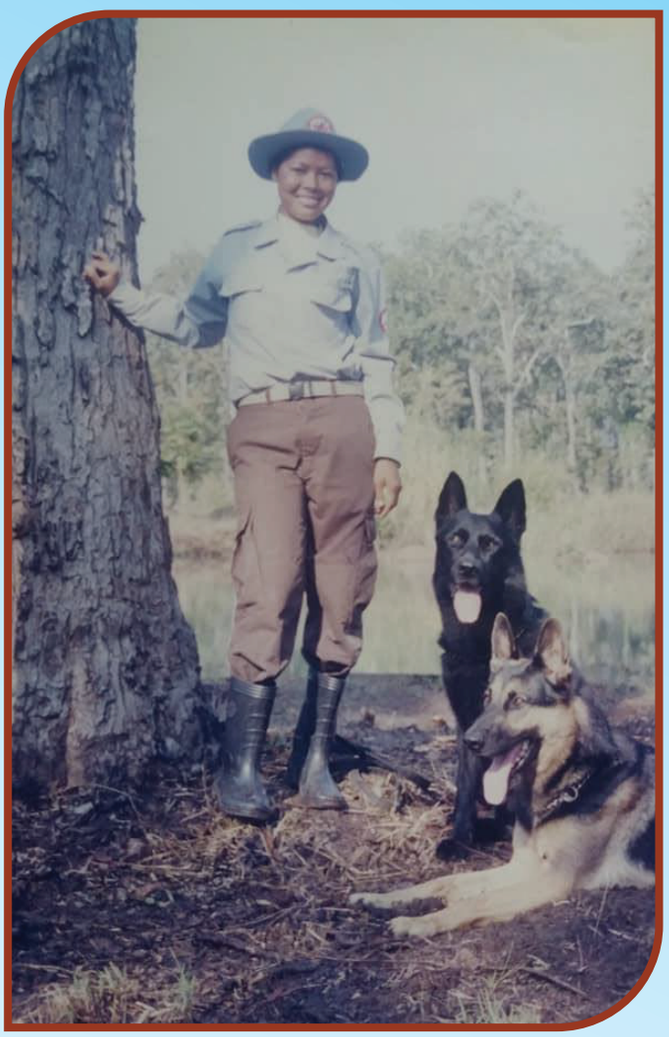




Her training record reflects her dedication to professional development. She has completed numerous courses, including Basic Demining, Mine Detection Dog Handler, Field Management, Topography (GPS and Mapping), Basic Demolition, and Land Release. These skills were crucial in her role as an MDD Commander, where precision and safety are paramount.

In addition to her professional achievements, Srey Mao has been recognized for her outstanding service with multiple medals—bronze, silver, and gold—and numerous certificates of appreciation and commendation. These accolades highlight her contributions to making Cambodia safer for future generations.

Srey Mao's journey with CMAC has not been devoid of personal challenges. Moving from one demining site to another strained her first marriage, ultimately leading to divorce. Despite these challenges, she relocated with her elderly mother to Kab Ko Thmey Village, Ochar Commune, Battambang District, Battambang Province, where she currently resides with her second husband, Sieng Bun Kheang, 42, originally from Kraing Sramor Village, Svay Chuk Commune, Samaki Meanchey District, Kampong Chhang Province. Her husband also serves in CMAC as an MDD handler. Although they have not had children together, they are living a happy life in Battambang.



Ms. Cheum Srey Mao Story-Mine Detection Dog Leader Woman

Srey Mao's resilience is evident not only in her professional life but also in her personal dedication to her family. Balancing her demanding role at CMAC with her responsibilities at home, she has managed to support her family while contributing significantly to her community's safety via CMAC.

Ms. Cheum Srey Mao’s story is one of resilience and dedication. Her journey with CMAC, marked by professional achievements and personal challenges, exemplifies the strength and determination required to overcome adversity. Her legacy is a testament to the impact one individual can have in the ongoing effort to make Cambodia a safer place.

Ms. Sok Sary: Demining Operator Specialist Woman

Ms. Sok Sary was born on January 03, 1987, and grew up in a farmer family residing in Prey Svay Village, Prey Svay Commune, Moung Russei District, Battambang Province. Her father is working within CMAC as TSC#76 member and her mother is a farmer living in O Sa Nguot Village, Tasanh Commune, Samlot District, Battambnag Province. In 2005, she married her husband, who is a demining expert of TSC#39 team working in Demining Unit 4.



Due to the CMAC announcement in 2019 to recruit young generation deminers from CMAC family, Ms. Sok Sary applied and successfully passed the recruitment and her first service was as a demining expert from 2019 to 2020. Following her commitment and great job performance, she has been selected among other demining experts to be a lady demining machine operator at CMAC in 2021 until now



Ms. Sok Sary is now living peacefully with her family of one daughter as a university student and one son as a junior high school student in O Sa Nguot Village, Tasanh Commune, Samlot District, Battambang Province.

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Ms. Leoung Malin- A Female Deminer Following Her Father's Footsteps



Miss. Leoung Malin was born on December 8, 1995, and grew up in Trapeang Por Village, Ov Lork Commune, Kombol District, Phnom Penh. Malin's father, Chum Sam At, 56, TSC Assistant Team Leader, works for the Cambodian Mine Action Center, and her mom, Bee Buheang, 51, was born in Klar Romeas Village, Chrey Roong District, Battambang Province. There are three siblings in her family.



She graduated from Ang Snoul Hun Sen High School in 2014. The dire circumstances of her living condition forced her not to pursue her studies at university and to seek employment to support her family.

Since her father is a CMAC staff member and Leoung Malin herself wishes to follow in her father's footsteps, she decided to apply and successfully pass the recruitment in 2020. After having been trained in the Technical Institute of Mine Action in Kompong Chhnang, Malin, ID 936344, passed the course of Basic Demining and became a deminer working in Demining Unit 2 (DU2) in Battambang Province.



Her dedication and hard work were quickly recognized, leading to her being assigned to different roles that help improve her qualifications. By April 24, 2024, she transitioned to the Special Diving Unit (SDU) as a member of the Underwater Operations Unit, a position that defined much of her career.

Although Panha has been working for CMAC for a few years and faces many challenges, she still highly commits herself to making a great effort for CMAC to clear landmines and UXOs for the sake of Cambodians.

Ms. So Malen- A Hero Rat Handler with a Gold Medal



Ms. So Malen was born on February 17, 1986, and grew up in Prey Toul village, Prasot commune, Svay Teap district, Svay Rieng province. Malen's father, Kim Men, died in 2012, and his mother, Soin, 65, was born in Prey Toul village, Prasot commune, Svay Teap district, Svay Rieng province. Malen has four siblings in her family. Facing challenging family circumstances, she made the difficult decision to stop studying after completing grade 9 in 2003. In the same year, Malen left his hometown looking for a job in Phnom Penh and became a garment worker until 2006.

In 2007, she traveled to Preah Vihear to live with her father, who was then serving in the military. In 2009, Malen learned that CMAC had announced the recruitment of community-based demining (CBD) teams, so she decided to apply for this position and successfully passed the test. Later, she was required to attend a demining course at the CMAC Training Center (now the Technical Institute of Mine Action) before starting her work in the field.



In 2010, Malen, ID 934477, worked in Preah Vihear for two years. During her mission, she found eight anti-personnel mines, seven anti-personnel mines, and one anti-tank mine. In 2012, she was transferred to work under Demining Unit 2 (DU2), located in Battambang province, where she found 23, including anti-personnel mines and anti-tank mines. Her journey within CMAC was characterized by continuous growth and diversification of skills. As a result, Malen was trained in a new skill for one year in Siem Reap to become a rat handler. In 2016, Malen was assigned to work in Varin district in Siem Reap province where she was awarded a gold medal with her HeroRat, Magawa for incredible life-saving bravery. In 2018, she was married to a fellow team member, Mr. Seoun Seila, who is a deminer working for TSC #66.



It is not easy for Malen to work with rats, and she encountered some challenges during her operations For instance, when it was raining, the rats found it difficult to sniff out landmines, and in areas with a lot of grain, the rats could lose concentration.

Malen is very proud to have worked for CMAC and helped to clear land for the people to farm and have a prosperous life. She is strongly committed to her dangerous work to ensure the safety of Cambodians' lives.

Ms. DUL SAROTH: Demining Machine Operator Specialist Woman



Ms. DUL SAROTH was born on July 12, 1990, and grew up in a poor family residing in Chamkartamao Village, Srae Thmey Commune, Rolea Pha EA District, Kampong Chhnang Province. Her parents passed away and left two sons and three daughters. She is the fourth daughter among the five. Ms. DUL SAROTH finished high school successfully in 2009 and would not continue to further education due to a difficult family condition. Then she started working as a factory worker in 2010.

Due to the CMAC announcement in 2020 to recruit young generation deminers from CMAC family, Ms. DUL SAROTH applied and successfully passed the recruitment and her first service was as a demining expert in 2020. At that time, she was selected to using ALIS detector in the research process to ensure the survival ability and safety of the detector. In



2021, she was moved to work as a demining expert for platoon#02 in Battambang Province, she is still using the ALIS detector. As ALIS detector user, she was frequently moved to work as deminer expert in DU3, Pursat Province in 2022, and in September 2022, she relocated to DU5 in Tbong Khmoum to test ALIS detector with UXO and ERW objects. Then she was moved back to TSC #52 in DU3 Pursat in the same year.

In March 2024, she was appointed as a Demining Machine Operator to work in DU4, Siem Reap Province after she received a training of Maintenance and Operation of Demining Machine Course in 2022. She is now operating a demining machine in minefield in Kampong Thom Province.



A Life of Service: Ms. Teang Sovanphalla's Dedication to Mine Action



Ms. Teang Sovanphalla's journey is a remarkable testament to dedication, perseverance, and service in the field of mine action. Born on July 7, 1975, in Phnom Touch village, O'Prasat commune, Mongkul Borey district, Battambang province, she has navigated a life shaped by both personal and professional milestones.

Sovanphalla's early life was rooted in Phnom Touch village, where she was born to her parents, Teang Tum and Buon Kim Loeung. Her father, Teang Tum, and her mother, Buon Kim Loeung, hailed from different parts of Battambang Province but later resided in Banteay II Village, O Tumpor Commune, Malai District, Banteay Meanchey Province.

Her childhood and adolescence coincided with Cambodia's civil war, prompting her to seek refuge in Thailand's Site 8 refugee camp. There, she seized the opportunity to complete her education up to grade 11 in 1992 and received pedagogical training. That same year, she began her teaching career in Malai, Banteay Meanchey Province, before her association with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC).



In 1998, she began her notable career with CMAC as a Mine Awareness Teacher. Her role was pivotal in educating communities about the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Sovanphalla's dedication and effectiveness in her role led to her promotion to Senior Provincial Coordinator of Mine Action in 2012, a position she holds to this day. Her career at CMAC has been marked by several achievements, including receiving two Certificates of Appreciation and a gold medal for her contributions.

Regarding the training course, Ms. Teang Sovanphalla has undergone extensive and specialized education in Mine Risk Education (MRE) and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Level 1 and Level 2, along with a training course in Pedagogy and Teaching Methodology. These exceptional qualifications have not only sharpened her expertise but have also empowered her to lead and coordinate mine action efforts with remarkable effectiveness.

In her personal life, Sovanphalla married Mr. Chhem Vuthy in 2000, a police officer hailing from Kang Tanung Village, Kang Tanung Commune, Kang Meas District, Kampong Cham Province. Her husband has been a steadfast support in her journey of disseminating MRE messages to safeguard all individuals in their communities from the dangers of landmines and UXO. Together, they reside in Korathan Village, O'Ambel Commune, Serey Sophorn District,

Banteay Meanchey Province, with their two daughters. Both are outstanding students pursuing higher education: the older daughter is on a scholarship program in the United States of America, and the younger one is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



Ms. Teang Sovanphalla, CMAC ID 933609, serves as a Senior Provincial Coordinator within Demining United 1 (DU1). Her role is crucial in disseminating MRE messages in the authorized target areas, reporting landmine/ERW information to CMAC's EOD experts, and coordinating with provincial officers, local authorities, and other stakeholders.

Sovanphalla's story is one of resilience and unwavering commitment to her work. Her journey from a teacher to a Senior Provincial Coordinator at CMAC highlights her dedication to making Cambodia safer and her impact on mine action efforts. Her life's work and her family's success stand as an inspiration for others who aspire to contribute meaningfully to their communities and overcome the challenges they face. Ms. Sovanphalla's contributions to mine action not only safeguard lives but also lay the groundwork for a safer, more prosperous future for Cambodia.



Miss Oum Sopheavy- A Life of Service in Mine Action



Miss Oum Sopheavy, born on July 20, 1988, is a dedicated professional with a background in communication and finance, holding dual Bachelor's degrees in English for Professional Communication and Banking and Finance, both earned in 2010.

Sopheavy, initially working as a translator for private companies and freelancing from 2011 to 2013, joined the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) in 2014, progressing from a volunteer to the Director of International Cooperation and Project Management (ICPM) by 2018, demonstrating exceptional leadership and project management skills. At CMAC, she managed the project cycle. This role involved initiating new project proposals, coordinating ongoing projects with donors, departments, and demining units, and overseeing finance, administration, support, and human resources. She supervised project reports and maintained the Project Management Matrix for over 30 projects each year. Additionally, she handles international training activities, including South-South Cooperation Training.



From May 2015 to September 2022, Sopheavy was part of CMAC's Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Team and the Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Technical Group for the National Mine Action Strategy 2017 2025. In these roles, Sopheavy promoted gender equity, encouraged women's participation, and advocated for equal opportunities in skills development, status, salary, and decision making. Sopheavy had also worked on plans to improvefemale staff's capacities and skills, promoting their advancement within the organization.



Recently, Sopheavy enhanced her expertise by earning a Master of Business Administration for two years from the International University of Japan in Niigata Prefecture, Japan.

She has now returned to CMAC and has recently been appointed as the Director of the Human Resources Department.



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