

Street Children Profile



2007

Compiled by Lucie Eches
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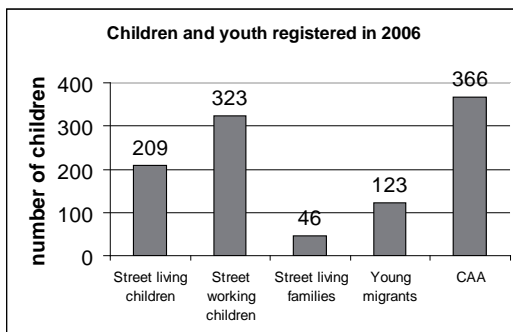
Why do we have a Street Children Profile?

In order to carry out our work in the best possible way, it is necessary to have a good understanding about the reasons why children begin living or working on the streets. Since 2002 Friends-International and Mith Samlanh have been conducting an annual street children profile of children who have joined their program in Phnom Penh. This basic study allows us to analyze and understand the ongoing changes within our target group.

We have compiled information about the backgrounds of **1067** street children who attended the Educational and Vocational Training Centers and the Transitional Home at Mith Samlanh in Phnom Penh as well as those children affected by HIV/AIDS who received material support.

In this document the term children is used to refer to “children and youth aged 0 to 24 years old”.

Please note that this profile only includes information about children joining Mith Samlanh in 2006 and therefore is not a profile of all children accessing Mith Samlanh programs.



The information about the children has been collected from registration forms completed for every child who attends Mith Samlanh.

We studied the profiles of 3 groups of street children (54%):

- former street living children (20%)
- former street working children (30%)
- former children of street living families (4%)

We also studied the profile of other marginalized urban children and youth that are very often being pushed into street life and/or street work (46%):

- former young migrants (12%)
- children affected by HIV/AIDS (CAA) (34%)

The figures and statistics cited in this Profile are not always representative of the entire street children population in Phnom Penh and must only be taken as a snapshot of the street children joining Mith Samlanh in 2006. Many registration forms were incomplete and as children voluntarily provide information upon their arrival, the reasons as to why children leave home are perhaps not always entirely accurate. Mith Samlanh staff do not pressure children for explanations in order to avoid possibly reinforcing their trauma. This could mean that some figures are inconsistent with other surveys.

Acknowledgment: This study was compiled by Lucie Eches, volunteer for Friends-International, in collaboration with Birgit Aßmann (Social Work Advisor) and Pierre-Louis Leroy (Coordinator Monitoring Evaluation and Research), Mr. Dak Gneng (TC Case management supervisor) and his team, Ms. Im Srey Pao (Placement team leader) and her team, Ms. Luch Peou (CAA team leader) and her team, Mr. Pin Sokhom (Training Center team leader) and his team, Ms. Uon Monyleap (Educational Center Team Leader) and her team, Ms. Kong Sathia (Safe Migration team leader) and her team, and the Friends-International team. A special thanks to Ros Sokngim who helped to translate the information required from Khmer into English and to Kerri Manika who did the proof readings.

If you would like to know more about our programs and our work to support street children, please contact:

Mith Samlanh

House 215, Street 13
P.O. Box 588, Phnom Penh,
Kingdom of Cambodia
Tel: (855) 23 220 596
Tel/Fax: (855) 23 426 748
www.streetfriends.org

Friends-International

House 9A Street 178
P.O Box 597, Phnom Penh
Kingdom of Cambodia
Tel: (855) 23 986 601
Email: info@friends-international.org
www.friends-international.org
www.childsafe-international.org

This profile presents the general information about all children and youth registered at Mith Samlanh in 2006. However a detailed version is available on Friends-International web site: www.friends-international.org .



Together, building futures.

Friends-International (FI) first started working with street children in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 1994. The initial project was called “Friends” or “Mith Samlanh” in Cambodian. In 1999 Mith Samlanh was localized as a Cambodia Non Government Organization and Friends-International continues to provide the organization with on-going technical support.

Friends-International is an International program for street children and has expanded in Cambodia and beyond. Friends-International now works in Cambodia (Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville), Thailand, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Indonesia and further abroad (Honduras, Mexico) and also with the development of support offices in Europe (France, Germany, Switzerland) and the USA.

Friends-International is a social enterprise that works with and for marginalized urban children and youth and their families to build their futures by:

- protecting urban children and youth from all forms of abuse within the scope of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child;
- reintegrating marginalized urban children and youth into their family, society, occupation and culture so they become actively involved in the development of their society;
- preventing marginalized urban children and youth from engaging in risky behaviour and/or dangerous situations that compromise their futures;
- improving the way organizations work by promoting innovative and effective approaches with the active participation of the children and youth;
- influencing all tiers of society to provide supportive environments and adopt positive behaviour changes.

This is achieved by developing creative, innovative and holistic programs, building networks and establishing solid support services within organizations, communities and within all tiers of society.

Friends-International is developing an international network known as the CYTI Network- a worldwide network of organizations working together to provide the best and most comprehensive services possible to marginalized urban children and youth, their families and their communities.

Friends-International has received the following recognition:

- Gold Medal of the Cambodian Government for the reconstruction of the country
- Order of Australia for “Service to Humanity” to Sebastien Marot “as founder and coordinator of Friends, an organisation assisting homeless children”
- Silver Medal of “Société d’Encouragement Au Progrès” (France)
- Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship



Mith Samlanh was established in August 1994 as a non-religious, non-political organization working with street children in Phnom Penh. It was established in response to the needs of street children, their family and their community. The projects of Mith Samlanh aim to assist the children's social reintegration (reintegration into their families, the public school system, employment, and their culture).

Mith Samlanh has 217 staff (85 female) including social workers, teachers, trainers, doctors, house parents, cooks, cleaners and a small administrative team.

The Mith Samlanh management team is responsible to the Mith Samlanh Board. The Board currently comprises 9 members (5 Cambodians and 4 Expatriates) from the NGO and business world. The Board provides direction to the Program Director; reviews and approves the budget and yearly report; reviews the annual work-plans and budgets; and is responsible for appointing, evaluating and if necessary, terminating the Mith Samlanh Program Director.

The overall objectives of Mith Samlanh are to:

1. Meet the street children's immediate essential needs in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child:
 - the right to life: providing nutritional meals, shelter, a safe environment and medical care;
 - the right to development: providing education and reintegrating them into public school and developing their curiosity;
 - the right to protection: fighting all forms of abuse against children including physical, sexual, family, and emotional abuse;
 - the right to participation: making children aware of their responsibilities and promoting action within the Center and in the community;
2. Reintegrate the children into their families, into society, into occupation, into their culture; and
3. Build the capacity of the staff so that the Cambodian nationals are able to run the program, independent of foreign intervention in the near future.

Mith Samlanh is co-founder (with FI) of Cambodia's Street Children Network (CSCN) and participates fully in the local NGO community, particularly in those forums focusing on street children and related issues such as the Child Welfare Group, End Child Prostitution, Abuse and Trafficking in Cambodia (ECPAT-Cambodia, founding member), HIV/AIDS Coordination Committee (HACC), Orphans and Vulnerable Children Task Force (OVC) etc.

Mith Samlanh is also working in close collaboration with Government (the Ministry of Social Action, Labor and Veterans Affairs, Phnom Penh Inspectorate, Ministry of Women's Affairs, NACD, Ministry of Education, police, local authorities), and, was also the only Cambodian NGO participating in the United Nations Special Session on Children (UNGASS) in May 2002.

Mith Samlanh is a member of the Friends Alliance, of the ChildSafe Network and of the Child Support Network.

Thank you to our partners that supported our work in 2006 through their collaboration, in-kind donations and advice.

Introduction

Cambodia has a remarkably young demographic structure with 44.3% of the population under 18 years of age¹. A combination of severe decimation of the population during nearly three decades of war and civil conflict, a post-war boom and the low average life expectancy of 57 years², are reasons behind the unbalanced population demography.

According to official statistics, 35% of the population in Cambodia lives below the poverty line (1800 Riel / USD 0.45 per person, per day)³. Approximately 80% of the population lives in rural areas⁴ where the highest poverty and the lowest school attendance is found⁵. Crop failures, weather conditions, environmental degradation, health problems, landlessness and lack of access to land make families very vulnerable. Lack of opportunities such as poor access to assets, education and skills training, lack of infrastructure and inadequate farming technology are among the reasons behind poverty.



Though it is also widespread in high social classes, increased violence against women, rape, domestic violence and trafficking of women and children might be symptomatic of poverty. It may also be symptoms of a post-war stress reaction and for many the only solution to handle their stressful life.

All these factors have lead to increased urban migration and therefore an increase in the population of street living children, street working children and street living families. There are an increasing number of young migrants from provinces arriving in Phnom Penh.

Urban poverty forces many children to work. Either family poverty, or the need to supplement family income are given as the primary motives in the case of three out

1 UNICEF: Cambodia Statistics 2005

2 UNICEF Cambodia Statistics 2005

3 World Bank: Cambodia 2004

4 UNICEF, Cambodia Statistics 2005

5 UNDP, Cambodia Human Development Report 2007, p.27

of four working children⁶. Furthermore, the cost of public education (registration fees, uniforms, supplies, mandatory private lessons) still prevents many families from sending their children to school. These children then spend most of their time unsupervised either loitering or working in order to supplement the family's income.

Even though the adult HIV prevalence rate has decreased from 3% in 1997 to 0.9 in 2006⁷, Cambodia still has one of the highest rates in Asia. As the number of children affected (sick parents, orphaned) is increasing, so is the number of street children. According to the Demographic and Health Survey 2005, 627,000 children are orphaned (62,000 double orphans) in Cambodia. No reliable statistics exist for those who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS but might be as many as 60,000 orphans and vulnerable children in Cambodia due to HIV/AIDS. Many of these children will have to work to supplement their family income and will eventually have to fend for themselves.

In recent years, drug use has emerged amongst youth from all social background. Drug use is forcing a rapidly increasing number of young people into poverty and on the street, putting them at risk of illness, violence, exploitation and other forms of abuse. There are an increasing number of children in the street due to drug use.

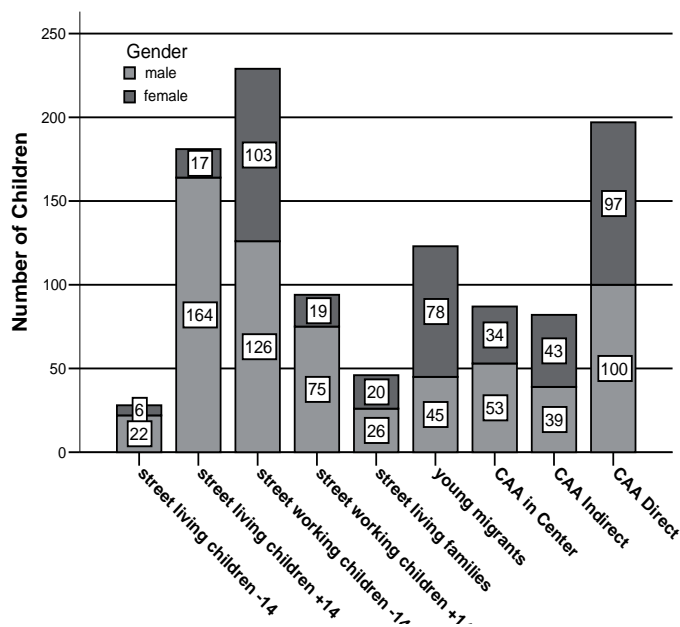
In Phnom Penh there are, on a daily basis, 1,000-1,500 street children who have completely cut ties with their families and have made the streets their home⁸. Depending on the definition and according to the figures accepted by UNICEF, there are between 10,000-20,000 street children working on the streets, who have kept ties with their families and return home either regularly or irregularly. According to a Mith Samlanh workshop in 2002 there are between 500 and 1,500 children belonging to street living families. This figure fluctuates, depending on the situation in the provinces.

6 Understanding Children's Work Project, Children's Work in Cambodia, April 2006, p.9

7 National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STIs, HIV Sentinel Surveillance Report, Cambodia, 2007

8 Mith Samlanh, Street Children Survey, June 2002.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF TARGET GROUPS¹



STREET CHILDREN

Street Living Children: children who cut ties with their families and live alone on the streets

- Estimated number: in Phnom Penh 1200-1500 on a daily basis²
- Gender: 11%³ females (for all age groups)
- Age group: majority (87%) were teenagers over 14 years old
- Education level: 11% of those at schooling age have never attended school and only 27% have gone further than primary school
- Origin: Phnom Penh (23%), Kandal (11%), Prey Veng (6%), Kampong Speu (6%), Kampong Cham (6%),
- Socio-economic category: lowest socio-economic category – surviving on the streets

In 2006, 209 street living children joined Mith Samlanh. They represented 20% of the children registered at the Center during this year.

¹ CAA=children affected by AIDS. Mith Samlanh offers three kinds of support for CAA:

- CAA in center: Children studying in the Center
- CAA direct: children not studying in the center but receiving support in public school and/or for their family
- CAA indirect: children registered because family members receive support.

² Mith Samlanh, June 2002 Street Children Survey.

³ Please note that every percentage in this profile has been rounded up to the closest unit

Street Working Children: children who spend all or most of their time working on the streets to provide an income for their families or for themselves, but who return to a caregiver's home at night.

- Estimated number: in Phnom Penh, 10,000-20,000 (this range is due to seasonal fluctuations and issues of definition)
- Gender: 38% females (for all age groups)
- Age group: 71% under the age of 14
- Education level: 24% of those at schooling age have never attended school and only 11% have gone further than primary school
- Origin: Phnom Penh (45%), Prey Veng (15%), Kandal (12%), and Kampong Cham (9%)
- Socio-economic category: lowest category, residing with families in squatter areas

In 2006, Mith Samlanh supported 323 Street Working Children. They represented 30% of the children registered in 2006.

Children of Street Living Families: children who live with their family on the streets.

- Estimated number: in Phnom Penh from 500 to 1,500 (due to seasonal fluctuations)
- Gender: 43% females (for all age groups)
- Age group: 87% under the age of 14
- Education level: 47% of those at schooling age have never attended school and only 6% have gone further than primary school
- Origin: Phnom Penh (26%), Prey Veng (20%), Kandal (9%), Kampong Cham (9%),
- Socio-economic category: lowest socio-economic category, residing in temporary shelters on the street with families.

In 2006, Mith Samlanh supported 46 children from Street Living Families. They represented 4% of the children registered at the Center during this year.

OTHER MARGINALIZED URBAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Young Migrants: children who leave their families in another province in order to find a job in Phnom Penh.

- Gender: 63% females (for all age groups)
- Age group: 84% over the age of 14
- Education level: 15% of those at schooling age have never attended school and only 17% have gone further than primary school
- Origin: Kampong Cham (22%), Prey Veng (6%), Svay Rieng (5%), Battambang (2%),
- Socio-economic category: range of socio-economic categories since poverty is not the only reason for migration

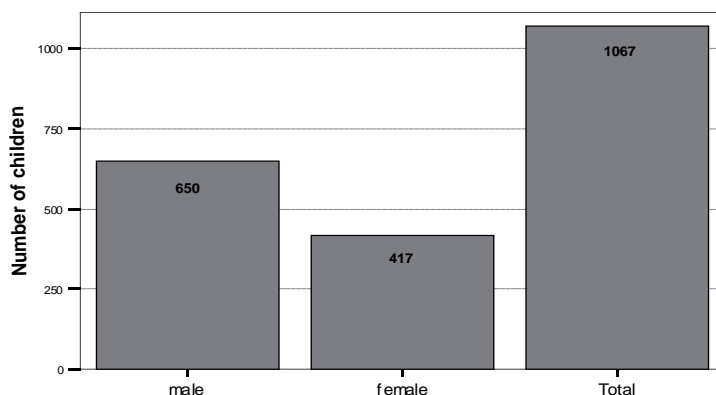
In 2006, Mith Samlanh supported 123 Young migrants. They represented 12% of the children and youth registered at the Center during this year.

Children Affected by AIDS: children whose situation is at risk due to HIV/AIDS infection in the family.

- Gender: 48% females (for all age groups)
- Age group: 67% under the age of 14
- Education: 9% have never attended school; 41% have had a continuous schooling and have been supported in the public school system.
- Origin: Phnom Penh (35%), Kandal (17%), Prey Veng (12%)
- Socio-economic category: range of socio-economic categories, however, illness and death caused by HIV / AIDS could mean that they fall into the lowest.

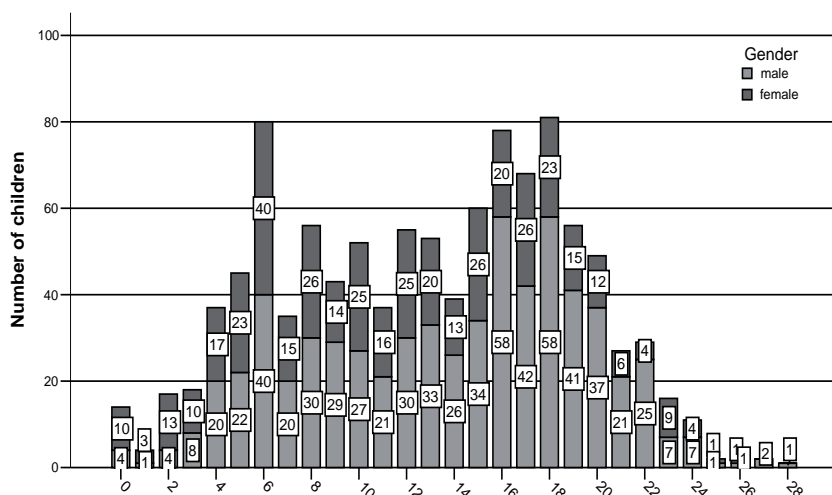
In 2006, Mith Samlanh supported 366 Children Affected by AIDS. They represented 34% of the children and youth registered at the Center during this year.

2. NUMBER OF CHILDREN REGISTERED AT MITH SAMLANH IN 2006



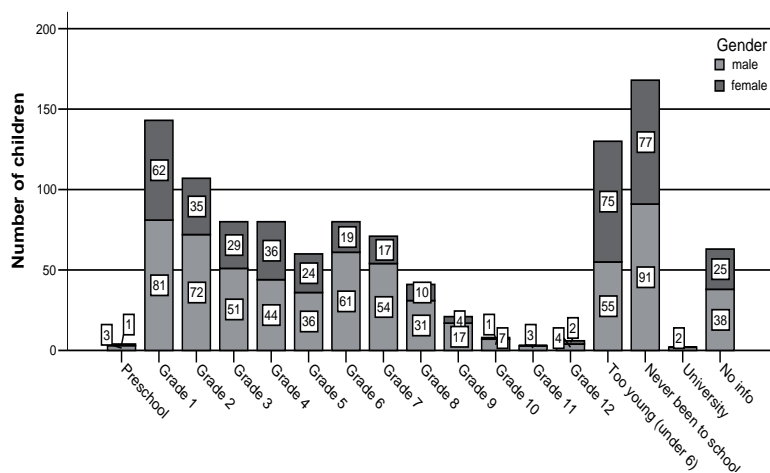
- This graph illustrates only the number of children arriving at Mith Samlanh in 2006. Therefore, the total number of children who received support in 2006 exceeds the figure above as it does not include the children who arrived in 2005 and are still at the Center.
- 1067 children have been registered in 2006, a 7% increase on 2005.
- 39% of the children registered were female.

3. AGE OF THE CHILDREN



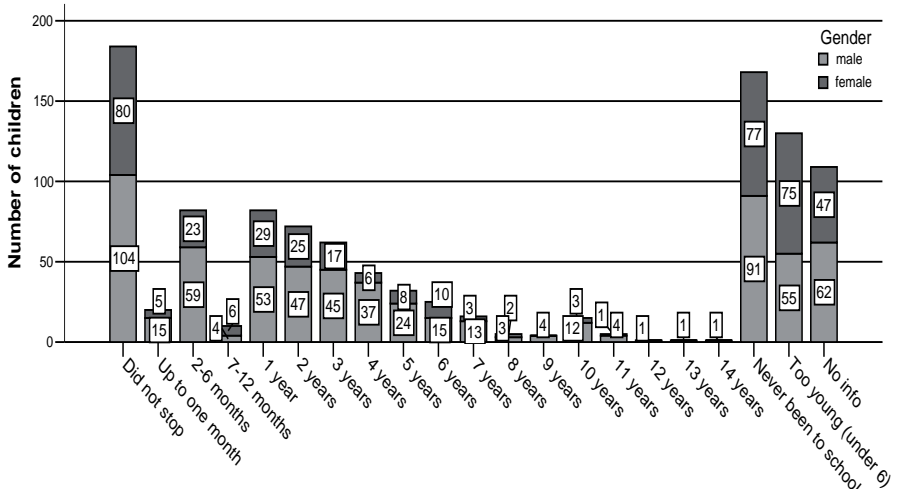
- 55% of the children registered in 2006 were up to 14 years old.
- 20% of children registered were between a few months and 6 years old.
- 35% of children registered were between 7 and 14 years old.
- 45% of children registered were between 15 and 28 years old.

4. LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON ARRIVAL



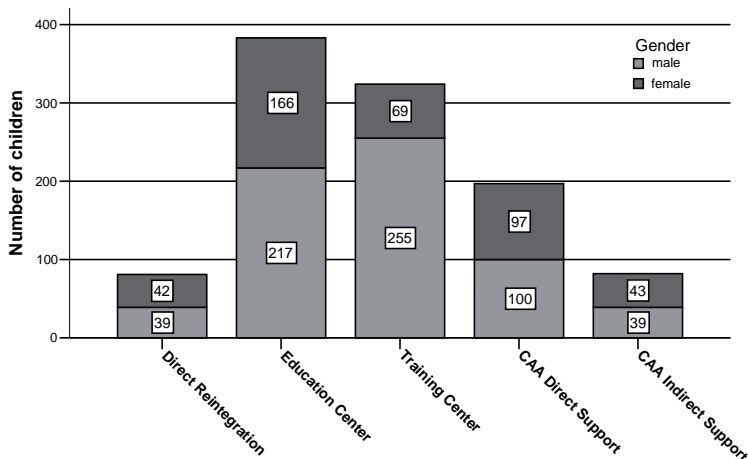
- Out of the children and youth in schooling age and who provided information, 19% never been to school.
- Only 17% went further than primary school (Grade 6).

5. TIME WITHOUT SCHOOLING



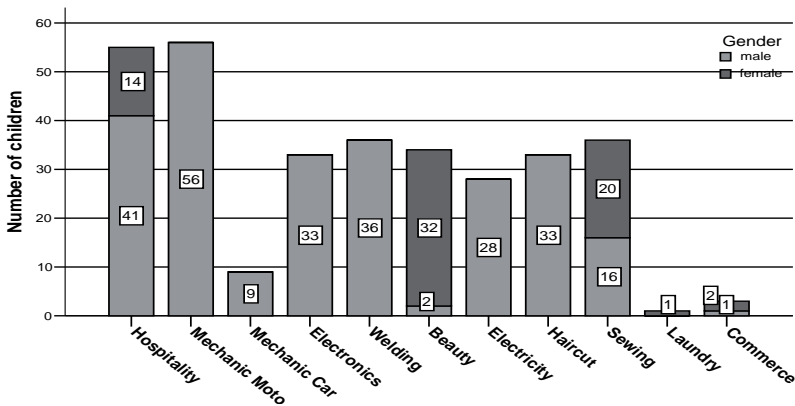
- 72% of children who went to school stopped learning from one month up to 14 years. Most of children who stopped school, stopped for 2 to 6 months or for one year. The longer a child stops school the more difficult it is for him/her to reintegrate the public school system.

6. SERVICES ACCESSED AT MITH SAMLANH



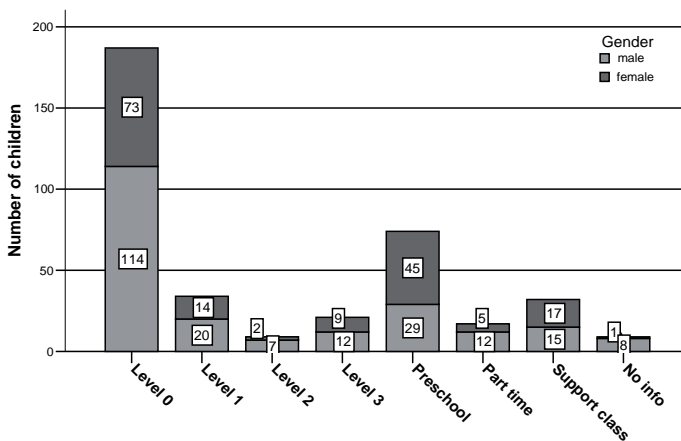
- 36% of the children registered in 2006 joined the Education Center, and 30% studied in the Training Center.
- 8% of the children were directly reintegrated after few days of counseling.
- 37% of the children stayed in the Transitional Home.
- 105 drug addicted young people accessed Detoxification and Rehabilitation Services, before they accessed Educational Center or Training Center.

7. VOCATIONAL TRAINING CHOSEN



- Among the youth who studied at the Training Center, 20% chose Mechanics (car and moto). Hospitality was the second choice with 17% of students.
- Hospitality is a very important and highly developed training course. There is a large capacity at Mith Samlanh for young people to undertake this course, with restaurants used as training centers (Training Center canteen, Friends the Restaurant and Romdeng which serves Cambodian cuisine). The training is particularly attractive considering the high employment rate in the catering sector and the growth of tourism.
- Among female, Beauty is the most popular training (46%).

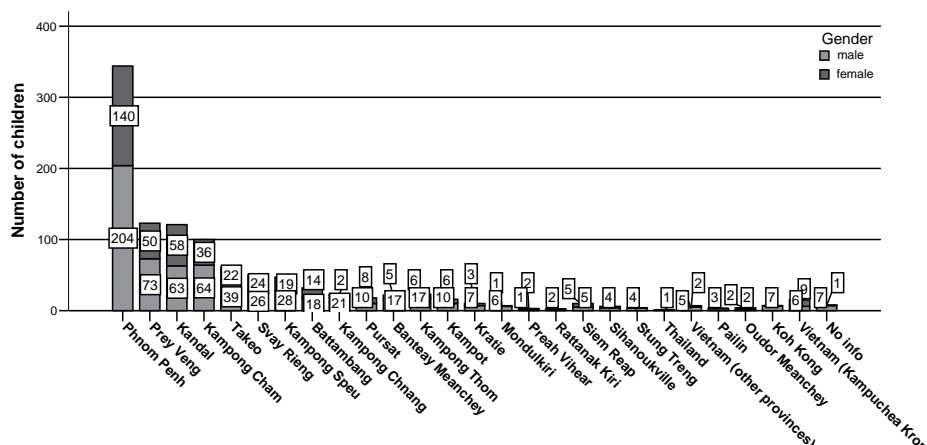
8. LEVEL AT EDUCATIONAL CENTER



- 383 children joined the Education Center. 49% of them enrolled in Level 0. This is because most of the children had never been to school or had no continuous education. They are enrolled in level 0 to prepare them to reintegrate Public School in the grade appropriate to their age.

- The part time class is an offer for children who do not have the opportunity to study the whole day, often due to the need to support their families.
- The support class offers additional support for children who already attend public school, but need further help to be able to continue their studies.
- Mith Samlanh team had no information for nine children as they did not spend enough time in the Educational Center (less than one week) or they left on their own. Thus they didn't have a chance to be tested and orientated to the suitable level.

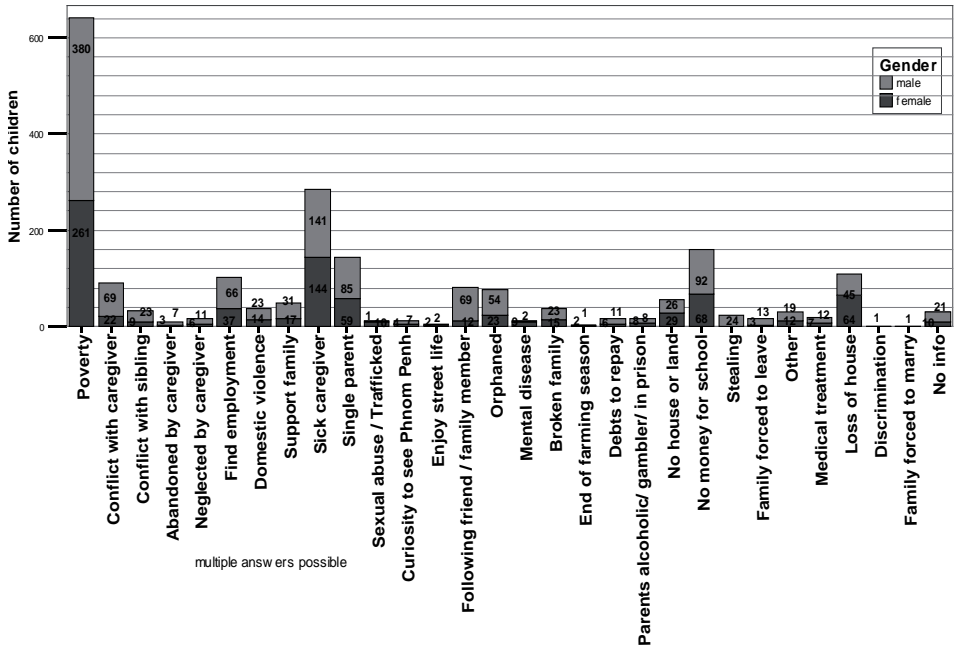
9. ORIGIN OF FAMILIES



- 32% of the children came from Phnom Penh
- 12% came from Prey Veng province and 11% from Kandal Province.
- 9% came from Kampong Cham Province

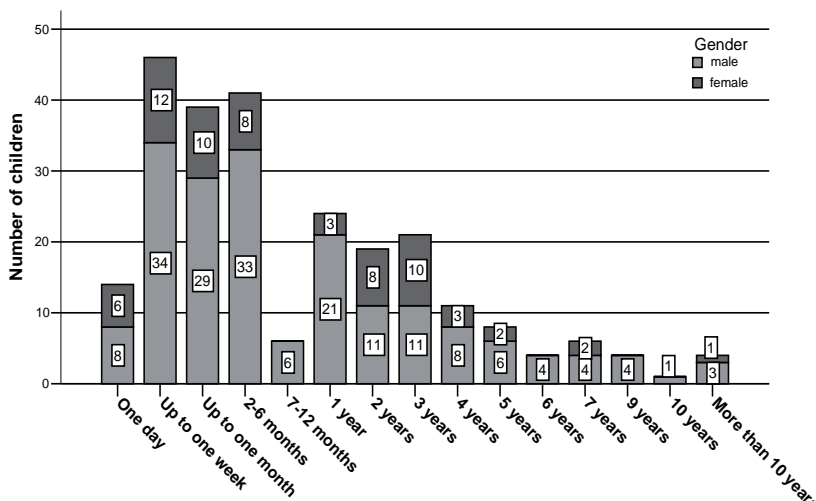


10. REASON FOR BEING ON THE STREETS



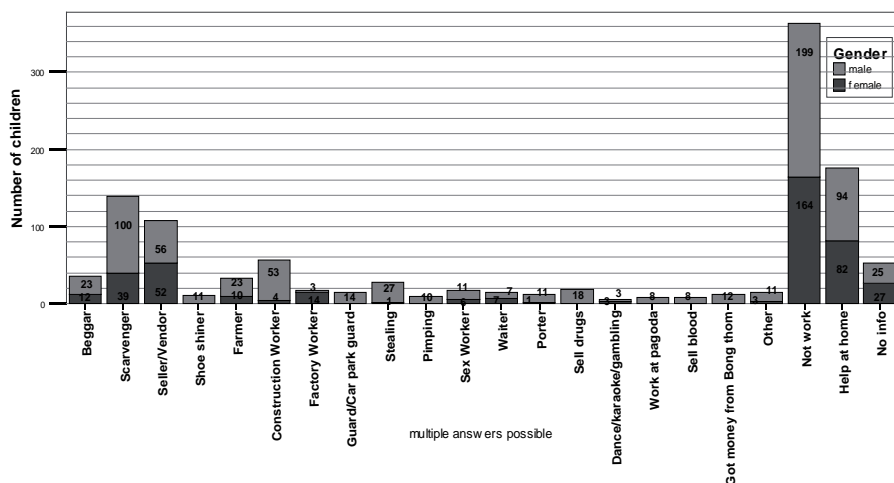
- Most of the children and youth (60%) mentioned poverty as the reason for being on the street.
- 27% said that they were on the street (living or working) because of their caregiver being sick. This figure reflects the increasing number of children affected by HIV/AIDS.
- 21% of children and youth mentioned problems with their family or caregivers (conflicts, neglect, violence, alcohol).

11. TIME SPENT ON THE STREET



- Of those who provided information (23%), 40% of children and youth stayed on the streets from one day up to one month.
- 41% of the children and youth stayed on the street for more than one year. Unfortunately, the longer young people live on the street the more difficult it is for them to change their habits and enter into Mith Samlanh. They feel free on the street and have difficulties accepting and coping with the rules and regulations of the Center.

12. WORK UNDERTAKEN BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH

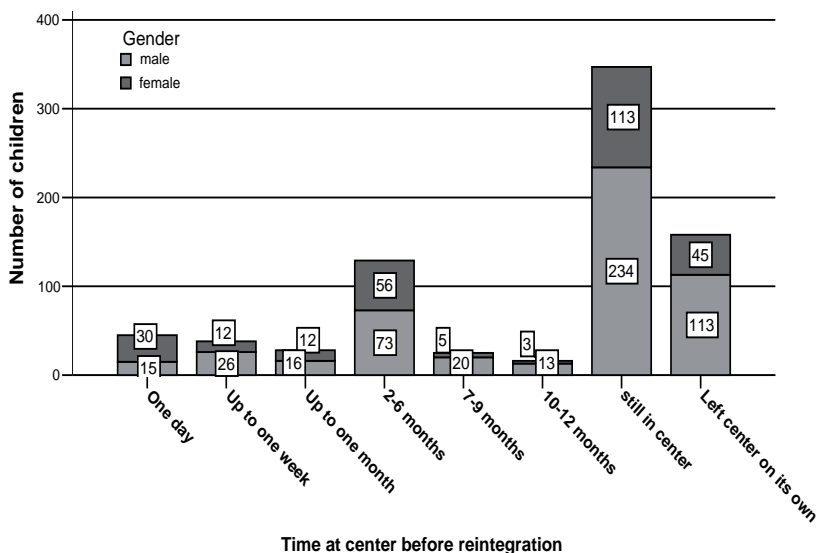


- Among all the children and youth registered at Mith Samlanh in 2006, 34% didn't

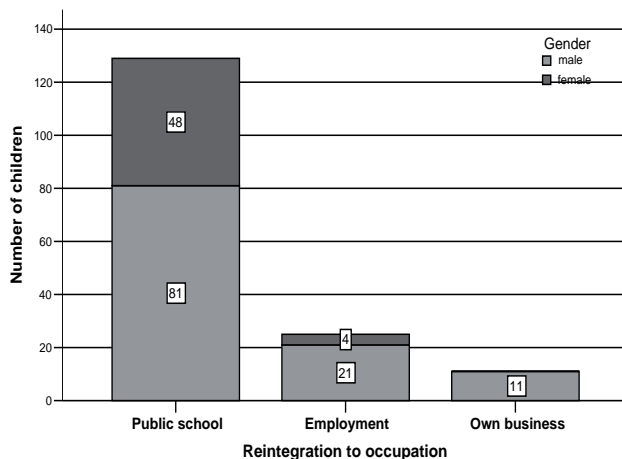
work. This is due the high number of children under the age of 7 registered (20%). They often not work themselves but stay with their parents while they work.

- Of those who worked, apart from helping at home (25%), most of the children and youth worked as scavenger (20%) and seller/vendor (15%) and 5% worked as beggars.

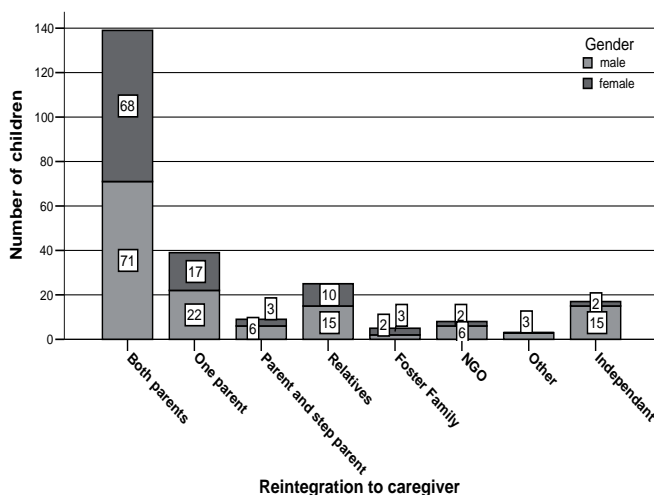
13. INFORMATION ABOUT REINTEGRATION



- This graph illustrates only the number of children who arrived in 2006 and have been reintegrated within the year.
- 36% (282 individuals) of children in center registered in 2006 were reintegrated within the same year. 8% of them were reintegrated after a few days of counseling.
- 33% have studied at Mith Samlanh either until the school year began, the child had finished her/his studies at the Center and could be reintegrated into employment or until family problems were solved or a new caregiver was identified.
- 15% of the children left the center on their own for various reasons. Some of them had problems to familiarize with the rules in the center, missed independent life or their friends on the streets. After leaving, children are followed up by Mith Samlanh's outreach teams and are encouraged to return and continue their studies.



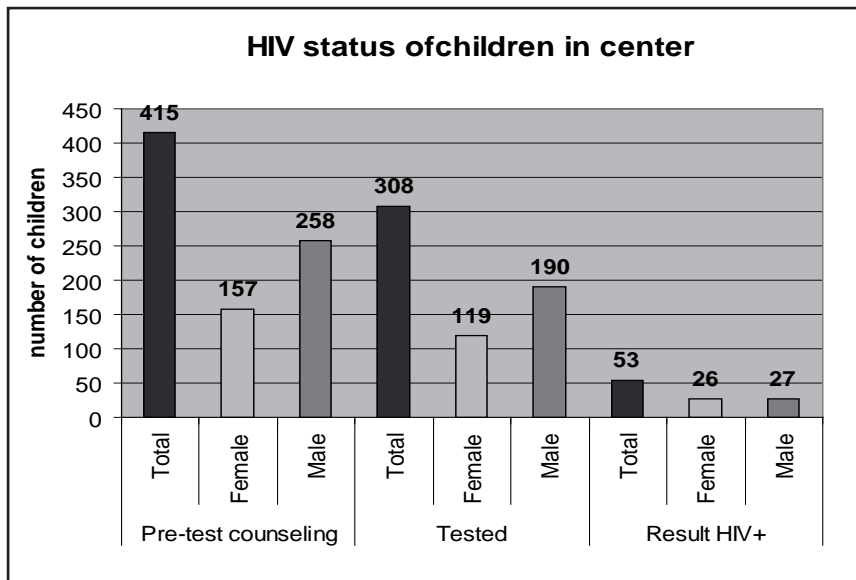
- Of the 165 children and youth who arrived in 2006 and have been reintegrated to occupation in the same year, 78% joined public school, 15% were supported to find an employment and 7% to run their own business.
- The total number of children reintegrated in 2006 is 494 (166 female). 295 (107 female) were placed into the public school system and 199 (59 female) were placed into employment and self-employment. It exceeds the figure above as the total number include children who arrived in 2005 and reintegrated in 2006.



- Of the children and youth who arrived in 2006 and were reintegrated to caregiver in the same year, 57% were reintegrated to both of their parents.

14. HIV status of children in the Center

Each child who is registered at Mith Samlanh is supported to access VCCT (Voluntary and Confidential Counselling and Testing) upon request.



- 415 children (38% female) requested pre-counselling. It is very similar to last year (414 children) but the percentage of females declined of 9%. These figures represent all the children tested in 2006, not only new arrivals.
- Of those who did the pre-counselling, 74% decided to take the test, similar to last year.
- Of those who took the test, 17% were HIV+, in comparison to 29% in 2005. 22% of females (37% in 2005) who were tested were HIV+, compared with 14% of males (21% in 2005).
- A number of factors are increasing the Cambodian youth's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. These include risk factors confronting young people in many parts of the world including risky sexual behaviour, lack of access to HIV information and prevention services, substance use, poverty, migration, social dislocation, low levels of education, gender inequalities and discrimination against those who are infected.

- Links between substance use and HIV transmission among young people in Cambodia are particularly significant. Drug use is on the increase in Cambodia, particularly among young people living on the streets. HIV vulnerability is increased as a result of sharing needles and unsafe sexual practices while under the influence of substances⁴. Links between prostitution and HIV transmission are widely acknowledged: the spread of HIV is driven by a norm of premarital and extramarital sex for men, usually with sex workers. Some of these sex workers may be children who have migrated to the city to find work

⁴ For detailed information regarding the links between drug use and HIV transmission among young people in Cambodia, refer to *Mith Samlanh-Friends, Drug Use and HIV Vulnerability*, 2002

Main challenges and the way forward

Conclusion

Over the past five years, Mith Samlanh's "Street Children Profile" has provided a non exhaustive but accurate image of street life in Phnom Penh, as told by the children who have accessed to its services. The profiles have reflected the trends and changes of the beneficiaries' population. The findings have allowed Mith Samlanh's teams to monitor their work and to adapt it to the needs of children and youth.



As in previous years, education and substance use are major concerns. But 2006 saw important changes concerning the family situation, the life on the street and with CAA.

The evictions in the Bassac area by the Phnom Penh Municipality has made a major impact on the population and on the results of this profile, including an increasing number of street living families, school drop outs and an increased number of reintegrations.

Education:

Looking at the previous profiles, it becomes clear, that even though more children enrolled in public school, fewer children stayed in the school system. Reasons for the high drop-out rates are poverty and the need for families to send their children to work, especially to pay for school fees.

Gender parity within the education system has not yet been achieved. Females are expected to accept additional responsibilities within the familial network which can prevent them from gaining an education, such as housework and taking care of siblings.

Mith Samlanh will continue and develop its efforts to reintegrate children at schooling age into the public school system after they have received remedial classes at the Center. Also, teams will continue to reinforce prevention and family support to avoid children dropping out of public school.

Substance use:

This year, less children and youth said they used drugs. However, the yearly snapshot survey on substance misuse conducted by Mith Samlanh, showed that regular drug use among street children remains a significant issue (just under 50% of the street population are regularly using substances), and that there is an increasing trend of youth coming to the streets due to personal drug use issues.

The reasons for this appear to be linked to the shallow depth of the relationship between newly contacted youth and social workers, where there can be an anxiety by youth to express drug use issues for fear of a negative or judgmental response as experienced in the broader society.

Countering this issue requires broader substance misuse prevention projects targeting children who are not on the streets (but can be vulnerable to do so) and children from all socio-economic levels of society. That needs to be promoted and developed by community based organizations and schools, and Mith Samlanh's outreach staff need to reinforce the non judgmental philosophy to newly contacted youth regarding substance use issues.

Family situation:

One major development to be found in this profile is a change in the family situation of the target group. In almost every category children stated that their parents were still married and both healthy. This is not in line with the findings from the years before.

Also, unlike previous years, the main reason for coming to the street provided by children and youth was poverty, whereas previously it was stated to be domestic violence or conflict with caregivers and/or step-parents. This may lead to the conclusion that not only disrupted families, but more and more "healthy" looking families need to send their children to work on the street or children themselves leave the family, because their parents are not able to support them. Another reason for these changes might also be found in the Bassac eviction, where formerly comparatively stable families were faced with loss of home and stable base to generate income, and promoting poverty which pushes children and families to the streets. This worrying development needs to be monitored in the new street children profile 2008.

To respond to the increasing economical problems of families, Mith Samlanh will have to enlarge its family support projects such as Home Based Production which assist parents to earn an income without having to send their children to work.

HIV/AIDS:

In 2006, unlike the previous years, the number of children who were known to be HIV positive in the center decreased. This figure might be due to the positive impact of the work of NGOs carrying out prevention campaigns in Phnom Penh and also in provinces. This trend will need to be confirmed in the next profile.

The increased number of CAA who have been working on the streets in 2006 requires the reinforcement of prevention work in Mith Samlanh's programs.

Life on the street:

The information provided by the children and youth appear to suggest that they spend a shorter period of time on the street than previously. This reflects the efficient work of the outreach teams meeting children on the street in time.

One concerning figure is the increased number of street children involved into high risk and illegal activities such as stealing, drug dealing, pimping, gangs, sex work, or blood selling. To respond this issue the outreach teams will have to reinforce their life skills activities.

Closing remarks

The findings of this Street Children Profile show the importance of prevention work and the necessity to reinforce it with every target group: life skills activities with street children including substance misuse prevention projects, family support with street working children, safe migration with young migrants, indirect support for CAA and of course a strong follow up and case management with families, communities and children.

In 2006 more children could be reintegrated at an early stage to caregivers and to occupation than in previous years. It is a very good result that confirms and motivates all teams of Mith Samlanh, with the support of Friends-International, to continue developing its project to be able to provide, in collaboration with Government agencies and NGOs, a holistic, sustainable and effective response to the ever evolving needs of street children.

Glossary

(Mith Samlanh Programs and Activities)

Boarding House

The Boarding House is situated in the middle of the city, close to where many of street children live and work at night and provides a safe place to rest during the day. For a small fee they can have a place to sleep, shower and receive meals. Free medical care is administered daily. Children receive individual follow-up through case management and through life plan exercises which enable them to identify options and access alternatives to street life.

Child Rights Program

Mith Samlanh works to protect the rights of street children and to fight against the factors facilitating the spread of child sexual abuse in the tourism industry in Cambodia. It is important to provide children and their families with the information that will help them to protect themselves and to rescue children from abusive situations, including prostitution. Prevention/education programs for children, families and communities of children on how to protect themselves from kidnapping and trafficking are being carried out. Children are informed about their rights as children, citizens and workers in Cambodia. The Child Rights team also monitors and evaluates cases of abuse.

ChildSafe Network, Together protecting children



ChildSafe
network

Together, protecting children.

Child Safe is a network designed to protect children from all forms of abuse. It is made up of businesses that have close contact with children, such as taxi-drivers, hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, internet cafes, tour operators and media partners. It also includes members of the child's immediate environment, such as parents, government officials, teachers, religious leaders, non-locals and travellers. ChildSafe works by encouraging community activism involving a positive behaviour change. This process ensures awareness of the dangers children face, the tools ChildSafe members can use, and the encouragement to take action when they witness a child in a risk or abusive situation.

Day Care Centers

The Day Care Centers are located in the grounds of two hospitals with large HIV wards for vulnerable people. They offer important respite services for children whose parents are sick with HIV/AIDS, thus preventing them from having to move to the streets. They provide recreational and educational activities, emotional support and basic health, hygiene and nutritional care. An important part of their work is also the facilitation of creating family plans. Mith Samlanh staff, the parents and the child (if old enough), put together a plan instructing where a child is to be placed once orphaned.

Drug Process

► Harm Reduction Program:

Harm reduction services provided various behavior change options including: material distribution for safe practices including needle/syringes, sterile water,

Vaseline (for solvent use burn protection), condoms, also safer drug use awareness, drug use vulnerability education, one on one counseling, group work, medical consultation/treatment and referral, activity/rest/washing space, detoxification treatment assessment and referral, life skills education and also accessing alternative activities to drug use.

► **Drug Withdrawal Treatment and Formal Rehabilitation:**

Mith Samlanh offers the opportunity for dependant substance users to enter a 2 week physical detoxification on a voluntary basis. Called the 'Green House', the service offers symptomatic treatment under medical and social work supervision, which allows users to undergo safe supervised drug withdrawal in a therapeutic setting.

Recovering users are able to remain at the Green House for 6 weeks after detoxification for formal rehabilitation, developing skills and strategies to stay drug free based on cognitive-behavioral counseling models, also physical and social activities. Youth are encouraged to plan further steps in their recovery through life planning.

► **Social Rehabilitation:**

Following formal rehabilitation these youth are able to continue their recovery through accessing other Mith Samlanh services such as vocational skills, remedial education, and culture activities with relapse prevention support, and are supported back to the community through access to employment, public school, and integrating drug free social networks including family.

Educational Center (EC)

Non Formal Education (NFE) provides street living children, street working children and very poor children with an opportunity to get an education. The specific objective is to support sustainable reintegration of street and out-of-school children into the public school system through the development of NFE methodologies. This system supports children to catch up many levels allowing them to rapidly reintegrate the public school system.

Home-Based Production

Home Based Production supports families of vulnerable children and youth to improve their income so that their children can go to school instead of working on the streets. Since 2005 over 20 different products have been designed, and 36 families were trained and equipped to produce. In order to support the scheme, two points of sales are opened in Phnom Penh and one in Siem Reap will be opened in 2008. 60% of all sales are paid back to the producers. With the rest of the profits, the team develops new production and designs a basic welfare plan for families.

IEC Material

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material is developed by most teams. These materials educate children on the streets and in the Centers about different topics such as Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS, Drugs, Child Rights etc. in a very comprehensive way – with the use of pictures, symbols and communication activities.

Outreach

The Outreach Team works day and night, directly with children who are living and working on the streets. The team builds confidence and trust with street children and provides counselling, basic health care, street education (including a mobile library), sports and games as well as life skills education and awareness (HIV/AIDS, drugs, reproductive health, STDs, Child Rights). Children on the street are taught how to protect themselves. Options and alternatives to street life are discussed with children and life plans are designed to support the children to safely move away from street life.

Peer Educators

Mith Samlanh has created a successful system of Peer Education within all its programs. All children receive basic life skills training. The ones who are most interested are asked to participate in further training to eventually gain the skills required to become a Peer Educator. Peer Educators choose one topic on which to base their educational sessions and create IEC material to use with their peers (theater, puppet shows, newsletters, games, dance shows, posters, photo-stories, photographs, etc.). These Peer Education sessions are carried out on the streets, in communities and in the Center, complimenting the work carried out by staff.

Placement

The Placement team works to reconcile children with their families. The children are encouraged and supported to return to their families, to reintegrate into the public school system or to find rewarding employment. The team provides support to be families and/or the children for the placement, and organizes regular follow-up to support the children's reintegration and to ensure the success and sustainability of the placement.

Reintegration

Reintegration refers to supporting a child to return to an environment they may have originally had links to and/or are familiar with. This can include the reconciliation of children with their immediate family, and where this is not possible, with their extended family. It also refers to supporting a child who is prepared to go back into the public school system.

Training Center (TC)

The objective is to offer former street youth realistic, sustainable alternatives to street life through 10 vocational training programs. All training includes hands on practice and are adapted to the present needs of the employment market. About 350 students over the age of 14 years, have access to vocational training that includes the choice between:

- mechanics (motorcycle and car),
- electronics (radio and TV repair),
- electrical (repairing electric appliances and setting up the electrical systems),
- sewing,
- hairdressing for men,
- cooking (Khmer and Western style),
- beauty training,
- welding,
- laundry.

Additional training is offered to the students including Khmer literacy, English lessons, life skills, arts, cultural activities and sports.

Transitional Home

The Transitional Home was a shelter for up to 300 children and youth. In 2007, the Transitional Home has been replaced by three smaller shelters to provide a more family-like atmosphere. Street children can come to stay there for a longer time during their studies if they can not stay with their family. They are offered meals, showers, beds, people to talk to and activities. Children who stay at the Center know that Mith Samlanh will be looking for their families and that they will have to attend school or training during the day.

Safe Migration

Safe Migration provides activities and information in the provinces about safe migration from the provinces to big cities. Young migrants and street girls are identified through outreach activities at the main entries points (taxi stations, bus stations, train stations, ports) to Phnom Penh and are provided with support and advice to prevent them from ending up on the streets.

Young Women's Information Center

A Young Women's Information Center in central Phnom Penh provides young migrants (from the provinces) with safe place to stay while suitable options are identified for them. Here, the girls receive life-skills education, employment and housing information. Hygiene facilities, places to rest, basic health care, food and snacks are also available.

Youth Information Center in Kampong Cham

In Kampong Cham, Mith Samlanh opened a Youth Center in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs (DSAVY) in July 2005. The Center provides a safe space for youth in Kampong Cham with recreational activities, non-formal education and prevention to youth and people in their communities. Reproductive health and life skills training, medical and health care are also provided.

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Mith Samlanh

House 215, Street 13
P.O. Box 588, Phnom Penh,
Kingdom of Cambodia

Tel: (855) 23 220 596

Tel/Fax: (855) 23 426 748

Email: friends@everyday.com.kh

www.streetfriends.org

www.mithsamlanh.org



Friends International

House 9A Street 178
P.O Box 597, Phnom Penh
Kingdom of Cambodia

Tel: (855) 23 986 601

Email: info@friends-international.org

www.friends-international.org

www.childsafe-international.org

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