



QSA Notes

February 2025

Training gives Chenda the courage to overcome disabilities

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Chenda at work using sewing skills learned in the KCD workshop

Chenda lived a typical childhood until she fell seriously ill at age seven. With no health centre nearby, her father sought help from a traditional healer, which unfortunately worsened her condition. Desperate, he took her to doctors in Phnom Penh. However, the treatment delay left her with lasting impairments. Her ability to walk, her memory, speech, and hearing were all affected, and she needed time to process thoughts and speak.

The illness dramatically changed Chenda's life. It took four years for her to walk again. Her education ceased because she couldn't travel to school, especially during the wet season when roads were flooded. She experienced discrimination in her community, so her parents kept her at home for her safety. This isolation deeply affected her motivation and courage, leaving her feeling hopeless, with only her parents truly supporting her.

At 35, Chenda's life changed when she joined a Khmer Community Development (KCD) workshop. Initially, she was unsure what to expect, as she had become accustomed to rarely leaving the house and had not interacted with many people in years. However, she found the workshop transformative. The training brought together people with other disabilities and supported them in building self-confidence and self-acceptance.

Chenda says she gained courage and confidence. She learned skills, including sewing, which she now uses to make t-shirts to sell. She also learned how to raise chickens, providing her with a new source of income. She says,

At KCD's training sessions in Phnom Penh, I could share my story and connect with others facing similar struggles. Although there is still some discrimination, I feel confident enough not to let it affect me.

Chenda has also earned respect from her community, which is impressed by her ability to achieve things that many people without disabilities cannot.

Increasing the involvement of people with disabilities

Just over one percent of the 6,018 people involved in QSA projects in the 12 months to 30 June 2024 were individuals living with a disability. QSA acknowledges the need to increase the involvement of people with disabilities.

KCD is one of the QSA project partners focussing on increasing the involvement of people with disabilities. Their current project aims to facilitate 50 disabled people to join the project, and they have established a fund to support this. KCD also works with Phnom Penh Centre Independent Living (PPCIL), arranging for them to visit target disabled households to learn more about the needs of disabled people and provide recommendations for work with them in the community.

KCD also uses a participatory form of theatre (Forum Theatre), to enable disabled people to raise their concerns and issues with local authorities, and to identify measures to support people with disabilities in target communities.



Phnom Penh Center for Independent Living (PPCIL) and KCD conducting a needs assessment for people living with disabilities