

MEK Channeng



With the 11MSP, the Convention is returning to a place where the mine ban movement started two decades ago. It is an opportunity for the international community to recall how far this movement has come and how much work still remains to be done. It is also an opportunity to remember that there are many faces of the landmine movement in Cambodia. MEK Channeng is one of these faces.



When MEK Channeng, or “Chan”, 21, speaks of the landmine accident that in 2005 took his legs and one arm, he drops his bright smile. “I was a very poor orphan, finding food from day-to-day. I was working with my uncle and my brother chopping wood to build a room when I was hit,” he says. “I stepped on a landmine and it was all over. But I did not die,” he states proudly.

His accident shows that landmines are still taking lives and limbs, many years after the landmines movement was born. He was left “without hope,” but fortunately not without help. Thanks to the Cambodian Red Cross and the Jesuit Service in Banteay Meanchey, his life took a positive turn. “I was encouraged... I received a wheelchair, and began studying.”

As an eighth-grade student, Channeng attended the landmark 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World. “I was very lucky to go to Colombia with the youth forum and to be there when they made the Cartagena Action Plan,” he said.

Channeng, now in tenth grade, is using his experience and his newly-found voice to call for action. “I stepped on a landmine and now I have no legs and only one arm. But I have my brain, my heart and my voice to ask those who still have not done so, to join the Convention.”

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