

# Khun Minh – Empowering Youth Leadership for Child Protection in Ta Som Commune

Khun Minh, 18, lives with his parents in Phnov village, Ta Som commune, Angkor Chum district, Siem Reap province. He is a grade 12 student at Angkor Chum High School and has been passionate about community work since 2019, although opportunities to get involved were limited. This changed when First Step Cambodia (FSC), in partnership with Plan International Cambodia under the Promotion Protection Plus Initiative, established a Child and Youth (CAY) Club in Ta Som commune.

In 2021, Minh was selected by the Commune Council to join the club. He actively participated in FSC's training sessions on child rights, life skills, child protection, non-violent relationships, violence against children, early and forced marriage, facilitation, report writing, commune investment planning, issue prioritization, and community dialogue. These trainings gave him the knowledge and skills to advocate for children and youth in his community.

At first, Minh lacked confidence in speaking at commune council and district meetings. He was intimidated by local authorities and unsure how to analyze community issues. However, through coaching from the project team on investment planning, community dialogue, and advocacy, Minh gradually gained confidence and the ability to represent his peers effectively. Minh's leadership grew as he shared his knowledge with other youth in schools and communities and promoted the club's work on social media. In late 2022, he was elected as the club's representative.



Khun Minh, a representative of a Child and Youth club of Ta Som commune  
Photo by: FSC © 2024

**“I am very excited to have learned so much from the First Step Cambodia team, especially about facilitation, commune investment planning, and leading community dialogue. These experiences have given me the confidence to participate in local development and organize discussions on issues that matter to children and youth. I am committed to sharing my knowledge and encouraging others to get involved so we can make our community a better place. Even if financial support ends, I will continue this work to ensure that children and youth are empowered to exercise their rights. I am grateful to First Step Cambodia for bringing this important project to my commune, and in the future, I hope to become a government official to further support my community.”**

Recently, Minh led a community dialogue focused on school dropout and early and forced marriage. The dialogue brought together stakeholders to discuss solutions, and the commune council appreciated the club's efforts. Minh's ongoing involvement in commune events has strengthened the club's impact.

As a result, the commune council integrated the CAY club's action plan into the official commune investment plan for 2025. Minh's journey shows how training, mentorship, and youth empowerment can help young leaders raise important issues and drive positive change in their communities.

