

DARA SENG



Dara Seng had another life before mine action. He was a teacher in Cambodia. There, he found his passion for education and community engagement. The transition into Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) thus felt natural. It reflects his deep commitment to ensuring the safety of his fellow Cambodians. Today, he is Deputy Director of the Public Relations Department at the Cambodian Mine Action Authority (CMAA) and coordinates risk education activities across the country. More than anything, Seng cares about saving lives and wants to promote safer behaviour to truly make a difference.

Born and raised in a country plagued by remnants of war, Seng is deeply committed to the people. His people. His careful choice of words and the seriousness with which he seeks to innovate in his role at the CMAA is moving; because he has first-hand experience of the dangers that still lie hidden in Cambodian territory. So, he believes in the power of collaboration and the lasting impact of effective, localized risk education. Seng works closely with government agencies, international organizations, and local communities to ensure that information reaches those most in need. He is responsible for overseeing the planning, communication, and effectiveness of risk education campaigns, making sure they align with Cambodia's National Mine Action Strategy, which prioritizes reducing the number of accidents in rural areas where the threat from explosive ordnance remains high.

Seng's passion for risk education stems from his belief that it is not just about education — it's about saving lives. That is the very reason why he chose this path.

“ I believe that you can save people's lives through providing awareness to the impacted population, especially in the rural areas through raising awareness to support behavioral changes.”



EORE Assessment in 2022. © CMAA.



EORE Training of Trainers (ToT) session provided to the Police. © CMAA.

One of Seng’s key accomplishments has been improving the coordination of risk education efforts in Cambodia. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Technical Reference Group, a national working group that brings together operators and development partners to share best practices and enhance the effectiveness of risk education activities. This group meets several times a year to ensure that Cambodia’s approach to risk education is not only aligned with international standards, such as the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), but also tailored to the unique challenges faced by local communities.

Although, risk education has been provided for over 30 years in Cambodia, Seng does not feel it is over, the sector needs to innovate.

Looking ahead, Seng is especially focused on the role of risk education in managing residual contamination. He recognizes that even after clearance operations are completed, the risk of encountering explosive ordnance remains. To address this, he advocates for sustained partnerships with sectors such as education, community development, and law enforcement to ensure that risk education continues and that communities have the tools they need to report residual contamination.

Seng is also a strong proponent of localization in mine action. He highlights the work of organizations like the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) and the Cambodian Red Cross, which have developed networks of community volunteers who not only provide risk education but also serve as vital links between affected communities and clearance operators.

As Cambodia prepares to host the 5th Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty in November, Seng sees it as an opportunity for the country to showcase its progress and strengthen international collaboration.

“ This is a big deal for Cambodia,” he says. “We’ve come a long way, and we’ll be able to highlight the progress. The Review Conference will be an important platform for us to share our experiences and an opportunity to engage in international collaborations to continue these life-saving initiatives.”

This has been Seng’s driving force: remembering where he comes from, his work as a teacher, and why he cares so much. He has remained dedicated to one core principle throughout his career: the belief that education, when carried out with the right partners and the communities, can transform lives. More than that, it can change the world.

“ EORE is still needed in Cambodia,” he says. “We must adopt different strategies and approaches because mines and explosives continue to cause accidents and endanger our affected populations daily.”



EORE Media Campaign 2023. © CMAA.