



# YARY CHHAY

**Senior Social Worker/Child Protection Officer**  
**Children's Future International, Cambodia**



***“I believe by providing social work services we support positive change for children and families.”***

## Overview of role

I have worked as a Senior Social Worker and Child Protection Officer at Children's Future International (CFI) for two years. I work as part of a team that works directly with a local orphanage supporting them in transitioning to community-based care. This is important work as orphanages are a significant risk here in Cambodia – around 80 per cent of the young people living in them are not actually orphans. In the child protection part of my job, I work to make sure all children are protected from abuse and exploitation.

## Tasks and responsibilities

I complete initial assessments to decide what services families need and I facilitate closure plans for families who are doing well so they can safely exit from CFI services without becoming dependent. I also work directly with orphanage staff and support them in learning the skills needed for community-based work – including how to identify children who are ready to be reintegrated and how to start the process. I also run a youth participation group so that we can understand the issues they are facing, and I run a training for girls on future career options.

## Training and education

I have a bachelor's degree in teaching English as a second language and a master's degree in law and political science. Through CFI, I receive a lot of regular training on child protection and counselling skills. More recently this training has been on sexuality, gender and speaking to children. I have also completed my train the trainer certificate to prepare me to train parents on positive parenting.

## Motivation

In my job, I love supporting families to make sure their basic needs are met and preventing families from separating. I also love delivering



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trainings so that others can share the knowledge with their community.

## Changing role due to COVID-19

COVID-19 has completely changed all of our roles. We have all been working from home and having to complete most contact via phone and social media. This has been challenging for keeping in touch with children who are at high risk. When we do visit, we wear masks and keep a distance. We have also needed to be creative and learn how to deliver our programmes online.

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## Who is the social service workforce?

While capturing any one definition of the social service workforce is challenging, it can be broadly defined to describe a variety of workers – paid and unpaid, governmental and nongovernmental – who staff the social service system and contribute to the care and well-being of children, youth, adults, older persons, families and communities. Social service workers engage people, structures and organizations to: facilitate access to needed services, alleviate poverty, challenge and reduce discrimination, promote social justice and human rights, and prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and family separation.

## What is Social Service Workforce Week?

Every year, the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance hosts Social Service Workforce Week. The week serves as an opportunity for advocates to bring attention to and build support for the social service workforce as well as raise awareness about promising workforce strengthening efforts supported by stakeholders around the world.

Organized around daily themes focused on areas of practice, the week will allow Alliance members and the public to engage in a dynamic platform of information exchange and advocacy through various forms of social media.

## What is the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance?

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance works towards a world in which a well-planned, developed and supported social service workforce engages people, structures and organizations to strengthen and build individual, child, family and community well-being and resilience. To achieve this, we work to build and channel the political will, actions, resources and structures necessary for a social service workforce that is knowledgeable, capable, critically reflective, resilient and committed.

The Alliance is an inclusive network of more than 3,000 individual members affiliated with a range of organizations and institutions across 145 countries. The Alliance is currently funded jointly by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), under the Partnerships Plus project implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., and by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through projects at global, regional and national level. The Alliance is a fiscally sponsored project of Tides Center, a U.S. registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

## Learn more

Learn more about Marcela and other social service workers! Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SSWWeek and online at [www.socialserviceworkforce.org/](http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/)

**Improving the workforce. Improving lives.**