



Mr. Hem Lorn, VHSG conducts PLHIV visit to follow up and encourage for treatment compliance. Photo by Khorn Linna/CRS

Village Health Support Group Helps in Follow Up to People Living with HIV in Lost to Follow Up Cases

SUCCESS STORY

Prey O'Mal Village in Sangkat Roleap, Pursat Province, has a total population of almost 2,000, and residents mainly work on agricultural farms to grow rice. Based on the words of the village health support group (VHSG), it was found that there are five people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the village.

One of the five PLHIV in the village is named Mr. Sambo; he contracted HIV in 2008. Since then, he used services at the ART site regularly until January 2022. Between February to May 2022, he left his hometown of O'Mal Village to work in Veal Veng District, Pursat Province – which is located far away from the ART site at the provincial referral hospital. For three months, Mr. Sambo could not access the service he needed for proper treatment at the ART site, primarily due to the long distance (approximately 120km) and a lack of transportation. As a result, his health condition deteriorated significantly, which was the reason he decided to return home in May 2022. When Mr. Sambo arrived in O'Mal Village, he was severely sick and was becoming progressively worse.

CRS' Resilient Sustainable System for Health (RSSH) Project, funded by the Global Fund, collaborates with the provincial health department (PHD) to support capacity building training that promotes and strengthens VHSG integrated roles in community HIV and AIDS response. This type of support includes knowledge

on confidentiality, stigma, and discrimination as well as provides follow-up and support to PLHIV who are considered as lost to follow up (LTFU) cases. Mr. Hem Lorn, a 49-year member of the VHSG is supported by the RSSH project. He is one of the VHSG members trained by the project and is highly motivated in performing his role to follow up with the PLHIV who are LTFU cases in his village.

Mr. Hem Lorn cares about the well-being of the villagers in his community, regularly visiting people. Once he heard news of Mr. Sambo returning home, he visited him to better understand his HIV condition considering the worsening of Mr. Sambo's health due to lost to treatment for three months. The two individuals met to discuss, which encouraged Mr. Sambo to return to receive treatment again. Soon after their meeting, Mr. Lorn brought him to the ART site at the Pursat provincial hospital, on his own motorbike.

One month after Mr. Sambo got back on track with his treatment, his health remarkably improved. He looks much healthier and frequently engages with his neighbors in the village, unlike before. Although his condition is more stable at the moment, with support from the RSSH project, Mr. Hem Lorn continues to remember to follow up with Mr. Sambo's treatment.



“In the village, I help HIV patients to get treatment service at the ART site, regularly. I normally do follow up with them through phone calls or make a visit to their houses. I want HIV patients to have hope. If they comply with the treatment course, they are healthy and be able to work. If they do not, their health may get worse, and they have HIV drug resistance.” stated Mr. Hem Lorn.

