

Red Phalkun, 28 year-old

9 March, 2006

My name is Phalkun. I am from Kampong Cham province. I have been in Phnom Penh for about one year and a half. I used to work as a beer promotion girl for Ashahi beer for two months. The salary is \$60 a month but I was paid \$40 a month as I just started working (it seems as probation period). I also got tips 2-\$3 from clients.

I have one 3 year-old son with my previous husband. I have lived together for two years, but we divorced because he always drank wine, played game and had the new wife. He hit me very often and has never been responsible for any thing in the family. I was unbearable, lastly he look down at my mother.

I have six siblings but my other two brothers died, one by HIV/AIDS and another got the problem with liver. I am the third child and I am the only daughter in the family.

My mother now is 62 year-old, and she had operated so she cannot do any thing. My father died because he had problem with his stomach. Moreover, I also have my 88 year-old grandma and my sister-in-law who is the victim of having HIV/AIDS infection from her husband living together as well. Because of the poor household in the family as I could not earn enough money to support the family from selling fruits, I decided to come to live in Phnom Penh. I tried to apply for a job at the garment factory but i did not get it. Because I did not get higher education, the only choice I can do is a beer promotion girl beside the garment factory work, and these jobs are discriminated by the society very much.

I also sell sex besides selling beer because the salary I get is not enough to pay for me and my family's needs or expenses even I try to manage it. I have only one partner in that time. He is a widower man and working as the construction worker. He loves me, encourages me to stop selling beer and he promises me to be responsible for my life but I always think about this as I need the money how can I stop. The company stopped me without giving me any payment because I could not sell beer much and my boyfriend took me out very often, too.

Later on, Thary, the member of WNU advices me if I could stop working as a beer promotion girl, she will help me to go for the vocational training at COSECAM where helps the poor women, sex workers to learn how to sew or make up. When I finish the training, I would get other job, and then society will not discriminate against us anymore.

I decided to go for training of the making up section which took eight months from April 2005 to November 2005. I got paid \$45 a month and other \$15 for my child and they also provided food for me as well during the training terms. In that time, my boyfriend and I decided to live together and we also get the marriage letter from the village chief. His parents know that I am a beer promotion girl but they love me and do not discriminate against me. I also try to gain favors from them. They all love my son, too.

Usually I got \$30 from making up in the wedding at the provinces, and \$10 in Phnom Penh. I do not have my own pretty salon but I drop my phone number to whom that knows me. So that they contact me when there are weddings.

I used to have two times of blood testing when I was a beer promotion girl and after I stopped. First in Phnom Penh, and I paid 4000reil (\$1) for the second testing at the health center at my homeland. I am negative. I went to check up my health like opportunity diseases at Rhact Clinic without required any payment as they help the poor such as beer promotion girl as they

contact the beer company during I was selling beer but I never have discharge or any problems. Since I stopped working there and finished the training I never get sick.

I am so happy now to see my life become better. I have my own family, and can earn some money that not as difficult as before. No one will look down on me or discriminate against me anymore. Even though I have a better life but I never forget my previous experience working as beer promotion girl. I wish I would help others who are the victim as I used to. No one wants to do such of job that society discriminate against us but because we do not have spaces of the employment as we have lost every thing and suffered from the privatization, the only choice we can do at the end is beer promotion girl, or sex work. All are about the stomach and family lives. But it is not our fault of being as beer promotion girl or sex workers, the cause is because of the liberalization and privatization which encourage and offer us to pay more money, then they tool all our properties but at the end we are blamed as the bad girls.