

## From Community Preschool Toward Secondary School

### Hea Sreyminh's Journey of Learning

The following is the story of Hea Sreyminh, a former student of Po Krom Community Preschool in Kampong Leaeng District, Kampong Chhnang Province.

Po Krom Community Preschool was established by the Cambodian Children's Advocacy Foundation Organization (CCAFO) in collaboration with the Kampong Leaeng District Office of Education, Youth and Sport, as well as the Po Krom village and Po Commune Council Office. The preschool has also received financial support from the iHerb Charitable Foundation and Karuna Children Cambodia Organization, formerly the Cambodian Buddhist Library Project Organization.

When Hea Sreyminh first enrolled at Po Krom Community Preschool in November 2020, going to school was not something she enjoyed.

At that time, Sreyminh was only five years old. During her first days at preschool, she often cried and asked to go home. She did not want to study, play with the other children, or talk to her teacher. “[She did not want to study, play with her friends, or talk to me,](#)” recalled Mrs. Ho Kimheap, who was Sreyminh's community preschool teacher at the time.

Like many young children attending school for the first time, Sreyminh needed time to adjust and become familiar with the new school environment. Her mother, Mrs. Orn Sreymom, however, continued bringing her to school every day.

### Gradually, Sreyminh Began to Change

She started making friends and enjoying the different activities at school. From a child who once cried and wanted to return home, she gradually became a child who enjoyed coming to school and attended regularly. She learned to listen to her teacher, participate in classroom activities, communicate with her classmates, and use polite expressions such as “[thank you, sorry, hello, and goodbye.](#)”

Mrs. Ho Kimheap observed that as Sreyminh became more comfortable in the preschool environment, she became increasingly interested in learning. She listened carefully to her teacher's instructions and participated actively in classroom activities.

What began as a difficult experience during her first days at preschool gradually developed into an interest in and love for learning. **Photo:** [Sreyminh, fourth from the left, while attending Po Krom Community Preschool in 2020.](#)



## Several years later, Sreyminh continued to demonstrate her determination and commitment to education.

As of August 2026, when Mrs. Ho Kimheap visited Sreyminh and collected information about her educational progress, Sreyminh was studying in Grade 6 at Po Primary School. In a class of 37 students, Sreyminh ranked first and regularly received certificates of recognition for her academic performance. Her Grade 6 teacher described her as a hardworking student who makes a strong effort in her studies and shows respect toward her teachers, elders, and classmates.

In the new academic year, Sreyminh will continue her education in Grade 7 at lower secondary school. Moving on to secondary education will mark another important step in a learning journey that began when she was a young child at community preschool.

**Photo:** Sreyminh while studying in Grade 6 at Po Primary School.



The two photographs of Sreyminh capture different stages of her educational journey. The photograph from 2020 shows her as a young child learning and participating with her friends at community preschool. Several years later, she stands in her school uniform with a book in her hands, preparing to move on to the next stage of her education.

### Sreyminh's Goal Does Not End with Grade 7

Sreyminh hopes to continue her education through completion and dreams of becoming a teacher in the future. Her mother has expressed her happiness with Sreyminh's progress and her appreciation to the teachers who have worked hard to teach and support her daughter from preschool through primary school. She is also grateful that a community preschool was available close to their home, giving Sreyminh the opportunity to begin her education at an early age.

Sreyminh's story also illustrates the longer-term value of CCAFO's Community Preschool Project. Community preschool is not simply a place where young children begin learning letters, numbers, colors, and shapes. It is also an environment where children can learn to communicate with others, participate in group activities, develop positive behavior, build self-confidence, and become familiar with the school environment from an early age. The results of early childhood education are not always immediately visible. Sometimes, those results become clearer after children have continued their education for several years and begun to develop goals for their own futures.

For Sreyminh, the journey began with a young girl who cried and wanted to go home during her first days at preschool. Gradually, she became a student who enjoys learning, works hard, and achieves strong academic results.

Today, Sreyminh is preparing to continue to Grade 7 with a strong commitment to her education and a dream that one day she will become a teacher.

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