

Case Study: Providing Opportunities for a Mother and her Children (June 2023)

30-year-old Sreymom* is the mother of four young children; 2 girls, ages 10 and 2, and 2 boys, ages 7 and 5. Her husband, the children's father, is currently in prison serving a 3-year sentence for non-violent crimes. Sreymom and her children live all together in a tiny ramshackle house. Their home doesn't have electricity or a proper toilet. They share a well with neighbors when they need water.

Until recently, what little money Sreymom earned was from collecting plastic and metal trash from the riverbanks which she in turn sold to recyclers. When they didn't tag along with their mother while she scavenged for trash, the children would stay at home, with the oldest daughter in charge of the younger siblings. None of the children had ever been to school before.

"It was really hard before. Sometimes we had enough to eat, and sometimes we didn't." – quote from mother

With the support of M'Lop Tapang's social workers, Sreymom and her children are now in a better and safer situation. The team helped with repairs on their house, adding a simple walkway to the entrance so that the children don't fall off the porch. The four children are now attending daytime programs at M'Lop Tapang. The two oldest have started Grade 1 non-formal education classes at the Education Center, and the two youngest are enrolled in the Baby Care Program that works with children under the age of 5 years old and diagnosed with malnutrition. All the children receive free medical services, supervised daytime activities, healthy nutritious meals, and organized play. Sreymom herself has started to learn cooking, one of M'Lop Tapang's vocational training programs. The family is also provided with food and hygiene supplies on a regular basis to ensure they have enough to eat at home.



Figure 1 Family house



Figure 2 Mother learning cooking

Additionally, M'Lop Tapang's social workers have helped Sreymom to visit her husband while he is incarcerated. A plan is in place already for M'Lop Tapang's employment services team to assist the children's father in finding a safe job once he is released from prison

"Our lives are so much better now. I don't have to worry about my children having enough to eat, and I am so happy seeing them in school and playing with other children."- quote from mother

"It was boring to stay at home. I like it here so much better. There is a playground here with many things and I can play with my new friends." – quote from 10-year-old girl



Figure 3 - 10 year old daughter in MT classroom

*names changed for confidentiality