

Hello praying friends!

We are so overwhelmed with joy at how God is opening the hearts of not only our Plas Prai students but their parents, relatives and neighbors back in their home villages. Please read the enclosed snapshot of one student's life and how God has both transformed her and is beginning to transform her village as well. There were no believers in Songlong Chey where Sopheourt is from prior to 2022. But God has been steadily working through this young lady, the prayers of her friends, a medical team and, of course, the Holy Spirit. Read "Sopheourt's Story" (attached) to find out more!

Thank you for your prayers over the last two months. Besides Sopheourt's story, 7 Plas Prai students were baptized (pictures attached) last month and we got to celebrate that with a youth team from our home church, Davisville. This was such a highlight for us!

Coming up, please pray for these events:

1. This Tuesday, September 26, about 20 new believers from 5 different villages (Sopheourt's village, too!) will gather with us as we help them to begin to understand the big picture of salvation through the Bible.
2. The new school year will start December 1 as the government tries to get back to the former education schedule for the country which was thrown off due to Covid. This means a bit of scrambling for the volunteer workers at Plas Prai. Please pray that we can help them get their breaks before they jump into a new year just two weeks after the old one finishes!
3. Sina will move into the Plas Prai management position. She is very familiar with just about all the runnings of the ministry. But please lift her up in prayer as she assumes responsibility and learns a few new things that she has not had experience with yet.
4. Sokhoeurn, our current Plas Prai manager, will move into a full-time role as church-planter. This faithful man and his family have given much over the last 5 years to manage the Plas Prai and have done superbly! They will continue to help at Plas Prai but will have more minor roles. Rather, they will focus on the ever growing group of new believers coming to faith through our students in villages where there is no gospel witness. Please pray that God will supply all of Sokhoeurn's family's needs. We will continue to partner closely with them in the area of church-planting.

We are thankful for each of you and your partnership in this work. May God continue to fill you with his joy and meet each of your needs by his grace.

With appreciation for you,  
Jim and Carolyn

Carolyn Gabriels  
World Team Cambodia  
[carolyn.gabriels@worldteam.org](mailto:carolyn.gabriels@worldteam.org)  
(country code 855) 97-686-0001  
Mailing address in Cambodia:  
P.O. Box 2450  
Phnom Penh 3  
Cambodia



# Sophoeurt's Story

It all began in 2017 when a student living in a remote village of Cambodia felt determined to study high school. She had already showed her perseverance by leaving home and living with her grandma to attend middle school. She had no connections to be able to continue into high school until she heard of a place that received students in her situation and helped them complete high school.



**Sophoeurt on interview day  
at Plas Prai in 2017**

Plas Prai was that dormitory and she decided to take an application. The information said the dorm was run by Christians, and although anyone was welcome to stay there, the document was clear that the leaders openly talked about their faith at the dorm and that church attendance was required. Sophoeurt didn't know any Christians but had heard some things from other villagers – none of which was good. She determined to put her application in anyway and she would stand firm in her own belief system if she was accepted.

Seeing Sophoeurt's determination to study and her clear need, the leaders at Plas Prai accepted her and she began her three year journey through high school at the dorm. Her resolve to reject Christianity began to falter as she watched the caring staff interact with her and other students. She watched them deal gently with the students and with each other, protecting the dignity of each other, forgiving each other as needed, not holding grudges and always putting others first. She didn't understand why these Christians were not like the stories she'd heard from the villagers. She also noted that what she was taught about God at Plas Prai was consistent with the way the Christians around her were living.

As time went on, Sophoeurt was so drawn to the good news of God's plan of salvation and the mercy he offers everyone through Christ's work on the cross, she concluded that what she had heard in the village about Christians was wrong and what she was seeing and hearing each day at Plas Prai was truth. By 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Sophoeurt decided that she wanted the relationship God was offering her, she wanted salvation! She began learning about baptism and wanted to be baptized to show everyone that she now had new life in Christ. She had one road-block. Her family had not experienced everything she had at Plas Prai. They still believed that Christians were not good and that this was a foreign religion. They feared Sophoeurt would reject her culture and the ways of their ancestors by becoming a follower of Jesus. When Sophoeurt discussed with them that she had become a believer and wanted to be baptized, they told her she needn't bother returning home.

When the staff heard the story, we all prayed with Sophoeurt. When she cried, our hearts broke with hers and we encouraged her to trust that God was working and that he would help her. We encouraged her to give her parents time. For one year, we all continued to pray together. Sophoeurt continued to show her faith to her family through her continued kindness, gentleness and service. She felt very alone when she was at home, but held onto the belief that God was with her in and through all of it. She trusted this truth though she didn't always feel the reality. By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Sophoeurt asked her parents again for permission to be baptized. They still refused. This time Sophoeurt told them she needed to take this step of faith. God was calling her to do this for him. They were angry and couldn't understand.



**Sophoeurt graduates DTS 2020  
(3rd from right)**

Once baptized, Sophoeurt could not get enough of God! She determined to study at YWAM's Discipleship Training School (DTS). In fact, she gave up a full scholarship to study in Phnom Penh at the University. She was hungry for Jesus. Her parents were beside themselves and confused as to why this bright young lady would choose this path. They thought she was crazy. Despite their position, Sophoeurt continued to love them and prayed regularly.

After 9 months of training with YWAM, Sophoeurt wanted to return to Plas Prai as a volunteer staff member, helping the younger students in the dorm who had come after she left. She committed to two years and prayed that she'd have opportunity to interact more with her parents while helping at Plas Prai. During the first year, Sophoeurt was able to spend more time at home. As she did, she would speak more about her faith and was more courageous to respectfully respond when family or villagers spoke down about Christ. She prayed against bitterness and continued to pray that God would open the hearts of those around her to the truth. Her family spoke less harshly as time went on and her siblings began asking questions.



**Davisville medical team with Sophoeurt**

During her second year, a group of Davisville church medical workers planned a trip to Cambodia focused on remote areas where villagers had the least access to good medical care. Because Sophoeurt had volunteered at the Plas Prai and because her





**Sophoeurt's parents, filled with joy, August 2023**

village fit the location where they wanted to serve, the team set up their clinic very close to that location. Sophoeurt's family members came to the clinic and not only received good medical care, but had the opportunity to hear the gospel.

One of Sophoeurt's uncles had chronic health issues and the team was able to see him, provide some answers and get him follow up care. The team made it clear that they were coming in the name of Jesus and that their free service was because of the one who loved them and gave himself freely for them. Sophoeurt's uncle was not only touched physically that day, he went home as a new creation in Christ. After the team left, he kept calling Sophoeurt to ask more about God, Jesus and the Bible. Soon the rest of the family began to see the change in this uncle's life. Shortly after this, Sophoeurt's siblings were not only asking her questions but were telling her they had chosen to put their trust in Jesus also! Within months, other relatives were coming to Jesus for salvation, joining a small group of believers in the neighboring town and calling Sophoeurt frequently with their stories of God's goodness.

Not only were a number of relatives choosing Christ, her parents had begun to tell others in their family that they should consider believing in Jesus. No, they had not trusted Christ for their own salvation, but they saw the positive benefits and thought that others should believe! Finally, Sophoeurt's mother came with Sophoeurt's uncle to a new believers' gathering at the Plas Prai. There, she decided Jesus was for her, too! When she went home, her husband told her that he too wanted this faith! They were both baptized last month in August 2023.

Just a few weeks ago, a group of us visited Sophoeurt's village. The new believers gathered to meet us. The peace on their faces was only matched by the joy in their voices as they each rushed to tell us their personal story of how God had met their needs and changed their lives. Sophoeurt's parents both spoke freely of how thankful they are to have Jesus as their Savior and God in their lives. Sophoeurt's uncle has been sharing what he knows with the group and they are all praying for the oldest brother who is not yet a believer but wants to know more. His grown children successfully kept him from attending the new group in the village that these believers formed, but with his

daughter-in-law's help, he was able to join us when we went and we gave him a Bible and challenged him to seek the truth for himself.

Our hearts are overwhelmed as we watch the Lord work through students from Plas Prai, like Sophoeurt, who have come to know him and have taken the good news back to their homes and villages. Our focus is now on helping those believers grow in their new relationship with Jesus. The new believers in Sophoeurt's village had two primary prayer requests when we asked how we could pray for them: #1 – "We want to see everyone in our village come to know and love God." And #2, "We want to grow in our love and knowledge of him as well!" Please pray this for Sophoeurt's relatives, village and for all the villages in our province. Please pray that we too will continue to grow and be empowered by the Spirit to help others grow and reach their neighbors, as well!



**Our visiting team prays over these precious new brothers and sisters in Christ.**



**Sophoeurt's parents honored us with a special banana flower soup and perfectly seasoned fried beetles!**