

Ms. An Lap – Promoting Child Protection in Nokor Pheas Commune

An Lap, 41, is a community pre-school teacher in Sambour village, Nokor Pheas commune, Angkor Chum district, Siem Reap province. On April 3, 2022, she joined the Protection Plus core parents group, organized by First Step Cambodia and funded by Plan International. The group has 10 members, including nine women, all committed to improving child protection in their community.

Ms. Lap received training on child rights, child protection, domestic violence, and stress management from First Step Cambodia. This training transformed her understanding of parenting and discipline. Before, she had witnessed many families using violence against children, believing it was necessary to ensure obedience. Such violent discipline was seen as normal and accepted in the community. However, after the training, Ms. Lap realized that violence harms children physically and mentally, leading to negative outcomes such as school dropout, mental health issues, and even suicidal thoughts.

With this new knowledge, Ms. Lap became an advocate for positive, non-violent parenting. She actively raises awareness about child rights and the harmful effects of violence. Since her involvement, she has observed a significant reduction in violence within her community. More parents now send their children to school and support them without using violence.



Ms. An Lap, a member of a Core Parent Group of Nokor Pheas commune
Photo by: FSC © 2022

“Being part of the core parents group and receiving training from First Step Cambodia has been life-changing for me. I am committed to continuing my involvement and learning more so I can better support children and families in my community. I will keep sharing what I have learned about positive parenting and child protection to help reduce violence, sexual abuse, child labour, exploitation, and trafficking. Together, by raising awareness and working with local authorities, we can create a safer, healthier environment where every child can grow up free from harm.”

When Ms. Lap encounters families that abuse their children, she talks to them about the importance of stopping violence. If the family refuses to change, she seeks help from village chiefs, commune chiefs, the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC), police, and local organizations. She stresses that preventing violence requires parents and caregivers to understand child rights, child development, and the special needs of children with disabilities. She also encourages providing children with access to education, health services, and emotional support.

Ms. Lap’s dedication demonstrates how education and community engagement can create safer, more supportive environments for children in rural Cambodia.

