



**united world schools**

## **UWS Life Stories**

A look at a few of the hundreds of people you  
are helping every day

## Katree: Aged 10 from Kro Lorng village

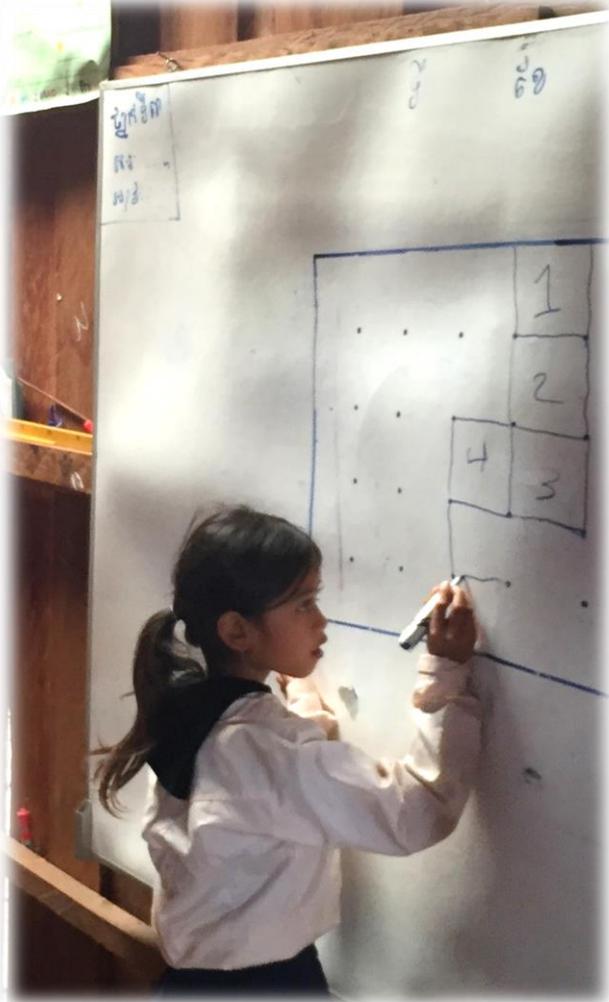
Katree\* is 10 years old and lives in the village of Kro Lorng in Northern Cambodia. She is the second eldest in a family of 5 children. Katree loves her village, particularly 'the nature' by which she means the huge forest that surrounds Kro Lorng.

In Cambodia children are meant to go to school when they turn six. Unfortunately, like thousands of children in her province, there was no school for Katree to go to. This meant Katree was brought up illiterate and only able to speak her tribal language. In 2014 UWS built a school in Kro Lorng. Katree was nine when the school opened and her whole life changed.

Before the school was built Katree would work all day with her family in the fields. The whole family would help prepare the ground, grow rice and look after their chickens and pigs. Katree said the work was hard and no matter the weather the family would go out to work. Katree has grown up knowing that if the crop was not good then they would go hungry. Katree said that some years bad spirits would effect the crops and everyone in the village would go without. This was particularly hard on the youngest children and unfortunately some of Katree's siblings had not survived. As the only girl in her family, Katree had the responsibility of looking after her youngest brother, Atra, who is four. Katree looks after Atra during the day while her mother does her chores. When the UWS school was opened Katree's mother was keen for her children to go to school but said she thought Katree might be too old to learn and that she would still need to look after Atra.

Katree has been going to school for over a year. She can now speak in the national language of Khmer and her reading is improving. Katree can count to 30 and is able to do basic addition and subtraction. She takes her brother Atra to school with her and he sits on her lap during lessons. Next year, when Atra turns five, he will start school himself and Katree thinks he will be top of the class.

Katree is still not sure what she wants to do when she grows up, she only knows that she doesn't want to be a farmer. With the help of UWS Kro Lorng she now has that option.



\*Katree's name has been changed to protect her but this is the story of a pupil at Kro Lorng

## Rochoman: Aged 22 from Jong Ra village

Rochoman is 22 years old and is a Community Teacher at Jong Ra village. Rochoman was born in a neighbouring village in Northern Cambodia. When he turned six he was sent by his parents to live with family members in a nearby town. Rochoman's parents are farmers and they were desperate for him to go to school. By staying with family Rochoman was fortunate enough to gain a place at one of the limited government schools. Rochoman described how lucky he was but also some of the problems. At his school the teachers didn't turn up every day and they often asked the students for money and food to help meet their needs.

Rochoman missed his family growing up but also realised just what a sacrifice they had made. Rochoman returned home annually before the Monsoon, when schools closed and he was needed to help prepare the ground for the crops. Rochoman's family were keen for him to be a policeman or doctor but Rochoman had other ideas.

Aged 19 he married Ocha and moved to her village, Jong Ra. The village was extremely remote and Rochoman realised that the children had no way of going to school. During the day Rochoman was looking for a job but spent his evenings teaching the local children to read and count outdoors. Rochoman said he loved teaching especially when he was able to explain how things worked.

In 2014 the village got their own UWS School. The School Support Committee, which was made up of village elders, had the job of choosing two local teachers who would be trained up and paid by UWS. Rochoman was the first person they approached. He instantly agreed to take the job and after some training began teaching even before the school was finished.

Rochoman has now been a UWS teacher for over a year and still gets regularly visited by UWS trainers. The school is very different from when he taught outside, he now follows a curriculum and has the same children attending every day. For Rochoman his status in the village has also changed. He says that he feels very respected in the village, even teaching some of the elders to read and write. His own family are also very proud and he loves the difference he is making to the community.

