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PROJECT NEWSLETTER

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Completion 26 computer labs and 11 sciences labs
- Life Skills Development efforts benefiting an estimated total of 20,732 students
- *Hands-on Science Resource Book* for teachers of Chemistry and Physics completed

IBEC PARTNERS

IBEC is funded by the American people through the US Agency for International Development (USAID). IBEC is implemented by World Education in close collaboration with Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE) and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education Youth, and Sport (MoEYS).

Other local partners include: WCRD, BSDA, NEP and EDA. Other international partners are Equal Access and the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Improved Basic Education in Cambodia (IBEC) Project

MAY 2011

ISSUE **6**

IBEC Continues to Build on Partnerships Working with MoEYS, Open Institute and Phnom Penh Post

IBEC maintained its momentum as it entered the Sixth Quarter of project implementation, a feat facilitated by the paucity of holidays during the reporting period. IBEC was able to identify new partners with whom to collaborate.

IT Lab Launch Ceremony in Siem Reap

IBEC organized a launch ceremony for an IT lab and a Science lab recently established at Samdech O High School in Siem Reap Town. The launch was attended by H.E. Nath Bunroeun (Secretary of State, MoEYS), the Director of the Office of Public Health and Education for USAID and the Director of the Provincial Office of Education as well as a representative from the Governor's Office giving the event



Good Cooperation with MoEYS: The Secretary of State cuts the ceremonial ribbon

an extremely high profile. The idea of doing the launch in Siem Reap relates to the fact that it is a new province. The launch will serve to better familiarize senior leadership in the province with the project as well as demonstrate the good work that it is doing.

Training video created by Open Institute

IBEC enlisted the assistance of the Open Institute to develop a video training tool that explains how trainers and school supervisors should conduct capacity building visits to schools. This video tool will greatly facilitate the training of core trainers provided by MoEYS to monitor schools, as well as school directors themselves because it helps them to understand the

expectations of capacity building activities. School directors are currently attending a 2-year School Management and Leadership Training Course (SMLTC) that will eventually end in their certification by the Ministry and World Education.



LIFT Staff give some advice while students practice interview techniques

Youth Publications

Editors from LIFT Youth Magazine, a supplement to the Phnom Penh Post, visited a project school that is developing a school newsletter. The visit to Speu High School was designed to be a meet-and-greet event as well as a workshop on different aspects of journalism. The program was very interactive and organized in such a way that the students were kept engaged in small group activities. Introducing young minds to aspiring journalists, currently attending the Royal University of Phnom Penh, was a great way to inspire the members of the Newsletter Club.

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The contents are the responsibility of World Education and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.

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Component I: Local NGO and Government Capacity Building & Advocacy for Sustainability

This quarter was marked by a focus on a range of capacity building activities. These activities included helping local partners to finalize benchmarks for improvements in their operational structures as well as the development of a monitoring tool that will help partners and IBEC assess their progress. The component also continued its efforts to support CEFACS, develop provincial working groups, and provide technical support to the 18 Beacon schools so far identified by the project.

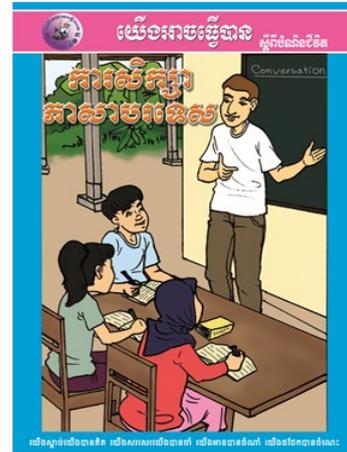
- Following the completion of performance benchmarks, the capacity building team assisted partners to align their policies to the government's tax laws, the National Social Security Fund, and the new NGO draft law.
- KAPE reached an important milestone in its capacity building efforts, sending its formal application to CCC for accreditation.
- All Beacon Schools managed to define a three-month plan to improve specific technical areas in which they aim to achieve 'excellence' and become a model for other schools.
- A first round of orientation training was provided to an additional seven CEFAC committees. Along with the contribution and feedback from local authorities, IBEC continued the process of revising the next round of CEFAC training materials.
- An important meeting with the Ministry's Consultative Group led to the adoption of an agreed framework for the implementation of the IBEC Life Skills Pilot in Year 3. This meeting was attended by all relevant departments.
- Meetings occurred with the Content Advisory Group (CAG) to finalize program content for the radio program and other media produced by the project. The CAG is a grouping of local stakeholder from the PoE, local partners, and community to agree on radio program content. These meetings ensure that stakeholders have adequate ownership of the program content and have some pride in what is broadcast.

Educational Outreach through Radio and Other Media

IBEC partner Equal Access Cambodia completed the implementation of several activities, including the production and broadcast of 4 new episodes of the life skills radio program - *We Can Do It*, and community engagement activities. Ten new student listening and dialogue groups were added to the existing 20 clubs in schools throughout Kampong Cham Province. These listening and dialogue groups ensure that the content of radio programming is fully discussed in target schools.

Comic Book Development

Another important output during the quarter involved the design of two new comic books that cover topics explored in the *We Can Do It* youth radio program, including key messages from the episodes. The first two books produced this year relate to *Studying Foreign Languages* and *Money Management*, respectively. Each comic book also comes with interactive exercises that will help students practice



skills discussed within a particular episode or topic. The comic books are designed to further the radio program's aim to engage, entertain and educate youth. These books are also very useful because they help to amplify life skills messages provided through the regular life skills classes .

Success Story

Component 2: Child Help Networks and Scholarships Make a Difference



Sokna gives a smile and has high hopes for the future

Lonh Sokna is 18 years old. She lives in RomPok village, Snuol District of Kratie Province. She is the third among seven children in her family. She has no father. All her brothers and sisters stopped studying at Grade 3 and 4 in order to help their family in farming. This year, Sokna studies in Grade 9 at Svay Chreas Lower Secondary School. She has been receiving a scholarship since Grade 7 from *Schools for Life Program* (2008-2009) and has been getting a scholarship since she was in Grade 8 from IBEC.

Sokna said that she is fortunate to receive a scholarship and help from her peers, which has encouraged her to stay in school and study hard. She is very happy that she is not discriminated against because of her disability and has the ambition to study until she has completed Grade 12. However, she worries that she will not be able to receive scholarship support beyond Grade 9 and then her mother will expect her to stop learning in order to help the family. But she still hopes that her commitment to continue her studies will be rewarded so that she can create a better future for her and her family.

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www.ibec.worlded.org

Component 2: More Equitable School Access

Scholarships

IBEC was able to implement scholarship distribution at both primary and secondary school level. During the quarter, there was a major spot check designed to ensure good governance in the administration of scholarship benefits. The project identified 5,247 scholarship recipients last quarter of which 63% were female. Schools reported remarkably low dropout levels, with no dropout at the primary level, and less than 3% dropout at the secondary level.

Children who are currently out of school continue to be an important IBEC target

group, and 2,220 potential beneficiaries were identified through mapping activities to receive financial assistance and support. IBEC has so far succeeded in re-enrolling 397 primary school children and 154 secondary school students with scholarship support.

In response to severe teacher shortages, IBEC worked with the Teacher Training Department and PoEs to recruit 120 new PTTC students from communes with the greatest teacher shortages. Scholarship benefits were distributed to 192 PTTC students chosen from these communes. PTTC Directors reported zero dropouts along with high performance levels of performance among the 192 beneficiaries.

Stakeholder-Driven Discretionary School Grants

IBEC oversaw the provision of considerable technical and material support to schools during the quarter. School management personnel devised different ways in which to utilize discretionary grants resulting in a wide range of activities being supported by IBEC including:

- Support to 225 school libraries
- Expansion of Child-to-Child Help Networks serving 8,966 beneficiaries
- Health Referrals for 39 physically challenged children
- Support to 271 Children's Councils
- Training for Girls' Counselors who provide support to 8,701 vulnerable girls.

Specialized training was also provided on the following subjects:

- Children's Rights
- Gender Equity
- Promoting Effective Homework

Centrally administered grants were also provided during the quarter, primarily for infrastructural developments such as:

- Water & Sanitation infrastructure (53 schools)
- Completion of two new Intermediate Classrooms
- Repairs to 88 classrooms

Success Story

Making a Dream Come True: Aspiring to be an inspiration to others



but now I am very happy that I can continue my studying and get success like today." She said she would commit to work hard until finishing PTTC and go back to teach in her local community and become a good teacher. She hopes she can be a role model for other girls in her village so that she can encourage them to work hard in learning .

Chan Neardey is 20 years old. She is a second year scholarship student studying at the Kratie Provincial Teacher Training College in 2010-2011. Neardey lives with her parents and her six siblings, three of whom are sisters. Her parents are both farmers in DamRe Village of Sambor District in Kratie Province, which is very, very far away from the college in Kratie Town where Neardey has to study. Right now, Neardey has to board at her school because she has no relatives living in the town where she studies. She finds it very difficult living so far away from home but because her family is poor, she doesn't have much choice.

Neardey has little money for paying her direct educational costs such as clothes, food, and other learning materials. All such issues would nearly push her to drop out of college. Fortunately, she gets support from USAID through the IBEC Project, which provides a stipend of 80,000 CR or about \$20 per month. Neardey said that, "if there weren't support from USAID, I would stop learning,

Component 3: Improved School Management & Community Engagement

IBEC completed the second of four capacity building workshops for school managers. The main theme of this workshop was "Improving Instructional Leadership" in schools. The workshop is a part of the School Management and Leadership Training Course (SMLTC) initiative designed for implementation over two years, leading to the eventual certification of school managers and administrators in target schools. The February workshop was attended by 507 school managers and administrators from target primary and secondary schools.

In connection with the instructional leadership workshop, IBEC provided a Reflection Workshop for Core Trainers who implement the course. The trainers learned how to perform post-project analyses by identifying factors such as what worked well and where the most important challenges remain. IBEC engaged two consultants to facilitate this workshop, as well as to develop a course outline for the next two SMLTC

workshops. IBEC cooperated with the Open institute to develop a training video on how to conduct productive school support visits, which greatly facilitated the workshop.

IBEC has been steadily expanding its coverage of capacity building support to School Support Committees. A total of 146 SSCs comprising 248 community members were provided with technical capacity-building workshops. The training team also implemented follow-up workshops for Technical Support Groups who work as peer mentors for teachers in target schools.

The Schools Helping Families activity has seen some impressive results this quarter. Through this program, IBEC provides additional scholarship support to vulnerable students who have learned life skills so that they may apply those skills in enhancing their family's local income. As a result of successful outreach efforts, this quarter, IBEC now provides assistance to 224 poor families.

Component 4: Improved Educational Relevance

Access to Information Technology

IBEC now supports a total of 25 USAID-funded labs across three provinces, having established the last two labs slated for this year in January. After reaching this target, IBEC moved its focus to teacher training, both with respect to digital literacy as well as IT integration issues.

The IT team held four Khmer Unicode and Open Office workshops as per MoEYS guidelines. The purpose of this technical support is to ensure that teachers can maintain the lab and administer the MoEYS prescribed IT curriculum to all students. These labs are now serving a total of 21,705 students with 81 MoEYS-assigned teachers trained by the project.

IBEC has been making strides in efforts to foster improved integration of IT facilities in the everyday teaching-learning process. For example,

IBEC is providing training in Project Method to teachers so that they can assist students in doing research projects. Students will then do a presentation to their classmates using PowerPoint templates. As of now, 32 classroom teachers across 8 schools have been trained in this methodology. Student research projects are now well under way and will culminate in Project Work Fairs planned for the end of the next quarter.

Another example is the School Newspaper Club pilot which is being successfully implemented in three schools. Club members are introduced to skills involved in newspaper production and student journalism. IBEC has been quite impressed with the outputs developed by students, leading to a desire to expand this initiative in other schools in the coming year.

Teacher Education

Most of the teacher education activities that took place during the quarter were refresher courses for Child Friendly School teachers at both primary and secondary school level. These were short one or two-day workshops that often took place on weekends and sometimes even on holidays to minimize the impact on study days for children. This support included the following activities,

- Secondary school teachers attended a one-day refresher course on how to organize Subject classrooms and integrate these facilities into CFS learning methodologies. In order to better facilitate the use of teaching aids in instruction, IBEC oversaw the distribution of Subject Classroom materials. Materials distributed included thermometers, grammar books and maps. Overall, 3,000 learning aids and books of various kinds were provided directly to schools for this purpose.
- Two foundational workshops were held for 462 new CFS teachers and 71 Community Teachers.
- IBEC trained over a hundred new remedial teachers in special techniques to help children with special learning needs. These efforts are expected to have a positive effect on blunting student repetition in all grades.
- Support to Technical Support Groups (TSG) at secondary school level: IBEC held reflection meetings with TSG members to identify problems and successes in their support to colleagues.
- Support to Subject Clubs: Within the last quarter, four more schools asked IBEC for assistance in creating subject clubs. As of now, IBEC is currently supporting 61 clubs across 24 secondary schools. Clubs undertake special activities in a number of topical areas such as English, History, Art and Creative Writing.



Children attending a remedial class lesson

Life Skills Framework

Life Skills implementation at field level began in earnest during the quarter with 93 secondary schools and 99 primary schools implementing life skills activities of some kind. A total of 20,732 children are benefiting from learning opportunities in agriculture, economic life skills, and socially relevant themes such as drug abuse prevention. An additional 19 new life skills modules are currently in production to complement the 11 modules developed last year.

These modules are being developed jointly with the Curriculum Development and the Vocational Orientation Departments in order to ensure ownership of the pilot by Ministry. IBEC plans to complete all modules for printing by July or August 2011.

IBEC also successfully organized a series of planning meetings with the Curriculum Development Department (DCD) and Vocational Orientation Department (VOD) where it was determined that the life skills pilot for next year ought to proceed as planned.

