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**PROJECT  
NEWSLETTER**

**IBEC AT A  
GLANCE**

- Five-year project: October 2009 to September 2014
- USD \$10 million in funding
- Implementing activities in three provinces (Kampong Cham, Kratie, and Siem Reap)
- Supporting 196 primary and 100 secondary schools across 3 provinces

**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 Kamputhian Action for Primary Education (KAPE) and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education Youth, and Sport (MoEYS).

Other local partners include: WCRD, BSDA, NEP, EDA and MEDIA ONE.

# Improved Basic Education in Cambodia (IBEC) Project

SEPTEMBER 2012

ISSUE



## IBEC Holds Key Mid-term Review Meeting

“IBEC is on the right track”: Director General of Education

As IBEC project reached its midterm point at the end of March 2012, World Education and KAPE organized an important Review that was held on 11 May 2012 in Siem Reap Province, drawing in a total of about 100 participants, including government counterparts, IBEC staff members, local partners as well as school teachers, students, and community members. The conference allowed all parties to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the last two and a half years, and discussed feedback for the next 2 years of the project. The Review Meeting was chaired by H.E Sam Serey Rath, Director General, Directorate of General Education, and Ms. Tara Milani, USAID OPHE Deputy Director.

The meeting included an exhibition of IBEC’s achievements, including samples of the 30 life skills instruction manuals that were developed over the last 2 years. POE Directors and Vice Directors made presentations on the project’s progress in their respective provinces, demonstrating a high degree of ownership and understanding of the project’s work in their schools. There were also presentations on the Life Skills Pilot, IBEC’s flagship activity, and on efforts to



*Participants examine the exhibitions at the review meeting during the break*

improve access to ICT in schools. Stakeholders made some very moving presentations about how the project had affected them personally including a young scholarship recipient enrolled at the Teacher Training College in Kampong Cham Province.

H.E. Sam Serey Rath closed the meeting with a very strong endorsement of the project’s work and expressed his view that the project is on the ‘right track’ in its approach to develop the school system. The meeting was then followed by a number of visits to target schools by members of the Consultative Group in the Ministry that oversees the project.

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

IBEC conducted a final round of benchmark appraisals with local partners, BSDA and EDA, in anticipation of the phasing out of assistance to them by Year 4. The component team has placed particular emphasis on helping BSDA to re-apply for accreditation from CCC at the end of the year so that they can join KAPE in becoming accredited.

On 26 June, 2012, a meeting was held with the Consultative Group and H.E. Sam Serey Rath to discuss the submission of IBEC's Year 4 Work Plan to USAID, and the expansion of life skills programming. H.E. Sam Serey Rath expressed full support for the proposed expansion and also recognized the need for the Ministry's departments to resolve the issue of overtime payments for teachers teaching life skills subjects. As a result, MoEYS will soon be issuing new guidelines for overtime payments.

### *Educational Outreach through Radio*

This quarter, IBEC partner Media One completed the final activities designed to disseminate life skills education information to a wide audience through radio programming and other media. MEDIA One (MI) a new LNGO comprising many of the old staff of Equal Access, took over EA's operations in Cambodia as of April 2012. MI received approval to continue EA outreach activities during this quarter. MI completed the production and broadcast of the life skills radio program, *We Can Do It*, and also conducted community engagement activities.

During the quarter, IBEC also organized numerous meetings with Provincial Working Groups to review measures for improving utilization of science labs, finalizing school tier classifications, and expanding the development of early grade literacy tools.

The coming year will be a strategic year for the IBEC project, during which all the involved organizations will need to invest time in advocacy in order to promote project achievements. All IBEC Project Managers and Provincial Coordinators were invited to participate in a one-day training on how to produce effective presentations, including an analysis of best practices, as well as practical suggestions to improve lay out and presentation techniques. IBEC implementing partner KAPE will work to identify future sources of funds to continue such staff development measures once the project comes to an end.

### **World Bank representative visits IBEC target schools**

On 23 May, 2012, Ms. Lynn Dudley, International Adviser for the Education Sector Support Scale Up Action Project, and Dr. Helen Abadzi, a specialist from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), came to visit IBEC supported schools to learn about innovative activities in the area of early grade reading. Dr. Abadzi is a well-known researcher in the area of early grade reading and assisted the Ministry in implementing the Early Grade Reading Assessment that informed the development of the new Grade 1 reader in 2010. The schools visited included Hun Sen Cheas PS and Thmor Pech PS in Tbong Khmom District, Kampong Cham Province. The schools demonstrated interesting interventions to the visitors such as remedial reading support, specialized classroom learning aids, bilingual classroom assistants, peer tutoring, and child-to-child help networks. The visitors actually spent about 30 minutes in a Grade 1 class to assess children's learning of reading and writing skills and came away considerably impressed. They also observed and video taped the student remedial program activities. Dr. Abadzi was very pleased with what she saw and said the schools were excellent and that it is obvious that IBEC is doing a great job.

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**[www.ibec.worlded.org](http://www.ibec.worlded.org)**

## Component 2: More Equitable School Access

### *Stakeholder-Driven Discretionary School Grants and Scholarships*

With the end of the school year approaching, scholarship programming support began to wind down at all levels, including in primary schools, secondary schools, and at the Provincial Teacher Training Colleges. At primary level, the local community scholarship committees held meetings with parents to encourage the reenrollment of their children at school next year. Reports from 170 schools indicate a dropout rate of about 6% of those receiving scholarships in Grades 4 to 6. Of the 1,934 students receiving scholarship assistance at lower secondary school level this year, 5% dropped out. Key reasons in both cases were identified as 'working at home' and 'migration' to Thailand to seek work. These rates are quite low in comparison to national rates, which are over 20%.



**Model Library Completed at Samdech Mae HS in Kampong Cham:** This is one of the most advanced libraries completed by IBEC to date. (The costs for the upgrading were shared with the Oak Tree Foundation.)

Around 400 storybooks entitled, *Discoveries, Inventions, and Creativity*, provided by the ASEAN Academy of Engineering and Technology, were distributed as well. With respect to Girls' Counseling Networks, over 22,000 children are being served. Project data shows 1,709 instances of consultations during the quarter, where more than 95% of girls who had left school for over three days eventually returned. Reports from schools with Child Help Networks indicated that 7,874 children benefited from classmate-mediated assistance such as peer tutoring, pen-pal networks, homework clubs, and peer support for children with physical challenges. IBEC also facilitated health referrals for 49 children with disabilities and chronic illnesses during the quarter.

School library renovations were completed this quarter, followed by a refresher course for 39 school librarians from across the 228 schools that have IBEC-supported libraries. Schools have reported positive end-of-quarter statistics that demonstrate widespread usage of the provided libraries including 95,000 users at primary school level and over 68,000 users at secondary level.

## Component 3: Improved School Management & Community Engagement

Since the completion of the School Management and Leadership Training Workshop 4 (SMLTC) last quarter, a central activity for this Component, IBEC has moved forward on a series of related activities. A reflection workshop was conducted for 20 project personnel at which they received guidance on how to conduct task work support visits, review school data, and monitor community outreach activities. Following the workshop, personnel conducted hundreds of support visits across all supported schools to help school directors complete the school management tasks they were assigned during SMLTC 4.

During the quarter, IBEC also participated in the organization of site exchange visits involving a total of 102 school directors and teachers. This included a study tour (paid for by the Oak Tree Foundation) to Lamplimat School, a public-private school in Thailand, visits to Beacon Schools, and involvement in Project Work Fairs to exchange ideas on subject clubs and project work implementation.



**IBEC teachers and school directors learn about problem-based learning during the study tour in Thailand**

Component personnel also worked with LNGO partners to follow up life skills activities among vulnerable families that receive scholarship assistance, to see if the grant assistance for life skills-related income generation activities are being put to use effectively. Preliminary findings have so far been positive with a full report being prepared for the next quarter.

## Component 4: Improved Educational Relevance

### Teacher Education

To determine the effectiveness of the measures taken to improve learning environments, the Component team carried out a large number of evaluation activities, including the assessment of Child Friendly School (CFS) teachers at both primary and secondary level as well as community teachers. Observation results were based on a randomized sample of the teacher population comprising 10% of all teachers, and show that 76% of teachers at secondary school level and 85% of those at primary school were compliant with the IBEC's minimum expectations for performance.

The Component also made an assessment of interventions to enhance reading and writing methods including storybook reading, providing supplementary reading materials, and literacy corners in classrooms. The assessment of 71 schools indicated that most schools had implemented these measures effectively, even though the school year was coming to an end. At the end of the quarter, over 127 students in Grade 1 were randomly selected for a post test reading assessment. The results indicated that nearly 70% of students had acquired basic reading and writing skills, signifying a need to continue this initiative.

### IT Access



**Another Successful Year of Project Work Fairs:** Students make their presentations on PowerPoint

With the completion of all lab emplacement and IT teacher training activities last quarter, the IT team focused on organizing Project Work Fairs in the three provinces. The fairs provide the students doing project work with a forum to make presentations on their research projects and share ideas. There were also prizes for Best of Show. This is the fourth year that project work fairs have been organized with USAID funding and these events seem to be greatly anticipated by students each year. The fairs this

year were the largest on record with 638 student participants, making 105 PowerPoint presentations on various topics such as the hazards of smoking, local history, and Khmer poetry.

The IT team also carried out a survey of 350 students from across 20 schools to determine the degree to which students have access to lab facilities. 64% of the students reported that they had had at least two hours of ICT instruction per week, no one had been charged access fees, and that access to computer lab facilities had played some role in the decision of most students to stay in

### Life Skill Education

The Life Skills Team spent this quarter evaluating the Life Skills Pilot, assessing implementation processes at the school-level, distributing 117,000 different learning and teaching materials, and refining teacher manuals and materials. With significant participation from the Ministry, the pilot evaluation was completed with respect to the five agreed parameters: (i) Teacher Methodology; (ii) Curriculum Clarity; (iii) Student Competency; (iv) Attitudinal Changes among Parents and Students; and (v) Institutional Framework Effectiveness. Summary findings were generally positive but highlight several areas in need of improvement. The MoEYS has

shown excellent responsiveness to these findings so far and is in the process of issuing additional guidelines regarding overtime payments for life skills education. In addition, IBEC worked with the Vocational Orientation Department (VOD) to assess a Career Counseling Framework that will link closely with the Life Skills Pilot. The assessment carried out at 22 schools found that there was high compliance with certain key guidelines including the completion of student assessment career forms (94% of schools); one-to-one interviews with selected students for career counseling (69% of schools); and mapping career opportunities in the local area (84% of schools).

IBEC also organized Market Simulation Events in 22 schools across the three target provinces. The component also worked on providing on-going support for Life Skills Innovation Grants, which is emerging as a key strategy to support income generation in schools so that life skills activities can be sustained in the future. This year, ten new schools started Life Skills Innovation Grants involving mushroom growing, poultry, and vegetable cultivation in addition to seven last year for a total of 17 schools. Approximately \$4,000 in grants was provided to schools for this purpose.