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**PROJECT NEWSLETTER**

**IBEC AT A GLANCE**

- H.E Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State attended the certificate distribution ceremony
- USAID Mission Director and Director General of the Directorate of Education visit IBEC supported school in Kg.Cham
- 553 school managers received school management and leadership certificate

**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 and MEDIA One.

# Improved Basic Education in Cambodia (IBEC) Project

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## SMLTC Certificate Distribution Ceremony



*H.E Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State, Vice Governor of Kg.Cham Province and Representation from USAID Attended the Ceremony*

On the 25th of June, there was a certificate distribution ceremony at the Provincial Teacher Training College in Kampong Cham province for school administrators who had completed the School Management and Leadership Training Course run by IBEC. H.E Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State, the Vice Governor of Kampong Cham Province, as well as representatives from USAID, the Provincial Office of Education, World Education, and KAPE all attended the Ceremony.

Since 2010, IBEC has been implementing a course on school management and leadership training. With the completion of the course, successful candidates were conferred with their certification during the quarter. School Directors and Vice Directors from nearly 300 schools across the three target provinces

of Kampong Cham, Kratie and Siem Reap received certificates.

In all, 553 people have successfully completed the course and have been certified through certificatory ceremonies such as this one. When addressing participants at this important event, the Secretary of State was very impressed with the level of achievement that IBEC is making in supporting the implementation of Ministry policies, especially in providing an essential training course for school directors.

He emphasized, “Good Schools can only happen with Good School Directors” and suggested that IBEC should endeavor to continue its good work in this area.

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

During the quarter, the Component continued its shift in focus towards intensive support of commune councils to instill habits of institutional support to local schools formerly supported by IBEC. The central focus of this shift is on the administration of school grants mediated by Commune Councils/CEFACs with some matching funds from the project. These activities are strongly linked with support for sustainability planning in schools undertaken earlier.

Presently, a total 12 out of 16 communes have so far provided matching funds to Cycle 1 schools formerly supported entirely by IBEC. These matching funds amounted to \$8,757, which comprises about 91% of the agreed match for the year (\$9,652)



*Instilling Habits of Institutional Support for Local Schools: A CEFAC Meeting at Ampil Tapok Commune in Kampong Cham Province*



*Observing Active Student Learning: H.E. Sam Sereyath and Mission Director observe a science lesson in a project supported science lab in Kampong Cham*

During this quarter, instead of having regular meeting at the General Directorate of Education Office in Phnom Penh, H.E. Sam Sereyath, Director General of the Directorate of Education and Chairman of IBEC Consultative Group led a CG delegation to visit IBEC's target schools to observe project implementation and receive feedback from stakeholders.

The delegation consisted of representatives from six MoEYS Departments including the Departments of Primary Education, Secondary Education, Curriculum Development, Vocational Orientation, Teacher Training, and ICT. The USAID Mission Director who has only recently arrived in country and is interested in

learning more about the education program also joined the delegation.

This high level delegation visited two secondary schools and a primary school in Kampong Cham, namely the Demonstration School linked to the PTTC, Pus Pi High School and Cheas Primary School. During the visit, the delegation had an opportunity to hear reports from the school directors, the Provincial Office of Education, and interact with students and teachers to gain a better understanding of project activities.

Continuous capacity-building support for Beacon Schools continued to be a key activity for the Component, particularly as this intervention assumes greater importance as a key exit strategy in Year 5. Capacity-building activities during the current quarter focused on how to host visiting schools to best leverage good practices that they have acquired as a result of IBEC inputs. During the quarter, the Component worked with PWGs to organize visits to 20 Beacon Schools involving 284 school personnel (114 women) from 42 surrounding schools.

## Component 2: More Equitable School Access

### Scholarships



*IBEC Scholarship beneficiaries on their way to school on project bicycles*

Component personnel completed tabulations of retention rates among primary and secondary scholarship beneficiaries. Finalized statistics indicate that retention rates were quite high at 97% for primary level and 96% for secondary school level. Retention rates were about the same for boys and girls. Tracer studies indicated that economic reasons continued to be the primary factor driving dropout at both primary and secondary level. Economic reasons accounted for 63% of the dropout cases at primary level and 70% at secondary level. An important difference in previous reporting is that most children are no longer leaving school for reasons of local employment but are becoming long distance migrants seeking work in Phnom Penh, Poy Phet, Siem Reap Town, and above all, Thailand.

During the quarter, the project made a final stipend payment to 120 PTTC students who have been recruited from remote communes with continuing severe teacher shortages. The quarterly stipend was \$60 or \$7,200 across the three colleges. These are continuing students who were admitted to the PTTC last year and will be graduating in August 2013. This is the last cohort of PTTC scholarship recipients to be supported by IBEC, thereby ending USAID involvement in this intervention. Altogether, IBEC will have supported 360 PTTC scholarship recipients by the end of Year 4. IBEC is currently considering undertaking a study of this intervention in Year 5 to determine its effectiveness and overall impact.

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*Stakeholder-driven Discretionary School Grants:*

Schools continue to evidence considerable experience in animating specialized educational services such as libraries, help networks, and children's councils, thereby allowing the Component to play more of a monitoring role at this late stage of project implementation. The Component team spent a considerable amount of time assessing activities and tabulating outcomes. In this respect, the Component reported that about three-fourths of observed children's councils were performing at a level of satisfactory or better.

Component personnel were assisted in this evaluation by DPOs in all provinces. The assessment focused on criteria that include ability to plan effectively, create budgets and schedules, and the degree to which the council is led by students (rather than by school personnel).

IBEC also continued to provide support grants for bilingual classroom assistant services as requested by target schools in their annual planning. These services are mainly targeted at schools with large Cham minority populations whose children come to school

with very little knowledge of the Khmer language.

At the end of the quarter, Component personnel tabulated the levels of library readership in each of the schools with libraries. At primary school level, field offices reported a total of 127,076 incidences of recorded library usage while at secondary level, 81,539 incidences were reported. Teachers are also using the library in increasing numbers and to a lesser extent community members.

## Nurturing a Dream with Help from USAID

Chot Srey Den is a Grade 9 student studying at Sang Kurb Lower Secondary School. She is originally from RatanakKiri Province and moved to Batheay District in Kampong Cham some years ago. Her father had hoped that it would be easier to attend school for his children in Kampong Cham. Srey Den's mother died many years ago so the family depends mainly on her father. There are five people in the family including an older brother and sister who work as laborers in Ratanakiri with her father. Her younger brother is 14 years old now and is a monk at a local pagoda. She is the only one in her family still in school. Srey Den has a dream to finish high school and get a good job so that she can support her family. She used to tell her father that she will achieve this dream to have a better job that can support the family well. Two of her neighbors wanted to marry her but she refused in order to finish her studies. She hopes to get married later if she meets the right person but right now she feels she is too young to get married.

Srey Den's family has no land but received permission from her aunt to build a small house of palm leaves on a piece of her land. But Srey Den said that she is not brave enough to live on her own when her father is not around so she lives with her aunt instead.

Srey Den is a diligent student and she rarely misses class unless she is sick. She gets high marks every term in nearly all her subjects. She also is interested in studying Chinese at a local Chinese temple. Normally, she stays with her aunt when her father is working in Ratanakiri or sometimes with a friend when it is time to study for the examinations. With support from USAID, she is able to get stationery for her studies

and support for tutoring, which is very important for her to pass the *Diplome* Examination this year. Srey Den also tries to earn as much money as she can and washes dishes and clothes for her neighbors and gets up to 7,000 or 8,000 riels a week.



*Srey Den on her way back from an IBEC tutoring Class at school*

## Component 3: Improved School Management & Community Engagement



*Getting the Community Involved in Reading Accountability: A parent comes to school to read a book with her daughter*

Activities in Component 3 during the quarter focused more narrowly on two activities. One of these is an on-going activity to strengthen the ability of School Support Committees to promote reading accountability in their respective schools while the other refers to the completion of the School Management & Leadership Training Course (SMLTC) related earlier.

During the reporting period, Component personnel and DPOs carried out a field assessment to determine how well SSCs were performing in terms of compliance with six criteria that concern reading accountability. A total of 126 schools were visited in this regard, mostly Cycle I schools.

At the end of 2012, the Component team conducted an orientation for Provincial Coordinators and District-Based Project Officers regarding the organization of workshops aimed at strengthening the role of SSCs in reading accountability in their respective areas. The purpose of this outreach is to help SSCs better reflect on promoting educational quality in their schools, particularly as this relates to reading skills, which are an increasingly prominent aspect of Ministry programming in recent years. This was the third round of such planning meetings with provincial teams to work with SSCs in this area.

## Component 4: Improved Educational Relevance

**Life Skill Education:** Throughout this quarter, the Life Skills Team has been evaluating the implementation of Life Skills activities, assessing implementation processes at the school-level. In this respect, the project distributed 6,477 different learning and teaching materials among target schools across the six provinces. An evaluation team comprising members of the project, POEs, and Ministry undertook assessments in June 2013 across three parameters including: (i) Teacher Methodology; (ii) Student Competency; and (iii) Institutional Framework Effectiveness. The assessment was completed during the quarter with significant MoEYS input and found that 80% of observed teachers in a statistically randomized sample had scored 'satisfactory' or better. A parallel assessment of 25 schools in the new demonstration provinces of Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, and Svay Rieng similarly found 92% of schools to be in compliance with Institutional Framework Guidelines for Life Skills implementation.

The Component also reported that a total of 12 life skills manuals have now been approved by the Ministry Textbook Review Committee with another 18 remaining.

During the quarter, Component personnel followed up all 17 secondary schools that were provided with Life Skills Innovation Grants in Years 2 and 3. These are experimental grants that are intended to help schools translate life skills education activities with students at their schools into income producing activities that will sustain project activities in the future. About \$6,683 in grants was disbursed for this purpose during the last 2 years. Essentially, the funds are intended to set up small Social Enterprises in each school linked to life skills programming.

### IT Access:

The ICT Team reported that all lab emplacement activities and teacher training had been completed since the last quarter. In this regard, two labs were installed in Year 4 for a total of 25 labs since project start-up. During the quarter, the ICT Team focused on organizing Project Work Fairs in the three provinces to provide a forum for students doing project work to make presentations and share ideas.

The team also carried out attitudinal surveys among 411 students in 20 schools to determine the degree to which students have access to IT lab facilities. Survey results were generally positive with about 65% of students reporting that they are 'very satisfied' with the quality of computer instruction that they received during the year, and that access to computer lab facilities had played some role in the decision of most students to stay in school.

As noted above, the Component organized Project Work Fairs in all three provinces including Kratie (3 June), Kampong Cham (5 June), and Siem Reap (7 May). This is the fifth year that such fairs have been organized and they are becoming an event that schools and students seem to eagerly anticipate (the first fair was held in 2009 under the *Schools for Life Project*). These events are a forum for project work completed during the year and exhibitions completed by students in 42 target secondary schools that have received computer labs and/or science labs. The presentations reflected in-depth projects undertaken by students on various topics of relevance in their local communities. The fair this year were reported to involve 543 students participants making 212 presentation of the topics included an expose on the domestic violence, local history, my marketing skill, environments, traffic accident, and interesting experiments in science composed by students.

**Teacher Education:** Component personnel spent the majority of the quarter assessing classroom performance for annual reporting purposes. This required hundreds of classroom observations, student tests on reading and writing, and the administration of student and teacher surveys, especially in the case of science labs.

The Component also did assessments of subject clubs to determine what number were functioning at a minimum level or better.



**Steady Progress in Teaching Quality:** A CFSS Teacher facilitates group work in Kampong Cham



**A Great Example of Youth Empowerment:** Students put on a cultural performance, make power point presentations on topics that interest them, and demonstrate science experiments that they have researched during Project Work Fairs in all three provinces.