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CAMBODIA

CASE STUDY

Building Community Engagement at a School in Kampong Cham



Mr. Ou Neng Seang of Bun Rany Kor Primary School in Kampong Cham Province explains his views on community engagement.

The IBEC Project seeks to promote better educated youth with increased access to a quality and relevant basic education through an approach that emphasizes holistic programming, stakeholder-driven development, and improved educational relevance and management. To learn more, visit www.ibec.worlded.org

Telling Our Story

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Community engagement is one of the activities, which cannot be excluded if one talks about the integrated effort to provide quality education to children. In Cambodia, community engagement has been regarded as one of the key factors, which determine the characteristics of Child Friendly School. Nevertheless, one often hears schools complain about the lack of participation from parents and communities in educating their children. Conversely, parents complain that schools normally don't offer a chance for parents and communities to participate meaningfully in important events taking place at the schools. In order to address the contradiction of these two perceptions, IBECP has sought diverse approaches to promote understanding and collaboration between the schools and the communities so they can work together in an aim to achieve an ultimate outcome, student achievement.

The SMLTC team met a community representative who has participated actively in helping a school in to better understand what factors inspired him to help the school. Mr. Ou Nengseang, 54 years old, is an SSC representative of the Bun Rany Primary School. He lives in Phoum Tamauk, Kor commune, Prey Chor district. In an interview with the SMLTC team, Mr. Ou said:

The reason I volunteer with the SSC because I value education, sympathize with children in my community, and I want them to grow up with bright future. Before, Bunray Khum Kor Primary School was in difficult condition. It was

also in a state of negligence, cows and buffalos walked on the school ground destroying flowers, small trees, and other crops planted by school students. Even worse, there were piles of waists from animal in classrooms. The roof was broken, and the water dropped on pupils' heads when raining. Moreover, in the school yards there were nothing attractive except messy grass growing, and the school did not have the gate.

In such condition, I felt regrettable, and these made me decided to volunteer with the SSC. At first, I was just an ordinary member, but soon later, I was chosen to be the chair of SSC since school year 1999-2000. As an SSC representative, I don't receive salary or any compensation from the school. However, in return of my hard work, I have earned appreciation and acknowledgement from school director, from school personnel, parents, and students. In the future, I would like to extend and delegate this activity to the deputy of SSC and my SSC members to continue my way of responsibility and accountability for school development when I retire.