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## CASE STUDY

### Promoting Creativity through School Newsletter Clubs



*Samples of recent publications (May and June) by IBEC School Newsletter Clubs (above)*

*Students brainstorm ways to format their newsletter with visitors from LIFT Magazine (below)*

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

Today's youth are growing up in an era of expanding networks and incredible connectivity. In Cambodia, new generations are thrust into a world of relatively sophisticated information technology. To facilitate access to IT is to create access to opportunity, and IBEC's IT-Integration activities aim to respond to this need by providing new avenues for IT engagement. IBEC has developed School Newsletter (SN) Clubs as an innovative intervention that combines the multiple aspects of academic learning, student group (council) activities, life-skills, and IT. The club's primary activity involves producing a newsletter once a month with content related to school news, student writing, photography, and artwork. It is designed to be an extra-curricular activity where students learn to gather information, express ideas, articulate their views, and use the required information technology needed to create a tangible product in print. Additionally, the activity hopes to increase students' civic involvement in school affairs, thus promoting the ideals of civic pride, transparency, and good governance. The club also provides a valuable opportunity for students to learn about journalism, particularly with respect to the related concepts of neutrality, balance, and transparency.

The pilot was launched over November and January at three secondary schools in Kampong Cham Province, which were faculty members (5 female) - including respective school

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Directors - and 64 students (35 female) successfully received training based on the SN Club module created by IBEC. Due to IBEC's prior establishment of IT labs at each school, the SN Club project only required IBEC to provide schools with resources specific to the club. This is a successful tactic that will be used for any future expansion. The additional materials provided were a digital camera, color printer and ink, and paper for printing. Follow-up training sessions were planned for topics such as the use of design software, club member responsibilities, and the concept of editorial boards. IBEC further enhanced one of the follow-up sessions by inviting a delegation of university-level youth journalists from LIFT Youth Magazine, a weekly supplement to the Phnom Penh Post, to engage with and inspire SN Club members through a workshop focused on different aspects of journalism. Members were excited to interact with older Cambodian students to whom they could look up and relate more easily.

One of the fundamental principles proudly espoused by the project from club formation to publication distribution is the spirit of volunteerism. All potential participants - teachers and students alike - engage with the club on a strictly voluntary basis, in order to encourage a healthy level of ownership and sustainability of the activity. The fact that there are now functioning SN clubs, which produce monthly newsletters is a testament to the level of interest and excitement among students about this activity. In total, the SN Club members have produced at least four to five publications each, and the clubs are expected to pick up again once they settle in to the new school year. Such encouraging results have prompted IBEC to consider expanding to other schools and target provinces in Year 3.