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## CASE STUDY

### Model Student Council at Amphoe Wan



**Fostering Democracy in School: The Student Council at Amphoe Wan HS meets to make a plan for the council grant that is being provided by the school. Students at Amphoe Wan are excited about managing their own resources and taking more responsibility for their school.**

*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)*

#### **Telling Our Story**

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The story of the Student Council at Amphoe Wan High School is one of true transformation. This high school is located in Krouch Chma District of Kampong Cham Province, right on the Mekong River. It is a rather large big school with 25 classes and five buildings. Mr. Chay Sophean, the Director of the school really wanted to develop his school but did not really know how. When he heard that schools could voluntarily join the IBEC Project if they could show high motivation of teachers and students, he jumped at the opportunity and was able to successfully complete the project application process in 2010. Amphoe Wan HS is now a Cycle 2 school with IBEC technical and grant support. One of the first things that Mr. Sophean wanted to do was to better involve the students in developing the school. The school had a Student Council but it did not work very well because no one knew well how to organize such a body. The council had no planning documents and did not really know how to identify problems and solutions in a clear way. The students did not really have a habit of sharing their ideas and did not think that doing things in the school could contribute to their studies.

One of the first things IBEC did with the managers and students at Amphoe Wan HS was to provide on-going technical support about making the Student Council operational. Project personnel helped to explain about concepts of empowerment and ownership and how these are key elements to successful development. The project helped to give concrete examples of how to apply these concepts such as giving students the power to make their own decisions, encouraging students to express their opinions freely, and actually allowing them to use a small council grant in a way that they thought would improve the school. These changes helped to motivate many students at the school to get involved in the council. There were real elections for student leaders of the council, which led to the development of a plan that the students themselves developed. During the planning, students worked together to map out the logical relationships between problems and possible solutions. At first, this was a great challenge for the students to do but after two years, they now seem very comfortable with the process and extremely motivated to work with THEIR council.