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CASE STUDY

The Case of the Wat Chikreng School's Children's Council



Student Council members at Wat Chikreng Primary School take great pride in their school. They hold open elections to choose officers and take much better care of their school than in the past.

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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Wat Chikreng is the name of a Primary school that is located in Phoum Pring Village in Siem Reap Province. This school was built in 1982 by the local community and currently has 10 teachers and 640 students. Before the school's involvement with IBEC, students had a very limited role in the school, which consisted of cleaning classrooms and following teachers' orders only. When IBEC started working in Wat Chikreng School, the school director, Mr. Ang Sayon, liked the idea of having the students play a bigger role but many in the school felt that it was not possible for young children to do much at all. The school had a Children's Council but it existed mainly on paper. When Mr. Sayon applied to join the IBEC Project in 2010, one of his highest priorities was to ask the project to help him build the capacity of the Children's Council.

After the school joined IBEC, the school director, teachers, and students joined several workshops about how to empower a Children's Council. The workshop gave guidance about how to set up a council, lead meetings, make schedules, develop a budget, and identify priorities when planning. Numerous examples were given about the concepts of 'ownership' and 'empowerment,' which are key aspects to council development. The main challenge for the school was how to make children feel that they had more ownership of the school without ordering the children around as they usually do. They had to spend a lot of time with the students asking them to talk about what things they wanted to see happen in the school and how to make these things happen. There were many meetings with the children in which they explained about planning, writing up minutes, problem identification, and other tasks that they learned in the IBEC training.

After three years of support from USAID, the student council in this school can lead their own meetings and facilitate discussion freely. They provide a lot of assistance to the school director in running the school. They can help clean the environment, maintain the water system, supervise the bio-garden, and keep the library neat. They also help to organize the peer tutoring activities at the school where the older children work with the younger children to help them read and write. Every month, the council makes a plan about what they want to do to improve the school. Now the school has improved in a way where the students don't just wait for things to happen but take the action themselves to improve things through their own council.