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CAMBODIA

CASE STUDY

The Long Road to School for Lorn Veasna



Veasna on his way to school



Veasna with his Grandmother, his aunt, and IBEC staff

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

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Lorn Veasna is now in now in Grade 9. He has been a physically challenged child since birth with one normal leg and a short stunted leg. His living situation was made all the worse because his parents got divorced and re-married, leaving him with his grandmother to raise him. His grandmother, Reach Mouri, is now 84 years old and lives with her youngest daughter who has four children of her own and is currently unemployed. Veasna was supported by KAPE with a primary school scholarship since he was in Grade 1 under the US Government supported OPTIONS Program. Even though OPTIONS ended in 2007, KAPE managed to find other donors to help Veasna. However, when he reached Grade 7, he had no prospect of further support – that is, until the IBEC Project started in 2009.

After receiving a request from the School Director at his school for continued assistance for Veasna, the IBEC Project agreed to make him a target student. Not only has he received scholarship assistance including uniforms, and stationery, but the project has been able to advocate for him with *Handicap International*, which has now provided him with a prosthesis to help him walk better. Because of the difficult situation of the family, IBEC has been providing him with a stipend of \$20/month to help keep him in school. It is really hard for Veasna to walk the 2 km to school making him absent often; as a result, the project has also worked with local village leaders to get a neighbor to help him bicycle to school together. Now Veasna comes to school more regularly and has been getting marks in the top rank of his class. His teachers have also taken a special interest in his difficult situation and provide free tutoring for him in Math, Khmer, and English.

As it turns out, Veasna has a drawing talent and wants to be an artist when he grows up. But he also has a practical side and helps his grandmother raise chickens, which he learned about in his life skills class. He also has decided to study bicycle repair at the local Training Center for Disabled Persons in Batheay District, where he lives. Veasna is very grateful to IBEC, his grandmother, and his teachers who all encourage him to persevere and try his hardest. His story shows what can be accomplished when we all work together to help.