



Success Story

Former struggling student helps others improve their reading skills

In March 2015, Sothea was recruited to work as a Literacy Coach for Total Reading Approach for Children Plus (TRAC+) project with World Education Cambodia. “I love to work as Literacy Coach because I want to help the struggling children in my village who have less support from their family,” explained Sothea. “I participate not because I want the stipend, but because I want to contribute to my community.”

Since joining the TRAC+ project, Sothea has had opportunities to sharpen and apply his education, which went unused for a long time. He has also gained more experience, which he uses to voluntarily teach young children in his village. In particular, he has been trained in such TRAC+ project components as mentoring peer educators and using the Aan Khmer mLearning application.

Sothea is a 28-year old farmer who lives with his wife and two-year-old son in Takeo Province. Sothea has faced many difficulties in his life. He says, “when I was 6 years old, I did not have a happy family life because my father usually committed domestic violence. He separated from my mother when I was very young.”

As a child, Sothea dropped out of school for nearly six months, without the support of a family member to keep him in school. When he was given homework he did not have any support and advice, and he lost his motivation to go to school. Fortunately, Mr. Sarein, a primary school teacher, visited him and encouraged him to return to school.

“I really appreciated his advice because he pushed me to return to school. Later on, I successfully completed my high school certificate,” said Sothea. Even so, Sothea faced other obstacles to finishing his education, such as when he was in Grade 7 and his father came to live with his family again. Sothea and his father did not have a good relationship, and his father wanted him to stop going to school, but Sothea challenged his father and remained in school.

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-- Sothea, a literacy coach trained through the TRAC+ Project

The school director noted, “Sothea is a committed Literacy Coach; he is very responsive, and friendly. I know that he has contributed to my school because I can see positive behavior changes among my students. Before, just a few students liked reading in the library. Now, I see more students reading in the library because I know he works with the librarian to encourage students.” Recently, Sothea has also been selected to be a community teacher and team leader of a children’s club run by World Vision Cambodia.

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