



Monitoring teachers' absenteeism leads to improved attendance and better education opportunities for students

Students at Dak Dam primary school in Mondul Kiri Province reap benefits of quality education, due to a dramatic improvement in teachers' attendance.

When asked why she likes attending the Dak Dam primary school in Mondul Kiri province, 14-year old Buny Kasrey replies she enjoys studying and playing with her friends. In the future she wants to become a doctor or a health worker.

The teenage girl, who belongs to the Phnong ethnic minority, is so driven that she has not missed one day at school. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of her past teachers.

"Last year I studied with a male teacher and he hardly came to school," she says, explaining joyfully that this school year the situation changed dramatically.

CARE Cambodia has been supporting the Dak Dam primary school through training sessions on school management and community relations for the past two years. As part of the training, the committee members were taught to monitor student and teacher attendance, and follow up on why there might be absences.

Pjeoy Phaney, who serves as the vice chief of the Pu Treng village and is a school support committee member, says she learnt about her responsibilities through a CARE training which was conducted by staff from the District Office of Education. "Previously I didn't know about the roles of the support committee," the 42-year old woman proclaims.

"Now, as a school support committee member, I monitor the teachers, especially when they have many absences - I need to know why they are absent. And after I know why they are not at school, I inform the school director about it."

Phaney pays regular visits to the school in order to monitor both the teachers and the students and to make sure that the children at the Dak Dam primary school receive quality education. "The teachers started paying attention to their students and to their attendance because now they know that someone is watching them," she explains.



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"Last year I studied with a male teacher and he hardly came to school. This year it is different."

Chas Phallen, the 26 year-old primary school teacher acknowledges the problem and the subsequent improvement in teachers' attendance herself.

"In the past we had problems with teacher attendance," she says. "But now it's not like that anymore. Since the creation of the school support committee and the public meetings with parents, where they can raise their issues about what is happening at school, it has changed."

She knows that better than anybody else as in the past she used to miss classes too. "Sometimes I would miss teaching classes because I had to help my father in the field," the young woman admits. "But now that the support committee is monitoring teachers' attendance, I come regularly."

These activities are part of the *School Governance* project, which is supported by the Capacity Development Partnership Fund.

