

ANGKOR THOM DISTRICT HALF-YEAR REPORT JULY-DEC 2017



I was very proud to see my students' knowledge and test results improve. This was a result of the new methodologies and concepts I learned through working with SeeBeyondBorders.



- *Mr Saveth, a mentee who won a gold medal at Peak Sneng primary school.*

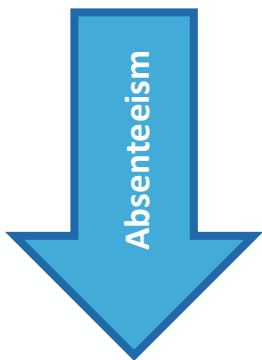
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

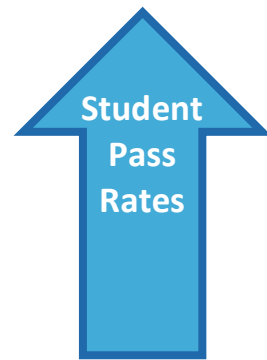
In July 2017 SeeBeyondBorders started the transition phase in the Angkor Thom project. This TNA funded project now aims to support mentors and teachers to take responsibility for both their own professional development and that of the other staff members in their schools. A natural extension of the core program (completed in Angkor Thom in June 2017) the transition phase will last for three years.

In this initial transition report period, we have built a good engagement with a variety of stakeholders in program implementation. These include those based at school level - mentors, mentees and school principals and those operating at a broader more systemic level. The latter group includes the District Office of Education (DOE) and the Provincial Office of Education (POE).



All stakeholders acknowledged that our programs have had a positive impact on the beneficiaries, especially on the capacities of the teachers and students. We have made positive progress on our targets across all of our programs since July. We were very pleased to see that the overall rates of absenteeism decreased from 10% to 6% in this period.

The student test results have significantly improved during this period compared to the previous six months. The number of students passing tests has increased significantly. For instance a record 83% of grade one students passed the test this year.



Teacher competency results also improved, and teachers became more confident in the use of teaching techniques, and in actively engaging students in the classroom. Mentors improved their support for their mentees, not only in mathematics, but across a variety of subjects.

We have trained a number of School Development Teams to increase parent engagement in order to provide better opportunities for their children. This was successful, and we saw a significant increase in the number of parents attending our activities in these schools.

In this six month period, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding between SeeBeyondBorders and the Angkor Thom DOE to extend the Transition Phase by two and a half years, in order to improve the teachers' professional knowledge.

We integrated the program activities with the POE's Annual Operation Plan (AOP) in order to align the two and ensure the accountability of the stakeholders.



SeeBeyondBorders' work has been recognized by the NGO networks at provincial and national level. We were elected to the 'Siem Reap Education Support Team' (SEST), and the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) at a national level. As secretary of the Siem Reap Education Support Team Steering Committee our main roles were to lead NGOs who are working in education to strengthen collaboration with the POE; and to inform the POE/DOE of the main challenges in the education sector, in order to ensure program sustainability and a better level of education throughout Siem Reap. Furthermore, we were invited to participate in many consultations with a variety of NGOs, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), especially on policy consultation.

In this reporting period in Angkor Thom our staff members have become more confident, and have shown great improvements. Leakena who was the Project Assistant, has now been promoted to Community Liaison Officer, and she has adapted to her role very well, improving the 'Getting to School' and 'Better Schools' programs. We were very pleased to introduce Mr. Heng Sopha as the new Mentor Development Coordinator, a role that requires managing our 'Quality Teaching' program in Angkor Thom, and ensuring program sustainability in the whole district.

We are pleased with what we have achieved in the district since July and we will be working hard to continue improving the quality of teaching; strengthening relationships with the DoE, NGO networks, schools, and communities; as well as reducing absenteeism in the next six months.

JULY-DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

- SeeBeyondBorders celebrated an award ceremony in October with a total of 80 participants (45 women) in attendance. According our survey, **98% of the participants said that the award program helps to motivate teachers to develop their professional capabilities.** All of the participants have stated that they will definitely continue with the program next year.
- 8 Senior Mentors (2 women) were selected from 4 clusters in the Angkor Thom district. All of the Senior Mentors work diligently towards improving the quality of education throughout the district. In addition, we also selected 17 new teachers to join our Transition Phase. This year and next, the new teachers will be trained by Senior Mentors on mathematical topics including addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Technical support will be provided by SeeBeyondBorders.
- An effective Technical Thursday Workshop was organized by SeeBeyondBorders, with a total of 25 participants (9 women). The goal of this workshop was to evaluate how the Technical Thursday Workshops are going, and to decide on new approaches in order to improve teaching quality. **All of the participants rated the workshop overall as a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5** (74% of participants rated the whole workshop as 5, and 26% of participants rated it as 4).
- We conducted a one-day workshop on school visioning with the School Development Team (SDT) at Doun Ov School. There were 28 participants, 21 of whom were women. The aim of this meeting was to engage all stakeholders to get involved and help to design their school's visioning and development plans. As a result of this, the participants developed visions for the school as part of a long-term development plan, with a focus on improving the quality of education in the school, creating a positive environment and a cultivating community involvement.. As a result of this school assessment, they identified many problems in the school, such as high absenteeism rates, litter, lack of fencing around the school, and a lack of understanding in parents about the importance of education. During an SDT discussion, problems were prioritized and a plan was created. **The SDP workshop was rated as 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5 by all participants.**
- The Development Teams of four Schools (Sodann, Samrong, Tatrav, and Peak Sneng) introduced their School Development Plan to their community members. 164 parents (130 women) were present. At this meeting, a representative of the SDT reported the key results of the development planning last year, highlighting how the school environments have improved.

JULY-DECEMBER CHALLENGES

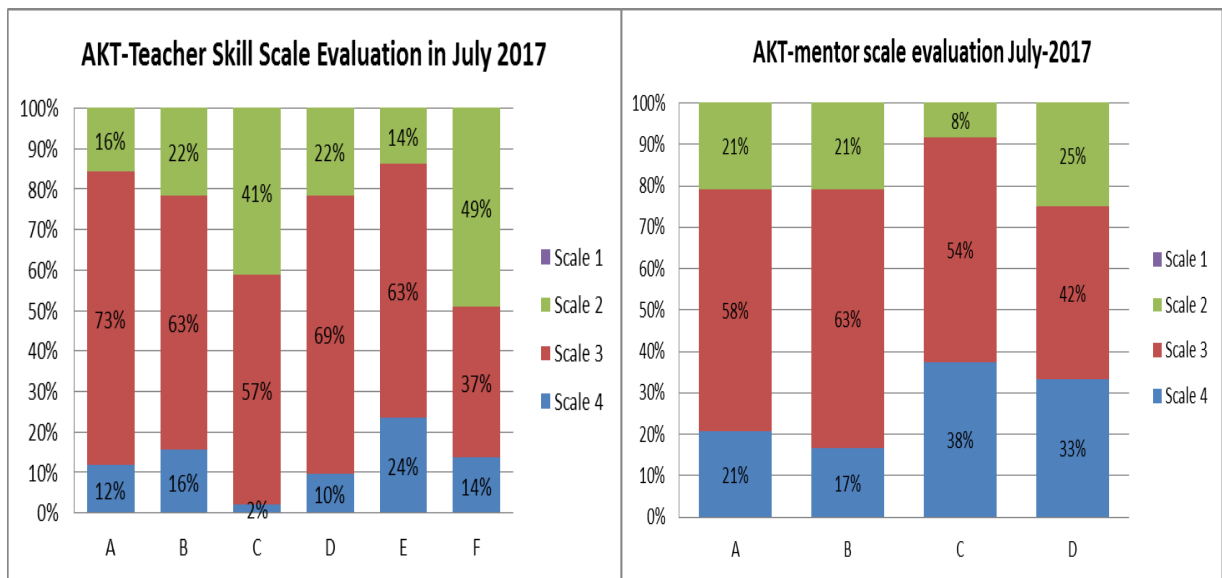
- **Most of the mentors found it hard to support the mentees in teaching Khmer.** We are continuing to discuss this with the Mentor Development Coordinators (MDCs) to ensure that we find a solution to this problem. We are also currently upskilling our staff in Khmer literacy, and **we are running a pilot Khmer literacy program in Rohal Soung Lech Primary School.** The results of this pilot will inform whether the program will be spread to other schools in the next academic year.
- New mentees were still finding it difficult to breakdown mathematical concepts and to use concrete materials. We are continuing to work with mentors in order to support their learning.
- The pass rates in grade 3 dropped by 7% in the past year. Some of the teachers did not perform as well as they had done previously. We are taking this issue very seriously, and are doing our utmost to improve the teaching standards at this grade level by supporting teachers and mentors wherever possible. Much work is going into ensuring that this drop will be reversed.
- Resources for mathematics classes have been delivered to 19 schools in Angkor Thom since the beginning of the project. According to our resource checklist, 20% of the resources are unusable because they have been damaged or lost. We are continuing to encourage school principals to maintain their resources, and to redistribute resources to teachers who do not have enough.

JULY-DECEMBER OUTCOMES AND EVIDENCE

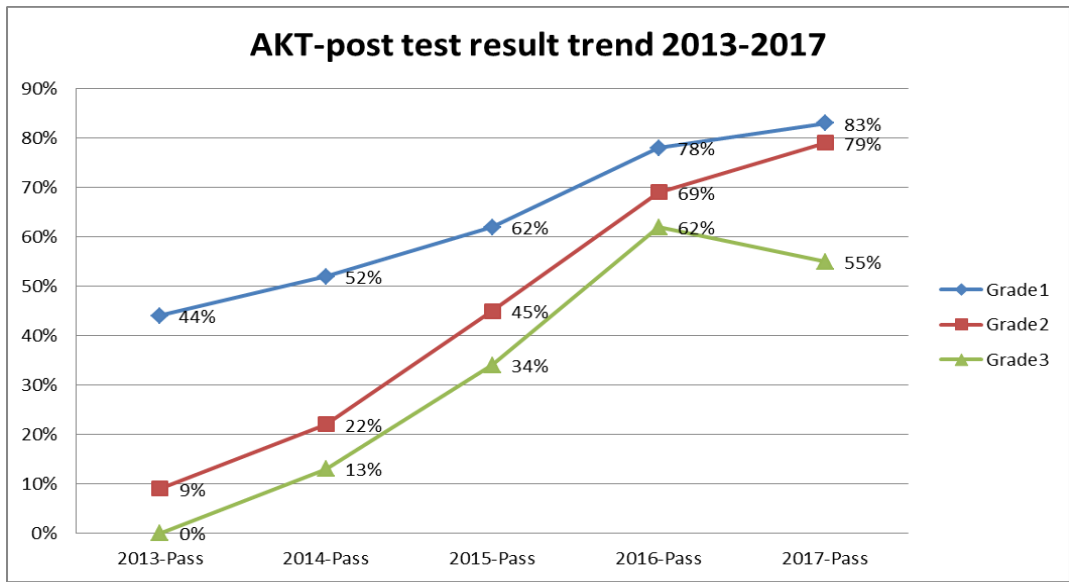
Teach the Teacher focus area

AIM: Develop confident and competent communities of teachers committed to quality teaching and ongoing professional development.

- SeeBeyondBorders uses mentor and teacher evaluation scales to assess how mentors and teachers are improving by evaluating whether they meet a set of criteria. Once the mentors or teachers fulfill all criteria needed to achieved a given level, they are accredited with that level as they build skills towards achieving the next level. They are rated on a scale of 1-4, where 1 is fairly good, 2 is good, 3 is very good, and 4 is exemplary in a Cambodian context. We evaluated our mentors and mentees on this scale and were happy to see that their performance has improved over the past six months. **All of the mentors achieved level 1 and 2, whilst 71% achieved level 3.** In the previous six month period only 92% of the mentors achieved level 1, 92% achieved level 2 and 38% achieved level 3. The mentees also improved in this 6 month period. **All of the mentees achieved level 1 and 2, 29% achieved level 3, and 2% achieved level 4.** In the previous 6 month period 98% of mentees achieved level 1 and 2, and only 18% achieved level 3. Mentors and mentees have also improved their confidence and their knowledge of mathematical concepts. They are using a variety of strategies they have learned in order to engage with students in the classroom.



- We were very pleased to see that **62% of all 26 mentors won awards this year**, 8% of whom received bronze, 19% received silver and 35% received gold. This is a significant improvement on last year, when 36% received bronze, 44% received silver, and nobody received gold.
- **This year, 54% of the 52 mentees won awards**, 6% of whom received bronze, 29% received silver and 19% received gold. This is also an improvement on last year, when 47% received bronze, 32% received silver and 2% received gold.
- SeeBeyondBorders conducted an end-of-year mathematics test for students in 17 schools in the Angkor Thom district. A total of 1,776 students across Grades 1 to 3 took the test, while 9% were absent on the day of the test. **We were happy to see a significant increase in the amount of students who passed the test by comparison to last year and a dramatic increase since we began working in this district in 2013.**



- Grade 1 students: 83% of students passed the annual test this year; compared to the 78% pass rate in 2016
- Grade 2 students: 79% of students passed the annual test this year; a jump of ten percent compared to the 69% pass rate in 2016

- Grade 3 students: 55% of students passed the annual test this year; a 7% drop compared to the pass rate in 2016. Some of the teachers in Grade 3 did not maintain the same level of performance as previously. We are doing our utmost to focus particularly on teaching standards at this grade level in order to ensure this drop will be reversed.
- **The number of mentors in attendance at monthly meetings during this period increased to 87%**, compared to 82% in the same period last year. The number of mentoring visits conducted by mentors also increased to 91% this period compared to 88% in the same period last year. SeeBeyondBorders pays mentors to visit their mentees once a month, however, mentors also contribute extra time to their mentees, unpaid. 41 mentoring visits were made during this period, without financial support from SeeBeyondBorders. All mentors were more confident in identifying their mentees' points of improvement. They provided the mentees with feedback more efficiently, and took on more responsibility to support their mentees.
- The number of visits to mentors by SeeBeyondBorders staff increased to 98% during this period, compared to 82% during the same period last year. We were happy to see significant improvement in the mentors' and mentees' capacities to use teaching techniques, to use concrete materials, and to help slow learners in the classroom.

Getting to School Focus Area

AIM: Increase participation and attendance in an educational environment that is fun, healthy and accessible to whole community.

- We are very proud to see that **student absenteeism has dropped significantly to 6%** this period compared to 11% in the same period last year. This is because mentors and mentees regularly discussed challenges and ensure that data recording improved over time.
- Our Conditional Cash Payment (CCP) program was successful during this period. **98% of CCP students were promoted to the next grade.** Of those students, 50% achieved an average mark, 30% achieved fairly good, 10% achieved good and 10% achieved top marks. In this period, CCP student attendance was 96%, which was very similar to the previous six month period when attendance was 95%. Attendance has remained steady because the CCP committees work together with parents to resolve issues, and have quarterly meetings. These parents are now committed to encouraging their children to attend school as well as to study at home.
- **In the 2016/17 school year we held a meeting in order to provide a fund of \$35 per student, to 60 CCP students.** There was a total of 134 attendees, made up of 59 parents (52 women), 15 committee members (6 women), and 60 CCP students (31 girls). During the meeting, CCP committee members discussed the students' results for the year of 2016/17 with the parents. They also reminded parents about the conditions that went along with the emergency fund.
- In this six month period, 99% of the planned sport lessons were successfully taught, compared to only 80% in the same period last year. We are happy to say that students enjoyed the sports lessons, and they were more motivated to go to school because of them.

Better Schools Focus Area

AIM: Stimulate sustained community engagement in the long term physical and educational development of Cambodian schools

- We were very pleased to see that the School Development Team at Sondan School had implemented a school development plan with the support of 14 parents who worked together to build wooden fences around school's ponds. A fund of \$125 was raised from the local community. SeeBeyondBorders contributed a further \$200 in order to finish the plan. As a result of this, wooden fencing was successfully built around the ponds in the school. This helped to make the school a safer place for children to play in.
- We were pleased to see that the School Development Team at Doun Ov School had started implementing their school plan, with the support of 20 parents (7 women), to clear away the bushes inside school campus.
- We were delighted to see that the School Development Team at Peak Sneng School had implemented their own plan to expand the school campus by filling in the ground with new soil. This cost \$375 of the school budget. They also built a hut to be used as an outdoor classroom for the students, which cost \$400 of the school budget. Students were happy that their school now had enough space to play outside during break times.
- Four schools (Somrong, Tatrav, Peak Sneng and Sondan) conducted annual progress meetings for the 2016-17 school year. The meetings were held at the end of August 2017 and 317 parents attended. The school principals reported that they were very happy with the involvement and contributions from their communities, which have allowed the schools to improve school facilities by making gardens, expanding the school campus, erecting fences, and providing the students with access to clean toilets and water.
- On the opening day for the 2017-18 school year, all SDP schools introduced their School Development Plan to their communities. 164 parents (130 women) attended the meeting.

JULY-DECEMBER FINANCIALS

	YTD Actual			
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Var USD	%
Teach The Teacher	23,769	21,693	(2,076)	-10%
Literacy	0	-	-	
Better Schools	4,679	4,836	157	3%
Getting to School CCP	6,254	6,637	383	6%
Getting to School Health	150	-	(150)	
Getting to School Sport	3,360	2,100	(1,260)	-60%
Project Teachers	0	-	-	
	38,211	35,266	(2,945)	-8%

Expenditure Summary - Angkor Thom

	YTD Actual			
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Var USD	%
Staff Wages and Allowances	31,126	26,439	(4,687)	-18%
Opps Costs				
Programme Costs	4,979	5,380	401	7%
Teachers and Community Member P	1,312	2,471	1,159	47%
Accommodation - Non-staff	-	-	-	
Building and Construction Costs	-	-	-	
Other Opps costs	794	976	182	19%
Total Opps Costs	7,085	8,827	1,742	20%
Total Overhead Expenses	(0)	0	0	#DIV/0!
Net Expenses	38,211	35,266	(2,945)	-8%

KEY VARIANCES

- 1. Teach The Teacher - \$2076 overspend.** This overspend is down to more staff time being allocated to the project than initially thought and a higher number of teachers winning the Krou La Or Award than anticipated.
- 2. Getting to School - CCP \$383 underspend.** This is mainly due to less medical costs for CCP students compared to budgeted medical costs.
- 3. Getting to School - Sport \$1,260 overspend.** Sport has been much more costly than envisaged and increased staff time resulted in this overspend. Sport is a vital way of promoting good attendance in school so we are determined to continue with this initiative for as long as possible.
- 4. Better Schools - \$157 underspend.** This came in nearly exactly on budget. Increased community engagement means more funds are raised locally for improvements.

JULY– DECEMBER CASE STUDY/ MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORY

AN OUTSTANDING TEACHER IN ANGKOR THOM DISTRICT

Saveth joined the SeeBeyondBorders program in 2014 as a mentee teacher in his school. He is an outstanding teacher in our program, and this year he received a Gold award. All of his students passed the SeeBeyondBorders mathematics test.



Mr. Saveth with deputy of PoE during award ceremony this year



I was very proud to see my students' knowledge and test results improve... These results haven't happened coincidentally; it is because of my great effort to teach my students using concrete materials and teaching methodologies which I learned through working with SeeBeyondBorders... I am strongly committed to sharing my knowledge and skills with other teachers in my cluster.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

The contribution TNA makes to SeeBeyondBorders makes a substantial difference to the lives of some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Cambodia. A large proportion of Cambodia's teachers and parents grew up in a world where the chance of a decent education was almost entirely eradicated. The result is that many of those teachers have not received the basic schooling and advanced training needed to help lead and inspire current and future generations. Alongside the bleak historical context, the education system remains grossly underfunded despite the proven correlation between education, development and the eradication of poverty. Teachers tread a fine line between the ethical code of teaching and the need to survive.

The programs offered by SeeBeyondBorders and supported by TNA enable teachers to make the right choice, building their skills and capability, encouraging students, parents and members of the community to engage with and play a role in strengthening education from a community level. Education is creeping up the national agenda, and in the meantime, SeeBeyondBorders is enabling teachers and communities to create their own positive educational impact. On behalf of the communities in Angkor Thom we would like to thank our corporate partner TNA for the continuous support.

This project is in part funded by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program. We thank them for their support.



Change begins with education