



PUOK DISTRICT

SIX MONTHLY REPORT

JANUARY- JUNE 2016

SeeBeyond|Borders

Change begins with education.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The period between January and June 2016 has been very busy in Puok District. SeeBeyondBorders has been operating in this district for five years and mentors have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. We have seen their confidence increasing significantly in the last few months, which has led to some high quality mentor-led training sessions. In addition, SeeBeyondBorders undertook a formal review of our activities in the district in order to evaluate our work and make recommendations for the future.

As we stated in our previous report, mentor and teacher numbers have decreased in Puok district this academic year but we have found that the commitment and motivation of the teachers who are working with us is extremely high. Many of the teachers were new to our program in November 2015 but they discovered quickly that making small changes to the way they teach leads to big changes in their students' understanding, and so they are keen to learn more.

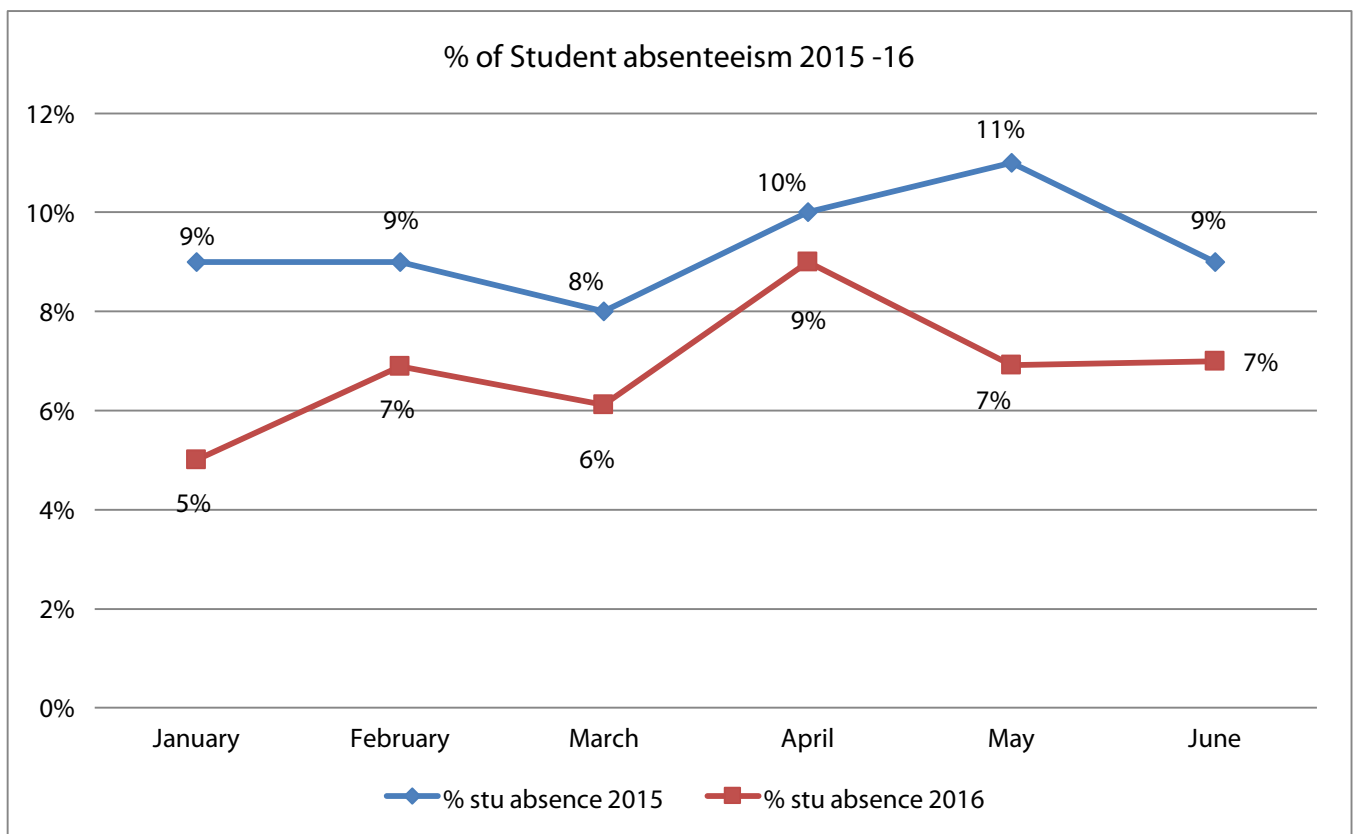
Three Senior Mentors were supported by SeeBeyondBorders to run a second training workshop in March 2016 and they did this with significantly more confidence than at the first workshop in October 2015. Participants were very positive about everything they learnt and they have been supported to embed these techniques into their classroom teaching through regular mentoring sessions. All mentors have started to support and advise other teachers in their schools, not just those on SeeBeyondBorders' programs, and this means that teaching standards are improving across the district and not just in Grade 1-3 Maths lessons.

Throughout the project we have tried to work closely with the Puok District Office of Education (DoE) and although this relationship has presented challenges in the past, we have seen a substantial improvement since January 2016. The Director is now following up on his actions more quickly and emphasising to teachers the importance of high quality teaching. We have also benefitted from a growing relationship with Ms Sek Sophana, DoE - Officer for Primary Education, who has attended our workshop and mentor meetings. This has also helped to demonstrate our partnership with the existing education system and government and increased the commitment of teachers to practice the techniques that we are embedding.

In March 2016, we carried out an evaluation of our activities in Puok district. The recommendation from this review, that was approved by the Board, was to move into a Maintenance/Handover phase in 2016-2017, gradually increasing the responsibilities of the Senior Mentors whilst simultaneously reducing the support provided by SeeBeyondBorders. The DoE has accepted this recommendation and they will assist in this phase to ensure that the program outcomes will continue in future, without the support of SeeBeyondBorders.

JANUARY – JUNE 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Improved student attendance:** In this period, the student absence rate decreased from 9% to 7% compared to the same period last year. SeeBeyondBorders' staff usually collect student absence records every month and then take the results to discuss with teachers and school principals, and sometimes authorities, to jointly agree interventions to improve attendance. As a result of these discussions, teachers actively encouraged their students to come to school more often and school principals organised meetings with parents and school support committees three times a year to share absenteeism information and encourage attendance. In addition, the teachers used SeeBeyondBorders' concrete materials during mathematic lessons more regularly to help the students understand more easily. One student told SeeBeyondBorders' staff that, "I really love learning because I want to be a literate person".
- **Mentor teachers leading the way in mentee engagement:** According to mentors' monthly reports, they continued to support their mentee teachers in their own schools twice per month as required by SeeBeyondBorders, and in addition they visited contract teachers and non-SBB target teachers once per month and gave them advice to improve their teaching skills. This was done voluntarily and was not something that SeeBeyondBorders has specified or compensated for. In the last six months, the mentor teachers provided opportunities for the mentees to demonstrate lessons to other teachers so that they can learn from their peers. This demonstrates that school principals are taking increased responsibility for improving the quality of education in schools, and highlights the sustainability of SeeBeyondBorders' Teach the Teacher Programs.



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- **Improved reporting in schools:** The number of data free days in Puok decreased from 17% to 3% when compared with the same period in 2015. If we compare the average data free days from the previous six-month period (July-December 2015) they have also decreased from 5% to 3%. Data free days are usually a result of teachers not attending or failing to take the roll on those days. This decrease shows that teachers are committed to improving the quantity of learning days as well as the quality of education in their schools.
 - **Better relationships with the DoE:** We have noticed that DoE has participated in our program more actively in this six-month period. Ms Sek Sophanna, Officer for Primary Education, attended in our March workshop and gave thanks to all participants in the closing ceremony. The Director of DoE accepted our challenges through our face to face reporting and in May he met with school principals to encourage the teachers and mentors to participate our program more actively.

JANUARY – JUNE 2016 CHALLENGES

- According to mentor attendance records this period, the mentor attendance in the Mentor Monthly Meeting decreased from 81% to 71% and number of mentor visits to mentees also decreased from 94% to 85% compared to the same period last year. This is because the mentor teachers were very busy with administration work and they had to attend a Math Training workshop, Leadership training and administrative work run by Ministry of Education Youth and Sport for long periods as well as ad-hoc meetings with District Officers.
- The mentors did not visit mentees across different areas of the curriculum (other than Maths) because 13 of the 14 mentees are new teachers and the mentors need to support them on mathematic subject only. In the next period, SeeBeyondBorders will ask the mentor teachers to visit the teachers across all areas of the curriculum because they are strong enough to support teachers on a variety of subjects.

JANUARY – JUNE 2016 MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORY

In Mathematic lessons, often students were not engaged as they were learning without concrete materials and having to think in abstract ways.

Since their teacher joined SeeBeyondBorders' Program they now use concrete materials in their lesson and that has changed students' feelings to love learning math. The students are really interested in the lesson by practicing with concrete materials. After the lesson the students understand at least 70% of the concepts. Thanks to these improvements, the district average absence rate this period is down to 7%.

- When asked; Do you want to come to school?
- How often do you come to school?"

100% of grade 3 students said "Yes, we really want to come to school and committed to come to school every day, because we love learning and want to get knowledge".



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

The contribution you make 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. With salaries of less than \$150 a month, teachers tread a fine line between the ethical code of teaching and the need to survive.

The programs offered by SeeBeyondBorders and supported by **you** 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. Thank you for your continued support.

Change begins with education.