



CHES e-Newsletter

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources. Winrock matches innovative approaches in agriculture, natural resources management, clean energy, and leadership development with the unique needs of its partners. By linking local individuals and communities with new ideas and technology, Winrock is increasing long-term productivity, equity, and responsible resource management to benefit the poor and disadvantaged of the world.

What is CHES?

Winrock is implementing Children's Empowerment through Education Services (CHES) project to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in agriculture through education services.

The 4-year project is funded by the United States Department of Labor under Cooperative Agreement IL-16567-07-75-K. CHES is being implemented in four provinces of Cambodia namely Pursat, Prey Veng, Siem Reap and Kampong Cham in close collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations at all levels.

School Enrolment Campaign Tackles Twin Issues of Child Labor and Education



Child Youth Clubs and Local Authorities Organized Enrolment Campaign at Floating Villages in Pursat Province to Raise Awareness on Child Labor and the Importance of Education

During the whole month of September 2010, Child Youth Clubs (CYCs), Child Labor Monitoring Committees (CLMCs), Children Councils (CCs) and local authorities organized enrolment campaigns in 64 out of 160 CHES villages to encourage communities to enroll their school-age children to school for a new school academic year 2010-2011.

This activity has a two-fold purpose: to continue building the capacity of community structures in awareness-raising and organizing sustainable strategies for raising community awareness on child labor and education; and to reinforce the importance of education among the target communities.

Inspiring and poignant stories were shared by children, youth and CLMCs as they did the house to house campaign in some villages. These show how effective personal motivational campaigns are in communities as well as real barriers in promoting children's right to education in very disadvantaged communities such as floating villages.

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Putting Ideas to Work

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A father of an 8-year-old girl who has not yet enrolled her in school said, "My daughter wishes to be a doctor so, sending her to school is how I can help make my daughter's dream come true". Although his daughter is considered 2 years behind the ideal age to start school, he has committed to enrolling her in school this October. Meanwhile, a girl who is living in a floating village in Pursat reported, "my mother enrolled my younger brother on the first day the school started collecting applications".

On the other hand, a mother also from a floating village revealed her outlook on school enrolment while breastfeeding her seventh child. She explained, "my son is 6 years old, but since he doesn't know how to swim I will not allow him to attend a floating school. There is too much risk of him drowning and, besides, the school does not accept children who can't swim". Although she is too busy caring for her two younger children to teach her 6 year old how to swim, her three older children have volunteered to complete the job. The mother further remarked that she plans to enroll her son in school next year after he learns how to swim.

Her neighbor, Prak Try, shared her experience with living on a floating house and having a child who did not know how to swim. She disclosed, "my daughter died when she was 4 years old from drowning while she was playing on my boathouse. I did not know she fell into the water and she did not know how to swim". With a tear in her eye, she added "I was planning to send her to kindergarten, but unfortunately she died before I had the chance".

Prak Try, now an adult laments the fact that she cannot read nor write, since her mother never sent her to school when she was young. Seeing herself disadvantaged for being illiterate, she has enrolled her son in grade one for two years in a row to ensure that he learns how to read and write with fluency.

Throughout the course of the campaign meetings, some community members confessed that their children have been engaged in child labor and that they had never before intended to send their children to school. However, after joining the campaign, one villager realized, "I now must consider what kind of work is appropriate for my children to help with". In general, the villagers expressed that they would like to eliminate child labor from their communities.

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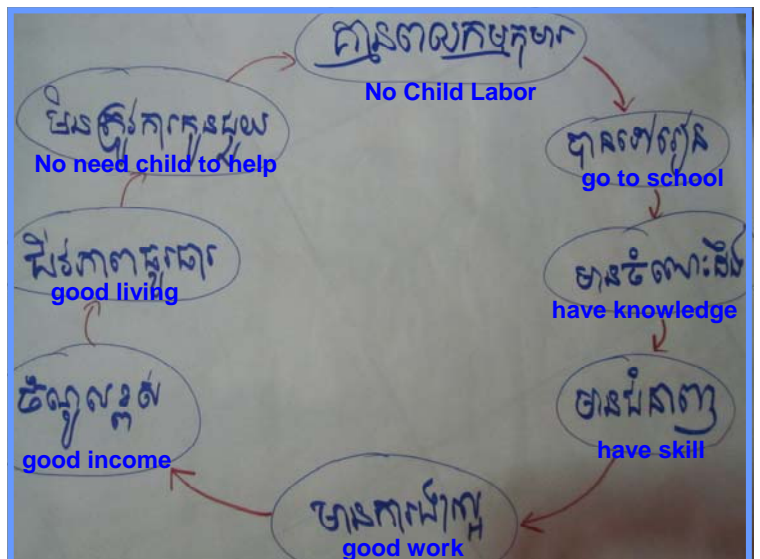
Gather Children and Parents to Watch Educational Comedy Video on Child Labor and the Importance of Education



These campaign meetings were organized with target parents and children not only who have reached the age of school enrollment, but also who have dropped out of school due to poverty or being orphaned. The meetings took a distinctively participatory approach to involving the attendants. In addition to screening educational child labor videos, the meetings were used as an opportunity for parents to share their experiences with regard to their children's schooling and their commitment to education. Participants were also quizzed with questions about child labor, and rewarded with study materials like notebooks, pens, and pencils, once they answered correctly.

During the meetings, the CYCs, CLMCs, CCs and local authorities presented an illustration of the circle of poverty that reflected its influence on the perpetuation of child labor [as shown in photo]. After viewing this illustration, the grandmother of an orphaned boy who attended the meeting remarked, "I really agree with this logic and now clearly understand the long-term effects poverty has on child labor".

This grandmother listened intently to the questions about child labor and eagerly raised her hand to respond, knowing that she could win notebooks and pens. She commented, "I will give these study materials to my grandson and will try my best to earn money that I can to send him to school. However, I am a poor woman and would appreciate any support offered by the government or NGOs to make this happen".



My daughter goes to school – I would devote all my effort!

The floating houses continue to move around from the storm's rising water levels as Chhun Ry places study materials into her 6 year-old daughter's school bag in her dilapidated boathouse, complete with a leaky roof.

When asked what she was doing, Chhun Ry explained "I just came back from the market where I bought study materials and uniforms for my daughter who will go to floating school this year". She added that, "I use my profit from selling fish and devote the rest of my efforts to supporting my daughter's schooling".

She reported that her daughter has been enrolled in school since applications were first accepted. Although she is busy earning a living, she recognizes the importance of taking the time to give attention to her daughter's education. She believes that education is the only asset that can lead her daughter toward a bright future and release her from her current living conditions. Lastly, she impressed that, "I would commit to do anything to support her study". With a smile, her daughter said, "I want to be a teacher."



Floating village at Kampong Luong Commune of Krakor District in Pursat Province

My Skill Helps My Life and My Family

Many success stories can be taken from the sample of beneficiaries who participated in vocational skills training. For instance, two children who completed training in hair-cutting (barbers) are now benefiting from their small barbershops.

One said that he would like to expand his business in the future by hiring employees, buying better quality tools, improving hair-cutting skills, and renting a commercial space. As opposed to the work he did before receiving training, this child rarely helps his family plant rice and no longer needs to rely on the unpredictable sale of handicrafts. The other trainee started his business at home using CHES materials. He no longer herds of buffalo as an unpaid family labourer and, instead, now earns \$1.50 per day as a barber. With this amount, they can support livelihood expense and save some to buy more haircutting tools or better quality tools.

In addition to haircutting skills, children who learned how to fix motorbikes also experienced an improvement in the quality and earning potential of their work life. One child trained in motorbike repair has stopped working as an unpaid cow herder and earns up to \$3.75 a day, while two other boys established motorbike repair shops in their home and now each earn \$3.75 per day.



After Training, he opens shop in his village with a start up kit from the CHES project



Meanwhile, girls have also benefited from their participation in the vocational skills training. In particular, those girls who studied sewing now practice their skills by sewing school uniforms for CHES beneficiaries and earn \$1.50 USD per outfit, e.g. shirts and skirt or shirt and trousers.

The project also offers job placement services for those beneficiaries who go into wage employment and provides for start-up kits and marketing support for trainees' who start producing and selling their own goods.

Many beneficiaries who completed vocational skills training were able to translate their education into earning a reliable income. Their ability to establish successful businesses indicates that the skills taught through the CHES project meet the market demand in the four provinces where CHES works.



**“I can send my younger sisters and brothers to school”,
quoted from Phach Hong who earns income from making
bamboo furniture after training.**

A Poor Family Combats Child Labor

It took about 3 hours to travel from Phnom Penh to Kampong Luong Commune along the paved road toward the floating villages in Pursat province, where many houses sit on Tonle Sap Lake. In Village IV, a poor family with two children can be considered a good model to the rest of the community. The parents exhibit such a strong commitment to sending their two daughters to school despite the many difficulties they face. Although they are not CHES beneficiaries since their children do not meet the project criteria, their story can inspire other poor households to continue striving to make education a reality for their children.

Father, Dy Seng, reported that he is both a fisherman and boat worker. He can sometimes earn anywhere from 3,000 Riel (\$0.75) to 6,000 Riel from his own fishing and about 8,000 Riel (\$2) to 12,000 Riel (\$3) as a boat worker. While he is adept at calculating numbers, he cannot read fluently. His income is used to support his family and his children's study. His first child studies in grade 11 while the second is in grade 10.

Dy Seng explained, "I borrowed some money from my neighbor to buy a better quality bike that will enable my daughter to get to school on time". "After working hard, I could pay off this debt", he said with a smile and obviously proud of his effort.

His wife, Keo Sovann revealed, "because of our low income, I have to sacrifice buying food for myself to save some money that can be used to support my children's schooling and keep them enrolled until they graduate". She added, "I have already saved a little money to buy books, pens, pencils and uniforms for them. Unfortunately, though, I cannot buy more than one outfit for each daughter to encourage them to study hard."

In addition, she raises several chickens to generate more income when her husband does not have job himself. She continued to say that she gives her children time to relax and study at home, so as to promote their hard work and creative thinking. She only asks them to do housework and to help with fishing during their school vacations.

Their children seemed grateful for their parents' hard work and all the attention given to their education. The second daughter informed, "I have tried to study hard in order to get scholarship, so my parents will not have to pay for me to study at university in the future". She continued to say, "I want to be a doctor or a policewoman because there are many poor people in my community who are infected with diseases and who become sick, especially children. But, they do not have money for treatment".

To echo this sentiment, the first child said, "I will not make my parents hopeless -- if I fail the exam, they will not be happy." She also wishes to be a doctor or a teacher because since, in her community, there are many illiterate children who will not be able to lift themselves out of poverty when they grow up.



He helps his wife to raise chicken when he is free from work

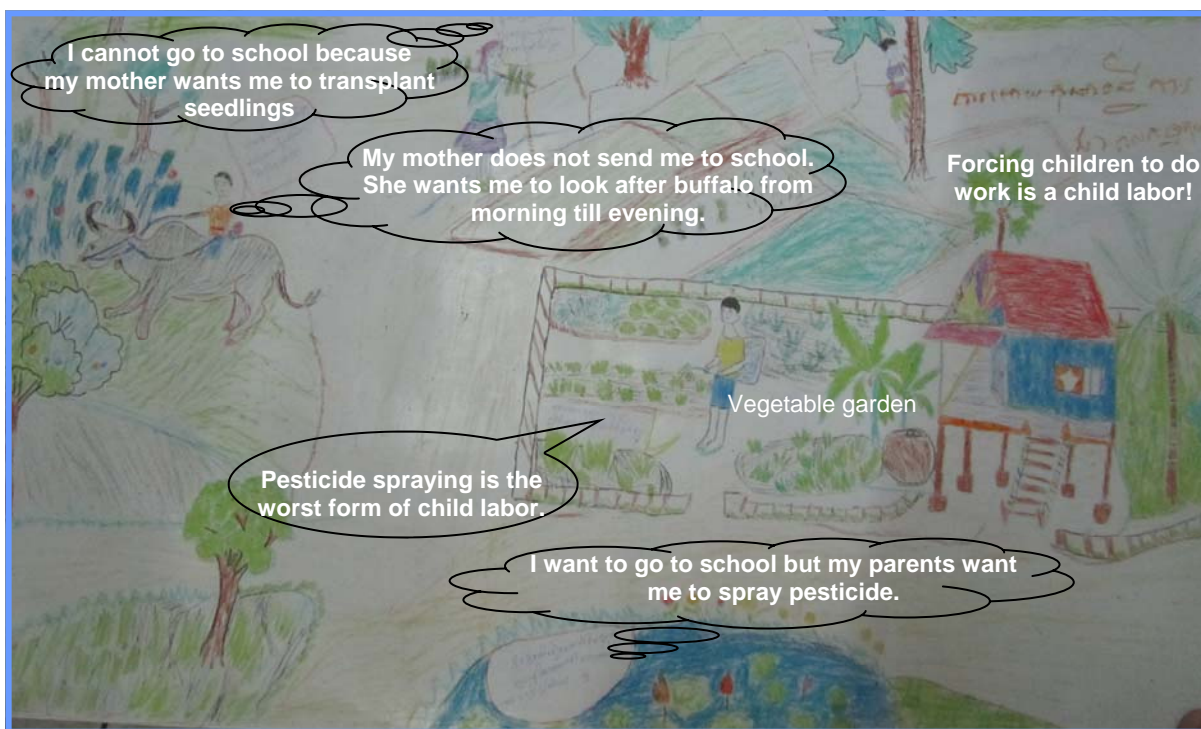
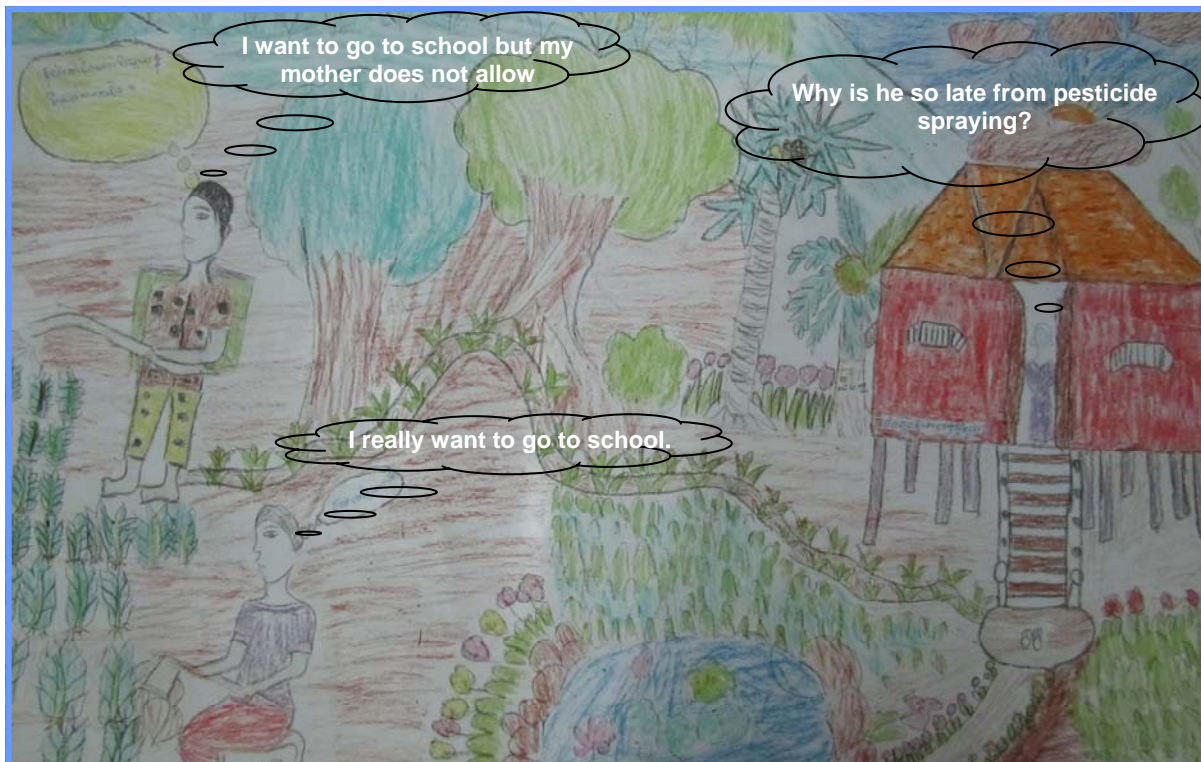


His house have moved from water and the storm to the upper land due to water level



A family full of joy and happiness who parents have commitment for their children's education.

VOICES OF CHILDREN



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