

# CHILD RIGHTS FOUNDATION CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT YEAR 2013

## I. INTRODUCTION

Child Rights Foundation (CRF) is a child-focused, not-for-profit, non-political and non-religious Cambodian non-governmental organization that works towards the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other instruments related to children's issues in Cambodia. It aims to promote long-term change in the way children are viewed, cared for and well treated. Established on November 20, 2000 and officially registered with the Royal Government of Cambodia on March 6, 2001, CRF endeavours to build local capacity and ownership of **duty-bearers** to respect, protect and guarantee these rights and as well as to empower **rights-holders** to exercise and demand their rights which are essential elements in Cambodia's progress, democratic and sustained development.

Since its inception, CRF has been working with governmental ministries and local authorities, especially with Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) under financial support from several donor agencies. With commitment to professionalism and accountability, CRF has continued its effort in realizing children's rights in order to reach sustainable changes of all individuals to take personal and collective responsibilities in making children's lives safe, positive and wholesome as guided by its vision and missions as follows:

### **Vision:**

A world where all children enjoy their rights in all circumstances.

### **Missions:**

- 1- To **educate** state and non-state actors to become accountable duty bearers in the implementation of the UNCRC,
- 2- To **empower** children and young people to actively and meaningfully engage in the decision-making process and to become their own advocate for the respect of children's rights at all levels,
- 3- To **support** duty-bearers and rights-holders in realization of child rights,
- 4- To **mobilize** individuals, resources and efforts towards personal and collective responsibilities for making the lives of the children safe, positive and wholesome and
- 5- To **monitor** the implementation of the UNCRC in Cambodia with meaningful participation of children and young people.

In 2013, CRF implemented 6 projects across 153 primary schools in five provinces, namely Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Kandal, Rattanakiri and Phnom Penh. The projects target education officers, teachers, students, child and youth-led groups' members, commune councillors and parents with primary focusing on mainstreaming child rights in the education system and promoting its application inside these target areas. Our achievements from these projects not only benefited the immediate target groups that we work with, but also the communities and policies and practices at different levels-namely from the school level to commune, district, provincial and national levels, particularly for the MoEYS in its formulation and implementation of future policies and directions.

As an immediate impact, CRF projects have built the capacity of at least 57 education officers, more than 1,450 teachers, 50,000 students, 700 youth, 86 members of school support committees and commune councillors and 348 parents through various trainings, workshops, meetings and consultations to equip extra knowledge and practical capability in promoting the application of children's rights and addressing

all child rights-related issues in their environments. Meanwhile, CRF has built a strong, close and sincere cooperation with the MoEYS, especially with five relevant departments, resulting in the conclusion of a new 5-year term 2013-2017 of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two entities.

Not only has CRF gained strong support from MoEYS, various important donors such as ANESVAD Foundation-Spain, Intervita onlus-Italy, Plan International-Cambodia, Save the Children, Norway House, and such have also contributed their support to make these projects realistic and operative. As a result, CRF to make progress and gain more credibility through all enumerated activities and achievements highlighted below.

## **II. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Project 1: Mainstreaming Child Rights in Schools**

Under financial support from Plan International Cambodia and close cooperation with MoEYS, this project is implemented in 124 schools, among which 43 schools are in Dambae and Ponhea Krek districts of Kampong Cham province (currently Tbong Kmom province) and 81 schools are in Angkor Chum, Angkor Thom and Srey Snam districts of Siem Reap province.

**Result 1.1: Teachers, education officers and School Support Committees are capacitated in child rights, child participation and positive discipline to reduce corporal punishment and encourage child participation in schools**

The project has empowered educational officials from national and provincial levels, including those who are part of the project steering committee, core trainers as well as key teachers who conduct echo trainings to members of the school children's council (SCC) and to all students. Our capacity building strategies consists of national consultation to trainings, monitoring and empowerment at the school level, both with teachers and the students, as well to enforce both the articulations of good policy and practices by the ministry officials, teachers and the students themselves.

**Result 1.2: Girls and boys are capacitated and have more opportunities to participate, express their opinions and influence decision-making at all levels**

CRF monitoring team has led a fact-finding mission to find out additional information on SSC such as that of about its structure, selection process, working mandate, its involvement in school management and development, CR sensitization among its members, children's involvement in any meeting within community and others. We have learned that most SSCs are less active in terms of being involved with schools, limited awareness of their roles and responsibilities, limited initiatives in school improvement activities etc. But, few SSCs have involved children in their meetings to discuss schooling campaigns and commune safety-related issues. This area is there requires more encouraging effort, follow-up and coaching; which will be paid with attention in the next project period.

**Result 1.3: child rights are officially integrated in primary education to promote general understanding on child rights among children**

This year, the project has achieved an important milestone where the MoEYS has accepted the integration of CR concept into teacher's manual in Social Study subject for grades 4, 5 and 6. The manual was co-developed by MoEYS and CRF with the integration of CR concepts and notions into practical use in primary education level. Furthermore, the guidelines on functioning school children's council (SCC) that CRF has helped develop and put into use for almost 4 years was also revised in accordance with the new SCC's statute and got official approval from MoEYS. These significant achievements show that the project is a complete success and is on the verge of witnessing its impact through nation-wide application.

CRF sees the achievements of this project this year as a major success in terms of fulfilling our vision and mission, since the Ministry of education is the one of the most important body to triggers child rights practice by teachers, parents and the children themselves. We also see our long term role in continuing to support this body to fulfil its other important obligations following this year's milestone.

## **Project 2: "Strengthening Children's Voices in Promoting Safe School"**

This project has been implemented for 2 years, 2012-2013, under the support of Plan International Cambodia, in 4 scattered provinces including Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, Rattanakiri and Phnom Penh. Accomplishments at school level includes successful building of capacity for school directors, in-service teachers, children's councils executive committee (CC-Excom.), School Support Committee (SSC) and Commune Committee for Disaster Management (CCDM) on 1) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), 2) Hazard Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (HVCA) and 3) development of DRR plan and School Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan. The project has directly influenced 12 school directors, more than 100 teachers and more than 4500 students, resulted in significant changes in knowledge, attitude and practices toward promoting school safety and disaster risk in their respective schools and communities.

At higher levels, the significant achievement lies with the adoption and launching for official nation-wide application of the school safety guidelines that CRF has helped to develop. Practically, one target school was awarded as a safe school champion at a regional competition with other nine schools from China and Indonesia.

### **Result 2.1: Guidelines on Safe Schools developed**

CRF has helped the MoEYS to develop Safe School guidelines, which respond to dimension 3 of child friendly school policy: Health, Safety and Child Protection. The guideline was finalized, adopted by H.E. Hang Choun Naron, Minister of MoEYS and then launched for official nation-wide application. 22,000 copies of the guideline were printed and distributed to Provincial Department of Education Youth and Sport (PDoEYS) in 24 provinces and relevant NGOs for promoting school safety in Cambodia with high appreciation in returns. Schools, especially located in disaster prone areas as well as NGOs working in this field need such an important guiding tool for disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation. The MoEYS has also acknowledged that the development of the safe school guidelines will contribute to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) strategy of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

### **Result 2.2: Good practice on Safe Schools documented and widely shared with DRR implementing agencies**

At provincial level, video documentation on simulation exercise, traffic facilitation, DRR campaign and safe school's project achievements were documented and copied as CD for disseminating during national launching workshop on safe school guidelines to officials of PDoEYS from 24 provinces, target beneficiaries, National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) and relevant NGOs/INGOs working in the same areas. As a result, all participants gained better understanding on safe school project and bring some good experiences to apply in their respective provinces.

At national level, the project achievements and experiences on Simulation Exercise and video clip were also shared among Provincial Committee for Disaster Management (PCDM), DCDM from 18 provinces and relevant NGOs working in the same sector who participated in the 25th National DRR Forum conducted in Banteay Meanchey province.

At regional level, two primary schools, Bakheng and Prek Taroath, were selected as the champion schools to represent Cambodia at a regional competition with other nine schools from China and Indonesia. The best practices of two target schools in Cambodia were documented and shared at the

regional level during a 3-day Regional Annual Program Review on Safe School conducted on 20-22 March, 2013 in Siem Reap province.

CRF has also organized an exchange study visit for all target schools to visit and learn from the champion schools in Phnom Penh capital in late July 2013.

***Result 2.3: 12 target schools are equipped with actual needs to become Safe Schools***

The selected school principals, teachers, children councils, SSC and CCDM of the 12 target schools have been actively involved in identifying hazards, developing and implementing school safety plan including DRR action plan and School Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan to promote safety of children in schools with support from teachers to ensure the continuity of study during a disaster strike or emergency. Once, the school safety plan finalized, it was shared and introduced to other teachers, children councils and SSC to get to know and participate in the implementation and monitoring of the activities.

In case a school does not have enough funds to implement the plan, school principals and SSC members mobilized financial resources from the surrounding communities and NGOs (for example, in Prek Taroath primary school in Phnom Penh raised fund to rehabilitate their school entrance road).

Teachers and children councils in the target schools have received training on how to use the facilities/equipment in emergency case such as small loud speakers, ropes, whistles, information boards, safety vests and traffic barricades, first aid materials and kit, hygiene and sanitary supplies. The target schools received school facilities and materials support to make their school safer based on the prioritized hazards and DRR action plan.

In addition, the Children's Council members have provided trainings to students after the national anthem salutation, in classroom or in group meetings. The Children's Council members used DRR quizzes and provided inform the students about what to do before, during and after flood, lightning strike, storm and traffic accident, waste separation, and what to do when there is an outbreak of disease or epidemic. First aid assistance and simulation exercise were also shared to students in theory and practices.

Changes in children's practices have been observed during the life of the project. For example, they did not play in flooded areas, did not stay under trees during raining, did not hold metal materials during storm and lightning, walked on the right hand side and washing their hands with water and soap before getting food, knew how to evacuate themselves to safer place when disaster strikes and providing first aid assistance to their classmates etc. This is a direct effect of the 104 child-to-child activities conducted in target schools by the children councils.

### **Project 3: Empowering Child & Youth-led Groups for meaningful Child Participation in Child Rights promotion and monitoring**

Under the financial support from Save the Children, this project aims at enabling children and youth network to play a role in promoting the awareness on UNCRC to communities and authorities and promoting the participation of the children themselves in local decision making. To achieve these, CRF has conducted simultaneous empowering, capacity building, coordinating and monitoring activities with and through the children and youth network (Cambodia Children and Young People Movement for Child Rights-CCYMCR), which is our strategic counterpart that has been benefiting from our coaching and coordination since its establishment.

To date this nation-wide network has reached a mature developmental stage, where major comprehensive policy is in place and reviewed from time to time, including this year and that members of network are now widely recognized by donors, policy makers at national level and local governments such as at commune level.

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Moreover their capacity to educate, advocate and monitor key issues on children's rights has demonstrated through the following project results:

**Result 3.1: 1,000 CCYMCR members (300 girls) engaged with local authorities for the implementation and monitoring of children's rights in communities.**

To date, a total of 855 children and youths are known to have played active role in monitoring and advocating for the implementation of children's rights and expressing ideas in decisions affecting their lives at home, community and children and youth- led groups (CYLG) in 16 target provinces. For instance, the children/youth-led groups have implemented their own research plan with CCWCs at their communities, shared and produced their own quarterly plans and reports, developed their own annual plan for 2014, elected their own council members for 2013-2014, reviewed and adopted the group policies. Members of CCYMCR, in particular, have participated in national events organized by Cambodia National Council for Children (CNCC) and other cooperative activities with Child Advocate Network (CAN) such as the development of children's report on the 3rd Optional Protocol on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, study exchanges, quarterly meetings and annual reflection meeting between CAN and CCYMCR.

**Result 3.2: 800 community members, including 40 parents in the target areas of CCYMCR provide opportunities for children to participate in CYLGs to be involved in decisions affecting their lives at home.**

This year, more than 1000 community members in 6 target areas-Kandal, Koh Kong, Kratie, Siem Reap, Preah Vihear and Kampong Chhnang-have learned about the importance of child participation in family decision making and child involvement in child club. 35 parents has developed family action plan to promote it shared it to their neighbours. In an interview, CRF found that 27% of community members involved were happy to support children's activities in their communities.

**Result 3.3: 1 target commune has integrated children's issues in their commune investment plan and has allocated a budget to respond to children's issues.**

The children and youth group in Prek Roka commune has raised 6 issues namely birth registration, regular health check of mother and baby, health and sanitation for children under age of 5, domestic violence affecting children, community pre-school development and support CYLGs' initiatives integrated into Commune Investment Plan to the commune councillors. The commune council has integrated these issues into the CCWC's annual plan 2013.

An amount of USD 1,063.44 (which equals 73.34% of total commune budget of USD 1,450.00) was spent by CCWC of Prek Roka commune to implement the action plan for children during March to December 2013.

Other project impacts include 16 CCWC members and 8 CYLG members gained knowledge on how to draw social service mapping, 4 social service maps of each village in Prek Roka commune were drawn by the participants from the community, 158 women and 15 pregnant women are aware of the important of pregnant checks and pregnancy vaccination, 167 children in Prek Roka primary school are aware on hygiene and sanitation on how washing hand with soap for children and 1, 233 children received new vaccine.

## **Project 4: Promoting Child Friendly Learning Environment for Quality Education**

This project was initiated with funding support from Intervita of Italy to enable the target groups to address the widespread problems of CR in schools. It is a 3-year project starting from February 2012 to January 2015 and being implemented in Siem Reap Province's 2 remote districts, Varin (22 schools) and Puork (2 schools).With full cooperation from the provincial education department and relevant stakeholders such

as Provincial Teacher Training Center, school directors, assigned teachers and students, the project has created a set of systematic intervention that led to the following results:

**Result 4.1: 70% of all teachers (176) in CRF target schools in Varin and Puork districts, Siemreap province are able to promote child safety and friendly learning environment – by the end of 2015**

The project found that more than 90% of the trained teachers on increased understanding to good and very good knowledge of topics given to them. More importantly, the project has witnessed a significant reduction in the practice of corporal punishment by teachers while better learning environment has been illustrated in all targeted schools. A dynamic engagement between the students and the teachers could also be witnessed.

February-July 2013, 17 extra classes were conducted in two schools, namely Prey Knol and Sre Por in Varin district, for slow learners from grade 1–6 - 1-hour session per day - to enable them to upgrade their learning from average to a higher level. In total, 257 students (107 girls) attended the remedial classes. All students were motivated with necessary school materials support such as exercise book, pens, pencils and slate. A monitoring tool was also produced for teachers to involve actively in the activity. As a result, 160 students (72 girls) have successfully passed to higher grade in new academic year 2013-2014.

In early period of the academic year, December 2013-January 2014, another 18 extra classes, Prey Knol 12 classes and Sre Por 6 classes were conducted for 130 (54F) students.

**Result 4. 2: 60% of School Children’s Councils in CRF target schools in Varin and Puork districts, Siemreap province take active role in actions promoting child participation and child protection in schools- by the end of 2015**

Trained school directors and key teachers have conducted training on necessary skill to SCC ExCom member in order to enable them to perform actively their role and responsibility. 120 of 2-hour training sessions conducted in 24 target schools once time per month in May, June and November and twice times per month in December 2013. Normally, 8-19 SCC ExCom members (depending on size of school) participated in the sessions. Topic taught included: SCC structure, how to prepare effective meeting, minute writing, report writing, team work, SCC action plan developing, etc.

Regular monthly meeting with and among SCC had been conducted on every 4th week of the month except August and September 2013. Normally, the meeting has to be leaded by the chairperson of SCC and joined by all ExCom members (consisting of 8-19 members depending on the size of school) and leader of class/Sakha to listen report on activities, achievements and challenges and plan from different branches and classroom level, either with or without help/advice from key teachers.

SCC executive committees in 22 schools of Varin District has involved actively in organizing 22 campaigns to promote school enrolment launched in villages surrounding schools before the new academic year started.

In the new academic year, key teachers and school directors has provided trainings on My View Box guidelines to SCC ExCom members, who later disseminated directly in front of the box on useful and how to use box to 20-30 students from grade 3-6. To be effective and make it easy, the guideline-sticker was produced and posted above or near by the box as guide on how to use it.

As a result, 57 letters from students were collected while the school directors responded by looking for resources from different sources including fund from MoEYS, project fund and other private donors, and promising to inform students in advance when teachers are absent as well as to provide students with more opportunities to actively participate in school activities.

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**Result 4.3: at least 70% of CRF's target schools in Varin and Puork districts, Siemreap province improved hygiene and sanitation status- by the end of 2015**

It was noticed that the shortage of water and the availability of toilets is a common problem hindering the effective promotion of hygiene and sanitation practice among students in all target schools. Through meeting with school principals and education officers at district office, 6 selected school need wells for improving school hygiene and sanitation and child friendly environment.

The project staff conducted a need assessment and identified 3 dilapidated latrines that need urgent renovation in schools of Sre Samot, Kork Phnom and Tuol Mead in Varin District. Finally, 3 latrines with 8 rooms in selected schools above were renovated. CRF handed over to schools to undertake with small budget allocation to them to restore the broken parts into good condition. This was started in June and finished in July 2013.

96 Awareness raising sessions on hygiene and sanitation practices were conducted in June and December 2013 SCC Excom members reaching a total of 3821 students (2103 girls). The students are now able to describe ways to avoid preventable diseases and 10 good common practices on hygiene and sanitation.

Integration of hygiene and sanitation practices into weekly plan has been so far implemented in 80% of the target schools. The process in setting up plan at class level was undertaken through a discussion with the entire class students to identify and adopt few issues or main concerns related to hygiene and sanitation which can be applied at own classroom, while another consultation at SCC ExCom level was also discussed with all sub-committee members involved to determine common issues to implement in a rotation schedule with other classrooms.

By working this way issues at classrooms as well as issues at school levels can be entirely tackled and applied by all students. E.g. the hygiene and sanitation practices – like taking care of toilets and cleaning, or collecting rubbish on school playground can be done in rotation once a week per class, whereas the role of cleaning classroom floor or wall, or refill water filter inside classrooms can be done in rotation once a week per student sub-group.

**Result 4.4: relevant stakeholders including DCWC, CCWC and PWG members in the target areas enhanced capacity in CR promotion and protection- by the end of 2015**

Greater community support has also taken place through DCWC and CCWC. CCWC in particular has committed to join force with schools in monitoring and report child protection cases, asked the school directors to report school attendance to them so that they can follow up and convince student's parents. In terms of child birth certificate – CCWC member has committed to continue to conduct birth registration campaign to further register for new born babies and to issue certificate for unregistered children in their commune.

**Result 4.5: a child protection policy/guideline adopted and applied in the target schools.**

Child Protection policy has been developed through a series of consultations with school directors, representatives of SCC and children's representatives. After the adoption of the guideline, all school directors have committed to enable all teachers in their respective school to sign on the code of conduct presented by this guideline.

## **Project 5: Promoting Child Friendly and Healthy Learning Environment**

This project forms a part of CRF new Hygiene and Sanitation Program started from August 01, 2013 to July 31, 2016. The objective of the project is to promote friendly, healthy and safe learning environment for boys and girls in the target schools contributing to their accomplishment of basic education as stipulated in Child Friendly School Policy of the MoEYS. This year, the project has chosen a primary

school in Prek Rokar commune, Kandal Steung District, Kandal Province, to implement activities, aiming at the following result areas:

**Result 5.1: School director and teachers of the target schools acquired relevant knowledge and skills for promoting child friendly learning and teaching environment.**

The project was embarked this year with the organization of necessary knowledge and skills of teachers and commune council members and students in the target areas. As a result, 1 vice-director of district education office, 11 teachers, 8 commune councils and CCWC members gained knowledge on children's rights, children's council, positive discipline and hygiene and sanitation and committed to share their knowledge through echo trainings to other members in their respective communities and schools.

**Result 5.2: Target school children gained necessary knowledge and skills promoting good health, hygiene and sanitation and preventing themselves from abuses and harmful situation; and increased positive hygiene and sanitation behaviours in daily practice.**

This will be fulfilled later years.

**Result 5.3: Target schools equipped with facilities necessary for promoting school hygiene and sanitation as well as child friendly learning environment.**

A preliminary need assessment on the current status of the existing classrooms were done, taking into consideration factors such as water reservoir and hand wash basin, the latrine, water filter in classroom, materials to keep classrooms and latrines clean, rubbish bins, the information board, medical check-up for school children (mouth, teeth, eye, ears,), first aids facilities/kits to target school and training need assessment for capacity building to teachers.

An action plan was jointly developed with resources from the community and the school mobilized to contribute to the project implementation. The commune chief agreed to allocate commune budget in the amount of Riel 1,000,000.00 (about USD is about \$250.00) while School Director also committed to allocate from school budget in the same amount. Totally about US\$500.00 has been mobilized from commune and school to support the project contributing to school improvement.

**Result 5.4: Health status of target educational staff and children improved through preventive measures from diseases.**

This will be fulfilled later years.

**Result 5.5: Vulnerable children (right holders) in the target schools who received direct support from the project are able to maintain schooling that prevent themselves from being abused and exploited.**

This will be fulfilled later years.

## **Project 6: Child Sponsorship Program**

This project has been implemented in partnership cooperation with Khmer-France-Hungary Friendship Orphanage (KFO) and Norway House (NH) since 2007. The objective is to help deprived children overcoming the poverty cycle by creating opportunity and possibility to go for post-secondary education that enables them to catch good careers in the future.

The project provides full support to individual sponsored student by covering all related costs such as living and studying costs, transport, accommodation, healthcare, etc. Most of the sponsored students are pursuing university degrees. Up to now 19 children and youths have been sponsored and 4 of them had graduated and have jobs while 15 are still under project coordination and support.

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### III. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Capacity Building:** to strengthen the organization's capacity as well as to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the programs, three support staffs and two program staffs participated some different training topics. One support staff and one program manager were sent to participate one day training in "Governance, Professionalism and Accountability " organized by CCC, and the aforementioned support staff was also joined one day training on "Finance club" organized by CCC. Another support staff was sent to participate one day training in "ICT learning forum" and one program staff to 2-day training on "Safe School training" organized by Safe School ARO at Bangkok, Thailand.

Besides the above external trainings, 3 internal trainings were organized for all program staff members on "Monitoring & Evaluation".

**Board of Director:** presently, CRF has five board members who have extensive knowledge and experience in the areas of CR, Law, development and fund raising. They are:

- Mr. Bun Sok Seila, Senior Programme Officer, Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law as chairperson
- Ms. Peng Sokunthea, Programme Officer at DIAKONIA, member
- Ms. Amy Antoniaides Austermler, Freelance Consultant on Women and Children, member
- Mr. Men Sedtharoat, Freelance consultant, member
- Ms. Tiv Tithvanna, Finance and Grant Officer, Aide et Action, member.

**Staffing:** As CRF has expanded its scope of work, this year, 2 staffs were additionally recruited. Currently 17 are program staffs and 9 are program supporting staffs. All together, we have 26 staffs member. However, three staffs were resigned during this year.

**Financial Management:** Almost every quarter CRF always tries its best to orientate its staff members on the organization's policy, especially its financial procedures so that all the expenses meet the real needs effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, to ensure that the financial policy goes on the right track and becomes a more reliable and credible mechanism for the organization, CRF usually hires independent auditing firm, KPMG, to audit its financial management. This procedure has been practiced for many years since 2001 and CRF has got the highest score for its financial management. Furthermore, CRF was awarded a GPP certificate for its good governance, professional and accountable practices.

### IV. NETWORKING

CRF is a member of several networks including NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (NGOCRC), End Child Prostitution, Abuse and Trafficking in Cambodia (ECPAT-Cambodia), Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and NGO Education Partnership (NEP). It is also a member of Emergency in Education Working Group (EiEWG) consisting key organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision Cambodia, Finn Church Aid and Plan. As a member of these coalitions, CRF has been actively involved and participated in their membership meetings and contributing inputs and information for their publications. We also have opportunities to learn and explore from other countries experiences through regular exchanges of publications, information on good practices and lessons learnt among the network members.

### V. CHALLENGES

In spite of having undertaken these project tasks with such accomplishments in the target areas, there still have been some difficulties and challenges that hamper the smooth implementation. The most recognizable obstacles to the implementing process are as follows:

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- Project staff members in remote areas have difficulty in finding quality receipts from suppliers that cause to wasting of children and youth's time to implement their activities.
- Staff are invited for working in cooperation with other institutions such as CAN through NGOCRC, CNCC but due to the project has no budget allocated for such work, it causes project staff to lose some opportunities to involve in those activities at national level.
- Project mid-term review started at the end of quarter is made the project team spent a lot of time with the consultant within the business period. So, the project focus was lost since the forces were divided.
- PWG members and school directors have many other duties, and the learning schedule is tough, causing difficulties in coordinating joint schedules for some activities.
- Some teachers and CC members who have been trained about necessary skills to work with children were transferred to other schools and replaced with new teachers and CCs.
- The reduction of fund has affected some achievements of projects, especially those projects that work for subjective outcomes with quality and long-term changes.
- The conducting of remedial classes by school teachers for poor learning students in order to upgrade their capacity to normal score is a real challenge for the project staff as well as for school directors to tackle due to the fact that some students were absent as they were forced to work for their family in the field.
- Unclear communications between sponsored students, NH and CRF. It was noticed that the process of communication, roles, and responsibilities of NH and CRF in implementing sponsorship program has not been made clear to the sponsored students so that some students communicated directly to NH, but not through CRF. This unclear communication line caused misunderstanding and confusing while performing project tasks. However, the problem was addressed during the meeting and through email communication between NH and CRF; the decisions made by both parties were clearly informed to the sponsored students to avoid misunderstanding and to improve future communication and actions.

## **VI. PROGRAM EXPENDITURE**

In 2013, CRF has received promises for funds from various donors to support its programs. Those donor agencies/sources namely are: Intervita onlus, Plan International Cambodia, Norway House (NH), Save the Children (SC), and other contributors. A total grant for the year was US\$ 588,509.00 and the total expenditure for the 12 month period is US\$ 625,886.00.

## **VII. LESSONS LEARNT**

The following lessons learnt have been found during the project implementation period:

- Children always have quick decision, for example the decision in selecting skill for their study. Some time, after finished school, they proposed to change to another skill as the last skill was not their idea/favourite. So, to smooth the project implementation and to improve children's decision making skill, CRF should provide them more related information and assist them to learn to hunt for more information and to analyse critically before making decision since the beginning, in order to avoid misuse of time and other administrative works.
- Any activity that is linked to MoEYS' policy or recommendations often gains welcoming support from grassroots level, for instance, initiative to promote children's physical recreation or exercise has hooked

up to some contributions from schools. This is the case of setting up a long-jump pit with small financial support from the project.

- Creating a strong SCC requires attention from the teachers, school principal and a system of planning, monitoring and feedback.
- The process of developing document in cooperation with MoEYS may take longer time than expected due to we need to consult with many layers of responsible mechanisms/institutions. Therefore, we should be more cautious when setting up project planning time-frame for such kind of activity. For example, cases of developing students and teacher's textbooks, and the revision of CC guidelines.
- Reflecting from these lessons learnt, through quarterly partnership meeting CRF and other Plan International Cambodia's partners would share achievements and the lessons learnt to improve our work plan in the future. We will strengthen in-service teachers and CC Ex-Com's knowledge on CC guidelines revised through trainings and coaching in order to make schools become safe and friendly place for children. Moreover, we will work closely with SSCs to boost SSCs members to take more attention to school development and have good cooperation with school principals.
- Working through the existing mechanism of the MoEYS, particularly through the District Training Monitoring Team (DTMT) is a key approach to build ownership of the government and ensure sustainability of the project, particularly in monitoring and reporting mechanism and mobilizing resources to support safe school initiatives.
- In order to make school support committee functioning effectively, close cooperation between school principal and SSC members and encourage them to involve in all school's activities especially in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation are key factors to build trust and transparency. By doing this, the school will be able to mobilize support and local resources from surrounding community to develop school as well promoting school safety.
- To reinforce the application of safe school guidelines nationwide, building capacity of MoEYS officials on safe school as national core trainers is a key approach to spread the knowledge to DTMT at the provincial and district levels.
- CYLGs got support from CCWCs for their activities in communities. The projects involve CCWC representatives from each target of CCYMCR members to participate in CCYMCR activities as chaperone/ observer/ participant such as child rights analysis, research planning, data collection in communities, quarterly meetings, awareness raising plan and implement etc. it make them understand about the way of working with young people, what kind of support that they can give, sometime could give advice to CYLGs for any obstacle etc. Beside the training and coaching activities this is one of strategy to linkage CYLGs with CCWCs. This strategy was applying within CCYMCR target communes and also shared to all CCYMCR parental organizations who wish to link up Child club with CCWCs.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

Year 2013 saw CRF's successful performance of its missions and advancement in accountability and professionalism in working for the benefits of the children, especially in realizing CR concepts within the education system and communities. An important factor for this cooperation with the MoEYS' 5 departments under a MoU for 3<sup>rd</sup> term CRF concluded with MoEYS in 2008. Because of this systematic cooperation, implementation at school and local levels has been very welcomed. The major success this year is the inclusion of teacher's manual development in the subject of Social Study for Grades 4, 5 and 6 and Safe School Guidelines coupled with outstanding involvement of MoEYS departments' officials, teachers, local authorities and students.

One remarkable reform that has been observed in target areas where CRF is operating is that the target

schools have significantly changed in terms of environment and learning atmosphere. Students have friendlier relationship in the playground and classrooms; teachers have given the consideration and the value of their students' views and have almost totally dropped the practice of punishment against their students and accepted the value of non-violent approach in teaching, which serves as one of the factors that could pave the way to child friendly atmosphere in schools as a whole.

All achievements point to the sustainability of our projects' impact on children through deepened stakeholders' commitment to the cause of children's best interests and the spirit of the government's MGD, especially the eight-point reform in Education field promulgated by H.E. the Minister for Education, Youth and Sport. With this effect, it is clear that CRF has played a very important role in Cambodia's progressive realization of children's rights and it is a demand that it continues its important missions for years to come.

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Vorn Koy (Mr.)

Executive Director  
Child Rights Foundation

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