

**CHILD RIGHTS FOUNDATION  
ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT  
YEAR 2015**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Child Rights Foundation (CRF) is a child-focused, not-for-profit, non-political and non-religious Cambodian non-governmental organization that works toward 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 treated. Established on November 20, 2000 and officially registered with the Royal Government of Cambodia on March 6, 2001, CRF endeavors 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 of Cambodia's progress toward 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) with the financial support of several donor agencies. With commitment to professionalism and accountability, CRF has continued its effort of realizing children's rights in order to achieve sustainable changes in the attitudes and mindsets of individuals to take personal and collective responsibility to make children's lives safe, positive and wholesome, in accordance with CRF's vision and mission statements, as follows:

### **Vision**

***"A world where the children's rights are realised in all circumstances, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child"***

### **Mission**

***"Our mission is to empower, influence and mobilise rights holders and duty bearers to advocate, realise and monitor the implementation of the UNCRC"***

In particular, CRF aims to:

- **Advocate** to duty bearers to be accountable for UNCRC implementation,
- **Empower** rights holders to meaningfully participate in age-appropriate decision-making and advocate for child rights,
- **Support** and **partner** with duty bearers and rights holders to realise child rights,
- **Mobilise** duty bearers to dedicate resources, commitment and efforts to realise child rights; and
- **Monitor** the implementation of the UNCRC in partnership with children and young people in Cambodia.

2015 was the final year of the CRF strategic plan 2013-2015. During this year, CRF implemented six projects that contributed to the 3-year strategic plan with total annual budget expensed \$411,108 provided by four donors: Plan International Cambodia, WE WORLD, NORWAY HOUSE and Save the Children. A seventh project covering WASH priorities was also implemented with a total annual budget of \$70,563 funded by ANESVAD. CRF also contributed \$25,522 toward project and administrative costs in 2015, making for a total 2015 annual budget of \$507,166 (equal 75% of annual budget approved \$679,922.00).

## **II. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Child Rights Education Program**

Under financial support from Plan International Cambodia and in close cooperation with MoEYS, the Mainstreaming Child Rights in Schools project was implemented in 124 schools, among which 43 schools are in Dambae and Ponhea Krek districts of Tbong Khmum province and 81 schools are in Angkor Chum, Angkor Thom and Srey Snam districts of Siem Reap province.

**Result 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. Core trainers attended 2-day refresher trainings on child rights, teaching methodology, child's participation and positive discipline and then went on to orient an additional 1,093 in-service teachers (557 women) and 52 School Support Committees (SSC) (12 women) in the target schools.

Significant progress was made in result 1 of the project in 2015. An internal assessment report indicated that 82% of targeted teachers applied positive discipline in their teaching and encouraged child participation, and 74% of respondent students indicated that their teachers now give more explanation to those students who do not understand the lesson or did not complete the homework. 90% (compared to 50% in 2014) of respondent students from grades 1 to 6 in target schools had a good understanding of child rights, child participation and positive discipline according to the knowledge results testing.

Moreover, 100% (compared to 50% in 2014) of SSCs understood the concept of positive discipline and child participation. They learned that violence against children is not appropriate or conducive to learning because it affects children's feelings and brains, making children feel scared and as if they don't want to learn. It is also a violation of the law and children's rights. Children have the right to participate and express their ideas and should be involved in the decision-making process so that their concerns and needs are understood and addressed. Additionally, through active participation, children could learn the way of working, understand about community and social issues, and also know about the budget expense. Teachers also learned the benefits of gathering ideas and problem-solving solutions from children. According to the assessment report, 70% (compared to 30% in 2014) of SSCs involved children in their meetings/discussion on children's matters. Among 84 individuals interviewed from school children's councils (SCCs), 61% of SCCs said they were involved in SSC meetings to discuss children's and school issues such as hygiene, school drop-out rates, the need for more teachers, school gates, study materials for poor students etc.

### **Result 2: Girls and boys are capacitated and have more opportunities to participate, express their opinions and influence decision-making at all levels**

In 2015, children's councils composed of 1,374 children (801 girls) play their role in sharing their concern and expressing their opinions during meetings in their communities and at their schools. The assessment showed that 81% of children's council members understood SCC guidelines. For instance, 95% understood that the SCC is composed of student members from grades 4 to 6. However, some were not clear as to who led the children's council, with 72% saying that is led by students while 28% said it was led by teachers and school directors. Moreover, in real practice, 77% said that the executive committee members were formed by election while 23% said they were nominated by teachers and then elected by students.

Quarterly meeting reports showed that school directors regularly addressed issues from the school suggestion boxes as well as those raised by children's council meetings. In total, school directors, SSCs and teachers addressed 2,676 concerns and issues (compared to 411 issues addressed in 2014) out of 3,936 complaints, concerns and suggestion letters (576 in 2014) raised by children on topics including violence against children, school management, teaching and learning issues and out-of-school children. This amounted to a response rate of 68%. The remaining concerns were beyond the capacity of school levels and were raised to District Office for Education Youth and Sport (DoEYS) and Provincial Office for Education Youth and Sport (PoEYS).

Moreover, the project assisted the MoEYS to develop a Child Protection Policy for schools. The policy seeks to promote a safe and supportive learning environment for all children in government and non-government schools in Cambodia. Many stakeholders including children and young people were met and consulted to get their inputs during policy development. Finally, the first draft of the child protection policy was completed and submitted to MoEYS for its official adoption.

### **Result 3: child rights are officially integrated in primary education to promote general understanding on child rights among children**

Through the internal assessment, 100% of targeted schools used student textbooks and teacher guidebooks on social studies of grade 4, 5 and 6 with child rights concept integrated, and 100% of students in grades 4, 5 and 6 were targeted with lessons on child rights through the student and teacher guidebooks. All lessons included descriptions of the "four baskets" of rights as enshrined in the UNCRC: the rights to survival, participation, development and protection. 100% of target schools used all materials developed by CRF related to child rights, corporal punishment and child participation.

In 2015, 200 copies of DVDs and 5,000 copies of booklets on good practices and lessons learned on the mainstreaming child rights in school projects were developed and distributed to all target schools, MoEYS, PoEYS, DoEYS and other NGO and Community-Based Organizations (CBO) operating in target provinces.

### **Case Study: School's transition to positive discipline methods helps Pear enjoy learning**

At the age of 13 years old, Pear is a 5th grade student in a primary school located 20 km away from Siem Reap Town. Because of hard living conditions, Pear has to shoulder a heavy load of housework and help her mother to earn extra income, which differentiates her from other children.

Pear told CRF: "I am sometimes late to school. I couldn't go to school regularly because I was busy with my housework such as collecting food for pigs, washing up plates and pots for cooking, cleaning the house, and going into the jungle to pick mempat tree leaves (Lngieng) with my mom. Sometimes I dropped to 8th place."

Although being in charge of a huge amount of housework, Pear is still an outstanding student in a class of around 30 students, and she has not been punished by her teachers. She also received a scholarship from the MoEYS, which provides US\$30 to support her studies annually.

For many educators, punishment was widely perceived as a method to make children well behaved. Mr. Chan Sophea, Head Department of Primary Education (DPE) said "the concept of using violence to make children well behaved and to improve their study results has occurred for a long time." Madame Sovan, school director, admitted that, "In the past, teachers used to punish children with stick and force them to run around campus." Mr. Unn, Pear's teacher, agreed with her.

But the result was that many children felt afraid of their teacher and school. "My friends were beaten, their ears twisted and forced to run around campus because they chitchatted loudly in class, ignored the teacher's explanation and stood on the tables. In that time, I was afraid of that punishment too" Pear said.

However, with effort and strong cooperation between CRF and MoEYS to implement the MCRS project from 2011 to 2015, this perception has changed steadily. Mr. Un informed CRF that, "After I joined the training with MoEYS and CRF on child rights, child participation and positive discipline, I realized that harsh punishment is not a good method for educating students, but it makes them scared and drop out of school. When we teach students without using violence, it makes the relationship between teachers and students closer; students are not afraid of teachers as they used to be before." He added that, "when I don't see Pear or other students at school several days in a row, I go to see their parents to find the reasons and sometimes I explain them the importance of education too." Mr. Chan Sophea also said that, "the corporal punishment is less and less used since teachers understand better and since we

## **Education Program**

In 2015, CRF implemented three projects contributing toward its education program. The project "Promoting Child Friendly and Healthy Learning Environment" and project "Child Scholarship" were funded by Norway House, and another project called "Promoting Child Friendly Learning Environment for Quality Education-Phase 2" was funded by We World.

### **Promoting Child Friendly Learning Environment for Quality Education-Phase 2 Project**

With funding support from We World, this project was implemented in close partnership with the MoEYS, the Siem Reap PoEYS and DoEYS for one year (April 2015 and end in March 2016) in order to guarantee that children in remote schools of Siem Reap province enjoy their right to quality education and respect in the learning environment. CRF targeted 24 primary schools of Varin and Puok districts, Siem Reap province, during this, the first year of the project. The below results were achieved from April to December 2015:

**Result 1: Provincial and district education officials and school management increased their knowledge on the importance of quality learning environments and improved their monitoring capacity.**

CRF cooperated with DoEYS of Varin district to establish the District Training and Monitoring Team (DTMT) to support 12 schools in Varin district on technical aspects and leadership & management. This team was oriented on the kinds of support it could offer to the respective target schools and also in developing an action plan. During the reporting period, one school received support from DTMT, and the remaining schools will receive DTMT support in January and February 2016, in accordance with the project implementation plan. On the other hand, the Quality Learning Environment (QLE) training is still in transition, and the MoEYS revised and adopted the child friendly school checklist in December 2015, so additional results in terms of monitoring capacities are expected in the next reporting period.

**Result 2: Increased capacity of School Support Committees (SSCs) to be actively involved in school management.**

39 participants (8 women)—including school directors, teachers, commune councilors, village chiefs, and DoEYS officials of the five target schools—were trained on the guidelines and establishment process of SSCs for schools. The post-test showed that 73% of participants left the training with a good understanding of these guidelines. Moreover, four of the five schools went on to form SSCs in accordance with MoEYS guidelines.

**Result 3: Strengthened the school mechanism for child protection.**

All of the 24 target schools set a code of conduct (CoC) in consultation with students and displayed it in their individual classrooms so that both teachers and students could see and implement as stated. 100% of schools developed and/or revised their CoC in a participatory manner.

My View Boxes of at six of the 24 target schools were functioning well. The My View Box is a one way that children can raise their concerns and/or suggestions to the school management for consideration. The committees tasked with opening these boxes found some concerns and suggestions made by children on topics such as punishment in school, bicycles, study material and household utility etc. Those concerns/suggestions were considered and acted upon according to the resources of school management.

A letter submitted to a My View Box at Char Primary School wrote that a teacher had used corporal punishment on students by hitting to make them obedient. After opening the box and finding the letter, the opening committee and CRF intervened, and the teacher received a warning from the DoEYS to refrain from corporal punishment of students.

In addition, 315 participants (197 girls) were trained on SCC roles and responsibilities, the functions of each role, how to develop SCC annual and monthly plans and reports, how to lead child activities, and concepts of writing a small proposal. The training post-test showed that 60% of the participants understood very well, 30% understood well and 10% understood a fair amount. After re-election of SCCs for the new academic year, eight proposals from SCCs in eight schools were submitted to CRF in December 2015. CRF reviewed and approved the proposals, and activities were scheduled to be conducted the following month.

**Result 4: Improved school physical environment.**

One school building at Char primary school was completely renovated with a 20% funding contribution from the community (\$684 out of a total budget of \$3,360). Additionally, two pre-school buildings at Lvea primary school and Rolumrun Thmei primary school were constructed following the minimum standards for safe construction, also with a 20% contribution from their communities (\$2,360 out of a total budget of \$11,800). Hygiene and sanitation facilities were improved in adherence with minimum standards for safe construction at 24 schools that received grants for school development, including construction and installation of three bio-sand water filters and three toilets and hand-washing stations. In addition, playground equipment installation was in progress, and sanitation materials were provided to the target schools.

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

The continuing project on “Promoting Child Friendly and Healthy Learning Environment” is a 3-year project that started from 01 August 2013 and will continue through 31 July 2016 with funding support by Norway House. The project is being implemented in Prek RoKar primary school of Prek RoKar commune, Kandal Stung district, Kandal province. The achievements report below is the combination of 2nd and 3rd year period, January to December 2015.

#### **Result 1: School director and teachers of the target school acquired relevant knowledge and skills for promoting child friendly learning and teaching environment**

Throughout 2015, 12 teachers (7 women) and 2 food vendors at the target school acquired knowledge and skills on safe food and prevention of worm parasites, community resource mobilization and positive discipline. 100% those trained indicated an increase in their level of understanding on the training topics, and 100% of them have full capacity to conduct echo trainings for their 600 students (275 girls). For instance, the trained teachers provided developmental learning opportunities and incorporated a range of core activities such as education, life skills, literacy, arts, culture and environment, play, recreation and sports for students. They used relevant information, education and communication (IEC) materials distributed to them to inspire students in all grades. Two key teachers were fully responsible for setting up, supporting and strengthening the SCC to empower its members to lead activities on their own.

#### **Result 2: Target school children gained necessary knowledge and skills promoting good health, hygiene and sanitation and preventing themselves from abuses and harmful situations; and increased positive hygiene and sanitation behaviors in daily practice**



Around 600 students gained knowledge on child rights, SCC roles and responsibilities, positive discipline, and hygiene and sanitation through echo training sessions conducted by the trained teachers. Moreover, 12 child-to-child activities were conducted, including awareness raising, quizzes on hygiene and sanitation, prevention of worm parasites, 10 good hygiene behaviors and child rights with students in and outside classrooms. Through child-to-child learning activities, children were encouraged to socialize with other students and to engage in activities, such as role-playing, dissemination and awareness, art, singing, dancing and storytelling. Four awareness-raising activities on prevention of worm parasites and risks of open defecation that related to 10 good hygiene practices were conducted with 160 parents and guardians in the surrounding communities by the trained 11 Commune Council members.

Hygiene rules or standards were formulated after training the three food vendors. These rules have routinely been enforced by the vendors, and it was observed that the surrounding environment is much improved. Additionally, 27 latrines were constructed during the project implementation period as part of outreach efforts to parents and families of targeted school children, thanks in part to resource contributions from the community and local authorities in the amount of USD 1,053.

The school library was provided with materials and equipment for use by students during schooldays. CRF cooperated with the DoEYS to support the operation of library, and the DoEYS assigned a full-day librarian to be permanently in charge of the library with regular monitoring. One of the most successful outcomes of CRF’s work with the library is the children’s newfound love for reading books, and this in turn can improve their literacy and develop their individual potential. In this way the library now belongs to everyone at the school and can benefit many generations of students to come.

#### **Expected result 3: Target school equipped with facilities necessary for promoting school hygiene and sanitation as well as child friendly learning environment**

In combination with educational activities the target school was equipped with the necessary facilities for promoting school hygiene and sanitation as well as child friendly learning environment, including: 1 hand washbasin was constructed 2 classrooms were repaired for the SCC, all rooms were equipped with comfortable friendly studying materials (workbooks, pictures, etc.), 4 swings and 4 levers were installed in the playground, a small life-skill garden was installed for students to learn both theory and practice of growing vegetables from the Life Skills Program



Practice, 30 educational traffic signs were installed along the footpath so that students could learn more about traffic, the school footpath was paved with gravel along a 175-meter long footpath and the potholes inside the school compound were filled, 1 water filter was installed and 5 rubbish bins were provided. The entire community—including local authorities and parent/guardians—made strong efforts to contribute to school facility improvements and maintenance through fundraising activities. It was noted that the community and school were mobilized to contribute to project implementation, mainly for school improvement, with total community financial contribution of amount of USD 720.

#### **Result 4: Health status of target educational staff and children improved through preventive measures from diseases**



In cooperation with the Brien Holden Vision Institute, Chey Chumneas hospital and Krousar Thmey Organization, 95% of targeted students 568 students (250 girls) and 13 teachers received medical checkups. Of these, 109 students (54 girls) received an initial diagnosis such as dirty ears, inflammation, otitis and ruptured eardrum. 58 students (25 girls) received the treatment and medication, one student received glasses and eight teachers received reading glasses. Around 10% of students received treatment services in this year. In addition, 1 first aid kit was provided to the school for teachers' and students' use when small cuts or injuries accidentally occur.

#### **Result 5: Vulnerable children (rights-holders) in the target school who received direct support from the project are able to maintain schooling that prevents them from being abused and exploited**

50 students from poorest families were identified and provided with basic needs support in order to maintain their schooling. The initiative was conducted based on the actual needs/problems, as assessed during home visits. According to school records and follow-up on these students' academic performance, 90% of them regularly attended school while 10% irregularly attended school even though they have faced daily numerous obstacles and challenges affecting their temperament and intellectual development and school performance.

#### **Child Scholarship Project**

Since 2007, CRF, in cooperation with Khmer-France-Hungary Friendship Orphanage (KFO) and Norway House, has implemented a project named "Child Scholarship". In 2013, Norway House paved the way to extending and drawing sponsorships for this project, which provides financial support to poor students in targeted communities. These scholarships cover students' school fees and provide a monthly subsidy for their study materials. The objective of the project is to help deprived children overcome the poverty cycle by creating opportunities and possibilities to reach post-secondary education, enabling them to secure good careers in the future. During this report period (January-December 2015), the project provided full assistance to 16 students (8 women) to cover their living and studying costs. Of these, two students (2 women) completed vocational skills courses and seven students (4 women) secured a full-time job. Thirteen students (5 women) were still continuing their studies.

#### **Child Rights Governance Program**

A project called "Empowering child- and youth-led groups for meaningful child participation in child rights promotion and monitoring" has been supported by Save the Children since mid- 2010 but was cut short in 2015 due to budget changes, running only six months, from January to June 2015. However, in this short period the following achievements included:

Cambodia Children and Young People Movement for Child Rights (CCYMCR) played an active role participating in the national events that were organized by government and non-governmental organizations to promote children's voices and influence in decision-making processes. In the first quarter, the three children (2 girls and 1 boy) and two youth (1 girl and 1 boy) who served as CCYMCR member representatives expressed their ideas specific to human trafficking and migration at the National Youth Forum, which is organized by World Vision Cambodia. The five representatives also participated in: the National workshop to promote participation of woman in politics organized by SILLAKA, a start-up meeting of the SIDA project organized by Plan International and a workshop on End Violent Against Women and Girls in Cambodia (EVAW/G) organized by UN Women and UNV. Moreover, they also participated in the workshop on Finalization of the National Child Development Plan and a preparation meeting for the 66<sup>th</sup> International Children's Day and International Day against Child Labor on June 12, which was organized by Cambodia National Council for Children (CNCC). In the second quarter, 5 CCYMCR and 3 Ex-Com members attended a forum for children and policymakers. The key children's issues on child

nutrition, child education and child labor were raised and recommended to senior government officials, and these issues were also integrated into a children’s statement for the 66<sup>th</sup> International Children Day and International Day against Child Labor.

The capacity of CCYMCR and its members is strengthened. During the first quarter, internal capacity buildings for CCYMCR Ex-Com members were conducted by the short-term volunteers from USA and Australia. The topics covered included: grant fund applications, basic photography, and IEC material development. The IEC materials on the UNCRC were designed by CCYMCR Ex-Com members with participation and inputs from 14 children (13 girls) and 1 youth (1 woman), all of whom are CCYMCR members based in Phnom Penh. On the other hand, CCYMCR received support to review its policy and organizational structure for becoming independent organization in mid-2015. In second quarter, the CCYMCR planned to draft a 3-year strategic plan, but unfortunately, a consultant for this project could not be found, so as an alternative next-step, Save the Children will review the ToR in consultation with CCYMCR and looking for possible internal resources or an independent consultant to assist with the process. Finally, CCYMCR Ex-Com members were also equipped with necessary knowledge and skills for NGO management, including child rights, facilitation skills, general accounting, and Quick-books and Adobe Photoshop software.

### **Child Protection Program**

The project named “Strengthening Children’s Voices in Promoting Safe Schools” is a 3-year project that started from January 2015 and will end in December 2017 with funding from Plan International Cambodia. The project is being implemented in 6 primary schools—two primary schools in Khan Chroy Chongva, Phnom Penh, and four more primary schools in Kangmeas District, Kampong Cham Province..

#### **Result 1: To promote a culture of school safety and resilience in Cambodia by enforcing the application of safe school guidelines at all levels.**

In cooperation with MoEYS, the National Core Trainer (NCT) of MoEYS is developing a training manual for the safe school framework to support existing safe school guidelines. The NCT was officially supported by H.E Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of MoEYS, in the development of this training manual.

#### **Result 2: To embed the participation of children in establishment of safe schools in target communities.**

At the start of the project, CRF conducted a baseline survey with support from the Plan International team. Besides this, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) action plans and Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans were developed during training for the 6 target schools target with 99 participants (40 women), including SSC members, Village leaders, commune councilors, school principals, key teachers and children’s council members. The project also provided financial support for the six target schools for preparing the school facilities in response to the risks identified in school mapping activities.



In addition, two students from target schools Beng Trav and Lvea primary schools were supported to join the Safe School drawing contest during ASEAN Day for Disaster Management. The schools won fourth and fifth place, respectively.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Program

With financial support from Anesvad Foundation, Phase II of the project “Improving Hygiene and Sanitation of Cambodia Rural Schools and Communities” is going to continue in another 2 years (June 2015 to May 2017) before phasing out from the target areas. This project seeks to generate an equitable improvement in access to water supply and sanitation for the prioritized population and thus contribute to the improvement of community health and life conditions of the population (17,784 who are 9,235 female) in 50 villages in 3 communes (Krang Mkak, Tuol Prech and Chhak Chheu Neang), and 8 primary target schools (2,666 students who are 1,229 girls) in Angsnuol district, Kandal province, Cambodia. The results below cover the period from June to December 2015.

### **Result 1: Water supply related hygiene and sanitation infrastructure is correctly operated and maintained by the communities and schools**

Water supply and sanitation user groups (WSUG), with 38% women including member of decision-making forums, created by the end of the first year and capacitated and operating by the end of the project for each village. WSUG was established in 50 target villages in 3 communes with 150 members (38% females) in November 2015. Members of WSUG vary from village to village depending on the number of water points it has. So far only 3 people in each village— making a total of 50 groups with 150 members (38% females)—have been selected to be formally recognized group leaders, but members representing each water point have not been selected yet. Concerning to their capacity building, 50 representatives from these groups have participated in the training on RWSS National Strategic Plan.

### **Result 2: Province-, district- and commune-level authorities have the commitment, capacities, and tools for planning, managing and maintaining water supply and sanitation in rural areas, as part of their duties.**

This result will be fulfilled in later reports.

### **Result 3: Networks of duty bearers on community WASH and School WASH promoted at local and national level for further development in rural WASH in Cambodia.**

A list of NGOs working on WASH was documented by sixth month of the project. So far, six NGOs have been identified through meetings with local authorities and networking, and CRF was able to obtain necessary information regarding their work. Further communication with individual NGOs will be organized in period 2.

### **Result 4: The local partner institutional management and capacity reinforced contributed to achieving the project results in efficient and sustainable ways.**

The PWG conducted field visits at least once every quarter. Missions of PWG were mostly conducted individually by PDRD and PCWC provincial and district authorities, including 1 meeting with commune councils and 24 others with village leaders to orient MRD guidelines for establishing community-WSUG, 1 meeting with school directors on school improvement plan and 1 training at Angsnuol.

Interventions included:

- A member from PDRD oriented MRD guidelines on RWSS and advantages of WSUG established to play roles in the maintenance and operation of water sources in their villages.
- A member from PDoEYS oriented all school directors to invite SSC, SCC and children’s parents participate in the development of school improvement plans in their respective school.

Additionally, two members of PWG at the district level also conducted field visits to observe the operation and use of hygiene and sanitation facilities supported previously to vulnerable groups and communities.

## III. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CRF’s 5-year Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 was developed by an independent consultant and was completed on September 11, 2015. The CSP prioritizes 3 key strategic directions: i) Fundraising to broaden to at least two new bilateral donors through targeted activities that meet the stated needs and priorities of children and youth; ii) Governance through improved administration, finance and human resources to meet best practice standards; and iii) Programs and Innovations



focus on quality, align with 2015-2020 National Plan for Child Development, deepen the role of children and young people as assets.

Based on the strategy, the management team with Board of Directors is now revising the organization structure, shaping human resources for the admin/finance section and developing new projects for presentation to donors.

### **Staff Capacity Building:**

To strengthen the organization's capacity as well as to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its works, CRF sent staff to four external trainings/workshops/learning forums on topics such as climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, proposal writing on CCA/DRR training at Kampong Cham province, ASEAN safe school framework rollout workshop, and field testing on safe school tools, basic financial management with NGO CRC, Internal Audit and Internal Control with CCC, and ICT forum with CCC. Moreover, CRF also held two internal trainings on issues such as climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and Human Resources Management for all staff.

### **Board of Directors:**

Presently, CRF has five board members who have extensive knowledge and experience in the areas of child rights, laws, development and fundraising. The present five board members are:

- Ms. Peng Sokunthea, Program Officer at DIAKONIA – Chairperson
- Mr. Bun Sok Seila, Senior Project Officer at RWI- Member
- Ms. Van Mary, Former CRF Program Manager- Member
- Ms. Mom Thany, Ministry of Agriculture, forestry and Fisheries- Member
- Ms. Tiv Tithvanna, Program Manager, Aide et Action- Member

Three board meetings were held this year. One was held in the first quarter in April, 2015, and was attended by three of the five board members together with the Executive Director. The second meeting was held in June 2015 and was attended by three board members as well as the CRF Management Team members. The third meeting was held in September and was attended by four board members together with all CRF Management Team members.

### **Staffing:**

As CRF has expanded its scope of work, this year, 12 new staff members were recruited and two existing staff members were promoted from Project Officers to Project Managers. Altogether, CRF now has 27 staff members of which 18 are program staff and 9 are supporting staff. However, 8 staff members resigned during this year.

### **Financial Management:**

Every quarter CRF tries its best to orient staff members on the organization's policies— and especially its financial procedures, so that all expenses meet the real needs effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, to ensure that the financial policy is on the right track and becomes a more reliable and credible mechanism for the organization, CRF usually hires independent auditing service to audit its financial management. This procedure has been practiced for many years since its inception in 2001 and no major frauds found.

To improve and strengthen its financial management and system, this year CRF hosted two volunteers from AFID organization from the UK to come and help in conducting internal checks and controls on CRF financial management including systems, policies and documenting. The first volunteer mission was from 21 April 2015 to 15 May 2015. The second volunteer mission was from 28 October 2015 to 9 November 2015. During these missions, CRF's financial policy and procurement policy were reviewed and updated. Moreover, the volunteers also shared tips on efficient and effective use of QuickBooks software with CRF finance staff.

## **IV. NETWORKING**

CRF is a member of several networks including NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (NGO CRC), Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and NGO Education Partnership (NEP). As a member of these coalitions, CRF has been actively involved and participated in their membership meetings and has contributed input and information for their

publications. CRF also has opportunities to learn and explore other countries' experiences through regular exchanges of publications, information on good practices and lessons learned among the network members.

## V. CHALLENGES

Though CRF made notable achievements over the year, the organization also faced difficulties and challenges that hamper smooth implementation of projects. The most recognizable obstacles to the implementing process were as follows:

- **Funding problem:** The exchange rate of the Euro to US dollar in 2015 really had an unavoidable and notable effect on many CRF projects and their results. Funding cuts resulting from exchange rate losses forced one project funded by Save the Children to be cut short, ending in the middle of the year, while other projects experienced extensive cut-backs in planned activities.
- **Stakeholders' involvement and commitment:** Most of CRF's projects require close cooperation with MoEYS, PoEYS, DoEYS, DTMT, school directors, teachers and SSC in order to support them to perform their duties, but many of these stakeholders were very busy during project implementation and has less time than would be ideal to contribute to project goals and activities. Lack of stakeholder involvement in some cases prevented projects from fully achieving project objectives and expected results.
- **Rescheduling:** Activities that required participation and inputs from government officials and/or local authorities sometimes faced setbacks due to repeated postponements and requests to reschedule by these duty bearers, who often prioritize political matters over project activities and sometimes dropped out of prior commitments to project activities at the last minute.

## VI. PROGRAM EXPENDITURE

Donor Agencies	Project Name	Donor Budget Approved	Donor Budget Expenditure	CRF Budget Expenditure	Total Project Expenditure
NORWAY HOUSE	Promoting Child Friendly and Healthy Learning Environment project-PCFHLE	\$34,562.00	\$35,895.69	\$895.00	\$36,790.69
NORWAY HOUSE	Child Scholarship Project-CS	\$33,382.47	\$26,404.14		\$26,404.14
NORWAY HOUSE	Promoting Child Friendly Learning Environment for Quality Education-Phase 2 Project-PCFLEQE	\$8,000.00	\$230.08		\$230.08
WE WORLD		\$145,702.76	\$97,540.70	\$4,663.73	\$102,204.43
Plan International Cambodia	Mainstreaming Child Rights in School project-MCR	\$224,282.00	\$207,449.60	\$3,663.68	\$211,113.28
Plan International Cambodia	Strengthening Children's Voices in Promoting Safe School project-SCVPSS	\$48,015.00	\$30,218.16	\$1,485.47	\$31,703.63
Save the Children	Empowering child and youth led groups for meaningful child participation in child rights promotion and monitoring project	\$19,653.00	\$13,369.60	\$205.67	\$13,575.27
ANESVAD	Improving Hygiene and Sanitation of Cambodia Rural Schools and Communities Project-IHS	\$166,325.00	\$70,535.90	\$26.87	\$70,562.77
Other CRF Contribution				\$14,581.86	\$14,581.86
<b>Total Budget for 2015</b>		<b>\$679,922.23</b>	<b>\$481,643.87</b>	<b>\$25,522.28</b>	<b>\$507,166.15</b>

## VII. LESSONS LEARNED

CRF learned the following activities from project implementation in 2015:

- Regular donor visits to the school really encourage stakeholders to become dynamic, and build good relationships and trust among each other.

- Community ownership is built up when beneficiaries and stakeholders have opportunities to share their needs and concerns related to project implementation. Active participation is best achieved when beneficiaries and stakeholders clearly understand the project plan, including goals and objectives and also have the opportunity to provide meaningful inputs.
- Generating collaboration, contributions, commitment and resources from school directors and local authorities is imperative for the ultimate success and sustainability of the project because these values build community ownership in decision-making on how to operate and maintain facilities they built.
- Holding trainings, coaching and regular mentoring on corporal punishment and the positive discipline alternative was effective in building teachers' capacities. Equipped with new knowledge of positive discipline, teachers and administrators expressed a desire to use these techniques and appreciated CRF support in increasing their knowledge and capacities in this critical area. However, teachers need more practice to be able to effectively use positive discipline in all situations.
- Provincial Working Groups are busy with their work tasks and do not have much time to join with project field activities in target schools. Additionally, target schools are distant from each other, and this makes a challenge for project staff to monitor activities on some occasions. CRF opened small offices and placed staff near the project, and this resulted in easier ability to provide ongoing coaching and mentoring.
- Teachers have been held accountable for their actions through the creation of suggestion boxes. The suggestion boxes allow students to anonymously place comments in the boxes to let the school know how teachers are treating them.
- Before phasing out a project, CRF will arrange several meetings with the National Working Group on Child Rights (NWGCR) and PWGRC to figure out the sustainability of implementing child rights in target primary schools.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

It is convincing to say that these results have come up due to strong cooperation and commitment of CRF staff and its partners and stakeholders. However the year 2015 was also a challenging year, with CRF projects being noticeably affected by global funding and currency trends and with two main projects coming to an end during this year, resulting in the loss of several highly valued CRF staff. At the same time, CRF took steps to ensure organizational sustainability when it developed its new 5-year strategic plan, but it still in the process of developing the operational plan and looking for funding to support implementation of these important strategies. So in the next coming years, CRF will renew its focus on resource management, organizational structure, program development and fundraising base on this new strategic plan.

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