

CAMBODIA: GIRLS' NEEDS AT THE HEART OF SCHOOL BUDGETS

Investing in a conducive environment for girls in Public Schools

By law the schools are obliged to address 'gender issues' in the budget, but they just did not know how!

GADC, an Oxfam partner in Cambodia, helped to clarify the concept and supported the teachers and parents of Tol Leap Primary School to specifically include the needs of girls in the school's annual budget. Since the schools work within the communes the whole community became involved.

After the training the school invested in: separated toilets for the girls, sanitary napkins, sex education and bikes to make it easier for girls to come to school.

This investment has resulted in a drastic reduction of the dropout rate for girls from 10% per year to 2.15%.

The principal, Kum Sokhan, couldn't be prouder to have all these girls back



Sophanna Ngen, 15 years old

School became even a better place for Ly Nita after her school decided in 2015 to make investments that would improve the school's environment for girls especially. They built separate toilets for girls and boys and provided sanitary napkins for girls.

Ly Nita: "Before, the toilet wasn't clean, there was no soap to wash your hands. And yes, many times I waited all day until I went back home to go to the toilet because of the smell."

Although she has not yet had her first period, she knows that her older friends can go for the sanitary napkins in the library: "It's good we have a female teacher there now."



Ly Nita, 10 years old

Sophanna Ngen (15 yrs) is one of the oldest girls at the Tol Leap Primary School. For young women like her and many other girls the recent changes at school were very welcome.

Having additional female toilets built in the school – among others gender sensitive changes – contributed to drastically reduce the drop out rate.

"The first time I was at school and felt a pain. I checked in the bathroom. I knew what it was, because my mother told me. I told the teacher in the library that I had 'an issue in my stomach' and she understood right away. She didn't even ask. She just gave me the sanitary napkins. In the library we also have this book to talk about these things with the older children. Now I know It's natural."



New girls' toilet



Tol Leap primary school class

Sam Sreyleak,
the teacher who
distributes hy-
gienic supplies
in the library.



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