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Teacher Sodorn Phearun

Meet Mr. Sodorn Phearun, a 27-year-old dedicated teacher from Trapeang Ro Pov Village, Kampot Province. Mr. Phearun teaches Grade 5 at Dob Sralau Primary School, where he has been inspiring young minds since fulfilling his childhood dream of becoming a teacher in 2019. While his early teaching years were filled with both excitement and nervousness, he embraced the challenges with determination.

For five years, Mr. Phearun taught core subjects like Khmer, mathematics, social studies, and science. However, life skills education was not part of the curriculum, and he assumed it was merely about farming activities or manual labor, unrelated to classroom learning. His perspective began to shift in February 2024, when he attended a transformative life skills education training supported by SAMAKY and ActionAid.

The training introduced Mr. Phearun to the six stages of life skills education, focusing on experiential learning, critical thinking, and student-led exploration. Initially, he found the concepts complex and overwhelming.

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However, motivated by his passion for education, he decided to implement the lessons at his school, allocating two hours a week to life skills education.

MR.PHEARUN WAS ON THE EXPOSURE VISIT TO OTHER SCHOOL WHERE TEACHERS AND STUDENTS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTING LOCAL LIFE SKILL WELL

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Starting with the first module, Mr. Phearun encouraged his students to explore their community. They conducted interviews with local experts, engaged in group discussions, and used library and internet resources to gather information. This new approach transformed the classroom into a dynamic space of curiosity and collaboration. Students who were once shy and hesitant began participating actively, showing remarkable growth in confidence, teamwork, and critical thinking.

Reflecting on the impact, Mr. Phearun shared, “I saw my students transform with my own eyes. They became courageous, respectful, and eager to learn. Even their simple gestures, like bowing during community interviews, showed their growth. The joy and enthusiasm in our classroom were unlike anything I had seen before.”

The journey wasn’t without its challenges. Compiling topic-based resource books tested Mr. Phearun’s perseverance, but the success was evident. These resources are now preserved in the school library, benefiting future generations.

The impact wasn’t limited to students. Mr. Phearun noted personal growth in his teaching methods and relationships with his students. “I’ve become more connected with my students,” he said.

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“Life skills education has taught me to view education beyond textbooks – it’s about shaping responsible, empowered individuals.”

Mr. Phearun expressed heartfelt gratitude to SAMAKY for integrating life skills into the curriculum. “This experience has been life-changing,” he said. “Although the first year was challenging, I’ve learned valuable lessons to improve in the future. With the insights gained from model schools and exceptional training, I’m committed to making life skills education a cornerstone of learning at Dob Sralau Primary School.”

Your support helps teachers like Mr. Phearun create brighter futures for children, empowering them to thrive both in school and in life. Together, we can continue transforming education and lives across communities.