SUCCESS STORY

Mobile app helps teachers to support literacy efforts

The TEST app prescribes literacy exercises based on learning assessment and individual needs.

[Photo Credit: TEST/World Education]

Technology helps link children to reading in Khmer

Each year Cambodian schools struggle to recruit enough teachers to meet the growing school-age population. The average student-teacher ratio is approximately 46 to one, with classrooms in some provinces exceeding 62 students per instructor. The shortage is particularly acute in primary schools.

In order to mitigate the critical shortage of teachers and promote strong foundations for literacy in Grades 1 & 2, World Education's Technology for Education Systems Transformation project (TEST) developed a mobile application that automates student reading assessments using mobile tablet computers. The mobile application enables teachers to quickly identify classroom learning trends and connect individual students to the learning resources that will help them most. The app builds on the innovative Continuous Assessment System (CAS) developed in collaboration between World Education and the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) under the Total Reading Approach for Children project (TRAC).

Initial impelementation of CAS and TRAC relied on pen and paper tests that were time consuming to evaluate, prone to teacher scoring errors, and potential for bias in asessment and data compilation. The app makes it possible to automatically score the assessments, making it easier to conduct the assessments at regular intervals to identify struggling students and provide timely targeted support. Based on student results, the app prescribes exercises in reading toolkits and additional training by a literacy coach provided by TRAC. The app also collects and aggregates data about learning trends that may be used by the Ministry of Education to inform future curriculum development. The TEST app is being used by approximately 2,050 students and 57 teachers in 7 schools across 3 Cambodian provinces with plans to expand.

"If we use the TEST app, it is easier than conducting the exam by paper, because it is effortless to manage students and reduces time spent preparing exam materials. All the questionnaires are in the TEST app and the testing rate is more accurate." Mr. Dy Chok Said, Literacy Coach at Hun Sen Kor Primary School.

The TEST app was made possible with grant funds from USAID's Development Innovations project. Development Innovations encourages and supports the use of ICT as solutions to improve access to information and deepen development impact in Cambodia.