

*From a recipient of a Buddhist Global Relief/LOI Rice Stipend and Scholarship in Cambodia:*

Orphaned as an infant, 18 year old Leak Van Vor still remembers how happy she was when she received the news of her scholarship in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Leak's father died before she was born and her mother died not long after, so she has been raised by her grandparents. We met Leak with her grandparents at their home.

"Our teacher told us there was a scholarship program for poor families so I applied. An officer came to conduct a social audit and saw we had a tiled roof so we were not selected until a bit later after a review of our situation."

"I received all my school needs such as uniforms, shoes, raincoat and study materials, a bicycle and 50 kilos of rice every month from the program! I also get \$25 a month from the program but tuition for five subjects is \$30."

"I received a bike in 2016 as my old bike pretty well broke down. It's 8 kms from home to school and around 3 or 4 kms from the residential home to school so I need my bike for a 30-minute ride to school everyday. I used to come home every week but now there's too much school-work to do so I can only get home to see my grandparents every three weeks or so."

"This is my third year staying at the residential home, which provides almost everything I need and without which it would be very difficult to concentrate on my studies. We arrange ourselves in groups of three for cooking and studying which helps a great deal."

Grandpa adds, "We also have to support Leak's daily expenditure with \$25 a month. The rice support is extremely helpful! I'm the only bread-winner and work a one hectare field of rice. We get several months of rice from that and sell two months worth to provide us some cash. The rice support of 50 kilos per month is therefore crucial for our survival and to keep Leak in school."

We asked Leak what she planned to do after 12<sup>th</sup> grade. "My dream is to become a teacher though I was recently told at a Lotus Outreach career orientation meeting that I have good potential in banking and finance." Whatever path Leak chooses, she is certain to become a productive member of her community.