

FIRST STEP CAMBODIA

Every child is free from abuse



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

PREVENTION | SUPPORT | CAPACITY BUILDING | RESEARCH | ADVOCACY

VISION

Every child is free from abuse

MISSION

FSC works in partnership towards strong child protection mechanisms, empowering children to be free from sexual abuse and living in safe and nurturing families.

We advocate for and engage with boys to address harmful social norms and gender issues affecting boys.





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MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is my privilege and honour to present you the Annual Report 2023 of First Step Cambodia. Over the past year, our organization has achieved significant milestones, thanks to the tireless support from our dedicated team, donors, and partners.

In December 2023, when your team attended the annual staff meeting at Tonle Basak II restaurant, I was inspired again to hear just how much First Step Cambodia's programs empower children to live in safe, nurturing families, and recover from trauma and abuse whilst building the capacity of social service workforce to improved their capacity responding to vulnerable children and families.

First Step Cambodia's direct support programme directly reached 110 children with lived experience of sexual abuse and children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, and 122 caregivers whilst our prevention programme increased knowledge of 2,832 children and 3,690 adults. Alongside the direct support and prevention programmes, our capacity building program increased capacity of 725 social service workforce and 265 children and youths.

First Step Cambodia also reinforced the link between our programme and important international and national initiatives in sexual abuse of children,

children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, child protection, and LGBTIQ+. I feel humble to be elected to be a member of the board of trustees of Family for Every Child and engaged with a number of international working groups including Children in Conflict with the Law, Prevention of Violence Against Children, and LGBTIQ+.

First Step Cambodia, in partnership with Family for Every Child, hosted a practice exchange visit on the harmful sexual behaviours of children with 9 Family members with a total of 15 participants (6 females). During the practice exchange, members shared their good practices, challenges, lessons learnt, and plan for addressing the issue of children who display PHSB.

First Step Cambodia would like to thank our own community: the individuals, foundations, government agencies, fellow NGOs and local government leaders who work alongside us. We know that child protection is challenging: it takes time, resources, patience and flexibility. We believe community members are the experts: they live the challenges and they know their priorities.

With thanks for your support and collaboration,
Chamreun Yaim





ABOUT FIRST STEP CAMBODIA

First Step Cambodia is a non-governmental organization, established in 2010, working in partnership toward strong child protection mechanisms, empowering children to be free from sexual abuse and living in safe and nurturing families. FSC advocates for and engages with boys to address social norms and gender issues affecting boys. Our purpose is that every child is supported and able to reach their full potential.

We work on prevention and protection in schools and communities, developing the capacity of professionals working with children, providing counselling and direct support to children affected by sexual abuse, conducting research, and advocating for societal change.

Today, First Step Cambodia is identified by local and regional organizations as a leader in the provision of direct services to both boys and girls. It remains the only organization in Cambodia that specialized in giving support to boys who are survivors of sexual abuse and to children displaying problematic and harmful sexual behaviour, as well as their families, caregivers, supporters, and communities.

Since 2020, First Step Cambodia (FSC) actively collaborates at multiple levels to bolster support for LGBTIQ+ children and youth. Internationally, it partners with organizations like the Ali Forney Foundation, Amara, and the Legal Service Centre in the US, sharing strategies and insights to enhance global protection services.



OUR PROGRAMMES

First Step Cambodia set out program strategy based on a four-level socio ecological model and our activities are specifically clustered between direct support, capacity building, prevention, research and advocacy enabling us to address sexual abuse of children including children with disabilities and children with diverse SOGIESC, and improve child protection mechanism at the individual, relationship, community and societal level.

I. PREVENTION

First Step Cambodia aims to increase the understanding, knowledge and awareness among different stakeholders including schoolteachers, students, children, parents, caregivers, villagers, and service providers who directly engage with children. To achieve this, First Step Cambodia has developed a range of informational and educational resources and tools, which are delivered in a range of workshops and forums to both children and adults and distributed for use in organizations and community settings.

II. DIRECT SUPPORT

First Step Cambodia provides social work services that are appropriate and sensitive to children affected by sexual abuse, children who are at risk of abuse, and children displaying SHB. We build on the child's strengths and apply the Social-Ecological Model, engaging with the children's families, supporters and community, making them an integral part of the process. Based on a foundation of research, we embrace child-friendly, client centered approaches.

III. CAPACITY BUILDING

First Step Cambodia provides specialist training, learning and consultation opportunities to improve the capacity of social service workforce to deliver quality services to children and families affected by sexual abuse, problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, and psychosocial issues. First Step Cambodia offers a wide range of training, including Boys First, Working with Families, Inclusive Child Protection, Children who display Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours and Social Work Practice.

IV. RESEARCH

First Step Cambodia leads and contributes to evidence-based research related to children who display problematic and harmful behaviour, sexual abuse of boys, and LGBTIQ+ inclusion in child protection in Cambodia and the wider region. First Step Cambodia continues to document our practice and approaches to working with boys and children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviour; and shares them among social service workforce in Cambodia and international communities.

V. ADVOCACY

We see strong partnerships and networks as the key to success and sustainable solutions. Our team facilitates and contributes to NGO networks and partnership meetings to raise awareness, and to promote and improve collaboration and service delivery to our target beneficiaries. Policy makers integrate sexual abuse of boys, harmful sexual behaviours, and LGBTIQ+ into child protection and legal frameworks and policies.

FIRST STEP CAMBODIA

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES



CHILDREN

3207



ADULTS

4537

ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS...



110 child survivors of sexual violence and children with problematic and harmful sexual behaviors supported



122 caregivers and parents of child survivors of sexual violence and children with problematic and harmful sexual behaviors supported



3097 children and youth educated and trained on and are aware of “child rights, violence against children, sexual abuse of boys, reporting mechanism and gender, sex, and sexuality”.



3910 parents trained on “child rights, violence against children, sexual abuse of boys and reporting mechanism”



505 social service workforces trained on “1. Sexual abuse of boys, 2. Children with harmful sexual behaviors, 3. Working with Families, 4. Social work practice, 5. Inclusive child protection, 6. Counselling skills, and 7. Case management.”



DIRECT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

In 2023, our social work team provided therapeutic and practical support to a total of 110 (F: 45) child survivors of sexual abuse, children with sexually harmful behaviours and LGBTIQ+ children in which 42 cases are new. A total of 122 supporter and caregiver cases (F: 74). 61 out of 79 active cases were reassessed during the reporting period. Based on the client progress report, 77% of our client's showed improvement in their psychological and physical status. This improvement is a testified the effectiveness of our social work teams and the contribution of our clients to their journey towards a brighter future.

We have also witnessed a significant increase in the capacity of parents and caregivers in the following areas: positive parenting skills, emotional support to their children, response and attitude to the child, and child protection. We saw that all of the supporters and parents demonstrated a better understanding of the underlying factors contributing to the child's behaviours and were able to respond to the situation with greater empathy and sensitivity. The team provided practical and therapeutic support to children and families including emergency food support, counselling, alcohol rehabilitation, healthcare, educational support, finance management and access to legal services. In this period, there was a total of 13 child cases were successfully closed.



Thank you [an FSC's social worker] so much for always visiting me. Before, I always had a lot of thoughts going through my mind and felt sad every day. It was difficult to live with my experience; I could not sleep. I was always worried about my health and the finance situation of my family. Every time I meet you, I feel relieved and confident, and gained hope to keep living and taking care of my sons.



DIRECT SUPPORT PROGRAMME



CHILDREN

110



CAREGIVERS

122

73 Children with lived experience of sexual violence

23 Children who display harmful sexual behaviours



10 Children with diverse SOGIESC experienced sexual violence

74 Female caregivers received support



04 Children with Disabilities experienced sexual violence



First Step Cambodia adopted the ecological model in the design of our programs ensuring that children are empowered to protect themselves and confident to represent their interests at commune, district, provincial and national level. To realise this goal, First Step Cambodia been working in collaboration with all relevant key stakeholders such children and youth, core parent groups, community leaders, NGOs, and government agencies. Our team empower children, youth and their parents through series of workshops and training sessions to build their capacity on child rights, child protection, child early and forced marriage, non-violence relationship, violence against children, sexual abuse of boys and how to seek support and there is number of audiences committed to the dissemination of knowledge and information they learnt from the workshop with their colleagues and people in the community so that more people can be part of the protection web of boys from sexual abuse and exploitation.



Mr Sok Sea
Peak Snaeng Commune Chief



I am extremely honoured and proud to have participated in this campaign and really admired the children and youths' skills in performing the short story. In the name of authority and myself, I completely support children and youth club to continue the activity to contribute to the improvement of our communities.



In 2023, a total of 6,636 (F: 4,857) in Siem Reap province, including 2,832 (F: 1,742) children and youth, and 3,804 parents and duty-bearers (F: 3,115), benefited from our prevention programs, which aim at empowering children and youth to protect themselves from violence and exercise their rights.



Ms Chorp Samoun
CAY, Koul Commune



It was extremely helpful to learn about the Commune Investment Plan (CIP) and its processes. It is essential for children and youth to understand and contribute their knowledge and experience to the development of the commune where we live. I'll ensure children's concerns are raised and addressed at the commune meetings.



Ms Cheap Pep
Parent, Paek Snaeng Commune



I am happy to gain knowledge of the effects of child early and forced marriage. It is important for all parents to be aware of this and stop forcing girls to get married against their will and when they are still young. I will continue sharing my knowledge with my neighbours and other parents in communities. No girls should be forced to get married!



PREVENTION PROGRAMME



CHILDREN
2,832



ADULTS
3,690

2498

Children increased awareness of child rights, child protection, child early and forced marriage, non-violence relationship, facilitation and report writing skills.

3530

Parents increased awareness of child rights, child protection, child early and forced marriage, positive parenting, non-violence relationship, facilitation and report writing skills.

334

Children increased awareness of sexual abuse of boys and child protection.

274

Parents and local authorities increased awareness of sexual abuse of boys and child protection.



CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

First Step Cambodia's capacity building programme aims to increase the capacity of social service workforce in protection and delivering social services to children and their families. First Step Cambodia recognised the importance of children and youth empowerment, and therefore, a total of 265 children and youth (F: 177) who are members of child and youth clubs benefited from our series of training sessions to become agent of change on relevant topics including child rights, child protection, non-violence relationship, child early and forced marriage and violence against children.

All children who attended our series of training sessions expressed their confidence and commitment to share their knowledge and actively address issues faced by children and youth in their communities. As results, they delivered awareness raising workshops on the topics above to a total of 2,498 (F: 1,543) other children and youth, and 17 out of 23 representatives of child and youth clubs from 23 communes were appointed to official members of Commune Committee for Women and Children whilst one of the 17 representatives was officially appointed to be a member of Women and Children Consultative Committee at district level in Siem Reap province.



Ms Ma Yaly
CAY, Peak Snaeng Commune



I am very excited to be elected as a representative of CAY club and gain trust from the commune and district councils in my capacity to contribute to the development of the commune. I'm proud of myself for being able to advocate for improved response to child drop-out of schools, child early and forced marriage and violence against children at the commune and district council meetings. I am extremely thankful to First Step Cambodia and Plan International Cambodia for implementing this important project in my commune.



In addition, a total of 725 social service workforce (F: 491) benefited from training courses consisting of Boys First (Sexual Violence against Boys), Working with Children who Display Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours, Working with Families, Inclusive Child Protection, Social Work Practice, positive parenting skills, non-violence relationship, child early and forced marriage, violence against children and Child Protection. The participants consist of front-line duty bearers from the government at national and subnational level, NGOs staff, church leaders and parents. All those who participated expressed confidence in their ability to respond to children who are experiencing or are at danger of sexual abuse, as well as in sharing their expertise with peers and younger people.

Mr Yav Sovath
Child Protection Focal Point
DoSVY, Battambang



This course enables me to identify and understand causes and effects of problematic and harmful sexual behaviours of children. I have never attended such courses before. I would like to request more training like this to NGO staff and authorities to improve their capacity to correctly respond to children. I hope we can work together to ensure children live safer lives.



First Step Cambodia provided series of capacity building to 15 of our social workers and managers (F:7) on identification of children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, address harmful social norms and children sexual behaviours at different stages, practice using tools, understanding pornography, and online risk and safety. These training courses enabled our social workers to feel more confident in their work with children who display PHSB and their parents and caregivers.

During 2023, First Step Cambodia social work team supports 23 children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours (7 girls) with a total of 6 complex cases. With the new knowledge, the social workers were able to better establish rapport with children and improved children and parents or caregivers' engagement in the development and implementation of intervention plan, which resulted in 2 cases of children who display PHSB successfully closed, and 18 other children have now accepted their responsibilities and stopped their problematic and harmful sexual behaviours. Our social work team reported that the training courses and group supervision improved their capacity to effectively manage problematic and harmful sexual behaviour cases and reduced unnecessary stress.

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME



CHILDREN
265



ADULTS
725

265 Children increased capacity on child rights, child protection, child early and forced marriage, non-violence relationship, facilitation and report writing skills.

220 Parents increased capacity on child rights, child protection, child early and forced marriage, positive parenting, non-violence relationship, facilitation and report writing skills.

433 Social service workforce increased capacity on support for boys, children who display PHSB, working with families, social work practice, and inclusive child protection.

72 Church leaders and members increased knowledge of child rights, violence against children, and child safeguarding.



RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

First Step Cambodia (FSC) is aware of the scarcity of resources related to sexual violence against boys, children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, and social work, especially in Khmer language. One our strategic priorities is the documentation of our good practice and experience in these areas. In 2023, FSC conducted complex case review of children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours (PHSB) to capture good practice, areas need improvement in this field, and to document available resources, our intervention, and tools. The project managed to develop and documents the followings:

1	Resource list related to children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours
2	Standard Operating Procedures on Group Supervision
3	Standard Operating Procedures on Training Course
4	Intervention Guidance for Practitioners: Children who Display Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours
5	Case Review Report: Children who Display Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours
6	Guidance for Using Body Map: Children who Display Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours
7	Guidance for Using Puppet: Children who Display Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours

With technical support and coaching from MEARL and Technical Specialist of Plan International Cambodia, one child-led action research conducted by 9 CAY club members at Koul commune of Angkor Chum district with participation 3 groups of 10 parents, 3 groups of 10 children and 6 key relevant stakeholders such as commune chief, school cluster, school director and 3 village chiefs. Respondents include 30 children and youth consisting of 10 children (G: 07; B: 03) and 20 youth (F: 10; M: 10), and 37 adults in attendance (F: 26, M: 11). The research aims at assessing situations of children drop out of school, barriers to child participation and decision making, and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people. At this point, the data collection process was completed, and a research report will be available in 2024.





Our advocacy strategy targets international, national and subnational stakeholders ensuring duty-bearers at different levels actively address issues concerning protection and care of children. In 2023, First Step Cambodia continued to actively engage with Family for Every Child, a global alliance of 47 local organisations working in 38 countries to improve the lives of children and families in need, in a number of joint project and activities consisting of the prevention of sexual violence against children, children in conflict with laws, LGBTIQ+, membership and digital working groups. In addition, First Step Cambodia hosted and participated in practice exchange activities with the members on “children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours” and “LGBTIQ+”, which will lead potential joint projects in the future.



At national level, First Step Cambodia’s representatives persistently work in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) in a number of national working groups: a working group to establish licensing office for social workforce, a

working group to organize “World Social Work Day”, a technical working group to review, evaluate and select trainers (led by National Institute of Social Affairs - NISA) continued to provide technical inputs into the curriculum development for social workforce, and a technical working group to create a white book to register all social workforce (led by NISA). In addition, we prioritised our engagement with three relevant departments of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation consisting of Child Protection Department, Department of Victim Protection and Department of Family Affairs aiming at integrating the topics of sexual abuse of boys, children who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, and LGBTIQ+ into the ministry agenda and strategic plan 2024-2028.



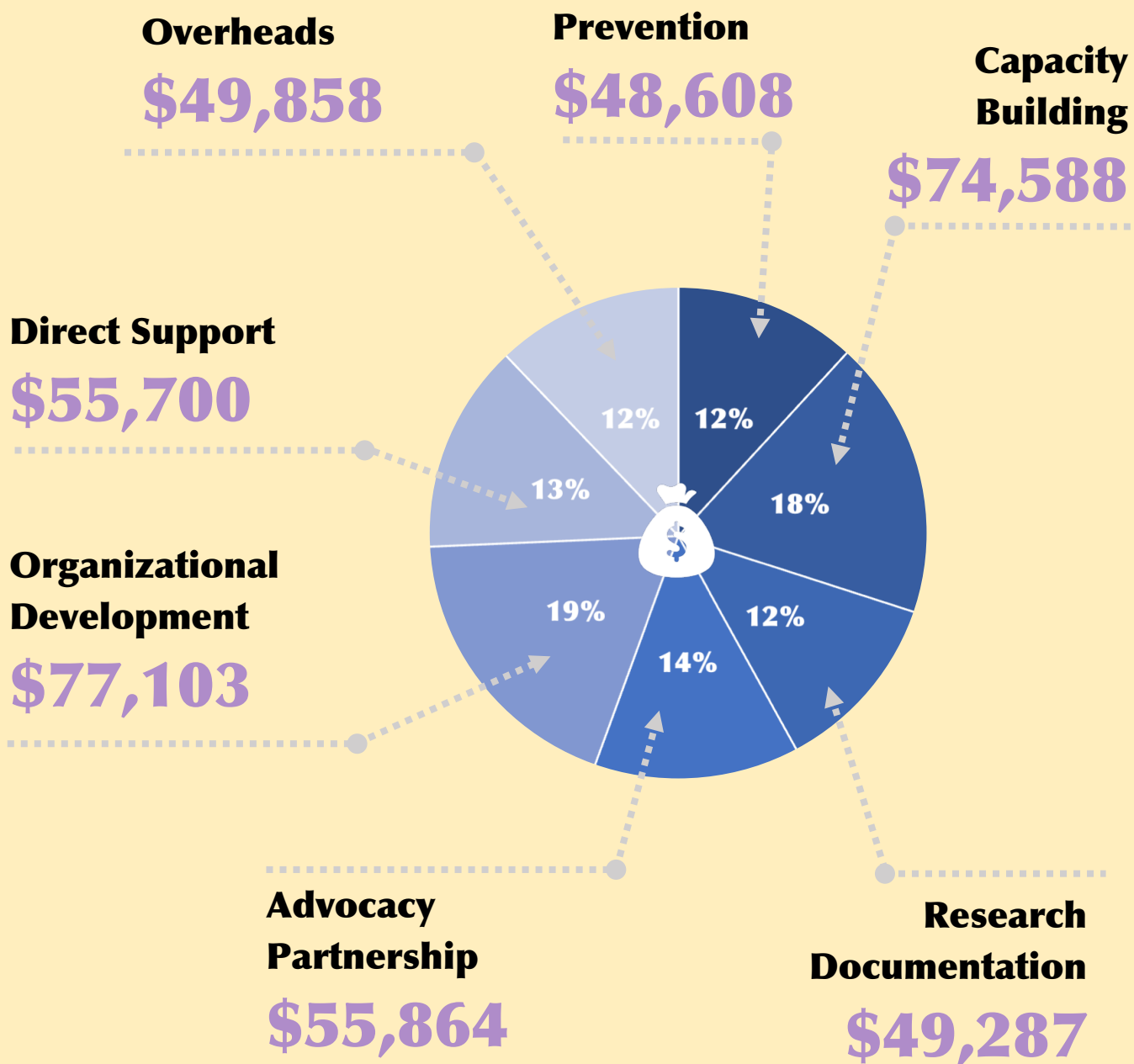
At subnational level, First Step Cambodia’s team worked closely with the provincial government, Women and Children Consultative Committee (WCCC), Provincial Committee for Counter Trafficking (PCCT), Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC), Provincial Child Protection Working Group, Working Group of Gender Based Violence (GBV), Department of Women’s Affairs (DoWA), Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVY), Department of Planning (DoP) and local authorities, and NGO partners to mobilize resources to support children and families affected by sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours.

FINANCE



Total expenditure

\$411,008



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First Step Cambodia would like to thank all members of the board of director, senior management team and staff for who have dedicatedly and professionally contributed to the achievements of First Step Cambodia's vision, missions and goals.



MANY THANKS



Last but not least, we would like to pay deepest gratitude and thanks to generous and committed donors and supporters for bringing their essential support to our programs. Their priceless contribution associated with the dedication of our team is protecting Cambodian children.



MANY THANKS



Until we are all equal

CHILDHOOD

WORLD CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION
FOUNDED BY H.M. QUEEN SILVIA OF SWEDEN

Family
for every child



静岡学生NGOあおい

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