

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Every child is free from abuse



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.



CONTENT

4

Message from our Executive Director

6

About First Step Cambodia

7

Our Programs

10

Direct Support Program

12

Prevention Program

14

Capacity Building Program

16

Research and Documentation

17

Advocacy Program

19

Finance

20

Acknowledgements

21

Our Partners



A portrait of a middle-aged man with short dark hair, wearing a blue polo shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred indoor setting. A purple semi-transparent box is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the text 'MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'.

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2024 has been a year of remarkable progress for First Step Cambodia (FSC), driven by our unwavering commitment to providing comprehensive support and advocating for the rights of vulnerable children. We have continued to refine and expand our direct support programs, prevention initiatives, and capacity-building efforts to create a safer and more inclusive environment for children across Cambodia.

This year, our direct support programs reached 67 child survivors of abuse, 22 children displaying harmful behaviors, and 82 parents and caregivers, achieving significant improvements in their well-being. We've also expanded prevention program reaching 2,756 children and youth and 1,158 duty-bearers. Central to our success is the collaborative approach we take, working in close partnership with a network of NGOs, government agencies, and community stakeholders to ensure coordinated and comprehensive support for those we serve. We are especially proud of our work championing for Blue Umbrella Day and the sexual abuse of boys on a global stage, reaching over a million people with a message of protection and support. The recognition from Mr. Phi No, Director of the Child Protection Department, affirming our unique position in supporting boy survivors, is deeply encouraging.



Our impact extends beyond direct service delivery. Through strategic advocacy efforts, we have influenced national policy, with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) integrating critical issues related to child sexual abuse and the rights of children with diverse SOGIESC into key strategic planning documents. Our capacity-building programs have empowered countless professionals and community members with the knowledge and tools to prevent and respond to child protection concerns. As we look to the future, we remain committed to innovation, collaboration, and unwavering dedication to creating a Cambodia where all children can thrive.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, our invaluable partners, and our generous donors for making this vital work possible.

With thanks for your support and collaboration,

Chamreun Yaim
Executive Director
First Step Cambodia





ABOUT FIRST STEP CAMBODIA

First Step Cambodia (FSC) is a pioneering non-governmental organization established in 2010 and legally registered with the Ministry of Interior in 2012. FSC envisions a Cambodia where every child is free from sexual abuse and empowered to thrive in safe, nurturing environments. Our mission focuses on developing robust child protection mechanisms that not only support boys, who are often underserved in this context but also encompass all children, including girls, children with disabilities, and those with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions (SOGIESC).

Utilizing a comprehensive four-level socio-ecological model, FSC's program strategy addresses abuse, particularly sexual abuse, at individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. Our initiatives are organized into five thematic areas: Direct Support, Prevention, Capacity Building, Research, and Advocacy. This multifaceted approach enables us to provide therapeutic services to survivors, enhance community awareness, and influence policy changes that prioritize child protection.

As the only organization in Cambodia specializing in support for boys who have experienced sexual abuse, FSC operates from offices in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. We collaborate closely with local authorities, national stakeholders, and international partners to strengthen child protection responses throughout the country. Through our advocacy efforts and capacity-building initiatives, we aim to transform societal attitudes towards child protection and ensure that all children can reach their full potential.





OUR PROGRAMS

First Step Cambodia (FSC) utilizes the ecological model as a foundational framework for its multifaceted programs, recognizing that a child's well-being is influenced by interconnected systems ranging from individual factors to broader societal contexts. At the individual and microsystem levels, FSC's direct support programs provide therapeutic interventions and practical assistance to child survivors of abuse, children displaying harmful sexual behaviors, and their families. This includes home visits, evidence-based therapy, and parental capacity-building, all designed to promote healing, resilience, and stronger family units.

FSC's prevention and capacity building programs target the mesosystem and exosystem levels, aiming to create safer and more supportive communities for children. FSC's prevention initiatives educate children, youth, and community duty-bearers about critical issues such as child marriage, online safety, and sexual abuse. These programs empower them to protect themselves and others, fostering a sustainable peer-to-peer education model within schools and communities. FSC's capacity-building programs further strengthen local systems by training social service professionals, partner organizations, and community leaders, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to child protection concerns effectively.

Finally, FSC addresses the macrosystem through advocacy, research, and documentation, striving to influence policies and practices at the national and international levels. By actively participating in national and international initiatives,

such as the Blue Umbrella Campaign and collaborations with organizations like Family for Every Child, FSC advocates for systemic changes that protect children's rights. FSC's engagement with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) to integrate key child protection issues into national strategic planning documents exemplifies their commitment to shaping policies that promote child well-being at the societal level. By addressing the complex interplay of factors that influence children's lives, FSC's program design demonstrates a comprehensive and effective application of the ecological model.

FIRST STEP CAMBODIA

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES



CHILDREN

2845



ADULTS

1827

ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS...



89 child survivors of sexual violence and children with harmful sexual behaviors supported



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



2,756 children and youth increased awareness of child rights, child protection, OCSEA and SOGIESC



1,158 parents trained on child rights, violence against children, sexual abuse of boys and reporting mechanism



337 social service workforces increased capacity to provide therapeutic and practical support to vulnerable children and families



DIRECT SUPPORT PROGRAM

First Step Cambodia (FSC) delivered comprehensive therapeutic and practical support to vulnerable children and families affected by sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviors. This included direct assistance to 67 child survivors, 22 children displaying harmful behaviors, and 82 parents/caregivers, utilizing home visits, phone calls, and evidence-based therapeutic techniques. Reassessments showed significant improvements in the well-being of 80% of clients, highlighting the effectiveness of FSC's intensive support model, which also focuses on increasing parental capacity and facilitating access to essential services.

In addition to direct care, FSC prioritized collaboration and case management, working closely with a network of 15 NGO partners and 7 government agencies to ensure coordinated and comprehensive support for clients. This collaborative approach involved 28 case conferences, resulting in 23 children and their families receiving additional assistance, such as therapy, education, and basic needs support. The success of this model is evidenced by the closure of 18 survivor cases, demonstrating significant progress in their emotional state and understanding of protective behaviors.



I used to think that my future was over since I was sexually abused. But the time has come for me not to feel like that anymore because I have regained my confidence in social activities, interacting with friends, and being non-discriminatory.



FSC extended its direct support to communities facing resettlement and hardship, notably collaborating with the Siem Reap Provincial Administration and other stakeholders to provide emergency food and healthcare packages to families in the Run Ta Ek Decho Sen municipality. This initiative included distributing essential resources to 175 families and healthcare packages to 75 families, demonstrating FSC's commitment to addressing the holistic needs of vulnerable populations beyond direct therapeutic interventions.



DIRECT SUPPORT PROGRAM



CHILDREN

89

47 Female Child



04 Children with diverse SOGIESC



04 Children with Disabilities



CAREGIVERS

332

67 Female Caregiver



36 Caregivers with Disabilities



PREVENTION PROGRAM

In 2024, First Step Cambodia (FSC) significantly enhanced child protection knowledge and practices among children, youth, and community duty-bearers through targeted awareness-raising initiatives. Reaching 2,756 children and youth (1,515 females) via 113 sessions, FSC addressed critical issues like child marriage, non-violent relationships, online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), and sexual abuse. Impressively, 95% of these participants demonstrated high increased knowledge and commitment to sharing what they learned with peers, fostering a sustainable, peer-to-peer education model within schools and communities. This empowers children and youth to protect themselves and others, creating a safer environment for all.



“I'm very pleased to learn about the dangers of cyberbullying and online grooming because families and children in my community are often unaware of these threats. Thanks to First Step Cambodia, I can now help protect myself and my friends online.”, said Sam Aun, a representative of Child and Youth club



FSC's impact extended to 1,158 duty-bearers (841 females), including government officials, police, educators, and community leaders, who participated in 41 awareness-raising events. These sessions covered key topics such as child rights, child marriage, and the importance of protecting boys from sexual abuse, aiming to improve responses to child protection issues at the community level. A remarkable 100% of these participants committed to sharing their newfound knowledge with parents in their communities, amplifying the reach of FSC's training efforts. Follow-up contact confirmed that this knowledge sharing occurred organically, highlighting the strong community ownership fostered by FSC's initiatives. Through sustained awareness initiatives, FSC has equipped children, youth, and duty-bearers with the knowledge and commitment to promote child protection. By addressing critical gaps in knowledge and promoting sustainable, community-owned solutions, FSC contributes significantly to creating safer and more supportive environments for children throughout Cambodia.



PREVENTION PROGRAM



CHILDREN
2,756



ADULTS
1,158

1322

Children increased awareness of sexual abuse of boys, child early and forced marriage, non-violence relationship, child protection and SOGIESC.

1434

Children increased awareness of online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

968

Parents increased awareness of sexual abuse of boys, child early and forced marriage, non-violence relationship, child protection, SOGIESC and positive parenting skills.

190

Parents and local authorities increased awareness of sexual abuse of boys and participated in Blue Umbrella Day 2024.



CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

First Step Cambodia (FSC) significantly strengthened its capacity and extended its expertise to partner organizations through a multi-faceted capacity-building program, ensuring inclusivity at every level. This included training 40 child and youth club members on online child sexual exploitation, empowering them to lead awareness sessions in their communities and demonstrating a high increase in knowledge among 95% of participants. FSC also conducted specialized training for 297 social service professionals, enhancing their ability to support child survivors of violence, particularly boys, and equipping them with essential tools for understanding relationships, identifying problems, and seeking effective solutions. These initiatives highlight FSC's commitment to addressing diverse needs and fostering a network of skilled individuals capable of addressing complex child protection issues, including those related to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC).

FSC's capacity-building efforts extended beyond direct training to include collaborative partnerships with organizations like Integral Cooperation of Cambodia, Morodok, and Epic Arts. Through a series of workshops and consultations, FSC and Mlup Russey Organization worked with these partners to assess their disaster management plans and identify areas for improvement, paving the way for a joint child safeguarding project in 2025. This collaborative approach ensures that child safeguarding efforts consider the specific vulnerabilities of all children, including those from the LGBTIQ+ community. Furthermore, FSC invested in its internal staff by providing intensive training on managing children displaying problematic and harmful sexual behaviors (PHSB).

These comprehensive and inclusive capacity-building programs have had a profound impact, creating a more skilled and confident workforce dedicated to child protection for all children. By empowering youth leaders, social service professionals, partner organizations, and its own staff with the knowledge and tools to support children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse SOGIESC, FSC is fostering a sustainable ecosystem of inclusive support for vulnerable children in Cambodia. These strategic investments are crucial for identifying and responding to the unique challenges faced by child survivors of violence, ensuring they receive the comprehensive and affirming care and protection they deserve, and reinforcing FSC's role as a leader in inclusive child protection in Cambodia.



CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME



CHILDREN

40



ADULTS

297

40 Children increased capacity on online child sexual exploitation and abuse: online safety

34 Social service workforce increased capacity on child safeguarding in the context of disaster management

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

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



RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

First Step Cambodia (FSC) firmly integrates documentation and evidence collection into its program design, underscoring its commitment to measurable impact. This approach is multifaceted, encompassing support for child-led research, the translation of crucial resources, and the standardization of procedures across operations. By prioritizing evidence-based practices, FSC ensures its initiatives are effective, targeted, and contribute meaningfully to the field of child protection.

A cornerstone of FSC's approach is empowering Children and Youth (CAY) to participate in research, placing their lived experiences at the forefront of understanding and addressing challenges. In 2024, CAY-led action research projects focused on vital topics such as child participation, the rights of children with diverse SOGIESC, access to education, and child marriage. The outcomes of these projects were presented to community leaders, fostering dialogue and informing actionable steps towards creating safer and more inclusive environments. This empowers CAY to become agents of change within their communities.

Further enhancing its reach and impact, FSC strategically invests in translating essential resources into both Khmer and English. By making materials like the "Intervention Guidance for Practitioners," "Guidance for Using the Puppet Tool," and "Body Map Tool" accessible in local languages, FSC strengthens the capacity of social work professionals and facilitates the standardization of best practices. FSC also implemented tools to ensure child safeguarding in disaster management and developed child-friendly training materials on online child sexual exploitation and abuse. This ensures all work is evidence-based, accessible, and significantly contributes to the knowledge base on child protection in Cambodia.





ADVOCACY PROGRAM

First Step Cambodia (FSC) demonstrates significant impact through its advocacy and partnership efforts at the international, national, and subnational levels. Internationally, FSC actively participates in the "United for Boys" campaign, facilitated by Family for Every Child, to address the global issue of sexual abuse against boys. Furthermore, the selection of FSC's Executive Director for key roles within Family for Every Child and the Felm Program-Level Advisory Group underscores the organization's recognized expertise and leadership in international child welfare. These positions provide FSC with platforms to influence policy and practice, ensuring that the needs of vulnerable children are addressed on a global scale.

At the national level, FSC's advocacy has directly influenced policy, with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) integrating critical issues such as sexual abuse of boys, harmful sexual behaviors in children, and the rights of children with diverse SOGIESC into key strategic planning documents. In collaboration with MoSVY and the Women and Children Consultative Committee (WCCC), FSC has also conducted awareness campaigns, such as the Blue Umbrella Campaign, to engage communities in the prevention of sexual abuse against boys. These initiatives highlight FSC's commitment to shaping national policies and fostering community awareness to protect vulnerable children.

Sub-nationally, FSC's partnerships and advocacy efforts have led to tangible improvements in community well-being and child protection. By reaching over 3,900 community members through awareness campaigns and participatory research, FSC addresses critical issues like child marriage and promotes non-violence. Collaborative projects with local NGOs, government agencies, and community groups in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap strengthen local systems for co-managing cases and providing essential support services. Initiatives like the "Child Safeguarding in the Context of Disaster Management" project and the program to empower children and youth for online safety further demonstrate FSC's commitment to creating safe and supportive environments for children in diverse contexts.





First Step Cambodia (FSC), in partnership with Family for Every Child, actively contributed to the global impact of the 2024 Blue Umbrella Day (BUD) campaign, joining 54 other civil society organizations across 37 countries in raising awareness about sexual violence against boys. As a participating member, FSC likely engaged in a diverse range of activities tailored to the Cambodian context. Based on the broader campaign's focus, FSC's contributions likely encompassed community-level awareness initiatives, skill-building workshops targeting local stakeholders and youth and advocacy efforts aimed at engaging government officials and promoting policy changes related to child protection and male survivors of abuse.

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, the Provincial Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Siem Reap Administration, Angkor Thom district administration, and Svay Chek Commune, First Step Cambodia organized the Blue Umbrella campaign activities in Cambodia. The event, with 190 participants (151 females) was presided over by prominent figures like Mr. Phi No, Director of Child Protection Department of Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and Her Excellency Sin Norm, chair of Siem Reap's Women and Children Consultative Committee. Through community-level activities and widespread social media reach that extended to over ten thousand individuals, FSC successfully increased awareness among key stakeholders to promote child protection including boys from sexual violence.

Building upon the momentum generated in 2024, FSC plans to continue its active involvement in the Blue Umbrella Day campaign in 2025, with a strategic emphasis on advocating for UN recognition of April 16th as Blue Umbrella Day. As part of this campaign, FSC will also focus on collecting signatures and mobilizing communities across Cambodia. FSC recognizes that achieving UN recognition is crucial to elevating the issue of sexual violence against boys on a global scale. Through these dedicated efforts, First Step Cambodia aims to contribute to a more just and equitable world where all children, regardless of gender, are safe from abuse and have access to the support and resources they need to thrive.

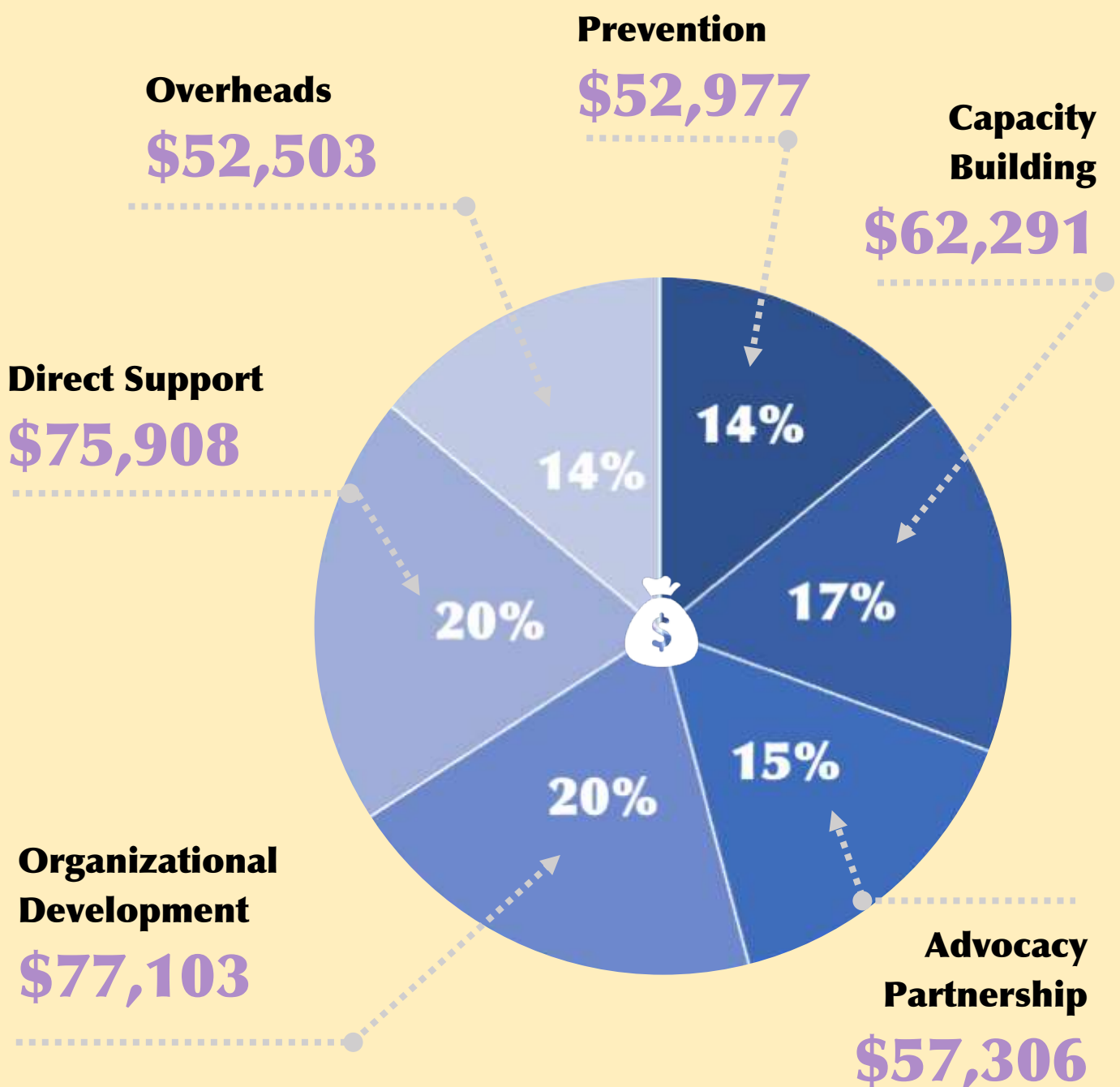


FINANCE



Total expenditure

\$376,320



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First Step Cambodia gratefully acknowledges the collaborative spirit and unwavering support of our partners, without whom our achievements in 2024 would not have been possible. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, for their partnership in advancing child protection policies. We also thank Family for Every Child and other international allies for their ongoing support and guidance. Finally, we recognize the dedication of our staff, the resilience of the children and families we serve, and the generosity of our donors, who enable us to continue our vital work.



MANY THANKS



OUR PARTNERS

- A member of Family for Every Child, a global alliance of 51 local organizations in working in 40 countries to improve lives of children and families in need.
- Work in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran, and Youth Rehabilitation
- Work in partnership with National Institute of Social Affairs
- A member the National Committee for Counter Trafficking and the Provincial Committee for Counter Trafficking
- Work in partnership with the Siem Reap Administration to strengthen child protection mechanism at sub-national level
- A chair of the Siem Reap Social Work steering committee
- A member of the Violence Against Children Working Group
- In partnership with Beautiful Life Organization, we work to ensure inclusion of LGBTIQ+ into the child protection services.
- In partnership with M'lup Russey Organization, we work to ensure children are safeguarded in the context of disaster management.

Family
for every child





PREVENTION | SUPPORT |

CAPACITY BUILDING | RESEARCH | ADVOCACY

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