



# THIS LIFE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

STORIES OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE



THIS LIFE



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Life is an Australian charity that works with children, women, families, and communities in Cambodia to overcome poverty, injustice, and violence. Based in Siem Reap, This Life has been operating since 2007 with a vision of a world where people have access to the resources, knowledge, and support they need to fulfill their full potential in This Life.

In 2022-23, This Life faced a challenging fundraising landscape, largely due to the war in Ukraine and global economic uncertainties. Despite these difficulties, we delivered our programs with innovation and collaboration.

In this report, we use stories of significant change to demonstrate how our programs have transformed the lives of our beneficiaries and partners. They are individual accounts of change that the participants themselves have gathered and chosen based on what they value most.

We share our stories of significant change across several key areas: children and families, education, gender equality, community research and advocacy, and justice reform. This Life remains committed to empowering people to create positive change for themselves, their families, and their communities.

### **This Life Beyond Bars (TLBB)**

The program empowers children and young people in prison with vocational and life skills training, enabling them to return to their communities with hope and opportunities. The program also supports children and young people and their families to reconnect and reintegrate during and after incarceration.

### **This Life In Family (TLIF)**

This Life In Family helps families remain together when they face the risk of being torn apart. The program provides quick and effective help to children and parents who come into contact with the law. TLIF also provides services and support to children whose parents are in prison, including case management, livelihoods, and visitation support.

### **This Life With Choices (TLWC)**

This Life With Choices helps young people with drug and alcohol issues recover and reintegrate through counselling, education, and support. The program also trains and raises awareness for local authorities and partner NGOs on how to work with young people with lived/living experience of drug use and harm reduction. The program aims to reduce the problems due to drug and alcohol use in prison and in communities in Cambodia.

### **This Life Reimagining Care (TLRC)**

In recent years, residential care in Cambodia has become increasingly common, and many children have been unnecessarily separated from their families and placed into institutions. This Life Reuniting Families reintegrates children from orphanages with their families and communities. The team uses a strength-based holistic case management system following international best practices.

### **This Life Without Bars (TLWB)**

This Life Without Bars provides a ground-breaking alternative pathway for children and young people who have committed nonviolent misdemeanour crimes. This community-based approach preserves education and promotes learning. This project helps young people avoid the hazards and risks of an overcrowded prison system.

### **Vocational Training and Social Enterprise (VTSE)**

This Life is a vocational training social enterprise supporting young people with valuable commercial skills and knowledge. In the near future, this program will include activities and community development work that will also improve the natural environment and neighbourhoods in which people live.

### **This Life Reimagining Care (TLRC)**

This Life Reimagining Care helps children in residential care institutions return to their families or alternative care options. The program provides case management, family tracing, reintegration support, and follow-up for children and families in Cambodia.

### **This Life New Horizons (TLNH)**

The program supports young people who have left residential care institutions to live independently and successfully. The program offers mentoring, life skills training, education, employment opportunities, and peer support. It also helps them cope with the challenges of transitioning to adulthood.

### **This Life Without Violence (TLWV)**

This Life Without Violence educates and mobilises communities to prevent and respond to violence against women and children. The program provides training, case management, support groups, and advocacy. It also raises awareness and promotes social change on gender-based violence issues.

### **This Life In Schools (TLIS)**

This Life In Schools improves education quality and access by engaging communities in school development. The program works with school principals, committees, teachers, students, and parents in Cambodia. It also supports school improvement plans and initiatives.

### **Internships and volunteering**

This program provides internships to high school graduates from low-income families. This provides an opportunity to access a university course and gain valuable work experience. Many young people benefit from this opportunity and remain with This Life after graduation.

### **Research and Policy (R&P)**

Our research team delivers high-quality, ethical research that shapes evidence-based policies, fosters innovation, and transforms public policy. We collaborate to drive practical solutions, actively bridging the gap between research and implementation.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)**

The MEAL team ensures accountability by monitoring and evaluating the status, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of

This Life's projects. They use innovative data visualisation techniques and performance management dashboards to provide a direct link of accountability to donors and investors.

### **Capacity & Partnership Development (C&PD)**

The Capacity & Partnership Development team plays a crucial role in This Life's mission by providing vital support to local organisations working in the development sector. Through organisational development and capacity-building initiatives, we aim to maximise the impact and sustainability of interventions, ensuring long-lasting positive outcomes for the communities we serve.

Our grassroots approach is foundational to our success and has allowed us to touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals over the years. By working closely with local organisations, community leaders, and non-profit entities, we have identified and addressed the specific needs and challenges faced by each community. This tailored approach has enabled us to create targeted interventions that make a real difference and foster lasting change.

Our work is shaped by ongoing conversations and consultations with local communities. These engagements provide the mandate from which our action programs are designed, developed, and delivered. We believe in actively involving the community in shaping the interventions that directly impact their lives. This participatory approach ensures that our efforts align with their priorities and aspirations, ultimately leading to greater relevance and effectiveness for our programs.

As we reflect on another successful year, this annual report serves as a testament to the dedication and commitment of our team, partners, and supporters. Together, we will continue to explore new opportunities and strategies to address emerging challenges, making sustainable development a reality for all.



## STORIES OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE: A POWERFUL WAY TO CAPTURE AND COMMUNICATE IMPACT

For this year's annual report, This Life took a different approach from previous years. We have adopted a participatory approach called Stories of Significant Change (SSC) to effectively measure and report on the impact of our programs. SSC is a qualitative and participatory monitoring and evaluation approach that uses stories of change to assess the impact of projects and programs. It diverges from traditional methods by not relying on fixed indicators predetermined at the beginning of a project. Instead, it involves gathering stories from various stakeholders about the changes they have experienced or observed as a result of a project or program. The stakeholders themselves then discuss and analyse these stories, choosing the most important ones in light of their own criteria and the program's or project's impact.

One of the major advantages of SSC is that it allows stakeholders to define what constitutes significant change according to their own values and perspectives. As a result, the project or program's direct beneficiaries and participants will find the impact assessment to be pertinent and meaningful. By empowering stakeholders in this way, SSC not only captures a more comprehensive understanding of the impact but also fosters a sense of ownership and participation among the stakeholders.

Additionally, SSC enables stakeholders to identify and convey complex or irrational forms of change that may be challenging for quantitative indicators to measure. Traditional monitoring and evaluation methods often struggle to capture changes in attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, relationships, and empowerment, among others. SSC offers a more nuanced approach to understanding and communicating these types of changes, which are often essential to measuring the true impact of a project or program.

SSC also facilitates learning and dialogue among stakeholders. Through the process of sharing stories, stakeholders at different levels can engage in discussions about the nature and value of change. This interactive process promotes improved understanding, feedback, accountability, transparency, and decision-making. It encourages stakeholders to reflect on their experiences and draw insights that can inform future actions and strategies.

The following stories collected through SSC are carefully selected by This Life staff at different levels based on four intermediate outcomes: increased access to services, increased participation in decision-making, increased resilience, and increased social cohesion. These stories effectively bring to life the most significant changes brought about by This Life's programs, which we believe adds value to our annual report annual report.

Our annual report not only serves as a document that demonstrates This Life's impact on its external audiences but also functions as a valuable tool for internal learning and improvement. Using SSC, This Life is gaining insights into its strengths and weaknesses, celebrating our achievements and challenges, recognise best practices and lessons learned, and strategically plan future actions and initiatives. By incorporating the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders, This Life builds trust and rapport with its beneficiaries and partners.

In conclusion, This Life's adoption of the SSC approach for measuring and reporting on the impact of its programs reflects a commitment to a more inclusive and meaningful evaluation process. SSC allows for a deeper understanding of the changes made by projects and programs and encourages active participation from stakeholders. By undertaking this process, it has provided us with valuable insights for learning and improvement, ultimately strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of This Life's programs.

## VISION, MISSION, VALUES

The mission and vision statements of This Life provide an overview of This Life's long-term goals and the daily inspiration for our team. Our organisation's core principles and priorities are encapsulated in this statement of mission. In this section, we hope to explain the core values that guide our organisation.

We recently updated our vision, mission, and values to reflect our commitment to elevating women, both internally and within our program delivery.

Women are central to positive community change and critical in the development process. That's why we value our women changemakers and seek to recruit, support, and celebrate women's contribution to a better Cambodia and a better world.



### VISION

To ensure that children, women, families, and communities are supported to access and create opportunities in this life.



### MISSION

To listen to, engage with, and advocate side by side with children, women, families, and communities as they define and act on their solutions to complex social challenges



### VALUES

**WE LISTEN.** Whether it's the people in the areas we work to improve, our fellow employees, or the funders, sponsors, and collaborators who make our work possible, listening is one of our most fundamental principles.

**WE COLLABORATE.** When we combine our strengths, that's when we really shine. We are able to confidently and comfortably push each other to greater heights because we appreciate and value our differences and each other's contributions.

**WE HAVE INTEGRITY.** We strive to maintain a strong commitment to upholding ethical standards. We prioritise transparency and maintain open lines of communication with one another, authorities, donors, and beneficiaries. We provide clear information regarding our actions, timing, rationale, and approach.

**WE BALANCE.** We prioritise the well-being of ourselves, our loved ones, and our overall health. Therefore, we commit to dedicating time to support one another and prioritise our physical and mental well-being.



**3,008**  
direct girl  
beneficiaries

**18,788**  
indirect girl  
beneficiaries



**472**  
direct adult  
beneficiaries

**8,128**  
indirect adult  
beneficiaries



**5,340**  
direct child  
beneficiaries

**32,929**  
indirect child  
beneficiaries



**954**  
direct adult  
beneficiaries

**60,972**  
indirect adult  
beneficiaries



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am excited to present to you the highly anticipated annual report for the transformative year of 2023. This year has been nothing short of remarkable, marked by the welcoming of new leadership in Cambodia, a rapidly evolving fundraising landscape influenced by global events like the Ukraine war, and the exponential growth of artificial intelligence. In the face of these seismic changes, I am proud to affirm that This Life has embraced adaptability and innovation with unwavering dedication.

At This Life, our vision and mission are clear. Our vision is to ensure that children, women, families, and communities are supported to access and create opportunities in this life. Our mission is to listen to, engage with, and advocate side by side with them as they define and act on their solutions to complex social challenges. We want to see a world where communities are empowered to find their own solutions to the problems they face, and where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources. Our team, which is composed of diverse and talented individuals, is driven by a shared passion for social justice and human dignity. I am honored to lead such a dedicated and capable team, and I thank them for their hard work, creativity and commitment.

Our impact is not possible without the generous support of our donors and partners, who share our vision and trust our approach. We are grateful for their continued backing, which enables us to pursue our ambitious goals and lay the groundwork for scaling up our innovative programs. We are also thankful for their feedback and learning, which helps us improve our practice and accountability.

In this annual report, you will find stories of significant change that illustrate the impact of our work on the lives of individuals, families and communities in Cambodia. These stories are not just anecdotes or testimonials, but evidence of how our programs contribute to meaningful and lasting change in various areas such as education, justice, child protection, disability inclusion and gender equality. These stories also

show how we use participatory methods to involve communities in every stage of our work, from design to evaluation. We believe that stories of change are powerful tools for learning and advocacy, as they capture the complexity and diversity of human experiences and values.

As we celebrate our achievements and reflect on our challenges, we also look forward to the future with optimism and determination. We are excited to explore new possibilities and partnerships that will help us expand our reach and deepen our impact. We are committed to continue learning and improving our work, based on evidence and feedback from our stakeholders. We are confident that together, we can make a difference in the lives of many more people in Cambodia and beyond.

I would also like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to Australian Ambassador Pablo Kang, who has been a great friend and supporter of This Life for many years. We welcome new ambassador Justin Whyatt and look forward to strengthening our collaboration with the Australian Embassy in Cambodia.

Thank you for being part of our journey and for making our work possible.

*Billy Gorter*



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



I am happy to present my second annual report as chair of This Life. On behalf of the Board of This Life, I'd like to open with a huge thank you to the team: our board members who volunteer their expertise and time, the executive team that works hard on a daily basis to oversee the delivery of quality outcomes, and our program and logistics teams that connect This Life with the communities we work with.

This year has been one of change, growth, recognition and hard work by all members of the This Life family. We are grateful to the communities we work with for their resilience and adaptability, despite the immense challenges they face. Our beneficiaries are at the heart of This Life and drive the direction of our work as we listen, engage and advocate for the change they identify for themselves, their families and their communities. Thank you.

This Life is proud to support Cambodian women, children, This Life is proud to support Cambodian women, children, families and communities in their journey of positive change. We do this through programs and campaigns grounded in community development, child protection, gender equality, education, and justice. We uphold our values of accountability, transparency, and collaboration, as evidenced by our contemporary governance framework, practices and policies.

Since 2020, This Life has been a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), a powerful network of like-minded institutions and leaders devoted to best practice governance, action, and accountability in international development. We signed a comprehensive Code of Conduct that sets high ethical and effectiveness criteria for the industry, and as signatories to the Code, we demonstrate our accountability to stakeholders, respect human rights and the environment, and join a collective voice to influence policy and drive change.

In June, Mr. Justin Whyatt, the new Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, visited our Vocational Training and Education Centre and spoke with students and staff. We welcome Ambassador Whyatt to the role of Australian Ambassador to Cambodia and look forward to maintaining our strong relationship with the Australian Embassy in Cambodia.

We were honoured to receive the Australian Not-for-Profit Technology Awards 2023 Best Social Media Campaign of the Year for our social media campaign, #GoodbyeMyLove. The centrepiece video was viewed nearly 1.6 million times. The overall campaign reached close to 4 million people and received extensive coverage for This Life's critical work addressing gender-based violence. Thank you to Infoxchange, a leading social enterprise that provides technology solutions for social impact. We were delighted to welcome Mytech Trinh as a new member of the board this year. Mytech brings a wealth of experience and expertise in finance, risk management, and governance. He is also a passionate advocate for social justice and human rights.

Thank you sincerely to our donors, partners, and volunteers who make our work possible. Our growing impact in Cambodia is made possible through your generosity, trust, collaboration, and commitment. Together, we can create lasting change for the women, children and communities in which we work. We are confident that, with your continued support, we can make a positive difference in the lives of many more Cambodians.

In this report, you will find stories of significant change that illustrate the impact of our work on the lives of individuals, families, and communities. We invite you to read through our FY23 annual report and join us in celebrating our achievements and sharing our vision for a brighter future for Cambodia.

*Hayley Lee Allen*



## MIDTERM STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

### We've Listened to Those We Value Most.

Our five-year strategic plan (2020-2025) was developed collaboratively with the communities we work with, our staff, board members, and funding partners. At the halfway point, we wanted to check if we were on the right track.

We asked: are we doing the right thing? and are we doing it right?

To answer these questions, we conducted a midterm review with feedback from over 100 stakeholders, including community and government representatives, donors and partners, staff and board members.

We are grateful for their honest and constructive responses, which helped us assess our progress and identify areas for improvement. We're excited to share what we heard from them and what we will do differently in the final two and a half years of our strategic plan. Some of the themes that emerged from their feedback were:

- » The strength of our collaboration with local authorities, capacity building with communities, and resource mobilisation efforts.
- » Our community approach, reporting, innovation and impact, and openness to partnerships.
- » Our people, work, and effectiveness. Staff satisfaction with This Life as an employer (average rating 8/10). A quote that illustrates their views was: "We are Driving change, developing new partnerships, and being part of something bigger" - Staff member

We also heard that there have been significant changes in the external environment that affect our work and our stakeholders. Some of the common themes raised were:

- » COVID-19's impact on communities and their livelihoods, health, education, and social cohesion.
- » The challenging fundraising landscape due to events like the Ukraine war, climate crisis, and donor fatigue.
- » The changes within Cambodia, such as the increase in drug use among young people, the political sensitivity of drug policy advocacy, and the need for more gender and disability inclusion.

Some of the quotes that illustrate these changes were:

“**The world approach to life has changed. Companies and people are re-evaluating their purpose**”.  
- Board member

“**COVID-19 has affected everything: income generation, education access, mental health**”  
- Community stakeholder

This Life is mostly on the right track with our strategic objectives. We also asked our stakeholders if they agreed with our strategic objectives and if they thought we were making progress towards them. Overall, we received positive feedback that confirmed that we are mostly on the right track.

However, one area of disagreement was on our growth. Some stakeholders felt that there was a need to grow our impact across Cambodia and regionally, while others felt that we should focus on improving our existing programs in Cambodia.

### What should This Life do differently?

Finally, we asked our stakeholders what they thought we should do differently over the next two and a half years. We received valuable suggestions on:

- » **Reports:** More qualitative analysis and narrative reports to supplement graphs and numbers.
- » **Budgeting:** Better management of budget spending to avoid underspend and maintain donor trust.
- » **Programs:** More focus on programs, either by going international or by improving the implementation of existing programs in Cambodia.
- » **Partnerships:** More network and collaboration with local NGOs and technical support for them.
- » **Diversification:** More diversification of funding sources and risk management.



## OUR NEXT STEPS

To address the differing opinions and better achieve our strategic objectives, we have identified several actions we will take over the next two years.

- i. We will work on an updated Theory of Change that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reflects our core pillars of work. This will help us respond to the feedback we have received from our stakeholders and improve our strategic planning. Each program pillar will have its own Theory of Change and SDG, showing how our interventions contribute to the desired outcomes. We will also invest in measuring the impact of our work, using a more informative approach that captures both the positive and negative effects of our actions.
- ii. We recognise the importance of building the capacity of local NGOs and will incorporate a partnership approach in all areas of our work, such as health, education, and livelihoods. We understand that effective collaboration with like-minded organisations is crucial in maximising the impact and sustainability of our interventions, especially in complex and dynamic contexts. Duplication of efforts is a big problem in the charity sector, and we will strive to be a leader in mitigating this issue by coordinating with other actors and sharing best practices.
- iii. We recognise the importance of research in tackling the emerging issues in development and are dedicated to collaborating and investing in research that aligns with Cambodia's major emerging challenges and the SDGs. The findings from this research will inform our future work and help us to focus our efforts in areas where we can have the most impact.
- iv. We acknowledge the need for sustainability and scalability and have decided to attend to the expansion of Strategic Objective 5 in the next strategic term from 2025. This objective involves expanding internationally and integrating its specific elements into a separate project.
- v. We will assess the feasibility of Vocational Training and Social Enterprise (VTSE) and Impact, Learning & Evaluation (ILE) becoming sustainable income-generating businesses. Should the assessment determine their viability, we will allocate resources to develop and implement business development strategies to diversify our funding sources and enhance our risk management capabilities. This will enable us to become more financially sustainable, freeing up resources that we can channel towards achieving our strategic objectives.
- vi. We acknowledge the need for sustainability and scalability and have decided to attend to the expansion of Strategic Objective 5 in the next strategic term from 2025. This objective involves expanding internationally and integrating its specific elements into a separate project.
- vii. We will develop the framework and impact story of the Diversion Program's pilot in Siem Reap to inform scaling and replicating our programs. This approach will help us to achieve significant change and create a lasting impact on the lives of the people we serve.

In conclusion, we are deeply grateful for the ongoing support and collaboration we receive from our stakeholders. The actions we will take over the next two years reflect our commitment to achieving our strategic objectives and making positive change in the communities we serve. We are excited to work alongside our partners to create impactful programs and sustainable interventions that address the needs and challenges of those who need them the most.

## GOVERNANCE

This Life is a non-profit organisation that empowers Cambodians to make an impact on complex social justice issues. The organisation uses grassroots community consultation approaches, community development techniques, and strengths-based case management for direct service provision to children and families. This Life has several sub-committees that add value and expertise to the wider function of the Board.

These sub-committees ensure that key areas of operational management are supported and directed with policies, guidance, and advice that are sector-specific and quality-driven by substance.

**THE AUDIT RISK AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (ARFC)** is a subcommittee of This Life's Board. The ARFC is a non-statutory body that the Board has formally established as per its Terms of Reference. Meeting on a quarterly basis, the Committee ensures that This Life's Board carries out its corporate governance and oversight duties regarding financial reporting, risk management, internal controls, external audits, and compliance with applicable laws, rules, and codes. The purpose of the ARFC is to outline the board's duties, authority delegations, reporting requirements, and meeting procedures in relation to This Life Policies and Procedures, financial reporting, risk management and internal control, compliance, and assurance.

**THE STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SEC)** is another This Life's Board sub-committee. The purpose of the SEC is to provide expertise and advice on fundraising strategies and activities as well as methods that can help open networks and make new developmental introductions where possible. Among wider methods, it accomplishes this by providing strategic advice and recommendations on fundraising, philanthropy, and events; reviewing and making recommendations for Board approval on strategies for achieving fundraising objectives; helping solicit potential corporate and individual sponsors and

donors; and assisting in identifying a list of potential sponsors, funders, and supporters of pro-bono support or gifts in kind.

**THE PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE (P&CC)** is a sub-committee of This Life's Board. The purpose of the P&CC is to oversee the creation and continuous implementation of the organisation's Fair, Safe, and Just Culture; ensuring that all employees have a positive working environment and enhanced health and wellbeing. It accomplishes this by monitoring, assessing, and reporting on the culture and organisational development to the Board. This Life Policies and Procedures:

This Life is governed by its board of directors, as stated in its constitution: "The Board shall be responsible for the overall governance of This Life." Additionally, the constitution specifies how board members are elected or appointed to their positions. This Life's policies are designed to ensure that all employees are treated fairly while ensuring that the organisation operates in compliance with all applicable laws. The policies cover a wide range of topics, including human resources policies such as recruitment procedures, employee benefits, and performance management systems, to name a few. Additionally, This Life has policies in place to ensure that all financial transactions are conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

## THIS LIFE BOARD



**HAYLEY LEE ALLEN**, *Chair*

Hayley specialises in the cultural, not for profit and NGO sector, delivering on corporate governance, policy, strategic planning and performance, ESG strategy, reconciliation action planning, audit and risk management, project management and business case development for major infrastructure and program funding. Hayley has worked with premier Australian cultural institutions NGV, Melbourne Recital Centre, Bendigo Art Gallery, State Library Victoria, and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria across governance, capital projects, driving venue utilisation and revenue, philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and major arts events and festivals. Hayley was appointed to Chair of the Board of This Life in 2021 after 2 years as Vice Chair. She is currently in her second term as Chair. Hayley is employed by CARE Australia in the role of Head of Governance Risk and Quality.



**MATTHEW LUCAS**, *Vice Chair*

Matthew is a senior executive with experience across diverse organisations in challenging global markets and varied products. He has held management positions in multi-billion-dollar companies including Expedia Inc and carsales.com, been responsible for aspects of financial reporting and regulatory compliance in businesses across the globe, served as Chief Operating Officer of an Australian household brand, led mergers and acquisitions teams, worked in investment banking and, most recently, founded a travel technology start-up.



**NAVAKA ARACHCHIGE**, *Treasurer*

Navaka is a finance, governance and corporate services professional and currently the Chief Financial Officer of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. He has over 20 years' experience in finance, management and corporate leadership in practice, private, public and not for profit organisations and has successfully led and managed multi-disciplinary teams and complex projects. Navaka has a keen interest in all aspects of organisational management and financial governance and has held positions or volunteered at PricewaterhouseCoopers, Austar Entertainment, Qantas, Sydney Water, the State Emergency Service of New South Wales, the Australian Graduate School of Management, Federal Court of Australia, the office of the Merit Protection Commissioner and several Federal government tribunals. Navaka is also the chair of the Audit, Risk, & Finance Committee.



**EMER PURDON**, *Secretary*

A passionate advocate for social and climate justice, Emer is an international development professional with almost two decades of experience in the not-for-profit, private and public sectors gained throughout the developing world. With a Masters in Development Management and a postgraduate qualification in Climate Change Adaptation, Emer brings skills in strategic planning, leadership and mentoring, program management, impact measurement, compliance and continuous quality improvement as well as facilitating partnerships across a range of stakeholders from communities through to partner governments. Based in Bali, Emer is the Deputy Director of DFAT's flagship health security program in Indonesia with responsibility for operations, GEDSI, MEL, Communications and Knowledge Management.





**STEPHANIE STEPHENS, General Member**

Stephanie is a clinical psychotherapist with 10 years' NFP and service delivery management experience. She has worked in education, mental health, youth, family and alcohol and other drug settings. Stephanie's current Canberra-based role, as Directions Health Services' Director of Service Delivery, focuses on clinical governance, service quality and performance, advocacy, and supporting front line staff to deliver equitable, empowering, life-changing services to vulnerable people. Stephanie completed her undergraduate at La Trobe University, Masters (clinical and research) at the Cairnmillar Institute, and MBA at Griffith University. Her post-graduate research considered service users' experience of family violence support services. Stephanie has a passion for developing and implementing equitable, accessible and client-centred services, advocating for a 'nothing about us without us' ethos, building positive workplace culture and supporting staff to deliver empowering and respectful services.



**MYTECH TRINH, General Member**

Mytech is a senior executive with over 17 years' experience in the funds management industry. Prior to joining financial technology firm GROW Inc to lead its managed funds business unit, Mytech was an executive board member and management committee member at Schroder Investment Management Australia Limited. He has deep technical knowledge of the end to end operating model of fund management businesses having held a number of different senior leadership roles within Schroders. He was responsible for overseeing the Finance, Tax, Legal and Compliance functions. Prior to Schroders, Mytech was previously a partner at Win & Associates, a boutique firm providing tax consulting services. He has also worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers as a chartered accountant and Blake Dawson Waldron (now Ashurst Australia) as a solicitor. Mytech holds a double degree in Commerce and Law from the University of New South Wales.



**DAMON MARTIN, General Member**

Damon is a qualified social worker and mediator with over 23 years' experience and commitment to ensuring the rights, safety and wellbeing of children are paramount. Based in Sydney and employed as the Deputy CEO of International Social Service Australia, Damon leads a team that delivers child protection and post adoption services that connect vulnerable children, adults and families affected by cross border issues. He also has extensive experience as the Social Work Expert for the ISS global project A Better Future is Possible aimed at promoting the rights of children with disabilities living in institutions to access family-based care. As part of this project he has completed over 15 missions to Cambodia, Vietnam and Azerbaijan. Prior to working in the NGO sector, Damon worked in statutory child protection authorities for 10 years in NSW, England and New Zealand (where he is originally from).



**JESSICA ERHART, General Member**

Jess has been building and managing brand communities for 10 years, with a special focus on the tech sector. She started her career in the non-profit sector as a volunteer for youth leadership organisation AIESEC, going on to become an Australian Director and to organise youth conferences in Tunisia, Malaysia and Jordan. Jess also spent time volunteering for Carpets for Communities, a non-profit supporting women to break the cycle of poverty for their families in Cambodia. Jess specialises in community management and engagement and has worked for Microsoft Europe, Virgin Australia, Queensland Museum and Microsoft Stores. She currently manages community programs for Asana in the Asia-Pacific region.



**LOUISE CROWE, General Member**

Louise is a management consultant with professional experience working in the education, medical research and financial services sectors. She has delivered a range of projects including operating model implementation, strategy design, implementation reviews, and Government evaluations. Currently working in the strategy field, Louise has also worked as a public policy consultant, meaning she brings to the Board strategic thinking capabilities, evaluation skills, bid funding development experience, and NFP sector experience. Louise has a particular passion for the NFP sector, and cares deeply about Indigenous rights, gender equality, and environmental protection. Louise is a Trinity College Dublin Gold Medallist and has a First-Class Honours Business degree from the University. She currently works with the Melbourne division of the strategy consulting firm, Strategic Project Partners.



**SURESH RAO, General Member**

Suresh has extensive experience as an IT management professional in a range of sectors including Government, not-for-profit, energy, finance, and health.

Recent roles include eight years as CIO at The Smith Family where Suresh helped transform the organisation through innovative award winning enterprise-wide IT solutions, as Project Director for the Secure Unified Research Environment (SURE) Australia's first secure private cloud infrastructure for health research, and as co-author of two research reports at the Digital Health Cooperative Research Centre (DHCRC) that discussed the technological and governance barriers to health research in Australia. Most recently he worked as a volunteer IT Adviser with NGOs in Indonesia and Cambodia, advising and mentoring staff and management on effective and efficient use of IT to fulfil their mission.

Suresh has gained a strong blend of strategic, operational and governance skills through senior technology and project management roles over more than three decades. He believes in the power of technology to transform organisations, and in adopting a strategic approach to implementing operationally appropriate and effective technology solutions. Suresh is based in Sydney, Australia.



**MIHAJLO STARCEVIC, Chair of People and Culture Committee**

Mihajlo joined This Life's board back in 2012 and was chair from 2017 to 2021. Mihajlo is an experienced executive, focused on helping organisations unlock potential and deliver results. Mihajlo is MBA qualified with a background in Engineering and 15 years of experience improving businesses through turnarounds, operations optimisation, strategy, P&L management, and program management. He has proven track record of converting vision into actionable strategies, communication, and engagement.



**SONJA KRIVACIC, Chair of Strategic Engagement Committee**

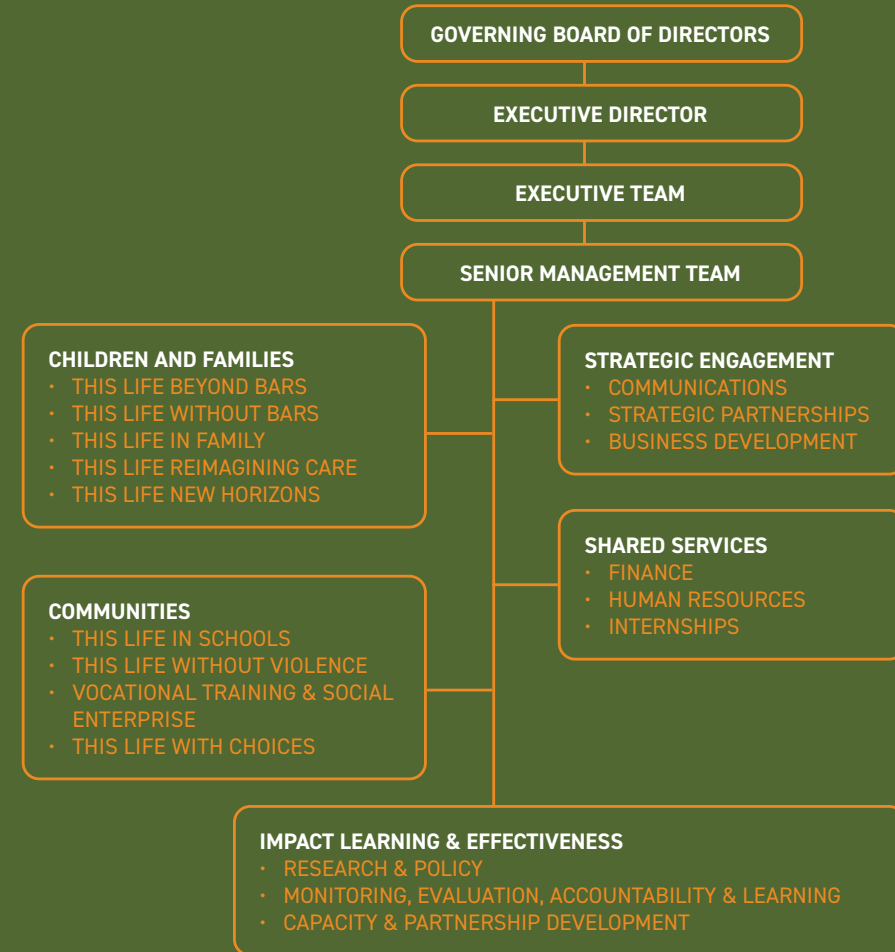
Sonja is a Researcher & Strategic Innovator with the ability to think outside the square with a focus on creating new value opportunities in program development, community engagement, change management, monitoring & evaluation and strategic partnership development. Sonja's experience in aid & development spans 15 years with a further decade in senior executive roles.

Her qualifications include two business degrees and a Master in Development Studies (UNSW).



**This Life consists of various teams that work together to achieve the following objectives:**

- » To listen to and understand the needs of the communities
- » To design and implement solutions that match the needs of the communities
- » To find, secure and communicate with suitable funding partners that support This Life's work
- » To comply with the legal and ethical standards of Cambodia and other relevant authorities. The graphic below shows how This Life is structured and divided into different teams as of the end of the fiscal year 2023.





## CAMBODIAN WOMEN CHANGEMAKERS

As an Australian NGO, This Life is proud to be a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the peak body for Australian non-government organisations working in international development and humanitarian action. ACFID has a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in its work and encourages members to integrate gender equality into their policies, programs, and organisational culture.

In line with ACFID’s submission on the International Gender Equality Strategy, one of their key aspirations is to champion the leadership and active participation of women and girls in decision-making and peacebuilding processes. In pursuit of this goal, we were thrilled to unveil the Cambodian Women Changemakers, a groundbreaking initiative that unites extraordinary women leaders from diverse sectors and backgrounds, all united by their passion for driving social change.

The Cambodian Women Changemakers initiative is a unique initiative that aims to empower emerging women leaders in Cambodia who are active in various fields including education, health, environment, human rights, and community development. The program is initiated by This Life and Women’s Resource Centre, two organisations with a strong, shared, commitment to gender equality and inclusive development in Cambodia.

The program runs over nine months and consists of three main components: leadership workshops, mentoring sessions, and networking events. The leadership workshops will provide the participants with practical skills and improved knowledge on communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, project management, and advocacy. The mentoring sessions will pair the participants with experienced women leaders who will offer them guidance, feedback, and encouragement. The networking events will connect the participants with other

women changemakers from Cambodia and South-East Asia, as well as with potential partners, donors, and supporters thereby increasing womens’ agency.

The initiative aims to build women’s relationships, skills, and confidence, and to provide participants with a broader network of support and influence. The program also aims to create a platform for women’s voices to be heard and recognised, and to showcase their contributions to social change. By doing so, the program hopes to inspire more women to take on leadership roles and to challenge the barriers they face in their personal and professional lives.

The initiative is being spearheaded by Susan Black, This Life leaders Borany Chea, Pisey Khim and Narath Keo with advice and guidance from changemaker Margaret Allison from Australia. Margaret Allison brings extensive experience in governance and international development and is currently serving as a consultant for the World Bank Group in Cambodia.

The Cambodian Women’s Changemaker initiative is made possible by financial support from the Australian Government channelled through the Australian Volunteers Program. The program facilitates partnerships, placement expertise and volunteer exchanges, where Australians can share their skills with their counterparts in various countries, and vice versa.

This Life recognises the power of the Cambodian Women Changemakers program and the strong synergies created through collaboration with the Australian Volunteers Program. The impact that can be made through women leaders as participants, mentors, facilitators and supporters goes beyond changes at an individual level, but extends to their communities and wider society, across borders and cultures.



## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS REEL



### RUN TLC 2023

RUN TLC was once again a huge success. Over \$5,500 was raised, and over 50 staff members participated in the 8th Khmer Empire Marathon in Siem Reap, a run that began at 5:30 a.m. We also had supporters participate in City2Surf, a 14-kilometre fun run from Sydney CBD to Bondi Beach. We were thrilled to see such a great turnout, and we look forward to an even bigger turnout next time!

### Our Deputy Director Meets Joe Biden and Barack Obama

Our deputy director, Se Chhin, is an alumnus of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), a highly selective cultural exchange program for emerging leaders in South-east Asia sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. Se was among a handful of alumni who had the opportunity to meet President Joe Biden and discuss a wide range of international affairs issues, including human rights, women's empowerment, and access to education in the region. Se was also chosen for the Obama Leadership Asia Pacific 2023 program based on his work and vision for social change. Through this program, he has gained new skills and knowledge, networked with other leaders, and learned from experts and mentors who share his values and vision. Se met former President Barack Obama in Athens, Greece, in July 2023.



### Australian Ambassador Visits This Life and Edith House

The Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, Justin Whyatt, and his team visited This Life's offices in Siem Reap and Edith House. Edith House is a social enterprise program that recruits vulnerable young people from communities where we run other programs, and partner NGOs. Students are empowered with life skills, personal development, vocational training (motorbike repairs, hairdressing, tailoring, small electric repairs), placement support, and everything they need to prepare for a bright future. The ambassador also met some of our volunteers from the Australian Volunteers Program. For over 15 years, the program has supported This Life with incredible volunteers who have brought immense strategic and operational value.

### This Life provides food aid to help flood victims

A devastating flood struck Siem Reap in October 2022, causing extensive damage across some districts and destroying homes, crops, and livestock. In response, This Life has shifted towards emergency relief, providing 5 tonnes of rice and canned fish to 200 families in Kralanh District. The organisation's efforts have been instrumental in providing much-needed aid to the affected families.

### This Life celebrates new Vocational Training, and Social Enterprise graduates

This Life held a graduation ceremony for 41 students from Siem Reap province who received certificates for 5th to 6th-generation motorcycle repair. The program recruits vulnerable young people across Siem Reap, including residential care facilities, diversion programs, and the communities where we run other programs. H.E. Sok Thol, Deputy Governor of the Siem Reap Provincial Board of Governors, presided over the ceremony and praised the collaboration between This Life and the LEAP Project. Se Chhin, Deputy Director of This Life, congratulated the students and called for further cooperation to provide social support services for vulnerable groups.



### Director of Youth Rehabilitation from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) and his team. They visited some beneficiaries of our diversion program

This Life was honoured to welcome the Director of Youth Rehabilitation from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), and his team. They visited some beneficiaries of our diversion program, an initiative that provides alternative measures to custodial sentences for children in conflict with the law. They also visited our vocational training and social enterprise, Edith House, which empowers vulnerable youth with skills and opportunities for a better future.

The director and his team were impressed with the results achieved by the collaboration and encouraged us to continue to expand the program and welcome more children. We are grateful for their support and recognition, and we look forward to working together to create positive change for our community.

### J Trust Royal Bank donates 20 laptops to This Life

A key goal of J Trust Royal Bank's corporate social responsibility is to contribute to "uplifting literacy for the growth of Cambodia." As part of this commitment, they generously gifted This Life with 20 laptops. The laptops will support "This Life In Schools," a program dedicated to improving access to and quality of education by engaging community members in school development. In this increasingly digital and technology-based world, those in vulnerable communities mustn't get left behind. These laptops will go a long way towards closing that gap.



### Reading Day Campaign

This Life in Schools program is dedicated to improving literacy rates in Cambodia. On March 10th, This Life partnered with NEP Cambodia and the Teacher Development Support Organisation (TDSO) to organise a Reading Day campaign. Over 300 people participated in the campaign, including the district deputy governor, the District Office of Education chief, teachers, students, and parents. In addition to reading activities and poetry competitions, lessons and discussions were introduced on the role of education in promoting and mainstreaming gender equality and teacher policy implementation practices.



### Children moved from residential care and reunited with their families

This Life Reimagining Care program aims to reduce children in residential care institutions (RCIs) in Cambodia, increase social workers' capacity to undertake quality reintegrations, and promote family-based care. Thanks to funding from USAID through Save The Children and in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVYs), we continue to make great strides. We signed a partnership agreement with Neoum Channa House, an RCI. The RCI closed, and the children were safely reunited with their families. The agreement outlines a shared commitment to conducting child-family reunifications, case management and ensuring effective accountability for the children's wellbeing.

### Expansion of vocational training skills for young inmates in Banteay Meanchey prison

We were proud to be able to expand our vocational training and social enterprise program. As a core part of our diversion efforts, the program provides skills training for vulnerable youths and non-violent offenders who simply need opportunities. The program now includes air conditioning and light installation vocational training classes for young inmates in Banteay Meanchey prison. These classes are the result of our collaboration with the Polytechnic Institute of Banteay Meanchey Province and Banteay Meanchey Prison.



### District Training and Monitoring Team Training

Our This Life In Schools program improves education access and quality through community engagement. We met with the District Training and Monitoring Team from four districts in Siem Reap to review our work in 2022-2023. We trained the DTMT on school development topics and learned from their experience implementing new policies and empowering children's councils. We presented our research on the DTMT's role in school-based management and joined the Coalition for Good Schools in Asia. We thank our partners for their support and celebrate our impact on education.

### Continued partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)

We extended our collaboration agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY). This partnership will enhance the quality and efficacy of our core programs, This Life Reimagining Care (TLRC) and This Life New Horizons (TLNH).

TLRC seeks to reduce the number of children living in residential care institutions and promote family-based care. TLNH provides caretakers with the education, knowledge, counselling, and mentorship necessary for successful reintegration into society. The partnership represents a significant milestone in both the work of these programs and the Cambodian social services industry.

### This Life organises strategic training session with key stakeholders to address the impact of residential care and family separation on children's well-being

This Life and the Department of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation in Banteay Meanchey organised a training session for local authorities to discuss the impact of residential care institutions (RCIs) on children's well-being and ways to prevent their separation from family. The training session was attended by the Women and Children's Consultative Committees (WCCC), village chiefs, and Commune Committees for Women and Children (CCWC) from several communes across the impact areas. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the impact of RCIs on children and learned about existing resources available in the community to support children in need and prevent them from being placed in institutions.



### 16 Days of Activism Campaign wins big!

We are honoured to have received numerous international awards for our 16 Days of Activism titled Goodbye My Love. While we were thrilled to have won several awards, we were excited to win new ones, including the Global Social Media Awards—Nonprofit Campaign of the Year. As an Australian NGO, we are particularly proud to have won the Australian Not-for-Profit Technology Award for Best Social Media Campaign of the Year. Our chair, Hayley Lee Allen, was able to pick up the award in person.

## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a major part of our campaign and advocacy. For 2022, our campaign was titled 'Goodbye My Love'. It is a powerful call to action centered on encouraging communities to come together to support women facing domestic abuse. The tagline of the campaign was "society must surround her with the strength, love, and support she needs to say goodbye."

66% of the Cambodian population believe that victims of abuse should remain silent for the sake of family. Additionally, only 24% of victims ever come forward, and those who do often face further abuse as well as community shame. Our video is aspirational in nature, encouraging communities to instead shame perpetrators and rally around victims instead. The video also highlights the fact that domestic abuse isn't just physical, but can be financial and emotional as well. The video also illustrates that abuse occurs across all socio-economic settings, and is not isolated to any one socio-economic class.

The video opens with a man walking away from his house holding a bag, followed by a close-up of his face. He is clearly distressed. This is followed by a flashback of the events leading up to this, in this case, emotional abuse. The scene ends with the man standing alone. Behind him, members of the community hold hands and face the home, symbolizing their protection of the woman and shunning of the perpetrator.

A similar pattern plays out in the next scene with a different couple, except financial abuse is depicted. The final couple in the video depicts a marriage where physical abuse has taken place, hence the opening of the scene showing the man behind bars. The flashback depicting abuse is followed by the most triumphant

aspect of the video. Everyone from the community comes together to condemn the man and support his wife. Men and women from all walks of life, different professions, and religions are united by the common goal of giving the woman the love and support she needs to say goodbye to her abusive relationship.

The ariel shot finally reveals that the community has encircled the house as a symbol of the love and protection they are giving to the women who experienced abuse. The final scenes of the video show key statistic before concluding with the call to action; "society must surround her with the strength, love, and support she needs to say goodbye."

The film, released on 25th November, received 1.6 million views. The additional posts over the 16-day period reached over 4 million people - nearly a 1/3 of the Cambodian population.

The campaign received extensive engagement and widespread support. It created a national conversation around the nuances of abuse, ending with a strong and memorable call to action messaging of - give her the love, strength, and support she needs to say GoodBye. The campaign involved public figures and groups, including the ambassador to Cambodia from Australia, women's organisations, and diplomatic agencies like GIZ, all alongside several Cambodian influencers.

We achieved national coverage through online media channels, TV, radio, and print, which included reporting on the issue of gender-based violence, interviews with women experiencing violence, and speaking with our staff working with individuals experiencing domestic violence and advocating for women's rights in the community with local authorities and other organisations.



Watch the 16 Days of Activism Short Film

**\$6,000** Budget

**1.6 million** Views

**4 million** Reach



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On March 8th 2023, This Life celebrated International Women's Day, a day chosen to celebrate the incredible achievements and contributions of women worldwide.

For over 15 years, This Life has been at the forefront of delivering grassroots solutions to some of Cambodia's most complex problems. Throughout this period, we have helped empower thousands of people with the tools, knowledge, and expertise they need to create a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

This impact would not have been possible without the contributions of exceptional women working across every area of our organisation. To commemorate this day, we wanted to showcase some of the inspiring women leaders in Siem Reap

who are making a difference in various sectors and fields. We created a video featuring interviews with women from different backgrounds and experiences, such as community counsel, disability services, and LGBTQ+ organisations. The video was shared on our social media platforms and received positive feedback and support from our followers.

We also held an event at our office to commemorate the day. In attendance were 5 organisations; REACH Siem Reap, Women's Resource Center, Beautiful Life Organisation, and Banteay Srei, which held an event celebrating International Women's Day! We invited the public to hear from leaders and changemakers from all five organisations as they shared powerful stories about their work and the women in their lives who inspired them.



## THIS LIFE BEYOND BARS

This Life Beyond Bars (TLBB) is a program that provides vocational training and support to prisoners and ex-prisoners, and helps them reintegrate into society and find employment. TLBB also works with the families of prisoners and ex-prisoners to strengthen their relationships and reduce the stigma and discrimination they face. The program also advocates for the rights and interests of prisoners and ex-prisoners, and promotes the reform of the prison system in Cambodia. The program has been implemented in Siem Reap, Oddar Meanchey, Phnom Penh and Banteay Meanchey provinces.

One of the impactful stories that highlights the transformative effect of TLBB is the story of one of our beneficiaries, Van. Van, then 17, comes from a large family comprising four sisters and one brother. His parents live in extreme poverty, and the family relies heavily on agriculture and animal husbandry. Struggling to find direction, like so many in his situation, he fell into a bad crowd, participating in increasingly deviant activities, and grew increasingly disrespectful towards his parents. Their interventions failed, and he was eventually convicted for participation in drug-related activities. He was sentenced to two years and six months of incarceration.

The consequences for young people convicted of drug offenses cannot be overstated. Upon release, they are often shunned by family and society, with virtually no way of moving forward. They often fall into a recidivism trap, placing a greater burden on their communities.

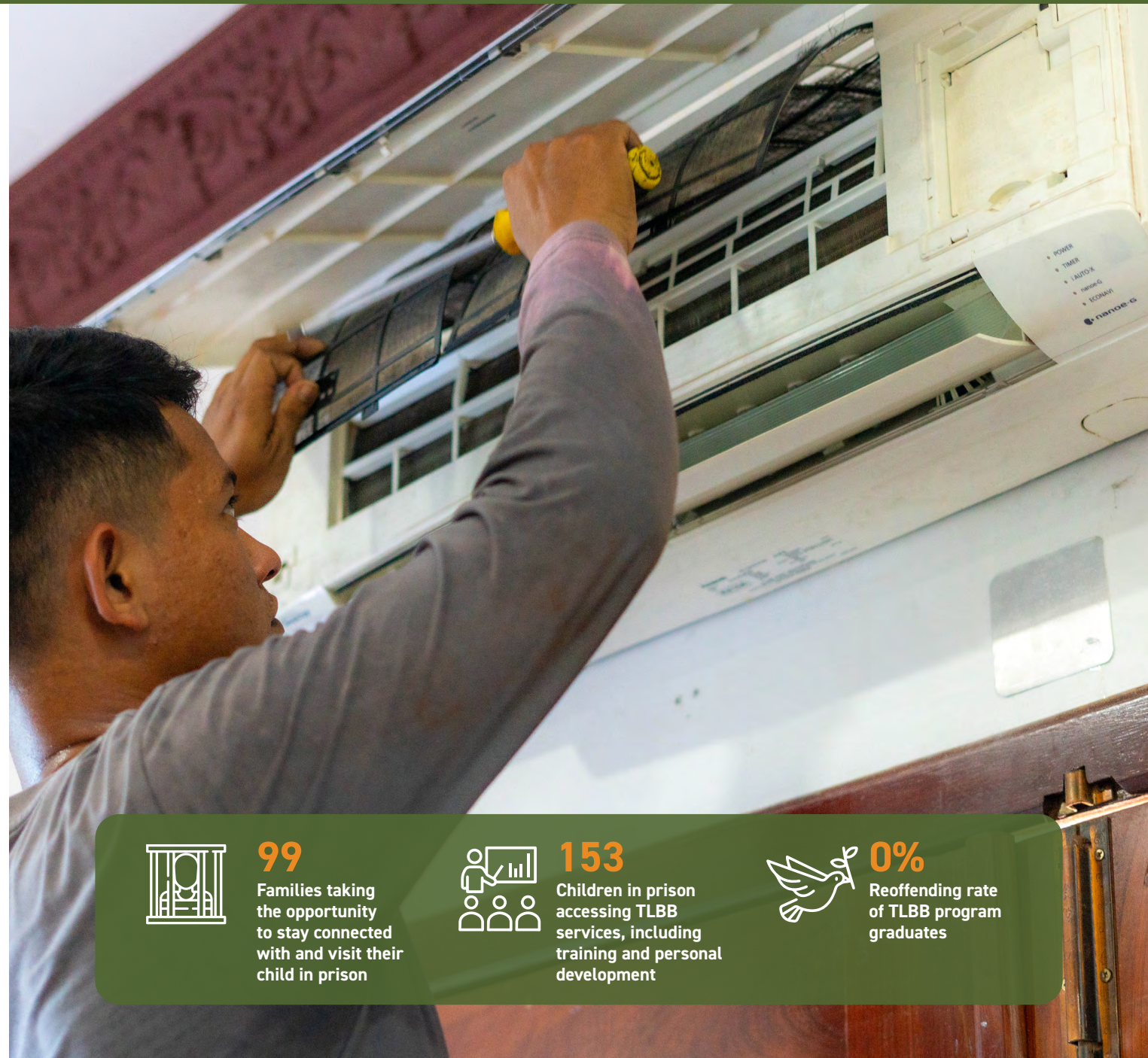
Van was distraught and felt hopeless in prison. He felt guilty for the added burden he had placed on his family and believed his life was over; he did not know what to do or who could help him. However, when TLBB offered the vocational training program inside the prison, Van decided to register for air conditioning training. At first, he was not very interested in the training, as he just wanted to leave the prison. However, the trainer and case manager provided him with training on air

conditioning repair, personal development, and support. They also helped his parents visit him in prison and gave him one-on-one support. Gradually, Van started to like his studies and accept his situation. He understood the value of the training and felt hopeful and valuable.

Van was released from prison and reintegrated to live with his family in his hometown with a significantly improved attitude. He stopped using drugs and helped his parents with errands and housework. His mother said, "I am so delighted to see my son change. I thank This Life for that." After his release, the program assisted Van in starting a small business as an air conditioning repairer and installer. Van said, "I am really happy. I will never upset my family again, and I will try my best to grow my business."

Van's story is a testament to the power of second chances and how sometimes all people need is the right opportunity. Van's story is a testament to how TLBB can transform the lives of prisoners and ex-prisoners by providing them with skills, opportunities, and support. Many in Van's circumstances often go in a different direction, falling into a cycle of crime, drugs and imprisonment, putting an immense burden on their families and their communities. Instead, thanks to the support of TLBB, he stands as a pillar in his community and a role model.

Van's story also shows how TLBB can prevent recidivism, which is the tendency of former prisoners to re-offend after their release. According to a This Life study, 60% of juveniles released from Siem Reap prison were reoffending within the first 6 months of their release. TLBB represents a vital step in reducing this number by tackling the root causes of recidivism and bringing hope and relief to families and communities most heavily impacted.



**99**  
Families taking the opportunity to stay connected with and visit their child in prison



**153**  
Children in prison accessing TLBB services, including training and personal development



**0%**  
Reoffending rate of TLBB program graduates



## THIS LIFE IN FAMILY

This Life in Family (TLIF) aims to support families with a parent in prison and works to prevent family separation and child institutionalisation. TLIF provides holistic support to families, covering their basic needs in education, health, livelihood, and counseling. TLIF also works with prison authorities, social services, and other agencies to facilitate family visits, reunification, and reintegration. TLIF also advocates for the rights and interests of families affected by incarceration and raises awareness about their situation and challenges.

One of the stories of significant change that illustrates the impact of TLIF is Leb's story. Leb's situation was one of the more heartbreaking we have encountered, as she had comprehensive challenges. She had no income, struggled with homelessness, and had no hope when her husband was imprisoned for a crime in 2013. She struggled to care for her toddler daughter and was marginalised by a society more inclined towards shaming than lending a helping hand.

In 2019, This Life In Family contacted Leb, whose case was referred by prison authorities. TLIF staff visited her regularly, gained a comprehensive understanding of her problems, and supported her using a holistic approach that included;

- » Support to visit her husband in prison (visiting incarcerated relatives is often logistically and financially impossible for those who are not well off)
- » Food, health, and counselling
- » Education support for her daughter, including study materials, extracurricular fees, and a bicycle
- » Chicken-raising business support, which gave her a source of income and a means of self-reliance

Leb overcame her difficulties and built a better life for herself and her daughter. She improved her living conditions, expanded her chicken-raising business, and joined a saving scheme. Her outlook and optimism have changed significantly. She is proud

of her daughter, who continues to study and maintains a good relationship with her father. She said, "TLIF has been like a family to me and given me hope. I'm grateful not only for the material support I received but also for the support that has made me stronger emotionally and spiritually and made me feel like I am not alone."

Leb's experience is a story of resilience, empowerment, and self-reliance despite facing adversity when the head of a household is imprisoned. Nurturing a family's well-being, developing opportunities in education, and building financial self-reliance all make a sustainable impact for a brighter future. TLIF has the hope of reaching more families who are affected by incarceration and believes that providing a holistic package of support that covers their basic needs—education, health, livelihood, and counselling—while also engaging with other agencies, services, and groups can bring about lasting change.

As a proud member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Leb's story is a powerful example of how This Life works to achieve one of ACFID's goals for gender equality:

- » to address the root causes of gender inequality, such as poverty, social norms, power structures, and discrimination.

By empowering Leb and other women like her, This Life helps them overcome the barriers that prevent them from fulfilling their potential and enjoying their rights. We are optimistic about the program's future and look forward to watching it become a replicable and scalable model. We also hope that Leb's story will contribute to a cultural shift where women in her position are elevated by their communities.



**30**  
Primary Caregivers supported to create income generation activities



**442**  
Children supported to remain within family care



**495**  
Children of incarcerated parents supported with education, visitation, and family assistance

## THIS LIFE NEW HORIZONS

This Life New Horizons (TLNH) is a program that helps children and youth who have left residential care institutions (RCIs) return to their families and communities. TLNH offers comprehensive support to care leavers, including their basic needs, education, health, livelihood, and counselling. TLNH also collaborates with RCIs, social services, and other agencies to ensure smooth reintegration, reunification, and transition. TLNH also champions the rights and interests of caretakers and educates the public about their situation and challenges.

Sophea's story is one of the stories of significant change that shows the impact of TLNH. Sophea is a 22-year-old woman from Pouk district, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia. She has a young son and an injured husband. She lives with her husband's family, who rely on her father-in-law's income. Sophea had to quit school in grade 11 when she got pregnant, and she lived in a residential care institution for nine years because of poverty. She also struggled with isolation, depression, anxiety, and trauma from living in the RCI. She returned to her family in 2018, but she felt out of place. She lacked life skills, had poor communication with the community, and sometimes felt awkward with her family.

Sophea never let her difficulties stop her. She joined the Care Leaver Project, an initiative by This Life New Horizon (TLNH), which supports children and youth who have left RCIs. Through this project, she connected with other care leavers who could relate to her unique challenges and support her. She also got counselling, training, and basic needs support from the TLNH team and care leaver peer support. With TLNH's assistance, Sophea joined a vocational training course at a beauty salon and is well on track to be a qualified beautician. She hopes to have her own salon someday and support her family.

Sophea appreciates the opportunity and guidance that TLNH has offered her: "TLNH has been a great source of support for me and my family. They have given us food, other basic needs, counselling, and guidance. They have also invited me to attend meetings and trainings where I learned new skills and knowledge that I can use for my own future. I enjoyed sharing my experiences with other care leavers from different RCIs and learning from them. TLNH has helped me find a job and a vocational training course that suits my interests."

Sophea is a woman of incredible courage. She has overcome many hardships in her life, but she has never given up on her dreams. She is not only surviving; she is thriving. She speaks confidently and optimistically as she follows her goals and works hard to improve her situation and that of her family.

As a proud member of ACFID, we are committed to doing our part to support their stated mandate of "Strengthening Australia's Efforts to Address Gender Inequality." Among their recommendations is "closing the earnings gap between women and men," as this gap contributes to a reduction in "investments into families and slowing poverty reduction." Edith House currently has 18 girls enrolled in vocational training who are gaining invaluable income-generating skills. We are excited to see the program grow, empower more women, and contribute to the closing of this critical economic gap.



**25**  
Care leavers who received the training skills and education based on their needs



**178**  
Authorities who received training on RCI impact and prevention of child separation



**155**  
Community members who joined the campaign on RCI impact and family-based care promotion

## THIS LIFE WITHOUT BARS

This Life Without Bars (TLWB) is a program that works to ensure children in conflict with the law are able to access alternative measures to custodial sentences, also known as diversionary measures, where appropriate. The program provides social support, case management, legal aid, and advocacy services to children in conflict with the law and their families. TLWB also works with government and civil society partners to promote the implementation of the Law on Juvenile Justice and the use of alternative measures for the detention of children.

According to the Ministry of Justice, there were 1,021 children in prison in Cambodia as of December 2022. Most were detained for minor offences and faced long periods of pre-trial detention, poor living conditions, and limited access to education and health care. Moreover, imprisonment had negative impacts on their mental health, family relationships, and future prospects.

TLWB believes that imprisonment should be the last resort for children in conflict with the law. The program advocates for diversion and probation as alternatives to detention, which are more effective and humane ways of dealing with juvenile offenders. Diversion is a process that allows children to avoid formal prosecution and sentencing by agreeing to participate in a rehabilitation plan that may include counselling, education, vocational training, community service, or restitution. Probation is a form of non-custodial sentence that allows children to remain in their communities under the supervision of a social worker or a probation officer.

A story of significant change that illustrates the impact of TLWB is Sothea's. Sothea is a 17-year-old boy from a poor farming family with three younger brothers. His parents became worried when he started skipping school, staying out late, and acting aggressively. In September 2022, Sothea and three of his friends were arrested and charged with violence against members of the public. He spent 38 days in pre-trial detention before he was released on a diversion plan, thanks to the intervention of a This Life social worker. The diversion



plan allowed Sothea to resume his formal education while receiving social and counselling services. The program also helped Sothea's parents improve their parenting skills and communication with their son.

Sothea expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the judge, the social agent, and This Life for allowing him to reform himself. He said, "I will complete my high school education and hope to pursue a university degree in law in the future." Sothea's mother noticed a positive change in her son's behavior. She said, "My son stopped hanging out with his bad friends; he always informs me when he goes out; he studies hard and helps with the housework. I stopped using violence and instead used positive words to encourage him."

Sothea's story shows how TLWB can transform the lives of children and families affected by imprisonment. Providing an alternative to custodial sentencing enables children to stay in their communities, continue their education, and access opportunities for personal growth and development. By supporting families to cope with the challenges of having a parent or a child in prison, TLWB strengthens family bonds and reduces the risk of family separation. By advocating for the rights and interests of children in conflict with the law, TLWB contributes to a more humane and effective juvenile justice system in Cambodia.



**52**  
Number of juveniles in conflict with the law received support during the sentencing process.



**35**  
Juveniles in conflict with the law who received full support during diversion plan implementation



**651**  
Police and commune leaders who received training on juvenile justice, law, and child protection

## THIS LIFE REIMAGINING CARE

This Life Reimagining Care (TLRC) program aims to reduce the number of children living in residential care institutions (RCIs) and promote family-based care and community learning centres. TLRC provides support to RCIs that want to transform their programs into non-residential services for children and families. TLRC also works with children, families, and communities to facilitate reintegration, reunification, and access to education and other services.

One of the stories of significant change that illustrates the impact of TLRC is the story of Savong Organization Cambodia (SOC), a community learning centre organisation in Siem Reap province. SOC started as an education centre that provided informal education to children in the community. In 2008, SOC expanded its program to five RCIs that provided care for vulnerable children. In 2018, SOC merged all RCIs into one, which supported 14 children and youth in 2022.

Extensive research and comprehensive discussions with a range of stakeholders made it clear that residential care is not the best option for children and youth. These children are more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation than their counterparts in family-based care. Furthermore, growing up in residential institutions can have detrimental effects on a child's health and development. Studies indicate a higher prevalence of health issues and developmental delays among children in institutional care. The lack of individualised care and limited opportunities for nurturing relationships can hinder their overall well-being.

Another notable concern is the difficulty these children face in transitioning into adulthood and succeeding after leaving the institution. The lack of a supportive family environment during their formative years can impact their emotional and social development, making it challenging for them to integrate into society and pursue meaningful opportunities later in life. SOC wanted to help them reunite with their families and access education and other services in their own communities.

Our program, TLRC, organised a range of activities and training sessions. SOC actively participated in all of them, gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of family-based care, the process of reintegrating children and youths, and facilitating successful transitions. Additionally, SOC discovered numerous benefits associated with community learning centres, such as providing informal education and essential services to children and families residing within the community.

With TLRC's assistance, SOC successfully transformed its existing residential care program into a dynamic community learning center. They worked collaboratively to identify and prepare appropriate placements for the 14 children and youths formerly residing in their facility. Furthermore, SOC networked and joined forces with the Social Work Network in Siem Reap province to strengthen their awareness of the various social services offered by many NGOs. They developed an innovative educational program that welcomed an impressive enrolment of around 200 students, offering informal education in kindergarten, English, and computer classes.

Additionally, SOC implemented a community library, further widening the resources available to their students. The community demonstrated its support of SOC's program through generous contributions. SOC remained committed to supporting reunified children and youths, offering ongoing support through scholarship programs and a range of additional services.

This change is significant because it shows how This Life worked with a community organisation, SOC, to improve the lives of the children and youths living in their centre and how they expanded their services to the community. SOC helped the children and youths reunite with their families and access education and other services in their communities. SOC also provided informal education and other services to more children and families in the community.



	<p><b>21</b> Families who received emergency support</p>		<p><b>117</b> Beneficiaries receiving family preservation and support services</p>		<p><b>8</b> Families who received support to set up small business</p>
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## EDITH HOUSE

Edith House is a program that provides assistance to young people who are struggling with issues such as disengaging from their education, being involved in criminal activity, or living in poverty. In addition to providing assistance with job placement and training for personal development, it also provides vocational training and skill development in areas such as hairdressing, air conditioning unit repair, beauty salons, and motorcycle maintenance. Additionally, it works in conjunction with other organisations and programs, such as the Department of Labour and Vocational Training and the LEAP (Livelihood Enhancement Association of the Poor), in order to expand the range of options and services that are available to students who come from underprivileged homes.

One of the stories of significant change that demonstrates the impact of Edith House is Chokchey's story. Chokchey lived with his elderly grandmother and two siblings after his parents' divorce. His family was pushed to the brink of extreme poverty when his father abandoned them, and his mother did all she could to provide for the family. Despite his mother's valiant efforts, the family struggled to survive. Still, Chokchey had school, which served not only as an escape from his dire home life but also as a source of hope that education would open doors for him, which would enable him to help his family.

However, that all changed when the COVID-19 pandemic began. His mother lost her job when the lockdowns started. Chokchey had to stop studying because he had no smartphone for online classes. He said, "I felt unhappy and hopeless about my future. We struggled to survive daily, and food was more important than school."

Things got better when the pandemic ended; Chokchey's mother remarried and brought him to live with her and her new husband in Siem Reap Province. But he said, "I didn't know what to do with my life in the new place, and I saw many problems, such as alcoholism, gambling, drug abuse, and violence." With his stepfather's help, Chokchey joined a project called LEAP, which referred him to This Life Vocational Training Centre in 2022 based on his interest in learning new skills.

Chokchey learned how to repair motorbikes from This Life trainers for six months and worked with a private-sector shop we are partnered with. He also got personal development training in various topics such as drug use consequences, communication, anger management and job preparation before receiving an official certificate from the Department of Labour and Vocational Training.

"Now, I run my own business in my village, with This Life's support and some capital from my family. I earn money daily to help my family here and send some to my elderly grandmother, who takes care of my two siblings in Battambang Province. What I am most proud of in my life is that I have a valuable skill that helps me improve myself and my family. Moreover, I can support my two siblings to continue their education until they finish."

Chokchey's story shows how Edith House can help young people overcome challenges and achieve their goals. He had many difficulties in his life, such as poverty, family separation, dropping out of school, and a lack of opportunities. But he did not give up on his dreams. Chokchey's story inspires anyone who wants to create a better future for themselves and their loved ones.



**14**  
Number of participants supported to set up their own business



**30**  
Number of participants employed after program completion



**23**  
Number of participants who completed the program

## THIS LIFE WITHOUT VIOLENCE

This Life Without Violence (TLWV) is a program that aims to prevent and reduce violence against women and children in Cambodia, especially in rural areas. The program works alongside communities to identify their challenges and co-design solutions to develop the structures and services they need. The program takes a multi-faceted approach that involves:

- » Using women's meetings and support groups to share valuable information on the law and human rights
- » Educating local authorities, including the police and commune leaders, on how to implement the law and support women and children facing violence
- » Providing case management, counselling, and intervention services to directly address violent behaviour within the household
- » Offering other essential assistance, such as food and education support, during COVID-19 or other crises

The program is based on the principle of community-driven dialogue, which means that the program listens to the voices of the people who are affected by violence and empowers them to take action for positive change. The program also collaborates with other organisations and the Ministry of Women's Affairs to create an increasing pool of resources and awareness to fight gender-based violence in Cambodia.

One of the stories of significant change that illustrates the impact of the program is the story of Srey Leak, a 38-year-old woman who lives in a small town 60 km north-west of Siem Reap Province. Her situation was among the most complex. Srey Leak had faced all four types of violence: sexual, economic, physical, and mental, without help or other support from anyone else. Her husband was abusive, jealous, and an alcoholic. He would hit her, destroy things in the house, scold her, complain about everything, and criticise her and their children. Srey Leak felt hopeless, depressed, and suicidal. She could not do anything to support her family's or their children's education.

This Life Without Violence stepped in, offering comprehensive support that included counselling and intervention to directly address violent behaviour within the household. This Life also provided other essential assistance to help meet basic family needs in terms of food and education costs.

After an intervention by TLWV, the family experienced a transformation. Srey Leak believed that her husband could be rehabilitated and the marriage salvaged. After TLWV did extensive work with her husband, Srey Leak decided to give him another chance. Our team keeps close contact with her and is quite pleased with the feedback so far. Srey Leak says, "things are better, and there is no serious violence or fighting with my husband anymore. He helps me with household chores, and now I have more time and feel better able to care about my children and their studies." Her husband also said, "I now can manage my anger; when I am angry, I focus on my work and try to be more helpful around the house."

Likewise, Srey Leak's daughter said, "I don't see my parents fighting or cursing; they get along now. Also, my mum cares about my schooling now, which means a lot to me. I'm much happier and want to keep studying so that I can become a policewoman in the future."

Srey Leak is also more active in the community, participating in workshops around domestic violence and lending support to those who are in the same kind of situation she was in.

As Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) members, we share in their commitment to promote gender equality and end violence against women and girls. ACFID believes gender equality is a human right and a precondition for sustainable development. TLWV has made great strides in this regard, providing holistic support within communities, working with leaders and policymakers, and driving comprehensive advocacy efforts to tackle harmful cultural norms and practices.



	<p><b>89</b> Family members received support through case management work</p>		<p><b>326</b> Local leaders trained</p>		<p><b>1,058</b> Community members attending focal and awareness raising events</p>
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## THIS LIFE IN SCHOOLS

This Life In Schools (TLIS) is a program that strives to enhance the quality of education and access for children and youth in rural Cambodia. TLIS collaborates with schools, local authorities, and communities to plan and implement school development projects, improve school governance and management, enrich teaching and learning methods, and foster community involvement and support.

One of the stories of significant change that illustrates the impact of the program is that of ChanOn, a 38-year-old woman who serves as a School Management Committee (SMC) member and a commune chief. She has been involved with TLIS for three years, regularly attending workshops offered by the program.

ChanOn shared that being an SMC member of the school has opened up many opportunities for her to learn from the TLIS program. She said she received training and exchange visits from TLIS on topics such as school development plan design, fundraising and proposal writing, and facilitation skills.

As a result, she has improved her skills and performance as an SMC member significantly. For instance, she can now organise fundraising activities more effectively and efficiently. She said, "I can now engage more stakeholders and community members to participate in fundraising activities to support the school's development because they have a better understanding of the school's needs through their involvement in SDP design." She also said that her relationship with the local authorities, the schools, and the community has been strengthened through more frequent training and meetings.

She further reflected that during the two exchange visits in three years, she gained a lot of new insights and strategies on school development, school organisation, and fundraising techniques by sharing them with other schools. She expressed her gratitude to the program for helping her enhance her work skills, build her capacity, advance her position, and contribute to lasting change at the school.

As strong believers in the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), we are particularly proud of ChanOn's growth. Gender equality, the enhancement of women's leadership in South and East Asia, boosting women's and girls' access to education, and greater inclusion of women in decision-making bodies are just some of the things This Life is actively working towards. The support and elevation of women like ChanOn, who hold positions of authority, is essential to meeting some of these goals. We are excited to see the impact she makes, and we believe she is an inspiring role model for her community.

ChanOn's story demonstrates how TLIS can empower SMC members to support their schools effectively. She overcame many challenges in her life, such as poverty, family separation, and a lack of opportunities. However, she did not give up on her dreams. She joined TLIS and learned how to plan and implement school development projects, how to raise funds and write proposals, and how to facilitate meetings and workshops. She also received vital support from TLIS and other partners who helped her with her personal development and leadership. Through these experiences, ChanOn developed confidence and skills that enabled her to become a commune chief and a successful SMC member. She also remained committed to her education and to helping her school and community. ChanOn's story inspires anyone who wants to create a better future for themselves and their loved ones.



**\$50,000+**  
\$ raised by school communities for school development



**3,516**  
Children grades 7-9 benefitting from community-led school development



**96.31%**  
Grade 9 students at partner schools who passed their final exams to continue on to High School

## THIS LIFE WITH CHOICES

This Life With Choices (TLWC) is a program that helps young people in rural areas overcome substance use and make positive choices for their lives. TLWC works with families, communities, schools, and other stakeholders to create a supportive environment for young people to learn new skills, access counselling, and connect with peers.

The following story is a powerful example of how TLWC transformed the life of a Nimol (pseudonym) who fell into a world of addiction, crime, and exploitation due to use at home and extreme poverty. Nimol is the oldest child in a family of five. His parents are struggling farmers with inconsistent incomes. This meant that the family often did not have enough food to eat. Worse still, his mother struggled with alcoholism, was often neglectful of the family, and was physically abusive towards his father. Nimol fell behind in school, often having to care for his siblings when his parents were away or when the violence between them was particularly bad.

With no support or guidance, he dropped out of school and moved to Phnom Penh with hopes of earning enough money to support his family and keep his siblings in school. He found work as a car cleaner, and despite working long hours, he barely had enough to eat. He also struggled mentally; life in a major city was foreign to him, and he was uncomfortable with his living situation. The other car cleaners he lived with used drugs, and they eventually coaxed him into joining them, convincing him that they would make him stronger, happier, less anxious and less hungry. He gave in and quite quickly became addicted. Soon, 70% of his \$150 salary went to paying for drugs.

Eventually, his parents convinced him to return home, angry that he was no longer sending money home but also scared for his safety. Unfortunately, a drug trafficker got a hold of him, giving him drugs in exchange for transporting them. He wasn't even aware that this was against the law. When his parents heard that he was involved with a drug trafficker, they physically assaulted him, hoping it would change his

behaviour. It didn't. He ran away from home and went to live with a friend who was involved in gang activity, smoking, drug use and excessive drinking. His parents tried to get him to come home, but he steadfastly refused, citing the stress of the domestic violence issues in the house.

However, commune members heard about the situation, and together with comprehensive help from This Life staff, things finally started to turn around. This Life worked closely with Nimol, informing them about the dangers of drug use. We also worked closely with his parents, providing extensive counselling and case management. After careful consideration, Nimol returned home. Commune leaders and This Life are pleased with the progress made within the family.

It was also important that Nimol find purpose. TLWC introduced him to Edith House, our vocational training and education centre. He was excited about the possibilities and eventually joined the motor bike repair class. He is determined to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone on to start their own businesses. The program gave him not only stability and purpose but also a healthy community to be a part of. Edith House connected him to others who struggle with addiction, and he receives peer support from them. In addition to support from drug addiction specialists, Edith House also facilitates sports and provides an opportunity for students to develop soft skills.

Drugs continue to be a significant problem in the country. Nimol's story illustrates the power of This Life With Choices. Thanks to the program's early interventions and holistic approach, Nimol is on track to be a productive member of his community and a potential role model for other young people.



406

School students who participated in drug awareness programs



64

Local authorities who joined drug awareness programs



27

One-to-one drug and alcohol focused sessions with juveniles



## MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) is a system that helps This Life track progress, make adjustments, discover unplanned effects, judge the impact, and be accountable to the stakeholders of its programs. MEAL is also a way to learn from program experience and knowledge, as well as industry good practices, to continually improve the quality of its work and the benefit it provides to the people it serves.

In its annual report, This Life has chosen the theme of stories of significant change and has told some powerful stories from some of its beneficiaries. These stories illustrate how This Life's programs have made a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities in Cambodia. They also show how MEAL is integral to the delivery of these programs, as it enables This Life to measure the outcomes and impacts of its interventions, to collect feedback and any concerns from the participants and other community members, and to use the evidence and learning to inform decision-making and adaptation.

MEAL plays a crucial role in all of these programs, helping This Life monitor the number of children who are separated from their families, evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the family reintegration process, ensure accountability to our beneficiaries and the community, and provide a framework to learn from the challenges and successes of various initiatives.

MEAL is essential for monitoring the changes in the community's social and economic indicators, evaluating the relevance and coherence of community-led solutions, ensuring accountability to community members and partners, and learning from the best practices and innovations of the community development approach.

Ultimately, MEAL's desired outcomes are:

- » Programs achieve or exceed stated indicator targets, in turn contributing to the achievement of planned programs objectives and goals, and program impact is demonstrated to donors.

- » High-quality reports are produced internally in a consistent and timely manner across all This Life programs and used to generate periodic donor reports in response to individual donor requirements.
- » Monitoring and evaluation findings are consistently used to improve the design of existing programs and to design new programs and research projects.
- » Community stakeholders and partners have opportunities to provide feedback on and inform This Life's work.

*“The programs depend on the ILE program to monitor and guide their implementation to be on track. The ILE team provides the program with the findings and recommendations based on their study and evaluation of the program. The program can use this information to decide whether it should keep going or change its work plans and improve its implementation. As a result, the program has no gaps between its plan and implementation.”*

*Likean On, MEAL officer.*



9

Dashboard established by ILE program for This Life



9

Projects across This Life are being supported by ILE program



432

Monitoring activities undertaken across the program of This Life

## RESEARCH AND POLICY

At This Life, we understand the importance of research and policy in driving positive change and promoting innovation in society. That's why we have established a dedicated research and policy program that focuses on conducting high-quality and ethically sound research to inform evidence-based policies and programs.

Our research encompasses a wide range of topics that directly impact the lives of children and families in Cambodia. We delve into areas such as education, domestic violence, women in prison, children in conflict with the law, nutrition, and care reform, among others. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of these issues, we employ both quantitative and qualitative methods, collecting and analysing data from a variety of sources. These sources include communities, partner agencies, government reports, academic journals, and international organisations. By doing so, we are able to gain insights into the needs and challenges faced by the people we work with while also identifying best practices and effective solutions to address these issues.

One of our most notable accomplishments in the past year was the publication of a report titled "Coalition for Good Schools: Preventing School-Based Violence Against Children in Southern Asia." This report was commissioned by the Coalition for Good Schools, a global network of civil society organisations advocating for quality education for all children. It provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of education in Asia, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for its improvement.

The report assessed the education systems of 15 countries in Asia, focusing on four key themes: access and equity, quality and learning outcomes, governance and accountability and innovation and technology.

The report shed light on the fact that although access to education has improved in Asia, numerous inequalities and barriers persist, hindering some children from receiving a quality education. It underscored the need to enhance the quality and relevance of education, as well as the governance and accountability aspects of education systems. Drawing upon evidence and best practices, the report concluded with recommendations aimed at enhancing education in Asia.

Recognised for its comprehensive and evidence-based analysis, the report received acclaim from the Coalition for Good Schools and other partners. Furthermore, it served as a valuable resource that informed our own programs and advocacy initiatives concerning education.

Another significant research endeavour we conducted was Barriers to accessing alternatives to incarceration for people who use drugs in Cambodia during and after COVID-19. The International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) generously provided funding for the study, and we appreciate their assistance in raising awareness of this important issue.

This study employed a mixed-methods approach that combined a desk review of the relevant literature and primary data collection. The desk review examined Cambodia's legal and policy framework on drug control, the code of criminal procedure, and Cambodia's juvenile justice law. The primary data collection involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with the following participants:

- » Formerly incarcerated women who served time in prison, some of whom were pregnant or had small children with them
- » Former drug users, both male and female, who had spent time in the drug rehabilitation centre.
- » Police officers from the drug squad are in charge of implementing the drug law
- » A judge who has presided over drug-related cases
- » This Life program officers are involved with enforcing and supporting the prison-related programs

Much of our research explores both the scalability and replicability of programs and research across Cambodia. We are confident that our programs can be successfully expanded across Cambodia.

We take immense pride in our research and policy work and the contributions it makes to our mission and vision. Moving forward, we are committed to carrying out rigorous and ethically sound research that supports evidence-based policies and programs benefiting the well-being of children and families in Cambodia.



## CAPACITY & PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This Life's Capacity & Partnership Development (C&PD) program supports other organisations in the development sector to enhance their organisational performance and achieve their goals. Through this program, we offer tailored training, coaching, mentoring, and consultancy services to our partners based on their needs and priorities. We also facilitate networking and collaboration among different sector actors to foster learning and innovation. In all our work, we uphold our values of listening to all voices, collaborating with all stakeholders, acting with integrity and accountability, and balancing work and well-being.

For the past several years, This Life has stayed committed to fostering collaboration and impact and has nurtured a relationship with the GHR Foundation and its seven Cambodian grantees. This fertile ground, ripe with understanding and experience, became the seedbed for what blossomed into "Seeds of Hope Blossoming: A Story of Transformation in Cambodia's Child Protection and Child Welfare."

The partnership bloomed with an equal and respectful embrace, a principle This Life champions through its C&PD program. Open dialogue, a foundation of trust, became the fertile soil where collaboration blossomed. No longer siloed, the GHR NGO partners shared their successes and struggles, building a mutual support network. Here, mistakes became stepping stones, and vulnerabilities morphed into strengths, a testament to the shared learning ethos C&PD instills.

The GHR funding model, as flexible as the Mekong's currents, adapted to the ever-changing needs of Cambodia's children, a hallmark of its NGO partners' focus on responsive and impactful interventions. It empowered the partners to be agile and responsive, their services reaching even the most remote corners. Together, the partners envisioned a future where funding would be a shared bounty, nourishing individual projects and a collective vision for safer Cambodian children. This vision resonates deeply with This Life's commitment to systemic change.

Learning became a vibrant tapestry, woven from shared experiences and diverse expertise, a central tenet of This Life's C&PD approach. Capacity-building workshops, like sunbeams piercing the bamboo, illuminated new skills and knowledge. The partners, once solitary islands, now learned from each other's strengths, their collaboration a lighthouse guiding the way towards a brighter future for Cambodian children, mirroring This Life's dedication to fostering knowledge exchange and collaborative learning.

The partners embarked on a journey of shared capacity-building, a core element of This Life's C&PD program. Training programs, like fertile fields, nurtured staff skills, empowering them to become champions for children's rights. Co-case management, a sturdy bridge, connected them with government agencies, building a more robust ecosystem of protection, reflecting This Life's dedication to fostering collaboration across sectors. But the journey was only complete with GHR's hand in theirs. The partners craved more engagement, more field visits, a more substantial presence in the coming regional conference, a voice echoing their shared advocacy.

The story of the GHR Foundation partnership, nurtured by This Life's C&PD program, is still being written, its pages filled with ink still drying. Yet, one thing is clear: seven threads, once scattered, have woven themselves into a vibrant tapestry of hope. With every shared challenge overcome, every collaborative triumph celebrated, the seeds of transformation have been sown, promising a future where Cambodia's children blossom under a sky woven from trust, collaboration, and unwavering commitment, a testament to the enduring impact of This Life's C&PD program.



	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Progress reports and dashboards for NGO partners</p>		<p><b>30</b></p> <p>Participants attended the NGO partners capacity development activities</p>		<p><b>7</b></p> <p>NGO partners who attended quarterly meetings</p>
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## SHARED SERVICES

The Shared Services team is an indispensable part of This Life. The team supports the organisation in delivering its services to the local communities in Cambodia, covering areas such as education, justice, community development, and social enterprise. The team also provides the essential functions, standards, and governance capabilities that enable This Life to operate as a legal and functional organisation. The Shared Services team ensures that our programs operate cohesively, efficiently, and effectively while meeting our obligations to the communities we serve and the regulatory bodies we are signed onto. The Shared Services team is the backbone of This Life and enables us to achieve our mission and vision.

The Shared Services team consists of three sections: finance, administration, and human resources. The team serves both the organisation and its stakeholders. Within the organisation, the team serves the project teams, the management, and the board of directors. The team provides financial, logistical, operational, and strategic support to ensure the organisation's smooth, efficient, and effective functioning and adheres to appropriate and progressive policies and standards that govern the organisation's activities and staff. Outside the organisation, the team serves various stakeholders, such as the donors, the partners, the government, and the public. The Shared Services team provides financial reports, audits, contracts, procurement, and legal advice to ensure the organisation's reputation, credibility, and accountability. It also shares the organisation's vision, mission, values, and achievements with external stakeholders.

The Shared Services team also supports the interns, external volunteers who join the organisation as part of the internship program. The internship program is a two-year program for high school graduates, including young women, from disadvantaged backgrounds who want to pursue their university education in a major of their choice. The interns work at This Life in the department that matches their major, where they learn from professionals and mentors. They also receive financial support from This Life to continue their studies at the university. The internship program helps the interns gain practical skills and experience, academic achievement, employment opportunities, and leadership development.

The Internship Program also acknowledges the interns who have completed or are currently participating in the program. The most recent intern was Sorn Chamroeun, who joined with additional support from PEPY Empowering Youth, a local non-profit and NGO providing personal and professional development training to rural youth in Siem Reap. Chamroeun is bright and brought tremendous value to This Life during his time here, and This Life was pleased to help mentor and upskill him as he works towards his dream of becoming an IT teacher.

The current interns are Visal Lorn, who works in HR, and Puthary Ven, who works in finance. They are both diligent and enthusiastic, and This Life values their presence and input. This Life also acknowledges the efforts of Somaly, who was an intern under PEPY and proved to be extremely helpful and efficient in supporting the admin work in the Edith House program.

“ Our team provides financial, logistical, operational, and strategic support to ensure the organisation's smooth, efficient, and effective functioning. As This Life's impact grows, we are tasked with ensuring that we adhere to appropriate and progressive policies and standards that govern the organisation's activities and staff.”

*Dhanita Potti, Director of Shared Services*



## THE AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM

The Australian Volunteers Program plays a crucial role in strengthening the ties between Australia and its neighbouring countries, particularly in the Pacific region. The program facilitates volunteer exchanges, allowing Australians to share their expertise with their Pacific counterparts and vice versa. This exchange of knowledge and experience not only enhances the capabilities and capacities of local organisations but also fosters mutual understanding and cultural exchange among the people involved.

This Life is one of the proud partners of the Australian Volunteers Program, a remarkable initiative by the Australian Government. For over 15 years, the program has been instrumental in supporting our work in Cambodia, where we strive to create positive change. Our founder, Billy Gorter, received support from the Australian Volunteer Program. He was fortunate enough to find a volunteer placement that allowed him to establish This Life as the organisation it is today. Since then, the AVP has provided us with amazing volunteers who have contributed immensely to our strategic and operational development, helping us achieve our vision and mission.

Most recently, we were fortunate to have Susan Black and Craig Arnoldt join our team as volunteers over the past year. Susan Black is a seasoned professional with over two decades of experience in development, nonprofit governance, and social enterprise. She has been a valuable advisor and mentor to our senior management team, helping us revamp many of our processes and systems and secure grants from various donors. She also spearheaded our mid-term review, giving us a chance to reaffirm our commitment, identify areas for improvement, and get valuable feedback from donors and stakeholders.

Craig Arnoldt is an IT specialist with over 10 years of experience across the nonprofit, public, financial and educational sectors. A long-term resident of Cambodia, he has been a key player in helping us integrate emerging technologies and software into our work, such as cloud computing, data analysis, and digital security. He has also helped us streamline many of our processes and workflows and put systems and procedures in place to improve quality and efficiency. As innovation is something This Life continues to thrive for, his assistance on the technology side of our operations was incredibly helpful.

We are immensely grateful to Susan and Craig for their dedication and generosity. They have not only shared their skills and knowledge with us, but also their passion and enthusiasm. They have become part of our family and our community. We are also grateful to the Australian Volunteers Program for making this possible. The program has been a reliable and supportive partner for us, providing us with guidance, resources, and opportunities.

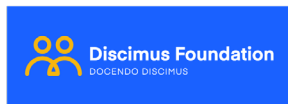
We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Australian Volunteers Program in the future, as we value their support and collaboration. We believe that this partnership is not only beneficial for us and our beneficiaries but also for Australia and Cambodia as a whole, as it strengthens our ties and friendship. We believe that this partnership is a powerful example of how people can work together across borders and cultures to create positive change in the world, for the present and the future.



## MESSAGE TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

We are grateful to our funders and donors for their generous support of This Life's mission to listen to, engage with, and advocate side by side with people to find their own solutions to complex social challenges. Your contributions have made possible the stories of significant change that we share in this report. These stories showcase the impact of our programs on the lives of children, families, and communities in Cambodia.

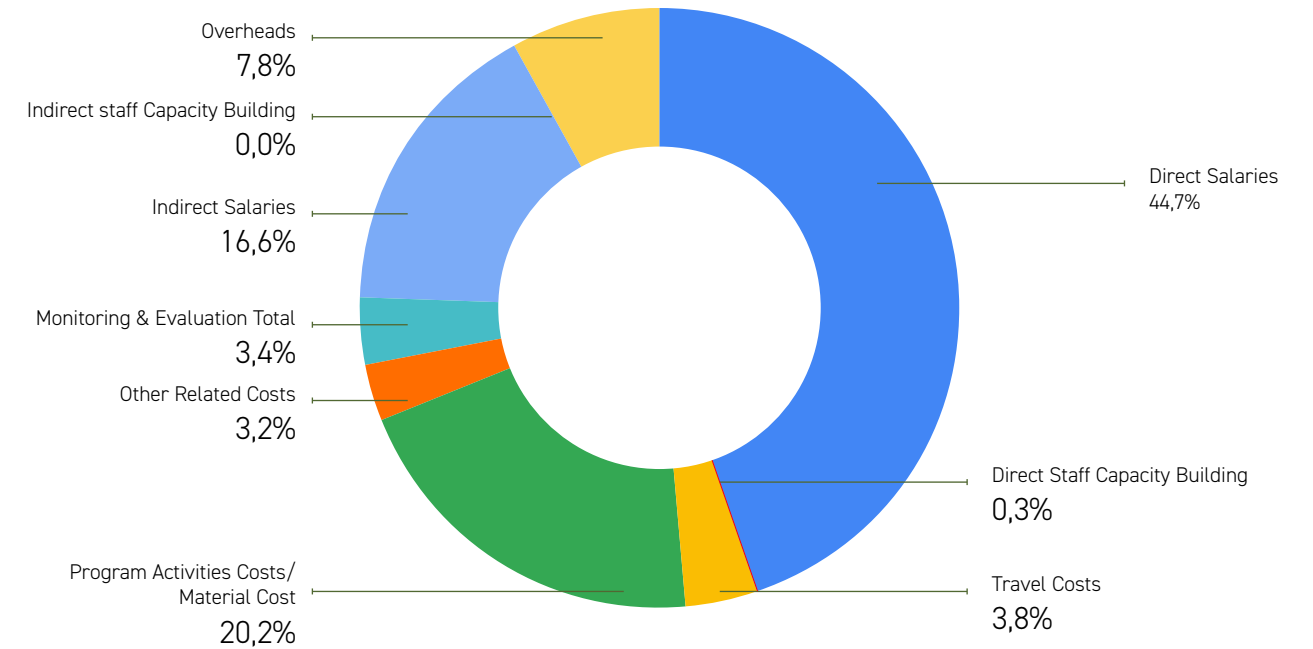
They also demonstrate the power of resilience, courage, second chances, and the impact that can be made when the most vulnerable amongst us are given opportunity and a little support. Thank you for being part of This Life's journey and vision. Together, we can create a more just and equitable future for everyone.



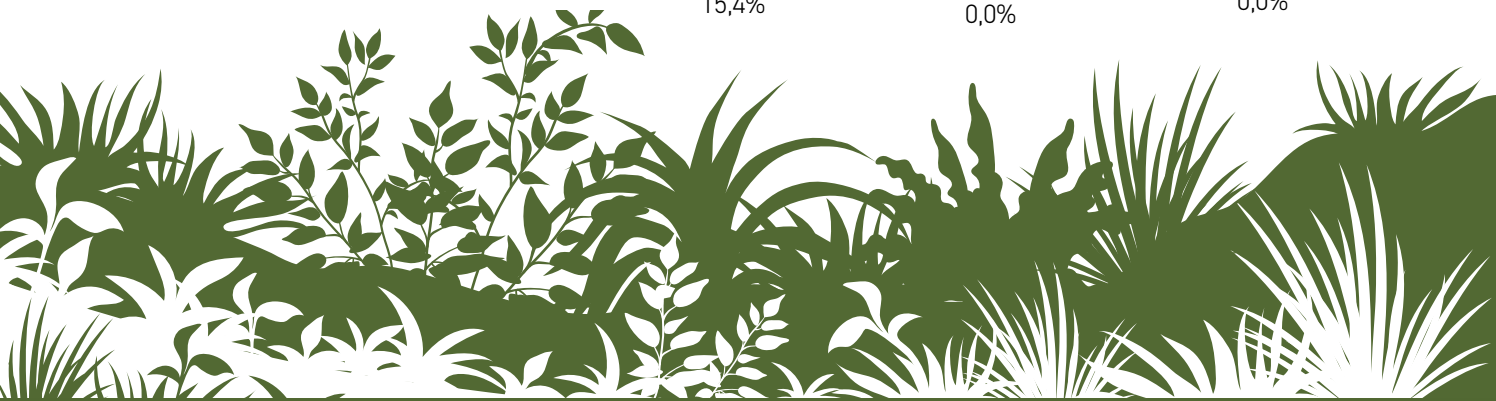
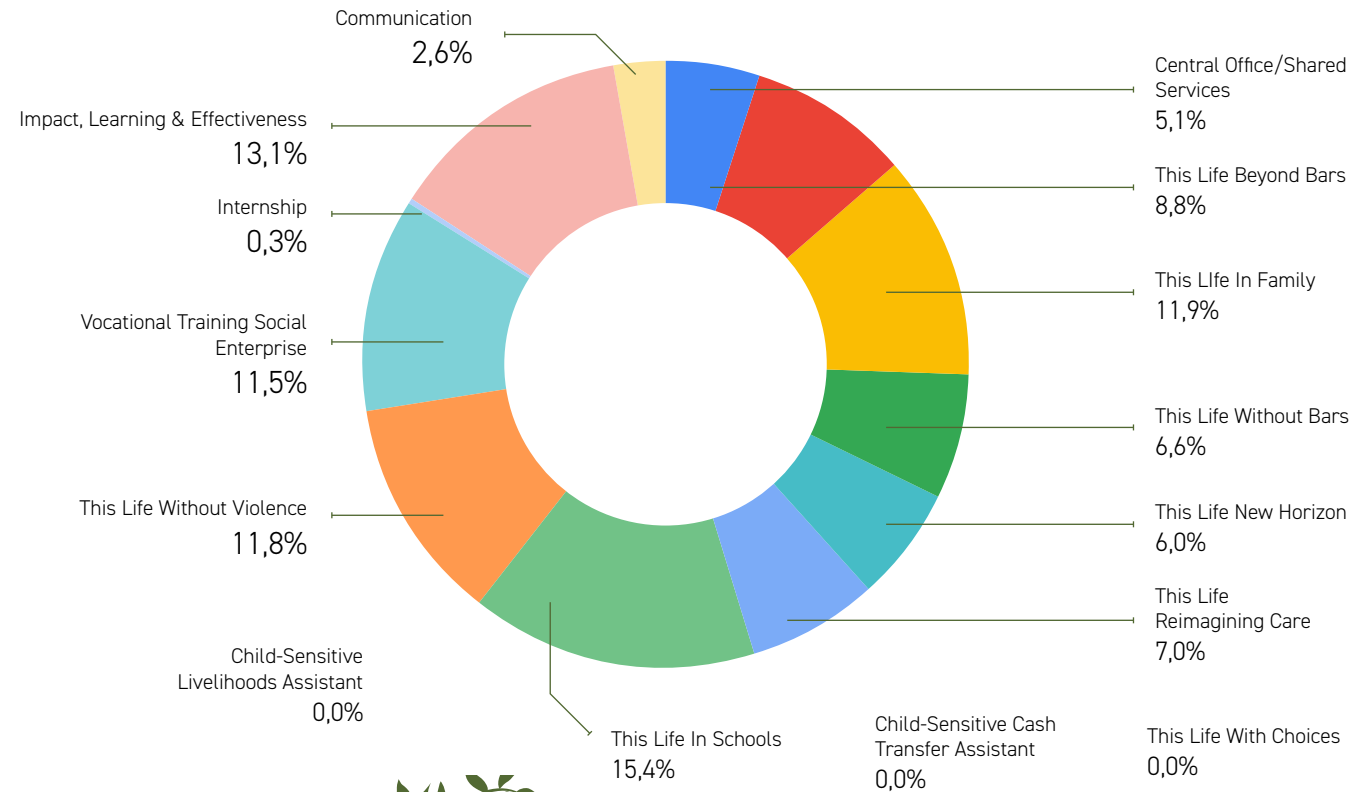
## FINANCIALS

For the Year Ended 31 August 2023						
	2023			2022		
	AUD	USD	KHR'000	AUD	USD	KHR'000
<b>Support and Revenue</b>						
Grant Income	1.204.545	781.147	3.214.420	1.807.909	1.247.819	5.083.615
Monetary Donations And Gifts	97.426	63.181	259.990	22.534	15.553	63.363
Monitoring & Evaluation	75.840	49.182	202.384	99.249	68.502	279.077
Consulting Service Income	0	0	0	11.663	8.050	32.796
Motor Doctor Income	10.703	6.941	28.562	14.050	9.697	39.506
Other Income	161.116	104.484	429.952	55.784	38.502	156.857
Income Released From Capital Grants Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Support And Revenue</b>	<b>1.549.630</b>	<b>1.004.935</b>	<b>4.135.308</b>	<b>2.011.189</b>	<b>1.388.123</b>	<b>5.655.214</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Central Office And Core Costs	154.183	134.219	552.310	154.335	106.523	433.975
Programs	1.826.963	1.150.554	4.734.529	1.990.963	1.374.163	5.598.340
<b>Surplus Of Revenue Over Expenditure</b>	<b>(431.516)</b>	<b>(279.838)</b>	<b>(1.151.531)</b>	<b>(134.109)</b>	<b>(92.563)</b>	<b>(377.101)</b>
<b>Other Comprehensive Income</b>						
Foreign Currency Translation	61.722	0	0	7.574	0	0
<b>Other Comprehensive Income For The Year</b>	<b>61.722</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7.574</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income For The Year</b>	<b>(369.794)</b>	<b>(279.838)</b>	<b>(1.151.531)</b>	<b>(126.535)</b>	<b>(92.563)</b>	<b>(377.101)</b>

## SUMMARY BY BUDGET ITEMS



## SUMMARY BY PROGRAM





## COMPLIANCE & REGULATIONS

This Life follows the highest standards of quality, transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in our work. We comply with the requirements of various regulators and standards in both Australian and Cambodia. These include:



**The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)**, which oversees the registration, governance, reporting, and conduct of charities in Australia. This Life is an ACNC registered charity. [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)



**The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)**, which sets out the code of conduct for good practice in international development. This Life is a signatory and an Interim Full Member of ACFID and we are committed to working with transparency, accountability, and integrity with the ACFID Code of Conduct. For further information on the Code, please visit [www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au).



**The Australian Taxation Office (ATO):** The ATO recognises This Life with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, which means that donations to This Life are tax-deductible. [www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit](http://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit)



**The Cambodian General Department of Taxation (GDT)**, which administers the tax laws and regulations in Cambodia. This Life is registered with the GDT under the name of This Life Cambodia. [www.tax.gov.kh](http://www.tax.gov.kh)



**The Accounting and Auditing Regulator (ACAR)**, which regulates the accounting and auditing profession and ensures the quality and reliability of financial information in Cambodia. This Life is registered as This Life Cambodia and is compliant with ACAR requirements. [www.acar.gov.kh/](http://www.acar.gov.kh/)



**Governance And Professional Practice (GPP):** The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) launched the NGO Governance & Professional Practice (GPP) program in 2004 to improve the quality and accountability of NGOs in Cambodia. The GPP sets out standards and guidelines for good governance and management of NGOs. [www.ccc-cambodia.org/en](http://www.ccc-cambodia.org/en)

## OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

As we look ahead, we are committed to upholding the ideals and aspirations of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), of which we are proud members.

women and girls as agents of change. We embrace innovation and adaptability as we navigate the ever-evolving needs and contexts of the communities we serve, and we continuously learn from our feedback and failures.

We are grateful for the support and partnership of our current funders and donors, and we are determined to diversify our funding sources to ensure our financial sustainability. We are also dedicated to expanding our reach and influence across Cambodia, scaling up and replicating our successful programs, and engaging with relevant stakeholders at all levels.

We are confident that our ongoing collaboration and commitment to meaningful change will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of children, families, and communities in Cambodia. Together, we can build a better world, one community at a time, and we are excited to continue this journey with our implementing partners and supporters.

Our priority is to promote gender equality, both within our organisation and through our programs, and to empower

Thank you for your trust and commitment to our vision.



## AUDIT REPORT



### This Life Cambodia Incorporated

#### Board's Declaration

The Board of This Life Cambodia Incorporated declares that in the Board's opinion:

(a) there are reasonable ground to believe that This Life Cambodia Incorporated is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payables;

(b) the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements give true and fair view of the state of affairs of This Life Cambodia Incorporated as at 31 August 2023 and the true and fair view of all income and expenditure of This Life Cambodia Incorporated for the financial year ended 31 August 2023;

(c) the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012 and the Australian Accounting Standards AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements; and

(d) This Life Cambodia Incorporated has exercised essential internal controls, which are adequate, appropriate, and effective in accounting for all income earned and expenditure incurred for the financial year ended 31 August 2023.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60-45(3)(b) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Act 2012 and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013 and full adherence to Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Code Compliant Financial Statements.

Hayley Lee Allen

Chair

Date: 25 January 2024



#### Independent Audit Report to the Board of This Life Cambodia Inc.

#### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of This Life Cambodia Inc. (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 August 2023, the statement of profit or loss, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the declaration by the Board.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Association for the year ended 31 August 2023 is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW).

#### Basis for Unqualified Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards) (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting**

We draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the Association to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the Association and should not be distributed to or used by parties other than the Association. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Responsibilities of the Board and Those Charged with Governance**

The Board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW), and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

Tactical Super  
Deanne Firth FCA (52264)  
Dated this 24th day of January 2024

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**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER SUBDIVISION 60-40 OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS COMMISSION ACT 2012**

**TO THE BOARD OF THIS LIFE CAMBODIA INCORPORATED**

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year end 31 August 2023 there have been no contraventions of the auditor independence requirement as set out in any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Tactical Super  
Deanne Firth FCA (52264)  
Dated this 24th day of January 2024

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