Dear Colleagues, Partners, Donors and Fellow Stakeholders,

We’ve just flipped fiscal year 2013 – the year to mark APLE’s 10 year anniversary of operating the PROTECT project in Cambodia to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation. With this annual report, I’m proud to announce our 2013 achievements and our outlook for the year to come.

Throughout 2013, we made great progress in all aspects of our investigative, social, legal and training services with your incredible and thoughtful support. We hope that these successes will increase the trust in the legal system and aid in the victim’s healing and rehabilitation process. Sadly, we still saw many abuse cases in 2013, but our enhanced cooperation and trust with national and international law enforcement partners enabled us to track down those who harm children. We hope that the increased arrests and convictions have sent a strong deterrent message to potential offenders and have helped strengthen Cambodia’s justice system.

Noticeably, we were able to successfully handle several high-profile cases involving child trafficking. This was a significant accomplishment by APLE and we are excited to conduct a study in 2014 to determine the possibility of intensifying operations in this area. Further, PROTECT has reached a multitude of participants through awareness and training activities. We hope the dissemination of knowledge will both prevent abuse and increase the likelihood of abuse being reported.

In closing, I’d like to profoundly thank all of our staff for their sleepless, life-intimidating, hard work everyday over the past year in making all of the above possible. It’s through their efforts and dedication that we deliver and capitalise our services. I remain confident that we are taking the right actions to create a safe environment for children to grow and free from sexual abuse.

Thanks to all the donors, partners and stakeholders for your continued support, commitment to APLE, and trust in us. We respect it and, with resolve and perseverance, we will continue to succeed.

Samleang Seila
Country Director
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Fast Facts

2013 has been a busy and exciting year for APLE!

73 cases opened for investigations

40 suspects arrested in Cambodia

04 suspects arrested in their home countries

79 child victims (boys & girls) rescued

39 perpetrators convicted and sentenced

557 direct beneficiaries of legal support

603 direct beneficiaries of social support

61 training and awareness sessions conducted

3331 participants in training and awareness
The Khmer Rouge’s brutal genocide ended in 1979, when Vietnam invaded; Cambodia is still recovering today. Sexual activities with those under the age of consent (15) are a felony. However, corruption plagues many official bodies, particularly the judiciary, and civil distrust of authorities remains high. The court process is confusing and often cost-prohibitive. Lawyer fees range from $500 to $2000; GDP per capita (current USD) is $946. Some perpetrators evade prosecution by bribing victims to drop complaints, which has led to impunity for those who can afford it.

Additionally, Cambodian law enforcement investigates only once a complaint is filed. The use of grooming techniques, whereby the child and/or their family benefits materially in exchange for abuse, makes it unlikely a victim will complain. Offenders often use money and gifts to ensure silence and financial dependence. With 22.8% of Cambodians living on less than $1.25 per day, rampant poverty stems vulnerability. Sexual abuse, and sex education in general, is taboo. Many Cambodians do not believe boys can be abused; many more do not think abuse exists at all. Some recognise that abuse occurs, but rely too heavily on money from the offender to file a complaint or see abuse as ‘normal’.

Combine these factors with the rise of tourism and a dangerous environment is created in which child sex offenders can exploit the vulnerability of locals and bribe officials to avoid capture.

... the fight against child sexual abuse had begun.
Mission

To reduce all forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation through prevention, protection, promotion of prosecution, and partnership.

Our goal

To prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation through awareness raising, capacity building and dissemination of knowledge;

To protect child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation through rescues and provision of social and legal services and

To promote prosecution of child sex offenders by closely collaborating with law enforcement.

APLE is a non-governmental organisation [NGO] that has been active in Cambodia since 2003, when the PROTECT Project was launched in partnership with Spanish NGO Global Humanitaria. APLE is the only NGO specialized in street-based child sexual abuse and exploitation in Cambodia, making us invaluable experts in this field.

At present, APLE co-chairs the Law Enforcement Taskforce of the National Committee to Lead the Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Sexual and Labor Exploitation of Women and Children.

APLE’s strength lies on close collaboration with national and international police. In 2003, APLE signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. In 2010, APLE signed another MoU with the Ministry of Interior to formalize and strengthen cooperation with the Cambodian National Police.

Vision

Freedom from sexual abuse and exploitation for all children.
We have four interconnected departments.

Investigation Dept: Investigators monitor and respond to reports of suspicious behaviour, as well as liaise with foreign and national law enforcement.

Legal Dept: Lawyers provide pro bono legal aid to victims, vulnerable children, witnesses, and family members.

Social Dept: Social workers help with a wide range of needs: referrals, medical care; shelter; welfare support; and trauma counselling.

Training Dept: Trainers organize events to educate and train the public, community and authority population.
2013 was a busy year for our investigators who investigated a total of 323 cases involving 339 suspects. 73 cases were opened due to high-levels of suspicion and 32 of these were passed to the police. As a result, 17 foreigners and 22 Cambodians were arrested.

Key achievements include the successful lobbying to the FBI to deport an American man to face charges in the US and to the Cambodian Ministry of Interior to execute a deportation order against a convicted Korean-Australian child sex offender.

The increasing arrest rate shows political willingness to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation. We hope that the arrests have also sent a strong message to the undiscovered suspects in Cambodia and deterred them from abusing a child.

**Key Facts**

- **79** Victims rescued from abuse
- **73** Cases opened for investigations
- **44** Suspects arrested in Cambodia & their home countries

Suspicious behavior reported to APLE hotline
In August 2013, the FBI informed APLE that a wanted child sex offender from the U.S. was hiding in Cambodia and working for a Christian NGO. APLE managed to locate the suspect, who was living in a centre with 28 children. In December 2013, the suspect was arrested. After initial counselling, five boys testified that the suspect had sexually abused them.

For the five victims, the arrest ended the ongoing abuse. For the other 23 children, further harm and possible abuse was prevented. APLE’s social worker assessed the situation of all the children and referred them to appropriate safe shelters. The five victims still receive counselling and all want to stay in the shelter so that they can focus on their studies. Two of the victims announced that they want to become doctors later.

This case has proven to be one of the most difficult examples of grooming that APLE has dealt with in its history. All victims strongly felt that the perpetrator was a good man who only tried to help them. APLE is working with the victims to help them understand the sexual abuse and the grooming techniques the suspect used. Thanks to the FBI’s information and their active support in this case.

In 2014, APLE plans to conduct more than 30 trainings to educate a variety of groups about grooming techniques and changes in the modus operandi of offenders in order to combat this pervasive trend.

... freedom from sexual abuse and exploitation for all children.
Our legal team provided pre-, during, and post-trial assistance to 557 people affected by victimisation. As a result, the victims, families, vulnerable children, and witnesses were able to testify confidently. 20 Cambodians and 19 foreigners were convicted and ordered to pay between 250USD and 3000USD compensation. 4 deportation orders were given and 1 carried out in 2013.

We hope that these successes will increase the trust in the legal system and aid in the victim’s rehabilitation process. This will encourage others to report suspicious activities and abuse and in the long term strengthen the judicial system in Cambodia.

Key Facts

557
Beneficiaries of pro bono legal aid

206
Victims represented in court

39
Convictions

$250-$3000
Compensation awarded to the victims
Srey Ny was 17 years old when she was raped by a Chinese national, in December 2012. APLE provided immediate social and legal support to the Srey Ny and her family. Two days later, APLE accompanied her father and mother and two witnesses to the police station to testify. Srey Ny’s father filed a complaint against the suspect and asked APLE to represent his daughter in court.

The police arrested the suspect on 15 March 2013. APLE’s legal team prepared Srey Ny, her family, and the witnesses for the legal process that was about to come. Srey Ny expressed that she felt scared at first; however, APLE’s social and legal support helped her to feel brave enough to testify in court.

The suspect was found guilty and he was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment. In addition, he was ordered to pay Srey Ny 3000 USD compensation. The case is now at the Appeal Court due to the suspect’s appeal, but Srey Ny and her father were happy with the first court’s verdict and hope that the sentence will remain the same.
Social Support
Main Achievements

Our social workers provided counselling to 603 people affected by victimisation, including 79 new victims who were rescued in 2013. By counselling not only the victim, but also the family, APLE aims to improve the victim’s environment through material support and education. 257 family members received support in a push to ensure re-victimisation does not occur.

APLE also facilitated placement in safe shelters if it was deemed necessary during an assessment or if the person requested this. 39 victims, 2 witnesses, and 26 vulnerable children were referred to safe shelters where they would be able to cope, heal, and develop positively.

Key Facts

603
Beneficiaries of social services

262
victims supported

67
Referrals for safe shelter

25
Referrals for medical examination
Case Story
Boy Nara

Nara came to live in Phnom Penh when he was young. Due to pressure to help his parents, he had to stop school. His father was a drunk that physically abused his mother. Then, Nara met a foreigner who gave him drugs. On many occasions, the foreigner sexually abused Nara; Nara was only 15 years old.

A 2011 APLE investigation culminated in Nara’s rescue. Our social worker provided him with counseling, follow-up visits, medical care, welfare support, and encouragement to study. Our lawyers counseled Nara and represented him in court. Despite APLE’s efforts, Nara was severely traumatised and did not stop using glue. Since Nara also did not have a job, his situation was worrying.

Our social worker worked with him, determined to see him overcome his addiction. In 2013, after almost three years of counseling, Nara decided to change his life. He stopped using glue and, with the help of our social worker, finally faced and worked through his trauma from the abuse.

Shortly after he got clean, Nara received help to start a small business. Nara now sells phone stickers in a market in Phnom Penh. He makes about 30 dollars on a good day and now has his own motorbike and phone. He lives with his mother and says he is confident about the future.
In 2013, trainers from APLE reached 3331 people through 45 awareness raising activities and 16 trainings in 8 provinces. These people now have a greater understanding about how to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation, the impact of abuse, offender’s grooming techniques, and how to report suspicious behaviour. Also, APLE was mentioned 73 times in local newspapers and 40 times in foreign newspapers. Throughout 2013, APLE also had the pleasure of being featured in 9 documentaries, which played in various countries around the world.
On 10 October 2013, APLE provided a full day training to 41 local authorities about child protection, how to recognize grooming techniques, and how to rescue children from sexual abuse and exploitation. After the training, the Commune Counsellor in Charge of Woman and Children, Sam Sopheap, came to the trainers and said that she had observed grooming behaviour in the past, but did not know that it was grooming. Instead, she thought these men were just being very nice to children; now she realized that they might have had bad intentions.

In addition, Sam Sopheap requested APLE to provide more trainings to communities and local authorities. She feels that trainings are very important for them to better combat the problem of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Finally, she promised to spread the word about APLE and tell her friends and colleagues about the work APLE does. She wants to encourage as many people as possible to understand abuse and to report it to APLE when they see something suspicious.
Ring the Alarm: In April, a Dutch court lifted a ban against the pedophile advocacy organization Mar- tijn that sought to normalise and glorify sexual relationships with children. APLE partnered with Operation Bobbi Bear [OBB] in South Africa to lobby against this decision and launched the Ring the Alarm petition in June. The petition called on the Dutch government to reinstate the ban in order to forbid pedophile advocacy and protect children. In November, APLE and OBB handed over the petition in The Netherlands. 194 organisations from 50 countries signed. Ring the Alarm is an unprecedented example of international collaboration and unity among child protection organisations around the globe.

Cooperation: In May, APLE Country Director met with the Dutch government’s national rapporteur on trafficking in persons. Discussions topics included human trafficking and child sex tourism cases involving Dutch perpetrators. In May, a British court sentenced a suspect to 21 months in jail for abusing Cambodian boys. APLE had monitored him since 2006. The charge was a result of joint action by APLE, the Cambodian National Police, and UK Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. In June, APLE located 4 Cambodian victims in a Belgian case involving 700 GB of child pornography. The Belgian police interviewed these children and brought the perpetrator to justice.

A regional initiative, Project WATCH, was officially launched in July in the Philippines, Nepal, India, and Indonesia by Terre de Hommes Netherlands. The initiative aims to replicate APLE’s successful approach to investigations of suspicious behavior, close police collaboration, and assistance in the prosecution of child sex offenders. In August, APLE provided a 10-day training course on investigations of child sexual exploitation to experienced local organisations from each country. These organisations now have increased knowledge and the skills to set up undercover teams, identify child sexual abuse, surveil suspects, educate communities, and train local police officers.

Some people have such a high rank in society that it seems almost impossible to prosecute them. One such person is HIV+ and believes that having sex with 1000 virgin girls can cure him. Despite his status, APLE investigated, collected evidence, and then urged police to take action. Police arrested the Cambodian military colonel in April for an aggravated rape charge involving 3 girls as young as 9 years old. Police revealed that more than 20 complaints had been lodged against the suspect, but action was slow because people feared his power and status. However, as a result of APLE, this notorious rapist is behind bars and the case set an important precedent that everybody is equal before the law.
“I find that APLE’s quality of investigations is the best of all organisations; their investigators are more skilled.”
 — Police officer from Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Unit [AHTJPU]

“The social worker always encouraged me with love, honesty, and heart. I’m very thankful.”
 — Female victim

“Owing to [APLE’s] courageous and committed work and assistance, we were able to achieve major success in our investigations into pedophilic crimes.”
 — Head of Section, Police President in Berlin

“APLE helped build my confidence after the abuse. Now I go to school and meet friends again.”
 — Female victim

“The strength of APLE is in its covert work. They are both careful and thorough.”
 — Police officer from AHTJPU

“I want to be a lawyer. Just as APLE helped me, I want to help others.”
 — Female victim

“The cooperation we received from APLE was excellent for our Belgian police to observe.”
 — Belgium Police Liaison Officer, Embassy of Belgium
In 2013, APLE faced three major challenges, which we aim to tackle in 2014.

1. Many communities are unaware of child sexual abuse and exploitation and thus do not see suspicious behaviour. As such, we plan to expand training and awareness raising activities to more remote areas. By strategically targeting new areas, we can increase knowledge and encourage actions to prevent abuse and report suspicious behaviour.

2. The court process is unsatisfactory for many victims. We plan to promote child friendly procedures in all stages of an investigation and trial. Also, we will advocate for speedy trials and quicker execution of compensation payments to avoid victims from withdrawing their complaint and/or offenders leaving the country before paying compensation.

3. Online abuse is a growing concern. We plan to pursue training on how to identify and track this crime, as well as establish a more systematic hotline to allow for easier reporting of suspicious online and offline behaviour.

While doing all this, we plan to coordinate with Project WATCH to enhance the operational capacity in this region and share best practices.
After 10 years of operation in Cambodia, we have now decided it is time for a change. We are very excited to unveil our new logo, which will serve as a symbol for protecting children in Cambodia.

The logo was chosen as it conveys a strong stance against child abuse, which exemplifies the vision of APLE.

We also believe the powerful, yet simplistic illustration will increase recognition of APLE both domestically and internationally.
APLE is proud to be a locally managed NGO and an equal opportunity employer. At present, APLE has 39 dedicated staff whose skills range from lawyers to social workers, investigators to project managers, accountants to trainers. All staff members have undergone extensive background checks and are highly qualified.

Currently, APLE has 2 volunteers. To ensure the highest standard of child protection is upheld, all volunteers must stay for a minimum of 6 months and are subjected to a rigorous screening process. APLE has been lucky to have excellent volunteers in the past and whose support has been invaluable to APLE’s work.
APLE runs solely on donations from international NGOs, government institutions, companies and generous individuals.

**Income**

$472,124.93

**Expenditure**

$461,636.80

- Overhead
- Human Resources
- Prevention Program
  - Awareness & Training
  - Tuk-tuk Campaign
  - Hotline & Dissemination
- Protection Program
  - Social Support
  - Pro Bono Legal Aid
  - Court cases and Client Fees
- Promotion of Prosecution
  - Investigations and Monitoring
  - Liaison with Police
  - Rescue and Raid Assistance

2013 financials audited by Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Thank You!

for your invaluable support

Without contributions from our donors and generous individuals, we would not have been able to achieve all that we have in 2013. We would like to extend our thanks to each and every one of you for your support.

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Embassy of Switzerland to Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar