



APLE

Annual Report
2015

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Message from the Chairman of the Board

It is a great pleasure to introduce this report in my capacity as Acting Chair of the new Board of Directors of APLE Cambodia. As you will see from the following pages, 2015 has been another year of great achievement for APLE in its endeavours to protect children from abuse and exploitation. It was fitting that the year ended with the news that APLE has been internationally recognised with a Stars Impact Award for 2015.

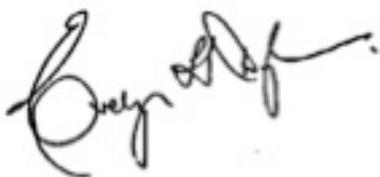
2015 was also notable for APLE Cambodia in that a new Board of Directors was formally established and met for the first time in the summer. We are delighted to welcome all our new non-Executive members who bring a variety of highly relevant skills and experience to the organisation. We look forward to supporting the Executive Team in developing and implementing APLE's new Strategic Plan in the coming years. We hope to attract new Board members over the coming months and are especially keen to recruit Cambodian nationals to these roles.

One of the most important aspects of the Board's responsibilities is to ensure the sustainability of the organisation, so that the dedicated APLE staff members can execute their work to the highest standards in a secure and rewarding professional environment. 2015 was a year of some financial uncertainty with the loss of some long-standing donors, but we were delighted to secure additional funding from new sources which enabled staff to complete their planned programmes of work. The year ahead will also present some financial challenges to enable APLE to achieve its new strategic objectives within the desired timescales, but the Board will continue to seek additional funds and we hope that new supporters may be attracted by the demonstrably high quality of professional services which APLE provides in the fight against child abuse and exploitation.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all our partners and supporters for their contributions to this important work. The Board also wishes to thank each and every member of the APLE Cambodia staff for their hard work and commitment throughout 2015, and especially during some extremely testing and stressful times. Without the selfless dedication of APLE staff, the many vulnerable children of Cambodia would undoubtedly be at greater risk.

It is my pleasure to commend this report of APLE activity in 2015 to all our stakeholders, partners and friends, and we look forward to even greater successes in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Evelyn Dykes
Acting Chair, Board of Directors
APLE Cambodia
January 2016

Dear APLE Stakeholders, Supporters and Colleagues:

Thank you for making 2015 yet another remarkable year for APLE Cambodia! This year marked the 12th anniversary of operations for the organization. Our dedicated staff has done an incredible job of protecting and supporting underprivileged children as well as strengthening our services.

In 2015, the need to provide comprehensive direct services to victims and families became the dominant focus of APLE. Our social and legal teams worked harder to meet higher expectations. This year, the social workers served 406 clients with counseling, welfare and medical support. By signing new MoUs with three other child-focused organisations, APLE ensured the best opportunities and long-term care for the clients through referrals and follow-up support. We were happy with the resulting increased satisfaction of our clients and hope to improve further next year. Further, alongside the social team, our lawyers and legal assistants counseled 203 clients and represented 101 of them throughout the court process. They also stringently advocated for prosecutions in courts, and were gratified to see increased civil compensations and deportations of the convicts ordered. Responding to the need of young victims to better understand the legal process, child-friendly educational materials illustrating the court steps were created and launched. Children were so pleased with this tool, and we are grateful to the courts for using it. .

It was notable that our investigations team continued to retain trust from the public and authorities and was able to respond to 192 cases, working in closer cooperation with the national and international law enforcement to tackle abuse. We were proud to note that our cooperation with police was excellent this year, bringing about significant positive changes in child interview techniques, victim support and rapid interventions. Police were observed to be more child-friendly and willing to cooperate!

Our new strategic plan 2016-2020 is ambitious. Our ongoing goal is to place emphasis on social and legal justice and protection mechanisms, which we view as crucial to preventing child sexual exploitation and ensuring efficient and effective responses. With this focus, we're looking forward to utilising our 12-year experience to improve continuity of our services, and sustain solutions.

2015 was also the year our new Board of Directors was born and brought invaluable expertise and skills into the organisation. We are indebted to our Board for their great initiatives in resolving an unexpected financial shortfall. We were also lucky to have had strong support from our donors throughout the year, enabling us to maximise our achievements.

Thank you to all our partners, donors and supporters for being a part of APLE and helping us to find solutions to enable better protection of our beloved children. We are looking forward to much more in 2016!



Seila Samleang
Executive Director
APLE Cambodia

Fast Facts

Some highlights from APLE Cambodia's 2015

62

victims rescued

27

suspects convicted

406

social support clients

84%

felt comfortable during the legal process

211

legal support clients

88%

felt their rights were protected by APLE

1066

participants in training and awareness

86%

shared knowledge with others

Context

Cambodia is considered a hotspot of child sexual abuse and exploitation; however, no population data sets in the Southeast Asia region estimate prevalence or incidence of CSAE. Despite this, a 2014 study in Cambodia showed that 2.4% of girls and 7.5% of boys reported that they had been forced to have sex at least once.

Poverty, combined with low education, leaves children vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Due to grooming, many people may benefit from or trust the offender; as a result, they may not believe a child if he/she discloses abuse or may rely too heavily on support from the offender to file a complaint.

The Cambodian government also lacks resources to protect victims of child sexual exploitation. In the last decade, the criminal justice system has improved; however, issues still arise due to weak understanding and inconsistent interpretation and application of the law. Criminal justice procedures are lengthy and not always sensitive to needs or trauma of child victims.

In addition, there is a growing concern over institution-based cases, which have risen recently, and child sexual exploitation online. There is little to no research on the situation of online abuse within Cambodia. Despite this, prevalence in the Philippines combined with rapidly growing Internet access has led to concerns in Cambodia. Children and youth often lack knowledge of how to use the Internet safely. Offenders also use the Internet to contact and/or groom children before or instead of visiting Cambodia. This is an area in which more research is needed.

Note: APLE has permission to use all photos. The identity of clients is protected through pseudonyms and blurred photos.

Sources: UNICEF EAPFRO 2012; Ministry of Women's Affairs, UNICEF, US Center for Disease Control 2014; Reimer 2015; Transparency International 2014



APLE

APLE is a non-governmental organisation [NGO] that has been active in Cambodia since 2003. APLE is the only NGO specialized in street-based child sexual abuse and exploitation in Cambodia, making us invaluable experts in this field. APLE has 44 dedicated staff. To date, the organisation has rescued 754 victims from further abuse and raised awareness or trained 11 172 individuals.

Vision

Freedom from sexual abuse and exploitation for all children

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

Mission

Our **'Continuity of Service'** Model

The four programs that APLE operates interlink to provide continuity of service to those affected by child sexual abuse and exploitation. Continuity of service is highlighted as key to helping victims overcome trauma and heal in a positive way.

Awareness and Training Program

APLE makes every effort to be a well-known and positive presence in the community, to instil trust and encourage knowledge dissemination.



Investigations Program

If abuse is suspected, our child protection agents work in collaboration with the police to initiate the evidence gathering and rescue process.



Social Support Program

From the moment of arrest, our social workers protect, support, and respond to the needs of the child. They also liaise with the child and their family, partner NGOs, and the government to determine the safest place for the child.



Legal Support Program

Finally, our lawyers are on hand to provide legal advice, counselling, and representation to the victims, if the child and their family request this from APLE.

Awareness and Training

Achievements

In 2015, APLE Cambodia reached **1066 [475F]** individuals through **7** awareness raising events, **4** training activities, **2** workshops, **7** informant discussions, and **4** online safety sessions. The participants' knowledge increased by **60%** and many retained the knowledge to use in daily life. Participants gained an understanding of how to prevent child sexual abuse, identify grooming, report suspicious behaviour, and share prevention strategies with others.

APLE Cambodia was also invited to be a guest speaker at **10** government-led events with **377 [154F]** participants. Many of these were to provide training to police or government officials on how they can better respond to children who have been victimised.

Key Participant Facts

86%

shared new
knowledge

50%

took action to
protect children

93%

used knowledge
in daily life

Promoting Online Safety to Youth

In 2015, APLE piloted out Internet hotline and began looking into how to make the Internet a safer place for children. One solution we had was to provide training to youth on how to be safe online. Internet access has skyrocketed in recent years; however, many young adults place themselves at risk by being unaware of privacy settings and potential dangers online. To attract interested participants, APLE advertised the training on our Facebook and at various universities. Many individuals applied to join and we were pleased to see how popular this training was.

APLE conducted 4 training sessions to 114 youth from universities and NGOs. During the training sessions, participants listened carefully, raised many relevant questions, and were active in group discussions. Though the participants attended university or worked in NGOs, most did not know how to use the Internet safely.

At the end of the training, participants thanked APLE for providing the training to them and promised to share the knowledge to their friends, family, and community. They stated learning about how to protect themselves online will have an impact in their daily use of the Internet and particularly Facebook. In addition, participants were glad to learn more about how to protect children online and report child indecent images to APLE's Internet hotline.



Investigations

Law Enforcement Cooperation *Achievements*

In 2015, the Investigations team conducted preliminary investigations into **192** cases and opened **42** cases. Increasing collaborative efforts, we worked with Cambodian police on **74** cases and with foreign police on **36** cases. Due to the tireless work of APLE Cambodia and the police, **13** foreigners and **9** Cambodians were arrested and **62 [36F]** victims were rescued. APLE Cambodia also assisted in **7** investigations that were handled by the police.

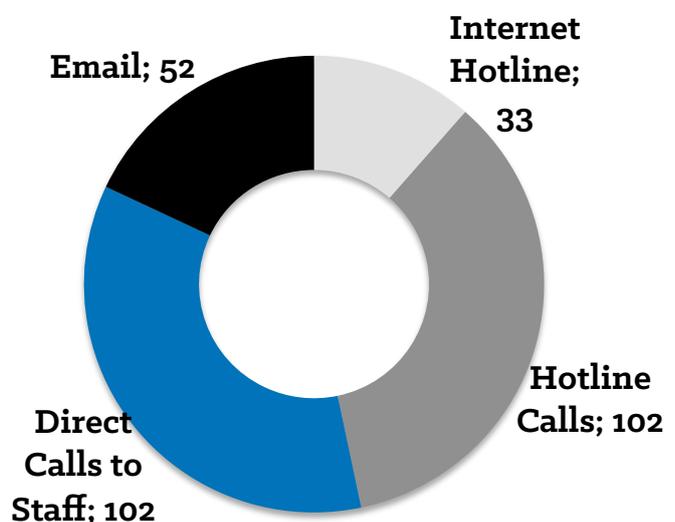
We piloted our Internet hotline this year and received **33** reports thus far. This will be formally launched in 2016. Our existing hotlines received **256** reports, **128** of which were investigated. We also scaled down our informant network to be more effective. We established **217 [51F]** new informants and built relationships with individuals in **5** remote areas.

Key Facts

62
victims rescued
from abuse

22 suspects
arrested

Suspicious Behaviour Reports to APLE



APLE Cambodia prioritises cooperation among stakeholders wherever possible. This is most crucial in our investigations to ensure the police are building their capacity to work on their own. In 2015, we have experienced excellent cooperation with both national and foreign police. Firstly, we referred 82 cases, 74 to Cambodian police and 36 to foreign law enforcement. The Cambodian police have been more engaged and proactive in responding to complaints. Due to this, we have also assisted the police in 7 cases initiated by them where they requested our advice. We have noticed a significant improvement in interview techniques and victim care; the police are being more child-friendly and sensitive in their approach.

Many cases that we jointly work with the police on involve grooming, which is difficult to investigate due to the victims' shame, fear, and emotional attachment to the offender. Grooming is most often employed by foreigners and, as such, the involvement of foreign police is beneficial in these cases. This year, APLE Cambodia has noticed a notable increase in the involvement of foreign law enforcement in child sexual abuse cases. Three suspects who were each involved in NGOs in Cambodia were arrested in their home countries, based on evidence gathered by the Cambodian National Police and APLE Cambodia. Foreign law enforcement are also following up on a number of other cases, providing technical assistance, sharing information, and examining possibilities of extradition and further charges against convicted child sex offenders after their sentence in Cambodia is finished.



Social Support

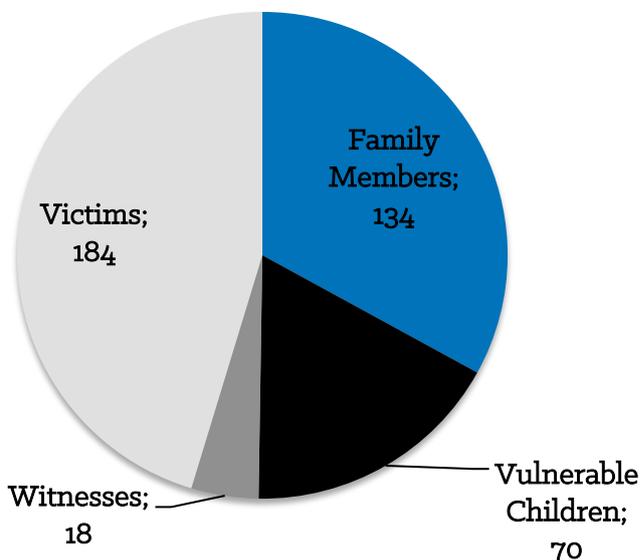
Achievements

This year, **406** clients received counselling, including **184** victims. **59** clients received welfare support and our Social Workers arranged medical care for **28** clients and medical examinations for **22**. To ensure the best opportunity and care for clients, we referred **50** victims, **62** vulnerable children, and **20** family members to partner NGOs and closed **94** cases. Our Social Workers also held **1** group activity for **10** victims to help them heal and bond.

APLE Cambodia signed Memorandums of Understanding with **3** NGOs to outline collaboration in the provision of long-term counselling and support to clients. In addition, APLE made **51** aftercare recommendations to the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation and met DoSVY officials **12** times to discuss specific cases.

Key Facts

Recipients of Social Support



82%
satisfied with
APLE support

84%
feel comfortable &
confident in court



Dreams of Becoming a Tailor

Ra Sreymeas was born in Prey Veng province in 2000. She has three siblings and is the third daughter in her family. Her mother and father were divorced when she was young; Sreymeas stayed with her mother, who soon remarried. The divorce was tough on Sreymeas and she eventually ran away from home.

She went to Phnom Penh to live with her aunt, who works in a small street-based shop in the city. Sreymeas didn't go to school; instead, she spent her time working and sometimes begging to earn money. In Phnom Penh, Sreymeas met many other girls who were also selling small goods and living on the streets with their families. One of her female friends introduced her to an American man, who the girls would often ask for money. One day, the American took Sreymeas and a few of her friends to a quiet place and sexually abused them. Afterwards, he gave each of them some money.

Sreymeas was abused several more times before being rescued by the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department police in March. APLE facilitated the rescue and our Social Worker stayed with the girls through the night to comfort them. Due to the instability of her lifestyle on the streets, we referred Sreymeas to a recovery shelter in Phnom Penh. Though she felt lonely at first, she quickly made many friends and is rebuilding her life.

Sreymeas is now attending school in the recovery shelter and learning to write. She is also in a one-and-a-half year vocational training course to learn to become a tailor. In the recovery shelter, she assists the caretaker to cook for the other girls once a week and meets her counselor often to discuss how she is feeling. In a recent meeting, Sreymeas said she does not want to live on the streets anymore; instead, she dreams of opening a small tailor shop.

Legal Support

Achievements

In 2015, our legal team provided legal counselling to **211** clients. The lawyers represented **101 [55F]** victims in court, which resulted in convictions of **14** Cambodian and **13** foreign child sex offenders. **23** compensation orders were given ranging from 2 million [500 USD] to 20 million Riels [5000 USD] and **46%** of the convicted foreigners received a deportation order.

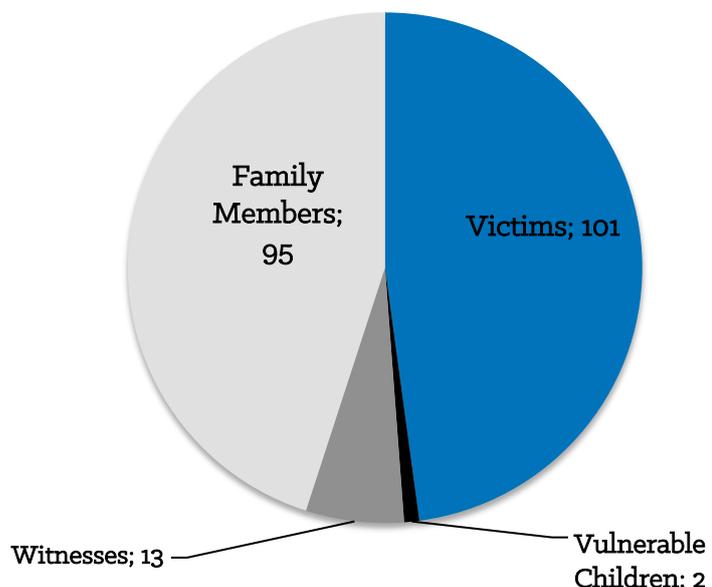
Our lawyers also developed **2** child-friendly materials to help explain the court process to children in a clear way and donated **16** privacy screens to courts. Children and their families have been very pleased with the materials and stated that it helped them understand the process better and feel less stress before and during trial.

Key Facts

Recipients of Legal Support

27 suspects
convicted

Represented
101
victims in court



Justice for Two Clients

In March, a case, which shocked even our experienced legal team, went to trial. APLE Lawyers represented two girls, whose virginity was bought by a Turkish man. The man was arrested in May after police raided his guesthouse room. Also arrested were the mother and sister of one of the girls and a broker.

Due to the involvement of one girl's family and the poor living conditions of the other girl's family, they were referred to a recovery shelter. The shelter staff and the girls requested APLE's assistance in bringing a legal case against the suspects. APLE's Lawyers met with the girls to provide them legal counselling and explain the court process. Based on their testimony, the man was charged with Purchase of Child Prostitution and the three women were charged with Soliciting for Child Prostitution.

At the trial, APLE Lawyers advocated for child-friendly procedures and a privacy screen was used to shield the girls from the suspects. The girl whose mother and sister were charged found it difficult to testify against them and asked the judge for leniency. In the end, the Turkish man was sentenced to 9 years imprisonment, while the three women were given 3 years in jail. Compensation of 10 million riels [2500 USD] was ordered and the Turkish man was given a deportation order.

The clients expressed satisfaction with the verdict and the deportation order so the man will not be able to abuse more Cambodian children. One client struggled to feel relief though, knowing that her mother and sister were in jail; however, she is receiving counselling to understand and cope with this. The clients are also attending school and studying in Grade 9 with both of them scoring in the top of their class. They feel much safer and want to become a lawyer and a doctor in the future.





Project WATCH Training

From April 6-10, two APLE Cambodia staff conducted onsite training in Bali, Indonesia for twelve dedicated staff from three Project WATCH partner NGOs. Throughout the week, we set a goal to pass on our expert knowledge about best practices in investigating child sexual abuse and exploitation using hands-on training, demonstrations, and presentations. The participants were engaged and excited to implement the new skills to combat child sexual abuse in their region.

Highlights

International Children's Day

On June 1, APLE Cambodia celebrated International Children's Day. Around 300 children and parents joined us to enjoy games and educational activities. APLE shared tips on the rights of the child and how to keep children in their family and community safe. This is APLE's first big event to celebrate with children and encourage parents to focus on their children's safety and we look forward to celebrating it again next year.

Proactive Steps to Child-Friendly Courts

In early 2015, APLE Cambodia designed and produced privacy screens, which were donated to 16 courts across Cambodia. Since we donated them, the courts have started using privacy screens proactively in cases involving minors and our lawyers rarely have to request it now. When it is used, victims are less fearful and able to provide more confident and clear testimony. Court officials thanked us for donating this tool to promote child-friendly courtrooms.



Stars Award

APLE Cambodia was proud to win a Stars Impact Award in 2015. This award is a great honour and tribute to our hard work over the last 12 years to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation. APLE Cambodia was recognised for our widespread impact on improving child protection by working in partnership with a large network to tackle the problem in Cambodia. Seila Samleang, our Executive Director, asks all our partners and supporters to please join in celebrating our success, since it is as much yours as ours.

Stars Award Foundation

Muna Wehbe, CEO of Stars Foundation said
“Once again this year's Impact Award winners have demonstrated exceptional work in responding to the needs of children, and in the strength of their institutional and

Strategic Plan

2016-2020

From September 2014 to December 2015, APLE Cambodia embarked on a strategic planning journey to evaluate its past performance and prioritise future ambitions. Through workshops, stakeholder feedback, and discussions, employees learned, shared, and built a new strategic plan that highlights best practices and sustainability. The 2016-2020 Strategic Plan includes a new vision, mission, and four core pillars that represent our intentions and aspirations, underpinned by commitment to ensure our staff are managed and developed to the highest possible professional levels.

Vision

A community with robust social and legal justice in which all children are safe from child sexual abuse and exploitation

Mission

To strengthen national social and legal mechanisms for the protection of children at risk of or affected by child sexual abuse or exploitation

**Criminal
Justice
Development**

**Court
Support**

**Community
Engagement**

**Research and
Advocacy**

Professional and Organisational Governance and Development



Staff

65.9%
male employees

34.1%
female employees

APPLE is a locally managed NGO and equal opportunity employer. At present, APPLE has 44 staff who work tirelessly to protect children across Cambodia. The team is a mix of long-term staff and new hires who work together to bring APPLE's strong support to beneficiaries and generate new ideas for innovative approaches.

APPLE was privileged to host 2 interns in 2015. They conducted research on best practices in social work and created a Theory of Change for APPLE. We are very lucky to have had their input and thank them for dedicating their time to helping APPLE.

Income

APLE Cambodia's work is made possible by donations from international NGOs, government institutions, and individuals.

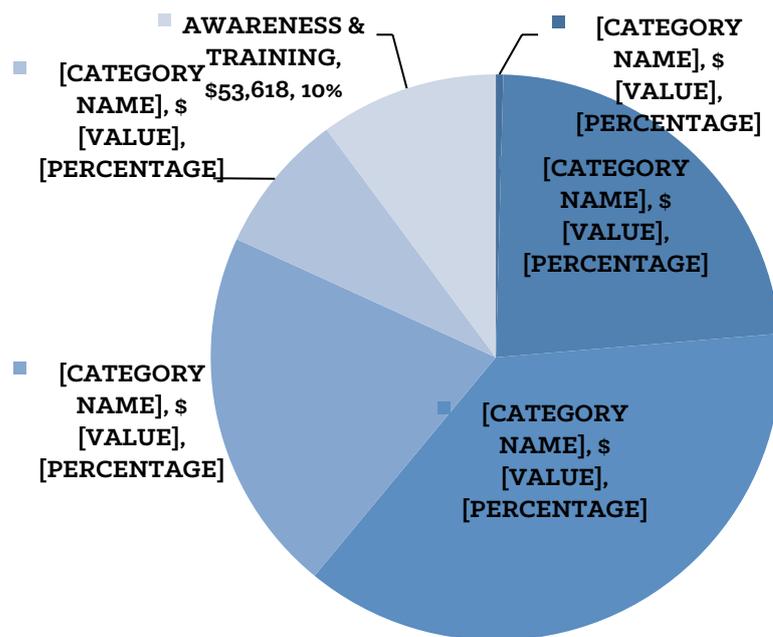
Our total income for 2015 was:

\$561 488

Expenditure

Our total expenditure was:

\$530 207



Thank You!

We at APLE Cambodia are grateful to all our wonderful donors, including the organizations below and other individual donors, who continue to provide invaluable support to enable us to implement our work and protect children.



TO HOLDING AS



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