



**APLE**



# *IMPACT*

*Report 2020*



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# BRIEF HISTORY

*Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE Cambodia) is a non-for-profit, non-governmental, locally established organization dedicated to the protection of children at risk of or affected by sexual abuse and exploitation.*

APLE has gained popularity, trust and expertise in the area of Criminal Justice by assisting the local police since its establishment in 2003. Initially, APLE assisted the Cambodian law enforcement with child-friendly information gathering processes in cases of street-based child sexual exploitation whilst providing pro-bono legal support to victims and their families.

A dire need for social support for those affected and at risk was identified, and in 2005, APLE began its social support program for the survivors. Until this day, APLE partners with other NGO service providers and refers rescued children, family members and witnesses to said institutions for specialized support, tailored to their specific, individual needs.

Throughout the years, child sexual abuse and exploitation trends have shifted both worldwide and in Cambodia, making our organization adapt to the ever-changing modus operandi of offenders. International collaborations as a response to child sexual abuse in travel and tourism as well as focus on online child sexual abuse and exploitation as a response to the increased risks of the world wide web are examples of these adaptations.

With its mission to strengthen the national social and legal mechanism for the protection of children, APLE commits to high level awareness raising through partnerships with relevant ministries, commune councils, civil society organizations, private organizations and partner NGOs to disseminate knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Likewise, APLE promotes the use of child-friendly criminal justice procedures via advocacy before relevant entities to ensure high level engagement and systematic change.

# BOARD UPDATE 2020

The last year brought many challenges for everyone due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. As this report shows, APLE has responded strongly throughout the year despite these difficulties. The team has achieved much more than might have been expected in such circumstances and the Board is proud of the progress which has been made.

Travel constraints due to Covid-19 meant that all Board meetings were conducted remotely and it was not possible for Board members to visit Cambodia. Despite this, the Board has also managed to continue its work and we were able to review and revise all existing APLE policies early in 2020 as well as producing a number of new policies to comply with international standards for an eco-friendly, transparent, equality-based and efficient NGO. The Board also took steps to ensure that all APLE employees and their families were protected from detrimental social and financial impacts of Covid-19.

It is also notable that despite many unexpected pressures and a global reduction in donor availability due to COvid-19, APLE has successfully managed its financial situation to end the year in balance. This is an excellent result which many other organisations have been unable to achieve.

During the year, we have had significant changes in Board membership. We were sad to lose Ms Sarah Nijholt, who had to resign due to work pressures overseas. However, we were delighted to welcome four new non-executive Board members at the end of 2020, 3 of whom are based in Phnom Penh; this is a significant positive development and we hope their local presence will provide even greater support to the APLE team. We have also agreed that from now on, all APLE Team leaders will become Executive Board members, in addition to the existing Executive Team. This will give more direct links between the Board and APLE staff and will enable wider input on a more frequent basis.

After 5.5 years in the role, Dr Evelyn Dykes stepped down from her position as Chair of the Board at the end of December 2020; a new Chair will be appointed shortly and Evelyn will continue to support APLE informally wherever she can.

## Meet Our New Board Members



**Mr Eang Seng Eav**  
General Manager

**Mr Eang Seng Eav:** is currently a General Manager of Bluebird International School. Mr. Seng Eav graduated from the university of Lumiere Lyon II, France, with a Master Degree in Entrepreneurship and Project Management. Before joining the Bluebird International School, Mr. Seng Eav had worked for a few NGOs specializing on the issue of human trafficking, child sexual abuse and exploitation. Regardless of the shift to educational sector, Mr. Seng Eav is still interested in NGO's work and wants to see children are free from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

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**Ms Malina Enlund**  
Trust and Safety Manager

**Ms Malina Enlund:** In the role of Trust and Safety Manager, Malina is responsible for the development and implementation of safety policies, tools and programs across Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp platforms in SE Asia. Malina works with Government and Non-Government partners in the region on issues of child online safety, women's safety, human trafficking and online well-being.

Previously Malina was the Head of Trafficking for ECPAT International and oversaw the Anti-Trafficking program for the global network currently operating in 108 countries worldwide. Prior to joining ECPAT, Malina Enlund led the operations of A21 Foundation across Asia and founded the Child Advocacy Center in Pattaya, Thailand in partnership with the Royal Thai Police and foreign law enforcement agencies. Malina has worked in the field of Anti-Trafficking and child exploitation in SE Asia for over 12 years. Malina Enlund has a degree in International Development from the University of Calgary and a Master's Degree in Advanced Child Protection from the University of Kent.

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**Mr Oliver King**  
Founder and Project Lead

**Mr Oliver King:** Oliver began his work in international development in Cambodia in 2016, serving as founder and project lead on capacity-building initiatives for disabled children living in poverty. He has a Master Degree (LLM) in International and European Human Rights Law from the University of Leeds, UK. Oliver is a committed human rights advocate, with a particular interest in child protection, children's rights and disability rights.



# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

We are proud to share with you our 2020 Impact Report which showcases the ground-breaking work of APLE Cambodia and the impact of generous contributions from all our supporters.

It was unfortunate that during 2020, the world was facing the crisis of Covid-19 pandemic and many things did not progress the way we all expected due to lockdowns and social distancing. However, despite the worst of these times, APLE staff were fortunate to successfully step up the fight against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE).

Through active involvement with high levels of government, we successfully contributed to and influenced the development of the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Online Child Sexual Exploitation which has been endorsed by the Minister of Social Affairs. We exerted efforts to ensure new legislation will effectively address significant loopholes in protecting children online. Workshops were jointly organised to bring together stakeholders at all levels to learn, reflect and discuss solutions that have led to national prioritization with regard to child-friendly criminal justice, victim legal remedies and prevention of re-offending.

More child-friendly rooms were successfully set up by our Criminal Justice Development team, resulting in a total of 6 rooms built across the country which are designed for use by police officers to interview possible child victims in a comfortable, child-sensitive and non-threatening space. Through a series of skill training forums provided by APLE, the Anti Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection police reported an increase of 78% in knowledge about child-focused investigation. Additionally, 88.2% of police procedures were assessed as complying with child-friendly standards of practice, thanks to the skill training. Further, we were able to assist the police to investigate and prosecute increased CSAE cases, especially in online form, leading to positive law enforcement outcomes.



The demand for services drastically increased during Covid-19 times. Our Court Support Program staff conducted risk and need assessments and provided affected children and their families with emergency support, while providing the integrated psychosocial and legal services. As externally evaluated, 83% of child victims felt satisfied with the legal processes they were involved in, thanks to APLE legal team. In 2020, APLE contributed to a successful conviction rate of 94% in its initiated cases. This was unprecedented.

Covid-19 has increased children's activity and presence online due to distance learning, thus causing more concern about their safety on the internet. Our Community Engagement team realised the pressing need for online child sexual exploitation awareness. They developed and widely disseminated evidence-based educational resources tailored for different audiences, having successfully reached an increase of targeted recipients.

Thanks to all our talented, professional and dedicated team and Board members. Without you, we could not have achieved this incredible milestone. Looking ahead, we are passionate to evolve to the next level with our next 5 year strategic plan 2021-2025, focusing on areas that maximise our strengths and ensure a long-lasting impact.

We extend many thanks to our partners and donors for making our work possible. And to our potential supporters, we urge you to join our causes through donating, volunteering, spreading good words, partnering, fundraising or becoming a goodwill ambassador.

We wish you all a healthy, successful and child-safe future,

Seila Samleang, Executive Director, APLE Cambodia



# APLE'S 2016-2020 STRATEGY

APLE's 2016 - 2020 strategy consisted of 4 interconnected programs that tackled child sexual abuse and exploitation in a holistic way.



# Criminal Justice Development

Through training, mentorship and assistance throughout the investigation of Child Sexual Abuse related crimes, the Criminal Justice Development Program aims to alleviate the gaps within the Cambodian law enforcement agencies and trump the application of international standards of child-friendly investigation processes. This program works in collaboration with relevant Law Enforcement Agencies and entities in Cambodia, mainly the Ministry of Interior's Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection police, in order to establish standard child protection and victim focused approaches to cases involving children, specifically those related to sexual abuse and exploitation. The program assists law enforcement agencies in the process of collecting information related to the cases referred to APLE's case workers via reports of concern from the general public through our hotlines, partner NGOs, or directly from victims and/or witnesses as well as from the law enforcement agencies themselves.

## Court Support

Our Court Support Program is responsible for the provision of free, appropriate and comprehensive coordinated assistance and support for CSAE victims.

This includes support and counseling through the crisis intervention stage, provision of legal services, and ensuring children receive justice. Once APLE's Criminal Justice Development case workers identify the victim, APLE's social workers intervene, usually along government ministries relevant to the social protection and welfare of citizens, mainly the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, as well as other specialized partner NGOs, to make an assessment of child's needs to ensure they receive access to the most appropriate, sustainable long-term psychosocial services. In addition, during this intervention, the social team assesses a possible referral in alignment with the child and their legal guardian's will to APLE's

legal team in order to provide legal counseling and representation in court in an impartial, compassionate manner, advocating for child-friendly court justice and proceedings. This program is also responsible for advocacy before judicial entities to implement child friendly methods during court proceedings, an essential component for the protection of the rights of a child, and for the benefit of their mental health and emotional recovery

## Community Engagement

Engaging all levels of the Cambodian society, APLE's Community Engagement program seeks to raise national awareness levels on the protection of children as well as the prevention and the action against child sexual abuse and exploitation. The program does so by partnering with government entities such as The National Committee for Counter Trafficking, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, civil society organizations and commune councils as well as private telecommunication companies and educational institutions to further spread this essential information. The program also promotes the use of the internet and telephone hotlines via these multi-sectoral meetings and trainings with children, youth, NGO representatives, peer educators and community leaders to increase knowledge about CSAE and break social stigmas towards children affected by sexual violence in the general public.

## Research and Advocacy

The Research and Advocacy program prioritizes the use of evidence-based information for the accumulation of well informed data to assist with the development of resources used for educational purposes and advocacy. Data from research is utilized within all of APLE's core programs to ensure effective response and awareness on essential information, while developing sustainable strategies for the protection of children and prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

# 2020

“ A year of  
resilience ”

2020 has been a year dominated by social and environmental challenges, with the profound change in ways of living due to the global outbreak of COVID-19 and its containment measures.

Lockdowns, schools and border closures, cancellation of educational and training gatherings, increase in the use of social media platforms and rise in unemployment brought a plethora of new challenges to the child protection community globally.

For Cambodia specifically, the economic impact of the pandemic left thousands of Cambodian households without at least one source of income. It is well known that economic vulnerability leads to all forms of vulnerability, including child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Due to these challenges, APLE decided to step up the fight in each of its programs, which we are proud to present in the following pages.



2,765

People reached via  
Awareness Raising and  
Trainings on Online and  
Offline CSAE



162

Individuals  
received legal support



259

Beneficiaries of Court  
Support's social program



31 children  
rescued



Welfare assistance to  
**86 beneficiary  
families**  
affected by Covid 19



167 reports

Received and processed  
through our hotlines



361

Welfare support  
packages delivered



Assistance to the police  
in the investigation of

89 Cases

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT



# 2020

## Achievements

The Criminal Justice Development team assisted the Cambodian law enforcement in the investigation of 89 cases which involved 95 suspects; 12 out of those cases led to the arrest of 13 suspects from the United States, United Kingdom, Sweden and Cambodia (10 cases). The arrests subsequently led to the rescue of 32 child victims, 19 of them girls.

 **88.2%**

Observation by APLE's case workers in 43 cases showed that 88.2% of the proceedings complied with timely and child-friendly standard.



**68% to 78 %**

Participants of ToT training sessions increased their knowledge on child friendly investigation from 68% to 78 %.

Throughout our 2016-2020 Strategy implementation, APLE has been throughout the course of the 2016-2020 Strategy implementation, establishing child friendly rooms. The development of one more child friendly room was successfully completed in Battambang Province. From the Child Friendly rooms APLE has established in Phnom Penh, Kandal, Kampot, Siem Reap, Battambang and within the Department of Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVY), 54 children, out of which 38 were girls, have benefited. During the reporting period, APLE held 12 meetings with the AHTJP police in Kandal and Kampot, Preah Sihanouk, Department of AHTJP, Battambang, Siem Reap and the Department of social affairs to sensitize and lobby for child-friendly investigations and the use of child-friendly interview rooms during their interviews with children during their investigations.

The core value of APLE's Criminal Justice Development Program is that of promoting the practice of child-friendly investigation procedures in the most sustainable manners possible by advocating for lasting change. This year, APLE collaborated with the Police Academy of Cambodia (PAC) reviewing study materials called "Victim Centric Response Strategy" for the embedment of child-friendly investigation procedures into the police-forming curriculum.

AHTJP police chiefs who participated in Training of Trainer sessions organized 7 trainings on Child-Friendly Investigation—including child forensic interview and responding to CSEA cases in a child-centric manner, as well as Online Child Sexual Exploitation - for 161 (F:38) police officials from Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kep, Kampong Thom, Banteay Meanchey, Kratie, Kampong Cham and Kandal. Likewise, APLE cooperated with the Anti Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department and organised Training of Trainer intensives on Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation to enhance the skills of police officers from Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Cham, Kratie, Preah Sihanouk, Kampot and Kep in identifying risks and offenses, as well as on how to respond to sexual crimes against children.

The importance of these trainings was highlighted by the Covid19 pandemic, as schools' closures led to increase use of internet for distance learning. This has increased children's susceptibility to online grooming by offenders. Separate trainings were also delivered to enhance what was taught in ToT sessions to support officers in their own information-dissemination sessions. APLE supported trained trainers technically and financially.





The rapid increase on internet usage in Cambodia has brought attention to the need for the local police to increase their understanding of OCSE and knowledge and skills in order to appropriately respond to the crime. OCSE skill training plays a crucial role for judicial officials and police officers in the investigation of child sex offenses online, that brings together senior judicial and police officers from the Anti-human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection police.

The post training evaluations informed that police participants' knowledge, especially on applying child-centric approach in responding to child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, not only increased but also improved their ability to respond effectively. Police have applied the obtained knowledge and skills within their day-to-day investigation duties, including initial response, victim identification and interviews.



# INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

APPLE's efforts on child protection and child friendly justice are not limited by borders. With Covid19 lockdowns and border closures, traveling sex offenders are more prone to change methods of grooming and offending such as Online Child sexual abuse and exploitation. Throughout the years, APPLE has built relationships with international law enforcement agencies (such as INTERPOL, ICE, FBI, Australian Police, U.K. Police, Canadian police, among others) and collaborated for the investigation and prosecution of transnational cases of Online and Offline Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. Despite the pandemic, APPLE continued a close working collaboration with these entities.

International collaboration in justice seeking processes is essential for the just prosecution and conviction of offenders from overseas locations. In 2020, a collaboration with the local police and the Department of Homeland Security Investigation of the United States led to the successful charge and prosecution of an American offender who admitted to molesting two underage girls. The man was convicted in the U.S. receiving 21 years of imprisonment.







November 2020: Our Executive Director Mr. Seila Samleang joined other child protection actors of the Asian region such as the ASEAN Commission, European Union, Interpol, the Dutch Embassy in Bangkok, ECPAT International and other foreign law enforcement agencies in a conference aimed at discussing the risks of child safety online, as well as the gaps within the legal systems in order to pave the way for solutions



APLE, represented by its Executive Director Mr. Seila Samleang, was honored to join and deliver a presentation at a three-day law enforcement conference in Siem Reap on protecting children from crime organised by the U.S. Embassy on October 2020, with the participation of U.S. Homeland Security, FBI trainers and other child protection NGOs.

# COURT SUPPORT SOCIAL PROGRAM

The Social program had a total of 259 beneficiaries, including 21 girls and 10 boys who received crisis intervention along with 30 family members and one child witness, having a total of 68 new beneficiaries. The crisis intervention process helps mitigate risks of re-traumatization and emotional difficulties during the investigation process.

Previous beneficiaries include 102 children out of which 53, a slight majority, are boys. 85 family members have also been followed up with, making a total of 191 previous beneficiaries.

The social program, thus, in total, throughout 2020, provided support to 259 beneficiaries, including 133 child survivors, 2 witnesses and 115 family members.

For the provision of long term psycho-social services, APLE worked in coordination with multiple partner NGOs as well as relevant government entities in order to cater to the specific needs of rescued children, according to their social, physical, emotional and individual needs.

APLE's social team coordinated 22 case management meetings which included 125 participants from the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth rehabilitation, Department of Women Affairs, the Commune Council for Women and Children and 32 partner service provider organizations in Phnom Penh, Preah Sihanoukville, Kandal and Siem Reap province.

The meetings were organized with the purpose of identifying challenges when providing support to children and families affected by or at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.

## Social Support 2020 Achievements



**259**  
Beneficiaries



**115**  
Family members assisted



**21 girls and 10 boys**  
Received crisis intervention



**2 witnesses**  
Received social support

For the purpose of aiding in the recovery of child survivors, APLE organized group activities with 44 beneficiaries (27 girls and 17 boys) in Siem Reap and Kandal to provide them with tools for their emotional healing process, as well as to provide a supportive network to share similar experiences.



**86%**

Child participants  
reported satisfaction  
with the group activities







**86**

Beneficiary families  
received alternative  
welfare support



**In light of the Covid19 Pandemic, APLE, in coordination with the Department of Social Affairs and partner NGOs, made risks and needs assessments and provided alternative welfare support to 86 of the beneficiary families: 361 welfare support packages, non-perishable foods, hygiene kits and learning kits.**

# COURT SUPPORT LEGAL PROGRAM



# 2020

## Achievements

The Court Support team provided crisis supports to 31 children and 30 families on top of the continued psycho-social supports provided to 102 previous child victims and 90 previous families. Additionally, 90 children and 72 families received legal aid services, including legal counseling, representation and assistance.



**94%**

In 2020, 94% of cases brought to court resulted in convictions.



**162 clients**

A Total of 162 clients (110 females and 52 males), including family members, were provided with legal advice and representation

In 2020, APLE accompanied 46 child victims through 55 court proceedings in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Kandal and Battambang, providing them with legal support and representation. These proceedings resulted in 16 offenders (12 Cambodian and 04 foreigners: two American, one Australian and one British) found guilty by Provincial Courts in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Kandal.

APLE, Liberty Shared and PILNet also continued to collaborate in the provision of pro-bono services to 12 child victims (F: 05, M:07) to bring justice to those children in cases where the offender was a foreign citizen.

APLE's lawyers have also engaged with other pro bono law firms. In September, the lawyers attended a workshop on Legal Learning with 10 lawyers and project officers who are members of PiLNet. This workshop also gave an open space for lawyers from private law firms to aim for the coordination and collaboration of free of charge legal services.

Child Friendly Practice in Court Proceedings were noted to increase within the practicing court officials (prosecutors and judges) based on the result of both the observation and the data collection of children and legal guardians participating in the proceedings. An increase in more private hearings, testimonies recorded through Tv-linked screenings, use of child friendly rooms and interrogation techniques

were noticed by our lawyers. As a result, 92% of child victims reported satisfaction in regards to the criminal justice proceedings and support services and 93% of court proceedings in cases represented by APLE lawyers passed the observational checklist of child friendly practice, where the legal and universal rights of the child where respected.

One of the biggest successes of APLE's legal team in 2020 was that of 22 boy victims receiving civil compensation.



**162** child victims and legal guardians received legal counselling and legal representation through participating in the criminal justice process



Out of which  
**110** females and  
**52** males



**16** offender convicted /  
**14** foreigners



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



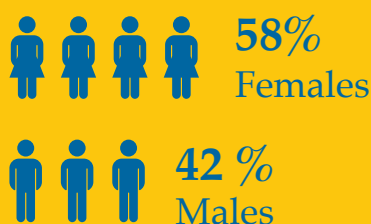


# 2020

## Achievements

With the aims of raising awareness within Cambodian communities and building the public's confidence and skills in preventing and responding to online and offline child sexual abuse and exploitation, APLE's Community Engagement Program has, in 2020, reached a total of 2,765 people.

**2,765**  
people  
reached



These individuals were reached through a series of awareness raising sessions, trainings, campaigns, meetings, technical support meetings, roundtable meetings and workshops.



**167 safety tips** were disseminated on social media, **reaching 1,916,543 users** and **engaging 69,830** of those.



Our Community Engagement Team Leader as well as our hotline analyst provided **5 radio live talk shows**, discussing OCSE related matters and **reaching 1,133 users**, **engaging 127** of them.

Given the need for increased awareness on the risks of online child sexual exploitation arising from an escalated use of internet due to the Covid19 pandemic, APLE incremented its online presence via awareness raising campaigns. The program's team produced 5 videos which contained information on prevention and reporting online child sexual abuse and exploitation, reaching 90,860 users and engaging nearly five thousand with their dissemination.

To break cultural taboos that keep children from learning about healthy behavioral patterns when it comes to sexual relationships, the awareness raising sessions also brought up topics within local communities in order to prevent victim-blaming and shaming, which ultimately leads to lack of reporting and exacerbation of trauma.

A total of 1053 (633 females) children, youths, parents, guardians and caregivers, professionals, government officials and other community members were engaged through 41 awareness raising sessions. 974 individuals (574 female) and 738 people (387 females) were reached through technical support meeting, campaigns, roundtable meeting and consultation workshop; which were delivered with the intention to take appropriate action to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse and exploitation. This includes types of sexual abuse, how to identify symptoms of abuse on a child, how to respond and support the victim as well as how to report.

We are proud to acknowledge that government institutions have taken forwarding actions in drafting Anti-Cyber Crime Law, OCSE curriculums for primary and secondary schools, and an improved action plan in preventing and responding to OCSE.

# Community Engagement Program's 2020 reach





“

It is imperative for parents to attain knowledge and skills on how to keep children safe from online and offline sexual exploitation related harms. APLE is committed to bring the message to at-risk communities.

”

“

One of our main ambitions is for every child in Cambodia to have access to knowledge and skills which will allow them to make use of the benefits of online learning and entertainment whilst minimizing risks of abuse and/or exploitation.

”







Professionals who work with children must be prepared to detect and respond to potential abuse. Training of teachers and people working with children in this regard is an essential component of the Community Engagement Program.

# ONLINE COURSES



APLE's internet hotline website ([www.internethotlinecambodia.org](http://www.internethotlinecambodia.org)) provides courses for professionals working with children, parents and caregivers, children and youth to attain skills to prevent and respond to Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. These courses have been introduced to our trainings for children and professionals working with children. The courses are free of charge, and a certificate is provided upon completion.





# Together For A Better Internet

//

**The Safer Internet Day initially was celebrated by only 14 countries within the European Union and Australia in 2004. In 2019, over 150 countries joined the global campaign.**

//

On Tuesday, 11th of February of 2020, APLE Cambodia, in collaboration with the National Committee for Counter Trafficking and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, was proud to hold the event “Together for a Better Internet” in order to promote the safe use of digital technology, especially among children and young people.

The event was held at the National Education Institute in Phnom Penh with the support of ECPAT Sweden; and was part of a Global Campaign promoted by the INHOPE Network (a global network of member hotlines, leading the fight against Child Sexual Abuse Materials online) and supported by the European Commission.

Mr. Seila Samleang, APLE’s Executive Director, welcomed close to 600 attendants from public and private schools in Phnom Penh, government officials, youth and various NGO staff members and gave a brief explanation of the background of the event: “The Safer Internet Day initially was celebrated by only 14 countries within the European Union and Australia in 2004. In 2019, over 150 countries joined the global campaign”. Mr. Samleang thanked the attendants and the government officials for their demonstrated commitment and called for joint forces to protect children online and encouraged safe use of the Internet







# Online Cyber Exploitation Case Study

## Sextortion as an Online Child Exploitation Trend in Cambodia

**Kunthea\*** is a 15-year-old girl living in Phnom Penh living with her family and studying at a private school. Her living situation in what is considered a low-risk environment. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, Cambodia's government intermittently ordered schools to close since March 2020, making many educational institutions shift to online distance learning.

Kunthea's teacher, a Cambodian man, took advantage of this situation and started to groom her via Instagram. As he gained more trust from the girl, the relationship became more intimate. He started to request nude pictures of her. He also asked her for large amounts of money in different occasions.

As the parents found out about the abuse, they reported the crime to APLE. APLE conducted the preliminary information-gathering alongside the police and the man was arrested in July 2020.

Kunthea was immediately supported by APLE's social workers and lawyers. On December 2020, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court sentenced the 27-year-old man with 2 years of imprisonment for Indecent Assault of minor under 15 years of age and Fraud, and was ordered to pay \$30,000 for restitution, as well as a 10 million Riel compensation (approximately \$2,500) to a girl victim. A 3rd charge on Sexual Intercourse with Minor under 15 years of age was dropped.

On November 13th, 2020 the Phnom Penh Municipal Court brought the case against the teacher to trial. The non-public hearing was held and the girl's testimony was presented through a screen linked to another location in order for the girl to feel safer not having to face her abuser.

Kunthea has been emotionally recovering from her feelings of shame and guilt, as she continues to receive emotional supports from APLE. Her family has been understanding throughout her emotional recovery.

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\*Name changed for confidentiality purposes

# RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

In 2020, the development of a curriculum and teaching methodology for the prevention of human trafficking and sexual exploitation has been concluded in collaboration with the National Committee for Counter trafficking and the Ministry of Education Youths and Sports. It is estimated for the materials to be implemented into the national curriculum in 2021.

In mid-2020 the Research and Advocacy Department conducted a study to examine the need and feasibility of implementing a one-stop service center for children affected by sexual abuse and exploitation. One-stop service centers are best practices known globally that provide a multi-sectoral response to children going through the criminal justice procedure, and combine agencies and service providers such as law

enforcement, medical care, psycho-social support and legal services. With all services under one roof, children receive holistic care under a child-centered approach, minimizing risk of re-traumatization.

The study combined interviews from government and non-government stakeholders, reports from children on their experiences through the criminal justice procedure, and learning visits to locations that have implemented similar models to learn from best practices and challenges. The information was analyzed to assess to what extent children's best interests are considered within the criminal justice procedure and whether a one stop service center can meet the gaps in need. It further examined the current institutional capacity to identify strengths and barriers to an effective implementation to determine whether it would be feasible to implement under the current context.





# HOTLINE

APLE Cambodia's hotlines (phone and internet) are recognized as an official point of contact in regards to Online and Offline Sexual Exploitation among society, NGOs, law enforcement and other governmental agencies, mainly endorsed by the Ministry of Interior of the Royal Government of Cambodia.



**40,000  
Visits**

**Our online hotline**

**[www.internethotlinecambodia.org](http://www.internethotlinecambodia.org),**

**set up with the support from InHope Foundation,  
received 40 thousand visits in 2020.**



**167 Cases**

Total hotline reports



**103 Cases**

Offline cases



**48 Cases**

Rape



**23 Cases**

Suspicion and  
grooming



**8 Cases**

Prostitution /  
sex trafficking



**24 Cases**

Others



**64 Cases**

Online cases



**32 Cases**

Distribution of CSAM



**7 Cases**

Distribution of Adult  
pornography



**2 Cases**

Online grooming



**1 Cases**

Sexting and sextortion



**21 Cases**

Others

# PARTNERSHIPS AND MEMBERSHIPS

## INHOPE

### INHOPE

INHOPE is a global network with 47 member hotlines fighting against Child Sexual Abuse Materials Online. Through our Hotline [www.internethotlinecambodia.org](http://www.internethotlinecambodia.org), we are part of this alliance which allows us to trace materials reported and make appropriate referrals for their removal, prosecution and possible victim identification.



### Family Care First

In consideration of the heightened risks that orphaned or homeless children face in regards to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, APLE, through Save the Children's Family Care First network, partners with nearly 50 member organizations to reintegrate children into family based environments.



### Ministry of Interior

APLE and the Ministry of Interior of the Royal Government of Cambodia are in a harmonious partnership endorsed by a Memorandum of Understanding in which both parties agree to work together to fight against human trafficking and sexual exploitation, cooperation through rescue and crisis intervention, coordination of post-rescue services, referrals, information exchange and trainings, among others. The Ministry of Interior recognizes APLE as a leader organization in the child protection area and recognizes its hotline as an official reporting mechanism in the country.



### ECPAT International

APLE is a member of ECPAT international, a worldwide network of organizations working to end the sexual exploitation of children. Through this network we connect to available resources, which can be in the form of information, research pieces and funding, to enhance the cause in Cambodia.



### TrustLaw

TrustLaw is the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro bono legal programme. Through Trustlaw, APLE accesses available research to advocate for best child-friendly practices, as well as to coordinate pro-bono legal services.





## APPLE Cambodia and A21: Together against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

On October 22nd, in Siem Reap, A21 and APPLE Cambodia signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which both organisations committed to the fight against the sexual exploitation of children in Cambodia.

Through this formalised partnerships, A21 and APPLE are jointly dedicated to strengthening social and legal mechanisms to protect children at risk of or affected by Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. Both parties agreed to collaborate in case management, as A21 will now be a partner for referral of catered social services whilst APPLE will continue to provide legal services to child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation - all in a child-centered and child-friendly manner.



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



“

Personal and professional development go hand in hand, and are inseparable.

”

Seila Samleang,  
APPLE's Executive Director

APPLE's commitment to professional development is evident through every effort to provide the staff with applicable skills for their professional and personal lives, for the benefit of society.

APPLE is an equal opportunity employer. In 2020, employed 30 staff members, half of them women. APPLE provided 1 internal training session and 5 external trainings. Additionally, APPLE had a Strategic Planning workshop with all staff members where training in project management and other disciplines were provided by the management team.



**30**  
**Staff members**  
**trained**

### 9 Participants

One internal training on  
Online Investigations

### 3 Participants

1 session on E- filling and  
Tax Return Practice

### 1 Participant

1 session on Criminal  
Psychology

### 1 Participant

1 session on guidelines  
and taxation

### 2 Participants

1 session on accounting  
standards for NGOs and  
Taxation

### 5 Participants

1 session on data  
analysis



## Child Forensic Interview Training

Six front-line staff from A21 and APPLE were trained on 'Child Forensic Interview' in order to effectively work on sexual exploitation cases involving children as victims and witnesses.

The 3-day core training, organised at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) by A21 and APPLE, was delivered by Mr. Seila Samleang, APPLE's Executive Director, and Ms. Ket Dalin, APPLE's Lawyer, focusing on the knowledge and key skills necessary for the staff to intervene and engage with children, families and other professionals during crisis intervention and investigation.





# Strategic Planning Workshop 2021-2025

“ We are proud to know that most of our activities have been extremely successful and relevant, thus most of them will continue to be carried out, yet evolving to the next level: it is our aim to increase our impact in the coming years. ”

On September 2020, the APLE team revisited its 2016-2020 strategy to understand the successes, challenges and lessons learned during this period in order to move forward with a new strategic planning in a world that now presents different complexities for the years of 2021 to 2025.

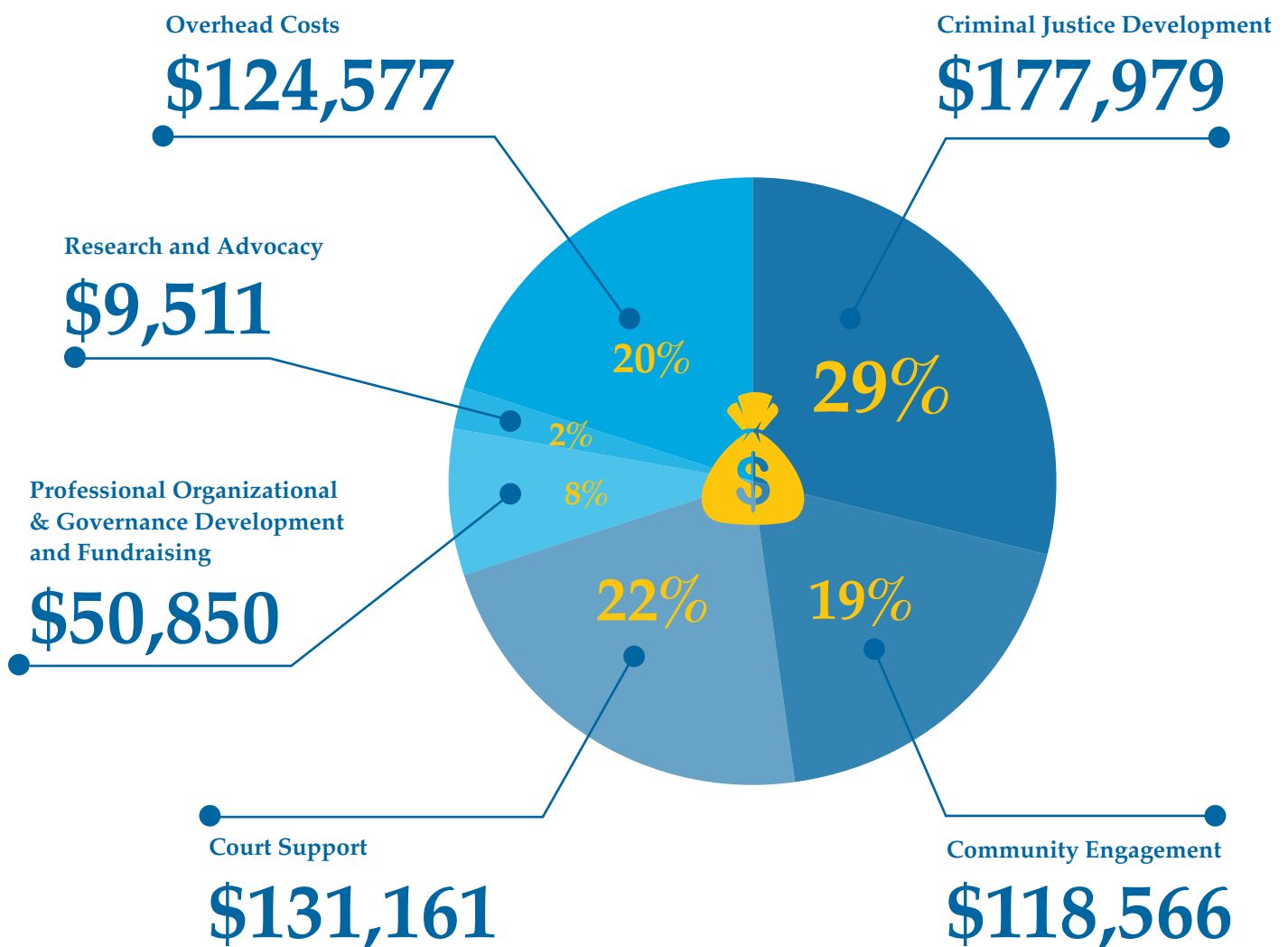
We analyzed stakeholder feedback, identified key strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as external factors in the formats of PESTEL and SWOT analysis. We also revised our vision/mission statements, as well as our goals, objectives and strategic priorities.

We are proud to know that most of our activities have been extremely successful and relevant, thus most of them will continue to be carried out, yet evolving to the next level: it is our aim to increase our impact in the coming years. This will be done through involving higher institutional entities into the child protection system, including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Police Academy, Ministry of Telecommunications, among others which will also include the private sector.

# FINANCE



Total expenditure  
**\$612,644**



# Acknowledgements

2020 was most definitely a testing year for the resilience of child protection. In the midst of a global crisis, we still found a beam of light within the trust from donors that allowed us to continue to protect children during these heightened times of risk.

On behalf of all of APLE's staff and board members, we would like to especially thank Terre des Hommes Netherlands, World Childhood Foundation, Bread for the World Germany, UNICEF, Dutch Embassy in Bangkok, ECPAT Sweden, USAID, AMCHAM, Facebook and Global Giving, for their support and trust during these pressing times.



Kingdom of the Netherlands





## Thank you USAID, and AMCHAM Cambodia!

For a fantastic event with an important cause at heart.

On October 12, 2020, USAID and AMCHAM Cambodia held a charity golf event at City Golf Course in Phnom Penh to celebrate the 70th anniversary of U.S. - Cambodia relations.

APLE was honored to receive a generous donation that was collected through all forty-six participants of the sports event, which was presented in a check handed by the Honorable Ambassador W. Patrick Murphy.

APLE would like to thank all participants of the event who contributed to the cause; and to USAID and AMCHAM for their wonderful consideration and endorsement of our cause: Protecting the children of Cambodia.









# APLE



The fundamental rights of all children are what drives us to continue to pursue social and legal justice for those affected by sexual abuse and exploitation.



[www.aplecambodia.org](http://www.aplecambodia.org)



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