

ANNUAL REPORT

Action Pour Les Enfants
www.aplecambodia.org



2021

Table of Contents

Our History	1
<hr/>	
A Message for Our Stakeholders	2
Operational highlights	2
Financial Highlights	3
Looking Ahead	4
<hr/>	
Strategic Programs	6
Policy & Legislation (P&L)	7
Criminal Justice Deveopment (CJD)	7
Victim Support & Assistance (VISA)	10
Community, Industry & Media Engagement (CIME)	13
<hr/>	
Policy and Law (PL)	4
Debt	4
Debt	4
Going Concern	4
Contingent Liabilities	4
Takeaways	4
<hr/>	
Independent Auditor's Report	5
Auditor's Report	5

OUR HISTORY

Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE) Cambodia is a leading non-governmental organization that was established in 2002 to combat the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse of children in Cambodia. Initially, the organization provided child-friendly information gathering processes to the national police and offered free legal assistance and psychosocial support to victim-survivors and their families. Over the years, APLE has evolved to respond to the changing needs of children and their families. Today, APLE addresses Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation both offline and online.

In 2014, APLE registered with the Ministry of Interior as a local NGO, which has helped it to establish valuable partnerships to combat CSEA at the national level.

Since 2015, APLE has focused on building the capacity of national prevention and response systems to protect children against Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) by working closely with key government institutions, law enforcement, and the private sector on comprehensive programmes that educate and empower children and young people about OCSEA and protective strategies for responsible internet use.

APLE is a member of two global networks focused on combating CSEA, operates under formal MoUs with the Ministry of Interior & the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, and is a trusted partner of Facebook.

APLE's tireless efforts have been instrumental in protecting children in Cambodia.



OUR VISION

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



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to strengthen national social and legal systems for the protection of children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.



A Message for Our Stakeholders

Operational Highlights:

2021 was a year of significant challenges, not least due to the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic. Measures introduced by the Royal Government of Cambodia included travel restrictions, school closures, curfews and lockdowns, resulting in significant challenges providing services and support. Throughout this time APLE rose to the challenge and worked creatively to overcome the difficulties - continuing our focus on delivering “social and legal justice” for child victims and their families. Our flexibility and commitment enabled us to increase access to quality, child-focused support services and legal protection. Of those receiving support, 86% of child victims expressed their overall satisfaction with the services provided – and specifically – confidence that their rights were respected during their participation in criminal proceedings.

We continued our work to strengthen the capacity of dedicated national law enforcement and other actors within the criminal justice system, related to the investigation, prosecution and prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation. This helped increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of national law enforcement in investigations of CSEA, and especially in relation to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA). As a result of our work, we have observed further improvements in multidisciplinary cooperation related to investigation, prosecution and prevention of CSEA. More specifically, among criminal justice actors - we have noted the promotion and increased ownership of child-focused and child-friendly responses, to ensure the best possible protection and support of the victims involving in the investigation and court process. Our evaluations reveal that in a total of 89 cases, the police conducted preliminary and timely responses, by assigning designated and appropriately trained investigating officers in 94.86% of cases.

In addition to provision of support and dedicated law enforcement strengthening, information sharing and awareness raising in communities remained a significant priority. Numerous sessions were conducted virtually and in-person for children, young people, parents and caregivers, key community members, service providers and other professionals. They were designed to increase awareness related to risk and vulnerability of children, to increase protective and help-seeking skills around child sexual abuse and exploitation, (especially OCSEA), and encourage increased public engagement and action for early prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation. In total 2,461 individuals received either awareness or training, with positive responses received.

Looking Ahead

With more than two decades experience at the forefront of the fight against Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) in Cambodia and the region, APLE is recognized as a respected expert in the field and has established durable, trusting and important strategic partnerships with national, regional and international stakeholders. APLE is the country lead for ECPAT International, a global network of 122 member organisations in 104 countries addressing CSEA, and is a member of INHOPE, a global network of 50 Hotlines addressing OCSEA in 46 countries. APLE will continue to develop and initiate relationships with a range of stakeholders to ensure that children's rights are protected, and that they receive the support they deserve.

With its current expertise, existing networks and collaborative approaches, APLE strongly believes that holistic, coordinated, multi-stakeholder approaches are essential to enable child protection systems to become stronger, effective and more sustainable. This also contributes to the development of a more child-focused child protection system - for investigation, prosecution and service delivery, including a comprehensive range of psychosocial supports from the crisis stage, through to rehabilitation and reintegration.

Looking to the future, APLE will therefore remain focused on and promote child-centered, rights based and participatory approaches, and build on the firm foundation of existing multi-stakeholder cooperation and collaboration across multiple networks of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.



Collaborative approaches make strongest protection of the rights of those at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.

A Quick Look To THE NUMBERS

309

clients received psycho-social support services



130

clients received legal support

130

Clients received legal counseling

61

Clients legally represented

22

Clients had legal cases closed

95

Clients had legal cases pursued

2,461

people benefited through awareness raising and training workshops

1,523

Children, youths, parents, NGO personnel, local authorities and teachers received awareness on the prevention of child sexual exploitation.

658

Law enforcement officials, lawyers, government officials, and NGO professional working with children received training.

280

Police, government officials, judicial officials and lawyers attended child sexual abuse

Strategic Programs

POLICY & LEGISLATION (P&L):

- Increase the adoption and effective implementation of comprehensive policies and laws, for the protection of at-risk children and children affected by sexual abuse and exploitation
- Improve leadership, coordination and collaboration among high levels of government, for effective implementation and promotion of existing policies and laws

CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT (CJD):

- Increase capacity of national law enforcement officials and judiciary for the investigation, prosecution and prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation
- Increase multidisciplinary cooperation at national and international levels for the investigation, prosecution and prevention of CSEA
- Increase child-focused and proactive practices by law enforcement and judiciary, for the best possible protection and support of child victims involved in the investigation and court processes

VICTIM SUPPORT & ASSISTANCE (VISA):

- Increase access to quality gender-sensitive and child-focused support services and legal protection, for child victims and their families
- Increase coordination and collaboration between law enforcement, judiciary and other child protection services for the provision of child-focused support for child victims and their families

COMMUNITY, INDUSTRY AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENT (CIME):

- Greater awareness and help-seeking skills around child sexual abuse and exploitation among children, young people, parents, caregivers and community members
- Increase dissemination of public information and promotion of evidence-based knowledge about risks for children to sexual abuse and exploitation, reporting mechanisms, and preventive measures
- Increase active engagement and action of the private sector for early prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation

Looking More In-Depth

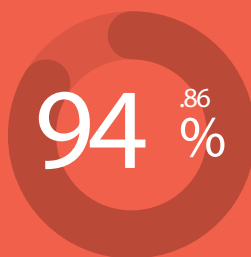
POLICY & LAW (PL)

APLE actively engaged in the drafting process of the “Child Protection Law” in partnership with The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY).

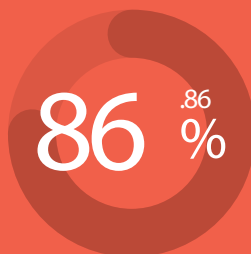


CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT (CJD)

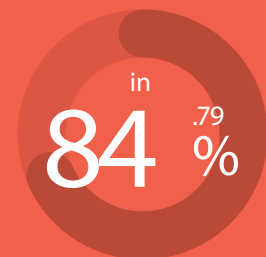
Snapshot



of police responses to (89) cases were conducted in a timely manner, and investigations were commenced by assigning designated and appropriately trained investigating police officers.



of police investigations (of 89 cases) were carried out with clear investigation plans, time frames and processes for working with children and families.



in child interviews, police conducted and followed child-friendly procedures by utilizing the PEACE interview model.

Police officers proactively and reactively carried out investigations into 89 suspected child sexual exploitation and abuse cases, both offline and online, involving 94 potential offenders. The majority of offenders (51) were Cambodian with remaining cases involving foreign nationals. These included American (7), Australian (4), French (4), British (2), Dutch (2), Italian (2), German (1), Canadian (1), and unclassified suspects (3). As a result of the investigations, nine suspects were arrested by police and their cases forwarded to the Court of First Instance for legal proceedings.

SIX BOYS RESCUED

Six underage boys aged between the ages of 8-15 years, were rescued by officers from the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police, after police responded to concerns regarding a French national who initiated intimate contact with the boys in the Toul Sangke neighborhood. Once sufficient evidence was collected, police arrested this 56-year-old man, and the boys were interviewed and subsequently referred to APLE partners to receive appropriate psychological and psycho-social support. The suspect was officially charged with committing Indecent Acts against minors under 15 of age, according to the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. If found guilty, the suspect faces imprisonment between 1-3 years.



LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST ONLINE ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION : In addition, through its Internet Hotline Cambodia, APLE received 125 reports concerning Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA). Among those, 71 cases were related to Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM), and the remaining, to adult pornographic materials (4), online grooming (9), live streaming (2), online solicitation and/or children exploited through prostitution (5) and sextortion (13). An additional 21 OCSEA related cases involved follow up, providing information and advice to vulnerable children and concerned parents. In accordance with the operating procedures, our Hotline Analysts assessed and responded by referring reports through the INHOPE ICCAM system (21 cases), to law enforcement agencies (28 cases), and to internet domain owners in 44 cases. As a result of these actions, the content of 40 posts were removed, and 27 cases were investigated by Cambodian police.

[A success story: Collaboration works faster!](#)

In August 2021, the Internet Hotline Cambodia received a report requesting to remove an indecent video which was uploaded to a pornography website. The report was made by a 17-year-old girl who identified herself as the victim. The reported URL was immediately accessed and analyzed by our hotline specialists and was confirmed to fit the criteria for child sexual abuse material. The URL was then reported to the INHOPE hotline member in the host country through the ICCAM, a system enabling the secure exchange of CSAM between hotlines located in different jurisdictions, with the aim of quick removal from the internet. The very next day, the content was successfully removed. APLE staff also followed up, maintaining contact with the girl, also supporting her to access additional support and services.



Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement is one of fundamental strategic objectives of the Criminal Justice Development Program. The increased knowledge and skills of law enforcement officers helps promote and child-focused investigations, prosecutions and overall, contributes to preventing child sexual abuse and exploitation. During 2021 APLE collaborated with the Cambodian National Police (CNP) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to organize and facilitate four specialized skill trainings sessions, focusing on child-friendly investigations.

This included several essential themes, including Understanding child sexual abuse and exploitation; Applying child-centric approaches in response to CSEA cases; Requirements of Child-friendly Standard Operating Procedures; Promoting a child-friendly culture within the workplace; and Understanding and responding to OCSEA cases. A total of 74 police officers took part, from Kandal, Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Kratie, Kep, Kampot and Preah Sihanouk provinces.



In addition to the skill training, APLE organized a two-day training session for 19 police officials and six APLE staff, related to “Stress Management and Self-Care” which was facilitated by expert psychologists and counsellors from a Cambodian NGO, the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO). The training helped the participants appreciate that stress management and self-care play a vital role for police leadership, and others, in developing services and responding appropriately to CSEA cases, including OCSEA.

Victim Support & Assistance (Visa)

APLE's victim support and assistance program has continued to work relentlessly to ensure adherence to the required standards of child-friendly court proceedings, as well as for victims to achieve justice during their journey to rehabilitation and reintegration.

The program therefore provides free legal advice and representation, also making certain that victims of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) and their families, are fully informed about their rights, and the status of their case in a sensitive and compassionate manner throughout the entire legal process. APLE's lawyers are present throughout the court proceedings, advocating and working to ensure that child victims' rights are protected and that their best interests are respected among court officials.

APLE's VISA team provides crisis intervention at the rescue and reporting stage. This involves conducting safety and needs assessments, identifying the specific requirements of each victim, based on their unique experiences and gender - and making appropriate referrals to our wide network of partner organizations for them to provide longer-term psycho-social, and other support services.

A Quick Look



86%

of child victims expressed that they felt comfortable and confident, and that their rights were respected during their participation in legal processes.

A Total of

309

clients received psychosocial and legal support services.

461

other beneficiaries, including judicial and government officials, police, lawyers and NGO stakeholders benefited through trainings, workshops, dialogues and meetings.

77%

of clients expressed satisfaction and stated that the support they received adequately met their needs.



In 2021, our VISA team provided legal counseling to 130 clients, 67 of whom were victims and 63 family members. Among those, 61 clients were legally represented by APLE lawyers while they attended to court proceedings to pursue justice. Proceedings resulted in five offenders—one British, one American and three Cambodians, receiving prison sentences of between 1-8 years, and compensation orders of 5 to 40 million Riel being made (Equivalent to US \$1,250 to US \$10,000).

In addition to the convictions, three victims from a further two cases (One in Cambodia and the other in Australia), were awarded with compensation by the courts. Two boy victims received US\$600 compensation each from an American offender, and one female adult victim received US\$65,000 compensation, awarded by an Australian court. The latter was a historical case from 2002-2005, relating to sexual abuse images which the offender produced at the time of the offences. [This illustrates how international borders and time is not a barrier to APLE supporting victims to seek and access justice.](#)

In addition to legal services, APLE provided psycho-social support, at the crisis stage to 34 new child victims and continued to provide support and follow up with an existing 187 child victims. The provision of immediate psychological counseling to child victims at the crisis stage plays a vital role following disclosure and rescue. The effects of abuse and exploitation are profound, affecting children emotionally and physically, and the essential support provided is very important and significant. This helps children to feel that they are not to blame and are safe, valued and respected. This can play a vital role in helping them take back control of their lives. APLE staff also frequently support parents and care givers, helping them come to terms with events and helping them to support their children. Immediate support kits which include hygiene materials and basic necessities are also provided to ensure that the essential needs of each child are met.

Figure 1:
Total Clients Received Support Services in 2021

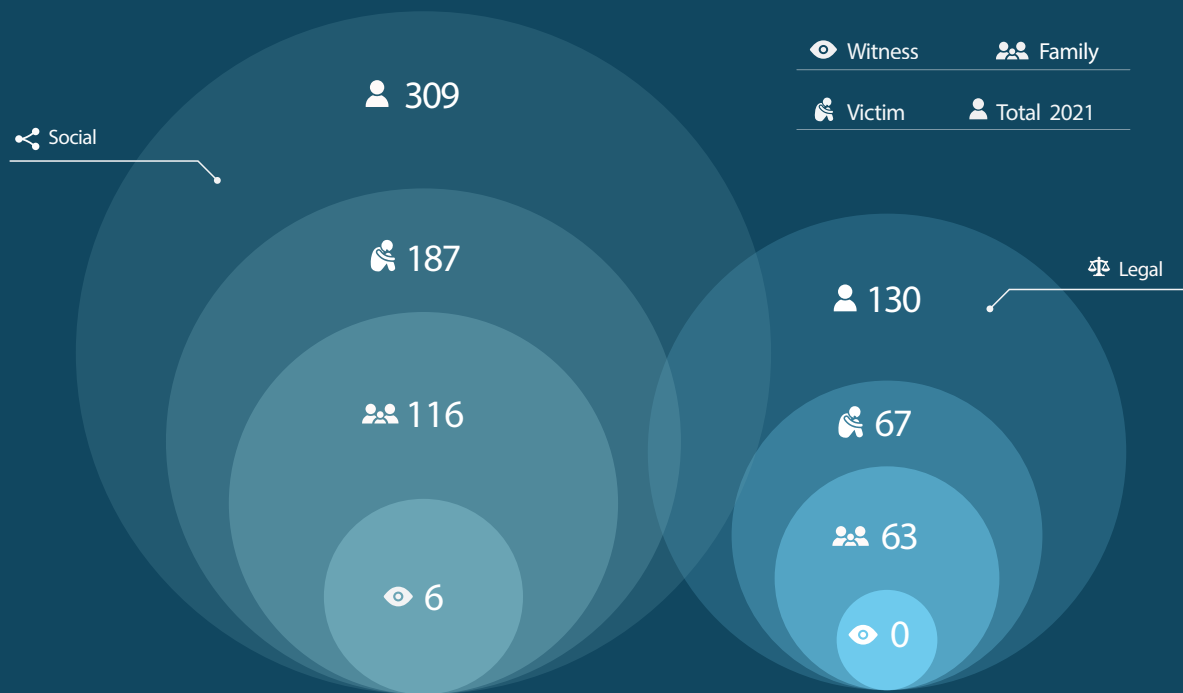
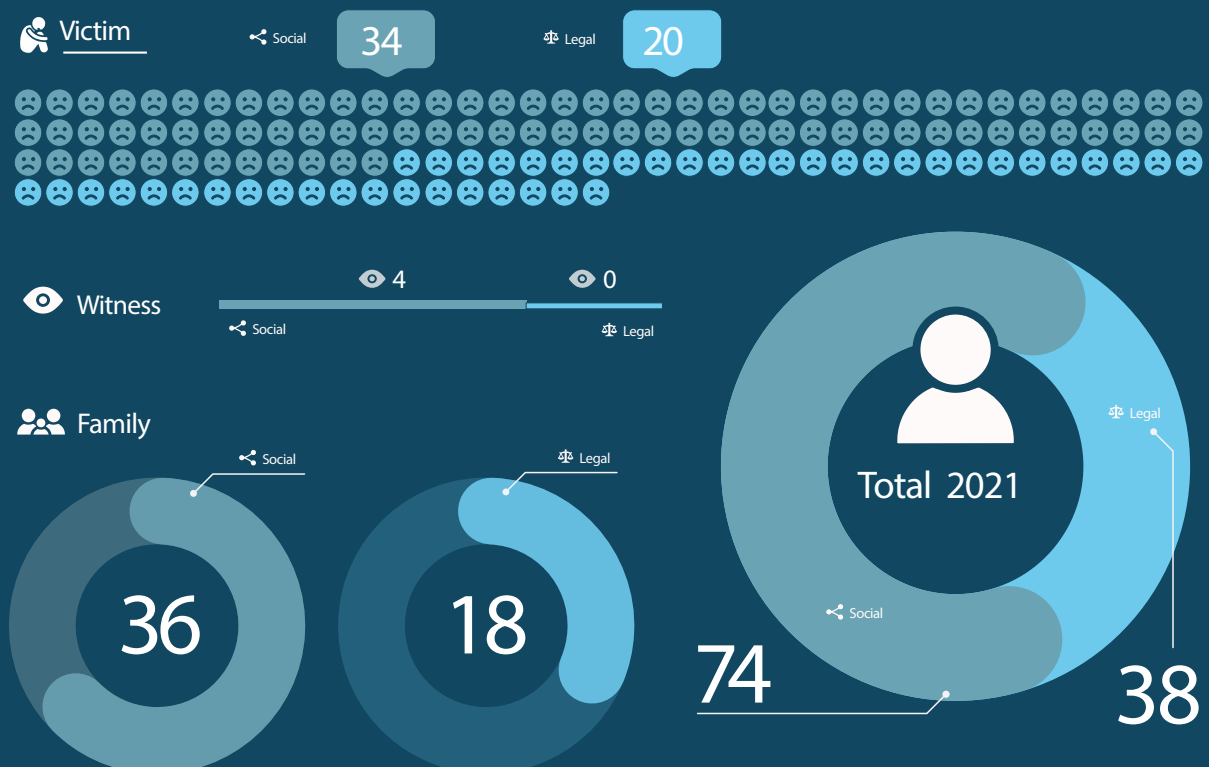


Figure 2:
New Clients Received Supports Services in 2021



Case Study: Settlement vs. A Lifetime of Fearfulness



Bopha turned 30 years old in 2021 and had worked hard for many years to set up her own business, a small beauty salon in her community, and also had her own family- a three-year-old son. However, this hid the reality that for many years Bopha had remained fearful and traumatized following sexual abuse as a 13-year-old girl. In 2019, she heard of another case involving child sexual abuse materials, when an Australian offender was arrested. He was sentenced to eight years and nine months in prison for the charges, which included unlawful sexual intercourse with a child, committing an indecent act on a child and possession of child exploitation materials.

In this case, the offender agreed to settle with Bopha for an amount of US \$65,000. Although she received a settlement, Bopha remains concerned of the availability of her sexual abuse materials and worries about it being spread in the virtual world.

COMMUNITY, INDUSTRY AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENT (CIME)



The CIME program aims to strengthen community understanding, to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of children through a range of tailor made and specially designed awareness raising, education, capacity building and dissemination activities. This addresses the lack of understanding of children, young people, family, community members, and duty bearers on sexual abuse and exploitation of children, both online and offline. This engagement enables them to monitor and identify children at risk, report suspected cases and seek help from key individuals and service providers to provide services and support.

AWARENESS RAISING:

Designed to increase the knowledge children, young people, parents, caregivers, educators and other community members to keep themselves and others safe.

Beneficiaries reaches through awareness

 Children

305

Male

460

Female

 Parents

157

Male

291

Female

648

 Male

875

 Female

Total beneficiaries reaches through awareness

 Local Authority

106

Male

94

Female

 Government & NGO

59

Male

22

Female

 Law Enforcement

21

Male

08

Female



You may wish to place some comments under each photo to explain what it is?

TRAINING

Conducted for child protection practitioners, community leaders, local authorities, private businesses and law enforcement, as well as judicial actors and lawyers - on subjects mostly concerning them, including reporting and child safeguarding.

 Police, Judicial
Official and Lawyers

186

Male

106

Female



 Government
and NGO Personnels

85

Male

135

Female

 Local Authority

66

Male

52

Female

 Parents

3


Male

25

Female

WORKSHOPS

Organised to focus on the identification, discussion and resolution of issues, and sharing of best practices among child protection stakeholders. Targeted at law enforcement, judicial officials, and also government and NGO personnel - to promote discussion surrounding the child-focused responses when addressing child sexual exploitation cases.

 Government, NGO
Personnels, and Teachers

49

Male

37

Female


 Youths

20

Male

26

Female

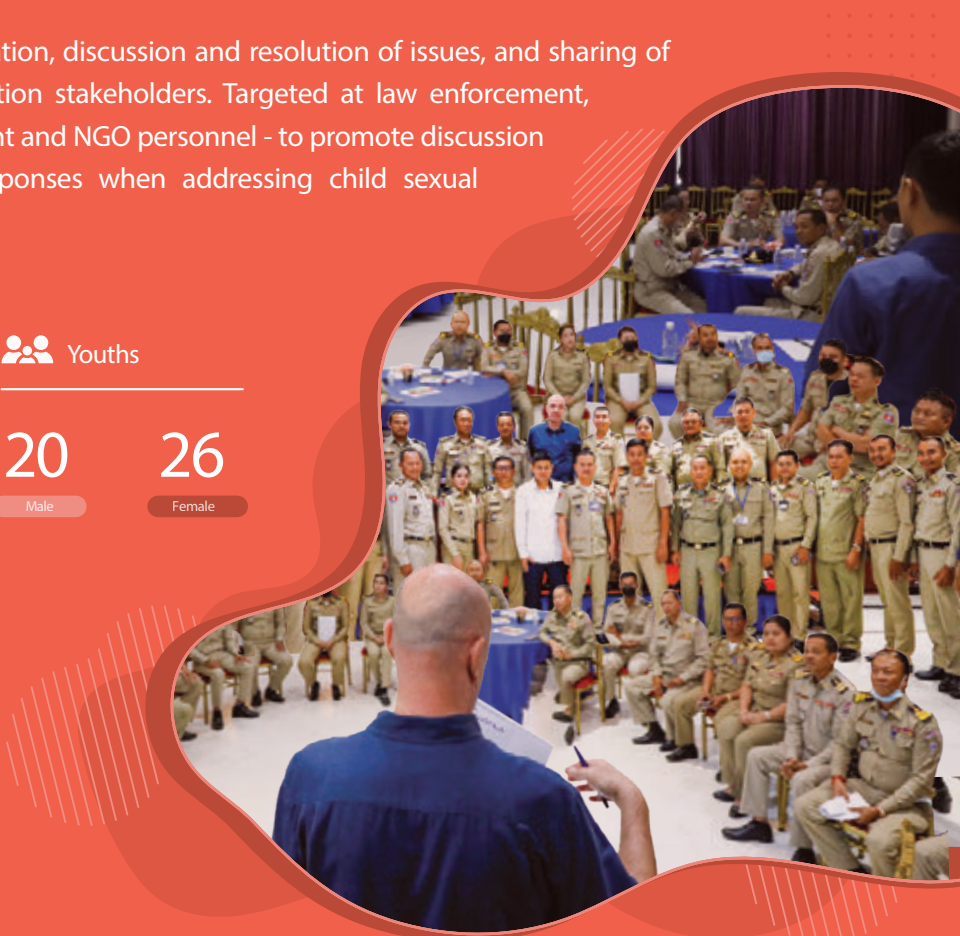
 Police, Judicial Official
and Lawyers

45

Male

103

Female





CAMPAIGN

Safer Internet Day 2021 (SID)

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the measures introduced by the Royal Government of Cambodia strictly prohibited large gatherings of people, to curb the spread of the virus and protect the population. However, APLE successfully adapted its approach and managed to organize the SID campaign in a range of smaller events. To achieve this, we collaborated with a range of partners, including the Cambodian Red Cross Phnom Penh Branch (CRC), Pour un Sourire d' Enfants (PSE), the Indochina Starfish Foundation (ISF) the National Committee to Counter Trafficking (NCCT), and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). In total 754 children, youth, parents, caregivers, government officials and NGO workers took part.

Following the events, 599 took part in the evaluation process. (The majority -72% were children, 15.5% parents/carers, 9.1% were youth aged 18-24 years old and 3.4% were government officials and NGO personnel working in child protection). [Overall feedback of the events revealed positive responses.](#)

80^{.50}
%

of participants expressed that the event helped them understand what risks children may encounter online, from them 50.6% very much.

81^{.50}
%

of participants considered that the event helped them understand what Online Child Sexual Exploitation is from them 51.6% very much.

84^{.50}
%

of participants expressed that the event helped them understand what online situations should be reported, from them 54.6% very much.

85^{.90}
%

of participants reported that the event helped them know how to keep children safe from online risks in future, from them 56.6% very much.

85^{.30}
%

of participants identified that the event helped them know where to report Online Child Sexual Exploitation, from them 60.1% very much.

Report It - Don't Share It! Campaign

During June-August 2021, APLE worked closely with Facebook to launch the 'Report It – Don't Share It!' campaign, designed to educate the public about the harm caused by sharing images or videos of child sexual abuse, and how to report this kind of content to law enforcement and Facebook. The campaign was rolled out in ten countries with child safety organizations, to inform people that sharing child sexual abuse materials (CSAM), is both illegal and causes significant harm to children. The key messages were translated into different languages and modified appropriately for each specific context – to encourage and promote common understanding and messages across all countries: Report it - Don't share it!

This campaign gained strong support from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPTC) and the Cambodia National Council for Children (CNCC). MPTC is the leading government institution to promote the protection of children in the digital age, as reflected by its ongoing public awareness campaign on Child Online Risks and Protection launched in early 2021. His Excellency, Chea Vandeth, MPTC's Minister, expressed his clear vision that "Cambodian children will have both opportunities and safety in using digital technology."

Mr. Seila Samleang, Executive Director of APLE said at the campaign launching that "We are very pleased to partner with Facebook to launch this campaign. This will enable a better understanding of how sharing images or videos of child sexual abuse online has a devastating impact on the child depicted in that content, and what adults can do to prevent sharing of child abusive content. We urgently call for the public to support the prevention of child sexual abuse online by sharing this campaign video and reporting crimes."

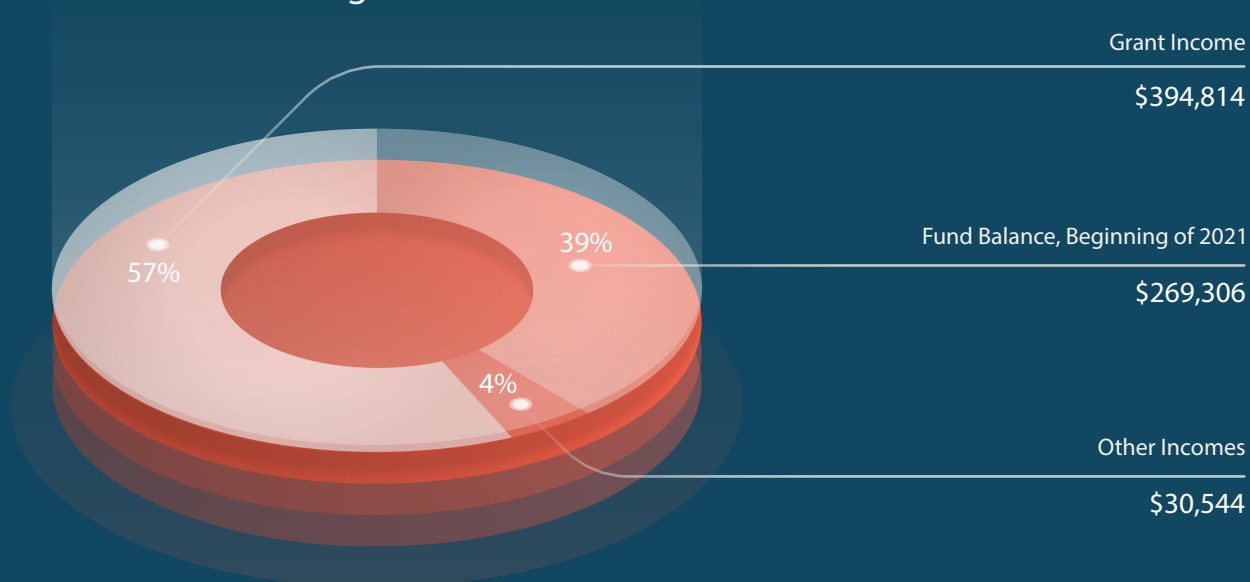
The campaign was very successful, reaching a total of 3,261,483 people and engaged a total of 268,514 people. Feedback indicated that the campaign was very impactful and promoted behavior change of internet users to take positive action to protect children.



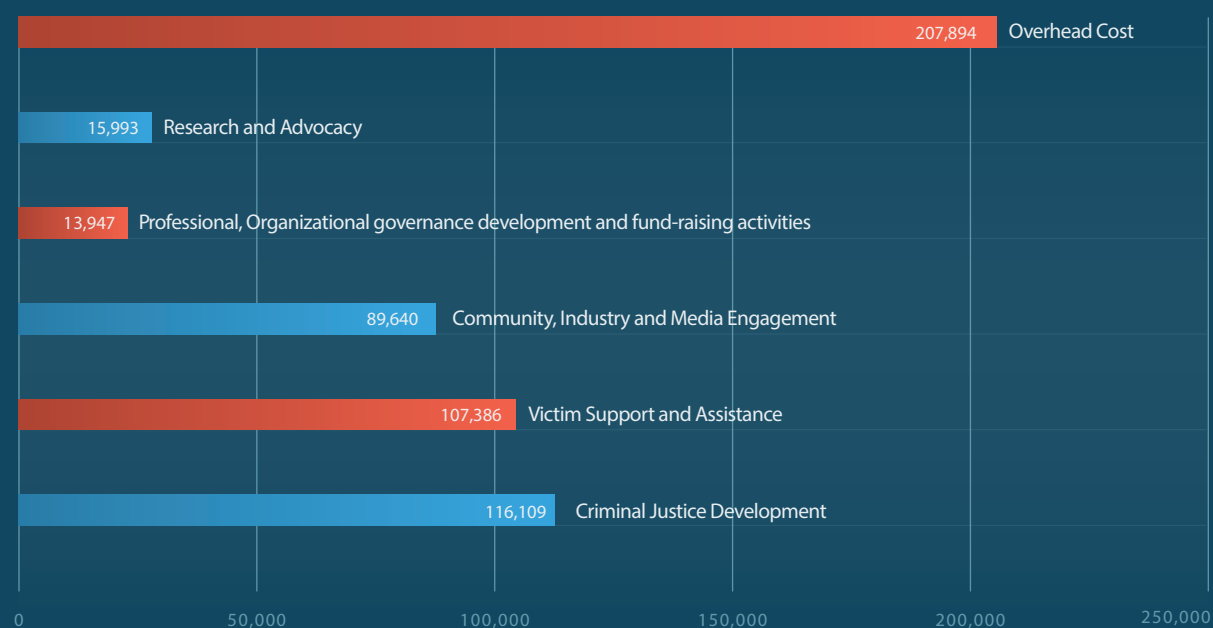
Financial Highlights:

In 2021, APLE had a total available budget of US\$ 694, 664 - provided by various donors and sponsors.

Total Available Budget



Expenditure



A photograph of five APLE staff members (three men and two women) standing in a row. Behind them is a large, faint graphic of a hand with fingers spread, set against a dark blue background with circular patterns.

CELEBRATING 2021

Agents of Change

Five APLE staff members were certified as “Agents of Change” after successfully completing 20 hours of training on victim-centered approaches. The training aimed to equip professionals such as police officers, judges, prosecutors and frontline child protection workers with the tools to assist sexually exploited children and youth. It was provided by experts - including former US police officers, prosecutors, attorneys and child protection specialists with a wealth of experience, supporting child victims in the criminal justice processes. [APLE staff will integrate what they have learned in future training events, to enhance the activities that they already provide.](#)

New Partnerships

Memorandum of Understanding

1. APLE and Cambodian Red Cross (Phnom Penh Branch)

APLE and the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) Phnom Penh Branch expressed the joint commitment to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse and exploitation, through the creation and implementation of educational activities, including awareness raising, trainings and campaigning to target audiences including children and general public, as well as to provide support to victims, and children vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation and their families.





2. APLE and Happy Chandara School

Within its five-year strategy (2021-2025), APLE continues to value the significance of close collaboration and work with various stakeholders. This enables resources to be combined and scaled up to meet the needs of all beneficiaries, especially child victims and their families who have significant impact on their emotional and physical health, and economic security.

Given this, APLE expanded our working collaboration with the Happy Chandara School, based in Phnom Penh and signed a MoU. This affirms our commitment and adherence to common values, and to protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. Further, it identified a shared practical framework for referrals, cooperation, communication and collaborative case management processes between the two organisations.

