

# IMPACT REPORT



APLE

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023

APLE Cambodia

This Impact Report was compiled and prepared by Mr. Neng Vannak, with assistance from all the colleagues at APLE Cambodia.

The photos and images in this report are sourced from APLE and Canva Pro.

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A full-page background image showing the silhouettes of two children flying kites against a bright, hazy sunset sky. The child on the left is in the foreground, reaching up to hold a kite string. The child on the right is slightly further back, also holding a kite. The kites are colorful, with one showing yellow, red, and blue, and another showing pink, yellow, and green. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and long shadows. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

# INTRODUCTION



## Advancing Child Protection Efforts in Cambodia

APLE Cambodia stands as a leading non-governmental organization dedicated to combating child sexual abuse and exploitation. Since its inception, APLE has proactively engaged in child protection through a comprehensive strategy encompassing prevention, protection, advocacy, and support. This approach ensures a safer environment for children by fostering close collaboration with law enforcement, government agencies, and community partners to address the multifaceted challenges of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Child protection is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of creating safe and nurturing environments that allow children to flourish. In our increasingly connected world, children face numerous threats, both online and offline, jeopardizing their safety and well-being. Protecting children from abuse and exploitation transcends a moral obligation; it is a societal responsibility necessitating coordinated efforts

across all sectors. Ensuring the safety of children is critical for their development, health, and dignity, and is essential in breaking the cycle of abuse and poverty they may encounter.

This Impact Report provides a comprehensive overview of APLE's activities and achievements in 2023, highlighting strategic initiatives and our effects on protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse. It details progress in four key intervention programs: Community, Industry, and Media Engagement; Criminal Justice Development; Victim Support and Assistance; and Policy and Legal Reforms. Additionally, it underscores our advocacy efforts that have significantly influenced national policies to enhance child protection.

The report also emphasizes the importance of continuous collaboration and innovation in driving these efforts to ensure all children can grow up in a secure environment.



## Message from Our Executive Director

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and pride for the strides APLE has made in our mission to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse. The journey through 2023 has been marked by both challenges and successes, each contributing to our growth and strengthening our resolve to create a safer community for children.

This past year, we faced significant challenges, from navigating complex legal landscapes to addressing the evolving threats posed by online child sexual exploitation and abuse. However, these challenges have also served as critical learning experiences, underscoring the importance of adaptability and the need for continued innovation in our approaches. Our ability to respond effectively to these challenges is a testament to the dedication and resilience of our team and the strength of our collaborations with government agencies, development partners, NGOs, and communities.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our board and staff, whose unwavering commitment and tireless efforts drive the success of our programs. Their passion and expertise are the backbone of APLE's impact. I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable support of our stakeholders, such as donors, partners, collaborators, and the community, whose trust and collaboration have been instrumental in furthering our mission.

Looking ahead to 2024, I am optimistic about the opportunities to expand our impact and deepen our engagement with communities. Our vision for the upcoming year includes enhancing our interventions, strengthening partnerships, and advocating for more robust legal frameworks to



Seila SAMLEANG  
Executive Director, APLE Cambodia

protect children. We will focus on developing and fostering innovative solutions and collective action to address emerging challenges and ensure that every child has the opportunity to live free from sexual exploitation and abuse.

As we embark on this journey into 2024, I invite all of our supporters and partners to continue standing with us. Thank you for your firm support and commitment to this vital cause.

With sincere appreciation,

# Year in Review

## *Empowering Communities and Strengthening Child Protection through Innovative Programs and Global Collaboration*

In 2023, APLE continued to advance its mission through impactful programs and initiatives, remarkable events, and strategic collaborations that reinforced our commitment to protecting children.

### **Community, Industry, and Media Engagement Program**

APLE's efforts focused on empowering communities to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse by promoting protective behaviors and collaborative actions. The program provided targeted training, awareness-raising, and campaign initiatives to equip communities with the skills necessary to identify and address exploitation and abuse effectively.

### **Criminal Justice Development Program**

This program enhanced law enforcement capabilities through specialized training and cooperation. APLE focused on child-centered practices and ensured that criminal justice procedures respected and prioritized child victims' best interests and well-being. Our initiatives facilitated the sharing of resources and best practices with the aim of strengthening the response to child sexual exploitation crimes.

### **Victim Support and Assistance Program**

APLE provided support services tailored to the individualized needs of child victim-survivors and their families. The program emphasized coordinated crisis support, recovery, capacity building for social workers, and the development of inclusive response systems. It empowered victims to heal and reintegrate into society.

### **Policy and Legal Reforms Program**

APLE played a crucial role in advocating for policy and legal reforms that align with international standards. We worked to support government bodies in establishing clear legal frameworks and strengthening child-centered practices in legal proceedings. Our efforts aimed to enhance the protection of vulnerable children and ensure that their rights are upheld in all legal contexts.

In 2023, APLE conducted large-scale awareness campaigns, such as Safer Internet Day, which reached thousands of people. Furthermore, APLE brought together key stakeholders from relevant sectors to discuss effective ways to collaborate and emphasized the need for meaningful cooperation across different sectors to prevent and respond to child sexual exploitation and abuse.







# IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



## Highlights of Impactful Interventions

In 2023, APLE achieved remarkable milestones in its mission to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse. Through comprehensive programs and strategic collaborations, APLE has delivered impactful services and advocacy.

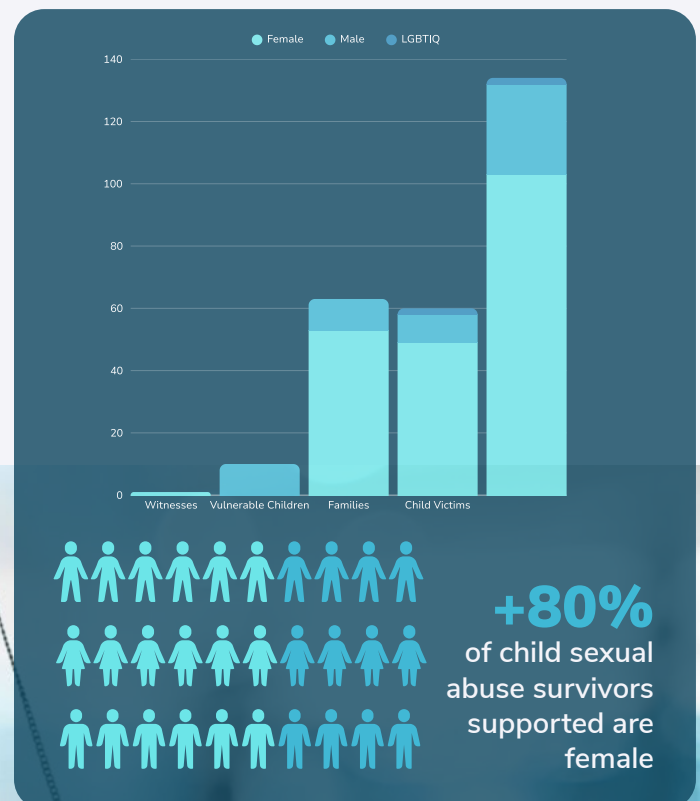
### Support and Assistance for Child Victim-Survivors

APLE provided psycho-social support to **134** clients, including 109 females and 2 children identifying as LGBTIQ+. These services were important for victims, vulnerable children, and their families. Among these clients, **60** were child victims, **10** vulnerable children, and **1** child witness. Moreover, **63** family members received social and legal support and education to cope with the aftermath of abuse.

In the legal domain, **127** clients benefited from legal counseling and support, which included representation during court processes. This support was crucial in ensuring that victims' rights were upheld and that they were treated

with dignity and respect throughout legal proceedings. Our legal team supported **57** child victims, **10** vulnerable children, **1** child witness, and **59** family members and facilitated their participation in court proceedings across various jurisdictions, including the Phnom Penh Municipal Court and the Supreme Court. These efforts were pivotal in securing justice for victims and holding perpetrators accountable. Notably, **9** victims received compensation, totaling US \$22,550.

### GENDER DISTRIBUTION ACROSS CLIENT GROUPS



### Awareness and Education Initiatives

APLE's Community, Industry, and Media Engagement Program conducted **48** awareness sessions, reaching over **4,141** individuals, including 2,371 females and 11 LGBTIQ+. These sessions were designed to promote protective behaviors and foster a culture of safety and support within communities. Moreover, the Safer Internet Day campaign alone reached **1,202** participants. This campaign was organized annually, aiming to enhance online safety awareness among government officials, NGO child protection workers, educators, industry personnel, children, and youths.

### Hotline and Reporting Mechanisms

APLE's hotline received a total of **271** reports, with 206 online and 65 offline cases. These reports were critical in identifying and addressing cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse, such as child sexual abuse material, online grooming, and sextortion. Among these, **188** online and **57** offline cases were referred to law enforcement agencies for investigations.

### Lobbying and Advocacy

APLE's efforts focused on strengthening policy and legal frameworks to protect children. Through collaboration with government bodies and international partners, APLE successfully advocated for the implementation of child-centered practices within the justice system. This ensured that the well-being and best interests of child victim-survivors were prioritized.

APLE has been instrumental in reshaping Cambodia's policy and legal landscape, advocating for response frameworks that align with international standards. This includes efforts to improve policies and legal systems through collaboration and the establishment of clear legal protections for children involved in the justice process.

### International Collaboration

APLE's active participation in international forums and partnerships facilitated the sharing of resources and best practices. By collaborating with global organizations like INHOPE, ECPAT network, industry companies like Meta, and international law enforcement agencies, APLE has reinforced cross-border efforts to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse.

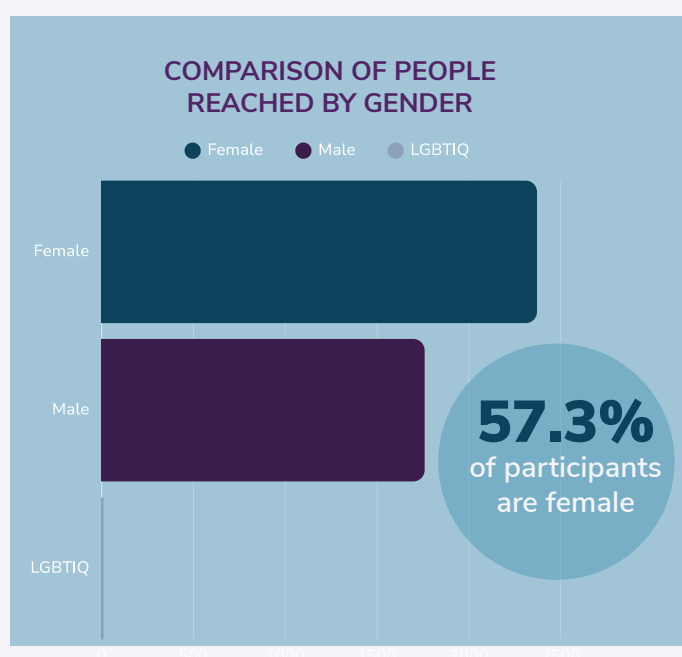
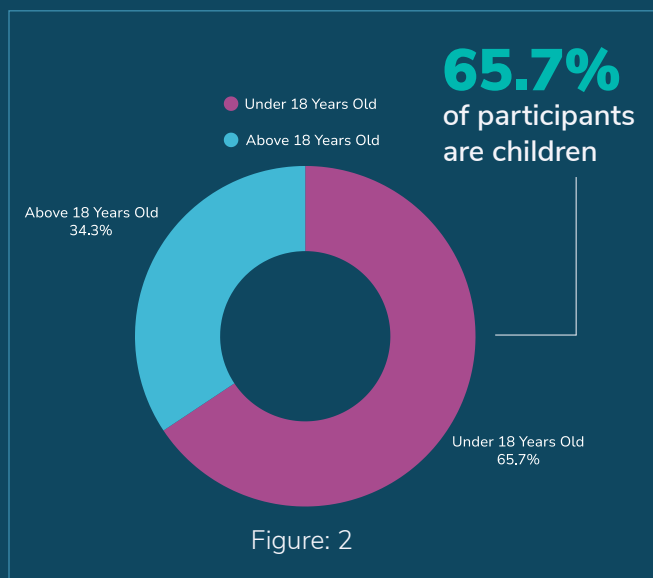


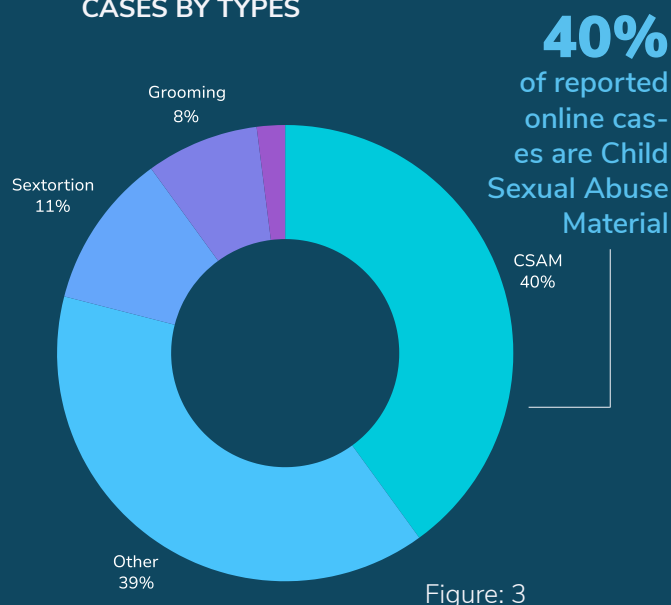
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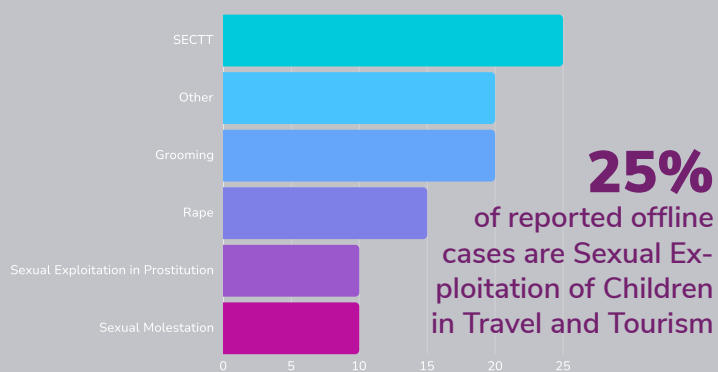
### PROPORTION OF PEOPLE REACHED BY AGES



### DISTRIBUTION OF ONLINE CASES BY TYPES



### PROPORTION OF OFFLINE CASES BY TYPES



### Law Enforcement Training

APLE's Criminal Justice Development Program focused on enhancing law enforcement capabilities to address child sexual exploitation and abuse effectively.

In 2023, APLE made significant strides in enhancing the capabilities of law enforcement to effectively address OCSEA. Through this program, APLE conducted five specialized training sessions, equipping **302** law enforcement officers with advanced investigative techniques and victim-centered approaches.

These training sessions were strategically designed to address the complexities of investigating child sexual exploitation cases, emphasizing the importance of adopting a sensitive and victim-focused methodology. Officers from various key departments, including Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection, Technical Police and Science, and Anti-Cybercrime, participated in these rigorous sessions.





# IMPACT STORIES





## IMPACT STORY 1

### *Advancing Child Online Safety Through National Training Initiatives*

In a concerted effort to enhance child online safety, twenty-four national trainers from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports have completed a comprehensive training of trainer course. Held on October 31st and November 1st, 2023, this initiative was a collaboration between APLE Cambodia and the Ministry's Department of Vocational Orientation. The training brought together core trainers, school directors, and local life skill teachers from three schools in Kampot.

The program focused on integrating online child safety materials—developed by the Ministry, APLE, and UNICEF—into the Local Life Skills Curriculum. This initiative aims to equip educators with the tools to foster safe digital practices among students.

A highlight of the training was a virtual presentation by eSafety representatives from Australia, who shared their approach to implementing online safety programs in schools.

Funded by UNICEF Cambodia and the Fund to End Violence against Children, this program will be extended to subnational trainers, school principals, and life skill teachers nationwide. These educators will play a crucial role in teaching students about online safety.

*"I feel more equipped and confident to foster a safer digital environment for our students, thanks to this comprehensive training."*

Online safety education initiatives are crucial in preventing OCSEA, as highlighted by the Disrupting Harm study in Cambodia. The study revealed alarming figures, showing that 11% of internet using children aged 12-17 years have experienced online sexual exploitation, with many cases going unreported due to a lack of awareness and resources. Specifically, the study found that a substantial proportion of children had encountered harmful online interactions, and this emphasizes the urgent need for comprehensive educational strategies.





## IMPACT STORY 2

### *From Vulnerability to Advocacy: Reachny's Journey of Resilience and Justice*

In the quiet town of Kampong Cham, Reachny, a 13-year-old girl, faced a harrowing ordeal of online sexual exploitation. As the COVID-19 pandemic shifted her learning to the virtual realm, a smartphone intended for her studies became a gateway to danger.

Through social media, Reachny unknowingly connected with a predator named SA SA, who masqueraded as a friend to gain her trust and manipulate her into sharing intimate content.

When Reachny resisted further demands, SA SA threatened to expose her, and ultimately shared her private photos and videos with her peers and teachers. This betrayal left Reachny isolated and ashamed, with her academic performance suffering and her parents misunderstanding her distress.

Hope arrived when a relative informed Reachny's family about APLE Cambodia's 'Pisey' Chatbot. Seeking guidance, her parents reached out, and APLE swiftly intervened, providing emotional

counseling and guiding the family through the legal process. With APLE's support, Reachny's mother filed a complaint against SA SA and his accomplices.

As legal proceedings unfolded, APLE stood by Reachny's side. We conducted a thorough risk assessment and provided support accordingly. With legal assistance from APLE, Reachny's family felt empowered to pursue justice. Their perseverance paid off as two offenders were arrested and charged for their crimes.

Enrolled in grade 7, Reachny received emotional treatment and social support from APLE's NGO partner specializing in trauma recovery. Despite the challenges, Reachny slowly regained her confidence. Today, she is an advocate for herself and others, embodying hope for victims of online sexual exploitation.

Reachny's transformation from victim to advocate highlights the power of comprehensive support in overcoming adversity. Her journey underscores the critical role of APLE in providing the assistance needed for recovery and empowerment. This success was made possible by the support of our partners and supporters, to whom we extend our deepest gratitude. ■





### IMPACT STORY 3

#### *Enhancing Police Response to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*

In Phnom Penh, a dedicated group of **45** trainers from provinces including Kandal, Takeo, Kampong Cham, Tbong Khmum, and Kep, along with key departments such as Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection, Technical Police and Science, Anti-Cybercrime, and the Police Academy of Cambodia, recently wrapped up a transformative two-day workshop.

This session aimed to boost skills in protecting children online and strengthening responses that are sensitive to the needs of young victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA).

Supported by UNICEF Cambodia and in collaboration with the Cambodian National Police, the training provided essential tools for tackling the challenging issues of OCSEA. In 2023, APLE trained a remarkable **302** officers, equipping them with advanced investigative skills and approaches that put victims first.

The workshop was hands-on, with officers diving

into real-world scenarios and learning how to better identify and handle online exploitation cases. Participants also had the chance to connect with expert trainers and discuss strategies for working with community and international partners.

“Being part of this training has been incredibly empowering,” shared one officer. “The practical skills and insights we’ve gained will really help us protect children and ensure justice is served.”

This initiative highlights APLE’s dedication to prevent communities from harm through meaningful partnerships and focused training.



## **OUR APPROACH TO CHILD PROTECTION**



## Our Child Protection Focuses

APLE's approach to child protection focuses on implementing best practices that foster innovation in interventions and promote continuous learning. These approaches ensure that we effectively protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, while empowering stakeholders to respond with expertise and compassion.

### Child Protection Best Practices

APLE supports frameworks that are built on international standards and localized strategies that prioritize children's rights and well-being. We emphasize a child-centered approach and engage in multi-sectoral collaborations.

### Innovative Interventions

Innovation drives APLE's programs, where we leverage digital tools to enhance our reach and impact. The 'Pisey' chatbot, for example, provides accessible resources and guidance to communities, children, victims, and families, facilitating swift support and intervention. Furthermore, our trauma-informed care methodologies are continuously refined to ensure that our services are sensitive and tailored to the unique needs of child victims, which promotes healing and empowerment.

### The Hotline

APLE's hotline is a crucial component of our efforts. We offer a secure and anonymous channel for reporting incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Staffed by trained analysts and counselors, the hotline ensures rapid intervention and connects callers with required services.

### Voices of Child Victim-Survivors

As part of our child protection strategy, APLE

is dedicated to amplifying the voices of child victim-survivors. We prioritize listening to their experiences to better understand their needs and develop inclusive responses. By integrating their perspectives into our programs, we empower survivors and enhance our effectiveness. APLE is committed to creating safe spaces for children to share, engage, and advocate for systemic change.

### Continuous Learning and Development

APLE is committed to the continuous learning and development of our staff to maintain high standards of care and responsiveness. Regular training sessions and workshops keep our team updated on the latest child protection practices and trauma-informed care techniques. Through partnerships with local and international organizations, we facilitate knowledge exchange and enable our staff to learn from global experts. This dedication to professional development ensures that APLE remains at the forefront of child protection and is prepared to address emerging challenges with evidence based knowledge and sensitivity.

A person is wearing a white and black VR headset, held up by two hands. The person's face is partially visible through the headset. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting. A dark teal rectangular overlay is positioned in the center of the image, containing the text "LOOKING FORWARD" in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

## Strategies to Address Evolving Challenges

As we look ahead, APLE remains dedicated to adapting our strategies to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse in an ever-evolving landscape. Our focus will be on proactively addressing emerging challenges and amplifying our impact through strategic initiatives.

The digital realm continues to present new risks to child safety. In response, APLE will invest in innovative technological solutions and enhance our child online protection strategies. We will strengthen cross-border collaboration with existing partners like INHOPE, eSafety, and ECPAT International while seeking new alliances with organizations such as WeProtect Global Alliance to ensure a more coordinated approach to combating online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, APLE will intensify community awareness through educational campaigns to empower children, families, and communities to recognize, report threats, and prevent harms effectively.

To address the growing demand for child protection services, APLE plans to expand its reach both geographically and programmatically. We will develop new initiatives targeting underserved regions, providing crucial resources and support to vulnerable communities. This expansion includes broadening our support networks and enhancing our hotline capabilities. We will also prioritize capacity building through national training programs for law enforcement and social service professionals. These initiatives aim to equip stakeholders with the essential skills to effectively tackle child sexual exploitation and create safer environments for children.

At the core of our approach, APLE will place children at the center when designing interventions. We recognize the importance of children's voices and experiences in developing effective solutions. By actively engaging children in the creation and implementation of our programs, we ensure that our interventions are not only child-centered but also truly responsive to their needs and perspectives. This collaborative approach will empower children as active participants in their own protection.

To ensure accountability, APLE will continue to implement rigorous monitoring and evaluation frameworks designed to track the progress and outcomes of our projects. These frameworks will enable us to assess our performance against set objectives and make necessary adjustments to enhance our services. Additionally, we plan to actively seek feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders and incorporate their valuable insights into our planning and evaluation processes.

We invite individuals, organizations, and communities to join us in our mission to protect children. Your support is crucial and can profoundly impact countless lives. Whether through financial contributions, volunteering, or partnerships, your involvement is vital in advancing our cause and making a lasting difference.





## **OUR FINANCIAL INTEGRITY**



## Financial Analysis

In 2023, APLE remained steadfast in its mission to drive positive change and support communities through targeted programs and initiatives. Our financial performance reflects our commitment to transparency and effective resource management.

This year, we received a total income of **\$435,183** from our generous donors, including BfdW, Plan International, UNICEF, Childhood Foundation, APLE Switzerland, and TdH Netherlands. These vital contributions enabled us to implement a variety of critical programs and initiatives.

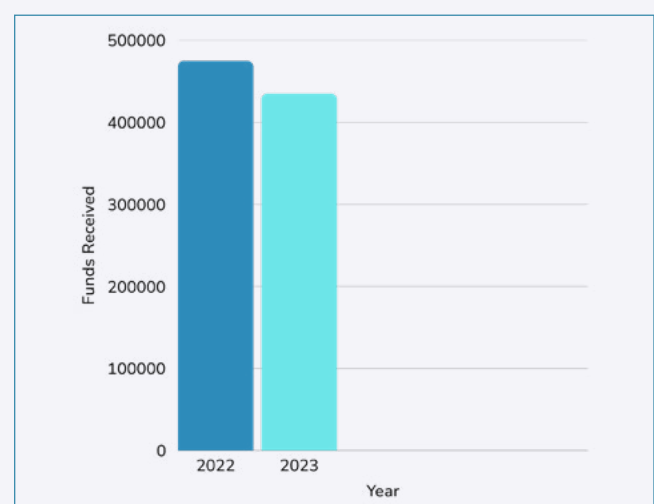
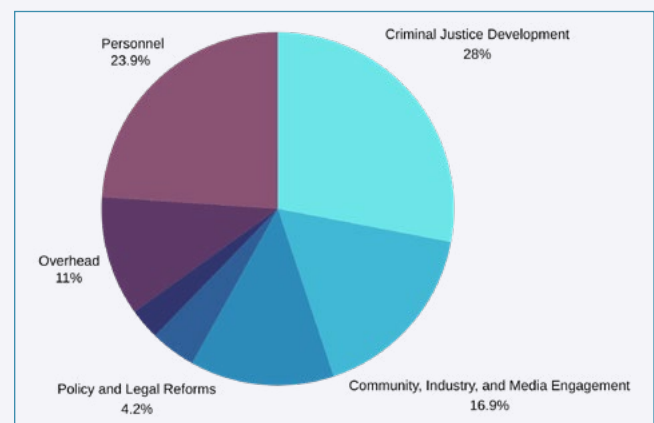
Our total expenditure for the year was **\$435,183**, distributed as follows:

- Criminal Justice Development Program: **28%** of our expenditure was dedicated to promoting fair and effective justice systems.
- Community, Industry, and Media Engagement Program: **17%** was allocated to fostering collaboration and engagement with key stakeholders.
- Victim Support and Assistance Program: **13%** supported the provision of necessary resources and aid to victims.
- Policy and Legal Reforms Program: **4%** was directed towards advocating for essential policy and legal changes.
- Professional and Organizational Development and Fundraising Activities: **3%** was invested to enhance organizational capacity and sustainability.
- Administrative: **35%** covered personnel and overhead costs, ensuring the smooth operation of our organization.

We maintain robust internal control frameworks to manage our financial resources. Our finance

team conducts regular audits to ensure compliance and uphold the highest standards of financial integrity. Transparency in our financial reporting allows stakeholders to understand the allocation and impact of our resources clearly.

We extend our profound gratitude to all our donors, especially **BfdW, Plan International, UNICEF Cambodia, Childhood Foundation, APLE Switzerland, and Terre des Hommes Netherlands**. Your generous contributions have been instrumental in advancing our programs and supporting the communities we serve. Together, we continue to make substantial progress in our mission, and we look forward to furthering this impactful work with your continued partnership.



## **Action Pour Les Enfants Cambodia**

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