



Ponheary Ly Foundation



Annual Report 2022 - 2023



This report covers:

School year from December 2022 - October 2023

Fiscal year from October 1st 2022 - 30th September 2023



Ponheary Ly Foundation (PLF)

is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that creates pathways to education for disadvantaged children and youth in northern Cambodia.

REGISTERED IN:

Cambodia

USA (EIN 20-4277315)

Canada (84158-3313-RR0001)

OTHER FISCAL SPONSORSHIPS (Umbrellas)

Switzerland (Eyes-Open)

EU (CEDE)

UK (GLOBALTEER)



Our mission is to break down the many barriers to education that impoverished students face, and ensure that they have equal opportunities for advancement.

Our work stems from the premise that access to school is a basic human right, crucial in the fight against poverty, and fundamental for the country's equitable development. With access to the right opportunities, students can help lift their families out of poverty and reshape their communities. *School Is The Answer*



We support over 2800 students across four pathways in the marginalized communities of Cambodia's two poorest provinces, Preah Vihear and Siem Reap. Working alongside existing public schools to bolster their effectiveness, we offer up opportunities that students otherwise would not encounter. Once a student enters a PLF Pathway, we accompany them every step of the way until the realization of their individual potential – whether that be meaningful employment, vocational training, or university.

RURAL PATHWAY

G4-12



REMOTE PATHWAY

K-G12



URBAN PATHWAY

G1-12

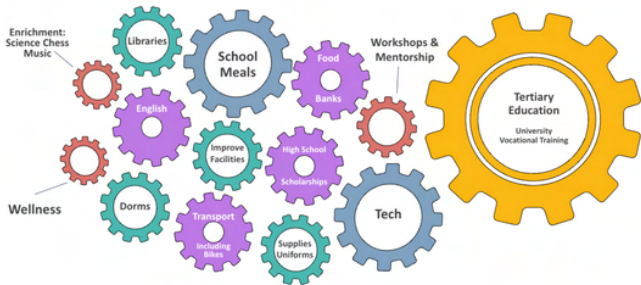


UNI & VO-TECH



GEARED FOR SUCCESS

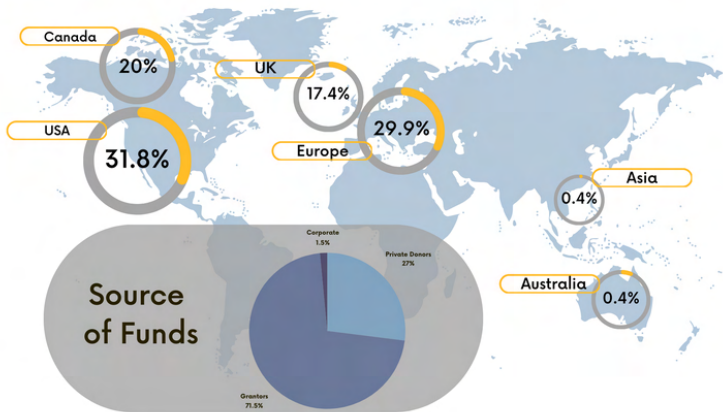
Our set of interconnected programs - honed and developed over time - build essential pillars around the bare-bones learning experience of the Cambodian public school system, and provide the many missing supports for children living in poverty. From filling breakfasts for primary students, uniforms and school supplies, transport, clean water, and sanitation, to extra-curricular classes, lifeskills development, mentoring, and scholarships, we work to ensure that students have everything they need to remain in school and progress through the grades.



Each 'gear' is sized to represent the proportion of funds used to provide each program

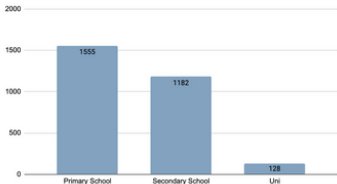
OUR SUPPORTERS

Donors from all over the world stand together in solidarity and provide the resources necessary for us to serve our students. Many have remained steadfast for more than a decade, some for almost two.

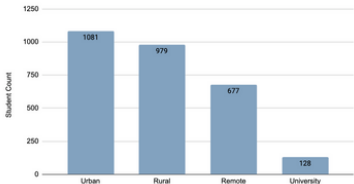


STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

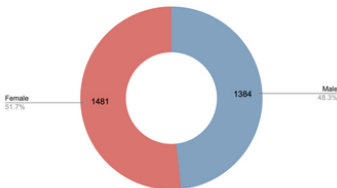
Student Mix: Total 2,865 Students 2022-23



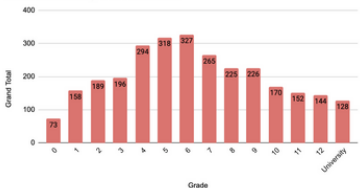
Student Catchment Areas 2022-23



Female vs Male 2022-23



Student Count by Grade 2022-23



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



2737
K-12 students

128 uni students



2938 uniforms &
supplies



129,193 bowls
of food

196 food bank
recipients



2833 lifeskills
workshop attendees

83 student
mentors



441 bicycles
awarded

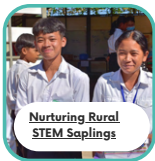


503
IT certificates
awarded



37,809
library books
borrowed

THE YEAR IN STORIES



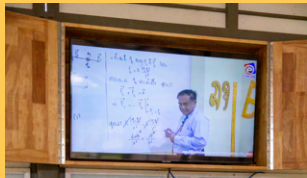
2022-23 STRATEGY

REMEDIAL

In running remedial classes for new Grade 7's at Srayang Learning Center in Preah Vihear to counter the Covid learning losses of 2021-2022, we began to see that a greater problem lay downstream, in the village primary schools, where Grade 6 students were not being adequately prepared for middle school.



Such remote communities struggle to attract experienced teachers, with each of the schools where we work having only one fully-trained teacher among their staff. Seeing the scale of this deficit reflected in Grade 6 students' ability to pass our entrance exam for SLC - which gauges their readiness for middle school - prompted us to provide additional support in order to mitigate this reality. The extra classes we provided in Khmer language and math to practice, review, and keep on track for completion of the full curriculum in time for the G6 exam have built a solid framework around the year for these students.



eLEARNING

The eLearning initiative that was also introduced during the school Covid closures continued at our learning centers, despite a lower attendance after regular classes returned to normal. While this shift is not surprising, we have continued to offer the sessions, with those students who do participate saying that it is a great way to supplement their government classes and improve their understanding.

STAFF RESHUFFLE

Instead of having a Field Director needing to have competency in English, Libraries, and teacher support at each location, we identified which FDs excel at - and enjoy - those different initiatives, and gave them program leadership across all locations. Theada (left) becomes Library Director and Sothy (right) becomes Teacher Trainer. Both are thrilled to use their skillsets to support their teammates and better serve our students.



TEAM DEVELOPMENT

We have 20 teachers and team members in the field, overseeing the extracurricular programs of English, science, computers, libraries, and more. We often train members into their entry teaching positions, as well as give regular access to skills training. These include teacher exchanges where we bring the whole team together in Siem Reap, but also peer coaching tours and one-on-one development sessions now led by Sothy and Theada. These are proving to be especially effective with the team quickly learning, and applying new concepts and skills.

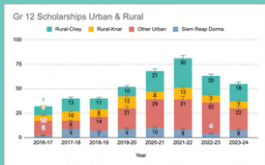


THE BOY 'PROBLEM'

A Cross-Program Initiative to address middle school retention and the high dropout rate for males - which was identified by UNICEF as a worrying trend even prior to Covid. Capitalizing on strengths made in our staffing and core programs to identify opportunities where we can create a 'pull' towards school, we are targeting the issue via multiple approaches: from tech and libraries to sports, clubs and competitions, to social work and mentorship.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

We continue to grow this program at the pre-Covid pace (after very liberal awards in 2020 and 2021) with a refocus on encouraging more students away from the 'easier' social track subjects and into the science track, as it enables them to take on STEM subjects at university and secure higher paying jobs after graduation while contributing to Cambodia's development.



FINAL INTAKE AT DORMS

After close scrutiny of the viability of our scholars' dorm in Siem Reap, we took our final intake of G11 students this year. With the standard of rural and remote high schools improving, it is now viable - and far preferable - for students to remain at home instead of relocating to the city to pass the national exam. This enables us to release and redistribute significant funding to support more students with workshops, scholarships, and food banks.

EXPLORE CLASS AND TECH GROWTH

Utilizing tech to create new student engagement opportunities and build study and life skills. We offer MS Office lessons to high school students at all our learning centers; while the continuing development of Explore class at Chey is bringing crucial digital literacy to middle schoolers earlier in their school journey through project-based lessons that develop self-directed learning and enhance their government classes.



EXPLORE STUDENT FEEDBACK

I like all the lessons! Because they always give me new things. I like them more and more over time!

I like Google search because I can search any lessons that I don't understand.

My favorite lesson in Explore is Math because this lesson can help me with my lesson in Khmer school.

The explore lesson that's my favorite are lessons about history because they teach me about how communities lived in the past - I really like learning about that.

I like chemistry, physics, and math because they can help me fill in the blanks in my knowledge

I like Arcademics because they have math games and can help me use my brain a lot and understand my own abilities

WHAT WE'RE CELEBRATING

Expansion of Srayang Learning Center



As we enter our second decade at Srayang, we have been quietly expanding capacity at the learning center with the construction of a whole new classroom block, as well as extending the computer lab - in hopeful anticipation of a large intake for the 2023-24 school year.

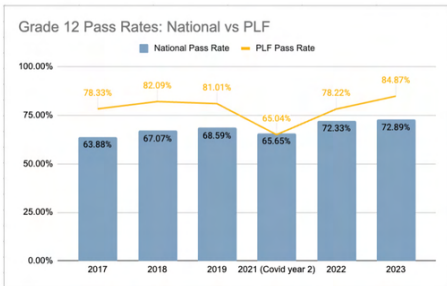
And it paid off! Our efforts in remedial have turned the tide on the very low numbers of students being able to pass our entrance exam, and begun to make up the lost ground due to Covid. We are thrilled to enroll a whopping 36 new Grade 7 ready for the new school year ahead!

Grade 12 Pass Rates

Our high school program goes from strength to strength, with our Grade 12 pass rate being - apart from the Covid quagmire years - consistently higher than the national average.

Additionally this year, 5 PLF students achieved Grade A - an absolutely fantastic result which puts them in the top 1.5% of the country and is our highest number of Grade A's in one year. The way the exams are scored makes it incredibly hard to get a Grade A, with students requiring above 90% on their papers, and then being ranked against all the other top results across Cambodia.

In Preah Vihear last year, the first Grade 12 class was opened at Srayang High School, and our first PLF student passed the exam while still being able to live at home. This year, all 6 of our Grade 12 students passed the exam.



(Note there was no national exam in 2020)

Lifeskills Workshops For The Win!



Our workshop program goes from strength to strength, with increased team capacity. Kao Ay (pictured) steps into a full trainer role, while field staff are leading primary workshops. This greater capacity has allowed for additional topics to be included in the schedule, with sessions on Gender, Bullying and Money Management revised and relaunched this year. The team also rolled out Money Management workshops for parents at our Preah Vihear locations. With the lack of financial literacy a critical issue in Cambodia and huge chunks of the population, especially rural families, falling prey to 'microfinance' loans, these sessions were very well attended.

Explore Class Takes Off



Building on the success of the [Explore pilot](#) that we ran in 2022 with a group of G7 students, Explore Level 1 has now completed its first full curriculum year. To accommodate this, at the beginning of 2023 we unveiled a dedicated Explore lab, kitted out with 14 brand new terminals - bringing capacity for 42 students across 3 daily classes. At the same time, we also developed Explore Level 2 with the same original pilot group, which will roll out its curriculum in the new year.

University Graduates Galore



We continue to be gratified with the ability for more and more PLF students to meet the requirements of a PLF University Scholarship. This year, we reached the milestone of 100 graduates since our University scholarship program began. A 2023 survey of those graduates shows that 95% are currently employed, with 74% working in their chosen field.

WHAT WE'RE MONITORING CLOSELY

In response to what has been recognized as a national problem, we are addressing the issue of **middle school retention for boys** via a long game that requires a multi-pronged approach. Using data analysis to address cross-program challenges, we are working to create a pull toward school for boys in the following areas:

Boys & Books

Library initiatives to engage more boys such as Top Reader Awards and mentoring boys in their reading progress

Competition & sports

Monthly sports days aimed at developing resilience and participation. Our all-school Chess tournament in July brought in more males than other programs.

PLF Youth & Mentorship Workshops

Activating our PLF Youth group as positive role models to encourage participation in mentorship sessions and field trip activities.

Explore & tech

After the introduction of courses geared to G7-9 at Chey, we now have 44% of middle school boys at this location engaged in tech after the first year.



WHAT WE'RE MONITORING CLOSELY



The ***Food Bank at Chreav Village***, on the outskirts of Siem Reap, which began as a primarily humanitarian response has been transformed to align with our mission, and more than 140 students of food bank families were enrolled in school in 2023 as part of the “trade school for food” agreement. Retention in this cohort was promising in the first year at 91%.

This project has brought us right back to our roots: going into an impoverished community, building a relationship, and learning from them what the obstacles are to their children having access to school. Then, together, we get busy knocking those barriers down. Ponheary is leading this effort as this sort of community building is her forté.



The difference between now and when she was doing this in 2006 is that these days, we have social work and admin staff trailing along behind her, interviewing individual families more deeply and tracking student activity more thoroughly. We're monitoring this project closely, not because it's a trial of something we've never done before, but because we've never been able to track the subtle movements of a community in the first steps of mobilization and moving forward. We haven't started from scratch in a very long time, and we're looking forward to what we will learn about measuring the progress of community building which is never more important (nor mysterious) than at the moment it begins.

EFFECTIVENESS & EFFICIENCY



93%

Primary School retention rate



\$2,755

To take one student from Grade 1 to 12

↓ 7.88%

Middle school dropout rate compared to national average (UNICEF)



↑ 12%

G12 exam pass rate compared to national average

\$70.40

Annual staff O/H per student



97.7%

University retention rate

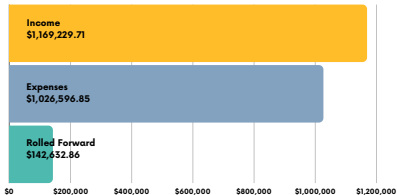


\$7,000

Average cost of a bachelor degree

FINANCIALS

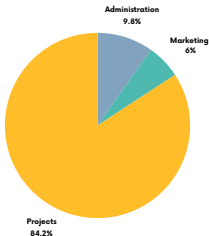
1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023



PLF has a strong commitment to protecting the long-term investments of our supporters by ensuring we can remain fully functioning no matter what the calamity.

There are restricted funds that fulfill the University scholarships that are underway at any given moment. There are restricted funds that build capital for expansion projects that will exist in the future we envision. There is one year of operating expenses in the event something cataclysmic occurs, like a pandemic.

We're covered, our students are covered and so are our donors, no matter what.



We welcome conversations about our financials, so if you have any questions, or would like to see our latest filings with the IRS, please be in touch! hello@theplf.org

Lori Carlson, Co-Founder & President



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School is the Answer.