

INVESTMENT FOR LIFE

Progress Report | H1 2023



OVERVIEW

In the first two years our team has built a strong foundation by setting up computer labs in 5 rural high schools, developing a high impact program and graduating over 2,000 children. The results are exceeding any expectation and bringing systemic change to the youth, schools and communities. However, we witness there is still a significant gap between graduation from a rural high school to completing secondary education and finding a meaningful job. To close that gap our project is now making an inspiring pivot to further expand and accelerate the already impressive impact on the career opportunities of underprivileged children in Cambodia.

This year, we started expanding the number of schools from 5 to 15, which will increase the capacity to train over 5,000 children, or more than 5% of all high school graduates in Cambodia, per annum. Moreover, we will establish our first Career Development Center (“CDC”) that will support ambitious high school students to start and successfully complete advanced education all the way to finding a meaningful job. The center also presents an opportunity to make the program self-sustainable by creating strategic partnerships with local corporates. We have already welcomed our first local partner De Heus, an international animal feed company with local presence that will use our program for brand awareness and access to motivated talent. Looking forward we are determined to overcome all challenges of successfully establishing our center, which is a novel initiative that will increase the systemic impact of our project.



In the first 6 months of 2023 our project team has achieved several important milestones:

- In Q1 2023, we opened our first CDC in Phnom Penh which will support ambitious students with: finding secure shared housing and parttime job; educated selection of study and coaching along the way; boost course to gain advanced skills; connections with corporates
- We opened school #6, which is becoming kind of standard practice, albeit still special as this is our first school in Phnom Penh that has 5,700 students from grade 9 and had no computers
- We hired Nhim Channita, our fifth team member, who has experience in sales and teaching English and will focus on engaging for universities and corporate partners as part of establishing the CDC
- We graduated 1,192 students, of which 681 female (57%) and 511 male (43%). We provided 826 certificates for IT training, 568 for soft- and life, and 95 for business skills.
- We started an active parent engagement program to prepare the student’s choice of study and financial planning. Wilde Ganzen is willing to provide additional financial support to the parents.

In the second half of the year, we aspire to achieve several key milestones:

- Opening three more computer labs, of which one together with De Heus
- Complete parent engagement program and sign-on at least 100 students for the CDC
- Expand the number of corporate partnerships, for which we have several conversations going on. This will probably become more successful once we have signed-on the first students
- Set-up a community platform to build a community of alumni and students at the CDC

The ultimate quest is to create a self-sustainable program that is not, or at least substantially less, dependent on our financial support in the future. The main drivers will be to expand our foundation to a size that it becomes commercially relevant for local corporates and to create the CDC, which is not connected to the public school system and allows for income generation. Income can be generated from CDC program fees, providing secure and shared housing, university admission fees and membership fees from local corporate partners. However, we expect that we need a minimum period of three years to get to a sustainable income state. The total expected funding from our foundation is around €250k, of which €200k has been secured leaving a funding gap of €50k to be raised in the coming three years.

We have several initiatives to close the funding gap:

- Youbedo, an online book platform that donates a percentage of each purchase to a good cause, has selected our project as one of their causes
- We have added a donation button to the website to allow smaller amounts to be donated. For \$25 you can provide our program to one child and boost their career opportunities, which is based on total cost for each school and the number of students in a three-year time frame

However, this will not be enough, and we need additional personal or corporate support from our networks. Just to remind you, the foundation has ANBI status, which allows deduction of taxable income that can be confirmed in documentation.

We are privileged to have so many friends and hope that we continue this extremely impactful journey together!



CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

We witnessed there is still a significant gap between graduation from a rural high school to completing advanced education and finding a meaningful job. Annually there are around 90,000 grade 12 students of which 75% graduate and 1 out of 3 pursue advanced education or around 25% of the total. However, it is estimated that 40% drop out in the first year because i) choice of study is not well informed; ii) total cost of study is underestimated; and iii) adaption to life in Phnom Penh without any family or network is difficult for students from rural areas. Moreover, there is a substantial skill and knowledge gap towards a meaningful job, which leaves many students with no option to move back home or take a poorly paid job even after completion of their study.

To close this gap, we are establishing our CDC, which to our knowledge is a novel solution in Cambodia. Hence, we need to prove it can work. The CDC will provide the following services:

- Provide secured shared housing
- Support financial planning, e.g student loan, scholarship, parttime job
- Give access to study facilities and student community
- Provide direct coaching on selection of study and job pathways
- Provide advanced IT-, soft- and business skills
- Provide short courses for specific job skills
- Organize job/internship markets
- Provide seed funding and incubator support for business ideas

On February 8, 2023, CDC was officially registered and opened with the great participation from all the school principals, selected teachers, selected students some with parents from the 6 targeted high schools and representatives of De Heus. Nita, our new CDC coordinator, is preparing the program and engaging with all stakeholders to be able to welcome the first students at the start of their study year in Q1 2024.



PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parent engagement is crucial to address the challenges of the poor and middle-class students who always struggle in achieving their goals of their graduation of their university and finding a good job in their lives. The team learned that most of the students that finished high school were not able to continue their higher education because lack of a proper plan, sources of information and financial support. Enrollment to the CDC provides a solution to these challenges.

In order to connect with the students and their parents, the project team first engaged in a consultative meeting with the School Management Committees (SMC). With the strong support from SMC, the team conducted a village mapping of targets around the schools and asked support from the commune chiefs and village leaders to gather the parents and the students to a reflection meeting to discussion challenges and possibilities. As a result, the team already met with 90 caregivers, 60 women and 45 students, 24 girls from 10 villages within three different schools.



These meetings gave the team the opportunity to understand their individual challenges and explain more challenges to them if they sent their children for further education without any clear plan, sources of information and support. The team also reflected about the cost of living and studying in Phnom Penh, the possibility of some part-time job and the support from the project at the Career Development Centre (CDC). After the discussion and reflection, every participant was excited about the intervention and support from the project. Wilde Ganzen will further support the parents by providing 33% of the funding need, which will be formalized in a contract and executed by IFL

The team will meet the parents again after the students finish their national exam in November 2023 so that the parents can have a final decision to enroll their children in CDC and receive the support. The project expects at least 20 students to register at the CDC from each targeted school, or 100 in total.



Grandma Pheap who joined the meeting told that “I have a granddaughter that dropped her university study in year 1 because she could not live in Phnom Penh alone. As caregiver, we did not have any clear budget plan, sources of information and help to manage the living and the study of our children. My first granddaughter would not have dropped her education if I met IFL project that year.”

PROJECT DASHBOARD



We have outperformed our original 3-year target of 2,160 students within 2.5 years. In the first 6 months we have graduate another 1,192 students bringing our total to 3,094, which translates in 140 students per cohort. In Q1 we have opened one more school that had its first graduation in June and we are about to open three more schools that will have their first graduation in November.

In 2023 we have started the expansion of our current program by adding additional schools and by opening a career development center. We will make sure the adapt the dashboard to reflect those additional activities and track the expanded budget into 2026.

Select school:

All schools

Overall KPIs

6/4 150% Number of Schools	3/3 100% Number of Slums	3094 / 2160 143% Number of students	\$147.4K / \$601.4K 23% Total Income '21 - '26	\$128K / \$586.9K 22% Total Expenses '21 - '26	\$45.2K / \$77.4K 58% Expenses vs Budget to YTD
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School KPIs

Student Gender Distribution

1289 Males trained	1805 Females Trained	58% Female/Male Ratio
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Computers

100 # installed at All schools	40 # maintained at All schools	0 # replaced at All schools
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Student Age Distribution

17,2 Average Student Age	30 14 Year	189 15 Year
599 16 Year	1070 17 Year	781 18 Year

Student Enrolment Status

1951 # enrolled in IT-literacy training	1939 # finished IT-literacy training	1939 # graduated from IT-literacy training
1880 # enrolled in Soft-and life skills training	1868 # finished Soft-and life skills training	1868 # graduated from Soft-and life skills training

Student Grade Distribution

143 Grade 10	1681 Grade 11	1254 Grade 12
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Additional Training

445 # enrolled in Business skills training	431 # finished Business skills training	431 # graduated from Business skills training
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Number of cohorts

22 Number of cohorts at All schools

Teachers Trained

27 Teachers Trained

Student Satisfaction Rate

4,1 Student Satisfaction Rate

Monitoring

215 # of visits All schools

FINANCIAL MATTERS



Based on the expansion of the number of schools and the establishment of the CDC we have updated our 2021 – 2023 budget to a budget covering 2023 – 2025. In Q1, we opened one new school, which is reflected in Project Assessment and IT Literacy training. In Q1, we also opened the career development center, which involved one-off expenses of rental deposit, refurbishment (including airco) and furniture, and cost of the opening ceremony. In Q2, we conducted graduation ceremonies, which is reflected in IT Literacy training and Soft-, Life-, and Business training. The increase in personnel cost is related to the additional hire of the CDC manager.

The underspending in Q2 is related to the delay in opening of two new schools, which are in advanced stages and will be completed in Q3.

Income sources		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Income from donors		31,213.16	31,069.89			62,283.05
Other income		-	-			-
Total income		31,213.16	31,069.89			62,283.05
Expenses						
1	Project Assessment	73.70	53.00			126.70
2	IT Literacy training	4,144.85	2,040.15			6,185.00
3	Soft-, Life-, and Business skill training	289.94	2,514.83			2,804.77
4	Career Development Center	19,524.45	1,779.75			21,304.20
5	Personnel	3,461.06	4,791.20			8,252.28
6	Overhead Cost (incl. visits)	3,177.51	3,235.98			6,413.48
Total expense		30,671.51	14,414.91			45,086.42
Net Cash Flow		541,65	16,654.98			17,169.83
Cash/Bank Balance forward						2,490.17
Balance remaining						19,687.00

CHILDREN'S VOICES

Now that our program is fully operational, we see the incredible scale of the impact our project is making. Since the start we trained 3,315 children, of which 1,192 in June at 5 schools. In numbers we are overachieving our ambition of 2,160 in three years. However, our impact goes beyond the numbers, as you can read in the children's testimonies. Our decision to combine IT and Soft&Life skills, and now supplemented with business skills, turned out to be a crucial factor. It remains astonishing how our small investment increases the confidence and expands the horizon of these students.



Sreypich - 18-year-old 11th grade student at Borset



I graduated from my IT literacy class. I am glad to speech today on behalf of my IT Class. We appreciate BMO and IFL to support the computer class in our school. This allows me and my friends to learn computer skills. Before I have never known anything about a computer, but 6 months later, I can type both Khmer and English. I learned MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint. It can help me improve my skills in life. I do like my Computer Class. I am enjoying learning it. I would like to thank to the school principal, teachers and the donor for investing this program to the school. Especially, I would like to thank BMO and IFL for the kind support. I wish you all good luck. ”



Sreyroth- 18-year-old 12^h grade student at Borivas



“I finished my Business Class. I am happy to tell you all about this Business Course that I learned. I was not sure about the difference between the Soft and Life Skill, but I understood the importance during the class. I studied about the Entrepreneurship and Successful Entrepreneurs, the Company Structure, Marketing Strategy & Sales and the Finance. I faced the big challenge for the Business Cycle. I was inspired by my teacher to create my Business Dream. Currently, I have a small bookstore even though my big dream I want to be a lawyer. I really like this course because it teaches me the new thing that I have never knew before. At final class, I have a chance to do my presentation for my project. I made my Power Point at the computer class even I can do it on my phone. I think it is a good course to all students to attend. It will open up what you have to think and do in the future, my friends. I would recommend for the students to try as I did. Finally, I would like to thank the teacher and principal and especially, to IFL Project for launch this Project..”



Kimor- 17-year-old 11^h grade student at Slaku



“I am pleased to graduate and receive the certificate of IT literacy and I was assigned to impress about the course among many students and dignitary guests. I would like to tell you that I did not know much about computers. However, the school partnered with BMO and IFL to set up the program. It was a great change for me that I learned Typing, MS Word and MS Excel. Currently I can use the computer and I type faster and made list better. I will use this knowledge and skills to improve my learning and future career. I know more about computers and know how to make charts. I can also help my team if they are not sure about any tools. I well understood that ICT is very good for my community work and for my future.



Kosal - 18-year-old 12th grade student at Sampov Poun



I am happy to have a chance to speak and receive the certificate today. I am very proud to finish this Soft and Life skill. I have never learned to strengthen the knowledge that I studied, so day by day I do not have confidence in myself. I do not value and do not dare to give myself for the opportunity to do something for the changes. When I have negative thoughts in my mind and always have a vague idea to set goals. Since I attended this course I have noticed that I have developed and my knowledge increased significantly. I learned how decisions are made and how to make those decisions in order to get the good results. I desire how to set a clear goal. I am very thankful for my teacher from BMO, IFL and my principal to launch the program in my school. I will apply the lesson to my actual situation”



Pisey - 17-year-old 11th grade student at Borset high school



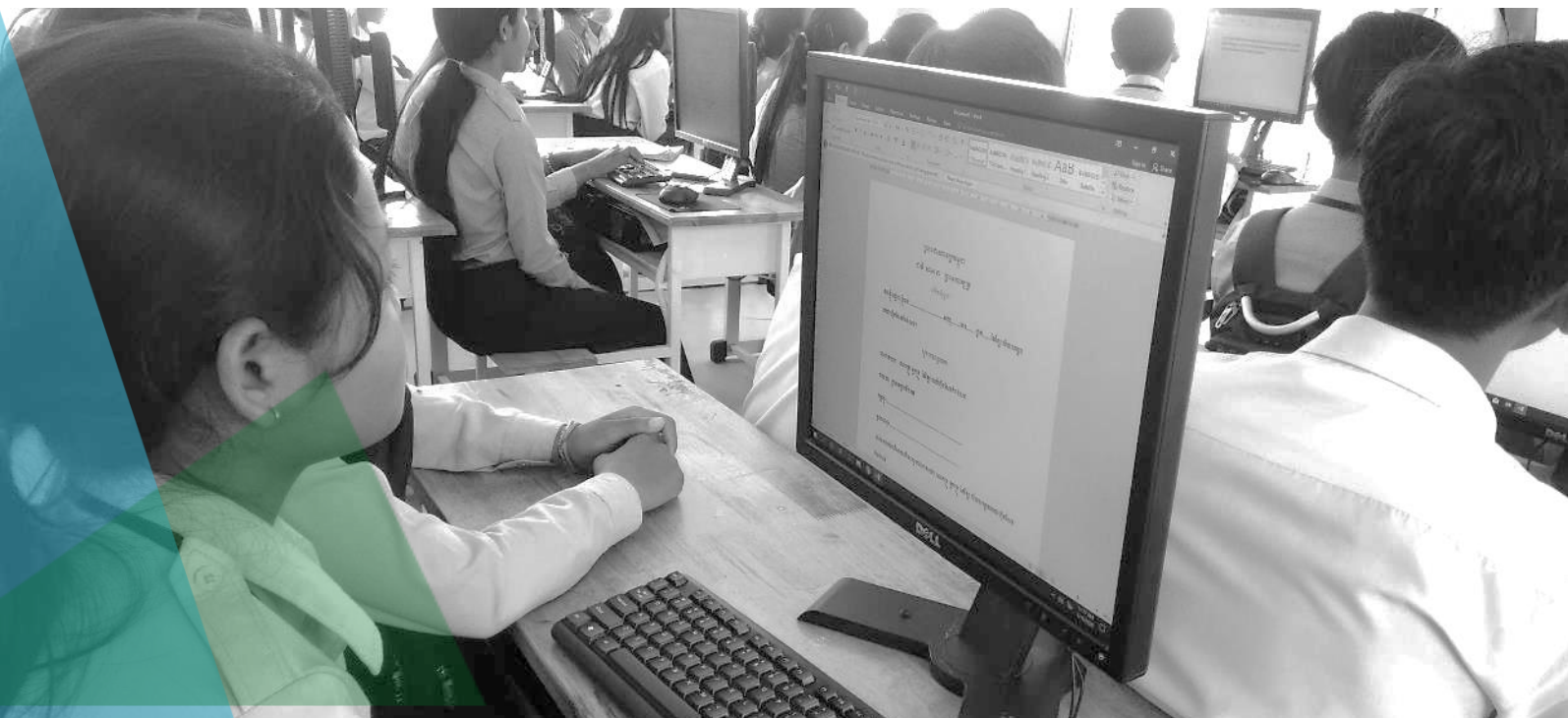
First of all, I want like to thank my principal and teacher for giving the great opportunity to impress about my Soft and Life skills. I want to tell you what I have changed through this program. I know what strength and weakness about me. I have learnt Goal setting and Expectation. I never know my goal and have any goal, but after this course I have set my goal. I want to be a teacher when I finish my high school. I choose this job when I recognize that this skill helps the next generation of the students. I understand how I look to the weak person differently than before and I can help them especially people that close to me. I do hope that I will keep it used for my future when I go out to the new world to study at Phnom Penh. I think that this Soft and Life Skills is useful for all kinds of work. I would like to thank to my teacher and the whole NGO that support this program. I promises I will try my best to use my skills that I have learnt from school as much I can.



Lina- 17-year-old 11^h grade student at Slaku



“I studied the computer and life skills. I spent 2 hours per week beyond my school administration hours. I like my computer class and practiced a lot. It's amazing for me to start the computer class. I received the certificates of the computer and life skills. I will continue to learn about hardware and software skills. I would like to thank IFL project for their full support of Slaku High School..



ACTORS/STAKEHOLDERS

Next to the inspiring impact on the student’s skills and ambition, which is our core focus, our project also provides important capacity building for the schools and local communities. To date in total 82 stakeholders have been involved to support the project including 28 teachers, of which 1 female, 32 school management officials, 12 government officials, and 10 community leaders. Everyone appreciates the project to support their schools that made their students see the goal in life and focus on learning more.

During the opening of the career development center all school principals and some teachers were present. For them it was really inspiring to feel being part of a movement. They are all so proud to execute our program at their schools and offer better opportunities to their students. They extensively shared their experiences to their peers, see the ‘learning and experience’ chapter for further details, and learn from each other. Moreover, they acknowledge the need for the career development center and committed to motivate their students to join the center,

“ Mr. Thim - 52-year-old village leader at Borset



Said during the parent engagement in his village that “I appreciate what IFL Project did with my community. Most of family sent their children study at Borset High School from this village, but less of them can continue their children at the university. I would thank for the challenging questions that we discussed together in order to push them to spend another 4-year program at the university for a better education and work. I would also appreciate for the expanding support of the project.”

“ Mr. Mov – new IT teacher at Sampov Poun



“Said “It was my first-time teaching the course at this school. Although I didn't have any major in Computer Science or Information Technology, but my proficiency with computer is what I like and I can share. I am impressed with my teaching as I see the growth of the knowledge of the student during the class and the end results of their final exam. Teaching the students helps me improves my understanding, searching and discovery to some functions that I have never used before.

I am personally very excited to stand and hand over the certificates to my students for their graduation today. I would commit myself to help more students so that they have the basic IT knowledge and skill before they finish high school. I would to thank IFL Project for the help of many students with IT, Soft-Life skills and Business Course. I hope the project will continue the partnership to exist with my school.”



Mr. Khoen – teacher at Slaku



After the Consultative Meeting on Parent Engagement at the communities, Mr. Khoen, a teacher at Slaku High School, said that “It is great the project can meet with the parents and students directly for a better connection and build more confident.” He added that “It is the life support and important benefits for the students after finishing grade 12 that we have never had this program.” The project used the Consultative meeting approach in order to gain support from the local authorities to the engagement at the village levels. Mr. Khoen said “It is the first project that I have ever hear. He stressed that “The good thing is the students can finish university and have a good job in Phnom Penh. I firmly believe that Bethel Mission and IFL achieve more and help more students from schools as it is a great after high school project. I would profoundly thank for the kind support.”



Mr. Roerurn – Chief of School Management Committee at Slaku



Said during the consultative meeting about the Parent Engagement that “I strongly support the project for the plan to meet directly with the parents at the community level. I will ask the commune chief and village leaders to collaborate as the project is very helpful the students in my community. I would appreciate for the new initiative to expand the support.” More than 20 teachers, community representatives joined the meeting to listen, discuss and asked the questions related to the service and support of the project for the living and learning in Phnom Penh. The teachers were impressed and they promised to disseminate the information to the students in grade 12 so that they could afford after their high school. After the support from SMC, the project worked to connect with the students and their families and built the good and trusting relationship before they could trust the project.

We will continue to engage with all stakeholders through our intense monitoring program. Our team visits each school at least one week per quarter to have sufficient time to provide: i) computer maintenance; ii) provide additional training and feedback on the program; iii) train new teachers; iv) engagement with students and parents to provide guidance on future ambitions. The close engagement is what sets our program out from many other initiatives both from NGO’s and government. On an annual basis there are senior oversight meeting for strategic direction setting.

LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE

During the opening ceremony of the CDC all principals and some teachers were present. The team took the opportunity to organize a meeting to reflect and allow for peer-to-peer learning, which was much appreciated, especially because most principals are really proud of their achievements.

The following observations were widely shared:

- At the public schools the average age of teachers is high, with limited female teachers, and there is high turnover. Turnover. That can limit the capacity to implement and maintain our program. The team has spent time and resources to build a new capacity of the newcomers and some schools need to delay the schedule or the project team had to jump in and do the work to complete the plan.
- The students were excited to receive the certificates, and everyone appreciated the team for helping them with program so that they could learn from what they did not receive from school. It is seen as a benefit for life
- The principals and teachers were pleased with the partnership with the team and made their school do what they have never done for the students.
- The parents and the students were very impressed for the expanding support in Phnom Penh after their completion of high school.
- The project found challenges for some parents who were not able to support their children to learn in Phnom Penh even the project contribution. They were not able to afford their part. The additional contribution of Wilde Ganzen will provide support
- The schools always ask for more computers to support the students as they found that the number of the students per class did not fit the computer lab as the project supported only 15 computers. The project experienced that even the students had to sit in pair work, but it was not enough. The class size was 40-50 students.
- One assessed school felt not good to hear the project set up their computer lab with the second-hand desktop computers and they expected for laptop computers or the brand-new ones.



ANY OTHER MATTERS

Opening school #6

IFL is expanding the base from 5 to reach 15 high schools in 2023-2026 across Cambodia, of which 4 more high schools in 2023. The first new high school (#6) was assessed in Phnom Penh in connection and collaboration from the Department of Education (DoE). The project team conducted the assessment to three different high schools as selected by the DoE. Samaki high school was selected, because it had 5,700 students with no computers, and the new opening was done on February 7, 2023 under the chairmanship of Mr. Rikkert Beerekamp, the Director of IFL.

Mr. Nil promised in front of the more than 100 students, DoE and donors during the opening ceremony that “I am very pleased to see the computer class existed. I selected more than 200 students to enroll the computer class. I will commit to achieve the plan as agreed.” He stressed that “The computer class does not only help the students, but also our teachers to move forward to Industry 4.0 because every work is online after the pandemics. The opening was signed and installment materials handed in the presence of Mr. Lady, the deputy DoE and Mr. Harry Schimmel, Country Director of De Heus.

Everyone was excited and pleased to see the new computer lab to be opened for the benefit of more than five thousand students that they have never had IT literacy training. Mr. Lady appreciated for the kind support from the project to donate and promote IT for the students in Samaki school.

The next school that will be opened will be co-funded by De Heus in the proximity of their factory. This will create a strong connection with the local community.



PLANS FOR NEXT 6 MONTHS

The project team has the following plans:

- Opening three more computer labs, of which one together with De Heus
- Complete parent engagement program and sign-on at least 100 students for the career development center, that will start their studies in Q1 2024
- Develop the boost course for the CDC in close cooperation with Bluefield
- Expand the number of corporate partnerships, for which we have several conversations going on. This will probably become more successful once we have signed-on the first students
- Set-up a community platform to build a community of alumni and students at the CDC



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