

INVESTMENT FOR LIFE

Progress Report | H2 2024



OVERVIEW

Since 2019, IFL has been addressing the critical need to build digital capacity among Cambodian youth, filling a gap left by the lack of government policies and support. Alongside a few other NGOs, IFL has taken the lead in installing computer labs in secondary and high schools in rural provinces across the country. However, what sets IFL apart is our holistic approach—not just providing infrastructure but also implementing a comprehensive course program that prepares students for future careers, as well as a training and monitoring system that ensures the program’s long-term sustainability.

Our program consists of three interlinked courses:

- ✔ Basic IT Skills – Ensuring digital literacy as a foundation for future learning
- ✔ Soft & Life Skills – Preparing students with essential interpersonal and problem-solving abilities
- ✔ Business Skills – Equipping youth with entrepreneurial and workplace competencies

To date, 7,426 students have received one or more certificates from the IFL program, with an annual graduation rate of more than 2,500 new students. Beyond training students, we have successfully built capacity at the school level, providing support to 169 stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, community leaders, and government officials. Notably, 59 teachers have been trained in our courses, strengthening the local education ecosystem.

Our impact extends beyond our direct efforts. In three schools, the enhanced management capacity has attracted additional NGOs, leading to new computer donations—a powerful multiplier effect that amplifies our mission.

This reinforces the relevance of IFL’s work, especially in rural areas where corporate and philanthropic presence is minimal. This was evident at the opening of our 12th school in Battambang province, near the Thai border, where the need for digital infrastructure remains urgent.

At the inauguration of Kdoldontev High School’s first computer lab on December 21, 2024, Mr. Hak Try, Director of the Office of Education, representing Mr. Yi Songki, Director of the Office of Education for Battambang province, expressed the significance of this milestone:

“Despite being close to the city, Kdoldontev High School has lacked a computer lab since its founding in 2010. We are deeply grateful to the IFL Project for providing this opportunity to hundreds of students. Without computer skills, their path to university and future careers would be significantly harder. In today’s digital era, computer literacy is essential. We sincerely appreciate this generous support.”

In the coming two years we have the ambition to open 6 new computer labs. Thereafter, we will reassess if our support is still needed whereby we try to mobilize as much as local support as possible. We are very proud that we already mobilized two local corporates, Zuellig Pharma and De Heus, that both donated a computer lab.



In 2023, the government announced an ambitious free vocational training program targeting 1.5 million students in the provinces. While this is a promising sign of their commitment to education, the lack of high-quality infrastructure raises concerns about its effectiveness in practice. Given Cambodia's traditionally strong obedience to government directives, most students will likely enrol in this program—regardless of whether it aligns with their ambitions and capabilities.

One unintended consequence of this policy is that many students seem to remain in their home provinces in stead of following their dream to study in Phnom Penh, leading to lower enrolment in our CDC (Career Development Center) program. We still expect that the more ambitious students will be disappointed of the vocational training offered and change course during the year, which presents an opportunity to enrol additional students. However, recognizing this shift, we plan to assess the situation in 2025 and explore new ways to support ambitious students that stay in their home province, potentially through advanced online training programs in our computer labs across different provinces.

Through strategic adaptation, collaboration, and innovation, IFL remains committed to empowering Cambodia's youth with the digital skills they need to thrive in an increasingly connected world.



Progress of IFL Program

As part of our plan, we keep opening new schools, especially with the ambition to open schools in more rural areas where our structural impact will be most profound. In the second half year we opened one new school, refurbished our first school after 5 years and performed graduations and monitoring of the existing schools.

On the 24th of December our team conducted the opening of Kdoldontev High School in Battambang province (school #12). The school consists of 8 buildings with 32 classrooms and 74 teachers, of which 39 females, that are teaching 1,273 students, of which 745 girls. Our team worked very close with the DoE for the school#12 assessment in Battambang province where five schools were visited.



Mr. Lim, the Deputy Director of the Department of Education, said *“I appreciate the close connection and cooperation with my DoE in order to set up and install a computer lab in my province. We strongly welcome and support the agreement so that the school students are able to require the knowledge of IT. IFL is playing an important role to fill the gap of the government, especially the resource assistance.”*



The computers for school #12 have been donated by Zuellig Pharma, an Asian medicine distribution company with a subsidiary in Phnom Penh. On September 10 the CEO, mr. Jan Rask Christensen , and the head of IT, mr. Ranjit Mendoza, handed over the computers during an official handover ceremony.

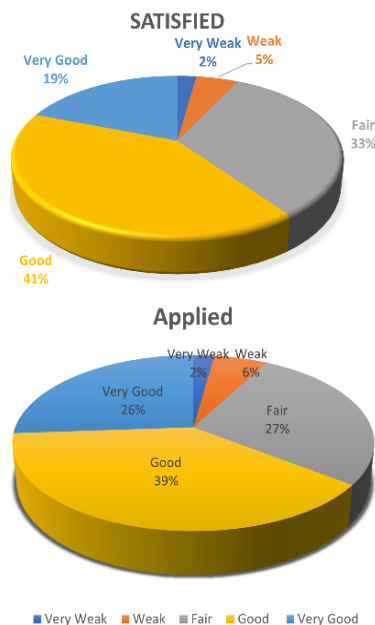


Next to opening of school #12, our team has also refurbished school #1, 5 years after the initial instalment. As all the computers were still functioning, they have been redistributed to 3 other schools, 5 computers each, to increase the number of computers according to the available space.

In the second half of 2024, we handed out 3,051 graduation certificates, of which 1,772 to female students (58%), and for the full year we handed out 5,227 graduation certificates, of which 3,023 to female students (58%). Some students graduate from multiple courses during the year. The total number of new students that received one or more certificates amounted to 2,579. School #10 and #11 held their first graduation ceremony, but school #12 was only opened in December and will have its first ceremony in June 2025.

School		Number of certificates H2 2024			Number of certificates 2024		
		Boy	Girl	Total	Boy	Girl	Total
1	Kampong Leav	175	197	372	243	280	523
2	Borset	117	167	284	208	339	547
3	Slaku	109	186	295	175	312	487
4	Sampov Poun	124	186	310	374	443	817
5	Borivas	168	195	363	287	328	615
6	Samaki	149	188	337	264	347	611
7	Veal Pong	106	196	302	158	282	440
8	Tbeng	78	88	166	158	207	365
9	Krang Sramor	164	227	391	248	343	591
10	Bakchenchien	60	78	138	60	78	138
11	Samrong	29	64	93	29	64	93
Total		1,279	1,772	3,051	2,204	3,023	5,227

Every student was very excited and happy to receive their certificates with pride of themselves. The project team conducted surveys with the students after each exam and 2,009 responses were received. According to the surveys, 93% were satisfied with the new skills and 92% of them are committed to apply their knowledge and skills to their higher education and employment.



The project team conducted 53 visits to assess, monitor and follow up with the teachers and provide coaching. The project is strongly supported by the principals and school management with good collaboration from the local authorities and police to ensure the safety and the security of the computer labs. **Mr. Vannak**, Deputy Director of school#12, Kdoldontev, Battambang province, said *“I commit to take a good advantage of Computer Lab for my teachers that have lack of this skill as well.”*



Beyond the visits to the schools, the project helped the teachers online to trouble shoot performance issues at the request of the teachers, as maintenance remains a challenge depending the on the knowledge and commitment of the teachers.

PROJECT DASHBOARD



In 2024 we graduated 2,579 students, which brings the total number of students supported at 7,426, which remains an impressive number. In 2024, we also opened three more schools, which is also reflected in the increase of number of computers installed and number of teachers trained. Our team remains very active in monitoring the schools, which is a crucial value add part of our program. During the visits they also maintain the computers. We are very proud that we have not replaced a single computer at any of the schools. However, at school #1 the computers are now 5 years old and have been replaced as part of our policy, but these computers are now added to three other schools to increase capacity.

Select school:		All schools					
Overall KPIs							
12/15	3/3	7,426 / 3790	\$255.9K / \$235.9K	\$251.7K / \$221.5K	\$88.7K / \$72.3K		
80%	100%	196%	45%	48%	122%		
Number of Schools	Number of Schools	Number of students	Total Income '21 - '25	Total Expenses '21 - '25	Expenses vs Budget YTD		
School KPIs							
Student Gender Distribution			Computers				
3099	4327	58%	220	28	15		
Males Trained	Females Trained	Female/Male Ratio	# Installed at All schools	# maintained at All schools	# replaced at All schools		
Student Age Distribution			Student Enrollment Status				
17,2	50	520	5473	5461	5461		
Average Student Age	14 Year	15 Year	# enrolled in IT-literacy training	# finished IT-literacy training	# graduated from IT-literacy training		
1719	2230	1820	4834	4822	4822		
16 Year	17 Year	18 Year	# enrolled in Soft-and life skills training	# finished Soft-and life skills training	# graduated from Soft-and life skills training		
Student Grade Distribution			Additional Training				
1670	2832	2908	905	891	891		
Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	# enrolled in Business skills training	# finished Business skills training	# graduated from Business skills training		
Number of cohorts		Teachers Trained		Student Satisfaction Rate		Monitoring	
23	53	3,9	323				
Number of cohorts All schools	Teachers Trained	Student Satisfaction Rate	# of visits All schools				

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

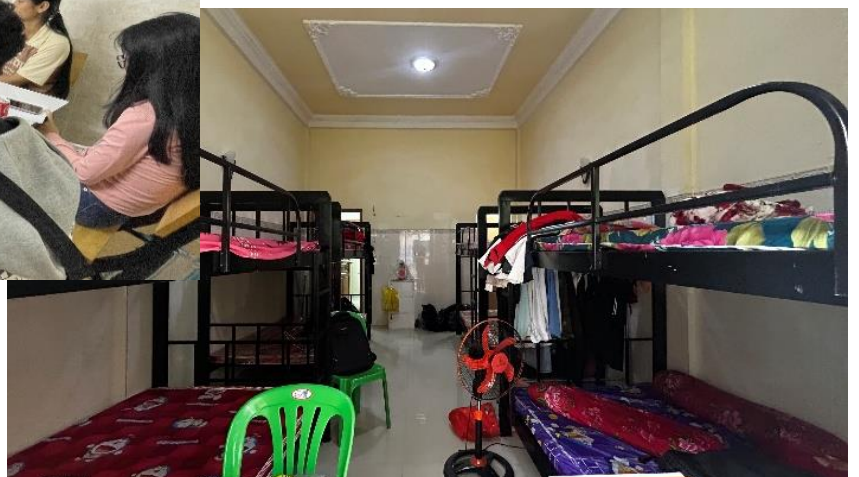
The Career Development Center (CDC) opened in 2023 to explore the possibilities of building the bridge for graduated students in rural high schools to successfully study in Phnom Penh and in the end achieve a meaningful job. In 2023 we prepared the building, procedures and boost program, and executed a student/parent engagement program to explain and promote the CDC, which is novel in Cambodia. In 2024 we welcomed the first students that completed the boost course and received their certificates during the reflection day with all school principals. They were very impressed and inspired to actively promote the CDC program to their students that will graduate this year and potentially enrol to the CDC in 2025.

However, in 2024 the new government program to provide free vocational training to high school graduates in the provinces took effect. This ambitious program targets free vocational education for 1.5m students, which will be very appealing to poor and obedient Cambodian families. Given the lack of proper infrastructure and government funding, our team expects that this program will have limited alignment with the ambitions and capabilities of many students. Hence, many are expected to be disappointed and look for alternatives like our CDC. As a result, the current enrolment is disappointing, but we remain optimistic that this will pick up during the remainder of the year.

As a result of changed government policy to create separate dormitories for girls and boys we have rented a second location in proximity of our CDC. As the number of students is below expectation, part of the new building has been sublet to a Cambodian family. We have also moved the location of the CDC a few houses, which will provide better quality/price level than the initial location.

Unfortunately, our CDC manager, Nita, has decided to pursue another opportunity that offers better payment. We are currently looking for a replacement for which we have received several applications. We prefer a female replacement, also to monitor the female students, but so far, we only receive applications from male applicants.

In the meantime, we will look for alternative ways to support ambitious students that stay in their home province, potentially through advanced online training programs in our computer labs across different provinces.



FINANCIAL MATTERS



The actual expenses of \$79,687 are higher than budget of \$72,359 for the full year resulting in a difference of -\$7,328. The main deviation is caused by the instalment of one additional school in December of -\$7,075. The other differences are caused by some higher cost of the CDC and housing and lower cost of the monitoring, because we decided to reduce the number of in person visits replaced by on-line check-ins. Overall, except the additional school, we have been operating in line with budget.

At the request of Wilde Ganzen an official audit has been conducted, which they ask for any project that received more than \$100,000 of funding. The audit has been executed for 2023 and 2024 and not reported any material misrepresentation and aligned with the reported management accounts. There were some procedural findings, of which several have already been implemented by our team.

\$		Budget	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Income from donors			-	27,991	13,331	19,253	60,575
Other income			1,628	1,135	575	45	3,381
Total income			1,628	29,126	13,905	19,298	63,957
1	Project Assessment	850	329	311	-	1,041	1,681
2	Project set-up and maintenance	10,030	4,612	4,547	438	6,658	16,256
3	Project monitoring and training	17,919	688	6,915	3,947	4,226	15,777
4	Career Development Center	6,920	2,852	1,959	2,032	1,949	8,792
5	Student Housing	960	2,832	-	-	-	2,832
6	Personnel	23,616	6,669	7,817	6,326	6,743	27,511
7	Overhead Cost (incl. visits)	7,532	1,408	2,520	1,326	1,585	6,839
Total expense		72,359	19,345	24,069	14,069	22,203	79,687
Net Cash Flow			-17,717	5,057	-164	-2,906	-15,730
Cash/Bank Balance forward							19,361
Balance remaining							3,631

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, 5 years ago, we trained 7,426 children. In numbers we are overachieving our ambition of 2,160 in the first 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.



Nasa – 18-year-old 12th grade student from Samrong (school #11)



“I am very happy to share my thoughts on the importance of studying computer skills. During my time studying computers, I gained a wealth of knowledge and experience. I learned about various computer systems and typing programs, which have helped me develop the skills needed to thrive in today’s world. Additionally, my training in Soft-Life skills was invaluable. It taught me the importance of understanding the traits of a good person, acquiring knowledge, and adjusting my behavior according to different situations. I would like to express my gratitude to the teachers who provided us with thorough instruction, allowing us to acquire these new skills and insights. I am also thankful to the principal and staff for giving us the opportunity to learn computer programs and life skills which have equipped us to navigate the modern era. Thanks to IFL Project for the kind donation and support to my school.”



Chatt - 18-year-old 12th grade student at Samrong (school #11)



My dream is to study IT at a university in Phnom Penh. I additionally gained more knowledge on IT after I studied the computer at my school. It helped build me a bridge to my dream. I am happy to receive the computer certificate today, but I will continue to pursue my IT degree as soon as I finished my high school. Even when my family is not able to help me, I will try to explore a scholarship.



Solina - 19-year-old 12th grade student at Bakchenchien (school #10)



“I am very interested in IT, Soft-Life Skills and Business Course. I am happy to receive the new training skills and certificate today. I never thought that I would have the opportunity to study this computer class. Because I really need this computer skill to achieve my future goals. I want to be successful in business. I like the Business Course because I studied marketing to sales, budget management. I also learned about the entrepreneurship. I will use the skills I learned to continue my studies at the university, Business Management. Finally, I would like to thank all teachers, the School Management and IFL project that gave me and my friends the opportunity to acquire skills for the future.”



Phally - 19-year-old CDC student from Kampong Leav (school #1)



"I am a driven and aspiring student, eagerly anticipated I move to Phnom Penh to study at Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). The excitement of embarking on this new chapter was tempered by concerns about the cost of living in the city. Fortunately, I discovered the IFL Housing option, which promised a more affordable and supportive environment. Upon arriving in Phnom Penh, I moved into the IFL Housing, finding it to be a welcoming and cost-effective solution. Living in the dormitory significantly reduced my expenses, allowing me to manage my budget more effectively and avoid the high costs associated with city living. This financial relief enabled me to focus on my studies without the constant worry of managing my finances. The dormitory environment also provided me with ample opportunities to engage with the teachers and peers. With teachers frequently visiting the dorms for study sessions and discussions, I found myself able to clarify doubts and gain deeper insights into my coursework. Beyond academics, the dormitory life offered a sense of warmth and community. The shared living space fostered a sense of camaraderie, making me feel at home despite being away from my family. Moreover, the dormitory provided additional training and workshops, which helped boost my skills and confidence. Participating in these activities gave me a well-rounded educational experience and prepared me for future career opportunities. Living in the IFL Housing turned out to be a transformative experience for me. It not only helped me save money but also enriched my academic and personal life. The combination of financial ease, academic support, and a warm, nurturing environment made my journey in Phnom Penh a fulfilling and memorable one"



Liner- 20-year-old CDC student from Borset (school #2)



"I am a determined and enthusiastic student, I always dreamed of studying at the University in Phnom Penh. When I was accepted, I was thrilled but also concerned about the high cost of living in the bustling capital. However, I discovered the IFL housing, which offered a solution to my worries. I moved to Phnom Penh and settled into the IFL Housing. The accommodations were modest yet comfortable, providing me with all the essentials I needed. Most importantly, living in the IFL Housing cut my rental expenses by 50%, allowing me to manage my budget more effectively. With these savings, I could cover other important expenses like food, transportation, and study materials. Living in the IFL Housing also introduced me to a vibrant and diverse student community. I quickly made friends with fellow students from various provinces"



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 169 stakeholders have been involved to support the project including 59 teachers (8 female), 49 school management officials (3 female), 27 government officials, and 34 community leaders (2 female). Everyone appreciates the project to support their schools that made their students see the goal in life and focus on learning more.

During 2024, the project got very strong support and collaboration from the Department of Education (DoE), the Office of Education (OoE), School Management Committee (SMC), the school principals and teachers so that the project ran very well. Especially, the onboarding of three new schools has been successful, but also MoU with several DoE’s has been renewed and all schools participated during our annual reflection day.

Based on the project successes, some NGOs followed and support more computers to the schools including school#1, Kampong Leav high school, school#4, Sampov Poun high school and school#6, Samaki high school. **Mr. Nil**, the principal of school#6, Samaki high school told that “I would like to thank IFL project that opened the door for my school to receive more support. There are two NGOs came and add more computer labs this year”

Mr. Channy – Governor of Samaki Meanchey District in Kampong Chnang



He said during the the graduation of school#9, Krang Sramor High School that “knowledge is really important for everyone, especially the technology which we cannot live without it. The job market is competitive if you cannot use the computer to work, you are finding life difficult by yourself. You are lucky to have IFL project to come and give you beyond IT literacy, but also Soft-Life skills and Business Course. The skills are very essential for you to pursue. I do hope that the project will continue to help and expend in my district as there are a few more high school needing the computer labs. Thank You.”

Mr. Chheng – Chairman of SMC of Sampov Poun (School 4)



He said during the graduation that “I did not have and learn computer at my age. We struggled to survive from the genocidal regime. There was no education. As the students of this generation, you are very lucky, especially IFL Project partnered with our school and support the computer lab. I would encourage you to work hard and bring this skill for your future. The next leadership for our community and shcool depends on you as the bambooshoot to take a lead. We are to hand it.”

PLANS FOR NEXT 6 MONTHS

The project team has the following plans:

- Increase the number of students in the CDC through promotion by the existing students, including renting a second building to enable separation of boys and girls
- Strategic review of CDC approach and consider enabling on-line support to students in provinces
- Convert the ongoing discussions with local corporates to support the IFL program, either through jointly setting up new schools or providing services or redundant hardware
- Open three additional schools



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