



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

The Angkor Tree Project

www.theangkortreeproject.org



A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGEMENT



Sustainable Development Goal 4

Quality Education : Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

...

4.C By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

In 2019, the main focus of The Angkor Tree Project was to develop the teacher training program further. The training modules covering teaching techniques were broadened and reached more teachers than before; the language proficiency program was successfully redesigned; the introduction of ‘speech therapy’ methodologies to improve pronunciation has proven to be successful and will be continued in the coming years ...

Our main breakthrough, however, is that we have been able to initiate a project to train teachers in public schools : EPPS (English in Public Primary Schools) is a project in which several NGO's, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, address all 510 public primary schools in the entire province of Siem Reap, impacting over 200.000 primary school children!

We want to express our deepest gratitude and respect to everyone who made our dreams here in Cambodia come true, our teachers, our trainees, our colleagues in other NGO's, and not in the least our many supporters and sponsors abroad.

Thank you !

Sopheak Ngo
Headmaster

Nat Son
Head of Teacher Training

Mark Desmaele
Operational Support

2019 IN DETAIL

English classes for children and adolescents.

The English lessons, as a supplement to the curriculum of the official schools, were further expanded and improved in 2019. For the young learners, we have now completely switched to the phonics-approach, where children learn phonemes and graphemes, rather than letters.

117 primary school children got a few hours of extra English lessons every day, some in the morning, others in the afternoon (depending on whether they attend the official school before or in the afternoon).

In the late afternoon, starting at 5 pm, 103 pupils from the secondary school regularly attended classes.

We managed to reduce absenteeism through a strict system of follow-up, with the involvement of the parents.

English lesson for young adults

Siem Reap is a city that lives on tourism. It is by far the most important source of income. Tourism means language skills, English and Chinese are the most important languages required for a job and an income in tourism. Several NGOs provide vocational training for this sector. In 2018 we had set up a cooperation with these NGOs (Safa, Changkran, ...) to offer their 'trainees' an English course, with the emphasis on the needs of this professional group. Two groups (15 beginners and 10 more advanced) followed this program daily.

We decided, however, to stop this program in 2019-2020. The vocational training programs are short-term, and the language program is taking more time. After having completed their vocational training, most of the trainees do not have the possibility to continue the language program. We are currently, in cooperation with the organizations offering the professional training programs, investigating other approaches where trainees can derive more benefit from the language program.

Teacher training (for teachers of English in informal schools)

The teacher training program has been run for the second consecutive year. We more than doubled the number of teachers from informal schools (NGOs and community schools), accounting for over 20,000 students, that followed training modules.

1. The existing offering has been extended with the following modules :

- How to use textbooks?
- PPP model, present, practice, produce
- Planning and reviewing your lessons
- Assessing student learning
- Creating a positive learning environment
- Letters and Sounds, principles and practice of teaching Phonics to young learners
- Using class time well
- Teaching pronunciation

Each of these training modules consisted of 3 phases, active observation of the teachers/trainees in their own working environment, a series of 10 workshops, and a coaching session, again in their own working environment.

Each module is followed by 15 teachers/trainees; all these participants are active teachers in NGO and community schools in and around Siem Reap.

2. Language proficiency training for teachers.

In 2019 we restarted the EFT (English for Teachers) program, a language proficiency course for English teachers. Every Sunday, 4 groups (2 Levels) of English teachers followed additional language courses (2 hours/week). Although the results are good, we think we can have more impact if these classes would be intensified. From January 2020 onwards we will, therefore, adjust the approach and transform the language classes to conversation classes, with a strong emphasis on speaking (and pronunciation), with preparatory work (reading texts, watching a YouTube movie, preparing a grammar course ...) done prior to the conversation class at home.

3. Follow-up meetings

Three follow-up meetings were organised to bring former participants back together. The collaboration portal (<https://angkortree.onmicrosoft.com>) has also taken shape and has been put into use.

Teacher training (for teachers of General subjects in informal schools)

In November 2019 we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with “Stichting Doenkers” vzw, a Belgian organisation, and we will cooperate in 2020 to set up a teacher training program, similar to the one we have for teachers of English, but targeting teachers of general subjects (Khmer, mathematics, science, ...) in informal schools.

The preparations are ongoing, and the first training modules will take place in the first quarter of 2020.

Speech therapy

Khmer is a difficult language. Not only the vocabulary and grammar are fundamentally different from what we know in English, but also the phonetic system is incomparable. Where in English we have 21 consonants, Khmer has 33, in English, we have 5 vowels, Khmer has a very complex system of dependent and independent vowels. And not only in the written language, but also orally there is a huge difference between both languages. That's why we started a cooperation with VIVES University college in Brugge (Belgium).

This project focuses on

- The correct pronunciation of English (sounds, word-endings)
- Word- and sentence stress patterns (in Khmer word-stress is always on the last syllable of a word)
- Proper use of the voice in the classroom (the voice is the most important tool a teacher uses in a classroom)

The pilot took place in the last quarter of 2019, involving 2 students and one lector of the department of "logopedie" (speech-therapy).

This pilot-project demonstrated that using techniques of speech-therapy works! Of course, we cannot transform anyone into a near-native speaker in just two months, but the results are promising.

Vives and The Angkor Tree Project, therefore, decided to extend the project and continue efforts in the coming years.

A second team will join us in the first quarter of 2020.

Headmaster coaching

As decided last year, and on request of our community reference panel, a training session for headmasters and teacher coaches took place in December 2019. Under the title "Instructional Leadership" 12 headmasters explored techniques and opportunities to better coach their teachers.

Teacher Community of Practice

Every year, all alumni of our training programs meet a few times to exchange experiences and ideas. One of the tools used is the Microsoft Sharepoint technology, allowing to share lesson plans, activities, manuals and all other material that can be used in the classroom. With a 'mixed ability' user community (not all users are well skilled in the use of this kind of platforms) we need to further invest in training and maintenance of the platform.

For 2020 we plan closer cooperation with the Siem-Reap COP, eventually leading to a merger of both initiatives.

Employees and trainees/volunteers

- Teachers Nana and Piseth have decided to leave the organisation to pursue new opportunities by setting up their own business. We wish them both the best of luck in their future endeavours.
- Teacher Candy joined the team in 2019. She takes care of the young learners (phonics teaching) and of the level 1 students of junior high schools. We wish her a warm welcome in the Angkor Tree Project family.
- Teacher Kimset joined us in December, taking over Piseth's classes. A warm welcome to him.
- Interns and volunteers from Northern countries often assist our local teachers. In 2019 we were able to welcome students from UCLL (Leuven-Limburg), KdG (Antwerp), AP (Antwerp), Vives (Brugge) and HoGent (Ghent). Volunteers came from Belgium, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Collaboration

In 2019 we again invested in participating in 'SEST' (Siem Reap Education Support Team), a consultative body created by the government where all actors from education come together (the so-called Provincial Education Sector Working Groups).

We are convinced that SEST can play a significantly more important role in aligning and coordinating activities of the many dozens of NGO's that are active in this region. But NGO's are not always the easiest partners to work with, mainly because many of them are highly dependent on donor-organisations abroad, and sometimes tend to serve the donors agenda rather than the local community.

Since 22nd of November 2019, The Angkor Tree Project's Nat SON holds the chair of SEST. The plan is to implement a structure that allows to cover the entire field of education in a comprehensive way and to have it operate as a P.M.O. (program management office) that

- makes an inventory of the situation and points out problems/issues for each area of attention (kindergarten, primary school, junior high school);
- analyses problems/issues and proposes solutions that can be implemented by NGO's or where NGO's can have an important input/contribution;
- advocates cooperation between NGO's and between NGO's and public sector.

The EPPS program (see page 13) is a first example of what can be achieved by cooperating.

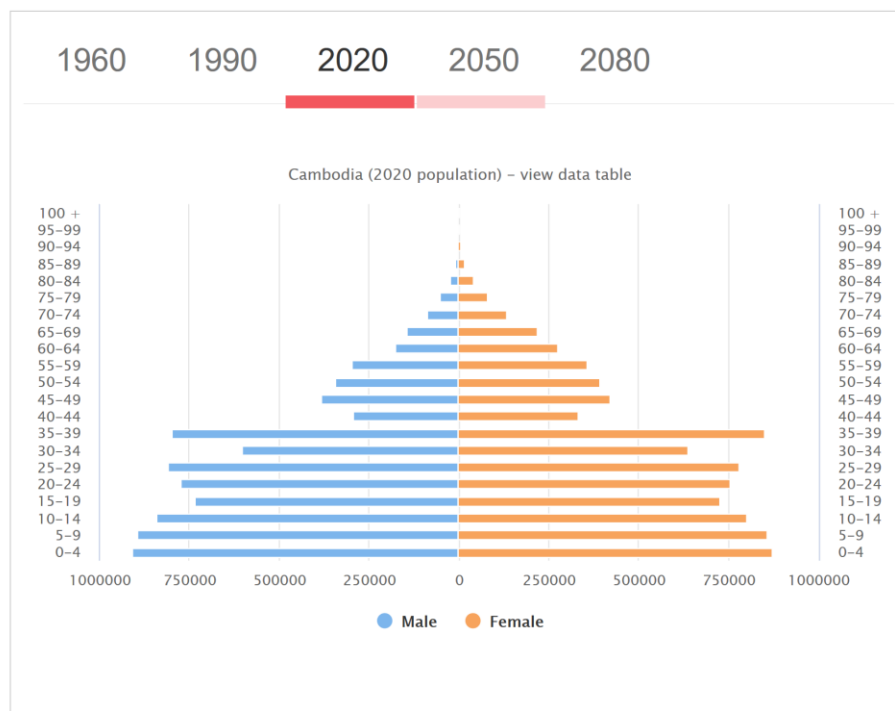
WHAT'S AHEAD?

The Cambodian government conducted a large-scale census (end 2018 - early 2019) and some results (in the perspective of education) are quite remarkable.

The province of Siem Reap has 510 primary schools, 93 junior high schools and 34 high schools. These account for 167.736 primary school students, 34.438 junior high school students and 39.905 high school students.

There are 5423 primary school staff (staff, not teachers), 1095 Junior High staff and 1591 High School staff.

Comparing the number of primary school students to the population in the age group of 6-12 is difficult, as we do not have exact numbers, but data from United Nations, World Bank and OECD give a fair idea.



Indeed, the vast majority of an estimated +95 % of children attend primary schools! It's mainly very remote rural areas that are lagging a bit behind.

Also, the participation of girls in primary education is not an issue.

The picture below shows a typical school (Kesara Ram Primary School in Siem Reap). They have 865 pupils, of which 414 girls. Compare that to the population graph above where you can see that in this age group there are more boys than girls; the numbers confirm that the efforts of many organisations promoting girls' participation in schools have paid off (this does not imply that there are no gender-related issues)

កម្រិតសិស្ស	ថ្នាក់	សិស្ស						បុគ្គលិក						សរុប
		សរុប	ស្រី	សរុប	ស្រី	សរុប	ស្រី	គ្រូ	បណ្ឌិត	សរុប	ស្រី			
សិស្សឆ្នាំទី 1	0A	132	61	27	13	159	74	11	06	24	21	35	27	សរុប ៨៦៥ (៤១៧ ប្រុស ៤៤៨ ស្រី)
សិស្សឆ្នាំទី ២	0A	134	68	09	03	143	74							
សិស្សឆ្នាំទី ៣	0A	123	56	06	01	129	57							
សិស្សឆ្នាំទី ៤	0A	145	62	06	03	151	65							
សិស្សឆ្នាំទី ៥	0A	150	79	01	00	151	79							
សិស្សឆ្នាំទី ៦	0A	131	67	01	01	132	68							
សរុប	24	815	393	50	21	865	414	11	06	24	21	35	27	

The main problem of education in Cambodia is not the number of pupils in primary schools, but the massive drop out of students when it comes to attending junior high school.

In the province of Siem Reap every grade in primary school (grades 1 to 6) accounts for approximately 28.000 students, every grade in Junior High School has only 11.500 students.

That's a dropout of 60%!

The main reasons are

- Lack of quality and resources in primary schools
- High indirect cost to attend secondary schools
- Lack of motivation (parents and students)

Lack of quality and resources in primary schools

- Low kindergarten attendance: children acquire necessary motoric and social skills that prepare them for successful learning in primary schools.
- An insufficient number of trained teachers (many primary school teachers have not even completed junior high school!)
 - Khmer
 - English
 - Maths
 - Other subjects
- Large classes : a class with 50 students is the rule rather than the exception
- Children with special needs are undetected and without adequate support (sight problems, learning disorders...)
- Lack of school materials (books, computers...)
- Often poor quality of infrastructure (classrooms, sanitary, drinking water...)
- Homework classes and complementary courses (NGO's) are unaligned with the school programs.

Before being accepted to a junior high school, students have to pass a test; most fail and drop out!

The high indirect cost of going to secondary schools

Unlike in Northern countries, commutes from home to school are not easy. There is no public transport, and roads are in bad condition; parents don't have cars to bring their children to school ... Going to a secondary school (there are only 93, while there are over 500 primary schools) is impossible unless you live close to that school, or have relatives in the surroundings of the school. There are some boarding homes, but by far not enough to cater for the need of the many thousands of students looking for accommodation (they are between 13 and 16 years old!) (Maybe a good idea for those seeking for alternatives when transforming orphanages to socially useful projects!)

Lack of motivation

At this age, it is often more attractive to keep children at home to help in the household or to help in the family business (farms, shops ...)

What to do?

At the Angkor Tree Project, we are confronted with these problems every day, and we were approached in a subtle way by the regional authorities asking for help.

We are experienced teacher trainers, and we have decided to make our experience available to the entire community, including the public schools.

However, **510** public primary schools, or 200.000 students, are far beyond our possibilities!

We started a search for partners and joined forces with Caring for Cambodia, New Hope Cambodia, Hands across the World and The global Child and started a project around Professional Development for English Teachers in Public Primary Schools.

EPPS, English for Teachers in Public Primary Schools was born!



The project scope is to provide every public primary school in Siem Reap province with at least one English Teacher

- Who has a sufficient level of proficiency;
- Who had a training adapted to the assignment;
- Using up-to-date manuals and methodologies;
- Using adequate technical tools;
- In good quality classrooms.

English was chosen as subject, not because it's the most important one, but because we have knowledge and experience in that area; because we can more easily set up local and international cooperation, and because it's an achievable goal: we can train one teacher per school (for subjects as Khmer and mathematics all teachers should be trained, and for the time being that is beyond our possibilities).

Moreover, it's the first time that such a project is planned and rolled out over the entire territory of a province, set up and managed by grassroots organisations. The whole community (NGO's, authorities, school principals, parents, international organisations) follow us closely and hope to be able to reproduce this approach for other subjects.

The EPPS approach.

In EPPS we concentrate on teachers of English in Primary Public Schools. They will be trained and coached for an entire year.

The project will start in a limited number (15 trainees) of primary schools. Only after the successful delivery of the first phase, the project will gradually be rolled out over the entire province.

The advantages of such a bottom-up approach are:

- The project can start with limited funding and resources.
- Experiences from the first phase can quickly be taken into the next stages; adjustments to the content of the training can easily be made.
- No need for a vast administration

- The POE (Provincial Office of Education, the Ministry of Education) and other relevant authorities and stakeholders will gain confidence in the project as it will have proven to work.
- The project can start almost immediately, with no need for long-lasting discussions.
- From the second phase onwards, the scale on which the work will be done can easily be adjusted to the available financial resources

Training and coaching approach

The training consists of 2 elements, teacher training (teaching skills) and language proficiency:

- In the first phase, the trainees are brought together to receive a very concise theoretical training on teaching English (based on the skills offered in TEFL courses).
After this introduction, they will meet regularly to prepare their upcoming classes. As they will all teach the same grades and levels, the lesson plans and preparation for all will be the same. The teachers-trainees will meet regularly, under the guidance of the instructor/coach, to evaluate the lessons already given, and to prepare the upcoming ones. This rhythm is maintained for a longer period.
The trainer/coach visits every trainee regularly in their respective school to coach in practice.
- At the same time, the trainees will participate in a language proficiency program.

After one school year, the trainees have received around 200 hours of training and many more hours of practice. This should enable them to continue to work autonomously from the second year onwards. They will then be encouraged to join the Community of Practice and to follow further in-service training.

The benefits for the participants are:

- A professional and free in-service training that can easily be combined with professional duties and private life.
- The trainees will receive a financial incentive, so their work is rewarded. This also helps to keep trainees on board for the entire duration of the project.
- The trainees will get access to (free) high-quality school materials (books, flashcards, audio and video sources, etc.)
- The trainees will be in a privileged position when it comes to promotion

- When international trainees are available, the local trainees will be the first ones to be selected to co-teach.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) :

The outcomes of the project will be measured as follows:

- **Language Proficiency:** a set of standardised placement tests will be used at the moment of intake. Every month a progress test is planned. At the end of the cycle, an end-test is planned. This end-test encompasses grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking and understanding.
All trainees must have progressed for at least one level (Beginner, Elementary, pre-intermediate, lower-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, pre-advanced, advanced, very advanced).
- **Drop-out:** at least 90% of the trainees who are engaged in the project also complete it. This means an attendance rate of at least 80 % and an assignment completion rate of at least 80%.
- **Assignment completion:** at least 90% of the trainees obtain an assignment evaluation rate of at least 70% on average.
- **Evaluation by school principals:** at least 80% of principals of schools concerned rate the outcomes of the project positive. For that purpose, an evaluation model will be developed where different aspects can be evaluated.
- **Evaluation by trainees:** at least 80% of the trainees express an interest in continuing the training. At least 70% of trainees show an express interest in further cooperation with international trainees or volunteers.
- **Students in grades 4, 5 and 6 will be tested.** Over 75% of the students need to pass the test.
- **Teachers will be evaluated by their students too.** An evaluation model will be developed for that purpose.
- **The trainer-coach will evaluate every teacher intermittently and at the end of the cycle, using a standardized evaluation model.**
- **Agreement of the POE to extend the project to more schools in the province.**

SUSTAINABILITY

Smaller organisations have a great advantage that they can respond very flexibly to sometimes rapidly changing circumstances and needs and that they have a much more transparent and simple cost structure. Indeed, the financial costs at The Angkor Tree Project are limited to about 200 euro per year (the cost of transferring money from Belgium to a Cambodian bank account), and the administrative costs don't exceed (publications in the Belgian Official Journal, Domain names, web hosting) 300 euro per year. That is less than 1.0% of our budget!

However, smaller organisations run the risk of being less sustainable than large NGOs. Often these (also called micro or grassroots) organisations are supported by one or a few people, and when these, for whatever reason, disappear, there is a considerable risk that the whole project does not exist very long.

Large organisations often have some specialised staff members, as a result of which the organisation has a great deal of expertise and know-how.

However, we are well aware of the risks and limitations and try to deal with this consciously.

The Angkor Tree Project invests in the professional training of the employees on site. The local members of the management team assume an increasing number of tasks and responsibilities, both pedagogically and organisationally. Sopheak Ngo, the headteacher, follows an "Executive certification in School Management" 3-year course (modules: Principalship, School Administration-Management, Principles of Curriculum Development, School Financial Management, Educational Leadership, Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills). As from 1 January 2020, he bears full responsibility (also financially) for the local school operation. Nat Son has final responsibility for teacher training (he holds a Master degree in Tesol from the University of Canberra, Australia). The role of Mark Desmaele is more of a facilitating than a guiding one: expanding a network with foreign schools for teacher training, relationships with sponsors, donors and subsidy providers. Once the bonds are established, they are also transferred step by step to the local team.

We acquire expertise through cooperation with other organisations, each of which is expert in their field. We share our knowledge with them, and they share with us. We are thinking of 'Child Protection', 'First Aid', 'Ethical behaviour', a.s.o.

Financial sustainability

An education project cannot exist without ongoing support from governments and private donors. Financial support from the local authorities is unavailable.

The United Nations decided that education should be universally available, for free for all children till the age of 15, to be extended gradually to the age of 18.

That's why asking parents for a financial contribution is not an option.

We also think that the right of education implies the right to having a trained teacher! Given the socio-economic situation of the trainees, it is not possible to charge for the teacher trainings we are providing. The only ones who could afford this are private for-profit schools that emerge all over the country (sometimes they even call themselves social enterprise!)

We have conducted some small experiments, trying to generate some income (doing translation work, baby-sitting service), but none of these was successful.

In 2020 we plan to cooperate with AFD (Academics For Development) to investigate other opportunities.

But yes, similar to 99% of the schools across the world, we depend on donations and grants.

We strive for diversification and try to work with a mix of private donations, government grants and support from NGO's in the Northern world. In the past few years, 90 % of our income came from Belgium, and we are trying to set up a network in other countries (the Netherlands, UK, US, Canada, Australia) to avoid to be dependant on a too limited group of funders.

WHO ARE WE?

Board of directors Cambodia

- Sopheak Ngo, Chairman
- Nat Son, Board Member
- Houk Theun, Board Member
- Mark Desmaele, Board Member

Board of directors Belgium

- Pieter Thiels, Chairman
- Ludwig Jegers, Board Member
- Marie Desmaele, Board Member
- Sandra Van Hooydonck, Board Member
- Sylvia Van Lint, Board Member
- Mark Desmaele, Board Member

Management Team Cambodia

- Sopheak Ngo, Headmaster
- Nat Son, Head of Teacher Training
- Mark Desmaele, operational support

FINANCIAL REPORT

Full details, including justification of each issue, is available online at www.theangkortreeproject.org

Below an overview (in USD and EURO):
Figures subject to approval by the Board of Directors

Expenses:

Description	USD	EUR	Total
Rent	2.400,00		
Building Maintenance	2.658,54		
Utilities	1.583,45		
Salaries	34.303,00		
Other staff costs like insurances,	2.882,36	513,01	
School supplies (Inclusive purchase of some computers)	6.218,85	2.075,87	
Breakfasts	1.824,40		
Costs for volunteers	6.931,22	542,95	
Financial and adm costs	270,50	309,13	
Exceptional costs	855,00		
Total			Euro 57.974,91 USD 63.712,48

- Income

Description	USD	EUR	Total
Gifts and allowances	2.800,00	49.275,31	
Contribution volunteers	2.308,00	3.383,14	
Events		6.722,88	
Total			Euro 64.029,61 USD 70.427,46

THANK YOU

The Angkor Tree Project is an educational project. No educational project can exist without the support of governments and/or sponsors. Government support in Cambodia will probably be impossible for many years, which is why we are very grateful to our many sponsors. Our operation in 2019 was possible, thanks to your support!

Thank you Johan, Leo, Ludwig, Steven, Patrick, Veronique, Sylviane, Erik, Ingrid, Marcel, Rudi, Elvire, Erwin, Kathleen, Hort, Marie, Robrecht, Herman, Luk, Goedele, Didier, Jan, Suzanne, Guy, Wies, Rene, Dirk, Lutgarde, Rolf, Dieter, Alain, Frederik, Christine, Alberte, Andrea, Andre, Magda, Stijn, Dirk, Danielle, Erik, Martine, Rita, Katrin, Kato, Dave, Sara, Sander, Marleen, Krista, Eric, Glenn...

Thanks to 'het Gemeentebestuur van Haacht', 'het gemeentebestuur van Kampenhout', Rotary Club Beveren Waas, 'het Provinciebestuur van Vlaams-Brabant', Argenta, Aukas vzw, SOL vzw, Meadowridge School, Rosemarie Mettler Stiftung, SDU, Life Sciences nv, city of Antwerp, ..

VARIOUS

The Angkor Tree Project (Cambodia)

Legal Name : TDSO, Teacher Development Support Organisation

Angkor Tree Street

Behind Wat Preah Enkoasei

Treang Village - Slakram commune - Siem Reap

Registration nr 10968 (Ministry of Interior)

The Angkor Tree Project vzw (Belgium)

Donkstraat 61

B-3150 Haacht

Belgium

Registration nr : BE0 642 700 026

Exempt of VAT (art 56 bis)

Website: www.theangkortreeproject.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/theangkortreeproject

Email: belgium@theangkortreeproject.org

cambodia@theangkortreeproject.org

Bank information :

Belgium: Account Triodos BE 87 5230 8077 3894 BIC TRIOBEBB

Cambodia: Account nr: 001 268 239

Beneficiary Name: Teacher Development Support Organization

Beneficiary Address: Treang, Sla Kram, Siem Reap

Beneficiary Bank: Advanced Bank of Asia

Beneficiary Bank Address: 148, Preah Sihanouk Blvd, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Beneficiary BANK SWIFT: ABAKHPP