

Quarter Overview

This quarter is the beginning of many new changes and developments at PEPY! First, **we are preparing to say goodbye to Bong Watd, our exiting Executive Director.** She will return to Phnom Pehn to her consultancy and her family at the end of March. We are so grateful for her commitment to PEPY and for the many positive impacts she has had on the organization. **Our new Executive Director, Mean Lux, is taking the time to learn PEPY's history and is looking forward to working with the team, board, and stakeholders on our upcoming Strategic Plan** to ensure our sustainability over the next 5 years. In addition to Mean Lux, **we welcomed new volunteer, Nicolette, in February.** Nicolette, a professional videographer and photographer, will be lending her skills to our Partnerships and Development team. We are also thrilled to be welcoming students and participants back to our programs this quarter. They have all worked so hard to advance their educational and

professional goals in spite of the extended COVID lockdowns. We are eager to give all of our participants the tools and resources to get their studies back on track and to prepare them for the current job markets.



Photo of our Director, Mr. Lux, interacting with our students.

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Community Student Outreach Program

Dream Management Project

It is wonderful to see new and returning faces in Dream class this quarter! This year, **we have over 950 students in Grades 10-12 attending Dream classes regularly.** While we were nervous about students' returning to school after the pandemic, our attendance rates are actually higher compared to last year, with some class attendance rates nearly reaching 100%. So far, Dream Officers have conducted at least four lessons per grade focused on self-discovery, goal setting, presenting, team work, leadership, financial literacy, how to fill out scholarship applications, and how to do an interview.



Students participating in a group activity in Dream Class.

The Dream team organized regular Dream Talks at each of our partner schools reaching over 300 students so far. Dream Talks are when recent graduates return to high school to share about their experiences in higher education. The sessions inspire and inform current students as they prepare to pursue their goals. **In Varin High School, we organized the first Sharing Event of the year with over 500 attendees.** The featured speakers focused on self-development and the importance of education. We are looking forward to bringing more inspiring speakers to Dream in the coming months!

Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE) Project

We are so pleased to share that **we have accepted 35 new scholars for 2022-2023.** We organized an Integration Day Event for the new scholars in January to give them the chance to get to know each other, learn about PEPY programs, and prepare for life in Siem Reap city. Since mid-January, **they have maintained a 98% attendance rate in the Learning Center which is a 6% increase compared to last year's scholars** during Quarter II. The Learning Center led a tour of eight higher education institutions and vocational schools to help the scholars get all the information they needed to select the school that meets their goals and aspirations. We look forward to helping them enroll in the coming weeks! In other exciting news, **the scholarship employment rate for all work eligible scholars is now 98%.** All of our 2021-2022 scholars received jobs quickly after graduating from the Learning Center and **there is now only one 2020-2021 scholar who is currently unemployed.** We are so thrilled to see our extra counseling and job preparation workshops are paying off!



Doeurn's Inspiring Story:

Doeurn, is a 2020-2021 scholar from a very remote area in Srei Snam District. Her home is over 50 km from the district center and 137 km from Siem Reap City. She is the second eldest child in a family of seven and her parents are farmers. To complete high school, she lived with a host family near the school for

two years and in the dormitory for one year. Doeurn was dedicated to continuing her education, but knew her parents had no means to support her. After applying to many scholarships, Doeurn was thrilled to be selected

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by PEPY. Now Doeurn is pursuing a Bachelor's in International Relations at Pannasastra University of Cambodia, Siem Reap Campus. In addition, after completing a nine-month internship at Spoons Cambodia, she was hired there as a Social Worker. Doeurn shared, "I am very happy with my current job at Spoons Cambodia because I love working with youths and helping them to achieve their goals. They come from a very similar background just like me so that gives me more energy and passion to work with them to ensure that they are in a good position in term of studying, living, and working."



Learning Center Program



Students and their parents in the Welcoming Day event.

The Learning Center welcomed new students and volunteers this quarter! **For the first time since the program's inception, we selected 65 students to attend the center!** In the past, we have only had the capacity to support up to 60 students, but with the additional interns and volunteers that we are bringing on board, we can offer more young people in our community some much-needed support. We have our remote volunteer, Ashley, returning to tutor students, and three SE Asia Foundation scholars. We are also in the process of selecting one long-term and experienced Native English-Speaking Volunteer. We are still feeling the impact of COVID-19 in our classrooms, as our students' pre-tests scores were some of the lowest we have ever seen in our center. We are grateful to have compiled such a fantastic team to ensure all of our youth leave the center prepared to thrive in their personal and professional lives.

The commitment from parents has also been very heartwarming. **Twenty-eight parents joined our Welcoming Event from January 16th-17th** in support of their children's education and to express their commitment to the center. We believe this will be one of our most rewarding and transformative years yet!

English Learning Project (ELP)

The Learning Center students are very eager to learn and increase their English language skills! After taking the pre-test for their class placements, we realized that the students will need a lot of specialized and intensive support. **The average pre-test score was 36%**, while last year's was 46%. Last year's student faced many challenges competing with youth in the city, so we know that the current students will be facing even more disadvantages. They will be receiving regular online sessions, extra support courses, and counseling throughout

the year. So far, each class (Camel is the beginner level, Hippo is the pre-intermediate level, and Anaconda is the intermediate level) received two lessons focused on building their basic vocabulary, lexis, and conversation skills.

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) Project



Students in ICT class during the first sessions.

The average pre-test score in ICT class was only 27% which indicates that our new students have very limited to no computer skills. One of the new students, Sovannet, explained, "I have never learned computer in high school. It is so challenging when I do my first pre-test in the ICT Class. It was not an easy-going test. I am so fortunate to get a chance to study at PEPY. I believe I will improve myself on both hard and soft skills."

Sovannet is certainly not alone, many of our students were not able to turn on or turn off a computer during the first week of class. The students' limited time with IT in high school, compounded with extended school lockdowns, forced most of our student to miss out on typing classes or any exposure to a computer before coming to our center. While we are starting out with basic cyber security, IT vocabulary, and introducing students to online platforms, the ICT teacher is planning on providing an extra one-hour class each week and providing individual tutoring to students this year.

>> Future is Bright Lab and Library

On the *bright side*, the Bright Lab and Library is continuing to thrive this quarter with 60 students, staff, and alumni renting IT materials. **We were able to raise \$225.63 USD from December-February** to go toward future IT purchases and repairs. Individuals reported that they borrowed computers to do their homework assignments, work on presentations, and improve their skills related to their job interests. Expanding the library will be one of our top priorities this year to meet the needs of our students and alumni.

Youth Empowerment (YE) Project

This quarter, the new students received many important workshops, training, and experiential tours to help them prepare for their future and advance their life skills. In February, the students were taken on university tours to help them identify which school best fits their needs. The tours included faculty introductions, going over the school's available majors, and the schools' clubs and programs. The students also visited APOPO and This Beautiful Life Organization to learn about their services in case they would like to join or support any of their initiatives. **The students were also provided workshops on Sexual and Reproductive**

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Health, Financial Literacy, and First Aid to ensure that they are living healthily and adapting successfully to city life.



Students participating in the First Aid workshop.

In the classroom, **students have been busy learning about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in the context of Cambodia while working in groups to conduct basic research.** The students also started giving presentations in the class to begin building up their confidence and their sense of initiative.



Youth Innovators' Space and Incubator (YISI) Program



Photo from the December 10th alumni meeting.

The YISI Program is in its third year of operation as of this quarter! In their recent Youth Innovator alumni meeting on December 10th, we learned about all the incredible progress alumni are making in their businesses and how they are supporting their communities. For example, Konhing, the Founder of Taan Weave and the recipient of our 2021 700 USD mini-grant, has joined our exhibitions and has made partnerships with local expo centers to sell her community's weaving products. They have increased their sales so much that they are able to support the women weavers in her village, buy higher quality equipment, and provide funds to the women weaver's children so they are able to access quality education. Taan Weaves and Konhing are just one of the many success stories from YISI.

The team also got valuable feedback from the alumni meetings to improve the YISI Program. The alumni suggest that we extend our mentorship support to each Youth Innovator to give them more ideas and methods to form successful co-operatives with competing businesses.

In addition to the alumni meeting, the team also organized another massive exhibition event in partnership with Enterprise Vision Academy, SAHAK, and SHE Investments as well as a WeBusiness Talk. The 3rd Siem Reap Entrepreneur's



WeBusiness Talk event at Vanda Institute.

Future Innovation Exhibition was held at the Cambodian National Youth Center on Sunday, February 19th, 2023. **Thirty entrepreneurs featured their products and services to over 500 event attendees.** The event also included performances from the Cambodian Martial Art Labok Kator and Shadow Puppetry from ASORAN, panels of business leaders sharing their experiences, and, Mr. Sok Thol, the Siem Reap Administration Director, giving opening remarks. Our WeBusiness Talk was held on February 26th, 2023 at Vanda Institute. **We had 64 youth join the event** to hear from Mrs. Kong Seakthy, the Business Owner of Tiara Air Travel and Tour, and Mr. Brian Synak Ork, the Country Manager of See the World Travel. The event gave participants the chance to learn from the speakers' experiences in the tourism industry, especially during and after COVID-19.

Social Enterprise Incubator Course

The YISI team selected 20 Youth Innovators out of 35 applicants to join our Social Enterprise Incubator Course. The course's orientation was on January 21st, 2023. The orientation covered PEPY's history, our current programs, and the incubator's policies and expectations. The participants also took part in a pre-exam to measure their knowledge on the course content. **The average score was 34%** indicating that the new Youth Innovators will be exposed to many new concepts and workshops through our team and their assigned mentors this year.



YISI Innovators and team during the business visit.

The Youth Innovators also participated in their first business visit at Soun Tunsay Restaurant on February 4th, 2023. The restaurant is 18 km from Siem Reap city and is a resort and restaurant where people can go camping, view the sunset and sunrise, enjoy their swimming pool, visit their flower garden, and so much more! During the tour, the Youth Innovators had the opportunity to meet the owner and learn how they adapted to keep their business open during and after the pandemic.

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IT for Business Course

The Youth Innovators also took a pre-exam for the IT for Business course. **They received an average score of 46%.** Most of our participants are at our pre-intermediate level and we look forward to helping them improve their IT literacy and skills as the course progresses. For their first lesson, they learned about the many overlooked tools in Telegram (Cambodia's top instant messaging platform). One of the new Youth Innovator's, Ms. Sopheaktra, shared, *"I am delighted to be selected for this course. The class topic is interesting and new for me to learn. In the afternoon, we learned about Telegram, and I saw that I missed many useful tools. Thank you very much to PEPY's YISI team."*

>> 3-month IT for Business Professional's Course

We will be recruiting for the first round of our 3-month course during Quarter III.



Mr. Hen, is a 36-year-old Youth Innovator who is currently enrolled in our Social Enterprise Incubator Course and our IT for Business Course. He, along with two university students, initiated a language school called Banana Center Cambodia (BCC) in 2021 in Svay Dangkum Primary School,

a site that is about 10 minutes from Siem Reap town.

The school purposes are to: 1) create jobs for community members, 2) increase the skills and capacities of teachers, 3) give disadvantaged students, aged 6-20, the opportunity to access language skills and close education gaps in the community, and 4) give students more university and career choices down the road.

The center was started with 8 students and now it has grown rapidly to reach over 400 students. BCC has also expanded to a team of 11 and opened at another location in Sangkat Svay Dangkum at Kontrok Village.

This year, as they continue to grow and shape their business, they hope to address several key challenges with the support of the YISI team. These include lack of human resources, as well as a lack of capital and key resources to strengthen and expand the center. As a lifelong-learner, Hen was very motivated to join YISI. He shared that, "with the YISI Program, I have gained critical soft and hard skills that allow me to build connections with other business owners, to exchange experiences with them, and have [the] opportunity to mobilize financial support for the Banana Center Cambodia." We look forward to helping Hen and his team achieve more sustainability and confidence as a new enterprise!