

BEAUTIFUL LIFE ORGANISATION ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS.

It has been my pleasure to put together this Annual Report for you; the very first we have done in English, specifically for you! For me, it has been a great opportunity for reflection, and I'm pleased to say one that continuously inspired thoughts like, "Wow, we are actually doing a lot of great things!"

I hope that you, too, can see the value in what we do, often in its simplicity. What comes naturally for others can actually be quite difficult for our community. Just showing up. Being our true, authentic selves. Feeling comfortable and safe in our own skin, let alone in different settings. Having to constantly consider how our identity or sexuality may impact our days, our conversations, our interactions. So, I am often overcome with queer joy to simply see my community enjoying themselves, being themselves. That is enough for me. That is a feat in itself.

I cannot speak highly enough of my team, whom you will see in the coming pages. Lyhuor, Sivat, Sophikun and Khunyeam continue to work tirelessly alongside our community, for a better community. Our weekly meetings are often the highlight of my week- just having the chance to check-in with these special people and update each other about what's been happening and the exciting things to come. It is not always easy to be a part of our community, let alone the faces of it. But they persist, with their energy, positivity and bravery, to show up not only for themselves, but for others, too. And they do it so well. I could not be more thankful or proud.

We are so lucky to live in a country that allows us to do the work that we do, and that does not criminalise who we are! And I look forward to continuing our important advocacy work alongside fellow stakeholders to make the situation even better for LGBTIQ+ people in Cambodia!

It is my honour to share with you all our Annual Report for 2023. Thank you in advance for your continued support, time and interest in reading it! I hope that 2024 is another successful and, most importantly, happy year for us all!

Jason Argenta

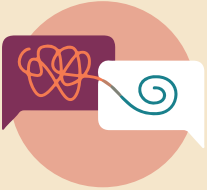
Director, Beautiful Life Organisation



ACHIEVEMENTS OVERVIEW



4372 visits to our drop-in centre



34 counselling sessions



1 individual supported to start hormone therapy



800+ individuals joining our community events



Child & Youth group formed



3 scholarships awarded



12+ workshops

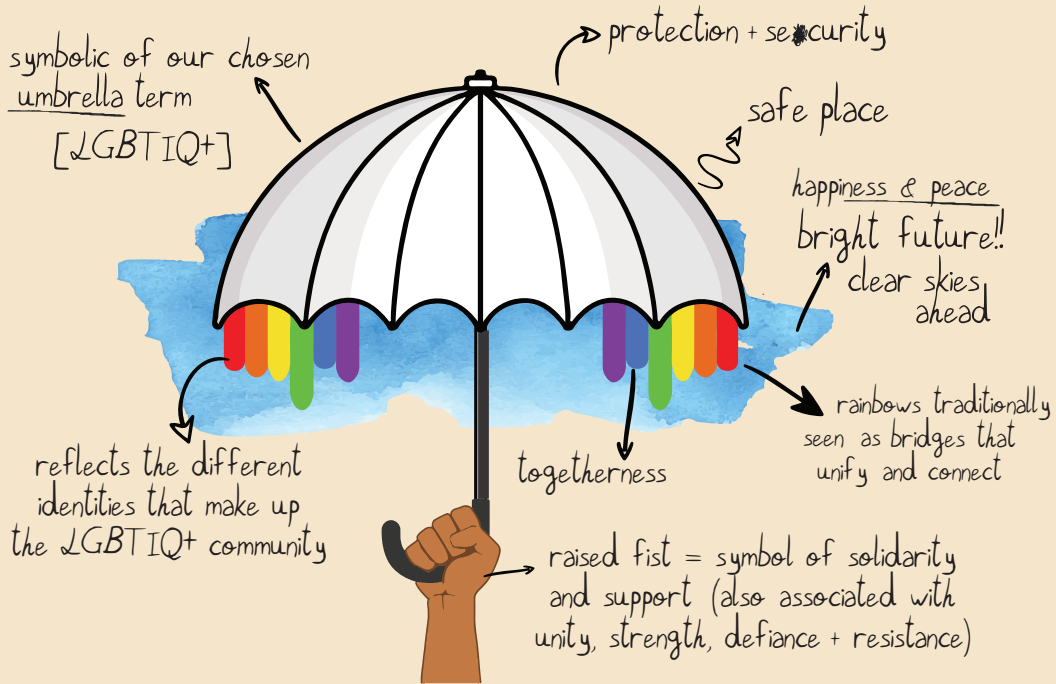


More and more partnerships, networking and collaborations

ABOUT US

Vision To live in a world free from discrimination.

Mission To create safe spaces for people with diverse SOGIESC (commonly known as LGBTIQ+ people) where they feel included, comfortable, accepted and celebrated.



Our team

SROY Sophikun
he/him
Facilitator

PROM Sivath
he/him
Facilitator / Project Officer

EM Lyhuor
he/him
Facilitator

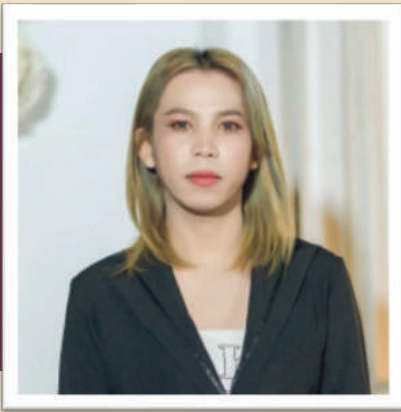
KHEANG Khunyeam
she/hers
Facilitator



ADVISORY BOARD

In late 2022, we formed an amazing **Advisory Board** made up of the following individuals! You need only read their titles and look at their faces to see why we chose them as our board members. We are so lucky to have these beautiful people and their combined wealth of knowledge to call on for advice and guidance!

Chair



UY Rada | she/hers
Outreach Supervisor
Men's Health Cambodia

Treasurer



THEN Rorth | he/him
Communications & Engagement Manager
Angkor Hospital for Children

Secretary



David HUNT | he/him
Director
Bambujaya Bilingual School



KHLANG Kim Ann | she/hers
Program & Executive Support Officer
SeeBeyondBorders



CHHOUN Thida | she/hers
Founder / Director
SafeSpaceBtB



Sara WALLIMANN | she/they
Co-Founder & Managing Partner
HAVEN Cambodia

1 DIRECT SUPPORT

Drop-in centre: A Place to be Yourself (APTBY)

After opening our doors in May 2017, having inhabited four different spaces, 2023 was the year we moved into our very own space!

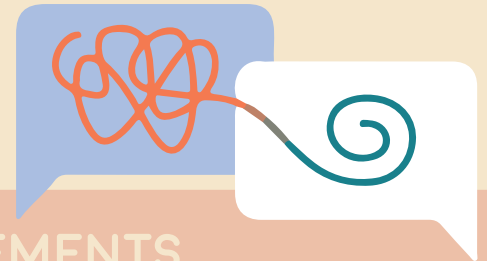


Oh wow! It's beautiful! Congratulations! Why did you need such a big space?

We have grown exponentially since opening in May 2017, when we welcomed just four visitors. In 2023, we had...

265 new visitors and a total of **4372** visits!

In 2023, we supported **13 individuals** to access a total of **34 professional counselling sessions!**



ISSUES RAISED

- Depression
- Family issues
- Workplace issues
- Anxiety
- Burnout
- Stress
- Loneliness
- Social relationship issues
- Grief
- Unstable moods

IMPROVEMENTS

- Happier
- More confident / independent
- Stress reduction
- Improved anxiety management
- Flexibility
- Better priority management
- More in tune with self, better self-control / managing emotions
- Healthy expression
- Braver
- Better at setting boundaries



Hi. I just went by the shop to see **Mia**. Said she had a good chat with your counsellor and she looked SO much happier!

They have 2 more 'sessions' planned I think. So thank you!!

I had problems with my thinking and it really affect on daily life. I can't sleep and eat well. I couldn't even concentrate on what I was doing. It really bothered me and made me badly depressed. But I had counseling with the counsellor a few times it made me feel better. The consellor help me to find the root of the cause of the problem and give good advice to take care of my mental health especially some techniques like breathing exercises to calm my mind down and [find] peace. I really recommend people should take conselling service when they have problem and can't solve it and it stuck in their mind. It's very important.

2 ADVOCACY

Community Empowerment

We had more than **800 people** join our events!

Our community events are about more than getting our community together just for fun (though they are also about that and that is equally important) - they are also about our community meeting others, trying new things, learning new skills, and feeling safe in spaces outside of our own.

OUR REGULAR EVENTS

- Karaoke
- Movie nights
- Make-up days
- Colouring-in days
- Discussion groups
- Games days
- Fitness sessions
- Zumba
- Yoga
- Cycling
- Salsa
- Swimming
- Skating





SPECIAL EVENTS

We hosted the **UN Human Rights Council's Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (IE SOGI)**.

We got our **Child & Youth** club together with our community to have a clean-up along the riverside.



Our community participated in a series of workshops with **Writing Through** (an organisation which uses creative writing as a tool to develop thinking skills, language fluency and self-esteem).

RAINBOW DREAM

It's a sunny day with the rainbow between two clouds,
Birds singing along,
Wind just blows the leaves,
Flowers dancing along in the wind.

There's fruit and snacks on the table inside the house,
A boy playing with his baby dolls,
Wearing a pink shirt and a skirt with his dad sitting alongside,
They are smiling at each other.
There's a call from mum inside the house,
"Time for snacks!"
And the sound of laughing and giggling in the house.
Suddenly, there is a ringing in my ears.
"Wake up! Wake up! Time for school! You are late!"

Open my eyes in the messy room with a dark blanket covering my face.
Soon the smile is gone; another day to start.



THIS IS ONE OF THEIR POEMS!

We arranged one of the biggest groups that Australian organisation, **Hair Aid**, had ever had! Participants were trained in different haircuts, and awarded a set of tools upon graduating, effectively setting them up to start earning money from cutting hair immediately!



We participated in a 6-week theatre workshop with **When Cats Fly- Creative Company** which uses the tools of theatre to help young people gain in confidence, self-awareness and connection.

A crazy ride that takes the hands of even the most timid souls out of their comfort zone throughout the journey of expressing themselves and never again shall they shy away from the word confidence.



Scholarships: for LGBTIQ+ individuals

In 2023, we supported one LGBTIQ+ individual to study an **Intensive English for Academic Purposes** university preparatory course. In 2024, he will begin his BA!



*A big thank you to our private sponsor, **Darron Gurney**, for making this possible!

We were also able to offer two other LGBTIQ+ individuals educational scholarships generously offered by **Destination TEFL** as part of Pride 2023 (a 4-week, 140-hour TEFL training course valued at \$1545)!



PREVENTION

Workshops

We delivered **12 workshops** related to LGBTIQ+, diverse SOGIESC, gender and sexuality, and the services we offer to our community! Recipients included organisations, schools and businesses!



We also took part in an important **LGBTIQ+ Mapping** workshop with **CHEC Organisation** who are endeavouring to become more inclusive in their programs and services

Inclusive Child Protection: Srolanh Kon Chea Kon



And organised a special workshop for **40 parents/caregivers** where we taught about LGBTIQ+ and identified and addressed some of their concerns about potentially having a child who identified as LGBTIQ+.



What concerns did the parents/caregivers have?

CONCERNS THAT WE ADDRESSED:

1. "I'm worried that my child will be discriminated against!"
2. "I'm worried about what others will say about me / my family!"
3. "LGBTIQ+ people cannot be successful, contributing members of society (and may destroy our culture)!"
4. "LGBTIQ+ people cannot have their own families!"

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS RAISED:

- lack of legal support and protection
- they may be pressured by those around them
- about their health

*Notes written by the parent/caregiver participants to our community (who they now understand could very well be their own children)



To address some of these concerns, we screened a video that we had made featuring parents of LGBTIQ+ individuals, hosted a panel discussion with LGBTIQ+ parents, and arranged a fashion show and drag show to showcase some of our community's talents, skills and contributions to society!



Resources

We continued to **create resources** relevant to LGBTIQ+ life in Cambodia, and reprinted an updated version of our **LGBTIQ+ Dictionary!**



All of our resources are available online for free download: www.aptbody.org/resources

Sexual health support

We continued to provide **free condoms** and **lubricant** to our community in public and private spaces, and referrals for **free HIV/STI testing and treatment**. We became a **community-based PrEP service provider** and also had a local doctor trained to be able to provide **hormone therapy** to our community. Unfortunately, the cost of hormone therapy continues to make it inaccessible to most who need it. As a way to figure out how much it would cost and potentially setting up a sponsorship program, we have been sponsoring one trans man to access hormone therapy.

Partnerships with



PARTNERSHIPS

- Active member of **Siem Reap Social Worker Network** meetings
- Active member of **Violence Against Children** working group
- Member of **ILGA Asia / ILGA World**
- Invited to join **Women ChangeMakers** group
- Informal consultant for high-school/university projects and groups (including a full-day event that we sponsored organised by one of the students from **Liger Academy** in Phnom Penh)
- Informal consultant for **Angkor Photo Festival's** LGBTIQ+ focused projects
- Enlisted by **Princeton University** to develop an LGBTIQ+ themed pre-departure guide for their gap year students coming to stay in Cambodia for 9 months
- Collaborated on a number of projects, including:
 - an article by documentary photographer, **Jonathan Slade**, entitled *Queer Lives: Thailand & Cambodia*
 - **Queering the Perspective** podcast
 - an article by **Kontinentalist** entitled *A Woman's World: Creating spaces for joy, leisure, and resistance in South and South-east Asia*
 - videos, interviews and meetings with fellow stakeholders, including **RoCK**, **Loveisdiversity** and **SafeSpaceBtB**
 - joint event and video for International Women's Day with **This Life Cambodia**
- Ongoing engagement with **the UN**, including:
 - youth consultations
 - Universal Periodic Review (UPR) engagement
 - selected to be part of a Training of the Trainers for International Human Rights Mechanisms
- Organised four days of **Pride events** in Siem Reap
- Attended Pride reception at **US Ambassador's residence**
- Visited by Indonesian doctors and researchers (**Yayasan Kerti Praja**) looking to set up community-based PrEP service in their country
- Regional engagement/advocacy (Manila, Bangkok, etc.)



PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



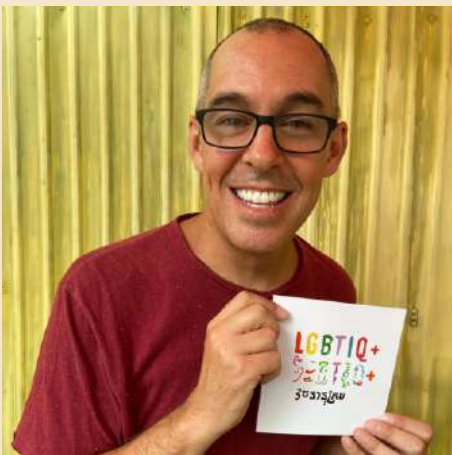
OUR DONORS



AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
AU CAMBODGE

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

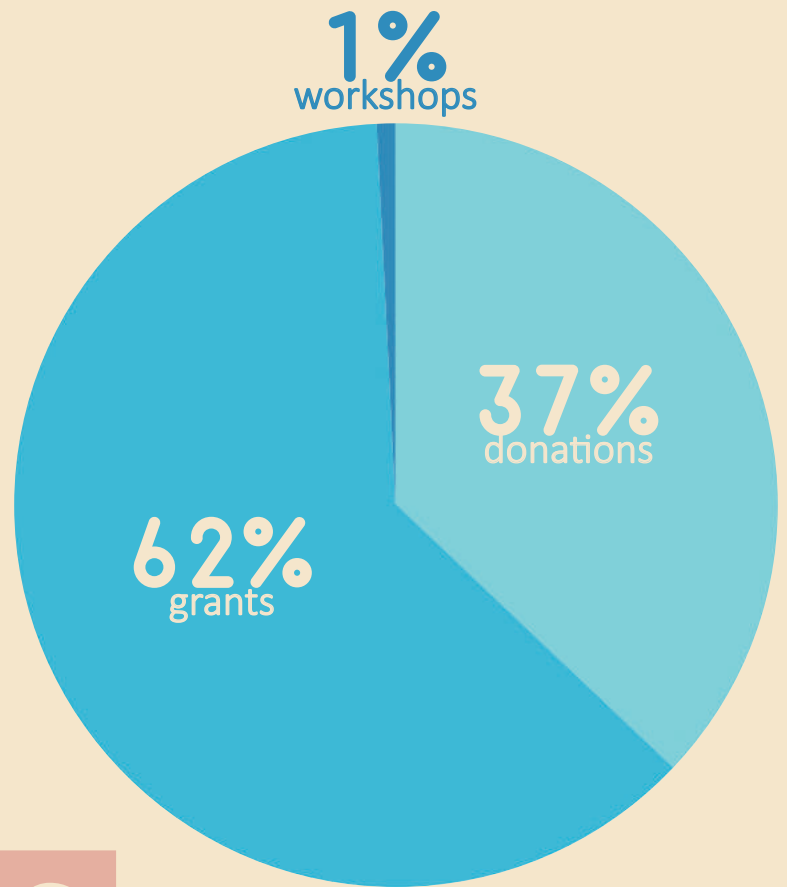
Special thanks to our following individual sponsors/supporters:



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

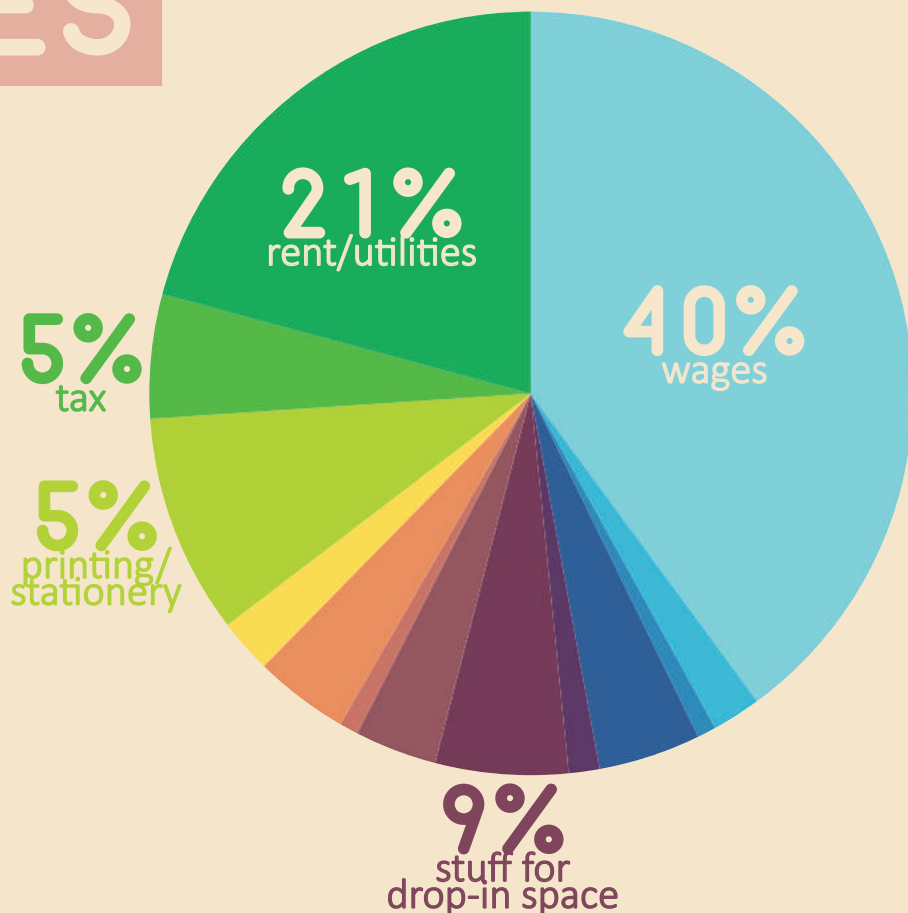
INCOME

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Grants: | \$19,725.61 |
| Donations: | \$11,773.37 |
| Workshops: | \$250.00 |
| Interest: | \$5.11 |
| TOTAL: | \$31,754.09 |



EXPENSES

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Wages: | \$14,954.54 |
| Counselling: | \$775.00 |
| Capacity building: | \$300.00 |
| Promotion: | \$1,624.51 |
| Medical care: | \$488.50 |
| Drop-in space stuff: | \$2,108.72 |
| Community activities: | \$1,306.23 |
| Translation: | \$300.00 |
| Miscellaneous: | \$1,504.50 |
| Cleaning supplies: | \$26.59 |
| Travel: | \$854.16 |
| Printing/stationery: | \$3,498.17 |
| Tax: | \$1,968.60 |
| Rent/utilities: | \$7,793.59 |
| TOTAL: | \$37,503.11 |



PLANS FOR 2024

Income generation for our drop-in centre

Upskilling members of our community and then employing them, creating both income for them and our organisation (for example, making trinkets or products to sell).

Celebrate PRIDE 2024 (and other International Awareness Days)

Help schools / organisations / businesses be more inclusive

Create more partnerships

Corporate engagement

Engaging different sectors to become more inclusive in their policies and practices; providing diversity / gender and sexuality training; raising awareness of our community and our history; gaining more support for Pride events and the services we offer.

Develop a hormone therapy sponsorship program

Developing a program which allows individuals to access hormone therapy- perhaps where they volunteer at our drop-in space, once a week for example, to “give back” (and perhaps only for a limited amount of time [as hormone therapy must be maintained as long as you wish you to see the changes it brings about]- but in the meantime, helping to get them to a point where they will be able to afford the costs themselves.



THANK YOU

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our donors and supporters in 2023 (and since our inception in 2017) who see the value in what we do and in our community! It is with **your** ongoing support that we will continue to thrive and walk alongside our community to a point where our services are no longer necessary- when our society is a **safe space** for all.



Leonard Wiens, Photographers Without Borders © 2019