Project Briefing: Xavier Jesuit School Student Dormitory

Overview: Opening Doors to Education in Rural Cambodia

In rural north-western Cambodia, access to quality secondary education remains out of reach for many young people. Families living in remote villages face substantial barriers, including long and hazardous travel distances, limited local high school infrastructure, and economic pressures that often force children out of school and into premature labour.

Located in Phnom Bak Village, Sisophon, the Student Dormitory at Xavier Jesuit School (XJS) addresses these barriers by providing a safe, supportive, and nurturing residential environment. Run through Jesuit Service Cambodia, the dormitory offers vulnerable youth from remote areas the opportunity to access comprehensive secondary schooling, moral formation, and life skills development that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

Led full-time by Dormitory Director Fr Do Thanh Nguyen SJ (Fr San) alongside dedicated residential caregivers, the facility operates not merely as boarding accommodation, but as an intentional community. Here, students are accompanied through academic mentoring, personal development, and pastoral care, enabling them to flourish academically and grow into young men and women for others.

Support and Recent Progress

During the first six months of 2026, the dormitory provided holistic residential care, academic support and personal development opportunities to 40 boarding students (27 girls and 13 boys) across Grades 8 through 12, guided by three residential caregivers, while Fr San continued to reside at the dormitory and oversee the project full time:

- **High Attendance and Engagement:** Boarding students achieved an outstanding 98% class attendance rate at Xavier Jesuit School, with daily routines fostering consistent study habits and discipline.
- **Academic Growth:** Over 52% of boarding students raised their average grade score by more than one full point between Semester 1 and recent mid-year assessments. Overall, 87.5% maintained or improved their academic grade standing.
- **Strong Accademic Performance** Demonstrating the impact of evening study sessions, the number of dormitory students ranking within the top five of their respective school classes rose to eight students.
- **Targeted Academic Support:** All Grade 12 boarders received weekend tutoring and evening classes in core subjects including Mathematics, Physics, and English to prepare them thoroughly for national exams.

- **Holistic Development:** Alongside academics, 90% of students actively participated in weekly extracurricular clubs, including IT, traditional dance, sports, guitar lessons, and sewing.

Accompanying the Whole Person: Pastoral Care and Life Skills

The Xavier School Dormitory places special emphasis on whole-person formation (*cura personalis*), ensuring students develop personal resilience and leadership alongside academic competence:

- **Mentorship and Goal Setting:** Building on the *Beyond Success* programme, students participated in review sessions and one-on-one accompaniment with caregivers to cultivate personal values, self-awareness, and Individual Development Plans (IDPs).
- **Responsibility and Community Life:** Approximately 95% of students consistently adhered to shared daily schedules and communal duties. Rather than leaving responsibilities unattended when taking part in extra activities, students learn mutual accountability and teamwork by arranging duty cover with peers.
- **Well-being and Recreation:** To promote emotional health and strong community bonds, students participated in monthly outdoor hikes, friendly football matches, and reflection days at cultural and spiritual sites such as Battambang and Kchas Pagoda.
- **Professional Child Safeguarding:** Dormitory staff completed specialized training in school counselling and child safeguarding, ensuring that student welfare, safety, and pastoral support remain at the highest standard.

The Potential Impact of Your Support

As Fr San reflects:

"Without support, many students in the dormitory would not be able to continue studying, or at least would find it difficult to access the quality education that enables them to dare to dream of a brighter future. The transformation and growth in the life of one student means the transformation of the whole world."

Pilgrims 100 support of the XJS Student Dormitory Project can create tangible, long-term impact. You are invited to support this vital mission in Cambodia, empowering young women and men to realise their full potential.