

Project Summary

Enhancing the Lives of People with
Intellectual Disabilities
Cambodia



Children and adults living with intellectual disabilities can enjoy learning with the support of Karuna Battambang Organisation (KBO), funded by Jesuit Mission supporters.

Country Context

The population of Cambodia is 16.99 million people. Many of those who survived decades of conflict have been plunged into poverty with 12.9% of the population living below the national poverty line¹.

Roughly 90% of those living in poverty are in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. Productivity is often low, and two thirds of the country's 1.6 million rural households face seasonal food shortages each year.

Cambodia has experienced economic growth over the last decade—with a strong dependence on the tourism, garment manufacturing, construction and real estate, and agriculture sectors. Still, Cambodia remains one of the poorest countries in Asia.

The Jesuits have a long history of working in Cambodia dating back to the 1980s in refugee camps. Today, there are 29 international Jesuit Priests, Brothers and Scholastics missioned to Cambodia. The Jesuit works are diverse including education, health, disability, agriculture, ecology and development programs.

About the project

Many people in Cambodia, especially in rural areas, are facing serious discrimination due to an intellectual disability. Jesuit Mission provides funding support to our local partner, Karuna Battambang Organisation (KBO), for the 'Enhancing the Life of People with Intellectual Disabilities' program.

This program **ensures people with intellectual disabilities and their families can access the help they need to overcome barriers, participate actively in their community and, ultimately, live a full life.** KBO staff provide services both in Community Based Rehabilitation Centres and through our Home-Based Care.

Operating across three Provinces – Battambang, Kampong Chhnang and Kandal – the project aims **to benefit over 2,600 people** including people living with disability, their families, local health staff, teachers, and village community representatives are among other people who benefit from learning and resources.

¹<https://www.adb.org/search?keywords=SOCIAL%20IMPACT%20ASSESSMENT&page=1&source=suggest>

Key project activities include:



The KBO team make regular home visits to help young people living with disabilities to learn basic living skills.

Vocational training

- Families receive training with a focus on agricultural skills, such as poultry farming.
- People living with disability receive ongoing teaching to improve their abilities for daily living, such as involvement in family life and contributing to chores.

Improvements to housing

- The project provides families with housing materials, construction, repairs.
- Select families receive emergency rice support to help overcome food shortages.

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) support - families receive materials to construct water wells and are provided with water filters to prevent diseases.

Access to healthcare and education services

- Participants of school age are supported to study at mainstream public schools with KBO staff regularly following up their study performance with teachers.
- Participants receive physiotherapy treatments, and their families are trained to continue the exercises at home.
- People receive health treatment at health facilities through referrals made by KBO.



Children living with intellectual disabilities can study in mainstream public schools with the support of KBO staff members.

Raising awareness of the rights of a person living with a disability

- KBO runs a regular radio program to raise awareness on disabilities prevention, early detection, and the health services available for people with disabilities.
- Training sessions are held for Public Health staff.
- KBO collaborated with other disability service organisations and health departments at all levels (local, provincial, national) on the care and rights of people with disabilities.
- Support workshops are held to build the capacity of parents of people with disabilities, local authorities, and other stakeholders.
- Special events are organised to promote the rights of people with disabilities.

Project outcomes and measures

The overall goal of the project is to enhance the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in Cambodia. This is broken down into the key objectives with measurable indicators to assess outcomes and impact.

Key Objective	Measurable indicators
Improve the functional performance and capacity of people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants living with a disability have benefited from special education have achieved individual progress. • Participants of school age have been able to study at mainstream public schools. • People have received physiotherapy treatments and their condition has become manageable or has improved.
Improve the living condition of people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected families in need of house improvements have received support through the provision of housing materials, construction and repairs. • Selected families facing an emergency have received appropriate and timely support.
Empower people with disabilities to become more independent and be active members in the family and the society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living with a disability are taking part in basic activities of daily life • Selected young people have received vocational training • Selected young people have received a training on agriculture skills • People living with a disability have participated in awareness raising events

Strengthen the family and community's awareness and involvement in disability issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents have actively participated in the activities of the project • Charity boxes placed in all selected places to raise funds from the community
Ensure disabilities issues are strongly considered by all stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health centre staff are aware of the causes of disabilities and can detect them • Participants have access to free health care services in the public health centres • Community-based committees participate in the process of the Community Investment Plan

Budget

In 2024, the project funding requested by KBO to Jesuit Mission Australia is \$97,323 total. As there is existing donor commitment to 50% this project the Pilgrims100 commitment would be **\$48,661**. The partner budget has been converted from USD at 0.62

Potential for Pilgrims 100 members to visit

KBO welcomes visitors and is able to arrange for groups to visit the student centres to meet students and staff and understand more about the importance of these facilities.



KBO delivering emergency food support to families of people living with disabilities

Hear their Stories

Soyim

Soyim is 21 years old and has been living with an intellectual disability since she was a young child. She joined the KBO program in 2006, with special needs teachers supporting her through Home Based Care services and an Individual Development Plan. KBO also trained Soyim's mother and older sister so they could feel confident to help Soyim at home.



Over the years, Soyim received regular health support from KBO and monthly referrals to health centres to ensure she could access the specialised care she needed.

In addition to specific support for Soyim, her family has received rice and other food, plus a water filter and

toilet. They've also received chickens and skills training to generate income. To help Soyim build vocational skills of her own, KBO and their partner organisation trained her in coffee making.

Because of support from KBO, funded by Jesuit Mission supporters, Soyim is not only able to live independently today, but she is also volunteering to help other children with disabilities.

Soyim was so happy to share her experience with KBO:

"Since becoming a KBO member I have received a lot of services, such as medicine or education. All teachers came to teach me physiotherapy every month and then I became better.

I am a volunteer with KBO. I make coffee, sell soft drinks, and I am able to teach children with intellectual disabilities how to make coffee like me.

In the future, I want to do a small business for my family, such as selling coffee, perfumes or things for children... Before, I never thought I could do this. But I received encouragement from my mother and siblings. Our lives must be valued."



Soyim is now confident to carry out daily living responsibilities on her own and she helps her older sister prepare food for the family.