



IL NODO
cooperazione
internazionale ets



2025 Annual Report

www.ilnodoets.org

I. General Introduction

Cambodia in 2025

2025 was a challenging year for Cambodia, a country that continues to balance economic growth with structural challenges and emerging crises. Longstanding inequalities between urban and rural areas, unequal access to essential services, and the continued vulnerability of women, children, and youth were further exacerbated by major political and economic tensions.

The conflict with Thailand, which reignited along the northern border areas after several years of peace, had a significant humanitarian impact. Thousands of families were forced to abandon their homes, leading to large-scale internal displacement. According to estimates from humanitarian organizations and government sources, between 130,000 and 150,000 minors lived in temporary shelters (photo) or with host communities in precarious conditions, with limited access to education, healthcare, and safe spaces.



Amid these challenges, the forced return of approximately 900,000 migrant workers placed considerable pressure on the labor market, social services, and already fragile family networks. Economic difficulties, worsened by international trade tensions and an unstable regional context, directly affected families' ability to provide their children with decent living conditions and continuous educational pathways.

IL NODO consistently continued its work in Cambodia, standing alongside the most vulnerable during a time of deep uncertainty. The year 2025 was not only a time of responding to emerging challenges, but also one of deepening community relationships, listening to local voices, and fostering sustainable opportunities for the future.

This report aims to present the set of projects carried out by IL NODO throughout 2025. More than a collection of activities, it is a shared narrative that reflects the deeper meaning of our work: putting people at the center, recognizing their dignity, and accompanying them along paths of growth, autonomy, and hope.

II. An Integrated Approach: Our Vision

IL NODO's work in Cambodia is grounded in an integrated approach to human and social development. The projects implemented in 2025 – *La Bottega dell'Arte*, *Children Behind Bars*, *Clean Water and School for All*, *Playful Journey: Towards a Brighter Future!*, and our Sponsorship Program – address different needs, but are linked by a shared vision.

Childhood, health, education, vocational training, and the protection of women are not separate issues, but interconnected parts of people's lives. Ensuring access to clean water means preventing disease and supporting school attendance; providing safe educational and sports spaces strengthens children's emotional well-being; offering vocational training to vulnerable youth reduces the risk of exploitation and marginalization; and supporting mothers and children in prison helps ensure dignity and care even in the most difficult contexts.

In 2025, IL NODO reinforced this vision by working in close collaboration with local authorities, communities, and national and international partners, while remaining active in the communities it serves.



III. Projects

La Bottega dell'Arte

WHERE

Phnom Penh

BENEFICIARIES IN 2025

22 (16 female | 6 male)

PARTNERS

Secondary School of Fine Arts
Agenzia Formativa di Varese

MAIN DONORS

Opera San Francesco per i
poveri
Paola Lenti
Pio Istituto Sordi

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



La Bottega dell'Arte

a) Context

In a country where many young people remain trapped in cycles of poverty, informal employment, and risk of exploitation, access to quality vocational training can create meaningful opportunities for change. For young women and people with disabilities, employment opportunities are often even more limited. La Bottega dell'Arte was created to address this reality: a safe and welcoming space where artisanal training becomes a tool for empowerment, economic independence, and personal growth.

b) Beneficiaries

In 2025, La Bottega welcomed 22 students, mainly young women from highly vulnerable backgrounds (16 women and 6 men).



This group included deaf students supported through a collaboration with partner organizations Deaf Development Program and Light of Mercy Home. Many of them come from backgrounds marked by abandonment, violence, extreme poverty, or limited access to education. Entering the Bottega means being recognized for their talent, creativity, and potential.

c) Activities

In 2025, La Bottega dell'Arte continued its training activities, offering courses in silversmithing and textile jewelry creation through a hands-on learning approach with daily guidance by master artisans who were once students of the center. Second-year silversmithing students also participated in a micro-entrepreneurship module designed to support the development of independent businesses.

The short course *Women Crafting their Future* was offered again in the first six months of 2025, for young women interested in metalwork.

Of the 9 participants, 3 earned their final diploma and 2 were hired by project partner MJC. However, following the end of the collaboration with MJC, the course was suspended in July 2025.

During the year, the school promoted several international collaborations. In February, it hosted Italian designers Irene Ortu and Laura Marola for a one-month creative workshop, with the resulting works later exhibited in Italy. Students of the Designing Girls' Future program also learned new knitting techniques thanks to Italian volunteer Anna Giardina.



In 2025, a partnership with De Montfort University was initiated: after participating in the Career Fair, in August the school hosted an IT student for an internship, which proved to be highly beneficial for both parties.



Important collaborations were also established with educational institutions. In partnership with the Secondary School of Fine Arts in Cambodia, a wire-wrapping workshop was organized and well received, with plans for additional workshops in 2026.

Since January, a creative exchange focused on collaborative jewelry design has also been underway with the Vocational Training Agency of Varese.

Finally, between October and December, final exams were held for the silversmithing courses and the Designing Girls' Future program, during which students demonstrated the skills they had acquired.



d) Impact and Meaning

During the year, six students graduated, and several former students secured employment or started independent businesses. Beyond these tangible outcomes, the project's deeper impact is reflected in the personal growth of its participants: young people gaining confidence, autonomy, and the ability to shape their own futures.

La Bottega dell'Arte continues to be a place where creativity fosters inclusion, opportunity, and hope.



III. Projects

Children Behind Bars



WHERE

Correctional Center N.2
(Phnom Penh)

BENEFICIARIES IN 2026

55 children, 55 mothers, and
32 pregnant ladies

PARTNERS

MAIN DONORS

Otto per Mille Chiesa Valdese
Pime Missionaries
Podinin Foundation
Women International Group



Children Behind Bars

Protecting childhood even in the most invisible places

a) Context

The CC2 women's prison in Phnom Penh is one of the most challenging environments in Cambodia. Overcrowding, poor hygiene conditions, and lack of adequate space make daily life extremely difficult, especially for pregnant women and children who, under Cambodian law, can remain in prison with their mothers up until the age of three.



In May 2025, IL NODO signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the General Department of Prisons, ensuring three more years of collaboration with local authorities and continuation of the project.

Growing up in a detention environment exposes children from the earliest months of life to conditions that can negatively affect healthy development and emotional well-being. The Children Behind Bars project provides essential support for mothers and children living in prison.

b) Beneficiaries

In 2025, IL NODO supported 55 children, their mothers, and 32 pregnant women. Behind these numbers are stories of vulnerability and resilience, as well as mothers striving to protect and care for their children.



c) Activities

In 2025, the project continued to support detained pregnant women and mothers with children through monthly distributions of food and hygiene supplies. In June, essential food items, hygiene products, and powdered milk for all children were also provided.

Medical support also continued throughout the year, with specialized doctors conducting monthly visits for mothers, pregnant women, and children. All 55 children completed the national vaccination schedule, and 21 babies were born in hospital under professional medical supervision.

Project staff maintained a daily presence in the prison, monitoring beneficiaries' health and providing practical and emotional support to the mothers. The future use of the "Children's Village" as a training center for detainees has also been confirmed, although activities have not yet begun.



The Day Care Center within the prison hosted 6 to 8 children (aged 18 months and older) each day, reaching a total of 28 beneficiaries over the course of the year. It provided a safe space for play and learning. No developmental delays were observed among the children. However, seasonal flooding continues to disrupt activities, and renovation of the facility is ongoing.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, arrangements were made for children over the age of three: 5 were placed with relatives, while 20 were able to leave the prison with their mothers upon completion of their sentences.

Continuous monitoring confirmed stable overall health conditions, with no cases of underweight children or vitamin deficiencies recorded. All children demonstrated age-appropriate cognitive and social development.

d) Impact and Meaning

In 2025, all children supported by the project completed the vaccination schedule and showed age-appropriate development. However, the project's most important achievement extends beyond health indicators: it has helped restore dignity to mothers and their children, affirming the right to care and protection even in the harshest conditions.

Every daily gesture - a meal, a medical visit, a moment of play - becomes an act of humanity and hope.



III. Projects

Clean Water and School for All



WHERE

Krang Beng village
(Kampong Chhnang province)

BENEFICIARIES IN 2026

45 families (220 beneficiaries)

PARTNERS

DONORS

Fidinam
REPI
Gabriele Trust

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



Clean Water and School for All

Health, Prevention and Dignity in Rural Communities

a) Context

Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services remains one of the main challenges facing many rural Cambodian communities. Despite government efforts and progress in recent years, water quality in more remote areas is often compromised, especially during the dry season when water availability is drastically reduced.

In 2025, these challenges were further exacerbated by the conflict with Thailand. Internal displacement and the forced return of hundreds of thousands of migrant workers also placed additional pressure on essential services.

Ensuring clean water access not only means preventing disease, but also supporting family well-being and supporting children's educational journeys.

b) Beneficiaries

The Clean Water and School for All project was implemented in the village of Krang Beng in Kompong Chhnang province. In collaboration with local authorities, 45 families were selected for the project. These households are classified as "very poor" or "extremely poor" and are often large families living in precarious housing conditions with school-aged children. For these families, daily access to safe water has a direct impact on health, education, livelihoods, and overall quality of life.



c) Activities

The project began in January with two days of WASH training designed to be practical and participatory. Through separate sessions for adults and children, families learned about personal and household hygiene, disease prevention, and the proper use of water purification filters.



During the mission, 47 filters were distributed (one per family and two for the village kindergarten). Participants also received information booklets and copies of the illustrated book *The Veil of the Queen of Fish*. Approximately 70–80 adults and 45 children took part in the January sessions.

Throughout 2025, monthly monitoring visits continued to ensure the proper use of the filters and showed increased awareness of the importance of clean water and improved hygiene practices.

Additional food and essential goods were distributed in April and July to 45 families, while powdered milk was provided in June to 11 families with infants under one year old. A third distribution took place in November.

d) Impact and Meaning

In 2025, the project contributed to reducing health risks associated with contaminated water and improving hygiene and overall health conditions. Many beneficiaries reported improved health and a greater understanding of disease prevention. Clean water became not only an essential resource, but also a source of stability for the children of Krang Beng, enabling more regular school attendance and improved learning conditions.



III. Projects

Playful Journey: towards a brighter future!



WHERE

Kompong Thom Orphanage

BENEFICIARIES IN 2026

95 children age from 5 to 14

PARTNERS

Inter Campus

DONORS

Opera San Francesco per i poveri
Bruni Foundation

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



Playful Journey: Towards a brighter future!

Growing Through Play, Sport, and Culture

a) Context

Playful Journey project is implemented in the government orphanage in Kompong Thom, in a rural province characterized by widespread poverty and limited access to quality educational services. In Cambodia, orphanages often host children who are not strictly orphans, but who come from extremely vulnerable families or remote villages, where geographical distance and poverty make regular school attendance difficult.



For these children, the orphanage is not only a place of shelter but also a space for growth, relationships, and protection. However, without structured educational and recreational activities, daily life risks offering limited opportunities for emotional and social development.

b) Beneficiaries

During 2025, Playful Journey engaged all 74 children residing in the Kompong Thom orphanage, as well as 21 boys and girls from nearby villages. The beneficiaries were children aged between 5 and 14, with diverse family backgrounds but sharing conditions of economic and social vulnerability. For many of them, participation in the project's activities meant accessing, for the first time, organized opportunities for play, sport, and non-formal learning.

c) Activities

Throughout the year, IL NODO ensured the continuity of sports activities and traditional Cambodian dance classes, held after school, from Monday to Friday. On Sundays, the orphanage opened its facilities to children from surrounding villages, becoming a space for social interaction and community inclusion.

Traditional dance proved to be a highly valuable educational tool: through movement, music, and symbolic gestures, children were able to connect with the history and culture of their country, strengthening their sense of identity and belonging.



Sports activities, particularly football and basketball, made a significant contribution to the children's physical and psychological well-being, providing opportunities for expression, social interaction, and emotional development.

In April 2025, thanks to Bruni Foundation, the football field was renovated, marking an important milestone: the space became safer, cleaner, and more protected, while helping children understand the value of caring for a shared environment.



Collaboration with Inter Campus, through two annual missions led by international trainers, further enriched the project by introducing innovative educational methodologies and strengthening the skills of the local staff.

d) Impact and Meaning

In 2025, Learning Through Play helped transform the Kompong Thom orphanage into a more educational and community-oriented space, where play becomes a tool for growth, inclusion, and hope.



III. Projects

Sponsorship Program



WHERE

Kampong Chhnang province
(multiple villages)

BENEFICIARIES IN 2026

28 students

PARTNERS

DONORS

Private Donors

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



Sponsorship Programme

a) Context

In 2025, the Sponsorship Programme continued to support access to education for children and adolescents in vulnerable situations in the Kompong Chhnang province, addressing the main economic barriers to school attendance.

b) Beneficiaries

The program supported 28 students (22 girls and 6 boys) and their families in the villages of Tangpon, Chrok Kov, Krang Doung, and Krang Beng. Support included monthly monitoring visits and awareness-raising activities with parents focused on the importance of education for their children's future.

c) Activities

Throughout the year, each beneficiary family received monthly food supplies, as well as hygiene and cleaning products, helping reduce household expenses and allowing children to continue their studies more consistently.

At the start of the school year, educational materials, uniforms, backpacks, and shoes were distributed to all participating students. In addition, regular communication was maintained with teachers to monitor school attendance and academic performance. In July, a bicycle was donated to facilitate one student's commute between home and school.



d) Impact and Meaning

During 2025, the project supported several important educational milestones: two students successfully completed Grade 9, transitioning from lower secondary to upper secondary school, while two girls successfully passed their final high school exams, completing the support program. Some beneficiaries left the project for personal reasons, often due to changes in their circumstances, while a new student joined in December.

Thanks to IL NODO's intervention, many children were able to continue their educational journeys with greater consistency, attend school with more peace of mind, and achieve important academic milestones. At the same time, the project helped strengthen families' awareness of the value of education, laying more solid foundations for the children's future.



IV. Head Quarters in Italy

Throughout 2025, the Italian office played a central role in ensuring a continuous support to our activities in Cambodia through intensive fundraising efforts, as well as the management of institutional partnerships. Particular attention was devoted to strengthening relationships with key donors - including Opera San Francesco, REPI, Fondazione Podini, PIME, Istituto Pio Sordi, Tavola Valdese, and private donors - while also maintaining close engagement with sponsors participating in the Sponsorship Program. Regular updates on beneficiary children were provided, ensuring transparency, accountability, and a steady flow of communication with supporters.

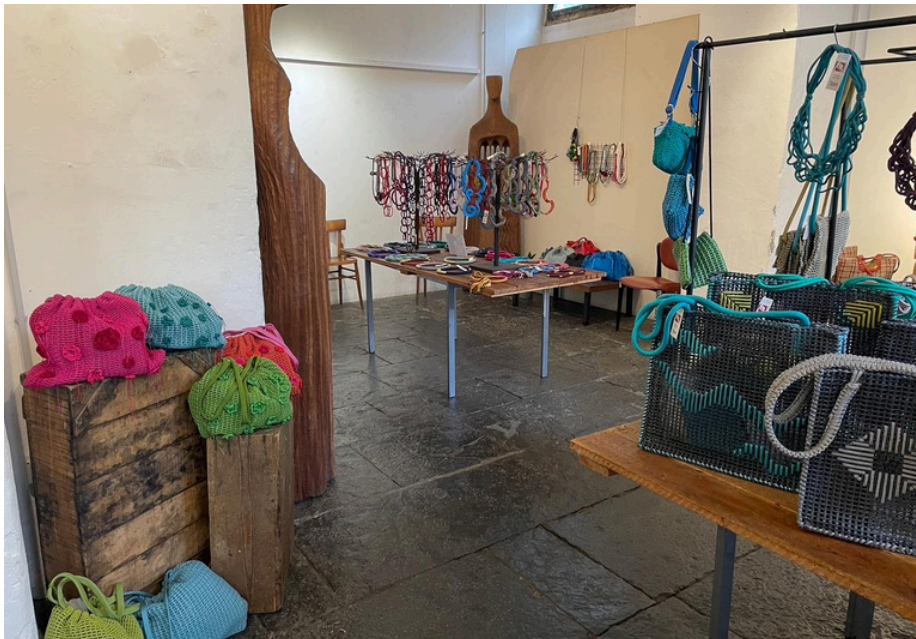
The Office also promoted and coordinated many fundraising events across Italy, strengthening our network of supporters and raising public awareness of IL NODO's projects in Cambodia. These activities were combined with the management of official and digital communications - including social media channels, newsletters, and the CRM system - as well as media relations, and the coordination of designers and partners to promote design items produced at Bottega dell'Arte.



Together, these efforts—supported by effective administrative and organisational management—made a significant contribution to sustaining and expanding the organisation’s projects in Cambodia.

Fundraising Events Organised in 2025:

- May 8 – Summer Bags & Necklaces, Atelier Toyofuku, Milan
- May 11, 12 – Un Gioiello per la Pace, Zeus Design, Milan
- May 28 – Summer Bags & Necklaces, Cascina Sant’Alberto, Milan
- September 19 – Musica & Birra, sede IL NODO, Milan
- November 6 – Leaves di Irene Ortu, Atelier Toyofuku, Milan
- December 4 – My Own Hands and Designing Girls Future, Cascina Sant’Alberto, Milan
- December 19 – My Own Hands, REPI, Lonate Ceppino (Milan)



V. Conclusion

In 2025, IL NODO continued its commitment to supporting vulnerable communities in areas affected by crisis and instability. Throughout the year, our projects demonstrated how consistent presence, attentive listening, and trust-based relationships can create meaningful, long-lasting impact.

This report is, above all, a thank you to all those who made IL NODO's work possible: donors, supporters, volunteers, partners, and local communities. Together, we continue to believe that even in the most challenging circumstances, it's possible to create opportunities for dignity, growth, and hope.



Our main donors



osf
OPERA SAN FRANCESCO
PER I POVERI
FRATI CAPPUCCINI

**PAOLA
LENTI**



FONDAZIONE
PIME

**otto
per
8 mille**
CHIESA VALDESE
UNIONE DELLE CHIESE METODISTE E VALDESI

fidinam



WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL GROUP
CAMBODIA



PODINI
FOUNDATION
ETS

**Pio
Istituto
dei Sordi**



BRUNIFOUNDATION
CHARITY ACROSS BORDERS

REPI

Use this QR Code to get to know more about us

