



# THE RABBIT'S GAZETTE

The Rabbit School quarterly Newsletter

*The start of a new speech therapy training, a greener school, learning with robots: the last three months have been very rich in great news for our students and teachers.*



## DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR OUR SPECIAL TEACHERS: ONE YEAR OF SPEECH THERAPY TRAINING

On October 27th, Rabbit School achieved a significant milestone by formalizing a groundbreaking partnership with CIMB Bank, marking the first collaboration with Cambodia's banking sector. This partnership aims to enhance the professional development of our teachers. Specifically, **CIMB has committed to supporting a Speech Therapy Center at The Rabbit School, based at the Toul Kork Primary School in Phnom Penh. All of our 18 special educators at this school will receive one year of speech therapy training.** The primary objective is to empower our devoted teachers with the expertise to apply speech therapy techniques in their daily interactions, fostering a deeper understanding of and response to the unique needs of our students. The training program will encompass 4 hours per week, encompassing a well-balanced blend of theoretical knowledge and practical application with our students.

Moreover, **four of our teachers will undergo an additional 2-hour specialized training track, qualifying them as "speech stimulators."** Over the course of six months, these educators will acquire the skills to conduct individualized follow-ups for students, focusing on language and communication development.

**This training is a game-changer for Rabbit School. Speech therapists are rare and expensive in Cambodia.** With this initiative, our teachers gain essential skills, ensuring our students receive crucial speech therapy support that was previously out of reach. **We are very grateful to CIMB for their support and commitment to our vital work.**

### EVENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER



**November 13th:** Welcome to the launch of the Phnom Penh - Banteay Meanchey race organized by Foyer Lataste

**December 3rd:** Participation to Disability Day

**December 21st-22nd:** Participation to ILO Workshop on Employment for People with Disabilities



**1 National Employment forum**

**1 subnational forum**

**20 parents meetings** in small group in 4 provinces



# GREENING OUR SCHOOL: RSO INITIATES ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY



Rabbit School aspires, as part of its 2023-2028 strategy, to actively contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With this aim, RSO seeks to provide a green and clean environment for its students, while also raising awareness among teachers and children about the importance of protecting our environment.

On November 14th, Manulife (Cambodia) PLC volunteered with 40 employees to assist our students in planting approximately twenty trees in the school courtyard. In addition, some of the volunteers spent the afternoon playing with our students, and donated learning toys to the school. This kind of support is incredibly valuable to us: beyond making the school greener and organizing activities, **their presence at our school brings joy to our students and great source of motivation to our teachers.** We are thankful for the support of Manulife (Cambodia) PLC !

Simultaneously, Rabbit School hosted the Climate Fresk at its premises. The goal is to raise awareness among our teachers, through a collaborative game, about the causes and consequences of climate change. This training will subsequently enable us to work with our teachers on an education approach tailored to children with intellectual disabilities on this subject

*The Climate Fresk Workshop is an immersive experience designed to raise awareness about the urgency of climate change and inspire individuals to take meaningful action. Through interactive sessions, thought-provoking discussions, and creative activities, participants gain valuable insights into the challenges our planet faces and the power of collective solutions. It's a journey that empowers individuals to become agents of change and contribute to a sustainable future.*





# TEACHING CODING TO PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, AN IMPOSSIBLE CHALLENGE ?

Can autistic or Down syndrome children learn to code? That's the challenge taken on by 6 IT and architecture students and their program "Yes I Code". For four months, they visited Rabbit School weekly to teach coding fundamentals to our youths aged 13 to 25.

The challenge is significant: most of our youths are not familiar with using a computer, let alone a keyboard. Their solution? They used remote-controlled robots from an iPad to teach computer thinking skills. From the tablet, the youths could direct the robot or make it perform actions, helping them understand the command logic between the iPad and the machine.

***"We aim to teach them how to think like a computer".***

According to Kim, one of the young teachers, our students made impressive progress: "At the beginning, they didn't know how to interact with the robot, then they got very



*amiliar. What we teach is not how to use a computer, but how to solve problems and make the best choice: how to think like a computer."*

The project was not easy for them, but eventually, they succeeded: "We had no experience with people with intellectual disabilities. Creating a relationship and confidence with them took some time, but in the end, most of them were really interested in the project," says Ly, another dedicated teacher. What is the next step for them? "We are still designing our new project, but we would love to teach students sciences through practical experiments."

We hope to see them soon!

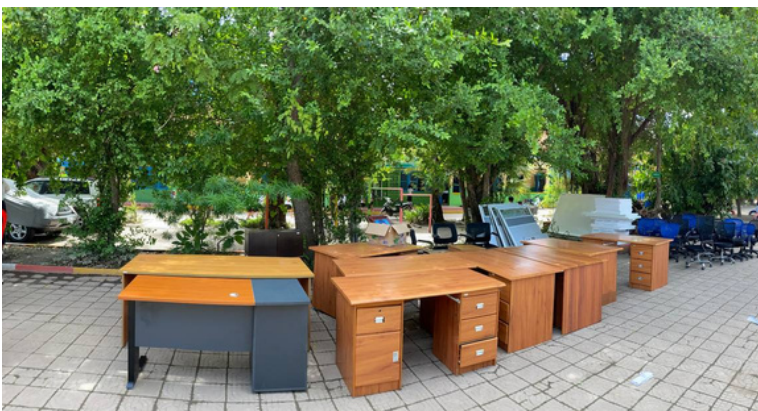




# PIL COMPANY GENEROUSLY OFFERS HUNDRED OF PIECES OF FURNITURE TO OUR 16 SCHOOLS



PIL Cambodia company, anticipating a move within the capital, has chosen to benefit our schools with furniture and accessories from its former office. Leakhena Ana, the Country Manager, became aware of our association through a family member, a former volunteer at Rabbit School. Touched by our youth and the mission entrusted to us, she and her team decided to donate office furniture to our classrooms: **31 office chairs, 17 desks, 13 cabinets and dressers, a kitchen set, a color printer, and numerous classroom accessories**, all in excellent condition. The equipment was distributed among our 16 schools in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Kandal, and Kampong Speu. During the appreciation ceremony, the PIL team spent several hours playing and chatting with our youth. A big thank you to them for their generosity, as well as the time and interest they dedicated to our students.





# CASE STUDY: VICHEKA, FROM OU KRAING AMPIL, INTEGRATES INCLUSIVE CLASS



Suon Vicheka, a 13-year-old boy with moderate cerebral palsy, resides with his parents in Ou Kraing Ampil village, Trapeang Kong commune, Samrong Tong district, Kampong Speu province. His father works as a car mechanic, while his mother manages the household.

Prior to joining school, Vicheka experienced loneliness, lacked friends, exhibited fear, and remained quiet. His mobility and daily activities were hindered due to his disability and the inaccessible environment, preventing him from attending school like other children.

***“Now, my son can play and learn with the other children of the village without feeling excluded”.***

In 2021, Vicheka was identified and selected to participate in a project. **He is currently enrolled in grade 1 in an inclusive class** at Prey Pdao Primary School, studying alongside other students without disabilities. Through the project, **Vicheka received scholarships for study materials, including school uniforms, notebooks, bags, and rice.** His progress in reading, writing, and socializing with teachers and friends at school has been remarkable. **Vicheka has become an outstanding student in his class,** fostering new friendships and enjoying playtime with his peers. He eagerly looks forward to attending school each day, bringing joy not only to him but also to his parents.



When asked about her feelings, Vicheka's mother expressed gratitude, stating, *“I am happy that my son with a disability attended school and achieved education like other non-disabled children in my village. **In this school, he can learn and play with all the children of the village without feeling excluded**”.* I thank the teachers, the school director, and donors who supported my son and his education. I wish them good luck and success in their life”.

# AN INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND HEALTHY PLAYGROUND FOR OUR STUDENTS

The ethos of Rabbit School has always been to encourage its students to explore the outside world. For this reason, all our classes are located within public schools, with the aim of fostering interactions with non-disabled children. Similarly, classrooms are always open, and students are free to come and go outside the classroom as needed (under the supervision of one of the teachers).



However, some of our playgrounds do not provide our students with a safe or hygienic environment. Additionally, the toilets do not always meet hygiene standards and are not accessible to everyone. This is the case with our main school in Toul Kork (Phnom Penh).

Providing a healthy and nurturing environment for children with disabilities is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it ensures their safety and well-being. Additionally, it allows us to teach them good hygiene practices while fostering a clean and green school environment. Lastly, children with intellectual disabilities, especially those with autism, require a space where they do not feel confined. The renovation of the play areas will enable them to have fun with their friends, just as they deserve.

With the help of an architect, we worked for 2 months on a new playground and restrooms design, to offer our students the environment they deserve. This renovation project includes 3 playgrounds: we aim to provide a safe and fair access to the playing area for every child of the Rabbit School. New facilities, an adapted floor, a separate space to protect from car circulation, trees to provide a greener environment.



Currently, we are still looking for donors to support this ambitious project. If you know any contact that might be interested in supporting this renovation, please contact our Program Manager Vong Vuthy: [vong.vuthy@rabbitschoolcambodia.net](mailto:vong.vuthy@rabbitschoolcambodia.net) / +855 93 851 047

*Thank you to our dedicated partners*

