



# Aziza's Courtyard

Spring 2025



Dear Aziza's Place Family, Friends and Supporters,

We are delighted to share the latest news from Aziza's Place in this edition of **Aziza's Courtyard!** Over the past months, our Beneficiary children have been making incredible progress in their academic pursuits, sports, and personal growth. From inspiring achievements in Karate to enriching cultural exchanges and educational milestones, there is so much to celebrate.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Your support makes all this possible! We hope you enjoy reading about the wonderful moments and recent successes.

## Aziza's Place Today

The number of children in our care has gradually adjusted post-Covid to arrive at the current 33 Beneficiaries. This optimal number allows us to address each child's individual, educational and personal development in a nurturing, positive and holistic environment, prioritizing individualized support for the children and fully engaging their families in our programs. This individualized engagement model has delivered success over 18 years of serving generations of Beneficiaries.

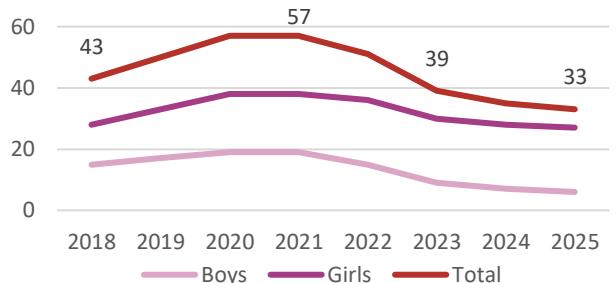


Figure 2: Change in Beneficiary count over the past seven years.

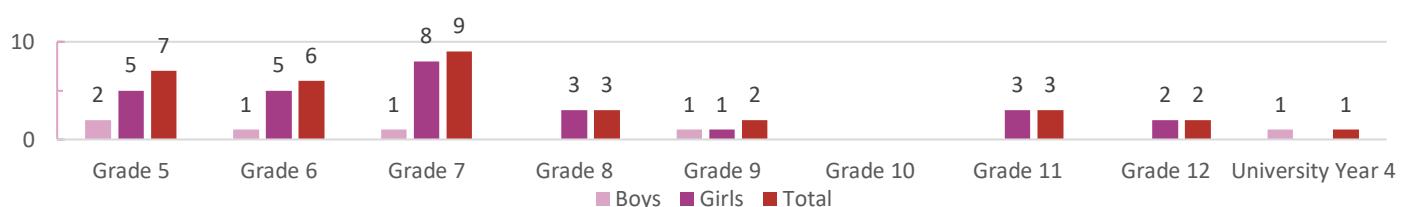


Figure 1: Breakdown by grade of Aziza's Place enrollees in Khmer Public Schools

Our Beneficiary children are encouraged and given tools to help them learn and excel—not just in their academic life—but encouraged to apply these tools in other aspects of life as well. As they progress at school, and subjects become more challenging, our Supplemental Education Program provides extra tutoring in Khmer, Mathematics, and Science to ensure our Beneficiaries keep abreast of their studies. Our special focus on gaining English and computer proficiency stems from these skills proving to be critical to securing future opportunities and employment. With the help of our new English teacher, computer teacher and dedicated volunteers, the children now receive more effective and engaging lessons, significantly improving their English and computer literacy.



We believe in celebrating success and personal milestones, and our Beneficiaries' academic achievements are regularly recognized and rewarded. Additionally, birthdays are special occasions at Aziza's Place, where we take time to honour each child as an individual, making them feel valued, appreciated and, most of all, loved.

Beyond academics, we emphasize team-building activities to strengthen bonds among our Beneficiaries. In 2024, we commemorated World Children's Day with a trip to Kampot, where the children explored the rich culture and diverse landscapes of Cambodia, learning more about their country's diverse and different provinces. At the end of 2024, a visit to the Sorsorro Museum in Phnom Penh showcased a unique learning space focused on Cambodia's economic development and sustainability. The visit helped the children understand important topics like innovation and financial literacy through interactive exhibits, among the challenges facing their young generation in an emerging modern economy.



## Celebrating Achievements

### Von Naveen: Prospective Civil Engineering Graduate!

Naween is the eldest of Aziza's Place current generation of Beneficiaries. He is an exemplar of our success and an inspiration for his younger cohorts as he enters the final phases of his studies to earn his Civil Engineering degree. We include below a message to you from Naween, in which he reflects on his studies, the challenges he has overcome, and his aspirations for the future.

*"Hello - my name is Von Naveen. I'm 23 years old. Right now I'm enrolled in my final year studying Civil Engineering at Norton University in Phnom Penh. Aziza's Place has continued to support me throughout my university journey by covering the cost of my study materials, school fees and providing a monthly general living support stipend. I am currently working at ISAS Construction company in Phnom Penh as a Site Engineer while also preparing for my final exams and Project to be completed by the end of the Academic Year.*



I'm happy for the support received from Aziza's Place towards helping me achieve my ultimate goal as a Project Manager at an Engineering and Construction company after graduation. I have had to overcome many challenges while I was studying, including securing a part-time job to pay for a portion of school fees and expenses not covered by Aziza's Place."

Naween's dedication is truly inspiring, and we are deeply proud of his tenacity and his achievements. We expect he will fully realize success as he works toward his goal of becoming a project manager. His example to the younger children at Aziza's Place shows that hard work, using every opportunity, does make dreams possible.

## Sao Vandy: National Karate Bronze Medallist

We are very proud of Vandy for winning 3rd place in the Women's Individual Kata category at the 2024 National Championship. Her hard work and dedication earned her a bronze medal and a 100,000 Riel prize (USD \$20). The competition took place from December 20-22, 2024 at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Karate and sports more broadly have been important tracks to pursue for health, teamwork and personal focus for our Beneficiaries over several generations at Aziza's Place. Vandy's achievement is an inspiration to all the children at Aziza's Place, especially those who attend regular karate lessons. Seeing her success has motivated many to train even harder as they prepare for their next belt advancement exams. Her journey proves that with focus, perseverance and commitment, great things are indeed possible.

We look forward to seeing our young students continue to use sports to help them grow and, for those who follow in Vandy's footsteps, win many more medals. Keep up the great work!



## New Beneficiary: Welcome, Mai Nita!

Aziza's Place welcomed Nita as a new Beneficiary based on a recommendation from her primary school director at Sonsam Kosal, a Khmer Public School, where many of the younger Aziza's Place Beneficiaries are also enrolled. Nita lives with her mother and two siblings in a single room after her father tragically passed away last year. Despite enduring this profound loss, Nita has become a motivated young student, eager to learn.

As part of the evaluation process Aziza's Place undertakes for accepting a Beneficiary candidate, Nita participated in a month-long evaluation and then a probation period, starting



in October, which included participation in supplementary tutoring classes and extra-curricular activities, such as dance and skateboarding sessions. As expected from our evaluation, she passed through the initial period with flying colours and entered Aziza's Place as a full Beneficiary last November, in time for the start of the academic school year. We are excited to support her on her journey, providing her with educational support and mental health care, with all the opportunities we can offer.

To help you get to know her better, we asked Nita a few questions about herself:

**Hi Nita! Can you tell us a little bit about yourself? How old are you?**

*I am 12 years old.*

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

*I like to read a lot and to play with my toys.*

**What is your favourite subject in school, and why?**

*My favourite subject is "Khmer literacy," because I like the stories and pictures in the books. I also like mathematics.*

**What do you like the most about Aziza's Place so far?**

*I like to play on the playground with my friends and to read new books in the library.*

**What is something you dream of doing in the future?**

*I want to become a police officer, but my mom thinks it is too dangerous. So maybe I will become a doctor instead.*

Nita has quickly become part of the Aziza's Place family, making new friends and embracing the opportunities available to her. We are confident she will be a high-achiever and we are excited to support her during a key part of her life journey.



## Westline School Results - 2023-2024 Academic Year

Thanks to our Board Member, Mr. Vutha, Aziza's Place recommenced our association with Westline School in November 2023, which generously offered scholarships covering 50% of the costs for the selected Beneficiaries to enroll in its English Language Program. The remainder of funds were provided by several long-standing donors who have also pledged to support each Beneficiary for multiple years. We felt that Westline's structured learning environment, smaller class sizes, and strong focus on English instruction will help the enrolees improve their academic performance and build confidence to engage in English. Our premise proved accurate as many of our enrolees have shown noticeable progress, particularly in deploying reading, writing, and related English communication skills.

Our nine Westline enrolees were selected based on outstanding academic performance in Khmer Public Schools; their expressed motivation to learn; demonstrated strong potential for improvement; and strong support and encouragement from their families.



Image 1: "Early Learner" Graduation at Westline

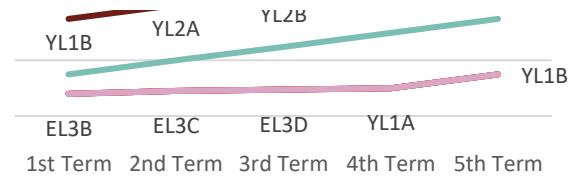


Figure 3: Progress of the student at Westline, EL = Early Learner, YL = Young Learner

The chart in Figure 3 highlights the steady progress of our Beneficiaries in Westline's Early Learner (EL) and Young Learner (YL) programs, since their enrolment in December 2023. Their consistent upward trend reflects the benefit from more personalized support in a more challenging learning context, helping each to focus and stay engaged. Not coincidentally, the structure and emphasis on skills acquisition at Westline has also resulted in improved performance in public-school studies. While good results are paramount, Aziza's Place also greatly values engagement and the individual effort expended and we include these metrics as a crucial progress marker.

Currently, only nine Beneficiaries attend Westline, limited due to funding availability. However, we continuously seek opportunities to grow this number and provide more children with access to high-quality education, especially in English. With Westline providing partial scholarships, we are currently seeking Sponsors and donors to cover the remaining \$1000 per year in costs to cover tuition, books, and uniforms for an additional four very deserving Beneficiaries candidates.



## From Germany to Cambodia: A Journey of Learning and Sharing



Image 2: from right to left Judith, Mum Pop, Teacher Sot, Lina and Marady

Aziza's Place welcomed two new volunteers, Judith Brömse and Lina Hafenbrädl, who joined us last September through the *weltwärts* program—a German development and volunteer service that enables young German adults to engage in social projects abroad. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication since their arrival has already made a meaningful impact on our Beneficiary children's educational and daily lives.

One of Judith and Lina's primary objective is to make learning fun! Without formal teaching credentials, they rely on mentoring from our team and their own school experiences to help the children improve their English grammar and vocabulary. Through interactive and playful methods, they encourage the children to use English more naturally in conversations, making English language learning both enjoyable and effective.

Beyond language learning, our volunteers bring a passion for music. Lina is skilled pianist and Judith a guitarist. They both enjoy playing for and with the children, inspiring them to explore music themselves. A memorable moment recently took place when one of our children recognized the *Pirates of the Caribbean* theme song that Lina was playing and immediately wanted to play it himself—showing how music can spark curiosity and motivation.

Cultural exchange is an important part of life at Aziza's Place, and our volunteers have embraced it wholeheartedly. They recently introduced a taste of Germany by preparing traditional potato pancakes with apple sauce, giving everyone the chance to experience a delicious part of German culture. During English lessons, they use pictures



from Germany to spark conversations about topics like weather and snow, encouraging the children to practice speaking in English. In return, the children have shared stories about Cambodian holidays and even taught the volunteers how to fold lotus flowers, a meaningful tradition for local celebrations.

Their exchanges go beyond language and food. Lina practices *Kun Khmer*, Cambodia's traditional martial art. When the children found out, they were thrilled, and she has since been teaching them basic moves—an exciting way to connect through sport!

The volunteers are also learning Khmer themselves while supporting the AP staff with their own English studies and assignments. As a creative contribution, they are currently painting a mural about Germany and volunteer work, providing the children with a colourful and artistic way to learn more about another culture.

These shared experiences help build meaningful connections between the volunteers and the children, creating a sense of community and mutual learning. Their presence at Aziza's Place is a testament to the power of cultural exchange, enriching both the children's education and the volunteers' personal growth. We are grateful for their contributions and look forward to more inspirational moments ahead!



## A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Donors

At Aziza's Place, we are deeply grateful for your generosity and commitment. Your support helps us provide our Beneficiaries with access to education, nutritious meals, school supplies, and participation in extracurricular activities, such as Khmer dance, Karate classes and skateboarding sessions with our long-standing partner, Skateistan. Your donations are essential to deliver quality Programs to ensure personal growth and a pathway to brighter futures.

Thanks to your continued generosity, two of our older Beneficiaries will graduate from high school this year—one is considering university, the other plans to pursue vocational training. Next year, three more will complete their high school studies, taking the next steps in their journey towards sustaining their own next generations, whether it is fulfilling educational aspirations or to secure good jobs to take care of themselves and their families. Your kindness and ongoing support truly does change lives and has for 18 years, we cannot thank you enough!



On the next page are a few more impressions from over our past year at AP. Enjoy the fun. 😊

