



**CAMBODIAN
CHILDREN'S FUND**

**TRANSFORMING THE MOST IMPOVERISHED KIDS
INTO TOMORROW'S LEADERS**



2026 Project Funding Proposal

CCF STORY LAB:

The Youth Media & Podcast Studio

CAMBODIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

As the one-time disposal site for chemical companies, hospitals and local industry, the Steung Meanchey district of Phnom Penh was one of the largest garbage dumps in Southeast Asia, and one of the most environmentally toxic and dangerous environments in the world. While they scavenged, children and their families were under constant threat of violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, and disease.

Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF) is a 501(c)(3) U.S. registered charity with a vision to lift the community of the former Steung Meanchey landfill out of poverty and into a new era of hope and possibility through the provision of education. Our approach is based on a fundamental belief that education will provide children pathways out of poverty. By developing the leadership potential of our students, leaders will emerge that will create generational change and a better future for Cambodia.

CCF has registered charity status in the US, UK, Hong Kong and Australia.



"We have reached our dream of getting the poorest kids into the best education. That dream has been accomplished on a scale far exceeding my expectations."

~Scott Neeson, CCF Founder & Executive Director

With an investment of around USD 35,000–40,000, we can build a Youth Media & Podcast Studio inside an existing CCF school: a fully equipped, student-run space for recording podcasts, interviews, and stories. This studio will grow leadership, communication, and digital media skills, and share authentic, youth-led stories from Steung Meanchey with supporters across Cambodia and around the world. Full Budget details on page 10.

THE GIFT OF EDUCATION

Most of the children supported by CCF come from families living in extreme poverty. We believe that quality education can help one child lift their whole family out of poverty, and that an entire generation of educated children can transform society.

CCF runs schools and learning centers near the former garbage dump in Steung Meanchey, Phnom Penh. We provide transport, school supplies, and access to high-quality education for children who were once considered “unreachable” by the public school system.

Our Operation Rescue program supports children who have dropped out of school or fallen behind. It offers accelerated learning so they can catch up and return to mainstream education.



We place a strong focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics). Our hands-on curriculum encourages creativity and practical skills, which are still uncommon in

Cambodia’s education

system. Students also join after-school STEAM clubs, take part in cultural and arts classes, and enjoy regular physical education.

Without CCF, these children would have almost no chance to go to school. Their families are often illiterate and face constant financial stress,

making it very hard to start or continue formal education.

CCF’s education model combines a strong curriculum, modern teaching methods, and a wide range of extracurricular activities to create truly transformative learning. Based on a constructivist approach, it focuses on student engagement, critical thinking, and learning by doing, so students gain skills they can use in real life.

Through inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education, CCF aims to break the cycle of poverty and inequality. Core programs like the Khmer General Education (KGE) Program and our STEAM initiatives focus on strong academic achievement. At the same time, leadership and career readiness programs build life skills, confidence, and a sense of social responsibility.







CCF YOUTH MEDIA & PODCAST STUDIO

For over twenty years, Cambodian Children's Fund (CCF) has transformed the lives of children and families from the Steung Meanchey community through high-quality education, health care, community support, leadership development, and pathways to meaningful employment. From kindergarten through to the Neeson Cripps Academy (NCA), CCF's integrated education and leadership programs now support hundreds of students each year, many of whom are the first in their families to complete school or attend university.

CCF's approach is holistic: education is combined with nutrition, health services, safe housing, child protection, and strong community relationships. **Within this model, CCF has built a particularly strong reputation in STEM/STEAM, youth leadership, and girls' empowerment.** Students regularly participate in local and international competitions, lead youth initiatives across the community, and act as role models for younger children.

CCF's impact is widely recognised, and this project is a chance to take that success even further by putting the microphone in the hands of students and community members themselves.

The Youth Media & Podcast Studio will celebrate and amplify their voices, so that stories of resilience, leadership, and change are told by the young people and families who live them. At the same time, it will equip students with strong communication, digital literacy, and media production skills – exactly the abilities they need to thrive in higher education and in today's modern workforce.

CCF already has many of the building blocks in place:

- A strong STEAM program at NCA and across CCF schools, with hands-on, project-based learning.
- Proven youth leadership programs where young people plan and deliver community activities.
- A track record of outstanding student and alumni stories, including students now studying multimedia and filmmaking.

The Youth Media & Podcast Studio will connect these strengths into a dedicated space and program that empowers CCF's young people to share their own stories and perspectives.

OBJECTIVES

As Story Lab, the Youth Media & Podcast Studio has four main objectives.

- 1. Strengthen Language, Listening, and Understanding:** The studio will provide a safe, professional environment where CCF students will gain practical, hands-on skills in audio recording, interviewing, active listening, scriptwriting, editing, and storytelling in both Khmer and English. Through storyboarding, guided discussion, and collaborative planning, they will break complex topics into simple, understandable steps, which supports deeper understanding and memorisation of key concepts. By constantly turning what they hear and learn into their own words, students will be better able to understand, remember, and apply what they are taught.
- 2. Develop digital media and communication skills:** Students will be equipped with practical, hands-on skills in audio recording, interviewing, scriptwriting, editing, and storytelling in both Khmer and English. These activities will be integrated into existing STEM/STEAM and language curricula so that podcasting becomes a natural extension of classroom learning. In this way, the studio will help students build digital literacy and communication abilities that are essential for higher education and future employment.
- 3. Amplify CCF stories and impact:** The studio will make it easier to capture and share authentic stories from students,



alumni, caregivers, teachers, and elders, including much-loved figures such as the Grannies. These stories will show, in a personal and powerful way, the holistic impact of CCF's work across education, health, leadership, and community development. The resulting content will provide compelling material for donor engagement, advocacy, and awareness campaigns, allowing supporters to hear directly from the people whose lives their support is changing.

- 4. Strengthen community and cultural connection:** Through interviews and conversations, students will document local culture, history, and community initiatives in Steung Meanchey and surrounding areas. The studio will encourage inter-generational dialogue by bringing young people together with community elders to share memories, traditions, and ideas for the future. This process will help preserve cultural identity, deepen understanding between generations, and reinforce a sense of pride and belonging within the community.

ALIGNMENT

The Youth Media & Podcast Studio will build on CCF's existing use of podcasts and digital storytelling. Grade 10 students are already engaging with podcasting within their curriculum, and podcast content has begun to appear in student-produced magazines and newsletters.

Within the STEM communication module, students have been introduced to podcasts as a new medium for explaining scientific ideas, even though many were initially unfamiliar with the format. The dedicated studio will consolidate these scattered activities into a coherent, well-resourced program, providing higher production quality, more structured training, and a visible central space for youth-led media.

- Education:** Within CCF's education programs, podcasting lessons will support language development, literacy, critical thinking, and ICT skills. Students will be able to transform project-based learning and research into audio stories, debates, and simple "science explainer" episodes.

This turns classroom knowledge into real-world communication practice and makes learning more engaging and relevant.

- **STEM/STEAM and Innovation:** The studio sits naturally alongside the student magazine production, digital design, film clubs and other STEAM activities already in place at CCF. It completes the cycle from idea and experimentation through to public communication and reflection. STEM and STEAM projects can be documented and shared as “behind-the-scenes” podcast episodes, which helps students reflect on their learning and increases motivation.
- **Girls’ Empowerment:** The studio will also directly support CCF’s girls’ empowerment work. Dedicated podcast series can focus on girls’ experiences in education and STEM, with girls taking leading roles as hosts, producers, and technical operators. This provides a safe, structured platform for girls to discuss leadership, equality, and their aspirations, reinforcing their confidence and visibility as role models.
- **Tomorrow’s Leaders and Youth Leadership:** Youth councils and leadership cohorts will have a dynamic new channel to explore community issues, interview local leaders, and reflect on their initiatives. Planning, recording, and publishing episodes will build real-world leadership experience, including teamwork, project management, and public communication. The studio will therefore act as both a training ground and a showcase for CCF’s “tomorrow’s leaders”.
- **Alumni and Donor Engagement:** The studio will strengthen links with alumni and donors. Former students can return to share their journeys from landfill to leadership, inspiring both current students and supporters. Carefully selected episodes and short clips can be featured on CCF’s website and social channels, enriching reports and appeals with authentic voices and deepening donor understanding of CCF’s impact.



PROJECT DESIGN

Location and Facilities

The Youth Media & Podcast Studio will be located at the Neeson Cripps Academy (NCA), building on its role as CCF’s hub for STEM/STEAM and project-based learning.

The studio itself will occupy a small, quiet area of approximately 12 square metres. This room will receive basic acoustic treatment, including panels and curtains, to reduce echo and minimise outside noise. At the centre of the room there will be a table and chairs suitable for three to four participants to record conversations comfortably. Lockable storage will be provided to keep microphones, headphones, and other equipment safe when not in use.

Equipment and Technical Setup

The studio will be set up as a small but professional video-audio space that is appropriate to CCF’s context and sustainable to run. The core recording kit will include dynamic microphones, each with its own stand and pop filter to ensure clear, consistent sound. These microphones will

be connected to a multi-channel audio interface, which in turn connects to a computer for recording and monitoring. Each participant will have their own set of headphones, supported by a small headphone amplifier so everyone can hear clearly during recording. A dedicated computer will run audio recording and editing software. In addition, a set of cameras and basic lighting will allow filming of interviews and video-podcasts, enabling students to work across both audio-only and simple video formats.

Program Activities

The Story Lab will host a range of program activities designed to build skills and produce meaningful content, and will function as a dedicated, flexible space for audio and video production, lesson recording, student presentations, and revision materials, supporting both classroom learning and youth-led storytelling.

Introductory training for students will be offered through short, focused courses. These sessions will cover story ideation and scriptwriting, helping students turn ideas into clear episode plans. Training will also include interview techniques and active listening, microphone technique and recording basics,

and the fundamentals of editing, sound design, and exporting episodes ready for sharing.

Following this, students will develop a range of youth-led podcast series. Proposed series include “Voices of Steung Meanchey”, which will feature student perspectives on life, education, and community, and “Future Leaders of Cambodia”, a show where young people interview youth leaders, alumni, and role models. Another series, “Girls in STEM”, will be hosted and produced by girls, showcasing conversations about science, technology, and breaking barriers - leading up to international days recognizing Women and Girls in Science and Technology.

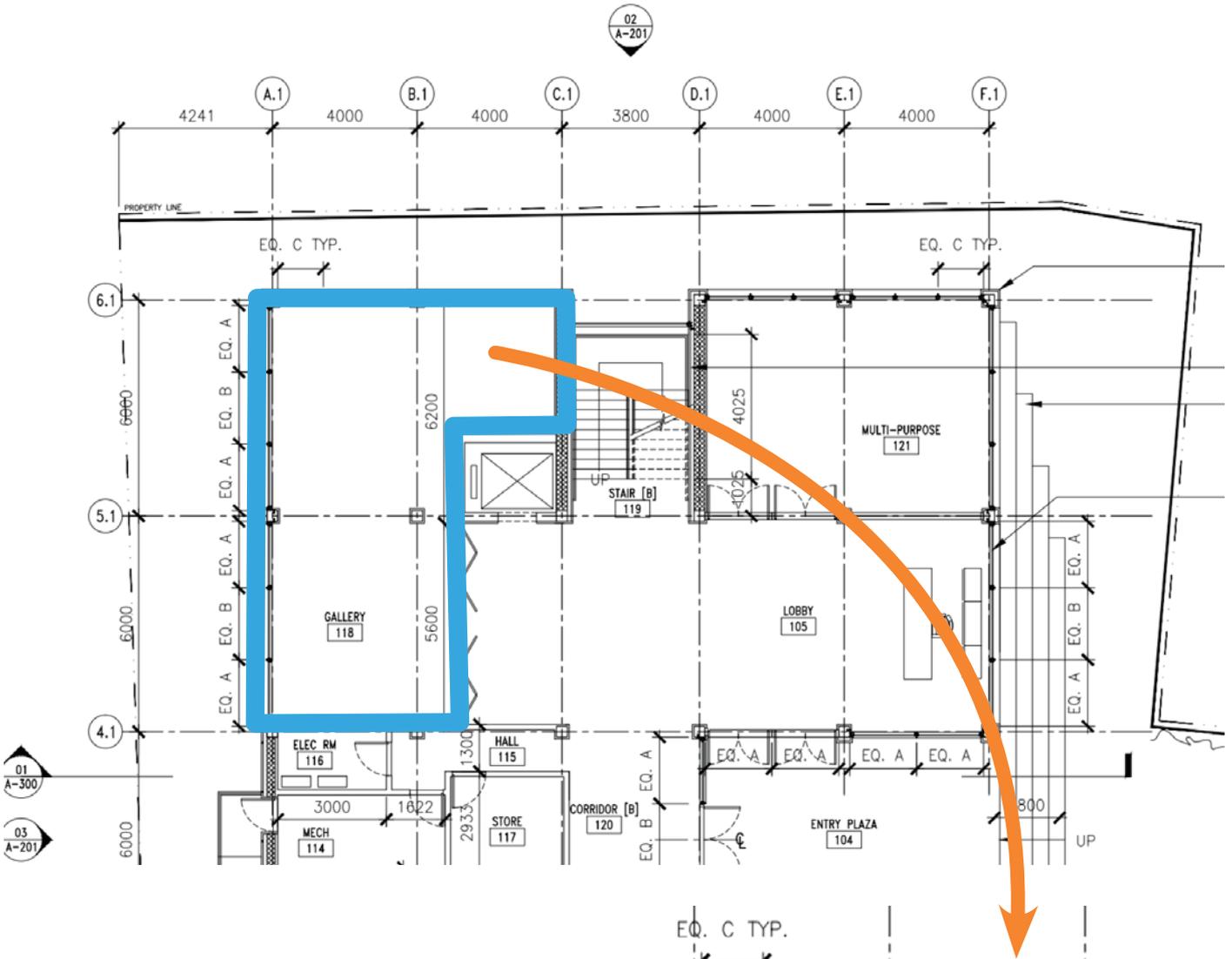
Together, these activities will turn the Youth Media & Podcast Studio into a vibrant hub of learning, creativity, and storytelling, firmly embedded within CCF’s broader education and community programs.

The studio will also be available as a flexible resource for the wider organisation. In addition to podcast production, it can be used for other educational activities, such as recording lessons, creating revision materials, and presenting student work. It will support youth leadership programs, providing a space for young leaders to practise communication, document their projects, and create content for peers.

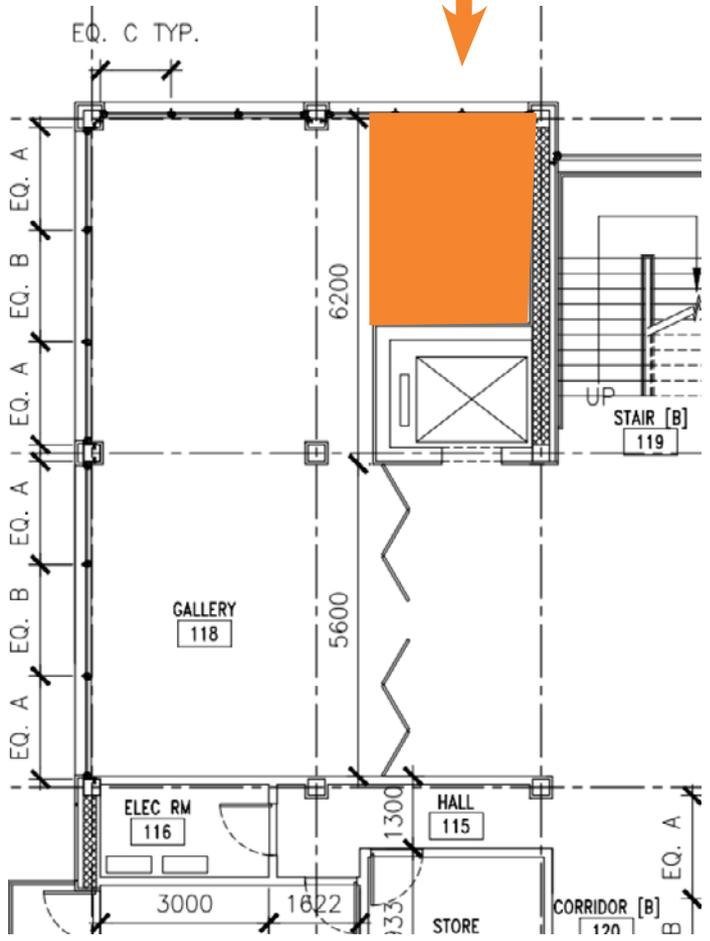


Scan QR Code to see the 2024 student interview with Scott Neeson.

FLOOR PLAN



The Youth Media & Podcast Studio will be created in a small corner of the NCA gallery. With simple acoustic treatment and smart layout, this corner becomes a dedicated recording space inside CCF's flagship STEM campus. Its central location keeps the studio highly visible and easily accessible for students, youth leaders, and teachers,



PROPOSED BUDGET

- All financial figures quoted in USD.
- The budget for the Youth Media & Podcast Studio is designed to cover everything needed to launch and sustain a small, professional space at the NCA. The largest share of the investment goes toward core studio equipment: quality audio gear, video capability, laptops, and editing software.
- A second portion of the budget is allocated to installation and fit-out. This includes wiring and cabling, building work, acoustic treatment, and practical furniture. By adapting space in the NCA gallery, the project keeps costs down while still creating a dedicated, quiet, and functional recording space.
- The remaining budget focuses on people and support. There is provision for initial staff and student training, short-term specialist technical support during set-up, and a part-time technical role in the first year.

Category	Line item	Estimated cost (USD)	Notes
Studio equipment	Audio equipment (mics, headphones, interface, stands, cables)	3,000	Core podcast/audio set-up for high-quality recording.
	Video equipment (3 cameras + tripods)	5,000–6,000	Allows filming of interviews and video-podcasts as needed.
	Studio lights	1,200	Basic lighting for video recording and a professional look.
	Laptops (2 units)	4,000	For recording, editing, and managing audio/video files.
	Software	2,000	Editing software licenses - 3 yr subscription
	hardware support	2,000	Digital Storage and appliances
Installation & fit-out	Wiring, cabling, basic sound treatment	500	Initial wiring and small building adjustments.
	Additional build and fit-out work	2,000	Extra carpentry, minor soundproofing and electrical work.
	Extra equipment and installation support	1,000	small items and installation labour.
People & training	Team training and launch support	5,000	Short, intensive training for staff and students to run the studio.
	Part-time technical role (3/4 time, Year 1)	7,500 - 10,000	Ongoing support to keep the studio running and mentor students.
Furniture	Desk / studio table / Chairs	500	Central recording table for 3–4 participants. eating for hosts and guests.
	Misc.	500	
Total		34200 - 37,700	

Note: A scaled-down version of the Youth Media & Podcast Studio can be delivered for around USD 15,000. This model focuses on audio-only production, removing cameras and visual recording. Training would be streamlined to a shorter introduction for staff and students, and the studio would operate without a dedicated technical support role, relying on simpler equipment and existing CCF capacity.



- **2025 earned perfect four-star ratings from Charity Navigator for 15th consecutive year.**
- **CCF was voted a top three charity in its category out of 225,000 by Charity Navigator in the 2024 Community Choice Awards.**
- **In 2016, CCF ranked in the top 1% globally with a perfect 100% score under Charity Navigator’s new assessment.**



CCF was the first organization in Southeast Asia to be recognized for its “transformative impact on education and society” by receiving a World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) Award in 2012.



2021, CCF awarded the first ASEAN award for Outstanding Social Welfare and Development in Cambodia. Nominated by the Ministry of Social Affairs for “a remarkable contribution to social and development work in Cambodia.”

2024, CCF wins the Australian International Philanthropy Award for the work of the Neeson Cripps Academy



CCF Founder, Scott Neeson, spent 26 years in the film industry, where he eventually served as president of 20th Century Fox International. He managed revenues in excess of \$1.5 billion and oversaw the release and marketing of several blockbuster films including Braveheart, Titanic, Star Wars, and X-Men.

In 2004, Scott left the film industry and set up Cambodian Children’s Fund. Paying for all of the start-up costs out of his own pocket, Scott now spends his time administering CCF in Phnom Penh as Executive Director while also fundraising abroad.



CHILDHOOD POVERTY IN CAMBODIA



Cambodia has recently redefined the poverty line, using the most recent Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey for 2019/20. The national poverty line is now 10,951 riels per person per day or the equivalent of \$2.70 (at October 2022 exchange rates). Under the new poverty line, about 18% of the population is identified as poor. (Worldbank 2022)

However, since 2018 the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative produce the global Multidimensional Poverty Index estimates by measuring each person's overlapping deprivations across 10 indicators in three equally weighted dimensions: health, education and standard of living. **Based on these estimates, 37% percent of the population in Cambodia (6 million people in 2020) is multidimensionally poor, while an additional 21% is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty (an additional 3 million people in 2020). (UNDP 2022)**

According to the 2022 report by the Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT) organization, "In 2019, research by the World Food Program revealed major improvements in the people's access to electricity and clean water. However, other

issues, such as debt continued to be a major issue. Many families continue to struggle with low incomes and indebtedness, while the price of electricity and fuel has increased and remains high. Communities also complained about not being provided with ID Poor (Health insurance for impoverished Cambodians) and having to take out loans to pay for medical bills."

The 2018 Child Poverty in Cambodia Report notes that studies on education in Cambodia show that the lack of water and sanitation - **34% of primary schools lacking drinking water and another 21% functioning without toilets - create a "barrier to learning"** which, along with other deprivations such as lack of food and safe accommodation, result in a high rate of school attrition – children beyond primary school age either drop out of school early or do not complete primary school.

Though Cambodia has made significant gains in educational equality in the past 20 years, there's still pressure on girls to drop out early, especially if a parent must choose between educating a son or daughter.

Without access to quality education girls remain trapped in poverty with no means of basic human development.

CCF'S APPROACH TO POVERTY REDUCTION

CCF operates over 60 inter-connected projects across six core program areas – Education, Leadership, Career & Life Skills, Childcare, Community Outreach, and Healthcare.

While not all programs are education-focused, each plays an essential part in ensuring children

(once labeled “unreachable” by the school system) and their families have access to the services needed to support the participation in education.

As a result, CCF has developed a robust poverty reduction model based on three key principles:



CCF provides for what educational theory tells us are the essential and undeniable foundational human needs without which no learning can occur.



DR LEE PARTRIDGE
Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning
University of Western Australia

The CCF model helps Cambodia in achieving its commitments to the United Nations by supporting the top six Sustainable Development Goals.





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THANK YOU