



Management Consulting against poverty

NGO Spotlight: Cambodia



May 2026
By Maroubra Consulting



Introduction: Maroubra Consulting and Management Consulting against poverty

Maroubra Consulting is a ‘remote first’ and ‘global first’ management consulting company with a nimble team of experienced consultants in Europe, US and Australia. We support both clients and NGOs with strategic design and advisory, digital transformation, AI business adoption and cyber security compliance management

We help organizations enhance decision-making, reinforce operations, and adopt technology in a responsible way. With more than 100 years of combined consulting experience, we work alongside our clients to achieve operational excellence through long-term partnerships and cost-effective remote or hybrid delivery models.

Sustainability sits at the core of our work. We actively support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number one: ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. This commitment is embedded in our business model, as we dedicate time and expertise to international NGOs, supporting them in strengthening strategic focus, improving operational effectiveness, and advancing digital readiness.

We are committed to giving back by openly sharing the expertise and insight gained through decades of business experience. Our work embraces innovation, including the use of AI tool, to equip NGO leaders and teams with practical, easy-to-apply tools that create meaningful impact. This report demonstrates our long-term strategic focus on understanding the needs of NGOs in Southeast Asia, supporting their growth, and contributing to sustainable solutions with lasting value.

Purpose of the NGO Spotlight

The NGO Spotlight series is our own research initiative designed to build a deeper understanding of the strategic pressures and operational realities faced by NGOs. In this Spotlight report, we share key insights from NGOs in Cambodia. By examining organisational purpose alongside day-to-day operations, we aim to uncover recurring challenges, capability gaps, and opportunities that shape NGO effectiveness and long-term sustainability.



Through interviews with Cambodian NGOs, we explored operational constraints and the role AI can play in enhancing productivity and decision-making. These insights inform practical recommendations and help shape how Maroubra Consulting—together with other companies and organisations committed to “paying it forward”—can support NGOs in becoming more resilient, efficient, and digitally ready for the future.

By creating meaningful partnerships, we seek to exchange knowledge, co-develop solutions, and scale impact in the ongoing fight against poverty and inequality.



Spotlight Cambodia: NGOs face funding pressures and low digital maturity

NGOs in Siem Reap, Cambodia

The NGOs interviewed in Siem Reap share a strong commitment to education, youth development, and community support. Most initiatives focus on English language learning, basic computer literacy, vocational skills, and in some cases health care and shelter for vulnerable children and youth. Education is widely viewed as the most effective long-term lever for breaking cycles of poverty in tourism-dependent communities. These organisations vary in size. Many NGOs work closely with families in the local community, schools, and local authorities to identify vulnerable children and respond to local needs.

Challenges in operations

Funding instability remains the most persistent operational challenge. Many NGOs rely on limited international donors or tourism-related income, leaving them exposed to external shocks such as regional instability and downturns in tourist activity. Weak local fundraising capacity further limits financial resilience. Capacity constraints are widespread, particularly among smaller, founder-led organisations with minimal staff. Larger NGOs face coordination challenges, succession planning issues, and difficulties aligning education outcomes with evolving labour market demands. Infrastructure gaps, including connectivity, limited equipment, and basic cybersecurity, reduce efficiency and increase operational risk.

The late cross-border tensions with Thailand also indirectly affect families' economic stability, creating higher demand for support services at the community level across the country.

AI potential in the NGO sector

AI adoption among NGOs in Siem Reap remains limited. Most organisations rely on basic digital tools for communication and administration, with only a few experimenting with AI solutions such as ChatGPT or Copilot for tasks like translation, document drafting, and content creation. Overall, AI is seen as an opportunity to improve productivity, communication, and youth skills, but broader adoption is constrained by limited digital capabilities, inconsistent internet access, and resource constraints.

Top 5 NGO challenges in Cambodia

- Funding instability
- Limited local donor base
- Infrastructure and basic technology limitations
- Low digital maturity
- Ongoing border tensions with Thailand

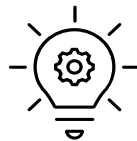
Summary

NGOs in Siem Reap work hard to support children and local communities, but many face ongoing challenges. Funding is uncertain and often depends on tourism and support from outside the country, while limited infrastructure and technology slow daily work. AI tools are not widely used yet, but interest is growing as NGOs look for practical ways to work more efficiently. Basic digital support and simple AI tools could help these organisations operate better. Border tensions with Thailand also create instability for families who rely on cross-border work or regional mobility, adding additional pressure on already vulnerable households.

Cambodia key figures

- Area: 181,035 km²
- Population: 17.7 million
- GDP: USD 151.1 billion
- GDP per capita (PPP): USD 8,710
- Poverty rate: 10.9%
- Human Development Index: 0.606





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About Maroubra Consulting

Maroubra Consulting is an international management consulting firm, specialists in business operations. The company supports client organisations with improving competitiveness, strengthening operational resilience and achieving sustainable growth. With a 'global-first' and 'remote-first' business model, and market presence in Bergen, Barcelona, Amsterdam, San Francisco and Sydney, Maroubra Consulting combines strategic direction with digital innovation. The company proudly support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #1: No Poverty, partnering with NGOs to create lasting impact.