

EMPOWER WITH AN EDUCATION
TO PREVENT SEX TRAFFICKING



2023



ANNUAL
REPORT

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This report reflects Free To Shine's activities for the period between 1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023.

Names have been changed and images unmatched throughout this report to protect privacy.

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OUR IMPACT TOTAL NUMBERS TO DATE

 [See page 07](#)
To find out more
about our impact
this year.



763

Girls
enrolled.



23

Houses
built.



73

Emerging
leaders.



7,484

Social work
interventions.



37,774

Safety visits
conducted.



1,041

Bicycles
provided.



9

University
graduates.



59

Village partnerships
established.

ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE

Free To Shine is an independently-funded, non-profit organisation founded in Australia, working to prevent sex trafficking in Cambodia. Our work is child protection-focused, human rights-based, and designed to strengthen families and keep children in education.

Our Cambodian team works with local authorities and communities to reach the most at risk rural girls, reducing their vulnerability to trafficking by improving their access to education and providing them with social work support.

We don't build new private schools; **we make it possible for children to access their local, public school.**

We don't rescue or save children from sex trafficking; **we work to prevent them from being trafficked in the first place.**



See page 03

To find out more about our program.

WHY PREVENTION?

In 2009, Free To Shine's Co-Founder and Managing Director, Nicky Mih, volunteered at an aftercare facility in Cambodia for survivors of sex trafficking. This profoundly changed the direction of her life:

"I asked survivors who had been rescued how I could help, and I was hardly prepared for their answer. I thought they'd want something straightforward and easy to provide, like university tuition fees, but they didn't want anything for themselves. Instead they wanted for no other girl to go through the horrors they'd been through. They asked me to go out into the rural villages, find the girls who weren't in school, and protect them. They told me that if these young girls were in school they would not be trafficked." – Nicky Mih

Focusing on education is widely recognised by experts in the field as a crucial component of preventing trafficking. According to the International Labour Organisation, "Getting girls and boys into schools and keeping them there is a vital step to reducing their vulnerability to trafficking."¹

With the survivors' suggestions backed up by international data, Free To Shine was born.

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OUR VISION

Educated girls, free from sex trafficking, shaping and leading their communities and country.



OUR MISSION

We prevent the trafficking and exploitation of girls by strengthening family and community systems to prioritise the safety and education of their children.



FREE TO SHINE

OUR VALUES



SAFETY

We prioritise keeping girls safe from trafficking and all forms of exploitation; identifying, reporting and addressing safety concerns promptly.

We work with families and communities in a respectful manner to end family violence and minimise factors that endanger their children.

We create an environment of confidence and trust and take care of our physical and psychological well-being.

We work ethically and professionally adhering to laws, policies, procedures, high standards and best practice.

We educate and engage our supporters without compromising children's safety or privacy.

We care for our organisation and use our integrity to guide our choices and decisions.



STRENGTH

We identify and build on the strengths of each girl, family and community we work with and believe in them.

We help children stay safely within their families and communities.

We are problem solvers, using our abilities to handle complex and conflicting situations.

We are committed to excellence and we are honest, work hard and have fun.

We work with vulnerable people but choose to represent their strengths and maintain their dignity at all times.

We can articulate our practice approaches and evidence bases.



EDUCATION

We provide access to education through to grade 12 but we focus on attitude, concepts learned, knowledge acquired and skills developed rather than scores attained.

We provide community trainings, leadership training to emerging leaders and scholarships for degrees that contribute to child protection.

We encourage curiosity, exploration, asking questions and the discovery that begins when we don't know the answer.

We participate in professional, collaborative networks to learn from each other's challenges, successes and failures.

We educate our supporters about human rights, human trafficking and child protection and our impact addressing these issues. As we learn from the girls, families and communities we work with we share this education with our supporters.

We are continuously learning and use this to develop and improve.



COMMUNITY

We work in partnership with girls, families, and communities contributing to the strengths, resources, and systems they already have.

We utilise relationships with community leaders and representatives, schools and government departments to advocate for and weave a web of support around vulnerable girls and children.

We celebrate each team member bringing different strengths, skills and abilities in contributing to a common goal.

We respect our donors as part of our team.

We work with other service providers and government to achieve major improvements in the child protection sector in Cambodia.



EQUITY

We follow a United Nations human-rights based framework, guided by the Declaration of Human Rights helping children and families to be free from slavery, access education, safe drinking water, enough food and adequate shelter.

We address gender inequity because 99% of victims of sex trafficking are women and girls, and Cambodia has not achieved gender parity.

We are fair.

We role model gender equity, and do not adhere to gender stereotypes within our team.

We create opportunities for people and businesses globally to engage in a strategic partnership that changes the world, using a system that works.

We do not contribute to any exploitation or inequity, ie fundraising chocolates are fairtrade and running singlets are from ethical clothing brands.

Our values guide our decision making. When we have a decision to make, we refer to and are guided by our values, in order of priority.

Safety is our highest value.

OUR THREE GOALS

PROGRAM STRATEGY

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GOAL 1 SAFE COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

Conduct **monthly safety visits** to address complex factors such as poverty, hunger, illness, unemployment, migration, addiction, violence, family breakdown and debt.

Provide **social work interventions** and crisis support to girls and their families facing exceptionally challenging circumstances.

Facilitate **community trainings** that build capacity within the community, increase knowledge of human rights and teach families how to protect themselves from exploitation and abuse.



GOAL 2 EDUCATED GIRLS

Improve **access to basic rights** such as safe drinking water, enough food, and adequate shelter so girls are able to stay safe and in school.

Provide essential **educational support and materials** necessary for each girl to access school including uniforms, books, pens, a backpack and a bike.

Provide financial support for **additional curriculum classes** to support girls to progress to the next grade.



GOAL 3 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Conduct **leadership training**, providing mentorship and project management skills development to emerging leaders.

Invest in university education to develop the next generation of Cambodian women leaders.

Teach and model **gender equity**.

LETTER FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your support this year helping us reach the most at-risk girls living in rural areas - improving their access to education, providing them with social work support, and reducing their vulnerability to trafficking. In this report hear from Savy, a village leader who explains how women and children who were experiencing family based violence were afraid before working with Free To Shine, and from Sak, a commune councillor for women and children who says “girls and families are safer since working with Free To Shine.”

Last year for the first time since Free To Shine was founded in 2010, Cambodia was downgraded in the Trafficking in Persons report to Tier 3, and without improvement this year it remains at Tier 3. The Government of Cambodia did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking

and was not making significant efforts to do so.² It is within the context of extreme poverty, gender based violence, and the risk of trafficking that Free To Shine’s program operates.

I have so much gratitude to our team who work with skill and dedication to support families through the ridiculously difficult choices they are forced to make as a result of living in extreme poverty. This year we have provided 1,989 safety visits and 1,398 social work interventions, 330 adults attended community trainings, 38 students graduated grade 12, and 12 young women are studying at university.

In this report learn about the support provided to Chantea, and how it helped her remain in school when difficult circumstances made it seem that disengaging from school was her only option. And hear from Savorn who made it to university and says, “I have become a better person, I know who I am, and what I want to become and be.”



We might be the ones on the ground working with girls, families and communities, but we couldn’t have done it without the support of our financial partners who fund this work.

Thank you!

Wishing you and your family well.

With love and appreciation,

N. Mih

NICKY MIH

CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

TRAFFICKING IN CAMBODIA

CAMBODIA: REMAINS AT TIER 3

For the second year running the Government of Cambodia did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and was not making significant efforts to do so, therefore the country remained at Tier 3.

Cambodia is both a source and destination country for trafficked people. Traffickers in Cambodia are most commonly family or community members or small networks of independent brokers.

The government took some steps in 2023 to address trafficking, including investigating, prosecuting, and convicting more traffickers, creating a special working group to investigate credible reports of large-scale cyber scam operations involving indicators of forced labor, and identifying and providing services for more Cambodian trafficking victims. However, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes, including by high-level senior officials, remained widespread and endemic, resulted in selective and politically motivated enforcement of laws, and inhibited law enforcement action during the year.

SEX TRAFFICKING – WOMEN AND GIRLS

Cambodian and ethnic Vietnamese women and girls move from rural areas to cities and tourist destinations, where criminals exploit them in brothels and clandestine sex establishments. Cambodian men form the largest source of demand for children exploited in sex trafficking; however men from elsewhere travel to Cambodia to engage in child sex tourism, increasingly facilitated through social media. Over the last year, the government prosecuted 16 cases involving sex trafficking, compared to four in the previous year.

THE GROWTH OF CYBER SCAMS

Traffickers increasingly use the internet and social media to fraudulently recruit Cambodians and foreigners, for jobs abroad and force them to engage in cyber scams, primarily in commercial compounds in Cambodia. Victims often arrive through airports, but there are reports of brokers moving victims overland or by sea into Cambodia. Traffickers subject workers to punishment for poor performance and disobedience, including physical abuse, wage-docking and debt-bondage, and may “resell” those who cannot meet sales quotas or repay recruitment debts. NGOs estimate that as many as 100,000 workers are exploited in forced labor in these compounds in Cambodia.

GOVERNMENT ACTION

Nationwide, law enforcement authorities often did not investigate or prosecute suspected or convicted traffickers despite credible allegations due to resource constraints and official complicity. Despite this, the government in collaboration with, and through funding from, NGOs and other donors – increased training for police, prosecutors, judges, and other government officials on anti-trafficking laws, investigative techniques, evidence collection, victim identification, and protection guidelines during this period and prosecuted 292 suspected traffickers and convicted 174. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC) facilitated the return of 100,353 undocumented Cambodian migrants (including 41,178 women and 12,050 children) and referred 2,227 victims and suspected victims of trafficking to NGO-provided social services.³



[Click here for the full report](#)

Taken from the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report
– United States Department of State.





OUR IMPACT

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS 2022-2023



1989
Safety Visits



1398
Social Work Interventions



330
Adults who attended
community trainings



12
Students studying
at university



25
Students who graduated
year 9



38
Students who graduated
year 12



286
Number of Girls and
Families Supported



40
Emergency Food Packages
Provided





PROGRAM STRATEGY GOAL 1

SAFE COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN



Conduct **monthly safety visits** to address complex factors such as poverty, hunger, illness, unemployment, migration, addiction, violence, family breakdown, and debt.

Provide **social work interventions** and crisis support to girls and their families facing exceptionally challenging circumstances.

Facilitate **Community Trainings** that build capacity within the community, increase knowledge of human rights, and teach families how to protect themselves from exploitation and abuse.

SAFETY VISITS

PURPOSE

We conduct monthly safety visits to address complex factors such as poverty, hunger, illness, unemployment, migration, addiction, violence, family breakdown, and debt.

NUMBER OF SAFETY VISITS CONDUCTED THIS YEAR: 1,989

OUTCOMES

Safety – When an Education Officer uncovers issues such as family violence, child protection concerns, drug or alcohol misuse or food insecurity, the girl and family are referred to a Free To Shine Social Worker or other Non Government Organisation for help or support.

Meeting basic needs – During the pandemic, many families on our program lost jobs. Through safety visits, we could identify those families who could not meet their basic needs, so that we could provide emergency food and larger vegetable gardens.

Improved physical health – We encourage families to seek help when experiencing health issues. An outcome of some of our safety visits is a beneficiary or a family member getting treatment for a health condition. We then continue to monitor the situation.

Improved mental health – Sometimes families need someone to listen and empathise. We provide emotional support to families who are really struggling.

Increased school retention – More girls remain engaged at school for longer because Education Officers are encouraging them, monitoring their attendance, following up absences and helping them overcome the challenges and difficulties that are often the reason they disengage from school.

Increased pass rate – A higher chance of passing exams because Education Officers offer ongoing encouragement as well as advice on time management and study techniques, while Education Officers have identified and addressed learning difficulties in some students that had not been noticed by their schools and provided them with validation and encouragement and additional help with literacy.

Increased resilience – Education Officers are positive role-models, a trusted adult outside the family (a protective factor) and mentor the girls under their care. They create a safe space to discuss challenges and concerns and develop problem solving skills and provide encouragement and positive reinforcement.

WORDS FROM THE TEAM

“The challenge I have had for the past six months is about families’ huge loans, and gambling. These two issues affect the girls’ study because in most cases the girls want to discontinue school and get a job to earn money to support their families. I always give them positive advice about what they should prioritise i.e. the long-term benefits of study, and realizing the negative impact of gambling. I encourage them to study hard to get a better job in the future. For those girls who still want to get a job, I recommend they should find a part-time job and make sure that it does not affect their studies.

My successes in my work this year are resolving two family gambling cases, resolving three families’ concerns about poverty, two girls’ concerns and feelings of sadness and depression, educating on the risks of discontinuing school, and teaching teenage girls about birth control, especially those who were beginning sexual relationships.

The lesson I learned from my work is the way to talk to the family about gambling because sometimes they might not be happy when I mention the high risks associated with gambling. What I am able to do is to report to the local authority to prevent and stop them from gambling. I also learned about the techniques for asking a question with the families concerned. I am always a good listener and talk to them, providing them with emotional support”.

- VANTINE, EDUCATION OFFICER

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“Working with Free To Shine is one of my dreams as I like to work with the community to empower and prevent trafficking and exploitation, and help to keep girls in school. Working with family violence is a difficult job for me especially, when I see girls at risk.

Working with Free To Shine, I have become a more flexible and optimistic person. When I see girls struggling, I can encourage and support them.

After graduating from high school I luckily received a funded university place from Free To Shine. I decided to study law because I was hoping to share my skills and knowledge about the law with my neighbours, family, and community. I apply the knowledge and skills I have learned by educating about human rights, women’s rights, child labor, freedom from slavery and torture, and the right to an education.”

- DA, EDUCATION OFFICER



WHAT IMPACT HAVE THESE SAFETY VISITS HAD ON GIRLS THIS YEAR?

SREYLEA*

Sreylea lives with her parents and a younger brother. Her parents earn money by making sugar from palm juice. Every morning her father climbs high up the palm trees to collect the palm juice. Sreylea's mother then heats the palm juice converting it into a lump of sugar to sell. One day her father fell out of a palm tree, and was injured. Sreylea's family, therefore, had no income. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that her family has a loan to pay. While her father was recovering, her mother borrowed more money for doctor's bills. Sreylea was worried about her

family. Sreylea told Cheat all her concerns. Cheat requested additional help through our Program Officer for an emergency food package, which was approved. Cheat further worked to support Sreylea in completing grade 12, and considering her options beyond, including applying for opportunities such as funded university places and vocational training positions. Sreylea's father recovered within three months and the family were able to resume their work. Sreylea passed grade 12 and Cheat is supporting her to apply for vocational training.

CHANHEA*

Chanhea lives with her parents and a younger sister and brother. Her father is a farmer and fisherman. He can only find fish in the rainy season. Her mother works at the scrap and recycling place. Her family

has a loan from the bank because her mother was sick with a blood pressure problem and was not able to work. Chanhea became withdrawn. She didn't talk very much, only answering questions asked of her, but not really engaging in conversation. Vantine was concerned as normally Chanhea was friendly. Vantine talked to her alone, checking her safety and mental and emotional wellbeing. Chanhea talked about her concerns that her family cannot make a payment to the bank. And they don't have enough food. Because of that, Chanhea wanted to stop school and go to work. She was struggling, feeling down, with feelings of hopelessness and depression.

She was in grade 11 so had less than two years of high school remaining. Vantine discussed the disadvantages of stopping school early and explained the higher risks of working under the age



of 18, and without her national certificate. Vantine worked with mum to explore the possibility of the credit officer placing a 'delay payment' on the loan while the family has no income. Vantine worked with mum to advocate for herself with the local and provincial hospital doctors to use a Poor ID card, which means there is no need to pay doctor's fees. Vantine requested an emergency food package from Free To Shine to support the basic needs of Chanthea's family. After a month her mother recovered and was able to return to work. Her father now has a job too, fishing locally and selling to the markets. Her family has enough food to eat.

Chanthea started to feel better, stayed in school and passed grade 11. She's now in her final year of school.

LINA*

Lina has lived with her grandmother and aunt from a very young age, after her mother and father divorced. Her mother remarried but never supported Lina. Lina's father also remarried but he is still supportive of Lina. Lina really loves her grandmother who has been her main support. But as Lina has grown up, she sometimes feels very disappointed with her life because she has seen her friends living with their parents. During her grade 12 studies, her elderly grandmother was frequently sick, and Lina began feeling sad, hopeless and depressed.

Vantine visits them to monitor their physical and emotional safety and wellbeing, and to empathise, support and inspire them. Vantine requested an emergency food package from Free To Shine to support their basic needs.

Lina still studies hard as she wants her grandmother to be proud of her. After school, she takes care of her grandmother. She was committed to finishing high school as she wants to be a teacher. She passed grade 12 and received a scholarship from the university.

Unfortunately her grandmother became seriously ill and Lina decided to reject the scholarship in order to stay home in the village to take care of her. Soon after her grandmother passed away. Lina felt depressed again along with feelings of grief and loss. Vantine continues to work closely with her, providing much needed support. Lina now has a job at a restaurant and has applied for vocational training.



“

Before, we struggled with a lot of cases, a lot of problems and difficulties in families. They didn't value education so they stopped their children going to school. Children and women who were experiencing family based violence were afraid. They did not seek help...girls and families are safer since working with Free To Shine. Because girls are educated they can find a service when they have a concern, or when they experience family based violence.

Savy, a Village Leader

”



SAFE COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

PURPOSE

We provide social work interventions and crisis support to girls and their families facing exceptionally challenging circumstances. When a girl is identified as being at risk, Education Officers update the concern to the Program Manager to refer the case to the Social Work program if necessary for a social work intervention.

NUMBER OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS CONDUCTED THIS YEAR: 1,398

OUTCOMES

Safety and security - Social Workers provide tailored interventions to help beneficiaries be safe and secure.

Problems are addressed or solved - Social Workers offer crisis intervention if needed. They also provide therapeutic support, guidance, counselling and referrals to help families address their issues.

Behaviour change - Social Work interventions can lead to behavioural changes in beneficiaries and their family members, depending on the concern and intervention.

Local Authorities are held to account - Social Workers work closely with local authorities to ensure they are aware of families with children 'at risk,' and are responding appropriately.

Minimise risk of trafficking and exploitation

- Social Workers educate families on risk and protective factors and actively work to decrease and increase respectively.

WHAT IMPACT HAVE THESE SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS HAD ON GIRLS THIS YEAR?

FAMILY AT RISK CASE STUDY:

LEAK*

Leak lives with her parents and younger siblings. Her father was working as a security guard, and her mother opened a local shop selling noodles. To open the shop they borrowed money from the bank. After three months the shop failed. So, when it failed her mother had no job and only her father was working, but he could not afford to pay back the bank. Leak's parents decided to go work in another province. Her father still works as a security guard and her mother works as a cook at a casino.

The three children are living at home, supported by their aunt who lives nearby. However, her mother's younger sister is looking after them because their houses are near each other. The concern is their uncle who uses drugs and looks at Leak in a way that makes her feel uncomfortable, and he tries to talk her into coming back to his house at night time. Leak felt uncomfortable so she told her aunty. She also talked to us about it. Da visited them and talked to Leak and her aunt. Leak's aunt asked the local authority to intervene. While this concern was being addressed Leak went to visit her mother and father for a month. When she came home she returned to school. However, her uncle has not changed his behaviour and the local authorities have not commenced working on this case. Leak and her family have been referred to our Social Work team for appropriate interventions and in the meantime their grandmother is staying with them at night.



WORDS FROM THE TEAM

"I support families with counselling when they have family problems. I teach them more about their local councils and the services available in their community. I emphasise that families need to take care of their mental health, as a lot of people feel down when they are faced with family concerns."

"I motivate and encourage girls to help them address their problems, and I make sure they can find the right, safe support. I help and support girls who are entering relationships, with a focus on them remaining safe. As I am a Social Worker, I work with the local authority and our team to talk to girls and families about healthy relationships, the impact of early marriage, and the need to access safety checks if they become pregnant. This work involves advocating for those girls entering early marriages."

- DARON, SOCIAL WORKER

FAMILY VIOLENCE CASE STUDY:

SEDA* GRADE 9

Seda lives with her parents. Her mother works as a cleaner at the hospital and her father is a fisherman.

Seda liked to hang out with friends, sometimes until late at night. She didn't focus on her studies. Her family talked with her a lot about it but she didn't listen to them. Her father followed her to see where she was going every night. He saw her with her friends, and he hit her.

Seda went home crying. After that she stopped going to school.

Our social worker worked closely with Seda and her parents, with a focus on ensuring that Seda is safe. Everyone talked about their feelings and frustrations. Seda's father said he was disappointed with his daughter, and just wanted to see her focus on her studies. Our social worker helped them understand and process their emotions and how to respond to one another appropriately.

Seda left and went to work in another province. First she was a construction worker. Then her

friends invited her to work in Thailand, but she rejected that. After a few months, she changed to work at a coffee shop. When the new school year began Seda decided to leave work and return to school.

Her family is very excited about that.

Seda has joined school clubs such as sports, volunteering, and traditional Khmer dancing. She is studying hard, is very active, and participates in every event at school.



“

Girls and families are safer since working with Free To Shine. Because families are changed they encourage their children to go to school. So girls could get an education and can decide for their future. Families have an opportunity to join the training such as Family Based Violence, Safe Community, Parenting Skills, Child Protection, Child Development, and Drugs and Alcohol.

Sak, Commune Council for Women and Children (CCWC)

”



SAFE COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

COMMUNITY TRAININGS

PURPOSE

We facilitate community trainings that build capacity within the community, increase knowledge of human rights, and teach families how to protect themselves from exploitation and abuse.

NUMBER OF TRAINING SESSIONS 11

NUMBER OF ADULTS PARTICIPATED 330

NUMBER OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATED 73

SUBJECTS TAUGHT

Child Development (3), Drugs and Alcohol (3), Child Protection (3), Safe Migration (1), Gender Based Violence (1)

OUTCOMES

Increased protection - community members are better able to protect themselves and their children because they have learnt about child protection, child development and drugs and alcohol.

Community members feel more connected - they share their experiences and gain peer support and understanding.

Stronger communities - through education and connection. And a strengthening of the relationship between local authorities and Free To Shine.

WHAT IMPACT HAVE THESE COMMUNITY TRAININGS HAD THIS YEAR?

“Free To Shine’s community training about Child Development is a good lesson for the villagers. They can understand how their children are developing. A lot of families misunderstand their children’s development.”

- SAK, CCWC

“I worry about the safety of villagers who migrate to work in other places within and outside Cambodia. I feel very concerned when they get cheated at their workplace. And, every month, I receive a lot of reports about family-based violence cases.

I have gained so much understanding about the topics. I have learned how my community members can migrate safely and avoid labor exploitation. I’ve learned a lot to help me address family-based violence, which should make for happier families. This is why I have always wanted the villagers to have a better understanding of all these topics. They are facing real problems, so I believe they could use the knowledge gained and apply it in their own lives. After training, I can see the positive impacts such as villagers migrating safely, taking care of their emotional feelings, and having the courage to talk about their concerns. I am very happy to work and collaborate with Free To Shine.”

- TOUER, COMMUNE LEADER



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I understand the four types of Family Based Violence, and how to ensure safe migration. It is important that the villagers attend community training to learn. Most victims of family based violence are women, so I would be happy to see men attend the training because when they join the community training on the topic of family-based violence, they will understand its negative impacts.

Rothneary, Trainer, CCWC

”



PROGRAM STRATEGY GOAL 2

EDUCATED GIRLS



Provide essential **educational support and materials** necessary for each girl to access school including uniforms, books, pens, a backpack, and a bike.

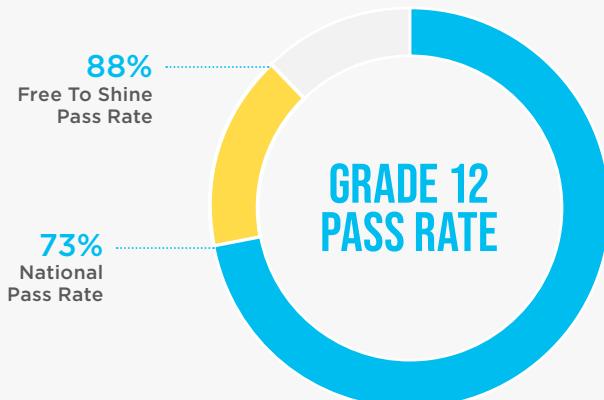
Provide financial support for **additional curriculum classes** to support girls to progress to the next grade.

Improve **access to basic rights** such as safe drinking water, enough food, and adequate shelter so that girls are able to stay safe and in school.

OUR IMPACT THIS YEAR

RANI* GRADE 7

Rani lives with her parents, and she has five older brothers and a younger brother. Her father is a farmer, has a rice field, feeds cows, and sometimes works as a construction worker in the city. Her mother is a housewife, who cooks, cleans, and takes care of her baby son. All of her older brothers have already finished school and are working. Rani always goes to school but she has a lot of trouble remembering. Her literature is very low; she cannot read or write Khmer numbers, consonants, or vowels. Cheat, Rani's Education Officer, assessed that Rani was really in need of additional support. Cheat informed our Program Officer and made a request for Rani to access additional tuition. Cheat liaised with Rani's school to explore with Rani's teacher if that additional support could be made available and she confirmed that she could tutor Rani at home. Cheat asked the teacher to sign a contract for six months of after school tuition. Within three



88.37% pass rate for Free To Shine students who sat the national grade 12 exams compared to a 72.89% national pass rate.



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months Cheat observed an improvement. After six months, Rani's reading and writing had improved a lot. As a result, she passed grade 6.

KIMYEE*

Kimyee lives with her mother and younger brother. Her mother works from home making baskets to sell and tending to a rice field. Their house was old and in much need of repair, the palm leaf walls were broken and the roof leaked. When it rained they could not stay there. As her house is in the Apsara zone they are not permitted to build a new house or do repairs without permission. Chenda applied to Free To Shine for a house build and the application was approved by our Program Manager. However the Apsara authority would not allow it. Kimyee's mother applied twice.

Chenda advocated for this family, talking with the village leader, the commune leader, and the local council for women and children seeking assistance with the application. It was a very long process and Chenda worked with the local councils to prove the family really needed a new house. Finally, the authority only approved a house repair. That has now been done so Kimyee, her brother and her mother now have safe, adequate shelter. Kimyee just graduated grade 12, and is applying for vocational training.

COMPLETING GRADE 9



Number of grade 9 students who took the exam: **38**

Number that passed the exam and completed grade 9: **25**

Free To Shine pass rate: **65.78%**

National pass rate: **94.78%⁴**

COMPLETING GRADE 12



Number of grade 12 students who took the exam: **43**

Number that passed the exam and graduated grade 12: **38**

Free To Shine pass rate: **88.37%**

National pass rate: **72.89%⁵**

Although the pass rate for grade 12 students was significantly higher than the national average, the pass rate for grade 9 was significantly lower. This can be explained by the high support needs of some of the girls that we are working with, for example higher risk of violence at home, high levels of poverty and a lack of parental support for education. Free To Shine works with the most at risk young women and as such their results can be lower than the national average even with significant wraparound support.



PROGRAM STRATEGY GOAL 3

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



Teach and model **gender equity**.

Conduct **leadership training**, providing mentorship and project management skills development to emerging leaders.

Invest in university education to develop the next generation of Cambodian women leaders.

PURPOSE

Free To Shine models gender equity and invests in the next generation of Cambodian women leaders by providing leadership training to emerging leaders, and funding university places.

GENDER EQUITY

Women are underrepresented in leadership positions and in politics worldwide.

Only 7% of village leaders, and 5% of school directors that Free To Shine work with are female. We model gender equity and invest in the next generation of women leaders by providing leadership training to emerging leaders, and funding university places.

During this reporting period, one Emerging Leaders workshop was conducted in October 2022, entitled “Foundation Skills of Leadership” to 11 Emerging Leaders and one gender equity workshop was conducted to the Free To Shine team in December 2022. In addition, the Women

in Leadership Officer developed workshops and training materials and consulted with external agencies to deliver future training activities.

Due to a restrictive budget, and the Women in Leadership Officer leaving her position midway through the reporting period, the Gender Equity and Leadership Training activities were paused in January 2023. We were able to continue in our commitment to those young women who had already begun funded university places

We work towards 50% of leadership positions, across all sectors, being held by women. To achieve this our strategy includes investing in university education to develop the next generation of Cambodian women leaders. Free To Shine continued to invest in university education for Cambodian women, and during the reporting period funded university places for five university students, including two studying a Law degree, two a Management degree and one studying Khmer Literature. While Free To Shine funds their university tuition fees, the students work full time to fund their own living expenses including rent and food. In return for receiving a funded university place these young women each contribute 100 hours per year of community service, in which they choose activities that will help develop their communities. A total of 550 community service hours were completed by university students during the reporting period.

MEET SAVORN*

YEAR 3 | MAJORING IN MANAGEMENT

Savorn was enrolled into our program in 2016, when she was in grade 9. She lived with her mother, and three siblings. Her father had passed away six years previously from cancer. Due to the loss of the father who was the main source of income, Savorn's family was really struggling financially. Both her older siblings discontinued school before grade 9.

Through every bit of her commitment and perseverance, Savorn completed high school in 2019 and was successful in gaining one of our few funded university places.

Her family circumstances are getting better; Savorn has a job as a housekeeper in a boutique hotel, her oldest sister is married, and her older brother and younger sister work in construction. They all support each other.

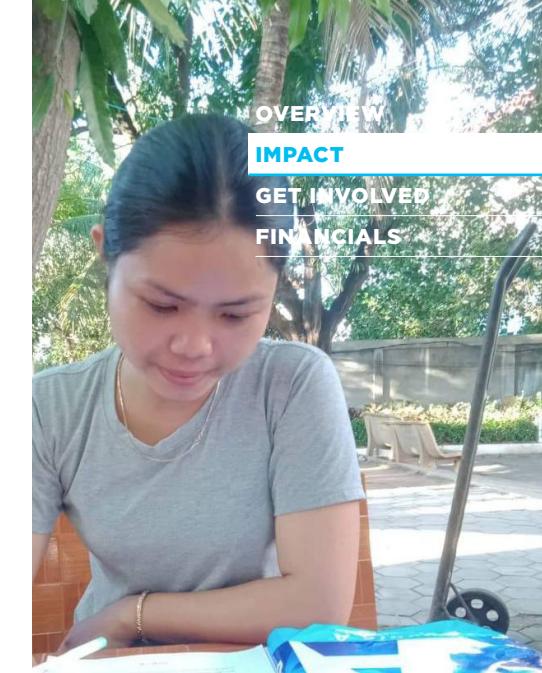
Savorn is more confident, responsible, and ambitious. "Throughout university life, I've gained plenty of knowledge and experiences. I learned how to work on goal setting, time management and financial management. I found myself becoming more efficient and productive in my daily activity. I have become a better person, I know who I am, and what I want to become and be."

Savorn is a good role model for the younger generation, displaying the characteristics and attributes of a great leader. She has shared her academic life to many other young women to inspire them to be motivated and fight hard to achieve their dreams. She wanted them to understand that taking challenges and risks will help them reach opportunities and solutions along the way.

She has participated in a variety of community service including teaching Math and Khmer to young children, assisting organisations in house-building, and helping to facilitate community training workshops on safe migration, identifying and responding to abuse, and alcohol and drugs awareness. She believes a community will only develop when people are being positive and start to take initiative.

"At first I was nervous and hesitant to start teaching the class, but by the time I started doing it, I felt confident and joyful. The children were also having lots of fun and they improved their calculations and Khmer writing."

- SAVORN*



On the current trajectory, it will take

131 YEARS

to close the gender gap⁶

- Global Gender Gap Report 2023

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Why is it important?

- For the safety of beneficiaries and team members – employees need to be competent in what they are doing and this is ever evolving. Some training needs to be annual because it is paramount that team members' knowledge is current for safety reasons.
- When gaps in knowledge or skills are identified, these need to be addressed.
- There is always new research, theories, and practice about which we should be informed, to ensure our interventions, procedures and policies remain best practice.
- To keep employees interested and motivated.
- To support career and personal development.

INTERNAL TRAINING

In the reporting period a wide range of internal training was delivered to the team which included the following specialist topics:

- Gender Equity - Gender Based Violence (delivered in July 2022).
- Child Protection Annual update + case studies (delivered in August 2022).
- NSSF about Retirement Fund (delivered in November 2022).
- Girls of Phnom Penh - Youtube video and discussion (delivered in November 2022).
- Gender Equity - Fostering healthy relationships (delivered in December 2022).
- Communication Skills and Conversations for Change (delivered in December 2022).
- Genograms and Counselling Tools (delivered in December 2022).
- Disrupting Harm Report and Cambodia data (delivered in January 2023).
- Crisis Response/Crisis Intervention (delivered in February 2023).

EXTERNAL TRAINING

In May 2023, financial partners through GoPhilanthropic Foundation's Capacity Building grant funded the travel expenses for Soriya, our Administration and Finance Officer to attend training with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC) titled "Strengthening the implementation of the law on Accounting and Auditing" in Phnom Penh. Approximately 300 participants including senior officials from MFAIC, line ministries, heads and representatives of foreign NGOs attended the consultative meeting. The main objective of the consultative meeting was to raise awareness on the obligations of associations and NGOs under the law on Accounting and Auditing which include: accounting obligation, reparation of financial statement in accordance with Cambodia's accounting standard; submission of financial statements for independent audits in order to ensure accountability, transparency and efficiency of foreign NGOs.

Additional external training provided to the team during the reporting period included:

- Sexual Harmful Behavior by First Step Cambodia (delivered August 2022).
- Fueling Your NGO by SE-Asia Foundation (delivered January 2023).
- Inclusive Child Protection by First Step Cambodia (delivered June 2023).

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We are incredibly appreciative towards our partners without whom we would not be able to provide critical wraparound services to the girls, families and communities we support.

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Government partners

Government partners during this reporting period included: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia (MFAIC), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSAVY) and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training through the National Social Security Fund (NSSF).



Kingdom of Cambodia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
& International Cooperation



Community partners

Our community partners include Family Care First (FCF), the Partnership Program for the Protection of Children (3PC) and First Step Cambodia. We have also worked in partnership with commune and district leaders and the Commune Council for Women and Children (CCWC).



Financial partners

We work in close collaboration with our financial partners and during the reporting period, received funding from Nature's Organic, GoPhilanthropic Foundation, Hayden Kirkwood Charitable Trust, Matthew Ford, Matt Rogers Books PTY Ltd, SE Asia Foundation, Helen Semler, Philip Aitken, B1G1 Giving, Anne Paterson, Jessica Pillow, Network for Good - Property Events, AVN Inspiring Accountants, Josephine Wolanski, Peter & Jillian Beasley and RJS Accounting Services Pty Ltd. Free To Shine also received pro bono support through PIER Marketing Group during this reporting period.

In December 2022, 19 students and three teachers from Bishop Druitt College participated in our "A Mile In Serey's Shoes" (AMISS) initiative to learn about life in rural Cambodia, the challenges families face daily, and Free To Shine's approach to preventing the exploitation of school-aged girls.



WAYS TO SUPPORT FREE TO SHINE

DONATE

freetoshine.org/donate

FUNDRAISE

freetoshine.org/fundraise

JOIN BUSINESS MATTERS

freetoshine.org/business

WORKPLACE GIVING

freetoshine.org/workplace-giving

AMISS WORKSHOPS

freetoshine.org/amiss

HOW TO SUPPORT US AS AN INDIVIDUAL DONATE

MAKE A **REAL IMPACT** WITH REGULAR GIVING

www.freetoshine.org/donate

Help create a safe community for a child

Join us in working towards a Cambodia where educated girls, free from sex trafficking, are shaping and leading their communities and country. For just \$15 a week, you can provide ongoing safety visits to address complex factors such as poverty, hunger, illness, migration, addiction, violence and more.

Visit our donate page and find out more about how you can contribute to one of these three goals: safe communities for children, educated girls, or women in leadership.



BUSINESS MATTERS

DO WHAT MATTERS IN YOUR BUSINESS

How you lead your business matters. It matters to your team, your results, and your impact on the world.

When you become a Business Matters member you'll also be helping to secure the safety and education of girls who are at-risk of being trafficked into the commercial sex industry in Cambodia. No matter which membership level you choose you'll receive a quality training video and accompanying poster every quarter - which will help you become a better leader, get better results and make a bigger impact!

THE BENEFITS

- ✓ You will align your business with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals
- ✓ You will gain a competitive advantage because doing good is good for business
- ✓ You will attract more clients
- ✓ You will drive higher profits
- ✓ You will motivate and engage your team
- ✓ You will become a better leader
- ✓ And you will help solve world problems!

Business can and should be used as a force for good.

Sign up or attend our webinar by registering at freetoshine.org/business or email us at businessmatters@freetoshine.org for more information.

www.freetoshine.org/business

VISIONARY

\$350 AUD PER WEEK



CORNERSTONE

\$75 AUD PER WEEK



LEVEL UP

\$20 AUD PER WEEK



This membership provides bikes, leadership training to emerging leaders, Community Training on preventing exploitation and abuse, and intensive social work interventions to those in crisis.

This membership provides safety visits to the girl's home and school, access to safe drinking water, a vegetable garden, and additional curriculum classes.

This membership provides school uniforms, backpacks, exercise books, pencil cases filled with pens, pencils, rulers etc, and library books.

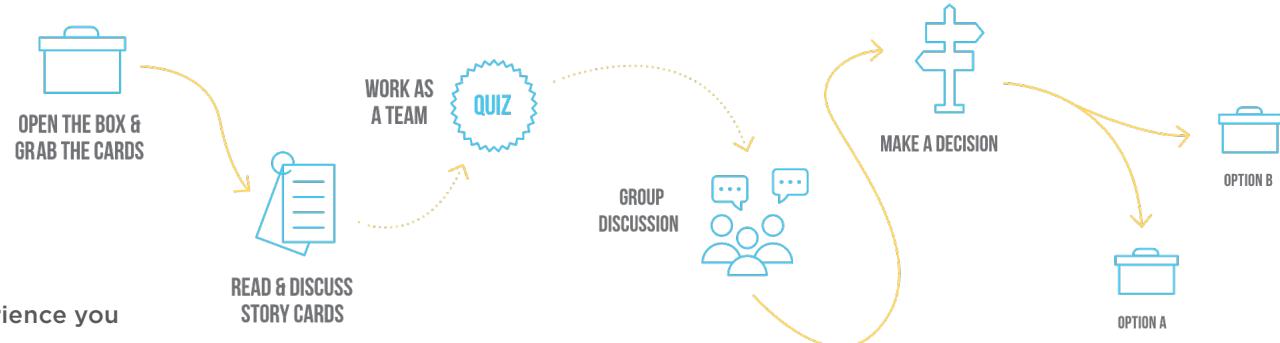
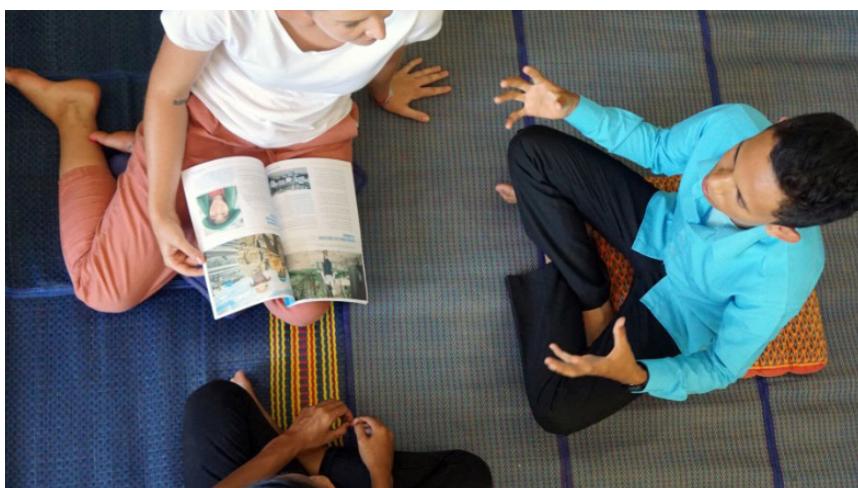
A MILE IN SEREY'S SHOES

A CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE STYLE INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

Walk a mile in Serey's shoes. During this interactive experience you will be dropped into the shoes of Serey, a Cambodian mother. Your mission, should you choose to accept, is to keep your children safe no matter what life throws at you. The challenges come in thick and fast. The stakes are high, and the pressure is on.

You will learn about life in rural Cambodia, the challenges families face daily, and Free To Shine's approach to preventing the exploitation of school-aged girls.

Email amiss@freetoshine.org for more information.



THE DETAILS



Duration: The experience runs for four hours



Location: Shine Central, Free To Shine Office in Siem Reap



Suggested donation: \$55 USD per person



WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

You'll learn about common challenges faced by rural Cambodian families and be asked to make difficult decisions on topics including traditional vs. modern medicine, microfinance loans and debt, child labour, orphanages, migration, food scarcity and more. The Free To Shine team will provide information and facilitate critical discussion about life in rural Cambodia and Free To Shine's approach to preventing the exploitation of school-aged girls.

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR FINANCIALS

Overall revenue increased from \$407,836 AUD in the 2022 financial year to \$447,527 AUD in 2023, which was a larger increase than anticipated in the previous annual report. This was as a result of Free To Shine anticipating that COVID-19 would have a more detrimental impact on revenue for a longer period than it did, the commencement in 2023 of Network for Good - Property Events fundraising initiatives and larger than anticipated grant revenue during the period.

Grants revenue grew from \$24,242 AUD in 2022 to \$81,616 AUD in 2023, with grants received from GoPhilanthropic Foundation which funded one Social Worker, two Education Officers, one Communications Assistant and Capacity & Development; Natures Organics to fund an Education Officer and Program Officer; Hayden Kirkwood Charitable Trust to fund bikes and school uniforms; Matthew Ford to fund an Education Officer; Matt Rogers Books PTY Ltd to fund one Communications Assistant and an Education Officer; SE Asia Foundation to fund equipment for the office; Helen Semler to partially fund our Program Officer; Philip Aitken to partially fund our Program Officer and B1G1 Giving. Additional revenue came from: Anne Paterson, Jessica Pillow, AVN Inspiring Accountants, Josephine Wolanski, Peter & Jillian Beasley and RJS Accounting Services

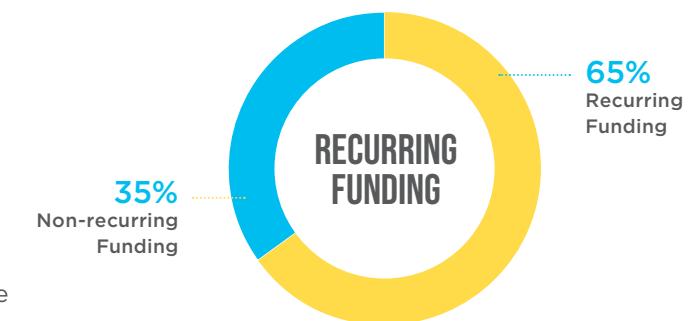


Pty Ltd. Free To Shine also received Pro Bono support from PIER Marketing to drive engagement among supporters. Business revenue also grew from \$135,478 AUD in 2022 to \$197,133 in 2023 and AMISS revenue from \$0 AUD in 2022 to \$3,449 AUD in 2023. There was a decline in revenue from events and donations (from \$166,980 AUD in 2022 to \$95,662 AUD in 2023), and in sponsors (from \$80,022 AUD in 2022 to \$67,394 AUD in 2023).

Overall expenses declined over this period from \$432,964 AUD in 2022 to \$331,396 AUD in 2023. There were reductions in expenses for the Safe Communities, Educated Girls, Women in Leadership, Operations and Fundraising categories, with one of the largest declines seen in expenses related to fundraising which went from \$130,990 in 2022 to \$63,631 in 2023. This was as a result of the Free To Shine Partnerships Officer (who was then based in Australia) leaving the organisation.

The proportion of revenue that was restricted increased from 34.8% in 2022 to 56.2% in 2023, which means that funding was tied to specific activities or outputs. Whilst the increase in revenue is welcomed with open arms, as a nonprofit organisation working to the needs of highly vulnerable girls in Cambodia, the growth in restricted funding as a proportion of overall revenue

also presents challenges including extending certain programs but an inability to fund other operations creating disruptions and reductions, and often times an increase in reporting and inflexibility when it comes to serving the needs of clients who at times require emergency support. Organisations like Free To Shine are required to invest in operations and administration costs to ensure fiscal responsibility, staff are complying with relevant policies and procedures, and critical partnership agreements with Government are developed and implemented to high standards so Free To Shine can continue supporting vulnerable school-aged girls in Cambodia. During this reporting period, the proportion of recurring funding declined from 78% to 65%, which creates instability for the organisation in terms of decision-making for the next year regarding staffing, programs and support to clients, and hinders long term planning.

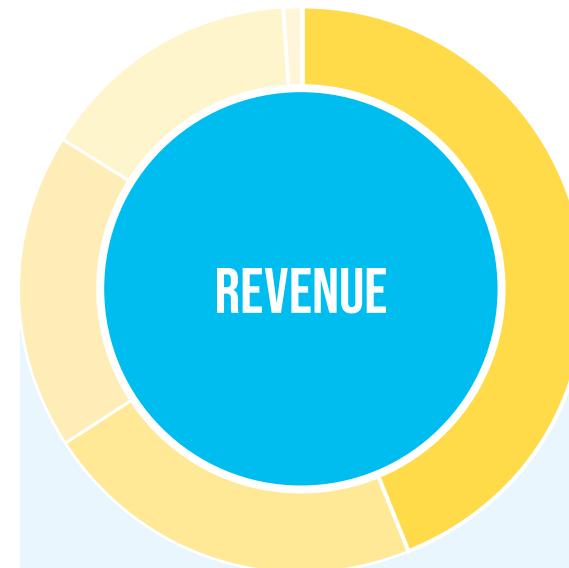


ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

We deeply value the trust you place in Free To Shine when you invest in our programs. We are a registered Australian charity, endorsed by the Australian Tax Office, ACN 143 986 074 and are registered on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, which is the national regulator of charities. We are formally registered in both Australia and Cambodia and have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. We are governed by a Board of Directors, and all of our financials are independently audited by a registered company auditor. When you invest in Free To Shine you can be sure your investment is used effectively and efficiently.

FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

This financial report pertains to both the Australian and Cambodian offices of Free To Shine. All financial figures are in Australian Dollars.



44%	BUSINESSES
22%	EVENTS & DONATIONS
18%	FOUNDATIONS
15%	INDIVIDUALS
1%	INTEREST



\$122,946	SAFE COMMUNITIES
\$66,918	EDUCATED GIRLS
\$63,631	FUNDRAISING
\$49,431	OPERATIONS
\$28,470	WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the years ended 30 June 2023 and 2022



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REVENUE

	2023	2022
	\$ AUD	\$ AUD
Events & Donations (see note)	95,662	166,980
Sponsors	67,394	80,022
Grants	81,616	24,242
Interest	1,652	1,113
AMISS	3,449	0
Other Income	622	0
Businesses	197,133	135,478
Total revenue	447,527	407,836

EXPENSES

Safe Communities

Safety Visits	63,907	72,881
Social Work Interventions	48,084	54,659
Community Training	10,955	9,995
	122,946	137,535

Educated Girls

Education Materials	27,960	22,222
Curriculum Classes	24,705	20,371
Water, Food & Houses	14,254	27,883
	66,918	70,475

EXPENSES (continued)

	2023	2022
	\$ AUD	\$ AUD
Women in Leadership		
Teaching & Modelling Gender Equity	0	7,426
Emerging Leaders	12,622	13,799
University Degrees	15,848	14,753
	28,470	32,345
Operations		
	49,431	61,619
Fundraising		
	63,631	130,990
Total Expenses	331,396	432,964
Revenue less expenses	116,132	(25,129)
Net Assets at End of the Year	344,035	227,903

NOTE. At a time when sourcing the necessary funds was so incredibly difficult, we were given restricted funding from a donor to trial a donor-acquisition position in the hope that this would yield the results we'd need to help us achieve financial sustainability. We're massively appreciative to this donor for enabling us to take this risk. Unfortunately, it did not yield the results we were hoping for. (2022)

SOURCES

- 1 'Training Manual to Fight Trafficking in Children for Labour, Sexual and Other Forms of Exploitation', International Labour Office, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Geneva: ILO, 2009, 4 v., www.unicef.org/protection/Textbook_2.pdf, (accessed 8 October 2021)
- 2 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Cambodia - United States Department of State, Cambodia - United States Department of State
- 3 ibid
- 4 The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, quoted in "Over 94% of lower secondary students pass diploma exams", Torn Vibol / Khmer Times, November 3, 2023
- 5 The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, quoted in "Cambodia Witnesses Record Pass Rates in BAC II Exams, Boosting Government's Pursuit of Academic Excellence", The Better Cambodia, Surya Narayan, November 24, 2023
- 6 Global Gender Gap Report 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2023/>

THANK YOU

អារក្សលាងប្រើន

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful people who have supported Free To Shine this year. Whether you contributed as a volunteer, donor, sponsor, or attended an event benefiting Free To Shine, we appreciate your support. With your help, we have kept over 750 girls safe and in school over the last twelve years!

Thank you to our volunteers, who have contributed over 1200 hours this fiscal year.

MAJOR SUPPORTERS



MATT ROGERS



HAYDON
KIRKWOOD
CHARITABLE
TRUST

MATTHEW
FORD

HELEN
SEMLER



PRO BONO SUPPORT

Thank you to these companies for providing pro bono professional services.



K&L GATES

PIER.



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