free to shine

QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

Supporting Safety, Wellbeing and Access to Education

During the quarter, Free To Shine continued to work alongside girls and their families across our target communities to support safety, wellbeing and access to education. A key achievement was that 13 girls supported through the program passed Cambodia's Grade 12 National Examination, completing secondary education and expanding their options for further study, vocational training and employment.

Free To Shine provided school supplies to all girls in the program who are attending school, helping them prepare for the new academic year. Each girl and family also received regular safety visits or social work interventions, as well as menstrual health education and access to reusable products. Additionally, 24 new girls were enrolled in support services.

Goal of the quarter

EDUCATED GIRLS

Names of all girls in this report have been changed to protect their privacy.



What is an 'exit to safety'?
An exit to safety is a planned transition out of the program when a girl and her family are no longer at risk of trafficking. The family has the knowledge, support, and stability to keep her safe independently.

THE NUMBERS THIS QUARTER

251	144	24	4	20	135	13	22
Safety Visits	Social Work Interventions	New Girls Enrolled	Exits to Safety (see note)	Bikes Delivered	School Supplies & Uniforms Provided	Students Who Passed the Grade 12 National Exam	Students Who Passed the Grade 9 National Exam

IMPACT THIS QUARTER

01	Supporting Girls' Menstrual Health and Wellbeing
02	Girls' Experience with Menstrual Health Support
03	Celebrating Grade 12 Graduates
04	Leakhena's Journey to Graduation

Free To Shine is a child protection organisation that prevents the sex trafficking and exploitation of school-aged girls in Cambodia. We strengthen community and family systems to prioritise children's safety and education.

01 SUPPORTING GIRLS' MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

For many families in Free To Shine's target communities who already face severe financial strain, the added cost of menstrual products and hygiene supplies is often out of reach. Stigma and limited access to reliable information further make it difficult for girls to ask questions or manage menstruation safely and confidently.

These barriers directly impact girls' comfort, confidence, and school attendance. Free To Shine addresses these challenges through social work support, age-appropriate health education, and practical assistance that enables girls to manage their health safely and make informed decisions about their wellbeing.

During the quarter, Free To Shine partnered with Cambodia Rural Student Trust's (CRST) Project G – Empowering Girls initiative to strengthen menstrual health support.

Project G representatives facilitated a learning session for our team on reproductive health, personal hygiene and menstrual care. The session strengthened our team's knowledge and their ability to have sensitive, age-appropriate conversations. It also provided practical guidance on the use, cleaning and care of reusable menstrual health kits.

Following the session, Free To Shine purchased reusable menstrual health kits from CRST's Project G and distributed them to girls across our target communities.

What's in each kit	Qty
Reusable pads	8
Snap-on holders	2
Pairs of underwear	2
Soap	1
Towel	1
Carry pouch	1
Drawstring bag	1
Cycle-tracking card	1

This practical assistance was provided alongside psychosocial support from social workers, including age-appropriate information about menstruation and personal hygiene, and a safe, supportive opportunity for girls to ask questions and discuss any concerns.



“The girls were very happy to receive the menstrual health kits. At first, the reusable pads were unfamiliar because they had not seen products like them before. I was especially pleased to hear that they are now using them, washing them after use, and keeping them in hygienic condition.”

– Phary, Free To Shine Social Worker

02 GIRLS’ EXPERIENCE WITH MENSTRUAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Dina*, 12, is in Grade 7 and began menstruating earlier this year. Each month, the cost of disposable menstrual pads was an added pressure for her family.

Through Free To Shine, Dina received a reusable menstrual health kit and spoke with her social worker about menstruation, hygiene, and how to use and care for the pads. At first, Dina was curious about the fabric pads and how they could be washed and reused. With practical information and reassurance, she felt more confident using the kit.

During a later visit, Dina shared:

“I am very happy because the pads are easy to use and comfortable on my skin. They feel similar to disposable pads from the market, and they are easy to wash after use.”





03 CELEBRATING GRADE 12 GRADUATES

This quarter, 13 girls passed Cambodia's Grade 12 National Examination, completing their secondary education. For girls who may experience financial hardship, safety concerns or other barriers to education, reaching this milestone represents significant persistence, support from families and sustained engagement with school.

Many of the graduates have participated in Free To Shine's program since primary school. Over time, girls and their families have worked with social workers to address barriers to education, strengthen wellbeing and safety, and sustain continued school attendance.

Completion of Grade 12 can broaden a girl's choices, including access to higher education, vocational training and employment.

> "I am very happy and proud to have passed the Grade 12 National Examination. This achievement has made my family proud and brought them great happiness. I would like to thank Free To Shine for supporting me throughout my journey. Through their support, I have grown as a person, becoming more positive in my thinking and more responsible.
>
> I would like to encourage girls who are still studying to work hard and do their best to complete Grade 12. If you have the opportunity, continue your education at university, because education and knowledge are important for building a better future."
>
> – Grade 12 graduate

04 LEAKHENA'S* JOURNEY TO GRADUATION

At 19, Leakhena* has reached an important milestone – completing Grade 12 and passing her National Examination. Leakhena has been part of Free To Shine's program since primary school. She began school later than many children, but remained committed to her education throughout.

Over the years, she and her family have worked with our social workers, receiving encouragement, practical support and resources to help her remain in school and pursue her goals.

When financial pressures placed her education at risk, Leakhena, her family and her social worker worked together to identify practical support and options that would help her stay in school. Her mother also remained a strong source of encouragement, wanting Leakhena to have the opportunity to complete school.

In her final year, Leakhena remained focused on her goal. She attended school regularly, participated in additional curriculum classes where possible and prepared for the Grade 12 National Examination. She sat the examination in August and received confirmation the following month that she had passed.

Her achievement reflects her determination, her family's encouragement, and the support she received along the way. With Grade 12 completed, Leakhena can now look ahead to new opportunities and pursue her dream of becoming a teacher as she continues to shape her future.

Your support enables Free To Shine to keep girls safe, healthy and in school – from practical menstrual health support to the encouragement that helps girls like Leakhena complete Grade 12 and pursue their goals.

Through these efforts, Free To Shine reaffirms its commitment to creating a safer, more educated, and empowered community for all.

If you would like to contribute towards this work you can do so here: **www.freetoshine.org/donate**

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