This Impact Report focuses on our collaboration with Children’s Future to deliver our Future Goals Project to communities outside our own geographical reach.
In rural communities around Cambodia, girls are often conditioned to believe that their options for their future are limited to marriage or the main jobs they are exposed to — teaching, construction, or selling in the market. Without strong goals in place, many will discontinue their education before grade nine to enter the labour force, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

When we ask the younger girls on our program what their dream job would be, the majority of them answer that they want to be teachers, often simply because teachers are the most successful adult women they see in their everyday lives. One of our core goals is to increase the number of women in leadership positions across Cambodia, and that starts with girls. We envision a generation of educated girls, free from sex trafficking, leading and shaping their communities and country. Making this vision a reality means supporting girls to dream big, break down social barriers, and equip them with the leadership skills they need to advocate for themselves at home, school, and beyond.

In 2017, with financial support from GoPhilanthropic, we designed, built and ran the Future Goals Project. The goal was to interview successful Cambodian women in different jobs and then share these stories to help the girls on our program develop their own career goals. We created a documentary film series where we interviewed twelve Cambodian women about their professions, and then shared the film through a series of workshops. The documentary series opened the eyes of the girls on our program to the possibilities available to them across all sectors, including in traditionally male-dominated fields like the police or tuk tuk drivers. By teaching girls to identify their own talents and giving them the tools to set personal and professional goals, they increased in confidence, celebrated their unique strengths and made informed decisions about their future.

Community is a core value at Free To Shine and partnerships are central to our work. We collaborate through professional skills exchanges, external trainings, and sharing of resources. Although each of our partnerships is unique, they’re essential to help us build on our strengths, develop, and stay up to date on child protection best practice.
Children’s Future is one such partner, whom we work really well with sharing resources and expertise. They provide over 250 marginalised children in Battambang with cutting edge social work and educational services, so that they can grow to be the country’s next generation of leaders. They are professional, and committed to keeping families together. They had read about our Future Goals Project and proposed collaborating with Free To Shine to bring it to their own beneficiaries. They contracted us to train their staff in our Future Goals Project and how best to deliver it to the communities they work with. Some of our team made the 3-and-a-half hour drive to Battambang where they were met and hosted by an enthusiastic and friendly Children’s Future team.

This quarter, Children’s Future delivered our Future Goals documentary and workshop to 36 girls and young women between the ages of 11 and 20. The students watched the documentary, participated in a variety of activities, and each developed their own personal career plan. Their career plans were wide ranging — from police officers, artists, and engineers, to farmers, teachers, and a Taekwondo teacher. Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the workshop; given a happy face and a neutral face, 23 out of 25 answered with a happy face to the question: “Did the workshop help you set your goal?” and most of the participants shared detailed answers as to how they planned to achieve their goal.

Like Children’s Future, we believe that each student has the potential to overcome the challenges they face. Helping girls to fully realise their power and take steps to achieve their dreams is a crucial step to creating a more equitable and just society. We are pleased Children’s Future approached us to deliver this program to girls and young women we otherwise wouldn’t have been able to reach. By working together, this knowledge and inspiration has reached a wider audience. We’re proud to see our Future Goals Project expanding, and look forward to the results Children’s Future will achieve when they deliver the workshops in public schools in their area.

**THANK YOU**

Thank you to Children’s Future for being a great organisation to partner with, and for sharing their data and photos with us for this report.