

APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30 2018

QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

Our Quarterly Impact Report provides details and statistics of beneficiaries and their families for the quarter period.

TOTAL NUMBERS



743

GIRLS ENROLLED



52

VILLAGE PARTNERSHIPS



19

HOUSES BUILT



125

COMMUNITY CLASSES TAUGHT



601

WATER FILTERS DELIVERED



690

BIKES DELIVERED

THE NUMBERS

THIS QUARTER



4

GIRLS ENROLLED



2

VILLAGE PARTNERSHIPS



3

HOUSES BUILT



9

COMMUNITY CLASSES TAUGHT



37

WATER FILTERS DELIVERED



42

BIKES DELIVERED

Free To Shine's frontline team is made up of three groups, each comprised of one Social Worker and four Education Officers. Each group is responsible for a caseload of nearly 200 girls and their families.

For this Quarterly Impact Report, each group has chosen one family to highlight and celebrate the IMPACT Free To Shine has had on them and their community.

Free To Shine would like to thank each and every supporter for making these positive outcomes possible and we hope you enjoy reading the following three case studies.





CASE STUDY #1

We met Sophy* when she was 15 years old and studying in grade 8. She approached one of our Education Officers and asked for our help, telling us that her family was poor but she was determined to stay in school. She said her goal was to graduate from high school and get a good job to support her family. We conducted a full assessment of Sophy's access to education, family life and overall wellbeing and accepted her onto our program in 2013.

Debt and Financial Planning:

At the time of enrolment, Sophy's father worked in a brick factory earning \$3.75 per day, but the work was irregular. Sometimes he earned enough money to cover the family's basic living expenses, but not consistently. Sophy's mother stayed home to take care of the children.

Before we met Sophy, her father got very sick and was unable to work for a period of time. This was a major blow to the family's financial situation and they were forced to take out a loan to cover his medical bills. They then took out a second loan to rent some land and grow crops, but unfortunately the land flooded and they lost the investment. They ended up having to take out a third loan to pay their rent and cover their living expenses, further compounding their debt.

Sophy worked during all of her school holidays and after school to supplement her parents' income.

Over the years, our Education Officers have worked to educate Sophy's parents about the importance of saving money and planning to pay off their loans.

Now, Sophy's father has found more consistent, higher paying work and has been able to save enough to pay off all the loans they previously had!

*All names have been changed for confidentiality reasons



Agriculture and Nutrition:

Free To Shine provided Sophy and her family with ten types of vegetable seeds and assistance in setting up a garden. Now, we continue to provide seeds on a monthly basis to Sophy's mother who has established a successful garden full of fresh produce, yielding enough to feed the family and sell extra at the local market. Our Education Officers suggested that she raise some animals and use their produce scraps to feed them in order to earn extra income. Now the family has several chickens and a baby cow!

The family's health has improved significantly over the years. They used to eat mainly rice and meat, but now they enjoy a variety of fruits and vegetables high in the vitamins and nutrients they need. They are very proud of their garden and the fact that they do not use any chemicals; they excitedly shared with our Education Officers that their produce is cleaner and higher quality than what you can find at the market!

Shelter:

At the time of our initial assessment, Sophy lived with her parents and two younger siblings in an old house made of palm leaves and bamboo. The house had many holes in the roof and siding, causing it to leak and flood during the rainy season.

In 2016, Free To Shine partnered with another NGO to build Sophy's family a new, more secure and livable home. The family's old home was very messy and cleanliness was not a priority, but after receiving the house donation their mentality shifted dramatically; they went from having one of the messiest houses on our program to one of the cleanest and most organised. They are proud of their new home and it shows each time they welcome us inside.





Hygiene & Sanitation:

When we met Sophie's family they did not have a toilet and struggled with poor hygiene, which negatively impacted their health. The lack of a toilet was a safety concern for us as well, because Sophie often had to go outside at night to find a field or place to use in lieu of a toilet. They also lacked access to safe drinking water.

Upon being welcomed onto the program the family was provided with a water filter to improve their health and hygiene. Our Education Officers had countless discussions on personal hygiene and the importance of proper hand washing, which was especially important when they did not have a toilet.

More recently, with their improved financial situation, the family was able to save enough money to purchase a toilet for their new home. This purchase has drastically improved their hygiene and quality of life, and provides a much safer alternative to the children going into fields at night.

Education & Leadership:

Before we enrolled Sophie, her family could not afford to buy a bicycle for her to get to and from school, so she walked 7km each way, every single day. Her parents told us that sometimes they could not afford to send Sophie to school in the afternoon and she would cry. Her parents did their best to support Sophie's education, but other needs were often prioritised.

Now, five years later, Sophie is thriving in grade 12. Close to achieving her original goal of completing high school, she has now set her sights on a university education.

"My name is Sophie. I am studying in grade 12 of high school. My favorite subject is History, Geography but I'm poor with Math and Physics. In order to get better I will try to listen to the teacher and self-study at home or attend extra classes. My strength is that I believe in myself, go to school regularly and have never failed a class. Next year, after graduating I have plans to study law at the university!"

Sophy dreams of becoming a Police Officer in the future. She told our team that she is interested in this career path for several reasons:

- First, she wants to help support her parents and take care of them.
- Second, she wants to protect her commune. She told our Education Officers that she has witnessed incidents of drug abuse and family violence in her village and this made her want to help keep the community safe.
- Finally, Sophy said she wanted to become a Police Officer because she will look “very professional and strong” in the uniform!

Our Education Officers have witnessed Sophy gain more confidence and leadership skills over the past five years. They say she is very mature for her age, always thinking about how she can help her family, friends and wider community. Everyone in her village looks up to her and the younger Free To Shine girls tell us that Sophy encourages them to study hard and to never give up.

Sophy said if she passes her grade 12 exam she wants everyone from Free To Shine to visit her home and celebrate with her. She plans to apply for a university scholarship from Free To Shine so that she can continue her studies and pursue her dream.

Sophy’s father: “I am really thankful to Free To Shine and [the Education Officers] who come to visit my daughter every month until now, and provide us with much needed seeds and water filters. I am so proud that with all of your support my daughter is now in grade 12 and she will have the state exam in the next 2 months. I hope that Free To Shine can keep supporting her and help her to achieve her goals.”





CASE STUDY #2

Before:

Free To Shine began working with Sinoun* and her family six years ago. At the time of our initial assessment, the majority of her nine siblings were not in school and her father was drinking in excess every day. The family was also living in extreme poverty. The father was a farmer and his income varied depending on the season, typically only earning between \$25 and \$50 per harvest. The mother stayed home with the children and did not earn any income. The family's financial situation could not support or feed their large family, and the income they did earn often went toward alcohol. The family struggled to afford to send their children to school and the majority of Sinoun's older siblings had dropped out to marry or migrated abroad in search of low skilled work. Sinoun's mother and father never attended school, so it was difficult for them to view education as a priority and they allowed their children to miss classes regularly or drop out completely.

The most disruptive issue in the home was the father's alcoholism. He would drink nearly every day with other villagers, spending the majority of the family's money and often skipping work. Sinoun would get extremely upset when her father came back drunk, and sometimes he would verbally taunt and abuse his wife and children. This led to Sinoun and her siblings feeling unsafe, acting withdrawn and ultimately disconnecting from school.

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After:

Free To Shine Social Workers dedicated countless visits to speaking with Sinoun's father about his drinking and the toll it was taking on his family. They shared stories, concerns, praise when applicable, and over time earned his trust. The behavioural changes were slow but after six months, Sinoun's father showed commitment to recovery. Now, six years later, he is still sober and has been able to maintain full-time, higher paying employment.

“Some men in the village when they drink or become violent, most of them never change because it's so hard. I am so proud of him for becoming a better person” - Sinoun's Mother

“I never thought my father could change so much for the better” - Sinoun

The second important plan Free To Shine had for the family was to get as many of the ten children back into school as possible. There were many conversations with the parents about the importance of education, development and income potential. The mother and father knew how difficult it was for them to earn money and did not want their children to face the same challenges. After several visits and long conversations, Sinoun's parents started to develop a commitment to their children's education. Within weeks, the five siblings who were eligible to re-enroll were all back in school and supported with materials and tuition support. The children were excited to be learning, safe and supported.

Although there are many more challenges, successes and complexities to this story, the team wanted to highlight the case for two reasons: 1) they are extremely proud of the father for taking their advice and changing his disruptive behaviour, and; 2) Sinoun and her four eligible siblings are now doing extremely well in school and it's difficult to think back to a time when they weren't so committed to education.





CASE STUDY #3

In 2015 Ry* and her family were referred to our program because the family could not afford to send their daughter to school, had significant loans they could not pay back, and had past incidents of family violence. Neither Ry's mother nor father attended school when they were young, and instead began working at a young age. They have since continued to work difficult jobs for very little pay.

During the initial assessment, Ry told our team, "I really love school and studying and I promise to finish all of my schooling if Free To Shine accepts me to their program. I really need to be in school and my parents cannot pay." Even from the initial assessment, our team could tell that Ry was a very intelligent, determined and hardworking girl and we were so happy to accept her to our program and provide the assistance needed to keep her in school and safe.

Since 2015, the Free To Shine team and Ry's family have become extremely close and we are so thankful for the family's trust and willingness to change for the betterment of Ry and her younger sister.

Family Violence:

Ensuring Ry's safety was our number one priority, so the first meeting Free To Shine had with her family was to address their history of family violence. Ry's father had been violent toward her mother in the past and Free To Shine was committed to addressing this so it would never happen again. Our Education Officers and Social Workers would sit with each family member and talk to them about safety, respect and that family members should never be violent toward one another. Behavioural changes often take a long time to set in, but fortunately in this case, Ry's father and the Free To Shine team connected very well and he almost immediately showed positive behavioural changes. We are so happy that the family has stabilised and there have been no violent incidents since these interventions.

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Financial Planning:

Before Free To Shine's involvement, the family's financial situation was alarming. They had borrowed large amounts of money and the compounding interest rates were beyond what the parents could begin to comprehend, let alone repay.

Ry was a hardworking and successful student, so a large portion of her mentorship time was dedicated to discussions on financial planning and the importance of saving money. Ry was quick to understand the importance of financial planning and after three years on our program, became the leading example her family needed.

Leading by Example:

The most inspiring and important aspect of this family's story is the growth we have witnessed in Ry over the years. Ry is one of the most hardworking, resilient and resourceful young girls we have had the pleasure of partnering with. According to her Education Officer, "Ry is the strength of her family." After school she is seen running home to help her mother and father. She helps her mother with all of the household chores. In addition, Ry rented every gardening book Free To Shine owns and taught her mother how to grow each of the vegetables we provide. After helping her mother with household chores, she works in the garden with her. Gardening is now her mother's new source of income. Ry is also quick to help her father look after their animals and reads to her younger sister nearly every night.

Last year, her family was \$75 dollars short on a payment for their land and they did not know what to do. According to her mother, Ry calmly told them not to worry and retrieved her life's savings. Ry sells vegetables at the market, raises countless animals to sell and looks after her neighbour's animals for small payments as well. When Ry handed her parents the \$75 they needed for their payment, they were astonished. Ry's strength elevates her entire family and she leads by example at only eleven years old.





Last month during our visit, the Education Officers learned of Ry's most recent entrepreneurial mission: she plans to purchase three piglets that she will raise on her own for 3-4 months. Ry will feed the pigs her leftover vegetable scraps that are usually discarded. Ry has written her entire plan for how to maximise her investment on the pigs and even presented her detailed plan to her Education Officer. We have ensured that her first priority is her education and the pigs will not cause her to miss any schooling. After she promised to not let the pigs interfere, we told her we were so proud of her initiative and excited to see her progress during her next home visit.

Learning about Ry and talking to her now, it is hard to imagine her being so close to dropping out of school just three years ago. She has taken every small opportunity for change and maximised it beyond belief. She has become a role model for her family, helping her parents break the vicious cycle of poverty.

"The young girl we met in 2015 has worked so hard in just three years and every time we visit her we are more amazed and proud of her. She is strong, ambitious and has such a bright future ahead." - Education Officer

"We are very happy and thankful that Free To Shine visits us every month and provides everything for our daughter to stay in school." - Ry's Mother

"Free To Shine created a big change for my family. A very good change for my daughter's future" - Ry's Father

CONCLUSION

These stories are just a few examples of Free To Shine's efforts to strengthen families so that they are willing and able to prioritise the safety and education of their children.

In partnering with 743 families over the years, we have developed a holistic approach that addresses root causes that make people vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. We have learned that children cannot be protected nor educated in isolation; this is why we dedicate so much of our time and effort to working with parents and broader communities, educating them so that they can see the value of education, and in turn create brighter futures for their children.

We are beyond grateful to these families for welcoming us into their homes, accepting our support and advice, and staying committed to their children's education during the most challenging times.

Again, we thank all of our donors and supporters for making this intensive, family-based support possible!

