SHINE CENTRE
Education and Leadership for Girls
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Adolescent girls in poor communities throughout Cambodia are often targeted for the purposes of commercial sex trafficking, labour exploitation, virginity sale, and other forms of exploitation. Violence against females in Cambodia has become a severe human rights violation restricting their freedom.

There is no denying the connection between a girl's educational outcomes and her risk of being trafficked. Most victims of the commercial sex industry have no formal education and only 20% of girls in Cambodia graduate.

There is a deep need for community-based protection and investment in the education and future for adolescent girls in Cambodia.
AusCam Freedom Project

Since 2013 AusCam Freedom Project has been identifying and mitigating risks to ensure young girls are not exploited or trafficked. We have helped thousands of girls unlock their true potential; making a better life not only for themselves but for their families, too. At AusCam Freedom Project, we prevent girls from ever stepping foot into danger. By reducing their vulnerability, mitigating risks, and supporting them to gain tools, skills and confidence, girls are now able to change the world around them. We envision a future where every girl in Cambodia is protected from exploitation.

That means when a girl reaches 15 years old (the legal age to work), her parents don’t calculate her worth in dollars; when a girl is approached by someone offering easy work as a “waitress” for quick cash, her family identifies it as potential for trafficking and protects her; when a girl studies hard in school, she doesn’t have to also worry about where she will find the money to pay the bribes to teachers so she can pass her exams; and when a girl is ready, there is a leadership centre nearby where she can cultivate all of the skills and confidence she will need to make her impact on the world, despite her household income.
The Shine Centre

So here is our plan...

This is a one-of-a-kind centre offering leadership opportunities, training, mentorship, and educational support so girls at risk of being trafficked can access a safe environment, then build the skills and confidence to do remarkable things in Cambodia and globally.

We envision a future where all girls are protected and have the opportunity and freedom to realise their dreams. This begins by building a strong resistance to trafficking and exploitation for every girl.

We plan to look back and see a generation of girls in Cambodia who were not only prevented from being trafficked, but were given the opportunities, choices and freedom to realise their potential.

And it starts here.
**Why Now?**

Girls in Cambodia have always faced barriers to achieving their dreams; barriers like chronic poverty, fractured families, gender based violence, school dropout, and early marriage. The situation compounded with the outbreak of COVID-19; families were devastated and girls became more vulnerable than ever to exploitation. Job losses, food shortages and lack of healthcare left parents to make impossible choices for their daughters and traffickers with easier access to potential victims.

We have spent the last several months providing essential emergency relief to keep girls safe, supported and encouraged. Across Cambodia many girls are dreaming of a better life, which is why we have also committed to identifying and leveraging opportunities that have risen through the emergence of COVID-19, including .

- Family vulnerabilities are more visible / easily identified than they were pre-COVID
- Girls are reaching out on a larger scale
- There is potentially less stigma on poverty/need because the majority of the population is vulnerable right now.
The Response
Freedom Line + Shine Centre

With the shifting environment, we launched the country’s first anti-trafficking crisis hotline dedicated to adolescent girls called The Freedom Line, allowing us to identify more girls at risk than ever before and distribute emergency relief. The Freedom Line, combined with our prevention model, will culminate in a unique centre that will give girls at risk of being trafficked (or re-trafficked) opportunities and access to education while surrounded by an encouraging support network.

In a world free from exploitation and trafficking, who better to lead the prevention efforts and challenge injustice than the girls who have experienced or witnessed it firsthand?
The Research

Over the last 5 years of operating our prevention programs, many challenges arose. There was a lack of space provided by schools to operate our programs, lack of consistency from teachers and directors, and growing absences and barriers for girls to attend. But the most significant threat posed to our impact was (and still is) that of corruption in the public school system. It is not uncommon for teachers to withhold vital information from students and then require them to pay fees for extra classes (bribes) in order to unlock that information that they need; without it girls will most certainly fail their exams.

So in late 2019, committed to protecting vulnerable girls, AusCam Freedom Project underwent a formal independent evaluation to determine our effectiveness of preventing school dropout.
Research Findings

Although the evaluation highlighted that the AFP beneficiaries were considered to be more vulnerable than the general population, in isolation, poverty was not necessarily a strong predictor of school dropout. The evaluation highlighted that the strongest predictor of potential dropout was a girl’s educational outcomes.

This is where we started rethinking and rebuilding.

The critical indicators which lead to poor performance:
1. Lack of motivation
2. Passing exams
3. Time dedicated to homework
4. Grade repetition
5. Absenteeism

The evaluation also found that 75% of beneficiaries were exposed to at least one toxic stressor (“never receiving affection”, “never receiving praise” and “being yelled at as punishment”) in the home. Many of those girls were exposed to three or more toxic stressors, causing immediate risk factors of poor school performance, again increasing their risk of school dropout and trafficking.
Response

It became clear that we needed to shift our focus and invest heavily in educational outcomes for girls in order to prevent school dropout and thus, prevent trafficking and exploitation.

The Shine Centre will be open to girls throughout Phnom Penh, but the first year will be a pilot year where we commit to discovering just how to offer the best quality and efficacy of the programs. In Year 2 (July 2021), we will open the centre publicly, including a tuition-based model to work towards financial sustainability.
### The Focus

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<th>Safety</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Wellbeing</th>
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| **CASE MANAGEMENT**  
*Improving school retention*  
- Identify, assess and enrol at-risk girls  
- Psychological and social support  
- Needs based welfare services  
- The Freedom Line | **EDUCATION**  
*Enhancing academic achievement*  
- Provide school materials  
- Monitor and support academic performance  
- Tutoring & Homework clubs  
- ICT - Digital Literacy | **EMPOWERMENT**  
*Building self-efficacy*  
- Life-skills & personal development Workshops  
- Girls Clubs (Glow Clubs) Peer mentoring and leadership  
- Girls Leadership Council & AusCam Alumni  
- Higher education and vocational skills  
- Career Workshops, job preparedness and placement  
- Career Counselling |
| **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**  
*Creating a protective environment*  
- Community workshops: human trafficking, child protection, early marriage, gender equality / girls education  
- Parental workshops: positive parenting, money management, nutrition, health/hygiene  
- Campaigns: videos for online use to reach more community members |
Increasing Impact

By focussing on quality of practice and programs, which are designed for the girls and by the girls; and utilising metrics to assess our performance, we will be increasing our impact. Every facet of planning will be based upon evidence from our focus groups, evaluation, context and research, which has left our programs with a much clearer theory of change. That planning includes:

- Redesigning risk assessments
- Up-skilling case managers in assessments and interviewing skills (building more positive relationships with family and local community)
- Continuing hotline operations to open up referral pathways and provide girls with a safe and confidential line of support
- Securing a social work technical advisor through Australian Volunteers International (AVI) to develop better systems and case practice guides
- Increasing our capacity to offer high quality tutoring to ensure girls can pass their exams and move to the next grade - ultimately passing grade 12
- Providing a more evidenced based curriculum for our life skills and personal development workshops and girls clubs

Our focus on the quality and impact of our programs to prevent school drop out and increase girls educational outcomes will increase our overall impact of preventing trafficking and exploitation.
Environmentally Conscious

At the Shine Centre, all furniture, supplies and outfittings will be from environmentally-friendly, sustainable and conflict-free sources, to ensure that we are contributing to a safer and more ethical future. The centre will prioritise recycling and be plastic-free.

One key element of the Shine Centre curriculum is the Girls Clubs. These are organised groups of between 15 and 20 girls, which are led by peer mentors. Having completed their modules in the Girls Club, girls will be able to choose a community project to work on, often these projects involve environmental or climate action. This opportunity gives girls with an interest in environmental protection the chance to develop their problem solving skills and address environmental concerns both in Cambodia and globally.
AusCam Freedom Project embraces the ambitious vision of the Sustainable Development Goals to better communicate our organisation’s mission to prevent the trafficking and exploitation of adolescent girls. Specifically, we have identified five SDG’s that express the key priorities addressed by our areas of action.
Year 1
Operating and planning for financial sustainability

Budget
- Capital Expense
- Operational Support
- Program

Support
- Fundraising
- Partnerships
Your invite

This is an invitation to join us as a partner. We call you a partner because of your commitment to seeing real change happen -- investing in girls so they are educated, protected and empowered. Together we will be able to offer each girl a future that looks markedly different from her past.

Why become a partner?

We look forward to honouring each and every partner, donor and girl who is part of our network by writing their names on the Partner Wall at the Shine Centre.

It’s affordable. You choose the amount that fits your budget. Cancel anytime if your financial circumstances change, or you feel that your impact isn’t being met (but we’re confident you won’t want to).

It’s a community. You can join a global group of determined, optimistic supporters who believe every girl should have freedom.

It’s sustainable. Your monthly giving saves our organisation money that we would normally have to spend on fundraising. We can now innovate and build programs in a way that maximises [your] impact.
Ready to partner?

Good. Because we are, too.

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