



Annual Report  
2014-2015

INVESTING IN  
WOMEN LEADING  
THE CHANGE



*Phearong Sdoueng, Rising Star (Cambodia - 3rd from the left), her first mentor Marica Rizzo (2nd from the left) and her family in Kampong Cham*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>WELCOME!</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>GLOBAL COMMUNITY</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>	I. Overview.....	22
I. Key Events & Milestones .....	4	II. Growing the Community .....	22
II. Background.....	5	III. Connecting Wedu’s Global Community Through Digital Media .....	23
III. Achievements.....	7	<b>MEDIA</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>FINANCES</b>	<b>25</b>
I. Overview.....	8	<b>2015 GOALS</b>	<b>26</b>
II. Rising Stars.....	8	I. Committed to Action .....	26
III. The Mentorship Program .....	10	<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>27</b>
IV. Outreach Growth .....	14	I. Wedu history .....	27
<b>INNOVATIVE FINANCING</b>	<b>17</b>		
I. Future Income Sharing Agreements ....	17		
II. Launch of FISAs in Cambodia.....	17		
III. Partnering for Success.....	18		

On the cover: Phearong Sdoueng, Rising Star (Cambodia), one of the two first Rising Stars in Cambodia to receive funding through the Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs).



Wedu Team, Bangkok, Thailand

## WELCOME!

What a year 2014 has been! We had a threefold increase in size, from 26 at the end of 2013 to 96 Rising Stars. We launched the first Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs) in Southeast Asia, an innovative financial product to fund education, which has been welcomed by both students and funders. We are now a proud member of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) and our work is increasingly attracting media attention.

At SOCAP 2014 we explained the big opportunity that FISAs represent for the funding of education worldwide, meeting the interest of changemakers from all over the world.

With CGI we are committed to reaching 1,000 Rising Stars by the end of 2018 and creating the first FISA fund in Asia.

We are also working with corporate partners to create a more inspiring and productive workforce, delivering solutions for both talent development and social impact. We believe this creation of shared value will be the future of successful businesses worldwide.

We could not have done this without all of the people who share our vision and supported us through our journey of making a difference. Special thanks are due to all of the mentors who are sharing their learning and insights with us, helping us create the world's best mentoring experience. A heartfelt thanks goes to the Woodcock Foundation, Wedu's first partner in enabling us to reach the next phase of Wedu's development.

I am looking forward to a terrific 2015 of growth and inspiration. We are proving that gender and origins don't have to limit a person's ability to become a strong leader. We are doing this for all current and future Rising Stars because it is the right thing to do. We are doing this together with you.

Thank you,

Mario Ferro

Co-founder & Chief Empowerment Officer, Wedu



*Phearong Sdoueng, Rising Star (Cambodia) and her first mentor Marica Rizzo*

## I. KEY EVENTS & MILESTONES

**50**  
RISING  
STARS

**March 2014**

Wedu works with 50 Rising Stars, after the year's first intake round!



**June 2014**

Wedu meets inspiring partners at the Siam City Cement Limited Company (SCCC), Thailand.



**August 2014**

Wedu is incorporated as Wedu (Thailand) Foundation in Bangkok.



**September 2014**

Wedu presents the Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs) at SOCAP.

**FISA**

**September 2014**

Wedu officially launches the first FISAs with two Rising Stars.



**September 2014**

Wedu's first two Rising Star applicants for FISAs receive full funding on KIVA.



**September 2014**

Wedu announces its Commitment to Action at the Clinton Global Initiative.

**FISA**

**November 2014**

Wedu receives the first FISA contributions from Cambodia!



**December 2014**

Wedu starts a long-term partnership with the Woodcock Foundation.

**96**  
RISING  
STARS

**December 2014**

Wedu works with 96 Rising Stars, after the largest intake round to date.

## II. BACKGROUND

### The Global Need

In a world where less than one in five members of Parliament is a woman, one out of ten heads of state is a woman, and less than one in twenty CEOs of S&P 500 companies are women, the need to foster women's leadership is stark. In places like Cambodia, in the past election, women members of Parliament decreased from 22% to 16%, the first decline in a long time. In Myanmar, besides Aung San Suu Kyi, less than 5% of Parliamentarians are women.

Pipelines for women leaders can be found in universities, yet in countries like Afghanistan, only one in five university students are women.

Our specific candidates report a lack of support and funds and also information asymmetries as the main obstacles to achieving personal development and higher education.

Women's empowerment is gaining momentum worldwide because it is the right thing to do and it is smart economics, as it is correlated with stronger business performance and higher GDP growth.

### Who We Serve

Our target groups have evolved over the last twelve months. We increased the diversity of countries of origin of Rising Stars (see chart below), and we are now serving more undergraduate Rising Stars, as we are finding that their need for mentorship is stronger.

We continue to target candidates from rural and underprivileged areas, and our network of Talent Spotters is growing exponentially, helping us reach deeper and deeper into the darkest areas of our target countries.

We are proud to have established new relationships in Laos and in South Korea, where we are starting to work with North Korean defectors.



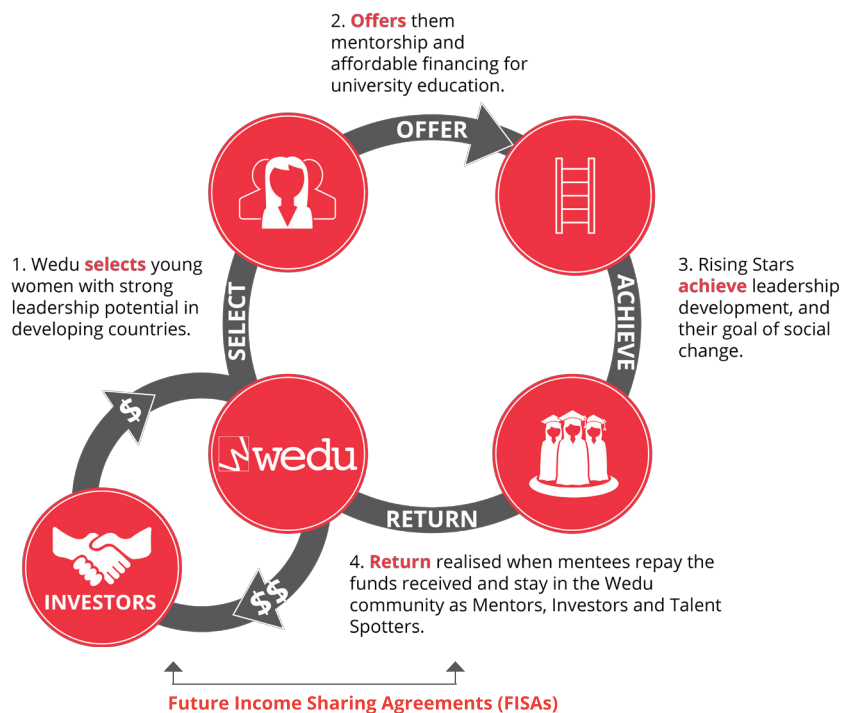
*Phearong Sdoueng, Rising Star (Cambodia) conducts a Wedu workshop at Khmer Youth Association*

Our current acceptance rate is about 1 in 5 (down from 1 in 3 one year ago). The current pool of Rising Stars can be broken down as follows:

Nationality	%	(Continued)	%
Myanmar	19.8%	India	3.1%
Cambodia	22.9%	China	3.1%
Nepal	10.4%	Laos	1.0%
Bangladesh	28.1%	Sri Lanka	2.1%
Afghanistan	6.3%	N. Korea	1.0%
		Vietnam	1.0%

## How We Do It

Wedu’s model, in a nutshell, consists of:



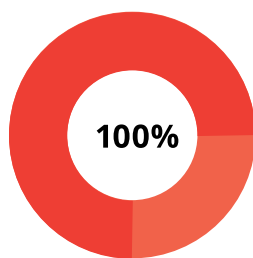
The leadership development support has been developed in cooperation with Acumen, based on the Acumen Global Fellowship curriculum and adapted to our segment and geography.

We have been working with leading global universities (Cambridge University, the London School of Economics and the Thunderbird School of Global Management) to design effective financial support mechanisms and risk management procedures based on innovative applications of the concept of “Social Collateral.” The design of the Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs) is ready and we are now conducting the first field experiments.

### III. ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Direct Social Impact

1. We increased threefold the number of Rising Stars served in the last 12 months. We have gone from 26 to 96 Rising Stars.
2. 100% employment in less than 4 weeks. The first Rising Stars from Myanmar who graduated from university are now already back in Myanmar working on social change. They have found employment in less than 6 weeks. They all cite strong support from their mentors as helping them to graduate from university and finding their first job.
3. 0% dropout rate from the program.
4. Very high satisfaction level from mentors and mentees. 78% of mentors indicate that they are “inspired by their mentees”, while 83% of Rising Stars expressed that they are “satisfied with the mentorship program”.



## 100%

of Rising Stars have found employment or pursued further studies within **6 weeks** after graduation

**75%** in employment  
**25%** in further studies

## 78%

of our mentors indicate that they are ‘inspired’ by their mentees

## 83%

of Rising Stars are ‘satisfied with the mentorship program’.

#### Qualitative Achievements

1. Ly Chhay and Phearong, our first two Rising Stars, have already become role models in their village and neighboring ones. We hear reports of other girls saying “I want to be a leader like them.”
2. Word of mouth is the strongest engine of expansion. Most of our new candidates are recommended by current Rising Stars.
3. We were invited to join the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) and launched our first commitment to action to reach 1,000 Rising Stars by 2018 and create the first FISA fund in Asia.
4. We have successfully started a corporate mentor recruitment pilot in Thailand.
5. Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs) are being successfully introduced to increase the financial sustainability of funding education in the long run.





(From left to right): Nang Htang Lahpai (Myanmar), Khin Khin Myat Thu Hlaing (Myanmar), Phyu Hnin Hlaing (Myanmar), and Menuka Gurung (Nepal)

## I. OVERVIEW

Wedu's Leadership Development program is empowering more and more young women in Asia every year and in 2015 we're taking this to new heights and exploring to new opportunities to have an impact. This year we have the aim of doubling our number of Rising Stars to 200 which will keep us on course to achieve our 2018 goal of 1,000 Rising Stars. Our mentorship program and leadership curriculum have passed the test of time and our earliest Rising Stars are continuing to excel in impressive ways, driving the evolution of new learning and support from our Leadership Development program. Our curriculum has grown to more than two years of monthly Leadership Lessons and our mentorship systems are increasingly taking a more structured shape, which will allow us to deliver the program to more and more Rising Stars in an efficient and scalable way.

We are giving increasing attention to the Leadership Development of our mentors. Mentors have yielded extremely exciting insights. In fact, our mentors are experiencing similar leadership development improvements as their mentees. For instance, 83% our mentors feel inspired by their mentees, improving their capacity for creative thinking and innovation. In terms of listening and communication skills, 90% reported that they have felt improvements. Additionally, 86% of our mentors also indicated improvements in their coaching skills through Wedu. They are also describing a sense of inspiration and newfound creativity driven by the extremely unique opportunity to engage with someone vastly different. These insights are driving Wedu's newest innovation in Leadership Development, a corporate employee development product which will connect corporate mentors with our Rising Stars. This will allow Wedu to bring our Leadership Development program to a new market, while mutually benefitting our Rising Stars through the creation of a large and continuous community of great mentors.



“Being a mentor has taught me that it is worth the time and effort to listen...”

— Xian Warner, gender specialist & Wedu mentor

## II. RISING STARS

Within one year, the expansion of not only the number of Rising Stars that Wedu currently supports, but also the geographic diversity of these young women has been truly extraordinary.

In December 2013, Wedu ended the year supporting 26 Rising Stars. At the end of 2014, after 3 intakes over the course of the year, we are now



supporting an astonishing 96 Rising Stars, a 255% increase from 2013.

Our Rising Stars come from different backgrounds across the Asia region, including new nationalities such as Laotian and North Korean, and the following countries:

<b>Countries</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>(Continued)</b>	<b>No.</b>
Bangladesh	27	India	3
Cambodia	22	Sri Lanka	2
Myanmar	19	Vietnam	1
Nepal	10	China	1
Afghanistan	6	N. Korea	1
Pakistan	3	Laos	1

## RISING STAR STORY



### **SUJATA BASKOTA** RISING STAR, NEPAL

Sujata Baskota is 19 years old and is living in Kathmandu, Nepal with her parents and one younger brother. Her father has a small shop of handicrafts and her mom is a housewife, both of whom did not receive a formal education.

Sujata grew up in a patriarchal society, where women were taught at an early age that they “should be dominated by their father before marriage, by their husband after marriage, and by their son after their husband’s death”. However, Sujata mentioned that changes are slowly taking place, “which provide positive hope for all women in Nepal.”

Because of her background, Sujata is very passionate about working on female empowerment in Nepal. Through her own leadership abilities, ideas, effort, and creativity, she hopes to give back to her community by empowering women by

“I want to make [financing for education] more accessible, so that more needy youths can acquire higher education.”

— Sujata Baskota,  
Rising Star (Nepal)

women**LEAD**  
NEPAL

making financing for education more accessible.

In Nepal, where a majority of people belong to the middle class and cannot afford higher education, Sujata is committed to reforming policies of commercial banks in Nepal that are currently making loans inaccessible to many students through complex documentation procedure, demand of collateral, and high interest rates.

She believes that by changing the policies and making the conditions more flexible, loans can be made accessible to students struggling to obtain higher education. Providing educational loans to young people will create a ripple effect, making jobs available to more people and enabling further community development.

Sujata first learned about Wedu through Women LEAD Nepal and her senior Menuka Gurung, who is also a Wedu Rising Star. Wedu’s financing made it possible for her to afford her higher education and through the mentorship program, she was able to experience personal and professional growth. Her mentor is Noam Kostucki, a professional specialising in business growth generation.

### III. UPDATE ON THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

2014 was a year for learning and improvement for the Wedu Mentorship Program. Through Wedu’s systematized quarterly surveys, we have been able to collect feedback and track the progress of our Rising Stars & Mentors’ learning. In doing so, we have gathered tremendous insights that have allowed us to address concerns quickly, while also providing an overview of where the real impact is happening, and how to rear the Mentorship Program to become more effective and robust. A few interesting statistics include:

**95%**

of our mentors report improvements in Communication skills

**86%**

of our mentors report improvements in Coaching skills

**97%**

of our mentors are inspired by their Rising Stars



Ly Chhay Loem, Rising Star (Cambodia) in her hometown Kampong Chom, Cambodia

## Learning Together

Understanding that mentorship provides a learning platform for both Rising Stars and mentors, we have restructured the Mentorship Program over the past year to ensure that it is able to cultivate leadership qualities that are important to each of their roles—Rising Stars as future leaders of social change, and mentors as better colleagues and global citizens.

To this end, we have defined the following four Learning Objectives:

Rising Star		Mentor
Action & Risk Taking	1	Coaching & Mentoring
Communication & Influence	2	Communication & Influence
Ethics, Empathy & Integrity	3	Ethics, Empathy & Integrity
Self-Awareness & Purpose	4	Social Impact

We base our leadership development curriculum on developing the following 7 Leadership Dimensions:

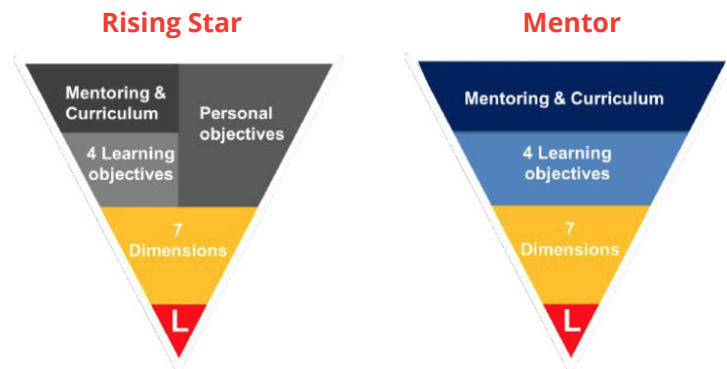
### 7 Leadership Dimensions



These Objectives have allowed us to map out the program’s Leadership Lessons to maximize the leadership growth opportunities for both Rising Stars and mentors. The Learning Objectives have been built on Wedu’s 7 Leadership Dimensions. These Leadership Dimensions are the foundation to Wedu’s design of the mentorship curriculum to ensure a well-rounded leadership development program.

In particular, the leadership development program for mentors include the following components: (1) Mentoring & the Leadership Development Curriculum, (2) the 4 Learning Objectives, and (3) the 7 Leadership Dimension. The combination of these three components make up the expected leadership development from which mentors will

benefit. Unique to the Rising Stars is the addition of ‘Personal Objectives’, which gives a specific focus on their goals of social change.



**MENTOR STORY**



**KELVIN NG**  
**MENTOR, SINGAPORE**

Kelvin Ng was born to low-income parents in Singapore—his mother was a production worker in a factory and his dad an electrician. “Not much was expected of me. [I was] branded by my teachers as a slow learner”, he says.

However, when Kelvin was accepted into university, he decided that this was his last chance to turn things around if he wanted to support his parents. Since then, he came to see education as a “social leveller, a means of giving hope for those who want to improve their lives.” This, he says, is the reason why he decided to become a social entrepreneur in the field of education.

Prior to becoming a mentor with Wedu, Kelvin spent 7 years working with a national youth organization in Singapore and was a trained university councillor at the University of Cambridge (UK). At Wedu, he mentors Alienery, a young woman from a small village in Mizoram, India, who is the first in her family to be educated up to the university level, with a passion for the environment and international politics.

"I have nothing but admiration for my mentee," Kelvin says. "I have no doubt that if I was born in her shoes, I would not have been able to achieve half of what she has accomplished with her determination and courage. Talking to her, I am reminded that any small success that I might have today, has come largely from what others have done for me and how little I am able to do on my own."

Kelvin is presently the Academic and Operations Director at iAcademy (Singapore) and Chief Operating Officer at Islington College (Nepal). As an educator, he says, "It fills me with pride when my students or mentees grow to realise their dreams and exceed my knowledge and skills. I am passionate about education and enjoy helping students maximize their potential."

## Corporate Partnerships on Mentorship

Wedu is not only a disruptive innovator in the way that we support the upheaval of traditional gender dynamics via empowered women leaders, we are also entirely rethinking the dynamics in the basic concept of mentorship. Instead of a one-way exchange between a teacher and a learner, Wedu has designed a mentoring program whereby both actors have wide latitude for learning and growth. Both the mentor and mentee are participating in a beneficial leadership development program so that each of their leadership potential is magnified exponentially. Corporations are ideal partners for our mentoring revolution. In joining our community, they will be representing both a new type of customer for Wedu and also an essential actor in the delivery of our leadership development service, ensuring the sustainable achievement of our enterprise mission.

With our new 'Mentoring for Leadership' Talent Development product, Wedu's leadership development model has expanded to be the first employee development solution where Social Impact and Talent Development meet.

We're working HR departments to provide them a rewarding and fulfilling learning experience for their staff. Our Talent Development product is a guided mentoring experience in which mentors are provided all of the tools to mentor a Wedu Rising Star and also the platform to practice skills like the ability to motivate, inspire and empower an

### Mentoring with Wedu



“I find this program benefits me in many ways, including realizing my value to help others, developing my communication skill, developing my coaching skills, and gaining inspiration in social work.”

— Duangkamon Bangsombun,  
Siam City Cement Corporation (SCCC)

ambitious young person—key for leadership excellence. They are able to mentor with an individually-customizable program extended over several months and also enjoy additional product elements, like a classic leadership training course, progress measurement and group reflections. These work together as a cohesive learning program which includes learning by listening, learning by continuous practice and learning by reflecting. It's an easy and flexible time-commitment with an supportive curriculum, which concurrently allows participants to take part in a global development mission.

In 2014, we launched a pilot with our first corporate partner, Siam City Cement Corporation (SCCC), which immediately saw the benefit that mentoring could have on employee leadership development and sustained, experiential learning. We are grateful for their early confidence and support and look forward to growing and improving the program together in years to come.

Our new corporate employee development product has been a collaboration of mentorship, coaching, human resource and business expertise, featuring best-in-class mentorship and training principles. It is an extension of our existing mentorship program, building a set of added-value features custom to our corporate audience. Our vision, to offer an employee development program powered by experiential learning and driven by a powerful impact story, is absolutely groundbreaking. We have already been received curiously and positively by industry experts and possible partners. We are very excited about the prospect of making waves in the corporate employee development sector and are confident that this will lead to even more opportunities for our Rising Stars. In this partnership, 1+1=3.

#### **IV. OUTREACH GROWTH**

The growth of Wedu and the number of Rising Stars that we currently support could not be done without multiple facets in our outreach and work within our community. This comes from our inspiring Talent Spotters, our current Rising Stars and our Leadership Development Workshops.

The total number of applications that we received over the course of the year was over

350. The nationalities of these applicants are varied and diverse across the Asia region, and outside of it, showing the outreach that Wedu has. These included:

Countries	No.	(Continued)	No.
Bangladesh	93	Laos	5
Cambodia	62	Thailand	5
Myanmar	52	Philippines	2
Nepal	48	China	2
Afghanistan	18	Congo	2
Pakistan	14	Indonesia	1
Vietnam	11	North Korea	1
Bhutan	11	Armenia	1
Sri Lanka	9	Nigeria	1
		Haiti	1

While not all of these applicants were eligible or accepted into the program, we always encourage them to continue striving for their educational goals so they can become leaders in their communities. As a result, we have noticed that **close to half (47%)** of all re-applications have been successful, and were accepted into the program as Rising Stars.

## Leveraging a Regional Network of Talent Spotters

Talent Spotters include Educational Institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations, and individuals who are a part of Wedu's Community and support our mission by recommending young women with strong leadership potential to apply for our program. Through our outreach strategies, we look for like-minded Talent Spotters who share our vision of unlocking the next generation of female leaders throughout Asia. We currently have 105 Talent Spotters and prospective Talent Spotters that are all across the Asia region, just like our Rising Stars.

Our network has grown significantly and organically, often with Talent Spotters reaching out to us to become involved in the overall mission of supporting female leadership and higher education.

A Talent Spotter becomes an official partner with Wedu once they have recommended a student, or more, to apply for our program. Our primary focus is to conduct our outreach within the Least Developed Countries, while we still acknowledge the need for outreach throughout all of Asia. Our current Talent Spotters operate out of:



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Cambodia



Lao



Myanmar



Nepal



Thailand

## Organic Outreach: Rising Star-led Local Workshops

One of the new initiatives that Wedu implemented is increasing the number of in-country and Rising Star-led Leadership Development Workshops, aimed at searching for more prospective Rising Stars. In addition to spreading the opportunities that Wedu provides for high potential women in Asia along with the importance of female leadership, these workshops also increase the Rising Star's personal leadership development.

In 2014, Wedu conducted a total of 12 Leadership Development Workshops, with the majority of these being led by Rising Stars. In total, there were approximately 500 participants.



*Ly Chhay Loem, Rising Star (Cambodia) conducting a Wedu Leadership Development Workshop at Asian University for Women (AUW), Chittagong, Bangladesh*

## Expansion into Cambodia

Cambodia is one of the most suitable economies for Wedu to pilot FISAs. Backed up by our own extensive primary research on the impact of university education on income growth, Wedu is increasing outreach activities in Cambodia to allow us to support even more high potential Cambodian women through the Mentorship Program and FISAs.

To help us do this, we have welcomed one of our first Rising Stars, Saorathana Phoeurk, to our team as a part time Operations Officer in Cambodia. Rathana now leads all outreach activities in her home country, conducting meetings with existing Talent Spotters, forming partnership with key educational institutions, as well as organizing Leadership Development Workshops at universities and organizations to directly engage female Cambodian students. This is part of Wedu's growing efforts to create stronger relationships and partnerships in the local communities within which we work.



**"My dream is for the Cambodian youth to have high education and strong participation in social development activities."**

— Saorathana Phoeurk,  
Rising Star (Cambodia) & Wedu Operations  
Officer in Cambodia





Mi Win Thida, Rising Star (Myanmar) at her graduation from Chulalongkorn University

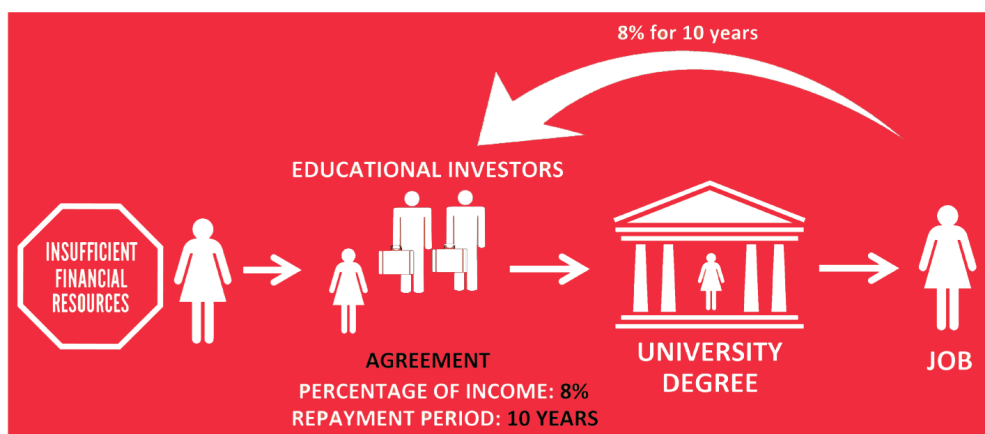
## I. FUTURE INCOME SHARING AGREEMENTS (FISAs)

Higher education is a powerful tool that can help unlock leadership potential. However, it remains financially inaccessible to many individuals around the world, most notably for women from underserved backgrounds.

Wedu aims to help address this gap in access by pioneering Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs), an innovative financing option for university education in Asia. FISAs are financial instruments that are more flexible and affordable than loans.

Rising Stars who have been granted FISAs receive funding for their university education, and agree to contribute a small percentage of their future income for a fixed amount of time to pay it forward to the next generation of Rising Stars who similarly need funding support.

For the Rising Star, this means a university education will be much more affordable and impactful than it ever was before.



## II. LAUNCH OF FISAs IN CAMBODIA

FISA in Cambodia was launched in partnership with CGI and Kiva with two of our Rising Stars from our very first cohort. Saorathana Phoeurk, Master's of Management candidate, and Phearong Sdoueng, 3rd year Bachelor's student in International Relations, are pioneering this innovative new financing model for Wedu and their fellow students. In their minds, they are simply making a smart, affordable choice to pay for their higher education, and at the same time committing to give back a percentage of their future income so that other students like themselves can have the same opportunities. In fact, Saorathana had already been awarded a scholarship from Wedu and was the one who approached us after

hearing us speak about FISA to ask if she could convert her scholarship to a FISA so that she could further contribute to this cycle of social change. It is inspiring and bold young women like Saorathana and Phearong who make us believe in and fuel what we do!

The launch of FISAs in Cambodia is the culmination of months' worth of research initiatives in Cambodia on the impact of university education on students' income growth potential. These research projects have been the result of a collaboration among Wedu, the London School of Economics, and Thunderbird School of Global Management, with the aim of building the foundational intellectual capital to ensure a sustainable implementation of FISAs in Cambodia, which will serve as a model for future launches elsewhere in Asia.

### III. PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

#### Unlocking Opportunities with CGI



We are honored to partner with the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) and many of its members towards an inspiring and transformational commitment to action: Reaching 1,000 Rising Stars in Asia and creating the first Future Income Sharing (FISA) Investment Fund in Asia. We are proud to have CGI members join us—Kiva providing access to finance, and +Acumen supporting the leadership development program.

We would love to partner with many other organizations to make this important commitment a success for all of the Rising Stars who will benefit from it.

In 4 years, to serve

**1,000**

Rising Stars through leadership development and access to finance for education



#### Implementing Partner: KIVA



Wedu's partnership with leading non-profit online lending platform Kiva was instrumental to our ability to launch Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs) in September 2014. As a fellow member of the Clinton Global Initiative, our aligned visions, complementary business models and leadership brought about an obvious partnership that resulted in an initial 50k USD credit line to offer FISA to Rising Stars in Cambodia.

Our first two FISAs posted on the Kiva website were funded in under 12 hours—much faster than any of us expected! This early success clearly demonstrates the power and potential of bringing together Kiva's community of more than 1 million online lenders and Wedu's inspiring Rising Stars to provide access to capital for education to those who might not otherwise be able to afford.

Moving forward, Kiva and Wedu aim to expand FISA in Cambodia and the region by working together to prove that FISA is both sustainable and scalable for our organizations,

as well as affordable and impactful for both Wedu's Rising Stars and Kiva's lenders. For Wedu in 2015, this means building the right infrastructure and organizational capability, hiring the right resources and educating more and more people around the world about the benefits of FISA.



*Phearong Sdoueng, Rising Star (Cambodia)*



*Saorathana Phoeurk, Rising Star (Cambodia)*

## IV. THE WEDU TEAM

### Growing the Team

The Wedu team saw tremendous growth in capacity in 2014 due to both the continued commitment of early team members as well as the hiring of some key positions in both Thailand and Cambodia. Katie Davos, Daisy Khamphakdy and Panyarak Roque passed their one-year marks with the organization and have contributed immensely to our early growth of Rising Stars, mentorship program development and FISA launch in Cambodia, respectively.

Throughout the 2nd half of 2014, Wedu was able to add to the team the following key staff:

1. Rebecca Gallogly, Leadership Development Strategist - focused on developing and managing our corporate leadership development product and corporate partners
2. Vivian Lee, COO - managing overall operations and building organizational infrastructure and systems for Wedu's capacity-building and sustainable growth
3. Rathana Phoeurk, Operations Officer - leading outreach efforts to reach more and more Rising Stars, as well as supporting FISA operations, in Cambodia. Rathana is also our first Rising Star hire who applied and interviewed just like any

**"Passion is worth to fight for, so just dare greatly. At best, I win. At worst, I lose. But I don't get to ask myself, 'what if?'"**

— Bopha Sean,  
Rising Star (Cambodia)



*Menuka Gurung, Rising Star (Nepal) and Wedu volunteers at the 2nd Wedu International Women's Day Mentoring Walk*

other candidate—we are proud to have her commitment, passion and hard work added to the team!

This next year will continue to be critical in organizational capacity-building as we look to hire key positions dedicated to Finance & Admin, FISA, Mentorship, Partnership Development and Community.

Wedu would also like to thank volunteer Dya Niknamian, who developed initial FISA communications material and provided key ground support during our CGI commitment announcement in NYC.

## Foundation of a Global Organization



*Kate James, Chief Corporate Affairs at Pearson*

We are excited to welcome Kate James to on the Board of Directors of Wedu UK. She is currently working for Pearson, a leading global education corporation where she moved from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Kate has been involved for many years with Vital Voices, a partner organization of Wedu also focused on nurturing women in leadership.

The board of Wedu (Thailand) Foundation also joins the effort in our strategic development where Board Vice President Napawong Snidvongs and Board Secretary Nattanicha Lephilibert bring their combined knowledge of business, politics, culture and non-profit governance to help us consolidate and expand in Southeast Asia.

We are setting the foundation for a truly global organization and the future evolution of the boards will reflect this evolution.

## Board of Directors (Thailand)



*Mario Ferro*



*Napawong Snidvongs*



*Nattanicha Aneksomphon*

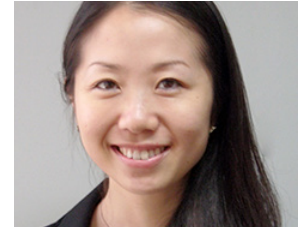
## Board of Directors (UK)



*Mario Ferro*



*Kate James*



*Mari Sawai*

## Board of Advisers



*Stuart Davidson*



*Jane Horan*



*Gyanesh Pandey*



*Ankur Shah*



*Manoj Sinha*



*Napawong Snidvongs*



*Mariko Tada*



*Jocelyn Wyatt*



## I. OVERVIEW

Wedu's growth and success is powered by committed individuals from around the world, united by a common vision and conviction that investing in women's leadership development is critical to achieving sustained and impactful social change.

Community members lend their time, effort, expertise, and voice to advancing Wedu's mission daily. With their support, Wedu is able to continue to evolve and provide our Rising Stars with the support and resources they need to achieve their goals of social change.

Wedu's community members contribute in many critical ways, from providing funds to helping us identify bright Rising Stars and passionate mentors to volunteering their time and expertise as panelists in the selection process.

Together, our inspiring Rising Stars, mentors, talent spotters, selection panelists, donors, ambassadors, and team members collectively form Wedu's global community.

## II. GROWING THE COMMUNITY

Our reach is expanding in both breadth and depth, leading exciting opportunities and unique challenges. Our goal is to enable Wedu's community members to feel a deep connection to the organization and one another regardless of where they are in the world.

In 2014, Wedu community members participated in 9 meet ups in 6 different cities (Bangkok, London, San Francisco, New York, Phnom Penh, and Yangon).

Building on the success of the 2013 event, Wedu held another successful Mentoring Walk in celebration of International Women's Day 2014.



*Wedu International Women's Day Mentoring Walk 2014 at the Bangkok Culture Centre*

With a goal to kick start a culture of mentorship in Thailand, Wedu's 2015 International Women's Day Mentoring Walk on promises to spark even bigger conversations both within the event and beyond.

In 2015, we plan to strengthen the reach of meet ups and work with our community to find even more enriching and engaging ways to stay connected, learn from one another, and celebrate the contributions we collectively make to advancing Wedu's mission. We are in the process of hiring a full time Community Architect who will work with our community to co-create and implement a stronger, and further connected global community.

### **III. CONNECTING WEDU'S GLOBAL COMMUNITY THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA**

At the beginning of 2015, Wedu launched its new corporate website to allow all stakeholders—from prospective students and mentors to Rising Stars, supporters, donors and volunteers—to easily find information about Wedu and get involved with the organization.





As Wedu grew over the past year, our work has been featured through multiple mediums. We are grateful to those who have recognized our work, and the impact that it is having on women across Asia.



News post on Wedu's Leadership Development Workshop hosted by Wedu Rising Stars at the Asian University for Women, Bangladesh.

[Click here to read more](#)



WeWork interview with Wedu co-founder and CEO Mario Ferro on how social enterprises can effectively leverage global talent to their goals.

[Click here to read more](#)



Wedu co-founder and CEO Mario Ferro talks to Social Missions about how Wedu started, the challenges it faces, and how Wedu is tackling them.

[Click here to watch the interview](#)



Wedu announces its Commitment to Action at the Clinton Global Initiative.

[Click here to watch the video](#)



Wedu launched its latest promotional video, which highlights the importance of mentorship and affordable financing options for university education towards unlocking Asian women's leadership potential.

[Click here to watch the video](#)





*Wedu Mentor Jane Donaldson and her mentee in Bangkok*

In 2014 we have been able to grow our reserves to fund the coming expansion in 2015. We are hiring new staff with specialised skills to take care of specific components of our programs. Our overheads have so far been very low and we will strive to keep them below 10% in the coming year of growth.

As we ramp up FISAs, scholarships will start representing a decreasing portion of the funds allocated to paying for the education of the Rising Stars. Scholarships were 100% of the funds in 2013.

We are very thankful to our long standing donors, especially an anonymous couple in New York and the Glory Gospel Singers. Their continuous support since the very beginning of Wedu has been transformational.

We are very excited to start establishing large partnerships with donors like the Woodcock Foundation which is pioneering a large long term grant with Wedu, really becoming a pillar for the impact of our work and creating the foundation for the impact that will come. We are looking for more inspiring partners like them.

The partnership with Kiva enables Wedu to reach a very large community to directly fund the Rising Stars receiving a FISA. Through Kiva 100% of the funds raised go to funding the education of Rising Stars and we are looking forward to expanding this empowering initiative.

In 2015 we expect to expand the corporate partnerships we are now piloting.

All in all Wedu's financial position is sound and our positive outlook for future fundraising enables us to plan investment in expansion of the impact we are delivering.

**100%**  
**MODEL**

with Wedu, you can set up a scholarship fund where 100% of your contribution goes to fund a Rising Star's education

**\$680K**

Raised in cash and commitments

**\$50K**

Partnership with Kiva to fund Rising Stars with FISAs

For a full financial report, please visit the UK Charity Commission site <http://bit.ly/1MHPBVx>



(From left to right): Daisy Khamphakdy, Mentorship Coordinator, Menuka Gurung, Rising Star (Nepal), Phyu Hnin Hlaing, Rising Star (Myanmar)

## COMMITTED TO ACTION

In September 2014 at the annual gathering of the Clinton Global Initiative in New York, we committed to reach 1,000 Rising Stars by the end of 2018 and create the first FISA investment fund in Asia.

In order to meet this long term goal, by the end of 2015, we aim to be working with over 200 Rising Stars across Asia, scale up corporate partnerships for mentoring and disburse more FISAs while increasing the quality of mentorship delivered.

To achieve these goals and our commitment, doing more of the same will not be enough. Wedu will need to profoundly increase the sophistication of its structure and acquire additional skills and resources.

To reach hundreds of more Rising Stars, we are partnering with more Talent Spotters in our target economies and expanding to new countries, like Laos and Vietnam. We are finding that the word of mouth between Rising Stars is the best way to expand reach, and we are developing tools to make their voices louder in every village, school and university where a great candidate Rising Star may be.

We are finding a high level of interest among prospective corporate partners and we are very excited by the possibilities that are opening up before Wedu. We look forward to sharing updates as they unfold over the course of the year.

We know that scaling up tenfold in less than four years is ambitious, but we also know it is achievable. We are not setting ambitious goals driven by greed or glory, but rather a moral duty to be ambitious. As long as there are young women who want to become Rising Stars, we will do everything within our power to support them and become their partner on the path to becoming a stronger leader, because this is what Wedu.

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### For questions and follow up, please contact:

#### Wedu Team

[info@wedufund.org](mailto:info@wedufund.org)

[www.weduglobal.org](http://www.weduglobal.org)

Do you see the potential?





## WEDU HISTORY

Wedu unlocks the potential of the next generation of female leaders in Asia by offering lifelong mentorship and innovative financing options for higher education, such as Future Income Sharing Agreements (FISAs). The Woodcock Foundation has been a strategic partner in the past twelve months and we would love to continue creating together a sustainable engine for social change that will last for generations.

Wedu began in March 2012 out of the need to **cultivate local leadership in the poorest parts of the world**, starting from Southeast Asia. We **focus on women** because it is smart economics and fosters a more just and equitable society. We are creating **a financially sustainable business model** based on a range of revenue streams. We believe in the power of social entrepreneurship and we are now starting to collect the first revenues from our services.

After meeting over 500+ youth, mostly from rural Cambodia and Myanmar, we came across girls like **Ly Chhay** (pictured on the left), Wedu's first Rising Star from Cambodia. We now have evidence that in rural areas of developing countries there are women with incredible leadership potential, and the capacity to become CEOs and members of parliament; but they are disconnected from information, networks and infrastructures available in urban areas, such as role models and financial support.

Over time, we have discovered that our Rising Stars derive the most benefit primarily from the mentorship program we offer and secondarily from the funds we provide. We aim to create the most engaging mentorship program in Asia and the most innovative financial support system for higher education in the region.