



CONTENTS

- LETTER FROM THE CEO 3
- OVERVIEW 4
- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT 6
- INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION 11
- COMMUNITY.....13
- CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS15
- STRATEGIC FOCUS ON CAMBODIA17
- FINANCIAL SUMMARY.....19



LETTER FROM THE CEO

2017 has been another year of terrific growth for the entire Wedu team and increased impact in our growing Community of inspiring women leaders.

I am in a particularly privileged position because I receive messages from Rising Stars from all across Asia, thanking us for the impact that Wedu has had on their lives. Some mention how their mentors helped them in moments of need and confusion; others mention that the work and growth of Wedu gives them hope for the potential of all women in Asia. Our team is incredibly proud of this feedback and uses it to continue to power the work that we do, knowing that there is still a lot of progress to made towards gender-equal leadership.

I want to highlight how 2017's accomplishments and progress influence 2018 and beyond, along three main areas of impact:

- Improve the leadership development experience by offering more learning options, which allows each Rising Star to create a unique path that can be adapted to her individual needs and goals. With in-person trainings and funding for attending conferences, we aim to expand upon a blended learning approach to better support the lifelong leadership development journey.

- Increase organisational sophistication with better processes, stronger global and local governance, and more use of technology to support growth and more diversified service offerings. Combined, this will enable us to continue to grow in the breadth of our impact while focusing more deeply in key markets.
- Accelerate the growth and adoption of innovative financing for education by continuing to pioneer Future Income Sharing Agreements in Asia.

"I see myself changing, growing into a more confident, less self doubting and more critical thinking version of myself. Wedu has helped me see beyond the horizon, opened me to the possibilities and capabilities which I [didn't know] about. Wedu has made me realize that the change starts with oneself, so I am working towards bringing change within myself and in my community." - Sajja

Mario Ferro
CEO & Co-Founder

OVERVIEW

At the end of 2017, we were proud to be supporting a total of **590 women** with their leadership development.

We welcomed our 16th cohort of Rising Stars, bringing the total from 318 to 484. We also conducted another Women's Leadership Academy and launched a new partnership with the IRC to support refugee women, bringing the total number of Leadership Fellows we support to 106.



Our Rising Stars come from **diverse backgrounds**, and this year's cohorts included Rising Stars representing the following new countries - **Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, and Mongolia.**



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



37 leaders from all ten ASEAN countries convened at our YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy.

For the second consecutive year, we partnered with the U.S. Mission to ASEAN to host the YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy in Jakarta, Indonesia. Participants from all ten ASEAN countries gathered for a five-day interactive, leadership training programme to advance their leadership development. Highlights included an individualized leadership assessment; mentoring sessions; networking opportunities; and a discussion of key gender and regional issues.

We continue to partner with the IRC to build refugee women's leadership capabilities, support their goal-setting to envision their livelihood outside of the camps, and to foster confidence and independence. Our partnership is part of the Global IRC Livelihoods Project benefiting refugees worldwide.

In October 2017, we kicked off a partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to provide refugee women from Myanmar a customised Mentorship Programme.





Committed Rising stars step up as Interview Leaders.

Rising Stars have always played a big part in nurturing and growing our Community. In October 2017, we selected 8 Rising Stars who demonstrated high commitment in past selection rounds to step up as Interview Leaders, thereby taking a lead role in selecting future Rising Stars.

18 workshops in total were led by Rising Stars across cities like Bhutan, Nepal, Cambodia, and Bangladesh.

These workshops provide Rising Stars with a platform to share their inspiring stories, to develop their leadership and presentation skills, and to use their voices to grow the Wedu Community.



Our Outreach team organized workshops with Talent Spotters like the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).



Workshopping the importance of mentorship and leadership development continues to be a positive addition to our partners' conferences, programmes, and curriculum. Last year, we worked with local partners to enhance IRI's Young Women Leader Programme on "Gender Equality and Social Entrepreneurship", as well as introduce mentorship to AIT's Bachelor's and Master's students.

INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION



New partnerships with local NGOs YUWA and Thabyay are vital for the growth of FISAs across the region.

In collaboration with YUWA and Thabyay, we launched FISAs in Nepal and Myanmar, respectively. 9 additional Rising Stars received funding for their education, and total disbursements by year end reached USD 30,690. As more Rising Stars completed their studies and found employment, the pay-it-forward momentum of FISAs continued to build.



2017 marked the start of some exciting strategic partnership discussions that have the potential to bring FISA to thousands of students in the coming years.

From investors and funders to technology and implementation partners, our combination of leadership and FISA is an attractive model for making higher education more accessible and affordable. At SOCAP 2017, Wedu and Lumni pledged to collaborate in laying the foundation for the first FISA funds in Asia. Together and with other alliances, we aim to deploy much more capital to satisfy the needs of more students, until everyone has access to affordable funds for high-quality education.

COMMUNITY

Our Rising Star photo contest (Through the Lens) gathered 986 likes and 459 shares...



Through the Lens is a contest that showcased the social missions of our Rising Stars through their photography skills. This also allowed the global community to learn more about their commitment to social change and the causes they support.

... and our video contest 'Do You See the Potential' on Youtube had over 7000 views and 1500+ likes.

Rising Stars from different countries and representing a wide range of personal and professional backgrounds joined the video competition to reflect on their experience with their Wedu Mentor(s). A common sentiment expressed by our Rising Stars was the eagerness to develop themselves and their communities with the help of a mentor.



CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Astro logo features the word "astro" in a bold, lowercase, pink sans-serif font. A thick, pink, curved line underneath the letters forms a stylized smile or a wave.

Our first cohort completed their mentorship with Astro employees through the Wedu Rise Mentoring Programme for Leadership.

In 2017, the first cohort of Astro employees enrolled in Wedu Rise to virtually mentor our Rising Stars. Upon completion, over 90% of participating employees reported improvements in their ability to mentor and coach others, better listening and communication skills, as well as the opportunity to understand more about a new culture.

**We welcomed
Amadeus APAC
as our newest
corporate Partner!**

Amadeus APAC also began a Wedu Rise pilot to mentor our inspiring Rising Stars across Asia.

Amadeus Group is a major technology services provider for the global travel and tourism industry.



STRATEGIC FOCUS IN CAMBODIA



In May 2017, we were invited to the World Economic Forum (WEF) on ASEAN and collaborated with Women in Business Cambodia (WiBKH) to host a community event.

It was our first occasion to join WEF on ASEAN in Phnom Penh, which is where Wedu first started. So we took this opportunity to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to Cambodia by collaborating with WiBKH to host an event on Women in Leadership - "Building the Future of Women in ASEAN." Many of our Rising Stars, Mentors and Partners were in attendance!

Our presence at WEF on ASEAN led to some significant partnership discussions with the Ministry of Women Affairs in Cambodia (MoWA) that will potentially shape an initial 3-year leadership programme for hundreds of women in Cambodia.



The pilot stage of the program, “Unlocking Women’s Leadership Potential for Socio-Economic Empowerment” in Cambodia, is expected to start in 2018-2019. To share the vision of a partnership focused on large-scale social change, we held a joint kick-off event on 18 December 2017, featuring one of our first Rising Stars, Phearong and Cambodia's Minister of Women's Affairs, HE Ing Kantha Phavi. We were also grateful for the attendance of many supporters from other government Ministries, as well as representatives from the private sector.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



In 2017 Wedu as a group received grants USD 694k vs USD 587 in 2016, a growth of 18.3% while operating expenses of 480k USD in 2017 grew only of 1.8% compared to 472k USD in 2016.

Wedu is reaping the benefits of economies of scale on the investments made in the past years. Being a service oriented organization, our main cost is salaries of our staff. Between 2016 and 2017 the incidence of salary costs stayed constant at about 43.3%. The incidence for organizations of event, chiefly the Women Leadership Academy and others, increased from 22.8% in 2016 to 31.3% in 2017.

[View the full 2017 Financial Report here.](#)



It is thanks to our community of Rising Stars, Mentors, Partners, Donors and all who offer us support that we continue to grow. Together, we are creating bigger, bolder impact for more gender-equal leadership.