



# ISF Employment Programme Five Year Strategic Plan

## Executive Summary

Since the programme started in 2011, 82 students aged 14-25 received support through the Employment Programme. The programme have been working with the number of students needing these services as our student body gets older creates a need to re-evaluate the programme.

The review has been informed by World Bank, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and National Employment Agency research, and through interviews with employers, ISF students and staff. While our research shows that the overall structure of the employment programme is appropriate to meet the needs of employers and students, the results of our SWOT Analysis of the current programme emphasize it that it is still embryonic; lacking depth, breadth and structure, especially in terms of soft-skill development and relationships with specialist vocational training NGOs and employers.

Is it recommended the programme maintain its existing overall structure, using a three-pronged approach covering in-house soft-skill development, out-sourced vocational training from specialist NGOs and robust and broad relationships with employers to provide students with the support, information and training they need to make the transition from education to employment.

## Mission

The aim of the Employment Programme is to take students who have participated in the various ISF education programmes and prepare them for working life so that they can reach their full potential and obtain employment or self-employment to match their skills, abilities and interests whilst providing them with sufficient income, opportunities for progression and job satisfaction to ensure the sustainability of their livelihoods.

## Objectives

1. To develop and deliver an effective soft-skills programme which ensures participants develop the skills required to attain and then maintain appropriate employment.
2. To deliver quality vocational training across a wide range of professions including catering, mechanics, plumbing, electrics, carpentry, tailoring and service through partnerships with other NGOs and training organisations.
3. To build strong and sustainable relationships with a wide range of employers across many industries including financial services, tourism, hospitality and catering, service, and technology in order to provide opportunities for programme participants to transition directly into partner organisations.

## Background

In late 2011, ISF initiated the Employment Programme to teach employability skills to students and prepare them to enter work placements once they reached 16 years of age. The aim of the programme was to make ISF students attractive to employers by assisting them to develop skills and attitudes that make them exemplary employees and individuals accountable for their own futures.

We partnered with several employers to provide our students with the opportunity to earn an income and gain work experience whilst continuing their studies. However, due to limited experience and skills, our students often ended up in low-skilled jobs such as house-keepers and kitchen assistants.

The programme was evaluated in early 2014, when an external advisor was hired to review and restructure the programme. As a result of this, the programme was amended and the minimum age for participants reduced from 16 to 14. The updated curriculum aimed to provide the students with key employability skills, careers counselling, training and job opportunities; engaging ISF students still in full time education, in addition to students studying and working part-time in order to earn an income on the side, and those who had dropped out, or were at risk dropping out of school for personal or financial reasons.

While some young people joined the programme after dropping out of school, others, identified as being at risk of dropping out of school, were supported by employment programme staff to continue their education whilst undertaking soft-skill training in preparation for employment. Despite a lack of structure, the programme has been important in ensuring that students have a minimum level of employment training and support.

All students in the employment programme have either received one-to-one coaching/group coaching or career counseling, while some have received soft-skill training. ISF social workers and employment programme staff support individuals to explore and understand their options and develop career pathways. Students have visited different vocational training schools and workplaces, and from time-to-time guest speakers - individuals who come from similar backgrounds as our students and have progressed on to leadership roles – have been invited to share their stories with the students.

Employment programme staff continue to support students already in employment by, communicating with employers and supporting them when they face challenges at work. The team also work with students' parents to keep them actively engaged and up to date with the support their children receive, as they often have significant influence over their children's education and employment-related decisions.

Since the programme started in 2011, 82 students aged between 14-25 received the following support:

- 82 students received 1-to-1/group coaching
- 75 students took part in Youth Club activities following a curricula developed by the Cambodian Ministry for Education and World Vision Cambodia which aimed to develop social awareness, advocacy, leadership, communication and team-working skills).
- 64 students received soft-skill training in-house
- 16 students received computer training on Microsoft Office (Word, Excel and Power Point), use of internet and email.
- 82 students received English language training while they were catch-up or state school students.
- 9 students received vocational training.

Since 2011 the number of students joining the Employment programme has continued to increase. In 2011, 8 students joined the programme, followed by 7 in 2012, 1 student in 2013, 12 students in 2014, 9 students in 2015, 15 students in 2016 and 22 students in 2017. Currently we are working with 74 students (excludes 8 students who dropped out of the programme).

Overall, 8 of 82 students have dropped out of the Employment programme with no work and no further connection with ISF.

From 2016 to October 2017, of the 19 students who work full time, 10 students remained in the same company for more than 6 months before moving on to a new work-place. Nine students moved to new job within 6 months.

Overall most children come to ISF with very little or no education, and without ISF support they would typically go on to earn maximum \$120 per month with very little job security and very little chance of progression (based on research from Open Institute on low-skill and unskilled migrant labor in cooperation with USAID and WINROCK International 2016).

**Table showing the employment profile of students assisted by ISF**

<b>Industry Sector</b>	<b># of students</b>	<b>Average salary per month (USD)</b>
<b>Hotel and catering</b>		
- Service provider	4	\$120
- Cashier	2	\$170
- Cook	3	\$150
- Tuk Tuk Driver	3	\$150
- Truck Driver	2	\$170
<b>Service</b>		
- Security Guard	2	\$150
- Cleaner	2	\$150
- Receptionist	2	\$160
<b>Beauty</b>		
- Beauty Salon	1	\$100
- Barber	2	\$170
<b>Trade</b>		
- Air-con repair	4	\$150
- Telephone repair	1	\$150
- Sewing machine repair	1	\$170
<b>Construction</b>		
- Construction worker	1	\$225*
<b>Garment</b>		
- Garment factory	6	\$160
<b>NGO ISF</b>		
- Football coach full time	2	\$170
<b>Printing</b>		
Book production	1	\$170
<b>Other</b>		
Full time	4	Various
Part time	9	\$10-60
	<b>52</b>	

\* Despite the apparent good salary, this job is high risk, with no contract, no insurance, hard physical labour, long, uncapped hours, (no weekend and minimal holiday) and is short term.

## Current Programme

The current Employment Programme is recognised as being in very early stages of development given the relatively small number of students who have reached formal employment age. With a growing number of students completing the full ISF Education Programme, we expect to see 10-20 students graduating from the Education Programme each year over the next three years.

Currently the Employment Programme engages 74 students; 43 of whom are working full time, nine working part time, seven in on the job training, five currently in vocational training, ten are receiving career counseling and soft-skill training. Thirteen of 74 students are continuing with their studies. Of the 74 young people in the programme, 22 require little support but continue to check-in with the Employment Programme team every 3 months.

The Employment Programme in ISF's Stung Meanchey centre is run by Chun Chamnan, who was promoted from the role of social worker in October 2016. One additional staff member was recruited to the team in September this year to support Chamnan as the number of students has and will continue to increase each year. The employment team work very closely with the social worker team who in turn work closely with all students at ISF and are well-placed to identify those who have, or are at risk of dropping out of school.

**The current program comprises of three elements, soft skill training, vocational training, and partnership with employers. These are outlined below:**

### **1. Soft-skill training**

The curriculum was partly developed in 2011 and re-defined by an external programme advisor who worked with us for 3 months in 2014. It has continued to be developed by previous and current staff members but there has been very limited understanding of soft-skills. We therefore recognise the need to enhance our skills and staff capacity in order to make the training more effective. We also recognise the need to create a more structured and comprehensive programme.

Our current Employment Programme has the beginnings of a soft-skills programme, which has been developed to include teaching on communication, decision-making, leadership, analytical skills, teamwork and problem-solving.

ISF's Youth Club was developed as a means of encouraging our students to stay in school and also presents an opportunity for soft-skill development by promoting social awareness, advocacy, leadership, communication and team-working skills.

### **2. Vocational Training**

As ISF doesn't have its own vocational training capability we have developed relationships with 8 NGOs, 1 private company as well as the government-run National Employment Agency (NEA) which has already developed effective vocational training programmes. Through these partnerships, ISF students can access vocational training and apprenticeships with training organisations, commercial companies and NGO partners. Where possible we seek opportunities where our participants can earn a small wage while working and being trained. The current partnerships with vocational training schools vary with respect to school fees payable, the level and type of support etc. ISF covers the cost where necessary.

Five students are still in vocational training. Nine students have completed the training; (5 are working in an area related to their training, while 2 have transitioned to other fields

and 2 have dropped out of employment completely or lost contact with ISF). The average salary earned by these students is \$160 -\$170 per month.

Where required we support students with training materials, transport, uniforms, food parcels for their families and where necessary, accommodation. This allows our students to make the most of their training whilst reducing the risk of them dropping-out in order to make ends meet. Of the 14 students who have attended vocational training, 7 per cent had completed grade 9, 43 per cent failed grade 9, while 50 per cent of students had never reached grade 9.

Based on our own experience and observations, students who enter vocational training prior to employment go on to have more stable jobs with increased opportunities for progression, salary increases and better working conditions than students who do not undertake vocational training. Students who not undertake vocational training or job preparation are less confident in their work and struggle more to overcome challenges they experience at work. As a result, they are less likely to remain employed than those who have undertaken training and preparation.

Currently we are aware of 25 vocational training schools run by NGOs, private companies and the government. While ISF has good relationships with some of these training schools, the current arrangements are based on informal verbal agreements. A full list of current and future vocational training partners can be found in the 'Future of the Employment Programme' section.

### 3. Employer Partnerships

We have built good relationships with 14 employers which provides some initial building blocks for the programme, however we need to create more structured relationships for the programme to be effective when we have more students coming through each year.

We currently have 52 students working in various industries (as above). However, we would like to expand the programme to include employment opportunities across multiple industries and companies. We recognise this aspect of the current programme needs substantial improvement as the range of employers we work with is still limited.

A full list of current and future employment partners can be found in 'Future of the Employment Programme' section.

## SWOT Analysis of the ISF Employment Programme

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge and understanding of the existing programme</li> <li>- Understanding of skills gap</li> <li>- Good relationships with vocational training schools and employment partners</li> <li>- Passionate staff</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited number of employment partners</li> <li>- Lack of partnerships with big local or multinational companies</li> <li>- Unstructured soft-skill curriculum</li> <li>- Limited staff capacity</li> <li>- Undefined success criteria</li> <li>- Unclear selection criteria</li> <li>- Lack of appropriate tools to monitor participant progress</li> </ul>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential partnerships with training organisations (e.g. NEA and PSE)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students face urgent financial pressures and go into unskilled work rather than completing training</li> <li>- Lack of student determination</li> <li>- Scheduling conflicts with state schools</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students don't understand/appreciate the value of employability skills</li> <li>- Quality of external vocational training</li> </ul>
--	---

## Research

We have pulled together some external research carried out by credible organizations that have studied employment needs in Cambodia as follows:

### 1. World Bank

Research by the World Bank (2012) identified that soft-skills are lacking amongst youth and university graduates in Cambodia, which poses a challenge to employers in the local job market (Matching Aspirations: Skills for Implementing Cambodia's Growth Strategy, World Bank, 2012). The research identifies that 70 per cent of Cambodian employers felt that young people lacked necessary soft skills such as positive work attitude, decision-making and analytical skills. In addition, employers reported a growing unmet demand for workers with a mix of soft and technical skills. Specific skills shortages were identified by the report in the following fields: engineering, science, agriculture, industry, mathematics.

### 2. National Employment Agency (NEA)

In a study published by the NEA in 2015, it was found that 4 out of the top 5 skills and competencies lacking among first-time job seekers leaving Higher Education had little to do with their field of study. The main skills and qualities identified were:

- working world/life experience and maturity
- Technical or job-specific skills
- Positive attitude/personality and motivation
- Foreign language skills
- Communication skills

In addition to this, to make the transition from student to employee, there is a far greater skill-set required than just the knowledge students gain at school or university. For example, an average student with strong English language skills is more likely to be hired by an international company than a top student with limited English language skills. Without effective communication there is little chance of success.

### 3. International Labour Organization (ILO)

A survey by ILO reporting on the skills gap (Skill Shortage and skill Gap in the Cambodian labour market, Nov 2013), drew on the experiences of more than 500 establishments in six sectors including three in manufacturing (food and beverage, garment/apparel and footwear, and rubber and plastic) two in service (finance and insurance, and accommodation), and construction.

The main reason behind poor performance indicated by establishments in all sectors (with only the exception of the higher paying finance sector) was lack of motivation. This reason was cited by almost two-thirds of the establishments involved. The second reason, cited by 44 per cent of establishments, was that workers were inexperienced, a reason that could be connected to the high worker turnover that characterizes the Cambodian labour market. Four skills were considered necessary by more than 20 per cent of the establishments; job specific tasks, oral communication, knowledge of foreign language and manual dexterity.

### 4. ISF Employment Programme Review: Interviews with Employers,

Two employers we met recommended that ISF should focus on supporting students in developing soft skills including key employability skills such as work ethic, self-

determination, and confidence. They also identified a need for computer skills and English, as well as passion for their work. The employers also fed back that the vocational training schools should provide more practical skills, however suggested that we should focus more on soft-skill training rather than technical skills.

**5. ISF Employment Programme Review: Interviews with ISF students** The feedback from students in the Employment Programme indicates that they receive negative feedback from their supervisors and sometimes from customers when they make mistakes. The reason they feel that they make these mistakes is because they lack skills and confidence. They are also aware that if they were supported to develop more skills, they would be able to perform better. Respondents also highlighted a need to gain more experience in order to be able to do their jobs better.

## Future of the Employment Programme

In the next three years, over 40% of ISF students will be aged 14 or over, and while we hope that most will complete their secondary education and move on to higher education, many will drop out of school due to familial and financial pressures. To prevent our students from ending up in low-paid and unstable jobs, ISF will have to work harder to make sure to provide the necessary skills and support needed to benefit the students in the long term. In addition ISF will need to build strong sustainable relationships with employers across multiple industries.

The table below provides an overview of the student profile over the next five years with relation to how many will need soft-skill training, vocational training and employment each year. This sets both the challenge and opportunity for ISF to enhance its employment programme.

	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
	SM	CA								
Soft skill training	100	80	50	30	50	30	50	30	50	30
Vocational Training	15	6	20	10	25	10	30	10	35	10
Working	5	4	10	7	10	7	10	10	10	10

Based on the research we have undertaken, we believe our focus should be to further develop the three main components within existing programme. However, each component needs a significant overhaul and enhancement.

The three components are soft skill, vocational training and building effective partnership with employers.

### 1. Soft-skills training

This element of the Employment Programme will continue to be delivered to students from 14 years old. Depending on their anticipated academic achievement we will create a series of soft skill modules in a structural manner. Each module of the new curriculum will cover a particular skill theme, and students will have the option to take various modules at different times depending on their need and availability.

Intense work on soft-skill training and curriculum development is needed in order to ensure improvement to develop the student's communication skills, self-confidence, ability to take initiative understand work-ethic and culture, as well as others skills.

The modules will include significant practical skills training with students including role play, interactive challenges and activities.

Based on our research, we have identified the following key topics for the soft-skill training:

1. Communication
2. Self-confidence & motivation
3. Problem solving
4. Analytical skills and decision making
5. Discipline
6. Teamwork

We will require external support to develop a curriculum covering these skills. We will also need “train the trainer” support to build in-house capability.

### Key Actions

- Identify which soft-skills above can be developed in-house and which require external support
- Outsource a specialist to review our current curriculum and assist in its development
- Research soft-skill training available (e.g. NEA)
- Continue to actively engage with employers to refine the skill training
- Build the capacity of existing staff to deliver more engaging and innovative practical classes.
- Develop system to track each student’s progress
- Find a means of integrating soft-skill development into the wider curriculum delivered to students from a younger age.

## 2. Vocational training

From the research we have carried out, and discussions held with other NGOs, we believe the most effective way to provide vocational training to our students is through partnerships with existing and developing NGOs, whose focus is vocational training. We have already built strong relationships with number of such NGOs, and will build further relationship in the future. These are set out in the table below:

### Current Vocational Training Partners

Name Partner	Type of training												
	Weld.	Mech.	Sew.	Constr	Tour.	Hotel & cateri.	Coo.	Bea.	Elect.	Busi.	Medi.	Design	Others
<b>NGOs</b>													
PSE		√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√		
CCF							√						
Mith Samlanh	√	√	√	√			√	√					
Don Bosco	√	√					√		√	√		√	
Krom Ngoy Center									√				
Project Khmer Hope				√		√							
Vimeantep Technical Center.									√				
Dai Tumneup Driving school													√
<b>Private Institution</b>													
Acedemy of Career and Tourism					√	√							

### Future vocational training partners

It is also important that we assess the quality of the training our students receive at these NGOs, providing students attending any vocational training. We will also carry out a full assessment of student’s expectations, desires, knowledge and skills to ensure we selected the

appropriate NGOs and vocational training theme for them and ensure that the quality meets employer requirements.

For each institute, we partner with we will ensure that they will have a robust standard. We will document service expectation, how the relationship will operate. The following school are future partners identified.

Name Partner	Type of training														
	Weld.	Carp.	Mech.	Sew.	Const.	Tour.	Hotel & cateri.	Cook	Beau.	Elect.	Busin.	Medi.	Music.	Desig.	Other.
NGOs															
Youth Development Association					√					√		√		√	
Passerelles numériques.										√					
Music Arts School.															√
<b>Public Institution</b>															
National Technical					√									√	
Industrial Technical Institute	√		√											√	
Preah Kossamak Polytechnic Institute					√					√					
National Polytechnic	√		√		√			√		√					
Cambodia-Thai Skill	√		√		√										
Phnom Penh JVC			√												
<b>Private Institution</b>															
Socheat Beauty Salon					√				√						
Linna Culinary School								√							
KSK Bakery and Food Center							√								
Cambodia International Cooperation Institute.			√		√						√				
Economic Development Institute											√				
Tommy's Company		√													

### Key Actions

- Work with individual students to identify skill shortages which inhibit career choice
- Review the jobs students go to after vocational training to assess whether training have been effective
- Research the quality of vocational training available to ensure students have the best employment opportunity

### 3. Partnerships with employers

As the number of students completing their secondary education through ISF increase there is a critical need to build strong and effective relationship with a large number of employers across a range of industries. We therefore propose to build upon the initial set of relationship we have. To this effect we have identified initial set of employers around various industries that can provide a range of employment opportunities for our students. These are set out in the table below which can be further developed in the future.

For each employer, we recognize that be successful we will need to build a strong bilateral relationship. We will also need to ensure our students learn required skill, knowledge and

personal characteristic. We will also need to monitor our students at trail in their first year of employment.

### Current partnerships with Employers

Name of employer	Job type						
	Reception./ cashier	Cook	Waiter/bar.	Work.	Electrician/ plumber	Electron.	Hair/make up
<b>Hotel &amp; catering</b>							
Eleven 1 Restaurant			√				
Lunchbox		√	√				
Norkor Reach Restaurant		√	√				
342 Guest House				√			
Savimex Gas station				√			
<b>Construction</b>							
Srun Gnoun Book				√			
Don Construction				√			
Net Construction				√			
Anong Air Condition Repair						√	
World Technology						√	
<b>Garment Factory</b>							
Sun Keng Garment (Cambodia) Co., Ltd				√			
<b>Beauty</b>							
Ya Beauty Salon							√
VPSS Security Service				√			
Natural Garden	√		√	√			

### Key Actions

- Monitor previous and future students working for partner employers to better understand the successes and challenges
- Expand employer network to include local and international companies.
- Develop black list of employers with bad work practices

### Potential Future Partnerships

Name of employer	Job type					
Intercontinental Hotel	Book-keeper	Cashier	Service provider	Kitchen staff	Maintenance	
Amazon Coffee	Book-keeper	Cashier	Service provider	Kitchen staff	Maintenance	
Raffles Hotel le Royal	Book-keeper	Cashier	Service provider	Kitchen staff	Maintenance	
Phnom Penh Hotel	Book-keeper	Cashier	Service provider	Kitchen staff	Maintenance	
H.I.S Cambodia. Love Peach Travel	Tour operator	Cashier	Sales			
S.T.B Travel and Tour Co., Ltd	Tour operator	Cashier	Sales			
DNAK Trading Co.LTD	Receptionist					
The Caffee Bean and tea leaf	Receptionist	Cashier	Waiter	Kitchen staff		
The Shops Restaurant	Receptionist	Cashier	Waiter	Kitchen staff		
BROWN Coffee	Receptionist	Cashier	Waiter	Kitchen staff		
FCC Restaurant	Receptionist	Cashier	Waiter	Kitchen staff		
Mini Banana Restaurant	Receptionist	Cashier	Waiter	Kitchen staff		
Top Banana Restaurant	Receptionist	Cashier	Waiter	Kitchen staff		
World Bright Outsourcing	Data entry					

ACLEDA Bank					
AIA Insurance					

## Other Key Actions based on SWOT Analysis

- Set clear success criteria of overall Employment programme
- Develop clear selection criteria for students joining the programme
- Develop system to keep track of each student's history and progress
- Develop a better understanding of how we can improve students' motivation and determination to thrive in education and work.
- Work with social workers to find solutions for state school timetables in order to ensure that students can attend extra classes and activities in the Employment programme, English and ICT.
- Continue to work to encourage students to stay in school until at least Grade 9 so they can undertake vocational training and progress on to work offering them better income and prospects for career progression.
- Explore opportunities for an ISF-run business providing youth with the opportunity to gain experience and skill while earning
- Consider providing financial support to students undertaking vocational training so as to reduce financial pressure and incentivize completion.
- Increase employment support provided to parents

## Conclusion

An effective Employment Programme within ISF is essential to ensure the ultimate success of the Programme in leading to appropriate sustainable employment for our students. The work we do through our Education Programme from catch up, state school, English, computer etc. gives our students a solid foundation. However, if they are unable to secure meaningful employment, the programme cannot be considered a success.

### **Key Actions**

- Hire Head of Employment Programme to oversee further development and implementation of new 5 year plan (job description attached).
- Outsource the development of further soft skill program
- Build capacity of the current staff to deliver the aforementioned soft-skill training.
- Identify high quality vocational training schools and review the employment that graduates from these schools are engaged in to ensure the training is effective in getting them the right jobs.
- Identify organisations that we would like students to get work placements with based on quality of training, salary and future prospects.
- Give students stipend if they attend vocational training (currently students prefer to take the job with no skill rather than going to vocational training)

## Budget

### Cost of current programme 2017/2018 US\$21,000 per year

Additional cost of after recommendation in first year is outlined below:

Details	QTY	Unite	Amount
Head of employment programme salary and insurance	1	13 months	\$25,000
Curriculum development and staff capacity building (first year, the cost for year after will be only for staff development and	1	1	\$20,000
Stipend for students in Vocational training	21	12 month x \$80	\$20,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$65,000</b>

### Total cost for the first year \$86,000

Cost after recommendation in second year is outlined below:

Details	QTY	Unite	Amount
Head of employment programme salary and insurance	1	13 months	\$25,000
Soft skill training delivering and staff development	1	1	\$5,000
Stipend for students in Vocational training	30	12 month x \$80	\$28,800
<b>Total cost for 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>			<b>\$58,800</b>

### Total cost for the second year \$79,800