Global Grassroots
6-Month Progress Update to Dining for Women
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August of 2012, Global Grassroots was chosen to be the featured program of Dining for Women, raising $50,000. This generous funding was to be contributed towards our 2013 Academy for Conscious Change and three new venture teams initiated by and for vulnerable women in Rwanda. Over the last six months, funding from Dining for Women has enabled:

- High-engagement social entrepreneurship coaching for the ventures of three teams, representing 37 women change agents, preparing to serve approximately 700 other vulnerable women and girls in their communities.
- Community-led research among 140 single mothers and 70 community members to develop a baseline understanding of the issues of teen pregnancy and the stigma and violence facing teen mothers and their children.
- The initiation of a training program for 140 single mothers in human rights so that they may be more capable of defending themselves against abuse, discrimination and stigma.
- Community-led research among a sample of 39 women experiencing domestic violence, local health workers and officials to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how conflict manifests and its causes among couples.
- The launch of a training program reaching 300 people to date, targeting couples experiencing domestic violence, engaged couples preparing for marriage and local officials, focused on conflict resolution and human rights.

We are deeply grateful for the thousands of members of Dining for Women whose contributions have gone directly to support our women change agents working to benefit vulnerable women and girls in the rural communities of Mahembe and Byimana in Rwanda. With your partnership, Global Grassroots’ graduates are fearlessly combating domestic violence, teen pregnancy, and malnutrition as they become recognized leaders in their communities.

The following report presents an overview of our work and an update on our progress for the last 6 months.
BACKGROUND

Global Grassroots is a US-registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that catalyzes ideas for social change designed by and for underserved women in post-conflict countries. Global Grassroots’ Academy for Conscious Change is an 18 month social venture incubator offering non-profit management skills, ethical leadership training, seed grants and high-engagement support that enables vulnerable women change agents to launch their own grassroots solutions benefiting women and girls.

Our long-term goal is that vulnerable women, especially in post-conflict and developing countries, will have the capacity and resources to lead responsible social change, sustained by their own communities. Our strategy for accomplishing our mission is two-part: (a) to catalyze and invest in the ideas of underserved change agents working collectively and systemically for the advancement of women and girls, and (b) to build the architecture necessary to sustain the work of conscious social change agents.

Global Grassroots’ core program is its Academy for Conscious Change, a social venture incubator that catalyzes vulnerable women change agents who wish to launch their own grassroots civil society organizations. The Academy program lasts an average of 18 months, the pace of which is driven by the team’s participation, and offers high-engagement support services in four phases:

1. Intensive, interactive 40-hour training program, incorporating:
   a. conscious leadership training
   b. mind-body trauma -healing
   c. social entrepreneurship and non-profit management skills
2. 3-6 months of hands-on non-profit venture development facilitation
3. Seed grants and implementation support
4. 12-months non-profit apprenticeship with ongoing, high-engagement advisory support

Our approach embraces a participatory development paradigm and integrates a holistic balance of personal and social transformation.

Since 2006, Global Grassroots has trained over 450 emerging change agents, who have launched sustainable, civil society organizations serving 25,000 vulnerable women and girls annually. Our experience has shown that one successful experience as a change agent is quickly followed by expansion and/or an iterative problem-solving process where women take on other challenges facing women in their communities. Within 12-15 months, most of our teams begin to expand.
their programs, teach others the social entrepreneurship skills they gained through our training, or utilize that training to launch new social ventures solving new issues within their community.

Global Grassroots’ high-engagement approach to catalyzing, self-sustaining, systemic social change organizations leverages each investment to create maximal social value. Our long-term goal is to advance a culture of conscious social change whereby women lead innovative grassroots change, sustained by their own community.

**PROGRESS UPDATE**

Over the course of the last six months, our efforts with women in Rwanda have focused on completing the venture development of seven social venture teams, including three whose seed funding was sponsored by Dining for Women. Following is an overview of each of the three organizations and their progress to date:

**A Friend Indeed | Inshuti Nyanshuti**

*Combating Violence and Stigma Against Unwed Mothers & Their Children*

**The Issue:**
Ten women compose A Friend Indeed, which works in Byimana within the Ruhango sector. They seek to combat violence against unwed single mothers and their children. Fatherless children are believed to be abnormal, and the mothers are targets because they are not married. The women even face discrimination and abuse from their own parents and siblings who beat them, reject them, and deny them and their children shelter and support. Members of society view single mothers as a burden and resource drain: a woman with an infant cannot easily find work and often turns to prostitution; prostitution contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS; if the woman cannot find work, she may beg or steal; and when the child is older, he or she may get into trouble on the street while left unsupervised as the mother works.

**The Solution:**
A Friend Indeed turned to Global Grassroots to learn the skills necessary to run a social venture. They formed small neighborhood associations for a total of 80 pregnant mothers and 120 illegitimate children to help the women find sources of income. After the Global Grassroots training, they modified their solution to focus on changing the conservative mindset that leads community members to ostracize single mothers. They have since created a multi-pronged approach to address this issue at several levels of society. They are now working to:

- Provide reproductive health training to youth, to help them avoid unwanted pregnancies
- Provide training to single mothers about their legal rights and skill training to help them earn a living
- Host 8 theater performances per year as well as open discussions to educate the public about the violence single mothers often face
- Help local leaders to understand and address this issue more seriously
- Create strategic partnerships with local health clinics and social workers to help them measure their impact
The Goals | Impact:
In the first year of operations, A Friend Indeed aims to:

• Decrease unwanted pregnancies by 30%
• Reduce rejection of single mothers and their children by 50%
• Reduce the number of single mothers and their children who drop out of school by 40% and 50%, respectively
• Increase the number of single mothers and their children who have access to health insurance by 60%
• Increase the understanding by the community of the rights of single mothers and their children by 60%

Progress Update:
To date, A Friend Indeed has completed their baseline issue study within their community among 140 single mothers, 70 members of the general public, school teachers, local officials and the local clinic. Results from their issue study include:

• 100% of the 140 single mothers surveyed gave birth out of marriage
• 91% of the single mothers replied that their pregnancies were undesired
• The clinic reported that in the last six months they had received 48 single girls who came to give birth
• 49% of single mothers admitted to having no knowledge of reproductive health
• 93% of single mothers replied that they need to learn an income generating skill
• 100% said that their children have no rights to an inheritance of their father’s property
• 73% of single mothers faced abuse as a result have to live at home and be supported by their families, 57% had been beaten by their families, and 29% were evicted from their homes
• 92% of single mothers faced violence during pregnancy
• 50% of single mothers had dropped out of school because they were pregnant 37% illegitimate children had dropped out of school
• 88% of single mothers lived on less than $10 per month
• Only 15% received any income from the father of their children, and 14% reported having to trade sex for that income from the father of their children
• For other sources of income, 44% relied upon friends or work in farming, 8% were involved in trade, 4% on a salary, 4% had turned to prostitution, and 26% had no income and relied upon their families
• 100% of the 70 community members surveyed said they thought a single mother was someone who had become useless

In June, the team hosted their first training with 140 single mothers on human rights to help the young women have more knowledge and confidence in standing up for their rights. Their next endeavor will be to conduct a training in reproductive health with young people in the community to begin to improve education so as to prevent further unwanted pregnancies. Following are photographs of the training program:
United People | Abishyizehamwe

*Fighting Domestic Violence and Improving Family Planning Through Education of Men and Women*

**The Issue:**
United People will fight domestic violence in their community of Byimana in the Ruhango sector. There, husbands abuse their wives, and neither is aware that laws protect women from this situation. The problem is compounded by a lack of family planning. Wives are challenged to care for many children with very limited resources.

**The Solution:**
To reduce domestic violence, United People will address the problem directly by providing home visits and legal training to both men and women in their community. They will personally visit, monitor and evaluate the homes of troubled couples and talk to them about peaceful conflict resolution. To change cultural norms in the next generation they will also provide training to couples preparing for marriage.

United People will also foster strategic partnerships with legal experts to aid them in the creation of a curriculum on family law, health, reproduction and family planning. Finally, they will provide sewing lessons to women to help them earn their own income and become more respected by their husbands.

**The Goals / Impact:**
The seven members of United People hope to decrease spousal abuse, lead more women to utilize family planning, and give women more power in their own households. In the first 12 months of operations they aim to:
- Train 210 married couples (420 people) in gender equity, reproductive health, family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention
- Reduce domestic violence community-wide from 50% to 25%
- Reduce the number of women who leave their families due to physical and emotional abuse from 50% to 25%

**Progress Update:**
United People has completed their baseline issue study and has also begun their training program, reaching 300 of their initial target of 420 people, including couples experiencing conflict and abuse, future couples about to be married and local leaders. Following are a selection of results from their community survey among 29 women, 5 local and religious leaders and 5 clinic health workers:
- 78% of respondents are interested in the team’s program services
- 86% of women are currently experiencing domestic violence
- 45% suffer from physical abuse
- 55% live in polygamy or circumstances where the male has multiple partners
- In 66% of cases, abuse of alcohol plays a role in the violence
- 17% of couples have separated
- 27% of women have had to drop out of school
- 83% have a monthly income less than $30
- 41% are dependent on money from their husband
The team will complete their training of 120 additional people including couples in conflict, future couples and local officials and then will initiate their program in income generation to provide women with greater economic security to leave abusive relationships that do not change. For couples who are able to manage their conflict without violence, the team will make awards of pigs after conducting follow-up home visits.

**People of the Same Compassion**  
*Eliminating Child Malnutrition by Training Parents to Create Kitchen Gardens*

**The Issue:**  
In the Mahembe community near Byimana, a group of teachers has grown concerned about the large number of children suffering from malnutrition and malnutrition-associated illness. Parents do not have the knowledge to prepare balanced and sufficient food for their children.

**The Solution:**  
The team formed by these teachers, People of the Same Compassion, has twenty members. They aim to eradicate malnutrition in Mahembe’s children by training parents to prepare nutritious food and grow kitchen gardens to supplement their diets.

**The Impact:**  
Once operational, this team plans to train parents on how to create kitchen gardens and how to prepare balanced meals using local products. Their research suggests that in addition to helping eliminate malnutrition and malnutrition-associated disease among Mahembe’s children and infants, their efforts will reduce family and community conflicts as well. This venture’s theory of change is that by training parents how to prepare a balanced meal and how to recognize the symptoms of malnutrition, and by training kids not to stigmatize malnourished children, malnutrition will be reduced and the number of children passing the national exams in school will increase. People of the Same Compassion’s objectives after 1 year of operation include:

- The proportion of children passing the national exam will increase from 60% to 70%
- Malnutrition will be decreased by 40%
- Conflict related to poison accusations will decrease by 30%
- 100% of trainees will prepare balanced meals
- Stigmatization will reduce by 20% (from an estimated 40%-60%)
- 2 out of 8 children who dropped out because of malnutrition will return to school
- 20% more parents will send malnourished children to school
- 50% of women trained in weaving will have income to buy what they need

After four years, this team of teachers aims to have 95% of students passing their national exams. People of the Same Compassion is in the final stages of development. Their program proposal has met with our approval with respect to its design for having a measurable social impact at the root level of their social issue with a comprehensive solution. We are working with the team to finalize their start-up and operating budget to ensure that it is designed for
long-term sustainability. They have prepared their issue study survey instrument, and will begin implementation of their baseline study once their budget is approved and award letter signed.

PLANS FOR THE COMING 6 MONTHS
Global Grassroots will continue to provide venture development support for People of the Same Compassion so that they may successfully initiate their venture plan. We will finish seed grant disbursements to A Friend Indeed and United People, so that they may officially move into their 12-month non-profit management apprenticeship. During this period of operation, we closely monitor their activities, visiting regularly and requiring quarterly financial and program reports. At the completion of one year of activities, all teams repeat their issue study to assess their impact.

From October 7 – 21, we will initiate our next Academy for Conscious Change incubator with a cohort of 5-8 water ventures. We are planning to begin our preparation for marketing and team selection in late August. The impact of water on women is tremendous, and water issues have been the second largest issue of priority facing our teams after gender-based violence. Given several partnerships, including the Global Water Challenge, we have decided to focus an exclusive incubator on fostering ventures who have an interest in working on the myriad of issues facing women and girls as a result of a lack of access to clean water.

Globally, women make up more than half of the 884 million people who have no access to safe water. They also represent those most often tasked with daily collection. According to UNWomen, on average women travel 10-15 kilometers or 6-9 miles every day, spending eight hours or more collecting water then hand carrying it to their home. Most women can only carry one large jerrycan, each of which holds 5 gallons or 20 liters. This water must then serve an average of 8 to 10 people in a household daily for drinking, cooking, washing clothes and dishes, bathing and cleaning their home.

According to the World Health Organization and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program for Water Supply and Sanitation, girls under 15 years of age are twice as likely as boys the same age to be given the responsibility to collect water. Girls who are tasked with the collection of water in place of their mothers miss part of their school day. Overtime, they can fall behind and eventually drop out. Women who manage this task for their family, give up hours of productivity that might have been spent other ways to enhance a family’s economic wellbeing.
Water collection thus continues to perpetuate the vulnerability of women, undermining the economic and educational opportunities that may exist to advance their wellbeing.

Even more unfortunate is the violence inherent in the process of collection. Because it takes so many hours to reach and return with water, many women leave before dawn and travel in the dark to get to a water access point early. Some water access points serve thousands of surrounding villagers. Arriving early means women can avoid the crowds that often break into violence as individuals compete for access. It also means that they are more likely to collect clear water from shallow creeks or hand-dug wells before it gets muddied with dozens of others coming for collection. However, traveling alone through the dark also leaves women more susceptible to opportunistic sexual assault. On the other hand, returning later than expected from collecting water is often a trigger for domestic violence as husbands await their morning tea or bath. Pregnant women carrying heavy water jugs are more likely to suffer a miscarriage. Women who are blind, elderly, disabled or too sick to carry water on their own are often forced to trade sex for men to deliver it for them when they cannot afford to pay for the service.

Not only is the collection process racked with violence and exploitation, but the water itself is a source of harm, spreading dangerous water-borne diseases. Globally, diarrhea is the second leading cause of death among children under five. And it is the lack of clean drinking water and proper hygiene and sanitation that are the primary causes of diarrhea. Safe water is also essential for reducing maternal mortality and infant mortality rates.

While women remain those most deeply impacted by the lack of access to clean water, unfortunately, women are least likely to control or manage water infrastructure. And yet, women represent the most critical stakeholders with a vested interest in resolving this issue. Water ventures can provide women with a viable and sustainable income, and an opportunity to serve as a change agent within her community serving the marginalized. Women-managed clean water access ensures girls’ access to education will be protected and the next generation will have even greater opportunities. Further, water access points where women gather make sensitizing large groups on issues such as women’s rights, domestic violence or HIV/AIDS remarkably easy. Women who manage their own clean water resources not only ensure the most vulnerable women
and girls are no longer subjected to poverty, violence and exploitation, but the ability of women to lead and control water ventures provides women with greater confidence, agency, leadership and engagement in community as change agents.

On average, each of Global Grassroots’ water ventures serves between 1500 and 2500 other people with clean water on an ongoing, permanent basis, while also working to alleviate several other issues affecting women as a result of a lack of access to clean water. We look forward to launching our next program on this critical issue this fall with the support of Dining for Women.

SUMMARY OF GRANT EXPENDITURES

To date, our programmatic work has focused on the final stage of venture development for seven Rwandan teams, the seed funding for three of which were sponsored by Dining for Women, including “United People”, “A Friend Indeed” and “People of the Same Compassion”. Under these activities, we have expended half our designated grant funding for US salaries, 85% of our grant allocation for our Rwanda staff salaries, and just over half our funding for program development expenses, which include transportation for site visits, communications, workshop materials, training facility rental and other operating expenses to support the development of our teams. As shared above, two of these three teams have begun their launch and we have issued the first two tranches of funding under each team award letters. This funding includes the initial expense necessary for each team to carry out their baseline issue study, per the results shared in this report, and the second tranche allows them to begin purchasing the supplies required to begin their operations. We anticipate awarding the remaining grant funding throughout the next six months, including for People of the Same Compassion who are ready to begin work once their budget is approved.

The start-up expenses and initial grant awarded for A Friend Indeed was: $4072. Of this grant, $972, representing the first two tranches of funding, has been disbursed. This leaves an allocation of the Dining for Women seed funding of $928 for unanticipated needs or expansion.

The initial start-up expenses and grant awarded for United People was: $3770. Of this grant, $1698, representing the first two tranches of funding, has been disbursed. This leaves an allocation of the Dining for Women seed funding of $1230 for unanticipated needs or expansion.

The anticipated start-up expenses for People of the Same Compassion are: $4794. This will leave an allocation of the Dining for Women seed funding of $206 for unanticipated needs or expansion.

Having an extra cushion of seed funding is very healthy as teams do not always adequately budget for the needs of their venture, prices change for supplies, local officials impose fees and taxes or equipment breaks. That being said, we feel good about the current ventures’ due diligence and financial planning, so we are hopeful we will actually be able to assist them with a second grant towards the expansion of their programs later in the year.

As shared in the report, we are planning to launch our next Academy for Conscious Change October 7 – 21 for 5-8 water ventures. It will be in the initiation of this new cohort into our incubator that we will expend the final funding for salaries, educational training materials and training expenses. Following is a line item summary of the budget for the allocation of Dining for
Women grant funds per category, the expenditures to date of grant funding and remaining funding balance.

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<th>Grant Allocated</th>
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<th>Remaining</th>
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<td>Rwanda Salary</td>
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There have been no changes to our timeline, budget, funding or program goals and we have not faced any challenges to our planned implementation. We had anticipated that our three teams would have moved further along in their venture initiation, but the pace is always driven by the team, as we are dedicated to supporting local initiative and the time teams need to fully plan and embrace ownership of their own ventures.

**CONCLUSION**

We have found that one of the most effective levers of change is a woman who has the capability, rights, power, courage, and resources to initiate solutions to the social issues she, her family and her community face. Global Grassroots’ long-term goal is to advance a culture of conscious social change whereby women lead innovative grassroots change, sustained by their own communities. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Dining for Women to make this possible in Rwanda, and look forward to expanding and deepening this impact in the coming six months.

For more information, please visit our website at: [www.globalgrassroots.org](http://www.globalgrassroots.org).