



PROGRAM FACT SHEET

January 2014



*Catalyst Foundation:
Holistic Community Development Program*

Website: www.catalystfoundation.org

"Rape is a vicious thing. It's not gentle or considerate. To the recipient it's violent & painful." Gladys Lawson, Blood Borne Connections

Mission

Catalyst Foundation's mission is to support community building in Vietnam to fight human trafficking. Centered on a holistic approach, Catalyst is a humanitarian organization that provides community programs which address basic needs, job opportunities, counseling and education to prevent the trafficking of women and girls.

Life Challenges of the Women Served

The program beneficiaries are girls ages 5-18, single mothers, and girls with grandparents as caregivers, all of whom are at the highest risk of trafficking in the Raglai community. The Raglai are the smallest and one of the oldest ethnic minority groups in Vietnam. They have a long history of discrimination against them because of cultural beliefs. As a traditionally matriarchal society, the Raglai have been targeted by more dominant groups who challenge the Raglai support of rights of women to own property and the tradition of children assuming their mother's names. Consequently, the Raglai are refused housing, education and even identity papers. Cut off from mainstream support, they live in extreme poverty and are viciously preyed upon by traffickers.

Extreme poverty is central to the many problems the Raglai face. The average Raglai lives on pennies a day, nine times below the average income of 88 cents a day earned by the poor in the majority ethnic group – the Viet. The founder and director of Catalyst, Caroline Nguyen Ticarro Parker, says that traffickers easily convince families that they have their daughter's best interests at heart, and that they will take good care of her in exchange for perhaps \$150, a huge amount to a Raglai family. Most Raglai speak only their indigenous language instead of Vietnamese, reducing their chance of understanding clearly what traffickers are offering. Overall, less than 32 percent of the community has ever attended school. Without education and employment, poverty presents health risks along with high risk that families in the community will sell their daughters, granddaughters, and single mothers in order to feed the rest of the family.



There is no simple option to stop trafficking. Catalyst Foundation believes there is only a holistic approach to ending this tragedy. Through education and community development, they give these communities and its daughters hope to end the cycle of poverty and human trafficking.

The Program

The Catalyst program is a holistic program that addresses the needs of the community to provide a safe environment for their daughters and help the community rise out of its extreme poverty. The Raglai are a small community living in Ninh Thuan Province. Because of their poverty and illiteracy, they are easy targets for human traffickers. The Catalyst

program addresses the prevention of human trafficking by addressing the needs of the community to stop the traffickers. The DFW grant covers a large portion of many of these areas.

The program addresses four main areas:

- **Basic Education** - providing education, food and safety for children ages 5-18
- **Community Education** - providing community access to social services and education related to preventing human trafficking
- **Vocational Education** – providing teen and adult women with skills and knowledge to become self-sufficient in agriculture, animal husbandry, household debt management, and adult literacy.
- **Community Medical Clinic** – staffing and equipping a medical clinic to provide health care services, health and nutrition education, access to safe water, illness prevention, hygiene and disease prevention, and maternity care.

Catalyst has learned over the years that a program of change depends on the trust they build with the community and commitment from the community to Catalyst’s mission to stop trafficking. To achieve commitment, Catalyst begins by involving the community in helping to determine how to solve their own problems. Catalyst works to build partnerships with community leaders who understand the complexities of each problem. Their ideas then allow Catalyst to create sustainable programs to meet the specific needs of a community.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does discrimination of a people create a state of poverty for a community like the Raglai of Vietnam?
2. Why is human trafficking more prevalent in poverty stricken areas?
3. How does the holistic approach that Catalyst is taking to help the Raglai community out of poverty also help to prevent human trafficking of their daughters?

The Program Budget and How DFW’s Donations will be used

DFW’s grant of \$36,000 will pay for counseling, education for mothers and their daughters, vocational training and operational costs for a period of one year. The objective of the adult community education program is to provide basic education to address extreme poverty, the root cause of trafficking. The program in rural Ninh Thuan province will serve a community of 100 Raglai families living below poverty level. Direct beneficiaries are 165 girls and 176 mothers.

Holistic Community Development Program DFW Budget	Total
Program Services	
Vocational & agricultural training	\$ 7,000
Microsavings & loans	\$ 3,000
Food & nutrition education	\$ 7,000
Health & hygiene education	\$ 3,000
Subtotal	\$20,000
Personnel Expenses	
Staff salaries	\$14,500
Non-Personnel Expenses	
Field visits (bus, meals, hotels, supplies)	\$ 1,500
Program Total	\$36,000

Please note: If net donations exceed the Featured Program amount, we provide Sustained Program funding (grants to selected programs previously funded by Dining for Women) and provide a reserve to ensure we are able to meet future grant obligations. Read more about our [Funding Model](#).

Why We Love This Program

The Catalyst Foundation works with the ethnical minority Raglai community. The Raglai are a matriarchal community, where children take their mother's name and where in the past women have been landowners. Because of their culture, they are discriminated against, live in poverty and are vulnerable to Human Trafficking. Through their holistic efforts, the Catalyst Foundation has reduced the number of women and girls working in below-subsistence jobs, and reduced the number of girls being trafficked.

[For an in-depth look at issues related to extreme poverty and human trafficking, see this month's Food for Thought.](#)

Evidence of Success

Catalyst Foundation successfully implemented the community development programs with a Khmer community in Kien Giang Province from 2005 – 2012. The Khmer are another ethnic minority that has been ignored and refused basic human rights. The majority of this community have lived and worked in a garbage dump their entire lives. Refused housing, education and even identity papers, they were viciously preyed upon by traffickers.

In the seven years of the Khmer program, Catalyst achieved long lasting and independently sustainable results in the community. The program built a school to provide literacy and helped change a community that was 98 percent illiterate to less than 35 percent. Literacy rates grew because children taught their parents to read. Before the school was built, only three of 75 children were not working. The rest were in jobs that made them vulnerable to abduction and trafficking. The creation of Project Backpack supported families and children to attend school. By 2012, only four children continued to work and the number of non-working children grew to 122. As of 2013, no children were working in the garbage dump.

In 2006, over 40 girls disappeared from the Kieng Giang community. Over the course of seven years, Catalyst was able to reduce that to 13 cases of trafficked children, and in the past two years, there have been no cases of abduction or trafficking.

Voices of the Women

The Raglai community program is just beginning, but the Khmer program has many girls and women who voice their support and approval.

- Pinang Thi Danh is a 28 year old wife and mother of two small children. Danh regrets that she never went to school, but she had to help support her family and the school was five miles away. Now, with the local Catalyst School, she wants her daughter to finish high school. When asked what her dreams are for her children, Danh was quick to answer, "Education!"
- Tapur Thi Nuong is also a 28 year old wife and mother. Although her husband never went to school, she completed fifth grade before she had to start working to help support her family. Her greatest concern is safe water and proper nutrition for her daughters. Walking more than three hours a day to get spring water from the mountain, Nuong hopes one day to have clean safe drinking water closer to her family. When asked about bathrooms, she said, "Everyone wants that, but drinking water comes first."
- Chamalea Thi Phi is a 21 year old wife and mother who never went to school. She lives with her husband, six-month old daughter, her brother and his wife, their children and the grandparents. When asked about her greatest fear she said, "It is daily." Phi worries about shelter for her daughter, food for her family, and being healthy. Because she shares a small two-room house with nine others, she dreams one day of having her own home.

About the Organization

Founded in 1999, Catalyst Foundation originally focused on improving the lives of orphaned, abandoned, and homeless children in Vietnam. Since that time, Catalyst Foundation has provided humanitarian relief programs in four provinces of Vietnam where poverty is dire and risks to girls and women are greatest. From experience, Catalyst learned that children and women cannot be protected from trafficking without educating and collaborating with the community.

Today, using a holistic community development approach, Catalyst addresses some of the root causes of child trafficking and is able to raise awareness, provide access to school, and increase economic opportunities for over 200 children and their families. The dedicated staff and volunteers carry out Catalyst's daily mission to provide assistance to needy children and their families.

Catalyst partners with a variety of organizations who help support their holistic programs. In addition to DFW funds, over the next year Catalyst will receive funding from HSBC Future First, UPS Foundation, True Volunteer Foundation, and contributions from the general public to ensure the continuity of their work with the Raglai community.

Where They Work



Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and the South China Sea as well as China, Laos, and Cambodia. The climate is tropical in the south; monsoonal in the north with hot, rainy season (May to September) and warm, dry season (October to March).

The country was under French colonial control from 1854 – 1954 when the French agreed to peace talks following a lengthy period of Viet rebellion. The country was divided into North and South by the Geneva conference to resolve disputes between the French-influenced South and the Ho Chi Minh led communist North. It was reunited in 1975 following the end of the Vietnam War, but many Vietnamese fled from the country in boats, raising global concern. Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1979 to oust the Khmer Rouge whose reign of terror caused an influx of Cambodian refugees to seek safety in Vietnam.

By 1995, Vietnam stabilized and successfully reconciled its position with global powers. The US re-established diplomatic relations and the Russians returned the Cam Ranh Bay naval base to Viet control. In 2007 the country gained membership in the World Trade Organization.

According to CNN, Vietnam remains a country of contrasts with lush beauty in its northern and central areas, and rural areas that time seems to have left untouched in the south. It has one of the world's fastest growing economies, but it also has some of the poorest people in the world.

**By educating members, DFW inspires us to make a difference through the power of collective giving.
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<http://www.diningforwomen.org/donate>

Our special thanks to Janine Baumgartner for preparing the *DFW "Featured Program Fact Sheet"* for January 2014

Additional Resources

On the **DFW January Program webpage for the Catalyst Foundation** you will also find links to:

- Food for Thought – an in-depth look at the status of higher education in developing countries
- Program Video – link and downloadable file
- Recipes, Customs, and Cuisine
- Recommendations for Fair Trade, Books, Films and Music

The U.N. 2015 Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Source Materials

- Documentation and images provided by Catalyst Foundation to Dining for Women
- CNN Freedom Project videos highlighting Catalyst's work in Vietnam. <http://www.catalystfoundation.org/videos>
- CIA World Fact Book - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html>
- Le, C.N. 2013. "[Viet Nam: Early History and Legend](#)" *Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America*.