



Dining for Women Interim Progress Report January 2015

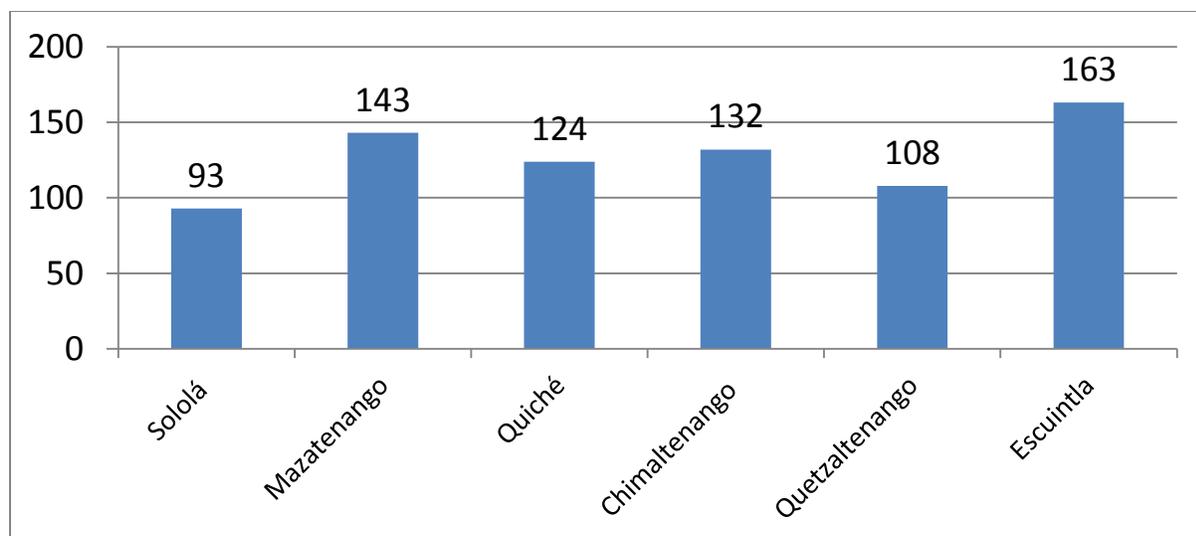
1. A brief description of what has been accomplished so far, including progress on the goals and objectives of the program DFW is funding. What impact has been made through DFW's funding.

Advanced Training Program

The Friendship Bridge (FB) Advanced Education Program continued to grow in 2014 as 763 clients participated in various types of technical trainings. This number is up from 517 in 2013, resulting in a 48% increase. Our goal for 2015 is to reach a total of 1000 clients participating in the program.

FB's partners in 2014 were: Gravileas (providing on-site training), and two individual consultants who provided trainings in the communities, often in the homes of the participants. One of the individual providers was an FB client and now promotes opportunities for client participation. All client participants received reimbursement for their transportation and meals, and in most cases, received a "starter kit" that includes basic materials required to put in practice the new skills, allowing them to begin generating revenue from it immediately.

Number of Clients that received Advanced Education by FB branch/region:



Trainings in 2014 by topic:

- Bakery and pastry (342)
- Canning and preserves (96)
- Floristry (153)
- Sausage making (16)
- Handicrafts (piñatas 108), (jewelry 13)
- Traditional candies and donuts (17)
- Traditional candies and canning (18)

FB sees staff development as key to the program's success, and as such, put time and effort into preparing its education staff and developing their leadership skills. FB staff averaged 50 hours of training per person in 2014.

We aim for a change in the lives of our clients by using targeted education to move them to reflection and analysis of their situations, and help them to develop solutions to their most pressing needs. This forms the conceptual framework used by our loan officers and other collaborators.

Our education programs continue to empower our clients and give them the tools needed to make a difference in their lives, their families' lives, and that of their communities. As a first step in their empowerment, we encourage the clients to decide for themselves about their economic and personal growth, their households, and health issues; the education topics are designed to guide their decisions to improve their economic conditions, the health of themselves and of their families, and ensure their children attend school. We also expect some of our clients will become community leaders and activists.

In 2014 a new Client Advisory Board was formed and held its first meeting, providing valuable feedback to FB. By giving our clients a voice to share their opinions and thoughts with us, we can ensure our services remain relevant to their needs. In 2014, we learned a great deal about the specific needs of our clients as they advanced along the Client

Continuum, and designed new credit products based on that information. The data collected is helping our organization better understand and shape the programs and services that are offered at each stage of client development. This information has helped to define a more well thought client segmentation strategy, initially defined in the levels of *Dreamer, Entrepreneur* and *Leader*. A pilot process to determine the adequacy of such segmentation will happen in the first half of 2015. The credit and non-financial products will be designed, or redesigned, considering this strategy.

2. Has anything changed in regard to the original program goals and objectives? If the budget has changed, please include the new program budget.

There have been no major changes in the original program goals. The impact measurement for advanced trainings has changed slightly from last year, but this is considered a minor change in the process.

3. Have you experienced any significant challenges or obstacles in implementation? If so, how are you addressing them?

The distance between the communities and the training center has always been a considerable barrier to participation. In order to mitigate this issue, we have found providers that can travel to the clients' communities. Even when the trainings are provided in their communities, the clients have to devote time away from their businesses, homes and children which proves to be a challenge for them. When they are able to attend, sometimes having a child on her back or a toddler is also a distraction that can limit the level of attention during the training.

Another issue is that fact that some clients may not have all the supplies and equipment needed to implement what they have learned. The trainings this year focused on providing techniques that can be easily replicated in the clients homes and that do not require specialized equipment. We also provided a basic kit of supplies with each completed training.

Another challenge has been cultural barriers. Occasionally, some clients may not want to put the new knowledge into action either for personal reasons (as their home responsibilities limit the time available), or their husbands may prefer they do things the same way they always have. Education topics focused in empowerment look to provide the client with the knowledge and confidence to decide what benefits her and her family most. The number of clients that apply the new knowledge is an important indicator to be measured in the program by the end of 2015. This measure will be developed together by SPM and Education Departments.

4. Has the timeline for the program changed from the original funding application?

There have been no major changes in the timeline; the estimated goal for 2015 is 1000 client participants.

5. Has funding changed for this program? For example, have you received unexpected funding from another source?

In 2014, we received funding from the following entities to support the Advanced Education program:

- Harvey Family Foundation
- Bancker Williams Foundation
- Red Empress Foundation
- AMB Foundation

6. How much of the original DFW restricted funds have been disbursed and how much remain?

All funding awarded in 2014 has been spent on the program.

7. Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant program staffing changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?

The organization structure has also change in the first half of 2014, the position of Country Director was created, to ensure the achievement of goals and provide a closer day to day coordination among the departments.

Within the report also include:

A blog-style summary of impact to be used in our communications (2-3 sentences).

The Advanced Training Program teaches our clients how to produce new, high quality products which they can later replicate and sell. This gives them an immediate opportunity to increase and diversify their income.

Any message you would like us to convey to our membership and donors about the impact our grant is having on those being served and/or your organization and its mission.

On behalf of the staff and clients of Friendship Bridge, we are extremely grateful to Dining for Women for this critical investment in the lives of the women we serve. We would like to invite the staff and membership of DFW to watch a short video of one of our most recent success stories: <http://vimeo.com/69499274>. Like Otilia (featured in the video), many of our clients are fulfilling their dreams and creating a better future for themselves and their families.