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Interim Progress Report to Dining for Women

Organization Name	Nepal Teacher Training Innovations
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Introduction

In 2014, we were able to achieve following accomplishments thanks to the support from Dining for Women. We conducted workshops in 8 schools of Sindhupalchok district and during monsoon season when the rural schools are closed, we conducted the workshop at a hostel for street children ran in Kathmandu by Child Protection Centers and Services. The total number of girls we worked with thanks to your support, was 727 and the average attendance rate exceeded 97%. The total number of meals we provided during the workshops to the girls, the trainers and the assistants was 16,821, and the total number of meals provided during the community ceremonies was 3,110. The workshops were delivered by 32 local women who have successfully completed our training of trainers and who were assisted by trainers' assistants. All of our trainers come from the same villages and communities that the participating girls, and many of them belong to historically marginalized ethnic groups and castes: Tamang and Dalit.

In 2014, again we were able to reach more girls than initially planned because in order to maximize the impact, we shifted from serving full meals (dal bhat – rice, lentil soup and curry) to each girl, to serving a smaller nutritious meal (tarkari chura – rice with vegetables.) The meals continue to play the important role they were designed for (hygiene practice in experiential education model and sharing meals between girls from different castes) while decreasing the cost of the program. This change allowed us to significantly raise the number of the girls we worked with – from planned 200 a year to 727 in 2014.

In the fall of 2014 we have launched a mentorship program, which serves as a long term support for girls who have participated in our workshops and other children and adolescents from their communities. The mentors meet monthly with Girl Support Committees formed during our workshops and guide them to solve problems that pertain to girls' health and safety. While the program is still being evaluated and its model might change after first three months of implementation, it already shows promising results with the girls solving conflict situations of bullying, intervening in cases of child marriage or other cases of domestic violence.

School	District	Girls
Shree Narayan Primary School	Sindhupalchok	23
Shree Thapi Narayan Lower Secondary	Sindhupalchok	50
Lazimpat hostel (CPCS)	Kathmandu	27
Shree Jal Devi Higher Secondary School	Sindhupalchok	166
Shree Panchakanya Primary School	Sindhupalchok	27
Shree Bhotenamlang High School	Sindhupalchok	104
Shree Bhotang Devi High School	Sindhupalchok	110
Shree Chilaune Higher Secondary School	Sindhupalchok	113
Shree Raithani High School	Sindhupalchok	107
TOTAL:		727

What outcomes the program was designed to achieve

Program's outcomes are: increased awareness in girls, their schools, and communities of girl specific health issues, increased awareness in girls, their schools, and communities of girl specific safety issues, enhanced confidence, public speaking and leaderships skills in girls, started dialogue on girl specific

issues between girls from different ethnic and caste backgrounds, established Girl Support Committees in schools, girls empowered to design and implement a Community Project.

What progress have you made toward achieving your objectives

Below please find results for each stated objective from the schools where we worked with funding from Dining for Women in 2014.

- Increased awareness in girls, their schools, and communities of girl specific health issues. Our evaluation process shows that 33% more girls after the workshop knew puberty hygiene, 30% more knew what puberty was, 27% more knew menstrual hygiene, and 25% knew the ways germs spread. Our interviews with the girls and their mothers confirmed that after participating in our program, girls started paying more attention to healthy and hygienic behaviors such as regular showering and hand washing. Some families reported changing their behaviors in households, for example introducing safe drinking water handling. During interviews, girls also reported changing menstrual restrictions in their families.
- Increased awareness in girls, their schools, and communities of girl specific safety issues. Knowledge of laws regarding various forms of violence and proper response mechanisms was where we saw the biggest impact of our workshops. Fifty nine percent more girls from Sindhupalchok reported knowledge of domestic violence laws in Nepal, and 47% more declared they knew what to do in case of domestic violence. Further 44% more declared they knew how to respond to bullying. Sindhupalchok is a known hub for human trafficking, and after our workshops 40% more girls said they knew what trafficking was, and 38% more knew what to do if they or someone they knew was at risk of being trafficked.
- Enhanced confidence, public speaking and leaderships skills in girls. While attitude shifts might be harder to measure quantitatively, 33% more girls after our workshop declared they felt powerful and 25% more said they felt strong. These changes were repeatedly confirmed by the trainers, teachers and the girls themselves. Many participants reported being less afraid to speak in public and participating in school activities more. Trainers also reported increased confidence, like this woman who led a group of girls in a school in Sindhupalchok: "through this workshop a lot of changes occur in a girl's life. When I came on the first day, some girls were so shy they were not able to say their names. After 24 days they speak with confidence and with smiles on their faces. Most changes are in their confidence levels."

Mentorship training conducted in October 2014 gave us an opportunity to talk with some of our former trainers about the long term changes they have observed in their schools and in the girls we've worked with months, or even a year earlier. We are happy to report that the opinions from each of the mentors were consistent in that the change in girls' attitude was long lasting. One trainer said, "Three most important changes I found in my school are: girls not scared or frightened. They are able to face any circumstances and they are more confident. If any problem arises, they are able to respond to it. If somebody bullies anyone, girls are ready to give feedback." Another former trainer who is also a teacher at a school where we have worked in August 2013 said, "There are many changes in our school after workshop. Recently girls actively organized quiz competition in our school. Previously girls did not like to participate in any competitions. Girls who were very quiet and passive are now very active and they are able to speak up in front of Girl Support Committee. If somebody bullied them they come and report

the problem to the Committee, we solved several cases. Girls are now capable of raising voice against violence, and bullying. They are now empowered and confident.” A trainer and principal of a small school we worked with in 2013 reported, “In our school one girl was supposed to leave schooling after class 5. After participating in our workshop she has managed to continue school regularly, even though she lives quite far. She is studying in class 8. This workshop convinced girls to continue to study, age doesn’t make any difference. She did it by her own conviction and confidence.”

- Started dialogue on girl specific issues between girls from different ethnic and caste backgrounds. In order to address caste divisions, the girls take turns distributing snacks among themselves. Traditionally, people from higher castes don't share meals or plates with people from lower caste, as they are considered polluting. Every girl we interviewed reported happily sharing meals with everyone else, and we have not recorded a single instance of caste discrimination in that respect. Moreover, the girls, after learning of girl specific health and safety issues share the knowledge with their peers and community members during the community ceremonies. These ceremonies are planned and conducted by the girls themselves and participants use them to raise awareness of issues like child marriage, domestic violence, or human trafficking.
- Established Girl Support Committees in schools. The girls in each school have elected the Committees, the total number of members in all of them is 63. The caste and ethnic backgrounds of girls vary from high caste Bahun, to Tamang, Sherpa and Dalit girls.

In order to provide a longer term support and structure for the Committees and other girls, we have launched a mentorship program. In October 2014 we have invited a group of our former trainers – one from each Village Development Committee where we have worked in the past – to Kathmandu. They all attended a training of the mentors, where we discussed with them gender and social norms, the need for mentors, the role of mentors, the problem solving process, and the issues of confidentiality and referral model. Upon going back to their villages, the mentors meet with each Girl Support Committee once a month. They guide and support the girls in the problem solving process and monitor girls' situation in their area. Most issues the mentors and Committees deal with are cases of bullying or harassment at school, which require a talk with the perpetrator and sometimes an intervention from the school principal. In many cases the Committee members identify girls and boys who for various reasons are not attending school and negotiate with their families sending the children back to school. We also had two cases where the girls identified some form of domestic violence or sexual abuse and reported them to police. In the case of child sex abuse, the perpetrator was imprisoned.

- Girls empowered to design and implement a Community Project. Girls in each school decided by consensus, planned and implemented a community project. These included repair of girls' toilet, upgrading classrooms (purchasing waste bins, water jugs), purchasing emergency sanitary pads for girl students, sound systems or cultural dresses used during school ceremonies.
- In 2014 we also engaged in advocacy work on national and international level. We participated in the design of National Strategy to End Child Marriage – an important and needed document that we hope will lead to changes on the ground. In October we published two pieces about the

links between menstruation and access to education in the developing world: a post on Girls' Globe titled "[Why Does Menstruation Matter?](#)" and a piece on the Guardian Global Development Professionals Network titled "[Not just a girls' problem: the economic impact of menstrual shame.](#)" In November, we led a Month of Action with the [Day of the Girl Summit: #PointPeriod campaign](#) which was aimed at raise awareness on how menstruation is a barrier to education in the Global South. For the campaign we published three infographics explaining the issue and led a [Twitter chat](#) in which many organizations and individuals discussed menstrual shame and stigma, its sources, how it can be addressed, and the need for girl friendly toilets and menstrual materials for girl students.

Changed in funding for the program

Since our initial application, we have received additional funding from Children of the Mountain, Present Purpose Network, PaxWorks and a number of individual donors.

Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal?

In July 2014 we have started a separate account with our fiscal sponsor, FJC. Before we shared an account with Nepal Teacher Training Innovations, and our both programs decided that it would facilitate our financial reporting if we had separate fiscal sponsorships account.

What challenges are you facing as you move forward with this project? How are you approaching these challenges?

One challenge that we face is lack of functioning state mechanisms, accountability and awareness on issues like child marriage. While we do meet with parents to educate them on legal age of marriage and consequences of early marriage, this knowledge is also lacking in local government officials and even police officers in rural areas. It was especially visible in a case from Gorkha district, where Girl Support Committee knew of a planned child marriage, discussed it with the family involved, and alerted appropriate resources, and the wedding still happened (the girl is back with her mother's family now.) To help Girl Support Committees, schools, mothers' groups and others react in cases of planned child marriage, we are planning to develop an immediate child marriage prevention toolkit. This tool will include legal provisions, appropriate state mechanisms, and steps they can take when they know of a case of planned early marriage.

Another challenge we regularly face in our work in the field is in our hiring model. We identify and interview young women who have potential to become our trainers, and this process very often comes under pressure from influential locals, from school principals to local politicians. During our training of trainers, first half is dedicated to discussing gender and social roles, discriminations, the need to work with girls and presentation and facilitation skills development, while during the second half potential trainers deliver activities from our curriculum to the group. This gives our Master Trainer a chance to identify skilled candidates and provide feedback to every participant. At the end the Master Trainer selects the women that best fit our criteria of skills and embodiment of Her Turn values of empowerment and gender equality. The hiring process is strictly merit based. More usual methos of hiring in these areas is based on local patron systems. Dealing with these pressures is often a challenge. During 2014, to become even more transparent in the process, we have developed a trainer evaluation tool, which we share with anyone in the village, which lists the skills we are looking for in trainers. Although it doesn't entirely remove the social pressures, it presents a clear hiring policy.

Have you revised your original objectives since the project began? If so, why? What are your new objectives?

To provide more structured support system for the girls we work with, we have introduced the mentorship program described above.

Do you anticipate any difficulties in completing your project in the timeframe outlined in your proposal?

Because we increased the number of participants, the funding from Dining for Women allows us to implement our program over a longer period of time. Initially we planned to deliver the workshops with the funding for four months each in 2013 and four months in 2014. The change from full meals to snacks allows us to continue the workshops and mentorship program for longer than anticipated. We expect to complete the funding in April 2015.

Message convey to Dining for Women membership and donors about the impact our grant is having on those being served and/or your organization and its mission.

We are incredibly grateful for the trust and support you have given us. One participant told us recently, "after attending this workshop I feel I can do anything in life." Thanks to you we have witnessed over and over, that when girls receive knowledge and skills they can become powerful agents of change in their communities. We have seen girls speak up and take action in cases of bullying in and out of school. We have seen girls starting talking about menstruation in their communities, in which the correct word for menstruation wasn't even known – the word used before means "untouchable". We have seen girls discuss with their parents various restrictions around menstruation and changing these traditions in their families. We have seen girls become advocates against violence and discrimination. We have also seen parents, teachers and school principals amazed at changes they witness in girls they know.

None of this would be possible without the support and trust you have given us and for this we thank you.