

GRANDMOTHER PROJECT

CHANGE THROUGH CULTURE

Mid-term Report - December 2015

Grandmother Leaders:
A resource to improve the lives of adolescent girls

Grant amount: \$44,500

Contact Person: Alyssa Rychtarik, Senior Program Advisor
Judi Aibel, Executive Director

11 Magnolia Parkway
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

“Even though I didn’t go to school I realized today that I know many things and also that I can still learn.”

*Grandmother Salimata,
Leadership Training
Participant*



“Wisdom of Grandmothers” game elicits dialogue on girls’ development training session.

Recap briefly what outcomes the program was designed to achieve.

The goal of the ***Grandmother Leaders Project*** is to improve the lives of adolescent girls by strengthening the leadership role of grandmothers in families and communities to prevent child marriage, teen pregnancy and female genital mutilation (FGM). One component of Grandmother Project’s (GMP) program to promote girls’ health and well-being is the DFW project which aims to: increase grandmothers’ knowledge of the risks of child/forced marriage, teen pregnancy and FGM; to empower grandmother leaders to play an active role in promoting community-wide change in favor of girls’ health and well-being; and to strengthen communication between grandmothers and adolescent girls.

GRANDMOTHER PROJECT

CHANGE THROUGH CULTURE

Girls are threatened by these and other challenging issues and cannot overcome on their own. The project aims to increase community support for girls namely, by building on the influential role of grandmothers within families and communities to promote changes in attitudes and expectations related to girls' growth and development.

Participatory training sessions with grandmother leaders from different villages are empowering them individually and collectively to take greater action within their own communities to protect and promote girls' well-being and education. The grandmother leaders are having a ripple effect on other grandmothers, mothers, fathers and traditional community leaders by increasing their understanding of the challenges faced by young girls and of the need for community-wide efforts to protect and support them so that they can fully develop physically, emotionally and intellectually.

Has funding changed for your program?

Since the DFW grant was awarded, we have received additional funding for our Girls' Holistic Development Program from two other sources for activities which complement but do not duplicate the DFW funding. We received funding from the Canadian Embassy in Dakar (34,000 CAD, 26,000 USD), to organize various community events including: Grandmother-Teacher workshops; Intergenerational forums; a Girls, Mothers and Grandmothers Forum, a Day of Praise of Grandmothers", and a series of "Under-the-Tree" Discussions with Grandmothers and Girls. We also received a grant from the UK Embassy in Senegal (5,800 GBP, 9,000 USD): to cover increased costs of the "Under the Tree Grandmother Leadership Training Sessions" (explained below); to cover GMP's (6,000 USD) contribution included in the original

Grandmothers participating in the "broken circles" exercise which teaches the importance of collaboration. 230 Grandmother Leaders from 43 communities are involved in the "under-the-tree" training sessions.



GRANDMOTHER PROJECT

CHANGE THROUGH CULTURE

DFW budget; and to provide additional funding for the production of a Lessons Learned report on the Grandmother Leadership Training project.

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

We have no changes to report.

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

A major challenge that we are facing is that financial resources are stretched. This is due in part to the changes we made in the format of the Grandmother Leadership training. The original proposal called for 6 one-day training sessions for 300 grandmother leaders in 30 villages/sites (i.e. a total of 1,800 days of training). Recognizing the necessity to build synergy and solidarity among the grandmother leaders, we decided to change the training format to 4 two-day training sessions, reaching 230 grandmothers in 43 villages. In doing so, however, it created a need



Discussion with grandmothers on how to improve communication with adolescent girls

for the *animatrice* (the trainers) to spend more time in the villages thereby increasing both *animatrice* time and costs. This change requires 10 more days of work for each of the 4 *animatrices* and also that they stay overnight during each of the 92 two-day training events, which adds costs for lodging and meals. The grant from the UK Embassy has helped to partially allay these costs. GMP has had to cover the remaining costs. We are convinced that the changes in the training strategy, providing more days of training to a somewhat smaller number of grandmothers, is beneficial in terms of increasing both

grandmothers' learning and the solidarity within grandmother groups and also because it allows the *animatrices* to interact with other community members and leaders in the evenings during the village sleep-overs.

Another challenge regards the availability of girls to participate in activities with the grandmothers, as they are in school all week and can only participate after school hours. To address this issue, the *animatrices* are conducting other activities with the girls in the evenings, as they are staying in the villages with the changes in the training format. The activities that are being done with girls and grandmothers in the evenings are those listed in Question 3, relating to funding changes. A budget modification request is being presented along with this report in keeping with the changes in the training format.

Have you revised your original objectives since the project began?

No, there have been no changes in the project objectives.

What progress have you made toward achieving your objectives?

The Grandmother Leadership Project has three objectives (listed below). To accomplish these objectives, two out of four training modules have been developed for this ground-breaking “**Under-the-tree Leadership Training for Grandmothers to Promote the Well-being of Adolescent Girls**” and **Training of Trainers Workshops** conducted with 4 GMP *animatrices* and 4 female teachers. The training sessions with grandmother leaders took place in June and July and between October and December. During the rainy season (Aug. and Sept.) many communities are inaccessible and activities were suspended. Between June and December, all 230 grandmother leaders participated in 2 two-day training sessions using training Modules 1 and 2. The participatory non-formal education activities included in the modules have been highly appreciated by the trainers, grandmothers and girls and we have observed positive changes in attitudes of both grandmothers and girls.

“These sessions are reinforcing the solidarity between us so that we can better work together to support our girls.”

Grandmother Diabouyel

Project objective no. 1: Increase grandmothers knowledge of the risks and of optimal practices related to: early/forced marriage, teen pregnancy and FGM

The aim of the various participatory learning activities in the training sessions is to encourage discussion of these critical issues concerning girls among grandmother leaders. GMP believes that change in grandmothers’ attitudes can best be brought about through peer group discussion in which “traditional” and “modern” ideas are debated and a consensus arrived at on the best practices to adopt.

GRANDMOTHER PROJECT

CHANGE THROUGH CULTURE

During the different exercises and while playing the game “The Wisdom of Grandmothers”, created in the project specifically to stimulate discussion related to the three project objectives, grandmothers’ comments are documented. Based on their comments, we are encouraged by their increasing commitment to discourage early marriage and FGM and to help girls avoid teen pregnancy.

“ When you have confidence in yourself you feel powerful. In order to accomplish our objectives we grandmother leaders must feel strong and confident”.

Grandmother Leader Sadio



Grandmother leaders discuss the need to support adolescent girls.

Project objective no. 2: Empower grandmothers to play an increased role in promoting the health and well-being of girls at family and community levels

“Under-the-tree” trainees are all grandmothers who were identified as leaders by their communities. However, it is through the participatory training activities on their roles and on the importance of individual confidence and group solidarity that grandmothers have increased their sense of empowerment and commitment to promote change for girls in the community.

Project objective no. 3: Strengthen communication between grandmothers and adolescent girls

The traditional African approach to teaching children key values and attitudes is “educating through fear”. Project training activities with grandmothers promote “educating through listening and dialogue”. Various exercises, role plays, etc. deal with the best ways to communicate with girls. Significant changes in the attitudes of grandmothers regarding how they communicate with girls are documented in their comments such as this one from grandmother Fatou, “*We have realized that we need to listen to girls much more in order to know how to support them*”.

GRANDMOTHER PROJECT

CHANGE THROUGH CULTURE

We have organized various joint activities between grandmother leaders and young girls, involving grandmothers particularly in exercises that address appropriate and effective communication with children and adolescents.

As stated in our answer to Question 3 above, funding received from other organizations has allowed us to implement activities that support and strengthen relationships between grandmothers and girls. The “Under-the-Tree” sessions with grandmothers and girls, as well as the “Women and Girls Forums” address the importance of intergenerational communication, most specifically that between grandmothers and young girls. Both of these activities offer grandmother leaders the opportunity to use their training and new knowledge in a community setting.

“A grandmother leader is not only there for her own grandchildren - her actions go beyond her family and her own grandchildren. That’s why she needs to learn new things.”

Grandmother Leader Dado



Girls and grandmothers discussing “under the tree”.

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

We anticipate all elements of the project to be completed on time.

Conclusion: Grandmother leaders exist in all communities but in the past they were neither recognized in development programs nor encouraged to play an active role in promoting the well-being of families and children. The **Grandmother Leaders Project** is capitalizing on the grandmother resource by empowering them to empower girls.

GRANDMOTHER

PROJECT CHANGE THROUGH CULTURE

| Activity | DFW Funding | Spent at Mid- term | Balance |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Activity 1. - "Under-the-tree" leadership exercises design/development | | | |
| Consultant Fees Leadership training development | 4.000 | 4.000 | - |
| Production of training materials and tools | 1.350 | 618 | 732 |
| Subtotal Activity 1. | 5.350 | 4.618 | 732 |
| Activity 2. - Training of the Trainers (TOT) workshops | | | |
| Participatory Methodology Expert | 5.360 | 4.097 | 1.263 |
| Experienced Facilitator & Local Coordination | 2.800 | 2.677 | 123 |
| Running costs TOT (room, perdiems, catering & transport) | 2.240 | 938 | 1.302 |
| Subtotal Activity 2. | 10.400 | 7.712 | 2.688 |
| Activity 3 - "Under-the-tree" leadership sessions with grandmothers in 43 villages | | | |
| Local coordination of activities & supervision | 5.800 | 3.382 | 2.418 |
| 4 animatrices | 7.500 | 2.400 | 5.100 |
| 4 animatrices overnights/meals in the villages | 4.500 | 2.852 | 1.648 |
| Transport of animatrices to villages | 1.800 | 1.824 | (24) |
| Cola nuts | 1.080 | 75 | 1.005 |
| Office supplies | 960 | 37 | 923 |
| Subtotal Activity 3. | 21.640 | 10.571 | 11.069 |
| Activity 4 - Documentation/evaluation | | | |
| Community Expert | 4.000 | 2.000 | 2.000 |
| Local transportation for interviews | 960 | 853 | 107 |
| Documentation Assistant | 600 | - | 600 |
| Subtotal Activity 4. | 5.560 | 2.853 | 2.707 |
| Activity 5 - Dissemination of Lessons Learned report | | | |
| Subtotal Activity 4. | 1.550 | - | 1.550 |
| | Total Funding | Total Spent Mid- term | Total Balance |
| TOTAL | 44.500 | 25.754 | 18.746 |

Note: These amounts are approximate as we have not yet received all receipts through 31 December 2015.