

Dining for Women Progress Report # 1 – Indego Africa

March 31st, 2016

1. Organizational Information

- a. Indego Africa
- b. The Leadership Academy
- c. \$40,000 (over two years)
- d. Hayley Doner, Development and Communications Manager
- e. 51 W. 52nd St.
New York, NY 10019

2. Program Objectives

Launched on October 1st, 2014, Indego Africa's Leadership Academy is an advanced business training program in Kigali, Rwanda dedicated to building powerful female leaders, businesswomen, and entrepreneurs. The program was created to equip emerging artisan leaders in Rwanda with the knowledge and skills necessary to grow their own businesses and drive economic and social progress in their communities.

Our goal in launching the program was that students would use the lessons they learned to improve the management and performance of their cooperatives. This would (i) allow us to supply our partner cooperatives with more orders, thus increasing the income of all our partner cooperatives and enabling them to better support themselves and their families; (ii) build knowledge and business acumen amongst artisans that they would carry forward with them in this and future endeavors; (iii) empower women to excel as leaders, entrepreneurs, and change-makers, driving economic and social progress in their communities.

3. Funding Changes

Once we launched the Leadership Academy, we found that the actual cost of running the program was higher than what we had initially budgeted. While in our budget submission to DFW we projected that the program would cost (on average) \$13,700 per semester (with DFW covering \$10k), the actual cost has come to nearly double that amount, at \$26k per semester.

This increase was due to several factors. When we first designed the program, we did not budget for missed wage stipends to compensate students for work-time missed due to class attendance, as we had never provided missed wage stipends for our educational programs before. However, after speaking in more depth with our partners about the program, it became clear that because of the rigorous time commitment (two full days a week for six months) involved in the Leadership Academy, students would need financial support in order to participate.

Other increased expenses included Teaching Assistant stipends (both were promoted to Head Teachers and hired full-time as Indego Africa employees), printing costs, and meals.

In order to cover the additional costs of the program, we have sought out some funding from other sources. This has not impacted the use of DFW's funds and is not covering components of the program funded by DFW.

4. Organizational Changes

We have since hired the two Leadership Academy Program Assistants (now Teaching Assistants), Emelienne Nyiramana and Modeste Ngabonziza, as full-time Indego Africa Education Associates and Co-Teachers at the Leadership Academy. This staffing change has freed up our Rwanda Country Director, who was previously the Head Teacher of the course, and has been an excellent transition both for Emelienne and Modeste's professional development and for the students' learning experience. Emelienne and Modeste both have significant training and mentoring experience, and Emelienne is particularly inspiring to the students as she was one of Indego Africa's first artisan partners and is a powerful example of what women in Rwanda can achieve with education and perseverance.

5. Challenges

Now in its third semester, the Leadership Academy is a well-established, smoothly-run program that we do not anticipate will face substantial challenges moving forward. That said, we consistently source feedback from our partners—both through informal conversations and formal surveys—to ensure that our program is meeting their expectations, and we remain ready to recalibrate when and as needed. For example, in the last round of surveys, our partners reported that they would like to receive more English vocabulary training as part of their lessons. We are now exploring English language learning resources that we could incorporate into our curriculum.

6. Objective Changes

We have not revised our original objectives since the program began.

7. Progress Towards Achieving Objectives

The Leadership Academy is now in its third semester and has been a tremendous success. The first semester began on October 1st, 2014; the second semester began on June 10th, 2015; and the third semester began on January 8th, 2016. DFW has generously supported the 2nd and 3rd semesters of this program.

Our students have made incredible progress towards achieving the Leadership Academy's stated goals and objectives. All of our students thus far have used the lessons they learned to significantly improve the management and performance of their cooperatives. They have improved inventory management and tracking procedures; instituted transparent and regimented bookkeeping and accounting systems; developed budgets, as well as savings and growth plans; created innovative marketing plans to build local business generation, and more.

These upgrades to organizational structure, efficiency, and productivity have made a tangible impact on the lives of all our artisan partners, who are now able to earn more income. In 2014, we placed \$123k worth of purchase orders at our partner cooperatives. In 2015, that number rose to \$180k (a 32% increase.) Our ability to boost these income generation opportunities was due in part to the changes our Leadership Academy students implemented at their co-ops, making their production, financial management, and client communication processes significantly more efficient.

In surveys we conducted at the end of the 2nd cohort, here is what some of our students said about the improvements they made to their cooperatives:

"I taught the other members how to work quickly so as to give the clients orders on time." - Christine Mukakayiza, Ejo Hazaza Cooperative

"We started recording all the expenses and receipts properly and filing all documents." - Alphonsine Uwimana, Twiyubake Cooperative

"I used my new leadership skills to solve conflicts at the co-op and even started a new group called 'Twiyubake,' which helps deal with conflict management." - Eugenie Nyirandaribitse, Covanya Cooperative

"The communication has improved between Indego and the co-op. We now ask when we have issues with an order instead of doing things the way we think it should be." - Gaudence Umutesi, Abasangiye Cooperative

In those same surveys, we found that our 2nd cohort of students had undertaken significant entrepreneurial activity during their time at the Leadership Academy. **52%** of students started a new business; **12%** expanded a pre-existing business; and the remaining **36%** plan to start a new business in the near future. Examples of new businesses include: selling livestock (such as rabbits, hens, goats, and pigs); selling food; and selling coal, to name a few. One student even bought a moto to start a transportation business. **96%** overall reported that they now have the skills necessary to run a business (vs. **0%** at the start).

Those who started new businesses hired **8 people** and are now earning on average an additional 52,500 RwF or **~\$70** per month—creating employment opportunities and economic growth in their communities and far exceeding our expectations for progress to be made within the six-month class timeframe.

96% of students led formal mentoring sessions at their cooperatives to share the lessons they had learned with their co-workers, a central goal of the program and a testament to the power and multiplier effect of educating women. This program is fundamentally about empowering women to empower each other, and we could not be more pleased with the results of this first DFW-funded cohort. We anticipate similar outcomes from the 3rd cohort and all cohorts moving forward.

Below please find quotations from a selection of 2nd cohort students about their experience at the Leadership Academy:

The Leadership Academy gave me knowledge about business that I had never had before and am now able to share with others. Being a part of the Leadership Academy also taught me how to interact with and learn from women that are not part of IKU - teamwork! - Augustin Nizeyimana, IKU Cooperative

I have had a lot struggles in my life and I had almost lost hope, but by joining my cooperative and participating in the Leadership Academy I have been able to share those struggles with my colleagues and open up more. I now know

that I still have a lot to live for. - Alphonsine Uwimana, Twiyubake Cooperative

“I learned how to save money, which I am now doing so I have enough to start my business. I learned about co-op management and the proper way to run one. I learned how to use a computer, use email and how to type and create spreadsheets to manage finances.” – Angelique Kanakuze, Ejo Hazaza Cooperative

I have been able to start and successfully run a new business {selling banana beer}, and I now employ someone that I pay myself. Plus, I am much more confident in communicating with others. - Kandama Agnes, Abasangye Cooperative

8. Difficulties in Project Completion

We do not anticipate any difficulties in completing this project in the timeframe outlined in our proposal.