



Counseling and Reintegration Final Grant Report 2013-2015 Dining For Women

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Summary

The following is a final report on a three year \$45,000 (\$15,000 per year) grant generously contributed by Dining for Women to Lotus Outreach's Counseling and Reintegration Program in Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia. This report covers Counseling and Reintegration's progress from 2013 through 2015. Lotus Outreach International would like to thank Dining for Women for their generous grant and the wonderful impact they have had on the women of this critical program.

Recap briefly what the program was designed to achieve

- 1) Provide up to 100 survivors of Violence Against Women (VAW) with individual and group trauma therapy, allowing them overcome the ravages of abuse and regain the self-worth and self-confidence needed to successfully rejoin society and lead safe, healthy and happy lives.
- 2) Award small business grants to approximately 10 reintegrated survivors, allowing them to utilize the vocational skills acquired while in residence.
- 3) Pair survivors with a qualified social worker that will assist them in planning their lives beyond the shelter, including: finding a new home, starting a small business, managing money and enrolling their children in school.
- 4) Social workers support and accompany survivors in reintegrating with their families and communities and provide follow-up support.
- 5) Maintain and expand local, external women's support groups for reintegrated survivors and other vulnerable women and girls in the community so they can share their challenges, frustrations, problems and concerns, giving them a continued emotional support-base and source of encouragement once they leave the shelter.

What was accomplished in connection with this project?

1. From 2013-2015, there were between 72 and 85 survivors of Violence Against Women (VAW) who received individual and group trauma therapy at our shelter in Banteay Meanchey. All were residents of the shelter. The average length of stay at the shelter was 117 days. All survivors remained at the shelter for at least one month, up to a maximum of one year. The survivors we treat in our shelter are predominantly victims of domestic violence, sexual Individual and group counseling continue to yield high rates of success in behavioral shifts for our clients. In these sessions, our counselors help our clients to overcome the ravages of abuse and regain the self-confidence needed to successfully rejoin society and lead safe, healthy and happy lives.
2. From 2013-2015, 52 small business grants were allocated to 52 reintegrated clients. Each client that receives a grant is required to participate in entrepreneurial skills trainings. Small business grants were provided to survivors of VAW in order to help them establish an array of different businesses, from grocery stores to tailoring to pig-raising.

- **2013**, 33 small business grants were provided to 7 reintegrated clients and 26 Safe Migration and Resisting Trafficking (LO's SMART program) peers who participated in entrepreneurial skills trainings.
 - **2014**, Nine small business grants were allocated to ten reintegrated clients,
 - **2015**, There were 10 individual small business grants provided to 5 clients of sexual abuse and 5 clients of domestic violence.
3. In the three year grant period, all 237 clients were provided with a qualified social worker who provides critical assistance planning for life after the shelter.
 4. After having reintegrated clients into their homes and workplaces, the reintegration team conducted (546 number) (120 in 2013; 179 in 2014; 247 in 2015) follow-up visits to 258 (120 in 2013; 77 in 2014; 61 in 2015) survivors. These follow-up visits are designed to check up on their living situation, work, community involvement, child care, and physical and emotional health.
 5. Over the grant period, the program has operated 10 - 12 support groups with a total of 75 -75 members. The groups mix reintegrated survivors with community members from their home villages. In these groups women meet monthly to discuss their personal situations, talk about violence against women and other issues in their local communities, and provide assistance and support to survivors of VAW. In addition to the support groups, there are four Women's Economic Empowerment Groups. The goal of these groups is to gather C&R small business grant recipients who had received agricultural training to share best practices with other women from the wider community.

Have the number of beneficiaries changed?

The goal of the Counseling and Reintegration program since 2013 was to serve up to 100 survivors of Violence against Women. Each year we served 72-85 survivors with highly personal individual therapy, small-group therapy, and large group therapy, often including scores of relatives who make our clients feel safe or stand to gain themselves from participation. We were able to provide 52 small business grants to our clients, 20 more than our original figure, which was 10 a year. These grants are absolutely critical to the empowered reintegration of our clients. We were able to pair social workers with precisely all of our clients from 2013 to 2015 as they reintegrated into their communities. We were able to facilitate reintegration for all of our clients, and maintained a strong follow-up record.

What challenges did you face in connection with this project? How did you address these challenges?

Severe Trauma Cases

Over the three year grant period, there were repeated challenges in the shelters among clients who had

been severely traumatized by sexual violence and required special medical attention beyond counseling. Counselors made it a priority to identify these patients, and are very proud of their work with two survivors of human trafficking and sexual abuse, who were given extremely close attention despite severe behavioral symptoms until they recovered and were eventually reintegrated.

Maintaining a 100% Follow-Up Rate

It has proven unavoidable that on occasion recently reintegrated clients move without notifying the program and fall out of contact. The reintegration team has started to rely on more regular contact through phone, rather than visits, to ensure former clients were still located in the same communities as well as with local authorities.

Small Business Grants for Reintegrated Survivors

Administering agricultural training and awarding small business grants to newly reintegrated clients posed challenges. Many women in our shelter were either too young to start their own businesses, or had little agricultural experience. We then trained a group of five clients who are in the process of collectively starting their own pig raising business, and facilitated a capacity building visit for the five survivors to an established CWCC women's business group in Siem Reap.

Massive Migrations

This year saw an enormous challenge for NGOs in Cambodia with the gigantic influx of Cambodian migrants returning from Thailand over June and July. Over 250,000 migrants crossed back into the country. Facing a crisis, LO and the CWCC sprung into action, offering support for transport costs and food for 124 female deportees with special needs, usually pregnant women and children who had little access to resources. The program supplied water, worked to make conditions better for pregnant migrants in the shelters, attended ad-hoc meetings with government authorities and other NGOs, and worked with Cambodia ACTs to provide transport costs, sleeping nets, milk, drinking water, and food to a total of 610 families, including 709 children and 110 pregnant women.

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 Lotus Outreach International staff has remained constant since our last report in May 2015. Our acting executive director is Patty Waltcher, who has led Lotus Outreach as President since 2011. The LO staff that have direct impact on the ground in Cambodia and deal with the specific implementation of this program have remained constant since its founding. Our Director of Field Operations for over 17 years, Glenn Fawcett, and Raskmey Var, our Country Representative in Cambodia, are fully immersed and have been at the forefront of monitoring and implementing this program since we began almost a decade ago.

Lotus Outreach did see some flux in our revenue between 2013 and 2015, which led us to scale back some programs for 2016. Thankfully, we are very pleased to report that we received major funding at the start of this year and are already planning to reestablish and revitalize all downsized programming.

What were the most important lessons learned?

Counseling & Reintegration has proven to be an effective program, and our dedicated counselors have continually impressed us with their efforts to improve the lives of the women and girls who pass through the Banteay Meanchey safe shelter. We believe strongly in the model of pairing counseling with economic empowerment and will continue to move forward with this model.

Lotus Outreach is dedicated to constant improvement of even our best programs, and we are continuing to enhance the capacity of counselors to heal survivors of the trauma through special trainings. We are working towards an even more comprehensive reintegration program that prepares women for economic empowerment, so that they are prepared to reenter their communities as capable, community leaders.

What has changed within your organization as a result of this project?

Lotus Outreach is dedicated to constant improvement of even our best programs. C&R is a critical component of Lotus Outreach's mission to assist victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence. We are continuing to enhance the capacity of counselors to heal survivors of the trauma through special trainings. Recently we have further developed monitoring and reporting mechanisms to give a larger variation of client-specific information.

Describe the unexpected events and outcomes, including unexpected benefits.

Our efforts facilitating a collective pig raising business among a group of five clients was wrought with the unexpected. We brought our clients on a capacity building visit to a previously established women's pig raising collective in Siem Reap this period to demonstrate a successful model, and the result was more wonderful than prior-conceived: both collectives now plan to work with each other raising and buying piglets, and it appears that they will work in close cooperation. Hopefully, this communication will help prevent issues like the illnesses encountered this year while raising chickens.

The Thai migration crisis over June and July incited valuable partnerships with other area NGOs, representatives from the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labor, UN agencies, and a host of other organizations. The CWCC partnered with the Cambodia chapters of the Mekong Migration Network to launch the findings of research on the movement called "The Precarious Status of Migrants in Thailand", which was attended by a large share of the media and NGOs in the area. The personal relationships developed as a response to the migration crisis should extend Lotus Outreach's resource network in exciting ways.

Did you change your strategy as a result of obstacles you encountered? How will you address these challenges in the future?

New strategies for disbursing small business grants were developed to ensure that clients were undertaking a project within their capacities and with a likely outcome of success. The program is continuing to develop the women's economic empowerment groups as successful businesses will establish them more fully as role models in their communities, inspire others to follow the same path, and further the stature and esteem of women of the younger generations.

Approximately how many lives have been touched, both directly and indirectly, by the program?

In 2013, 85 survivors received individual counseling, small-group and large-group counseling, and weekly group counseling sessions to help them overcome the trauma of rape, domestic violence and human trafficking. 85 survivors were reintegrated into their home communities accompanied by the reintegration team. Indirectly many more hundreds of people are affected each year by the vast changes in these girls' lives.

In 2014: A total of 80 survivors received professional counseling and reintegration services, and they have been returned to their home villages where they will be able to better support over 400 family members. 217 total survivors and family members received follow-up support, providing a safety net to ensure their continued protection from assault and human trafficking. Thousands more people benefit from the businesses run by C&R entrepreneurs, as these survivors grow and cook food to feed their communities and spend their own money on other local businesses. A total of about 700 direct beneficiaries in 2014.

In 2015: A total of 127 survivors and 50 relatives admitted into the shelter, of which 72 received individual, small group, and large group therapy. There were 57 clients who were reintegrated to their chosen communities.

A total of about 237 clients received individual, small-group, and large group therapy at our shelter. Counting their relatives and family members who receive counsel are welcomed into the shelter and reap the benefit of their family member's support there were approximately 1,800 direct beneficiaries from 2013-2015. Counting the rest of their communities and the economic and social impact of our reintegrated clients, there were thousands more indirect beneficiaries.

What are the measurements used to monitor success and how was this information measured (e.g., surveys, observation)? Be specific and include measurable results.

Measurements and data on the C&R clients are collected by our counselors, members of our reintegration team, and the CWCC staff with whom we work in conjunction with on the Consoling and Counseling Program. Before counseling begins, counselors apply a mental assessment and analysis survey that determines if the survivor's needs are in line with what the program provides. The program counselors log notes on individual clients after each session, tracking their progress, and the CWCC staff maintains running data on who is at the shelter, along with collecting and maintaining data on our clients' legal situation vis-a-vis their abuser and their personal, domestic and economic circumstances. The reintegration team conducts follow-up visits for all reintegrated survivors to track their progress,

and visits former clients in their communities with CWCC staff.

Cases are only closed once they are in a safe, stable place, as determined by our reintegration staff to be free of any violent threat. The reintegration team conducted 217 follow-up visits to 217 clients and their relatives.

The Counseling and Reintegration Program maintains consistent communication with clients that choose to pursue the small business grants offered as well. Detailed records are kept of incomes and expenditures of each small business. We record all details of stock in and out and what remains in the period but after analyzing the records, it is difficult to measure profit and loss for the businesses undertaken in this period. Many of our clients have only received primary school education, which is a major obstacle to maintaining consistent records. We are however establishing new formats in the current period, that will apply retroactively to all the grant recipients mentioned in this report and expect to see usable data that will allow us and the recipients to make a clear assessment of their profit/expenditure/costs from herein.

If the program is ongoing, provide plans and expected results, including projected timeframe.

For 2016, the Counseling and Reintegration program has been down-scaled due to funding availability. However, recently we secured a major investment from a grantor and plan to run the C&R program at its full capacities for 2017.

We have discussed and examined ways to bolster this program's economic empowerment access, including membership in micro-lending Savings Groups, and further developing the small business grant program for people who have limited history running their own business. The program will continue facilitating collective economic empowerment groups for VAW survivors, and following up with professional mentorship and support.

We will also continue to provide capacity building resources to enable the counselors at CWCC to be more effective, furthering their involvement and organization of conferences, summits, and technique sharing meetings.

Provide a detailed list of all expenses incurred during the grant cycle which have been paid for with the Dining for Women grant.

Please see attached for our budget report from this grant period.

Did this grant and relationship with DFW assist your organization in obtaining other funding, partnerships with other organizations, or public recognition in some capacity?

In the three year grant period, the generous support of Dining for Women assisted Lotus Outreach in fully

funding the program. Dining for Women's support is absolutely critical to the operation of this program and to the lives of hundreds of Cambodian women. We are extremely grateful for all of its support!

Include several stories, experiences and quotes from women/girls, preferably in their own words, whose lives were altered by the funded program.

Lin, a young girl rescued from the streets of Thailand

Lin (whose name has been changed here to protect her identity), age eight, is the only girl among six siblings. She was born in Battambang province into a family of extreme poverty. Several years ago her parents took Lin and her two younger siblings to migrate to Thailand for labor work. Her father found work as a construction worker in Thailand, and Lin and her mother took to the streets to beg for money with her younger siblings.

One day in August 2015, Lin, her mother and her younger siblings were arrested by Thai police while begging for money in Bangkok. Her mother was sent to prison, charged with child exploitation. Lin was referred to stay at government shelter, and did not know where her two brothers were after the arrest. A short time later, Lin was repatriated to Cambodia directly to Poipet Transit Center, a transit and reception center of Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs. The next day she was referred to stay and receive services from the Cambodian Womens Crisis Center.

Lin was very upset living in the shelter for the first few days. She wanted to go back home to see her family; she was always thinking about her mother, in the custody of the Thai police. She was thinking about her father. She was afraid to join group plays or activities with other clients in the shelter.

The C&R counselor provided counseling to Lin, by beginning with building a real and trusting relationship. The counselor organized group plays and group counseling in the shelter, and purposefully engaged Lin in each activity she could. Lin produced handmade souvenirs, painted pictures, played with dolls, and played with other children. Through these activities, Lin began to feel happier and developed good relationships with others. Lin displayed great courage as she began to join group plays and activities.

Young Lin has made tremendous strides towards regaining physical and emotional health. She is currently attending school nearby the shelter and is a first grade student. She has said she will wait for her mother or father to come to pick her up from the shelter. The program will continue following up with Lin, while the reintegration project will continue searching for news of her parents.

Chakrya, a young survivor of sexual abuse

Nine-year-old Chakrya (who's name has been changed here to guard her identity) is from Thmar Pouk District in Banteay Meanchey, where she lived with her mother and father and her younger siblings. Her parents migrated to Thailand to find work, so Chakrya was sent to live with her older sister (20) and her husband (26). On October 3rd, 2015, while Chakrya was staying there, her sister's husband went into her room at night and sexually assaulted her. He told her that he would kill her if she told anyone.

Chakrya was too afraid to tell anyone what had happened. Her brother-in-law raped her once more, this time during the light of day. Chakrya was very brave and spoke to her mum's close friend and neighbor (who she calls Aunty). When her mom called her Aunty to check in that day, she told her about the incident. Chakrya told her everything about the rape, and her mom then called to commune chief and to police station to file a report.

The police acted quickly and arrested the brother-in-law. They found him gambling and arrested him on the spot. The District Based Multi Sectoral Network member (a policeman who works closely with the Cambodian Womens Crisis Center) contacted us on October 7th to advise them of the case. With the local authorities working closely with CWCC, they were able to intervene quickly. The next day, the Community Organizing Officer and the Monitoring Officer from the CWCC went to the police station to enquire about the details of the case and to meet with Chakrya. She was referred to the nearest Hospital to undergo a full medical check-up. On the 9th of October, six long days after the first incident, she was brought to the shelter to stay.

At the shelter, Chakrya initially felt very uncomfortable. She wanted to go back to stay with her neighbor; she was scared that she knew no one in the shelter. The C&R counselor began by building a strong, personal relationship with Chakrya, working hard to earn her trust, and inviting her into joint counseling and group activities with other young clients. She joined small and big group counseling to share stories, produce handmade souvenirs and trinkets, paint and draw pictures. Her mother returned back from Thailand to visit her, and her father also called her from Thailand which made Chakrya feel a lot better.

CWCC are helping to prosecute the brother-in-law by providing a lawyer for the case. Chakrya has had to attend the court to give evidence and the program always ensures that she is accompanied by a counselor. Along with the medical evidence provided, the brother-in-law has confessed to his crimes and is awaiting his sentence. CWCC believes that justice will be served in this case.

Back when Chakrya lived with her parents and sister, she was unable to attend school as they could not afford it. Since coming to the shelter, Chakrya has started to attend school and says "I really like school and I want to study."

In her free time after school Chakrya likes to play games with her friends. She likes to play on the playground at the shelter and she loves drawing pictures. She enjoys coloring in and her favorite book is one full of Disney princesses. "I like staying here because I feel happy and not scared and all the staff here look after me," she says.

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

Lotus Outreach International would like to thank Dining for Women with the deepest gratitude for their generous \$45,000 grant towards the Counseling and Reintegration program. Your contribution allowed us to run this program at an extremely high level, and make invaluable changes in the lives of hundreds of Cambodian victims of violence against women. From all of us at Lotus Outreach and on behalf of all the women this program has served, thank you so very much.