

DFW Final Report

Grantee / Organization Name: Indego Africa

Program Title: The Leadership Academy

Grant Start Date: September 2015

Grant Amount: \$40,000

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1. Recap briefly what outcomes the program was designed to achieve.

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.

2. What was accomplished in connection with this project? Please address each stated objective. If any project objectives were changed, please also explain the circumstances leading to the modification of the objective(s).

Generously supported by Dining for Women, Indego Africa’s Leadership Academy in Kigali was a tremendous success, with all **100** students using the lessons they learned to improve the management of their cooperatives, assume leadership roles, and start new businesses in their communities.

Semester	Start Date	Graduation Date
Semester 1	October 1, 2014	April 30, 2015
Semester 2	June 10, 2015	January 14, 2016
Semester 3	January 8, 2016	June 22, 2016
Semester 4	July 27, 2016	January 18, 2017

Below, please find average results from all four graduating classes of our Leadership Academy.

Organizational Upgrades: 100% of our students used the lessons they learned to significantly improve the management and performance of their cooperatives. They improved inventory management and tracking procedures, instituted transparent and regimented bookkeeping and accounting systems, created budgets, and savings and growth plans, and developed innovative marketing strategies to build local business generation.

Income Generation: These strategic upgrades resulted in increased order volume—from Indego Africa and local clients—and boosted income generation. 49% of our students reported an increase in income since participating in the Leadership Academy with Indego’s partners across all programs earning, on average, **\$2.23 per day**.

Leadership: 74% of our graduates assumed new leadership roles in their cooperatives and communities, including Cooperative Treasurer and Vice President, and Community Sector Advisor and Youth Leader. Of the remaining students, 57% intended to run for a new leadership position in the future.

Entrepreneurship: 92% of our students reported that they developed the knowledge and skills needed to start and manage a new business—and many did. Approximately 35% of our students started new businesses including selling soft drinks, selling livestock and agricultural products, and opening a pub. 80% intended to start a new business in their community, with 48% of those students having already developed and written business plans by the completion of the program.

Mentorship: 90% of our graduates led formal mentoring sessions at their cooperatives to share lessons learned at the Leadership Academy with co-workers, a central goal of the program and a testament to the power and multiplier effect of educating women.

3. **Have the number of beneficiaries changed? To report this please refer to the original numbers in your grant proposal under *Number of women and girls Directly Impacted and Indirectly Impacted*.**

The number of direct beneficiaries has not changed since Indego Africa's original grant proposal. To date, the Leadership Academy has directly impacted 100 women artisans who have graduated from the program.

As cited in our original proposal, the long-term benefits of the Leadership Academy have indirectly impacted several additional groups. First, it has impacted 900+ artisans that Indego currently partners with in Rwanda, well over the 600 women quoted at the time of our original proposal in 2014. These women have been able to learn from the 100 Leadership Academy participants at their individual cooperatives across Rwanda.

Second, the Leadership Academy has improved the lives of the artisans' families and communities through increased income generation and transferable business acumen. Indego's artisan partners have, on average, 4.5 dependents. Accordingly, income earned through partnership with Indego Africa supports over 4,000 people. For children, that income is frequently applied to pay school fees, an investment in Rwanda's next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs.

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

The Leadership Academy is a strongly-established program, and we do not anticipate any significant obstacles in continuing to implement it in the future. However, one interesting challenge (and opportunity) we continue to face post-semester is follow-up reporting and evaluation for Leadership Academy graduates. Since it was founded, the Leadership Academy has become a proven entrepreneurship incubator—many of our students are starting new businesses in their communities or developing plans to do so.

In light of this increase in entrepreneurial activity, we are committed to tracking how our partners sustain and grow their businesses after each six-month semester. We are continuing to work with our team in Rwanda to implement special bi-annual follow-up evaluation and assessments of graduates to determine how many women start businesses after graduation, and how those who started new businesses during the program are sustaining and growing their businesses.

5. 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?

Since our original proposal was approved in 2014, Indego Africa has undergone the following organizational changes. In 2015, we launched operations in Ghana, providing an additional 125+ artisans with the training, market access, and business education they need to run successful businesses and provide for their families. We also increased our staff from four to seven full-time employees in Rwanda to meet the needs of our growing number of artisan partners and program participants.

6. What were the most important lessons learned?

One of the most important lessons we learned in completing the Leadership Academy, was how best to meet the sheer demand for advanced business education among our artisan partners. Each semester, Indego received upwards of 50-70 applicants for 25 spots. Some of the feedback we received from our students included a desire for other members of their cooperatives to participate in the Leadership Academy so they too could benefit from the training. In meeting this high demand, Indego successfully graduated 100 students within two and a half years and began providing advanced business training to even younger artisan partners this past July.

Below please find quotations from a selection of graduates about their most memorable and important learning experiences at the Leadership Academy:

“I am very happy with the training I received at the Leadership Academy. I made a lot of friends and learned to build customer loyalty. I run a small business but before participating in the Leadership Academy, I never really cared about customer service. Now I not only know how to price products and record expenses, but I also know how to build relationships with my clients.”

- Josephine, IKU Cooperative (Semester 4)

“The communication has improved between Indego and the co-op, and has helped our business. We now ask when we have issues with an order instead of doing things the way we think they should be done.”

- Gaudence, Abasangiye Cooperative (Semester 2)

“Every week I go to the cooperative and tell others what we have learned. For example, we didn’t have business cards to market our cooperative. But I encouraged my co-op to invest in them and now we have business cards to market ourselves—we also made t-shirts.”

- Anne Marie, Covanya Cooperative (Semester 3)

“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, Ejo Hazaza Cooperative (Semester 2)

“The Leadership Academy provided an opportunity for me to meet with other artisans and improve my networking skills, which is something I continue to do to grow my business.”

- Donatha, Ibaba Cooperative (Semester 4)

“The Leadership Academy helped me become self-reliant and confident. Before I was shy and I struggled to speak English. Now I try to speak English as much as I can because I know it is the language of business.”

- Alphonsine, Ibaba Cooperative (Semester 3)

“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, IKU Cooperative (Semester 2)

“My favorite moment of the Leadership Academy was the first day of computer class. It was the first time I had ever touched a computer and a special day I’ll never forget.”

- Jeanette, Agatako Cooperative (Semester 4)

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

Due to the success of the Leadership Academy over the past two and a half years, we launched a Young Leaders Academy in July 2017. As a wraparound program to Indego Africa’s Vocational Training program, this initiative provides 25 underprivileged young women in Rwanda per six-month semester with the advanced business education and technology training they need to successfully enter the workforce and participate in the artisan economy.

The launch of Indego Africa’s Young Leaders Academy allows us to not only address the unique livelihood challenges young women face, but also ensure the long-term growth and sustainability of the artisan sector in Rwanda for years to come. Further, by developing advanced business knowledge and valuable skills at an early age, young women in Rwanda will be able to better support their children and families in the future, and create life-changing employment opportunities in their communities.

The Young Leaders Academy is modeled after the well-established, smoothly-run Leadership Academy but is customized for younger students (all of whom possess a secondary school education) to include more technology training and social media marketing.

8. Describe the unexpected events and outcomes, including unexpected benefits.

One encouraging benefit of the Leadership Academy has been seeing the intergenerational power of Indego’s model in action. On June 22nd 2016, Indego held a joint graduation ceremony for students of both our Vocational Training program and third semester of the Leadership Academy in Rwanda. During the ceremony, Indego staff alternated between each group of graduates as names were called and diplomas were awarded. Graduates stepped up to the stage from both sides and hugged each other as they met in the middle to receive their diplomas. This inspiring moment helped illustrate what makes Indego Africa so effective. We’re not only locally embedded in the communities we work with, but also committed to creating jobs and providing financial education for our artisan partners across generations.

Since the Leadership Academy’s launch, our students have continually taken the lead in their communities and spread economic growth, social progress, and hope across their country. As detailed in our response to Question #7, the program’s success, in combination with consistent demand from our younger partners for more advanced learning opportunities, helped inspire the launch of Indego’s Young Leaders Academy. This rigorous new education program is already underway providing young artisan women in Rwanda with the advanced business education and technology training they need to successfully enter the workforce and participate in the artisan economy.

It is because of the success of programs like the Leadership Academy that we can build on this foundation and continue to address the unique livelihood challenges young people face for years to come.

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

Based on feedback from participants, we adjusted our Leadership Academy curriculum to include more time spent on technology training. By incorporating longer lessons on computer use and business technology into the daily curriculum, our students were better able to hone their computer and word-processing skills. Using computer technology to send emails to clients and record revenue also helped them practice their English. Indego continues to elicit and incorporate feedback from our students in all of our programs to help grow and improve our education model.

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

Approximately 5,000 lives have been touched, both directly and indirectly, by the Leadership Academy. Please see our response to Question #3 for more details.

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

Indego Africa monitors and tracks success based on our partners' progress towards quantitative projected outcomes, as well as through the qualitative changes that take place in their lives, such as increased confidence, self-perception, and hopefulness for the future.

We monitor and evaluate the program's success through baseline survey interviews conducted by our Rwandan staff at the beginning of each semester, and completion survey interviews conducted at the end of each semester. These surveys allow us to measure relevant indicators and collect valuable qualitative feedback. We also conduct follow-up surveys six months and one year after the program to assess what percentage of students start new businesses and hire people in their communities.

Since its inception, Indego Africa has been steadfastly committed to measuring its impact. Each year we undertake a comprehensive social impact assessment, collecting quantitative and qualitative data on the ongoing progress of our artisan partners, including our Leadership Academy graduates, and publishing the results. Our reports to date show a powerful narrative of empowerment for our artisan partners, their families, and their communities. To view our Social Impact Reports, please visit: indegofafrica.org/impact.

Please see our response to Question #2 for measurable, quantitative results across all four semesters of the Leadership Academy.

In addition to the feedback we receive from instructors and students, the results of the Leadership Academy will also be used to improve upon subsequent semesters of the program and inform future iterations of Indego Africa's education model, including new programs like the Young Leaders Academy.

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

N/A

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

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

Indego Africa's relationship with DFW has helped our organization forge connections with supporters across the United States. Over the past two years, Indego Africa's founder, CEO, and Development and Communications Manager, have attended various DFW chapter meetings and events that have allowed them to meet new people and share Indego's mission with individuals and like-minded organizations.