

Final Report

Equipping and Empowering Female Leaders

Prepared by Collateral Repair Project

Submitted to Dining for Women



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Equipping and Empowering Female Leaders: Final Report

Summary

The Equipping and Empowering Female Leaders project funded by the Dining for Women foundation was completed in September 2017. The project has been a resounding success for our participants and our community center – with the training program being one of our most attended and engaged with program.

The project was designed with three main objectives in mind as follows:

- (1) to increase healthy psychosocial and health and wellness behaviors among women
- (2) to increase women's leadership in their community and in our center
- (3) to institute women-led programming and a governing body that ensure that women's needs in our community are addressed

Healthy psychosocial and health awareness



Figure 1 One of the practitioners providing acupressure



Figure 2 An acupressure session in progress

The project has facilitated acupressure and yoga sessions each week throughout the project lifecycle. These have been via twice weekly acupressure sessions and once a week women's yoga.

Yoga has been successful as women in our community had some exposure to the concept and benefits of yoga and therefore community buy in was strong.

Acupressure however proved to be more challenging especially at the start of the project programming. Women were unfamiliar with acupressure and skeptical at first and this was reflected in the attendance.

The local community acupressure trainers advocated amongst the community about the benefits of acupressure and we saw attendance rise and established a pool of consistent, regular attendees. Many women in our community suffer from serious muscle joint and back pain and would come to the acupressure sessions seeking some pain alleviation that went beyond the skill, expertise and remit of the acupressure practitioners.

The acupressure trainers have commented on occasions that unfortunately the women in our community are less likely to take time for their own self care via sessions such as acupressure due to the pressures of family life as a refugee. This is a reality within which we operate in our community center programming so a learning point would be to conduct more general awareness sessions about the importance of self care to obtain stronger buy in to such sessions. Stressing the importance of self care as a method for our community women to sustain and support their families could be a compelling approach.

Our nutritional and health sessions were some of our most heavily attended programs reflecting the lack of available wellness sessions for the urban refugee community we serve. Awareness sessions on diabetes, heart disease, oral hygiene and breast cancer were extremely important as feedback showed us that our community are preoccupied with their most pressing needs (food security, child protection and education, resettlement) that often things such as oral hygiene and general gynecological issues are neglected. After a particularly well attended women's health session by an Obstetrics and Gynecology Doctor attendees commented that they will go on and inform their female relatives what they learnt which demonstrated that this information has not been available prior and that the impact goes well beyond the direct beneficiaries served by this program.



Figure 3 Attendees listen attentively to a health seminar



Figure 4 Health awareness seminar in progress

Women's leadership in their community and in our center

The project was designed to develop and empower leadership within our community via a ToT methodology where community members administer and deliver the training program to members of their community. This model was extremely successful with seamless community trainers leading the sessions in the first year of the program.

However, we faced a challenge when the Program Manager responsible for this project unexpectedly moved on without a formal hand over process. This challenge proved to be a great opportunity for the trainers however who stretched their remit and scope to accommodate the staffing change. The trainers collectively worked together to create a clear picture and strategy to hand over to a new member of staff who took over responsibility for the program.

They worked seamlessly and collaboratively with the staff member to ensure programming continued with minimal impact and to collate feedback from participants so that the new program manager could assess the current state of the program activities. This program empowered these women and developed them such that they took the initiative and put their leadership skills in action for the success of the program.

Three of the initial trainers were resettled abroad however this has been a challenge the remaining trainers addressed professionally – creating a rota system to cover their sessions in a fair, efficient and seamless way.

These leaders have now become CRP leaders across programs and initiatives, often conducting focus groups on community issues and leading other programs such as our women’s knitting collective. We are confident they have been able to fulfill these varied and challenging roles so well because of the empowerment and leadership developed via this program with many of them having undergone substantial transformations in confidence and leadership.

THIMYA, PROJECT TRAINER TALKS ABOUT HER TRANSFORMATION AFTER ATTENDING THE PROGRAM AND BECOMING A TRAINER

“We left Baghdad in 2013. It was like a prison-- especially for us, since we were minorities. Now when I come to CRP and learn about human rights I think 'How were we living in Iraq?' My whole life I didn't feel like I had any rights. We were living in fear. We could not even express ourselves even if we were in our own home. That is something that had been ingrained in us since we were children: 'Don't express yourself. Don't think.' It was all fear. So I grew up, got married and I passed that same fear on to my children. When I came here to Jordan, I still lived with this fear. I stayed for a period of time at home afraid. My little son was 12 years old when we came and I wouldn't let him go to school. If my son was out late I was terrified. I would accompany my daughter everywhere and I even prevented her from going to shop alone. It got to





"...For 8 months I came to the women's empowerment sessions and I got to know many Iraqi women. Back in Iraq I would have been afraid of them. I had no friends back in Iraq, but then I came to CRP and said to myself, 'Where were these amazing people in Iraq?'

Our instructor is amazing. She is like a sister and a friend, and she taught us how to love ourselves. I never imagined I had the capacity to feel like this. I felt like I hated myself before--like an animal who would just eat, breathe and sleep. She brought things out that I had inside me that I did not even know of.

We spoke about women's empowerment, about women's rights that every person should enjoy but that I had not even heard of. It was like we had been programmed not to see that these are our rights. The course began making me a better person, and I convinced my daughter to come with me. After that, I began to see my daughter's personality changing day by day. Do you know what a happy thing that is to see? That you have done something for your daughter that will impact how she will go on to raise her own family. My daughter has now become a trainer. She now has so much self-confidence. Her thoughts and opinions come out naturally and coherently without fear. She now has big dreams.

I used to be afraid even to express myself, but now I have become a trainer! I now stand before people who are like I was when I first came to the center--afraid and completely overcome by fear. As a trainer, I want to make sure that no woman remains afraid or is afraid to share her opinion.

Women led programming and establishment of a governing body to address women's needs

The women leaders developed within this program have become CRP's female leadership ambassadors - they have facilitated focus group sessions with external organizations such as the Nobel Women's Initiative in November 2016, and have been sent as CRP delegates to external training sessions - with the Centre of Mind and Body Medicine. This is because they have shown over the duration of this project their leadership capabilities and have worked amongst each other, the community and CRP staff in a helpful, cooperative and seamless way. Even when faced with challenges such as relocation of fellow trainers staffing changes and scheduling issues they have all worked together for the purposes of providing useful and meaningful value to the CRP community center and the beneficiaries it serves. The women leaders have been at the forefront of other programs at the center ranging from Gender Based Violence Awareness and Prevention sessions to our very successful women's knitting cooperative.

Whilst we call on this body of leaders regularly a learning point would be to have a more formalized and strategic set up for regular sessions with a clear strategy and approach to identify the community's women's needs and a plan to address. Up until now this has been done in a non-formalized way.

End of Project Field Trip

To mark the end of the project CRP arranged a field trip for 35 participants. As communicated to Dining For Women, there was an underspend due to lack of spending on transport costs throughout the program. As such we obtained approval from Dining For Women to use the remaining funds from the underspend towards an away day field trip. This trip took place on 19th-20th September following the Eid al Adha public holiday in Jordan.

The trip was attended by the special trainer, Nuha, engaged at the start of the project who conducted the initial batch of training and the training for trainers session. Our original participants and trainers were extremely excited to be reunited with Nuha and demonstrate their progress over the course of this program. Nuha was joined by five of the women leaders and thirty women who completed the training course. Many of the women who completed the training were unable to take time away from their families to attend hence the final number agreed upon for the trip was 35.

The field trip combined a mix of visiting women's organizations and groups at the Princess Basma center, historical visits in Jordan which as refugees many of the women had not had the chance to visit beforehand, recreational and social sessions through evening dinner plans and additional leadership sessions delivered by master trainer Nuha.

All feedback obtained regarding the trip was overwhelmingly positive with participants commenting on how the trip was a welcome break from the pressures of their day to day life in East Amman. The program and the trip brought together people from different backgrounds, countries, religions and sects which would normally not happen in day to day life – and forged strong bonds and friendships which is a key objective of all CRP community center activities. The opportunity to have Jordanians and the refugee community socializing and training together as both participants and trainers was extremely important to address sensitivities around refugee communities and host communities.

The trip was a further leadership opportunity for the community leaders with a last minute challenge arising where the designated staff member responsible for chaperoning the trip unable to go due to a bereavement in the family. The leaders worked together and with a different member of staff to manage the execution of the trip without any issues. This is a testament to the leadership capabilities of these leaders that has been nurtured and developed through this program.

The trip
beneficial to
leadership skills
second day
amazing
Jerash
Jordanian
Everyone got
and every
you could see
faces the world
we can do together
trainer



Figure 5 Some of the attendees on the trip pose for a photo



Figure 6 Interactive leadership activities



Figure 7 Nuha with some of the attendees



Figure 8 Nuha, master trainer (second from right) with three community trainers



Figure 9 Master trainer, Nuha, facilitates a session on leadership

It was so nice to spend this unique time with friends from the training. It was a break from life in Hashami that I have not had since arriving in Jordan as a refugee. I never thought I would be with all these people as friends – we were Syrian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Muslim, Christian, Sabai! We danced and ate and learnt and laughed. – *Hawraa, trip attendee*

Prelim Timetable of activities		
Tuesday	10am	Meeting point at CRP
	10.30am	Buses leave for Jerash
	12.00pm	Arrive at Princess Basma Center Jerash
	12-3pm	Womens activity at princess Basma. Lunch at center
	3-5.30pm	Jerash Visit
	6pm	Dinner: Jerash Ya Hala restaurant
	8.30pm	Ajloun Forest Reserve hotel
Wednesday	8-10am	Breakfast: Ajloun forest reserve
	11.30-3pm	Ajloun forest reserve - use of conference room. Nuha activities.
	4pm	Head back to Amman

Figure 10 Field trip schedule of activities

Equipping and Empowering Female Leaders: Challenges Faced

Challenge Area	Description	Remediation
Scheduling	Public holidays in Jordan are often announced with only days notice as many are dependent on the lunar calendar. The length of holidays are often determined by the government and can range from 1 day to 1 week. This has impacted scheduling and therefore resulted in the completion of the program later than initially planned for	Clear and timely communication with Dining for Women. Going forward allow for contingency period when scheduling timeline of programs.
Attendance – weather/season related	Attendance of programs during adverse weather such as rain, snow and extreme heat has an impact on all CRP activities.	We have considered covering costs of transport in these situations however have decided the implications overall are negative on our community. This is an issue without a simple solution so scheduling of programs should be completed with this in mind – drops in attendance during winter and height of summer. Activities in summer should be moved to ensure participants are not travelling during hours of strongest sun exposure etc.
Activities – Buy in	Community members skepticism around new programs they are unfamiliar with (e.g. acupuncture) and viewing any self care programs as self indulgent	Conduct general awareness sessions on the benefits of such activities (health, psychosocial, physiological etc.) and also on the importance of self care for themselves and their families

Staffing changes	Staff changes resulted in new program manager to oversee project	Staff changes are often inevitable as people move on – however ensuring there is adequate coverage is extremely important. Following the departure of the initial Program Manager we implemented a buddying system where two members of staff worked together to support this and other projects – this ensures coverage if a staff member leaves or is unavailable for any reason. This is increasingly more important as we utilize local community staff members who are often in the process of resettlement.
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Number of People Served:

Directly served	Indirectly Served
275-300 women	900-1200 (average family size of 5)

Continuity of Project

Acupressure and **yoga** are continuing for the foreseeable future and have become an integral part of CRP programming.

The methodology of the women’s empowerment training program has been extremely successful and thus CRP have made every effort to retain and reuse this methodology. We are currently implementing the training course content and methodology under a project that started in September 2017 called “Hope Through Displacement” that aims to empower women and girls through skills and knowledge. The core modules developed under the **Equipping and Empowering Female Leaders** project are being delivered by the same community leaders developed and empowered through this program. The community leaders are an integral part of our community and we are looking at ways to develop them further, and have them train new emerging leaders.

The **medical and nutritional** seminars have highlighted that awareness sessions are important, but more so – the community need access to healthcare practitioners. CRP is currently working with US based medical groups to see how we can establish a consistent, effective partnership to provide much needed medical support to bolster the awareness sessions held at CRP’s community center.

Expense Overview

The grant awarded for this project was \$37,058.04. The amount spent and underspend is listed in the table below and the detailed log is enclosed.

Summary

Grant Amount (USD)	37058.04
Amount Spent (USD)	36267.43
Underspend:	790.61

As communicated with Dining for Women, during the course of the program we identified there would be an underspend as a result of not spending on transport costs. The rationale and approach was discussed with Dining for Women and a proposal laid out requesting the underspend is put towards a field trip that includes one night away as detailed above in the Field Trip section. The engagement and flexibility of Dining for Women to respond to changes and trends we have identified in implementing the project has been extremely supportive. The detailed expense log is enclosed below.

We would like to request that Dining for Women enables us to use this extra \$790.61 as we see fit toward emergency assistance needs in our community.

Thank You, Dining for Women!

This project was the first of its kind at CRP—one where we used the Training of Trainers model to address real needs in our community. We are amazed at the many lives this project has touched and thrilled by the wealth of female leadership that has emerged as a direct result of Dining for Women's support.

Our women's leadership workshops are an institutionalized activity at the center and we continue to train and support future women leaders in our community. Thank you, Dining for Women, for making it possible for us to begin this important work!