
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Organization:** iACT

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Project Title: Little Ripples Leadership Training**Grant amount:** \$49,320**Contact Person:**

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“Before Little Ripples and support from LEAD with EMPATHY, it was very difficult for women to stand up and speak up at community meetings. When women attend[ed] any meetings in camp, they would ask the men sitting next to them to speak on their behalf and share their ideas...Now, women stand up, they speak up, and they share their ideas in front of leaders and in front of men.” —iACT Project Coordinator in refugee camp Goz Amer

In March and May of 2017, iACT staff traveled to eastern Chad to implement our newly-developed *LEAD with EMPATHY* leadership development curriculum with women in refugee camp Goz Amer and conduct a baseline survey to measure changes in leadership behaviors, knowledge, skills, and experiences.

In February 2018, iACT staff returned to eastern Chad to gather feedback from women participants and measure the impact of the curriculum training project. This final report provides an overview of our proposed project, including beneficiaries and outcomes, an update on the final results, challenges, impact since implementation, and ongoing plans.

iACT is a Los Angeles-based organization whose mission is to aid, empower, and extend hope to those affected by mass atrocities. iACT programs challenge the traditional humanitarian top-down model by creating and implementing solutions *with* beneficiaries to address the comprehensive needs of a community, and build resilience and restore dignity for people affected by violence. iACT’s approach uses experts to create program models and skeleton curricula, while empowering refugees to adapt and lead the respective programs in their communities.

Outcomes

With support from Dining For Women, iACT developed, implemented, and evaluated a new leadership training curriculum for all Little Ripples early childhood educators and prospective female early childhood educators in refugee camp Goz Amer, eastern Chad, to increase educators’ agency over school resources and management. The proposed objectives that the project was designed to achieve include:

Objective 1: After one year of project implementation, increase the number of refugee female early childhood educators and prospective educators in camp Goz Amer who participate in leadership training from 0 to 62.

Objective 2: After one year of project implementation, increase the knowledge and leadership skills of 62 refugee female early childhood educators and prospective educators in camp Goz Amer, from baseline to follow-up.

Objective 3: After one year of project implementation, increase the active participation of refugee female early childhood educators in camp Goz Amer in education management meetings, from baseline to follow-up.

Beneficiaries

iACT proposed to directly serve a total of 62 women: 21 Little Ripples-employed early childhood educators and 41 prospective early childhood educators; and indirectly serve 240 female students out of 535 total students (approximately 45%), 535 female caregivers, and three Pond refugee host families in refugee camp Goz Amer, eastern Chad. Prior to implementation in March 2017, iACT received funding from other sources to open three new Little Ripples preschool Ponds in camp Goz Amer—employing six new educators and reaching 135 more children. The six educators were selected from the group of 41 "prospective early childhood educators." As a result, this project directly served 62 total women, **27** Little Ripples-employed early childhood educators, and **35** prospective early childhood educators. Ultimately, the project indirectly served 670 children—50% of whom were girls—670 female caregivers, and six refugee families hosting the six in-home Ponds.

Measuring Success

Based on five years of implementation and evaluation of the impact of Little Ripples on refugees in camp Goz Amer, iACT designed a three-part plan to assess the impact of the *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum on the increase of knowledge and leadership skills of 62 refugee female early childhood educators and prospective educators, and on their participation in camp education meetings.

- 1) iACT designed and implemented a survey to measure the leadership knowledge, skills, attitudes, and participation of women. The survey was implemented with the 62 participating women at baseline in March 2017 and again, one year later, in February 2018.
- 2) At baseline, midpoint, and follow-up, iACT conducted interviews with a random sample of participating women.
- 3) Over the course of the grant, the iACT Project Coordinator conducted observations of Little Ripples educators' leadership behaviors and participation.

Accomplishments

The stand-out results and accomplishments of the *LEAD with EMPATHY* leadership training project are demonstrated through the participating women's ability to address issues related to children's rights, women's rights, and conflict resolution. These accomplishments are best reflected in the

behavioral changes of participating women—a stark contrast to how women behaved prior to Little Ripples and implementing the *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum.

Prior to Little Ripples, there were very few women in the entire camp of 30,000 people that held jobs as teachers. When Little Ripples began in 2013, iACT employed fourteen women. Through Little Ripples, iACT now employs 43 women. That alone, iACT Project Coordinator *Oumda Tarbosh* explained, has opened the minds of parents and leaders. They see the women working, earning money, and living a good life, and now, they want that for their daughters, too:

“Before Little Ripples, when women attend[ed] any meetings in camp they would ask the men sitting next to them to speak on their behalf and share their ideas. It’s true. You would see a woman whisper to the man next to her and he would stand up and speak for her.”

“You’ll see parents now sending their daughters to school because they hope they can become teachers like Little Ripples women. And,” Oumda added, “women are no longer quiet in meetings. They stand up, they speak up. It’s like Little Ripples and LEAD with EMPATHY showed them they can and they should speak up.”

In addition to increasing their participation in meetings and speaking out, *LEAD with EMPATHY* has also affected how participants communicate with parents and community members. *Souad*, an education director of Little Ripples, shares an example below.

Souad is twenty years old. She fled her home Darfur, Sudan, as a little girl and has been living in refugee camp Goz Amer for fourteen years. She still remembers the terrible journey on foot to the border of Chad. In camp Goz Amer, she lives with her father, mother, three brothers, and five sisters. *Souad* has been an education director of Little Ripples for three years. She is the only person in her family with a formal job and receiving a consistent monthly salary, which she uses to dutifully support her family. *Souad* spoke highly of the curriculum and its impact on the women of Little Ripples:

“Before, we didn’t know how to communicate with the community in a positive way. We learned about the feelings of others and how to lead the community even outside of Little Ripples. Now at meetings with parents, with community leaders, and in education meetings, we share our ideas in the meetings.”

Souad also explained how she put her newly learned *LEAD with EMPATHY* human rights knowledge and communication skills into action in order to travel to other refugee camps in eastern Chad to assist iACT in expanding Little Ripples.

“Women are not allowed to travel; it’s forbidden. As our job, iACT asked us to travel to refugee camps Mile and Kounoungou to help with Little Ripples. And because of the curriculum [LEAD with EMPATHY], we know it is our human right to choose and decide if we travel. So, step by step, we had conversations with leaders and we explained ourselves and explained that it is good for women to travel and it is good for the community. Then,

they allowed us and we are here [in refugee camp Kounoungou—a two-to-three-day trip by road from camp Goz Amer, where she lives].”

When asked if there was anything that she learned from the curriculum that she did not know before that may have changed her behavior in some way, she responded:

“We didn’t know about the human rights of children. Now we know all the rights of children and so we feel we can protect children and their rights.”

The *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum culminates with an Action Project for which women work in small groups to identify a community problem and begin to plan and map how they will address the problem. Our project follow-up survey asked the women to identify problems they were addressing or aspired to address in their community. The following list are the problems most commonly listed by women participating in the project:

- Early marriage
- Domestic violence
- Violence against children
- Low school attendance rate of primary school students

With the information learned from *LEAD with EMPATHY*, here is one example of how the women have been working together to address some of the above issues:

“We prepare what we will say, then meet with camp block leaders and talk about the issues, and try to explain the rights of women and children and why what is happening is not good for the community. For example, we try to explain the consequences of domestic violence and talk about the rights of women. Some leaders listen and say, “Okay;” while with some other leaders, it takes time and many conversations. But it is good.”

Based on conversations with Little Ripples teachers, iACT also found that the information learned from the curriculum helped women improve how they build relationship with parents and address conflict. Rayaana, an 18-year-old teacher at Little Ripples, explained a situation that took place at Little Ripples with a mother of a student and how she and other Little Ripples teachers dealt with the issue together.

“One day, a child came very sick and dirty to the Pond [Little Ripples in-home center]. And so, as one of the teachers, I sent her home because it was not good for her to be around other children and she shouldn’t have been that dirty. Upon seeing her child was sent home, the mother of the child came to the Pond very angry. She was talking very angrily to us. Because of the [LEAD with EMPATHY] curriculum, we knew it was best to listen and not speak back. We let her talk angrily. Then we kept teaching. We decided, instead of speaking to her alone, we would hold a meeting with all the mothers of students attending Little Ripples. During the meeting, we talked with all the mothers about the importance of health and hygiene and we shared some information. We explained the importance of helping children be healthy and

how to be healthy. After the meeting, the angry mother came to us and apologized. She said she understands now the importance of health and hygiene and her daughter will no longer come to school dirty.”

Survey Results

The following results demonstrate an increase in knowledge, skills, and a change in women’s behaviors from baseline, prior to completing the curriculum in March 2017, to follow-up one year later in February 2018.

Leadership

- 100% of participants agreed with the statement that “leadership can be learned.” (Baseline was 40%.)
- 75% of participants disagreed with: “Only people with a title, high status, or authority can be leaders in their community.” (Baseline was 50%.)
- 95% correctly identified characteristics that makes somebody a “good” leader based on the definition presented in the survey and in reference to the curriculum content. (Baseline was 55%.)
- 100% of women correctly chose “listening” as a critical skill to being a “good” leader. (Baseline was 87%.)
- 92% of women agreed that “[U]nderstanding your feelings and the feelings of other people is important to being a good leader.” (Baseline was 66%.)

Human Rights

- 70% agreed that human rights are held by all people, equally and forever. (Baseline was 60%.)

Empowerment

- 88% of women correctly identified three ways to “empower someone” based on information learned from the curriculum. (Baseline was 23%.)

Strategy Change

Along with Little Ripples teachers who have completed the curriculum, we collectively decided it would be most impactful and useful to engage Little Ripples teachers and women from the community in the *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum during Little Ripples Teacher Training II, six months after the initial implementation of Little Ripples and Teacher Training I—this strategy is designed to allow time for the newly-employed Little Ripples women to adjust to the new demands of managing the program, to get comfortable with the daily Little Ripples preschool curriculum, and to identify their strengths and areas of improvement as teachers and leaders, all of which the women will build upon when learning and completing the *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum. iACT feels that this model will create the greatest impact on refugee women in eastern Chad and refugee settings worldwide, as Little Ripples expands.

Challenge & Lessons Learned

The *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum and training is designed to be refugee-led and adaptable to contextual challenges of working in isolated and under-resourced refugee camps in eastern Chad, but since our six-month report, we experienced a new challenge and lessons learned.

- 1) Completion of curriculum: Of the 62 women participating in the leadership training project, approximately 15 women, all of whom were prospective Little Ripples teachers, only completed half the curriculum. Reasons given included not enough time and low priority in their daily life. On a typical day, the majority of these women spend their day preparing meals, fetching wood and water, cleaning clothing, selling things, and resting.

This led iACT to ask, "How might we motivate and incentivize women who are not employed by iACT to complete the curriculum? The Little Ripples teachers have agreed they will conduct more follow-up with these 15 non-Little Ripples teachers and ensure the women are more engaged in the curriculum and attending group meetings. During the next implementation of *LEAD with EMPATHY*, iACT will partner employed women with non-employed women so that they can hold each another accountable through completion of the curriculum. Upon future implementation of the curriculum in other camps, iACT staff will ensure each woman has at least one "partner" to hold accountable and complete the curriculum with.

Ongoing Plans

Based on the positive feedback from participating women in camp Goz Amer and the reported impact on their knowledge, skills, and self-directed action, iACT will now offer the *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum with all current and future Little Ripples trained and employed teachers. In partnership with Jesuit Refugee Service in 2017, iACT has already provided the *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum to eleven employed preschool teachers working throughout the Central African Republic. In 2018, in partnership with Plan International, iACT will be engaging Burundian refugee preschool teachers across two refugee camps in Tanzania in the curriculum. iACT will also be extending the curriculum to three more Darfuri refugee camps in eastern Chad. Additionally, the Malala Fund is currently interested in implementing the curriculum through its Gulmakai Network in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and countries housing Syrian refugees (Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey).

Furthermore, iACT is in the process of seeking UNESCO certification for the *LEAD with EMPATHY* curriculum with hopes of offering and sharing the curriculum with non-governmental organizations and refugee communities globally—empowering hundreds of women to stand up, speak out, and be agents for change in their communities.

Message for Dining for Women Members

We sincerely thank the Dining for Women members and donors for supporting our leadership training project. It is because of your support for this project that, for the first time ever, young Darfuri refugee women in camp Goz Amer, eastern Chad, feel empowered, confident, and compelled to speak out for what they believe in and begin to challenge the gender-norms that have

restrained women in their community for far too long. Through the *LEAD with EMPATHY* leadership project, we have seen that if we partner directly with refugee women and provide access to information and tools, employment and training, and safe spaces for learning and sharing ideas, women naturally become the agents of change in their community—solving problems and creating change from within, little by little.

Budget

Please see the Final Report Budget for detailed list of expenses.