



Dining for Women

Interim Report

June 2018

1. Organizational Info

Organization: Starfish One-by-One

Contact Name: Travis Ning

Contact Address: 1031 33rd St. Denver, CO 80205

Contact Email and Telephone: travis.ning@starfish-impact.org, 303-670-1291

Program Title: Connecting talent with opportunity among Girl Pioneers in rural Guatemala

Grant Amount and Start Date: \$60,000 - 4/15/2015 (\$20,000 per year for 3 years)

Kind of Grant (Featured or Sustained Program): February, 2016-2018 Sustained Program

2. Program Outcomes:

The goal of the Starfish Impact School is to equip young women with the skills to match their vision and ambition to lead positive change in Guatemala. Fortified with a healthy cultural identity and an education that meets the demands of the present-day economy, a graduate will be capable of occupying crucial roles of significant influence in her community and country.

The Starfish Impact School will evidence the phenomenon of what is possible when talented girls are given an extraordinary opportunity to receive a culturally attuned, robust education designed to catapult them into positions of leadership. The school is deliberately designed to be the first of what will become a network of all-girl schools that will transform the landscape of a country in dire need of its female talent.

At the conclusion of this three-year (2016-2018) project, Guatemala will have its first all-girl secondary school specifically designed to empower and educate high-aptitude female leaders from traditionally marginalized contexts. With its purposeful design that integrates the core concepts of culture, community and academics, graduates of this school will achieve previously unseen heights in the areas of government, economic participation, and leadership. The school-and all of its systematized

materials, policies and curricula- will be the first in what will become a network of female-focused schools around the country.

3. Program Funding

Funding for this program has not changed in any significant ways that affected program design or implementation, although there have been shifts amongst funders in relation to the amounts we projected and what was actually received. We continue to receive generous funding from an individual investor who has been solely responsible for the construction of the Impact School building. The building is projected to be completed in late October 2018. Managing the construction project while also scaling the school has been intense. However, we remain on-schedule with the construction as we are in the thick of the rainy season (May-Oct).

4. Significant Changes

Welcoming new students to the Impact School: In January 2018, we began our second year of operation at the Impact School with 93 students--47 of whom comprised the second generation of 7th-grade students. Over the last six months, educators, staff, and 8th-graders have adjusted to the presence of two grade levels in the school. We have rearranged classrooms to accommodate the new students and continue to focus on the delivery of high-quality academic instruction through engaging activities.

Doubling in size can be a source of great stress, but we experienced a smooth logistical transition. Issues that were high stress when opening the school such as transportation and food were much more manageable due to our previous experience. Our newest educators transitioned fully into their roles and have good command of their classrooms, which is reinforced by continued intentional investment with weekly professional development and content coaching sessions.

School culture continues to be strong and the new generation of students have acquired the language, rituals, and body language that are distinct characteristics of Starfish and the young women that we work with as they journey through the program. Healthy friendships span grade levels at the school, creating a deep sense of community among the students.

Staff Changes: In February 2018, we shifted a key fundraising role, Director of Engagement (previously held by Joanna French), from Denver, Colorado to Antigua, Guatemala. This transition allows for closer proximity of US staff members to the program and the young women who attend the Impact School and reduction of operating costs. We continue to navigate the new challenges associated with greater distance between the Director of Engagement and our financial supporters, but are already seeing the profound benefits of more frequent field visits to the school.

In May, we bid farewell to a person who has been an instrumental piece of our staff in Guatemala. Oscar López, the Director of Innovation, has been replaced with a more experienced educational expert. Oscar has been a tremendously loyal and committed member of Starfish since 2012 and holds significant institutional knowledge. This departure is necessary but is an emotional loss for the whole team.

5. Number of Beneficiaries

The first quarter of the Starfish Impact School (January 2018– March 2018) featured the integration of the school's second cohort of 48 students and families. These new Girl Pioneers and families finalized their six-month onboarding program and formally enrolled in the program in December of 2017. The school year started in early January with a total of 93 students and families. In addition to the students in the school, Starfish mentors work deeply with families on a monthly basis in their homes as well as during individual and group parents meetings held at the school. Because the average family size in Guatemala is eight people, we count the 93 student families as part of our beneficiary pool, bringing the number of direct beneficiaries for the Impact School to 744. There are, of course, many other people affected by the school in indirect ways as our students and their families model the Girl Effect in their communities.

6. Challenges Moving Forward

Literacy: The reality of the starting point for incoming 7th graders is lower than we had anticipated. Our curriculum was designed with the idea that students would be 2-3 years behind in reading. In actuality, this gap is 4-5 years. Literacy is fundamental to unlocking all curriculum. When it is not in place, staff most constantly respond to these gaps, and this slows the pace significantly. The school's biggest challenge right now is to figure out how students can become better readers at a faster rate. This will require adjustments in the induction program as well as during the start of 7th grade.

Catching our breath and designing high school: The rhythm of operating a middle school while building out high school is intense. By 2020, we need to have a clear vision, plan, and curriculum for high school. This process has begun, and we have the enormous benefit of experience, but we know how much work it will be.

Information systems: We are in the process of introducing two robust information management systems. The first is PowerSchool, a remarkably comprehensive tool to track student progress. This platform will track all information for students in grades 7-12. The second platform is Salesforce. In addition to tracking donor information, Salesforce will manage all data on graduates, partnerships, and other external relationships.

7. Objectives

The objectives of the Starfish Impact School remain the same, as detailed in the following section.

8. Progress Toward Objectives

The school's student body doubled in size in January. In spite of this exponential growth, we leveraged experience to ensure a smooth logistical transition. Issues that were high-stress in 2017 (such as transportation, food, supplies, bathrooms, etc.) were far more manageable due to experience. The second generation of educators moved from assistant roles (held throughout

2017) to frontline educators managing their classes. The investment in planning and existence of a School Effectiveness Plan made this all relatively smooth. School retention through 2018 is 100%. The below objectives and progress indicators detail the specific focal points of this project:

- *Using local talent, reinvent the role of “educator” in the Guatemalan context. This entails deviating from the known model of “teacher” (which in Guatemala is a job often noted for its passivity and rigid adherence to status quo) by creating and utilizing high-impact educators with vivid clarity of objectives and intentionality in the classroom.*
 - Educator and mentor retention in 2018 is at 100%. The school is benefitting from the significant investment made in developing the educators who now lead classes for the first time.
 - Going from educator 1.0 to educator 2.0 (and then 3.0): Starfish has reached a plateau among educators that is both impressive and daunting. We have developed a system that can mold incoming talent (level 0) and, through intensive professional development, get this person to a 1.0 level. This level is likely higher than most teachers in the Department of Sololá. We build a leadership team around this goal, and we achieved it. We are now retooling the leadership team for the next phase: getting to levels 2.0 and then 3.0.
 - In late April, we agreed to terms with our "Master Teacher" role who will have the task of raising our group of educators to new heights. An educator with years of experience teaching in the American School of Guatemala as well as a charter school network in Denver took over this role in mid-May. This two-year role has replaced our current Director of Innovation, who has been with Starfish since 2012. Additionally, we will be replacing our Director of Curriculum (who will complete her two-year contract in August) with someone who is even more experienced in high school curriculum design.
- *Redefine the word “school” for all stakeholders by evidencing what a quality education can achieve in both its process and result. Students and families are accustomed to schools being foreign entities (parents most often lack sufficient Spanish to speak with teachers) that can provoke fear and alienation. The Starfish Impact School, with its indigenous staff and celebration of Mayan identity and community, will foster an unprecedented partnership with parents who will also receive support in their homes.*
 - Two mentors are assigned to each grade and tasked with ensuring fluid communication and alignment between the school and the family. The induction period is intense but takes place on weekends in the city of Sololá (much closer to the homes of the girls). January marked a significant leap for families as girls travel daily to Panajachel, leaving home early and returning late in the afternoon. The 100% retention rate, in spite of this rather dramatic shift for families, is an indicator of the effectiveness of the home visits.
- *Infuse national secondary school curriculum with “real world” skills through consultation with experts and private sector entities. In contrast to the typical secondary school education (average of 600 classroom hours/year), the Starfish Impact School will have approximately 1600 annual hours of instruction to significantly complement the national curriculum with tangible skill development and practice.*

- Educators have elevated their use of classroom management techniques, which is in large part due to coaching from external partners. Whereas before they were wrestling with the timing of their usage, today these techniques are used more instinctively and therefore “set the table” for effective learning.
- Major infusions of innovation have come in the form of visits from JUCONI Mexico (family work), Pedagogía 3000 Mexico (educator wellness) and ADGN Consulting (review of school efficacy plan).
- Formative assessment (which is an academic evaluation system designed to ensure that each student is mastering content before advancing onto the next level) is something rare in Guatemala. Instead, schools often take into consideration other issues like participation, attendance, provision of materials, etc. that can be important factors, but not assess if a student knows the subject matter. This leads to large numbers of high school graduates trying to navigate the labor market but unable to secure work due to enormous gaps in their knowledge. The Impact School will undoubtedly foster participation, track attendance, etc., but seeks to isolate student growth and content mastery. To that end, we have introduced PowerSchool as a system to track each student. This integration began in January 2018 and is now near completion.
- *Attract, select, and bring on board high-aptitude girls from motivated families.*
 - The student recruitment process for 2019 has begun. We are seeing a significant increase in the number of applicants and associate this with two factors: the school construction project (which is highly visible from Sololá’s main highway) as well as the growing awareness of the Impact School in rural villages. Recruitment and selection will continue through June. In July, the induction period (known as Escuela Estrellita) will begin.
 - Based on the data regarding literacy, we are retooling the July-December induction period to include even more opportunities for girls to practice literacy skills. We will likely add a full-time reading camp during their school break between primary and secondary school (the months of November and December).
 - We are using two international tools for measurement to enable us to track growth toward math and literacy and compare them on a larger stage. These programs are Map and Lexile and are they being introduced during Escuela Estrellita in order to create an accurate baseline of data to which we can compare student growth.

9. Project Timeline

There are no project timeline updates that have significantly affected the implementation of the school and this grant. Worth noting is the ongoing school construction project, that we expect to have completed in late October.

10. Message for Membership and Donors

Ixxik is 23 years-old in the final year of her university (majoring in psycho-pedagogy). She is the Spanish language arts educator at the Impact School. Ixxik is rare among educators because of her family situation. She is from a village on Lake Atitlán, but her family is middle class (her father holds a university degree). Another contrast is that Spanish is her first language since her parents speak different Mayan dialects. She is also living on her own since her parents relocated to a city several hours from the school. The combination of an educated family and Spanish language have been enormous resources for Ixxik and helpful since she is leading what is arguably the most challenging and important class in the school.



Literacy is a tremendous challenge among Girl Pioneers. Ixxik cites the focus on abilities and content as key differentiators of the school. Traditional schools emphasize content but provide no training for students to develop thinking skills. From her perspective as an educator, the fact that “girls construct their learning” makes class much more dynamic for all and much more enjoyable for her to plan. Her challenge is to always keep class moving and exciting, in spite of the challenging Spanish content. In particular, Ixxik is seeking out tools for keeping discouraged students engaged with Spanish.

Ixxik is drawn to the Impact School due to its focus on girls from rural areas. It’s a context that she knows well. Her grandparents never studied, therefore she can see the power of education in the lives of her parents. She can already see how Girl Pioneers take their lessons home to support their younger siblings.



“If I didn’t have education, I wouldn’t know what to do in the future and others could insult me saying that I am only indigenous and not anything more.”

Estefany is twelve years old and lives with her family of six in the village of Molino Belén. She is in 7th grade and formally enrolled in the Impact School in January 2018. She is already more educated than her parents.

Estefany cites the school’s focus on communication skills as a big difference compared to her elementary school. She also says that the teachers in her old school did not seem to care

about her and that the building felt unsafe. She says she was insulted at her old school for being indigenous, and that in the new school she sees that people pay attention to her.

She is proud of her grades so far, and the network of support that she feels she is creating with her peers. Her challenge is staying focused on what the mentors are saying since she sometimes gets distracted. She likes all the classes and highlights the focus on the competencies as something she has never learned previously.

11. Expenses Incurred During Reporting Period

Line Item	Cost per Unit	Units	Total	DFW 2018 investment	Expense incurred as of May 2018
Salary (75%)- Current Country Director (emerging Starfish Impact School Leader)	\$21,000	1	\$21,000	\$2,500	\$1,250
Salary (100%)- Current Coordinator of Innovation and Partnership (emerging Director of Instruction and Growth)	\$28,000	1	\$28,000	\$5,000	\$2,500
Starfish Impact School educator salaries	\$4,750	8	\$36,000	\$5,000	\$2,500

Salary (25%) Mentor training and implementation of innovations to improve academic achievement for 72 Girl Pioneers and families in Starfish wrap-around program	\$1,450	5	\$7,250	\$4,000	\$2,000
Salary (50%) of Coordinator of Innovation and staff wellness	\$3,650	1	\$3,650	\$1,000	\$500
Salary (50%) In-Country project administration	\$3,500	1	\$3,500	\$500	\$ 250
School recruiter travel expenses to/from rural villages	\$1,000	1	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000[1]
Teaching supplies per student	\$100	40	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$ 500
			TOTAL	\$20,000	\$10,500

[1] While the rest of the costs have accrued expenses at approximately 50% of the full investment due to the halfway point in the school year, the school recruiter travel cost has been spent in full as the initial phase of the recruitment process has just come to a close.