

A Breeze of Hope Foundation Dining For Women 2017 Final Report

Organization Name: A Breeze of Hope Foundation (ABH)

Project Title: Centro Una Brisa De Esperanza (CUBE)

Grant Amount: \$50,000

Contact Person: Brisa De Angulo, CEO

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1. Outcomes our Project was Designed to Achieve

We designed DFW project to provide 70 girl victims of sexual violence with a safe and comfortable environment in which they can rebuild their lives and develop the skills they need to live successful, economically independent lives. We designed our project to reach this long-term goal through the following project outcomes:

- A. 70% of the girls will increase their self-esteem
- B. 80% of the girls will increase their capacity for self-sufficiency and economic independence
- C. 80% will increase their academic confidence and performance
- D. 80% will increase their political participation, particularly their knowledge of their human and civil rights

2. Accomplishments in Connection to our Project

We are proud to say that our objectives/outcomes have not changed and that we've made great strides in accomplishing each of our stated objectives. Below we've listed separately each of our outcomes with its corresponding accomplishments.

A. 70% of the girls will increase their self-esteem

70 girls participated regularly in individual and group therapy. We initially aimed for 70% of these girls to show a significant increase in their self-esteem. However, 67% displayed increased self-esteem, which is a significant accomplishment considering the severe trauma that accompanies childhood sexual violence. For almost all of these girls, the healing process is long, complex, and characterized by constant ups and downs, especially in the area of self-esteem. Additionally, most of the girls assessed were in their first year at CUBE. Based on our many years of experience, we can say with confidence that nearly all of them will increase their self-esteem even more during their second year.

B. 80% of the girls will increase their capacity for self-sufficiency and economic independence

70 girls participated regularly in the vocational therapy courses for economic independence. Out of a voluntary sample of 37 girls in this program, 95% (35) increased their capacity for self-sufficiency and 46% (17) increased their capacity for financial independence. The low percentage for financial independence stems from the fact that most of the younger girls (ages 8 to 11) struggled to grasp the importance and "how to" of long-term planning, budget management, and opening a bank account. Nonetheless,

the older girls readily displayed a firm grasp of these skills and sought opportunities to put them into practice, despite the common perception of economic independence for women as a strange and foreign concept within Bolivian culture.

C. 80% will increase their academic confidence and performance

We provided 70 girls with academic support. 98% improved their academic confidence! 73% improved their academic performance and 25% maintained their initial level of school performance. Also, 12 youth finished high school this year and 20 enrolled in higher education programs!

D. 80% will increase their political participation, particularly their knowledge of their human and civil rights

70 girls participated in education about human and civil rights. 90% reflected a substantial increasing in their understanding of human and civil rights. Additionally, our legal team achieved 26 convictions this year with a 100% conviction rate in rape cases.

3. Number of Beneficiaries and any changes

Our total number of beneficiaries is the same as what we listed in our initial proposal. We provided direct services to 70 girl victims of sexual violence, ages 8-20, and reached 210 women and girls who were classified as indirect beneficiaries.

4. Challenges faced in connection with this project and how these challenges were addressed

This year we confronted one main challenge—the continued collapse of Bolivia’s judicial system. As a result of the continued collapse of the Bolivian judicial system, judges postponed CUBE’s scheduled trials a total of 99 times this year. The greatest impact of these delays was on the children and their supportive family members. The stressful and fearful uncertainty of a pending trial fatigued the children and their families—emotionally, physically, and spiritually. To reduce this fatigue, our attorneys took two strategic actions:

[1] They aggressively pursued pre-trial incarceration for suspected aggressors. The temporary incarceration of the suspected aggressors offered a tremendous amount of solace and respite to the victims and their loved ones. Pre-trial incarceration also helped shield the girls from aggressor retaliation, intimidation, and physical violence while they awaited trial.

[2] They approached judges with dogged persistence, pushing them to reschedule trials as soon as possible to protect the children’s best interest. Under Bolivian law, court cases involving violent crimes against children take precedence over other cases. However, this law is often not enforced by judges and prosecutors. Thus, our attorneys made every effort this year to pressure judges and prosecutors to give priority to cases involving child victims, citing this law and high court cases.

5. Any changes to project or project situation (significant staff changes, NGO affiliation change, loss of large funder, etc)

We made no significant changes to the project and experienced no significant changes to the project situation during this funding period.

6. **Most important lessons learned**

We learned two vitally important lessons this year. First, we experienced the chasm that separates *child centered approaches* from *child directed approaches*. The latter heeds children's direct feedback, while former simply places children's supposed needs at the center of staff-dominated planning activities. We also learned that the girls' direct feedback is immeasurably more valuable than even our best efforts to *think from a child's perspective*. They know their realities better than we could ever imagine. Thus, we sought their direct—and often anonymous—feedback on vital issues such as attendance, scheduling, therapeutic activities, and whether they *like* our staff. This feedback drove nearly all of changes we made this year.

Second, we confirmed our long-standing belief that the quality of our direct services depends mostly on the quality of our staff's self-care practice. Our staff came face to face with the reality that we cannot give to another what we do not possess ourselves. Though best-practices and current research are crucial, staff burdened with the cumulative impact of vicarious trauma are not poised to open their hearts to another's pain. Thus, we implemented bi-weekly on-site yoga classes for our staff that occur during their work hours. We built self-care into our daily work schedule. We noticed that many of our staff began to rediscover that intuitive sense of compassion and connection, which is the heart of successful therapy. Put another way, this year's lessons have been about concrete way to heed the gentle whispers of suffering children and of those who seek to alleviate that suffering.

7. **Changes in the organization as a result of this project**

As a result of the funding provided by DFW, 70 new girls were able to receive free services at CUBE. Additionally, as a result of having the resources to test and strengthen the interdisciplinary practices through this funding, our therapeutic framework was further validated, refined, and confirmed by this year's experiences. Our DFW framework has become an essential part of CUBE operations.

8. **Unexpected results and outcomes of this project, including unexpected benefits**

We expected that our direct services would help girls build the knowledge and internal resources they need to become powerfully self-confident and economically independent women. Part of this initial expectation was that their recovery and growth in these areas would take years to accomplish. On unexpected outcome of this project has been how quickly the girls have reclaimed their voices and wills, even as they struggle with the ups and downs of emerging self-esteem. The strength they developed has enabled them to exceed all of our initial expectations and, for example, start their own business and find creative ways to experience financial independence as teenagers.

Yamila's story is a powerful example of this growth.¹ Yamila was 13-years old when she first arrived to CUBE. She was also six months pregnant and battling severe depression. A close relative of her mother's long-time boyfriend had been raping her for a more than a year. When she first walked through CUBE's doors, Yamila was scared, hurt, and furious about

¹ We obtained permission to share this story. Also, we changed the child's name and some identifying details to protect anonymity.

the fact that she would soon have a baby. Her school had recently forced her drop-out because school officials had deemed her pregnancy a distraction to other students.

Only a few days after she arrived to CUBE, Yamila's attorney convinced the prosecutor and judge to place her aggressor in pre-trial detention while they complete the investigation process. This has allowed Yamila to feel secure enough to shift her focus from survival to healing. After only 11 months of receiving services from CUBE, Yamila has demonstrated incredible strength, motivation, and self-confidence.

With CUBE's team by her side, Yamila gave birth to her beautiful baby boy. After a month at home with her son, she returned to CUBE and began participating in every therapeutic activity she could cram into her day. She found the greatest joy in her creativity work at our bakery and never missed a class. She rapidly moved through each of the program's levels.

Yamila eventually asked her vocational therapy instructor if she could sell the pastries and cakes she was making during her practice. Her instructor enthusiastically encouraged her to do so, and now Yamila is filling orders for people outside of the organization, building her business experience, and saving money. Yamila uses the money she earns to care for her baby and herself.

Also, with the help of her psychologist, she has developed a strong and healthy bond with her son and has been able to improve her relationship with her mother and sisters, who are working closely with one of CUBE's social workers. Yamila is currently looking forward to re-enrolling in school in 2018 and is working closely with her social worker to make her dream a reality.

9. Strategy changes as a result of encountered obstacles/ways you will address these challenges in the future

As we mentioned above in Question 4, our main challenge this year was the worsening collapse of Bolivia's judicial system. The chronic trial postponements that result from this collapse will continue to affect the children and families at our center in the coming years. Thus, our attorneys will continue to aggressively pursue pre-trial incarceration and pressure judges to give priority to these cases. We will also continue providing additional psycho-social support to those affected by the stressful uncertainty of these delays.

10. Approximate number of lives touched, both directly and indirectly as a result of this project

In addition to our 70 direct and 210 indirect beneficiaries, our project touched the lives of approximately 2,000 individuals throughout the Cochabamba region. As children and their supportive family members regained their voices, spoke about their abuse, and learned about their human rights and ways to get help, they became advocates within their families, social groups, schools, and communities. Children in our program began referring their classmates and friends to CUBE for help. Youth from CUBE began teaching younger children in CUBE about their rights and the importance of breaking the silence. Youth in our DFW project also participated in the survivor led Network of Children and Youth Against Sexual Violence, which has spread CUBE's message throughout Bolivia since 2016. The children and youth in

the DFW project also participated in many public events throughout the year, helping to raise awareness about sexual violence, the need to disclose, and how to get help at CUBE. These public events proved an amazing way for girls to build their confidence and help other girls who continue to suffer in silence.

11. Measurements used to monitor success and method of measurement (include specifics and measureable results)

We gathered information regarding our DFW project using standardized psychological evaluation tools developed especially for evaluating trauma symptoms in children. Our psychologists, vocational therapy instructors, and lawyers used these tools to collect data on an on-going basis as a part of their regular direct services interactions with the girls. We analyzed the data at the end of each quarter. Below is a table that contains the specific indicators and measurements we used and information about how we gathered data.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Grant Activities and Results

| Activity/Activities | Expected Results | Indicators to Assess Progress | How will the data be collected and by whom | When will data be collected and analyzed? |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Individual Therapy & Group Therapy Sessions | Increased self-esteem | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular participation in individual therapy sessions 2. Regular Participation in group therapy sessions 3. Improved Body Posture 4. Increased Acceptance of Body & Self 5. Improved Eye-Contact 6. Reduction in defensive and hyper-vigilant behaviors and attitudes Increased comfort while Talking/Sharing | The Psychologist and Group Therapy Facilitator will register data on psychological assessment instruments specially designed for trauma assessment. | Data will be collected and analyzed on a rolling basis with a final team-based analysis conducted at the project's end date. |
| Economic Independence Building (EIB) Course | Increased confidence in their ability to manage a business and provide a service or product | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular participation in EIB courses. 2. Increased communication with other EIB participants 3. Improved ability to develop and manage a small budget 4. Improved ability to take periodic inventory of supplies 5. Improved ability to assess quality of product/service 6. Improved ability to creativity advertise their product/service ideas | The Vocational Therapy Facilitator will gather data and analyze on each girl's progress toward project results. | Data will be collected and analyzed on a rolling basis with a final team-based analysis conducted at the |

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|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | 7. Increased interest in management a business and pursuing higher education | | projects end date. |
| Educational Advocacy and Assistance | Increased academic confidence and performance and reduced instances of bully and revictimization at school | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular participation in educational assistance program 2. Increased confidence in ability to learn new material 3. Increased ability to focus on and complete tasks 4. Increased desire to plan for higher education <p>Increased comfort in daily school environment</p> | The Psychologist, Vocational Therapy Facilitator, and Group Therapy Facilitator will gather and analyze data on each girl's progress toward project results. | Data will be collected and analyzed on a rolling basis with a final team-based analysis conducted at the projects end date. |
| Legal Advocacy | Increased protection of the girls from sexual aggressors and an increase in the girls' knowledge of their legal right and remedies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal process complies with all statutory requirements 2. Successful detention or prosecution of defendants in cases that are procedurally ripe 3. Girls show increased ability to identify violations of their human and civil rights 4. Girls show increased ability to identify their positive rights (e.g. right to non-violent education, right to express opinions, etc.) <p>Girls show increased ability to identify legal remedies relevant to their life situations</p> | The Attorney will gather data and analyze on case progress and each girl's progress toward project results. | Data will be collected and analyzed on a rolling basis with a final team-based analysis conducted at the projects end date. |

We listed these specific measurable results above in Question 2, where we also included commentary on these specific results. Here is a brief overview of the raw statistics:

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C. 80% will increase their academic confidence and performance

We provided 70 girls with academic support. 98% improved their academic confidence! 73% improved their academic performance and 25% maintained their initial level of school performance. 12 youth finished high school this year and 20 enrolled in higher education programs!

D. 80% will increase their political participation, particularly their knowledge of their human and civil rights

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12. Plans and expected results, including projected timeframe

We will indefinitely continue the project we started with DFW, and we will indefinitely continue implementing the wonderful changes we made to our organization as a result of our project with DFW. We will also continue to assess the girls' trauma recovery progress using the indicators and objectives we proposed for our DFW project.

13. Detailed list of all expenses incurred during the grant cycle that were paid for with the Dining for Women Grant

Please refer to the expense sheet included in the email that contained this report.

14. Ways that this grant and the relationship with Dining for Women assisted the organization in obtaining other funding, partnerships with other organizations, or public recognition

We are unsure whether our partnership with Dining for Women assisted us in obtaining other funding. We are certain, however, that the extensive network of women connected with DFW increased our public exposure and directly contributed to our CEO, Brisa De Angulo, being invited to speak as a keynote speaker at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Conference in Brazil in September 2017. This exposure in Brazil has brought new funders, and this is in large part thanks to the anonymous workings of the wonderful members of DFW.

Additional Information needed:

1. Several stories, experiences, or quotes from girls about how CUBE has changed their lives
2. Several high-resolution photos depicting girls who have benefited from the program
3. Any message you want to convey to the membership and donors about the impact the grant is having on those being served and/or your organization and its mission
4. Final budget with the detailed financial accounting for all grant funding

